

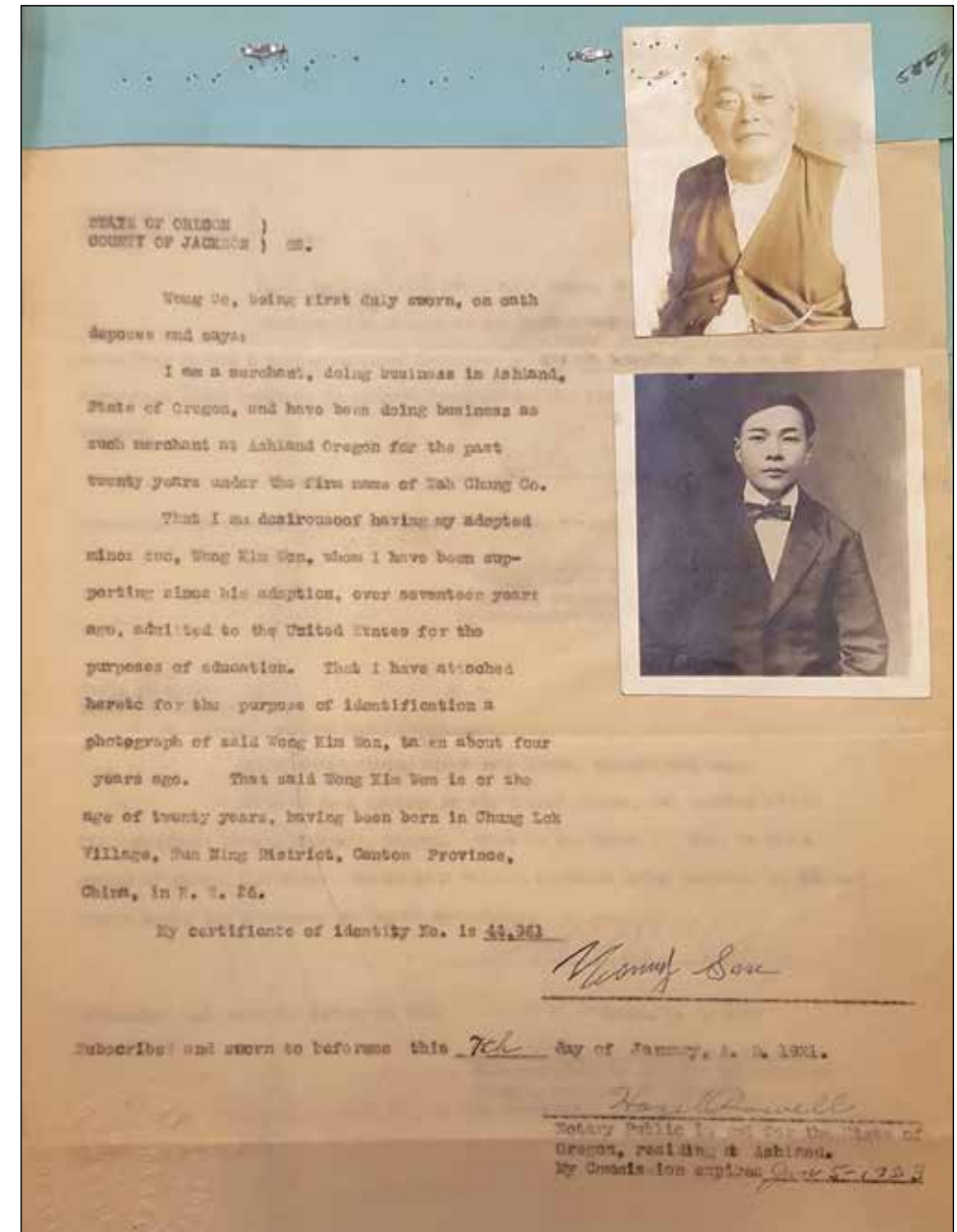
“Bona Fide” Merchants

Negotiating Life, Labor, and Transnational Mobility in the Time of Chinese Exclusion

CHELSEA ROSE, JACQUELINE Y. CHEUNG,
AND ERIC GLEASON

THE UNITED STATES was nearly a century old before the federal government began restricting immigration into the country. Some restrictions targeted Asians in general, with many directed specifically toward Chinese immigrants. While sweeping exclusionary policies are not unique globally, the U.S. Chinese exclusion laws were exceptional in that they individualized the practice by evaluating each specific immigrant’s right to enter.¹ From 1875 until 1943, these treaties, laws, legal opinions, administrative rules, and regulations increasingly circumscribed the free movement of Chinese immigrants inside the United States and strictly limited the inflow of new migrants of Chinese descent. These efforts had a profound and lasting impact on the Chinese diaspora in the Pacific Northwest and have influenced U.S. immigration policy into the twenty-first century. Having to navigate the ever-changing laws, rules, and regulations aimed at their exclusion shaped the nature of Chinese communities and affected their relations and interactions with their white neighbors. Exclusion laws also divided the Chinese community into two distinct classes: laborers and a privileged class that included merchants. Attaining officially recognized merchant status offered a degree of certainty and stability, as well as social and transnational mobility, providing immigrants and their families with opportunities for prosperity in a largely unwelcoming land. This privileged status gave individuals the ability to travel back and forth to China, to maintain close personal ties to their *qiaoxiang* (home village), and to bring their immediate family to the United States.

Forming partnerships in jointly owned stores allowed multiple, often related, members of the community to pool resources and to share the profits as well as the costs and challenges of operating a business — and attain merchant status. In the more rural parts of Oregon, these enterprises often served as gathering places while providing multiple business purposes,



ON THIS IMMIGRATION FORM, Wong Quon Sue attests on January 7, 1921: “I am a merchant, doing business in Ashland, State of Oregon, and have been doing business as such . . . for the past twenty years.” He is applying to bring his adopted son, Wong Kim Won, to the United States to attend school. Wong Quon is pictured in the top photograph on the form, and Wong Kim Won is in the photograph below.

including merchandise store, bank, lodge, laundry, restaurant, and labor contracting. These businesses functioned as crucial community anchors and allowed partners to enjoy the rights of the privileged class.

The merchandise store served a critical and multifaceted role in the formation, development, and decline of rural Chinatowns throughout Oregon and in Chinese Oregonians' transnational lives. Chinese Oregonians also used these businesses to facilitate resistance and community persistence in the face of ever-evolving U.S. immigration policy, which they widely saw as "lacking social and moral legitimacy" and therefore unworthy of compliance.² Chinese migrants and U.S. government officials were each navigating a "system of formalized deception."³ In effect, the more explicit the exclusion policy, the more predictable it became, thereby easing subversion. The process was established with a "restrictionist mind-set" wherein the default position was to consider Chinese immigrants excludable.⁴ The increasingly complex immigration process, aimed at identifying "legitimate" immigrants, instead ironically served to "create, systematize, and facilitate fraud."⁵ As earlier scholars have noted, just as illegal immigrants were ruthlessly pursued through this process, they were also created by it.⁶

While contemporary residents may remember Chinese mercantile stores as important community resources in their towns, the more subversive, and perhaps substantial, role of these businesses has been lost over time. When successful, these critical services were invisible to outsiders and went largely unnoticed. As a result, many of the same men who were engaged in a sophisticated counter-attack against an unjust immigration system have been portrayed in the historiography through paternalistic tableaux or victim narratives that romanticize and condescend the complex transnational identities of Oregon's early Chinese residents. This article uses two case studies to explore ways in which Chinese Oregonians circumvented exclusionary policies: the Wing Hong Hai Company (永同泰) in The Dalles (姐里阜) and the Wah Chung and Company (和昌) of Ashland.

The Wing Hong Hai and Wah Chung companies were chosen for this analysis because they each served as a critical anchor business run by Chinese men who were esteemed and active members of their respective towns. The Wing Hong Hai Company store was the more typical Chinese mercantile store, offering a wide range of imported goods to all residents of The Dalles. In contrast, the Wah Chung and Company store was one branch of a business that provided labor and supplies to the Southern Pacific Railroad from its Ashland base. While each business was organized to ensure the partners could obtain and maintain legitimate merchant status, most of those partners were also actively engaged in the various side hustles needed to supplement the income they could generate as merchants alone. In order to

contextualize the actions and agency of these merchants as they navigated the impacts of Chinese exclusion in Oregon, we begin with an overview of the evolving federal exclusionary policies of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF CHINESE EXCLUSION

During the second half of the nineteenth century, the United States struggled to balance its treaty obligations to China (necessary to maintain a desired favored-nation trade status) with the overt racism toward Chinese immigrants and the economic fears and frustrations of a largely white West Coast population that was increasingly focused on Chinese exclusion. This villainization of a specific immigrant group resulted in a barrage of targeted local restrictions, discrimination, and often vigilante violence. Such conditions affected not only Chinese immigrants working and living in nineteenth-century Oregon, but also the twentieth-century demographics of the state. Federal exclusion laws effectively legitimized local policies and violence, making it difficult for the large populations of Chinese migrants living in rural Oregon to remain and to establish generational roots in these communities.

This increasingly complex political dance started with the Page Act of March 3, 1875, wherein the United States sought to limit immigration by targeting Asian laborers, making it illegal to take or transport "any subject of China, Japan, or any Oriental country, without their free and voluntary consent, for the purpose of holding them to a term of service."⁷ This provision of the act addressed the primary concern stated by advocates for Chinese exclusion: unfair competition from inexpensive, indentured Chinese labor. It also limited the immigration of Chinese women by prohibiting "the importation into the United States of women for the purposes of prostitution" under the contemporary, widespread belief that most Chinese women immigrating into the United States were sex workers.⁸ Legislators used purposefully vague language in this act, intending to avoid violating provisions of the Burlingame Treaty of 1868, which had allowed free emigration between the United States and China.⁹ In practice, the Page Act failed to stem the flow of Chinese laborers into the United States; however, it drastically slowed the immigration of Chinese women.¹⁰

The evolving exclusion laws that followed placed an untenable burden on Chinese residents living and working in the United States. The "gatekeeping culture" created through exclusion shifted the ways Americans considered immigration and race within the traditional mindset that the United States was a "nation of immigrants."¹¹ As a result of continually expanding restrictions, Chinese became more openly defiant and creative in their strategies to sidestep the system.¹² U.S. immigration officials understood that classify-

ing individuals based on occupational categories was “highly arbitrary and subject to manipulation,” yet they insisted on the practice as a means toward achieving the underlying goal of Chinese exclusion.¹³ As a result, fraud went hand-in-hand with the immigration process.

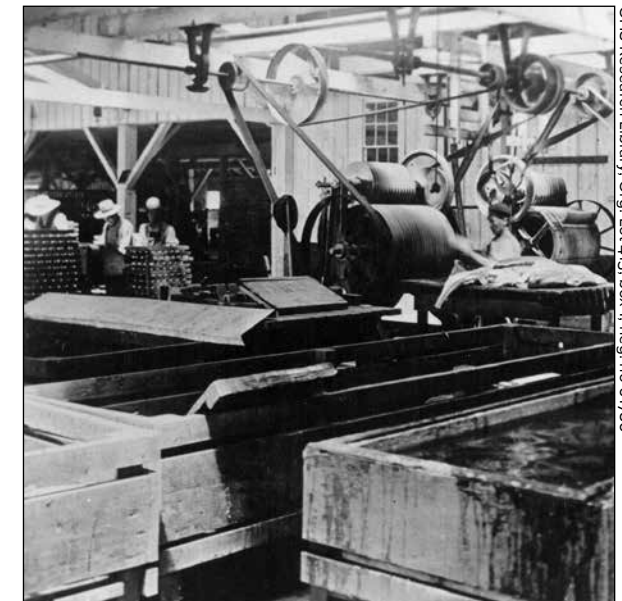
The Angell Treaty of 1880 modified the 1868 Burlingame Treaty and served as the template for all of the exclusionary laws that followed. The first article granted the United States the ability to regulate, but not prohibit, the entry of Chinese laborers for the purposes of maintaining “the good order of the said country.” For the first time, the United States restricted free immigration on the basis of race. Those restrictions were based on “class,” splitting Chinese immigrants into two groups: the excluded laborer class and a welcomed class that consisted of teachers, students, merchants, and travelers.¹⁴ At this time, the privileged class also included laborers who already were established U.S. residents, but this distinction between groups of laborers would prove difficult to demonstrate, document, and track.

The Angell Treaty of 1880 also laid the groundwork for legislation adopted on May 6, 1882, most commonly known as the Exclusion Act of 1882. This was the first of a long series of congressional acts that specifically restricted and excluded Chinese immigration into the United States and regulated the travel of all Chinese to and from the country. In her introduction to *The Chinese Must Go*, Beth Lew-Williams notes that many historians miss the staged progression of Chinese exclusion, overlooking the Restriction Period (1882–1888) and lumping it in with the subsequent Exclusion Period (1888–1943). She argues that this distinction is critical to understanding “the radicalism of Chinese exclusion and the contingent history of its rise.”¹⁵

The Act of May 6, 1882, focused almost exclusively on restricting the Chinese laboring class, defined by the act as “skilled and unskilled laborers and Chinese employed in mining.”¹⁶ Under this act, no new laborers were to be admitted into the United States for a period of ten years. Laborers already in the country at the time of the adoption of the Angell Treaty of 1880 could remain and were permitted to travel roundtrip to China as long as they obtained an identification certificate, which was given free of charge at the port of exit. Section 14, the penultimate section of the act, was sweeping and profound for the long-term interest of all Chinese living in the United States. It read in full: “That hereafter no State court or court of the United States shall admit Chinese to citizenship; and all laws in conflict with this act are hereby repealed.”¹⁷ This provision applied to all classes of Chinese immigrants. With these twenty-seven words, the United States effectively denied the right of citizenship to the more than 100,000 Chinese already in the country, and all future Chinese immigrants, based

exclusively on their race. As a result, the ability of Chinese migrants who initially came to Oregon — to mine gold or build railroads — to remain in these rural outposts and create a sustainable future for themselves and their families increasingly diminished in comparison with that of other immigrant populations.

Through the Act of July 5, 1884, Congress sought to amend some of the perceived deficiencies of the 1882 act. For the first time, it defined and constricted the classification of one of the privileged classes: merchants. Under the act, “hucksters, peddlers, or those engaged in taking, drying, or otherwise preserving shell or other fish for home consumption or exportation” were excluded from the merchant class.¹⁸ The provisions of the act that covered fisherman were likely an outgrowth of an 1880 California law that sought to prohibit Chinese commercial fishing (it was later ruled unconstitutional).¹⁹ The success of U.S.-based Chinese fishing enterprises in domestic and international markets is likely the motivation for targeting the industry.²⁰ In addition, departing merchants were now required to provide the same identification details as departing laborers and to “state the nature, character, and estimated value of the business carried on by him prior to and at the time of his application as aforesaid.”²¹ New, incoming merchants needed to provide the same details. All arriving members of the privileged classes furthermore needed to obtain a certificate provided by the Chinese government, or other country of residence, verifying to their right to enter into the United States.



OHS Research Library, Orig. Lot 413, box 1, neg. no. 61780

CHINESE WORKERS at the Seufert Cannery in The Dalles, Oregon, process fish for canning between 1910 and 1918. Canneries employed mostly Chinese laborers, who were excluded from fishing jobs, to process fish for canning beginning in the late nineteenth century. The man to the right is operating salmon gang knives, and the men to the left are canning half-pound salmon cans. The wooden tanks in the foreground held slimed salmon.

The Scott Act of September 13, 1888, further restricted Chinese laborers and marks the formal transition from the Restriction Period to the Exclusion Period. The Scott Act targeted the previously “privileged” laborers who had been in the country when the Treaty of 1880 was enacted, denying their right of return from travel outside the United States unless they had a “lawful wife, child, or parent in the United States, or property therein of the value of one thousand dollars, or debts of like amount due him and pending settlement.”²² The departing laborer was required to apply at least one month prior to the planned departure and to provide proof of their family or assets. The laborer must, with limited exceptions, return within a year to the same port from which they departed.²³ This act was unsuccessfully challenged through the case that became *Chae Chan Ping v. United States*. The Supreme Court’s decision in that case created a precedent known today as the “plenary power doctrine,” granting power to the legislative branch and limiting the power of the judiciary in matters of immigration law and international treaties; this doctrine continues to affect U.S. immigration policy.²⁴

The additional travel restrictions placed on laborers had at least three effects: discouraging all but the wealthiest of laborers, or those with immediate family who could stay in country, from traveling abroad; limiting the ability of departed laborers to return; and encouraging laborers to become members of the privileged class — that is, merchants. Section 8 of the 1888 Act further complicated the lives of Chinese residents and visitors to the United States, by granting the Secretary of the Treasury the authority to make, change, and amend rules and regulations relative to the act. This administrative flexibility added new uncertainty and unpredictability to the lives of any Chinese person wishing to depart or enter the United States.²⁵

The Geary Act of May 5, 1892, extended the Chinese exclusionary restrictions for another ten years and required every resident Chinese laborer in the United States to register for, receive, and carry a certificate of residence within one year’s time.²⁶ The Act of November 3, 1893, clarified certain parts of the 1892 act and added more refined, and confined, definitions for both Chinese laborers and merchants. This act defined laborers as “both skilled and unskilled manual laborers, including Chinese employed in mining, fishing, huckstering, peddling, *laundrymen* [emphasis added], or those engaged in taking, drying, or otherwise preserving shell or other fish for home consumption or exportation.”²⁷ The merchant was now defined as:

*a person engaged in buying and selling merchandise, at a fixed place of business, which business is conducted in his name, and who during the time he claims to be engaged as a merchant, does not engage in the performance of any manual labor, except such as is necessary in the conduct of his business as such merchant.*²⁸

Although this act formalized the descriptions of laborers and merchants, further refinement and restriction came through the adoption of rules and regulations, and through legal and administrative decisions. Laundering was a well-established and profitable venture for Chinese immigrants, and the Geary Act’s classification of laundrymen as laborers directly affected Chinese Oregonians, including the partners in the Wing Hong Hai Company store in The Dalles.

The Act of April 29, 1902, extended Chinese exclusion indefinitely. Through a series of rules, approved from 1903 to 1906, clarity and consistency — as well as increased severity and rigidity — were added to Chinese exclusion practices. The Commissioner-General of Immigration issued standardized forms for the multiple contingencies faced by traveling laborers and merchants, with blank spaces left to be filled in by the travelers, their legal representatives, and immigration officials. Additional publications instructed immigration agents on how to obtain the testimony of non-Chinese witnesses, and to have photographs taken of the Chinese merchant stores suspected of harboring restaurants, laundries, or gambling establishments. Rule 27 placed the burden of proof on merchants to demonstrate business ownership, capital, and expenses along with their personal registered resident status.²⁹ Many individuals recognized that “bona fide merchants,” the phrase often used in legal documents of the era, not only had to create a paperwork trail toward legitimacy but also were often being evaluated using “racialized markers of class that distinguished them from Chinese laborers.” Calloused hands or other physical remnants of manual work could be used against applicants, who would sometimes strive to distinguish themselves from the stereotyped “cheap, servile workers who competed with white workingmen” by presenting as an idealized version of a benign businessman who would otherwise pose no threat to society.³⁰

The following profiles of the Chinese merchants in The Dalles and Ashland are largely compiled from newspaper articles and Chinese Exclusion Act case files. While these sources are primary documents, created at the time of the historical events under study, they are also clearly biased, as their creators each had their own agendas. Although case files include interviews with Chinese immigrants, these official interactions were performative and tailored to comply with immigration laws and produce a desired outcome that was often different for the two parties. Unvarnished firsthand accounts, opinions, feelings, and perspectives of the Chinese are mostly missing from this data. Nonetheless, the existing sources can provide insight into how members of the Wing Hong Hai Company of The Dalles and the Wah Chung and Company of Ashland served their respective communities as they navigated the perilous waters of exclusion.

THE WING HONG HAI COMPANY AND THE DALLES

The Wing Hong Hai Company Store was established in 1894 and located at what was once the center of a small but thriving and vibrant rural Chinese community in The Dalles, Oregon. The store building remains, but the business that once occupied it is long gone. The Dalles was a major supply hub along the Columbia River, serving the inland Northwest via its connections to wagon roads, railroads, and river boats. Many localized, rural industries recruited and attracted Chinese migrants to The Dalles. The Chinese came to work on the local railroad construction, on fruit orchards and ranches, in logging, and, beginning in 1896, by providing reliable, seasonal labor for the Columbia River salmon canneries.³¹ The first census of The Dalles, in 1860, lists four Chinese residents. As the town grew, so did the Chinese community. It reached its height of 117 people (approximately 5 percent of the population) in 1880, and held steady at roughly 80 people for the next thirty years. The aging population began to fall rapidly by 1910, and by 1940, just 9 individuals remained.³² The precipitous decline in the Chinese community in The Dalles came as a direct result of the intentional exclusion of new Chinese immigrants and the pressures that this exclusion placed on a community that could not renew itself. The 2020 U.S. Census reported a population of 16,010 residents in The Dalles, with only 1 percent identified as Asian.³³

Laundries were originally the dominant Chinese-owned and -operated businesses in The Dalles and were primarily found along First Street, the main business street fronting the river and railroad.³⁴ Following the exclusion acts, merchandise stores replaced laundries, and the Chinese community became concentrated along the south side of a single block of East First Street. This modest Chinatown eventually had up to five Chinese mercantile stores operating simultaneously to serve the local community, including its Chinese residents.³⁵ While laundries or restaurants were often more profitable than merchandise stores, the privileged-class benefits provided to merchants under the exclusion acts offer an explanation for the dominant position of these stores in The Dalles and throughout the West.

From 1894 until 1913, Lee Yuen Hong (李元亨) and his partners were the proprietors of the Wing Hong Hai Company Chinese Mercantile store, located in a leased brick building at 210 East First Street.³⁶ Lee Yuen Hong came to the United States in 1882, at the age of seventeen, from San Gan Village, Sun Ning District (now Taishan County, Guangdong). A year later, he moved to The Dalles. He worked for a time as a cook and janitor for the French family, prominent local bankers, whom he would eventually entrust with all his savings and banking transactions. In 1894, he traveled round-trip to China, returning as a merchant connected to the Yee Hop Company.³⁷ Soon after his return, he opened the Wing Hong Hai Company Store and



Photograph by Cliff Danger

THE WING HONG HAI COMPANY STORE, pictured here in 2020, operated out of this building from 1894 to 1912, now located at 210 E. First Street, in The Dalles. The Dalles was a major supply hub along the Columbia River and attracted Chinese migrants seeking work.

the Yuen Hai Laundry in partnership with his older brother Lee Yuen But. By 1901, he was also the proprietor of the New York Restaurant in The Dalles.³⁸

Over the years, other Lee brothers and their cousins joined the company, although the exact relationships are sometimes difficult to determine. In the immigration files, Lee Yuen But, Lee Wing (李永), Lee Dick (李迪), and Lee Yip Tai are referred to as Lee Yuen Hong's brothers, while Lee Sang is described as a cousin. The relationship of partners Lei On, Lee Chew, and Lee Hing is not recorded, but they are likely from the same *qiaoxiang* and had a family connection to Lee Yuen Hong. A partnership was essential for the management and operation of this type of store. Typically, one or more partners managed the store, while the other partners visited China or pursued other types of work. Although no official partnership book existed for the Wing Hong Hai store, testimony in Exclusion Act case files indicates that while partners joined or left and relationships changed, Lee Yuen Hong remained as the stable presence, serving as manager and head of household.³⁹ The informal and fluid nature of the store partnership was both a liability and a feature that could be exploited. Partnership shares



LEE YUEN HONG was a partner and proprietor of Wing Hong Hai Company in The Dalles, Oregon. This photograph, dated December 22, 1906, was included with immigration documents in his Chinese Exclusion Act case file no. 971.

inspector John Sawyer complained that “the only evidence as to who have constituted the firm being the inexact and inconsistent statements of the manager.”⁴¹

The 1900 census lists nine residents at the Wing Hong Hai store, with partner Lee Yuen Hong listed as a merchant, Lee Dick listed as a student, and Lee Wing listed as a laborer.⁴² The remaining residents include four other laborers and two cooks. Although profitable, the associated laundry business created problems for the Wing Hong Hai Company partners, who aspired to be “bona fide” merchants. Lee Yuen Hong initially operated the Wing Hong Hai store and the Yuen Hai Laundry in the same building. The 1900 Sanborn Fire Insurance map indicates the building was divided in half, with the laundry on the east side, the store on the west, and a washhouse and drying platform in the back. By 1906, the partners had invested heavily in the laundry, and immigration inspectors noticed that “while the stock of merchandise on hand in the store is quite small, the laundry is a large and well-equipped one.”⁴³ At this time, Lee Yuen Hong asked if he could bring his wife and son from China.

could be bought, sold, and listed as an asset for partners traveling under a laborer certificate, and partners could accrue profits during their absence. When Lee Yuen Hong’s older brother and original partner Lee Yuen But was applying for permission to return from a four-year visit to China in 1899, Lee Yuen Hong stated that while he was in China, roughly \$400 in profits from the store had been sent to him in “different small sums.” At that time, Lee Chew and Ah Wing were also listed as partners: “Each of the above named partners original[y] contributed \$500.00 each to the capital stock of said firm and together with the accumulated profits remaining undivided these individual holdings are considerably increased.”⁴⁰ The lack of a partnership book for the Wing Hong Hai store irritated and confused immigration inspectors, which likely complicated the partners’ travels to and from their family homes and villages in China. In 1911, immigration

The answer was no; the laundry business made him a laborer. His lawyers, writing to the immigration inspector regarding his application to travel, reported “Hong is anxious to bring his wife back with him, but we have advised him that this is impossible inasmuch he is not exclusively a merchant.”⁴⁴

Although the laundry business compromised Lee Yuen Hong’s merchant status, the laundry equipment and the laundry-business profits counted toward his assets as a laborer, which qualified him for a laborer’s return certificate.⁴⁵ His brother and partner Lee Yuen But did not have a laborer residence certificate and therefore likely would not have been allowed return entry from his trip to China in 1906. At the time of his departure, he stated that he worked in both the store and the laundry, and as a result, was not considered a merchant.⁴⁶ In 1908, Lee Yuen But’s younger brother Lee Wing bought his stake in the partnership.⁴⁷

When Lee Yuen Hong returned to The Dalles in 1908, he began to “perfect” his merchant status by separating himself from the laundry business.⁴⁸ In doing so, he lost the steady and reliable income that came from the laundry, but he regained the privileged merchant status and, with that, the ability to bring his wife and children to The Dalles. He moved the laundry operation next door and sold it to Lee Bing Wa in 1909.⁴⁹ He removed the dividing wall between the former laundry and store and stocked the entire storefront with merchandise. The connecting doorway remained between the two adjacent buildings. While the three laundrymen were still living at the Wing Hong Hai store in 1910, the businesses were carefully delineated.⁵⁰

When Lee Yuen Hong made his last application to travel and return with his fam-



LEE YUEN BUT was a business partner with Lee Yuen Hong of the Wing Hong Hai Company and was referred to as his brother in Chinese Exclusion Act case files. This photograph from 1899 is included with immigration paperwork in his Chinese Exclusion Act case file no. RS14989.



LEE WING, a business partner in Wing Hong Hai, was also referred to as a brother of Lee Yuen Hong and Lee Yuen But. He is pictured here in on July 18, 1898, in a photograph included in his Chinese Exclusion Act case file no. 2406.

ily as a merchant in 1911, the laundry had a completely separate entrance.⁵¹ Nonetheless, the immigration inspector denied return certificates to both Lee Yuen Hong and his partner and brother Lee Wing. The immigration service had begun to scrutinize Lee Yuen Hong and the Wing Hong Hai partners prior to their travel requests. Immigration officials discovered that Lee Yuen Hong had been arrested that January in San Bernardino, California, where he reportedly had traveled to “recuperate” from an illness.⁵² Lee Yuen Hong was caught “piloting three contraband Chinese” with “a number of old identification papers, for which he could have had no proper use, and the business card of a Chinaman in Tia Juana, Mexico” in his possession. Police confiscated the identification paper of younger brother and partner Lee Dick during the arrest and released Lee Yuen Hong to return to The Dalles.⁵³ The confiscated document, previously accepted as legitimate, had allowed Lee Dick entrance into the United States at Port Townsend as a merchant in 1897.⁵⁴ Its legitimacy was now tainted. This document serves as a tangible reminder of the immigration challenges faced by Lee Dick and the variety of strategies the partners employed to evade, circumvent, or facilitate the restrictive immigration process.

In various immigration documents, Lee Yuen Hong testified that he had four brothers who were partners in the Wing Hong Hai: Lee Yuen But, Lee Wing, Lee Dick, and Lee Yip Tai. The Exclusion Act case files for the latter three brothers illustrate the confusing, and perhaps purposefully fluid, identities that the partners shared. At times, both Lee Wing and Lee Yip Tai were also known as Lee Dick. Lee Dick (a.k.a. Lee Yip Tai) claimed in 1913 that he had returned from China to The Dalles as a merchant and partner in 1897, then allegedly went to China on short notice without pre-investigation in 1909 and was still there in 1911. Lee Wing, the youngest brother, also called Lee Dick or Dick Hong, was living in The Dalles and was planning to accompany Lee Yuen Hong to China on the 1911 trip. When questioned, Lee Wing gave conflicting answers — including an unsubstantiated claim that he was born in Portland — to explain why he did not have a resident certificate.⁵⁵ Edward French, the banker, described Lee Wing as Lee Yuen Hong’s “troublesome” younger brother: “When Lee Yuen Hong was running his laundry, Dick worked in it; then he worked as a cook or dishwasher in restaurants; then back to the laundry; then out of town and back again.”⁵⁶ The similarities in the names and in the photographs of Lee Wing and Lee Dick suggest that the identities may have been shared by two partners, or that one partner used different identities depending on the situation.

By 1913, immigration officials were sharing and combining files so they could compare and expose inconsistencies.⁵⁷ So, when Lee Dick arrived in Seattle from China in December 1912, and sought entry to the United States

as a merchant with the Wing Hong Hai Company, officials detained and questioned him. He eventually confessed “that in 1897 he was admitted upon a returning ‘merchant’s’ paper which ‘my older brother fixed for me,’ and that he had not previously been within the United States [before 1880].”⁵⁸ That “old merchant paper” specifically included the claim that Lee Dick arrived before 1880, which, prior to the 1888 Scott Act, would have qualified him for admission under the terms of the Angell Treaty.⁵⁹ In addition, his arrival in Port Townsend, specifically, may also have been purposeful, as word may have reached Lee Yuen Hong and Lee Dick about an interpreter at Port Townsend known to have helped other Chinese immigrants gain entry.⁶⁰ Lee Dick’s case was not successful, and he was subsequently deported.

While immigration officials regarded Lee Yuen Hong with suspicion, residents of The Dalles considered him a likeable, successful businessman. When he died in an automobile accident in 1912 at the age of forty-five, *The Dalles Chronicle* headlined “Popular Local Chinaman Killed” and described his “pleasing personality,” noting that he could “read and write English” and “had accumulated a considerable amount of money through his excellent business ability.” The Dalles Band led his funeral procession to the cemetery, while incense burned outside his door in Chinatown. Instead of burial, he was embalmed, and his remains were shipped to his family in China.⁶¹

Lee Yuen Hong left no will, but he had over \$2,000 cash and approximately \$270 worth of goods in stock, including furniture, tableware, Chinese groceries, tea, rice, oil, preserved vegetables, Japanese oysters, canned goods, liniments, sauces, whiskey, wine, cigarettes and cigars, firecrackers, candles, aprons, and Chinese shirts and shoes. Lee Yuen Hong’s family was living in Hoy Yen, Sun Ning District. He was survived by his wife Sue Shee, his son Toy Duck, daughter Coon Shue, and an unnamed four-year-old daughter. His widow decided to retain Lee Yuen Hong’s one-quarter interest in the store so that their son could come to the United States and run it when he got older.⁶² This did not happen, as the loss of Lee Yuen Hong marked the end of the business.

WAH CHUNG AND COMPANY STORE, ASHLAND, OREGON

Established in 1891, the Wah Chung and Company was the heart of Ashland’s small Chinese community.⁶³ Whereas The Dalles had a Chinatown for decades, most Chinese in southern Oregon were originally drawn to the area by mining opportunities and largely dispersed in rural camps or based in Jacksonville’s Chinese quarter prior to the arrival of the railroad in 1884. By the late 1860s, Chinese migrants controlled much of the mining occurring in southwestern Oregon. As gold mining waned and agriculture became the leading economic driver in the Rogue Valley, the town of Jacksonville, along with its Chinese community, waned as well. The railroad bypassed

| Wah | | INTERNATIONAL CHINESE BUSINESS DIRECTORY. | | 1529 |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|--|-----------------------------|------|
| | | Hon | | |
| 美國阿海阿省 OHIO, U. S. A. | | | | |
| 店名 | 生意 | 門牌號數街名 | | |
| Name. | Business. | No. Street. | | |
| 都李杜埠 TOLEDO—(Continued) | | | | |
| 華盛 | 西菜 | Wah Sing, Restaurant..... | 418 E. Main St. | |
| 永興 | 什貨 | Wing Hing & Co., Gen. Mdse..... | 1611 Lawrence St. | |
| 永華源 | 什貨 | Wing Wah Yuen, Gen. Mdse..... | 617 Jefferson St. | |
| 和源昌 | 什貨 | Wo Yuen Chong, Gen. Mdse..... | 509 Erie St. | |
| 怡昌 | 什貨 | Yee Chong, General Merchandise..... | 509 Erie St. | |
| 美國屋加堪馬省又名屋喇夏瑪省 OKLAHOMA, U. S. A. | | | | |
| 提摩埠 ARDMORE (Carter County) | | | | |
| 加梯寬尼 | 西菜 | California Cafe..... | P. O. Box 393 | |
| 陳添 | 西菜 | Chin Him, Restaurant..... | | |
| 興記 | 雜貨 | Hing Kee, General Merchandise..... | | |
| 廣昌 | 西菜 | Quong Chong, Restaurant..... | P. O. Box 543 | |
| 榮利 | 洗衣 | Wing Lee, Laundry..... | | |
| 屋加堪馬埠 OKLAHOMA (Oklahoma County) | | | | |
| 昌記 | 雜貨 | Chong Kee, General Merchandise..... | 128 N. Reno St. | |
| 昌利 | 雜貨 | Chong Lee, General Merchandise..... | 110 Reno St. | |
| 加蘭 | 西菜 | Grand Cafe, Chop Suey..... | 206 W. Grand Ave. | |
| 隆盛 | 漆器 | Lung Sing & Co., Chinese and Jap. Goods..... | 406 N. Broadway | |
| 紐約 | 西菜 | New York Cafe..... | 20 Broadway St. | |
| 廣合 | 衣箱 | Quong Hop, Laundry..... | 231 W. Fourth St. | |
| 三和 | 雜貨 | Sam Wah Hop & Co., Gen. Mdse..... | 18 S. Robinson St. | |
| 三榮 | 西菜 | Sun Wing, Cafe..... | 119 S. Robinson St. | |
| 和合 | 蘇杭 | Wah Hop & Co., Dry Goods..... | 7 N. Harvev St. | |
| 怡利 | 洗衣 | Yee Lee, Laundry..... | 30 Harrison St. | |
| 美國柯利近省 OREGON, U. S. A. | | | | |
| 打市崙埠 ASHLAND (Jackson County) | | | | |
| 寶和隆 | 雜貨 | Bow Wo Lung & Co., General Merchandise..... | | |
| 和昌 | 雜貨 | Wah Chong, Gen. Mdse..... | 282 A St.; Box 494 | |
| 埃市左利埠 ASTORIA (Clatsop County) | | | | |
| 德和 | 洗衣 | Ark Wo & Co..... | P. O. Box 823; 302 Bond St. | |
| 擯利李 | | Charles Lee & Co..... | 128 Eighth St. | |
| 國民黨 | 會所 | Chung Hwa National Club..... | P. O. Box 843 | |
| 德隆 | 雜貨 | Duck Lung, Gen. Mdse..... | P. O. Box 861; 310 Bond St. | |
| 恒益 | 接工 | Hong Yick, Chinese Labor Bureau..... | 340 Second St. | |
| 千 五 二 九 | | | | |

WAH CHUNG AND COMPANY is listed as “Wah Chong, Gen. Mdse.” in the 1913 *International Chinese Business Directory* under Ashland (Jackson County) along with Bow Wo Lung & Co. General Merchandise.

Wong Quon Sue (黃官仕), Wah Chung and Company’s majority shareholder and manager, described the business as selling “groceries, Chinese goods, such as rice, fire-crackers, noodles, dried fish, canned goods; we also sell vegetables, hogs, tea, shoes, everything gangs use out on the tracks.”⁶⁶ Wong Quon Sue operated the company along with several other partners. The main business was located at 282 A Street in Ashland’s railroad district, and it supplied the remote work camps by stocking railroad cars provided by the Southern Pacific Railroad Company. In addition to the Ashland-based business, there was an affiliated Los Angeles, California, branch of the Wah Chung and Company. Wong Quon Sue was a shareholder, but the business

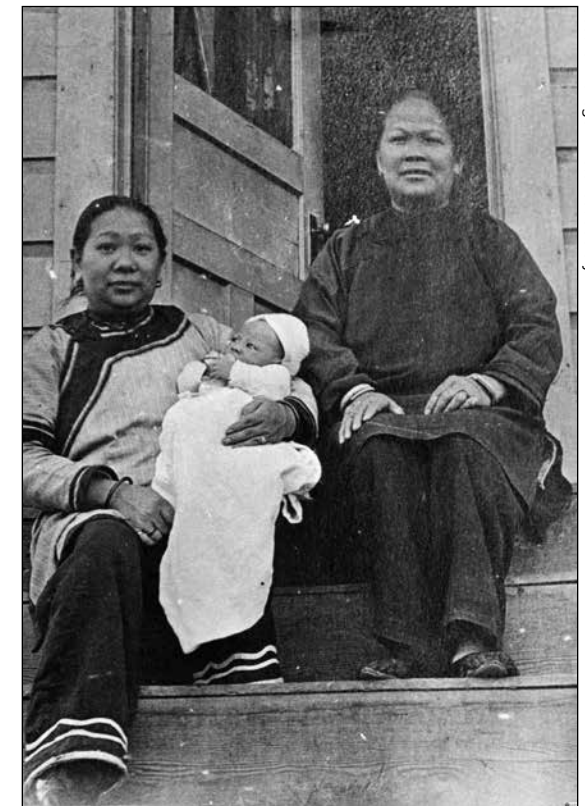
the town in 1884, and four years later, a fire destroyed the northern portion of the Chinese quarter.⁶⁴ While a small number of Chinese residents remained in Jacksonville and the surrounding areas, discriminatory business fees and laws prohibiting property ownership, paired with the economic decline in the region, prompted the bulk of the population to relocate by the 1880s. Meanwhile, the arrival of the railroad to southern Oregon employed hundreds of Chinese workers in its construction and provided ongoing economic opportunity for the Wah Chung and Company, which served as a labor brokerage for the Southern Pacific Railroad and operated both a brick-and-mortar store and a traveling store from the 1890s well into the twentieth century.⁶⁵

was managed by Wong Sha Lim, who also used it to help funnel labor to the work crews in Oregon.⁶⁷

Wong Quon Sue worked for the railroad for over forty years, and his business ventures expanded to include a laundry, restaurant, and gold mine, among other assets. According to census and immigration records, Wong Quon Sue immigrated to the United States around 1870 from Chun Lock Village (長樂村), Sun Ning District. He left a wife in China, Lee Shee, who reportedly died in 1906. There were no children from this union. Wong married California-born Jin Shee, or May King, in 1901. The couple adopted Loi Tai, who was known locally as Jennie Wah Chung, around 1907, when she was four or five years old. Records indicate she was born in Happy Camp, California, to Wong Bo, but do not otherwise provide the circumstances surrounding her adoption.⁶⁸ The couple went on to have two additional children: a daughter named Ah Hai or Gin Tie, who died when she was about one year old, and a son, Gim Ming, known locally as Samuel “Sammy” Wah Chung.⁶⁹

In 1901, Wong Quon Sue built a “neat, two-story frame building” to house his growing family.⁷⁰ The family maintained a fishpond and raised a garden that featured a variety of vegetables, those common both in the local area and in China.⁷¹ In 1915, a sample of the garden products, including beans and cucumbers “originating in the flowery kingdom,” were put on display to the delight of the Ashland community.⁷² This garden is also described in immigration files by witnesses, who were careful to note the distinction between household chores such as watering the garden and activities that would classify one as a laborer.⁷³

The entire family supported and participated in community events, had floats in local



JIN SHEE holds one of her children in front of her home in Ashland, Oregon, with an unknown woman between 1905 and 1910.

Southern Oregon Historical Society

parades, and attended local weddings and Christmas parties, and the children were popular in school. Many Ashlanders recalled Wong Quon Sue's sharing Chinese culture with the community by delivering lily bulbs in December, stating they will bring "happiness and prosperity" to those whose plants bloom under their care.⁷⁴ Newspaper accounts describe the Wong family's hosting lavish dinners showcasing traditional Cantonese cooking at the Chinese New Year, complete with fireworks. The Wongs also invited the larger community to participate in the festivities, as newspapers reported: "trays of sweetmeats, nuts and queer candies are placed where all may partake in the Wah Chung Store, and feasts are nightly occurrences."⁷⁵

While Wong Quon Sue and his family made their mark in the documentary record of Ashland, the lives of Wong's partners have been harder to discern. What little we do know about these men and their families has almost entirely been recovered from immigration files. Over time, at least fourteen men were listed as partners in the Wah Chung and Company, which reported between four to six partners at any one time. Some of these partners were clearly legitimate and some were questionable, based on the available records. When asked why he had so many partners, Wong Quon Sue answered, "I am out on the road a good deal. I am a Chinese contractor for the Southern Pacific Co. and then we have two store cars on the road all the time to supply Chinese section gangs."⁷⁶ While this may have been true, the partnership model was also a common Chinese business practice.

There was no known partnership book for the Wah Chung and Company store, and there are several inconsistencies in regards to who was listed as an active partner in the company over the years. These company snapshots can be found in various immigration files, which may be factual but are clearly tailored to suit the needs of the current immigrant. In addition to majority shareholder Wong Quon Sue, several men were firmly associated with the business for decades. These include: Wong Ock Jung (黃德中), who was affiliated with the firm from roughly 1900 into the 1920s and was primarily engaged with managing the railroad crew and traveling store; Wong Kan How (黃琮勸), who joined the firm in about 1902 and served as a bookkeeper and general assistant into the 1920s; Wong Park You (黃百優), who joined in 1905 and managed a second railroad crew and traveling store until the 1920s; and Wong Sha Lim, who helped with labor recruitment from roughly 1908 through at least 1913 and was based in the Los Angeles branch of the company.⁷⁷ Several other men were listed as being affiliated at one time or another. Wong Youe (王有), Wong Wa Fon, and Wong Buck Yee are all mentioned as being members around the turn of the twentieth century.⁷⁸ Wong Tie Man returned to China and remained a partner before selling his share to Wong Mah Chow in 1905, and Wong Sai Tong (黃世棠) is listed as affiliated with the company starting in 1922.⁷⁹

The immigration records listed above indicate that, like Wong Quon Sue, many of these men were from Chun Lock Village.

In 1921, Wong Quon Sue brought his adopted son Wong Kim Won to Ashland. Wong Kim Won was reportedly the son of Wong Quon Sue's brother Wong Sue Din, who died in 1904. The boy was cared for by Wong Quon Sue's first wife Lee Shee until her death in 1906. Wong Kim Won was then raised by his older brother, with the financial support of Wong Quon Sue. Wong Quon Sue stated that he was motivated to bring over Wong Kim Won at this time so he could be educated and help with the store.⁸⁰ This was his second attempt to bring Wong Kim Won to the United States, the first being in 1912. At that time, Wong Kim Won's statements were inconsistent with the affidavit provided by his uncle, and the inspector testified that he "doubted if he was the boy for whom the affidavit had been intended."⁸¹ While the 1921 immigration file does not provide a photograph of young Wong Kim Won, there are enough discrepancies in the two accounts to suggest that there were two different individuals and that one or both of the boys was a paper son — a term used to describe an individual born in China and brought into the United States under fraudulent circumstances, usually by pretending to be the descendant of a legal resident. Wong Kim Won brought his wife Lum Shee to join him in Ashland in 1923.⁸² Other partners used their privileged merchant class to bring over family as well. Wong Kan How brought over his wife Eng Shee and son Wong Youk Sing in 1922, and in 1927, Wong Sai Tong brought over a son, Wong Quock Tung.⁸³ Although these men enjoyed privileged merchant status, bringing their families to Ashland was not always easy. At its height, this process was so onerous that all immigrants could find barriers to entry,



LOI TAI, who was known as Jennie Wah Chung (right), plays dress-up with a friend in about 1905. This photograph was likely taken in Wong Quon Sue and Jin Shee's home in Ashland.

Southern Oregon Historical Society

regardless of whether they were barred or accepted according to the various exclusion acts.⁸⁴

Wong Quon Sue retired from the Southern Pacific Railroad Company in 1926, after forty-two years of service, and died in Portland in 1927.⁸⁵ His son Samuel died from an accidental drowning in the Willamette River a few months later.⁸⁶ While it is unclear what happened to the Wah Chung and Company at this point, it likely dissolved without Wong Quon Sue.

PAPER MERCHANTS, BONA FIDE MERCHANTS, AND THE POWER OF THE PRIVILEGED CLASS

The Wing Hong Hai and the Wah Chung and Company stores each played an important role in the establishment and maintenance of Oregon's Chinese diaspora community. On the surface, these businesses bought and sold goods and services to the residents of The Dalles and Ashland, Oregon; in reality, these transnational establishments did so much more. While urban Chinatowns might have had the populations needed to allow merchandise stores to thrive in their own right, in rural areas, the opportunity to demonstrate being a merchant on paper — a “bona fide” member of the privileged class — was the real value of these enterprises.

A partnership in an established business was needed to claim merchant status; however, making a living often required outside income to sustain the business and its dependents. A mercantile store selling imported goods and targeting the local Chinese population had a limited customer base in a small town, but laundries and restaurants, whose proprietors the laws explicitly defined as falling within the laboring class, appealed to the broader community and could be far more profitable.⁸⁷ Members of both companies owned or were associated with laundries, restaurants, and other enterprises, and the bulk of the Wah Chung and Company's profits undoubtedly came through its role in supplying men and goods to build and maintain the railroad. Scholars recognize labor contracting as one of the most lucrative ventures for Chinese immigrants at this time.⁸⁸

While the privileged status of a merchant provided opportunity and greater control of movement and personal choice, laborers could also obtain a laborer's return certificate using cash — at least \$1,000 in assets — as a means to travel to China and return to the United States. Ng Len On (伍安) obtained a laborer's return certificate in 1913 because he had reportedly loaned Wah Chung and Company partner Wong Kan How \$1,000, as did Lee Cheung (李昌), a local cook who was owed \$1,000 by Wong Quon Sue in 1912.⁸⁹ Whether these occasions reinforce the assertion that outside capital was needed to support struggling merchant stores, reflect informal banking, or were a strategy for gaming the system is unclear, but the terms of the loans are decidedly neb-

ulous considering the large amount of money involved.⁹⁰ When immigration officials asked Mr. Ng or Mr. Lee for details about the transaction, both parties gave vague statements that the loans carried 4 percent interest and assured the inspectors that they were not to be repaid until their return. Traveling as a merchant ensured reentry and could provide the opportunity to bring family members to the United States, but traveling with a laborer's return certificate might have been less of a hassle. Wong Ock Jung, longtime partner in the Wah Chung and Company, chose to obtain a laborer's return certificate for a 1923 trip to China despite being a legitimate merchant.⁹¹

In addition to serving as an anchor within the Chinese community, businesses such as the Wing Hong Hai and Wah Chung and Company also facilitated interaction and collaboration between Chinese Oregonians and their white neighbors. By 1892, the Geary Act required a white individual to serve as a witness for a Chinese person as part of the required immigration documents. This was an attempt to ensure the legitimacy of an immigrant's status, as white individuals were considered to be credible by default.⁹² In The Dalles and Ashland, these witnesses included friends, neighbors, business associates, and customers. Lee Yuen Hong relied on his established relationship with prominent banker Edward French and bank cashier J.C. Hostetler, both of whom regularly vouched for him. The proprietors of the nearby drug store, lumber store, and freight office also served as witnesses for the Wing Hong Hai merchants. White lawyers in The Dalles prepared documents and wrote letters and telegrams that helped merchants such as Lee Yuen Hong and his partners arrange for travel and comply with immigration requirements.⁹³

Immigrants to Ashland relied on Wong Quon Sue's extensive social capital, and witnesses commonly included postmen, an American Express agent, white merchants, and a woman who lived next door.⁹⁴ While testimony supports lengthy friendships or repeated business interactions in many of these instances, it is also possible that money was informally exchanged for these services. In addition, Chinese informants have admitted that forgeries often included signatures of prominent community members such as postmasters and mayors, as their position could influence an inspector's view, in particular in remote areas where it was difficult to confirm testimonies.⁹⁵

While Lee Yuen Hong and Wong Quon Sue worked hard to facilitate passage to the United States for their partners and extended families, they were undoubtedly receiving financial gain from their efforts. All aspects of the migration process were commodified: “False papers, medical inspections, visas, witnesses who would claim to be your uncles and brothers, paper families, and old ladies who knew you as a babe in arms in San Francisco could all be bought, sold, and exchanged.”⁹⁶ This practice involved a complex mix of generosity, kinship, altruism, subversion, and exploitation, and it

could ultimately be quite profitable to sponsors such as Lee Yuen Hong and Wong Quon Sue, who controlled these resources and opportunities. Historian Madeline Y. Hsu argued that this defiance of bureaucracy “demonstrates the viability and adaptability of traditional structures of family, clan, and native-place networks in an industrializing, often hostile, modern world.”⁹⁷ In some instances, profiteering was happening on both sides — with corrupt officials financially benefitting from illegal immigration even as they worked to stem it.⁹⁸

Documents indicate that as Wong Quon Sue became an influential member of his adopted community, he also remained a powerful ally in his hometown. His story therefore illustrates the transnational experience of Chinese immigrants, who were often negotiating the social, political, and economic realities of two distinct communities. And while the Wah Chung and Company was an important resource for residents of both Chun Lock and Ashland, it also tied these communities to the larger Chinese diaspora in Oregon and California. As part of his business with the Southern Pacific Railroad, Wong Quon Sue and his partners traveled extensively across Oregon and California, maintaining a network that stocked the store and railroad gangs with groceries and workers. This complex web of supplies, support, and social connection was a key factor in the resilience and survival of rural Chinese communities during the Exclusion Era.

In addition to providing merchant status, documented assets, or family affiliation to would-be Chinese immigrants, Lee Yuen Hong also outright resisted participating in the oppressive immigration system by aiding in the smuggling of Chinese individuals across the Mexican border. This strategy, which avoided the exhaustive U.S. immigration process altogether, was another approach for circumventing Chinese exclusion by providing a “surreptitious entry through the ‘backdoor’ of Canada or Mexico” and thereby making Chinese immigrants what legal scholar Emily Ryo defines as “this country’s first ‘illegal immigrants.’”⁹⁹ Illegal entry of Chinese immigrants was common all along the Mexican and Canadian borders, and Chinese merchant contractors held a notable role in facilitating cross-border traffic by expanding previously established supply routes to include “the new trade in human contraband.”¹⁰⁰ Lee Yuen Hong may have turned to smuggling to help his brothers or potential partners who lacked the required certificates enter the United States. Not only did Mexico have a long, porous border, it also had liberal immigration policies for Chinese laborers who were desired for the construction of the Southern Pacific Railroad, mining, ranching, and other types of work. Some estimate a minimum of 17,300 Chinese illegally crossed borders into the United States between 1882 to 1920.¹⁰¹ Smuggling was aided by Chinese social societies as well as individual white and Chinese businessmen, and it included a network of boarding houses in Mexican border towns as well as brokers selling

Chinese labor certificates.¹⁰² Chinese migrants were concealed in trains, arrived in small boats, traveled by road hidden in vehicles, or walked. Some Chinese crossed over disguised as Mexicans.¹⁰³ Brokers such as Wong Quon Sue and Lee Yuen Hong found profitable niches through exploiting their trans-pacific connections, and the impact was twofold: in aiding an immigrant’s passage they might help their families and communities, but their ability to facilitate the movement of human bodies (labor) and goods across borders also made them powerful middlemen in the process of imperialism and settler colonialism.¹⁰⁴

In building a life for himself in the small town of Ashland, Wong Quon Sue both resisted and exploited his foreign status. The local paper described him as “one of the ‘whitest’ men to be Chinese that ever existed.”¹⁰⁵ Although he successfully negotiated life as a Chinese man in a sometimes-hostile climate, there is no indication that his goal was to achieve the “whiteness” of his neighbors. Despite his local prominence, Wong Quon Sue was known as “China Jim” or, more commonly, as “Wah Chung,” after his business. Many of his local friends did not even know his real name, and some accounts suggest all members of the business were called Wah Chung. Whether this was annoying, insulting, or acceptable to Wong Quon Sue is unknown, but when asked for his wife’s name on his wedding day, he declared she was “Mrs. Wah Chung now!”¹⁰⁶ At face value, not acknowledging an individual’s given



WONG QUON SUE and his youngest son, Samuel, appeared in a retirement announcement in the *Southern Pacific Bulletin* on January 14, 1925. Wong is referred to as “Wah Chung,” a name many local residents called him.

name can appear to be yet another way that the white majority marginalized members of the Chinese community; however, it was just as likely one of the shrewd strategies employed by the Wah Chung and Company.

Under the Act of November 3rd, 1893, the definition of merchant was refined to include “a person engaged in buying and selling merchandise, at a fixed place of business, which business is conducted in his name.”¹⁰⁷ This wording was initially strictly interpreted, resulting in returning merchants being denied reentry if their name was not part of their firm’s name. Clarity and flexibility were eventually provided through a March 31, 1894, opinion by the Secretary of the Treasury. The opinion stated that “an actual partner indicated by the word ‘Co.’ is entitled to enter as ‘merchant’ engaged in business ‘conducted in his name,’” and it allowed for multiple partners to be accommodated within a single business name.¹⁰⁸ Newspapers and other documents indicate that Wong Quon Sue and his family fully embraced the Wah Chung moniker in their dealings with the Ashland community, and it is possible that other partners did as well, to a lesser extent. Whether an intentional tactic or cultural prejudice, white witness testimony inferred that Wong Kan How and Wong Ock Jung were also both known as “Wah Chung” but were fully understood to be distinct from Wong Quon Sue.¹⁰⁹ The store name Wing Hong Hai (sometimes written Wing Hong Tai) strategically contains the names of several of the business partners: Lee Wing, Lee Yuen Hong, and Lee Yip Tai.¹¹⁰

A 1928 article in *The Dalles Daily Chronicle* makes no mention of the merchant stores that served as anchors to the community, and instead describes the residents of the “Once Prosperous” Chinatown as engaged as cooks and laundrymen, noting that others “sawed wood and made their gardens, all honest, profitable occupations.”¹¹¹ Many Chinese living in rural communities during the Exclusion Era straddled the line between honest labor and bona fide merchant, adopting whichever label helped them achieve their goals. Frank B. Sargent, Commissioner General of Immigration, observed that “no matter how trustworthy and honorable a Chinese merchant or laborer may be in the conduct of his daily business, he seems to have no compunction whatever in practicing deceit concerning matters in which the Government is interested.”¹¹² The U.S. immigration process was a forceful demonstration of the lengths the government would go to “obstruct the desires of individual Chinese, probe their bodies, measure them, evaluate them, label them, humiliate them, detain them in dirty sheds, and treat them like criminals” under the façade of the rule of law.¹¹³ Both sides attempted to assert their moral prerogative over the process, but the deception needed to enter Oregon during the Exclusion Era haunted many Chinese Americans and threatened their sense of safety and belonging for years and, in some cases, for generations.

Lee Yuen Hong, Wong Quon Sue, their partners, and others registered, testified, filed for permits and certificates, produced witnesses and proof of assets, and endured investigations and interrogations to meet Exclusion Act requirements, but they also exploited or disobeyed what they believed were unfair rules when it was pragmatic or profitable to do so in order to make a living, grow a business, and provide for their families. Wong Quon Sue succeeded and thrived in Ashland and provided opportunity for the residents of Chun Lock Village for decades. Although Lee Yuen Hong was less successful by comparison, his story may typify the experiences, strategies, struggles, and aspirations of many Chinese in small towns across Oregon.

NOTES

1. Adam McKeown, “Ritualization of Regulation: The Enforcement of Chinese Exclusion in the United States and China,” *The American Historical Review* 108:2 (April 2003): 378.

2. Emily Ryo, “Through the Back Door: Applying Theories of Legal Compliance to Illegal Immigration During the Chinese Exclusion Era,” *Law & Social Inquiry* 31:1 (Winter 2006): 112.

3. McKeown, “Ritualization of Regulation,” 394

4. Erika Lee, *At America’s Gates: Chinese Immigration During the Exclusion Era, 1882–1943* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 77.

5. McKeown, “Ritualization of Regulation,” 379.

6. Lee, *At America’s Gates*, 148.

7. Page Act of March 3, 1875 (Immigration), Forty-Third Congress, Sess. II, ch. 141, sec. 2.

8. *Ibid.*, sec. 3; Kerry Abrams, “Polygamy, Prostitution, and the Federalization of Immigration Law,” *Columbia Law Review* 105:3 (April 2005): 657. “Most Chinese women who migrated to California during the 1860s and 1870s were second wives, concubines in polygamous marriages, or prostitutes.”

9. The Burlingame Treaty of 1868 was

established as a means to ensure friendly relationships between China and the United States by giving the citizens of each nation the right to move freely between the two countries. Beth Lew-Williams, *The Chinese Must Go: Violence, Exclusion, and the Making of the Alien in America* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 2018), 28.

10. George Anthony Pepper, “Forbidden Families: Emigration Experiences of Chinese Women under the Page Law, 1875–1882,” *Journal of American Ethnic History* 6:1 (Fall 1986): 28–29.

11. Lee, *At America’s Gates*, 43; Lew-Williams, *Chinese Must Go*, 45.

12. Ryo, “Through the Back Door,” 129.

13. McKeown, *Ritualization of Regulation*, 385.

14. Office of the Solicitor of the Treasury, *Digest of “Chinese Exclusion” Laws and Decisions*, document no. 2107, compiled by Chapman W. Maupin, Washington Government Printing Office, 1899, 3.

15. Lew-Williams, *The Chinese Must Go*, 8–9.

16. Office of the Solicitor of the Treasury, *Digest of “Chinese Exclusion” Laws and Decisions*, 10.

17. *Ibid.*, 10.
 18. *Ibid.*, 13.
 19. L. Eve Armentrout-Ma, "Chinese in California's Fishing Industry, 1850–1941," *California History* 60:2 (Summer 1981): 144.
 20. Linda Bentz and Todd J. Braje, "Bounty from the Sea: Chinese Foundations of the Commercial Shrimp, Squid, and Abalone Fisheries in California," in *Chinese Diaspora Archaeology in North America*, Chelsea Rose and J. Ryan Kennedy, eds. (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2020), 275–305.
 21. Office of the Solicitor of the Treasury, *Digest of "Chinese Exclusion" Laws and Decisions*, 12.
 22. Office of the Solicitor of the Treasury, *Digest of "Chinese Exclusion" Laws and Decisions*, 17. \$1,000 is approximately \$27,000 in 2020 (<https://www.officialdata.org/us/inflation/1888?amount=1000>).
 23. They must have married and cohabitated for at least one year, and the one thousand dollars must be "bona fide and not colorably acquired for the purpose of evading this act." Office of the Solicitor of the Treasury, *Digest of "Chinese Exclusion" Laws and Decisions*, 17–18.
 24. The History Engine, "Legal Precedent of Chae Chan Ping V. United States," <https://historyengine.richmond.edu/episodes/view/6721> (accessed October 30, 2021).
 25. Office of the Solicitor of the Treasury, *Digest of "Chinese Exclusion" Laws and Decisions*, 18. The full text of Section 8 reads: "That the Secretary of the Treasury shall be, and he hereby is, authorized and empowered to make and prescribe, and from time to time change and amend such rules and regulations, not in conflict with this act, as he may deem necessary and proper to conveniently secure to such Chinese persons as are provided for in articles second and third of the said treaty between the United States and the Empire of China, the rights therein mentioned, and such as shall also protect the United States against the coming and transit of persons not entitled to the benefit of the provisions of said articles. And he is hereby further authorized and empowered to prescribe the form and substance of certificates to be issued to Chinese laborers under and in pursuance of the provisions of said articles, and prescribe the form of the record of such certificate and of the proceedings for issuing the same, and he may require the deposit, as part of such record, of the photograph of the party to whom any such certificate shall be issued."
 26. *Ibid.*, 21–22.
 27. *Ibid.*, 24.
 28. *Ibid.*, 24.
 29. *Ibid.*, 21; Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of Immigration, Treaty, Laws, and Regulations Governing the Admission of Chinese, regulations Approved February 5, 1906, regulations Governing the Admission of Chinese, document no. 54, p. 42.
 30. Lee, *At America's Gates*, 89–90.
 31. The Seufert Cannery in The Dalles hired a seasonal crew of Chinese cannery workers beginning in 1896 and continuing into the 1940s. The cannery provided housing, cooking facilities, and a garden plot on the east side of town. Francis Seufert, *Wheels of Fortune* (Portland, Ore.: Oregon Historical Society Press, 1981), 100–116. Lee Dick, a partner in the Wing Hong Hai Company, was a laborer at the Seufert Cannery in 1909. Seufert Bros. Co, The Dalles, Ore., employee list, 1909, CEA case file, Wong Fook file, Portland, box 5, case 1700, <https://chineseexclusionfiles.com/2015/08/31/seufert-bros-co-the-dalles-ore-cannery-employee-list-1909> (accessed November 27, 2021).
 32. The Chinese residents of The Dalles came from eight villages in Taishan District and four villages in Xinhui District.
 33. U.S. Census Bureau, Quick Facts, The Dalles city, Oregon, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/thedallescityoregon/POP010220#POP010220> (accessed November 9, 2021).
 34. This main thoroughfare was initially named Main Street; however, it was also called Front Street before the eventual name change to First Street, which was made after the main business district shifted south to Second and Third Streets.
 35. The 1897–98 *Wasco County Directory* lists five Chinese merchants in The Dalles, and the 1900 United States Census data lists 87 Chinese in The Dalles.

36. Chinese names are provided as available. Article XV, section 8, of the Oregon Constitution of 1859 reads: "No Chinaman, not a resident of the state at the adoption of this constitution, shall ever hold any real estate, or mining claim, or work any mining claim therein. Testimony taken by R.E. Hussey, December 1, 1906; Examination by H. Edsell August 21, 1908, Lee Yuen Hong Case File 971
 37. *List of Outside Chinamen Applying for Admission at Portland Oregon from July 4, 1893, Merchant and Exempt Classes* (accessed on ancestry.com) lists the Yee Hop Co. at 130 First Street, The Dalles, Oregon. Admitted partners were Lee Toy, November 4, 1893; Low Tai, January 28, 1894; Gumme Gin, January 28, 1894; and Moon Wing, April 24, 1894. Lee Yuen Hong is not listed as an admitted partner in what may have been a short-lived company established to give merchant status to multiple partners. The authors have not found any documents from Lee Yuen Hong's 1894 arrival. Pre-investigation by Inspector John B. Sawyer, May 12, 1911, RG 85, Chinese Exclusion Act case file [hereafter CEA case file], Lee Yuen Hong, case file 1009/83 [hereafter Lee Yuen Hong CEA case file 1009/83], National Archives and Records Administration, Seattle, Washington [hereafter NARA-Seattle]. Testimony taken by R.E. Hussey, December 1, 1906, and examination by H. Edsell August 21, 1908, CEA case files, Lee Yuen Hong, case file 971 [hereafter Lee Yuen Hong CEA case file 971], NARA-Seattle.
 38. "New York Restaurant, L.Y. Hong, Proprietor, First-Class in Every Respect, Meals at All Hours, Oysters Served in any Style, 87 Second St," *The Dalles Chronicle*, August 15, 1901.
 39. Various Chinese Exclusion Act documents over the years include mention of eight different names listed as partners in of the Wing Hong Hai Company: Lee Yuen Hong, Lee Yuen But, Lee Wing (or Ah Wing), Lee Dick (a.k.a. Lee Yip Tai), Lee Sang, Lee Hing, Lei On, Lee Chew. At any given time, however, there are only two to four active partners. The authors have no documents for Lee Chew or Lee Hing.
 40. Postmaster Riddell was responsible for getting affidavits and witnesses for Lee

Yuen But. Letter from Lee Yuen Hong to H.H. Riddell, Esq., Postmaster, The Dalles, Oregon, May 22, 1899, RG 85, CEA case file, Lee Yuen [But] Case File RS14989 [hereafter Lee Yuen But CEA case file RS14989], NARA-Seattle.
 41. Letter of John Sawyer, Chinese Inspector, to J.H. Barbour, Inspector in Charge, regarding his inspection for the pre-investigation of the merchant status of Lee Yuen Hong and Lee Wing, May 26, 1911, Lee Yuen Hong CEA case file 1009/83, NARA-Seattle. Other businesses in The Dalles, such as the Dock Sing Company and Wing Yuen Company, had partnership lists filed with the U.S. Immigration Office.
 42. The partner Lee Wing listed as a laborer was age 63, so he is not the Lee Wing who was a later partner and a younger brother to the primary partner, Lee Yuen Hong.
 43. Letter from R.E. Hussey, Acting Chinese Inspector to J.H. Barbour, Inspector in Charge, December 17, 1906, Lee Yuen Hong CEA case file 1009/83, NARA-Seattle; 1900 Sanborn Map from The Dalles, p 8, https://www.loc.gov/resource/g4294dm.g4294dm_g073481900/?sp=8&r=0.448,0.495,0.328,0.189,0 (accessed November 9, 2021).
 44. Huntington and Wilson, Law Office to Chinese Inspector in Charge, November 7, 1906, Lee Yuen Hong CEA case file 1009/83, NARA-Seattle
 45. "Lee Yuen Hong intimated to Inspector Hussey . . . that he was willing to supply a certificate of deposit for any amount necessary to bring his property valuation up to \$1000." Letter from J.H. Barbour to Huntington and Wilson, Attorneys-at-Law, December 4, 1906, Lee Yuen Hong CEA case file 1009/83, NARA-Seattle.
 46. "Both myself and said Lee Yuen Hong have carried on said mercantile business and said laundry business, and that each have labored in said laundry to a greater or less extent." Affidavit of Lee Yuen But, October 20, 1908, Lee Yuen Hong CEA case file 971, NARA-Seattle; "Concerning the case of Lee Yuen But who has no certificate of residence, I desire to inform you that said Chinese is prevented from securing a return certificate by virtue of Rule 17 of the Regulations." Letter

from J.H. Barbour to Huntington and Wilson, Attorneys-at-Law, November 10, 1906, Lee Yuen Hong CEA case file 1009/83, NARA-Seattle. There are no documents indicating Lee Yuen But returned from China to any of the Northwest ports.

47. Affidavit of Lee Yuen Hong, May 12, 1911, CEA case file, Lee Wing, case file 2406 [hereafter Lee Wing CEA case file 2406], NARA-Seattle.

48. The term “perfect” was used by J.H. Barbour, Inspector in Charge, of the U.S. Immigration Service in Portland.

49. Sworn statement by Lee Yuen Hong to Inspector R.E. Hussey, July 31, 1912: “There was formerly a laundry connected with my business but I took it out when I got back from China in September 1908,” CEA case file, Lee Yip Tai, case file 2809 [hereafter Lee Yip Tai CEA case file 2809]. Lee Yuen Hong states that Lee Bing Wa runs the laundry next door, but Lee Yuen Hong rents him space in the back yard to dry clothes and also lets him use the kitchen. Interrogation of Lee Yuen Hong by Inspector John B. Sawyer, May 12, 1911, Lee Yuen Hong CEA case file 1009/83, NARA-Seattle.

50. The 1909 Sanborn Map depicts a laundry at the rear of the building and one next door to the east with a connecting door. 1910 United States Census of The Dalles, lists three men living at the store as “Laborer, laundry”.

51. “About a year and a half ago . . . he sold out the laundry and at about that time an entrance into the laundry from the street was built whereas previously the entrance to the laundry had been through the store.” Sworn statement from E.H. French of the French and Co. Bank to Inspector Sawyer, May 13, 1911, Lee Yuen Hong CEA case file 1009/83, NARA-Seattle.

52. Affidavit of Lee Yuen Hong, May 12, 1911, Lee Yuen Hong CEA case file 1009/83, NARA-Seattle. The authors could not find additional information or newspaper accounts of Lee Yuen Hong’s arrest, or why he was released.

53. Sawyer related: “His demeanor under investigation was artful and evasive.” Letter from Inspector John B. Sawyer to J.H. Barbour,

May 26, 1911, Lee Yuen Hong CEA case file 1009/83, NARA-Seattle. Letter from Office of Inspector in Charge, Portland, Oregon, to Commissioner of Immigration, Seattle, Washington, January 21, 1913, CEA case file, Lee Dick, case file 13610 [hereafter Lee Dick CEA case file 13610], NARA-Seattle: “It appears to have been taken from the personal effects of Lee Yuen Hong at the time of his arrest.”

54. An 1893 photo and affidavit stated Lee Dick was a partner in the store and had not conducted any labor in the previous year. Lee Dick CEA case file 13610, NARA-Seattle.

55. Testimony of Lee Wing, May 12, 1911, Lee Wing, case file RS27307 [hereafter Lee Wing CEA case file RS27307], NARA-Seattle.

56. Sworn testimony by E.H. French in reply to questions by Inspector Sawyer, May 13, 1911, Lee Wing CEA case file 2406, NARA-Seattle

57. He arrived in November 1912 , a month after Lee Yuen Hong died, but was detained and later deported after an unsuccessful appeal. Lee Wing CEA case file 2406, NARA-Seattle.

58. Memorandum from Daniel J. Keefe, Commissioner General In re Appeal of Case of Lee Yip Tai, alias Lee Dick alleged domiciled Chinese Merchant, January 11, 1913, Lee Wing CEA case file 2406, NARA-Seattle.

59. Lee Dick CEA case file 13610, NARA-Seattle.

60. Lee, *At America’s Gates*, p. 199, states that interpreter Carleton Rickards at Port Townsend was involved in landing illegal Chinese immigrants from 1896–1897; Lee Dick landed in 1897, but there is no evidence Rickards was involved.

61. “Popular Local Chinaman Killed — Lee Hong Slips on Wet Pavement Getting Out of Automobile,” *The Dalles Weekly Chronicle*, Friday, October 11, 1912; “Chinese Funeral,” *The Dalles Daily Chronicle*, October 7, 1912.

62. In the Matter of the Estate of Lee Yuen Hong, Deceased Order Approving Final Report & Account, November 13, 1913, probate records, Wasco County, from Oregon State Archives. The 2019 value is about \$60, 000 in cash, and \$7,000 worth of store inventory using calculations from <https://westegg.com/>

inflation (accessed November 9, 2021).

63. Wong Quon Sue Testimony, 1913, CEA case file, Wong Park Yew, case 3502 [hereafter Wong Park Yew CEA case 3502], NARA-Seattle.

64. The Chinese quarter was largely vacant and dilapidated by the 1880s, but some residents persisted in the area into the twentieth century. Chelsea Rose, “Burned: The Archaeology of House and Home in Jacksonville,” Oregon’s Chinese Quarter. *Chinese Diaspora Archaeology in North America*, eds. Rose and Kennedy, 163–87; Chelsea Rose and Katie Johnson, *Rising From the Ashes: Jacksonville Chinese Quarter Site (35JA789) Data Recovery Excavations*, 2016, Report to the Oregon Department of Transportation, White City, from the Southern Oregon University Laboratory of Anthropology, Ashland, Oregon.

65. Wong Quon Sue Testimony, 1913, Wong Park Yew CEA case 3502, NARA-Seattle; Wong Youe Affidavit, 1897, CEA case file, Wong Youe, case 15598 [hereafter Wong Youe CEA case 15598], NARA-Seattle.

66. Wong Kan How, Wong Kan Soo [Wong Quon Sue] Testimony, 1922, CEA case file, Wong Kan How, case 2142 [hereafter Wong Kan How CEA case 2142], NARA-Seattle .

67. *Southern Pacific Bulletin* “Chinese Labor Agent,” January (1925): 14; Wong Kan How testimony, 1911, “Partnership List, Wah Chung and Company, Ashland, OR,” Wong Kan How CEA case 2142, NARA-Seattle.

68. *Ibid.*; Wong Kan Soo [Wong Quon Sue] testimony, Wong Kan How CEA case 2142, NARA-Seattle.

69. Wong Ngoon Sue Testimony, 1921, CEA case file, Wong Kim Won, case 5011/89 [hereafter Wong Kin Won CEA case 5011/89], NARA-Seattle. A headstone was placed in the Ashland Cemetery for Ah Hai, inscribed as “Gin Tie ‘Bessie’ Wah Chung” who lived from November 1, 1904, to July 31, 1905, and reportedly died of cholera.

70. *Daily Capital Journal*, September 17, 1901, p. 2

71. *Ashland Tidings* September 6, 1915, p.7

72. “Ashland and Vicinity,” *Medford Mail Tribune* September 27, 1915, p. 5

73. F.F. Wittle Witness Statement Won

Kim Won Deposition, 1922, CEA case file, Lum Shee, case 5011/207 [hereafter Lum Shee CEA case 5011/207, NARA-Seattle.

74. “Local and Personal,” *Ashland Tidings* December 14, 1916, p. 6.

75. *Ashland Tidings* CHINESE NEW YEAR MINUS FIRECRACKERS January 29, 1917, p. 2

76. Wong Quon Sue Testimony, 1913, Wong Park Yew CEA case 3502, NARA-Seattle.

77. Wong Ock Jung Testimony, 1923, CEA case file, Wong Ock Jung, case 510/308, NARA-Seattle; Form 551, 1923, Wong Kan How CEA case 2142, NARA-Seattle; Form 551, 1913, Wong Park Yew CEA case 3502; Wong Kan How Testimony, 1911, Wong Kan How CEA case 2142, NARA-Seattle.

78. Affidavit, 1899, Wong Youe CEA case 15598, NARA-Seattle. Wong Wa Fon is described as having sold his interest in the business to Wong Ock Jung. Wong Quon Sue Testimony, 1909, Wong Ock Jung CEA case 510/308, NARA-Seattle; Wong Buck Yee sold his interest to Wong park You prior to returning to China, where he reportedly died in 1909, Wong Quon Sue testimony (page 2), 1913, Wong Park Yew CEA case 3502, NARA-Seattle.

79. Wong Quon Sue Testimony, 1909, Wong Ock Jung CEA case 510/308, NARA-Seattle; Wong Quock Tung, 1927, CEA case file, Wong Quock Tung, 6140/5-4, NARA-Seattle.

80. Wong Ngoon Sue Testimony, 1921, Wong Kim Won CEA case 5011/89, NARA-Seattle.

81. Vice Consul General Findings, 1914, Wong Kim Won CEA case 5011/89, NARA-Seattle.

82. Won Kim Won Deposition, 1922, Lum Shee CEA case 5011/207, NARA-Seattle.

83. Form 551, 1923, Wong Kan How CEA case 2142, NARA-Seattle; Wong Quock Tung, 1927, Wong Quock Tung CEA case 6140/5-4, NARA-Seattle. Note: Wong Sai Tong’s descendants stated to the authors that Wong Quock Tung was a paper son.

84. Lee, *At America’s Gates*; Madeline Y. Hsu, *Dreaming of Gold, Dreaming of Home: Transnationalism and Migration Between the United States and South China, 1882–1943*

(Redwood City, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2000).

85. *Southern Pacific Bulletin*, January 1925:14; "Honor Society Ashland Normal School Formed," *Medford Mail Tribune* May 25, 1927, p. 8.

86. "Ashland," *Medford Mail Tribune*, August, 8, 1927, p. 4.

87. Various court rulings and opinions by both the Attorney General and the Secretary of the Treasury increasingly constricted the definition of merchant and expanded on work considered labor. Examples include: The owner of a restaurant is not necessarily a "laborer" within the exclusion acts, 20 Op. Atty. Gen., 575; A restaurant keeper who received a certificate as a merchant, under a ruling of the Department, is entitled to reenter, though the Department has in the meanwhile ruled that restaurant keepers are not merchants; Op. Atty. Gen. February 8, 1899; a proprietor of a restaurant is not a merchant, Op. S.T., July 16, 1895; a Chinaman landing as "merchant" may lawfully become "laborer" afterwards, Op. S.T., September 7, 1895; a person seeking admission on a certificate as a "merchant," but on examination, declaring his intention to become a laborer, cannot enter, Op. S.T., April 1, 1894; merchant working occasionally as a house servant before departure is not entitled to reenter, *Lew Jim v. United States*, 66F, 953; The chief cook of a restaurant cannot reenter as a "merchant," Op. S.T., November 4, 1897; a partner who does the cooking for the firm is not entitled to enter as a merchant, Op. S.T., March 1, 1899.

88. Bennet Bronson and Chuimei Ho, *Coming Home in Gold Brocade: Chinese in Early Northwest America* (Seattle, Wash.: Chinese in Northwest America Research Committee, 2015), 72.

89. Form 432, 1913, CEA case file, Ng Len On, case 31,480 [hereafter Ng Len On CEA case 31,480], NARA-Seattle; Form 432, 1913, CEA case file, Lee Cheung, case 30,227 [hereafter Lee Cheung CEA case 30,227], NARA-Seattle.

90. Banking and lending were likely services offered by Chinese businesses. Lee Yuen Hong, when describing the Wing Hong

Hai Company to immigration inspector John Sawyer, stated: "We also engage in money lending." Lee Yuen Hong interview for pre-investigation of mercantile status, May 12, 1911, RG 85, Chinese Exclusion Act case files, Lee Yuen Hong CEA case 1009/83, NARA-Seattle.

91. Form 432, 1923, Wong Ock Jung CEA case 510/308, NARA-Seattle.

92. The Geary Act of May 5, 1892, required the testimony of a white witness to establish the residency of a Chinese laborer, in the absence of a certificate, at the time of the passage of the act. With the passage of the Act of November 3, 1893, the language had been modified to "at least one credible witness other than Chinese." Office of the Solicitor of the Treasury, *Digest of "Chinese Exclusion" Laws and Decisions*, p. 22–23.

93. E.H. French and J. C. Hostetler, French and Company Bank, served as witnesses for Lee Yuen Hong, May 13, 1911; Fred W. Wilson, Attorney-at-Law, wrote letters to the Portland Inspector of Immigration regarding Lee Yuen Hong's and Lee Wing's applications to travel, April to May 1911; Law Offices of Huntington and Wilson prepared papers and wrote letters to the Portland immigration inspector for Lee Yuen Hong in 1906 and 1908. Lee Yuen Hong CEA case file 1009/83, NARA-Seattle. J.T. Peters, lumberman, and O. Kinnersley, drug store proprietor, served as witnesses for Lee Yuen But in 1899, Lee Yuen CEA case RS14989, NARA-Seattle. George F. Ross, chief clerk of the freight office of the Oregon Railway and Navigation Company, served as witness for partner Lee Sang in 1900, CEA case file, Lee Sang, case 15888 [hereafter Lee Sang CEA case 15888], NARA-Seattle.

94. Constable M.N. Long, merchants P.W. Paulson and G.W. Vaupel, and postmaster W.H. Bunk all served as witnesses for Wong Youe in 1897, Wong Youe CEA case 15598, NARA-Seattle; American Express Agent D.A. Applegate and merchant R.A. Minkler served as witnesses for Wong Ock Jung in 1909, Wong Ock Jung case 510/308, NARA-Seattle; R.A. Minkler, Postman J.R. Casey, and J.H. Provost served as a witness for Wong Kan How in 1911, Wong Kan How CEA case file 2142, NARA-Seattle; Postman John R.

Casey and candy store owner Charles R. Rose served as witnesses for Wong Park Yew in 1913, Wong Park Yew CEA case 3502, NARA-Seattle; D.A. Applegate and retired merchant C.H. Vaupel and served as a witness for Wong Kim Won in 1921, Wong Kim Won CEA case 5011/8, NARA-Seattle; and F.F. Whittle and Wah Chung and Co. neighbor, Harriet Clark, served as a witness for Wong Kim Won in 1923 when he brought his family to the United States, Wong Kim Won CEA case 5011/207, NARA-Seattle.

95. Lee, *At America's gates*, 201.

96. McKeown, *Ritualization of Regulation*, 397; Lee, *At America's Gates*, 189.

97. Hsu, *Dreaming of Gold, Dreaming of Home*, 12.

98. Lee, *At America's Gates*, 198.

99. Ryo, "Through the Back Door," 110.

100. Kornel S. Chang, *Pacific Connections: The Making of the U.S. Canadian Borderlands* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2012), 50.

101. Ryo, "Through the Back Door," p. 110, cites several sources: the estimate of 17,300 is from Erika Lee, *At America's Gates*, 149–50; Luther C. Fry, "Illegal Entry of Orientals into the United States between 1910 and 1920," *Journal of the American Statistical Association* 23 (1928): 173–77, estimates 7,000–21,000 illegal entries between 1910 and 1920; and Estelle Lau, "Paper Families: Identity, Immigration Administration and Chinese Exclusion," (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 2000), p. 91, cites a 1901 report estimating 20,000 illegal entries.

102. Ryo, "Through the Back Door," 133; Mai Ngai, *The Lucky Ones* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2010), 137. Contemporary newspaper accounts also suggest that Chinese were being smuggled into the U.S. from Mexico disguised as Japanese. "Japanese Held as Smuggler of Chinese" *Los Angeles Herald*. August 2, 1911, p. 7.

103. Letter from Marcus Braun, U.S. Immigration Inspector to Frank B. Sargent, Commissioner General of Immigration, February 12, 1907: "They come to Mexico with no intention to remain there but because they think they can enter the United States in an easy way. . . . I found them to cut their

pigtails and exchange their blue jeans and their felt slippers to the most picturesque Mexican dress," quoted in Ryo, "Through the Back Door," 122.

104. Chang, *Pacific Connections*, 30.

105. "Wedding of Wah Chung," *Rogue River Courier*, September 19, 1901, p. 2

106. *Ibid.*

107. Office of the Solicitor of the Treasury, *Digest of "Chinese Exclusion" Laws and Decisions*, 24.

108. *Ibid.*, 39; Op. S.T., March 31, 1894; a person whose name is not part of the firm name is not a "merchant" within the acts, 21 Op. Atty. Gen., 5 Syn. Dec., 14877; Chinese person, though a partner, can not reenter if his name is not a part of the firm name. *In re Quan Gin* 61 F, 395; and *In re Yee Lung* 61 F, 641; Interest of merchant in firm must be real, but not necessary that his name appear in firm name. *United States v. Lee Kan*, May 21, 1894 62 F, 914. Office of the Solicitor of the Treasury, *Digest of "Chinese Exclusion" Laws and Decisions*, 39.

109. O.B. Turner witness statement, 1922, Wong Kan How CEA case 2142, NARA-Seattle; D.A. Applegate witness statement, 1923, Wong Ock Jung CEA case 5010/308, NARA-Seattle.

110. The proprietors of two other Chinese merchandise stores in The Dalles were known by their store names, even on official documents. Lee Ho of the Dock Sing Company was married in 1888 in The Dalles, using the name Dock Sing, and early immigration documents for Wong Chung of the Chew Kee Company name him as Ah Chew Kee. Ah Chew Kee, 1899–1902, CEA case file, Ah Chew Kee, case RS17173, NARA-Seattle. Dock Sing Marriage Certificate is from the State of Oregon, Wasco County, May 26, 1888, in the marriage of Dock Sing and Hen Lee, copy held by the authors.

111. Esther Thomlinson, "Chinatown, Once Prosperous Section, is Nearly Deserted," *The Dalles Daily Chronicle*, May 26, 1928

112. Report of the Commissioner General Frank B. Sargent quoted in the March 1908 "Proceedings of the Asiatic Exclusion League" p.11.

113. McKeown, *Ritualization of Regulation*, 399