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RICHARD H. PETERSON

CONFLICT AND CONSENSUS: *Labor Relations in Western Mining*

MERLE W. WELLS

THE WESTERN FEDERATION OF MINERS

GEORGE G. SUGGS, JR.

THE COLORADO COAL MINERS' STRIKE, 1903-1904

STEVEN C. LEVI

SAN FRANCISCO'S LAW AND ORDER COMMITTEE, 1916

ABRAHAM HOFFMAN

THE EL MONTE BERRY PICKERS' STRIKE, 1933

ALAN PROBERT

THE PACHUCA PAPERS: *The Real del Monte Partido Riots, 1766*

WILLIAM R. KENNY

NATIVISM IN THE SOUTHERN MINING REGION

LYNWOOD CARRANCO

THE CHINESE IN HUMBOLDT COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

GERALD N. HALLBERG

BELLINGHAM, WASHINGTON'S ANTI-HINDU RIOT

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THE CHINESE IN HUMBOLDT COUNTY, CALIFORNIA:

A Study In Prejudice

By Lynwood Carranco

ON SUNDAY, MAY 4, 1969, a Golden Spike celebration was held in San Francisco to commemorate the centennial of the transcontinental railroad. Mrs. Chinn Lee Shee Wing, ninety-eight years of age and daughter of a Chinese '49er, unveiled a plaque to pay tribute to the 12,000 Chinese who helped build the Central Pacific. A week later a crowd of twenty thousand people turned out for the big centennial celebration fifty-six miles west of Ogden, Utah, off the northern shore of the Great Salt Lake. The occasion was the re-enactment of completion of the "impossible railroad" — the meeting of the Union Pacific and the Central (now Southern) Pacific, one hundred years before.

And along with the thousands of railroad buffs and devotees of Western Americana, had come the politicians: four U. S. Senators, seven Congressmen, the Governor of Utah — and Federal Transportation Secretary John Volpe, the principal speaker, who succeeded in infuriating the Chinese delegation from San Francisco by virtually ignoring the 12,000 Chinese who helped to build the Central Pacific over the Sierra Nevada to Promontory, Utah. "Who else but Americans could drill ten tunnels in mountains thirty feet deep in snow and who else but Americans could chisel through miles of solid granite?" asked Volpe. Who else indeed — but the 12,000 Chinese?¹

Mrs. March Fong, a California assemblywoman, promptly demanded a public apology from Volpe for ignoring the thousands of Chinese who labored on the transcontinental railroad. "As you must know," Mrs. Fong said in a telegram to Volpe, "many of these workers performed their labor under virtual servitude and to slight them now one hundred years later must be termed either an oversight or an insult."² Oversight or insult — this was another incident in the history of the long-suffering Chinese in California.

1. *San Francisco Sunday Examiner and Chronicle*, May 18, 1969.

2. *Ibid.*

Historian Hubert Howe Bancroft says that "Ship-loads of paper and printer's ink had been spoiled and breath enough wasted to sail those ships in reiterating the proposition . . . that the Chinese must go," even though some authorities claim that the Western shore of the continent was theirs by the right of discovery.³ Since 1571 the Chinese have not only visited Mexico, but have also become residents, being employed in ship-building and other trades.⁴

In 1848 Charles V. Gillespie, who proposed to introduce Chinese immigration into California, brought the first Chinese — two men and one woman — from Hong Kong in the clipper bark *Eagle*.⁵ By August, 1852, there were approximately 18,000 men and fourteen women, and people were beginning to be concerned over the desirableness of such a vast immigration of the Chinese.⁶

The Chinese were first treated as "fellow-citizens" by the Californians, and were given a prominent place in the celebration of the admission of California as a State in the Union. Governor John McDougal, in his message to the legislature on January 7, 1852, referred to the Chinese as "one of the most worthy citizens of our newly adopted citizens" and expressed a desire for their further immigration and settlement.⁷ As late as May 12, 1852, the *Daily Alta California* carried the following:

Quite a large number of the Celestials have arrived among us of late, enticed thither by the golden romance that has filled the world. Scarcely a ship arrives that does not bring an increase to this worthy integer of our population. The Chinese boys will yet vote at the same polls, study at the same schools and bow at the same altar as our own country-men.

Many Chinese came to make their fortunes in a rich new country. But the great mass of Chinese immigrants came not of their own initiative but under a system of contract, which paid their passage in turn for a stated term of labor at certain rates of wages, which were high for the Chinese, but very low for the Californians. This contract system was administered by six Chinese companies in accordance with Chinese laws. These organizations, known as the "Six Companies," became very wealthy and powerful.⁸ By 1876 the companies had imported 141,300 Chinese laborers. A slave syndicate also was responsible for importing about 6,000 Chinese women to the United States for the purpose of prostitution.⁹

3. Hubert Howe Bancroft, *THE WORKS OF HUBERT HOWE BANCROFT — HISTORY OF CALIFORNIA, 1860-1890* (39 Vols., San Francisco, History Company, 1890), Vol. VII, p. 335.

4. *Ibid.*

5. Zoeth Skinner Eldredge, *HISTORY OF CALIFORNIA* (4 Vols., New York Century History Company, n. d.), Vol. IV, p. 307.

6. Bancroft, *Works*, p. 336.

7. Rockwell D. Hunt, ed., *CALIFORNIA AND CALIFORNIANS* (San Francisco, Lewis Publishing Company, 1926), Vol. II, p. 360.

8. Eldredge, *History*, p. 309.

9. Bancroft, *Works*, p. 336.

The Chinese in Humboldt County, California

Although the Six Companies attempted to pass themselves off as benevolent organizations, interested only in the welfare of the Chinese under contract, the early Californians accused them of importing large numbers of coolies and prostitutes under contract, as well as illegal extortion and evasion of the law. These companies controlled and governed all the Chinese in the country with an iron hand, becoming a substitute for their native village and patriarchal associations. They had their own laws, which if broken, were carried out swiftly, without regard to the laws of the United States.

In order to control their people, the companies had a secret organization whose members were called "highbinders" or "hatchetmen." These men not only policed the Chinese, but ruthlessly avenged any infraction of the rules of the companies. Only rarely did the state convict any Chinese man for murdering one of his own countrymen in the Chinese quarter.¹⁰

It is controversial whether the Six Companies did or did not exist to help their fellow countrymen, but the belief spread among Americans that the typical "coolie" was not a free and independent laborer, but that he was ruthlessly exploited by shrewd speculators. This belief was well circulated to intensify the feeling of hostility toward all Chinese in California.¹¹

The early Californians welcomed the Chinese immigrants because there was a shortage of dependable laborers, and the Chinese were good and faithful workers. Although the Chinese were employed in many occupations, they also flocked to the mines from the beginning. The first Chinese came to Humboldt County in Northwestern California in 1850 on their way to the gold fields on the Trinity River.¹²

Because of their un-American ways, the Chinese grouped together and never interfered with the white miners. As a rule they only worked the claims that the whites abandoned or passed by. A white man usually worked for sixteen to twenty dollars a day, while a Chinese man was satisfied with five or eight dollars a day.¹³ When the whites failed to mine their daily quota, they often attacked the Chinese. The first recorded friction between the two races seems to have occurred in Humboldt County in June, 1856, when a group of whites attacked some Chinese who had discovered gold. The sheriff finally settled the issue by driving the whites away.¹⁴ Lawless whites would at times have target practice by firing their guns at the Chinese while they were working.¹⁵

10. *Ibid.*, p. 344.

11. Hunt, *Californians*, p. 362.

12. Issac Cox, *THE ANNALS OF TRINITY COUNTY* (Eugene: 1940), p. 37.

13. Bancroft, *Works*, p. 337.

14. Doris Chase, *THEY PUSHED BACK THE FOREST* (Sacramento: 1959), p. 53.

15. Charles Yuill, "The Chinese Before 1885," Speech (Humboldt County Historical Society), January, 1954.

The white miners appealed to the State Legislature for relief against the Chinese because they worked for less wages and because they sent their money back to China instead of investing it in the state. In 1850 the State Legislature passed a law requiring a foreign miners' license.¹⁶ This license became prohibitive to the Chinese and drove them from the mines and into the towns and cities, where they were employed in truck-gardening, farm labor, household duties, fishing, common labor, and in anything that the white man chose not to do.

The Chinese, as previously noted, had settled in all parts of Humboldt County in the early days of gold mining on the Trinity and Klamath rivers, and in 1854 the local paper mentioned that "The Chinese are still pouring in! — heading for the gold fields."¹⁷ The Humboldt County Census of 1860 lists thirty-eight Chinese, most of them living in the Eel River area.

Gradually, because of the scarcity of gold and the foreign miners' license, the Chinese began to settle near and in the towns. A news item of March 14, 1868, stated that two Chinese men were brought into court in Eureka and charged with robbery and assault, indicating they were within the jurisdiction of the city's courts.¹⁸ Another item in the *Humboldt Times* of 1868 stated that "the Chinese are coming, oh dear! No they are not, they are right here." By 1874 a "Chinatown" had been established in Eureka, and the Chinese were also living in Arcata at this date.

More than two hundred of Eureka's Chinese, including twenty women, lived in the heart of what is now Eureka's business district, the block bounded by Fifth, F, Fourth, and E Streets. There were a few Chinese families, but the majority included men and prostitutes. Their dwellings and business buildings were poor shacks. The land and property belonged to white citizens who had a profitable investment, renting to the Chinese for six or eight dollars each month.¹⁹ The camp on which these shacks were located was low and swampy, and a creek followed a gulch which ran through the block and emptied into a slough below the present Fourth and E Streets. The slough had been filled at Fourth Street to improve the street, and thus cutting off the creek and leaving Chinatown without drainage. Into this area a stagnant pool of water developed, in which refuse from kitchens of seventeen houses and out-houses was dumped. The Chinese were always personally clean, but the newspapers complained of the nauseating odors caused by this filth.²⁰

16. Bancroft, *Works*, p. 377.

17. *Humboldt Times*, October 14, 1854.

18. *Ibid.*, March 14, 1868.

19. Personal interview with Peter Rutledge, October, 1953.

20. Charles Andrew Huntington, "Memoir of the Life of C. A. Huntington" (Yale University Library, Coe Collection, No. 96, 1899), p. 220. Also, D. L. Thornbury, CALIFORNIA'S REDWOOD WONDERLAND: *Humboldt County*, (San Francisco: Sunset Press, 1923), p. 65.

The Chinese in Humboldt County, California

In spite of their miserable environment, some of the Chinese became clever business men, and some of their children were enrolled in the local public schools.²¹ Their truck farms around Eighth and K Streets supplied Eureka with most of its vegetables. They had wash houses at the foot of F Street where they did all the laundering. Many Chinese worked as house servants, janitors, and cooks in local households, logging camps, and ranches. The Chinese worked in the woods as swampers and fire-tenders. As early as 1875 they were brought to the county for construction of roads and railroads.²² The fishing industry also attracted the Chinese, and they became excellent cannery workers.²³

As a rule the majority of the Chinese were well treated, but there were the usual bigoted feelings of an ignorant or frustrated majority who bullied and made the Chinese the butt of practical jokes. The Chinese were excellent blackberry pickers, but in the woods they were abused by men and boys. A newspaper editorial of June 23, 1877, complained of this ill-treatment, stating the following:

A Chinese man was almost killed in the woods by a white man . . . there are some Chinese if attacked will defend themselves. The best way to do is to let them alone. They will mind their own business and if others would do the same there would be no trouble.

The system of contract labor was an influence in bringing the Chinese to Humboldt County. As early as 1875, Charles J. Barber, in an agreement with Sum Chung, an agent for the Six Companies, brought fifty Chinese to the county.²⁴ In 1883 the Orientals worked in the construction of the Eel River and Eureka Railroad.²⁵ The coolies built the mountainous Wildcat Ridge Road from Ferndale to Petrolia. The evidence comes from old-timers who remember when their parents used to speak of the coolies. Chinese coins have also been found along the thirty miles of winding roads.²⁶ They also built the Old Coast Road from Bear Creek Valley to Shelter Cove in southwestern Humboldt County.²⁷

Gradually the tension between the whites and the Chinese increased. But to be objective one must remember the anti-Chinese feeling that had swept throughout California. Strong prejudice was directed against all foreigners, but the Chinese, especially, were singled out because of their strange un-American ways. The Eureka newspapers reported this feeling, and the expulsion of the Chinese from Eureka was another incident in the general movement.

The year 1876 marked a definite turning point in the history of

21. Huntington, *Memoir*, p. 222.

22. Personal interview with Peter Rutledge, February, 1956.

23. *Daily Times-Telephone*, December 23, 1884.

24. Humboldt County, *Records*, p. 221.

25. *Weekly Times-Telephone*, February 24, 1883.

26. Personal interview with Dr. Hyman Palais, May, 1961.

27. Personal interview with Martha Roscoe, May, 1961.

27. Personal interview with Martha Roscoe, May, 1961.

anti-Chinese agitation in California. Up to this point, most of the anti-Chinese legislation adopted in California had been declared unconstitutional as being in violation of treaty provisions, the Fourteenth Amendment, or the federal civil rights statutes. The federal courts, as a matter of fact, was constantly preoccupied with California's race legislation in the period from 1860 to 1876. The Chinese in California had wisely decided to defend their rights along strictly legal and constitutional lines. It was the "coolies" from Asia, not the Indians or Negroes, who made the first great tests of the Civil War amendments and the legislation which came with these amendments.²⁸ The campaign shifted from state to national level, from Sacramento to Washington. In 1882 a measure suspending Chinese immigration for ten years was finally forced through Congress.²⁹

The three Eureka newspapers all began active campaigns against Chinese immigration and Chinese suffrage. But on the whole the *Northern Independent* seemed to have an objective attitude toward the Chinese problem. Its editorials reflected an honest concern over the thousands of Chinese entering California each month.

The competition of Chinese labor was a crucial one in California. In San Francisco the Chinese owned most of the boat and shoe factories, and they controlled cigar-making, the laundries, and the clothing trade. Because of this wages were reduced for white workers. But this competition with the Chinese or the reduction of wages did not occur in Humboldt County. Once a year, according to the *Weekly Times-Telephone* of May 3, 1884, there was a local scare on the subject of labor and wages. The newspapers took up the cry of "Too many laborers — starvation wages!" At this time wages for all kinds of labor, skilled and unskilled, were higher in Humboldt County than elsewhere in the state.³⁰

The Chinese culture, in contrast to the American culture, also influenced anti-Chinese feeling. The Chinese were aliens in every sense. The color of their skins, their features, their smallness of stature, their foreign language, their different customs, their religion — all of these contrasted strongly with the Caucasian counterpart, and increased the feeling of revulsion toward them.³¹

But the real source of conflict occurred in the early 1880s with the arrival of a different class of Chinese in Eureka. In the new element were two factions belonging to different companies, and they were members of rival tongs. These Chinese were armed with bulldog pistols, knives, iron bars and other weapons. Some of these Chinese men were "highbinders," and they were very dangerous.³²

28. Carey McWilliams, *BROTHERS UNDER THE SKIN* (Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1951), pp. 91-92.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 92.

30. *Weekly Times-Telephone*, May 3, 1884.

31. Bancroft, *Works*, p. 355.

32. *Daily Times-Telephone*, February 7, 1885.

The Chinese in Humboldt County, California

The new element established brothels, gambling dens, and opium dens, and in general took advantage of their countrymen. The Reverend Charles Andrew Huntington came to Eureka in 1883 to head the Congregational Church, and he remained in this area during the 1880s and 1890s. In his "Memoir of the Life of C. A. Huntington" (Yale University Library), he mentioned that these vices were the major source of conflict:

Chinatown was said to endanger the public morals by reason of their use of opium; their habit of gambling, and their heathenish disregard for Christian morality, and they were the objects of universal hatred because they were a menace to the public morals.³³

As early as 1878, the citizens of Eureka became agitated with the vice dens, since white men and women and even boys visited them. On January 6, 1878, two white women visited an opium den and became insensible from the effects of the opium. The editor of the local *Humboldt Times* stressed this concern in 1881:

Opium smoking is becoming one of the fixed vices of this country. . . . In this city there is no ordinance to prohibit its use. . . . It is the Chinese quarters of this city that are utilized for that abominable purpose. The patrons of the dens are generally said to be young men, and sometimes women . . . that they have been seen to enter and leave China houses in the night.³⁴

The local citizens also protested the houses of prostitution in Chinatown even though these brothels were operating in the white section. As early as 1869 the newspapers claimed that these places were a danger to the morality and safety of the city, "and that these places destroyed the morals of the youth and children of the city."³⁵ Thus the living habits and conditions of Chinatown, along with the opium dens, gambling houses, and houses of prostitution, were the cause of much anti-Chinese feeling.

The Chinese were regarded as a menace to the democratic institutions, since they practiced a sort of quasi-government among themselves. They showed no desire to become citizens of the United States.³⁶ Local newspapers began an active campaign against Chinese immigration on these grounds. The Chinese were compared with other immigrant groups who came with their families to make a permanent residence and to become part of California, politically and socially.

The campaign by local and state newspapers continued for many years. On the whole the Californians thought that the Chinese were slaves who established a quasi-government which acted in defiance of

33. Huntington, *Memoir*, p. 221.

34. *Humboldt Times*, January 29, 1881.

35. *Daily Times-Telephone*, February 5, 1885.

36. *Northern Independent*, August 19, 1869.

state law. Gradually most citizens began to stereotype the Chinese as uncivilized heathens without respect for law and order.

Although the Chinese did not become troublesome until 1883 with the coming of the rival tongs, they apparently liked to shoot their guns. In 1868 a grand jury indicted two men, Tin Quy and Pou Yong, for assault with intent to kill and to commit robbery.³⁷ On two different occasions in 1881, the Chinese fired their guns in defiance of an ordinance which prohibited such actions.³⁸

At times the Orientals openly defied the law, and there was little hope of convicting any of them unless there was white testimony. The Chinese blocked the police and superior courts in Eureka because they would not testify against one another. They did not respect the oath, and they would lie in court, even if there was extreme hatred involved:

They have prevarication reduced to a dead line, and perjury to a fine art. If 20 of them swore over a pile of burning paper that Ah Gee did the shooting, 25 more would swear over the blood of a decapitated rooster's head that Ah Sam was the guilty man.³⁹

The citizens were soon convinced that trials of Chinese were useless since it was impossible to get any satisfactory justice through legal proceedings. At a meeting held on March 9, 1882, the citizens of Eureka voiced their attitude to adopt resolutions urging Congress to restrict the immigration of the Chinese:

We have anxiously watched the hordes of Mongolian paupers, criminals and prostitutes flooding our shores; we have seen our civilization almost subverted and our children driven from all avenues of honorable labor by aliens, foreign to our tongue, religion, customs, laws, and social relations.⁴⁰

About 1883 the two rival tongs in Chinatown posed a serious problem because they had imported professional gun and hatchet men from San Francisco. These men were "highbinders of the most dangerous sort," and soon riots, murders, and assaults became commonplace.

Many disturbances occurred in the year 1884. On Sunday, August 24, a shooting match occurred between the two tongs. Officers Vansant, McGarrighan, and Deputy Sheriff Cutler arrested seven of the Chinese, but they were released by Judge Denver Sevir at the Eureka Police Court.⁴¹ On August 26, the *Daily Times-Telephone* issued the following warning: "A genuine riot may be looked for in the Chinese quarter at almost anytime." On the same day another shooting took place with

37. *Weekly Humboldt Times*, March 14, 1863.

38. *Ibid.*, January 29, 1881.

39. *Daily Times-Telephone*, February 14, 1885.

40. *Weekly Humboldt Times*, March 11, 1882.

41. *Daily Times-Telephone*, February 7, 1885.

42. *Ibid.*, August 27, 1884.

The Chinese in Humboldt County, California

bullets flying across Fourth Street. Again several Chinese were arrested with no results.⁴² After a riot on September 23, the *Daily Times-Telephone* stressed the attitude of the citizens of Eureka:

One thing was appraised of, however, and that is that the Chinese are becoming an intolerable nuisance to our people, and if some means cannot be devised to make them behave, they should be made to leave.⁴³

Another shooting occurred in Chinatown on December 20, which caused more excitement in Eureka. A bullet crossed Fourth Street and passed through the wall of a house owned by D. R. Jones. The following comment was printed in a local paper: "These heathens have been hailing their pistols a little too loosely of late and steps should be taken to check them before some innocent party is hurt."⁴⁴ But the Chinese "highbinders" continued to have their "pistol practice," and they continued to ignore the law.

On Sunday morning, February 1, 1885, more serious violence broke out at Fourth and F Streets, across the street from the *Humboldt Times* building. The front page of the newspaper reports the news:

Just as we were going to press last night a serious riot broke out in the Chinese quarters just opposite our office. Some ten or twelve shots were fired. . . . We do not know the extent of damage, but saw one Chinaman laid out with a bullet through his lung. Dr. Davis took the ball out of his back. He is a gone Chinaman. We saw another fellow with a wound in his hand. The officers captured about a half-dozen pistols, and locked up as many Chinamen. Since the above was in type it has been learned that another one was shot in the abdomen and will die.⁴⁵

The *Daily Times-Telephone* published an editorial entitled "Wipe Out the Plague-Spots," which called for the removal of Eureka's Chinatown by the board of health:

Under the present condition of things there is not only the danger from a moral point of view, but continual danger to life and property. It will not do for our citizens to longer permit such life-taking demonstrations as one witnessed in the Chinese quarter, and one of the principal streets of the city, last Saturday night. It was only a wonder . . . that some innocent pedestrian was not made to bite the dust. Such a result is liable to come at any time, as long as the representatives of two conflicting Chinese companies are allowed to live in such close proximity. If ever such an event does occur — if ever an offending white man is thus offered up on the altar of paganism, we fear it will be goodbye to Chinatown.⁴⁶

The very next evening, Friday, February 6, 1885, at 6:05 o'clock, the climax came. Two Chinese men on the north side of Fourth Street

43. *Ibid.*, September 24, 1884.

44. *Ibid.*, December 24, 1884.

45. *Humboldt Times*, February 1, 1885.

46. *Daily Times-Telephone*, February 5, 1885.

below Rick's stable began shooting at one another. City Councilman David C. Kendall lived at the corner of Fifth and E Streets, just outside the Chinese section. Leaving his home after dinner, he walked down E Street, heading toward his downtown office. The Chinese men fired about nine or ten shots in quick succession as Kendall was crossing Fourth Street. A bullet hit him, and he fell on his face. M. F. LaGrange was first on the scene, and Kendall's wife, who had come out when she heard the shooting, was also soon at his side. Kendall was carried to his home where he spoke a few words to Dr. Gross and W. H. Wyman before he died.⁴⁷ At the same shooting, Louis Baldschmidt, a youth who was working at the Pratt Furniture Store, was also shot in the foot while going home to his supper.⁴⁸

The news spread rapidly, and Eureka was soon ablaze with excitement. Hundreds of idle men — loggers, miners, mill workers, sailors, and drifters — soon gathered at the corner of Fourth and E Streets, clamoring for action and shouting "Burn Chinatown" and "hang all the Chinamen."⁴⁹ Police officers captured a Chinese man who was supposed to have killed Kendall, and with considerable difficulty the captive was taken to jail.⁵⁰ Before the evening was over, twenty Orientals had been arrested for the shooting of Kendall, and Sheriff T. M. Brown was afraid that the men would take over the jail. This was the first time in the history of the county that a law enforcement agency had called upon the National Guard. But before the situation could get out of hand, some of Eureka's leaders called for a meeting at Centennial Hall on Fourth Street between F and G Streets.⁵¹

In less than twenty minutes after Kendall's death, some six hundred men met to discuss the recent development. Mayor Walsh was named chairman of the meeting and H. H. Buhne was appointed secretary. A. J. Bledsoe, Frank McGowan, and James Brown spoke on the evils of Chinatown and its menace to the community. T. M. Brown and George W. Hunter, who spoke next, sympathized with the angry crowd but counseled moderation.⁵²

The men in the hall were very excited and a resolution was actually proposed to go into Chinatown and massacre every Chinese man. When this was frowned on, the next proposition was to loot Chinatown, to tear down the buildings, and to drive the Chinese beyond the city limits.⁵³

The crowd was almost at the rioting point. If any clue had been

47. *Ibid.*, February 7, 1885.

48. *Ibid.*

49. *Ibid.*

50. *Weekly Times-Telephone*, February 14, 1885.

51. *Daily Humboldt Standard*, February 9, 1885.

52. *Weekly Times-Telephone*, February 14, 1885.

53. Huntington, *Memoir*, p. 224.

The Chinese in Humboldt County, California

known as to the identity of the killer, they would have lynched him immediately. No such clue was known, however, and Hunter moved that a committee of fifteen men be appointed to go to Chinatown and notify the Chinese to pack up and leave within twenty-four hours. The committee members were H. H. Buhne, chairman, C. G. Taylor, Frank McGowan, W. S. Riddle, E. B. Murphy, W. L. Mercer, W. J. Sweasy, A. J. Bledsoe, N. A. Libbey, Dan Murphy, James Simpson, James Brown, W. J. McNamara, H. Libbey, and F. P. Thompson.⁵⁴ Some respected citizens of Eureka objected to the resolution forcing the Chinese to leave Eureka. The Reverend Mr. Huntington, for example, spoke against the resolution:

We all deplore the death of our fellow citizen, Mr. Kendall. But no Chinaman had any design on his life. His death was entirely accidental. The Chinaman who fired the shot is guilty . . . but the rank and file of the people in Chinatown are as innocent of the death of Mr. Kendall as I am. . . . You have no more right to drive them from their homes than you have to drive me from my home.⁵⁵

The authorities were powerless to control such a mob. If the mayor and some of the aldermen and other citizens had not called the meeting to order and, by reason and argument, succeeding in diverting the energies of the multitude into peaceful channels, much blood would have been shed and much property would have been destroyed. The mob did not riot and Captain Kelleher's guard retired before morning.⁵⁶

The committee later met and sent for three leaders from each rival tong. The Chinese were told that they had to leave Humboldt County within twenty-four hours. Representatives of the committee visited every part of the city and surrounding area and told the Chinese the decision of the committee. By 8:00 o'clock p. m. every Chinese man in Eureka was packing his personal goods to prepare for departure the next day.⁵⁷

There was no violence during the night of February 6. The local *Daily Times-Telephone* mentioned that "We trust that wise counsels will prevail today . . . the life of the lamented Kendall could not be atoned for by the stretching of one hundred of their worthless necks."⁵⁸

On the morning of Saturday, February 7, there was much activity on Fourth Street. Piles of household belongings, clothing, and merchandise were heaped onto the street and loaded into wagons and any type of transportation available. Before noon twenty-three loads were piled on the Humboldt Bay docks to be placed aboard two steamships which were in the harbor at the time, the *City of Chester* and the *Hum-*

54. *Weekly Times-Telephone*, February 14, 1885.

55. *Memoir*, p. 225.

56. *Daily Humboldt Standard*, February 9, 1885.

57. *Ibid.*

58. *Daily Times-Telephone*, February 6, 1885.

boldt.⁵⁹ During the day the committee also brought Chinese from the nearby ranches and cookhouses, and they were housed in warehouses near the bay.⁶⁰ Earlier a gang of Chinese men had extended the Arcata and Mad River Railroad three and one-half miles to Isaac Minor's Warren Creek Mill. At this time the Chinese were working on branch railroads at Warren Creek, and these men were herded together and taken to Eureka.⁶¹ Seeing they had no alternative, they offered no resistance. A few Chinese had tried to escape by way of Arcata and the Eel River, but they were captured and taken to Eureka.⁶²

During the night some persons built a scaffold with a hangman's noose dangling from it on Fourth Street between E and F Streets. A sign on the gallows read: "Any Chinaman seen on the street after three o'clock today will be hung to this gallows."⁶³

Despite criticism and ridicule, many Eureka citizens defended the Chinese, who had to leave their jobs and businesses. Some did not wish to part with their Chinese servants, but were finally forced to give them up.⁶⁴ Intolerance and bigotry were more in evidence. The Reverend Mr. Huntington was hanged in effigy in front of Centennial Hall because some men found a Chinese servant hiding in his home. Charley Way Lum, a Chinese boy, was on his way to the warehouses on the bay as ordered, but a crowd of hoodlums dragged him to the gallows and put the noose around his neck in the presence of hundreds of people. No one, not even the police, interfered until the Reverend Mr. Rich ordered the crowd to release the boy.⁶⁵

The streets were crowded with people who watched the movements of the Chinese with close interest. The crowd was orderly, and the Chinese were not molested. The committee separated the rival tongs: one hundred thirty-five Chinese and fifty tons of merchandise were put on board the *Humboldt*, and one hundred seventy-five Chinese and one hundred tons of merchandise on board the *City of Chester*. Four of the passengers were merchants who had resided in Eureka from ten to fourteen years.⁶⁶

Although rough seas prevented the steamers from departing until the next morning at 6:00 o'clock, February 7, 1885, marks the date of the expulsion of the Chinese. The delay in departure caused a few demonstrations, but on the whole the crowds were orderly.⁶⁷

The steamers arrived in San Francisco on Monday, February 9,

59. *Ibid.*, February 8, 1885.
 60. *Daily Humboldt Standard*, February 9, 1885.
 61. *Blue Lake Advocate*, February 21, 1957.
 62. *Daily Times-Telephone*, February 7, 1885.
 63. Huntington, *Memoir*, p. 226.
 64. *Ibid.*
 65. *Ibid.*, p. 227.
 66. *Weekly Times-Telephone*, February 14, 1885.
 67. *Ibid.*

The Chinese in Humboldt County, California

1885. The Chinese quickly scattered throughout the lanes and alleys of San Francisco's Chinatown. Mr. Lindsay, Eureka city marshal, accompanied the Chinese to San Francisco to assist the Harbor Police in identifying the "highbinders" who were among the Chinese. Again there were no arrests because of no positive proof.⁶⁸

At a meeting of the Ong Cong Gong So organization in San Francisco, the law-abiding Chinese stated that a large delegation of the "worst highbinders in the state" had arrived from Eureka. An example was the notorious "Adam Quinn" who had just completed an eight-year sentence at San Quentin for blackmail and robbery. He had gone to Eureka the previous week to "practice his trade."⁶⁹

A reporter of the *San Francisco Call* interviewed Colonel F. A. Bee of the Chinese consulate about the expulsion:

We intend to wait quietly until the excitement dies down and then seek redress in the courts. The whole trouble in Eureka has been caused by a few highbinders — law breakers. There is a sheriff and other officers of the law in Eureka, and they ought to have arrested all law-breakers. All the Chinese expelled are not criminals. Many of them are peaceable merchants, whose businesses have been broken up by their expulsion. Somebody will have to pay for the injury done them.⁷⁰

The men who ran the Chinese out of the city were very fortunate that their plans did not backfire. First, the Chinese did not own any real estate. Most of the miserable shacks in which they lived were rented to them by C. F. Ricks and other citizens of Eureka. If they had owned property, the United States Government would have stepped in, even though the government of China was weak and could not properly support the rights of her citizens in the United States. Second, it was also unusual at that time of year for two vessels to be in port so that most of the Chinese could leave at once. The two steamers arrived in San Francisco when business was quiet, and no ships were expected to arrive. Few people were at the docks. Recent storms had disrupted communication, and the authorities in San Francisco had no knowledge of the Chinese incident in the isolated town of Eureka. If the officers had known they probably would have met the steamers and made the captains return the Chinese. The Chinese immediately scattered, and it was impossible to collect them for reshipment.⁷¹

The popular fable states that the mysterious country of China was so determined to live in isolation from the world and so built an enormous wall to protect its empire from invaders. The Great Wall had its counterpart, not only in the vast hemispheric wall built by the Occidental world which was comprised of legal statutes, but in a specific "invisible wall" built around Humboldt County.

68. *San Francisco Daily Report*, as quoted by *Weekly Times-Telephone*, February 14, 1885.

69. *San Francisco Call*, as quoted by *Weekly Times-Telephone*, February 14, 1885.

70. *Ibid.*, February 14, 1885.

71. Thornbury, *Humboldt County*, p. 67.

A large crowd assembled at Centennial Hall on Saturday, February 7, in the afternoon at 1:00 o'clock, to hear the report of the citizens' committee. This was Humboldt County's "unwritten law" against the Chinese and other orientals — which was to be enforced for the next sixty years! The following resolutions were adopted:

1. That all Chinamen be expelled from the city and that none be allowed to return.
2. That a committee be appointed to act for one year, whose duty shall be to warn all Chinamen who may attempt to come to this place to live, and to use all reasonable means to prevent their remaining.
3. That a notice be issued to all property owners through the daily papers, requesting them not to lease or rent property to Chinese.⁷²

The Eureka Common Council met that same Saturday night in their regular session. Mayor Thomas Walsh presided and the following councilmen were present: A. Cottrell, T. Baird, D. Murphy, T. Cutler, and W. H. Wyman who took over the duties of the clerk who was absent. The mayor briefly and "with feeling" announced the death of Councilman David Kendall. Councilman Murphy made a motion, and it was ordered that the council hear the report of the committee from the citizens' meeting and that no further business be transacted until Wednesday evening, February 11.⁷³

W. S. Ridell, secretary of the citizens' committee, then read the resolutions passed at the afternoon meeting, and A. J. Bledsoe, also of the committee, spoke in regard to the subject matter. A petition signed by many citizens and taxpayers was received, "praying that the Chinese quarters be removed." The council then passed a resolution "declaring the Chinese quarters in the city a nuisance and that steps be taken to remove the same outside of the city limits." The following was included in the minutes:

Resolved: that the citizens committee . . . [appeared before] . . . appointed by this meeting of the common council of the City of Eureka who meet tonight and demand that the common council take immediate action towards declaring the Chinese quarters in the City of Eureka a nuisance and removing same from the city limits. Per order of the committee.⁷⁴

The anti-Chinese fever also spread to the City of Arcata. On February 7, 1885, George W. B. Yocum called a meeting. The crowd appointed a committee and issued an ultimatum to the Chinese to leave by February 11, 1885. The Chinese obeyed the order and all moved out of the city limits of the town.⁷⁵

72. *Weekly Times-Telephone*, February 14, 1885.

73. Minutes of the Eureka Common Council, February 7, 1885.

74. *Ibid.*

75. *Daily Times-Telephone*, February 12, 1885.

The Chinese in Humboldt County, California

During the same week, a group of citizens also held an anti-Chinese parade in Crescent City, and the citizens demanded that "The Chinese Must Go." But they permitted only one Chinese man to remain in Del Norte County. The Chinese were not totally expelled until April, 1886.⁷⁶

About three months after the expulsion, two former Chinese residents tried to get railroad contracts in Eureka, but were denied by the committee of fifteen.⁷⁷ On May 2, 1885, Lemon, the contractor for the Eel River and Eureka Railroad Company, made preliminary arrangements to use Chinese labor. The people objected, and Lemon hired white workers.⁷⁸

Later throughout the year of 1885, many of the Chinese returned to the area. Chinese peddlers began to sell their wares in Eureka, and Chinese leaders tried to establish a town near Eureka in order to carry on their business as they had done before the expulsion. On January 7, 1886, a Chinese man named Charley Mock tried to negotiate the purchase of property on Second Street with the aid of a white citizen. Upon being informed of the deal, the newspapers urged property owners to be on their guard in matters of selling and leasing land to the Chinese, because if they gained possession of real estate, the law could interfere on their behalf. Mr. Charley Mock soon left town at the "advice" of several citizens.⁷⁹

The Eureka papers of January, 1886, announced the coming anniversary of the tragic death of City Councilman Dave Kendall and asked the citizens to renew their pledge. The dramatic incident of the preceding year was printed again:

The death of one of Eureka's most highly esteemed citizens at the hands of a Mongolian highbinder resulted in the expulsion of the Chinese from the city limits, and so far as we are aware no Chinaman has lived within them for twenty-four hours since that date. It was the duty of a committee of fifteen citizens to see that none of the Mongols be allowed to return, and that from the 7th day of February, 1885, no new ones coming over should be allowed to locate within the limits of Eureka. Eureka was the first point in the United States to take this step which was a fact heralded to the remotest corner of the nation.⁸⁰

The committee of fifteen held a meeting on January 12, 1886, to make arrangements for a mass meeting to be held on February 6 in honor of Kendall. A. J. Bledsoe called for the citizens of Arcata, Fern-dale, Springville (Fortuna), Rohnerville, Hydesville, and Salmon Creek to attend and to decide on some lawful means to expel all the Chinese in Humboldt County.⁸¹

76. Chase, *The Forest*, p. 55.

77. *Weekly Times-Telephone*, April 4, 1885.

78. *Ibid.*, May 16, 1885.

79. *Ibid.*, January 16, 1886.

80. *Ibid.*

81. *Ibid.*

A week before the anniversary of the Chinese exodus was observed in Eureka, the citizens of Arcata held an anti-Chinese meeting in Richert's Hall. Mr. Chandler, of the Blue Lake Mill Company, Mr. Faulk, of Faulk, Hawly and Company, and Isaac Minor all spoke against the Chinese and said that the Chinese should leave immediately. James Beith, E. S. Deming, R. M. Fernald, G. W. B. Yocum, and R. Burns were chosen as a committee of five to attend the meeting in Eureka.⁸²

The anniversary meeting was the largest ever held in Eureka up to that time. Three hundred persons came from Arcata. There was much discussion at the meeting. The Honorable J. P. Haynes said that "the cry in the past had been 'The Chinese Must Go,' but now it is 'The Chinese Must Never Return.'" The suit against the City of Eureka by a Chinese man named Wing Hing for \$132,820 was announced. In honor of the event Eureka offered aid to the people of the neighboring towns to get rid of their Chinese. C. S. Ricks explained that he was the loser to the extent of three hundred dollars each month by the expulsion of the Chinese. He said that he had been accused of being a "Chino-ophile," but that he had hired only white laborers.⁸³ Then the people adopted the following resolutions:

Resolved, that it is the sense of this meeting that we regard with disgust and unqualified disapprobation the action of any person in selling or leasing real estate to the Chinese, that in our estimation such a person is a traitor to his race and a fit subject for the censure of all citizens.

Resolved, that we now pledge our honors that we will not either directly or indirectly patronize any person who in anywise deals or trades in goods, wares or merchandise manufactured by Chinese.⁸⁴

The citizens of other towns soon followed the suggestion of the committee of fifteen of total expulsion. By January 26, 1886, Rohnerville ordered its Chinese to leave.⁸⁵ In Ferndale the Chinese had to sell their laundries. A certain Sam Que was quoted that he was satisfied but "he no likee levee Ferndale."⁸⁶ The citizens of Crescent City held meetings the first week of March, 1886, to "remove all Mongolians from our midst." Hobbs, Wall and Company and J. Wenger and Company, the principal mill owners, signed a pledge to "discharge all Chinese labor on or before the 13th day of April, 1886."⁸⁷

A week after the Eureka meeting, the citizens of Arcata met at the Excelsior Hall in Arcata to draw up the following resolutions:

1. We, the citizens of Arcata and vicinity, wish the total expulsion of the Chinese from our midst.

82. *Ibid.*

83. *Ibid.*, February 13, 1886.

84. *Ibid.*

85. *Daily Times-Telephone*, January 26, 1886.

86. *Weekly Times-Telephone*, February 27, 1886.

87. *Ibid.*, March 4, 1886.

The Chinese in Humboldt County, California

2. We endorse the efforts of Eureka to exclude all Chinese settlements in the city and environs.⁸⁸

The Chinese who were expelled brought a law suit against the City of Eureka. A Chinese man named Wing Hing brought suit in the United States Circuit Court against the City of Eureka to recover \$132,820. This represented the claims of fifty-two Chinese men who had assigned their claims to Hing. The complaint charged:

. . . that a mob of disorderly persons assembled together and without authority of law, broke into the premises of plaintiff and fifty-five other Chinese persons and firms, and carried away and destroyed goods belonging to them of the value of \$75,245, by reason of which carrying away and destruction Hing and other Chinese suffered damages to themselves and business to the amount of \$57,670.⁸⁹

B. J. Akerman, deputy U. S. marshal, filed the complaint in the Humboldt County Clerk's office and served the papers on Mayor Walsh.⁹⁰ The suit caused much excitement in Eureka, since the damages claimed were many times greater than the entire Chinese population of Eureka had ever claimed on the assessment rolls, which was only \$2,800.⁹¹ When the Chinese suit against the City of Eureka — *Wing Hing vs. Eureka* — was finally called, S. M. Buck, city attorney, went to San Francisco to represent the city. The case was summarized in a local paper:

The suit of *Wing Hing vs. the City of Eureka* is ended. Mr. Buck of Humboldt appeared for the defendant city and moved to strike from the complaint all damages claimed for driving the Chinese away, and for loss of business. Judge Sawyer granted this motion and ordered all claims stricken out except those for injury to property. As no property was molested or injured, this action of the Court virtually disposes of this important case in favor of the city of Eureka.⁹²

About twenty Chinese men still remained in the Humboldt Bay area. This group, living near Arcata, began to leave, and on April 31, 1886, the last of the county's Chinese left aboard the *Humboldt*.⁹³

Myths and legends develop over any cataclysmic event, and the Chinese expulsion was no exception. The popular story that exists today is that Charley Moon was the only Chinese man who was allowed to stay in Humboldt County. He was working on the Charley Bair ranch in the Redwood Creek area, and he was not molested. Charley, who was well-liked and respected, married an Indian woman and raised a large family. When a group of citizens came from Eureka to get Char-

88. *Ibid.*, February 20, 1886.

89. *Ibid.*, January 30, 1886. The transcript of the trial is on file at the Humboldt County Clerk's Office.

90. *Ibid.*

91. *Ibid.*

92. *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 31, 1886, as quoted by the *Weekly Times-Telephone*, April 3, 1886.

93. *Ibid.*, May 1, 1886.

ley Moon, Mr. Bair threatened them with a gun, and the men returned to Eureka empty-handed.⁹⁴

But there is evidence that others lived back in the isolated mountainous area of the county. Mrs. Brenda Catanich, who formerly taught school on the Klamath River from 1904 to 1907, said that she knew three elderly Chinese men who had married Indian women. Billy Bow, a Mr. Fong, and John Cook were good citizens who worked as farmers and miners. They sent their children to the white man's schools. At the time of the Chinese expulsion, the three-day journey on horseback over the mountains to the isolated Klamath River was too great an undertaking, so the Chinese were left undisturbed. The Chinese never journeyed far from the river, and Chinese relatives visited them from Siskiyou County.⁹⁵ And there were probably others who lived in this isolated country.

In October, 1886, excitement again reached a high pitch in Eureka. The Cutting Packing Company, which operated a fish cannery on the Eel River, decided to import a crew of fifty Chinese. The citizens of Eureka held a mass meeting on October 13 to name a committee. The committee, composed of W. J. McNamara, J. F. Coonan, W. F. Mercer, F. McGown, and A. C. Spear, proposed resolutions that declared "the members of the packing company to be traitors to the white race" and urged the citizens of Humboldt County and the town of Ferndale to drive the Chinese out.⁹⁶

A delegation from Eureka went to Ferndale, demanding a mass meeting to fight the return of the Chinese. At the meeting, which was held in the Old Roberts Hall, speakers from Eureka harangued the crowd and read anti-Chinese letters. But when a rising vote was taken, it was found that the valley citizens were against the anti-Chinese proposition, and some even spoke of the mistreatment of the Chinese.⁹⁷

The people of Ferndale finally decided to allow the Chinese to remain until after the fishing season. They left in December aboard the *City of Chester*, and the Cutting company agreed not to bring the Chinese to the county again.⁹⁸ But later the company, which had spent about \$36,000 in the area, threatened not to reopen without Chinese labor. They were allowed to use Chinese labor in 1887 and again in 1889. The Chinese left at the close of each season.⁹⁹

All was quiet on the Chinese front until September, 1906, when Eureka again seethed with excitement. The Starbuck-Tallant Canning Company of Port Kenyon near Ferndale imported twenty-three Chinese

94. *Blue Lake Advocate*, June 21, 1956.

95. *Eureka Independent*, February 29, 1956.

96. *Weekly Times-Telephone*, October 14, 1886.

97. *Ferndale Enterprise*, October 15, 1886.

98. *Ibid.*, December 17, 1886.

99. *Ibid.*, October 21, 1887; December 13, 1889.

The Chinese in Humboldt County, California

and four Japanese from Astoria, Oregon, to work at the cannery.¹⁰⁰ The local steamship agent even tried to get the Santa Fe Railroad to furnish a boxcar which could be pushed to the wharf so that the people of Eureka would not get excited when the Chinese landed.¹⁰¹

There was much excitement in the local papers. The glaring headlines of the *Humboldt Times* stated: "THE CHINESE MUST GO!" — Such Was the Unanimous Sentiment at the Mass Meeting Last Night."¹⁰² Once again the citizens were indignant that the unwritten law of Humboldt County had been violated by the business men of Ferndale and the Port Kenyon Cannery. A meeting was held at the Labor Hall on Second Street and those present called for immediate expulsion. Dr. W. E. Cook and E. P. Hawkins, president of the Longshoreman's Federation, and others condemned the Chinese. Those at the meeting even thought about sending a petition to the Board of Supervisors to close the Eel River to fishing if the Tallant Company did not come to terms.¹⁰³

The next day representatives of the Building Trades Council of Eureka and members of the Fortuna Board of Trade went to Ferndale to learn why Ferndale had ignored the unwritten law of the county and "contaminated the air of the county with the filthy Chinese whom the fathers of the present generation was forced to resort to strenuous means to eject." According to the local papers there were a thousand or more woodsmen ready to flock to Fortuna if the Chinese were not asked to leave.¹⁰⁴

Other meetings were held again in Eureka and Fortuna on October 3, and the citizens passed resolutions to reject the offer of the cannery to use Chinese. The people of Ferndale finally made the decision to send the Chinese back and to attempt to operate with white labor. The Japanese were not asked to leave.¹⁰⁵ On October 4, the twenty-three Chinese men were placed in a boxcar at Port Kenyon and shipped back to the railroad wharf in Eureka, and then transferred to Gunther Island. The Chinese were housed in an old cookhouse, and a deputy sheriff was placed in charge so that the Chinese would not be molested. No one else was allowed on the island.¹⁰⁶

The committee in charge of expelling the Chinese requested donations to feed the Chinese for a few days and to pay their passage back to Astoria. They also published a list of "anti-Chinese contributors" in the local papers ". . . so that posterity may run back over them and see who is instrumental in ejecting the Chinese from the county in 1906."¹⁰⁷

100. *Humboldt Times*, October 2, 1906.

101. *Daily Humboldt Standard*, September 29, 1906.

102. *Humboldt Times*, October 2, 1906.

103. *Daily Humboldt Standard*, October 2, 1906.

104. *Humboldt Times*, October 2, 1906.

105. *Ibid.*, October 3, 1906.

106. *Ibid.*, October 4, 1906.

107. *Ibid.*

The *Roanoke* arrived in Humboldt Bay on Monday, October 8, and eighteen of the twenty-three Chinese men sailed for Astoria. The other five were given permission to sail on another steamer for San Francisco. One newspaper stated: "On the steamer *Roanoke* they will shake the Humboldt dust from their sandals, satisfied the county is a fine place, but no place for a Chinaman, and such is the report they will carry to their friends."¹⁰⁸

The editors of the local newspapers gave credit to District Attorney Gregory and Sheriff Lindsay for this peaceful expulsion, since they personally persuaded the officials of the cannery to send the Chinese away before the local people could decide to take the law into their own hands.¹⁰⁹ The Ferndale merchants paid the Chinese one-half of their contract price. Lee Eso, the Chinese boss, said "Good for Chinamen — money, no work — bad for boss Chinaman."¹¹⁰ After this incident the *Daily Humboldt Standard* summarized the Chinese situation:

It can truthfully be said that the county stands as a unit on the Chinese exclusion and there is no doubt but that our people will work harmoniously together in their stand to prevent them becoming residents of this county.¹¹¹

In the first week of November, 1909, the Japanese Tsuchiya brothers established a Japanese art goods store in the Brett building on Fifth Street near E Street in Eureka. On early Sunday morning November 5, about 2:45 a. m., an explosion rocked the city: some unknown persons had dynamited the Japanese store. A stick of dynamite was placed in the recessed doorway of the store and set off by means of a long fuse. A reward of \$1,050 was offered to anyone who could offer any information leading to the arrest of the bombers. The City of Eureka offered five hundred dollars, and private parties offered the balance. Mr. F. Tameguchi, a Japanese interpreter, arrived from San Francisco to investigate the incident, and he said he was pleased at the efforts to find the bombers.¹¹² No arrests were ever made, the store was never reopened, and the two Japanese men were never heard from again.

On August 2, 1913, a Japanese junk was discovered on the Pacific beach, four miles north of Samoa on the Peninsula. Deputy Immigration Inspector W. J. Nichols arrested three Japanese, who were part of a crew of nine Japanese who had crossed the Pacific from Japan to the Humboldt Coast in a crude junk! The other members, who were weak from lack of food, were captured a short distance beyond Big Lagoon. Captain Ozaki, who had deserted the others to evade capture, was later caught. One of the crew members, Sahey Inouye, confessed to some kind of an attempted smuggling plot, but the details were never revealed. On

108. *Ibid.*, October 6, 1906.

109. *Ibid.*, October 4, 1906.

110. *Ibid.*, October 9, 1906.

111. *Ibid.*, October 5, 1906.

112. *Humboldt Times*, November 6, 1909.

The Chinese in Humboldt County, California

August 13, the nine Japanese were taken to San Francisco in the custody of immigration authorities, to be later deported back to Japan.¹¹³

In the winter of 1926 the original Hartsook Inn, in southern Humboldt County, burned down. The San Francisco owners, in order to get the popular inn rebuilt for the summer trade, sent a group of Oriental workers to clean up the ruins. They were on the job for just a short time when a group of laborers, accompanied by the sheriff, came down and literally ran them out of the county. About the same time some Orientals were sent to Shelter Cove to help set up a canning unit. But in order to avoid trouble, the sheriff arrived first on the scene, and the orientals left soon after.¹¹⁴

An extremely bigoted incident occurred in 1930 which is difficult to understand. The Japanese ambassador, who arrived in San Francisco on his way to Washington, D. C., decided to travel through the Redwood Country by private car and then by train from Portland to Washington, D. C. Whether he wanted to see the famous redwoods or whether he wanted to test the notoriety of the unwritten law of the county is not known. A group of citizens from Eureka met him just south of Garberville, and they escorted him through the county to the Del Norte County line, without allowing him to stop. He was told to keep going.¹¹⁵

When the Americans took over Japan at the end of World War II, they recovered official documents, the contents of which were revealed in many newspaper and magazine articles. One article listed the various reasons why the Japanese had attacked Pearl Harbor. One of the reasons was the unwritten law of Humboldt County against the orientals, and special notice was given to the humiliating incident of the ambassador.¹¹⁶

In 1941 the minister of the Presbyterian Church of Eureka scheduled a Chinese minister from China to speak at an evening service as a guest speaker. This event was publicized by the news media which informed the public that the service would be broadcast by remote control by radio station KIEM. But a few minutes before the broadcast the remote control lines "mysteriously" went dead, and the service was cancelled.¹¹⁷

In July, 1944, during World War II, twenty-seven Nisei were brought from a relocation camp near Redding to be tried in a United States District Court in Eureka for draft evasion. They were acquitted and sent back to the camp.¹¹⁸ A letter to the editor showed that there was concern and that attitudes were beginning to change:

113. *Humboldt Times*, August 2, 1913.

114. Personal interview with Andrew Genzoli, historian for the Eureka *Times-Standard*, August, 1969.

115. *Ibid.*

116. *Ibid.*

117. Jean Neilson, *Times-Standard*, December 11, 1969.

118. Personal interview with Wally Lee, veteran newspaperman of the Eureka *Times-Standard*, August, 1969.

Many of us who are native Humboldters and whose parents arrived when Eureka centered itself in and around First, Second and F Streets held our breaths when we learned that 27 Japanese were to be brought here and tried in our midst. We sincerely hoped that the dogs of race prejudice would not succeed in getting out of hand. The trial of these 27 Japanese is without parallel in the U. S.

These defendants were treated courteously. These people reached our city, one that is known the length and breadth of the Orient as being definitely anti-Oriental. They were protected by a quiet dignified sheriff's office. In transport between jail and court there were no demonstrations. They arrived without counsel, and two young American attorneys, both natives of Humboldt, took over their cases. A fair right-minded American judge, Louis Goodman, saw to it that they were given a fair trial, and in the end rendered an outstanding decision. I wonder if some of us "native Humboldters" were to find ourselves in a similar position in Japan, if we would be afforded the same justice and fair play that we have afforded these American-born Japanese. I sincerely hope that, when it is again possible for these men to write to their relations in Japan, they will be so kind as to write about Humboldt County and the City of Eureka and the real American folk they found there.¹¹⁹

Local people tell many stories about their confrontation with the Chinese and other orientals in other areas of California and the Orient. Most of the stories center on San Francisco's Chinatown, the largest in the United States. Humboldters, while eating at the many Chinese restaurants, have been treated graciously. But once the Chinese knew that their guests were from Humboldt County, the gracious treatment immediately changed to indifference or even hostility. Even in far-off China local travelers have had the same experiences with the Chinese.

This writer was raised in the company town of Samoa on the peninsula, the former headquarters for the huge Hammond Lumber Company. When an oriental ship came in to load lumber, the young and old of the community would come to the wharves to observe the orientals — usually Japanese. The orientals were a curiosity as they wandered through the town or bought goods at the company store. But as a rule they were not allowed to leave their ships when they docked at Eureka across the bay.

Anti-Chinese sentiment continued virulent long after 1885. Racial discrimination had persisted; indeed, well into the twentieth century a tendency to glory in the anti-Chinese attitude was much in evidence. Books, editorials, and pamphlets since that date have boasted that no "heathen Chinese" has dared to settle in the county. A business directory of Humboldt County was published by one of the local newspapers in November, 1890. It contained the following:

In the matter of Chinese competition, a question of such paramount importance all over the coast, not alone to the wage worker but to many of the trades and business enterprises, Humboldt is above any county in

119. Emily Jones, "Open Letter to Editor," *Humboldt Standard*, July 25, 1944.

The Chinese in Humboldt County, California

the State of California blessed. There is not a Chinaman in Humboldt County, except in the mines on the Klamath River. . . . To those who have experienced the misery of having this degraded and debasing element in their midst, and realize the futility of redress at the hands of the U. S. Courts . . . this simple fact of itself is no small recommendation where seeking a home as far removed from vicious example as possible. Nature's benefactions to Humboldt County have been many, but we pride ourselves on having, by our own efforts, eradicated a festering, putrescent sore from our vitals.¹²⁰

A book published by the Humboldt Chamber of Commerce in 1893 contained the following lines:

One fact makes Humboldt unique among the counties of California, and indeed, on the Pacific Coast — we have no Chinese. Our working-men are not compelled to come into competition with the degraded coolies of the Orient. There was a time when the Chinese had quite a colony here, but in one of their "Tong" wars a stray bullet from the pistol of a highbinder struck and killed a prominent citizen of Eureka. . . . The community rose as a man and drove every Chinese out of the county. That was in 1885, and since then Humboldt has had no Chinese. Even in far-off China, the coolies know that they are not permitted to come here, and none ever attempt it.¹²¹

In 1901, a pamphlet, entitled *Survey No. 83 of Fieldbrook*, was published and contained "Ten Reasons Why Humboldt County is the Best County on the Pacific Coast for Business and Residence." Reason number nine was "Because it has no Chinese and none need apply."

As late as 1937 the *Humboldt Times* published a souvenir edition on its eighty-fifth anniversary. An article entitled "No Oriental Colonies Have Thrived Here Since the Year 1885" boasted:

Humboldt County has the unique distinction of being the only community in which there are no oriental colonies. . . . Although 52 years have passed since the Chinese were driven from the county, none have ever returned. On one or two occasions off-shore vessels with Chinamen crews have stopped at this port, but the Chinamen as a rule stayed aboard their vessels, choosing not to take a chance on being ordered out. Chinese everywhere have always looked upon this section of the state as "bad medicine" for the Chinaman.

The following section appeared on page 65 of the 1941 *Charter and Revised Ordinances* of the City of Eureka, published by order of the mayor and council:

Sec. 190. No Chinese shall ever be employed, either directly or indirectly, on any work of the city, or in the performance of any contract or sub-contract of the city, except in punishment for a crime. Nor shall any provisions, supplies, materials, or articles of Chinese manufacture or production ever be used or purchased by or furnished to the city.

120. THE HISTORY AND BUSINESS DIRECTORY OF HUMBOLDT COUNTY (*Eureka Daily Humboldt Standard*, 1890), p. 91.

121. J. M. Eddy, IN THE REDWOOD REALM (*Eureka*, 1893), p. 23.

In 1959 a council-manager form of city government was introduced by the City of Eureka, and a new charter was drawn up. The new charter automatically repealed many of the old sections, and Section 190 was eliminated. But the section would have been invalid because in December, 1943, the Chinese exclusion acts were repealed and made resident Chinese aliens eligible for citizenship, and in 1950 the District Court of Appeals in California, following the lead of the United States Supreme Court, held the Alien Land Acts of 1913 and 1920 unconstitutional.¹²²

The first contemporary Chinese came to Eureka to settle in the early 1950s. One of the first was Mr. Ben Chin who opened up the Canton Restaurant. Later Mr. James Chin and his family arrived from Portland to lease the Red Robin Cafe in Arcata. Although they had been warned about Eureka, they stopped in the city on their way south. They liked the area so much that they decided to stay.¹²³

Their son, Dan Chin, who came to Arcata at the age of ten, says that he only encountered racial prejudice once when he was in the fifth grade when some "young brats" made some derogatory remarks about his race. Dan Chin, who was co-valedictorian of the 1969 graduating class at Eureka High School and who maintained a 4.0 grade point average while in high school, was awarded a scholarship to Stanford University where he will major in pre-medicine.¹²⁴

In 1958 Jack and Fumiko Kanbara, of Japanese descent, came to Arcata when he joined the staff at the Humboldt State College library. Fumiko, after some initial problems, was hired as an elementary school teacher in Eureka. She said that at first she had some qualms about the local people, who gave her "surprised glances," but that she was accepted by all she met. Even in the early 1960s when she went shopping in Eureka and Arcata with her two small girls, people would stop to stare, and children would whisper "Chinese."¹²⁵

At the present time there are only six Chinese families and some other Chinese individuals in Humboldt County, numbering less than forty in a total population of more than 106,000. Most of them are associated with the four Chinese restaurants in the area.¹²⁶ In the 1950s oriental students from California and the Orient began to enroll at Humboldt State College in Arcata, helping to lower the bars of prejudice and to condition the local people to orientals.

122. Personal interview with Melvin Johnson, city attorney for Eureka, California, August, 1969.

123. Personal interview with Daniel Chin, August, 1969.

124. *Ibid.*

125. Personal interview with Fumiko Kanbara, August, 1969.

126. Personal interview with Daniel Chin, August, 1969.