

The Benton Bi-Weekly Record, Fort Benton, MT. Feb. (1875 to Dec. 1879)
The Benton Weekly Record, Benton, MT. (Feb. 1880 to Aug. 1884)

March 25th, 1876

“Ching-Bang” is the name of Skipper Joe Hill’s latest importation. The new arrival has brought with him from China a blacking brush, of immense size, and is prepared to make things shine on a *large* scale. At least such seems to be the Skipper’s *understanding*.

March 30th, 1877

There is an industrious Chinaman in this community who desires to state through the *Record* that he will go out to day’s work or take in floors to scrub. He can be found almost any where at any time.

April 13th, 1877

Arthur Sling Bang, the Chinese he-laundress, has planted a fine bed of asparagus seeds, and proposes to furnish the Benton market with this delicious esculent during the coming season.

June 22nd, 1877

Chinese Murder

The murder of the Chinaman, Ah Too, at Butte was an atrocious affair. After shooting him through a window, his assassin waited until the surgeons had dressed his wound and gone and then broke in and cut him up brutally. The *Miner* says it was rumored he was concerned in the murder of a Chinaman in German Gulch. Chinamen say here he was a Chinese devil, had been killed once in California but had come back. Others say he was a good gambler and had beaten some Chinamen out of money. We are told also that he was a friend of the Chinaman, murdered by Chinamen for his money in German Gulch last year, probably a detective, and knew too much for the safety of others. This seems the most plausible story. These Chinese murders are becoming very frequent. This is the third in this vicinity within a few months; and it is usually impossible to find out the perpetrators. They seem to value life lightly and make heavy expense to the county where these are arrests and trials. In the German Gulch case the suspected party was released on preliminary examination and in the Butte case no arrests were made, the occupants of the cabin having fled before the murder was discovered. However there seems no way to prevent these things and they must be borne as part of the Chinese occupation. --*The New Northwest*

October 25th, 1878

China and America, locked horns in the early part of the week. One of our leading business houses became dissatisfied with their China cook and make a Douglass Democratic change in their culinary department, greatly to the disgust of John Chinaman. Stocks rose immediately after the Chinaman evacuated the premises, and peace reigns now in the concrete quarter.

February 13th, 1880

The Chinese celebrated new year yesterday with fireworks and Melican visitors. Both were plenty in the Chinese quarter.—*Helena Independent*

February 13th, 1880

Extreme vigilance is in order at present. Marshal Frank is exhausting himself in the discharge of his duties and can be found on hand at any time, ready to use up a cane on the chinaman who should possess the temerity of exploding a firecrackers. To-day being the New Years of the ladies were visible who visited the China quarter to satisfy curiosity. How many opium dens those ladies graced with their presence, I am unable to say, but presume that their curiosity was satisfied to the fullest extent.

February 27th, 1880

One of the Chinese laundresses of Benton says, “Bilness no muchee good. Melican man ‘wellie shultee too long, wellie shultee so long make chinaman sickee to washee.”

March 19th, 1880

A shooting scrape took place among the disciples of Confucius in the Chinese quarters last Monday. No Asiatic soul was sent to the Flowery Kingdom; but the heathen who attempted to convert a live Celestial into a corpse was curtailed by Judge Donnelly to the extent of \$100 fine and costs of court. It was a heavy toll on all.

April 2nd, 1880

A Heathen Chinese has turned Tiger tamer in Benton.

May 14th, 1880

Tuesday, May 11th, 1880

Court met at 9a.m. The case of Lau You vs. “Arthur”. Ah Dot called. Messrs. Buck & Hunt appeared for the plaintiff and Mr. Kanouse for defendant. This was a case to recover the sum of \$60, claimed by the plaintiff to have been taken by defendant from a letter addressed to plaintiff. The defendant denied the claim and put in counter claim to recover something like \$80 for board, nursing, etc., during sickness. The complaint and answer being read, the court ruled that the denial was in fact an admission. Mr. Buck, for the plaintiff, agreed to recognize the answer as a denial. A number of witnesses, most of whom were Chinese, were called; and it seemed to be the duty of each particular Chinese witness to swear a straight story for his side of the case. After the testimony was all in, and the arguments for each side had been heard, his Honor Judge Wade said that in a case of this kind it was hard to get at the truth, in fact an impossibility to find the exact truth; that the testimony for each side about equally balanced the testimony for the other side. The plaintiff, failed in establishing his claim, and the defendant failed to establish his counter claim. Therefore the court ruled that judgment was for neither plaintiff nor defendant, and that each pay one-half of the costs of the suit.

It should, perhaps, be remarked that the judgment of the court seemed to be particularly satisfactory to both the plaintiff and defendant, and each appeared as much delighted as if he had won his suit.

May 28th, 1880

Pioneer is also departing from the scene of its former mining glories, as the mining population is now about half Chinese and half white men.

June 2nd, 1881

The Chinese Funeral

Although there was an evident disposition on the part of the Chinese, friends of the deceased Quong Chong, to conceal from our people the hour for the funeral services, a large and curious crowd was drawn to the grave yard last Saturday afternoon. However common Chinese burials are to other communities this one was the first that ever occurred to Benton, and hardly any of the spectators had ever had an opportunity to see the curious ceremonies of such an occasion.

It would be interesting to know the significance of the various rites and we have made several efforts to obtain the information; but the Chinese are very reticent and are not all willing to communicate what we were anxious to find out. It must suffice, then, to say that the body—completely dressed in a white costume, such as Chinamen wear indoors, wearing shoes and hat—was placed in the coffin. Four packs of cards, with four silver half-dollars, were also placed inside. The coffin was then put in the hearse together with the bedding, clothes, and other personal property of the dead man. One Chinaman who acted as chief mourner rode beside the driver; at intervals of a few yards along the route of the procession this man threw out small scraps of paper. On arriving at the cemetery the body was summarily placed in the ground and covered up. As soon as this had been done, a bonfire was made of all the dead man's effects which formed as odd a collection as can be imagined. After the fire was well under way the chief mourner, after having first poured out a libation of whisky, burned, with great care to have every fragment of it consumed, a brown paper book supposed to contain the accounts of the deceased. This done, there was arranged about the foot of the grave a bowl of cooked rice with two chopsticks stuck therein, a bar of soap, two whisky bottles, three cups and some burning tapers and papers and decorated candles. In turn each Chinaman approached, and after having bowed three times, knelt and poured whisky into the middle one of the three cups from which some of the liquor was distributed to the other two and some poured on the ground. Then he bowed low again three times and made way for the next man. A board was placed at the foot of the grave instead of at the head; it was covered with hieroglyphics and one half of it was buried. The rice, whisky, candles, &c., were allowed to remain at the grave. One Chinaman carefully gathered up a handful of earth from the mound and wrapped it in paper and the obsequies were concluded. The body will lie in the ground for two years and will then be disinterred and sent back to China.

June 16th, 1881

Raid on an Opium Den

Winding Up of an Infamous Business

The Sheriff, Thursday night, made a descent on an opium den, on Front st., nearly opposite Murphy, Neel & Co.'s store, and captured four Chinamen, one in the act of smoking, two lying in a drunken stupor, and the fourth, the owner of the house, raided.

The fact is a notorious one that all the Chinese laundries about town do a little business on the side, in letting out opium pipes to smokers at fifty cents a smoke. Before the enactment of the opium law, last winter, the dealers in the drug were able to carry on their frightful trade without any possibility of molestation by the authorities, all attacks upon the business through the nuisance act, since there was no specific law to govern the case, having met with failure. No one, who has not looked into the matter, can have any idea of the magnitude of the traffic here. The patrons of the various houses have been, it is true, for the most part Chinese, but many of the white trash about town are frequenters of the little rooms at the rear of the laundries, where curled, up on the bunks they, can, under the influence of a few whiffs of smoke escape, for a time from their beastly selves. Besides, this kind of a drunk has to them the merit of cheapness.

The traffic has been more secretly conducted since the opium law went into effect last winter, and consequently it has been more difficult to take offenders red-handed, so to speak. One den in particular has been under surveillance for the last three nights, and our reporter accompanied the sheriff last evening as he went to station himself where, through an uncurtained window, he could watch the movements of the occupants of the room. After a few moments of waiting, one Chinaman was seen to take up a pipe and lie down on one of the bunks. This was the chance sought; the door was quickly opened and the sheriff and our reporter entered the room. One the bed, a pipe between them, lay two Chinamen, their staring eyes and the set expression on their faces telling the story of their indulgence. They were declared under arrest. In another bed was found a Chinaman so sound asleep that it was with great difficulty that he was aroused. After the drunken men became aware of the situation a string of extremely lucid and plausible pigeon-English explanations followed—none of them smoked, one had too sore a finer, another had sworn off and had smashed his pipe, the fragments of which he produced; the third said he “he smoke alle time; he know law, he don’t gib dam; he Slan Flanciso man; hell!” The owner fo the house, Ah Gee, was put under arrest. What seemed to concern him most was the Sheriff’s taking away his pipes, lamps and a tock of opium on hand. A few small bottles were scattered about on the table and these and a single pipe were declared to be everything connected with the business about the place. He is an accomplished liar. A movement to break some locked drawers showed him the jig was up, and he took a key from his pocket and, unlocking the drawers, gave up two large tin boxes of the drug, each weighing about a pound, a glass jar containing about as much more, and several small bottles, all full. Under the bed and concealed in various places were found in all about a dozen pipe bowls, all thoroughly saturated with the stuff, three stems, lamps, weigh scales, and other tools of the trade, besides a cigar box full of cinders which are apparently saved for the purpose of extracting the unconsumed opium therein. The latter is the best evidence of the amount of the drug consumed in this single den.

The Chinamen were all broke up over the closing of the house. They could not do justice to the subject in their broken English, but poured forth their indignation in pure Chinese all the way to the jail, and as the doors closed they were driving the prisoners inside mad with their pitiful story. We predict that these arrests will end the nefarious business for a long time in Benton.

The sequel to the capture resulted, this afternoon, in the Chinamen being brought into Court before Judge Tattan, who fined “Charley” \$5.00 and costs; Ah Sing \$5.00 and costs; Quong Lee \$5.00 and costs; Ah lee \$50.00 and costs, or to stand committed to jail for two months. Most of the fines were promptly paid.

June 16th, 1881

Collector T.A. Cummings made a large seizure of opium which had never paid any duty, in a Chinese house yesterday.

June 16th, 1881

All the Chinamen, but one, paid their fines for smoking opium, like little men. One Chinaman has a sore hand and can’t do any washing anyway, so he thinks it a matter of economy to board with the county a few weeks. But he misses his opium and suffers terribly in the consequence. A large piece came near being smuggled in to him yesterday; but it fell into the hands of the enemy. A bottle of some solution of the drug was likewise confiscated to-day.

August 18th, 1881

There was a bit of excitement up town night before last. It appears from the tale told us by Mongolian, that a number of colored men were playing cards in the Eagle Bird Saloon and, if the Chinaman is correct, a job was put up among several of the dusky gamblers to rob him of his oriental ducats. Tumbling to the racket, however, before the advantage was taken of him, John Chinaman grabbed his money and prepared to make a lively exit when, with his usual free and easy manner of handling deadly weapons, the proprietor leveled a pistol at him and ordered him to stay. But John knew they cared more for his money than his company, so he forthwith dropped his checks like hot cakes and took French leave of the assemblage. If this story be true, and we have no reason to doubt it, the parties to the affair should be arrested and punished.

February 23rd, 1882

Persons sweetly slumbering this morning in the vicinity of Chinese wash-houses must have thought "Gehenna broke loose" when at six o'clock the Chinamen ushered in their New Year with fire-crackers, and the noise all Celestials so dearly love. The holiday season will last for three days, and during that time we may expect our clothing to be badly mixed, or else not come home from the wash at all. The Chinamen were running around to-day exchanging calls, "all same 'Melican' man." Their cards were of red paper folded several times. In all the laundries an entertainment, consisting of cake, wine or whiskey, cigars and Chinese dried fruit, or confectionery, was provided and the white callers were treated with marked consideration. It is with them the year 8, but what that means is "something no fellah can find out."

March 16th, 1882

Suicide

Fort Assinaboine, March 14, 1882.

Ah Wan, a Chinaman who has been working for one of the officers of this post was found this morning in a cellar of the house hanging dead from a beam, having committed suicide. The cause of the act was that John could not rest easy knowing that his father had killed another Chinaman. The Chinamen at the post say the Devil came after him.

March 23rd, 1882

The body of Ah Wan, the Chinaman who committed suicide by hanging at Assinaboine the other day, has been sent to Helena for burial.

March 30th, 1882

Sam Yek, a Walkerville Laundryman, has mysteriously disappeared. So have numerous articles of clothing left with him to be laundried. This is the man whom the Nine Companies threatened, and it is thought possible that he has been made away with.--*Independent*

May 18th, 1882

A Test Case

Can Chinese Buy and Hold Unpatented Placer Mining Ground

The case of Tibbets and others against Ah Tong and others was begun last summer to the District Court of this county to test the right of Chinese to hold by purchase unpatented placer mining ground which had been located by citizens and sold to Chinese. A preliminary injunction was applied for, which was heard in chambers before Judge Galbraith upon affidavits showing: That

the ground in suit, situated near Pioneer, had been located by McDonal, Biley, and others, and worked by them for several years and by them sold to the defendants in April 1880; that in April, 1881, the plaintiffs located the ground while defendants were in possession under their purchase. The preliminary injunction was denied, and the case was tried at the past April term by a jury, and the same facts proven as were presented on application for injunction. Under Instructions from the court, a verdict was returned for the defendants. The plaintiffs based their rights solely on the ground that aliens could not hold unpatented mining ground, conceding that they have a valid right to purchase and hold patented ground; that as soon as a citizen conveys to an alien who had not declared his intention to become a citizen, unpatented ground, it becomes subject to relocation. This view of the case is fully supported by the case of Chapman against Toy Long, decided by United States Circuit Judge Deady, reported in 4th Sawyer Reports, page 28, and the same opinion seems to have been expressed in a case, not reported, decided by the Supreme Court of Nevada in 1877, but published in the *Scientific Press*, while the Supreme Court of Montana, in the case of the Territory against Lee, 2 Mont. 124, has held otherwise. The case is one of much interest, especially to the Chinese who hold mining claims in this way, and there is a large area of valuable mining ground so held. We are not advised as to whether the plaintiffs will prosecute the suit further.—*The New Northwest*

August 17th, 24th, 31st, & September 14th, 1882

Oriental Saloon

Bakery and Restaurant

Choice Wines and Liquors Constantly on Hand

Open Day and Night

Hop Lee, Proprietor

September 28th, 1882

A Chinaman named Ah Shuang was arrested last night for smoking opium, and was taken before Judge Tattan this morning, and was fined by him \$10 and costs.

October 5th, 1882

Hwa Kwoh

A Celestial Returning to the Flowery Kingdom

Ah Too leaves to-morrow morning for China. He and Char Lee in partnership carry on the laundry opposite Murphy, Neel & Co. on Front Street. Ah Too has been a resident of this country for a little over eighteen years, more than two years of which he has lived in Benton, and the remainder of the time in San Francisco. During the time he has sojourned in this country he has returned to China four times and he is now going back for the fifth, and is uncertain whether he will ever return again to this country or not, but will be governed by circumstances in that respect after he returns from China. He expects to go direct from Benton to San Francisco, and there take one of the ocean steamers to Hong Kong and from thence to Canton, and there he will embark on one of the boats peculiar to that country and go up the Canton river about 500 miles to his native place, Wam Boo, a town of about 3,000 inhabitants, immediately upon the river, and in the Province of Canton, and where he expects to arrive about the tenth of next November.

October 12th, 1882

Another Laundry

The house used by Mr. Culbertson as a dining hall during the time he was building his new hotel—and which is on St. John street on the opposite side of the street from the Pacific Hotel, has been rented by a Chinaman said to be Quong Lee for a laundry, and he is making a sewer on the edge of the sidewalk from his laundry to the Missouri river, running along the sidewalk past Miller's saloon, which he expects to have completed to-day or to-morrow.

October 12th, 1882

Sim Sing, a recent arrival of only a few weeks in Benton, has formed a partnership with Hob Lee in keeping the Oriental saloon on the corner of Main and St. John streets.

October 12th, 1882

A Token of Acknowledgment

Mr. Sim Sing, who tends bar at the Oriental saloon, handed us a newspaper printed in the celestial kingdom, at Canton, as a token of acknowledgment of the obligations which he is under to us for noticing the departure this morning for China of his friend Ah Too. He assured us that the paper contained news of the highest importance and interest, and everyone connected with the establishment examined it until they almost become cross-eyed, and attempts at deciphering it will have to be suspended until a more fitting opportunity.

November 30th, 1882

Hop Lee, the celestial who runs the Oriental Saloon, was closed up last night by the sheriff, on an attachment of debt to T.A. Cummings. A compromise was effected by the attorneys to-day, and Mr. Hop Lee will again open in Oriental magnificence.

December 28th, 1882

The two Chinamen who were arrested on Sunday night by Sheriff McDevitt for selling whisky to Indians, were examined before Judge Tattan this afternoon, W. B. Settle appearing for the defendants. Sufficient cause appearing to the Court, the prisoners were committed, in default of \$100 bail each, to await the action of the grand jury.

February 24th through May 19th, 1883

Chung Kee's Saloon

Bakery and Restaurant

Choice Wine and Liquors Constantly on Hand

Open Day and Night

Chung Kee, Proprietor

April 28th, 1883

Chinamen seem to be the best, or at least the most successful vegetable gardeners in this vicinity. One of those industrious pig-tails is already hawking young onions and spinach, and had a good stock of celery as late as the first of February. They are not very modest in charging for their produce, however.

May 5th, 1883

A Calf Kills a Chinaman

At about 2 o'clock on Thursday morning a Chinaman named Wang Hee died at Ben Marker's from injuries he received the night before from a young bull on the ranch. It appears that there was a cow on the place that no one but Marker could milk, because of the determined interference of its bull calf. The calf would fly into a rage whenever its mother was milked. The bull is now three years old and for the past year has been kept in an adjoining lot, and when any one approached the cow with a milk-pail the bull would fly into a fearful rage, and its bellowing could be heard all over the ranch. Day before yesterday the Chinaman started to milk the cow and the bull, becoming very much excited, rushed to the fence as usual, but the Chinaman paid no attention.

Suddenly the bull retreated a few paces and lowering its head, charged for the fence, making a breach and sending the fragments high in the air. The fence went down as if it had been paper, and the bull came headlong at the Chinaman, striking him to the head and side with his horns. The horn penetrated the left side, breaking two ribs, and the other fractured the skull. The farm hands rushed out to find the bull tossing the Chinaman in the air, and bellowing savagely. The bull was driven off and the unfortunate man was taken to the house unconscious. He lingered in great agony until 2 o'clock in the morning, when he died.—*Bozeman Chronicle*

May 19th, 1883

Opium Smoking

Three Chinaman were arrested last night by Officer Finnegan for opium smoking, and their pipes, lamps, and quite a quantity of the drug captured. They were taken before Judge Kanouse to-day, and were discharged after an examination, as no evidence was produced to show that they kept a place of resort for opium smokers or sold the drug to any one.

June 2nd, 1883

The five Celestials who arrived by coach the other day are about to start a Chinese store in Foster's old building on Main street. They are reported to be plentifully supplied with the condign, and will probably carry a good stock. This has long been a great want in Benton. No place can hope to flourish unless it contains a store where you can purchase fans painted with hump-backed Chinamen and impossible swans, or blue vases with green lizards crawling over them, and other things to suggest the horrible possibility that you've got 'em again.

June 2nd, 1883

Only Two Sacks

The public sale to a Chinaman of a squaw in our very midst, for the trifling compensation of two sacks of four, will horrify and alarms our readers. Does slavery exist amongst us in this year of universal enlightenment? Are human beings to be bought and sold upon our public streets, and at so small a price as that mentioned? Are Chinamen not only to pauperize our working classes, but enslave the original owners of this splendid continent. Why, where will they stop? If they will buy a squaw for four sacks, and so on until they will have us all in a condition of servitude. Some of our citizens should inform that squaw how her aboriginal honor has been degraded, and advise her to take her glittering scalping-knife in the solemn watches of the night and remove the capillaries of the daring oriental.

August 25th, 1883

Ah Kee, the Mongolian murderer, was jerked into the arms of his beloved Joss at Missoula yesterday. He is said to have taken the matter very philosophically, having no fear for his future welfare.

August 25th, 1883

The Chinese must go. Ah Hay, or Gee Whiz, or some other euphoniously titled Celestial, left by the Helena stage this morning to make his home hereafter among his Mongolian brethren at the Capital.

September 8th, 1883

The two Chinamen arrested for running an opium joint on Front street were given a hearing yesterday. One of them plead guilty and was given five days in jail. The second plead not guilty and, after trial, was released.

September 22nd, 1883

A Leper in Missoula

We entered the place, which was used as a sleeping room, fitted up with bunks three high, and about the dirtiest place to be found in Missoula, and the atmosphere was so thick with bad smoke and close air generally that it was a nail in one's coffin to breathe it. A half dozen Chinamen lay in the bunks and stuck their heads over the sides to see who the intruders were. The leper was pretty well covered up, but uncovered when told to exhibit himself. Dry and scaly places on his forehead, part of one finger gone but healed up, a hole in one heel, ulcerated, and sores on the toe pretty well established the fact that he was really a victim of that loathsome disease. Chinaman Jim and Lee Kim are the names, the names the poor devil is known by, and up to two months since was employed as help in the hotels and eating places. He has not felt well for several months, and has probably had the germs of the disease in his system for years. He has lived in this country for about six years.—*Missoulian*

October 13th, 1883

Ah Lung, the Chinaman who was convined in the county jail at White Sulphur Springs charged with the murder of a brother idolater, made his escape Thursday night, together with a horse thief named Canton. Nothing has been heard from them since, although a vigilant search has been kept up. The Meagher county jail is worse than none at all and the commissioners over there ought to do something toward getting a more substantial one.

February 23rd, 1884

Sam Lee has quit keeping washenhouse. No payee, soap too hi hi.

March 23rd, 1884

Cash has become so scarce in Benton that Chinamen shoot off fireworks when a customer pays a bill. There was a grand display of Roman candles last night.

April 19th, 1884

The Arcade Restaurant, formerly owned by John Kleber, has been re-opened by Tuey Mow and Ah Sing. Tuey Mow has the reputation of being the best Chinaman cook in Benton and his

restaurant has, under his management, earned enviable fame. If you want a first-class meal give Messrs. Mow and Ah Sing a call.