

Mercantile Restocked

The biggest event at the Mai Wah since the organization began is the return of some 2,500 artifacts to the Wah Chong Tai Mercantile where they were nearly 70 years ago when Charlie Bovey acquired them and took them to Nevada City.



On loan from the owner, the Montana Heritage Commission, the artifacts together with the original cabinets, cases, and

counters that were in the store beginning before 1905 were back in Butte in February, as reported in our June 2012 newsletter.

Thanks to Janet Sperry's donation creating the Merle and Edith Hoyt Curatorial Chair, Curator Janna Norby has now catalogued most of the artifacts. With significant help from Si Wen Liu, a high school student in Butte, hundreds of labels have now been translated and informative tags prepared to enhance the visitor experience.

Grand Reopening of the Mercantile!
The celebration is scheduled for
June 15, 2013

Save the Date!

Special Guests visit

The Museum had several special guests last summer. The first were May Chan and her husband Greg Rathbone. May Chan's great-great grandfather was Chin Chun Hock, the first owner of the Wah Chong Tai Mercantile. Chin Chun Hock was a very successful businessman in Seattle and owned the Wah Chong Co. there. He came to Butte about 1894 and had the Wah Chong Tai built to house a very successful store. His family is currently working on their family history which will be shared with us in the future.

The second set of visitors was Colin and Carol Tam with their guide Marcie Rindal. Colin's grandfather was one of the very first to open a noodle parlor, located at 102 S. Main Alley. He had the actual floor plans of the restaurant, documents, and photos of his family. Colin, at age 86, was very moved by what he found in Butte after a trip to the Archives where he found his father's and aunt's birth certificates. At dinner at the Pekin with Danny Wong (Ding Tam), they discovered that he and Danny had family from the same village in China.



Chinese New Year 2013 Year of the Snake
Parade date: Saturday February 16

Sponsored by the
Mai Wah Society



Membership

In 2012, the Mai Wah Society rejuvenated its membership program that had been languishing for some time. We have three calendar-year membership levels, \$25, \$50, and \$100. All levels are significant help in our operations and we hope you'll consider joining, using the membership form in this newsletter. All levels include free admission to the museum. We're thrilled to list here our members for 2012 as well as major donors—thanks! Your membership makes a difference!



The Mai Wah Society

*"Preserving and Interpreting
Butte's Asian Heritage"*

Membership Benefits

\$100

Newsletter, Free Museum Admission, 15% Gift Shop Discount, \$5 Discount on T-Shirt Purchase and Guided Museum and Building Tour for 10 People

\$50

Newsletter, Free Museum Admission to Member, Two Museum Passes, and \$5 Discount on T-Shirt Purchase

\$25

Newsletter, Free Museum Admission to Member and Two Museum Passes

Join Today!

Your membership has many benefits
Preserve Butte's Historic Chinatown!

Paid Members, 2012

Katherine Griffin
Steven Wong
Richard Nelson

Toni & Paul Seccomb

Gary Weisz
Todd Baker
Butte Weekly
Mitzi Rosssillon
Victor Sloan & Sandra Gong
Janet Sperry

Fred & Melinda Quivik

Lucy Pesanti
Jana Faught
Elizabeth Ramsey
Debbie Bishop
Lindsay Mulcahy
Richard Gibson
Maryett Swafford

2012 Donors (\$50 and over)

Janet Sperry
Karen Davidson
Mitchell Stocks
Dori Skrukrud
Judith B. Condren
Celine Fisher

Business Blessings —Thanks!

Business blessings, started in 2010, have become a popular part of the Chinese New Year celebration in Butte. We appreciate the support and hope that the Dragon Dance brought prosperity to the following businesses this year:

2012 Business Blessing Donors

Quarry Brewing
Butte Plaza Mall
MainStreet Uptown Butte
Butte-Silver Bow Court House
Silver Dollar Saloon
Butte Weekly
NorthWestern Energy
Jade Spa
M & M Cigar Store Cafe
Insty-Prints
Lisa Wareham Studio
Montana Therapeutic Massage
Headframe Spirits
Main Stope Gallery
Butteopia
Bad Beaver Bikes
Venus Rising
Hilltop Market
Hennessy's Market
Hilltop Flea Market
Butte Public Library
Julians

We'll be organizing the parade and the business blessings for 2013 in January. Mai Wah volunteer Sonny Thornborrow plans to visit with most uptown businesses. If you are interested in a business blessing, you can also contact Sonny at mt1595@yahoo.com. It is not always possible to accommodate all requests, because of constraints on the parade route, but we try to also arrange for off-route blessings.



Montana Shares

Montana Shares is a partnership of 40 statewide non-profit organizations and the Mai Wah is a proud member. Montana Shares and member groups are devoted to improving the quality of life for Montanans and their communities through workplace giving (payroll deduction) campaigns. You should also know that Shares will always honor donor choice and strive for strict fiscal accountability. Our annual campaign is underway at workplaces around the state.



You can participate in several ways: 1) contribute through your current workplace campaign or ask that Montana Shares be included in your workplace campaign, 2) contribute individually, and 3) if there is no campaign in your workplace, ask that Montana Shares be an option for all employees. For more information, please call Montana Shares at 1-800-2625 or in Helena 442-2218, or visit the Shares website at www.montanashares.org. In Butte, please call Deb Bishop at 782-4867 or email at info@maiwah.org. There is a Montana Shares link on our webpage at www.maiwah.org. Every contribution, small or large is acknowledged and truly appreciated.

Curator position extended

Thanks to a second gift by Board Member Janet Sperry, we are excited to announce the extension of the Merle and Edith Hoyt Curatorial Chair into 2013. Janet's initial gift of \$13,000 in memory of her parents allowed Janna Norby to catalog most of the Mercantile collection and get much of it on display—a huge accomplishment that would have been impossible without this support.



The second \$13,000 gift from Janet will permit Janna to work on the remaining objects in the

Mercantile collection, and to expand the work to include many other artifacts held by the Mai Wah. These include dishes and cooking utensils from Ming's Restaurant, with the ultimate goal of creating a noodle parlor exhibit.

The Mai Wah has many other objects, in storage for many years, which we hope to get displayed once the curation is complete.

Thanks, Janet!

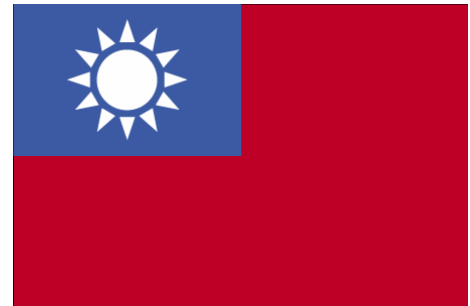
Below and left: a few of the 2,500 artifacts from the Wah Chong Tai Mercantile Collection, on loan to the Mai Wah from the Montana Heritage Commission.





Renewing Taiwan cultural ties

On January 6, 2013, the Mai Wah was honored by a visit from Mr. Chin Hsing (Andy Chin), Director-General of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Seattle. The Republic of China established this office to promote and strengthen the economic, cultural, educational and other related ties between the United States and the Republic of China (ROC) on Taiwan. The Seattle office (TECO in Seattle), overseen by the Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office in the United States, represents the interests of ROC (Taiwan) in the Northwest Region of the USA. The organization arranged for the donation of Montana's Chinese dragon to the Mai Wah Society in 1998, and the 2013 visit was intended to renew our friendship and to explore future collaborative projects.



Mr. Chin and his colleague Richard Lin had never visited Butte previously. The visit began with a tour of the Mai Wah Museum. In addition to Mai Wah board members, they were joined by State Senators Jon Sesso and Jim Keane, Mark Bisom with the Montana Department of Commerce, and Chief Executive Matt Vincent for a business luncheon—the Uptown Café went out of their way to prepare a special, and typically outstanding, meal for this visit.



Jana Fought, Andy Chin, Richard Lin, and Jim Griffin.



Museum visitation report



Jana Faught was the primary face visitors saw at the front desk in 2012. She was helped by part-time manager Bob Flynn and volunteers Loretta Ballek (74 hours) and Madlyn Bracco-Taylor (10 hours).

In 2012 we saw about 435 visitors at the museum, not quite the recent high of 499 in 2010.

Other volunteers include Siwen Liu - translation work; Pat Pansze - soapmaking and help with inventory; Deb Mueller - exhibit to Ft. Missoula;

Mitzi Rossillon - help with exhibit for Ft. Missoula; Noorjahan Parwana - job description, dragonmaster; Jim Ramsey - fireworks; Chris Fisk and Butte History Club - parade dragon; Dori Skrukud - floats for parades; Mike Mazolini - float coordination; Elizabeth Ramsey - Newsletter; Lindsay Mulcahy - Special Projects, parade; Robert Edwards - Moving, fireworks, special projects; Janet Sperry - Curatorial services; Bob Brock - Board member; Jim Griffin - Building repairs, moving Mercantile; Jana Faught - President; Debbie Bishop - Shares coordinator, Secretary; Dick Gibson - Treasurer, tour guide, webmaster. We thank them all!

The Chinn Family: Our next exhibit

The Chinn family was closely associated with the Mai Wah and Wah Chong Tai for the first 75 years of the 20th Century. Thanks to a grant from the Montana Cultural Trust, and memorial donations honoring Pearl Chinn So who grew up in the buildings in the 1920s-1940s, we are preparing an exhibit to tell their family story and its connection to Butte's Chinatown, from the mid-1890s to the 1950s.

Board member Dick Gibson was awarded the Dave Walter Research Fellowship by the Montana Historical Society to research this history. He spent three days in June in Helena exploring archives there, and since September he's been working on the project.

Contributions from the Chinn family are of course invaluable. Honnay Molloy, daughter of Howard Chinn who was born in the Mai Wah building in 1916, recently provided us with some photographic negatives from 1945-50 showing the family in and around Butte. The photos and other information will be incorporated into an interactive touch-screen display that will be the centerpiece of the exhibit.

Immigration papers (provided by Christopher Chen) have allowed us to build a family tree dating back to the first half of the 19th Century, to the great-grandfather of Howard and his nine brothers and sisters who called West Mercury Street home.

This exhibit should be available for the museum's opening in June 2013.



Family and friends on the sidewalk in front of the Mai Wah, 1950. The baby is Yvonne Chinn, daughter of Bill Chinn, a son of Albert Chinn, the manager of the Wah Chong Tai from about 1912-1937. Photo provided by Honnay Molloy, Bill Chinn's niece.



Mai Wah Society

MEMBERSHIP & DONATIONS

Memberships and donations to the Mai Wah help make possible all the programs we have—from tours to special educational programs to new exhibits. The Mai Wah Society is a 501(c)3 non-profit, so donations are tax deductible as allowed by law.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

Membership levels (check one)

- \$25 (free museum admission, 2 guest passes)
- \$50 (free museum admission, 2 guest passes, \$5 discount on t-shirt)
- \$100 (free museum admission, 2 guest passes, \$5 discount on t-shirt, 15% gift shop discount, private tour for up to 10 people)

Amount enclosed for donation above membership: _____

Please make check payable to Mai Wah Society
and send to
P.O. Box 404, Butte, MT 59703

Thanks very much!



Mai Wah Society
P.O. Box 404
Butte, MT 59703
www.maiwah.org

PRST STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Butte, MT
PERMIT NO. 593



Mai Wah Society Newsletter January 2013

***Chinese New Year 2013
Year of the Snake***

***Parade date: Saturday
February 16
Starts 3:00 p.m.
At the Court House***

MAI WAH SOCIETY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

PRESIDENT: Jane Faught

VICE PRESIDENT: Dick Gibson, Newsletter Editor

SECRETARY: Debbie Bishop

TREASURER: Dick Gibson

MEMBERS: Bob Brock, Robert Edwards, Jim Griffin, Lindsay Mulcahy, Janet Sperry, Pat Munday, John Little