



Charles Sturt
University

Celebrating
30 years in 2019

Bew Chip's Register

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Acknowledge Maori people, Wiradjuri, hosts of the conference.

There are also some other thanks and acknowledgements I need to make.
I'd like to thanks Charles Sturt University for providing me with research allowance which assisted me to attend the conference.

I'd like to acknowledge Michael Williams for pointing out the importance of Bew Chip's Register
and Ely Finch who has done such a fine job of translating Bew Chip's Register into English with notes that provide so much additional information.

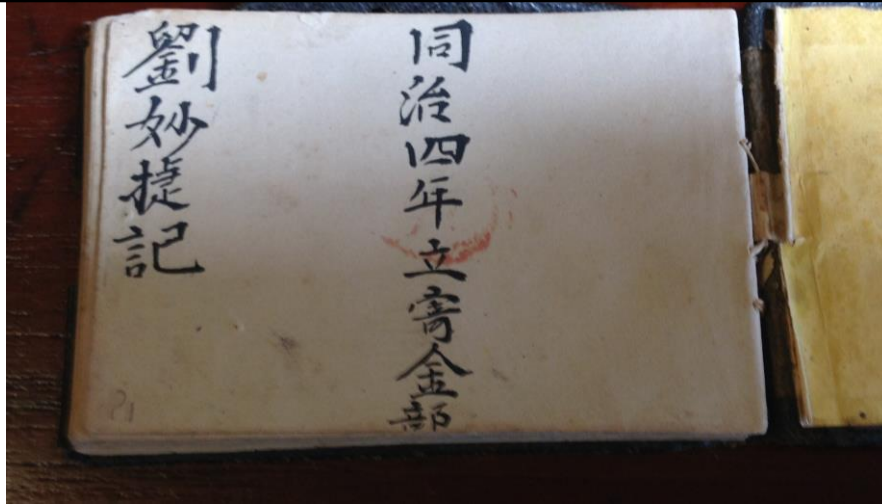


The events I'll talk about in the next 20 mins took place at Hill End and Tambaroora, about 3 hours drive west of Sydney. Hill End was the site of a reef mining boom in New South Wales in the 1870s. The original alluvial goldfield in the area was at Tambaroora where gold was discovered in 1853.



Nu Chip, National Parks and Wildlife Services Archives,
Old CWA office, Beyers Ave, Hill End: [NUC 0001].

Today I want to talk about this little book which belonged to a Chinese resident of Tambaroora.



Bew Chips' Register, Page I

The book belonged to a man named Lew Bew Chip. Born in Canton in 1846, Bew Chip arrived in Tambaroora as a goldseeker in 1865, and lived in the Tambaroora district for the rest of his life.

As Bew Chip found gold, he entrusted returning countrymen to carry gold dust and coins back to China on his behalf.

He kept a register of the names of those carrying the gold for him, the names of their villages and the amount of gold they carried for him.

Over twenty-five years between 1865 and 1890, Bew Chip sent back a total of gold 1069.6 grams of gold-dust to China.

Dispatching gold record book established in the fourth year of the reign of Tong Zhi
(1865)

Recorded by Liu Miao Jie

The author holding the gold record book

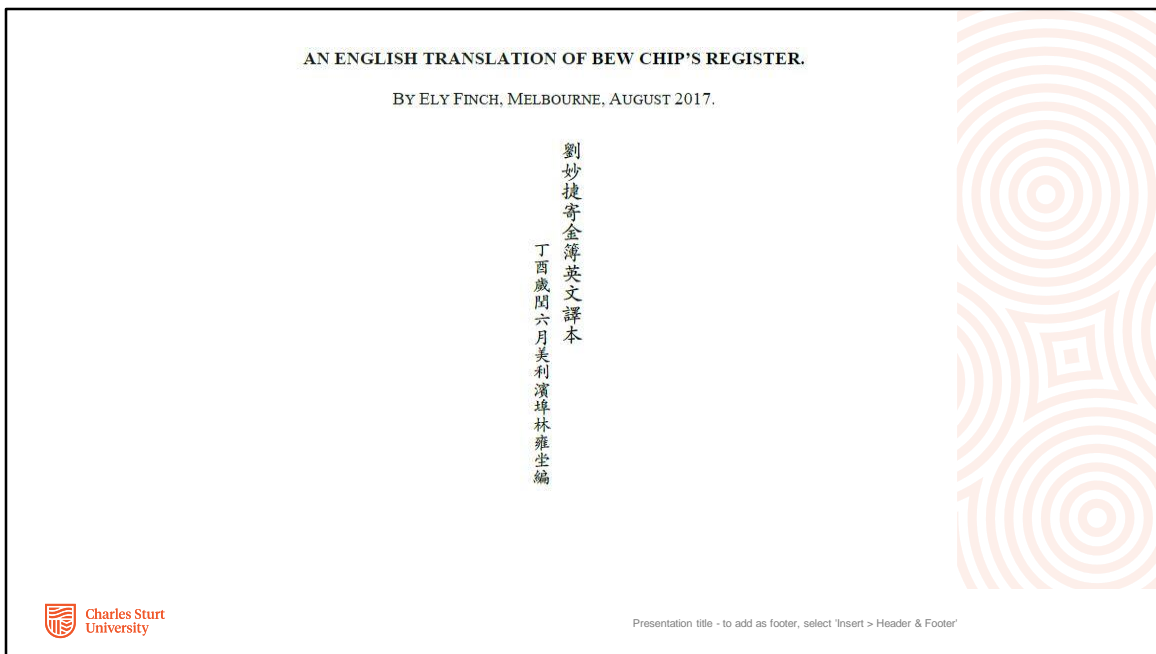


Photo from Chinese Lodges in Australia, Kok Hu Jin, 2005.



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The Register was first identified and translated by Kok Hu Jin in 2005. Kok Hu Jin used pinyin in his translation. With Mandarin pronunciations, the names of people listed in the register do not correspond with names as they appear in colonial records.



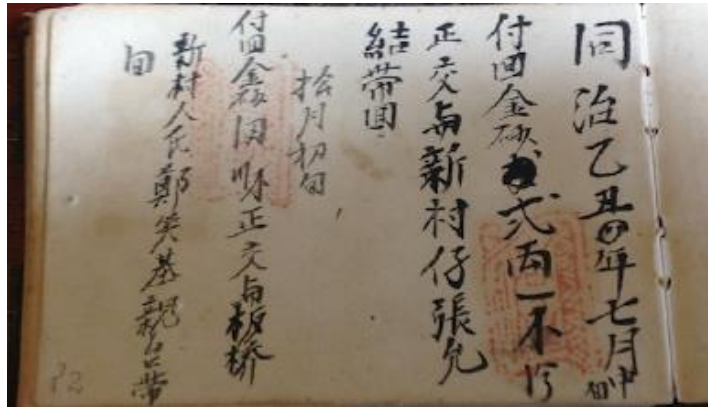
In 2017, Ely Finch completed a new translation which provides a transliteration in Cantonese, the language spoken by most of the Chinese on the Tambaroora goldfields.

In this presentation, I'll show you through some of Ely's translations. I'll also talk about what life was like for Bew Chip in Hill End.



Last Of Gold Diggers. New Chip aged 101, is last of 15,000 Chinese who flocked to Hill End—**Tambaroora** gold diggings in the 'fifties. Chip came to Australia as young man.

This is Bew Chip in his old age. This newspaper article refers to him as New Chip, the name by which he was known in Hill End. According to the article, he was aged 101. He was old, but not that old.



TRANSLATION:

The T'ung Chih Era

Year 4, IIII

Month 7

The middle decade : Sent back 2 taels 1 mace 1 candareen of gold dust. Passed to Cheung Wan Kit of San Tsuen Chai to take back.

Month 10

1st decade : Sent back 1 tael 3.0 mace of gold dust. Passed to Cheng Siu Ki, a native of San Tsuen, Pan Kiu, to take back.



So the same year Bew Chip arrived, he was able to start sending gold back to China. The first entry in the book is dated in the fourth year of the T'ung Chih era. That date translates as 1865, the year Bew Chip arrived.

The first entry, which you see here, records two remittances. In the first, Cheung Wan Kit of San Tsuen Chai village carried two taels, one mace and one candareen of gold back to China for Bew Chip. Ely has calculated this as the equivalent of 80g of gold.



Translation of Bew Chip's Register page V

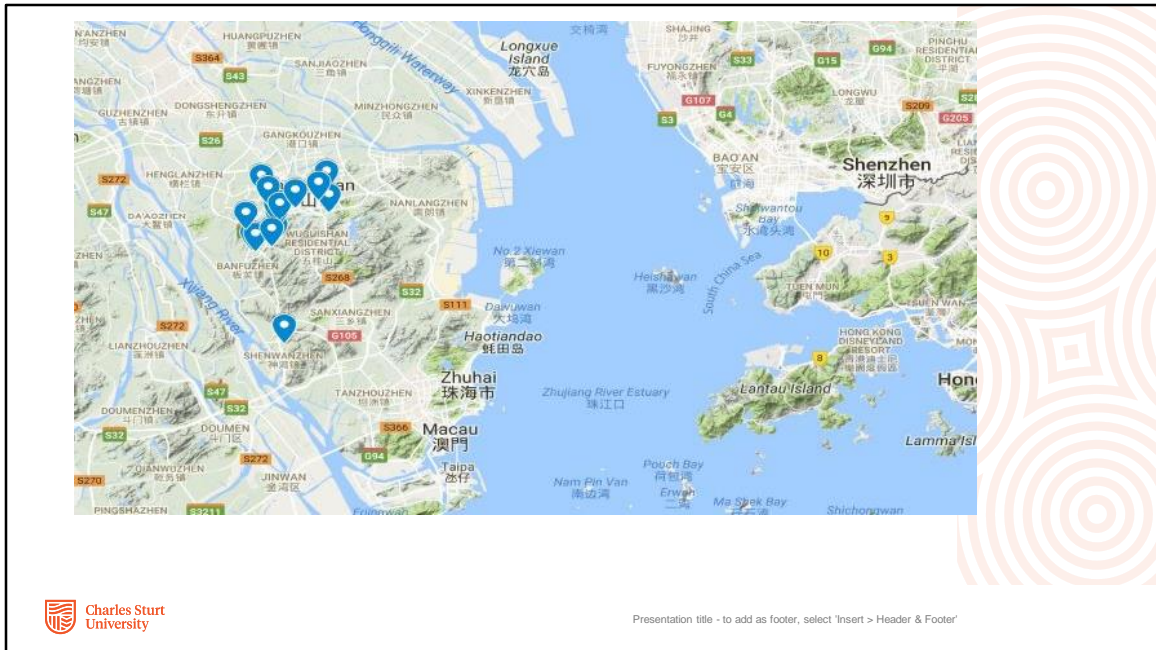
In reading Ely's translation of the Register, I made a wonderful personal discovery.

On 31 July 1866, a man carried 2 mace of gold to China for Bew Chip.

The man carrying the gold had the surname was Kwok, the same surname as my own.

The name of his village was Chuk Sau Yuen, my family's ancestral village in Zhongshan.

Kwok Ying Tsoi is not the only Kwok from Chuk Sau Yuen in the Register.



Ely identified that altogether, seventeen villages are named in the Register. All seventeen of the villages were clustered in Heungshan (Zhongshan 中山) or Shekki (Shiqi 石岐), the business and cultural subdistrict of Heungshan. The Register does not tell us, however, the name of Bew Chip's home village.

Ely Finch, "An English Translation of Bew Chip's Register," (Melbourne 2017), 38.



Bark huts in Chinatown, Tambaroora, American and Australasian Photographic Company, 1870-75, State Library of New South Wales



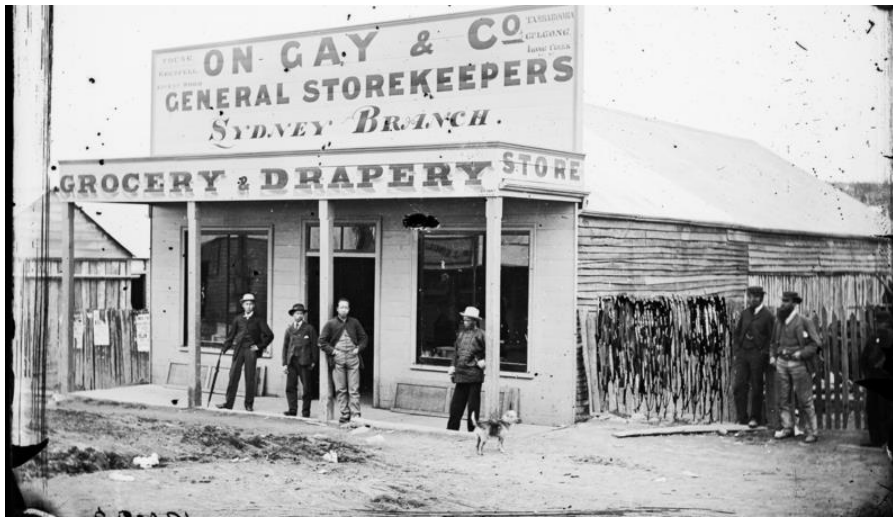
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The rush of Cantonese gold-seekers to Tambaroora peaked in 1858.

In 1865, the year Bew Chip arrived, Tambaroora was visited by a journalist from the Herald, who reported:

The large number of Chinese who have settled themselves at Tambaroora and the long time during which they have been located here have made this place a kind of centre of Chinese communication. Here are their most famous joss houses.

But in the next few years Tambaroora declined as Hill End grew.



On Gay & Co., general storekeepers (grocery & drapery), Hill End, American & Australasian Photographic Company, 1870-1875, State Library of New South Wales



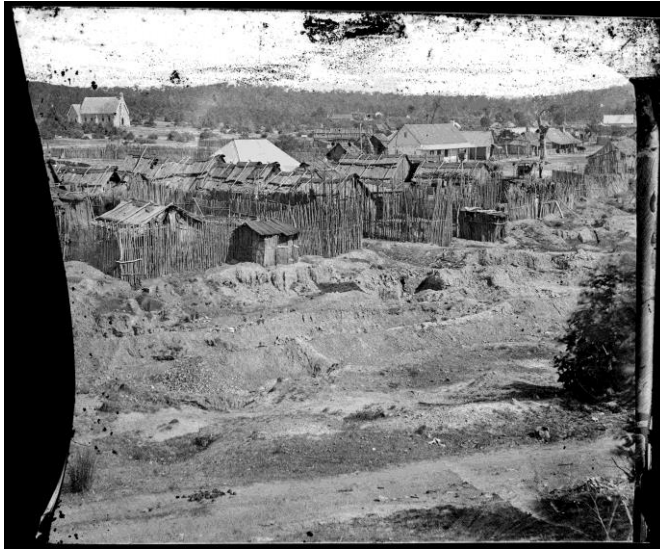
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By the end of the 1860s, the locus of mining activity, and the business centre of the settlement switched to Hill End. A branch of On Gay and Co. first opened in Tambaroora. With the rush to Hill End, a new branch opened in Hill End. Here is On Gay with umbrella standing outside the front of his Hill End store. On Gay & Co. continued to serve Hill End up until the 1930s.

On Gay, Chinese shopkeeper at
Hill End, American and
Australasian Photographic
Company, 1870-75,
State Library of New South
Wales



The American and Australasian Photographic Studio was established at Hill End in 1871. Some of Bew Chip's contemporaries, were photographed in the studio at this time. This is the storekeeper known as On Gay.

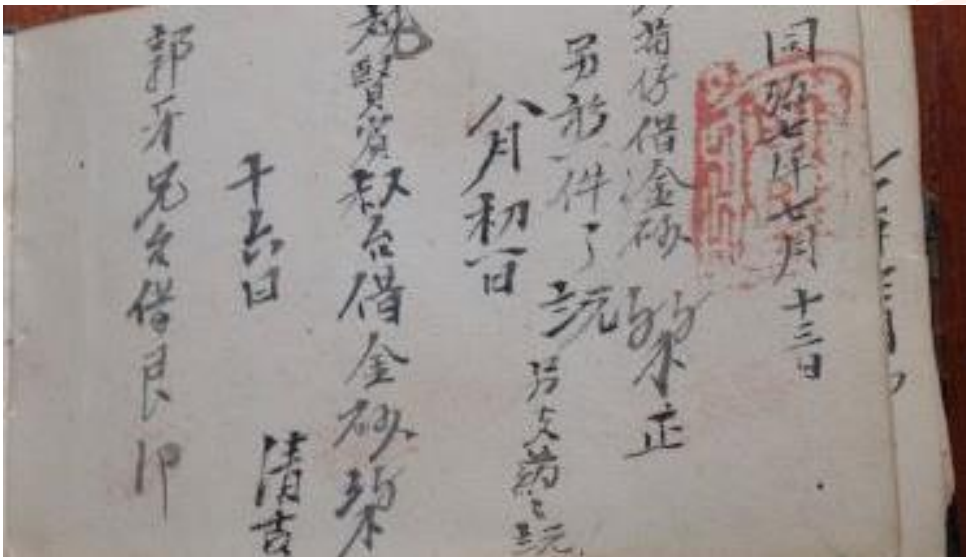


Panoramic view of Tambaroora (with Chinatown in the foreground and St. Saviour's Church upper left), American and Australasian Photographic Company, State Library of New South Wales



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As the population shifted to Hill End, Tambaroora declined. This photo, circa 1872, shows the Chinese camp in Tambaroora looking rather tired. Between the 1861 and 1871 censuses, the Chinese male population in the district fell from 1649 to 405. Bew Chip's Register shows that none of the persons who returned to their villages came back to Tambaroora, as the names of the carriers do not recur in the Register. Nor were they replaced by new arrivals, who were instead headed for New Zealand, the tin fields of Northern NSW or the Palmer River in QLD.



Translation of Bew Chip's Register page XLII

Bew Chip's Register is not only a record of remittances. The second half of Bew Chip's Register is an account of gold loaned to members of the community.

In August 1868, Mew Chip loaned Kau Chai, his paternal grandfather's brother, 5.5 mace of gold, a garment of clothing worth 8s and another 8s outlay for medicine.

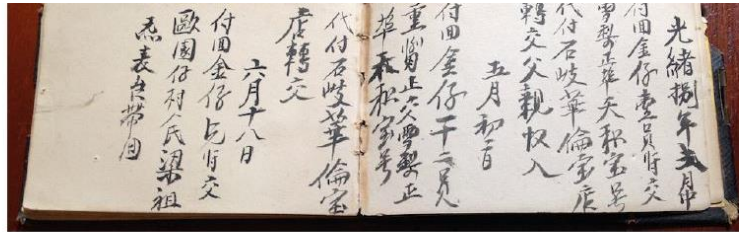


View of Miners Arms Hotel, a Government Commissioners Office (left), Tim's crushing machine (right) and other buildings and tents. Turon and Macquarie Junction, Hill End, American and Australasian Photographic Co. SLNSW



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In the 1870s, Chinese began establishing market gardens to supply the European mining population. The Hill End Register of Dams, Reservoirs and wells for domestic purposes shows that the majority of market gardeners were Chinese. A Chinese market garden can just be seen in the background of this photo of the Miner's Arms at the junction of the Turon and Macquarie Rivers, taken circa 1872.



TRANSLATION:

The Kuang Hsü Era

Year 8

Mid month 2 :

Sent back one gold coin. @21. Passed to Tin Woh of Sydney, to send on to Wah Lun of Shekki, to pass on to my father.

Month 5

Day 2 :

Sent back twelve gold coins. 2.52 taels in weight. Passed to Tin Woh of Sydney, to send on to Wah Lun of Shekki, to pass on.

Month 6

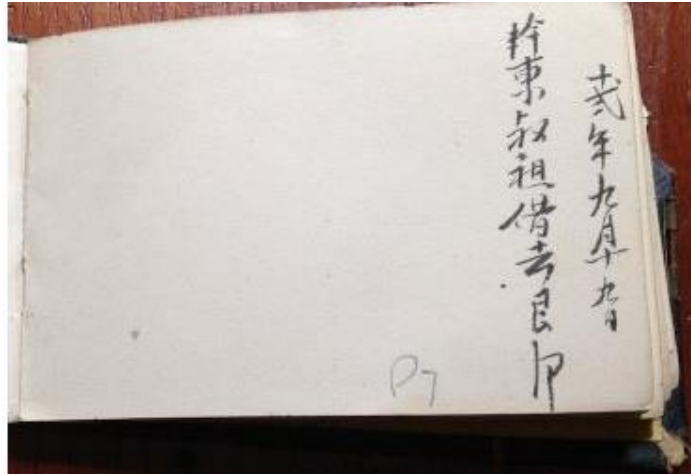
Day 18 :

Sent back one gold coin. Passed to Tin Woh of Sydney, to send on to Wah Lun of Shekki, to pass on to my father.

Translation of Bew Chip's Register pages XII and XIII

As time passed, there were fewer Chinese to return to their villages, so Bew Chip sent gold coins to Sydney firms, from where they were remitted to a store in Shekki to pass on. For example, the first entry here shows that in 1882, one gold coin was given to Tin Woh 天和 of Sydney, to send on to the Wah Lun 華倫 store in Shekki to pass on.

Bew Chip also sent coins through the Sydney firm of On Yik Lee.



Translation of Bew Chip's Register page XXVI

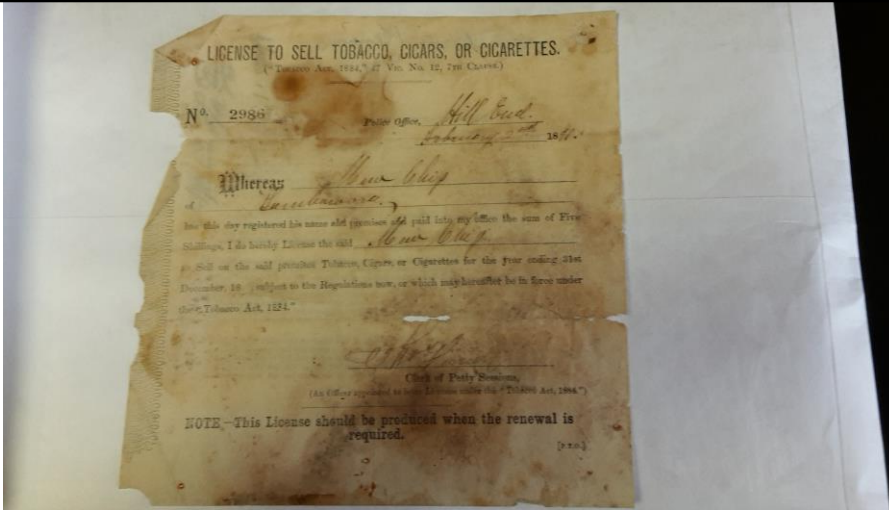
Amongst those who stayed on, perhaps without the means to return, was Bew Chip's Great Uncle Kon Tung, who on 16 October 1886, (or a date equating to then) borrowed 1 pound from Bew Chip.

But times were to get tougher yet. The *Chinese Restriction & Regulation Act* of 1888, prohibited any new arrivals from China from engaging in any kind of mining without the express authority of the Minister in charge of the Department of Mines. With no new young men to replace an aging population, no capital investment and a worked out field, gold was not easily found.

In 1890, Bew Chip remitted gold back to China for the last time.

By 1891, the male population of Tambaroora had declined to 164, of whom 59 were Chinese males.

Bew Chip turned to other occupations.



Nu Chip, National Parks and Wildlife Services Archives,
Old CWA office, Beyers Ave, Hill End: [NUC 0001].



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Perhaps Bew Chip managed a store for some time, as in 1891, he obtained a licence to sell tobacco in Tambaroora.

According to the memoirs of Hill End resident Walter Hamilton, New Chip was a miner, carpenter, bootmaker and pork butcher before he took up a garden. He would pack his vegetables from there to sell in Hill End and Tambaroora. As Bew Chip grew older, he moved closer into town.



"Poor Old Chip", Maris Collection, Courtesy of Hill End and Tambaroora Gathering Group



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Here is a photo of Bew Chip, titled "Poor Old Chip". Long-time Hill End resident Fred Thompson recalled:

My first memories of New Chip were going to his home in Tambaroora when I was about four or five with my brother Dick. He had a very good vegetable garden and took the vegetables to Hill End and sold them. He did this for many years. ...My brother Dick was a good gardener and visited New Chip who taught him about gardening. I remember sitting at table in the kitchen of his home and having a cup of tea. He was a very quiet and gentle man. He would always show me his garden and talk about the same.

Long-time Hill End resident, Les Hamilton who remembered New Chip walking into town during the 1920s and '30s to sell vegetables said: "Everyone liked Chip. He was a great bloke."

*Hill End National Parks and Wildlife Services Visitors Centre; Testimony of Walter Hamilton - Tambaroora
Fred Thompson, Pers. comm., 3 September 2016.*

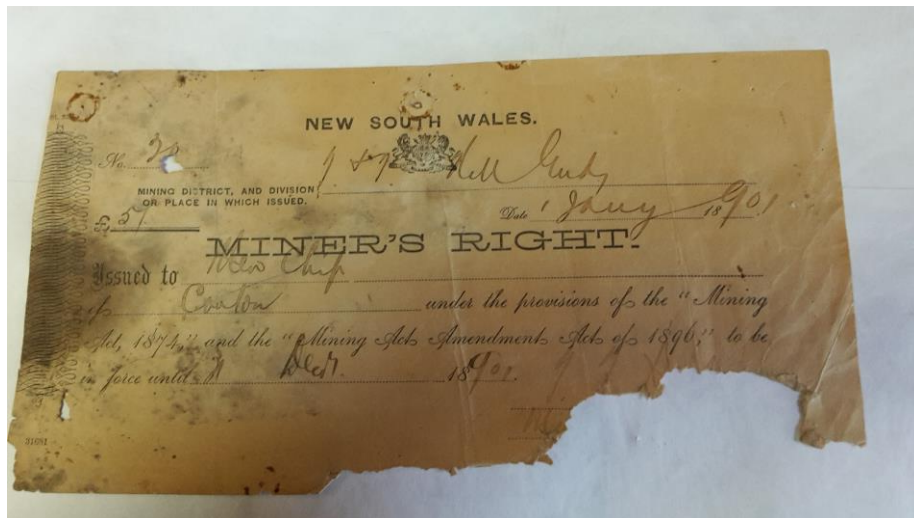


Chinese Miner at Hill End, circa 1908-10, NPWS archives,
file HUGHES HUG0003.



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Many of the Chinese men remaining in the district lived in poverty. Whilst they were not the only ones in the district struggling to make a livelihood, Chinese did it extra tough. Not only did they not have family to support them, but they were also deprived of any government assistance. The Old Age & Invalid Pensions Act introduced in 1908 disqualified Asiatics from the pension unless born in Australia. This is not a photo of Bew Chip but..



Miners Right dated January 1901, Nu Chip, National Parks and Wildlife Services, Old CWA office, Beyers Ave, Hill End: [NUC 0001].

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Miners Rights certificates issued in Bew Chip's name dated 1901, 1912 and 1920 and 1934 show he continued mining all his life.



"Poor Old Chip", Maris Collection, Courtesy of Hill End and Tambaroora Gathering Group

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Bew Chip's contemporaries went to New South Wales in the hope of finding gold, saving and returning home with glory. Not all succeeded.

Some never made it home. 56 Chinese deaths were registered at the Hill End Registry between 1874 and 1933.

Bew Chip was the last of his generation in Tambaroora. In March 1937, Hill End resident Bruce Goodwin drove Bew Chip to Bathurst station from where Bew Chip took a train to Lidcombe and entered the Lidcombe State Hospital, also known as the Rookwood Asylum.



Nu Chip [sic], Photo from the collection of Betty Maris,
Courtesy of the Hill End and Tambaroora Gathering Group

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He died there three months later. Bew Chip's death certificate, showed he had a wife and two children in China, but it seems he never returned to China to visit his family. Nor does it appear that he married or had children in Tambaroora.

He was buried in a paupers grave at Rookwood Cemetery. The Register was probably amongst his possessions when he died.

NSW BDM, Death certificate 6985/1937



Once Bew Chip left Hill End, the Chinatown area of Tambaroora was hydraulically sluiced, removing approximately four to six feet of soil from the surface in the operation. The Chinatown area disappeared completely. Today, little remains of the once bustling town of Tambaroora except a single chimney. Bew Chip's register is a rare source of information on the Cantonese who came as to New South Wales as gold-seekers, and the life of Bew Chip who stayed.

Bruce Goodwin, *Gold and People: Recollections of Hill End 1920s to 1960s* (Frenchs Forest NSW: B. Goodwin, 1992), 110-18.



Thank you

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In preparing this presentation, I'm indebted to members of the Hill End and Tambaroora Gathering Group.
I'd also like to specially thank Fred Thompson, one of the few people alive today who met Bew Chip.