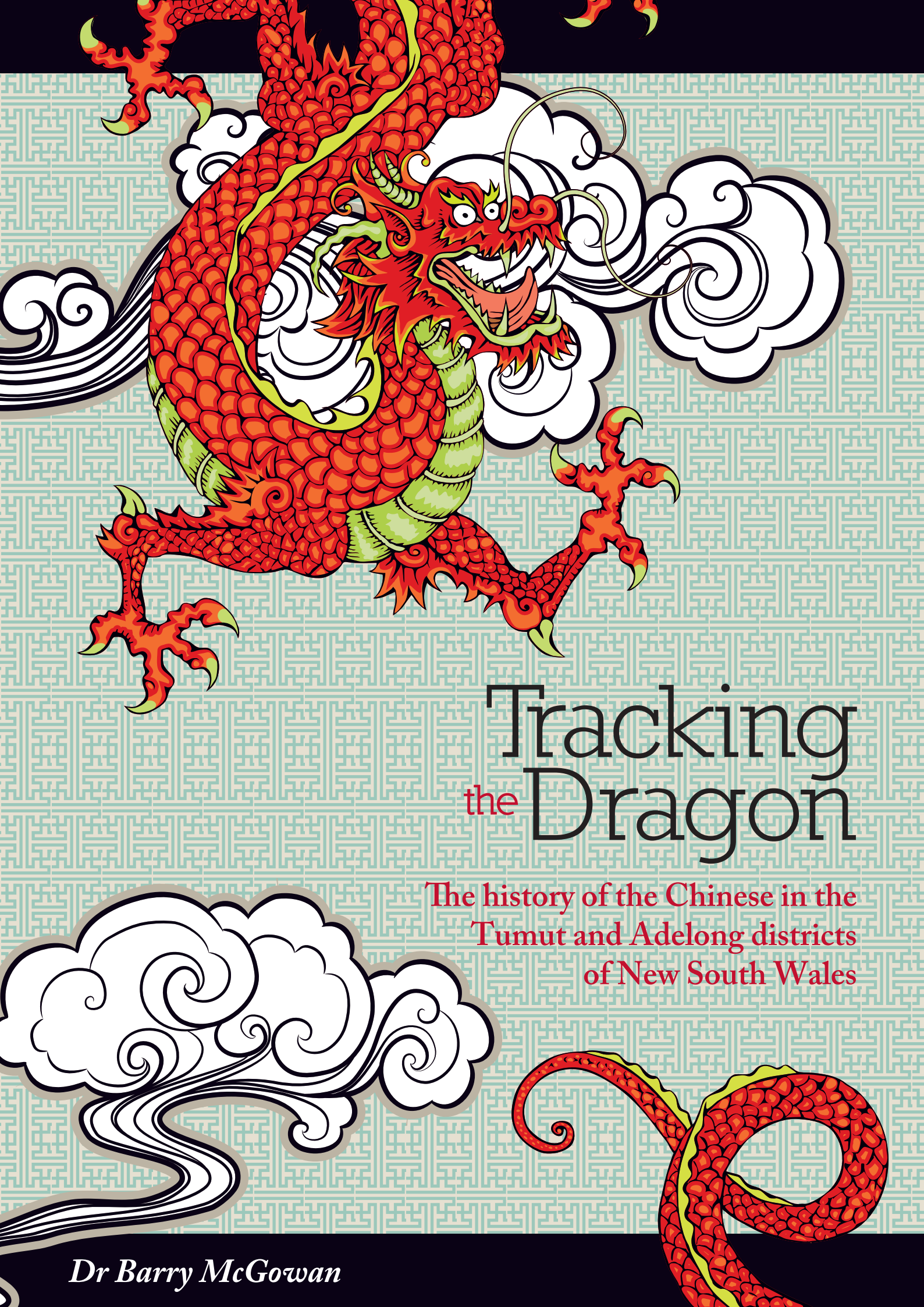

Tracking the Dragon

The history of the Chinese in the Tumut and Adelong districts of New South Wales

Dr Barry McGowan

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Wagga Wagga
Museum of the Riverina

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Contents

05 Introduction

06 Significance and Provenance Work

11 Indentured labourers

14 Gold miners

17 Pastoral workers

25 Market gardeners

32 Farmers

40 Storekeepers Traders and Restaurant owners

49 Beliefs, Fraternities and Factions

67 Camp Life; Food and Leisure

81 Prejudice and Discrimination

95 Law and Order

105 Families, Friendship and Influence

141 The White Australia Policy

155 Conclusion

156 Bibliography

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 exhibition was huge; stretching from Hillston, Booligal and Balranald in the west to Temora in the north, Tumut and Adelong in the east, and the Murray River in the south. The time span was also very wide, from 1850 to the present day, and the themes illustrated 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 each Riverina district.

From the outset it should be noted that there is some overlap between the 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 Tumut's Chinese history will include references to families and businesses in, say, Wagga Wagga (hereafter Wagga), Narrandera, Hay and elsewhere. For some districts the sources are silent over certain time periods, for there are often gaps in the press reports. In these instances, examples of incidents, functions or 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. Shepherding was specifically mentioned. The contracts were legally enforceable under the *Master and Servants Act*, which was heavily weighted in the employers' favour, many of whom were also the magistrates charged with the responsibility for enforcing the legislation

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 (hereafter NSW). 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. 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. 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. Large self-contained Chinese camps or Chinatowns were located in the main Riverina towns such as Albury, Narrandera, Hay, Deniliquin and Wagga. Smaller camps and enclaves existed in towns such as Tumut, Junee, Gundagai and Tarcutta, and on many of the large pastoral stations in the region. The main Chinese camp in Tumut was on Fitzroy St, facing the reserve.

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. In an 1878 report a total of 1466 Chinese people were recorded in the towns and villages of the Riverina District. A subsequent report on Chinese camps in the Riverina prepared by 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 may have been about 2200. 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

[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; Cathie May, Topsawyers: *The Chinese in Cairns*, Studies in North Queensland History, No.6, James Cook University, Townsville, p.14.

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

miners.

Between 1878 and 1883 Narrandera was the key destination for the Chinese, the Chinese population leaping from a mere 27 to 303. The growth in the Chinese population was explosive, for in the 1871 Census only 11 Chinese called Narrandera home. In 1871 there were 183 Chinese in the Tumut area, only 10 of whom lived in the town, the others working in nearby rural districts as market gardeners, pastoral labourers or tobacco farmers. The Chinese population at Adelong was 28, most of whom probably lived in the goldfield camp at Upper Adelong. In 1878, 130 Chinese lived in the Tumut area, of whom 11 were classified as store keepers and employees, obviously town-based occupations, and 104 classified as shepherds, cooks and other occupations. The Chinese population at Adelong was 50, of whom 12 were storekeepers and employees in the town and goldfield camps, 20 were goldminers and 18 were shepherds, cooks and 'other occupations'. It is not clear what was meant by 'other occupations', but more than likely it included pastoral labourers, market gardeners and tobacco farmers. In 1891 Tumut's Chinese population had fallen to 57, though it is unclear how many of these people were living in the town or elsewhere. Comparable figures on Adelong are unavailable. By 1901 Tumut's Chinese population had fallen to 35. An important caveat with these later figures, however, is that they refer to country of birth and therefore exclude children born to Chinese or European Chinese families in Tumut or elsewhere in Australia. This is an important qualification, for several Chinese or part

Chinese families lived in Tumut in the 1890s and early 1900s.[2]

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.[3] And the Chinese men constituted a very large proportion of the adult male population in the Riverina towns. The late historian, Geoffrey Buxton, estimated that the presence of 300 adult male Chinese in a town such as Narrandera with a total population in the early 1880s of 1400 meant that every second

Map showing where the majority of Chinese in this essay originated from in Guangdong Province and where they came to in Australia.

Clive Hilliker and Barry McGowan, Australian National University

man in town was Chinese.[4] The proportion may not have been as high in Tumut, but it was significant nevertheless.

Other immigrant or non-European groups lived in the Riverina. Large populations of Aboriginal people lived, like the Chinese, 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 Sze (See) Yap District (counties of Kaiping, Xin*hui*, 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

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[2] '1871 Census', pp.324-429; Fosebery, 'Chinese (Information Respecting, Residents in the Colony, 1878), pp.469-473; Brennan, "Chinese Camps'; *Eleventh Census, New South Wales, Taken on the night of the 5th April 1891*, Sydney, 1894, 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; 1871 Census, pp.324-429.

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

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

(Xin*hui* and Taishan), but in NSW there was a far wider representation of Guangdong counties.[5] 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 sponsor and/or give credit to fellow district members.[6] 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.[7] 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, 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.[8]

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. It was no coincidence that the principal source of migrants was Guangdong Province, 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 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 was devastated by a succession of highly disruptive events such as uprisings by clan and secret society members, feuds, the Opium Wars, and the Taiping rebellion and its fierce suppression. The rebellion was the most bloody civil war in human history, and in Guangdong Province alone, about one million people died.[9] 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.[10]

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

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[5] 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, pp.88-91.

[6] Williams, *Chinese settlement in NSW*, pp.12, 22, 23.

[7] Cai, Shaoqing, 'On the Overseas Chinese Secret Societies of Australia', *New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies*, 4, 1, June 2002, pp.30-45.

[8] 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.

[9] 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; 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.

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

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 help of the foreign legations, and perhaps Clarrie Leslie's father was one of these men.[11]

As suggested by the foregoing the new migrants were not coolies, but rather free or semi-free, most entering the Australian colonies on the credit-ticket system, sponsored by merchants in Hong Kong and Australia or family, to whom they were indebted for their passage. Headmen or bosses, in association with native place associations and fraternal organisations such as secret societies monitored the migrants until their debt was paid.[12] After payment of their debt they were free to go where they pleased. As one 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'.[13]

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[11] 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.

[12] 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.

[13] 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 nineteenth 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'. Legislative amendments to the *Master and Servants Act* in 1847 meant that contracts with Chinese labourers were enforceable, but the *Act* was heavily weighted 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.[14]

The editor of the *Sydney Morning Herald* was critical of the use of indentured labour. On 22 April 1852 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, the Chinese became '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, had at least the solace of domestic ties to cheer his hours of rest'. On 24 April 1852 he was even more forthright and referred to the 'sordid traffic' in Chinese labour, the squatters having had 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'. The editor remarked that 'the encouragement of Chinese immigration was tantamount to the discouragement of English immigration'.

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 Church and Peters. 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

[14] 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.

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 eventually fed, but by other means. Subsequently, three men, 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. 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, 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.[15]

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 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, 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.[16]

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

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

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

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 bench from 1847 and was a member for the Lachlan and Lower Darling in the Legislative Assembly in 1856-58 and the Murrumbidgee in 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 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 subjects such as entomology, ichthyology and other areas of zoology.[17]

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 twentieth century, were indentured labourers. According to William's wife, Chin See Shai Hee, they came out with 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 later the 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 William obtained a good education. By the time William arrived in Australia in 1899 Hing Gim had opened a store in Tumut, Chu Yin Sum having returned to China.[18]

[17] *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.

[18] Information from Chris and Jean Shai Hee, February 2012; Interview of Chin See by Chris Shai Hee, March 1984; Joe and Reg Shai Hee, 'An Anecdote on the life of Chin See Shai-Hee', unpublished reminiscences, Sydney, 2004.

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.[19] The Chinese miners were integral to this success story, and because some of them eventually migrated to the Riverina to work in the pastoral industry their involvement in mining 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. [20]

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.[21] 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). 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.[22]

Most Chinese miners in the Riverina were located on the Adelong goldfields. To the horror of some European observers and the applause of others the Chinese miners in Adelong were very successful. Speaking 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.[23]

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[19] 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.

[20] Cronin, *Colonial Casualties*; Serle, *The Golden Age*, p.382.

[21] Serle, *The Golden Age*, pp.324-31. An entry (poll) tax and ship tonnage restrictions were introduced by the Victorian Government in 1855. In response, the Chinese traffic was diverted through South Australia, but by 1857, and under pressure from the Victorian Government, immigration restrictions had been introduced in this colony as well. In that year the Victorian Government also introduced a residence tax. For NSW legislation see Barry McGowan, *Dust and Dreams, Mining Communities in Southern New South Wales*, UNSWPress, Sydney, 2010, pp.29-30.

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

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

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

Later that year another writer remarked that 'The Chinese, although arriving in such numbers, seem to readily plant themselves upon payable ground'. The numbers of Chinese were such that in January 1861 that the Gold Commissioner added a Chinese interpreter to his staff, the writer stating that 'This will prove a great convenience, and the difficulty that has always attended the administration of justice amongst this singular race will be done away with'. Later that month a local writer stated that the Chinese appeared 'highly satisfied with the result of their labours'. In July of that year a local correspondent proclaimed that a 'prosperous crowd of celestials are gathered on headwaters of the Adelong' and that arrangements had been entered into by the leading bosses for the 'importation of a large number of fresh adventurers'.[24]

The main focus of the Chinese miners was Upper Adelong and the area below the Adelong Falls. Soon they were using their new wealth to buy up claims from the European miners. A Chinese boss had offered a miner called Tully and his party £700 for their claim below the falls, although Tully had expected slightly more. Chinese miners had bought the claim next to his for £500. The correspondent remarked that the Chinese were obtaining all the valuable claims on the Adelong Creek, and that 'Notwithstanding all prejudice and all that has been said to the contrary, John is not half so bad as some people would have us believe, whilst their sobriety and cleanliness in this district are worthy of imitation'.[25] By October the Chinese miners were reported to be gradually acquiring the whole of the Upper Adelong, two more European parties having sold out, one for £250 and the other for £200.[26] The Chinese miners were, in effect, the European miners' market, for by purchasing claims at a good price they allowed many Europeans to exit the diggings profitably and much sooner than may have

[24] Wynyard Times, 21 December 1860, 11, 29 January, 26 July 1861.

[25] Wynyard Times, 2 April 1861.

[26] Wynyard Times, 5 October 1861.

otherwise been the case.

A burst of dry weather in March 1862 gave the Chinese miners a chance to work the bed of Adelong Creek, and a party began sinking a hole immediately below the falls in the centre of the channel. In October that year a party of Chinese paid Hollowell and Co £50 for their claim at the junction of the Honeysuckle and Adelong Creeks. The Europeans had not made enough to cover their rations for some time prior to the sale, the correspondent stating that this spoke well for the 'systematic way Chinamen have of working ground, by which they live like kings whilst Europeans are starving'.[27]

In his reminiscences Will Carter recalled that there were 'quite a number' of Chinese miners at Middle Adelong in the early years and that most of them were employed by Europeans.[28] One employer of Chinese labour was Mr A. D. Shepard, an American who arrived on the scene in the 1860s. He was a noted economist, and finding Chinese labour cheaper than European labour, he employed them almost exclusively in his first venture near Surface Hill, below the Reefer battery. According to Carter, he discontinued employing them when he detected them pilfering the gold. He retired from the field in 1906, a wealthy man.[29]

According to Carter another man to make his fortune on the diggings was Ah Chee (Dang Ah Chee). He got his break from a 'crazy Chinaman', who was talking loosely about a gold prospect on Adelong Creek. Ah Chee went with the man to the spot and was shown a nugget of gold weighing several ounces. He lost no time in pegging out a large claim. Ah Chee employed Samuel Basham as manager and worked the ground by hydraulic sluicing in the winter months, and by pick and shovel in the dry months. It was estimated that he took about £5000 from the claim.[30] Another successful Chinese miner was Chin Kway, who worked his claim with three other Chinese men. Carter recalled that this was one of the richest claims on the creek, and all four men made their fortunes.[31]

Elsewhere in the district the local press reported an influx of miners into the diggings at Black Range (present day Lavington) in 1860. The diggings included about 30 Europeans besides a number of Chinese. In September about 50 Europeans and 200 Chinese were on the field, and by January about 300 miners were on the field, of whom one third were Chinese[32]

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[27] Wynyard Times, 14 March, 21 October 1862.

[28] Turner, Alan, *Looking Backward. The Adelong Goldfield*, unpublished manuscript, 1998, p.28.

[29] Turner, *Looking Backward. The Adelong Goldfield*, p.72.

[30] Turner, *Looking Backward. The Adelong Goldfield*, p.40.

[31] Turner, *Looking Backward. The Adelong Goldfield*, p.22.

[32] Albury & District Historical Society, *Bulletin* 464, pp.3-4, 2006.

PASTORAL WORKERS

The main occupations for the Chinese in the Riverina were in the pastoral sector, particularly once the gold diggings became less profitable. 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. Employment in the pastoral industry would not have been as significant in the Tumut area as it was further west near Narrandera and Hay. However, some men would have been employed on the local stations, and others would have sought employment subsequently in the pastoral industry out west. As this form of employment was the main reason for the large Chinese presence in the Riverina, it is recounted in some detail.

According to Buxton, ringbarking involved cutting a continuous ring of chips around the trunk which avoided the work invoved in cutting down trees and grubbing stumps afterwards and 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 ringbaking 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.[33] A report in 1881 stated that 'perfect armies of Chinamen were going about ringbarking every tree at the rate of 9d per acre'. But 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 pastoralists were accused of ringbarking indiscriminately.[34] 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. Accounts of the Chinese ringbarkers and pastoral workers on the stations are rare, the most comprehensive being that of George Gow, a station manager and later a stock agent.

Gow stated that one of the main contractors in the Narrandera area was Wong Gooey.

> 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.'[35]
>
> 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

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[33] Buxton, *The Riverina 1861-1891*, pp.247-248.

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

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

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

Barry McGowan

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 & District Historical Society

in a high voice, sometimes a low, so that they all appeared to be talking together.[36]

Gow remarked that 'their dress was after the style of loose pyjamas, and their heads were adorned by large hats something 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'. 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 carrier pigeons, and a pigeon loft was erected at the Narrandera camp for this purpose.[37] Sam Yett worked closely with contractors such as Wong Gooey and Ah Hem, while Ah Sam engaged the Chinese gardeners and possibly the cooks.[38] George Hock Shung, Sam Yett's nephew, succeeded him on his death in 1903, though he may have commenced contracting work well before that.[39] 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, who always had another man ready to replace the one leaving. In his study of the Narrandera Chinese, historian 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.[40]

According to Gow most European bush labourers shunned ringbarking work, calling it 'Chinamen's work'.[41] However, the Chinese men were very well provided for and lived 'exceedingly well'.

> 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....[42]

The land clearing contracts could be strongly contested. C.F. McDonald, the manager of Wantabadgery station in the early 1880s, lamented that the Chinese labourers were refusing to work at the prevailing rates and bargaining for higher ones.[43] Gow also recounted the attempt by Gooey to obtain a better paying contract from John Holloway, the owner of Moombooldool station, who wanted 24,000 hectares ring-barked at one shilling an acre. Gooey unsuccessfully argued for one shilling and one

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

[37] Barellan Progress Association and Improvement Society, *Early Days in Barellan and District*, pp.35-40.

[38] Hilda M. Freeman, *Murrumbidgee Memories and Riverina Reminiscences. A Collection of Old Bush History*, the author, Emu Plains, 1985, p.141.

[39] Barellan Progress Association and Improvement Society, *Early Days in Barellan and District*, pp.20-23, 50-54; Buxton, *The Riverina*, pp.262-3, 280.

[40] 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.

[41] Barellan Progress Association and Improvement Society, *Early Days in Barellan and District*, p.36.

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

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

pence an acre and 'lost' the contract. However, not long thereafter another Chinese man rode up with a gang of men on the way and ready to work, and said he would take the job for one shilling an acre. It later transpired that Gooey and the other man were related, both probably resident at the Narrandera camp and belonging to the same clan, district and fraternal association. The Chinese were not a servile labour force. [44]

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 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 pile 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.[45]

Chinese workers also constructed earthen built dams (tanks). According to historian Ada Trevaskis, 20 or more Chinese were used to construct the large dams. They broke the soil with picks and shovels, and carried it away in wheel barrows or baskets. Those using baskets carried two on each end of a yoke across shoulder, when one carrier returned with empty containers there were others filled and ready for transportation. She commented that the dams had two steep sides, with two ends sloped for transporting the soil, although many dams in the Riverina are gently sloped.[46] Sometimes the dams were built as large embankments enclosing a swamp or natural drainage area, or trapping the water from small creeks.[47] Historian, Mona Terry has also stated that Chinese labour was used to dig wells and dams in the Oakland's district near Jerilderie.[48]

Many labourers in the Deniliquin area, and elsewhere in the Riverina, came from Victoria, in particular from 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, stated that his father was very friendly with Patrick McFarland on Barooga station, and Henry Hay on Collendina station, near Corowa. Following MacFarland's suggestion that he go in for contracting, he arranged for about 500 labourers to come to Australia and begin clearing work. He cleared MacFarland's Barooga Station and Hay's Collendina Station and several other properties towards Deniliquin. The men worked in gangs of 20 to 40, and carried enough stores to last them up to six months. According to George 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. Chen Ah Kew was often away for two and three weeks at a time.[49]

It is questionable if as many as 500 men were recruited and employed simultaneously, given the

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

[45] Account supplied by Ms Jenny Taylor, Wagga Wagga.

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

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

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

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

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

daunting logistics of transport and supply, though that may have happened over time. A 500 strong labour force would have been almost unmanageable. The method of clearing also sits at odds with the more common practice of ringbarking. Burning was used, however, to get rid of cut timber, tree roots and suckers. Whatever the exact details, it is an invaluable account and suggests strongly that Chinese labour from Victoria was used extensively for land clearing.[50]

Another curious question about George Wing Dann's letter is the timing of this activity. More than likely it coincided with the great wave of land clearing in the Riverina post gold rush from the 1860s on, and prior to the introduction of the 1888 NSW immigration restrictions, which included a prohibitive poll tax of £100. It is difficult to contemplate that a man of Chen Ah Kew's standing would have acted illegally to circumvent the restrictions. However, historian Rod Lancashire has suggested that Chinese labour from Victoria may have been used in shearing. He cites a 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 is provided by several newspaper advertisements.[51] 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.[52] 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. [53]

According to historian Mona Terry, Chinese labour from the Rutherglen area was used extensively in the Oaklands district near Jerilderie. She commented that when the Rutherglen mining ceased the Chinese miners sought work on the stations, clearing timber, digging and lining wells and dams and

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[50] *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, pp1-15; Rod Lancashire, 'European-Chinese Economic Interaction in a Pre-Federation Rural Australian Setting', *Rural Society*, Vol.10, No.2, 2000, pp.229-241.

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

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

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

digging post holes. 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.[54]

With the passage of time, an increasing number of labourers were recruited under arrangements between leading Chinese merchants in Australia and Asian 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).[55] Willie Ah 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 on contracts in the Urana area.[56] The same recruitment processes would have occurred elsewhere in the Riverina.

The Chinese labourers also excelled at many other tasks, such as wool scouring. 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'. All of Burrabogie's wool clip for the year would be scoured by Chinese labour. The Chinese 'did not work for a low wage, but they have organisation, industry, carefulness, thrift which the available white work men lack'.[57]

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 people. It was not so much that their labour was cheaper, for in many cases the Chinese labourers 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 turned their hand to rabbiting in some cases, and were found ready to do nearly all the rough work on the stations.[58] 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.[59]

Some Chinese men worked as shearers.[60] However, they were generally not welcome at such work.

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

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

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

[57] *Argus*, 22, 29 October 1887.

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

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

[60] <www.daao.org.au/legal/eula.html>

Thomas Booth worked as a station-hand in the late 1870s on Corrong station near Booligal, and recalled an incident 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.[61] By the twentieth century such antagonism had faded, and Chinese-Australians worked in the pastoral industry as wool classers, shearers or general hands, so long as they were members of the union, the AWU. Alex Pack from Hay worked as a groom at Daisy Plains and later began shearing at the station, and in 1945 commenced shearing professionally on OJ Smith's and Ray Congdon's teams until 1955, recommencing shearing on a freelance basis in 1970.[62] Another Chinese shearer was Clarrie Leslie (formerly Clarrie Chun) from Junee. 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 sheared in sheds such as Glen Iris, Merybindinyah, Yammatree, Caragabool, Brindabella, Wantabadgery, Ballengoarrah, Dollar Vale and Cooba station, and travelled 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.[63] Another Chinese farm labourer was Walter Clarke (Fong) from Broken Dam, near Temora, who 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 duties was to ride ahead to find a suitable site 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.[64]

Eric Doon was the one of the best known wool classers in the Tumut district. After a short period in the family business, Eric decided to gain his qualifications as a wool classer – which meant living and studying in Sydney for three years. Fortunately, he could stay with relatives who lived close to the wool classing college. Before Eric became a fully qualified wool classer all the wool purchased by the Doon family was sent to Sydney or Albury for classing. This was a very necessary but expensive process in the wool industry and wool classers were in high demand. It was celebrations all round when Eric graduated in 1944. Eric was also responsible for the business's bookwork.[65]

Another well known Chinese wool classer 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 to Seymour in Victoria, to 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 among one of the longest serving persons to be associated with a particular wool clip in the Hay district.[66]

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[61] Hay Historical Society Web-Site Newsletter, February 2006, No IV.

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

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

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

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

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

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.

MARKET GARDENERS

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

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, and in partnership with other Chinese men. It was very labour intensive work, and the methods and technology differed little from that used in China for centuries past.[67] Equipment included hoes, shovels, rakes, harrows, ploughs, and heavy wooden shoulder yokes for carrying the watering cans.

Sometimes the water was raised from the creeks and rivers by pumps, but the task of watering the plants was always done with watering cans. Almost all town gardens were located near waterways, usually on the fringe of towns near the camps.

Some of the early accounts of market gardening in the Riverina provide important insights into the methods and techniques used, and the regard with which the Chinese market gardeners were held by the local residents. In Deniliquin, 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. A report in November 1864 referred to a market gardener by the name of Cooey, who had sent up dray loads of vegetables from Bendigo to Deniliquin for a good price and had now leased three acres (1.2 hectares) in Deniliquin for a market garden. A later report mentioned the extensive use of night soil, which was mixed in two pits and applied periodically, the garden being 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.[68] 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.[69]

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

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

[69] *The Pastoral Times*, 16 July 1870.

The Brewery market garden at Deniliquin under the floodwaters of the Edwards River. The location of Chinese market gardens near water sources made them vulnerable to frequent flooding.

Deniliquin and District Historical Society

A Chinese gardener at Merowie, Hillston, New South Wales.

Hillston Historical Society

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'.[70] In 1892 a Chinese market garden was established on land leased from the Council, and an engine and pump erected at a cost of £280. The correspondent remarked that 'The enterprise of our Chinese friends merits the success which their indefatigable industry will no doubt command.'[71]

On the occasion of Chinese New Year at Hillston in 1876 the local correspondent spoke very highly of the Chinese gardeners, of whom there were about 20 working in a cooperative arrangement, and 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'.[72] The first Chinese market garden at Darlington Point was established in 1880, when the town was still an infant settlement; a year later it was described as 'fearfully and wonderfully irrigated' and a 'spectacular success'. The garden was 'washed by the Murrumbidgee River, watered by two wells, and traversed throughout by canals'.[73] 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.[74]

An account of market gardening at Hillston by Tom Parr in 1900 provides further insights into the technology employed in some of the gardens.

> Their method of getting the water up to the surface from the river was by means of small buckets, say perhaps holding half a gallon…These were fastened to an endless chain and the buckets completed the circle, thus circulating a continuous stream of water. This set up was driven by a blindfolded horse going round and round continuously…The Chinamen flood irrigated some of their vegetables such as potatoes, pumpkin, etc., also their fruit trees. But much of the water was run down a drain from where it was pumped from the river, into small holes dug in the garden holding, say, about 300 gallons with a plank running into the water hole on one side and running out on the other side. The Chinamen operating had two huge watering cans on a bamboo stick across his shoulder, one can, one each side, and as he jogged through, he dipped both cans into the water, the cans having a spray nozzle on the spout.[75]

In the towns and on the pastoral stations the gardeners lived in small huts, usually built of timber and galvanised iron, comparable in comfort with shepherds' huts and some shearers' quarters on many pastoral stations, and to the huts in the Chinese camps. Small market gardener's huts survive at Tupra station, west of Hay, the Homestead Station (formerly Kerarbury) near Darlington Point, North Wagga Island, and Tubbo Station, west of Narrandera. At Tubbo station the hut measures six metres by two,

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

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

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

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

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

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

Fig tree planted by Chinese at Grubben Station, Yerong Creek, New South Wales.
Barry McGowan

Charlie Wong Hing's hut, North Wagga river flats, New South Wales.
Genevieve Mott

with three bunks located on either side of the interior, and a bath tub. Stone footings for two market gardener's huts and a small dam across a gully are located in the hills at the back of Kimo Station near Gundagai, where the gardeners also worked as scrub cutters.[76] A dam, a lone fig tree, and the footings for two Chinese huts are located on the Chinese market garden area on Grubben Station near Yerong Creek, south of Wagga.[77]

At 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 (2.2-4.0 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 Edmondsons, a large department store. During World War Two 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.[78] Frank Angnea was another Chinese market gardener at North Wagga. In the 1930s he had a market garden on Borambola station, and trucked his produce to Wagga and other destinations. In the 1940s, he was joined by a relative by marriage George Amber Moy and his son Keith at his North Wagga garden. During World War Two Frank had contracts to supply vegetables to the RAAF base at Uranquinty and the army at Kapooka.[79]

One of the more enduring market gardens in Wagga was begun by Tommy Ah Wah, or Ah War, on an eight hectare property on the east side of town A local resident, Marjorie Morrow, recalled that he sold his produce through the local business of Wallace and Ryan. In the 1950s the market garden was run by Thomas Allan, his youngest son.[80] Floods again ravaged many Riverina towns, including Wagga, in the early 1950s. According to Frank Rynehart this experience proved too much for many of the gardeners and they left not long after.[81] For obvious reasons the gardens were located near rivers and streams,which meant that they were particularly susceptible to flooding. No accounts of floods are available for the Tumut gardens, however they would not have had anywhere near the frequency and magnitude of the Murrumbidgee River floods. At Gundagai in 1925, 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.[82] The 1931 floods were particularly testing and True's Flat was again submerged and the vegetable gardens completely destroyed. Tommy Allen, the Chinese gardener, refused to leave his house, and was surrounded in his upstairs apartment by 'several feet of water'.[83]

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[76] Information from the late Harry Daley, Gundagai, 2009.

[77] Personal observations, the author.

[78] 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.

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

[80] Information from Marjorie Morrow, Arthur Nixon and Russell Danswan, 2009.

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

[82] *Daily Advertiser*, 13 June 1925; *Gundagai Times*, 29 May 1925.

[83] *Gundagai Times*, 26 June 1931.

Frank Agnea with a loaded truck.
Private collection

Site of Chinese market gardener's hut and garden on ***Kimo,*** *Gundagai, New South Wales. April, 2009.*
Barry McGowan

A variety of garden implements was used, many of them heavy & durable.

Hay Gaol Museum

Some gardeners raised stock as well, and some of them had other occupations such as storekeepers, hides and skin dealers and labour contractors. On 10 July 1875 the *Gundagai Times* correspondent lamented the number of pigs running wild in the town, remarking that 'if they trespass they have no owners - or none that will recognise them - but when they are to be deported to Beechworth, to nourish the Chinamen who consume them, they are mustered and claimed'. One party had sent over 800 pigs to Beechworth so far that year. On 30 December 1879 the *Gundagai Times* cited the instance of four Chinese men - two of whom were well known in Gundagai as gardeners - leaving the town with £1800 in earnings.

At Tumut, market gardening was also very profitable. One of the legendary gardeners was Ping Kee. Arriving in Australia in 1876 he was at first a bookkeeper for the prosperous Adelong merchant Ah Nam, then later a store keeper at Kiandra, before coming to Tumut as a farmer and market gardener.[84] Local market gardeners recalled by Tumut resident Jack Bridle were Hing, who farmed on Frank Bourke's property at Blowering, Bo Lung at Tumut Plains, and on the banks of Bromley's Lagoon, men such as Dang Gow and Ah Won.[85]

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[84] *Tumut and Adelong Times*, 12 July 1938.

[85] Jack Bridle, 'Memories and information of the Chinese', *Memories of Tumut Plains*, residents and ex-residents, Wilkie Watson, Tumut, 1993, pp.13-14.

FARMERS

Chinese men carrying harvested tobacco.
National Library of Australia

In the early 1870s the Chinese turned their attention to other forms of cultivation – tobacco and maize. On 23 November 1889 a correspondent for the Sydney Mail stated that the first attempt to grow tobacco in district in 1875 was by Jong Ming and two other Chinese men, who rented 15 acres (6 hectares) of land from John Richards of Windowie. 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. They knew little or nothing about the housing and curing of tobacco and neglected to use artificial heat and the process of 'smoking' – which was only acquired after subsequent experience. But because of the virgin soil and the warm bright weather after it was placed in the shed they sold their tobacco to a Sydney factory for very good price of 8d a lb. Other Chinese soon followed. One of these was Ah Foot, whose crop in 1876 suffered considerably from attacks by caterpillars.[86] 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.[87] 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.[88] They were financed by Tumut-based entrepreneurs, of whom the main one was Dang Ah Chee. He helped set up their farms, taking a share of their crops as payment and bargaining with the landowners and the tobacco buyers on their behalf. Some of them were tenants on land that he either owned or leased.

[86] *Gundagai Times*, 14 January 1876.

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

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

The growth of the industry was rapid. In March 1878 it was reported that Mr Shelley had rented out land along the creek to the Chinese, who had planted tobacco and maize, the writer stating that 'Chinese labour is about all that is obtained in these parts'.[89] By April between 50 and 60 acres (12.5 and 15 hectares) were under cultivation for tobacco. The most important of the Chinese growers was Ah Chong of Windowie, who had a much larger crop than the previous year; Gum Ten had seven acres (1.7 hectares), two other Chinese growers had six and 15 acres (1.5 and 4 hectares), and a number of Europeans had farms of between 18-20 acres (4.5 and 5 hectares).[90] In June E. G. Brown, a tobacco buyer, sold about 30 tons of tobacco from Chinese growers to a Sydney firm.[91] On 11 October the *Gundagai Times* correspondent commented that the yield for the year had been 60 tons, mostly produced by the Chinese. The only European growing it on a large scale was W. Bridle. Tobacco fetched a price of between 3d and 1s per lb, and an average yield was between half a ton to 15 cwt an acre. He remarked that up to 200 acres [80 hectares] would be under cultivation in 1879, implying a crop of between 100 and 150 tons. Many growers made small fortunes, though it did not benefit the well to do 'Chee Sing' for long as he died of pulmonary consumption in 1882. In 1877 his crop had been valued at £600.[92]

On 7 November 1882 the *Gundagai Times* reported that three Tumut-based Chinese tobacco growers had sold nine tons at a good price – five tons at 9s a lb and four tons at 8s 5d, and one Chinese grower, who rented land for £1 an acre, hoped to net £1500 for the year. The correspondent concluded, 'Europeans, go ye and do likewise'. In June 1885 the *Gundagai Times* stated that E.G. Brown had estimated that the crop would be 400 tons. The Chinese were regarded as the most successful growers in the Gundagai, Tumut and Adelong districts and had also 'taken a hold of the hops industry'.[93] Dang Ah Chee was one of the main tobacco entrepreneurs. In addition to Mr Wilkinson's farm at Springfield, he had leased about 300 acres (120 hectares) of alluvial land from John Jenkins of Nangus for tobacco growing.[94]

In 1887 a correspondent remarked that large quantities of tobacco were on road to the market, and that the growers were doing well, production being 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'. Messrs Ching Chong Oh, My and Co watered each plant morning and evening, covering them with a bunch of straw in the morning to keep off the hot sun and in the evening removing the covering. When the plants became larger they wiped each leaf clean, not on a small patch of ground, but 'acres upon acres'. 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'.[95]

By 1888 the Chinese tobacco growers were firmly established in the Tarcutta area, at Hillas Creek and Lacmalac. In September five wagons with 27 tons of tobacco went through Tumut en route to Gundagai railway station, the best part of it grown by Dang Ah Chee at Lacmalac on land rented from John Jenkins. But in other respects these were not happy times for the Chinese tobacco growers.

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89 *Gundagai Times*, 9 March 1878.

90 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 April 1878.

91 *Gundagai Times*, 21 June 1878.

92 *Gundagai Times*, 20 June 1882.

93 *Gundagai Times*, 30 June 1885.

94 *Gundagai Times*, 5 October 1886.

95 *Goulburn Herald*, 18 January 1887.

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

Anti-Chinese feelings were running high in many parts of the colony and an Anti-Chinese League was established in Tumut in late 1887. One of its main aims was to discourage European landowners from leasing land to the Chinese farmers. While no actual violence was committed, Chinese residents were sometimes subjected to petty annoyances and destruction of property. For instance in September 1888 a European farmer living on Tumut River noted some Chinese who rented adjoining land retrieving their ploughs out of the river into which they had been tumbled by 'persons unknown'.[96]

1889 was perhaps the high point for the Chinese tobacco growers, the *Sydney Mail* correspondent remarking that the last output of tobacco leaf from Tumut been little short of 900 tons and 2000 acres (800 hectares) were under crop, with many European farmers now cultivating it. In the early days much of the crop was wasted through a lack of knowledge on how to treat it. But gradually proper methods were discovered, and now cultivation and curing was carried on as systematically as in the USA. The correspondent considered that the industry may become as general and as important as maize growing in the district.[97] By the 1890s a depression in the tobacco industry had forced many Chinese growers to leave. But Ah Chee continued to prosper. In 1898 he bought Westwood estate from R.M. Shelley for £5600. He had previously bought two farms at Bombawlee from F. Kinred, of about 120 acres (48 hectares) each, for £18 an acre, and purchased the Club House Hotel at Gundagai for £3100, paying cash for the lot.[98]

[96] *Gundagai Times*, 21 September 1888.

[97] *Sydney Mail*, 22 September 1888, 23 November 1889, 7 July 1890.

[98] *Narrandera Ensign*, 26 August 1898.

Fire was an ever-present hazard for the growers, both Chinese and European, and was usually caused by carelessness in drying the tobacco. In June 1888 Charley Queen from Hillas Creek lost most of his 1887 crop by fire. His shed had been full of tobacco. In contrast to the racist sentiments adrift elsewhere in the district the reporter stated that 'the unfortunate sufferer is a hardworking, industrious fellow, and is greatly sympathised with'. The following month there was another fire at Hillas Creek, and between six and eight tons were lost. The grower had 'a very narrow escape' trying to save his crop and the 'best part of his clothes and pigtail were burnt'. In December 1888 the Chinese growers at Yabtree again suffered very heavily when a lot of bark and saplings, which had been set aside for building tobacco sheds, were burnt.[99]

The diary of R.G. Horsely provides a rare insight into the Chinese tobacco industry in the late 1880s. His property, Yabtree Station, comprised 45,000 acres (18,000 hectares) and had extensive frontage to Hillas Creek and the Murrumbidgee River. Curiously, no mention is made of the Chinese growers before 1887, suggesting that many of the Yabtree Chinese were refugees from the racial ill feeling then brewing in the Tumut district. Horsely arranged to buy the tobacco leaf direct from the growers at a fixed price. If the tobacco was grown on land held by selectors they received one fifth of the crop, which was bought by Horsely. Horsely also arranged for the land to be ploughed prior to planting, provided poles for the sheds and timber for the kiln, advanced stores and money at ten percent interest and assisted the Chinese men with writing, and the provision of beef, pork and other commodities. He also arranged for insurance of the crops. One of his managers described the farms as 'a source of trouble and annoyance to the station from the very first', as the growers had persisted in cutting the fence and running their horses into the paddocks. In another instance, Wong Sam and Company had not cleared the land properly or pressed and dried the tobacco as it should have been done. One member of the party had been in Wagga for a time as a cook and another had been cutting suckers. Some of the growers, such as Ah Sam, also grew corn. In 1891, Ah Poo, one of the Yabtree growers, took first and third prize at the Wagga show for his tobacco, the judges regarding the Yabtree tobacco as the best in the district. His farm was located at Mundarlo, where there were at least two Chinese stores. By 1893 tobacco farming had ceased at Yabtree due to oversupply and poor prices. In the past the sheep had been treated for ticks by tobacco based sheep dip. But this was not as effective as the new Cooper's dip, and discoloured the wool. According to Horsely there were at least 20 Chinese farms on Yabtree and the nearby selections.[100]

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. With new type of tobacco and a guaranteed price of 2s 6d a lb the industry flourished. He commented that in the 1920s twenty or more Chinese tenant farmers were growing tobacco and maize on the Tumut Plains at Wermatong.

> I can well remember them ploughing with two horses and a single-furrow plough. It was good rich soil and easy to work. They would work all day sowing the tobacco plants, shuffling along on their knees or backsides, pushing their basket of plants in front of them and sowing a row on either side. The Chinese would then carry a 2 - 4 gallon tin of water on a yoke, watering their plants with a long homemade dipper or ladle. They would work for hours on the hottest day, then back to their cool bark hut with earthen floor, have a drink of rice wine, and lay back on their bunk and have a pipe of opium, then back to work again.

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[99] *Daily Advertiser*, 20 June, 19 July, 11 December 1888.

[100] R.F. Horsely, *Diaries, 1876-1891*; Emily Horsely. *A Gleam of Sunshine. The story of the Horsely family of Yabtree, Gundagai, NSW*, unfinished manuscript.

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 "O"

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

> As a young man in the Depression days of the late 20's and early 30s' I worked for them, mainly cutting and carting wood for their tobacco kilns. They were good to work for, if you said it was one cord of wood or two, they never doubted you ... They would tear off a piece of paper, make some marks on it – 'you take it to Willie' [Willie Shai Hee – Yee Hing & Co]'. 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. [101]

Jack and his father always made a point of delivering wood to the Chinese farmers at Chinese New Year, and were invited to their feast of roast pig and duck, with rice wine and Chinese whiskey. 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'. In 1930 a Chinese farmer, Charlie Gow, shot and killed Cletus Halloran, a local boy aged 20. He was acquitted on a verdict of justifiable homicide, but Jack contends that out of consideration for the families involved and their neighbours, the Wermatong owners did not renew the leases as they fell due, and the Chinese farmers drifted away.

Some Chinese men turned to wheat farming and grazing. George Yan was a farmer in the Snowy Mountains. In early life he had a selection at Yarrangobilly and drove horses and bullock teams, carting wood, groceries and other supplies to the Kiandra residents from Tumut and Cooma. He sold his original property in 1924 and later carried on grazing at his Lobb's Hole property, to which he added lease country. He retired to Tumut in 1945, handing over the control of his grazing interests to his sons Jink (Frank) and Arthur.[102]

James Wong (Ah) Chuey, early 1900s: Chuey was a Junee based wool, skins and hides dealer, commission agent, general storekeeper, contractor and wool scourer, with branch stores in Cootamundra, Tumut, Wagga Wagga, Wyalong and Barmedman. He was a prominent member of the Junee Methodist church and a principal benefactor of the See Yap Society, the Glebe Temple and the Chinese Masonic Society in Sydney.

Anna Lee, the Chinese Masonic Society, Sydney

Another Chinese landowner was William Quong from Grong Grong, near Narrandera. He purchased a number of farm properties, 'Redbank', east of Grong Grong, 'Hillview', north of Gong Grong, and 'Riverside', south of Grong Grong on the Murrumbidgee River.[103]

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[101] Bridle, 'Memories and information of the Chinese', pp.12-14; *Tumut and Adelong Times*, 6 August 1935.

[102] Yan, George (1871-1952), Obituaries Australia, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University; information from Meredie Mee Ling, February 2012.; http://oa.anu.edu.au/obituary/yan-george-1679/text1802

[103] Recollections of Betty Menzies (formerly Choy), Wagga Wagga, 2010.

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

The prosperous James Ah (Wong) Chuey owned a 600 acre (240 hectare) property near Junee, and George Mee Ling senior from Temora owned large properties in the Temora district.[104] In the late 1870s James Fong (Yie Zhan Fang) of Broken Dam near Ariah Park selected 40 acres (16 hectares). 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 selected a 320 acre (128 hectare) block between his property and the northern boundary of Samuel Harrison's 'Ariah Park' in 1884. The new property was called 'Wattle Farm'. The boundary of the block was fenced and divided into three paddocks, an earth tank (dam) built to provide stock water, and ringbarking and grubbing commenced 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). [105] Bill Clarke, the second youngest of her sons, also farmed at Broken Dam on a 900 acre (360 hectare) property. He later sold out at and purchased a large holding at 'Dungary', to the west of Dubbo.[106] Several other sons also became farmers. Walter Fong share farmed for Mr I. Fisher at Beckom. From there he share farmed on the Thompson Brother's 'Murrill Creek' holding, 16 km south of Ardlethan, and when 'Murrill Creek' was eventually subdivided, he purchased a block and farmed on his own account until 1947. Harry Fong established himself as a farmer on 'Jasper Woods' at Mirrool.[107]

[104] 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; information from Meredie Mee Ling, February 2012.

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

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

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

STOREKEEPERS, TRADERS AND RESTAURANT OWNERS

Chinese stores were located in the Chinese camps and 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. For instance, in Adelong in 1879 Sun Ye Chong was advertising his stock at the 'lowest possible prices'. In 1880, on the occasion of the opening of his old store, Kum Hang Long advertised that 'every article will be sold at lowest possible prices'. The same boldness was evident elsewhere in the Riverina.[108]

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'.[109] The Man Sing store at Temora was owned by the Mee Ling family, who 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'.[110]

To all appearances it all seemed good healthy competition, but as with so many of their endeavours the success of the Chinese provoked resentment, and 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 campaign was unsuccessful and most Chinese stores continued for many years to come.[111]

Unlike their European counterparts the Chinese 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, did not just rest with provision of imports and other produce, but had a much wider social importance, particularly if reinforced by district and fraternal linkages. Like their Sydney counterparts the country storekeepers helped with finding lodgings and jobs, which was an easy task when the storekeeper was also a labour contractor and/or a market gardener. They also helped in the purchase of travel documents such as shipping tickets and applications for Certificates Exempting from Dictation Test (CEDTs), and with translation, the writing of letters and banking and remittance of

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[108] *Gundagai Times*, 16 December 1879, 27 April 1880.

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

[110] Temora Centenary Committee, *Temora Yesterday and Today*, p.250; *Temora Independent*, I6 November 1995, 20 January 1909, I2 January 1910; information from Meredie Mee Ling, February 2012.

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

money to China or elsewhere.[112] Most remittances were in the form of bank drafts, arranged by the store and transmitted to a Hong Kong business or bank, and converted into Hong Kong dollars.[113]

The Tiy Loong store at Tumut fits into the multifunctional category described by Lydon. Josephine Oh (Dang Quong Wing's daughter) recalled that

> 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 ... Dang Loon's family had their meals with the staff, but her brothers were so mischievous that the staff complained, so their meals were sent up to the residence for them, so there could be peace in the dining room.[114]

Dang Loon's daughter, Thelma, married Tom Young, who ran the Sun Kum Lee & Co store in Merivale Street, Tumut.

William Shai Hee's Yee Hing Company store 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) recalls 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. Men would stay in the store prior to returning to China. Her father looked after them, 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. [115]

The Yee Hing store was very profitable, and William re-invested much of his money in China, probably intending to return there to live one day. His investments included a cotton mill in Shanghai and a bank in Guangzhou, together with several other Chinese businesses. He also built three very large homes, but lost all his property with the Chinese Revolution in 1949.[116]

When William took his family to Sydney to further the children's educational opportunities and careers in the 1940s, one of his sons, Ted, remained in Tumut and became the local photographer. Pam Archer recalled that Ted was one of the town characters. He would appear at every ball or similar function. To order a photo you would catch him on his bike near the post office and order a copy and collect it at the same place a few days later.[117]

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[112] Lydon, *Many Inventions*, pp.83-84.

[113] Williams, *Chinese Settlement in NSW*, pp.12, 22, 23.

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

[115] Information from Jean Chin (née Shai Hee), March 2012.

[116] Information from Jean Chin and Joe Shai Hee, February 2012; interview of Jean Chin by Rosetta Sung, unpublished, 1980s; Interview of Chin See by Chris Shai Hee, unpublished, March 1984.

[117] Reminiscences of Pam Archer, January 2012.

'Phone 38 Established 1888. P.O. Box 24

Yee Hing & Co.

GENERAL STOREKEEPERS,

FITZROY ST.——————TUMUT.

Large Stocks of Best Quality Goods at Lowest Prices.

Civility and Attention Guaranteed.

Orders Called For and Delivered.———Produce Bought and Sold.

Advertisement from the Tumut Centenery Celebrations *brochure, 1924.*

Yee Hing's store, Tumut, late 1970's.
Private collection

Some of the Chinese merchants and storekeepers were very successful. Dang Ah Chee had large stores in Tumut and Gundagai, and, as discussed earlier, was a very successful gold miner at Adelong Creek and a prosperous tobacco merchant and landowner in the Gundagai and Tumut area.

According to Will Carter's reminiscences Ah Chee made a fortune from his gold mining claim, and established a store at the Chinese camp, later selling out to Dang Ah Hack. Who later sold it to Ah Tie, a local digger, Ah Tie later departed to Cootamundra, where he set up a bakery. Ah Tie in turn sold the business to Foo Lee, by which time Ah Chee had opened a store in Tumut. In Ah Chee's obituary it was stated that he began work in the district as a teamster employed by Mr D. McGillivray, and was one of the original teamsters transporting goods from Sydney to Tumut and Adelong. The obituary writer mentioned that he later went into farming in a small way and then opened a store in Upper Adelong. 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. According to Josephine Oh, a descendant of his brother, Dang Bown Sluey, his success was largely attributable to his European wife, Margaret, who was able to read the market reports and advise him when to buy and sell wheat. Back in Hong Kong his luck deserted him. He was swindled by 'shady dealers' and lost much of his store of wheat, which was contained in two silos in Hong Kong, when the silos were struck by a typhoon.[118]

Dang Ah Chee was assisted in his Gundagai store by two relatives, Dang Ah Hack and Dang Goon Loon, later known as Dang Loon. In his Certificate of Domicile application in 1905 Dang Loon stated that he was a general storekeeper and clerk to Dang Ah Chee at Gundagai, and had a one third share in a company known as Mun Chong, with an estimated value of £600.

He may have run this latter store in partnership with Dang Ah Hack, who had been bequeathed substantial Gundagai properties by Ah Chee. [119] On his death in 1905, Dang Ah Hack was one of the wealthiest men in the town. He was regarded as 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.[120]

After Dang Ah Chee dissolved his Tumut business, Tiy Loong & Co was formed across the street on newly built premises, with his brother Dang Bown Sluey as manager.

When the family elders recalled Dang Bown Sluey to Hong Kong to help settle Ah Chee's affairs, the business was left in the hands of Dang Loon. Dang Bown Sluey died in China and his eldest boy Dang Quong Wing returned to Tumut to work in his father's business. Quong Wing intended to return to China and closed the Tiy Loong business in 1926. However, he remained in Tumut and re-established the business, naming it simply as Quong Wing.

Several Chinese stores were located in the main Adelong town area. The two main merchants were Kum Hang Long and Ah Nam. They competed for business with the European stores in town and with the Chinese stores at Upper Adelong and elsewhere. The competition was fierce, for in July 1878

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[118] Alan Turner, *Looking Backward. The Adelong Goldfield*, , pp.40-41; *Tumut and Adelong Times*, 20 October 1905; Dang Ah Chee, *Letter Book*, Tumut and District Historical Society. Folio 378; Josephine Oh, letter to Kate Bagnall, 20 October 2004, courtesy of Pam Archer; letter to Pam Archer, 30 June 1988.

[119] SP244/2, C05/3806, National Archives of Australia (NAA), Sydney; Josephine Oh, letter to Kate Bagnall, 20 October 2004, courtesy of Pam Archer; Josephine Oh, letter to Pam Archer, 30 June 1988.

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

HI CHONG STORE, GUNDAGAI.

AH CHEE,

HAVING an eye to business as well as to the wants of his customers, has laid in a large stock of goods

Suitable for the Christmas Season

Which he is offering at VERY REASONABLE PRICES.

Those who have not yet visited this store will be amply repaid by doing so, as they will **save fully 30 per cent.** in their purchases there. He has, besides

Drapery, Grocery and Hardware,

A FIRST-CLASS STOCK OF

HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE,

Galvanized Iron and Fencing Wire.

ALSO AN EXTENSIVE ASSORTMENT OF

BOOTS & SHOES

From the best importing houses, as well as Gillespie's Goods.

This is no Puff, but a genuine advertisement.

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 reposed in him.

Advertisement Gundagai Times, *December 25, 1888.*

HI CHONG STORE,

GUNDAGAI.

AH CHEE

HAS much pleasure in inviting the Public to inspect his Stock of

HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE

Which comprises

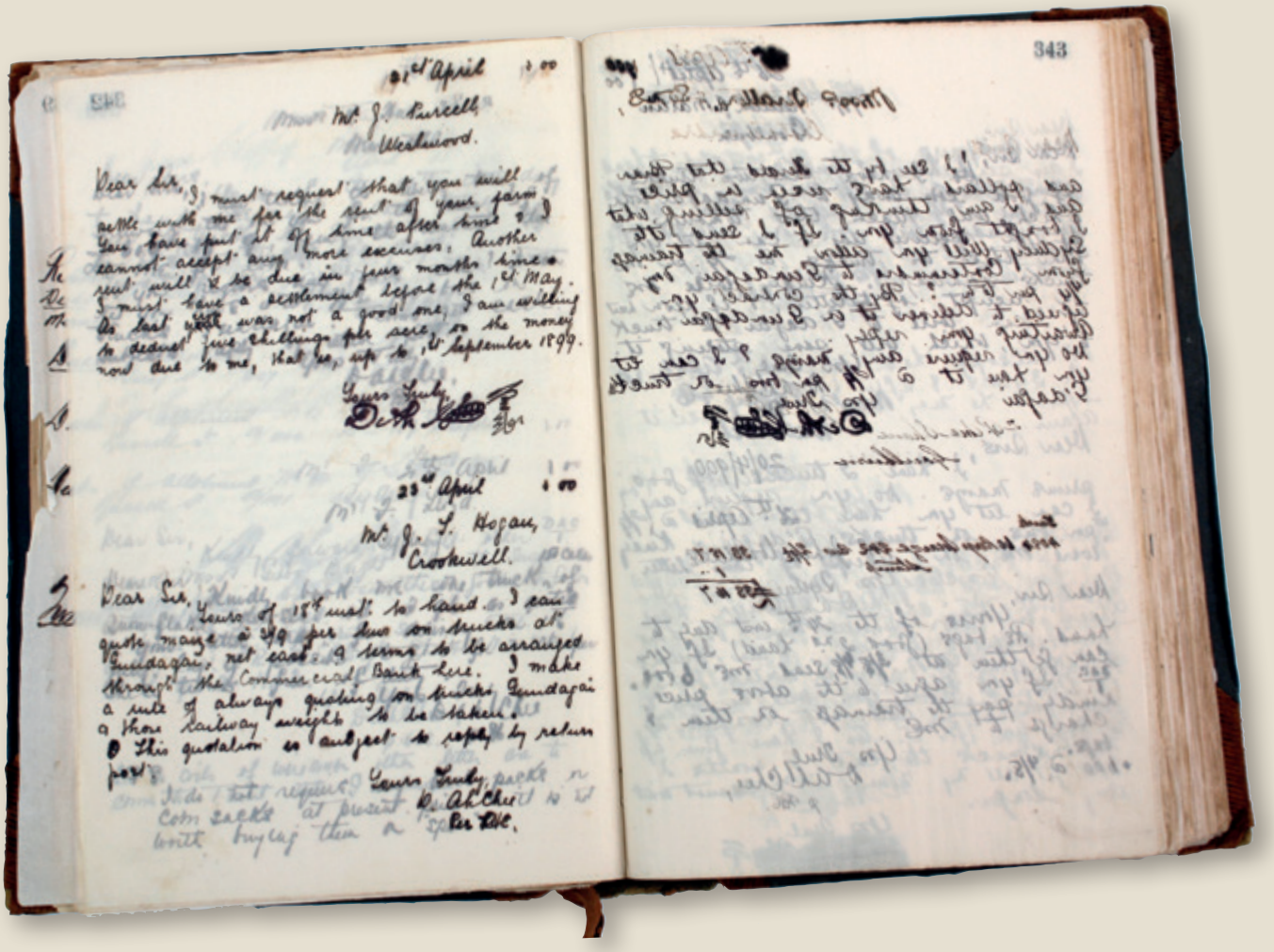
Tables, Chairs, Sofas, Chests of Drawers, Meat Safes, &c.,

All of which are well and strongly made, and much cheaper than usual.

NEW GOODS

In Drapery, Boots, Hats, and Clothing received every month.

Advertisement Gundagai Times, *October 20, 1876.*



Dang Ah Chee's letter book. Dang Ah Chee, a Tumut based entrepreneur and storekeeper, opened his Hi Chong store in Gundagai in 1876. He recorded all correspondence in this letter book and others like it.

Tumut and District Historical Society Inc

Tiy Loong Store, Tumut.
Private collection

the Chinese stores were reported to be accepting cash only, and other storekeepers who had given credit had to wait for their customers to pay. In August the Chinese storekeepers were reportedly undercutting each other and selling groceries ten per cent under cost. One firm said that to drive the other off they would lose a thousand pounds.[121] In March 1880 one of the Chinese stores was reported to be closing because Kum Hang Long was resuming business in his old store. He advertised as Kum Hang Long, Foo Lee in April. In September Ah Nam was reported to be enlarging his premises. Another storekeeper in Adelong was Sun Ye Chong.[122]

Further into the twentieth century the Chinese people diversified into many other businesses such as garages, theatres, trucking, dry cleaning and restaurants. One such man was Dang Charles Doon, who began work in Australia as a cook on the Reno goldfields near Gundagai. He later went to Tumut where he leased 25 acres (6.25 hectares) at Wermatong station on the Tumut Plains in 1903 for tobacco growing and possibly market gardening.[123] He also worked as a cook at the Royal Hotel in Tumut and was a market gardener at Gilmore, later setting up a store and a wool and skin buying business near the Chinese camp, and building a shed behind his shop for storing tobacco. He transported the skins to Sydney, bringing back goods such as hardware. His sons Bob, Eric and John helped him on his buying and selling runs around the district. Grace Ching (née Doon) recalls that every fortnight the men would make a trek to country farms and villages throughout NSW, buying rabbit skins, hides, and calf and fox skins. Often the skins were fresh and needed to be dried and preserved with salt, and sometimes the men were out for a whole week, camping in the countryside. They used a horse drawn

[121] *Gundagai Times*, 5 July, 9 August 1878.

[122] *Gundagai Times*, 16 December 1879, 5 March, 27 April, 24 September 1880.

[123] Wermatong Station, *Ledgers*, Tumut Public Library.

KUM HANG LONG, FOO LEE & CO.
ADELONG.

NOW OPEN

With a New and complete assortment of

Grocery	Fancy Goods
Drapery	Ironmongery
Haberdashery	Earthenware
Clothing	Furniture
Boots and Shoes.	Stationery.

Sauces, Fish	
Pickles	Picks and Shovels
Jams, and	Powder, Nails
Confectionary	Locks, &c., &c., &c.

KUM HANG LONG, FOO LEE & CO.

Have again opened the Old Store, and every article is new and bought FOR CASH, which will be sold at

LOWEST POSSIBLE PRICES.

☞ Come and See and Judge for Yourselves.

Advertisement, Gundagai Times, *April 27, 1880.*

Big Sale

AT

Tiy Loong & Co's

.. .. ..2/- IN THE £ ..

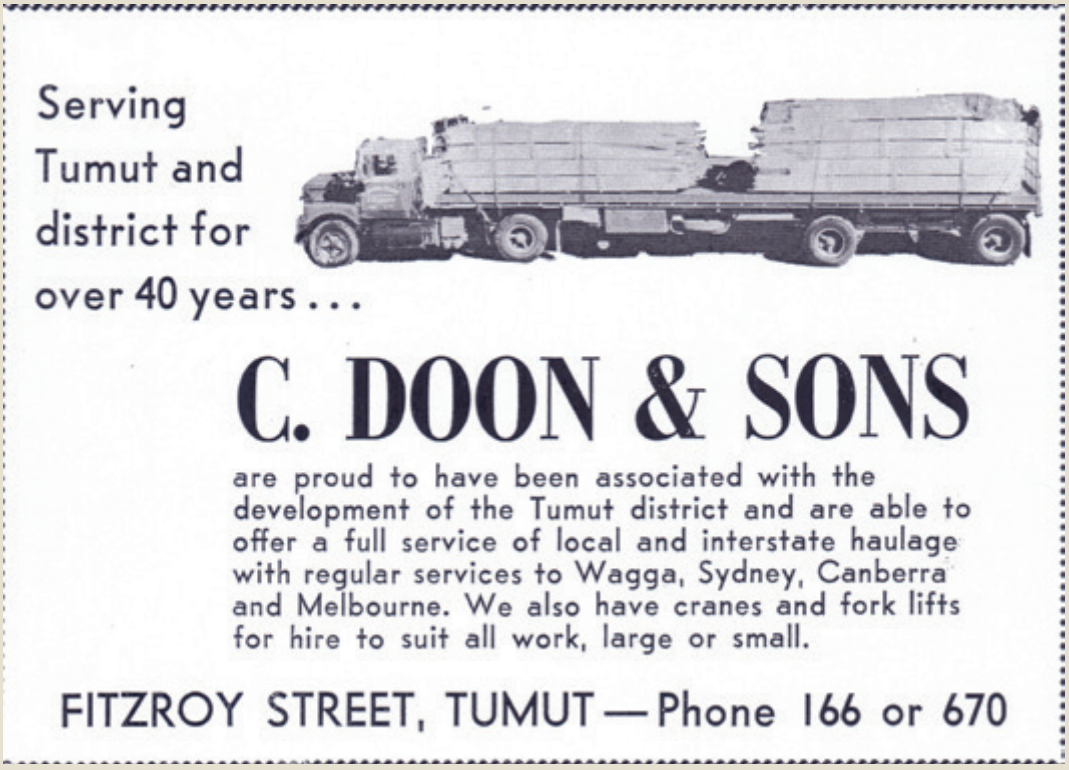
10 PER CENT OFF ALL LINES OF DRAPERY, CLOTHING, BOOTS AND SHOES

STILL GREATER REDUCTIONS ON
.. .. ..SPECIAL LINES

THIS IS A GENUINE SALE
COMMENCING SEPTEMBER 1, AND CONTINUES FOR THREE WEEKS.
COME AND SEE THE VALUES. YOU WILL SAVE MONEY!

Grocery Lines also reduced. Specially cured Bacon and Hams at
Prices Lower than elsewhere. DON'T MISS THIS OPPORTUNITY.

Advertisement from the Tumut and Adelong Times, *March 2 1925.*



Serving Tumut and district for over 40 years . . .

C. DOON & SONS

are proud to have been associated with the development of the Tumut district and are able to offer a full service of local and interstate haulage with regular services to Wagga, Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne. We also have cranes and fork lifts for hire to suit all work, large or small.

FITZROY STREET, TUMUT — Phone 166 or 670

Doon business advertisement, undated.

wagon in the late 1930s and early 1940s, then bought a Dodge utility, and later a small truck. Many years later Bob's wife, May, ran the Eastern Jade Chinese restaurant in Fitzroy St, Tumut, on the site of William Shai Hee's Yee Hing store, and later catered for the Tumut RSL Club. For some years Gordon Wee and his wife owned a Chinese restaurant in Wynyard St next to the Council Chambers.[124]

When the offer was made by the Neptune Oil Company for the Doon company to become their agent in the Tumut Adelong Batlow districts, the family business had already expanded to transporting (with trucks and semi-trailers) and carrying wool, skins and hides to Sydney, Albury and Melbourne. Bob and Eric were the main drivers for a few years, until John left school at 16 years of age. For a time there were three trucks and semi-trailers, but this gradually increased to many more, which provided an opportunity to employ local drivers and expand the business.

By the early 1950s, the brothers decided to branch out to dry cleaning (4 Star Drycleaners), which John took control of, with Bob and Eric doing most of the transporting with the employment of local men. Eric was also busy with wool classing, bookwork in the office, trips with a truck and semi trailer whenever there was a demand, as well as preparing and preserving the rabbit skins, hides and calf skins. Later, the transport business expanded to carry timber for the Snowy Mountains Scheme. The drying process was done in a pit – each hide was spread out in the pit (one at a time) with naphthalene for the preserving of the fur and crystallised common salt for ridding the small fleshy pieces left behind by the "skinner" and sheep dip to prevent infestation from flies, followed by the second hide, until the pit was full. The process would take many weeks before the hides were ready for bundling. The timber yard was nearby. There were no front loaders in those early days and the timber loading was done by hand. [125] Perhaps the family's best known business venture was a very successful horse syndicate, horses from their stables winning many races in the Riverina district, and no horse better known or loved than Arwon, the winner of the 1978 Melbourne Cup.[126]

Grace (née Grace Doon) and Raymond Ching were very entrepreneurial. They had a shoe repair business in Sydney before moving to Tumut in 1955 and converted an old building close to the main street into a shoe repair business. In 1962 Clarion Drycleaners bought out 4 Star Drycleaners and approached Ray and Grace to be their agents, which fitted in with their shoe repair business. During this time Ray was also approached by Mr A.J. Kain of Railway End Mixed Business, Tumut, to service his black and white TV sets and install all the antennas required by his customers at that end of the town. Ray organised his schedule so that he could be at the shop repairing shoes from from 7 am to 3 pm, while Grace was busy with the drycleaning agency (and later a luggage agency for Myco) from 7.30am to 5.30pm. Ray would take the three children home to do their homework whilst he concentrated on the TV sets (mostly replacing valves and repairing intermittent faults) in the sun room of the house. By the time Grace arrived home Ray would have the TV sets fixed to be delivered back to Mr Kain's customers and attend to any antennas that needed installing. The word soon got around of Ray's expertise, and business owners from Tumbarumba, Adelong and Batlow came after hours with their TV repairs.[127]

Not all Chinese storekeepers were prosperous, though they occupied a special niche in the local iconography, and were especially popular with the children. At Upper Adelong one such storekeeper was Foo Lee. As a small girl living at Upper Adelong in 1884-1885, Constance Sullivan remembered

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[124] Information from Grace Ching (née Doon), March 2012.

[125] Recollections from Grace Ching, September 2011.

[126] *Tumut and Adelong Times*, 10 November 1978, 28 August 2007, 21 May 2010.

[127] Recollections from Grace Ching, September 2011.

Young's Cash & Carry Store, Tumut.
Private collection

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'.[128] Another popular Chinese storekeeper was Lee Loong, also known as 'Deafy', who lived at Middle Adelong, where he also grew tobacco. According to Will Carter, Loong was 'a very intelligent, genial, generous, obliging and extremely humorous character, and a very obliging man'. His horse, harness, saddle and bridle 'were mostly on loan to someone or other', and he was always ready to kill a pig for a neighbour, or haul a bit of firewood for anyone. He practically taught himself, with the aid of his 'Anglo-Chino books', and hints from a school child, or a customer, to write English well enough to make out his bills in readable type, and he rarely made a mistake. Constance Sullivan had similar fond memories of Deafy's young countrymen working on the tobacco crops behind the store with their 'straight loose coats, short roomy trousers, heel-less slippers and shady, drooping straw hats with pointed crowns'. When most of his countrymen returned home or moved on elsewhere Deafy chose to stay, living for many years alone in his store.[129]

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

[129] Barnes, *There's Gold*, pp.156-157.

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 native-place associations and fraternal organisations such as *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. The 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.[130] In every respect, from transport and 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 the See (or 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.[131] The offices of the district associations were located in metropolitan cities such as Melbourne and Sydney, the main points of disembarkation for Chinese migrants to Victoria and NSW. James Wong Chuey, a partner in the Yee Hing Company store in Tumut with William Shai Hee, was a strong patron of the Sze Yap Society and the Kuan Tia (or Kwun Ti) Temple in the Sydney suburb of Glebe. 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.[132] In the absence of formal district associations the stores of merchants such as James Wong Chuey and William Shai Hee became de facto association premises.

According to historian Harry Hill a small brick building (demolished in the 1980s), known as the Chinese Camp, was located next door to the Doon's business in Fitzroy Street, and had been built by members of the Sze Yap Society as a stopover place for Chinese men travelling to and from the Kiandra goldfields. In later days it became a home for old Chinese men who found it difficult to fend for themselves. Charles Doon was a patron, or father figure, for these men. Older members of the Doon family recall that the brick building had been built by local Chinese tobacco and maize farmers, many of whom lived on the Tumut Plains, for use as a meeting place and social centre when in town. Their family always referred to the building as the Chinese Camp. By then all other Chinese houses and shops in the original Fitzroy Street Chinese Camp, except for the Doon business, had disappeared. A medium sized kitchen was located at the back on the brick building and connected with an open corrugated iron roof over a brick path, about two to three metres long. The kitchen was used for all the cooking and had a large table in the centre where the occupants met for their meals. Grace

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[130] 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.

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

[132] *Chinese Australian Herald*, 2 April 1904; *Junee Southern Cross*, 6 March 1904.

Ching recalled that the last few men living there used to place pennies, half pennies and sometimes threepences on the small table near the window to give to any children in the neighbourhood, especially to Joan Holdsworth's kids. Joan sent pots of soup to the men whenever she was cooking for her own family, and it was her children who delivered it over the fence or into the living area. The last man known to live there was Ah Kim. Joan sent his food every day for years. During World War Two the camp was empty, except for the Pang family from Sydney, who occupied it until after the war, staying in the camp for almost a year. The girls were very good tap dancers and the elder brother had a good singing voice.[133] Another family to live in the camp was Gordon Wee and his wife. They left Tumut in the 1940s and went to Junee to run a market garden, which was later sold when they moved to Melbourne.[134]

Joe Hai Shee recalled that the building was registered in the name of the Sze Yap Association, to which all the Tumut Chinese (and almost all other Chinese in the Riverina), had affiliation. The use of the brick building as a social centre is consistent with the role that both district and fraternal associations had elsewhere in Australia as a refuge and haven for elderly single Chinese men. It is the only known building connected with the Sze Yap Association in the Riverina. Charles Doon eventually took over responsibility for it by paying the rates after it fell into disuse when the farmers left the district in the late 1930s, early 1940s.[135]

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 loyalties would be challenged soon enough by other allegiances, such as the Christian Church, and by the rise of a merchant oligarchy, but they were never entirely dislodged.[136] 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. 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 and 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 Shaoqing has likened the League to an unofficial Chinese consulate. 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 (or Lodge) in

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[133] Information from Grace Ching, October 2011.

[134] Information from Joe Shai Hee, February 2012.

[135] *Tumut and Adelong Times*, 21 July 2009; information from Grace Ching, October 2011.

[136] 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.

A section of the subscription board for Chinese members of the Hung Men (a secret society) in Narrandera. It was originally located in the temple at Narrandera.

Parkside Cottage Museum, Narrandera

Sydney in 1911 and Melbourne in 1914.[137]

One of the founding members of the Chinese Masonic Lodge at Surry Hills, Sydney, and one of the strongest supporters of the republican movement, 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 was President of the Young Chinese League and chaired the luncheon, which was attended by several members of Parliament and other notables. Alluding to the existence of political and factional discord between different 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.[138]

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 has only recently been recovered, having served time as a book shelf in the late Mervyn Shung's home, after its retrieval from the temple prior to its demolition. A signboard which reads 'Chinese Masonic Society,' and temple doors with panels inscribed with Chinese writing which refers to the Hung Men is located in the Albury Museum.[139]

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[137] 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*, ed. 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.

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

[139] My thanks to Benjamin Penny and Li Tana from the ANU for their assistance with this point.

Chinese temple doors, Albury.

Albury Regional Museum, New South Wales

Historian Kok Hu Jin has stated that the name of the Albury temple was Wu Di Miao, and 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.[140] Masonic Lodges were also located in other Riverina towns, such as Wagga and Hay. 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. The store was frequented by members of the Hung Men Society and was a meeting place for them, with William taking a strong paternal interest in the welfare of the men, providing accommodation and looking after their needs, including the despatch of their money and belongings back to China, if deceased.[141] Given James Wong Chuey's Sze Yap connections the store probably also served as a district association meeting place. Most members of the Hung Men would have had Sze Yap loyalties.

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. 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 New South Wales. 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.

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[140] Kok Ju Hin, *Chinese Lodges in Australia*, pp.28-45; *Chinese Temples in Australia*, pp.2-7.

[141] See discussion of the functions of the Shai Hee store, in Storekeeper, Traders and Restaurant Owners Section.

William Shai Hee's Father and Mother.
Private collection

> 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.[142]

The role of family and clan in Chinese society in the Riverina, and their connection with the district associations and the secret societies is curious. In the Tumut Gundagai area Dang Ah Chee was probably the first of his clan to migrate, followed by his brother, Dang Bown Sluey, and relatives such as Dang Loon, Dang Charles Doon and Dang Ah Hack. Dang Charles Doon and Dang Ah Chee were from the same village in China, as presumably were most of the other clan members.[143] It is possible that Dang Ah Chee sponsored other men as well, in particular some of the tobacco farmers. These men would been beholden to the societies and associations in the early days of their arrival in Australia, and if hard times beckoned, but such arrangements would have been suspended for the Dang clan members and other men sponsored by Dang Ah Chee once they had arrived in the district. Dang Ah Chee and his brother would have monitored these men very closely and would not have needed the formal assistance of the associations or societies in this task.

In the case of the Shai Hee family, the patriarchs, Chu Yin Sum and Hing Gim, were well established by the time of the 1860s gold rushes. Although an elder in the clan it is possible that James Chuey had been encouraged to migrate by the two Shai Hee patriarchs, for the ties between both families were very close. It is most unlikely, however, that he would have required funding or monitoring.[144]

Despite this seeming homogeneity and the overarching oversight of the fraternal and district associations and men such as Dang Ah Chee, factional discord amongst the Riverina Chinese occasionally erupted, the incidents suggesting regional and kinship differences, and more importantly, animosity between the Han Chinese and their perceived oppressors from Northern China, the Manchus. Dang Ah Chee's relatives were not involved in any of these incidents, though whether that applies to some of the other men that he may have sponsored is unclear. One of the more serious incidents occurred in the Wagga Chinese camp in 1874, when a riot involving stabbing broke out between 30 to 40 members of two rival factions over a gambling dispute.[145] Factional or regional discord also arose in nearby Gundagai. In a court case in 1869 the Police Magistrate noted that the plaintiff and his witness, who was also an interpreter, were from Amoy (Xiamen City in Fujian), the accused from Macao and some other witnesses were from Canton (Guanghzou).[146] In another case shortly after, Ah Shue asserted that he was a Chinaman born within the great walls, and that his opponents were Tartars, the reporter remarking that 'the ancient animosities between the Celestials and their stronger and fiercer foes may add some colouring to the legal proceedings we speak of'.[147] At

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

[143] Information from Grace Ching, March 2012.

[144] Information from Chris, Reg and Joe Shai Hee, February 2012; Letter from Clarrie Hogue to Harold Holt, Minister for Immigration, November 1952. (courtesy of Chris Shai Hee).

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

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

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

Adelong in 1883 a faction dispute occurred over funeral expenses. The reporter stated that the case

> was attended with the usual difficulty that occurs in settling Chinese disputes, each party had an interpreter, and as the contendingparties came from different parts of China each had his own squad of adherents, who manifested deep interest in the proceedings and yabbered considerably among themselves.[148]

In his memoirs Will Carter recalled that older residents had vivid memories of faction fights at the Upper Adelong camp and that Kun Yew and Ah Lip were 'more than ordinarily contentious and savage in their dispositions'. Often there were fierce battles with bamboo basket poles and knives, many of the camp being fights fuelled by over indulgence in Chinese brandy or a home brew.[149] Similar comments on factions were made in Narrandera in 1892, the correspondent commenting that the local Chinese appeared split into cliques; some 'real Chinamen', and some 'Tartars'[150]

For white Australians the most visible signs of Chinese traditional life were the New Years Eve festivals held 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 brick built oven was about a metre in diameter and a metre high, plastered on the outside, and with an opening or fire door at the bottom. After the fire and ashes were withdrawn up to three pig carcasses would be slung in from the top, head downwards, the top put on and the edges "plugged up". 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.[151] The baking of moon cakes accompanied these and other functions, the dough being placed in the rounded end of a wooden handled cookie maker, which had an engraving of an animal on the end holding the dough.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 a touch of the exotic to the otherwise staid surrounds of most towns.

The first mention of Chinese New Year celebrations in the district was at Adelong in 1864. Permission for a display of fireworks had been sought unsuccessfully from the Gold Commissioner, who refused as it was Sunday. The reporter remarked that the Chinese had amused themselves further up the creek, and on Monday and part of Tuesday the noise of crackers was heard with little intermission.[152] In 1874 a local reporter wrote that Chinese New Year had been 'carried out with great spirit here, and fireworks and crackers have been going off in all directions'[153] The celebrations in 1887 were also carried out with great gusto and folks 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.'[154]

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148 *Gundagai Times*, 29 June 1883.

149 Turner, *Looking Backward*, pp.33-34.

150 *Narrandera Ensign*, 2 December 1892.

151 Wilton, *Golden Threads*, pp.85-95.

152 *Wynyard Times*, 11 February 1864.

153 *Gundagai Times*, 21 February 1874.

154 *Gundagai Times*, 28 January 1887.

Chinese stone incense grinder.
Hay Gaol Museum

A temple was in existence on the Tumut Plains as early as 1882, where most of the Chinese men lived, and it may have continued in existence for many years after as a focal point for festivals and burial ceremonies.[155] In February 1891 a correspondent commented that at Tumut

> the usual quiet was broken by the intermittent explosion of crackers, though on the whole it was a feeble demonstration compared with past occasions, when plentiful tobacco harvest gave Chinese the wherewithal to indulge in extravagant rejoicing.[156]

However, by the 1920s the old religious observances were fading, as many of the Tumut Chinese were adherents of one of the Christian churches. Older members of the Doon family are adamant that there was no temple in Tumut in their time (1920s on) and that religious functions were held in the private homes of the Chinese living in Tumut or on the Tumut Plains.[157] Joe Shai Hee has remarked that Chinese New Year was celebrated in private homes, with each family having their own function.[158]

Some of the Tumut Chinese may have also attended temple and New Years Eve functions in other towns such as Albury and Wagga. For instance, in 1887 over 200 Chinese from all parts of NSW were in Wagga to commemorate the opening of the new temple, which was

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[155] *Gundagai Times*, 25 August 1882.

[156] *Town and Country Journal*, 14 February 1891.

[157] Information from Grace Ching, October 2011

[158] Information from Joe Shai Hee, February 2012.

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

> lit up with many candles and lanterns, and Chinese religious devices and symbols, totally beyond our power of description. Several priests clad in silken robes, officiated at the strange services, whilst a tremendous din of gongs, timbrels and sundry musical instruments of Chinese make seemed to impress John, notwithstanding the semi-suffocating atmosphere of burning incense. The Chinese held great feasts in the front buildings, which were lit up with Chinese candles, whilst the Masonic signs and emblems of their country and lodge were hung up upon the walls of the building. A great many townspeople visited the Joss House during the first three days, and during the visit of ourselves and a few others, we experienced the genuine hospitality of a leading storekeeper, who seemed not to resent the prying eyes of the Europeans.[159]

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 the Kincaid and Fitzmaurice Street intersection, 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.[160] Some Tumut Chinese may have attended this function.

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. A Ch'ing Ming ceremony took place at the Chinese cemetery at Tumut in June 1882.

> Placed around a grave we noted a baked pig, couple of bottles containing what appeared to be brandy, and sundry dishes of Chinese condiments deemed by them suitable for the nourishment of departed souls. The Chinese present, including priests from the Joss House at Tumut Plains, kneeled upon mats, and after muttering a good many words, prostrated themselves three times smiting the grave mound with their forehead. During the ceremony, the attendees burnt a quantity of silver and gold tissue paper, representing money. They described the rite as an annual event, which took place throughout the colony on that day.[161]

When a child, Constance Sullivan and some other children may have accidently intruded on a similar ceremony when passing by Foo Lee's store at Upper Adelong. He invited them into the shop where he offered them cakes and lollies. Over a facing doorway, a large picture of 'his joss' was 'sailing down' on a gathering of Chinese men. Incense sticks were set around the joss. Foo Lee explained that 'the food was not for the living', though he had given them a share, but for the dead Chinese in the cemetery that lay a little distance from the store.[162]

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 Wagga, Tumut and Hay.[163] At Tumut in 1898 the Rev. S. E. Owens-Mell, established a Chinese mission at Tumut Plains. 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 of Andrew Young, a devout catechist who had

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[159] *Daily Advertiser*, 16 June 1887.

[160] *Daily Advertiser*, 20 September 1881.

[161] *Gundagai Times*, 25 August 1882.

[162] Barnes, *There's Gold*, pp.132-133.

[163] *Narrandera Ensign*,10 May 1888, 23 November 1894, 26 June 1896, 23 February 1900; *Narrandera Argus*,1, 15 August 1899; *Riverine Grazier*, 16 June 1893, 18 January 1895; Wilton, *Golden Threads*, pp.100-101; letter to author from the Albury and District Historical Society, 14 January 2008.

Incense burner used in temple rituals.
Private collection

Incense sticks made of plant tubers
Hay Gaol Museum

for five years prayed that he might be sent to Tumut. He had a fiancée in China and wished to visit her. The Christian Missionary Service (CMS) agreed to send him to a training school in China to prepare for Holy Orders, where he married his fiancée, who become a nominal Christian. Tragically, while he was crossing from Hong Kong to the mainland, in the company of the Bishop of Victoria, Hong Kong and three students, 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.[164]

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. Foremost among 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

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

First Anglican religion class for Chinese men, Tumut Plains, New South Wales.
History of the Anglican Church in Tumut, 1830-1926

English language, but most of all he appreciated their conversion to Christianity.[165] 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'.[166]

In another instance of gratitude for the church mission work, the Anglican minister, the Rev. A. C. Mosely received a letter from Sun Yek and Co. in 1902, on behalf of the Chinese community at Gundagai, congratulating him on his promotion to Wagga and expressing regret at his sudden departure. The letter had 15 signatures. In his reply, Rev. Mosely expressed his regret that he had been unable to preach to the Chinese community in their own language, and hoped that before long they would become members of the church.[167]

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 they were to be purchased or leased from European landowners or local government authorities. In China and among diasporic Chinese in South East Asia, funerals, and

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

[166] 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.

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

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. At Adelong the largest Chinese cemetery was near the main Chinese camp at Upper Adelong. The site was gazetted in 1875, though it had been in use some years before that. There are 18 exhumed graves at the site. Another smaller cemetery with at least seven exhumed graves is located at Middle Adelong. The importance of traditional Chinese burial customs, including the practice of feng s*hui*, is evident at the upper and middle Adelong cemeteries in the location and orientation of the graves. There is also very strong evidence of ritual exhumation.[168]

Chinese burning tower, cemetery, Tumut, New South Wales.
Barry McGowan, 2009

The earliest account of a Chinese burial at Tumut was in November 1881. The correspondent stated that the dead man, Ah Min from Tumut Plains, had several mates who carefully performed all the last rites in the Chinese fashion. The body was placed in the coffin outside his hut, and a bonfire made of his bedding and clothes. Cash for the undertaker was paid , and along the road Chinese men dropped small bits of coloured paper. At the grave

> Prayers were said, a few small coins deposited in the grave, coffin lowered, a quantity of tinsel paper burnt, and a cooked fowl, a tin of rice, and a flask of brandy were placed upon the coffin. Each man then seized a shovel and quickly filled in the grave.[169]

In June 1882 it was the turn of a 'well to do Chinese', Chee Sing, a partner with Ah Limm of Tumut Plains, who died of pulmonary consumption. His funeral was attended largely by Chinese men, and several buggies were filled with mourners.[170]

Grace Ching recalls that her father Dang Charles Doon 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

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

[169] *Gundagai Times*, 4 November 1881.

[170] *Gundagai Times*, 20 June 1882.

Graves of Chin Toy who died June 9, 1924 and Hock Sam who died March 3, 1940 in the cemetery, Tumut, New South Wales.

Barry McGowan, 2009

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 arranged with Quong Wing and Charles Doon beforehand.[171]

Where the deceased Chinese were Christian converts, both Christian and Chinese rites often occurred. The Chinese were buried in the denominational sections of the local cemetery, usually, though not always, with European style headstones. Some whites viewed this blending of Christian and Chinese burial rites with contempt, and others were 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.[172] Comments from a correspondent for the *Junee Democrat*, however, were strongly biased. 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.[173]

A little more edifying was the burial of Ah Nam, a well-known Adelong merchant, whose funeral cortege was described as 'one of largest witnessed in Adelong for some years past'.

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[171] Information from Grace Ching, October 2011.

[172] *Junee Southern Cross*, 20 March 1903.

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

> 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.[174]

Over time adherence to these traditional burial and commemorative practices faded. Chin See Shai Hee remembered that flowers were taken to her husband's grave on Chinese New Year, Christmas, Father's Day, and to commemorate the day he died. but there were no traditional Chinese graveside rites.[175] Other Chinese families who were members of one of the Christian churches would have done likewise.

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 Harbour.[176] According to Hong Kong based historian, Elizabeth Sinn, the return of bones to the actual villages was probably done through the Tung Wah Hospital in Hong Kong, a role that this institution had played for Chinese people in many countries.[177]

The earliest known exhumations in the Tumut district, if not in the Riverina, were in 1882 when 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.[178] 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.[179] Similar ceremonies took place in 1904 when 26 Chinese were exhumed from cemeteries at Cootamundra, Gundagai, Tumut, Adelong, Adelong Crossing, and Hillas Creek. The bones were placed in a hermetically sealed leaden case.[180] In 1917 a permit was issued to the Tumut merchant, Dang Loon, to allow him to exhume the remains of 12 Chinese interred in the Chinese cemetery at Tumut for eventual removal to China. The men were Chung Ching, Lee Yen, Lee Hing, Gee Quong Hing, Woo Wun, Ching Ah Monn, Teng Tung, Ah Tom, Ah Fon, John Fong Yee, Ah Pow and A Ling, and they had been interred for between 12 and 15 years. The exhumation was done by Thomas Chew Ching of Braidwood, and took two days, the bones being

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

[175] Interview of Chin See Shai Hee by Chris Shai Hee, March 1984.

[176] 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.

[177] Sydney Empire, 2, 4 May 1864; Yong, *The New Gold Mountain*, pp. 3-4, 189-95; Lydon, *Many Inventions*, p. 89; Williams, *Chinese Settlement in NSW*, pp. 15-18. Sinn, *Power and Charity*. pp.70-72.

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

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

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

Anglican baptism, Tumut. Dang Charles Doon fourth from right and William Shai Hee, second from right.
Private collection

placed in separate metal cases and securely soldered before being taken outside the burial ground. It cost about £10 for each case.[181]

It is sobering, however, to recall the sorrowful circumstances of some deaths, for despite clan and lodge allegiances, many Chinese men lived in uncomfortable surrounds and were susceptible to many illnesses. They felt the pangs of loneliness and despair keenly, particularly if poverty and ill health beckoned. At Adelong

in 1873, Ah Sing from Sharp's Creek died from an over indulgence in opium. He reportedly smoked 6d worth after each meal. A similar fate befell Ah Fook in 1875.[182]

More sorrowful was the death of Ah Sheer, who cut his throat and hung himself. Ah Nam, the storekeeper, said that Ah Sheer was a tobacco grower, and didn't think he had much money, about £4. He was in his shop on Saturday last, looked ill, asked foolish questions and talked foolishly. He was, however, good friends with everyone, and worked in partnership with Suen Leouz, a gardener.[183] In 1894 Ah Tie hung himself from cross beam of his hut. In late 1881 a fatal epidemic amongst the Tumut Chinese was reported. Four men had died after a few day's illness and several more were supposed to be dying.[184]

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

[182] *Gundagai Times*, 27 December 1873, 6 March 1875.

[183] *Gundagai Times*, 8 August 1879; *Town and Country Journal*, 27 October 1894.

[184] *Gundagai Times*, 1 November 1881.

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. At Tumut the burning tower and some graves have survived relatively intact, and at Albury the burning tower and offertory table and many of the headstones and graves still remain. However, this has not been the case elsewhere, and neglect and vandalism have been significant issues. At Wagga in the early 1980s only a few of the 37 graves retained their headstones. 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 cemetery has now been restored and tidied up and is an important asset to the Wagga community. [185] The burning tower at Deniliquin is still intact, but nothing else, and at Hay only a few graves and some scattered remains of the headstones are left. At Narrandera, continual vandalism has led to the removal of the remaining headstones, which are now located in a small memorial garden.[186]

[185] *The Leader*, 2 November 1983; *Daily Advertiser*, 4 October 1994.

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

Camp Life; Food and Leisure

Most 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. Even if they lived elsewhere, for instance, on pastoral stations or the smaller Riverina towns the larger camps were still important in their lives, for that was usually where the temples, lodges, churches, gambling houses and Chinese stores were located. In his 1884 report Martin Brennan provided an important snapshot of these camps 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. The camps 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 for labour for European pastoralists, a refuge for European women, and entertainment and recreation for others in the form of drinking, gambling and prostitution.[187]

The largest camp was at Narrandera, on the banks of the Murrumbidgee River. In 1883 it had 340 residents, of whom there were 303 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

The Chinese camp at Narrandera.
The Parkside Cottage Museum, Narrandera

[187] Pauline Rule, 'The Chinese Camps in Colonial Victoria: Their Role as Contact Zones', in Sophie Couchman, John Fitzgerald & Paul Macgregor, *After the Rush. Regulation, Participation, and Chinese Communities in Australia 1860-1949*, Otherland Literary Journal No 9, Kingsbury, 2004, pp.119-131.

labourers employed on the pastoral stations returned from their work assignments, the population was much larger. The village had streets and lanes, and contained stores, a temple, a very large cook shop, two lottery houses and several fan tan rooms. The Tumut camp on Fitzroy Street was nowhere near as large or durable, as most of the Chinese in the district lived and worked as farmers on the Tumut Plains, and only visited the camp on weekends or other special days.

On the Adelong goldfields the main Chinese camp, which included a cemetery, was at Upper Adelong, some distance from the main town, but near the mining claims. A survey by the late Lindsay Smith revealed the remains of at least four huts and a store possibly owned by Dang Ah Chee, although there were many more hut sites than that in the camp's heyday. Also at Upper Adelong was Watson's large store, accommodation house and the post office.[188] A Chinese camp was also located at Middle Adelong, a correspondent stating in 1872 that he had seen some parties of Chinese at work on the creek, a few Chinese gambling houses, a water powered sawmill and Watson's store (it would have been a second, smaller store). He stated that at Upper Adelong there were a few Chinese encampments, Watson's large store, accommodation house, the post office, and a few private houses. It is possible, however, that the correspondent had his locations mixed up, and first up he was describing Upper Adelong, not Middle Adleong, and second the embryonic township of Adelong rather than the Upper Adelong camp. It is most unlikely that the post office and private houses would have been located at the Upper Adelong camp.[189]

In 1878 a correspondent (possibly the same one) stated that

> at Upper Adelong he had come across a small Chinese camp, where nearly everyone had gardens and sold their produce in Tumut and Adelong. Tobacco was growing well in all the gardens.

Middle Adelong was described as a once thriving township, now deserted except for one Chinese man, with many of the buildings 'gradually crumbling away'. Again it is likely that the correspondent was describing firstly Middle Adelong and secondly Upper Adelong.[190]

The camps were predominantly male domains, which meant that social and family lives were pursued largely outside a family environment and that sexual relations meant crossing the racial and cultural divide with partners and prostitutes sought from the local non-Chinese population.[191] Most social activity took place in the temples, lodges, gambling houses and opium rooms, although home visits and entertainments were frequent where women were involved. Many observers, particularly those from outside the district, found the camps a source of wonderment, puzzle and often scorn, often viewing them as dens of iniquity, and posing a moral threat to the local youth. Their comments provide a snapshot of racial attitudes, and a glimpse of Riverina society and its Chinese migrants. With few people to champion their interests, the Chinese men and their camp followers were portrayed in an overwhelming negative light.

Writing in May 1889, at the height of the anti-Chinese movement in the town, a Tumut correspondent described the local Chinese camp as

> a source of annoyance to respectable residents. Even the better class of Chinese amongst us would gladly see these dens of iniquity swept away. On Sundays the camps swarm with Chinese who

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188 *Town and Country Journal*, 1872, in Perkins Papers, p.38.

189 *Town and Country Journal*, 1872, in Perkins Papers, p.38.

190 *Town and Country Journal*, 9 March 1878.

191 Williams, *Chinese settlement in NSW*, p.10; Wilton, *Golden Threads*, pp.55-56.

> throughout the week earn their living on the various tobacco plantations around Tumut, and the owner of the establishments grow rich on the opium smoking, gambling, and prostitution that is there carried on. A short time since the police made a successful raid on one of the camps when gambling was in full swing, but the light fines inflicted upon the offenders were readily paid and the evil still thrives. The singularly constructed habitation at the camps are at all points perforated with loop holes and scouts are ever on the watch, so sooner does a policeman appear in the locality than his advent is quickly signalled all over the place, and though the officer of the law may try to disguise himself in plain clothes, he is almost sure to be immediately detected.[192]

Brennan had quite a bit to say on the European women at the camps. He remarked that there were 37 European women married to Chinese at the five camps inspected. Some of them 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. 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'. 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. [193]

Many camp residents were literate & brought books from China or purchased them from merchants and importers. This book is about Guangzhou workers and the Guangzhou Chamber of Commerce.

Albury Regional Museum

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.[194]

He had even more to say about the prostitutes and some of their clientele. There were 37 prostitutes in the camps, all between 18 and 30 years, but occasionally the camps contained twice that number. The females occupied one or two rooms each in the camp, where they were visited by Chinese and Europeans, men and sometimes boys [sic]

> 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

[192] *Sydney Mail*, 18 May 1889.

[193] Brennan, *Chinese Camps*, p.2.

[194] Brennan, *Chinese Camps*, pp.2-4.

> 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. On those occasions most of the married women act more defiantly towards the police because of the greater security which they think they enjoy from being made amenable to the Vagrant Act- in having husbands.[195]

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 they have been instrumental in most of the cases for which the Chinese have been prosecuted. Of the 74 women in the camps 50 were confirmed opium smokers. On the subject of Chinese seduction Brennan attested that 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.[196]

Some of the European women were escaping bad marriages and others poverty or both, for the plight of women perceived as having no lawful means of support was fearful. They were outcasts from society, totally marginalised and under constant surveillance by the police. It is no wonder then that they saw the camps as refuges and the Chinese men as protectors, and even less wonder that some of them embraced activities such as prostitution, sly grog selling and the mesmeric delights of opium smoking.

Two principal comments can be made about the European women in the Riverina 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. The high profile of some of the women in the press and court reports meant that they were rarely out of the public gaze, confirming for the casual visitor and many local residents that the camps were dens of iniquity. 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'.[197] Few, if any, of them lived in camps the size of those at Wagga and Narrandera. In the Riverina, while many of the European women married to Chinese men lived in the camps, some lived elsewhere, and were not part of the general fracas that sometimes occurred in the camps. However, as so often happens today, the local press was not interested in them, but rather their more disorderly and newsworthy sisters.

An exception to some of these more dysfunctional alliances was the relationship between Ah Yank, a Tumut Chinese man who occasionally acted as an interpreter, and his female companion. In late 1880 he went to Melbourne and brought back with him a 'very attractive female whom everyone thought

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[195] Brennan, *Chinese Camps*, p.4.

[196] Brennan, *Chinese Camps*, pp.2-4.

[197] 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.

until very recently was his wife'. They both lived at the camp. However, the girl became very ill and became progressively weaker. Her friends, who were highly respected residents of Beechworth, heard of her condition and sent a brother over who got in touch with Rev G. Soares, who with several other townsfolk went to the camp and had her removed to Mr Conquit's house. She had not been expected to recover. A strong attachment had grown up between them and when she was offered the choice of returning to her friends or going to hospital she said that 'she would rather stay and die in his (Yank's) presence, as he had been very good and kind to her'.[198] Less touching was the case of Mrs E. Maxwell, who was fined 10s for being drunk and disorderly, and 20s for using obscene language. As she could not afford to pay the fines she went to the lockup, until released by a Chinese man who had tried hard to get the lockup keeper to reduce the fine.[199]

While there were fewer disorderly houses and women of ill repute in Tumut and Adelong than in some other Riverina towns, they nevertheless existed. In December 1879 Elizabeth Howard was charged with assaulting Ah Poo, who was found at Ah Tack's store in Richmond place lying in a pool of blood. Police visited Ching Tong Fong's place in Russell Street and in the early hours of the morning in a bark hut behind the house discovered the prisoner in bed with a Chinese man. Howard put up a struggle and refused to dress herself, overturning the lamp and lacerating the sergeant's hand. Ah Poo was in a serious condition and not fit to give evidence.[200] In February 1880 Elizabeth Howard was again in court when she was charged with larceny, the correspondent noting that she had caused disturbances with Chinese men on several occasions, 'she being an intimate follower of these men, and has but recently been discharged from the Gundagai jail'. She had been in the lockup since Saturday, and appeared in court 'elegantly attired in blue silk and a showy hat, which was in keeping'. She was described as possessing 'great personal attractions, but her language was not very refined'.[201] In another incident in May 1883 Ah Foo was charged with stealing money from Lottie Anderson, 'a frail frequenter of the Chinese camp'. One of the witnesses said that a European youth, 'Willie', was refreshing himself with the 'spectacle of a white woman lying on a bed smoking opium in company with a chinaman'. He did not know the youth's other name, and when asked if he was in the court, 'there was a stampede to the doors with other youths dropping behind the burly form of one of the policemen'.[202]

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. They 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 also on European men and boys. The principal game was "Pak ah pu" or "my pow Chong", commonly known as the "Chinese

198 *Gundagai Times*, 20 November 1881.

199 *Gundagai Times*, 10 March 1882.

200 *Gundagai Times*, 16 December 1879.

201 *Gundagai Times*, 27 February 1880.

202 *Gundagai Times*, 29 May 1883.

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

Gambling took place in the Riverina camps all year round. The principal games were Chinese Lottery *and* Fan Tan. Fan Tan *was played with Chinese coins as gambling chips.*

Museum of the Riverina, Wagga Wagga

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. The banker deducted two pence in every shilling.[203] Chinese coins were used as tokens, and a large number of them have been found at several camp sites, in particular Upper Adelong, Tumut and Wagga.

A fulsome account of the lotteries appeared in the *Riverine Grazier* of 5 August 1890. The reporter remarked that five or six of the wealthier Chinese at Hay formed a bank by putting in about £50 each, and appointed Chinese agents on commission to sell the tickets. Each ticket was numbered from 1 to 80 in Chinese characters, and sold from 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. The drawings were conducted in a partly partitioned room known as the bank. First, 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 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 holder of the tickets compared them with the result tickets to see if they had won; the minimum correct numbers was five. No matter what the profits of the bank were the original capital was not augmented, 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'.[204]

Concerns about gambling began to emerge in some Riverina towns in the early 1880s. At the heart of these concerns was the perceived potential for young people and children to be drawn into its 'enticing mesh spend their all, and then go begging'. The editor of the *Daily Advertiser* remarked that:

> 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.[205]

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 at Oxley, Maude, Booligal and other rural centres. In its report of 5 August 1890 the *Riverina 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

[203] Sherry Morris, 'Chinese Quarter Gambling', *Daily Advertiser*, 17 May 1997.

[204] *Riverine Grazier*, 5 August 1890, 26 March 1945.

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

existence of the lotteries was known only to a relatively few. But over the last three of four months itinerant agents had been appointed, and they had 'carried on a most active canvass of the town'. Some residents could probably afford to throw their money away, but there was no doubt that the greater number of those affected

> are those of a class who can hardly be expected to weigh the chances for and against winning, and who, ill able to afford it, waste shilling after shilling ... In this class are shop boys and girls, youths of all kinds, servants male and female, hotel servants especially ... Worse than this, however, not only are class limits ... ignored, but also are age limits. Even children have been drawn into the vortex, and, so far as their means will allow, are regular customers of the bank ... We are credibly informed that a good deal of the money which usually finds its way to the confectioners is by means of the lottery agents now diverted into the Chinese Camp.

Further, according to the newspaper, some lottery draws were held at night, and witnessed by large numbers of people, of whom the greater number were youths. This gave the youths an opportunity to 'stroll around the camp', and be 'brought into contact with the degraded beings and demoralising scenes for which Chinese Camps everywhere are notorious'. He concluded that the

> lotteries should go on if it is thought unfair to stop the Chinese gambling while we ourselves are permitted to bet and shake dice and play cards at our clubs. But for the sake of decency this illegal and iniquitous traffic should not be allowed to be a house to house one as at present.

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.[206] 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.[207]

Opium smoking was another popular pastime, and to a large degree substituted for the drinking of alcohol, which was largely the preserve of Europeans. The use of opium in China dated back to at least the 1700s, and attempts by Chinese authorities to limit the trade resulted in the Opium Wars, which the Chinese lost, the Treaties of Nanking (1842) and Tientsin (1858) ensuring 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 Upper Adelong, Tumut, Wagga, and Grubben station. The items include pipes, parts of opium tins, opium scales and the ubiquitous tincture of opium vials. Just how widespread the practice and 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.[208]

Opium smoking was a time consuming and passive activity, and best indulged in while lying down

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

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

[208] Lydon, Many Inventions, p.134.

and in company. Janis Wilton quotes the comments of a local journalist in Deniliquin, which conveys a sense of what it was like inside one of the opium shops in the local camp in the early 1880s.

> 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.

Following an official inspection of the Albury camp in 1881 it was reported that

> In several bunks Chinamen were found indulging in their besotting narcotic, but 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.[209]

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. They stated that

> An infatuation for opium has sunk those females to a "lower depth" of social degradation. Of the seventy-three females in the camps visited, fifty at least are confirmed opium-smokers; some few are endeavouring to wean themselves from this abominable habit, and are, they say, taking medicine with that in view; others however not only indulge in the practice but add the additional luxury of smoking ... and cigars. Opium acts as a narcotic, and answers the purpose of a stimulant; hence it is there is 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.[210]

By the early 1880s a few Chinese clergymen and respectable merchants began to voice their opposition to opium smoking and agitated for the opium trade to be prohibited. Quong Tart was an active campaigner and in 1883 launched an anti opium crusade which resulted in a petition with 4,000 signatures to the Executive Council of NSW. In his submission to the Brennan report he stated that

> The fulcrum on which rests all vice, immorality and corruption within the Chinese is opium. To it the evils arising from the Chinese and their camps can be traced, and it is only by placing that detestable drug beyond the reach of my countrymen that the Government of the State can hope for reformation.[211]

He went on to assert that the majority of the residents in the camps including those who were opium smokers, agreed with the desirability of restricting the availability of opium. Brennan's report was a little more ambivalent on opium smoking, recognising that it had been imposed upon the Chinese and was now a part of the Chinese way of life. [212]

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. After some attempts by religious bodies to eliminate opium smoking the Chinese in Victoria began to play a part in the anti opium movement, in particular through the Chinese Empire Reform Association, and the

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

[210] Brennan, *Chinese Camps*, p.3.

[211] Brennan, *Chinese Camps*, p.7.

[212] Brennan, *Chinese Camps*, p.3.

establishment of the Chinese Anti-Opium League of Victoria. The League's actions aroused enthusiasm among Chinese merchants in Sydney, in particular Thomas Yee Hing, who was also President of the New South Wales Chinese Empire Reform Association, and led to the formation of the Chinese Anti-Opium League of New South Wales. The League soon gained support from influential Australian organisations such as the Masonic societies and churches of all denominations, and obtained 61,000 signatures for a petition in August 1905. Federal legislation passed 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, and led to a rise in the price of opium which made smuggling more profitable.[213]

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'.[214] 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'. On the subject of gambling he commented that Fan Tan was 'played by those in a position to play – storekeepers, cooks, ringbarkers, etc'. He considered that the Chinese lottery was also beneficial 'for most Chinese give a proportion of money to the local hospital. Last year £10 was given, this year £16'. On the camp women he remarked that

> They are for the most part poor, weak-minded creatures, whom perhaps trouble, drink, or some cause had driven for their homes, and the soft-hearted Chinaman cannot refuse them admittance. In no one case have I ever heard of a Chinaman in any way trying to induce a respectable girl to leave her home and live an immoral life. Some of these poor, deluded creatures fly to opium as a source of relief to a troubled mind; but in no way does a Chinaman encourage them to smoke, and much less to drink. In many cases the Chinese have been known to reform some of these women, and even make good wives of them. Such instances are few, but the general rule is when these girls get all they can from the Chinese of one camp, under pretence of love, they leave that camp, go from place to place, and are far from being a benefit to the Chinese.[215]

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 of drunken behaviour to make it into the courts was in July 1879. The correspondent stated 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 5s for obscene words and 5s for drunkenness.[216]

Eating together was an important means of cementing bonds and hierarchies within families and

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[213] Yong, *New Gold Mountain*, pp.179-188; Wilton, *Golden Threads*, pp.65-71.

[214] *Daily Advertiser*, 8 January 1884.

[215] *Daily Advertiser*, 17 April 1884.

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

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

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'.[217]

Rice was the staple diet and complemented other foods such as chicken, pork, fish, beans and a variety of green vegetables, of which there was little shortage in the Riverina, with its many market gardens in the towns and on the pastoral stations. Tea was an important staple as a drink. It was one of the main goods imported from China and became the key beverage consumed in nineteenth 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 Man Sing from Temora, and the famous Sydney tea saloons of Quong Tart. Outside the main festivals such as Chinese New Year accounts of the day to day culinary experiences of the Chinese men are rare. In one such account Will Carter recalled that the Chinese storekeeper at Middle Adelong, Lee Loong, or 'Deafy',

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

A Chinese kettle for brewing herbal medicines.
Private collection

> killed a couple of pigs each week-end, chiefly for the supply of his fellow country-men, the fossickers, who usually came along in strings, with their poles and baskets, or sacks, for their weekly supplies disposing of it most of it on Sunday afternoons.[218]

At the Albury camp in 1881 a correspondent remarked that

> men were seen at their dinner plying their chopsticks over some savory [sic] vegetable curry, accompanied by rice, and washed down with the very weakest infusion of "flowery pekos"; others were found superintending culinary arrangements over cleanly-swept hearths; in the lottery house a crowd was collected evidently intend upon some "combination"; and in the butchers' place was to be observed half a pig hanging with several joints of other kinds of meats.[219]

In an account of life at the Chinese camps on the pastoral stations, George Gow stated that

> 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 ...[220]

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

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[218] Turner, *Looking Backward*, pp.28-29.

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

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

> 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 is 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.[221]

Mr I. C. Fisher from Ariah Park 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'.[222]

Along with the dietary staples a wide variety of other ingredients peculiar to Chinese cuisine was consumed. Some of the most common were soy sauce, garlic, spring onions and ginger. Other ingredients included chestnuts, melon seeds, black beans, bean curd, shark fin, canned fish, preserved duck, preserved plums, moon cakes and cooking lard. Jars of ginger were often given as presents to Europeans on Chinese New Year.[223]

In her reminiscences, Joan Palmer recalled the Chinese market gardener on Midgeon station approaching her and her siblings as children with a smiling face as he handed them a pot of ginger as a New Year's present.[224] 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. [225]

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 could hold preserved vegetables, sweet gherkins, sweet bean paste, shrimp paste, salted garlic, salted onion and pickled lemon. Because of their thickness the jars were used for prepared foods such as pickled vegetables. Ginger bottles were distinctive and glazed in greenish blue or mauve colours. The ceramic eating bowls, plates and spoons came in a variety of common designs and styles, 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.[226] A large number of these traditional items have been recovered from the site of the Fitzroy St camp and from the Chinese camp at Upper Adelong. Elsewhere in the region, at Yerong Creek south of Wagga, objects found have included a ginger jar with its lid and the remains of celadon rice bowls.

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[221] Speirs, *The Beehive and the Broken Dam*, pp.44-45.

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

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

[224] Palmer, *Memories of a Riverina Childhood*, p.105.

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

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

Together with the variety of traditional cooking utensils, storage containers, tableware and ingredients were many European and locally manufactured foods and objects, for traditional items were not always 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 innovative incorporation of local produce and products. A comprehensive archaeological survey of Chinese mining camps and settlements in south east NSW, conducted by Dr Lindsay Smith, revealed evidence of mixing and sharing at a number of sites. Evidence of sharing and mixing was particularly strong 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 fragments of glass artefacts, most of which were very fragmentary. With the exception of a few complete Chinese medicine vials, the glass was largely of European origin, probably fragments from alcohol bottles.[227]

[227] Smith, 'Hidden Dragons. The archaeology of mid-to late-nineteenth-century Chinese communities in south-eastern New South Wales', pp.71-258; 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; Lydon, *Many Inventions*, pp.92-101.

Prejudice and Discrimination

By the mid to late 1870s anti-Chinese sentiments in NSW were becoming increasingly prevalent. One concern was increased Chinese migration to colonies such as NSW, Queensland and the Northern Territory. Other concerns were 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 fears of Chinese immorality. The latter issue was heightened by two enquiries in NSW into crowded dwellings and common lodging houses. The trigger point, however, 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. This decision was fiercely opposed 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.[228]

The Riverina was not immune to these events. At Wagga in December 1878 about 300 people attended a protest meeting in support of the strikers. But it was a pale imitation of the Sydney meetings, 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 (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'. Many of the comments at the Wagga meeting were in line with these new sentiments, almost all speakers opposing Chinese immigration and expressing solidarity and sympathy with the strikers.[229]

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

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[228] 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 , 'The economics and organisation of Chinese mining in colonial Australia', *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. Purifying Australia and California 1850-1901*, Hale & Iremonger, Sydney. 19791, pp.78-84.

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

local writers used the most intemperate language to convey their views, but most were a little more 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'.[230]

In a similar vein, in January 1879 the editor of the *Riverine Grazier* commented favourably on the pamphlet issued by L Kong Meng, Cheok Hong Cheong and Louis Ah Mouy. He stated that there had been 'hitherto far too much senseless condemnation of the Celestials, whom we have invited and encouraged to come to our shores, and far too little recognition of that just claim to be regarded as part of the human family.[231]

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

[231] *Riverine Grazier*, 1 January 1879.

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 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.[232]

The views of the editor for the *Wagga Wagga Daily Advertiser* (hereafter *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.[233]

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* on 24 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,

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

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

> 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 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.[234]

Despite the obvious prejudices in this article, it was, for its time, more balanced than many others, and 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.[235] The Riverina press could no longer ignore these sentiments. In June 1881, the editor of the *Daily Advertiser* criticised 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

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

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

> 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 "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.[236]

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 the Chinese 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 thefollowing 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, fomented by increased Chinese migration to the rich tin fields in north east 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

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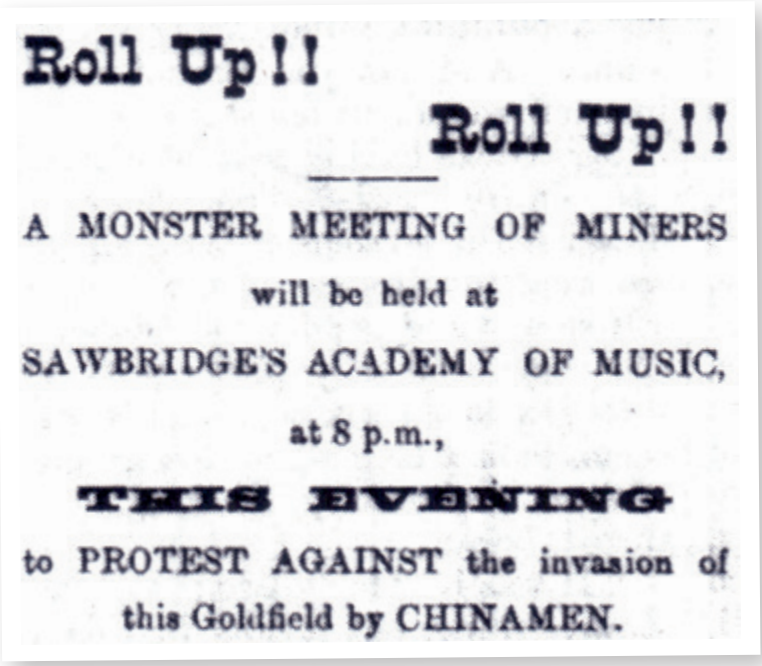
[236] *Daily Advertiser*, 28 June 1881.



Roll Up!!

Roll Up!!

A MONSTER MEETING OF MINERS

will be held at

SAWBRIDGE'S ACADEMY OF MUSIC,

at 8 p.m.,

THIS EVENING

to PROTEST AGAINST the invasion of this Goldfield by CHINAMEN.

Advertisement for a "Roll Up" meeting in the Temora Star April 7, 1933.
National Library of Australia

such as 'the yellow agony'.[237] 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 ...[238]

These changing sentiments led to protest meetings and the formation of anti-Chinese Leagues. At Temora in April 1883 a roll-up meeting was called 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.[239] 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

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[237] 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.

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

[239] *Temora Star*, 7 April 1883.

> 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.[240]

The formation of an anti-Chinese League in Tumut in December 1887 followed hard on the heels of anti-Chinese agitations elsewhere in the colony, a local correspondent stating that the town wore quite a lively aspect owing to the number of people who had come in from the country to attend the public meeting to be held that night to establish an Anti-Chinese League in Tumut. E.G. Brown, the Tumut Mayor, presided, and around him on the platform were the proposers, seconders and supporters of the various resolutions. The resolutions were all passed unanimously. 'The meeting was orderly throughout' commented the reporter, 'although some of the audience were rather excited'.[241] The league had 170 members and a committee of 25 to draw up rules and manage business, and later, paid officers to canvass for members.[242] In March 1888 a circular was sent to European landholders requesting them not to renew leases to Chinese or let fresh land to them. A petition was also signed asking Parliament to take action on Chinese emigration, and at a subsequent meeting a unanimous vote of thanks was given to Angus Rankin, the owner of Brungle estate, for not letting his land to the Chinese.[243]

Despite this ardour, the League's effectiveness was blunted by the unwillingness of many landowners to embrace its central proposition not to rent land to the Chinese. Many landowners, including the in-laws of the main proponent Mr Shelley, regarded the Chinese farmers as their bread and butter.[244] 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*, and 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. There were also hints that the League might suggest to the Seamens' Union the possibility of imposing a secondary boycott on shipment of wool from pastoralists who employed Chinese labour. 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'.[245]

The views of a local resident following a visit to the Mt Adrah and Hillas Creek area in August 1888 are a good indicator of the strength of racial ill-feeling in the Tumut area in the late 1880s. He referred to the Chinese at Hillas Creek as 'Bread Robbers', and went on to say that in front of Crain's Mount Adrah station

> is a red hill 12 miles from town; this spot was once famous for its grapes, but alas! the "Celestials" have the land and grow tobacco. Two hundred yards from the hotel [Crain's Mount Adrah Hotel] the Yaven creek joins the Nacka, and is known below the junction as Hillas. At the present time it is the home of 200 Chinamen, or can I truthfully say 200 "bread robbers". The intruders monopolise all the best lands

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240 *Temora Star*, 14 April 1883.

241 *Town and Country Journal*, 3 December 1887.

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

243 *Town and Country Journal*, 24 March 1888; *Sydney Mail*, 24 March 1888.

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

245 *Riverine Grazier*, 14 August 1888.

> 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 on the 200 "per schent" system. The time is approaching when we must boycott the owners of land let to Chinkies. In Tumut the Chinese number close to 2000 [a gross 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. In Adelong a Chinese store does a rattling trade, it being supported principally by the working class, the very last who should assist them. On the other hand the European store keepers employ all white labour at a high figure, comparatively speaking, to the Chinese business men, hence the money is always in circulation.[246]

Another example of racial ill-feeling was provided by a correspondent in April 1889, who stated that the Tumut Plains were dotted with Chinese tobacco plantations and their sheds, and that the Chinese paid more rent than Europeans and still made a living out of it. He went on to say that

> As a general rule a Chinaman has no family to clothe and educate, no literary tastes to satisfy, no relations to support, no political or social clubs to support, and no race meetings, balls or parties. He lives in a shed, works 'incessantly sunrise to sunset Sunday to Saturday, is clothed in the cheapest garments, and lives on the poorest food. Competition with such a one is beyond the power of a white man, and therefore the Mongolian can afford to give more rent for his tobacco land than a white man, and as a matter of course drives the white man out of the field ... Mr Shelley will not rent land to a Chinaman.[247]

New immigration restrictions were imposed in 1888. The debate on and passage of the *Influx of Chinese Restriction Act 1888* was driven by a deep seated fear of a resurgent China and racial xenophobia, fomented by the Premier, Sir Henry Parkes. Earlier the Riverina press had welcomed the imposition of restrictive measures, many newspaper 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.[248]

One instance of these conflicting views was provided by the editor of the *Riverine Grazier*, who, on 18

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[246] *Gundagai Times*, 25 August 1888.

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

[248] 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. On 30 June the League organised a demonstration which attracted between 6,000 and 50,000 people. 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* , 1, 8 June 1888; *Albury Border Post*, 3 February 1888.

April 1888, reminded his readers of the colony's wider treaty obligations, stating that although the Chinese may not be in competition with the Europeans in Hay

their low civilization and comparative pagan habits render them undesirable fellow-colonists under any circumstances, is palpable', and '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'.

By 22 May, however, his tone and focus had changed almost 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's 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 sentiments were expressed by almost every other newspaper editor in the Riverina. The editor of the *Gundagai Times* remarked that the Premier had thrown

> to the winds all treaties or obligations of the mother country - all this to please a turbulent Sydney mob who waylaid him at Parliament House. He has brought contempt and ridicule upon the country by his hasty action, and whereas he sought to float once more upon the sea of popularity, it would, instead, seem to foreshadow his downfall ... We are favourable to blocking the Chinese in a fair and legitimate way and in conformity with the beautiful idea of British justice. The Chinese came here under our existing law and should be treated so in all honour, it is a contemptible act to pass any retrospective measure after these men had actually arrived in British waters. Any law dealing with the Chinese should respect the vested interest of those who are here, as it is against all a white man's ideas of justice and fair dealing between man and man to hunt them without giving them a chance of defending themselves.[249]

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'.

> 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 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 ... At the root of the Chinese trouble are the old sores of the social system, the distribution of wealth, the relations between labor and capital, the training and improvement of the masses and above all the tenure of lands.[250]

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 colonies. An increase

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[249] *Gundagai Times*, 22 May 1888.

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

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 Net Rowan / Year 1894
Trade or occupation previous to conviction Miner
Religion Pagan
Education, degree of R. Nothing else
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 & pock marked.

(No. of previous Portrait _____).

CONVICTIONS.

Where and When.	Offence.	Sentence.
Corowa P.C. 1 7 96	Evading poll tax	£150 or 2 years Impt.

Albury courthouse record of Willie Ah Poy, sentenced for evading poll tax by crossing the river at Corowa.
New South Wales State Records Centre

Willie Ah Poy and Walter, Ruby, Doris and Billy with Leslie against wall of shop, 1890s, Chiltern, Victoria
Private collection

in the Chinese gaol population was all but assured.[251]

These new restrictions soon drew scorn from the Riverina press, the earliest 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.[252]

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.[253]

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

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

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

The Albury courthouse record of Willie Ah Poy portrays him as a poll tax evader and therefore a criminal. In a photograph of Willie Ah Poy in Chiltern, Victoria he is revealed as a respectable fruit and vegetable storekeeper. He married Louisa Coon from the Victorian goldfields and they had nine children. Willy travelled frequently to China to see his parents, and possibly he had a wife and children there was well. He did not return from his last trip and he was presumed dead. Louisa moved to Albury with the eight surviving children, where she met and married Edward (Teddy) Mahlook, a local market gardener.[254]

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, who were 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.[255] 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 often bordered on the absurd, and aroused much anger, particularly when prosperous 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 allowed to enter the Colony without incurring the poll tax only 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.[256] 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, he also being a naturalised citizen of that colony. The editor of the *Sydney Morning Herald* went on the attack, his remonstrations also being 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.[257]

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[254] Neil Wilson, 'The dinky-di Poy Boys', *Herald Sun*, 29 July 2000; *Albury & District Historical Society Bulletin*, May 2005, No 446; information from Lindsay Poy junior, Albury, 2010.

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

[256] *Albury Banner*, 15 February, 10 March 1889.

[257] *Sydney Morning Herald*, 28 February 1893.

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, who 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.[258]

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, but also the generally favourable attitudes towards their plight by much of the local press. On the occasion of 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.[259]

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'.[260]

The correspondent had yet 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'.[261] 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

[258] *Albury Banner*, 10 March, 29 February 1893, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 27, 28 February 1893.

[259] *Albury Banner*, 18 August 1893.

[260] *Albury Banner*, 1 December 1893.

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

the poll tax; at least his copies of the Bible were exempt![262] 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.[263] Another ridiculous 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.[264]

The Albury correspondent 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 on 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'.[265] The immigration issue was, of course, only resolved with Federation in 1901.

[262] *Albury Banner*, 10 January 1896.

[263] *Albury Banner*, 3 January 1896.

[264] *Albury Daily News*, 3 June 1898.

[265] *Albury Banner*, 11 November 1898.

Law and Order

The law courts generally strived to be even-handed in their treatment of the Chinese people. Unlike California in the early 1850s, Chinese evidence was admissible in the courts and the use of interpreters was common, and the Chinese made full use of the courts to prosecute individuals, including their own countrymen, who had aggrieved them by assault, stealing or refusal to pay debts. The presence of large numbers of Chinese in the local courts, particularly in the early years of Chinese settlement, was, nevertheless, a challenge for magistrates and judges, who for the most part tried to be equitable and fair. In a case at Gundagai in 1869 the magistrate in his summing up 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.[266]

But not all observers were as understanding, the editor of the *Wagga Express* stating in 1873 that

> The undesirable immigrant whom we have encouraged to dwell amongst us, who raises our cabbages and cooks our mutton, appears to possess as fatal a facility for mixing himself up with criminal proceedings as for availing himself of legal protection if he imagines himself wronged. That he generally succeeds in gaining the sympathy of the court, no one, who has ever "sat through" a case in which a Chinaman was involved, will deny.

He implied that difficulties in language and getting reliable witnesses prevented searching scrutiny by lawyers and the Bench, and that instead of

> inviting him to tell the truth under pain of being spiritually snuffed out [a reference to the Chinese practice of swearing in by blowing out a match], some stronger pressure were brought to bear upon him. Prison discipline with light work and plenty of food is but little punishment to him. The Chinaman is a difficult subject for legislation, but he is a subject, nevertheless.[267]

In a case in Narrandera in 1884 the acting judge 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 defendants were found guilty, one getting five years gaol, and the other two four years and three years.[268]

Working in the Chinese men's favour was the perception by some judges and magistrates that the Chinese were inoffensive or defenceless, a back-handed compliment at best, a magistrate at Wagga commenting that striking a Chinese man was 'like striking a woman'.[269] In a case at Adelong in 1882 involving an assault by four Europeans, including Alexander Neil, against two Chinese men, one of whom was Tu Hock, the Police Magistrate concluded that 'four Europeans who were all powerful men,

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

[267] *Wagga Express*, 26 July 1873.

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

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

were more than a match for two celestials'. He fined Neil £1 with costs.[270]

The press and the courts were scathing on the larrikins, who sometimes assaulted the Chinese by throwing stones or stealing or damaging their vegetable produce. Two instances of the latter occurred in 1881 and 1883. In April 1881 some Chinese men complained that several larrikins had stolen fruit from their gardens. When the larrikins were seen they began throwing stones, a large one striking one of the Chinese in the breast. The reporter remarked that 'The Chinamen here arrange matters for a trifling sum of money, so that justice is defeated; and, until an example is made of the rising generation of this class, the property of the residents is unsafe'. In 1883 William Hodson was fined 5s for wilful damage to fruit belonging to Ah Foot from Adelong. [271]

Assault cases were very common, as was the condemnation from the press and the courts. For instance, at Adelong in 1876 two youths were charged with assaulting a Chinese man, the reporter commenting that

> Whenever the case comes on for hearing, the decision arrived at may be the means of checking the rowdyism so often exercised towards the 'heathen Chinee' by our local roughs and larrikins.[272]

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'.[273] 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.[274]

The tenant farmers on the predominantly Chinese occupied Tumut Plains were certainly not immune from harassment. On 20 January 1899 Dang Ah Chee wrote to a local farmer F. Kindred, advising that one of his Chinese tenant farmers had complained about the farmer's cattle constantly getting into his corn paddock, and asked the farmer to do something about it. He also complained that one of Kindred's sons and some other boys had taking fruit from the fruit trees. In conclusion he asked Kindred when he intended moving his tobacco and hay, as his sons often made the excuse of going to see the hay and tobacco in order to get at the fruit. He warned him to keep the boys away unless his tenant was at home. The tone of the letter was polite, but to the point and with a distinct air of authority.[275]

Some incidents were aimed at the Chinese as a community or group rather than as individuals. The earliest such case was in August 1863 when four Chinese men were held up and robbed by four armed men with masks, about 19 km from Tumut. The men were later apprehended and sent to Goulburn for

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

[271] *Gundagai Times*, 12 April 1881.

[272] *Gundagai Times*, 25 February 1876. The outcome of the trial is unknown.

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

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

[275] Dang Ah Chee, *Letter Book*, Tumut and District Historical Society.

trial, but the outcome of the case is unknown.[276] Almost as dramatic was the attempt by several youths in February 1883 to amuse themselves at the expense of the Chinese camp residents. One of the boys was under the influence and was urged by the others to enter one of the homes and insult the inmate. This act duly accomplished, both he and his mates began assailing the Chinese men with 'disgusting epithets that cannot appear in print'. Afterwards they visited another house, but were ejected by the inmates who fired a gun in the air several times to scare them off. 'Who could have blamed the Chinamen had they inflicted grevious bodily harm upon these brawlers who disgrace the community amongst whom they live?' commented the exasperated reporter. The incident demonstrated quite convincingly that the Chinese men were more than capable of fighting back effectively.[277]

Most cases of assault and annoyance, however, targeted individuals. One incident involved a case of attempted arson at a Chinese store in Fitzroy Street, Tumut in 1877. The owner, Chang Hang Tye, who was sleeping on the premises, was awoken by a loud explosion in the next room. His partners, Sing Lee and Ah Yonk, also woke up. They found fires burning in various places and saw a man running away, but could not apprehend him.[278] In August 1879 Hugh Naughton was fined £1 with costs for assault and battery on Ah Lin, who was riding near the Tumut racecourse when he was met by a party of horsemen who were shouting and using very bad language. He tried to ride away but was followed and rushed, causing his horse to throw him. Another European man helped him remount his horse. The Police Magistrate observed that 'young men, who ought to know better, frequently treated Chinamen in a very cowardly and disgraceful manner'.[279] In a somewhat similar incident in September Ah Wah, an experienced Kiandra packer for nine years, lost 66 lbs of butter and 107 dozen eggs worth £10 when his horse and packhorse bolted after having stones thrown at them. However, the case was dismissed when another Chinese man said after questioning that the horse had been known to bolt before.[280] In October George Jones was fined 10s for assaulting Ah Chong, by throwing a stone which struck him on the head.[281] At Gundagai in August 1885 two men were charged with riotous behaviour following a complaint by the Mundarlo storekeeper, Ah Gow. The men had ridden through his verandah late at night, knocking at the door and shutters, and later indulging in 'rowdy and larrikin like conduct'. One man was fined £1 and the other was gaoled for seven days.[282]

As noted above, the Chinese men were quite capable of fighting back. In June 1880 a Tumut man needed to go through a small paddock occupied by a Chinese man close to town and was in the act of lowering the slip rail when the man came out and fired a gun at him. He had been annoyed by town boys interfering with the slip rails, hence the 'hot salute', the correspondent commenting that 'our lads had better keep clear of the spot for the future' In cases of assault, the Chinese men often found allies in the form of sympathetic European witnesses. In May 1882, Ah Sue was charged with the assault of Honora Woods at Gocup. He had chased one of her children to the house and when she caught him at the doorstop he had hit her. She would not, however, swear that she had not hit him first. A European witness, B. Cussen, stated that Ah Sue had complained that the boy had thrown stones at his horse. He had known Ah Sue for over 12 months and had seen boys tormenting him. The case

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276 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 August 1863.

277 *Gundagai Times*, 20 February 1883.

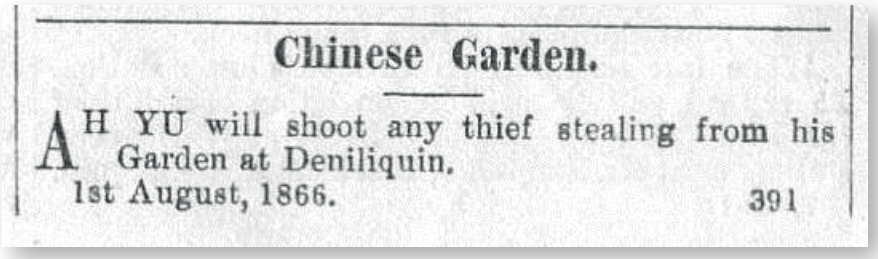
278 *Sydney Mail*, 1 October 1877.

279 *Gundagai Times*, 5 August 1879.

280 *Gundagai Times*, 9 September 1879.

281 *Gundagai Times*, 21 October 1879.

282 *Gundagai Times*, 14 August 1885.



Chinese Garden.

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

Deniliquin & District Historical Society

was dismissed.[283] In February 1891 Charles Crompton, a 16 year old, was fined £10 and £2 19s 9d costs for an unprovoked assault on the unfortunate Ah Sue. Septimus Underwood saw Crompton throw the stone which struck Ah Sue on the forehead, rendering him unconscious. Several other witnesses also gave corroborative evidence. Dr Mason said but for a wire band on his hat the result may have been more serious. Several other boys who had thrown stones at Ah Sue were fined 10s and one who pleaded guilty was fined 5s. The Police Magistrate congratulated the constable for the trouble he had taken to see justice done, and 'sternly reproved' the boys.[284]

Another example of the even-handedness of the courts involved Ah Quee and Ah Moy, who were charged with assault and battery on a man called Edmondson near Adelong. Edmondson had accused them of stealing his dog, and after some words hit one of them in the face. Both men then attacked him with heavy sticks and chased him into Crain's hotel. When he went out again to settle matters they knocked him down, but the court dismissed the case, deeming Edmondson to be the aggressor in the first instance.[285] A more significant instance involved Ah Nam, the Adelong storekeeper, who was charged with maliciously shooting at Joseph Cupitt. Ah Nam had asked him to pay a bill, but Cupitt denied owing Ah Nam any money. In response Ah Nam said he would shoot Cupitt if he did not pay, then pulled out a revolver and fired a shot. Cupitt, his wife and two other men ran away and hid behind a tree when they heard the shot, then ran into the house, Ah Nam following. Cupitt in turn pointed a gun at Ah Nam and threatened to shoot him if he did not go away. Ah Nam said that Cupitt had cheated him out of money several times and that when he went to collect money Cupitt swore at him and threatened him with a spade. In the court evidence was given testifying to the good character of Ah Nam, and a certificate with a long list of signatures was read verifying his character. Ah Nam said that he had not intended to shoot Cupitt, but only frighten him. In summing up the judge said that the jury only had to decide that Ah Nam fired the revolver at Cupitt with intent to inflict grievous bodily harm or that he did not. The jury opted for the latter interpretation and Ah Nam was found not guilty. Earlier the court had ruled that Cupitt had owed Ah Nam £6 13s 6d, his storeman and the carter proving beyond all doubt that the goods had been delivered to Cupitt's house.[286]

Perhaps the most significant example of fair play by the courts was the trial of Charlie Gow on a charge of manslaughter for having fatally shot Cletus Halloran, aged 20 years, in August 1935. The case clearly indicated that harassment of Chinese tenant farmers by some Europeans was still an issue in the 1930s.

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[283] *Gundagai Times*, 2 May 1882.

[284] *Town and Country Journal*, 28 February 1891.

[285] *Gundagai Times*, 9 October 1885.

[286] *Gundagai Times*, 13 July 1886, 13 August, 10 September 1886.

Gow stated that he had been in bed in his hut when he heard someone break down the door, then enter the room and point a gun at him. He stated that he thought he was going to be shot and was terrified, so picked up a gun and fired a shot, hitting Halloran in the leg. Halloran then pointed the gun at Gow again, and Gow again shot him. He was still in bed when he fired the second shot. Gow then left the hut and went to get help. In court it transpired that it had been raining heavily at the time of the incident and that if Halloran had been seeking shelter he could have done so on the verandah. Gow's hut had been broken into and money stolen on three previous occasions, the last time was six weeks prior to the shooting. One witness said that it was customary for men to go into the Chinese huts unceremoniously, simply by pushing the door open. Gow was the brother in law of Dang Charles Doon, who helped with some of the interpretations. He was acquitted of the charge of murder[287]

Although the courts tried to be even-handed, at times the administration of justice by the police, particularly in the nineteenth century, appeared to be heavily weighted against the Chinese and their female camp companions, both of whom were seen as visible and easy targets. The prosecutions for sly grog dealing and gambling are a good instance of this discrimination. In March 1891 a carefully planned raid on a Chinese gambling shop in Tumut

> threatened to be not exactly what the police bargained for when 20 sickly looking opium smokers, sentenced to pay fines amounting in aggregate to £24, declared that they would go to the lockup and not pay the fines, and thither they went for an hour.

The prospect of a month in Gundagai gaol soon changed their minds, however, and the fines were paid.[288]

Many Riverina residents viewed the gambling prosecutions with disdain and acted as advocates or character witnesses for the accused. In Wagga in February 1888, in response to the recent convictions of several Chinese men for playing Fan Tan, a local correspondent under the pseudonym of 'Justice' commented that it was well known that gambling was carried on every night at some clubs and hotels, and that many people, including the police, were aware of it.

> 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.[289]

Similar comments were made by the *Riverine Grazier* correspondent in February 1892 when he stated that

> 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.

The comments by the Counsel for the men, Mr Crang, are instructive. He had 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.

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[287] *Tumut and Adelong Times*, 6, 13 August 1935; *Cootamundra Herald*, 2 October 1935.

[288] *Town and Country Journal*, 4 March 1891.

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

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. He 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.[290]

It is doubtful if the police would have had 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, then on purchasing the alcohol, departing and handing the evidence to the local constable, who had meanwhile observed the proceedings from some vantage point.[291]

In March 1883 Jacob Tyfield informed on Ah Sam, a cook for Ah Tack, for selling liquor without a licence at the Tumut Chinese camp. Some young ladies had been at Ah Sam's place with two young men, and Tyfield stated that he had been there on business and had sold one of the women a chain and bracelet. He had then asked Ah Sam for something to drink, and five port wines on a tray were brought in, for which Ah Sam claimed he had not been paid. Ah Sam said that Tyfield had come to the house nearly every night since the girls had been in the camp. The first time he had come with jewellery; the last time he came about 2 am and did not bring jewellery. Tyfield said that he had intended to stay, but had been told that he could not. Three of the women lived in the house and paid Ah Sam rent; their occupation was not known. Ah Sam was fined £32 10s, and Tyfield was given a reward of £10.[292]

Sometimes the Chinese were informers, revealing a breakdown in traditional loyalties or perhaps reflecting clan or district 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 sly grog cases. He said he was motivated by a desire to defend the publicans, although he still expected to get half the fine as an informer, which no doubt was the prime incentive.[293] In Adelong in 1885 the Chinese wife of the storekeeper Ah Yan was charged with sly grog selling. She was in full Chinese costume and could not speak English. The informer was Ah Kan. Police saw him getting the grog. He said he had paid for it, but the wife denied selling the grog, saying that it was given as a gift in connection with a festival ceremony concerned with the dead, possibly Ch'ing Ming, it having been bought for that purpose by a number of Chinese, who had each contributed towards it. The case against the wife was dismissed, but her husband was fined £30 plus costs.[294]

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

[290] *Riverine Grazier*, 2, 12 February 1892.

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

[292] *Gundagai Times*, March 1883.

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

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

February 1862 a Chinese man robbed him of £59, and in July two Chinese men stole goods valued at £14. Chinese men also robbed the premises of John Wheatley at Upper 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'. In September several Chinese again stole £14 of goods from Watson's store.[295] Neither were the Chinese averse to stealing fruit, although this crime appears to have been more a European specialty.[296] More pertinent was the practice of selling spurious gold. In 1865 a Chinese man offered seven ounces for sale, but the gold buyer was suspicious and declined. He then offered three ounces for sale at the Bank of New South Wales and sold four ounces to another gold buyer, who becoming suspicious, had the gold treated, and finding it false had the guilty party arrested.[297]

Some Chinese crimes, such as sheep, horse and saddle stealing were very Australian, and some crimes were committed against their own countrymen, adding an impulsive and hot-tempered dimension to life in the Tumut and Adelong Chinese communities. For instance, in November 1868 an unnamed Chinese man was in the Tumut gaol on a charge of cutting and maiming one of his countrymen in a quarrel.[298] And in April 1872 a Chinese man known only as Charley was sentenced to one year in the Wagga gaol for assaulting Charley Sing in an opium shop in Tumut. Following an argument, Sing was stabbed in the face, leg and arm with a pair of scissors. [299] In April 1874 Ah Gin was found guilty of stealing a purse and £2 3s from Ah Ming. They had both been in the opium shop in Tumut lying on the same bed and smoking from the one pipe. When Gin went out Ming missed his purse. A butcher at Tumut saw Gin come from the opium shop, stoop down and put something among some thistles. When he went over he found a purse and some papers.[300] In 1880 Ah Pow was given two months gaol for assaulting Ah Sam. Both men were farmers at Tumut Plains. Ah Sam was bringing horses to Tumut when Ah Pow called him names and hit him on head with a stick, throwing him down and pulling him along the ground by the hair and giving him two or three kicks for good measure. There were several European witnesses.[301]

A similar degree of angst occurred at Adelong.[302] In 1869 Ah Quong was charged with feloniously wounding Ah Hang at Upper Adelong. Ah Hang, a miner, met Quong at the Chinese camp and asked him to pay him monies he owed. Quong said that he had no money to pay and quarrelled with him, chopping him on head with a knife three times. It took Quong five weeks to recover.[303] In 1876 Ah Ti, the storekeeper at Upper Adelong, had for some days annoyed a Chinese cook living near his store, and had unsuccessfully challenged him to fight. To his surprise the cook later fronted him with the blade of a pair of sheep shears and wounded him 'dangerously'.[304] Mention has already been made of the faction fights at the Upper Adelong camp and the occasional 'fierce battles with bamboo basket poles and knives'.

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295 *Wynyard Times*, 25 February, 15, 18 July, 26 September 1862.

296 *Wynyard Times*, 30 January 1863; *Gundagai Times*, 18 March 1871.

297 *Sydney Mail*, 16 September 1865.

298 *Gundagai Times*, 21 November 1868.

299 *Wagga Express*, 8 April 1872.

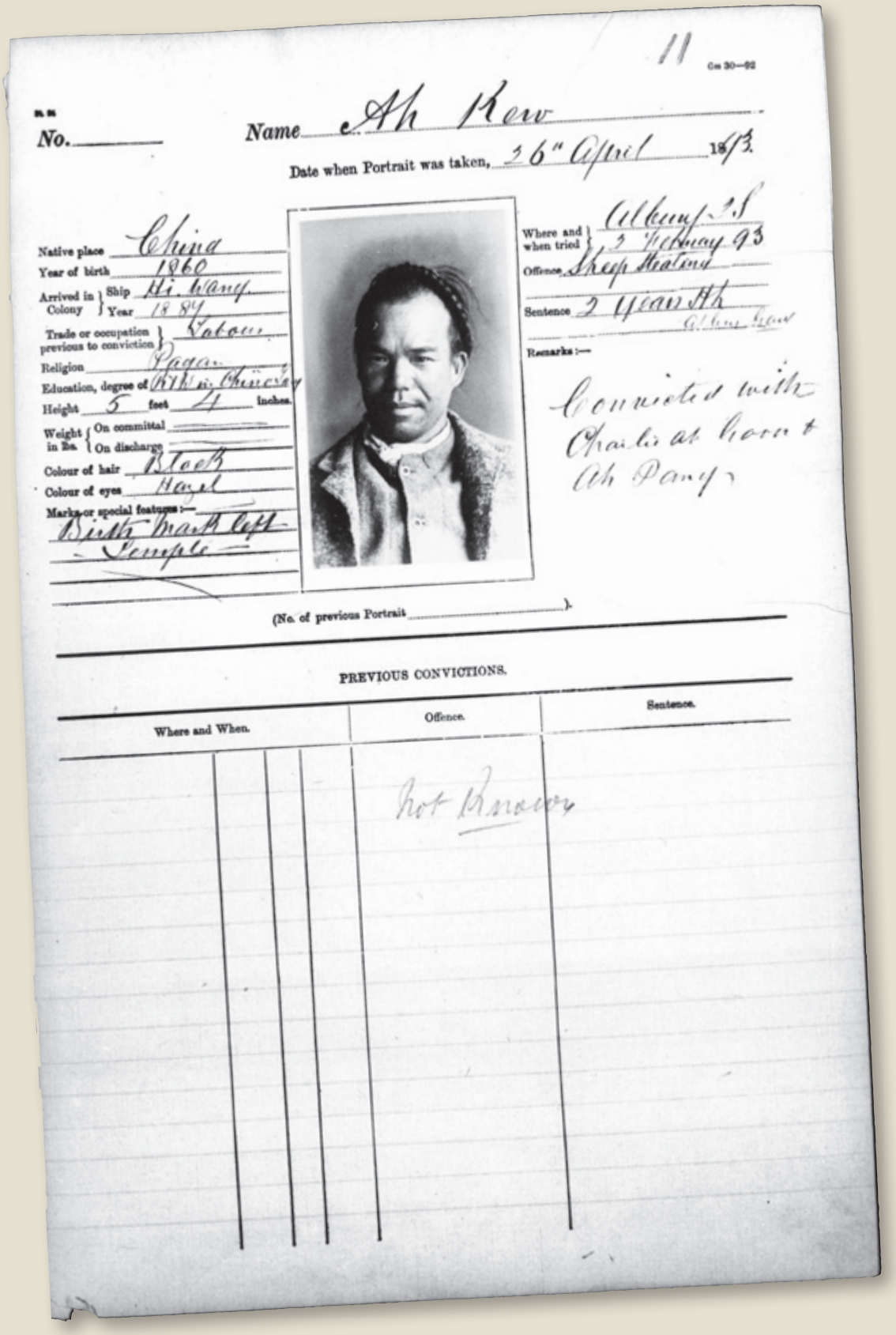
300 *Wagga Express*, 8 April 1874.

301 *Gundagai Times*, 1 June 1880.

302 *Gundagai Times*, 3 March 1876.

303 *Gundagai Times*, 27 February 1869. No account of the trial outcome is, however, available.

304 *Gundagai Times*, 3 March 1876.



No. _____ Name Ah Kew

Date when Portrait was taken, 26th 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 Nil 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 2 February 93
Offence Sheep Stealing
Sentence 2 years Hl Albury Gaol
Remarks:— Convicted with Charlie at Howe & 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

These latter incidents did not always make it to courts, however.[305]

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, pale into insignificance compared with the racial free for all with its associated 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 15s a week rather than the usual 20s. Armed with shear blades, waddies and some kerosene tins to use as drums to drown out the victims' shouts, the assailants tore down the tents of the Chinese 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'.[306]

The most infamous incident was the 'Battle of Hillston Bridge' in 1895, in which one Chinese man was killed and two severely injured. The fracas occurred on Chinese New Year and involved about 30 Chinese men and about 20 Europeans, some of whom 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. The perpetrators were brought to trial, but the lack of reliable witnesses meant that all were acquitted of manslaughter.[307]

Locally, the worst incident 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'.[308]

Many instances of physical and oral abuse were never reported to the police, and did not make it into the courts, especially when the offenders and victims were children and teenagers. 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 Doon boys all the way to church. Their father retaliated in a very practical way, buying each boy 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 living at the stables with the other apprentices and strappers, he was teased relentlessly and called names such as 'little fried rice' or 'little Chinkie'. He didn't like it and realised that unless he did something life would

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[305] Turner, *Looking Backward*, pp.33-34.

[306] Hay Historical Society Web-Site Newsletter, February 2006, No IV.

[307] *Hillston Spectator*, 2 February 1895; *Riverine Grazier*, 29 January, 5, 8, 19 February, 26 March, 5 April 1895.

[308] *Gundagai Times*, 7, 23 September, 5 October 1880.

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. For the other boys it as just as well, for the owner, Dan Lewis, appointed Ted as an 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'.[309] But happily 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-based family recalled that while the boys were taunted at school, they could hold their own. Not so the girls, particularly if they had darker skin. The girls were teased, taunted and bullied, and they were called chinks and half-castes, a girl from another family committing suicide as result. The family did not socialise with other families in town, and the children did not go to other children's places for birthdays or holidays. Some other Chinese males visited on Saturday evenings, where there was a swap of fish for pork and a shared dinner followed by cards.[310]

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

[310] Information from Allison Nye, Castlemaine, 2010.

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'.[311] 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 of Chinese New Year, for while white Australians were largely observers in these celebrations, occasionally they were invited to the feasts. For example, at Gundagai in 1880, Dang Ah Chee and Sun Yun Yek, the two main merchants, invited some European residents to dine with them. 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.[312] 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'.[313]

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. At Gundagai in 1879 the Chinese were congratulated on having set a 'praiseworthy example to the Europeans' by the generosity of their contributions to the hospital. [314] Dang Ah Chee was renowned for his generosity. He was a major benefactor of the Tumut hospital, which cost about £1300 to build, and donated £100 towards its construction. In 1883 Ah Chee donated a baptismal font to the Presbyterian Church. The same level of generosity was evident elsewhere in the Riverina. For example, the *Riverine Grazier* carried regular lists of European and Chinese contributors to the Hay hospital. 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. The Deniliquin Chinese were equally generous; with 52 contributors from the town in 1875 and 66 in 1899. [315]

The Chinese also took part in local concerts, fetes and processions, particularly where fund raising was involved, and were ready contributors to other worthy causes. At Albury in 1876 the Chinese took part in a procession to celebrate the visit of the Governor of NSW, Sir Hercules Robinson, and in 1897 they took part in a parade in aid of a fund to erect a Queen's memorial wing to the Albury hospital, and in celebrations to mark the Queen's Jubilee. They wore 'strikingly picturesque' costumes and were accompanied by a Chinese band. The reporter commented that the 'Chinese in the kindest and most

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[311] A.T. Yarwood, *Asian Immigration to Australia. The Background to Exclusion 1896-1923*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1964, p.117.

[312] *Gundagai Times*, 13 February 1880.

[313] *Gundagai Times*, 28 January 1887.

[314] *Gundagai Times*, 31 January 1879.

[315] *Riverine Grazier*, 8, 16 February 1879; Deniliquin and District Historical Society, *Chinese subscriptions to the Deniliquin hospital 1872-1908*.

Opening of the Tumut hospital. Dang Ah Chee, centre back row.
National Archives of Australia

self-sacrificing manner threw themselves into the enterprise enthusiastically, and were very largely instrumental in making its unqualified success'.[316] In the Hay district in April 1891, several Chinese were contributors to a fund to help people affected by a serious fire at Booligal.[317] At Hillston in 1894 a number of Chinese took part in the hospital fete procession, including a Chinese band and a Chinese cook shop four-in-hand. They also participated in two Chinese races at the games that followed. The Chinese also donated fireworks to the Hay hospital fetes.[318] Chinese gardeners also entered and won prizes in the horticultural shows. In 1891 Ah Poo, one of the Yabtree growers near Mundarlo, took first and third prize at the Wagga show for his tobacco.[319]

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries Europeans and Chinese led largely separate lives. However, there were many instances of affection at the departure of a long term Chinese resident for China, or at his funeral, and instances of genuine friendship.[320] The death of the Adelong storekeeper, Ah Nam, is a case in point. His funeral cortege was one of largest witnessed in Adelong for some time and all the leading business people attended, with at least 600 at the graveside. The Rev. Soares read the Church of England service, and in a short address alluded to the 'honest manliness of his character,

316 *Albury Banner and Wodonga Express*, 4 November 1876; *Ovens & Murray Advertiser,* 19 June 1897; *Albury Daily News & Wodonga Chronicle*, 23, 24, 28 June 1897.

317 *Riverine Grazier*, 7 April 1891.

318 *Riverine Grazier*, 12 August 1892, 3 April 1894, 23 April 1897, 2, 16 May 1899.

319 *Riverine Grazier*, 19 October 1894; R.F. Horsely, *Diaries, 1876-1891*; Emily Horsely. *A Gleam of Sunshine. The story of the Horsely family of Yabtree, Gundagai, NSW*.

320 *Junee Democrat*, 12 August 1903.

for he was always ready to assist charities and each religious denomination received a share of his liberality'. According to the *Gundagai Times* editor

> 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.

A short time before 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.[321]

Similar tributes were paid to another Gundagai resident, Dang Ah Hack, on his death in 1905.The *Gundagai Times* stated that he was one of the wealthiest residents in Gundagai. He 'was exceedingly popular, and was admired for his honorable business methods, his shrewd commercial qualities, and his large-heartedness and charity'. By his death

> Gundagai had lost one of its most honorable and successful business men. His purse was always open for all serving cases and for the relief of distress, and he will be sadly missed by the many who have partaken of his bounty.[322]

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. Many Chinese men, particularly the storekeepers, were Christian converts and were married, mostly to European women, although some married Chinese women. An early instance of the latter took place in 1880, the arrival of the Chinese wife of the Adelong storekeeper, Kum Hang Long, in Gundagai en route to Adelong, causing quite a sensation. 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, her dress being of richly embroidered satin. She wore no hat or bonnet, but had a quantity of choice flowers in her hair'.[323] 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.[324] After 12 months her Chinese maid was sold to a Chinese storekeeper in 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. [325]

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 in the Riverina and elsewhere in Australia. The Chinese 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 Mcgregor have commented, many Chinese men in Australia supported 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

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321 *Gundagai Times*, 3, 6 July 1888.

322 *Albury Banner*, 26 May 1905.

323 *Gundagai Times*, 16 April 1880.

324 *Gundagai Times* 20 April 1880.

325 *Gundagai Times*, 26 April 1881.

Look Duey Sluey's photograph for her certificate of exemption from the dictation test.

National Archives of Australia

Foot Chung c 1909.

Private collection

Dang Charles Doon and Esther with Bob, Ted, Eric and Betty. Doon returned to China in about 1910 or 1911 where he married Esther Gow. Because of the White Australia Policy she was unable to migrate to Australia for another 14 years.

Private collection

or adopting sons was part of this strategy.[326] For these men, tradition and family ties in China were still very important.

Emboldened by an intricate system of inter-marriage, clan and family allegiances and networks many Chinese men went on to create miniature dynasties within their local district. The life of Dang Ah Chee illustrates some of these elements, for together with his brother Dang Bown Sluey and other clan members they formed a business dynasty that endured for many years, in the process sponsoring other Chinese men from the same clan to work for them. 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 one of his returns to China acquired a concubine.[327]

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 and a child in China. 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 Ah Hack of Gundagai, with whom he was closely associated in business matters. 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 received a modest lump sum and monthly stipend and their house in Hong Kong. She later took the family to England.[328] Dang Ah Hack also had a first wife and children, a son and a daughter, in China. He had five sons and three daughters in Australia.[329]

Another clan member was Foot Chung, a cousin of Dang Ah Chee. Foot Chung was naturalised in NSW on 20 October 1883, and applied for exemption from the dictation test in 1909. The only question for the immigration officials was whether the photo of the person claiming to be Foot Chung was the same as the person on the naturalisation certificate. This led to a convoluted round of questions and interviews by the Tumut and Gundagai police. Senior Sergeant Costello from Tumut was informed by Chin Wee and Dang Loon, who were partners in the Tiy Loong Company, Tumut, that the photo was of Foot Chung. They had worked with him at Ah Chee's stores at Tumut and Gundagai, where had had gone under the names of Woon Yee and Sing Chung. Two other Tumut storekeepers, Ah Sing and Ah Loy, and Ah Kin, a labourer, also verified the photo. Several Europeans recognised the photo as that of a Chinese man who was farming at Tumut Plains with Ah Sing and at Lacmalac with Loon Hee He, about 20 years ago, but did not know his name. Sergeant Anderson from Gundagai had the photo positively identified as that of Foot Chung by Yee Hing and as Sing Chung by Wing Gooey, both residents of Gundagai. Yee Hing had been living in Gundagai for 20 years. Wing Gooey was a former resident of

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[326] 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.

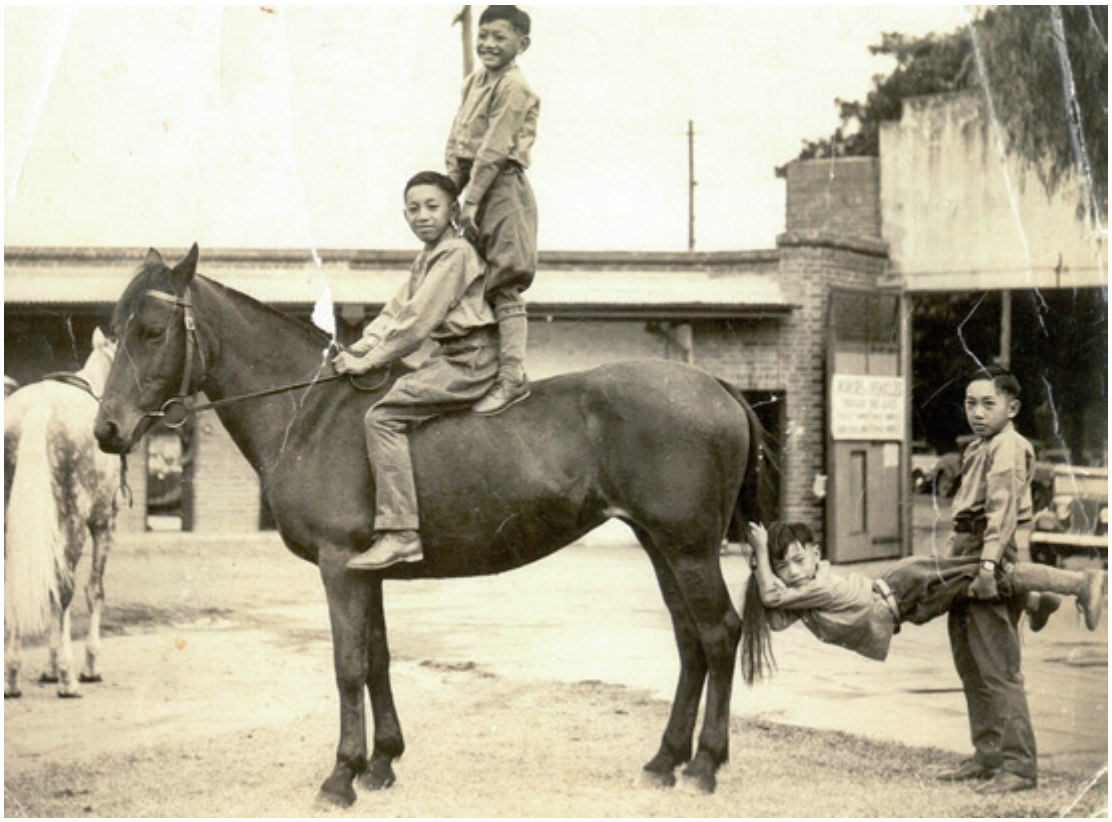
[327] letter from Josephine Oh to Kate Bagnall, 20 October 2004; letter from Josephine Oh to Pam Archer, 30 June 1988.

[328] Josephine Oh to Kate Bagnall, 20 October 2004; Series SP 244/2, C05/5679, National Archives of Australia (NAA), Sydney.

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

The young Doon boys were talented and passionate footballers and played with the Junior Anglican (JA) and Young Anglican (YA) teams in Tumut. Bob Ted, John and Eric are all in the photograph.

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

Tumut, and had lived in Gundagai for 'some little time past'. When Wing Gooey knew Sing Chung he was in the employ of Ah Chee at Tumut. In his submission to the authorities Foot Chung submitted that he had leased land at Lacmalac from Dang Ah Chee and had farmed there for two years. While in Hong Kong Foot Chung had worked in Dang Chee's business on Queens Road.[330]

The Doon family from Tumut provide an excellent example of the ability of the Chinese people to establish themselves successfully in regional Australia and become an important part of the local community. According to his obituary writer, Dang Charles Doon was born in China in 1878 and came to Australia with his uncle when he was 13 years old. Family members state, however, that he came out to Australia on his own, accompanying his uncle's (more than likely Dang Ah Chee) merchandise. At age 35 he returned to China where he married a woman by the name of 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.

Charles and Esther had a large family. Eight of their children were born in Tumut: Eric, Bob, Ted, Betty, John, Grace, Bonnie and Joyce. Richard did not emigrate until 1938. Sadly, 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. His obituary writer described Charles 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.[331]

The young Doon boys were talented and passionate footballers and played with the Junior Anglican (JA) and Young Anglican (YA) teams. In a report of a Monte Carr Cup challenge game in 1941 involving the JA team, the reporter commented that:

> Bob Doon (captain) playing his usual splendid and dashing game, opened the scoring for JA and Ted Doon converted ... In a brilliant game (Bob) displayed an exceptional turn of speed, tackling and handling well, and piled on 12 points for his side in scoring four good tries... '

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.[332] Grace Ching (née Doon) recalls that her parents and siblings were always welcome in other people's homes, and the children invited to birthday parties and the like.[333]

Charles and his sons raced their own horses at local and district meetings, two of the more successful ones being Oroko and Tumut Lass. 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

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[330] Series SP42, C1910/126, NAA, Sydney.

[331] Andrew Junor, 'Chung On: Moonee Ponds and the lemon chicken long boom', Honours thesis, University of Melbourne, 2010, pp. 20-21; *Tumut and Adelong Times*, 18 November 1955, 10 November 1978, 20 April 1993.

[332] Discussions with Ted Doon, 2010.

[333] Conversation with Grace Ching, May 2012.

Improver's Handicap at 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.[334] 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 travelled to Melbourne to support the brothers.

Ted Doon recalled that he wanted for be a jockey from the earliest days. While still at school he did track work at Tumut, getting up at 4 am to ride his bicycle 11 km to the track, then after work riding back and milking the family cow before going to school. He did track work after school as well. When he was 14 he worked as an apprentice to Danny Lewis at Randwick, and went on to become one of Sydney's leading jockeys. He won the Sydney apprentice's premiership in 1944-45 and had numerous big cup wins in the years to come, such as the AJC Metropolitan, Summer Cup (twice), Christmas Cup, Carrington Stakes (twice), Tattersall's Plate, Canterbury Cup and the Canterbury Stakes. Later, he left the metropolitan scene to take up racing in the country, at places such as Canberra, Griffith, Wagga Wagga and Bega. In the 1950s he rode overseas, having great success in Sri Lanka and India. When he returned he lived in Canberra, where he became the leading jockey for 20 years, taking his career tally to more than 2000. Ted won eight races on the Melbourne Cup winner Arwon, when the horse was trained in Canberra by John Morrisey. He retired from racing in the late 1980s, but continued to ride track work for leading trainers at Rosehill for several years.[335]

Ted passed away suddenly on 19 November 2011. Neville Layt, who rode with and against Ted, said that 'Teddy couldn't do enough for anyone. He was a very special person in the racing game', and 'one in a million'… 'He was gifted, he was up there with the [best]'. Keith Dryden, a horse owner, put Ted's success down to his unique understanding with each horse he rode. He was one of the best horsemen he had ever seen, 'This day and age we don't get too many jockeys that are great horsemen because the game's changed and the jockeys are specialised in race riding'.[336] Ted was often offside with the racing administrators for breaching the rules, with the charges ranging from not allowing horses to run on their merits to tampering with the scales. May Doon, his sister in law, described him as a 'larrikin who could talk his way out of anything - and he often needed to'. One story is that a leading QC declared that should he ever be charged with murder, forget about hiring him a lawyer, 'Get me Teddy Doon'.[337] Ted had four children, one of whom, Michelle Black, with her husband Rodney, owns Creations Jewellery in the Style Arcade at Manuka. Their son Ben designs and makes the jewellery, and daughter Natalie and daughter in law Kate help in the store.[338]

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 1952. He worked at first in his father's business in Tumut, before becoming a restaurant owner in Sydney. He was, however, unable to contact his family in China and feared the worst. The family was not reunited until the early 1950s. In 1954

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[334] *Daily Advertiser*, 3 10 March 1962.

[335] *Sun Herald*, 26 July 1981; *Daily Telegraph*, 4 May 1888; personal reminiscences from Ted Doon, 2010, *Racing and Sports*, 26 November 2011.

[336] *Canberra Times*, 23 November 2011.

[337] *Tumut and Adelong Times*, 22 November 2011.

[338] Discussions with Ted Doon, 2010.

Richard bought a half share in the Chung On Café in Moonee Ponds, Melbourne, and later became the sole owner. The café soon became a local icon. In 1970 he became a Parliamentary member of the Taiwanese Upper House under special provisions which allowed Chinese people to be nominated for Parliament in recognition of the very large number of overseas Taiwanese people, or Chinese people with Tawianese allegiance or affiliation. 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 Taiwanese Government, later becoming director of the Chinese Cultural Community Centre in Little Bourke Street.[339]

Richard had contacts and influence at the very highest levels in white Australia, including the DLP Senator Frank McManus, and the local federal MP, and he 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. On his 80th birthday he was honoured by the then Premier, Jeff Kennett, the Chinese community and the City of Essendon. His funeral service in 1995 drew 300 people. The President of the Taiwan Government sent a sympathy scroll, and the Government's National Party flag was laid on top of the coffin. His son Danny also became widely involved in civic affairs, serving as president of Melbourne's Chinatown, president of the Chinese Restaurateur's Association of Victoria, and vice-president of the Moonee Ponds Chamber of Commerce. He organised the establishment of the Victorian Elderly Chinese Hostel in Ascot Vale in the 1990s.[340]

Eric Doon was a sports lover and a lifetime member of the Tumut football club, fulfilling the roles of president, treasurer, team manager and groundsman. He was also a racehorse owner, and supported everything his children and grandkids were involved in, from ballet and horse riding to motorbike racing.[341] Eric and Zelda Fuller married in Sydney in 1954 and returned to Tumut to great acclaim, several hundred people gathering at the Oddfellow's hall to welcome them. At the hall Mr French expressed his wishes that Eric and Zeld would continue to be a shining example to the young people and help build a better Tumut. Mr Gaul said that all appreciated Eric and Zelda's fine qualities and the fact that they had already given so much to the public life of Tumut.[342] In the years to follow Eric and Zelda would continue their earlier involvement with the Anglican Youth (YA) of Tumut, Eric as Treasurer and Zelda as President. They were both very popular, and their consistent involvement over a decade was greatly appreciated by many people. Zelda's father, the Hon. Arthur Fuller, was the ALP member for the Hume Electorate in the House of Representatives in 1943, 1946, 1951 and 1961, and was Government Whip for a term. He was highly respected in the Tumut district and the Hume Electorate. Later, Eric and Zelda moved into the hotel business (in semi retirement) at Tamworth and Toowomba. They retired permanently in Queensland.

In one sense Eric and Zelda continued their association with the Riverina through Jenny McIntyre, their eldest daughter. Jenny has been a teacher and educator for almost 30 years, and taught in Sydney and the Riverina. In the early 90s she was seconded to her regional office, first as a project officer and then a consultant sharing professional development and her training expertise with over 300 schools and 3000 teachers. One of her tasks was to coordinate the regional training development program for

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339 Junor, *Chung On*, pp.20-33; discussions with Danny Doon, September 2011; information from Grace Ching, October 2011.

340 Junor, *Chung On*, pp.20-33; discussions with Danny Doon, September 2011; information from Grace Ching, October 2011.

341 Information from Lel Doon, September 2011.

342 *Tumut and Adelong Times*, 18 January 1954.

teachers across the greater Riverina. She was the principal at Fig Tree Pocket State School in Brisbane for about 10 years and now assists *Learnlife* (a boutique professional development provider), which provides professional assistance to teachers in Queensland and elsewhere. She also assists the MindFit Kids organisation.[343]

It was through Eric and Zelda that the younger members of the Doon family experienced social life in a country town. In their positions with the YA (Young Anglican) Association, they organized the Annual Debutante Ball in Tumut for many years. They were also responsible for the inaugural Young Anglican Camp held at the Tumut Showground, with young people from many country centres in the Riverina attending. Three out of four weekends they organised social tennis events with the Cramptons of Tumut Plains and at the Tumut tennis courts. These were very successful events and greatly enjoyed by the young folk of Tumut. Zelda later instigated the purchase of a transportable building from the Blowering Dam/Talbingo area for use as the YA house, and it served as an extra social venue for the younger generation. After a decade or so, the building was moved to Forest Street and used as St Andrew's Sunday School.[344]

Betty, the oldest of Charles and Esther's daughters, has a very special place in the family's memories. She attended Tumut State Primary and Intermediate High School from 1933 to September 1943 and during that time formed some very close friendships, which continued for many years. Betty was taught piano lessons by Miss Ethel Bridle for three years and gained many certificates. She also taught Sunday school at All Saints Anglican Church in Tumut, and along with her sisters was a member of the church choir. Her lifestyle changed abruptly with the sudden death of Esther in September 1943. It was the end of her schooling, for now she had the responsibility of looking after the family. Her main duties included the cooking of lunch and dinner with the help of her father Charles, who had recently semi-retired from the family business. As there were many other chores, Betty soon rostered out jobs to each of the girls (Grace 13 and Bonnie 12), but not to Joyce, who was only nine years of age. Eric had returned to Sydney to completehis wool classing course, and Bob and Charles were busy with the wool, hides and skin buying business and were oftenout for the whole day, which meant packing their lunch. When all were home, there was usually a hot lunch followed by a Chinese meal for dinner. The family laundry was massive, with a change of overalls and work clothes every Monday, so in the end someone came in to do the washing at least once a week. One of Betty's memorable duties was to brush and plait Joyce's long hair before going to school. John made sure there was always a supply of cut stove wood ready for each day, while Betty attended to all the cooking chores. There were many days when some jobs could not be completed, so the tasks were done on Friday or Saturday.[345]

Social life for the four Doon girls began with each making their entry into society through the YA Ball, which was organised by Eric and Zelda each year. It was one of the social events of the year in Tumut. One year the YA Association organised their annual debutante ball on Betty's 19th birthday. Betty had a 'beautiful embroidered lace gown' made by Mrs Ted Brown, who had included the Doon girls as four of her many clients. Her brother Eric was her partner. The debutante of the ball was chosen by visitors from Wagga, and Betty was the winner. Following Betty's 21st birthday the family decided that it was time for her to move to Sydney for a better social life. She worked in Richard's restaurant in Manly, and sometime later met her future husband Gordon at the Dragon Ball held by the Sydney Chinese Community.[346]

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[343] Information provided by Grace Ching, March 2012.

[344] Recollections from Grace Ching and Zelda Doon, September 2011.

[345] Information from Grace Ching, October 2011.

[346] Information from Grace Ching, October 2011.

Often Betty and Grace would travel to Sydney from Tumut for the Dragon Ball. On one occasion Gordon introduced Grace to Ray Ching, who had just arrived back in Sydney, after spending two years in Darwin, where he met up with his step sister, Florrie and family. In Darwin he conducted a shoe repair business, and on weekends would go crocodile hunting. Ray successfully applied for a job as a radio and electrical technician on the Snowy Mountains Scheme and moved to Cooma. Having every third weekend off, Ray came to Tumut for visits, while Grace continued with her employment at the local solicitors (N.B. Mackenzie & Orr). Having two daughters engaged to be married, their father, Charles, suggested they should have a double wedding, which took place in Tumut on Monday, November 6, 1950. The reception was held at the Royal Hotel, Tumut, where Charles had been employed as a weekend cook in theearly 1920s. Betty and Gordon had one son, Gordon, and all returned to Tumut late in 1955, after the death of Charles. Gordon relieved Eric of the bookkeeping of the C DOON & SONS Transport Company, and built a home in Merrivale Street. A daughter, Julie, was born in 1961. In early 1965 Wagga Wagga Technical College offered several night courses in Tumut several times each week, the teachers travelling from Wagga. Grace was interested in several courses offered - even though she was busy with the business, and Ray encouraged her to take on a three year course with the option of completing a fourth year. Ray had an interest in Judo and the Tumut Town Band, and the children loved seeing him in the town band on Anzac Day, Christmas, and on other special occasions. At weekends the family would go for drives to the snow in winter and Talbingo Dam, and later, Lake Blowering, especially when there were visitors from Sydney and Melbourne. In 1969 Grace and Ray decided to move to Melbourne, where Grace still lives. Ray passed away in October 1977, 'a gentle person who believed in hard work and a good sound education will make dreams come true'.[347] Betty passed away on Christmas Eve 2014.

Bob Doon was another very highly regarded member of the Tumut community. He had been part of the family trucking business, and after retiring had worked with his son Peter and his wife Carol in their business, Tumut Bricks and Pavers. Bob contributed enormously to the local 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.[348] On his passing in August 2007 he was described as

> 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.[349]

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. Some of the organisations included the Tumut V.I.E.W. Club, the Tumut Art Society, All Saints Church and Lions and Lions Ladies, the Tumut Choral Society and Tumut Meals on Wheels. As part of her pastoral work she visited the local hospital, nursing home and Blakeney Lodge several times each week. 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

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347 Information from Grace Ching, October 2011.

348 *Tumut and Adelong Times*, 8 April 2004, 28 August 2007.

349 *Tumut and Adelong Times*, 28 August 2007.

May and Bob Doon with baby Robert, May 1956.
Private collection

pastoral care, church activity and the Lions Club.[350]

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. Betty took care of Tom and Thelma's daughter Janette on Saturdays for two or more years while Thelma worked in Tom's store. Gordon Wee, who later brought his wife from China, lived in the Chinese camp before buying a restaurant in Wynyard Street. Gordon's family were close friends of the Doon and Shai Hee families, and kept in contact after they moved to Junee and Melbourne. They had a market garden in Junee and in Melbourne at Narre Warren North. The Melbourne garden was later subdivided into house blocks and from then on the family prospered.[351]

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, the men having 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, 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.[352]

In 2007 Charles's grandson Ramon Doon 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. A further

[350] *Tumut and Adelong Times*, 16 July 1991, 27 January, 8 April 2004, 28 August 2007.

[351] Information from Grace Ching, March 2012.

[352] Information from Grace Ching, October 2011.

trip took place in September 2013.[353] Another illustration of the family's links with China was the tie between Dick Doon and the ancestral village. Originally a teacher in the village, he was also involved in the administration of the district and had been an adviser to the village mayor. Once in Australia he sent money back regularly to the village for maintenance of the family cemetery, for in the village there were some 50 or 60 families with the same name. After World War II broke out 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. His son Danny migrated in 1950 under these provisions.[354] The family has held several reunions, the first of which was in Tumut in 1993, and the most recent in Melbourne in 2013. Sixty descendants from all over Australia, including grandchildren and great grandchildren, attended the 1993 function.[355]

The Tumut-based Shai Hee family was also heavily involved in the local community, and maintained strong links with China.

William Shai Hee's Chinese businesses included a cotton spinning mill in Shanghai and a bank in Guangzhou. On one of his trips William married Chin See, but had to return to Australia to attend to his businesses, leaving Chin See in the home village, Hem-Ning, Hoe-Sun, (near Guangzhou), where his first son, Ted, was born.

A year later William brought his wife and son to Australia, and they lived 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. 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's until the family could arrive in 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, Eva 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. Allan and Joe also stayed for a while longer. Allan had been working in Tumut as a motor mechanic, and continued this profession in Sydney after he left Tumut, working at Sutton Motors, Ashfield until his retirement. Joe finished his Leaving Certificate and became Captain of the Tumut High School and Captain of the Senior Rugby League football team. He is still recognised in Tumut for his contribution to rugby league. Later he became a builder with his own company. Bob was also a builder and later changed careers and became well known in Paddy's Markets, where he sold framed prints. Bill was a bus driver for State Transit and an inspector at the time of his retirement. Reg married Elaine Sung from Manilla in northern NSW. Her mother, Emily, married a Chinese chef from Sydney. Her brothers were stockmen and drovers. Emily's grandmother, Sarah Pidgeon, was European and was disowned by the family for having married a Chinese man.[356] In Sydney, Reg operated a refrigerator and washing machine repair business for about 24 years, and employed about six people. Jean married Herbert Chin and ran a corner store in

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[353] *Tumut and Adelong Times*, 14 September 2008; information from Ramon Doon, September 2011, Grace Ching and Carolyn Ufer, October 2011 and May 2012.

[354] Discussions with Danny Doon, September 2011.

[355] *Tumut and Adelong Times*, 20 April 1993.

[356] Information from Chris Shai Hee, March 2012.

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, Wille and Allan, Eva and nanny, Chin See and Reg, Jean and Ted.

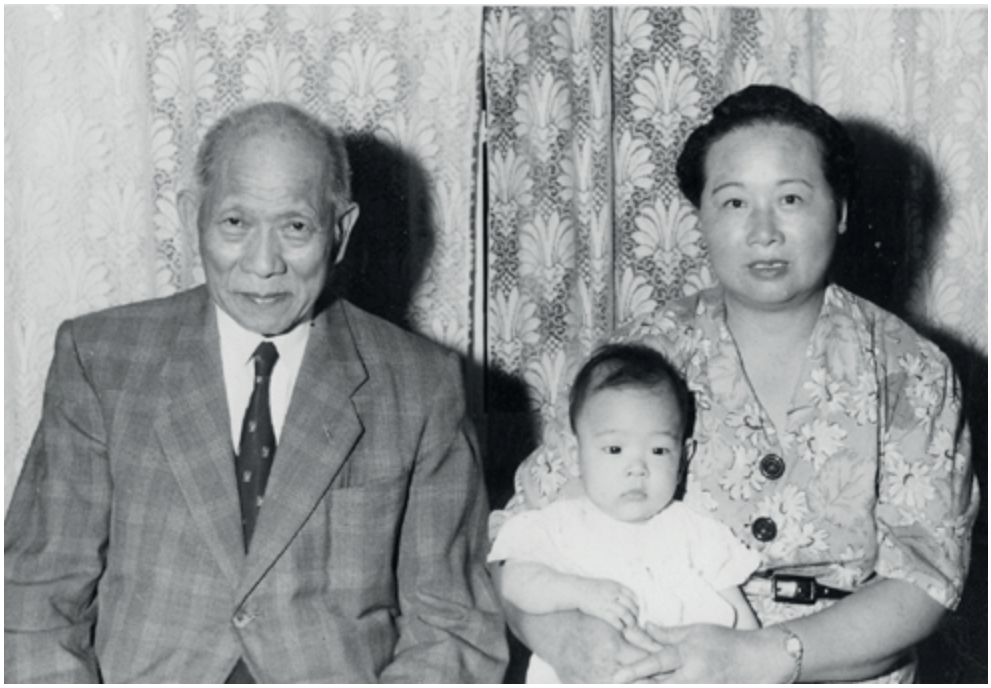
Private collection

The Shai Hee family, Tumut 1945. Back row: Jean & Bobby, Allan, Eva and Reg. Front: Margaret, Eileen, Willie and Joe.
Private collection

Leichardt, Sydney for about 40 years.[357]

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 oldest of the children, but more vulnerable, and his expulsion had a affected him seriously. 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 ever being invited into other people's homes (other than Chinese

[357] Joe and Reg Shai Hee, 'An Anecdote on the life of Chin See Shai-Hee', unpublished reminiscences, Sydney, 2004;information from Chris Shai Hee, May 2012.



William and Chin See Shai Hee with grandson Chris in 1959.
Private collection

homes).[358]

Either directly or indirectly, however, the family had high level contacts elsewhere, in particular with the Chuey family. The importance of this connection was brought 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 permission to remain here for short periods only. Rose approached a neighbour, Clarrie Hogue, who wrote to the Minister for Immigration, Harold Holt, and 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.[359]

The Yan family have also been long term residents of the Tumut and Adelong district. Thomas Yan (formerly Thomas Ah Yan), the patriarch, was a gold miner and storekeeper at Kiandra. His partner, Catherine Wortz, was German-born and the couple had seven children, all of whom were well known identities in Kiandra. A son, George, was a carrier, selector and grazier in the Kiandra Yarrangobilly area, retiring in 1945 and living in Tumut. In his obituary it was stated that he was 'one of Nature's gentlemen and did not have an enemy in the world. No stockman or traveller ever passed his residence without receiving a bed or a meal, if required'. George married Clare Jane Hetherington and had 11 children.

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[358] Discussions with Reg and Joe Shai Hee, May 2012.

[359] 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.

A recent photograph of Chin See Shai Hee with her grandson, Chris Shai Hee.
Private collection

Maggie Yan and Jacob Wilson on their wedding day.
Private collection

Yen family skiing, Maggie Yen looking directly at the camera.

Private collection

He was an adherent of the Anglican Church.[360] Three of George's sons, Frank, Arthur and Eric also lived in Tumut. Frank and Arthur had been cattle farmers in the Lobb's Hole area, before coming to Tumut to live. Frank was also a racehorse breeder, and his horses won many races. Eric operated a gravel truck before his retirement. Another son, Reginald Thomas (Tom Yan junior), lived at nearby Adelong. According to one of his daughters, Gwen Skeers, Tom was a sheep station manager near Adaminaby and came to Adelong to live following the construction of Lake Eucumbene. He worked as a logger, taking the felled logs out of the forest to waiting trucks for transport to the mills. Tom's son, Kevin, and his son, Gavin, still live at Adelong. Gwen's husband, Tom, quarried granite stone, which he sold to stonemasons in Tumut such as Terry Sturt.[361]

One of Tom Yan's daughters, Barbara, married George Ball, a hops farmer in the King Valley, near Wangaratta. Her children, Frank, Jack and Emily, often visited Tumut on their holidays, and George and Barbara returned to Tumut to live before settling in Katoomba. Another daughter, Mary, went to Herberton in Queensland, but still stayed in touch and occasionally visited Tumut. Another daughter, Maggie, was one of Australia's first ski champions, and married a Lebanese-born hotelier in Kiandra, Jacob Wilson.[362] Historian Judith Hickson has written at length on the involvement of the Chinese people, and in particular the Yan family, in skiing at Kiandra. The Kiandra snowshoe Club held its first 'special' race for Chinese members in the 1860s. Local identity, Bill Hughes, 'recalled the special races for the Chinese miners on the field, with a heat of a dozen or so Chinese streaming down Township Hill'. In August 1894 *Freeman's Journal* described the Chinese race, won by Ah Fat, as 'exceptional fun', while in 1900 an article in the *Town and Country Journal* recounted preparations for a snowshoe carnival in Kiandra where 'Chinese and Chinese children, like animated Japanese dolls [were seen] all laughing, joking, jeering, falling here and there and everywhere'. According to Judith, the achievements of Barbara, Margaret and Mary Yan overshadowed those of many other women competitors. The *Cooma Express* on 9 August 1895 described Miss M Yan as 'a perfect artist on the shoes'. In 1896 the winner of

[360] Yan, George (1871-1952), Obituaries Australia, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, http://oa.anu.edu.au/obituary/yan-george-1679/text1802.

[361] Information from Rhonda Sturt, Tumut, June 2013, and Gwen Skeers, Adelong, October 2013.

[362] Information from Rhonda Sturt and Pat Howard, Tumut, June 2013.

Maggie Yan on horseback.

Private collection

Kiandra snow picnic for the Yan family.

Private collection

the major downhill event was Frank Yan, who was presented with a gold fob watch and a pair of inlaid hickory skis by NSW M.P. Mr G (Gus) Miller.[363]

Maggie and Jacob Wilson moved to Tumut in 1927 to run the Commercial Hotel. They ran the hotel until 1937, then managed a dry cleaning and laundry business until the 1960s. A granddaughter, Rhonda Sturt, recalls the close relationships between her family and other Chinese families in Tumut. All her siblings were invited to the Doon family banquets and social functions, including the family weddings, and to functions at the Loon and Young family homes, and reciprocated this hospitality.[364]

Grace Ching remembers Maggie, or as she was later known, Nanna, as having a very happy disposition and a contagious friendly smile.She wore beautiful long jade earrings and was always dressed impeccably, even whilst doing her household duties. Her husband Jacob conducted a very busy laundry for decades. It was very popular with local businesses such as hotels, motels and boarding houses,The Tumut Council camping ground offered accommodation in servicedcabins and caravans in 1940s/early 1950s when the Snowy Mountains Scheme was in full swing, and brought in many customers to all localbusinesses, including the laundry. Her memories of the Wilson family and the daughters Enid, Marie & Topsy were of a busy family involved in the hustle and bustle of a well organised laundry service,Later, Ray Neden became an employee and later married Marie, Rhonda Sturt's mother. Enid married Dave Livingstone, the local electrician, and Topsy married well know local Jockey Jack Hegharty.

During preparations for the double wedding of Betty and Grace, their father Charles Doon wished to ask Nanna Wilson to represent his deceased wife, Esther, at the reception to be held at the Royal Hotel, Tumut, where he had worked for many years as a cook.Some time before the big day, Nanna Wilson asked whether her eldest daughter, Marie, could take her place. Nanna was very shy and felt that Marie would know the guests better than herself and do a better job of representing Esther.Marie proved to be the ideal hostess. From that period onwards, the Wilson family became close friends, especially the male members who would meet daily at the local pub for drinks. The group became quite big and there were more than twenty drinkers in the groupeach day. That was the daily contact the male members of the Doon, Wilson, Neden and Livingstone families kept for decades to come. Information from Grace Ching, March 2015.

Many times during 1930s to 1950s, the Doons visited the Wilsons at their laundry premises. Mid morning on that day, there would be a phone call from Mr Charlie Hibbens, from the local slaughtering yards. Mr Hibbens saved all the offal (heart, kidneys, brains. Lambs fry, etc) for Esther, and she made delicious stir fries and hot pot from these free items. On the way home the family would call in at Wilson's and leave some of the food with them, including meat and bones for the dog. Nanna Wilson would be immaculately dressed with a well pressed white apron. She would be half way through cooking lunch for the family or baking a cake, and Grace and her sisters were often recipients of a slice of freshly baked cake. During Chinese New Year Esther made an extra special tray of dumplings for the Wilson family. Decades after the double wedding male members of these two families continued their ritual meeting at the local pub - and hundreds of times they were accompanied by their spouses to attend functions held at the different local pubs of a Friday night and weekends. These regular meetings were the basis of a wonderful friendship between two Tumut families.

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[363] Judith Hickson, 'Chinese Skiers of Kiandra: Object and narrative', *reCollections*, Vol.8, No.2, 2014, pp.3-4; Lindsay M. Smith, 'Cold Hard Cash', A Study of Chinese ethnicity in archaeology at Kiandra, New South Wales, M.A, ANU, 1998, pp.51-55.

[364] Information from Rhonda Sturt, Tumut, June 2013.

Adaminaby in the 1890s, Booshang's store in the foreground.
Patrick Shand collection

While the decision by Rhonda's grandparents to settle in Tumut was driven by commercial and educational opportunities, rather than family and clan ties, the family had been on close personal terms with the Chinese community in Tumut while in Kiandra, and had very close contacts with the Yen family from Adaminaby. Following the closure of the Kiandra school two of Maggie's sisters stayed at the Yen family home during the school term. Arthur and Dill Yen and Arthur's sister Maude ran a general store and butcher's shop in Adaminaby. Rhonda described it as an 'Aladdin's cave', with all types of goods, some hanging from the ceiling. A brother, Geoff, had a garage and picture theatre. Rhonda has very fond memories of Geoff, whom she described as a 'larger than life' character. She remembers him as a large, tall man, very flamboyant and gregarious, friendly and always smiling. He often visited Tumut as a member of the Adaminaby bowling team and stayed with her mother, Marie (Tiny) Neden, or her sisters (Rhonda's aunts) Topsy and Enid. She has little recollection, however, of Arthur's other brothers, Frank and Victor, or of another sister, Minnie. Pat Howard, one of Rhonda's cousins, also recalled the very close personal relations between her family and other Chinese families at Tumut and the Yen family at Adaminaby. When her family lived at Kiandra, the Tumut Chinese families would visit and take part in snow picnics and skiing. Some of the Yens went to Sydney to live, so her mother and grandmother's homes were popular stopover places on their visits back to Kiandra and Adaminaby.[365]

The Yen family also enjoyed skiing. According to Judith Hickson, Geoff Yen's daughter, Odette, remembered her father as an active cross-country skier, who led groups on cross-country expeditions in the 1940s and 1950s. All the family became keen and accomplished skiers.[366] The National Historical Collection of the National Museum of Australia contains a pair of wooden skis, which were owned by Geoff Yen. They were retrieved from his Adaminaby property in 1958.

[365] Information from Rhonda Sturt and Pat Howard, Tumut, June 2013, October 2014

[366] Hickson, 'Chinese Skiers of Kiandra: Object and narrative', p.7.

Patrick White with his bulldog, Soames, on Bolaro Station, Adaminaby in 1931.
The Australian *newspaper September 1, 2012*

The Yen family were not the only Chinese family in Adaminaby. Charles Yen (formerly Charles Chun Yen) migrated to Australia in the 1850s aged 17, and came out on the same boat as John Booshang (Du Boo Shang). They worked together in a coal mine at Bendigo, then both joined the gold rush to Kiandra in the early 1860s. One winter season John helped carry provisions to the camp when the snow was too deep for horses to travel. He later moved to Adaminaby, where he became a storekeeper and market gardener. One observer said that 'He had a very good sense of humour and was a very strong man. He carried half a bullock on his back up to the butcher's shop'. Local resident Neville Locker recalls an account of John Booshang taking bets that he could carry a 60 kg bag of flour on his back all the way from Adaminaby to Kiandra, a distance of about 32 km. Neville remembers John as an excellent horseman who often did horse riding stunts and tricks at the local shows. He later became a very successful horse trainer. According to historian, Trixie Clugston, the Booshang shop had pies and lollies, and the Yen's had groceries, clothing and a butcher's shop.[367]

John Booshang married Anastasia Casey Thomas at Cooma in 1881. Charles Yen married a twin sister, Jane Thomas, at Cooma at about the same time.[368]Anastasia and Jane, born in 1864, were the daughters of Cooma residents Thomas Thomas and Johanna Shanahan, who had married at Buckenderra in 1858. Anastasia and John, who married in 1881, had three children and Jane and Charles had two, before both families moved to Adaminaby in about 1888. Here they settled themselves, opening a store and Jane and Anastasia having four and five more children respectively. Sometime later the family name changed to Booshand. Harry Thomas, a descendant of Thomas and Johanna Shanahan, has advised that the first use of the name Booshand took place in 1891, with the birth of Thomas Parkinson. Others to follow were John James, born 1895, and William Henry, born in

[367] Trixie Clugston, in Laura Neal, *It doesn't Snow Like It Used To…Memories of Monaro and the Snowy Mountains,* Cooma Community Contact Centre and NSW Department of Technical and Further Education, Sydney, 1988, pp.15-16; www.monaropioneers.com/nimmitabel/pioneers/booshandj

[368] www.monaropioneers.com

1897; Walter Oliver, born in 1900, took the surname Booshang.[369] Both families became established members of the Adaminaby community. John Booshang lived there until his death in 1923, at which point Anastasia moved to Sydney to be with her children, dying there in 1934.

Judith Hickson has commented that Charles Yen's family-operated businesses included a general store, butcher shop, picture theatre and service station/garage. Family members, Arthur, Bella and Barbara were employed in running the store and shop. Frank ran the local garage and was later joined by his son Geoff, who had completed a motor mechanic apprenticeship in Sydney. Rex (Reginald Thomas) also worked at the garage and theatre before moving to Taree on the mid-north coast. The Yens imported and sold a very wide range of goods, including imported Chinese products such as Ve-Tsin gourmet powder (Monosodium Glutamate). In an interview in 2009, Cooma-Monaro Shire Councillor, Jenny Lawless, remembered shopping at the Yen's store on the way home from school; 'Sausages were occasionally on the menu from Mr Yen and it was the children's job to bring them home'.[370]

According to Judith Hickson tthe Yens were actively involved in community events and routinely attended services at the Roman Catholic Church. Charles was a regular entrant at many of Adaminaby's early agricultural shows and won awards for a diverse range of livestock and activities. He was also honorary secretary of the Adaminaby cricket club, and family members regularly volunteered their services at community events such as shows and race days. Arthur Yen often played the piano at local dances and balls, and was a member of the Adaminaby brass band. Despite this assimilation, however, his family did suffer from acts of discrimination and vilification. In 1908 an axe was thrown at Charles's son. The attack occurred after abusive and racist remarks were made to the young man while he was driving sheep along a road with a Mr Barrett. A local farmer's son, John Watkins, was later charged with inflicting grievous bodily harm on the boy, who sustained serious injuries to his hand, wrist and face. At the trial Barrett said that the boy had not given any offence to Watkins, but the accused was later acquitted by a jury in Cooma. Despite these provocations the Yen family were economically very successful, and bought two nearby grazing properties, Speedwell and Collingwood. Charles's son Arthur lived at Collingwood, where he bred and trained race horses, often winning prizes at the local shows. Arthur was well known as a bookie at the Adaminaby race course.[371]

The Yen family were compulsorily moved in the early 1950s when the old Adaminaby township was flooded as part of the Snowy Mountains Scheme. According to Judith Hickson, Frank Yen, who was a photographer of some renown in the district, refused to move to the new town and went to Sydney, dying shortly after. Geoff moved the wooden house from Collingwood to the new town. According to his daughter, Odette, life 'was never the same for the town once it was moved…it was just an everyday struggle'.[372]

The Yen family have a special place in the world of Australian literature, and were the basis for the Quong family in Patrick White's first novel, *Happy Valley*, written while White was working as a jackeroo

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[369] Information from Harry Thomas, Beechworth, November 2014; www.monaropioneers.com/nimmitabel/pioneers/booshandj.

[370] Judith Hickson, 'Chinese Skiers of Kiandra: Object and narrative', *reCollections*, Vol.8, No.2, 2014, pp.1-12.

[371] Hickson, 'Chinese Skiers of Kiandra: Object and narrative', *reCollections* , pp.4-6 ; Leigh Stewart, *Historic Adaminaby. Book of Photos*, the author, place of publication unknown, 2004.

[372] Kate Bagnall, 'The Tiger's Mouth. Thoughts on the history and heritage of Chinese Australia: *Happy Valley*: Patrick White's Impressions of an Anglo-Chinese Family'; www.chineseaustralia.org/archives/1666.

at Bolaro station in southern NSW in the 1930s. By the time that White arrived John Booshang had passed away and many other family members had left the district. So White as the narrator, when he spoke about the Chinese in Adaminaby (Happy Valley), was referring to only one Chinese family; the Yen family. He would have frequented their large sell-all general store, and some of their other businesses, but how well he knew them individually is not clear. According to historian David Marr they had shod his horses.[373]

In his biography of White, Marr had the following to say about the Yen family and the Quong family.

> Escape is the common dream of everyone in Happy Valley except the Furlows and the Quongs. They know what they are doing there, for between them they own the place. The Quongs are taken raw from the Yens who ran most of the businesses in town when White was a jackeroo. Walter Quong is the notorious Frank Yen who pissed in the keyholes of Cooma. Arthur Quong kept a race horse in a shed at the back of the shop as Arthur Yen had in Adaminaby, and both men share the same white-rimmed eyes. Ethel Quong, like Minnie Yen, was a domestic servant at Government House before she made an unlikely and unhappy marriage. But White invented for her a child, Margaret, conceived out of wedlock. Margaret Yen is not a Yen, but an exotic version of Paddy White, a lonely, thoughtful and silent child with big eyes.[374]

There are some riders to Marr's excellent account. The Walter in the novel was almost certainly Geoff Yen, who had the garage and picture show business, and was similar in appearance. According to both Rhonda and Neville, Geoff's wife's name was Ethel or Eleanor, but not Minnie.

Happy Valley was published in 1939 and won the Australian Society of Literature's gold medal in 1941. Despite this acclaim, White never allowed the novel to be reprinted in English. According to David Marr, writing for the *Canberra Times* in 2012, this was because

> White could never shake the fear that … [the Yens] … could sue for what he did to them in the pages of *Happy Valley*. He could not be reassured about this. White went to his grave fearing the revenge of the Yens.[375]

In his biography of White in 1991, Marr said that in the aftermath of his Nobel Prize, White allowed *Happy Valley* to be published in French and, for the first time, in Italian. But years before he had already put a ban on reprinting the book in English and had even forbad microfilm copies at universities. The main cause of this reluctance was the fear of being sued if the book ever re-appeared in Australia. White stated that

> I had used the first names of a whole family without realizing what I was doing. As the characters in the book behave very much like the members of the actual family, trouble might blow up if their descendants realized. I don't want this generally known.[376]

According to Marr, Kylie Tennant had 'put the fear of libel in him' when she told him once how she was sued by a man she had named in her novel, *Ride on Stranger*. White feared far worse from the Yens of Adaminaby if they ever recognised themselves as the Quongs of *Happy Valley*. However, when the issue of republication re-emerged in the early 1970s the fears of libel in the Monaro had long since passed, as most of the main characters were dead. [377]

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[373] Bagnall, 'The Tiger's Mouth: *Happy Valley*'.

[374] David Marr, *Patrick White. A Life*, Vintage, 1991, p.153.

[375] Bagnall, 'The Tiger's Mouth: *Happy Valley*'; *Canberra Times*, 26 May 2012.

[376] Marr, *Patrick White*, p.546.

[377] Marr, *Patrick White*, p.546.

Perhaps White had cause to fear libel, or worse. The *Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age* both published the same article by Marr about *Happy Valley*. The *Herald* received a response from a Yen descendant named Laurann Yen Charolles, who wrote:

> In *Happy Valley* White does indeed steal my grandparents and report them spitefully: they are without humour, without grace, without respite from the bleak town and their bleak relationship; two dry peas in a miserable pod. But there is wonderful White as well – a sense of place, where every tree, every verandah, every small comforting pretension gets into your bones. I know, more from White than from memory, every person.

The letters page of the *Herald* on 2 June 2012 also included a postscript which talked a bit about Marr's unsuccessful attempts to track down members of the Yen family. After all these years came an acknowledgment that 'White looked on their grandparents with a cold and unforgiving eye but nevertheless wrote a fine book'.[378]

It is instructive to see what White wrote, for he was not just writing about the Chinese at Adaminaby, but Rhonda Sturt's forebears, the Yan family. White stated that the people of Kiandra (Kambala in the novel), the home of the Yan family, were 'a kind of half-bred Chinese, quiet and industrious, though perhaps a little sinister to the eyes of a stranger'.[379] Of the Quongs he stated, 'People used to make guesses at how much the Quongs had got. You never knew with Chows. And this was a source of bitterness'.[380] In voicing the thoughts of the new overseer, Clem Hagan, White wrote 'You could never say much for a place that was run by Chows. Chows or Dagoes. They always took the profits from anyone else'.[381]

And again, after Hagan had been sprayed with mud from Walter Quong's (Geoff Yen's) brand-new Ford, White writes

> The yellowish face of a Chinaman looked out from the steering wheel, tried to frown, but smiled… Hagan swore 'To be run over by a bloody Chow right in the middle of the street. It made him angry again…He would like to feel that Chinaman's jaw.[382]

In describing Ethel Quong (Marion Yen), Walter's European wife, White writes that she was 'sour and thin, her whole aspect was a little virulent, so that people avoided her, and she said she had no friends at all because she was married to a Chinaman'.[383] Of Amy Quong (Dill Yen, Arthur's wife), White wrote

> Amy Quong's emotional life seldom came so close to the surface. Love or hate lurked, or stirred with a vague motion in the more secret depths. She was not intentionally secretive. She was not actually passionless. Emotion was just a mental state that she did not actively reveal, that anyone would sense instinctively …', or again 'There was a core of hardness in Amy, as in most people who are self- sufficient. She could close up. She was a piece of stone. And there is no pity in stone.'[384]

Information received from Neville Locker appears to confirm White's portrayal of racial attitudes in Adaminaby pre World War Two. Neville's family property was named Happy Valley and it is this name that White probably used for the title of his book. He would have ridden or driven past the property

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[378] Marr, *Patrick White*, p.546.

[379] Patrick White, *Happy Valley*, Vintage Books, London, 2013, p.4.

[380] White, *Happy Valley*, p.31.

[381] White, *Happy Valley*, p.22.

[382] White, *Happy Valley*, p.59.

[383] White, *Happy Valley*, p.107.

[384] White, *Happy Valley*, pp.248-249.

many times on his way from Bolero to Adaminaby.. According to Neville it was not just the Chinese people, that is, the Yen family, that White pilloried, but lot of other locals as well. The book caused quite a stir when it was first published, for a lot of local people, not just members of the Yen family, recognised either themselves or other townsfolk in his narrative. And there can be no doubting the accuracy of the racial undertones in the book. Neville recalls that there were two football teams in the town, one primarily European and the other primarily Chinese, that is, members of the Booshang and Yen families, and possibly the Yan family, and some of their supporters. To this can be added a touch of sectarianism, which lasted well into the 1950s in many country towns, for the Thomas family, and therefore Jane and Anastasia, and the Yen and Booshang families, were members of the Roman Catholic Church.[385]

Perhaps more relevant was the reality that the Yen family, in particular Geoff Yen, were economically very successful. For instance, they were among the first, if not the first, people in town to embrace the advantages of the motor vehicle. The Yens could get people into Cooma and back for shopping excursions far more quickly than the coaches. According to Neville, John Freebody had the main coach run between Adaminaby and Cooma. Soon he had no passengers, and by 1912 the mail run was closed. Ironically, Neville recalls that John's son Keith was a motor car enthusiast, and if his father had bought him a car his business would probably have survived, but he was an adherent of the view that horses were more reliable than cars, and the car was just a passing fad. Neville recalls stories told of conflicts between bullock and horse teamsters and truck operators, who often had to endure road blockages or blockades on their way to the Cooma railway station.[386]

The attitudes of some local town folk towards the Yen family seem at odds to the generally more benign picture of race relations in many of the towns in the Riverina. But the Yen family's circumstances were different. They were isolated: apart from the Booshang family there were no other Chinese people in the town, unlike say at Tumut and Narrandera. And the family was working in direct competition with other European businesses, and besting them. There was no tradition of economic co-dependence as in the Riverina in the 19th and early 20th century. Nevertheless, perhaps too much can be made of the racist theme – the Yens were actively involved in many community activities, and must have had a strong degree of social acceptance – but this reality had little place in White's narrative.

Another strong family network in the Riverina, with relevance for the Tumut and Adelong district began at Narrandera with the prosperous merchant Sam Yett, and his nephews George and William Hock Shung, and at Urana with Willie Ah Kinn, a market gardener and labour contractor. Sam Yett lived in Narrandera for 20 years. Like so many of his countrymen he had family in China, but there is no account of him marrying in Australia. On his death he was described as the 'King of Chinatown', the *Narrandera Argus* stating 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 will be greatly missed.[387]

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 countrymen, over

[385] Information from Harry Thomas, Beechworth, November 2014; information from Neville Locker. October 2014.

[386] White, *Happy Valley*; discussions with Neville Locker, October 2014.

[387] *Narrandera Argus*, 26 March 1903.

William and Adelaide Ah Kinn (née Lamonte)
Parkside Cottage Museum, Narrandera

William and George Hock Shung.
Parkside Cottage Museum, Narrandera

George Hock Shung with his son Mervyn in Narrandera.
Parkside Cottage Museum, Narrandera

Jessie Hock Shung (née Lamonte).
Parkside Cottage Museum, Narrandera

George and Jessie (née Lamonte) Hock Shung.
Private collection

Rose Chuey, back row fifth from the right in an Anglican church music class in Junee, c 1910.
Private collection

> 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.[388]

George Hock Shung 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 George '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.'[389]

George's son Hilton joined the RAAF in World War II and was stationed at 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. Described by the *Narrandera Argus* as a 'Sensational Plane Crash', 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 ever held in Narrandera. Hundreds of people lined the streets and attended the graveside service.[390] Jessie died two years later.[391] Keith passed away in 1950. He had an 'uncanny knowledge' of greyhound dogs, and his judgment was respected by all connected with greyhound racing.[392]

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[388] *Narrandera Ensign*, 26 June 1903.

[389] *Narrandera Argus*, 23 May 1944.

[390] *Narrandera Argus*, 7 September 1945.

[391] *Narrandera Argus*, 4 February 1947.

[392] *Narrandera Argus*, 1 September 1950.

Another son, Mervyn 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. He was awarded his 50 year certificate in 1999.[393]

James Wong Chuey from the Melbourne Argus, *14th September , 1925.*

Jessie was not the only descendant of Willie Ah Kinn in the Riverina, for Willie and his wife Adelaide had five other children; Ivic, Archibald, Adelaide, Emily and Annie. Annie's descendants live in Narrandera today, their lineage illustrating the difficulties in tracing the genealogy of Chinese Australian families, and suggesting strongly that there are many more descendants of Chinese Australian families living in 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. A son, John Pearson, also lives in Narrandera. Alton, a steam train driver, was the father of Bob Hoban, who also lives in 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 Kinn, 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, who was part owner of William Shai Hee's Yee Hing store, 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, and 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. He was also a confidant 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, 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 onto the British Consulate at Guangzhou. But it was to no avail and a ransom of £400 had to be paid. After this

[393] Mervyn Shung, 'Probis Address. My Life Story by M.W. Shung', undated.

Garage advertisement, Wah's garage. From the Southern Cross*, February, 1963*

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.[394] In 1925 he was invited by the Chinese Masonic Society in Melbourne to help celebrate the opening of a new Masonic Lodge in Shanghai.[395] His wife, Rose, 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.

Outside the Wah's garage in Junee. Left to right: Stan Hancock, Les Ah Wah, unknown and Linda Wah.

Private collection

Jan Yee, a daughter of Thelma Young (formerly Loon), recalled that Rose had been an abandoned child in China. When James Chung On's wife came to Australia she took Rose with her to help her as a maid. Rose was treated as a daughter, and became, therefore, a sister to Violet, who married Dang Loon. James Chung On had worked as a market gardener and tin miner, and had been heavily involved in community activities in Launceston.[396]

Another prominent Junee identity was Tommy Ah Wah, a skin, wool and hides dealer, and then later owner of a very successful garage and service station. Russell Danswan worked for the Wahs almost his entire working life and remembers them affectionately 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, illustrating again the importance of networks and friendships amongst the Riverina Chinese. Russell recalled the warm-hearted greetings when the Mee Lings visited Junee. According to Russell the Wah children were all well-educated, and the girls very proficient in dancing and piano. Linda was the accountant and bookkeeper at the garage.

Another daughter, Edna, taught tap dancing to the girls for the Methodist church concerts. Lesley enlisted in the Australian army in the Second World War and in 1945 was in Sabah, formerly British North Borneo. The last surviving member of the family was Jack Wah, who retired from the business

394 *Braidwood Review*, 8 August 1916; *Chinese Australian Herald*, 28 October 1916 (translation of original by Michael Churchman, ANU); *Adelaide Advertiser*, 15 September 1916.

395 *Melbourne Argus*, 14 September 1925.

396 *Junee Southern Cross*, 24 July 1953; *Hobart Mercury*, 25 February 1952; *Launceston Examiner*, 25 February 1952; discussions with Jan Yee, June 2012.

Ted Mahlook & Louisa Poy, Albury.
Private collection

Lindsay, William & Roy Poy.
Private collection

due to ill health in 1995. He excelled at bowls and held many executive positions with Junee rugby league and Group Nine.[397] George Mee Ling senior and his wife Cheng were residents of Temora from the earliest days. He was a member of the local Masonic Lodge and very active in charitable work. The family returned to China in 1910 with their children. George died in China. A son, George junior, was an active member of the Temora community, and on his passing in 1975 was described as having a 'genial personality and gentle manner', and a 'ready response to those in need'.[398]

The Poy family from Albury presents another example of a well-known Chinese family bridging the racial divide and successfully embracing new affiliations and loyalties. 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 Willie Ah Poy, who had a fruit and vegetable store in Chiltern, Victoria.

They had nine children. Willie travelled frequently to China to see his parents, and possibly a wife and children as well. On his last trip he did not return and he was presumed dead. Louisa moved to Albury with the eight surviving children, where she met and married a market gardener, Edward (Teddy) Mahlook in 1928.

During World War II, three of her sons, William, Roy and Lindsay were in different parts of Asia fighting the Japanese. According to Lindsay they all cheated death through 'Chinese luck and sharp wits'. 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 merge in with the locals and escape, subsequently getting 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. Some years later he recalled that the bad memories lingered for many years, haunting him in his waking hours and at times of rest.[399] His brother Lindsay saw overseas duty in May 1945 as a trained engineer in North 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.

Lindsay is the sole survivor of the eight Poy children at the time of writing this research. On his return to Albury he became a bookmaker, then bought a taxi. His brother Roy also became a bookmaker. Lindsay's son, Roy, followed in his father's occupation, 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 himself. Roy was a well known Australian Rules footballer in his day, John Harms from the *Melbourne Age* including him in his list of the ten greatest Chinese Australian footballers of all time. Lindsay and Roy's brother, 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 plastic surgeon.

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[397] Information, Russell Danswan, Junee, 2009; Military Records, Leslie Edward Ah Wah, Series B8832002, Item NX157455, NAA, Canberra; Sherry Morris, *Speaking of the Past*, Vol.2, Section12, Migration/ethnic influences, Junee Shire Arts Council.

[398] *Temora Independent*, 3 February 1942, 5 June 1975, 3 January 1940, 8 April 1976; Temora Centenary Committee, *Temora Yesterday and Today, 1880-1980*, Temora Historical Society, 1980, p.250.

[399] *Border Mail*, 12 August 1989, 15 February 1992.

FEE PAID WARRANT No. 15016 01/24/1928

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 of departure shown below.

Date 21st November 1928. W H Barkley Collector of Customs.

DESCRIPTION.

Nationality Chinese Birthplace Canton

Age 61 years Complexion Dark

Height 5 ft. 8ins (Book) Hair Turning grey

Build Medium Eyes Brown

Particular marks Nil

(For impression of hand, see back of this document.)

Date of departure 15th Dec 1928 Port of Embarkation Sydney

Ship Taiping Destination China

Date of Return 4 JAN 1930 Ship Changte

Port Sydney

4.214/8.27.—C.8071. Customs Officers.

Dang Loon's 1928 CEDT document.

National Archives of Australia

The White Australia Policy

William Poy often came across from Canada every year to organise the family reunions.[400]

[400] Wilson, 'The dinky-di Poy Boys'; *Albury and District Historical Society Bulletin*, May 2005, No. 446.

Form No. 21. COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA. No. 06/287
DUPLICATE. *Immigration Restriction Acts 1901-1905 and Regulations.*

CERTIFICATE EXEMPTING FROM DICTATION TEST.

I, John Baxter Sub OW the 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 J Baxter 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 :—

AUSTRALIA H.M. CUSTOMS N.S.W. SYDNEY

3/9/06

Date of departure Sept 06 Destination China
Ship Empire

Date of return Ship
Port

Customs Officer

By Authority: Robt. S. Brain, Government Printer, Melbourne.

Dang Bown Sluey's CEDT document, 1906.
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. However, 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.[401] 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.[402] The authorities, and in particular labour politicians, strictly administered and scrutinised the immigration regulations for Chinese people; any major concessions would have been a serious breach of policy.[403]

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. 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.[404] A Gundagai, and later Tumut, businessman who successfully applied for a Certificate of Domicile in 1905 was Dang Loon. His visit to China was unusual, for 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. The owner of the *Gundagai Times* was a referee for Dang Loon's certificate application, and described him as a 'highly respectable man, always quiet and unassuming in manner, and is besides a worthy townsman in every way'.[405]

In 1905 Dang Bown Sluey sought Certificates for his two sons, Quong Wing and Klew Wing, to enable them to travel to China for their education. Both boys had to obtain certificates of attendance from their teachers.[406] 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, character being made more explicit than with the Certificates of Domicile.

As Paul Jones has remarked, after Federation a pattern of regular, short term visits to the home villages and towns of Southern China became normal practice. 120 approved journeys by Chinese

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401 Yarwood, *Asian Immigration to Australia*; Curthoys, 'Conflict and consensus', p.56.

402 Yarwood, *Asian Immigration to Australia*, pp.68-82; Williams, p.33.

403 Yarwood, *Asian Immigration to Australia*, pp.115-118.

404 Shirley Fitzgerald, *Red Tape Gold Scissors. The Story of Sydney's Chinese*, State Library of New South Wales Press, Sydney, 1996, pp.33-37.

405 Series SP 244/2, C05/5679, NAA, Sydney.

406 Series SP42/1, C1912/3324, C1913/4423, C1913/5044, NAA, Sydney.

PAID WARRANT No. 5731 of 14/3/30

Book No. 475

Form No. 21. DUPLICATE. COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA. No. 081

Immigration Act 1901-1925 and Regulations.

CERTIFICATE EXEMPTING FROM DICTATION TEST.

I, George Finlay Kirkton Mitchell the Collector of Customs for the State of NEW SOUTH WALES in the said Commonwealth hereby certify that Violet Loon (or Ung 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 Geo F G Mitchell R.C.9. Collector of Customs.

DESCRIPTION.

Nationality	Chinese	Birthplace	Canton
Age	42 years	Complexion	Dark
Height	5' 2"	Hair	Black
Build	Medium	Eyes	Brown
Particular marks	Nil		

(For impression of hand, see back of this document.)

PHOTOGRAPHS.

Mrs Violet Loon T.W. 17/3/30

Mrs Violet Loon T.W. 17/3/30

Date of departure 27 3 30 Port of Embarkation Sydney

Ship Changte Destination China

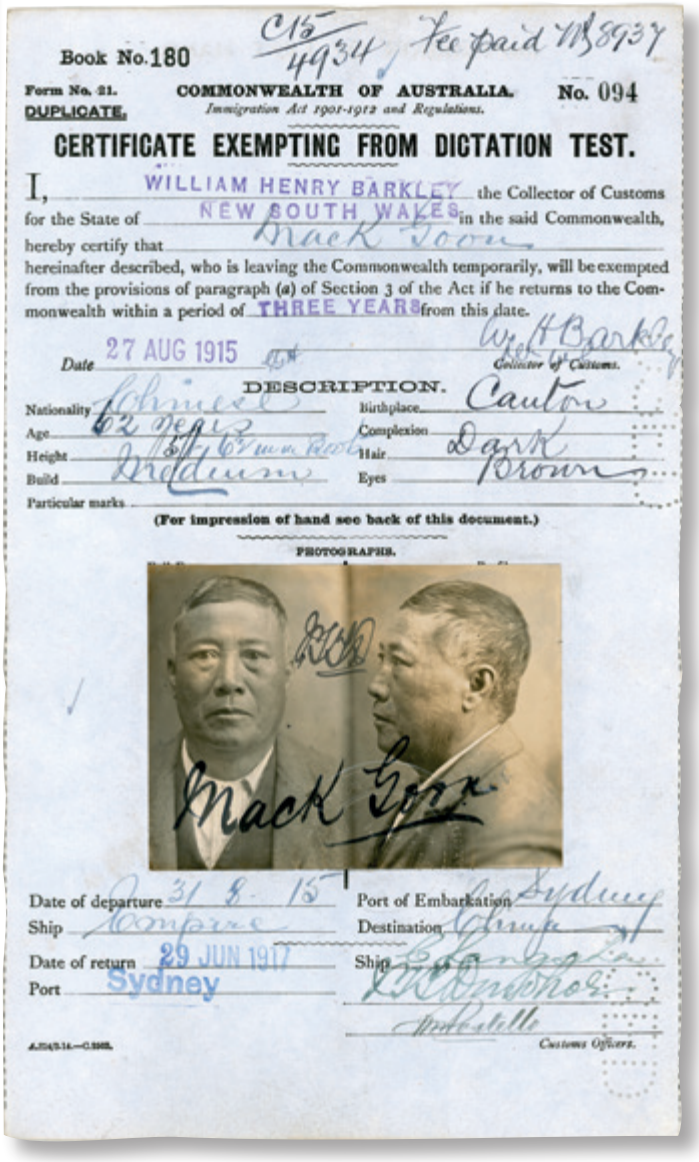
Date of Return 8 NOV 1930 Ship Changte

Port Sydney

Customs Officers.

Violet Loon' CEDT document, 1930.

National Archives of Australia



C15/4934 Fee paid £3 8s 9d

Book No. 180

Form No. 21. DUPLICATE. COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA. No. 094

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.

Date 27 AUG 1915 Wm H Barkley Collector of Customs.

DESCRIPTION.

Nationality	Chinese	Birthplace	Canton
Age	62 years	Complexion	Dark
Height	5ft 6½ins	Hair	Brown
Build	Medium	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 Sonoma Destination China

Date of return 29 JUN 1917 Ship Changsha

Port Sydney

Customs Officers.

Mack Goon's CEDT document, 1915.

National Archives of Australia

in 1902 grew tenfold by 1905 and thereafter to several thousand in the following years. Wives and dependent children, students, businessmen and others were admitted on a short term basis 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. Although residents of Australia, the Chinese were under continued surveillance, 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.[407]

The fate of those who had unsuccessful CEDT applications is illustrated by the experience of Narrandera storekeeper George Hock Shung. In December 1912 he applied for a CEDT and obtained good references, the Mayor of Narrandera describing him as a straightforward, reliable and peaceful citizen, and S. Richards, a local merchant saying that he was a 'good citizen, and a very straight going fellow'. The manager of the Bank of NSW described him as 'very reliable and honest', and the manager of Hill Clark & Co, stock agents referred to him as 'thoroughly reliable and trustworthy in his dealings'. However, 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'.[408]

More successful was Dang Bown Sluey, who applied for a CEDT in 1906 to permit him to return to China to help Tang Chee, Dang Ah Chee's son, manage his father's businesses. CEDT's were also sought for his wife Look Quen Sluey, two daughters. Gook Quen Sluey 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. To obtain his initial CEDT he provided 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.[409]

Dang Loon visited China again in 1915, 1928 and 1930. On the latter occasion he was accompanied by his wife Violet and their three children, Thelma, Dorothy and Donald. The manager of the Commercial

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[407] Paul Jones, *Chinese-Australian Journeys. Records on Travel. Migration and Settlement, 1860- 1975*, National Archives of Australia, Canberra, 2005, pp.16-21.

[408] Series SP42/1, C1913/5044, NAA, Sydney.

[409] Series SP42/1, C1912/3324, C1913/4423, C1913/5044, NAA, Sydney.

Form No. 21. COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA. No. 570
Immigration Restriction Acts 1901-1905 and Regulations.

CERTIFICATE EXEMPTING FROM DICTATION TEST.

I, John Baxter acting 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 29 Nov 09 acting Collector of Customs.

DESCRIPTION.

Nationality Chinese Birthplace Canton
Age 28 years Complexion
Height 5ft 2in in Book Hair Dark
Build Medium Eyes Brown
Particular marks Scar on left cheek bone

(For impression of hand see back of this document.)

PHOTOGRAPHS.

Full Face. Profile.

Date of Departure Dec 09 Destination China
Ship Nikko Maru
Date of return 30.5.10 Ship Aldenham
Port Sydney J.W. Denihan Customs Officer

Book No. 166 C15/886 Fee paid 1/-

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 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 20 2 15 W.H. Barkley for Collector of Customs.

DESCRIPTION.

Nationality Chinese Birthplace Canton
Age 36 years Complexion
Height 5ft 5½ in Book Hair Dark
Build Medium Eyes Brown
Particular marks Scar on left cheekbone Scar on Chin right side

(For impression of hand see back of this document.)

PHOTOGRAPHS.

Willie Shai Hee

Date of departure 22 2 15 Port of Embarkation Sydney
Ship Nikko Maru Destination China
Date of return 26 JUN 1916 Ship S.S. Shaloo
Port Sydney J.W. Denihan Customs Officer

FEE PAID WARRANT No. 3964 of 15/3/22

Book No. 329 C22/1376

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 W.H. Barkley Collector of Customs.

DESCRIPTION.

Nationality Chinese Birthplace Canton
Age 43 years Complexion
Height 5ft 5½ in Book Hair Dark
Build Medium Eyes Brown
Particular marks Scar on left cheek bone

(For impression of hand see back of this document.)

PHOTOGRAPHS.

Willie Shai Hee

Date of departure 13/3/22 Port of Embarkation Sydney
Ship S.S. Albano Destination China
Date of return 29/8/23 Ship S.S. Albano
Port Sydney J.W. Denihan Customs Officers.

FEE PAID WARRANT No. 891 1/7/33

Book No. 508 C23/4433

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.

Date 6. 7. 1933 Geo F A Mitchell Collector of Customs.

DESCRIPTION.

Nationality Chinese Birthplace Canton
Age 54 years Complexion Dark
Height 5ft 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.)

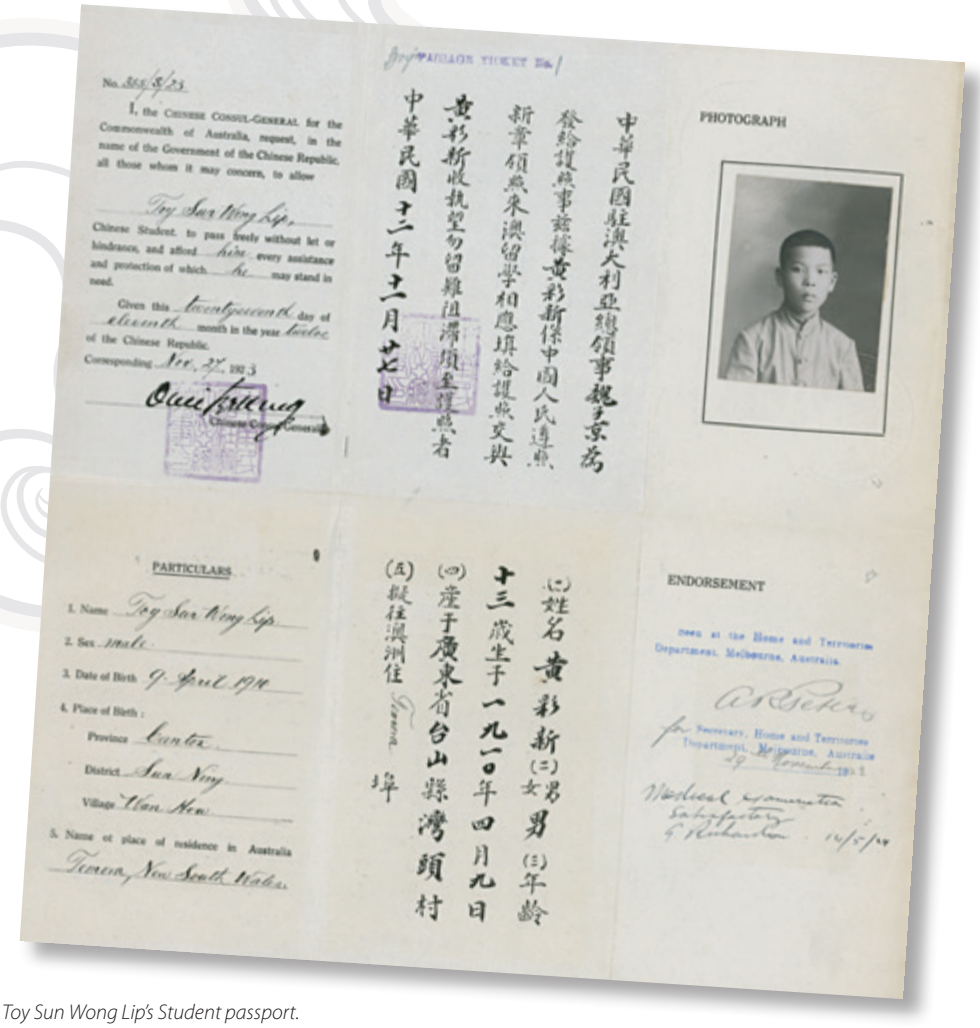
PHOTOGRAPHS.

Willie Shai Hee

Date of Departure 15th July 1933 Port of Embarkation Sydney
Ship "Tanda" Destination China
Date of Return 20-6-35 Ship "Tanda"
Port Sydney H. Deasey Customs Officers.

William Shai Hee's CEDT documents, from 1910 to 1933.

National Archives of Australia



Toy Sun Wong Lip's Student passport.
National Archives of Australia

Bank said that Dang Loon had been a customer for 20 years. Transactions had always been done in a satisfactory manner, and he held him in high esteem. Another referee, Mr Bendery, said he had known Dang Loon for about 20 years, and described him as a 'very highly respected resident', who 'bears an excellent character'. He had many business transactions with him and had found him 'strictly honest and very straightforward'. Violet also needed referees. One of them, the manager of the Commercial Bank, said she had been an enthusiastic worker for the hospital, Red Cross, Benevolent Society, church and other institutions, and held in the highest esteem by the townspeople. Another referee described her as an excellent worker for the hospital and 'charitable to a very marked degree'.[410] In 1928 Dang Loon was accompanied by his son, Albert Henry. One referee, Tom Wilkinson, a stock, estate and financial agent, stated that 'he always found him an honest and law abiding citizen'. Another referee, R. Blakeney, described him as 'highly respected' and an 'excellent character'. He had 'proved himself strictly honest and upright in all his dealings and has been a generous supporter of charity and all movements for the benefit of the town and district'.[411] Dang Bown Sluey, Dang Ah Chee and Dang Loon had first wives in China (Dang Loon had one child from that relationship). Bown Sluey also had a concubine. The desire to visit children conceived from those relationships must have been overwhelming, and a major reason for visiting China.

[410] SP 244/2, C30/2538, NAA, Sydney.

[411] Series SP 244/2, C28/11356, NAA Sydney.

A former Tumut resident, Mack Goon, a labourer and former cook and a resident of West Wyalong, 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 and16 years at Wyalong.

One of his referees, George Bland, 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 referee was 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 having a 'quiet disposition, very respectable and straight in all his dealings'.[412]

The referees' comments on the CEDT applications by George Hock Shung, Dang Bown Sluey, Dang and Violet Loon and Mack Goon are illustrative of the very obvious affection and regard with which some Chinese people were held by white Australians (other than Constable Toohey) in their local communities. The applications also show a wide range of reasons for returning to China. Foremost was the desire to visit family, especially children and ageing parents, and to ensure that the Australian-born children received a Chinese education. Other reasons were marriage, accompanying family remains for burial, returning home when very ill and near death, or to conduct business.

Toy Sun Lip's experience illustrates the strict regulations surrounding the admittance of Chinese students into Australia, and the perils of non-compliance. 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. It also highlights the plight of aging Chinese men, who, amidst a dwindling Chinese population, had difficulty in obtaining casual help in their business enterprises. His father, Wong Lip, applied for a CEDT in July 1921, and on his return to Australia he was accompanied either by his son, Toy Sun, or the boy arrived shortly after. He commenced school at Temora in late 1924, Wong Lip having by then left Jerilderie and set himself up as an orchardist at Temora.[413] At first Toy Sun's attendance was very good with very few absences. 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 sickness. All other aspects of his attendance were satisfactory. The same level of non-attendance occurred at the end of first term 1926, this time because of the need to help his father, the school saying that his absences had been 'practically unavoidable'.

This pattern of absences continued in future years, despite several warnings from the Department of Home Affairs. In September 1928 further absences 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. In April 1929 the Chinese Consulate General applied for a further 12 month's extension of the boy'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 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,

[412] Series SP42/1, C15/4934, NAA, Sydney.

[413] Series SP42/1, C21/5853, NAA, Sydney.

with the usual warning about attendance. In early 1930 the Department was advised that Toy Sun 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. Even an intervention by the influential James Wong Chuey could not save him.[414]

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 often mounted. Such cases 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, and precedent setting, decision.[415] 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 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. He was described as having been a storekeeper near Gundagai for about 25 years, and since 1902 a commission agent in Sydney. He had been employed by Dang Ah Chee at Gundagai, and had advertised the opening of his Hi Hing store at Mundarlo in the 11 January 1881 edition of the *Gundagai Times*. One son (Charlie) returned in 1904. In 1935 Charley Gow, a resident at Tumut Plains, was tried and acquitted of manslaughter. At the court proceedings Dang Charles Doon was a character witness and stated that Charley was his brother-in law. It is highly probable that Charley Ah Gow is the same person as the Charley Gow who re-entered Australia in 1904, for the Ah was a European appendage and often dropped from the name.

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.[416]

The twist to this story involves Esther Doon, the wife of Dang Charles Doon from Tumut. Three of

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[414] Series A1, 1929/3660, NAA, Canberra.

[415] Williams, *Chinese Settlement in NSW*, pp.32-33.

[416] Series A1, 1917/16652, NAA, Canberra.

Esther's children, Ted, Johnny and Grace were adamant that Esther was born in China (even though the birth certificate states that she was Australian born), and married Charles (their father) there. She arrived in Australia some 14 years later under the name of Gow. Having spent his early years in Australia in the Gundagai area, Dang Charles Doon would have known the Ah Gow family very well, and 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. She was given an assumed identity as one of Ah Gow's daughters to allow her entry into Australia, and thus became a sister to Charlie Gow. All she needed was a valid birth certificate showing her as Australian born. Ted and Johnny were adamant that political contacts in government and possibly the department helped facilitate her entry into Australia with a purchased or re-issued birth certificate. It was most unlikely that Australian officials in Hong Kong were going to trek out to a remote Guangdong village to check on the whereabouts or otherwise of the remaining Ah Gow daughters (if alive). Family information indicates that both Florence and Esther had false identities, using birth certificates of two of the Gow family's daughters, and as a consequence they became sisters. The majority of post 1905 Chinese brides of Chinese-Australian men were never able to settle in Australia.[417]

But Charles Doon's frustrations with the White Australia Policy did not stop with the arrival of Esther, for the 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, and hinting that Esther was only there on a temporary basis. Charles's attitude to these visits was that 'there had to be new face at the table every year', Esther's pregnancies ensured 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.[418]

Furthermore, their son Richard was still in China, where he 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 and avoided famine. 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.[419]

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.[420] By coincidence, and unbeknown to each other at the time, the new Raymond came out to Australia on the same boat as Richard Doon. The Ah Gow and Doon cases and their interconnectedness prove just how difficult it was to arrange family re-unions in the early to mid 1900s and the heartlessness of a government

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[417] Paul Macgregor, 'Dreams of Jade and Gold. Chinese Families in Australian History', *The Australian Family, Images and Essays*, Anna Epstein, (ed), Scribe Publications, Melbourne.1998, pp.25-28; information from Ted and Johnny Doon, June, August 2010, and Grace Ching, October 2011; Birth Certificate 15658/1891, NSW Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages.

[418] Information provided by Grace Ching, October 2011.

[419] Junor, *Chung On*, pp.20-33;

[420] Information provided by Grace Ching, October 2011.

policy, which sought to deny and frustrate them.[421]

Richard's relationships with the Immigration Department were also difficult, and illustrate further the point that while the Chinese were residents of Australia they were subject to constant surveillance and were certainly not free. According to historian Andrew Junor the Department had officially approved Richard's restaurant business in Sydney, but he incurred their displeasure when he did not inform them of his new business in Moonee Ponds. He was told to return to Sydney immediately or risk deportation. An officer of the Department also paid Richard a home visit to check on his degree of assimilation. Although the officer was concerned that he did not belong to any clubs he noted that he lived among Australians, had a 'good appearance, a pleasing personality and an adequate knowledge of English'. The official scrutiny did not stop there, however, and his Chung On restaurant continued to scrutinised by the Department of Immigration, 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. He had contacts and influence at the very highest levels in white Australia, including the local federal MP, Mr Stokes, and DLP State Senator Frank McManus. Richard often used them to write to the Department when there were complications. 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. He was also very active in assisting migrants and their families, particularly where the men were skilled chefs.[422]

The Shai Hee family also faced challenges with the immigration regulations. 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. The other business partners were unable to assist in the management of the store, and the owners were unwilling to hire another manager. 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 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 because of the difficult trading conditions and the death of the previous manager, Mr Lim Singh. He wrote again in 1930, stating that all of the staff were Australians, and 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.[423] 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

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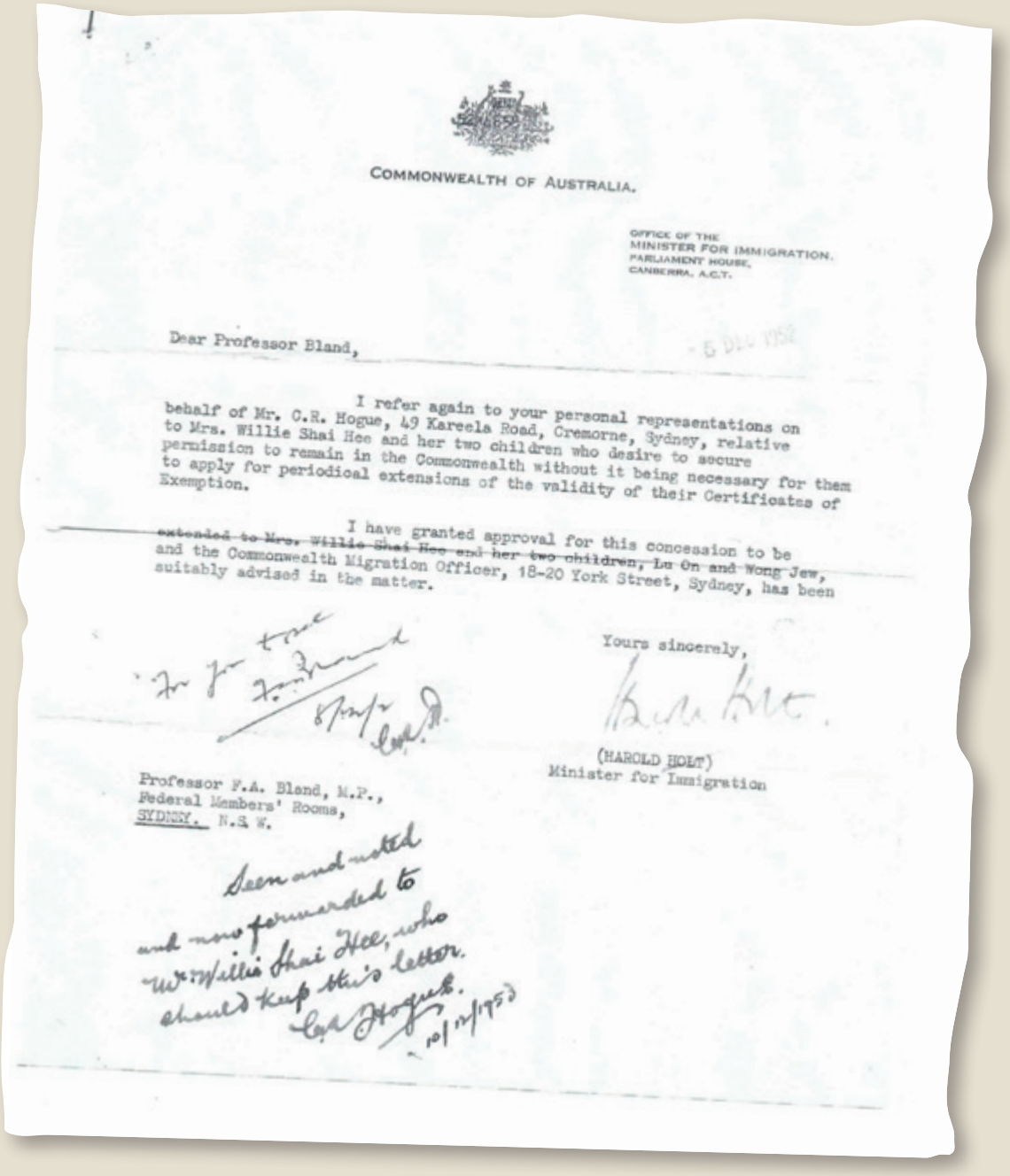
[421] Macgregor, 'Dreams of jade and Gold. Chinese Families in Australian History', pp.25-28; information from Ted and Johnny Doon, June, August 2010; Birth Certificate 15658/1891, NSW Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages.

[422] Junor, *Chung On*, pp.20-33; information from Lel Doon, September 2011.

[423] 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

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. If he had to close the business a number of employees would be out of work, and his customers seriously affected. A local resident, Ken Hoad, wrote in support stating that most of the customers were White Australians.[424]

In 1933 the family, with the exception of Ted, returned to China for the children's education. The Consul-General wrote in 1934 seeking exemption for Ted to act as a substitute for William who was finalising his father's affairs in China. Once again 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 Willie 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 by local MPs, Parker Moloney and Tom Collins, and by his bank manager.[425]

William's concerns with the immigration restrictions and the ever-present possibility that Chin See and Ted, who had to apply periodically for renewal of their newly acquired CEDTs, could be deported from Australia, led him to build two homes in Hem-Ning in the 1920s. He may also have had in mind living

[424] Joe and Reg Shai Hee, 'An Anecdote on the life of Chin See Shai-Hee' unpublished reminiscences, 2004; information from Joe Shai Hee, February 2012; Series A2998, 1952/4657, NAA, Canberra.

[425] Joe and Reg Shai Hee, 'An Anecdote on the life of Chin See Shai-Hee', unpublished reminiscences, Sydney; information from Joe Shai Hee, February 2012; Series A2998, 1952/4657, NAA, Canberra.

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, while 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 diaolous, (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. Almost all diaolous 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. [426]

An example of the vulnerability of the overseas Chinese in China to kidnapping is illustrated by the kidnapping of James Wong Chuey's adopted son in 1916, who was only released after payment of a handsome ransom. More pointedly, for the Shai Hees, was their own experience with kidnapping. In their Chinese home Chin See employed a nanny to look after the children. One day she asked the nanny to kill a duck. The nanny said she couldn't find a knife and Chin See went to look for one. While she was gone the nanny ran away with Reg, who was then only a baby, and went to the docks to sell him. Obviously the sons of the overseas Chinese brought a very good price at that time. After a frantic search Chin See caught up with them and took Reg home (the fate of the nanny is unknown).[427]

Continued concerns about deportation 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 F. A Bland, to ask that Chin See, Ted and Joe, be granted permanent exemption to live in Australia, instead of being given permission to remain 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 Willie 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 (who he said had been related to the late Mr Chuey and his wife) for many years. The Chuey family had been neighbours of his in Cremorne for a long time, Mr Chuey having been for many years one of the leading Chinese merchants in Sydney and the country. By this time William had left Tumut and was a business owner in Petersham, Sydney.[428]

The Minister, Harold Holt, 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.[429] In a letter to Hogue, Bland

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[426] 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 Shai Hee, February 2012.

[427] *Chinese Australian Herald*, 28 October 1916 (translation of original by Michael Churchman, ANU); information from Reg and JoeShai Hee and Jean Chin (née Shai Hee), February 2012.

[428] Letter from Clarrie Hogue to Harold Holt, Minister for Immigration, November 1952 (courtesy of Chris Shai Hee).

[429] Letter from Harold Holt, Minister for Immigration to Professor F.A. Bland, M.P., 5 December 1952

Conclusion

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 of re-union, when all their world had been destroyed by circumstances over which they had no control.[430]

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. Although no mention was made of assistants, 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 from and to Australia by coloureds, permitting the entry of anyone who could satisfy officials that they had formerly lived in Australia. Commencing in 1924 the age of students permitted to enter Australia was gradually reduced, particularly if the parents were merchants. 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.[431]

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, when a local trader was permitted to introduce an assistant if he had gross turnover of at least £5000 a year. He could introduce an extra assistant for each £10000 of turnover to a maximum of five on condition that an equal number of local hands were employed. 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 engage 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. Subsequently a separate category of persons eligible for entry - Chinese chefs – was instituted to enable Chinese restaurant owners to import the necessary staff, and in 1940 the turnover requirement for additional assistants was reduced to £5000. 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. [432]

(courtesy of Chris Shai Hee).

[430] Letter from F. A. Bland to Clarrie Hogue, 15 December 1952 (courtesy of Chris Shai Hee).

[431] A.C. Palfreeman, *The Administration of the White Australia Policy*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1967, pp.5-19.

[432] Palfreeman, *The Administration of the White Australia Policy*, pp.5-19.

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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. Much of the bullying and taunting of individuals on the streets, school grounds or the work place was never recorded, and far less prosecuted. These thoughtless acts, combined with intemperate language occasionally used by the press, would have been difficult to bear, and deep psychological scarring or worse was sometimes the result. The Chinese presence in the Riverina was, however, mainstream and spanned several generations to the present day. At times they were a significant proportion of the adult male population, 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 and 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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