

## Memorial of Chinese Laborers at Rock Springs, Wyoming (1885)

*One of the worst outbreaks of anti-Chinese violence occurred at Rock Springs, Wyoming, in 1885. As recounted below by Chinese residents and survivors of the attack, the riot was triggered by the refusal of Chinese miners to join white miners in a strike for increased wages. However, it should be pointed out that racial hostilities had been festering since 1875, when Chinese laborers were first hired by the Union Pacific Company as strikebreakers to replace white miners. In the 1885 incident, the Knights of Labor, seeking to eliminate Chinese competition for jobs, instigated the violence, in which a mob of armed white men opened fire on defenseless Chinese miners, killing twenty-eight and wounding fifteen, and burning all seventy-nine shacks belonging to the Chinese.*

*Chinese minister Zheng Zaoru immediately sent three officials to investigate the situation, including Huang Sih Chuen, consul at New York. They were able to substantiate the damages and cause of the massacre as set forth in the following memorial. However, despite their thorough report and the eyewitness accounts that were submitted to Congress, none of the rioters were punished. Zheng then resorted to arguing for indemnities on the basis of U.S. constitutional and treaty obligations to good effect, so that President Grover Cleveland was moved to convince Congress to appropriate \$150,000 to cover property losses detailed in Zheng's report.*

*The gruesome details and outpouring of emotions in the aftermath of the massacre speak to the vulnerability of the Chinese caught in the cross fire of labor conflict and racial hatred as well as to their courage, dignity, and dogged determination in seeking justice in America. Appended to the memorial, but not reproduced here, were detailed lists of those killed and wounded in the riot as well as of property losses sustained by Chinese residents in the respective camps.*



Massacre of the Chinese at Rock Springs, Wyoming, 1885. (Courtesy of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley)

Rock Springs, Wyo., September 18, 1885  
Hon. Huang Sih Chuen, Chinese Consul

Your Honor:

We, the undersigned, have been in Rock Springs, Wyoming Territory, for periods ranging from one to fifteen years, for the purpose of working on the railroads and in the coal mines.

Up to the time of the recent troubles we had worked along with the white men, and had not had the least ill feeling against them. The officers of the companies employing us treated us and the white man kindly, placing both races on the same footing and paying the same wages.

Several times we had been approached by the white men and requested to join them in asking the companies for an increase in the wages of all, both Chinese and white men. We inquired of them what we should do if the companies refused to grant an increase. They answered that if the companies would not increase our wages we should all strike, then the companies would be obliged to increase our wages.<sup>1</sup> To this we dissented, wherefore we excited their animosity against us.

<sup>1</sup> Their employer, Union Pacific Coal Department, had cut their wages the year before in response to the economic depression.

During the past two years there has been in existence in "Whitemen's Town," Rock Springs, an organization composed of white miners, whose object was to bring about the expulsion of all Chinese from the Territory.<sup>2</sup> To them or to their object we have paid no attention. About the month of August of this year notices were posted up, all the way from Evanston to Rock Springs, demanding the expulsion of the Chinese. On the evening of September 1, 1885, the bell of the building in which said organization meets rang for a meeting. It was rumored on that night that threats had been made against the Chinese.

On the morning of September 2, a little past 7 o'clock, more than ten white men, some in ordinary dress and others in mining suits, ran into Coal-pit No. 6, loudly declaring that the Chinese should not be permitted to work there. The Chinese present reasoned with them in a few words, but were attacked with murderous weapons, and three of their number wounded. The white foreman of the coal-pit, hearing of the disturbance, ordered all to stop work for the time being.

After the work had stopped, all the white men in and near Coal-pit No. 6 began to assemble by the dozen. They carried firearms, and marched to Rock Springs by way of the railroad from Coal-pit No. 6, and crossing the railroad bridge, went directly to "Whitemen's Town." All this took place before 10 o'clock A.M. We now heard the bell ringing for a meeting at the white men's organization building. Not long after, all the white men came out of that building, most of them assembling in the bar rooms, the crowds meanwhile growing larger and larger.

About 2 o'clock in the afternoon a mob, divided into two gangs, came toward "Chinatown," one gang coming by way of the plank bridge, and the other by way of the railroad bridge. The gang coming by way of the railroad bridge was the larger, and was subdivided into many squads, some of which did not cross the bridge, and remained standing on the side opposite to "Chinatown"; others that had already crossed the bridge stood on the right and left at the end of it. Several squads marched up the hill behind Coal-pit No. 3. One squad remained at Coal-shed No. 3, and another at the pump-house. The squad that remained at the pump-house fired the first shot, and the squad that stood at Coal-shed No. 3 immediately followed their example and fired. The Chinese by name of Lor Sun Kit was the first person shot, and fell to the ground. At that time the Chinese began to realize that the mob were bent on killing.

The Chinese, though greatly alarmed, did not yet begin to flee. Soon after, the mob on the hill behind Coal-pit No. 3 came down from the hill, and joining the different squads of the mob, fired their weapons and pressed on to Chinatown.

2. The Knights of Labor, which entered the Wyoming scene in 1883, had demanded the discharge of all Chinese employed by the Union Pacific.

The gang that were at the plank bridge also divided into several squads, pressing near and surrounding "Chinatown." One squad of them guarded the plank bridge in order to cut off the retreat of the Chinese.

Not long after, it was everywhere reported that a Chinese named Leo Dye Bah, who lived in the western part of "Chinatown," was killed by a bullet, and that another named Yip Ah Marn, resident in the eastern end of the town, was likewise killed. The Chinese now, to save their lives, fled in confusion in every direction, some going up the hill behind Coal-pit No. 3, others along the foot of the hill where Coal-pit No. 4 is; some from the eastern end of the town fled across Bitter Creek to the opposite hill, and others from the western end by the foot of the hill on the right of Coal-pit No. 5. The mob were now coming in the three directions, namely, the east and west sides of the town and from the wagon road.

Whenever the mob met a Chinese they stopped him, and pointing a weapon at him, asked him if he had any revolver, and then approaching him they searched his person, robbing him of his watch or any gold or silver that he might have about him, before letting him go. Some of the rioters would let a Chinese go after depriving him of all his gold and silver, while another Chinese would be beaten with the butt ends of the weapons before being let go. Some of the rioters, when they could not stop a Chinese, would shoot him dead on the spot, and then search and rob him. Some would overtake a Chinese, throw him down and search and rob him before they would let him go. Some of the rioters would not fire their weapons, but would only use the butt ends to beat the Chinese with. Some would not beat a Chinese, but rob him of whatever he had and let him go, yelling to him to go quickly. Some, who took no part either in beating or robbing the Chinese, stood by, shouting loudly and laughing and clapping their hands.

There was a gang of women that stood at the "Chinatown" end of the plank bridge and cheered; among the women, two of them each fired successive shots at the Chinese. This was done about a little past 3 o'clock P.M.

Most of the Chinese fled towards the eastern part of "Chinatown." Some of them ran across Bitter Creek, went up directly to the opposite hill, crossing the grassy plain. Some of them went along the foot of the hill where Coal-pit No. 4 stood, to cross the creek, and by a devious route reached the opposite hill. Some of them ran up to the hill of Coal-pit No. 3, and thence winding around the hills went to the opposite hill. A few of them fled to the foot of the hill where Coal-pit No. 5 stood, and ran across the creek, and thence by a winding course to the western end of the "Whitemen's Town." But very few did this.

The Chinese who were the first to flee mostly dispersed themselves at the back hills, on the opposite bank of the creek, and among the opposite hills. They were scattered far and near, high and low, in about one hundred places. Some were standing, or sitting, or lying hid on the grass, or stooping down on

the low grounds. Every one of them was praying to Heaven or groaning with pain. They had been eyewitnesses to the shooting in "Chinatown," and had seen the whites, male and female, old and young, searching houses for money, household effects, or goods, which were carried across to "Whitemen's Town."

Some of the rioters went off toward the railroad of Coal-pit No. 6, others set fire to the Chinese houses. Between 4 o'clock P.M. and a little past 9 o'clock P.M. all the camp houses belonging to the coal company and the Chinese huts had been burned down completely, only one of the company's camp houses remaining. Several of the camp houses near Coal-pit No. 6 were also burned, and the three Chinese huts there were also burned. All the Chinese houses burned numbered seventy-nine.

Some of the Chinese were killed at the bank of Bitter Creek, some near the railroad bridge, and some in "Chinatown." After having been killed, the dead bodies of some were carried to the burning buildings and thrown into the flames. Some of the Chinese who had hid themselves in the houses were killed and their bodies burned; some, who on account of sickness could not run, were burned alive in the houses. One Chinese was killed in "Whitemen's Town" in a laundry house, and his house demolished. The whole number of Chinese killed was twenty-eight and those wounded fifteen.

The money that the Chinese lost was that which in their hurry they were unable to take with them, and consequently were obliged to leave in their houses, or that which was taken from their persons. The goods, clothing, or household effects remaining in their houses were either plundered or burned.

When the Chinese fled to the different hills they intended to come back to "Chinatown" when the riot was over, to dispose of the dead bodies and to take care of the wounded. But to their disappointment, all the houses were burned to ashes, and there was then no place of shelter for them; they were obliged to run blindly from hill to hill. Taking the railroad as their guide, they walked toward the town of Green River, some of them reaching that place in the morning, others at noon, and others not until dark. There were some who did not reach it until the 4th of September. We felt very thankful to the railroad company for having telegraphed to the conductors of all its trains to pick up such of the Chinese as were to be met with along the line of the railroad and carry them to Evanston.

On the 5th of September all the Chinese that had fled assembled at Evanston; the native citizens there threatened day and night to burn and kill the Chinese. Fortunately, United States troops had been ordered to come and protect them, and quiet was restored. On the 9th of September the United States government instructed the troops to escort the Chinese back to Rock Springs. When they arrived there they saw only a burnt tract of ground to mark the sites of their former habitations. Some of the dead bodies had been buried by the company, while others, mangled and decomposed, were strewn on the ground and were being eaten by dogs and hogs. Some

of the bodies were not found until they were dug out of the ruins of the buildings. Some had been burned beyond recognition. It was a sad and painful sight to see the son crying for the father, the brother for the brother, the uncle for the nephew, and friend for friend.

By this time most of the Chinese have abandoned the desire of resuming their mining work, but inasmuch as the riot has left them each with only the one or two torn articles of clothing they have on their persons, and as they have not a single cent in their pockets, it is a difficult matter for them to make any change in their location. Fortunately, the company promised to lend them clothing and provisions, and a number of wagons to sleep in. Although protected by Government troops, their sleep is disturbed by frightful dreams, and they cannot obtain peaceful rest.

Some of the rioters who killed the Chinese and who set fire to the homes could be identified by the Chinese, and some not. Among them the two women heretofore mentioned, and who killed some Chinese, were specially recognized by many Chinese. Among the rioters who robbed and plundered were men, women, and children. Even the white woman who formerly taught English to the Chinese searched for and took handkerchiefs and other articles.

The Chinese know that the white men who worked in Coal-pit No. 1 did not join the mob, and most of them did not stop work, either. We heard that the coal company's officers had taken a list of the names of the rioters who were particularly brutal and murderous, which list numbered forty or fifty.

From a survey of all the circumstances, several causes may be assigned for the killing and wounding of so many Chinese and the destruction of so much property:

(1) The Chinese had been for a long time employed at the same work as the white men. While they knew that the white men entertained ill feelings toward them, the Chinese did not take precautions to guard against this sudden outbreak, inasmuch as at no time in the past had there been any quarrel or fighting between the races.

(2) On the 2nd day of September, 1885, in Coal-pit No. 6, the white men attacked the Chinese. That place being quite a distance from Rock Springs, very few Chinese were there. As we did not think that the trouble would extend to Rock Springs, we did not warn each other to prepare for flight.

(3) Most of the Chinese living in Rock Springs worked during the daytime in the different coal mines, and consequently did not hear of the fight at Coal-pit No. 6, nor did they know of the armed mob that had assembled in "Whitemen's Town." When 12 o'clock came, everybody returned home from his place of work to lunch. As yet the mob had not come to attack the Chinese; a great number of the latter were returning to work without any apprehension of danger.

(4) About 2 o'clock the mob suddenly made their appearance for the attack. The Chinese thought that they had only assembled to threaten, and that

some of the company's officers would come to disperse them. Most of the Chinese, acting upon this view of the matter, did not gather up their money or clothing, and when the mob fired at them they fled precipitately. Those Chinese who were in the workshops, hearing of the riot, stopped work and fled in their working clothes, and did not have time enough to go home to change their clothes or to gather up their money. What they had left at home was either plundered or burned.

(5) None of the Chinese had firearms or any defensive weapons, nor was there any place that afforded an opportunity for the erection of a barricade that might impede the rioters in their attack. The Chinese were all like a herd of frightened deer that let the huntsmen surround and kill them.

(6) All the Chinese had, on the 1st of September, bought from the company a month's supply of provision and the implements necessary for the mining of coal. This loss of property was therefore larger than it would be later in the month.

We never thought that the subjects of a nation entitled by treaty to the rights and privileges of the most favored nation<sup>3</sup> could, in a country so highly civilized like this, so unexpectedly suffer the cruelty and wrong of being unjustly put to death, or of being wounded and left without the means of cure, or of being abandoned to poverty, hunger, and cold, and without the means to betake themselves elsewhere.

To the great President of the United States, who, hearing of the riot, sent troops to protect our lives, we are most sincerely thankful.

In behalf of those killed or wounded, or of those deprived of their property, we pray that the examining commission will ask our minister to sympathize, and to endeavor to secure the punishment of the murderers, the relief of the wounded, and compensation for those despoiled of their property, so that the living and the relatives of the dead will be grateful, and never forget his kindness for generations.

Hereinabove we have made a brief recital of the facts of this riot, and pray your honor will take them into your kind consideration.

SOURCE: *U.S. House Report* (1885-1886), 49th Congress, 1st Session, no. 2044, pp. 28-32.

#### OTHER REFERENCES

Arif Dirlik, ed., *Chinese in the American Frontier* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001).

Craig Storti, *Incident at Bitter Creek: The Story of the Rock Springs Chinese Massacre* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1991).

Shih-shan Henry Tsai, *China and the Overseas Chinese in the United States, 1868-1911* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1983).

3. Legal status accorded to countries with which the United States wished to trade.

## A Chinese View of the Statue of Liberty (1885)

Saum Song Bo

*The following letter by a Chinese immigrant in response to the building of the Statue of Liberty pedestal in 1885 was first published in the New York Sun newspaper and later reprinted in the monthly periodical American Missionary. Just three years before, Congress had passed the Chinese Exclusion Act, barring further immigration of Chinese laborers to this country and denying Chinese immigrants the right to become naturalized U.S. citizens. Excluded from political participation and denied civil rights as symbolized by the Statue of Liberty, Chinese immigrants such as Saum Song Bo considered it an insult that they were being asked to contribute funds toward the building of the statue. To add salt to the wound, the statue was a gift from France, which that same year had defeated Chinese troops in Indochina and begun to colonize the area that is now Vietnam.*

Sir:

A paper was presented to me yesterday for inspection, and I found it to be specially drawn up for subscription among my countrymen toward the Pedestal Fund of the Bartholdi Statue of Liberty.<sup>1</sup> Seeing that the heading is an appeal to American citizens, to their love of country and liberty, I feel that my countrymen and myself are honored in being thus appealed to as citizens in the cause of liberty. But the word liberty makes me think of the fact that this country is the land of liberty for men of all nations except the Chinese. I consider it as an insult to us Chinese to call on us to contribute toward building in this land a pedestal for a statue of Liberty. That statue represents Liberty holding a torch which lights the passage of those of all

1. The Statue of Liberty was designed by Augustus Bartholdi and given to the United States by the French in memory of the two countries' alliance during the American Revolution. An additional \$270,000 had to be raised among the American people to build the statue's pedestal.

nations who come into this country. But are the Chinese allowed to come? As for the Chinese who are here, are they allowed to enjoy liberty as men of all other nationalities enjoy it? Are they allowed to go about everywhere free from the insults, abuse, assaults, wrongs and injuries from which men of other nationalities are free?

If there be a Chinaman who came to this country when a lad, who has passed through an American institution of learning of the highest grade, who has so fallen in love with American manners and ideas that he desires to make his home in this land, and who, seeing that his countrymen demand one of their own number to be their legal adviser, representative, advocate and protector, desires to study law, can he be a lawyer? By the law of this nation, he, being a Chinaman, cannot become a citizen, and consequently cannot be a lawyer.

And this statue of Liberty is a gift to a people from another people who do not love or value liberty for the Chinese. Are not the Annamese and Tonquinese [Tonkinese] Chinese, to whom liberty is as dear as to the French? What right have the French to deprive them of their liberty?

Whether this statute against the Chinese or the statue to Liberty will be the more lasting monument to tell future ages of the liberty and greatness of this country, will be known only to future generations.

Liberty, we Chinese do love and adore thee; but let not those who deny thee to us, make of thee a graven image and invite us to bow down to it.

SOURCE: *American Missionary*, October 1885, p. 290.

#### OTHER REFERENCES

- Sucheng Chan, ed., *Entry Denied: Exclusion and the Chinese Community in America, 1882-1943* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991).  
 Philip P. Choy, Lorraine Dong, and Marlon K. Hom, *The Coming Man: 19th-Century American Perceptions of the Chinese* (Hong Kong: Joint Publishing Co., 1994).  
 Charles J. McClain, *In Search of Equality: The Chinese Struggle against Discrimination in Nineteenth-Century America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).

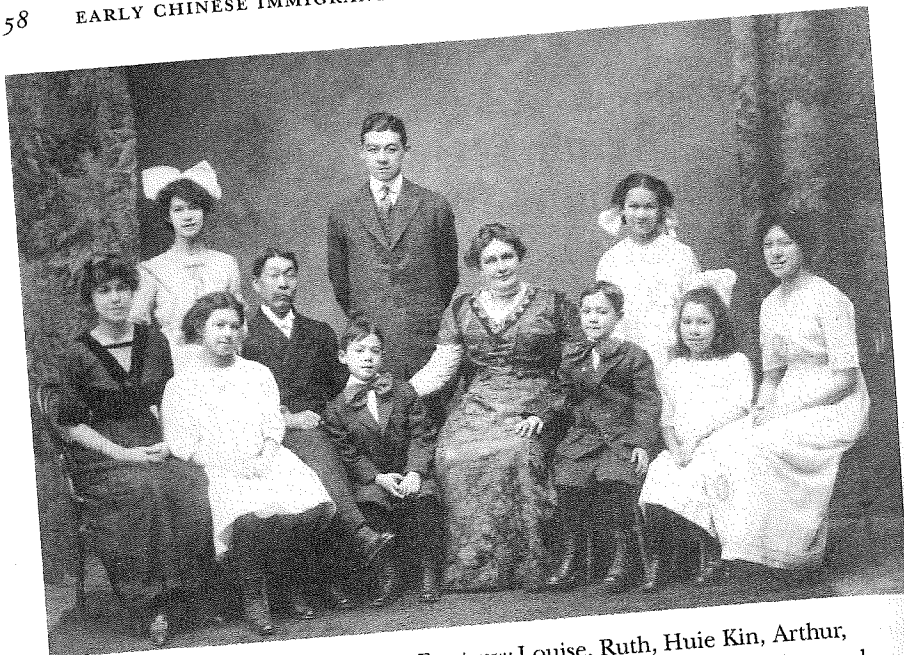
## Reminiscences of an Early Chinese Minister (1932)

Huie Kin

*Even before Chinese immigration to the United States became significant in the mid-nineteenth century, American missionaries were in China spreading the Gospel. In addition to their evangelical work, they helped establish a web of social ties between the two countries. On returning to the United States, they worked among Chinese immigrants. Although the missionaries were only modestly successful in winning converts, many of the early Chinese American Christians played leading roles in their communities as educational, social, and religious leaders. Huie Kin was one of these.*

Born Huie Kin-kwong ("Light of Scholarship") in 1854 in a poor village in Sunning (now Taishan) District, Guangdong Province, he emigrated to the United States in 1868 at the age of fourteen. He and other youngsters in his village had caught "gold fever" after hearing stories from villagers who had returned from California. Huie initially settled in Oakland, where he worked as a houseboy for several different families. One of his employers taught him to read and write English, and introduced him to Christianity. After he was baptized in 1874, he became a leader in the local Chinese Sunday school. Several years later, at the age of twenty-six, Huie entered the Lane Theological Seminary in Cincinnati, Ohio, at the urging of his "spiritual father," Dr. Nathaniel Eells, pastor of the Oakland Presbyterian Church.

In 1885 he became the first Chinese Christian minister in New York and one of the prominent leaders of the local Chinese community. He actively propagated the Gospel among the local Chinese, attended to the needs of the poor, and tried to bridge the divide between the Chinese and white American communities. He married Louise Van Arnam, a volunteer mission worker and daughter of a New York police officer. The two had six daughters, all of whom married Chinese professional men and went to China to live with them, and three sons, who married white American women and stayed in the United States. Late in life, Huie Kin returned to China and in 1932, two years before his death, published his memoirs, from which the following excerpts are taken. His recollections include many vivid memories of his youth in China, his



Huie Kin family portrait, ca. 1911. *Front row:* Louise, Ruth, Huie Kin, Arthur, Louise Van Arnam, Albert, Dorothy, and Alice. *Back row:* Caroline, Irving, and Helen. (Courtesy of the Huie Kin descendants)

*adolescence in Oakland, his religious education, many travels, encounters with prominent Chinese political and educational leaders, and the building of the First Chinese Presbyterian Church in New York City.*

#### AN IMMIGRANT BOY

On a clear, crisp, September morning in 1868, or the seventh year of our Emperor Tongzhi, the mists lifted, and we sighted land for the first time since we left the shores of Kwangtung over sixty days before. To be actually at the "Golden Gate" of the land of our dreams! The feeling that welled up in us was indescribable. I wonder whether the ecstasy before the Pearly Gates of the Celestial City above could surpass what we felt at the moment we realized that we had reached our destination. We rolled up our bedding, packed our baskets, straightened our clothes, and waited.

In those days there were no immigration laws or tedious examinations; people came and went freely. Somebody had brought to the pier large wagons for us. Out of the general babble, someone called out in our local dialect, and, like sheep recognizing the voice only, we blindly followed, and soon were piling into one of the waiting wagons. Everything was so strange

and so exciting that my memory of the landing is just a big blur. The wagon made its way heavily over the cobblestones, turned some corners, ascended a steep climb, and stopped at a kind of clubhouse, where we spent the night. Later, I learned that people from various districts had their own benevolent societies, with headquarters in San Francisco's Chinatown. As there were six of them, they were known as the "Six Companies." Newcomers were taken care of until relatives came to claim them and pay the bill. The next day our relatives from Oakland took us across the bay to the little Chinese settlement there, and kept us until we found work.

In the sixties, San Francisco's Chinatown was made up of stores catering to the Chinese only. There was only one store, situated at the corner of Sacramento and Dupont streets, which kept Chinese and Japanese curios for the American trade. Our people were all in their native costume, with queues down their backs, and kept their stores just as they would do in China, with the entire street front open and groceries and vegetables overflowing on the sidewalks. Forty thousand Chinese were then resident in the bay region, and so these stores did a flourishing business. The Oakland Chinatown was a smaller affair, more like a mining camp, with rough board houses on a vacant lot near Broadway and Sixteenth Street. Under the roof of the houses was a shelf built in the rear and reached by a ladder. Here we slept at night, rolled in our blankets much in the manner of Indians. . . .

My first job was in a family as general help, earning \$1.50 a week with board. There lingers still in my memory the vision of the ubiquitous apple sauce on the table, which I soon got so sick and tired of that I would have given anything for a Chinese meal. Our culinary tastes play an important part in the psychology of homesickness. We were told on Scriptural authority that the one thing that marred the otherwise joyous exit of the Israelites from the land of their serfdom and their triumphal journey to their new home in Canaan was the longing for the meats and drinks they were accustomed to in Egypt, and when the good Lord heard their pleading and sent them a flock of wild geese, or something of that sort, the people ate so heartily that many died of acute indigestion. One of the homely remedies we have in China for homesickness is to take along a bit of native earth, mix it with water, and drink it when one is in a strange land. I do not know what its therapeutic effect is on our internal workings, but at least it soothes one's feelings. . . .

#### MISSIONARY WORK IN NEW YORK

Chinatown then [1886] lay on both sides of Mott Street and was filled with gambling houses, which, in open daylight, carried on their nefarious trade, stripping poor workingmen of their earnings. It was a little Monte Carlo, but without its glamour, and its uncrowned prince was Tom Lee, head of the On Leong Association and known among Americans as the "Mayor of China-

town." We were then young, full of ardor to right the wrongs of the world, and decided to wipe out the evil business, even though we knew that the most powerful organizations were behind it, and the city police, for some reason, were maintaining a tolerant attitude towards it. We secured the backing of Mr. Anthony Comstock, secretary of the Society for the Prevention of Crime. We went into the gambling houses dressed as ordinary workmen, mingled with the habitués and got to know the proprietors or operators by sight. With the incriminating information in hand, we had warrants issued, and even took part in the raids, quite unaware of the personal risk we were running. Very soon [missionary workers] Guy Maine [a.k.a. Yee Kai Man], Joseph Singleton [a.k.a. Chew Mon Sing], and I were spotted men.<sup>1</sup> The gamblers threatened us with physical violence if we did not leave them alone; and when they found us unmoved, approached us with attractive offers to share their profits. One evening some armed men tried to waylay me along a certain street which I usually took to return to the mission, but somehow I took into my head to return by a different way and thus avoided the encounter. On another occasion, when we were leaving the Tombs, after having successfully prosecuted some gamblers, a man came up from behind and aimed something at my head; fortunately, Mr. Allen Williams knocked the assailant down before he could do any harm. Mr. Allen Williams was the agent to an insurance company from which I had just taken out a policy. It was a coincidence that he should be there, but the rumor spread in Chinatown that the insurance company maintained a bodyguard for Huie Kin. Taking out life insurance policies was then quite a novel thing with our people.

Another incident of a similar kind happened a few years later. It was Sunday and, as usual, church service was to commence at 2 P.M., and men would drift in and find a welcome, whether they were members or strangers. As I was leaving my study to go up to the pulpit, I noticed three men entering the church whom I suspected to belong to the group that had attempted to kill me. I told Mrs. Huie of my suspicion, leaving her to deal with them as best as she could without disturbing the audience. Mrs. Huie met them in the vestibule, greeted them cordially, as was her custom, and ushered them to seats in the very front row in the church. The men sat down sheepishly, stayed about five minutes, and slipped out. I do not believe any permanent good was done by our activities, but we did stir things up so that the police had to close all the gambling houses. They remained closed for a year or so.

Once a meeting held at the Second Avenue Presbyterian Church was addressed by a lady missionary from China. A number of our people, as well

1. Both Guy Maine and Joseph Singleton were Christian converts who had arrived in New York City in the 1880s. Maine established the Sunday school of St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church, and Singleton was director of the Chinese Mission of the United Congregational Church, interpreter for U.S. Customs, and a member of the Chinese Reform Party.

as I myself, attended. The lady spoke fervently for the cause of evangelizing China's millions, and drew a vivid and impressive picture of the social and spiritual transformation that Christianity was making in the land of Old Cathay. The address was well received by the audience until the speaker, in her desire to bring out the contrast between Christian and heathen civilization, overdid herself in painting a black picture of Chinese homes without a ray of redeeming love, little children crushed under inhuman cruelty, women denied an education and treated as the plaything of the predatory male, etc. The storm broke when she generalized that all Chinese men beat their wives without cause. One Chu vehemently remonstrated in his broken English against this obvious exaggeration: "Fourteen year in China, no Christian, no beat wife one time." I also stood up to say that in my own village I had never seen a man beating his wife. The lady asked me how many wives my father had. I replied that he had only one wife, my mother; and as a return thrust, I added that it seemed that even preachers in Christian America sometimes could not avoid difficulties with their wives. This roused ripples of laughter in the audience, for just at that time the newspapers were featuring the domestic troubles of a prominent minister in the city. . . .

#### MY MARRIAGE

Our people have a belief that marriages are made in heaven, hence the importance of consulting fortune tellers beforehand to make sure that the birth cycles of the prospective bride and groom harmonize with each other, thus insuring matrimonial happiness. In the West people make matches first, and then consult the fortune mender (psychiatrist, psychotherapist, and what not) afterwards. Whether marriages are made in heaven or on earth, there is such a thing as love at first sight, an inner urge and conviction beyond the reach of conscious reasoning that one has found his lifemate. That was how I felt when I first met Miss Van Arnam. Even the fact that she was of another race made no difference to me, and neither could the social prejudice against international marriages stand in my way. Our common interest in mission work brought us together frequently, and, like any young man bent on winning a fair maiden, I made use of every opportunity to cultivate her good opinion and strengthen the bonds that held us together. I frequented the prayer meetings at the Dewitt Memorial Chapel, Twenty-Ninth Street and Seventh Avenue, where Miss Van Arnam had her practical training. No doubt at first she merely regarded me as an interesting Chinaman engaged in Christian work, and attributed my presence at these prayer meetings to religious zeal. I invited her to help us at the mission and consulted her about our work. More and more her interest in the Chinese people grew, acquaintance deepened into friendship, and friendship ripened into life comradeship. I confided the matter to Dr. George Alexander, my pastor and chairman

of our Mission Committee. With his usual acumen, the good doctor asked to see the young lady. So I took Miss Van Arnam to see him. Salutations over, Dr. Alexander, with infinite tact, asked whether she had thought of the fact that centuries of a different culture lay behind the life of the young man whom she had decided to accept as her husband. Miss Van Arnam replied that she realized the difference in our racial and cultural backgrounds, but she believed that back of us both was the Lord God, who created all races of one blood and meant them to live together in mutual service. We left with our pastor's blessing.

We next called on her parents at Troy to obtain their consent to the marriage. Mr. Van Arnam said that he liked me personally well enough, but how could he entertain the thought of his daughter living under the stigma of having married a Chinaman? Her pastor, a kindly old gentleman of the conservative school, was genuinely perturbed. "You marry a Chinaman?" he said to her; "Why, you could marry any man in the Troy Conference. . . . And have you considered where would your children stand?" Miss Van Arnam's reply was at once dignified and to the point. She said that if God should bless our home with children, she would bring them up in the fear of the Lord and educate them for a useful life in the world, trusting that they would be able to take their place, the equal of any other young men and women. She saw her mother alone, who told her that she was old enough to know what she was doing and that she would not stand in the way of her happiness.

We were quietly married by Dr. Alexander on April 4, 1889, the ceremony being witnessed by a small group of intimate friends, including Mr. K. P. Lee, of the Chinese Legation, and Mr. Chang Foyin, of Columbia Law School.<sup>2</sup> After the church service, a reception for the Chinese community was held at our Mission. For our honeymoon, we visited Washington, D.C., where, through the introduction of the Legation, we called on President Harrison, who very graciously presented to Mrs. Huie a bouquet of flowers from the White House Conservatory. . . .

#### ASSISTING DR. SUN YAT-SEN

In the summer of 1903 we spent our vacation in visiting the World's Fair at St. Louis, Mo., and seeing old friends on the Pacific Coast. In San Francisco we met Dr. Sun Yat-sen, then a political refugee from China with a big prize on his head. As he was proceeding to New York, we urged him to stop at our Mission. This he did, but he got there before we returned. Our Bertha who

2. Most likely Kwai-pan Lee and Chang Hon-yen, both former students of the Chinese Educational Mission. Chang became the first Chinese lawyer in the United States when he received his law degree from Columbia University in 1886.

received him explained that no accommodation was available except a small room at the head of the stairs on the fourth floor with only a sky-light. Without saying who he was, Dr. Sun took the little room and moved in with his suit-cases. Later he was transferred into a bigger and better lighted room. Here he spent the summer months and with him were the brothers Wang Chung-hui and Wang Chung-yao, sons of my old friend Rev. Wang Yu Cho of Hongkong, at that time studying at Yale and at Columbia respectively. What they were working on nobody in the house had any inkling of, but we were later told that the first draft of the Constitution of the Chinese Republic was made there. . . .

Dr. Sun was advocating a more drastic policy, namely, to overturn the Manchu Regime and make China a Republic. Kang [Youwei, the reformer] and Sun could not see eye to eye in this matter. The business interests were opposed to a revolution. Dr. Sun's following was mostly among the laboring and student classes. When he was staying at our place, a threatening letter came demanding that we oust him or else our Mission would be boycotted by the Chinese people. In reply, I made a public announcement that the Mission was not interested in politics and was open to all comers whatever their political views. In time Dr. Sun's persistent and self-sacrificial efforts bore fruit. Especially the younger elements, students and workers alike, rallied around him and joined his secret revolutionary organization, the Tung Meng Hui, precursor of the Kuomintang. A fascinating and fluent speaker, well informed about world affairs and backed by his unselfish devotion to the national cause, undaunted courage and a romantic career, Dr. Sun could hold his audiences spellbound for hours at a time, whether they numbered by the hundreds and thousands or only a handful. He was at his best when in the quiet of the night, with a small group of followers gathered around the lamp-light, as often happened in the back-rooms of the little laundries in New York City, he spoke to them about the military reverses and diplomatic failures of China and expounded his programme for the liberation and self-rule of the Chinese people. He often appeared weary and worn in body, but always enthusiastic for his cause and never down-hearted.

His next visit to New York was in July 1910 when he returned from England shortly before the Revolution actually broke out at Wuchang in central China. Dr. Sun spent the evening with us, talking about his plans until three in the morning. He said that everything was ready for the revolution to start but they needed more funds and suggested that on his return from San Francisco and Portland in the fall, he be introduced to some American sympathizers who were financially able to help the movement. I did speak to Mr. Thomas Denney of Wall Street, a classmate of Mr. Yung Wing at Yale. But Dr. Sun did not come back. He was in England when the Wuchang uprising in November 1911 precipitated the revolution and he hurried back to the old country to head up the new Republican Government in Nanking. . . .

## "ALL THINGS TO ALL MEN"

From the very beginning a great deal of my time was taken up with helping individuals in trouble, such as illness, lawsuits, misunderstanding with their American landlords, financial difficulties, home problems, etc. Like other immigrants, the Chinese people find life difficult in America on account of differences in language and ignorance of the customs, which in turn cause misunderstanding with the people of other races. Such difficulties can become very serious, but they are also easily adjusted, if properly handled by those who happen to know the language and usages of the land, and have friends on both sides of the line. Hence people came to me for such friendly advice and help that I could give without difficulty, though involving much time and energy. When a foreigner is in good health and able to earn his own livelihood, he can well take care of himself, but when he gets sick, is laid up, and without employment, he is pitifully helpless. He cannot afford private medical attention and yet does not know where the hospitals are or how to get in. So every year, I brought a good number of sick Chinese to the hospitals. . . .

Charlie Hin kept a basement laundry and came to our Sunday School at 14 University Place. One winter Sunday, he was not at the Mission. We found him sick with pneumonia in his basement laundry, almost dying. He refused to go to the hospital, for he had heard of doctors taking out the patients' eyes while they were under ether. I assured him I would personally go with him and visit him every day. He got well, and thenceforth he could not say enough about the clean linen and fine treatment they gave him at the hospital; he thought that the doctors and nurses were like angels. While he was convalescing in the hospital, I told him that I had an invitation from our Chinese minister at Washington, D.C., and had to be away for several days. Charlie got excited and wanted me to take him out of the hospital that very day. This was impossible; his importunity won and I had to cancel my trip. . . .

The Mission door bell rang vigorously at 4 o'clock, one March morning. On opening the door, I found a Chinese brother who had walked up from Chinatown in the rain. He rushed into the church, saying, "I come worship, I come worship," knelt before the pulpit and "kowitzed" as he would in a temple. I stayed with him, gave him some hot drink, and quieted him. He kept complaining, "I lost my soul; man died in Chinatown taken my soul away; can't you see I have only a head, soul gone?" I told him that he had come to the right place and that we would do all we could to have his soul restored to him. We arranged for him to be taken care of in a hospital for mental disorders. The man got well, recovered his reason and was never troubled again with the malady.

In one year, I introduced as many as eighty-one sick persons to the hospitals. That was in 1923, two years before my retirement. I became a familiar figure to the gate-keepers, and the patients were known as "Huie's pa-

tients." I knew the doctors and nurses and social workers at the Presbyterian Hospital best of all, and for their care of the Chinese patients, these strangers without a home and often without friends or relatives, I can never adequately express my indebtedness. I recall in particular Dr. Charles Young, Superintendent of the Hospital, and Dr. Fisher preceding him. I would take up a sick man and Dr. Young would put his arm in mine and together we would go to a ward. He would speak to the head nurse: "This is Huie's patient." This was sufficient: however crowded the ward, a bed was found for "Huie's patient." They were all wonderful to the Chinese. Often a patient had nothing with which to pay his hospital bill; I would appeal to the Superintendent and he would remit the fee. In return, every year I went around among the Chinese restaurants and laundries to take up a collection for the hospital.

All sorts of people sought my help, both known and unknown to me. Whenever a case seemed hopeless, it would be referred to me. One night, I received word that a white woman in Chinatown wanted to see me. She was dying and wanted to speak to a clergyman. I went down with Mrs. Huie. The front door of the building, opening on the Bowery, was found locked. We went through the Chinese theatre, down a rope ladder, through a sub-basement, up a flight of stairs and got to her room. We talked with her, prayed with her and comforted her as best as we knew how, a young woman of another nationality, an actress by profession, who had drifted into the Bowery and was dying of the dreaded T.B. She passed away the next day.

Tom, 15, was a difficult boy to manage. His uncle thrashed him, and he in turn hit the uncle. He was charged with attempted murder and committed to the Jefferson Market Court detention-house. Our Mission was then at 26 West 9th Street, not far from the Market. I went to see the boy and sent him some Chinese food every evening. At the trial, I was present. He put his arms around my neck, clung to me and promised that he would be good, if I would take him home. I pleaded with the judge and the judge agreed to leave him in Mrs. Huie's custody. We had him in the old house with our own children for several weeks until he found work. Tom's uncle, of course, did not like my interference in his family affairs and for a long time avoided me and our Mission. Years afterwards I met him, explained that my interference was for the boy's own good, and we were reconciled. . . .

Some years ago it was a common practice for Chinese to be smuggled into the United States from Canada. At Plattsburg, N.Y., they would try to get in and be arrested. Certain lawyers who were in the business on a commission basis, namely, a fixed sum for a successful entry, would get as witnesses Chinese residents with registration papers, to testify that they had known the individuals in question in San Francisco, were present at the shaving of the baby's hair (which was equivalent to a baptism certificate), etc. In this way they would get into the country, with good registration papers issued to them as native-born. My contention was that so long as a Chinese was in the coun-

try, with or without registration paper, he should not be molested. It was up to the Government to keep them out, but once within the country, they should be left alone.

An amusing incident occurred in Buffalo. A Chinese had bought a ticket for China and was on his way. At Buffalo, he was arrested and detained, because he could not produce his registration paper. I was asked to go and straighten up the case. I called on the Commissioner of Immigration and explained that the man was really on his way to China; he had no registration paper, but there was his ticket for the journey. The Commissioner would not believe us and said that the United States Government would deport the person. So I got the man to give me his ticket and collected the refund for him, while the United States provided him with a free trip back to the old country.

Ling Fong was an inmate of a bad house. Word came through to the Mission that she wanted our help to secure her freedom. We got Mr. William Beecher interested in the case. Mr. William Beecher was a well known lawyer of New York, once a district attorney and son of Dr. Henry Ward Beecher, the famous preacher. We arranged for her to escape from the house. She stayed for a week in the Beecher home and then came to our house. At that time, we were living at Sackman Street, Brooklyn. The keepers of the house discovered her escape and traced her movements to our place. So a group of them came and demanded her return. It so happened that, only a few minutes before, the girl had left with Mrs. Harriet Carter, a Baptist mission worker, to attend a court session in New York. There was a street car station at the back of our block and it seemed that the men had come around to the front of the house one way and the women had gone the other way and so they did not meet. Mrs. Huie alone was in with our son Irving. The men fiercely demanded the Chinese girl.

Mrs. Huie: "There is no Chinese girl here."

The men: "You have her."

Mrs. Huie: "Then look through the place, and if I have her, take her away and my house too."

The men searched the place, looked into closets, crawled up the attic, and of course, left in a threatening mood but empty-handed. At the trial, Mr. Beecher prosecuted the girl's keeper; she was given her freedom and brought back to our house. Two weeks later she was transferred to a Home for Girls at 23 East 11th Street, where she made herself very useful. The Superintendent became much interested in her and spoke to her about her spiritual welfare. One morning before daybreak, Ling Fong excitedly rapped at the Superintendent's door and called, "Get up, get up; I talk to God, He talk to me."

She was baptized by Dr. Alexander. Afterwards she married a Chinese restaurant proprietor, maintained a beautiful home and adopted a number of orphaned children, whom she cared for and sent through school. . . .

The forty years of my ministry were filled with cases of the kind I have here given, helping my countrymen in time of distress. It is true some of the younger people went through the Mission to positions of high standing in business and in political life, but they are a very small minority. The majority were composed of humble workingmen and tradesmen—strangers in a strange land, unknown beyond the narrow circle of their own nationality, whose existence in the community was without significance and left not a record because they were without vote or citizenship. But I was glad that my lot was cast among them and that in living among them and working for them, I seemed to get a clearer insight into the mind and spirit of that Great Galilean, who lived so close to his people, that their joys became his joys, and their sorrows, his sorrows. Without trumpeting and heralding, the work of our Mission Church was carried on from year to year, hidden away in a humble corner of the gigantic metropolis, ministering to a neglected but self-respecting nationality group of five thousand souls.

SOURCE: Huie Kin, *Reminiscences* (Peiping: San Yu Press, 1932). Reprinted by permission of George L. Trigg.

#### OTHER REFERENCES

- Arthur Bonner, *ALAS! What Brought Thee Hither? The Chinese in New York, 1800-1950* (London: Associated University Presses, 1997).
- Leong Gor Yun, *Chinatown Inside Out* (New York: Barrows Mussey, 1936).
- Timothy Tseng, "Chinese Protestant Nationalism in the United States, 1880-1927," in *New Spiritual Homes: Religion and Asian Americans*, ed. David K. Yoo (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1998), pp. 19-51.
- Wesley Woo, "Chinese Protestants in the San Francisco Bay Area," in *Entry Denied: Exclusion and the Chinese Community in America, 1882-1943*, ed. Sucheng Chan (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991), pp. 213-45.