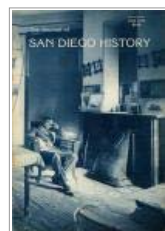


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REBUILDING THE CALIFORNIA SOUTHERN RAILROAD: THE PERSONAL ACCOUNT OF A CHINESE LABOR CONTRACTOR, 1884

Edited by Andrew Griego

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In the spring of 1883, Ah Quin, a Chinese merchant and labor contractor, joined many San Diegans in celebrating the beginning of the regular operation of the California Southern Railroad. The citizens were elated with the near completion of the long-sought rail connection running from San Diego to San Bernardino, anticipating sudden prosperity with the improvement of economic ties with the rest of California. Ah Quin had good reason for self-congratulation; as a contractor for the railroad he hired and organized hundreds of Chinese laborers to build large sections of the railroad. When the construction was drawing to a conclusion he took a brief vacation from work that allowed him to survey the entire length of the railroad. In noting his departure on the trip the *San Diego Union* wrote, "Ah Quin, the popular Chinese merchant on Fifth Street will leave tomorrow on a pleasure trip on the excursion train for San Bernardino."¹ Yet Ah Quin's satisfaction with the work was short-lived, for hardly a year

passed before a series of storms struck Southern California and destroyed much of the track that had been so long in planning and construction. In the months following the disaster the people of San Diego watched anxiously as Ah Quin and other labor contractors recalled their laborers and set about repairing the railroad line.

In 1884, Ah Quin recorded his own account of the rebuilding of the California Southern in a personal diary, one of seven diaries that he kept during his lifetime which have been preserved.² Fortunately, he chose to write them in English, and they are easy to read despite his unpolished syntax and grammar. The little books are a singular resource for San Diego history and for the history of the Chinese in California, offering a unique opportunity to observe events from the perspective of a Chinese immigrant. So far as this writer can determine, no other personal accounts of such depth were produced by nineteenth century sojourners.³ Selected entries from the diary of 1884 are edited in this article. It is the only diary that has survived from the years that Ah Quin was a labor contractor for the railroad, and was apparently kept both for his own pleasure and to record business activities. Not only does it document some activities of a Chinese labor contractor, but it also describes one aspect of the development of the railroad in the San Diego region.

Ah Quin pursued a varied course leading to his career as a labor contractor for the railroad in San Diego. In 1868, as a young man of twenty years of age, he immigrated to the United States from Canton, China, intending to send home enough money to uplift the sagging family fortunes.⁴ He was intelligent, and ambitious, and demonstrated an ability to quickly adapt to Western customs, all of which made him well suited for the overseas enterprise. In a Christian missionary school in Canton he was one of only a few Chinese converted to Christianity, and was taught to read and write in both Chinese and English by the missionaries.⁵ His literacy in both languages proved to be very helpful when he moved to California.



For most of the early years that he lived in California Ah Quin found employment as a house servant and cook. Many of his relatives also immigrated to the United States, and they did their best in assisting him to locate work. He traveled widely, and after a period of time in San Francisco spent several years in Santa Barbara learning merchandising from an uncle.⁶ In 1877, he embarked on an ocean journey to Coal Harbor, a small island off the southern coast of the Alaskan Peninsula, and in that cold and isolated land worked for more than a year as a cook for a small mining company.⁷

In the summer of 1878 Ah Quin was back from Alaska, and devoted much time to visiting friends and relatives throughout California. In September of that year he made a short trip to San Diego to see relatives, and while there became acquainted with George Marston, the socially prominent

railroad terminal would transform National City into a boom town, Kimball had coaxed the directors of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad to route a branch line through San Diego to establish a terminal at National City.¹² The first step in making this dream a reality was achieved on October 12, 1880, when the California Southern Railroad was chartered, with Benjamin Kimball named as president, and M.A. Luce vice-president.¹³ Ah Quin was among those contractors subsequently hired by the railroad. Chinese immigrants became the chief objects of the search for manpower as the contractors hurried to meet completion deadlines. The small Chinese community in San Diego existed in the face of hostility from white residents, but the railroad workers received a grudging welcome.¹⁴ In 1866, these Oriental sojourners had proven their courage and physical stamina when they built the Central Pacific Railroad across the Sierra Nevadas and the forbidding wastes of the Great Basin.¹⁵

In the early months of 1881, construction of the California Southern began in earnest. The railroad route extended from National City to San Bernardino, running northward along the coast before turning inland through Temecula Valley. An additional adjunct north of San Bernardino was to be built at a later date. Rugged terrain barred the way at several points, most notably at Temecula Canyon, which the *San Diego Union* described as "seven miles of solid rock."¹⁷ Ah Quin was quite successful in recruiting men, and hundreds of Chinese workers he hired were deployed at these and other sites along the track. As construction through the canyon progressed, rockslides made working conditions uncomfortable and dangerous, causing numerous complaints by the Chinese laborers there.¹⁸

Throughout the construction, Ah Quin was principally concerned with recruiting men, managing the logistics of sending supplies to his workers, and supervising some of the work. He hired foremen to oversee most of the actual construction, however, because business often called him from end-of-track. In their makeshift camps the Chinese subsisted chiefly on an austere diet of rice, potatoes, and fish, which Ah Quin dispatched by rail from a store he opened in San Diego's Chinatown. Much of his income was generated by selling provisions to his men. Work on the railroad proceeded in rapid fashion, and by 1883 the line was almost completed. With the end in sight Ah Quin and other contractors began to discharge their men, retaining only enough to staff maintenance crews.¹⁹

Within only a few months the search for laborers was renewed and intensified when unusually bad weather brought heavy rains that created havoc along the railroad track. Engineers had planned the railroad route without examining the potential for flooding, and as a result the tracks crossed the Santa Margarita River many times. When the rains reached a crescendo in February of 1884, this small stream became a raging torrent that devastated a considerable portion of the railroad. Over thirty miles of track was washed away, and the wreckage of tracks and bridges was seen floating far out at sea.²⁰ One train was stranded on the track for several days, and its passengers forced to hike to San Diego for help.²¹ Ah Quin was on a recruiting trip to Riverside when the worst of the storms jolted Southern California. San Diego was suddenly isolated by railway and he was compelled to go by train from Riverside to Los Angeles, from where he rode the steamship home.²²

After evaluating the damage done to the railroad, J.N. Victor, the superintendent of the railroad, urged the contractors to begin rebuilding the stricken portions of the track. Spurred on by Victor, Ah Quin traveled to Los Angeles, Riverside, and San Francisco, seeking laborers, but had to employ all of his recruiting skills to hire enough men. Many Chinese laborers in San Francisco preferred instead to take advantage of the relatively high wages that were being offered in the agricultural fields of the Central Valley.²³ Through one means or another Ah Quin was able to gather the men necessary to fulfill his contracting obligations, but was disappointed that he did not recruit more. Competition among the contractors was keen, and several contractors had more success in attracting men.

Conflict between the contractors and their men in the railroad camps was not unusual. In his diary for 1884 Ah Quin revealed that the work crews occasionally complained about the prices that he charged them for provisions, or threatened to walk off the job during quarrels with the foremen. But Ah Quin was a masterful negotiator, and always forestalled disagreements before they erupted into serious trouble. Under his guidance the men rebuilt portions of the track above Oceanside and through Temecula Valley. Along with other labor gangs they succeeded in returning the rail connection to San Diego. Afterwards Ah Quin transported his men north to San Bernardino to construct the railroad extension.

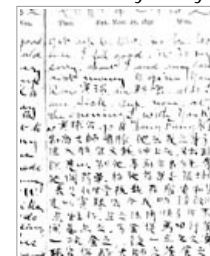
San Diego was without a railroad connection until 1885, when the link to the main line was re-established.²⁴ But Frank Kimball's visions of developing National City into a major metropolis never materialized, because shortly thereafter the railroad terminal was removed from National City to a more centrally located site in San Bernardino. The railroad proved not to be the key to mushrooming growth and affluence that everyone had expected. Yet that does not diminish the achievement of Kimball and the labor contractors. Together they accomplished an important step in the evolution of transportation in San Diego County.

When the rebuilding of the railroad was completed Ah Quin turned most of his attention to managing his store and the many real estate interests that he acquired throughout Southern California, although he continued to contract labor for various purposes. He sank permanent roots in San Diego, which became even more secure when he and his wife Sue Leong, the daughter of a Chinese merchant whom he married in 1881, began to raise a large family.²⁵ In a large two story home on Third Street their twelve children grew to adulthood, and the family became completely assimilated into the mainstream of American life.²⁶ The children received religious and academic training at the Chinese mission in San Diego, where they were bright and industrious students. Meanwhile, Ah Quin amassed both wealth and influence, and became recognized as a spokesman for the Chinese community and the unofficial "Mayor of Chinatown."²⁷ He remained a respected resident of San Diego until his tragic death on February 8, 1914, when he was struck by a motorcycle while walking the streets of Chinatown.²⁸ His two oldest sons, George and Tom, ultimately took over the family business, and became as influential as their father had been. Thus, the mantle of leadership in the home and community easily passed to the second generation in this immigrant family.

A further note on the diary of 1884 should preface these selections. The entries appear here exactly as they do in the diary, with only minor corrections in punctuation and capitalization having been made to make some of the sentences more intelligible. Also, rather than attempt to translate the Chinese names present in the diary that were written in Chinese, I have merely indicated in brackets where these personal names occur. My primary concern has been to retain the original flavor of the diaries.

THE DIARY OF 1884

- Jan. 2 Got up as usual. bre [breakfast] is very late because today sent the goods to all the gang.
 Jan. 3 [personal name in Chinese] is with me and he help me to pick up the goods and send it to the gangs.
 Jan. 7 go to send fish.



- Jan. 10 by engine to National City and railroad office and get \$15 advance and go to brickyard, have lunch at Sue Uoh Wash house,²⁹ walk along the wharf back to San Diego.
- Jan. 19 go by train to see all gangs on California Southern as representative. return same day by 7:15. by [buy] some lunch at Chinese restaurant.
- Jan. 22 Today is payday. Got up at 6, go to D St. by train to all gangs of C.S.R.R., have the lunch in Fallbrook.³⁰
- Jan. 24 [2 personal names in Chinese] eat with me and they help me work for the goods send for our New Year Gang of C.S.R.R.³¹
- Jan. 27 New Year today, stay home all the time to wait, an the visitors to come and see me, most every of them pay mine daughter some of money, in all count about \$40.00.³²
- Feb. 1 Go train to Riverside³³ and have supper in coffee saloon, sleep in [personal name in Chinese] room.
- Feb. 2 Have breakfast in saloon 10 A. M., by stage go up to Riverside station, no train to S.D.C.,³⁴ then back to Colton.³⁵ stay in hotel. rain, cannot have train home because Temecula Valley is brook.³⁶
- Feb. 3 Have bre [breakfast] in hotel in Colton. wait at the train home but have none. stay Colton.
- Feb. 4 go to San Bernardino visit [personal name in Chinese] house, walk back to train station then go to S.D.C. but stop at Temecula³⁷ till dark, then start, go very slow to home of S.D.C.
- Feb. 12 go over to National City because the rain is heavy. To the R.R. office, Mr. Victor³⁸ want me to get some men very bad.
- Feb. 13 go by train to Riverside to get men to work on the R.R. of C.S., but have none. Have sup [supper] with Yee Kee and sleep in his bed.
- Feb. 14 breakfast in the saloon at Riverside, by the stage to Colton, then go by S.P.R.R.³⁹ to get men at Pomona.⁴⁰ at Choung Lee Kee speak to [personal name in Chinese] one hour. Then the train to Los Angeles at 6.
- Feb. 18 Felt very sad, not knowed anything.
- Feb. 20 Cal [California] not knowed anything of San Diego because the California Southern Railroad is destroyed.
- Feb. 25 Woke up at 6:10, stay at Riverside to wait, and case of gambling of Quong Mow Lung. they ask me to interpret for Judge Conway, then the case free of charge. all the men fill happy. Riverside paper talk about me.⁴¹
- Feb. 27 Get up at 7 and leave Riverside and go by stage coach to Colton, then by train to Los Angeles, have lunch in Sam Wo. by train to San Pedro and transfer to steamer Ancon⁴² wake up at 6 A.M., steamer arrives 7, home in San Diego.
- March 1 Go by train to gangs 1, San Luis Rey Station.⁴³ Supper with [personal name in Chinese] who is work on the boarding car of C.S.R.R., sleep in the car at 10.
- March 2 have a cup of coffee in the Ah Chan Kitchen. Walk to gang of 4, Vsidora⁴⁴ and back in San Luis Rey Station. sup [supper] in hotel of McCarthy, and sleep in his hotel.
- March 3 bre [breakfast] is at Oceanside Hotel, and by the train back to S.D.C., it is all rain till Cordero.⁴⁵
- March 11 by stage go to National City to see Mr. Victor, the head man of C.S.R.R. and by the engine back to S.D.C.
- March 18 go by stage to National City about the pay to gang 2 because they quit work, but not pay yet.⁴⁶
- March 27 go to National City to hear order Mr. Victor about the C.S.R.R., but he want me to go off city of Los Ang [Angeles] to find some work men.
- March 28 by steamer Ancon to S.F.C.⁴⁷ little seasick, look for men to work on C.S.R.R.
- March 31 steamer Ancon arrived in S.F.C. 12 A.M. walk in the street.
- April 8 in big church of our Pre [Presbyterian], Stockton St., all the girl meeting of the year.⁴⁸ They is very fun. then out in the theater⁴⁹ of [personal name in Chinese], telegram to Mrs. Ah Quin.
- April 9 Have big dinner and drink with friends because Wing Wo win big money in lottery.⁵⁰
- April 10 busy to get ready and fix the men by the steamer. See Miss Cubbleston⁵¹ at mission before I leave. 50 workmen I took in steamer.
- April 13 steamer in S.D.C. 6: home 7: bre [breakfast] and with 50 men go by train to over 19 miles work. home by train.
- April 15 by train to Cordero of C.S.R.R., and walk about 13 miles today, and by the stage home.
- April 20 go to the wharf waiting for the train and start 8: and by the train to 18½ miles, big gang to see about the trouble, the goods they said is too high.
- April 25 Woke up at 5:30 A.M., and send rice to Hop Lee big gang.⁵²
- April 27 waiting the train, ...go over the nine mile gang and rest till the train home.
- May 3 Stay at Cordero most all the day. bre [breakfast] at gang.
- May 5 sent rice to Hop Lee gang at Cordero C.S.R.R.
- May 21 by stage to National City in C.S.R.R. to get pay, by stage home and put up the goods to gang 2 at Cordero.
- June 9 With Ah Ben have coffee in saloon and by train to gang Hop Lee, about some men work on section 2 Cordero, quarrel with foreman Mr. Linch.⁵³ [personal name in Chinese] and [personal name in Chinese] all belong our relations, and they go back to work at Hop Lee gang again, except Ah Tong. Mr. Potter⁵⁴ no want him to work. I and Ah Ben go to Oceanside.⁵⁵
- June 13 go up to the pay day of C.S.R.R. after start to Gang Hop Lee...back to Oceanside by stage.
- June 27 by stage go over National City, and Ah Sue go too. I and Baby Ah Ying⁵⁶ and Ah Sue go in the R.R. office.
- July 3 bring 5 men to go by train Cordero . . .
- July 26 send 7 sks rice off to Hop Lee Gang. Stay home all the time...written a new counting book.
- July 29 At Hop Lee Gang with trouble [personal name in Chinese] He try to cheat me \$30 about the commission,⁵⁷ he try to change the figure. Supper in boarding house.⁵⁸
- Aug. 1 Trouble better, home by train to San Diego, in bed by 11.
- Aug. 4 Order from Mr. Victor of C.S.R.R., want me to get 60 our people again.
- Aug. 11 Stage to San Luis Rey and sup [supper] at old Forster house⁵⁹ near the ocean.
- Aug. 12 bre [breakfast] in Santa Ana Hotel⁶⁰ by the train to Los Angeles. go Gee Lung and talk about to employ some of our men working on C.S.R.R.
- Aug. 15 stay in Gee Lung, look for men. a telegram for J.N. Victor.
- Aug. 16 by train to San Francisco.⁶¹
- Aug. 17 in city 11:30, first call on Quong Tuck Yeun,⁶² and in the theater.
- Aug. 20 See Miss Cubbleston at Mission House and [personal name in Chinese] and his wife. and ready by the steamer of Santa Rose.⁶³ Steamer at Luis Obispo and in Santa Barbara at 4 to 5. see Mr. Huse⁶⁴ and Ah Chin.
- Aug. 23 it is very foggy, the steamer can't get in till 11:30 [A.M.] go to National City about men. Mr. Victor want me to get more men.

- Aug. 27 Today is very busy, and put the goods in box to go to the gang of C.S.R.R., I expect to have about 80 of our people come to work on the C.S.R.R., but in the same evening I received a Quong Tuck letter about not so much, they say about 26 come tomorrow.⁶⁵
- Sept. 13 to Los Angeles...at Gee Lung. stay in town all day.
- Sept. 21 felt very sorry. William⁶⁶ got all the men supply to C.S.R.R., that makes me not felt well. Stay home all the time.
- Sept. 23 Mr. Fred Osburn have about one hundred Chinamen come work on the road of C.S.R.R.
- Sept. 28 Today is payday, so I go by stage with Mr. Potter and paymasters to Fraook Brothers line, in Mr. Hubbler, and supper at their tent.
- Oct. 1 by train go to Newhall,⁶⁷ see about men in Hop Lee.
- Oct. 12 very busy day, [personal name in Chinese] and his twenty-five men want to come to work on R.R. at Colton to Temecula.
- Oct. 17 start by train and go over to end of track of C.S.R.R.
- Oct. 21 stage in C.S.R.R. to get the last payment of September.
- Oct. 22 by stage to the end of track of C.S.R.R. to see about the matter of [personal name in Chinese] payment to settle with him.
- Nov. 2 today is very busy day, some work men want to go the work on the R.R. at C.S.R.R. on Temecula Station, and 50 men start in the afternoon 5:30 from Los Angeles. The party of our Chinese people [two personal names in Chinese] stop at 40 miles because the track is off, so we stay all night.⁶⁸
- Nov. 3 the train is start 7 A.M., pass the car who is broke. so many cattle killed near Colton⁶⁹...Colton about 8: transferred to C.S.R.R. Train to Temecula at 11 p. m....sleep in tent of mine.
- Nov. 5 stay in car all day.
- Nov. 6 stay all day in the box car, and supper in the box car.
- Nov. 16 by buggy go up to Temecula Station 7.
- Nov. 20 go and send some things off the train to end of track of C.S.R.R., stay home rhymetism [rheumatism] in feet.
- Nov. 22 go up by train to end of track of C.S.R.R.
- Nov. 26 in the evening Ah Ben is called on me at camp, and tell me about [personal name in Chinese] who is now clerk for me in camp. now is gamble a good deal.
- Dec. 11 go up Front of Track in mine store camp...it is rainy day...met Mr. Potter, the Road Master, walking up to mine camp.
- Dec. 19 send goods to railroad. go to National City. Mr. Victor give me new contract for work on San Bernardino north.⁷⁰
- Dec. 21 Go by train to all the gangs of C.S.R.R. to pay day. then the train go up to Temecula 73 miles, up in my store camp. go up 76 miles...to this new R.R.
- Dec. 22 go down again...to see about the matter of all the new Cajon Pass Road, and some is settle but some is not.⁷¹
- Dec. 24 move all the gangs up Cajon Pass and the time is raining.
- Dec. 25 mine men is ready, and go up to put up the tent. Stay raining, I work in the rain and I get wet.
- Dec. 26 stay in camp all the time, but today is busy.
- Dec. 28 by stage go to Colton and then go Los Angeles at 12:15, first see Gee Lung, after to see about the contract of the gangs.

NOTES

1. *San Diego Union*, October 15, 1882
2. The diaries were found among family possessions by Dr. Thomas Kong, Ah Quin's great grandson, and it was through his courtesy that they were made available to the author. They are presently housed in the San Diego Historical Society Library and Manuscripts Collection.
3. Historians of the Chinese in America have long lamented the paucity of primary sources generated by the Chinese. See Roger Daniels, "American Histories and East Asian Immigrants," *Pacific Historical Review* 43 (1974): 449-472; and Thomas Chinn, "New Chapters in Chinese History," *California History* 57 (Spring 1978): 2-7.
4. Ah Quin was a native of the Toishan district of the Kwangtung province of China, having been born there in 1848. Correspondence from Dr. Thomas Kong, November 28, 1978; and United States Congress, House, "Immigration Investigation," 51st Congress, 2d Session, 1890, p. 554. Hereafter cited as "Immigration Investigation"; and Ah Quin Diary, December 8, 1877. Hereafter cited as Diary.
5. Correspondence form Thomas Kong, November 28, 1978; Charles C. Dobie provides a discussion of the lack of success Christian missionaries encountered when attempting to proselytize Chinese immigrants who had already come to the United States in *San Francisco's Chinatown*, (New York: D. Appleton-Century, 1936), p. 203.
6. "Immigration Investigation," p. 555.
7. Diary, 1877-1878.
8. *Ibid.*, September 30, 1878.
9. *Ibid.*, October 8, 1880.
10. *Ibid.*, October 21, 1880.
11. *San Diego Union*, October 26, 1880.
12. The diaries of the Kimball family are on file at the National City Archives, National City Public Library; See also Francis X. King, "Frank Kimball, Pioneer of National City," (Master's thesis, San Diego State College, 1950).
13. Hubert H. Bancroft, *History of California*, vol. 7, (San Francisco: History Company, 1886), p. 614; and Richard Pourade, *The Glory Years*, (San Diego: Union Tribune Publishing Company, 1964), p. 158.
14. For excellent secondary studies of the Chinese community in San Diego see Arthur McEvoy, "In Places Men Reject: Chinese Fishermen at San

Diego, 1870-1893," *Journal of San Diego History* 23 (Fall 1977): 12-24; and Elizabeth C. MacPhail, "San Diego's Chinese Mission," *Journal of San Diego History* 23 (Spring 1977): (Master's thesis, San Diego State University, 1977).

15. Alexander Saxton has provided a thorough examination of the building of the Central Pacific Railroad by Chinese laborers in "The Army of Canton in the High Sierra," *Pacific Historical Review* 35 (May 1966): 141-152.

16. Bancroft, *History of California*, 7:614.

17. *San Diego Union*, August 18, 1881.

18. *Ibid.*, September 13, 1881; October 26, 1881.

19. R.P. Middlebrook, "The Chinese at Sorrento," *San Diego Historical Society Quarterly* 10 (January 1964): 10.

20. Bancroft, *History of California*, 7:614.

21. Pourade, *Glory Years*, pp. 162-163.

22. Diary, February 28, 1884.

23. *San Diego Union*, August 29, 1884.

24. William E. Smythe, *History of San Diego, 1542-1907*, (San Diego: History Company, 1907), p. 406.

25. Correspondence from Thomas Kong, November 28, 1978; and *San Diego Union*, November 29, 1881.

26. United States Bureau of the Census, Population Manuscript Schedule, 1900, San Diego Enumeration District, National Archives microfilm copy, San Diego Public Library.

27. Interview with Mrs. Buelah Rynerson, Escondido, Calif., June 23, 1978.

28. *San Diego Union*, February 12, 1914; and Walter Bellon, "Memoirs", MS Collection, SDHC.

29. It has been impossible for the author to learn anything more of the owners of this laundry, or of all but a few of the Chinese mentioned in the diaries. Because of their high mobility Chinese immigrants often failed to appear in registers that might provide basic information, such as city directories or census manuscript schedules. For those Chinese that are represented in these sources transcription of Chinese names is often unreliable.

30. Once part of the Santa Margarita Rancho and named for Fallbrook, Pennsylvania, this community grew along the railroad tracks when a developer purchased the first 160 acres in 1884. Lou Stein, *San Diego County Place Names*, (San Diego: Tofua Press, 1975), p. 47.

31. Each of Ah Quin's work gangs was given a name or number, but it is not clear why he referred to this one as the New Year Gang.

32. Chinese often paid their debts during the Chinese New Year, and gave money to their children as presents. Mary E. Coolidge, *Chinese Immigration*, (New York: Henry E. Holt Company, 1909; reprint ed., New York, Arno Press, 1969), p. 8.

33. Originally founded in 1870 by the Southern California Colony Association, Riverside's population numbered only a few thousand people during the building of the railroad. J.M. Guinn, *History of the State of California and Biographical Record of Coast Counties, California*, (Chicago: Chapman Publishing Company, 1904), p. 248.

34. Ah Quin commonly abbreviated the names of cities. In this case he is referring to San Diego.

35. Colton began as a railway station near Temecula Valley. It was settled by the Glover Mountain Colony in 1873 and later named for David D. Colton, financial director of the Central Pacific Railroad. Erwin Gudde, *California Place Names*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969), p. 221.

36. Ah Quin apparently means that Temecula Valley is filled with rushing water.

37. There were several stations in or near Temecula Valley, and the train may have stopped at one of these. Pourade, *Glory Years*, p. 161.

38. J.N. Victor was the superintendent of the California Southern Railroad. *Monteith's City Directory of San Diego*.

39. Southern Pacific Railroad.

40. Pomona was a small settlement founded by the Los Angeles Immigration and Land Cooperative Association on August 20, 1875. Gudde, *California Place Names*, p. 203.

41. Judge Conway was apparently a municipal court judge in Riverside. Ah Quin frequently acted as an interpreter in court cases involving Chinese, especially for Chinese charged with gambling. For an example see *San Diego Union*, October 3, 1886.

42. This steamship was once part of the fleet of the Pacific Steamship Company that operated between California's coast cities. Don Stewart, *Frontier Port, A Chapter in San Diego's History*, (Los Angeles: Ward Ritchie Press, 1966), p. 109.

43. San Luis Rey, one of the oldest settlements in the county, was a small community of about 700 people during the building of the railroad. *San Diego City Directory, 1886-1887*.

44. This railroad station on the Santa Margarita rancho was probably named for Ysidora Forster, the wife of John Forster, who had purchased the rancho in 1864, and the sister of Andrés and Pio Pico. Gudde, *California Place Names*, p. 371.

45. Cordero, another site of a railroad station, was located east of Del Mar and north of Sorrento, extending over a region that was earlier known as Cordero and Soledad. San Diego Place Name File, SDHC MS Collection.

46. Although they were reliable workers, the Chinese should not be characterized as docile. They often reacted angrily when they believed they were

being treated unfairly, as in this case, when they had not yet received their wages.

47. San Francisco.

48. Ah Quin is apparently referring to a group of Chinese girls under the care of the Presbyterian mission in San Francisco's Chinatown. The mission was originally founded in 1854 on the corner of Stockton and Sacramento Streets. During his years of residence in San Francisco Ah Quin made many close friends among the missionaries and Chinese converts, and visited them at every opportunity. Doris Muscatine, *Old San Francisco, The Biography of a City From the Early Days to the Earthquake*, (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1975), p. 116.

49. The Chinese theater has been described by one writer as "a mixture of melodrama, farce, and circus performance." Their performances lasted many hours and were extremely popular with the Chinese sojourners. Alexander McLeod, *Pigtails and Gold Dust*, (Caldwell, Id,: Caxton Printers, 1947), p. 307; Lois Rodecape, "Celestial Drama in the Golden Hills, The Chinese Theatre in California, 1849-1869." *California Historical Society Quarterly* 23 (1944): 97-116.

50. Gambling was a passion with many Chinese and winning the lottery was a cause for celebration. For complete descriptions of Chinese gambling games see Stewart Culin, *The Gambling Games of the Chinese in America*, (Las Vegas: Gambler's Book Club. 1972).

51. Miss Cubbleston was one of the teachers at the Chinese mission in San Francisco.

52. The origin of the name of this work gang is uncertain, but it may have been designated by the name of a Chinese foreman.

53. Ah Quin hired several white foremen, and they sometimes had difficulty maintaining amicable relations with the Chinese.

54. F.H. Potter was employed as roadmaster of the railroad and was apparently subordinate to J.N. Victor. See also Diary, April 18, 1884.

55. In 1884 Oceanside was a thriving community of about seven hundred persons, and contained three hotels. Glenn S. Dumke, *The Boom of the Eighties*, (San Marino: Huntington Library, 1944), pp. 148-149.

56. Ah Quin's oldest child, Annie Lee, was also called Ah Ying by the family. She was born in 1884. United States Bureau of the Census, Population Manuscript Schedule, 1900, microfilm copy, San Diego Public Library.

57. Ah Quin is referring to the railroad commission he received for hiring laborers.

58. This may have been a Chinese washhouse, or the residence of one of Ah Quin's friends.

59. Travelers often stopped overnight at this large two story building, erected by Marcos Forster between Mission San Luis Rey and San Juan Capistrano. Mildred B. Hoover, Hero E. Rensch, and Ethel Rensch, *Historic Spots in California* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1966), p. 335.

60. Santa Ana was a small community that had been founded by William H. Spurgeon in 1868. It received an extension of the Southern Pacific Railroad in 1877. Thomas B. Talbert ed., *The Historical Volume and Reference Works Covering Garden Grove, Santa Ana, Tustin*, vol. 1 (Whittier, Calif.: Historical Publishers, 1963), pp. 250-260.

61. Travel by train on a journey of this distance was quite unusual for Ah Quin, who customarily preferred to ride the steamer along the coast.

62. Quong Tuck Yeun was one of Ah Quin's many liaisons in San Francisco, and assisted him in gathering labor.

63. The *Santa Rosa* was another one of the steamships of the Pacific Coast Steamship Company. Stewart, *Frontier Port*, p. 109.

64. Charles Huse was a prominent judge in Santa Barbara with whom Ah Quin had become friends. Huse had been one of the founders of a Chinese mission in Santa Barbara, and it was there that he and Ah Quin became acquainted. Charles Huse, *The Huse Journal, Santa Barbara in the 1850's*, edited by Edith Conkey, (Santa Barbara: Santa Barbara Historical Society, 1977), pp. xvii-xx.

65. Most of the workers that Ah Quin expected decided instead to work on the farms in the Central Valley. *San Diego Union*, August 29, 1884.

66. Ah Quin was probably referring to William Osburn, one of the contractors for the railroad. *San Diego City Directory, 1886-1887*, p. 76.

67. This community was named for Henry M. Newhall, a railroad promoter, and was established in 1876 as a station of the Southern Pacific Railroad at the site of present-day Saugus. In 1878 it was moved a few miles further away along the railroad line. Guddé, *California Place Names*, p. 221.

68. Travel was delayed because of the derailment of one of the trains.

69. The derailment appears to have been caused by a herd of cattle on the track.

70. Workers were being transferred north to begin construction of the railroad extension from San Bernardino to Cajon Pass.

71. Ah Quin's meaning here is unclear, but he may have been alluding to the question of deployment of workers along the railroad extension.



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