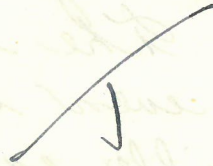


Bugas, Anna Marie
Political Economy
Section I

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The Chinese Riot

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The Chinese Riot

The causes leading to the Chinese Massacre in 1885 date back several years of that time. For years prior to 1885, Chinese were imported legally and otherwise by the Union Pacific Railroad Co. and other corporations. They came into Rock Springs in the early seventies to work in the mines and just before the Riot, the Railroad Co. replaced all the white section labor by Chinese and the feeling ran high against them in Rock Springs, terminating as it did in a shameful killing of about thirty harmless men, shot in the back while running for their lives. Many of them ran into the hills, and there died of their wounds, not being found until years later. No one knows the exact number that were killed. The United

States was called upon later to settle by payment to the Chinese government for the lives taken by the irresponsible mob.

On Wednesday, September 5th, 1885 the Massacre took place. The night before several men went around to different miners' homes and told them that the next day the white miners ~~and~~ were going hunting and shooting all the Chinamen they saw. The people thought it was a joke, but the next morning, which was Wednesday, about 10 o'clock the Chinese Dinner Carriers, as the ones who daily carried dinners to the Chinese in the mine were called, were being stoned with rocks and chased by men and boys until they had to drop their load and flee for safety. One after another they were treated with rocks in the same manner. Rock Springs, in the town proper at that time was devoid of rock suitable for throwing, and

these stones were undoubtedly brought into town for that purpose a day or two before.

All the mines were working that day, except possibly No. 6, where a fight had taken place between the Chinese and white men the day before. It seemed that over one-half of the Chinamen employed in the mines had stayed at home in anticipation of this trouble. But those ~~of~~ who did go to work must have gotten a warning for they didn't come out of some of the mines until dusk, but when they did they were on the run toward the south east of No. 1 mine and over the hill (No. 1 hill.) Rifles cracked in the hands of several of the mob, which was on the old bridge on Bridger Ave., and several Chinamen were shot from that spot, where the mob had organized early in the day and started for Chinatown. Nearly all

Chinatown was ablaze and smoldering by now, the work being almost done. There were, however, still men with guns picking off Chinamen, who ventured out of the mine or from some hiding retreat a little too early.

Soon after the stoning by boys and men of these "dinner carriers" the mob, most of which had guns, began their march toward Chinatown. There were not over 60 or 75 men in that crowd and probably 40 or 50 had guns. Back of these armed men were trailing men and boys. The Chinese had at one end of their Chinatown a large two story building which was used as a place of worship and also for Faro and other Chinese gambling games. After the Riot when it was rebuilt they kept their prized and sacred Dragon there. When the crowd reached within

about 200 yards of this building they halted and sent a committee to apprise the Chinese of their intention (which was to burn the building) if they did not leave within a given time. At that time there were around 500 men in the building. As the expiration of the time for leaving approached, the Chinese seemed very excited and appeared almost at the point of fighting among themselves. Some urged to leave the house, others evidently wanted to stay. There was a loud jabbering, ~~and~~ swinging of arms, and other noises inside that could be heard from a long ways off. The Chinese were taking so long about making up their minds that the mob began to move forward. When near the building they began jumping ^{out} of windows. By that time some ~~one~~ of the mob knocked the locked door in and the Chinese began running out of this and also jumping out of windows. The

white men started shooting into the house and toward the fleeing men. Soon smoke was oozing from the building. As the Chinese saw the men kept up their fire and hundreds of shots must have been wasted for scarce because of the small number of men killed for the ~~number~~^{hundreds} of shots fired.

The mob advanced into Chinatown driving out of the houses those who were too frightened to run, and setting fire to all the houses, after first plundering them of everything valuable.

The Union Pacific Railroad Co. ordered that all Chinese be picked up along their line and taken care of, which was done. The fleeing Chinamen were gathered up, loaded into box cars and brought back to Rock Springs. Soldiers were already awaiting their arrival. Squads of soldiers would guard the Chinese on their exodus for many months after the riot. For a while afterward white workmen, such as carpenters etc. were also guarded, but soon the guarding of the whites was

discontinued. At first the soldiers and whites were mistrustful of one another and many fights took place between them. Later they began to fraternize and confidence between them was restored. They finally left in 1898 after 13 years in Rock Springs. There was a year or so prior to the final withdrawal of the army from Rock Springs that one or two companies of colored soldiers came, the white army leaving. The colored army sojourn, while brief, was the most trying period for the peace officers as well as the citizens in general of the entire 13 years in which soldiers were there.

The Chinese Dragon didn't come into such general notice before the Riot as it did afterward. In fact it is not known for sure whether or not the Chinese possessed one in Rock Springs before the Riot. After it however, this idol of Chinese worship was used on certain important occasions for years in Rock Springs. It was

said that only two such Dragons existed in the United States - one in Rock Springs and the other in San Francisco. Whenever this huge thing was brought out in celebration of a big event, it was necessary that about 100 men carry it. The men carrying it had to keep even step and they were invisible except for their feet. The Dragon was accompanied with all sorts of ~~noise~~ ~~or~~ music in the form of fifes, tambourines, drums and fire crackers. Children and grown ups also followed. The body of the Dragon was in the form of a serpent made of hoops covered with linen and silk of many colors, to imitate the scales on the snake's back. Its head was a bull's head with large horns, greenish bulging eyes, and its mouth open with a serpent's tongue hanging out. The Dragon would halt in front of each Chinese business house for a moment, acknowledging it by turning its head toward it and bowing a couple of times.