

# CHINESE LOS ANGELES IN 1870-1871

## The Makings of a Massacre

*By Scott Zesch*

The Los Angeles race riot and Chinese massacre of 1871, one of America's worst hate crimes, is also perhaps the least understood tragedy in California's early statehood history. Why did a savage mob of Anglos and Latinos ransack Chinatown and indiscriminately murder eighteen Chinese men and boys? The earliest press accounts attributed the riot to "animosity of race and a desire for plunder."<sup>1</sup> Modern historians of Chinese America and the American West, if they mention the incident at all, usually confine their explanation to economic motives. They depict this shameful episode as part of a larger, working-class contest that pitted a resentful workforce of dispossessed Californios, poor Southern whites, and recent European and Mexican immigrants against cheap Asian labor.

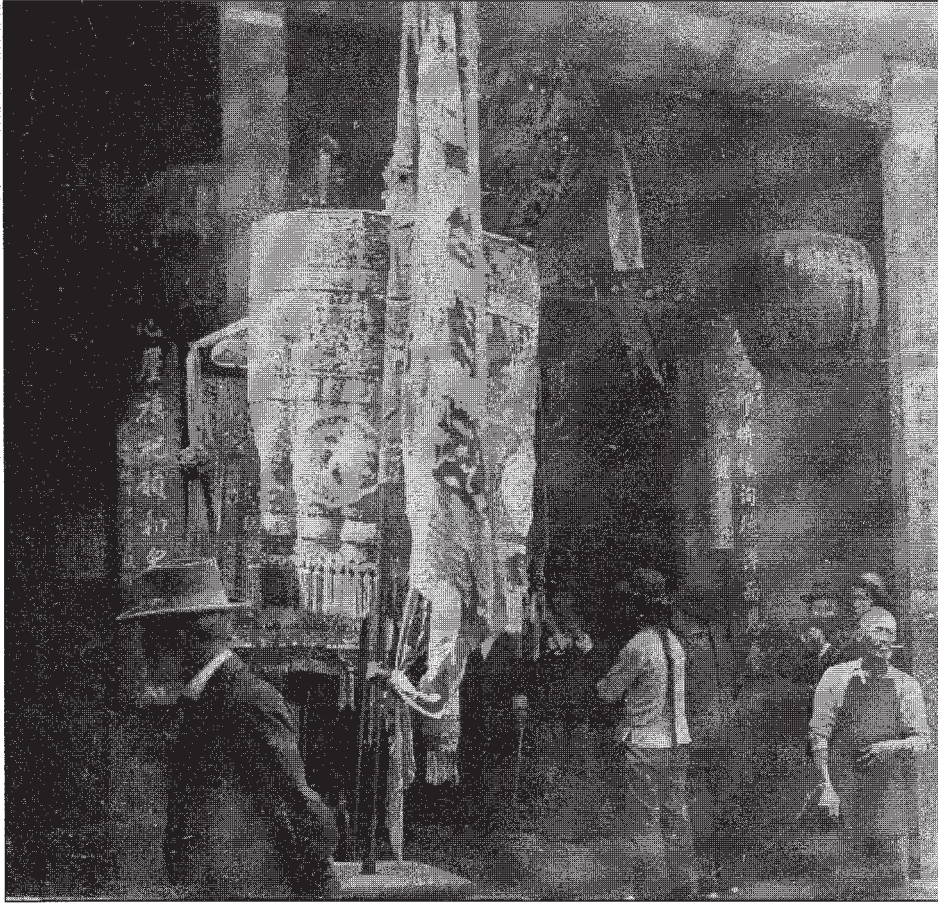
That rationale is neither satisfying nor consistent with the known facts. William Locklear's more focused study showed that the anti-Chinese labor movement did not take root among workers in Los Angeles until five years after the massacre and was never as virulent as it was in San Francisco. By and large, Asians and non-Asians did not vie for the same jobs in Los Angeles. To the limited extent they did compete, the Asians were too few to constitute a serious threat.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, several nineteenth-century California residents and visitors disputed the common assumption that Chinese servants worked for lower wages than non-Asians.<sup>3</sup> This article, rather than focusing on labor conflicts, will explore

the fractious world of Chinese Los Angeles during the year preceding the massacre of 1871. It will also attempt to place that shocking explosion of deadly hatred in the context of increasing and uncurbed racial hostility between the town's Chinese residents and its American population, a development that does not appear to have been an outgrowth of competition for jobs in Los Angeles.

#### THE EARLY CHINESE COMMUNITY

The California gold rush brought the initial wave of Asian migrants to the west coast, and a few of them soon began trickling into the sunny, luxuriant land of orchards, vineyards, and cattle ranches that surrounded Los Angeles. The town's continuous Asian presence dates from 1850, when two Chinese men, Alluce (Ah Luce) and Ah Fon, appeared in the federal census. The Chinese population grew slowly, increasing to only three by 1857<sup>4</sup> and sixteen at the time of the 1860 census. By the following year, twenty-one Asian men and eight women were living in the vicinity of Los Angeles.<sup>5</sup> In 1861, Chun Chick opened the first Chinese merchandise shop on Spring Street across from the courthouse.<sup>6</sup> Five Asian laundries and one fish market also operated in Los Angeles at the time.<sup>7</sup>

The vast majority of Asian laborers did not intend to settle permanently in California but instead hoped to save a few hundred dollars and return home to live in relative prosperity. Few purchased property in the state, and most relocated frequently to take advantage of new opportunities to earn income.<sup>8</sup> The Burlingame Treaty of 1868, while extending a number of legal protections to Chinese nationals residing in the United States, did not provide them with an avenue to naturalization, further ensuring that they would not put down roots.<sup>9</sup> As anti-Chinese sentiment developed in America, journalists denigrated Asian workers for impeding the flow of European immigrants who "would take up permanent residence, accept citizenship, and produce a population which would settle the country instead of exploiting it and then departing from it."<sup>10</sup> However, Ludwig Louis Salvator, the Austrian archduke who visited Los Angeles in 1876, more thoughtfully observed, "[I]t is not surprising that people who are denied citizenship and equality before the law should return home."<sup>11</sup> Nonetheless, some young Chinese men stayed longer than expected. By 1870, forty-four percent of Los Angeles' Asian males were age thirty or older.



#### CHINESE BANNERS IN LOS ANGELES'S CHINATOWN

The vast majority of Asian laborers did not intend to settle permanently in California but instead hoped to save a few hundred dollars and return home. Unless otherwise noted, photos are courtesy of Seaver Center for Western History Research, Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History.

The story of the earliest Chinese migrants to southern California is sometimes characterized as a lost history.<sup>12</sup> Very few documents produced by Los Angeles' Chinese residents of the mid-nineteenth century have surfaced. Instead, researchers have attempted to glean information about their lives from newspaper accounts—which must be evaluated critically, since local reporters knew little about Chinese society and often reinforced familiar stereotypes and prejudices. Sometimes journalists concocted entirely fanciful versions of events in Chinatown as entertainment pieces rather than reporting objectively. Even the formal statements that Chinese merchants occasionally issued to the press appear to have been crafted by their American lawyers and were usually more self-serving than enlightening. Nor is Chinese court testimony altogether reliable, because Asian interpreters, who were sometimes “bribed and brow-beaten,” were believed to have “confused testimony” that depended on “nuances of meaning.”<sup>13</sup>

Scholars find it especially challenging to trace the careers of individual Chinese, not only because they relocated frequently but also because English transcriptions of Asian names varied widely from source to source. For instance, only a few of the Chinese names listed in the early Los Angeles censuses match those that appear in contemporaneous newspaper stories, judicial documents and county records. One court official candidly admitted that he recorded the name of a Chinese litigant “as near as the Clerk could judge by defendant’s pronunciation.”<sup>14</sup> A newspaper reporter also confessed, “In spelling the Chinese names, we have been governed by the pronunciation, and may have committed some mistakes.”<sup>15</sup> The problem of identifying specific Chinese is exacerbated by the frequent use of the informal prefix “Ah” as a substitute for proper names.

The census of 1870 provides the best demographic overview of Los Angeles' Asian community around the time of the massacre. The town's Chinese population numbered only 178 out of a total of 5,728 (about 3 percent). The most common Chinese occupations were launderers, cooks, and gardeners (i.e., vegetable growers and peddlers)—jobs that most American men did not covet. In fact, the Chinese migrants to California originally entered the laundry trade to serve the market in the mining camps, where non-Asian males were reluctant to do “women’s work.”<sup>16</sup> Similarly, male Chinese domestics filled a void in Los Angeles because few satisfactory cooks and housekeepers of other races were available.<sup>17</sup> Two of the town’s Asian house servants, Ah Tie and Ah Jim, were

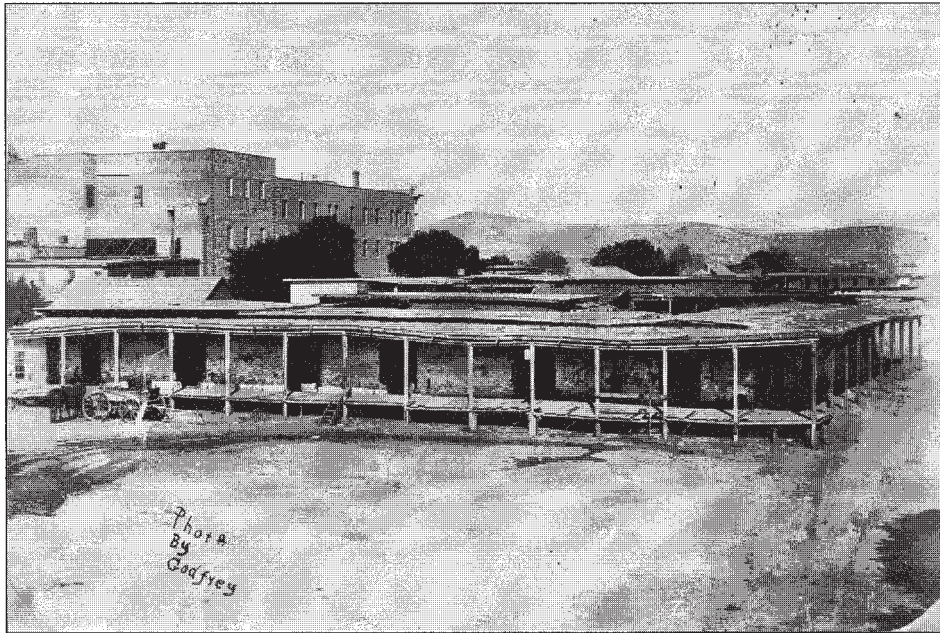


only eleven years old, and a third, Ah Hing, was only twelve. By 1870, Los Angeles had its first Chinese American, a three-year-old boy born in California and also called Ah Tie.

Men comprised 80 percent of the town's Chinese population in 1870. This lopsided sex ratio does not necessarily mean that a majority of Chinese males were unmarried. The families of many young men who sought their fortunes in America arranged marriages for them shortly before they left China, both to cement their ties to their villages and to ensure that they would send part of their overseas earnings to support their extended families back home.<sup>18</sup> Nonetheless, early Chinese California is often described as a bachelor society, since very few married migrants brought their wives with them. According to a report prepared by the Chinese Six Companies, the wives remained behind "because it is contrary to the custom and against the inclination of virtuous Chinese women to go so far from home, and because the frequent outbursts of popular indignation against our people have not encouraged us to bring our families with us against their will."<sup>19</sup>

Los Angeles' earliest Chinese residents were widely dispersed throughout the municipality.<sup>20</sup> During the 1860s, however, the first Chinatown started to develop along Calle de los Negros (Negro Alley), situated immediately northeast of the town's principal business district. According to the 1870 census of Los Angeles township, sixty-six Chinese resided in Chinatown, while forty-six stayed with their Anglo or Latino employers and the remaining sixty-six lived in scattered households with other Asians.

Calle de los Negros, the heart of Chinatown, was a short, unpaved street, running only 500 feet from the intersection of Arcadia and Los Angeles Streets to the plaza. It took its name not from African Americans but from the dark-complexioned Californios who had previously resided there.<sup>21</sup> Once home to Los Angeles' best families, the neighborhood had deteriorated into a tough slum by the 1860s, a far cry from the bucolic world of orange, walnut, and olive groves and flowering gardens on the residential outskirts of town.<sup>22</sup> As in other communities of southern California, the Chinese of Los Angeles settled in an old Latino neighborhood, adorning the shabby, mud-walled houses with bright red posters and stringing Chinese banners and lanterns from the sagging galleries.<sup>23</sup> Antonio F. Coronel, the state treasurer and former Los Angeles mayor, owned the main block of rundown adobe stores and apartments that the



THE CORONEL ADOBE,  
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that the Chinese leased in Los Angeles.

Chinese leased. The migrant workers congregated there because they were frugal and rents were cheap. In fact, it was not unusual for fifteen or twenty Chinese laborers in California to share one small room.<sup>24</sup> Seven Asian men were known to occupy a seven-by-nine-foot cabin on Grasshopper (Figueroa) Street in Los Angeles.<sup>25</sup>

By the early 1870s, Calle de los Negros had acquired a notorious reputation. The local press referred to it as the “five points” and “Barbary coast” of Los Angeles.<sup>26</sup> Shortly after the Chinese massacre in 1871, the *New York Times* published a colorful description of the neighborhood:

It consists of low, whitewashed, one-storied, old-fashioned, windowless adobe buildings, and bears a striking contrast with its neighbor, Los Angeles-street, with its fine two-storied brick warehouses. The denizens are almost cosmopolitan, and consist of the dregs of society, among whom are some of the greatest desperadoes on the Pacific coast. Murderers, horse-thieves, highwaymen, burglars, &c., from all parts of Southern California and Arizona, make this their rendezvous. It is their brothels monopolizing about two-thirds of an entire block.<sup>27</sup>

People of all races, including the Chinese, took part in the scrapes that regularly occurred along Calle de los Negros. Henryk Sienkiewicz, the Polish journalist and author of *Quo Vadis?*, visited California in 1878 and noted that the Chinese were usually "a peaceful and timid people, but amongst themselves they quarrel quite frequently and with equal frequency the quarrels end with a stabbing."<sup>28</sup> Examples from the Los Angeles court records and news accounts of the early 1870s indicate that Sienkiewicz's statement was only slightly exaggerated. In one squabble that occurred on November 8, 1870, Ah Lim was found guilty of assault with intent to commit murder when he knifed a fellow countryman, Ah Choo.<sup>29</sup> The following month, another Chinese man was convicted of threats to kill.<sup>30</sup> Two Chinese women, Ah Ya and Ye Sup, were arrested and fined six dollars each for disturbing the peace when they tried "to disfigure each other's countenances" on Calle de los Negros.<sup>31</sup> A late-night row in a Chinese gambling hall over an unpaid physician's bill resulted in a "faction-fight," spilling into the street.<sup>32</sup>

When reporting these rowdy incidents, the Los Angeles newspapers sometimes referred to the various Chinese "factions" or "companies" that existed in town. These terms referred to the *huiguan*, the most visible organizations in the Asian communities of California. Collectively, they were known as the Chinese Six Companies after they formed a loosely organized federation in San Francisco in the early 1860s. The *huiguan*, which were established along home-country geographic and kinship lines, provided services and protection to their members but also extracted fees from them. Membership was not voluntary; a Chinese worker could not purchase a return ticket to China without a certificate issued by his association. In each town, the local leaders of the *huiguan* were successful merchants who usually spoke some English and interacted with Americans.<sup>33</sup> The *huiguan* also served as a network connecting the scattered Asian communities of California. The leaders of the major Los Angeles companies, in addition to their dealings with the *huiguan* headquarters in San Francisco, maintained close connections with their fellow company members in San Bernardino, Santa Barbara, and San Buenaventura.

During the 1860s, the See Yup Company emerged as the most important *huiguan* operating in Los Angeles. Its undisputed leader was Sing Lee, a wealthy merchant who came to California around 1860. He was characterized as "a 'big Tyee' among the Chinese of this city" and a "boss Chi-

naman" who dealt "extensively in human flesh."<sup>34</sup> A powerful man with powerful enemies, Sing Lee was the subject of a foiled assassination attempt in the fall of 1870.<sup>35</sup> He was also quite litigious. He once pressed criminal charges against an American, James Ganahan, who had taken Sing Lee's pantaloons rather than his own while changing clothes in a dark room. After Ganahan returned the missing pantaloons, the case was dismissed.<sup>36</sup>

In addition to the *huiguan*, a second form of Chinese organization operating in California was the mafia-like tong or secret society. The tongs tended to attract underworld figures who monopolized the profits from gambling, opium, and prostitution.<sup>37</sup> The relationship between these two types of associations was complex and remains somewhat of a mystery. Early observers of Chinese America distinguished sharply between the beneficent *huiguan* and the fighting tongs. Mary Roberts Coolidge, for instance, chastised California journalists for mischaracterizing tong wars as disputes between the *huiguan*.<sup>38</sup> So did Chinese immigrant Lee Chew: "Newspapers often say that [the fights among the Chinese] are feuds between the six companies, but that is a mistake. The six companies are purely benevolent societies."<sup>39</sup> At times, the *huiguan* openly opposed the tongs and tried to halt the traffic in prostitutes. The San Francisco press declared in 1864 that the principal Asian merchants were "all anxious and determined to stop . . . the outrages which are wrongly charged against them as a people"<sup>40</sup> and reported in 1868 that all the *huiguan* had "combined to break up the wicked and barbarous practice" of selling women.<sup>41</sup> Writing to President Grant in 1876, the leaders of the Chinese Six Companies castigated "unprincipled Chinamen" for bringing prostitutes to America.<sup>42</sup> Rev. Otis Gibson, a Methodist missionary to the Asians of San Francisco during the 1870s, also maintained that the Chinese Six Companies tried to stop the importation of prostitutes.<sup>43</sup>

However, modern scholars of Chinese America have come to recognize that wealthy merchants who headed the local branches of the *huiguan* sometimes engaged tong fighters to resolve their business disputes. Membership in the two types of organizations overlapped to some extent.<sup>44</sup> According to Him Mark Lai, the larger *huiguan* had divisions similar to tongs that acted as defense units against outside threats to members' interests.<sup>45</sup> Moreover, one California journalist charged in 1869 that the Chinese Six Companies' effort to stop the traffic in prostitutes "was



nothing less than a cunningly devised scheme to effect precisely what was pretended to be opposed."<sup>46</sup> In the small but contentious Chinese community of Los Angeles in the 1870s, it is difficult to draw any meaningful distinction between the *huiguan* and the tongs. As early as 1866, three of the See Yup Company's merchant leaders—Sing Lee, Yo Hing and Sam Yuen (or Yung)—were jointly charged with the tong-related activity of "keeping, maintaining and residing in a house of ill-fame."<sup>47</sup> The evidence over the next several years overwhelmingly indicates that these three *huiguan* magnates were all involved in the hostilities that periodically erupted over the possession of Chinese women.

#### CHINESE WOMEN

Many of the troubles that arose in Los Angeles' early Chinatown were rooted in a pronounced sex imbalance. Only thirty-four Chinese women (20 percent of the total Asian population) were living in the town in 1870. Twenty-two of them were no older than twenty. The *Los Angeles News* perpetuated the widely-held belief that "the majority, if not all, of the Chinese women who immigrate to this country are brought hither . . . for the purpose of prostitution."<sup>48</sup> Another California journalist claimed, "The Chinese laugh at the absurdity of supposing that any of their countrywomen of respectable position, ever come here."<sup>49</sup> As Lucie Cheng and Suellen Cheng have pointed out, it is impossible to know how many Asian females in Los Angeles actually worked in brothels, as the 1870 census did not list prostitution as an occupation.<sup>50</sup> However, several contemporary scholars have theorized that Chinese prostitution may not have been as prevalent as once believed, since a significant proportion of scarce Asian women in nineteenth-century America became wives, concubines, or laborers in other occupations.<sup>51</sup>

Los Angeles records support this proposition. According to the census of 1870, two of the town's Chinese women, Ah Lee and Wa Sug, worked in laundries. Court records and news accounts of the early 1870s confirm that several of the prominent Asian men of Los Angeles had wives in town. Among them were Chee Long "Gene" Tong, a popular physician; *huiguan* leaders Yo Hing and Sam Yuen; and businessmen Hing Sing, Quong Lee and Charley Shew. The 1870 census also indicates that three of the town's Chinese households consisted of one man and one woman, and another nine mixed dwellings may have housed as many as

fifteen couples. Thus, more than half of the thirty-four Asian women living in Los Angeles may have been wives or concubines.<sup>52</sup> Moreover, the predominantly female Chinese households that appeared on the census records were not necessarily brothels. In 1873, an eighteen-year-old seamstress named Ty Choy testified that she shared a residence with her mother, sister (also a seamstress), and brother-in-law.<sup>53</sup>

In addition, instances of polyandry were probably less common than was once assumed. Visiting journalist Henryk Sienkiewicz claimed in 1878 that "when among ten Chinese occupying a dwelling there is but one woman, they all live together with her."<sup>54</sup> This assumption failed to account for the fact that some Chinese married couples took in boarders or shared their homes with relatives.<sup>55</sup> For example, the 1870 census reveals that the Los Angeles household of Ah Fei apparently consisted of one married couple with a small son but also included three additional Chinese.

Still, prostitution was a fact of life in the disproportionately male world of Chinese Los Angeles. Court records show that criminal proceedings were initiated against the proprietors of Asian brothels in 1862, 1864, and 1866.<sup>56</sup> Lucie Cheng's influential study revealed a great deal about Chinese prostitutes in nineteenth-century America. As a rule, unmarried young women did not willingly leave China or enter the flesh trade. Sometimes desperately poor families sold their daughters to procurers; other women were lured by false promises of marriage or jobs or were even kidnapped. Brothel owners imported them under contracts of indentured servitude or outright sale.<sup>57</sup> Once they reached California, their lives were hard, sad, and usually short. Albert S. Evans, a journalist who toured San Francisco in 1872, wrote sympathetically, if patronizingly, that Chinese prostitutes "are intellectually only children, and are more to be pitied and less condemned than the fallen of their sex of any other race. . . . They . . . become attached to each other in a childish way, frequently being seen walking together on the streets, hand in hand, like little Caucasian sisters going home from school."<sup>58</sup>

For indentured or enslaved Chinese women in America, the most feasible avenue of escape was marriage. When young females arrived from China, wealthy merchants purchased the most desirable for their own households. According to Rev. Otis Gibson, the Methodist missionary, most of these women served as second wives or concubines, as "real first

wives are a rare article among the Chinese in America.”<sup>59</sup> Highly prized, they lived in seclusion in their husbands’ quarters and were largely isolated from both American society and the Chinese community. Other women, after working for some time in brothels, married Asian laborers and helped their husbands in their trades.<sup>60</sup> Lucie Cheng suggests that Chinese working men were less likely than non-Asians to stigmatize prostitutes, since they realized that these women did not choose their occupation.<sup>61</sup>

A few indentured Chinese women successfully escaped servitude by fleeing to mission houses. When a prostitute ran off, however, her owner or his association would go to great lengths to recover her, for several reasons—the high profits she earned, the owner’s vindictive feelings toward her, and the precedent she would set for others if she were successful. The *Los Angeles News* explained the machinations that the flesh traffickers most commonly employed to ensure a woman’s return or to steal a prostitute from another agent:

When a rival company in their accursed profession wish to secure the control of a woman owned by or in the employ of another, they do not hesitate to make a charge of grand larceny under oath, secure the arrest of their victim, provide a bond for her and secure her release and possession, which is the object of the proceeding. Having accomplished this, they refuse to appear in Court as witnesses in support of the charge upon which their victim was arrested, and by means of which they secured the control of her person for the purposes of prostitution.<sup>62</sup>

Angelenos first witnessed this type of subterfuge in 1870. On August 25, Sing Lee, the head of the See Yup Company, swore out a warrant for the arrest of a missing prostitute named Sing Yu, whom he described as “full faced and about twenty years old,” alleging that she had broken into a trunk and stolen \$500 in jewelry and cash. According to news reports, she had “been kidnapped more than once by the rival dealers in prostitution,” and her possession “often changed from one company to that of another.”<sup>63</sup>

The See Yup Company offered a \$100 reward for Sing Yu’s return. Three policemen—one of whom, Joseph Dye, had a history of violent assaults—suspected that Juan Espinosa, a familiar figure along Calle de los Negros, had kidnapped the woman. Dye’s men were close to retrieving her and collecting the reward when their “competitors,” city marshal William C. Warren and deputy sheriff Sam Bryant, learned of her where-

abouts. Warren and Bryant found Sing Yu at Espinosa's home on First Street "after taking considerable trouble" and recovered the missing jewelry. Sing Yu testified that she had not run away but had been abducted by two fellow Chinese, who were guilty of any theft that had occurred.<sup>64</sup>

Two days later, Sing Lee told the justice of the peace that "after a thorough investigation of the matter he was satisfied his suspicions against the woman were without foundation, that she was not the guilty party, and asked that the cause be dismissed at his costs."<sup>65</sup> The court records do not indicate what happened to Sing Yu, who was most likely returned to her owner, Ah Jo. Sing Lee then charged Ah Chu, Ah Gung (or Chung), and Juan Espinosa with the theft. At the hearing, Espinosa admitted that the two Chinese men had hired him to convey Sing Yu in a buggy to his house and conceal her. She was then to be taken to Visalia and delivered to another dealer in prostitution. Espinosa, for his services in this lucrative trade, was to receive \$200—twice the monthly salary of Los Angeles' highest-paid policeman.<sup>66</sup>

Sing Yu disappeared again on the night of October 14, 1870. This time, she was accused of taking a gold watch and \$130 in gold coin. Her owner, Ah Jo, ascertained that she had fled to Wilmington and then to Anaheim, where she had allegedly "hired a Mexican with a stylish turnout, and left in the direction of San Buenaventura." Sing Lee once more advertised a \$100 reward for Sing Yu's capture and return.<sup>67</sup> City marshal William C. Warren, this time accompanied by police officer José Redona, pursued Sing Yu and recovered her from the marshal at San Buenaventura. The two lawmen arrived with their prisoner in Los Angeles on October 31, 1870, and took Sing Yu before the justice of the peace.<sup>68</sup>

One matter remained unsettled: who would get Sing Lee's reward? Marshal Warren had done the legwork, but policeman Joseph Dye had telegraphed the bench warrant that led to Sing Yu's arrest in San Buenaventura.<sup>69</sup> On Temple Street near the courthouse, Warren and Dye got into a heated argument over who deserved the money. Both lawmen were dangerously unpredictable; Warren had killed a fellow officer in an argument five years earlier.<sup>70</sup> Dye, who had lost the previous reward for Sing Yu's capture to Warren, accused his boss of taking money that did not belong to him. The two peace officers drew pistols and started firing at each other. Policeman José Redona and deputy constable Robert Hester tried to intervene and were both wounded, as was a Chinese bystander.



Warren died from his wounds the following day.<sup>71</sup> Meanwhile, Sing Yu was released to her owner, since the evidence, not surprisingly, failed to sustain the charge of grand larceny against her.<sup>72</sup>

Two months later, Sing Yu was at the center of a third affray. On the night of December 22, 1870, the deputy sheriff of Santa Barbara tried to arrest her in Los Angeles on a charge of grand larceny. Accompanied by deputy U.S. marshal Jonathan Dunlap, he went to Calle de los Negros, where he found Sing Yu in bed. The two lawmen told her to dress in a hurry. Then they rushed her outside and placed her in a carriage. About 100 angry Chinese, many armed with pistols or knives, followed them. They stopped the coach at the corner of Main and Commercial Streets and tried to prevent the sheriff and the marshal from taking her away. The Chinese man who came from Santa Barbara to identify Sing Yu was shot in the back and badly wounded. One of the horses pulling the carriage was also shot and died outside of town. Four Chinese men were arrested. The *Los Angeles News* used the occasion to lobby against "the Chinese companies who deal in human depravity and prostitution, and who avail themselves of the laws intended for the suppression of crime, to obtain possession and control of their sometimes unwilling subjects."<sup>73</sup>

As more information emerged, it became clear that false charges had once more been leveled against the often maligned Sing Yu, this time to remove her to Santa Barbara so she could not testify in a Los Angeles criminal case. Two weeks earlier, she had accused a man named Lee Woo of stealing her jewelry and cash.<sup>74</sup> Sing Yu was to be the primary witness for the prosecution. As for the allegation that she had committed theft in Santa Barbara, the *News* scoffed:

How she could have stolen any thing in that county from any one but the jailer, is a mystery, as the only time she was ever there was when she fled from here, and was arrested by the officers of that county the moment she came within their jurisdiction, and lodged in jail until her return here in the custody of the law. The arrest, however, served two purposes, it gave a rival company possession and control of the girl Lin You [Sing Yu], and prevented her from appearing this morning as a prosecuting witness against Lee Woo, and should prove to the satisfaction of the most skeptical that the "heathen Chinee" is not only an adept at villainy, but that he knows how to make the laws and law officers serve him in the commission of crime.<sup>75</sup>

The most startling aspect of Sing Yu's arrest barely made the papers. The *News*, in its lengthy tirade attacking the entire Chinese community,

only cursorily mentioned that Chinese gunmen had fired four shots into the carriage in which the lawmen were riding with Sing Yu.<sup>76</sup> Gunfights between Chinese tong fighters were not unheard of in Los Angeles, but shooting at American law officers was a bold new development, one that would result in terrible consequences ten months later.

For the most part, Chinese prostitutes such as Sing Yu were unable to escape from their masters, largely because American lawmen bent over backward to help restore them to sexual slavery. This system was not unique to Los Angeles. Throughout California, dealers in Asian women offered rewards to convince police officers to do their bidding.<sup>77</sup> When the Chinese Six Companies in San Francisco publicly decried the importation of prostitutes, they complained: "If officers would refuse bribes, then unprincipled Chinamen could no longer purchase immunity from the punishment of their crimes."<sup>78</sup>

However, the *huiguan* kingpins of Los Angeles understood the importance of maintaining a mutually beneficial relationship with the police force. One reporter noted that the Chinese were "choice in their selection of officers."<sup>79</sup> The *Los Angeles News* complained on several occasions that allowing the Chinese "barbarians" to use the legal process "in pursuit of a nefarious traffic, bandying writs from day to day," was "a mockery" in which justice was "more than figuratively blind."<sup>80</sup> The same newspaper also opined that policemen who allowed themselves to be bought were "utterly unworthy of the badges they wear."<sup>81</sup> Still, this misuse of the legal system continued unchecked for several years.

#### SINO-AMERICAN RELATIONS IN LOS ANGELES

Unlike newly-arrived immigrants from Europe or Mexico, the Chinese were neither able nor especially eager to blend into their California communities. They clung to their home-country traditions and manner of dress, remaining a people apart. That prompted journalist Albert S. Evans to write: "What a strange, peculiar people are these Chinese! Dwelling among us, they are not of us . . . They walk the same streets and breathe the same air with us; but they do not talk the same language; do not act as we act; do not reason as we reason; do not think as we think."<sup>82</sup> Rev. Otis Gibson believed that the men's custom of wearing long queues stood "more in the way of Americanizing the Chinese than any other one thing." He also thought that their assimilation was slow because "the

Chinese are extremely conservative, and it takes a long time to permeate the thought of a whole Chinese community with a favorable notion of any change in their national customs."<sup>83</sup>

The Chinese of Los Angeles did make some overtures toward the American population. The Asian community's earliest leader, a man who used the name John Tambolin, invited journalists to attend the Chinese New Year festivities in 1866, and one reporter admitted that he "left with a better opinion and feelings towards the Moon Eyed race."<sup>84</sup> However, early California historians Hubert Howe Bancroft and J. M. Guinn indicated that most Asians had little desire to mix socially with Americans. According to Bancroft, the Chinese "exhibited a disposition to hold aloof from the white race . . . as much from choice as from recognition of the unfriendliness visible in the looks and acts of their American or European neighbors."<sup>85</sup> Guinn posited that the Chinese "despised the 'white devils' among whom they lived," but added that this was "not strange considering the mobbing and maltreatment they received."<sup>86</sup>

As a result of language and cultural barriers as well as the racial prejudice they encountered, the Chinese tended to keep to themselves, limiting their personal commercial transactions to Asian-owned businesses and their social outings to the restaurants and gambling halls of Chinatown. No doubt many of them found American culture and values unappealing. Zhang Deyi, a Chinese diplomat who visited the United States in 1868, thought that American food tasted "like the rank odor of sheep" and that the custom of blowing a kiss to a member of the opposite sex was "wanton in the extreme."<sup>87</sup> Immigrant Lee Chew disclosed in 1903 that some of his fellow countrymen living in the United States believed "that there is no marriage in this country, that the land is infested with demons and that all the people are given over to general wickedness."<sup>88</sup>

Since the migrant laborers generally stayed within their own community, only a minority of Angelenos regularly interacted with the Chinese. The 1870 census suggests that about thirty Asian men worked alongside, and lived under the same roof as, Anglo or Latino farm laborers, house servants, and hotel or restaurant workers. Some non-Asians visited Chinese physicians, because American medicine during the nineteenth century was largely ineffectual in treating many types of injuries and infections.<sup>89</sup> By 1872, one Chinese doctor in Los Angeles, Ah Poo Ji Tong, was advertising his services in both English and Spanish.<sup>90</sup>

In addition, thirty-seven Los Angeles households employed Asian domestics in 1870. A number of the town's most substantial citizens hired Chinese house servants and cooks: former governor John G. Downey; lawyers Cameron Thom, Andrew Glassell, Charles Larrabee, Andrew J. King, Frank Ganahl, and Alfred Chapman; physicians Joseph P. Widney and John S. Griffin; orchard owner Joseph Wolfskill; public officials Charles E. Miles, Stephen Mott, and Frank Carpenter; and merchants Prudent Beaudry, Manuel Requena, Juan Lanfranco, Samuel C. Foy, and James M. Griffith. Visiting journalist Charles Nordhoff suggested that employers were favorably disposed toward the Chinese as a people because their Asian workers "do not drink, do not quarrel, are not idle or prone to change, give no eye-service, are patient, respectful, extremely quick to learn, faithful to their instructions, and make no fuss."<sup>91</sup> However, close contact with the Chinese did not always erode American "prejudices and fears," according to Nordhoff. He met housewives in California who would not leave their children home alone with Asian servants because there had been "unpleasant occurrences."<sup>92</sup>

The first Chinese residents of Los Angeles found themselves in the midst of a notoriously violent society. A "staging place for drifters," Los Angeles attracted young, aggressive bachelors who wandered into town from the mountains, mining camps, cattle-driving trails, and frontier forts.<sup>93</sup> Many residents, including the Chinese, habitually went around armed. Between 1847 and 1870, the relatively small town averaged around thirteen murders per year, or a homicide rate of 158 per 100,000—a much higher per capita figure than New York, Chicago, or San Francisco.<sup>94</sup> During twelve particularly bloody months in 1850–1851, the homicide rate reached 1,240 per 100,000, the highest in American history.<sup>95</sup> Mob justice was also common. Between 1850 and 1870, the lynching incidents in Los Angeles have been estimated at thirty-five, more than four times the number carried out in San Francisco.<sup>96</sup> Nevertheless, the town's Chinese population grew slowly during this period, not only because of the abundant opportunities available to Asian workers in northern California but also because "the early reputation of Los Angeles did little to attract visitors."<sup>97</sup>

While the atmosphere of violence that permeated Los Angeles would not seem conducive to racial tolerance, very few reported attacks on the Chinese occurred in the city during the 1850s and 1860s. The Americans





VIEW OF LOS ANGELES IN 1871,  
taken from Phineas Banning's residence on Fort Hill, looking northeast, past  
North Broadway (then Buena Vista) Street, with Southern Pacific railroad  
shops in distance. Chinatown was located beyond the right frame of this  
photo. *Courtesy of Security Pacific Collection/Los Angeles Public Library.*

more or less ignored their few Asian neighbors, adhering to a “live and let live” philosophy. The local press, on the rare occasions when it discussed the Chinese at all, usually struck a neutral, occasionally amused tone. After some American ruffians broke up the furniture in a Chinese brothel in 1864, a journalist scolded the perpetrators as “unmanly” and “evil disposed persons,” asserting that the “humble and unobtrusive establishments” were “not nuisances” and that the Asian women were “entitled to the protection of the law in their persons and property.”<sup>98</sup>

All that changed abruptly in January 1869, when the strongly Democratic, pro-labor *Los Angeles News* launched a daily edition that published a prolonged series of vitriolic editorials against Chinese immigration.<sup>99</sup> In essence, the *News* put forth the standard arguments that the Chinese, who lived “like rats in one tenement,” were too frugal, too efficient and too hard-working for American and European laborers to compete with. (The same paper hypocritically praised the industry and thrift of white immigrants from Oregon.<sup>100</sup>) The editors argued that the influx of Asians to California would eventually force the American middle class “back to a brutish, mere physical existence, by taking away the luxuries, the means for education, and refining leisure, which have been within their reach.”<sup>101</sup> These political diatribes were motivated not only by the perceived threat from Chinese labor in California but also by fear that the impending passage of the Fifteenth Amendment might pave the way for Chinese citizenship and suffrage.

The advent of this anti-Asian rhetoric in the *News* does not appear to have been sparked by changes in Los Angeles’ economy. While the local Chinese population was growing, it constituted only about 3 percent of the city’s total by 1870. Moreover, the *News* welcomed non-Asian newcomers, proclaiming “there is room for them and many more.”<sup>102</sup> The fact that the editors targeted only Chinese immigrants, not those from Europe or Mexico, belied the idea that Los Angeles was getting too many new workers for the number of jobs available. Despite the economic downturn elsewhere in California, Los Angeles was booming in 1869 and reportedly had the lowest unemployment rate of any comparable town on the west coast at the time of the massacre in 1871.<sup>103</sup> Nor did Chinese workers undercut the wages paid to non-Asians in most of the occupations in which they were employed locally. Journalist Charles Nordhoff

reported that the amount earned by Chinese cooks and waiters kept pace with non-Asian wages, and Rev. Otis Gibson confirmed that Chinese house servants would strike for the highest wages they could get.<sup>104</sup> The editors of the *News*, rather than commenting on local conditions, seem to have been aping the anti-Chinese agitation filtering down from northern California, which had intensified since 1867.<sup>105</sup>

Significantly, the *News* went much farther in its attacks than simply complaining about the increased number of Asian laborers in California's workforce. It relentlessly castigated the Chinese people as "an alien, an inferior and idolatrous race," "a curse to our country, and a foul blot upon our civilization."<sup>106</sup> The three highly-publicized rows over Sing Yu in 1870 also gave the *News* a convenient excuse to portray the entire Chinese community as immoral. Although the vast majority of Asians in Los Angeles were ordinary laborers living uneventful lives, Americans' attitudes toward them were colored by lurid news stories about Chinese gun-fighters and sex slaves. Meanwhile, the prominent Angelenos who claimed to admire their Asian employees wrote no letters to the local newspapers countering the blatantly racist editorials. Nor did the city's many lawyers, who profited from representing Chinese clients in their numerous court cases. (Ironically, one of the publishers of the *News*, Andrew J. King, was a lawyer for local *huiguan* leader Yo Hing. King also employed a Chinese cook at the time.<sup>107</sup>) Thus, the hatemongering went unchallenged.

Around the same time, Los Angeles witnessed an alarming increase in unprovoked, racially-motivated attacks on the Chinese. A white man threatened Yo Hing and his companion with a chair when they stopped for a drink at a hotel in El Monte.<sup>108</sup> Another white man said he "hit a Chinaman on the head because I wanted to."<sup>109</sup> Irish immigrant Pat Gleason, having been insulted by a Chinese cook while he was in jail, thrashed the first Asian he saw after his release because "he would just as soon 'bate' one as another."<sup>110</sup> A man named Santiago Arguella approached a Chinese vegetable peddler and struck him on the face with a heavy whip.<sup>111</sup> In the early hours of a summer morning, a party of Latino "sere-naders" beat up three Chinese men on New Commercial Street.<sup>112</sup> An inebriated Native American woman accosted some Chinese shoemakers and smashed their window.<sup>113</sup> A Chinese woman was "violently assailed

with a shower [of] stones from a crowd of boys, who bruised her severely and then turned the hose on her wounded body,"<sup>114</sup> while two other children were seen "shaking their little fists at a passing Chinaman."<sup>115</sup> In Sonoratown, the barrio north of the plaza where poorer Mexican immigrants lived, someone posted a warning in 1871 "to the effect that no 'Heathen Chinese' will be allowed to settle in the first ward, and notifying transient Celestials to 'cut their lucky.'"<sup>116</sup> A new American laundry proudly advertised "the entire exclusion of Chinese from employment in the establishment."<sup>117</sup> Only two weeks before the Chinese massacre, a young African-American man lashed out at Ah Goff and "subjected him for a time to severe lapidation."<sup>118</sup>

Nothing in the news accounts indicates that any of the American perpetrators of these attacks were competing for the same types of jobs as those held by the Asians they assaulted. Nor were they avenging personal grievances against specific Chinese. Rather, it seems that they had come to believe the increasingly common and uncontested talk, both in the press and on the streets, that the Chinese were depraved, degraded, and subhuman—in short, fair game. An early history of the city pointed out that "public sentiment at the time placed a very low estimate on the value of the life of a Chinaman."<sup>119</sup> These chilling incidents caused the *Los Angeles News* to retreat temporarily from its anti-Chinese rants in the summer of 1871 and fret that the Chinese "seem to be made especial objects of attack."<sup>120</sup> Yet only a month later, the *News* reaffirmed its views about the "natural antipathy . . . inherent in persons of the white race against the hideous and repulsive Mongolians."<sup>121</sup>

During this period, the Chinese also became more aggressive in their dealings with Americans, perhaps in response to the brutalities their people suffered. As seen earlier, Chinese gunmen fired shots into a carriage in which American lawmen were riding with Sing Yu. An Asian cook on a farm shot fellow employee Juan Tapia in the hand when they got in an argument over a cup of coffee.<sup>122</sup> Several Chinese men "roughly handled" an African American whom they believed had stolen an umbrella.<sup>123</sup> An Asian man reportedly entered a German's house and knocked down two children.<sup>124</sup> When two Chinese men were convicted of assault for striking a white woman and spitting in her face, the *News* remarked that the case "tends to show the natural dispositions of the Chinese animals."<sup>125</sup> By 1870, the era of Sino-American tolerance in Los Angeles was over.



## A WAR IN CHINATOWN

At the close of the 1860s, the dominant See Yup Company and its three principals—Sing Lee, Yo Hing and Sam Yuen—effectively controlled business in Chinatown. Except for a few personal squabbles between Chinese laborers, the local press reported very little tension within the Asian community until March 1870, when the *Los Angeles News* noted, “It seems that here, as elsewhere, the Chinamen recognize control by separate and rival ‘companies,’ having their headquarters at San Francisco.” This observation was prompted by an incident in which a “pugnacious Chinaman” who had been attacked by an Asian gang when he went to collect some laundry “sought revenge by knocking down the first one of his country men whom he met that belonged to the same company with those who had whipped him.”<sup>126</sup> Disputes among the Chinese had somehow become collective rather than individual. The following month, when an Asian man was arrested on suspicion of murder but discharged for lack of evidence, the *News* observed:

The Chinamen here, as elsewhere in California, are gathered beneath the banners of rival “companies.” Members of the company to which the alleged murderer does not belong have threatened his life. A bitter quarrel has been engendered and open war was threatened.<sup>127</sup>

The rift in the local Chinese leadership had been at least two years in the making. In 1868, See Yup principals Yo Hing and Sam Yuen were among five Chinese cited for rioting when they got in a street fight with each other.<sup>128</sup> A few days later, Yo Hing charged Sam Yuen with “unlawfully threatening to whip” him, professing his fear that his fellow See Yup member would “carry his threats into execution.”<sup>129</sup> At some point in 1870, the See Yup Company divided, and three new splinter associations emerged in Los Angeles: Yo Hing’s Hong Chow Company, Sam Yuen’s Nin Yung Company, and the less significant Hop Wo Company.<sup>130</sup> The original See Yup Company, still headed by Sing Lee, continued to exist as a separate entity. A fifth *huiguan* operating in the city was the Chin Woa Company, a minor organization.

The reason for the breakup of the See Yup Company in 1870 is unknown, but it was not amicable. According to Him Mark Lai, divisions sometimes occurred when ambitious *huiguan* leaders such as Yo Hing took advantage of clan and village loyalties to form rival power blocs.<sup>131</sup> By the spring of 1871, Yo Hing’s upstart Hong Chow Company had become the

most powerful Chinese association in the city.<sup>132</sup> Sing Lee publicly denounced the aggressive newcomer as a rogue organization formed "for the purpose of plundering and oppressing" Asian workers. He claimed:

This company is not one of the old established Chinese companies, but is a new concern gotten up here in Los Angeles for the purpose of trading upon the fears and necessities of friendless Chinamen, and of levying black mail upon all, who, having no friends to protect them, would rather pay what they ask than subject themselves to the persecution of these people.<sup>133</sup>

Yo Hing, the head of the new Hong Chow Company, was an extroverted, ambitious man who had settled in Los Angeles around 1863 and later adopted the American name Joseph Hinton.<sup>134</sup> He was thirty-one at the time his organization came into being in 1870. Local lawyer and banker J. A. Graves described him as "a huge man, not so tall, but thick, heavy, while not fat. . . . He had extremely long arms, and a voice that fairly rumbled when he talked."<sup>135</sup> Unlike Sing Lee, who did business mostly with his countrymen, Yo Hing actively engaged with the larger community and forged friendships with several prominent Americans. He began his career as a cook in the household of Andrew J. King, who in turn served Yo Hing as his lawyer. Subsequently, he leased a farm from former mayor John G. Nichols, owned a cigar factory and store on Los Angeles Street, served as a court interpreter, and worked as a railroad contractor.<sup>136</sup> The Americans who knew him held varying opinions of Yo Hing. The Los Angeles writer and adventurer Horace Bell praised him as "an enterprising and prominent Chinaman . . . a fine fellow . . . suave, polished . . . liked and respected by all decent citizens."<sup>137</sup> However, C. P. Dorland, an early president of the Historical Society of Southern California, remembered him as "a man who in every way sustained the national reputation of his race for ways that are dark."<sup>138</sup> In 1877, Yo Hing's rivals assassinated him on the streets of Chinatown with two blows to the head from a hatchet.<sup>139</sup>

As of May 1871, the Hong Chow Company's chief competitor was still Sing Lee's long-established See Yup Company.<sup>140</sup> Within a few months, however, the See Yup organization was surpassed in prominence by another splinter *huiguan*, Sam Yuen's Nin Yung Company. Surprisingly, there was no reported friction between these two associations; in fact, the See Yup and Nin Yung Companies appear to have been allied.<sup>141</sup> Perhaps Sing Lee, who was planning to return to China in the summer of

1871, was winding down his affairs in Los Angeles and transferring his business interests to the ascendant Nin Yung organization. Or maybe the See Yup and Nin Yung headmen thought an alliance was necessary to counter the increasing influence of Yo Hing's Hong Chow association.

Sam Yuen and his partners in the Nin Yung Company managed the Wing Chung store, located in the center of the southern wing of Chinatown's L-shaped Coronel block. The firm operated a restaurant and sold a variety of Chinese merchandise.<sup>142</sup> With a limited market of only 178 Asians in the town of Los Angeles, competition among the Chinese merchants was cutthroat, and the *huiguan* resorted to heavy-handed tactics on behalf of their members. In one instance, a shopkeeper who belonged to Yo Hing's Hong Chow Company was renting a commercial space from Prudent Beaudry for fifteen dollars a month. Sam Yuen, the Nin Yung kingpin, reportedly leased the entire Beaudry block for \$169 and raised the hapless shopkeeper's rent to fifty dollars in an effort to drive him out of business. Yo Hing told the shopkeeper to keep paying Sam Yuen the old rate of fifteen dollars. The Nin Yung leader threatened to evict the man but finally relented, aware that Yo Hing would take the controversy to court.<sup>143</sup>

During the months following the acrimonious disintegration of the See Yup Company, *huiguan* rivalry and vengeance took many forms in Chinatown. The chain of events that ultimately resulted in the Chinese massacre in Los Angeles actually began in San Bernardino, where a sensational incident involving an Asian prostitute named Sing Ye created a stir throughout California and beyond. On the afternoon of November 1, 1870, five Chinese men who had purchased the woman in San Francisco for \$340 took her to the outskirts of San Bernardino. There they stripped off her dress, tied her to a tree, whipped her, and burned her body with blazing sticks, all because she refused to give up some money in her possession. The five men were brought to trial; four were convicted for assault to do great bodily harm.<sup>144</sup>

This inflammatory tale produced its expected results among the American population. The people of San Bernardino convened a public meeting and passed a resolution prohibiting any Chinese from working in town after thirty days. The *San Bernardino Guardian* decried the "idolatrous, degraded, unelevating, impoverishing heathens, that cannot possibly become of any use to the land in any sense except to supply a mere

temporary need of labor."<sup>145</sup> In San Francisco, the local newspapers published a false rumor that Sing Ye had been burned to death at the stake, although the editors of the *Alta California* acknowledged, "[W]e look on the report with suspicion."<sup>146</sup> Nonetheless, the *New York Times* repeated this exaggerated account of Sing Ye's purported death on its front page.<sup>147</sup>

The San Bernardino affair turned out to have a direct connection with the Chinese of Los Angeles. The men who were arrested and tried for torturing Sing Ye were members of the same *huiquan* as Yo Hing, who did his best to protect them. On November 9, he swore out a warrant for the arrest of an Asian cook named Que Ma, accusing him of horse theft. Policeman Joseph Dye, who had killed the city marshal less than two weeks earlier, traveled to San Bernardino, where Que Ma had reportedly fled, and arrested him there. When the cook was brought before the justice of the peace in Los Angeles, a different story emerged. Through his interpreter, Que Ma said that he had never set foot in Los Angeles County before, "as he was abundantly able to prove." He claimed that his arrest was a ruse to ensure that he would be absent from San Bernardino and therefore could not testify against the five defendants in Sing Ye's case. Neither Yo Hing nor any other witness appeared against Que Ma, who was discharged. According to See Yup leader Sing Lee, the unfortunate cook "had to spend all his little savings in employing lawyers to defend him, and thus, though innocent, was ruined by the prosecution."<sup>148</sup>

Yo Hing then set out to ascertain who had informed on the members of his company in San Bernardino and brought about their misfortune. Early the following year, he started avenging their prosecution by waging war against the suspected informers in the See Yup Company. His first victim was a successful San Bernardino laundryman named Wong Hing, who was passing through Los Angeles in January 1871 with his wife, Ah Mouie, on their way back to China. Yo Hing demanded that they reimburse him for the Hong Chow Company's costs in defending the accused torturers, but they refused. The following day, January 23, Wong Hing and Ah Mouie were about to leave on the train to the harbor when, to their surprise, they were arrested, searched, and jailed on a false charge of theft. Jailor Frank Carpenter, following his usual practice, took their property—\$694 in gold and silver coin, plus other valuables—for safekeeping. In the meantime, one of Yo Hing's men, Lay Yee, filed a bogus civil action against Wong Hing, claiming he had defaulted on a loan. The court issued



a writ of attachment, and the couple's money and other personal property that Carpenter was holding ended up in Hong Chow hands.<sup>149</sup>

Yo Hing's next victim was Choo Chee, a merchant from San Francisco who visited Los Angeles in March 1871. The Hong Chow people mistakenly thought he had come to town to assist his fellow *huiguan* member Wong Hing, who was still trying to recover the money taken from him and his wife at the county jail two months earlier. In an effort to get Choo Chee imprisoned, two Hong Chow men, Lay Yee and Quang Yu, swore out a complaint before justice of the peace William H. Gray falsely alleging that the visitor from San Francisco had paid an assassin \$400 to kill them. Gray, an elderly man who was not easily fooled, curtly dismissed the "purely malicious" prosecution, noting that it grew out of the "competitions and jealousies which characterize these Chinese Companies, and with which the Courts are so frequently annoyed." Gray ordered Yo Hing's men to pay the court costs.<sup>150</sup>

Infuriated by this defeat, the Hong Chow people opted for a more direct method of retaliation. On March 9, 1871, Wong Hing, the San Bernardino laundryman, was walking arm-in-arm with a friend when Yo Hing's henchman, Lay Yee, approached them and fired his pistol. The bullet missed Wong Hing but struck the other man in the hand. Lay Yee was held to answer before the grand jury.<sup>151</sup> Two days later, Yo Hing attacked and closed the laundry of Sam Gut Gee, another See Yup member.<sup>152</sup>

These events in the early part of March 1871 were soon overshadowed by another daring escapade involving a Chinese woman. This time, however, the woman was not a prostitute, and the method of securing her possession was not a false charge of larceny. On March 3, 1871, Lee Yong, a cook in a local household and a member of Yo Hing's Hong Chow Company, quietly obtained a marriage certificate to wed Yut Ho.<sup>153</sup> The beautiful woman was already married to Hing Sing, an older, wealthy member of the See Yup Company. Four days later, Hing Sing was away from his home in Calle de los Negros when Lee Yong, accompanied by three colleagues, arrived in a carriage. He boldly entered Hing Sing's house and carried off Yut Ho. Once Hing Sing's friends realized what had happened, they chased the carriage all the way to justice of the peace John Trafford's office. Lee Yong banged on the door, and he and Yut Ho were admitted to be married. Afterward, the couple escaped through a back exit and fled in the carriage.<sup>154</sup>

Outraged, Hing Sing filed suit in county court the same afternoon, alleging that his wife had been illegally detained under a forced marriage. He filed a separate petition before the justice of the peace against Yo Hing and six other men, charging them with abducting his wife and, by threats and intimidation, forcing her to marry Lee Yong against her will. When Yut Ho was brought before the county court, Judge Ygnacio Sepulveda ordered that she be restored to her original husband, Hing Sing. A fight over Yut Ho erupted in the courtroom and spilled out into the street. The Hong Chow abductors managed to seize the woman once more, but lawmen pursued them and brought her back.<sup>155</sup>

That night, however, Yut Ho's new husband obtained another writ of habeas corpus. Law officers found the woman "secreted in one of the dens of Negro Alley" and brought her before district judge Murray Morrison. According to See Yup members, Hing Sing and his friends "were kept out of the Court room by some officers, and prevented from speaking to the Judge." Nor was Hing Sing's lawyer present at the time. In a surprising reversal, Judge Morrison released Yut Ho to the custody of her abductor, Lee Yong. The judge instructed police officers to escort the couple and protect them from a group of angry Chinese, "who followed the carriage through the streets as long as they could keep up with it."<sup>156</sup>

The local newspapers delighted in portraying the whole affair as a romantic caper, creating a fanciful tale in which Yut Ho "had wearied of being an old man's darling" and willingly escaped with the cavalier Lee Yong.<sup>157</sup> Something much more suspicious had occurred, however. Since 1852, when Los Angeles County first started keeping marriage records, only two Chinese couples had wed within the American legal system.<sup>158</sup> Things changed markedly in 1871. Yut Ho and Lee Yong were the first of five Chinese couples who would marry before a justice of the peace in less than a year.<sup>159</sup> Their union marked the beginning of a period in which forced marriage supplanted bogus charges of theft as the primary means of procuring Asian women from members of competing *huiguan* in Los Angeles. The *Los Angeles News* observed, "The Chinese have found that by going through the form of marriage as required by the law of the country, they can defy their rivals."<sup>160</sup>

The Chinese statements to the press soon shed more light on Yut Ho's situation. Sing Lee and six other members of his See Yup Company were the first to tell their side of the story. Claiming to represent the

"respectable Chinese residents of this city," they asked the public to "fix the responsibility upon the guilty parties, and not hold all of us accountable for the villainy of a few." The See Yup leaders described Lee Yong not as a dashing lover but as one of Yo Hing's "tools." The abduction, they alleged, occurred with the assistance of "three officers." They further asserted that Yut Ho, "against her will, and without knowing what was going on, was put through the forms of the marriage ceremony." At no time "was the woman herself asked to say with whom she wished to go." They claimed that their real adversary was not Lee Yong but Yo Hing, whose "villainous features have appeared at every trial, behind the counsel of the nominal party," and who "perverted the machinery of the law" under the names of "his various tools and creatures."<sup>161</sup>

Yo Hing did not suffer these insults in silence. Five days later, he responded with a public letter of his own. Rather than denying the charges that Sing Lee had leveled against him or offering an alternative version of the facts, Yo Hing referred vaguely to "evil disposed persons" who made "false accusations to ruin my good name, and despoil me by harassing law suits of the savings of years of honest industry." Most of his letter consisted of a self-serving testament to his "peaceable, quiet and humble way." "Since I have been here," he wrote, "my business has been principally with the American portion of the population, and to them do I refer for a refutation of the charges made through your columns." He named prominent residents with whom he had been associated: lawyer Andrew J. King, former mayor John G. Nichols, educator William McKee, and the officers of the U.S. Internal Revenue Service.<sup>162</sup>

However, the series of vengeful shenanigans that Hong Chow members had initiated two months earlier belied both Yo Hing's sanctimonious testimonial and the Los Angeles newsmen's far-fetched accounts of a scandalous romance. It appears that Yut Ho's kidnapping was the crowning act of retaliation by Yo Hing in connection with the San Bernardino affair. A news article identified her aggrieved husband, Hing Sing, as a suspected informer in Sing Ye's case.<sup>163</sup> The See Yup people claimed that Yo Hing ordered the abduction because he was "filled with baffled rage" that his men's suit against Choo Chee three days beforehand had failed.<sup>164</sup> What remains unknown is whether Yo Hing and the Hong Chow Company intended to hold Yut Ho for ransom, force her into prostitution, sell her, or help Lee Yong keep her as a stolen bride. Regardless,

it appears that Yut Ho was not a willing participant in a love triangle but a pawn in the protracted fight between the *huiguan*.

After Judge Morrison released Yut Ho to the custody of the Hong Chow men on March 7, 1871, she disappeared from Los Angeles' recorded history. The fact that the See Yup Company made no further attempts to recapture her suggests that she may have been removed from town. Her case made no news for several months, except for one minor incident in which two Chinese men obtained a certified copy of her American marriage certificate. The *Los Angeles News* speculated that the document was "doubtless intended to act as a legal bill of sale in some contemplated transfer."<sup>165</sup> Indeed, Yo Hing may have planned to sell Yut Ho and apply the proceeds toward his company's costs in defending the accused torturers of Sing Ye. Or perhaps the two men who obtained the certificate were friends of her husband, Hing Sing, who was preparing to attack the legality of the marriage. Whatever the case, the war that Yo Hing had launched in Los Angeles was far from finished.

#### THE RACE RIOT AND MASSACRE OF 1871

Although Chinatown was relatively quiet during the summer of 1871, trouble between the *huiguan* resumed in October. A Los Angeles merchant reported that the Chinese had purchased between forty and fifty pistols from his store.<sup>166</sup> When the steamer *California* arrived from San Francisco, the passengers who turned up in Los Angeles included several Chinese tong fighters sent for the express purpose of settling the score against Yo Hing and the Hong Chow Company. One of them, Ah Choy, may have been Yut Ho's brother, according to some American accounts.<sup>167</sup> Representatives of the Nin Yung Company, who were in a better position to know, said that she was the sister of a man named Ah Guey.<sup>168</sup> Regardless of which was correct, the element of kinship indicates that the contest over Yut Ho was not merely a matter of commerce or revenge but of honor. More significantly, the presence of a male relative and protector in California suggests that Yut Ho did not come to America as an anonymous indentured woman but as the intended bride of Hing Sing. It is also likely that the impending fight was not entirely over Yut Ho. Some of Yo Hing's adversaries may have thought he had generally gone too far in persecuting the suspected informers in the San Bernardino affair.<sup>169</sup>



Around 9:30 on the morning of October 23, 1871, Yo Hing was visiting the home of an Asian man known as Charley on the upper end of Calle de los Negros. Two San Francisco gunmen, Ah Choy and another tong fighter, Yu Tak (or Tuk), arrived and called Yo Hing into the narrow street. After a heated exchange, gunfire broke out. A bullet passed through Yo Hing's coat and shirt but missed his body. He fled the scene and swore out a warrant against his assailants. Ah Choy, in turn, filed a complaint against Yo Hing for assault with intent to murder. All the parties were released on bail.<sup>170</sup>

The following afternoon, October 24, the feudists appeared before the justice of the peace. They all pleaded not guilty, and their cases were adjourned until the next day. Still fuming, they returned to Chinatown. Tensions ran high between the Hong Chow members and their Nin Yung adversaries, who had apparently succeeded the See Yup people as the avengers of Yut Ho after Sing Lee left for China. Around five o'clock that afternoon, San Francisco gunman Ah Choy was eating a meal in the back part of a house on the east side of Calle de los Negros. Hearing a commotion in the street, he went to the front door. There he found a party of armed Hong Chow members, which may have included their leader, Yo Hing. One gunman raised a pistol and shot Ah Choy in the neck, mortally wounding him. Then they fled down the street.<sup>171</sup>

Police officer Jesus Bilderrain was stationed a block away at the corner of Arcadia and Main Streets. Hearing the shots, he climbed on his horse and rode to Chinatown. Some Asian informants had warned him that morning that a big fight was brewing. When he arrived, he broke up a gun battle between several Chinese in the street and placed one man under arrest. Then he noticed Ah Choy lying in the dirt, bleeding.

Officer Bilderrain followed another gunslinger into Sam Yuen's Wing Chung store, which he recalled was "plum full of Chinamen." He did not recognize any of them and thought they were from out of town. Some opened fire on him. The gunman he was chasing approached him and pointed a pistol to his chest. Bilderrain grabbed the pistol. The gunman pulled the trigger, but the hammer came down on Bilderrain's thumb, saving the policeman's life. Frantically, he tried to escape, but the front door was stuck. He ran out the back exit into the corral, where he faced more Asian gunmen. A bullet struck him in the shoulder. He dashed back into the store, tumbling over chairs. This time, he managed to get the

front door open. He staggered outside onto the gallery. Clutching a post for support, he blew his whistle to summon his fellow officers.

The tong fighters inside the Wing Chung store were still firing out the door. Neighboring shopkeepers closed their iron shutters. Special police officer Robert Hester arrived in the neighborhood and told several Chinese to surrender, but they refused and shot at him. Another Asian gunman fired at police officer Esteban Sanchez. He chased the man through a house on the west side of Calle de los Negros and into the corral behind the Coronel block. Other Chinese poured out from the rear of the adobe building and started shooting at him. He fled from the corral and ran back around front to the gallery, which was raised three or four feet above the earthen street. In the doorway of the Wing Chung store, he saw a man whom he thought was Sam Yuen, the proprietor. They fired at each other at the same time. Sanchez took cover on the gallery to the right of the doorway.

A popular rancher and former saloonkeeper named Robert Thompson ran up to Sanchez and asked him, "What is the matter?" Sanchez replied, "The Chinamen are shooting. Look out, as there are two or three there and they may shoot you." Thompson, standing to the left of the entrance of the Wing Chung store, replied, "I'll look out for that." Sanchez hurried off to load his pistol. Thompson stepped into the doorway, stuck his arm inside, and fired two random shots into Sam Yuen's store. Someone inside returned the fire. Thompson drew back, clutching his chest. He had been hit above the heart and was mortally wounded.<sup>172</sup>

Meanwhile, a large crowd of "terribly excited" and heavily armed Americans surrounded the Coronel block, drawn to Chinatown by the commotion. Any time a door opened, the Americans and the Chinese exchanged rapid gunfire. Constable Richard Kerren reportedly shot at two Asian women, Cha Cha and Fan Cho, wounding one of them.<sup>173</sup> Sheriff James F. Burns, intent on catching Thompson's killers, ordered the officers and the civilians he deputized to shoot anyone who tried to escape from the long building.<sup>174</sup> No doubt feelings ran high, as Thompson, well liked from his days as an owner of the Blue Wing Saloon, left behind a pregnant wife, Rosario, and a young daughter, Cecilia.<sup>175</sup> Nor did anyone know at the time whether policeman Jesus Bilderrain or a wounded teenage bystander, Juan José Mendibles, would survive. Hysterical rumors that Chinese gunmen "were killing the white men by whole-

sale in Negro Alley" also contributed to the Americans' agitation.<sup>176</sup> The law officers, failing to read the crowd's sinister mood, unwittingly helped ensure that none of the human targets trapped inside the adobe apartment block could flee to safety. At that critical juncture, they seemed much more concerned with arresting the tong gunfighters than protecting the innocent Asian tenants.

Once the crowd learned of Thompson's death, they were determined to get their hands on the terrified Chinese huddled inside. They cut holes in the brea roof of the Coronel block and tried unsuccessfully to shoot them out, burn them out, and flush them out with a fire hose. Around 8:45 that night, they finally battered down a door in the building, and "a storming party" rushed in. Joseph Mesmer, only fifteen at the time, was astonished to see that "from a state of complete tranquility and repose, a mob of men, in a few minutes, can be transformed into a mob of wild beasts who will stop at nothing." He also pointed out, "In those days all Chinese males wore queues . . . [s]o the capture of [the Chinese] was easy."<sup>177</sup>

The horrors that occurred during the following two hours have been recounted in detail elsewhere and will only be summarized here.<sup>178</sup> The mob, roughly estimated to have numbered at least 500, dragged Asian men and boys through the streets of Los Angeles and beat them, kicked them, stabbed them, shot them, and hanged them. They made no attempt to distinguish between the tong killers and ordinary Chinese civilians. As one young Asian man later told a reporter: "When Melican man gettee mad, he damn fool; he killee good Chinaman allee same bad Chinaman!"<sup>179</sup> One victim had arrived from China only a week earlier, and two were recent transplants from San Francisco. A young Chinese man of about eighteen, on his way to be hanged, responded to cries for his blood by saying, "Me no fraid, me good, no hurt any man."<sup>180</sup>

The excessive brutality of the killings went well beyond mere vengeance. One of the innocent victims was Gene Tong, a popular physician in his early thirties. Dragged from his bed, he clasped his wife and begged for their lives before they were yanked apart. Dr. Tong, "an inoffensive person" who "attended strictly to his own business," was "well educated" and spoke "cultured English," according to Joseph Mesmer, a witness to his hanging. He remembered that "the mob took a special delight in pulling him up and then letting him down, bumping his head forcibly each time against the cross-beam, the blow each time resound-



BODIES OF CHINESE VICTIMS IN THE JAIL YARD, OCTOBER 25, 1871  
Virtually everyone in the Asian community was directly affected, as one out of every ten Chinese had been murdered in the violence. *Courtesy of Security Pacific Collection/Los Angeles Public Library.*

ing like the breaking of a watermelon. They did this in seeking to learn the whereabouts of his reputed wealth.”<sup>181</sup> Another victim on the gallows, Ah Loo, managed to get his hands on the rope above his head and stave off strangulation. For nearly five minutes, two of the lynchers struck his hands with clubs and pistols. Once they had broken practically every bone in his hands and beaten the flesh to a bloody pulp, he dropped into the noose. The rioters then “blazed away at him, perforating his head with bullets.”<sup>182</sup> Other Americans started “stamping on the heads” of the Asians lying on the ground.<sup>183</sup>

The frenzied rioters cried for more Chinese, using a clothesline when they ran out of hanging ropes. One of the killers was a boy no older than ten, whose “childish voice sounded strange . . . as he called aloud for more victims.”<sup>184</sup> As the Chinese were hauled away to be lynched, American looters poured into the Asian stores and homes, shouting, “Help your-



selves, boys." Fong Yuen Sing, the bookkeeper for the Wing Chung store, later testified that the mob took \$3,000 in gold and silver coin from a trunk and destroyed or stole about \$3,500 worth of merchandise.<sup>185</sup> The looters also robbed the pockets of the dead Chinese dangling from the improvised gallows.

While the massacre may be viewed as an instance of retaliatory mob justice that veered horribly out of control, it is also important to remember that the crowd took fiendish pleasure in killing the Chinese. Most of the lynchers were jocular rather than enraged while they carried out the grisly murders. A delighted hangman, "dancing a quick step" on a balcony, called out, "Bring me more Chinamen, boys, patronize the home trade."<sup>186</sup> A bystander jeeringly removed his hat when one victim was hanged and intoned, "Here's another soul saved."<sup>187</sup> William Widney reported that one group "seemed to be amusing themselves" by jerking a victim's head against the beam of a gate.<sup>188</sup> When national guardsman John M. Baldwin rebuked the crowd in Spanish, a hardware dealer named John D. Hicks mockingly misinterpreted his remarks in English.<sup>189</sup> An intoxicated man named P. S. De Orney thrust a severed Chinese queue in the face of wagon-maker John Goller at Robert Mulloy's saloon and reportedly said, "If you don't believe this is China, smell it."<sup>190</sup> At Christopher Higby's saloon late that night, rioter A. R. Johnston joked that "some of the long-tails" had "gone up."<sup>191</sup>

The next morning, seventeen mangled Chinese bodies lay in two rows in the jail yard, some with ropes still attached to their necks. According to one journalist, "Their countenances were ghastly and distorted, many of them besmeared with blood, and pierced with bullets."<sup>192</sup> An eighteenth victim, the first man hanged, had been buried the night before.<sup>193</sup> Distraught Chinese poured into the white-fenced jail yard and searched for missing friends and relatives. Virtually everyone in the Asian community was directly affected, as one out of every ten Chinese had been murdered.

After the coroner's jury had examined the bodies, the Chinese placed them in rough redwood coffins, which they took to the city cemetery for burial. Mourners built fires at the foot of the graves and burned Joss sticks as they knelt and wept. Oddly, the Chinese "altogether abandoned" the body of one victim, refusing to offer the customary tribute after burial.<sup>194</sup> Perhaps they held him partly accountable for what had happened.

According to policeman Emil Harris, only one of the eighteen lynched Asians, believed to have been a brother of Sing Lee, was guilty of having taken part in the gunfight that precipitated the riot.<sup>195</sup>

A journalist who visited the Coronel block reported a horrifying scene: "Clothes, Joss sticks, candles, broken chairs and large quantities of sugar were strewn in every direction. . . . Blood was smeared in all directions on the walls and boxes, and in and under the beds were pools of clotted gore." The table in the Nin Yung Company's dining room was still set for six and covered with "a variety of Chinese delicacies that we are not familiar with." At Dr. Tong's house, "Human gore could be traced in all directions."<sup>196</sup> Landlord Antonio Coronel tried to recover \$5,000 from the city for damages to his adobe building, prompting one citizen to suggest that the Los Angeles common council should sue him for \$100,000 instead for "perpetrating a nuisance" and a "disgrace to the city."<sup>197</sup> Subsequently, Coronel was indeed cited with maintaining a public nuisance.<sup>198</sup>

#### AFTERMATH

As Los Angeles reeled from the bad press it was getting across the nation, efforts were underway to determine who was responsible for the tragedy. Less than a week after the massacre, the coroner's jury concluded that "people of all nationalities as they live in Los Angeles" participated in the riot.<sup>199</sup> Most journalists maintained that the mob consisted of "the dregs of society."<sup>200</sup> Indeed, some of the men indicted for murder were known for previous acts of hooliganism or violence. One of them, Adolfo Celis, had nearly been lynched the year before when he pursued and killed a man who had stolen two shirts from him.<sup>201</sup> Reporters described another rioter, L. F. Crenshaw, as a young man with a "reputation of the worst sort" who associated with people "of the lowest character" and whose "favorite resort was the rendezvous of lewd women, pickpockets and cut-throats."<sup>202</sup> Other men indicted in connection with the riot had faced charges for assault and battery,<sup>203</sup> malicious mischief,<sup>204</sup> or theft.<sup>205</sup> Historian William Locklear observed that the extensive looting of the Chinese businesses and homes, together with the location of the riot in the center of a slum, lent credence to the theory of substantial underclass involvement. Locklear also characterized the mob's actions as "the dying breath of a period of general lawlessness."<sup>206</sup>

At the same time, many of the indicted rioters were solid, middle-class businessmen, artisans, and regular employees who should have felt no threat from migrant workers. As eyewitness Joseph Mesmer recalled, “[S]ome of our own ‘average citizens’ took part, mingling with the scum and riffraff from the camps and stables.”<sup>207</sup> One of them, J. C. Cox, had even served as a special policeman.<sup>208</sup> The rioters included a shoemaker, a butcher, a plasterer, a farmer, a shoeblack, a beekeeper, a carpenter, and a teamster. None of these men had any labor-related reason to murder peaceable Asian launderers and domestics—much less a beloved Chinese physician.

Perhaps it is most realistic, if most troubling, to view the Chinese massacre neither as an expression of economic frustration nor as an inexplicable aberration but as the expected result of a collapse of the communal forces that usually operate to keep the sinister side of human nature in check. The motivation initially put forth by the press, “animosity of race and a desire for plunder,” may be as good an explanation as any. The *Los Angeles News* suggested that the crowd attacked the Chinese in part because they thought they could get away with it: “The lawless elements of society have been educated to believe that murder could be indulged in with impunity, provided it was committed by a mob instead of a single individual.”<sup>209</sup> Moreover, a notoriously racist California statute of 1863 prohibited any Chinese from giving evidence in court either in favor of or against any white person.<sup>210</sup> Paul De Falla, in his seminal article analyzing the massacre, speculated that the Los Angeles police force “had felt during the night of the riot that it would have been legally useless to have made any arrests because the victims of the mob were Chinese and therefore, clearly outside the protection of statutory law. . . . No testimony available from [Chinese] witnesses or victims, no arrests.”<sup>211</sup>

Through the years, some accounts of the massacre have leveled vague accusations that the town’s “leading citizens” also bore responsibility, despite Hubert Howe Bancroft’s contention that the Asians were “protected by the better sentiment of the intelligent and right-minded.”<sup>212</sup> Journalist Charles Nordhoff also observed, “The respectable classes, though too often silent, are utterly opposed to the cry against the Chinese.”<sup>213</sup> For the most part, the events of October 24, 1871, bore out Nordhoff’s observation about California’s elite—both their disapproval of

Chinese persecution and their inaction in the face of it. Mayor José Cristobal Aguilar rode his horse through Calle de los Negros in response to reports of a disturbance there but made no effort to calm the crowd.<sup>214</sup> Well-known merchant Harris Newmark "hurried to the scene" of the massacre but did not attempt to intervene.<sup>215</sup> Some "respectable citizens" witnessing the mayhem merely clucked that "it was a shame, but there were no means to check the mob."<sup>216</sup> To be fair, a number of American citizens, most of them lawyers and store owners, did risk their lives in an attempt to stop the killings and escort the Chinese to safety. Furthermore, one newspaper observed that the murders "commenced at an hour when business men, professional men and all the better classes of our community had retired to their homes."<sup>217</sup>

Nonetheless, the town's elites did not entirely escape the condemnation of their contemporaries. Reporters for the *Los Angeles Star* claimed that they "saw some of our best people with indignation flashing in their eyes. It is possible that some of them, under this feeling, may have lent encouragement to some sort of demonstration against the Chinese."<sup>218</sup> Councilman George F. Fall threw a brick and a chair at Yo Hing and reportedly cried out, "Hang them!"<sup>219</sup> Witnesses testified that a clothing retailer named Cohen remarked that he was "in favor of hanging every G—d— one" of the Chinese.<sup>220</sup> Horace Bell later alleged that prominent merchants "dealt out rope to be used for hanging Chinamen" and that many "persons of position and influence . . . boasted of their guilt while the affair was yet hot." He also thought it was unjust that the subsequent indictments for murder "were against poor Mexicans without influence, and a lone Irishman, a shoemaker."<sup>221</sup> That shoemaker, A. R. Johnston, also complained at his sentencing "that the people were guilty, but that the poor alone suffered."<sup>222</sup> District judge Robert M. Widney, in his jury instructions at the rioters' trials, cautioned the jurors not to be influenced by the fact that "many citizens or even a majority of the most respectable citizens approved of the acts of the rioters."<sup>223</sup>

Attempts to bring the mob killers to justice were frustrating. The grand jury returned thirty-seven indictments in connection with the riot, including twenty-five for murder of the Chinese victims. (It also indicted eight Asians for the deaths of Ah Choy and Robert Thompson, two of whom were tried and acquitted.)<sup>224</sup> Only ten rioters were ever brought to trial. Eight were eventually convicted on a reduced charge of manslaughter.

ter and sentenced to terms ranging from two to six years.<sup>225</sup> The following year, their convictions were overturned on the most maddening of legal technicalities: the original indictments against them failed to specify that anyone had actually been murdered.<sup>226</sup>

Despite this unpalatable end to the riot trials, the Chinese made some impressive legal headway in the aftermath of the tumultuous events of 1871. Ah Mouie, wife of San Bernardino laundryman Wong Hing, became the first Asian woman known to have filed a civil action in a Los Angeles court. She sued sheriff James F. Burns and jailor Frank Carpenter, seeking damages for unlawful conversion of her property. As it turned out, Yo Hing had made a critical error when taking his revenge on the couple. His henchman, Lay Yee, had obtained a writ of attachment naming only Wong Hing. However, the evidence showed that \$686 of the couple's confiscated \$694 actually belonged to the wife, and the writ did not apply to her separate property. Ah Mouie won her case; the California Supreme Court affirmed the decision on appeal. However, the court denied Ah Mouie's \$1,000 claim for mental suffering caused by having to "inhale the filthy vapors" of the county jail during the half-day she was imprisoned there.<sup>227</sup>

Dr. Tong's widow, Tong You, also sought redress in the American judicial system. She filed a criminal complaint charging Yo Hing with "inciting and participating in a mob or riot" resulting in her husband's murder.<sup>228</sup> (Dr. Tong was not a member of either of the two feuding *huiguan* but of the minority Chin Woa Company.<sup>229</sup> His wife's suit suggests that the neutral Chinese of Los Angeles thought Yo Hing's people were primarily to blame for the events leading to the riot.)

When two Asian men were tried in district court for the death of Ah Choy, their lawyer objected to the testimony of a Chinese witness for the prosecution, Ah Ling, on the grounds that "he does not believe in the Christian religion; does not understand the nature of an oath or the responsibilities thereunder according to our laws, customs, and civilization; he does not believe in God, nor in the form of any religion prescribed and practiced by civilized nations, and that he is not sworn according to the forms practiced by heathen or uncivilized nations." The objection was overruled, and "Chinese testimony was introduced, and for the first time allowed in evidence in this Court."<sup>230</sup> Indeed, the Chinese thought that "swearing by a book" was "nonsense," according to Li Gui,



a visiting official from China.<sup>231</sup> Consequently, district judge Robert M. Widney approved a special oath in 1872 by which Chinese witnesses could swear on the severed head of a chicken rather than a Bible.<sup>232</sup>

Sam Yuen's Wing Chung firm brought a civil suit against the City of Los Angeles, claiming that the law officers' failure to stop the looters resulted in nearly \$7,000 worth of damage to the business. When the complainants attempted to introduce the testimony of bookkeeper Fong Yuen Sing, the defense cited the infamous state law prohibiting a Chinese witness from giving evidence relating to a white person. The Wing Chung partners argued, both logically and successfully, that the City of Los Angeles was not a white person. Judge Widney agreed and allowed the testimony.<sup>233</sup> (The Wing Chung firm nonetheless lost its case, because the evidence indicated that Sam Yuen had "instigated and participated in the riot."<sup>234</sup>)

In early November 1871, many of the Chinese who had fled because of the riot returned to Los Angeles, where by mid-month they had reoccupied those compartments of the ravaged Coronel block that were habitable.<sup>235</sup> By the following February, the Chinese community had largely rebounded. They celebrated their New Year "with much noise, firing off crackers and bombs." However, the celebrations were "not as ostentatious as formerly," since the Chinese population had "diminished since the riot."<sup>236</sup>

The massacre of 1871 did nothing to quell the rash of disputed marriages and the abduction of Asian women in Los Angeles. Only three weeks after the tragedy, Ah Sum, a cook at the jail, and Hon Que, his bride, were married over the objections of another Chinese man, who told the justice of the peace "something relating to himself and the woman in Sacramento."<sup>237</sup> The following February, Sing Hee, a woman of the See Yup Company who escaped from "a life of shame" in "a den of infamy," caused a great uproar when she married Hong Chow member One Za before a justice of the peace "to get the full protection of the law."<sup>238</sup> An abduction was foiled in April 1872 when two men tried to kidnap the wife whom Charley Shew had recently purchased.<sup>239</sup> A cook named Ah Sam was murdered by a storekeeper and his assistant when he tried to steal a Chinese woman.<sup>240</sup>

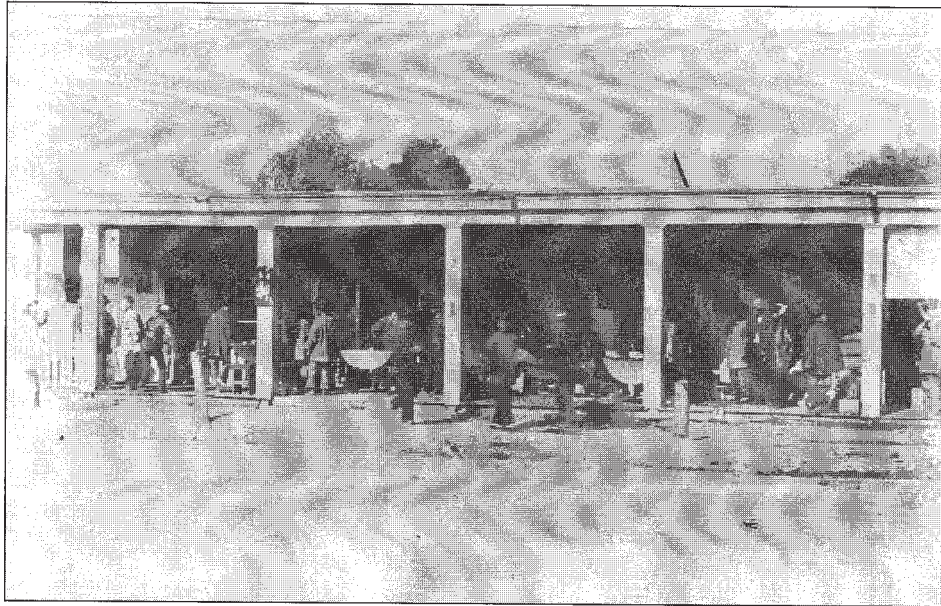
One member of the Los Angeles judiciary finally got tired of hearing cases that involved the sale and exploitation of women. In October 1872,

Ah Chu sought to recover on a contract by which he was to receive \$300 for locating and recovering a missing woman who was the “servant” of Fong Chong. Ah Chu found the woman in a laundry and bought her from the owner for \$125, then delivered her to Fong Chong. Justice of the Peace William H. Gray, “an able and an honest man” who was popular among the Chinese for having hidden several of them in his cellar on the night of the massacre,<sup>241</sup> exploded:

On inquiry as to the present whereabouts of the woman, witness coolly stated that Fong Chong had sold her to a man in Bakersfield! Plaintiff having closed his testimony, defendants [sic] attorney moved that this cause be dismissed on the ground that the law does not recognize slavery and that the contract between the parties is not only null and void but criminal. This motion was argued at some length by respective counsel, and was afterward sustained by the court, and in dismissing the cause, regrets its want of power to punish both parties as they deserve, for the violation of the Laws of the Land, and afterward, for contempt of this Court in attempting to make it a party to the transaction. But, having no such power, under the complaint, this cause is hereby dismissed at the cost of Plaintiff.<sup>242</sup>

Meanwhile, the Los Angeles press, barely chastened by the memory of the massacre, soon resumed its usual practice of lambasting and ridiculing the Chinese. Four months after the riot, the *Los Angeles Star* once again blamed the “barbarous” Chinese for the “stain upon the name of our fair city,” accusing them of “butchering one another as well as those who venture to interpose to preserve the peace” without mentioning the role of the American lynchers or looters.<sup>243</sup> The *Los Angeles News* even had the gracelessness to complain that the Chinese, while visiting the burial sites of the lynching victims, left refuse from firecrackers that “intrudes upon the graves of the whites.” In the editors’ opinion, “This desecration of the resting place of our dead, for the sake of complying with the heathenish custom of a barbarous race, ought not to be tolerated.”<sup>244</sup> When the Chinese conducted religious observances for the riot victims in August 1872, the local newspapers complained about the “confusion contributed by these barbarians,” who performed “the most hideous music ever heard.” American bystanders laughed at the ceremonies.<sup>245</sup>

Perhaps the most sobering aspect of the Chinese massacre of 1871 is how little Los Angeles changed as a result and how quickly its citizens forgot. The event is said to have marked the end of mob justice in the town, although that development was more likely the product of a gradual



CHINATOWN (MARCHESSAULT AND LOS ANGELES STREETS),  
CA. 1880, A FEW YEARS AFTER THE MASSACRE

Perhaps the most sobering aspect of the Chinese massacre of 1871 is how little Los Angeles changed as a result and how quickly its citizens forgot.

decrease in violent crime than collective shame over the lynching of innocent Asians.<sup>246</sup> The *Los Angeles Star* accurately predicted that “no evil of consequence” would befall Los Angeles as a result of the riot, which would “be forgotten in a brief time.”<sup>247</sup> By early 1872, life as usual had resumed in both Chinese and American Los Angeles. Local newspapers continued to disparage the Chinese. The Chinese continued to abduct and sell women. American law officers continued to facilitate these transactions.

In a more logical world, the tragedy of 1871 would have ushered in a new era of racial tolerance in Los Angeles. Instead, anti-Asian sentiment increased during the decade that followed. In 1876, Los Angeles organized an Anti-Coolie Club, whose membership included some of the town’s most prominent citizens.<sup>248</sup> Austrian archduke Ludwig Louis Salvator noted that by then, the Chinese were “not popular” in Los Angeles. He further reported, “American boys frequently hold up to scorn and ridicule these younger sons of China. At times, even the adults indulge

in fist-fights which are brought about, as a general thing, by prolonged mistreatment.”<sup>249</sup> An increase in the local business license tax in 1879 was aimed directly at Chinese launderers and vegetable peddlers.<sup>250</sup> In 1882, many Angelenos rallied in favor of the Chinese Exclusion Act.<sup>251</sup>

If no one learned anything from the massacre, is there any point in studying it, or even remembering it? That question calls to my mind an aphorism coined by a friend who grew up in an Orthodox Jewish family to summarize the events commemorated by several Jewish holidays: “They tried to kill us. They failed. Let’s eat.” Likewise, it may be that the most valuable conclusion to draw from the Chinese massacre is the most obvious one: the Asian community survived by persevering in the face of persecution. Affixing a tidy economic or historical explanation to an outbreak of irrational racial violence would wrongly distance it from us: *you or I would never do that, and besides, conditions were different back then*. The day after the riot, one journalist wrote that the people of Los Angeles, “sickened with last night’s horrors, are determined that no stigma of like character shall ever again rest upon us.”<sup>252</sup> It would, of course, in 1943, 1965, and 1992. Remembering the inhuman acts that our fellow human beings inflicted on those eighteen murdered Chinese in Los Angeles will not prevent the recurrence of racial or ethnic hatred. But forgetting what happened that night in Chinatown would further diminish all of us, for the very act of reflective remembrance is one of the more encouraging aspects of our humanity.

## NOTES

\* The author thanks Hynda Rudd, Paul Spitzzeri, Eugene Moy, J. W. Wong, Angi Ma Wong, Peter Blodgett, Dixie Dillon, Bill Frank, John Mack Faragher, John Cahoon, and the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California for their help in locating sources for this article.

<sup>1</sup> *New York Herald*, Oct. 28, 1871.

<sup>2</sup> William R. Locklear, “The Celestials and the Angels: A Study of the Anti-Chinese Movement in Los Angeles to 1882,” *The Historical Society of Southern California Quarterly*, 42 (Mar. 1960): 240, 244.

<sup>3</sup> Charles Nordhoff, “California for Health, Pleasure and Residence,” in *Nordhoff’s West Coast: California, Oregon and Hawaii* (1874; reprint, London: KPI Ltd., 1987), 90; Otis Gibson, *The Chinese in America* (Cincinnati: Hitchcock & Walden, 1877), 106; Hamilton Holt, ed., *The Life Stories of Undistinguished Americans as Told by Themselves* (1906; reprint, New York: Routledge, 1990), 184.

<sup>4</sup> *Los Angeles Star*, Jan. 24, 1857.

<sup>5</sup> *Los Angeles Star*, Apr. 27, 1861.

<sup>6</sup> *Los Angeles Star*, July 13, 1861; Harris Newmark, *Sixty Years in Southern California, 1853–1913* (1916; 4th ed., Los Angeles: Dawson’s Book Shop, 1984), 298.

<sup>7</sup> *Los Angeles Star*, Mar. 17, 1860, and Apr. 27, 1861.

<sup>8</sup> Shih-shan Henry Tsai, *The Chinese Experience in America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 33; Roger Daniels, *Asian America: Chinese and Japanese in the United States since 1850* (Seattle: University of



- Washington Press, 1988), 16; Peter Kwong and Dušanka Mišćević, *Chinese America: The Untold Story of America's Oldest New Community* (New York: The New Press, 2005), 42.
- <sup>9</sup> Kwong and Mišćević, *Chinese America*, 58–60.
- <sup>10</sup> Charles Morley, trans., "The Chinese in California, As Reported by Henryk Sienkiewicz," *California Historical Society Quarterly*, 34 (Dec. 1955): 312–13.
- <sup>11</sup> Ludwig Louis Salvator, *Los Angeles in the Sunny Seventies: A Flower from the Golden Land* (Marguerite Eyer Wilbur, trans.; Los Angeles: Bruce McCallister and Jake Zeitlin, 1929), 42.
- <sup>12</sup> Thomas W. Chinn, "New Chapters in Chinese-American History," *California History*, 57 (Spring 1978): 7.
- <sup>13</sup> Eng Ying Gong and Bruce Grant, *Tong War!* (New York: Nicholas L. Brown, 1930), 26.
- <sup>14</sup> *People v. Ah Shaw, Con Wan et al.*, Feb. 5, 1872, Minute Book, 17th Judicial District Court, Los Angeles Area Court Records, Huntington Library (hereafter "LAACR").
- <sup>15</sup> *Los Angeles Star*, Oct. 26, 1871.
- <sup>16</sup> Kwong and Mišćević, *Chinese America*, 11–12.
- <sup>17</sup> Joseph Mesmer, "Chinese in Los Angeles," Joseph Mesmer Papers, Department of Special Collections, University of California, Los Angeles (hereafter "Mesmer Papers"); Newmark, *Sixty Years in Southern California*, 123.
- <sup>18</sup> Sucheng Chan, *Asian Americans: An Interpretive History* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1991), 104; George Anthony Pepper, *If They Don't Bring Their Women Here: Chinese Female Immigration before Exclusion* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 5.
- <sup>19</sup> Judy Yung, Gordon H. Chang, and Him Mark Lai, eds., *Chinese American Voices: From the Gold Rush to the Present* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 20–21.
- <sup>20</sup> Thomas Allen McDannold, "Development of the Los Angeles Chinatown: 1850–1970" (M.A. diss., California State University, Northridge, 1973), 31.
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- <sup>22</sup> Newmark, *Sixty Years in Southern California*, 30–31; Morrow Mayo, *Los Angeles* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1933), 38; Locklear, "The Celestials and the Angels," 249.
- <sup>23</sup> Carey McWilliams, *Southern California Country: An Island on the Land* (1946; reprint, Freeport, N.Y.: Books for Libraries Press, 1970), 85–86.
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- <sup>25</sup> *Los Angeles News*, July 1, 1870.
- <sup>26</sup> *Los Angeles News*, Aug. 24, 1870; *Los Angeles Star*, Nov. 4, 1870.
- <sup>27</sup> *New York Times*, Nov. 10, 1871.
- <sup>28</sup> Morley, trans., "The Chinese in California," 307.
- <sup>29</sup> *People v. Ah Lim [John Doe, Chinaman]*, Case No. 81, Nov. 12, 1870, Los Angeles County Justices Court, LAACR.
- <sup>30</sup> *Los Angeles News*, Dec. 25, 1870.
- <sup>31</sup> *Los Angeles News*, Oct. 11, 1871.
- <sup>32</sup> *Los Angeles News*, June 3, 1871, and June 4, 1871.
- <sup>33</sup> Him Mark Lai, "Historical Development of the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association/Huiguan System," *Chinese America: History and Perspectives* [1] (1987): 13–51; Kwong and Mišćević, *Chinese America*, 83–85; Gunther Barth, *Bitter Strength: A History of the Chinese in the United States, 1850–1870* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964), 77–81; Elmer Clarence Sandmeyer, *The Anti-Chinese Movement in California* (1939; reprint, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1973), 23, 29.
- <sup>34</sup> *Los Angeles News*, Nov. 23, 1870, and July 19, 1871; *Los Angeles Star*, Nov. 25, 1870.
- <sup>35</sup> *People v. Lee Fat, John Doe and Richard Roe*, Minutes, Justice of the Peace (Gray), Nov. 25, 1870, LAACR; *Los Angeles Star*, Nov. 23, 1870, and Nov. 25, 1870; *Los Angeles News*, Nov. 23, 1870.
- <sup>36</sup> *People v. James Ganahan*, Minutes, Justice of the Peace (Gray), Nov. 7, 1870, LAACR.
- <sup>37</sup> Chan, *Asian Americans*, 67; Benson Tong, *Unsubmissive Women: Chinese Prostitutes in Nineteenth-Century San Francisco* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994), 9–10; Kwong and Mišćević, *Chinese America*, 85; Barth, *Bitter Strength*, 101–102.
- <sup>38</sup> Mary Roberts Coolidge, *Chinese Immigration* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1909), 408.
- <sup>39</sup> Holt, *The Life Stories of Undistinguished Americans*, 182.



- <sup>40</sup> *Daily Evening Bulletin* [San Francisco], Apr. 27, 1864.
- <sup>41</sup> *Daily Evening Bulletin* [San Francisco], May 18, 1868.
- <sup>42</sup> Yung, Chang, and Lai, eds., *Chinese American Voices*, 21.
- <sup>43</sup> Gibson, *The Chinese in America*, 143.
- <sup>44</sup> Tsai, *The Chinese Experience in America*, 54; Daniels, *Asian America*, 26; Chan, *Asian Americans*, 67; Kwong and Mišćević, *Chinese America*, 86.
- <sup>45</sup> Lai, "Historical Development of the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association/Huiguan System," 32.
- <sup>46</sup> *Daily Evening Bulletin* [San Francisco], Feb. 25, 1869.
- <sup>47</sup> *People v. Sing Lee, Sam Yung, Sou Go and Yo Hing*, Minutes, Justice of the Peace (Shore et al.), Sept. 8, 1866, LAACR.
- <sup>48</sup> *Los Angeles News*, Feb. 23, 1872.
- <sup>49</sup> *Daily Evening Bulletin* [San Francisco], July 20, 1869.
- <sup>50</sup> Lucie Cheng and Suellen Cheng, "Chinese Women of Los Angeles, A Social Historical Survey," in *Linking Our Lives: Chinese American Women of Los Angeles* (Los Angeles: Chinese Historical Society of Southern California, 1984), 7.
- <sup>51</sup> Cheng and Cheng, "Chinese Women of Los Angeles," 4-5; Huping Ling, *Surviving on the Gold Mountain: A History of Chinese American Women and Their Lives* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998), 53; Pfeffer, *If They Don't Bring Their Women Here*, 88-91; Kwong and Mišćević, *Chinese America*, 98; Judy Yung, *Chinese Women of America: A Pictorial History* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1986), 15; Huping Ling, "Chinese Merchant Wives in the United States, 1840-1945," in *Origins and Destinations: 41 Essays on Chinese America* (Los Angeles: Chinese Historical Society of Southern California, 1994), 79.
- <sup>52</sup> United States Ninth Census (1870), Los Angeles Township and City, Los Angeles County, California; *Wing Chung Co. v. Los Angeles City*, Case No. 1941, June 22, 1872, 17th Judicial District Court, Civil Cases, LAACR; *Los Angeles Star*, Mar. 10, 1871, and Oct. 9, 1871; *Los Angeles News*, Feb. 18, 1872, Feb. 27, 1872, and Apr. 7, 1872.
- <sup>53</sup> *People v. Ah Son, Wah Hing and Ah Shoah*, Case No. 136, Feb. 8, 1873, Los Angeles County Justices Court, LAACR.
- <sup>54</sup> Morley, trans., "The Chinese in California," 307.
- <sup>55</sup> Cheng and Cheng, "Chinese Women of Los Angeles," 7; Pfeffer, *If They Don't Bring Their Women Here*, 91.
- <sup>56</sup> Case Nos. 610, 611, 614, 615, 616 and 646, Nov. 8, 1862, Court of Sessions, Los Angeles Criminal Cases, LAACR; Minutes, Justice of the Peace (Shore et al.), Mar. 12, 1864, and Sept. 8, 1866, LAACR.
- <sup>57</sup> Lucie Cheng Hirata, "Free, Indentured, Enslaved: Chinese Prostitutes in Nineteenth-Century America," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 5 (Autumn 1979): 4-9; Lucie Cheng Hirata, "Chinese Immigrant Women in Nineteenth-Century California," in Carol Ruth Berkin and Mary Beth Norton, eds., *Women of America: A History* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1979), 229-30.
- <sup>58</sup> Albert S. Evans, *À la California: Sketches of Life in the Golden State* (San Francisco: A. L. Bancroft & Co., 1873), 284-85.
- <sup>59</sup> Gibson, *The Chinese in America*, 134.
- <sup>60</sup> Cheng and Cheng, "Chinese Women of Los Angeles," 7; Ling, *Surviving on the Gold Mountain*, 49, 61; Judy Yung, *Unbound Feet: A Social History of Chinese Women in San Francisco* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 28; Ling, "Chinese Merchant Wives in the United States," 83.
- <sup>61</sup> Hirata, "Free, Indentured, Enslaved," 19.
- <sup>62</sup> *Los Angeles News*, Dec. 24, 1870.
- <sup>63</sup> *Los Angeles Star*, Nov. 1, 1870; *Los Angeles News*, Oct. 28, 1870, and Dec. 24, 1870.
- <sup>64</sup> *Los Angeles Star*, Aug. 26, 1870; *Los Angeles News*, Aug. 26, 1870.
- <sup>65</sup> *People v. Sing Yu*, Minutes, Justice of the Peace (Gray), Aug. 25, 1870, LAACR.
- <sup>66</sup> *Sing Lee v. Ah Chu, Ah Gung and Juan Espinosa*, Minutes, Justice of the Peace (Gray), Aug. 27, 1870, LAACR.
- <sup>67</sup> *Los Angeles News*, Oct. 28, 1870.
- <sup>68</sup> *Los Angeles News*, Oct. 16, 1870, and Nov. 1, 1870; *Los Angeles Star*, Nov. 1, 1870.
- <sup>69</sup> *Los Angeles News*, Nov. 1, 1870.
- <sup>70</sup> *Los Angeles Tri-Weekly News*, May 30, 1865, and June 13, 1865.
- <sup>71</sup> *People v. Joseph F. Dye*, Case No. 1006, Feb. 23, 1871, 17th Judicial District Court, Criminal Cases, LAACR; *Los Angeles Star*, Nov. 1, 1870, and Nov. 2, 1870; *Los Angeles News*, Nov. 1, 1870, and Nov. 2, 1870; New-

mark, *Sixty Years in Southern California*, 418. Dye was cleared of manslaughter charges. The witnesses agreed that Warren had fired first.

<sup>72</sup> *Los Angeles News*, Nov. 6, 1870.

<sup>73</sup> *Los Angeles Star*, Dec. 23, 1870, Dec. 24, 1870, and Oct. 27, 1871 (testimony of George M. Fall); *Los Angeles News*, Dec. 23, 1870, and Dec. 24, 1870. Three of the men charged with rioting were identified as Lang Yu, Ah Hing, and Ah Yew. *Los Angeles News*, Dec. 24, 1870.

<sup>74</sup> *People v. Lee Woo*, Minutes, Justice of the Peace (Gray), Dec. 8, 1870, LAACR; *Los Angeles News*, Dec. 11, 1870.

<sup>75</sup> *Los Angeles News*, Dec. 24, 1870.

<sup>76</sup> *Id.*

<sup>77</sup> Hirata, "Free, Indentured, Enslaved," 19–20; Tong, *Unsubmissive Women*, 151.

<sup>78</sup> Yung, Chang, and Lai, eds., *Chinese American Voices*, 21.

<sup>79</sup> *Los Angeles News*, Mar. 9, 1871.

<sup>80</sup> *Los Angeles News*, Dec. 24, 1870, Mar. 10, 1871, and May 6, 1871.

<sup>81</sup> *Los Angeles News*, Mar. 30, 1872.

<sup>82</sup> Evans, *À la California*, 246.

<sup>83</sup> Gibson, *The Chinese in America*, 77.

<sup>84</sup> *Los Angeles Semi-Weekly News*, Feb. 16, 1866.

<sup>85</sup> Hubert Howe Bancroft, *History of California*, in *The Works of Hubert Howe Bancroft* (39 vols.; San Francisco: The History Co., 1890), XXIV, 336.

<sup>86</sup> J. M. Guinn, *A History of California and an Extended History of Its Southern Coast Counties* (2 vols.; Los Angeles: Historic Record Co., 1907), I, 232.

<sup>87</sup> R. David Arkush and Leo O. Lee, trans. and eds., *Land Without Ghosts: Chinese Impressions of America from the Mid-Nineteenth Century to the Present* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 32, 38.

<sup>88</sup> Holt, *The Life Stories of Undistinguished Americans*, 183–84.

<sup>89</sup> Kwong, and Mišćević, *Chinese America*, 15–16.

<sup>90</sup> *Los Angeles Star*, Oct. 9, 1872.

<sup>91</sup> Nordhoff, "California for Health, Pleasure and Residence," 90.

<sup>92</sup> *Id.* at 85.

<sup>93</sup> Robert W. Blew, "Vigilantism in Los Angeles, 1835–1874," *Southern California Quarterly*, 54 (Spring 1972): 12; Frances Lomas Feldman, "Human Services in the City of Angels," *Southern California Quarterly*, 85 (Summer 2003): 152; J. J. Warner, Benjamin Hayes, and Joseph P. Widney, *An Historical Sketch of Los Angeles County, California* (1876; reprint, Los Angeles: O. W. Smith, 1936), 124.

<sup>94</sup> Eric Monkkonen, "Western Homicide: The Case of Los Angeles, 1830–1870," *Pacific Historical Review*, 74 (Nov. 2005): 609; Eric H. Monkkonen, "Homicide in Los Angeles, 1827–2002," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 36 (Autumn 2005): 172.

<sup>95</sup> Kevin Starr, *California: A History* (New York: The Modern Library, 2005), 84–85.

<sup>96</sup> Willard, *The Herald's History of Los Angeles City*, 280.

<sup>97</sup> Locklear, "The Celestials and the Angels," 241.

<sup>98</sup> *Los Angeles Star*, Mar. 6, 1864.

<sup>99</sup> *Los Angeles News*, Jan. 4, 1869, Jan. 22, 1869, Mar. 19, 1869, Apr. 1, 1869, Apr. 13, 1869, Apr. 28, 1869, May 13, 1869, May 21, 1869, May 28, 1869, June 23, 1869, July 21, 1869, July 27, 1869, Sept. 9, 1869, May 2, 1870, June 11, 1870, July 9, 1870, Nov. 17, 1870, and Dec. 24, 1870; Newmark, *Sixty Years in Southern California*, 380.

<sup>100</sup> *Los Angeles News*, Oct. 12, 1869.

<sup>101</sup> *Los Angeles News*, May 21, 1869.

<sup>102</sup> *Los Angeles News*, Sept. 15, 1869.

<sup>103</sup> Remi Nadeau, *City-Makers: The Story of Southern California's First Boom, 1868–76* (Los Angeles: Trans-Anglo Books, 1965), 35–40; Locklear, "The Celestials and the Angels," 244.

<sup>104</sup> Nordhoff, "California for Health, Pleasure and Residence," 90; Gibson, *The Chinese in America*, 107.

<sup>105</sup> Sandmeyer, *The Anti-Chinese Movement in California*, 45–47.

<sup>106</sup> *Los Angeles News*, Nov. 17, 1870, and Dec. 24, 1870.

<sup>107</sup> *The Evening Express* [Los Angeles], Sept. 5, 1871.

- <sup>108</sup> *Los Angeles News*, Sept. 24, 1870.
- <sup>109</sup> *Los Angeles Star*, July 26, 1871.
- <sup>110</sup> *Los Angeles Star*, May 28, 1871; *Los Angeles News*, May 28, 1871.
- <sup>111</sup> *Los Angeles News*, Oct. 22, 1870.
- <sup>112</sup> *Los Angeles Star*, June 17, 1871.
- <sup>113</sup> *Los Angeles News*, July 27, 1870.
- <sup>114</sup> *Los Angeles News*, June 16, 1871.
- <sup>115</sup> *Los Angeles News*, July 20, 1871.
- <sup>116</sup> *Los Angeles Star*, Apr. 27, 1871.
- <sup>117</sup> *Los Angeles News*, Aug. 3, 1871.
- <sup>118</sup> *Los Angeles News*, Oct. 8, 1871.
- <sup>119</sup> Willard, *The Herald's History of Los Angeles City*, 286.
- <sup>120</sup> *Los Angeles News*, June 22, 1871.
- <sup>121</sup> *Los Angeles News*, July 20, 1871.
- <sup>122</sup> *People v. John Doe, a Chinaman*, Minutes, Justice of the Peace (Gray), Oct. 19, 1871, LAACR; *Los Angeles News*, Oct. 18, 1871; *Los Angeles Star*, Oct. 21, 1871.
- <sup>123</sup> *Los Angeles News*, Dec. 8, 1870.
- <sup>124</sup> *Los Angeles News*, Feb. 12, 1870.
- <sup>125</sup> *Los Angeles News*, Feb. 9, 1871.
- <sup>126</sup> *Los Angeles News*, Mar. 3, 1870.
- <sup>127</sup> *Los Angeles News*, Apr. 23, 1870.
- <sup>128</sup> *People v. Ah Soi, Ah Han, Ah Yee, Yo Hing, Ah Yung and Sam Yung*, Minutes, Justice of the Peace (Still/Gray), May 4, 1868, LAACR.
- <sup>129</sup> *People v. Sam Yung*, Minutes, Justice of the Peace (Still/Gray), May 7, 1868, LAACR.
- <sup>130</sup> *Los Angeles Star*, Oct. 30, 1871 (Yo Hing's statement).
- <sup>131</sup> Lai, "Historical Development of the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association/Huiguan System," 17.
- <sup>132</sup> *Alta California* [San Francisco], Mar. 11, 1871.
- <sup>133</sup> *Los Angeles Star*, Mar. 10, 1871.
- <sup>134</sup> Emma Woo Louie, *Chinese American Names: Tradition and Transition* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co., Inc., 1998), 126.
- <sup>135</sup> J. A. Graves, *My Seventy Years in California, 1857-1927* (Los Angeles: The Times-Mirror Press, 1927), 275.
- <sup>136</sup> *Los Angeles Star*, Mar. 15, 1871, and Oct. 30, 1871.
- <sup>137</sup> Horace Bell, *On the Old West Coast* (ed. Lanier Bartlett; New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1930), 170, 177.
- <sup>138</sup> C. P. Dorland, "Chinese Massacre at Los Angeles in 1871," *Annual Publication of the Historical Society of Southern California*, 3 (1894): 22.
- <sup>139</sup> *People v. Wong Chu Shut*, testimony, Sept. 27, 1877, 17th Judicial District Court, Richard Courtney Collection, Huntington Library; *Los Angeles Star*, May 15, 1877, and May 19, 1877; Graves, *My Seventy Years in California*, 275-79; Bell, *On the Old West Coast*, 177.
- <sup>140</sup> *Los Angeles News*, May 6, 1871.
- <sup>141</sup> The alliance of these two *huiguan* was suggested by a news article indicating that a single prostitute was held jointly by the "managers of the Sam Up [See Yup] and Ling Yung [Nin Yung] companies." *Los Angeles News*, Feb. 25, 1872. Policeman George Gard, who regularly patrolled Chinatown, suggested that the See Yup Company had merged with the Nin Yung Company when he testified: "They used to call [the Nin Yung Company] the Sing Lee Company, but Sing Lee has gone to China." *Wing Chung Co. v. Los Angeles City*, Case No. 1941, June 22, 1872, 17th Judicial District Court, Civil Cases, LAACR. However, another news account clarified that the See Yup Company continued to exist separately from the Nin Yung Company: "We are assured . . . that the late disturbance was not caused by the old feud existing between the Wing Choung [Nin Yung] and the Yo Hing [Hong Chow] Companies . . . and that the See Yup Company . . . had nothing whatever to do with the riot of the 24th of October." *Los Angeles Star*, Feb. 24, 1872. The following year, the See Yup Company was again mentioned in the local press as a distinct entity. *Los Angeles Star*, Sept. 6, 1873.
- <sup>142</sup> *Wing Chung Co. v. Los Angeles City*, Case No. 1941, June 22, 1872, 17th Judicial District Court, Civil Cases, LAACR.

- <sup>143</sup> *Los Angeles Star*, Oct. 30, 1871. Although this story came from Yo Hing's statement, Sam Yuen's people, in their response, did not deny that the events had occurred. *Los Angeles Star*, Oct. 31, 1871.
- <sup>144</sup> *San Bernardino Guardian*, Nov. 5, 1870, and Nov. 26, 1870; *Los Angeles News*, Nov. 10, 1870; *Los Angeles Star*, Oct. 31, 1871 (identifying the woman as Sing Ye). The convictions were overturned a month later on the ground that the defendants had been found guilty of only a simple assault, which was a misdemeanor. *Ex parte Ah Cha*, 40 California Reports 426 (1870). One newspaper quipped that the four released prisoners "roasted for two hours one of their countrywomen, for which crime, it appears, there is no punishment by law." *Los Angeles Star*, Dec. 24, 1870.
- <sup>145</sup> *San Bernardino Guardian*, Nov. 26, 1870.
- <sup>146</sup> *Alta California* [San Francisco], Nov. 12, 1870; *Daily Evening Bulletin* [San Francisco], Nov. 12, 1870.
- <sup>147</sup> *New York Times*, Nov. 13, 1870.
- <sup>148</sup> *Los Angeles Star*, Nov. 10, 1870, Nov. 30, 1870, and Mar. 10, 1871; *Los Angeles News*, Nov. 10, 1870, Nov. 13, 1870, Nov. 29, 1870, and Nov. 30, 1870.
- <sup>149</sup> *Lay Yee v. Wong Hing*, Case No. 1765, Jan. 23, 1871, 17th Judicial District Court, Civil Cases, LAACR; *Los Angeles Star*, Jan. 24, 1871, Jan. 26, 1871, and Mar. 10, 1871; *Alta California* [San Francisco], Mar. 11, 1871.
- <sup>150</sup> *People v. Choo Chee and Gi On*, Minutes, Justice of the Peace (Gray), Mar. 4, 1871, LAACR; *Los Angeles News*, Mar. 5, 1871.
- <sup>151</sup> *People v. Lae Yu*, Minutes, Justice of the Peace (Gray), Mar. 9, 1871, LAACR; *Los Angeles Star*, Mar. 11, 1871; *Alta California* [San Francisco], Mar. 11, 1871.
- <sup>152</sup> *Yo Hing v. Sam Gut Gee*, Minutes, Justice of the Peace (Gray), Mar. 11, 1871, LAACR; *Los Angeles News*, Mar. 12, 1871.
- <sup>153</sup> Lee Yong (groom) and Yut Ho (bride), Mar. 3, 1871, Marriage Records, Los Angeles County Registrar's Office. A later source identified the woman as Ya Hit, a name that has been repeated in several secondary accounts of the Chinese massacre. Dorland, "Chinese Massacre at Los Angeles in 1871," 22.
- <sup>154</sup> *Los Angeles Star*, Mar. 8, 1871.
- <sup>155</sup> *In the Matter of Ute How*, Minutes, County Court, Mar. 7, 1871, LAACR; *People v. Yo Hing et al.*, Mar. 8, 1871, Minutes, Justice of the Peace (Gray), LAACR; *Los Angeles Star*, Mar. 8, 1871, and Mar. 9, 1871; *Los Angeles News*, Mar. 9, 1871.
- <sup>156</sup> *Los Angeles Star*, Mar. 8, 1871, and Mar. 10, 1871.
- <sup>157</sup> *Los Angeles News*, Mar. 8, 1871.
- <sup>158</sup> These were John Tambolin (groom) and Ah Qu (bride), Nov. 19, 1862, and Oh Moy (groom) and Ah Foy (bride), May 7, 1868, Marriage Records, Los Angeles County Registrar's Office.
- <sup>159</sup> In addition to Lee Yong and Yut Ho, they were: Ah Chun (groom) and Sy Ku (bride), Oct. 3, 1871; Ah Kit (groom) and Sung Kum (bride), Oct. 20, 1871; Ah Sum (groom) and Hon Que (bride), Nov. 15, 1871; and One Za (groom) and Sing Hee (bride), Feb. 22, 1872, Marriage Records, Los Angeles County Registrar's Office.
- <sup>160</sup> *Los Angeles News*, Feb. 23, 1872.
- <sup>161</sup> *Los Angeles Star*, Mar. 10, 1871.
- <sup>162</sup> *Los Angeles Star*, Mar. 15, 1871.
- <sup>163</sup> *Alta California* [San Francisco], Mar. 11, 1871.
- <sup>164</sup> *Los Angeles Star*, Mar. 10, 1871.
- <sup>165</sup> *Los Angeles News*, Apr. 21, 1871.
- <sup>166</sup> *Wing Chung Co. v. Los Angeles City*, Case No. 1941, June 22, 1872, 17th Judicial District Court, LAACR (testimony of Jesus Bilderrain).
- <sup>167</sup> *Los Angeles Star*, Oct. 24, 1871; Dorland, "Chinese Massacre at Los Angeles in 1871," 23.
- <sup>168</sup> *Los Angeles Star*, Oct. 31, 1871.
- <sup>169</sup> When Yo Hing indicated that the riot had its origin in the dispute over a shop leased from Prudent Beaudry, Sam Yuen countered that the trouble was "not about rented premises alone." *Los Angeles Star*, Oct. 30, 1871, and Oct. 31, 1871.
- <sup>170</sup> *People v. Ah Choy and four other Chinamen*, and *People v. Yo Hing*, Minutes, Justice of the Peace (Gray), Oct. 23, 1871, LAACR; *Los Angeles Star*, Oct. 24, 1871; *Los Angeles News*, Oct. 24, 1871.
- <sup>171</sup> *Los Angeles Star*, Oct. 31, 1871. Ah Choy said that Yo Hing was with the party that shot him. However, Yo Hing claimed that he was at Alexander Rendon's barber shop on Main Street at the time of the shooting.

and Rendon corroborated that story. *Los Angeles Star*, Oct. 30, 1871, and Nov. 1, 1871. Yo Hing's adversaries swore out a complaint charging him and others with the murder of Ah Choy. *People v. Yo Hing et al.*, Minutes, Justice of the Peace (Gray), Oct. 27, 1871, LAACR. The following week, Yo Hing was arrested at San Juan Capistrano while trying to flee to Arizona. *Alta California* [San Francisco], Nov. 4, 1871; *Los Angeles Star*, Nov. 6, 1871. However, he was released a month later, and nothing came of the charge against him. *Alta California* [San Francisco], Dec. 6, 1871.

<sup>172</sup> The foregoing account of the gunfight resulting in the shootings of Bilderrain and Thompson is drawn solely from eyewitness testimony, which is mostly consistent but differs in some particulars: *Wing Chung Co. v. Los Angeles City*, Case No. 1941, June 22, 1872, 17th Judicial District Court, Civil Cases, LAACR (testimony of Jesus Bilderrain, Esteban Sanchez, Sam Yuen, Ventura Lopez and Jose Sanchez); *Los Angeles News*, Oct. 26, 1871 (testimony of Jesus Bilderrain and Francis Baker), Oct. 27, 1871 (testimony of Robert Hester), Feb. 15, 1872 (testimony of Jesus Bilderrain and Esteban Sanchez), Mar. 31, 1872 (testimony of Adolfo Celis), Apr. 2, 1872 (testimony of Estevan Sanchez and Jesus Bilderrain), Apr. 3, 1872 (testimony of Jesus Bilderrain and Pedro Badillo). Although many accounts of the episode state that Bilderrain called on Thompson for help, Bilderrain did not testify to that effect. Rather, it appears that Thompson entered the fray voluntarily. Horace Bell, in his highly questionable rendition of the incident, claimed that Thompson went to the Wing Chung store for the purpose of stealing the proprietors' money. Bell, *On the Old West Coast*, 171, 176. Bell was not an eyewitness to these events, and his version lacks credibility. Two Los Angeles dailies praised Thompson as "a well known and respected citizen" and "a generous hearted, liberal man." *Los Angeles News*, Oct. 25, 1871; *Los Angeles Star*, Oct. 26, 1871. Nonetheless, at least two subsequent accounts of the massacre accepted Bell's uncorroborated tale. Norton B. Stern and William M. Kramer, "Emil Harris: Los Angeles Jewish Police Chief," *The Historical Society of Southern California Quarterly*, 55 (Summer 1973): 164; William B. Secrest, *Lawmen & Desperadoes: A Compendium of Noted, Early California Peace Officers, Badmen and Outlaws* (Spokane: The Arthur H. Clark Co., 1994), 162-63 (referring to Thompson as a "thug").

<sup>173</sup> *Los Angeles News*, Oct. 28, 1871 (testimony of Benjamin McLaughlin); *People v. Richard Kerren*, Case No. 1101, Jan. 5, 1872, Los Angeles County Court, Criminal Cases, LAACR. Kerren was charged with assault with a deadly weapon but found not guilty.

<sup>174</sup> *Los Angeles News*, Oct. 29, 1871 (testimony of James F. Burns).

<sup>175</sup> *In the Matter of the Estate of Robert Thompson*, Minutes, Los Angeles County Probate Court, Nov. 20, 1871, LAACR.

<sup>176</sup> *Los Angeles Star*, Oct. 27, 1871 (testimony of N. L. King).

<sup>177</sup> Mesmer, "Massacre of Chinese," Mesmer Papers.

<sup>178</sup> The most comprehensive account of the riot and massacre is Paul M. De Falla, "Lantern in the Western Sky," *The Historical Society of Southern California Quarterly*, 42 (Mar. 1960): 57-88 (Part I) and 42 (June 1960): 161-85 (Part II). Newspapers covered the events of October 24 extensively, though not always accurately. The *Los Angeles Star* and *Los Angeles News*, in their editions of October 26 through 29, 1871, published the testimony of numerous eyewitnesses taken at the coroner's inquest. These depositions must be read carefully, however, as many of those who testified were suspected rioters. Eyewitness recollections recorded many years after the fact include: R. M. Widney, "Chinese Riot and Massacre in Los Angeles," *The Grizzly Bear*, Jan. 1921, 3-4, 22 (also published in *Los Angeles Examiner*, Sept. 7, 1924); James Franklin Burns, "James Franklin Burns, Pioneer," *The Historical Society of Southern California Quarterly*, 32 (Mar. 1950): 61-66; and Mesmer, "Massacre of Chinamen in 1871" and "Massacre of Chinese," Mesmer Papers. The massacre is discussed in the context of Los Angeles vigilantism in Paul R. Spitzzeri, "Judge Lynch in Session: Popular Justice in Los Angeles, 1850-1875," *Southern California Quarterly*, 87 (Summer 2005), 105-11.

<sup>179</sup> *Los Angeles News*, Oct. 26, 1871.

<sup>180</sup> *Los Angeles Star*, Oct. 26, 1871.

<sup>181</sup> Mesmer, "Massacre of Chinese," Mesmer Papers.

<sup>182</sup> Newspaper clipping dated Nov. 4, 1871, Robert Maclay Widney, "Scrapbook and Folder of Miscellaneous Items," 11-12, Huntington Library.

<sup>183</sup> *Los Angeles News*, Oct. 29, 1871 (testimony of H. Schlotterbeck).

<sup>184</sup> *New York Times*, Nov. 10, 1871.



- <sup>185</sup> *People v. Sam Yuen et al.*, Case No. 1164, Nov. 19, 1872, 17th Judicial District Court, Criminal Cases, LAACR.
- <sup>186</sup> *Los Angeles Star*, Oct. 27, 1871 (testimony of Adolph Schwob).
- <sup>187</sup> *Id.* (testimony of S. A. Butler).
- <sup>188</sup> *Los Angeles News*, Oct. 27, 1871 (testimony of W. W. Widney).
- <sup>189</sup> *Id.* (testimony of J. M. Baldwin).
- <sup>190</sup> *Los Angeles News*, Oct. 29, 1871 (testimony of John Goller, P. S. De Orney and Robert Mulloy).
- <sup>191</sup> *Los Angeles Star*, Oct. 27, 1871 (testimony of J. W. Brooks).
- <sup>192</sup> *Los Angeles News*, Oct. 26, 1871.
- <sup>193</sup> Paul De Falla identified a nineteenth victim, Fun Yu, who died of a gunshot wound on October 27. De Falla, "Lantern in the Western Sky," Part II, 162. However, a news account described this man as "[o]ne of the Chinamen who came down from San Francisco, as is alleged, for the purpose of killing Yo Hing." *Los Angeles Daily News*, Oct. 28, 1871. Thus, it appears that "Fun Yu" was actually Ah Choy, who was shot by his Chinese enemies prior to the riot.
- <sup>194</sup> *Los Angeles News*, Oct. 31, 1871.
- <sup>195</sup> *Los Angeles Star*, Oct. 26, 1871 (testimony of Emil Harris). Yo Hing said, "Only three or four bad Chinamen were killed. The rest were good people." *Los Angeles Star*, Oct. 30, 1871.
- <sup>196</sup> *Los Angeles Star*, Oct. 27, 1871.
- <sup>197</sup> Common Council Records, Nov. 16, 1871, Los Angeles City Archives; *Los Angeles Star*, Nov. 18, 1871, and Nov. 20, 1871. The Los Angeles common council found that Coronel was entitled to damages and agreed to submit the determination of the amount to binding arbitration. Common Council Records, Nov. 23, 1871, and Dec. 7, 1871, Los Angeles City Archives.
- <sup>198</sup> *People v. A. F. Coronel*, Case No. 1168, Dec. 10, 1872, Los Angeles County Court, Criminal Cases, LAACR.
- <sup>199</sup> *Los Angeles News*, Oct. 29, 1871. No African Americans or Native Americans are known to have taken part in the riot. Rather, the members of the mob seem to have all been native-born whites and Californios along with European and Mexican immigrants.
- <sup>200</sup> *San Francisco Chronicle*, Oct. 26, 1871; *New York Herald*, Oct. 26, 1871.
- <sup>201</sup> *People v. Adolfo Celis*, Case No. 946, May 11, 1870, 17th Judicial District Court, Criminal Cases, LAACR; *Los Angeles Daily News*, Mar. 13, 1870.
- <sup>202</sup> *Alta California* [San Francisco], Feb. 19, 1872; *Los Angeles News*, Feb. 20, 1872.
- <sup>203</sup> *People v. Andres Saur* [sic; Soeur], Minutes, Justice of the Peace (Still/Gray), Nov. 13, 1867, LAACR; *People v. Patrick McDonald*, Minutes, Justice of the Peace (Gray), June 26, 1871, LAACR.
- <sup>204</sup> *People v. Jesus Martinez*, Minutes, Justice of the Peace (Still/Gray), Jan. 6, 1868, LAACR.
- <sup>205</sup> *Los Angeles Star*, May 18, 1871 (Edmund Crawford); *People v. Lewis Mendel*, Case No. 1048, Sept. 23, 1871, Criminal Cases, LAACR; *Los Angeles Star*, Oct. 6, 1871 (Andres Soeur); *People v. Esteben Antonio Alvarado*, Minutes, Justice of the Peace (Gray), Feb. 12, 1872, LAACR.
- <sup>206</sup> Locklear, "The Celestials and the Angels," 244-45.
- <sup>207</sup> Mesmer, "Massacre of Chinese," Mesmer Papers.
- <sup>208</sup> Common Council Records, Mar. 5, 1866, Los Angeles City Archives.
- <sup>209</sup> *Los Angeles News*, Oct. 27, 1871.
- <sup>210</sup> Act of Mar. 16, 1863, ch. 68, § 1, [1863] Cal. Stats. 60; J. A. C. Grant, "Testimonial Exclusion Because of Race: A Chapter in the History of Intolerance in California," *UCLA Law Review*, 17 (Nov. 1969): 197.
- <sup>211</sup> De Falla, "Lantern in the Western Sky," Part II, 170-71.
- <sup>212</sup> Bancroft, *History of California*, XXIV, 342.
- <sup>213</sup> Nordhoff, "California for Health, Pleasure and Residence," 139.
- <sup>214</sup> *Los Angeles Star*, Oct. 28, 1871 (testimony of M. Madigan).
- <sup>215</sup> Newmark, *Sixty Years in Southern California*, 434.
- <sup>216</sup> *Los Angeles Star*, Oct. 26, 1871 (testimony of Henry T. Hazard).
- <sup>217</sup> *Alta California* [San Francisco], Oct. 26, 1871.
- <sup>218</sup> *Los Angeles Star*, Oct. 27, 1871.
- <sup>219</sup> *Los Angeles Star*, Oct. 27, 1871 (testimony of George Fall); *Los Angeles News*, Oct. 29, 1871 (testimony of Frederick Weaver).
- <sup>220</sup> *Los Angeles News*, Oct. 27, 1871 (testimony of A. J. Bowman and W. W. Widney).
- <sup>221</sup> Bell, *On the Old West Coast*, 172, 175.

- <sup>222</sup> *Alta California* [San Francisco], Mar. 31, 1872.
- <sup>223</sup> *People v. L. M. Mendel et al.*, Case No. 1084, Dec. 2, 1871, 17th Judicial District Court, Criminal Cases, LAACR.
- <sup>224</sup> *Los Angeles News*, Dec. 3, 1871. The two Chinese who were tried were Quong Wong (also known as Con Wan) and Ah Ying. Other Chinese known to have been indicted were Ah Sing (originally indicted as Yo Duc) and See Saow (originally indicted as Ah Shaw). Minutes, 17th Judicial District Court, Feb. 5, 1872, and Feb. 14, 1872, LAACR; *Los Angeles News*, Feb. 15, 1872; *Alta California* [San Francisco], Feb. 16, 1872.
- <sup>225</sup> Minutes, 17th Judicial District Court, Feb. 17, 1872, Mar. 27, 1872, and Mar. 30, 1872, LAACR; *Alta California* [San Francisco], Feb. 19, 1872, and Mar. 31, 1872; *Los Angeles Star*, Mar. 28, 1872. L. F. Crenshaw, Louis Mendel, A. R. Johnston, Charles Austin, Patrick M. McDonald, Jesus Martinez, Refugio Botello, and Estevan A. Alvarado were convicted, while Dan W. Moody and Adolfo Celis were acquitted. Indicted rioters who were not brought to trial included J. Clement Cox, Edmund Crawford, Ramon Dominguez, J. G. Scott, "Richard Roe" [actual name unknown] Doland, Victor Kelley, Ambrosio Ruiz, Samuel C. Carson, Andres Soeur, A. L. King, Francisco Peña, and "John Doe" [actual name unknown] Keller. The surviving indictments are found in Case Nos. 1067 through 1084 (murder) and Case No. 1115 (rioting), 17th Judicial District Court, Criminal Cases, LAACR.
- <sup>226</sup> *People v. Crenshaw*, 46 California Reports 66 (1873). This decision resulted in the release of seven convicted men from the San Quentin penitentiary on June 10, 1873. The eighth, Refugio Botello, apparently escaped punishment altogether, as he had been released on bail after sentencing pending resolution of his appeal. *Alta California* [San Francisco], Mar. 28, 1872.
- <sup>227</sup> *Ah Mouie v. James F. Burns and Frank J. Carpenter*, Case No. 1814, May 18, 1871, 17th Judicial District Court, Civil Cases, LAACR. Ah Mouie's claim for payment went full circle, finally landing on the Hong Chow Company's doorstep. Burns and Carpenter did not have enough property to satisfy the judgment in her favor, so Ah Mouie had to recover her money from those two officials' sureties. *Ah Mouie v. Samuel B. Caswell and Phineas Banning*, Case No. 2219, Apr. 25, 1873, 17th Judicial District Court, Civil Cases, LAACR. Having paid the judgment amount, the sureties sued the three people who had originally executed a bond indemnifying the sheriff for any damages he might sustain by reason of the writ of attachment. One of them was Yo Hing's henchman, Lay Yee. *Samuel B. Caswell and Phineas Banning v. John G. Nichols, John Wilson and Lay Yee*, Case No. 2271, July 30, 1873, 17th Judicial District Court, Civil Cases, LAACR. Meanwhile, Ah Mouie neglected to pay her attorneys, who had to sue to recover their fees. *Thom & Ross v. Wong Hing and Ah Mouie*, Minutes, Justice of the Peace (Trafford), July 11, 1873, LAACR.
- <sup>228</sup> *People v. Yo Hing*, Nov. 2, 1871, Minutes, Justice of the Peace (Gray), LAACR; *Los Angeles Star*, Nov. 4, 1871. Tong You's case was unsuccessful; Yo Hing was charged but later released. *Alta California* [San Francisco], Dec. 6, 1871.
- <sup>229</sup> *Los Angeles Star*, Oct. 26, 1871; *Los Angeles News*, Oct. 26, 1871.
- <sup>230</sup> *Los Angeles News*, Feb. 15, 1872; *Alta California* [San Francisco], Feb. 16, 1872.
- <sup>231</sup> Arkush and Lee, trans. and eds., *Land Without Ghosts*, 48.
- <sup>232</sup> Widney, "Scrapbook and Folder of Miscellaneous Items," 12; Boyle Workman, *The City That Grew* (Los Angeles: The Southland Publishing Co., 1936), 148. A Los Angeles justice of the peace had authorized this form of attestation for Chinese litigants eight years earlier. *Los Angeles Star*, Apr. 9, 1864.
- <sup>233</sup> *Wing Chung Co. v. Los Angeles City*, Minutes, 17th Judicial District Court, June 3, 1872, LAACR.
- <sup>234</sup> *Wing Chung v. Los Angeles*, 47 California Reports 531 (1874).
- <sup>235</sup> *Alta California* [San Francisco], Nov. 10, 1871; *Los Angeles Star*, Nov. 20, 1871.
- <sup>236</sup> *Alta California* [San Francisco], Feb. 10, 1872.
- <sup>237</sup> Ah Sum (groom) and Hon Que (bride), Nov. 15, 1871, Marriage Records, Los Angeles County Registrar's Office; *Los Angeles Star*, Nov. 16, 1871; *Los Angeles News*, Nov. 16, 1871.
- <sup>238</sup> One Za (groom) and Sing Hee (bride), Feb. 22, 1872, Marriage Records, Los Angeles County Registrar's Office; *Los Angeles News*, Feb. 23, 1872, and Feb. 25, 1872; *Los Angeles Star*, Feb. 24, 1872, and Feb. 27, 1872.
- <sup>239</sup> *People v. Ah Yan and Ah Yu*, Minutes, Justice of the Peace (Gray), Apr. 6, 1872, LAACR; *Los Angeles News*, Apr. 7, 1872.
- <sup>240</sup> *People v. Tung Cy and Ah Kong*, Case No. 160, Sept. 3, 1873, Los Angeles County Justices Court, LAACR; *Los Angeles Star*, Sept. 4, 1873.

<sup>241</sup> Bell, *On the Old West Coast*, 176, 323.

<sup>242</sup> *Ah Chu v. Fong Chong*, Minutes, Minutes, Justice of the Peace (Gray), Oct. 9, 1872, LAACR; Horace Bell, *On the Old West Coast*, 170.

<sup>243</sup> *Los Angeles Star*, Feb. 27, 1872.

<sup>244</sup> *Los Angeles News*, Apr. 30, 1872.

<sup>245</sup> *Los Angeles Star*, Aug. 6, 1872; *Los Angeles News*, Aug. 8, 1872.

<sup>246</sup> Blew, "Vigilantism in Los Angeles," 25. One more lynching took place in Los Angeles County in 1874. Spitzzeri, "Judge Lynch in Session," 111-13.

<sup>247</sup> *Los Angeles Star*, Oct. 30, 1871.

<sup>248</sup> Locklear, "The Celestials and the Angels," 245-46.

<sup>249</sup> Salvator, *Los Angeles in the Sunny Seventies*, 43.

<sup>250</sup> Locklear, "The Celestials and the Angels," 248-49.

<sup>251</sup> *Id.* at 253.

<sup>252</sup> *Alta California* [San Francisco], Oct. 26, 1871.