

# Sacramento River Delta Historical Society NEWSLETTER

*"For what is the present, after all,  
but a growth out of the past."*

— Walt Whitman

NEWSLETTER

Vol. 10, No. 2

DECEMBER 1990

## SOCIETY NOTES

The year got off to a slow start, however, eventually the Dai Loy Museum and the History Center were both opened.

The Dai Loy Museum operated all summer with staffing provided by Mr. Clarence Chew, who will operate the museum until the end of 1990. There were 4092 visitors from May through September. The museum is open more according to the availability of visitors. Books and postcards are on sale. Admission is \$1 for adults--children free.

The September meeting was held at the Bates School in Courtland. Mr. John Bettencourt from the "Old City Cemetery Committee" was the featured speaker. The committee has been active for five years and has been successful in bringing the Sacramento City Cemetery, on Riverside, out of retirement. The plots are privately owned and the city cannot maintain them. Recent interest has improved the maintenance with the cooperation of the Sheriff Department's alternate work program and the Committee. Mr. Bettencourt told several interesting stories about people buried in the Old Cemetery. Hardin Bigelow, Sacramento's first elected mayor who built the first levee (1850), was shot in the squatters' riot and died of cholera--all in one year. William Stephen Hamilton, son of Alexander Hamilton, who was buried three different times in three different places. A young railroad engineer who gave his life to save a trainload of passengers. Mark Hopkins, first of the Big Four to die. The Honorable Reuben Kircheval, a Green and a Colby were mentioned from the Delta. A very pleasant evening was enjoyed by all who attended.

Committee Chairman Jerold Waterworth announced the opening of THE SACRAMENTO RIVER DELTA HISTORY CENTER in the Jean Harvie School during September. The center will be developed as a depository and research center where people will be able to work on individual and society projects. Exhibits will be open to the public. Meetings may be held in the center and it will be open for research and browsing. Among the many treasures available are transcripts of the oral interviews held with many early Deltans. You can probably read between the lines that a great deal of volunteer help is going to be needed to sort, arrange and maintain this center. Plan to contribute your share of time and energy! Does anyone have any three- or four-drawer file cabinets they do not need any longer? The History Center could use them.

A need to improve our finances has led to a change in the dues structure. Rather than raise dues, the special categories for students and seniors were eliminated. We hope to raise enough revenue to maintain our publication schedule and other activities without further restructuring.

The nominating committee is working on a slate of officers for next year. Stand by to be called and serve!

Our November meeting was held in the History Center at the Jean Harvie School. Mr. James Alkons, conservator of paintings at the Crocker Art Gallery, spoke on the preservation of paintings, photographs, letters, maps, etc. We are most grateful for his advice and much better equipped to save our own artifacts. Many thanks to Mr. Alkons and to Cathy Hemly for arranging his appearance.

<b>ANNUAL POTLUCK DINNER</b>	
ST. ANTHONY'S HALL	JANUARY 21 6:30
FOOD	FUN ENTERTAINMENT BUSINESS
<b>EVERYONE COME!</b>	
BRING A HOTDISH, SALAD OR DESSERT	

NL V010 #02

## WALNUT GROVE METHODIST CHURCH

[This article is from the Nichi Bei Times, a Japanese-American Daily, April 10, 1990. Written by Gary Kawaguchi with some information from Ed Kawahara and others.]

A trip into our collective nikkei past should begin with a drive up the Sacramento River to the delta down of Walnut Grove. Most Californians have heard of Locke, the state's only surviving Chinese rural community. Only a stone's throw from Locke, Walnut Grove is fishing heaven, the perfect location for a Huckleberry Finn adventure.

Driving along roads on top of the levees, you can peer down at boats drifting through the slow moving current. Green fields and orchards stretch out on both sides in the fertile sedimentary soil deposited by the Sacramento. The pastoral riverside seems unchanged by progress and yet it's little more than an hour by car from San Francisco.

As a old-time nikkei community, Walnut Grove was similar to many rural towns up and down the coast. What's unique today is the delta community's state of preservation, appearing much as it did in the 1920s. For the nisei and older sansei who return there and for visitors who grew up in other rural areas, Walnut Grove provides many reminders of their farming origins.

Miles of levee along the riverbanks were raised one basket at a time by Chinese laborers from the 1850s through the 1890s. Protecting crops from annual floods, the earthen ramps enabled large-scale agricultural development in the delta. After the passage of the Chinese exclusion act, Japanese immigrants took their place as migrant agricultural workers.

Due to the language and cultural differences between the white landowners and their largely Asian workforce, the Japanese were offered leasing arrangements so that they could farm the land, thus relieving landowners of the burden of recruiting labor, according to Ed Kawahara, a former Walnut Grove community activist, an ex-instructor in Asian American Studies at U.C. Berkeley and current director of the Small Business Development Center Program of the state commerce department.

The Japanese tenant farmers and sharecroppers produced labor-intensive crops like asparagus, making nearby Isleton the "Asparagus Capital" of America. Although highly perishable, vegetables were marketable because of advances in rail transportation. The growers soon began to ship produce to Japanese communities in urban areas and also developed food processing and direct retailing. Catering to the large migrant workforce, Japanese merchants established businesses in Walnut Grove -- at its height there were 13 hotels, 7 grocery stores, a Japanese school and even a theater. The stores supplied small riverside communities and labor camps, sending boats to deliver food and mail throughout the maze of islands, channels and sloughs.

Prosperity, however, peaked around 1924. The depression, an influx of Filipino labor, and a shift toward more capital-intensive crops like grains, alfalfa and canning tomatoes had a great impact on the Japanese population. By the end of the wartime internment, the Japanese had little work to return to.

The land beneath the town was owned by five white families until the 1970s when many of the original owners passed away, leaving the property under the control of corporations. The Japanese families had built houses and businesses but were forced to pay rent on the land. Renters' rights could be revoked at any time, leaving the few nikkei residents who remained after the war in a tenuous position.

In the late 1960s, the issei and nisei residents of the lower (called the "ura") half of town protested a rent increase by one of the landowners by staging a rent strike. The strike mobilized the residents and drew outside support. The nikkei residents successfully negotiated a cooperative buyout of the land under their buildings. The upper, "omote," part of town also became a cooperative a few years later. Because of these cooperative movements, the town has remained intact.

Recently, Methodist pastors, including Mike Yoshii of Alameda, Roger Morimoto of Fresno, and Mark Nakagawa and Gary Barbaree of Sacramento, became interested in restoring the Walnut Grove Methodist Church as an historical archive and retreat center. The quiet rural community was envisioned as a cultural center for nikkei throughout California.

In 1913, the Kawashimo Minami Mi-I Kyokai (Walnut Grove Methodist Episcopal (M.E.) Church South, in England) was formed as a mission group, according to Seizo Oka, historian, former director of the Japanese American History Room and an early resident of Isleton, nine miles downriver from Walnut Grove.

The Walnut Grove church was constructed in 1915 under the leadership of Rev. Keiichi Imai, a pioneer immigrant pastor. A year later, however, it was destroyed by fire and rebuilt in 1917. After the Rev. Imai left the Walnut Grove community for his new congregation in Dinuba in 1930, the church again burned down in 1934. The present building was built after the 1934 fire. The building's interior indicates its uses for social functions of the early nikkei community. For example, half of the upper floor is composed of small rooms which were used for school during the day and to board workers who needed a place to sleep at night. Before World War II, racial segregation forced the Japanese children to attend a separate school. Oka remembers how Rev. Imai organized a Sunday School in neighboring Isleton on Saturdays as local interest was very great.

In the mid-1920s, a Buddhist Church was initiated in Walnut Grove, rapidly attracting a large following. The Buddhists had traditional appeal and, unlike the Christians, did not vigorously support the temperance movement and prohibition. Thus, by 1924, the Methodist adult congregation had decreased to fewer than one hundred. And because of the post-war resettlement of nikkei to other areas, the church no longer has regular services.

The church would have disappeared long ago if it were not for the community's unique situation. Much of the Sacramento delta area hasn't been subdivided and developed because the levees are slowly deteriorating and replacing them would be too expensive. The Methodist Church owns the building but the Delta Japanese Development Association owns the land. The building, as a result, has not been used much since the war nor can it be sold off.

The church, with its simple frame construction in its quiet peaceful setting, has a way of awakening memories and emotions from the past, especially for former residents, said Rev. Barbaree. In the future, the pastor hopes that the historic building and the rural setting will serve as a retreat center to introduce younger sansei and yonsei to their rural legacy.

## DELTA LIFESTYLE

Three generations of Smiths cultivated a rich lifestyle off of the delta land. There are many descendants and relatives of Steven Turner Morse and John Crawford Smith in the area today.

Steve Morse was born in 1780. When he was 21, he went to Florida to form a colony. He left because of the Indians and moved to Canada where he cleared land and became prosperous. He left Canada, rather than serve the king, and moved to New York where he drove the Albany-Buffalo stage. In 1819 he married Sara Turner. They had 10 children and moved to Lockport, Illinois.

Steven Turner Morse (Junior) was born in New York in 1820. He did farm work and blacksmithed in Missouri, Mississippi and Alabama. Steven moved to Lockport, Illinois, in 1844, where he worked until 1849 when he went to California. He was a typical '49er. In California he mined for three years before he moved to the Sacramento River. He was a blacksmith at Onisbo in 1854. He bought a ranch on Miner Slough in Solano County and in 1858 he bought a ranch at the head of Sutter Island in Sacramento County.

In 1859 he married Martha Burson from Lockport who worked on the Runyon ranch. They had four children and lived on the "point" ranch on Sutter Island until his death in 1889, the result of a fall on his head while loading hay.

Their oldest daughter, Sara Eliza, born in 1861, married John Crawford Smith in 1881. John, born in Brooklyn New York in 1852, was a rancher on Merritt Island in Yolo County. After they married they lived on a scow/houseboat anchored in the Sacramento River in front of the 10 acres they farmed. At that time there were only low tidal levees. In 1887 the levees were raised and strengthened by Reclamation District dredges and a graded road was added to the levee top. The Smiths and their three children, Nettie, Charles and Ada, moved the house ashore, put it

on foundations and added a story. John's parents joined them and so did eight more children, Crawford, Hazel, Willie, Clara, Alvah, John Clifford, Dorris and Gladys--the last in 1907.

The oldest boy, Charles, took out a scow provisioned for two or three weeks at a time. He hunted and fished the sloughs from the ranch to Rio Vista where he sold his catches. He continued his way of life until he had a fishing accident, became ill and died in the hospital in Rio Vista in 1912.

Thirty acres were added to the farm where vegetables were grown, a cow kept for milk, horses for work and a transport and chickens and hogs were raised.

In the 1880s the family fished for salmon (there were canneries in the area), sometimes netting a sturgeon. Duck hunting was very lucrative and ducks in plentiful supply. Mrs. Smith cleaned them before putting them on the boats that stopped on their way to San Francisco where there was a ready market. Hay schooners stopped by too.

Later bees were kept and honey sold in Sacramento. During the time the Holland Land Company reclaimed land, beavers were a problem and Clifford and his father trapped beaver for two or three years and cured and sold the pelts.

In the 1940s, after the death of Sara and John and the marriage of all the girls, Clifford built a new house on the site of the old scow-house and raised a family while farming on Merritt Island.

[This article was prepared by Carol Watson with information garnered from "Pen Pictures from the Garden of the World" by Wm. Davis, Wrights reproduction of Thompson and Wests "History of Sacramento County California (1880)," ancient conversations with Edith Morse Conner (Sara's little sister) and more recent conversations with Margaret Smith (Clifford's wife) and Alice Pylman Quick (Nettie's daughter). It was also polished by the editor.]

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ORGANIZED APRIL 30, 1917

# TRACTOR NOTES

Ever wonder where the word "tractor" originated? A hundred years ago when steam power was used engines that moved were referred to as "steam traction engines." As gasoline engines became popular this was changed to "gasoline traction engines." Usually 1906 is the year credited for popular establishment of the name "tractor" to replace the longer three-word name. It is usually attributed to Charles Hart and Charles Parr, the two men who designed a twin cylinder, oil-cooled engine and then installed it in a tractor. Theirs was the first company to make tractors exclusively. W.H. Williams was sales manager for Hart-Parr. One day, when he was writing advertising he used the word "tractor." Perhaps the credit should go to him. But in patent #435600 the word first appeared. This patent was issued to George Edwards of Chicago. You can take your pick!

Fifty years ago, four companies merged: Oliver Chilled Plow Co., Nichols & Shephard Threshing Co., American Seeding Co., and Hart-Parr Tractor Co. James Oliver invented the chilled plow, a method of reducing the temperature on outside edges of share resulting in a "sandwich" of steel. The plows had longer wear life and were more flexible. James made a significant contribution and when the 1929 merger formed, his son was chairman of the board. Hart and Parr were University of Wisconsin students and founded their tractor company in 1897 with the engine they designed.

First production tractor was sold in 1902 in Iowa and the farmer used it for 17 years! They designed 25 models over the next 30 years. The triple name phased out in the late thirties when the "streamlined" Oliver 70 row crop came out in 1940. This was the beginning of the Fleetline series: 60, 70 and 80 models. The 80's were also available with diesel engines of Buda-Lanova design - a first for Oliver.

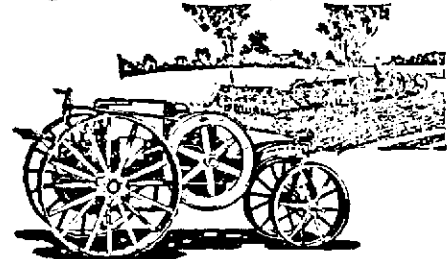
During 1944 Oliver bought the Cleveland Tractor Co. (Cletrac) thus acquiring a tracklayer division. Oliver crawlers were popular after World War II due to lower price and availability compared to Cat and International Harvester. However, manufacture was discontinued in 1965. At one time (1952) Oliver owned the Be-Ge Co. They manufactured tractor hydraulic system attachments used to control pulled implements. The museum has an early (1930s) prototype of a Be-Ge unit built in the plant at Gilroy.

During the sixties a lot of changes took place with Oliver Corp. White Motor Co., Cleveland, bought them along with Cockshutt Farm Equipment of Canada. Then in 1969 Minneapolis-Moline (tractors) merged and all became White Farm Equipment Co., a division of White Motor Corp. With all the mergers, acquisitions, take-overs, etc., we tend to forget old, important names.

You can see these tractors and others at the San Joaquin County Historical Society Museum at Micke's Grove in Lodi.

1916

**Buy It Now and Save the Feed**  
Mogul 8-16 \$675 Cash, f.o.b. Chicago



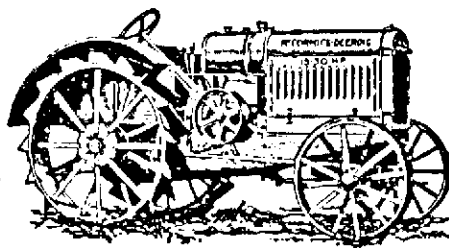
HIGHEST AWARD

**It will pay you to buy your Mogul 8-16 now.** Judging from our experience, the works will have difficulty in filling the demand for these tractors for spring work. If you order yours now, you will have it when you need it, and the tractor will not cost you a cent for up-keep until you begin to use it.

Besides, there probably will never be a better market for good farm horses than there is this winter. Buy a Mogul 8-16 now. Sell your horses in this good market and sell the feed they would consume while standing idle this winter.

Mogul 8-16 is the one light tractor that burns cheap oil fuel—kerosene, benzine, naphtha, and other low grade distillates—successfully. It costs only \$675 cash, f.o.b. Chicago. Your local dealer has a sample machine that you can see and study, and he can probably refer you to many farmers who know that the Mogul 8-16 does, better and cheaper, the heavy work of the farm for which you are now using horses. If he cannot, write us. We can. We will also send you our 100-page tractor book, "Farm Power," which tells fairly why you should own and use a modern Mogul 8-16 light tractor. Don't delay. Buy it now.

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## Mogul 10-20 Kerosene Tractor

The new Mogul 10-20 is a later development of the Mogul 8-16, built to pull three plows instead of two, embodying every improvement found possible, and operating as economically and reliably as ever, on kerosene and still cheaper fuels.

The introduction of this tractor is of great personal interest to every farmer who has the trend of the farm power situation well in mind, and who realizes how completely Mogul 10-20 performance is vouched for, not only by the 75 years of Harvester Company experience but by the work of thousands of Moguls now earning their way on American farms.

Mogul 10-20 has a simple, slow speed, long-life motor. The crank case is enclosed, working parts protected yet all easily accessible. You will find here the big things in Mogul construction that have helped to make Mogul the standard farm power.

Mogul 10-20 would have a successful and prosperous future on your farm. This is a tractor it will pay you to be well acquainted with.

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## Another Pioneer in Oliver Merger

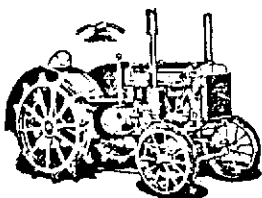
Oliver Farm Equipment Co. Agrees to Purchase American Seeding Machine Co. Subject to Stockholders Approval

EXPANSION plans of the Oliver Farm Equipment Co. are evidenced by press reports which state that the new company, which recently merged well-known concerns as Oliver Chilled Plow Works, Hart-Parr Co. and Nichols & Shepard, has agreed to acquire the American Seeding Machine Co. of Springfield, O. subject to ratification by the latter company's stockholders.

The American Seeding Machine Co. incorporated in 1902, was the result of a merger of a number of prominent seeding machine companies, some of which were established as long ago as 1855. Consequently, the addition of such lines as Superior drills, Black Hawk spreaders and the Buckeye line would add several more of the pioneer lines of farm equipment to the Oliver merger and thus help to make the new organization a formidable "full line" concern.

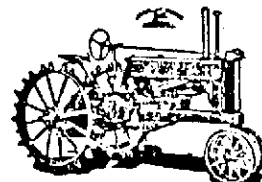
As this issue goes to press, official release of the above report has not been received but reliable sources state that the report is true and that the sale will no doubt be ratified at an early meeting of stockholders of the Seeding Machine Co., of which W. H. Stackhouse, well known in implement circles, is president.

1929



**JOHN DEERE Model D**

The New John Deere Model D for the home farm jobs handles a 2- or 4-bottom plow, a 20-inch separator, a 16-inch combine and other equipment to perfection.



**JOHN DEERE Model A**

The John Deere General Purpose Model A Tractor with adjustable tread does all farm work, including planting and cultivating two or four rows at a time. Handles the load effortlessly pulled by 8 horses.

p4

**PLACE NAMES**

[From the SACRAMENTO COUNTY HISTORY SOCIETY'S GOLDEN NUGGETS, we have the origins of some Sacramento County place names.]

*Antelope*, from the pronghorn once common here, was the name given the settlement of J.F. Cross's brick warehouse by the Antelope Business Association in 1877.

*Brannan Island*, opposite Rio Vista is named for Sam Brannan, who led Mormon colonists to California in 1846. After the gold discovery, he became a wealthy promoter of financial enterprises.

*Citrus Heights*, formerly Sylvan, was renamed in 1910 by Walter E. Trainor when he began selling small acreages to Midwestern settlers to grow citrus fruits.

*Elk Grove* dates from 1850 when James Hall opened the Elk Grove House, with an elk's head painted over the door. He came from Elk Grove, Missouri.

*Folsom*, named for the landowner, Joseph L. Folsom, was planned by Theodore Judah in 1855 to create a terminus for the Sacramento Valley Railroad.

*Galt*, founded in 1869 by the Central Pacific Railroad, was named at the suggestion of John McFarland, after his home in Ontario, Canada.

*Herald*, established in 1911, was named for two men, Herbert Fleischacker and Alden Anderson, builders of a short rail line between Stockton and Sacramento.

*Kimball Island* was named for George W. Kimball, first postmaster of Antioch and first justice of the peace of New York Township.

*Natomas*, including the Maidu word "note" (upstream or east), was first Natoma, a town southwest of Folsom (1851). The Natoma Water Company evolved into the Natomas Company, with large land holdings; thus North and South Natomas.

*Orangevale* dates from 1887 when the Orange Vale colonization Company was formed to promote the sale of acreages in a presumed frost-free area.

*Wilton*, a station of the Central California Traction line, was named for the landowner, Seth A. Wilton, a dairy and poultry rancher. There was a post office in 1915.

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**IN MEMORIAM**

Emeline A. Pylman  
Barbara O'Neill

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**SACRAMENTO AREA OLD BUSINESSES**

American Express (local office) . . . . .	1850	United States Cold Storage of Cal . . . . .	1898
Sacramento Union . . . . .	1851	J.N. Blair & Co. . . . .	1899
Longshores Luggage . . . . .	1859	(Wool and hide, butcher and dairy	
Heald Business College (campus) . . . . .	1863	supplies, now commercial refrigeration and	
Gladding McBean . . . . .	1875	restaurant food facilities.)	
(Clay sewer pipe and terra cotta and		Crystal Cream and Butter . . . . .	1901
brick building products.)		Emigh Hardware . . . . .	1908
H.C. Muddox . . . . .	1878	McCurry's Camera Store . . . . .	1908
(Originally sewer pipe and pottery,		Orchard Supply Co. of Sacramento . . . . .	1919
now construction brick of all kinds.)		Merchants National Bank of Sacramento . . . . .	1921
Palm Iron and Bridge Works . . . . .	1886	The Spink Corp. . . . .	1926
California Central Press . . . . .	1891		
(Sacramento Lithograph)			

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PS

## BOOKS OF INTEREST

\*A Companion in California. (ppbk)  
by James D. Hart  
(Later director of Bancroft Library, U.C.)

\*Indians of California: The Changing Image.  
by James J. Rawls (ppbk)

\*Bridging the Pacific: San Francisco, Chinatown and its People. (ppbk)  
by Thomas W. Chinn

The Journal of Jesus Maria Estudello: Sketches of California in the 1860's.  
Ed. by Margaret Schlichtmaun

\*A Life of Its Own: The Politics of Water and Power.  
by Robert Gottlieb.  
Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich

\*Early Tall Buildings from the Agricultural Valley Towns of Central and Northern California: A Sentimental Sketchbook. Collection of Downtown Main Street California, USA.  
by Dickenson Weber.  
Sandscape Press, Concord, CA

\* Books available in the Sacramento City/County Library System.

### WORKSHOP

An Oral History Training workshop will be presented from 1-4 Wednesday, January 18, 1991 in the Woodland Public Library, 250 First Street, Woodland. \$25 to register--call 881-1212. Presenters will be local historians, Shipley Walters and Joann Larkey.

Editor ..... Kathleen Hutchinson  
Co-Editor ..... Carol Watson  
Typist ..... Judy Johnson

The Sikhs of Northern California, 1904-1975.  
by Bruce LaBrack  
A.M.S. Press, New York

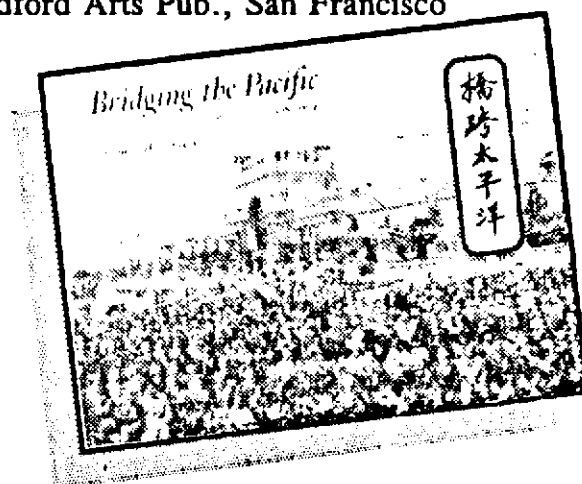
\*The Issei: The World of the First Generation Japanese Immigrants 1885-1924.  
by Yori Ichioka  
Free Press MacMillan

\*Asian America: Chinese and Japanese in the United States Since 1950.  
by Roger Daniels  
University of Washington Press

The Californios vs Jedediah Smith 1827-27.  
Ed. by David J. Weber  
Arthur H. Clark Co., Spokane

Yosemite. The Embattled Wilderness.  
by Arthur Runte  
University of Nebraska Press

\*O California: Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century California.  
Landscapes and Observations.  
by Stephen Vincent  
Bedford Arts Pub., San Francisco



**BRIDGING THE PACIFIC.**  
**San Francisco Chinatown and its people**  
by Thomas W. Chinn.

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