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CONNECTIONS 天体联系

**STORIES OF CHINESE IMMIGRANTS TO THE WARANGA
AREA**

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INTRODUCTION

These stories were researched and written between 2022 and 2024 and published fortnightly in the Rushworth and district newspaper, the Waranga News, in 2023 and 2024.

Waranga was the name of a now defunct local government area (Shire of Waranga 1865-1994). The former shire boundaries represent the geographic area covered by most of the stories.

The Waranga area has had Chinese immigrants since soon after the start of the local gold rush, which dates back to 1853. In the intervening 170 years, these new arrivals and their descendants have made an impressive contribution to local communities. The stories that follow celebrate that contribution.

Some errors may be included in the text, and the author accepts full responsibility for them. However, this compilation represents a genuine attempt to pull together as much of the available information on the subject as possible. Hopefully, it will provide a basis for future researchers to come up with a more comprehensive picture of the lives of Chinese immigrants to the area.

The research and writing are not subject to copyright, but it would be appreciated if acknowledgement of sources was made if any of the information is used by others.

Tony Ford
Flora Hill. Victoria 3550
Email: boze24@hotmail.com
Mobile: 0423557120

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Map of Victoria indicating the location of the former Shire of Waranga

1 CHINESE CONNECTIONS

The Waranga area has strong Chinese historical connections, thanks largely to the influx of Chinese miners during the gold rush. Gold discoveries in this area in 1853 post-dated earlier finds in Victoria, which had sparked the first gold rushes to the new state, by a little over two years. As a result, there was already a relatively small number of Chinese miners in Victoria, some of whom were attracted to the local fields. The influx from overseas intensified over the next few years until numbers tapered off in the 1860s.

Going overseas in search of gold was not a new experience for the Chinese. For instance, many had been to the Californian gold rushes which had commenced in 1849. Quite a few also had some experience of gold mining in their home country, where gold was regarded as a valuable commodity and source of wealth.

These days, the Chinese connection to the local area is remembered through place names such as Chinaman's Hill, Chinaman's Flat, Chinaman's and Mongolian Reefs and Chinaman's Gully. Of course, the Cheong family has a strong connection to Whroo, with a well-known forest road named after them. Several local families can boast Chinese ancestors as part of their family trees. Both Rushworth and Whroo cemeteries have sections for burial places of Chinese people and there is at least one Chinese burial at Murchison.

RACISM ON THE GOLDFIELDS

As well as facing all the other hardships that affected the itinerant mining population, the Chinese were faced with blatant racism on the goldfields. Their very different language, culture and appearance made them stand out. They were often called "celestials", which in this context meant "otherworldly". They became targets for abuse simply because they were different.

Governments were under pressure to stem the flow of arrivals from China. The colonial governments imposed harsh taxes as a way of trying to dissuade people from entering the country. For those that had already arrived, residency taxes were applied which did not affect any other nationalities.

As well as experiencing day-to-day racism, the Chinese miners were also subjected to occasional outbreaks of extreme violence from other miners. Riots at places like the Buckland River in north-east Victoria and Lambing Flat in NSW were not uncommon.

PRINT MEDIA RACISM

The Chinese had to contend with a generally racist colonial press, who used the term "invasion" to describe the influx of miners from China. The same terminology was not used for all the miners from other parts of the world, who came to Australia in their tens of thousands during the goldrush years.

Newspaper editors fanned the flames of racism by consistently using terms like "gang of Chinese gamblers", the "despised" or "wretched Mongolians" (even though most of the Chinese miners were not from Mongolia), Chinese "depradators", "prowlers" and "demons" and "worthless members of the Chinese race". They fostered the idea that Chinese labour would provide "ruinous competition" for Australian workers, even though many Australians had already left their jobs to go gold seeking and there was plenty of work available for everyone.

LOOKING FOR POSITIVES

Despite the racism that they faced, the Chinese made a positive contribution to the local Waranga community. They were able to supply a range of goods and services that would otherwise have been unavailable on the

goldfields; as miners they were often experienced, hardworking and skilful with a tendency to be more persistent than their European counterparts; the vast majority were law-abiding citizens; they brought a different culture which made life on the goldfields a truly multicultural experience.

Many of the Chinese gold miners returned home to China at some point. However, a substantial minority stayed in Australia and went on to make an important contribution to the developing economies of the colonies, and later the new nation. Today, people who identify as having Chinese ancestry make up 5.5% of the Australian population (Source: 2021 Census). China is also Australia's major trading partner. However, in some parts the media of today continue to go down the path followed by their predecessors, by consistently fearmongering when it could be promoting a much more positive relationship.

2 CHINESE GOLD MINERS

During the 19th century gold rushes, many Chinese miners came to the Waranga area, mostly from the mid-1850s onwards. In history, they have tended to be lumped together into one homogenous group. One reason for this was that they tended to stick together as part of tight-knit groups because of the opposition from European miners. However, with such large numbers involved, there was great diversity across the group that generally went unrecognised by many observers.



Map of China showing Guangdong Province

Most of the local miners (an estimated 90%) came from Guangdong province, which is a coastal province in the south-east of China, bordering Hong Kong. At the time of the Australian gold rushes, there was turmoil in China (foreign incursions, political instability, population pressures, famine, natural disasters) and great poverty in that part of the country. That made the prospect of going overseas to find gold an attractive proposition. Gold was highly valued in Chinese society.

Most of the miners were men, with only an extremely small number of Chinese women coming to the Australian colonies. The men who came generally had a strong spiritual, cultural and family connection to China which meant that in time, many

expected to return to their country of birth. For those who died while in Australia, there was a hope that their earthly remains would be repatriated. Given the circumstances of the gold rush, this was a vain hope for many. Locally, this resulted in some Chinese burials in Rushworth, Whroo and Murchison cemeteries.

HOW DID THEY COME?

Many of those who came to Victoria to the gold rush were from a region known as See Yup, or the four counties, 100-200 kms south-west of the provincial capital of Guangzhou (known to Europeans as Canton). Smaller groups came from other areas and there were "at least 14 different dialects spoken by Chinese voyagers to Victoria in the 19th century, reflecting their diverse home villages and cultural backgrounds." People from different parts of China were not always on good terms with each other and sometimes those antipathies came with them.

Most gold seekers from Guangdong province began their journey to Australia by walking or riding to the provincial capital. The many river crossings and some of the travel would have been made on vessels known as junks. Larger

junks would then ferry them to a seaport such as Hong Kong, where they would wait in shanty towns for British, American or Dutch sailing ships heading for Australia.

On arrival, the miners would then have to walk to the goldfield of choice. Victoria introduced a prohibitive entry tax in late 1855 which meant that many landed in South Australia or New South Wales to avoid the tax. However, they then had to do an epic walk of hundreds of kilometres before they could start work.

CONTRACTS

Some miners used their own resources to migrate, but many were too poor to afford the cost involved. In those situations, organising companies recruited miners and contracted the workers. The companies would pay for the passage to the goldfields, with the miners obliged to repay the loans with interest. This could be problematic as there was no guarantee of success on the goldfields.

Often, as part of the contract, the workers would be required to be part of “controlled and well organised teams with special subdivisions (miners, cooks, interpreters etc) under a team manager, or a ‘headman’, until they had worked off the debt.” Once this had been done the workers were free to mine for themselves or go into other businesses using the proceeds of their earlier mining activities.

BACKGROUNDS

As discussed, there were very few Chinese women who came to Australia, largely for cultural reasons. The men were mostly aged between 20 and 40 and were from a wide range of backgrounds – not just agricultural peasants. “Miners, carpenters, translators, entertainers, scholars, gardeners, butchers, cooks, doctors, herbalists and entrepreneurs were in their midst” and many were literate. China had a comparatively advanced education system at the time.

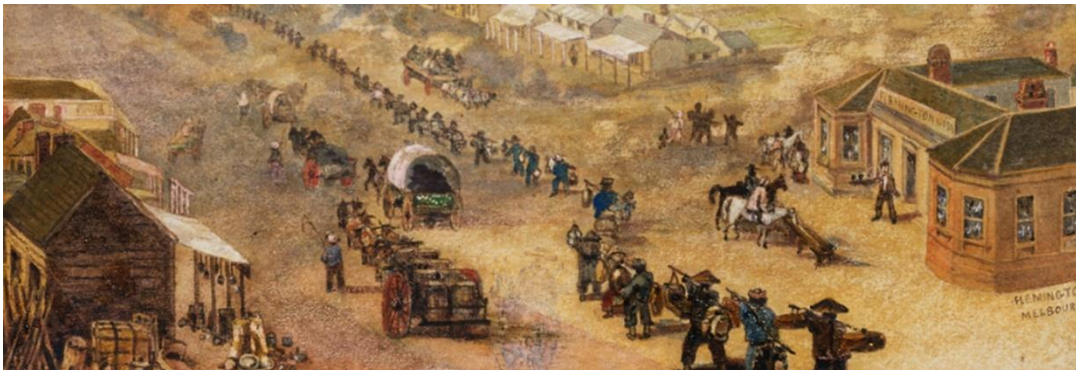
About a third of the Chinese men were married, which made returning to wives and families in China a priority (or not in some cases!). Some who stayed in Australia married European women, but this was uncommon because of a relative dearth of women in gold rush societies.

Ref: <https://victoriancollections.net.au/stories/many-roads-stories-of-the-chinese-on-the-goldfields/voyaging-to-australia>

3 TRAVELLING CROSS COUNTRY

Early Chinese arrivals would disembark in Port Phillip Bay, then embark on a long trek to the goldfields. Melbourne was full of stories about the latest rush, so it could be assumed that from the start of the rushes to the Waranga goldfields in 1853, a proportion of the miners coming to the area would have been Chinese. They could have been

directly off the boat or moving from earlier rushes.



Artist Samuel Brees' depiction of Chinese miners passing through Flemington in 1856

When the Chinese arrived, they sometimes employed a guide to lead a group to the goldfields. They may also have employed some form of transport, such as a bullock dray. Generally, they walked, carrying their possessions on poles balanced across their shoulders.

ROBE TO RUSHWORTH

As the number of Chinese migrants began to escalate rapidly in the mid-1850s, political pressure induced the Victorian government of the day (late 1855) to introduce an entry or “poll” tax of £10 (= \$20) which was a phenomenal sum in those days. Arriving at larger ports after the voyage from China, many prospective miners journeyed on to Robe in South Australia, usually by coastal steamer, after which they walked cross country. You can imagine the epic walk from Robe to Rushworth, which was well over 500 km as the crow flies. In total, over 16,000 Chinese arrived at Robe, producing a boon for the local economy which supplied the new arrivals.

Various routes were followed, depending on which goldfield a group was heading towards. Sometimes, they discovered gold along the way, as a group did at Ararat. In some places, this is claimed as the best alluvial goldfield discovered in Victoria, although the Mt Alexander goldfields around Chewton and Castlemaine make the same claim.

At the time, the colony of Victoria was thinly populated. The travellers had to rely on purchasing food from the stations they passed along the way. Sometimes they would work for the squatters in exchange for the food e.g. digging wells, building. They would also mark trees with Chinese characters to show travellers who came in their wake which squatters were good to work for and those who were best avoided.

RE-ENACTMENTS

In recent years, there have been at least two re-enactments of the epic walk from Robe to the Victorian goldfields. In 2014, Chinese-Australian Charles Zhang and his teenage son Oscar set out from Robe, walking about 30 km each day. They arrived in Ballarat after just over two weeks of walking and some amazing experiences along the way.

Then, in 2017 a team of community walkers, including descendants of original Chinese goldfields migrants, walked eastwards from Robe through Lake Hawdon, Penola, Casterton, Coleraine, Hamilton, Dunkeld, Skipton, Linton, Smythesdale and Ballarat before arriving on the steps of Victorian Parliament House on the 25 May. They were welcomed by the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition, who both provided heartfelt apologies to the Chinese diaspora for the mistreatment that their ancestors suffered during the gold rush era. In particular, they referred to the punitive government legislation that only applied to Chinese migrants.

One of the unplanned benefits of both re-enactments was to create wonderful networks of people who supported the walkers in some way. This included walking with them and providing them with offers of food and accommodation. Local people along the route also shared information that had been retained in their communities in the 160+ years since the Chinese sojourners originally passed through. The walks created a wonderful sense of goodwill between the Chinese diaspora and the rest of Australia.

Sadly, in recent years this goodwill has been severely tested, much of it by political posturing of the respective governments of China and Australia. It would be good if this deterioration in relations could be turned around, given the inextricable links the two countries have with each other. There is potential for this to start at the local level with simple acts like those of the Rushworth and Whroo Cemetery Trusts in recognising the Chinese people buried in the cemeteries there.

References: State Library of Victoria (SLV) and Chinese Community Council of Australia Victorian Chapter (CCCAV) websites

4 OTHER WAYS TO WARANGA

The previous story talked about early Chinese miners landing in Melbourne and walking to the goldfields. Then as the Victoria government introduced an entry tax for Chinese from 1855, some landed in South Australia and walked into Victoria. Others landed in New South Wales and found their way overland.

There are records of miners crossing the Murray River at various places where there were no customs officials to demand the entry tax. The miners would then walk on to their selected goldfield. In 1857, large numbers of Chinese men were crossing the Murray at Albury, having landed in Sydney and walked down to the border.

RIVER TRANSPORT

Another way of getting relatively close to some goldfields without having to walk all the way from Adelaide or Robe was to come up the Murray River, land in New South Wales, then find someone to ferry them across to Victoria. At the time, paddle steamers were travelling right up the Murray from its lower reaches. Potential customers would have to pay their way, but this was obviously much cheaper than paying the Victorian entry tax. Those who could not afford this additional fare would have no option but to walk all the way.

One of the riverboat captains, Captain Francis Cadell, had employed Chinese men on his ships when he was engaged in the tea trade between China and Australia, as well as trading between Port Adelaide and Melbourne.¹ Some of them then also worked for him on the river trade, which included passenger transport.

Two of them travelled up the Murray on the Cadell's "PS Albury" in 1855 as far as Albury. On the way, there were regular stops in which they were able to "develop business and friendly contacts, probe the possibility of Chinese employment on various sheep stations and hotels, as well as investigate suitable land for gardens."²



PS Albury c 1870

DESTINATION ECHUCA

By mid-1856 the first large groups of Chinese were being offloaded at Moama then ferried across the river without having to pay the entry tax. A group of 90 Chinese miners arrived at the end of July, then two days later "PS Leichardt", which was towing a barge, delivered 320 more.³ It seems that this trade lasted for some time

even though it would have been an uncomfortable trip of nearly 2700 km by river. The arrival of the railways in the 1860s killed off much of the river trade.

The Chinese who landed in Echuca could get the news of the latest rushes then head in that direction. They were reasonably close to the Waranga goldfields, so it could be expected that a proportion of them would finish up in this area. This was the period in which many new discoveries were being made in the Waranga area, although there was always the difficulty of gaining suitable access to water in drier months.

MOVEMENTS AROUND THE GOLDFIELDS

Of course, numbers at the Waranga goldfields were like any others, in that they were subject to the whim of the miners. If prospects looked better somewhere else, many would join the rush. The papers were full of such moves. At the end of 1855, when things were getting dry around Rushworth and Whroo, the large population “including many Chinese, during the past few months, are now gone.”⁴

In mid-1857, the population “of both Chinese and European, is rapidly on the increase...scarcely a day passes that I do not hear of some new yield of an extraordinary amount.” It was also reported that “large parties of Chinese are daily breaking camp on Bendigo, and taking their departure for the Goulburn”⁵, which was another name for the Waranga area. However, by mid-1858, “a good many of the unlucky miners are leaving this district, to seek for work on the new railway.”⁶

Movement between goldfields was often still done on foot, unless the miners had made enough to travel by coach, horse, or by hiring other forms of transport. Sometimes Chinese entrepreneurs provided transport to facilitate this movement. For example, a party of 8 Chinese was transported through Murchison in 1879 by Ah Gong, a licenced waggoner, on their way to Beechworth.⁷

Sources: 1 Holsworth, Carol, *Chinese in Echuca-Moama – A Chronicle 1850s to 1930* (Echuca Historical Society, 2008) p1; 2 loc cit; 3 *Courier of Mines* 29.7.1856 and 1.8.1856; 4 *Argus* 7.12.1855 p6; 5 *Bendigo Advertiser* 19.7.1857 p2; 6 *Ovens & Murray Advertiser* 6.7.1858 p2; 7 *Waranga Chronicle* 2.5.1873

5 HOW MANY CHINESE MINERS?

The State Library of Victoria (SLV) estimates that by 1859 there were already 40,000 Chinese people in Victoria, working in both mining and other pursuits. Some of the Chinese had been here before the gold rush, but the vast majority arrived in search of gold. In the main towns where gold had been discovered, the Chinese often constituted around 20% of the male population by the late 1850s. In 1859 at the Mt Alexander goldfields near Castlemaine, the 4500 Chinese constituted nearly a third of the population. So how many came to the Waranga goldfields?

Obviously, the numbers ebbed and flowed, as they did for all other groups of miners. When new discoveries were made which seemed to offer better prospects elsewhere, there was wholesale movement to the new rushes. This applied equally to the Chinese miners. In the Waranga goldfields, having enough water for mining operations was a perennial problem. During the summer months and at times of drought, there was a general exodus from the local area.

MINING REPORTS

Regular reports had to be lodged by mining surveyors with the Victorian government. These contained useful statistics which included the number of Chinese miners. In November 1859, a little over six years after gold had been discovered at Rushworth, Mining Surveyor John Breen reported that there were nearly 1000 miners working at Rushworth. Of these, 390 were Chinese, while at Whroo there were 70 Chinese out of a population of 359.¹ It is interesting to note in hindsight that no other ethnic or national groups were identified separately.

By the end of December 1859, the *Argus* newspaper was reporting “a considerable number of Chinese have migrated (from Rushworth) within the last two months”.² The paper reported that the number of Chinese at Rushworth was down to 145. You would suspect that lack of water to conduct mining operations in summer

months was a factor. However, numbers continued to drop to around 100 by September the following year. Some of them might have gone down to Whroo and White Hills, where the numbers had doubled to 159.

MOBILITY

With regard to other rushes, the Chinese were prepared to move to where conditions appeared better. For example, the Mclvor (Heathcote) reporter for the Bendigo Advertiser said in November 1856 that “swarms of Chinese pass through our neighbourhood, bound for the Ovens (Beechworth).”³ Another route to the north-east was through Rushworth, crossing the Goulburn at Murchison.

In 1868 the Mclvor Times reported that “about 30 Chinamen went to the rush today.”⁴ The paper was talking about what was then called the Spring Creek gold rush, in the area better known today as Graytown. Spring Creek goldfield, between Mt Moormbool and Mt Black, attracted many Chinese miners “who are in considerable numbers at the north end of the rush, and who have been doing very well...”.⁵

This sort of mobility was a feature of the gold rushes and applied to all ethnic groups and nationalities, not just the Chinese. Consequently, it is probably impossible to tell exactly how many Chinese people came to the Waranga area in total. At times, we know they did form a significant part of the local population. The numbers were in the hundreds rather than thousands at any one time.

VICTORIA - NUMBER OF CHINESE, 1854 to 1921.

YEAR	Full-Blood			Half-Caste		
	Males	Females	Persons	Male	Female	Persons
1854	2,341	...	2,341	a	a	a
1857	25,421	3	25,424	a	a	a
1861	24,724	8	24,732	a	a	a
1871	17,795	31	17,826	a	a	a
1881	11,795	164	11,950	74	95	169
1891	8,355	134	8,489	417	471	888
1901	6,236	111	6,347	504	498	1,002
1911	4,491	216	4,707	465	429	894
1921	2,918	244	3,162	515	502	1,017

(a) Not available.

Source: Yearbook Australia 1935

STEADY DECLINE

The numbers of Chinese in Victoria appear to have peaked in the late 1850s to early 1860s, followed by a steady decline. By 1866, the number of Chinese alluvial miners was down to around 21,000, with only a handful employed in quartz mining.⁵ By Federation in 1901, the numbers of Chinese in Victoria were down to a little over 6000, or just over 1% of the population. In recent times, that percentage for Australia as a whole has risen to over 5.5% (more than a million people), meaning that our connection to China is stronger than ever.

References: 1 The Argus 10.11.1859; 2 The Argus 26.12.1859; 3 Bendigo Advertiser 17.11.1856; 4 Mclvor Times 30.10.1868; 5 The Argus 28.11.1868; 6 Bendigo Advertiser 25.6.1866

6 EARLY ARRIVALS AND SUCCESS

The first record of a Chinese miner that shows up in an Assistant Gold Commissioner's regular weekly reports for the Waranga goldfields appears in late April 1854. An unnamed Chinese man brought two nuggets into the Gold Office (which was then located in a tent). The nuggets weighed 17 oz 10 dwt (almost exactly half a kilogram) and 8 oz 10 dwt (nearly 250 g) respectively. For obvious reasons, the miner "would not disclose the (exact) locality" where he found the gold.¹

This means that, although the majority of Chinese miners arrived later, there have been some on the Waranga goldfields in the very early days. The fact that the Assistant Commissioner's report in April expressed no surprise that a Chinese man should sell his finds to the Gold Office would seem to indicate that there were other Chinese miners already there. These men may have been in Australia at the start of the gold rushes or could have arrived by ship soon after they had heard about the spectacular new finds.

Apart from these Chinese discoveries, there had been other amazing finds in the early months of the Waranga rush. For instance, in October 1853 a digger had turned up a nugget weighing 81 oz (2.3 kg) at Whroo – then referred to in the reports as "Wooroor". The Assistant Commissioner in charge at the time, William Willoby, reckoned "the nugget was the best and richest specimen I have seen on the goldfields."² On today's values it would be worth nearly \$250,000 (January 2024 prices).

HIGHLY MOBILE

The population on the goldfields was highly mobile, as evidenced by some of the estimated population figures provided in the Assistant Commissioner's reports. Willoby's first report, lodged in August 1853, indicated there were something like 5000 miners already on the ground when he arrived with staff and dray loads of equipment.³ By Christmas though, lack of water meant that only about 700 remained.

It was likely that very few of those involved in this first rush were Chinese. There was a time lapse between the gold discoveries, word filtering back to China, then entrepreneurs organising people and the shipping required to bring them out to Australia. Numbers would have peaked later in the 1850s.

From mid-1859 to mid-1860, when gold-seeking populations had settled down to a degree, the numbers of Chinese on the Waranga goldfields fluctuated between 150 and 250. The reports listed the Chinese separately from other men, women and children, as though the Chinese were another species that did not fit into those three categories. At the time, the overwhelming majority of those listed as "Chinese" would have been men.

SUCCESS

There was still plenty of gold being found at the end of the 1850s, as gold shipments out of Rushworth for 1860 comprised nearly 18,000 ounces (an astonishing \$55 million worth at January 2024 prices). The increase in quartz mining on an industrial scale, as compared to alluvial mining, would have significantly contributed to this.

Meanwhile, the Chinese were still largely employed in alluvial mining. Around this time, there were usually 60-70 puddling machines in operation (when water was available). The vast majority of these were operated by the Chinese miners.

It is hard to know how much gold they were finding, because there were multiple ways of disposing of the product of their labours. Much gold was transported by the weekly armed gold escort, which took gold from the Waranga goldfields to Heathcote initially, then on to Melbourne. However, it was suspected that much of the gold mined by the Chinese unofficially found its way back to China through a variety of methods. As well as ordinary money, gold was basically legal tender, so could also be used to purchase food and supplies. The result of this was that a fair proportion was in circulation in the local economy at any time.

The early and spectacular successes with alluvial mining on the Waranga goldfields were largely over by 1860. To be successful required patience and persistence, a systematic approach and long hours of hard work. The Chinese miners generally displayed these characteristics to a greater degree than their western counterparts.

Sources: 1 PROV, Assistant Gold Commissioner's Report 22.4.1854; 2 *ibid* 18.10.1853; 3 *ibid* 13.8.1853

7 CHINESE CAMPS ON WARANGA GOLDFIELDS

The Chinese miners and businesspeople on the Waranga goldfields tended to live in separate communities to the Europeans. There were various reasons for this. As a group, they suffered considerable racism from other residents of the goldfields, so it was safer to keep to themselves. Additionally, many of the miners were part of organised groups. Sometimes, the groups were comprised largely of men from the same village or local area back home. They shared language and customs. There were also people within the groups who had designated tasks, such as providing food for the miners at the end of a hard day and maintaining the camp.

CAMPS AT WHROO



Source: Public Records Office Victoria – File GF31 Waranga Gold Fields 1857

There are contemporary maps of the Waranga goldfields which identify the locations of Chinese camps. One made by surveyor Philip Chauncy in 1857¹ shows two Chinese camps at Whroo. Both are on the west side of the Balaclava Gully, which runs roughly parallel to the Rushworth Road. One is in the vicinity of the roadside dam, which is usually referred to as Lewis' Dam, while the other was a bit further south opposite the old school reserve (between the old cyanide vats and the restored puddling machine). Chauncy marked the two sites with a number

of crosses, but it is not clear whether these represent dwellings or other buildings, or they just indicate the camp as a whole.

The two camps shown might indicate that the inhabitants were from different villages or areas in China or that they were members of different societies. There will be more information in later stories about the societies, which were not always on the best of terms with each other.

RUSHWORTH

Similarly, Chauncy's map shows two Chinese camps at Rushworth. Both were just south of the town near Main Gully, which is where the first gold was reputedly discovered in the area. One was on the eastern side of the gully, where it takes a big turn to the south. This area had been cleared but the bush is regenerating there now. The other was on the western side, and a little further south. It was situated between Main Gully and the Whroo-Rushworth Road.



Source: Public Records Office Victoria – File GF31 Waranga Gold Fields 1857

The 1857 map also shows Chinese Gully/Flat just north of Moora Road (near the western end of Rushwoth) and running in a north-north-easterly direction. Presumably, Chinese alluvial miners had worked the area before 1857, which gave the gully its name, but the surveyor showed no indication of any Chinese camp at that locality. In his 1993 study of mining sites in the Waranga area², David Bannear found no evidence of Chinese miners being there or any camp in that area.

The hill at the north end of the gully is still known as Chinamen's Hill. It was the site of quartz mining but it is unlikely that the Chinese had much involvement in that. The quartz reef was opened up after being discovered by European alluvial miners in the gully.

By 1867, the location of one or more of the camps may have changed. A report in the Bendigo Advertiser stated that some quartz miners were working “the upper end of Old Red Hill, near the Chinamen’s camp”³ It is uncertain where “Old Red Hill” was, but the name could easily have changed over the years.

OTHER PLACES OF INTEREST

Despite the name, the so-called Mongolian Reef near Rushworth (about a mile or 1.6 km west of Growler’s Hill) was mostly mined by Europeans. The first to do so had been sold the rights to the site for £150 (\$300) by Chinese alluvial miners who had discovered the reef while working in the area in 1867.⁴ The Chinese had briefly worked the site, getting good returns until they lost the “run of the stone”. Generally, the Chinese miners preferred alluvial mining, so they probably went back to that after selling their right to the site. There is no sign of a permanent Chinese camp in that locality.

It is clear from this that the Chinese miners explored plenty of potential new mining sites around Rushworth and Whroo, but for the reasons stated earlier, tended to camp together in groups.

References: 1 <https://mapwarper PROV.VIC.GOV.AU/maps/6264>; 2 Bannear, David, Historic Mining Sites in the Rushworth-Waranga North Mining Division (Part 2: Site Gazetteer); 3 Bendigo Advertiser 9.9.1867; 4 Bannear p 43-4

8 LIFE IN CHINESE CAMPS

The Chinese on the Waranga goldfields (as on other goldfields) tended to live in clearly defined camps. Maps from the late 1850s indicate there were at least four – two at Rushworth and two at Whroo. Language was a massive barrier to communication with other miners until the Chinese had been there long enough to learn some English. There were also great cultural differences from the Westerners. These factors could lead to racism – sometimes extreme – which discouraged the Chinese from living amongst the wider community.

There do not appear to be any detailed descriptions of the Chinese camps on the Waranga goldfields. However, at some of the larger centres, where there was a bigger concentration of Chinese people, observations have been made. You could expect that the camps at Waranga were similar, but perhaps on a smaller scale.

PEN PICTURE OF A CAMP

In May 1855, a Melbourne newspaper provided this description.¹ “The visitor to the goldfields ...cannot have failed to notice the small uniform-sized tents, huddled together and interspersed with sheep-pens, carpenters’ shops and various similar establishments, denoting that a community with somewhat of organisation existed there.

If he stayed there long enough, he may have observed numerous beings, with umbrella-shaped coverings to their heads, who seem to have stepped out of the china-ware whose grotesque figures were want to excite our youthful wonder. Some of these are trotting homewards carrying heavy burdens of sugar or of rice, suspended to bamboo poles, on their shoulders. Others are busily engaged in the butcher’s avocation, while the carpenters follow their trade squatting on the ground.

Those who are working as diggers are washing, puddling or sinking, with a fussy sort of industry, or running hither and thither like ants near their hill. Animated discussions are kept up in a sing-song style of elocution, and altogether a scene presented as dissimilar to anything European as can be conceived. It scarcely needs to be added that our visitor has before him the external features of a Chinese encampment.”

The description is by a European commentator, apparently struggling to suppress his disdain for what he is observing.

ANOTHER VIEW

The Chinese camps were generally very well-organised, with various people having designated tasks under the control of a headman. As well as those mentioned above, the camps had cooks to prepare all the meals for their compatriots, something the Europeans might have appreciated after a hard day of mining.

The coolie hats worn by the Chinese were probably about the most sensible hats you could possibly imagine in the heat of the Australian bush – light, wide-brimmed and sun smart. Bamboo poles were a very practical way to carry loads much larger than the average person could otherwise have done. There are plenty of records of Chinese men using the device with buckets on each end to carry water – always a scarce resource – long distances to the camps.

Plenty has been written about the capacity of the Chinese men to work hard all day as a team, from sunrise to sundown. This tended to create a degree of jealous resentment amongst the Europeans which could feed into racist outbursts.

OTHER FEATURES OF CAMPS

As communities became more established, there would have been stores, market gardens and perhaps a Joss House (temple). There is no mention in contemporary writing of Joss Houses being built on the Waranga goldfields. This was perhaps because the population was not large enough, or too transient compared to places like Bendigo and Castlemaine, to warrant one. As a temporary measure, a tent may have been used, as temples were central to the lives of the Chinese miners. Because of the importance of spirituality in their lives, it is inconceivable that there would have been no provision to cater for this need.

Supply lines to the camps were maintained by Chinese businessmen. Some of these were based in the so-called Chinatown in Little Bourke Street in Melbourne, which had already established as a centre for Chinese business and culture. Quite often, the businessmen were leading members of the so-called “secret” societies that also had a significant impact on the lives of the Chinese miners.

References: 1 The Argus 23.5.1855; 2 Theobald, Marjorie, Mount Alexander – Mountain of Gold 1851-1861

9 ALLUVIAL MINING

The Chinese miners were mostly alluvial miners. Alluvium is the loose clay, silt, sand, or gravel that has been deposited by running water in a stream bed, on a floodplain or on an alluvial “fan”. Hence, alluvial miners worked relatively close to the surface as opposed to quartz miners. On the Waranga goldfields, the first places of interest would be in the gullies between the low hills, or on flatter areas that received run-off.

Obviously, the best sites for alluvial mining were taken up quickly in any gold rush, including those on the Waranga goldfields. Initially, a mining right entitled a person to mine 8 square feet (2.4 square metres). As the Chinese often operated in organised teams of men, each of the team could lay claim to their rightful parcel of land. When these were grouped together, the team could command quite a substantial area in which to mine.

Quartz mining involved considerable capital to excavate to greater depth. This was often done by companies as opposed to individuals or small groups of men. The Chinese tended to stick with alluvial mining even after most

of the obvious areas for this had been explored. Sometimes, they reworked the slag heaps left by earlier miners in a profitable way, which gives an indication of their level of focus. It could also create some jealousy from the other miners, even though they had obviously been slipshod in their techniques when they first mined an area.

HARD WORK

There are numerous testimonials about the capacity of the Chinese miners for hard and persistent work to achieve their goals. For example, "The Chinese are partial to prospecting, and most indefatigable in their labours from daybreak until dark – the puddlers are usually 'washing off' by candlelight. The gold purchasers state that the greater proportion of alluvial gold is the product of Chinese labour. In every portion of the division, however secluded, if it had a puddle hole, one or more Chinamen is there rocking his cradle"¹ and "The Chinese deserve the credit for being, as a body, the steadiest and most industrious workers..."²

In 1867, the Bendigo Advertiser was reporting that "...Chinese (who) have proved themselves to be admirable workers, and have been exceedingly lucky in striking gold."³ It brings to mind the old adage that the harder you work, the luckier you get!

TRADITIONAL METHODS

The Chinese also tended to stick with their traditional methods even when many of the other miners moved on and became involved in quartz mining. As the other miners moved away from alluvial mining, the Chinese would often buy their equipment and take over abandoned sites. By 1861, the Colonial Mining Journal was reporting that "The Chinese are our principal puddlers, and are gradually purchasing the whole of this sort of property."⁴

In 1868, at the Graytown (or Spring Creek) goldrush south of Whroo and Bailieston, "The Chinese, who are in considerable numbers at the north end of the rush, and who have been doing very well, still use the puddling tub and finish off with the cradle, in the old style."⁵

By 1866, the Bendigo Advertiser was reporting that there were still about 21,000 Chinese alluvial miners in Victoria, nearly a third of the alluvial mining population. However, there were only 28 Chinese men known to be working in quartz mining at the time (less than 0.2%).⁶

METHODS

As hinted in the earlier quotations, the principal mining methods involved digging up the soil by hand using pick and shovel, using puddling "tubs" or puddling machines to initially break down the alluvium collected from mining sites, then using pans, cradles or other devices to do the final extraction of the gold.

Obviously, water was essential for these two processes. As stated previously though, access to water was problematic on the Waranga goldfields. Even though Whroo was sometimes referred to as the "wet diggings" as opposed to the Rushworth's "dry diggings", in reality they were pretty much the same. There were times where no water was available on site. It had to be carted a considerable distance and used extremely sparingly. The alternative was to desert the field during a dry spell and come back after wet weather.

References: 1 The Age 20.7.1859; 2 Bendigo Advertiser 25.5.1866; 3 Bendigo Advertiser 26.8.1867; 4 Colonial Mining Journal 8.9.1861 p 189; 5 The Argus 26.11.1868; 6 Bendigo Advertiser 25.6.1866

10 ROCKING THE CRADLE

The Chinese were the pre-eminent alluvial miners on the Waranga goldfields in the 1850s and early 1860s. They tended to stick with alluvial mining well after the majority of miners had either left the industry or were employed by companies involved in quartz mining. In contrast to quartz mining, the alluvial miners could operate with a very small amount of capital. They could also move quickly to new rushes because of their basic equipment.

Most methods of mining for alluvial gold were based on the fact that gold was heavier than the rest of the alluvium. If you could separate the elements that made up the alluvium, the gold would sink to the bottom

The methods used by the Chinese did not vary much over time, although they showed adaptability and were prepared to try new innovations. They were very adept at using the “cradle” which had been invented at the time of the Californian gold rushes in the late 1840s. There would have been hundreds of cradles operating in the Waranga area during the Victorian gold rush era after that technology was brought to Australia.

PUDDLING

Prior to using a cradle, the miners needed to break up the alluvium, particularly when there was clay in the mix. Before the innovation of the puddling machine, the miners would use what was generally called a puddling tub. Quite often this would be in the form of a wooden barrel which had been cut in half. The wash dirt was placed in the tub with water, then agitated to break it up into fine material which could be fed into the cradle.

A way to shift bigger volumes of earth was with a puddling machine, similar to the one which has been reconstructed at Whroo. These machines were an Australian invention of the 1850s. They required a bit more capital investment and also a horse to provide the power. The horse would walk around the top of the puddling machine attached to a wooden pole, which in turn was attached to harrows which broke up the wash dirt.

Wandering through the Rushworth forest, it is easy to find what is left of many old puddling machines in the gullies. Usually, the wooden lining has rotted away, just leaving the familiar round depression in the ground. As the European miners moved on, the Chinese miners often acquired the infrastructure that they had established.

USING THE CRADLE

North-east Victorian researcher Jacqui Durrant describes the use of a cradle, having experimented with one made by a friend. “With a design imported from the Californian gold fields, the cradle was a simple but effective hand-operated device used by diggers to separate gold from washdirt by means of a rocking motion. At the very top of the cradle is a classifier sieve (usually with half-inch or quarter-inch openings) which screens-out larger pieces of rock and other material, allowing only finer sand and gravel through. Between the sieve and the lower section is a baffle with riffles, which acts as a trap for fine gold and also ensures that the aggregate material being processed is evenly distributed before it enters the bottom sluice section. The baffle sits at an angle, pointing down towards the closed back of the box.

The inside bottom of the box is lined with a carpet...which also has riffles. The entire device sits on rockers at a slight gradient, which allows it to be rocked from side to side by its handle. The rocking motion, along with a stream of poured water, washes the earthy matter and the gravel through the sieve, down the baffle and out the end of the cradle. This leaves the gold, mixed with heavy, fine black sand, concentrated either above the first riffle at the bottom of the box, or as we were to find, also caught in the hessian fabric, or washed to the bottom plate of the box itself.”



A variety of cradles – L-R Rushworth Museum; Chinese Museum, Lt Bourke St, Melbourne; Golden Dragon Museum Bendigo

References: Life on Spring Creek blog by Jacqui Durrant 2.10.15 (Note that the Spring Creek in the title of this blog is near Beechworth and not the local Spring Creek we now know as Graytown)

11 TEAMWORK

As we have seen earlier, the Chinese gold miners were used to working in teams. Sometimes, this was a group of indentured workers, often from the same geographic area of China. When their debts were paid off, the miners were free to form their own groups to work a claim. Other groups that were wealthy enough to pay their own passage to Australia and purchase their basic supplies could do that from the outset.

When working a cradle, teamwork was essential, so this method of gold extraction suited the Chinese miners. One historian describes the make-up of a team thus – “For maximum efficiency, at least four men were required to work this system: One dug the stuff from the ground, another carried it to the cradle and emptied it on the sieve; the third gave a rocking motion; while the fourth dashed on water...using a ‘dipper’ (a large can on the end of a rod). This team could be expanded to include someone to ‘puddle’ the stuff before placing it on the sieve.”¹

Sometimes, more than one of the tasks might be completed by one member of the team. When conditions were dry, some of the team members would be needed to cart water from time to time.

DIGGING THE DIRT

The term ‘alluvial mining’ gives the impression that the miners were just digging near the surface, but sometimes the conditions required them to dig much deeper. Some contemporary commentators thought that if they were digging shafts, the Chinese miners dug round shafts, while the Europeans usually dug square or rectangular ones. However, this appears to be a myth as both square and round shafts have been found in areas mined by both groups. With alluvial mining, quite often the Chinese miners used a process called ‘paddocking’, where rather than digging a shaft, the entire surface was systematically removed to put through puddling machines and cradles.

When the above-mentioned researcher was experimenting with the use of a cradle “It turned out that the cradle could process about 10 ‘easy’ shovels-full at a time, and that the classifier sieve had to be emptied of the heavier material about every third shovel-load...We didn’t have anything to ‘puddle’ the stuff in before cradling it, and as it turned out, this would have been preferable as some of the clay was extremely sticky and stiff, and had to be loosened by hand.”¹

DIFFERENT TECHNIQUES

You would think that working a cradle would be similar everywhere. However, the type of alluvium did have an impact on the process. A miner on the goldfields in the north-east of Victoria, working in the 1850s, explains -

“...soon after beginning to wash our stuff, Whitelaw and G— had a quarrel which rose from the latter finding fault with the former’s method of cradling. At Forest Creek, whereby G— had learned to cradle, the gold is coarse and nuggety, slow cradling and plenty of water is generally used there, on the other hand at the Sydney diggings where Whitelaw had learned to cradle, the gold is extremely fine which requires fast cradling and very little water, so as not to wash away the finer particles; now the gold on these diggings happened to be of the same kind as that on the Sydney side, therefore it should be washed like it: an experience of more than two years has proved this to be the most effectual way, yet G— would persist in maintaining that the cradling for one class of gold would do that for the other, and words rose between them on the issue of this dispute, which ended in a separation when the stuff was washed...”²

The Forest Creek goldfields being referred to in the quote were around Castlemaine, so it was box-ironbark country like Waranga. This may have required the first method of cradling. The Chinese miners also worked a lot of mullock heaps, where you would expect that a lot of the bulkier material had already been removed and only the finer gold remained. As a result, the second method developed at the Sydney diggings might have been more appropriate those circumstances.

References: 1 Life on Spring Creek blog by Jacqui Durrant 2.10.2015; 2 Edward Ridpath, Journal, MS 8759, Box 1012/4, State Library of Victoria manuscripts collection, pp.21-22 (quoted in Ref 1)

12 PUDDLING MACHINES



Horse-drawn puddling machines, such as the one reconstructed at Whroo, are examples of “the puddling technology developed in Victoria from 1854 in response to the need to process enormous amounts of clay soil which needed to be broken up to get at the gold. Horses were used to drag harrows around a circular ditch in which the soil and water were mixed...In the history of Victorian gold mining...(puddling machines are) the only technology or method developed entirely on Victorian goldfields.”¹

Reconstructed puddling machine on the Rushworth-Graytown Road, Whroo

Some of the gold-bearing alluvial clay was often very sticky. The puddling machines could process larger amounts of it much more quickly than the methods previously employed, such as using a bucket or half barrel and agitating the contents with a stick, shovel or some improvised tool.

CHINESE PUDDLERS

As has been stated in previous stories, the Chinese became the pre-eminent puddlers on the Waranga goldfields by the late 1850s. By that time, many of other alluvial miners had either given mining away or were employed with companies focussed on quartz mining underground.

Snippets from newspapers support this fact. In late 1859, The Argus reported that at Whroo, there were 150 Chinese, all of whom were men engaged in alluvial mining.² There were 63 puddling machines but only 31 of

these were operative, probably because of seasonal lack of water. Most of them were being operated by Chinese miners, with the report saying that a majority of the puddling machines in the area had been taken over from Europeans.

At the same time, there were 130 puddling machines around Rushworth, with only just over half being in use. The fact that only 145 Chinese miners were counted suggests that more of the puddling machines at Rushworth were still operated by Europeans.

This means that if the rough census was reasonably accurate, there were nearly 300 Chinese still at the Waranga goldfields, despite the fact that “a considerable number of Chinese have migrated within the last two months.”²

THE 1860s

By 1861, the Colonial Mining Journal reported that at Whroo, “The Chinese are the principal puddlers, and are gradually purchasing the whole of this sort of property.”³

Through the 1860s, Chinese puddlers were still active in the local area, although numbers were dropping. In 1865, a group found a nugget at Whroo weighing over 11 oz (over 300 grams) which they sold to storekeepers Stewart and Smith in Rushworth.⁴ In January 2024 values, the nugget’s gold value alone would be over \$33,000. Quite often, the Chinese miners were making their finds on ground that had already been worked by other miners.

As the quartz miners extended their operations, there was the possibility of coming into conflict with the Chinese puddlers. In 1867 at Whroo, “a serious fight broke out between some Chinese puddlers and a party who had taken up a quartz claim and required to sink near the puddling machine...”⁵ Few mining wardens existed to adjudicate, so there was little in the way of effective resolution of this type of dispute. As a result, the aggrieved parties sometimes took matters into their own hands. At least one historian also claims that the “European miners regularly drove off the Chinese whose claims proved to be rich”.⁶

WATER PROBLEMS

Lack of water was always a problem for the miners on the Waranga goldfields. By its nature, puddling required a significant amount of water. Other miners sometimes complained about profligate water use by the Chinese, but in reality, everyone needed this scarce resource. There is no evidence to suggest the Chinese used more than other miners.

Much later, the Bendigo Advertiser reported that “for domestic purposes strings of Chinamen are to be seen conveying it (water) that distance (2 miles or 3.2 km) in buckets on bamboos.”⁷ Although this observation was not on the Waranga goldfields, it gives an indication of the difficulties facing the miners. If they had to go to these lengths to obtain domestic water, you could assume that mining operations were pretty much at a standstill. The report also provides a strong mental image of Chinese men carrying loads in a very traditional way with the bamboo across their shoulders supporting a bucket on each side.

Sources: 1 Victorian Heritage Database Report re Bet Bet Reef Gold Puddling Site (11.5.1999); 2 The Argus 26.12.1859; 3 Colonial Mining Journal 8.9.1861 p189; 4 Bendigo Advertiser 29.7.1865 p2; 5 Bendigo Advertiser 20.9.1867; 6 Theobald, Margaret, Mount Alexander – Mountain of Gold 1851-61 p196-7; 7 Bendigo Advertiser 27.3.1876

13 POLITICAL ACTION ON THE GOLDFIELDS

In the lead-up to the dramatic events that took place at Eureka Stockade in 1854, there was considerable political agitation on the goldfields. For all miners, the oppressive miner's licence fee and the aggressive way in which the fees were collected were lightning rods for dissent. Meetings occurred across the goldfields at many places including Bendigo, Castlemaine and the Waranga goldfields. It is likely that Chinese miners participated in these demonstrations locally.

However, the Chinese miners had much more to be unhappy about than the mining population in general. Apart from the hated licence fee, they were subjected to other taxes and restrictions. In a move to limit the number of Chinese coming to the goldfields, the colonial government introduced An Act to Make Provision for Certain Immigrants (i.e. Chinese) in 1855. The Act imposed a one-off poll tax of 10 pounds on every Chinese arrival, as well as limiting the number of Chinese passengers to just one for every ton of cargo.

It also imposed an annual one pound (\$2) fee for a "Chinese protection ticket". This fee was supposed to provide funding for wardens to be employed by the government to look after the interests of the Chinese. A more cynical view is that it provided a way of controlling the Chinese population. The wardens, who worked with headmen in each camp through interpreters, were also there as tax collectors.

PROTESTS

Initially, protests came in the form of meetings and petitions by the Chinese miners and their supporters, who included well-respected Chinese businessmen in Melbourne. There was a big rally in Bendigo (not Whroo, as reported in one local history publication) of around 1000 Chinese people in October 1859.¹ It is possible that there were rallies held simultaneously on the Waranga goldfields, but they would have been much smaller. At the time, a rough census of the Chinese population at Rushworth and Whroo put the numbers at around 300 people. There do not seem to have been any local rallies mentioned in the district papers.

The protests followed a fairly standard format, in which a number of speeches were made by the leaders at public meetings. In some cases, these were followed up with petitions written to the powers that be, requesting changes to the legislation. Various institutions such as the Public Records Office of Victoria (PROV) hold copies of these heartfelt submissions to government. Basically, the Chinese were arguing for the right to be treated the same as everyone else who was on the goldfields at the time.

Whether the meetings and petitions did any good is a moot point. In November 1857, the Victorian government passed a further Act which did not improve the lot of the Chinese, adding that they would not have access to legal proceedings to recover property.² Some commentators feel that tax evasion was more effective than petitions. However, the petitions may have played a useful role in challenging stereotypes of the Chinese and identifying their diverse range of experiences.³

TOWARDS THE 20TH CENTURY

During the remaining forty years of the 19th century there was a steady movement towards what is generally referred to as the White Australia Policy. Anti-Chinese sentiment hardened, and in this hostile environment, the numbers of Chinese in Australia diminished steadily. The majority of those who had arrived in the 1850s returned home to their villages and wider families.

In the Waranga area, a relatively small number of Chinese remained part of the local communities. Some of the men had married European women and chose to stay. In some cases, their ancestors still live in this area. Others could not afford to return home, eking out a living searching for gold, or engaging in other employment. One of these areas of employment was working in the pastoral industry, as hutkeepers, cooks and shepherds. They did not have the opportunity of selecting land to set up their own farms, which their European counterparts did.

Others were engaged in setting up and running market gardens on town fringes, working on government projects and setting up their own businesses.

SOURCES: 1 The Age 11.10.1859 p5; 2 Theobald, Marjorie, Mount Alexander Mountain of Gold 1851-61 p 198; 3 Kyi, Anna, Chinese Activism on the Goldfields Seminar, PROV 12.10.2022

14 RESIDENTS' LICENCES

One of the things that caused dissatisfaction amongst the Chinese on the Waranga goldfields was the imposition of the so-called resident's licence in 1857. It was one of several deterrents introduced from 1855 by the Victorian Government after political pressure to curb the number of Chinese immigrants. An earlier British treaty with China meant that the government could not just prohibit immigration completely, but it nevertheless did its best to make it very difficult.

Chinese protests peaked in the late 1850s, when the largest number of Chinese were in the country. The protests were ultimately successful, but at a time when many of the Chinese gold miners had already gone home. One of the main forms of protest against the resident's licence fee was non-payment, which occurred regularly on the Waranga goldfields.

POLICING

The Waranga goldfields were under the control of an Assistant Commissioner. He had staff such as clerical officers but also a detachment of police who were obliged to carry out his instructions at the local level. One of the perennial problems faced was a lack of sufficient numbers of police to carry out all the duties required. Also, the poor quality of men who were attracted to the job was an issue in what was then quite a remote location.

Towards the end of the 1850s, the Assistant Commissioners at Rushworth used the police to harass the Chinese to pay their prescribed residents' licence fees. This was clearly a direction from above, from the government via the Chief Commissioner. The success or otherwise formed the basis for part of a pro-forma report that was regularly submitted from each goldfield to the head office.

LOCAL CONVICTIONS

In September 1860, the police rounded up 23 Chinese men and they were brought before the court. Of these, 22 were convicted for not having a current resident's ticket and they were each fined £2 (\$4) – equivalent to about \$150 in today's money.¹ It is unclear whether the men were withholding the fee as a form of protest, they had simply hoped they could avoid payment, or for some other reason.

These convictions applied to arrests over a two-week period, in line with the regular reporting sequence by the Assistant Commissioner. This was an unusually high figure for a fortnight in 1860. At this point in time there were around 300 Chinese at Rushworth and Whroo, so the arrests constituted about 8% of the Chinese population of the day. Generally, the figures were lower, but it was clear from the reports that a considerable amount of attention was paid to collecting the fees.

In the lead-up to earlier goldfields protests, mainly about the miner's licence fee, regular raids by police on the broader mining community were hated and led to a great deal of friction. It is likely that these resident licence hunts were similarly offensive to the Chinese, particularly as the impost only applied to them.

LAW AND ORDER

From a broader law-and-order point of view, the Chinese population were generally well-behaved. They did not partake of alcohol to the same extent as their European counterparts, so were less likely to be involved in violent crime. They were more likely to be victims of such crime. A tendency by a minority to prefer opium as the drug of choice rather than alcohol meant that they were more likely to be of a subdued, as opposed to an aggressive disposition after imbibing.

The other factor that was regularly reported from the goldfields was that the Chinese were extremely hard workers, labouring from dawn to dark with their alluvial mining. It was observed on a regular basis that they were more diligent workers than the wider population. You can imagine that by the end of such long days, they only thing that they would be interested at the end of the day was getting a feed then a good night's sleep.

They also lived in close, tight-knit communities where the people looked out for each other. Often the people they were living and working with were relatives or former neighbours from their home village. This lessened the likelihood of engaging in crime, especially involving their countrymen. Head men usually kept a tight rein on the men living within the Chinese camps.

Sources: 1 PROV, Assistant Gold Commissioner's Report 24.9.1860

15 CHINESE IN THE PASTORAL INDUSTRY

We tend to think of the Chinese who came to the Waranga area in the 19th century as being involved almost exclusively in gold mining. However, the new arrivals did engage in other occupations. A number of them worked in the pastoral industry as employees in roles such as shepherds and hut keepers. Gold mining was not always viable, especially in dry periods on the Waranga goldfields. Having alternative work would have brought in some funds, while allowing the men to keep an eye on their claims as they waited for the all-important rain to allow them to continue operations.

During the gold rushes, there was a general shortage of labour available to work on the squatting runs. Many of the employees who had been working on the runs disappeared to the latest rush, which may have been in another part of the state. It may also have been the case that the Chinese were better and more reliable workers, and preferred by the station owners. Waranga (later Waranga Park) station was one of the local runs that employed Chinese men on a regular basis in the 1860s.

WARANGA PARK

In her history of Waranga Basin¹, Joyce Hammond mentions that there were 13 Chinese workers at Waranga Park run, although she doesn't say when this was, or provide the source of the information. However, newspaper reports mention Chinese men working for the squatter William Gunn during the 1860s.

In 1864, Gunn was in trouble with the authorities for having scabby sheep. Scab was a disease that threatened the pastoral industry, so strenuous efforts were made to contain the disease. Gunn was actually dobbed in by a fellow squatter. A government inspector found a flock of 1400 sheep with scab and "two Chinamen were shepherding the flock". He went on to inspect another flock of similar size, "under the care of a Chinaman".²

Gunn was fined 250 pounds (\$500) – an enormous sum at the time – and an appeal against the conviction was dismissed.

Waranga Park station was originally part of the Toolamba run, set up in 1840. When it was divided off the Toolamba run, it still comprised over 50,000 acres (20,000 hectares) including what is now the Waranga Basin and the township of Rushworth. There were several lessees before Gunn arrived in the 1860s. He eventually became a prominent citizen. It is hard to imagine a bigger contrast between the Waranga area and where he came from in northern Scotland.

SHEEP STEALING

In 1869, one of Gunn's Chinese employees was charged with "killing, with intent to steal, a sheep, the property of Mr Gunn of Waranga Park station. The man had for some time been suspected of thieving practices."³ For his trouble, the man spent three months in the Sandhurst gaol (now site of the Ulumbarra Theatre in Bendigo). It would be surprising if he got his old job back when he was released.

In the same year, a traveller was passing through the Waranga area from "the Broken River, and being pushed for time, took across country to save many miles, and coming to sheep tracks going the same route as I was going I followed them, coming to a hut on a hill belonging to Waranga Park station, the trees which for a radius of fully half a mile (0.8 km) were all rung (i.e. ringbarked) and dead." The hutkeeper he met there was Chinese.

OTHER DUTIES

The traveller stopped to speak to the Chinese hutkeeper, who would have been responsible for cooking for the shepherds working in the area. During the day, the hutkeeper may have been employed ringbarking trees as part of his employment.

Many buildings were made of bark in the early days, which would explain why some of the trees were damaged. Cutting bark, a commonly used building material on stations, could also have provided another class of work for the employees of the run, and perhaps the remnant Aboriginal population.

The vast majority of trees were ringbarked because there was a general presumption at the time that less trees would result in better growth prospects for fodder and grain crops. One hundred and fifty years later, it is clear that the Waranga area would have benefitted in the long term from a much more judicious clearing of the land.

Sources: 1 Hammond, Joyce, History of the Waranga Basin (1989) p 3; 2 Bendigo Advertiser 22.8.1864; 3 Bendigo Advertiser 23.8.1869

16 A SURPRISING SIGHT

When the traveller in the previous story was traversing the Waranga area in the late 1860s, he came across a Chinese hutkeeper on the Waranga Park station. Around the hut was what could only be described as an astonishing sight. "Judge my surprise at seeing suspended from the branches (of dead, ringbarked trees) hundreds of iguanas in various stages of drying. These were not small, but varying from 3 ft to 4 ft (1-1.3 metres in length) and over."¹

What he was seeing, of course, were dead goannas, or lace monitors. If the numbers quoted are accurate, then goannas must have been very common at the time. These days, it is a relatively rare occurrence to see a goanna in the bush around Rushworth. Prior to colonisation, they were hunted by the Ngurai-illum Wurrung, the local

Aboriginal people, as a food source. Perhaps the fact that the number of these people had dropped dramatically after colonisation, through murder, disease and dispersal, meant that the main predators of goannas were no longer there. Numbers may have burgeoned as a result, making the collection of the goannas by the Chinese hutkeeper an easier task than it would otherwise have been.

USES OF GOANNAS

Naturally, the traveller asked the hutkeeper why he was killing and drying so many goannas. He “informed me that after they were thoroughly dry, he consigned them to Kong Meng, a Chinese merchant in Melbourne in those days, who shipped them to China, where they were ground up and converted into medicine.”¹

Apart from the hutkeeper earning himself some extra income on the side, this story points to other roles played by Chinese immigrants during colonial times. Some were clearly merchants who, amongst other things, traded goods to the Chinese miners on the goldfields. They also saw opportunities to export Australian products to China, something that has been done ever since.

KONG MENG

Lowee Kong Meng was the antithesis of the image of the poor Chinese peasant coming to Australia, saddled with debt and seeking his fortune. He was already wealthy when he arrived in 1853 and was fluent in English and French. Briefly trying gold mining, he quickly abandoned that risky pursuit. Setting himself up as a highly successful businessman in Melbourne, he had fingers in many pies, including transporting and trading goods to and from Australia and arranging for ships to bring Chinese immigrants to the country.



Kong Meng was influential in Melbourne and beyond. “A popular and enlightened leader in Melbourne's Chinese community, Kong Meng supervised Chinese clubs, settled disputes among his countrymen, helped them to find work and urged them to respect the British flag, law and justice.”² He took up the political causes of his countrymen who were treated harshly under Draconian laws aimed at limiting the amount of Chinese immigration to Australia.

“Despite his attitude towards the immigration issue, Kong Meng was far from unpopular and was elected by the Victorian government as a commissioner for the Melbourne Exhibitions in 1880 and 1888. Contemporary Australian writers described him as 'cultured', 'superior', 'influential' and 'highly esteemed', a gentleman with an 'exceedingly generous disposition' who 'gave liberally to churches and public charities, without respect to creed and denomination'.”²

CHINESE DOCTORS

The story about the goannas suggests that the Chinese in Australia were able to bring specific medical knowledge to this country, while using locally sourced raw materials to produce medicines. Some of the medicines were produced and sold locally.

A source of employment for some of the Chinese who emigrated would have been in the field of medicine, where they would be able to tend to the needs of their countrymen, and to a lesser extent, some Europeans. The

traveller mentioned in these stories visited one such Chinese doctor in Ballarat in the 1870s. As a result of the smell coming from the doctor's laboratory ("more pronounced than any bone-mill and guano-shed rolled into one, with the aroma from the Yarra, below the West Melbourne swamp...thrown in"¹) he did not try the medicine. However, he conceded that the doctor "was considered very clever, and had made some great recoveries, especially with cancer."¹

Sources: 1 Launceston Examiner 31.3.1899 p4; 2 Australian Dictionary of Biography website

17 MARKET GARDENING

One of the businesses in which the Chinese excelled in the Waranga area in the latter part of the 19th century was market gardening. Many of those who came to Australia seeking their fortune came from rural areas in south-eastern China. As a result, they already had the skills which would allow them to be successful in this pursuit.

Some of the miners would have used market gardening as an adjunct to their mining operations. If successful as miners, some would have used the proceeds from those endeavours to set themselves up in this alternative line of work.

TOWN FRINGES

From the outset, many of the Chinese miners worked in teams. Some of the team would be responsible for feeding the others, so this involved growing some of the food, procuring what they could not grow, and cooking. Adjoining the Chinese camps at Whroo, Rushworth and on other local goldfields, it is likely that there were kitchen gardens which initially mainly supplied the Chinese diaspora. The signage at the Whroo Cemetery states that Chinese market gardens existed at Moora, Rushworth and Long Gully, Whroo.

Later, some of the gardeners ran businesses on the fringe of local towns. In 1884, The Argus newspaper reported that at Murchison "the Chinese have a large and productive garden upon its (i.e. the Goulburn river's) banks, "John" supplying all of the vegetables consumed in the town."¹ Three years later at Nagambie, a severe flood washed away the Chinese gardens along the river there. The gardeners' huts were destroyed, and people had to be rescued from the raging torrent.²

The floods that year also affected Tatura, where the "Chinamen's gardens", just outside Tatura on the Rushworth Road, were flooded.³ In 1889, a visitor to Elmore noted "The first objects that attract the eye are the Chinese gardens on the banks of the river, looking splendid from the coach passing by; they are irrigated by pumps worked by horses."⁴

INTO THE 20TH CENTURY

In 1902, the Rushworth Chronicle noted the death of "Ah Cheong, who has followed the occupation of market gardener at Sailor's Gully, near Whroo, for some 40 years, (who) died suddenly on Wednesday evening. He had been ailing for some time."⁵

It seems that the business of setting up market gardens by the Chinese to serve the local towns continued well into the 20th century. The Rochester Express of 1914, when reporting on a large catch of cod in the Campaspe, stated that a large fish was caught near the Chinese gardens on the banks of the river.⁴ Implicit in the statement was that fact that everyone knew the place where the catch had occurred, so were well aware of the Chinese gardens.

DIFFICULT WORK

The task of running a market garden in places like Rushworth and Whroo, where there was no river, was made more difficult by comparative lack of water and poor soils. Sometimes water would have to be carried a substantial distance to sustain the crops. Soil would have to be gradually improved over time, with crops needing to be protected from domesticated and native animals.

There was also a Chinese market garden at Moora which was established by the Chong family in 1850s, and operating into the 20th century. You could understand why a gardener would choose to set up there, where soil was better and there was a creek, albeit ephemeral.

SOURCES: 1 The Argus 6.9.1884 p4; 2 The Argus 5.8.1887; 3 The Argus 6.8.1887; 4 Rochester Express 20.3.1914 p3; 5 Rushworth Chronicle 30.5.02; 6 The Age 28.1.1928 p19

18 CHINESE VEGETABLES

The previous story, about Chinese market gardening in the Waranga area, begs the question – what was grown in the gardens? Initially, it was probably vegetables that the people were used to growing at home in China. Seeds could have been brought from China or purchased from Chinese traders in Australia as they became established to cater for the needs of thousands of Chinese miners who flocked to Victoria in the 1850s.

The vegetables would have included Chinese variations of some vegetables the other immigrants may have been familiar with, such as spinach, broccoli, cabbage, celery, radishes and other root vegetables. There would have been other crops that would have been little known in Australia such as bok choy, watercress, yams, egg plants and gourds. Chinese cuisine also used a whole lot more leafy greens and sprouts than Western cooking. These latter ingredients were relatively quick growing.

With horses being used everywhere in the Waranga area, in transportation as well as in the mining and pastoral industries, there was no shortage of manure which could be used to enhance the poor soils.

SAILOR'S FLAT

One of the longest running market gardens in the Waranga area was at the Ah Cheong property at Sailor's Flat, just west of Whroo on Cheong Road. It would be interesting to know what crops were grown on the property. This may have changed over time as the number of Chinese people in the area declined over the latter part of the 19th century and the family catered more for the European market. They grew fruit as well as vegetables.

Ah Cheong, later known as "Luke", was the progenitor of the now much-extended Cheong family who still live in the Waranga area and far beyond. Luke met and later married a European woman, Ellen (known as Helen) Donovan, who was 15 years his junior. Their marriage certificate states that Ellen's father John Donovan was a blacksmith; Luke's father was a schoolteacher in China. Ellen informed the registrar of births, deaths and marriages at Whroo that her mother had died when she was a child, and she did not know her name.

PREJUDICE

The wedding took place at the Ah Cheong property and the service was performed according to the rites of the United Methodist Free Church by Rushworth minister Rev David Porteus.¹ Porteus was an enthusiastic supporter of the church's missionary work in China. Perhaps that played a part in his agreement to solemnize the marriage.

At the time, it was unusual for mixed marriages such as this to take place because of the amount of anti-Chinese sentiment that existed. Many of the European women who followed their hearts and married Chinese men were looked down upon by the broader community. The fact that Ellen already had children with Luke prior to the marriage may have exacerbated the amount of disdain the couple initially experienced.

REDEMPTION

In time, the Ah Cheong family secured their place in the history of Whroo, becoming highly respected citizens. Helen and Luke had seven children, all born at Whroo, one of whom (George) died in infancy. The others – William, Ada, Herbert, Edwin, Daisy and Helen (known as “Minnie”) - went on to live very long and productive lives, many in the local area.

At the time of Luke’s death in 1902, his son Herbert was a schoolteacher at Puckapunyal. Herbert spent his whole working life in the service of the Education Department, retiring when he was Headmaster of Kallista State School in the Dandenong Ranges. He acted, along with his mother, as an executor of Luke’s estate, which left all the assets to be held in trust for Helen for the duration of her life, then distributed equally between the surviving children.²

Ada Cheong was a spinster who ran a very successful dressmaking business in High Street, Rushworth, which commenced advertising in 1908 when Ada was in her mid-30s. The business ran for many years, with Ada employing a number of other women, including her sister Minnie.³

Helen Cheong lived on for 25 years after Luke’s death, a family matriarch watching over an ever-expanding Cheong family tree. She was 75 when she died and is buried in the Whroo cemetery, as is “Luke”.

SOURCES: 1 Births, Deaths and Marriages Victoria; 2 Public Records Office of Victoria (PROV); 3 Bons, Tracey, Rushworth Businesses and Their Owners, Vol 1&2; Sundry information – Ancestry and Trove websites

19 THE IMPACT OF FLOODS

Chinese market gardeners who set up close to the Goulburn and Campaspe Rivers and other smaller waterways were subject to flooding, especially before the rivers were increasingly controlled by structures built to facilitate irrigation. The Chinese set up their own irrigation systems to draw water from the rivers and creeks for their crops.

1870 was a year of very bad flooding on the Goulburn and Campaspe Rivers. At Echuca in November, the Campaspe was backing up and flooding large parts of the town. The surprising number of twenty Chinese gardeners, who were operating close to the river, had to abandon their properties.¹ Further south down the river at Runnymede and Rochester, there was severe flooding, affecting the Chinese gardens near the river.

In 1887 at Nagambie, a severe flood washed away the Chinese gardens along the river there. The gardeners’ huts were destroyed, and people had to be rescued from the raging torrent.² The floods that year also affected Tatura, where the “Chinamen’s gardens”, just outside Tatura on the Rushworth Road, were flooded.³

MURCHISON FLOODS

One of the biggest floods to ever hit Murchison occurred in 1916. Chinese market gardeners suffered significant damage to their gardens and infrastructure, as well as loss of other assets that were washed away. They were also lucky to be alive at a time when communications were more difficult and flood warnings often came too late.

The Murchison Advertiser reported that “As usual, the Chinese gardens and houses, in the vicinity of the railway bridge, were entirely submerged, and the occupants had a very narrow escape indeed, being compelled to wade out to high land waist deep in water at 3 am on Monday morning.”⁴

The occupants did not have time to even take their horse with them which was left tethered in the stable. Fortunately, the horse was later rescued by Mr G F Heazlewood and others, “with a fine piece of oarsmanship.” The horse was already shoulder-deep in water by the time a rescue party arrived. Before they could rescue it, they had to demolish a wall of the stable. “A long line was then attached to the animal, and he was taken through heavy currents, across fences and around trees, to a place of safety.”⁴

As well as rescuing the horse, two dogs and some other assets were saved, but all things considered the Chinese suffered some of the greatest losses amongst the citizens of Murchison.³ Their whole livelihood was destroyed, and they had to start again almost from scratch.

FLOODED AGAIN

Less than a year later, after re-establishing their gardens and infrastructure, the Chinese were flooded out again. In anticipation of more floods after the 1916 inundation, they had gone to considerable effort to erect earthen banks around their property. However, the floodwaters soon breached these, the result of much hard work over the previous few months.

The only saving grace in 1917 was that the occupants had received some advance warning. They had sufficient time to remove their horses, carts and other assets which could be moved, out of harm’s way. Of course, dwellings and the all-important gardens were destroyed again.

This time the Chinese were so disheartened that they decided to abandon the site near the railway bridge. They went into negotiations with Mr J Parker to lease a block of land fronting River Road on the northern side of Murchison.⁴

RESILIENCE

These stories give an indication of the great resilience of the Chinese immigrants who decided to stay on in Australia, despite the many hardships that they faced. They adapted to new occupations after the alluvial gold ran out, showing perseverance in maintaining their new occupations in the face of natural disasters such as flood and drought. All of this was achieved so far from their much-loved country of birth, and in the face of sustained prejudice by many of the European immigrants.

Sources: 1 Riverine Herald 5.11.1870; 2 The Argus 5.8.1887; 3 The Argus 6.8.1887; 4 Murchison Advertiser 29.9.1916; 5 Murchison Advertiser 15.6.1917

20 TROUBLE WITH HORSES

In the 19th and early 20th century, when horses were an all-important means of transport, accidents were frequent. Most people are aware of Chinaman’s Bend, on the Mt Camel range. At that point, on what was then the main road from Bendigo to Beechworth, Yee Geen’s horse and cart went over the edge of the steep incline in 1879, with the driver being killed. Yee Geen was working for market gardener Ah Gow, delivering vegetables to properties in the area around the Mt Camel range. An inquest was held in a pub at Redcastle.

A few years later “No small amount of excitement was caused in Rushworth yesterday afternoon when it was seen that a horse attached to a dray was parading Murchison Street at the rate of about 20 miles an hour, and clearing everything before it in a most miraculous manner. After running the course of the street it turned along the Tatura road, and after galloping about a mile and a half pulled up from sheer exhaustion, and allowed itself to be captured without breaking a strap. The runaway is the property of Ah Cheong, a puddler residing in Growler’s Gully.”¹

At the time, the newspapers tended to confuse the names Cheong and Chong. In this case, it was almost certainly Ah Chong, who was a small-time miner around Rushworth for a long time. Growler’s Gully is on the eastern side of Growler’s Hill, where Ah Chong had a hut and puddling machine in the 1860s.

20TH CENTURY

The fine Chinese gardens on the banks of the Campaspe River at Elmore have been mentioned in an earlier story. “Jimmy Ah Khan, well known here as a Chinese vegetable vendor, met with a very painful accident on Saturday week. Ah Khan had just returned from Bendigo in his wagon, and was about to dismantle his horses from the vehicle. Whilst in the act, they suddenly moved forward, and the pole of the wagon struck Jimmy in the chest, precipitating him with violent force to the ground. Luckily, however, both wheels eluded his prostrate form, but from what can be gleaned from him, it appears one of the horses must have trampled him. On taking the injured Chinaman inside, it was found he was in a very critical state and Dr Costillon was summoned. Two or three days later, a Chinese doctor from Bendigo attended him, and he is now recovering from the effects of his experience.”²

Of interest is the vast distance (90 km return) Ah Khan was prepared to travel with horse and wagon to sell his produce. Also, the use of a Chinese medical practitioner came after he had tried a European doctor, suggesting that he may have had greater faith in the former.

RUSHWORTH ACCIDENTS

In Rushworth in 1914, Mrs Chong (Emma, nee Branson) was thrown from her gig when her horse stumbled. She broke her wrist in the fall and was probably lucky not to sustain more serious injuries.³ Some of Mrs Chong’s sons later served with the AIF in World War 1.

An unusual chain of events happened in Rushworth in January 1928. “Mr G. Jones, of Bailieston, left his car standing on an incline in front of the shire hall. The car started off, and collided with an electric light standard. The force of the impact dislodged a large globe, which burst with a loud report on hitting the ground. This caused a Chinese market gardener’s horse to plunge and break free of the harness, with the result that the cart, in which the Chinese was still seated, ran down the hill until brought to a stop by the gutter in front of the Commercial Bank”⁴, the building which still stands at 34-36 High Street. The shafts on the cart were ruined but no one was hurt.

Of interest here is the fact that Chinese market gardeners were still operating in the area as late as 1928. The paper did not report on the name of the Chinese market gardener, so we cannot establish whether it was someone with a vegetable garden in the local area, or whether he had come from further afield to sell his produce in Rushworth. Chinese gardeners were still selling their produce in Rushworth much later than 1928.

Sources: 1 Goulburn Advertiser 9.5.1884 (thanks Alan McLean); 2 Elmore Standard 2.5.1901; 3 Murchison Advertiser 22.5.1914; 4 The Age 28.1.1928

21 OTHER OCCUPATIONS

Previous stories have shown that not all Chinese immigrants in the latter half of the 19th century were gold miners. Many were engaged in other occupations or running businesses. In the Waranga area, involvement in the pastoral industry and in market gardening was not uncommon.

Like the immigrants from other countries, the Chinese coming to the local area had a vast range of skills that could be employed as an adjunct to, or alternative to gold mining. There were skilled and unskilled labourers, tradesmen and professionals, as well as entertainers, medical practitioners and herbalists, teachers, interpreters, merchants, spiritual leaders and many others.

INTERPRETERS

One of the important roles on the goldfields was that of interpreter. When the system of wardens or protectors was set up in the mid-1850s, those appointed to the positions were European. Therefore, they needed interpreters to be able to communicate with the people they were supposed to be “protecting”. Problems included difficulty in sourcing interpreters and the fact that there was no one Chinese language. Although many of the immigrants who came to the Waranga area were from south-eastern Guangdong province, there were different dialects spoken in different places.

Obviously, interpreters were needed to address clashes between European and Chinese miners, such as the one described in an earlier story. They were also often required in legal proceedings such as inquests into deaths. In 1866, Ah Lick gave evidence through an interpreter at the inquest into the death of his brother, Ah Owen, a miner who had died at Whroo aged about 44, from heart disease. The brothers had come from Canton (now Guangdong) province in south-eastern China.¹

IRRIGATION WORKS AND HAWKING

Some Chinese workers found employment on irrigation infrastructure projects which were being built in the latter part of the 19th century. “A Chinese named Ah Gow, who had been subject to fits, died very suddenly at one of the camps on the main channel works, near Murchison, on Tuesday (17.9.1889).”²

There was an Ah Gow who was a market gardener at Graytown ten years earlier. This may have been the same person, although it seems to have been a fairly common name. The Graytown Ah Gow employed another Chinese gentleman called Ye Geen. He worked as a hawker, travelling far and wide on a horse and cart selling vegetables. Although his name is not well known, many will know of him as the man killed when his spring cart rolled over on what is usually referred to as Chinaman’s Bend – high up on the Mount Camel range on the road east from Toolleen.

Ye Geen was travelling around the Mount Pleasant area – Toolleen, Redcastle, Cornella, Gobarup etc – selling produce when he had the fatal accident. His body was conveyed to McKee’s Hotel at Redcastle, where the coroner’s inquest was conducted by a local JP. Ye Geen was identified by Ah Gow, who advised that he was from Canton region, was 49 years old and partial to opium smoking. Apparently, he had a relative living in Heathcote.³

ENTERTAINERS

Gold miners – both Chinese and European – were starved of amusements on the goldfields. Touring performers would visit mining settlements. Although unreferenced, one local historian claims there was a visit to Whroo by a Chinese dramatic company in 1860 that attracted “several hundred Chinese from surrounding goldfields

gathered in the Whroo Chinese camp and went wild with excitement".⁴ Europeans also attended the two performances in a large marquee and enjoyed the show, even though it was performed in a language they did not understand.

Performing for their countrymen provided another avenue of employment for some Chinese who were in Australia at the time, or perhaps visiting specifically for that purpose. Enterprising entrepreneurs amongst the Chinese immigrants would have arranged the tours.

We tend to have a stereotypical view of the Chinese who came to the area during the gold rush i.e. they were all poor farmers who indebted themselves to come here in the hope of getting rich quickly then going home. In fact, they were a much more eclectic group with a wide range of skills that benefitted their new communities. Many stayed to make their lives here.

SOURCES: 1 PROV File 1866/196; 2 Kyabram Union (newspaper) 20.9.1889; 3 PROV File 1879/207; 4 Hammond, Joyce, The Golden Years of Rushworth and Whroo p117

22 CHINESE RATEPAYERS

See also – Appendix B

The forerunner of the Waranga Shire, the Waranga District Roads Board was set up in 1863, ten years after the discovery of gold in the local area. (The Shire was proclaimed soon afterwards in late 1865) One of the first things to happen was a valuation of properties, many of which were located on Crown Land at the time. Once the valuation was done, the property could be assessed for municipal rates. In the early days, these rates were payable by the occupier rather than the owner, as they are now.

You can imagine the difficulties facing the Board and later Shire staff trying to document this information. With the gold rushes, the situation on the ground would be extremely fluid as people moved from place to place seeking their fortune.

Fortunately, the rate books have been retained for posterity. Many of the earlier ones are available online at the Public Records Office of Victoria (PROV).¹ They give some insight into the Chinese presence in the area over the years up to the end of the 19th century, when numbers had declined significantly.

THE 1860S

The first available set of valuations was done in 1863, during which the properties of quite a few Chinese were rated. All of them were on Crown Land. A majority of these were in the four Chinese camps, two at Rushworth and two at Whroo. However, a number appeared at other locations spread across the local goldfields, such as Parramatta, Shellback, Billy Buttons, Profit and Scotchmen's Gullies. Others were located at or near Growlers, White Hills and Fontainbleu. Those that lived in these other places were usually the only Chinese listed there. Typically, their rated property would consist of a hut and a puddling mill or machine.

Occasionally, the main asset (in addition to a hut) was a garden. Ah Kong (probably Ah Chong) was listed as having a hut and garden on the Five Mile Creek, Moora, which received a valuation of 12 pounds. Rates of 12 pence were calculated per pound of valuation, which meant that Ah Kong was up for 12 shillings in rates for the year. Two storekeepers were listed in Whroo, Ah Chow (probably Ah Chou) and Ah Wee, whose property included "store and buildings" in each case. Their properties were only given valuations of 15 pounds, so it seems the buildings were insubstantial.

By the time the next lot of valuations was done in 1865, the valuers had got slack. Many of the ratepayers were simply listed as “Chinaman”, without any obvious effort to determine names. That is unfortunate, as it makes it harder to track the movements of people over the years.

SELECTION

From the early 1870s, there was a rapid influx of settlers taking up allotments known as selections. The number of ratepayers increased dramatically, going up five-fold from the mid-1860s, to 1880 when there were 2115 rated properties. Despite the increasing population, the number of Chinese inhabitants of Waranga was on the wane. This was partly due to the virtual end of alluvial mining, which prompted many to return to the country of their birth.

At the same time, the colonial governments made it harder for Chinese people to enter the country. If they left, even just for a holiday or to visit family, it was made more difficult for them to return. As the move towards federation gathered steam, the framework for the White Australia policy was put in place.

20th CENTURY

Few Chinese stayed in the area into the 20th century. By then, they were mostly market gardeners. Two that are well known were Ah Cheong and Ah Chong (no relation). Ah Cheong had a leasehold of 80 acres at Whroo. The valuation was 14 pounds (\$28) and the rate applied to that was still 12 pence per pound. Ah Chong had 40 acres, listed as Rushworth but more likely Moora. There appear to have been three other Chinese with market gardens in the Waranga Shire at this time, albeit operating on a smaller scale than the other two.

Only one Chinese appearing in the 1900 rate books was listed as a miner. He had a cottage at Rushworth as his main asset.

Sources: 1 PROV – search “Waranga Rates”. A shout out to Samantha Cerchi for suggesting this amazing source.

23 MAJOR LIFE EVENTS

Various sources record major life events such as births, marriages and deaths. These include the office of Births, Deaths and Marriages Victoria, originally set up after Victoria became a separate colony in 1851. Records established in the early years of the gold rush were not always comprehensive but using things like newspapers and cemetery records can help to create a clearer picture.

Most of the Chinese who came in search of gold arrived from the mid-1850s onwards, by which time the new Victorian government had put people and infrastructure in place to record births, deaths and marriages. However, it would have been hard to cover the whole state at a time of immense upheaval. Newspapers were well established in the cities but not in country towns like Whroo and Rushworth at that time. The first Rushworth Cemetery, south of the town, dates from 1853, while the Whroo cemetery was gazetted in 1860. Early record keeping could be patchy. As a result, what follows does not provide a complete picture.

BIRTHS

There were not many births of people of Chinese descent in the early days of the gold rush. Firstly, there were comparatively few women on the goldfields. Also, the vast majority of the Chinese men who came to the rushes were not accompanied by wives or other women.

Births that did occur often resulted from relationships between Chinese men and European women. Some of the early recorded births are those of the children of Ah Cheong (later known as Luke) and Ellen (or Helen) Donovan. Their seven children were all born at or near Whroo in the 1870s and 1880s, although two do not appear to have been recorded with the BDM office of the day. For two others, the name is misspelt Ah Choeng. On the birth records Ellen gave her previous surname as Anderson, although in she used the name Donovan for her marriage record.

MARRIAGE

As previously stated, marriages of Chinese men were uncommon in the local area in the latter part of the 19th century. If they married European women, the couple was often subjected to prejudice. The Ah Cheongs have already been mentioned. "Charles" Ah Ping married an Annie McDonald on 15 March 1889. Charles was a market gardener operating from a rateable 10 acre property on Crown Land in the parish of Moora.¹ There was also a woman who gave her name as Elizabeth Loug, who was living in the Chinese camp at Main Gully, Rushworth in 1910 when she was a witness at an inquest. However, it is not clear whether she was married to a Chinese man.

Even rarer than marriages to European women were marriages between two Chinese people, as very few Chinese women came out to Australia. Charles Robinson, editor of the Waranga Chronicle, reported on one such wedding in the local paper. The groom's name was Cheong Ah Lick, with his wedding to a 19 year old bride attended by many Chinese people. "Their enthusiasm, so evinced by the consumption of whiskey and the destruction of crackers, was boundless." Robinson continued in a mocking tone "The beauteous bride, o'er whose raven locks have passed, whose bright eyes so recently illumined our darkness, whose silvery laugh has yet to echo in our ears, left for town with her moon-faced groom, on Tuesday, in a cabbage cart."² Such casual racism was common in those days.

DEATHS

The major event that most commonly occurred for Chinese people in the Waranga area through the 19th and into the 20th century was their death. A large majority of those who came to Australia seeking gold returned to China, but many stayed in the local area. As we have seen, some married and may have started families. Quite a few were single men who for one reason or another opted to stay in Australia.

Many of these worked in and around local towns. This may have been by choice if they had other friends still living locally and had found a way to make a living after the gold rush waned. Some of them were too poor to return to China: several were clearly destitute when they died, as evidenced by inquests into their deaths.

Sources: 1 BDMV and information supplied by Tracey Bons 31.5.2021; 2 Walkabout magazine 1.3.1968 p 30-1

24 CHINESE DEATH RITUALS

In Australia at present, there is a wide range of choices about what happens to you when you die. The actual rituals that take place can vary widely. Across China in the 19th century, there were also many variations, given that there was a much larger population, with broad ethnic and religious diversity. Consequently, rituals for Chinese immigrants who died in Australia took a variety of forms.

The Chinese immigrants would all have preferred to be buried in their home village back in China, close to kith and kin. There is a fear that if this does not happen, the spirit might become a lonely ghost wandering in a strange

and foreign land. However, bodily repatriation was an impossibility for most of those who died in Australia because of the cost that would have been involved in returning the coffin containing the remains by ship.

BURIAL

Something that most 19th century southern Chinese wanted was to be buried rather than cremated. There was a strong belief that cremation mutilates the body, having a disturbing effect on the afterlife. With burials, there are some differences compared to most Western funerals. For instance, the casket is generally open during the ceremony and up until the point of burial. Also, as the casket is lowered into the ground, mourners turn away from the grave site rather than watching the casket descend into the earth.

When a monument is erected, it is a footstone rather than a headstone. That is, the commemorative stone is placed at the foot of end of the grave with the mound behind the footstone. There is just one footstone in the Rushworth cemetery and one in Murchison. Footstones have curved tops rather than flat to discourage malignant spirits from settling there. Burial mounds are regarded as important and should not be flattened out as they were at Kangaroo Flat cemetery some years back, causing great consternation.

Interestingly, the colour that Chinese associate with death is white, as opposed to the black that Westerners usually associate with death. The deceased may be attired in a white robe and attendees at the funeral tend to wear plain white clothes. An exception is made when the deceased is over 80, where bright colours such as pink or red may be worn.

CEMETERY LAYOUT

Chinese cemeteries are laid out according to Feng Shui principles, as is the Chinese section at Bendigo cemetery. Elements included are trees (to represent the protective dragon and tiger), a guardian hill behind the graves, running water, and an entry defined by stone markers.

In Chinese cemeteries the tracks wind through the graves instead of following straight lines because bad spirits are thought to travel in straight lines. Pomelo trees are important features as the Pomelo is regarded as the Tree of Life.

Some cemeteries e.g. Bendigo and White Hills have burning towers. This is nothing to do with cremation. Paper gifts and offerings are burnt and transported by the smoke for use by the ancestors in the afterlife. Smoke from incense fulfils the same function.

ANCESTRAL TABLETS

When Chinese people die, an ancestral or spirit tablet is produced, which symbolizes the spirit of past ancestors. They usually contain details of the deceased, such as name, home village, age, date of death and perhaps some details of the person's life. They may be kept in a temple (joss house) where there is one, or at an altar in the home. They can be as simple as writing on a piece of paper or quite elaborate, made from materials that will last. In the case of the Chinese who died on the Waranga goldfields, lack of access to a joss house may have meant that they were placed at a home altar in a tent or hut of a relative.

It is thought that the soul is made up of three parts – one which stays with the ancestral tablet, a second that accompanies the deceased to the grave and a third that begins the journey to reach the next world. Ancestor worship and filial piety (respect for the elderly and ancestors) is central to most Chinese belief systems.

Reference: Talk on Chinese burial traditions and beliefs by Adrian Hem (Wan) at Bendigo Library 3.5.23

25 MURCHISON FOOTSTONE

Like Rushworth, Murchison cemetery has only one Chinese footstone. The only word recorded in the cemetery trust records is Toylock. This is problematic, because it could be interpreted in a number of ways e.g. one word (Toylock) being the name, or two words (Toy Lock) or the prefix Ah could have been used before one or both words as the surname.

We do not have a date of burial. On the footstone itself, there are nine Chinese characters which have not previously been translated. With the assistance of a researcher at the Golden Dragon Museum in Bendigo, Leigh McKinnon, an interesting story has emerged about Toy Lock. A market gardener called Toy Lock certainly had a long association with Murchison, but it seems that he is not buried in this grave. The most likely explanation is that Toy Lock originally purchased the grave site, but the burial is of someone else, possibly a relative.



TOY LOCK

From various records, it is “apparent that this Toy Lock was born c.1868/9 (in China) and arrived in Australia c.1887 as a young man.” It is unclear whether he came straight to Murchison, but by 1899 he was definitely there, as his vegetables won prizes at that year’s Murchison show, then again in 1902. Earlier stories have reported on the effect of floods on Chinese market gardeners, and in 1906 “the extensive garden of Toy Lock has been inundated, and he will be a heavy loser.”

In 1909 Toy Lock returned to China for a visit, indicating that he had achieved a measure of financial success through his gardening. At the time, he applied for and gained a Certificate of Exemption from the Dictation Test (CEDT), which would facilitate his return to Australia. After Federation, the Australian government had introduced the White Australia Policy and the Dictation Test was a way of precluding most Chinese from entering the country. The only exceptions were those who had lived here for some time before going overseas.

LONG TERM VICTORIAN RESIDENT

Toy Lock remained in Murchison until at least 1922, during which time he had two further visits to China in 1915 and 1921. During the Great War, he contributed to the war effort by supplying clothes for Belgian refugees.

Then it appears Toy Lock moved to the Wimmera, as he was a resident of Warracknabeal when applying for CEDTs for three further trips to China up to 1930. In 1939, at the age of 70 and still listed as a market gardener, he left Melbourne for China for a final time. Many Chinese people had very strong associations with the village of their birth, wishing to return there for their death. This may have been the case with Toy Lock.

AN EARLY DEATH

The person who is most likely buried in the grave at Murchison is Fung Sing, a 32 year-old labourer. A man of this name died in Murchison in March 1896. He had lived in Australia for two years, having left a family, including a 6 year old son in China. Perhaps he was seeking employment opportunities in Australia with a view to returning home after making some money. It is not clear whether he worked for Toy Lock.

Chinese characters on the footstone reveal that the grave is that of Choi (Toi) Fong Sing. The other characters denote that he came from Naam Chou village in Ning County. This county has been known as Toishan (or Taishan) since 1913 and is situated on the Pearl River Delta in Guangdong Province, south-eastern China. Many of the Chinese who came to the gold rushes in the Waranga area had come from this part of China.

There is a strong likelihood that Fung Shing had relatives from his local area living in Murchison when he arrived in Australia. Toy Lock could well have been one of them. Being an older relative, and an apparently prosperous market gardener, may have prompted Toy Lock to purchase the grave site in which Fung Sing is buried. The circumstances of the tragic early death, and its potential impact on Fung Sing's family back home, may also have contributed to the desire to memorialise his death appropriately with a footstone.

Source: Notes by Leigh McKinnon, Golden Dragon Museum 8.3.2023. Sincere thanks to Leigh for his assistance with this research.

26 RUSHWORTH FOOTSTONE

Many Chinese people were buried in local cemeteries in the latter part of the 19th century. Where there was a large Chinese population, in places such as Beechworth, White Hills, Bendigo and Castlemaine, the sections containing Chinese burials are extensive. There are a large number of footstones, and sometimes infrastructure such as a burning tower.

With a smaller Chinese population here, there is just one Chinese footstone in the Rushworth cemetery. It commemorates a man called Ah Chou (a name which has various other spellings). Back in 2009, Wim and Dorothy Rosenberg from Stanhope arranged for a translation of the Chinese characters on the headstone by a Chinese scholar, Dr Kok Hu Jin.¹



When translating from Chinese characters to English, there are all sorts of complications. For example, one Chinese character can have more than one meaning in English. There are also multiple variations in the Chinese language. The official dialect today is Mandarin, but even now 30% of Chinese speak other dialects. One of these is Yue (or Cantonese). Most of the diggers who came to the Waranga area were from Guangdong province, often referred to in gold rush days as Canton. However, even within Cantonese there are local dialects which can render speakers of two dialects unintelligible to each other.

AH CHOU

The headstone reveals that, like so many of his compatriots in the Waranga area, Ah Chou came from the Guangdong (Canton) province in south-eastern China. The district that he came from is known as Xinhui, which is not far from Macao and Hong Kong. There is a strong chance that the port of Hong Kong was Ah Chou's exit point when he left for Australia.

Unlike many European headstones in the cemetery, Ah Chou's footstone does not mention dates. The Rushworth Cemetery Trust

records also do not mention the date of burial, but a relative, "Thomas" Ah Chong was buried in the same grave in 1911.

Chinese people were rarely granted an obituary in the local papers. If so, it was usually only a couple of lines, even if the person had lived in the local community for decades. If an obituary did appear, it was usually not much more than a report on how the person died. Often, it did not even include a name.

Sadly, there was no obituary printed in local papers for Ah Chou, so we know little about his life. Some references suggest that he was a storekeeper at Whroo. There are other references to an Ah Chow (perhaps the same person) on the Whroo Cemetery Trust website and also in the Rushworth Chronicle, the latter stating that he was before the courts on occasions. The Chinese were required to have (and pay for) a residency ticket. If they could not produce a current ticket, they were in trouble with the law. This may have been the case with Ah Chou. There is no suggestion that Ah Chou was less than scrupulously honest in his regular business dealings.

There is an obituary for Ah Chou's relative "Thomas" Ah Chong, which states that as a "very old identity of Moora (he) was a very quiet old man and was well respected. He leaves a widow and large family to mourn his death." He had married Emma Branson in 1875. They had 8 children together and ran a market garden.

SECRET SOCIETY

At the top of Ah Chou's headstone is a circle, which Dr Kok suggested was a symbol representing "a blazing sun and is used to decorate the distinguished member of the Hung League."¹ The Hung League was also referred to as the Heaven-Earth-League, which was a secret society known in Chinese as Thian Ti Hwui.

A researcher at the Golden Dragon Museum in Bendigo has cast some doubt on this interpretation and an internet search does not reveal the symbol as one of significance for the Heaven-Earth-League. However, this does not necessarily mean that Dr Kok's interpretation is incorrect. Many Chinese who came to Australia were members of such societies, which have been likened in some quarters to Freemasonry, where ritual, secrecy and loyalty are regarded as important characteristics of members.

One of the main functions of the societies was to look after the members, who were often from the same clan and/or geographic region of China.

Sources: 1 Waranga News 22.10.2009 p 15; Other – Ancestry website

27 DEATHS FAR FROM HOME

In Chinese culture, most people wished to eventually return, or at least have their bodily remains returned to their home village. Of course, when you were nearly 6000 nautical miles from home, this was not always going to be possible. As a result, some of the Chinese immigrants to the local area in the 19th century ended up being cremated and/or buried here.

Rushworth, Whroo and Murchison cemeteries all have Chinese burials. At Rushworth, some Chinese burials may have taken place in the old cemetery off the Whroo road between 1853-61, but there are no records to confirm this. That cemetery was close to the Chinese camps in Main Gully.

The Cemetery Trust allocated some ground on the eastern boundary of the new cemetery, which was established in 1861. The Chinese section is the lowest point in the cemetery and subject to flooding, which says something about attitudes to the Chinese at the time. There is only one headstone, but a number of burial mounds. It is

virtually impossible to say how many Chinese and their descendants are buried in the cemetery, as there are almost certainly unrecorded graves. There are possibly between 20 and 30 burials there.

By the names on the cemetery register, Whroo cemetery records suggest there are at least 25 people with Chinese ancestry buried there. Others might not have been recorded. Like Rushworth, Murchison cemetery has just one Chinese headstone. The only information in the cemetery records is the name Toylock. There are Chinese characters on the headstone which may reveal some of the secrets behind the life and death of the grave's occupants.

Other deaths are recorded in newspapers, including in the excellent set of obituaries collected by Alan McLean and available on the Rushworth Cemetery Trust website. However, some of the names do not appear in cemetery records. This could be partly because there was so much variation in how names were recorded by different people.

CAUSES OF DEATH

There have been at least 16 inquests into the deaths of Chinese people in the Waranga area since 1856. The reports contain a wealth of information. Sometimes, interpreters were used to gain information from Chinese witnesses who knew the deceased.

Causes of death were many and varied. There was one apparent suicide, with four others dying in accidents. Of those, two died in horse and cart related accidents, which were fairly common in the 19th century. Another was killed in a mine cave-in. His name was A Yea, and the death was unusual in that he had been working with European miners at the time. Generally, the Chinese worked with their own countrymen. A fourth Chinese man, who was probably in his 60s, died of burns in 1882. He had multiple existing health problems before he died.

Most of the others died of various health problems. Often a doctor was sent for to confirm the cause of death, and more often than not, this was the mercurial Dr J V Heily. Sometimes Dr Heily went into great detail in his report, especially where there was evidence of opium use. In one case, he concluded the cause of death was opium poisoning i.e. an overdose. The question of opium use by the Chinese and others will be the subject of a later story.

Quite a few of the men who died from health problems were elderly. For instance, Cheong Hong was 89 when he died in 1910 with multiple health issues. He had been in Victoria for 55 years, placing his arrival around 1855. He was still living in the Chinese camp in Main Gully, Rushworth when he died. Some of the men appear to have been quite destitute when they died. Witnesses gave accounts of trying to be of assistance e.g. by providing food and seeking medical help for people when they were incapacitated. It was a sad and often lonely way to die, so far from home and kin.

Sources: Websites - Public Records Office Victoria – VPRS 24 Inquest Deposition Files, Whroo Cemetery Trust, Rushworth Cemetery Trust.

28 A LUCKY ESCAPE

Calvin Chong, one of the sons of "Tommy" and Emma Ah Chong of Moora who were mentioned in an earlier story, was lucky to survive an incident that took place on New Year's Day, 1888. It was every parent's worst nightmare scenario. As a four-year-old, Calvin had wandered away from home and got lost in the bush, which was full of old mineshafts. The family were out desperately searching for him.

Fortunately for him and his parents and siblings, a Mr Mullaney and friends from Rushworth were having a horse and gig drive through the bush west of Rushworth. “They were horrified to see what appeared to be the dead body of a child lying on an ant-hill and covered with ants.”¹ Calvin had walked about four miles (6.5 km) from home before he collapsed, exhausted.

“One of the (Mullaney) party jumped out and recovered what were at first thought to be the remains, but was delighted to find the little fellow was not dead. He was stripped of his clothing, and the ants brushed off him, and Mr Mullaney and his friends then drove the child to a splitter’s hut in the vicinity, to make inquiries.”¹ Soon after, there was a joyful reunion with family.

THE LIFE OF CALVIN

Calvin went on to live a long and productive life, dying as a 76-year-old bachelor in 1962 and being buried in the Rushworth cemetery. All of the Chong children were given European names. Although he was christened Calvin, he was better known as “Tommy”, the same moniker that had been adopted by his father. This may have been because he followed in his father’s footsteps as a market gardener at Moora.

When Ah Chong died in 1911, some of the family went over to Western Australia while Calvin and his brother Alfred continued growing vegetables at Moora. During World War 1, they donated vegetables as part of community fundraisers to provide support to such things as the soldiers’ “comfort fund” and the French Red Cross.² Calvin lived in Stanhope in the 1930s and ‘40s, continuing to pursue his career as a gardener until he retired into Rushworth, while Alfred worked as a wood cutter in the Rushworth forest.

THE MATRIARCH

After a brief sojourn in Western Australia, Emma came back to Victoria. In May 1914, she was thrown from a gig and broke her wrist.³ Accidents involving horse-drawn vehicles were common at the time. But Emma was made of tough stuff. Her father was a miner who seemed to be constantly on the move in the latter part of the 19th century. After Emma was born in Dunolly, the family moved through a succession of other mining towns – Ararat, Inglewood, Tarnagulla, Raywood, Kangaroo Flat and Sandhurst, before turning up in Whroo in the mid-1870s.

It would have caused something of a sensation in the local area when the teenage Emma married a Chinese gentleman more than twice her age. They probably experienced their fair share of racial discrimination as they started and raised their family. Some of the children went to the Moora South State School, with two of the boys serving in World War 1. More about them in a later story.

TO WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Emma spent the last part of her life living in Western Australia. She died in Perth in 1947 at the grand old age of 90 and is buried in the Anglican section of Karrakatta Cemetery. It is unclear whether she had any relatives living in Perth at the time. She had survived her Chinese husband “Tommy” Ah Chong by 36 years.

Following in her mother Elizabeth’s footsteps, who had 12 children over a 20-year period, Emma had 7 or 8 children of her own. The first two children, her only girls, sadly died in infancy. Then she lost her husband and son Walter in 1911. Despite those setbacks over the years, Emma survived as the matriarch of the extended Chong family.

Sources: 1 Ovens and Murray Advertiser 7.1.1888; 2 Murchison Advertiser, sundry dates; 3 Murchison Advertiser 22.5.1914; Other sources – Ancestry, NAA, AWM, WA BD&M and Trove websites

29 CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

Contemporary accounts suggest that the Chinese on the goldfields were generally law-abiding citizens. With the numbers involved, there were always going to be some offenders and disputes arising between various parties. Probably the most common offence was not paying the various taxes that applied only to Chinese miners, such as the residency tax. This may have been more a form of protest at an unjust tax than a crime per se.

A report in a local paper stated that "The Chinese, of whom there were many on the field, gave little trouble, but Hong Song, Ah Chow, Cong Too, and others of the fraternity were before the court on occasions, for failure to have a current resident's licence."¹ From 1855, the licence was one pound p.a., paid as well as the widely hated fee for a miner's right.

VICTIMS OF CRIME

The Chinese were more likely to be victims of crime, rather than the perpetrators. Sometimes this appeared to stem from racist attitudes held by some of the European miners. For example, an Irishman named James Ryan went berserk in the Chinese camp at Whroo in August 1860. He attacked many of the occupants, with seven being injured, some seriously. There were no police on hand to arrest Ryan, so a citizens' arrest took place. He escaped and attacked an innocent Chinese by passer. With the help of two Rushworth policemen and some of the Chinese, he was finally subdued and put in the lock-up.²

Children on the goldfields were sometimes influenced by the attitudes of their parents. At Whroo in 1867, "Stone throwing at Chinamen by mischievous young rascals is now becoming common, and several serious accidents have happened." For once, a local newspaper editor was sympathetic, recommending "their being summon(s)ed and the best punishment would be a sound flogging."³

Theft from the Chinese was not uncommon. Bushrangers were active on the main roads used by all diggers moving between the various goldfields. In 1857, two bushrangers held up and robbed several parties of people near the Campaspe River on the "Goulburn-road"⁴ (i.e. the road between Bendigo and Beechworth, passing through the Waranga goldfields and crossing the Goulburn at Murchison). One party was a group of Chinese from whom they stole 62 pounds (\$124), a huge sum at the time. The offenders were caught shortly afterwards at Amherst.

Another group of Chinese were "stuck up" by three bushrangers near Tait and Hamilton's Halfway House at Cornella and relieved of the gold they were carrying, along with other property. A mounted constable managed to single-handedly arrest the bushrangers soon afterwards, recovering property including "a massive gold ring which had been taken from a Chinaman, on which some ineffectual attempts had been made to erase some celestial characters engraved thereon."⁵ Constable Crofts proudly escorted his prisoners to the Rushworth lock-up.

FIRST SUSPECTS

In a culturally hostile environment, the Chinese were often considered to be the first suspects if a crime was committed. It was a similar situation to what is regrettably still sometimes seen today with so-called "African gangs", Aboriginals and other minority groups.

For instance, the Mclvor Times reported in 1864 that "The Chinese are suspected of stealing a bag of rice from Mr Baud's store"⁶ at Whroo, with no evidence to support the claim. In 1867, "spurious gold in being sold in Whroo in small quantities, supposed by Chinamen."⁷ (More about "spurious gold" in a later story) The following year,

after a burglary at Whroo, “a search was made amongst the Chinese tents...without success, and up to this time no clue has been obtained.”⁸ Targetting the Chinese first in searches not uncommon.

Much later, in 1887 at Murchison, there was a market garden about a mile (1.6 km) from the town run by Ah Hung and his unnamed brother. “By dint of hard work and economy for the last eight years” they had accumulated a substantial amount of cash (85 pounds or \$170) after investing heavily in “improvements and irrigation works.” Immediately, it was concluded that “a Chinese lately in their employ is suspected of having been the thief.”⁹

Sources: 1 Grant, Alan, article entitled Waranga – Epitome of Evolution in Walkabout magazine 1.3.1968; 2 Bendigo Advertiser 31.8.1860; 3 Bendigo Advertiser 26.11.1867; 4 Bendigo Advertiser 6.5.1857; 5 Mount Alexander Mail 16.12.1857; 6 Mclvor Times 23.9.1864; 7 Bendigo Advertiser 16.10.1867; 8 Bendigo Advertiser 21.2.1868; 9 Herald 11.2.1887

30 CHINESE COMMITTING CRIMES

Generally, the Chinese in the Waranga area were good citizens in that they only came up before the courts on a relatively small number of occasions. When they did, it was for a variety of misdemeanours and crimes, including non-payment of taxes and theft.

One of the Chinese shepherds working for William Gunn of the Waranga Park station was charged with killing a sheep, with intent to steal it (and possibly eat it). The unnamed man “had for some time been suspected of thieving practices.”¹ He got 3 months imprisonment in the Sandhurst gaol for his trouble.

There was an exciting incident in 1887, at the “hotel and store of Mr M Kearney, Noorilim.”² The premises was broken into by two Chinese men. Kearney was not home, but the female cook became aware of the intrusion and alerted another employee by the name of Tonkin. Tonkin loaded a double-barrelled shotgun and tried to bail up a man who was coming out of the front door. The offender fled. Tonkin unloaded both barrels at him as he escaped into the night, apparently unscathed.

As the other offender was trapped in the building, Tonkin guarded the door until more help arrived. A search of the premises revealed the other offender hiding inside. He gave his name as Ah Coon and had stolen jewellery, postage stamps and other property on his person. Other goods were near the door ready to be removed.

SPURIOUS GOLD

One of the more unusual charges laid was in relation to attempts to pass off “spurious” gold to shopkeepers. In 1865, Ah Chin “pleaded not guilty to an indictment charging him with selling a quantity of spurious gold to J H Collier, storekeeper at Whroo.”³ During evidence given at the court case, Thomas Benbow, the manager of the Bank of Victoria in High Street, Rushworth testified that he had examined the gold. It turned out to be mostly an alloy of copper and silver with some gold electroplated onto it.

At the time, gold was legal tender, being accepted by all traders at the appropriate exchange rate. Ah Chin had already been in gaol for a month when the case was heard. He copped another 14 days, with hard labour. In the newspaper reporting, there was no indication of the amount he received from Mr Collier at the time of the offence.

OTHER CRIME

Physical violence was uncommon, although on one occasion, a Chinese miner was charged with injuring a horse of a mining inspector. One of the roles of the inspectors was to collect taxes such as the residence tax, which only applied to the Chinese. Perhaps the inspector was a little over-zealous in performing his duties on this occasion.⁴

There were occasionally fights between people that finished up in court, quite often the result of a dispute over a mining claim. More often, this type of dispute was settled with violence on the spot, with Chinese miners generally losing out.

In 1871, Ah Wong was charged with attempting to stab Rushworth butcher Henry Hodgson with a knife.⁵ This was after Hodgson had thrown Ah Wong out of his shop for complaining about the poor quality of meat he was being offered. There was conflicting evidence, but the all-European jury was quick to find the defendant guilty and he was subsequently given a month in gaol with hard labour.

Even less common than the use of physical violence by Chinese against other miners were fights within the Chinese communities that resulted in court appearances. One exception was a fight in Mousey Gully in 1886 in which a Chinese man was stabbed by one of his compatriots with a small butcher's knife. The resulting wound under the ribs was about one and a half inches (4 cm) deep. Defendant Ah Yung (or Yong) was found guilty and sentenced to 18 months in gaol.

For more stories related to Chinese court appearances, see Alan McLean's books "Order in the Court!" and "100 Years of Mysteries in the Rushworth District." For more general information, chapter 2 of Alan's "A Colourful Chronicle of Challenges" is devoted to the Chinese.

Sources: 1 Bendigo Advertiser 23.8.1869 p3; 2 The Age 27.5.1887 p6; 3 Bendigo Advertiser 14.7.1865; 4 Bendigo Advertiser 28.4.1869; 5 Bendigo Advertiser 16.2.1871 p3

31 FRATERNAL SOCIETIES

Many of the Chinese men who came to the Waranga area during the gold rush era were members of fraternal societies. Westerners who did not understand the nature of the groups tended to refer to them as "secret" societies and hinted at links to organised crime. Even today, the Chinese triads are sometimes seen as spin-offs from these groups.

In fact, the societies were more about the mutual well-being and advancement of the members. Some commentators have suggested that they had similarities to the lodges that proliferated in Australia until comparatively recently. In those lodges, there were also elements of secrecy and detailed ritual in the performance of ceremonies, but at the time, people tended not to see the similarities. Later, some local societies of Chinese men morphed into European style lodges, some of which have survived to this day. The name "Chinese Masonic Society" was adopted locally early in the 20th century.

PAROCHIAL BASE

The membership of a particular Chinese society was usually associated with a geographic area of China. Many of the men who came to the Waranga area were members of Hung League or Heaven-Earth-League. The one Chinese headstone in the Rushworth cemetery indicates that Ah Chou, the person commemorated there, was a member of this group.

Hung League members mainly came from the south-eastern Chinese province of Guangdong (Cantonese people) and to a lesser extent, Fujian (Amoy people). More specifically, a large number of people came from the Pearl River delta – the See Yap area (which comprised four districts of Hoi Ping, San Wei, Toi Shan and Yian Ping) and the Sam Yap area (which included the districts of Nam Hoi, Poon Yee and Soon Tuk).¹

ROLE OF THE LEAGUE

One commentator has described the role of the league as follows - “Large numbers of Chinese labourers, finding themselves now in a foreign land, without relatives or acquaintances to turn to in times of need, swore oaths of brotherhood and joined the Hung League in order to undertake mutual aid activities to protect the economic rights and common interests of the Chinese and to oppose the oppression and discrimination of both the Western colonial government and the European settlers. Under normal circumstances, the Hung League arranged jobs for them, mediated their disputes, and assisted with the everyday difficulties of birth, old age, sickness and death and so on.”²

In other words, the Chinese immigrants were very good at looking after their mates, a concept very familiar within Australia given the emphasis placed on it by the Anzac legend. Way before Anzac, the Chinese were organised in such a way that it was less likely that individuals would slip through the net. There was care and compassion for all, especially those deemed to be most in need of assistance.

CO-OPERATION BETWEEN GROUPS

In China at the time of the Australian gold rushes, there was political turmoil. Sometimes the secret societies were operating in direct competition with each other politically. This could lead to violent clashes. In Australia, however, the different groups were more likely to co-operate to face dual threats from governments and from the wider community. As well, the local groups were less culturally and linguistically diverse than their counterparts in China.

With regard to dealing with government, the societies were a cohesive force and an avenue through which complaints could be made to government about legislation that discriminated against Chinese immigrants. However, they were also a way to express support for wider movements such as the campaign to remove the hated miner’s licence.

Political activities could be channelled through the headmen who were appointed in each Chinese camp. They in turn had contact with some of the wealthy individuals in Melbourne who were Hung League leaders and who had the ear of government. The highly respected businessman Kong Meng, mentioned in an earlier story, was one such person. (Incidentally, two of Kong Meng’s sons were keen to enlist in the AIF in World War 1)

Sources: 1 Golden Dragon Museum, Bendigo, leaflet (1991); 2 Shaoqing, Cai, On the Overseas Chinese Secret Societies of Australia, in NZ Journal of Asian Studies (June 2002) p40;

32 OPIUM USE

Some of the Chinese immigrants in the Waranga area were opium users. One of the many stereotypes trotted out by the press of the day referred to “opium dens” and the number of “depredations” attached thereto. At the same time, the writers tended to overlook the excessive use of alcohol by the European miners that was far more likely to result in violence and other crime.

Ironically, it was the British who had introduced opium to China. They had something of a monopoly on the worldwide opium trade in the 19th century and saw huge trading opportunities given the size of the Chinese population. Opium was being illegally imported into China by British merchants, particularly from about 1820. The Chinese government began to resist more strongly because of the impact on its citizens. Two wars were fought between the Chinese and British resulting in the latter securing their trading position along with other economic concessions.

One of the large centres for trading was the Guangdong region of south-eastern China. Many miners who came to Australia for the gold rush were from this area and were already opium users when they arrived. It may be that others took up the habit after they arrived, given the difficulties they faced living in this country.

OLDER MEN

There is not much reliable information about the extent of opium use during the halcyon days of the gold rush of the 1850s and early 1860s. It seems to have been fairly common, also providing a business opportunity for merchants and owners of establishments where the drug was used. Distribution may or may not have been under the control of the secret societies mentioned in the previous story.

Some of the men who remained in the Waranga area from the mid-1860s were regular users. It seems that many of those who were left, after most of their compatriots had gone, tended to be loners, often destitute. With no option of returning to their homeland, opium may have dulled the pain of their existence.

OPIUM POISONING DEATH

There is one account of a Chinese man who died of opium poisoning at Scotchman's Gully, Whroo in 1874. It was unclear whether this was an accident or perhaps an intentional overdose with a view to committing suicide. At the inquest into his death, his mate Young Hong said that Ah Hin was a poor man who "smoked opium more or less according to the money he made."¹ Ah Hin was apparently in very low spirits at the time of his death.

The venerable Dr J V Heily did an autopsy after the death and provided a graphic six-page deposition to the inquest, which was held at the Balaclava Hotel in Whroo. The good doctor had known the deceased prior to his death and, along with other witnesses, stated that Ah Hin had been a regular user for many years. On the day of his death, he had taken the opium in a liquid form rather than smoking. It was concluded that he had probably done so with suicidal intent.

Other deaths around this time were not caused by opium poisoning, although it was often noted at the inquest if the deceased had been an opium user.

VICTORIANA

Within the European community, there were also opium users. At the time, it was not an illegal drug. As well as taking the drug recreationally, as some of the Chinese did, others used it as a non-prescribed, cheap medicine known as Laudanum. Various other products like cough syrup also had an opiate base. Men, women and children used the medications regularly and purchases from chemists were not limited.² Cocaine was also readily available over the counter.

Towards the end of the 19th century, there was a growing awareness of the dangers of opium use. Medicinal use started to come under stricter controls and there were efforts to dismantle the opium trade.

No such efforts were made to control alcohol consumption, which along with tobacco tended to be the drug of choice of the Europeans who flocked to the area during the gold rush. Some of the Chinese also imbibed in alcohol.

Sources: 1 PROV File No 1874/590; 2 Historic UK website

33 CHINESE GAMBLERS

Gambling by Chinese immigrants was usually described in negative terms by the press of the goldrush era. Terminology included phrases such as “gambling dens”, “unlawful games” and “gang of Chinese gamblers”. The reality was that people of virtually all ethnic backgrounds engaged in gambling on the goldfields, of one form or another.

China had a long history of gambling. Chinese immigrants (before and during the goldrush) brought their own games with them, but also tried other games that were new to them. It is likely that some European miners reciprocated by trying games that the Chinese had introduced to them.

VICTORIAN ATTITUDES

Although gambling on horse-racing had been common in Victoria since European settlers arrived in numbers from the 1830s, and other forms of gambling (cards, dice etc) were tolerated, there was a lot of anti-gambling sentiment. Much of it came from Protestant clergy and moralists who thought that gambling constituted anti-social behaviour, was likely to water down the work ethic and would inevitably lead to a degradation of moral values.

Government felt under pressure to regulate gambling, in part to try and ensure that any gambling that did occur was carried out in a fair and equitable way. In 1852, the infant Victorian Government introduced the wonderfully named Act to Restrain the Practice of Gambling and the Use of Obscene Language. At the same time, The Vagrant Act prohibited gambling on “unlawful games” and in public places. Anyone arrested for doing so could come under what was then a broad definition of a vagrant and be fined or gaoled.

In part, this legislation was used to vilify and harass the Chinese. Some of the so-called “unlawful games” were those that had a long history of being played by Chinese people. Newspapers from the last half of the 19th century contain a litany of stories about raids on Chinese gambling “dens”. In the 1860s, police were sometimes paid bonuses for arresting Chinese gamblers and those running such institutions. No such problems for horse-racing, which was controlled by the ruling classes of the day.

TYPES OF GAMBLING

One of the oldest card games much enjoyed by the Chinese diggers was Fan Tan, also known as “Sevens”. In the game, the object is to get rid of all your cards first. The player who does so wins the pot. Players place a chip in the pot at the start of the game, and each round where they cannot make a move (i.e. place a card).

Faro was another old card game that was once played regularly, but these days in casinos has been replaced by poker. In 1865, a raid in the Little Bourke Street Chinatown precinct led to 25 men being charged with playing a version of Faro, which was illegal at the time. They were each fined 10/-, with the alleged organisers copping £5 fines.

There were also variations of lotto games, such a Pah-ah-pu. In this game, the player buys a ticket with 85 printed Chinese characters, on which they mark ten. Pre-determined prizes are given to anyone who selects at least 5

correct characters, with prizes rising progressively for those with 6-10 correct characters. Other Chinese games such as Mahjong and Pai Gow (the latter using 32 dominoes as part of the game) could also be used as a basis for betting.

These days, apart from some gaming that occurs in casinos in Macau and Hong Kong, gambling is largely banned in China. No doubt it still occurs at the local level as a form of entertainment.

WARANGA GOLDFIELDS

Although there is little newspaper coverage of Chinese gambling in the local area during the goldrush, it is likely that it would have been a common occurrence. Whether this amounted to addiction, which was a generalised claim made in some newspapers, is debatable. In any case, it did not seem to affect the work ethic of most Chinese diggers, who were generally considered to be most hard-working in their pursuit of gold.

Similarly, in a male-dominated society with few other sources of entertainment, the European diggers were drawn to different forms of gambling. More often than with the Chinese, this gambling would be accompanied by alcohol consumption, with its potential to fuel arguments and possible violence.

Sources: 1 Argus 25.10.1865

34 RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY

As a group, the Chinese miners on the Waranga goldfields were probably more spiritual and active in remaining connected to their religion than the European miners. They obviously had a spiritual connection to their homes in China which meant that many of them returned home as the returns from alluvial mining diminished. If they happened to die in Australia, it was fervently hoped that their remains would be returned to their place of birth. This was not always possible because of financial and other constraints.

These days, although Chinese is an atheist state, the Chinese government officially recognises five religions – Buddhism, Taoism, Catholicism, Protestantism and Islam. The latter three only have tiny congregations today. Less than 3% of the population are members of these religions.

RELIGIOUS PRACTICE

According to Wikipedia, “Confucianism and Taoism (Daoism), later joined by Buddhism, constitute the “three teachings” that have shaped Chinese culture. “There are no clear boundaries between these intertwined religious systems, which do not claim to be exclusive, and elements of each enrich popular or folk religion.”

Briefly, Confucianism is a philosophy, which provides guidelines for social mores and relationships between people and entities. Taoism is more concerned with the spiritual side of people’s lives and the nature of the universe. Buddhism, which was introduced from India, is a philosophy based on personal development and the acquisition of deep knowledge.¹

Clearly, this is a fairly simplistic overview of what is a complex array of principles and practices that have developed over millennia and helped to make China the country it is today.

IN WARANGA

The most obvious symbol of religious focus in a community was the “Joss House”, similar to the one in Bendigo. A joss house is defined as a Chinese temple or shrine where an idol or idols are worshipped, similar to churches in

the Christian religion. Larger towns on the goldfields had joss houses, but there does not seem to be any record of one on the Waranga goldfields. It is possible that there were communal non-permanent places of worship where people gathered on a regular basis e.g. in tents or bark huts.

With all the Chinese men in the district, there would have been some who were able to minister to their needs, even though it may not have been in an official capacity. Similarly for the Europeans, there were people within the ranks of the miners who could hold services of sorts. Travelling clergymen also provided some services. As well as worshipping at a communal facility, many of the Chinese men would have small shrines in their own tents and huts.

GODDESS OF MERCY

At the Golden Dragon Museum in Bendigo there is a temple known as the Guan Yin Temple, consecrated in 1996. Guan Yin is the Chinese Goddess of Mercy. Although she is a Buddhist goddess, there are many different “incarnations and manifestations of Guan Yin’s divinity.”² She was the first mother Goddess figure in Chinese religion and consequently is highly revered and worshipped in many countries as “the protector of families and the household, especially women and children.”²

Worship is often associated with making offerings to the Gods, which is why you will see gifts of flowers, fruit and other food placed in the temples. Prayers are accompanied by the burning of incense, which is symbolic in that the smoke is meant to carry those prayers to heaven.

In order to soak up a little of richness of Chinese religion and spirituality, a trip over to the Golden Dragon Museum, Yi Yuan Gardens & Guan Yin Temple complex and the Joss House is recommended. In keeping with the theme, the Buddhist stupa at Myers Flat, Bendigo – the Great Stupa of Universal Compassion - is also well worth a visit.

Sources: 1 <https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/chinese-religions-and-philosophies>; 2 Golden Dragon Museum leaflet entitled Guan Yin – The Goddess of Mercy

35 CHINESE NEW YEAR

In this area, we tend to only hear about Chinese New Year through news stories of events held in larger centres like Bendigo and Melbourne. However, it is an important annual event for Chinese people everywhere. With traditions going back around 3500 years, New Year in China is a time for families to return to their home villages for reunions, feasting and celebration. The family reunion dinner is the highlight.

Chinese New Year is celebrated over a 15-day period, traditionally ending with a lantern festival. This usually incorporates lion and dragon dances. There is plenty of colour (red), bright lights and noise, the latter provided by drums and firecrackers. One of many legends about Chinese New Year says that this is designed to scare off monsters that would attack villages at the start of new year.

Numerous local Victorian newspaper reports of Chinese New Year celebrations on the goldfields suggest that the European residents were only too pleased to join in the celebrations by purchasing and setting off fireworks. These were hard to come by from any sources other than the Chinese. Anyone old enough to remember Guy Fawkes Night (November 5) in Australia will appreciate the amount of pleasure (and potential danger) that this could bring to people of all ages. How good was it to blow stuff up?

TIMING

Chinese New Year always begins with the new moon that falls between 21 January and 20 February, so the date varies each year. In 2024, the new moon was on February 10, while the previous year it was on 22 January. Because the date is associated with a phase of the moon, Chinese New Year is sometimes referred to as the Lunar New Year.

Chinese astrologers divide up star signs by years, whereas Western astrologers use months (Gemini, Pisces etc) when the stars/constellations are at their zenith. Each year in the Chinese system is associated with a particular animal. There are 12 different ones, with each repeated every 12 years. 2024 is the year of the Dragon, which last occurred in 2012 (then 2000, 1988 etc).

As we know, Western astrologers provide horoscopes, as well as associating certain personality traits with certain star signs. The Chinese do the same. It depends on the year of your birth. Anyone born in the year of the Dragon is said to be charismatic, intelligent, confident, powerful, naturally lucky and gifted. They strive to do everything to the best of their ability.

You might like to compare your supposed personality characteristics under the two systems. Don't be surprised if you find some contradictory information.

GOLDFIELD CELEBRATIONS

It is hard to find stories about Chinese New Year celebrations on the Waranga goldfields. A brief mention appeared in the Waranga Chronicle in January 1879, the tone a tad sarcastic. "The Chinaman's New Year's festival was commenced on Tuesday last and a considerable amount of (gun)powder was wasted in the shape of crackers in its inauguration." ²

However, because of the long-standing traditions, it is certain that celebrations would have taken place every year, and anywhere that the Chinese congregated in any number, such as Rushworth and Whroo (and later Graytown). It was probably a somewhat melancholy time for the Chinese, as they would be missing family and friends who were so far away.

The Chinese on the Waranga goldfields would lack the resources to stage a major event, although fireworks and other paraphernalia could have been obtained by local Chinese stores, having been transported up to the area by Chinese merchants in Melbourne. Some of the locals may have travelled to places with much larger Chinese populations, like Castlemaine or Bendigo, to participate in celebrations there.

Celebrations would have tailed off in the early part of the 20th century as the effects of the White Australia policy became apparent and the remaining Chinese became more isolated. However, with a current Chinese diaspora in Australia of well over a million people (5.5% of the population), vibrant Chinese New Year celebrations are now a significant and enriching cultural event for our multicultural society. Guo Nian Hao! (Happy New Year!)

36 LONG SERVING TEACHER

A long-serving (and maybe long-suffering) teacher with the Victorian Education Department and local resident, Dorothy ("Dot") Jean Salter, was of Chinese-Australian heritage. When she taught humanities subjects at Rushworth, some of the students called her "Ching" or "Old Ching", reflecting the casual racism that was unfortunately still prevalent in the area in the 1960s and early 1970s. Dot retired in 1971 after 27 years of service at Rushworth Higher Elementary School, which later became Rushworth High School.

During her time at Rushworth, Dot rose through the ranks to become the Senior Mistress. Some of the girls from the '60s will remember her measuring their hemlines so that they were no more than the maximum height above the knee. The introduction of the mini-skirt had resulted in quite a few hemlines going up. There are many, many other stories about Dot, but suffice it to say that her willingness to respond to any provocation simply inspired some students to keep coming up with things that would get a rise!

She travelled on the Stanhope South bus with the students, where she ruled the roost, as she did not have a driver's licence until later in life. According to one former student who travelled on the bus and shall remain nameless, "After gaining her licence, she would sedately follow the bus into the Rushy schools. But one morning, Mrs Salter got a rush of blood and decided to overtake the bus and beat it to Rushy. Unfortunately, this manoeuvre at the Zegelin Road intersection resulted in her steering wheel locking up as she turned into Zegelin Road. Her car, slowly turning in tight circles, broke through the adjoining dairy farmer's boundary fence and scattered cows in all directions. All the children on the bus were beside themselves with laughter."

CHINESE-IRISH HERITAGE

Dot's grandmother Bridget was an Irish lass born in Limerick in 1841 before coming out to Australia with her parents Thomas and Margaret Ryan. The family appear to have been working in the goldfields of northern Victoria. That could be where she met her future husband, known later as "James" Amoy.

James was a native of the island now known as Xiamen, just off the south-east coast of China in Fujian province. They had their first child together prior to getting married in a Christian church in Castlemaine in 1862. Presumably, James had migrated to Australia in search of gold, as the family moved around various goldfield towns as their next three children were born.

By the late 1860s they had settled in a small town then known as Sago Hill (now Haddon), a few kilometres south-west of Ballarat. Their remaining nine children were born in that vicinity.

ENTREPRENEUR

While Bridget was mothering her growing family, James was developing his business interests. He engaged in mining as a tributor, which meant that he supplied certain elements required for the business in return for a percentage of the profits. James organised Chinese labourers and supplied some of the equipment required in the mining ventures. Not everything went smoothly. He was attacked with an axe by miner Chun Goon in 1882 in a dispute over the purchase of mining equipment.

James survived and branched out into storekeeping in Haddon. Given the size of the town, it was possibly the only store in town. In the mid-1880s, James became naturalised. He also purchased one of the two Haddon pubs, the British Queen Hotel, from countryman Ah Tan for the sum of 101 pounds and 10 shillings. The pub was delicensed by the Licensing Reduction Board in 1908, but James had already relinquished the ownership by then.

DOT'S MUM

Dot's mother, Ellen May Moy, was born in Haddon in 1882, the eleventh of Bridget and James' children. When she was only 10, something went awry in her parents' marriage. James had allegedly left Bridget, who still had six of her children to care for but had no means of supporting them. The case finished up in court, where James was given an order to provide maintenance of one pound and ten shillings per week.

Ellen later married Hugh Featherstone, and Dot was the first of their three children, born in 1907 at Ballarat East. In turn, Dot married school teacher Edgar John Salter in Bendigo in 1931. The family moved to Rochester later in the 1930s and then to the Waranga area, where they had property at Stanhope South. Dot remained in the area after the death of her husband in 1955, who she outlived by 50 years.

Sources: Trove and Ancestry websites

37 WAR SERVICE

Two of the boys of “Tommy” Ah Chong and his wife Emma (mentioned in a previous story) served overseas with the AIF in World War 1. This helps to illustrate that the men and women who served came from quite diverse backgrounds. The image of the “bronzed ANZAC” is largely a myth.

Arthur Chong (No 8289), who was a sapper in a Tunnelling Company, enlisted from Western Australia. He and his brother James had headed west around the time of the death of their father and brother Walter in Victoria in 1911. Emma, their mother, was with them for a time in WA, before returning to Victoria.

TUNNELLING COMPANY

The fact that Arthur was recruited into a Tunnelling Company suggests that he may have had mining experience, although he listed his occupation as farmer on enlistment. With the war raging on the Western Front locked into grinding trench warfare, tunnellers were an important part of the AIF. They were engaged in all sorts of earthworks, including digging tunnels under enemy lines with a view to positioning explosives prior to attacks.

Arthur was 34 when he enlisted in Perth at the end of April 1917. It was a brave move, considering the Allied forces were losing an enormous number of men on the killing fields of the Western Front at the time. After basic training, he was assigned to reinforcements for the Tunnelling Companies and came back to Victoria for further training. He eventually sailed for the UK via the Suez Canal in November.

Because of various illnesses and training, Arthur never made it to the front line. Before he was discharged as medically unfit in July 1919, he met and married Englishwoman Lizzie Jane Gillman in the Registry Office at Bristol. They were living in Bristol on his discharge. Apparently, he lived in England after the war.

GUNNER AND DRIVER

Arthur’s younger brother James was also living in Western Australia prior to the Great War. Working as a sleeper hewer at Greenbushes in the forests of south-western WA, he signed up relatively early in October 1915 at the age of 22. Perhaps he had picked up his skills in the Rushworth forest? Like his older brother, James took a circuitous route to Europe after some issues with illness, namely sexually transmitted disease.

James (No 22081) had trained as a gunner in the artillery but was later appointed as a driver for the 4th Artillery Column. He finally made it over to France in May 1917 but his time at the front line was short-lived. Two and a half weeks after arriving at the Western Front, James was severely wounded. He was shipped back to England for treatment for wounds to the left shoulder, arm and chest. His war service was effectively over. Although he recuperated from his wounds, he was deemed unfit for further active service and sent back to Australia. He lived in Western Australia on his return, but clearly his sleeper hewing days were over. James died in West Perth in 1956.

WORLD WAR 2

James Chong signed up again in the second World War for home service. By then too old (50) for active service, he put in another two and a half years of service for his country. At the time of his enlistment, he was at the euphoniouly named Booloogooroo Station in the Carnarvon district of Western Australia.

Back in Victoria, the Cheong family of William and Caroline (nee Gilbert) provided a number of volunteers, including Albert (V331265) who served on the home front, pretty close to home. At the time of his discharge, he was a Sapper at the No 3 POW and Internment camp near Waranga Basin. Two of Albert's brothers, Arthur (VX126780) and George (VX116530) served overseas.

These three members of the Cheong family were the grandsons of "Luke" Ah Cheong, the progenitor of the family in the Waranga area, and Ellen/Helen (nee Donovan). By the time of the Second World War, the family was largely assimilated into the Australian population and made a significant combined contribution to the war effort. Ellen lived to see this contribution and would have been justifiably proud.

Sources: AWM, DVA and NAA websites

38 ON THE KOKODA TRACK

Images and stories from Kokoda Track might have you believe that Australian soldiers, all of good British stock, took on and ultimately beat back the invasion by Asiatic hordes in Papua New Guinea during World War 2. However, some of the Australians were from other ethnic backgrounds, including Asian. Indeed, George Cheong from the local Waranga area and whose grandfather was Chinese, was one of the defenders on the Kokoda Track.

George was born in Rushworth during World War 1, to parents William and Caroline. He grew up at Whroo and lived there prior to World War 2. Sadly, his father William died in 1944 while George was on active service and never got to rejoice in George's homecoming at the end of the war. He is buried in the Rushworth cemetery.

Later Sergeant George William Cheong (VX116530), George had initially enlisted at Rushworth in April 1941 at the age of 24. At first, he was in the militia i.e. civilian forces that were not part of the regular army, and only supposed to serve in Australia. His battalion went to Papua New Guinea in late 1941, as PNG was deemed to be part of Australian territory at the time. Later, he signed on to be part of the regular army at Iloilo, Papua, just before his unit went up the Kokoda Track to meet the invaders.

Like many local men, he was a member of the famous 39th Battalion, which became the first unit to front the Japanese advance around Kokoda in July 1942. Other locals who were in the battalion included Charles Clarke, Joe Baker, Roy Nutt, Jack Lloyd and John McLeod (all of Rushworth), George Saunders and John Taylor (Girgarre), Aub Downing and George Dunster (Stanhope) and several from Tatura including Jack McPhail. Many of these men belonged to B Company of the 39th.

With the Japanese threat building, the 39th Battalion was ordered up the Kokoda Track along with another militia battalion. After the Japanese landed on the north coast of PNG in late July, they moved quickly to try to seize the strategic town and airfield at Kokoda. It quickly became clear that Kokoda was indefensible, and the 39th started a strategic withdrawal back along the track towards Port Moresby.

At Isurava, site of the first major battle on the track, the militia battalion had been reinforced by two experienced regular army battalions. Eventually they were relieved as more troops arrived. Later in the war, George worked with the Australian New Guinea Administration Unit before his eventual discharge in February 1945. Shortly

before that, he married his sweetheart Myee Aileen Bryant at St John's church in Ashfield, NSW. His wife had also served her country in the Australian Women's Army Service.

After the war, George and Myee farmed for a while at Moora East, then lived in Kyabram where George was a mail contractor and bus proprietor. The couple later moved to Macleod, a north-eastern suburb of Melbourne where George died in 1989. He is yet another person not recognised on the Rushworth war memorial's plaque which purports to remember all those locals who enlisted and served overseas in WW2.

George's brother Arthur (VX126780) served for over two years (August 1943- October 1945) at Adelaide River, just over 100 km south of Darwin, as a truck driver. The Australians and Americans had set up a major army base there and an airfield at nearby Batchelor. Arthur's unit was 1 Australian BIPOD – Bulk Issue of Petrol and Oil Depot. The airfield was bombed by the Japanese in November 1943, the last of over 200 air raids on northern Australia during the war. It is unclear whether Arthur was there at the time.

Another brother, Albert Edwin Cheong (V331265) served on the home front, including at the No 3 and 4 Internment camps off Zegelin Road, north of Rushworth. Each camp contained up to 1000 civilians who were interned because they were foreign nationals from countries like Italy and Germany, and therefore deemed to be the enemy.

The Cheong family made a significant contribution to Australia's war effort during World War 2. These three boys were just some of the many Australians of Asian descent who helped thwart Japan's intentions. Perhaps there was an element of retribution involved, as the Imperial Japanese Army had already carried out many depredations in China in the 1930s.

APPENDIX A: CHINESE PEOPLE IN THE WARANGA AREA

This is a list of people whose names were encountered during research for the Celestial Connections stories. It is not a comprehensive of all the Chinese people who came to the Waranga area.

<u>NAME#</u>	<u>EURO NAME</u>	<u>SOURCE*</u>	<u>DATE/YEAR</u>	<u>NOTES</u>
A Chong		PROV	1863	Ratepayer at Growlers - Hut and puddling machine
A Chong		PROV	1863 & 1865	Ratepayer at White Hills - Huts and puddling machine. 1865 listed as "Ah" Chong
A Chung		WC	1861	Died aged 35; Native of Hong Kong
A Cong		PROV946	1865	Coroner's Inquest; Apparent suicide
A Sam		JH p117	1859	Interpreter at Whroo protest meeting
A Son		PROV946	1865	Witness in coroner's inquest into death of A Cong
A Wing		PROV	1858	Coroner's Inquest; d.Three Mile Waterholes, Cornella @ 21
A Wing		PROV	1863	Rushworth Ratepayer - Waranga Roads District - Huts and puddling machines
A Yea		PROV360	1858	Coroner's Inquest; d.Rushworth in mine cave-in
Acou	Charles	RCEM 13/?	1900	Buried at RC
Ah Cheong	George	WC/WCS3-10	1886	Died - aged 19 months
Ah Cheong	Luke	WC/WCS3-10	1902	Died - aged 66
Ah Cheong		PROV	1900	Ratepayer at Whroo. Valuation 10 pounds. Gardener
Ah Cheong		PROV	1900	Ratepayer at Whroo. Valuation 14 pounds. 80 acres. Gardener
Ah Cheong		GA	9.5.1884	Report of horse runaway. Ah Cheong (Chung?) puddler at Growlers
Ah Cheong Lick		RC		Chinese wedding
Ah Chew	Albert	VBDM	1878	Born Rushworth; son of "Charles" Ah Chew and Louisa Yates
Ah Chew	Charles	WC	1883	Father of Henry who died as infant
Ah Chew	George	VBDM	1880	Born Rushworth; son of "Charles" Ah Chew and Louisa Yates
Ah Chew	Henry	WC	1883	Died at 8 months; son of "Charles" Ah Chew and Louisa Yates
Ah Chew		WCS3-9	1863	Store owner Whroo
Ah Chin		BAD	14.7.65	Charged with selling spurious gold at Whroo
Ah Chock		RCTW	d.1885	Obituary
Ah Chong	Mr (Thomas)	RCTW	1911	Obituary - Moora gardener
Ah Chong	Thomas	RCTW/ANC	d.1911	Obituary; b.Canton; m.Emma Branson 1875; 8 children
Ah Chong	Thomas	RCEM 13/19	1911	Gardener at Moora; d.26.4.1911; buried with Ah Chou at RC
Ah Chong		PROV	1900	Ratepayer at Rushworth - 40 acres. Value 18 pounds. Gardener
Ah Chou		RCEM 13/19		Store keeper at Whroo; Headstone at RC
Ah Chou		PROV	1865	Ratepayer - Store and dwelling Long Gully Whroo
Ah Chow		WM	1.3.1968	Before the courts on occasions
Ah Chow		WC		Storekeeper at Whroo
Ah Chow		PROV	1863	Ratepayer Profit Gully - Log Hut

Ah Chow		PROV	1863	Ratepayer at Whroo - Store and buildings
Ah Coon		AGE	27.5.1887	Caught during a burglary at Noorilim hotel and store
Ah Coon		PROV	1863	Ratepayer at Scotchmen's Gully - Huts and machine
Ah Fat		PROV	1863	Rushworth Ratepayer - Waranga Roads District - Huts and puddling machine
Ah Fat		PROV	1863	Ratepayer at Fontainbleu - Hut and puddling machine
Ah Fat		PROV	1865	Ratepayer No 2 Camp Main Gully - slab hut and machine
Ah Fong		PROV	1863	Rushworth Ratepayer - Waranga Roads District - Hut and garden
Ah Fong		PROV	1865	Ratepayer No 2 Camp Main Gully - Hut and garden
Ah Foo		WC	1891	Died aged 56; Native of Canton
Ah Foun		PROV	1863	Ratepayer at Long Gully Whroo - hut and puddling mill x 2
Ah Foun		PROV	1865	Ratepayer at Scotchmen's Gully - Huts and machine
Ah Fung		GC	1869	Buried at Graytown cemetery. Born 1816. Died 25.4.1869
Ah Gec		PROV	1865	Ratepayer No 2 Camp Main Gully - hut
Ah Gong		WCHR	2.5.1879	Licenced waggoner transporting Chinese to Beechworth
Ah Goui		WCHR	3.2.1881	Blind hawker reported attacked
Ah Gow		KU	20.9.89	Death reported near Murchison on 17.9.89
Ah Gow		PROV207	1879	Witness at Coroner's Inquest into death of Yee Geen (employee)
Ah Hee		VBDM	1889	Died at Rushworth aged 69
Ah Hing		PROV590	1874	Coroner's Inquest; d.Whroo of opium poisoning
Ah How		MT	31.8.1860	Injured in assault by Irish miner at Whroo
Ah Hung		MT	31.8.1860	Injured in assault by Irish miner at Whroo
Ah Hung		MH	11.2.1887	Market gardener at Murchison
Ah Hung		GA	16.5.1884	Gardener at Murchison charged with shooting a horse
Ah Hup		PROV457	1865	Coroner's Inquest; d.Rushworth of debility
Ah Kar	M	RCEM 13/55		Buried at RC; no date in records
Ah Kar		PROV	1900	Gardener and ratepayer at Rushworth. Valuation 12 pounds
Ah Kar or Kah	William	RCTW/PROV	d.1916	Obituary; witness in inquest PROV1910/431
Ah Khan	Jimmy	AGE	29.4.1901	56 yo market gardener at Elmore run over by heavy wagon
Ah Kong		PROV	1863	Ratepayer at Five Mile Ck Moora - Hut and garden. Ah Chong?
Ah Leong		WC	1863	Died aged 29; Native of Canton
Ah Let		MT	31.8.1860	Injured in assault by Irish miner at Whroo
Ah Lin		WC	1866	Died aged 50
Ah Ling		PROV	1863	Ratepayer Billy Buttons Gully - Log Hut
Ah Ling		PROV	1863 & 1865	Whroo ratepayer - hut and puddling mill
Ah Lipp	Charles	SW	1859-62	Miner on "Goulburn" diggings; m Mary Downey at Castlemaine 1883
Ah Mow		MT	31.8.1860	Injured in assault by Irish miner at Whroo
Ah Ning		WC	1874	Died aged 38; Native of Canton
Ah Owen		WC/PROV196	1866	Coroner's Inquest; d.Whroo of heart disease @ 44
Ah Ping	Ada May	WC	1894	Died at 7 weeks; daughter of "Charles" Ah Ping & Annie (King)
Ah Ping	Charles	VBDM, TB		m.Annie McDonald 1889; Market gardener 1890
Ah Poo		PROV724	1874	Coroner's Inquest; d.Whroo of bowel strangulation
Ah Pow		WC	1874	Died aged 36; Native of Canton

Ah Rat		PROV	1865	Ratepayer - hut and machine at Fontainbleu
Ah Sing		PROV431	1910	Living in Main Gully
Ah Sing		VBDM	1910	Died Rushworth aged 82
Ah Sing		PROV	1900	Ratepayer at Rushworth on Crown Land. Gardener.
Ah Sing		PROV	1900	Gardener and ratepayer at Murchison. Valuation 4 pounds
Ah So		RCTW	d.1893	Obituary
Ah Soon		MT	31.8.1860	Injured in assault by Irish miner at Whroo
Ah Sue		PROV174	1891	Coroner's Inquest; d.Rushworth of natural causes; named as Ah Tue in BAD 10.2.91
Ah Thom		PROV378	1879	Coroner's Inquest; d.Snake Gully of heart disease; 60+
Ah Tim		PROV	1865	Ratepayer at Nuggetty Gully - hut and machine
Ah Toy		WC/PROV488	1871	Coroner's Inquest; d.Whroo of apoplexy
Ah Wee		WCS3-9	1863	Store owner Whroo
Ah Wee		PROV	1863	Ratepayer at Whroo - Store and buildings
Ah Wic		PROV	1865	Ratepayer - Dwelling at Whroo
Ah Wing		WC/PROV203	1870	Coroner's Inquest; d.Whroo of heart disease
Ah Wing		PROV	1863	Ratepayer Profit Gully - Hut and Puddling Mill
Ah Wing		PROV	1863 & 1865	Ratepayer Whroo - Hut and Puddling Mill
Ah Wing		PROV	1865	Ratepayer - 5 huts opp Mr Thompson's at White Hills
Ah Yoon		VBDM	1889	Died at Rushworth aged 64
Ah Young		VBDM, TB	1893	b.1842; d.1893 at Rushworth aged 51
Ah Young		PROV	1863	Ratepayer in Parramatta Gully - Hut and Puddling Machine
Bo Fong		PROV857	1862	Witness in coroner's inquest into death of Kong Tong (his cousin)
Cheong	Ada	WC/WCS3-10	1959	Died - aged 84
Cheong	Adam	RCEM13/8	1988	
Cheong	Arthur (Dick)	RCEM11/125	1971	Son of William A
Cheong	Calvin	OMA	7.1.1888	Rescued as a 4 yo. Surname was Chong not Cheong
Cheong	Caroline Jane	RCEM11/124	1945	nee Gilbert; Wife of William A
Cheong	Doris Ada	RCEM9/298	1983	
Cheong	Edwin	WC/WCS3-10	1945	Died - aged 65
Cheong	Evaline	WC/WCS3-10	1869	Died - aged 84
Cheong	Gilbert	WC/WCS3-10	1918	Died - aged 6 months
Cheong	Gladys	WC/WCS3-10	1919	Died - aged 2
Cheong	Hannah	RCEM9/298		
Cheong	Helen	WC/WCS3-10	1927	Died - infant
Cheong	Herbert James	RCEM9/298	1954	
Cheong	Luke	WCS3-9		Spouse - Ellen Donovan
Cheong	Rubina	WC/WCS3-10	1966	Died - aged 74
Cheong	Sarah	WC/WCS3-10	1936	Died - aged 85
Cheong	Unnamed	RCTW	1918	Obituary - Infant son of Mr & Mrs W Cheong
Cheong	Veronica	WC/WCS3-10	1911	Died - as an infant
Cheong	Walter	WT	28.7.1900	Found 44 oz nugget, Parkins Gully, Whroo
Cheong	Walter	RCEM5/145	1900	

Cheong	William Albert	RCEM11/124	1944	Son of Luke & Ellen (nee Donovan); Husband of Caroline J
Cheong	Alfred	WCS3-9		Grandson of Luke
Cheong Hong		PROV431	1910	Coroner's Inquest; d.Rushworth of old age
Chew Mow	Clara	ANC	1872	Born at Spring Creek (Graytown) to James Chew Mow & Eliza
Chew Mow	Elizabeth Ann	ANC	1870	Born at Whroo to James Chew Mow & Eliza
Chew Mow	Mary Jane	ANC	1868	Born at Wattle Flat, Heathcote to James Chew Mow & Eliza
Chew Mow	Thomas	ANC	1868	b. Shunde district Guangdong; Married Eliza Jane Edwards at Reedy Lake
Chew Mow	Thomas	ANC	1868-72	Birth of children at Heathcote, Whroo and Spring Ck (Graytown)
Chew Mow	Thomas	ANC	25.11.1873	Died at Chinese (?) hospital Bendigo
Chil	James	PROV1910/431	1910	Witness at Inquest
Chin King		MT	31.8.1860	Injured in assault by Irish miner at Whroo
Chong	Alfred	RCEM11/110	1964	
Chong	Arthur	AWM, NAA	1914-18	WW1 soldier - No 8289 Sapper. Stayed in England.
Chong	Calvin	WT	21.4.1917	Lease on 25 acres at Moora expired
Chong	Calvin/Calvers	RCEM11/110	1962	
Chong	James Palmer	AWM, NAA	1914-18	WW1 soldier - No 22081 Driver
Chong	Emma	AWM, NAA		Moora mother of WW1 soldiers Arthur and James. Nee Branson
Chung Mine		PROV389	1856	Coroner's Inquest; d.Whroo of natural causes
Cong Too		WM	1.3.1968	Before the courts on occasions
Goon Chi		PROV1058	1881	Coroner's Inquest; d.Rushworth of burns received
Hee Ah		VBDM, TB		b.1820; d.1889 at Rushworth aged 69
Hong Chong		RCTW	d.1910	Obituary; Aged 75; 40 years in camp at Main Gully
Hong Song		WM	1.3.1968	Before the courts on occasions
Kong Ling		PROV972	1862	Coroner's Inquest; d.Rushworth of heart disease
Kong Tong		PROV857	1862	Cor Inq; miner of Rushworth; d.in dray accident
Le Look		PROV590	1874	Interpreter at Whroo for inquest into death of Ah Hing
Lo Dong		WCS3-9	1863	Store owner Whroo
Lo Dong		PROV	1863	Ratepayer at Whroo - Chinamen's Camp
Loug	Elizabeth		1910	Possibly Chinese; lived in Main Gully; witness at inquest for Cheong Hong
Pick	Sam	WC	1888	Died aged 54; Native of Canton
Sam Chat		JH p117	1859	Leader at Whroo protest meeting
See Fow		PROV	1863	Ratepayer Shellback Gully - hut and puddling machine
Toylcock		MC		Name on grave at Murchison cemetery. Probably plot purchaser, not deceased
Unnamed		GA	16.5.1884	Dispute over access to water, alleged pollution in Murchison lagoon
Unnamed		RCTW	1884	Obituary - Unnamed Chinaman of Main Gully
Unnamed		PROV	1865	Ratepayer at No 1 Camp Main Gully
Unnamed		PROV	1865	Ratepayer at No 2 Camp Main Gully
Unnamed		PROV	1865	Ratepayer at No 2 Camp Main Gully - slab hut and machine
Unnamed		PROV	1865	Ratepayer at No 2 Camp Main Gully - slab hut

Unnamed		PROV	1865	Ratepayer at No 2 Camp Main Gully - hut next to Ah Fat
Unnamed		PROV	1865	Ratepayer - hut at Garden at Mouses Gully
Unnamed		PROV	1865	Ratepayer - hut near Ah Chou's at Long Gully Whroo
Unnamed		PROV	1865	Ratepayer - huts and machine at Long Gully Whroo
Unnamed x 4		PROV	1865	Ratepayers - hut and machine - Growlers, Shellback, Parramatta, Liverpool gullies
Wau	Ah Kau	RCEM	1916	
Yee Geen		PROV207	1879	Coroner's Inquest at Redcastle. Killed in cart accident on Mt Pleasant
Yoon Ah		VBDM, TB	1889	b.1825; d.1889 at Rushworth aged 64
You You	Tommy the Cook	RCTW	1900	Obituary - lived in camp on Merrigum (now Tat) Road
Young Hong		PROV590	1874	Witness at Coroner's Inquest into death of Ah Hing

#NAMES

Names are recorded as found in each source

Generally, the surname is listed first but there many complexities in Chinese names

"Ah" is usually a name prefix like "Mr" - not part of the name as such

*SOURCES

NB Numbers in source column show page reference, date of publication, grave reference, file number etc

AGE	Age newspaper
ANC	Ancestry Website
AWM	Australian War Memorial Website
BAD	Bendigo Advertiser
GA	Goulburn Advertiser
GC	Graytown Cemetery Records
JH	Hammond, Joyce, The Golden Years of Rushworth & Whroo
KU	Kyabram Union (newspaper)
MC	Murchison Cemetery
MH	Melbourne Herald
MT	Mclvor Times & Goulburn Advertiser (Heathcote)
NAA	National Aust Archives Website
OMA	Ovens & Murray Advertiser
PROV	Public Records Office of Victoria - for ratepayers search "Waranga Rates"
RC	Rushworth Chronicle
RCEM	Rushworth Cemetery Records
RCTW	Rushworth Cemetery Trust Website, courtesy of Alan McLean
SW	Susan Walter, Gold 'n' Greens - A History of the Chinese of Malmesbury
TB	Tracey Bons, Researcher
VBDM	Victorian Births, Deaths & Marriages
WC	Whroo Cemetery
WCHR	Waranga Chronicle
WCS	Waranga Conservation Study
WT	Weekly Times

APPENDIX B - CHINESE RATEPAYERS IN THE WARANGA AREA**1863 & 1865**

NAME	ASSET	LOCATION	1863 NO	1863 VAL	1865 NO	1865 VAL
A Wing	Hut & Puddling Machine	Main Gully Chinese Camp	126	12		
A Wing	Hut & Puddling Machine	Main Gully Chinese Camp	127	10		
A Wing	Hut & Puddling Machine	Main Gully Chinese Camp	128	10		
Ah Fat	Huts & Puddling Machine	Main Gully Chinese Camp	129	12		
Chinaman	Slab Hut	Main Gully Chinese Camp	130	3		
Ah Fong	Hut & Garden	Main Gully Chinese Camp	131	12		
Ah Young	Hut & Puddling Machine	Parramatta Gully	136	12		
A Chong	Hut & Puddling Machine	Growlers	151	12		
See Fow	Hut & Puddling Machine	Shellback Gully	154	12		
Ah Ling	Log Hut	Billy Buttons Gully	163	3		
Ah Chow	Log Hut	Profit Gully	221	3		
Ah Wing	Hut & Puddling Mill	Profit Gully	233	12		
Ah Chow	Store & Buildings	Whroo	258	15		
Ah Wee	Store & Buildings	Whroo	259	15		
Lo Dong	Chinamen's Camp	Whroo	260	10		
Ah Ling	Hut & Puddling Mill	Whroo	265	12		
Ah Wing	Hut & Puddling Mill	Whroo	269	12		
Ah Foun	Hut & Puddling Mill	Long Gully Whroo	301	12		
Ah Foun	Hut & Machine	Long Gully Whroo	305	12		
A Chong	Huts & Puddling Machine	White Hills	314	15		
Ah Fat	Hut & Puddling Mill	Fontainbleu	319	12		
Ah Coon	Huts & Machine	Scotchmen's	322	12		
Ah Kong	Hut & Garden	5 Mile Creek Moora	323	12		
Ah Tim	Hut & Machine	Nuggetty Gully			110	12
Chinaman	Camp No 1	No 1 Camp Main Gully			130	10
Chinaman	Camp No 2	No 2 Camp Main Gully			131	10
Chinaman	Slab Hut & Machine	No 2 Camp Main Gully			132	12
Chinaman	Slab Hut	No 2 Camp Main Gully			133	3
Ah Fat	Slab Hut & Machine	No 2 Camp Main Gully			134	12
Chinaman	Hut next to Ah Fat	No 2 Camp Main Gully			135	3
Ah Fong	Hut & Garden	No 2 Camp Main Gully			136	12
Ah Gec	Hut	No 2 Camp Main Gully			137	3

Chinaman	Hut & Machine	Growlers	152	12
Chinaman	Slab Hut & Machine	Parramatta Gully	169	12
Chinaman	Slab Hut & Machine	Shellback Gully	173	12
Chinaman	Slab Hut & Machine	Liverpool	179	12
Chinaman	Hut & Garden	Mouses	204	12
	5 Huts opp Mr			
Ah Wing	Thompson's	White Hills	229	5
Chinaman	Hut near Ah Chou's	Long Gully Whroo	235	10
Ah Wing	Hut & Machine	Long Gully Whroo	236	12
Ah Chou	Store & Dwelling	Long Gully Whroo	237	25
Ah Wic	Dwelling	Long Gully Whroo	239	4
Ah Ling	Hut & Machine	Whroo	281	12
Ah Wing	Hut & Machine	Whroo	285	12
Chinaman	Huts & Machine	Long Gully Whroo	305	12
Ah Foun	Huts & Machine	Scotchmen's	310	12
Ah Chong	Hut & Machine	White Hills	322	12
Ah Rat	Hut & Machine	Fontainbleu	323	12
No of Rated Properties			451	473
Rate per Pound			12d	15d

1880 & 1890

NAME	Occupation	ASSET	LOCATION	1880 NO	1880 VAL	1890 NO	1890 VAL
Ah Mow	Gardener	Cottage & garden	Moora	468	12		
Ah Chew	Gardener	80 acres fenced, cottage & c	Moora	507	16		
Ah Chung	Gardener	10 acres garden & huts	Moora	524	15		
Fune Chum?	Miner	Cottage	Rushworth	557	4		
Hang Goui	Gardener	Hut & c	Rushworth	558	3		
Chine Dung?	Miner	Hut & c	Rushworth	559	4		
Chiu Chick	Miner	Hut & c	Rushworth	560	3		
Ah Gun	Miner	Hut & c	Rushworth	561	3		
Ah Chew	Miner	Hut & c	Rushworth	562	4		
Ah Chung	Miner	Hut & c	Rushworth	563	3		
Ka Hu	Miner	Hut & c	Rushworth	564	3		
Le Chung	Hawker	Cottage & stables	Rushworth	572	5		
Ah Zong?	Gardener	Cottage & garden	Rushworth	580	5		
Ah Chow	Miner	Hut	Rushworth	600	3		
Ah Ping	Miner	Hut	Rushworth	604	3		
Thomas Hu Hu	Cook	Hut	Rushworth	616	3		
Stang Gog?	Gardener	Garden & hut	Whroo	733	4		

Ah Cheong	Gardener	Residence & garden & c	Whroo	735	10	
Ah Hung	Gardener	Garden	Murchison	1399	5	
Ah Cheong	Gardener	9 acres Market Garden	Whroo		350	10
Ah Chong	Gardener	40 acres Market Garden	Moora		477	17
Ah Cheong (Chew?)	Gardener	80 acres fenced, cottage & c	Moora		478	16
Charles Ah Ping	Gardener	10 acres Market Garden	Moora		483	12
Ah Fong	Gardener	Hut & garden	Waranga		893	4
Ah Sam	Gardener	Garden	Murchison		1468	15

No of Rated Properties - NB Shire boundary changing	2115	1575
Rate per Pound	12d	12d

APPENDIX C: INQUESTS INTO DEATHS OF CHINESE PEOPLE IN THE WARANGA AREA

PROV FILE*	NAME	OCCUPATION	PLACE OF DEATH	CAUSE OF DEATH	CHINESE WITNESSES
1856/389	Ching Mine	Not stated	Whroo	Natural Causes	Nil
1858/360	A Yea	Miner	Rushworth	Mining Accident (cave-in)	Nil
1862/857	Kong Tong	Miner - Main Gully	Main Gully Rushworth	Dray Accident	Bo Fong - cousin
1863/972	Kong Ling	Not stated	Waranga Park Station	Heart & Lung Disease	Sue Ey; Kim Yen
1865/946	A Cong	Not stated	Bush nr Rushworth	Strangulation (Hanging)	A Son - miner
1865/457	Ah Hup	Not stated	Waranga Park Station	General Debility	Nil
1866/196	Ah Owen	Miner	Whroo	Heart Disease	Ah Lick - miner/brother
1870/203	Ah Wing	Miner	Whroo	Heart & Lung Disease	Ah Chou - gardener
1870/203	Ah Wing (cont)	prev Ship's Carpenter	Whroo	Heart & Lung Disease	Cong Chong
1871/488	Ah Toy	Not stated	Chinese camp Whroo	Sanguineous Apoplexy	Nil
1874/724	Ah Poo	Gardener	Scotchmen's Gully Whroo	Inflammation of Bowels	Ah Poi - gardener
1874/724	Ah Poo (cont)				
1874/590	Ah Hing	Not stated	Sailors/Pinchgut Gully, Whroo	Opium Poisoning	Young Hong
1879/207	Yee Geen	Salesman/Hawker	Mount Pleasant	Spring Cart Accident	Ah Gow (employer)
1879/378	Ah Thom	Not stated	Snake Gully - Rushworth	Heart Disease	Nil
1882/1058	Goon Chi	Not stated	Rushworth	Burns - fell into fire	Nil - lived alone
1891/174	Ah Sue	Miner, cook, gardener	Main Gully Rushworth	Pleuro-pnuemonia	"James" Chil
1910/431	Cheong Hong	Retired for 15 years	Main Gully Rushworth	Age, Heart, Lungs, Arteries	"Willie" Ah Kah - mkt gardener

Total = 16

*Public Records Office of Victoria file number - the first figure is the year, so files in chronological order

Dr J V Heily from Rushworth conducted many of the medical examinations of the deceased. NB Long report on Ah Hing

BIOGRAPHICAL INDEX

Names appearing in the index are only from the text of the stories. Refer also to the appendices, which include other lists of Chinese people who lived in the Waranga area at some time.

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Ah Chin	42	Downing, Aub	52
Ah Chong	30,32-3,38	Dunster, George	52
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Ah Coon	42	Featherston, Hugh	51
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Cheong, Herbert	28	Rosenberg, W & M	37
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Chong, Calvin	39-40	Stewart & Smith	20
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