



**Barry Lawrence Ruderman
Antique Maps Inc.**

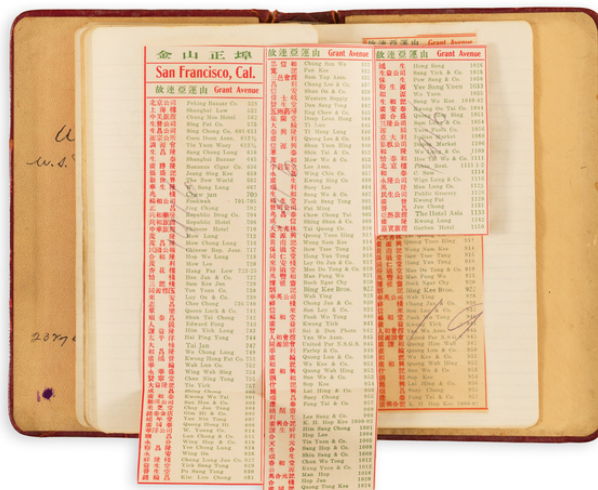
7407 La Jolla Boulevard
La Jolla, CA 92037

www.raremaps.com

(858) 551-8500
blr@raremaps.com

(San Francisco Chinese Exclusion) [Notebook of W.H. Webber, Immigration Inspector at Angel Island during Chinese Exclusion Act enforcement, comprising an improvised directory of San Francisco's Chinatown during the years 1883 to 1915]

Stock#: 92770
Map Maker: Webber
Date: 1905 - 1915 ca
Place: Angel Island, San Francisco
Color: (See Description)
Condition: VG
Size: 4.75 x 7.25 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Chinese Exclusion Inspector's Notebook

Angel Island Immigration Officer's Improvised Directory of San Francisco's Chinatown Residents

A remarkable and unique historical artifact - a personal improvised directory of San Francisco's Chinese residents from 1883 to 1915, compiled and used by a U.S. Immigration Inspector charged with enforcing the Chinese Exclusion Act. W.H. Webber, the compiler of the present directory, was stationed at Angel Island, the notorious detention center where thousands of Chinese people were confined and interrogated during the decades of when the Chinese Exclusion Act was in force.

Angel Island, located in San Francisco Bay near Alcatraz Island, was used as a detention center by the U.S. Immigration Service from 1910 to 1940. During these years many thousands of Chinese were confined on Angel Island where they were "processed" by inspectors who conducted grueling interrogations, sometimes over periods of months or even years.

The directory is meticulously compiled, listing the names and addresses of hundreds of Chinese living in Chinatown, from 1883 to 1915. The notebook itself is of a style patented in 1904-1905, and its contents appear to have been compiled over time, roughly from 1905-1915, with additional leaves added as required. The retrospective directory content is significant as Webber begins his entries with the year



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1883, the first year of enforcement of the Chinese Exclusion Act. The various dated sections of the makeshift directory are seemingly arranged erratically, i.e. 1912, 1903, 1904, 1905, 1883, 1888, 1894, etc. This is because the notebook was arranged to give Webber a snapshot of a given street's make-up over time, thus, for example, the residents of Dupont street are shown in 1883, 1888, 1894, and so on, within an easy flip of a page or two.

Horn Hong & Co. Chinatown Directory Pages

Many of the pages have pasted-in clippings, taken directly from now very rare Chinatown broadside directories issued by Horn Hong & Co. These printed sections, printed in red and green ink, are arranged by street name and house number, and seem to have served as a model for Webber's manuscript entries. Horn Hong & Co. served the local Chinese community and also published *The Weekly Occidental* newspaper from 1878 to around 1900. Taber photographed the Horn Hong & Co. storefront in the 1880s.

About half of the pages contain manuscript directory listings, which stretch back to the year 1883. While very neatly maintained, the directory contains evidence of use by Webber, with scattered ink and pencil tick marks on the various entries, perhaps placed while looking up a person's place of business or residence.

The Chinese Exclusion Act and "Chinese Inspectors" at Angel Island

The Chinese Exclusion Act was a U.S. federal law signed in 1882 that aimed to restrict Chinese immigration to the United States. This act had a significant impact on the Chinese community in San Francisco and the Bay Area, where many Chinese immigrants had settled. The act prohibited Chinese immigrants from becoming naturalized U.S. citizens and limited their rights to own property or work in certain industries. Chinese immigrants who left the United States for any reason also had to apply for re-entry through the U.S. consulate in their home country, a process that often took years and involved extensive questioning by Chinese Inspectors with the U.S. Immigration Service stationed at Angel Island. These inspectors were known for their harsh treatment of Chinese immigrants, leading to significant emotional distress among the Chinese community.

Interestingly, the Act exempted certain merchants and even restaurant owners could apply for merchant visas beginning in 1915 after a federal court ruling. This led to many new Chinese restaurants being established in the 1910s and 1920s, as restaurant owners could leave and reenter the country from China. The Act was finally repealed in 1943.



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Bill Ong Hing, a law professor at the University of California at Davis, has written about the role of Angel Island during the time of the Chinese Exclusion Act. He makes references to Inspector W.H. Webber, quoting from original records documenting Webber's interrogation of Chinese people at Angel Island.

An interview with inspector Webber appeared in a 1910 Visalia newspaper, specifically about his field work in the Central Valley and elsewhere in the state during which he investigated the employment histories of Chinese immigrants. The article summarized how people from different countries were being processed by the immigration service, for example "a good many Russians come in through Angel Island, many from the Hawaiian Islands...and seem to be a desirable class of immigrants." Anent the Chinese, however, Webber had this to say:

No Chinese immigrants are coming in illegally through the ports...Chinese have to pass through very strict requirements. They must either show that they have lived here before, were born here, or that their fathers are living here, or else have what is known as 'Section 6 certificates' issued by the Chinese government, which guarantees that the holders are merchants, students or travelers for pleasure or curiosity. These certificates must be passed on by the American consul general in China.

An important primary source for the history of how the Chinese Exclusion Act was enforced.

Rarity

Such original notebooks used by agents of the U.S. Immigration Service during the enforcement years of the Chinese Exclusion Act are very rare in the market. This is the first such notebook we have handled.

Detailed Condition:

12mo. Contemporary red leather three-ring binder. Approximately 108 sheets of lined paper with manuscript text in ink or pasted-in clippings from printed directories of Chinatown residents (on rectos only, versos blank). Ink ownership inscription on inside front cover: "W. H. Webber / U.S. Immigration Service / Angel Island, Cali. / 2327 Hilgard Ave. / Berkeley, Cal." Condition is excellent.