

**NOTE:**

- *Thanks Anne for giving me this opportunity to share my research and learn from you.*
- *Thanks for the great support from Danny and Chrissi*
- *Thanks for QUT Business School, Queensland Library Foundation and State Library of QLD giving me this “QBLHoF Fellow”*

***A brief self-introduction***

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8. Challenges and next stage

Today's presentation: 30 minutes to cover these 8 topics and then Q&A.  
Note down your questions and let's discuss at the end of my presentation.

## About the project

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### ➤ Goal:

- Tell the story of Chinese business people in QLD during 1840-1940 for the normal readers based on facts.
- Increase the awareness of the Chinese business history in QLD
- Attract Chinese tourist to regional areas

### ➤ Methodology:

- Typology
- Comparative study (case studies)

### ➤ Resources:

- Primary
- Secondary
- Field research

### ➤ Tools: [Time graphics](#) & [Citavi](#)

### Goal:

- This is not an academic research. It is not written for scholars but for community members.
- The goal is based on the needs of the readers - a story, but a story based on facts.
- It will be too big to cover Chinese business history after WWII, so we focus on 1840- 1940.
- Try to benefit the regional economy. China national tourism administration experience – next wave – cultural tourism

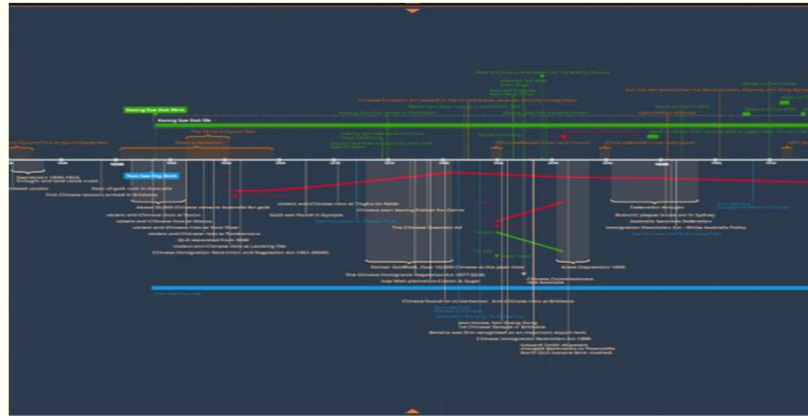
### Methodology

- Typology – Category and type, an archaeology approach. Bottle to bowl, garden to farm
- Case Study – comparative study – the similarities and differences

### Tools:

Introduce the Time graphics and Citavi

## The introduction – A chorological overview



Chorological approach is the most common method in history research.

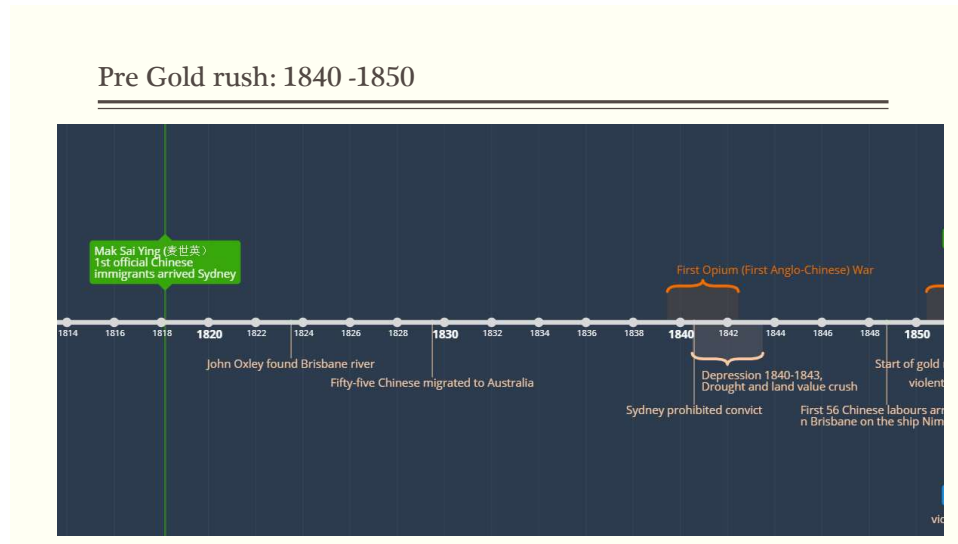
To put Chinese business in QLD along with the big events happened in China and Australia during the 1840-1940 will help readers have a big picture.

The Chinese business history is not an isolated serious events, it developed around the “circumstances”

It is also easier for normal people to understand Chinese business history in QLD in a “social media” way – be interactive and grab the information with a picture not words

Briefly explain the lines using the Web.

Date, month and year. If date not sure, use 15<sup>th</sup>, if date and month not sure, use 1 July.



What is the linguistic meaning of “Australia” - "unknown southern land“ from Latin australis meaning southern. Named by the British navigator Matthew Flinders in 1804. It also called “New Holland” The name was first applied to Australia in 1644 by the Dutch seafarer Abel Tasman.

While there are many researches that show Chinese people came to Australia (Southern land) long before the first fleet, the first officially recorded Chinese immigrant is **Mak Sai Ying** who arrived in Sydney on **27 Feb, 1818**.

As with many other Chinese immigrants in this period he started as a carpenter before he purchased land in Parramatta and was granted the licence for The Golden Lion Hotel, a public house in Parramatta.

### Why Chinese immigrants?

- Due to the restriction of the convict numbers to Australia there was a shortage of labourers. In

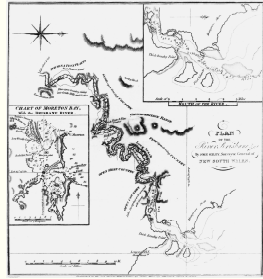
- 1840, Sydney prohibited new convicts. More Chinese labourers were brought to Australia.
- During 1840-1843, there was a drought in Australia and the land value crashed.
  - At the same time (1839-1842), British fought the first Opium War with China on behalf of drug traffickers. The battlefields were mainly in today's Guangdong and Fujian provinces. The war ended with the "Treaty of Nanking" which opened free trade including opium in five ports: Guangzhou, Amoy, Foochow, Shanghai and Ningbo. Hong Kong also became British's colony. The first Opium War not only opened the ports but also opened the eyes of the Chinese people to the Western world, especially in Guangdong and Fujian areas. With the increase of the trade with the world including with Australia, more Chinese people emigrated to overseas.

### **First recorded Chinese to QLD**

In 1823, John Oxley found Brisbane River but it was not until 1848 that the first Chinese labourers (56 people) arrived in Brisbane via Sydney.

During this period, , there is no evidence Chinese business in Queensland, but there were some trade links including labour traffic between Queensland and China.

## Pre Gold rush: 1840 -1850



Plan of River Brisbane and chart of Moreton Bay, drawn by John Oxley, 1823, John Oxley Library

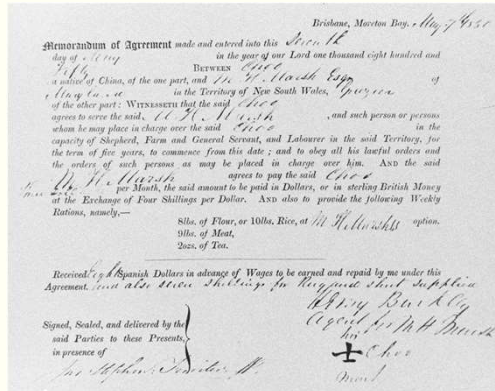


J & G Shying & Co Undertakers in Parramatta

Source: <http://arc.parracity.nsw.gov.au/blog/2017/01/27/mak-sai-ying-aka-john-shying/>

Most Chinese immigrants were from Guangdong or Fujian, working as labourer.

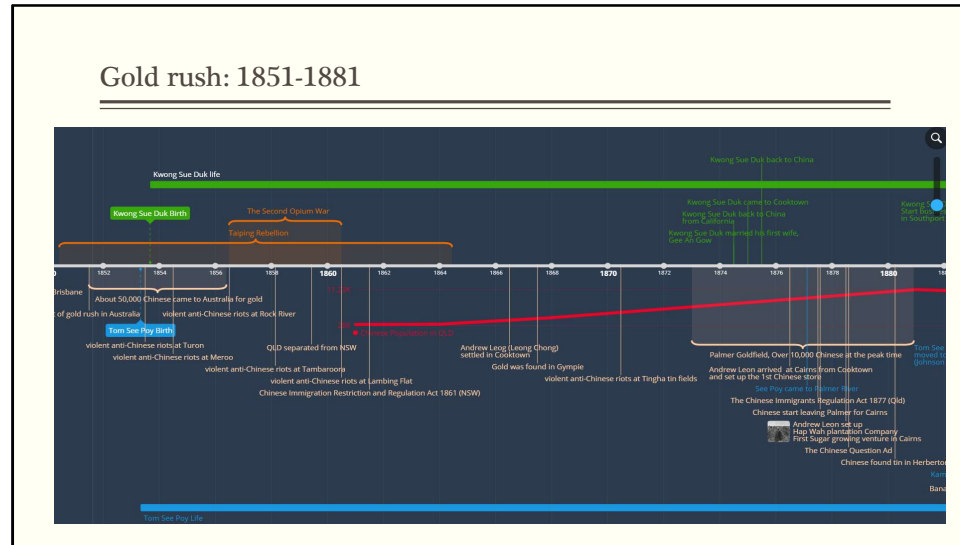
Memorandum of agreement between Choo and M.H Marsh  
owner of Maryland Station in 1850



Source: John Oxley Library, Neg 161619

Most of the Chinese brought to Queensland before gold rush worked as shepherd, farm and general services. A photo from John Oxley Library showed a Memorandum of agreement between Choo and M.H Marsh owner of Maryland Station in **1850**. According to the memorandum, Choo will receive Three Dollars per month. He also received Eight Spanish Dollars in advance of wages plus some weekly rations, including flour, rice, meat and tea. (Photo)

Look at the signature of the Chinese



Did all Chinese come for gold? Were they all poor Coolie?

Two factors pushed and pulled Chinese people into Australia:

Pushed by the wars in China:

During this period, there were the Second Opium War (1856-1860) and the Taiping Rebellion (1850-1864) in China. **The Beijing Agreement signed in 1860 opened more ports in China and legalised the British opium trade in China.** At the same time, the **Taiping Rebellion created a period of radical political and religious upheaval.** This was probably **the most important event in China in the 19th century.** An estimated **20 million Chinese people were killed during this period.** More Chinese people became opium addictive and more people were looking for new hope. People in Guangdong and Fujian areas had more links with the western world thus the opportunities to move to overseas.

Pulled by the Gold Rush

Gold rush to California (1848 – 1855) (Jiu Jin Shan) and Melbourne (1851 – 1861) (Xin Jin Shan) became very attractive.

In 1851, the discovery of gold in NSW and VIC started a gold rush. People gave up their jobs and families to get to the gold field, including the teachers and policemen. Even the sea crews abandoned their ships and rushed to gold field leaving vessels stranded in the port. A Chinese man sent a letter to his hometown in Guangdong and 3,000 Chinese came to Melbourne for “Xin Jin Shan -New Gold Mountain” (Chinese call California “Jiu Jin Shan-Old Gold Mountain”).

During 1851-1856, there were about **50,000** Chinese that came to Australia for gold. The conflict on the gold fields caused many anti-Chinese riots during this period as well.

In 1859, Queensland separated from New South Wales.

In 1861, NSW passed the ‘Chinese Immigration Restriction and Regulation Act’.

In 1860, there were 286 Chinese in Queensland. One of the famous Chinese businessman **Andrew Leon** settled in Cooktown in 1866. Andrew didn’t come to Australia as a gold digger, he worked in tropical agriculture in the West Indies, including two years in Cuba. Andrew moved to Cairns in 1876 and set up the first Chinese store in Cairns. Andrew is the pioneer of Chinese business in QLD. **In 1878**, Andrew set up ‘Hap Wah plantation Company’, the First Sugar growing venture in Cairns.

In 1867, gold was found in Gympie then Palmer gold field started in 1873.

In 1877, Queensland government passed “The Chinese Immigrants Regulation Act”. Chinese started leaving palmer gold field for Cairns.

In 1878, the famous “Chinese Question AD” was published on the 5 August by Chinese community leaders to improve the understanding between Chinese and other Australians. [Click to see the details of the newspaper.](#)

In 1881, the Chinese population in QLD reached the peak. Over 11,000 Chinese people lived in QLD.

## Tom See Poy & Kwong Sue Duk

Our two protagonists of the case studies were born during this period in the same year: 1853. Tom See Poy 1 May 1853 and Kwong Sue Duk 4 September, 1853.

But they had totally different life in Australia.

See Poy was born in a poor family and came to Palmer River with his father, brother and many other Chinese gold diggers. According to See Poy's 'My Life and Work' published in 1925 "Not only was gold difficult to find the climate is not suitable and was the cause of frequent attacks of illness'. When he arrived (1877), he saw 'the staved looks of our fellow countrymen who were either penniless or ill'. He described the hard three-month journey from Cooktown to Palmer gold mine. In his book, he also mentioned a man called 'Mr Chan Poo' (陳盤) who treated his father and brother's eruptive fever without charge.

After 5 years (1882), See Poy realised '**search for gold was like trying to catch the moon at the bottom of the sea**'. So he started working in a restaurant 'at the wage of two pounds a month'. See Poy must be working very hard and got some bonus because at the end of the year, he saved 'twenty-five pounds, sixteen shillings and six pence, after deducting expenses'.

See Poy moved to Johnson River Valley when he saw 'some Englishmen advertised for labours' in March 1882. This ended See Poy's gold dream in Palmer.

Not all of Gold rush Chinese were digging gold, about **half of them grew vegetables, cooked meals and conducted other services like Kwong Sue Duk, the herbalist.**

Kwong Sue Duk had totally different life experience with See Poy. He went to California in his teens and made his first bucket of gold. In 1874, he came back to China and learnt herbal medicine. One year later (1875), he came to Cooktown and set up a business selling tools and supplies to Chinese gold diggers. In 1879, when the gold rush in Palmer retreated he returned to China and came back to Australia in 1882. This time, he set up a business called 'Sun Mow Loong' in Southport NT (near Darwin) selling general goods and real estate. With the booming Chinese population in Southport and surrounding goldfields, Kwong's business had a turnover in trade **of £25,000 per year.**

(At the similar time 1882, current value about 5 million A\$, See Poy saved £25 a year working in a restaurant).

In 1882, Tom See Poy moved to Innisfail and Kwong Sue Duk moved to Southport in Northern Territory, a thriving river port during the Pine Creek gold rush near Darwin, and set up his store Sun Mow Loong. This marked the end of the gold rush in QLD.

### **Chinese business in Cooktown:**

At this stage, most Chinese businesses in Queensland were in Cooktown importing goods from China to supply Chinese miners and offering accommodation and other services. There were some small vegetable gardeners in Palmer gold field as well. Andrew Leon set up Hap Wah plantation Company, the first Sugar growing venture in Cairns.

## Chinese gold diggers in 1860s

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Chinese gold digger starting for work, 1860s  
[http://onsearch.sq.qld.gov.au/permalink/f/1oppkg1/sq\\_digitool116084](http://onsearch.sq.qld.gov.au/permalink/f/1oppkg1/sq_digitool116084)



Chinese miner in traditional garb relaxing with a long stemmed pipe  
[http://onsearch.sq.qld.gov.au/permalink/f/1oppkg1/sq\\_alma21220000780001](http://onsearch.sq.qld.gov.au/permalink/f/1oppkg1/sq_alma21220000780001)

There are two photos in John Oxley library showing two Chinese gold diggers starting for work and relaxing after work in 1860s. (Photo)

Drawing of Chinese people on the road to the Palmer Goldfield, Queensland, 1875



Chinese on the way to Palmer  
[http://onsearch.sq.qld.gov.au/permalink/t/fhmkog/sq\\_digital0192712](http://onsearch.sq.qld.gov.au/permalink/t/fhmkog/sq_digital0192712)

There is also a drawing of 'Chinese on the road to the Palmer' published in 1875 collected in John Oxley Library. The drawing shows a group of Chinese people happily marching to Palmer Gold Field. The first person seems to be a leader wearing traditional Chinese dress, officer hat and holding an umbrella. They were all carrying goods using Chinese shoulder pole. (Photo).

It seems Chinese gold digger had a good time in the beginning.

Miners playing ping pong in Queensland, ca. 1890

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Source:  
[https://digital.slg.qld.gov.au/delivery/DeliveryManagerServlet?change\\_lng=en&dps\\_pid=IE288429](https://digital.slg.qld.gov.au/delivery/DeliveryManagerServlet?change_lng=en&dps_pid=IE288429)

It seems there were some harmony times between Chinese and Western gold diggers.

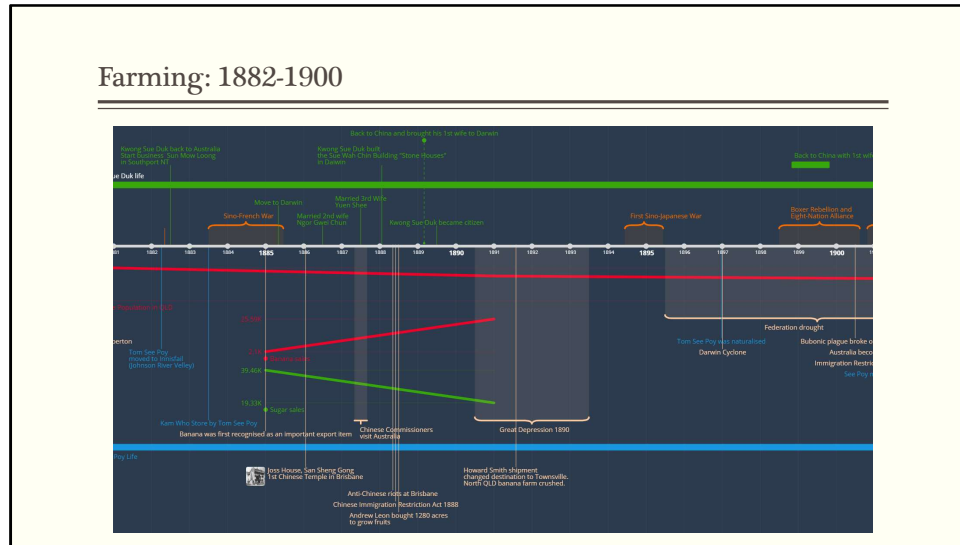
Chinese hawker in the Darling Downs, ca. 1875



Source: John Oxley Collection Neg 63654

Not only gold mine, there is also a picture at John Oxley collection showing Chinese hawker in the Darling Downs.

## Farming: 1882-1900



Soon after the gold rush, Cairns became a major centre for Chinese people. They used their farming experience from China to open the land and started farming in north Queensland.

There are detailed study's in Cathie May's book 'Topsawyers : the Chinese in Cairns, 1870-1920'. As the book pointed out, Chinese farmers contributed significantly to the tropical agriculture in Queensland especially the Banana industry.

In 1885, banana was first recognised as an important export item. Chinese farmers in Queensland used their connections with their countrymen in Melbourne and Sydney to grow bananas and supply Chinese markets in New South Wales and Victoria. The sales of the Banana in QLD started from £2,000 in 1886 and grew to £25,000 in 1891. Controversially, the sugar industry dropped from £39,000 to £19,000 in the same period.

Also in 1885, the first Chinese temple, San Sheng Gong, was built in Brisbane.

The anti-Chinese activities never stopped after the gold rush. In 1887, the Chinese commissioner first visited Australia but his visit didn't improve the understanding between Chinese and Western people.

On 5 May 1888, anti-Chinese riots happened in Brisbane and many Chinese businesses were attacked. There is a very good video created by Queensland State Archives about this:  
<https://youtu.be/LFhBBRANdJw> Play The video from the <https://time.graphics/line/292712>

In the same year, the Chinese Immigration Restriction Act was passed. More and more Chinese people left Australia. The Chinese population in Queensland continued declining.

During this period, Australia also experienced great depression (1890-1893) and the Federation drought (1895-1903). In 1900, Bubonic plague broke out in Sydney and in 1901, Australia became a federation and passed 'Immigration Restriction Act', the White Australia Policy.

At the same time there were more wars and natural disasters in China.

During Sino-French war (1883-1885) China was defeated again by France. This aroused nationalistic awareness about the China's modernisation in southern China.

In 1895, China was defeated by Japan, this war marked the growth of Japan and the decline of the Chinese empire, and it also **triggered a reform movement to finally result in the beginning of revolution against the last empire – Qing dynasty.**

Yihequan was a Chinese secret society supported by poor peasants to anti Qing dynasty and the westerners. The group practised certain martial arts (Gongfu) in the belief that this made them invulnerable, so the westerners called them Boxers.

From 1898, they changed their name from Yihequan to Yihetuan which means "Righteous and Harmonious Militia" and turned their force against foreigners in China. By May 1900, the Boxers were roaming the

countryside around Beijing. About 19,000 soldiers from 8 countries were formed and finally captured in Beijing on 14 August 1900. During the fight, about 100,000 or more people were killed. After 1900, the West got more power in China and Qing dynasty was weakened further. Yuan Ming Yuan – summer palace

This was a tough period to do business in Australia for Chinese entrepreneurs. However, Andrew Leon bought 1280 acres in 1888 to grow fruits. And our two major subjects also chose to stay in Australia.

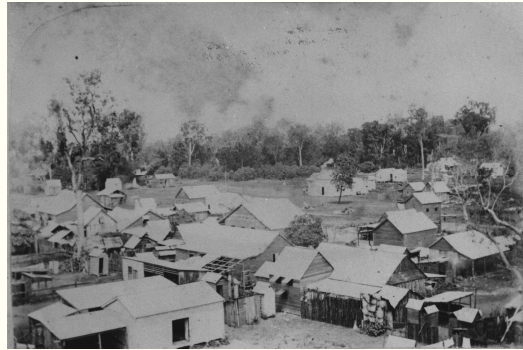
In 1883, Tom See Poy and two other Chinese men set up the **Kam Who store** at Mourilyan and then moved to Innisfail and stayed there to grow his business till he died in 1926.

In 1885, Kwong Sue Duk moved to Darwin and built the famous **Sue Wah Chin Building**, originally known as Stone House in 1888. He continued his business there until 1902 when he moved back to Cairns. During this period, he married his 2<sup>nd</sup> wife (1886), 3<sup>rd</sup> wife (1887) and went back to China and brought his 1<sup>st</sup> wife and children to Darwin (1889). He became a citizen in 1889. In 1898, he brought his 1st wife back to China as she asked and stayed one year in China and married his 4th wife. He brought his 4<sup>th</sup> wife back to Darwin in 1899.

In this period, most Chinese businesses in Queensland are farming and farm related businesses in north Queensland. There were some furniture makers and shops in Brisbane as well.

## Chinatown Cairns, 1886

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Source:  
[https://digital.sluq.qld.gov.au/delivery/DeliveryManagerServlet?change\\_lng=en&dps\\_pid=IE1078097](https://digital.sluq.qld.gov.au/delivery/DeliveryManagerServlet?change_lng=en&dps_pid=IE1078097)

## Hap Wah plantation Company -1890s

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Source:

Innisfail area. Carrying bananas to train

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Source: <http://hdl.handle.net/10462/deriv/6298>

Joss House, Breakfast Creek, 1886

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Source: John Oxley Library Neg 10124



The big events in Australia in this period are: World War 1 (1914-1918), Spanish Flu broke out (1919), Soldier settlement Act QLD (1917-1929), The Great Depression (1929-1939) and the building of Sydney Bridge (1924-1932).

While in China, there were more wars and revolutions. Sun Yat-sen establishes the Revolutionary Alliance anti-Qing dynasty (14 June, 1905), Chinese revolution (1911-1912) and pull down the Qing Dynasty (**Last Emperor**), the warlord period (1916-1926), Northern Expedition (1926-1927), KMT (Kuomintang, National Party) launch anti-CCP (Chinese Communist Party) purge (1927-1937), Japanese invasion of Manchuria (18 September, 1931) and the Nanjing Massacre (December 1937–January 1938).

In 1902, Kwong Sue Duk moved to Cairns from Darwin. It seems he lost his fortune in Darwin cyclone in 1897. According to the Queenslander, Feb 28, 1903, p977, “Kwong See Tick (another name of Kwong Sue Duk) is a chemist by profession, but was one time a wealth merchant in port Darwin, but through being too good-hearted he gave too much credit to customers, and the result is his present position as a dispenser of roots and pills and a seller of lottery tickets.”

During 22 July 1907 – 1 April 1908, Kwong Sue Duk went back to China again.

In 1910, Kwong Sue Duk moved to Townsville. He kept travelling between China and Australia: 11 December, 1910 - 3 November 1911, 2 December 1912 – 26 March 1913, 18 May 1914-15 July 1914 . In 1917, he moved to Melbourne. 10 years later, he retired in Townsville in 1927 and passed away on 17 February 1929.

During this time, Tom See Poy stayed in Innisfail looking after his business. His business grew bigger and bigger and he didn't have time to go back to China. In 1901, his family sent him a wife to Innisfail. Together, they had five children. In 1908, Mrs See Poy brought children to China, but See Poy remained in Innisfail for his business. He also brought many of his relatives to Australia including his young brother. He believed the best way to help his family was to bring them to Australia. Most of his relatives worked in his business. In 1925, See Poy passed the business to his children and retired. He wrote 'My Life and Work' in 1925 and passed away on 18 April 1926. From 1929, his family started building See Poy House in

Innisfail. The business continued as See Poy & Sons and became a very famous department store in Queensland until the site was purchased in the early 1980s.

During this period while most of 1<sup>st</sup> generation Chinese immigrants were still carrying on their farm business and small shops, some old people retired and went back to China, but more and more Chinese businesses were set up by Australia born Chinese. These young Chinese business people developed business in some new industries. A picture from John Oxley library showed Ah Ping, the tobacco industry pioneer in Texas district in 1933, another picture showed about 100 young Chinese in Townsville Chinese youth club 1940s.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> generation (ABC – Australia Born Chinese) prefer professional career other than merchandise. Look down upon Merchandise in Chinese culture.

We are seven - Queenslander, 28 Feb, 1903, p977



Source: John Oxley Library, Neg  
112755

“Kwong See Tick (another name of Kwong Sue Duk) is a chemist by profession, but was one time a wealth merchant in port Darwin, but through being too good-hearted he gave too much credit to customers, and the result is his present position as a dispenser of roots and pills and a seller of lottery tickets.”

An Ping, Tabaco industry pioneer Texas district 1933



Townsville Chinese youth club 1940s

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Source: John Oxley Library, Neg 115065

Case studies – Kwong Sue Duk (邝仕德) & Tom See Poy (谭仕沛)



Kwong Sue Duk with his three wives and fourteen children, Cairns, 1904. John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland. Neg 10203



<https://www.facebook.com/LostCairns/photos/a.445567395489426/1623954030984084/?type=3&theater>

## See Poy: My Life and Work



Source:  
[http://www.visualarts.qld.gov.au/content/see\\_poy\\_standard.asp?name=SeePoy\\_MyLifeAndWork](http://www.visualarts.qld.gov.au/content/see_poy_standard.asp?name=SeePoy_MyLifeAndWork)

## Challenges and next stage

### 1. Challenges

- The Chinese names
  - The lack of record
  - The biased record
- John Pong Shying
  - Mak Sai Pang
  - Mai Shi Ying
  - Mak O'Pong
  - John Sheen (Possibly)

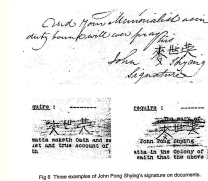


Fig 8. Two examples of John Pong Shying's signature in documents.

Source: <http://arc.parracity.nsw.gov.au/blog/2017/01/27/mak-sai-ying-aka-john-shying/>

### 2. Next Stage

- More Chinese business cases
- Chinese business landscape – geography study (interactive mapping)
- The heritage tour of Chinese business in QLD
- Chinese business and regional economy development

Need your help for more local information

Need your cooperation for Chinese business history tour to attract Chinese tourists.

True or False? Queenslander, 28 Feb, 1903, p977

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"WE ARE SEVEN."

Keung See Tick, with three wives and 12 children, arrived in Cairns from Port Darwin about three months ago. He has five wives and twenty children altogether, but two wives and six children are in China. The youngest child was born at Cairns only ten or twelve weeks ago. Keung See Tick is a specialist in pediatrics, but was at one time a wealthy merchant in Hong Kong, but through being the general agent for a large number of customers, and the result in his pocket business as a big dealer of opium and pills and a dealer of lottery tickets.

Source: John Oxley Library, Neg 112755

Four wives or Five wives?

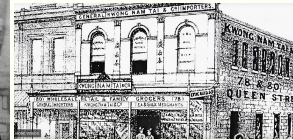
## Chinese Business in Brisbane – Chick Tong and his family



Chick Tong and his wife Cladys



Chick Tong and his son, Shum Chick Tong  
1905. Source: John Oxley Library Neg  
197082



Kwong, Nam Tai & Co

There are couple of studies about Brisbane Chinese, but few about Chinese business in Brisbane. Joan Fisher's Doctoral thesis "**The Brisbane Overseas Chinese Community 1860s to 1970s: Enigma or Conformity**" in 2005 collected valued information about Chinese community in Brisbane.

Some of them are:

### Chick Tong

Chick Tong was born in 1849 and naturalised in 1893. He owned two elegant shops in Queen Street. His firm called **Kwong, Nam Tai & Co** began in 1884. He married an English woman and lived in the Brisbane suburb of Swan Hill - today named Kelvin Grove. This was at the time a leafy outer suburb. Chick Tong received an official letter after the factional fighting of 1892. The letter advised against further disputes. The inquiry into these events did not distinguish him as a leader. It is not clear whether he belonged to any faction.

His son, Sun Kum Chee (Shum Chick Tong), was bom in Brisbane in 1885 and spent the years 1890 to 1911 in China to receive a Chinese education.

Photograph of Chick Tong and his son, Shum Chick Tong in Imperial Scholarship Robes taken in 1905 before his son left for China. John Oxley Library.

### **George Shue**

George Shue was regarded by government officials as a community leader.<sup>138</sup> In 1884, he purchased the land on which the Temple was to be built. He was a trustee of the Temple at its opening ceremony. In the investigation into the 1892 disturbances, he was recognised as a leader in the Chinese community by the authorities. He was registered as **a merchant or cabinet maker in Ann Street between 1884 and 1895**. After 1903 he had no further involvement in community activities. This was another individual who played a representative role in the community but only for a short period.

### **Charles Tong Wah**

Charles Tong Wah, a **cabinet maker in Ann or Wickham Street between 1888 and 1897** was similarly a trustee of the Temple in 1886. Like Chick Tong he received an official warning after the 1892 disturbances.<sup>139</sup>

Chinese men in front of their temple, Brisbane, 1903



Source: John Oxley Library Neg 60908

Individuals who did take an interest in the ownership of the Temple land in 1903 included Mee Lee, Lee Gun, Tong Lee, Fat Kee, See War, Lee Chow and Jim Yin. The Mee Lee and Mee Fook families were connected. Mee Fook was born in Canton in 1863 and was naturalised in 1901. He was a founder of the firm of Mee Lee Bros. This firm was recorded by the *Pugh Almanac*<sup>142</sup> as having been in business at 362 Wickham Street from 1890 to 1924. It is clear that this family was from Zhongshan.<sup>143</sup> Mee Fook and his wife Moon Quin had five children who were born between 1902 and 1910. They returned to live in China from 1911 until 1913.<sup>144</sup> Mee Lee appeared in the photograph of 1903. The firm of Mee Lee Bros operated until the middle of the twentieth century. According to the *List of Aliens 1916*,<sup>145</sup> additional firms provided this service. These included the other firm of See War, See War and Co of 227 Brunswick Street; Fong Pie of 86-88 Ann Street; and Jue Yow of 20 Roma Street.

Source: *The Brisbane Overseas Chinese Community 1860s to 1970s*:

Enigma or Conformity , Joan Fisher, 2005

## Geographic – interactive map

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Q & A

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