



**ORIENTALISM AND IMPERIALISM:
19TH CENTURY ANGLO-AMERICAN
CONCEPTIONS OF CHINA
AND THE CHINESE**

by Richard Chu and Eugene Cooper

Richard Chu is a graduate student in history at the University of Southern California. Gene Cooper is an associate professor of Anthropology at the University of Southern California.

The academic study of "other" cultures, the "science of man," developed in the nineteenth century in lock step with the creation of institutions to maintain and control the far flung empires of the colonial powers of the day. From the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries, this was especially true for Great Britain, but from the late nineteenth and into the twentieth centuries, very much the same could be said for the United States as it came to replace Britain as the major "neo-colonial" world power, particularly in relation to China and the Chinese.

Anglo-American thought in the period was characterized by a perspective that Edward Said has called "Orientalism," a collection of institutions "dealing with the Orient... making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it... for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over (it)."¹ The characterization of the "Oriental" as passive, cruel, despotic, mysterious, inferior, weak, and sexually dangerous was typical of the Orientalist perspective. The Orient as a place was malignant and stagnant, waiting to be ruled and manipulated by the Occident. Westerners used such perspectives to justify the colonization of these lands and the brutalization of their people.

Historically, the British were notorious for such Orientalist perspectives. Having colonized India and other parts of South and Southeast Asia, they added Egypt and Tunisia to the empire in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. During these periods of colonial expansion, a close relationship developed between the British scholarly world and the institutions of imperial control. The academic environment in which the Orientalist tradition came to be cultivated grew larger, more formally organized, and more closely linked with government. Other schools of thought like social Darwinism accentuated the "scientific" validity of the division of "races" into advanced and backward categories, and

1. Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978), 3.

served to justify the colonization of the "inferior" races.

The body of opinion concerning the Chinese among Europeans and Americans during this period played a role in influencing and justifying their colonial ambitions. Although China was not colonized by Western imperialists in the same manner as India was incorporated into the British empire, the unequal treaties imposed upon China by the Western powers were almost tantamount to colonization. The most favored nation clause in these treaties, granted all the imperial powers—Britain, the United States, France, Germany, and Japan—any and all privileges enjoyed by any one power and enabled them to squeeze all sorts of concessions from China.²

The Chinese were construed by these foreign powers as exotic, dangerous, sly, and lazy, and any contact with them was to be minimized or avoided. Like the Spaniards who chose to wall themselves up in Manila, refusing to mingle with the "natives," Westerners in China lived in coastal enclaves, usually on islands or places separated from the Chinese city by rivers, canals, creeks, or other waterways.

As a manifestation of their distrust, fear, and contempt of the Chinese, the extraterritoriality clauses in the treaties China was forced to sign provided that foreigners remained answerable only to foreign and not to Chinese law which they considered barbaric. The Chinese who lived abroad, however, were not accorded the same rights.

It is interesting to examine the American role in the scramble for advantage in the dismembering of China. The U.S. imported 102,000 pounds of silk from China in 1869, and ten times that amount a decade later, second only to Britain up to the early 1900s. The U.S. was clearly a participant in the Western imperialist encroachment in China, and its citizens there, like those of the other imperial powers, enjoyed the privileges of extraterritorial protection from Chinese law. At the turn of the century, the U.S. was busy annexing Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines from Spain as well.

Back home in the United States, an Orientalist perspective clearly pervaded American thought, and was reflected in popular images of the Chinese, especially with the onset of large-scale immigration of Chinese workers.

"Coolie" labor from South China began to appear in the United States in the latter half of the nineteenth century as the black slave trade tapered off following emancipation. Suffering extreme hardship in their native villages due to the socio-political unrest and economic dislocation, thousands of men from South China migrated worldwide in search of secure sources of income. The first wave of Chinese immigrants to arrive in America worked in the mines. Later on, they shifted to work on the railroads, while others moved into agriculture. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, they could also be found in manufacturing, laundry and domestic service, and low skilled occupations for the most part. Heavily concentrated on the West Coast, their numbers increased from a few thousands in the 1850s to as many as 63,199 in 1870. Exclusion acts and economic hardships notwithstanding, the Chinese continued to migrate to the United States in substantial numbers.

The Orientalist perspective of American thought at the time was reflected in the journalism of the day. Henry George, a young printer and journalist who later became a

2. John King Fairbank, *China: A New History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), 204.

3. Alexander Saxton, *The Indispensable Enemy: Labor and the Anti-Chinese Movement in California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), 102.

politician, wrote in one of his articles that the Chinese, like Africans, were “an infusible element,” that they were “utter heathens, treacherous, sensual, cowardly, and cruel.”³

An article that appeared in 1856 in a San Francisco gazetteer described the Chinese as “unique.” According to the writer, their appearances “made people wonder that nature and custom should so combine to manufacture so much individual ugliness.” The article further described Chinese women as the “most degraded and beastly of all human creatures.”⁴

Politicians, religious leaders, military men, capitalists, and even organized labor contributed to the perpetuation of negative perceptions of the Chinese. Indeed, these stereotypes contributed to the idea of the “yellow peril” to subsequent discriminatory legislation aimed at Chinese in the U.S..

American businessmen, soldiers, educators, and missionaries who went to China at the turn of the century certainly carried with them these images of the Chinese, and their racist thinking supported their actions. They segregated themselves from the Chinese, while insisting on the rights of missionaries to conduct “civilizing” forays out among the “heathen Chinese.” To their credit, these attempts often resulted in the creation of modern schools that taught new subjects in different ways, and were open to women. But, in general, the expatriate American shared with the other European colonialists the self-reinforcing stereotypes that helped to justify their country’s domestic racist policies at home as well as its imperialist ventures abroad. They were no less beneficiaries of their own Orientalist myths than were the British before them, justifying their cruelty and insensitivity, with Orientalist “theories” of racial superiority.⁵

Editor's note: This article is published to give insight into widespread attitudes that fueled the treatment of Chinese and Chinese Americans in the U.S. during those difficult early times.

4. Saxton, 18.

5. For other works on the Chinese Americans and the discrimination they experienced during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, see Sucheng Chan’s [This Bittersweet Soil: The Chinese in California Agriculture, 1860-1910](#), Ronald Takaki’s [Strangers from a Different Shore](#), Gunther Barth’s [Bitter Strength: A History of the Chinese in the United States, 1850-1870](#), and Lucy E. Salyer’s [Laws Harsh as Tigers: Chinese Immigrants and the Shaping of Modern Immigration Law](#).

CHINESE MEMORIAL SHRINE HISTORICAL MONUMENT DEDICATION

by Randall Bloch

Randall Bloch is a member of the CHSSC Board of Directors and the Chair of the Historic Shrine Project.



Offering Ceremony



Shrine dedication view: Two burners (Sept. 1888) and the restored offering table are shown.

Over 80 people gathered on June 28, 1998 to celebrate restoration of the 1888 Chinese Memorial Shrine in Los Angeles' Evergreen Cemetery. The event was hosted by the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California which served a whole roast pig and an array of Chinese delicacies to its guests.

State Assembly speaker Antonio Villaraigosa and representatives of other elected officials delivered congratulatory speeches. Suellen Cheng of the Museum of Chinese American History spoke on the purpose and symbolism of the ceremonies that were held at the Shrine. Archaeologist Roberta Greenwood, the keynote speaker, and UCLA historian Dr. Leonard Pitt stressed the importance of preserving landmarks and reminders of the City's history.

The nineteenth century shrine is generally considered the oldest surviving structure in Los Angeles built by Chinese people. It consists of an altar platform, a common memorial stone ("stele"), and two ceremonial burners. During funerals, symbolic items such as ersatz paper money were burned to send them to the deceased in "wisps of smoky mail" (as Dr. Munson Kwok aptly put it). Many offerings of incense, poultry, roast pig, and

potables were placed on the altar at other ceremonies such as Ch'ing Ming (Chinese Memorial Day).

Rarely used after the early 1960's, the decaying Shrine was to be demolished in 1990. That year, the Society began a preservation campaign that included the Shrine's designation as a Los Angeles Historic/Cultural Monument, the monument's purchase, fundraising, and creation of a two-phase strategy to restore the Shrine. In phase one, a retaining wall, wrought-iron fence, steps, and a gate were installed to create a sense of "place" for the monument. During repair of its structural elements in phase two, craftsmen re-pointed the burners' brickwork and installed floor-to-ceiling foundation beams inside the structures to brace them and reinforce them. A new center stone to replace the fallen original was created at significant expense, its Chinese characters being matched painstakingly through archival photographs.

After the completion ceremony, Assembly Leader Villaraigosa petitioned the California Legislature to pass a resolution recognizing the Society's work to preserve the Shrine. That framed document is proudly displayed at the Society's Heritage and Visitor's Center in Chinatown.



From L to R: Job Well Done! Shrine Chair, Randall Bloch; President, Jeffrey Tung; Board Chair, Irvin Lai

BOOK REVIEW

by Ellen D. Wu

Chinese American Names: Tradition and Transition. By Emma Woo Louie.
(Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland, 1998. 240 pp. hardcover \$32.50)

Emma Woo Louie's *Chinese American Names: Tradition and Transition* is perhaps the seminal work in the little-explored territory of onomastics (the study of names) in the field of Asian American Studies. In accessible language and an engaging style, Louie examines the naming conventions of Chinese Americans and their relevance to Chinese American history and identity.

Louie astutely begins with a discussion of traditional Chinese customs regarding family and given names. As she explains, many of these practices have crossed the Pacific with Chinese immigration to America. While some have been preserved, however, Chinese Americans have adapted or discarded them according to personal whim and social necessity over the past 150 years. On the other hand, new ones have evolved or been created to suit the unique socio-historical circumstance of the Chinese in America.

Louie's meticulous scrutiny reveals her outstanding scholarship. Her examination of the endless variety of Chinese American surnames, for example, demonstrates her stunning knowledge of and facility with several Chinese dialects, including Cantonese, Mandarin, and Shanghainese. Her research methods are resourceful and creative, enlisting a wide variety of primary sources including oral histories, business directories, Chinese New Year souvenir booklets, and her self-proclaimed "favorite," gravestones. Finally, Louie incorporates gender analysis into her study, paying careful attention to difference in the naming conventions of women and men in Chinese and Chinese American history.

A more in-depth inquiry into the role of racism and pressures of Americanization in shaping Chinese American identity and naming practices would enhance the overall discussion, as would a look at the impact of the Asian American Movement of the 1960s and 70s and today's attitudes of "multiculturalism" and "political correctness."

Nevertheless, *Chinese American Names* fills an important gap in Asian American studies and deserves the critical attention of students, academics, and community members. A must-read for all interested in Chinese American history, Louie's pioneering work will hopefully spark others to explore further naming conventions of all Asian American and Pacific Islander groups.

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Founded Los Angeles, California, November 1, 1975

Incorporated under the laws of the State of California, December 23, 1976

Office: 969 No. Broadway, Los Angeles 90012

Telephone: (213) 621-3171

The Chinese Historical Society of Southern California was organized in November 1975. The purposes of the society are: 1) to bring together people with a mutual interest in the important history and historical role of Chinese and Chinese Americans in Southern California; 2) to pursue, preserve, and communicate knowledge of this history, and 3) to promote the heritage of the Chinese and Chinese American community in support of a better appreciation of the rich, multi-cultural society of the United States.

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OFFICIAL PAPERS, SON OF A NATIVE

by Paul G. Chace

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During the exclusion era, it was necessary for anyone of Chinese ancestry in America to get official papers from the United States Immigration Service in order to travel out of the country. These official papers now are rich sources of history on Chinese Americans such as George Wong, a.k.a. Wong Ho Leun, one-time owner of Riverside, California's Chinatown. In 1934 Wong "made application . . . for preinvestigation of status as a citizen, for Form 430," in order to travel to Mexico and return to the United States.

Wong's case file highlights the gravity of government paper work during the exclusion era. Wong applied to officials at the Immigration Service office in San Bernardino on February 1934 and announced his intention to enter Mexico at Calexico and subsequently to re-enter there into the United States. The official documentation of his life as well as his father's then had to be assembled, reviewed, approved, forwarded, filed, and refiled.¹ Altogether, these files provide a detailed and official history of this Chinese family in America.

Wong born in August 1900 in Wo Hing Lee, a hamlet of 15 houses which was a part of the Wong's lineage village of Gom Ben, located in the Sun Ning District (now Taishan in Guangdong Province). His birth followed one of four fully documented return visits his father made from the United States to his ancestral home between 1898 and 1927. His father made a trip back to China in September 1898 and was married soon after he arrived in his village. His mother, Lee Shee, was from the nearby the village of Wang Hong, and their first son was born about a year later.

Wong arrived from China at the port of San Francisco on board the SS Siberia in November 1914. The subsequent investigations of his status and his right to enter the United States included two sworn and transcribed interrogation sessions with the fourteen-year-old boy and one session with his father. Each interrogation detailed personal knowledge of the family's history, so that officials could compare and judge the veracity of the claim of his right of entry. The case was coordinated at the Angel Island Station and required about a month before it reached a favorable disposition. Wong was recognized and admitted into the United States as the "son of a native."

1. Half a century later, these historical records were transferred and are now available at the National Archives. The official papers related to Wong's application are on file with the National Archives (RG85, B180, F13905/10-12) in San Bruno, California.

Later, George Wong became well known to the officials in San Bernardino and often served them in cases requiring an interpreter. Furthermore, he had become a registered voter following his 21st birthday. The San Bernardino office sent a letter on Wong's behalf to the Immigration & Naturalization Service at San Francisco, "requesting that your file in his case, together with any related files, be forwarded." The letter offered the references that Wong "was admitted at your port November 9, 1914, as the son of a native, No. 13905/10-12." The next week the San Francisco office expedited a number of the family files to the San Bernardino office.

The crux of Wong Ho Leun's status as the "son of a native" was the prior claim of his father, Wong Ben Jew, to have been "a Native born citizen of the United States." Wong Ben Jew claimed to have been born at 738 Commercial Street in San Francisco about 1874. Furthermore, it was asserted that he had been taken to his father's village in China in September 1881, accompanied by his mother. This history was officially established in September 1889 with Habeas Corpus Petition No. 8872, filed with the United States District Court, Northern District of California. Wong Ben Jew had arrived on board the SS Gaelic and been detained by the customs inspector. The case, presented before Judge Ogden Hoffman, was a citizen's claim for a writ against being "unlawfully imprisoned, detained, confined, and restrained of his liberties." An attorney filed a petition on behalf of Wong Ben Jew and supported it with a petition from Wong Po Sai, who had sworn that he was the claimant's father. Wong Po Sai also asserted that Wong Ben Jew was a member of the San Francisco firm of Bow Wing Chong & Co., located at 738 Commercial Street (the address provided for the son's birth sixteen years earlier). Members of two other Chinese firms in San Francisco also came forward in support of the case and provided sureties for the necessary bail. Later, a certified personal copy of the official court papers was handed to immigration officials and reaffirmed as proper when Wong Ben Jew re-entered the United States aboard the SS Coptic at San Francisco in May 1900, and each time thereafter that he returned from his visits to China.

Wong Ben Jew was successful in part because the courts rarely had the evidence to disprove Chinese petitions of habeas corpus. Testimonies from most claimants and the supporting witnesses in the early habeas corpus cases were not written out or filed. Chinese landing in San Francisco between 1882 and 1891 filed 7,000 such petitions, and they won 90% of their cases. For some petitioners, landing successfully in the United States required a ploy, such as a story of leaving before the United States' 1882 enactment of the first Chinese Exclusion Act which required Chinese to hold official documents in order to leave and to enter the country. These loopholes proved to be quite effective. With official papers, Wong Ben Jew was recognized as a native-born citizen of the United States; his son, Wong Ho Leun (George), was then recognized as the son of a native citizen. Nevertheless, the "FORM 430, APPLICATION OF ALLEGED AMERICAN CITIZENS OF THE CHINESE RACE FOR PREINVESTIGATION OF STATUS" was required during the 1920s and 1930s. Referred to as a "return certificate," these official papers were required for those leaving and planning on returning to the United States. Wong's father had also acquired such an Immigration Service form with his photograph attached for his anticipated return when he last traveled to China in 1925.

Wong followed regulations in February 1934 when he applied for a Form 430 in order to travel to and from Mexico. The Immigration Service office at Calexico approved the application and then held his files for four months. Apparently there was a change in his

plans, and Wong decided not to go to Mexico. The United States Immigration Service office at Calexico sent the Wong family's official paper files back to San Francisco in June with the comment, "The above applicant has not presented himself at this station for check out to Mexico, and it does not appear that it is his intention to do so in the near future; your files... are returned herewith." It is these official papers, returned and filed, that are now rich fodder for historians over 60 years later.

BUILDING A RAILROAD THROUGH THE SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY

by Tom McDannold

Tom McDannold is a past president of CHSSC and a retired professor of geography at Ventura College.

It is well known that Chinese laborers were largely responsible for railroad construction in the West and particularly California.¹ Beyond this simple fact, however, few may know exactly *how* they accomplished such a feat.

Historians have documented the techniques and danger of building a railroad in California's mountainous regions such as the Coast Range and the Sierra Nevada.² However, little has been done regarding construction in a flat and often wet region like the San Joaquin Valley.

Fortunately, an oral history project conducted years ago in Merced County can provide some insight. The project was conducted by Ralph L. Miliken, the first postal mail carrier in western Merced County. Arriving in 1910, Miliken came to know many of the earliest Euro-American settlers in and around the town of Los Banos. Quite a number of people who lived in the area had crossed the continent in the 1850s and recounted their experiences to him. Trained as an historian at Stanford University, Miliken recognized the value of the information and recorded it for more than 50 years.

An interview he conducted with a Mrs. Jeffers on November 9, 1944 at her store in Los Banos is of particular significance, shedding light on the construction techniques used by the Chinese as they built across the valley floor. The railroad in question was the San Pablo and Tulare Extension Railroad Company. Incorporated in 1887, the company built a standard gauge railroad from Tracy in San Joaquin County southward through the county of Stanislaus and Merced, to Pampa in Kern County.³ The line eventually became part of the Southern Pacific Company. When construction reached the community of Volta in Merced County, Mrs Jeffers, a young girl at the time, was there. She conveyed the following observations to Miliken:

[Mrs. Jeffers] says that the track was built as far as Volta [by 1888] and for about a year was the end of the line. The delay in going on with the track was due to some trouble in getting across Los Banos Creek. She thinks that the railroad had to wait until the middle of the next summer when the country was dry in order to get the track built across the creek.

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1. Thomas W. Chinn (ed.), A History of the Chinese in California: A Syllabus (San Francisco: Chinese Historical Society of America, 1969), 43-48.
 2. Sandy Lydon, Chinese Gold: The Chinese in the Monterey Bay Region (Capitol & California: Capitols Book Company, 1985), 79-101.; Alexander Saxton, "The Army of Canton in the High Sierra," The Pacific Historical Review, Vol. 35 (1966): 141-52.
 3. Wayne Pimentel, Dogtown & Ditches: Life on the Westside, (Los Banos, California: Loose Change Publications, 1987), 61.

Mrs. Jeffers says that the company had about five hundred Chinese working. She says they were the first Chinese she had ever seen. The Chinese used to come over to her father's ranch to buy chickens. Mrs. Jeffers had a bright red rooster with big long tail feathers. As soon as the Chinese saw that rooster they wanted to buy it. She was very much afraid that sometime the Chinese would steal it from her and so whenever she saw a string of Chinese coming towards the ranch, she would call her pet and taking it in her arms, go off and hide with it until the Chinese were gone again.

Mrs. Jeffers says that the railroad bed was built on a foundation of gravel. The railroad would back a car load of gravel up to the end of the line. Then Chinese would hop to it and shovel the car load of gravel ahead of the car. Then other Chinese would rush forward with ties and place them on the gravel. As fast as enough gravel and ties had been laid down for a new set of rails to be pushed ahead [they] would be spiked down and the train would advance a little farther.

Whenever the track came to a wet place or a slough, the pile driver would be pushed up to the end of the line and piles driven in the soft ground. The Chinese had square boxes made of lumber that they would set down in the water and then get in and tamp the mud. Immediately the Chinese would begin dipping a continuously [sic] stream of buckets of water out of the wooden box. As soon as the water was all out inside, then the pile driver would set a pile in the wooden box. The Chinese would guide the post until the pile driver had got it firmly started. Then it would be driven firmly into the soft ground. As soon as the piles had been driven, a bridge would be built, the rails laid and again, the train would move forward another car load of gravel.

It was surprising how fast such a large gang of Chinese could get the gravel unloaded and another set of rails laid. Mrs. Jeffers doesn't remember just how far the railroad advanced each day but she thinks it was maybe a quarter of a mile. Anyway it was a long ways [sic]. She says that afterwards, after the road bed had been built out of gravel and the rails laid and the train was going up and down the new track, men and teams [of animals] and scrapers would come along and scrape dirt up against the gravel on both sides of the track. In this way the road bed was widened and more firmly in place.⁴

Although the Chinese workers have long since gone, their construction persists. It is an important part of the state's history and rail system.

4. Ralph L. Miliken, Los Banos History: Remiscences, California State University Stanislaus, unpublished manuscript, vol. 4, 6-8.

EAST MEETS WEST (ON A RAILROAD TRACK)

by Margie Lew

Margie Lew is a member of the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California.

On May 10, 1869, an historic event of great significance occurred—the completion of this country's first transcontinental railroad, thereby paving the way for a westward expansion of vast proportions. On this day at Promontory Summit, Utah, the Central Pacific's locomotive *Jupiter* and the Union Pacific's *119* were joined together with a Golden Spike being driven in place.

On May 10 each year for the past 46 years, the Golden Spike National Historic Site and the Golden Spike Association from Brigham City have presented the annual Golden Spike Ceremony. This year's program included a number of dignitaries—U.S. Senator Orrin Hatch, U.S. Congressman James V. Hansen, Mr. Jyh-Yuan Lo, and Mr. Hubert Chang from the Republic of China, each of whom addressed the audience. The Golden Spike Association then presented a re-enactment of the events of May 10, 1869, with local citizens dressed in costumes of that period playing the roles of the various participants in the original ceremony. The two locomotives *Jupiter* and *119* were joined together. As the Golden Spike was driven in place, the telegrapher sent the message "D-O-N-E," just the way it happened 129 years ago.

However, one thing was not the same as it was then—the WEATHER! On May 10, 129 years ago, it was a typically warm spring day. There were blue skies with hardly a cloud. But on *this* May 10, Mother Nature showed her temperamental side—there was rain, wind, thunder, lightning, and hailstones the size of marbles. Consequently, the program was delayed, and the Golden Spike was driven in about 45 minutes later than the exact historic moment of 12:47 p.m. The forecast of bad weather most certainly was the reason for the small number of attendees. According to park rangers, there are typically 5,000-7,000 people for this special event. Despite the rain, however, the crowd was enthusiastic, and most stayed until the end of the program.

To help celebrate this memorable day, 22 members of the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California traveled to Promontory Summit to participate in the festivities and to honor the thousands of Chinese laborers who helped to build this railroad. John and Bill Chew were the coordinators of the trip, and spent many hours taking care of details large and small. Bill did extensive research to try to locate descendants of the Chinese workers. He found several people, but they were unable to attend. As luck would have it, the Society has found its own descendants—the Yee brothers, John, Johnson, and Bill, whose great-grandfather worked on the transcontinental.

As representatives of CHSSC, Bill Chew and John Yee were part of the program. Bill spoke of his visit to the Golden Spike National Historic Site last year, his efforts in locating the descendants of railroad workers, and his great desire to have a group of Chinese Americans be a part of the ceremonies. As John was about to address the audience, the rain came—BIG TIME! The program was delayed, but resumed 45 minutes later as John stated that the Society felt quite honored to participate in this celebrated event. He also noted that this was a complete turn-around from 1869 when the contribu-

tions of thousands of Chinese laborers were ignored and unrecognized at that time and for many years afterwards. John then presented to Superintendent Bruce Powell a booklet to be included in the Golden Spike archives. The booklet contains, among other information, the names and photos of the railroad workers and their descendants.

CHSSC also presented a plaque inscribed with the following words: "In appreciation to the staff of the Golden Spike National Historic Site for recognizing the contributions made by Chinese workers." Next followed the re-enactment of the two locomotives coming together. When the "last spike" was hammered in, the Society's special "surprise" was presented—a traditional Lion Dance, complete with cymbals and gongs, was performed by Jeff Chan and his assistants. A long string of firecrackers was lit, adding a festive touch to the grand finale, and brought great enjoyment to the spectators.

Superintendent Powell and his crew of park rangers gave the greatest cooperation to CHSSC in every aspect. Their avid interest in the Chinese participation on the railroad supported and encouraged Bill Chew in his research for descendants. When the 22-member group arrived at the Visitors' Center on the morning of May 10, they were warmly welcomed by the Park Rangers and the citizens of Brigham City and Box Elder County.

Unanimously, Society members expressed their pleasure and enjoyment of this trip to Promontory Summit. It gave them a deeper sense of history, and helped them to appreciate more fully the perseverance and endurance of the Chinese railroad workers who, by their years of diligent labor, unwittingly became a significant chapter in the history of America.



John Yee presents Society's Appreciation Plaque to Superintendent Bruce Powell, Promontory Point National Historic Site. Yes, it was raining hard!

Photo by Eugene Moy



Laying a spike, closeup. Johnson Yee swings the mean hammer on the nail held by John Yee. Lucky Owyang looks on (right).

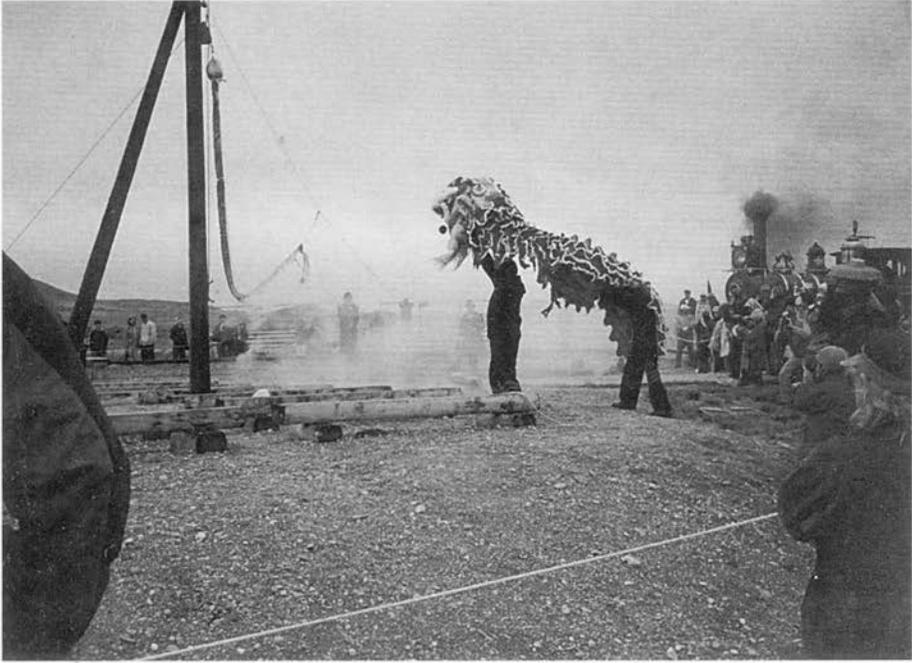


Reenacting the famous picture at the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad. This time there are Chinese in the picture, in front!

Photo by Eugene Moy



Society lays the spike down, in front of Old Jupiter. Franklin Mah, Johnson Yee, Gardner Barlow and John Yee officiating.



Lion Dance at Promontory Point Ceremony! Jeff Chan and Kingman perform the Lion Dance as firecrackers explode.

Photo by William Chew

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The Chinese Historical Society of Southern California was organized in November 1975. The purposes of the society are: 1) to bring together people with a mutual interest in the important history and historical role of Chinese and Chinese Americans in Southern California; 2) to pursue, preserve, and communicate knowledge of this history, and 3) to promote the heritage of the Chinese and Chinese American community in support of a better appreciation of the rich, multi-cultural society of the United States.

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