

A Legacy of White Australia

[Home](#) / [Collection](#) / [Issues & insights](#)

A legacy of White Australia: Records about Chinese Australians in the National Archives

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 Gooley 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.

Contents

[Introduction](#)

[Mr and Mrs Poon Gooley](#)

[Colonial naturalisation](#)

[Colonial exemption](#)

[Temporary entry of Ham Hop on exemption](#)

[Exemption from dictation test as a domicile](#)

[Alien registration](#)

[Extension of Poon Gooley's CEDT](#)

[Recovering lives](#)

[Unlocking the legacy](#)

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.^[1] Ignoring indigenous Aboriginal Australians and groups like the Chinese who had also made Australia 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.^[2] 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'.^[3] 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^[4] – 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.^[5]

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'.^[6] 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.^[7]

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^[8] 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 Gooley 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 Gooley

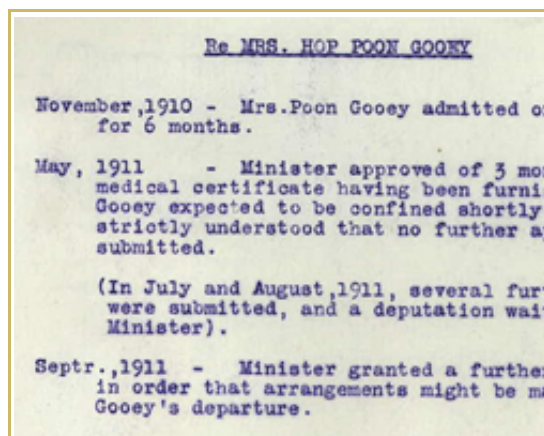
The ideal of White Australia conflicted with reality in many ways, not least of which was that there was already a significant Chinese minority living and working and raising families in Australia at the turn of the 20th century. In 1901, there were 29,153 Chinese men and 474 Chinese women in Australia 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]



Studio portrait of the Poon Gooley family reproduced in the *Daily Telegraph*, 1913
NAA: A1, 1913/9139

The Poon Gooley 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 Gooley 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 Gooley, 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 Gooley’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 Gooley^[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 Gooley and Ham Hop set up their home in Geelong on the bay west of Melbourne, where Poon Gooley 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 Gooley, 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 Gooley, 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.



Department of External Affairs memorandum outlining the extensions granted to Ham Hop’s exemption, 1913
NAA: A1, 1913/9139

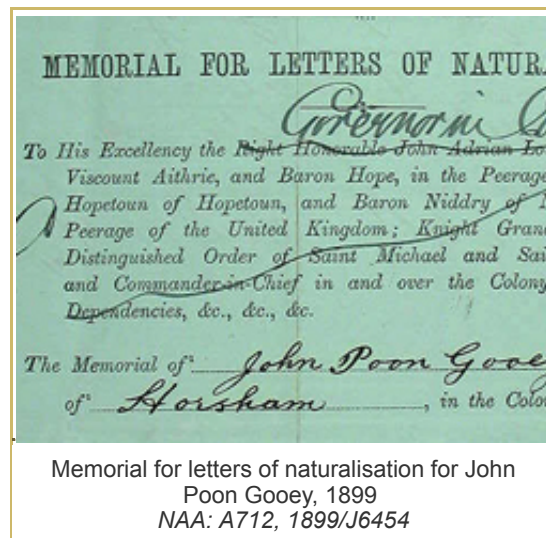
The Commonwealth government was reluctant to set a precedent by allowing Ham Hop to remain in Australia, fearing that such action would lead to an increase in the Chinese population. Many ordinary Australians, however, felt the injustice that was being perpetrated by not allowing the family of Poon Gooley, 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 Gooley’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 Gooley’s efforts to have his wife continue to live with him in Australia was a shared opposition to intermarriage and racial mixing.

The Poon Gooley 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 Gooley'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 Gooley's paper trail begins when he applied to be naturalised in Victoria in 1899, in the name of John Poon Gooley. 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.^[18] 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.

^[19]



Perhaps unaware of the policy not to naturalise Chinese, in July 1899 Poon Gooley applied for naturalisation.^[20] 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 Gooley'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.^[21]

Poon Gooley's uncle, James Pon Hop, had been naturalised sixteen years earlier in 1883, before the restrictions had been brought in.^[22] 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 Gooley 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.^[23] 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 Gooley 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 Gooley'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 Gooley 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.

Ling Shear	...	...	...	Burwood-road, 1
Loney Foong Hym	...	...	...	Lee's-lane, off street, Melbou
Loney Teng	...	...	...	Brunswick ...
Pon Wing Fat	...	...	...	100 Little Bourne
Poon Gooley	...	...	...	Horsham ...
Wing Kee	...	...	...	High-street, As
Wong-On	...	...	...	Melbourne
Yee Pava Cheong	...	...	...	Hawthorn
Ying Wing	...	...	...	Walhalla

Given under my Hand and the Seal of the Colony,
One thousand nine hundred, and in the sixty-third
(L.S.)

Poon Gooley's copy of a list of exemptions from the Chinese Act 1890, 1900
NAA: MP56/12, 6

Poon Gooley'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 Gooley), resident in China, was exempt for a period of six months from 8 February 1900.^[25] Poon Gooley 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 Gooley'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 Gooley'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 Gooley's trip to China ten years later, by which time the federal Immigration Restriction Act was well in place. As well as describing Poon Gooley in glowing terms (James Berry, ironmonger, said he was 'a desirable citizen and an upright honourable man', for example), both letters mentioned that Poon Gooley 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 Gooley 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 Gooley 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 Gooley 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 Gooley 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 Gooley's struggle with the government

IMMIGRATION RESTRICTION ACT 19

11/30 State of *Victoria*

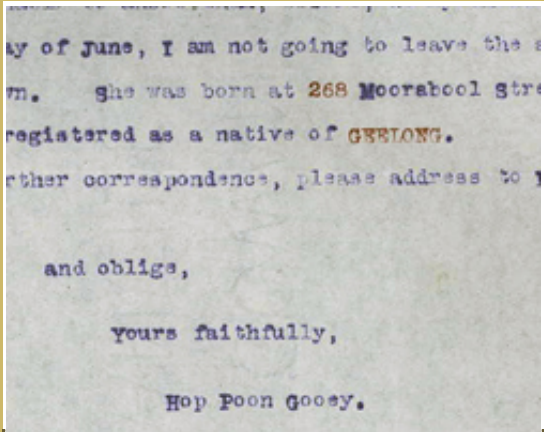
to Certify that *Ham Hop Gooley*
China aged *2*
married woman is
three months from the date hereof from the p
Restriction Act 1901.

Certificate of exemption for Ham Hop, 1911
NAA: A1, 9139

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 Gooley himself. The file records the efforts of various organisations and individuals who supported Poon Gooley, 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 Gooley 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 Gooley 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.



Letter from Ham Hop, 1911
NAA: A1, 1911/9139

Exemption from dictation test as a domicile

Whatever he said publicly, before his departure Poon Gooley made sure that he would be allowed to return to Australia should he want to. Before travelling to China in 1910, Poon Gooley 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 Gooley 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 Gooley 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.



Clipping about the Poon Gooley family's departure, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 May 1913
NAA: A1, 1913/9139

Alongside Poon Gooley'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 Gooley 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.^[29] Poon Gooley'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.^[30] 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.^[31] He would have been about 67 years old.

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

Extension of Poon Gooley's CEDT

There is one further file that documents Poon Gooley's time in Australia. In November 1918 he applied (once again) for a certificate to exempt him from the dictation test.^[32] 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 Gooley 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 Gooley'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 Gooley would be admitted at Melbourne only. Poon Gooley was granted a certificate and departed from Melbourne on the *Kitano Maru* on 20 December 1918.^[33] It was noted on his certificate that he was, at age 42, 'slightly bald' and 'turning grey'.

Poon Gooley 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.^[34] 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 Gooley should 'be regarded by the shipping company as sufficient authority for the issue of a passage ticket'.

Poon Gooley's extension was granted until mid-December 1924, but in late November that year he wrote

Form of Application for Registration.

This form is to be filled up in duplicate, and the Alien is to attach the same to the forms, before the member of the Police Force in charge of the registration, nearest to his usual place of abode.

Name: Poon Gooley Sex: Male

Date of birth: 20 July 1875

Place of birth: Canton, China

Place of residence: Market Square Buildings

Poon Gooley's application for registration as an alien, 1917
NAA: MT269/1, Vic/China/Gooley Poon

Height: 5ft 7 inches Hair: Brown

Build: Medium Eyes: Brown

Particular marks: None

(For impression of hand, see back)

Full Face:—

PHOTOGRAPHS

Poon Gooley

Certificate exempting from the dictation test for Poon Gooley, 1918
NAA: B13, 1918/25405

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 Gooley ever did return to Australia.

Recovering lives

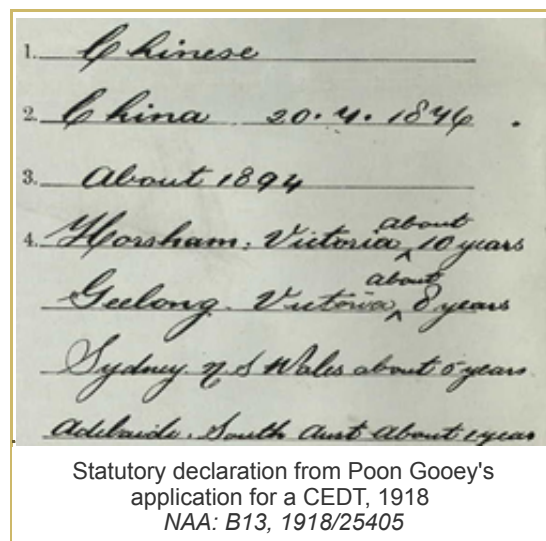
Poon Gooley, his wife Ham Hop, his children Queenie and Lena, his uncle James Pon Hop and his brothers Poon See and Poon Choy are just a handful of the Chinese Australians whose lives and struggles are documented in the records created in the administration of the White Australia Policy during the early 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 Gooley and his uncle did, and about a tenth of them were allowed in on temporary certificates of exemption, like Ham Hop.^[35] 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.^[36] 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 Gooley 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 Gooley case were first used in 1961, by historian AT Yarwood in an article about the entry of wives during the early White Australia period.^[37] 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.^[38] 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.^[39] 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^[40]; Sophie Couchman's ongoing projects on Melbourne's Chinese



Letter from Poon Gooley in Shanghai, 1924
NAA: B13, 1918/25405

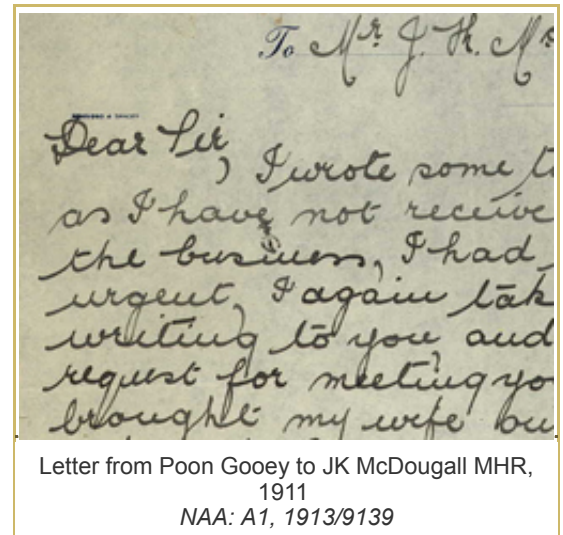


Statutory declaration from Poon Gooley's
application for a CEDT, 1918
NAA: B13, 1918/25405

community and Chinese photography in Australia^[41]; Paul Jones' work on White Australia and Australia's Chinese communities^[42]; Barbara Nichols' PhD research into Chinese restaurants^[43]; my own work on Chinese Australian families^[44]; Annette Shun Wah's journey into her family's past^[45], and intriguingly, Stephen Morgan's work on human capital and economic development in South China.^[46] Researchers interested in other marginalised ethnic groups similarly draw on White Australia records held by the National Archives.^[47]

Unlocking the legacy

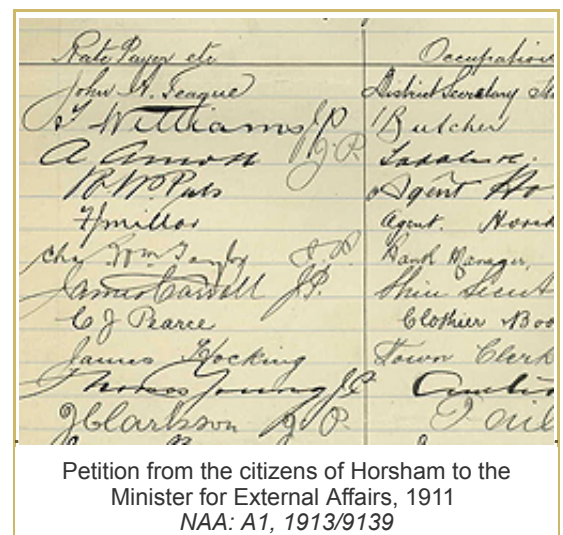
Over the past several decades, there have been ongoing calls in the archival community for archivists to rethink their collecting policies in order to truly reflect the communities they represent, and to make sure that marginalised groups are fairly recorded in archival collections.^[48] The National 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.^[49] Access policies should facilitate use and understanding of the records.



Letter from Poon Gooley to JK McDougall MHR, 1911
NAA: A1, 1913/9139

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.^[50] 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.^[51] 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.^[52] 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.^[53]

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).^[54] 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>



Petition from the citizens of Horsham to the Minister for External Affairs, 1911
NAA: A1, 1913/9139

and <ancestry.com>. A number of significant series of Chinese-related records are now completely described at item level, with many others partially described.^[55] 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.^[56]

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. ^[57]

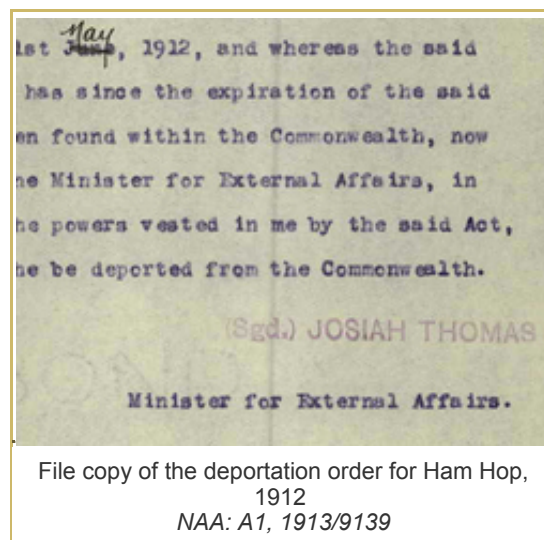
There are some exciting possibilities of what could be done with the records in an online environment, however, beyond merely describing and digitising them. Within the collection there are many different records relating to the same individuals and within the various records there are references to 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^[58]; also to the sort of project that encourages public interaction and participation in an online environment.^[59] Such a site could become a way to transform the records into a more 'tangible manifestation of community heritage and identity'.^[60]

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.^[61]

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.^[62] 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.^[63] 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.^[64]

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.^[65] 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'.^[66] 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'.^[67] 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'.^[68]



Ham Hop, 1910
NAA: A1, 1913/9139

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. ^[69]

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 Gooley case and others in more depth.

Notes

1. On race and Federation see, for example, Helen Irving, 'White Australians', chapter 6 in *To Constitute a Nation: A Cultural History of Australia's Constitution*, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, 1997 and Raymond Evans, 'White citizenship: Nationhood and race at Federation', *Memoirs of the Queensland Museum, Cultural Heritage Series*, vol. 2, no. 2, pp. 179–87. [\[back\]](#)
2. See Douglas Cole, "'The crimson thread of kinship': Ethnic ideas in Australia, 1870–1914", *Historical*

3. For a neat summary of the various colonial anti-Chinese laws, including New Zealand, see Nigel Murphy, *The Poll-tax in New Zealand*, 2nd edition, NZ Chinese Association Inc. and Office of Ethnic Affairs, Wellington NZ, 2002, pp. 13–20. See also Myra Willard, *History of the White Australia Policy to 1920*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1967 (first published 1923). For a comparison of Australian and US anti-Chinese measures, see Michael Williams, 'Anglo-Saxonizing machines: Exclusion America, White Australia', *Chinese America: History and Perspectives*, 2003, pp. 23–33. [\[back\]](#)
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. [\[back\]](#)
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. [\[back\]](#)
6. On the background and application of the dictation test, see AT Yarwood, 'The dictation test – Historical survey', *The Australian Quarterly*, June 1958, pp. 19–29. [\[back\]](#)
7. See Paul Jones, *Alien Acts: The White Australia Policy, 1901–1939*, PhD thesis, Department of History, University of Melbourne, 1998. [\[back\]](#)
8. On the work of the Customs Department, including the administration of the Act regarding Chinese, see David Day, *Contraband and Controversy: The Customs History of Australia from 1901*, AGPS Press, Canberra, 1996. Also, John M Petersen, 'Chinese immigrants, White Australia and Victorian Customs officers 1901–1920', *Australian Journal of Customs History*, no. 5, November 1993, pp. 26–31. [\[back\]](#)
9. *Official Year Book of the Commonwealth of Australia*, no. 18, Bureau of Census and Statistics, Melbourne, 1925, particularly pp. 951–56. [\[back\]](#)
10. The story of the Poon Gooley family has been told many times, with varying levels of accuracy. Two of the best accounts are AT Yarwood, 'The "White Australia" Policy: Some administrative problems, 1901–1920', *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, vol. 7, November 1961, pp. 245–60 and CF Yong, *The New Gold Mountain: The Chinese in Australia, 1901–1921*, Raphael Arts Pty Ltd, Richmond SA, 1977, pp. 26–28, 208 and 222. Two that contain factual errors are Eric Rolls, *Citizens: Flowers and the Wide Sea*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia QLD, 1996, pp. 419–20 and, surprisingly, John Fitzgerald, *Big White Lie: Chinese Australians in White Australia*, University of New South Wales Press, Sydney, 2007, p. 200. [\[back\]](#)
11. Ham Hop was generally referred to as Mrs Poon Gooley, sometimes as Mrs Hop (or Hope) Poon Gooley. In his first request to bring his wife from China, Poon Gooley refers to her by the name Ham See, most likely Tan Shi 譚氏. 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. [\[back\]](#)
12. *Official Year Book of the Commonwealth of Australia*, no. 18, Bureau of Census and Statistics, Melbourne, 1925, p. 956. [\[back\]](#)
13. The *Tung Wah Times* referred to Poon Gooley 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. [\[back\]](#)
14. Poon Gooley 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. [\[back\]](#)
15. Birth registration of Queenie Hop Poon Gooley, Victoria, 1911, reg. no. 11794. [\[back\]](#)
16. Birth registration of Lena Hop Poon Gooley, Victoria, 1913, reg. no. 4094. [\[back\]](#)

17. CF Yong provides a discussion of the case in the context of Chinese Australians' responses to the White Australia Policy in *The New Gold Mountain: The Chinese in Australia 1901–1921*, Raphael Arts, Richmond SA, 1977, pp. 26–28. For articles on the case in the Chinese press, see *Tung Wah Times* (*Donghua xinbao* 東華新報), 17 and 24 August 1912, 14 September 1912, 1 and 22 March 1913, 12 April 1913, 10 May 1913; *Chinese Australian Herald* (*Guangyi huabao* 廣意華報), 31 May 1913; *Chinese Times* (*Aiguo bao* 愛國報), 11 May 1912–2 August 1913 (cited in Morag Loh, 'The Chinese Times 1902–1922', *La Trobe Journal*, no. 53, October 1994, available online, accessed 4 April 2009). [\[back\]](#)
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. [\[back\]](#)
20. NAA: A712, 1899/J6454 (digitised). [\[back\]](#)
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 黃亞喜) 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 Gooley's application under the *Chinese Act 1890* can be found in NAA: MP56/12, 6 (digitised). [\[back\]](#)
24. Sophie Couchman, 'Not so mug mugshots: Behind the portraits of series B6443', in *Crossings*, vol. 9, no. 3, 2004, available online, accessed 4 April 2009. [\[back\]](#)
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/Gooley Poon (digitised). [\[back\]](#)
30. NAA: MT269/1, Vic/China/Hop James (digitised). [\[back\]](#)
31. *Argus*, 28 August 1920. [\[back\]](#)
32. NAA: B13, 1918/25405 (digitised). [\[back\]](#)
33. Poon Gooley'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

was one of four major Shanghai stores established by Chinese Australians. It is not clear what Poon Gooley's role in the company was, but his name appears, along with those of Guo Le and Guo Shun, in a list of attendees at a banquet of Chinese Australian businessmen in Shanghai in 1921. *Tung Wah Times (Donghua xinbao 東華新報)*, 19 March 1921. On the history of Wing On, see John Fitzgerald, *Big White Lie: Chinese Australians in White Australia*, University of New South Wales Press, Sydney, 2007 and 'The Guo Brothers and the Yongan Company', Chinese Heritage of Australian Federation website, www.chaf.lib.latrobe.edu.au/stories/guo_bros.htm, accessed 5 April 2009; Wellington KK Chan, 'Personal styles, cultural values and management: The Sincere and Wing On companies in Shanghai and Hong Kong, 1900–1941', in Kerrie L MacPherson (ed.), *Asian Department Stores*, Curzon, Richmond, Surrey, 1998 and 'Selling goods and promoting a new commercial culture: The four premier department stores on Nanjing Road, 1917–1937', in Sherman Cochran (ed.), *Inventing Nanjing Road: Commercial Culture in Shanghai, 1900–1945*, East Asia Program, Cornell University, Ithaca, 1999. [\[back\]](#)

35. See Barry York, 'The Chinese in Australia: Exclusions and admissions, 1901–1957' in Paul Macgregor (ed.), *Histories of the Chinese in Australasia and the South Pacific*, Museum of Chinese Australian History, Melbourne, 1995 and *Admissions and Exclusions: 'Asiatics' and 'Other Coloured Races' in Australia 1901 to 1946*, Centre for Immigration & Multicultural Studies, RSCS, Australian National University, Canberra ACT, 1995. [\[back\]](#)
36. See Michael Williams, "'Would this not help your Federation?'" in Sophie Couchman, John Fitzgerald and Paul Macgregor (eds), *After the Rush: Regulation, Participation, and Chinese Communities in Australia 1860–1940. Otherland Literary Journal*, no. 9, December 2004, p. 37. [\[back\]](#)
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. [\[back\]](#)
38. AT Yarwood, *Asian Migration to Australia: the Background to Exclusion 1896–1923*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1964; AC Palfreeman, *The Administration of the White Australia Policy*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1967; and Yong Ching Fatt, *The Chinese in New South Wales and Victoria, 1901–1921, With Special Reference to Sydney and Melbourne*, PhD thesis, Australian National University, 1966 and *New Gold Mountain: The Chinese in Australia 1901–1920*, Raphael Arts, South Australia, 1977. [\[back\]](#)
39. For example, Shirley Fitzgerald, *Red Tape, Gold Scissors: The Story of Sydney's Chinese*, 2nd ed., Halstead Press, Sydney, 2008; Jane Lydon, *Many Inventions: The Chinese in the Rocks 1890–1930*, Monash Publications in History, Clayton VIC, 1999; Eric Rolls, *Citizens: Flowers and the Wide Sea*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia QLD, 1996. [\[back\]](#)
40. Michael Williams, *Destination Qiaoxiang – Pearl River Delta Villages & Pacific Ports, 1849–1949*, PhD thesis, University of Hong Kong, 2003, available online, accessed 9 April 2009. [\[back\]](#)
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'. [\[back\]](#)
42. For example, Paul Jones, 'The view from the edge: Chinese Australians and China, 1890 to 1949', in Charles Ferrall, Paul Millar and Keren Smith (eds), *East by South: Chinese in the Australasian Imagination*, Victoria University Press, Wellington NZ, 2005; and 'What happened to the Chinese between the World Wars?', in Sophie Couchman, John Fitzgerald and Paul Macgregor (eds), *After the Rush: Regulation, Participation and Chinese Communities in Australia 1860–1940. Otherland Literary Journal*, vol. 9, 2004; 'Progress amid a "fountain of invented sensation": The Chinese–Australian press and governments (1856 to 1957)', in Sybil Nolan (ed.), *When Journalism Meets History 3*, RMIT Publishing, Melbourne, 2004. [\[back\]](#)
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


their “Chinese” children’, *History Australia*, vol. 1, no. 1, December 2003, pp.30–40; Golden Shadows on a White Land: An Exploration of the Lives of White Women who Partnered Chinese Men and their Children in Southern Australia, 1855–1915, PhD thesis, University of Sydney, 2006. [\[back\]](#)

45. Annette Shun Wah, ‘Grandma’s Chinese whispers’, in Kellie Abbott, *Family Journeys: Stories in the National Archives of Australia*, National Archives of Australia, Canberra, 2008. [\[back\]](#)
46. Stephen L Morgan, ‘[The biological standard of living in South China during the 19th century: Estimates using data from Australian immigration and prison records](#)’, paper presented at the Asia/Pacific Economic and Business History Conference, QUT, Brisbane, February 2006, available online, accessed 9 April 2009 and ‘Australian immigration archives as a sources for business and economic history’, *Australian Economic History Review*, vol. 46, no. 3, pp. 268–82. [\[back\]](#)
47. See, for example, the work of Pam Oliver on the Japanese, including *Empty North: The Japanese Presence and Australian Reactions 1860s to 1942*, Charles Darwin University Press, Darwin NT, 2006; Nahid Kabir on Muslims, including ‘Muslims in Western Australia 1870–1970’, *Early Days: Journal of the Royal Western Australian Historical Society*, vol. 12, part 5, 2005, pp. 551–65; the work of Margaret Allen on Indians, including ‘Betraying the white nation: The case of Lillie Khan’ in *Athanos: Semiotica, Filosofia, Arte, Letteratura, special issue of White Matters/Il Bianco al Centro della Questione*, vol. 17, no. 10, 2006–07, pp. 346–53; and the work of Klaus Neumann on refugees, internees and others, including ‘Guarding the flood gates: The removal of non-Europeans, 1945–49’, in Martin Crotty and David Roberts (eds), *The Great Mistakes of Australian History*, University of New South Wales Press, Sydney, 2007. [\[back\]](#)
48. See, for example, Ian Johnston, ‘Whose history is it anyway?’, *Journal of the Society of Archivists*, vol. 22, no. 2, 2001, pp. 213–29; Joan M Schwartz and Terry Cook, ‘Archives, records and power: The making of modern memory’, *Archival Science*, vol. 2, 2002, pp. 1–19; Baiba Berzins, ‘Show and tell: Access to multicultural records’, in Margaret Bortley and Patricia McQueen (eds), *Documenting Multicultural Australia: A Record of the Conference for Museums, Libraries, Archives and Historical Collections*, Museums Association of Australia Inc. and Library Council of Australia, Melbourne, 1989. [\[back\]](#)
49. 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. [\[back\]](#)
51. Julie Stacker and Peri Stewart, [Chinese Immigrants and Chinese Australians in NSW](#), National Archives of Australia, Canberra, first published 1996, revised 1997, 1998, 2003, updated and reprinted 2004, available online (pdf, 1.4mb), accessed 5 April 2009. Michael Williams has also prepared a short guide to accessing Chinese records held in the Sydney office. See Michael Williams, ‘[Tracing your Chinese ancestors in the administrative files of the Commonwealth Immigration Restriction Act](#)’, available online through the Golden Threads website, accessed 20 April 2009. [\[back\]](#)
52. Paul Jones, [Chinese–Australian Journeys: Records on Travel, Migration and Settlement, 1860–1975](#), National Archives of Australia, Canberra, 2005, available online (pdf, 5.4mb), accessed 5 April 2009. [\[back\]](#)
53. Including Kate Bagnall, ‘[Finding Chinese family connections in the National Archives](#)’, published in various Australian family history magazines and on the National Archives website, accessed 9 April 2009; ‘[Chinese Australians: Records of travel and settlement](#)’, online exhibit, National Archives of Australia website, accessed 9 April 2009; Annette Shun Wah, ‘Grandma’s Chinese whispers’, in Kellie Abbott, *Family Journeys: Stories in the National Archives of Australia*, National Archives of Australia, Canberra, 2008 and [online case study](#) on the National Archives website, accessed 9 April 2009; ‘A Chinese–Australian family’, in *Memory of a Nation*, National Archives of Australia, Canberra, 2007; ‘Chinese gold in the archives’, *Memento*, [issue 22](#), January 2003, available online,

accessed 15 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. [\[back\]](#)
55. Chinese-related series that have all items listed on RecordSearch include, for example, NAA: A1; B13; BP343/15; ST84/1. [\[back\]](#)
56. Henry Yu, 'Writing the past in the present', *Amerasia Journal*, vol. 28, no. 3, 2002, pp. xli–xlii. [\[back\]](#)
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. [\[back\]](#)
58. For an introduction to prosopography, see Koenraad Verboven, Myriam Carlier and Jan Dumolyn, 'A short manual to the art of prosopography', in KSD Keats-Rohan, *Prosopography Approaches and Applications. A Handbook (Prosopographica et Genealogica*, vol. 13), Oxford, 2007, available online at prosopography.modhist.ox.ac.uk/images/01%20Verboven%20pdf.pdf, accessed 4 April 2009. [\[back\]](#)
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. [\[back\]](#)
60. Ricardo L Punzalan, 'Archives and the segregation of people with leprosy in the Philippines', *Fourth International Conference on the History of Records and Archives (ICHORA 4): Conference Papers*, University of Western Australia, August 2008, p. 94. [\[back\]](#)
61. Inge Bundsgaard, 'The selection of case files: The right to social memory versus the right to social oblivion', *Comma*, no. 1–2, 2002, pp. 174–5. [\[back\]](#)
62. Ann Laura Stoler, 'Colonial archives and the arts of governance: On the content in the form', in Carolyn Hamilton et al (eds), *Refiguring the Archive*, Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht, 2002, p. 83. [\[back\]](#)
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. [\[back\]](#)
64. In the context of the United States, see, for example, Adam McKeown, 'Ritualization of regulation: The enforcement of Chinese exclusion in the United States and China', *American Historical Journal*, vol. 108, no. 2, April 2003, pp. 377–403 and Estelle T Lau, *Paper Families: Identity, Immigration Administration, and Chinese Exclusion*, Duke University Press, Durham and London, 2006. The most obvious example within the Australian context is that of Aboriginal Australians. See Dani Wickman, 'The failure of Commonwealth recordkeeping: The Stolen Generations in corporate and collective memory', *Comma*, no. 1, 2003, pp. 117–28. [\[back\]](#)
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. [\[back\]](#)
66. Keith Windschuttle, *The White Australia Policy*, Macleay Press, Sydney, 2004, p. 9. [\[back\]](#)
67. David Walker, 'Strange reading: Keith Windschuttle on race, Asia and White Australia', *Australian Historical Studies*, no. 128, 2006, p. 120. [\[back\]](#)
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. [\[back\]](#)

69. Nelson Mandela, 'Renewal and renaissance – Towards a new world order', lecture presented at the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies, Oxford, 11 July 1997, available online at www.oxcis.ac.uk/lectures/Mandela.doc, accessed 7 April 2009. [\[back\]](#)












National Archives record items cited – click the link to see the digitised file in RecordSearch			
	Mrs Poon Gooley – Exemption certificate	1910–14	A1, 1913/9139
	Chow Ga Hon, Lain Anding and Wang Ah Hae – Naturalisation	1854	A712, K1854/13999
	James Pon Hap – Naturalisation	1883	A712, 1883/Z7328
	John Poon Gooley – Naturalisation	1899	A712, 1899/J6454
	James Ah Lum – Naturalisation	1903	A712, 1903/R4891
	James Pon Hap – Letters of naturalisation	1883	A801, 2251
	Poon Gooley – Application for certificate exempting from the dictation test	1918–25	B13, 1918/25405
	Register of certificates exempting from the dictation test (departures), Melbourne	1904–59	B6003
	Various documents relating to late 1880s to early 1900s migrants	1892–21	MP56/12, 6
	Poon Gooley – Alien registration	1917	MT269/1, Vic/China/Gooley Poon
	James Pon Hop – Alien registration	1918–20	MT269/1, Vic/China/Hop James

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](#)

National Archives record series cited					
	Series title	Date range	Series number	Location	Notes
	Department of External Affairs correspondence files	1903–38	A1	Canberra	All items are listed and many digitised
	Colonial applications for naturalisation in Victoria	1851–1902	A712	Canberra	All items are listed and some digitised
	Cancelled Victorian naturalisation certificates	1853–1902	A801	Canberra	All items are listed and some digitised
	Assent copies of Acts of Parliament	1901–	A1559	Canberra	All items are listed and some digitised
	Collector of Customs (Melbourne) correspondence files	1902–	B13	Melbourne	All items are listed and some digitised
	Registers of certificates exempting from the dictation test (departures), Melbourne	1904–59	B6003	Melbourne	All 3 volumes listed but not digitised
	Miscellany kept by the Department of Home and Territories	1880–1925	MP56/12	Melbourne	All 8 items listed and 1 digitised
	Forms for registration under the War Precautions (Aliens Registration) Regulations 1916 and the Aliens Regulations Act 1920	1916–22	MT269/1	Melbourne	All items listed and some digitised
	Certificates of domicile and certificates exempting from the dictation test, Sydney	1905–53	ST84/1	Sydney	All items are listed and some digitised
	Registers of certificates exempting from the dictation test, Townsville	1917–41	BP343/15	Brisbane	All items are listed and some digitised
	Certificates exempting from the dictation test, Darwin	1905–41	E752	Darwin	All items are listed and digitised

A Legacy of White Australia

Home / Collection / Issues & insights

The Poon Gooley family, 1913



On 12 May 1913, Sydney's *Daily Telegraph* newspaper published this photograph of Poon Gooley, 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

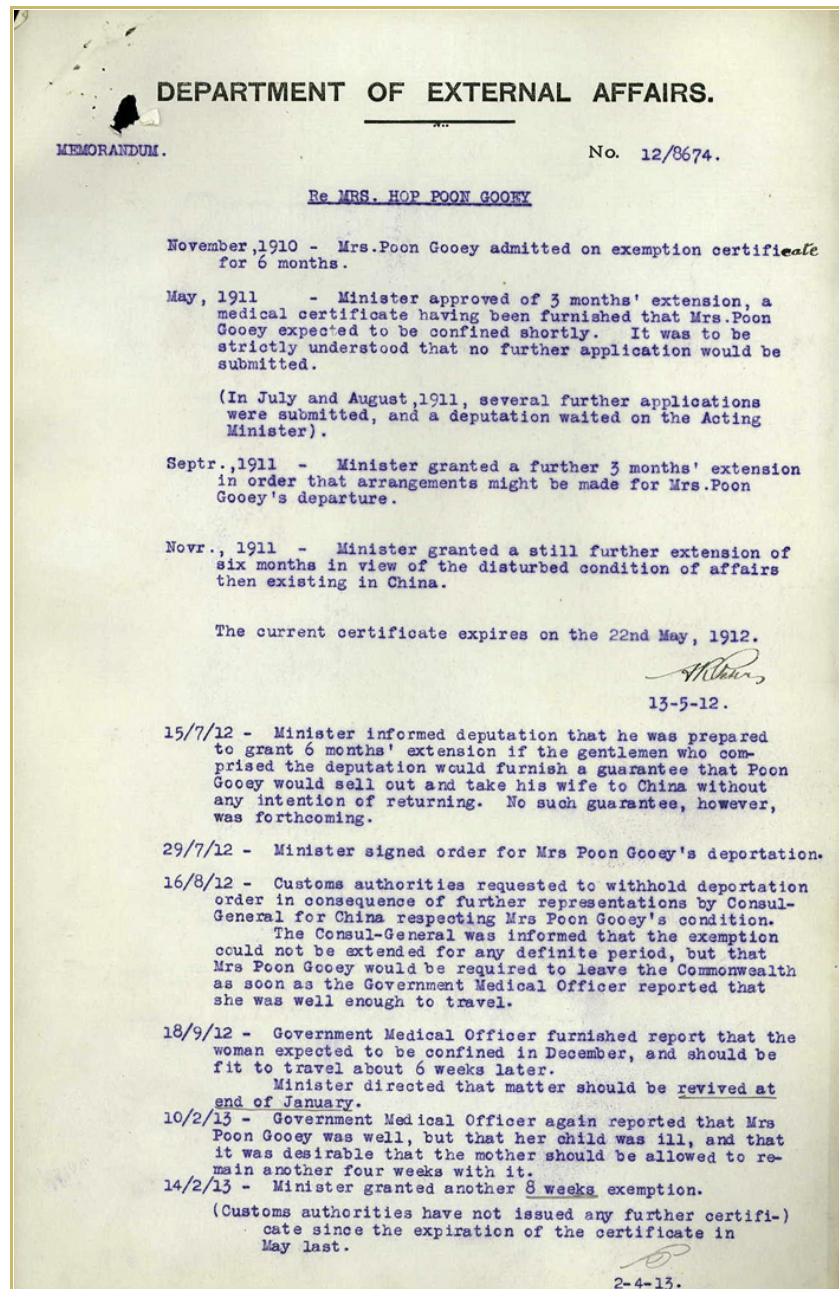


Where you see this symbol in RecordSearch, a digital copy of the item can be viewed online. Simply click on the 'View digital copy' link.

A Legacy of White Australia

[Home](#) / [Collection](#) / [Issues & insights](#)

Memorandum regarding Mrs Hop Poon Gooley, 1913



This Department of External Affairs memo, prepared by AR Peters, outlined the ongoing extensions granted to Ham Hop by the Minister between May 1911 and February 1913.

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.

A Legacy of White Australia

Home / Collection / Issues & insights

Memorial for letters of naturalisation for John Poon Gooley, 1899

99/ J 6454

Sir,

I have the honour to submit a Memorial for Letters of Naturalization, and beg to request that it may be laid before His Excellency the Governor as early as convenient.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your obedient Servant, *John Poon Gooley*

The Honorable
The Chief Secretary.

MEMORIAL FOR LETTERS OF NATURALIZATION.

Governing Council

To His Excellency the Right Honorable John Adrian Louis, Earl of Hopetoun, Viscount Aithrie, and Baron Hope, in the Peerage of Scotland; Baron Hopetoun of Hopetoun, and Baron Niddry of Niddry Castle, in the Peerage of the United Kingdom; Knight Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George; Governor and Commander-in-Chief in and over the Colony of Victoria and its Dependencies, &c., &c., &c.

The Memorial of *John Poon Gooley*
of *Horsham*, in the Colony of Victoria:

Respectfully sheweth—

* Name. 1. That your Memorialist's name is *John Poon Gooley*

* Age. 2. That he is *Twenty-four* years of age.

* Place where born—town, village, or hamlet, & country. 3. That he was born at *Canton*

* Occupation. 4. That he is by occupation a *Gardener*

* Time of arrival in colony. 5. That on the *20th* day of *May* in the year *1893* he arrived in the Colony of Victoria by the ship *(Chinese name) Kip Hong* from the Port of *Hong Kong* in *China* and that he has ever since his arrival, being a period of *6 years* been a resident in said Colony of Victoria.

* Ship's name, port, and country.

* Time of residence in colony. *Warramboul & Horsham*

6. That he is desirous of permanently settling in the said Colony, and of being naturalized therein.

Your Memorialist, therefore, prays that Your Excellency may be pleased to grant to your Memorialist Letters of Naturalization, under the Act of the Parliament of Victoria numbered 1063, subject to the provisions therein contained, and subject also to such conditions as Your Excellency may consider necessary or advisable.

And your Memorialist will ever pray.

* Signature in full of applicant. *John Poon Gooley*

Dated the *14th* day of *July* A.D. 189*9*.

[OATH.]

In 1899, Poon Gooley 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 Gooley's arrival in Australia, and his clear, neat signature suggests that he was may well have been literate in English before he came to Victoria at age 18. His application was made in the name 'John Poon Gooley', 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.

A Legacy of White Australia

[Home](#) / [Collection](#) / [Issues & insights](#)

Back of James Pon Hap's naturalisation certificate, 1883



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.

Page 1 | [2](#)

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

NAA: A801, 2251

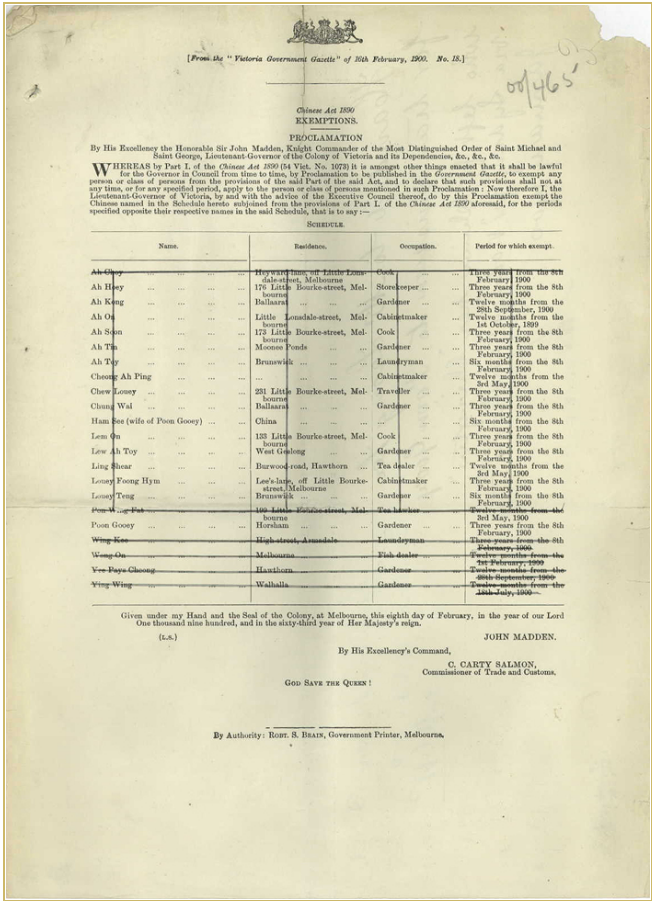


Where you see this symbol in RecordSearch, a digital copy of the item can be viewed online. Simply click on the 'View digital copy' link.

A Legacy of White Australia

[Home](#) / [Collection](#) / [Issues & insights](#)

Front of Poon Gooy's exemption under the 'Chinese Act 1890', 1900




Poon Gooy 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.

Page 1 | 2

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.

A Legacy of White Australia

Home / Collection / Issues & insights

Certificate of exemption for Ham Hop, 1911

Form No. 2.

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

IMMIGRATION RESTRICTION ACT 1901.

Number 11/30 State of Victoria

This is to Certify that Hop Poon Goey
of China aged 29 years, a married woman is exempted for a
period of Three months from the date hereof from the provisions of the
Immigration Restriction Act 1901.

Dated at Melbourne this 8th
day of June 1911

By Authority: J. Kew, Acting Government Printer, Melbourne.

* Insert trade, calling, or other description.

Actg Collector of Customs
for Victoria

This Certificate must be retained by the person to whom it is issued.
Regulation No. 9, gazetted 3rd January, 1902, states—"9. Any person who, with intent to contravene or evade the Act, or these Regulations, or without just cause or excuse, transfers or delivers up to any other person any certificate or credentials referred to in the Act or in these Regulations, shall be guilty of an offence against these Regulations."
NOTE.—A person guilty of any offence against these Regulations is, under section 18 of the Act, liable upon summary conviction to a penalty not exceeding £50, and in default of payment to imprisonment with or without hard labour for any period not exceeding three months.

Ham Hop (Mrs Hop Poon Goey) 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

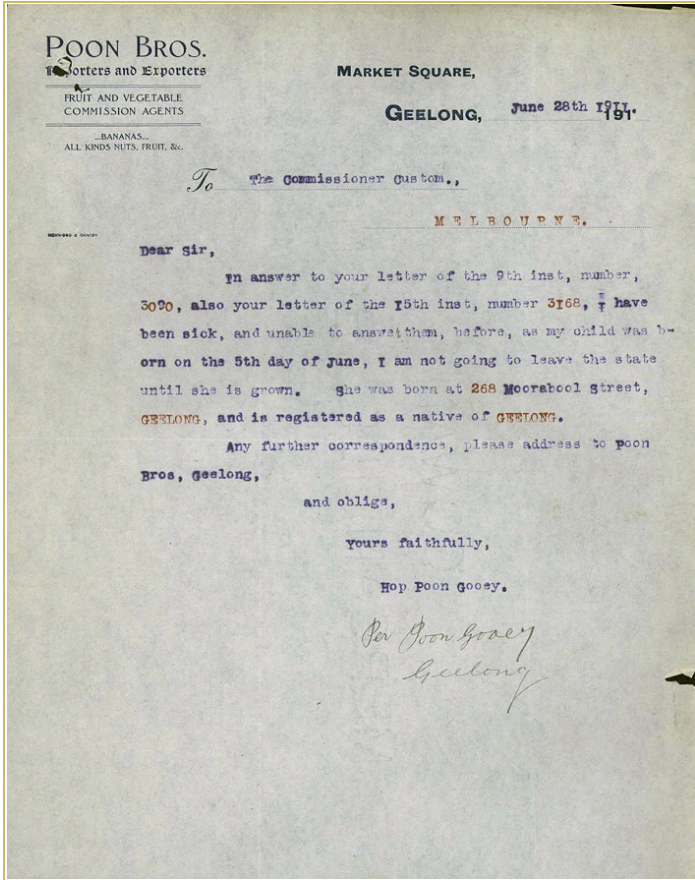


Where you see this symbol in RecordSearch, a digital copy of the item can be viewed online. Simply click on the 'View digital copy' link.

A Legacy of White Australia

[Home](#) / [Collection](#) / [Issues & insights](#)

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 Gooley 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

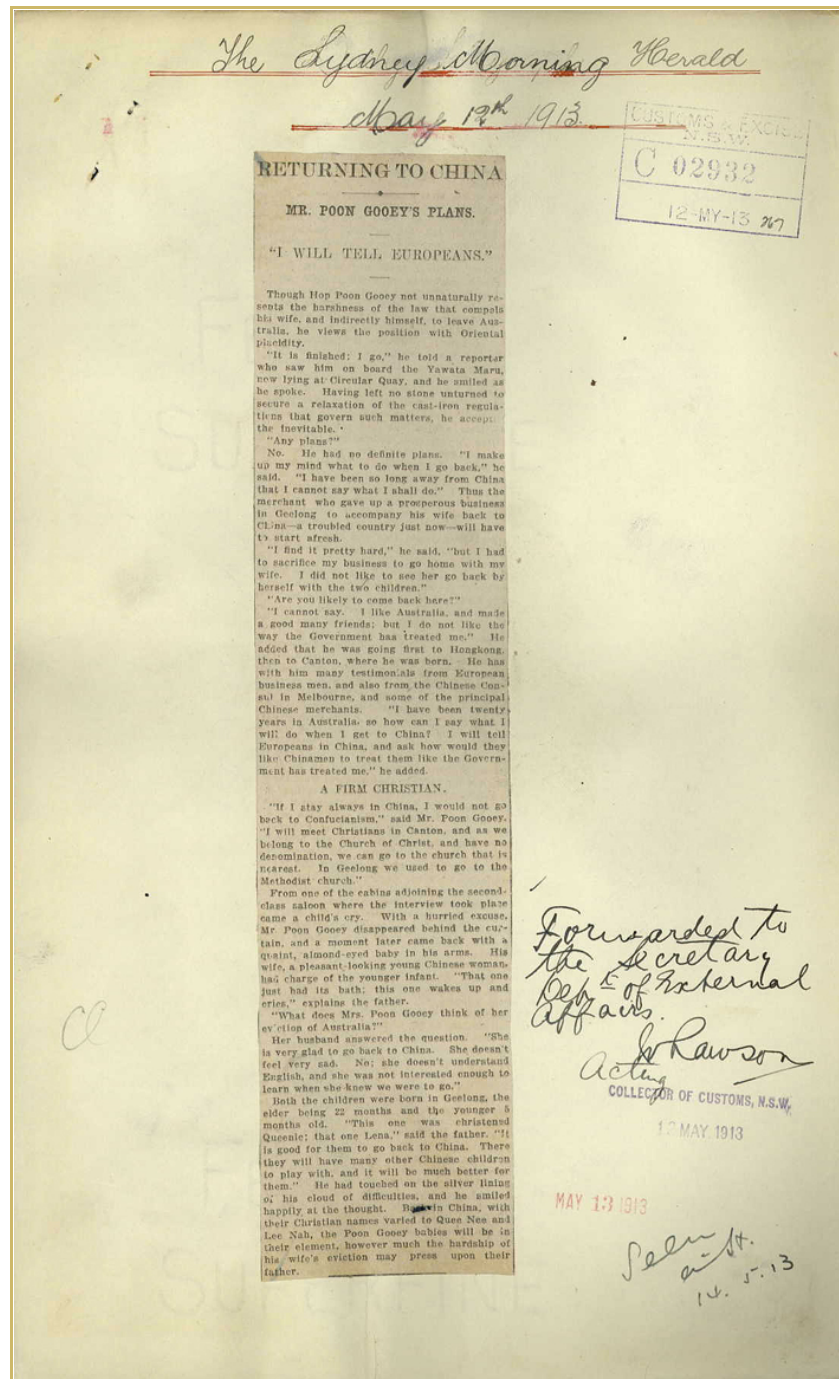


Where you see this symbol in RecordSearch, a digital copy of the item can be viewed online. Simply click on the 'View digital copy' link.

A Legacy of White Australia

Home / Collection / Issues & insights

Clipping from the 'Sydney Morning Herald', 12 May 1913



Stories about the Poon Gooley 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 Gooley 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.

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.

A Legacy of White Australia

Home / Collection / Issues & insights

Poon Gooley's alien registration, 1917

FORM A.

THE WAR PRECAUTIONS (ALIENS REGISTRATION) REGULATIONS 1916.

Form of Application for Registration.

This form is to be filled up in duplicate, and the Alien is to attend in person, with the duplicate forms, before the member of the Police Force in charge of the Police Station nearest to his usual place of abode.

Name (in full) Poon Gooley GOOLEY
 Nationality Chinese Sex Male
 Birthplace Canton, China Date of birth 20.4.1845
 Place of residence* Market Square Buildings, Geelong
 Place of business (if any) Market Square Buildings Geelong
 Occupation Printer
 Date of entry to Commonwealth about March 1894
*If a member of a ship's crew, state here name of ship, port at which voyage commenced, and port to which bound.

Personal Description.

Height 5 ft 8 in Colour of eyes Brown
 Colour of hair dark Notable marks nil
 Remarks nil

Let it thank print if unable to write (Impression to be made in presence of Aliens Registration Officer).

Date of application MAR 26 1917

Signature of Alien Poon Gooley

(THIS SPACE FOR OFFICE USE ONLY.)

Certificate No. 44 Issued on MAR 26 1917
 Remarks

Signature of Aliens Registration Officer [Signature] 3355
 Police Station Geelong

D.594/9.16—C 10318—1306.

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 Gooley had returned from China and re-established his business at Geelong. He registered as an alien in March 1917.

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

NAA: MT269/1, Vic/China/Gooley Poon



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.

A Legacy of White Australia

Home / Collection / Issues & insights

CEDT for Poon Gooley, 1918

Book No. 235 18/235.

Form No. 21. **COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.** No. 006
DUPLICATE. Immigration Act 1901-1912 and Regulations.

CERTIFICATE EXEMPTING FROM DICTATION TEST.

I, Sidney Heywood Rowe, ^{Actg.} the Collector of Customs for the State of Victoria, in the said Commonwealth, hereby certify that Poon Gooley, hereinafter described, who is leaving the Commonwealth temporarily, will be exempted from the provisions of paragraph (a) of Section 3 of the Act if he returns to the Commonwealth within a period of 3 years, from this date.

Date Dec. 2nd 1918. ^{Actg.} MR Rowe Collector of Customs.



DESCRIPTION.

Nationality <u>Chinese</u>	Birthplace <u>Canton</u>
Age <u>42</u>	Complexion <u>Olive</u>
Height <u>5ft 7 inches</u>	Hair <u>Black (turning grey)</u>
Build <u>Medium</u>	Eyes <u>Brown</u>
Particular marks <u>None</u>	

(For impression of hand, see back of this document.)

PHOTOGRAPHS.

Full Face:— Profile:—

Date of departure 20/12/18 Port of Embarkation Melbourne
Ship Kiako Maru Destination China

Date of return _____ Ship _____
Port _____

4.214/3.17.—0.2005. Customs Officers.

Each time Poon Gooley 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.

Page 1 | 2

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

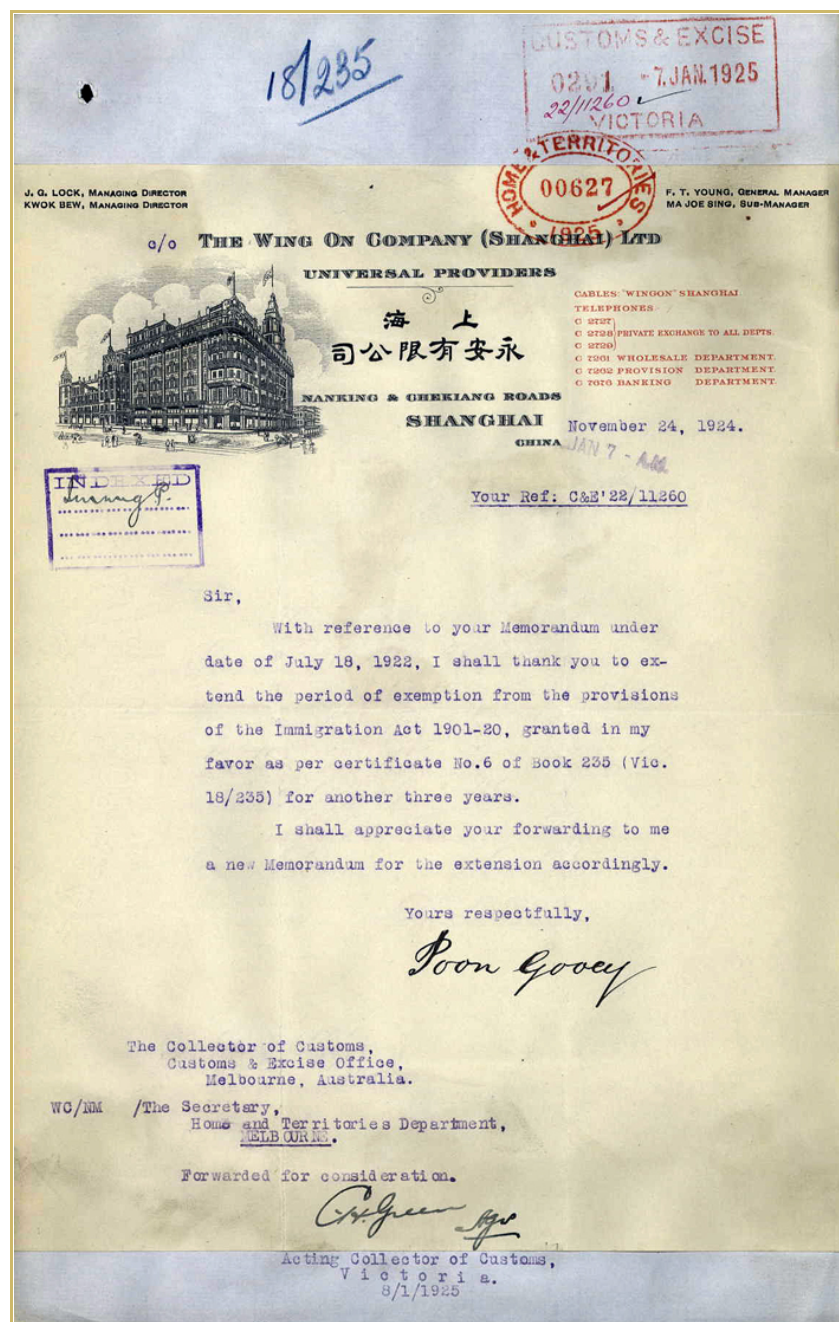


Where you see this symbol in RecordSearch, a digital copy of the item can be viewed online. Simply click on the 'View digital copy' link.

A Legacy of White Australia

Home / Collection / Issues & insights

Letter from Poon Gooley, 1924



Poon Gooley 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 Gooley 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.

A Legacy of White Australia

Home / Collection / Issues & insights

Poon Gooley's application for a CEDT, 1918

Form No. 22

*A.R. Card
67 Geelong
seen 4/12/18. 1096*

25405

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

IMMIGRATION ACT 1901-1912.

*19. 12. 18.
Market Square
Geelong*

Sir,

I beg to apply for a Certificate under the *Immigration Act* 1901-1912, Section 4 (b), and Regulations, and I forward herewith a Statutory Declaration in support of my application.

I wish to visit *China* for *36* months.

I attach *Two* Certificates of my character, and six unmounted photographs of myself (three full face and three profile).

I undertake and intend not to bring with me or to introduce into the Commonwealth on my return to the Commonwealth any relative who is not possessed of an unexpired or unrevoked certificate excepting him or her from the provisions of paragraph (a) of section 3 of the above Act, and I also undertake and intend not to be directly or indirectly privy to the bringing to or introduction into the Commonwealth of any such relative.

If my application is granted, please intimate the fact to me at the above address.

Yours faithfully,
Poon Gooley

THE COLLECTOR H.M. CUSTOMS,
Melbourne

NOTE.—The six photographs should be unmounted and not retouched; taken with hat off; size, about 3½ in. x 2½ in.; and the "profile" copies should be distinctly side faces, not three-quarter.

NOTE.—The Statutory Declaration should set out the length of residence in Australia, and should verify all documents accompanying the application, and should be in the form required by the "Statutory Declarations Act 1911."

A 20/12/18.—C14263.

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 Gooley applied for a CEDT to cover a three year visit to China. He included two references with his application.

Page 1 | 2 | 3

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

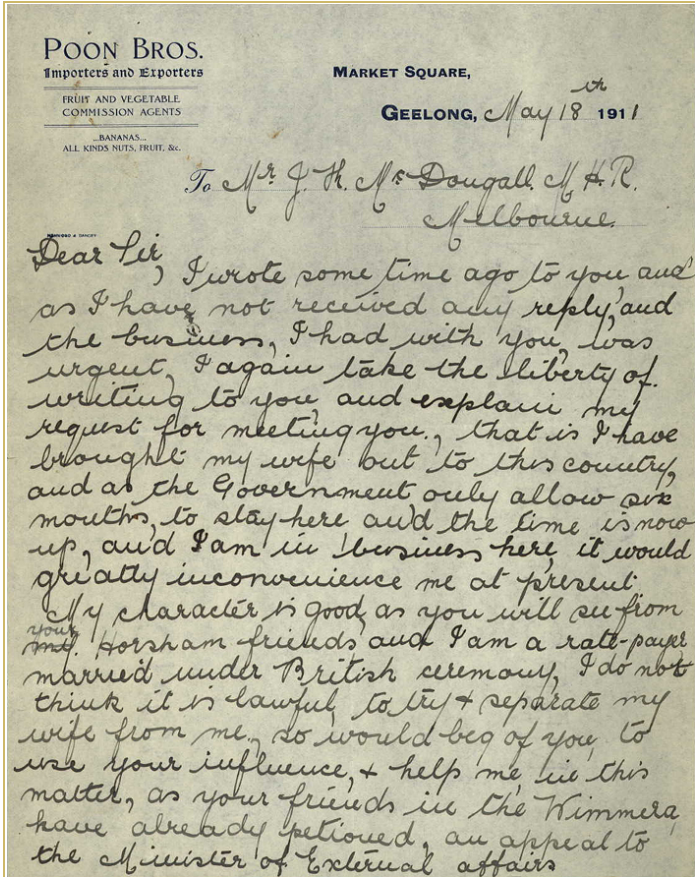


Where you see this symbol in RecordSearch, a digital copy of the item can be viewed online. Simply click on the 'View digital copy' link.

A Legacy of White Australia

[Home](#) / [Collection](#) / [Issues & insights](#)

Letter from Poon Gooley, 1911



Poon Gooley made use of all available avenues in his efforts to keep Ham Hop in Australia. This letter was written to JK McDougall, Member of the House of Representatives for Warrnon, requesting a meeting to engage his support. In the letter Poon Gooley pleaded his case, saying 'I am a rate-payer married under British ceremony, I do not think it is lawful, to try try & separate my wife from me, so would beg of you, to use your influence, and help me in this matter'.

Page 1 | 2

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

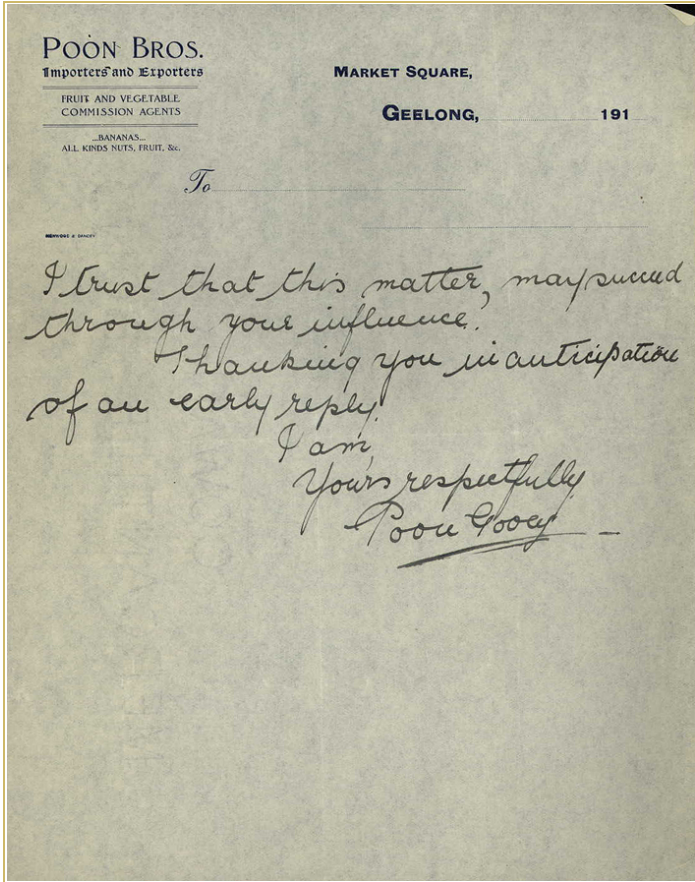


Where you see this symbol in RecordSearch, a digital copy of the item can be viewed online. Simply click on the 'View digital copy' link.

A Legacy of White Australia

[Home](#) / [Collection](#) / [Issues & insights](#)

Letter from Poon Gooley, 1911



Page 1 | 2

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

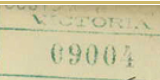
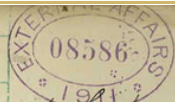


Where you see this symbol in RecordSearch, a digital copy of the item can be viewed online. Simply click on the 'View digital copy' link.

A Legacy of White Australia

Home / Collection / Issues & insights

Petition from the citizens of Horsham, 1911

We being citizens of Horsham in Victoria do hereby
 humbly petition the Hon. the Minister for External
 Affairs to allow Hopi Poon Goey, the wife of Poon Goey
 to remain in the Commonwealth.

Poon Goey has been a resident of the
 Commonwealth for 16 years several years in Horsham
 where he is well known and respected.

He married his wife Hopi Poon Goey in
 Hong Kong several years ago before the Assistant
 Registrar General the marriage being an English
 one.

Poon Goey has carried on business in Horsham
 for several years as a fruiterer and speaks and
 writes English thoroughly.

Name	Occupation
John A. Teague	District Secretary State Rivers Commission
W. Williams	Butcher Horsham
A. Amos	Labourer Horsham
R. W. Pats	Agent Horsham
H. Miller	Agent Horsham
Chas. W. Sayby	Bank Manager Horsham
James Barrell	Shin Secretary "
C. J. Pearce	Clothier Boot & Shoeman "
James Gocking	Town Clerk
James Young	Cartoonist
J. Clarkson	Sailor
James Berry	Ironmonger
William Oliver	Inspector
Walter Bolton	Agent Horsham
C. N. Ward	Inspector
Amos Green	Truities & Inspection
R. Wilmoth	Solicitor Horsham
J. Ball	Fruiterer & Grower
J. McAnley	Auctioneer
Arthur Rogers	Agent
John & Miller	Labourer

In May 1911, residents of the town of Horsham petitioned the Minister for External Affairs to allow Mrs Poon Goey 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 Goey must leave at the expiration of her exemption.

Page 1 | 2

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

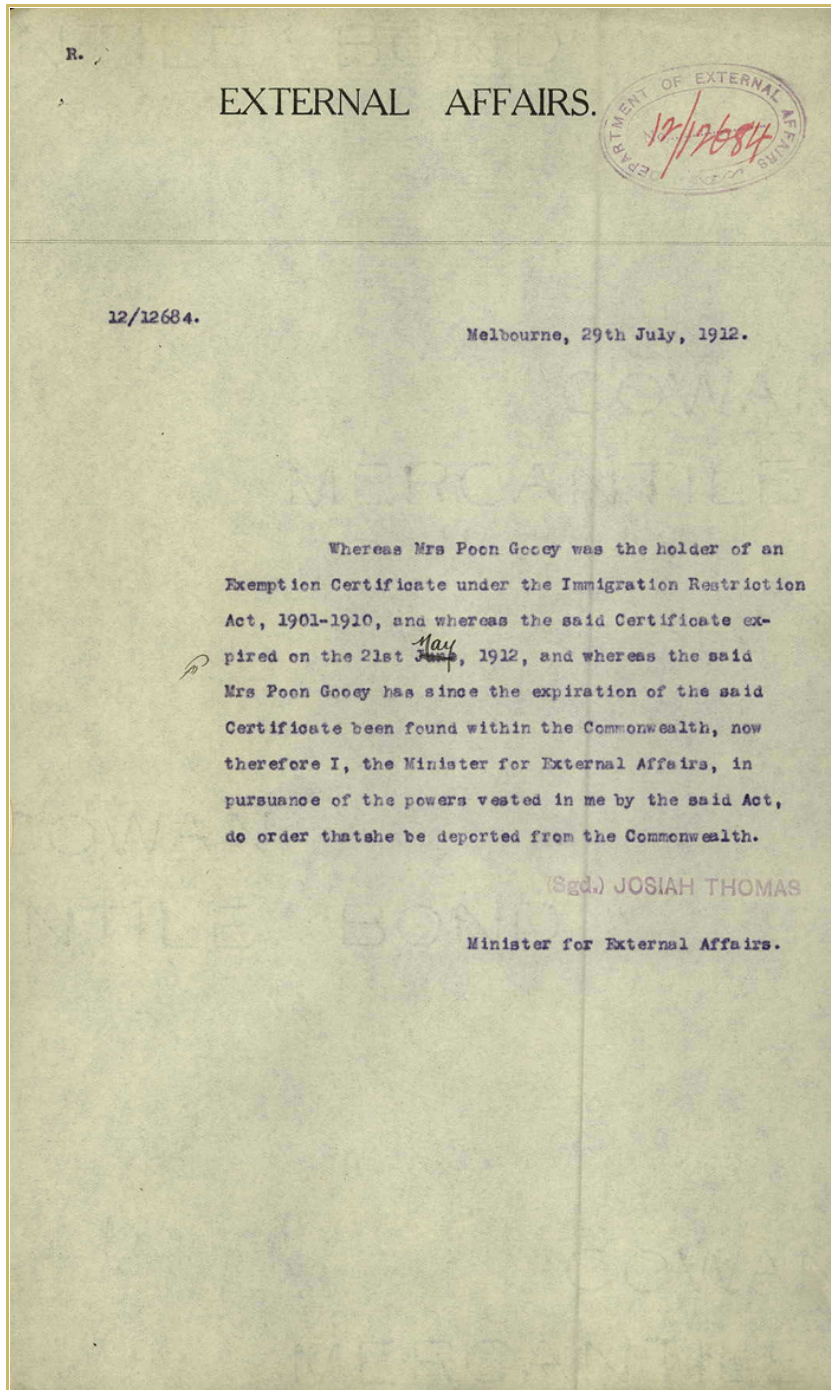


Where you see this symbol in RecordSearch, a digital copy of the item can be viewed online. Simply click on the 'View digital copy' link.

A Legacy of White Australia

[Home](#) / [Collection](#) / [Issues & insights](#)

Copy of the deportation order for Ham Hop, 1912



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.

A Legacy of White Australia

[Home](#) / [Collection](#) / [Issues & insights](#)

Portrait of Ham Hop, 1910



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 Gooley
C&E 11/14829 [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.