

HUMAN / ENVIRONMENT INTERACTION

Organizing Questions

- What physical, natural, and social challenges did Chinese railroad workers encounter while building the Transcontinental Railroad?
- How did the Transcontinental Railroad impact the development of the American West?
- How did the Transcontinental Railroad change Chinese railroad workers' lives?
- In what ways are the issues of the Transcontinental Railroad relevant to today's technological advancements?

Introduction

In this lesson, students learn the significance of the Transcontinental Railroad and how it transformed the physical and cultural landscape of the country through examining resources from the Chinese Railroad Workers in North America Project (CRWNAP) website and collection, as well as interviews of Chinese railroad workers' descendants.

On Day One, students are introduced to the lesson through viewing a series of images that depict some of the physical and natural challenges the Chinese railroad workers encountered. Students then conduct additional research by exploring the "Geography of Chinese Workers Building the Transcontinental Railroad" page of the CRWNAP website and answering questions pertaining to the material on the site.

On Day Two, students review their answers and discuss topics pertaining to the "Geography of Chinese Workers Building the Transcontinental Railroad" page. Students then read oral histories of several descendants of the Chinese railroad workers and recreate interviews that they will present to the class.

On Day Three (and Day Four if needed), students present their interviews of Chinese railroad workers. After the presentations, students engage in a class discussion. To conclude the lesson, students listen to the song "Men of Iron" and create a song of their own, incorporating imagery and information they studied throughout the lesson.

Objectives

In this lesson, students will

- learn how a railroad is built to understand the difficulty and danger involved;
- examine the impact the Transcontinental Railroad had on the physical environment in the short term and long term;
- research the physical, natural, and social challenges that Chinese railroad workers encountered while building the Transcontinental Railroad;
- learn how the Transcontinental Railroad impacted the development of the American West;
- research and present findings on how the Transcontinental Railroad

- changed America and people's lives from a number of perspectives;
- consider how issues of the Transcontinental Railroad are relevant to today's technological advancements; and
- appreciate multiple perspectives.

Connections to Curriculum Standards

This lesson has been designed to meet certain national history, social studies, geography, and Common Core State Standards as defined by the National Center for History in the Schools, the National Council for the Social Studies, National Geography Standards, and the Common Core State Standards Initiative. The standards relevant to this lesson are listed here.

United States History (from National Center for History in the Schools)

- Era 4, Standard 2C, Grades 7–12: Explain how immigration intensified ethnic and cultural conflict and complicated the forging of a national identity. [Interrogate historical data]
- Era 6, Standard 2A, Grades 5–12: Trace patterns of immigrant settlement in different regions of the country and how new immigrants helped produce a composite American culture that transcended group boundaries. [Reconstruct patterns of historical succession and duration]
- Era 6, Standard 2A, Grades 5–12: Assess the challenges, opportunities, and contributions of different immigrant groups. [Examine historical perspectives]
- Era 6, Standard 2C, Grades 7–12: Describe how regional artists and writers portrayed American life in this period. [Read historical narratives imaginatively]
- Era 6, Standard 3A, Grades 9–12: Account for employment in different regions of the country as affected by gender, race, ethnicity, and skill. [Formulate historical questions]

National Social Studies Standards (from the National Council for the Social Studies)

- Culture; Thematic Strand I: Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of culture and cultural diversity.
- Time, Continuity, and Change; Thematic Strand II: Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of the ways human beings view themselves in and over time.
- People, Places, and Environments; Thematic Strand III: Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of people, places, and environments.
- Individual Development and Identity; Thematic Strand IV: Social

studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of individual development and identity.

- Individuals, Groups, and Institutions; Thematic Strand V: Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of interactions among individuals, groups, and institutions.
- Power, Authority and Governance; Thematic Strand VI: Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of how people create and change structures of power, authority, and governance.
- Production, Distribution, and Consumption, Thematic Strand VII: Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of how people organize for the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services.
- Science, Technology, and Society; Thematic Strand VIII: Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of relationships among science, technology, and society.
- Global Connections and Interdependence; Thematic Strand IX: Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of global connections and interdependence.

National Geography Standards

The National Geography Standards were established to form a framework that provides guidelines on what students should know about geography. The standards listed below have been categorized into six essential elements.

The World in Spatial Terms

The geographically informed person knows and understands:

- Standard 1: How to use maps and other geographic representations, tools, and technologies to acquire, process, and report information from a spatial perspective.
- Standard 2: How to use mental maps to organize information about people, places, and environments in a spatial context.
- Standard 3: How to analyze the spatial organization of people, places, and environments on Earth's surface.

Places and Regions

The geographically informed person knows and understands:

- Standard 4: The physical and human characteristics of places.
- Standard 5: That people create regions to interpret Earth's complexity.
- Standard 6: How culture and experience influence people's perceptions of places and regions.

Human Systems

The geographically informed person knows and understands:

- Standard 9: The characteristics, distribution, and migration of human populations on Earth's surface.
- Standard 10: The characteristics, distribution, and complexity of Earth's cultural mosaics.
- Standard 11: The patterns and networks of economic interdependence on Earth's surface.
- Standard 12: The processes, patterns, and functions of human settlement.
- Standard 13: How the forces of cooperation and conflict among people influence the division and control of Earth's surface.

Environment and Society

The geographically informed person knows and understands:

- Standard 14: How human actions modify the physical environment.
- Standard 15: How physical systems affect human systems.
- Standard 16: The changes that occur in the meaning, use, distribution, and importance of resources.

Reading Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies (from the Common Core State Standards Initiative)

- Standard 2, Grades 11–12: Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.
- Standard 3, Grades 9–10: Analyze in detail a series of events described in a text; determine whether earlier events caused later ones or simply preceded them.
- Standard 4, Grades 9–10: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/ social science.
- Standard 7, Grades 11–12: Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.
- Standard 9, Grades 11–12: Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.

Writing Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects (from the Common Core State Standards Initiative)

- Standard 4, Grades 6–12: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- Standard 6, Grades 9–12: Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products, taking advantage of technology’s capacity to link to other information and display information flexibly and dynamically.
- Standard 9, Grades 6–12: Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Materials

Handout 1, *Note-taking Sheet for Images from the Railroad*, 30 copies

Handout 2, *Map*, 30 copies

Handout 3, *Geography of Chinese Workers Building the Transcontinental Railroad*, 30 copies

Handout 4A, *Interviews of Chinese Railroad Workers’ Descendants: Bein Yiu Chung*, 3–4 copies

Handout 4B, *Interviews of Chinese Railroad Workers’ Descendants: Chin Lin Sou*, 3–4 copies

Handout 4C, *Interviews of Chinese Railroad Workers’ Descendants: Fong See*, 3–4 copies

Handout 4D, *Interviews of Chinese Railroad Workers’ Descendants: Hong Lai Wo*, 3–4 copies

Handout 4E, *Interviews of Chinese Railroad Workers’ Descendants: Jim King*, 3–4 copies

Handout 4F, *Interviews of Chinese Railroad Workers’ Descendants: Lim Lip Hong*, 3–4 copies

Handout 4G, *Interviews of Chinese Railroad Workers’ Descendants: Lum Ah Chew*, 3–4 copies

Handout 4H, *Interviews of Chinese Railroad Workers’ Descendants: Mock Chuck*, 3–4 copies

Handout 5, *Interview Activity*, 8 copies

Handout 6, *Interview Note-taking Sheet*, 30 copies

Handout 7, *Songwriting Activity*, 30 copies

PowerPoint Presentation, *Images from the Railroad* [separate file]

Slide Script, *Images from the Railroad*

Answer Key, *Geography of Chinese Workers Building the Transcontinental Railroad*

Equipment

Computer with Internet access and a Flash-enabled or HTML5-supported web browser

Computer projector and screen

Computer speakers
Colored markers or highlighters
15 computers with Internet access for student use

**Teacher
Preparation**

Instructions and materials are based on a class size of 30 students. Adjust accordingly for different class sizes.

1. Make the appropriate number of copies of handouts.
2. Become familiar with the content of all handouts, PowerPoint Presentation, Slide Script, and the Answer Key. Handouts 4A–H contain references to prostitution, so use your discretion on whether to distribute these as they are or to remove particular passages.
3. Become familiar with the “Geography of Chinese Workers Building the Transcontinental Railroad” page of the Chinese Railroad Workers in North America Project (CRWNAP) website at <<http://chineserailroadworkers.stanford.edu/virtual/>>.
4. Listen to the song “Men of Iron” on the Chinese Railroad Workers in North America Project website at <<http://web.stanford.edu/group/chineserailroad/cgi-bin/wordpress/men-of-iron/>>.
5. Set up and test computer, projector, and speakers. Confirm ability to play audio and video and project sound audibly to students.

Time Three to four 50-minute class periods

**Procedures
Day One**

1. Inform the class that they will learn more about the Transcontinental Railroad, the Chinese laborers who worked on it, and its far-reaching effects. To give students a sense of what working conditions were like, explain to the students that they will view a series of images from the Central Pacific Railroad.
2. Distribute one copy of Handout 1, *Note-taking Sheet for Images from the Railroad*, to each student and instruct them to record their notes on the handout as you display the PowerPoint Presentation, *Images from the Railroad*. Emphasize that the images will be displayed twice: the class should study the images in silence the first time through, and can then share their questions and comments during the second viewing.
3. Display the PowerPoint Presentation, *Images from the Railroad*, allowing students enough time to observe and record notes for each image. Remind students to reserve their comments and questions for the second viewing.
4. Display the PowerPoint Presentation, *Images from the Railroad*, a second time, this time asking students to share their answers and observations. Provide additional information and ask questions from the Slide Script, *Images from the Railroad*, as you do so. Students should keep Handout 1 to reference in later activities.
5. Explain to students that the Chinese Railroad Workers in North America Project (CRWNAP) has also created an interactive site with

maps and images to facilitate a deep understanding of the Chinese railroad workers' experiences. Distribute one copy of Handout 2, *Map*, and one copy of Handout 3, *Geography of Chinese Workers Building the Transcontinental Railroad*, to each student.

6. Direct students' attention to the map on Handout 2. Instruct students to use two different colored highlighters or markers to trace the Central Pacific Railroad (from Sacramento, California to Promontory, Utah) in one color, and the Union Pacific Railroad (from Omaha, Nebraska to Promontory, Utah) in another color. Inform students that they will use this map throughout the remainder of the lesson.
7. Divide the class into pairs and instruct them to visit the "Geography of Chinese Workers Building the Transcontinental Railroad" page of CRWNAP website at <http://chineserailroadworkers.stanford.edu/virtual/> and use the information on the site to answer the questions on Handout 3. Allow 20–25 minutes for them to work on the activity, checking in with students to help them navigate the website and answer questions as needed.
8. If students are unable to finish in the time remaining in class, assign Handout 3 as homework. Inform students that they should be prepared to discuss the answers to Handout 3 at the beginning of the next class.

Day Two

1. Instruct students to share their answers to Handout 3, *Geography of Chinese Workers Building the Transcontinental Railroad*. Use Answer Key, *Geography of Chinese Workers Building the Transcontinental Railroad*, to facilitate discussion. Collect Handout 3 for assessment.
2. Ask students what they think happened to the Chinese railroad workers after the Central Pacific Railroad was completed. Inform students that the CRWNAP conducted interviews with many of the descendants of the Chinese railroad workers and that they will read excerpts of these interviews to learn more about the far-reaching impact of the railroad.
3. Divide the class into eight groups, A–H, and distribute Handouts 4A–H, *Interviews of Chinese Railroad Workers' Descendants*, to the corresponding groups. Remind students that descendants' accounts, like any oral history, often contain inaccuracies and can't be taken as completely factual. Allow students time to read their interviews.
4. When groups have finished reading their assigned interview, distribute one copy of Handout 5, *Interview Activity*, to each group. Review directions and answer questions regarding the activity as a class.
5. Allow students the remainder of class to write their interviews and prepare to present them. Inform students that they should be prepared to present their interviews at the beginning of the next class.

**Days Three
and Four**

1. Allow groups five minutes to prepare their interview presentations.
2. Before the presentations, distribute one copy of Handout 6, *Interview Note-taking Sheet*, to each student. Direct students to have Handout 2, *Map*, ready as well.
3. Facilitate group presentations. Direct students to record notes on Handout 6 as their classmates present. They should also mark where each Chinese railroad worker lived and worked on their maps with each worker's initials.
4. After the presentations, debrief the activity with a brief discussion.
 - Look at the different places in which the Chinese railroad workers lived in the United States. What unexpected paths did some of their lives take?
 - How are the former railroad workers' stories similar? How are they different?
 - How accurate do you believe was the oral history you read? Why might the descendants' accounts of their ancestors' lives differ from what actually happened? Think about how family histories are often passed down.
 - One of the goals of the Transcontinental Railroad was to unify the country from East to West, as the country had technically been unified from North to South after the Civil War. Do you feel that the construction of the railroad helped achieve this goal of unification? How did it do so? In what ways did it not?
 - Can you think of other immigrants who have come to the United States recently for work? What similarities, if any, do their stories have with the Chinese railroad workers' stories?
5. Collect Handout 6, *Interview Note-taking Sheet*, for assessment.
6. To conclude the lesson, inform students that they will write a song based on the Chinese railroad workers' experiences, using imagery from the beginning of the lesson and the CRWNAP website, experiences described in the interviews, or students' thoughts about the material they have learned throughout the lesson.
7. As a class, listen to "Men of Iron," an original four-minute song written by Black Irish Band member Patrick Michael Karnahan in honor of the Chinese Americans who built the Central Pacific Railroad. The song and accompanying video can be found here: <http://web.stanford.edu/group/chineserailroad/cgi-bin/wordpress/men-of-iron/>.
8. Distribute one copy of Handout 7, *Songwriting Activity*, to each student. Review the directions for the activity as a class.
9. Instruct students to work on their final activity for the remainder of class and for homework. Facilitate song performances during the next class period and collect students' songs for assessment.

- Assessment** The following are suggestions for assessing student work in this lesson:
1. Handout 3, *Geography of Chinese Workers Building the Transcontinental Railroad*, using the Answer Key, *Geography of Chinese Workers Building the Transcontinental Railroad*, as a guide.
 2. The Interview Activity based on material from Handouts 4A–H, using the criteria outlined on Handout 5 as a guide.
 3. Handout 6, *Interview Note-taking Sheet*, based on the quality of notes taken.
 4. Students' songs, using the criteria outlined on Handout 7, *Songwriting Activity*, as a guide.
 5. Student participation in group and class discussions, evaluating students' ability to
 - clearly state their opinions, questions, and/or answers;
 - provide thoughtful answers;
 - exhibit sensitivity toward different cultures and ideas;
 - respect and acknowledge other students' comments; and
 - ask relevant and insightful questions.

NOTE-TAKING SHEET FOR IMAGES FROM THE RAILROAD

View each image the teacher displays and answer each corresponding question. More information about the images will be provided soon, but for this initial viewing, study the images in silence. Carefully examine each one, and refrain from asking questions or commenting until the second viewing.

Image #1



What do you see? What is the terrain like? Where do you think this is?

Image #2



What do you see? What do you think is being built? What is it for? What kinds of hazards do you think workers had to face when building this structure?

Image #3



What do you see? What do you think is happening in this photo? What is the terrain like? What would have made this work dangerous?

Image #4



What do you see? What is the terrain like? Where do you think this is?

Image #5



What do you see? What do you think is being built? What is it for?

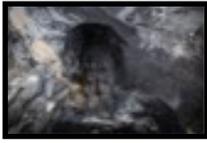
Image #6:



What do you see? What is the terrain like? Where do you think this is? What tools did the workers have to cut through the rocks? How hard would this work have been?

handout 1

Image #7:



Imagine you were a worker in this tunnel looking up. This is what you might see. What do you think it is? Why do you think it was created?

Image #8:



What is this? Why do you think it was built? Where do you think this is? What was it about the construction of this wall that you think allowed it to last for 150 years? What made it so sturdy and strong?

Image #9:



This is a broader view of the previous image. What was the terrain like? What are the weather conditions like in this image? What do you think it would have been like to be in the tunnel during one of the many snow storms the winter it was built?

Image #10:



What do you see? What is the terrain like? Where do you think this is? What made the construction of these tunnels hazardous work?

Image #11:



What do you see? What is the terrain like? Where do you think this is?

Image #12:



What do you see? What is the terrain like? Where do you think this is?

Image #13:



What do you see? What is the terrain like? What do you think the weather was like in this image? Where do you think this is? What were the dangers of working in this environment?

Image #14:



What do you see? What is the terrain like? What do you think the weather was like in this image? Where do you think this is?

Image #15:



What modes of transportation do you see? What is the terrain like? Where do you think this is?

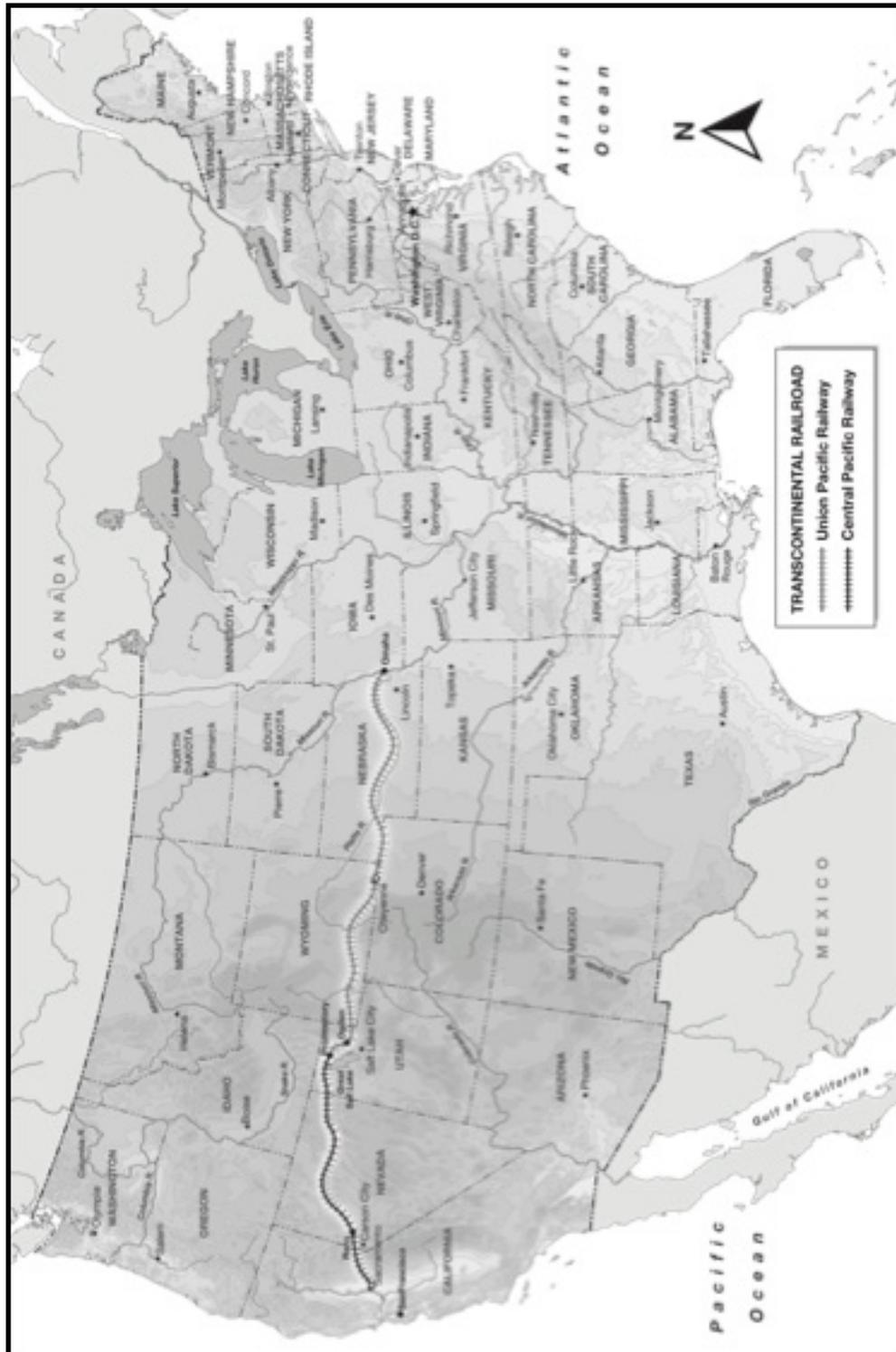
Image #16:



What do you see? Why do you think this picture was taken? Where do you think this is? Who do you see in this image?

MAP

Throughout the lesson, use the map below to take notes on places significant to Chinese railroad workers and the development of the Transcontinental Railroad.



7. How was the railroad influential in the development of the towns of Winnemucca and Elko?
Winnemucca:

Elko:

8. In what ways were the Chinese treated differently from other workers? List at least four examples.

handout 3

9. What were some positive and negative consequences of the first Transcontinental Railroad? List at least two examples for each.

Pros:

Cons:

10. What did the Chinese workers do once the CPRR was built? List at least four examples.

INTERVIEWS OF CHINESE RAILROAD WORKERS' DESCENDANTS: BEIN YIU CHUNG

The Chinese Railroad Workers in North America Project conducted a series of interviews of descendants of workers on the Central Pacific—as well as people who were associated with the railroad, such as suppliers of food and herbal medicines. For the next activity, you will read edited versions of their stories and create interviews of your own.

Read the following interview and then follow the directions on Handout 5, *Interview Activity*.

Bein Yiu Chung Family

Raymond Douglas Chong (Great-great-grandson of Bein Yiu Chung)

Interviewee: Raymond Douglas Chong (Great-great-grandson of Bein Yiu Chung)

Interviewer: Connie Young Yu and Shelly Fisher Fishkin

Location: San Francisco, California

Date: December 7, 2013

Self-Introduction and His Relation to Bein Yiu Chung

Transcript

Interviewer: Okay. This is an interview for the Stanford Chinese Railroad Project of North America and the date is December 7, 2013. We're talking to you, Ray, and I'd like you to introduce yourself and your railroad ancestry.

Raymond D. Chong: Well Connie, thanks for the opportunity be here. My name is Raymond Douglas Chong. I live in Sugar Land, Texas near Houston. This story, what I'll be telling you, it would be about my great-great-grandfather. Bein Yiu Chung—that's his Cantonese name. And he was from the village of Long Gang Li, village of Dragon Hill in Kaiping, in Guangdong Province. This is his story.

Identifying Bein Yiu Chung and His Work on the Railroad / Difficulty of Having Documents

Transcript

Interviewer: Basically, could you give some of the vital statistics—where he was born, when he was born, and how you know that he worked on the Transcontinental Railroad.

Chong: Well, as you know, back in China in old days, there weren't that much paper records. They wouldn't record birth certificates, very meager remnants of anything, the only thing I have confirmed was the family tree book—the *zupu*. I found it back around 2008 with his name on it—Generation 39. (Is it 39?) I'm Generation 43. So I found his name in

the *zupu*. So I know of his existence, I know of his grave at the Hill of the Flying Swan, near my village, Long Gang Li in Kaiping. So, I honored him on May 8, 2009 and my clan at that time. The story of him as a railroad worker came about on January 1, 2013. Well my cousin, related that story from my, my father's best friend in Kaiping about the railroad. That he had worked in Gold Mountain where there's no city. In other words, he was always moving around—where can he be living?—he can't be living in San—he was working as the railroad moved forward. That's—was—the confirmation discovery of my great-grandfather as a railroad worker here in Gold Mountain.

Interviewer: So it's from oral history.

Chong: It's always oral history. There's no record, no true record, no written documents. This is all oral history. It's very important to record, document it, because there's nothing else. If there is any scrap of documents over time, it would have faded. As you know, in Guangdong Province, it's very humid, very wet—paper disintegrate[s] over time. The ink diffuse[s]. You're lucky to find anything of any substance of paper records.

Interviewer: So you mention the year 1865, when he first came to work on the railroad. Could you talk about that?

Chong: Right, right. Well, because there's a lack of—lack of true records, I make some great assumptions because the way my, my father's best friend described seeing—seem right. That he came when the contractors from Hong Kong came around looking for workers to go to Gold Mountain. There's "hey, you can make gold pieces. Make big money. Come and check—sign a contract with me to be a rail worker." And that correlated with his story, my best friend's, of my father, he said, his grandfather left together with my great-grandfather in 1865. So that's the story that unfolded as I developed a discussion for my father's best friend.

Raymond D. Chong's Discovery of His Roots

Transcript

Interviewer: So you started a process of looking for your roots. And you have this journey you are going to describe that connects right back to your first ancestor who came to America.

Chong: Yes. Right, right. Well the story unfolds on January 30, 2003. On that day, a friend of mine, named John Thomas Caleb, put a gun on his head, a handgun and shot himself to death in Monterey. That was the start of my journey—my paradigm shift of way. I looked at myself as an American, now I look at myself as Chinese. And before, I was different, now I'm at a different place. I'm still more of a bamboo—a *jook-sing*—but before, I was thinking of America, now I think forward into China.

paradigm shift—a fundamental change in approach or underlying assumptions.

jook-sing—Cantonese term for a person of Chinese descent who identifies more with Western culture than with traditional Chinese culture

So it's been a transformation since that time. A journey of over 10 years now of looking for my roots. Before that, I never knew nothing about my family, other than box—shoe box of pictures, black white pictures, hidden stories that unfolded over the past 10 years that I finally figured out, “oh, that's what's—the relationships—those were the secrets they didn't tell me about. I found so many secrets the past 10 years—I could be considered the black sheep because I know so much now. But because those were the dark days, that before January 30 of 2003, my background was an empty white canvas. No context, no texture, because it was a dark secret, a hidden secret that our family did not talk about. Never. I was just living myself as a ABC—America-born Chinese—as a *jook-sing*, bamboo. I knew I was Chinese, but my elders never told about the stories—about the paper son, discrimination, the second woman, the second wives, things of that nature. I had to—after their deaths—figure out what the truth is.

paper son—a term referring to Chinese males who entered the United States sometime after 1906 claiming to be the sons of lawfully residing Chinese. They sometimes used the identity papers of another person to support their claim. They became known as “paper sons” because they were sons on paper only. Many lived for years with false identities.

Bein Yiu Chung's Work on the Railroad / Return to the Village with Wealth in Hand / His Marriage to Two Women

Transcript

Interviewer: So could you start with the generations—the first generation, the second, and then the third would be your father's generation.

Chong: Well the generation actually goes back to 778 A.D. When I got the *zupu*, the family tree book, from my cousin in 2008—we go back, myself, I'm Generation 43. I go back to Generation 1 in 778 A.D. Fast forward to my village, Long Gang Li, Village of the Dragon Hill, is, is the 1466 A.D. Fast forward today, now, I'm here, Generation 43, my father before was 42, my grandfather before that was 41, my great-grandfather was 40. So the gentleman we're talking about, my great-great-grandfather was Generation 39. Bein Yiu Chung, the railroad worker. That is our genesis and why we're meeting here today.

Interviewer: So after, could you describe how your, how your railroad ancestor—Bein Yiu Chung—how he came to America, the years that he worked here—what you know about the years that he worked here.

Chong: Because it's a recent knowledge, I knew about that, that my great-grandfather was a rail worker, I know about it, it's not a complete story yet. At this point, what I know is that he was here, he was with my best friend's grandfather at that time—and it's just what—they toiled along the railroad tracks when there's no city. There's a camp, every night is a camp. There's a moving camp. There's no city. What I know is that they came back as Gold Mountain men, with pieces of gold, to build their Gold Mountain houses. To reunite with their wives and family or maybe marry a second woman to become their second wife. Because they had wealth, they had the opportunity to build Gold Mountain houses. Those are the stories that were told to me.

Interviewer: Do you have, uh, the archival records? Have you been to San Bruno to see when they returned? Uh, when the ancestors returned?

Chong: Well, before 1882, there was no formal system of documenting arrivals, departures. The only remnants or trace would be ship logs—whether who is departing, who is arriving, and most of the time, they messed up the names, the actual transliteration of the names. And sometime, they just treated Chinese as cattle. Ten Chinese, 20 Chinese. And the records could also get lost, destroyed over time. So it's very hard to retrace that. You can get a rough inkling—what kind of ships they arrived, what ships they departed, a system of what was in place, but it can, it can be very difficult to find exact time when he arrived, the exact time when he went back.

Interviewer: So he, your ancestor, Chung Bein Yiu, he returned to his village and he build a home there. So he was going back, to retire?

Chong: A Gold Mountain house. Or retired, one, number two, get married to the second women. Before they left for Gold Mountain, it was traditional for a guy to make sure he comes back to the village, was to marry a woman to have a rationale or connection to come back. So he married the first woman, then he married the second woman, which turned out to be a second line of my family I discovered in 2008. Another trace of my family roots.

Interviewer: So are your roots from the first wife or the second?

Chong: His first wife. With my great-great-grandfather.

INTERVIEWS OF CHINESE RAILROAD WORKERS' DESCENDANTS: CHIN LIN SOU

The Chinese Railroad Workers in North America Project conducted a series of interviews of descendants of workers on the Central Pacific—as well as people who were associated with the railroad, such as suppliers of food and herbal medicines. For the next activity, you will read edited versions of their stories and create interviews of your own.

Read the following interview and then follow the directions on Handout 5, *Interview Activity*.

Chin Lin Sou was a labor contractor as well as one of the more prominent Chinese-American railroad voices. After working on the railroad, he settled in Denver, Colorado. He grew in influence, eventually becoming the mayor of Denver's Chinatown, and was recognized by political figures and on the town hall.

Interview 1: The Life and Importance of Chin Lin Sou, according to Charlie Chin, artist-in-residence at the Chinese Historical Society of America.

Transcript

Chin: It's sometimes difficult to relay history to people, without using a particular person or a particular event, as the nail with which to hang things on. There were, for reasons which are now obvious, very few voices that survived the building of the Transcontinental Railroad on the Chinese side. But there were men who continued to stay and work after its completion. Amongst them, Chin Lin Sou, who eventually settled down in Black Hawk, Colorado and then again later in Denver, Colorado. He became... [a] labor leader [later]. He had been, when he was working on the railroad. Amongst other reasons, because his apparent facility with speaking English allowed him to gravitate towards that position. Later as a labor contractor working in Colorado, he was able to build a very comfortable living for himself and sent for his wife.

I understand that in Denver, Colorado, if you go to the City Hall, they have 12 stained glass windows representing 12 pioneers of Colorado and he is amongst them. Reportedly, in the research I've done, it was discovered that his daughter was married in Denver, Colorado. And it was the social event of the season. The mayor of ... Denver, Colorado and the governor of Colorado attended. So in many ways, it was—it bespeaks of—both his importance and how well they had done in Colorado. His descendants are still there. They've also spread to other parts of the country. He is a representative example of the Chinese men who worked on that great project.

Unfortunately, it was also in ... Denver, Colorado—during the great “Hop Alley” Riot, which took place in 1880. There, about 3,000 of the local inhabitants rose up and attempted to destroy the Chinatown and one Chinese man was lynched. He made an effort to try to bring calm but was unsuccessful.

Chin Lin Sou represents one of the few voices we have left. Because these attempts to expunge this country of Chinese were so successful, it is difficult for us now to find voices of any kind that still survived.

Interview 2: Carolyn Jew Kuhn (Great-granddaughter of Chin Lin Sou)

Interviewee: Carolyn Kuhn, Great-granddaughter

Interviewed by: Connie Young Yu and Shelley Fisher Fishkin

Interview Date: September 11, 2013

Location: San Francisco, California

Introduction/Description of Family Line

Transcript

Carolyn Jew Kuhn: Hello! I'm Carolyn Jew Kuhn. I was formerly Carolyn Gwen Jew. My Chinese name is Jiao Sun Kin, I was born in Denver, Colorado. I am very proud to say that I am the great granddaughter of Chin Lin Sou, one of the pioneers of Colorado. I am the fourth generation in this Chin family.

Interviewer: Could you talk about your parents... the third generation?

Kuhn: My father was also born in the United States in San Francisco. My mother was born in Denver, Colorado. She was of the third generation. Her father, William Chin, was the mayor of Chinatown in Denver, Colorado.

The father of the mayor of Chinatown [William Chin] was Chin Lin Sou....

Research on Chin Lin Sou / Importance of Chinese in Colorado

Transcript

Interviewer: ...[H]ow did you find out more about [Chin Lin Sou] and can you tell us what you know about him?

Kuhn: I have been on this quest for a very long time. Of course, the family is always the best and the most informed. So my Uncle Ed and Bill, Auntie Hazel, Helen, and sometimes Auntie Francis, were able to share some pieces of history about him.

But the most information that I gathered was from going to the Denver Public Library since 2008. It becomes very important as you get older. History is important, and I would like for my daughter to know and understand what and how the pioneers made their lives and my life a lot easier and a lot better because of their hard work. Since that time, I have been going to the Denver Public Library and I got to be friends with the historian in the history library down in Denver. I used to look at the microfiches at all of those, print them off, what happened, I read them, a

lot of the information was erroneous. It was very disturbing to see that my Grandfather, William Chin, was not acknowledged as the mayor of Chinatown. And even worse, the information on Chin Lin Sou was very sparing and sometimes inaccurate.

So for years, my mother, Wawa Chin Jew, and I went to the operas up at Central City. We saw and sat in the house, the opera house, where Chin Lin Sou had a chair dedicated along with several other pioneers. His chair is right next to [that of] Bill Cody, William Cody, and that chair was dedicated by the McFarland family, a preeminent family in Denver.

So that even made me more interested, continue to look at this history. Then, Colorado, it was a centennial for Colorado, in 1976. And so in honor of the pioneers, they created stained glass windows of the Coloradoans who made an impact. Chin Lin Sou was one of them.

Linda Jew and I were honored to make a presentation about Chin Lin Sou's stained glass window. So we went to the state capital on the third floor and in 1977, we spoke about our family and, uh, we knew that that stained glass was of large importance.

When they built the convention center in Denver, Colorado, the mosaic surrounding the convention center all had photographs of the pioneers of which one was Chin Lin Sou.

We have been looking and exploring and asking. We have had interviews with the wonderful William Wei, who is married to Susan Wei, Drs. William and Susan Wei of the University of Colorado. They are history teachers.

William Wei has acknowledged and remembered that the Chinese people were an important part of building Colorado. It was disturbing to him to know that the Chinese people were not at all recognized. He spoke to my mother and my uncle and my sister and had several articles published in *The Denver Post* and the *Rocky Mountain News* about the absence of acknowledgment for the Chinese people who build Colorado....

Chin Lin Sou's Involvement with Transcontinental Railroad / Lack of Chinese Representation at History Colorado Museum

Transcript

Interviewer: I just wanted to ask about Chin Lin Sou and the building of the Transcontinental Railroad. Do you have information or have you done research on his role?

Kuhn: Chin Lin Sou was a significant player in the building of the Transcontinental Railroad because he was tall in stature, over six feet tall, spoke perfect English, he was an educated man and not of the coolie genre. He was perfect to recruit and to lead the people in California to work in Colorado on the Transcontinental Railroad. He was the foreman. There was some doubt about the ability of the Chinese to do a good job on

the Transcontinental Railroad, but we see that the Chinese got the hardest job in building the railroad over the mountain passes and over the hilly areas.

We see pictures of the Chinese people having to be lowered in baskets, to blast away the rocks and to lay the rails in which the railroad would pass.

Chin Lin Sou made sure that this was completed and I think at... Promontory Point at which the railroad met from the West and the East, the job had been completed. The ironic thing is, the Chinese people were not acknowledged even at that time. They were not invited to the final celebration of the finishing of the Transcontinental Railroad. And based on that, it was a little bit disturbing to know and understand that while this man had done a wonderful job, the Chinese people were summarily dismissed. They were considered *shakes head* not very useful anymore. The other people stayed around Colorado. There was a Chinatown, but Chinatown was not in the best area. It now is a very in-place to be. Chinatown is where Coors Field baseball field is.

At the time they grew up there, it was near the railroad.

But the discrimination though, and the jobs hard to find. But the building of the Transcontinental Railroad, even to this day, is still not acknowledged. And there are articles from Dr. William Wei who brought that up, wrote books and articles.

I have made it somewhat of a mission on my own to go to the History Colorado Museum. History Colorado Museum is about Colorado and pioneers. What I saw was that there was a lot of information about the Japanese Internment, Camp Amache, and the Japanese people. There was minimal info about the Chinese people and the building of the railroad.

So I joined up at History Colorado and I got a comment card. The comment card was a long-winded—what my daughter calls a “dissertation”—asking, where is the display? Why are the Chinese not represented? I want to share some information and I would like Colorado to acknowledge the work and the Chinese people who made Colorado and this nation great.

That was all partially the work of Chin Lin Sou, my great grandfather and the work of the Chinese people in Colorado.

Ten-Mile Day / William Chin (Grandfather) Sent to China

Transcript

Interviewer: [D]oes your family oral history or tradition ever talk about the famous 10 miles a day—10 miles in one day—of track that were laid? Was Chin Lin Sou the foreman for that project?

Kuhn: It wasn't discussed a lot. The literature does say, however, that the rules were: they needed to lay 10 miles a day. The Polish and Irish people used to laugh at the Chinese people because they looked different. They

queue—a braid of hair usually worn hanging at the back of the head

wore queues, [their] clothing, they were small in stature. But, once the hiring Caucasians saw how hard Chinese worked, it was very apparent that the Chinese people were going to make the building of the railroad 10 miles a day, 20 miles a day, work and a success.

Interviewer: And I heard that your grandfather William Chin was sent back to China at one point to learn more about China? Can you talk about that a little bit?

Kuhn: My Aunties probably know a little bit more. But we know that tradition in our family is very important. And it was important for Chin Lin Sou to make sure that his sons, William Chin, my grandfather, know about Chinese tradition—go back, learn, write—so he did. He went back and he learned and he was a smart and educated man. And when he came back to Colorado, he was bilingual and also like Chin Lin Sou, very much a leader. And he was, in fact, the mayor of the Chinatown, a handsome man, and a good man.

Interviewer: Did you know him?

Kuhn: Never got to meet him. He was kicked in the back by a mule. And it damaged his kidneys. Well, we were not lucky to ever meet him—face to face. But we have heard everything good about him.

He was, I think, buried in the old cemetery at Riverside, a cemetery in Colorado. While it was not a very beautiful spot, it was still a place of honor. And he is buried there with his wife, Daisy Chin....

INTERVIEWS OF CHINESE RAILROAD WORKERS' DESCENDANTS: FONG SEE

The Chinese Railroad Workers in North America Project conducted a series of interviews of descendants of workers on the Central Pacific—as well as people who were associated with the railroad, such as suppliers of food and herbal medicines. For the next activity, you will read edited versions of their stories and create interviews of your own.

Read the following interview and then follow the directions on Handout 5, *Interview Activity*.

Fong See Family

Lisa See (Great-great-granddaughter of Fong See)

Interviewee: Lisa See (Great-great-granddaughter of Fong See)

Interviewed by: Connie Young Yu, Barre Fong

Interview Date: May 12, 2015

Location: Brentwood, California

Introduction to Lisa See / Employment of Great-great-grandfather and Great-grandfather

Transcript

Lisa See: My name is Lisa See and I'm a writer; I write about the Chinese-American experience. I started writing first about my own Chinese-American family but then I've sort of broadened that to begin writing fiction about the Chinese-American experience and a lot about China as well.

Barre Fong: Tell me about your great-great grandfather.

See: My great-great grandfather was an herbalist in South China. He wasn't an herbalist like you think of today. He would put down mat and do some acrobatic tricks with his sons. He was more like a—may I say like a snake-oil salesman. They were very, very poor. He came over to work on the building of the Transcontinental Railroad. He was hired as an herbalist. So if you think about that time, there were Western doctors here who were treating the white laborers, but the Chinese laborers had no interest in Western medicine. So it was really helpful to the railroad company to have people there who could treat their Chinese laborers with traditional herbs and things like that. It was probably a lot cheaper for them as well. So he was there working on the railroad. I actually don't know that much about what his day-to-day life was like apart from the fact that I've certainly done research in how the number of laborers grew, and what happened when someone died, and what happened when someone got sick, and things like: actually the Chinese laborers tended to stay more healthy than the white laborers because for one thing they boiled their water to make tea. And so they didn't get things like typhus or water-borne diseases. So he really helped with that I believe.

levee—an embankment for preventing flooding

See: Then when the railroad was completed—yeah, after the railroad was completed they dispersed and they went in every direction. Some of them were working on new railroad spurs that went through the southwest, down into the south, north towards Canada, that came down into Los Angeles where I live now. But people also went in different directions to follow different kinds of labor. So they went into agriculture and fishing. Think of the Sacramento Delta, the building of the levees. All of that done by Chinese labor in the same way the railroad had been. Because Sacramento was the closest city to the railroad camps, this was a place where my great-great-grandfather did go. He opened a small herbal shop right in the—not even in regular Chinatown, it was just sort of Chinatown-adjacent. And he kept that shop for many, many years, and I was able to find it in the Sacramento archives of business ledgers, things like that. I also looked for him in the old payroll records of the railroad. They kept really interesting records because their records you can see pages where its “China Jim, China Jim, China Jim. China Sam, China Sam, China Sam.” So out of all the thousands of laborers, very few of them were listed with their actual names. And I didn’t look at every single record, but I never found my great-great grandfather.

See: Anyways, he ends up in Sacramento. He opens this herb shop. I’m just gonna say I like to think of this man as one of the original deadbeat dads. You were supposed to work hard, save your money, and send it back home to China. My great-great grandfather, he had a fondness for women and gambling, something that continues in our family even today, and as a result, his wife back in China was so poor she used to carry people on her back from village to village to earn money to support her children. Finally some people took pity on her and lent my great-grandfather, who was only fourteen years old, the money to come to the United States. By that time, his dad was working in Sacramento. He found him, he said, “Dad you’re a bum, go home.” And he did. And my great-grandfather stayed and he did a lot of the jobs we see for immigrants today. He washed dishes in restaurants and he swept up in factories. He worked in fields. By the time he was thirty, still in Sacramento, he had his first business. It was a factory that manufactured crotch-less underwear for brothels. So I could talk a little bit more about that but I’d like to circle back with a couple other things.

Effect of Chinese Exclusion Act on Family Narratives, Social Conditions

Transcript

See: Well I think one of the reasons people didn’t want to pass on stories is because as time went on, the laws were so brutal and tough, and you had to keep your story straight. You had to have one story and you had to maintain that story. I thought it was really interesting when I did find all of the papers at the National Archive, how much they lined up with the stories that I had been told. But every once in a while there were lies. You could see them and they jumped out and the inspectors caught them too.

paper son—a term referring to Chinese males who entered the United States sometime after 1906 claiming to be the sons of lawfully residing Chinese. They sometimes used the identity papers of another person to support their claim. They became known as “paper sons” because they were sons on paper only. Many lived for years with false identities.

miscegenation—mixture of races

infrastructure—the underlying foundation or basic framework (as of a system or organization)

There was one point when my great-grandfather tried to bring in paper sons. He totally failed because he already had 20 years of documentation that showed he didn’t have any sons in China. They knew it. But there were other things where he had maintained a lie that allowed him to bring in many other people. In the way that he brought in paper merchants, for example. But I think about that—you have this story, and I’m not saying things weren’t tough when Chinese came to work during the Gold Rush, or when they were working on the railroad. But what happens after the railroad is completed, and that huge influx of white labor, and how that changes California so dramatically. And all of that leading eventually to Chinese exclusion. So if you think of the 49ers, the Gold Rush—but the Chinese were actually 48ers because they could get here so much faster because they could just get here across the ocean. So if you go from 1848–1882, that’s a pretty long time where you have—I’m not saying it wasn’t difficult, I’m not saying there wasn’t plenty of discrimination and hardship, there was—but you didn’t have this one national law that—

Fong: That forces you.

See: Right. And so that law, that one law becomes the law from which everything else comes. All the miscegenation laws, the land laws, the laws that say you—if you’re Chinese you can’t attend a white school, if you’re Chinese and you own a laundry you pay double the amount of taxes than if you’re white and you own a laundry. So all of these laws, everything, comes from this one law. So if you think of that 1882 moment where everything has to kind of freeze into a story. Especially if you’re trying to pass yourself off as a merchant, and somebody who’s going to be questioned every six months about their merchant status by the government. All of that gets frozen in a sense. Again, for people who come as paper sons or paper merchants after that, everything still ties to that one moment, 1882. And so I think that’s one reason why it’s not that stories are deliberately covered up necessarily, it’s more that you’ve got to stick to this one story or else there are going to be very severe consequences for you and your family....

Legacy of Chinese Workers and Immigrants

Transcript

Fong: Maybe you could talk a little bit about this big picture legacy of your family’s contributions to the West and what you think the legacy of your great-great grandfather would be, if you could put it into a paragraph.

See: Well first I want to talk about the legacy in general of the Chinese in the West because the people like my great-great grandfather, and my great-grandfather, and all of those men primarily were so responsible for building the infrastructure of the West that still matters today. You know, the railroads, the Sacramento Delta. And all those levees still there, that’s still the richest agricultural land that’s usable in the country. All of the

abalone—a mollusk with a flattened slightly spiral shell that has holes along the edge and is lined with mother-of-pearl

different kinds of industries people went into and how they did have this kind of ripple-down effect in how they changed. How, for example, people ate. Westerners didn't eat shrimp, they didn't eat abalone. The idea of fresh seafood or different kinds of seafood here in Los Angeles. But in other places in the West, a different way of looking at agriculture as getting fruits and vegetables into people's hands. Here in Los Angeles we had this big vegetable peddler market. And all the fruits and vegetables for many years were delivered horse and cart by Chinese fruit and vegetable peddlers who would go door to door and sell stuff. And it seems like market-table is something new. No, it's been here a long time, and it's been in California a long time. So I think there are things we don't even see that are part of our legacy, are part of this legacy. And I often think if you take a family trip and you're just driving around in the West, and you'll pass something like China curve, China lake, China bend, China hill—all of these places where there were Chinese who worked there, who made that railroad spur around the corner, who built that bridge over the river. That infrastructure, it's there because they did it. And that's something that was—it's invisible because we don't know who did it, but it's something some of us use every single day.

See: I think for my own family, well I think for all families, actually, that we wouldn't be here today and enjoying the lives that we're enjoying today if not for the hard work and the sacrifice and the suffering that came before us. We were literally riding on their shoulders. They're the ones who lifted us up to this place. I see in my own family, my great-great grandfather: illiterate. My great-grandfather: illiterate. My grandfather and his brothers and sisters who went through high school—they didn't go to college. My father goes to college. And that's a pattern that you see over and over again with families, whether they're old pioneer families or even new families. This sense of how education can help to transform you, and can transform your family.

I think along the way some things get lost, you know. Here in Los Angeles Chinatown, it's really more of a ghost town because the younger generation, they have gone on to college. They've become doctors and lawyers and dentists and artists and dancers and photographers. They do all of these other things. They don't need to work in the curio shop, in the cafe. So many old businesses that had been around for so long, closing. And I can see, even for our family story—it's just a matter of time, you know, it's just a matter of time. And here something is started in 1874, and went through various things but it still is the same family-owned business. One of the oldest in the state. And so that's gonna disappear at some point, because the younger generation doesn't want to... And again, I just feel that maybe my great-grandfather didn't have a huge personal lasting presence. I don't think these families, none of them rose to be Rockefellers or Kennedys or Carnegies. But what they did is what allowed more people to come, more people to get an education, more people to have success, more people to find a life and to have people like your own daughter, who might just look at it all very differently. Just look at it so differently. Where you can still honor the past and honor your culture and

honor the traditions—and yet you're still very much within this larger American world.

INTERVIEWS OF CHINESE RAILROAD WORKERS' DESCENDANTS: HONG LAI WO

The Chinese Railroad Workers in North America Project conducted a series of interviews of descendants of workers on the Central Pacific—as well as people who were associated with the railroad, such as suppliers of food and herbal medicines. For the next activity, you will read edited versions of their stories and create interviews of your own.

Read the following interview and then follow the directions on Handout 5, *Interview Activity*.

Hong Lai Wo Family

Russell Low (Great-grandson of Hong Lai Wo)

Interviewee: Russell Low, Great-grandson

Interviewed by: Connie Young Yu and Barre Fong

Interview Date: September 18, 2013

Location: Stockton, California

Introduction to Family History

Transcript

Russell Low: Hi my name is Russell Low. I was born in April of 1953 in Stockton, California. My parents built this house, and they have lived here for over 60 years, my mom at least.

My interest in sort of our family history began 20 years ago, and at that time, I videotaped my father and many of his siblings in 1991 or 1992, talking about their parents in Salem. It turns out that my grandmother, my dad's mother, was from a family that turns out that participated in building the railroads. Specifically, we later found out, in building the Transcontinental Railroad.

So, if you take the family history back many, many years, probably the first artifact we have is the photo I am looking at here. And this was the photo of their family in Chinatown in 1903. And in this photo, as you'll see, they are all dressed up in Chinese costumes. And this photo shows two parents. Tom Ying, was her mother, and Hong Lai Wo, was her father. And a total of five children at that time. And their story goes back much further, as we found out later. Because the father, was born in the Dailong Village—her father, was Hong Lai Wo—in 1850, we believe, or right about that time. So he was in this village and he came to the United States, we think, in the mid 1860s. The date isn't really clearly known. But it wasn't until he met his wife, actually. Well, I should go back. He came to work in the Transcontinental Railroad, according to a story told by his son. We can go back to that story a little bit later, because that story told by one of his sons at his 100th birthday is really what sort of cemented our belief that the father worked on the Transcontinental Railroad. So he came at 1865,

perhaps, mid-1860s. He came, with an uncle, older brother actually, he came with one of his brothers, and they worked on the Transcontinental Railroad. At some point during this, the story according to his son, was that the brother lost an eye during a blasting accident. And exactly where that happened isn't clear. But that's the story as we know it. The fact is that there is little that is known about that time period. After he worked on the Transcontinental Railroad, we believe he came back to San Francisco. He worked, at some point, at factories making cigars. Later on, he owned a cigar factory, became a merchant.

And his wife was Tom Ying, and her story is actually quite interesting. So the father came over to work in the Transcontinental Railroad. The wife came over, by family history, she was brought over by missionaries. And my mom actually remembers that she was then put in a home for young Chinese girls. So we believe that the true story was that she was probably brought over to be a slave or a servant. As a young girl, six or eight years of age. And she was rescued, and I think she probably was at the Occidental Home for Chinese Girls, later became the Cameron House. She lived there for several years. Recently I went back to that, to the Cameron House, and went through their old records, trying to find her name in there, but was not successful. So we don't have any absolute proof, but most of us believe that that was the story.

So she came in 1880, and in 1888, she married Hong Lai Wo. That was his married name at that time. So that the stories according to them is that he would have had to come into the Cameron House, the Occidental Home for Chinese Girls. He would have met them, they would have interviewed him, they would have grilled them basically to make sure that he was worthy of marrying one of their young girls. And apparently he was accepted. They were married in 1888, and over the next several years, they had a number of children. And the children are in this photograph. And the oldest was born in 1890, that was my grandmother. Her name was Ah Gui. The other children were born between 1891 and 1896. So these children, Kim later tells the story—was the fourth child—and I believe he is born 1894, and Kim later on went on to tell the stories I mentioned.

They grew up in Chinatown, and I think they had a good childhood according to Kim. According to many recordings we have of Kim describing what it was like to be in Chinatown, he talked about going to Chinese school, and he resisted this because he didn't think he needed to learn Chinese, but his mother told him, "no, you must go to Chinese school" and he did. His mother worked as a seamstress, and as a midwife. And in fact, according to Kim, she brought a lot of Chinese babies into the world in Chinatown during this period of time.

Their lives changed about the turn of the century. So this is like the early 1900s. And this photo is from 1903. I think many things were happening. I think the family, were as many families in Chinatown, was probably quite poor. There wasn't a lot of money. So of the five children, they had to marry one off quite early. My grandmother, Ah Gui, was married in 1903. She was quite young at that time. Actually only 13 years of age. That

began the story of my side of the family, the Low side of the family. So 1903, the oldest daughter, Ah Gui, *Ah Kei* as we called her, went off to Salem.

In 1904, two young boys, there's Kim, and his older brother Bing, went off to live with Uncle in Calypso, Montana. And he tells the story, Kim does, wonderfully... he is 10, his brother Bing, he is 12 years old, they are dressed in their skull caps and their Chinese finery, and the mother is sending them off. Imagine being a mother sending two younger sons off to live with an uncle that she barely knows. And they have to go off on the train. Well first, they have to cross the ferry. So they cross San Francisco Bay on a ferry. And she gives each of them three Chinese coins, with a square cut out of it. She gives them very specific instructions. Take the coins, throw them out into the water for good luck. It's some legend that perhaps she now—they tell us the story of how they very religiously did this as they were crossing San Francisco Bay with their uncle. Once they went to Oakland, they then got on a train, went up to Seattle, and from Seattle changed to the Great Northern Pacific Railroad and took the train from Seattle or Spokane all the way to Calypso, Montana. And Calypso, Montana was quite a mining Western town, I presume. So then he worked with his uncle.

The uncle owned a merchant store—a merchandise store—and he watched the store for him. One of the stories about the uncle is that he sold and made lingerie for the women of the night—he called them—for the prostitutes. And he said that the uncle was quite enterprising. So he would talk his way into these brothels and sold the underwear to the women. The other business he had was, at least he worked in another business, was Bong Tong Restaurant. Both he and Bing worked as bus boys. And they would make fifty cents an hour. At the end of the month, the boys had 60 dollars and every month would sent the money back to their mother, in San Francisco.

So by this time, the mother was by herself because the father had passed away in 1905. The father passed away in 1905, he died from beriberi, which is a vitamin B1 deficiency. I think you get that basically because he was starving. People were just eating plain white rice. Not enough nutrients in it for us. He died a very slow death over a couple years... So I think this again is another reflection that they just didn't have enough money.

So they were in Calypso, Montana, working. He went to school. Actually, he tells a story that when he went to the American school in Calypso, Montana, he had a queue. All the Chinese did. And when he went to school, the boys wanted to play with it. The American boys. And they wanted to pick fights with him. He realized that when you are in a fight, having long hair is really quite a disadvantage. So he came home and he told his uncle that I want to cut off my queue. The uncle said, "no, you can't do that. If you cut off your queue and go back to China, they are going to chop off their head. The Manchus will." So he said, "I don't care. If I go back to China, I will grow another queue." So he cut off his queue

beriberi—a disease marked by weakness, wasting, and damage to nerves and caused by a lack of the vitamin thiamine in the diet

queue—a braid of hair usually worn hanging at the back of the head

Manchu—a minority ethnic group of China. The Manchu ruled China during the Qing Dynasty (1644–1911)

like 1905, perhaps, quite early. So he said that when the Manchurians were overthrown that he then went around in a basket and cut off dozens of queues from the Chinamen in Calypso, Montana.

But they were there for quite a time. And while they were there, something else of course happened. A few months later, the earthquake occurred in San Francisco. So right after the boys left the earthquake destroyed their home. They had no place to go back to. So they were there pretty much stranded with their uncle. The mother, back in San Francisco, took the older daughter, Chung Go, still there, and the younger brother, Ah Toon, or Ed, and she then moved to Oakland. So the family story moves to Oakland while the boys are in Montana.

The boys actually stayed there until about 1910. And in 1910, for some reason, they changed. Apparently what happened was that Bing went to Whitefish, Montana where he became an assistant cook. That sort of starts his whole story as a cook. He, throughout the rest of his life, cooked at different restaurants, and different resorts. I think that's where he probably learned—you can find him on census...

INTERVIEWS OF CHINESE RAILROAD WORKERS' DESCENDANTS: JIM KING

The Chinese Railroad Workers in North America Project conducted a series of interviews of descendants of workers on the Central Pacific—as well as people who were associated with the railroad, such as suppliers of food and herbal medicines. For the next activity, you will read edited versions of their stories and create interviews of your own.

Read the following interview and then follow the directions on Handout 5, *Interview Activity*.

Jim King Family

Gene O. Chan (Great-grandson of Jim King)

Interviewee: Gene O. Chan (Great-grandson of Jim King)

Interviewer: Connie Young Yu, Barre Fong

Location: Sacramento, California

Date: June 27, 2014

Gene O. Chan: ... My name is Gene O. Chan. The middle initial actually is—"O" is Owyang and that came from my—my father's paper says Kwon Chan Owyang. So they stuck that in my middle name.... Tai King is my grandfather but his father is my great-grandfather and he's the one that came from China from **Sun Qiong** Village, **Heung San** District. And he came in 1855, when he was only 16. And have to work for somebody, so he end up working, according to some literature from the wife—had some kind of history, will, said something about shepherding and railroad. So that's only thing we knew at a time. So when my mom wrote about it, they just started from there. They didn't know that he is already Jim King at the railroad. So I rewrote it, timeline wise to fit all, fit just perfect. So he went in 1866, by time he was 27, he went to Central Pacific... Railroad, became Jim King contractor, contracting for hiring people from China... And... when that railroad got completed with the Transcontinental Railroad, they laid off about 12,000 Chinese that had built the railroad. And it was really the Chinese built most of the railroad. The rest of them didn't do as good. They didn't survive that, that horrendous weather through the mountain....

And then, then after, they, they finished the railroad, he came down to the valley here to help build the levee. So he was known as Jim King foreman here. And then, they were getting 14 cents per cubic yard, wheelbarrowing. But finally, when the, what you call these clam shell diggers, dredgers came, displaced them from having to that, then they went farming. Because they came from *Heung San District*—that's farming. So you notice the whole valley were—all the orchards and pears—most of were started by Chinese. And they work for the owner, for a share, like 60:40 split, but you got to pay all the thing. And so, so the whole valley was developed by Chinese.

levee—an embankment for preventing flooding

So that's why Locke, Locke has a memorial there now that kind of points that out from the railroad, to the levee, to the orchards. You know, there is a museum down there now that has, has a kind of a monument there kinda explaining that, at Locke. And Locke, I was in the original group that formed the Committee in Locke, but then I got too busy and I couldn't follow up. And I helped them once in awhile, when they wanted someone to take a tour, like people coming from San Jose or Fresno, they didn't have anybody they will call me and I would try to help them, but—I mean they want to know who lives in this building, what it was you know—and so, I'm the only one left I think....

Fong: And so, going back to 1855, do you know, was there any reasoning why your great-grandfather left China?

writ—a formal written document

Chan: Ah. On the writ up there, it says because there's some turmoil going on in China. And there was some infighting and besides there was some flood—the thing going on. And somehow, he came, I don't know how 16-year-old just can come over here and start working, but that's what he said. And then, everything fits from 1855. Eleven years later, he's at the railroad. Three years later, he is down the valley here. And then he got married after he came to the valley here. He found a girl in San Francisco, crying in the street that was shipped over here—her parents sold her to some people for the United States, to come over for prostitution. At that time, they won't let any Chinese women come. So he bought out the contract from the whoever had a contract for her and married her. And then, they're raised eight children, two girls first and then four boys after that, and then my grandfather was a number two, number two boy. And then number four boy is Gam Lung....

Yu: ... [I]t sounds like he, first of all, he came early—

Chan: 1855. And he was 16.

Yu: 16. And he learned English. So somebody was willing to teach him English.

Chan: He was working for the miners is what we figured, for 11 years, because he can't have his own job, right? There was prejudice there, right?

Yu: Yup.

Chan: They were taxing the Chinese for mining gold. They didn't tax other people. So he had to work for somebody. And at least, he must be a very good worker because able to teach him enough English.

Yu: But then they trusted him enough, or they would have kicked him out. Do you know if he got paid well?

Chan: That, I would have to go to the museum to see if I can find it—I find the payroll log but they don't tell me the money part. I am sure they would have some, if you research it, maybe find out how much they were paying the Chinese. Now that book may say that. You know. I read most of it. I don't remember having gone past it.

Yu: Well, I was thinking, when he worked for the mining company as a teenager, he was, I mean, he survived, they gave him an opportunity. So by the time they were recruiting for the railroad, they needed someone like him.

Yeah, because 11 years, he learned English. So he must have been a fairly smart and a good worker. And then when the valley also was building the levee, good worker. And a farmer? They all know him. And like I said, I got three farmer that certified it for him, on those. I can make copy of that for you. And uh—

Yu: So his labor contracting is different from the contracting that, in the Central Pacific, the history, in that, by the 1860s, they would have a contractor in China.

Chan: Yeah. They contract from China to bring them over here, but he didn't, I don't think he went back. From here, he was able to coordinate it, hire the people. You know, there's many, many contractors, you know, whole group. If you look at that list, there are whole bunch of contractors. So he must have his own little bunch that works for him, you know.

Yu: Yeah, he was probably. After he contracted, he worked on the railroad too. I mean, the very first Chinese that were hired were from California. Because they needed workers around so he was one of the first.

Chan: Probably one of those very first [months in] 1866 is when he was started on the payroll log. So that fits pretty well, timeline-wise. So I kinda corrected some of the thing my mother wrote.

Yu: And, and the fact that he was not on the payroll in '65, does not mean that he did not work there.

Chan: No. I just only found it.

Yu: They started—

Chan: Three years early, actually.

Yu: Earlier?

Chan: They started, 1863, I think it started, slowly. You know, going through Marysville, this area here. So that book that I show you, also talks about that. Talks about what did the Chinese have to do to fix all the repair work and things. And then all the other worker couldn't survive that cold mountain weather, you know. Somehow they were able to survive.

Yu: And you have his photographs, you have photograph of his wife, that's really amazing.

Chan: Yes. Yes. And then that book with the payroll log. At least, so at least identify him as Jim King. Now I know it wasn't the valley here as a foreman because they made him Jim King. It was because of the railroad. That's why he got the Central Pacific, working as a contractor, he learned English.

Chan: So, but anyway, his eight children—so you see, the family tree is pretty big.

Yu: Did any, do you have any stories about him from any of the children?

Chan: No, not, no. Only mention is from the will. From the, the wife had a will for each of the son. And I may have it, but I'm not sure which one, because all in Chinese. I have a bunch of little booklet that my mom kept wrapped up.

Yu: ... But he must have made enough money. You know, his family—

Chan: Yes. He schooled them. He had both Chinese and English.

Yu: So this former railroad worker, who spoke English, raised a large family, and by then he was a contractor for the—

Chan: Down the valley here. And then the farmer, contractor of farmer too. So the thing is, he was able, yeah, I'm surprised, eight children, he's able to tutor two kinds—Chinese and—they were able to read a Chinese newspaper—and it said that the English part, my grandfather went to the immigration he spoke all English. When they had Grandma over, I have the questions that they ask him and then it says he spoke all English. Like, Grandma would have to have an interpreter, see? So that's on the record also. So I got that on the file, if you need copies of those to verify that, I have that also.

Yu: Did Jim King ever own any land, any property?

Chan: No, not that I know. Because you can't own any land. You can't own, you can't even buy land. And so luckily Locke was a lease land. We built a house but, but he's, he's gone already by then. He was going somewhere between 1898 and 1903. They don't, they don't know what happened to him. And there, and the nearest thing we can figure out, somewhere in Alton, after his what, I think, after, I gotta remember whether his wife went to China after he disappeared. You know they were having some labor strife in Antioch and he was in Alton, at maybe hiring as a laborer again and might have got into some, something bad. Or they said he might have fell in the river and drowned.

Yu: You don't know where his grave is?

Chan: No, they never found him.

Yu: They never found Jim King?

Chan: No, no, they never found him. After that, after about, I think it was between 1898 and 1902 or 1903 there, they said, even the farmer worker mentioned that he was gone in that period, couple years ago, when I read through the file.

And one son that didn't go to China, when the mom, the grandmother took them all the China, that was Gam Lung, Kim King. He, he's known as a slot machine king. He was a farmer first, then later on he acts and he bought a whole lot of slot machine. Had it all down the valley and

Yolo County, and Alton, Rio Vista. And we didn't know that was illegal because it's behind the stairway or somewhere, all the stores had it. And he was paying off the store. And he picked us up when we were young kids, "come here, come on, let's go for a ride," in his 1938 Ford, you know, and we didn't know he was collecting. Now that I think about it. He said, "just stay in the car, I'll be right back." We went to Yolo, all these other places, you know, he was collecting. Then he, at, at the house, he has a house in Locke, separate from my grandfather's house. He had a, up on the levee on the other side. And he actually had a downstairs where he was fixing the machines. And he had the other machines in a little place upstairs, where he had pinball machines and shoot the bear, remember? You had shoot the bear, go "oong" thing. And then, we ride with him, then he give us some money we can go play it. But finally, I think after Governor Brown Sr. clamped down and shut it all down, and a lot of people had to get rid of the machines.

And all the gambling house, you know. Locke had at least three gambling houses going full-time, doing keno, you know, and, and you, grandma says, you know, the sheriff is all paid off, so when they come to raid, there's nobody there. And I used to sit in front with my grandpa. And there's always an old man sitting there. And there's a little hole in the wall with a rope on it, see. And in case the sheriff, you know, didn't tell them, on a, some come, he sees the sheriff car, he pulls the thing, the pin comes off the door, and the big heavy door locks close, and everybody runs out the back into the orchard. That was the gambling part. Also, sometime, the moonshine. They were making the white whiskey, the *baak zau, bai jiu*. See the cops coming and run to the fence, throw all his rice cake over the fence, and all these pigs come eating it. Big, big pigs.

Yu: This is during the time when there's a lot of gambling, and it's mainly a bachelor's society, with mainly single men that were living there?

Chan: Uh, there's a lot of single men and we rented room. They just, you know, their wives in China and they send money back. And they work in orchard most of the year, but they always kept one room in Locke. Just one room, small room, with—able to put two bunks—and they have a kitchen for everybody, and a wash area, and only have one light bulb hanging down, that was it. But they, they, don't pay very much, only 15 to 20 dollars a month or something like that. And they come back whenever holiday, they all back.

But the gambling is not most of those people. It's outsiders....

INTERVIEWS OF CHINESE RAILROAD WORKERS' DESCENDANTS: LIM LIP HONG

The Chinese Railroad Workers in North America Project conducted a series of interviews of descendants of workers on the Central Pacific—as well as people who were associated with the railroad, such as suppliers of food and herbal medicines. For the next activity, you will read edited versions of their stories and create interviews of your own.

Read the following interview and then follow the directions on Handout 5, *Interview Activity*.

Andrea Yee (Great-granddaughter of Lim Lip Hong)

Interviewee: Andrea Yee (Great-granddaughter of Lim Lip Hong)

Interviewer: Connie Young Yu and Barre Fong

Date: March 26, 2013

Location: San Francisco, California

Andrea Yee: My name is Andrea Yee. I'm a fourth generation, direct descendant of Lim Lip Hong. Lim Lip Hong was born in a village called *Lai Ji Cun*, I believe—I just discovered this—in this province of Guangdong. I found that he was born of a poor farmer. And according to the diary of my uncle who recorded 30 pages in his diary of the family history, which was a gold mine to find, and he is stating that he, he heard from his father that great-grandfather, his family was very poor and they worked in the fields every day in order to eat each day. If they didn't work, they didn't eat. So that was very interesting....

So when his uncles left for America, that was in the 1850s, when China was submerged in the Opium War. Now, the Opium War started in 1842. China was battling the British ships that were bombing all the harbors—from Canton all the way to Shanghai. There were five major harbors. And the British were bombing all the harbors out so they could dump their opium into China. And that was their war strategy: to conquer China. Now the British grew all their opium in India which they had already conquered. So by the time the 1850s came, China was deep into famine and addiction to opium and they could no longer protect their country. And that's why all these poor farmers, all these sons who were left in famine had to go to other places.

And I, I think Vick had mentioned that Lim Lip Hong's ship was heading to Australia. But all I know is that his ship took six months to get to California. And whether he took the Australian route or he went up north through the Japanese current, we don't know. But we do know that in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, there's a dead spot. And the sailors know about getting caught in that dead spot. And most people died if they did get caught in that. If they don't manage to get out of it, it would take them a long, long time to get across.

Opium Wars—(1840–1842), China lost to Britain; (1856–1860), China lost to Britain and France; the treaties signed at the end of both wars were the first of many “unequal treaties” in which China was forced to accept unfair terms with no recourse

So at any rate, he was only 12 years old when he finally arrived in California. He was so young that he could not haul the boulders out of the mines. So they sent him to work in the laundries. He worked in the laundries until he was old enough to haul boulders, at which time he helped his uncles to do the mining. And also there was a mention how they build all the stone walls. And if you go to the east part of Central Valley, all the ranches that run through there have hundreds and hundreds of miles of stone walls. And they all are about four to five feet tall, two and a half feet thick. All boulders and stones that the Chinese built for all the ranchers there. And no mortar. And they, and they still exist. They still use them. One of the reasons is that they passed a law in California that the ranchers had to build these walls in order to keep their livestock from wandering off. So Lim Lip Hong spent the late 50s and early 60s with his uncles doing that and the mining.

Then, in 1865, he joined the railroad crew. Until 1869, he worked all throughout building the railroad going up through the Sierra Nevada and then he also, after the, the railroad was finished, up to Utah, he went on to continue building railroads through the desert into Salt Lake City. He ended up in Virginia City, because I have a record of a census in Carson City of his name. And we know that he lived in Virginia City for quite a few years, his, let's see, I think it was his grandson used to go visit Virginia City. And it was called the bloody bar in Virginia City, where he's famous. He was very famous. He was also known as a Lothario, Lothario, gun-toting cowboy. So he evidently live the good life there but he worked really hard, because in Virginia City there are mine—silver mines—that they discovered. I went there and I discovered that there still are some shacks left in Virginia City that—where the Chinese lived, but they're all run down and I, I was told by the shopkeeper that they're going to just plow them under, which is a real shame. Because the Chinese built the railroad that goes to Virginia City but it's a small gauge railroad. And they were not allowed to work in the mines because of the Irish Union, but when the silver mines had to go very, very deep underground, they would hire the Chinese. Because that was dangerous work. And the mines would, the temperature would go high as almost 200 degrees. And when they sent the Chinese down there, they would have to bring them up after few minutes and just flood them with cold water and then send them back down again. Oh! This is what they had to endure in order to work in those mines. And I was just there and just a few years ago to hear these stories.

Lothario—a man whose chief interest is seducing women

At any rate, this brings us to around 1874 when he heard about the Gold Strike in the Black Hills of South Dakota. And so he went to South Dakota there and worked in the mines there. It's a city called Deadwood and it was probably the only city that welcome Chinese in the Midwest. Meanwhile, on the West Coast, all the western states were burning down all the Chinatowns. They were trying to get the Chinese out of it, out of the United States, send them back to China, any way they could. Because after the railroad was completed all these Chinese were out of work. And then when the railroad was completed all the Euro-Americans were

coming across on the railroad that the Chinese built, finding that there was no work and getting very resentful to the Chinese man who were preferred as workers. So by 1880s, the Chinese population had decreased by two-thirds. So as many as they could, they just sent them back, got them out of there. And there were a lot of hangings, massacres that we're uncovering now. It's a very sad, untold story but interesting.

At any rate, by 1877, uh, 79, Lim Lip Hong came back from Deadwood, South Dakota and, um, settled in San Francisco, Potrero Hill. He married a young Chinese woman who was... 20 years younger than him. And he settled in Potrero Hill. He had seven children. When he first settled, he had bought a horse, two cows, ducks, chickens and geese. This is all in the diary. Very interesting. He lived in a shack. And we have a picture of that shack where all his children were born. The first one was born in 1879. And it was told that he worked as a laborer. He worked in butcher town, as in the slaughterhouse there. His, he took all the unwanted pig parts and his two sons would cart them into Chinatown and sell them to the Chinese. Then, he began to work as—he raised chickens, and his wife sold the eggs. And he also worked to import... guano from Cuba and he, he states that... he brought his two sons into business with him to do this business.

And in fact, the eldest son, Lim Sing left to go to Cuba in 1911. So we have a record of that. And he also went there again in 1989—no—yes, he, he, he left again in 1918. So we have a record of these goings and comings because the officials could not believe that the Chinese could be free to come and go whenever they please. They wanted to get them out of here as soon as possible. So I combed through the San Bruno Archives and I've uncovered what they had to go through in order to leave the country which the officials were happy to have them do, but they didn't want them to come back in. So the interviews lasted for a long, long time. They had to bring in other members of the family. And they had to bring in photos, they had to bring in certificates that they were citizens and each one of them, they questioned in great detail about how many brothers and sisters, what are their names, how many children each one of them had and what were their names. So we have a record of great-grandfather and great-grandmother coming into the office and being questioned.

And the interesting thing about this is that it happened with each one of the sons. And they all went into business importing, exporting. My grandfather had to go to China in order to hire his crews for all the steamship lines. So one of the brothers... has this record of, of questions and interrogations that he had to go through. And then finally, in 1942, he went back in for questioning and then the official said "Oh, no. That's all over with. The anti-immigration law is no longer in effect." But if you can realize that anti-immigration, Chinese, Anti-Chinese Immigration Act started in 1882. So it lasted until 1943. And during that period the Chinese were—there were many, many laws that were passed that encouraged the racism and the discrimination that all, all these ancestors had to suffer through...

Well, this is a wonderful story, you know, about our great ancestors. And...we really, really need for these stories to, to be told to the descendants. So they appreciate the history and, and what they went through in order to build America. Because that railroad was built. It had a great part in the Civil War. I don't think many people know that. It was Abraham Lincoln who was the first president to realize that we needed this Transcontinental Railroad to come across because the West was wild and isolated. The East was going through their Civil War. They needed all the minerals that we had and they also needed the men to join and fight the Civil War. So the completion of this railroad, built by the Chinese, is historical in our general American history. That, that created the nation. And it's not in our history books. This, I don't understand...

Interviewee: Victor Lim (Great-grandson of Lim Lip Hong)

Interviewer: Connie Young Yu and Barre Fong

Date: March 26, 2013

Location: San Francisco, California

Victor Lim: ...I'm Victor Lim and I was born in [19]44 in San Francisco. I'm the descendant... of a gold miner, that came in, in the 1850s. So I guess I'm fourth generation. I was raised in El Cerrito and I went to school there... So I'm, I'm my grandfather's only Lim grandson....

Lim: ... Initially, [my great-grandfather] came over and he was like 11 or 12 with his uncle. And from what I heard, when I was a youngster, that they were actually on their way to Australia. Now this is something new that the other cousins hadn't heard—they have a lot of information but I remember hearing it specifically. Now whether they changed their mind or got blown off course, I don't know, but I remember hearing as a youngster that they were... initially were going to go to Australia.

So, then apparently, but this is all secondhand. You know that he... worked on the railroad. His uncle did gold mining. I'm sure he helped. But he worked on the railroad and was back in Minnesota. There were some records of him being in Minnesota. And the interesting thing is he, he didn't, most Chinese either died—railroad workers and miners—either died or returned to China. That's just the pattern—they were here to make money.

He stayed. And the family rumor has always been and I've got it confirmed more recently as that, but it's been in the family for years—of rumor that he probably had an Indian wife and family. And that's why he stayed and then return to China. So in the 1880s they shipped over a bride for him from China, from Canton. And that's my—who will be my great-grandmother....

Yu: So he would have been in his early 20s when he worked on the Transcontinental Railroad.

Lim: Right... And he—but after working on the railroad... he stayed. And the family rumor was and, and I've had recently reconfirmed that he might have had a[n] Indian wife and a family with her. And that's why he stayed. Then in the 1880s, he brought over a Chinese wife and we're the descendants of that that lady—woman.... she mistreated my grandmother. I heard many, many stories about how... she mistreated my grandmother.

Yu: Was this—were their lives in San Francisco?

Lim: Right. They lived, uh, they lived in, on a farm in Minnesota Street, which is south of China[town], in China Basin. So they didn't live in Chinatown like, like most, most of the Chinese did. They actually lived out on a farm. So, he, Grandpa, actually commuted when he went to Chinatown, the family... and the kids, in other words, my aunts and uncles all went to school in Chinatown. It was pretty segregated in those days and all the, all the kids, the Chinese kids, went to, I think Commodore Stockton is the name of the school that they went to. Yeah.

Yu: Did your grandfather talk about his father?

Lim: You know, my grandfather died when I was three. Yeah. So everything I've learned is through, not but, basically through my aunts and uncles. I was fortunate that I spent a lot of time with, with my aunts and uncles. I was an only child so I spent a lot of time with, with, every weekend with aunts and uncles and they talked a lot. And our family was such that everything was discussed in front of the kids. There was never a closed-door discussion anything. So I knew all the good and all the bad from them—about the family.

Yu: You have the oral history of the family.

Lim: Yeah, yeah. Sylvia and I have probably the most. And, but Andrea has some, but it's, it's just a, it's a different, from a different angle....

Yu: Could you describe that—the work they did?

Lim: Yeah, yeah, my grandfather... was quite a person. Quite a significant person... Grandpa Sing was the oldest of the... boys. He had two older sisters and one of them was pretty famous too.... She was... the queen of gambling in San Francisco in the 20s. And then one of her disciples was [Cantonese Name] who was the king of the gamblers in the thirties and forties...

Yu: And these were the children of the railroad worker?

Lim: ... Right. The woman. The queen of the gambling. Now the king of the gambling that came, he came later, he wasn't related. Although a lot of their kids intermarried, he was, he actually came from China when he was 18. That's [Cantonese Name] You need to do a thing on him. You might not get anything out of the kids though, they're really mum about.

Yu: But what kind of work did your grandfather do?

Lim: Alright. Apparently, you gotta realize, my grandfather, my great-grandfather... didn't have kids, at least Chinese kids, for a long time. So he was, so my grandfather, number one son, actually went out and worked from about the time he was 11 or 12. He basically supported the family, from what I've heard, from that point on....

Yu: How did you know about his first family, the Indian family [audio overlap]?

Lim: You know, we just heard rumors that because there was a gap from the time he worked on the railroad and in the mines. There was a 20-year gap before our great-grandmother came over. Yeah. So it was assumption, assumption substantiated by rumors.

Yu: And that family was left in Minnesota, or?

Lim: We don't know, we don't know. Yeah. I've jokingly talked to—I was a retired optometrist... I have some Indian patients [unclear] once in a while, and I always tell them that story and jokingly tell them that you could be my cousin.

INTERVIEWS OF CHINESE RAILROAD WORKERS' DESCENDANTS: LUM AH CHEW

The Chinese Railroad Workers in North America Project conducted a series of interviews of descendants of workers on the Central Pacific—as well as people who were associated with the railroad, such as suppliers of food and herbal medicines. For the next activity, you will read edited versions of their stories and create interviews of your own.

Read the following interview and then follow the directions on Handout 5, *Interview Activity*.

Lum Ah Chew Family

Interviewee: Paulette Liang (Great-Granddaughter of Lum Ah Chew)

Interviewer: Connie Young Yu and Barre Fong

Date: November 3, 2014

Location: San Francisco, California

Paulette Liang: My name is Paulette Liang. I was born in Fresno, California and I lived in San Francisco.

Yu: ... [T]ell us something about your search for your ancestor, your great-grandfather. Tell us his name and how, what you have learned about him.

Liang: Well... I was working on a family history. My mother was the family historian. She passed on. So I'm left to do it. And my great-grandfather's name was Lum Ah Chew. And family lore has always known that he worked on the railroad, then he worked on the levees in the delta in the Sacramento Delta, and was a farmer there for over 40 years. And, you know, married, had three children, and so we are his descendants.

levee—an embankment for preventing flooding

Yu: So he had three children. Could you tell us about them, and then how to relate to you?

Liang: My grandfather was his oldest son. His, my grandfather's, name was Chauncey Chew, and he was a farmer, a merchant, labor contractor, basically, you know, was a very well-known person in Courtland, California. And all his children were born there and we've lived there, in Courtland, for almost, yes, over 100 years. So I live, I grew up in Sacramento and my grandmother eventually moved to Sacramento.

Yu: So, it's on your mother's side. That is, Chauncey's daughter?

Liang: Yes, my mother is Chauncey's daughter.

Yu: And her name?

Liang: Was *Edna Chew.* Edna Lum Chew. Because originally, our name is Lum. It was actually Lum Chew. But because of the transposition, everybody became known as Chews. My mother is always very adamant

about the fact that we should always be—no, know—that our Chinese name was Lum.

Yu: So going back, to the original generation that came to America. Do you know the village that your great-grandfather came from?... Could you talk about his background? How old he was when he came?

Liang: Okay, well, he actually, his family, migrated from, uh, Fukien to Guangdong. And he came from **Zhongshan Leungdo Shaping Ha** Village. His family had migrated there only two generations before he left in 1860. And he came to California when he was 19 years old. And I have found records of federal census of him being a laborer here in San Francisco in 1860. And then in 1866, he was working for the Central Pacific Railroad. And then in the... 1870 Census records, he was in Courtland. And the family history has always been that he worked on the railroad and then he moved to Sacramento delta, helped to reclaim the levees, and then farmed there for over 42 years. And he died in 1906.

Yu: So you mentioned that his family immigrated from Fukien province. But he always considered himself from Zhongshan, is that correct?...And the dialect is Zhongshan.

Liang: Yes. Yes.

Yu: Because a great many people, Chinese from the delta, was from Zhongshan.

Liang: Yes... I think a lot, because of that, they were also very, very involved in the Revolution in China, with so much discrimination here... they followed the event in China very closely. And my, both my great-grandfather and my grandfather were involved in the, in the movement, you know, to liberate China. And Sun Yatsen came to visit them and stayed at their house.

Yu: Could you talk a little bit more about that? Sun Yatsen came to stay in Courtland?... He stayed in the home of—

Liang: My great grandfather and my, and my grandfather was very involved in the KMT chapter in Courtland.

Yu: And you have some documentation from the travels, I mean, the people going back and forth, and you could talk, if you talk about, your father, you said was born in China?

Liang: My father was, yes. But he didn't come until 1925 and he actually came as a part of a diplomatic... mission. But he ended up in Courtland, teaching Chinese school, because my grandfather hired him to teach Chinese school. And then, you know, he married my mother.

Yu: So he hired his future son-in-law to teach Chinese school.

Liang: That's correct.... And my mother also was a Chinese school teacher. When she was 16, she was recruited to teach the younger children because, you know, she was studious quick learner. So she was, you know, she was a Chinese school teacher, too.

the Revolution (The Chinese Revolution of 1911)—in October of 1911, a group of revolutionaries in southern China led a successful revolt against the Qing Dynasty, establishing in its place the Republic of China and ending the imperial system.

Sun Yatsen—(1866–1925) Chinese revolutionary and political leader; financed several uprisings in China; when the Qing Dynasty ended, he was the first provisional President of the Chinese Republic

KMT (Kuomintang)—“National People’s Party,” the political party that governed all or part of mainland China from 1928–1949

Yu: Well, could you tell us something about the documents and the photographs you have?...

Liang: Okay. In the 1860 Census, the federal census, he was listed as a laborer in San Francisco. And he was 19 years old. And then I have the, well, this is the 1860 census. And then in 1866, he's listed as working for the Central Pacific Railroad. In August 1866, he was a cook. And in September 1866, he was still working for a Central Pacific—he was a waiter. So there's that. And then on the 1870 census, he was in Courtland, by that time, and he was working on the Runyon Ranch, and he was a farmhand... And in the 1900 census, he is listed—he's 60 years old now, and so he's listed here. And I also have a document, from, he was a witness for a young person who was, who was I guess, he's testifying that he was, this young person was native-born. So this interview was conducted in English and my mother said he could read and write and speak English but he was illiterate in Chinese. And then I have his death certificate. So that's what we know about Lum Ah Chew.

Yu: Did he die in Courtland?

Liang: Oh yes. Yes. He, my great-grandmother said he collapsed in his son Sing's orchard. And he died of myocarditis...

myocarditis—
inflammation of the
heart muscle

Fong: Do you have any, aside from just knowing that your great-grandfather worked on the railroad, were there any stories passed down about that time? About maybe what he was doing? I mean he was a cook and a waiter, but any other stories?

Liang: Actually, no. I really don't know of any other stories about him. My mother never knew her grandfather because he died in 1906, before she was born. And he was just knowing to be an orchard, you know, orchardist, and a very good farmer. He worked for the same family for many years—the Deming family. And the Demings were very fond of him and Mrs. Deming sent my grandfather Chauncey to school in Rio Vista, the Saint Joseph Academy. So he, he could read write and speak English quite well, you know, very well. And so in the early 1900s, because he was very fluent speaker... he negotiated, you know, a lot for the Chinese community.

Yu: As far as the, the first mention of his occupation was laborer. That's before the railroad. Do you know what kind of work that was?

Liang: I have no idea what that would be.

Yu: It's not in the mining country. It was—

Liang: in San Francisco...

Yu: And then when he worked as a cook for the railroad.

Liang: Yes.

Yu: That would be for, do you have a sense or have you heard stories—he cooked for fellow Chinese, he was part of a work crew.

Liang: Oh I am sure he was a part of a work crew that cooked for Chinese because at that time, the Chinese all cook, you know, had their own cooks and cook for themselves. So. I don't know what the Europeans ate.

Yu: But he was listed on the payroll.

Liang: Yes.

Yu: Did, were there any stories about the work or the pay on the railroad? Anything?

Liang: Only that he was paid a dollar and 15 cents a day as a cook and only 60 cents—66 cents as a waiter. So that wasn't much money.

Yu: What year? What year was the waiter? Was he waitering...?

Liang: 1866, in September of 1866.

Yu: We're trying to figure out, I'm trying to think of what kind of waiting on tables—waiting—serving food or—this is the first time I've seen—heard the occupation waiter in conjunction with the railroad.

Liang: Oh. Maybe. I don't know. Maybe he was waiting on the European, you know? I've no idea. Probably the Chinese didn't have any waiters.

Yu: It's very important to know that he was paid \$1.15 a day.

Liang: Uh, as a cook. Let's see, where is he. Yeah, they have it as per diem. So, let me see, where is it, Ah Chew Ah Chew, well let's see here it says he only work three days in 1866 as a waiter. And he was paid 66 cents a day. So at the end he was paid a \$1.95. And, uh, let's see, Ah Chew, here he's listed in the cook. He was paid \$1.15 a day, so at the end he was paid \$10.35.

Okay, okay. He was working for the Central Pacific Railroad in August of 1866. He's listed as a cook and he was, he, I think, oh, the number of days he worked as a cook, it looks like, might have been nine days, and he was paid \$1.15 a day. So \$10.35 in all.

Yu: Are there other listings of Chinese, I'm thinking of the comparable wages, doing other work?And how much they were paid?

Liang: You know, on this, on this ledger, only, there were only the Chinese waiters. Everybody else here is European.

Yu: And what kind of work were they doing?

Liang: Well, okay, here's a Europe—here's a non-Chinese name. He was a cook, he worked 31 days and he was paid \$50.

Yu: So he was paid a lot more than—

Liang: ... the Chinese cooks. And, uh, these are all non-Chinese names and I don't know what, it says drifter, but outfitter? Maybe it is outfitter? They were paid \$1.15 a day. Oh. I guess these might have been outfitters, they called them, and they were paid \$1.15 a day.

Yu: So it's the same as a cook. A \$1.15?

Liang: Hmm hmm. Let's see. It's sort of hard to read.

Fong and Yu: It's okay. Yeah. We get the idea. And also, that, that, you always heard, that your great-grandfather worked on the railroad.

Liang: Always. Oh yes, always.

Yu: So this is just, uh, maybe one page of his work assignments he might have done. We don't know how much other work he has done for the railroad.

Liang: Yes, no, I don't know. I guess, there might be other records in the Railroad Museum, but I've never looked them up. I've, I didn't really look any further than these that I found.

Yu: Where did you find those?

Liang: At the Railroad Museum in Sacramento.

Yu: Oh, I see.

Liang: They have the actual ledgers, but I never, I couldn't xerox them at the time, because they were so large, but now they're online. Sue found them. So that was great.

Yu: There might be others.

Liang: There might, there might be. But I think I did find a record of him in Nevada City in 18—was it something—between 1866 and 1870 and Courtland. So he may have gone up to the mines from there, who knows....

INTERVIEWS OF CHINESE RAILROAD WORKERS' DESCENDANTS: MOCK CHUCK

The Chinese Railroad Workers in North America Project conducted a series of interviews of descendants of workers on the Central Pacific—as well as people who were associated with the railroad, such as suppliers of food and herbal medicines. For the next activity, you will read edited versions of their stories and create interviews of your own.

Read the following interview and then follow the directions on Handout 5, *Interview Activity*.

Mock Chuck Family

Interviewee: Vicky Tong Young (Great-granddaughter of Mock Chuck)

Interviewed by: Barre Fong

Interview Date: May 13, 2015

Location: Lake Forest, California

Mock Chuck's Gold Watch / Research on Mock Chuck

Transcript

Young: Hi, I'm Vicki Tong Young, and I'm a former teacher. I live in Lake Forrest, CA... I'm very proud of the fact that my great-grandfather, whose name was Mock Chuck, was one of the earliest railroad pioneers. We have a very special family heirloom that we've had in the family for 140 years. And it's a gold watch that my great-grandfather was given by the railroad many years ago, and so over the years it's kind of been a fascination for me to find out about the story of the gold watch.

Fong: Tell me about the watch.

Young: The watch—it's dated 1875 and it's inscribed with my great-grandfather's name, Mock Chuck. It was inscribed by someone who was an official of the railroad, we think. It's a beautiful 18-carat gold watch, very valuable, very exclusive. It was made in Switzerland. The story goes that my great-grandfather was so proud of this watch that he had it on a long chain with a peanut, a golden peanut, on the end of it and he would wear it all the time. Just because he was proud of his part in building the railroad.

My mother was the one who really made me interested in the watch, because she was so proud that this ancestor had done this. He was part of my father's family actually. I was a history major at UCLA so I always was really interested in what the Chinese had accomplished. To have this piece of history in my hand was really neat. So I actually went through ancestry.com and did a big search of my family tree. In doing that, we had also talked a lot to the relatives before they had passed away. We had a lot of oral history. So we put that all together and we traced the story of our family.

Fong: What did you find on ancestry.com? Did you find people you hadn't known about?

Young: I think it kind of filled in the blanks. I think for a lot of us who had ancestry we might just have known little bits and pieces, but we really have no idea of how incredibly courageous they were and just the hardships they faced. We found a lot of papers about him that are available online now, like we found his census report from Los Angeles in the year, I think it was 1900. We found his name on some of the railroad payrolls that were actually made back in 1866, which were absolutely amazing to see his name on this piece of history—that was really a thrill to see that....

Great-grandfather's Background / Experience as Headman

Transcript

Young: The more I found out about his life, the more I was absolutely amazed at how incredibly brave and persistent the men who came over were. Because he was born in 1847, he was born in Yin Ping, and it was mainly a farming area, but he was very fortunate that he was actually educated. He went to school, and he was training to be an herb doctor. So he was an herbalist. And things in Yin Ping was so bad in those days that they were having civil war and there was famine and there were bandits. It was just a very unsettling time. So about 1864 is when he first came over. So we assume that he came over because he was probably the brightest one in the family and they put their—all their eggs in that one basket. We think he was the first one to come over to America. When he got here eventually one of his uncles eventually got a job working as a cook for the railroad. We think that's probably how he got connected to the railroad.

Fong: Do you know what he did on the railroad?

Young: On the railroad, he was considered a headman, and headmen were the people that were the Chinese people who kind of oversaw the Chinese crews. First there was a white person who was the foreman, and then there was a headman and he was the one who got all the provisions and he gave out the money and he kept track of them. And I think because my great-grandfather was educated, it was helpful to him because he could do herb doctoring, he knew how to do numbers, and one month it was really funny, he had to be a waiter for a white crew. He only did it for three days, and he did it for I think 66 cents a day. So I guess they must have felt that somehow he could communicate with the white crews, because when they needed him in a pinch they probably moved him over and had him do that just for one month.

Fong: And he was literate?

Young: He was literate. Yes.

Fong: That's probably why his name was on the—his actual name was on the payroll records. He could write his name.

Young: Yes. And it was interesting because in the tracing of the history a lot of people have names that are misspelled. He also had his name misspelled a lot but because it was such a simple name, Mock Chuck, then I think that it was easy to remember and I think he was very proud of his name so we did find him in a lot of places.

Fong: Do you know if [*inaudible*] have been back to the village?

Young: No, we have never been back there. My uncle said it was about a 100 miles from Hong Kong. So it would have been easier for those people to come to America because it was simpler for them to get to the port. Basically we think what happened to him was that he realized very early that he didn't want to work as a manual laborer. First he was educated and most of them weren't educated, and then when he got there they were going over the Sierra Nevada so he was actually there in that first really bad winter when they had people sleeping in the snow. And I would imagine he realized that that wasn't much of a future for him, so the following winter—by that time he was already gone, we think. Because he was no longer in the payrolls, so we think probably he became like a middle man. Because in those days what they did was that the headmen, who were Chinese, they got to provide labor and the person who provides the labor then gets to be able to provide the food, clothing, tools, and so they can make a little bit of a profit in between. So we think that's probably what happened.

Mock Chuck's Connection to Village / Marriage in China

Transcript

Fong: Do you know if he was sending money back?

Young: Yes, the reason why he came and I'm sure the reason why most of them came was because they were holding up the family. And we know later in his life that he was able to acquire some land in Yin Ping, and there were 40 families who were able to farm on the land. So not only was he providing for himself and his family but also, you know, the people back there too that could then have a living for themselves. I think that's why it was hard for them to return, because they knew that so many people were counting on him. And also, he was one of the people who could read and write, so he actually wrote letters for other people, and that's one of the things that he did. So I'm sure he was helping some of his, you know, fellow villagers to be able to send money home, send letters home, things like that.

Fong: Do you know, on that land, did they build any buildings that he owned?

Young: We really don't know much about Yin Ping, what happened there. We know they had a big compound for the big family that they had. But I'm sure that being a Gold Mountain person, that was part of why they wanted to come too, they wanted to be successful, they wanted to share their success with the people at home.

Fong: Was he married in China, do you know?

Young: So the interesting part about him was because he came over so early, he was only 17 when he came over, he didn't marry until much later in his life, and the story on him was that he had worked on the railroad so long by the time he was ready to go back to China there was a lot of anti-Chinese sentiment. They knew that if they went back and forth it would be very difficult for him to go back. So we think he didn't go back to China to get married until the 1880s. So he was like close to 40, between 30 and 40, when he went back. And he only, to our knowledge, got to go back a few times to China.

Fong: And so he did get married, I'm sure.

Young: He did get married, he had a first son who ended up dying. He went back about six years later, and then my grandfather was conceived. And the I think one of the tragic parts of his life was that he didn't see his own son be born because they had so many exclusion laws at that time that I think he probably had some inside information—he must have known they were gonna change the laws. So he caught a boat back without seeing his son be born, and he made it about 32 days before they changed the law and said: no Chinese can come back to this country even if they've been here for many years, they cannot, they absolutely cannot return. So he beat it by 32 days....

So my great-grandfather Mock Chuck was actually one of the fortunate ones. Since he did have an education, when he was on the railroads he realized, what can I do to make money in this new place? What can I offer people? So he realized that there needed to be a bridge between the Chinese and the Caucasians, the ones who were working on the railroad and the ones who were paying for them and getting things for them. So in the old days they would allow the person who supplied all the Chinese labor with getting them all the food and the clothing and the tools that they needed—the Chinese were treated differently. They had to pay for their own keep, they had to take that out of their salaries. Like I said, I think they got paid a dollar a day in gold. So they actually had it in their hand. They were so frugal they were able to save even on this meager amount. So once my great-grandfather realized, Ah, this is something I can do. And all the other Chinese headmen realized that too. So every year on the payroll you would see, Ah Kee Company, you know. And each headman would try to make his own little company so he could have a little stake in what was going on. So those were the fortunate ones because eventually they learned how to sell items and do exporting and importing and they were able to start their own businesses. Because the only people who were not excluded were the merchant class. So what

my great-grandfather did was he became a partner and a small partner in some of these bigger companies, and that's how the Chinese would help one another. Somebody would say, let's start a company, let's sell merchandise in San Francisco, let's sell tea and rice and then each person would put in, say \$500 and be a partner, and that would open doors for their whole family, for their futures. When my great-grandfather went to Los Angeles, he realized, okay, how am I going to make a success, Chinatown is such a small place, only Chinese people will come here to buy and sell goods. So he realized he could advertise. So they had a city directory and so my great-grandfather was one who put in--his employment agency has an ad in the City Directory because he realized he wanted to fit into the new culture. He wanted to find a way to help his fellow man. And he was instrumental, I think, in some of the Chinese businesses there banding together and working together for those things.

INTERVIEW ACTIVITY

Imagine that you have the opportunity to conduct an interview of the Chinese railroad worker described in your handout. Create an interview between the people in your handout and a group of reporters in a question-and-answer format which you will then present to the class. To help create your interview presentation, follow the steps outlined below.

1. Decide who will be interviewed and who will be the reporters.
2. Write a short 2–3 sentence introduction of the people who will be interviewed. Decide who will give this introduction during the presentation.
3. Write the script for your interview. The questions and answers in this interview should convey the following information:
 - Name of railroad worker
 - What area of China he came from
 - What year he arrived in the United States
 - Reasons for coming to the United States
 - Type of work he performed for the railroad
 - What he did after working on the Central Pacific Railroad
 - Places he lived after working on the railroad
 - Whether the railroad worker has any documents or memorabilia, and if so, their significance
 - Other important events, people, etc. described in your handout

Since everyone in your group will be participating in the interview, every person will need a copy of the script. Your teacher will collect one copy of the script for assessment at the end of your interview.

4. Your group will be assessed on the following criteria:
 - The interview is well-rehearsed.
 - There is equal participation among group members.
 - The presentation is 3–5 minutes long.
 - The presentation exhibits sensitivity toward different cultures and ideas.
 - The presentation conveys all the information listed in Step 3.
 - You provide the interview script to teacher, and it is 1–2 typed pages or 2–3 neatly handwritten pages in length.

***NOTE:** Avoid using inappropriate or offensive stereotypes, language, accents, and mannerisms when acting out character roles. Failure to comply with this rule will result in automatic failure for this activity. If you are uncertain whether something is inappropriate or offensive, check with your teacher first.*

INTERVIEW NOTE-TAKING SHEET

Listen to your classmates' interviews and record the following information in the space provided. In addition, mark the places on Handout 2, *Map*, in which the Chinese railroad worker lived at different points of his life with a small "x" and the railroad worker's initials.

Name of former railroad worker	What area of China did the interviewee(s) come from?	Reason(s) for coming to the U.S. and year of arrival	Type of railroad work	What did the interviewee do after working for the Central Pacific RR?	Where did the RR worker live afterwards? List all.
Bein Yiu Chung					
Chin Lin Sou					
Fong See					
Hong Lai Wo					

Name of former railroad worker	What area of China did the interviewee(s) come from?	Reason(s) for coming to the U.S. and year of arrival	Type of railroad work	What did the interviewee do after working for the Central Pacific RR?	Where did the RR worker live afterwards? List all.
Jim King					
Lim Lip Hong					
Lum Ah Chew					
Mock Chuck					

SONGWRITING ACTIVITY

In this activity, you will listen to the song “Men of Iron” posted on the CRRWNA website at <http://web.stanford.edu/group/chineserailroad/cgi-bin/wordpress/men-of-iron/>. and compose lyrics of your own to pay tribute to the Chinese railroad workers.

Then, prepare to perform your song for the class or make a video recording of your performance to play for the class.

Guidelines:

Think of the images you have viewed and the interviews you have read or heard. Choose an aspect of the Chinese railroad workers’ experience you would like to write about.

Some possibilities include:

- Write an entire song about what it’s like to work inside a tunnel during the winter.
- Write about the blistering heat of working in the desert.
- Write about what a Chinese railroad worker might have been feeling during the strike from Cisco to Truckee.
- Write a song about one of the Chinese railroad workers interviewed in the last activity.

Revisit the CRRNA website at <http://chineserailroadworkers.stanford.edu/virtual/> and review the information. If you are unsure of your song topic, please check with your teacher.

Your song should:

- contain at least four verses, each with at least four lines;
- include information from the lesson about the Chinese railroad workers’ experiences;
- be written neatly on a separate sheet of paper that will be turned in after the performance;
- be well-rehearsed; and
- demonstrate cultural sensitivity.

For your presentation:

- rehearse and record your song to play for the class in the following class period; or
- rehearse your song and perform it live for the class (it does not need to be memorized).

IMAGES FROM THE RAILROAD

After students have viewed the images and taken notes on Handout 1, *Note-taking Sheet for Images from the Railroad*, facilitate a class discussion about the images using the questions students posed during their initial viewing of the PowerPoint presentation. Provide additional information after students have offered their own observations and direct them to record additional notes on their handouts. Please note that more focus is spent on certain images than others.

Image #1



Student questions: *What do you see? What is the terrain like? Where do you think this is?*

Ground was broken in Sacramento at Front and K Streets on January 8, 1863 to begin construction of the Central Pacific Railroad, the western link of the first Transcontinental Railroad. Here's what the railroad looked like at Antelope Ridge Near New Castle, approximately 30 miles from Sacramento.

(Courtesy of Alfred A. Hart Photograph Collection, Stanford University)

Image #2



Student questions: *What do you see? What do you think is being built? What is it for? What kinds of hazards do you think workers had to face when building this structure?*

Trestles are open cross-braced frameworks used to support an elevated structure such as a bridge. Trestles were used throughout the construction of the Transcontinental Railroad. Construction crews needed to build these structures ahead of track-layers. Trestles crossed rivers and canyons, went through mountains, and crossed over dry gullies that would wash with water during rain and spring snowmelt.

"Building Trestle at New Castle Placer County" (Courtesy of Alfred A. Hart Photograph Collection, Stanford University)

Image #3



Student questions: *What do you see? What do you think is happening in this photo? What is the terrain like? What would have made this work dangerous?*

In early 1864 workers began blasting and digging through steep terrain on the Bloomer Ranch near Auburn, California to create a level grade for tracks. Bloomer Cut, 38 miles (61 kilometers) from Sacramento, ended up being 800 feet (243 meters) long and 63 feet (19.2 meters) high, and workers dug a trough through naturally cemented gravel and hard clay with picks, shovels, and black powder. This was the first major engineering challenge for the railroad, and it was dangerous work. At least

some Chinese may have worked at Bloomer Cut by the time it was completed in March 1865.

(Lawrence & Houseworth Albums. Wood Train and Chinaman in Bloomer Cut, c. 1860-70. Gift of Florence V. Flinn. The Society of California Pioneers.)¹

Image #4



Student questions: *What do you see? What is the terrain like? Where do you think this is?*

In the summer of 1865 the railroad builders faced one of their biggest challenges, a roadbed curving around a mountain high in the Sierra Nevada, named Cape Horn (Mile 57 / Kilometer 91.7) after the treacherous route for ships sailing around the tip of South America. The site was “a precipitous, rocky bluff” about 1,200 feet high above the American River east of Colfax, California.

“Excursion Train at Cape Horn.” (Courtesy of Alfred A. Hart Photograph Collection, Stanford University)

Image #5



Student questions: *What do you see? What do you think is being built? What is it for?*

In addition to the difficult terrain, workers had to battle the weather. Snow from fierce blizzards often blocked tunnel entrances, and the workers shoveled out tunnels through the snow, as much as 500 feet (152 meters) long. Snow structures such as this one needed to be built in order to continue work.

Because of the severe winter storms, the Central Pacific built 37 miles (59.5 kilometers) of snow sheds to cover the tracks in 1868 and 1869.

Scene near the Summit (Courtesy of Alfred A. Hart Photograph Collection, Stanford University)

Image #6:



Student questions: *What do you see? What is the terrain like? Where do you think this is? What tools did the workers have to cut through the rocks? How hard would this work have been?*

In fall 1865, Chinese workers embarked on the most daunting of all the challenges they faced on the Central Pacific: the digging of 15 tunnels, most of them at high elevations, through the Sierra Nevada, for a total of 6,213 feet (1,894 meters). The most difficult was No. 6, the Summit Tunnel (Mile 105.5 / Kilometer 170), cut through solid granite, 1,695 feet (517 meters long) and 124 feet (38 meters) below the mountain’s surface. ² Here’s an image of laborers and rocks, near the opening of Summit Tunnel (Tunnel No. 6).

(Courtesy of Alfred A. Hart Photograph Collection, Stanford University)

1. Samuel Montague quoted in George Kraus, *High Road to Promontory: Building the Central Pacific across the High Sierra*, 90.

2. John R. Gillis gives a detailed description of digging the Summit and other tunnels to the American Society of Engineers. Read John R. Gilliss [sic], Civil Engineer, Member of the Society, “Tunnels of the Pacific Railroad, A Paper Read Before the Society Jan. 5, 1870,” in *Transactions, American Society of Engineers*, Vol. 1. Published by the Society, 1872, 155–172.

Image #7:



Student questions: *Imagine you were a worker in this tunnel looking up. This is what you might see. What do you think it is? Why do you think it was created?*

Crews dug at both the east and west face of the Summit Tunnel (Tunnel No. 6), but progress was still too slow. In order to move the work more quickly, a stripped-down locomotive was hauled to the top of the tunnel and work gangs set about sinking a vertical shaft 73 feet (22 meters) down into the center of the tunnel. Workers were let down into the tunnel and lifted out through the central shaft, and the debris was hauled out with buckets raised by the locomotive's steam engine. Now work could proceed in four directions, at both the east and west faces, and inside out. Based on this description, draw a quick diagram of how you think construction of the tunnel took place. This is a view of the vertical shaft halfway through Tunnel No. 6 (Summit Tunnel).

(Taken by Richard Koenig on October 7, 2011)

Image #8:



Student questions: *What is this? Why do you think it was built? Where do you think this is? What was it about the construction of this wall that you think allowed it to last for 150 years? What made it so sturdy and strong?*

While every one of the 15 tunnels cut through the Sierra Nevada Range could be considered a monument to the Chinese workers who toiled for the Central Pacific, there is a stone retaining wall near Donner Summit that is actually named for the people who were so instrumental in its successful construction. Initially discriminated against by the Central Pacific, the Chinese worked so well that they were given increasing amounts of responsibility very quickly. This is a recent photo of the "China Wall."

(Taken by Richard Koenig on May 15, 2013)

Image #9:



Student questions: *This is a broader view of the previous image. What was the terrain like? What are the weather conditions like in this image? What do you think it would have been like to be in the tunnel during one of the many snow storms the winter it was built?*

This is an image of China Wall and Tunnel Eight, just east of Donner Summit. You can imagine what the winter conditions were like for the railroad workers. This view was made from the Lincoln Highway just east of Donner Summit.

(Taken by Richard Koenig on October 7, 2011)

Image #10:



Student questions: *What do you see? What is the terrain like? Where do you think this is? What made the construction of these tunnels hazardous work?*

Interior of Tunnel 12, just inside eastern portal. Imagine the labor necessary to create 15 of these tunnels.

(Taken by Richard Koenig on November 7, 2014)

Image #11:



Student questions: *What do you see? What is the terrain like? Where do you think this is?*

In addition to trestles, tunnels, and snow sheds, bridges also needed to be built for the railroad. Here's an image of the Lower Cascade Bridge Above Cisco.

(Courtesy of Alfred A. Hart Photograph Collection, Stanford University)

Image #12:



Student questions: *What do you see? What is the terrain like? Where do you think this is?*

This is an image of a snow plow in Cisco. Take note of how high the snow is in comparison to the height of the worker standing next to the plow. This image further illustrates the conditions that workers endured.

(Courtesy of Alfred A. Hart Photograph Collection, Stanford University)

Image #13:



Student questions: *What do you see? What is the terrain like? What do you think the weather was like in this image? Where do you think this is? What were the dangers of working in this environment?*

The terrain was easier once the workers reached the high desert of Nevada and Utah, but there they had to contend with extreme heat, long supply lines, and the breakneck speed of construction. Sunstroke and heat exhaustion were problems in the high desert. This is an image of "Construction Train on Desert Near Humboldt Lake."

(Courtesy of Alfred A. Hart Photograph Collection, Stanford University)

Image #14:



Student questions: *What do you see? What is the terrain like? What do you think the weather was like in this image? Where do you think this is?*

As construction neared Promontory Summit, workers laid 10 miles and 56 feet of track in one day on April 28, 1869, working between 5:00 am and 7:00 pm. The accomplishment was in response to a \$10,000 wager Charles Crocker made with Thomas Durant of the Union Pacific that his Central Pacific workers were capable of doing what seemed impossible. A squad of eight Irish rail-handlers and an army of several thousand Chinese accomplished the feat. What kind of coordinated effort was required to accomplish this feat? This is an image of “End of track near Iron Point.”

(Courtesy of Alfred A. Hart Photograph Collection, Stanford University)

Image #15:



Student questions: *What modes of transportation do you see? What is the terrain like? Where do you think this is?*

This is an image of the special train of Governor Leland Stanford en route from Sacramento to Promontory, Utah, where the ceremony of Driving the Last Spike, connecting the Western Pacific and Union Pacific Railroad was held May 10, 1869. The picture was taken at Monument Point, a short distance from Promontory, and depicts the change made in transportation from the covered wagon to the iron horse. What advantages did the train have over the covered wagons in this picture?

(Courtesy of Alfred A. Hart Photograph Collection, Stanford University)

Image #16:



Student questions: *What do you see? Why do you think this picture was taken? Where do you think this is? Who do you see in this image?*

In Alfred Joseph Russell’s iconic photo of the event at Promontory, “East and West Shaking Hands at Laying Last Rail,” it seems that Chinese do not appear in the crowd. With locomotives from each railroad facing each other, their pilots (cowcatchers) almost touching, men are lined up on each side to mark the moment. Two chief engineers, Greenville Dodge of the Union Pacific Railroad on the left and Samuel Montague of the Central Pacific Railroad on the right, lean together with bottles between the smokestacks for a toast. There may be one or two Chinese in baggy and patched work clothes, such as those worn by the workers laying the last track in the scene; yet, oddly, one worker has his back turned to the camera, although no one else stands with his back turned. Next to him there may be another man, similarly dressed, facing the camera, but a white man next to him has his arm extended and holding up his hat. People had to hold their pose a long time to take photos in those days—so it’s odd that this man holds his hat very deliberately to hide the face of the person standing next to him. No one else is the target of a similar gesture or prank.

“East and West shaking hands at the laying of the last rail.” Plate 227. Photograph by Andrew J. Russell. Andrew J. Russell Collection. (Courtesy of Oakland Museum of California)

GEOGRAPHY OF CHINESE WORKERS BUILDING THE TRANSCONTINENTAL RAILROAD

1. How was the terrain different for workers building the Central Pacific Railroad (CPRR) and the Union Pacific Railroad?

The eastern section of the line, built by the Union Pacific Railroad Company, required tracks laid across vast flat expanses of mid-western prairie, but the western portion of the line required tunneling through the imposing Sierra Nevada mountains—blasting and digging cuts through deep rock, carving out 15 tunnels through solid granite in high altitudes, dumping large quantities of dirt and rubble to create fills, constructing trestles across deep canyons, and building retaining walls. The terrain was a bit easier once workers reached the high desert of Nevada and Utah, but there they had to contend with extreme heat, long supply lines, and the breakneck speed of construction.

2. How did the weather affect the progress of the railroad workers?

There were 44 storms during one winter in the Sierra Nevada. Snow at the summit averaged 18 feet/5.5 meters, with total snowfall reaching over 40 feet/12 meters. Snow often blocked tunnel entrances, avalanches were a constant danger, and camps were carried away by snow slides. Snow sheds had to be built to cover tracks.

In the desert of Nevada and Utah, summers could reach 120 degrees Fahrenheit/49 Celsius, and many workers collapsed due to the excessive heat.

3. What other types of work drew potential railroad workers away from working on the Central Pacific Railroad? List two.

They had better prospects in the booming Nevada silver mines and in agriculture.

4. How did attitudes toward hiring Chinese workers change over the course of building the Transcontinental Railroad? List at least four examples that depict company attitudes toward the Chinese.

- *At the start of construction, the Central Pacific Railroad had no plans to hire Chinese workers. Leland Stanford, president of the railroad, had been elected governor of California on a program opposing Chinese immigration, calling the Chinese “the dregs” of Asia.*
- *Due to a serious shortage of workers, Chinese workers were hired. At least some Chinese may have worked at Bloomer Cut by the time it was completed in March 1865.*
- *By July 1865, the Chinese workforce was nearly 4,000. During 1866, approximately 8,000 Chinese worked on the construction of tunnels and 3,000 were grading and doing other work, representing 90 percent of the Central Pacific Railroad workforce.*
- *In 1867, Chinese laborers went on strike to demand equal pay with Euro-American workers. While the company did not concede to the specific demands, they learned that the Chinese could not be taken for granted. Charles Crocker also pledged not to dock the pay of the workers for their action. The strike showed that the Chinese workers were not docile and that they could fight for their rights. Some suggest that many of their demands were met some time after the strike, thereby allowing Crocker to “save face.”*
- *On April 28, 1869, working between 5 am and 7 pm, workers laid 10 miles and 56 feet of track in one day. A squad of eight Irish rail-handlers and an army of several thousand Chinese accomplished the feat, with the San Francisco Bulletin describing the effort as “the greatest work in tracklaying ever accomplished or conceived by railroad men.” The names of the eight Irish workers were recorded by the railroad, but none of the Chinese workers’ names were recorded.*

- *Very few Chinese were represented at the ceremony on May 10, 1969 at Promontory Summit, Utah because almost all of the Chinese and other workers had been either dismissed or were moved west to improve the hasty construction. During the festivities around the country there was little mention of the Chinese labor that played such a major role in the railroad's construction.*
- *Chinese contributions to building the railroad did not go completely unacknowledged. For instance, a reporter for The San Francisco Newsletter describes one part of the celebration at Promontory ignored by other reporters:
"J.H. Strobbridge, when the work was all over, did invite the Chinese who had been brought over from Victory [nearby work camp] for that purpose, to dine at his boarding car. When they entered, all the guests and officers present cheered them as the chosen representatives of the race which have greatly helped to build the road ... a tribute they well deserved and which evidently gave them much pleasure . . ."*
- *During the celebration in Sacramento, E. B. Crocker (Charles's brother) praised the Chinese in his speech: "I wish to call to your minds that the early completion of this railroad we have built has been in large measure due to that poor, despised class of laborers called the Chinese, to the fidelity and industry they have shown."*

5. Where did many of the Chinese workers originate from in China? What factors led them to work on the railroad?

Railroad workers recruited by labor contractors came mostly from the Pearl River Delta area of Guangdong (Canton) province, especially Siyi (Sze Yap, meaning four counties: Taishan, Kaiping, Xinhui, and Enping). These counties suffered from extreme poverty, ethnic conflict, and civil unrest, and the area was close to Hong Kong, Macao, and Guangzhou (Canton) as points of departure. Desperate for employment, workers from this part of Guangdong boarded ships for California and other destinations to support their families.

6. At what point did Native Americans join the workforce? What deal did the railroad company negotiate with the Native Americans so construction could continue through their territory?

Native Americans joined the workforce in Nevada. Charles Crocker made agreements with the Shoshone and Paiute nations for construction to move ahead unmolested; in exchange, the tribes would have free passage on the trains once they were running.

7. How was the railroad influential in the development of the towns of Winnemucca and Elko?

***Winnemucca:** 325 miles/523 kilometers east of Sacramento, Winnemucca became a center for Chinese life. Masses of Chinese workers lived in three sprawling camps with a total of 275 tents. In 1868 and 1869, local merchants—including some Chinese—rushed in with great anticipation of prosperous business. Eventually, the famous Sing Fat Bazaar of San Francisco opened a branch in the town. The arrival of the railroad changed the nature of Winnemucca, and the CPRR was very influential in its development. According to Professor Sue Fawn Chung, "Winnemucca was a natural commercial center for not only the equipment needed to complete the CPRR to Promontory but also later as a transportation hub to San Francisco to the west, Salt Lake City to the east, and Oregon and Idaho to the north.*

Elko: As the last major town in Nevada before Utah, Elko served miners, ranchers, and travelers. "Chinese railroad workers and Chinese merchants became a part of the community from Elko's early heyday and helped lay the foundations of its prosperity."

8. In what ways were the Chinese treated differently from other workers? List at least four examples.
- *When large numbers of Chinese workers were first hired in 1865 they were paid \$26 per month for a six-day workweek, although rates would vary depending on how skilled or dangerous the work. For example, those who worked in the tunnels were paid an extra \$1 per month. Chinese workers worked longer hours than white workers and had to pay their headmen or contractors for their own lodging and food; on the other hand, the Central Pacific provided white workers accommodations and food without additional cost, and they were paid more.*
 - *The overseers of the Chinese workers paid them lower wages, forced them to work longer hours than first stipulated, and often abused them. Chinese workers were drawn away from the railroad to work in nearby mines, and foremen tried to prevent them from leaving, sometimes by force.*
 - *The Chinese were organized into work gangs, each led by a "headman" or contractor. Gangs lived together and hired their own cook and, in many cases, a medical practitioner who attended to illness and injury. In their contracts, Chinese workers insisted that a Chinese physician be in the vicinity.*
 - *Chinese workers were mainly assigned to common labor, such as grading.*
 - *Chinese workers had to provide their own food. They insisted on eating Chinese food, which they bought from stores kept in cars near the end of the track.*
 - *The Chinese and Native Americans were paid "by the wholesale" because Crocker felt that it was impossible to tell them apart. A paymaster would deliver money to the work gang boss who would then divvy it up.*
 - *At the end of the track, almost all of the Chinese and other workers had been either dismissed or were moved west to improve the hasty construction, leaving only a few Chinese to complete the work and celebrate the completion of the railroad in Promontory, Utah.*
9. What were some positive and negative consequences of the first Transcontinental Railroad? List at least two examples for each.
- Pros:**
- *The railroad made it possible to move goods and people across the country much more quickly.*
 - *Small farmers settled along the railroad's route.*
 - *Some Chinese workers returned to China where they helped in the development of their villages and regions, including building some of China's first railroads.*
 - *Many people praised the Chinese for their hard work and contributions to building the country.*
- Cons:**
- *Native American tribes were decimated, their lands stolen, and cultures undermined.*
 - *Small farmers became victims of railroad monopolies.*
 - *Chinese were regarded as racial inferiors and competition to white working people.*
 - *After violent campaigns to expel them, 1882 saw the first of many Congressional acts to exclude Chinese.*

10. What did the Chinese workers do once the CPRR was built? List at least four examples.

- *Some Chinese workers returned to China where they helped in the development of their villages and regions, including building the first railroads.*
- *Others who remained in the U.S. went to work in agriculture, mining, and building levees along the rivers.*
- *Some Chinese entered domestic service or worked in manufacturing to produce cigars and other products.*
- *Some Chinese continued to work for the Central Pacific to upgrade the often makeshift construction of previous railroads.*
- *Some Chinese went to work on the Union Pacific.*
- *Chinese also went on to build the railroad from Sacramento down the San Joaquin Valley to Los Angeles.*
- *Chinese veterans of the Central Pacific (along with additional compatriots newly arrived from China) also helped to build scores of other railroads throughout the United States and Canada.*