RAILROAD CENTENNIAL BRONZE MARKER

This Commemorative Plaque, one of two identical bronze markers, was unveiled at local centennial observance on May 4th at Society headquarters.

The Society conceived the idea, and solicited the financial support of the San Francisco Chinese community. Local unveiling was to give the community an opportunity to see the plaques, as well as to observe the centennial with an appropriate ceremony.

One of the plaques was placed at the national historical site headquarters at Promontory, Utah, where the Central Pacific joined the Union Pacific in 1869. The other plaque will be placed in Sacramento, California, the starting point of the Central Pacific. A new railroad museum, to house many of the railroad's former locomotives, is to be erected in the near future and this plaque will then be permanently affixed to this building. In the meantime, it may be seen at the Pioneer Hall Museum in Sacramento.

The wording on the plaque was composed by Thomas W. Chinn, with the translation and Chinese calligraphy by well-known calligrapher Mr. P. C. Lee. The design was arranged by Philip P. Choy.

A more complete story on the railroad centennial is contained in the several articles written on the following pages.

and its 4 pages added to a combined May-June issue of 8 pages, in order to more fully cover the activities for the period.
SEMINAR REPORT


It was held at the Chinese American Citizens Alliance auditorium at 1044 Stockton Street, San Francisco, with Philip P. Choy, H. Mark Lai, and Thomas W. Chinn as co-chairmen.

BACKGROUND: Various California school district representatives had contacted the Society, requesting information on the history of the Chinese in California. Originally, the Society had individually replied to these inquiries. Then the Society felt that, as this history will be developed into classroom material, the basic history, together with such references as are in the Society's possession, should be made available to the California school districts as a whole; thus enabling educators to shape their classroom material with some assurance that the basic history would be uniform throughout the state.

As a preliminary step, several school districts were invited to attend a special meeting held on February 1, 1969, to exchange ideas and make suggestions toward the programming of a seminar, its subject matter and depth. The meeting was attended by all those invited, and the program as discussed was heartily endorsed. Representation was from both rural and urban districts.

Following the meeting, the Society went to work to plan the Seminar. The following resource persons and an advisory committee devoted time preparing material, or participated in the Seminar:

Prof. Kenneth A. Abbott, Mrs. Barbara Adams, Mr. Charles C. Chan, Miss Rosemary Chan, Miss Frances Chin, Miss Mayme Chin, Mrs. Daisy W. Chinn, Mrs. Frances L. Chinn, Mr. Walter W. Chinn, Mrs. Sarah Choy, Mr. Daniel Chu, Mrs. Vyolet Chu, Miss Victoria Chun, Mr. Benton Dere, Miss Jean Dere, Mrs. Henrietta S. Fong, Mrs. Rosemary Fong, Mr. Gordon D. Gollan, Mrs. Gladys C. Hansen, Mrs. Priscilla Heinstein, Mr. William F. Heintz, Mr. Luke Hom, Mrs. Helen Hsu, Mrs. Helen Jang, Mr. Sing Jok Ju, Mr. William Jung, Mr. Alfred Kennedy, Mr. Lawton R. Kennedy, Mrs. Sally Kennedy, Mrs. Adrienne Kwong, Mrs. Laura Lai, Mr. S. K. Lai, Mr. Chingwah Lee, Mr. Lim P. Lee, Mr. Albert C. Lim, Mr. Paul H. Louie, Mr. Hobart M. Lovett, Mr. John F. Ma, Mr. Robert A. Nash, Mr. Yuk Ow, Miss Florence Owyang, Mr. Ernest Pattison, Mr. Robert C. Stevenson, Miss Doris Wong, Mr. H. K. Wong, Mr. James Wong, Miss Mary Wong, Mr. Francis Yee, Miss Frances Yen, Col. John Young, and Mrs. Alice F. Yu.

Three speakers appeared on the day's program: William F. Heintz, San Francisco author and economics historian; Thomas W. Chinn, historian, a founder and first president of the Society; and Chingwah Lee, noted Far Eastern Art and Culture consultant and a founder of the Society.


Nearly 250 registrants attended, and the response of the registrants toward the seminar program was excellent. Many wanted additional seminars, and more than one in five bought additional copies of the syllabus. Immediately following the Seminar, bulk buyers of the syllabus were the San Francisco Public Library, 50 copies, and the San Francisco Unified School District, which ordered 68. Since then, many smaller orders have been filled, and at this writing, only a few dozen copies are still available at $5.50 per copy.

The significance of the Seminar and its purpose cannot be overlooked. In presenting the program, the Society made available to all interested persons and organizations, an opportunity to utilize the many years' research of the compilers, Thomas W. Chinn, editor, and H. Mark Lai and Philip P. Choy, associate editors.

The table of contents of the 90-page book:

- Pre-Columbian Contacts—Fact or Myth?
- Geographical Background
- Language
- Early Contacts with the West/First Chinese in the New World
- Chinese in the Americas in the 18th and Early 19th Centuries
- Chinese Pioneers in California
- Early Chinese in San Francisco
San Francisco’s Chinatown in the 1850’s
Why the Chinese Came
Emigration and the Chinese Imperial Government
The “Coolie” Trade
How They Came
Immigration and Internal Migration
Some Major Anti-Chinese Legislations
Immigration Laws—Immigration
In the Gold Mines
Other Mining and Mineral Activities
The Fishing Industry
The Shrimp Industry
The Abalone Industry
Other Fishing Activities
The Salmon Canning Industry
Early Chinese Laborers and Construction Workers
The Railroads
Miscellaneous Construction
Cigar Industry
Woolen Industry
The Slipper, Shoe and Boot Industries
The Sewing Trades
Miscellaneous Industries
Reclamation
Agricultural Labor
Farmers, Sharecroppers and Truck Gardeners
Flower Growers in the San Francisco Bay Area
Restaurants, Laundries and Domestics
The Chinese Six Companies
Family and District Associations
Highbinders
Chinese Language Schools
Newspapers
Theatres
Chinese Temples in North America
Festivals
Some Old Local Customs
Herbs, Herb Doctors
From Sojourner to Citizen
Bibliographies
Transliteration of Chinese Words
Notes on the Syllabus
MAPS:
Map of Kwangtung Province
Acapulco, Manila Trade Routes
Chinese Shrimp Camps on San Francisco Bay, 1890-1930
TABLES:
Table I: Chinese in the United States Before the Exclusion Act
Table II: Chinese Population in the United States, 1852 to 1900
Table III: Chinese Population in the United States (Excluding Hawaii and Alaska)
Table IV: Immigration to the United States
Table V: Chinese in California by District of Origin
Table VI: Number of Chinese in California by Counties

COMMEMORATIVE PLAQUES UNVEILED

On Sunday, May 4, the San Francisco Chinese community observed the centennial of the First Transcontinental Railroad in America, and at the same time paid tribute to the Chinese workers of the Central Pacific Railroad.

An audience of more than two hundred gathered at Society headquarters at 17 Adler Place, where an outdoor program was held with Albert C. Lim and Zeppelin Wong as Masters of Ceremonies. The program:

Greetings by President Philip P. Choy;
Messages and telegrams read by Zeppelin Wong and Francis Yee;
Introduction of honored guests, including most of the heads of the various family, district and fraternal associations of the Chinese community;
Remarks by Supervisor Peter Tamaras representing the Mayor of San Francisco, Joseph L. Alioto;
Presentation of Mayor’s Proclamation by Supervisor Tamaras;
Remarks by Dennis Wong, President of the Chinese Six Companies;
Remarks by Tung-hua Chou, Consul General, Republic of China;
Remarks by Walter C. Frame, Chairman, Railroad Centennial Committee;
A Salute to Chinese Railroad Workers by Thomas W. Chinn, Executive Director;
Presentation of Railroad Painting by Col. and Mrs. John Young, representing Prof. Mui. Jue Tin;

The Mayor’s Proclamation reads:
One hundred years ago on May 10, 1869, the first transcontinental railroad in America was completed and joined at Promontory, Utah, linking the Union Pacific Railroad with the Central Pacific Railroad on that historic date. Californians of Chinese descent were the primary builders of the Central Pacific portion of the railroad, the transcontinental railroad which was hailed at the time as an impossible dream come true.

In this Golden Spike Centennial year, the Chinese Historical Society of America, deeply aware of the role the Chinese pioneers played in making an “impossible dream come true,” led the movement to have the Chinese railroad builders properly recognized, by securing the cooperation of the Chinese communities in providing suitable plaques to commemorate the occasion.

One plaque will be placed at Sacramento, California, and the other at Promontory, Utah, the starting and ending portion of the Central Pacific Railroad.

The San Francisco Chinese community has taken the initiative in providing the necessary means for the Society to complete its self-appointed task. The City of San Francisco has just cause to be proud of its Chinese community.

Now, therefore, be it resolved that I, Joseph L. Alioto, Mayor of the City and County of San Francisco, do hereby extend warm congratulations and heartiest commendations to the Chinese Historical Society of America and all of its members in recognition of their distinguished contributions toward greater understanding of the role which Chinese pioneers played in building the West.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the City and County of San Francisco to be affixed this twenty-ninth day of April, nineteen hundred and sixty-nine.

Joseph L. Alioto, Mayor

The San Francisco Board of Supervisors also adopted a resolution paying tribute to the Chinese railroad pioneers and commending the Society for its work in furthering the cause of history.

Special commendations came from the Senate, California Legislature, in the form of a Resolution:

RESOLUTION

Relative to the Chinese contribution to the construction of the transcontinental railroad

By Senator George R. Moscone of the Tenth Senatorial District, and Senator Milton Marks of the Ninth Senatorial District

Whereas, May 10, 1969, will be the 100th Anniversary of the driving of the Golden Spike at Promontory, Utah, signifying the completion of the construction of the transcontinental railroad by the Central Pacific and Union Pacific; and

Whereas, Although the Central Pacific began to construct the western half of the railroad on January 8, 1863, it was not until the spring of 1865, when the first Chinese laborers were brought to the construction site, that the pace of the construction reached its maximum; and

Whereas, These men, numbering some 10,000 during 1866, were responsible for the bridging and tunnelling of the towering Sierra Nevada; and

Whereas, The successful assault on the Sierra Nevada extracted a terrible toll of these men, and an estimated 500 to 1,000 of them were killed before these mountains were conquered; and

Whereas, Charles Crocker, one of the Big Four in the development of the railroad, at the Last Spike Ceremonies pointed out that “the early completion of this railroad . . . has been in a great measure due to that poor, destitute class of laborers called the Chinese—to the fidelity and industry they have shown . . . ”; and

Whereas, This transcontinental railroad line today stands as a monument to the courage, dedication, endurance, fidelity, and industry, matched only by the Sierra Nevada they conquered, of the thousands of Chinese laborers who left
the "Central Kingdom" to find their fortune in "Gum Shan," the Gold Mountain, as the United States was named; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, That the Members commend the Americans of Chinese descent for the vital role that they and their ancestors have played in the development of California and the nation, especially in the construction of the transcontinental railroad; and be it further Resolved, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit a suitably prepared copy of this resolution to the Chinese Historical Society of America, in San Francisco.

Senate Resolution No. 217 read and unanimously adopted May 5, 1969.

Signed,
ED REINECKE
President of the Senate

The success of the occasion was even more than that of a Centennial celebration. It was one of the rare occasions in nearly 50 years that the Chinese Six Companies and the Chinese community leaders have cooperated and extended felicitations to a Chinese organization that had originated in America; the first was the Chinese American Citizens Alliance, shortly after the turn of the century after China had become a republic. This break-through for the Society augurs well for future in-depth historic studies of the Chinese and the communities.

Telegrams were received from the various Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Associations across the country, including Stockton, San Diego, Chicago and New York. A message was also received from the railway ministry of Taiwan. Local, state and national leaders also sent wires.

H. K. Wong was chairman of the day, assisted by the following committee:


AT SACRAMENTO, MAY 9

Railroad Centennial observances continued as a busload of Society representatives and San Francisco Chinese community leaders traveled to Sacramento to dedicate the bronze plaque marking the western starting point of the Central Pacific Railroad in its drive to "wed" with the Union Pacific at Promontory, Utah.

To coincide with the ceremonies, two special Southern Pacific (successor to the Central Pacific) Railroad trains arrived, one to dedicate plaques along its route to Truckee and return to San Francisco; the other to continue on to its May 10th Centennial observance climax at Promontory.

Mr. Walter C. Frame was the chairman for the observances in California, and it was through his offices and efforts that the dedication of this portion of the Society's placement of two plaques was so successfully conducted.

Groups of local citizenry were dressed in the costumes of the nineteenth century to lend flavor to the occasion. An army band, dressed in the uniform of its counterpart at the driving of the Golden Spike a century ago, played appropriate music.

Congressman John E. Moss of Sacramento was the principal speaker, reminding the audience that the completion of the transcontinental railroad a century ago truly unified the nation, and paid tribute to the many workers on the railroad, but particularly the Chinese pioneers.

Other speakers were Chinese Consul General Tung-hua Chou and Chinese Six Companies President Dennis Wong. The Society was represented by Executive Director Thomas W. Chinn, who delivered the main Chinese tribute; and President Philip P. Choy, who made the presentation of the commemorative plaque to the city.

PROMONTORY, UTAH, MAY 10

On May 10, 1969, President Philip P. Choy and Executive Director Thomas W. Chinn flew to Promontory, Utah, to join in the climax of the national observance of the centennial of the first transcontinental railroad.

This was the culmination of many
months' efforts on the part of the Society in correspondence with centennial officials in which, finally, five minutes was allotted to the Society to pay tribute to the Chinese workers of the Central Pacific. A separate and special dedicatory ceremony was to follow at the building wherein the plaque would be placed.

In order to present a neutral observer's story of the Promontory incident, the following article written by Dale Champion, writing for the San Francisco Chronicle, is reproduced herewith. Only pertinent parts of the story are used here—the full text of which is available in the Chronicle's May 12, 1969 issue.

THE FORGOTTEN MEN AT GOLD SPIKE CEREMONY

By Dale Champion
Chronicle Correspondent

Ogden, Utah—As history and rail fans by the hundreds headed for homes across the Nation in special trains yesterday, they were still muttering about the politicians who outsmarted the Iron Horse at the Promontory Railroad Centennial.

A crowd of 20,000 turned out Saturday for the celebration, 56 miles from here, on the northern fringe of the Great Salt Lake.

So did four U.S. senators, seven congressmen, the governor of Utah, Federal Transportation Secretary John A. Volpe and John Wayne.

The politicians so monopolized things that the audience, some of whom had come from Europe and South America, sheltered almost out of patience under a hot desert sun, waiting for the Great Event: the re-enactment of the meeting of the Union Pacific and the Central (now Southern) Pacific a century ago.

Secretary Volpe, the principal orator, succeeded in infuriating the Chinese delegation from San Francisco by wholly ignoring the 12,000 Chinese who helped build the Central Pacific over the Sierra to Promontory.

"Who else but Americans could drill ten tunnels in mountains 30 feet deep in snow?" asked Volpe, speaking in a flat, nasal Bostonian accent.

"Who else but Americans could chisel through miles of solid granite?"

"Who else but Americans could have laid ten miles of track in 12 hours?"

Sitting in angry silence at the rear of the bunting-draped platform were Philip P. Choy, chairman of the Chinese Historical Society of America, and his colleague from San Francisco, Thomas W. Chinn, founder and executive director of the society.

Chou Tung-hua, Consul General in San Francisco for the Republic of China, sat several rows forward on the platform, just behind the politicians.

Unlike Volpe, the three were well aware that none of the Chinese railroad workers were Americans. In fact, foreign-born Chinese were barred for years from becoming citizens.

Chinn said later that he and Choy were "very unhappy" at Volpe's chauvinistic slighting of the Chinese.

The injury cut particularly deep, Chinn said, because of the Chinese Historical Society's strong effort in conjunction with the Centennial "to correct various incorrect impressions concerning the Chinese and their role in building the West."

As part of the centennial, the society dedicated plaques at Sacramento and Promontory in tribute to the Chinese who worked for the Central Pacific.

... Presiding at the three-hour ceremony was Thomas M. Goodfellow, chairman of the National Gold Spike Centennial Commission and president of the Association of American Railroads.

... But Goodfellow did not take time to credit the Pacific Coast chapter of the Railway and Locomotive Historical Society for its dogged work in bringing to Promontory its two real stars—vintage locomotives duplicating the ones that nosed together May 10, 1869.

Fred Stindt, a San Francisco executive and president of the chapter, which sponsored a special train excursion to
Ogden, said he was told only last week that the group would not be represented
on the platform. [Stinted had a bleacher seat.] . . . The Railway Society was not
the only other group shunted out of view.

In the sanitized platform version of
the railroad building, no mention at all
was made of what it did to the Indians,
for whom it was catastrophic.

Nevertheless, there were Indians in
the shirt-sleeved audience who remem-
bered. When the ceremony was over,
they formed a ring on their own and
danced to a tom-tom.

“We Indians are always getting
kicked around,” said Jennie Begali, an
instructional aide at the nearby Inter-
mountain School for Navajos at Brig-
ham City. “Maybe we ought to take the
land back.”

Benjamin F. Biaggini, president of
the Southern Pacific, took part in the
activities to the extent of waving his hat
to the crowd and sitting up front of the
platform in the Promontory activity.

Until recently Promontory was a de-
serted spot in desolate sagebrush coun-
try, reached only by a dirt road.

For its revival, it resembled a county
fair . . . When the ceremony broke up,
one disappointed observer said, “It was
the work of giants re-enacted by midgets.”

In Ogden later, at a banquet attended
by 400 Northern California railroad
buffs, a speaker said the late Lucius
Beebe, a rail fan par excellence, would
have given the ceremony the element it
lacked—“class.”

No explanation was given by the plan-
ners, the chairman or the master of cere-
mony for the omission of the five minutes
promised in a wire to the Society. There
was only passing mention of the Chinese,
grouped as among the workers on the road.

Following the ceremony, the two Socie-
ty representatives and Col. and Mrs. John
Young, who traveled in the special train,
and Consul General Chou met at the
Historic Site building where the plaque
ceremony was to be held.

The small auditorium held about 80-
100. President Choy spoke out strongly
about the treatment accorded, and received
an apology from Chairman Goodfellow.

Although the Society did not fulfill its
objective of paying tribute to the Chinese
pioneers over a national network, it did
reach its other objective in having two
plaques placed in historic sites that will
remind future generations of the contribu-
tions of the Chinese railroad pioneers.

A CONGRESSMAN’S LETTER

The following copy of a letter sent to
Secretary of Transportation John A. Volpe
in Washington was received from Con-
gressman John E. Moss of Sacramento by
the Society:

“May 14, 1969

Honorable John A. Volpe
Secretary
Department of Transportation
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Mr. Secretary:

“I have a strong sense of disquiet over
the content of the speech made by you at
Promontory in the State of Utah on Satur-
day, May 10, 1969 on the occasion of the
Centennial Commemorative Ceremony of
the completion of the first transcontinental
railroad.

“I recognize that as a member of the
Cabinet with relatively short tenure, you
have had many problems cross your desk
each day and that it was necessary for you
to undoubtedly assign much of the prepa-
ration of your remarks to subordinates.
Whatever the conditions, it seems incredi-
able to me that anyone superficially ac-
quainted with the history of the construc-
tion of the transcontinental railroad would
ask the question, ‘Who else but Americans
could drill ten tunnels in mountains 30
feet deep in snow?’ and, ‘Who else but
Americans could chisel through miles of
solid granite?’ and, ‘Who else but Amer-
icans could have laid ten miles of track in
12 hours?’ when in fact on the same plat-
form from which you spoke were repre-
tsatives of the Chinese community of
the Western States, particularly from the
San Francisco area, who were there proud-
ly to participate in commemorating the work done by more than 12,000 Chinese imported for the specific purpose of doing the backbreaking job of building much of the most difficult stretch of the railroad through the Sierras. No cognizance was taken of the fact that many Irish immigrants also worked long and difficult hours to aid in the construction of the railroad. In every sense, the construction was in keeping with the then current traditions of this country that men and women from all corners of the globe came here adding new dimensions to our culture and aiding in the building of the infrastructure which made possible the tremendous growth of this Nation.

"It is my conviction, Mr. Secretary, that an apology is owed to Mr. Philip P. Choy, Chairman of the Chinese Historical Society of America, to Mr. Thomas W. Chinn, founder and executive director of the Society, to the Honorable Chou Tung-Hua, Consul General for the Republic of China in San Francisco. There were other slights to the representatives of the Chinese community for which you were not responsible as there were slights to other groups who pridefully spent many hours in preparation to participate in the ceremonies.

"There was much in the content of your speech with which I agreed but I truly regret the slight to a proud and construc-