A Legacy of White Australia

Kate Bagnall

National Archives of Australia

Paper presented at the Fourth International Conference of Institutes and Libraries for Chinese Overseas Studies, Jinan University, Guangzhou China
10 May 2009

Using the story of Poon Gooey and his family as a case study, this paper discusses the National Archives’ early 20th-century records on Chinese Australians, particularly those created in the administration of the White Australia Policy. The records document many aspects of the lives of Chinese Australians, including immigration and travel, business enterprises, political activities and community life. Publications and finding aids, descriptive work and digitisation projects are making the records easier to access and hopefully encouraging their use.

The records are a legacy of the discrimination and marginalisation of the White Australia years, but they can be used by researchers today to recover the lives of Chinese Australians in the past, and also to provide a more nuanced understanding of the contradictions and complications of Australia’s response to its Chinese population.

NOTE: This page contains Chinese characters for certain personal names and publication titles. You will need to have Asian fonts enabled on your computer to view these characters correctly.

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Introduction

In 1901, the six British colonies of Australia united to form a nation. Their federation was the result of more than a decade of intercolonial discussion and negotiation, of public referendums and political debate, on all manner of issues from trade and tariffs to meteorology and astronomy. One issue which caused little controversy, however, was the desire for the new Australian nation to be white. Ignoring indigenous Aboriginal Australians and groups like the Chinese who had also made Australian their home, white colonists imagined that they would, through legislative means, be able to ensure that their new nation remained ‘British’ in character. The so-called Father of Federation, Henry Parkes, spoke of a ‘crimson thread of kinship’ that ran through all Australians, citing a common racial and cultural heritage as the basis for the formation of the nation. Within such rhetoric there was to be no place for non-Europeans in Australia, or as Australians.

The presence of non-European migrants, of whom the Chinese were the most numerous and most obvious, had caused a great deal of angst for white colonists during the second half of the 19th century. The colonies first introduced anti-Chinese legislation after the Chinese population grew with the southern gold rushes of the 1850s and 1860s. There were various shipping limits, poll taxes, residency taxes and residency and naturalisation restrictions imposed against the Chinese in the different colonies from the mid-1850s, but from 1888 colonial leaders agreed on a uniform policy on the ‘Chinese Question’. They severely limited Chinese immigration, and as the 1890s progressed this anti-Chinese sentiment translated to other ‘coloured’ peoples too. As a result, two of the earliest pieces of legislation passed by the new Commonwealth Parliament in 1901 were the Pacific Island Labourers Act – which ordered the deportation of most of the Pacific Island labourers who worked in Queensland and northern New South Wales – and the Immigration Restriction Act.

The Immigration Restriction Act 1901 was designed to limit non-European and other so-called undesirable migration to Australia. It introduced a dictation or education test, which could be used to exclude those seeking to enter Australia by requiring them to pass a written test in a language they did not necessarily understand. Initially the test was to be in English, but a later amendment in 1905 changed this to being in ‘any prescribed language’. Based on a similar test used in the Natal, the dictation test was introduced to provide a supposedly non-racial basis for the exclusion of non-Europeans. With pressure from Britain not to offend Japan by introducing an overtly race-based immigration policy, the dictation test was seen as a means by which a compromise could be met. The Act, with various amendments, remained as Australia’s primary piece of immigration legislation until 1958. It formed the backbone of what came to be known as the White Australia Policy.

The careful administration of the Immigration Restriction Act, together with various other parts of the White Australia Policy, left a diverse and complex trail of records, created primarily by the federal Department of External Affairs, the Department of Trade and Customs and, after its creation in 1945, the Department of Immigration (and their subsequent agencies). These records are now held by the National Archives of Australia. The Act had a particular impact on Australia’s Chinese community and White Australia records document many aspects of the lives of Chinese Australians, such as immigration, travel, business enterprises, political activities and community life. The records give a vivid picture of the experiences of both immigrant and Australian-born Chinese, of individuals, families and communities in Australia and of their ongoing ties to China.

Over the past decade, the National Archives of Australia has made its Chinese records increasingly accessible to the public through the publication of two research guides and by ongoing descriptive and digitisation projects. Many thousands of individual records are now available to view through the Archives’ collection database, RecordSearch, providing unprecedented online access. Using the Poon Gooey deportation case from 1913 as an example, this paper presents an introduction to the National Archives’ early 20th-century holdings on Chinese Australians, which were created primarily through the administration of the Immigration Restriction Act. The paper further explores how the records, a legacy of the discrimination and marginalisation of the White Australia years, can be used by researchers today to both recover the lives of Chinese Australians in the past and to provide a more nuanced understanding of the contradictions and complications of Australia’s historical response to its Chinese population and of what it meant to be ‘Australian’.

Mr and Mrs Poon Gooey
The ideal of White Australia conflicted with reality in many ways, not least of which was that there was already a significant Chinese minority living and working and raising families in Australia at the turn of the 20th century. In 1901, there were 29,153 Chinese men and 474 Chinese women in Australia in a total population of 3.77 million. Ten years later, the number of men had dropped to 21,856 and the number of women had increased to 897. An increasing proportion were Australian-born. Alongside these figures were those for Anglo-Chinese – the so-called ‘half-caste Chinese’, offspring of Chinese fathers and white mothers – who numbered about 3000. These early 20th-century numbers show a significant reduction from the height of the gold rush period fifty years earlier, particularly as a percentage of the total population – in 1861 there had been more than 38,500 Chinese out of a total population of only 1.1 million – but the Chinese continued to make up a significant and visible minority.[9]

The Poon Gooey case of 1910–13 provides a good illustration of the records that were created during the period in which first colonial, and then the new Commonwealth government aimed to further reduce the Chinese presence in Australia. In the records of the Poon Gooey case, and many others like it, we can see how Chinese people found themselves at odds with the official policies that governed their lives in Australia.[10] Centred around the deportation of Ham Hop[11], the wife of Poon Gooey, the case focused attention on the limitations placed on the entry of Chinese wives, and highlighted to many white Australians the inhumanity of the White Australia Policy when it was strictly applied to otherwise good, decent people. Australia’s Chinese community, like many around the world, had historically been one predominantly of men. When Ham Hop arrived in Australia as Poon Gooey’s wife in 1910, he became one of only 801 Chinese men who had their wives living with them in Australia and Ham Hop was one of only 181 Chinese-born wives of Chinese men in the country.[12] The Australian government was keen that these sorts of numbers should not increase.

Poon Gooey[13], a native of Kaiping county inland from Hong Kong, had arrived in Australia in 1893. A committed Christian, he was a successful greengrocer, fruiterer and produce merchant at Horsham in western Victoria when he brought Ham Hop to join him in Australia in November 1910. Under the Immigration Restriction Act, Ham Hop was initially allowed to stay only for a period of six months. Poon Gooey and Ham Hop set up their home in Geelong on the bay west of Melbourne, where Poon Gooey established a branch of Poon Brothers, the business he owned with relatives in Horsham.[14] In 1911, Ham Hop was given permission to stay in Australia for a further three months, and a baby daughter, Queenie Hop Poon Gooey, was born at Geelong on 5 June 1911.[15] Further extensions of Ham Hop’s exemption certificate were granted, and a second daughter, Lena Hop Poon Gooey, was born on 4 January 1913.[16] Growing increasingly reluctant to allow Ham Hop to remain in Australia any longer, the Commonwealth government threatened deportation and the family eventually left Melbourne for China in May 1913. Ham Hop’s original stay of six months had grown to two and a half years.

The Commonwealth government was reluctant to set a precedent by allowing Ham Hop to remain in Australia, fearing that such action would lead to an increase in the Chinese population. Many ordinary Australians, however, felt the injustice that was being perpetrated by not allowing the family of Poon Gooey, a respectable, Christian businessman, to live with him in Australia. Many also believed that he had been naturalised, while his two children were certainly Australian-born British subjects. The Christian churches vocally supported Poon Gooey’s efforts to keep his family with him, as did various other groups. Petitions were signed, meetings were held and letters were written, all to no avail. The Chinese community were also active in using the family’s situation to agitate for changes to Australia’s discriminatory legislation, and the case was reported in the Australian Chinese press.[17] Interestingly, one of the arguments used by both white and Chinese Australians to support Poon Gooey’s efforts to have his wife continue to live with him in Australia was a shared opposition to intermarriage and racial mixing.
The Poon Gooey case was a relatively rare moment when the concerns and difficulties faced by a Chinese family in Australia reached the consciousness of the broader Australian community. Because of their interest, and because of Poon Gooey’s ongoing efforts to keep his family in Australia, there is a large Department of External Affairs file that documents Ham Hop’s time in Australia from 1910 to 1913. Alongside this there are various other records now held by the National Archives, created both before and after Federation, which highlight some of the ways in which the White Australia Policy affected the everyday lives of Chinese people.

Colonial naturalisation

Poon Gooey’s paper trail begins when he applied to be naturalised in Victoria in 1899, in the name of John Poon Gooey. Chinese had been able to become naturalised British subjects in Victoria until the mid-1880s, but in 1885, after an increase in the numbers of Chinese applying for naturalisation, the Victorian government decided to issue no more ‘unless a sufficient reason was assigned’. In 1886, 173 naturalisation certificates were issued to Chinese, then in 1887 only 16, and after that none at all. When the Commonwealth took over naturalisation powers and brought in the Naturalization Act 1903, Chinese and other ‘natives of Australia, Asia, Africa and the Pacific’ were excluded by law, not just practice. The racial barrier was removed with a new piece of legislation, the Nationality Act 1920, but it remained the Australian government’s policy not to grant applications for naturalisation by Chinese. It was not until 1948 that the legal status of an Australian citizen came into being, and not until 1957 that long-resident Chinese were finally able to apply for citizenship.

Perhaps unaware of the policy not to naturalise Chinese, in July 1899 Poon Gooey applied for naturalisation. His application shows that he was born in 1875, and had arrived in Victoria from Hong Kong only six years earlier, at the age of 18. Since then he had been living at Warrnambool, on Victoria’s west coast, and then at Horsham, where he worked as a gardener. Poon Gooey’s application can be found with those of many other Chinese men (and a very small number of women), dating from 1854 to 1903, in series A712.

Poon Gooey’s uncle, James Pon Hop, had been naturalised sixteen years earlier in 1883, before the restrictions had been brought in. Born in 1853, Pon Hop had arrived in Victoria from Hong Kong in April 1865, at the age of 13. At the time of his naturalisation, he worked as a hawker at Smythesdale, not far from the booming gold rush city of Ballarat. Over the next twenty years, Pon Hop used his naturalisation certificate as a de facto passport when he travelled back to China, and a photograph was attached to the certificate to assist in his identification. He first travelled in July 1886, returning in May the following year. He left again in October 1891 and returned in August 1892. His last trip on his naturalisation certificate was his return from China in February 1905. It was then that his handprint was taken and his certificate reclaimed by Customs officials. It can now be found in a series of cancelled certificates of naturalisation, A801.

Colonial exemption

Unable to be naturalised, in January 1900 Poon Gooey applied to the Victorian Commissioner of Trade & Customs for exemption from Victoria’s Chinese Act 1890 so that he could go home to China and then return again to Victoria. Under the Act, there were tonnage restrictions which meant that only one Chinese person was allowed per 500 tons for each vessel arriving in Victoria. The Act covered every
person of ‘Chinese race’, other than those who had been exempted. Exemptions were automatically granted to Chinese officials, members of ships’ crews and those who had been naturalised, but the Governor could also from time to time personally grant exemptions and a list would be published in the Government Gazette. People who had been granted exemptions were issued with an offprint from the Gazette to which their photograph had been attached. They would present these documents to officials on return to Australia.\[24\]

Poon Gooey supplied basic information about the six years he had been in the colony, his age, the places he had lived, as well as the names of respectable white colonists who knew him. Two letters of reference accompanying his application stated that he was anxious to make the arrangements perfect so that there should be no difficulties on his return to Australia with his wife. A police report from Horsham revealed further details of Poon Gooey’s life: he was one of eight Chinese who had fruit and vegetable gardens at Green Park, Horsham, and he was a self-professed Christian who attended the Bible Christian Church. The Church’s pastor stated that Poon Gooey read and wrote English well, and that he was ‘a superior Chinese of excellent character’. His application was approved, and he was free to return to Victoria within three years.

Poon Gooey’s intention in travelling to China was to get married. Shortly after his own exemption was approved, he wrote again to the Commissioner of Trade & Customs applying for permission for Ham See, his betrothed, to enter Victoria. There is no reply among the documents on the file, but the exemption list published in the Government Gazette on 16 February 1900 stated that Ham See (wife of Poon Gooey), resident in China, was exempt for a period of six months from 8 February 1900.\[25\] Poon Gooey left Melbourne at the end of January 1900, and returned in December. No wife returned with him, however.

The small collection of documents relating to Poon Gooey’s trip to China in 1900 is a very rare example of the colonial administrative process. Most of the records relating to the hundreds of trips to and fro made by Chinese men from Victoria in the colonial period no longer exist.\[26\] Poon Gooey’s documents remain in a file labelled ‘Various documents relating to late 1880 to early 1900 migrants’ (underneath which is written ‘May be of interest to some antiquarian in about 50–100 years time’!)

Also in the file are two letters of reference relating to Poon Gooey’s trip to China ten years later, by which time the federal Immigration Restriction Act was well in place. As well as describing Poon Gooey in glowing terms (James Berry, ironmonger, said he was ‘a desirable citizen and an upright honourable man’, for example), both letters mentioned that Poon Gooey was applying to the Commissioner of Customs for a permit to return to Australia. An official has noted on one of the letters on 18 May 1910: ‘Form sent, photos asked for’. Poon Gooey was granted a certificate of exemption from the dictation test, and he left Australia on the SS Seydlitz in June 1910.

### Temporary entry of Ham Hop on exemption

Poon Gooey arrived back in Australia five months later, on board the SS Nikko Maru, arriving at Melbourne on 21 November 1910. This time his wife was by his side. When he had written to the Commonwealth in early 1910 for permission to return, Poon Gooey had written separately to ask for permission to bring his wife to Australia. Ham Hop was initially allowed to enter Australia for six months, with a bond to be paid and a guarantee from her husband that no further exemption would be requested. A 360-page file from the Department of External Affairs (in series A1) records Ham Hop’s arrival and the efforts of Poon Gooey and his supporters over the next couple of years to gain permission for Ham Hop to remain in Australia on a more permanent basis.\[27\]

The story of Poon Gooey’s struggle with the government
over Ham Hop's right to stay in Australia is a long and complex one, with correspondence backwards and forwards between the Department of External Affairs, the Victorian Collector of Customs, the Chinese Consul-General in Melbourne and Poon Gooey himself. The file records the efforts of various organisations and individuals who supported Poon Gooey, including petitions from the residents of Geelong, Horsham, Adelaide and from Chinese residents of Brisbane. The file also includes carefully-kept newspapers cuttings about the case that appeared in various Sydney and Melbourne newspapers between 1911 and 1914.

After more than two years, Poon Gooey conceded defeat and took his family back to China. They departed on the *Yawata Maru* from Melbourne in May 1913. It would seem that Ham Hop had lived a quiet life in Geelong, as wife and then mother. She did not speak English, and for all the file tells us about the machinations of her husband on her behalf, there is little about Ham Hop herself. Letters nominally from her were in fact clearly written by her husband, and even when her signature was required, her husband signed on her behalf.

It is hard to really know how much Ham Hop was aware of the whirlwind of activity and protest stirred up by her situation, or of the efforts of so many strangers to keep her family together in Australia. One can guess that she was probably quite relieved to be taking her young daughters and husband back home to the familiarity of China, a change that might lead to a more settled and stable situation. When Poon Gooey left Australia in 1913 he told the press that he was not sure if he would return again – after having to give up his business and, particularly, after the way the government had treated him.

**Exemption from dictation test as a domicile**

Whatever he said publicly, before his departure Poon Gooey made sure that he would be allowed to return to Australia should he want to. Before travelling to China in 1910, Poon Gooey had applied for and been granted a certificate of exemption from the dictation test. In 1913, he did so again.

These, and his subsequent applications, are recorded in a register of applications for Certificates Exempting from the Dictation Test (CEDTs), along with those of hundreds of other Chinese, Indian and Syrians and other non-European residents of Victoria. The three registers (held as series B6003) date from 1904 to 1959 and record basic details of each applicant and their travels. The registers show that after leaving Australia in May 1913, Poon Gooey returned to Australia a year later, in June 1914. He visited China again in 1916, at which time the register notes that he was 42 years old, a greengrocer at Geelong who had been resident in the Commonwealth for 24 years. Poon Gooey left for China in April 1916 on the *St Albans* from Sydney and returned to Melbourne on the *Aki Maru* in March 1917. He made one later departure from Australia in 1918.

Alongside Poon Gooey's applications, the register records the travels of other members of the extended Poon clan living in Victoria, including James Pon Hop, Poon See, Poon Choy, Pon Ah Hoey, Poon Ah Lie, Poon Ah Tong, Poon Ah Yuey, Poon Leong Wing, Sam Poon and lastly Poon Ah Cheong, who applied for a CEDT in 1946, at the age of 75 and after living in Australia for 48 years. Described as a gardener living at Darlot Street, Horsham, the register shows that Poon Ah Cheong left on the SS *Soochow* in December 1946, never to return.[28]

**Alien registration**
When Poon Gooey returned from his trip to China in March 1917, he was required to register as an alien. As a security measure during World War I, in 1916 the Australian government introduced the War Precautions (Alien Registration) Regulations, which required aliens (non-British subjects or foreign nationals) to present themselves at their local police station to register and to notify the police of any changes of address. Poon Gooey’s registration form gives his birth date as 20 July 1875 and his date of arrival as ‘about March 1894’. At the time of registration, he was living at the Market Square Buildings in Geelong, where he also ran his business as a fruiterer. In the personal description section it was noted that he was 5 foot 8 inches tall, and had brown eyes and dark hair.

James Pon Hop also registered as an alien, even though he had been naturalised in 1883. He did not do so until January 1918, however, because he had been told by someone that he didn’t need to because he was over 60 years of age. At the time of his registration, he was described as a labourer living in Russell Street, Melbourne. In March, he notified that he was changing his address to ‘care of Pong Bros, Geelong’, and then in August 1920 that he was going back to Melbourne. Pon Hop appears to have returned to China for the last time sometime soon after. The Argus newspaper reported in its Geelong news on 28 August 1920 that Pon Hop was leaving for China, with the intention to settle at Canton. He would have been about 67 years old.

The alien registration documents for Poon Gooey and Pon Hop are found in series MT269/1.

Extension of Poon Gooey's CEDT

There is one further file that documents Poon Gooey’s time in Australia. In November 1918 he applied (once again) for a certificate to exempt him from the dictation test. He completed the standard application form (Form 22), declaring his personal details, occupation, the places he had lived in Australia and previous absences from the country. On this last point he stated that he had been to China ‘4 times about 12 months each time’. These would have been his trips in 1900 (when he married), 1910 (when he brought Ham Hop to Australia), 1913 (when his family returned to China) and his last trip back in 1916.

Still living at the Market Square in Geelong, Poon Gooey provided reference letters from the City Inspector and Assistant City Inspector from Geelong, men who had daily contact with him at the markets. The Geelong police furnished a positive report as to Poon Gooey’s character and stated that they knew no reason why the application could not be granted. On his previous trip to China in 1916, the usual formality of taking a handprint had been dispensed with, and so it was again with this application, on the proviso that Poon Gooey would be admitted at Melbourne only. Poon Gooey was granted a certificate and departed from Melbourne on the Kitano Maru on 20 December 1918. It was noted on his certificate that he was, at age 42, ‘slightly bald’ and ‘turning grey’.

Poon Gooey had applied for exemption for three years, the longest period a certificate was granted for. In 1922, however, he was still in China and working for the Wing On Company in Shanghai. He wrote to the Collector of Customs in Melbourne requesting an extension. This was granted, and in July 1922 he was sent a memorandum outlining the conditions of the extension, to which his photograph was attached. To avoid being fined for carrying ‘prohibited immigrants’, shipping companies required proof from Chinese travelling to Australia that they would be permitted to land on arrival. The Acting Collector of Customs stated that the memorandum sent to Poon Gooey should ‘be regarded by the shipping company as sufficient authority for the issue of a passage ticket’.

Poon Gooey’s extension was granted until mid-December 1924, but in late November that year he wrote
again from Shanghai to Melbourne asking for a further extension. He was notified in January 1925 that his certificate of exemption from the dictation test had been extended for a further three years, and he would be free to return to Australia before the end of 1927. There is nothing to show, however, that Poon Gooey ever did return to Australia.

Recovering lives

Poon Gooey, his wife Ham Hop, his children Queenie and Lena, his uncle James Pon Hop and his brothers Poon See and Poon Choy are just a handful of the Chinese Australians whose lives and struggles are documented in the records created in the administration of the White Australia Policy during the early decades of the 20th century. Between 1902 and 1946, more than 61,000 Chinese people entered Australia, out of a total of around 108,000 people classified as ‘Asiatic’. More than half of them already had domicile in Australia, like Poon Gooey and his uncle did, and about a tenth of them were allowed in on temporary certificates of exemption, like Ham Hop. Each of these entries is documented in some way in the various records now held by the National Archives. I say each of these entries rather than people, because the figures do not relate to separate individuals, but to separate trips into Australia. As to how many individual Chinese are documented in the records, it is hard to say precisely, short of some very long and labour-intensive research. Historian Michael Williams has estimated that more than 6000 individual Chinese are documented in the CEDT records held in Sydney alone. What is certain is that these records provide information about a significant proportion of the Chinese population in Australia, one of a number of ethnic populations who are often under-represented in mainstream studies of Australia’s past.

The National Archives’ holdings are arguably the most valuable and extensive single archive relating to people of Chinese background in Australia. They are particularly valuable for researching Chinese community histories though the lives of individual people. As shown in the Poon Gooey records, they provide biographical and genealogical information, photographs, details of employment and residence, information about overseas travel and of familial and business networks around Australia, in the Pacific and New Zealand and back to China. They contain all kinds of correspondence, written references, police reports, school reports, business financial statements and newspaper clippings, as well as various types of personal documentation. They are about old men, young men, women, children, migrants and Australian-born, those who were wealthy, those who were poor, those who were in Australia only fleetingly and those who remained their whole lives. The records are also about the interactions the Chinese community had with the broader community, not only with government officials, but with the white Australian men and women who were their neighbours and friends and kin, those who acted as referees, who wrote letters, who signed petitions and held meetings on their behalf, as well as those who did the opposite. Although the records’ creation was for the purposes of bureaucratic administration, the possibilities for their use today are as diverse as the lives they document.

The records of the Poon Gooey case were first used in 1961, by historian AT Yarwood in an article about the entry of wives during the early White Australia period. Yarwood’s longer work, Asian Migration to Australia (first published in 1964), together with AC Palfreeman’s 1967 book, The Administration of the White Australia Policy, and CF Yong’s 1966 PhD thesis, later published as New Gold Mountain: The Chinese in Australia 1901-1920, were among the earliest to use White Australia records in their examinations of the immigration of Chinese (and other non-Europeans) in early 20th century Australia. These works are the precursors to the growing body of scholarship on the Chinese in Australia, most of which has used the records to a greater or lesser extent. There is a steady interest in the records, from academic researchers, local, community and public historians, genealogists and postgraduate researchers. To name but a few: Michael Williams’ groundbreaking study of the transnational connections of the New South Wales Chinese community; Sophie Couchman’s ongoing projects on Melbourne’s Chinese
Unlocking the legacy

Over the past several decades, there have been ongoing calls in the archival community for archivists to rethink their collecting policies in order to truly reflect the communities they represent, and to make sure that marginalised groups are fairly recorded in archival collections. The National Archives of Australia is not a collecting archive, and so cannot retrospectively seek to cover ‘gaps’ in the collection. However, as discussed, because of previous racially-based government policies, the National Archives holds significant groups of records which document the lives of previously marginalised groups in Australian society, such as Chinese Australians and Aboriginal Australians. It is important to understand the significance of the records and work to unlock their meaning – to assist communities to recover the lives of their ancestors and their own place in the nation’s past, but also to foster in the wider community a greater understanding of Australia’s past treatment of marginalised groups. Appraisal policies should value records, including personal case files, that document marginalised lives, and ensure that records are not destroyed. Access policies should facilitate use and understanding of the records.

Publications, descriptive projects and digitisation initiatives undertaken by the National Archives have played a useful part in encouraging use and understanding of the White Australia records, particularly by family historians. In 1996, the National Archives published a short research guide, *Chinese Immigrants and Chinese Australians in NSW*, the first of what was then a new type of finding aid for the Archives. While not perfect, the guide provided a solid starting point from which to launch into otherwise little-described records in the National Archives’ Sydney office. Subsequently, a much more extensive guide was published in 2005. Compiled by Paul Jones, *Chinese–Australian Journeys: Records on Travel, Migration and Settlement, 1860–1975* looks at holdings in each state and territory office and covers much more diverse ground, including records about Chinese in Papua New Guinea and Australia’s various Pacific Island territories. These guides provide general descriptions of archival material at series level, with various item-level examples, and are useful reference guides for more advanced researchers. Other National Archives’ publications, both in print and online, have featured stories based on the Chinese records.

The primary way into the collection is, however, the National Archives collection database, RecordSearch. RecordSearch first became available online almost ten years ago, and around ten per cent of the Archives’ holding are now described at item level (the entire collection of around 350 shelf kilometres is, however, described at series level). Many Chinese records are among those described at item level, meaning that they can be identified by a simple keyword or name search of the database. A ‘NameSearch’ interface has recently been added to RecordSearch, too. The National Archives has pursued a program of item-level description, particularly for immigration and naturalisation records, in part because of an increasing interest in the collection by family history researchers, whose focus rests primarily on individual people and particular groups of records, especially war service and immigration. They are also a group who are becoming accustomed to particular ways of accessing archival material, through websites like <findmypast.com>
A number of significant series of Chinese-related records are now completely described at item level, with many others partially described. Personal names remain the simplest way the records are listed in the database, although other identifying material – such as place of birth or residence, date of birth or arrival in Australia or nationality – is also sometimes included in item titles.

The search for archival material about individuals can now be a very straightforward one. Henry Yu, Associate Professor of History at UCLA, has written, for example, of being able to locate the records of his Chinese great-grandfather while on a brief trip to Australia for a conference in 2002. He wrote:

> It was quite surprising that I found his records. It was even more surprising that it took less than an hour, perhaps the shortest time it has ever taken in my professional career as an historian to find a document in the archives.

Unfortunately however, not all research attempts reap as immediate results as Henry Yu’s. There are ongoing issues with the findability of material, even with item-level description, resulting from the size and complexity of the collection, the time and resources it takes to undertake detailed descriptive work, and the quality of the descriptive work undertaken – what information, for example, should usefully be included in item titles to help people find what they are looking for? The Archives is continuing to consider the ways in which findability of records can be enhanced, particularly in an online environment.

One further initiative that is facilitating access to records is the National Archives’ digitisation program, by which the public can access digitised copies of archival material online through RecordSearch. There are ongoing proactive digitisation projects in each of the Archives’ state and territory offices, as well as a fee-paying service for researchers wanting to be able to view particular files online. Currently, once a digitised record is loaded to RecordSearch it can be viewed for free by anyone, anywhere. Chinese-related records are among those that have been included in proactive digitisation projects, particularly those relating to Queensland and the Northern Territory.

There are some exciting possibilities of what could be done with the records in an online environment, however, beyond merely describing and digitising them. Within the collection there are many different records relating to the same individuals and within the various records there are references to many different individuals. One possibility would be to connect the records en masse, using emerging web technologies to create a genealogy of Australia’s early 20th century Chinese population – a giant web that connects the various scattered records about one individual to each other, but also, perhaps more importantly, that links those individuals to relatives, clan members, neighbours, business partners, fellow church-goers and other people who also appear in the records. The records lend themselves very nicely to the possibilities of a study that is part biography, part genealogy and part prosopography; also to the sort of project that encourages public interaction and participation in an online environment. Such a site could become a way to transform the records into a more ‘tangible manifestation of community heritage and identity’.

Rethinking the legacy

The records of White Australia have a particular and enduring value, with multiple meanings and uses. As Inge Bundgaard has written, personal case files such as those created in the administration of the White Australia Policy:

> give us a rare opportunity to study the intersection between public administrations and the people they administer… it is here that we have an opportunity to gain the insight that will allow us to understand both the impact of official laws and regulations and the public response to them. It is also here that the historian often finds the life and colour that can illustrate and personify abstract and theoretical reflections. And it is here that private citizens sometimes can find information that makes it possible for them to understand their own history.

As well as what their contents can reveal, there is much that we can gain from a greater understanding of the White Australia records in themselves, and of the systems through which they were created – systems of power, control and marginalisation. As Ann Laura Stoler has written, it is not only the content of archives that
should be considered, but also the ‘particular and sometimes peculiar form’ of the archive and the process of archiving that should be explored. The thousands of certificates, application forms, references, letters, memos, registers and other documents that make up the White Australia records tell us not only about the people described in them, but also of the critical ways in which identity and belonging, inclusion and exclusion, functioned within the context of White Australia, and of how recordkeeping technologies facilitated the control of marginalised groups. For the Chinese Australian community, one which was bounded by this legislative and administrative restriction, an understanding of the mechanisms of law and policy can reveal much about how and why the community developed in the way it did. The records can tell us about how the systems of exclusion and marginalisation worked, as well as how public policy, its enforcement and application, deeply affected people’s personal lives.

The lessons of the past are, though, somehow still easily forgotten. The preservation, accessibility and ongoing use and interpretation of White Australia records, those relating to Chinese and also to other non-European Australians, is critical. In some circles, White Australia remains a contentious and contended part of Australia’s national story, and the discrimination, injustice and hardship it imposed upon Australians is still questioned. In recent times this has been most obvious in the writings of Keith Windschuttle, whose 2004 book, *The White Australia Policy*, sought to refute the idea that the White Australia Policy was ‘some morally repugnant product of the Australian past from which we should cringe or apologise’. Claiming that today’s historical understanding of Australia’s racist past is a distortion that lacks ‘empirical foundations’, Windschuttle’s own study completely ignores the archival record that documents the many ways in which ideas of racial difference, of racial superiority and inferiority, were central to the thinking of those who created and then administered the laws and policies of White Australia. In the words of historian David Walker, Windschuttle’s omission is major, unexplained and even puzzling, because ‘the archival record provides an essential context for the implementation of the White Australia policy’. Windschuttle denies White Australia’s inherent racism but, as Walker notes, the cases found in the archives demonstrate that ‘by any normally accepted definition this is a racist policy and there is nothing to be gained by evading the issue’.

We need, therefore, to continue to engage with and reflect on the archival legacy of White Australia – from what the records can tell us of the lives of Chinese Australians in the early years of the 20th century, to the ways in which the state used administrative and recordkeeping systems as powerful tools to control the shape of the newly emerging Australian nation.

In the words of Nelson Mandela:

> The purpose of studying history is not to deride human action, nor to weep over it or to hate it, but to understand it. And hopefully then to learn from it as we contemplate our future.

### Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Sophie Couchman, Amanda Rasmussen and my colleagues in the Canberra, Sydney and Melbourne offices of the National Archives who helped with the preparation of this paper. I would also like to acknowledge the Centre for Historical Research at the National Museum of Australia whose grant of an Early Career Summer Fellowship in 2009 allowed me time to write, and to consider the Poon Gooey case and others in more depth.

### Notes


4. ‘An Act to Provide for the Regulation, Restriction, and Prohibition of the Introduction of Labourers from the Pacific Islands and for Other Purposes’ (No. 16 of 1901), NAA: A1559, 1901/16, available online through the *Documenting a Democracy* website.

5. ‘An Act to Place Certain Restrictions on Immigration and to Provide for the Removal from the Commonwealth of Prohibited Immigrants’ (No.17 of 1901), NAA: A1559, 1901/17, available online through the *Documenting a Democracy* website.


11. Ham Hop was generally referred to as Mrs Poon Gooey, sometimes as Mrs Hop (or Hope) Poon Gooey. In his first request to bring his wife from China, Poon Gooey refers to her by the name Ham See, most likely Tan Shi 谭氏. On the birth registrations of her daughters, her name is given as Ham Hop, and it is this version of her name I have chosen to use in an attempt to give her an identity separate from that of her husband.


13. The *Tung Wah Times* referred to Poon Gooey as Pan Ru 潘如. His certificate of exemption under the *Chinese Act 1890*, however, has the characters 潘巍 (Pan Wei). See, for example, *Tung Wah Times (Donghua xinbao 東華新報)*, 17 August 1912 and 1 March 1913 and NAA: MP56/12, 6.

14. Poon Gooey was in business at Horsham with his uncle, Pon Hop, and his brother, Poon See (born c. 1877). Poon See married Australian-born Ada Wing You (née Siakew), a widow, in 1915. Ada had five children from her first marriage, then three more with Poon See. NAA: A1, 1913/9139; marriage registration of Poon See and Ada Wing You, Victoria, 1915, reg. no. 1119; death registration of Ada Poon, Victoria, 1960, reg. no. 31654; death registration of Poon See, Victoria, 1939, reg. no. 3547.

15. Birth registration of Queenie Hop Poon Gooey, Victoria, 1911, reg. no. 11794.

16. Birth registration of Lena Hop Poon Gooey, Victoria, 1913, reg. no. 4094.

18. NAA: A1, 1911/14641 (digitised). This file also documents naturalisation policies of the other Australian colonies/states before 1903. [back]

19. For a timeline of changes to naturalisation (and immigration) law as applied to Asians, see the National Archives of Australia’s *Uncommon Lives: Muslim Journeys* website, accessed 8 April 2009. [back]


21. The earliest naturalisation application of Chinese in Victoria that I have located is that of three men, Chow Ga Hon (Zhao Yiduan 趙宜端), Lain Anding (Lin Yating 林亞亭) and Wang Ah Hae (Huang Yaxi 洪亞喜) in December 1854. The men were all carpenters living in Melbourne, and had been in Australia only a couple of years. See NAA: A712, K1854/13999 (digitised). I have located eight naturalisation applications of Chinese in 1903, the last year in which grants were made under colonial legislation (but as discussed, not to Chinese). One of these was for James Ah Lum, a gardener living at Avoca. He signed his name only as Lin 林. NAA: A712, 1903/R4891 (digitised). [back]

22. James Pon Hop’s naturalisation documents are under the name James Pon Hap. NAA: A712, 1883/Z7328 and A801, 2251. [back]

23. Poon Gooey’s application under the *Chinese Act 1890* can be found in NAA: MP56/12, 6 (digitised). [back]


25. List of exemptions from the *Chinese Act 1890*, *Government Gazette*, 16 February 1900, p. 662 and *Victoria Police Gazette*, no. 8, 21 February 1900, p. 75. [back]

26. Lists of those exempted from the *Chinese Act 1890* were published in the Victorian *Government Gazette* (and reprinted in the *Victoria Police Gazette*), but few records that document the administrative processes behind the exemption lists remain. Sophie Couchman discusses this in relation to a series of photographic records, B6443, in Couchman, ‘Not so mug mugshots’. [back]

27. NAA: A1, 1913/9139. [back]

28. All details taken from NAA: B6003. [back]

29. NAA: MT269/1, Vic/China/Gooey Poon (digitised). [back]

30. NAA: MT269/1, Vic/China/Hop James (digitised). [back]


32. NAA: B13, 1918/25405 (digitised). [back]

33. Poon Gooey’s departure was reported in the ‘Country news’ section of Melbourne’s *Argus* newspaper. The article stated that he was ‘a well-known Chinese resident and business man’ who was about to ‘take a trip to China to see his wife and child’. *Argus*, 28 November 1918. [back]

34. In Chinese the Wing On Company was known as Yong’an youxian gongsi 永安有限公司. The Wing On business empire, including department stores and textile mills, had its beginnings as a fruit shop in Sydney. The company was established and managed by the Gock brothers, James Gocklock (Guo Le 郭樂), Philip Gockchin (Guo Quan 郭泉) and William Gockson (Guo Shun 郭順), who were natives of Zhongshan. The company expanded to Hong Kong in 1907 and opened its flagship store on the corner of Nanking and Chekiang Roads in Shanghai in 1918. The Wing On Department Store


37. Incidentally, Yarwood did not consult some of the records about the case that are now held in Melbourne office of the National Archives, resulting in him making some incorrect assumptions in an otherwise excellent discussion of the case. AT Yarwood, ‘The “White Australia” Policy: Some administrative problems, 1901–1920’, *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, vol. 7, November 1961, pp. 245–60. [back]


41. For example, Sophie Couchman, ‘From Mrs Lup Mun, Chinese herbalist to Yee Joon, respectable scholar: A social history of Melbourne’s Chinatown, 1900—1920’, in Henry Chan, Ann Curthoys and Nora Chiang (eds), *The Overseas Chinese in Australasia: History, Settlement and Interactions*, Interdisciplinary Group for Australian Studies, National Taiwan University and CSCSD, Australian National University, 2001; and ‘Not such mug mugshots’. [back]


43. PhD research still in progress, but see Barbara Nichol, ‘Sweet and sour history: Melbourne’s early Chinese restaurants’, *Memento*, no. 34, January, pp. 10–12. [back]

44. See, for example, Kate Bagnall, ‘A journey of love: Agnes Breuer’s sojourn in 1930s China’, in Desley Deacon, Penny Russell and Angela Woolacott (eds), *Transnational Ties*, ANU E Press, Canberra, 2008; “‘I am nearly heartbroken about him’: Stories of Australian mothers’ separation from

The departmental case file relating to the O’Keefe deportation case of 1949 (a case that was said to be ‘the beginning of the end of the White Australia Policy’) has, for example, been destroyed, mostly likely by the Department of Immigration during reappraisal in the 1990s. On the case, see Sean Brawley, ‘Mrs O’Keefe and the battle for White Australia’, public lecture for the National Archives of Australia, 1 June 2006, available online, accessed 9 April 2009. On the appraisal of immigration case files, see Sheila Powell, ‘Archival reappraisal: The immigration case files’, *Archivaria*, vol. 33, Winter 1991–92, pp. 104–16, and on the differing values placed on case files by archivists and those using the records, see Ellen Scheinberg, ‘Two perspectives on the same source: An examination of federal deportation case files’, *Archivaria*, no. 57, Spring 2004, pp. 52–67. [back]


50. See, for example, the discussion thread ‘Chinese Australians’, started 5 December 2007, on the Chinese Genealogy forum, siyigenealogy.proboards.com, accessed 5 April 2009. [back]


54. The National Archives collection is managed according to the Commonwealth Record Series (CRS) System. A brief explanation of the CRS System is available in Fact Sheet 6: The Commonwealth Record Series (CRS) System, available online, accessed 20 April 2009. For more detail on the development, history and application of the CRS System, see Sue McKemmish and Michael Piggott (eds), The Records Continuum: Ian Maclean and the Australian Archives First Fifty Years, Ancora Press in association with Australian Archives, Canberra, 1994.

55. Chinese-related series that have all items listed on RecordSearch include, for example, NAA: A1; B13; BP343/15; ST84/1.


57. For example, series E752, which holds the 720 remaining CEDT records for the Northern Territory between 1905 and 1941, has been completely digitised. A list of other series that are part of proactive digitisation projects is published on the National Archives website.


59. The National Archives’ first such initiative was launched in November 2008. The Mapping our Anzacs website provides a map interface to the 376,000 service records of men and women who served in the First Australian Infantry Force (1st AIF) in World War I. This innovative site, which also allows people to create scrapbooks and tributes to individual service people, has had a very positive response.


63. This point has been made in connection with the American Chinese community and the records of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) held by the National Archives and Records Administration. See Peggy Spitzer Christoff, ‘An archival resource: INS case files on Chinese women in the American Midwest’, Journal of Women’s History, vol. 10, no. 3, Autumn 1998, pp. 155–70.


65. For a discussion of the ongoing resonances of White Australia today, see Laksiri Jayasuriya, David Walker and Jan Gothard (eds), Legacies of White Australia: Race, Culture and Nation, University of Western Australia Press, Crawley WA, 2003.


67. David Walker, 'Strange reading: Keith Windschuttle on race, Asia and White Australia', Australian Historical Studies, no. 128, 2006, p. 120.

68. David Walker, 'Strange reading', p. 121. Historian John Fitzgerald’s Big White Lie also takes issue with the arguments put forward by Windschuttle. See, in particular, pp. 4–9, 233–34.
More information about the records

The table below lists the record series mentioned in this paper. Clicking on the series title link will take you to further information about the series in RecordSearch, the National Archives collection database.

These series are a small sample of those held by the National Archives relating to people of Chinese heritage. For a more complete listing, see the following research guides:

- Chinese–Australian Journeys: Records on Travel, Migration, and Settlement, 1860–1975 – covering all states and territories
- Chinese Immigrants and Chinese-Australians in NSW – covering records held in Sydney only
Both guides can be downloaded at no cost in pdf format.

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<td>Colonial applications for naturalisation in Victoria</td>
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<tr>
<td>Certificates exempting from the dictation test, Darwin</td>
<td>1905–41</td>
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<td>Darwin</td>
<td>All items are listed and digitised</td>
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</table>
The Poon Gooey family, 1913

On 12 May 1913, Sydney's Daily Telegraph newspaper published this photograph of Poon Gooey, Ham Hop and their daughters Lena and Queenie. The following day the family left Australia from Melbourne on the Yawata Maru.

This clipping was taken by the Acting Collector of Customs in New South Wales and sent to the Secretary of the Department of External Affairs to be placed on file.

More information about this record is available in the National Archives RecordSearch database. The link below takes you into the database.

NAA: A1, 1913/9139

Where you see this symbol in RecordSearch, a digital copy of the item can be viewed online. Simply click on the 'View digital copy' link.
Memorandum regarding Mrs Hop Poon Gooey, 1913

Deborah of External Affairs.

MEMORANDUM

No. 20/1974.

November, 1910 - Mrs. Poon Gooey admitted on exemption certificate for 6 months.

May, 1911 - Minister approved of 5 months' extension, a medical certificate having been furnished that Mrs. Poon Gooey expected to be confined shortly. It was to be strictly understood that no further application would be submitted.

(On July and August, 1911, several further applications were submitted, and a deputation waited on the Acting Minister.)

Sept., 1911 - Minister granted a further 5 months' extension in order that arrangements might be made for Mrs. Poon Gooey's departure.

Nov., 1911 - Minister granted a still further extension of six months in view of the disturbed condition of affairs then existing in China.

The current certificate expires on the 22nd May, 1912.

15/7/12 - Minister informed deputation that he was prepared to grant 6 months' extension if the gentleman who composed the deputation would furnish a guarantee that Poon Gooey would sail out and take his wife to China without any intention of returning. No such guarantee, however, was forthcoming.

29/7/12 - Minister signed order for Mrs Poon Gooey's deportation.

16/8/12 - Customs authorities requested to withhold deportation order in consequence of further representations by Consul-General for China, reporting Mrs. Poon Gooey's condition. The Consul-General was informed that the exemption could not be extended for any definite period, but that Mrs Poon Gooey would be required to leave the Commonwealth as soon as the Government Medical Officer reported that she was well enough to travel.

18/8/12 - Government Medical Officer furnished report that the woman expected to be confined in December, and should be fit to travel about 6 weeks later.

Minister directed that matter should be revived at end of January.

10/9/12 - Government Medical Officer again reported that Mrs Poon Gooey was well, but that her child was ill, and that it was desirable that the mother should be allowed to remain another four weeks with it.

14/2/13 - Minister granted another 8 weeks' exemption.

More information about this record is available in the National Archives RecordSearch database. The link below takes you into the database.

NAA: A1, 1913/9139

Where you see this symbol in RecordSearch, a digital copy of the item can be viewed online. Simply click on the 'View digital copy' link.
Memorial for letters of naturalisation for John Poon Gooey, 1899

In 1899, Poon Gooey applied to be naturalised in the colony of Victoria. More than a decade earlier, however, the Victorian government had decided to no longer naturalise Chinese and so his application was not granted.

The memorial he completed gives details of Poon Gooey's arrival in Australia, and his clear, neat signature suggests that he was likely literate in English before he came to Victoria at age 18. His application was made in the name 'John Poon Gooey', but in later years he no longer included 'John' in his name.

More information about this record is available in the National Archives RecordSearch database. The link below takes you into the database.

NAA: A712, 1899/J6454

Where you see this symbol in RecordSearch, a digital copy of the item can be viewed online. Simply click on the 'View digital copy' link.
James Pon Hap was granted naturalisation in Victoria in 1883. His naturalisation certificate was used as a de facto passport when he travelled between Australia and China in the following two decades. Naturalisation meant that James Pon Hap was exempted from the restrictions of colonial Victoria’s anti-Chinese legislation.

James Pon Hap's photograph was attached to the back of the certificate, and annotations made in both English and Chinese documenting his various travels. His handprint was taken in 1905, after which time his certificate was ‘cancelled’, collected and placed on file.

More information about this record is available in the National Archives RecordSearch database. The link below takes you into the database.

NAA: A801, 2251

Where you see this symbol in RecordSearch, a digital copy of the item can be viewed online. Simply click on the 'View digital copy' link.
Poon Gooey was granted an exemption under the Victorian Chinese Act 1890, which let him return to the colony after a trip overseas in 1900. His exemption was for a period of three years.

Lists of the names of people granted exemptions were published in the Government Gazette. Those granted exemptions were also given a copy of their exemption list which they could use as proof of their status on returning from overseas.

More information about this record is available in the National Archives RecordSearch database. The link below takes you into the database.

NAA: MP56/12, 6

Where you see this symbol in RecordSearch, a digital copy of the item can be viewed online. Simply click on the 'View digital copy' link.
Certificate of exemption for Ham Hop, 1911

Ham Hop (Mrs Hop Poon Gooey) was issued with exemption certificate no. 11/30 on 8 June 1911 by the Acting Collector of Customs for Victoria. The exemption was valid for three months.

This was the first extension of Ham Hop's original six month exemption, which had been granted in November 1910. The Minister approved the extension because at the time of her application, she was pregnant and soon to give birth. Her daughter Queenie was born on 5 June 1911.

More information about this record is available in the National Archives RecordSearch database. The link below takes you into the database.

NAA: A1, 1913/9139

Where you see this symbol in RecordSearch, a digital copy of the item can be viewed online. Simply click on the 'View digital copy' link.
Letter from Ham Hop, 1911

In early June 1911, Ham Hop was sent her new exemption certificate, as well as an application form which she was asked to complete and return at once. Receiving no reply, the Victorian Collector of Customs followed up with a reminder letter on 15 June, and received this letter in response.

After a further letter from the Collector of Customs, Poon Gooey finally returned the completed form at the beginning of July.

More information about this record is available in the National Archives RecordSearch database. The link below takes you into the database.

NAA: A1, 1913/9139

Where you see this symbol in RecordSearch, a digital copy of the item can be viewed online. Simply click on the 'View digital copy' link.
Stories about the Poon Gooey family made both the mainstream and Chinese press in Australia, as well as internationally, in New Zealand and China. From mid-1912 to the family’s departure in May the following year, a range of opinions, both for and against, were voiced.

Taking advantage of the interest in his family’s final return to China, Poon Gooey used the press to have one final dig at the treatment he and his family received from the Australian government.

More information about this record is available in the National Archives RecordSearch database. The link below takes you into the database.

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Under wartime regulations, aliens resident in Australia were required to register at their local police station, and notify any changes of address. After leaving Australia with his family in 1913, Poon Gooey had returned from China and re-established his business at Geelong. He registered as an alien in March 1917.
Each time Poon Gooey left Australia, he applied for a Certificate Exempting from Dictation Test (CEDT). He did this in 1910, 1913, 1916 and finally in 1918. Holding a CEDT was necessary to allow him to return to Australia without being subjected to the dictation test on arrival. It was also necessary for him to purchase a ships passage in Hong Kong, because shipping companies could be fined for bringing ‘prohibited immigrants’ to Australian shores.

CEDTs recorded personal details that would allow Customs officials to identify people on their return to Australia, and usually had front and side portrait photographs attached. They were also used to record details of the person’s departure and arrival.

More information about this record is available in the National Archives RecordSearch database. The link below takes you into the database.

NAA: B13, 1918/25405

Where you see this symbol in RecordSearch, a digital copy of the item can be viewed online. Simply click on the ‘View digital copy’ link.
Letter from Poon Gooey, 1924

Poon Gooey had received one extension to his 1918 CEDT, but in 1924 wrote again to the Collector of Customs in Melbourne for a further extension. He wrote care of the Wing On Company in Shanghai.

The request was granted by the Department of Home and Territories in January 1925. There is, however, no indication on the file that Poon Gooey ever did return to Australia.

More information about this record is available in the National Archives RecordSearch database. The link below takes you into the database.

NAA: B13, 1918/25405

Where you see this symbol in RecordSearch, a digital copy of the item can be viewed online. Simply click on the ‘View digital copy’ link.
Applications for a Certificate Exempting from Dictation Test (CEDT) required the completion of a Form No. 23, which included a statutory declaration outlining various personal details, providing references from respectable citizens, and supplying front and profile photographs 'with hat off'.

In 1918, Poon Gooey applied for a CEDT to cover a three year visit to China. He included two references with his application.

More information about this record is available in the National Archives RecordSearch database. The link below takes you into the database.

NAA: B13, 1918/25405

Where you see this symbol in RecordSearch, a digital copy of the item can be viewed online. Simply click on the 'View digital copy' link.
Letter from Poon Gooey, 1911

Dear Sir,

I wrote some time ago to you and as I have not received any reply, I understand that you received the letter of writing to you and explained my request for meeting you. To this I have attached my wife's statement to the court, and the government only allows me to continue to stay here and I have no way of making a living. It would greatly inconvenience me at present. My character is good and my permission to live in Australia is confirmed. I am married under British ceremony, and I am a rate-paying married man, and I have already been married. Therefore, I would like to have your influence, and help me in this matter.

Poon Gooey.

More information about this record is available in the National Archives RecordSearch database. The link below takes you into the database.

NAA: A1, 1913/9139

Where you see this symbol in RecordSearch, a digital copy of the item can be viewed online. Simply click on the 'View digital copy' link.
Letter from Poon Gooey, 1911

To

I trust that this matter may succeed through your influence. I am looking forward in anticipation of an early reply.

Yours respectfully,

Poon Gooey.
In May 1911, residents of the town of Horsham petitioned the Minister for External Affairs to allow Mrs Poon Gooey to remain in the Commonwealth. The petition was put together by John A Teague, District Secretary of the State Rivers Commission. The petition was sent to the Secretary of the Department of External Affairs through a firm of solicitors, Doyle and Kerr, of Melbourne.

The Acting-Secretary of the Department replied, acknowledging receipt of the petition, but firmly stating that no extension would be granted and that Mrs Poon Gooey must leave at the expiration of her exemption.
A deportation order for Ham Hop was signed by the Minister for External Affairs, Josiah Thomas, on 29 July 1912. This is the copy that was kept on file. The original was sent to the Collector of Customs, Melbourne, by the Secretary of the Department of External Affairs, with the request that he ‘take the necessary steps to see that effect is given to the order’.

More information about this record is available in the National Archives RecordSearch database. The link below takes you into the database.

NAA: A1, 1913/9139

Where you see this symbol in RecordSearch, a digital copy of the item can be viewed online. Simply click on the ‘View digital copy’ link.
This photograph of Ham Hop was taken by Yeoman Photographers of 116 Bourke Street, Melbourne, presumably soon after she arrived in Victoria in 1910. On the back of the photograph is written:

Hop Pon Gooey
C&E 11/14929 [Customs and Excise Department file number]
E.A 11/14723 15183 [Department of External Affairs file numbers]
21/11/1910 arrived

More information about this record is available in the National Archives RecordSearch database. The link below takes you into the database.

NAA: A1, 1913/9139

Where you see this symbol in RecordSearch, a digital copy of the item can be viewed online. Simply click on the 'View digital copy' link.