THE CHINESE AND THE STANFORDS:

IMMIGRATION RHETORIC IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY CALIFORNIA

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A University Thesis Presented to the Faculty

of

California State University, East Bay

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in History

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By

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June, 2011

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Preface

In 1888, James Grant Wilson and John Fiske edited the multi-volume *Appletons' Cyclopaedia of American Biography* that included an entry for one Leland Stanford, then serving his first six-year term as a United States senator. The work made mention of Stanford's varied accomplishments, including his role as president of the western half of the first transcontinental railroad, the Central Pacific, and his endowment of a university sited at his California Palo Alto estate in memory of his only child, Leland Stanford Junior. Intended to augment this $20,000,000 endowment was the income from another Stanford property, the Vina Ranch in Tehama County, California, then estimated at 30,000 acres--it would ultimately expand to 55,000 acres. The author concluded: "It is divided into 500-acre tracts, and most of the labor is performed by Chinamen."[1] This seemingly innocuous reference to Stanford's use of Chinese labor was

[1] James Grant Wilson and John Fiske, eds., *Appletons' Cyclopaedia of American Biography*, 6 vols. (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1888), 5:644.

actually fraught with meaning in the late nineteenth century; it exemplified the intertwined issues of race, labor, and class that had transfixed California society from the start of the Gold Rush in 1849. These topics as applied to Anglo-Chinese relations in California would remain highly controversial for at least another seventy years. Looking at how Leland Stanford, and his wife, Jane Lathrop Stanford, dealt with "the Chinese question" in their public and private lives adds complexity to our understanding of race, labor and class relations in California, 1850-1905, and illustrates the public versus private face of Chinese immigration rhetoric.

If ever there were two entities that were integral to latter-nineteenth-century California history, it would be the Chinese and the Stanfords. Why, where, and how they intersected at both public and private levels became a topic of interest for me when I ran across a photograph of the Stanford family mausoleum taken shortly after Leland Stanford's death on 21 June 1893. One of the most elaborate flower arrangements made for his funeral was from a group of Chinese gardeners that worked for him at his Palo Alto estate in the Santa Clara Valley. This struck me as

odd; had not the Chinese been horribly exploited as laborers by none other than Leland Stanford during the building of the western half of the transcontinental railroad? If the negative nature of that past experience was accurate, why would any Chinese men be working for him at his estate? Why had they made what was clearly a gesture of affection and respect at his memorial service? Why would Stanford, known for his racist views, choose to employ Chinese in intimate settings that would put them in daily contact with himself and his family? And if the Chinese had been present at the estate in 1893, two years after Leland Stanford Junior University opened its doors on the extensive grounds of said estate, why were they never mentioned in any modern stories or histories of the university? Finding that photograph was the catalyst for wanting to tell their story, a simple acknowledgement of the Chinese presence and contributions to both the Palo Alto estate and what were once known as the "Pioneer Days" of Stanford University. What I realize now is that the story is really one of both the Chinese and of Leland and Jane Stanford, and that this lost story conveys the complexity of the social, racial and economic

development of California, the results of which are still being played out today.

The timeframe for this particular story begins with the California Gold Rush in 1849 and will end with the aftermath of the 1906 San Francisco earthquake and fire. The decades between these two epic events witnessed the explosive growth of population in California due to people flocking there from all over the world in search of instant and easy wealth. With this growth came the inevitable clashes and tensions resulting from so many different people with individual ideas and intentions competing against each other in a relatively unsettled area, and the expansion of a white society at the expense of people of color.

California entered the United States of America as a free state during the Civil War (1860-1865). Leland Stanford was one of the state's wartime governors (1862-1863) and its first Republican in that role. In his inaugural speech, he addressed an issue already on the minds of white Californians--the influx of Chinese immigrants--and he came down squarely on the side of restricting Chinese immigration, basing

his argument on his belief that the Chinese were an inferior race.

Chinese immigration into California before the Gold Rush was a mere trickle, and only 325 "Celestial" Argonauts appeared in 1849, with another 450 coming in 1850.[2] But in 1851 2,716 Chinese men made their way into the gold fields and in 1852 20,026 more followed.[3] In *Strangers from a Different Shore*, historian Ronald Takaki asserts that up until this point the Chinese were welcome in California, with the *Daily Alta* proclaiming in 1852 that "the China boys will yet vote at the same polls, study at the same schools and bow at the same altar as our own countrymen."[4] At the same time, California governor John McDougal, in reference

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[2] Californians often referred to the Chinese as "Celestials" due to China being known as the "Celestial Kingdom" or "Celestial Empire." "Mongolians," "Mongolian heathens," and "coolies" were other popular, and usually more pejorative, descriptors. "Chinamen," "Chinaman" and "China-boy" were also in common use, in addition to the more straightforward term of "Chinese." H.W. Brands, *The Age of Gold: The California Gold Rush and the New American Dream* (New York: Doubleday, 2002), 64; and Ronald Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1989), 79.

[3] Takaki, *Strangers*, 79.

[4] Takaki, *Strangers*, 80.

to the recently passed 1850 Federal Swamp Land Act, reiterated that the Chinese were needed to help with this work, vital to releasing California's agricultural potential, and identified them as "one of the most worthy classes of our newly adopted citizens --to whom the climate and the character of these lands are peculiarly suited."[5]

But, as Takaki points out, the white gold miners swarming the foothills had an entirely different perspective on who belonged in California and they expressed their nativism in the phrase "California for Americans."[6] The fight for which race the state would ultimately belong to was already on and the Chinese, despite the presence of immigrants from all over the world then in California, were singled out as early

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[5] The 1850 Swamp Land Act granted California 2,200,000 acres of swampland made up of rich peat soil that was highly conducive to productive farming. Clearing and draining these lands was both dangerous and strenuous, with few white laborers willing to tackle the fieldwork. The Chinese were the perfect solution in terms of a large labor force willing to perform the job. Sucheng Chan, *This Bittersweet Soil: The Chinese in California Agriculture, 1860-1910* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 163; and Richard Steven Street, *Beasts of the Field: A Narrative History of California Farmworkers, 1769-1913* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004), 238. Takaki, *Strangers*, 81.

[6] Takaki, *Strangers*, 81.

racial targets who threatened not only the well-being of the mining districts but of the state itself. By the time Leland Stanford took office as governor in 1862, his inaugural message deriding the Chinese as the "dregs" of Asia and calling for their immigration restriction was reflective of the burgeoning Yellow Peril hysteria, the fear that Asians would overrun the Pacific Coast.[7] Norman E. Tutorow, author of a two-volume biography on Stanford, *The Governor: The Life and Legacy of Leland Stanford, A California Colossus*, acknowledges Stanford's racial beliefs favoring whites and also the presence of Chinese laborers working at the Stanfords' various properties.[8] What this project contributes is a perspective on the evolution of Leland and Jane Stanford's public views regarding the Chinese over several decades, and a comparison of these views with their behavior in their private lives and enterprises.

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[7] Margaret Holt Mudgett, "The Political Career of Leland Stanford" (Master's thesis, University of Southern California, 1937), 16-17.

[8] Norman Tutorow, *The Governor: The Life and Legacy of Leland Stanford, A California Colossus*, 2 vols. (Spokane: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 2004), v.1: 102, 135, 454, 516, and v.2: 839.

Beyond the issue of change over time, the Stanford's relationship with the Chinese they hired was complex, as seen in the choices they made. Historian Nick Salvatore believes a comparison of their viewpoints to their actions allows for understanding the pattern of choices the Stanfords executed within the sphere of possibilities they envisioned from a culture and society that they inherited rather than made.[9] To this I would add that the Stanfords, with their immense wealth and power--and in their roles as leaders within local, state and national society--were not hesitant to reshape that society as they saw fit.

Stanford's various roles as politician, businessman and state booster shaped both his words and his actions regarding the Chinese. Mrs. Stanford's changing roles similarly influenced her, first as supportive wife and later as embattled widow managing the vast Stanford holdings. Her additional persona as the surviving founder of the fledgling Stanford University is well represented in Gunther Nagel's

[9] Nick Salvatore, "Biography and Social History: An Intimate Relationship," *Labour History*, 87 (Nov 2004): 189.

biography of her, *Iron Will: The Life and Letters of Jane Stanford*. Nagel chose two of her letters that include her thoughts and dealings with the Chinese at both Palo Alto and Vina; this project will examine the Palo Alto estate records and newspaper coverage during her lifetime to flesh out the divergent viewpoints these two letters reveal.[10] We will also see how Mrs. Stanford's thoughts regarding Chinese immigration and her concerns over the growing call in California for Japanese immigration restriction at the turn of the last century added to the makings of Stanford University's first serious scandal. When economics professor Edward A. Ross was forced to resign in part for his public airing of anti-Japanese immigration beliefs, several other Stanford professors resigned in protest; the resultant national-level furor over the perceived lack of freedom of academic speech at Stanford University lasted for months.

The so-called Ross Affair highlights a very publicized event in Jane Stanford's life, but looking at her association with two of the Chinese men she maintained twenty-year-long relationships with in her

[10] Gunther Nagel, *Iron Will: The Life and Letters of Jane Stanford* (Stanford, CA: Stanford Alumni Association, 1975), 137, 150-151.

personal life also provides a layer to Anglo/Chinese relations in California during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries where the Chinese emerge as more than just victims of the prevalent nativism that gripped California at the time. Historian Cecelia Tsu explored the dichotomy between California boosterism that promoted white family farming free of any need for foreign labor and the reality of white farmers/growers in Santa Clara Valley being completely dependent on that labor, the Chinese being the first immigrant group to fill that necessary role.[11] While Tsu makes many valuable contributions in describing the relationships between Chinese and Anglos in the valley in terms of farmers/growers and laborers, and includes Jane Stanford and two of the Chinese men she leased land to, the author fails to situate the Palo Alto property in its rightful place in society as a landed estate of the San Francisco peninsula. She states that visitors to the Palo Alto estate "probably were not aware" that two Chinese gardeners were responsible for the beautiful Stanford grounds in

[11] Cecelia Tsu, "'Independent of the Unskilled Chinaman'": Race, Labor and Family Farming in California's Santa Clara Valley," *Western Historical Quarterly*, 37, no. 4 (Winter 2006): 476.

1893.[12] On the contrary, these country estates, including not only that of Leland and Jane Stanford, but of their friends and neighbors such as Timothy and May Hopkins, James and Mary Flood, and Darius and Jane Mills, were also expressions of California boosterism where California represented an Arcadian Eden, "a place that was implicitly associated with new possibilities and the potential for a rich life that could not be experienced elsewhere in the United States."[13] The fact that these estates all depended on Chinese labor was often reported in the newspapers at the time, and the estates themselves were open to casual visitors who could not fail to notice who was actually doing the work. Tsu correctly points out that whites who hired the Chinese met with public criticism and the wealthy and influential owners of the San Francisco peninsula estates during the 1880s and 1890s were certainly no exception.

Examining how the Chinese worked on these estates, especially looking at two particular Chinese men who were employed by Jane Stanford, Ah Jim and Ah

[12] Tsu, "Unskilled Chinaman," 488.

[13] David Streatfield, "Where Pine and Palm Meet: The California Garden as Regional Expression," *Landscape Journal*, 4, no. 2 (Fall 1985): 61.

Wing, reinforces the notion that the Chinese were more than just victims of racial hatred and abuse; there were many Chinese who not only survived California racism but managed to function--some even to thrive--in spite of it. This exploration is not an attempt to downplay the very real violence and oppression the Chinese suffered at the hands of whites in California, but seeks to add detail and nuance to provide a more balanced and realistic portrayal of Anglo/Chinese relations in California during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Stemming from a combination of racism and labor unrest, this simmering anti-Chinese resentment on the part of whites culminated in a series of legislative acts that started with the 1868 Burlingame-Seward Treaty allowing the Chinese entry into the United States but forbidding them naturalization, and concluded with the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act, which suspended entry of Chinese laborers for ten years. As Erika Lee points out in *At America's Gate*, while the Exclusion Act did successfully restrict Chinese immigration, most Californians perceived the law to be

a failure.[14] They consequently pushed additional and much more restrictive legislation from 1888 to 1927, and the Chinese Exclusion Act was not formally repealed until 1943. By that time the Exclusion Act had shaped American attitudes of discrimination based on race, class, gender, sexuality and citizenship not just for California, but for the entire American nation. And, as Ronald Takaki maintains in *Iron Cages: Race and Culture in Nineteenth-Century America*, the American mindset that constructed the 1882 Exclusion Act was not produced spontaneously and full-blown in California during the nineteenth century, but was brought to the state by Americans who had already proven themselves willing to use people of color, specifically Native Americans and African Americans, as labor sources for building American society during

[14] What many Californians wanted was a complete halt to Chinese immigration, and some also wanted the Chinese already living in the state deported. The 1882 Exclusion Act only restricted certain Chinese--laborers--from entering the country for ten years, and many Chinese found loopholes that allowed them entry. Californians were resentful of these legal loopholes and believed they made the Exclusion Act a mockery, hence the resultant legislation. Erika Lee, *At America's Gate: Chinese Immigration During the Exclusion Era, 1882-1943* (Chapel Hill: NC and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 44.

the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[15] Leland Stanford, who brought his racial beliefs along when he came to California from New York in 1852 to sell supplies to the miners, was just such a man. These racial beliefs only took on more importance for Stanford in his role as governor and booster, when he envisioned California as a state for white men and their families who would make a living farming in the Golden State.

Furthermore, as Sucheng Chan notes in her history of the Chinese in California agriculture, *This Bittersweet Soil*, the Chinese played major and multiple roles in the development of California agriculture, and not just those of docile or "cheap labor" as portrayed in earlier histories where the Chinese were seen as nothing more than victims.[16] A closer inspection of the roles the Chinese played at the Stanfords' Palo Alto estate will bring some much-

[15] Ronald Takaki, *Iron Cages: Race and Culture in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), vi.

[16] The notion of the Chinese as "cheap labor" sprang from their willingness to work for $1.00 per day without board. White laborers deeply resented this, claiming they could not possibly support their families on such a low wage and thus were rendered a non-competitive labor source, since employers would always pay as low a wage as possible. Chan, 301.

needed balance to a complex story that involves both the Chinese and the Stanfords, and will illuminate the dichotomy between the public and private faces of Chinese immigration rhetoric so prevalent in California during the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-centuries.

Acknowledgments

I want to thank the many people who supported this project. They include the fabulous staff at the Stanford University Archives at Stanford University, my supervisor, Dr. Laura Jones, my advisor, Professor Linda Ivey and, most especially, my friend Marlea Graham, who put in many long hours helping me to prepare the final manuscript. I also want to particularly thank Lorraine Mock and Natalie Haggerty, the great-granddaughters of Jim Mock, as well as Herbert and Franklin Yee, the great-grandsons of Yee Fung Cheung, for entrusting their family histories to me. I could not have gotten this thesis done on time

without all of the aid from the above-mentioned parties, not to mention the other friends and relatives who provided a sympathetic ear when needed. I promise you all I will no longer make you listen to any more stories of nineteenth-century California! At least, not until the next story needs telling……☺

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Chapter 1

The Onset of the Gold Rush

The Chinese Arrive in California

James Marshall, a carpenter hired to build a sawmill at Sutter's Fort in California, discovered gold on the South Fork of the American River on 24 January 1848. The resultant Gold Rush drew 100,000 Argonauts from America, Latin America, Europe, Asia and Australia within the next year with tens of thousands more yet to follow.[1] California was not yet a state and contained relatively little settled society of established law and order. One result of this was that the incoming miners were completely free to take matters into their own hands as they saw fit, often relying on violence to settle the inevitable disputes.

The majority of the Chinese who came to California after 1848 arrived looking for one thing--gold. They hoped to become rich and to return to their homes and families in China within three to five years

[1] The term Argonaut came from Greek mythology and referred to those who followed Jason in search of the Golden Fleece.

of starting their journey.[2] In this desire they were no different from the vast majority of other Forty-Niners who came to California for the very same reason. While many Chinese did return to their home country at some point, others ended up making California their permanent home, or nearly permanent in the case of those who returned to China only in their old age, or made arrangements for their bones to be transported back to China after their death.[3] The Chinese who came to California in the early years of the Gold Rush, the vast majority of whom came from the Pearl River Delta in Guangdong (Kwangtung) Province, expected a positive experience.[4] Labor brokers in port cities displayed circulars advertising irresistible employment opportunities:

> Americans are very rich people. They want the Chinaman to come and make him very welcome. There you will have great pay, large houses, and food

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[2] Ronald Takaki, *Strangers*, 31.

[3] The Chinese relied on family members to tend their graves, believing that otherwise their unfed and uncared for spirits wandered for a lonely eternity. Sandy Lydon, *Chinese Gold: The Chinese in the Monterey Bay Region* (Capitola, CA: The Capitola Book Company, 1985), 131.

[4] Him Mark Lai, *Becoming Chinese American: A History of Communities and Institutions* (New York: AltaMira Press, 2004), 15.

> and clothing of the finest description. It is a nice country, without mandarins or soldiers. Money is in great plenty and to spare in America.[5]

Chinese arriving in *Gam Saan* (Gold Mountain) found a somewhat different experience.[6] Even before the larger numbers of Chinese began arriving in the gold fields, white miners in Tuolumne County had passed a resolution in 1849 forbidding the Chinese access to claims in their district. Throughout the 1850s, Chinese living in California endured robberies, physical attacks, and forcible removals from claims. In some instances these assaults ended in death.[7] This trend of violence was due to whites viewing the Chinese as "unique" and linking that uniqueness with racial inferiority.[8]

Though news of these negative experiences eventually reached China, later sojourners would still make the arduous journey but with more realistic expectations. These men were willing to take such

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[5] Takaki, *Strangers*, 34.

[6] The Chinese referred to California as Gold Mountain.

[7] Chan, 58.

[8] Alexander Saxton, *The Indispensable Enemy: Labor and the Anti-Chinese Movement in California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), 18-19.

risks for the opportunity of earning even three hundred dollars in savings, an amount considered a veritable fortune in China that would bring both wealth and honor to the individual and his family.

Many who made the trip to California were merchants and a few were artisans, but the vast majority were farmers and laborers, reflecting the predominantly agrarian nature of Chinese society.[9] In the first fifteen years following the Gold Rush, most Chinese worked in placer mining or trading. Within the major mining camps, a few Chinese were employed as merchants, grocers, truck gardeners, cooks, servants, laundrymen, barbers, herbalists, prostitutes, professional gamblers and even as fortune-tellers, serving white miners as well as their own countrymen.[10] Forced out of the best mining opportunities by white miners intent on retaining California resources for themselves, the Chinese adapted to the situation and found ways to survive, turning to their advantage the gaps in California's nascent society that required filling.

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[9] Chan, 28-29.

[10] Chan, 52.

The Chinese were not white miners' only targets; the French, Mexican, Hawaiian and Chilean Argonauts suffered from the same vociferous rejection, but to a lesser degree. White miners demanded that the state levy the Foreign Miner's Tax intended to forestall any competition from non-Americans. In 1852, Stanford followed his brothers to California where they were successfully engaged in selling supplies to miners; it was in that same year that members of the California Assembly formed a committee to investigate complaints regarding the Chinese in particular. The committee found the well-being of the mining districts threatened by "the concentration, within our State Limits, of vast numbers of the Asiatic races, and of the inhabitants of the Pacific Islands, and of many others dissimilar from ourselves in custom, language and education."[11] The Chinese were deemed "servile contract laborers" who had no interest in becoming American citizens; moreover, they degraded American whites working alongside of them. Even worse, their mere presence was enough to discourage desirable immigrants--white immigrants--from settling in

[11] Takaki, *Strangers*, 81.

California. Ironically, the Chinese could not become American citizens even if they wanted to, due to the 1790 federal law that reserved naturalized citizenship for whites only. The end result of the committee's work was the creation of the tax whereby every foreign miner who did not want to become a citizen was required to ante up three dollars per month. The tax was directed against all foreign miners but enforcement ultimately focused primarily on the Chinese.[12]

The Stanfords Arrive in California

When Leland Stanford arrived in California in 1852, the tide had clearly already turned against any welcome the Chinese initially had experienced in the first two to three years of their coming to the state. Stanford had no more intention of remaining in California than the Chinese sojourners had, or, for that matter, the majority of the other thousands of

[12] By 1870, when the federal Civil Rights Act voided the tax, the Chinese had contributed five million dollars to the counties and state of California as a consequence of the tax, providing between 25 and 50 percent of all state revenues. Takaki, *Strangers*, 81.

Argonauts. He had left his wife of two years, Jane Lathrop Stanford, behind in New York at the behest of her ailing father, who feared for her safety in California's rough-and-tumble society. Furthermore, Mrs. Stanford's father required her nursing assistance, his own wife being too busy caring for the remaining Lathrop children still at home.[13]

Leland Stanford was born to Elizabeth and Josiah Stanford on 9 March 1824 in the Watervliet township just north of Albany, New York.[14] He was the fifth of eight children, seven of whom were boys; the Stanfords' only daughter died at the age of nine months and one of their sons died at the age of nine years. Josiah Stanford made his living in various ways, including innkeeping, farming, and building roads and bridges. Leland Stanford grew up in an affectionate family atmosphere and learned valuable lessons relating to hard work, time and money, not to mention how to keep up with his father, brothers and

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[13] Roxanne Nilan, "The Life and Times of a Victorian Lady: Jane Lathrop Stanford," *Sandstone and Tile* 21, no. 3 (Summer 1997): 7.

[14] Norman Tutorow, *The Governor*, 1: 3-4.

the hired help in terms of physical labor.[15] Despite a love for farming, Stanford trained for the law, attending school but dropping out short of graduation in 1845 when he was twenty-one. He then served a legal apprenticeship with the Albany law firm of Wheaton, Doolittle and Hadley and was admitted to the bar in 1848. He was offered a partnership when Doolittle retired but preferred to strike off on his own and headed west to Chicago.[16] He ultimately ended up in Port Washington, Wisconsin and spent the next two years earning enough money to get married.

Jane Elizabeth Lathrop was the woman Leland Stanford intended to marry. She was born in Albany on 15 August 1828 to Dyer and Jane Lathrop. The third of seven children, Jane remained particularly close to her siblings throughout adulthood, including younger sister Anna Maria, who was named after the second Lathrop child who had died at the age of four.[17] Jane briefly attended the Albany Female Academy as a young woman but soon returned home to help her mother, and

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[15] Norman Tutorow, *Leland Stanford: Man of Many Careers* (Menlo Park, CA: Pacific Coast Publishers, 1971), 4.

[16] Tutorow, *Man of Many Careers*, 8.

[17] Tutorow, *The Governor*, 1: 19.

apparently later regretted the lost opportunity of increasing her education.[18] The lessons she learned at home regarding thrift and frugality remained with her for her entire life, despite the great wealth she eventually possessed. She and Leland Stanford married on 30 September 1852, and they promptly returned to Wisconsin where they rented a one-room apartment over a bar while Stanford continued his law practice.[19]

Unfortunately Port Washington was providing less business than it first had when Stanford moved there in 1848, and when a fire destroyed his extensive and valuable law library in 1852, the Stanfords were at a crossroad. They decided to try California but Mrs. Stanford first wanted to return to Albany to visit her family before the couple headed west. She never imagined that both sets of parents would insist she should remain behind or, much worse, that Stanford would eventually be persuaded to agree with them. The couple endured a painful three-year separation as a result, with Stanford forging on to California while Mrs. Stanford remained in Albany to nurse her father.

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[18] Nilan, "Life and Times," 6.

[19] Kate McDowell, "The Stanfords' Sacramento Years," *Sandstone and Tile*, 15, no. 1 (Winter 1991): 2.

Stanford landed in San Francisco without so much as a dollar to his name. His brothers loaned him enough store goods to get himself set up in business as a mercantilist in Cold Springs, just three miles from where James Marshall had discovered gold. While Stanford would never practice law again, his education and experience were not wasted, for he was able to put both to good use in his new venture.[20] He also put his great physical strength to work, driving eight- and ten-horse teams pulling heavy wagons of goods that Stanford himself would load and unload.

He partnered with another Gold Rush newcomer who also hailed from New York, Nicholas T. Smith. They became lifelong friends who saved money in these early days by sleeping on the store's counters wrapped in buffalo robes and using their boots as pillows.[21] This sleeping arrangement especially served them during heavy rains when flooding commonly occurred; they could jump off the counters, pull on their boots and

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[20] Tutorow, *The Governor*, 1: 43.

[21] Smith would later serve as treasurer for the Central Pacific Railroad. George Clark, *Leland Stanford: War Governor of California, Railroad Builder and Founder of Stanford University* (Stanford University and London, Stanford University Press and Oxford University Press, 1931), 55.

start hoisting goods up to higher shelving. Stanford's strength was again put to effective use as he heaved barrels of sugar and other heavy goods on to the countertops.[22]

Stanford definitely encountered Chinese men while working in Cold Springs and later, when he and Smith moved their business to Michigan Bluff. One of Stanford's biographers, George Clark, identified an 1853 photograph of the Smith-Stanford store as being located in Cold Springs.[23] A sign bearing the Stanford name can be seen on the ridgeline of the roof but an even larger sign written in Chinese characters was nailed above the main entrance and it announced: "Chinese goods are always on sale at this store." Clearly Stanford as a businessman was cognizant of the profits to be made selling goods to the largest possible number of miners who, regardless of their

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[22] Clark, 56.

[23] Clark wrote on the back of the photograph that he traveled in June 1929 to both Cold Springs and Michigan Bluff with photograph in hand and determined it had to be the Cold Springs store based on the topography. Stanford Family Photo #14853, Stanford Family Collection, SF, Stanford University Archives, Stanford.

race, paid for their supplies in California's preferred currency of gold like everyone else.

What he thought about the Chinese on a personal level during his first experience in California is unknown, beyond the fact that they were desirable customers; although he and Mrs. Stanford wrote to each other regularly during their three-year separation, she burned almost all of those letters after his death, determined to keep their private life just that.[24] Other letters Stanford wrote home to his relatives have survived but none of them mention this particular subject. Much later, in answer to charges of being supportive of the Chinese while serving his first term as a United States Senator in 1889, Stanford insisted that "since 1855 he has been opposed to the presence of Chinese in California."[25] It is interesting that he chose 1855, the year he and his

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[24] Bertha had many roles throughout her lifetime. She went from mourner at Leland Stanford Junior's funeral to being Mrs. Stanford's secretary. Over the years she was also a friend and companion, and ultimately became Mrs. Stanford's biographer. Bertha Berner, *Mrs. Leland Stanford: An Intimate Account* (Stanford University and London: Stanford University Press and Oxford University Press, 1934), 9.

[25] "Stanford's Views," *Sacramento Daily Record-Union*, 16 Jan 1889, 6.

wife determined California would be their permanent home, as the time he first believed the Chinese had no place in the state; it is possible that between 1852 and 1855, when he still planned on returning to New York, he simply did not care about the racial composition of California.[26]

Dyer Lathrop died 19 April 1855. When Stanford got word of his father-in-law's death, he sold out his half of the business to his partner, Nick Smith, and sailed for New York. Reunited once again, the young couple was at another crossroad. Should they remain in Albany or start over elsewhere? Bertha Berner, Mrs. Stanford's longtime secretary and companion, wrote that due to her husband's prolonged absence, Mrs. Stanford had suffered from cruel gossip claiming that her husband had deserted her; consequently, she wanted nothing more to do with her hometown.[27] Her preference

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[26] Many of the miners had no interest in anything to do with California beyond finding gold and returning home; in 1852, one claimed, "Money is all we want and came for, and when we get it and return we will then perhaps look out for our country and see that she is not ruined." While Stanford was in California to sell supplies to miners, rather than mining itself, he was as much a sojourner as the Chinese until 1855. Tutorow, *The Governor*, 1: 88.

[27] Berner, *Mrs. Leland Stanford*, 8, 10.

was for California, a state still perceived as having limitless potential six years after the Gold Rush and, perhaps for the sensitive Mrs. Stanford, an equally important 3,000-mile distance from humiliating whispers. On 24 October 1855, the Stanfords made the twenty-two day sail from New York to California, arriving in San Francisco on 16 November 1855 and immediately setting out for Sacramento.[28]

Sacramento in 1855 was thriving as the new capital of California. The city was a major hub, with steamboats and ferries connecting it to San Francisco; wagon and stagecoach roads branched out in all directions. There was even a railroad, California's first; the Sacramento Valley Railroad featured twenty-two miles of track between Sacramento and Folsom. Stanford bought the Stanford Brothers mercantile store at 56 and 58 K Street from his brothers, Josiah and Philip, and ran it on his own, retaining the familiar name for customer recognition. In 1858 he took on a partner, Donald Meeker. The business was doing extremely well, allowing the Stanfords to live

[28] Tutorow, *The Governor*, 1: 56-57.

comfortably and invest their profits in various other business ventures.[29]

The Chinese were initially welcomed in California by some, but not by the miners, the single most powerful group in California during the 1850s. They demanded that the state crush competition from foreign miners. The end result was the Foreign Miner's Tax, imposed most heavily against the Chinese. Forced to eke out a living placer mining on abandoned claims, many of the Chinese were beset by violence at the hands of white miners who had no qualms about implementing their will through their fists.

Leland Stanford, who came to California to sell supplies to the Argonauts, included the Chinese among his customer base. What he thought about them during his first three years in California is unknown, but he could not have failed to notice the prevalence of anti-Chinese sentiment in the state. Stanford was a private citizen during this time period, with no clear intention of making California his home. Once he did so in 1855, and then achieved public office as governor in 1862, his private and public viewpoints

[29] Tutorow, *The Governor*, 1: 57.

about the Chinese would attain a new level of significance due to his prominent political position.

Chapter 2

The Governorship of California

Leland Stanford Re-enters Politics

Stanford was a man of considerable energy; in addition to focusing on business concerns, he renewed his earlier interest in politics and civic matters. While living in Wisconsin in 1850 he had run as the Whig nominee for district attorney of Washington County in 1851; he lost by 600 votes.[1] He was later successfully elected as a village trustee in 1851 and subsequently was made president *pro tem* of Port Washington's town council.[2] In 1854, during his first stay in California, the Placer County Board of Supervisors made him a justice of the peace, a position Stanford held until he returned to New York in May 1855 to re-unite with Mrs. Stanford after her father's death.[3]

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[1] Tutorow, *The Governor*, 1: 16.

[2] Tutorow, 1: 21-22.

[3] Tutorow, 1: 52, 55.

In 1856, along with fellow city merchants Collis P. Huntington and his partner, Mark Hopkins, and brothers E.B. and Charles Crocker, Stanford became interested in the development of the Republican party in California, realizing that the Whigs (his earlier party of choice) were steadily losing ground in local and national politics.[4] The attraction of the Republican party for Stanford was that it was pro-railroad and anti-slavery.[5]

Interest in a transcontinental railroad that would link isolated California to the East existed as early as 1849, when member Oliver Wozencraft raised the issue at the state's constitutional convention. Theodore Judah, the engineer and ardent railroad man who had built that first stretch of track between

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[4] The national Whig party had split between a Southern pro-slavery wing and a Northern and Western Free Soil anti-slavery wing; Stanford was a Free Soil Whig before becoming a Republican. Free Soilers supported Pennsylvania Democrat David Wilmot's beliefs. He had declared to Congress in 1846: "I would preserve for free white labor a fair country, a rich inheritance, where the sons of toil, of my own race and own color, can live without disgrace which association with negro slavery brings upon free white labor." Tutorow, *The Governor*, 1: 89, 90, and Leonard L. Richards, *The California Gold Rush and the Coming of the Civil War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2007), 64.

[5] McDowell, *Sacramento Years*, 4.

Sacramento and Folsom in 1854, then became obsessed with building a transcontinental railroad; he began lobbying hard to raise both interest and capital.[6] Finding little positive response in San Francisco, Judah resorted to approaching men in Sacramento, where he managed to convince Stanford, Huntington, Hopkins, the two Crockers, and a few others to invest in a railroad project most thought technologically impossible. Due to the seemingly insurmountable barrier of the Sierra Nevada, among other assorted challenges, many thought the task impossible, but it seemed everyone in California at this point wanted the railroad. People living in the state recognized that railroads in the eastern part of the United States were increasing trade, industry, agricultural progress and, of course, profits.[7] If California were to reap the same benefits, not to mention become less isolated

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[6] Kevin Starr, *California: A History* (New York: The Modern Library, 2005), 115.

[7] Richard B. Rice, William A. Bullough and Richard J. Orsi, *The Elusive Eden: A New History of California* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1988), 237.

by means of quicker and safer transcontinental transportation, the railroad had to be built.[8]

The issue of slavery spreading beyond the South had been tearing the country apart with increasingly greater force since the Missouri Compromise of 1820, which dictated that newly created states would be admitted to the Republic on the understanding that a balance of free and slave states would be maintained. California had been admitted as a free state in 1850 but had been overwhelmingly Democratic ever since, the Democrats largely being transplanted Southerners who supported slavery. Both Republicans and Democrats in California were split over slavery, with the Democrats arguing whether to contain it or allow it to spread and Republicans arguing whether to contain it or eradicate it. The issue of slavery was inextricably tied to the issue of race; California Democrats referred to their Republican rivals in the most racist of terms, openly and routinely calling them "black Republicans," "abolitionists," "darkey sympathizers," "devotees of the dark faith" and "nigger-worshippers."[9]

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[8] Serious negative feeling toward the railroad started with the depression of the 1870s. Tutorow, *The Governor*, 1: 121.

[9] Richards, 175.

Republicans themselves were split in the matters of slavery and race relations, disagreeing over slavery vs. abolition, and feelings for blacks ranging from hatred to indifference to--very rarely--a desire for racial equality. Huntington believed fervently in racial equality and spent much of his later fortune giving generously to black institutions. Stanford abhorred slavery on principle but was no abolitionist, meaning he held racial beliefs that found the white man superior to the black.[10] This viewpoint was typical of most Americans at the time, and was clearly reflected in Stanford's acceptance speech when he was nominated as a candidate for the role of California's Republican governor in 1859:

> The cause in which we are engaged is one of the greatest in which anyone can labor [referring to holding the Union together]. It is the cause of the white man—the cause of free labor, of justice, and of equal rights. I am in favor of free white American citizens. I prefer free white citizens to any other class or race. I prefer the white man to the negro as an inhabitant of our country. I believe the greatest good has been

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[10] Stanford's anti-slavery convictions stemmed from reading Dr. Francis Wayland's *Moral Philosophy* while attending school; Stanford believed slavery should not exist within the framework of free government. Tutorow, *Man of Many Careers*, 26-27.

> derived by having all the country settled by free white men.[11]

He would reiterate this belief in a campaign speech, "I prefer free white citizens to any other class or race."[12] It is impossible to know how much of this anti-Chinese sentiment was Stanford's personal conviction, how much of it was a Republican candidate's attempt to disassociate himself from the "black Republican" image of loving people of color, and how much was the shrewd politician's response to give the voters what they wanted. There is no doubt that by this time the animosity of white Californians towards the Chinese had become a significant and public topic with anti-Chinese sentiment clearly reflected in consistently heavy and vitriolic newspaper coverage.

Controversy over Chinese labor began as early as 1852, when California state senator George Tingley introduced a bill calling for the importation of Chinese laborers to do reclamation work.[13] One fellow senator thought it appropriate as long as these

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[11] Richards, 175.

[12] Tutorow, *The Governor*, 1: 103.

[13] Street, 238-239.

laborers were not allowed to become citizens; others thought it resembled a modified form of slavery. The most violently opposed, as well as the strongest political force in the state at the time, were the miners. They were adamantly against importing Chinese contract laborers, fearing both competition in the gold fields and the opportunity it would give for wealthy farmers to develop land monopolies similar to those of the southern plantation system. The state assembly passed the bill but the Senate killed it, with Governor John Bigler calling it "a moral evil."[14]

By 1859, when Stanford made his first run for governor, there were approximately 34,933 Chinese, mostly men, in California; 29,355 were living and working in the mining districts, with 2,719 in San Francisco and another 2,519 in the Central Valley. They made up 9.2% of the state's total population of 379,994, and the majority of the Chinese in the Sacramento area were either mining or performing agricultural work.[15] At this point in time, as reflected in Stanford's acceptance speech, whites were

[14] Street, 238-239.

[15] Chan, 43, 54, 62-63.

also highly concerned with the racial composition of California's burgeoning population; according to the nativist voice, the Golden State, like the rest of America, was for whites only. The Chinese had already been unfavorably conflated with blacks and Indians; in the 1854 Supreme Court decision regarding *People vs. Hall*, the court had declared:

> No black, or mulatto person, or Indian shall be allowed to give evidence in favor of, or against a white man. Held, that the words, Indian, Negro, Black, and White are generic terms, designating races. That, therefore, Chinese and all other people not white, are included in the prohibition from being witnesses against whites.[16]

Then, in 1859, the California superintendent of education declared that the schools must be racially segregated, insisting that the mixing of the races was completely unacceptable:

> If this attempt to force Africans, Chinese and Diggers [Indians] into one school is persisted in it must result in the ruin of the schools. The great mass of our citizens will not associate on terms of equality with these inferior races; nor will they consent that their children should do so.[17]

Clearly, Stanford was not operating outside of the court of public opinion when he campaigned for

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[16] Takaki, *Iron Cages*, 220.

[17] Takaki, *Iron Cages*, 220.

governor. Nonetheless, he lost this first nomination, placing last in a field of three. However, he remained committed to the growth of the Republican party. He stumped throughout the state in support of Abraham Lincoln's run for United States president, not really expecting victory due to repeated Republican losses.[18] However, Lincoln won and, as a consequence, the Stanfords sailed east in January 1861 to attend the Inaugural Ball in Washington, D.C. Stanford later met with Lincoln as one of a committee of three to advise the president in the matter of Pacific patronage. The Stanfords remained in the East for over four months, returning to California with Mrs. Stanford's sister, Anna Maria Lathrop, in tow. Stanford was interested in actively pursuing the nomination of governor this time, writing to his brother Philip that he was willing to consider himself as a strong Unionist candidate who would actively support the Lincoln administration.[19]

Stanford's second campaign for the then-biennial governorship focused on the outcome of the Civil War,

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[18] Tutorow, *Man of Many Careers*, 35.

[19] Tutorow, *The Governor*, 1: 116.

and he pushed the notion that the "holy cause" of the Union could only be won if Californians elected a Republican administration.[20] Other issues included addressing corruption within the state government, balancing the state budget and, of course, the transcontinental railroad. He also spoke about the Chinese in California, and made his strongest speech to date concerning this latter issue after he won the election and was inaugurated as Republican governor of California on 10 January 1862:

> While the settlement of our State is of the first importance, the character of those who shall become settlers is worthy of scarcely less consideration. To my mind it is clear, that the settlement among us of an inferior race is to be discouraged, by every legitimate means. Asia, with her numberless millions, sends to our shores the dregs of her population. Large numbers of this class are already here; and unless we do something early to check their immigration, the question, which of the two tides of immigration, meeting upon the shores of the Pacific, shall be turned back, will be enforced upon our consideration, when far more difficult than now of disposal. There can be no doubt but that the presence of numbers among us of a degraded and distinct people must exercise a deleterious influence upon the superior race, and, to a certain extent, repel desirable immigration. It will afford me great pleasure to concur with the Legislature in any constitutional action, having for its object the repression of the immigration of the Asiatic race.[21]

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[20] Tutorow, *Man of Many Careers*, 46.
[21] Tutorow, *The Governor*, 1: 127, and Mudgett, 16-17.

Just a few days after making this speech, Governor Stanford became president of the Central Pacific Railroad; now he was not merely investing in the railroad, he was in the business of building one. Easily juggling the joint responsibilities of railroad president and state governor, and unconcerned with the modern notion of conflict of interest between the two roles, Stanford on 26 April 1862, signed into law House Bill 201.[22]

The law called for a tax racially targeting the Chinese and was intended to both discourage Chinese immigration and protect white labor from Chinese competition, the latter point being one that would progressively grow much more explosive in succeeding decades. The appellate court found the tax unconstitutional, stating that the Chinese could be taxed like other residents but not exclusively. The California Supreme Court concurred in July 1862, also finding the law unconstitutional because the tax restricted commerce, a federal area of concern.

Other pertinent 1862 legislation that indirectly affected the Chinese living in California was the

[22] Tutorow, *The Governor*, 1: 132.

encouragement of agriculture and manufacturing with bonuses paid for the production of flax, hemp, cotton, raw silk, hops, tobacco and sorghum.[23] The Chinese would ultimately provide much of the field labor needed to grow and harvest these various crops, backbreaking jobs that free white labor generally had no interest in performing.[24]

This prevalent situation would create one class of people very interested in keeping the Chinese in California--farmers desperate for reliable labor to harvest time-sensitive crops that would otherwise rot.[25] On 30 September 1862, viticulturalist and president of the California State Agricultural Society, Agoston Haraszthy spoke at the Sacramento state fair, praising the Chinese for their role as both laborers and consumers, and expressing concern at the rising call for their expulsion from the state.[26] Haraszthy hired many Chinese laborers to work for him; other growers who also relied on Chinese labor agreed

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[23] Tutorow, *The Governor*, 1: 133.

[24] Street, 254.

[25] Street, 254.

[26] Street, 254.

with him. This situation of one group of Californians determined to get rid of the Chinese and another group believing their livelihood required the presence of the Chinese added fuel to the fire of the Chinese question. As agriculture eventually replaced mining in the state, that fire would only burn hotter.

Public vs. Private Life

The Stanfords had earlier purchased a large house on the corner of Eighth and N Streets in 1861 that was more suitable for all of the entertaining they now did.[27] They hired a bevy of servants to assist with the daily upkeep of the mansion, and with the numerous social functions each of the Stanfords now hosted. Among this staff was a Chinese cook, food preparation being one of the livelihoods the Chinese were "allowed" to follow. Many Chinese cooks became like members of the family and stayed with one household for decades.[28] That may or may not have been the case

[27] McDowell, 5.

[28] Street, 246.

with this particular cook, but he *was* instrumental in finding someone to save Mrs. Stanford's life.[29] At some point in 1862, she became deathly ill with a pulmonary infection that American doctors were helpless to treat.[30] The Chinese cook suggested sending for Yee Fung Cheung, a Chinese herbalist who had arrived in California in 1850. Desperate to save his wife, Stanford agreed to the suggestion. The cook took a horse and buggy and made his way to the Sacramento Chinatown, then located on I St. between Front and Sixth streets.[31] He found Yee playing mah-jongg in the back of T. Wah Hing's grocery store and drove the herbalist to the Stanford house. There Yee examined Mrs. Stanford and successfully treated her with

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[29] Dr. Herbert Yee, great-grandson of Yee Fung Cheung, telephone interview with author, 10 March 2011; and Dr. Franklin Yee, great-grandson of Yee Fung Cheung, telephone interview with author, 26 March 2011; and Donovan Lewis, *Pioneers of California: True Stories of Early Settlers in the Golden State* (San Francisco: Scottwall Associates, 1993), 541-545.

[30] Ed Goldman, "Keeping It in the Family," *Sacramento Magazine*, (June 2005), available from http://www.sacmag.com/media/Sacramento-Magazine/June2005/Keeping-It-In-The-Family/ (accessed 4 March 2011).

[31] Stephen Magagnini, "Chinese Transformed 'Gold Mountain,'" *Sacramento Bee* (18 Jan 1998), available from http://www.calgoldrush.com/part3/03asians.html (accessed 24 January 2011).

majaung, a natural source of ephedrine that eased her labored breathing.[32] She recovered and Yee would later work as a doctor for the Central Pacific Railroad, treating both Chinese and white patients.[33]

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[32] Magagnini, unpaginated.

[33] Yee Fung Cheung returned to China in 1904 a wealthy man; his grandson Henry Yee emigrated from China and attended Stanford University between 1918 and 1920. While attending school he worked for the university president, David Starr Jordan, to help defray the cost of tuition. When Stanford University switched from semesters to quarters, the tuition increase was too much for Henry Yee and he transferred to the University of Michigan. Two of his sons, Herbert and Franklin Yee, also attended Stanford University and lived in the Chinese Student's Club on Salvatierra St. Two more Yee descendents later earned their degrees from Stanford as well. The Chinese Student's Club was built by the Chinese students, angry because no Chinese men were allowed in the Encina men's dormitory; as late as 1918, a Chinese student was thrown bodily out of the building. Jordan, had earlier attempted to address racial discrimination on the campus in 1908 by creating the Cosmopolitan Club, a university society for Australians, Japanese, Chinese, and Europeans of various nationalities. He also refused to allow Chinese men working on the campus to be mistreated, expelling two students "for robbing a Chinese vegetable wagon" and counseling another who had locked a Chinese laundryman in his Encina dormitory room and dragged the man's cart to Mayfield and abandoned it there in order to avoid paying his bill. Connie Yu, *Chinatown, San Jose, USA* (San Jose, CA: History San Jose, 1991), 101, and "Forms Chapter of New Society at Stanford," *San Francisco Call*, 20 January 1908, 2, and Orrin Leslie Elliott, *Stanford University: The First Twenty-Five Years* (Stanford: Stanford University Press and London: Oxford University Press, 1937), 212, and David Starr Jordan to William Durand, undated, David Starr Jordan Papers,

This story is significant on two levels. First, it highlights one of the ways in which whites and Chinese intersected, with a Chinese herbalist using his knowledge and abilities to carve out another role for himself when gold mining, as it had for so many others, failed to meet his initial expectations. Second, it is the first known example of the public and private faces of Chinese immigration rhetoric colliding for Stanford. In his public role as governor, he came out and stated in the clearest of terms his low opinion of the Chinese as a race and his every intention of legally pursuing a way to prevent additional Chinese immigration. In his private role as an employer, however, he had at least one member of this "inferior" race working in his own home and, in fear for his wife's life, was willing to allow another Chinese man to treat her. This situation where the public Stanford said one thing and the private Stanford did another is one that was repeated with regularity over the next three decades. There were also, at least, four known swings in his public opinion; he was against the Chinese, then for, then

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SC0058, Stanford University Archives. Herbert Yee and Franklin Yee, telephone interviews.

against, and then for again, and throughout all of these public shifts of opinion numerous Chinese men worked for both of the Stanfords, and later for the widow alone, for the remainder of the Stanfords' lives. For that matter, some of those Chinese men spent the rest of their own lives, long after the Stanfords were gone, working as "old retainers of Governor Stanford" at the university in one capacity or another.[34]

While this initial episode with the herbalist Yee may have been one that influenced the Stanfords' private thinking towards the Chinese in a positive way, it did not initially soften Stanford's public attitude towards the Chinese living in California. In his first Annual Message, delivered 7 January 1863, Governor Stanford returned to the subject of Chinese immigration restriction, suggesting that another tax be created that would slow immigration without shutting it off completely.[35] He also proposed that the Californnia Legislature continue to think of a way to

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[34] George B. Culver, "Byways of the Arboretum, Soon to Be a Great Botanical Garden," *Stanford Illustrated Review* 28, no. 7 (April 1927): 335.

[35] Tutorow, *The Governor*, 1: 135.

legally proscribe Chinese immigration, fearing that the presence of so many Chinese already in California were enough to prevent more "desirable citizens," citizens of a "higher and more enterprising and labor-creating class" from settling in California.[36]

Promoting California's agricultural potential was another of Stanford's themes:

> ……of all the varied interests of our State there are none more important, or that promise more cheering results in their future development, than that which has for its object the cultivation of the soil…Agriculture is the great source whence come the necessaries and comforts and many of the luxuries of life. It is an employment that is at once invigorating and ennobling, and when wisely pursued, where nature has been as bountiful as she has been with us, and where other advantages permit, it becomes the means of creating commerce, of inducing manufactures, and of accumulating wealth.[37]

This notion of the nobility of the farmer stemmed from President Thomas Jefferson's vision of independent small farmers populating the Republic, white family men who, "being close to the earth and therefore incorruptible would serve as value carriers, as champions against the constant encroachment of

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[36] Tutorow, *The Governor*, 1: 135.

[37] Clark, 140.

urban wealth and special privilege."[38] A separate New England belief was that "land was a form of capital, consumed for the purpose of creating wealth."[39] It is interesting to note that these ideas, which would greatly expand between the 1870s and the 1890s, were already taking root in Stanford's mind as early as 1863.

He was not nominated to run again for governor and, many years later, declared that he had "had to decide whether I would remain in public life or give my whole time to the Pacific railroad, which I had assisted to bring into form."[40] Whether or not this was a later rationalization, the fact remains that Stanford was now free to concentrate more fully on the building of the railroad and there were more than enough challenges in his role as company president to

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[38] Jefferson's private reality encompassed the ownership of a large plantation dependent on slave labor, the opposite situation of his public vision. Saxton, *Indispensable Enemy*, 21.

[39] Cecelia Tsu, "Grown in the 'Garden of the World': Race, Gender and Agriculture in California's Santa Clara Valley, 1880-1940," Ph. D. diss. (Stanford University, June 2006) 24.

[40] Tutorow, *The Governor*, 1: 157.

keep even the most energetic of men completely engaged.[41]

Stanford moved from the relative obscurity of being a well-to-do mercantilist into the public arena when he became involved in state politics and railroad building. He supported the nascent Republican party, the dark horse of California politics where Democrats had dominated since 1850. Stanford's Free Soil beliefs were apparent in his stringent anti-Chinese campaigning comments made when he claimed "the greatest good has been derived by having all the country settled by free white men."[42]

Stanford's public and private views about the Chinese came into conflict when he hired a Chinese cook for the Stanford family home while simultaneously giving voice to anti-Chinese rhetoric focused on sending the Chinese back to their home country during his governorship. Both of the Stanfords may have started to develop positive feelings privately towards the Chinese after herbalist Lee Fung Cheung successfully treated Mrs. Stanford's life-threatening pulmonary infection in 1862. However, Stanford

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[41] Tutorow, *The Governor*, 1: 157.

[42] Richards, 175.

maintained his negative public viewpoint, the evidence being the consistent anti-Chinese stance he held throughout the two years he was governor. Once Stanford would become more actively involved with the presidency of the Central Pacific Railroad, he would go on to employ literally thousands of Chinese men and make the first polar swing of his public opinion regarding the Chinese from the negative to the positive.

Chapter 3

The Building of the Central Pacific Railroad

The Chinese as Railroad Workers

Initially, work on the western half of the Central Pacific Railroad proceeded slowly; one of several reasons for this was the Central Pacific Railroad Company's inability to secure a stable work force. As a result, Crocker directed the superintendent of construction, James H. Strobridge, to advertise for 5,000 workers in January 1865. The company only managed to hire about 800 men, many of whom deserted for the mines after earning a month's pay as a grubstake.[1] When some of the Irish immigrants working on the road threatened to strike for higher pay, Crocker, apparently at his brother E.B.'s

[1] Many of the Argonauts spent every penny they had simply getting to California. These men then needed to earn enough money to live on and to get themselves to the goldfields. Money earned for this purpose was referred to as a grubstake. Charles Crocker's testimony, *Report of the Joint Special Committee to Investigate Chinese Immigration, February 27, 1877* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1877), 666-688, available from http://cprr.org/Museum/Chinese_Immigration.html (accessed 24 January 2011).

suggestion, ordered Strobridge to go to Auburn and hire fifty Chinese workers to fill the dump carts, the simplest form of labor.[2] Strobridge, who had earlier employed several Chinese workers at his farm and hotel in 1852, wanted no part of working with them.[3] Reputed to be one of the most profane men in the state, with a supervisory style that relied on intimidation and physical violence, Strobridge retorted, "I will not boss the damned Chinaman. He is strange. He smells. He eats disgusting things. He is not a mason."[4] More to the point, he did not believe they were capable of the

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[2] Yen Tzu-Kuei, "Chinese Workers and the First Transcontinental Railroad of the United States of America," Ph. D. dissertation (New York: St. John's University, 1976), 32-33, and Erle Heath, "From Trail to Rail: The Story of the Beginning of Southern Pacific," *Southern Pacific Bulletin* 15, no. 5 (May 1927): 12.

[3] G.J. "Chris" Graves, "Eighteen Chinese and James H. Strobridge—The California Special Census of 1852," *Central Pacific Railroad Photographic History Museum*, available from http://cprr.org/Museum/Chinese Laborers.html (accessed 2 March 2011).

[4] Richard Rayner, *The Associates: Four Capitalists Who Created California* (New York: W.W. Nortion and Company, 2008), 66, and "People and Events: Charles Crocker (1822-1885)," *American Experience: Transcontinental Railroad*, available from http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/tcrr/peopleevents/p crocker.html (accessed 24 January 2011).

heavy labor required by road work.[5] Crocker is said to have responded that if the Chinese could build the Great Wall of China, they could build a railroad.[6]

Crocker was actually speaking from experience. While historical accounts have consistently set the starting date of the Chinese working for the Central Pacific as March 1865, a study of the surviving Central Pacific payroll records reveals that Chinese were hired in large numbers as early as January 1864.[7] They also appear in February and April 1864 payroll records, working until railroad funds dried up and temporarily halted construction. It seems likely these experienced men were among those who returned to work in the spring of 1865, their prowess prompting Crocker and Strobridge to drop any lingering doubts on two issues: that the Chinese were a viable work force and that the Central Pacific could or would make any progress without the Chinese acting as the principal

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[5] Crocker, 666-688.

[6] Heath, 12.

[7] William F. Chew, *Nameless Builders of the Transcontinental* (Victoria, Canada: Trafford Publishing, 2004), 37.

work force. On 12 April 1865, E.B Crocker wrote to a friend:

> A large part of our force are Chinese, and they prove nearly equal to white men, in the amount of labor they perform, and are far more reliable. No danger of strikes among them. We are training them to all kinds of labor, blasting, driving horses, handling rock, as well as the pick and shovel.[8]

Likewise, the acting chief engineer, Samuel S. Montague, wrote in his annual report for 1865:

> It became apparent early in the season that the amount of labor likely to be required during the summer could only be supplied by the employment of the Chinese element of our population. Some distrust was at first felt regarding the capacity of this class for the services required but the experiment has proved eminently successful. They are faithful and industrious and, under proper supervision, soon become skillful in the performance of their duty. Many of them are becoming very expert in drilling, blasting and other departments of rock work."[9]

Strobridge, publicly acknowledging his altered opinion, would later say of the Chinese, "They learn quickly, do not fight, have no strikes that amount to anything, and are very cleanly in their habits. They

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[8] Chew, 38.

[9] Heath, 12.

will gamble and do quarrel among themselves most noisily—but harmlessly."[10]

Elated with the progress being made, Crocker and Strobridge arranged to hire three thousand more Chinese through Sisson, Wallace and Company in San Francisco.[11] Up until then, most Chinese in California had been working in the mining districts, but now that placer mining had finally played itself out, they were desperate for other work and answered the Central Pacific Railroad's call in droves.[12] The Central Pacific Railroad also arranged for more Chinese men to come straight from China in an attempt to continually increase the workforce, using the Dutch merchant Cornelius Koopmanschap, also headquartered in San Francisco, as a go-between.[13]

The Irish already hired by the Company wanted no part of working with the Chinese and threatened to run

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[10] Heath, 12, and James H. Strobridge's testimony, *Report of the Joint Special Committee to Investigate Chinese Immigration, February 27, 1877* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1877), 666-688, available from http://cprr.org/Museum/Chinese Immigration.html (accessed 24 January 2011).

[11] Crocker, 666-688.

[12] Yen, 11.

[13] Crocker, 666-688.

them off. Crocker told them they either worked with the Chinese or they were fired. More significantly, these unskilled white workers were, for the most part, promoted to foremen over the Chinese and subsequently earned a wage four to five times higher than what they had earned as laborers.[14] What with the difficulty, not to mention the undesirability, of road work and the opportunity to elevate themselves, the already hired Irish workers and other white laborers who later worked on the massive construction project accepted Crocker's ultimatum.[15]

In October 1865, only a few months after large numbers the Chinese were first hired by the Central Pacific, Stanford wrote a statement to United State President, Andrew Johnson and Secretary of the Interior James Harlan regarding the progress of the road. Like Strobridge, he had a new and different opinion of the Chinese. He explained the initial situation of white labor being difficult to procure in California--the end result being only 31 miles of track built in the first two years of operation--and

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[14] Yen, 37.

[15] Saxton, *Indispensable Enemy*, 66.

went on to defend their subsequent use of Chinese labor:

> As a class they are quiet, peaceable, patient, industrious and economical—ready and apt to learn all the different kinds of work required in railroad building, they soon become as efficient as white laborers. More prudent and economical, they are contented with less wages. We find them organized into societies for mutual aid and assistance. These societies, that count their numbers by thousands, are conducted by shrewd, intelligent business men, who promptly advise their subordinates where employment can be found on the most favorable terms.[16]

Stanford went on to reassure Johnson and Harlan that the Company was employing free labor, not enforcing a form of servile labor on the Chinese:

> No system similar to slavery, serfdom or peonage prevails among these laborers. Their wages, which are always paid in coin, at the end of each month, are divided among them by their agents, who attend to their business, in proportion to the labor done by each person. These agents are generally American or Chinese merchants, who furnish them their supplies of food, the value of which they deduct from their monthly pay. We have assurances from leading Chinese merchants, that under the just and liberal policy pursued by the Company, it will be able to procure during the next year, not less than 15,000 laborers. With this large force, the Company will be able to push on the work so as not only to complete it

[16] Leland Stanford, *Central Pacific Railroad: Statement Made to the President of the United States and Secretary of the Interior of the Progress of the Work, Oct. 10th, 1865* (Sacramento: H.S. Crocker and Co.'s Print, 1865), 7-8.

> far within the time required by Acts of Congress, but so as to meet the public impatience.[17]

Many people critical of the use of Chinese labor were confused by the difference between contract laborers, where Chinese men had their passage paid for and they worked off the debt upon their arrival in California, and the so-called "Coolie Trade," which was a form of slavery. The Coolie Trade took place in Hong Kong, where coolie brokers in effect bought Chinese men as slaves for $120-$170 and then sold them off to sugar plantation buyers in South America or the West Indies at a profit anywhere from $350 to $400.[18] Knowledge of the trade was commonplace and led many Californians to regard any and all Chinese they saw as coolies. Comparisons to secessionists and the slavery they supported, not to mention the heavy toll of so much death and destruction in a war the secessionists caused and lost, were also highly unpopular—the Civil War had only been over for a few months and emotions were still running high. Ardent Republicans such as Stanford, Crocker, Huntington and Hopkins found any comparisons to their employment of the Chinese to

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[17] Stanford, 7-8.

[18] Street, 238-239.

slavery distasteful, as evidenced by Stanford's careful explanation of how the Chinese were hired and paid for their work in gold coin.

Stanford's sea change in opinion regarding the Chinese is not difficult to understand. They were accomplishing the impossible by building the railroad, ensuring that delays the Company could not afford were in the past, and at a much lower dollar amount than white laborers would have cost, had white laborers been willing to do such arduous work.[19]

Unskilled white laborers in 1865 earned $30 per month, plus food and lodging, while the Chinese were earning the same amount of cash but paid for their own food and sleeping quarters, basically canvas tents or simply sleeping outside. Add to that the fact that white skilled workers earned three to five dollars per day for the skilled tasks the Chinese were performing at their $30/month rate. The salary without board difference alone saved the Company, over the next three years, approximately five and a half million dollars, without taking into account the additional savings made by innumerable Chinese performing skilled

[19] Yen, 109.

tasks at the lower unskilled pay rate.[20] The ratio of Chinese to white workers was four out of five men; the average number of overall workers was 5,000 except for the two years of summit work, when the number of Chinese ranged from 11,000 to 15,000.[21] After studying the surviving Central Pacific Railroad payroll records, author William Chew believes that a total of 23,000 Chinese workers is actually a much more accurate number, with many gangs working one-month to four-month stints while a very few gangs worked as long as fifteen to seventeen months at a time.[22]

Stanford's Perceived Role as Pro-Chinese

When Stanford made his report, the most difficult portion of road to be built was still in the future. The summit of the Sierra Nevada loomed high both

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[20] Saxton, The *Indispensable Enemy*, 63.

[21] Alexander Saxton, "The Army of Canton in the High Sierra," *Pacific Historical Review* 35, no. 2 (May 1966): 144; and Rice, et al., *Elusive Eden*, 251.

[22] Chew, 42, 47.

literally and figuratively. Beyond Auburn the rugged terrain climbed 6,000 feet for forty miles before hitting the summit, marked by the dangerous cliffs of Donner Pass. In winter the temperatures typically plunged below-zero and forty-foot snow drifts halted progress for weeks at a time. In summer there was soaring heat, clouds of biting insects and, even deadlier, swarms of rattlesnakes.[23] By late 1866, the Chinese workers were within fourteen miles of the summit and they spent the next two years, through two of the worst winters on record, boring through 6,213 feet of granite to create numerous vital tunnels.[24] They worked year-round, regardless of the weather, for two reasons: 1) any time spent idle translated into a monetary loss of hundreds of thousands in terms of land and subsidy payments for the Central Pacific, and 2) the Central Pacific had to reach Utah, with its Mormon settlements that would provide freight and passenger traffic, before the Union Pacific Railroad, who was striving from the East to reach the same

[23] Rice, et al., 250.

[24] Yen, 161.

point.[25] Whichever company arrived at the Salt Lake Basin first would dominate the transcontinental system and earn correspondingly higher profits. Before the Central Pacific hired Chinese workers, the Union Pacific, relying on Irish immigrants and ex-Confederate soldiers, was outpacing the western-based company at a ratio of 8:1.[26] As a result, Crocker and Strobridge drove their workers mercilessly, mindful of all that was at stake and furthermore motivated by a ceaseless stream of harrying telegrams from the other directors.[27]

Stanford also came into direct contact with the Chinese working on the road, albeit not at the same level as Crocker and Strobridge. In an 1868 letter to Mark Hopkins, he wrote:

> Those Dutch Flat Chinamen passed on to the graders yesterday morning. About twenty-five men left and this morning fifteen say they want to go below. I shall put the forces at work from the other end as much as possible.[28]

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[25] Saxton, *Indispensable Enemy*, 65.

[26] Yen, 32.

[27] Yen, 32.

[28] Leland Stanford to Mark Hopkins, 21 October 1868, Leland Stanford Papers, SC033a, Stanford University Archives, Stanford.

It is possible that this degree of personal contact also influenced Stanford's change of heart regarding the Chinese, in addition to the clear benefits they were bringing to the railroad endeavor as a workforce. He saw first-hand how difficult the work was and how successfully the Chinese carried out their various and arduous tasks. The Central Pacific's hiring of the Chinese, the retention of the Chinese despite white laborers' protests, and Stanford's role as president, created a new public image of him as a "friend" of the Chinese that persisted during his lifetime. This perception would stay with him despite his numerous protestations on his own behalf in terms of supporting restricted Chinese immigration and anti-Chinese legislation once he became a U.S. Senator in 1885. Long after his death in 1893, author Erle Heath would claim in a 1927 article about the creation of the railroad:

> Governor Stanford held the Chinese workers in such high esteem that he provided in his will for the permanent employment of a large number. Some of these are still living and working lands now owned by Stanford University.[29]

[29] Heath, 12.

It is certainly true that a few Chinese workers remained living and working on the campus when Heath wrote his article, although an examination of Stanford's will housed in the university archives does not reveal any references to Chinese workers and their continued employment.[30] It is entirely possible, however, that some verbal agreement had been made, on either Stanford's or Mrs. Stanford's part, with estate and later university administrators; for instance, Mrs. Stanford had asked the Board of Trustees to keep her brother, Charles Lathrop, on as treasurer for the remainder of his working life and they honored her request. She also asked university president David Starr Jordan to permanently retain a Mr. Soule, the woodshop instructor, because her late husband had recommended him for the position. A similar agreement regarding some of the Chinese men who had first worked at the Palo Alto estate and later for Stanford University might also have been made, the evidence being the presence of long-standing Chinese employees at the university well after the Stanfords' respective deaths in 1893 and 1905.

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[30] Leland Stanford, "Last Will and Testament," SC033a, Leland Stanford Papers, Stanford University Archives, Stanford.

Work on the Pacific Railway finished when the Central Pacific crew connected track with the westward-bound Union Pacific men, meeting in Promontory, Utah on 10 May 1869 with the celebratory Golden Spike ceremony. Stanford was the only one of the Central Pacific directors to travel to Promontory. Once there, his brief remarks do not appear to have included any mention of the Chinese workers; if he did, they went unrecorded.[31] Strobridge, on the other hand, invited several of the Chinese workers who were at Promontory to his railroad car for lunch. They entered to cheers from Strobridge's other guests, "the chosen representatives of the race which have greatly helped to build the road--a tribute they well deserved and which evidently gave them much pleasure."[32] At the Sacramento celebration, E.B. Crocker also spoke up for the Chinese:

> In the midst of our rejoicing at this event, I wish to call to your minds that the early completion of this railroad we have built has been in great measure due to that poor, despised

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[31] Tutorow, *The Governor*, 1: 289.

[32] Tutorow, *The Governor*, 1: 300, and Wesley Griswold, *A Work of Giants: Building the First Transcontinental Railroad* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1962), 329.

> class of laborers called the Chinese—to the fidelity and industry they have shown.[33]

Mention of the Chinese workers' accomplishment was also made in the press. In August 1869, an *Overland Monthly* writer noted:

> The dream of Thomas Jefferson, and the desires of Thomas H. Benton's heart, have been wonderfully fulfilled, so far as the Pacific Railroad and the trade with the old world of the East is concerned. But even they did not prophesy that Chinamen should build the Pacificward end of the road.[34]

A month later, a writer for *Scribner's Monthly* wrote about his experience at the Promontory ceremony, noting the racial and social significance of the occasion he observed that day:

> One fact…forcibly impressed me at the laying of the last nail. Two lengths of rails, fifty-six feet, had been omitted. The Union Pacific people brought up their pair of rails, and the work of placing them was done by Europeans. The Central Pacific people then laid their pair of rails, the labor being performed by Mongolians. The foremen, in both cases, were Americans. Here, near the center of the American Continent, were the united efforts of representatives of the continents of Europe, Asia and America—America directing and controlling.[35]

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[33] Griswold, 322.

[34] F.F. Victor, "Manifest Destiny in the West," *Overland Monthly* 3 (August 1869): 148-159, in Takaki, *Iron Cages*, 231.

[35] Frank Norton, "Our Labor System and the Chinese," *Scribner's Monthly* 2 (May 1871): 67, in Takaki, *Iron Cages*, 231.

This writer perfectly captured the racial mood of America, and California, in the latter part of the nineteenth century. America, and by extension California, was for white people, for the superior race who had a God-given mandate to develop resources other races, inferior races such as Native Americans or Mexicans, merely squandered. While the Chinese involvement in building the Central Pacific Railroad did not change public opinion in their favor, it certainly changed Strowbridge's and Stanford's opinions of their capabilities, prompting these men to speak publicly in their behalf. These connections with officials of the Central Pacific Railroad would benefit some of the Chinese workers who returned to California once the road was completed. In an oral history gathered in the Santa Clara Valley during the late 1960s, one contributor, referring back to the persecution the Chinese faced during the 1870s and 1880s, stated:

> These men were finally aided by the Big Four. Stanford, especially, was against the outrageous discrimination against Chinese, and he and Crocker, Huntington, and Hopkins employed Chinese

> laborers on their estates as houseboys, cooks and gardeners."[36]

The owners of the Central Pacific Railroad, Stanford, Crocker, Huntington and Hopkins (known as the Associates, or the Big Four), made relatively little construction progress until they resorted to hiring Chinese laborers as their principal working force. They overcame white opposition to the use of Chinese workers by promoting white laborers into supervisory positions and increasing their pay. The Chinese, desperate for work since placer mining had played itself out, responded to the call for workers by the thousands; at the height of the project, 11,000-15,000--and possibly up to 23,000--Chinese men were employed by the Central Pacific. Without the back-breaking work of these men, the California skeptics would have been correct: the western half of the transcontinental railroad would not have been built.

Stanford may or may not have already changed his private opinion about the Chinese before or during

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[36] Mike Culbertson, "The Chinese Involvement in the Development of the Flower Industry in Santa Clara County," in Gloria Sun Hom (ed), *Chinese Argonauts: An Anthology of the Chinese Contributions to the Historical Development of Santa Clara County* (Los Altos, CA: Foothill Community College, 1971), 51.

construction of the railroad, but he definitely developed a new public opinion about them. While he was governor of California, he claimed the white race was superior to that of Chinese, and that the Chinese had no place in California. Now, three years later, he praised the Chinese character to the president of the United States and claimed they were equal to white laborers in terms of efficiency. Stanford's public stance in support of the Chinese caused him to be perceived as a friend of the race he once deemed inferior to that of whites. His continued employment of them on his Palo Alto estate, on his other private properties, and for his various business interests, despite the vehement protests of anti-Chinese proponents, would only reinforce this publicly-held belief of Stanford as an advocate of Chinese labor.

Chapter 4

The World of the Estates

The Chinese Return to California

Although the common depiction of the completion of the Central Pacific has 10,000 Chinese men instantaneously flooding back into San Francisco, the reality was somewhat different.[1] The Central Pacific continued to employ thousands of Chinese throughout the 1870s and 1880s to rebuild certain sections of the transcontinental line and to construct new roads for the Southern Pacific and for the Texas and Oregon lines.[2] Many of the men released from the Central Pacific after reaching Promontory walked the 800 miles back to California, unable or unwilling to pay the fare to ride the train; the 18 September 1869 *Sacramento Daily Union* reported that the Chinese

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[1] Roger Daniels, *Guarding the Golden Door: American Immigration Policy and Immigrants Since 1882* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2004), 12.

[2] Richard Orsi, *Sunset Limited: The Southern Pacific Railroad and the Development of the American West* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 415.

laborers "have not been paid for several months and that large numbers of them have been discharged lately from the company and have been refused transportation back to Sacramento contrary to the agreement."[3] The lack of payment may or may not have been true; the Union Pacific had definitely not been paying their laborers, who expressed their displeasure by capturing and holding Union Pacific vice-president Thomas C. Durant while he was on his way to Promontory, releasing him only after he wired for their back wages.[4]

Aside from railroad workers making their way back to the Pacific coast, another 11,000 new Chinese men came to California in 1870. The years 1873-1877 saw 18,000 more Chinese entering the state each year, with men working on land reclamation and other large construction projects. Employment opportunities now included widespread fruit cultivation, which required both more skill and more labor than that of California's formerly primary crop of wheat.[5] The

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[3] Yen, 170.

[4] Griswold, 318-319.

[5] Chan, 37, 41.

Chinese also found places working as factory workers, farm laborers, farmers, truck gardeners, fishermen, laborers, merchants, professionals, laundrymen, cooks, servants and, for the majority of the few Chinese women in California, as prostitutes.[6] The manufacturing jobs were based in San Francisco, with the other labor being performed both in or near the City, and throughout the San Joaquin and Sacramento valley areas.

San Francisco journalist, Henry George, wrote many widely-read essays supporting both the anti-Chinese immigration movement and the prevention of the use of Chinese labor in California. Viewing the completion of the transcontinental railroad with a mixture of anticipation and trepidation, he perceived a contradiction in the enormous wealth that technology, such as that of the railroad or the factory, generated for a relative few and the parallel decrease in the workingman's share of the riches. If anything, in George's view, the worker was growing even poorer due to the Chinese labor presence, with

[6] Chan, 45.

Chinese workers taking the place of white laborers.[7] His shrill and unceasing message that targeted the Chinese for all of California's economic and social woes fell on welcoming white ears, particularly after the national fall Panic of 1873, when thousands of men were thrown out of work.[8] Many of these desperate men took to the countryside looking for agricultural work and were angered to find Chinese gang bosses securing jobs for Chinese workers that these white men believed should be theirs.[9] Much of their bitterness and frustration stemmed from a sense of displacement and victimization due to industrialization and dashed hopes.[10] Disappointed ambitions fostered feelings of deprivation held by white men, especially second-generation Americans, who had come to California with high expectations of easy and quick wealth, whether in gold or affordable land for small farming. Instead, these men found a hard reality of hydraulic mining and agribusiness that had coalesced into George's

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[7] Takaki, *Iron Cages*, 240.

[8] Street, 277.

[9] Street, 277.

[10] Saxton, *Indispensable Enemy*, 13.

prediction of wealth for only a few, the land monopolists, and the end of the line, quite literally, of further westward movement for those still seeking their fortune.[11] The double loss of jobs due to skilled tasks being rendered obsolete by technology and the remaining unskilled jobs taken up by cheap foreign labor was the basis for nativism, the antipathy directed by white Americans towards immigrants.[12] Nativism in California had been expressed through the use of violence by white miners soon after the Chinese first arrived in the state, but the mid-1870s with its attendant hard times brought a sharp increase in the amount of force used against the Chinese, much of which went unrecorded in the newspapers.[13]

The violence in San Francisco during July 1873 was splashed all over the newspapers, however, with three nights of mayhem that included arson and the murder of Chinese men sparked by a sandlot meeting.[14]

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[11] Saxton, *Indispensable Enemy*, 16.

[12] Saxton, *Indispensable Enemy*, 14.

[13] Street, 278.

[14] A sandlot was a sandy vacant lot where men, generally unemployed white laborers, gave speeches, often standing on boxes at the time. Sandbox is sometimes used in place of sandlot.

Anti-coolie clubs, which had manifested themselves in one form or another since the arrival of the Chinese Argonauts, had been on the rise since the late 1860s. An example of one was the Central Pacific Anti-Coolie Association, formed in San Francisco in 1867 in part to protest the influx of Chinese laborers for the railroad. While many of the clubs claimed to adhere to legal means to stop immigration they relied on violence to enforce their goals, with the "legal and illegal, peaceful and violent" being "intertwined and mutually reinforcing".[15]

Despite the numerous physical attacks and murders, the Chinese for the most part prevailed, with only 4,000 men returning to China each year.[16] What helped the Chinese the most during this troubled time period was their sterling reputation for neither striking nor walking off the job, in contrast to white workers who were wont to "throw down their hop sacks, drop their grape boxes in the middle of a field, or without notice stroll away from picking peaches."[17] White growers who had been deserted by white laborers

[15] Saxton, *Indispensable Enemy*, 75.

[16] Takaki, *Iron Cages*, 237.

[17] Street, 278.

heading for the saloon or the mines were then more dependent on reliable Chinese labor, and highly appreciative of the fact that the Chinese stuck to their contracts and finished whatever task they had been hired to do. This situation of reliance existed regardless of the size of the farm; both small and larger growers were dependent on Chinese help.

Charles Nordhoff, author of the popular guidebook *California for Travellers and Settlers*, wrote in 1873 about this dichotomy between the prevailing anti-Chinese sentiment and the equally strong need for Chinese labor in California:

> Both political parties in California denounce the Chinaman on their platforms; but if you go to the houses of the men who make these platforms, you will find Chinese servants; if you visit their farms or ranches, you will find Chinese hands; and if you ask the political leader, after dinner, what he really thinks, he will tell you that he could not get on without Chinese, and that the cry against them is the most abominable demagogism; all of which is true.[18]

By the time Nordhoff published his book, Leland Stanford's political career as governor of California was ten years behind him, and his role as a U.S. senator was yet to come. During the 1870s and early

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[18] Charles Nordhoff, *California: For Health, Pleasure, and Residence. A Book for Travellers and Settlers*, (Berkeley: Ten Speed Press, 1973 Centennial Printing), 90.

1880s, Stanford's role as a businessman and private citizen prevailed over that of politician, but his high-profile position as president of the Central Pacific kept his viewpoints—and who he was hiring--in the public eye.

In 1876, as the level of agitation over the restriction of Chinese immigration spread to Washington, D.C., Congress formed a special committee, the Joint Special Committee to Investigate Chinese Immigration, to convene hearings in San Francisco and explore the situation. Although the hearings appeared to be objective, they were anything but.[19] The more moderate men of the committee withdrew for various reasons and the three who remained in control of the hearings were all rabidly anti-Chinese. What they found, much to their surprise, was that half of the witnesses spoke in favor of the Chinese, including Charles Crocker and James Strobridge.[20] Stanford was in

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[19] Street, 286.

[20] The full report of the hearings is available online. *44th Congress, 2d Session, Senate. Report No. 689. Report of the Joint Special Committee to Investigate Chinese Immigration. February 27, 1877.* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1877), available from http://cprr.ogr/Museum/Chinese Immigration.html (accessed 24 January 2011).

Philadelphia at the time, attending the Centennial Exhibition with his wife and their son, Leland Dewitt Stanford. Bertha Berner wrote that the Stanfords were interested in purchasing a Chinese bedroom set on display, and that when officials heard about this, "instructions were at once sent by the Chinese government to beg Mr. Stanford to accept the pieces as a gift, in appreciation of his fair treatment and protection of the Chinese in California."[21] Newspapers at the time reported that the Stanfords paid several thousands of dollars for the carved bedroom set, but several rolls of silk brocade accompanied the magnificent pieces of furniture, and perhaps these were truly a gift.[22] More to the point is the perception of Stanford as a friend of Chinese labor, a perception that clung to him from the first hiring of Chinese workers for the railroad and remained with him throughout his life, regardless of how often the media reported his periodic anti-Chinese sentiments.

The Stanfords themselves were also physical targets of anti-Chinese sentiment during the mid-

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[21] Berner, 16.

[22] "Yesterday's San Francisco News," *Sacramento Daily Union*, 31 October 1876, 2.

1870s, courtesy of Stanford's position as a capitalist and owner of the railroad.[23] As rabble-raiser Denis Kearney rose to prominence through his repeated delivery of vehement and popular sandlot speeches decrying local capitalists for their hoarded wealth and their use of "cheap" Chinese labor in favor of white workingmen, incited mobs would heed his exhortations to make their way to Nob Hill, site of the mansions of Stanford, Crocker, Hopkins and Huntington.[24] The Stanfords hired an armed guard to patrol their property, and Stanford ultimately arranged a private face-to-face meeting with Kearney. The 11 March 1878 newspapers were full of Kearney's account of the meeting, wherein he claimed Stanford

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[23] Boycotting and setting fires were two favored methods of intimidation used by Anti-Coolie clubs and "tramps," unemployed white laborers who roamed the countryside looking for work. Targets included capitalists, politicians, land monopolists and the railroad, all of whom employed Chinese laborers. Numerous small growers also suffered from threats and attacks. Street, 289.

[24] Denis Kearney was an Irish immigrant who was self-employed as a drayman. Ironically, this placed him outside the class of the workingman, a man who hired himself out for wages. He was a founder of the Workingman's Party, a short-lived (1877-1884) but extremely powerful political party based in San Francisco and closely associated with white labor issues. Saxton, *Indispensable Enemy*, 117.

had convinced him "that he had been a workingman himself, and would not interfere with his employees in voting as they saw fit, and he hoped that if anyone attempted to do so he would be reported."[25] Kearney remained Kearney, however, and in his speech that same day, he charged:

> He [Stanford] is willing to accept any change that may take place, and he says—I suppose we will take it for what it is worth—that if we convince him that cheap Chinese labor is a curse he will discharge all his Chinamen. If Leland Stanford don't discharge his Chinamen we will tell him that we will force him to discharge his miserable Chinese lepers. But Christ forgave the penitent thief; so will we, the workingmen of California, forgive Leland Stanford, if he comes right down and tells us that he has done wrong, that he had no business to import these lepers from Asia, that he will commence now and discharge all his Chinamen, and employ in their stead free American white men.[26]

While Stanford may or may not have made conciliatory remarks to Kearney during their meeting, he certainly had no intention of casting away his wealth or power and, actions speaking louder than words, no intention of dismissing the Chinese men who worked for him, in either his business or his private

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[25] "Meeting of the Agitators—Kearney's Opinion of Governor Stanford," *Sacramento Daily Union*, 11 March 1878, 4.

[26] "The Labor Agitators," *San Francisco Evening Bulletin*, 11 March 1878, 1.

concerns. It is possible he met with Kearney to allay Mrs. Stanford's fears over attacks by the unruly and threatening groups who gathered outside the mansion; many years later, when addressing the issue of rising anti-Japanese sentiment in 1903, she stated:

> It is but a repetition of the old prejudice against the Chinese, and a repetition of "Kearneyism," when a reign of terror pervaded our city, and no one knows of it better than I, for we had a guard, armed, in our house to protect us, and a squad of police surrounded our house to prevent it from being burned.[27]

The Stanfords Move to the San Francisco Bay Area

The directors of the Central Pacific decided in 1873 to relocate to San Francisco, with three of the partners each building large and elaborate residences on Nob Hill, ostentatious mansions that were public expressions of railroad-created wealth, culture and prestige. The lone exception was Huntington. He preferred New York over San Francisco and instead merely purchased Central Pacific lawyer David Colton's

[27] "Mrs. Stanford Gives to Public First Statement of Her Position in the Ross-Howard Incident," *San Francisco Call*, 26 July 1903, 23.

Nob Hill mansion from the man's widow for his sporadic visits to California.

Stanford could also afford to indulge in his passion for trotting horses, a passion he shared with several other friends, including Mills, Flood, Hopkins and, most particularly, Crocker, whom he often raced against on the public pathways at Golden Gate Park.[28] His purchase of Occident in 1870 was the first of many acquired racing horses, both trotters and flat runners, that he at first stabled at Nob Hill in a barn built near the residence. In 1876, the Stanfords began purchasing acreage on the San Francisco peninsula between the villages of Mayfield (now South Palo Alto) and Menlo Park, ultimately assembling some 8,800 acres over the next few years.[29] Called Palo Alto, the estate was named for a local landmark, an ancient redwood tree (*Sequoia sempervirens*) that still stands on the bank of San Francisquito Creek near El Camino Real today.[30] Several reasons existed behind the

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[28] Tutorow, *Man of Many Careers*, 161.

[29] Karen Bartholomew, "'The Farm' a Century Ago," in *Stanford's Red Barn* (Stanford University: Stanford Historical Society, 1984), 5.

[30] The Stanfords named the estate Palo Alto, and made the division of Palo Alto Farm to describe "the Home

motivation for the purchase of this particular property, the Stanfords by this time having bought--and continued to buy throughout Leland Stanford's life--vast amounts of land throughout the state. First, Leland Junior was now eight years old and his parents wanted to provide him with the freedom of country living impossible to achieve at the beautiful but very formal and urban mansion perched on Nob Hill.[31] Second, the purchase of this property would allow expansion of Stanford's horse facilities, enabling him to concentrate more fully on his singular ideas regarding horse breeding and training, and enough acreage to perform some experimental farming.[32] Third, the estate as a country residence would provide a welcome respite for the entire family from the

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Place," which was the site of the house, surrounding gardens and cultivated fields. The horse facility, built a mile from the house, was known as the Palo Alto Stock Farm. It was also common for people at the time to refer to any of the Stanfords' various properties as the "Stanford Ranch," "ranch" being the Anglo interpretation of the Spanish word "rancho." "Palo Alto," *San Mateo Times and Gazette*, 18 May 1878, 2.

[31] Theresa Johnston, "About A Boy," *Stanford Magazine* (July/August 2003), unpaginated, available from http://www.stanfordalumni.org/news/magazine/2003/uluag/features/junior.html. (accessed 22 February 2011).

[32] "Palo Alto," 2, and Tutorow, *The Governor*, 1: 438.

stress of city life. Real estate developers, among the most ardent of California boosters, extolled the benefits of country living and found many receptive clients who responded favorably to their claims. A typical advertisement for the area read:

> "Menlo Park," San Mateo Co., beautiful sites for homes in the country…There are few, if any, places within one hundred miles of this large and growing metropolis [San Francisco], which combine so many natural advantages for a country residence; the soil is excellent; it is wooded with large, splendid live oaks, and other evergreen shade trees. The climate is unsurpassed; the extremes of heat and cold are never felt, and the harsh summer winds and fogs don't reach here…The cars of the SF&SJ RR land passengers at their depot, at this point, in about an hour and a quarter, thus enabling business men to live here and transact their business in town…Those who are alive to the importance of a home in the country, with all its advantages for health, education, etc., are earnestly requested to go and look at this lovely spot.[33]

Once the railroad between San Francisco and San Jose was completed in 1864, the wealthy men who made their money through mining, agriculture, railroading, banking or real estate took advantage of the easy commute and built country estates up and down the San Francisco peninsula. This development was the largest concentration of estates west of the Mississippi, due

[33] Robert Schellens Collection, Redwood City Public Library.

to the fortuitous combination of wealthy patrons with access to large amounts of land in an area with a long growing climate and a wide diversity of plants available via local nurseries and the port of San Francisco.[34]

These estates were used as part-time residences to escape the dank fogs of San Francisco summers, but they were also used for experimental growing grounds as Californians grappled with mastering the local soil conditions and the semi-arid Mediterranean climate while creating "Paradise" in the process.[35] The properties were generally modeled after European-style grounds, with grand houses surrounded by formal and informal gardens, botanical collections, arboretums, artificial lakes, enclosed deer parks, follies, and extensive stables, often with private racetracks, all hidden behind shrubbery, trees and high fences.[36] The properties also usually included a farm and a dairy,

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[34] David Streatfield, *California Gardens: Creating a New Eden* (New York: Abbeville Press Publishers, 1994), 37.

[35] Streatfield, "Paradise on the Frontier," *Garden History* 12, no. 1 (Spring 1984): 59.

[36] Julie Cain, "Rudolph Ulrich and the Stanford Arizona Garden," *Sandstone and Tile* 27, no. 2 (Spring/Summer 2003): 3.

and pasturage for cattle or sheep or both, all of which would provide fresh meat, produce, nuts, eggs, milk and butter for both the country and city residences. Most of the estates were quite large, the average size being 500 acres, and were hewn from woodland drifts composed of highly-prized native coast live oaks (*Quercus agrifolia*) and valley oaks (*Quercus lobata*). Creation and maintenance of these numerous estates was extremely laborious, and the Chinese had a large role in much of that work. Some worked directly on the estates for the property owner while others leased acreage from them and were self-employed as tenant farmers, strawberries being one of their most common crops.

In 1872, the *San Mateo Times & Gazette* noted:

> D.O. Mills has some 60 Chinamen at work on his place building a bulkhead from high-water to low-water mark for the purpose of reclaiming several thousand acres of overflowed marsh, that when reclaimed will furnish the most valuable pasturage on his farm. To dairymen, late grass is of great value.[37]

Aside from the reclamation work typically required when picturesque landscapes were sculpted from a countryside that was otherwise still largely

[37] "Reclaiming," *San Mateo Times & Gazette*, 27 January 1872, 3.

untouched, the Chinese working for Mills also planted the hundreds of exotic trees for which his estate, Millbrae, became famous.[38]

According to Chinese gardener Jim Mock's own 1908 testimony to immigration officials in San Francisco, he and his wife, Lee Ho, arrived in California in 1875 and he began work as a gardener for Mrs. D.O. Mills.[39] The couple remained at the Mills estate for "not quite a year," and then "worked at Menlo Park, for Mrs.

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[38] Native Americans in California had managed the landscape, largely through the use of fire. They burned the land to enable hunting, acorn-gathering and travel; they also used fire to clear the land in order to grow tobacco and generate the growth of seed-bearing plants. Streatfield, "Paradise on the Frontier," 62; and Mark S. Still, "The Mills Family and the Mills Estate: A Brief Overview," *La Peninsula: The Journal of the San Mateo County Historical Association* 32, no. 1 (Winter 1999-2000): 17.

[39] Mills and his wife owned 850 acres in what is now Millbrae. Mills, like Stanford, was considered a "friend" of the Chinese. In 1878, while visiting with U.S. President Rutherford B. Hayes, Mills told Hayes "that a limited number of Chinese is a great advantage to this State, but that we should not have enough to interfere with any other class of laborer. I maintain, moreover, that the Chinese came here under treaty provisions, and should be protected while they remain." This advocacy of a policy limiting the number of Chinese allowed in the state, and enforcing that limitation through strictly legal means, was common among influential whites who employed Chinese laborers. "The Chinese Question," *San Francisco Bulletin*, 23 February 1878, 2.

Stanford."[40] Ah Jim, as he was familiarly known, may have been one of the very first Chinese men hired by the Stanfords to work at Palo Alto in 1876, when they first began acquiring multiple properties that would form the estate.[41]

According to Bertha Berner, "For the conduct of this great estate one hundred and fifty persons were employed, one hundred white, the rest Chinese, all boarded on the premises."[42] These large numbers would not have been accurate until the early 1880s, after the estate began to develop on a larger scale. When horse trainer Charles Marvin arrived in April 1878, he

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[40] Jane Stanford used Menlo Park as her address rather than the correct town of nearby Mayfield, preferring not to be associated with a place known for its motley collection of saloons and brothels. Jim Mock, Interview, 28 May 1908, Record Group 85, San Francisco District Office, "Immigration Arrival Case File Series," ARC 296445, 10252/7, National Archives and Records Administration, National Archives at San Francisco, San Bruno, CA.

[41] One of Jim Mock's descendents, John Mock, told historian Him Mark Lai that Ah Jim had worked for the Southern Pacific during the 1880s before coming to work at the Palo Alto estate. It is possible that Ah Jim chose to keep his 1908 testimony to immigration officials as simple as possible, telling them only what he thought they needed to hear to allow one of his California-born sons entry back into the United States. Lai, 190.

[42] Berner, 92.

found that "the track was just being built, new buildings were hardly yet planned, and there [were] only about a dozen men employed on the farm."[43] Just a month later, the *San Mateo Times and Gazette* featured a long article describing the Palo Alto estate, claiming the property was already developing into "one of the finest country seats in the state." To describe the estate's rightful setting, the journalist began:

> California is rapidly becoming celebrated for princely homes. Wealth and taste may combine to make beautiful places of residence almost anywhere, however little nature may favor the effort, but in the Golden State where a semi-tropical climate and a prolific soil make all growth luxuriant they find it comparatively easy to make a Paradise. Therefore it is not strange that throughout these beautiful valleys elegant dwellings with their delightful surroundings are rapidly multiplying as if scattered by the magic influence of a fairy hand.[44]

The reporter went on to note that fifty sets of "fairy hands" were at work at the Palo Alto estate, with no mention of their race. A year earlier, the same newspaper had noted analogous development in San Mateo County, and identified the workers as Italians and Chinese:

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[43] Bartholomew, 5.

[44] "Palo Alto," 2.

> From the fertile gardens tended by the picturesquely clad and industrious Italians, or the ubiquitous Mongolians, San Francisco derives the greater portion of her vegetables…but above and beyond its position as a food producer, the delectable climate, the glorious beauty of its landscapes and its proximity to San Francisco have caused the county to become the favorite location of the country mansions of our untitled aristocracy, whose 'palaces and parks' are sown broadcast through its happy valleys.[45]

The extensive horse breeding and training facilities were constructed about a mile away from the Stanfords' new summer residence, a house built near San Francisquito Creek by previous owner George Gordon. Leland Stanford, in addition to breeding and racing his beloved horses, was also now able to embark on another passionate interest, that of experimental farming. Despite his choices in terms of the law, mercantilism, politics and railroad building, Stanford preferred to be thought of as a farmer, a man of the soil.[46] One of his favorite topics of conversation was "nature and the quality of the soil, the climate, the seeding of land, and how and when it was best to harvest crops."[47] The original ornamental grounds

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[45] "Our Sister Land of Milk and Honey," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 1 March 1877, 4.

[46] Tutorow, *Man of Many Careers*, 160.

[47] Tutorow, *Man of Many Careers*, 160.

around the residence were expanded with the addition of numerous exotic plants and carpet beds featuring flowers planted in elaborate designs. Stanford took a particular personal interest in creating an arboretum that would eventually feature thousands of trees from every country in the world, a popular Victorian conceit. Some of his interest in this project stemmed from his desire to prove California's agricultural potential. On 3 January 1880, the *San Francisco Newsletter* and *California Advertiser* reported:

> President Leland Stanford of the Central Pacific road, intends to plant every tree, shrub and vine that will grow in California on an arboretum of some 300 acres, which he has set apart for that purpose on his Menlo Park estate, near San Francisco. He has bought 1,231 kinds of plants at Flushing [Long Island, New York], which required several cars for their passage to California, and he intends to give a practical test of his belief that California will grow a greater variety of plants than any other country in the world.[48]

The scope of the Arboretum project was as large as the area laid out for it, some 300 to 450 acres. Stanford was credited in the *New York Times* as being the first person to bring together the "largest collection of plants which will grow in any one spot

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[48] Julie Cain and Roxanne Nilan, "Every Tree, Shrub, and Vine: Leland Stanford's Arboretum, 1879-1905," *Sandstone and Tile* 27, no, 2 (Spring/Summer 2003): 16.

in the country," and that "with the exception of the Arnold Arboretum…this undertaking of Gov. Stanford is the first of the kind which promises to assume proportions worthy of the name of a scientific arboretum."[49] The purchase of plants at Long Island nurseries was "probably the largest number of varieties and choice trees, etc. that ever were brought together in a single purchase."[50] Stanford reportedly told the proprietor of the nursery "that he intends to experiment with the widest possible range of varieties, and try what will and what will not grow."[51]

Crops of alfalfa, wheat, oats, barley and sixty acres of carrots were also grown for the 600 to 775 horses in residence at the stock farm. In 1878, the *San Mateo Times and Gazette* reported on Stanford's interest in experimental farming:

> He appears to think he can do the county some good in using his magnificent tract of land in testing some of the theories advanced by the leading minds and experimenting with different

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[49] "Arboriculture, Ex-Governor Stanford's Plan for an Arboretum," *San Francisco Chronicle* (29 August 1880), 5.

[50] "Arboriculture."

[51] "Arboriculture."

> varieties of grains and fruits, to see what can be learned in their cultivation.[52]

By that time, the Palo Alto Farm was planted out in 1,000 acres of grain, mostly wheat and barley, with another 118 acres of alfalfa, with deep plowing being the experimental component in an attempt to produce a heavier crop than that of the previous season. A map of the property dated "1878 to 1879" lists the type and acreage of the crops produced that year. The Chinese were definitely part of the large workforce required to cultivate a total of 1,523 acres; thirty-one acres of barley were produced in a section identified as "China Camp."[53] Chinese gangs were rotated among different areas of the farm and stock farm as needed. Some of these Chinese held permanent jobs and lived on or near the property while others were hired as temporary day laborers. Those men lived in the Chinatowns of Mayfield, Menlo Park, San Jose or San Francisco.[54]

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[52] "Palo Alto," 2.

[53] "Sketch of Ranch Shewing Farm Operations, 1878-1879," Map 153, Stanford University Archives, Stanford.

[54] The ubiquitous Chinatowns typically supported at least one general store, the back room of which was the social center--and gambling room--for the Chinese living in town or close by, or just passing through.

Stanford also became interested in planting grapes and subsequently built a winery close to his large Palo Alto vineyard. The main roads on the property were lined with trees identified as blue and red gums, pines, figs, chestnuts, elms and cork elms, catalpas, black walnuts and English walnuts.[55] Fruit production was another consideration, as Stanford believed fruit to be one of the most viable sources of income for California farmers.[56] Around 1880 he ordered 272 varieties of fruit trees and shrubs, including apples, apricots, blackberries, cherries, currants, gooseberries, mulberries, nectarines, peaches, plums, Japanese persimmons, pears, quince, raspberries, and "the celebrated English filbert."[57] These joined the

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There was also usually a restaurant, a laundry or two, and a boarding house in the larger towns. The town of Palo Alto refused to allow a Chinatown to exist within its boundaries. The townspeople also resisted allowing Chinese to work there independently as restaurant or laundry owners, although cooks, domestic servants and truck gardeners were acceptable. The Mayfield Chinatown disappeared by the 1920s but the Menlo Park Chinatown survived until the 1950s. Mrs. Stanford, and later the Stanford University community, used the services of the Chinese laundries at both Mayfield and Menlo Park. Lai, 187, 189.

[55] "Sketch of Ranch."

[56] Cain and Nilan, 18.

[57] Cain and Nilan, 18.

oranges, potatoes and walnuts already growing on the place. The extensive horticulture and viticulture practiced at Palo Alto required a large labor force.

Much of the planting, plowing, pruning, digging, picking, irrigating, pressing and harvesting of these various crops at Palo Alto was done in large part by Chinese labor. Many Chinese chose farming work to escape urban violence.[58] The Chinese who worked on Stanford properties were somewhat protected by where they worked, but they did not live in completely encapsulated bubbles.[59] One of the Chinese workers at

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[58] As the economic crisis begun in 1873 deepened at the end of 1876, 1877 saw yet another increase in the violence directed against the Chinese. Street, 269, 289.

[59] One of their vulnerabilities was being robbed, despite living on the estate. On 20 February 1893, the large Chinese boardinghouse, "a considerable distance from the white quarters," was empty at 6 a.m. except for the cook, cleaning up after having served breakfast. Three men, two whites and one Chinese, attacked him and tied him up. They then went through the various trunks and stole close to $4,000 that the Chinese workers had saved. Police were still looking for the robbers two days later. The Chinese camp at the nearby Hopkins estate, Sherwood Hall, was robbed two years later by two Chinese men, who made off with $500.00 worth of clothing, coins and valuables. Hopkins offered a $50.00 reward. A later robbery against Ah Wong, another Chinese gardener at Stanford University in 1904, resulted in three white men stabbing and leaving the man for dead after robbing him near the campus. Those men were captured and

Vina, a ranch in Tehama County that Stanford purchased in 1881, was clubbed to death in 1882 at the dinner table one evening by a 19-year-old white co-worker named Grant after an argument.[60] However, violence on Stanford properties was prohibited and, more importantly, enforced; an 1884 entry in one of the Palo Alto Stock Farm Letterbooks relayed that a worker named Denike was "discharged for striking a Chinaman in the dining room."[61]

Many of the Chinese who worked at Palo Alto frequented Young Soon Quong's store in San Jose's Chinatown. His wife, Young Gum Gee, later remembered that these workers "from Leland Stanford's 'Farm' would stop at the store and tell them how well they were treated by Stanford, especially during the

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arrested. "A $4,000 Robbery," *San Jose Mercury News*, 21 February 1893, 3; "The Chinese Camp Robbed," *Daily Palo Alto*, 21 February 1893, 1; "No Clew to the Robbers," *San Francisco Call*, 23 February 1893, 2; "A Burglar's Big Haul," *San Jose Evening News*, 31 May 1895, 1; and "Murderous Assault On A Chinese," *San Francisco Call*, 27 November 1904, 25.

[60] "Cowardly Murder of a Chinaman," *Sacramento Daily Union*, 27 November 1882, 2.

[61] Jonathan Sikken to Ariel Lathrop, 28 February 1884, 225, Letterbook, Palo Alto Stock Farm Records, SC006, Stanford University Archives, 225.

earlier days of anti-Chinese violence."[62] The feelings of safety and good treatment experienced by the Chinese working on the Palo Alto estate were significant; many Chinese did not trust the white community as a whole due to both how they were treated within the legal system and the everyday casual violence that was a regular part of their lives.[63] When Crocker testified at the Joint Special Committee to Investigate Chinese Immigration in 1876, he said, "I think an American going to China stands a better show for justice than a Chinaman coming to America."[64] He went on to declare that American prejudice worked to the injury of the Chinese, and described how the day before the hearings he witnessed a white youth "jerk a Chinaman out of a seat in a rail-road car, which he took for himself, and he did it in such a way that he

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[62] Based on this perception of safety, Young Gum Gee advised her son to attend Stanford instead of Berkeley; he graduated with a BA from Stanford in 1935, followed up two years later with an advanced degree in petroleum engineering. Connie Young Yu, "John C. Young, A Man Who Loved History," *Chinese America: History and Perspectives* (San Francisco: Chinese Historical Society of America, 1989), 10.

[63] Yu, *Chinatown San Jose, USA*, 27.

[64] Crocker, 66-688.

would not have dared to have done it to a white person."[65]

Once the Pacific Railway was completed in 1869, several thousand Chinese men returned to San Francisco. They found work in factories, as cooks and domestics, in laundries and in many types of agricultural work, including farming, truck gardening and fruit cultivation. Additional large numbers of Chinese also continued to emigrate from China each year. With the panic of 1873 and thousands of men put out of work in California, antagonism against the Chinese holding jobs white laborers believed should be theirs greatly increased; while many professed that the Chinese should only be removed by legal means, anti-Coolie gangs and bands of tramps relied on violence to make their point. Whites who employed the Chinese, whether large growers or small, also felt the brunt of this violence, most often by having their fields or barns torched.

Stanford was considered a friend of the Chinese because he had hired them for the railroad against white protests and continued to employ them at his

[65] Crocker, 66-688.

various properties and business ventures.[66] His Palo Alto estate was one of many on the San Francisco peninsula; these large pieces of property by their very size demanded a large labor force to both create and maintain them. Stanford indulged in his passion for horses and for experimental farming at Palo Alto, and the Chinese men he hired did much of the labor required for the agricultural concerns, although a few also worked with the horses. Many Chinese chose to work on estates or farms in the country in an attempt to escape the prevalent urban violence so often focused against them; Stanford enjoyed the reputation of being a good employer and of providing a safe environment for the Chinese to work in by enforcing rules that protected them. A closer examination of everyday life at Palo Alto will reveal how whites and Anglos interacted on the estate, and that Mrs. Stanford maintained long-term relationships with several of her Chinese employees, two of them being Ah Jim and Ah Wing.

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[66] Stanford and Hopkins both hired a preponderance of white men to Chinese on their estates, but they were criticized for hiring any Chinese at all; anti-Chinese sentiment touted the notion that any job held by a theoretically single Chinese man was one denied to a more deserving white family man.

Figure 1. Leland and Jane Stanford, 1850.
Courtesy Stanford University Archives.

Figure 2. Cold Springs store, 1853. Note the sign with Chinese characters hanging over the main entrance. Courtesy Stanford University Archives.

Figure 3. Palo Alto Spring, painting by Thomas Hill. Hill portrayed a picnic at the Stanfords' Palo Alto estate. Leland Stanford is seated beneath the tree holding a small canvas, with Hill standing at his shoulder. Leland Junior is just to his father's side; he is seated on a footstool and wearing striped stockings. Mrs. Stanford is in the immediate foreground with two small girls at her feet. James Vickers, the African American butler and coachman, is standing off in the distance. None of the Chinese domestic servants are portrayed in this work. Courtesy Stanford University Archives.

Figure 4. Aerial photo of Palo Alto showing Chinese quarters near the creek in foreground. Courtesy Stanford University Archives.

Figure 5. A Chinese gardener planting a carpet bed near the Palo Alto residence. Courtesy Palo Alto Historical Society.

Figure 6. Hotel del Monte grounds. Author's Collection.

Figure 7. Chinese head gardener at Hotel del Monte, Nea Lea, with his family. Courtesy John Sanders, Naval Postgraduate School.

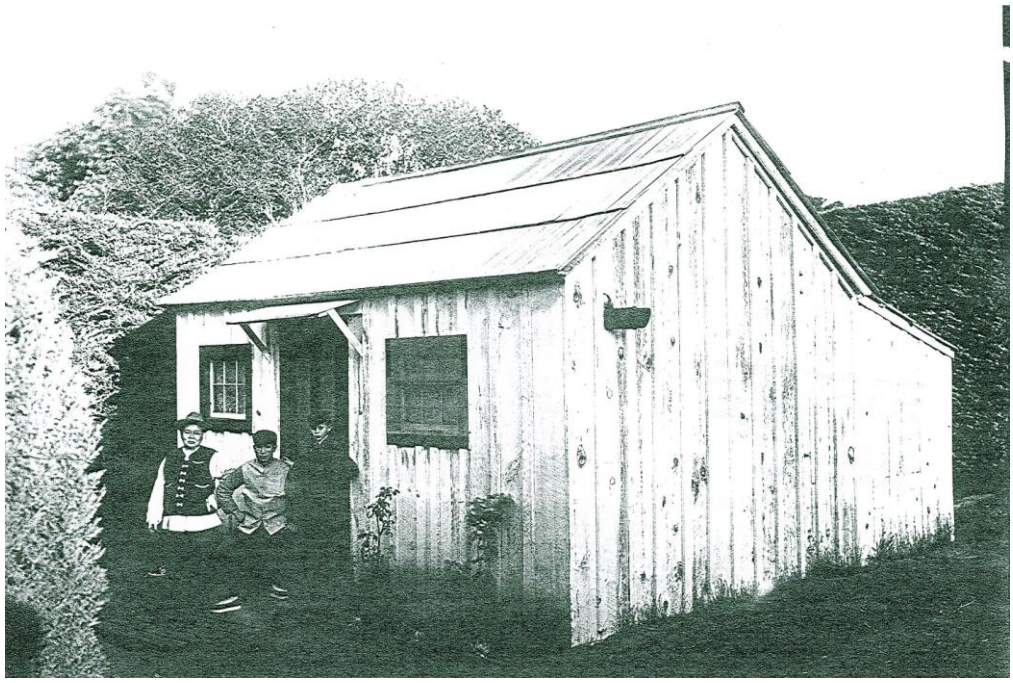


Figure 8. Chinese quarters at Hotel del Monte. Courtesy California State Library.

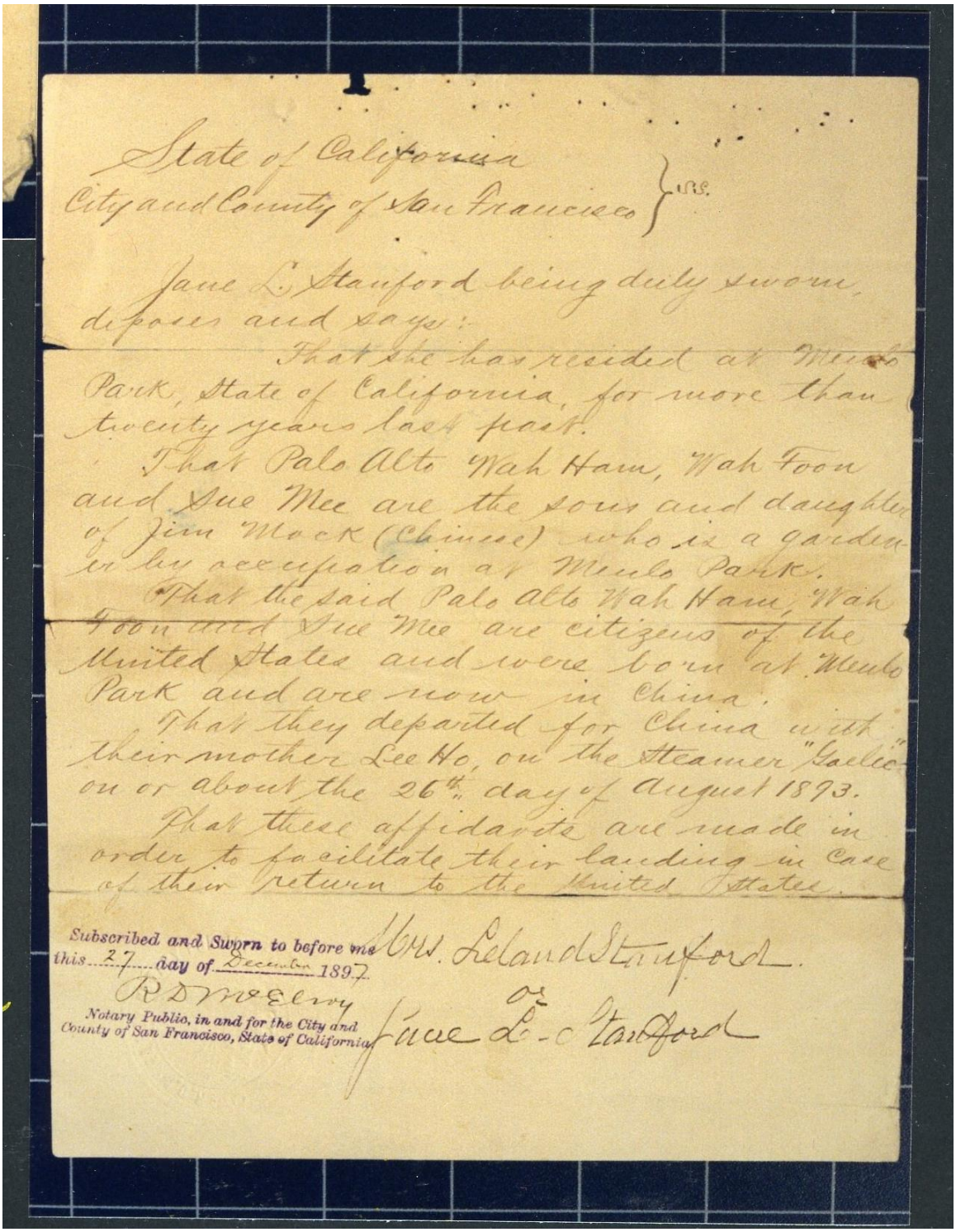
Figure 9. Two Chinese gardeners standing *to the right* of a guest in Hotel del Monte's Arizona Garden. Author's Collection.

Figure 10. Leland, Jane and Leland Stanford Junior, Paris, 1880. Courtesy Stanford University Archives.

Figure 11. Some of these floral tributes were created by Chinese gardeners working at the Palo Alto estate, June 1893. Courtesy Stanford University Archives.

Figure 12. Ah Jim, head Chinese gardener at Palo Alto. Courtesy Lorraine Mock and Natalie Haggerty.

Figure 13. The silver articles given to Ah Jim and Lee Ho when their son, Palo Alto (Mock Wah Ham) was born on the Palo Alto estate. Courtesy Lorraine Mock and Natalie Haggerty.



State of California
City and County of San Francisco } ss.

Jane L. Stanford being duly sworn, deposes and says:

That she has resided at Menlo Park, State of California, for more than twenty years last past.

That Palo Alto Wah Ham, Wah Foon and Sue Mee are the sons and daughter of Jim Mock (Chinese) who is a gardener by occupation at Menlo Park.

That the said Palo Alto Wah Ham, Wah Foon and Sue Mee are citizens of the United States and were born at Menlo Park and are now in China.

That they departed for China with their mother Lee Ho, on the steamer "Gaelic" on or about the 26th. day of August 1893.

That these affidavits are made in order to facilitate their landing in case of their return to the United States.

Subscribed and Sworn to before me this 27 day of December 1897.

R D McElroy
Notary Public, in and for the City and County of San Francisco, State of California

Mrs. Leland Stanford.
Jane L. Stanford

Figure 14. Mrs. Stanford's 1897 affidavit confirming the nativity of Ah Jim's three oldest children. Courtesy Lorraine Mock and Natalie Haggerty.

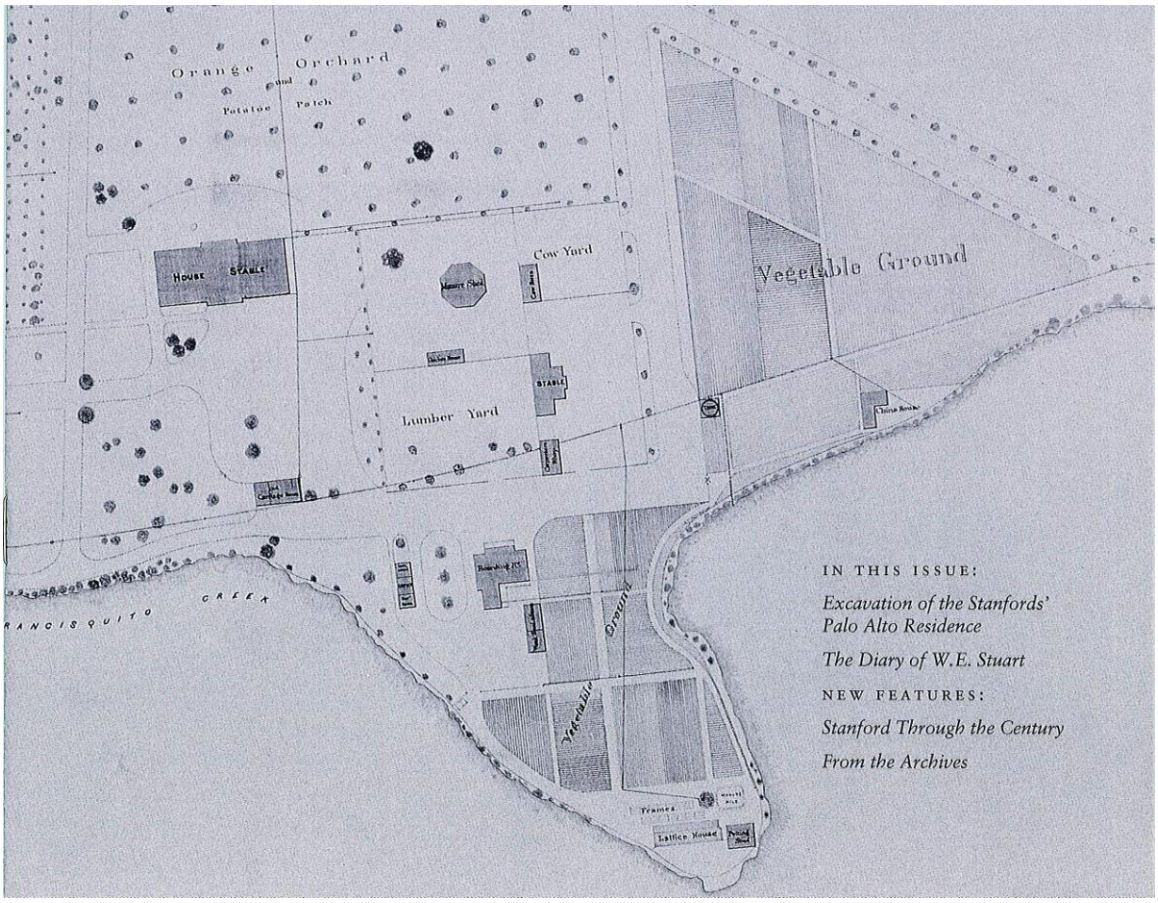
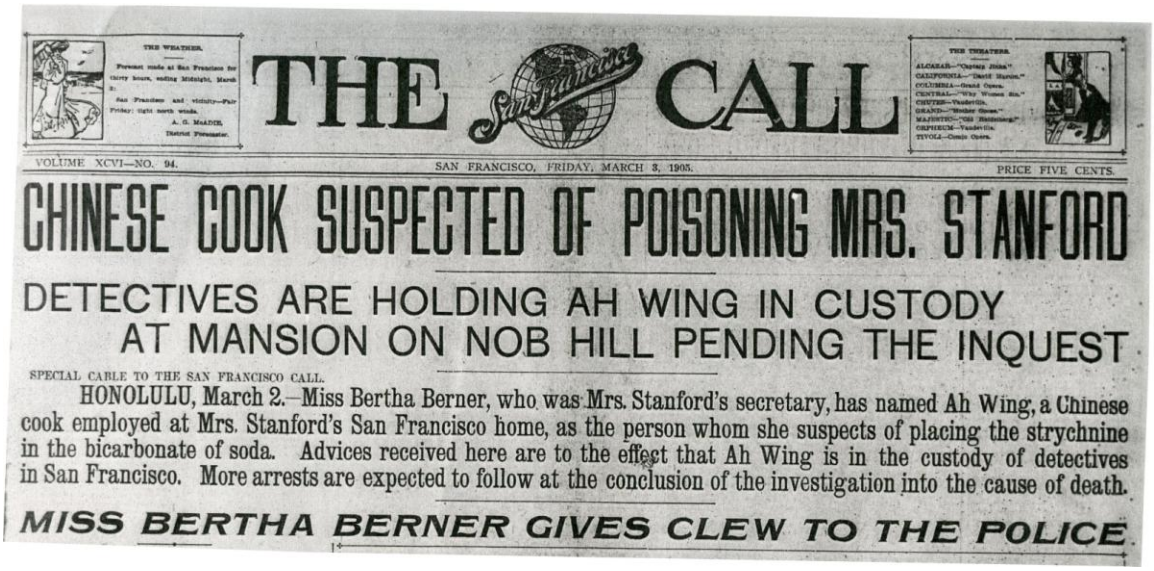


Figure 15. A detail from Map 158, showing a portion of the Palo Alto residential grounds leased by Ah Jim and Ah King in 1893. Courtesy Stanford University Archives.

Figure 16. A Chinese vegetable peddler on Alvarado Row, site of faculty homes on the Stanford campus, ca. early 1890s. Courtesy Stanford University Archives.

Figure 17. Mrs. Stanford in Tokyo, Japan in 1902, seated with Japanese graduates of Stanford University. Long-time companion and secretary Bertha Berner is standing to the far right of the photograph. Courtesy Stanford University Archives.



THE CALL

VOLUME XCVI—NO. 94. SAN FRANCISCO, FRIDAY, MARCH 3, 1905. PRICE FIVE CENTS.

CHINESE COOK SUSPECTED OF POISONING MRS. STANFORD

DETECTIVES ARE HOLDING AH WING IN CUSTODY AT MANSION ON NOB HILL PENDING THE INQUEST

SPECIAL CABLE TO THE SAN FRANCISCO CALL.

HONOLULU, March 2.—Miss Bertha Berner, who was Mrs. Stanford's secretary, has named Ah Wing, a Chinese cook employed at Mrs. Stanford's San Francisco home, as the person whom she suspects of placing the strychnine in the bicarbonate of soda. Advices received here are to the effect that Ah Wing is in the custody of detectives in San Francisco. More arrests are expected to follow at the conclusion of the investigation into the cause of death.

MISS BERTHA BERNER GIVES CLEW TO THE POLICE

Figure 18. Ah Wing was briefly one of the initial main suspects in the matter of Mrs. Stanford's mysterious death. *San Francisco Call*, 3 Mar 1905.

THE SAN FRANCISCO CALL, SATURDAY, MARCH 4, 1905.

POLICE CERTAIN THAT ALL SUSPECTS ARE WITHIN REACH

BEVERLY SAYS HIS FEELINGS WERE FRIENDLY

Describes as "Nonsense" the Report That He Was Dismissed From Service

LEFT OF OWN ACCORD

Declares He Would Have Done Anything to Make Former Employer Happy

FAMILY IS PERTURBED

SECRETARY ASKS FOR SODA IN A PAPER PACKAGE

Pharmacist in Palo Alto Asserts He Sold Mrs. Stanford Harmless Drug

GIVES DATE OF SALE

Record Shows Purchase of Three Ounces on the 6th of February

DEATH RECALLS EVENT

ALL SUSPECTS WITHIN REACH

Burnett Is Ready to Act When the Evidence Is Complete.

WILSON THINKS IT WAS MURDER

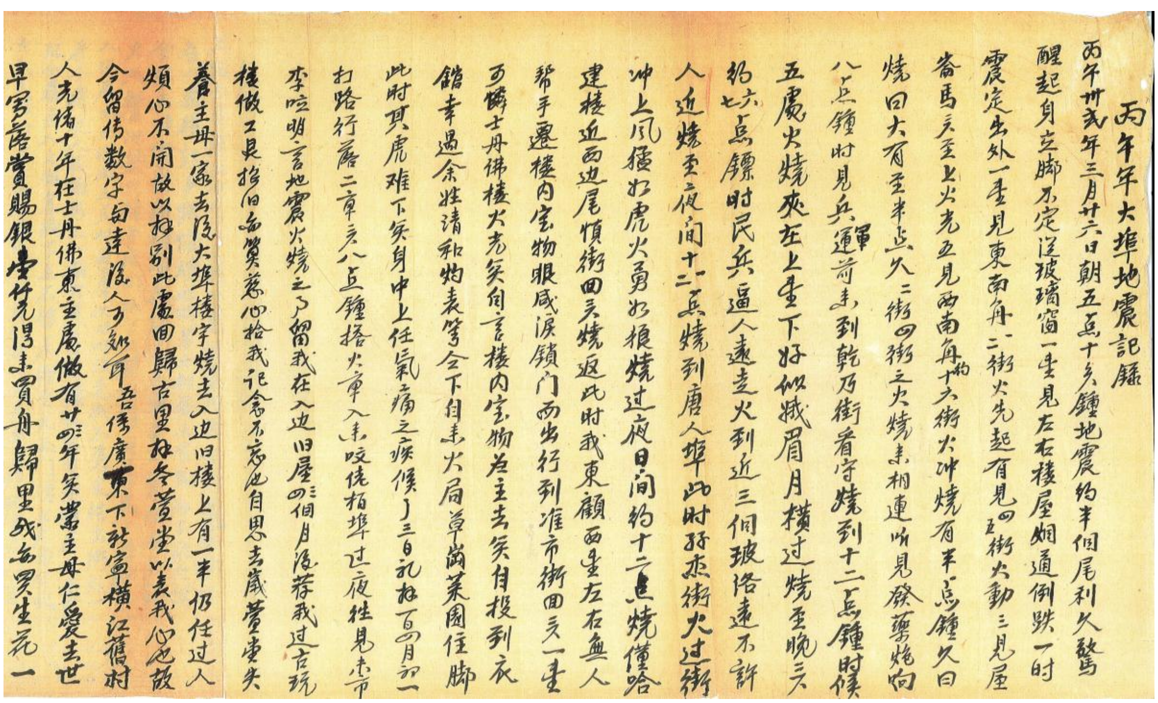
"In Interest of Justice" Refuses to Discuss Suspicions.

Figure 19. Ah Wing was depicted the upper left-hand corner of this article covering Mrs. Stanford's death. *San Francisco Call*, 4 Mar 1905.

AH WING BY NO MEANS A PRISONER

PHOTOGRAPH of Ah Wing, the Chinese housekeeper of the Stanford mansion on Nob Hill. It has been reported that he was detained at the house by the detectives on the theory that he might know something of the alleged poisoning of Mrs. Stanford. On the contrary, he has been free to come and go, and the photograph was taken as he was entering the Stanford grounds after a visit down town. It was Ah Wing who was said to have had some trouble with [illegible] because the domestics in the house insisted on being served with coffee at 4 P. M., and that he threatened to report the fact to Mrs. Stanford.

Figure 20. Ah Wing, cleared of suspicion and released from house arrest, seen entering the gate of the Nob Hill mansion. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 6 Mar 1905.



丙午年大埠地震記錄

丙午卅弍年三月廿六日朝五点十多鐘地震约半個尾利久驚
醒起身企脚不定從玻璃窗一望見左右樓屋烟通倒跌一时
震定出外一望見東南角一二街火先起有見四五街火動三見屋
崙馬夭至上火光五見西南角约十六街火冲燒有半点鐘久曰
燒回大有至半点久二街四街之火燒来相連喺見發藥炮响
八点鐘时見兵運軍前来到乾乃街看守燒到十二点鐘时候
五處火燒夾在上一望下好似撒眉月横过燒至晚三六
约七六点鏢时民兵逼人遠走火到近三個玻洛遠不許
人近燒至夜间十二点燒到唐人埠此时孖杰街火过街
冲上风猛如虎火勇如狼燒过夜日间约十二点燒僅哈
建樓近西边尾慎街四点燒返此时我東顧西望左右無人
幫手遷樓内宝物眼感淚鎖门而出行到准市街四点一望
可憐士丹佛樓火光矣自言樓内宝物為主去矣自投到衣
舘幸遇余姓請和灼表等今下自来火局草崙菜園住脚
此时其虎难下矣身中上任氣痛之疾候了三日孔拉[illegible]四月初一
扣路行落二章戶八点鐘搭火車入来咬佬[illegible]埠过夜[illegible]見[illegible]
李啶明言地震火燒之乃留我在入边旧屋四個月後薦我过古玩
樓做工艮指旧無貿落心拾我记念不忘也自思去歲營東失
養主母一家去後大埠樓宇燒去入边旧樓上有一半仍住过人
煩心不開故以拍别此處回歸古里拜冬營堂以表我心也故
今留傳數字句達後人可知耳吾係廣東下新寧横江舊村
人光緒十年在士丹佛東主處做有廿四年矣當主母仁愛去世
早写[illegible]賞賜銀壹仟元得来買舟歸里我無買生死一

Figure 21. A detail of Ah Wing's letter to the Stanford community after his departure for China in 1906. Courtesy Stanford University Archives.

Chapter 5

The Chinese at the Palo Alto Estate

Everyday Life at Palo Alto

Palo Alto at 8,800 acres required a large labor force to handle all of the upkeep required for a farm, a stock farm and a model European-style estate intended to dazzle visitors from around the world. Its very size, not to mention the broad range of tasks required to keep it running in optimal condition, meant that the Stanfords hired several Chinese gangs to do most of the work relating to the property and some of the work relating to the horses as well.[1]

The surviving time records from the Palo Alto estate date from March 1883 through June 1903, and are somewhat inconclusive in terms of exactly how many Chinese were at the estate and what they were doing.[2]

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[1] Stanford had a well-known preference for Chinese laborers after they performed so successfully on the Central Pacific and Southern Pacific Railroad construction projects.

[2] The Palo Alto Stock Farm was discontinued in 1903. The timecard books reflect that closure but work still continued, now under the auspices of Stanford University. Earliest payroll information for the

The earliest record that best reflects the work at Palo Alto started in October 1883.

The October 1883 entries show a breakdown of the various departments that made up the overall estate at the time: the stock farm (trotters), the farm, garden and grounds, and the running horse department (flat racers housed at the former Peter Coutts spread that Stanford had purchased in 1882). Two separate accounts were listed for "Improvements" and for the "Private Residence." Ah Jim was running a total of five gangs, doing consistent work termed as "General" and "Regular," and earning $35/month as one of several China bosses; later entries show him earning $50/month.[3] Two of Jim's gangs worked in the Farm Dept.

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university can be found in SC048. Timecard Book, March 1883-June 1903. Timecard Books, 1883-1903, unpaginated, Palo Alto Stock Farm Records, SC006, Stanford University Archives, Stanford.

[3] What constituted "General" and "Regular" work seen in monthly time records was not evident although Ah Jim's "General" gang was paid $1.33/day and his "Regular" gang earned only $1.00/day in October 1883. Gangs ranged in size from three to ninety or higher, depending on the task. It would appear that the "General" gang did work that required more skilled or possibly was more dangerous. For example, Stanford used nitroglycerine to blast planting holes for trees when traditional digging proved insufficient to allow enough water to penetrate the heavy clay soil. Timecard Book, October 1883, unpaginated.

and three in Garden and Grounds. Tasks listed in the back of the January 1884 time book included: killing gophers, tending to Lathrop's grounds, cutting wood and tending to the carrots, vegetables, greenhouse, lawn, and vineyard.[4] Another entry showed four men working three days in the greenhouse, anywhere from fourteen to twenty-five men working in the "Park," forty-six men spending two days cutting stakes followed by only two men cutting stakes for one day, two to seven men transplanting trees on six different days, and one man spending nine days killing gophers.[5]

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[4] Manager Ariel Lathrop and his wife Katherine lived for a time in Cedro Cottage, one of the properties bought by the Stanfords to expand the Palo Alto estate. Cedro Cottage, a classic Victorian gingerbread cottage, was known for its beautiful surrounding formal gardens and was later used by stock farm personnel and Stanford faculty for housing. Mrs. Stanford also spent considerable time there with Leland Junior when he was a child. Peter C. Allen, "The Cottage by the Creek," *Sandstone and Tile* 9, no. 3 (Spring 1985): 3-9.

[5] February 1884 entries show the Chinese tending hogs and chickens, working at a mill, spreading gravel on the roads, working at the reservoir, feeding the horses, handling brood mares and colts, driving horse carts and job wagons, killing gophers, and pulling weeds. March 1887 entries show Chinese being sent to various residences on the estate for short stints: "Chinamen employed during month for regular private use—Chas. Marvin's house for four days, E.S. Taylor's house for four days and Ferguson's for one and one half days." Timecard Book, February 1884 and March 1887, unpaginated.

Much of the work on the estate relating to the farm (cultivated fields and orchards), to garden and grounds (the residential grounds) and to the park (what is known today as the Arboretum) was flexible, with individuals and gangs slipping between various tasks and departments.[6] Other jobs required specific

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[6] Typical entries from gardener Thomas Douglas's daily journals include: "Balance of men helping Jim irrigating vineyards, I opened the ditch and irrigated bamboos." (18 March 1889); "Twelve men cutting down trees in the park." (13 December 1889); "Teams began working on circles in Quadrangle and grading about Tomb." (3 March 1890); "16 men hoeing in Nursery, 11 men in Park digging large olives, planted 3. The most we have planted any one day. Staked off part of the planting space around Tomb." (31 March 1890); "Taking up yews, euonymus from Arizona Garden and transplanting about Tomb, leveling circles in Quad." (15 April 1890); "Marked trees to be taken down around residence." (22 April 1890); "Men sulphuring in vineyard until 9 a.m., sowing seeds from India" (14 May 1890); and "Went to Mayfield in p.m., got grass seed and left at China Camp to sow early tomorrow morning." (25 May 1890). Douglas also noted events of interest: "Sunol [one of Stanford's prized fillies] trotted a mile in 2.101/2, best three-year-old record in the world." (9 November 1889); "Thermometer stood at 20 degrees at Timothy Hopkins." (8 January 1890); "Chinese New Year's Eve, came down on 11:40 train and attended dinner at residence grounds and stock farm tendered by Chinese." (19 January 1890), followed by "China New Years, no men working." (20 January 1890); "Heavy earthquake at 3:37 a.m. lasting 20 seconds." (25 April 1890); "Others helping Jim, box of cuttings came from Golden Gate Park and all hands went to work working them up." (11 October 1890); "Governor and Mrs. Stanford arrived." (19 October 1890); "President Harrison and party visited Governor Stanford today. The President and Mrs. Harrison planted a *Sequoia*

skill or knowledge and were done by individuals. For instance, Ah Ling, and later Ah You, were irrigators. There was also upward mobility for some. Ah Ein worked as a carpenter, as a hostler and later as a China boss. Men also worked in the winery, the vineyard, at the rock crusher and digging under the auspices of the Manzanita Water Company (Stanford's water company concerned with corralling enough water for the estate and later for the university).[7]

Later entries show Chinese working in all aspects of the estate, both as long-term individuals and as more transient gangs of varying sizes. The Chinese answered to China bosses such as Ah Joe (Garden and Grounds), Ah Jim (Farm), Ah Leon (Stock Farm) and Ah Sam (Running Horse).[8] The China bosses answered in turn to white foremen, who answered to Ariel Lathrop, one of Mrs. Stanford's brothers and overall manager of the

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gigantea [sic] each." (29 April 1891) and "LSJU opening, watering in Nursery." (1 October 1891). Thomas Douglas, Daily Journals, unpaginated, Stanford University Arboretum: Records, 1886-1994, SC195, Stanford University Archives, Stanford.

[7] Timecard Books, March 1887, December 1887, May 1889, unpaginated.

[8] Timecard Books, July 1883, October 1883, July 1887, unpaginated.

estate. When Ariel Lathrop resigned in 1892, Mrs. Stanford's youngest brother, Charles Lathrop, replaced him.[9] This hierarchical arrangement remained in place as long as the Stanfords were away; when they were in residence, some of the Chinese employees dealt directly with either Stanford or Mrs. Stanford.

Several men were hired as cooks for the various estate boardinghouses (separate quarters for the whites and Chinese) and Ah Sing was listed as a house servant for the residence. Ah Joe was employed as the China Boss for Garden and Grounds and was paid a salary of $40/month. In October he only worked four and one half days; his time record noted: "Gone to China. Paid to date by JLS." A similar entry was noted for Ah Fook and Ah Charlie, two of the cooks. These entries reflect Jane Lathrop Stanford's direct interaction with some of the Chinese men working at the estate, particularly with those who worked in and around the residence.[10]

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[9] Tutorow, *The Governor*, 2: 739-740.

[10] The reference "Gone to China" was indicative of the transnational life many of the Chinese in California lived during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Those who could afford it (and before increasingly harsher exclusion laws made it extremely difficult for Chinese to get back into America after a

While many of the Chinese who worked at the estate performed as laborers, cooks, assistants, dishwashers, waiters, house servants, gardeners and farmers, all of which were acceptable roles, more than a few worked directly with the horses.[11] Ah Tom worked as a cart driver for the stock farm, Ah Quong, Ah Sher and Ah Sam were all listed as hostlers with the Running Horse Department, and Ah Charley was identified as a hostler working under a white coachman, Charlie Wooster, for Garden and Grounds; Ah Charley drove Mrs. Stanford when she was in residence.[12] These men had to be good with horses for Stanford would not tolerate just anyone working around

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visit home) sailed home to China to visit spouses and other family members who were usually recipients of part of the Chinese worker's wages. Maintaining connections to family in China was crucial, just one of the reasons being the traditional Chinese belief that one's soul could not "rest after death without the ministration of the family." Many Chinese who died in California previously arranged for their bones to be shipped home through friends or the local benevolent association. Lydon, 131. Timecard Book, October 1883, unpaginated.

[11] Timecard Books, October 1883, January 1884, May 1887, May 1889, August 1892, August 1893, August 1894, May 1895, June 1897, July 1899, August 1901, June 1903, unpaginated.

[12] Jane Stanford to May Hopkins, 26 July 1899, Jane Stanford Papers, SC033b, Stanford University Archives, Stanford.

his world-record-breaking equines; he had strict rules in place concerning swearing, shouting and the use of force, especially whips.[13] One of the basic tenets of his training program was that the horses were always treated gently.[14]

Although the Chinese working for the Central Pacific had already proven their prowess driving horses, the notion that they were "not good with teams" persisted.[15] Many of the Chinese were taught how to plow while working at the stock farm and Ferguson, the estate's clerk who also supervised the grounds, wrote to his boss, Ariel Lathrop:

> Have to report that the Chinamen plowing in vineyard at Garden & Grounds are doing fair work; both horses and drivers will get used to the work in a few days. Very few Chinamen know how to handle horses.[16]

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[13] Tutorow, *The Governor*, 1: 446.

[14] Timecard Books, October 1883, January 1884, May 1893, July 1893, unpaginated.

[15] Tsu, "Grown in the Garden," 69.

[16] Ferguson was precisely the type of man the Stanfords later hoped their university would produce; he had completed a collegiate course at Oakland that provided practical training for his future employment. H.S. Foote, ed., "L.C. Ferguson, Grounds Superintendent of the Palo Alto Ranch," *Pen Pictures from the Garden of the Wolrd, Santa Clara County, California, Illustrated*, (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Company, 1888), 328. Lewis Ferguson to Ariel Lathrop, 27 January 1887, Letterbook.

The fact that several Chinese worked at tasks outside those considered acceptable for them (working with the horses, including the trotters, the runners and the work animals; also, several Chinese men worked regularly as carpenters and one as a painter, and another Chinese worked as a "cellarman" in the Palo Alto Winery) is evidence of Stanford's faith in them by providing them these unusual opportunities. It could certainly also be said that several of the Chinese took advantage of their being at Palo Alto by pursuing and mastering new skills.[17] Stanford's white

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[17] A Chinese woman coming into San Francisco bypassed the method of associating herself with Stanford and instead used his name directly: "Among the Chinese who recently reached San Francisco on the "City of Peking" was a woman who was registered as Mrs. Leland Stanford. Her husband had once worked for Senator Stanford, and so she adopted his name. Mrs. Stanford looked very portly to the experienced eye of the custom inspector, and an examination showed that the woman had on no less than seven costly suits of silk clothing." Several years later, Moy Ah Kee, who later worked as a court interpreter for seventeen years, claimed he "was educated very well by Governor Stanford, in whose service he was engaged formerly." Moy, then a wealthy man living in Chicago, had filed for first citizenship papers in New York in 1880, and was then applying for his second set of papers in Chicago, despite "the act of Congress forbidding naturalization to Chinamen." Moy might have been motivated by the recent passing of the 1892 Geary Act, with its requirement that the Chinese carry certificates of registration. "News of Our Neighbors,"

foremen, who did not always agree with his liberal thinking, had no choice but to follow Stanford's dictation about how things were run at his estate.

Jonathan Sikken, a clerk who dealt with the stock farm's administrative business, wrote in response to one of the Lathrop brothers' inquiry about work for a white laborer in 1884:

> There are very few places at the ranch for white "laborers." As a rule all the plain laboring work is done by Chinese, but there is so much to be done at the garden and grounds just now that there will be no difficulty in finding work for him if you send him down. If he proves suitable he can be put in charge of the reservoir if we have rain enough to stock it and meantime there are numberless holes to dig and trees to plant.[18]

What is interesting to note here, aside from confirmation of Stanford's preference for Chinese "plain" labor, is the potential for the white laborer to ascend to a supervisory level; the Palo Alto estate was using the same employment setup described by Crocker regarding the Central Pacific's working relationships between the Irish and Chinese workers. No doubt Stanford was trying to minimize any potential

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Salt Lake Tribune, 26 May 1887, 5; and "Wants His Papers," *San Francisco Call*, 24 February 1893, 2.

[18] Jonathan Sikken to Mr. Lathrop, 25 January 1884, 183, Letterbook.

resentment on the part of his white employees by using what he considered a tried-and-true method that placed whites in managerial positions and therefore kept the peace.[19]

Sikken, although a clerk and not a foreman, took it upon himself to overrule how Ah Jim dealt with the tools in Garden and Grounds, confident in his authority over the China boss. He justified his actions to Lathrop, cognizant that he had angered Jim in the process but assured of his superior position as a white man:

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[19] Friction between Chinese and white workers was theoretically kept to a minimum by segregating workers' quarters and, sometimes, the workers themselves. Everis "Red" Hayes, one of the owners of the 600-acre Edenvale estate in San Jose was the subject of a newspaper exposé in 1904; he was running for Congress on an "anti-Chinese" platform while employing Chinese to work on his estate, just as Leland Stanford had done in 1885. Worse, Hayes had tried forcing white workers to eat at the same lunch table as a Chinese employee. Several of the men refused, claiming they "were Californians; that we were not accustomed to eating with a Chinese and that we did not intend to do it." Hayes's brother told the newspaper no Chinese were employed by the Hayes family. In fact, Hayes claimed the only Chinese who had ever worked at Edenvale worked for Rudolph Ulrich, the head gardener at Monterey's Hotel del Monte, who used Chinese labor when installing the Edenvale landscape back in 1889. This was untrue but voters did not care; Hayes subsequently served seven terms in the U.S. House of Representatives. Tsu, 97-101; and "Chinese Not Employed By Him," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 29 October 1904, 9.

> For quite a while past the picks, shovels, etc. have been disappearing from the Garden and Grounds. This fact and the further one that Mr. [Thomas] Ferguson complained to me a day or two since that he could not get a pair of pruning shears from Jim when he wanted them has caused me to take the control of all property out of Jim's hands and turn it over to Flannery—Mr. Ferguson's assistant. Flannery now issues the tools to the Chinamen in the morning, has them returned to him at night and locks everything in the tool house and keeps the key. Jim does not seem pleased with the arrangement but I am convinced it is a proper one.[20]

Ferguson, in turn, made his own complaint to estate manager Lathrop about Ah Charley.[21] Charley had started a fire in the stove of the Palo Alto residence and then gone off to China Camp (one of the Chinese boardinghouses on the estate) and left "the house to take care of itself," the result being one wall of the house was scorched clear through.[22] Ferguson insisted that the residence was neither securely guarded nor "protected against fire while left in charge of

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[20] Jonathan Sikken to Ariel Lathrop, 17 January 1884, 173-174, Letterbook.

[21] Lewis C. Ferguson replaced Sikken in 1885 as clerk and superintendent of the grounds.

[22] Chinese who lived in employers' homes never lost their desire for Chinese fellowship, where they could converse in their native language and share stories of their experiences with others also living far from home. Street, 245; and Lewis Ferguson to Ariel Lathrop, 13 April 1886, 195, Letterbook.

Charley or any other Chinaman."[23] He also believed that Charley leaving "the house to care for itself" was "an action, which I surmise, Mrs. Stanford would not tolerate for a moment and which undoubtedly, she has no knowledge of."[24] Ferguson wanted Lathrop to hire a white person to be responsible for the residence but there is no evidence he did so. Charley, who may have actually slept at the residence, was with Mrs. Stanford for many more years and was one of her avowed favorites, along with Joe and Wing.[25]

Ferguson was even more agitated in 1887 when a group of Chinese men assigned to Garden and Grounds refused to plow at the rate of $1.00/day.[26] Other

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[23] Ferguson, 13 April 1886, 195.

[24] Ferguson, 13 April 1886, 195.

[25] Nagel misread Mrs. Stanford's missive, mixing Wing with Wong, but perusal of the original letter clearly reveals the dotted letter "i." Nagel, 151; and Jane Stanford to May Hopkins, 26 July 1899, Jane Stanford Papers.

[26] The long-fixed Chinese wage rate of $1.00 per day was generally increased to $1.25 and was as high as $1.50 in some areas by 1884; some of the Chinese at Palo Alto were only being paid at the $1.00/day rate while others were earning considerably more in 1887. Street, 341; and Lewis Ferguson to Ariel Lathrop, 26 January 1887, 124-126, and 27 January 1887, 130, Letterbook.

Chinese on the property were earning more than $1.00/day depending on their type of work, but it is not clear who decided the pay rates for the various jobs that needed doing. As fewer Chinese laborers were available after the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act, some Chinese felt more confident about striking for higher wages. Many white growers found this new militancy both ominous and threatening. Ferguson's first reaction was to fire the men right on the spot; he only kept them on because Ah Jim, the China boss, pleaded their case.[27] Ferguson wrote to Lathrop, "If we do not discharge these Chinamen who refused to go plowing until they saw it was no use to hold out for increase of pay, such things are liable to occur again."[28] Lathrop concurred but Ferguson was not satisfied with the manager simply backing him up; he wanted Lathrop to speak to Jim face-to-face. Ferguson had even gone so far as to threaten Jim with being fired, along with every Chinese man working in Garden and Grounds, if such a thing ever happened again.[29]

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[27] Street, 341; and Lewis Ferguson to Ariel Lathrop, 26 January 1887, 124-126, Letterbook.

[28] Ferguson, 26 January 1887, 124-126.

[29] Ferguson, 26 January 1887, 124-126.

Several of these men were long-term employees as opposed to the transient gang workers. While many of the Chinese gang workers were merely temporary employees and thus easily expendable, it is unlikely Ferguson had the authority to fire Jim, although Lathrop certainly did.

The Start of the University

While Ah Jim was still working as head gardener for the Stanfords in 1886, they hired Frederick Law Olmsted to design the overall layout of the university campus they intended to build in their son's memory at their Palo Alto estate.[30] He worked in conjunction with

[30] Charles Hodges, the first university architect, wrote: "The Senator was a great advocate of Chinese labour. Hundreds of them were employed, digging the trenches for the tunnels, accommodating the steam pipes and so on, running to the dormitories east and west [of the Main Quadrangle]." Hodges was also the recipient of a Chinese cook's services when he first arrived at the estate while the university was undergoing construction. Mrs. Stanford also arranged for domestic help for faculty later living on the campus, an example of how the Chinese working on the estate seamlessly moved into also working for the university as established members of the community. Charles Lathrop also later hired Chinese to work at

the Boston architectural firm of Shepley, Rutan and Coolidge, with Charles Coolidge being the principal architect associated with the Stanford University project. Olmsted and two of his associates, junior partner Henry Codman, and Thomas Douglas, former California state forester, at times worked directly with Jim in relation to planting the new campus landscape.

One of the features of the university was to be a new arboretum, in addition to the arboretum Stanford had begun planting on his property in 1878. Olmsted drew up a list of prospective trees and shrubs, "Names heard in the locality and generally known by the Chinese gardner [*sic*]."[31] When Codman made one of his

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the Business Office that oversaw combined estate and university affairs when the experiment of hiring student help proved unsuccessful. The single best source of how the Chinese were an integral component of the early Stanford University community is Ellen Coit Elliott, wife of the first university registrar. She includes several anecdotes in her autobiography. Ellen Coit Elliott, *It Happened This Way: American Scene*, (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1940); and Charles Hodges, "Reminescences [*sic*] of Stanford University and Its Founders," 2, Charles Hodges Papers, 2499, Stanford University Archives, Stanford; and Elliott, *The First Twenty-Five Years*, 156.

[31] Frederick Law Olmsted, "A List of the Trees and Shrubs Advised to be Propagated at Palo Alto," 22 October 1886, Stanford University Arboretum: Records,

periodic inspection tours from Boston in 1888, he wrote to Olmsted:

> Jim says he talked the matter over with the Governor and the Governor told him it was all right to take the piece [of land] now being used. ..Jim has not planted any seed nor set out any cuttings. He says it will not do to begin till February, so there is plenty of time to increase quantities.[32]

Jim being chosen as the gardener for Olmsted to deal with in 1886, when white gardeners were also employed on the property, is another example of Stanford affording unusual opportunities to some of the Chinese who worked for him.[33] The Stanfords spent most of their time in Washington D.C. while the university was being constructed, and Olmsted and Codman also passed relatively little time in California. In fact, Olmsted ultimately arranged for Douglas to work full-time at the Palo Alto estate beginning in December 1888, where he was ostensibly

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1886-1994, SC195, Stanford University Archives, Stanford.

[32] Henry Codman to Frederick Law Olmsted, 21 January 1888, Architecture of Stanford University, 1886-1937, SC125, Stanford University Archives, Stanford.

[33] Jim may have possessed an extraordinary level of skill in identifying or dealing with plants. It is also very likely that he was fairly proficient in English, a skill vital to moving successfully between the white and Chinese communities.

responsible for propagating plants for the new arboretum. Instead, Douglas found himself also dealing with every aspect of maintaining the residential grounds, up until then Jim's domain. An experienced nurseryman, Douglas nonetheless found himself at a loss when attempting to work with the Chinese gardeners at Palo Alto. Olmsted fired off an indignant letter to Stanford on 16 March 1889:

> Douglas writes that he has been badly set back in all his plans and has accomplished less that I had laid out for him because of the necessity of constant, close, personal, detailed direction of Chinamen who could not understand or read English and who not being able to read labels would make sad mistakes if he did not follow each man closely. This has kept him so closely to the nursery itself that he could not go about to search for the seeds and plants of California that you most wanted nor make good arrangements for collecting and identifying them. He found it impossible to deputize this work (except to a few species growing near Palo Alto) to Chinamen. He begged Mr. Lathrop to let him have one man who could read plant names and take orders for operations to be carried on not constantly under his own eyes but Mr. Lathrop said that you had forbidden this. At last his father came to his assistance, but too late to allow him to accomplish what had been intended.[34]

Olmsted's letter reflects the ongoing power struggle that existed between the principal players involved in building the university; it also casts

[34] Frederick Law Olmsted to Leland Stanford, 16 March 1889, Architecture of Stanford University.

light on the early strained relationship between Douglas, Jim and the Chinese gardeners who were more than willing to test this newcomer's knowledge and authority. While Jim was probably unhappy with Douglas's new role superseding his own as boss of the residential grounds, in the same way he had been unhappy when Sikken interfered with his management of the tools, he and Douglas eventually worked things out. Later entries in Douglas's journals note traveling to San Francisco with Jim, attending the christening of Jim's first son, and taking part in the annual celebrations of the Chinese New Year at the estate.[35]

While there were clearly frustrations on both sides at times for whites and Chinese, everyone on the estate had to learn to deal with each other. Some of these frustrations appeared to stem from racially-based assumptions, such as Ferguson railing that no Chinese man was capable of dealing with the Stanford residence on his own. Ferguson's desire to fire any Chinese who threatened to strike was another example

[35] Douglas, Daily Journals, 29 January 1889, 19 February 1889, 20 February 1889, 30 July 1889, 19 January 1890, 20 January 1890, 7 February 1891, 8 February 1891, 9 August 1891: unpaginated.

of a practice commonly used by white laborers but was not tolerated with the Chinese. Other frustrations were simply the normal irritations felt by persons working within a close environment, and by no means were all interactions between whites and Chinese negative. When the Chinese prepared a large feast for the estate foremen each Chinese New Year's, work came to a halt, a rare occurrence as other American holidays such as Thanksgiving or Christmas were still considered working days.[36]

[36] Lydon claimed the Montereyan Chinese usually celebrated the Chinese New Year for three days with a division between private and public festivities. It is unknown if the Chinese at Palo Alto were allowed to fire off their traditional firecrackers used to scare off evil spirits as Leland Stanford was famous for not allowing any behavior that might disturb his horses. Chinese workers at Palo Alto did grumble when, starting in 1887, Lathrop and Ferguson changed policy and made "the China-Holiday" a day without pay. At the neighboring Timothy Hopkins estate in 1885, visitor Isabella Cass noted that the Chinese who lived there delayed their New Year celebration until Timothy Hopkins could attend. She was told they fired off 3,000,000 firecrackers; she herself did not watch the festivities as they took place on the Sabbath but she certainly heard them. She had gone to San Francisco's Chinatown the day before with May Hopkins and described in her diary being served tea and sweetmeats by a Chinese merchant. Lydon, 256; and Lewis Ferguson to Ariel Lathrop, 1 February 1887, 138, Letterbook; and Isabella Cass, 14 February 1885 and 15 February 1885, unpaginated, Diary, Isabella Cass Diary, SCM109, Stanford University Archives, Stanford.

Sikken's remarks about the scarcity of white labor at Palo Alto testified to Stanford's preference for Chinese workers in terms of plain labor, and the fact that one of the white laborers was fired for striking one of the Chinese men shows that Stanford would not tolerate any violence against his Chinese employees. A highly-publicized wave of attacks against Chinese laborers took place throughout California in the mid-1880s with Anti-Coolie League members and other outraged white citizens, including unemployed white laborers, literally attacking and driving out Chinese field hands in thirty-five different communities.[37] It is no wonder that many of the Chinese who worked at Palo Alto felt relatively safe and spoke well of their living conditions when visiting the San Jose Chinatown.[38] Beyond their safety and their sustained employment, several of the Chinese also enjoyed work opportunities denied to them elsewhere.

[37] Street, 344, 351.

[38] Yu, "John C. Young," 10.

More than a Working Relationship

Some of the Chinese working at Palo Alto for many years developed an affectionate relationship with all three of the Stanfords, especially with Leland Junior.[39] When he died of typhoid fever in Italy while traveling abroad with his parents in March 1884, the Chinese gardeners working at Palo Alto expressed their sympathy with the Stanfords' loss by creating their own floral offering for the large and public funeral held in San Francisco.[40]. Bertha Berner, a mourner who would later become Mrs. Stanford's secretary and companion for twenty years, described the event:

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[39] The Stanfords christened their son Leland DeWitt Stanford. At some point, he apparently wanted to change his name to Leland Stanford Junior in honor of his father. His letters were signed with various signatures reflecting both names between 1879 and 1884; when his parents created the university in his memory they called it Leland Stanford Junior University. Tutorow, *The Governor*, 2: 681-682.

[40] Herbert Nash, Leland Stanford Junior's tutor, wrote of his student: "As a mere child he would scour the farm on his pony with his dogs barking at his heels; he loved to spend the day in the fields among the laborers…All the farmhands were his friends—whether of Mongol, Circassian, or African race." Herbert C. Nash, "Biographical Sketch," *In Memoriam-Leland Stanford, Junior* (privately printed, 1884), 11, Stanford University Archives, Stanford.

> The large church was completely lined with flowers and tall pieces stood in the aisles. A notable piece was a white cross standing in the central aisle that reached up into the vaulted ceiling, a tribute from the Chinese gardeners employed at the country home. They had made it themselves, very artistically, and had transported it to the church during the night to keep it from wilting. They had written on the card: "For little Leland, from the Governor's Chinese boys." This was fastened with a heavy white silk cord and tassels. The frame of this cross was kept, was remade somewhat smaller, and each Easter morning was placed in front of Leland's tomb, trimmed with white flowers by the Chinese gardeners.[41]

This action repeated by the Chinese gardeners over the years not only reflected their respect for the Stanfords and their own personal grief, but also their reverence for family and for male children, two central attributes of traditional Chinese culture.[42] Some of these men may have also converted to Christianity, through missionary activity in China or after coming to California, and therefore would have been fully cognizant of Easter's religious association with redemption.[43]

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[41] Berner, 38.

[42] Lydon, 131.

[43] Ellen Coit Elliott, wife of the first university registrar, wrote about meeting one of the Chinese cooks for the first time: "Ah Sam took care of us very well. We learned from Dr. Jordan that 'Ah Sam' was Chinese for 'The Tree,' but he was addressed as 'Sam'

Jane Stanford, Ah Jim and Ah Wing

Leland Stanford was clearly regarded as a friend of the Chinese; Mrs. Stanford was also known for her positive feelings towards them. In an 1892 *Ladies Home Journal* article featuring Mrs. Stanford, she was characterized in the following way:

> The Chinese have her sympathy, and she considers them somewhat abused. Her chef is a Celestial, and as the Stanford dinners are among the famous ones given in Washington, his Chinese Highness must be familiarly acquainted with the most intricate mysteries of the cuisine.[44]

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precisely as though christened Samuel. His queue had been cut off; that, Dr. Jordan states, was because he was a Christian. I thought it a pity, religion or no religion; but Mrs. Jordan thought it much better for the kitchen. He was our first Chinaman, and furnished an early thrill when we spied him squatting at the door of the red barn eating rice out of a bowl with *chopsticks*.. But servant problems began promptly, for he did not last long. He said he was not strong, and Mrs. Stanford had told him there would not be much work to do; but, 'plenty work--I go.'" Elliott, *It Happened This Way*, 184-185.

[44] Another scrapbook clipping reported: "Everybody is talking about Mrs. Stanford's Chinese cook's recipe for bird's nest soup. This much-talked-of Chinese dish was served at a dinner given by Senator and Mrs. Stanford some weeks ago." Mrs. Stanford supplied the recipe to the reporter; she reportedly took four

The journalist also noted the Stanfords' close relationship, claiming that "Senator Stanford gives his wife his closest confidence on all business matters, whether political or financial; she has consequently a wide range in experience of worldly affairs."[45] It follows that Mrs. Stanford may have also influenced her husband's actions towards the Chinese. In a Santa Clara County oral history, taken during the late 1960s, a member of the Chinese-American community recounted:

> There is an old Chinese story of aid to the Chinese. A Mr. Milbra presented Mr. Leland Stanford, Sr. a document for his signature to oust the Chinese from the state of California. When Mr. Stanford was about to sign, Mrs. Stanford interposed and related to her husband that the Chinese people have been good to him. The Chinese had helped him in the building of the transcontinental railroad, in building the university, and in many other ways. Why should they force the Chinese to leave? Mr. Stanford then refused to sign and walked away. This proved

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Chinese cooks along to Washington, D.C. Unidentified clipping, Scrapbook No. 11, 51, Stanford Family Scrapbooks, SC033f, Stanford University Archives, Stanford; clipping from *Ladies Home Journal*, February 1892, Scrapbook No. 3, 14; and Stanford Properties, 0006, Stanford University Archives, Stanford.

[45] *Journal* clipping, Scrapbook.

> the fact that Mrs. Stanford held a great love for the Chinese people.[46]

That these memories endured for several decades after the respective deaths of the Stanfords (he in 1893 and she in 1905) is evidence of the depth of the regard that existed between the Stanfords and some of the Chinese men who worked for them. Many of the Chinese who worked at Palo Alto were there for several years; two men in particular, Ah Jim and Ah Wing, enjoyed long-standing relationships of twenty years with Mrs. Stanford.

Ah Jim's full name was Jim Mok Jew You.[47] Whether he began work at Palo Alto in 1876 or later in the

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[46] In the same collection of oral histories, someone else spoke of the Stanfords in connection with John Heinlen: "He and his family were dearly loved by the Chinese people, as were Senator and Mrs. Leland Stanford." John Heinlen was a white San Jose man who supported the local Chinese community and allowed them to lease and build on his property after their Chinatown was torched on 4 May 1887; the second San Jose Chinatown was consequently known as Heinlenville and was built under great protest by the white community. Connie Young Yu, *Chinatown, San Jose, USA*, 29, 34-38; and Kenneth Chow, "The History of the Chinese People in Santa Clara County," in Hom, 11.

[47] Many of the Chinese "bobbed and weaved through their public life using one name in the white community, another in the Chinese community and another (their true identify) within the immediate family." Ah Jim signed his leases with Jane Stanford as Jim Mok Joey or Jim Mok Joey You and told immigration authorities his two names were Jim Mock and Jim Mock Jew You. The

1880s after working on the Southern Pacific, his situation was relatively unusual because his wife, Lee Ho (Lee Shee), accompanied him. Most married Chinese women living in the San Francisco Bay Area at the time were usually the wives of wealthy merchants, even by the turn of the century.[48] Most laborers who came to California left their wives at home. It was too expensive to bring them, not to mention the wives themselves had familial obligations to their parents-in-law and their own children.

Both of the Stanfords were extremely fond of children; the fact that Ah Jim had his family living on the estate was no doubt part of the reason for a relationship that extended beyond that of disinterested employer and employee. At some point, probably in 1880, Lee Ho gave birth to a daughter, Mock Tsue May (Sue Mee), while living at Palo Alto. Some years later, she gave birth to a boy, whom Ah Jim claimed Jane Stanford named Palo Alto, on 7 July

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transcriber spelled Ah Jim's name as Mock but Jim spelled it Mok when writing his signature. ARC 296445, 10252/7; and Lydon, 4-5.

[48] Tsu, "Grown in the Garden," 95.

1891.[49] The baby's Chinese name was Mock Wah Ham; the Stanfords presented Jim and Lee Ho with the gift of a silver mug, knife, fork and spoon, and a gold-lined cup, all engraved with "Mock Woh [*sic*] Ham, Palo Alto, July 7, 1891."[50] Two Mock family descendents believe the gifts were a result of Mock Wah Ham being the first Chinese baby born on the estate, although he appears to have been the second baby, since various testimonies filed with the immigration authorities attest to the fact that Sue Mee was the eldest Mock child.[51] Perhaps the true distinction was that Mock Wah Ham was the first male Chinese baby born on the estate, the preferred gender of Chinese tradition. Thomas Douglas, the first university gardener, noted in his journal on 9 August 1891: "Very hot, no men working. Christening Ah Jim's baby."[52] With the

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[49] Various documents in Mock Wah Ham's immigration file list his name as Mock Wah Ham, Palo Alto Wah Ham, Mock Jew Quay, Mok Wah Ham, Mock Woh Ham, and Palo Alto Mock. A Mock family scrapbook identifies him as Wah Him Mock. ARC21785/4-7.

[50] ARC21785,/4-7; ARC21785/4-7; and ARC 20505/6-4.

[51] Lorraine Mock and Natalie Haggerty, Ah Jim's great-granddaughters, interview with author, 22 August 2010; Lorraine Mock, 16 February 2011.

[52] Douglas, 9 Aug 1891, unpaginated.

scarcity of Chinese children outside of Chinatown, it is likely these three siblings were cosseted not only by the Stanfords, but also by the Chinese men who worked on the estate.

Lee Ho gave birth to a second boy on 29 December 1892, named Mock Wah Foon (Wah Fun).[53] His nickname was Menlo Park, Mrs. Stanford's preferred address for the Palo Alto estate. Pregnant with a fourth child, Lee Ho returned to China on 26 August 1893 with her young daughter, her toddler, her eight-month-old infant, and accompanied by a possible relative identified as Mock Due Fay, on the SS "Gaelic."[54] She left without any registration papers, perhaps a signal she had no intention of herself or her children returning to America.[55]

In 1897, Ah Jim was considering having Wah Foon, his second son, travel from China to Palo Alto. He enlisted Mrs. Stanford's aid, asking her to write an affidavit testifying to his eldest three children's

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[53] ARC10252/7.

[54] ARC10252/7.

[55] By August 1893, any Chinese leaving the country without registration papers as required by the Geary Act would not be easily readmitted to America. ARC 296445, 10252/7; and ARC 296445, 21785/4-7.

native status.[56] Chinese struggling with immigration authorities determined to keep them out after the 1882 Exclusion Act soon learned "how to emphasize their class and citizenship status and their relationships with whites."[57] Jim also solicited four white notarized signatures from the estate, three supervisors and that of Charles Lathrop.[58] For whatever reason, Mock Wah Foon remained with his mother in China until he reached the age of seventeen, in 1908.

Ah Jim, who leased acreage from Mrs. Stanford until January 1896, was by that time living in San Francisco above the Chung Sun Wo store, a business in which he was part owner and that provided him with the highly respected status of merchant. Jim asked two white men, Peter J. Kelly and Edgar A. Soper, to act as witnesses that he was Mock Wah Foon's father.[59]

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[56] ARC10252/7.

[57] The 1882 Exclusion Act exempted laborers from entry, but not scholars, teachers, merchants or travelers. Immigration officials struggled with who, exactly, was a laborer. Clearly Jim, who was still working as a gardener--he did actually later become a merchant in San Francisco--was taking no chances Mock Wah Foon would be denied entry. Lee, 135.

[58] ARC10252/7.

[59] Jim at one time had shipped flowers to San Francisco through the Wells Fargo office at the Menlo Park train depot; Soper was the Southern Pacific ticket agent as

Their sworn testimony, combined with Mrs. Stanford's affidavit, convinced immigration officials of Mock Wah Foon's nativity and they allowed him into the country with relative ease, although he still had to undergo the typical close questioning, providing details of life in his village and his familial connections in both China and California.[60]

After Leland Stanford's death in 1893, Ah Jim seized the opportunity to go into business for himself. He and Ah King, the latter having worked in the estate greenhouse for several years, co-signed a

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well as the Wells Fargo express agent there. William E. Strobridge, "Boxes of Cut Flowers: Menlo Park and Wells Fargo, 1899-1900," *La Peninsula: The Journal of the San Mateo County Historical Association* 32, no.1 (Winter 1999-2000): 3; and ARC10252/7.

[60] Ah Jim's oldest son, Mock Wah Ham, returned to California on 31 December 1910, a year after his father's death. Despite Wah Ham's possession of Mrs. Stanford's affidavit and the silver articles and gold-lined cup, immigration officials initially denied him entry because his answers to questions about his village and family did not match those of his brother. Officials reconsidered two months later only after Harry C. Peterson, curator of the Stanford Museum on the university campus, went to the Angel Island immigration office and showed officials a photograph of the two boys that had been on exhibit in the museum for the past ten years. The Chinese Inspector decided that he was then still not convinced Wah Foon and Wah Ham were brothers, but he did believe Wah Ham had been born at Palo Alto as claimed and so recommended he be allowed back into the country. ARC21785/4-7.

lease with Mrs. Stanford. The *San Francisco Call* reported:

> The cutting down of expenses which was begun several months ago at Vina, Menlo and Palo Alto still continue[s]. The hothouse, vegetable garden, grounds and orchard have been leased to Jim Mok Goey You, the Chinese who has so long had charge of the grounds.[61]

Ah Jim and Ah King were equal partners for two years, then Ah Jim worked solo for another two years, not only leasing land for his own use but also continuing to care for the residential grounds.[62] White property owners leasing land to Chinese for farming and horticultural purposes in Santa Clara Valley was a common practice, with the Chinese often negotiating terms to suit their own best interests. These white land owners were often publicly criticized for doing

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[61] Leland Stanford had negotiated a few leases with tenants before his death, generally granting residence to former owners from whom he had purchased the property. Mrs. Stanford, desperate to keep the university open while her husband's estate was tied up in probate, opted to lease extensive portions of Palo Alto and Vina to tenant farmers, usually collecting both rent and a portion of their crops and produce. "Mrs. Stanford's Plans," *San Francisco Call*, 6 October 1893, 7.

[62] "Memorandum of Agreement," 23 September 1893, 28 March 1894, 17 December 1894, Palo Alto Stock Farm Records, SC006, Stanford University Archives, Stanford.

so because leasing land to Chinese exposed the fallacy behind the notion that California was intended for white family farmers who had no need to rely on foreign labor to make their living.[63] Mrs. Stanford maintained numerous leases with white tenant farmers, as well; the 8,800-acre estate was large enough to support not only Mrs. Stanford's various concerns but also those of a dozen small farmers. According to a Martin Murphy family member (an early pioneer family), these and other local property owners also hired Chinese labor through Leland Stanford before his death in 1893: "The procedure, if one wanted to hire Chinese laborers, was to write a letter to Governor Stanford at Mayfield."[64]

Ah Jim himself hired Chinese gardeners to help him care for the residential grounds; the terms of the lease called for two Chinese men to work under Jim's supervision year-round and an additional three Chinese men to help plant flowers for ten days each spring,

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[63] The practice of whites leasing land to Chinese for tenant farming was not confined to Santa Clara Valley but was widespread throughout the state. Tsu, "Grown in the Garden," 102.

[64] Marjorie Pierce, *The Martin Murphy Family Saga* (Cupertino, CA: California History Center and Foundation, 2000), 112.

not including Sundays. Jim was to cover their board and wages. He also leased all of the growing grounds close to the residence (specified by boundaries but not by size of acreage), plus an additional portion of thirty-six acres of nearby orchards and vegetable gardens for $636 per year. He also had access to nut and fig trees on the property. A percentage of produce, flowers and nuts went to Mrs. Stanford and the rest was Jim's to sell. Most of what he grew was probably sold on the university campus to the dormitories and faculty homes; anything remaining would have been sold in Mayfield, Palo Alto (the town), Menlo Park or San Francisco. Jim's biggest risk as his own employer, aside from the normal weather and insect infestation issues, was not having enough water. Mrs. Stanford reserved the right to circumvent irrigation piped to the leased grounds if there was a shortage of water, a typical clause made in the Stanford leases. If water was short due to a drought, Mrs. Stanford was ensuring she had enough water for her own needs, meaning the estate and the university.

Jim decided to cut short his three-year lease by two years, at the beginning of 1896.[65] He then leased grounds in nearby San Carlos, where he grew sweet peas, asters, chrysanthemums and stock for the cut-flower market in San Francisco.[66] It is possible Jim was leasing land from either N.T. Smith, Stanford's

[65] Jim and King's previous two leases had been for one year each; his first lease as an individual with Mrs. Stanford was for three years, but the lease was noted as expired on 1 January 1896. All of the other leases in the file were for one year; it is possible the three-year timeframe was an experimental idea that did not play out. Some leases show considerable numbers of strike-outs and addendums. Presumably Jim believed he had a better opportunity by moving to San Carlos. Ah Toy and Ah You (Yow) negotiated similar year-long leases with Mrs. Stanford and remained with her until at least 1900; there are no leases beyond 1900 in the Stock Farm records but other university records show that the university Board of Trustees continued to negotiate leases with local farmers after Mrs. Stanford's death in 1905. The university still leases property for agricultural purposes today; the campus was fondly nicknamed "The Farm" by students. "This Indenture," 1 November 1895, and "Due Dates, Season of 1899, Palo Alto, Cash Leases," Palo Alto Stock Farm Records, SC006, Stanford University Archives, Stanford.

[66] Lai credits Jim with using his influence at the Palo Alto estate to secure positions for many clan members and local townspeople arriving from China; the Chinese, like other immigrant groups, favored chain migration where one immigrated to a place where a friend or relative already lived. According to Lai, up until the 1920s, the majority of gardeners and cooks on the estate and campus were from Huangliang Du, Jim's home community. Many second-generation Mock (Mok) family members were born in and around the Palo Alto area. Lai, 190.

early business partner and lifelong friend, or Timothy Hopkins; both of these men owned extensive property in San Carlos, and the Sunset Seed and Plant Company, Hopkins's nursery company, moved their growing grounds from the Hopkins estate in Menlo Park to San Carlos after Hopkins sold his interest in the business. Jim Mock for several years then became one of the many Chinese horticulturalists living on the San Francisco peninsula who grew cut flowers for a living. By 1900, however, he decided to buy shares in the Chung Sun Wo mercantile in San Francisco, and he lived above the store until his death on 15 September 1909. Within ten days of his death his body had been shipped back to China for burial by his family in his home village.[67]

Ah Wing, like Ah Jim, worked for Mrs. Stanford for twenty years. He was the only Chinese man employed by the Stanfords who sent a letter addressed to the university community after his return to China; his letter is the one rare instance of a personal document remaining from that generation of men, all other surviving documents having been generated through immigration officials. By Wing's own account, he had

[67] "Removal Permit, Department of Health," ARC 296445, 10252-7.

been born in Wang Kwong (Crooked Street) Village, in the District of Sun Ning, Province of Kwong Tung.[68] He began working for the Stanfords in 1883 or 1884. Many of the Palo Alto employees served in more than one role; Wing worked as a cook before he became responsible for all Chinese staff working at the Nob Hill mansion and the Palo Alto estate residence. In 1902, Charles Lathrop wrote to his sister, Mrs. Stanford: "When I was at the Palo Alto house yesterday, there was a new china-boy there and I was informed by Wing on Saturday, when I was at the house in this City, that he had sent a boy down."[69]

The Palo Alto residence appears to have had one Chinese house servant assigned there regularly when the family was away; Ah Sing was working there as early as 1883 until at least May 1893. He may have been one of the employment casualties of Leland Stanford's death, or he may have transferred into a position cooking for one of the boardinghouses, as

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[68] Ah Wing, "Earthquake of the 32nd Year of the Reign of Emperor Guangxu," Earthquake (1906) Collection, 1906-1979, SC206, Stanford University Archives, Stanford.

[69] Charles Lathrop to Jane Stanford, 13 October 1902, Jane Stanford Papers.

there was a listing for a cook named Ah Sing in July 1893.

Over one hundred Chinese employees (and numerous white employees) were laid off from the estate to cut expenses when assets were frozen while Stanford's will was in probate, leaving only nine Chinese still working at Palo Alto.[70] Jim was one of the survivors and Wing, whose primary working location was the Nob Hill mansion, was also exempt. Charles Hodges, who worked as a draftsman while the university was built and later became the first university architect, wrote to Mrs. Stanford on 26 August 1893: "There are nine Chinamen only employed, including Jim, two being worked on the University grounds."[71] From this note it sounds as if Mrs. Stanford did not necessarily specify who of the Chinese employees were to remain, although

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[70] The total number of staff on the estate by November 1893 were eighty-six white men and nine Chinese men; six Chinese worked at the stock farm, one carpenter remained in the Improvement Department, one boardinghouse cook was still employed, and one man still worked in the winery. The number of faculty at the university were also reduced and everyone took a pay cut, with some whites earning less than some Chinese. Lewis Ferguson to Jane Stanford, 20 November 1893, 462, Letterbook.

[71] Charles Hodges to Jane Stanford, 26 August 1893, Jane Stanford Papers.

surely she hand-picked, out of the seventeen people then on her personal staff, the three who continued to work for her, one of them being Wing.[72]

In 1902, Wing traveled back to China to visit his family. Additional restrictive anti-Chinese legislation had followed the 1882 Exclusion Act; in 1888, the Scott Act prohibited the return of any Chinese laborers visiting China, even those with current re-entry visas. Enforcement of the Scott Act prevented 20,000 Chinese men from returning to America; Huntington publicly condemned this action while Stanford, still in his negative public mode against the Chinese, supported it: "I know that many voted unwillingly for the Scott act, but as it is about the thing the Pacific coast wants, it certainly would be bad policy to imperil it in any way.[73] The Scott Act was followed by the 1892 Geary Act, which extended the Exclusion Act for another ten years, and required all Chinese to carry a "certificate of registration," complete with identifying photograph. Any Chinese person not carrying a certificate was

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[72] Nilan, 4.

[73] "Mr. Stanford's Opinion on Restriction of Chinese," *San Francisco Bulletin*, 9 December 1889. 3.

subject to arrest, a year of hard labor and deportation. Wing, in possession of such a certificate, must have felt confidant he would not be regarded as a laborer by immigration officials, but when he returned he was detained for a week. Charles Lathrop wrote to his sister:

> Ah Wing called at the office yesterday morning and I told him to go to the City house and remain there until you returned as these were your instructions, should he arrive during your absence. It was a whole week before he could make a landing and they had to wire to Washington to get permission for him to come ashore. I told Wing that if ever he went back to China he would have to remain there as it would be impossible for him to get back in America again.[74]

Most of the immigration inspectors were extremely biased, their one goal being to keep out as many Chinese as possible.[75] However, influential whites could have a profound impact on the outcome of the final decisions made by immigration officials.[76] Inspectors had a tremendous amount of leeway when deciding cases and were often told by the Washington D.C. office to use their own best judgment. Wing was

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[74] Charles Lathrop to Jane Stanford, 1 May 1902, Jane Stanford Papers, SC033b.

[75] Lee, 48.

[76] Lee, 135.

allowed re-entry due to his connection to Mrs. Stanford, and her connections to powerful officials; it is entirely possible that, without that intervening telegram from Washington, Wing would have been sent back to China.

He did return to China several months after the 1906 Great Earthquake and Fire. In her will Mrs. Stanford remembered several of the domestic servants. Ah Wing received $1,000 after her death in 1905; he was the only Chinese man employed by Mrs. Stanford whom she made a beneficiary. Wing was especially close to her due to being a member of her household for twenty years; the affection she shared with him, and with other Chinese employees such as Jim, Joe and Charley, no doubt grew stronger after the respective deaths of her son and husband in 1884 and 1893. Although Mrs. Stanford still had family living close by, and a retinue of servants, she was also described as lonely.[77] She took her friendships greatly to heart, and after her death, close friend Timothy Hopkins wrote that her most prominent character trait was "a

[77] Myrtis Hodges, "The Woman Who Built and Endowed A University," 5, Charles Hodges Papers, 2499, Stanford University Archives, Stanford.

determined devotion--to ideals, to husband, to son; verging sometimes on the emotional, but an unselfish devotion so consecrated as to be uninfluenced or swayed by passing moods or fancies."[78]

Both Ah Jim and Ah Wing, as well as the several other Chinese men who worked for the Stanfords over many years, are examples of Chinese men who were more than just victims during a time when prevalent anti-Chinese sentiment fueled oppression and violence throughout California and other parts of the country. Jim in particular was a man who came to California with very little and prospered in what was, for the Chinese, an exceedingly hostile environment. The opportunities Stanford gave him, and the opportunities he made for himself while in Stanford's employ, eventually led to Jim working for himself as a tenant farmer. He ultimately made enough money to purchase shares in a prosperous Chinese mercantile, which enabled him to move into the highly respected merchant class. Wing also did well for himself, remaining a part of the Stanford household for over twenty years and ultimately supervising all of the Chinese servants

[78] Timothy Hopkins to Charles Gardner, 26 February 1910, Jane Stanford Papers.

at both the Nob Hill and the Palo Alto residences. He particularly enjoyed a close relationship with Mrs. Stanford, the evidence being naming him her only Chinese beneficiary.

The Palo Alto estate, at its height during the 1880s, hired about one hundred white men and fifty Chinese employees to work the land and the horses. Several of the Chinese were long-term employees of many years who lived on the estate while others were transient gang workers who came from nearby Chinatowns as day laborers. Some performed specialized work with either the horses (drivers and hostlers), the "Improvement" Department (carpentry and painting), or the vineyard (cellarman). Others performed laboring work and shifted from department to department, working at multiple tasks as needed. Some Chinese were paid $1.00/day while others earned considerably more. Ah Jim was the highest paid China gang boss at $50/month.

Stanford demanded that the Chinese men working at Palo Alto be treated as well as his beloved horses, and enforced his rules by firing workers that broke those rules. The feeling of safety and good employment opportunities not readily found elsewhere were greatly

appreciated by the Chinese, who spoke of their fair treatment while patronizing the San Jose Chinatown store. Much later, they passed on stories of how Stanford abhorred their discrimination and Mrs. Stanford in particular had great regard for them.

However, the Chinese did not live in an encapsulated bubble at Palo Alto. There was friction at times between white and Chinese employees, some of it race-related and some of it just the normal irritations of working in a close environment. There were also positive interactions between whites and Chinese, one good example being the Chinese cooking a lunar New Year's dinner each year for the ranch foremen while all work came to a halt on the estate.

Several of the Chinese who worked for the Stanfords for many years formed an affectionate relationship with them, a relationship made more acceptable by being one between employer and servant. When Leland Stanford Junior died, the Chinese gardeners put together a special cross of flowers for his funeral, then recreated a smaller version of the cross each year at Easter.

Two long-term employees of twenty years were Ah Jim and Ah Wing. Jim eventually went into business for

himself raising cut flowers for the market in San Francisco before becoming a merchant. Wing remained with Mrs. Stanford until her death and then worked for the university as a museum guard before returning to China.

Stanford hired Chinese laborers not only at Palo Alto, but for his other properties and business concerns as well. His public opinion about the Chinese remained good or neutral while he was acting simply as a businessman and private citizen He continued to hire the Chinese despite public pressure to replace them with white laborers who were family men. Once Stanford returns to political office in 1885 as a U.S. Senator, his public opinion again flips to the negative, but the public perception of him as a friend of the Chinese continues because, despite his negative public statements, he still employs them at the same time he promises to send them back to China.

Chapter 6

Other Stanford Properties and Chinese Labor

Hotel del Monte

Stanford was perceived as a friend of Chinese labor because he continued to hire "Celestials," not only in connection to the various railroad lines he owned, but for his other business and personal interests as well. In addition to the Palo Alto estate, Stanford owned part of the Hotel del Monte, built at Monterey in 1880; this property comprised not only the 126 acres of gardens immediately surrounding the hotel but also the 7,000-acre Del Monte Forest. In 1881 he began purchasing the multiple properties that would make up Vina, the Stanfords' 55,000-acre ranch in Tehama County. Chinese labor was integral to the maintenance of these two vastly different properties, both of which received a lot of media coverage. The Hotel del Monte was regarded as the California equivalent of a European hotel at the Riviera and everything about the place was first-class. Vina was considered a model ranch, with no

expense spared in making her so. Stanford believed in putting his money where his mouth was, and threw his resources wholeheartedly into his various endeavors. Those forces antagonistic to Chinese labor were not about to let the fact that the Chinese were a vital component to the very successful operation of these ventures pass unchallenged.

In 1879, while the development of the Palo Alto estate were progressing and expanding, the owners of the Central Pacific Railroad were in the early stages of planning a luxurious destination resort hotel in Monterey that would generate passenger traffic for their various lines. The Monterey newspapers followed closely every detail of the construction and opening of this hotel, known as the Hotel del Monte, while also noting--and railing against--the activities of the Chinese who lived and worked in the area.

On 21 August 1880, only two months after the elegant hotel's grand opening, the *Monterey Californian* indignantly reported:

> Last Saturday evening, Geo. Schoenwald, Manager of the Hotel del Monte, discharged all the white men that was [*sic*] working around the hotel, on the gardens and lawns, and put Chinamen in their place, at $15 and board. There were many of the white men with families to support, but no

> difference, they had to give way to these Mongolian heathens who do not benefit the town or country one cent to a white man's dollar. If such acts as this does [*sic*] not make a man think of rifles and cannon, we do not know what would.[1]

This paragraph reflected three common complaints that Californians made about the Chinese. One, that they were not family men but merely bachelors; two, that they were willing to work at wages no white man could support a family on; and three, that all Chinese sent their wages home to China and thus did not benefit California's economy at either the local or state level. The first and third complaints were misconceptions, already addressed in this paper; the second matter of the Chinese being willing to work for low wages was an issue that would remain contentious for another two decades. In the meantime, Stanford, Crocker and Huntington could easily ignore these particular jabs, their immense power combined with the long-term success of the hotel easily overcoming any local objections.[2] Also, 1880, in comparison to the

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[1] *Monterey Californian*, 21 August 1880, 3.

[2] Stanford was equally adamant, despite his anti-slavery views, that black people also had no place in California, although he had hired one African American, James Vickers, who acted as a butler and a coachman, plus several black youths to work in the stables. At Hotel del Monte, the policy was Chinese

turbulent mid-1870s, was an economically stronger year. The depth of local feeling against the Chinese was in direct proportion to the area's dependence on Chinese labor and the health of the economy: relatively neutral if the economy was strong and stridently negative if the economy was weak.[3]

Many Chinese remained working for the hotel in their capacity as gardeners; large numbers of men were also hired to work inside the hotel. Contemporary tourist publications commented on the dichotomous issues of exclusion and desired labor, and added one caveat, noting:

> Foreigners from other lands may rail against the Chinese as much as they please, and our legislators may be right in excluding them lest they overrun the country, but it must be said in their favor that they are a peaceful, industrious set, and there are no better servants for indoor or outdoor work. Under certain conditions, however, they are as obstinate as mules. When you engage them you must be exceedingly careful in giving them instructions, for they will always continue to do what they are at first told to do; you cannot change their ways.[4]

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and whites only: "No colored waiters will be employed." "Del Monte: Progress of the Work of Rebuilding the Hotel," *San Francisco Bulletin*, 20 October 1887, 1; and Tutorow, *The Governor*, 2: 839.

[3] Lydon, 115.

[4] Morris Phillips, *Abroad and At Home: Practical Hints for Tourists* (New York: The Art Press, 1891), 194-195.

In fact, it was George Schoenwald, Hotel del Monte's manager, who was the source for this author's opinion regarding the stubbornness of Chinese workers. Schoenwald also clearly felt dealing with their perceived vagaries was well worthwhile, concluding, "But seven Chinamen will do the work of fourteen white men."[5]

Schoenwald's viewpoint was a variation of the public vs. private argument pertaining to the Chinese. He made a point of the negative quality of their stubbornness lest he praise the Chinese too highly, but he was also adamant they were crucial to the labor force of the hotel. By this time, also, Stanford was back in public office. Thousands of people from all over the United States visited the hotel, well aware of whom the owners were, and they could hardly miss seeing the Chinese men working there.[6] Schoenwald's

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[5] Phillips, 195.

[6] Descriptions of the famed Hotel del Monte grounds filled the American newspapers as well, with the racial component of the staff being identified: "The grounds of this magnificent hotel are seven thousand acres in extent and boast twenty-seven miles of driveway—fifty men are employed in their care; the head gardener is a German [Rudolph Ulrich], the assistants are Chinese." A Massachusetts visitor noted: "I shall have to wait until another time to tell you of the Indian reservations and the Chinese

criticism of the Chinese may have been an attempt to mitigate the fact that he also considered them to be vital employees.

The owners of the Hotel del Monte also hired Chinese laborers to build what became known as Seventeen-Mile-Drive, a picturesque road that led from the front of the hotel through nearby Monterey and Pacific Grove and out to the Carmel mission before looping back to the hotel. Created as a diversion for hotel guests, the road was first intended for horse-and-buggy use before later being modified for automobile traffic. On 26 June 1880, three weeks after the hotel opened, the local paper reported: "Men are hard at work on the road around to Point Cypress."[7] On 25 September 1880, the *Monterey Californian* crowed: "That the railroad company will soon commence work on the Point Cypress Road, and that white men will be

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quarters, which we have visited. The Chinese are pleasant to trade with; their avarice is more delicately concealed than the impatient American, who is so anxious to dispose of his wares." (Vermont) *St. Alban's Daily Messenger*, 5 June 1886, 2; and "In California a Worcester Excursionist on His Travels: Monterey and Its Hotel," (Massachusetts) *Worcester Daily Spy*, 18 June 1883, 4.

[7] "Brevities," *Monterey Californian*, 26 June 1880, 3.

employed."[8] On 25 December 1880, the *Monterey Californian* noted, this time without the habitual rancor: "A crew of about twenty Chinamen are at work on the road at Point Cypress."[9]

A series of Chinese fishing villages along Seventeen-Mile-Drive were spared encroaching development because the Pacific Improvement Company, the Big Four's land development company, became their landlords in 1880. While these villages continued to depend on fishing for their livelihood, they also became part of the "exotic" scenery and more than one village member opened up a souvenir stand, selling seashells and other trinkets to hotel guests.[10] Local historian Sandy Lydon opined:

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[8] "They Say," *Monterey Californian*, 25 September 1880, 3.

[9] White men appear to have been the first labor source to construct Seventeen-Mile-Drive, with white locals excited at the prospect of building the railroad planned to parallel the scenic drive. By December, however, the railroad plans had fallen through and Chinese were working on Seventeen-Mile-Drive instead of white laborers. This situation would normally incur the most virulent reaction in the local press; the mention is surprisingly mild. *Monterey Californian*, 25 December 1880, 3.

[10] Guests of the hotel regarded the Chinese who worked there as exotic curiosities. Isabella Cass, an Easterner who visited the Hotel del Monte as a guest of Timothy and May Hopkins, wrote in her diary, "Like

> Though there may have been something patronizing, almost zoo-like, about the relationship between the Del Monte guests and the Chinese villages, being set upon by finger-pointing, gawking visitors from Boston was certainly better than being set upon by a group of disgruntled fishermen as sometimes happened to the Chinese near Santa Cruz.[11]

The hotel was perpetually short of water. In 1883 the owners ordered hired Chinese laborers to construct a twenty-five-mile pipeline that carried river water from the Carmel Valley to a reservoir in Pacific Grove; from there water was piped into town and to the hotel. The *Monterey Argus* reported, "The people of Monterey may not expect the water in from the Carmel [River] before 1884."[12] In 1888, when the reservoir was under construction, a *Monterey Weekly Argus* journalist visited the site and, again with none of the usual negative references towards the Chinese, reported:

> On probably twenty acres is grouped thirteen hundred men—twelve hundred and fifty of whom are Chinamen—three or four hundred horses, and maybe two hundred carts. All are continually in motion,

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looking out into a park—the first thing I did this a.m. [was] to watch the Chinamen at work among the flower beds under the great pine trees of the hotel grounds." Cass diary, 15 December 1884, unpaginated.

[11] Lydon, 167.

[12] In this instance, the townspeople had no complaint against the use of Chinese labor as the town benefited from the project. *Monterey Argus*, 13 January 1883, 2.

> and a casual glance from an elevated position gives one an impression similar to the restless, undulated motion of the sea.[13]

Vina Ranch

Stanford found it somewhat more difficult, though not impossible, to ignore complaints regarding the Chinese he hired to keep the Vina ranch going. Part of the reason for this had to do with his successful 1885 election to the U.S. Senate, which coincided with another wave of violence directed against the Chinese in the mid-1880s. Stanford had maintained a high profile in the press since his governorship and the building of the railroad; due to his two-term role as a senator Stanford's media coverage only intensified and became much more politically fraught from 1885 until his death in 1893.

This was the third occasion Stanford publicly changed his opinion of the Chinese; the swing from the positive things he had to say about them back in 1865 to what he then said in 1885 was clearly motivated by

[13] *Monterey Weekly Argus*, 29 September 1888, 2.

his again taking public office. While privately continuing to employ Chinese men to work on his various properties, Stanford was quoted in the *Oakland Tribune* on 22 January 1885:

> It is certainly beyond question that the right to exclude foreigners belongs to every nation, while the exercise of that right is merely a question of policy. The people of the coast are clearly in favor of exercising this national right to the exclusion of the Chinese, and no man of honor could possibly accept from them a representative position in the Legislature of the nation unless he were willing to sustain the policy upheld by them.[14]

Some were willing to accept Stanford's anti-Chinese voice at face value. On 24 January 1885, the *San Francisco Argonaut* claimed:

> There is no man in California who is a more earnest and sincere friend of labor and labor interests than Leland Stanford, nor one who has a more intelligent appreciation of the rightful relations existing between labor and capital.[15]

That very same day, the *Santa Cruz Sentinel* posted a somewhat more jaundiced opinion: "Stanford

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[14] Clipping, *Oakland Tribune*, 22 January 1885, Scrapbook No. 11, 2.

[15] Clipping, *San Francisco Argonaut*, 24 January 1885, Scrapbook No. 11, 10..

employs many Chinamen, and is trying to establish a dukedom at Monterey."[16]

Stanford's willingness to pursue restriction of Chinese immigration was limited to attempting to persuade fellow Congressmen to vote for relevant legislation he himself publicly supported but never once initiated. Clippings in the Stanford Family Scrapbooks reveal that "Leland Stanford is educating the Senate on the Chinese question," and "He is working zealously and effectively for the Morrow Chinese Restriction Act, overcoming much of the opposition found in the Senate to further anti-Chinese legislation."[17] This opposition was a reference to the growing Eastern backlash of support for the Chinese, a response to the mid-1880s wave of violence directed towards them. Stanford acknowledged this backlash and responded, "The recent outbreaks on the Pacific coast have created a good deal of sympathy for the Chinese,

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[16] Stanford and Crocker were often targeted in the Santa Cruz papers after the nearby Hotel del Monte opened and became a serious rival for Santa Cruzian hostelries. Clipping, *Santa Cruz Daily Sentinel*, 24 January 1885, Scrapbook No. 11, 16.

[17] Unidentified clipping and undated *Stockton Independent* clipping, Scrapbook No. 10, 4.

and, I am afraid, have injured our chances somewhat for getting the desired measures through Congress."[18]

Stanford allegedly fired Chinese workers from his vineyards while serving as a senator but he certainly continued to employ them in other roles on his properties.[19] The Chinese were very much in evidence at both Palo Alto and Vina until Leland Stanford's death in 1893, and they remained at both estates, albeit in decreasing numbers, for at least another two to three decades.[20]

The media attention directed against those considered a friend of the Chinese was specifically addressed in the newspapers during the mid-1880s in an attempt to pressure them into firing their Chinese workers. On 6 March 1886, the *Daily Alta* declared:

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[18] Several Congressional members traveled to California to attend the funeral of Republican Senator John F. Miller. While in San Francisco, they made a point of touring "the Chinese quarter," no doubt to satisfy their own curiosity about the "exotic" Chinese who stirred up such strong reactions in California. "A Congressional Excursion," Scrapbook No. 10, 11; and an unidentified and undated clipping, Scrapbook No. 10, 8.

[19] Tutorow, *Man of Many Careers*, 193, and Tutorow, *The Governor*, 2: 839.

[20] Timecard Records, 1883-1903, unpaginated; and "Big Success on Stanford Ranch," *Pacific Rural Press*, 23 May 1914, 604.

> A very enthusiastic meeting of the Anti-Chinese Association of this place [Menlo Park] was held last evening. Announcements greeted with round after round of cheers were made that J.C. Flood, Joseph Donohoe and Richard Burke would discharge their Chinese employees just as soon as they could obtain other laborers to fill the places. We are burning with high hope of Senator Stanford, James T. Doyle, Timothy Hopkins and others doing likewise, and thus placing capital and civilized labor in sweet accord.[21]

The political situation also impacted Timothy Hopkins, business associate and close personal friend of the Stanfords. Hopkins and his wife, Mary ("May"), lived at Sherwood Hall, a 280-acre Menlo Park estate that was a stone's throw from the Stanford property. Mark Hopkins had raised Timothy Nolan as a son but had never formally adopted him; after Hopkins's death, his widow, Mary Frances Hopkins, legally adopted Timothy

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[21] The remainder of the article covered two of the thirty-five instances of groups of Chinese being forcibly driven out of various towns throughout California and Oregon at the time. At Red Bluff, California, the local Anti-Coolie league had ordered five boycotts against local firms that hired Chinese and were also following the Chinese peddlers around and scaring off their potential customers. At Portland, Oregon, 125 Chinese arrived after "having been driven out of their camps by a crew of sixty whites, most of them masked. The Chinese were engaged in chopping wood and clearing brush. They were escorted to the ferry by the crowd and brought to this site. It was the exact repetition of the Albina exodus last Sunday night." "The Progress of the Agitation in Various Towns," *Daily Alta California*, 6 March 1886, 5.

despite his reaching near-majority age (some claimed he was already twenty-one years old when the adoption took place). Stanford acted as a mentor to Hopkins, who first worked as a director of the Central Pacific Railroad and later as a treasurer for the Southern Pacific Railroad. The Hopkins estate, like the Stanford estate, regularly employed both Chinese and white workers; Hopkins was particularly devoted to raising several different varieties of cut flowers, first on an amateur basis and later for the market.[22] When the Menlo Park Anti-Coolie League approached

[22] Hopkins, like Stanford, was often in the headlines due to his position as a railroad man. His venture into the cut flower market generated a lot of press covering his Sherwood Hall estate and the Chinese employed there: "They [the grounds] are more handsomely kept than any we saw. As we moved about and noted the diligence and care of the Chinese gardeners cleaning and trimming the lawn, our driver, Wm. Solen, a vivacious Irishman, created considerable merriment by remarking, 'One Irishman is harder to watch than a dozen Chinamen.'" A comment on the Chinese working at Sherwood Hall: "Indeed, the Chinese employed here do seem a different race from the Mongols you see in San Francisco's wash houses and opium joints. These look slick and clean and lack the cunning faces that mark the less fortunate of their race. In place of the cunning there is contentment, even happiness. The Celestials are cheerful in their work.'" "Across the Continent," *Baltimore Sun*, 11 July 1887, 6; and "Perfumed Beauty," *Chicago Inter Ocean*, 7 August 1892, 17.

Hopkins, he agreed to meet with three members at his estate on 28 March 1886.

Hopkins, claiming to have spent $43,418 over the past three years on white labor and only $14,000 on Chinese labor during the same period, firmly refused their demand that he fire his "Celestial" workers and replace them with white men. He made the point that a great deal of money was flowing through Menlo Park as a result of the jobs created by the Sherwood Hall estate and said, "I want to continue improvements but if there's going to be difficulty I do not care to spend any more money, if I am not to get the same amount of pleasure which I am enjoying now."[23] The blustering committee members backed down from the less-than-veiled threat of an imminent cessation of estate employment, but the Chinese issue continued as a bone of contention between Hopkins and anti-Chinese groups for quite some time.[24]

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[23] Long-time friend Charles Gunnison was then staying as a guest with the Hopkins family and made notes of the meeting, providing a transcript of the entire conversation. Charles Gunnison, 28 March 1886, unpaginated, Charles A. Gunnison Journals, 1881-1887, M0179, Stanford University Archives, Stanford.

[24] Many of the Chinese who went into business for themselves as flower growers on the San Francisco peninsula worked at the Stanford and/or Hopkins

There is no record of the Menlo Park Anti-Coolie League approaching Leland Stanford; it is possible they did not because the Stanfords were back East at the time. However, that did not stop the Red Bluff Anti-Coolie League from sending a resolution to Stanford on 31 March 1886, or the *Red Bluff People's Cause*, the local newspaper, from threatening Stanford with a boycott if he did not fire the Chinese he had working at Vina.[25]

Stanford had purchased the first of multiple properties that made up the Vina Ranch in 1881. When China bosses realized what an extensive viticultural concern he intended to make of the place, they flocked to Vina's ranch manager, offering unlimited numbers of workers.[26] Before long, there were well over one thousand Chinese men living in the town of Vina, most

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estates before going out on their own. As late as 1895, the San Francisco Florists' and Flower-Growers' Association, in an effort to break the Chinese flower growers, was excoriating Hopkins in the press for continuing to employ fifty to sixty Chinese at his estate, where they were trained in horticulture. "Checking Chinese Florists," *San Francisco Examiner*, 15 February 1895, in Schellens Collection, Redwood City Public Library; Lai, 190; and Hom, 51, 54.

[25] Clark, 453; and Street, 357.

[26] Street, 330.

of whom commuted daily by the wagonload to the ranch; only the Chinese cooks actually lived on the property. The Chinese laborers worked at a large number of tasks when the ranch was first purchased: ripping out old vines, planting thousands of new vines, building a granite dam on nearby Deer Creek, digging a large canal and smaller ditches, cutting alfalfa to feed the ranch animals, harvesting tons of fruit from the already established orchards, and harvesting and threshing wheat and barley crops.[27]

Firing the Chinese would have brought much of the ranch work, which involved aspects of farming and ranching in addition to the vineyards, to a disastrous halt. Stanford responded to the boycott threat by writing a long letter to the *Sacramento Daily Union*:

> The resolution of your League of March 31st addressed to me is received, and has had careful and respectful consideration.
>
> Independently of my position as a public man, a request of any considerable number of my fellow-citizens would have my best attention, and though your resolutions are directed more particularly to affairs personal to myself, yet I am aware that you reflect the sentiments of a very large portion of the people of our State in regard to the employment of Chinese.
>
> Under the treaties existing between our Government and that of China, the Chinaman is entitled to the same just treatment, while in our country, as any other foreigner or as any

[27] Street, 331.

> citizen. Whether white men shall be preferred to him in employment is a question of humanitarianism and private interest.
>
> Regarding that, I have the right to dispose of my own property and my own means as suits me best, so long as I obey the laws. If my humanitarianism impels me or my interests incline me to employ Chinese labor, I hold that I have a perfect political right to do so, it being a matter of my own conscience and its dictates. My race prejudice, however, inclines me to my own people, and I am desirous of giving them on all suitable occasions the preference. I have, therefore, in harmony with my own inclinations, strengthened by your request, given instructions to my agent to direct that the preference for white labor be carefully exerted.
>
> The employment of Chinese labor among the farmers has been, I think, fairly a necessity, and is likely to continue so, because good laborers can very soon, in the vast unoccupied resources of our State, find employment in something that offers a better reward than common farm labor; consequently good white labor is difficult to be had. I believe the sentiment of the people of California is very largely hostile to more Chinese coming into our country, also that most of our people sincerely wish the Chinese now in the country were out of it; and, in obedience to that will, and in harmony with my own judgment, I shall do, here, in my public duty, whatever I can justly do to restrict Chinese immigration.[28]

Much of the letter sounds conciliatory and as if Stanford is seriously willing "to direct that the preference for white labor be carefully exerted." In fact, he was carefully delineating what he might be required to do as a public figure versus his rights as

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[28] Leland Stanford, *Sacramento Daily Union*, 13 May 1886, in Clark, 453-454.

a private one. The reality was that the Chinese, for the most part, remained working at Vina in one capacity or another. An unidentified newspaper clipping in the Stanford Family Scrapbooks, most likely dating from 1886 based on the proximity of other 1886 clippings on the same page, noted with some cynicism:

> The large force of Chinese is still employed at the ranch but it is stated on reliable authority that Senator Stanford will discharge the whole of his pig-tail army by fruit-picking time and give their time to white people—men, women and children. A similar report has gone forth a number of times before, seemingly for the object to deceive the public, and it is greatly to be hoped the heathens will have to shoulder their bamboo poles and skedaddle this time.[29]

Stanford did put some effort into hiring more white workers, but he chose these particular men for their knowledge rather than their race. While touring France in 1887, he arranged for one hundred Bordeaux vineyard hands and their families to relocate to Vina, where "they will be given the places now held by the Chinese, and from their life-long experience in this branch of labor they are expected to prove far more

[29] Unidentified and undated clipping, "Stanford's Vina Ranch," Scrapbook No. 10, 44.

satisfactory than the Mongolians."[30] By 1891, there were sixty-one Frenchman living at Vina in their own large boardinghouse on the ranch where they retained their own native language and customs.[31]

Stanford also experimented with hiring boys; growers dissatisfied with some of the more militant Chinese striking for better working conditions after the 1882 Exclusion Act tried hiring Anglo children to take their place.[32] When Vina's Chinese grape-pickers

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[30] "Importing Vineyard Hands," *Sacramento Daily Union*, 2 November 1887, 2.

[31] Tutorow, *The Governor*, 1: 517.

[32] Once the number of Chinese workers started to shrink courtesy of the 1882 Exclusion Act, these men realized their lower numbers gave them more power over their working conditions. In the mid-1880s some started to strike and angry growers, once their strongest supporters, retaliated by trying to find a different labor source. Growers also tried hiring African Americans, but with the same unsuccessful results. These two entries appeared simultaneously in the same newspaper's "Pacific Coast Items" column: "A plan has been set afoot to replace the Chinese in Fresno by negroes." "A number of farmers on the Cosumnes river are arranging to import colored laborers from North Carolina. They are engaging entire families." Note that family trumped race in this situation. Inter-related entries in the same column included: "Riverside's citrus fair opens tomorrow," "A band of thieving tramps was jailed at Frenso Saturday." "The question of irrigation is receiving close attention in Placer county." "Timothy Hopkins, at Menlo Park, is planting 100 acres of apricots this year." "There has been an average arrival of forty tramps per day at Fresno for several weeks, and much thievery naturally

went on strike in August 1888, forty boys from San Francisco were brought in to take their place.[33] The trial was a disaster, however, with the boys soon returning home:

> Unprepared for long hours of hot dusty labor and primitive living conditions, and having signed up for work assuming they were going out on a kind of picnic, many children grew homesick, quit, and took the next train home.[34]

In 1890, the *San Francisco Examiner* reported that the vast majority of workers at Vina were white, "except for a handful of Chinese who do work which whites refuse to do."[35] The number of Chinese being hired crept upward, however, and when Leland Stanford

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followed." and "Hon. H.M. Estee and three others have bought a tract of 1,430 acres of land lying from two to three miles south of Oroville. They propose to enter into the fruit-growing industry." These entries represent the connected issues of race, labor and industry in California at the time. "Pacific Coast Items," *San Francisco Bulletin*, 6 February 1886, 1, and Street, 319, 364-365.

[33] An 1889 article makes reference to 140 boys from San Francisco and Sacramento; it is not clear if a second attempt was made to use boys as a labor source. "The Vina Ranch," *Daily Alta California*, 18 February 1889, 2.

[34] Street, 365.

[35] San Francisco *Examiner*, 6 April 1890, in Tutorow, *The Governor*, 1: 517.

died in June 1893, it was up to his widow, Jane Lathrop Stanford, to deal with Vina.[36]

The *San Francisco Morning Call* made mention of a state of "temporary stringency" being set in place due to Stanford's will being probated. Among other things, 800 horses at Palo Alto were sold, as was "a large quantity of wine and brandy on the Vina Ranch", with proceeds going to the support the university.[37]

Mrs. Stanford's additional strategy was to reduce the workforce at Vina, just as she was doing at Palo Alto and at Gridley Ranch, yet another Stanford property.[38] The *Sacramento Daily Record-Union* noted that Mrs. Stanford dismissed the sixty-odd French workers at Vina, most of whom made plans to return to their native country, and cut the number of field hands, normally a group of 600 to 800, down to 125

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[36] Stanford's death coincided with the start of a four-year depression that engendered yet another wave of violence directed against the Chinese, with a six-week rampage taking place between August and September 1893. Street, 380-381.

[37] "Stanford University: A Temporary Stringency in Its Finances," *San Francisco Morning Call*, 10 August 1893, 8.

[38] "The Stanford University: Movement to Meet the Institution's Financial Needs," *San Francisco Morning Call*, 1 September 1893, 6.

men. No mention was made in this article of the racial component of this working force.[39] One historian claims the remaining men were all Chinese.[40]

When Mrs. Stanford visited the ranch again at the end of January 1894, some of the dismissed white laborers harassed her railroad car, shouting and firing shots either in the air or at the car, depending on which newspaper account was accurate.[41] The newspapers, after initial reports, deliberately downplayed the violence, but when Mrs. Stanford refused to "rehire the men, fire the Chinese, or rescind her wage cuts," the protesters became even more violent, and the frightened Chinese refused to return to work until the disgruntled "rabble-rousers" finally left the area.[42]

Labor problems persisted at Vina, however; on 29 August 1898, Mrs. Stanford wrote to May Hopkins:

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[39] "Changes at Vina: The Force of Men Has Been Greatly Reduced," *Sacramento Daily Record-Union*, 5 September 1893, 5.

[40] Street, 387.

[41] "Was Not Scared," *San Francisco Morning Call*, 1 Feb 1894, 2; "The Vina Ranch," *Sacramento Daily Record-Union*, 1 February 1894, 2; and "She Was Warned," *San Francisco Morning Call*, 2 February 1894, 2.

[42] Street, 387.

> I came here last Wednesday to pacify a bitter feeling existing betwixt white employees and Chinese. The manager had leased the grape picking to a Chinese firm, and white men had to go to them for employment and were paid and discharged by them. The latter rebelled and, thinking I had approved this course, they threatened to burn everything in sight. They commenced, and all the vineyard tools, ploughs and so forth were destroyed, also 300 tons of hay and the same amount of alfalfa. I stemmed the storm, broke the contract, went among the pickers, spoke a few kind words to them, and in the course of a day all was changed. We now have 300 pickers, mostly white men. I dismissed the manager from this department and I feel that it is safe now for me to go home.[43]

Publicly Mrs. Stanford had always been regarded as a friend of the Chinese, but clearly she had a limit as to what that "friendship" would support. In the privacy of a letter from friend to friend, she expressed the commonly-held anti-Chinese concept that white labor was degraded by their association with Chinese labor. Even more surprising, she chose to reward white employees for their hoodlum-like and destructive behavior; after all, "no sane orchardist would trust the task of harvesting his crop to 'sandlot hoodlums and agitators' or a 'class who are

[43] Jane Stanford to May Hopkins, 29 August 1898, Jane Stanford Papers.

of less value to the country than the Chinese themselves.'"[44]

There is no evidence in this letter of Mrs. Stanford feeling compelled to take the course she chose. On the contrary, there is every indication she felt not only justified in her own decision, but also that her white employees were equally justified in their use of force to destroy her property because they believed she had set up the contract with the Chinese. Yet this lone incident only sheds light on one isolated aspect of Mrs. Stanford's thinking about the Chinese; in another letter to May Hopkins, she expressed a completely different outlook when resolving a personal one-on-one issue with Kee, a former house servant.[45] He went to work for May Hopkins after Mrs. Stanford dismissed him for being

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[44] The *Pacific Rural Press* had been a supporter of Chinese labor in California and warned against growers employing white "tramps" or "hoodlums" in place of the reliable and skilled Chinese. Quotes from *Pacific Rural Press*, 16 September 1893 and 7 October 1893, in Street, 386, 788n.

[45] Later, in 1903, when Mrs. Stanford was speaking against the growing anti-Japanese movement, she made it clear she thought it wrong to consider "distinctions between man and man—all laborers, and equal in the sight of God." "Mrs. Stanford Gives to Public," 26 July 1903, 23.

quarrelsome. When Ah Charley was driving her to Mayfield, they passed Kee on the county road and she "was surprised to find him looking so pale and thin."[46] She asked him if he wanted to return to her employ and he said yes; Mrs. Stanford told Kee she would speak to Mrs. Hopkins about his leaving Sherwood Hall to return to Palo Alto. Mrs. Stanford then left for Germany, and wrote to May Hopkins from there:

> I did not see you to mention it but, dear May, you know I would not under any condition want you to give him up if you care to retain him—I have three faithful boys—Joe, Wing and Charley—and had I not been touched to the heart by Kee's devotion to me I would not have been so indiscreet to say what I did. You are to keep him if you need him—he is faithful, trusting and affectionate—I sent him away because he became quarrelsome—I want you to deal frankly with me, dear friend, and I leave it to you to decide the matter, for if you should give him up if you have become attached to him, I should have a sorrow that would not let my heart rest. I love you, dear May, and not anything I shall ever do will come betwixt us—I have such a contempt for anyone who will entice a servant away from anyone, let alone a dear friend.[47]

Here Mrs. Stanford clearly valued the Chinese servants who worked for her, citing their attributes of loyalty, trust, affection and devotion. She herself felt great loyalty towards family and friends and so

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[46] Jane Stanford to May Hopkins, 26 July 1899, Jane Stanford Papers.

[47] Stanford to Hopkins, 26 July 1899.

was especially appreciative of that particular trait. Perhaps the difference between her dismissive reaction to the Chinese working at Vina and her opposite caring reaction to Kee stemmed from just that circumstance; the men at Vina were virtual strangers to her while Kee, and the other Chinese servants who worked in and around the Palo Alto residence, were a daily part of her life. Several of those Chinese men had long-term relationships with Mrs. Stanford that fostered a level of intimacy well outside that of a standard labor contract.

This instance of Mrs. Stanford's decision to uphold her white laborers' hoodlum-like behavior compared to her decision to rehire Kee and to later declare that all laborers were equal in the sight of God reveals yet another level of complexity in the Stanfords' relationships with the Chinese, especially when combined with Stanford's public opinions that blew back and forth with his politically motivated winds. Their long-term choices over time, with the exceptions of Stanford's alleged firing of the Chinese from his vineyards around 1890 and Mrs. Stanford's aberrant support of the white laborers at Vina in 1898, showed them to truly be friends of the Chinese;

they consistently ignored attempts of anti-Chinese proponents to pressure them into replacing their Chinese workers with white family men. Stanford properties like the Hotel del Monte in Monterey and the Vina Ranch in Tahema County garnered a lot of publicity due to who owned them, but also because they were both first-class operations that depended to some degree on Chinese labor. The Chinese remained firmly ensconced at the Hotel del Monte throughout the 1920s, just as they did at Stanford University, and the numbers at Vina moved downward around 1890 but then just as surely crept back upward.

The issue of Chinese labor was still contentious throughout the 1890s but was gradually replaced with anti-Japanese agitation as the Chinese still working in California began to age and were not replaced with new immigrants. In the Stanfords' final years, he was still dealing with the political aspects of Chinese exclusion and would ultimately--and publicly--declare the 1882 Exclusion Act and the legislation that followed it to be a mistake. Mrs. Stanford, who outlived her husband by thirteen years, would struggle with the growing anti-Japanese sentiment that began close to the turn of the century for two reasons: she

hired Japanese workers at both Palo Alto and Vina, and she had developed a particular fondness for the Japanese students who attended Stanford University.

Chapter 7

The Stanfords' Final Years

Stanford and the 1892 Geary Act

Leland Stanford was elected to a second six-year term as United States Senator in January 1891. He had consistently and publicly supported anti-Chinese legislation, though never initiating it, from the time he first took office as a United States senator in 1885. During most, if not all of that time, he continued to hire Chinese laborers in both his business and his personal concerns. The public had voted for Stanford in part due to his anti-Chinese platform. Consequently, he felt a need to counter the resultant backlash that derived from his continual employment of Chinese workers by repeatedly giving voice to anti-Chinese rhetoric through the newspapers.

Three years after the 1882 Exclusion Act, and in Stanford's first year as senator, he was invited to serve as a member of a Congressional delegation convened by senior California Senator John F. Miller "for consultation relative to legislation suggested by

the defects in the Chinese Restriction Act and its attendant issues."[1] The 1882 Exclusion Act was effective, but Californians and other supporters of exclusion felt it was seriously inadequate as many Chinese continued to find their way into the country.[2] As a consequence, new legislation that attempted to meet all of the loopholes perceived in the 1882 Exclusion Act was regularly proposed. Such legislation did not always pass; the latest wave of violence directed against the Chinese on the Pacific coast during the mid-1880s caused many Eastern members of Congress to oppose legislation they considered unfair and inhumane. Stanford addressed this Congressional conflict, warning that if appropriate restrictive legislation was not passed, Californians would take the law into their own hands. Yet he also went on to acknowledge the vital role the Chinese played in labor and industry on the Pacific Coast, tempering the sentiment by also expressing the opinion that the Chinese had run their course:

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[1] "A Conference," *Daily Alta California*, 27 August 1885, 8.

[2] Lee, 44.

> The Chinamen have played an important part in the development of that section of country by the work they have done in the building up of railroads and in other improvements, as well as manufactures; but the limit of their usefulness has been reached. Not only should no more be allowed to come into the country, but those now here should be gradually returned.[3]

In another interview he opined:

> California is always ready to welcome labor and find it useful and profitable employment. I do not think the Chinese will give much trouble. They are not a prolific race, and negroes are increasing at ten times their rate yearly. Once welcomed to our shores, the Chinese have a right to stay, but their infecundity and some prohibitive Congressional action about admitting them in the future should quietly end the Chinese trouble.[4]

He also believed that white labor was not adversely affected by the presence of Chinese labor:

> The unemployed in California are numerous, but I do not think they are unemployed because of the Chinese, or anything other than their own

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[3] "The National Capital," *Sacramento Daily Record-Union*, 28 February 1886, 1.

[4] Stanford continued to call for white men and their families to settle in California while acting as a senator, and he cut rail fares to make travel more affordable. His ideal vision for California was reflected in a clipping entitled "Booming California": "Let the good work go on until hundreds and thousands more of men come to California and locate or buy farms and make homes for themselves and families. California wants 100,000 industrious, sober, steady men and we would not object to men with women and children. We hope the cut in fares will continue six months longer." Unidentified and undated clipping, Scrapbook No. 10, 27, and "Stanford Interviewed," unidentified and undated clipping, Scrapbook No. 10, 28.

> improvident nature. I have fed tramps at a direct expense of over $200 per month during the past season on one farm, although there was never a day during that time that we were not shorthanded of good men and wanted them. There is room in California for 15,000,000 of people."[5]

Stanford also involved himself in Chinese-related matters taking place in California. When Ah Tai Duc, a Chinese cook living with a middle-aged couple in Cloverdale, California, killed the husband and wife before fleeing with eighty dollars, a sensationalized manhunt followed.[6] Ah Tai Duc (Ang Tai Duck) managed to flee the country before he was intercepted and taken to Hong Kong to await extradition. Stanford sent a telegram to San Francisco's chief of police, Patrick Crowley:

> Secretary Bayard has telegraphed as follows to our Consul at Hong Kong: "Withers, Consul, Hongkong, application made to British government for arrest at Hongkong of Ang Tai Duck, charged with murder in California and recently released at Yokahama. Endeavor to secure provisional arrest awaiting papers." Leland Stanford.[7]

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[5] "The Uses of Wealth," unidentified and undated clipping, Scrapbook No. 10, 40.

[6] Street, 346.

[7] Crowley, chief of San Francisco police from 1866-1897, despite any anti-Chinese sentiment he may or may not have felt, was known for aggressively dealing with the sandlot agitators: "In the Protrero troubles, when rioting sprang out of anti-Chinese sentiment, the Chief made a sort of military expedition of it. The Protrero was a long way over the sand dunes and creeks

In 1889, Ida Grant, wife of U.S. President Ulysses S. Grant's son, Frederick, wrote to Jane Stanford: "Both Fred and I feel the deepest gratitude for your sympathy and goodness, and the Governor's interest and help in the Chinese matter."[8] It is possible the matter she was referring to was the political embarrassment suffered by the American government when Chinese diplomats were treated badly by San Francisco immigration authorities while en route to Washington, D.C. Ironically, Stanford had just gone before the Senate to present a concurrent resolution made with the California state legislature calling for more federal legislation restricting Chinese immigration.[9] Stung by an editorial that had appeared in a January 1889 San Francisco paper, that claimed Stanford "did not seem to think that any

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then, and at the head of his men he went out on horseback to subdue the rioters." Kate Hays Crowley, "Chief of Police Crowley," *Police and Peace Officer's Journal*, December 1929, unpaginated, available from http://sfmuseum.org/hist3/crowley.html (accessed 13 May 2011). "Ang Tai Duck: The Latest Efforts to Secure the Cloverdale Murderer," *Daily Alta California*, 1 March 1886, 1.

[8] Ida Grant to Jane Stanford, 10 March 1889, Jane Stanford Papers.

[9] Tutorow, *The Governor*, 2: 774.

restriction at all [was] really necessary in the interests in this country," he insisted otherwise.[10] Not only did he call the Chinese an "undesirable" class, he fell back on the stance held when he was governor of California:

> Senator Stanford says that since 1855 he has been opposed to the presence of Chinese in California, and on every occasion has done all that he could to secure the enactment of a law restricting and prohibiting their coming to this country. He assures his constituents that they need feel no alarm that he will do anything to aid Chinese immigration. He says that he always has and always shall do all in his power to keep out of California an unhomogeneous class.[11]

Stanford continued in this vein, publicly against the Chinese while still hiring them for both his business and personal ventures, until February 1893, when he suddenly softened his opinion:

> Mr. Stanford has rather a good opinion of the Chinese, a strange thing in a Californian. He says that they make good domestic servants, and he glories in the fact that they keep Biddy in check, which is his own way of putting it. They take good care of their credit, and there is no danger of their trying to overrun the country, as eventually they all want to get back to their own.[12]

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[10] "The National Capital," *Sacramento Daily Record-Union*, 16 January 1889, 6.

[11] "The National Capital," 16 January 1889, 6.

[12] "Stanford's Millions," *Chicago Journal*, February 1893, clipping in Scrapbook No. 3, 93.

Then, in the first week of May 1893, Stanford publicly made a switch from the fully negative to the fully positive in his regard for the Chinese in California, claiming:

> There should never have been a restriction law passed in the first place, and the Geary law, which has followed, is an outrage. I did not oppose it, for it appeared that some of the people at any rate wanted it. I will admit that at one time I had some fears of the Chinese overrunning this country, but for some years I have had none.[13]

He went on to defend their employment:

> Then there is another thing. We need the Chinese here to work in our fields, vineyards and orchards and gather our fruit and do the common labor of the country. I do not know what we would do without them, and I undertake to say that they are the most quiet, industrious and altogether commendable class of foreigners who come here. There is no other class so quick to learn and so faithful, and who can do the kind of work we have for them to do. I am persuaded, too, notwithstanding all that has been said about the majority of the people being opposed to the Chinese, that they are not opposed to them. It is only the few. Our intelligent business men are not opposed to them. Neither are the mechanics, because Chinese do not take up the trades. They do simply the commonest kind of work, and in doing so they do not really come into competition with white labor. The white men are, as a result, promoted to a better and more paying kind of labor.[14]

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[13] "Favors the Chinese," *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 1893, clipping in Scrapbook No. 3, 113.

[14] "Favors the Chinese," May 1893.

Stanford's fourth and final public change in viewpoint was motivated by at least three concerns. The recently passed Geary Act called for all Chinese to carry certificates of registration, subject to arrest and up to a year of hard labor followed by deportation if they did not carry these documents.[15] Many Chinese living in California, angry that they alone were now required to carry documentation of residence, refused to register. This situation lasted until a test case was upheld in court; the outcome was all those without certificates would be subject to a jury trial and due process. When the deadline for registration was extended, most Chinese capitulated and registered. As Stanford pointed out, Congress had made no appropriations to send men back to China, the average cost being $60 per steamship fare. There were an estimated 130,000 Chinese living in the United States, with 70,000 residing in California. Stanford was now asking the question; who was going to pay those steamship fares?[16]

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[15] Street, 377.

[16] "Favors the Chinese," May 1893.

Stanford was also concerned about there being enough labor in California to not jeopardize bringing in the various crops should the Chinese labor force suddenly be removed. The third issue he was troubled by was the inevitable negative impact on trade with China that would result from the United States deporting several thousands of Chinese people. The two latter issues had come up before, but it took the passing of the Geary Act to bring Stanford to the point of once again publicly defending the Chinese. A fourth contributing issue was likely the fact that he no longer had to worry about re-election; he was now free to voice his opinion without concern over what constituents might think.

Stanford concluded his interview, one that Mrs. Stanford also attended:

> I am here [at Palo Alto] to build myself up, said the Senator. I find that this air on my farm is a little better than I have been able to find anywhere else, and here I shall remain all the summer. Yes, in regard to that proposed deporting of the Chinese it is just as well to consider the matter very closely, because it is a serious thing. The transportation itself is a very important question. It is only one of the many which must be faced.[17]

[17] "Favors the Chinese," May 1893.

Public reaction to Stanford's reversal of opinion was mixed, with the Eastern newspapers coming out heavily in Stanford's favor, reflecting their long-running opposition to the issue of Chinese exclusion. The *San Francisco Chronicle* noted: "Some local surprise has been caused by Senator Stanford's denunciation of Chinese exclusion or restriction and of the Geary law made in an interview printed here."[18]

These two newspaper clippings from the Stanford scrapbooks noted with neutrality:

> …while Senator Stanford, on the other hand, comes boldly to the front with a declaration that the Pacific states need the Chinese as laborers and would not willingly see them deported from the country. There are evidently two sides to the question, even among the Pacific coast community and the illogical and cruel policy pursued there in past times is finding less and less favor with the better kind of citizens.[19]

> Senator Stanford's views on this [issue] surely will carry weight. He is an able and experienced man, a Californian and a man of Congress. If California can stand the Chinaman it would seem as if the other states ought to be able to.[20]

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[18] "Leland Stanford and the Chinese," *San Francisco Chronicle*, 8 May 1893, clipping in Scrapbook No. 3, 112.

[19] "Ah Sin in Court," unidentified and undated clipping in Scrapbook No. 3, 112.

[20] "Defending Chinese," *Hartford Post*, May 1893, clipping in Scrapbook No. 3, 112.

The *Washington Post*'s reaction exemplified the Eastern standpoint:

> The attitude of Senator Stanford toward the cruel and outrageous anti-Chinese movement in the far West, while it is just what might have been expected, does him the utmost honor. It is not enough that men of high character and broad intelligence should silently condemn abhorrent things; they owe it to themselves, to their country, to civilization, to make that condemnation known. We have a right to ask that their influence be used for the general good. Every fair-minded citizen understands that this attempted persecution of the Chinese in this country is the work of fanatics, demagogues, and schemers. Every well-informed and observant one believes that it is both unconstitutional and barbarous, to say nothing of the shameful bad faith with which it literally reeks. In order to carry out the so-called "Exclusion" measure adopted by the last Congress, we must not only violate the spirit of solemn treaties, but we must ignore the simplest and most obvious dictates of humanity. The whole movement represents a conspiracy against the most sacred principles of our national being. Senator Stanford has at once exerted his own exalted manhood and the dignity of this enlightened age in denouncing the contemplated outrage. He deserves the thanks of every humane and patriotic and self-respecting citizen of the Republic. All those who occupy positions similar to or approximating his should put themselves on record. The vicious, the ignorant, and the credulous should not be left to monopolize the controversy.[21]

[21] "Honor to Senator Stanford," *Washington Post*, May 1893, clipping in Scrapbook No 3, 119.

Another unidentified clipping from the Stanford scrapbooks questioned Stanford's change of heart but seemed willing to at least consider the topic:

> Most of this 'fuss' has been made on the Pacific coast, which has been understood to know more about the Chinese question than any other American locality. The rest of the country has been impressed by the protest of the Pacific coast against the increase of Chinese immigration, and while the country generally has not suffered it was thought that an extension of the evils as they were said to exist on the western border would be bad all around. Besides this was the desire to come to the rescue of the Pacific coast communities. Can it be that the country has been misled? Is it possible after all that the Chinese, instead of being a curse, are in fact a blessing?--that instead of trying to reduce the number we would do well to have more of them? Here is one of the foremost newspapers of the Pacific coast expressing a desire for '40,000 more Chinese laborers in the Pacific northwest to do work which white men will not do, and yet which is necessary for development of the country, the result would be good for everybody.' These latter day opinions on the Chinese question have an odd sound in comparison with all we used to hear from our Pacific brethren. Perhaps conditions have changed. It is not easy to understand. It may be necessary to do some more investigation.[22]

Stanford did not live through the summer; he passed away in his sleep at Palo Alto on 21 June 1893.[23] Ferguson's letter to Charles Lathrop that day

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[22] "Chinese in the United States," unidentified and undated clipping in Scrapbook No. 3, 133.

captured the high regard commonly felt by those working for Stanford:

> It is with a sad heart that I write even a line at this moment in the face of, I must say, our loss and bereavement in the sudden taking away of Senator Leland Stanford. To say that we loved him when alive and will miss him more and more since his demise, is but a frail expression of our real feelings.[24]

The Chinese who worked for Stanford at Palo Alto attended his funeral, as did all of the other employees. The *San Francisco Morning Call* described the scene: "From the Chinese Ah Jim to the colored water-boy of the racetrack, all seemed willing and anxious to perform a farewell duty to their departed employer."[25] The reporter went on to note that the Chinese were dressed in their finest clothes, and that of the multitude of flowers sent for the service, the Chinese household servants brought a cross of roses and smilax while Ah Jim and Ah King had constructed a broken wheel and pillow of flowers as symbolic tokens of their sorrow. The Chinese community in San Francisco also showed their regard for Stanford:

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[24] Lewis Ferguson to Charles Lathrop, 21 June 1893, 182, Letterbook.

[25] "Laid In A New Tomb," *San Francisco Morning Call*, 25 June 1893, 7.

> The Chinese Six Companies respect the memory of the late Leland Stanford as they do that of few white men. Every one of them evinced their reverence for the dead Senator by placing the yellow flag of China, together with the emblem of their particular company, at half-mast over the company's headquarters. Not since the death of President Garfield have the flags of the Six Companies been placed at half-mast and in the memory of the oldest inhabitant these are the only two occasions upon which the Chinese have shown such marked respect upon the death of a Caucasian.[26]

Mrs. Stanford and the Ross Affair

A year before Stanford's death, Denis Kearney suddenly surfaced again in the newspapers. He had faded from the political scene after 1884 and the demise of the Workingman's Party, although his slogan "The Chinese must go!" was still heard often enough. Now he had a new battle cry, "The Japanese must go!"[27] He claimed Japanese labor was to be imported to construct a railroad between Ogden and San Francisco,

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[26] The Chinese Six Companies were an "umbrella organization for the large kinship and mutual benefit organizations established in the United States to serve Chinese immigrants and preserve order in the communities." Lee, 123. "Chinese Flags at Half-Mast," *San Francisco Morning Call*, 26 June 1893, 4.

[27] "Kearney's New Warcry," *San Francisco Call*, 27 June 1892, 1.

and his response was: "I do know that I am against the Jap, and want him shut out, the same as the Chinaman."[28]

The Stanfords were certainly aware of Kearney's new theme; a long newspaper clipping describing his anti-Japanese activities had been cut out and pasted into one of the family scrapbooks.[29] The Japanese immigrants were considered a worse threat than the Chinese due to the acknowledged Japanese prowess in the field of agriculture, in addition to the already existing issues of race and labor.[30] They were also

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[28] "After the Japs: Kearney Says They Are Not Needed Here," *Sacramento Daily Union*, 5 July 1892, 3.

[29] Kearney sent the Stanfords a sympathy note when their son died in 1884, and offered any help necessary to Mrs. Stanford once the bereaved parents arrived back in California. Tutorow, *The Governor*, 2: 693-694. "Japs Must Go," *San Jose Mercury News*, May 1892, clipping in Scrapbook No. 3, 50.

[30] In 1898, Stanford professor Edward A. Ross and university president David Starr Jordan had been asked by the *San Francisco Call* their opinion on the racial makeup of the Japanese. Were they properly considered to be Mongolians? Both men professed to not being ethnologists but that did not prevent them from giving an opinion. Ross thought they should properly be considered to be Malayans, and Jordan said that "the Japanese would probably pass as Mongolian, but I do not know that they are not rather Malayan." Much more to the point, Jordan concluded, "In a legal sense, a law which prevents Mongolian citizenship can probably not bar out the Japanese." "Not of the Mongolian

considered "more objectionable" because of their "aggressive and warlike nature," as opposed to Chinese "docility."[31]

Mrs. Stanford discovered for herself how strong anti-Japanese feeling was in 1895 when she hired Japanese laborers to work at Vina.[32] John Dunne, a disgruntled citizen living in the town of Vina, wrote a letter to the deputy state labor commissioner, C.L. Dam, complaining of the local labor situation:

> The great Stanford vineyard and ranch here has been conducted principally by white labor at good, fair wages previous to Governor Stanford's death. Since his death the madam has dismissed all the white help and what few were retained have to work for Chinese wages. Now she, as I

Race," *San Francisco Call*, 7 February 1898: 8, and Lee, 32.

[31] Lee, 32.

[32] May 1895 also saw the first entry for a Japanese house servant, J. Kawasaki, at the Palo Alto residence, working for $20/month, $15/month less than Ah Sing had been making. The final China gang entries in the Palo Alto *Time Record* books appear to have been made in September 1893; thereafter, they were let go as part of the staff reductions made to save the university. All Chinese entries from then on are only of individuals. In September 1899, "Coolies" (Japanese) were hired in large groups to work in every department at Palo Alto. Timecard Records, May 1895 and September 1899, unpaginated; and "Cooly [*sic*] Laborers at Vina," *San Francisco Call*, 11 August 1895, 14.

> understand, made a contract with 300 Japanese to do the work of white men and Chinamen.[33]

The *Call* reporter noted that "the public is familiar with the well-known generosity and liberality of the Stanfords and their active interest in the labor classes." Deputy Commissioner Dam, hesitant to offend Mrs. Stanford, said he would give her the benefit of the doubt and wrote a letter asking for confirmation of the charge. However, if she had hired Japanese labor, "with thousands of white men idle in the state, it is not fair to the laboring classes nor to the general public that more should be thrown into the ranks of the unemployed and their places filled by coolies."[34]

Mrs. Stanford made no response and her brother and business manager, Charles Lathrop, told the *Call* "he would not be interviewed upon the subject, and declined to affirm or deny the truth of Dunne's statement relative to the employment of Japanese coolies."[35] Dam reiterated that "we can furnish any

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[33] "Cooly [*sic*] Laborers," 11 August 1895, 14.

[34] "Cooly [*sic*] Laborers," 11 August 1895, 14.

[35] "Japanese Help for Vina," *San Francisco Call*, 13 August 1895, 7.

number of white people to harvest her crops and do all the other work required."[36] He also went on to say that Mrs. Stanford had the right to hire whomever she wished, and "neither this nor any other commission has a right to interfere with her or her business affairs."[37]

Confirmation that Mrs. Stanford had hired Japanese workers at Vina made the papers on 24 August 1895. Mention was also made of "pushing through Congress a Japanese exclusion act," with Labor Commissioner William Fitzgerald going on to say "it would not surprise him if trouble resulted from the discharge of white men and the hiring of Japs to take their places, especially where only a matter of a few cents were involved."[38] Fitzgerald was highly annoyed that Mrs. Stanford had ignored Dam's letter:

> I can hardly believe that the lady has failed to receive the letter sent to her from this office, and I feel that we are entitled to an answer. This commission does not dispute Mrs. Stanford's right to employ any class of laborers she chooses upon the Stanford estate, but if she is employing coolies the public will, no doubt, think such was

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[36] "Japanese Help," 13 August 1895, 7.

[37] "Japanese Help," 13 August 1895, 7.

[38] "The Anti-Jap Agitation," *San Francisco Call*, 24 August 1895, 5.

> not the policy of the late Senator Stanford. When he was running for office he was recognized throughout the United States as the friend of the white working man.[39]

Fitzgerald was correct that Stanford had been considered a friend of white labor, but he was also believed to have been a friend of the Chinese. By anti-Chinese standards, the two positions were diametrically opposed, although Stanford certainly thought otherwise. Mrs. Stanford, expending every possible effort to keep Stanford University going while her husband's will was in probate and also fighting the lien the United States government had slapped on the estate for not-yet-due railroad loans, was not concerned with the race of grape-pickers at Vina. She had put the contract out to bid and was intent on accepting the lowest bidder. She had cut the salaries of faculty at the university, as well as those employees who survived the extensive layoffs at Palo Alto, Vina and Gridley. Her low wages reflected not only her personal economy, but the poor state of the country's economy as well. The 1893 depression

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[39] "Anti-Jap Agitation," 24 August 1895, 5.

lasted for four years; times were still relatively hard in 1895.[40]

She was not insensitive to the anti-Japanese rhetoric, however. On 8 May 1900, she read in the *San Francisco Call* the following viewpoint expressed by Stanford professor Edward A. Ross in a San Francisco address he had been asked to present on the scholar's view of Japanese immigration: "And should the worst [*sic*] come to the worst it would be better for us to turn our guns on every vessel bringing Japanese to our shores rather than permit them to land."[41]

Mrs. Stanford, always sensitive to public criticism in terms of the Stanford name and of the university, had already been unhappy with Ross's earlier public speeches as far back as 1896. The negative press Ross generated coupled with negative opinions fed to her by other Stanford community members only increased her desire that Ross's

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[40] Both Chinese and Japanese laborers continued to work at Vina for many years to come. In 1914, the *Pacific Rural Press* noted "a hundred white men and an unknown number of Chinese and Japanese do the work now; the number of men will be increased when haying begins in earnest." The university Board of Trustees sold Vina in 1919. "Big Success on Stanford Ranch," *Pacific Rural Press*, 23 May 1914, 604.

[41] Elliott, *The First Twenty-Five Years*, 340.

connection with Stanford University be terminated. University president David Starr Jordan had hand-picked Ross personally and believed him to be an excellent professor; his view was that if Ross was lacking in using good judgment, maturity would naturally correct the situation. Jordan was also a fervent believer in academic freedom of speech. He took great pride in creating a university setting where "the wind of freedom" (*Die Luft der Freiheit*) actually blew, so was consequently shocked when Mrs. Stanford asked him not to renew Ross's yearly contract. Jordan succeeded in deferring her request. However, Ross's May 1900 speech where he claimed that "if Orientals were allowed to pour into this country the American standard of living would be lowered," coupled with an earlier speech where he predicted street railways would pass through municipal ownership before reverting to private hands, so distressed Mrs. Stanford that she would brook no opposition.[42] Ross

[42] Mrs. Stanford perceived Ross's opinions as criticisms of her late husband, an intolerable situation from her point of view. She also had no idea that her decision to not rehire Ross once his contract was up would be construed as muzzling academic free speech or that this specific interpretation of events would so damage Stanford University's reputation at

initially seemed to accept her decision and tendered his resignation, but he then went to the press with his version of events. Several Stanford professors tendered their resignations in protest over the perceived issue of freedom of academic speech. The entire affair took center stage in American educational circles, with the issue of anti-Japanese rhetoric quite lost in the long drawn-out tumult. Mrs. Stanford refused to publicly address the situation until 1903, when she stepped down as surviving Founder and passed the sole authority she had held over the university since her husband's death ten years earlier to the Board of Trustees. In her address to the Board of Trustees, she reiterated the notion that the anti-Japanese immigration sentiment was an undesirable re-creation of the past, that "this movement, which has but just commenced against the immigration of Japanese to our country, will, in a few months, have assumed very serious proportions."[43] Her fear was absolutely justified; the creation of the 1882 Exclusion Act that targeted the Chinese based on their race set the stage

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the national level. Elliott, *The First Twenty-Five Years*, 329-330.

[43] "Mrs. Stanford Gives to Public," 26 July 1903, 23.

for ensuing legislation that then targeted the Japanese for the same reasons. Mrs. Stanford's strong feelings about the matter were surely also influenced by the fact that she had been hiring Japanese laborers to work at Palo Alto, as well as Vina, and that she had a particular fondness for the Japanese students who attended Stanford University.[44]

Mrs. Stanford's Final Days

On 14 January 1905, Mrs. Stanford drank a glass of Poland water taken from a bottle left by her bedside by Ah Yeng, a Chinese house servant who reported to Ah Wing.[45] The water tasted oddly to Mrs. Stanford and she promptly made herself vomit; later chemical testing indicated the water had been laced with commercial strychnine. Jules Callundan, a lead detective from the Harry Morse Detective and Patrol

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[44] Nagel, 147.

[45] Ten people were reportedly in the Nob Hill mansion the night of January 14: Ah Wing, Ah Young, Yeng, the first cook, Ah Lee, the second cook, Wong, the second butler, Nora Hopkins, a housemaid, Elizabeth Richmond, a ladies' maid, William McWhinney, the first butler, Bertha Berner and Mrs. Stanford. "Stanford Poison Mystery Still Wrapped in Darkness," *San Francisco Bulletin*, 21 February 1905, 1.

Agency, concluded the attempted poisoning was a malicious prank, that a jealous household servant had put the strychnine in the water in an effort to discredit Bertha Berner, Mrs. Stanford's long-time companion and secretary whom she held in high regard.[46] Mrs. Stanford, understandably distraught at the notion someone had tried to poison her, left for Hawaii with Berner and a newly-hired maid, May Hunt. On 28 February 1905, at the Moana Hotel, Mrs. Stanford went into convulsions after taking a cascara tablet and a medicinal strychnine-laced half-teaspoonful of bicarbonate of soda before retiring; she told the summoned physician, Dr. Francis Humphris, that she had been poisoned again.[47] He was unable to save her and she died shortly afterwards. The Coroner's Inquest

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[46] Robert Cutler, *The Mysterious Death of Jane Stanford* (Stanford, CA: Stanford General Books, Stanford University Press, 2003), 25.

[47] Cascara tablets, taken to aid digestion, consisted of cascara, a powder ground from buckthorn tree bark, mixed with *nux vomica;* each capsule contained a miniscule amount of strychnine, a thirtieth of a grain. The tablet Mrs. Stanford had taken was actually one that had been mixed for Berner, thirty-three years younger than Mrs. Stanford's age of seventy-six. Berner's relative youth would have provided her with a greater tolerance for ingesting strychnine. Cutler, 41.

held by the Sheriff's Office in Hawaii found a verdict of death by strychnine poisoning.[48]

When the shocking news reached California, the San Francisco police, who had not been called when the January poisoning incident took place, led the investigation into Mrs. Stanford's death.[49] Ah Wing, as factotum of the Nob Hill household and a beneficiary in Mrs. Stanford's will, was considered one of several suspects and was interrogated by the police, who also searched his room at the mansion. Despite Wing's inheritance of $1,000 from Mrs. Stanford he was soon cleared of any suspicion.[50]

He attended Mrs. Stanford's funeral and one reporter, focused on those attendees who had been under investigation, noted:

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[48] "Mrs. Stanford Murdered by Strychnine Poisoning, Declares the Coroner's Jury," *San Francisco Call*, 10 March 1905, 1.

[49] All of the San Francisco police records relating to Mrs. Stanford's death were destroyed in the 1906 earthquake and fire.

[50] The San Francisco police were never able to make a determination as to whether or not Mrs. Stanford had been poisoned accidentally, on purpose, or not at all, the Coroner's Inquest finding notwithstanding. The university administration insisted her death had been a natural one and, within a month, the intense media coverage died down.

> Ah Wing, the old Chinese house factotum, also came in for inspection and quiet comment [by fellow mourners]. He followed along with his head raised and his countenance expressed the fact that he was fully cognizant that he was one of the centers of attention. He was plainly, almost poorly dressed, and carried in his hand a black soft felt hat with a heavy band of crepe about it.[51]

Wing was in San Francisco on 18 April 1906, the day of the Great Earthquake followed by a three-day holocaust of fire. He was living in Chinatown; it is not clear if he was still working in the Nob Hill mansion, then owned by Stanford University, or possibly employed by Timothy and May Hopkins. When Chinatown was burned out he made his way with Ah Young the few blocks to the Stanford mansion and, with the gardener and watchman, stayed there overnight until fire again caught up with him. Ah Young had left earlier, but Wing lingered, hoping against hope that the mansion and its valuable contents could be saved, but the watchman soon told Wing the neighboring Hopkins mansion was on fire and the firemen had left it because they had no more water. In his letter to the Stanford community, Wing related:

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[51] "Tribute of Respect to Jane Lathrop Stanford," *San Francisco Call*, 25 March 1905, 3.

> As Mr. Hopkins' house was on the leeward side, I thought that our house with all the things inside could not be saved. Instantly, tears came to my eyes. Packed up a few of my belongings, closed the door, I left. I was very sad and melancholy on the way, and unwilling to look back. At Jones Street I looked back, and adding much to my sorrow, I found the house in flame.[52]

Wing spent another three days in San Francisco before he was able to walk across the city to the Valencia Street railroad station. From there he made his way by rail to Sherwood Hall, Timothy and May Hopkins's estate in Menlo Park. May Hopkins arranged for him to stay in the one standing wing of the Stanfords' wrecked Palo Alto residence and to guard the Stanford Museum, which had been plagued by looters after the earthquake. Wing stayed for a few months but remained troubled by the traumatic event he had survived. While appreciating "a very kind treatment I shall never forget," he decided to leave "for my country to see my mother."[53]

Of Mrs. Stanford, Wing wrote:

> When Mrs. Stanford died, she willed me a thousand dollars. As a token of remembrance of her, I brought to her tomb a bouquet of flowers on the morning of my leaving for China. Confucius said, "Treat the dead as if they are still living."

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[52] Ah Wing, "Earthquake," 1.

[53] Ah Wing, "Earthquake," 1.

> When Mrs. Stanford became old, it is natural for me to serve her as I treat my own mother.[54]

It is unknown if Wing intended to try returning to America again when only four years earlier Charles Lathrop had warned him he might not be able to re-enter the United States if he made another trip to China. Wing's closing words certainly sounded like a final farewell:

> May the university be prosperous, the trustees be guided with wisdom and strength, that the name of Stanford may live forever throughout the world. May the Stanfords find everlasting pleasures and gladness in heaven.[55]

His final sentence was a sentiment often expressed by Mrs. Stanford herself; she had fervently prayed she would be reunited with the husband and son who had passed into Immortality before her.

Although Stanford had publicly maintained a negative viewpoint of the Chinese since assuming political office in 1885, the signing of the 1892 Geary Act motivated him strongly enough to go to the newspapers and reverse his previous opinion. Stanford had three problems with the Geary Act: one, he was troubled by the notion of deporting the Chinese as a

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[54] Ah Wing, "Earthquake," 1.

[55] Ah Wing, "Earthquake," 1.

whole out of the country due to the cost, for which Congress had made no provision; two, California agriculture would be irreparably harmed by the loss of the Chinese as a labor force; and three, trade with China would inevitably be damaged if the United States were to deport 130,000 Chinese back to their native country. He went so far as to denounce exclusion as a whole, claiming that while he had once believed that the Chinese would overrun the country, he had not felt so for some years. Stanford died 21 June 1893, shortly after making his pronouncement.

Just a year earlier, Denis Kearney had made a public comeback with a new slogan: "The Japanese Must Go!" Mrs. Stanford, who was known for her feeling that the Chinese had been abused in the United States, was adamantly opposed to anti-Japanese sentiment, comparing it to anti-Chinese feeling (or "Kearneyism," as she put it), and justly feared that these new targets of racial opposition would share the same legislative exclusionary fate as that of the Chinese.[56] Both of the Stanfords were known for their support of

[56] Her comments were prophetic; in a newspaper column immediately adjacent to the coverage of Mrs. Stanford's death was an article calling for Japanese immigration restriction. "To Keep Out Japanese," *San Francisco Call*, 3 March 1905, 4.

white labor, in addition to their perception of being friends of the Chinese, despite Stanford's sometime public opinions supporting Chinese immigration restriction. While anti-Chinese proponents could never accept this notion of supporting both white and Chinese labor, the Stanfords did, this belief providing yet another layer to their complex relationship with the Chinese.

Conclusion

The Chinese were initially welcomed in California at the start of the Gold Rush but not by the single most powerful group in the state, the white miners. Leland Stanford, who came to California in 1852, had contact with the Chinese; they were an important part of his client base, as evidenced by the large sign above his store proclaiming the availability of Chinese goods. What he thought about them personally at that time is unknown.

When Stanford ran for the office of governor of the state of California, his thinking in regard to the Chinese assumed a level of significance that did not exist when he was merely a private citizen. In his first public opinions, reflected in his campaign speeches and actions while he was governor, he was emphatically against the Chinese. At the same time, he had employed a Chinese cook in his Sacramento home, and solicited the help of a Chinese herbalist when his wife, Jane Lathrop Stanford, became deathly ill with a pulmonary infection. Here Stanford's private and public worlds collided as he said one thing and did another.

Stanford's heretofore negative opinion of the Chinese did a complete about face once he hired thousands of Chinese men to build the western half of the transcontinental railroad. He and the other railroad owners devised a strategy where the white workers of the railroad supervised the Chinese and earned more pay. It was a similar strategy--although some of the Chinese earned more money than some of the whites--to one he used when employing Chinese at his Palo Alto estate, as well as other private and business ventures.

The Palo Alto estate was one of many on the San Francisco peninsula that were so large they required a substantial use of Chinese labor to keep them maintained. Stanford's 8,800-acre estate could not be forced into the definition of a white family farm due to its vast size and its owner, as a matter of record, employed both whites and Chinese, preferring the Chinese for plain labor. He afforded the Chinese opportunities they could not find elsewhere and enforced rules protecting the workers' safety. Many of the Chinese employees at Palo Alto were there for several years; at least two of the men, Ah Jim and Ah Wing, had twenty-year relationships with Mrs.

Stanford. These long-term relationships were not merely that of employer and employee, as seen by Mrs. Stanford's willingness to write an affidavit for Ah Jim, the beautiful flower arrangements created by the Chinese employees at the Stanfords' funeral services, and Ah Wing's sorrow at the loss of his employer to death, and of his home, the Stanfords's Nob Hill mansion, to the 1906 Great Earthquake and Fire. The surface relationship of employer and servant, however, did make the Stanfords' relationship with their Chinese employees more publicly acceptable.

Stanford's perception as a friend of the Chinese persisted despite his periodic negative comments to the press because he continued to employ them at both his private properties and his business ventures, two of those being Monterey's Hotel del Monte and the Vina Ranch in Tehama County. The hotel and ranch were large first-class operations that received a lot of press due to their owner's position in society, and helped keep the fact that Stanford hired Chinese in the eye of the public.

Over Stanford's lifetime, he switched his public opinion of the Chinese from negative to positive to negative and finally to positive again. Shortly before

his death, he claimed that the 1882 Exclusion Act had been a mistake, claiming that the Chinese were a vital component of California's labor force in terms of agricultural work.

As the Chinese population aged after the passing of the 1882 Exclusion Act and other subsequent restrictive legislation, the continual need in California for a seasonal labor force shifted the focus from the Chinese to the Japanese. Mrs. Stanford, predicting the parallels between Chinese and Japanese immigration policy, went so far as to fire a Stanford professor for voicing anti-Japanese rhetoric. Her feelings against anti-Japanese restriction were also influenced by her hiring of Japanese men at Palo Alto and Vina, as well as her fondness for the Japanese students that attended the university.

The Chinese and the Stanfords, two of the most important entities of nineteenth-century California history, intersected at both public and private levels. The relationship was a complex one for several reasons. One, Leland Stanford's public opinion did not always match his private actions. At times, this led the public to perceive him as a friend of the Chinese, even when he was publicly denouncing them. Second,

Stanford's public opinion changed over time, not twice but four times, due to his political circumstances. Third, Stanford defined himself as a racist, stating that he preferred whites over people of color. He insisted in his role as governor that California was for whites only, yet he employed both Chinese and African Americans in intimate settings where he and his family had daily and affectionate contact with them. Fourth, Mrs. Stanford, while consistently viewed as a friend of the Chinese, revealed by her actions at Vina that she did at some level believe the anti-Chinese rhetoric that insisted white labor was degraded by any association with Chinese labor.

Exploring these layers of dichotomy within the complex relationship between the Chinese and the Stanfords reveals the public and private faces of Chinese immigration rhetoric so prevalent in California during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. While a superficial look at anti-Chinese sentiment in nineteenth-century California would give the impression that Anglo and Chinese relationships maintained an insuperable distance, the reality was that some of these relationships reveal a private reality of a middle ground, of long-running

relationships based on something more than mere employment. These varying relationships were not confined only to the Stanfords and the Chinese men they hired but were part of the everyday fabric of nineteenth-century life in the Golden State.

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