CHINAMAN TYCOON

LIFE AND TIMES OF LEW HING (1858 – 1934)

***From the***

***LEW/QUAN FAMILY PAPERS***

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***LEW HING-CHIN DEAD***

***IN CALIFORNIA AT 77***

***\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_***

***Chinese Immigrant. Boy Became***

***Noted Captain of Industry***

***On the West Coast***

***\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_***

***Special to The New York Times***

**SAN FRANCISCO, March 8. –**

**Lew Hing-chin, Chinese immigrant**

**boy who in the space of half a cen-**

**tury became a captain of industry,**

**died today at his home in Oakland.**

**He was 77 years old.**

**At the age of 11, he came to Cali-**

**fornia with insufficient money to**

**provide food for his needs. He**

**found work in an Oakland cannery**

**and within a few years became its**

**owner. Later he established the**

**Pacific Coast Canning Company in**

**West Oakland, assuming the presi-**

**dency of the plant. He also became**

**the president of the Canton Bank**

**in San Francisco and vice president**

**and general manager of the China**

**Mail Steamship Company.**

**Broadening his scope, he founded**

**The Chinese-Mexican Mercantile**

**Company of Mexicali and engaged**

**in the import trade by becoming**

**President of the Hop Wop Lung**

**Company of San Francisco, and**

**founding the Sing Chong Company,**

**to handle retail trade.**

**When, in 1918, he attempted to**

**increase the stock of the China**

**Mail Steamship Company from $2,-**

**500,000 to $10,000,000, he was op-**

**posed by the stockholders of the**

**company and his name was placed**

**first on a secret “hate list.” For**

**years he was forced to have police**

**protection.**

**In recent years he had been re-**

**tiring from active business, dividing**

**his holdings among his son, Lew**

**Gow, Thomas C. Lew and Ralph**

**Lew. His sons and his wife were**

**With him at the time of his death.**

Shunned in Chinatown due to the failure of Canton Bank and China Mail Steamship Lines, his passing attracts little attention in Chinatown. However, the New York Times, the San Bernadino Sun and the hometown, Oakland Tribune publish his obituary.

Baptized in 1933, his funeral services are held at the Chinese Presbyterian Church in Oakland, California.

**The Early Years**

**1858 - 1877**

THE EARLY YEARS: TRAINED TO BE A MERCHANT

Lew Hing was born on May 26, 1858 in Li Ao Village, an old settlement of the Lew clan in the town of Dajiang of the Xinning district (now Taishan) in Guangdong Province, China.

Liu Naicong, his father, moves the family from the village to Canton, the capital and biggest city of Guangdong Province where he prospers as a merchant. In the 1860s, he sends his eldest son by his first wife to San Francisco to open Hing Kee & Co., a dry goods store in Chinatown.

Lew Hing, a third son by his third wife is sent to Hong Kong for basic education in Chinese and rudimentary English. Upon completing school in 1871, Lew Hing travels alone on the Pacific Mail Steamship *China* to San Francisco to begin a merchant apprenticeship.

During the day, Lew Hing learns under the strict tutelage of his brother while attending English classes on his own at the Presbyterian Chinese Mission House in the evenings.

AN OPPORTUNITY APPEARS

By 1872, Lew Hing’s apprenticeship complete, the older brother leaves for China to visit family. Tragically, he perishes in route after *PSS America* catches fire in the harbor of Yokohama, Japan.

Under Confucian influenced cultural traditions, if his brother survived and returned to San Francisco, Lew Hing’s dream of a different fate would be dashed. Left to operate the shop alone, he demonstrates the ability to substantially increase the business.

Lew Hing’s curiosity about the world outside of Chinatown prompts him to seek friendship with a white customs broker, Peter William Bellingall, 15 years his senior. P. W. takes a liking to young Lew Hing and with his encouragement, Lew Hing begins to see possibilities beyond operating a dry goods store in Chinatown.

P. W. Bellingall describes Lew Hing as “one of my very best friends” in an unpublished memoir, writing “No white man on earth could have been a kinder friend than Lew Hing has been to me.” They remained lifelong friends.

GREATER AMBITIONS

On June 1, 1874, with his father’s blessing, Lew Hing begins to realize his dream of pursuing more opportunities. He forms a partnership to operate Hing Kee & Co. and files a public announcement in the *San Francisco Examiner*.

Freed from the daily presence in the store, Lew Hing visits stores outside of Chinatown observing new trends in products. Seeing new products made of tin, with P.W.’s help, Lew Hing apprentices in a white tin shop to learn the trade.

Armed with the knowledge gained from his apprenticeship, Lew Hing partners with P. W. where Lew Hing fabricates tin cans in the back of Hing Kee while P.W. deals with white tin suppliers, warehousemen, banks and sales agents. It is the first exposure for young Lew Hing to American business practices.

By 1877, with a successful business manufacturing cans for canners, particularly the salmon canneries, Lew Hing converts all of the Hing Kee & Co. space into a tin shop named Wo Hing Kee.

MARRIAGE AND A FAMILY

Business success allows Lew Hing to notify his parents he is ready for marriage. As a child, he was betrothed to Chin Hou, three years younger, the 6th daughter of a herbalist living on the same street in Canton as his parents.

In 1877, Chin Hou is 16 when she and Lew Hing marry in Canton in a “proxy” marriage where Lew Hing is overseas and represented by a rooster, allowable under Chinese law.

Chin Shee (her married name), her mother-in-law and the rooster then depart for San Francisco, first stopping in Hong Kong at the American consulate to qualify for entry.

Prior to 1875, America has an open border policy but enactment of the 1875 Page Act, the first restrictive federal immigration law effectively limits the entry of women from Asia by enacting a screening process. Predominately designed to stop the formation of permanent Chinese colonies, it targets Chinese women, claiming they intend to practice prostitution in America.

U.S. Consul in Hong Kong David H. Bailey, a strong opponent of Chinese immigration, devises a draconian procedure to deter entry. Applicants are subject to numerous grueling interrogations by different authorities in Hong Kong, on ships to San Francisco and at the docks in San Francisco. Bailey’s procedure is successful as in 1877, a mere 77 Chinese women legally enter, one being non-English speaking Chin Shee.

A second wedding ceremony is held in San Francisco on November 22, 1877. On December 7, 1878, their first child, a daughter, Lew Yung is born in an apartment at 715 Commercial Street, across from Wo Hing Kee at 716 Commercial.

Chin Shee gives birth to 12 children, seven surviving to adulthood (Lew Yung in 1877, Lew Gow in 1885, Lew Mui in 1889, Lew Oy in 1891, Lew Sing in 1894, Lew Ngon in 1898 and Lew Quong in 1903).

In addition to 7 surviving children, Chin Shee would have four miscarriages and a son Lew Ming who passes as a child.

Lew Hing would have a son Lew Quai (Quay) with his second wife Jung Shee who passes as a child.

Both Lew Ming and Lew Quai are married to deceased girls of the same approximate age and date of death in “ghost marriages” started in the Han dynasty. Traditional and wealthy families believed unmarried heirs roaming in the netherworld might not be auspicious for continuing the family’s good fortune. Details of both marriages were inscribed on copper plaques and prominently displayed with family photos.

**NUTURING A DREAM**

**1877 - 1902**

STEP BY STEP

In 1884, Lew Hing moves Wo Hing Kee to larger space at 621 Jackson Street and his family to 707 ½ Commercial Street where in 1885, Lew Gow, his first son and presumed heir of his businesses is born.

The success of the tin shop is not enough for Lew Hing. He sees a greater business opportunity in producing a product for the end user market. Already fabricating tin containers, why not fill them with processed foods?

With the tin shop in the hands of trusted employees, Lew Hing takes a job in a cannery to learn the basics of food processing. At night, he experiments to perfect his own canning method.

According to testimony before U. S. Immigration Service on October 3, 1930, Lew Hing’s first cannery is on Jackson Street. It may have been at 732 Jackson Street, across the street from Wo Hing Kee.

THE POGROM AGAINST THE CHINESE

When the cannery opens on Jackson Street, the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act banning Chinese immigration is in place. By mid-1880s, anti-Chinese forces focus on driving out Chinese already in America. In the towns and cities where Chinese live and work, white mobs murder, rape, loot and burn their businesses and residences to drive them out.

By the end of the 1880s, Chinese are driven out of nearly 200 towns in the Pacific Northwest and California. An account of violence against the Chinese is documented in a 2007 book *“Driven Out: The Forgotten War Against Chinese Americans”* by Jean Pfalzer.

Thousands of Chinese seek refuge in San Francisco Chinatown already overcrowded with people living in unsanitary conditions.

With lack of work attributed to racial prejudice, unsanitary conditions and rampant crime, many Chinese decide to return to China. Lew Hing’s new cannery “Tai Fung” (Peaceful and Beautiful” benefits as those making the trip home purchase many of the only cans with a Chinese label. Soon, demand exceeds production and Lew Hing looks to expand his operation.

OVERCOMING FINANCIAL LIMITATIONS

For Chinese to find capital for a large enterprise is a challenge. No white bank or investment house risk investing in a Chinese business during a time of intense anti-Chinese sentiment. Lew Hing would find a tough time financing his project. Complicating his search for funding is his being a Sze Yup and considered by the Sam Yup merchants, the wealthiest in Chinatown, to be an upstart whom they want to see fail. His path to fund his project is limited by this prejudice but regardless of the odds, he pushes on.

Fortunately, a fellow Sze Yup Lew Kan takes interest in Lew Hing’s cannery project. The wealthy owner of Lun Sing, one of the oldest businesses in Chinatown, is aware of Lew Hing’s success as a shopkeeper, owner of a tin shop and finally a small cannery. Lew Kan’s agreement to become a silent partner in the new cannery likely attracts others of the Sze Yup community to invest.

With financing in place, Lew Hing locates, rents and equips a three-story wooden building next door to the Chinese Consulate on Stockton Street. Working in a residential building, Lew Hing plans for fruit and vegetables to be prepped, cooked and canned in the basement and surrounding space in the alley behind the building and adjoining buildings. The finished products are hoisted by pulley to the first-floor where the canned are labeled, boxed and warehoused. The second floor will house the offices for the cannery while his family will live on the third floor. By the mid-1890s, the cannery occupies buildings at 802, 804, 808 and 810 Stockton Street. A 1900 federal census lists Lew Kan, his two wives and family and Lew Hing, his two wives and family living on the third floor above the cannery at 804 Stockton Street.

A SUCCESSFUL LAUNCH

Pacific Fruit Packing Company opens for business in 1887, the same year as the “Sandlot Incident” fueled by the infamous slogan of Denis Kearney’s Workingmen’s Party of California “The Chinese Must Go.” White mobs roam San Francisco, murdering Chinese and torching Chinese businesses, mainly laundries.

In such unfriendly times, Lew Hing hides ownership of the cannery beginning with the name Pacific Fruit Packing Company. All business contact is through the selling agent Frank H. Foote in the business directory. Raw materials for the cannery are handled by Minaker & Welbanks and Wo Hing Kee supplies the cans. Later, Lew Hing will buy or lease orchards, sometimes with Lew Kan to create a vertically integrated enterprise.

Products are marketed under distinctly western brand names: Pacific Fruit Packing Company of San Francisco; San Francisco Fruit Canning Company; and Alameda Canning & Packing Company. Labels on the cans carry the phrase “Made by white labor” as Lew Hing gives white women and girls jobs when jobs are scarce for them.

TARGETED BY WHITES

After five years of operation without incident, in 1891, an article appears in the *San Francisco Chronicle* critical of Pacific Fruit Packing Company. In it, the reporter exposes the unusual arrangement of white women and girls working under Chinese bosses, writing of the “reversing things with a vengeance.” The expose, during the height of anti-Chinese sentiments, implies that the Chinese may very well abuse white women and girls working in the cannery.

Throughout the decade, Pacific Fruit Packing Company remains a target of negative publicity.

For example, after a Supreme Court’s decision upholding the constitutionality of the Geary Act in 1893, an article in a local paper quotes a disgruntled ex-fruit canner:

“The Chinese are ruining every business. They learn how to can fruit, then lease a shed in which they and the slaves of Six Companies go to work. The canner will take anything if it is cheap. A leper is able to solder cans, peel tomatoes, or remove stones from plums and apricots. He is cheap and given work. You can go to a Chinese cannery on Stockton Street today and buy canned fruit labeled ‘Made by white labor.’

By the end of the decade, in 1899, an article titled “Caucasian Cheap Labor” appears in the *San Francisco Examiner* claiming Lew Hing, the Chinese boss abuses white women and white girls working in Pacific Fruit Packing Company, ruling them “as few masters outside of a slave pen would think of doing.”

WHITE COMPETITORS FAIL TO ELIMINATE PACIFIC FRUIT

In June, 1899, eleven white canneries form a cartel, California Fruit Canners Association, controlling more than one half of the canning capacity. It intends to drive competitors, including Pacific Fruit Packing out of business, by dictating terms to fruit growers and negotiating cheaper freight costs.

Many independent canners go out of business but Pacific Fruit survives by reducing payroll costs through hiring more Chinese workers in place of white workers and by selling its products beyond the shores of America to the Orient under the label “Tai Fung” and to Europe under the Pacific Fruit labels.

By the end of the 19th century, an industry report lists Pacific Fruit Packing as third among canneries in California measured by packing of an estimated 30,000 cases of tomatoes.

CONDITIONS PRESAGE A GREATER ROLE FOR LEW HING

The latter half of the 1880s and the 1890s is a tumultuous period as thousands of Chinese driven out from cities in Pacific Northwest and California seek refuge In San Francisco Chinatown. Unable to find gainful employment, single men join Tongs.

As rival Tongs fight for control of the gambling, prostitution and drugs, the fragile social and political stability of Chinatown is strained and the 1890s opens with heightened tensions between Six Companies and Chee Kung Tong, an association of the Triads societies over control of power in Chinatown.

Influence in Chinatown begins to shift when Chee Kung Tong and Six Companies take sides over the 1892 Geary Act requiring every Chinese, citizen or not, to carry a certificate of residence at all times in public. Six Companies believes the requirement unjust and unconstitutional while Chee Kong Tong urge the Chinese to comply.

On May 15, 1893, the United States Supreme Court in *Fong Yue Ting v. United States* rules the registration requirement constitutional; that Congress had the “absolute and unqualified” power to devise procedures to register and deport resident Chinese aliens.

Residents of Chinatown begin to question Six Companies leadership which is further harmed by internal dissension fracturing the fragile relationship between the Sam Yup and Sze Yup.

Previously, the two leading communities in Chinatown worked to resolve disputes. However, in 1895 when the Sam Yup demanded a Sze Yup servant accused of murdering a prominent Sam Yup pay with his life, the simmering resentment over the dominance of Six Companies by the much smaller Sam Yup community results in a call to boycott all Sam Yup businesses by the Sze Yup. The boycott dooms any attempt for reconciliation between the two major communities in Chinatown until 1898.

The loss of prestige and influence of Chinese Six Companies, long the mechanism for mediating between the Sze Yup and Sam Yup presages a shift in power in Chinatown. The continued stalemate frees the Tongs to prey on the weak and defenseless.

The tong gained broad appeal by offering brotherhood and mutual protection to anyone regardless of family name or native place, even nationality. In contrast, neither Sze Yup and Sam Yup *huiguans* are able to provide for mutual aid and protection for innocent members in a time of need.

FOUR FAMILY ASSOCIATION AND FOUR BROTHERS ASSOCIATION

To protect innocent residents of Chinatown, associations began to form to help fellow surnamed clansmen regardless of where they came from, similar to single lineage villages in China where particular villages protect their residents.

In 1895, clansmen of Lew, Quan, Jung and Chew form Lung Kong Association (Four Family) and Mu Tin Association (Four Brothers). Organized into two branches, Four Family has jurisdiction over affairs affecting the entire clan while Four Brothers acts as the clan association’s defense unit against outside threats to member’s interests. In many respects, the latter is similar to a Tong and will engage with the Tongs to protect clansmen when needed.

The associations bring together clansmen like Quan Ying Nung, a Sam Yup owner of Kim Lung, a long-established high end dry goods store and Lew Hing, a Sze Yup owner of Pacific Fruit Packing Company and newly established Hop Wo Lung, a dry goods store.

Lew Hing’s main interest is Mu Tin (Four Brothers) for the protection he needs for Wing Lay Yuen, a lottery in which he is a major investor which is known to the police as one of the “Big Eight” lotteries in Chinatown. Lew Hing gains notoriety when on June 3, 1894, he and two others sue the Chief of Police and two officers for damages resulting from the raid on his lottery.

After the earthquake of 1906, Lew Hing deemphasizes his role in Mu Tin (later Ming Yee) by turning over leadership to Quan Yick Sung. He maintains a role in Lung Kong as the major donor for construction of a building in 1907 to house displaced clansmen, a meeting hall for Lung Kong and clubhouse for Mu Tin immediately after the 1906 earthquake, leads efforts to build a building for Lung Kong at 1034 Stockton in 1910 and a building in 1924 for the newly merged Lung Kong and Mu Tin (Ming Yee) at 924 Grant Avenue.

MERGING OF LEW AND QUAN FAMILY

Into the 1890s, merchant families in Chinatown have few places to socialize. Some turn to western churches which is an opportunity for families of the same social status to meet regularly. A popular church is The Chinese Presbyterian Church on Stockton Street, across and down the street from Pacific Fruit Packing. On Sundays, the children of Lew Hing and Chin Shee, daughters Yung, Mui and Oy and sons Gow and Sing mix with the children of Quan Ying Nung and Tom Shee, sons Poon, Yeen, Jwe and daughters Jan and So Ha.

In 1894, Lew Hing travels back to China to visit his parents. There, anticipating the eventual marriage of his oldest daughter Lew Yung, Lew Hing has a “gengpu” prepared. Marriage is an important cultural tradition in China and the “gengpu” provides information on the bride to the groom’s family to allow his family to determine whether the union would be auspicious.

Lew Hing also marries a second wife, Jung Shee while in China. She returns with him to San Francisco to live with his first wife Chin Shee and family.

On January 2, 1898, Lew Yung and Quan Yeen marry at 7 Dupont Street, residence of Quan Ying Nung and Tom Shee. Attending from Fresno are Judge M.K. Harris and his wife, guardians of Quan Yeen as a child growing up in Fresno. Quan Ying Nung had left his second son with the Harris family for education in an American household while fleeing Fresno with his family to San Francisco during the pogrom of the mid-1880s

Lew Hing will rely on Quan Yeen and Lew Yung to handle business affairs in Chinatown. With familiarity with both American and Chinese customs social mores, Quan Yick Sung (his business name) would handle Hop Wo Lung, the lotteries and Four Brothers. Lew Hing would groom his sons Gow, Sing (Thomas) and Ralph for roles in the white business world.

BUBONIC PLAGUE QUARANTINE

On March 6, 1900, a Chinese man is initially diagnosed as the first case of bubonic plague in the United States. Chinatown is immediately quarantined as the city fathers hope would force Chinatown out of the prime property it occupied in the City. An estimated 20,000 residents and its businesses, except those owned operated by white owners, are cut off from the outside world and in danger of economic ruin.

Included in the quarantined area is Pacific Fruit Packing whose dilemma was likely cheered by the cartel. Facing economic ruin if the cannery is unable to operate, Lew Hing summons W.A. Richardson, his attorney to petition the city to allow it to continue to operate. As a back-up, On May 29, 1900, Lew Hing incorporates Pacific Fruit Packing Company as a white owned business; Joseph Goetz, Frank H. Foote, and P. W. Bellingall are the majority of the shareholders of Pacific Fruit Packing. The ruse is not needed as Richardson is successful in exempting the cannery from the quarantine.

The first confirmed philanthropic act by Lew Hing is in 1899, a year before the plague. He is the largest individual donor to the construction of Tung Hua Dispensary (Oriental Dispensary) which opens in the same month as the plague is diagnosed. Not a full-service hospital, its opening is timely as for years, the city refused to allow Chinese access to city health facilities despite their paying taxes to support such institutions.

In 1922, when Chinese Six Companies led an effort to build a modern, full-service modern hospital, Lew Hing once again donates and his total gift of $4,300 is the largest from any community organization or individual.

Throughout his life, Lew Hing would continually support education, health and community endeavors America and China.

When Ng Poon Chew approaches Lew Hing for financial assistance to start a Chinese language newspaper in 1900, Lew Hing provides substantial funding for Chung Sai Yat Po, one of the longest running, most influential Chinese-language daily newspapers in America.

A MISSTEP

In 1901, a year considered the bloodiest in Tong War conflicts, Four Brothers and Bing Kong Tong engage in a war in which five men are killed. The year-long war ends in a truce but early attempts by Lew Hing to mediate as a merchant fail, creating unwanted challenges for him because of his role as head of Four Brothers.

By the end of 1901 and into early 1902, Four Brothers is involved in another potential war, this time with the powerful Wong clan over money. A feud between Four Family and the Wong clan has lasted for years but erupts when a Wong is murdered by members of Four Brothers. Fear paralyzes Chinatown; gambling joints are left deserted while leaders of both organizations go into hiding.

Now, Lew Hing is concerned for his safety and his family’s safety. He hastily sells Pacific Fruit Packing to his rival, the cartel which attempted to put him out of business and leaves for China. Claiming to be retired at forty-four, one might not believe his active business career is over. Retaining ownership interest in Hop Wo Lung and executing an affidavit allowing him to retain “merchant status” seems to confirm his stay in China is only temporary.

As the family departs San Francisco, the *San Francisco Chronicle* takes one last swipe at Lew Hing with a brief announcement on February 26, 1902 that “Lew Hing, a Chinese proprietor of the Pacific Fruit Packing Company in the city, who fills the anomalous position of being the only Chinese who employs white girls in his business, sailed with his wife and children for a visit to China. In his factory Lew Hing employs about (*illegible*) white girls.”

**BUILDING A REPUTATION**

**1902 - 1911**

RETURN TO AMERICA

Lew Hing settles his family in the Xiguan District of Canton in a complex consisting of a main house and two smaller ones on each side, 11 rooms in total. There is also a large courtyard, a special room for opium smoking and living quarters for 7 or 8 servants, Lew Hing turns to business opportunities in China and Hong Kong.

However, having been away from China since the mid-1860s, adjusting to the business climate is a challenge. His investments show little promise and running low on funds, he and Chin Shee return to San Francisco with the sons, Lew Gow and Thomas and youngest daughter, Rose in July, 1903. The two older daughters, Lew Mui and Lew Oy remain in the house in Canton. Also returning is his eldest daughter, Lew Yung and her two daughters, Quan King and Quan Gum.

In San Francisco, Lew Hing starts a drayman and dry goods business at 709 Sacramento Street, resurrecting the names Wo Hing Kee and Tai Fung for the two new businesses while resuming use of the prestigious telephone number “China 1.”

A NEW START

Having reestablished a presence in Chinatown, Lew Hing then re-engages with former business associates P.W. Bellingall, W.E. Minaker, Webster Welbanks and W. A. Richardson to plan a new cannery.

P.W. Bellingall, a politically connected resident of Oakland recommends property in a mostly vacant West Oakland industrial area, next to Southern Pacific railhead and close to the Oakland Harbor. The location is ideal for shipping product throughout America and to the Orient and Europe. W. A. Richardson purchases the land and he and others arrange funding and other connections for start-up and operating expenses.

By November 3, 1903, Lew Hing files incorporation papers in Alameda County for Pacific Coast Canning Company whose purpose is to “maintain a general fruit packing, canning and preserving business.”

News of the new cannery reaches San Francisco via the *San Francisco Call* newspaper which reports of a “powerful rival” to the canning trust formed in 1899.

PACIFIC COAST CANNERY

Construction begins in 1904 and by December, Pacific Coast Cannery opens for business. In April, 1905, hundreds of white women and children are busy canning asparagus, then fruit and tomatoes. An *Oakland Tribune* article of December 28, 1905 reports most of the canned fruits and vegetables of the new cannery are for export.

With the exception of Lew Hing, the Pacific Coast board of directors and officers are white. The

products are sold under a quintessential American brand “Buckskin” with the label featuring the image of a cowboy surrounded by antlers.

To distribute Pacific Coast products, Pacific Coast switches from Frank Foote as the selling agent to William Rolph as the company prospers and seeks new markets. The choice of Rolph, a charter member of Griffiths-Durney, a distributor of packed and canned goods is a shrewd one as he is the brother of James Rolph who will become mayor from 1912 – 1931. Both Lew Hing and William Rolph will prosper.

With Pacific Coast as a business anchor, Lew Hing rewards the white men who help him on his way into the white commerce stream by gifting them shares of three lesser-known canneries: West Coast Asparagus Company (1905), Crescent Canning Company (1906) and San Pablo Canning Company (1907). P. W. Bellingall and W. A. Richardson are initial directors of all three while Frank H. Foote is an initial director for two.

COPING WITH THE GREAT SAN FRANCISCO EARTHQUAKE

When the 1906 earthquake hits San Francisco in the early morning of April 18, Only Lew Hing and 11-year-old son Thomas are home on Sacramento Street residence. The rest of the family is in China, having left on November 4, 1905 with Chin Shee who is to tend to seriously ill Lew Quay from second wife, Jung Shee.

Lew Quay dies before Chin Shee and the family arrive however, leaving her to arrange “ghost marriages” for both Lew Quay and Lew Ming, his older brother who also died as a child six years before.

A “ghost marriage” is performed with a “bride” of the same age who died around the same time and mainly practiced by wealthy families believing unmarried males heirs roaming around in the netherworld may not be auspicious for continuing the family’s good fortune. Plaques memorializing the marriages are then made for the family alter.

When Lew Hing arrives at the cannery, he learns of the treatment of Chinese by the official relief agencies in refusing aid. Lew Hing turns his attention to the plight of thousands of Chinese by setting up a refugee camp on vacant land around the cannery, providing food, shelter and support. His humanitarian efforts at the time, hailed by the Chinese and the Chinese government are ignored by the white media which decry the “invasion of the Heathens” into white areas of Oakland, bringing their filth and diseases.

Only in 2006, during the centennial celebration of the Great San Francisco Earthquake, did the media tell of his humanitarian deed.

MOVE TO OAKLAND

A week after the earthquake, Lew Hing sets up shop in Oakland Chinatown, purchasing for

$7500, a building at 315 Eighth Street in Chinatown to house the dry goods store Hop Wo Lung,

an herbal store Hong Yan Tong Wing Kee, and Wing Lay Yuen, the lottery.

To house his large family, Lew Hing pays $3,000 cash for a two-story house for he and Chin Shee and their two youngest children at 265 Eighth Street, a house for his eldest daughter, Lew Yung and son-in-law Quan Yeen at 272 and a duplex at 271-273 for other members of his family.

Later, when his sons, Lew Gow and Thomas and their families move out of 271 - 273 Eighth Street, it houses Wing Lay Yuen. Lottery betting and drawings take place upstairs while the downstairs is a clubhouse where customers are treated to free meals, a unique feature of Chinese gambling houses.

Finally, Lew Hing purchases a building at 327 Eighth Street to house a clubhouse to entertain gamblers for Fook Loy, another lottery Lew Hing owns and in a separate part of the building, he starts Wa Kue, a school for children.

A PROMINENT RESIDENT OF OAKLAND

By 1911, Pacific Coast Cannery is one of the largest employers in Oakland, advertising itself as the “Packers of Asparagus, Fruits and Tomatoes,” the product line includes apples, pumpkins, squash, plums, peaches, apricots, cherries, berries and grapes.

In 1913, Lew Hing moves out of Chinatown to a two-story house at 457 Stow Avenue with an unobstructed view of Lake Merritt. As an alien, he is prevented from buying property by the state’s Anti-Asian Land Act so P. W. Bellingall purchases the house and later transfers ownership to Lew Gow in October, 1914.

By 1914, he is given his due as a successful businessman when included in *Davis’ Commercial Encyclopedia of the Pacific Southwest*.A brief description accompanying his picture notes Pacific Coast Canning Company is the third largest cannery on the West Coast and Lew Hing is “without doubt the ablest authority on fruit in the State, and his counsel is repeatedly sought by similar enterprises.”

**THE GOLDEN YEARS**

**1911 - 1926**

GROUNDED IN CHINATOWN

During his life, Lew Hing returns only twice to China; once in 1894 and then in 1902. Despite success in the white world of commerce, he is still looked down upon and shunned because of his race. Chinatown is where he is most comfortable and accepted.

For such a towering figure of American commerce, he can count on only few who are willing to help him when help is needed: P. W. Bellingall, W. A. Richardson, Frank H. Foote and William Rolph.

After the earthquake destroys San Francisco Chinatown, Lew Hing turns to W. A. Richardson and Frank H. Foote along with his son, Lew Gow and a fellow clansman, Lew Wing to form a real estate development business, West Coast Improvement Company. It constructs one of the first permanent buildings at the southeast corner of Dupont and Commercial Streets in September, 1906.

The four-story brick building helps reestablish the associations Lung Kong and Mu Tin in Chinatown. In the top three floors are rooms for displaced clansmen of the Lung Kong and the ground floor, a meeting hall for Lung Kong Association and a clubhouse for Mu Tin (later renamed Ming Yee) fronting Dupont Street while behind, Wing Lay Yuen lottery.

In 1910, with substantial financial contributions each time from Lew Hing, Lung Kong moves to a newly built headquarters building at 1034 Stockton Street and in 1924, the newly merged Lung Kong and Ming Yee forming Lung Kong Tien Yee Association moves to the Ming Yee building at 924 Grant Avenue.

HELPING FELLOW CLANSMAN

Lew Hing’s largesse extends to clansmen whenever possible. Most notable is Chew Yin. He was first associated with Presidio Fruit Canning Company at the northeast corner of Broadway and Sansome Streets, known to the Chinese in Taishan dialect “Precita.”

After Precita is destroyed in the earthquake, Chew Yin seeks Lew Hing’s help in opening another cannery. Lew Hing uses his contacts to help open Bayside cannery in Alviso, California. A newspaper article describes the new officers of the cannery as Lew Hing president, Chew Yin vice president and his son Thomas Foon Chew as superintendent.

In 1917, after Thomas Foon Chew forms the Bayside Fish Company in Monterey with his father and other investors but needs capital to build an asparagus cannery in Isleton, CA, Lew Hing assists by buying the fish cannery in 1918.

In the 1920s, Thomas Foon Chew becomes known as the “Asparagus King” with Bayside Cannery as the third-largest canning business in the United States.

THE JIANDU

Throughout his life, Lew Hing maintains a low profile. Very few photos exist of his appearances at community gatherings and he eschews organizational titles. He exercises influence behind the scene in Chinatown as a leading member of three powerful organizations based on bloodline, district of origin and profession in Chinatown – Lung Kong Tin Yee Association, Ning Yung Benevolent Association and Chinese Chamber of Commerce (a merger of the Zhaoyi Gongsuo, formed in 1881 by mainly Sam Yup merchants, and the Chinese Merchants’ Association, founded in 1895 by See Yup merchants). He only accepts directorship of CCBA or Chinese Six Companies in 1911 partly because the Chinese Consul General who nominated him was his old friend and former neighbor Li Yung Yew.

His influence is not unnoticed in the Chinese community. People seeking to promote a new business attempt to enlist people with successful business experience to act as *Jiandu*, loosely translated as “supervising elder.” This title is conferred on people with the best reputation, experience and trustworthiness in the community.

The title in not only honorific however, the incumbent is responsible to supervise, control, monitor, and audit company operations of any business he is involved with as a *Jiandu.*

Approached many times after the 1906 earthquake devastates San Francisco, several groups see an opportunity to form a bank to assist Chinatown in rebuilding its economy. One of the groups is headed by Look Poon Shan and I.P. Allen, seasoned bankers.

CANTON BANK

In 1903, Look Poon Shan and Look Tin Eli, bilingual sons of an owner of a small country Chinese store in Mendocino go to San Francisco where both find work at the Russo-Chinese bank, Look Poon Shan as Chinese general manager and Look Tin Eli as part time confidential secretary.

Look Tin Eli also applies for the job of general manager of a new import/export company under construction at the corner of California and Dupont streets. Lew Hing, as the major investor of Sing Chong, hires him to oversee construction. The store opens in December, 1905, four months later and is destroyed by the earthquake.

The Russo-Chinese bank building is also destroyed by the earthquake and months after ends its presence in California. Look Poong Shan and I. P. Allen, banking veterans decide to open a bank serving the Chinese community and look for ways to capitalize it.

Finding Chinese to invest in a western style bank is difficult and to overcome community mistrust, Look Poon Shan asks Look Tin Eli to approach Lew Hing as *Jiandu* for their venture. Lew Hing is interested in adding a bank to his portfolio and agrees. On October 1, 1907, Canton Bank receives the necessary permits and licenses as a commercial bank in California. Four days later, the bank opens with Look Poong Shan as president, Lew Hing as vice president and I.P. Allen as cashier.

Look Poon Shan leaves for Hong Kong to open a branch of the bank in 1909 and Look Tin Eli becomes president. As a state-chartered bank, Canton Bank cannot have a foreign branch but Look Poon Shan stays in Hong Kong and joins another bank.

Under Look Tin Eli, as the only Chinese-owned bank in the U.S. known for political stability, Canton Bank soon attracts businesses from California, Mexico, Central and South America, Hawaii and Pacific Islands, Canada and even Europe.

By 1913, Canton Bank establishes a solid reputation, counting among its clients, not only Chinese around the world but also prominent American businesses.

CHINESE MEXICAN MERCANTILE COMPANY

In July 1911, four months before the fall of the Qing Dynasty, Lew Hing accepts appointment as a director of Chinese Six Companies. Although directors normally serve a 3-year term, Lew Hing will serve continuously as a director from 1911 to 1926.

This appointment to the governing body of Chinatown helps Lew Hing extend his business reach into Mexico in May, 1913. Officially incorporated as Chinese-Mexican Mercantile Company and known by its Chinese name “Wa Muck”, in a circulated prospectus, he is prominently featured as “plenipotentiary president”, authorized to receive shareholders’ monies. Unlike that of the Canton Bank and the later involvement with China Mail Steamship Lines, Lew Hing is familiar with this kind of business.

Three months later, a shipment of dry goods, groceries, furniture arrives in Mexicali, Mexico for the new business and by the fall, it opens for business providing merchandise from China along with ranch services, financial services, and renting of rooms.

By 1919, Wa Muck becomes “the firmest and largest establishment in Baja California of its sort doing general mercantile business.” It also owns Paris Café, the finest Chinese restaurant in Mexicali, and actively engages in financial services. It becomes one of the leading lending institutions in the region by providing loans to newly-arrived laborers, farmers and merchants. *Chinaman Tycoon: Life and Times of Lew Hing (1858 – 1934)*, Roland Hui, Happy Garden Press, 2022. pp, 151 – 152.

CHINA MAIL STEAMSHIP COMPANY

Two unrelated historic events prompt the founding of the China Mail Steamship Company.

On January 18, 1915 Japan, as part of its imperialistic ambitions, presents “Twenty-One Demands” to China intent on turning China into a Japanese protectorate like Korea. Chinese on both sides of the ocean are outraged. On February 20, the San Francisco Chinese Chamber of Commerce proposes a boycott of Japanese products to protest the Twenty-One Demands.

By March 1, the newly formed All-Overseas Chinese Association for National Salvation issues boycott rules. Among the 19 rules of the boycott is Rule 6, a boycott of Japanese steamers for voyages to and from China. A boycott is not considered inconvenient for the Chinese as they always favor shipping on Pacific Mail, the American shipping lines.

However, on March 4, 1915, the United States Congress passes the Seamen’s Act to safeguard the welfare of merchant seamen working on American vessels. The new law substantially increases the cost of labor for Pacific Mail as it must hire Americans rather than cheaper Chinese labor from Hong Kong. With increased costs, Pacific Mail’s board finds it less competitive to Japanese shipping lines and decides to end its transpacific business by November, giving Toyo Kisen Kaisha (TKK), the Japanese-registered shipping lines, a virtual monopoly of the passenger and freight traffic across the Pacific.

In July, 1915, the Japanese government issues an order making all space on subsidized ships available only to Japanese shippers. Chinese and American trading companies are disadvantaged and Chinese on both sides of the Pacific are concerned. Mainland Chinese capitalists float a plan to counter the Japanese government edict. When that plan fails, Look Tin Eli, then president of the Canton Bank, Lew Hing and two other leading merchants call a meeting of CCBA (Chinese Six Companies) to discuss the crisis.

The merchants agree the only solution is for the Chinese to establish a shipping line. Lew Hing, a director, lobbies fellow directors of Chinese Six Companies to adopt a resolution encouraging the community to support the patriotic venture by buying stock in a new corporation.

Upon learning of the availability of the steamer *China*, Look Tin Eli leads an effort to raise money to purchase it for $300,000. By October 11, a $10,000 down payment is paid and three days later, 15 people, led by Look Tin Eli, gather in city hall to file papers incorporating China Mail Steamship Company, Ltd.

On October 28,1915, in a ceremony attended by Mayor Rolph, Lew Hing’s youngest daughter, Rose christens the ship “China” with a bottle of California wine.

Five months later, the board of directors elect Look Tin Eli as president, Lew Hing and Deng Jinqing as Vice Presidents, Mark Thue as treasurer and M. Q. Fong as secretary.

BECOMING A TYCOON

With the help of loyal white business associates, Lew Hing navigates within in the white business world and becomes wealthy beyond wildest dreams.

Much of the credit is due to a business relationship with William Rolph. As Griffith-Durney evolves into a food brokerage powerhouse, Rolph ascends within the company. By 1918, he is vice-president, second only to founder, Joseph Durney.

The nearly quarter century partnership of Pacific Coast and Griffith-Durney benefits both Lew Hing and William Rolph. Lew Hing shrewdly manages Pacific Coast and Rolph’s superb marketing skills plays a significant role during the rapid growth of Pacific Coast. Lew Hing is given an office at Griffiths-Durney to which he goes every afternoon.

JAMES ROLPH, JR. BECOMES MAYOR

Lew Hing knew James Rolph, William Rolph’s older brother since the early 1890s when both were involved in the food business. When Pacific Coast is seeking a package and canned food agent to help expand its markets, Lew Hing may have contacted the elder Rolph for an introduction to his brother.

The years from 1906 to 1910 are economically rewarding but beginning in 1911, a singular event will make Lew Hing and William Rolph wealthy beyond belief – the election of James Rolph, Jr. as mayor of San Francisco. He serves from 1912 to 1931 as mayor before being elected governor of the state of California.

A sign of the close friendship of the Rolphs and Lew Hing is a photograph of a private party at Hang Far Low hosted by Lew Hing celebrating James Rolph’s election. At the head table, Lew Hing is surrounded by Mayor Rolph’s wife, his father and brother William and his wife. Also present at the head table is the Chinese Consul General and Joseph Durney.

The connection with the Mayor bears fruit as Pacific Coast provides products during WWI to the Commission for Relief in Belgium and later to all of Europe through the U.S. Food Administration after the war from 1914 to 1924. As a result, 80% of Pacific Coast products are exported to Europe.

Lew Hing will return the favor by helping Mayor Rolph, also Vice President of Panama Pacific International Exposition Corporation with bringing the newly formed Republic of China to participate in the 1915 P.P.I.E.

Notable among other known business of Pacific Coast through the Rolph connection is supplying goods for the 10,000 strong U.S. Army’s “Punitive Expedition” in 1916 to capture Pancho Villa.

THE RECKONING

The most visible and successful Chinese owned businesses in Chinatown are the Canton Bank and China Mail Steamship Lines, both helmed by Look Tin Eli. However, in 1918, he hurriedly departs, leaving both companies in the lurch. Lew Hing becomes president of the Canton Bank in 1918.

In 1922, with China Mail in trouble, Lew Hing agrees to accept the general manager’s position to straighten out the problems facing the company.

Lew Hing is now in the untenable position of running four large businesses, Pacific Coast, Chinese-Mexican Mercantile Company, Canton Bank and China Mail. He had business experience with the first two but the last two, not so much.

Lew Hing’s inexperience with the complexities of the shipping business was no match for its declining revenues, a heavy debt load and trouble with the government.

It is the trouble with the government that brings down China Mail. While the Maritime Marine (Jones Act) and Volstead Acts adversely affect the economic well-being of China Mail, its reputation as a way for smugglers to transport opium is its downfall.

China Mail ships are identified as frequent vessels used for importation of “smoking opium”, banned since 1909. Reports of opium seizures on China Mail ships are commonplace; the *Nanking* is the choice of transport for the smugglers, earning it the nickname “dope ship” in enforcement circles and the Chinese community.

Struggling to remain profitable, China Mail fate is sealed by continuous violations of the Narcotics Drug Import Act of 1922. If inspectors find drugs on board, the penalty is $25 per ounce. A shipping company is then required to give a surety bond for the release of the vessel but may appeal to the Secretary of the Treasury for remission or mitigation of the fine or penalty assessed.

The government imposes heavy fines on China Mail but its appeals for remission or mitigation of fines are routinely denied. The government then seizes China Mail’s ships and other assets to pay the fines, forcing it into bankruptcy.

When the bankrupt proceedings finally close in April, 1929, loans from the Canton Bank go unpaid and the Chinese stockholders lose their investment. Chinese investors blame Lew Hing, besmirching his reputation in Chinatown.

A DOUBLE STANDARD?

During the bankruptcy proceedings, the record show that China Mail’s appeals for remission or mitigation of the heavy fines are routinely turned down while American carriers caught with contraband are treated differently.

In an expose for the July 25, 1929 *San Francisco Examiner* titled, HEAVY FINES ON SHIP LESS SEEN AS DOPE EVIL REMEDY, author Annie Laurie seems to confirm the unequal treatment of China Mail. She compares the fine assessed on the President Taft of $146,500 but reduced to THREE THOUSAND DOLLARS; the fine assessed on the President Lincoln of $32,823 but reduced to ONE THOUSAND DOLLARS; the fine on the West Cho-paka of $19,700 but reduced to FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS…(to) “…The China Mail line for some reason or other, is not so lucky. OWNERS BANKRUPT. Heavy fines were plastered on the China Mail ships, due to record seizures in the port of San Francisco, and the China Mail line was forced into bankruptcy because of these fines…”

WA MUCK TROUBLES

Wa Muck faces a series of challenges beginning in 1920 when the price of cotton slumps. It heavily finances Chinese cotton ranches and cooperatives and suffers a double hit as many loans to Chinese ranches become non-performing on top of the depressed prices for cotton that Wa Muck’s own Jick Sang Yuen farms produce.

Wa Muck suffers losses of several hundreds of thousands of dollars and avoids bankruptcy only because, as Lew Hing tells another, that he “took care of it.” He borrows heavily to prolong the life of Wa Muck.

In 1923, Wa Muck’s facilities are destroyed when all of La Chinesca (Chinatown) burns down. Wa Muck quickly rebuilds and in the same year, cotton prices climb. However, despite the recovery of the cotton industry and rebuilding of the facilities, business conditions for Wa Muck continue to steadily deteriorate and cash crunch reaches a critical level by 1925.

Lew Hing makes two trips to Mexicali in June and October of 1925 to try to save Wa Muck but it is too late. In May, 1926 when Wa Muck overdraws its account by $6,000 and First National Bank of Calexico refuses to extend credit, its all over but the shouting. Lew Hing makes one last visit to Mexicali in July to wind down the business.

THE HOME OWNED BANK IS TAKEN OVER

Under Lew Hing’s presidency, the bank continues to prosper and by the end of 1919, total deposits increased to more than $4.6 million. However, it is Lew Hing’s unrelated business problems which open the door to the demise of Canton Bank. In order to save Wa Muck from bankruptcy, he pledges 584 shares of Canton Bank stock as collateral to secure needed loans.

His distressed financial situation prompts the leader of Oriental Commercial Bank (OCB), a newly formed bank by overseas Chinese capitalists from Central and South America and Southeast Asia to pounce. Interested in a foothold in America, OCB purchases 584 Canton Bank shares from Lew Hing for cash which he needs to pay off the loans.

Facing additional financial difficulties, Lew Hing sells more shares of Canton Bank stock to OCB until he retains only 15 shares of the 1,515 (25.25%) of Canton Bank shares he once owned.

Once acquiring a majority of outstanding shares of Canton Bank, OCB executes a takeover, leaving Lew Hing as president in name only.

The coup de grace for Canton Bank comes when, in Hong Kong, a notice is posted on the front door of OCB announcing it is closed. It comes after three months of speculation that one of the bank’s principal shareholders suffers heavy losses in his business, hurting the bank’s prestige. As a result, customers withdraw money from their accounts to where, by June 10, 1926, bank’s total deposits are down to HK$170,000.

A month before that closure, in May 1926, it is well known in banking circles in San Francisco that OCB had sold its holdings of Canton Bank stock to Anglo-California Trust Company. However, when news of OCB’s sale of Canton Bank shares reach Chinatown, despite assurances of the stability of Anglo-California Trust, depositors withdraw more than two million dollars from Canton Bank.

Then, a second run on Canton Bank happens when news of OCB’s collapse is announced on June 10, 1926.

On July 19, 1926, the Superintendent of Banks of the State of California shuts down Canton Bank “for the protection of its depositors.” At the time, the bank is potentially liable for losses of over half a million dollars in foreign exchange sent to OCB. On July 28, the state places Canton Bank in liquidation.

The closure shocks Chinatown, its failure directly and adversely impacting many Chinese businesses and individuals. The Chinese Chamber of Commerce (CCOC) in San Francisco passes a resolution to rescue the bank.

At the same time CCOC considering a rescue plan for Canton Bank, it begins negotiating with J.F. Johnson, the California Superintendent of Banks, to form a new commercial and savings bank to buy the suspended business of Canton Bank.

Johnson agrees and specifies the terms and conditions - $1,000,000 to be met within 40 days. Despite outreach and pleas to Chinese communities across America, they were only able to reach $400,000 in stock sales. With that, Canton Bank is history and the investors, having lost their investment, blame Lew Hing.

**THE SUNSET YEARS**

**1926 - 1934**

PACIFIC COAST IN TROUBLE

In 1924, shareholders of Pacific Coast hire an attorney to investigate whether Pacific Coast funds in Canton Bank accounts are illegally diverted into “private ventures” of some of the directors without entries being made in the corporate ledger. While the board of directors of Pacific Coast Cannery authorizes Lew Hing to write checks against the account for up to $40,000 dollars, revelations of diversion of Pacific Coast funds for other companies hurt Lew Hing’s reputation among his closest advisers and clansmen.

INTO THE SHADOWS

The 1923 China Mail bankruptcy filing and the 1926 liquidation of Canton bank represent a fatal blow to Lew Hing’s reputation in Chinatown and among the Chinese in America. With individual Chinese and Chinese organizations having lost their investments, sentiments turn against Lew Hing.

For Lew Hing, covering financial problems of Chinese-Mexican Mercantile Company with Pacific Coast funds is a critical setback to his business fortunes. By 1925, when Wa Muck overdraws its account and its bank refuses to extend further credit, Lew Hing cannot use the Pacific Coast account to bail it out.

By 1926, the California state banking regulators are investigating mismanagement of Canton Bank amid revelations of his diversion of company funds of Pacific Coast.

On May 3, 1926, he decides to give up the crown jewel of his business empire, Pacific Coast Cannery. He gives H. E. Rusk, a San Francisco banker, a 30-day option to buy out all of Pacific Coast’s assets for $400,000 cash and $400,000 in preferred stock of a new corporation to be formed.

Despite the years of business setbacks, he never wavers in philanthropy for San Francisco Chinatown. In 1924, he makes large donations to the building fund for the new Chinese hospital and to the YMCA for the only swimming pool in Chinatown.

But with the business reversals, the respectin the community is gone. He loses his directorship at CCBA (Chinese Six Companies) and his last business, Hop Wo Lung, founded in 1895 loses substantial business, finally closing in 1929.

ONE LAST CANNERY

In 1928, at the age of 70, he tempts fate by agreeing to start a cannery with long-time business associate Lew Wing in Antioch, California.

Lew Wing signs a lease with R. Hickmott Canning Company whose president is Lew Hing’s long time attorney, W. A. Richardson.

Lew Hing’s contribution to the newly formed West Shore Packing Company is at least $20,000 for the equipment while a business associate of long standing, Lew Wing’s invests $10,000. Lew Hing’s oldest son and youngest daughter Lew Gow and Rose Moon are named president and vice president respectively while Lew Wing, the only one familiar with the operation of a cannery is the superintendent

West Shore packs fruit at Hickmott after the latter finishes its asparagus run, usually from April to June. Records show that in 1930, West Shore packs apricots, pears, peaches, tomatoes and spinach.

The cannery closes in 1931 due to the depression.

THE END

During his business life, Lew Hing is involved with 34 businesses, many as principal owner, partner or president and invests in 12 other businesses.

By 1927, Lew Hing’s house at 3750 Lakeshore Avenue and two lotteries, Wing Lay Yuen and Fook Loy are the only significant assets remaining. Because of his reliance on the lotteries for his livelihood, he joins the Suey Ying Tong in September, 1927 for protection.

Lew Hing dies on March 7, 1934. Four months later, on August 8, 1934, the *Oakland Tribune*, publishes a headline across a page in bold letters reading: “TONG WAR THREATENED IN CITIES OF BAY REGION.”

The article warns of an imminent breakout of tong warfare in the Oakland and San Francisco Chinatowns as representatives of two tongs meet in Oakland to arbitrate a dispute involving ownership of Lew Hing’s one-half interest in Fook Loy and Wing Lay Yuen valued at least a quarter million dollars.

The dispute threatens to escalate into a full-scale war, a repeat of what transpired between these two tongs 19 years earlier. The Chinese Peace Society, formed in 1913 to mediate tong conflict intercedes. After **61** meetings, the two tongs finally reach an amicable settlement in October. The terms of the settlement are not made public.

Lew Hing would never know the last the public would hear his name is not related to his business successes or philanthropy but of his association with lotteries, illegal in California since 1849.