Locality

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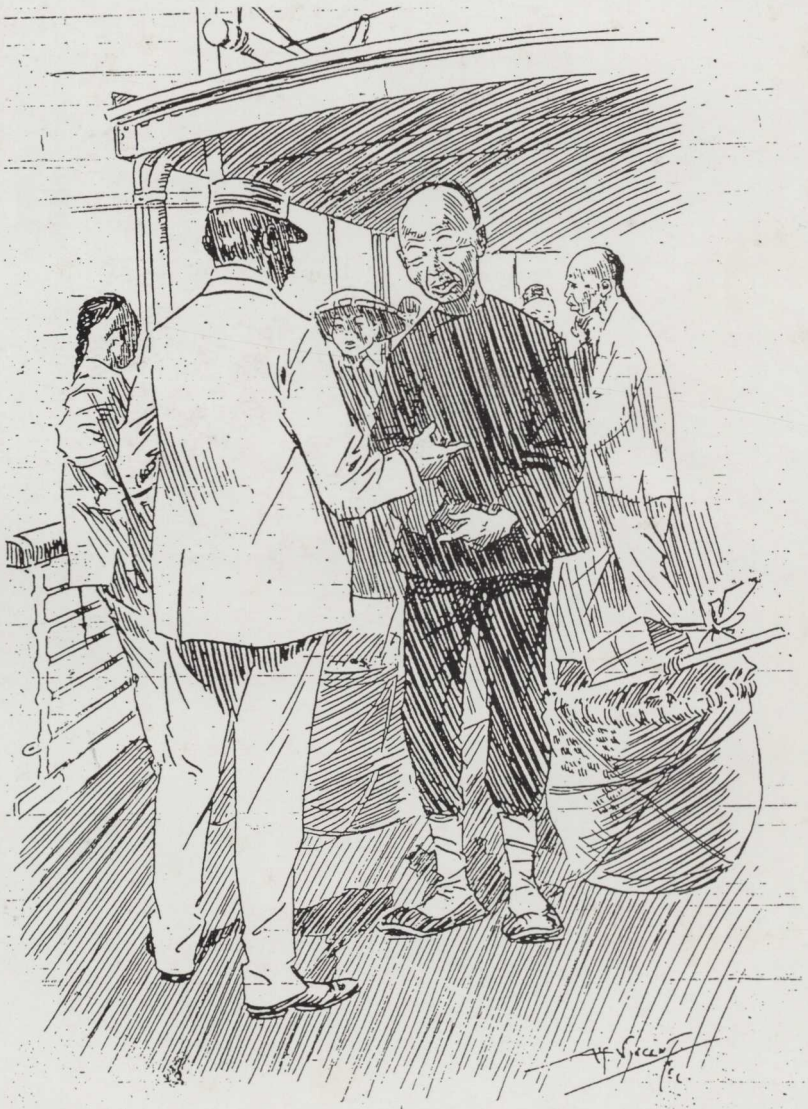

HE PASSED.

CUSTOMS OFFICER *(testing returned Chinaman)*: "*What do you know about South Melbourne?*"
CHINAMAN: "*Too muchee dam lallikin.*"

# Sourcing our Chinese past

VOLUME 11 NUMBER 2

# Observations of a 'China Consul'

*by Michael Williams*

*"From three causes, over-population, internecine feuds, and an universal spirit of gambling, resulting in different degrees of slavery, crime, and debt, gold-hunting possesses every attraction for men of the south, providing means of escape, or food for excitement, with the final inducement that if they return they will return rich enough to compensate for past offences or misfortunes."*[1]

This analysis of factors influencing Chinese migrants to the Australian colonies is to be found in a British Foreign Office report prepared in 1877 by one of its China Consuls. The 'Notes by Mr. Crawford on Chinese Immigration in the Australian Colonies' provide us, despite their often patronising Victorian expressions, with a range of keen observations on Australia's Chinese residents at this time. Observations that have the potential to greatly broaden our understanding of the diversity and motivations of Chinese people in nineteenth century Australia.

At first glance Crawford's observations in the above quoted passage would appear to be yet another in a long line of prejudiced European remarks about Chinese people.[2] Closer examination reveals, however, that Crawford's familiarity with Chinese language and culture and the basic neutrality of his intent, while acknowledging his obvious biases, give his direct observations a depth and interest that make them unique among 19th century non-Chinese sources. In even referring to more than a single motivation for 'gold-hunting' Crawford presents a broader range of influences than most researchers have done until very recently.[3] While his references to 'an universal spirit of gambling' and 'food for excitement' equates Chinese gold seekers to that flood of humanity who flocked to the goldfields of Australia and North America in the nineteenth century. The mention of 'slavery, crime, and debt' hints at conditions in China at the time, conditions with which Crawford was familiar and whose role in the method of people's migration he was also familiar. In referring to 'men of the south', Crawford appreciates that he is dealing with only a part of Chinese society, a part to which he is aware people may never return but that if they do, much will have been gained.[4]

It is the intention of this paper to point out where Crawford contributes to our understanding of Chinese people in 19th century Australia. Crawford reveals more of the diversity of the people he observed than most 19th century sources. He also gives explanations for specific aspects of the Chinese in Australia, notably the tendency to closely work old tailings and working arrangements generally, that differ from those found in the histories of Chinese Australia. Additionally, Crawford often comments on subjects that are missing from these histories and so provides us with possibilities for further research.

Before discussing these aspects of the report, however, it is useful to give some background to the report itself and to J. Dundas Crawford, its author. The credibility of Mr. Crawford as an observer should be looked at, in particular his claim to have relevant language skills. Also it may be useful to speculate on why this source has not been made greater use of by researchers.

The report was prepared on the instruction's of 'Her Majesty's Charge d'Affaires at Peking' who sent an official of the British Consular Service to the Australian colonies to gather the required information. Part I of the 'Notes' ranges over issues relating to Chinese migration in Australia including its context within the British Empire, wage and price comparisons, trade competition with the United States, impacts on wage rates, camp descriptions, medicines, European attitudes to Chinese, food and diet, business networks and the home life of a Chinese merchant in Victoria. Part II focuses on Cooktown and the nearby Palmer River goldfields, which were, at the time of Crawford's visit, the main destination of new arrivals from China. Topics include Aborigines, crops, climate, merchants, European resistance to Chinese arrivals, secret societies, women and finally the possibilities of a trans-national railway under a 'United Australia'.

The 'Notes' themselves were written up in China and forwarded from 'Shanghae' by the Acting Consul to the Foreign Secretary.[5] Why Mr. Crawford was given instructions to report on Chinese emigration to the

Australian colonies at this time has not yet come to light. The 'Peking' origins of the instructions could imply that the Chinese Imperial Government may have been making requests, as it certainly did ten years later.[6] Or it may have been because an official in London (or the colonies) had the idea that a report from someone who could actually read and speak Chinese might be of value. Whatever the reason, it is the fact that the report was written by someone with at least some degree of knowledge of both Chinese language and culture, that helps make this report unique among 19th century sources of Chinese Australian history.[7]

To what extent Mr. Crawford could speak and read Chinese can only be derived from the internal evidence of the report and from our knowledge of the Chinese Consular Service at the time J. Dundas Crawford was serving.[8] We know that all members of this service were trained in 'Chinese', that is Mandarin, but that in many areas of China to speak only Mandarin meant not being able to speak to most people.[9] The Pearl River Delta districts, from which the vast majority of Chinese people in Australia came, were just such non-Mandarin speaking areas. From remarks made in his report, however, it would appear that both Crawford's ability to read and speak while in the Australian colonies was reasonably high. Crawford translates various signs in Chinese stores and temples and criticises the Colony of Victoria's use of Chinese in its documents as 'somewhat inelegantly worded', while suggesting improvements. His ability to understand spoken Chinese (Cantonese) to some degree is supported by his reporting a conversation between the Melbourne merchant Kong Meng and his gardeners. None of this proves conclusively that his language abilities were of a high order but these abilities can be said to have been higher than most European commentators. Indeed, it was presumably because of these abilities that he was sent to do this report.[10]

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A knowledge of the Chinese language and a position in the British Chinese Consular Service do not in themselves make the 'Notes' a valuable source of Australian Chinese history, though these features do make them an interesting one. What gives the 'Notes' their value are the keen personal observations which provide us with details not usually found in comparable European observations.[11] While Mr. Crawford displays all the patronising habits of thought common to Victorian Englishmen, his own observations are intelligent and do not seem to be striving to do anything other than describe the situation of Chinese people at the time that he saw them. Where, however, he is reporting what others have told him, Mr. Crawford is uncritical and liable to accept much at face value, particularly in regard to Aboriginal Australians.

Despite the seeming value of this source of information, the 'Notes' have been little used by modern researchers.[12] This lack of use is not because the report is unknown to researchers. In fact, at least two well-known works of Australian Chinese history have made use of the 'Notes', though each for relatively minor references.[13] Two reasons might explain why more use hasn't been made of this source. The first is a post-modernist tendency to so dissect an observers prejudices and patterns of thought that little use is actually made of what is observed. While a second, more credible, reason for neglect of the 'Notes' would appear to be due to the limited knowledge of Chinese culture and background history on the part of most researchers of Chinese people in Australia.

Without some appreciation of Chinese culture and background history it is difficult to appreciate the value of what Crawford is telling us. Thus when slaves, the variations in districts of origins or the presence of 'Tartars' is observed, it may not at first be obvious that Mr. Crawford is providing new information and challenging assumptions. These assumptions usually revolve around the idea that the Chinese in Australia were basically all the same and that the circumstances of their origins and possible variations in these origins

are not relevant to their behaviour and settlement patterns in Australia. Some researchers have in fact pointed out the need to see the history of the Chinese in Australia from their own point of view.[14] However, it has been only recently that researchers have begun to do this.[15]

In a group such as the 'Chinese' in Australian history, so often subject to stereotyping, any evidence that assists in demolishing these stereotypes is of value. Crawford provides us with information concerning districts of origin, leisure habits, social origins and variations in cultural practices that enable us to appreciate the diversity of Chinese background people in Australia. On the significance of districts of origin and other divisions within the 'Chinese' community, Crawford is revealing.[16] He tells us of the 'rivalry of race between Hakka and Punti [Cantonese]', of feuds 'between Cantonese and Fuhkeen [Fujian]', of 'Amoy men', 'natives of Swatow' and that the 'Cantonese form under one of two great leagues of 'yik' which represent a division, political and sectarian, as well as geographical.' He identifies the people of 'Ironbark Camp, near Sandhurst, Victoria,' as a 'village of pure Tartars, who once formed part of the old Manchu garrison of Canton.' We are also told that of 'the five great places of Canton [Guangdong],' present in the Australian colonies, the wealthiest were from the 'guild of the three 'yik'', 'Canton citizens proper', 'who, despising their poorer neighbours of Tungkun and the more turbulent natives of Heongshan,' 'affect a private contempt in their hatred for the rival league of the four 'yik', a hatred 'to the full reciprocated'.[17]

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These references do not tells us what impact, if any, these divisions had on the history of Chinese people in Australia and further research based on greater awareness of this factor is needed. Crawford does, however, provide us with one interesting example of such an impact when he tells us that, 'on account of disagreements between the clans, Hakka and Punti', an attempt to set up organisations for ensuring that debts were repaid 'on the Californian principle' failed.[18] We are thus also incidentally informed that Chinese Australian and Chinese United States history did not necessarily follow the same paths.[19]

Not only are Chinese residents in 19th century Australia rarely distinguished by their districts of origin, but their class, or social and economic backgrounds, are rarely alluded to. Again the assumption appears to be that all arrivals from China were equally poor and a few made good while in Australia.[20] The 'Notes' give us many reasons to question such assumptions. Several references are made, for example, to 'slaves', including a 'lad sold for export', as well as to 'bondsmen', 'apprentices and freedmen', 'gang leaders' and 'clans'. Crawford also explains that 'slaves' in the Chinese context does not imply the degree of coercion and hardship his readers might infer and gives his opinion that both slaves and bondsmen are better off than in China. According to Crawford, slaves, 'complain not so much of their condition as of their master's improvidence in casting their lot [on the Palmer River] where so little return is apparently to be gained for so great risks.'[21]

Did the fact that some Chinese residents were bondsmen and others slaves make any difference? It is a common observation of Chinese gold diggers that they remained on deserted fields and due to either greater intelligence or patience or both, picked over 'exhausted' mines for gold.[22] Crawford's awareness of the diversity of the Chinese people in Australia enables him to give details of these work practices that allow us to go beyond explanations based on assumed psychological differences. Mining claims were often worked by 'bonded labourers and slaves' and 'on the older fields only diggers remain who are steadily working

under agreement.' For such a miner, 'if his earnings are not his own, his shoes remain of straw, his jacket of coarse blue cotton, and his luxuries continue to consist of pickled cabbage and jerked pork till his time is fulfilled.'[23] An explanation as to why many Chinese miners remained on nearly exhausted tailings based on contracted labourer arrangements is not to be found in any description of Chinese gold mining in Australia that I am aware of.

Beyond gold mining, the 'Notes' remind us that the range of occupations undertaken by Chinese people in Australia were quite diverse, though with notable exceptions. The usual stores and market gardening are mentioned as well as numerous others, including the nearly forgotten fact that Chinese residents 'divided the fisheries with Italians', and had 'stations on parts of the coast of Queensland'. Market gardening by Chinese people is described as having 'reduced vegetables from an expensive luxury, often exotic, to being a cheap and universal article of diet.' While the absence, compared to the United States, of bootmakers, washermen and domestics is noted, so also is that, 'No Australian capitalist employs Chinese in any manufacture or in any agricultural industry.'[24]

It was around the perceived challenge of cheap labour that much of the hostility to Chinese residents in 19th century Australia revolved. Modern researchers have attempted to show that this was perhaps a false impression but few have attempted to show why Chinese labour practices may have differed from those of

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Europeans.[25] Crawford helps us to understand the pattern of work among Chinese residents in the colonies not only according to cultural factors but as due to a variety of employment relationships. We are told there are workers in debt who 'under the influence of Australian institutions and the attraction of high wages' 'desert' their employers, others who quickly clear their debts and demand their own terms, while some slaves serve with 'a feudal devotion.' Also, there are those who are, 'bound to their employers as often by ties of kinship as by self-interest' or by the influence of ties to 'their families in China.'[26] This picture of diverse employment relationships and influences on Chinese workers is relevant to understanding the conflict with non-Chinese workers that arose in the late 19th century. In particular they can assist us to broaden our explanations beyond cultural differences or false impressions on the part of white workers.

The presence of organisations such as the 'Sheathed Sword' further illustrates the diversity of colonial Australia's Chinese residents. While much has been written about 'secret societies' and 'triads' among overseas Chinese, little is known about their existence in colonial Australia.[27] Crawford describes temples in Ballarat such as the 'Priceless Triad', the 'Triad of Purity' and the 'Triad of Union'. This last is that of the 'Sheathed Sword Society', a 'secret society' which Crawford distinguishes from other forms of communal organisation partly due to its 'preponderating influence' based on a 'sworn fraternity'. Crawford also observed that the role of the secret societies, which he describes as being chiefly, 'a public regard for the rites of burial and revenue [?] for the dead', were declining 'into mere tea-shops'.[28]

If secret societies helped people within their own communities, it was those who could speak English who played a vital role in dealing with the wider community. For a marginalised community this role went beyond the mere capacity to speak English; 'If a fracas occur in a teashop, or a watch be missed from the pocket of an opium-sleeper, it is the interpreter to whom the Chinese community looks for the punishment of law breakers, and on his head falls the blame when a thief eludes the police.' While most interpreters where born in Australia, others ways people might acquire

English included being 'educated in Cantonese schools or laboriously self-taught from their primers', still others may have 'been in the employ of a shipping firm at Shanghae', 'resident at Hong Kong' or 'interpreter on board Californian immigrant vessels'.[29]

A final aspect of the diversity of Chinese people in Australia relates to simply seeing them as human beings. Crawford helps here too, in his ponderous Victorian style, when he observes that for the 'immigrant', a 'humble extravagance keeps pace with the income, an imperceptible bettering of dress and accessories, too often attended by increasing expenditure in play.'[30] Observations on entertainment, including music, leisure activities and games of various kinds and a description of a merchant's private quarters, all help us to see more than the docile seller of vegetables or the quite hardworking goldseeker.

Many descriptions of gambling games popular with Chinese residents exist but Crawford also tells us that dominoes was popular and that 'immigrants from Fuhkeen' using a 'teetotum' played a game that took them through 'every official rank of the Mandarinate' until the winner achieved 'a Governor-Generalship'. Like many others, Crawford also refers to opium smoking, he in fact gives a wonderfully detailed analysis which includes the interesting observation that opium smoking is a habit 'indulged in so ostentatiously' in Australia. We are also told of other popular leisure habits such as meeting 'after work to smoke

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tobacco and drink tea'. While in Cooktown, entertainment of a more elaborate nature took place in the "Garden of Gold-Valleys" where 'music is given every evening free'.[31]

We know very little details of the private aspects of people's lives. Crawford seems to have personally visited at least one merchant's home, but unfortunately his brief description of the 'transition' from shop to private house only helps us to realise how little we know of this 'mat-hidden' world. A world of imported Chinese porcelain and bronzes, of petted children, portraits in Mandarin dress and of wives who play the zittar.[32]

While individuality continues to elude us, Crawford gives us two examples of divergence from what are usually seen as characteristic elements of the overseas Chinese. The regular remittance of money to families in China and a high level of concern about the dead to ensure the removal of their bones to the home village were undoubtedly true of most Chinese residents.[33] Yet Crawford tells us that only a 'few remit money to China' and that there is 'little zeal regarding funerals at Cooktown'. In the early days of the Palmer River goldfield we are even told it, 'required all the efforts of the police to force the Chinese to bury their dead'. In Melbourne, Crawford reports he was told the reason for the lack of concern about funeral organisations was that, "We are young and death comes rarely".[34]

That such observations could be made suggests at least two considerations relevant to future Chinese Australian research. The first is that among diverse groups of slaves, bondsmen, etc., coming to the Australian colonies from many districts of origin, the fact that they felt little regard for each other, despite the European insistence that they were 'countrymen', should not be considered surprising.[35] The second consideration is that links to home districts and villages did not necessarily spring up with the first arrivals but grew gradually, as networks developed, sponsored arrivals joined relatives and needs arose. These are interpretations based on Crawford's observations that require further research but they suggest that Chinese Australian history could benefit from being seen in more evolutionary or developmental terms.

If Chinese people could vary in their adherence to strong custom then it is conceivable that Europeans could vary in their adherence to prejudice. In this regard Crawford provides us with an observation of quite dramatic differences between Sydney and Melbourne. We are told that all

Chinese people, 'whether rich or poor, reduce themselves at Sydney to a common level, in order to disarm public opposition'. The 'result of this artificial system is apparent in the unhappy air of constraint which characterises the Chinese of Sydney and distinguishes them from their free-mannered countrymen in Victoria.'[36] Crawford's comments are not in themselves proof that such differences between the colonies existed but they are suggestive. Various regional studies have illustrated the differing patterns of Northern Queensland, Western Australia and Darwin,[37] but the assumption that Victoria and NSW were the same remains unquestioned and therefore uninvestigated.[38]

Another interesting contribution by Mr. Crawford concerns the methods by which villagers made their way to the Australian and Californian goldfields and other distant places. The term 'credit-ticket' is most commonly used to cover a system whereby people would go into debt to pay for their passage and then repay the principle and interest. Perhaps by working for someone connected with the original creditor, if not that creditor himself.[39] According to Crawford; 'country villagers [could] either form themselves into co-operative bands and emigrate in a clan, or individually to enter into unwritten bonds with a labour agent.'[40] Slaves have already been referred to and this could include 'voluntary servitude' which would confer 'a small pension upon their parents, which would be forfeited by their manumission.' Workmen could also participate in

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South-east Asian wide networks which included the Australian colonies and, 'make a living by serving successive contracts of three or four years' duration in such places as Saigon, Manila, Queensland, or Singapore'. If heading for the Queensland goldfields specifically, they might seek out 'emigration agents', employed by companies in both Australia and China. Transport to Queensland would be by various classes of steamer, including ones chartered by a Melbourne based firm such as one which carried 200 'picked men' organised into gangs 'including slaves'. The 'Notes by Mr. Crawford' make sufficient reference to a variety of methods to suggest that either 'credit-ticket' was only one of many methods or that its definition needs to be greatly widened.

A final contribution by the 'Notes' worth mentioning relates to two myths of significance to 'white Australia', namely Lambing Flat and that of alleged Aboriginal cannibalism and a supposed preference for 'Chinese'. Both these myths enjoyed a wide circulation and appear to have done so at the Palmer River Goldfields too, according to Crawford. The observation of interest is that both stories appear to have been told, at least in part, by Europeans in an effort to 'bluff' the Chinese 'by dark allusions to the tragedy of Lamming [sic] Flat' and in the case of the cannibalism myth, by Chinese fireside storytellers also, to terrify newcomers.[41]

"In Victoria and New South Wales ... the transition from miner to artizan still proceeds, but slowly." As Mr. Crawford realised, his report was made at a time when the movement of people from China to the Australian colonies for gold had peaked. It also came not long before the enactment of major anti-Chinese immigration laws in the 1880s made this same report's prediction of a 'nucleus of Asiatic colonization' impossible.[42] The 'Notes' therefore were compiled at a pivotal time in the history of Chinese people in Australia. By providing modern researchers with a better understanding of the diversity of Chinese residents in the Australian colonies, Crawford can assist us in getting beyond stereotypes and cultural assumptions. Something that the well intended efforts of modern researchers, employing 'anti-racist' rhetoric alone, cannot do.

The 'Notes' provide many observations of value to the researcher of Chinese Australian history, each in themselves small and

viewed in isolation, not conclusive. It has not been the purpose of this paper to argue for each observation's validity but rather to highlight them in order to encourage further efforts at understanding the diversity and evolution of Chinese Australian history. That such an interesting and valuable source has been neglected, partly due to a failure to recognise the significance of what was observed, is an indication of how much still needs to be done before Australia fully understands the role of its Chinese residents and of some of its own myths concerning them. The observations of this China Consul still have something to contribute.

1 J. Dundas Crawford, 'Notes by Mr. Crawford on Chinese Immigration in the Australian Colonies', September 1877, *Great Britain Foreign Office Confidential Prints*, F.O. 3742, p.2.

2 There are numerous examples of such material, see Bill Hornadge, *The yellow peril; a squint at some Australian attitudes towards Orientals*, Review Publications, Dubbo, 1971 and Yu Ouyang, 'Australian invention of Chinese invasion: a century of paranoia, 1888/1988', *Australian Literary Studies* Vol.17, No.1 May pp.10-11, 1995.

3 This is discussed in detail by Yong Chen, 'The Internal Origins of Chinese Emigration to California Reconsidered' *Western Historical Quarterly*, 28 Winter 1997, pp.521-546.

4 It is not that such reference are unknown to historians of Chinese Australia but that they are rarely drawn together and never by 19th century European sources.

5 Crawford, op.cit., p.1. There is a copy of the report in the Queensland State Archives and a reference to it being received by the NSW Governor also.

6 'The Chinese Minister at this Court, in a note dated the 12th December last, called my attention to the position of Chinese subjects in certain of the Queen's Colonies, and requested that an inquiry might be instituted into the laws enacted against them by some of the Colonial Legislatures.' Salisbury to Sir J. Walsham, Her Majesty's Minister Peking, June 22, 1888, Foreign Office Confidential Print, 6018, December 1890.

7 Certainly unique among European sources. Material from Chinese people themselves is extremely rare and is usually found in witness evidence to official reports. These include the 'Report on the condition of the Chinese Population in Victoria', 1868 by Rev William Young, which includes a copy of the rules of the 'Su-Yap' Society from 1854, to be found in Ian Francis McLaren, *The Chinese in Victoria: official reports and documents*, Red Rooster Press, Victoria, 1985, pp.31-58 and the NSW *Report of the Royal Commission on Alleged Chinese Gambling and Immorality and Charges of Bribery Against Members of the Police Force*, Appointed August 20th 1891, Government Printer, Sydney, 1892. The Chinese language newspapers are of course the best such source but the first of these was not published until 1894. The most accessible information on these papers for the non-Chinese reader is, Yu Lan Poon, "The two-way mirror: contemporary issues as seen through the eyes of the Chinese language press, 1901-1911" in Shirley Fitzgerald & Garry Wotherspoon (Ed), *Minorities: cultural diversity in Sydney*, State Library of New South Wales Press, Sydney, 1995, Chapter 3. An example of what can be done by personal observation without cultural and language knowledge is the also neglected, Margaret Egerton, 'My Chinese', *The Cosmos Magazine*, Sept, pp.124-128, Oct, pp. 138-141 and Nov, pp.192-196, 1896.

8 Little is known about J. D. Crawford personally except that his father was a Resident Magistrate in New Zealand and that he passed the Civil Service examination in March 1870 age 19. In 1877 he is recorded as assisting in Ichang and in that year is reported to have suffered a breakdown and transferred to Shanghai but jumped overboard on the voyage to Hong Kong and returned to England, where he died aged 52. See, P. D. Coates, *The China Consuls, British Consular Officers, 1843-1943* Oxford University Press, Hong Kong, 1988, pp.79, 274, 357 and 513. See also the report of Crawford's intended visit in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 15/12/1876. (My thanks to Phillip Bramble for locating this newspaper report.)

9 Coates, op.cit., p.82 where he also states that 'the dialect-speaking southern ports were normally staffed by officers unable to communicate with ordinary local people.'

10 Crawford, op.cit., pp.8-10, 14 & 28-29 and p.19. In a newspaper report of his visit Crawford is described as "a fluent speaker of the Chinese language", *Sydney Morning Herald*, 15/12/1876.

11 See note 2. I would regard 'My Chinese' op.cit. as an exception to this.

12 Neither by modern historians nor it would appear by the people who commissioned it, a not unusual fate for official reports.

13 Kathryn Cronin, *Colonial Casualties: Chinese in Early Victoria*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1982, pp.20-22, n. 9, 11, 12 and p.41 & Jan Ryan, *Ancestors: Chinese in colonial Australia*, Fremantle Arts Centre, Fremantle, 1995, p.18 n.12 and p.21 n.32. So minor were these references that I did not pick up on Crawford's value from them but from a remark in George F. Seward, *Chinese Immigration in its Social and Economical aspects*, Charles Scribner's Sons, NY, 1881, p. 415, in which he refers to a 'Mr. Dundas Crawford of H.M. Consular Services' and his 1877 report on Chinese people in Australia. From there it was possible to locate the report in the NLA's copies of Australian related British Foreign Office material.

14 Such as, Arthur Huck, "A note on Hwuy-ung's letters from Melbourne 1899-1912", *Historical Studies*, Vol 9, No.35, 1960, p.316; J. W. Cushman, "A 'Colonial Casualty': The Chinese community in Australian Historiography", *Asian Studies Association of Australia*, Vol. 7, No 3 April, 1984, pp.100-113 and H. D. Min-hsi Chan, 'A decade of achievement and future directions in research on the history of the Chinese in Australia' in Paul Macgregor, (Ed) *Histories of the Chinese in Australasia and the South Pacific*, Museum of Chinese Australian History, Melbourne, 1995, pp.419-423.

15 The best collection of the most recent research of this kind can be found in Regina Ganter (Ed), 'Asians in Australia History', *Queensland Review*, Vol. 6, No. 2, November, 1999.

16 It is not that researchers have been unaware of the districts of origins but having mentioned them, little regard is then paid to the possible difference such divisions might have made to settlement patterns or to life in general.

17 Crawford, op.cit., p.7-8. For more information about the role of these districts and a map of the Pearl River Delta Districts see, Michael Williams, 'Sojourn in Your Native Land' *Queensland Review*, Vol. 6, No.2, Nov 1999, pp.14-17.

18 Crawford, op.cit., p.11 and p.19. For details of these organisations and their procedures in the United States see, David W. Galenson, 'Chinese Immigration and Contract Labor in the Late Nineteenth Century', *Explorations in Economic History*, Vol. 1, 24, 1987, pp.22-42.

19 Another difference was that these United States organisations based on the 'Californian principle' also acted as labour importers and brokers themselves, Galenson, op.cit., p.28.

20 Jean Gittins, *The Diggers from China: The story of the Chinese on the Goldfields*, Quartet Books, Melbourne, 1981, p.8, simply says they were all 'poor people'. Those who use Rev Young's report know that he at least mentioned 'artisans, traders and intellectuals' in addition to 'agricultural labourers and peasants'.

21 Crawford, op.cit., pp.4, 5, 19, 23, 29 and 30.

22 Gittins, op.cit., p.75, 'having observed the careless methods of the average European miner, they were content to go over abandoned ground and 'tailings" and Geoffrey Serle, *The Golden Age*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1963, p.322, 'with more patience than most European miners.'

23 Crawford, op. cit. p.19, p.3 and p.5.

24 Ibid., p. 18 and p.3. This last is noteworthy given the original purpose of Chinese contracted labour in the 1840s.

25 See Andrew Markus, *Fear and Hatred: Purifying Australia and California 1850-1901*, Hale & Iremonger, Sydney, 1979, pp.81-87 and pp.157-179; Shirley Fitzgerald, *Red Tape, Gold Scissors*, State Library of NSW Press, Sydney, 1997, p.76 & 83; and Charles Archibald Price, *The great white walls are built: restrictive immigration to North America and Australasia, 1836-1888*, Canberra: Australian Institute of International Affairs in association with ANU Press, 1974, pp.163-64.

26 Crawford, op.cit., p.19.

27 For example, Frederic Wakeman, 'The Secret Societies of Kwangtung, 1800-1856' in Jean Chesneaux (Ed), *Popular Movements and Secret Societies in China 1840-1950*, Standford University Press, 1972, pp.29-47 and Maurice Freeman, 'Immigrants and Associations: Chinese in nineteenth century Singapore' in L.A.Fallers (Ed), *Immigrants and Associations*, Mouton, Paris, 1967, pp.25-35.

28 Crawford, op.cit., p.9 and p.10.

29 Ibid., p.13 and p.27.

30 Ibid., p.5.

31 Ibid., p.15, p.11, p.10 and p.29.

32 Ibid., pp.19-20.

33 Maurice Freedman, *Chinese Lineage and Society: Fukien and Kwangtung*, University of London, Athlone Press, 1966, pp.139-140, on the role of bones in ancestor worship. Sinn, Power & Charity, Oxford University Press, NY, p.18, considers that concern for the dead was 'paramount' with the overseas Chinese. For these aspects in Australia see, Williams, op.cit. and Janis Wilton, Chinese Voices, Australian Lives, Ph.D. thesis, UNE, 1996.

34 Crawford, op.cit., p.5, p.23 and p.29. See 'The Chinese Question', *Cooktown Courier*, 15/9/1875 for a contemporary effort to explain the cultural reasons for this reluctance to bury the dead.

35 Crawford, op.cit., p.23.

36 Ibid., p.11.

37 See Ryan, op.cit, Cathie May, *Topsawyers: the Chinese in Cairns 1870 to 1920*, James Cook University, Qld, 1984 and Diana Giese, Beyond Chinatown: Changing Perspectives on the Top End Chinese Experience, National Library of Australia, Canberra, 1995.

***In order to understand an area it is necessary to obtain an understanding of the lives of the individuals, both anonymous and well-known, who were associated with it.***

38 This is despite such clues as the fact that Victoria seems to have been the only colony to put official documents into Chinese and to have two Chinese merchants on the board of a major bank, including Chinese characters on its bank notes. See, G. Oddie, "The Lower Class Chinese and the Merchant Elite in Victoria, 1870-1890", *Historical Studies*, Vol 10 Nov 1961, No 37, pp.65-69.

39 Fitzgerald, op.cit., p.26; Serle, op.cit., pp.320-21, acknowledges the vagueness of the descriptions of 'credit-ticket'. Most rely on Persia Crawford Campbell, *Chinese coolie emigration to countries within the British Empire*, P.S. King & Sons, Westminster, 1923. For a more recent discussion see, Galenson, op.cit., pp.22-42.

40 Crawford, op.cit., p.2.

41 Crawford, op.cit., p.2, p.29, p.30, p.33, p.22, and pp.31-32. It is not suggested that Lambing Flat did not occur but only that its image in the popular imagination and the historical reality diverge somewhat. For the cannibalism myth see, Michael Pickering, 'Consuming Doubts: What some people Ate? Or what some people Swallowed?' in Laurence R. Goldman (ed), *The Anthropology of Cannibalism*, Bergin and Garvey, Westport, 1999.

42 Crawford, op.cit., p.4 and p.3.

# Using Database Technology to Research Individuals with Chinese Names: A case study of Little Bourke Street Melbourne

*By Sophie Couchman*

*They [the women of the Presbyterian Women's Mission Union] would visit the homes somewhere up in the little lanes you know. Most people would probably be a little doubtful going in to. These ladies had no fear of going into these places. In actual fact, it was a very safe locality to be in...if you knew it. But of course it had the reputation of not being very salubrious.*[1]

In the excerpt above Ron Wong Loy, a former resident of Little Bourke Street, recalls the role of the Presbyterian Women's Mission Union in the community. He draws attention to the negative way in which the area was viewed but qualifies this by saying that if 'you knew it' it was a 'very safe locality'. It is the 'knowing' of Little Bourke Street which is what is needed in order to move beyond the strong stereotypes which are still associated with the area. In order to understand an area it is necessary to obtain an understanding of the lives of the individuals, both anonymous and well-known, who were associated with it. This requires the collection of