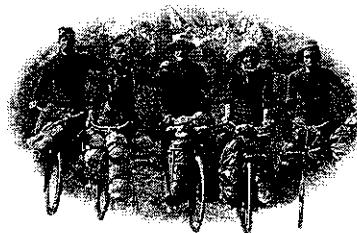


- 22 Burston and Stokes, *Round the World on Bicycles*.
- 23 Paul Farren, 'The Legacy of George Singer: An Australian Perspective', in Ron Shepherd (ed.), *Cycling History 14: Proceedings of the 14th International Cycling History Conference*, Canberra Bicycle Museum, Canberra, 2003, pp. 8–14.
- 24 See catalogue of the 1880 Exhibition.
- 25 Bartleet's *Bicycle Book*, printed in the United Kingdom by E. J. Burrow for the Dunlop Rubber Company, 1931.
- 26 Notes on the Moller Company were supplied by Vaughn Cottle, South Australia.



## Chapter Four

# Riding with the Best of Them:

CHINESE AUSTRALIANS AND CYCLING  
IN AUSTRALIA

Sophie Couchman

The photograph reproduced below was tucked in amongst 250 turn-of-the-century studio portraits of Chinese Australians who were leaving colonial Victoria in 1899–1900 and wanted to be able to freely return. Although other portraits in the series, which conformed to nineteenth-century studio portraiture conventions, are far from standard 'mug shots', this portrait not surprisingly stands out from the others. It is unexpected to see a photograph of someone on a bicycle in a series of bureaucratic photographs.



William Nean, 1900, COURTESY:  
National Australian Archives.

However this photograph also surprises because it is a *nineteenth-century Chinese man* on a bicycle.

Chinese Australians are not generally associated with something as modern as the bicycle at this time. Unfortunately, it is easy to be surprised about Chinese Australian participation in what might be called ordinary 'Australian' lifestyles. For a long time they have been depicted in anonymous and stereotypical ways, particularly in visual imagery.<sup>1</sup> Chinese became the 'Other' that Australia defined itself against. They were marginalised as something different and excluded from the newly forming Australian nation.<sup>2</sup> They were made Chinese, rather than Chinese Australian.<sup>3</sup> Chinese still remain anonymous and shadowy figures in Australian histories. Current research in Chinese Australian history aims to give some of the names and identities back to these individuals and to add complexity to understandings of Australia and particularly people of Chinese heritage in Australia.<sup>4</sup>

Chinese Australian participation in sport, particularly Australian Rules football and soccer, has been touched on by a number of authors of sports history.<sup>5</sup> However, much more research is still required to gain a thorough understanding and appreciation of the breadth and depth

of their participation as well as the role sport has played through time in the lives of Chinese Australians in both Australia and in China. To date, Chinese Australian cyclists have not been the subject of research. Research on Australia's cycling history generally is also limited, given cycling's vital part in Australian social and sporting life particularly in the last years of the nineteenth century.<sup>6</sup> Similarly, although the bicycle held an iconic status in Mao's China, very little has been written about its history there, a notable exception being Edward Rhoads, who has begun some preliminary, but as yet unpublished, research in this area.<sup>7</sup>

Involvement in this new and modern form of transport and recreation was a craze that swept the industrialising world in the 1890s. Acknowledging and understanding Chinese Australian participation in this activity helps understanding of not only how Chinese Australians related to Australian and Chinese society but also how they related to global modernising influences. Preliminary findings discussed in this chapter demonstrate they were involved in cycling at a range of levels in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century. This is explored through photographs of Chinese Australians involved in cycling. These photographs illustrate each individual's interest in representing themselves as part of this modern phenomenon.

## CYCLING IN AUSTRALIA

There were three major booms in cycling in Australia.<sup>8</sup> The first occurred from the 1860s, after the introduction of the velocipede; the second, after the high-wheeler's (popularly known as the penny farthing) introduction from the late 1870s. It was not until the 1890s, however, that the craze for cycling as a sport, recreation and reliable form of transport really swept Australia and the world. The 'safety bicycle' with its chain, spoked wheels and tubular frame was first introduced to Australia in the mid- to late-1880s.<sup>9</sup> When the pneumatic tyre was added to this design in 1890, it dramatically changed cycling and opened it up to the mainstream.<sup>10</sup> Bicycles had become not only more comfortable but also more affordable.

It is estimated that 200,000 Australians purchased new bicycles in the 1890s.<sup>11</sup> In 1897, roughly 150 makes of bicycle were available for sale.<sup>12</sup> A trade in second-hand bicycles quickly emerged. Riding schools were soon established and thousands commuted to central Melbourne by bicycle.<sup>13</sup> Cycles were also used in the countryside, particularly on the West Australian goldfields and on rural properties in the Eastern colonies.<sup>14</sup> They were adopted by shearers, mining prospectors, clergy and various government workers and agencies. Cyclists even served in the Boer War in the first significant wartime use of bicycles.<sup>15</sup>

Before their more widespread adoption, bicycles were symbols of status and provided an opportunity to display the wealth of their owners.<sup>16</sup> As a

new technical innovation, they were also symbols of modernity and technical progress.<sup>17</sup> Speed was an important part of their attraction; compared to a horse, a bicycle was easier to care for, cheaper and more practical, and fast over long distances.<sup>18</sup> Bicycle racing was phenomenally popular. Bicycle races, even penny farthing races, were reported in newspapers with a breathlessness that hinted at an impending accident in the same way car and motorcycle races are reported today. The dangerous side of the bicycle was also a source of criticism and fear, and there were passionate debates over whether women should be allowed to cycle, whether cycling on Sunday was against religious scripture, and questions were raised over the health benefits of cycling.<sup>19</sup> Competitive cycling was criticised for its risqué clothing and association with gambling and corruption. By the early 1900s, however, the passion behind most of these debates had largely dissipated along with the passion for the bicycle as a racing vehicle which was now competing with the thrill of motor vehicles.

Bicycles were being used across Australia in the nineteenth and early-twentieth century for all different kinds of purposes and by all different kinds of people, and they remain a vital aspect of Australian life today. Given its ubiquity, it is not at all surprising that Chinese and their descendants, born in Australia, wanted to become involved in this exciting, new and modern form of transport, just like any descendants of British or European immigrants.

## CHINESE AND CYCLING

Today it is difficult to imagine China without the bicycle. Preliminary unpublished research by Edwards Rhoads into the history of cycling in China suggests the high-wheeler was first introduced into China in 1879,<sup>20</sup> about the same time it arrived in Australia. As in the west, it became a symbol of modernity and progress in the early years of the twentieth century. Initially the domain of foreigners, bicycles were quickly taken up by Chinese Christians, modernist reformers and then the broader Chinese population.<sup>21</sup> By the first decade of the twentieth century, bicycles were sufficiently popular with Chinese for them to feature in anti-western boycott literature, guidebooks and popular posters. As in the west, the bicycle's status as a symbol of modernity was quickly overtaken by the motor car some time in the first two decades of the twentieth century.

The largest numbers of Chinese immigrants came to Australia during the gold rushes in the 1850s and 1860s, before the arrival of the bicycle in China.<sup>22</sup> They came in smaller numbers later in the century and in very small numbers in the twentieth century, before the loosening of Australia's racially based immigration policy in the 1950s. They formed complex communities, and businesses, newspapers and social, political and religious institutions were founded by Chinese immigrants all over Australia.<sup>23</sup> They also diversified

into a range of occupations. Chinese immigration was predominantly male although some brought wives from China or established families with Chinese or non-Chinese women in Australia. At the same time as negotiating a place for themselves here, they also retained an active interest in China, which was undergoing tremendous social change.

Moves in China to modernise in a way that retained Chinese identity were simultaneously echoed and stimulated by overseas Chinese. Wei-li Ye has written about the important influence of returning American Chinese students on the development of Chinese modernity in the early-twentieth century, for example.<sup>24</sup> It is conceivable that the bicycle played some part in this process of exchange and this raises some interesting questions. Might new Chinese immigrants who rode bicycles in China encourage Chinese Australians to adopt the bicycle? Similarly, to what extent might Chinese Australians returning to China have influenced the adoption of the bicycle in China? Michael Williams has noted that bicycles were amongst the many items brought back to China by returning overseas Chinese and that the first bicycle to Zhongshan was reputedly brought in 1889 from Hawaii.<sup>25</sup> Understanding Chinese Australian participation in cycling helps us to understand not only how they related to Australian and Chinese society but also how they related to global modernising influences. The 'Queue-Cutting Society', for example, established in 1902 in Melbourne, was a revolutionary organisation that wanted to overthrow the Qing Dynasty and reform China through modernisation.<sup>26</sup> In 1903 it recommended to its members that they dress well and travel by car or bicycle.<sup>27</sup> Further research is needed before these questions can be addressed, but what is clear is that, for Chinese Australians, the bicycle was a symbol of progress. In terms of Chinese Australian participation, the 1890s, with the introduction of the safety bicycle, marks the earliest date for which evidence has been uncovered to date.

Having outlined the connections between Chinese Australians and their interests in cycling, this chapter turns to discuss the range of ways Chinese Australians participated in cycling through an exploration of the cycling activities of three men around the turn of the century.

## COMPETITIVE CYCLING: WILLIAM NEAN

The above photograph of William Nean<sup>28</sup> provides evidence of Chinese-Australian involvement in competitive cycling at the turn-of-the-century. It was taken in 1900 and given to the Victorian colonial government as part of the process of applying for an exemption under the Victorian *1890 Chinese Act* which limited Chinese immigration. Under this Act, the number of Chinese permitted to enter Victoria was limited to one adult for every 100 tons of cargo. Chinese already resident in Australia for a number of years were able to obtain an exemption from the Act prior to their departure from Australia. It is an

interesting choice of portrait to have given to immigration authorities, but it must be remembered that photographs were not widely used for identification purposes at this time on passports or other immigration-style documents, nor was the mug shot so familiar today used outside the prison system.<sup>29</sup> In fact, use of the photograph, both in Australia and in places like the United States, played an important role in the evolution of the use of photographs in immigration and passport bureaucracy.<sup>30</sup>

In this image, one can see William Nean, an attractive confident young man choosing to represent himself as a cyclist. In doing so he not only shows his passion for the sport but also a desire to represent himself as a modern man, and someone a little different from the crowd. Photographic portraiture at this time was dominated by formulaic poses and studio props that created a visual uniformity in studio portraiture.<sup>31</sup> The bicycle portrait was a sub-set of this genre but not one commonly adopted. It is unlikely that the reasoning behind William Nean's choice regarding the selection of this photograph for immigration purposes will ever be known, but in choosing to portray himself to authorities as a modern man, he distances himself from contemporary stereotypes of Chinese, in particular working-class Chinese.

Like many of his countrymen, William Nean worked as a market gardener in Wangaratta.<sup>32</sup> He was born in China, probably around 1864, and arrived in Australia some time between then and 1896 when, at 32, he married 20 year old Rosey Johnson.<sup>33</sup> Although market gardeners have the reputation of coming from the lower and less educated classes of Chinese, emerging Chinese Australian historical research shows some had much more complex socio-economic profiles.<sup>34</sup> William's signature on his marriage certificate is in a strong English hand, suggesting at least a basic English education. His return visit to China in 1900 also suggests he was at least moderately financially successful. His marital life was less so. Some time before his trip, his marriage with Rosey broke down and she appears to have bigamously remarried in 1899.<sup>35</sup> After two years in China, William Nean returned to Victoria where he disappears from the historical record.<sup>36</sup>

Wangaratta was a popular place for cycle touring. The *Austral Wheel* published a separate *Guide to the Victorian Alps* in 1898 which provided information about a number of cycle routes in the area, all starting from Wangaratta.<sup>37</sup> Could this environment have influenced William Nean's adoption of cycling? Might he have read the guide or ridden any of these routes? Unfortunately this portrait is the only evidence of his cycling activities but he may well have been inspired by this strong local cycling culture.

From the photograph, it can be deduced that William Nean was a competitive cyclist. He is posed on a racing bicycle.<sup>38</sup> He also wears racing clothing and shoes. While it is possible the bicycle belonged to the photographic studio it is unlikely the clothes and shoes would have also been provided.

'Dress up' photography, as practiced today at places like Sovereign Hill and many tourist attractions in China, was not commonplace at this time. The pose adopted in the photograph also suggests he was a competitive cyclist. Other photographs and illustrations of competitive cyclists from roughly the same period show similar poses — posed on the bicycle commonly either full frontal or in profile.<sup>39</sup> These photographs form a distinct sub-genre of photographic portraiture of the time. The genre contrasts with that of touring cyclist portraiture where subjects were photographed off their bicycles and outside the photographic studio 'on the road'.<sup>40</sup>

William Nean's clothing in the portrait is quite tight-fitting and revealing. Although such dress had become more acceptable in Australia by the turn of the century, as late as 1899 some were still complaining to the *WA Cyclist* that cycling dress was merely a 'skin tight singlet, a pair of trunks displaying the leg to the hip, and so tight as to expose the whole form'.<sup>41</sup> Like western dress, traditional Chinese dress also covered the whole body and was, additionally, very loose fitting. From both a Chinese and, to a lesser extent, Australian perspective, wearing and being photographed in cycling attire such as this would have carried a hint of the scandalous, particularly because of the presence of women at cycling races.<sup>42</sup>

We are also unable to determine from the photograph how long William Nean raced as a competitive cyclist. The first bicycle races were held in the 1870s and the early-1880s.<sup>43</sup> Professional racing was introduced to Melbourne in 1890.<sup>44</sup> By 1895, it seemed to some that any centre of population was 'deemed incomplete without its asphalted cycling track'.<sup>45</sup> Cash prizes offered became large enough that dozens of the world's greatest riders came to Australia to compete.<sup>46</sup> In 1892 and 1895 the winners of the Austral Wheel Race (one of the biggest Australian races) collected £200.<sup>47</sup> Fitzpatrick suggests 'that cycle racing was a good candidate for being the most lucrative sporting activity an individual could attempt throughout the 1890s'.<sup>48</sup> Bicycle racing became particularly popular as a spectator sport. Around 40,000 to 65,000 people turned up to see the two-day annual Austral Wheel and Australian Natives' Association cycle races.<sup>49</sup> It was common for 75,000 spectators to watch races on the concrete track at the old Sydney Cricket Ground and 20,000 at Melbourne's old Exhibition Buildings track.<sup>50</sup> After peaking in the mid- to late-1890s, by 1900 competitive cycling was just beginning to show signs of decline.

In addition to this photograph, there is a little further evidence of Chinese Australian involvement in competitive cycling. The *Tung Wah* newspaper (1898–1930s), an important Sydney-based Chinese language newspaper, reported on a number of cycle racing events and developments both in Australia and overseas, particularly in the period 1898–1899.<sup>51</sup> This suggests that the Chinese reading community had a broad-based interest in cycling

as a sport and, like other Australians, Chinese Australians might also have been part of the many spectators of the sport. There was ample opportunity, for example in Bendigo in October 1896, when a 'Chinese version' football match between Bendigo and Eaglehawk Chinese was played at Canterbury Park followed by a bicycle race around Lake Neangar.<sup>52</sup> Both these events were held to raise funds for the Bendigo Hospital.

There are strong links between Chinese sporting events and fundraising, particularly hospital fundraising, events. As early as 1893, Chinese in Melbourne were involved in fund raising activity to help relieve 'wants of Richmond citizens'.<sup>53</sup> This included Chinese races and bicycling. Quong Tart, whose involvement in cycling is discussed below, assisted with the organisation of a Patriotic Sports Carnival at Moore Park, Sydney, in February 1900 to raise morale during the Boer War.<sup>54</sup> As part of the celebrations, a 'Chinese bicycle race' was organised. Like a number of women's cycle races, the extent to which this race might simply have been a novelty race is unclear.<sup>55</sup> Nevertheless, placegetters' names were published in the *Evening News*. Quong Tart was also involved in the organisation of the Jubilee Charity Carnival held in August 1897.<sup>56</sup> This fundraising carnival consisted of novelty entertainments, including Chinese bicycle races and handicap bicycle races. The Chinese bicycle race was reported as 'about the funniest thing seen on the ground' while the handicap races were reported in the standard fashion.<sup>57</sup> Despite the condescending nature of the report, the place-getters of the two Chinese races were named as Hock Sing followed by Bin Hing, and in the second race Bin Hing followed by W. Gar Jub. It was noted that Hock Sing had 'won a race somewhere in the country' but gave no further details.

As suggested by the throw away comment about Hock Sing, Chinese cyclists were not only racing in Chinese-only novelty races. The *Bulletin* reported in 1899 that Moy Hi Ling, rather than racing in 'celestial races', 'came out for the handicap, and rode with the best of them' at a Bendigo meet.<sup>58</sup> However, the paper could not resist noting that he only rode for half the distance.

Chinese Australian competitive cyclists certainly became more numerous in the 1920s and 1930s, particularly in the Bendigo area. Ray Wallace, a local historian, has done some research on competitive cycling in the area.<sup>59</sup> He interviewed Ernie Ah Dore who was a market gardener in Elore near Bendigo. Ernie Ah Dore began racing as a junior professional in 1935. The races he won helped to pay off his bicycle, which had cost £19 15s. Ernie also remembered Percy Lougoon of Myers Flat who successfully raced in the 1920s; Laurie Lew Ton of Bayswater and Stan Neve of Eaglehawk who both raced with some success prior to World War II; as did R. Wing Quay of Richmond in the 1940s. Also from Bendigo, Jan O'Hoy, whose father will be discussed below, was a well-known cyclist who raced during the 1930s.<sup>60</sup>

Understandably, evidence for Chinese Australian involvement in cycling



*The League Starters — Mr. Quong Tart [left] and Mr. Harry Bagnall', from an undated unidentified newspaper clipping.*

SOURCE: Tart-McEvoy family papers, Society of Australian Genealogists.

*A similar image is also reproduced in Margaret Tart's 1911 biography of Quong Tart, but with considerable loss of detail, particularly on the starter gun held by Quong Tart.*

is difficult to find and what is found is serendipitously won, as there do not appear to have been any famous Chinese Australian cycling competitors. No doubt, other early Chinese Australian competitive cyclists will emerge with further research. The portrait of William Nean shows the important role that photography, particularly in private family collections, may play in this.

### CYCLING ADMINISTRATORS: QUONG TART

Quong Tart's involvement in organising 'Chinese' bicycle races in Sydney in the context of fund raising can be seen as part of Chinese Australian involvement in the administration and bureaucracy of cycling. But his participation was much more extensive than this. A very different man to William Nean and the majority of Chinese Australians, Quong Tart was a successful Chinese merchant who attained an extraordinary celebrity status in Sydney.<sup>61</sup> He was well connected to New South Wales colonial high society and had a high profile as a philanthropist and anti-opium campaigner. This enabled him to be taken seriously within sporting administration in a way that may not have been possible for many other Chinese Australians. He was actively involved as a player and administrator in a wide range of sports.<sup>62</sup> His participation in sport, including cycling, can be seen as part of his position as a man of status.

Again, a photograph (see above) provides important, but not the only, evidence of Quong Tart's cycling activities. This strangely contrived photograph shows Harry Bagnall in the foreground with Quong Tart as starter, slightly to one side and to the rear. They stand in the middle of a sports ground with crowds in a pavilion behind them. Mr Bagnall holds, what appears to be, a handkerchief in his hands and Quong Tart an umbrella and a long object of some sort, possibly a pistol, related to his role as starter.

The photograph was reproduced posthumously in a biography of Quong Tart published by his wife in 1911.<sup>63</sup> It was originally published in one of Sydney's illustrated newspapers in the mid- to late-1890s.<sup>64</sup> Quong Tart was active as a starter in a number of League of New South Wales Wheelmen races from as early as 1896.<sup>65</sup> The photograph may relate to a One Mile Handicap held at the Sydney Cricket Ground on 10 June 1899, organised by the League of New South Wales Wheelmen.<sup>66</sup> A notice for this event lists H. Bagnall as one of three judges and Quong Tart as one of two starters. However, he and Harry Bagnall were also starters at a cycling race organised by the League of New South Wales Wheelmen and separate from the Chinese races that were run as part of a 'Chinese charity carnival' probably held in late 1897 and, therefore, possibly others.<sup>67</sup> The photograph may also relate to a set of races held in 1895 when Zimmerman, a famous American cyclist, toured Australia. An obituary for Quong Tart states he was a starter during the 'immensely successful' cycling meetings held when Zimmerman was in Sydney.<sup>68</sup>

Some time between 1902 and 1903, possibly earlier, Quong Tart was made Vice-President of the Newtown Bicycle Club.<sup>69</sup> As well as starter for the League of New South Wales Wheelmen, he was also elected one of their vice-presidents.<sup>70</sup> The League of New South Wales Wheelmen was established in September 1893 to cater especially to professional cycling and was affiliated with the Victorian League; clearly, Quong Tart was involved with the organisation during its early years.<sup>71</sup> The first cycling club established in New South Wales was the Sydney Bicycle club in September 1879 with ten members.<sup>72</sup> Other groups followed, including the Suburban Bicycle Club formed in 1882.<sup>73</sup> In August 1883, the New South Wales Cyclists' Union was formed to oversee amateur cycling throughout the colony. In its first year, seven clubs were affiliated with it, and by March 1900, they had 22 clubs on the roll with a total of 935 members.<sup>74</sup>

Whilst it is suspected that the roles as vice-president were largely honorary and linked to financial support, there is no doubt they also carried a degree of status. Quong Tart's personal papers include a range of invitations to races and cycling social events — including race meetings and annual dinners of the Sydney Bicycle Club, League picnics; there is even a Christmas card from the President of the Melbourne Bicycle Club.<sup>75</sup> Quong Tart's involvement in these groups can be seen as part of raising and maintaining his own status as

well as attempts by cycling clubs to raise their status through the association and financial support of prominent members. By way of illustration, in at least one year, the League of New South Wales Wheelmen held their prize-giving ceremony at Quong Tart's famous tea rooms in King Street, Sydney.<sup>76</sup>

In addition to being an office bearer in these cycling organisations Quong Tart was also a member of his local cycling club in Burwood, one of the earlier suburban clubs in Sydney, established some time between 1879 and 1883.<sup>77</sup> This suggests he also rode recreationally, but perhaps not competitively. As a young man he organised a popular horse meet in the Braidwood area and also raced horses himself.<sup>78</sup> This indicates that he had a competitive nature and was physically athletic in his youth; by the 1890s, however, he was in his forties and possibly feeling too old to compete in cycle races being held. This did not stop him having strong views about the nature of competitive cycling.

Quong Tart was an active philanthropist, and an important aspect of his public image was that he was seen as a man of good character. In 1883, he launched an anti-opium campaign in an attempt to ban the importation of opium into Australia's colonies.<sup>79</sup> His desire in part was to try to improve the moral well-being not just of Chinese lives but also society in general. It is perhaps not surprising then that this attitude extended into his views of sport. In an address to the League of New South Wales Wheelmen, Margaret Tart quotes him as urging members to 'act honourably in their racing and have no shinaniking. If they raced right out from the shoulder they were bound to get on. The man who shinaniks,' he ominously warned, 'is unworthy of the name of a British cyclist.'<sup>80</sup> This statement is odd in a number of ways. 'Shinanik', which may have been incorrectly quoted, doesn't appear to be a word. It is probably a corruption of 'shenanigan', which has had many spellings over time, meaning trickery, underhand action or intrigue.<sup>81</sup> The statement also illustrates the ambiguous identity 'Australians' had prior to Federation. Here we have a Chinese-born man who has made Sydney his home, urging members of the League, who no doubt had various cultural backgrounds themselves, to live up to being 'British'.

Precisely when Quong Tart made this comment is unclear. However cycle racing, particularly at the end-of-the-century, was under considerable strain due to the poor racing ethics of its racers.<sup>82</sup> There was also controversy over unfair play in betting and sponsorship. According to one New Zealand cyclist quoted by Jim Fitzpatrick, 'A stranger has no show against the numerous cliques on the track, and stands a good chance of being punched if he rides well.'<sup>83</sup> Fitzpatrick argues that this corruption and 'unanimity of spirit' between participants led in part of the downfall of the sport, particularly after 1901.<sup>84</sup> Quong Tart's comments appear to have been made either in anticipation or response to this point of crisis in the sport.

Quong Tart was certainly not representative of the ordinary Chinese



*Que O'Hoy posed with his bicycle and Gladstone bag, c.1903–1905.*  
COURTESY: Denis O'Hoy, private collection.

Australian of this period, who was more likely to be a market gardener like William Nean than a leading metropolitan merchant such as Quong Tart, who mixed easily within the upper levels of Australian society. His involvement in cycling in Sydney reflects both his interest in the sport but also his position as one of Sydney's high standing citizens.

### GENERAL CYCLING: QUE O'HOY

Que O'Hoy did not enjoy the social standing of Quong Tart but he was still a very well-respected and well-known member of the Bendigo community.<sup>85</sup> His family remains prominent today. His father, Louey Oh Hoy arrived in Bendigo in 1863 and shortly afterwards opened a general store. He became an affluent and prominent businessman. Que O'Hoy was born in China and arrived in Bendigo as a child in 1883. He was registered as an alien but permitted to live in Australia. He quickly became a well regarded member of the community. Que O'Hoy married Suey Gook in China in 1910 in a traditional ceremony. Suey Gook arrived in Australia in 1920. Her stay was conditional on government approval and so between 1920 and 1942 when she was finally granted permanent residency she made a number of return trips to China.<sup>86</sup> Que and Suey Gook had ten children, including Dennis O'Hoy, who was the youngest.

In this photograph (see above) we see Que O'Hoy, choosing to capture

his interest in cycling in a photographic portrait. According to Dennis O'Hoy the photograph was taken some time between 1903 and 1905 when Que was 20 or 21 years old.<sup>87</sup> It was taken to be sent to the family members in China. Presumably Que and his family wanted to show the Chinese side of the family their son's success in Australia. He has chosen to represent this success with his smart western suit, Gladstone bag, and modern bicycle. Two copies of this photograph were made. The other was proudly framed and hung in the O'Hoy family room on public display. Que's representation of himself therefore set an example to family in China as well as the Bendigo community about what it meant to be a successful immigrant to Australia.

According to Dennis O'Hoy, Que used to ride to work in his younger days. The clips containing the bottom of his trousers in the portrait illustrate Que's familiarity with the practicalities of cycling. Dennis is uncertain whether the bicycle featured in the portrait belonged to Que or was a Bartlett studio prop. It is likely that it was his bicycle. There does not appear to be any stand holding the bicycle steady for the photograph as was common in other studio bicycle portraits. The Gladstone bag Que holds certainly belonged to him and was used by Que as a briefcase throughout his life to his dying day. Que's interest in cycling may have inspired his son, Jan O'Hoy, who became a competitive cyclist in the 1930s.

Like the portrait of William Nean, this photograph is also part of a sub-genre of photographic portraiture that depicts individuals along side their bicycles that dates back to the introduction of the velocipede.<sup>88</sup> It is one of only two portraits the author has come across of Chinese Australians posing with bicycles for personal use (see below). The other is a much more informal snap shot taken early in the twentieth century in Whitmore Square, Adelaide. It shows Daniel Poon Num and Stephen Lum posed casually beside their bicycles with their trouser legs tied back.<sup>89</sup> The private nature of most personal photograph collections means that it is difficult to determine the extent of such photographs within the Chinese Australian community.

There is considerable other evidence, though scattered, of Chinese Australians association and involvement with cycling for recreational and transport purposes, particularly in the 1890s. Chinese living, working and visiting Melbourne's Chinatown area were exposed to cycling as early as 1893 when Dunlop established their first Australian pneumatic tyre factory in Tattersall's Lane off Little Bourke Street.<sup>90</sup> J. M. Peers-Smith, the initial manager of the firm, encouraged racing cyclists to bring their tyres to the factory to get them overhauled and also to ride along the cobblestones of lane and discuss difficulties with him so that improvements in design could be made. Advertisers for Dunlop Tyres may also have been inspired by Chinatown's close proximity in 1896 when they used a Chinese figure holding a fan and juggling tyres/rings to advertise their 'feather light' tyres.<sup>91</sup>



Daniel Poon Num (right) and Stephen Lum, photographed at Whitmore Square, Adelaide, c.1900–1910.

SOURCE: Poon Num collection, Museum of Chinese Australian History.

An early example of Chinese Australian engagement with nineteenth century bicycle culture is an advertisement in a series of undated English-language poster advertisements for Hung Shup grocers store of 51 Campbell Street, Sydney.<sup>92</sup> It is a puzzle advertisement titled 'A "Run" on Pork Puzzle: Find the Drover' which shows three European men on penny farthings, one coming off his bike after hitting some pigs. The aim is to find the drover within the picture. The address and nature of the business were printed below. While in English, the pictorial nature of the puzzle might also have appeal to those with more limited language skills.

In 1894, Sydney's *Chinese Australian Herald* ran an article encouraging Chinese to adopt the bicycle. They argued that it was not an extravagant use of money to buy a bicycle but that the bicycle was a valuable new technology that Chinese should be utilising like everyone else.<sup>93</sup> Cycling was well reported in Chinese-language newspapers. Various bicycle companies advertised in newspapers, such as the *Chinese Australian Herald* and the *Tung Wah* from as early as 1896 tempting purchasers with special financing arrangements.<sup>94</sup> The Australian Cycle Insurance Company of 108 Pitt Street, Sydney, also advertised bicycle accident insurance in the *Chinese Australian Herald*.<sup>95</sup> The editors of the newspaper reinforced this message with a short paragraph after the advertisement reiterating information contained within it. In the same year the paper also ran an article on the invention of the bicycle and

recommending American bicycles as superior vehicles to purchase.<sup>96</sup>

Court records provide more concrete evidence of Chinese Australian involvement in cycling. The *Bendigo Advertiser* reported on a number of Chinese cyclists who were taken to court for breaching cycling regulations at the turn of the century. Woy Pon Hem was charged with riding on the footpath in 1899 and Ah Chong was fined £5 for the same offence at Long Gully in 1903.<sup>97</sup> This second report refers to 'a number' of Chinese Australian bicycle 'devotees' in Bendigo. Many years later probably in the late 1920s or 1930s, Wilf Blake, who was born in Kangaroo Flat in 1909 and lived there till 1940, remembers a group of Chinese market gardeners cycling in single file through Kangaroo Flat to Bridge Street in Bendigo to the 'Chinese club' and then returning again in the evening after their games of fan tan.<sup>98</sup> George Sing, the son of Ah Sing, was a prominent member of the Mudgee Cycle Club in the 1920s or 30s. Ah Sing's family was 'one of the best remembered families of long standing' in the Mt Frome area in rural New South Wales.<sup>99</sup>

## CONCLUSIONS

Along with other people around the world it is clear Chinese Australians were actively participating in cycling during its boom at the turn of the century. These profiles illustrate that they were competitive cyclists, and club administrators. They also rode bicycles for transportation and for simple enjoyment and some even used bicycles in their advertisements. By representing themselves in photographs in association with cycling the Chinese Australians in this paper sought to present themselves both in Australia and China as modern men.

The photographs used in this chapter illustrate the importance of family photographs which show Chinese Australians as they wished to be seen in contrast to stereotypical images of 'the Chinaman' so common in the late nineteenth and turn of the century Australian imagery. It is hoped that next time readers see one of the nineteenth century racist cartoons from the *Bulletin* or a hackneyed image of the lone anonymous Chinese hawker that they will also be encouraged to think of the visual images in this chapter — of William Nean confidently racing his bicycle, of Quong Tart as master of ceremonies, and of Que O'Hoy with his trusted Gladstone bag and bicycle — of Chinese Australians as modern men.

## NOTES

I would like to thank Rob Hess for his help and encouragement and Kuo Mei-fen for the identification and translation of Chinese language sources. Research for this paper is part of a PhD dissertation in Asian Studies at La Trobe University, exploring the use of photography by and about Chinese Australians. The PhD is supported by the Australian Research Council.

- 1 This often racist imagery has been reproduced in so many Chinese Australian and Australian history books and exhibition displays that the author feels it is unnecessary to further replicate them in this paper. John Fitzgerald discusses stereotypical imaging in the context of museum displays. See John Fitzgerald, 'Another Country,' *Meanjin*, vol. 60, no. 4, 2001, pp. 59–71. For a discussion of racist imagery in Australian nineteenth century cartoons see Ross Woodrow, 'Darwinism and Images of Race in the Australian Popular Press (c. 1850–1900)', Master of Philosophy thesis, University of Sydney, 1994, and his website at <http://www.newcastle.edu.au/disciple/fine-arts/theory/race/race2.htm>, accessed 20 September 2004. Jane Lydon discusses Chinese imagery and the picturesque: Jane Lydon, *Many Inventions: The Chinese in the Rocks 1890–1930*, Monash Publications in History, Melbourne, 1999. Lee discusses a range of visual representations of San Francisco's Chinatown: Anthony W. Lee, *Picturing Chinatown: Art and Orientalism in San Francisco*, University of California Press, Berkeley, c. 2001.
- 2 Helen Irving, *To Constitute a Nation: A Cultural History of Australia's Constitution*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999.
- 3 John Fitzgerald, 'Chinese, Australian, and Proud: The "Australian" in Chinese Australians 1900–1937', unpublished paper, 2003.
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- 6 Jim Fitzpatrick, *The Bicycle and the Bush: Man and Machine in Rural Australia*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1980; Jim Fitzpatrick, 'The Spectrum of Australian Bicycle Racing: 1890–1900', in Richard Cashman and Michael McKernan (eds), *Sport in History: The Making of Modern Sporting History*, University of Queensland Press, Brisbane, 1979, pp. 326–42; Hess, 'A Mania for Bicycles'; Anthony Hughes, 'Sporting Federations: The Impact of Federation on Sports Governance', in Richard Cashman, John O'Hara and Andrew Honey (eds), *Sport, Federation, Nation*, Sydney: Walla Walla, pp. 118–32, 2001; Helen King, 'The Sexual Politics of Sport: The Australian Perspective', in Richard Cashman and Michael McKernan (eds), *Sport in History: The Making of Modern Sporting History*, University of Queensland Press, Brisbane, 1979, pp. 68–85; Penny Russell, 'Recycling Femininity: Old Ladies and New Women' *Australian Cultural History*, no. 13, 1994, pp. 31–51.

- 7 Edward Rhoads, 'Cycles of Cathay: A History of the Bicycle in Twentieth Century China', Paper presented at the Annual meeting of the Association for Asian Studies, New York City, 2003.
- 8 Fitzpatrick, *Bicycle and the Bush*; Hess, 'A Mania for Bicycles'.
- 9 Fitzpatrick, *Bicycle and the Bush*, p. 33; Theo Van Kalleveen, *Australs and Legends: A Century of Track Cycling*, The Author, Bentleigh, Victoria, c. 2002, p. 3.
- 10 Fitzpatrick, *Bicycle and the Bush*, p. 152; Donna Rae Szalinski, 'Austral Wheelrace' in Wray Vamplew, Katharine Moore, John O'Hara, Richard Cashman and Ian Jobling (eds), *Oxford Companion to Australian Sport*, Reprint, Revised second edition, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1997, p. 129.
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- 13 Szalinski, 'Austral Wheelrace', p. 129.
- 14 Fitzpatrick, *Bicycle and the Bush*, pp. 66, 190.
- 15 Szalinski, 'Austral Wheelrace', p. 31.
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- 17 Age, 'Cycling Notes', 12 November 1895, pp. 17–18.
- 18 Fitzpatrick, *Bicycle and the Bush*, p. 11.
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- 20 Rhoads, 'Cycles of Cathay'.
- 21 See Rhoads, 'Cycles of Cathay'; an article in the *Austral Wheel*, January 1899 reports on Chinese women cycling along The Bund in Shanghai, one the daughter of a Christian convert, the other, not.
- 22 C. Y. Choi, *Chinese Migration and Settlement in Australia*, Sydney University Press, Sydney, 1975.
- 23 Shirley Fitzgerald, *Red Tape, Gold Scissors: The Story of Sydney's Chinese*, State Library of New South Wales Press, Sydney, 1996; Cathy May, *Top Sawyer: The Chinese in Cairns 1870 to 1920*, vol. 6, *Studies in Northern Queensland History*, Department of History, James Cook University, Townsville, 1984; Jan Ryan, *Ancestors: Chinese in Colonial Western Australia*, Fremantle Arts Press, Fremantle, 1995; C. F. Yong, *The New Gold Mountain: The Chinese in Australia 1901–1921*, Raphael Arts Pty Ltd, Richmond, South Australia, 1977.
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42 *WA Cyclist*, 12 May 1899, as quoted in Fitzpatrick, 'The Spectrum of Australian Bicycle Racing'.

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50 'Cycling', p. 118.

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65 *Wheelman*, 13 November 1896, p. 14.

66 Notice to racing cyclists, Society of Australian Genealogists, Tart-McEvoy family papers, scrapbook, p. 13.

67 'Chinese charity carnival: Celestial procession and football match, cycling races', Star [c. 1897 based on location in scrapbook], Quong Tart and Family Papers (1831–1940), Box 5X, Mitchell Library, ML MSS 5094.

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69 Society of Australian Genealogists, Tart-McEvoy family papers, scrapbook 24, p. 155.

70 Travers, *Australian Mandarin*, p. 128; Tart, *The Life of Quong Tart*.

71 Hughes, 'Sporting Federations', p. 130; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1 January 1901, p. 12.

72 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1 January 1901, p. 12.

73 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1 January 1901, p. 12.

74 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1 January 1901, p. 12.

75 Society of Australian Genealogists, Tart-McEvoy family papers, scrapbook 24.

76 Society of Australian Genealogists, Tart-McEvoy family papers, scrapbook 24, p. 155.

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84 Fitzpatrick, 'The Spectrum of Australian Bicycle Racing', p. 334.

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95 *Chinese Australian Herald*, 26 February 1897, courtesy Kuo Mei-fen.

96 *Chinese Australian Herald*, 5 March 1897.

97 Bendigo Advertiser, 1 May 1899, 13 March 1903. Thanks to Amanda Rasmussen for drawing the author's attention to these articles.

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## Chapter Five

# Australian Women Cyclists in the 1890s

Fiona Kinsey

Just a little over a century ago, middle- and upper-class women around Australia were caught up in the bicycle craze that was sweeping the world.<sup>1</sup> On the grand boulevards of Australian cities and on the back roads of the bush, large numbers of women broke through gender stereotypes and rode into a new era of freedom and adventure. These women rode alone, in clubs, or with family and friends. They promenaded, performed, rode for charity and toured the country-side. They set long-distance cycling records and won prizes for racing.

A number of scholars have taken a keen interest in early women cyclists.<sup>2</sup> David Rubinstein has discussed women in his history of British cycling; Clare Simpson has published widely on New Zealand women cyclists; Kathryn Carse