

THE CHINESE IN CALAVERAS COUNTY



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JOHN CHINAMAN IN ANGELS CAMP

By ED LEONARD

The first Chinese reached Angels Camp prior to 1851. J. D. Borthwick relates a visit to Angels in 1851 and states, "The Chinese camp was on a gulch near the village — about one hundred Chinese pitched their tents on a rocky eminence by the side of their diggings. They invited me to eat and insisted on my drinking a pannikin full of brandy, and also gave me some cigaritas, the tobacco of which is very aromatic and pleasant. The Chinese invariably treated in this same hospitality anyone who would visit their camps." The Gulch entering Angels Camp just above the village is China Gulch.

This tent city was replaced by many wooden buildings and two brick buildings on both sides of Angels Creek back of the Angels Hotel, and an adobe building and two wooden buildings across the creek.

The Chinese Cemetery adjoined the village up stream.

In 1873 when Beauvais surveyed the townsite, he listed twenty lots as being owned by Chinese and having buildings on them.

The Chinese gardens occupied the lowlands along the creek.

The townsite map lists Sien Lum as owning one brick store building (The Bird Residence) and five wooden buildings.

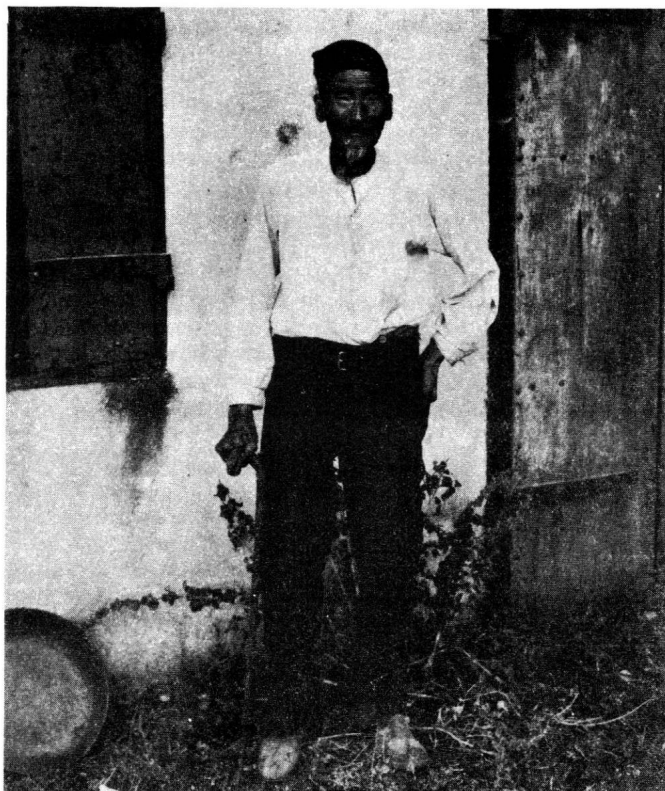
Choy Sam owned the brick building now used as the City Jail, the adobe store across the creek and seven wooden buildings.

On September 12, 1889, this adobe store with a wooden second story was advertised for sale for \$400 by Yet Sing. Later the building burned and Yet Sing lost his life in the fire.

Other property owners in 1874 were Ah Tye, Hing Nam, Ah Mook, Pan Chim Leh, Lim Sum, and the Yup San Company.

This well established community had a population of about two hundred persons. As most of the population were single men, many occupied a single building. The narrow bunks were in tiers along the walls. They used these bunks for sleeping and opium smoking. There were several stores, gambling dens, and opium dens, as well

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MINER—Ah Lin, one of the last Chinese in Jenny Lind is remembered as mining along the Calaveras River. — Historical Society photo.

CHINESE IN JENNY LIND

By PERCY HUNT

As I remember the only two Chinese I knew were Ah Lin and Ah Poo. They lived in little shacks in Jenny Lind and mined along the Calaveras River. They were very old men when I knew them. Ah Lin often remarked "Want to die, no can die." Ah Lin died at Jenny Lind but Ah Poo wandered away from the County Hospital in San Andreas and his remains were found on a ranch near San Andreas.

From an interview with Mrs. Etta Hardesty Smith, formerly Etta Jenkins, who was born in a hotel in Jenny Lind in 1870, I gathered the following information. My father, Henry Hunt, and Etta Jenkins were about the same age and the stories they have told me about the Chinese are similar.

It seems Chinatown at Jenny Lind began about where the IOOF Hall now stands and extended on south toward the Calaveras River. There were many houses, stores, and gambling houses. At a certain time each evening a Chinese would come out on the street and call that it was time to gamble and Chinese would come flocking out of the houses everywhere.

Mrs. Smith's mother baked bread and gave it to them,

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John Chinaman in Angels Camp

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as the lodging dwellings. A laundry serving the white population of Angels Camp was also in operation.

Around the doorways, describing the use of the building, was a border of orange-colored paper inscribed with Chinese characters in black. Burning punks were in conspicuous places and burned continually. I find no mention of a Joss House.

As most of the Chinese were coolies they dressed very much alike, with blue cotton pantaloons with wide legs and a square cut cotton blouse with flowing sleeves. They wore sandals or slippers. They described the weather as one shirt, two shirt, or three shirt. The queue was braided with silk thread at the end to protect the hair from breaking, and generally hung down the back. It extended about to the waist. However, when working he coiled the queue around his head and wore a tight skull cap. It was a calamity to lose the queue. For cold weather he wore a quilted blouse filled with cotton.

Sam Choy, the "Bissie Man," was a man of family. He owned the brick stores and gambling dens. He had control of groups of workers who often were contracted to the miners. He furnished them with food, clothing, lodging, tools, and slave girls. He collected the pay from the contractor and controlled the finances of the coolies. He also bought gold from the white miners, weighing it on a balance scale made of bamboo.

The female members of his family were dressed in bright shiny silk. Their pantaloons, which extended below their other garments, fairly rustled when they walked. Their slippers were highly decorated. The feet of his girl Ah Nee were bound at a tender age after which she was unable to walk naturally. She screamed with the pain so that people residing near could hear her.

In September, 1883, Sam Choy announced that he was sending Ah Nee, born in Angels Camp, to China that she might enter the society befitting her rank.

The stores carried tea imported from China. It was packed in tin foil and came in large cubicle boxes bearing Chinese characters and art work and highly polished.

The rice came in braided rice straw sacks or bags. These bags were highly prized by young American girls as they were easily made into good serviceable sun hats.

Chinese candy, nuts, dried shrimp, and dried abalone were much sought after by the white children.

Chinese New Year was a continuous celebration for several days. It was a period of feasting accompanied by a lot of noise. Great quantities of pork and gin were added to the usual diet. Long strings of firecrackers were hung from the buildings and lighted at the bottom. These kept up a continuous din, often interspersed with a bomb. When a string separated, the firecrackers popped off on the ground. White boys gathered the duds and fired them, often breaking them in the middle and setting the powder afire.

The Chinese were inveterate gamblers, one game being fan tan, a card game.

The Chinese gardens produced prolifically, and surplus vegetables were peddled in the community. The Chinese brought over from China the idea of using "night soil," human body wastes, and used it for fertilizer. They also raised hogs which were sold to the Rose Butcher Shop and Calaveras Market. The hogs and ducks, which they

Chinese in Jenny Lind

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and in return they brought China candy, nuts, and silk handkerchiefs from China. A baby Chinese girl was born there. There was a butcher shop near the river, where the Chinese butchered hogs. On the Dennis Ranch was a vegetable garden run by a man by the name of Joe Spanard and right across the road from him was a store run by "Big Man Hop," a Chinese. There was a blacksmith shop, where the proprietor was Joe Really. Les Hugo had the Post Office and Cap Tyler had a saloon.

East of Chinatown on the hillside was the Chinese Cemetery. After the Chinese had been buried a number of years, their bones were disinterred and shipped back to China, providing they had not cut off their queues before they died.

One time word got around that a bunch of men — Mexicans — were coming to run the Chinese out of Jenny Lind and the Chinese were much excited. They had a meeting in one of the larger houses and Mr. Jenkins, Mrs. Smith's father, spoke to the frightened Chinese and assured them they would not be bothered. The raid never materialized.

also raised, supplemented their rice diet.

On June 17, 1919, the City Marshal was instructed to have all hogs removed from Chinatown.

While peddling, the Chinese used a yoke which fitted over the shoulders and around the neck, with a basket suspended at each end. In lieu of a yoke, they suspended their baskets at the end of long springy poles.

The cemetery shows signs of having been a depository for a large number of bodies. When a Chinese died he was buried in a shallow grave and after the flesh was off the bones he was disinterred and shipped back to his home community in China, where his remains were placed in an earthen jar and set out in a resting place he had chosen. The funeral was an affair of much ceremony. Choice meats, rice, rice cookies, pork and fowl meticulously prepared were placed on the grave to appease the devils who might wish to interfere with the body on its journey to the other land. As soon as the Chinese left the grave, the white boys of the camp enjoyed a feast.

At work in the placer mines, John, as he was known to the white population, worked with his cousins. He referred to another Chinese as his "cousin." He followed the white men, when on his own, working over the tailings and poorer spots. He piled the large rocks to hold back the tailings and make his sluice ways. Then with scrapers he dug down into the narrow crevices and scraped the bedrock to get the fine gold, left by the "49'ers" as they hastily mined over the area recovering only the coarse gold and nuggets. When water was scarce he used his yoke or pole to carry buckets of gravel from the mine to water where it could be washed. They mined the gulches in Slab Ranch, long after the white miners had gone. He adopted the white man's pan and rocker and the sluice box.

Working as "contract labor," he dug ditches and canals for diverting or carrying water, piled the rock walls to contain the tailings and, using his yoke or pole and baskets, transported the gold-bearing gravel.

The Chinese introduced the China Pump for removing

THE CHINESE AT CALAVERITAS

By FRED CUNEO

the water from deep pools. The China Pump was made by building a box-like flume, with a roller at each end, and by using ropes and cleats making an endless belt which extended up the flume and continued back under the bottom. When in action the water was pulled up the flume behind the cleats which extended across the flume. The upper roller was turned by man power and imparted its motion to the moving belt.

When the placers no longer yielded a living, John became house boy, cook or laundryman. The Calaveras, Angels, and Commercial hotels employed them, while Lane, Coleman and other families employed them as cooks and houseboys.

Chong Kong operated a restaurant on Main Street in 1856. A building on the back of the lot became the Pioneer Restaurant and was operated by Louie, who had worked for Charles Lane. Park and Kuen operated it as the leading restaurant in town for many years.

As the century ended so did the Chinese community. In the 90's the population was reduced to about 30 people. Of those who died, their bones have been disinterred and returned to China. Some who returned to China carried their gold to buy and add additional area to the family holdings. Others moved to Stockton, San Francisco and the valleys to mingle with the Chinese there. A few decided to remain and became cooks for the mining superintendents or in the hotels.

The queue, flowing pantaloons, overshirt, and slippers which distinguished the pioneer Chinese are no more. He wears modern clothes, even his name is changed. He is now known as Louie, Willie, Jim, and other white men's names.

For many years Willie Lee was the faithful cook for Grandma Rolleri in the old Calaveras Hotel, and Willie's boys washed dishes. Willie saved his money and returned to China. Grandma Rolleri got two beautiful chairs made of Teak wood and inlaid with pearl from him. Willie Lee returned from China and continued to work at the Calaveras Hotel for Mrs. Rolleri up to the 1920's. He had a crew of helpers, sometimes as many as five. He worked in and supervised the work in the kitchen. Mrs. Rolleri had her own butcher shop and Willie Lee had first choice of the cuts of beef, mutton and pork. The kitchen was also a bakery for the hotel. Willie made all the cakes, pies, bread, and ice cream used in the dining room. His last helpers were Louie, Sing Lu, and Aho. He must be given credit for the reputation won by the dining room of the hotel. Aho began as a dishwasher as a very young boy and worked up to be a cook. When he died a short time ago a local cook put some cigarettes in his coffin. After the coffin was closed the local cook was somewhat chagrined as he found he had forgotten to put some matches in—"How was Aho going to light the cigarettes?"

Ah Lee operated a laundry on Bush Street. Wah Ling leased the building from Mrs. McGaffey in 1908 and with several helpers carried on a laundry business. The flatirons were heated on wood stoves.

One Chinese, who was the last to mine Angels Creek, changed the flow of water from one side of the creek to another, and washed the dirt with rocker and pan. He dug into the crevices in the cascades just above the Main Street bridge. He supplemented his earnings by raising peanuts, roasting them on a hot rock over some coals in a kerosene can and selling them at the theater, to car-

According to word passed down by old-time residents of Calaveritas, many Chinese settled at Calaveritas during the later stages of the gold rush. It is believed that at least 100 Chinese worked in this area at one time. They were located at both Upper and Lower Calaveritas. Most of their cabins were built along the north side of the creek. Approximately 300 feet down the creek from the old Costa residence there are rock foundations still in existence where it is said they located their cabins.

With sluice boxes and pans they worked the gravel along the creek bed. They built a drain more than a mile long down the middle of the creek so as to drain off the water to enable them to work. This drain started above Calaveritas and extended nearly to the present Airola ranch.

Frank Trenque stated that when he was a boy around 1895 he remembers that the Chinese had a large water wheel in the middle of the creek about one-half mile down the creek from Calaveritas.

The late Louie Costa, lifelong resident of Calaveritas, always spoke of the Chinese having a well along the creek right in the center of the town. He said they used two pumps and were unable to pump it dry. They planted a large vegetable garden and also a peach and cherry orchard. He further recalled that the Chinese buried some of their people on the hill northwest of the town and approximately 200 feet above the road now used by the Calaveras Cement Company. Many years later a Chinese person appeared at Calaveritas and had one of the bodies exhumed and shipped back to China.

Today there are many Chinese locust trees growing along the creek and they are about the only reminder we have that this hard working, resourceful and oppressed people once occupied our region.

nivals, or on the street. He was known as the "Peanut Man."

Jim, one of the cooks for Lemue, in the old Angels Hotel, died suddenly in Chinatown. When Carley, the undertaker, and John Lemue, who lived near, entered the building to get the body they observed that the Chinese seemed afraid to enter. Jim had placed some money on a table. Undertaker Carley and Lemue left to get an undertaker's basket to transport the remains. When they returned the money had disappeared. A tong leader from San Francisco came to Angels and took charge. As Jim was supposed to have considerable wealth they told the leader of the disappearance of the money. He answered, "The Chinese are afraid of the dead but they are not afraid of his money."

Sam Lee, born in Angels Camp, was a small, likeable Chinese. He was known as "Happy" and was the mascot of the Angels baseball club. He moved to San Francisco and was always pleased to show his friends from Angels through the intricacies of the San Francisco Chinese quarter.

Ng Quoy, one of the last farmer Chinese, was the last to operate near Angels Camp, at first on the Baumhogger property, then on the Gann property on the Grade Road. He raised vegetables, berries, and hogs. Once, when peddling, a lady asked for fifteen cents worth of peaches.

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THE CHINESE IN MOKELUMNE HILL

Compiled and Written By
MARY JANE GARAMENDI

Until a few years ago, there stood embedded in a huge Chinese Tree of Heaven an old iron shutter, the last visible memory of the large Chinatown in Mokelumne Hill during the 1870's, 80's and 90's. Today, time has even erased this last memory, for the large tree has completely enveloped the shutter; but some of the stories of the Chinese in Mokelumne Hill can be heard from a handful of old-timers who still live there.

Chinatown in Mokelumne Hill encompassed that part of town north of the Post Office on Center Street to the creek (still called China Gulch) below the Catholic Cemetery, and south and east of the creek to Lafayette Street running to the side of the Leger Hotel and past the Catholic Church. Here, in the early days lived an estimated two or three hundred Chinese people. Some estimates reached the five hundred mark. Their homes were built of wood and were flimsy and close together. There were a few adobe houses. One such house collapsed on a sleeping Chinese, and he was crushed to death.

The Chinese worked in the hydraulic mines, although many kept busy building ditches and flumes, while several served as cooks in the mining camps. The Butte Canal in Amador was built with Chinese labor. A piece of a blue and white Chinese bowl was found on top of the ridge beside the old ditch above the McSorley Ranch home by Ray Garamendi, evidence that the Chinese at one time had worked on that ditch also.

Although the Chinese put in the same hours as the white laborers, they received less pay. Mrs. Harriet Solari has a record book of her grandfather's, Samuel Moser, listing many Chinese laborers in his hydraulic mine in Spring Gulch near Mokelumne Hill. One such notation is that in March, 1877, Ah Cook, a laborer, received \$1.62 for one day's work; on April 7th he was paid \$9.60 for five and three-quarters days' labor.

In 1881, some of the Chinese laborers working for Mr. Moser were: Ah Ben, Ah Lun, Ah Ch, Ah Ting, Ah Chung, Ah Wa, Ah Kim, Ah Wan, Ah Low, Ah Lee, Ah Ing, Ah Kong, Ah Tin, Ah Sam and many others. Ah Sam was the last Chinese in Mokelumne Hill and died here at an old age. (Ah is the Chinese equivalent of Mr.)

The Chinese also mined for themselves. Several worked along the Calaveras River near the Blue Jay Mine. One such operation consisted of an overshot wheel which spilled water over the ore which had been shoveled into a flume or long sluice-box.

Dennis Kearny, an Irishman from San Francisco, running for governor, campaigned with the slogan, "The Chinese Must Go." He was against their working for such low wages. Kearny toured the Mother Lode in 1879, speaking against the outrages of Chinese labor, and one such speech was made in Mokelumne Hill. Among the spectators listening with interest was Ah Yan, a Chinese laborer who worked in Vieth's hydraulic in Chili Gulch. After Kearny had finished his speech, a citizen, John Day, asked Ah Yan what he thought of Kearny's talk, and also what he thought of Kearny. Ah Yan did not hesitate for a second, but answered, "Chinaman, he number one; American, number two; Englishman, number three." Day then asked, "But what do you think of the Irish?" And Ah Yan rapidly replied, "Irishman, he got no number."

The Chinese had several stores in Mokelumne Hill.

They specialized in Chinese food and clothing, but many white people traded there, because of the lower prices. American children were especially interested in buying firecrackers (which they occasionally tied to dogs' tails and sent the dogs yelping through the store, causing bedlam). Chinese candy was also a favorite item.

Henry Asbury, who lived on Stockton Hill, was kept busy hauling freight from Stockton or Valley Springs for the Chinese stores with an eight-mule team.

The largest store was one owned and operated by Chung Kee, which stood directly across from the Post Office. This store was later run by Ah Foo, who had a large family of six or seven children. Charlie Danz tells of seeing white and Chinese eating at Chung Kee's, indicating there may have been a restaurant there also. Mr. Danz, as a boy, also witnessed a very interesting procedure at Chung Kee's. The Chinese were noted for being rather mercenary, and this little story points up that fact: Two Chinese would stand, one at each end of a long table covered with a blanket. Each held in his hands the end of a long straw or split-bamboo bag (the kind in which the rice was shipped to the stores). Inside this bag were thrown 2-, 5-, and 20-dollar gold pieces. Then the Chinese would shake the bag back and forth, very vigorously, for hours at a time (switching crews now and then). The blanket would then be burned, and the gold dust, worn from the money in the vigorous shaking, would be retrieved.

The children of the community would also search the streams, creeks and gutters after a rain, picking up gold flakes or small nuggets, and selling them to the Chinese storekeepers.

Two other stores were also operated during this era. They were Nam Chung's store, which was behind the present Central Garage (Roggenthen's) and Sing Choy's. One of these was later run by a Chinese named Bill, and called China Bill's. There is a little difference of opinion as to where Sing Choy's was located. Some say it was also behind the Central Garage, while another story has it located near the present Reed Store. Sing Choy's daughter, Annie, was the only Chinese girl going to school in Mokelumne Hill in the 1880's. She is said to be still living in San Francisco. There is no recollection of other Chinese children attending school in the town, nor of any Chinese school in the area.

A humorous story told about Sing Choy is one related by the late Tom McSorley: One day a magician (unknown to the storekeeper) walked into Sing Choy's store and asked for a dozen eggs. Sing Choy disappeared into a back room and came forth with the eggs for the man. Then the storekeeper watched in wide-eyed amazement as the magician opened each egg and out of each one dropped a silver dollar. After the magician had left, Sing Choy hurried into the back room and cracked open a whole crate of eggs, of course to no avail!

The Chinese stores also maintained a delivery service to miners out on their claims near the creeks. They carried on pack mule the food needed by the miners who could not get into town to shop.

The Chinese raised and butchered their own hogs, beef, and ducks. They also had two vegetable gardens near China Gulch, one on either side of the road. Water chestnuts, or Chinese potatoes, were grown in water in these gardens.

The following account was taken from the CALA-

VERAS WEEKLY of July 30, 1948, and was written by Cecille Vandel McMillan:

"Chinese carried water to their gardens on poles over their shoulders. At each end of the pole was a water container; a can was punched full of holes and attached to a long handle and used as a sprinkler."

"In the flat on Center Street below what is now the Catholic Cemetery was a pretty sunken garden with a lily and fish pond and a curved bridge, very pretty in form, beside a small Chinese tea house."

It is also recalled by Herb Blais that next to the garden was a large cork tree about twenty inches in diameter, and the cork was about two inches thick.

There were two Joss Houses or Chinese churches in Mokelumne Hill Chinatown. Both were located below the Post Office and west of China Gulch. The larger of the two was used jointly by the Amador and Mokelumne Hill Chinese; this one was destroyed in the 1897 fire. The other one, closer to the creek, escaped the fire and a shell of it was standing as late as 1923, when it was used as a hog pen.

The Chinese loved to celebrate and did so in colorful and noisy ways. Emmett Joy tells that their principal celebration was Chinese New Year's, which fell between January 21 and February 18. On this occasion the Chinese paid their debts, visiting from house to house. Kind wishes and feasting cards of red paper inscribed with Chinese characters were left at each Chinese residence. Lanterns decorated the houses and windows; firecrackers were exploded, gongs and drums sounded to drive from earth all the bad spirits.

A similar celebration (Moon Cake celebration) fell the second week of September. It was at this time that the Chinese families put watermelon, candy, peanuts and cakes in front of their homes and places of business to satisfy the devils. Candles or "punks" were lit all night. Charlie Dan relates that he was among the American youngsters of the town who enjoyed playing devil and went from house to house eating the goodies placed there.

Not the occasion for celebrating, but, nevertheless, a colorful and noisy one, was the Chinese funeral. This event proved very exciting for the white children (and adults, too). There was a big procession with a band playing during which the mourners (many of them women hired especially for the event and dressed mostly in white) uttered lamentations and scattered pieces of paper inscribed with Chinese characters, to drive away bad spirits. The Chinese graveyard lay outside the confines of the present Protestant Cemetery. Here the dead were buried three or four feet beneath the earth's surface. Then large amounts of rich Chinese food were placed on the graves. This was done to satisfy the devil so he would not molest the corpse. However, during the night, stealthy Indians or rambunctious boys would clear the graves of the feast, and thus the Chinese were happy, thinking the devil was satisfied.

When the families of the dead were wealthy enough to do so, they had the bodies exhumed and the remains placed in large earthen jars and shipped to China. Even today a few of these jars, or the remnants of them, can still be found around Mokelumne Hill.

Mokelumne Hill Chinatown even had its slave market which stood directly behind the Central Garage. The little cabin which now stands there is made of some of the lumber from the old slave market.

This article, contributed by Harriet Solari, describes



JOSS HOUSE—This picture shows the front of the Chinese Joss House, built in 1857, that was once a San Andreas landmark as the place of worship for Chinese of Calaveras County. — Photo courtesy of Mrs. Eva Sorocco.

the fire on the 18th day of May, 1897, which destroyed Mokelumne Hill Chinatown. The source and date of the article is unknown:

IN SMOKE
CHINATOWN IN MOKELUMNE HILL COMPLETELY
DESTROYED

The Fire started as it did in 1874
and made a clean sweep of the rookeries—
none left standing—

"One of the largest fires in Mokelumne Hill since the memorable fire of 1874, when the whole business portion of the town was destroyed, started last Thursday morning about nine o'clock and completely wiped out Chinatown. The fire started as it did in 1874, in one of the Chinese houses on Court St. (the short street behind the Leger Hotel) and, as all the buildings are of wood and touch each other, they burned like so many limbs of a dry pine tree. The fire ran back as far as the corner of Main and Center Street and down Center Street as far as the creek, then south along Court Street to Pellaton's Store. Every house in the Oriental quarter was either burned or torn down, none escaping except the old Joss House in the gulch. The mercantile store of Chung Kee & Co. had the roof and all wooden attachments burned, but the store building proper which is of adobe and fire-proof, withstood the flames and all the stock was saved. The store of Nam Chung Co. with all its stock was destroyed. The blacksmith shop of A. Lampson fronting on Main Street which was in close proximity to the Chinese buildings had a close call, but by hard work was saved. The larger Joss House which belonged jointly to the Chinese in this and Amador County, went up in smoke.

"The fire company's water system worked well and the company did all in its power, but there was not a sufficient length of hose to reach all around. At least fifty buildings were destroyed.

"It is said that the fire was started by three high-

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CHINESE IN CAMANCHE

Written by the Children of the Camanche School in 1935 and dedicated to Miss Mary Duffy, one of the Highly Esteemed Teachers of the School. Loaned by Madeline Cavagnaro.

One can hardly picture our very American little hamlet ever having had a foreign element. But soon after the town began, the Chinese came to work in the mines and gradually left after the mining was out. Chinatown extended from the present H. B. Cavagnaro home, which was a Chinese store, east toward Miss Whiteman's home, where row after row of windowless homes and a Chinese Joss House must have given a most cosmopolitan air to Camanche. The Chinese dressed in native costume, wore their hair long, and kept very much to themselves as is their custom. There were about a hundred here during the rush days.

In about 1865 the Chinese had a "Tong" war, or open fighting between two clans. They met on Main Street and battled with clubs and knives. Later a trial was held in Armory Hall in Campo Seco in the Justice's Court and during the proceedings one Chinese got up and shot another. Mr. Jeff Gatewood, attorney from San Andreas, was the leading attorney there. His fee was \$25.00 per day.

At another time, a citizen, Mr. Conway, antagonized the Chinese and they were going to scald him. He ran from Chinatown into Duffy's Hotel where Mr. Duffy saved him by hiding him in the cellar.

The Chinese also engaged in gardening and a beautiful garden flourished in the land behind Cavagnaro's home toward the present Zimmermann place, and from Mrs. Bert Smith's to the creek.

There were two Chinese stores in town. E. Long had one in the H. B. Cavagnaro home, and there was another next door that was destroyed by the fire. The owner, Ye Yeck, moved from there into the stone room of Miss Duffy's home occupied at the present time by the C. A. Hagquist family. Mr. Quong took over the store for him, across the street and finally a Chinese by the name of Chinese Joe ran it until about 1915. He was the last Chinese to inhabit Camanche.

On certain holidays during the year, the Chinese honored their dead. A little way from town near the present church a burying ground existed. They later dug up their dead and sent them back to China. They would take food, particularly roast pigs, and place it on the grave. Then they would kneel at the grave and perform their religious ceremonies. The Indians of the town, not being afraid of Chinese gods, would later steal the food for a feast. At one time the Chinese chased a Camanche resident through Main Street in an effort to recover a stolen roast pig.

In 1878 a heavy cloudburst hit Camanche and drowned two Chinese women and one man. One Chinese baby was found dead in a grapevine in one of the gardens. This flood carried away part of Chinatown.

The Chinese worshipped the horned toad. The white children of the village used to catch them and sell them in return for coveted Chinese candy which had a most desirable flavor and was very popular. They paid about ten cents for them. Sometimes they exchanged cigars for them.

Sue Lin Kee was the only Chinese girl to go to the Camanche School. Sue Lin always had Chinese candy and cakes that were similar to maple sugar.

CHINESE AT SHEEP RANCH

By JUDGE J. A. SMITH

The residents of Sheep Ranch would not permit Chinese to live in Sheep Ranch.

On one occasion, Mr. Chevanne, the owner and operator of the Chevanne Mine, one of the principal mines on the Sheep Ranch lode, brought a Chinese into the district as a cook. The people resented this act on the part of Mr. Chevanne and he was immediately taken across O'Neal's Creek and told not to return. He complied with the people's request and for many years Chinese could not be persuaded to go to Sheep Ranch.

At a much later date, when Mr. Plate was superintendent of the mine, Mr. and Mrs. Leo Valente, at that time operating an eating house, hired as a cook a Chinese known as Ah Wah. He remained as their cook for a period of four years. This cook was well liked by the white people and later served as a cook at the Metropolitan Hotel in San Andreas, Camp Nine, Indian Creek, and Fricot City.

(Facts by Leo Valente, Sheep Ranch, California.)

John Chinaman in Angels Camp

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It so happened that the peaches were extra large, weighing about a pound each. He weighed out four peaches which came to about four pounds. Quoy, in relating the incident, said, "I no likee him kind of woman, she cheat me one cent and then growl saying I charge too much."

At another time he had gardened at Atascadero. Here he said they carried rocks in baskets and put about one pound in each sack of beans.

Ah Yet, one of the last of the Chinese peddlers, using his pole and baskets, walked to Carson Hill and Melones carrying vegetables.

The SAN ANDREAS INDEPENDENT, July 14, 1860, published the following:

"Chinamen Killed—On Thursday afternoon about two o'clock a Chinaman traveling on the public road between Altaville and Hawkeye had his brains beaten out with a club and his pockets rifled."

About 1900 a Chinese known as Willie had a tailor shop in Chinatown.

In the 90's Angels was a booming, bustling town and the "Girls of the Night Life" became numerous and were forced from their quarters in the middle of town on Rasberry Street and took up residence in Chinatown, gradually taking over the better buildings and displacing the Chinese. They remained until the law made it illegal for them to operate.

The flood of January 21, 1909, carried most of Chinatown down Angels Creek. The brick buildings, Bird residence and City Jail, are all that remain.

E. Long was a Chinese of the higher caste. His business was to obtain mining contracts for other Chinese. He returned to China and brought a Chinese wife back with him who had small feet and was a "lady." They also brought a servant girl with them. They had two small children, then Mrs. E. Long died and she was buried in an enormous casket and was dressed in many of her native costumes. Mr. E. Long died suddenly soon after, and Mrs. E. Long's brother cared for the children awhile in Camanche.

CHINESE ON THE STANISLAUS RIVER

By ARCHIE D. STEVENOT

"Mr. Mother Lode"

At Two Mile Bar above Slocum's Bridge above Knight's Ferry on the Stanislaus River there were several companies, mostly Chinese. The Chinese liked to work in the river better than on dry land during warm days. Information in Hittel's Scraps, 1858, Vol. III, page 66½.

"New York Bar, above Two Mile Bar, is claimed by Dean and Sons, who employ about 50 Chinamen. Vermont Bar, 1½ miles above this, has several claims, some of which are worked by Chinese on shares.

"Bostwick's Bar near Reynolds Ferry consists of three or four large river claims which are worked by Chinamen. The Chinese generally work in swarms of from 25 to 30 and are said to be equal to white men for turning and fluming rivers.

"From Reynolds to Robinson Ferry, there are many diggings and claims and it is the best area in the county for mining, right now (1858). It is estimated that there are 2,000 Chinamen at work in this area at present."

Ah Chung was a very industrious Chinese miner who had a claim on the Stanislaus River below Peoria Flat. It is now covered by the waters of the Melones Dam. He was on his way to deposit his gold dust in the bank in Jamestown, when an attempt was made on his life. He acted on impulse and killed his enemy, a prominent citizen of the community. From that time on local laws were established to give the Chinese more protection and understanding than in the past.

This information on Robinson Ferry, Calaveras County, was given me by Edith Pendola, Fred Stevenot, and what I saw and heard during the 1870's and 1880's. There were great numbers of Chinese living in Robinson Ferry. There were several houses in the middle of town and a long house near the river and one up the river. These Chinese were engaged in mining in the Stanislaus River as well as in the gulches of Red Hill and Carson Hill. There were two characters by the names of Ah Yet and Ah Hong who raised vegetables. They peddled them with sticks across their backs with a basket on each end. They also bought vegetables from the Pendola family, who settled in Robinson Ferry in 1840. Ah Hong would go to the Pendola ranch on Monday. He always liked Edith, the second daughter, to wait on him, so he would say, "No want you, want number 2 girl," meaning Edith. He could not say Thursday, so he would say, "no come tomorrow (meaning Tuesday), no come tomorrow (meaning Wednesday), come tomorrow (meaning Thursday).

The two Chinese raised wonderful lettuce but the white people wondered about it. After they found that they saved their human refuse in a large vessel and then used this to fertilize their lettuce plants, no one ever ate their lettuce any more.

They peddled on Jackass Hill as well as Robinson Ferry.

The Pendola family had a large vegetable garden and peddled as far as Big Trees. Antone Airola, who is 97 years of age now (1963) told me he remembers that when he was a small boy living at the Pendola ranch how Mr. Pendola had four horses to pull his vegetable wagon up as far as French Ranch. Then Antone would take the two lead horses back to the ranch, and Mr. Pendola would go on to the Big Trees with just two horses.

CHINESE OF CAMPO SECO

By ROBERT B. FINNEGAN

Although the Mexicans, Chileans and French dominated the population of Campo Seco during placer mining days, it was not without its Chinese settlement.

The Chinese were no match for the experienced "Chilanos" as the men from Chili were called. The Chilanos numbered approximately 2,000 and were mostly young unruly miners. They had gained their experience in mining in their native South America and were experienced in the use of the batea, a wooden pan used for placer mining. The Chilanos evidently fought quite often with the Chinese over mining claims and other problems of the community.

In the two remaining cemeteries of Campo Seco, headstones dating back to mining days are mostly Chilean, French and Irish. The Chinese had their own cemetery located to the north of the present Penn Mine Road on the outskirts of the community. There are no remains of the Chinese cemetery and it is reported that most of the remains that were buried there were removed and sent to China for final burial which was the custom of the Chinese.

Several original buildings of the gold rush era are still standing in Campo Seco. On the south side of the Penn Mine Road two buildings can be located on the outskirts of present-day Campo Seco.

These two buildings, side by side, are reported to have belonged to two different "tongs" or cliques of Chinese miners. Miners patronizing one store would not trade with the other merchant. Materials used in building the stores were rocks, a small amount of lumber, mud, clay and moss for "chinking" and "plastering" side walls. The buildings were equipped with the customary iron doors and shutters used in the early days. Eighteen-inch walls, sturdy in their rock makeup, have weathered almost a century of standing. Planks of wood were used in the formation of peaked roofs, the flat ceilings being covered with adobe with roofs rising above them. Clumps of grass and moss formed the thatching materials.

On surrounding hills, the Chinese lived in tiny shacks described by John McGill (old time resident now deceased) as "three bed houses" — because the Chinese slept three deep on bunk-like beds. As was customarily the case in early mining towns, the Chinese population was dominantly male. For entertainment they built a large gambling hall across the road from their two stores. There are no remains of that building.

During the 1880's, when gold was dwindling down, the Chinese element skipped the area and sought other means of livelihood. The stone fences, reportedly built by Chinese labor, were not built by the Chinese but by private landowners at least in the Campo Seco area, according to John McGill. Mr. McGill stated he remembers a number of Scottish farmers who built their own rock fences during his lifetime.

A Chinese known as Sing A Lee was probably the last Chinese resident of the community. Lila Edalgo, present postmaster of Campo Seco, relates she can remember his coming to her house as late as 1902 to do washing for her mother. He was a popular figure in the area and used to give Chinese bracelets to the ladies of the town. These bracelets were described as being made

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The Calaveras County Historical Society meets on the fourth Thursday of each month at the Courthouse in San Andreas. Dinner meetings are held each quarter at different places in the county.

EDITORIAL

Due to the illness of Coke Wood, Helen Lewis and Sadie Hunt served as editors of this issue of LAS CALAVERAS. We realize that we are not nearly as competent as Coke to perform this task and sincerely hope you will bear with us in our first venture along this line.

Coke has been confined to St. Joseph's Hospital in Stockton since September 22. At that time he suffered a heart attack while spending the week end in Murphys and was taken to the hospital by ambulance. Although his condition is improved his activities will be greatly curtailed for several months. The members of the Society extend to him best wishes for a speedy recovery and eventual restoration to that perfect state of health he has enjoyed in the past.

We are sorry to report the death, on September first, of one of our cherished members, Caroline Buchanan, wife of our director, Harry Buchanan of Rail Road Flat. We extend to her bereaved family our sincere sympathy in the loss of their loved one.

We acknowledge with deep appreciation a gift of \$250.00 from Mr. and Mrs. Addison Carley of Vallecito, who have been presented honorary memberships in the Society. They are the proud owners of Moaning Cave, near Vallecito, one of the most famous spots of historical interest in Calaveras County.

CHINESE AT FOURTH CROSSING

According to Supervisor William Wells, at Fourth Crossing there was a large Chinese settlement along the creek, including a store, a butcher shop and a laundry behind the hotel. There were about 600 Chinese around 1880-90, but they gradually drifted away.

Chinese Gambling at O'Byrne's Ferry

By JUDGE J. A. SMITH

The Chinese as a race are very fond of gambling, and one of Bret Harte's poems refers to the Chinese gambling on the Stanislaus.

Their principal game was fan tan, but they also played other card games in which they were joined very often by the whites.

There was a large Chinatown on the Calaveras side of the Stanislaus River at O'Byrne's Ferry.

Chinese do not indulge much in sports, but gamble for profit and recreation.

Near Altaville lived a bad character who, on one occasion, went down to O'Byrne's Ferry and indulged in gambling with the Chinese. When the stakes became large on the table he covered the Chinese with a pistol, raked in the gold dust and departed. A short time thereafter, he returned and again took the stakes.

The Chinese were prepared for this and, catching him off guard, overpowered him and bound his hands and feet. They then sewed him up in a blanket and tossed him into the river.

The authorities didn't even investigate the matter and were satisfied that it was good riddance.

Chinese of Campo Seco

(Continued From Page 7)

of varicolored glass. Sing A Lee was known as a kind, friendly and gentle Chinese and is kindly remembered as probably the last Chinese to live in Campo Seco, to where many of his kind had thronged to engage in placer gold mining beginning in the early 1850's.

With my thanks to Mary Jo Snyder, The Lodi Times, and Lila Edalgo.

Chinese in Mokelumne Hill

(Continued From Page 5)

binders who came up from the City and whose purpose was robbery, but there appears to be nothing to substantiate this assertion.

"It is impossible at present to make an estimate of the loss. Most of the houses burned were owned by white residents of the town."

Thus ended a colorful and exciting era in the rich and varied past of Calaveras County.

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