Chinese came to California largely because of bad conditions in the homeland. Famine and war combined to impel the Chinese to travel thousands of miles to face strange and unknown conditions across the ocean. The lure of gold completed the reasons for this great movement. That the Chinese who mined for gold-ginned wealth beyond their expectations or the expectations of their neighbors we have seen and admit. The Chinese in the gold fields of California aided materially in the development of mining in the state. They modified and improved the various mining implements to the benefit of mining conditions in the state. They often explored and opened up new mining areas, and found gold where the white miners believed none existed. The exodus of the Chinese from the mines marked the beginning of the decline of this picturesque region. When the Chinese left, the mines lost its most faithful and industrious workers; no other group and nationality labored quite so earnestly. Therefore, the withdrawal of the Chinese from the gold fields signified the beginning of that regions' decline.

Key Words: Chinese Immigrants, Mining, Anti-Chinese Movement
I

Origins of the Chinese Movement into California

The United States is a nation of immigrants. Even the first people, the Native Americans, are believed to have migrated from another continent, Asia. Though the history of America is incomplete unless it includes all its ethnic groups, the history of the Chinese in America has remained largely an untold story. Perhaps this oversight is due to the fact that Chinese-Americans still number less than a million in a nation of 220 million people. Nevertheless, their influence and contributions over the last one hundred and forty years have had a profound effect on the course of American history.

The earliest Chinese-American contact began in 1784 when the first American traders landed at Canton. However, the first wave of Chinese emigration to the United States in noticeable numbers did not start until the 1850s. Why did the Chinese leave China? Why did the Chinese come to the United States in particular? To answer these questions, it is necessary to view the Chinese migration in a larger context: socio-economic conditions in the Old Country and opportunities in the New Country.

(1). China

Emigration has long been a part of Chinese history. During the Ming period (1368-1644) people from the coastal provinces of South China fanned out to the Philippines, Southeast Asia, and the East Indies. And as the New World opened, they went to Mexico, Brazil,


2 Ibid., p. 9.
The Gold Hunters

Peru, and Canada. Eventually perhaps ten million Chinese scattered throughout the world, and between the gold rush of 1849 and the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 nearly three hundred thousand, most of them from Kwangtung (Canton) Province in southeastern China, came to the United States. Ostracized socially, isolated culturally, and faithful to their values, the Chinese immigrants would have an extraordinary experience in the United States, one marked by pain as well as triumph.

Most of the nineteenth century Chinese immigrants came from the Sunwui, Toishan, Hoiping, and Tanping districts of Kwangtung. Kwangtung is noted for hot monsoon summers and cool winters. With most of the soil arable, Kwangtung farmers raised rice on the wet, flat coastal plain, where seventy inches of rain fell annually. Sugar cane was an important cash crop, and so were mulberry leaves for the silk industry. Pears, oranges, plums, mangoes, peaches, and pineapples grew in the mountains. Except for the cities of Canton (Kwangchow), Hong Kong, and Macao, Kwangtung was a rural, agrarian society where peasant families had tilled the land for millennia.

In spite of the land’s fertility and its intensive use, life was a struggle. There were more than 400 million people in China in 1850s, and population density along the coast averaged more than a thousand people per square mile. Agricultural techniques were primitive, and with only one-third of an acre to feed each person, production never satisfied demand. Even when the harvest was good, rice had to be imported. Frequent river flooding and periodic crop failures further beset peasant life. It is a world-known fact that China overpopulated. In China the land was truly thickly peopled and the economic condition wretched. Comparing the area and
population of the Chinese empire and America, we find that in territory China was just about as large as the United States. Yet its population was five times as many. The mild climate of Southern China also encouraged the increase of population. Travelers had written much about people living in boats on the Pearl River and about growing potatoes in the kitchens. Both these facts, though more or less exaggerated, show that the southeastern provinces are densely inhabited.

Until the nineteenth century few Chinese went overseas. There was such a strong feeling about the Middle Kingdom and its superiority that anyone who left it to live among the foreigners was thought to be degrading himself. Chinese believed China was the center of the earth, the highest expression of human civilization, and that Westerners were barbarians. And, there were stiff penalties under the Ching Dynasty for Chinese who left the country. In fact, until 1894, any Chinese who left China was committing a capital offense. Besides, for a long time the Chinese government did not have any representatives overseas to protect Chinese abroad. Any Chinese who went overseas did so at his own risk and had to rely on other Chinese immigrants for protection.

In addition to legal difficulties and emotional stress, the hardship of traveling conditions for the Chinese contract labor was so abhorrent

---

6 Ibid.
7 Ibid., p. 18.
8 Ibid., p. 24.
that many Chinese laborers died on the way to their destinations. Conditions on the ships were dreadful. As many as five hundred men were crowded into one hull so they barely had room to lie down. Due to overcrowding, lack of food, unsanitary conditions and harsh treatment, riots and murders sometimes occurred and many of the laborers died on board. Some Chinese jumped overboard and drowned. Another serious problem for Chinese was living in a strange land without knowing the language and customs. Despite all these hardships, many Chinese still made the decision to go abroad.

Chinese emigration had peculiar territorial limits not only in its destination but also in its source. It was chiefly composed of young peasants coming from only six districts of the two southeastern provinces. Fookien and Kwangtung lay between Foochow and Canton. When we think of the peculiarities surrounding this emigration, we can not help believe that there were certain local characteristics, which made Kwangtung and Fookien differ from the other provinces of the seafaring spirit, the early contact with western nation, the empire. A marked characteristic of the people of Kwangtung and Fookien was their independent, adventurous and unbending spirit. The Cantonese were natives of the Kwangtung delta who considered themselves superior to other groups. They controlled the economic and political machinery of the province. The Hakka (guest people) had emigrated from North China in the thirteenth century and were culturally and linguistically distinct from the Cantonese. They lived in separate villages, resented the patronizing attitudes of the Cantonese, and had competed with them

---

10 Ibid., p. 15.
for hundreds of years. Finally, there were the Tanka, chronically poor fishermen, smugglers, and ferrymen despised by Cantonese and Hakka alike. The independence of their province which despised submission to the Son of Heaven and which did not join the Celestial Empire, Cantonese had long been fostered the independent spirit until the Ming Dynasty about three hundred years ago.\(^{12}\) This unruly spirit their northern neighbors designated as “savageness,” and they called the Cantonese tauntingly “the southern savages.”\(^{13}\) Whether savage or not, Kwangtung preferred independence to servile submission to the despotic rule of the central government and homage which their northern neighbors take pride in as a sign of civilization.

Aside from rapid multiplication of population, another influence impelling the people to emigrate is the family tradition, which entitled the eldest son of the family to occupy the ancestral house.\(^{14}\) Suppose a man has five sons, which is not uncommon in Canton; his eldest son would have the house. Again supposing these five sons each had a family of five children, how could these children (the land in Canton being so clear and labor so cheap) manage to house themselves? Generally they could not, “from one generation to another everybody tries to send a man overseas, that’s the only way you can make things better,”\(^{15}\) and emigration is the result.

If China was overpopulated, why did not the people of other provinces emigrate? Because China was not a migratory nation.

---


\(^{13}\) Ibid., p. 67.


The Chinese were home land; the Middle Kingdom was to them the center of civilization and all the surrounding countries were savage nations, nations where there was little to gain but much to lose. Until the present time the outside world had been chaos of mystery, unknown and forbidding to the Chinese. Not only the respectable people not voluntarily go outside the limits of the Celestial Empire, but even the desperate convicts and exiles dreaded banishment to these distant lands. In democratic Canton, every man was considered the equal of every other man and all countries worthy of consideration. Even among the Cantonese the well to do did not emigrate. Students and merchants, who could afford to stay, consequently stay. Conventional ideas, of course, kept women at home. It was the wretched economic condition that had driven the young peasants out.

The economic condition was very important to the peasants. The emigrants were almost exclusively peasants. Their income was very little, but their families were very enormous. When the harvest was good, they got barely sufficient food to satisfy their hunger. In time of droughts, which often occurred in winter in the southeastern provinces, they suffered from the failure of crops. We have also to remember that it was the well-to-do peasants that had their own land to till. Those that had no land labored for those who had. Yet we need not picture the misery of these laboring peasants in times when food was scarce. When they were out of work, they sought to cut wood in the hills. By this new occupation they could obtain only enough to meet the demand of their homes, the reward of the whole day’s labor being twenty or thirty cents. Yet hills were soon

16 Bees, *The Other Side of the Chinese Question*, p. 41.
deforested and their families were constantly threatened with starvation.
Naturally these able-bodied, young peasants aspired for something greater, something by which they could better their own economic conditions and secure the ease and comfort of life. At home such excellent opportunities were lacking. They had to seek them abroad.

Other occurrences were destined to make the emigration inevitable. First, the stress of wars. During the Mid-nineteenth Century, opium trade let the European imperialism create new problems. Since the seventeenth century, when Dutch merchants introduced opium to China, European traders had competed to supply the huge Asian demand for the drug. In the 1830s English merchants dominated the opium traffic, but Chinese officials wanted it to stop because they felt it was undermining the fiscal and moral base of China. When Chinese officials seized the English opium supplies at Canton in 1839, the British government sent military forces and occupied the city. This is the so-called “Opium War”. This war is also known by the name “First Foreign War”, since it marks the first hostile contact of China with an outside power. The war began in 1839 and lasted until 1842. After three years of intermittent conflict, the First Opium War ended when China signed the Treaty of Nanking. Five Chinese ports including Canton, Shanghai, Ningpo, Amoy, and Foochow were opened to foreign trade. The closed-door policy of China was broken for the first time.

The Treaty of Nanking, signed on August 29, 1842, opened China to the world. In addition to the opening to foreign trade of five

---

ports, the island of Hong Kong was ceded to Great Britain.\textsuperscript{20} This step was of imminent importance for several reasons. Hong Kong was the greatest natural harbor of China; it was the nearest port of importance to Canton, the great commercial center of southern China. Under the control of Great Britain it was bound to become the most important connecting link between the trade of China and that of Great Britain, the United States, and in fact, the whole world. When we take into consideration the fact that practically all the Chinese immigration into California came from the southern provinces of Kwangtung and Fookien, whose natural outlet was Hong Kong, we can readily see the importance of Great Britain gaining control of that port.\textsuperscript{21} For under China, Hong Kong had been left in an undeveloped state; foreign trade was impossible. Under Great Britain, the port had rapidly developed and became the natural outlet for Chinese emigration. A last result of the Opium War was the first American treaty with China, the Treaty of Hwanghsia, signed on July 3, 1844, providing for commercial intercourse between the two nations.\textsuperscript{22}

The period of the years between the Treaty of Nanking and the outbreak of the Second Foreign War in 1847 was one of very unsettled conditions.\textsuperscript{23} China, during this time, was trying to adjust herself to the new foreign intercourse. Gradually the number of foreigners in the country increased. As trade developed with foreign nations, friction also seemed to develop. This bad feeling, characterized by many attacks on European and American traders, finally culminated

\textsuperscript{20} Ibid.,
\textsuperscript{22} Gowen and Hall, \textit{An Outline History of China}, p. 254.
\textsuperscript{23} Ibid., p. 257.
in the "Second Foreign War", this is another Opium War, which lasted from 1847 to 1859. This was a war to a large degree a repetition of the first one. It was brought to a close by the Treaties of Tientsin (1858) and Peking (1860). Sporadic disturbances continued through 1862. In itself the war was of no great importance, and certainly did not affect the Chinese movement to California. Yet, the war was of considerable importance as taking place during the very prolonged and bloody Taiping Rebellion. The combination of these two events, which tore China apart both internally and externally, was a great and deciding factor in the Chinese immigration into California. In 1848, when the news of the discovery of gold reach Asia, many thousands of Chinese were only too glad to escape from the deplorable conditions in their homeland, and seek their fortunes across the ocean.

The Taiping (Heavenly Peace) Rebellion let the European presence disrupted traditional society. Christian missionaries preaching Jesus Christ and the church as a social institution challenged the Confucian emphasis on family authority. British textiles entered Kwangtung, ruined local producers, and vastly increased unemployment. Anglo-Chinese wars stimulated racial violence between the English and the native peasants. And the Taiping (Heavenly Peace) Rebellion in the 1850s devastated southeastern China. China suffered from this internal discord for fourteen years (1850-1864). In one of the largest of China’s many peasant revolts, Hung Hsiu-ch’uan, a Hakka (guest people) student and a Protestant Christian convert, proclaimed himself the younger brother of Jesus Christ and led a mystical religious-military revolt against the Manchu authorities of Kwangsi Province, just north of Kwangtung. Quickly spreading to Kwangtung, the

24 Speer, The Oldest and the Newest Empire, pp. 389-393.
rebellion turned into a general uprising of discontented scholars denied admission to the civil service (and thus consigned to a life of menial work); Cantonese residents suffering from economic disruptions; troubled peasants wanting land reform; democrats hoping to destroy political tyranny; and Hakkas planning to blunt the power of the Cantonese.25 During this time the country was overrun by bandit hordes, cities were pillaged, women and girls ravished, trade disrupted, and famine appeared, now in one province and now in another.26 It was a social catastrophe; the rebellion and its suppression completely destroyed the rural economy and killed more than twenty million people. Desperate peasants began looking beyond China for new opportunities.27

The Taiping Rebellion, therefore, was an important cause for the Chinese movement across the Pacific Ocean and into California. It is interesting to note that the rebellion started only a year or so after the discovery of gold and lasted for approximately the same length of time as the gold rush. During this period of time, therefore, the rebellion was an ever-present pressure on the Chinese to immigrate to California. The internal and external dissension that was sweeping China, coupled with the roseate reports of Chinese already in California as to the wealth to be obtained there, proved to be one of the impelling causes that sent the Chinese across the Pacific.

Yet amidst all these upheavals the Chinese family continued to order peasant life. A basic institution of social control, the clan tied families together in village economies where property was held in

25 Vitor G. and Brett de Bary Nec, Longtime California, p. 32.
27 Victor and Nec, Longtime California, p. 32.
common, graveyards administered, and ancestral halls maintained. Individuals subordinated their personal interests to the authority of the extended family, and kinship interests to the authority of the extended throughout life. Peasants were intensely loyal to the family; it supplied their reason for being. The disruptions of the mid-nineteenth century tested that loyalty, as farmers became more and more hard-pressed to support their families. In the end, family devotion pushed hundreds of thousands of peasants to go overseas.

In short, during the latter half of the nineteenth century China was an unhappy and impoverished country. Droughts, floods, famine, and bandits wrought havoc in the countryside and the cities. The land was poor and poorly managed, and intrigues and warring factions plagued the last ineffective rulers of the Manchu Dynasty. The people of South China, particularly in the vicinity of Canton, were generally not as well educated or as well off as people in the north, and were hardest bit by the political and economic hardships of the times. Many of them were prepared to gamble their all on a long and difficult journey, with no guarantee of success when they reached their destination, California. Most immigrants were adults in their twenties or thirties. These people had grown up under a different culture in a different milieu. Their language was Chinese and their ways were firmly by tradition. Migration, to them, was yanking up deeply imbedded roots and transplanting them in foreign soil, a traumatic experience that required a tremendous amount of readjustment.

(2). United States

At the time of these disasters in China, there were certain attractions abroad to quicken the emigrating movement. The
demand of labor in Cuba, Mexico, Canada, and Peru for different economic purposes, and especially the discovery of gold in California had stirred the whole world with hopes of unexpected fortune. The call of the Gold Mountains, the name given by the Chinese laborers to the Californian ranges, was ringing in the air of the distressed regions of Canton. A more direct inducement to make the journey to California was the news of the gold strike of 1848. In 1849, $2,000,000 in gold was exported from California and the same amount in goods and coin came back. Gold had been discovered at Coloma, in what is now El Dorado County, on January 19, 1848, and by the following fall the rush was on from all over the world, bring men of all sorts and classes—except the timid and the poor in spirit. In the early 1850s advertisements were placed in Hong Kong newspapers to attract passengers for American ships on their return voyage from China. Word spread by letter and by mouth as Chinese already in California wrote home of the gold rush. By 1851, the rush from Kwangtung to California was on. After the initial surge of immigration of the early 1850s, immigration leveled off and the image of California seems to have receded. However in the late 1860s Newspapers on Chinese coast again carried advertisements of the advantages to be had by shipping to California to work on the railroads and in agriculture. To go over there and dig the gold up was the thirsty desire of the poor sufferers. “To be starved and to be buried in the sea are the same,” said some young adventurers.

28 Eliot Grinnell Mears, Resident Orientals on the American Pacific Coast (Arno Press, 1928), p. 188.
30 State Mining Bureau, San Francisco: The Financial, Commercial & Industrial Metropolis of the Pacific Coast, p. 15.
31 The China Mail, Hong Kong, May 30, 1853.
32 California China Mail and Flying Dragon, March 1, 1867.
"Why not plunge right into death rather than wait for death!" With this spirit they even embarked on their crude, old junks and combated with the dangerous element of the sea without any fear or the least idea of receding. The Chinese became sojourners; temporary immigrants who planned to work in America until they were fifty or sixty years old. Then they would return home bringing wealth and respect. During their years abroad, they hoped to make return visits to China several times, marry a woman selected by the clan, father many children, and help the family by sending their money home in China. Emigration was not a turning away from their homeland but a defense of the family and the village, the only way to preserve the traditional order.

The Chinese were suggested as a labor force during the mid-nineteenth century. They were docile, patient workers who did not watch the clock, frugal livers who did not demand exorbitant wages, and stolid beings who could not be swayed by the agitator. Their advocates foretell a New England in which if only Chinese workers were employed, factory wheels would turn steadily, the laboring class lived simply and contentedly, and their employers divided their time between the management of these patriarchal mills and the higher arts of civilization. Nature farmers, also, brightened at the prospect. The wonders of Chinese agriculture were recounted, the more conservative were urged to give up their race prejudices, and some were known to repeat with favor the sentiment credited to the laborers of California: "All I want in my business is muscle. I do not care whether it be obtained from a Chinaman or a white man— from a

34 Ibid.
mule or a horse. Therefore, during the early exploitative era, the United States welcomed the Chinese immigrants into this New Country.

The first Chinese immigrants in California were treated with “distinguished consideration”: They were referred to as “fellow-citizens”. Governor McDougal made allusion to the Chinese as one of the most worthy classes of America’s newly adopted citizens, expressing a desire for further Chinese immigration and settlement. A basic reason for the cordial welcome to the early Chinese immigrants lay in the fact that there was in California no dependable supply of common laborers and that these Orientals showed themselves adaptable, faithful workers, whether in the mines, on the railroads and ranches, in laundries, hotels and private kitchens, or as domestic servants. They seemed to have a passion for work and were content with meager wages.

In addition, many of the champions of Chinese labor insisted that Chinese labor was “by no means as cheap as was sometimes implied”. And this was true, perhaps, oftener than not, about the actual wage per day paid them. Yet cheap labor is not always measured by the wage—sometimes it is measured by the drudgery, the drive and hours put in from dawn to dark.

Having taken a comprehensive view of the causes of emigration—the economic pressure, the stress of wars, the social prejudice and the

36 Secretary of the Connecticut Board of Agriculture, *Tenth Annual Report, 1876-1877*, p. 48.
38 Ibid.
gold attraction—which render an unmigratory nation migratory, it is easy to see why the Chinese laborers come to America. Yet aside from all these, there is still another cause that sent the Chinese to the United States. That is the Chinese sense of “family attachment”.\textsuperscript{39} To make clear what I mean, I may say that the Chinese stick to their friends and relatives. Where their friends and relatives go, there they go. Where their friends and relatives do not go, there they do not go. Formerly they flocked to the Straits Settlements and never a single one lived anywhere else by himself. Yet, as soon as a beginning was made, his friends and relatives soon followed the adventurous emigrant. That is why the reason that only three Chinese emigrants appeared in San Francisco in 1830, only forty-five years later in 1875, we find quite a large settlement in that city.\textsuperscript{40} Thus, the Chinese migration to the United States in the nineteenth century was caused by push and pull, the push of the Old Country and the pull of the New Country.

II
Routes to the Mines

In 1848, gold was discovered near Coloma, California. James Marshall was building a sawmill for John Sutter when he noticed bits of gold metal in the millpond.\textsuperscript{41} The news of this discovery spread all over the world. First, Americans from the West coast poured into California. Then the Hawaiians arrived, followed by South Americans. In 1849, Europeans heard the news and joined the rush

\textsuperscript{39} Edith E. Erickson and Eddy Ng, \textit{From Sojourner to Citizen: Chinese of the Island Empire} (Calfax, Washington, 1989), p. 57.

\textsuperscript{40} \textit{Annual Report}, 1963-72.

The Gold Hunters

to California.\textsuperscript{42}

A few Chinese were among the first to venture into the gold mining districts after its discovery in 1848. However, in 1850, only 500 out of 57,787 miners in California were Chinese.\textsuperscript{43} In 1851 Chinese immigration to California increased sharply. Many of these newcomers turned to the mining camps as a first venture.\textsuperscript{44}

San Francisco was the port of entry into California for ships from China.\textsuperscript{45} The harbor of San Francisco was not only the largest and most sheltered harbor on the coast of California, but also the seaport nearest to the gold regions. The mountain streams in the gold areas flowed into either the Sacramento or San Joaquin Rivers, and these rivers in turn flowed into San Francisco Bay. In the town and bay of San Francisco, then, we find the key that opened the “promised land” to the thousands of gold-seekers from all over the world who arrived in California by waters.

There were two general ways to reach the mines from San Francisco. The first, and by far the most important, was by waters, up the Sacramento or San Joaquin Rivers, and then overland to the mines; the second, and least important, was by land, down the peninsula of San Francisco to San Jose, and then over the Coast Tange mountains and across the San Joaquin valley to the mines. Some as a direct land favored this latter route to the mining region. The travel was

\textsuperscript{42} Alta California, August 21, 1850.

\textsuperscript{43} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{44} Mae H.B. Boggs, “My Playhouse was a Concord Coach, Oakland,” Sacramento Union, Vol. 3(Spring, 1942), p. 310.

\textsuperscript{45} William Speer, An Humble Plea Addressed to the Legislature of California in Behalf of the Immigrants from the Empire of China to this State (San Francisco, 1856), p. 18.
long, however, and the route was never extremely popular.46 The classic path from San Francisco to the gold regions of the Sierra Nevada Mountains, the path taken by perhaps ninety-five percent of the miners coming from the coast town, led up the Bay of San Francisco, through its northeastern branch, Suisun Bay, and into either the Sacramento or the San Joaquin Rivers. This river journey proved to be immensely popular with the Chinese.47 Crafts of all kinds were used in the trip. The passage from San Francisco to Sacramento or Stockton took a number of days, sometimes a week, and cost from sixteen dollars up.48 Most of the boats did not provide food for their passengers.49

If the Chinese miner wished to pursue his undertaking in the so-called Northern Mines,50 he took passage from San Francisco up the Sacramento River to Sacramento or Marysville (further up the river). If he wished to visit the Southern Mines, he traveled on the boat up the San Joaquin River to Stockton.51 The three towns mentioned: Sacramento, Maryville, and Stockton, were the three great focal points of the inland valley of California. They were the three distributing towns for the mines to the east. Supplies not purchased in San Francisco could be secured in these towns. Chinese also appeared on the scene when gold was discovered in the Trinity County area in the early 1850s. In 1853, they first appeared in Shasta

47 Speer, An Humble Plea Addressed to the Legislature of California in Behalf of the Immigrants from the Empire of China to this State, p. 18.
48 F.P. Wierzbickie, California As It Is, and As It May Be, Or A Guide to the Gold Region (San Francisco, 1849), p. 40.
49 Ibid.
50 J.D. Borthwick, The Gold Hunters, p. 47.
51 Ibid.
County on their way to the new mines.\textsuperscript{52} Many Chinese who were disappointed in their quest for wealth, or who were easily tired of the mining work, returned from the mountains to these towns of Sacramento, Marysville, and Stockton, and made their homes there. As in the case of San Francisco, the Chinese became merchants, restaurateurs, and laundrymen. These three valley communities still possess their picturesque Chinatowns, vivid reminders of the Chinese who settled them in the fifties.

Groups of Chinese hiking to the mining areas from the river ports must have presented quite an unusual sight, as evidenced by the following descriptions by contemporaries:

...Crowds of Chinamen were...bound for the diggings, each man with a bamboo laid across his shoulder, from both ends of which was suspended a higgledy-piggledy collection of mining tools, Chinese "fixings" which no one but a Chinaman could tell the use of—all speaking at once...\textsuperscript{53}

They were mostly dressed in the national costume, petticoat trousers reaching to the knee, big jackets, lined and quilted, and huge basket hats, made of split bamboo. The lower part of their legs were encased in blue cotton stockings, made of cloth and with soles fully an inch in depth.\textsuperscript{54}

The appearance of the people was extremely curious and diversified. There were Chinese in all the splendor of sky-blue or


\textsuperscript{53} Ping Chiu, \textit{Chinese Labor in California} (Madison, 1967), p. 44.

\textsuperscript{54} Report of the Joint Special Committee to Investigate Chinese Immigration, 44\textsuperscript{th} Cong., 2\textsuperscript{nd} Session, 1876-77, \textit{Senate Report} 689, p. 78 and p. 666.
purple figured silk jackets, and tight yellow satin continuation, black satin shoes with thick white copes, and white gaiters; a fan in the hand, and a beautifully plaited glossy pigtail hanging down to the heels from under a scarlet skull-cap, with a gold knob on the top of it. These were the swell Chinese; the lower doers of Celestials were generally dressed in immensely wide blue calico jackets and bags, for they really could not be called trousers, and on their heads they wore enormous wickerwork extinguishers, which would have made very good family clothes-buckets.55

Gold mining was a gamble; while some “struck it rich,” many others worked hard for nothing. Therefore, gambling was in the very air. Most of the miners were young men, too active, ebullient, and vivacious, for quiet amusements in their hours of leisure. There was no home life or anything to suggest it. In 1850 only two percent of the population of the mining counties were women, and probably most of these were of loose character. There was no standard of respectability to be lived up to.56 Against the toils and hardships of the minefield, against the gloom of disappointment or the wild elation of success, human nature demanded a counterpoise of some sort—and the only places in all the wide land where the miner could find comfort, luxury, gaiety, were the saloons and gambling-houses.

In the mining towns, Chinatowns also sprang up to serve both white and Chinese miners in a variety of ways: by establishing laundries, boarding houses, restaurants, general stores, etc.57 A big Chinatown in the northwestern part of the State sprang up in

56 Ibid., p. 10.
Weaverville, where several thousand Chinese lived and mined. Other Chinatowns in this area were in Shasta and Yreka. In the Northern Mines, Chinese settlements were established in towns such as Goodyear's Bar, Coloma, Placerville, Dutch Flat, Bevada City, Grass Valley, and Auburn. Oroville and Marysville once boasted Chinese populations rivaling that of San Francisco. 58

Chinese were also numerous in the Southern Mining District. Several thousands settled in the Chinese Camp, some eight or ten miles south of Sonora. 59 As the Chinese were gradually driven from other camps in the area, they also congregated in the China Camp and the town became the distribution center of Chinese labor for all the Southern Mines. 60 Towns in the region, such as Bear Valley, Sonora, Coulterville, Mokelumne Hill, Angel’s Camp, Hornitos, Knight’s Metty and Columbia also once had their thriving “Chinese Camp”. 61

III
Chinese Life at the Mines

(1). The Chinese Settlements in the Mines

The Chinese Camp contained the largest Chinese population in the mines, which was the distributing center of Oriental labor for all the Southern Mines. Chinese activity extended over the entire mining region; Chinese camps were found all over the gold area.

58 Ibid.
59 It is said that the Chinese Camp was settled by a group of Chinese, part of the crew of a stranded ship, who were persuaded by a ship’s captain to wash for him. Ibid., pp. 45-47.
61 Ping Chiu, Chinese Labor in California, p. 46.
The Chinese settlements in the mines were of two distinct types. First there were the numerous camps, located generally on the banks of rivers and their branches. Then there were the Chinatowns, forming parts of various towns in the mining region. The principal distinction between the two kinds of Chinese settlements is obvious. The camps were separate communities; only Chinese lived in them. The Chinatowns formed sections of towns. They were distinct quarters of American mining communities. Besides, the principal purpose of the Chinese camps was to serve as convenient shelters to protect the miners actually digging for gold. The purpose of the Chinatowns was different. The Chinese quarters of the mining towns served as supply centers for the outlying Chinese camps. They also served to provide the rest of the town with certain desirable necessities as restaurants, laundries, and shops where all manners of articles could be purchased at greatly reduced prices. In general, the Chinese camps contained the largest Chinese population in the mines. Chinese activity extended over the entire mining region, and Chinese camps were found all over the gold area. The Chinese miners set up camps characterized by small tents and brush houses, near their claims, generally on the banks of a stream. Sometimes a Chinese camp would be formed near an American camp on the same river. Yet the Chinese camp was near American cabin on the side of the hill too near to be pleasant, for they kept up a continual chattering all night, which was rather tiresome till Americans got used to it.

Borthwick’s desire to travel took him all over the mines. While at the Yuba River he came upon a Chinese camp, and told of it in the following words:

63 Ibid.
I went down the river two or three miles to see a place called ‘Mississippi Bar’, where a company of Chinamen was at work. After an hour’s climbing along the rocky banks, and having crossed and re-crosseed the river some half-dozen times on pine longs, I at last got down among the Celestials. There were about a hundred and fifty of them here, living in a perfect village of small tents, all clustered together on the rocks...their camp was wonderfully clean....

The above quotation shows in what isolated and inaccessible places the Chinese camps were often placed. This fact was often due to the desire of the Chinese to work in locations somewhat removed from American mining camps. The American miners generally chose the easier locations to work—those that were on the main routes of travel. The Chinese miners were willing not only to explore areas already mined by Americans and others but they were also eager to mine in the more isolated parts of the region.

In addition, Chinese people from each particular region in Kwangtung Province tended to live and work together. Feuds over mining rights occurred frequently between groups. This was the cause of the so-called “Weaverville War” in 1854 between a group of Sze Yup people and a group from Heungshan. Fighting also flared up between the Sam Yup people and Hakkas in 1856 at Chinese Camp.65 These have been the subject of many highly colored

---

64 J.D. Borthwick, *Three Years in California* (Biobooks, 1948), pp. 252-255. Borthwick, a continual traveler through the mines during the period of the fifties, was particularly interested in the Chinese he found there. His book abounds in illustrations of Chinese mining life, other occupations, feuds, persecution, etc. It is one of the five or six best sources for Chinese life in the California mining regions.

accounts, but it should be understood that these were not tong wars, but rather private feuds. However, by and large, the Chinese were peaceful both among themselves and in relation with others.

(2). The Chinese as Miners

San Francisco was the starting point for the Chinese Argonauts. Generally, after landing in San Francisco, several days were spent in procuring necessary supplies and consulting one or another of the district associations. Then the immigrant would set off, and in the company of his fellow countrymen, head for the gold mining districts. Instructed in the necessity for keeping together and warned to minimize their contacts with the more aggressive and unpredictable white man, they worked in groups.

At first, when there were few Chinese miners, they were regarded and tolerated as curiosities. They in turn invariably treated in a hospitable manner any one who visited their camps, and seemed

---

66 TONG WARS is not clear when true tong wars began in America, but, by the late 1880s, the war "tong" had come to have negative connotations outside of Chinatowns. Actually, in the long list of Chinese tong organizations a large number remained altogether free from inter-society fighting tongs. Cited from C.N. Reynolds, "The Chinese Tongs," The American Journal of Sociology, XL (March 1935), pp. 617-19. Even so, it was difficult for outsiders to distinguish a militant tong from a pacific one. Overlapping membership, since many people belonged to more than one tong compounded this difficulty. A respectable merchant, for instance, had automatic membership also in one or two benevolent tongs and at least one clan tong. He might also join a secret society tong for protection of clan prestige that was the most important causes of tong violence. Accounts of battles arising from these causes were indeed numerous. In early May 1869, for example, a battle occurred between two rival groups of Chinese railroad workers near Camp Victory in Utah. As the dispute erupted over a $15 debt owed by a member of one tong to a member of a rival tong. After the usual braggadocio, both parties sailed in, at a given signal, armed with every conceivable weapon. Several shots were fired and all indications of the outbreak of a riot appeared until a superintendent of the Central Pacific restored order and averted a major disturbance. San Francisco Evening Bulletin, May 6 and May 8, 1869.

rather pleased than otherwise at the interest and curiosity excited by their domestic arrangement.68 The Chinese quickly learned however that it was more prudent not to contest the richer diggings with the white miners, but satisfied themselves by working only leftover claims or reworking the tailings that the whites had discarded.69

The early Chinese generally were engaged in placer mining. This was carried on along the banks of streams and their branches. The first appliance used in this type of mining was the simple “pan”. The Chinese, as well as the other miners, at first used any kind of pan or basin to scoop up the gold.70 However, the “cradle” or “rocker” was the Chinese favorite mining implement. The instrument of rocker was an oblong box about four feet long, two feet wide and nine inches deep at the higher end. A bar divided the box in the middle, the lower end being left with a very low end-board. The top of the rocker was open. Another box with perforated sheet-iron bottom was made to fit into the upper half. This was known as the “hopper”. Beneath the hopper was a canvas “apron”, placed at an angle of about thirty degrees with its lower end near the upper part of the cradle. The apron was so placed that the dirt being washed through the water would have to pass over this apron and down on to the floor of the cradle. The box was mounted on rockers.71 After white miners had abandoned the cradle for newer devices, Chinese still used it for a

69 Ibid., pp. 160-161.
70 Owen Cochran Coy, Gold Days (Los Angeles: Powell Publishing Company, 1929), p. 118. One of the best books yet written on the period 1848-1860 in the California mines. Coy has drawn freely from many manuscripts and sources of the time. The result is a splendid work dealing with a phases of the gold period of California state history.
71 Ibid., pp. 118-121.
Other equipments used were the "long tom" and various types of "sluice boxes." The long tom was a wooden which open at the tops and at the ends. The lower part of the tom was perforated to allow the finer particles of dirt to be washed down by a flow of water into the "riffle box" placed underneath. The sluice box was merely an exaggerated long tom, and, by several of them being placed end to end, could be made to extend quite a distance, perhaps one hundred or two hundred feet. The ability of the Chinese to work these mines through large-scale projects surprised the American miners. Much gold was obtained from the beds of the streams themselves by means of diverting the flow of the water. To do this the usual method was to construct a "wing dam". Teams of workers used pine trees to build wing dams of up to two hundred yards across streams. These "were built of stone, brush and dirt and extend only a part of the way across, then down the stream and back, thus confining the water to a narrow channel and leaving expose a part of the river bed." Wing dams were built all over the mining region by Chinese miners. It was a task peculiarly suited to mass action, and one in which the large groups of Chinese miners excelled. They also developed a chain pump, which was turned by a man on each side working a treadmill of four spokes on the same axle. Through this kind of teamwork, the

72 Ibid., p. 122.
74 For a very detailed discriptions of the various types of mining devices, the reader is referred to Owen Cochran Coy's Gold Days (Powell Publishing Company, Los Angeles, 1929), one of the best books written on the period 1848-1860 in the California mines. Coy has drawn freely from many manuscripts and sources of the time. The result is a splendid work dealing with all phases of the gold period of California state history.
75 Ibid.
76 Ibid., p. 126.
Chinese miners were able to make a living where individual American miners could not.\textsuperscript{77}

When the placer fields became exhausted, other types of mining were investigated. The Chinese engaged in two kinds of mining, "Hydraulic" and "quartz", after 1855, which tended to supplant the old placer methods. Hydraulic mining was a term applied to the mining process whereby large streams of water under heavy pressure were thrown against gravel banks with such force that they were washed away, permitting the segregation of the heavier gold-bearing gravel from the lighter materials.\textsuperscript{78} In this type of operation the Chinese miners generally worked under white control and direction, being paid one or two dollars a day as wages.\textsuperscript{79} In addition, the development of quartz mining followed shortly that of hydraulic mining. In this type of mining, gold is extracted from veins of rock or quartz-bearing gravel.\textsuperscript{80} The best way to reach the gold found in this rock formation is by means of mines. The Chinese were not wealthy enough and encountered too much opposition from white miners to think of digging or purchasing mines.\textsuperscript{81} Therefore, as in the case of hydraulic mining, they generally were hired to work as mine laborers by white mine operators.

Many of the Chinese were hired out to the white miners. They

\textsuperscript{77} California. Foreign Miners Committee. \textit{Reports of the select committee to whom was referred Assembly bills no. 206, 207 and 208}, with reference to foreign miners. Majority report adverse to these bills, and substitutes another especially directed against Chinese labor. Sacramento, B.B. Redding, state prtr., 1855, App. Ass. Jol. 6 sess. doc. 19.

\textsuperscript{78} John S. Hittell, \textit{The Resources of California} (San Francisco, 1867), p. 242.

\textsuperscript{79} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 287. It says that the Chinese owned no hydraulic equipment or claims.

\textsuperscript{80} The actual discovery of quartz as a medium containing gold was in 1849, but it general development came much later.

\textsuperscript{81} Hittell, \textit{The Resources of California}, p. 387.
were hired first in placer mining, and then in drift digging to some extent, and finally in hydraulic mining to very great advantage.\textsuperscript{82} When a person hired one or more of these Chinese, "it was usual, if not universal, to settle with the headman of the company; and if you turned off one, he would bring you another."\textsuperscript{83} Other Chinese worked for their compatriots, or Chinese companies. One observer noted that among the Chinese miners were Chinese of the better class, who no doubt directed the work and paid the common men very poor wages, poor at least for California.\textsuperscript{84}

In addition, Chinese operations in the mines were nearly all owned by companies. Companies brought up scores of Chinese and hired them out, or located claims, and set them to work on them. The company came down in the evening and took possession of the gold. These companies supplied rice and other provisions, tools, etc., for these fellows who worked in the mines.\textsuperscript{85}

Chinese miners not only worked in the gold mines, they were also an important part of the quicksilver and borax mining industries in California, which produced millions of dollars. However, the working conditions were terrible and ruined the health of many miners. Chinese did most of the manual labor—mining, sorting the ore and tending the furnace. Besides the miners and the furnace-men, there was a small group of Chinese called "sootmen", who crawled into the hot condensers (for condensing quicksilver vapor) and cleaned out the

\textsuperscript{82} "A Brief History of the Chinese in America," included in the 50\textsuperscript{th} Anniversary Album of the Young China Morning Paper (Hong Kong, 1960), p. 55.
\textsuperscript{83} Ralph Mahoney, "Our Chinese-American Heritage," Arizona Days and Ways Magazine (September 30, 1956), pp. 77-79.
\textsuperscript{85} Rosena A. Giles, Shasta County (California, 1949), p. 153.
quicksilver laden soot. Most of the workmen became so badly salivated from inhaling the mercury fumes that they eventually became "shaking, toothless wrecks." Chinese working at the mines fell into two categories—the manual laborers who spoke little or no English and the more educated, English-speaking ones who managed the business affairs of the workers. The latter group held the more important underground jobs and worked in the store, or in the superintendent's home.

The mines becoming increasingly difficult to work and also becoming very crowded with representatives from all over the world, the Chinese possessed enough ingenuity and enterprise to engage in other and varied occupations. During the fifties a considerable number of Chinese miners withdrew from their work in the Sierra foothills and sought further avenues of gain in the valley towns and in the towns along the coast. Yet almost as great a number of Chinese remained in the mining region to enter lines of work to which they proved to be particularly well adapted.

Many of the Chinese opened up stores, in which all sorts of miners' supplies could be obtained. These stores served both white and Chinese miners. They were to be found all over the mining area. The one great item of favor the white miner felt toward the Chinese stores was that they were considerably lower in price of articles sold than were the American and other stores throughout the mines. The Chinese storekeeper, as well as the Chinese engaged in other occupations, was not in the mines to make as much as possible from

---

86 Helen R. Goss, The Life and Death of a Quicksilver Mine (Los Angeles, 1858), p. 65.
87 Ibid., pp. 65-66.
88 A good example is found at Coloma, where two Chinese stores are still standing.
It was in the matter of preparing food that the Chinese made their greatest success in the mines. In this the conditions that helped to create the environment of the region aided them. For the arduous work in which the miner engaged created in him a voracious appetite. The restaurants run by the Chinese were the objects of the miner’s particular favor places. As civilization and more stable conditions spread over the mining region, the Chinese with culinary ambitions found further scope for their talents in the position of cooks for private households and for American restaurants. During the decade of the fifties the average wage paid to cooks in families was forty or fifty dollars per month. The Chinese were content to accept a considerably smaller sum. They also found occupation as waiters in white restaurants and even in white mining camps.

The other occupations, besides mining, followed by the Chinese in the mines were not all “honest” and above reproach. Their fondness for gambling was seen throughout the mining district. The gambling houses received their patronage more from the white miners than the Oriental. Many Chinese operators of these houses gained fortunes from their undertakings and in later years moved down into the larger towns to the west, where they continued their

---

89 Speer, The Oldest and the Newest Empire: China and the United States, p. 499. This book by William Speer is the most voluminous and the most authoritative source reference we possess as to the relations between China and California during the fifties. The author, a missionary in China and resident of California and friend of the Chinese in the state in the fifties, is remarkably fair and consistent in his point of view. The volume contains a detailed analysis, in its first chapters, of the Chinese character and of conditions in China during the foreign wars. The last part of the book concerns the Chinese in California.

90 Ibid., p. 499.

91 Ibid.
endeavors on a larger scale.

The Chinese in the mines have now been viewed as miners, restaurant keepers, cooks, waiters, washermen, gambling operators and counterfeiters. Yet in whatever occupation the Chinese engaged to encounter opposition from the white residents of the mining region. While he was high in favor of the people of San Francisco and the inland river towns, antagonism often took forcible means to express itself and resulted in stringent acts against the Chinese.

IV

The Anti-Chinese Movement

(1). The Development of Anti-Chinese Feeling in the Mines

During the first few years after the discovery of gold the arrival of the Chinese miners aroused no feelings of antagonism in the mines. This was due to several reasons. First, in comparison with the ever-increasing numbers of white miners arriving in California from all parts of Europe and America, the Chinese were comparatively a very small group. They formed a distinctive section of the mining population to be sure. The very scarcity of Chinese numbers rendered them for a time free from persecution.

Secondly, the Chinese desired to work only those gold areas already deserted by the white miners. In the early fifties the Chinese did not wish to acquire new claims. They did not wish to develop new mining areas. As the decade progressed and the white miners discovered that claims considered to be exhausted and deserted by them were proving immensely rich to the Chinese miners who were working them, antagonism developed.
A final reason for the freedom from molestation enjoyed by the Chinese in the early fifties was their natural tendency to keep to themselves. The Chinese miners were unobtrusive, earnest individuals, far removed from others engaged in the same task.

While the rapid increase in the number of Chinese miners in 1852 and the years immediately following was the impelling motive for the rise of agitation against them, there were other reasons that contributed to its growth. The ability of the Chinese to work to their gain the mining areas abandoned as worthless by the white miners was particularly aggravating.

Other motives that aided in the rapid development of the anti-Chinese movement in the mining area were due to a variety of reasons. According to Speer’s analysis, the objections may be classified under two heads. First, these strangers were of no pecuniary benefit to California, that they interfered with American labor, and that they carried nearly all they made out of the country. The belief that the Chinese did not spend what they gained in California was an almost universal feeling. Secondly, those Chinese vices made them dangerous to American people and to American posterity. The many gaming establishments maintained by enterprising Chinese throughout the mining region served to strengthen this attitude. A further and prominent reason was the belief among the white miners

---

92 Speer, An Humble Plea Addressed to the Legislature of California in Behalf of the Immigrants from the Empire of China to the State, p. 19. This is, unreality, a summary of Dr. Speer’s longer book, cited below. It is however, one of the best accounts we have of the reasons for Chinese immigration in the fifties to California. It is also very important as a guide to conditions in the mines as the Chinese found them.

93 Ibid.
of practical slavery.\footnote{Rockwell D. Hunt and N. van der G. Sanchez, \textit{A Short History of California} (T.T. Crowell Company, New York, 1929), p. 362. This most recent historical work in California is valuable for its treatment of the Chinese at the mines, but does not go back of the year 1848.}

The acme of antagonism against the Chinese, and a good summary of extreme reasons against them may be seen in a speech of Governor Bigler, that inveterate enemy of the Oriental, delivered in 1854. To summarize his reasons for stopping the influx of Chinese, Bigler declared that they lived in squalor, spoke a strange tongue, worshipped idols, ate rats, were diseased, had their own laws and agents, sent money out of the country, and worked for less wages and more hours than did the white miners.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, p. 362.} The objections to the Chinese advanced by Bigler may be said to represent the belief of a large proportion of the mining population. Governor Bigler was the miners' political leader in the state; his views and theirs in regard to the Chinese question coincided.

The large number of reasons against the Chinese soon resulted in frequent acts of aggression and violence against the unfortunate Oriental miners. Beginning in 1852 and continuing through the fifties until the time when the mines commenced to lose their popularity, these acts of violence increased both in number and in severity. There were many instances in the mining history of California in which the Chinese miners were driven from their diggings and claims by white mobs of miners, or the Orientals were beaten and robbed by bands of infuriated Americans or other whites, where the Chinese were even murdered without a chance to fight for their lives. These instances of persecution form a dark and
unpleasant page in the history of gold mining in California.\footnote{The anti-Chinese agitation first developed in the mines in 1852; it spread to San Francisco much later.}

The anti-Chinese feeling in the mines gained in strength as the decade of the fifties progressed.\footnote{Gertrude Atherton. \textit{California: An Intimate History} (Harper and Brothers, New York, 1914), p. 287. Reissued by Doni and Liveright, New York, 1927. It says that in 1859 a company of militia was sent to Shasta County to put down anti-Chinese riots there.} Chinese miners were attacked individually and in groups by bands of Americans and other miners. They were driven from their claims, robbed and even slain. Their persecutors went for the most part unpunished; for the law, wherever it existed, was generally against the Chinese. The few examples of antagonism that have been presented portray the typical feeling against the Chinese as it existed in the mines. This feeling was brought to the attention of the political leaders of the state, and these men took heed of the growing wave of opposition to the Oriental that emanated from the hills to the east. For the mining region was the dominant political area of California; its attitude was the state attitude; its attitude had to be heeded.

\textbf{(2). Anti-Chinese Politics and Legislation}

The first legislative act that affected the Chinese in the mines was the Foreign Miners License Tax Law, passed in 1850.\footnote{\textit{California Statutes, 1850} (Sacramento, California, 1850), pp. 221-223.} In order to mine, this bill provided that all persons not citizens of the United States must obtain a license costing twenty dollars per month. The law was directed against the foreigners in the mines, not so much the Chinese as the Latin Americans. As a revenue measure, the tax was an absolute failure and was repealed in 1851.\footnote{\textit{California Statutes, 1851} (Sacramento, California, 1851), p. 424.}
The year 1852 marks the beginning of definite action against the Chinese, as distinguished from other aliens in the state. The Foreign Miners License Tax Law resulted in rapid desertion of the mines by the Latin Americans. This action left the Chinese as the largest group of foreigners in the region, and the center of American attack.

In 1852 attention was drawn to the Chinese in the state by the introduction in the California Senate of a bill by Senator Tingle, known as the “Coolie Bill”, with the purpose of enforcing in the courts the contracts made in China to perform work in California. The bill was lost when it was voted on, but in Senate’s provoked a minority report by Senator Roach. This report is generally credited with starting the contract labor of Chinese life in California and in the mines. The report of Senator Roach had the decided effect of fixing the attention of all classes in California on the Oriental immigration.\(^\text{100}\)

The increasing influx of Chinese into the state caused the Committee on Mines and Mining Interests of the State Legislature to publish a statement advising the curbing of this Asiatic immigration. Governor Bigler, who owed his strength and popularity to the support given him by the mining interests, took cognizance of the attitude of the mines, and issued a special message that is a landmark in the history of anti-Chinese politics. The Governor Bigler’s inaugural address, delivered January 8, 1852, embodied the points of this special message. After devoting much time to an attack on the Chinese in general, their customs and their system of labor in California, Bigler recommended heavy taxation and an appeal to Congress to stop the

\(^{100}\) *California Senate Journal, 1852* (Sacramento, California, 1852), pp. 67-68.
"contract coolie trade".101 The immediate result of the special message was the renewal of the Foreign Miners License Tax by the Legislature. This time the law required all persons not citizens of the United States to pay a tax of three dollars per month in order to mine in California.102 A non-political result of Bigler’s attack was an open letter of the Chinese of San Francisco denying the charges embodied in the Governor’s message.103

Another legislative act passed in 1852 merits our attention. In this year the State Legislature passed a bill requiring the masters of vessels to give a per capita bond of five hundred dollars as indemnity against the costs of medical and other relief of alien passengers; or to commute such bond by the payment of not less than five and not more than ten dollars per passenger.104 This tax was collected until 1870, when the statute enforcing the Fifteenth Amendment made it unconstitutional.

In 1853 the Miners License Tax of three dollars per month was advanced to four dollars per month.

In 1854, although Governor Bigler continued to issue objections to the increasing numbers of Orientals in the state, no anti-Chinese legislation was passed. The only fact of note was a report of the

101 California Senate Journal, 1852 (Sacramento, California, 1852), p. 373.
102 California Statutes, 1852 (Sacramento, California, 1852), p. 84.
103 Frank Soule, John E. Gihon and Jame Nisbet, The Annals of San Francisco: Containing A Summary of the History of California, and a Complete History of Its Great City (D. Appleton and Company, New York and San Francisco, 1855), p. 381. The Annals of San Francisco is one of the most famous books of the period. In regard to the Chinese, the policies of Governor Bigler are particularly stressed.
104 Mary Roberts Coolidge, Chinese Immigration (Henry Holt and Company, New York, 1909), p. 70. The standard work on Chinese immigration as it affects California; a very careful compilation of the various acts that had made this immigration a great international problem.
legislative Committee on Vice and Immorality, severely censuring the Chinese, particularly those in San Francisco.\textsuperscript{105}

In 1855, the Foreign Miners License Tax was again raised, this time to six dollars per month.\textsuperscript{106} The effect of this prohibitive tax was soon felt in the state, especially in the mining counties. Many Chinese miners entered other occupations and the counties lost thousands of dollars of revenue. In 1856, the Legislature repealed it and returned the rate of the tax to four dollars per month.\textsuperscript{107} The Foreign License Tax remained at this figure of four dollars per month until 1870, when amendments to the national Constitution made it void.

Another important legislative act passed in 1855 was the Capitation Tax. This act “required the master, owner or consignee of any vessel, having on board persons ineligible to become citizens, to pay fifty dollars per person.”\textsuperscript{108} If the act had been carried out and the tax enforced it would have put an absolute stop to Chinese immigration. Yet the act proved unenforceable, and in 1856 was declared unconstitutional.\textsuperscript{109}

In the year 1856 Chief Justice Murray gave his famous decision on denying the right of Chinese to testify in American courts. In 1850 Indians had been denied this right. In 1856 Chief Justice Murray declared that the name “Indian” included “Mongolian” also.

\textsuperscript{105} Senate Journal, 1854 (Sacramento, California, 1854), pp. 623-624.
\textsuperscript{106} California Statutes, 1855 (Sacramento, California, 1855), p. 194.
\textsuperscript{107} California Senate Journal, 1856 (Sacramento, California, 1856), pp. 398-401.
\textsuperscript{108} Coolidge, Chinese Immigration, p. 71.
\textsuperscript{109} Ibid.
and forbade the admission of Chinese testimony in California courts. This dictum of Chief Justice Murray remained in force until 1873, when witnesses were permitted to testify in the courts regardless of color or nationality.\textsuperscript{110}

All through the fifties the Chinese were under the great disadvantage of being denied the privileges of naturalization. The first constitution formed in California, in 1849, limited citizenship to “white male citizens of the United States and Mexico”,\textsuperscript{111} and from this class the Chinese were excluded. This denial of naturalization resulted in the Chinese having no standing whatsoever in the courts of law. In the mines outrages might be committed on the Chinese by the white miners with impunity. No judge would consider upholding the Orientals in a disputed action.

The antagonism against the Orientals developed first in the mines. During the first years of the fifties, this antagonism was restricted largely to the mining area. During this period the Chinese were favored the people of San Francisco and the valley towns of Maryville, Sacramento, and Stockton. Yet after 1855 the anti-Chinese feeling was to be found over the entire state. Although existent, this feeling was rendered dormant by the outbreak of the Civil War and remained in this state during the sixties. It recommenced in the seventies with particular violence, and finally culminated in the famous exclusion act of 1882. Nevertheless, the Chinese continued to work the poor and abandoned claims until the early 1900s when the claims were exhausted. Their initial welcome into the growing state would soon turn to open hostility erupting in punitive legislation and violent

\textsuperscript{110} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 176.

\textsuperscript{111} The revised California codes destroyed Justice Murray's decision.
The Gold Hunters

V

Conclusion

Let us ask ourselves the question: What was the part the Chinese played in the development of gold mining in California during this period in which we are interested? Did the Chinese make it worth their while to undertake the long journey across a great ocean in order to mine for gold in a strange land on the other side? Did they benefit the land in which they labored so tenaciously and in which they aroused so much antagonism?

In the course of our investigations, we have seen that the Chinese came to California largely because of bad conditions in the homeland. Famine and war combined to impel the Chinese to travel thousands of miles to face strange and unknown conditions across the ocean. The lure of gold completed the reasons for this great movement. That the Chinese who mined for gold-ginned wealth beyond their expectations or the expectations of their neighbors we have seen and admit. Their fidelity to hard and persistent work resulted in their enrichment. The Chinese miners accumulated enough wealth from their efforts to retire to China or the coastal and valley towns of California in comparative comfort when the agitation against them in the mines reached too violent heights.

The Chinese in the gold fields of California aided materially in the development of mining in the state. By the thoroughness of their efforts they set an example to all other miners of how to work a claim to the best advantage. They modified and improved the various
mining implements to the benefit of mining conditions in the state. And in their anxiety to gain as much wealth as possible, they often explored and opened up new mining areas, and found gold where the white miners believed none existed. When hydraulic methods were introduced and when quartz mining was developed the Chinese served as valuable and necessary cogs in the carrying out of the work.

The exodus of the Chinese from the mines marked the beginning of the decline of this picturesque region. When the Chinese left, the mines lost its most faithful and industrious workers; no other group and nationality labored quite so earnestly. Therefore we may close our theme with the affirming that the withdrawal of the Chinese from the gold fields signified the beginning of that regions’ decline.
掘金者：
十九世紀中葉加州金礦區華人生活寫照

陳靜瑜*

十九世紀中葉，中國境內連年乾旱天災，農田荒蕪，有限的食糧不能養活這麼多的中國人，飢荒貧窮到處可見。對外因中英鴉片戰爭失利，對則內則內亂頻頻發生，尤以太平天國之亂最為甚，破壞中國倫常社會。此刻，正當美國加州發現金礦，需要大批的外來勞工，當這個消息傳到國人耳中，更鼓舞沿海國人向全然未知的新大陸做一個賭注。他們認為與其坐而待斃，倒不如出洋一試。就如磁鐵般一吸（指金山黃金夢吸力）及一推（指中國老家生活的困苦）的互動下，中國人以異鄉孤客（sojourners）的身份出現在美洲新大陸土地之上。中國勞工辛勤的幫忙美國挖掘金礦，對美國西部的開發頗有貢獻。本篇論文即在探討十九世紀中葉，美國引進大批中國勞工的原因、中國勞工進入加州礦區的路線、中國勞工在礦區生活的情形、工作時所使用的淘金器具、以及美國排華的舉動及立法等。本論文的結論是，金山礦區的挖掘隨著中國勞工的引進而興盛，亦隨著中國勞工的被驅逐而衰退。中國勞工對美國西部的開發，曾奉獻出一番心力。

關鍵詞：中國移民 採礦 排華行動

* 國立中興大學歷史系副教授