

Alaska State Library  
Historical Collections

Guide to Collection

China Joe, 1834-1917.

"China Joe" Papers, ca. 1917-2004

MS 217

4 folders

Processed By: Sean Lanksbury  
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**ACQUISITION:** The collection was donated by Mark Whitman of Douglas, AK in 2004 (Acc. no. 2004-065.)

**ACCESS:** The collection is available for viewing; however, the photographs may not be photocopied.

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**PROCESSING:** Legal documents were photocopied onto acid-free paper. Photographs have been sleeved in Mylar. Collection has been described at the folder level.

### Biographical Note

Chew Chung Thui (1834-1917), known to most as "China Joe" or "Joe the Baker," immigrated from China to Victoria, British Columbia in 1864. Other names attributed to Joe included Hi Chung, Chung Thui, As Hie, Tui, Ting Chu, Ting Tu Wee, and Lee Hing. Later in 1864 he moved to a mining camp in Boise, Idaho.

In 1874, Joe followed the Gold Rush back to British Columbia and set up a bakery and general store around Dease Lake. When the Stikine froze around 1875 and created a food shortage in the Yukon, Joe possessed the only supply of flour. Rather than use the opportunity to make a profit, he opted to ration his materials to the miners based on their needs, asking only that he be repaid when the shortage ended. In 1879 Joe came to Wrangell and purchased the steamliner Hope which he converted into the town's first hotel. Later he operated a bakery in Sitka, Alaska.

He arrived in Juneau in 1881. In January 1886, armed vigilantes attempted to seize China Joe and send him out of Juneau, alongside the Chinese mine laborers they had ejected from the Treadwell mine. Many of Joe's friends and supporters came to his aid, protecting him from deportation. China Joe remained to become the only person of Chinese descent in Juneau and one of its leading citizens. He became a charter member of the Alaska Pioneers Association. His bakery, located on 3<sup>rd</sup> and Main Street, attracted many Juneau locals, especially the town's children. He passed away in 1917 of heart failure and was buried at the Evergreen Cemetery in Juneau, Alaska.

### **Scope and Contents Note**

These materials were collected by Mark Whitman of Juneau, Alaska to aid in the creation of a stageplay script based on China Joe's life. The collection contains the Legal documents filed by or for China Joe, one notebook of research pertaining to the life and death of China Joe, newspaper articles, and handwritten notes. Brett Dillingham of Juneau, Alaska also contributed.

### **Related Materials**

China Joe [videorecording] / [produced through a Juneau History Grant administered by the Juneau-Douglas City Museum ; project coordinator, Brett Dillingham]. VIDEO 0346

### **Inventory**

#### ***Box 1***

- Folder 1    Legal documents: Certificate of Death, notarized; photocopies of Deed, Last Will and Testament, Executor's Petition, Bank Consent, Final Execution, Court Orders, Proof of Payment, and Supplements.
- Folder 2    Notebook: photocopied news clippings related to China Joe.
- Folder 3    Two portraits. Headstone rubbing from Evergreen Cemetery. Photo negatives of Evergreen Cemetery plot images.
- Folder 4    Stageplay: "The Story of China Joe" by Dillingham, Brett, Mark Whitman, 1992, handwritten notes.