Bulletin FOR APRIL, 1969 VOL. IV, NO. 4
Chinese Historical Society of America

MONTHLY MEETING
APRIL 11, 1969 – 7:30 p.m.

Volunteers to help with the April 19th Seminar for educators are requested to attend for briefing on assignments and duties, etc.

Following the meeting, member Charles Chuck Chan of San Mateo, will review some recent books on the Chinese. Mr. Chan also writes book reviews for the East-West Weekly.

RAILROAD CENTENNIAL

One hundred years ago on May 10, 1869, the first transcontinental railroad in America was built. As the people throughout the nation observe the centennial of this historic event, our Society would remind its members and friends of the part that the Chinese played in making possible the joining of the Central Pacific and Union Pacific railroads on that historic date.

Oscar Lewis, in the foreword to his book, *The Big Four* (Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1938), wrote that "the building of the first transcontinental railroad profoundly influenced the social, economic, and political life of the Pacific Coast, bringing about its transition from an isolated and largely self-sustaining region to one with fortunes closely linked with those of the rest of the nation." . . . "Typical products of that period were the Central Pacific's Big Four: Huntington, Stanford, Crocker, and Hopkins—men who from places behind the counters of pioneer stores had, in far less than two decades, shouldered their way upward to places of national importance."

Locally, these men were to bring about social, economic and political changes which wrought in the area, the very essence of our west as we now know it. It would be pure conjecture to hazard a guess as to the region's social and political development had the Union Pacific managed to push its way entirely to the end of the line in Sacramento. Certainly it would be hard to conceive that the Union Pacific's eastern capital would have the same personal interest as those of the "Big Four" in developing the west.

From the railroad's completion, the Central Pacific, Southern Pacific and the "Big Four" were good friends of the Chinese community. Huntington, in 1900 said in a major speech that among the Chinese "will be found some of the best men who ever lived." Stanford provided in his will for permanent Chinese employment for many, some of whom were still working at Stanford University in the 1930's.

As we watch the approach of that centennial date, it is hard to realize that while credit for the Central Pacific's achievements is generally given to the Chinese workers whose labor made it possible, there has never been a physical token of credit placed or erected to serve as a reminder of this fact. (Nevada, during its centennial in 1964, placed two markers paying tribute to its Chinese pioneers.)

To partially rectify this situation, one in which neither local nor national agencies seem inclined to take the initiative, the Chinese Historical Society of America has decided to shoulder this responsibility.

On the morning of May 9, 1969, an historical plaque will be placed during centennial ceremonies in Sacramento, California, the starting point of the Central Pacific over a century ago. (After the ceremonies, the plaque will be stored until the completion of a new Historical Locomotive Museum in that city. The plaque will then be permanently attached to the building.)

On May 10, 1969, an identical plaque will be dedicated at Promontory Point, Utah, where the two railroads were joined. The wording on the markers will read: "To commemorate the centennial of the first transcontinental railroad in America and to pay tribute to the Chinese workers of the Central Pacific Railroad whose indomitable courage made it possible. May 10, 1869 - May 10, 1969. Plaque placed by the Chinese Historical Society of America." These words will also be translated into Chinese on the plaques.

THE CHINESE LABORERS AND THE CENTRAL PACIFIC

By George Krause

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The stern task faced by Central Pacific's Big Four in driving the nation's first transcontinental railroad over the High Sierra and across the Nevada plains and desert to join with Union Pacific at Promontory Summit, Utah, would have taken much longer were it not for the Chinese laborers who played such a significant role in building the railroad.

Charles W. Crocker – known as the organizer, construction genius and leader of men among the Central Pacific's "Big Four" – was the man responsible for recruiting the Chinese, first in California, and later in Canton province and bringing them to California.

Due to a shortage of money, Leland Stanford told the Pacific Railroad Commission in 1887, that Central Pacific was able to field only 300 workers during the extremely mild Sierra winter of 1864 compared with the 13,500 they would have on the payroll two years later.

But on January 2, the California Supreme court reaffirmed the constitutionality of the state legislature's act providing for payment by California of interest on $1.5 million in bonds for the hard-pressed Central Pacific at the rate of seven per cent. This made the bond immediately salable and gave the railroad instant financial relief from long and agonizing financial strain.

Four days later, the Sacramento "Union" carried a Central Pacific ad calling for "5,000 laborers for constant and permanent work; also experienced foremen."

Construction, long halted at Newcastle, California, speeded immediately – but apparently the need for labor continued strong, for the Shasta Courier carried this advertisement on January 2.

"The Central Pacific Railroad Company advertises for 5,000 laborers to work upon the road between Newcastle and Illinoistown (Colfax). It is the intention of the company to employ at once as many men as can be advantageously worked on the distance between these points – 23 miles. The iron for laying this additional amount of track is already in Sacramento and it is expected that the cars will run to Illinoistown by August next. The above opportunity affords a chance for those out of employment."

Base camp for Supt. J. H. Strobridge's construction crews was in Auburn. New men were hired as a result of the fresh money in the treasury and were put to work completing the unfinished grading of the 12 miles between Newcastle and Clipper Gap.

It was after passing Auburn early that year that the first Chinese were employed – apparently because Central Pacific was unable to fill its ranks.

The first indication of this appears in an April 12, 1865 letter written by Central Pacific's legal counsel – Judge E. B. Crocker – to his longtime friend Cornelius Cole, who was retiring as a California Congressman and returning to his home.

"Friend Cole," he said, ". . . . . we have now about 2,000 men at work with about 300 wagons and carts and I can assure you they are moving the earth and rock rapidly. We are now on some of the heaviest work in the mountains, but so far we have been very fortunate in meeting very little hard rock. You will be astonished when you come back and see the amount of work we have done.

"*A large part of our force are Chinese* and they prove nearly equal to white men in the amount of labor they perform, and are far more reliable. No danger of strikes among them. We are training them to all kinds of labor, blasting, driving horses, handling rock, as well as the pick and shovel. We want a body of 2,500 trained laborers and keep them steadily at work until the road is built clear across the continent, or until we meet them coming from the other side . . . ."[1] Charles Crocker, who conceived the plan of employing the Chinese, was opposed by Strobridge, who gave in only after a series of trials demonstrated the worth of the Celestial worker.

Crocker insisted that the race that built the Great Wall of China could certainly be useful in building a railroad, countering Strobridge's claim that they were "not masons."

Strobridge finally agreed to try 50 Chinese. They did so well, he agreed to 50 more – and before the road was finished, there were about 12,000 on the payroll. As the Chinese increased their numbers and their skill, the ascent of the railroad toward the Summit also increased in speed, despite ever-greater difficulties.[2]

Shovel and pick and black powder were the only aids to grading – and horsepower meant horses pulling small carts. Speedy construction under such conditions required em-

ployment of many men – and nothing was scarcer in California than labor in 1865. Such Caucasians as were not employed on ventures of their own found it more profitable to work in the mines or follow agricultural pursuits than to face the hardships of handcarving a railroad right-of-way up the steep slopes and through the granite spires of the Sierra. At the same time, there were many thousands of Chinese in California. Drawn here by gold fever, they were eager for employment.[3]

S. S. Montague, in his annual report of 1865, said "It became apparent early in the season that the amount of labor likely to be required during the summer could only be supplied by employment of the Chinese element in our population. Some distrust was at first felt regarding capacity of this class for the services required, but the experiment has proved eminently successful. They are faithful and industrious and, under proper supervision, soon become skillful in the performance of their duty. Many of them are becoming very expert in drilling, blasting and other departments of rock work."

The Chinese on the Central Pacific were divided into little groups. Each had a cook, who not only prepared their meals but was required to have a large boiler of hot water ready each night so that when the Chinese came off the road they could fill their little tubs made from powder kegs and take a hot sponge bath. This bath and change of clothes was a regular thing every night before they took their evening meal. Strobridge pronounced them "the best in the world. They learn quickly, do not fight, have no strikes that amount to anything, and are very cleanly in their habits. They will gamble, and do quarrel among themselves most noisily – but harmlessly," he noted.

Stanford, in a report to Andrew Johnson, had this to say about the Chinese on October 10, 1865:

"As a class they are quiet, peaceable, patient, industrious and economical. Ready and apt to learn all the different kinds of work required in railroad building, they soon become as efficient as white laborers. More prudent and economical, they are contented with less wages. We find them organized into societies for mutual aid and assistance. These societies can count their numbers by thousands, are conducted by shrewd, intelligent business men who promptly advise their subordinates where employment can be found on most favorable terms. No system similar to slavery, serfdom or peonage prevails among these laborers. Their wages, which are always paid in coin each month, are divided among them by their agents who attend to their business according to the labor done by each person. These agents are generally American or Chinese merchants who furnish them their supplies of food, the value of which they deduct from their monthly pay.

"We have assurance from leading Chinese merchants that, under the just and liberal policy pursued by the company, it will be able to procure during the next year not less than 15,000 laborers. With this large force the company will be able to push on the work so as not only to complete it far within the time required by the Acts of Congress but so as to meet the public impatience."

The difference in the eating and drinking habits of the Chinese and white workers building the Central Pacific was as great as their other living habits.

The Chinese menu included dried oysters, abalone and cuttlefish, dried bamboo sprouts and mushrooms, five kinds of vegetables, pork, poultry, vermicelli, rice, salted cabbage, dried seaweed, sweet rice crackers, sugar, four kinds of dried fruit, Chinese bacon, peanut oil, and tea. Seemingly, this was the forerunner of the modern American well-balanced diet.

The fare of the Caucasian laborer consisted of beef, beans, bread, butter and potatoes.

On the grade, the Caucasians relieved their thirst with water – not always the best and at times, despite all precautions, a source of illness.

The Chinese drank luke-warm tea. It stood beside the grade in 30 and 40-gallon whiskey barrels, always on tap. Several times daily, a Chinese mess attendant brought fresh tea, pouring it into the big barrel. These beverage reinforcements were carried to the work site in powder kegs suspended from each end of a bamboo pole which was balanced on a Celestial shoulder.[4]

On October 10, 1865, Governor Stanford again wrote President Andrew Johnson and Secretary of Interior James Haran:

"A call was issued for 5,000 laborers and from that day to the present, every able-bodied laborer that could be procured has been employed and kept constantly at work in the construction of the road.

"Labor is, however, scarce and dear in this state. For several months the number procured was comparatively small, but recently they have increased more rapidly, until now, 5,000 men are employed, with over 6,000 teams and the prospect is that the number of

laborers will be increased to 6,000 during this season.

"A large majority of the white laboring class on the Pacific Coast find more profitable and congenial employment in mining and agricultural pursuits, than in railroad work. The greater portion of the laborers employed by us are Chinese who constitute a large element in the population of California. Without them it would be impossible to complete the western portion of this great national enterprise within the time required by the Acts of Congress."

Governor Stanford held the Chinese workers in such high esteem that he provided in his will for the permanent employment of a large number. Some of these were still living and working lands now owned by Stanford University in the '30s.

Building the Central Pacific road over and through the granite walls of the Sierra Nevada was literally hand carving. Pick and shovel, black powder and one-horse dump carts were the only aids to grading. Chinese were lowered in baskets over cliffs 2,000 feet above the base of the American River Canyon to literally chisel a roadway through the granite reaches and occasional shale deposits for the iron rails. It is thus easy to understand why Central Pacific's Chinese became known as "Crocker's Pets."[5]

Central Pacific and its Chinese laborers met the biggest problem in the fight to cross the Sierra head-on after the line was opened to Cisco. This was the Summit Tunnels – ten of them, numbered 3 to 13 within a 20-mile stretch between Cisco, located at Mile Post 92 (from Sacramento) and Lake Ridge at Mile Post 112 just west of Cold Stream Valley on the eastern slope of the Summit.

These tunnels were bored while the mountain slopes were covered under as much as 30 feet of snow at times.

Civil Engineer John R. Gills, who worked on these tunnels, told the American Society of Civil Engineers, which recently declared the Central Pacific (not the Union Pacific) a National Civil Engineering Landmark:

"During the fall of 1866, the track reached Cisco, and as fast as the gangs of (Chinese) were released, they were hurried to the Summit to be distributed among the tunnels in its vicinity. The year before (in August, 1865) some gangs had been sent to Summit Tunnel No. 6, and commenced the cuts at its extremities; winter set in before the headings were started, and the work had to be abandoned. To avoid a repetition of such delay, the approaches to all the tunnels were covered with men (who) worked day and night in three shifts of eight hours each. Thus, time was saved, and the tunnel organization started at once. As an illustration of the hurry, I may mention walking two miles over the hills after dark and staking out the east end of Tunnel 12 by the light of a bonfire. At nine o'clock the men were at work . . . ."

Gills went on to describe the weather problem at the Summit and said that "At Tunnel 10, some 15 or 20 Chinese were killed by a slide" that winter. The year before, in the winter of 1864-65, two wagon road repairers had been buried and killed by a slide at the same location.

J. O. Wilder, a Central Pacific – Southern Pacific employe for many years, in an interview with the late Erle Heath, onetime Southern Pacific historian, said:

"The Chinese were as steady, hard-working a set of men as could be found. With the exception of a few (Caucasians) at the west end of Tunnel No. 6, the laboring force was entirely composed of (Chinese) with white foremen. A single foreman with a gang of 30 to 40 men generally constituted the force at work at each end of a tunnel; of these, 12 to 15 worked on the heading, and the rest on the bottom removing material. When a gang was small or the men needed elsewhere, the bottoms were worked with fewer men or stopped so as to keep the headings going.

"The Chinese were paid $30 to $35 in gold a month, finding (maintaining) themselves, while the (Caucasians) were paid about the same with their board thrown in . . ." Nine-tenths of the force on the road, he said, was Chinese. Using black powder, the Chinese averaged an advance of 1.18 feet daily.

The first train arrived at Summit from Sacramento November 30, 1867. The Summit tunnels had been completed in August of that year when the thousands of workers, mostly Chinese, were turned loose to build the line which had previously been graded to the Nevada State line. Now the job of hauling locomotives, cars and iron over the Summit, for the 40 miles of roadbed awaiting the rails, began.

A. P. Partridge, who also aided in construction, told Heath this story:

The snows came early that year, he said, "and drove the crews out of the mountains. There were about 4,000 men . . . . 3,000 of them Chinese. Most . . . came to Truckee and filled up all the old buildings and sheds. An

old barn collapsed and killed four Chinese. A good many were frozen to death."

A construction report by Strobridge indicated that crews, that winter, were at work many miles ahead of the line. "It was necessary," he said, "to have the heavy work in Palisade Canyon done in advance of the main force, and 3,000 men with 400 horses and carts were sent to that point, a distance of 300 miles in advance of the track. Hay, grain and all supplies for the men and horses had to be hauled by teams over the deserts for that great distance. Water for men and animals was hauled at times 40 miles."

On August 1, 1867, C. P. Huntington issued a report from his New York office as the race to meet Union Pacific gathered storm:

"The company hopes to increase its force of 10,000 men to 15,000 during the present season when progress over the plains will be very rapid."

Charles Crocker announced as a New Year's resolution "a mile a day for every working day in 1868." Apparently, the other associates were of the same mind as on January 26, 1868, Collis P. Huntington wrote to Crocker, "I consider it of the most vital importance that we build to the Wasatch Mountains. . . . I would build the road in the cheapest possible manner then go back and improve it at once, because the Union Pacific have built the cheapest kind of road."

On June 20, 1868, the Alta California of San Francisco carried a story on the first trip between Sacramento and Reno. The reporter who told the story mentioned this item in passing: Below Chisco, "Chinamen are swarming all along the road. They have nearly finished their work in this vicinity and are packing their traps preparatory to passing on over the Summit into the great interior basin . . . .

On passing the Summit, he went on, "As the first through passenger train sweeps down the eastern slopes of the Sierras, John (meaning the Chinese laborers) comprehending fully the importance of the event, loses his natural appearance of stolidity and indifference and welcomes with the swinging of his broad-brimmed hat and loud, uncouth shouts the iron horse and those that he brings with him.

"John with his patient toil, directed by American energy and backed by American capital, has broken down the great barrier at last and opened over it the greatest highway yet created for the march of commerce and civilization around the globe . . ."

"Central Pacific found it desirable to increase grading forces considerably, so they brought several hundred (Chinese) direct from China and organized them into construction gangs. The Piute Indians got among these Chinese and told them some big stories about enormous snakes out on that desert large enough that they could swallow (a man) easily . . . four or five hundred took their belongings and struck out to return directly to Sacramento. Crocker & Co. had spent quite a little money to secure them and they sent men on horseback after them . . . Most of them came back again, kind of quieted down, and after nothing happened and they never saw any of the snakes, they forgot about them."

Despite such diversions, progress was swift. San Francisco's Alta California pictured the pace of Central Pacific Construction: "Camp equipage, work shops, boarding house, offices and in fact the big settlement literally took up its bed and walked. The place that knew it in the morning knew it no more at night. It was nearly 10 miles off and where was a busy town of 5,000 inhabitants in the morning, was a deserted village site at night, while a smooth, well-built, compact road bed for traveling stretched from the morning site to evening tarrying place."

Caxton, pen name for San Francisco Chronicle Correspondent W. H. Rhodes, along on an inspection trip by railroad commissioners early in September, 1868, wrote: ". . . . we were informed by Mr. Crocker . . . he had just placed upon the work all the Indian tribes living in the great basin of the Humboldt, consisting chiefly of the Pah-Utahs, Cowchillas and Washoes. I asked him how many men he had at work? He replied that it was impossible to tell as no list of names was kept and the men worked by the squad and not as individuals. In explanation, he added that Indians and Chinese were so much alike personally that no human being could tell them apart and, therefore, for fear of paying double wages, he devised the scheme of employing, working and paying them by the wholesale. Thus, every morning a count is made of those who go to work, a second of those who eat and a third of those who quit at night. In this way, lengthy bookkeeping is avoided, time is saved and cheating prevented. At the present time, there are about 10,000 Chinese, 1,000 (Caucasians) and 'any number' of Indians employed on the road . . . "

At the end of the track, 307 miles from Sacramento between Mill City and Winnemucca, the train trip ended, Caxton reported.

"Here we found a very large number of men at work – principally Chinese – laying the track . . . A horse was furnished me by Gen. Crocker and I rode on a gallop to the front. The grading is completed several hundred miles in advance of the track laying, so there is no delay in placing the rails.

"It would be impossible to describe how rapidly, orderly and perfectly this is done without seeing the operation itself. There are just as many employed as can conveniently work, and no more. Vehicles laden with ties are always in advance, and Chinese with gauge and leveling rod place them across the grade, almost as quick as thought. The car with the rails is brought up at a gallop and six white men – three at each rail – roll the iron off the car and drop it upon the track with the velocity of steam. The empty car is lifted off the track, and then one fully loaded is drawn to the front, and the same operation repeated ad infinitum.

"I found it was no joke (when) Gen. Crocker (said) it would be no easy task to overtake the end of the road. Taking out my watch, I timed the last half mile I saw laid, and it took a little less than 28 minutes . . ."

On November 9, 1868, the San Francisco Alta California, further pictured the Chinese forces in action at the rail end:

"Long lines of horses, mules and wagons are standing in the open desert near the camp train. The stock is getting its breakfast of hay and barley. Trains are shunting in from the west with supplies and materials for the day's work. Foremen are galloping here and there on horseback giving or receiving orders. Swarms of laborers, Chinese, Europeans and Americans, are hurrying to their work . . . By the side of the grade smokes the camp fires of the blue clad laborers who could be seen in groups waiting for the signal to start work. These are the Chinese, and the job of this particular contingent is to clear a level roadbed for the track. They are the vanguard of the construction forces. Miles back is the camp of the rear guard – the Chinese who follow the track gang, ballasting and finishing the roadbed.

"Systematic workers these Chinese – competent and wonderfully effective because tireless and unremitting in their industry . . .

"The Chinese board themselves. One of their number is selected in each gang to receive all wages and buy all provisions. They usually pay an American clerk – $1 a month apiece is usual – to see that each gets all he earned and is charged no more than his share of the living expenses. They are paid from $30 to $35 a month, out of which they board themselves. They are credited with having saved about $20 a month. Their workday is from sunrise to sunset, six days in the week. They spend Sunday washing and mending, gambling and smoking, and frequently, old timers will testify, in shrill-toned quarreling.

"At sunrise a signal to turn to is given from the camp train. What at first seemed confusion to the visitor soon is the aim of this third gang to keep pace with the rail gang. At times lack of wagons make it impossible to keep up the supply of poles and the telegraph gangs, who pride themselves on never letting the track get ahead of them utilize sage brush, barrels, ties – surreptitiously taken from the track – or anything else that would keep the wire off the ground until the supply of poles again equal the demand.

"Then comes a wagon bearing a reel of wire which unrolls as the wagon goes ahead. As the wire uncoils it is carried up on the poles and made fast to the insulators.

"Back of the track builders follows a gang with the seven or more ties necessary to complete the foundation for each rail. These are put into position and spiked by another gang, which also level up the track and leave it ready for the ballasters.

"Meanwhile on board the camp train cooks are preparing dinner, clerks are busy with accounts and records, and the telegraph wire is tapping back the needs for tomorrow in the way of material and supplies.

"Twice a day the camp train moves to the end of the track – at noon to give all hands the hot dinner that six-hours of labor has earned and at night to give supper and sleeping accomodations.

"Immediately on reaching the end of the track at night a telegraph wire is cut in from the last pole to the telegraph car and Sacramento is notified of the number of miles of track laid."

The Vallejo Evening Chronicle of January 11, 1869, told how the Chinese gangs were paid:

"Sisson and Crocker Co. had an interpreter named Sam Thayer and also a Chinese interpreter. When they came up to these gangs of Chinamen, the money due them would be already counted out and they would dump the money in one of the Chinese' hats for that gang with a statement written in Chinese. There would be no time for explanations. They had to take it whether they liked it or not. This Sam Thayer claimed he could speak half a dozen Chinese dialects. If there were any claims about the pay, they

would take it up with the Sisson and Crocker Company later."

Most intense construction came in the early months of 1869. One day Union Pacific's Irish "terriers" laid six miles of track. Crocker's "pets," paced by Central Pacific's own Irish track builders, followed with seven. This was bettered by the rival camp and brought the boast from Crocker that his men could lay ten miles of track in a day. It is said that his wager of $10,000 was "covered" by Thomas C. Durant, vice-president of the Union Pacific. Crocker and Strobridge made careful plans. Ties were laid several miles in advance and materials were hauled ahead to strategic points. April 28, 1869, was the day. While a number of officers of both companies, including Gen. G. M. Dodge, chief engineer of the UP, several newspaper correspondents, and workers from the rival camp looked on, the Central Pacific forces, working with military precision and organization, laid ten miles and 56 feet of track in a little less than twelve hours, a feat that has never been equaled. This day's performance brought the CP rail-head past Camp Victory, later Rozel, a few miles from Promontory and completion of the Central Pacific.[6]

Although many claims have been made about the Central Pacific and Union Pacific powder crews blowing up each other's forces as the grades began to parallel in Utah, I have been unable to substantiate this with any contemporary account.

The Salt Lake City Deseret Evening News of March 25, 1869, reported that "Sharp Young's blasters are jarring the earth every few minutes with their glycerine and powder, lifting whole ledges of limestone rock from their long resting places, hurling them hundreds of feet in the air and scattering them around for a half mile in every direction. Mr. T. E. Ticks showed me a boulder of three or four hundred pounds weight that was thrown over a half mile and completely buried itself in the ground within twenty yards of his cook room. I ate a hearty breakfast and left that spot *sine dine*. At Carlisle's works a few days ago, four men were preparing a blast by filling a large crevice in a ledge with powder. After pouring in the powder they undertook to work it down with iron bars, the bars striking the rocks caused an explosion; one of the men was blown two or three hundred feet in the air, breaking every bone in his body, the other three were terribly burnt and wounded with flying stones . . .

"From what I can observe and hear from others, there is considerable opposition between the two railroad companies, both lines run near each other, so near that in one place the UP are taking a four feet cut out of the CP fill to finish their grade, leaving the CP to fill the cut thus made in the formation of their grade.

"The two companies' blasters work very near each other and when Sharp & Young's men first began work, the CP would give them no warning when they fired their fuse. Jim Livingston, Sharp's able foreman, said nothing but went to work and loaded a point of rock with nitro-glycerine, and without saying anything to the CP 'let her rip.' The explosion was terrific. The report was heard on the Dry Tortugas, and the foreman of the CP came down to confer with Mr. Livingston about the necessity of each party notifying the other when ready for a blast. The matter was speedily arranged to the satisfaction of both parties."

Nothing was mentioned of any injury or death resulting from actions of either road, however.

On May 6, the San Francisco Evening Bulletin reported a Chinese Tong war:

"A battle has occurred between two rival companies of Chinamen, several hundred in number, laborers of the See Yup and Teng Wo Companies. They have been idle at (Camp) Victory, eight miles from here, for a number of days past. The row occurred about $15 due from one camp to the other. After the usual braggadocio, both parties sailed in, at a given signal, armed with every conceivable weapon. Spades were handled and crewbars, spikes, picks and infernal machines were hurled between the rank of the contestants. Several shots were fired and everything betokened the outbreak of a riot. At this juncture, Superintendent Strobridge, with several of his men, rushed into the melee and, with the assistance of the leading 'Chinamen,' who were more peaceably disposed, he succeeded in separating the combatants and restoring order . . .

"The casualties include the shooting, fatally, it is supposed of a Chinaman. The ball penetrated his left side, tearing the flesh and inflicting a very ugly wound. If this man dies, another encounter will certainly follow and much bloodshed will doubtless ensue. Dr. Blackwood has rendered surgical attendance to the wounded man." Further fighting was apparently avoided since no other mention appeared in the newspaper.

On May 8, a dispatch to the San Francisco Bulletin reported that "A large gang of graders attached to the Union Pacific road, made their appearance here today, announcing their intention to 'clean out' the Chinese

who had an encounter here yesterday . . . Though much bluster and menacing language was indulged, still no positive demonstration has yet been made. . . . At all events, no collision can occur today and steps will be taken to prevent such altogether."

"Crocker's Pets" – who had made the road possible, almost disrupted the final events that were to celebrate their labor.

On the way to Promontory, the Stanford special narrowly escaped catastrophe. Chinese, cutting timber on the mountains above the entrance to Tunnel No. 14 near the State Line east of Truckee, saw the regular train pass. Unaware of the following special, they carelessly skidded a log down upon the track below. The log, 50 feet long by 42 inches in circumference, landed in a cut with one end against the bank and the other on a rail. The engineer, rounding a curve there, braked his train but it struck the log, crippling the engine. A guest, riding on the cowcatcher, was seriously injured. The log scraped all along one side of the car, taking the steps with it. A wire was sent ahead from the next station in time to hold the train at Wadsworth until the Stanford coach could be attached. Thus, the Chinese were responsible for the use of the CP Locomotive "Jupiter" at the ceremonies, rather than the "Antelope" which had started to make the trip.

The famous Gold Spike ceremony that united the Central Pacific and Union Pacific railroads at Promontory took place only a few days later – on May 10, 1869.

With the completion of the Central Pacific, many Chinese workers moved to other railroad construction jobs, including some for the Central Pacific. Others returned with their savings to their families in Canton. Others still sent to China for wives and settled in various western communities as laundrymen and restauranteurs. The majority who remained, however, returned to the Pacific Coast.

1 "Memoirs," Cornelius Cole, published 1908.
2 "From Trail to Rail," Chapter XV, series in the Southern Pacific Bulletin by Erle Heath and Lindsay Campbell.
3 Ibid.
4 Ibid.
5 Ibid.
6 Ibid.

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CHINESE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA
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