



Wong Aloy, *Chicago Record*, November 21, 1894.

A Portrait of Wong Aloy: A Chinese Immigrant's American Journey

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Wong Aloy (1868-1922) was one of the earliest recorded ASPA residents in Evanston.¹



This article, the first in a series, is part of Placemaking, a project to uncover, collect and share Asian, South Asian, and Pacific Islander (ASPA) histories in Evanston. The Project is co-sponsored by [Kitchen Table Stories Project](#) and the [Evanston History Center](#). Research is ongoing and more articles will follow. Please contact us if you would like to get involved with the project!

Author's Note:

Wong Aloy was many things; a man of letters, a merchant, a playwright, an immigrant, an interpreter, a brother, an uncle, a husband, a son. His life and career in the United States provide a fascinating portrait of an immigrant from China; his experiences, triumphs, and tragedies constitute a significant narrative. His life was woven by the multiple threads related to numerous issues facing immigrants from China in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. After he came to the U.S., he lived in San Francisco, the territory of Montana, Evanston, Chicago, New York, and El Paso. He was deeply impacted by white Americans' attitudes toward and treatment of Chinese immigrants - both positively and negatively - and he was fully enmeshed in the Chinese immigrant community.

Wong lived in Evanston for about five years and the experience had a major impact on his life. Wong's life after he left Evanston was so compelling that I could not help but trace the larger events that constituted that portion of his life, astonished as I pieced together the range of his experiences.

More research into Wong Aloy's biography is needed.² But for now, here is part of his story.

Language warning: Some of the language reproduced here is racist. It is quoted here in its original context only and in order to preserve the historical context in which it was originally used.



Lai Afong, Boats in Guangzhou Harbor, Guangdong, China, c. 1880. (Wikimedia Commons)

Guangdong, China

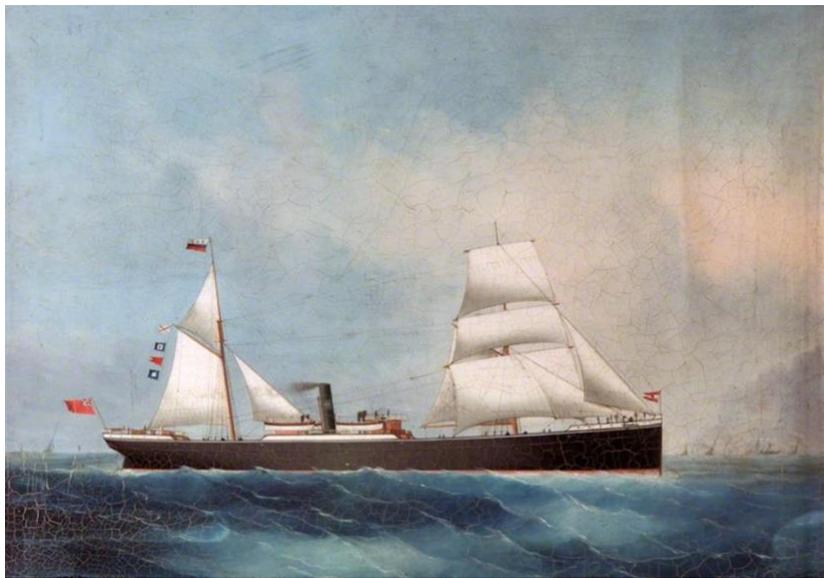
Wong Aloy was born in a remote town near the Si-Kiang River in Guangdong Province (Canton) in southern China. His father, Wong Quai Jun, and mother, Jue Shue, had several children.³ Their oldest son was 21 years older than their youngest son, Wong Aloy. Wong was the “pet” of the family, as he later said.

Wong's older brother immigrated to the U.S., probably in the 1870s. He lived in the territory of Montana where, according to Wong Aloy, he was a businessman. In 1881, when Wong was a teenager, his older brother returned to China for a visit. When he learned that Wong didn't like

school and that his mother let him “have his own way,” the older brother asked his parents if they would allow him to come to the U.S. They agreed.⁴

On the day of his departure, May 1, 1882, Wong found himself overwhelmed. With great sadness, he and his brother said their goodbyes to family members and left. “[T]he picture of the smiles which my home folks gave me is still in my mind,” Wong recalled years later. “And the kind, true, tender and wise advice which they gave me on that morning - it seemed to be whispering in my ears all the day long.”⁵

Wong sailed with his brother to Hong Kong. After spending a week in that city, his brother, who would remain longer in China, bade Wong goodbye. Jam Hing, Wong’s brother’s business partner, was returning to the U.S. and he had agreed to look out for Wong both on the voyage and once they arrived. The two set sail for San Francisco. Wong Aloy was 14 years old.



Anjer Head, c. 1850-1910. (Merseyside Maritime Museum)

San Francisco

At that time, a steamer voyage from Hong Kong to San Francisco took about four weeks. A look at records of ship arrivals in the port of San Francisco at the time leave little doubt that Wong sailed on the British steamer, the *Anjer Head*, which arrived in San Francisco on June 13, 1882 with 830 Chinese passengers on board, along with European and American passengers.⁶

Like many ships at that time, the *Anjer Head* was held in quarantine at Meiggs pier in San Francisco out of concern that there might be an outbreak of smallpox on board.⁷ According to standard procedures, immigrants were vaccinated against smallpox, and once a ship arrived in port, doctors boarded the vessel to conduct an examination. After the *Anjer Head* was released from quarantine, the European and American passengers were allowed to disembark first. Next, the passengers from China were allowed to disembark; they were directed to the Customs House, where officials inspected their luggage and subjected them to a brief physical examination. Now officially on American soil, they proceeded to the city’s “Chinese Quarter” or Chinatown.⁸

Wong and the other immigrants from China aboard the *Anjer Head* arrived in San Francisco just weeks after the U.S. Congress passed the [Chinese Exclusion Act](#) on May 6, 1882. Thus, Wong was one of the last immigrants from China to enter the U.S. before the act took effect. (Note the cut off of June 1882 in the chart below.)

**Chinese Immigration into the United States for each Calendar Year
from 1855 to 1882 inclusive.**

Year.	No.	Year.	No.	Year.	No.	Year.	No.
1855.....	3,526	1863.....	7,214	1871.....	6,039	1879.....	9,189
1856.....	4,733	1864.....	2,795	1872.....	10,642	1880.....	7,011
1857.....	5,944	1865.....	2,942	1873.....	13,154	1881.....	23,727
1858.....	5,128	1866.....	2,385	1874.....	16,651	1882 Jan to June.	27,765
1859.....	3,457	1867.....	3,863	1875.....	19,033		
1860.....	5,467	1868.....	10,684	1876.....	16,679	Total.....	266,071
1861.....	7,518	1869.....	14,902	1877.....	10,379		
1862.....	3,633	1870.....	11,943	1878.....	8,468		

NOTE.—The statement is made that nearly one-half of all the Chinese who have arrived in the United States have returned to their native country.

The above total number has been revised in recent years. Between 1850 and 1882 it is estimated that roughly 322,000 immigrants from China arrived in the United States.⁹ While the number of immigrants from China dropped off dramatically after 1882, there was still some continued immigration. *American Almanac and Treasury of Facts, Statistical, Financial, and Political Rochester* (NY: H.H. Warner and Co, 1883), 27.

In the 1840s, Chinese immigrants (mostly single men) came to the United States largely to the West Coast to work in gold mines, as well as in other industries, including agriculture and mining. Quite notably, many would work on the building of the Transcontinental Railroad.

As the number of Chinese immigrants grew, so did the racist sentiment towards them, particularly on the West Coast where their numbers were higher than in any other part of the United States. In the last half of the 19th century, various laws and ordinances were passed to limit Chinese immigrants' opportunities and curtail their rights within the U.S.

In 1882, the Chinese Exclusion Act, the first federal law focused on restricting immigration, was passed. The act barred Chinese immigrant laborers from entering the U.S. for a decade. Exemptions were made for students, teachers, merchants, and diplomats, as long as they had the required documentation. Those who were able to immigrate after 1882 faced the fact that no immigrant from China would be allowed to become a U.S. citizen. By this act, Chinese immigrants already in the U.S. became so-called "permanent aliens." The 1882 act was extended several times before becoming indefinitely extended in 1904. The restriction barring immigrants from China from becoming U.S. citizens was lifted in 1943.

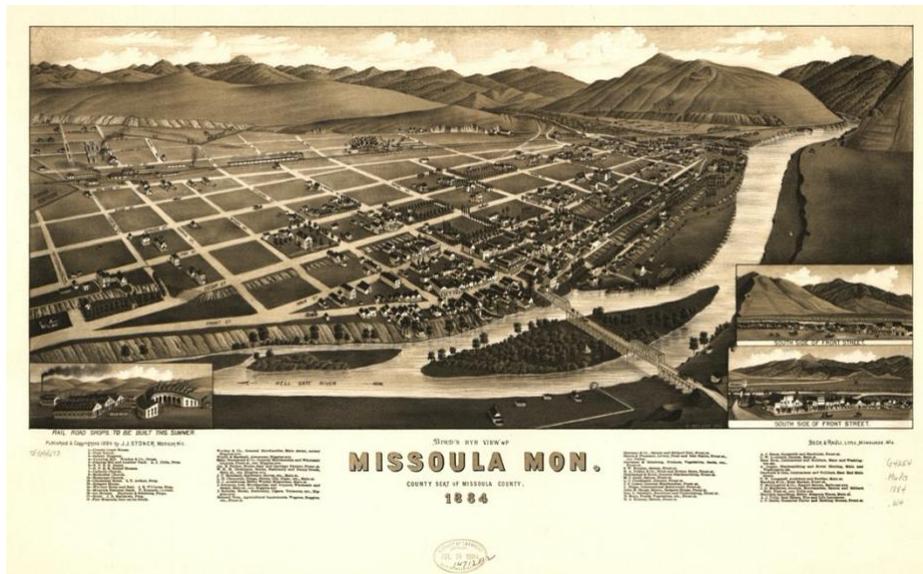


Chinatown, San Francisco, California, c. 1898. (Keystone View Co., Manufacturers and Publishers, Library of Congress.)

The majority of Chinese immigrants to the U.S. arrived in San Francisco. Increasingly, they were met with a host of discriminatory laws, barring them from, for example, attaining certain kinds of employment, attending schools with white children, and testifying in court. In January 2022, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors passed a resolution formally apologizing for the city's various forms of discrimination against Chinese immigrants and their descendants.¹⁰

“The shameful history of structural and systematic racism and discrimination against Chinese immigrants and the Chinese American community by the City and County of San Francisco reaches back over 150 years and touched every aspect of life including employment, housing, education and culture,” the resolution stated.¹¹

After Wong Aloy arrived in San Francisco, he worked for five weeks in a laundry, one of the small number of industries open to Chinese immigrants.¹² “I didn’t like that kind of work,” Wong later told a *Chicago Daily News* reporter, “but, finding myself an ostracized stranger, 4,000 miles from home, I was glad to follow the example of my countrymen.”¹³ ([Read about the civil rights struggle pertaining to Chinese laundries in San Francisco here](#)).



Bird's eye view of Missoula, Montana, 1884. (Geography and Map Division, Library of Congress.)

Missoula

Around 1883, Wong moved to Missoula, a town in the territory of Montana. He may well have gone there with his brother's business partner, Jam Hing, who was apparently in business there.

In the small town of Missoula (population 2,500 in 1880), Wong Aloy was employed as a cook and domestic servant in the household of Captain Christopher Powers Higgins. Higgins, a former U.S. army officer, was a business owner, banker, and politically powerful resident of Missoula.¹⁴



Christopher Powers Higgins (1830-1889), 1879. Higgins was an Irish immigrant who came to the U.S. as a child. He enlisted in the U.S. army at the age of 18; he was later "put in charge of a military force by the general government and ordered to subdue" Native Americans in Montana.¹⁵ In 1865, he and two others organized the town of Missoula. When Higgins died, Missoula's public buildings were draped in black.¹⁶ (Findagrave.com)

The fact that Wong moved to Missoula is not surprising. He was one of hundreds of Chinese immigrants who came to Montana from the West Coast in the late 19th century.¹⁷ A mining boom attracted workers to the remote Western territory and the population skyrocketed. By 1870, more than 1,900 Montana residents were immigrants from China, constituting roughly 10% of the territory's total population. Montana soon boasted the fifth highest number of Chinese immigrants after California, Idaho, Oregon, and Nevada.¹⁸

By the time Wong arrived, an anti-Chinese movement was gaining momentum among white Montana residents.¹⁹ The "Chinese must go" - this was a popular phrase of the anti-Chinese movement in the United States at the time. Efforts to restrict and oppress immigrants from China were founded on racist ideas and often centered on the argument that Chinese immigrant laborers drove down wages and "stole" jobs from white workers.

In the town of Missoula, an "anti-Chinese committee" was formed; racial slurs were printed repeatedly in the press; and a concerted effort among white residents was underway to force Chinese immigrants to leave. "The community would be well rid of them," an editorial in *The Missoulian* read. "Drive them out. Do it peaceably and quietly, but do it."²⁰

The drive against and discrimination toward Chinese immigrants in Montana was replicated in places across the U.S. In the latter part of the 19th century, violence toward Chinese workers would accelerate. Immigrants were driven out of communities in various localities; they were attacked; and they were murdered. In 1885, in Rock Springs, Wyoming, for example, white miners attacked and killed 28 Chinese immigrant miners. (Read more: <https://www.wyohistory.org/encyclopedia/rock-springs-massacre>)

Partly as a result of the violence directed toward them, many Chinese immigrants moved east to major cities, including New York and Chicago.

Wong lived in Missoula for about five years. Living and working in the Higgins household (which included seven children) was likely arduous work. But he would later recount that it was during this time that he perfected his English and began "writing love stories and dramas."²¹

He also met the Reverend Wilder Mellon Nutting. Nutting was a missionary - also known as a "circuit rider" - for the Methodist Episcopal (ME) Church. Nutting had been assigned to the Montana territory in 1883.²² Three years later, he was assigned to Missoula.²³ His job was to organize new congregations, preach to residents in remote or rural areas, and help the church expand.

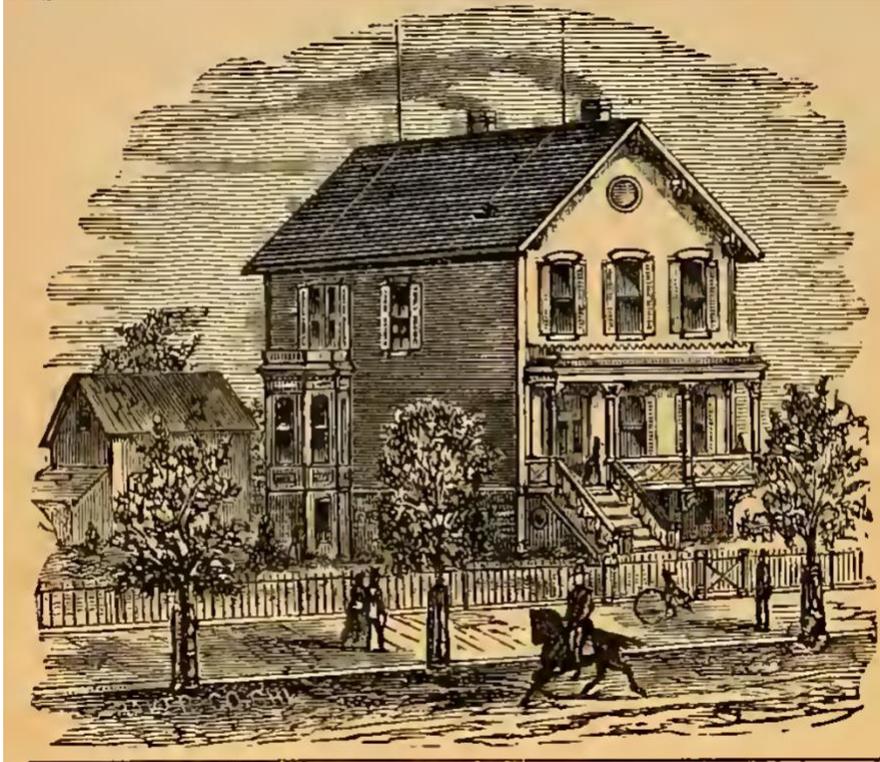


Wilder Mellen Nutting (1854 -1937) was born in Wabash County, Illinois. He moved to the Montana territory with his family in the 1870s. He studied at Highland University in Kansas and at the Baptist Theological Seminary at Rochester, New York, before returning to Montana as a missionary. ²⁴ (Findagrave.com)

The first Methodist Episcopal Church in Montana was established in 1866.²⁵ At the time, the ME Church operated what were called “missions” in a variety of countries, including China and India, beginning in 1847. The missions were designed to convert people to the church and minister to populations in foreign countries. The church also operated what it called “Foreign Missions” or a “third class of missions” in territories in the western and southwestern United States; these areas included Arizona, the Black Hills, Dakota, so-called “Indian Territory,” Montana, Utah, West Nebraska, and New Mexico.²⁶ Some of the church’s missionaries also worked extensively with Chinese immigrant populations, especially in California, where the Rev. Otis Gibson (1826-1889), author of the seminal *The Chinese in America* (1870), worked. Gibson, a former missionary to China, was a prominent member of the ME Church. He worked to advance the rights of Chinese immigrants. He publicly opposed the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882.²⁷

Wong’s encounter with Nutting would change the course of his life, quite literally. Wong later explained that in Missoula he was “converted to the Christian religion by Rev. Nutting.”²⁸

Wong’s employer, Captain Higgins, died in 1889, the same year Montana was admitted to the Union. Wong had already left Missoula by then. The Reverend Nutting “brought him to Evanston,” as Wong later said.²⁹



Illustration, Davis Street, Evanston, Illinois (Evanston Township Directory, 1888).

Evanston

In late 1887 or early 1888, Wong Aloy and Wilder Nutting left Missoula and traveled over 1,500 miles east to arrive in Evanston. Nutting was to continue his religious studies and would enroll at the Garrett Biblical Seminary, where he would study for two years.³⁰ Wong Aloy would also become a student again once in Evanston, now revisiting his education after many years of hard manual labor and domestic work. But in order to continue his education, Wong needed employment. With years of experience as a cook and servant for the Higgins family, Wong was hired in a similar role for an Evanston family. And, while in Evanston, he would “work his way through school.”³¹

The first known record of Wong’s presence in Evanston is found in an 1888 directory: he is listed as working as a cook for Eliza Barber and living in the Barber residence at 1006 Orrington Ave (near Emerson Street). Barber’s son Arthur was a student at Northwestern University at the time Wong worked for and lived with the Barber family.

Eliza Barber was a widow. Her husband, Seth Barber, had worked as a dry goods salesman. He died in 1881. Both the Barbers were immigrants from England.³² (The Barbers would be the second immigrant family Wong would work for in the United States.)

Aloy Wong, cook Mrs. Eliza Barber, 1006 Orrington av

Evanston Township Directory, 1888. Wong was later listed as a “servant” for Eliza Barber. Various sources that document Wong’s life after he arrived in Evanston include some conflicting and erroneous biographical details. On more than one occasion it was reported, for instance, that Wong was Japanese. His name was often misspelled in records, such as city directories and newspaper articles, listing him as “Won Aloy” and “Wung Aloy.” His names were

also reversed in various sources (as they are above). Wong signed his name in the traditional Chinese manner with the surname first.

As Wong settled in, it was likely a comfort to him to know that the Rev. Nutting and his wife lived not too far away, at 825 Chicago Avenue.

Given that Wong had converted to Methodism, going to Evanston was a good fit. The Barber family were members of Evanston's First Methodist Church on Hinman Avenue.³³ And the town was dominated by the ME Church, to some degree, from the presence and influence of Northwestern University (originally founded as a Methodist institution) to the work of the Garrett Biblical Seminary, the first Methodist seminary in the Midwest.³⁴



First Methodist Church, Hinman Avenue, Evanston, Illinois, c. 1894. (*Classic Evanston*.)³⁵

However, having lived in two American localities where the Chinese immigrant population had been large, Wong arrived in a state that counted only a tiny number of immigrants from China. According to the U.S. Census, in 1880, the total population of immigrants from China in Illinois was 212.³⁶

At this point, I have identified two other immigrants from China who were living in Evanston at the time Wong arrived: Sam Sing and El Lee. Both men were operating laundries in Evanston. Lee at 525 Benson Street and Sing at 523 Orrington Ave. Sing would live and work in Evanston for decades. Soon, more immigrants from China would arrive.³⁷

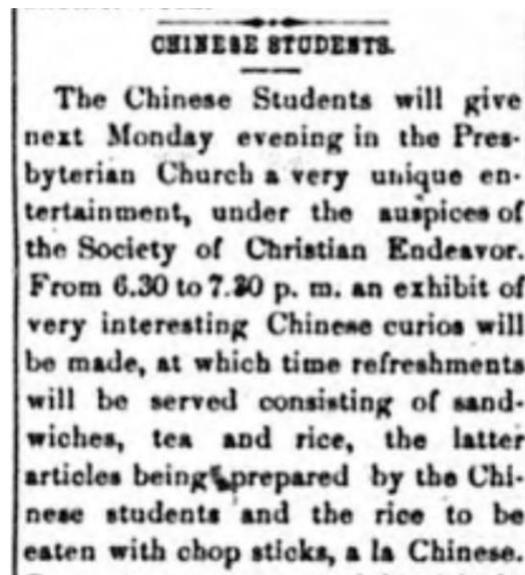
About two years after Wong arrived, Jim Lee (1855- ?) was living in Evanston and operating a laundry at 1614 Sherman Ave. Lee arrived in the U.S. in 1875. A few years later, in 1880, Willie Sing (1860-?) arrived in the U.S. from China. Sing later joined Lee in Evanston and they ran the laundry

together.³⁸ (Lee and Sing, along with other Chinese immigrants who operated laundries in Evanston, is the subject of a forthcoming Placemaking article.)

At the time these men were living in Evanston, the population of Evanston and South Evanston was about 9,000. (This time period predated the merging of the two towns in 1892.)

Although Evanston did not have any sizeable Chinese immigrant population, it did boast a certain connection with China. The ME church, Northwestern University, and Garrett Biblical Seminary all had a history of sending Evanston missionaries to China, along with other countries.³⁹ And on at least one occasion that I have found, Evanston hosted a group of visiting students from China.

In the summer of 1887, the students came to Evanston and hosted a fundraiser to raise money to build a Baptist Mission Church in China. At Evanston's Presbyterian Church, the students - "Christian converts" as the local newspaper called them - served refreshments, performed songs, and displayed "Chinese curios." They also performed a Chinese wedding ceremony in "Chinese regalia."⁴⁰



"Chinese Students," *Evanston News-Index*, July 23, 1887.

Wong was about 20 years old when he arrived in Evanston and took up his duties in the Barber residence. Along with his work in the household, Wong also took on other jobs. He "waited table," mowed lawns, "and did anything that came to hand to earn an education."⁴¹

While in Evanston, Wong soon became known more as student than servant. By December 1890, he was attending school at the original Haven School (demolished) which was located on the northwest corner Church Street and Sherman Ave. Wong was a student in teacher Lottie Armstrong's class that year.⁴²



The old Haven School where Wong Aloy was a student. (Evanston History Center.) “Wong Aloy, whose face has become familiar about the town,” the *Evanston Index* reported, “is particularly well-known to the pupils of Haven School as one of its most interesting students.”⁴³

According to an 1894 profile of Wong, he “stood high in his class and was well liked by his classmates.” He also “made many warm friends” in Evanston. In particular, Wong singled out Homer Hitchcock Kingsley (1859-1924), superintendent of Evanston schools, his teachers, and John S. Short, a carpenter who lived at 242 Grove Street and frequently welcomed Wong into his home.⁴⁴

Another Evanston resident, James P. Grier, became Wong’s close friend. Grier was just four years older than Wong. Born in Illinois, Grier moved to Evanston in 1883 and was a student at Northwestern University at the time Wong arrived in Evanston. Grier was also a member of the ME church and would lead the “young people’s meeting” at Evanston’s First Methodist Church.⁴⁵



James Parkinson Grier (1864-1919). Grier's father had been a surgeon in the Union Army in the American Civil War. After he died, Grier's mother, Rhoda M. Grier, followed her son to Evanston in 1888. She was a charter member of Evanston's Emmanuel Methodist Episcopal Church. In 1890, James P. Grier graduated from Northwestern and went on to earn a Bachelor of Laws at Northwestern in 1892.⁴⁶ He set up a law office in downtown Chicago and was soon operating a "profitable law practice."⁴⁷ From 1901 to 1906, Grier served on the Evanston City Council representing the 2nd Ward. He would live in Evanston until his death in 1919. (Photograph, *Evanston Index*, March 2, 1907.)



Eighth Grade Class, Haven School, Evanston, Illinois, 1887. (Evanston History Center.) The original photograph reproduced here is blurry around its edges; despite scanning it at high resolution it is difficult to determine the year written on the sign propped up in front of the student at bottom left or to see clearly the student standing at the top row, first on the left. Is that student Wong Aloy?⁴⁸

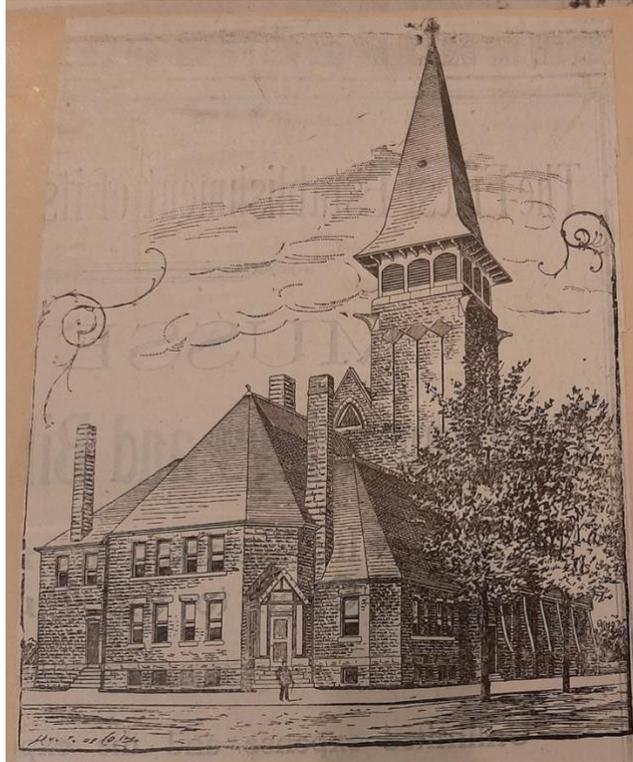
After leaving Haven School, it was reported that Wong attended Evanston High School. One account stated that he worked at custodian at the high school while he was a student there.⁴⁹ Several other accounts mention that he later attended Northwestern University.⁵⁰ In 1891, for example, the *Evanston Index* referred to Wong as “the Chinese student of Northwestern University.”⁵¹ At this point, however, no records of his attendance at Evanston High School or Northwestern have been located.



The Evanston High School, at Elmwood Avenue and Dempster Street, opened in August 1883. This building was the precursor to the current Evanston Township High School building, which opened in 1924 . (Photograph, Alexander Hesler.)

As Wong advanced in his studies, he continued to work on his writing, a vocation he took up in earnest while living in Missoula. By the 1890s, he had “written many stories and plays which deal with Chinese life.”⁵² He soon became well known as “a deep student of Chinese history” and began to give lectures to “American audiences.”⁵³

He also served a role within Evanston’s Methodist community. In March 1891, for instance, Wong led the “young people’s meeting” of the Emmanuel Methodist Church congregation, just as his friend James P. Grier did at the First Methodist Church.⁵⁴ (The meeting Wong led was held at the high school since the Emmanuel Methodist Church at Oak Avenue and Greenwood Street was in the process of being constructed at the time.⁵⁵)



Founded in 1889, the Emmanuel Methodist Church held its first services in Evanston's high school before the church was completed. (Illustration, "Story of a Church," *Evanston Press*, N.D., 1901.)

In February 1893, at the Union Hall (demolished) at 807 Davis Street in Evanston, Wong gave a lecture about China. According to a reporter present at the talk, Wong explained various aspects of the country, including its educational system. At one point Wong also addressed "the matter of limiting Chinese immigration." While no record of his talk is known to exist, the reporter present merely commented that Wong's addressed the issue "in a very interesting way."⁵⁶

The issue of the rights of immigrants from China was likely at the forefront of Wong's mind when, in August of 1890, according to a local newspaper, *The Inter-Ocean*, Wong visited the Cook County Circuit Court "for papers of naturalization to become a citizen of the country." Observing that Wong had been in Evanston for two years, the paper noted that he "is now well up in American ideas. He is anxious to vote."⁵⁷

The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 would be renewed and extended just two years later, making Wong's wish to become a U.S. citizen futile. In fact, in 1892, the U.S. Congress passed the [Geary Act](#) which extended the Chinese Exclusion Act and added other restrictions. The Geary Act included the provision "That any Chinese person or person of Chinese descent convicted and adjudged to be not lawfully entitled to be or remain in the United States shall be imprisoned at hard labor for a period of not exceeding one year and thereafter removed from the United States, as hereinbefore provided."⁵⁸ Further, it ordered "all Chinese laborers within the limits of the United States" to apply for, obtain, and carry "certificates of residence." Anyone found without such a certificate was subject to detention and deportation. A period of one year was given in which to obtain the certificates. In Chicago, and across the country, many Chinese immigrants, residents, and

others denounced the law as unconstitutional. ([Read about Fong Yue Ting's challenge to the law and the U.S. Supreme Court ruling which upheld the law in 1893.](#))

Bancroft Library

No. 65622

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.
Certificate of Residence.

ORIGINAL.
Barry & Weldon

Issued to Chinese LABORER, under the Provisions of the Act of May 5, 1892.

This is to Certify THAT Hang Jung a Chinese
LABORER now residing at SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA
has made application No. 10522 to me for a Certificate of Residence, under the provisions of the Act of Congress approved May 5, 1892, and I certify that it appears from the affidavits of witnesses submitted with said application that said Hang Jung was within the limits of the United States at the time of the passage of said Act, and was then residing at SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA and that he was at that time lawfully entitled to remain in the United States, and that the following is a descriptive list of said Chinese LABORER viz:

NAME: Hang Jung AGE: 39 Years
LOCAL RESIDENCE: 728 Sacramento St. 2nd fl. SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA
OCCUPATION: Shoemaker HEIGHT: 5 ft 3 in COLOR OF EYES: Brown
COMPLEXION: Dark PHYSICAL MARKS OR PECULIARITIES FOR IDENTIFICATION: Scar left temple near eye. Mole on nose. Scar on right temple. Several small scars on right temple.

And as a further means of identification, I have affixed hereto a photographic likeness of said Hang Jung.

GIVEN UNDER MY HAND AND SEAL this Twenty-sixth day of March, 1894, at San Francisco.
State of CALIFORNIA

M. H. Wilson
Collector of Internal Revenue,
District of CALIFORNIA
W. H. Wilson



Hang Jung, Certificate of Residence, March 1894. (The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.)

While Wong was unable to become a U.S. citizen (that right would not be extended to immigrants from China in his lifetime), he did indeed play an integral role in the unfolding of America's story; he would soon become part of the system of government itself and he took an active part in both the legal system governing immigration and the community of immigrants from China who had to negotiate that system.



North Clark Street, Chicago, 1893. (S.L. Stein Pub. Co., Library of Congress.)

Evanston/Chicago

At some point during his time living in Evanston, Wong began to work as an interpreter in the Chicago court system. The opportunity may well have come to him by way of his friend James P. Grier, who still lived in Evanston and was now working as a lawyer in Chicago. Wong was one of a growing number of Chinese immigrants who would be hired as interpreters for local and federal governments during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. They would play a crucial role as mediators between Chinese immigrant communities and the courts, law enforcement, and government of the United States.

On March 29, 1893, Wong traveled from Evanston to downtown Chicago. He was serving as an interpreter in a trial of a man named Jung Jack Lin.⁵⁹ Later, it was reported that Wong “gave his help to another of his countrymen” who was “in some minor trouble.” Wong reportedly succeeded in “obtaining his release.”⁶⁰ That night, Wong was walking alone on the street when he was brutally assaulted in an alley near the Rookery Building in Chicago.⁶¹ He survived, although he was badly injured. His two attackers, both immigrants from China, were apprehended.

Later accounts would reveal that the attack on Wong Aloy was the result of a variety of disputes between the Moy and Wong families or “clans” in Chicago. These were two powerful groups of Chinese immigrants. Both groups exercised social and political power and each supported its members in a variety of ways as they negotiated life in the United States.

Reportedly, within the Moy family there was some dissatisfaction with Wong's role in helping obtain the release of the man he had recently helped. The Moy family was said to have been the man's enemy and had set him up, assured he would be found guilty.⁶² Wong Aloy, who was a member of the Wong clan, was now identified as an enemy of the Moys. (The families or clans had their origins in kinship that stretched back to China and over many generations.)



“War in Chinatown,” *The Inter-Ocean*, April 9, 1893. According to Huping Ling, author of *Chinese Chicago: Race, Transnational Migration and Community Since 1870*, the public often perceived the clans - later more often referred to as “tongs”- as purely criminal associations. While some number of these groups did expand into criminal operations, they began as collectives structured around providing help, support, and protection for their immigrant members. Ling describes them “as being simply to help fellow members in poverty or distress and to assure justice among members.”⁶³ In part, as Ling argues, the rivalry that existed between the Moys and Wongs centered on the ways in which each group defined integration into American society: the Moys were proponents of exercising the power of the Chinese immigrant community itself, through influence, business, politics, while the Wongs were proponents of the “Americanization” of all Chinese immigrants.

Following the attack, Wong Aloy's name appeared in papers across the country. It was reported that he was hiding somewhere in Chicago, badly injured and fearing for his life. He sent a note to his friend, John B. Strasburger, a Chicago lawyer whom he likely met in his work as an interpreter. According to reports at the time, Wong asked Strasburger for help. Strasburger found Wong and took him into his home while Wong recovered. Strasburger would soon represent Wong in the case against his assailants. In a sense, this act of kindness would shape Wong's future career.⁶⁴ After he recovered, Wong returned to Evanston.⁶⁵

Some speculated that the attack on Wong had also been related to another dispute between the Wongs and the Moys. Both families had applied for the contract for creating and operating the Chinese Village display at the upcoming 1893 World's fair at Chicago.⁶⁶ The Wong family had been awarded the contract that the Moy family had been reportedly sure it would secure.⁶⁷

Being awarded the contract for the world's fair display was a lucrative business opportunity. “Chinese merchants of wealth,” it was explained at the time, saw their involvement in world's fairs as a way to “to take advantage of the opportunity thus offered to introduce into this country several lines of manufactured products which have never been handled here.”⁶⁸ But the importance of the

contract related to more than mere business. Indeed, the fair provided the opportunity to represent Chinese culture in America, an opportunity that was viewed as politically and socially critical among many in the Chinese immigrant community. It afforded the opportunity to educate white Americans about Chinese history and culture, to connect with the public, and work closely with many of Chicago's most prominent business owners and politicians.

Meanwhile, the Cook County State's Attorney, Jacob J. Kern presented the case against the two men accused of attacking Wong Aloy. Both men were from the Moy clan. Wong's supporters and members of the Wong clan accused Kern of going too easy on the two accused assailants. And thus, they summoned the noted journalist and activist Wong Chin Foo from his home in New York. They hoped he would help bring justice for Wong Aloy.



[Wong Chin Foo](#) (1847-1898) was a writer, journalist, and civil rights leader. (Illustration, *Pittsburgh Dispatch*, October 30, 1892. He was born in Jimo, Shandong Province, China. He attended school in the U.S. In 1874 he became one of the earliest immigrants from China to be granted U.S. citizenship. He lived for a short time in Chicago in the 1870s and later in the 1890s. Wong was founder of an association for Chinese-American voters and is credited with coining the term "Chinese American." In 1883, he launched New York City's first Chinese newspaper, *The Chinese American*. He also published a newsletter in Chicago. After the Geary Act of 1892 renewed and extended the Chinese Exclusion Act, Wong was one of the founders of the Chinese Equal Rights League in New York City (reestablished in Chicago in 1897). One of the League's goals was to petition Congress for the right of suffrage for Chinese immigrants. Wong served as secretary of the group and led a battle against the Geary Act, testifying in front of Congress and debating noted anti-Chinese leaders. More on Wong Chin Foo: <https://usdandelion.com/archives/6310> and https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0lsxWKL_6mY

Wong Chin Foo's attempt to ensure that the two alleged attackers would be fairly prosecuted was not successful. In fact, as he soon stated, the unwillingness of the state's attorney to bring any kind of real charges against the two men stemmed from corruption within Chicago's city government. Kern, it was charged, was "prejudiced in favor of the Moys and will not accord justice to the Wongs." "Those men are my friends," Kern reportedly said of the two assailants, "and in no case will I prosecute them."⁶⁹

While Wong Chin Foo was not successful in ensuring that Wong Aloy's attackers were brought to justice, it appears that he did have a great impact on Wong Aloy; in fact, Wong Aloy's career would

come to mirror the older Wong's career in many ways. Both men would work as writers, lecturers, and advocates for civil rights; both would work to educate the American public about Chinese culture and history; and soon, both men would join together in their work to represent Chinese history and culture at America's world's fairs.



The Chinese Theatre, World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, 1893, photograph by Halsey Cooley.
(Newberry Library.)

Chicago

Just weeks after the attack, the World's Columbian Exposition opened in Chicago and soon, Wong Aloy would be identified as “a prominent figure in the Chinese theater at the world fair.”⁷⁰

On the Midway Plaisance, the Chinese Village opened; it included a theater, tea house, restaurant, shop, and temple. The village was funded and designed by three prominent Chicago residents, all of whom were immigrants from China.⁷¹ Wong served as a manager at the village.⁷² He also premiered one of his own plays, “God in Heaven,” which was performed at the theater during the fair.

A Chicago reporter was on hand opening night: “[S]hortly after 11:00 o'clock,” he wrote, “Wong Aloy, the Evanston student whose fracas with the Moy faction of Chinatown was exploited in a police court recently, gazed out at a fair sized audience through a peephole in the curtain.”⁷³

Wong earned acclaim for his work, and the next year, 1894, he premiered another of his plays, “a drama of Chinese love and courtship.”⁷⁴ The play centered around a young man in China who meets the woman of “his dreams,” falls in love, and works to win her heart.

All the players were white students from the Sopor School of Oratory, located in the Steinway Hall building on Van Buren Street in Chicago. (In at least one account, Wong was listed as a student of the school.⁷⁵)

The play was a “decided hit.”⁷⁶ As one reporter noted, the play might “immortalise [Wong’s] name as the Shakespeare of his countrymen in America.”⁷⁷

The year 1894 was significant for Wong Aloy. The premiere of his new play brought him accolades and a lengthy and laudatory profile of his life and talents appeared in newspapers in Chicago and other cities across the country. “In person Aloy is of medium size and slender,” the profile read. “He dresses and wears his hair in the American style and his features are somewhat like the Japanese. And, like them, he is very polite, good natured and unassuming.”⁷⁸

That year Wong Aloy moved from Evanston and settled in Chicago’s Chinatown. At the time, the majority of immigrants from China lived in Chicago’s (old) Chinatown, a neighborhood located on South Clark Street and Van Buren.

“[D]own in that portion of Clark street where so many Chinamen live there’s a fanciful young man from the flowery Kingdom whose name is Wong Aloy,” read the profile of Wong.⁷⁹ The reporter noted that while Wong had been “formally engaged in that particular branch of domestic science with distinguishes his countrymen in America,” he was now working for the Wah Chong Jan company, a dealer of “Chinese wares” located at 309 South Clark Steet in the heart of Chicago’s Chinatown.⁸⁰

That same year, Wong was serving as secretary of Chicago’s Chinese Mutual Benefit Association.⁸¹ He was also building a broader reputation as a writer. He was, according to one reporter, “probably the only Chinese writer in America [*sic*].”⁸²

The fact that Wong moved to Chinatown is not surprising. In a later study of a group of Chinese immigrants in Evanston, sociologist Paul Siu noted that although the men lived and worked in Evanston, the center of their social life was Chicago’s Chinatown; on their days and evenings off from work they would travel to the city for recreation and entertainment.⁸³ “At night in Chinatown,” a reporter wrote in 1904, “hundreds of Chinese congregate in little groups in various places of business.”⁸⁴ (Paul Siu’s study is the subject of an upcoming Placemaking story.)

A little over a year after the Chicago world’s fair opened, Wong formally declared - once again - his intention to become a U.S. citizen. Perhaps he wanted to follow in the footsteps of his friend Wong Chin Foo who had applied for U.S. citizenship in 1874 and succeeded.

On June 13, 1894, Wong swore an oath that it was his “bona fide intention to become a citizen of the United States” and that he would “renounce forever all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince, potentate, state or sovereignty whatever, and particularly to the emperor of China.”⁸⁵

United States of America, } ss.
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS.

I, Wong Aloy
S. M. Burnham, Clerk of the District Court of the United States for the
Northern District of Illinois, that it is bona fide my intention to become a citizen of the United States, and to renounce
forever all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince, potentate, state or sovereignty whatever, and particularly to
The Emperor of China
whereof I was heretofore a citizen or subject.

Subscribed and sworn to before me, this }
13th day of June A. D. 1894 }
S. M. Burnham Clerk.

Wong Aloy

By the time Wong signed this “Oath of Allegiance” on June 13, 1894, he had been living in the United States for 12 years. Like other immigrants from China at the time, Wong was barred from attaining U.S. citizenship. (Illinois, U.S., Federal Naturalization Records.)

Wong would soon become involved in the movement for civil rights for Chinese immigrants and people of Chinese descent. When, under Wong Chin Foo’s leadership, the Chinese Equal Rights League of America was reestablished and incorporated in Chicago in 1897, Wong Aloy was part of the organizing group. Among the goals of the League: “To encourage among Chinese residents of the United States, including both natives of China and American born descendants of Chinese, patriotism towards the United States government, and devotion to its principles” and “to secure for the members of this organization full rights and privileges as citizens of the United States and protect them in the exercise and enjoyment of the same.”⁸⁶

On March 11, 1897, articles of incorporation for the League were officially filed with the Cook County recorder. The incorporators included Wong Chin Foo, Thomas Yuen, and James P. Grier, Wong’s old friend from Evanston.⁸⁷

The group was active in lobbying for rights and educating the public. In the fall of 1897 in Chicago, for example, the League hosted a “grand mass meeting.” Wong Aloy was one of several of the League’s members who were present on the stage that night.⁸⁸



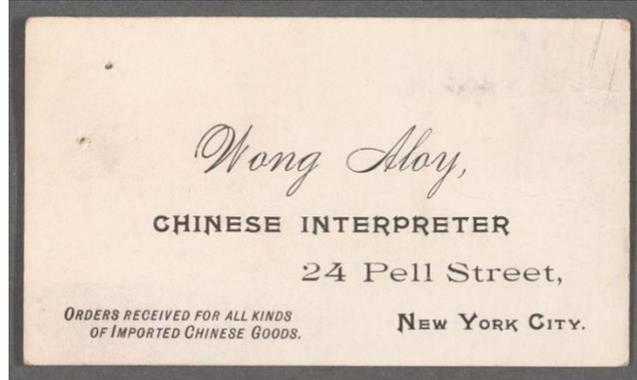
Chinese Equal Rights League of America, Meeting announcement. *Chicago Tribune*, November 25, 1897.

Over the next few years, along with his work with the League, Wong would also be involved in other world's fairs. In 1898, he served as one of several "gentleman in charge" of the Chinese Industrial Village at the Trans-Mississippi Exposition in Omaha, Nebraska.⁸⁹ That project brought Wong once more into contact with Wong Chin Foo, who served as "Chinese commissioner" for the exposition.⁹⁰

After that fair closed, Wong Chin Foo traveled to China to visit family. The sad news soon reached the U.S.: Wong Chin Foo had died from heart failure while he was abroad.

The loss of his friend must have been a hard blow. Although Wong Aloy was building a life for himself in Chicago, and was, in many ways, successful, he also confronted numerous barriers. The life of a Chinese immigrant in Chicago, Wong observed at the time, "is a very sad one."⁹¹

Wong Aloy did not stay long in Chicago. He soon made his way New York City.



Wong Aloy's business card (New York Public Library.)

New York City

Around 1899, Wong was living in New York City's Chinatown.⁹² The reason he moved to New York is not known. But in the wake of his friend Wong Chin Foo's death, Wong Aloy did, in essence, follow in his friend's footsteps. Wong Chin Foo had lived for many years in New York's Chinatown and now, Wong Aloy was there too.

Following his experience as an interpreter in Chicago's court system, Wong was soon working as an interpreter in New York.⁹³ He was also running his own import business and was identified by the New York press as the "wealthy Chinese merchant of Chicago."⁹⁴

In Manhattan, Wong Aloy lived at 24 Pell Street, a noted address in the Chinese immigrant community. On the building's ground floor was the Mon Lay Won restaurant, which was branded by its owners as "Chinese Delmonico" (named after the famous New York culinary institution). At the restaurant, leaders of New York's Chinese immigrant community often hosted city officials and politicians. The building was a central location for prominent members of the Chinese immigrant community to conduct business, advocate for civil rights, and connect with powerful members of the city's government.

Now a member of the Chinese Masons, (whose meeting house was located nearby at 18 Pell Street), Wong soon found himself playing a part in the life, society, and politics of New York's Chinatown.⁹⁵ As historian Mae M. Ngai has shown in her extensive research, Chinese interpreters played important roles in the late 19th and early 20th century. "As the number of Chinese working as interpreters grew," Ngai wrote, "so did their self-awareness as a group possessing a special kind of social location, knowledge, and power."⁹⁶ And it was in New York that Wong would play an increasingly prominent role as a mediator/go-between, connecting the two "worlds" of immigrants and the city's power brokers.



The Chinese Delmonico restaurant was housed in the building at 24 Pell Street, the same building that Wong Aloy called home. Pell Street, New York, 1900-1910. (Library of Congress.)

In 1896 in New York City, a group Chinese immigrants and city residents of Chinese descent incorporated the Hep Sing Tong, a group dedicated, in part, to the “suppression of vice” in the city. Members explained their intension “to establish and maintain a permanent place of meeting for the members away from the baneful influences of the opium dens and gambling joints where religious observances, social amusements, recreation, and intercourse may be enjoyed and the study of the English language may be pursued.”⁹⁷

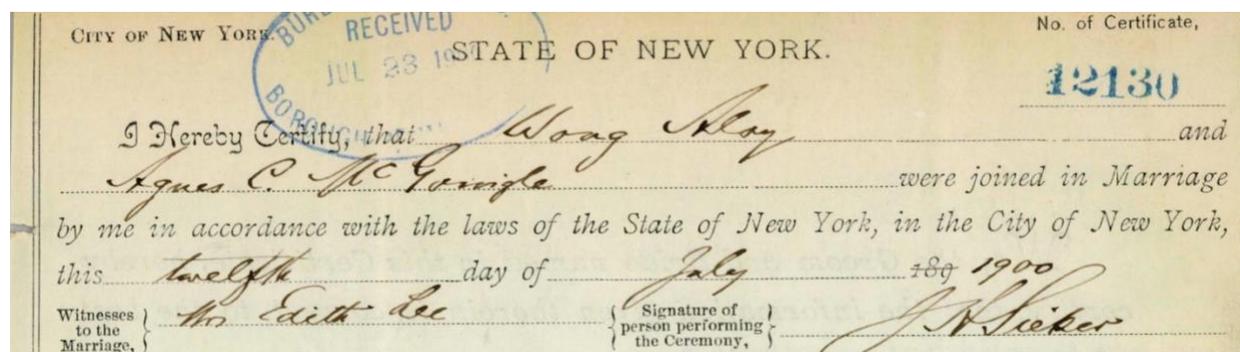
The Hep Sing Tong (later known as the Hip Sing Tong) would later become a largely criminal operation. In rivalry with other groups, namely the On Leong Tong, the group would soon be engaged in a violent power struggle to control Chinatown.⁹⁸

But it was around the turn of the 19th century that Hep Sing Tong members formalized their pledge to aid “the police against the law breakers of Chinatown.”⁹⁹ Some members joined forces with members of the “Committee of Fifteen,” a collective of mostly white New Yorkers organized to stamp out prostitution, gambling, and “opium dens.” Much of their activity was focused in

Chinatown, a densely populated area with a high percentage of immigrants from a variety of different countries.

Wong Aloy began to work as an interpreter and guide for members of the “Committee of Fifteen” as they visited and evaluated various suspected vice operations in Chinatown. “Wong Aloy is a man who can be depended upon,” wrote one committee member. “He said his main object was to destroy the gambling houses and stop his countrymen from being robbed by Chinese expert gamblers, also of having police levy tribute and blackmail upon gambling and houses of prostitution.”¹⁰⁰

During his time in New York, Wong met Agnes C. McGonigle, a white woman originally from Boston. Just how they met is not known. What is known: On July 12, 1900, in Manhattan, Wong Aloy married Agnes C. McGonigle.¹⁰¹ On their marriage certificate, McGonigle listed her address as 17 Mott Street, just a two minute walk from 24 Pell Street.



Marriage Certificate, Agnes C. McGonigle and Wong Aloy, July 12, 1900 (New York City Municipal Archives). On the marriage certificate, McGonigle listed the names of her parents as James McGonigle and Elizabeth Cady and her hometown as Boston. At this point I have been unable to find any more information about McGonigle.

While some U.S. states made it illegal for Chinese and white people to marry, New York and Illinois were not among them.¹⁰² Especially in big cities where there was a sizeable percentage of men who had immigrated from China, marriages between male immigrants from China and white women were not uncommon. In 1906, the *Chicago Tribune* pondered such marriages in a two-page spread announcing the fact the 200 white women in the city were married to Chinese immigrants. (“The question” as to “why” they would chose to marry “was as easy to answer as why white women marry white men,” the reporter announced. “The reasons are as varied and in most cases the motives are the same.”¹⁰³)

A year after Wong and McGonigle were married, Wong Aloy was hired to work periodically as an interpreter for the District Attorney’s office in New York.¹⁰⁴ In 1904, he returned to Chicago where he was hired as an interpreter for the U.S. Bureau of Immigration Service.¹⁰⁵ He was paid \$4 on a per diem basis.



Wong Aloy, illustration from “Chinese Home Life and Superstitions,” *Comfort*, September 1900. “Wong Aloy wears a close cropped moustache, and its general bearing is suggestive of the Japanese,” wrote a reporter in 1904. “He speaks English fluently, and with grammatical precision. He is a close student of political affairs in this country, and is probably as familiar with the platforms of the two great parties as the ordinary voter.”¹⁰⁶

Chicago, again

By the time Wong Aloy returned to Chicago there had been a significant increase in the city’s Chinese immigrant population. By 1905, an estimated 2,500 Chinese immigrants were living in Chicago.¹⁰⁷ That number would grow, especially after the 1906 earthquake in San Francisco prompted many people to go east and settle with relatives and friends in Chicago.

Increasingly, now, residents and business proprietors in Chicago’s Chinatown were harassed. Racist attitudes among some white city residents labeled Chinese immigrants as dangerous, unclean, drug addicted; white women were warned not to fall into the “traps” of Chinese men. The neighborhood was also patrolled and monitored by city officials. “The name of every Chinese resident of the city is on the books of the Chinese inspector L[orenzo] T. Plummer,” it was reported.¹⁰⁸



“Sign That Marks Gambling Places,” *Chicago Tribune*, August 29, 1908. As the Chinese immigrant population increased in Chicago, so too did the harassment of immigrants and Chinatown residents. Mainstream newspapers warned white readers of rampant gambling taking place everywhere in Chinatown, while white women, it was reported, were being frequently “followed and insulted” by Chinese immigrant men on Clark Street.¹⁰⁹

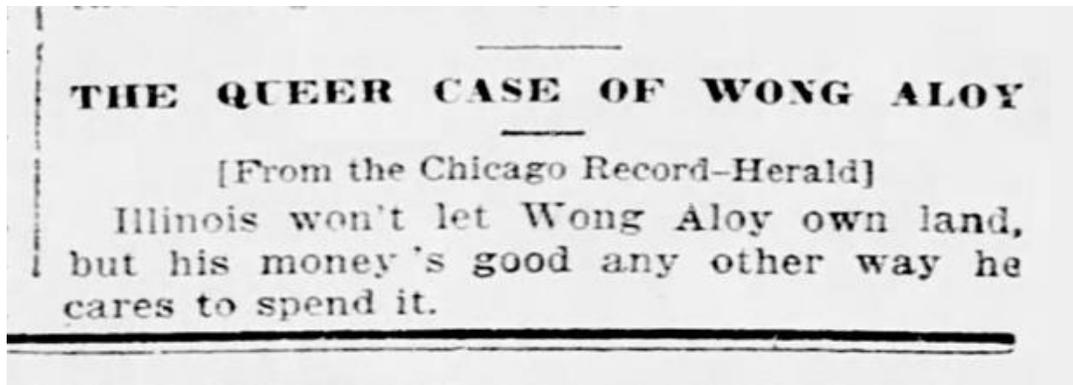
The neighborhood was also the site of a focused effort to identify immigrants from China who might be in violation of immigration laws. Following passage of the 1892 Geary Act, policing immigrants increased, and by 1900 enforcement of the Chinese Exclusion Act had become “one of the main functions” of the U.S. Bureau of Immigration.¹¹⁰

In Chicago, the Bureau operated a specific unit called the “Chinese Bureau,” headed by Lorenzo T. Plummer, with Wong Aloy serving as an interpreter.

While Wong Aloy took on the responsibilities of his new job, he also looked to settle down in the city. In 1904, a Chicago property was sold to Wong Aloy by John B. Strasburger (Wong’s old friend who had helped him after he had been attacked in 1893).¹¹¹ In April 1905, Wong applied for and received a building permit for a two-story basement frame residence at 7343 Honoré Street in Chicago.¹¹² This feat was noted in the press.

After Wong’s purchase of the property there was some debate about whether a Chinese immigrant “could hold title in Illinois” and, as it was reported, “the general consensus of opinion among attorneys was that he could not.”¹¹³ According to reports at the time, “there is an old Illinois statute which provides that an alien can hold title to real estate for six years, but this is believed to be void.”¹¹⁴ And in fact, in June 1887, the Illinois State Legislature passed a bill that prohibited “aliens” from acquiring real estate in Illinois by “descent, device, purchase, or otherwise.”¹¹⁵

Legally barred from owning property, Wong Aloy thus confronted yet another of the many restrictions faced by many Chinese immigrants in the U.S.



Boston Evening Transcript, November 2, 1904. Wong Aloy “seems to be a pretty thoroughly Americanized Chinaman,” wrote a reporter, “and out of the \$4 a day which he earns in a highly respectable and useful occupation as an interpreter he has saved enough to buy a small home in which to house his American wife and bring up his natural born American children. But doubtless to his amazement, he finds that he cannot do this because Illinois a few years ago, in a spasm of fright over the perils of alien landlordism, passed a law prohibiting that kind of ownership of real estate. It is a fine specimen of that large body of fool legislation with which many of our states are afflicted.”¹¹⁶

I was unable to determine if Wong and McGonigle had children. It is something vaguely referred to in two sources from the early 20th century (including the quote in the caption above). But at this point, I have found no documentation. However, if they did indeed have children, those children would have been granted one of the rights Wong Aloy longed wished for himself: American citizenship. For, after 1898, all children of immigrants born in the United States were born American citizens, thanks to the efforts of a young restaurant cook from San Francisco, Wong Kim Ark. (As American citizens, it should be noted, Wong’s wife and children would have been able to purchase and own property in Illinois.¹¹⁷)



Wong Kim Ark (c. 1871- ?) (National Archives.) Wong Kim Ark was in his 20s when he insisted upon his legal rights as an American citizen. In 1897, Wong Kim Ark was denied re-entry into the U.S. when he returned to his hometown of San Francisco after a visit to China. Wong, who was born in San Francisco, asserted that he was a U.S. citizen by birth, even though his parents, who had immigrated to San Francisco, had been born in China (and were therefore barred from U.S. citizenship). His case, https://encyclopedia.densho.org/United_States_v._Wong_Kim_Ark/, went all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court. That case asked the court to determine if American citizenship should be based upon the principle of *jus sanguinis* (“right of blood”) or *jus soli* (“right of the soil”). In 1898, the court’s landmark ruling was issued

in a 6-2 decision affirming Wong Kim Ark's American citizenship and establishing the concept of "birthright" American citizenship.¹¹⁸

Apparently, Wong Aloy did not build the desired house on Honoré Street. By 1906, Wong, and presumably McGonigle, were living at 7343 South Wood in Chicago.¹¹⁹ He continued to work as an interpreter, becoming deeply involved in both the American Chinese immigrant communities and American government bureaucracy. He worked on numerous cases brought by the U.S. government enforcing the Chinese Exclusion Act and often accompanied law enforcement on raids, sometimes going out of state, to apprehend those who were believed to be in violation of the law.¹²⁰ At the time, Wong was described as keeping "in close touch with the Chinamen's affairs. He is familiar with the provisions of the exclusion act, and his advice is always in demand."¹²¹

Wong held the unusual position of having, in a sense, one foot in the world of Chicago law and politics and the other in the world of Chinese immigrants. Interpreters working for agencies such as the U.S. Bureau of Immigration, as historian Mae M. Ngai argues, can be seen "quite literally [as] mouthpieces for the coercive state." Yet they also "made it possible for non-English speaking immigrants to 'speak' to the offices of power, to defend themselves or make claims in their own interests." This position, Ngai argues "created a complicated and unstable position for the interpreters."¹²²

In 1907, Wong's life would be further complicated owing to a large scale "shake up" in the U.S. Bureau of Immigration. Citing a "serious condition of inefficiency in the Chinese exclusion service," the secretary of the U.S. Department of Commerce and Labor ordered every Chinese interpreter to be transferred out of his present city.¹²³ Wong, it was announced, would be sent to El Paso, Texas.

At the time the transfer was announced, Wong working on a display at the Jamestown exposition in Norfolk, Virginia. He would soon return to Chicago, pack up, and set out "to make El Paso . . . home."¹²⁴



El Paso, Texas, c. 1910. (DeGolyer Library, Southern Methodist University.) El Paso was a central site of operation for U.S. immigration officials (as was the Mexico-U.S. border area in general). It was a primary location for the enforcement of the Chinese Exclusion Act since many Chinese immigrants who were believed to have entered the U.S. illegally travelled from Mexico and came to the Texas city. (Read more about El Paso and Wong Kim Ark's experience there: <https://elpasomatters.org/2022/07/04/wong-kim-ark-vs-united-states-history-immigration-supreme-court/>)

El Paso and Chicago, again

Wong Aloy worked for the U.S. Bureau of Immigration in El Paso for about three years. By 1910, the *El Paso Herald* reported that he had left that job and was now working as an interpreter and “Chinese lawyer” - a term often applied to Wong and others like him who helped negotiate legal matters between Chinese speaking people and officials representing U.S. government and law enforcement.¹²⁵

In fact, while still in El Paso, Wong worked on a variety of cases representing Chinese immigrants and U.S. residents of Chinese descent who were charged with violating immigration laws. One local attorney testified that many lawyers employed the “well-educated” Wong “on account of his familiarity with legal procedure.”¹²⁶ On behalf of those facing possible deportation, Wong traveled to various American cities in order to secure depositions “to prove their right to be in the country.”¹²⁷

By 1912, Wong, now in his 40s, was living at the Lakota building at 614 Mesa Ave in El Paso.¹²⁸ It appears that Wong's talent for becoming involved (and well liked) by any community he called home was more than even intact. At a baseball game played in the city's Chinatown, Wong “led the rooting from the grandstand” and even interpreted the cheers for Chinese-speaking fans.¹²⁹ Later, he took the lead in canvassing the Chinatown area, collecting information for the U.S. census.¹³⁰

Sometime after 1914, Wong was again back in Chicago - a city that had changed dramatically since he last lived there.

Just a few years earlier, around 1911, the city's original Chinatown had been broken up as the Chinese immigrant population and people of Chinese descent began to move south, eventually establishing a new Chinatown around the intersection of Cermak Road and Wentworth Avenue.¹³¹



“War on New Chinatown,” *Chicago Tribune*, November 30, 1911.

The establishment of a new Chinatown did not take place without conflict. With news of “wealthy Chinese merchants and their white real estate allies” planning to establish a new Chinatown, the “Wabash Avenue Protection Association” was formed. According to the *Chicago Tribune*, association members viewed the “migration of the Chinese from South Clark street . . . to Wabash and 25th Street as “a real and immediate ‘yellow peril.’”¹³²

Wong remained in the city's “old” Chinatown, living at 503 South Clark Street, where he operated a store.

The record of Wong's time in Chicago in the late 1910s and early 1920s is sparse. His work as interpreter and merchant in the old Chinatown was now taking place in a city where the tong wars had become increasingly violent. At one point in 1918, Wong was implicated in an opium sting operation, but it is unclear if any charges were ever pressed.¹³³

In April 1919, Wong Aloy learned of the death of his friend, James P. Grier.¹³⁴ Grier, who had first met Wong more than three decades earlier, died in Evanston and was buried at Chicago's Rosehill Cemetery. He left behind his three children and his wife, Jennie.

Just weeks later, in May 1919, Wong Aloy drafted a will and filed the document with the Cook County court. His former boss from the U.S. Bureau of Immigration, Lorenzo Plummer, served as a witness.

About three years later, on April 27, 1922, Wong Aloy was shot and killed at 2212 Archer Avenue in Chicago.¹³⁵ By all accounts, he had been targeted by the On Leong Tong and reports at the time referred to Wong's murder as an assassination. Immediately, members of the rival Hip Sing Tong called for revenge. Chicago police were notified that the San Francisco faction of the Hip Sing Tong had dispatched several gunman to Chicago to “avenge the death of Wong Aloy.”¹³⁶

The so-called “tong wars” would accelerate. But it is unclear what transpired in the aftermath of the murder. (Read more about the Chicago tongs here: <https://www.wbez.org/stories/what-a-murder-in-my-family-reveals-about-chicagos-chinese-gangs/4ab82db6-ded8-4b40-a372-eafdf5d8e7ce>.)

It is also unknown what happened to Agnes McGonigle, Wong's wife. On his 1922 death certificate filed in Cook County, Wong was identified as a widower. However, his burial record identifies him as being divorced.¹³⁷

In 1919, Wong Aloy appointed his nephew, Wong Buck Young, executor of his will and left him the bulk of his estate. At the time Wong drafted his will, Wong Buck Young lived in China. Wong stipulated that should Wong Buck Young not be a "resident of the United States" at the time of Wong's death, then the bulk of his estate would be divided equally between Wong Buck Young and another nephew also in China, Wong Lin Oye. "Share and share alike," he noted in his will.¹³⁸

But in fact, just after Wong Aloy's death, on July 10, 1922, the younger Wong signed an executor's oath and stated that he resided at 503 South Clark Street, Wong Aloy's former residence.¹³⁹

At the time of his death, Wong Aloy's estate was valued at \$10,000 (about \$160,000 in 2022).

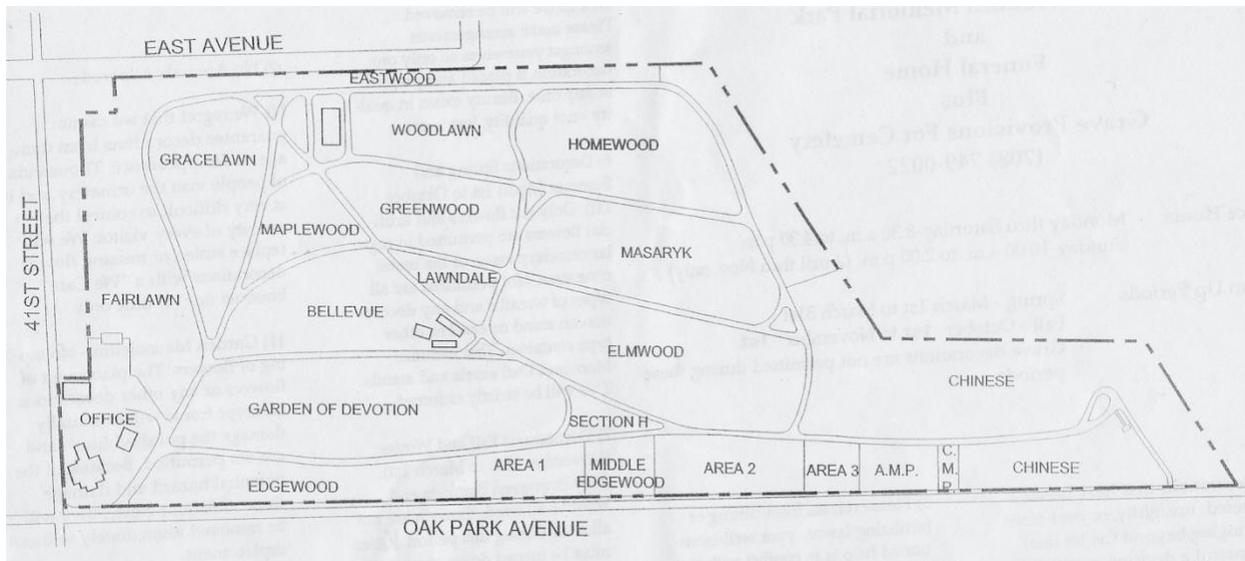
There were two others to whom Wong Aloy left money: his old friend John B. Strasburger, the lawyer who had come to his rescue after he had been attacked in 1893, and Jennie Grier, "the widow of my late friend James P. Grier of Evanston IL," as Wong noted.¹⁴⁰



Jennie Gertrude Parkes Grier (1864-1954), 1922. (U.S. Passport Application.) In 1895, James P. Grier married Jennie Parkes in her family's home at 1014 Maple Avenue in Evanston.¹⁴¹ After they married, they moved into the Grier family home at 1016 Lake Street where they raised their three children. Their two sons became prominent medical doctors who worked at the Evanston Hospital and the Community Hospital. In 1954, Jennie Grier died at the age of 90. She lived in Evanston for 65 years and was a member of Evanston's First Methodist Church and later, the Emmanuel Methodist Church.¹⁴²

Wong made two important requests that he asked his nephew to fulfill. First, Wong instructed, "I order and direct that my executor . . . shall arrange and provide for the shipment of my body for burial to Hoy Pen District, Hen Key Lee Village, County of Hen Kon, Qun Dom Province, China."¹⁴³

On May 1, 1922, Wong Aloy was buried at Mount Auburn Cemetery in Stickney, Illinois, just outside of Chicago. The cemetery, founded in 1895, was an important burial site for Chinese immigrants and people of Chinese descent.¹⁴⁴



Map of Mount Auburn Cemetery, Stickney, Illinois. Note the areas marked “Chinese.” (Midwest Cemetery Preservation.) In the late 19th and early 20th century, Chinese immigrants and people of Chinese descent had been buried in area cemeteries such as Rosehill Cemetery in Chicago. (Between 1892 and 1900 it was reported that 200 Chinese immigrants were buried at Rosehill.) But later, restrictions were placed on burials and, as a cemetery spokesman said in 1944, Rosehill’s “board of management has sold lots only to white people since 1925.”¹⁴⁵ By the 1920s, it appears that Mount Auburn Cemetery was one of the few local cemeteries that did not bar Chinese immigrants and people of Chinese descent from burial nor did the cemetery management restrict burial rites.¹⁴⁶

While Wong’s burial at Mount Auburn Cemetery might seem to suggest that his wish to be buried in China was not fulfilled, it may have actually been part of a particular custom related to the death of immigrants from certain parts of China. According to the custom, the first burial was to be done immediately after death; then, after a period of five to ten years or more, the body was exhumed “so that the bones can be cleaned and then arranged in a specific pattern in a box or urn” and thus prepared for a “second burial” in China. It is estimated that roughly “100,000 sets of coffins or bones made their way back to China over the first half of the 20th century” in this way.¹⁴⁷ (Read more: <https://www.cuhk.edu.hk/english/features/professor-yip-hon-ming.html>)

According to Mount Auburn Cemetery records, on November 13, 1935, Wong Aloy’s body was disinterred from its grave at Mount Auburn Cemetery and sent to Hong Kong.¹⁴⁸ Presumably, Wong’s family members then fulfilled his wish for burial in his hometown.

Wong’s second request was as follows: “I further make special request that said Wong Buck Young shall secure for me a son by adoption, according to the Chinese custom, and give him an education as is befitting to my said son, according to Chinese faith and practice.”¹⁴⁹

I not yet been able to determine if a son was ever adopted. But what is interesting to note is that with this request Wong Aloy underscored the importance of education, of legacy, and of the tenets of “Chinese faith.” By the time he died, Wong had lived in the U.S. for four decades; he experiences had taken him from coast to coast, into the lives of immigrants, families, lawyers, teachers, and

friends. He had worked to represent the history of his home country and to become a citizen of his new one; he worked to advance the rights of immigrants and he also worked within a system that curtailed those rights. Wong Aloy's biography speaks for itself; it is a narrative that is as astonishing in its breadth as it is inspiring and amazing.

So how to conclude this story?

This seems fitting:

At one point in working on this article, I stumbled upon a brief mention in a newspaper that Wong Aloy had once visited North Adams, Massachusetts. (I did indeed find evidence that Wong visited nearby Boston on at least one occasion.) According to the story, Wong came to North Adams on a kind of research trip. He was looking for "first-hand information regarding the bringing here, years before, of a large number of his fellow countrymen to work in the Sampson shoe shop." At the time, the newspaper noted, Wong was "writing a history of the Chinese in America."¹⁵⁰

It is unknown if Wong ever did write that history; but I looked into the story he was seeking information about and provide part of it below.



Chinese immigrant workers, Sampson Shoe Factory, North Adams, Massachusetts, c. 1870 (North Adams Public Library.)

The Sampson Shoe Company, a large and successful factory run by Calvin T. Sampson (1826-1893), was one of many factories in the town of North Adams; the town was a thriving industrial hub,

attracting workers by the hundreds, the vast majority of which were foreign born and many were immigrants from Ireland and Canada. As Sampson's business grew, the number of his employees did as well. In 1870, after the workers formed a union, Sampson fired those who had joined the union and sent his superintendent to California to bring back Chinese immigrants to work in his factory. When the first workers arrived, they proceeded to the factory accompanied by a private police escort. Ultimately, about 125 Chinese immigrants would come to North Adams to work in the factory, and for many, their arrival, which received notable attention, fueled the flames of local anti-Chinese sentiment as it "proved" that these immigrants were taking jobs from white people. Because of the hostility the men faced, only 3 or 4 of the immigrant workers from China would remain in North Adams after their work contracts expired. All of the other workers left the town.¹⁵¹

This was a story that Wong Aloy wished to tell.

I hope that this portrait of Wong Aloy himself pays forward his intention to educate people about the "history of the Chinese in America."



Edward Bing Kan, *St. Louis Star and Times*, January 20, 1944.

CODA: Chicago, Again

Roughly two decades after Wong Aloy's death, the U.S. Congress repealed the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act and its subsequent laws.* A month later, at the Federal Building in Chicago, Edward Bing Kan (1878-1959) became the first immigrant from China to become an American citizen since the Chinese Exclusion Act had been passed six decades earlier. In 1892, Kan, a 13 year old student, immigrated to the U.S. from China. He settled in Portland, Oregon, where he met Katherine Wong (Kan) (1880-c.1955), a U.S. citizen of Chinese descent. The couple married and had three children. In 1909, they moved to Chicago where Kan was hired as a Chinese interpreter for the U.S. Bureau of Immigration, a position he held for more than 35 years.¹⁵² It could be that Wong Aloy and Kan knew each other.



Katherine Jane Lee Kan (1929-2018), *Chicago Tribune*, December 20, 1944

In December 1944, Edward Bing Kan returned to the Chicago Federal Building to stand by as his 15-year old granddaughter, Katherine Jane Lee Kan, took the oath and became a U.S. citizen. Born in Hong Kong, Kan was the first Chinese woman to become an American citizen after the repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act.

*The repeal, however, instituted quotas for future immigrants. Read more here: <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1937-1945/chinese-exclusion-act-repeal>

There is more to explore and learn about Wong's life and career. Please stay tuned as this story is updated and as we share others.

Many thanks to the following people for their help with this article: Hannah Zhihan Jiang, Medill School of Journalism, Northwestern University; Rodger C. Birt, Professor Emeritus of Humanities and American Studies at San Francisco State University; Kevin B. Leonard, University Archivist at Northwestern University; Nicole Jacob Marks, Evanston Township High School Alumni Relations; Angelique Gamboa, Family Services Counsellor at the Mount Auburn Cemetery, Stickney, Illinois; Jeremy M. Farmer, National Archives at Chicago; and Ian Mitchell of the *Evanston Roundtable*. I am also very grateful to the staff at the New York State Archives Researcher Services unit for their help.

¹ The earliest recorded Chinese immigrants in Chicago arrived in 1858. Ben Bronson and Chuimei Ho, "1858: The First Chinese Resident of Chicago: A Knife Thrower," Chinese American Museum, 2005.

<https://ccamuseum.org/1858-the-first-chinese-resident-of-chicago-a-knife-thrower/>

² In the course of conducting this research, I uncovered a handful of details about Wong Aloy's life that I was not able to confirm. I am also still working to determine the exact town where Wong Aloy was born. I am also looking to find more information about his family. This article will be updated as information is uncovered and confirmed.

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- ³ The names of Wong Aloy's parents are spelled differently on various records. The spellings given here are taken from his 1900 marriage certificate.
- ⁴ M.B. Thrasher, "How a Chinese Boy Was Homesick," *Every Other Sunday*, February 11, 1900, 92.
- ⁵ M.B. Thrasher, "How a Chinese Boy Was Homesick," *Every Other Sunday*, February 11, 1900, 92.
- ⁶ "The Quarantined Steamer," *San Francisco Examiner*, June 16, 1882.
- ⁷ "The Quarantined Steamer," *San Francisco Examiner*, June 16, 1882.
- ⁸ Otis Gibson, *The Chinese in America* (Cincinnati, Ohio: Hitchcock and Walden, 1877), 45-46.
- ⁹ Suchen Chan, "Chinese Livelihood in Rural California: The Impact of Economic Change, 1860-1880," in *Working People of California* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1995), 57.
- ¹⁰ Nicolas Iovino, "San Francisco Apologizes to Chinese Immigrants for Historic Discrimination," Courthouse News Service, February 1, 2022, <https://www.courthousenews.com/san-francisco-apologizes-to-chinese-immigrants-for-historic-discrimination/>.
- ¹¹ At the time the resolution was issued, San Francisco was the fourth city to issue such an apology. San Francisco Board of Supervisors, "Resolution Apologizing to Chinese Immigrants and Their Descendants," File No. 211240, January 26, 2022.
- ¹² "Wong Aloy and His Play," *Chicago Daily News*, November 20, 1894.
- ¹³ "Wong Aloy and His Play," *Chicago Daily News*, November 20, 1894.
- ¹⁴ "Miscellaneous," *The Inter-Ocean*, August 12, 1890.
- ¹⁵ "Another Pioneer Gone," *The Independent Record*, October 16, 1889.
- ¹⁶ "C.P. Higgins Dead," *Great Falls Tribune*, October 16, 1889; "Another Pioneer Gone," *The Independent Record*, October 16, 1889.
- ¹⁷ See Mark T. Johnson, *The Middle Kingdom Under the Big Sky: A History of the Chinese Experience in Montana*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2022.
- ¹⁸ John R. Wunder, "Law and Chinese in Frontier Montana," *Montana The Magazine of Western History* (Summer, 1980), 18.
- ¹⁹ Jim Harmon, "Harmon's Histories: All Debts Cancelled, Grievances Forgotten in Missoula's Old Chinatown," *Missoula Current*, March 2, 2020. <https://missoulacurrent.com/art/2020/03/histories-old-chinatown/>.
- ²⁰ "Drive Them Out," *The Missoulian*, July 9, 1895.
- ²¹ "Wong Aloy and His Play," *Chicago Daily News*, November 20, 1894.
- ²² Methodist Episcopal Church, *Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Colorado Conference* (New York: Phillips & Hunt, 1883), 216.
- ²³ "M.E. Conference," *The Independent Record*, July 13, 1886.
- ²⁴ Methodist Episcopal Church, *Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Colorado Conference* (New York: Phillips & Hunt, 1883), 216.
- ²⁵ *Forty-Seventh Annual Report of the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church* (New York: Methodist Episcopal Church 1867), 161.
- ²⁶ *Forty-Seventh Annual Report of the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church* (New York: Methodist Episcopal Church 1867), 161. For more on the American Protestant mission movement in general, see John King Fairbank, ed., *The Missionary Enterprise in China and America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard U.P., 1974).
- ²⁷ Wenxian Zhang, "Standing Up Against Racial Discrimination: Progressive Americans and the Chinese Exclusion Act in the Late Nineteenth Century," *Phylon* (Vol. 56. Summer 2019), 16.
- ²⁸ "Wong Aloy and His Play," *Chicago Daily News*, November 20, 1894.
- ²⁹ "Wong Aloy and His Play," *Chicago Daily News*, November 20, 1894.
- ³⁰ "Methodist Ministers," *Butte Daily Post*, August 23, 1887.
- ³¹ "Wong Aloy and His Play," *Chicago Daily News*, November 20, 1894.
- ³² U.S. Census records, Evanston, Illinois, 1880.
- ³³ Donation records, First Methodist Episcopal Church, Evanston, Illinois, October 1, 1893, Evanston History Center archives.
- ³⁴ Now known as Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary (after merging with two other institutions).
- ³⁵ The church pictured in the photograph that appears here was torn down in 1909 after structural damage was discovered. The current (2022) First Methodist Episcopal Church replaced it. It was completed in 1910.

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- ³⁶ *American Almanac and Treasury of Facts, Statistical, Financial, and Political Rochester* (NY: H.H. Warner and Co, 1883), 278.
- ³⁷ Evanston City Directory, 1888.
- ³⁸ U.S. Census, Evanston, Illinois, 1900.
- ³⁹ *Eighty-Sixth Annual Report of the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church* (New York: Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1904).
- ⁴⁰ “Chinese Students,” *Evanston News-Index*, July 23, 1887; “Chinese Students,” *The Inter-Ocean*, July 31, 1887.
- ⁴¹ “Wong Aloy and His Play,” *Chicago Daily News*, November 20, 1894.
- ⁴² “The Public Schools,” *Evanston Index*, December 20, 1890.
- ⁴³ “China,” *Evanston Index*, February 18, 1893.
- ⁴⁴ “Wong Aloy and His Play,” *Chicago Daily News*, November 20, 1894.
- ⁴⁵ “Evanston,” *The Inter-Ocean*, November 2, 1890.
- ⁴⁶ Northwestern University, *Catalog, 1891-1892* (Chicago: Thayer and Jackson, 1892), 232.
- ⁴⁷ “James P. Grier,” *Evanston Index*, March 2, 1907.
- ⁴⁸ I was unable to locate any photographs of Wong Aloy, other than the Haven School photograph which may indeed picture him. The search continues.
- ⁴⁹ “Claims They Are Highbinders,” *The Inter-Ocean*, March 31, 1893.
- ⁵⁰ “Claims They Are Highbinders,” *The Inter-Ocean*, March 31, 1893; Evanston City Directory, 1888; Scott D. Seligman, *The First Chinese American: The Remarkable Life of Wong Chin Foo* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2013), 224.
- ⁵¹ *Evanston Index*, March 21, 1891.
- ⁵² “A Love Drama,” *Cincinnati Post*, November 21, 1894.
- ⁵³ “A Love Drama,” *Cincinnati Post*, November 21, 1894.
- ⁵⁴ *Evanston Index*, March 21, 1891.
- ⁵⁵ The Emmanuel Methodist Church was founded by members of Evanston’s First Methodist Church on Hinman Avenue. The idea was that Evanston was growing at such a pace that those “who lived in the western portion of the town” needed a church of their own since “the old parish [was] too large for a single pastor to have charge of.” “Will Dedicate the Church Today,” *Chicago Tribune*, June 12, 1892.
- ⁵⁶ “China,” *Evanston Index*, February 18, 1893.
- ⁵⁷ “Notes,” *The Inter-Ocean*, August 12, 1890.
- ⁵⁸ U. S. Congress, “An Act to Prohibit the Coming of Chinese Persons into The United States,” Fifty-Second Congress. Session I. 1892.
- ⁵⁹ Adam McKeown, *Chinese Migrant Networks and Cultural Change: Peru, Chicago, and Hawaii, 1900-1936* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 199.
- ⁶⁰ “Allege a Conspiracy to Murder,” *Chicago Tribune*, April 7, 1893.
- ⁶¹ “Wong Aloy’s Assailants Held to the Criminal Court,” *The Inter-Ocean*, April 29, 1893.
- ⁶² “Allege a Conspiracy to Murder,” *Chicago Tribune*, April 7, 1893.
- ⁶³ Huping Ling, *Chinese Chicago: Race, Transnational Migration, and Community Since 1870* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press), 38.
- ⁶⁴ “Fears They Will Kill Him,” *The Inter-Ocean*, April 4, 1893.
- ⁶⁵ “Teacher Lawyer Friend” - so reads the headstone at the grave of John B. Strasburger (1850 - 1928). Strasburger was born in Naperville, Illinois. His father was an immigrant from Germany. He was educated at Aurora Seminary and Pekin Academy. Before becoming a lawyer, he was school superintendent and principal of South Chicago High School (closed, 1910). A.T. Andreas, *History of Cook County of Illinois* (Chicago: A.T. Andreas, 1884), 591.
- ⁶⁶ The Moy clan, the most influential, was often in sharp conflict with the Wong clan. Wong Aloy was said to have been a member of the Wong Clan, which won the bid for the World’s Fair display. Yuki Ooi, “‘China’ on Display at the Chicago World’s Fair of 1893: Faces of Modernization in the Contact Zone” in *From Early Tang Court Debates to China’s Peaceful Rise*, Friederike Assandri and Dora Martings, ed. (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2009), 60-61.
- ⁶⁷ “Allege a Conspiracy to Murder,” *Chicago Tribune*, April 7, 1893.
- ⁶⁸ “The Exposition Column,” *The Crete Vidette*, June 2, 1898.

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- ⁶⁹ “Complaints of Kern,” *Chicago Tribune*, April 16, 1893; Huping Ling, *Chinese Chicago: Race, Transnational Migration, and Community Since 1870* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2012), 37. Jacob J. Kern (1863-1941) served as Chicago city attorney from 1890 to 1892. He served as state’s attorney from 1892-1896. “Jacob J. Kern, 78, Dies,” *Chicago Tribune*, February 1, 1941.
- ⁷⁰ “A Love Drama,” *Cincinnati Post*, November 21, 1894.
- ⁷¹ Z. Serena Qui, “In the Presence of Archival Fugitives: Chinese Women, Souvenir Images, and the 1893 Chicago World’s Fair,” *Panorama*, Spring 2021. <https://journalpanorama.org/article/asian-american-art/archival-fugitives/#marker-11645-19>
- ⁷² M. B. Thrasher, “A Chinese Boy’s Story,” *Every Other Sunday*, December 31, 1899.
- ⁷³ “Chinese Theater,” *Evansville Journal*, May 24, 1893.
- ⁷⁴ “A Love Drama,” *Cincinnati Post*, November 21, 1894.
- ⁷⁵ “Camel Feeling Bad,” *The Inter Ocean*, November 18, 1894; “Midway is Revived” *Chicago Herald*, November 11, 1894.
- ⁷⁶ “A Love Drama,” *Cincinnati Post*, November 21, 1894.
- ⁷⁷ “A Love Drama,” *Cincinnati Post*, November 21, 1894.
- ⁷⁸ “Wong Aloy and His Play,” *Chicago Daily News*, November 20, 1894.
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- ⁸⁰ “A Love Drama,” *Cincinnati Post*, November 21, 1894.
- ⁸¹ “Lee Yon is Placed Behind Bars,” *Chicago Tribune*, October 22, 1894.
- ⁸² “A Love Drama,” *Cincinnati Post*, November 21, 1894.
- ⁸³ Paul C. P. Siu, *The Chinese Laundryman: A Study of Social Isolation* (New York: New York University Press, 1988), 145, 147.
- ⁸⁴ “War in the Orient,” *Lawrence Democrat*, September 16, 1904.
- ⁸⁵ Northern District of Illinois, U.S. Federal Naturalization Records.
- ⁸⁶ Scott D. Seligman, *The First Chinese American: The Remarkable Life of Wong Chin Foo* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2013), 265.
- ⁸⁷ “Chinese Form a Society,” *Chicago Chronicle*, March 12, 1897; Scott D. Seligman, *The First Chinese American: The Remarkable Life of Wong Chin Foo* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2013), 265.
- ⁸⁸ “Chinese Ask for Rights,” *Chicago Tribune*, November 28, 1897.
- ⁸⁹ “WCTU Column,” *Canute Daily Tribune*, July 30, 1898.
- ⁹⁰ Wong Chin Foo was also granted a permit to bring 250 Chinese citizens to the U.S. for three months to take part in the exposition. “Washington Notes,” *New York Sun*, December 5, 1897; “Notes from Omaha,” *Nashville American*, April 4, 1898; “WCTU Column,” *Canute Daily Tribune*, July 30, 1898.
- ⁹¹ “A Love Drama,” *Cincinnati Post*, November 21, 1894.
- ⁹² “From Wong Aloy,” *Buffalo Evening News*, March 18, 1900.
- ⁹³ “Chinese Festival Ends,” *Boston Evening Transcript*, March 10, 1903.
- ⁹⁴ “Hustling After the Concessions,” *Buffalo Times*, August 18, 1899.
- ⁹⁵ “Chinese in Mourning,” *Buffalo Courier*, November 8, 1901.
- ⁹⁶ Mae M. Ngai, “‘A Slight Knowledge of the Barbarian Language’: Chinese Interpreters in Late-Nineteenth and Early-Twentieth-Century America,” *Journal of American Ethnic History* Vol. 30, No. 2 (Winter 2011), 12.
- ⁹⁷ Arthur Bonner, “Alas! What Brought Thee Hither?” *The Chinese in New York, 1800-1950* (London: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1997), 139.
- ⁹⁸ The two rival groups would also be established on the West Coast, New York, and Chicago.
- ⁹⁹ “To Make Chinatown Moral,” *New York Times*, November 8, 1896.
- ¹⁰⁰ Document, N.D., Records of the Committee of Fifteen, New York Public Library.
- ¹⁰¹ NYC Depart of Records and Information Services, New York City Municipal Archives, Certificate of Marriage, July 12, 1900.
- ¹⁰² Anti-miscegenation laws varied across different states; some expressly prohibited Chinese and white people from marrying; others had broader restrictions, also prohibiting, for example, Japanese and white people from marrying. Deenesh Sohoni “Unsuitable Suitors: Anti-Miscegenation Laws, Naturalization Laws, and the Construction of Asian Identities.” *Law & Society Review* (41) 2007, 597.
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- ¹⁰⁹ “Report Girls Insulted,” *Chicago Tribune*, August 29, 1908.
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- ¹¹³ “Topics of the Times,” *Evening Times Republican*, October 14, 1904.
- ¹¹⁴ “Topics of the Times,” *Evening Times Republican*, October 14, 1904.
- ¹¹⁵ The law granted “resident aliens who had declared their intention to become citizens six years within which to dispose of such property.” Samuel MacClintock, “Aliens Under the Federal Laws of the United States,” *Illinois Law Review* (May 1909), 38.
- ¹¹⁶ News item, *Evening Bulletin*, October 20, 1904.
- ¹¹⁷ The status of an American spouse married to a non-citizen would change in 1907 with the passage of the Expatriation Act. The act ordered that women who married men who did not have U.S. citizenship automatically lost their own U.S. citizenship status. The law was repealed in 1931. (Read more: <https://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/1998/summer/women-and-naturalization-1.html>)
- ¹¹⁸ Christopher Klein, “Born in the USA: The Chinese Immigrant Son Who Fought for Birthright Citizenship,” History.com, March 18, 2021.
- ¹¹⁹ Lakeside Annual Directory of the City of Chicago, 1906.
- ¹²⁰ “Three Chinamen Taken to Nashville,” *Leaf Chronicle*, April 7, 1905.
- ¹²¹ “War in the Orient,” *Lawrence Democrat*, September 16, 1904; “War in the Orient Studied by Chinamen,” *The York Daily*, September 19, 1904.
- ¹²² Mae M. Ngai, “‘A Slight Knowledge of the Barbarian Language’: Chinese Interpreters in Late-Nineteenth and Early-Twentieth-Century America,” *Journal of American Ethnic History* Vol. 30, No. 2 (Winter 2011), 7.
- ¹²³ “Shake Up Among Chinese Interpreters,” *Arizona Daily Star*, June 5, 1907.
- ¹²⁴ “On Vacation,” *El Paso Herald*, October 29, 1907.
- ¹²⁵ “Kilpatrick Will Assist in Compiling District Court,” *El Paso Herald*, May 6, 1910.
- ¹²⁶ U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, Fifth Circuit, Transcript of Record. Yee Suey v F.W. Berkshire, March 12, 1915. 49.
- ¹²⁷ U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, Fifth Circuit, Transcript of Record. Yee Suey v F.W. Berkshire, March 12, 1915. 49.
- ¹²⁸ Worley’s Directory of El Paso, Texas, 1912, 488.
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- ¹³⁴ Obituary, James P. Grier, *Chicago Tribune*, April 5, 1919.
- ¹³⁵ “Blame Tong War for Poolroom Death Mystery,” *Chicago Tribune*, April 28, 1922.
- ¹³⁶ “Tong Warfare Feared,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 13, 1923.
- ¹³⁷ “Wong Aloy,” *Illinois, U.S., Deaths and Stillbirths Index, 1916-1947*, Ancestry.com.
- ¹³⁸ “Wong Aloy,” Record of Wills, 1879-1928; Probate Court, Cook County, Illinois.
- ¹³⁹ “Wong Aloy,” Executor’s Bond, July 10, 1922, Wills and Probate Records, and Record of Wills, 1879-1928, Illinois. Probate Court, Cook County, Illinois.

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- ¹⁴⁰ “Wong Aloy,” Record of Wills, 1879-1928; Probate Court, Cook County, Illinois.
- ¹⁴¹ “Society Amusements,” *Chicago Tribune*, January 30, 1895.
- ¹⁴² “Jennie Gertrude Grier,” Obituary, *Evanston Review*, December 23, 1954; *Evanston Index*, March 2, 1907.
- ¹⁴³ I am still working to identify the precise locations Wong lists here and trace the connections between these areas and his family history. “Wong Aloy,” Record of Wills, 1879-1928; Probate Court, Cook County, Illinois.
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- ¹⁴⁶ Monica Eng, “Chinese-Americans Have Their Own Ways of Paying Respect,” *Chicago Tribune*, May 25, 1998.
- ¹⁴⁷ Alex Frew McMillan, “Learning Lessons from the Grave: The Remains of Chinese Emigrants Produced a Paper Trail of the Modern Chinese World,” The Chinese University of Hong Kong, August 2015.
- ¹⁴⁸ My thanks to Angelique Gamboa, Family Services Counsellor at the Mount Auburn Cemetery. She was able to locate the record of Wong Aloy’s burial and disinterment and she provided me with these details. I am grateful to her for finding this information.
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