

# FIVE GENERATIONS OF FOOD SERVICE

## THE *AH CHEE* AND *SAI LOUIE (CHAN)* FAMILIES OF AUCKLAND.<sup>1</sup>

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Chinese takeaways became part of the New Zealand diet after World War 2, and since the 1990s there has been an explosion of Chinese restaurants. But the New Zealand Chinese community has a much longer history of running restaurants. This article traces brothers *Chan Dar-Chee* and *Chan Yun-Gee*<sup>2</sup>, and four generations of their descendants (who took the surnames *Ah Chee* and *Sai Louie*) who have cooked and sold food to Aucklanders. The history of Chinese New Zealanders is often framed in terms of the discrimination they faced and the ‘self-segregation’ they practiced.<sup>3</sup> The family members in this article all served ‘European’ food, which illuminates an often-overlooked aspect of the history of New Zealand Chinese entrepreneurship: that they always operated within the mainstream business community.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Produced with financial assistance from the Chinese Poll Tax Heritage Trust.

<sup>2</sup> Wong Hop, David, personal correspondence, 24 Jan 2021. Historians have always recorded Ah Chee’s brother (Sai Louie’s father) as Chan Yan Chee or Chan Yun-Gee, but after recent research, family Historian David Wong Hop believes he has not been able to confirm what his name was.

<sup>3</sup> Yee, Beven, ‘Coping with Insecurity: Everyday Experiences of Chinese New Zealanders’, in Manying Ip, ed, *Unfolding History, Evolving Identity: The Chinese in New Zealand*, Auckland: Auckland University Press, pp. 216-217

<sup>4</sup> Ip, Manying, *Dragons on the Long White Cloud: The Making of Chinese New Zealanders*, North Shore City: Tandem Press, 1996, pp. 8-9; Burton, David, ‘Chinatown and Beyond: Sino-Kiwi Culinary Encounters’, *The Aristologist*, 7, 2016, p. 82

Restaurant Name	Owner	Location	Year
?	?	Masterton	1892
Caledonian Boarding House	?	Wellington	1892
Colonial Restaurant	Tom Hung	Lambton Quay	1888
City Restaurant	Tom Hung	Lambton Quay, Wellington	1892
?	?	Ridgeway Street, Wanganui	1897
?	Chow Fa / Joe Fall	Haining Street, Wellington	1897
?	Ah Bing	Haining Street, Wellington	1900
?	?	Main Street, Palmerston North	1903
?	Nan Chong	Haining Street, Wellington	
Tung Yu Li	?	Wellington	1913

Appendix table 2: Additional Chinese Cooks

Name	Place of Employment	Year
Ah Quie	Telegraph Hotel, Otaki	1880
Ah Moon	Teviot Station	1892
Sam Go	How Chow’s Restaurant, Gisborne	1893
Jimmy Wang	Wellington / Kapiti	1896
Jim Young	McCarthy’s Family Hotel, Whanganui	1905
Charlie Sing	Market Hotel, Auckland	1906
Charles Sue/Sui/Soley	Market Hotel, Auckland	1907
Ah Tuck	Central Hotel, Wellington	1907
Ah Chuck	Occidental Hotel, Wellington	1907
Ah Duck	Occidental Hotel, Wellington	1907
Joe Young	Occidental Hotel, Wellington	1907
Chow Ding	Nelson	1908
Joe Wah	New Plymouth	1909
Ah Hing / Ah Yin	Star Dining Room, Albert Street, Auckland	1910
Joe Lee	Wanganui	1911
Wong Jack	Pahiataua	1913