

# Chan Tin Wo Timeline

By Sandy Chan (12/21/17 – Updated 5/31/2020)

This timeline was originally done for a re-enactor in an Arizona Historical Society event in 2017 and was updated on May 31, 2020.

**February 1847** Born in China (1900 Census)

**1873** Immigrates to the US (to work on railroad?)

**1879** works for railroad as cook; is in the camp by Maricopa, AZ in 1879.

- Maricopa is northwest of Casa Grande and is now known for its Harrah's Ak-Chin Casino.
- Cooks (VIPs) Chinese worked as cooks for both the Chinese & American crews and were paid at a higher rate than the regular labors.

**1880**

- **Feb. 21:** *AZ Citizen* (Pre-railroad which arrived in Tucson in March 1880; this freight would have been brought in using oxen or mules on wagons.)

FREIGHT MOVEMENTS.		
Arrivals at Casa Grande, February 19.		
	Pags.	Total Weight.
Lord & Williams.....	3	590
L Zeckendorf & Co.....	100	10900
Ohnesorgen & W, 1 coach.		
Tully, Ochoa & Co.....	2	240
A B Sampson.....	2	150
L Meyer & Co.....	1	70
Empire M and M Company ...		20190
J Powlin.....	156	3210
B Garcia.....	10	600
W Bonner.....	8	800
D Felix & Co.....	6	500
H Drachman.....	2	110
<b>Chan Tin Wo.....</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>690</b>
W A Bourland.....	5	410
R B Metcalf.....	2	70
W F Mills.....	4	770
J Hoefler.....	30	3100
H Wettsch.....	21	1130
Pierce & Wood.....	6	360
A L Warren.....	6	225

LIEUT. W. J. ROSS is in from the Oro Blanco District.

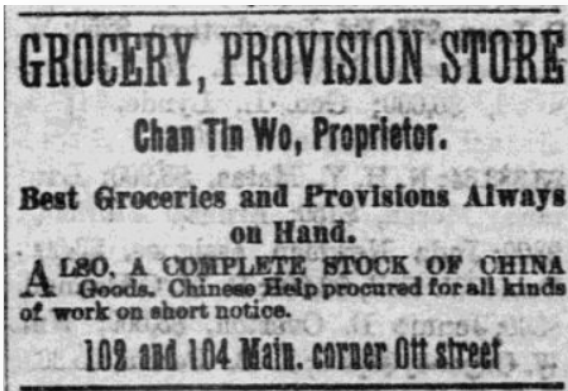
- **June 21 & 22:** *Possibly* enumerated in the census as a “washer” under the name of Woo Chang Ting. The age (18) is off but it may have been estimated by the census taker. He could have been working in a laundry to get money to open his store now that he had his inventory.

**1881:**

- CTW is listed in the Tucson city directory as a dealer in "Chinese goods" operating a store at 111 N. Main Street
- CTW becomes a US citizen. (Note Exclusion Act was passed in 1882.)

**1882:** 1<sup>st</sup> registers to vote in Pima County; is politically active the rest of his life

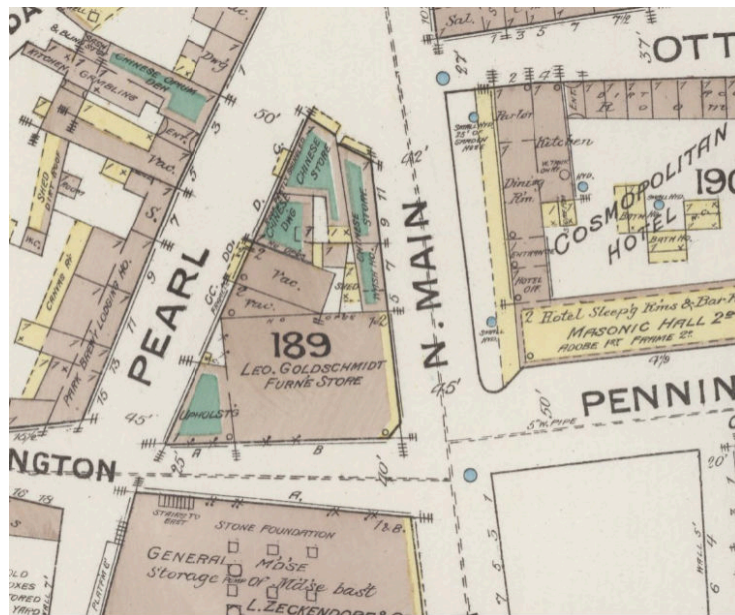
1883: *Tucson Citizen* July 17, 1883 (CTW ran numerous ads in both the *Star* & *Citizen* over the years.)



- His stores were like a super Walmart – they sold everything from food to “provisions” and, for a while, he was a labor contractor – “Chinese help procured”. (Hired out Chinese laborers for jobs.) See 1886 below for more on his stores.

1884: “Bill Oury, in turn, offered the property for sale July 1, 1870, advertising “the Buckley and Overland Mail Houses” as being “desirably situated in the town of Tucson, and well adapted for a Hotel and Livery Stable business, having a large corral and the best well of water in town.”<sup>43</sup> In spite of his blandishments, the property failed to sell and the Buckley House remained in Oury's possession another fourteen years, (1884) until it was purchased by a Chinese merchant, Chan Tin Wo.” (*Jrn. of Az Hist.* Vol. 7, #4)

1886 Sanborn Fire Map (Library of Congress). Pearl and Ott streets no longer exist; Main is now Grande. The CTW store was on the southwest corner of Ott and Main.



**11/9/1884:** CTW was "most prosperous groceryman in this city. Chan is a Republican striker and may be said to be on the wrong side of the fence, but he has the reputation of being about as honest and square in his dealing as men are generally made" (*AZ Daily Star*) In another article in 1884 he is reported to not only speak English but Spanish too.

**10/24/1886** (*AZ Daily Star*) in addition to selling hams and other pork products, in 1889 he rented Werner's Lake to provide fish (carp) to Tucson, also in 1889 he dabbled in mining in the Santa Ritas, in 1894 started a tobacco factory to make cigars. (*AZ Daily Star* articles over several years)

isa coat upon her tongue near its base.  
**Chan Tin Wo** has purchaded a car load of hogs and placed them on his ranch in the valley. Some of them are fine blooded and intened for breeding purposes.

**1888:**

- Marries Wong Fung Kee aka "Fannie;" she was born in July 1869 in California, the marriage was likely arranged. (1900 Census) *AZ Citizen* 7/28/1888 (Note *LA Times* byline; originally published on 7/19/1888)

**Chan Tin Wo**, a **Chinese** merchant of Tucson, Arizona, appeared at the county clerk's office yesterday for a license to wed Wong Fung Kee, of this city. There is quite a difference in the ages of the two, **Chan** being 41 and Miss Wong but 18, but **Chan** is apparently well off for he left in the clerk's office a card stating that he dealt in general merchandise, wines, liquors, cigars, hay and grain on Main street, Tucson. He speaks English fluently and takes home with him a young bride to share his prosperity.—*L. A. Times*.

- **AZ Daily Star** 12/28/1888, in early 1889 he improved the property he purchased in 1884 and planted trees.

The "Buckley House" now owned by **Chan Tin Wo**, and at present occupied by a horde of Chinamen, was once the principal hotel of Tucson. The building as all old settlers may remember, was the headquarters and depot for the overland stage line owned by Boss Buckley. This was in days long before the "iron horse" "broke the silence that reigned supreme in the deep and mighty forests [of cacti] in Southern Arizona." The "old land mark" is still in the same spot—on the west side of Pearl street.

**Dec. 1889:** daughter Fannie J. Chan is born Tucson. (1900 Census)

- *AZ Daily Star* 5/2/1893

**Arizona Native Chinese.**

A Chinese boy baby was born in Tombstone yesterday. This is the first native son of Arizona to be brought into the world of a Chinese parent.—Prospector.

Tucson has a record ahead of the foregoing. **Chan Tin Wo**, the well-known Main street merchant, is the proud father of a baby girl born in December 1889. Thus Tombstone is beaten by over three years. His son and heir is well on towards a year old.

Of children of Chinese father and American or Mexican mothers, Tucson has several preceding **Chan Tin Wo's** little ones. One such little girl is eight or nine years old.

**1892:** son You Whi Chan is born in Tucson. (1900 Census)

**1895:** son Frank Chan is born in Tucson. (1900 Census)

**March 1895:** Don Chun Wo, CTW's nephew, and Don Doan Yook come to Tucson to take over CTW's store while he is on an extended visit to China.

- As per his death certificate, Don Chun Wo's father was Don Dung Yoc (aka Don Doan Yook) who was either CTW's brother (most cited) or brother-in-law. Don Dung Yoc was a goldsmith and jeweler from San Francisco. (Delgado, Grace. *Making the Chinese Mexican*.)
- Don Chun Wo becomes known as "mayor of Chinatown;" in the late 1920s he moves to Casa Grande where he dies in 1945.
- *AZ Daily Star* 11/1/1895 he turns his business over to Don Chun Wo

**NOTICE.**

TUCSON, OCT. 31, 1895.

Having sold my merchandise business, corner Main and 6th streets, to **Don Chun & Co.**, all parties owing me for goods and groceries will please call at my old place of business and pay their accounts without delay.

**CHAN LIN WO.**

**1897-98:** city directory lists Chan Tin Wo as a "wholesale and retail Dealer in family groceries. Corner Main and Mesilla Sts. Goods delivered free to any part of the city."

**1900:** Casts the decisive vote to build Drachman School on Convent & 18<sup>th</sup>.

**1904:** CTW is the first Chinese person to serve on a jury in Pima County (11/2/1904 *Tucson Citizen*); also reported in the *Dallas Morning News* 1/8/1905 below (note *LA Times* byline, stories also ran in the Prescott and Riverside, AZ newspapers among others)

**Chan in the Jury Box.**  
A Chinaman was a member of an important trial jury in the District Court in Tucson, Ariz., a few days ago. He was Chan Tin Wo, a Tucson merchant of excellent standing, who has done business in this city for more than twenty-five years. He is a heavy taxpayer and takes a keen interest in public matters. He made an exceptionally capable jurymen.—Los Angeles Times.

Research as of this date, has located an article in the *Arizona Daily Star*, 11/2/1904 that refers to Don Chun Wo as serving on the jury and not Chan Tin Wo - ??? I think it really was Chan Tin Wo.

Don Chun Wo, the well known intelligent and popular young Chinese merchant of Tucson, served on a jury last Monday. This is the first instance of a Chinaman serving on a Pima county jury. Don is a native of the United States, has lived in this city many years and is a father of a family.

**After 1904:** According to Don Chun Wo, CTW returns to Hong Kong, where he dies.