The First Chinese American

The Remarkable Life of Wong Chin Foo

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Front Cover: Wong Chin Foo. Sketch from a photograph by George G. Rockwood from *Harper's Weekly*, May 26, 1877. The original photograph apparently no longer exists. The Chinese calligraphy is in Wong's own hand, taken from the signature on his Declaration of Intention to become a U.S. citizen, filed with the Circuit Court of Kent County, Michigan on April 3, 1874.

Back Cover: One of the few confirmed photographs of Wong Chin Foo known to exist, taken in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania, probably in early 1870. Courtesy of Special Collections/University Archives, Bertrand Library, Bucknell University, Lewisburg, PA.

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Wong Chin Foo Chronology

1839–42	Britain provokes and wins the First Opium War with China; forces concessions in the Treaty of Nanjing, including the opening of five ports to foreign trade and missionary activity.
1847	Wong Chin Foo is born in Jimo, Shandong Province, China, to a well-to-do family.
1850–71	The Taiping Rebellion, led by a religious fanatic, is fought against the Qing dynasty. Rebels gain control of a large swath of southern China before being defeated.
1856–60	Britain and France win the Second Opium War and force additional concessions from China, including the opening of diplomatic missions and 11 additional ports.
1860	Wong arrives with his father in reduced circumstances in Zhifu (now Yantai), Shandong, which opens to foreign commerce in this year.
1861	Taken in by Southern Baptist missionary Rev. J. Landrum Holmes and wife Sallie. Rev. Holmes is murdered by bandits soon afterward.
1862	Sallie Holmes bears a son and moves her household to Dengzhou (now Penglai), Shandong, where she begins 20 years of missionary work.
1867	Baptized into the Baptist faith in Dengzhou. Accompanies Sallie Holmes to America.
1868	U.S. and China sign the Burlingame Treaty, which guarantees U.S. non-interference in China's internal affairs and effectively encourages Chinese immigration to America.

Studies at Columbian College Preparatory School, Washington, DC. Begins lecturing on Chinese culture.

1869–70 Studies at Lewisburg Academy in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania.

1870 Returns to China.

1871 Marries Liu Yushan, former pupil in a Baptist school in Dengzhou.

1871–72 Appointed interpreter in the Imperial Chinese Maritime Customs Service in Shanghai and then in Zhenjiang, Jiangsu Province. Excommunicated from the Shanghai Baptist church.

1873 Son Wong Foo Sheng is born.

Flees China after Qing government puts a price on his head for revolutionary activities. Escapes to Japan, and boards a U.S.-bound ship with help from the American consul in Yokohama.

Arrives in San Francisco. Helps liberate Chinese girls sent to the U.S. to become prostitutes, earning the enmity of the triad organization responsible for importing them.

Begins a multi-year, cross-country lecture tour.

1874 Admitted to U.S. citizenship at Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Allegedly engages in a liaison with a prostitute in Rochester, New York.

"The Chinese in Cuba," his first published article in English, appears in the *New York Times*.

Declares himself China's first Confucian missionary to the United States.

Prince Gong, China's de facto foreign minister, demands his extradition to China, but is rebuffed by the American chargé d'affaires in Beijing.

1875 U.S. Congress passes the Page Act, an attempt to restrict the immigration of Chinese prostitutes that proves a barrier to further immigration of all Asian women.

1877 Meets Madame Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, founder of the mystical Theosophy movement, and addresses members of her society in New York.

1879 Settles temporarily in Chicago. Intervenes in a dispute between local Chinese laundrymen. Enemies seek to have him kidnapped and deported. Survives assassination attempt. Cuts off queue and permanently adopts Western dress.

1880 Briefly quits lecturing and opens a tea shop in Bay City, Michigan.

Registers to vote in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

1882 The Chinese Exclusion Act, which places a 10-year moratorium on the immigration of Chinese laborers into the United States and prohibits the naturalization of Chinese, is signed into law.

1883 Publishes the *Chinese American*, New York's first Chinese newspaper. Believed to be the first time the term is used.

Charges Chan Pond Tipp with attempting to assassinate him and causes latter's arrest. Chan, in turn, sues for criminal libel, seeking $25,000 in damages.

Publicly challenges San Francisco anti-Chinese demagogue Denis Kearney to a duel.

1884 Introduces Americans to "chop suey" in an article in the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*.

Convenes first meeting of "naturalized Chinamen" in New York City, probably America's first gathering of Chinese American voters.

1885 Found guilty of libeling Chan Pond Tipp and ordered to pay $1,000.

Cracks the case of the murder of Sing Lee, principal witness in a legal dispute among Canadian Chinese laundrymen.

1887 Publishes essay, "Why Am I a Heathen?" in the *North American Review*, causing a firestorm of criticism and spurring a rebuttal.

Travels to Canada and is forced to pay a $50 head tax.

Bests Denis Kearney in a face-to-face debate in New York.

1888 Sues, or threatens to sue, the Canadian government for $25,000.

Publishes the *New York Chinese Weekly News*, an illustrated weekly. Endorses Benjamin Harrison in the 1888 presidential election.

Publishes "The Chinese in New York" in *Cosmopolitan* magazine.

President Grover Cleveland signs the Scott Act, prohibiting Chinese laborers in America from returning if they depart.

Establishes the Chinese Citizens' Union in New York City.

1889 Publishes "The Chinese in the United States" in the *Chautauquan* and "Wu Chih Tien, the Celestial Empress," a serialized work of fiction, in *Cosmopolitan*.

Defends Chinese men accused of crimes in Chicago and Philadelphia.

1890 Assists in the rescue of Suen Yee, a young Chinese woman forced into prostitution.

1891 Refused a U.S. passport, despite his status as a citizen.

Arrested in New York on trumped-up charges of illegal voter registration, but is acquitted.

1892 U.S. Congress passes the Geary Act, which extends the Chinese Exclusion Act for 10 years and requires Chinese to register under penalty of imprisonment and deportation.

Treasury Department issues regulations for enforcement of the Geary Act, including requirement that Chinese registrants be photographed.

Establishes the Chinese Equal Rights League to demand repeal of portions of the Geary Act.

Probably authors the *Appeal of the Chinese Equal Rights League to the People of the United States for Equality of Manhood*.

1893 Testifies before the U.S. Congress Committee on Foreign Affairs in favor of a bill to repeal the citizenship portion of the Geary Act.

Chinese Theatre opens in Manhattan, fulfilling his decade-long dream.

Treasury Department announces modification of Geary Act registration regulations, dropping photograph requirement.

Returns to Chicago to assist the Wong family in a lawsuit against the Moy clan, earning the enmity of the latter.

Supreme Court affirms constitutionality of the Geary Act.

Publishes the *Illustrated Chinese Weekly News*, a.k.a. the *Chinese American*, in Chicago, with the goal of "Americanizing" local Chinese.

Appointed Chinese Inspector in New York.

1894 Sues Boston's West End Street Railroad Company after being cursed by a conductor.

1895 Goes into the herbal medicine business in Atlanta, Georgia with Dr. Wang Gum Sing, but partnership dissolves within two weeks.

1896 Holds inaugural meeting of the American Liberty Party, whose principal platform plank seeks enfranchisement of Americanized Chinese.

Publishes first edition of the biweekly *Chinese News* in Chicago. Endorses William McKinley for president.

Demands cabinet or diplomatic position from McKinley administration.

Probably meets Dr. Sun Yat-sen in Chicago.

Dr. Sun, released from incarceration at the Chinese Embassy in London, releases letter from Wong confirming support for his movement in America.

Announces that Chicago is to become headquarters of a Chinese revolutionary junta.

Inaugurates short-lived Temple of Confucius in Chicago.

Receives letter from son in China asking for help for himself and his ailing mother.

1897 Secures articles of incorporation for the Chinese Equal Rights League of America.

Awarded franchise to build a Chinese exhibit at the Trans-Mississippi International Exposition in Omaha, Nebraska.

Organizes mass meeting in Chicago to push for citizenship rights for Americanized Chinese.

1898 Ousted by partners in syndicate underwriting Chinese exhibit at the Trans-Mississippi International Exposition.

Departs the United States for Hong Kong.

Applies to the U.S. Consulate-General in Hong Kong for a passport, which is issued and quickly revoked by order of the State Department.

Returns to Shandong for a family reunion.

Dies of heart failure in Weihai, Shandong.

1
The Arid Land of Heathenism (1847–67)

The single most important choice in the life of Wong Chin Foo—the one most responsible for who he eventually became—was not his own. It was, in fact, made on his behalf when he was a teenager by a pious American lady who thought he might make a good missionary.

The boy met the woman in Zhifu, a fishing village on the north coast of China's Shandong promontory, 100 miles from his home and more than 11,000 miles from hers. He was 13 years old and known by the name Wong Sa Kee, and he had wandered there with his elderly father in search of alms. The old man, scion of a well-regarded and wealthy family in his native town of Jimo, had been a prosperous tea merchant, but had proven inept at managing the family's wealth. Greedy relatives had used the pretext of a concubine's suicide to wrest his money from him. Impoverished, he and his son were reduced to begging for food.[1] The pair made their way northeast to Zhifu—known today as Yantai—in 1860, a pivotal year in the history of the village. It was the year the foreign missionaries came.

The woman, Sallie Little, the youngest child of a physician and the principal of a girls' seminary, was a native of Upperville, Virginia. She had grown up in an atmosphere at once literary and religious; by the age of 15, a year after her baptism, she had resolved to become a missionary. Sallie had wed the 22-year-old, Virginia-born Rev. James Landrum Holmes in July 1858, a month after his graduation from Columbian College in Washington, DC. Landrum, too, had declared from childhood a desire to preach the gospel. China, to his mind desperately in need of salvation, had been squarely in his sights from a young age.

Sallie, with steel-blue eyes set in an oval face, was not beautiful, but she was passionate, well-educated, and deeply religious. She could speak and write French and was an earnest and disciplined

worker. Landrum, handsome and talented, was a man whose winning personality seemed particularly suited for work among the Chinese. Theirs was a true love marriage, buttressed by a common faith and purpose. Before graduation, Landrum had received an appointment from the Board of Foreign Missions of the Southern Baptist Convention in Richmond, Virginia, to do missionary work in China. A month after their wedding, on August 21, 1858, the young couple set sail for Shanghai, where Southern Baptists had already established a small presence.[2]

The urge to bring Jesus to the heathen Chinese was not a new one. Christianity had entered the empire as early as the seventh century AD. Missionaries had trickled in during the Yuan and Ming dynasties, which lasted from AD 1271 to 1644. The Qing dynasty that followed had often entertained Jesuit advisers in its court. But it was not until the waning decades of the Qing, which lasted until the early twentieth century, that Protestants got their first real shot at imperial China.

Americans played a major role in this effort. The Second Great Awakening, with its religious revivals and camp meetings, had enabled the westward expansion of many American Protestant groups in the first half of the nineteenth century. It seemed only natural to continue to discharge America's self-appointed "errand to the world" by Christianizing, and thereby civilizing, nonbelievers in foreign lands. Some denominations had begun sending missionaries to Hawaii, India, and Burma in the early part of the century.[3] Their numbers increased substantially in the years leading up to the Civil War and grew even more in the decades that followed it.

China under the Manchus (*Manzu*), a minority tribe from the northeast that had conquered the majority Han people and begun to rule over them as the Qing dynasty in 1644, had been closed to foreign missionaries. Things were changing, however. A series of events at mid-century conspired to offer Christian churches an unprecedented opportunity to establish themselves in the empire. As the *Southern Baptist Missionary Journal* noted in its 1846 inaugural edition:

> This fair portion of the earth has long been contemplated by the Christian church with intense interest and with earnest desires for its spiritual emancipation . . . but the faith of God's people was not sufficiently strong to look for an answer so soon. Their expectations have been anticipated. An infinitely wise and overruling agency has effected a strange revolution in the policy of the government and China may now be entered . . . An opportunity

> is furnished . . . to preach the gospel to an extent utterly beyond the power of the Christian world to supply.[4]

Never mind that the "infinitely wise and overruling agency" was acting through the good offices of the British navy, whose gunboats were the proximate cause of this "strange revolution" in policy. Had the isolationist Manchu government not been in disarray, beset by aggressive colonial powers from without and domestic revolutionaries from within, Protestant missionaries might never have made headway in the empire.

China's door had been pried ajar in 1842 at the conclusion of the First Opium War, which an aggressive Britain had provoked three years earlier. The British East India Company had been producing opium in India, and traders had been smuggling it into China via Guangzhou in ever-increasing quantities. But they had been doing so by bribing local officials in violation of Chinese law, which forbade importation of the drug. Alarmed at China's growing number of addicts and at the outflow of silver from the nation's coffers, the Manchu government in Beijing dispatched to Guangzhou an imperial commissioner who had the temerity, in 1839, to confiscate and destroy more than 20,000 chests of British opium.[5] Although the Chinese had justice on their side, their junks were no match for the British gunboats, which sank them handily. War broke out: the British sent in reinforcements, not only to the Pearl River Delta between Hong Kong (*Xianggang*) and Guangzhou, but further north to the Yangzi River ports of Shanghai and Nanjing as well.

Wholly unprepared for war with the technologically superior Europeans, China was easily overpowered. The country suffered a humiliating defeat. The Manchus were forced to sign the Treaty of Nanjing, which compelled China to pay six million silver dollars in reparations for the lost opium and to open five ports to foreign trade, residence, and missionary activity. Treaties with France and the United States providing similar concessions soon followed. The empire was also forced to cede Hong Kong Island to the British in perpetuity.[6]

Emboldened in part by the disgrace that the loss of the war had caused the Manchus, revolutionaries in south China, led by a man named Hong Xiuquan, launched the Taiping Rebellion eight years later, when Wong Sa Kee was just three years old. It was one of several uprisings against the Qing dynasty at mid-century, but was by far the most extensive and threatening. Hong, who had repeatedly

failed to pass the imperial examination that would have secured him a civil service position, had been converted to Christianity by the Rev. Issachar J. Roberts, a Southern Baptist missionary who had come to Guangzhou in 1844. However, a series of religious visions—some say the result of a nervous breakdown—convinced Hong that he was the son of God and the younger brother of Jesus Christ. He became persuaded that overthrow of the Manchus was necessary for the establishment of God's kingdom on earth. He called it the Taiping Tianguo, or the Heavenly Kingdom of Great Peace.[7]

Hong championed some social and economic reforms under the mantle of his self-serving brand of Christianity, among them a more equitable distribution of wealth. His movement attracted many followers, as many Chinese did not require much persuasion to oppose the Manchus, who were viewed as foreigners who had subjugated them and taxed them too heavily and who had of late become weak and corrupt. The Taipings eventually metamorphosed into a potent fighting force. Over a period of several years, they battled their way north, occupying Nanjing in 1853 and establishing their capital there. Before they were finally defeated by Manchu forces just over a decade later, they had assumed control of a large swath of southern China and had posed a mortal threat to the dynasty.[8]

In the meantime, the Chinese had been less than scrupulous in their observance of the Treaty of Nanjing. In 1856, they attacked a British vessel believed to be carrying opium, giving the Europeans, who desired additional privileges in China, a second excuse to press for them. Assisted by the French, the British attacked again in what came to be known as the Second Opium War. China resisted, but Guangzhou was taken in 1857 and Tianjin in 1858. In the Treaty of Tianjin that concluded the war, China was obliged to offer concessions not only to Britain and France, but to Russia and America as well. The reluctant Manchus were compelled to allow these nations to open legations in their capital city of Beijing and to permit foreign trade in 11 additional ports. The treaty was signed in 1858, but fighting did not cease until it was ratified by China in 1860.[9]

With the traders came missionaries. Previously limited, like the merchants, to five ports, they were suddenly permitted to venture inland. A host of devout Christians of various stripes spread quickly through the country, eager for a chance to save as many of China's 400 million souls as they could. The reception they received from the Chinese—none too pleased at the prospect of having foreigners

in their midst—was not a warm one, however. The concessions they demanded had constituted a huge loss of face, not just for the Manchu rulers, but for patriotic Chinese generally. Nor did the average Chinese make a distinction among Europeans, or between Europeans and Americans. Foreigners were foreigners, uncivilized barbarians all. The "red-haired devils" were in China because they had forced their way in, not because they had been invited.

The American Baptist Mission had sent its first missionary to China nearly a quarter of a century before the Holmeses reached Shanghai in February 1859, after six punishing months on the high seas.[10] Southern Baptists—who had organized their own foreign mission board in 1845, after a dispute with their northern brethren about whether slaveholders ought to be missionaries—had been in Shanghai since 1847, five years after it had been opened to foreigners. With the signing of the Treaty of Tianjin, new ports would be open to them: they set their sights on establishing new missions in the northern coastal province of Shandong.

Opening one such mission was to be Landrum and Sallie Holmes' assignment, but it was not yet possible when they arrived in China. Dengzhou (known today as Penglai) in Shandong was one of the 11 ports slated to be opened as soon as the treaty took effect, but this would not occur until the agreement was ratified by the Manchus the following year. Biding their time in Shanghai, they worked with the Rev. and Mrs. Matthew Tyson Yates, who in 1847 had been the first to arrive, and the Rev. and Mrs. Tarleton Perry Crawford, who had come in 1852. Because they expected to leave for Shandong as soon as hostilities ended, they took up the study not of the local Shanghai dialect but rather of Mandarin, a variation of which was spoken throughout Shandong.

Dengzhou was mentioned by name in the treaty, but Zhifu, 60 miles to its east, had a deeper harbor. References to the former, however, were understood to apply to the latter.[11] Accordingly, on December 31, 1860, the Holmeses, with an infant daughter born in Shanghai, landed in Zhifu together with the Rev. Jesse Boardman Hartwell, his wife Eliza, and their son. The Hartwells continued on to Dengzhou, while the Holmeses remained in Zhifu, where, not coincidentally, Landrum's younger brother Matthew also settled. The two brothers went into mercantile trade, offering Landrum an independent source of income. Among other endeavors, the enterprise profited handsomely from smuggling cotton into the Confederacy during the Civil

War.[12] A decade later, Matthew would be named the U.S. consul in Zhifu.[13]

The salubrious climate of northeastern Shandong was a welcome relief. It was far healthier than Shanghai, which was oppressively hot and humid in summer and cold and damp in winter. Shandong's winters were cold, to be sure, but dry. The area was mountainous, but the hilly terrain was beautiful, the mountain air pure, the sea breezes balmy, and the mountain streams crystal clear.[14] The Holmeses, who had been eager to leave Shanghai, found their new location a huge improvement and settled in quickly.

The Holmeses were the first missionaries to arrive in Zhifu, though others soon followed. They leased a traditional Chinese courtyard home in the village of Zhuji, four miles west of the center of town, in which rooms were arranged around a central, open-air atrium. It was fitted with floor-boards, bare earth being considered unsuitable for Western habitation.[15] The home consisted of a parlor, a bedroom, and a guest room, as well as a small apartment for use by the servants, a storage room, and a chapel. They had brought some furnishings with them from America for their new home, including a coal-burning Franklin stove for warmth.

The missionaries provided the local Chinese with quite a spectacle. The women wore wide hoop-skirts, flounces, and "coal-scuttle bonnets," horseshoe-shaped affairs that covered the top, back, and side of the head. The men wore tight trousers and "plug-hats," round, narrow-brimmed derbies. And if their clothing did not strike the Chinese as exotic enough, their complexions and coiffures also set them apart. They must have seemed nothing short of apparitions to the natives of Shandong, who had had no experience with foreigners.[16] In a letter to her friend Anna Kennedy Davis, Sallie described the ordeal of being gaped at on one of her first forays into town:

> I went ashore today, had quite a crowd around; they were tolerably polite, though, and when Landrum told them they had looked at us long enough and thought it would be more polite for them to go away . . . they turned and went off, and I suppose told what a wonderful sight they had witnessed, for in a few minutes another crowd came running to see us.[17]

The receptions, however, were not always so courteous. The Hartwells, for their part, had to contend with the coldest of shoulders upon their arrival in Dengzhou:

> The leading men of the city had . . . decided to discourage all intercourse with the outsiders and to render their stay as inconvenient and unpleasant as possible. Reports were circulated that these barbarians were inimical to the government, that they were spies, that they had come to wean the people's allegiance from the Emperor to foreign rulers, that they would kidnap women and children by the ship load to send off to the outside countries, that they could throw magic spells over the unwary, especially children, to make them follow them and become Christians, and that they practiced various unknown black arts, and were altogether exceedingly dangerous.[18]

Not long after their arrival, the Holmeses took in a bright young Chinese boy named Shetze. It was an act of Christian charity and not an adoption, as it was already clear that Sallie could bear children of her own. By July, they had welcomed young Wong Sa Kee into their home as well, although the boy had actually been placed in the care of Landrum's brother Matthew by his father, Wong Fong Chung. The latter must have been desperately poor to have been willing to give his son up to the care of "foreign devils." More than 20 years later, Wong would recall gratefully that his father's "only crime at the time was that he was too poor to give me an education. He was too old to make his own living, while I was too young to make one for him, and through sheer humanity the Holmes family . . . took us both in and provided for us, not only for a season but for nearly ten years."[19]

Sallie contrasted her two new Chinese charges in a July 8, 1861 letter to Anna Davis:

> Already having Shetze, we now have another, at least he is nominally Matthew's boy, as his old father gave him to him. He is thirteen years of age, not any larger than Shetze though. His mother dead, and his father *very old* and *poor*. He is a pretty bright boy, not such a genius as Shetze. I think he will probably never take the lead . . . for either good or evil; but he learns well, is obedient, and doesn't get into scrapes as often as Shetze, though I don't know whether his principles are any better or not; it is but little we can expect in that respect concerning a child brought up in heathenism, taught to steal and cheat, the only wrong about such things being the getting found out; but we will hope for the best, though what is taught in early childhood is hard to be eradicated; but my hope lies (even as it does with the grown up people) in the converting power of God.[20]

The family's happy life soon came to an abrupt end, however. In August, the Holmeses lost their daughter, Annie, to an infection contracted during teething. And in October of that year, in an even greater tragedy, Sallie lost her husband, Landrum, when a gang of Chinese bandits camped out a few miles from Zhifu and threatened the town.

While still in Shanghai, Landrum had visited Nanjing to establish contact with the Taiping rebels.[21] Because they espoused some Christian principles, he had hoped to find them powerful allies in the effort to preach the gospel. Although he was disappointed in their doctrines, he had been received warmly. He now assumed the bandits massing on Zhifu's outskirts were also Taiping rebels and that he might expect a similar reception from them, but it proved a costly miscalculation. When he and a brother Episcopalian missionary rode out to dissuade them from attacking the town, the two were brutally murdered, their burned bodies discovered a week later. They were interred next to little Annie on an island near the entrance to Zhifu harbor, since it was considered unseemly by the local mandarins for foreigners to be buried on the Chinese mainland.

Sallie's faith remained unshaken, even after losing her only child and her beloved husband within three months of each other. Defying expectations that she would pack up and return at once to America, she announced that she had decided to stay in China and continue her work rather than to "leave the heathen without a knowledge of Jesus."[22] The fact that she was pregnant again did not change her resolve. She did, however, conclude that it would be prudent to relocate to Dengzhou, so in July 1862, scarcely a month after the birth of her son, named Landrum for his late father, she did just that. Along with her went not only the infant but the other members of her household, including the two Chinese boys and Wong's aged father.

In Dengzhou, a walled city of about 80,000, Sallie joined Martha Crawford, who had arrived from Shanghai in 1863 with her husband, the Rev. Tarleton Perry Crawford. The two women took to knocking randomly on doors in an attempt to spread the gospel. There was much hostility, however, and the going was difficult. As Rev. Crawford's biographer recounted:

> On knocking at a door . . . they were often told "not at home," or "the dogs will bite," or sometimes plainly, "we do not wish you here," but this did not occur very frequently. A more common

> plan was to show, by a cool reception, that the visitors were not welcome . . . Thus those two brave women, often with aching hearts and lagging feet, persevered in their work in the face of many discouragements.[23]

Three months after Sallie's arrival, Dengzhou's North Street Baptist Church was established—the first Baptist house of worship, and probably the first Protestant church, in China north of Shanghai. It boasted eight members, including Sallie, the Hartwells, and a few Chinese converts. Three additional Chinese were baptized on that day.[24] Wong Sa Kee was to have been a fourth, as Sallie mentioned in a September 29, 1862 letter to Anna that revealed a deepening understanding of the boy:

Figure 2

1858 wedding photograph of Sallie Little and J. Landrum Holmes, courtesy of Deborah Guiher Chamblee.

> I told you, I think, that I hoped my cook was a Christian. He has been baptised and Sakhe [*sic*] is to be next Sunday. Sakhe is one of the most promising boys I know of. I hope to see him a useful missionary yet, and I know *he* thinks of it and studies hard that he may be the better fitted for it; but he does not talk much about it, he seems to have too high a reverence for the calling to think it proper for a *boy* to talk of being a preacher; but says he wants to go to his birthplace and *tell* his friends about Jesus, and though he is old enough to know that in a worldly point of view he would do much better to go into the business with Matthew, he does not wish to go. He studies so hard that it makes him sick sometimes, and I have to send him out to take exercise. He is a great favorite with everyone who knows him, but it does not seem to spoil him at all.[25]

The ceremony did not happen as planned, however. Five days afterward, Sallie explained in another letter that Sa Kee "is to wait a little longer for baptism." Although she fully believed he had accepted Christianity, some of the Chinese church members were apparently not as convinced.[26] One can only speculate as to what caused them to doubt his readiness.

Five years later, Wong recounted his version of the circumstances of his conversion. As he told it, he had been raised to worship idols, but had been attracted by the singing in a Christian house of worship one day, and curiosity had driven him inside. Even though he did not fully understand what was going on—he thought when everyone knelt to pray they were actually worshipping the wooden benches—he went back several times. One Sabbath, the missionary preached about idols, and Wong decided to put what he had heard to the test. Late that night, he went into a Buddhist temple, grabbed an idol by the head and shook it, and then waited to be struck down in retaliation. When nothing happened, he went home; the following morning—after a sleepless night—his faith in idols was shattered forever.[27] He went on to be baptized in 1867, at the time sharing Sallie's hope that he might one day become a missionary himself.[28]

Dengzhou's Baptist community continued to grow. Sallie opened a small day school for boys[29] that her two wards probably attended. She had mastered enough Chinese to translate Favell L. Mortimer's *Peep of Day*, a popular children's book that told the story of Jesus and inculcated fear of hell and damnation.[30] The young Wong would surely have been familiar with that book, and might well have committed some of its passages to memory. By the same year, the

mission boasted 23 native converts and two schools. The following year, Eliza Hartwell launched a girls' school and a second church was established. [31]

Dengzhou's foreign community consisted of Sallie, the Hartwells, the Crawfords, and a handful of others. These, plus the late Landrum and his brother Matthew, presumably constituted the sum total of foreign adults with whom Wong came into close contact during his teenage years. Overall, his early experience with these Westerners was positive: he admitted as much two decades later, in his most famous article, "Why Am I a Heathen?" written in English for the *North American Review*. Even in that blistering polemic, which set out his reasons for rejecting Christianity, he allowed that "at this impressible period of life Christianity presented itself to me at first under its most alluring aspects; kind Christian friends became particularly solicitous for my material and religious welfare, and I was only too willing to know the truth."[32]

But if Wong observed Christian charity at work during his early years, it came packaged with a generous measure of Christian condescension. The missionaries saw idolatry and depravity everywhere they looked in what one called the "arid land of heathenism,"[33] and did not hesitate to condemn them in their sermons, their letters, and the articles and books they published about their experiences. In this way, they played a major role in creating and shaping the image Americans had of China and the Chinese people. While these were certainly deeply held convictions, there was a pragmatic reason for the missionaries to dwell on them. The more they portrayed the Chinese as desperate souls in need of redemption, the more their presence in China was deemed necessary, and the expense of keeping them there justified.[34]

Sallie herself wrote of the "vileness and degradation here that shows how little civilization can do for a nation without religion," and she was certainly not alone in this view.[35] Another example can be found in comments by Samuel Wells Williams, an early missionary in Guangzhou who, years later, as the chargé d'affaires of the American Embassy in Beijing, would play a pivotal role in thwarting Wong Chin Foo's extradition to China. In his 1849 book, *The Middle Kingdom*, he observed that "they are vile and polluted in a shocking degree, their conversation is full of filthy expressions and their lives of impure acts."[36] Similar views were espoused in innumerable missionary publications in the late nineteenth century.[37]

Remarkably, however, some Baptist observers actually took a nuanced view of Confucianism, the system of principles governing Chinese relationships set down by the sage Confucius, who happened to have been a native of Shandong and a source of much pride among local provincials. To the extent that it was more a set of rules for behavior than a religion and did not involve idol-worship, it could be tolerated and even admired. An article in the 1846 *Southern Baptist Missionary Journal* held that the sage "taught much that is proper to be observed, attracted numerous followers and acquired almost unbounded influence among his countrymen." Buddhism and Taoism, though, were another story. The former was dismissed as "a stupid system of idolatry," with its "gilded images, its magnificent temples,

Figure 3

This photograph may include a very young Wong Chin Foo. Identified only as "Mr. Holmes' children with Chinese playmates, Kinhwa," the photo shows three Caucasian children and three Chinese children, the eldest of whom, pictured third from the right, may be Wong Sa Kee, which was his childhood name. Source: Special Collections, Yale Divinity School Library, Hartwell Family Papers.

its lazy priests, its mendicant monks and its unmeaning ceremonies," and the priests of the latter as "great pretenders of magic and alchemy."[38] These views were commonly held by the foreigners in his life: Wong could scarcely have been unaware of them. Indeed, within a few years, he would return the criticism in kind and denounce the missionaries for providing the world with a skewed and patronizing view of the social life and religion of the Chinese.

That the missionaries viewed the Chinese as a species apart is hinted at even in the passages in Sallie's letters to Anna Davis that mention the two Chinese boys in her care. Although she was kind to the youngsters, feeding, clothing, and educating them, she clearly did not consider them adoptees or think of them in the same way she did her own children. Her letters are filled with reports of the joys of mothering first her daughter, and then her son. By contrast, the Chinese boys are mentioned only intermittently, and never with the same level of emotional investment. Wong's prospective baptism, in fact, was discussed in the same breath as the conversion of one of her servants. While Sallie clearly had affection for the boys, their importance to her was more as converts—and prospective soldiers in God's army—than as sons,[39] something that could not fail to have escaped their notice.

Although Sallie would remain in China for two decades, she took a two-year trip to America in 1867, when her son, Landrum, took ill. Mission board minutes record that she also brought along the son of a brother missionary in Guangzhou.[40] What they failed to note was that she had a third boy in tow as well. It was young Wong Sa Kee. She had arranged for him to further his education in the United States.

More than any other, it was *this* choice—Sallie's decision to bring the promising young Chinese to America in order to make a proper Baptist missionary of him—that set the stage for the emergence of the man who would become Wong Chin Foo. She was not wrong about him: he *was* preacher timber. But not, as it would turn out, of any variety she could possibly have imagined.

5
A Hare-Brained, Half-Crazy Man (1873–74)

The *San Francisco Chronicle* profile, "A Remarkable Chinaman," was reprinted in newspapers throughout the country and gave Wong a measure of nationwide renown.[1] It provided a fairly comprehensive, if somewhat embellished, summary of his life to date, including the *MacGregor* affair and his revolutionary activities in, and flight from, China. Connecticut's *Hartford Courant* published it on October 7, 1873,[2] where it must have caught the attention of Yung Wing, the Cantonese who had first arrived in America decades before Wong and who had graduated from Yale in 1854.

Although Yung had become a naturalized American citizen in 1852, he had returned to China after his graduation. After a brief apprenticeship to a Hong Kong attorney, he had moved to Shanghai, where he worked for several months as an interpreter for the Maritime Customs,[3] the same organization that employed Wong half a dozen years later. Yung then went into business, flirted with joining the Taiping rebels, and, in 1863, met Viceroy Zeng Guofan, the general who would eventually subdue the Taipings. Zeng, who had a strong interest in acquiring technical knowledge from the militarily superior West,[4] made use of Yung's experience and his English-language ability by sending him abroad to acquire machine tools that enabled China to manufacture some of its own munitions.[5]

Yung was promoted to the titled elite after this mission and became a member of Zeng's personal staff. He used his influence to lobby for a cherished goal that had grown out of his own experience: the education abroad, under public sponsorship, of a significant number of Chinese boys. The students would study technical subjects and return to China after 15 years to put their knowledge to practical use in public service. Zeng, aware of China's military backwardness, was supportive, but there was opposition in the conservative Manchu

court. It was not until 1871 that a proposal submitted by Zeng and Li Hongzhang, a leading provincial official who would eventually become one of China's key diplomats, was approved.

America was chosen over Europe for this experimental program, in part because of Yung's familiarity with it and in part because the Burlingame Treaty, which China and the United States had signed in 1868, provided for mutual rights of residence and attendance at public schools. Accordingly, four groups of 30 students each would be sent to New England, one group per year over a four-year period, to study military science, mathematics, navigation, shipbuilding, and arms manufacturing. The program would be overseen by Chen Lanbin, an old-fashioned Confucian scholar and minor official who spoke no English, with the bilingual Yung Wing as his deputy.

Yung proceeded to Massachusetts to arrange accommodation for the boys: the first 30 students followed, together with Commissioner Chen and another official, in the summer of 1872. Chen and Yung set up the permanent office of what was called the Chinese Educational Mission to the United States in Hartford, Connecticut, while their colleague was assigned to Massachusetts. The Hartford office was, in fact, the first permanent mission China had ever established abroad: the isolationist Manchus had not previously seen merit in setting up diplomatic offices in foreign lands, and would not inaugurate a formal mission in America until 1878.[6] As China's first overseas office, it served also as a de facto embassy. And although it did not have an official mandate to do so, it reported to Beijing about activities in the United States that were of interest to China, and monitored conditions elsewhere in the hemisphere, such as in Cuba and Peru, where Chinese laborers were being severely mistreated.[7]

Yung was thus already ensconced in Hartford when the *Courant* ran its first article about Wong Chin Foo. Several months later, it published a second piece, in which the "remarkable" Chinaman had somehow been restyled a "swindling" Chinaman. After recounting Wong's résumé, the *Courant* went on to claim that he had been traveling around the country swindling hotel keepers and others; that he had defrauded several people, both Americans and Chinese; and that he was representing himself as "a mandarin sent by the Chinese government on a special mission."[8] It added that he knew scarcely anything of Chinese literature. The following month, in a veiled reference to the Irene Martin affair, the paper made a third, passing mention of Wong, asserting that he "has further exhibited his

Figure 10
Yung Wing, 1881.

wicked proclivities in Rochester in a way that will not bear reporting," adding that he was "utterly repudiated" by all the Chinese residents of America.[9] And a fourth, brief item in the newspaper's "Personal Gossip" column that followed on September 8 maintained that Wong was "pronounced a fraud by the Chinese officials in this country."[10]

Although Wong would later occasionally be accused in print of skipping out of town without paying his hotel bill, no such allegation had appeared elsewhere before the *Courant* had its change of heart and published its second piece. The paper provided no details, nor did it cite any sources to confirm these alleged misdeeds. The suggestion that Wong was unschooled in Chinese literature, however, could have come only from a fellow Chinese, who would have seen this as a particularly damning criticism. And the alleged denunciation by "Chinese officials in this country" points the finger squarely at Yung Wing. Only a minuscule number of Chinese lived on the East Coast at this time. Only three were government officials, of whom two happened to live within shouting distance of the *Courant*. Of those, Yung was the one who could speak English.

Yung, a *true* mandarin sent by the Chinese government on a special mission, surely viewed Wong as a usurper; he would have seen vilification of such a troublemaker as entirely consistent with his quasi-diplomatic mission. The assertion that Wong was representing himself as an emissary of the Chinese government was, however, a fabrication. He was, to be sure, styling himself a "Confucian missionary" at this time, which could have been the pretext for the allegation, but he was hardly posing as an envoy of the Qing court. It was already clear that Wong had no love for the Manchus: he had, after all, launched a putsch against the regime, albeit a ham-handed one, while in China, and back in America he had been nothing but critical of them in his

speeches. In fact, the *New York Commercial Advertiser* reported in the same month the second *Courant* article appeared that, during a lecture in Buffalo on June 22, Wong "spoke strongly against the present Imperial government of China and the Tartar dynasty which he had entered into a conspiracy to overthrow."[11] He would hardly have been able, let alone willing, to present himself credibly as an agent of the very same government he was denouncing.

Two months later, Wong committed to print his antipathy to the ruling dynasty. Although he made his living during this period as a lecturer—his writing career would not begin in earnest for another decade—he penned an article for the *New York Times* in August 1874 detailing the cruel treatment of Chinese laborers in Cuba. He retold the story of a Cantonese coolie he had interviewed in Boston who had escaped from a Cuban sugar plantation. The young man had been duped and then kidnapped in China, and wound up cutting sugar cane under slave-like conditions for five years. Wong retold the unnerving tale of how he had been exploited, beaten and malnourished.

Wong placed the blame for this involuntary servitude squarely at the feet of corrupt Manchu officials, who had, he said, permitted as many as 100,000 Chinese to be kidnapped in similar fashion and enslaved abroad during the previous quarter-century. He explained that he had not spoken about the matter before, "because I disliked to lower my country in the estimation of other nations," but that the depraved indifference of the Chinese government to this abuse of its citizenry had impelled him to speak out.[12]

Since the Hartford mission also had responsibility for monitoring events elsewhere in the Americas, it is probable Wong's article and its attendant indictment of the Chinese government had caught Yung's attention. But whether it did or not, the *Courant* coverage was sufficiently damning that Yung or his superior, Commissioner Chen Lanbin, it can be inferred, wrote a report about Wong quoting the *Courant* article and sent it back to China. The document eventually reached the Zongli Yamen, the Manchu government's foreign affairs office, which found in it ample cause for alarm.

A surviving translation of a September 28, 1874, letter from Prince Gong (an uncle of the emperor, who had established the yamen in 1861 and continued to direct its activities) to Samuel Wells Williams, the American Embassy's chargé d'affaires, makes clear that the Chinese government was aware of the *Courant* article—indeed, the prince more or less quoted it directly. The yamen had just completed

Figure 11

Prince Gong as captured by noted Scottish photographer John Thomson.

Figure 12

Samuel Wells Williams, from Frederick Wells Williams, *The Life and Letters of Samuel Wells Williams, Missionary, Diplomatist, Sinologue* (New York and London: G.P. Putnam's Sons, The Knickerbocker Press, 1889).

an investigation of Wong's activities while he lived in Shanghai and Zhenjiang under the name of Wang Yen Ping. The prince's concern was not Wong's earlier revolutionary activities in China, but rather reports that he was passing himself off as an imperial emissary in America and planning to do the same in Canada and England. His potential for making mischief abroad if he were taken by foreigners to be speaking for the Chinese government was cause for alarm, especially to officials with minimal experience in the ways of international diplomacy. "If he has the hardihood to go abroad and everywhere talk in this wild way," the prince wrote, "he ought to be closely pursued and arrested, or it is greatly to be feared that he will cause difficulty of the most serious kind."[13]

Accordingly, the prince demanded his extradition. "It is of the greatest importance that Wang-Yen-Ping [*sic*] be at once taken up and sent back to China for trial, so that he can no longer roam all over other lands and create disturbance; and I certainly hope that it will be done now as requested," the letter concluded.[14]

Williams believed the prince was overreacting and said so, in the form of a condescending lecture on international relations. "I beg to state that it is a general rule among Western nations that when a subject of one country, who is charged with such an offense, flees to another, he is not liable to arrest and examination there," he wrote, "unless he has broken the laws of that country." He then reassured the prince that the American authorities would quickly realize that, "as he bears no letters with him from his own government, he is only palming himself off" as an envoy. "It is quite out of the question for such a hare-brained, half-crazy man as this to make any trouble there, and it is needless for me to make known this application to have him arrested with a view of punishment," he added, concluding that the prince should be "relieved of all apprehension and solicitude" about the matter.[15]

Privately, Williams was less critical of Wong. As he wrote to Secretary of State Hamilton Fish, "so far as I know anything of him, he is simply an enthusiastic, excitable man, ready to engage in any enterprise which promises reward or notoriety, and this assumption on his part of the dignity of envoy is probably a piece of bravado which has been greatly exaggerated by newspaper writers."[16]

The prince responded by citing the specific article in the Burlingame Treaty that provided for extradition,[17] but did not press the point, and the matter seems to have been dropped. Whether Wong ever even knew of it is doubtful. But he certainly continued to believe that returning to China would mean death for him, and acted accordingly. For a quarter of a century, he did not consider going back, and maintained no contact with his family. In the meantime, he would devote his energies to shoring up the image of the Chinese, which was taking a tremendous drubbing all across the United States.

23
False Starts (1894–95)

Shortly after the Columbian Exposition closed, Wong returned to New York. With his departure, the second incarnation of his *Chinese American* newspaper died. In December 1893, several papers around the country carried a tiny item in which it was revealed that Treasury Secretary John G. Carlisle—the man charged with enforcement of all Chinese exclusion legislation—had appointed Wong Chin Foo to the position of Chinese inspector.[1] Such inspectors were employed by both the Customs Service, which still had some authority over immigration in the 1890s, and the Office of the Superintendent of Immigration, which had been established in 1891. Both were part of the Treasury Department; their inspectors enforced the laws governing Chinese immigration.[2]

Wong had realized his wish of securing a federal appointment, but that he would have accepted such a position, given his views, is on the face of it somewhat shocking. One of the nation's shrillest critics of the Geary Act, he had signed on with the agency responsible for enforcing it. While it was true that Wong favored a halt to further Chinese immigration, it is still remarkable that he was willing to become a part of the agency that not only kept his compatriots out, but also deported Chinese who had entered America illegally. It appears, however, that Wong's position at least partially involved the interdiction of opium imports: this was a cause with which he thoroughly sympathized.

The *Washington Star* had an interesting view of Wong's appointment. It called it "at least a start in the direction of bringing the Celestial under the civilizing and soothing influences of the government pay roll," noting that "if John could be given to understand that he is eligible to the police force or to other departments of employment, it is very possible that the representatives of his race in this

country would at once cut off their cues, wear commonplace clothes, learn to vote and even to write legible laundry tickets." Apart from the snide comment at the end, Wong would have agreed with these aspirations.[3] If he had misgivings about taking the job, they are not recorded. And, as with most of his other endeavors, he did not keep the position for long. In fact, several years later he would deny having accepted it at all.[4]

Wong's initial assignment appears to have been a temporary one that began some time before the official announcement. He worked under John B. Weber, a Republican, Civil War veteran, and two-term member of Congress from upstate New York. Weber had been appointed the Port of New York's very first Commissioner of Immigration in 1890, a position he held for three years. As Wong told a *Washington Post* reporter, Weber soon discovered that he needed all the help he could get in controlling the smuggling of Chinese—and opium—into the country, and it was he who had approached Wong for help. According to Wong, Weber pledged in return not only to pay him "liberally," but also to help him secure a position as a consul somewhere in the Chinese Empire.[5] Wong had sought both before—the steady pay of a government job, and a diplomatic posting in his native land.[6]

According to the *Post*—and Wong seems to have been the source for its report—Wong performed well in the position. He captured many smugglers and helped organize seizures of a considerable quantity of opium. He did so well, in fact, that he was sent to Boston, where a syndicate of Chinese merchants was smuggling Chinese laborers in from Canada and earning $200 a head in the process. Wong, in an excellent position to gather information from within the Chinese community, discovered that some of the money was ending up in the pockets of federal customs officials. He reported as much to Weber, implicating Colonel Louis M. Montgomery, a Confederate Army veteran who was in charge of the New England district.

Wong's accusation of Montgomery came to a head in Weber's office at a meeting of the three men. "There was a very stormy scene," the *Post* reported. "Wong claims that he was finally shoved through the door with the impression of the Colonel's Boston boot on his trousers." He was fired. He claimed to have been cheated out of some wages, and a friend he sent to collect what was due him was chased out of the office. Wong then threatened a lawsuit against Weber,

although there is no record of such a case actually being filed in New York or in Massachusetts.[7]

That, however, did not spell the end of Wong's affiliation with the Treasury Department. Weber stepped down in 1893 at the end of the Harrison administration. Persistent reports of corruption caused Secretary Carlisle to appoint Colonel J. Thomas Scharf, an author, historian, journalist, and Confederate Army and Navy veteran, to investigate alleged fraud in Chinese inspection operations at the Port of New York. Scharf re-engaged Wong "with a positive assurance that he was to get a permanent berth as a full-fledged custom officer," which probably explains the timing of the official announcement in December. That arrangement, however, lasted only three months. Wong claimed to be the victim of false information provided to Scharf by an unnamed rival. Whatever Scharf was told, it was sufficient to sow distrust between the two men, and Wong's brief career as a customs inspector was at an end.

During his stint in Boston, Wong got into yet another tussle that ended up in court. While traveling on the West End Street Railway, he made a remark about the speed of the train to which the conductor took umbrage. The latter cursed him "loud and long, laying special stress upon his nationality," the *Trenton Times* reported. Wong, in turn, sued the railroad for $1,000 for damages to his feelings.[8] It is doubtful he collected, if indeed the case ever went to trial. Several months later, back in New York, he was injured in an attack by a mob of boys on East 27th Street.[9] Whether the attack was racially motivated is unclear, but probable; Chinese were often accosted during this era by young men brought up to regard them as lesser creatures. One of the boys was arrested and arraigned. Although it seems as if Wong was constantly appearing in court as a plaintiff, it is worth noting that justice for Chinese was sometimes possible in the courts—although it was never a sure thing—whereas it was often denied them by the other branches of government. It is no wonder Wong was constantly seeking redress in the courtroom.

The following March, still interested in government work, Wong filed an application for an inspectorship with the president of the Excise Board in New York.[10] He was looking to be reappointed to his old position as special inspector for Chinatown.[11] Then, in the fall, he made a sudden—and, as it turned out, abbreviated—move to Georgia. The *Atlanta Constitution* reported in early October that he was in town and would probably reside there for some time. Recounting his

résumé for Atlantans not already acquainted with it, the *Constitution* correctly described him as "one of the few Chinamen in the United States having a national reputation."[12]

Wong may have gone to Atlanta for the trial of Dr. Gee Loy and Tom Lee—not the same Tom Lee who was his friend in New York—who had been arrested on October 5 for keeping an opium den.[13] He seems to have served them as both interpreter and expert witness. He told the court that, while the climate of his native land made it necessary for people to use opium, it was not countenanced by the Chinese government and was not so degrading as drinking whiskey.[14] Wong may also have gone south for negotiations with Dr. Wang Gum Sing,[15] whom the *Constitution* described as one of the best-known Chinese physicians in the country.[16]

Dr. Wang himself had been in town only a few months. Nearly 60 years old, the peripatetic herbalist had lived in Trinidad, Colorado, in 1892; Las Vegas, New Mexico, in 1893; and, most recently, in San Antonio, Texas, in 1894. By the time Wong arrived, Dr. Wang had done business in three different locations in Atlanta, taking his stock of seeds, roots, herbs, and barks with him each time he moved. His store was gaily decorated with Chinese fans and other Oriental *objets d'art*, and his parchment diploma hung on the wall.[17] The doctor might have been lured to Atlanta by the Cotton States and International Exposition, which was going on in the city's Piedmont Park. Its 6,000 exhibits attracted some 800,000 visitors,[18] and he needed American patients to survive. Atlanta's Chinese population in 1895 was minuscule; only 46 Chinese were enumerated there five years later in the 1900 federal census.[19] Local Chinese would have constituted far too small a base for a Chinese apothecary to build a practice. To lure American patients, he even paid for testimonials from satisfied customers to appear in the *Constitution*.[20]

Whether Wong first met the doctor in Atlanta or had known him earlier is unclear, but in any event, on October 9, Wong announced his intention to remain in the city and go into business with the Chinese physician.[21] The *Constitution* reported that he would take charge of the doctor's business while the latter tended to patients; the two proposed to "introduce to the people of the city a new mode of treatment for diseases of all kinds."

It was just like Wong to associate himself with an effort to show the superiority of a Chinese approach—in this case, in medicine—and just like him to jump with both feet into a questionable business

arrangement, unencumbered by knowledge of the trade and deficient, as always, in sound commercial judgment. Dr. Wang was not as accomplished an English speaker as Wong, a fact that was surely a reason for his interest in the arrangement. Nobody knew how to promote a new venture better than Wong Chin Foo, who excelled at interpreting things Chinese to Americans, and this enterprise needed American patients to succeed. The other attraction was that Wong had some money to put into the business.[22]

"Heretofore the practice of Chinese doctors has, for the most part, been devoted to Chinese in this country, but Foo says he intends to bring the worth of Dr. Sing's remedies to the attention of Christian people," the *Constitution* reported. Wong told its reporter that he and Dr. Wang had effected a wonderful, partial cure of a very sick Chinese man who had been given up as "hopelessly ill" by American doctors. Sustained by a cocktail of Chinese herbs, he had been recovering rapidly.[23]

It took only about two weeks for the arrangement to unravel and for Wong to seek the arrest of Dr. Wang for swindling him.[24] Wong accused the doctor of misrepresenting his business—he had said there was "big money" in it, Wong asserted—and of bilking him out of $75 before kicking him out. The physician was bound over for trial, but a few days later the two were back in court when Wong accused him—despite the doctor's incarceration in the city jail—of keeping him in such "a continual state of fear by his threats" that Wong was forced to hire a black man at $3 per week for protection.[25]

The next day, the doctor turned the tables on Wong, accusing him of perjury, but the judge dismissed the case. Wong prevailed in court and the doctor was released after a week and a half in confinement. Whether the money was returned was not reported.[26] But that was the end of Wong's sojourn in the South. From there, it was back to the Windy City, which he would call home for the rest of his time in America.

Notes

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Chapter 1 The Arid Land of Heathenism (1847–67)

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