
Chinese in California collection

Finding aid prepared by Juliana Schouest and Sara Seltzer, Student Processing Assistants; machine-readable finding aid modified by Eric Milenkiewicz, Archives Assistant.

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Descriptive Summary

Title: Chinese in California collection

Date (inclusive): circa 1850-1989, undated

Date (bulk): 1970-1985

Collection Number: MS 095

Extent: 4.58 linear feet(11 boxes)

Repository: Rivera Library. Special Collections Department.
Riverside, CA 92517-5900

Abstract: The Chinese in California collection is comprised of photographs, correspondence, press clippings, typescripts, and other material pertaining to the history of Chinese life and culture in California and other areas in the western United States. Material relates to the academic study of the Chinese experience in the United States and the effort to preserve the historic sites and artifacts pertaining to this experience.

Languages: This collection consists of material in English and Chinese.

Access

This collection is open for research.

Publication Rights

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Preferred Citation

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Acquisition Information

Provenance unknown.

Processing History

Processed by Juliana Schouest and Sara Seltzer, Student Processing Assistants, 2008.

Historical Note

The Chinese began to arrive in California in large numbers after the discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill in 1848. Their arrival was part of a complex economic relationship between China and the United States in which the Chinese became a major source of labor for the economic development of the American West.

Most of the Chinese that came to the western United States were from southeastern China and of Cantonese decent. The victims of war, natural disasters, and political and economic oppression, they were attracted to California by the promise of gold and opportunity. Many were laborers and farmers, but merchants, craftsmen, artisans and students also came in search of opportunities. Their exodus from China was aided by the ongoing development of Hong Kong as an international port. By 1870, the Chinese made up nearly 25 percent of California's unskilled labor force, but only 10 percent of the state's total population. Ten years later, the Chinese comprised two-tenths of one percent of the U.S. population. Ninety-nine percent of these Chinese lived in the West, nearly three-quarters of them in California.

In cities and towns, many Chinese became domestic servants, cooks, laundrymen, and held other service jobs. The Chinese also made up the majority of workers in such light industries as garment, shoe, and cigar making factories. When the railroad opened up jobs to the Chinese, thousands signed up to work. As early as 1858 the Chinese were building intrastate railroads, and in the 1860s they were instrumental in building the western portion of the transcontinental railroad from Sacramento, California to Promontory Point, Utah.

In the beginning most of the Chinese came to California to work temporarily, but many eventually made California their home. Their presence led to the creation of Chinese communities commonly referred to as "Chinatowns." These enclaves were segregated and considered an exotic curiosity by mainstream America. They had their own form of self-government organized under the leadership of merchants' guilds and district associations.

When the economy declined, unemployed white workers accused Chinese workers of causing the nation's demise. Anti-Chinese hysteria permeated California politics. The state's labor unions claimed Chinese immigration would destroy

the nation's democratic structure. This Sino phobia was realized in murders, exclusion, and the total destruction of the Chinese communities by the passage of anti-Chinese legislation. California's 1879 Constitution even contained a specific section on how to eradicate the Chinese from the state.

On May 6, 1882, the federal government, influenced by powerful anti-Chinese lobbyists from California, passed the Chinese Exclusion Act, which barred entry of all Chinese laborers into the United States for ten years. This marked the first time immigration to the United States was banned on the basis of race and class. Still dissatisfied with the presence of "too many" Chinese in the United States, the government continued the Exclusion Act until 1904, when it was extended indefinitely. Similar restrictive immigration policies were eventually applied to other Asian ethnicities.

Collection Scope and Contents

This collection is comprised of photographs, correspondence, press clippings, typescripts, and other material pertaining to the history of Chinese life and culture in California and other areas in the western United States. Topics covered include the study and preservation of regional Chinatowns (including the Riverside, California Chinatown), scholarly research on various aspects of Chinese history and culture, and the lives of Chinese residents in different communities. Photographic and print materials document the construction of railroads, agricultural labor, the Gold Rush, and life in multiple Chinatown locations. This collection also includes material pertaining to the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California.

Collection Arrangement

This collection is arranged into three series as follows:

Series 1. Academic writings on Chinese history and culture, 1875-1989, undated

Series 2. California Chinatowns, circa 1870-1988, undated

Series 3. Chinese in Western U.S. history, circa 1850-1989, undated

Indexing Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.

Subjects

California

Chinatowns

Chinese

Immigrants

Riverside (Calif.)

Genres and Forms of Materials

Anthropological studies

Clippings (information artifacts)

Correspondence

Documents

Photographs

Series 1. Academic writings on Chinese history and culture 1875-1989, undated

Series Scope and Contents

This series consists of typescripts written by scholars from various academic disciplines.

Material includes photocopies of complete monographs, as well as clippings excerpted from scholarly publications. Subjects include Chinese history, philosophy, arts, and archaeological and anthropological studies.

Series Arrangement

This series is arranged sequentially according to box and folder number.

Box 1, Folder 3

Correspondence, maps, and other material pertaining to the study of Riverside's historic Chinatown by Harry Lawton. 1987-1989, undated.

Box 1, Folder 7

Typescript titled "Chinese Pumps in the California Gold Fields" by Makoto Kowta of California State University, Chico. Includes supplemental correspondence. 1989.

Box 1, Folder 11

Correspondence regarding historical research, primarily between Harry Lawton and Ruthanne Lum McCunn, a Chinese-American writer as well as clippings regarding Chinese immigrants in the eastern United States. 1984-1988, undated.

Box 2, Folder 2	Correspondence regarding Harry Lawton's historical research and manuscripts on Chinese in Southern California, primarily in Riverside, California. 1986-1987.
Box 2, Folder 3	Press clippings taken from publications on art and archaeology regarding Chinese ceramics in North America, primarily California (photocopies). Includes an independent scholarly typescript. 1972-1987.
Box 2, Folder 4	Typescripts and press clippings pertaining to archaeological studies of Chinese artifacts (photocopies). 1969-1983.
Box 3, Folder 8	Typescripts and other material regarding the scholarly study of Riverside, California's historic Chinatown. Subjects include the use of opium, coins, ceramics, and agricultural labor. 1987-1989, undated.
Box 4, Folder 2	Typescripts titled "Chinese Who Died in Riverside, California: 1886-1939" by Rebecca L. Lum and Suanne J. Yamashita and "Gaming" by Fred W. Mueller, Jr. and Jane Lenker regarding the Riverside Chinatown. Also includes a compilation of press articles documenting the lives of Chinese in Riverside, California (photocopies). circa 1890-1986, undated.
Box 6, Folder 1	Manuscript titled "Index for "This Bittersweet Soil" by Sucheng Chan. 1986.
Box 6, Folder 2	Page proofs from the manuscript "This Bitter-Sweet Soil: The Chinese in California Agriculture, 1860-1910" by Sucheng Chan. Includes preface, lists of contents, illustrations, and tables, introduction, and the chapter "The Chinese Diaspora." 1986.
Box 6, Folder 3	Page proofs from the manuscript "This Bitter-Sweet Soil: The Chinese in California Agriculture, 1860-1910" by Sucheng Chan. Includes the chapters "Trans-Pacific Pioneers" and "Feeding the Miners." 1986.
Box 6, Folder 4	Page proofs from the manuscript "This Bitter-Sweet Soil: The Chinese in California Agriculture, 1860-1910" by Sucheng Chan. Includes the chapter "Green Gold." 1986.
Box 6, Folder 5	Page proofs from the manuscript "This Bitter-Sweet Soil: The Chinese in California Agriculture, 1860-1910" by Sucheng Chan. Includes the chapters "New World Delta" and "Potato Kings." 1986.
Box 6, Folder 6	Page proofs from the manuscript "This Bitter-Sweet Soil: The Chinese in California Agriculture, 1860-1910" by Sucheng Chan. Includes the chapters "So Many Fecund Valleys", "Cheap Labor", and "Working Hands." 1986.
Box 6, Folder 7	Page proofs from the manuscript "This Bitter-Sweet Soil: The Chinese in California Agriculture, 1860-1910" by Sucheng Chan. Includes the chapters "Managers and Entrepreneurs", "Survival and Community", "Conclusion", and "Essay on Sources." 1986.
Box 6, Folder 8	Page proofs from the manuscript "This Bitter-Sweet Soil: The Chinese in California Agriculture, 1860-1910" by Sucheng Chan. Includes the chapter "Notes." 1986.
Box 7, Folder 1	Typescripts regarding anthropological and sociological studies of Northern California Chinatowns. Includes a brochure pertaining to the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California and a volume of the "Gum Saan Journal" published by the society. 1979-1984.
Box 7, Folder 5	Typescripts regarding the archaeological study of Chinese ceramics in Northern and Central California. 1978-1986.
Box 8, Folder 1	Typescript titled "The Living Earth Manual of Feng-Shui: Chinese Geomancy" by Stephen Skinner (photocopy). 1982.
Box 8, Folder 2	Typescript titled "An Anthropological Analysis of Chinese Geomancy" by Stephan D.R. Feuchtwang. 1974.
Box 8, Folder 3	Typescript titled "An Anthropological Analysis of Chinese Geomancy" by Stephan D.R. Feuchtwang and other material pertaining to various topics in Chinese culture. 1974, undated.
Box 8, Folder 4	Press clippings regarding various academic studies of Chinese culture and other material pertaining to Fred W. Mueller, Jr.'s research for the thesis "Feng Shui: Overseas Chinese Settlement in California; An Archaeological Perspective." 1885-1986, undated.
Box 8, Folder 5	Typescripts and other material regarding Fred W. Mueller, Jr.'s research for the thesis "Feng Shui: Overseas Chinese Settlement in California; An Archaeological Perspective" (includes photocopies). 1875-1987.

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- Box 9, Folder 1 **Typescripts, media clippings, and other material pertaining to archaeological research, Chinese history, and scholarly work in the field of Anthropology (includes photocopies). 1896-1986, undated.**
- Box 9, Folder 2 **Research notes, note cards, and other material pertaining to archaeological research on the Ming Dynasty ceramics and tombs (includes photocopies). 1897-1979, undated.**
- Box 9, Folder 3 **Typescript titled "Explanation of Plates" (photocopy). undated.**
- Box 9, Folder 4 **Typescript titled "Blue-and-White Chinese Porcelain: A Study of Form" written by Cornelius Osgood (photocopy). 1956.**
- Box 9, Folder 5 **Typescript and press clippings regarding Chinese ceramics (photocopies). 1976-1981.**
- Box 10, Folder 1 **Typescripts primarily regarding the study of Chinese wares and ceramics excavated in the United States. 1976-1987, undated.**
- Box 10, Folder 2 **Typescripts and other material pertaining to the archaeological study of Chinese wares and porcelains. 1981-1984, undated.**
- Box 10, Folder 3 **Typescripts regarding the archaeological study of Chinese wares, porcelains, and ceramics including findings in Riverside, California. 1984, undated.**
- Box 10, Folder 5 **Typescripts, research notes, and other material pertaining to the study of Chinese porcelains. 1979-1987, undated.**
- Box 10, Folder 6 **Documents titled "RCT Coding Sheet" pertaining to the archaeological analysis of Chinese ceramics. undated.**

Series 2. California Chinatowns circa 1870-1988, undated

Series Scope and Contents

This series consists of material pertaining to Chinatowns throughout the state of California. Correspondence, clippings, photographs, and other material regarding the historic and cultural preservation of Chinatowns in California, particularly the Chinatown in Riverside, California.

Series Arrangement

This series is arranged sequentially according to box and folder number.

- Box 1, Folder 1 **Correspondence, publications, and other material pertaining to visiting Taiwanese artists, the archaeological dig of Riverside, California's Chinatown site, and the dedication of the Chinese Pavilion in Riverside, California. 1985-1988, undated.**
- Box 1, Folder 2 **Correspondence, media publications, and other material regarding the dedication week of the Riverside Chinese Memorial Pavilion in Riverside, California. 1987, undated.**
- Box 1, Folder 4 **Newsletters, clippings, and other material regarding the Jensen-Alvarado Ranch, a historical landmark in Riverside County, California. 1986-1987, undated.**
- Box 1, Folder 5 **Documents and other material regarding the ground breaking ceremony for the Riverside Chinese Memorial Pavilion and the development of a Chinatown historical park in Riverside, California. 1981-1986.**
- Box 1, Folder 6 **Correspondence and other material regarding the development of a Chinese historical park in Riverside, California, the history of the Chinese in Southern California, and the dedication of the Riverside Chinese Memorial Pavilion in Riverside, California. 1986, undated.**
- Box 1, Folder 8 **Photographs of Riverside, California's Chinatown and Chinese residents, holograph biography of George Wong, and other material pertaining to research conducted by Harry Lawton. 1888-1958, undated.**
- Box 1, Folder 9 **Correspondence and other material regarding a photographic documentary on Chinese farmers of the Sacramento Delta and its exhibition in Riverside, California. Also includes material pertaining to the dedication of the Riverside Chinese Pavilion 1984-1987, undated.**
- Box 1, Folder 10 **Fliers and other material pertaining to the archaeological dig of Riverside, California's Chinatown and the Chinatown Centennial Ball. 1984-1985, undated.**
- Box 2, Folder 1 **Correspondence from Jerry A. Gordon to Harry W. Lawton regarding the production of the film "When They All Still Lived," a documentary about the Chinese in Riverside, California. 1986.**

Box 2, Folder 5	Typescripts, fliers, and other material regarding archaeological studies of Chinese culture including information pertaining to an archaeological symposium and the Chinatown Centennial Ball in Riverside, California. 1985-1988.
Box 3, Folder 1	Press clippings from local Riverside, California newspapers, primarily "The Press-Enterprise", and other material regarding the archaeological dig of the historic Chinatown site (includes photocopies). 1984-1988, undated.
Box 3, Folder 2	Correspondence and other material regarding the grassroots campaign to preserve Riverside, California's Chinese heritage. 1939-1985, undated.
Box 3, Folder 3	Correspondence and other material pertaining to the archaeological dig of Riverside, California's historic Chinatown and the Chinatown History Video Project. 1984-1985, undated.
Box 3, Folder 4	Correspondence, articles, and other material pertaining to the archaeological dig of Riverside, California's historic Chinatown (includes photocopies). 1983-1984, undated.
Box 3, Folder 5	Correspondence and other material regarding the centennial celebration of Riverside, California's Chinatown, the commencement of the Chinatown archaeological dig, and the participation of historical and scientific organizations in the realization of the Chinatown project. 1985, undated.
Box 3, Folder 6	Correspondence, newspaper clippings, and other material pertaining to Riverside, California's Chinatown archaeological dig and subsequent exhibit at the Riverside Municipal Museum, the study of Chinese in Riverside, and a documentary film about the Chinatown site (includes photocopies). 1984-1986, undated.
Box 3, Folder 7	Correspondence, press clippings, and other material regarding the findings of the Riverside, California Chinatown archaeological dig, the dedication of the Riverside Chinese Pavilion, and historical documents related to Chinatown residents (includes photocopies). 1910-1987, undated.
Box 3, Folder 9	Fliers, correspondence, and other material regarding the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California, the celebration of Chinese New Year, and the UC Riverside Chinese Student Association. 1988, undated.
Box 3, Folder 10	Photographs and other material of Riverside, California's Chinatown residents and landmarks and the archaeological dig of the historic site including a blueprint reconstruction of the original Chinatown, a newspaper clipping regarding a slide presentation about Chinatown, and a water-color titled "The Opium Smoker" produced in Riverside. circa 1885-1985, undated.
Box 4, Folder 1	Typescript regarding the proposal for an archaeological dig of the Riverside, California Chinatown and a field notebook documenting work on this historic site. 1984-1985.
Box 4, Folder 3	Correspondence, transcripts, and other material pertaining to oral history interviews with Chinatown resident George Wong and local Riverside inhabitants associated with the Chinese. 1895-1986, undated.
Box 5, Folder 1	Photographs and negatives depicting San Bernardino, California's Chinese residents and landmarks (includes photocopies) circa 1870-1915, undated.
Box 5, Folder 4	Correspondence, historical records, and other material regarding the history and possible excavation of the Redlands, California Chinatown (includes photocopies). 1892-1988, undated.
Box 5, Folder 5	Documents regarding property leased to Chinese residents of San Bernardino County, California (photocopies). 1882-1988.
Box 5, Folder 6	Photographs of scenes regarding the life and customs of Chinese residents in Anaheim, California's Chinatown. 1885-1918, undated.
Box 5, Folder 9	Clippings from local newspapers regarding the historic site of the San Bernardino, California Chinatown (includes photocopies). 1966-1980, undated.
Box 5, Folder 12	Photographs of residents, landmarks, and the urban environment in the Los Angeles, California Chinatown. circa 1880s-1904, undated.
Box 7, Folder 3	Photographs, postcards, and other material depicting life in San Francisco, California's Chinatown (includes photographic prints and photocopies). 1870-1984, undated.

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- Box 10, Folder 4 **Reports, press clippings, and other material regarding the archaeological study and the history of the Riverside, California Chinatown (includes photocopies) circa 1875-1986, undated.**
- Box 10, Folder 7 **Field notes and other material pertaining to the archaeological study of the Riverside, California Chinatown including the final observations and site descriptions made at the conclusion of the study. 1986, undated.**
- Box 11, Folder 6 **Photograph album regarding the dedication of the Riverside Chinese Pavillion and the book "Wong Ho Leun, an American Chinatown" as well as the premiere reception for "While They All Still Lived" presented by the Great Basin Foundation. 1987.**
- Box 11, Folder 7 **Photograph album of a reception honoring Chinese Americans that includes images of actor James Hong and head of the Great Basin Foundation, Emma Lou Davis. undated.**

Series 3. Chinese in Western U.S. history circa 1850-1989, undated

Series Scope and Contents

This series is primarily comprised of photographs depicting Chinese life in California, Oregon, Nevada, Utah, and Washington in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Subjects include the construction of western railroad lines, the Gold Rush, the immigrant experience, agricultural and domestic work, and Chinese community life. This series also contains photographs depicting life in China, especially the Guangdong province, as well as images from nineteenth century publications from the United States.

Series Arrangement

This series is arranged sequentially according to box and folder number.

- Box 2, Folder 6 **Photographs depicting Chinese life in nineteenth century California and Oregon (compiled for use in the publication "Orange Groves and Rice Bowls"). circa 1860-1907.**
- Box 2, Folder 7 **Photographs depicting Chinese life in nineteenth century California and Oregon (compiled for use in the publication "Orange Groves and Rice Bowls"). circa 1860-1914.**
- Box 2, Folder 8 **Negatives pertaining to Chinese immigrants in the Western United States. undated**
- Box 5, Folder 3 **Newsletters and other material pertaining to the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California. 1985-1989, undated.**
- Box 5, Folder 7 **Correspondence and other material regarding Chinese working in Cucamonga, California (photocopies). circa 1890-1986.**
- Box 5, Folder 8 **Photographs depicting Chinese agricultural workers throughout California. 1883-1919, undated.**
- Box 5, Folder 10 **Photographs depicting the Chinese immigrants and their cultural sites in California. circa 1900-1930, undated.**
- Box 5, Folder 11 **Photographs depicting Ku Klux Klan members in Pomona, California and an archaeological dig. circa 1924-1930, undated.**
- Box 7, Folder 2 **Photographs depicting Chinese immigrants working during the California and Nevada Gold Rush. 1852-1861.**
- Box 7, Folder 4 **Photographs and other material depicting Chinese immigrants on Angel Island. 1985, undated.**
- Box 8, Folder 6 **Newsletters pertaining to Chinese immigrants in the Western United States. 1967, 1987.**
- Box 9, Folder 6 **Rice bag. undated.**
- Box 11, Folder 1 **Photographs depicting Chinese immigrants in Nevada, Oregon, and Washington. 1873-1935, undated.**
- Box 11, Folder 2 **Photographs depicting Chinese agricultural and domestic workers throughout California. circa 1850-1940, undated.**
- Box 11, Folder 3 **Photographs depicting Chinese laborers building the Central Pacific and California Southern Railroads in California, Nevada, and Utah. circa 1860-1889, undated.**
- Box 11, Folder 4 **Photographs depicting life in China, primarily Canton, Guangdong province. 1899-1983, undated.**
- Box 11, Folder 5 **Photographs and other material regarding the life of Chinese immigrants in the western United States and China (photocopies). 1983-1985, undated.**