RESEARCHING CHINESE FAMILY HISTORY IN AUSTRALIA

Great Wall of China (Mutianyu section of the Great Wall), Huairou, Beijing, China
Photo Source: Flick. Photo taken by Robin Zebrowski, 27 June 2009.

Local Studies Library Guide
Parramatta Heritage Visitor Centre

PARRAMATTA HERITAGE CENTRE
VISITOR INFORMATION

1. "Start with the known"

Like all family history research, a good starting point is by writing down what you know already. Then gather as much information as you possibly can through family members and family stories. This can be done through conducting an oral history interview.

2. Chinese personal names

Traditionally Chinese names comprise of three characters: 1 surname character at the front followed by 2 given name characters.
E.g.

麥 = *Mak*[6] or wheat	(surname)
世 = *Sai*[3] or world	(given name)
英 = *Ying*[1] or brave	

In Australian records, Chinese people's names were written down in many different ways. Note that Chinese surnames are in the reverse order of western name conventions.

'Ah' or 'A' does not have a meaning. It was simply used as a way of addressing someone. It's the equivalent of saying 'Hey' Peter, etc

Chinese is a tonal language. There is no standard way for translating Chinese characters into English until the Wade-Giles (19th century) and later Hanyu Pinyin (1950) systems were developed.

Tip 1: Keep a list of each different spelling of your ancestor's name you find, to use in keyword or name searches. Be on the lookout for anything written in Chinese characters and take a photocopy.

Tip 2: Keep track of any other Chinese families you find living in the same area as your ancestor, or who have the same family name. These could become possible clues that connect to your own family.

If you want to trace your ancestor before they arrived in Australia, you will need to know their proper Chinese name (preferably in characters) and their home district (just 'Canton' isn't enough).

Chinese naming practices
A Chinese genealogy book known as a 家族 (*jiapu*) or 族譜 (*zupu*) traditionally recorded the male names of a family in Chinese. The surnames of wives were also listed followed by the character 氏 *shì* which means surname.

Some Chinese families use a 'Generation Poem' 字輩詞 to record the lineage of a generation. Usually prescribed to males in the family, siblings and cousins of the same generation would share a 'Generation Name' 字輩 *zìbèi* or 班次 *bāncì*. This was usually the middle character of the name, e.g. 世 *sai*[3] from the earlier example.

Further reading
Behind the name - http://www.behindthename.com/names/usage/chinese
House of Chin - http://houseofchinn.com/ChineseNames.html
Wikipedia, 2016, 'Chinese name' - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_name
Wikipedia, 2016, 'Generation name'- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Generation_name

3. Place names of Chinese ancestral homes

Most early Chinese migrants to Australia were listed as having arrived from Canton, which could refer to a province of Guangdong or the captial city of Guangzhou.

A good starting point is to locate familiarise yourself with the village or region of China you are researching using Google maps (English) or Baidu maps (Chinese). My China Roots - http://www.mychinaroots.com/ can also help by providing some context to your ancestral village. Fees apply should you use their research services.

There are several databases that allow you to research your Chinese ancestral village including:
In Search of Root's Village Database - http://rootsdb.org

Roots Village DB - http://villagedb.friendsofroots.org/search.cgi and how to guide - http://houseofchinn.com/HowToFindYourAncestralVillage.html

Some words when describing the hierarchy of locations in China.
縣 *xiàn* - County
城 *chéng* 市 *shì* - City
鎮 *zhèn* – Town or Village
區 *qū* - Borough
鄉 *xiāng* - Village
村 *cūn* - Hamlet
裡 *li* - Lane
巷 *xiàng* - Alley
園 *yuán* - Garden

Further readings
Chinese Family History Group of Souther California, 2014, 'Ancestral village research' - http://www.chinesefamilyhistory.org/ancestral-village-research.html
Family Search, 2016, 'China Genealogy', https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/China_Genealogy
Wikipedia, 2016, 'Place names in China' - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Place_names_in_China

4. **Consult Australian records and resources on**
   - Gravestones
   - Birth, death and marriage records
   - Immigration, travel and alien registration records
   - Naturalisation and Citizenship records
   - Chinese newspapers
   - Chinese student records

Additional Chinese-Australian Family History Research Guides

Archives In Brief 33 - Chinese migration and settlement in New South Wales
© State of New South Wales through the State Records Authority, 2003.
https://www.records.nsw.gov.au/state-archives/guides-and-finding-aids/archives-in-brief/archives-in-brief-33

Chinese Australians: A Guide to Holdings in the Mitchell library
compiled and edited by Paul Jones & Terri McCormack, 2000.
http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/blogs/start-your-chinese-family-search-state-library

Chinese Immigrants and Chinese–Australians in New South Wales
by Julie Stacker and Peri Stewart, published by the National Archives of Australia, 1996.
http://guides.naa.gov.au/chinese/

Guide to Chinese-Australian Family Research
compiled by Pauline Rule and Sophie Couchman for the Chinese Museum, June 2011.
http://www.chinesemuseum.com.au/wp-content/uploads/Guide-to-Chinese-Australian-Research.pdf

Chinese settlement in NSW : a thematic history : A report for the NSW Heritage Office
by Michael Williams, September 1999.
http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/heritagebranch/heritage/chinesehistory.pdf

The Chinese in Australia: A context and introduction to material on the Chinese Heritage of Australian Federation website
©La Trobe University, Humanities and Social Sciences, Asian Studies Program
https://arrow.latrobe.edu.au/store/3/4/5/5/1/public/education/history.htm

Finding Chinese family connections in the National Archives
by Kate Bagnall,
http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/publications/papers-and-podcasts/family-history/chinese-family-connections.aspx

LIST OF RESOURCES
Books about Chinese family history

Ancestors : Chinese in colonial Australia
by Ryan, Jan.
General Subject: Chinese -- Western Australia -- History.
Publication Date: 1995
Format: Book
Shelf Number: LS 325.25109941 RYAN

Chinese-Australian journeys : records on travel, migration and settlement, 1860-1975
by Jones, Paul (Paul Anthony), 1955-
General Subject: Chinese -- Australia -- Archives.
Publication Date: 2005
Format: Book or Electronic version
Shelf Number: LS 305.8951 JONE

Chinese immigrants and Chinese Australians in NSW
by Stacker, Julie & Stewart, Peri
General Subject: Chinese -- Australia -- History.
Publication Date: 1996
Format: Book and online:
http://guides.naa.gov.au/chinese/
Shelf Number: LS 304.894051 STA

From Canton with courage : Parramatta and beyond: Chinese arrivals 1800-1900
by Brook, Jack.
General Subject: Chinese Australians.
Publication Date: 2010
Format: Book

Shelf Number: LS 305.89 BROO

Red tape, gold scissors : the story of Sydney's Chinese
by Fitzgerald, Shirley, 1949-
General Subject:Chinese -- New South Wales -- Sydney -- History.
Publication Date: 1997
Format: Book
Shelf Number: LS 305.895109441 FIT

Remembering the forgotten : Chinese gravestones in Rookwood Cemetery 1917-1949
by Jones, Doris Yau-Chong.
General Subject: Chinese -- New South Wales -- Rookwood -- Geneaology.
Publication Date: 2003
Format: Book
Shelf Number: LS 929.5 JONE

Sources for Chinese local history and heritage in New South Wales
by Young, Faye.
General Subject: Chinese -- New South Wales -- Social conditions -- History -- Sources.
Publication Date: 1997
Format: Book
Shelf Number: LS 305.89510994 SOU

Sourcing our Chinese past
By Bagnall, Kate
Series: *Locality*, volume 11, number 2
General Subject: Chinese – Australian -- Sources
Publication Date: 2000
Format: Online
http://katebagnall.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Bagnall-Locality-2000.pdf

Tracking the dragon : a guide for finding and assessing Chinese Australian heritage places
by Pearson, Michael, 1951-
General Subject: Chinese -- Australia.
Publication Date: 2002
Format: Book and Electronic version
Shelf Number: R 363.69 PEAR

Other related books

Chinese Anzacs
by Clyne, Joanna, author.

General Subject: Chinese Australians -- History -- Study and teaching (Secondary)
Publication Date: 2015
Format: Book and online:
http://anzacportal.dva.gov.au/resources/chinese-anzacs
Shelf Number: LS 940.3089 CLYN

Cooking & sharing : a booklet of Chinese recipes
by Cheng, Shirley.
General Subject: Cooking, Chinese.
Publication Date: 2013
Format: Book
Shelf Number: LS 641.59 COOK

Pēngrèn hé fēnxiǎng : huárén jiātíng shípǔ = Cooking and sharing - a booklet of Chinese recipes
by Cheng, Shirley, editor.
General Subject: Cooking, Chinese.
Publication Date: 2013
Format: Book
Shelf Number: LS 641.5951 COOK

Looking forward, looking back : a collection of migrant stories, 2009
by Dundas Area Neighbourhood Centre (N.S.W.).
General Subject: Migrants -- Chinese community -- Australia.
Publication Date: 2009
Format: Book
Shelf Number: LS 305.895 LOOK

Castlemaine petitions : petitioners for a Castlemaine municipality and petitioners against the Chinese Residence Licence
by Gervasoni, Clare.
General Subject: Chinese -- Victoria -- History.
Publication Date: 1998
Format: Book
Shelf Number: LS 994.5031 CAST

India, China, Australia : trade and society 1788-1850
by Broadbent, James.
General Subject: International trade -- Australia -- History.
Publication Date: 2003
Format: Book
Shelf Number: LS 994.02 BROA

The changing face of Australia : a century of immigration 1901-2000
by Walsh, Kate.
General Subject: Immigrants -- Australia -- History.
Publication Date: 2001
Format: Book
Shelf Number: LS 325.94 WAL

Databases
Chinese Australian Historical Images in Australia -
http://www.chia.chinesemuseum.com.au/

Dr. Kate Bagnall, 'A legacy of White Australia: Records about Chinese Australians in the National Archives', National Archives of Australia
http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/publications/papers-and-podcasts/immigration/white-australia.aspx

Family Search, China Collection of Genealogies, 1239-2014 "中國, 族譜收藏 1239-2014 年."
https://familysearch.org/search/collection/1787988
From various institutions and private holdings in China, North America, and Southeast Asia.

La Trobe University, 'Chinese Heritage of Australian Federation Project' -
http://arrow.latrobe.edu.au/store/3/4/5/5/1/public/index.htm

National Library of Australia 'Chinese collection' -
https://www.nla.gov.au/asian/chinese and try searching the Trove database http://trove.nla.gov.au/

Society of Australian Genealogists -
http://www.sag.org.au/

Visit your local State Library, State Records and Archives, Local Library and Historical Society to see what resources they may hold in their collection.

Newspapers
The Chinese Advertiser (Ballarat, Vic.) (1856)

Later known as The English and Chinese Advertiser (1856-1858)
Simplified Chinese title: 唐人新闻纸
Traditional Chinese title: 唐人新聞紙
Link: http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/title/706

Chinese Australian Herald (Sydney, NSW) = Guang yi hua bao, (1894-1923)
Simplified Chinese title: 广益华报
Traditional Chinese title: 廣益華報
Link: http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/title/704

Chinese Times (Melbourne，Vic.) (1902-1922)
Simplified Chinese title: 美利宾埠爱国报/爱国报/警东新报/民报
Traditional Chinese title: 美利賓埠愛國報/愛國報/警東新報/民報
Link: http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-title705

The Chinese times [Newspaper]
General Subject: Newspapers on microfilm.
Publication Date: 1894 1893 1892
Format: Microfilm
Shelf Number: LS REELS

Tung Wah News (1898-1902) / Tung Wah Times (1902-1936)
Simplified Chinese title: 东华新报 (1898–1902) / 东华报(1902–1936)
Traditional Chinese title:東華新報 (1898–1902) / 東華報 (1902–1936)
Online index: http://resources.chineseaustralia.org/tungwah/
Note: not yet digitised.
Format: available on microfiche at State Library of New South Wales and National Library of Australia.

For more information on early Chinese newspapers:
'Early Chinese newspapers : Trove presents a new perspective on Australian history'
by Kate Bagnall, 19 February 2015.
https://www.nla.gov.au/blogs/trove/2015/02/19/early-chinese-newspapers

Trove list: Journals, articles and data sets on subject: "Chinese Australians -- New South Wales -- Newspapers."
http://trove.nla.gov.au/article/result?q=subject%3A%22Chinese+Australians+--+New+South+Wales+--+Newspapers.%22

Old Hong Kong newspapers - https://mmis.hkpl.gov.hk/old-hk-collection

Online Resources and Organisations

New South Wales
Australian Chinese Community Association of New South Wales 澳華公會
http://www.acca.org.au/drupal/en/community-services-28

Chinese Australian Historical Society Inc. 澳洲華人歷史協會 (Haymarket, N.S.W.) -
https://chineseaustralianhistory.org
Email: contact.cahs@gmail.com
Twitter: @cahs_contact

Chinese Heritage Association of Australia Inc. 澳洲華人歷史文物會
http://www.chineseheritage.org.au/

Migration Heritage Centre, 2011 -
http://www.migrationheritage.nsw.gov.au/ (archived website that is no longer updated. Useful for past Chinese research projects such as *Tracking the Dragon : a history of the Chinese in the Riverina* or *Water from the Wells : Chinese market gardens in NSW 1850-2010*)

Sydney Living Museum's 'Celestial City : Sydney Chinese story', 2014 exhibition
http://sydneylivingmuseums.com.au/exhibitions/celestial-city-sydneys-chinese-story

Victoria
Chinese Australian Family History Organisation Victoria Inc. 澳洲维省华商家谱华协会 |澳洲維省華商家譜華協會 - http://www.cafhov.com/
Email: info@cafhov.com

Chinese Museum 澳華歷史博物館 (Melbourne, VIC.) –
http://chinesemuseum.com.au/

State Library of Victoria, 2016, 'Researching your multicultural ancestors'
http://guides.slv.vic.gov.au/multiculturalancestors

Fiona Chiu : Chinese family tree, 2000 (Education Services Australia Resource)
http://www.civicsandcitizenship.edu.au/cce/fiona_chiu_chinese_family_tree,28895.html and
http://www.scootle.edu.au/ec/viewing/L614/index.html

Australia Capital Territory
National Archives of Australia 'Chinese Australian' snapshot of collection -
http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/snapshots/chinese-australians/index.aspx

Historian Dr. Kate Bagnall's 'The tiger's mouth' blog –
http://chineseaustralia.org/

National Library of Australia 'Chinese collection' -
https://www.nla.gov.au/asian/chinese

Invisible Australians : Living under the White Australia Policy by Dr. Kate Bagnall and Dr. Tim Sherratt–
http://invisibleaustralians.org/
Email: admin@invisibleaustralians.org
Twitter: @InvisibleAus

Overseas
Family Search, 'China Genealogy'
https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/China_Genealogy

Lisa Louise Cooke, 2013, March 8, 'Family tree relationships – it's complicated (Chinese genealogy)', *Genealogy Gems*
http://lisalouisecooke.com/2013/03/chinese-family-history/

University of British Columbia (UBC) Library, 2014, 'Mapping the villages and towns recorded in the Register of Chinese Immigration to Canada from 1885 to 1949',
http://asian.library.ubc.ca/special-projects/mapping-the-villages-and-towns-recorded-in-the-register-of-chinese-immigration-to-canada-from-1885-to-1949/

Forums
Chinese genealogy (Australia) –
http://siyigenealogy.proboards.com/thread/1209

Chinese Family History & Stories (New Zealand) – click to go to the NZ forum / notice board

Video clips
Off the Great Wall, 2013, 'The Complicated Chinese Family Tree', Youtube,
https://youtu.be/nCFRoILS1jY

References
Cassie Mercer, 2013, February 10, 'Kung hei fat choy : tracing your Chinese ancestors in Australia', *Inside History magazine* [Website]. Available online http://www.insidehistory.com.au/2013/02/kung-hei-fat-choy-tracing-your-chinese-ancestors-in-australia/

Kate Bagnall, 2016, 'Finding your Chinese roots : tips for tracing your Australian family's Chinese origins' [workshop notes], presented at 'Chinese family history and migration to Australia' workshop held at the Society of Australian Genealogists on Saturday 30 April 2016.

Pauline Rule and Sophie Couchman, 2011 June, 'Guide to Chinese-Australian family research', Melbourne, Vic. : Chinese Museum. Available online http://www.chinesemuseum.com.au/wp-content/uploads/Guide-to-Chinese-Australian-Research.pdf