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The Ghost of the Hong Monopoly:
US-China Trade and Diplomacy in the Nineteenth Century

DISSERTATION

submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in History

by

Laurie Jean Dickmeyer

Dissertation Committee:
Professor David Igler, Chair
Professor Jeffrey Wasserstrom
Professor Emily Rosenberg

2017

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DEDICATION

To

my friends and colleagues

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

The Ghost of the Hong Monopoly:
US-China Trade and Diplomacy in the Nineteenth Century

By

Laurie Jean Dickmeyer

Doctor of Philosophy in History

University of California, Irvine, 2017

Professor David Igler, Chair

This dissertation examines the history of US-China relations from 1784 to 1870 with attention to the intersection of commercial interests and diplomacy. Merchants constituted the largest and most significant group of Americans traveling to China in the nineteenth century, and the government's interest in China remained commercially oriented throughout this period. As a result, the US federal government depended heavily on American commercial traders for intelligence about China as well as broader diplomatic issues. Traders had limited experiences and imperfect knowledge about China, but nevertheless, they informed political and diplomatic decisions made by the new nation halfway around the world. With the slow pace of transportation and communication between the United States and China, Americans in Guangzhou—and later, other Chinese ports opened to trade—were on their own. This compelled American merchants and consuls to cooperate with their commercial rivals and former colonial masters, the British, who had much greater experience in China. As a new nation, the United States had few resources to devote to promoting trade in China. US warships infrequently visited the China coast, and Congress allocated minimal funds to consulates and legations. Unlike Great

Britain, the United States had little power to force China to negotiate a commercial treaty. Since the United States remained mostly neutral during the Opium Wars, Americans depended on British military power for commercial and diplomatic privileges in China. This was an uncomfortable but obvious truth for American merchants, diplomats, and naval officers.

By closely examining the specific experiences of US traders, their attitudes regarding China and the Chinese both in public and private writings, and the efforts of consuls and diplomats, this dissertation traces the genealogy of a commercially-oriented, local, and port-based knowledge about China. Although the US government took traders' "expertise" into consideration and provided general instructions, ultimately, individual merchants and diplomats in China forged America's China policy. Rooted in English language sources but also making use of some Chinese language documents, this study demonstrates how the restrictiveness of Qing regulations created a commercial focus in America's China policy that lasted decades after the end of the Canton system.

INTRODUCTION

The first American trading vessel to reach China, the *Empress of China*, sailed from New York on February 22, 1784, just four and a half months after the conclusion of the American Revolutionary War. Robert Morris and other merchants refitted the ship, originally built as a privateer vessel for the war, for commerce and sent it to Guangzhou, China—the only port open to European trade—carrying ginseng and silver specie. John Green, the ship's captain, and the two supercargoes[1], Samuel Shaw and Thomas Randall, had all served as officers in the US Continental Army before turning their energies to the expansion of American commerce and personal profit. On August 28, 1784, when they first arrived in Guangzhou—or as they called the port city, Canton—Chinese merchants had not heard of this new nation, the United States. Samuel Shaw wrote in his journal:

> Ours being the first American ship that had ever visited China, it was some time before the Chinese could fully comprehend the distinction between Englishmen and us. They styled us the *New People*, and when, by the map, we conveyed to them an idea of the extent of our country, with its present and increasing population, they were not a little pleased at the prospect of so considerable a market for the productions of their own empire.[2]

The Chinese merchants had difficulty distinguishing Americans from their European counterparts and especially the British because they wore the same style of clothing and spoke the same language.[3] But they were nonetheless "pleased," according to Shaw, with the "prospect" of new customers.

In the first years that American commercial traders came to Guangzhou, the Chinese referred to Americans as "second-chop Englishmen," because the British had more ships and

[1] Supercargoes were representatives of the ship's owners and in charge of overseeing the cargo.
[2] Samuel Shaw, *The Journals of Major Samuel Shaw: The First American Consul at Canton: with a Life of the Author*, edited by Josiah Quincy (The New York Public Library, 2011), 183.
[3] Kariann Akemi Yokota, *Unbecoming British: How Revolutionary America Became a Postcolonial Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

carried larger cargoes.[4] Qing government records would not even mention the United States until three years later in 1787.[5] While Chinese merchants initially knew little about the United States beyond what Samuel Shaw told them, Shaw and Randall were nearly as ignorant of China and trade in Guangzhou and therefore relied upon the advice and friendship of their fellow traders from France and Great Britain. The *Empress of China* returned to New York on May 11, 1785, after an absence of nearly 15 months, and its success encouraged others to invest in trade with China. From the beginning, the United States and China developed a relationship defined by commerce. Although mission work, diplomacy, and cultural exchange would become significant forms of exchange, commerce would continue to guide informal and formal diplomatic engagement between the two countries well into the late nineteenth century.

This dissertation examines the history of US-China relations up to 1870 with attention to the intersection of commercial interests and diplomacy. Merchants constituted the largest and most significant group of Americans traveling to China in the nineteenth century, and the government's interest in China remained commercially oriented throughout this period. As a result, the US federal government depended heavily on American commercial traders for intelligence about China as well as broader diplomatic issues. Traders had limited experiences and imperfect knowledge about China, but nevertheless, they informed political and diplomatic decisions made by the new nation halfway around the world. With the slow pace of transportation and communication between the United States and China, Americans in Guangzhou—and later, other Chinese ports opened to trade—were on their own. This compelled

[4] The term "chop," commonly mentioned in China trade sources can either refer to official seals or stamps or permission slips. John Barrow, a British official writing around 1804, mentioned that the Chinese had almost stopped using the term "second-chop Englishmen." Here "second-chop" has the same meaning as "second-rate." John Barrow, *Travels in China, Containing Descriptions, Observations, and Comparisons, Made and Collected in the Course of a Short Resident at the Imperial Palace of Yuen-Min-Yuen, and on a subsequent journey through the country from Pekin to Canton* (Memphis, Tenn.: General Books, 2010), 593.
[5] Yokota, *Unbecoming British*, 116.

American merchants and consuls to cooperate with their commercial rivals and former colonial masters, the British, who had much greater experience in China. From 1785 to 1856, the president often appointed partners in prominent China trade companies, such as Russell & Co., as consuls. As the primary US government agents in China, these men gave commercial interests even more weight.[6] As a new nation, the United States had few resources to devote to promoting trade in China. US warships infrequently visited the China coast, and Congress allocated minimal funds to consulates and legations. Unlike Great Britain, the United States had little power to force China to negotiate a commercial treaty. Since the United States remained mostly neutral during the Opium Wars, Americans depended on British military power for commercial and diplomatic privileges in China. This was an uncomfortable but obvious truth for American merchants, diplomats, and naval officers. By closely examining the specific experiences of US traders, their attitudes regarding China and the Chinese both in public and private writings, and the efforts of consuls and diplomats, this dissertation traces the genealogy of a commercially-oriented, local, and port-based knowledge about China. Although the US government took traders' "expertise" into consideration and provided general instructions, ultimately, individual merchants and diplomats in China forged America's China policy.

Rooted in English language sources but also making use of Chinese language documents, this study demonstrates how the restrictiveness of Qing regulations created a commercial focus in America's China policy that lasted decades after the end of the Canton system.[7] Some scholars

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[6] The "China trade" refers broadly to trade in China and South and Southeast Asia ("the East Indies"). I focus on China as the most significant Asian destination. For an extended discussion of the term "East Indies," see James Fichter, *So Great a Proffit: How the East Indies Trade Transformed Anglo-American Capitalism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010).

[7] Many books on US-China relations have used English language sources exclusively. Notable exceptions include: Xu Guoqi, *Chinese and Americans: A Shared History* (Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press, 2014); Gordon H. Chang, *Fateful Ties: A History of America's Preoccupation with China* (Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press, 2015); John Pomfret, *The Beautiful Country and the Middle Kingdom: America and China, 1776 to the Present* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2016).

have attempted to distance themselves from the claim that Americans rode on the coattails of the British in China by pointing to the independence and individuality of American free traders of the 1780s to the 1820s. Yet there is a good deal of truth to American dependence on the British in China during the late eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries. Americans entered a well-established commercial system in 1784, previously developed by Western and Chinese merchants, and in the post-Opium War treaty port system they also depended on the military power of the British to secure treaty privileges. A move away from a military-enforced commercial relationship in the 1860s signaled an attempt to reconfigure US-European-China relations toward peace that if it had succeeded would have meant less American dependence on Great Britain.

The United States, Great Britain, and Global Commerce

On the heels of the Revolutionary War, individual American merchants stepped onto the stage of global commerce despite serious obstacles. In Great Britain, politician John Holroyd vindictively called for the continued blockade of American shipping to British colonies in the West Indies, a policy adopted by Parliament during the war.[8] The American colonial economy had depended on trade with the West Indian colonies for over 100 years, and the United States also felt pressed on other commercial fronts. Imperial Spain blocked access to New Orleans, preventing American farmers from shipping their goods down the Mississippi River to markets in the Atlantic and the Caribbean. The British Royal Navy no longer protected American vessels, which suddenly became vulnerable on oceanic voyages, and pirates from the Barbary Coast

[8] John Holroyd, *Observations on the Commerce of the American States* (London: Printed by J. Debrett, opposite Burlington House, Piccadilly, [London], 1784); Cathy Matson, "Accounting for War and Revolution: Philadelphia Merchants and Commercial Risk, 1774-1811," in *The Self-Perception of Early Modern Capitalists*, ed. Margaret Jacobs (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 184-85; Linda K. Salvucci, "Atlantic Intersections: Early American Commerce and the Rise of the Spanish West Indies (Cuba)," *Business History Review* 79, no. 4 (Winter 2005): 784-85.

captured ships in the Mediterranean and held Americans for ransom.[9] Faced with these constraints, American merchants looked to the port of Guangzhou as a promising commercial emporium.

Before independence, Great Britain denied American ships the right to trade directly at foreign ports under the Navigation Acts of 1660, 1663, and 1696. Instead, the British East India Company monopolized trade in China and acted as middlemen between the East Indies and the British colonies in North America. Affluent American colonists purchased Chinese porcelains and silks, and tea-drinking became a habit that permeated nearly every segment of society.[10] Although British law forbade American vessels from traveling to Guangzhou, individual Americans sailed on British vessels as sailors and officers. For instance, Connecticut-born John Ledyard accompanied Captain Cook's third and final voyage (1776-1780) as a corporal of marines, and returned to the United States with a business proposal. During the voyage, the ships *Resolution* and *Discovery* had acquired sea otter skins from the Nuu-cha-nulth on Vancouver Island. When the ships later sailed to Guangzhou, the crew discovered that the sea otter skins sold for a much higher price than anticipated. Ledyard enthusiastically proposed that American

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[9] Dane A. Morrison, *True Yankees: The South Seas & The Discovery of American Identity* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014), 7-8.

[10] Caroline Frank connects American colonial history to European exploits in Asia. By examining presence of Asian material goods in northern colonial homes and an American interest in China, Frank uncovers the pre-history of the American China trade and recovers the commercial, political, and ideological significance of the East Indies trade for the American colonies. Caroline Frank, *Objectifying China, Imagining America: Chinese Commodities in Early America* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2011). There has been a plethora of works written on the broad contours of early American trade. Key works include: Kenneth Scott Latourette, *The History of Early Relations Between the United States and China, 1784-1844* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1917; Foster Rhea Dulles, *The Old China Trade* (Boston; New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1930); Foster Rhea Dulles, *China and America: The Story of Their Relations since 1784* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1946); John K. Fairbank, *Trade and Diplomacy on the China Coast* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1953); Wade J. Caruthers, *American Pacific Ocean Trade: Its Impact on Foreign Policy and Continental Expansion, 1784-1860* (New York: Exposition Press, 1973); Michael H. Hunt, *The Making of a Special Relationship: The United States and China to 1914* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983); Arrell Morgan Gibson, *Yankees in Paradise: The Pacific Basin Frontier* (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1993); Jacques M. Downs, *The Golden Ghetto: The American Commercial Community at Canton and the Shaping of American China Policy, 1784-1844* (Associated University Presses, Inc., 1997; reprint, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2014); Fichter, *So Great a Proffit.*

merchant vessels take an itinerant route to China, traveling south around Cape Horn, then to the Pacific Northwest to acquire sea otter skins, and across the Pacific to Guangzhou. Although he was not successful in organizing such a voyage, many early American traders would follow his proposed model with additional stops in Hawai‘i and other Pacific islands to gather natural products valuable in the Chinese market, including sandalwood and sea cucumbers.[11] By 1800, American merchants established themselves as serious competitors in the foreign market at Guangzhou, second only to the British East India Company.

Qing China and Foreigners

By the late eighteenth century, when Americans first arrived in Guangzhou, China was the largest, wealthiest, most populous, contiguous empire in the world, controlled by the Manchus, an elite minority. While they maintained many aspects of their own culture, the Manchus adopted a hierarchical, Confucian bureaucracy, retaining the practice of imperial examinations to select Han Chinese to work under and alongside Manchus. They also adopted the tributary system used by the Ming to manage relations with neighboring territories and sought to keep Westerners at bay.[12]

In Guangzhou, Americans entered into a long-established, rigid system of commercial relations, commonly referred to as a the “Canton system.”[13] Europeans had been traveling to

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[11] James R. Gibson, *Otter Skins, Boston Ships, and China Goods: Maritime Fur Trade of the Northwest Coast, 1785-1841* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1992), 22-23; Edward G. Gray, *The Making of John Ledyard: Empire and Ambition in the Life of an Early American Traveler* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007).

[12] James L. Hevia, *Cherishing Men from Afar: Qing Guest Ritual and the Macartney Embassy of 1793* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1995), 29-56; Mark C. Elliot, *The Manchu Way: The Eight Banners and Ethnic Identity in Late Imperial China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001); Pamela Crossley, *The Manchus* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1997); Pamela Crossley, *Orphan Warriors: Three Manchu Generations and the End of the Qing World* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990).

[13] For an exhaustive study of the workings of the Canton trade, see: Paul A. Van Dyke, *The Canton Trade: Life and Enterprise on the China Coast, 1700-1845* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2005). Macao has drawn the attention of multiple China trade scholars. See: Sibing He, *Macao in the Making of Early Sino-American Relations, 1784-1844* (Macau: Cultural Affairs Bureau of the Macao S.A.R. Government, 2014). Paul A. Van Dyke, ed.,

Chinese ports since the sixteenth century and enjoyed relative freedom to trade with the Chinese during the Ming Dynasty. However, by 1700, Qing Dynasty officials had developed an intricate set of commercial procedures and regulations restricting foreign trade to a single port, Guangzhou. A network of Qing officials and a guild of state-appointed merchants, called Hong merchants, closely regulated foreign traders.[14] Foreigners also interacted with other Chinese who provided services related to the trade—linguists, compradors, and pilots. Foreign vessels and their crews remained at Huangpu anchorage on the south side of Huangpu Island (黃埔島 *Huangpudao*), and smaller Chinese vessels ferried cargoes along the Pearl River to warehouses called "factories" or "hongs," an English word derived from the Chinese word for "firm" (行 *hang*).[15] The Qing government restricted foreigners to a few blocks surrounding the factories. During the off-season, Europeans had to leave the port, and many chose to stay in nearby Portuguese-administered Macao. Westerners, particularly the British, chafed at these constraints and agitated for increased access to markets in China. It was within this restrictive system that Americans first conducted trade with the Chinese. A series of crises in China—the Opium Wars and the Taiping Civil War—framed the work of American traders and consuls as demonstrated in the following chapters.

Americans and Macao: Trade, Smuggling, and Diplomacy on the South China Coast (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2012).

[14] "Junks" were the name for the distinctive Chinese sailing vessels. One of the best monographs on the Chinese junk trade remains Jennifer Wayne Cushman's *Fields from the Sea: Chinese Junk Trade with Siam during the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Southeast Asia Program, 1993). Good works on early periods of this trade are: Craig A. Lockard, "'The Sea Common to All': Maritime Frontiers, Port Cities, and Chinese Traders in the Southeast Asian Age of Commerce, ca. 1400-1750," *Journal of World History* 21 (2010): 219-47; Tansen Sen, "The Formation of Chinese Maritime Networks in Southern Asia, 1200-1450," *Journal of Economic and Social History of the Orient* 49 (2006): 421-53. In addition to Van Dyke's influential works, a handful of monographs have studied the Hong merchant guild: Anthony Ch'en (Ch'en Kuo-tung), *The Insolvency of the Chinese Hong Merchants, 1760-1843*, Institute of Economics Monograph Series 45 (Nanjing; Taipei: Institute of Economics, Academica Sinica, 1990); W. E. Cheong, *The Hong Merchants of Canton: Chinese Merchants in Sino-Western Trade*, Nordic Institute of Asian Studies Monograph Series no. 70 (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 1997).

[15] Pamela Kyle Crossley, *The Wobbling Pivot: China since 1800, An Interpretive History* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 73.

The First Opium War and the Unequal Treaties

Despite the restrictions in Guangzhou, foreign traders had a more important problem to solve: what goods could they bring that ultimately held trade value in Chinese markets? Commodities like ginseng and sea otter and seal skins boomed in the early nineteenth century but depreciated when traders flooded the market. During the first half of the nineteenth century, two commodities, silver and opium, had more lasting impacts. China had a long-standing demand for silver since the sixteenth century. Silver was used to pay taxes and compensate the army. When it became scarce and more expensive in relation to copper (the currency used for everyday transactions), taxpayers felt resentful. Until the early nineteenth century, Mexico and Peru produced around 80 percent of the world's silver and gold, and Spain transported these precious metals to Asia in the Manila Galleon trade (1565-1815).[16] However, in the 1810s and 1820s, South American independence movements caused a major decrease in world silver production, compelling British and American traders to seek alternative forms of payment for Chinese goods: opium.[17]

[16] For many years, the cardinal work on the Manila Galleon trade has been: William Lytle Schurz, *The Manila Galleon* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1939). A forthcoming book will explore the connection between the trans-Pacific trade and globalization: Peter Gordon and Juan José Morales, *The Silver Way: China, Spanish America and the Birth of Globalisation, 1565-1815* (Penguin Books China, 2017).

[17] Many works deal with the historical significance of flows of silver across the Pacific. Dennis O. Flynn and Arturo Giráldez have been the most influential scholars in this discussion, and they have written about how silver increasingly connected multiple parts of the world, noting China's demand for the commodity for currency as a key factor. See: Dennis O. Flynn and Arturo Giráldez, "Born with a 'Silver Spoon': The Origin of World Trade in 1571," *Journal of World History* 6, no. 2 (1995): 201-221; Dennis O. Flynn and Arturo Giráldez, "Cycles of Silver: Global Economic Unity through the Mid-Eighteenth Century," Journal of World History 13, no. 2 (Fall 2002): 391–427. Other recent works on silver include: Tonio Andrade and Xing Hang, eds., *Sea Rovers, Silver, and Samurai: Maritime East Asia in Global History, 1550-1700* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 2016); Man-houng Lin argues that disruption of world's silver supply coincided with major changes in China and East Asia—Qing China's near-collapse, the beginning of its eclipse by Japan in the East Asian order, and shifting notions of the proper relationship between state and market and between state and society—disrupted China and ushered it from the Qing dynasty to modern China. Man-houng Lin, *Upside Down: Currency, Society, and Ideologies, 1808-1856* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard East Asian Monographs, 2006).

British India provided a reliable supply of a potent form of the drug, and American traders developed a niche market in Turkish opium.[18] Americans had been aware of opium as a profitable commodity since the first US consul Samuel Shaw arrived in Guangzhou in the 1780s.[19] Although the British East India Company objected to American merchants carrying opium from Calcutta, Americans had free rein at Smyrna. The largest, most influential American firms—Perkins & Co. until 1830 and Russell & Co. after 1830—dominated the Turkish opium trade.[20] Around 1820, Qing crackdowns on opium in Guangzhou and Macao pushed foreign opium smugglers to more remote Inner Lingding Island (內伶仃島 *Nei Lingdingdao*, romanized as Lintin), located between Hong Kong and Guangzhou.[21] From there, Chinese junks and slim rowboats transferred the cargoes to Guangzhou for distribution.[22] At every step of the process, Qing officials looked the other way, often in exchange for bribes.[23] Although Americans smuggled large amounts of Turkish opium in the 1820s and 1830s, the British East India Company outstripped them, smuggling much larger amounts of Indian opium.[24] In 1834, when the British Parliament ended the East India Company's monopoly on British trade in China, private British traders flooded the opium market, transporting opium from both India and Turkey to China, and Americans lost their near monopoly of Turkish opium.[25] Regardless, American

[18] Julia Lovell, *The Opium War: Drugs, Dreams, and the Making of Modern China* (New York: The Overlook Press, 2015).
[19] Charles C. Stelle, "American Trade in Opium to China, Prior to 1820," *Pacific Historical Review* 9 (Dec. 1940), 426-27.
[20] Ibid., 438, 444.
[21] For a description of smuggling at Guangzhou, Macao, and Lingding, see: Paul A. Van Dyke, "Smuggling Networks of the Pearl River Delta before 1842: Implications for Macao and the American China Trade," in *Americans and Macao: Trade, Smuggling, and Diplomacy on the South China Coast*, edited by Paul A. Van Dyke (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2012).
[22] Peter C. Perdue, "The First Opium War: The Anglo-Chinese War of 1839-1842," *MIT Visualizing Cultures*, 2011, https://ocw.mit.edu/ans7870/21f/21f.027/opium_wars_01/ow1_essay01.html.
[23] Downs, *The Golden Ghetto*, 114-124.
[24] Charles C. Stelle, "American Trade in Opium to China, 1821-39," *Pacific Historical Review* 10 (March 1941), 68-69.
[25] Ibid., 73-74.

participation in opium smuggling allowed some firms to reduce their dependence on silver to acquire Chinese goods.[26]

In the 1830s, Great Britain pushed for more direct communication with the Qing government and increased trading privileges, while the Qing court targeted the British as the primary offenders in opium smuggling.[27] By the late 1830s, tensions between China and Great Britain reached new heights, and war seemed certain. While there was a sense of general anti-foreigner sentiment, Americans evaded Qing blame for the opium trade and continued to trade freely until war broke out. During the First Opium War, the British navy overpowered Chinese coastal forces, shocking the imperial court, and the threat of additional attacks brought the Qing to the negotiation table.[28] At the conclusion of the First Opium War (1839-1842) and the Second Opium War (1856-1860), Western powers exacted privileges in what are referred to as "unequal treaties," signaling the beginning of China's "century of humiliation," a period of Western imperialism and intervention.[29] In 1842, foreigners gained the right to travel and trade in four new ports, imposed regular tariffs, and had extraterritoriality, meaning that Western citizens in China were subject to their own nation's laws and not China's. Since the British negotiated most favored nation status, all foreign nations that made treaties with China—including the United

[26] Jacques M. Downs, "American Merchants and the China Opium Trade, 1800-1840," *The Business History Review* 42 (Winter 1968), 421-22.
[27] With the end of the British East India Company monopoly in China in 1834, the British trade superintendent Lord Napier pushed for a more direct relationship with Qing officials at the port instead of dealing indirectly through the Hong merchants, straining China's relations with foreigners. Meanwhile, by the 1830s, an anti-opium lobby had firmly established itself in the court, and the Daoguang emperor cracked down on opium. Daoguang named Lin Zexu imperial commissioner and charged him with the eradication of opium smuggling and use in Guangzhou. During this process, Lin demanded that foreign traders hand over all opium stored in the factories and in their ships and sign an agreement stating their immediate renunciation of the opium trade. Lovell, *The Opium War*, 32-77.
[28] For a history that connects Chinese intellectual trends and literati politics to foreign policy, particularly Chinese-Western relations in the 1830s and 1840s, see James M. Polachek, *The Inner Opium War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 1992).
[29] Dong Wang, *China's Unequal Treaties: Narrating National History* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2005). Treaties signed between Western powers and Tokugawa Japan have also been referred to as "unequal treaties." Recent studies of the Japanese treaties include: Michael R. Auslin, *Negotiating with Imperialism: The Unequal Treaties and the Culture of Japanese Diplomacy* (Cambridge, MA; London, England: Harvard University Press, 2004).

States—would automatically receive the same privileges negotiated by other nations. From 1842 to 1860, foreigners traveled to, evangelized, and conducted business at the five ports of Guangzhou, Shanghai, Xiamen, Fuzhou, and Ningbo. In Guangzhou, Americans and other foreigners faced increasing anti-foreigner sentiment and local Chinese resistance of new treaty privileges. Within a decade of opening, Shanghai, located near the tea- and silk-producing centers, became the new center of Chinese-foreign trade. In all five ports, US consuls lacked adequate funds, personnel, and a military presence, and felt powerless to enforce the new treaty when Qing officials and local people resisted.

The Taiping Civil War

In the mid-nineteenth century, both China and the United States faced civil wars that disrupted foreign commerce and diplomacy. In the Taiping Civil War (1850-1864)—the most destructive war of the nineteenth century and possibly the bloodiest civil war ever—the rebels of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom challenged the ebbing power of the Qing dynasty. At least 20 million people died due to warfare, famine, and disease, a death toll at least 30 times that of the American Civil War.[30] To make matters worse for the Qing, the British and French waged a separate war against them in the late 1850s, which resulted in a second round of unequal treaties, further opening China to Westerners.

The Taiping Civil War was closely watched by Americans, who believed it could portend change in US-China relations and missionary efforts. Hong Xiuquan, a teacher and failed civil service exam candidate, had visions of a visit to Heaven, which he later interpreted using Christian tracts. Concluding that he was the younger brother of Jesus Christ, he cultivated a

[30] The war is also commonly referred to as the Taiping Rebellion, but this term implies that the Taiping were always in the wrong for defying the Qing. Stephen R. Platt notes that both sides were responsible for the destruction of the war, making the term "civil war" more appropriate. Stephen R. Platt, *Autumn in the Heavenly Kingdom: China, the West, and the Epic Story of the Taiping Civil War* (New York: Vintage Books, 2012), xxiii-xxviii.

following in Guangdong and Guangxi provinces, declaring the founding of the "Heavenly Kingdom of Transcendent Peace" (太平天國 *Taiping tianguo*). In 1853, after a series of unsuccessful battles, Hong Xiuquan captured Nanjing and made it the Taiping capital. The war loomed large in Americans discussions of China, particularly during the first half of the 1850s. American commercial traders and diplomats saw possibilities for economic ruin or prosperity, depending on the outcome of the war. Merchants hoped that the Taiping would be more open to foreign trade. Some Christians believed that the sect might be the catalyst needed to convert China. Others believed that the Taiping Civil War was China's political revolution to overthrow a corrupt, despotic government. By 1860, the Qing had expelled the Taiping from Shanghai and fought to expunge the final vestiges of rebellion. Meanwhile, the British and French defeated the Qing in the Second Opium War and forced the opening of additional ports and the stationing of foreign legations in Beijing.[31] Although Americans declined to participate in much of the Second Opium War, they reaped the spoils of British and French belligerence.

Historiography

Older histories of nineteenth-century China-West relations problematically used an "impact response" framework, in which the arrival of Westerners catalyzed a stagnant China to modernize. This resulted in Western-centric studies that focused on civilizational conflict and inadequately delved into the inner workings of Chinese institutions and society.[32] Yet the

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[31] In addition to Platt's engaging narrative, see the following English-language works on the Taiping Civil War: Hong Beom Rhee, *Asian Millenarianism: An Interdisciplinary Study of the Taiping and Tonghak Rebellions in a Global Context* (Youngstown, N: Cambria Press, 2007); Jonathan D. Spence, *God's Chinese Son: The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom of Hong Xiuquan* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1996); Deng Yuanzhong, *Americans and the Taiping Rebellion: A Study of American-Chinese Relationship, 1847-1864* (Taipei: China Academy in Hwa Kang, 1982); Jen Yu-wen, *The Taiping Revolutionary Movement*, with the editorial assistance of Adrienne Suddard (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1973); Franz H. Michael, *The Taiping Rebellion: History and Documents*, in collaboration with Chung-li Chang, 3 volumes (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1966-1971.

[32] Paul Cohen critiqued this problematic historiography in: Paul Cohen, *Discovering History in China: American Historical Writing on the Recent Chinese Past* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010 reissue).

narratives of these older works continue to shape research on China-West interactions.[33] Dennett's *Americans in Eastern Asia* (1922), based on State Department records, provided a sweeping narrative arc of a clash of civilizations. He claimed that during the nineteenth century, the United States had a consistent policy for East Asia—the demand for most favored nation status—and Americans vacillated between cooperative and belligerent tactics to this end.[34] From the 1950s to the 1990s, historian John K. Fairbank also focused on civilizational conflict caused by the differences between the "Sinocentric World Order" and the European nation-state system, which he argued, resulted in the collapse of the Qing dynasty. He also emphasized the "Tributary System," in which all foreigners paid tribute to the superior power, China, in order to trade. Fairbank claimed that this long-standing history of considering foreigners as inferiors caused the Qing to delay formal diplomatic relations.[35] In recent decades works prompted by Paul Cohen and others have sought to counter Western-centric scholarship. For instance, instead of ascribing conflict to inherent, irreconcilable civilizational differences, James M. Polachek's *The Inner Opium War* (1992) focused on the Qing dynasty's internal struggles to account for its loss of the

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[33] Tyler Dennett, *Americans in Eastern Asia: A Critical Study of the Policy of the United States with Reference to China, Japan, and Korea in the 19th Century* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1922); Fairbank, *Trade and Diplomacy on the China Coast*. Other notable early works on the US-China relationship include: Latourette, *The History of Early Relations Between the United States and China, 1784-1844*; The best work on the Philadelphia branch of the American China trade is Jonathan Goldstein, *Philadelphia and the China Trade, 1682-1846: Commercial, Cultural, and Attitudinal Effects* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1978). Older works on the China trade, which have not held up as well, include: Dulles, *The Old China Trade* and Samuel Eliot Morison, *The Maritime History of Massachusetts,1783-1860*, 1st ed. (Boston; New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1922).

[34] Dael Norwood, "Trading in Liberty: The Politics of the American China Trade, c. 1784-1862," (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 2012), 12; Norwood also cites Michael H. Hunt and Jacques M. Downs as following in Dennett's footsteps. See Hunt's *The Making of a Special Relationship*; Downs, *The Golden Ghetto.*

[35] Fairbank's most influential and well-known work remains *Trade and Diplomacy on the China Coast*, which argued that China's past as an insular empire with a Sino-centric foreign policy based on tribute from bordering political entities. This interpretation of Chinese foreign relations dominated the historiography of Chinese-West relations for decades. Fairbank, *Trade and Diplomacy on the China Coast*. See also: John K. Fairbank, *The United States and China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983); John K. Fairbank, *China: The People's Middle Kingdom and the U.S.A.* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1967). For a discussion of the persistence of the tribute system as a framework for early Chinese-European relations, see: Peter Perdue, "The tenacious tributary system," *Journal of Contemporary China* 24, no. 96 (2015): 1002-1014; Suizheng Zhao, "Rethinking the Chinese World Order: The Imperial Cycle and the Rise of China," *Journal of Contemporary China* 24, no. 96 (2015): 961-982.

First Opium War.[36] More recent works have presented complex histories of diverse interests and groups in China—both Chinese and foreign—identifying moments of conflict and cooperation.[37]

The impact of economic interests on American actions in China figures centrally in this dissertation. In the nineteenth century, commerce spurred American activity and expansionism widely across the Pacific, and impacted the decisions made locally at individual ports in China. By looking at the specific circumstances of Chinese ports, the cumulative motivations, intentions, and actions of both Chinese and American actors elucidate how commercial interests drove diplomacy.[38]

This study benefits from research on the role of trade in US foreign diplomacy and empire, beginning with the work of Walter LaFeber, and more recently Matthew Fry Jacobsen.[39] It considers how trade facilitated informal diplomacy before the US established formal diplomatic relations with China, and after the Treaty of Wangxia (1844), when trade continued to motivate America's China policies. Scholars of US empire and US and the world consider issues of gender, race, and the global context in recent cultural and transnational histories. Kristin L. Hoganson's *Consumers' Imperium: The Global Production of American Domesticity, 1865-1920* offers insight into the roles that Chinese and American women played in trade and diplomacy.[40]

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[36] Polachek, *The Inner Opium War*; Cohen, *Discovering History in China.*

[37] Robert Bickers, *The Scramble for China: Foreign Devils in the Qing Empire, 1832-1914* (London: Allen Lane, 2011); Lovell, *The Opium*; Platt, *Autumn in the Heavenly Kingdom*. For a review of these three books, see: Maura Cunningham, "Forgetting and Remembering: New Books on China and the West in the Nineteenth Century," *World History Connected*, 2012, http://worldhistoryconnected.press.illinois.edu/9.3/br_cunningham.html.

[38] Historian of American diplomacy and immigration Matthew Frye Jacobson hints at a longer history of US-China relations with comments such as: "The idea that China and the China market held some special significance for the United States had a long a varied history…" Matthew Fry Jacobson, *Barbarian Virtues: The United States Encounters Foreign Peoples at Home and Abroad, 1876-1917* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2000), 26. In *The New Empire* Walter LaFeber argues that the United States developed an informal empire abroad based on free trade with other nations. While his analysis focuses on the years from 1860 to 1898, he acknowledges attempts to construct empire based on both territorial and trade expansion in the years immediately following independence. See Walter LaFeber, *The New Empire: An Interpretation of American Expansion, 1860-1898* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1963), 3-7.

[39] LaFeber, 1963; Jacobson, 2000.

[40] Kristin L. Hoganson, *Consumers' Imperium: The Global Production of American Domesticity,*

Hoganson examines quintessentially domestic places such as the middle-class American home to find evidence of international connections. Through shopping, decorating, dining preferences, and leisure choices, women produced an internationally-influenced domesticity and asserted their agency. This approach counters traditional foreign relations histories that emphasize male-dominated topics of diplomacy, military, and manufacturing. Although I do not directly study consumerism in the United States or China, consumers and their demand for luxury goods provided the impetus for the American China trade and has a prominent place in this study.

Recent work on nineteenth-century US-China commerce and diplomacy has discovered previously neglected connections between the China trade and developments in the United States.[41] Kendall Johnson's edited volume, *Narratives of Free Trade: The Commercial Cultures of Early US-China Relations*, gathers together essays organized around the broad theme of commerce and its effects. Individual chapters provide valuable analysis on American traders in China, and others look at cultural and intellectual aspects of foreign relations. Individually, the essays offer close analyses of specific texts, such as the journals of Samuel Shaw, the first unofficial American consul in Canton in 1784. Kendall Johnson's *The New Middle Kingdom: China and the Early American Romance of Free Trade* (2017) expands on the examination of free trade rhetoric and studies writings about China by missionaries, merchants, and diplomats to understand the cultural impact of the China trade on the developing United States— in faith,

1865-1920 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

[41] Widespread interest in China has also resulted in several popular synthetic works, including: John Pomfret, *The Beautiful Country and the Middle Kingdom*; Eric Jay Dolin, *When America First Met China: An Exotic History of Tea, Drugs, and Money in the Age of Sail* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Ltd., 2012). Several recent works have dealt with the topic of China-foreign relations and law, due to the unusual case of European and American extraterritoriality in China from the mid-nineteenth to mid-twentieth century. See: Li Chen, *Chinese Law in Imperial Eyes* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015); Pär Kristoffer Cassel, *Grounds of Judgment: Extraterritoriality and Imperial Power in Nineteenth-Century China and Japan* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); Eileen P. Scully, *Bargaining with the State from Afar: American Citizenship in Treaty Port China, 1844-1942* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001.

foreign policy, law, and literature.[42] Dael Norwood's *Trading Freedom: How Commerce with China Defined Early America* traces eighteenth- and nineteenth-century American political discussions that intertwined the China trade with struggles over sovereignty, imperial expansion, capital, labor, and race.[43] Xu Guoqi's *Chinese and Americans* disagrees with many other works on US-China relations that focus on differences and confrontations. Instead, he has produced a "shared history" that examines instances of cooperation and shared national experiences from Anson Burlingame's mission to the world as China's ambassador, to John Dewey's 1919 visit to China. In the process, Xu rejects a tendency in the historiography to focus on China's "century of humiliation" following the loss of the First Opium War (1839-42).[44] John Pomfret's *The Beautiful Country and the Middle Kingdom* presents the history of US-China relations as cycles of mutual hope and disenchantment.[45]

America's knowledge and imaginings of China influenced how US merchants and diplomats approached US-China relations. Caroline Frank's *Objectifying China, Imagining America* examines the history of Asian consumer goods, such as tea and porcelain, in colonial North America.[46] Early Americans had already received and developed ideas about China and Asia directly through trade goods and from narrative accounts by European voyagers. Thus,

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[42] Kendall Johnson, *The New Middle Kingdom: China and the Early American Romance of Free Trade* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2017). Another work that explores some of the broader effects of the China trade on America is: Michael D. Block, "New England Merchants, the China Trade, and the Origins of California" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Southern California, 2011). Michael Block's dissertation looks at how imperfect ideas about trade with China drew Americans into the Pacific long before Manifest Destiny.
[43] Norwood presented part of his new monograph at the 2017 AHA meeting: "Reconstruction's Relations: The Geopolitics of the Burlingame Mission in the United States and China, 1868" (presentation, Annual Meeting of the American Historical Association, Denver, CO, January 7, 2017). Also see Dael Norwood's faculty page for an overview of his upcoming book: *Binghamton University*, accessed April 11, 2017, https://www.binghamton.edu/history/people/faculty/norwood.html.
[44] Xu Guoqi, *Chinese and Americans.*
[45] John Pomfret, *The Beautiful Country and the Middle Kingdom: America and China*.
[46] Frank, *Objectifying China, Imagining* America; Frank continued work in this vein in a collected edition: Patricia Johnston and Caroline Frank, eds., *Global Trade and Visual Arts in Federal New England (New England in the World)* (Durham, NH: University of New Hampshire Press, 2014). See also: Jane T. Merritt, *The Trouble with Tea: The Politics of Consumption in the Eighteenth Century Global Economy* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2017).

when American merchants finally traveled to China on their own voyages, they carried a set of preexisting ideas regarding China and its people. John R. Haddad studies the myriad ways that Americans learned about China in the nineteenth century, through museum exhibits, trade objects, travel writing, missionary literature, international expositions, magic lantern shows, and film.[47] He argues that American thinking about China was often fantastical, and China's eighteenth- and nineteenth-century exclusion of foreigners only intensified American interest and wild imaginings. Multifarious viewpoints colored ideas about China, including religious faith, perspectives on science and technology, sexual orientation, finance, personal anxieties, and racism. Haddad agrees with John Kuo Wei Tchen that Americans defined themselves against the "other," the Chinese, but points to different motivations for thinking about China: curiosity about the world, career aspirations, and escapism.[48] Gordon H. Chang's *Fateful Ties* offers a sweeping intellectual history of American thinking about China from 1784 to the present, demonstrating America's clearer understanding of China over the years.[49]

Great Britain—given its role in the Opium Wars and formal China-West relations—greatly impacted US-China trade and diplomacy. Great Britain was China's largest foreign trading partner and a formidable opponent in war due to its naval power, nearby colonies, and financial resources. As China's second-largest trading partner, the United States competed with Great Britain commercially, but sometimes collaborated to uphold privileges they shared under

[47] John R. Haddad, *The Romance of China: Excursions to China in U.S. Culture, 1776-1876* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008).
[48] John Kuo Wei Tchen, *New York Before Chinatown: Orientalism and the Shaping of American Culture, 1776-1882* (Baltimore, MD; London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999).
[49] Gordon H. Chang, *Fateful Ties: A History of America's Preoccupation with China* (Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press, 2015); John R. Haddad, Review of *Fateful Ties: A History of America's Preoccupation with China*, by Gordon H. Chang, *American Historical Review* 121, no. 4 (2016): 1287-88. Haddad notes that Chang's work updates Harold R. Isaacs's *Scratches on our Minds: American Images of China and India* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe Inc., 1958). For a genealogy of British knowledge about China, see: Chen Song-chuan, *Merchants of War and Peace: British Knowledge of China in the Making of the Opium War* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2017).

most favored nation status. US-British relations in China continue to be a topic of debate for historians. John R. Haddad suggests that literature on early US-China trade points to the US riding on the coattails of Great Britain.[50] However, he identifies areas of American distinctiveness. Americans developed a "hyperindividuality" in China because they had to be pragmatic and flexible in response to the lack of US government support abroad. Kariann Yokota's work demonstrates how Americans competed with and attempted to differentiate themselves from the British following American independence, not only in Guangzhou but also in the Atlantic world.[51] James R. Fichter's *So Great a Proffit: How the East Indies Trade Transformed Anglo-American Capitalism* characterizes the relationship between Americans and the British as both competitive and cooperative as they competed to carry goods between Asia and the Atlantic but cooperated, forming an international business community of merchants, company directors, shareholders, and employees.[52] However, Macabe Keliher argues that Anglo-American competition, not cooperation, defined America's China policy.[53] My dissertation is concerned with the US-British relationship in so far as it impacts US relations with China. American neutrality in the First and Second Opium Wars and Anson Burlingame's cooperative policy (Chapter 4) demonstrated that Americans did not always follow the lead of the British. Moreover, economic competition with Britain often motivated US officials. Although US merchants had been calling for increased diplomatic representation in China since at least 1807, the US government only seriously considered the establishment of formal relations when

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[50] John R. Haddad, *America's First Adventure in China Trade, Treaties, Opium, and Salvation* (Philadelphia PA: Temple University Press, 2013).
[51] Yokota, *Unbecoming British.*
[52] Fichter, *So Great a Proffit*, 2.
[53] Macabe Keliher, "Anglo-American Rivalry and the Origins of U.S. China Policy," *Diplomatic History* 31 (2007): 227-257.

Britain's treaty with China threatened US economic interests in East Asia and the Pacific.[54] Yet it cannot be forgotten that British military power made American commerce and diplomacy in China possible.

Many emerging studies draw US-China relations into a Pacific World framework. Recent works by David Armitage, David Igler, and Matt K. Matsuda acknowledge that a plurality of topics and narratives are necessary.[55] David Armitage and Alison Bashford's edited volume, *Pacific Histories: Ocean, Land, People*, brings together strands of Pacific histories grouped under the broad categories of "Connections" (environment, migration, and economy), "Knowledges" (religion, law, and science), and "Identities" (race, gender, and politics). Armitage and Ashford also identify two geographic foci in Pacific history—the Pacific islands and the economically-driven Pacific Rim.[56] David Igler's *The Great Ocean* identifies the period from 1768 to 1848 as a time of rapid commercial, cultural, and ecological transformations in the Pacific. My dissertation prioritizes one of these Pacific themes: commerce. Many nineteenth-century American actions around the Pacific can be traced back to the goals of protecting and expanding American access to Asian markets. Trade with China—and aspirations to expand that trade—created a commercially driven informal American empire during the first half of the nineteenth century, resulting in territorial acquisitions in Hawai‘i, Alaska, and the Philippines in the latter nineteenth century. The early roots of empire therefore lay in commerce.

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[54] Ibid. This argument is in opposition to many scholars of US-China history, such as Tyler Dennett and John K. Fairbank, who emphasized cooperation between the United States and Great Britain.

[55] David Armitage, and Alison Bashford, eds., *Pacific Histories: Ocean, Land, People* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); David Igler, *The Great Ocean: Pacific Worlds from Captain Cook to the Gold Rush* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013); Matt K. Matsuda, *Pacific worlds: A History of Seas, Peoples, and Cultures* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

[56] A key work in this strain is Matt K. Matsuda's synthesis of Pacific history which focuses particularly on Pacific Islanders. Matsuda, *Pacific Worlds*; Matt K. Matsuda, "The Pacific." *American Historical Review* 111, no. 3 (2006): 758-780.

This dissertation also benefits from specific research on China trade merchants. Paul A. Van Dyke's *The Canton Trade: Life and Enterprise on the China Coast, 1700-1845* explores the rise and fall of the foreign trading system at Guangzhou, outlines the roles of its Chinese participants (Hong merchants, compradors, linguists, and pilots), and explains the procedures for trade at Guangzhou.[57] Van Dyke's other works expand on *The Canton Trade*, examining specific Chinese merchants.[58] Jacques Downs wrote the foundational work on US firms in Guangzhou—*The Golden Ghetto: The American Commercial Community at Canton and the Shaping of American China Policy, 1784-1844*.[59] Downs consulted numerous records created by American merchants to produce a detailed study of the American business community in Guangzhou and delineated major changes in business practices. Both Van Dyke and Downs inspired more detailed analyses of the China trade and its participants, including those by Rachel Tamar Van and John D. Wong. Van's work brings women and gender into a field heavily populated with male historical figures by tracing kinship networks of trading families.[60] Wong studies the most prominent Hong merchant in Guangzhou in the nineteenth century, Wu Bingjian (伍秉鑑), known as Houqua to foreigners, focusing on the Chinese, Indian, American, and British networks he maintained before the imposition of Western power in China. These works stress the rich possibilities of tracing transnational and kinship networks to more fully understand early US-China trade.

[57] Van Dyke, *The Canton Trade*.

[58] Paul A. Van Dyke, *Merchants of Canton and Macao: Success and Failure in Eighteenth-Century Chinese Trade* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2016); *Merchants of Canton and Macao: Politics and Strategies in Eighteenth-Century Chinese Trade* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2011); Paul A. Van Dyke, ed., *Americans and Macao*. Van Dyke has also worked with Cynthia Viallé to translate and annotate the Canton-Macao Dagregisters (Dutch accounts of trade) from 1762-1764, which have been published in three volumes.

[59] Downs, *The Golden Ghetto.*

[60] Rachel Tamar Van, "The 'Woman Pigeon': Gender and the Anglo-American Commercial Community in Canton & Macao, 1800-1849," *Pacific Historical Review* 83, no. 4 (2014): 561-591; Rachel Tamar Van, "Free Trade & Family Values: Kinship Networks and the Culture of Early American Capitalism" (Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 2011); John D. Wong, *Global Trade in the Nineteenth Century: The House of Houqua and the Canton System* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

Overview

This study traces US-China trade and diplomatic relations up to 1870. Chapter 1 examines the interactions of American commercial traders with Chinese merchants as formative experiences in early informal US-China relations. Qing regulations determined that relations with Western countries would be commercial when they excluded all other types of visitors from China. The chapter begins with the restrictions placed on foreign traders in Guangzhou from 1700 to 1839. Merchants, not unsurprisingly, complained about regulations that limited trade, and they exerted constant pressure on the Qing to expand trading privileges. Following the First Opium War (1839-1842) between Great Britain and China, the British negotiated most favored nation status, which gave all foreign nations in China the same privileges. The first treaty between the United States and China, the Treaty of Wangxia (1844), almost exclusively dealt with commerce, as demonstrated by the experiences of American commercial traders in two ports: Shanghai and Guangzhou. This chapter explains the context necessary for understanding why the United States considered its relationship with China primarily a commercial one, and how American China merchants developed skewed conceptions of China and the Chinese as a result.

Chapter 2 considers how Americans in China, after the Treaty of Wangxia, publicly wrote about their commercial opportunities. It initially focuses on writings by two heads of the preeminent American China trade company, Russell & Co.: Robert Bennet Forbes' *Remarks on China and the China Trade* (1844) and Shanghai merchant-consul Edward Cunningham's letter to Congress (1855). Although both prominent American China trade merchants in the mid-nineteenth century, Forbes and Cunningham have not yet been compared for their competing conceptions of the China trade. Both writers participated in a debate over the expansion of

foreign trade in China, and the comparison of the two demonstrates how much the political and commercial landscape had changed in just over a decade. The chapter also analyzes one of the most robust examples of American travel literature about early treaty-port China, Benjamin Lincoln Ball's *Rambles in Eastern Asia* (1855). During the early 1850s, Ball visited all five ports and wrote a detailed account that touched upon quotidian American-Chinese interactions that merchants and diplomats sometimes overlooked in their own writings. Even dental surgeon Ball's reflections pertained to the commercial orientation of nineteenth-century US-China relations.

Chapter 3 uses US consular correspondence to explore how merchant-consuls in China mediated US-China relations in the four newly opened treaty ports of Xiamen, Ningbo, Fuzhou, and Shanghai.[61] US trade lagged in Xiamen and Ningbo, leaving US consuls with few formal duties. However, in Fuzhou and Shanghai, robust Christian missions and burgeoning trade resulted in larger foreign communities, and consuls clashed with Qing officials over land disputes and the fallout of Chinese uprisings.[62] Ultimately, US consuls struggled to implement treaty privileges, exposing the limits of American power and resources. Overextended US consuls, who acted as quasi-diplomats, grappled with issues beyond their purview—the Taiping Civil War, the refusal of Qing officials to follow the treaty, and the complicated nature of US-British relations in China—indicating a need for real diplomats dedicated to advancing more

[61] Consular records refer to Chinese places using Wade-Giles or other forms of transliteration: Amoy for Xiamen, Ningpo for Ningbo, and Foochow or Fuh Chau for Fuzhou.
[62] Until 1854, the British and American governments made attempts to establish diplomatic relations with the Taiping in their capital in Nanjing. Initially, they believed that the Taiping might be more open to dealing with foreigners than their Qing counterparts. Foreign diplomats discovered that the Taiping did not have a significantly different approach to foreign relations than the Qing, and when the tide of the civil war began to turn against the Taiping after 1853, American and British officials returned to treaty negotiations with the Qing as their best hope for improving the fortunes of their citizens in China. American businessmen alternated between supporting the Taiping and supporting the Qing depending on whichever side appeared to have the upper hand, and continued to conduct business with both sides while waiting for the war to conclude. For a detailed description of how the Taiping Rebellion shaped commerce and US-China relations, see Yuan Chung Teng's "American China-Trade, American-Chinese Relations and the Taiping Rebellion, 1853-1858," *Journal of Asian History* 3, No. 2 (1969), 93-117.

than commercial interests. While scholars have utilized consular records to construct narratives about US-China relations, most notably Tyler Dennett and Te-kong Tong, the significant role that consuls played in crafting local American China policy receives closer study here.

Chapter 4 addresses a range of themes central to emerging formal diplomacy in China: how knowledge about China was transmitted to the US government, prevalent attitudes concerning China and the Chinese, and imagined possibilities for the US-China relationship. This chapter shifts from the local contexts of Chinese treaty ports to national arenas of the US Congress during the mid-nineteenth century and early official diplomacy in Beijing. Congress fielded letters from merchants and development plans from entrepreneurs, but debates over slavery and the American Civil War sidelined extensive government consideration of China in the 1850s and 1860s. The chapter also examines the careers of two key US diplomats in China, Humphrey Marshall and Anson Burlingame. Marshall struggled to enforce the diplomatic stipulations of the Treaty of Wangxia, while other government officials—both American and Qing—seemed content to keep the relationship strictly commercial. Anson Burlingame reversed relations and was the first US diplomat admitted to Beijing. Due to his congenial personality and cooperative spirit, the Qing chose him as their first ambassador to the Western treaty powers, marking the apogee of US-China relations. Despite this, Burlingame was aware of growing anti-Chinese sentiment in the United States that would later upset US-China relations in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This chapter juxtaposes commercial and racial discourse about China and the Chinese in Washington, DC with the practice of formal diplomacy in Shanghai and Beijing. By studying the contrasting efforts of Marshall and Burlingame to develop formal diplomacy, I demonstrate how both the United States and China were resistant to go beyond commercial relations in the years following the First Opium War.

By 1870, foreigners could trade at more than ten Chinese ports, and diplomats had been admitted to Beijing, marking China's implementation of Western diplomatic conventions. The opening of China increased contact between Americans and Chinese, improving knowledge of China and the Chinese. Yet misconceptions, myths, and fantasies about China continued to circulate in popular culture.[63] Even American businesspeople and diplomats, who resided in China, did not have realistic views about commercial opportunities—the focal point of US-China relations. China hands and government officials rejected some of the more outlandish fantasies, but Western cultural superiority permeated discussions of diplomacy, science and technology, race, labor, and commerce. This study explores attitudes and knowledge regarding China that circulated among American merchants and officials, arising from the restrictive setting of pre-treaty Guangzhou. American merchants' individual experiences, writings, ambitions, and actions cumulatively formed American's China policy in the nineteenth century.

[63] Haddad, *The Romance of China.*

CHAPTER 1

FROM THE CANTON SYSTEM TO TREATY PORTS: AMERICAN COMMERCIAL TRADERS IN CHINA, 1784-1864

War and conflict figured prominently in the letters and journals of American merchants in China following the American Revolution. Just a couple decades later, Americans faced blockades and depressed trade during the War of 1812, but it would be wars in China that most severely disrupted US-China trade. From around 1700 to 1839, foreigners had traded in only one Chinese port: Guangzhou. However, following the British victory in the First Opium War (1839-1842), the British forced China to open four additional ports, grant additional trading privileges, pay reparations, and cede Hong Kong. With most favored nation status, the United States, France, and other European nations received the same trading privileges. The First and Second Opium Wars (1856-1860) largely determined relations between China and foreign countries during the mid- to late nineteenth century, but uprisings in China, especially the Taiping Civil War, became the backdrop for changes in global commerce in Chinese ports. This turbulent context influenced the attitudes and opinions of American commercial traders in the early years of US-China commerce and informal diplomatic relations. Since the United States maintained a primarily commercial relationship with China, the opinions of these traders would play a significant role in the formation of America's China policy.

This chapter uses the letters and records of American commercial traders to explore their roles and attitudes in commerce and life in China from 1784 to 1864. It addresses their entry into the trade system at Guangzhou—or Canton, as foreigners called it. In Guangzhou, foreigners struggled to balance trade, so they would not have to rely on silver to pay for Chinese teas and silks. American merchants developed expertise in these commodities and the markets in Guangzhou and the United States. Over the course of the eighteenth century, Qing officials and

merchants had refined a system of regulations to control foreigners and their interactions with people in Guangzhou as well as strictly controlling the process of trade.[1] Leading up to and during the First Opium War, Americans remained neutral but acted as informed observers of the conflict and commentators on the impact it had on commerce. Following the war, the United States sent an envoy, Caleb Cushing, to China to negotiate the first US-China treaty. Upon arrival, he discovered that his mission was unnecessary. During his voyage, the British had negotiated most favored nation status for all Western nations, meaning the United States automatically had the same trading privileges as the British. However, Cushing insisted on going forward with negotiations to the chagrin of some American merchants, who feared he would do more harm than good. In the decade following the signing of the US-China Treaty of Wangxia (1844), American merchants expanded their operations in new ports and lived freer lives with their wives and children abroad, but also contended with disruptions caused by Chinese uprisings and the Second Opium War.

Commodities and Commerce

Although American vessels initially constituted a small portion of foreign trade at Guangzhou, US trade grew quickly. In 1784, the first season that Americans traded, American consul and supercargo Samuel Shaw recorded the number of foreign ships that came to conduct business. While the British East India Company had nine ships, and other countries such as the Netherlands, Denmark, France, and Portugal had as many as four or five, the United States began humbly with one ship, the infamous *Empress of China*.[2] Within fifteen years, however, China trader Samuel Dorr reported that the number of American ships increased to twenty-three. These

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[1] Guangzhou began "Canton" in Western languages sometime during the late Ming when Portuguese first visited the city. It is likely a corruption of the name of the province Guangdong. Graham E. Johnson and Glen D. Peterson, *Historical Dictionary of Guangzhou (Canton) and Guangdong* (Historical Dictionaries of Cities of the World, No. 6), (Lanham, MD; London: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1999), 25-26.

[2] Samuel Shaw, *The Journals of Major Samuel Shaw: The First American Consul at Canton: with a Life of the Author*, edited by Josiah Quincey (The New York Public Library, 2011): 182.

vessels hailed from major ports of the eastern seaboard: New York, Salem, Boston, and Philadelphia. On average, they carried 326 tons compared to the massive British East India Company ships of 1,100 to 1,400 tons.[3] Despite the smaller size of their vessels, American traders had an advantage over the behemoth British East India Company operation: their freedom and flexibility to conduct trade as individual traders—a trait that Hong merchant houses preferred. Within 20 years of first arriving at Guangzhou, US trade was only second to the British.

Although Western merchants enthusiastically sought out Chinese luxury goods like tea and silk, Chinese markets did not have an equally strong demand for foreign goods, which resulted in a trade imbalance. American traders scrambled for goods, which might tip the balance of trade in their favor, carrying a variety of commodities from the United States and other goods acquired en route to China. In the 1780s, Americans and Europeans exploited a Chinese demand for ginseng—commonly used in the manufacture of medicines believed to aid digestion, mental acuity, and overall health.[4] In the early eighteenth century, French Jesuit missionaries reported in letters to their superiors, in passing, that Canadian ginseng had passed for the Chinese variety and that there could be a market for it. This knowledge spread to England by the early eighteenth century and appeared in a collection of Letters of the Missionary Jesuits and was then reproduced in the world's first scientific journal, *Philosophical Transactions* of the "Royal Society of London for Improving Natural Knowledge."[5] European merchants cultivated the new

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[3] Samuel Adams Dorr Diary, 1809, Joseph H. Hayward family papers, Massachusetts Historical Society.
[4] John Rogers Haddad, "Behind a Cup of Tea: The Commodities of America's China Trade, 1784-1839," *China, America and the Pacific*, 2013, http://www.cap.amdigital.co.uk/FurtherResources/Essays/CommoditiesChinaTrade. For an overview of the importance of ginseng in China, see E.N. Anderson, *The Food of China* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988), 113, 230, 235-36; Edward H. Schafer, "T'ang," in K.C. Chang, ed., *Food in Chinese Culture: Anthropological and Historical Perspectives* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1977), 111-112.
[5] Henry Jones, *The Philosophical Transactions (From the Year 1700, to the Year 1720.) Abridg'd and Dispos'd under General Heads* (London: W. Innys, R. Ware, J. and P. Knapton, D. Browne, T. Longman, C. Hitch, J. Hodges, S. Austen, A. Millar, J. and J. Rivington, and J. Ward, 1749), 314-319.

source of ginseng—gathered by indigenous women in northeastern North America—and glutted the market in Guangzhou in the late 1740s and 1750s, causing prices and demand to drop precipitously.[6] By the late eighteenth century, the supply of ginseng in Guangzhou stabilized, and ginseng became a profitable commodity again. The *Empress of China* had carried 30 tons of ginseng along with cotton and other sundry items. Supercargo Samuel Shaw hoped that ginseng could balance the China trade for Americans.[7] He wrote to Foreign Secretary John Jay: "The nations of Europe are for the most part obliged to purchase this commodity [tea] with ready money, it must be pleasing to an American to know that his country can have it upon easier terms; and that the otherwise useless produce of her mountains and forests, will in a considerable degree, supply her with this elegant luxury."[8] After only two years in Guangzhou, Chinese and European merchants complained that Americans had depreciated the price of ginseng by flooding the market.[9] Despite the collapse of the Guangzhou ginseng market, Americans had already established a trading presence and accrued enough capital to continue trading in China.[10]

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[6] Christopher Parsons has explored the "afterlives" of ginseng's discovery in New France, which "upended lives, cultures, and ecosystems as whole communities foraged for ginseng plants in the forests of northeastern North America." Christopher M. Parsons, "The Natural History of Colonial Science: Joseph-François Lafitau's Discovery of Ginseng and Its Afterlives," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 73 (2016): 39; Jonathan M. Chu, "Reorienting American Trade: The Origins of the China Trade and the Development of a National Investment Community," presented to the joint seminar of the Program in Early American Economy and Society at the Library Company of Philadelphia and the MacNeil Center for Early American Studies," November 30, 2007, http://librarycompany.org/Economics/PDF%20Files/Chu.pdf; Brian L. Evans, "Ginseng: Roots of Chinese-Canadian Relations," *Canadian Historical Review* 66 (1985), 10-21.

[7] One merchant vessel, the *Harriet*, set off from American shores for China before the *Empress of China* with a full cargo of ginseng. At the Cape of Good Hope, the captain encountered a British East Indiaman, who traded Hyson tea for the twice the original cost of the ginseng. See Paul E. Fontenoy, "Ginseng, Otter Skins, and Sandalwood: The Conundrum of the China Trade," *The North Mariner/Le Marin du nord* 7, no. 1 (January 1997), 4-5.

[8] Samuel Shaw to John Jay, December 31, 1786, in *The Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States of America, from the Signing of the Definitive Treaty of Peace, 10th September, 1783, to the Adoption of the Constitution, March 4, 1789*, Vol. 3 (City of Washington: Blair and Rives, 1837), 786; Rhys Richards, "Re-Viewing Early American Trade with China, 1784-1833," *Mains'l Haul* 39 (Spring 2003): 14-19.

[9] Jane T. Merritt, *The Trouble with Tea: The Politics of Consumption in the Eighteenth-Century Economy* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2017), 134.

[10] Jonathan M. Chu, *Stumbling toward the Constitution: The Economic Consequences of Freedom in the Atlantic World* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 20-21.

When sailing across the Pacific to China, Americans collected other commodities, primarily sea otter pelts, seal skins, and sandalwood, which they rapidly depleted to acquire Chinese luxury goods.[11] In addition to tea, Hong merchants exported silk, and other luxury items in smaller quantities made their way onto American ships. Camphor and other oils, ivory- and lacquered-ware, cassia, trunks made of camphorwood, and "a thousand other little things" also did well in the United States, wrote trader John Cunningham in the 1830s and 1840s.[12] Americans traded itinerantly to obtain many of the goods they imported to Guangzhou. From the conclusion of the War of 1812 until 1829, the firm of Perkins & Co. dominated US trade at Guangzhou. In 1792, Bostonian Thomas Handasyd Perkins, who learned about the value of sea otter skins as a supercargo in Guangzhou, formed the firm James & Thomas H. Perkins with his brother. In 1806, the nephew of Perkins brothers, John Perkins Cushing, led the newly-formed Perkins & Co. A talented merchant, Cushing formed profitable partnerships with Chinese, British, and American traders including the Hong merchant Houqua, Samuel Cabot, Samuel Russell, George R. Russell, Henry Parkman Sturgis, William Sturgis, Benjamin C. Wilcocks, John R. Latimer, and the Forbes brothers.[13] On May 13, 1816, the trading company Perkins & Co. wrote to their business partners at Bryant & Sturgis, with whom they worked so closely that businessmen collectively referred to the two firms as "the Boston Concern" or "the PCBS concern."[14] Perkins & Co. reported that ships had been anchoring in South America and Hawai'i

[11] Jonathan Schlesinger examines the mid-eighteenth to mid-nineteenth century commodity booms driven and brings together such disparate places as Manchuria and California as part of the same China market-driven world. Jonathan Schlesinger, *A World Trimmed with Fur: Wild Things, Pristine Places, and the Natural Fringes of Qing Rule* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2017).
[12] Ibid.; See the following works for in-depth discussions of America's fascination with China trade: Thomas J. McCormick, *China Market: America's Quest for Informal Empire, 1893-1901* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967); Gordon H. Chang, *Fateful Ties: A History of America's Preoccupation with China* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2015)
[13] For an overview of Perkins & Co., see: Jacques M. Downs, *The Golden Ghetto: The American Commercial Community at Canton and the Shaping of American China Policy, 1784-1844* (Associated University Presses, Inc., 1997; reprint, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2014), 150-162.
[14] Ibid., 155.

to acquire sandalwood and other goods. Afterward, some ships proceeded home and others sailed to the Mediterranean, or other places where China goods might generate profit. Perkins & Co. described the state of trade in Guangzhou:

> Articles of import generally are without demand. Opium (Turkey's) bears a better price than any other article that can be mention'd, but will fall...should any considerable quantity be imported. Quicksilver is also at a decent price at present, say 90 to 100$ per pecul, but would be reduced one third on the importation of a few hundred piculs.[15]

Perkins & Co. described a market sensitive to supply that required careful communication as merchants imported products that had not been acquired in the United States such as bird's nests, betel nut, rattans, and Malacca canes did well at market. Americans could also sell beef, pork, paint, canvas, bread, cordage, twine, spirits, turpentine, raisins, paint oil, tar, pitch, and rosin in small quantities.[16] Despite the best efforts and hopes of American commercial traders, these commodities did not balance the trade. Foreigners often paid for Chinese goods using silver specie, until opium smuggling shifted the balance of trade in their favor. Before the nineteenth century, Americans had to use silver for roughly two-thirds of their purchases.[17]

While trading in Guangzhou, American merchants promptly acquired practical expertise in tea, the primary article of trade. European merchants began directly purchasing Chinese teas in the early seventeenth century, but the Chinese remained the experts on the cultivation, selection, and preparation of a variety of green and black teas. American merchants developed only an incomplete, pragmatic knowledge of the commodity. They distinguished between varieties of green teas (Young Hyson, Hyson, Hyson Skin, Twankay, Gunpowder, and Imperial) and black teas (Congou, Souchong, Pekoe, Oolong, Ningyong, Ankoi, and Powchong). James Hayward, a

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[15] A picul is a traditional Asian unit of weight, 133 and ⅓ pounds, the amount of weight a man could carry using a shoulder pole. Perkins & Co. to Bryant & Sturgis, May 13, 1816, Canton, Hooper-Sturgis papers, Massachusetts Historical Society.

[16] [Advice about trading in Guangzhou], John Cunningham papers, 1838-1875, Massachusetts Historical Society.

[17] Merritt, *The Trouble with Tea*, 135.

merchant with the shipping firm Crocker & Warren of New York City, traveled to China in 1854 aboard the *Swordfish* to examine business prospects there. During his work, he wrote a "Treatise on Tea," which instructed an unnamed associate in the art of the tea trade, focusing on selecting teas for different regions of North America and determining the quality of tea.

> Different sections of our country have formed habits of using different kinds of tea. Of the green none is used so generally as Young Hyson. In much of the Western Country, some of the middle States, in northern New Hampshire & in Vermont it forms all but an inconsiderable part of all the tea drank. Skins & Twankays are in use chiefly on the Northern frontier & in Canada west—tho' these kinds get into use to some extent wherever larger public works bring together the laboring foreign population—Gunpowders & Imperials are used at the South and somewhat at the West. Oolongs & Ningyongs (essentially the same tea) are almost universally taken in the New England states excepting N. Hampshire and Vermont and are used to some extent there…[18]

American traders might specialize in tea and need to be aware of these geographical preferences and changing tastes all the while keeping supply and demand in mind. Americans had become more sophisticated consumers of tea, expanding their tastes beyond Bohea, a cheap black tea commonly consumed in pre-revolutionary America.[19] Tea purchasers like Hayward used their skills of discernment to purchase teas of good quality, and tea sellers in the early United States employed marketing techniques through packaging and advertisements to diversify the tastes of American tea drinkers.[20]

Tea traders also had to evaluate the quality of the tea in Guangzhou. With inexperienced or inept foreign traders, Chinese tea merchants might try to sell "mixed tea." Some tea purveyors disguised low-quality tea leaves by adding dyes or mixing in leaves from other plants to add bulk. Hayward denounced the practice: "Chinese are audacious in this sort of deception. Quantities are bought here every year, tho' less now than formerly, put up like tea and having its

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[18] James Hayward, "Treatise on Tea," n.d., James Warren Hayward Papers, 1850-1857 Massachusetts Historical Society.
[19] Merritt, *The Trouble with Tea*, 137.
[20] Ibid., 137-140.

general appearance, but which is none of it tea…the wonder being that anybody should ever buy it and the greater wonder that anybody should drink it."[21] Hayward described the proper procedure for judging a tea at market, employing his senses by visually examining the tea leaf, its shape and color, and then smelling and chewing it. With experience, a tea buyer would be able to determine type and quality of tea and be able to make informed purchasing decisions. Yet Hayward admitted that "some men never become judges of tea—tho' dealing in it many years and largely."[22] He concluded that traders needed to become tea experts in order to counter a widespread Chinese mendacity. Another trader operating earlier in the 1810s, John Cunningham, also criticized the deceitful practice: "The best teas come from Nankin & the adjacent provinces; it is pure and unadulterated; that made in Canton is almost always dyed, and is generally a mixture of several different sorts of the same species. This tea I consider as poisonous, still immense quantities are annually consumed."[23] While Chinese tea merchants may have attempted to manipulate early Americans into buying low-grade, adulterated teas in the 1810s, by the 1850s, foreign merchants had experience with teas, which they passed down to novice merchants.

Gideon Nye, Jr. intimated that his fellow American merchants secured second-rate teas because of the demand for a cheap product in the United States. A native of Fair Haven, Massachusetts, Nye had worked in China as a supercargo and commercial agent beginning in 1831. In 1843, he co-founded the New York firm Nye, Parkin, & Co., which became Nye Brothers & Co. in 1853. His firm collapsed in 1856, but he continued to work in China as a commission trader and was appointed vice consul at Guangzhou.[24] In 1850, at the height of his

[21] Hayward, "Treatise on Tea."
[22] Ibid.
[23] [Advice about trading in Guangzhou], John Cunningham papers.
[24] "Spent in the China Trade: A Sketch of the Life of the late Gideon Nye," *New York Times,* March 4, 1888, 3.

career, he wrote a series of articles about the China tea trade for *Hunt's Merchants' Magazine*, a well-known, monthly American commercial publication. Due to popular demand, Nye published the articles with additional materials in pamphlet form. Rather than blaming only Chinese tea merchants for the quality of tea, he also criticized American consumers for their demand for "cheap" tea, which was really "*false* tea" of inferior quality and questionable purity.[25]

> This general seeking for the lowest cost article has induced the introduction of these substitutes for the genuine and healthful varieties…the increase of the consumption has been seriously interfered with, through the distaste which the *false* article has given…it is believed that the consumers, generally, are now exercising much greater discrimination in selecting their tea, and are using the sound medium qualities, which yield so much larger a proportion of good drink, for the same amount of money, than the lower cost teas.[26]

American tea expertise also extended to preparation. If American consumers did not learn how to properly prepare tea—sometimes by brewing it too strongly—they would not enjoy it and would associate the poor taste with all varieties of tea, regardless of quality. Nye suggested that the "judicious management on the part of the dealers" in the western and southern parts of the United States would mitigate mistakes made by uninformed and unsophisticated consumers.[27] In addition to tea sellers in the United States, Nye hoped that other American writers, those familiar with "political economy" or "active promoters of temperance" would educate American tea drinkers both of the benefits and proper way to prepare tea.[28] Nye argued that tea originated from a single, reliable source (China) and "a comparatively limited number of the most intelligent and respectable merchants," while its competitor in the United States —coffee—came from disparate sources and groups of merchants.[29]

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[25] Gideon Nye, Jr., *Tea: and the Tea Trade, Parts First and Second, first published in Hunt's Merchants' Magazine*, Third Edition (New York: Geo. W. Wood, 1850), 10.
[26] Ibid., 25.
[27] Ibid., 11.
[28] Ibid., 39.
[29] Ibid., 43.

Nye also blamed the hurriedness of the buying and selling in China for the inferior quality of teas sold in the United States.

> The general want of nicety of judgment in the selection of tea, and the consequent undue regard paid to the "style" or form and color of the leaf, rather than to the intrinsic quality, which can only be well tested in the cup, and which is often indicated by a broken leaf, whether in green or black teas, for the reason that the youngest leaves are naturally the tenderest and soonest broken, and, at the same time, the richest in flavor, is at present a check to the growing predilection for the beverage.[30]

Both Hayward and Nye noted a problem with American merchants' selection of teas, but Nye, the more experienced trader, recognized larger forces at work than individual corruption on the part of Chinese tea traders.

Regulating Foreigners in Guangzhou

Besides developing expertise in Guangzhou and American markets, US merchants also had to navigate regulations concerning foreigners in Guangzhou and find their niche in a well-established system. When Americans first arrived in Guangzhou, other European groups—the British East India Company, French, Dutch, Danish, Spanish, and German traders—had already paved the way for foreign trade. Aware of America's status as a new nation, most European traders welcomed the crew of the *Empress of China*. Captains and supercargoes relied on advice and information provided by Europeans during this first trip.[31]

Interactions with British, Spanish, and Portuguese traders during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries made the Qing wary of allowing Westerners complete freedom in China.[32] The Qing government restricted trade with foreigners exclusively to the port of Guangzhou officially in 1757 although foreign trade took place mostly in the port of Guangzhou since

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[30] Ibid., 44.
[31] Shaw, *The Journals of Major Samuel Shaw,*162-173; Kariann Yokota, *Unbecoming British: How Revolutionary America Became a Postcolonial Nation* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 115-152; Dane A. Morrison, *True Yankees: The South Seas & The Discovery of American Identity* (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 2014), 3-50; Downs, *The Golden Ghetto*, 44-46; Dennett, *Americans in Eastern Asia*, 44-68.
[32] Yokota, *Unbecoming British*, 125-131.

around 1700.[33] The "Eight Regulations"—first drawn up in 1760 and confirmed in 1818—dictated the conduct of foreign traders and Chinese citizens who interacted with them. The regulations forbade items that foreigners could use to harm or threaten Chinese citizens: warships, guns, and spears. Western women were forbidden from entering the city for fear that they would have children and establish more permanent foreign communities.[34] Other regulations closely controlled the comings and goings of foreigners and restricted times and places of leisure outside of the factories. The trading season lasted from October to March, and foreigners had to leave Guangzhou during the off-season.

The regulations also policed interactions between foreigners and Chinese. Compradors, who acted as agents and provisioners for foreigners, had to register at Macao. Each factory could have no more than 18 Chinese porters, limiting the number of Chinese who encountered foreigners. Hong merchant houses, specially licensed and organized by the Qing government and the primary group with whom foreign supercargoes and captains collaborated, could not owe debts to foreigners. The regulations also outlawed smuggling with "rascally natives," which would cheat the Qing out of duties and other fees needed for the administration of the empire. Foreigners had to return to the factories at night and were "not to be allowed to pass the night out or carouse."[35] Such interactions threatened to disrupt not only social order but also the flow of

[33] Part of the emperor's 1757 edict is available in: Chen Bojian (陈柏坚) and Huang Qichen (黄启臣), *Guangzhou Wai Mao Shi* (广州外贸史 The History of Guangzhou's Foreign Trade) 3 vols.
(Guangzhou: *Guangzhou Chubanshe* 广州出版社, 1995), 1:238-9.
[34] Some traders attempted to break the prohibition of bringing foreign women to Guangzhou. While in Canton in 1806, Captain Amasa Delano heard the story of how a man smuggled his wife into Canton disguised as a young man, but Chinese officials realized that she was a woman. She and her husband fled and barely escaped to the refuge of Macao. Amasa Delano, *A Narrative of Voyages and Travels in the Northern and Southern Hemispheres: Comprising Three Voyages Round the World Together with a Voyage of Survey and Discovery in the Pacific Ocean and Oriental Islands*, Printed by E. G. House, for the author, 1817: 541.
[35] An abridged version of the "Eight Regulations" can be found in: Amos Porter, *The China Journal of Amos Porter, 1802-1803,* Greensboro, Vermont: Greensboro Historical Society, 1984; John M. Carroll, "Slow Burn in China: Factories, Fear, and Fire," in *Empires of Panic: Epidemics and Colonial Anxieties*, edited by Robert Peckham (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2015), 35-55.

revenue to the court. For Western powers that did as they pleased in most other parts of the world, these restrictions offended their sense of entitlement.

Americans grumbled about the regulations in writings both public and private. Samuel Shaw wrote to Secretary of State John Jay that the situation of Westerners was "not enviable...considering the length of time they reside in this country, the restrictions to which they must submit, the great distance they are from their connections, the want of society, and of almost every amusement, it must be allowed that they dearly earn their money."[36] Commercial traders complained about problems common in global commerce during the age of sail, but the restrictive regulations at Guangzhou seemed to exacerbate homesickness, boredom, and restlessness. Americans half a world away from their families felt isolated and bored in the small, insular foreign community. In 1831, writers for the local English-language magazine, *Canton Miscellany*, agreed with this sentiment: "I...hear daily and constant complaints of the listlessness of a life in China."[37] However, contributors to the magazine understood that isolation had implications beyond personal comfort:

> The small space allotted foreigners for residence, being only in the Suburbs of a Commercial Capital, and rarely visited by any Native of higher rank than a Hong Merchant; a resident foreigner, is placed on but little better footing for comprehending the state of civilization in China, than an inhabitant of London or Paris, conversant with the Chinese language.[38]

By isolating foreigners in Guangzhou, Qing officials also circumscribed opportunities for learning about China.

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[36] Samuel Shaw to John Jay, January 1787 in *The Journals of Major Samuel Shaw*, 349.
[37] "De Omnibus Rebus et quibusdam alliis," *Canton Miscellany* 1 (1831), 30.
[38] "Comparative State of Civilization in China," *Canton Miscellany* 1 (1831), 38. In the same issue another article, expresses the same sentiment: "It is unfair to assume the manners of a Hong Merchant as forming the standard of Chinese Gentlemen, or to draw conclusions unfavorable to the character of the lower orders, with the hoots of Fan-kwei ["foreign devils"] from the rabble of Canton still ringing in our ears." "Observations on the Meaou-tsze Mountaineers," *Canton Miscellany* 1 (1831), 38.

Rules and established customs required a plethora of complex fees, levies, port charges and customs dues exacted by port officials, in order to acquire the "chops," or permits, needed to enter Guangzhou to trade.[39] Once within Guangzhou, traders had to be sponsored by one of the Hong merchant firms (usually twelve in number) referred to collectively as the Cohong (公行 *Gonghang*), whom the Qing emperor charged with conducting foreign trade and overseeing foreign traders.[40] Hong merchants, who used their own wealth to guarantee foreign vessels, worked closely with foreign traders and held a good deal of power within Guangzhou but also had to satisfy superiors in Beijing with mandatory "gifts." As an organized guild from 1760 to 1842, the merchants pooled a portion of their profits to create a fund to protect each other from bankruptcies in the case of large, unpaid foreign debts or excessive demands from the Qing court.[41] Foreign traders and Hong merchants conducted business at the factories, or foreign warehouses, a row of buildings along the Pearl River, where foreign captains and supercargoes also resided. Once the trading season ended, usually after a stay of one to three months, foreigners had to depart and continue their voyages or go to Portuguese-controlled Macao.[42] These rules and regulations demonstrate the high degree of control that Chinese officials

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[39] Rhys Richards, *Captain Simon Metcalfe: Pioneer Fur Trader in the Pacific Northwest, Hawaii, and China, 1787-1794* (Kingston, Ontario; Fairbanks, Alaska: Limestone Press, 1991), 85-6; "Extracts from an Unpublished Journal of the Last Embassy to Peking in 1816," *Canton Miscellany* 1 (1831), 3.

[40] There are four major works on the Hong merchants: Paul A. Van Dyke, *Merchants of Canton and Macao: Success and Failure in Eighteenth-Century Chinese Trade* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2016); Paul A. Van Dyke, *Merchants of Canton and Macao: Politics and Strategies in Eighteenth-Century Chinese Trade* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2011); Ch'en Kuo-tung Anthony, *The Insolvency of the Chinese Hong Merchants, 1760-1843*, 2 vols. (Taipei: Academica Sinica, 1990); Cheong Weng Eang, *Hong Merchants of Canton: Chinese Merchants in Sino-Western Trade, 1684-1798* (Copenhagen: NIAS-Curzon Press, 1997); Hosea Ballou Morse, *The Gilds of China, with An Account of the Gild Merchant or Co-hong of Canton* (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1909).

[41] Van Dyke, *Merchants of Canton and Macao: Politics and Strategies in Eighteenth-Century Chinese Trade*, 2; Frederic Delano Grant Jr., *The Chinese Cornerstone of Modern Banking: The Canton Guaranty System and the Origins of Bank Deposit Insurance, 1780-1933* (Leiden: Brill Nijhoff, 2014).

[42] Hosea Ballou Morse, *The Gilds of China, with an Account of the Gild Merchant or Co-Hong of Canton*, 2nd ed. (New York: Russell & Russell, 1967), 80-83.

exercised over the trade and lives of foreigners, the Hong merchants who worked with them, and other people who might interact with them.

The success of the "Eight Regulations" depended on the assumption that all parties would obey these laws. However, both foreigners and Chinese regularly violated restrictions and did so with the increasing complicity of Qing officials. Foreigners circumvented restrictions by dealing directly with small Chinese merchants outside of the officially-sanctioned Cohong, in widespread smuggling ventures.[43] For instance, captains avoided duties at Huangpu altogether by leaving their vessels among the islands near Macao. For instance, in 1788 Captain Simon Metcalf anchored his brig *Eleanora* in Lark's Bay and then sent seal skins to Guangzhou on another American ship, so that he would not have to pay duties.[44] Qing officials responsible for upholding the regulations looked the other way when bribed by foreign merchants. William C. Hunter, a long-time resident of Guangzhou and employee of the American firm Russell & Co., addressed the common misconception that the "Eight Regulations" completely controlled foreigners: "It was assumed that life there was a heap of restrictions, a long conflict with the authorities, of trials, of threats, of personal danger, and of a general uncertainty as to what the morrow might bring forth." Yet foreigners openly flaunted regulations in the 1830s:

> Everything worked smoothly and harmoniously by acting in direct opposition to what we were ordered to do. We pursued the evil tenor of our way with supreme indifference, took care of our business, pulled boats, walked, dined well, and so the years rolled by as happily as possible. Life and business at Canton before Treaty days was in fact a conundrum as insoluble as the Sphinx.[45]

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[43] Yen-p'ing Hao has argued that Chinese-foreign trade was freer than historians have assumed, and that the Canton System and the Cohong did not monopolize trade completely. Yen-p'ing Hao, *The Commercial Revolution in Nineteenth-Century China: The Rise of Sino-Western Mercantile Capitalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).

[44] James Kirker, *Adventures to China: Americans in the Southern Oceans, 1792-1812,* New York: Oxford University Press, 1970: 161-4.

[45] William C. Hunter, *Bits of Old China* (London: Kegal Paul, Trench, & Co., 1885), 2-3.

The "Eight Regulations" did not accurately represent the lived experiences of the Canton system. Instead, foreign commercial traders and the people they interacted with openly circumvented the law and created a parallel system of customs and conventions.[46]

Even Hong merchants—the intermediaries between foreign traders and the Qing government—broke the rules to pursue closer, more profitable relationships with Americans.[47] Wu Bingjian (伍秉鑑), was the head of the Ewo hong (怡和 *Yihe*) and the leader of the Cohong. Wu Bingjian's father, Wu Guorong, had founded the company.[48] Since foreigners found Chinese names difficult to pronounce, they called both father and son by the name Houqua (also spelled Howqua), which came from their trade name, 浩官 (*Haoguan*).[49] Wu Bingjian was the most prosperous Hong merchant and one of the wealthiest people in the world, and in 1834, he estimated his fortune at $26 million. Historian John D. Wong characterized Houqua as having "an extraordinary ability to balance his interests with those of his partners from America, England, and other parts of the world that allowed him to play a pivotal role in configuring trade networks as global connections intensified."[50] Houqua recognized the potential profits of working with the newly-arrived Americans and formed close, trusted business relationships with

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[46] Historian of British-Chinese relations in Guangzhou and Hong Kong, John M. Carroll, writes that the Canton System "was an encounter defined by certain enduring features, among them a mutual commitment to pecuniary gain, tension and conflict but also accommodation and adaptation, and rules and regulations that were increasingly neither enforced nor followed." John M. Carroll, "The Canton System: Conflict and Accommodation in the Contact Zone," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society Hong Kong Branch* 50, Fiftieth Anniversary, 1961-2010 (2010), 52.

[47] Records concerning the Hong merchants more often come from foreign sources than Chinese sources. None of the account books of the Hong merchants exists. Paul A. Van Dyke posits that Hong merchants may have destroyed their records once they were no longer needed because Qing authorities might use them to determine if the merchants needed to pay more duties to the emperor. If asked for accounts of a specific year, merchants might create books that would not incriminate them. Paul A. Van Dyke, *Merchants of Canton and Macao: Success and Failure in Eighteenth-Century Chinese Trade*, 110.

[48] Paul A. Van Dyke studies the history of the Wu family, focusing on Geowqua (a.k.a. Wu Qiaoguan 伍喬官) and Puiqua (a.k.a. 伍沛官 Wu Peiguan), originally a tea-trading family who began the hong firm that Houqua later expanded. See "Chapter 5: The Wu 伍 Family, 1772-1802," in Van Dyke, *Merchants of Canton and Macao: Success and Failure in Eighteenth-Century Chinese Trade*, 107-122.

[49] John D. Wong recently completed an exhaustive study of Wu Bingjian and his place in global commerce during the nineteenth century. John D. Wong, *Global Trade in the Nineteenth Century: The House of Houqua and the Canton System* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

[50] Ibid., 4.

commercial traders.[51] As the most well-known and respected Hong merchant among Americans, Houqua invested in the US market and maintained steady correspondence with his business contacts in Boston, New York City, London, and Bombay, with prominent China trade merchants such as John Perkins Cushing, John Murray Forbes, and Robert Bennet Forbes.[52]

Americans profited from their connections to one of the most important centers of global commerce, Guangzhou. The official Canton system placated the Qing court's concern regarding foreign disturbances, stifling most cultural and social exchange except through closely-monitored connections between American commercial traders and a limited set of licensed merchants and support staff. In reality, many foreigners and Chinese transgressed the boundaries of the regulations, and Americans and other foreigners participated in illicit commercial enterprises. Ultimately, both the officially sanctioned Canton system and its illicit underbelly only required a narrow knowledge of Chinese markets and procedures to conduct business.

War and Trade

American merchants encountered constant disruptions, which altered their business practices and attitudes toward China and the Chinese. Conflicts in China and elsewhere in the world unsettled regular trade, making stoppages expected, but no less detrimental for commercial firms. The War of 1812, the Opium Wars (1839-1842; 1856-1860), and the Taiping Civil War (1850-1864) interrupted and reconfigured commerce and international relations. These conflicts convinced many American commercial traders that a naval presence along the China coast would best ensure the safety of American citizens and property. Such thinking pervaded and framed how many Americans approached relations with China up to 1870.

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[51] James R. Gibson, *Otter Skins, Boston Ships, and China Goods: The Maritime Fur Trade and the Northwest Coast, 1785-1841* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1992), 87.
[52] Letterbook of Houqua, 1840-1843. Adam Matthew, Marlborough. China, America and the Pacific, http://www.cap.amdigital.co.uk/Documents/Details/MHS_Houqua.

During the War of 1812, the British obstructed American maritime travel and trade. From 1803 to 1814, during the Napoleonic Wars with France, the British Royal Navy impressed roughly 10,000 American merchant sailors, causing the United States to declare war on Great Britain in 1812.[53] In the United States, a limited number of ships passed through blockades to conduct trade. In 1807, Americans exported $108 million in goods and imported $138 million, but in 1814 at the war's height, exports had fallen drastically to $7 million and imports to $13 million. However, blockade runners, privateers, and overland smugglers facilitated the flow of Asian luxuries to the American market at increased prices.[54] The war with Britain complicated other aspects of business such as the insurance of merchant vessels. Although maritime insurance covered many types of risks, British impressment was not one of them. In 1813, the Ocean Insurance Co., which was insuring a Bryant & Sturgis vessel would not cover the risk of capture by the British and cautioned that other companies would be unlikely to take on the risk.[55]

Both the war and the anticipated peace prompted discussions of American commercial strategy in Guangzhou. Associates at Perkins & Co. wrote to their close business partners Bryant & Sturgis with news about trade in Guangzhou:

> The quantity [of ships] in the market is small & would advance extremely high in case of peace between England & America. We are now waiting with much anxiety for the arrival of some vessels from Europe in expectation of receiving favourable accounts of the negotiation. Should this be the case we should not hesitate to invest the balance in our hands in such goods as will answer your market.[56]

With the peace announced late December 1814, traders expected changes in the state of trade. More and more merchant ships arrived in the months following peace, hailing from Philadelphia,

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[53] Paul A. Gilje, *Free Trade and Sailors' Rights in the War of 1812* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

[54] Troy O. Bickham, *The Weight of Vengeance the United States, the British Empire, and the War of 1812* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

[55] Bailey and Willis to Bryant & Sturgis, February 18, 1813, Hooper-Sturgis papers, Massachusetts Historical Society.

[56] Perkins & Co. to Bryant & Sturgis, March 10, 1815, Hooper-Sturgis papers, Massachusetts Historical Society.

New York, Rhode Island, and Boston. Perkins & Co. reported: "The object of most of them appears to be silks, & the quantity that will be shipped the present year will be much greater than usual. The prices have risen very considerably since the peace, as has every other description of exports."[57] With the end of the blockades and arrival of American and British merchants, competition for teas and other goods drove up prices, but also increased the flow and rate of trade, which American and other foreign traders welcomed.

During the 1830s and 1840s, Chinese-British conflict constrained all foreign trade in Guangzhou. Tensions over the freedom of trade came to the forefront with a standoff between the Qing governor general in Guangzhou and Lord Napier, commonly referred to as the Napier Incident. Before 1834, the British East India Company monopolized British trade with China. However, when Parliament ended the monopoly—in part due to arguments in favor of free trade—any British trader could conduct business in Guangzhou with the Hong merchants. To oversee the British traders, Parliament sent Lord Napier to China as trade superintendent. Before 1842, Qing government regulations required that the Cohong act as intermediaries for all foreign traders and officials. However, Lord Napier challenged these regulations and attempted to communicate directly with the imperial representative at Guangzhou, Governor General Lu Kun (盧坤), by leaving a letter at one of the city gates. Lu Kun refused to accept the letter and complained to the Hong merchants, whom had been charged with handling foreigners. Foreigners translated his response and published it widely: "The petty affairs of commerce are to be directed by the merchants themselves...the great ministers of the celestial empire are not permitted to have intercourse by letters with outside barbarians. If the said barbarian eye [Lord

[57] Perkins & Co. to Bryant & Sturgis, September 19, 1815, Hooper-Sturgis papers, Massachusetts Historical Society.

Napier] *throws in* private letters, I, the governor, will not at all receive or look at them."[58] During the nineteenth century, Westerners commonly believed that Chinese officials thought of foreigners as "barbarians," a misinterpretation of the word 夷 (*yi*), which is better translated as "foreign(er)" or "non-Han." Affronted by additional attempts to address the government diplomatically, Lu expelled Lord Napier from Guangzhou and suspended British trading rights. Napier ordered British frigates *Andromache* and *Imogene* to the anchorage at Huangpu, preparing to use force if Lu continued to block British trade. Both Qing and British officials had arrived at an impasse, which worried American onlookers.[59]

American commercial traders closely observed the conflict between China and Great Britain. In 1834, 27-year-old Charles James Everett of Boston, the nephew of China trader Charles Everett, kept a journal describing the rising tensions and the impact of the standoff on trade and the foreign community in Guangzhou and Macao. On September 5, he wrote: "last night on a/c [account] of Sir [George] Robinson's destroying one of the Viceroy [governor general] chops, a great number of Chinese collected in front of the Factories, but no damage was done."[60] On September 7, Everett noted that the Chinese were preventing all British ships from coming into Guangzhou. A chop (an official letter with a seal) followed the next day prohibiting all foreigners from coming up the Pearl River to Guangzhou. Several days later, the Chinese sent British representatives back to Macao. Meanwhile, American ships were marooned in the anchorage at Huangpu. On September 10, British merchants, frustrated with the trade stoppage,

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[58] This English translation of Lu's edict to the Hong merchants uses the word "barbarians" to refer to foreigners, which ascribes to the original term *yi* a derogatory tone not necessarily intended in the Chinese version. This was a common misconception among Westerners in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Qtd. in Samuel Wells Williams, *The Middle Kingdom: A Survey of the Geography, Government, Education, Social Life, Arts, Religion, &c., of the Chinese Empire and Its Inhabitants, Volume 2* (New York: John Wiley, 1849), 474.
[59] Samuel Wells Williams, *The Middle Kingdom*, 468-486; Michael C. Lazich, "Placing China in Its 'Proper Rank among the Nations': The Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge in China and the First Systematic Account of the United States in Chinese," *Journal of World History* 22, no. 3 (September 2011): 527-551.
[60] Charles James Everett travel diary, 1828-1836, October 5, 1834, Everett family papers, Massachusetts Historical Society.

announced that they planned to publish a public letter "of rather a threatening nature to the Governor" if officials did not restore regular trade. Armed British ships amassed at Huangpu, and Everett speculated that violent conflict was imminent. Hoping to avoid violence, Chinese officials announced that trade would be reopened if Lord Napier sent the frigates away, but Lord Napier refused to do so. He communicated to the British merchants that he had done everything within his power to negotiate with Governor General Lu Kun and returned to Macao. Over a month after the stoppage of British trade in Guangzhou, British ships returned to trade. However, the conflict did not end with the resumption of trade. On October 9, the Lu Kun announced that British ships would not be able to get pilots until Lord Napier promised that no British warship would ever pass the Bogue Forts, a narrow strait in the Pearl River.[61]

In October 1834, the conflict between the British and Chinese ended suddenly (and embarrassingly for the British) with the death of Lord Napier from a fever. The Lord Napier incident had not done anything to advance foreign trade in Guangzhou; rather it put the Chinese on edge, who suspected that the British might try to use force again to open trade further.[62] In this incident, Americans like Charles James Everett acted as witnesses to the conflict and relayed crucial intelligence to Americans at home, but American merchants also suffered from the interruption of foreign trade. Following the 1834 incident, Qing officials became much warier not only of the British but all foreigners in Guangzhou. Their guardedness was justified. Only five years later, the conflict over Chinese-foreign trade erupted yet again, resulting in the First Opium War.

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[61] Ibid.; The Bogue Forts, also known as the Bocca Tigris ("the tiger's mouth"), the Bogue, and Humen (虎門), is a narrow strait in the Pearl River Delta. In order to successfully navigate through the strait, foreign ships hired Chinese pilots with a detailed knowledge of the river to guide their passage.

[62] Michael C. Lazich, "Placing China in Its "Proper Rank among the Nations."

One might be tempted to think that Americans passively stood by as Great Britain and China grappled over opium, but this was not the case. Like the British, some American commercial traders also smuggled opium into China. During the eighteenth century—despite imperial prohibitions in 1729 and 1799—Chinese users combined opium with tobacco, producing a more potent, addictive effect causing opium smoking to spread widely and become a social activity among the wealthy. In 1757, the British East India Company forced farmers in British-controlled India to cultivate poppy for the Chinese market. By the 1820s, with a growing supply of opium, prices fell, making opium smoking an affordable activity for Chinese of all social strata.[63] Although the British supplied the bulk of opium from India, American merchants carved out a niche in the trafficking of Turkish opium. In 1804-05, American vessels began trading at the Turkish port of Smyrna (modern-day Izmir), the principal market for opium from the Levant. The American shipment of opium from Smyrna to China picked up especially after the disruption of US trade following the War of 1812, and American trading dominated the Turkish opium market until the 1830s.

During the 1820s and 1830s, opium trafficking to China grew. In Guangzhou, the importation of opium remained constant from 1805 to 1820 at approximately 4,000 chests per year, with each chest containing 1 picul (roughly 133 pounds), of opium. In the 1822-23 season, the market took 7,773 chests, and in 1824-25 season it took 12,434 chests.[64] Beginning in 1821, in response to the Qing government's crackdown on opium, merchants developed a system outside of Guangzhou near Inner Lingding Island, where foreign vessels transferred their opium cargoes to a store ship before proceeding to Huangpu anchorage. Local Chinese dealers bribed officials, transported the opium to shore, and distributed it to consumers. Two houses, Perkins &

[63] Julia Lovell, *The Opium War: Drugs, Dreams, and the Making of Modern China* (New York: The Overlook Press, 2015), 1-54.
[64] Downs, *The Golden Ghetto*, 112-128.

Co. and Bryant & Sturgis, dominated the Turkish opium trade to China. However, in 1824 a new commission firm, Russell & Co., formed and immediately began dealing in Indian opium. When Russell & Co. absorbed Perkins & Co. in 1829, it effectively controlled the American opium trade in China. When the British East India Company's China monopoly ended in 1834, private British traders streamed into all branches of the opium trade, including the American-dominated Turkey market. During the second half of the 1830s, the volume of the opium trade soared, nearly doubling the volume of the previous years, just as the Qing government redoubled efforts to eradicate opium. Russell & Co. only swore off opium when it was too late, and Lin Zexu began his anti-opium campaign, detaining foreign merchants in Guangzhou and demanding the surrender of all opium at Guangzhou, Lingding, and other anchorages.[65] Although US firms took active part in opium trafficking, Great Britain's belligerence drew attention away from American activities.[66]

Americans reflected on the implications for trade and Chinese foreign relations. John Cunningham, a Boston merchant, worked in the tea industry in the Philippines, Japan, and China from the late 1830s to the 1870s. His brother Edward was partner at Russell & Co. Cunningham used business connections across Asia to stay informed about the First Opium War. On May 3, 1839, he wrote in his journal about the experiences of an acquaintance, Mr. Cross, in China:

> He spoke of his own adventures & of the trouble in China on [account] of opium, it had all been seized by the Chinese government, or rather they have seized the owners and threatened them with death if they do not give up all in their possession…The Chinese are no doubt perfectly right in endeavoring to stop the trade, but they ought to seize the *drug*, not the *persons of those* who own it. Many will be totally turned down by the operation who have large quantities of it in China; they say there are upwards of 80,000 chests in Canton.[67]

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[65] Jacques M. Downs, "American Merchants and the China Opium Trade, 1800-1840," *Business History Review* 42 (Winter 1968), 428-42.

[66] Scholars have given the First Opium War extensive treatment. For an updated narrative using both English- and Chinese-language sources see Julia Lovell's *The Opium War*.

[67] John Cunningham, "Journal in Singapore and Penang, Pedir Coast, Macao & Canton," May 3, 1839, John Cunningham papers, Massachusetts Historical Society.

Appointed by the Daoguang emperor to end the smuggling of opium in Guangzhou, Imperial Commissioner Lin Zexu banned the sale of opium. Lin closed access to Guangzhou, confined traders to the factories, and had 20,000 chests of opium destroyed. While Cunningham stated that he understood why the Qing would want to destroy opium, he believed that punishing and confining foreign merchants was not an acceptable solution and implied that he was more concerned about the impact it would have on foreign merchants' business. ("Many will be totally turned down by the operation.") Cunningham continued to pay attention to the state of affairs in Guangzhou while at Penang, Malaysia:

> The news from China is very bad; all the foreigners excepting one or two Americans have left Canton & trade is at a stand. Elliot [the Chief Superintendent of British Trade] had forbidden his countrymen having anything to do with the Chinese, and has returned to Macao. Opinions as to tea being opened or not are very various, but all seem to think American vessels will be perfectly safe.[68]

While the state of business remained uncertain, Lin did not target Americans, even though the most prominent American firm, Russell & Co., had been an enthusiastic participant in the trafficking of opium. As a result, American merchants could profit during the brief period when the Chinese had expelled the British, but still allowed other foreigners to trade.

To remain in the good favor of the Qing, American merchants publicly denounced opium trafficking, but some still carried on trade for the British for a fee. John Cunningham believed the practice to be duplicitous and unethical. "This is a sort of underhand business; the cotton is shipped in our name & we make to appear as if we bought it in order to avoid any chance of its being seized as British property."[69] Cunningham viewed the opium trade of the "venomous drug" as a sin. "We laugh at the Chinese as half savage; have they not shown themselves more civilized

[68] Ibid., July 21, 1839.
[69] Ibid.

than we who cry them down in this business?"[70] He pointed out the hypocrisy of drug traffickers who considered themselves more civilized than the Qing government, which sought to stamp out the traffic. Two firms, Olyphant & Co. and Wetmore & Co., had refused to participate in the opium trade from the beginning. Most notably, David Olyphant, who supported Protestant missionary efforts in China, opposed the opium trade due to his Christian ideals.[71] On August 21, 1838, Olyphant & Co. publicly registered its opposition to the trade in a letter to the editor of the *Canton Register*, one of China's first English-language newspapers, financed in part by David Olyphant[72]:

> *The vista opens before us, upon imperial censures, restrictions on purchases and sales, stoppage of trade, capital punishments & c. Nor can any man among us say, that the Opium Trade may not cost him yet his liberty, his fortune, or his life. The Imperial Government, an unlimited and despotic authority, is in open collision with foreign residents,* and none can predict, with any claim to confidence, what the contest will yet involve, or where it will cease.[73]

Olyphant & Co. argued that simply abstaining from the trade was no longer enough. The opium traffic had permeated every segment of foreign trade in Guangzhou, Huangpu anchorage, and at unsanctioned anchorages like Lingding, resulting in a corrupt system and uncertain future for all US merchants.

By August 5, 1839, Cunningham had traveled to Macao, where many foreigners resided during the off-season, and he observed American business practices during the British-Chinese standoff. Cunningham visited some of the trading houses, including Wetmore & Co., to assess

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[70] Ibid.

[71] Another prominent American commission house, Wetmore & Co., also refused to enter the profitable opium trade on moral grounds. Downs, "American Merchants and the Opium Trade, 1800-1840," 439; Gregory Adam Scott, Finding Aid for the D.W.C. Olyphant Papers, 1827-1851, The Burke Library Archives, Columbia University Libraries, Union Theological Seminary, New York, June 2010, http://library.columbia.edu/content/dam/libraryweb/locations/burke/fa/mrl/ldpd_8527541.pdf.

[72] David Shavit, *The United States in Asia: A Historical Dictionary* (New York: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1990), 373.

[73] Qtd. in William Storrs Fry, *Facts and Evidence Relating to the Opium Trade with China* (London: Pelham Richardson, 23, Cornhill, 1840), 14-15.

the situation. With the disruption of regular trade, the price of teas at Guangzhou fell. The British, with no way to access the market, needed the Americans to take licit trade goods like cotton to Guangzhou. Cunningham noted how this impacted Americans:

> However this may be, one thing is certain, the Americans have a clear coast of it as there are very few vessels of other nations in the port. Captain Elliot has acted very generously altho' very unwisely with regard to our countrymen here. He told them that if they would place their opium in his hands he would give it up as English property & hold himself responsible for any loss they might incur; what has his government to do with the Yankees, I think they will have enough to do, to pay their own subjects without meddling in those of other nations. But the consequences of this act of the Captain's, are that we trade as usual & have no bad odor attached to our names as on the Chinese records Americans stand among those who never dealt in opium where as they have been full as bad as the English.[74]

Cunningham understood Captain Elliot's offer as an act of solidarity allowing Americans to continue to trade in Guangzhou without being labeled as opium traders in the eyes of Lin Zexu. Yet the arrangement also benefited the British, who, at the least, would be able to transport their trade goods to Guangzhou even if it meant paying their competitors, the Americans, to ship those goods. British merchants would gain nothing if the Qing also suspended trade with the Americans. Regardless of Elliot's intention, at the outset of the Opium War, Americans profited from the appearance of having no connection with the opium trade. Historian Jacques M. Downs claimed that the shipping of goods up and down the Pearl River for the British cost more than shipping cargo from Europe to China. Many Americans made fortunes shipping British goods during the confrontation between the British and Qing empires.

The proxy trade carried out by the Americans on behalf of the British proved to be short-lived. By August 13th, 1839, even Americans in Guangzhou and Macao faced trade restrictions. Cunningham's comprador (the local manager for the foreign factory in Guangzhou) refused to provide ballast for Cunningham's ship because he was afraid that even this basic service might

[74] John Cunningham, "Journal in Singapore and Penang, Pedir Coast, Macao & Canton," August 5, 1839.

provoke Lin Zexu. Cunningham wrote, “Everything looks like a place preparing for a siege. I am in hopes however that we shall manage to get our freight yet.”[75] Four days later, Cunningham’s hopes were dashed. The comprador could not secure ballast for the ship *Tyra*, and Chinese merchants became too frightened to buy goods from Americans, worrying that associating with any foreigners would bring them to Lin Zexu’s attention. Lin Zexu had issued a proclamation, both in Chinese and English, forbidding the supply of provisions to the British. Although it did not explicitly forbid supplying other foreigners, few provisioners were willing to take the risk. Cunningham thought it best to leave Guangzhou. “No one, not even my own countrymen, do not know when I shall get away, obstruction after obstruction arises, seeming to have no end.”[76] In the following days, all remaining British citizens at Guangzhou and Macao left for Hong Kong. As Cunningham finally departed Huangpu anchorage, fighting broke out. Two British warships successfully engaged thirty Chinese junks, sinking two junks, blowing up another, and killing 300 Chinese, but suffering no damage to their ships.

Cunningham recorded advice and information for other merchants planning to trade in Guangzhou. Based on his brief stay in Guangzhou and experience with the China trade, he perceived himself as a notable American observer and specialist on trade and relations with China. He considered the impact of the First Opium War on US trade: “This, it must be remembered is an unusual season at Canton, one from which no rules can be taken for others; trade is very unsettled whereas generally it can be told with great preciation [sic] what will be the price of different articles for the whole season.”[77] Cunningham soberly observed the upset of the ordinarily predictable Canton system. For Cunningham, the conflict between the British and the Chinese interrupted not just the flow of trade but also the relationships American commercial

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[75] Ibid.
[76] Ibid., August 19, 1839.
[77] Ibid.

traders had with Hong merchants. "The Hong merchants are not so trustworthy as formerly; they have been oppressed to such a degree during the late troubles that many are on the point of failing; some of them are not very honest, but Thonching, Footan, Samqua, & Tuqua are honest and trustworthy. Houqua is the oldest & the best friend of foreigners."[78] On March 17, 1839, Lin Zexu blamed the Hong merchants for the proliferation of the foreign opium trade and had his lecture transcribed and later distributed it to foreign merchants. John Robert Morrison, the Chinese Secretary and Interpreter to the Superintendent of British Trade in China, translated the edict into English: "If you say these things were without your knowledge, of what use then are you? If they took place with your knowledge, death is too light a punishment for you...Yet these Hong merchants have continued in the same course of filthy and disgraceful conduct, to the great indignation and gnashing of teeth of every one."[79] Lin Zexu was not wrong. Hong merchants had transgressed the regulations set forth by the Qing court. They were certainly aware of opium smuggling and were also guilty of borrowing money from the British and other foreigners to help pay the Qing court, something strictly prohibited in the "Eight Regulations."[80] However, until Lin Zexu arrived in Guangzhou, officials had looked the other way as long revenue from foreign trade continued to flow into the Qing court's coffers. He threatened to kill members of the Cohong if they did not cooperate with his campaign to eradicate the opium trade.

Due to Great Britain's naval power, the First Opium War only lasted three years. The Qing court did not anticipate the strength of the British naval forces along the China coast, assuming the British would not be able to devote resources to a conflict halfway around the world. Qing military tacticians were also unaware that the British had recently built a faster opium clipper,

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[78] Ibid.
[79] "Edict from the Imperial Commissioner to the Hong Merchants," translated by [John] Robert Morrison, in *Correspondence Relating to China: Presented to both Houses of Parliament, by Command of Her Majesty* (London: T.R. Harrison, 1840), 352-355.
[80] Lovell, *The Opium War*, 59-60.

the *Nemesis*, which could sail in shallower waters unlike previous British vessels that had visited Guangzhou.[81] By August 1842, the war ended with the British-Chinese Treaty of Nanjing. For Americans, the end of the war signaled opportunities for expanded trade and non-commercial access to China, but merchants and politicians both worried that the British might use their victory to gain advantages in the China market over their American competitors.

The Treaty of Wangxia

On August 29, 1842, Great Britain and China negotiated a treaty largely in Britain's favor. The Treaty of Nanjing abolished the monopoly of the Cohong and opened trade between British merchants and all businesspeople in Guangzhou and four additional so-called Chinese "treaty ports": Shanghai, Xiamen (Amoy), Fuzhou (Foochow), and Ningbo (Ningpo). The treaty also called for the standardization of duties and ceded the island of Hong Kong to the British. A year later, Great Britain and China signed the Treaty of the Bogue, a supplemental treaty, which granted most favored nation status, so that all foreign nations that negotiated with China received the same privileges given to other nations.[82] The Qing hoped that by granting most favored nation status to all Western powers that Great Britain would not have an advantage over other countries and that the United States and France might keep Great Britain in check.[83]

When US officials in Washington first heard about the Treaty of Nanjing, they did not know that the British and Chinese would later negotiate for most favored nation status. Therefore, the news of the treaty catalyzed a commercially-focused, Anglophobic group of politicians into action. They wanted to make a strong impression on the Qing, assert the

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[81] For a history that connects Chinese intellectual trends and literati politics to foreign policy, particularly Chinese-Western relations in the 1830s and 1840s, see James M. Polachek, *The Inner Opium War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 1992).
[82] John K. Fairbank claimed that the idea of most favored nation came from an ancient idea of treating all foreigners equally and that it would ensure that Americans would feel grateful to the Qing emperor and not the British. Fairbank, *Trade and Diplomacy on the China Coast*, 195-196.
[83] Robert Bickers, *The Scramble for China: Foreign Devils in the Qing Empire, 1832-1914* (London; New York: Penguin Books, 2011), 89.

sovereignty of the United States, and secure American trading privileges. At the center of this reaction was Caleb Cushing, a Massachusetts representative in Congress whose father John Newmarch Cushing, cousin John Perkins Cushing, and some of his most wealthy constituents had ties to the China trade. Cushing advocated for a strong US presence in China and in the Pacific, particularly Oregon, Hawai'i, and Japan, all places where Americans and British competed for economic and territorial control. Like many merchants and politicians, he worried that, unchecked, the British would dominate markets and claim territory, excluding Americans in the process. Both President Tyler and his Secretary of State Daniel Webster relied on Cushing's advice and heeded his warning about the British.[84] On December 30, 1842, President Tyler called for Congress to finance a US mission to China. Tyler framed the mission not only in terms of Pacific commerce but also as a civilizing mission, the converse of Great Britain's "questionable morality" during the First Opium War.[85] When Congress approved the request, Tyler appointed Caleb Cushing—the most fervent advocate in Congress for a US-China treaty—the first American ambassador to China.

After a voyage of 208 days, Caleb Cushing arrived at Macao on February 24, 1844, and quickly discovered that his primary objective had already been accomplished—Americans had the same trading privileges as the British. Qing officials had even written an edict affirming that American merchants would receive the same privileges as British traders.[86] However, Secretary of State Webster had instructed Cushing to travel to Beijing, "if practicable," for an audience

[84] Macabe Keliher, "Anglo-American Rivalry and the Origins of U.S. China Policy," *Diplomatic History* 31, no. 2 (April 2007): 227-257.
[85] Ibid. This statement has later been referred to as the Tyler Doctrine, which expanded the Monroe Doctrine to the Pacific. John M. Belohlavek, *Broken Glass: Caleb Cushing and the Shattering of the Union* (Kent, OH: The Kent State University Press, 2005), 151-152.
[86] Belohlavek, *Broken Glass*, 162.

with the emperor to establish diplomatic relations.[87] However, no other Western nation had successfully established a diplomatic post at Beijing, and the main American concern remained commerce. Qing officials did not know this, and Cushing would use the threat of traveling to Beijing as leverage in treaty negotiations.[88]

American merchants, thrilled with the windfall of commercial privileges, worried what Cushing planned to do in China. Two months after Cushing arrived in Macao, one merchant in Guangzhou expressed his concerns in *Niles' Register*, a weekly national magazine published in Baltimore:

> Your townsman, Mr. Cushing, is quietly living at Macao, preparing, as *he says*, to go to Pekin. When at Macao I had the honor of seeing much of his excellency (Cushing) who has spurs on his heels, and mustachios and imperial, very flourishing! Although I like the man, I most heartily wish he were anywhere else but here and am, as well as every other American merchant here, in great fear. As Americans we are now on the very *best* terms possible with the Chinese; and as the only connexion we want with China is a commercial one, I cannot see what Mr. Cushing expects to do. He *cannot* make us better off—and a very few of his important airs will make us hated by the Chinese, and then we lose all the advantages we now have over the English; and though I believe Mr. C. to be as honest as the most of politicians, yet I fear for the sake of being, as he hopes, put face to face with Taoukwang (Emperor) he will sacrifice his countrymen and the good will of the Chinese and lose all. So much for politics.[89]

Merchants feared that Cushing's flamboyance and enthusiasm for the mission might do more harm than good. However, Cushing hoped to improve US standing in China by negotiating a

[87] U.S. Congress, Senate, Daniel Webster to Caleb Cushing, May 8, 1843, 28th Cong., 2nd Sess., S. Doc. No. 138; Ping Chia Kuo, "Caleb Cushing and the Treaty of Wanghia, 1844," *The Journal of Modern History* 5, no. 1 (March 1933): 34-35.

[88] Several scholars have addressed the Treaty of Wangxia negotiations between the Americans and the Qing. See: Kenneth S. Latourette, "The History of Early Relations Between the United States and China, 1784-1844," *Transactions of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences* 22 (1917), 1-209; Dennett, *Americans in Eastern Asia*; John K. Fairbank, *Trade and Diplomacy on the China Coast* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1953); Claude M. Fuess, *The Life of Caleb Cushing,* 2 vols. (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1923); Foster Rhea Dulles, *The Old China Trade* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company,1930); Ping Chia Kuo, "Caleb Cushing and the Treaty of Wanghia, 1844"; John M. Belohlavek, *Broken Glass*, 150-180; Kendall A. Johnson, "Caleb Cushing's Print Trail of Legal Extraterritoriality: A Confederated Christendom of Commerce, from the Far East to the Far West," in *The New Middle Kingdom: China and the Early American Romance of Free Trade* (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 2017), 170-210.

[89] Extract of a letter received by the Clarendon, at New York, April 16, 1844, Niles' *Register*, July 15, 1843, p. 308, qtd. in Dennett, *Americans in Eastern Asia*, 143.

separate treaty that did not depend on the British to secure privileges. While Cushing waited for a Qing official to arrive in Macao to begin negotiations, Cushing busied himself with reading the British-Chinese treaties and meeting with American merchants from Guangzhou and with Elijah Bridgman and Peter Parker—both long-time missionaries who acted as interpreters and Chinese cultural advisers for Cushing's mission.[90] Cushing went so far as to study Manchu, the language of the Qing court. He also began to consider the next steps in opening the Pacific to American merchants and wrote to President Tyler in January 1844 to request that his mission be expanded to include a diplomatic visit to Japan. Cushing's grand ambitions worried commercial traders, who did not want to risk souring relations with China.

Qing officials also worried about Cushing's intentions. Advisers to the Daoguang emperor appointed an experienced official, Qiying (耆英, also romanized as Keying), who had conducted the negotiations with the British, and sent him to Macao.[91] The emperor's advisers sought to dissuade the Americans from traveling north to Beijing to have an audience with the emperor. Qing officials considered this unnecessary since negotiations could be carried out better in Guangzhou or Macao, where they had interpreters available who could speak European languages, and the people were accustomed to foreigners. Eventually, Qiying successfully persuaded Cushing to conduct negotiations in Macao, where they took place from June 21 to July 3, 1844.[92]

Qiying and other officials made plans in the event of an American attack. Qiying expressed frustration at the Americans' impatience to travel to Beijing before he had even

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[90] Belohlavek, *Broken Glass*, 162-163.

[91] The British captured Qing government records covering the years 1835 to 1853 in Guangzhou during the Second Opium War (1856-1860). The memorial uses the name *Guwei* (顧嘁) likely referring to Cushing. Today the common transliteration for Cushing is *Gusheng* (顾盛). Great Britain, Foreign Office. 清代广东省档案. *Qing Dai Guangdong Sheng Dang an*. London: Public Record Office, 1982.

[92] Charles R. Kitts, *The United States Odyssey in China, 1784-1990* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1991), 17-18.

arrived in Macao to negotiate with Cushing.[93] He and other Qing officials worried that such hot-headedness might lead Americans to ignore their requests to conduct diplomatic negotiations in Macao. The Chinese were suspicious, believing that Americans were following the lead of the British in pursuing unequal treaties with China.[94] Yet Qiying mentioned that Americans did not seek territorial acquisitions in the same way that the British had with Hong Kong.[95] He speculated that even rumors that the Americans might come north could be harmful, alarming the Chinese people along the northeastern coast, and should be avoided at all costs. Therefore, some officials called for naval and military training and preparation.[96] In memorials to the Qing court, Qiying described the drills that military soldiers and officers would need to undergo since they had long been out of practice.[97] These preparations would be unnecessary. Cushing realized that Qiying and other Qing officials were not willing to let him travel to Beijing, so he used the threat to travel north for leverage rather than a serious demand.

Once Cushing agreed to abandon his goal of traveling to Beijing to meet with the emperor, Qiying agreed to sign the commercial treaty that they drafted during just two weeks of

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[93] Ibid. "以夷性多躁..." (*yi yi xing duo zao…*) "The foreigners become more impatient/hot-headed…" Daoguang reign, 24th year, 4th month, 15th day, Great Britain, Foreign Office, 清代广东省档案 *Qing Dai Guangdong Sheng Dang an* [Qing Dynasty Guangdong Archives] (London: Public Record Office, 1982), 139-140.

[94] "因聞英夷曾訂約冊，是以接踵彷效..." (Because the British made a treaty, [the Americans] follow suit…), Daoguang reign, 24th year, 5th month, 10th day, Great Britain, Foreign Office, 清代广东省档案 *Qing Dai Guangdong Sheng Dang an* [Qing Dynasty Guangdong Archives] (London: Public Record Office, 1982), 141.

[95] "隨據呈出貿易條欵一冊，雖譯漢不明，字句澁晦，而大致尚與新定章程約畧相彷，並據稱不敢效英夷之所為，圖佔海島等語。" ([The American treaty] has articles concerning trade, although the Chinese[translation] is unclear. Generally, this new treaty is about the same, but does not annex islands or other [territory] as the British [treaty].) Great Britain, Foreign Office, 清代广东省档案 *Qing Dai Guangdong Sheng Dang an* [Qing Dynasty Guangdong Archives] (London: Public Record Office, 1982), 142.

[96] "再，奴才於三月十八日行抵嚴州府地方，遇見署理兩江督臣壁，言及咪唎堅使臣欲行請覲，雖已阻止，萬一該船北駛，順道闖入江口，民心不免驚疑，必須不動聲色，預為部署。" ("Again, on the 3rd month, 18th day your servant [I] went to Yanzhou prefecture, to see the acting governor-general of the Liangjiang, Bi, and said the American envoy wanted to have an audience with the emperor, but they should be stopped if they sail north to enter the mouth of the [Peiho] river. [If they do so], the people cannot help but be alarmed, so they should preemptively deploy [the military.]") Great Britain, Foreign Office, 清代广东省档案 *Qing Dai Guangdong Sheng Dang an* [Qing Dynasty Guangdong Archives] (London: Public Record Office, 1982), 141.

[97] Ibid. "又江寧三才陣多年未演，今已軍容復振。" ("And the troops at the river have not been active for many years, so the army needs to be refreshed.")

negotiations. Unsurprisingly, Cushing and Qiying settled on a treaty that looked remarkably like the treaties made with the British. Like the British, Americans would be allowed to trade and reside at the five ports: Guangzhou, Xiamen, Fuzhou, Ningbo, and Shanghai. They could also own businesses, operate hospitals, churches, and cemeteries. As part of the supervision and regulation of US trade in China, the United States would appoint consuls and other officers to communicate directly with the Qing government. The treaty stipulated that Americans would pay the same customs fees as other nations, and that any changes to customs fees would be made in consultation with the American consulate.[98] American citizens in China would have extraterritoriality and be subject to US law, which would be administered by the consul. Americans could also employ tutors to teach them "any of the languages of the empire" and purchase any books they might want. Previously, the restriction on teaching foreigners Chinese carried serious penalties. Unlike the British, Cushing did not demand the annexation of land.[99]

The Treaty of Wangxia negotiations did not did fundamentally change privileges granted to foreigners, but they revealed misunderstandings and anxieties between the United States and China. Both countries wanted a relationship primarily defined by commerce, something made clear in communications between Qiying, Cushing, and their respective superiors. Anxieties about British power in China and the Pacific motivated Cushing, who not only wanted trading privileges on par with the British but also a separate American treaty. Qiying and other Qing officials, devastated by the outcome of the First Opium War and the exactions of the unequal treaties, took Cushing's request to travel to Beijing seriously and were skeptical of Cushing's intentions. Despite these fundamental differences and deep anxieties, Cushing and Qiying

[98] United States, "Treaty of peace, amity, and commerce, between the United States of America and the Chinese Empire," July 3, 1844, http://lccn.loc.gov/12033773.
[99] Bickers, *The Scramble for China*, 89; The British asked for $21 million Spanish dollars in reparations from the Chinese on account of the property lost during the First Opium War. Johnson, *The New Middle Kingdom*, 28.

concluded peaceful negotiations. And for commercial traders, the treaties opened a new set of exciting possibilities—new ports, new business partners, new markets, and the promise of profit.

The Opening of Shanghai

Of the four new ports open to foreign trade, Shanghai proved to be the most successful. Located on the Yangzi River, Shanghai had more direct access to important Chinese tea and silk markets than Guangzhou, making it the most attractive port for commercial traders. Shanghai had served as a major center for trade between China and Southeast Asia for centuries before Americans arrived.[100] Foreign firms set up branches, and Chinese personnel from the Guangzhou-Macao with foreign business and European language skills moved to Shanghai.

Edward Cunningham, an established commercial trader from Milton, Massachusetts, partner in Russell & Co., communicated with business partners about the advantages and disadvantages of doing business in the newly-opened port of Shanghai. Cunningham took advantage of the treaty port system and transacted commission business in three ports: Guangzhou, Shanghai, and Fuzhou.[101] He transferred to Shanghai to do bookkeeping for Russell & Co. and wrote to John Murray Forbes, a railroad investor and brother of China merchant Robert Bennet Forbes, imagining that Forbes would be "somewhat interested to hear from this comparatively new port."[102] Shanghai did not have the well-established infrastructure and practices of the Canton system.

All the details of business are troublesome & annoying here at present. The boats are so

[100] Linda Cooke Johnson, *Shanghai: From Market Town to Treaty Port, 1074-1858* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995), 2-5.
[101] Cunningham also acted as US vice consul at Shanghai from 1851 to 1854 and was one of seven board members of the Shanghai Municipal Council of the International Settlement, which was created in 1854. He later became the chair of the board in 1868. Sibing He, "Russell and Company in Shanghai, 1843-1891: U.S. Trade and Diplomacy in Treaty Port China," paper presented to "A Tale of Ten Cities: Sino-American Exchange in the Treaty Port Era, 1840-1950—An Interdisciplinary Colloquium," Hong Kong University, 23-23 May 2011, http://www.amstudy.hku.hk/news/treatyports2011/files/sibinghe.pdf.
[102] Edward Cunningham to [John Murray] Forbes, November 17, 1846, Edward Cunningham papers, Massachusetts Historical Society.

> small there is trouble in landing goods, then there is trouble in finding coolies, & it is the same thing in shipping. The admirable system existing at Canton is entirely wanting, here, and there is more trouble in one item here, than in the whole works of shipping there. Cash is more plenty than last year, but still much of the trade is in barter.[103]

On the other hand, Shanghai had definite advantages. Edward Cunningham admitted that the cost of tea was very low, and transportation was less expensive than in Guangzhou.[104] The geography of Shanghai also appeared promising for business:

> Shanghae [sic] seems likely to grow on other accounts. The silk country is close behind it, and all the raw silk must eventually be shipped from here. They say below that capital is wanting, and that will keep the trade at Canton, but the city of Soochow [Suzhou], only 50 miles distant is one of the richest in China and if money can be well invested, they will not be long in discovering it. The navigation is bad, but there is to be a light at the mouth of the river, and good charts will make the way more safe.[105]

While Shanghai was not yet a well-established international port, it had potential to become a rich center of Chinese-foreign trade that could surpass Guangzhou.

Over the next fifteen years, Americans and other foreigners in Shanghai established a thriving commerce with Chinese merchants and developed a distinctly cosmopolitan society that eclipsed Guangzhou.[106] By 1865, Shanghai had a sizable foreign population of 2,297, of which there were 378 Americans and 1,372 British. The Chinese population of the city was 90,587.[107] From 1860 to 1865, William Minns Tileston, an employee for the shipping and merchant firm Olyphant & Co. in Shanghai, wrote letters to his mother, Mary Tree Tileston, about life and work in the port. Tileston praised the cosmopolitanism of the Bund, the waterfront area within the Shanghai International Settlement, with "representatives of almost every nation on earth."[108] Races, concerts performed by regimental bands, and opera were welcome distractions and a

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[103] Ibid.
[104] Edward Cunningham to [John Murray] Forbes, January 15, 1847, Edward Cunningham papers, Massachusetts Historical Society.
[105] Ibid.
[106] William Minns Tileston to Mary Tree Tileston, William Minns Tileston letters [transcriptions], 1860-1865, Oct. 1, 1860, Massachusetts Historical Society.
[107] He, "Russell and Company in Shanghai, 1843-1891," 9.
[108] Ibid.

dramatic change from the dull pre-treaty port days in Guangzhou. During the 1850s, large firms like Russell & Co. had already transferred their headquarters to Shanghai, and half of China's exports came out of Shanghai.[109]

Even though Americans received the same treaty privileges as the British under most favored nation status, American traders continued to feel threatened by the British. Tileston cultivated a strong disdain of the British based on their dominance of the Maritime Customs Service, which had a mostly Chinese staff, but was overseen by a British Inspector General and a foreign—mostly British—senior staff. The Qing government created the Maritime Customs service in conjunction with foreign consuls when Qing officials were unable to collect duties due to the Taiping Civil War. Initially, the Maritime Customs Service, established in 1854, assessed duties on cargoes arriving in foreign vessels and constructed port infrastructure.[110] Tileston believed that the British control of the customs service threatened Americans, who were in a vulnerable position during the first half of the 1860s due to the American Civil War:

> If the Civil War were over, our interest in China might then be looked out for now altho' our steamers do the bulk of the carrying trade on this river yet they are absolutely controlled by the English. In this way, the foreign Customs Houses now established at all the open ports are entirely controlled by the English Minister as Chief Superintendent of Trade in China. Nine tenths of the Employees are Englishmen and his minions, you can imagine how much favor is shown us.[111]

Tileston speculated that these positions allowed the British to manipulate trade in their favor, including the control of vessels that patrolled the coast of Shanghai for pirates. The "true object of this fleet is ostensibly to keep the river free from pirates and rebels but in reality to jealously

[109] He, "Russell and Company in Shanghai, 1843-1891," 3.
[110] The Maritime Customs Service's duties expanded into many other areas including the collection of meteorological data, the supervision of the Translators College that trained Chinese diplomats, the development of a modern Chinese navy, the management of Chinese foreign loans, and other foreign-affairs-related areas. For an excellent history of the Maritime Customs Service utilizing newly-available sources at the Second Historical Archives in Beijing, see: Hans van de Ven, *Breaking with the Past: The Maritime Customs Service and the Global Origins of Modernity in China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014).
[111] William Minns Tileston to Mary Tree Tileston, William Minns Tileston letters [transcriptions], 1860-1865, April 1, 1863, Massachusetts Historical Society.

watch and if possible filter the advancement of American Enterprise on the greatest river known to the world."[112] Tileston had the right to worry about British influence, since the Maritime Customs Service created a set of institutions, regulations, and practices that dictated the exchange of goods and the arrival and departure of vessels and people.[113] Despite British dominance of the Maritime Customs Service, Americans would later hold prominent positions, including the inspector generalship. Meanwhile, the US Minister to China Anson Burlingame encouraged American consuls and merchants to abide by the regulations of the customs service.[114]

Americans faced war in the United States and in China, where the Taiping Civil War and other uprisings threatened the stability of trade and the safety of Shanghai residents. A sense of foreboding permeated Tileston's letters. Although the Taiping Civil War was nearing its conclusion in 1863, the Taiping launched major attacks on Shanghai in 1860 and 1862, which ultimately failed. Tileston described the Qing efforts to guard the city from future attacks. There was a "large number of men garrisoned here, ready to protect the place" should the rebels attack the city. "Foreigners are in constant danger of their lives," he wrote.[115] "The Rebels are encamped just outside the city, ready at any time to make a descent, keeping the nervous portions of the Community in a constant state of fear and trembling. A large force of English and French troops are under arms, and I may see some fighting before long."[116] On October 18, Tileston

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[112] Ibid.

[113] Van de Ven, *Breaking with the Past*, 4.; Internal conflicts were not the only hindrance to trade that also threatened the lives of Americans. Chinese pirates sailed along the coast searching for ships to attack and plunder. Tileston related the news that pirates along the coast captured a bark and killed all of her passenger except one. At the time of writing, Tileston said that the U.S.S. *Saginaw* was in pursuit of such pirates. See Wang Wensheng, *White Lotus Rebels and South China Pirates: Crisis and Reform in the Qing Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014.)

[114] Hans van de Ven, *Breaking with the Past: The Maritime Customs Service and the Global Origins of Modernity in China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 68, 97.

[115] William Minns Tileston to Mary Tree Tileston, William Minns Tileston letters [transcriptions], 1860-1865, October 1, 1860, Massachusetts Historical Society.

[116] Ibid., October 4, 1860.

heard reports that the Taiping had taken Beijing, and the emperor and his court had fled. Not only did foreigners fear for their lives, but the threat of attack and the presence of the Taiping near Shanghai also upset foreign trade. In the case of an attack, Tileston and other foreigners would be forced onto ships in the harbor for protection.[117] Americans lived and did business in Chinese ports during a time of upheaval involving multiple conflicts that overextended Qing forces and threatened American lives, property, and business.

Faced with civil wars both in China and the United States in the early 1860s, American commercial traders lamented the decline in trade:

> Business is so very dull in this place that many houses talk of discontinuing their agencies. In fact the opening of the [Yangzi] River and the interior of the country has not produced those Golden results many people anticipated and which wee [sic], to a certain extent, prognosticated by the first rush. The breaking out of the American War and the subsequent scarcity of Cotton was a severe blow to our Import trade, and in local business we can not compete with the natives. The prospects for Tea, particularly in the United States look very blue. In fact, to use a vulgar expression, China appears to be pretty nearly "played out."[118]

Tea remained a major export commodity for Americans, and exports from China to the United States fell drastically during the 1861-1862 season (7,215,010 pounds) to the 1862-1863 season (227,930 pounds). Although the tea trade returned to antebellum levels in following seasons, Tileston could not help but notice the devastating drop in trade.[119] The Office of Maritime Customs reported that British merchants took advantage of the loss of their American competition although Chinese tea-sellers suffered: "The purchase of green teas was more happily managed due to the uncertain aspect of affairs in the United States, which paralyzed

[117] Ibid., October 18, 1860.
[118] Ibid., September 30, 1864.
[119] *Reports from the Foreign Commissioners at the Various Ports in China for the Year 1865* (London: Harrison and Sons, 1867), 62.

operations...and so lowered prices as to cause considerable losses to Chinese holders."[120] As China trade companies faced failure, American merchants sought to mitigate the reduced volume of trade. For instance, American agents and tea tasters alternated between ports to keep their businesses afloat. Participants in Chinese markets also noticed the marked absence of American Southern cotton. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, American commercial traders brought a variety of goods to trade in Guangzhou—from ginseng to the skins of fur-bearing animals to sandalwood—always making up the difference with silver until some turned to Turkish opium. Americans continued to bring these goods in smaller amounts in addition to novel items, including a wide variety of cotton and cloth.

Guangzhou and the Second Opium War

Although Shanghai became the center of international trade, Guangzhou remained the center of Chinese foreign relations until 1861. The Second Opium War (1856-1860) would force the Qing to admit Western diplomats into Beijing. The war, which pitted Great Britain and France against China, addressed unrealized British dreams, including the legalization of the opium trade, further opening China to foreign commerce, and the expansion of the coolie trade. The Qing had already spread their military resources thinly because of the Taiping Civil War (1850-1864). Both conflicts resulted in trade stoppages and the destruction of treaty port infrastructure. Qing officials ignored Americans in lieu of the more pressing concern of maintaining sovereignty over China, and individual American merchants threatened to spoil the inchoate US-China relationship by peddling firearms and other supplies to the Taiping.

Initially, Guangzhou maintained a prominent position in Chinese-foreign trade after the opening of four additional treaty ports, but it did not command the same awe and respect it once

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[120] Office of Maritime Customs, "Report on Trade at the Port of Shanghae for the Year 1865," February 1, 1866, printed in *Reports from the Foreign Commissioners at the Various Ports in China for the Year 1865* (London: Harrison and Sons, 1867), 131.

had for Americans visitors. A little over a decade following the signing of the Treaty of Wangxia between the Americans and the Chinese, Marcus L. Woodard, chief officer of the ironically-named brig *Progressive Age* of Belfort, Maine, commanded by Captain A. Holmes, described Guangzhou to his brother as "a city which one short week ago was one of the beauty spots of earth, but which is now a mass of smoldering, dingy ruins."[121] Woodard had already visited other major Chinese ports including Shanghai, Ningbo, and Hong Kong before taking cargo to Macao and Huangpu, which made Guangzhou look even worse by comparison.[122]

In Guangzhou, Woodard witnessed the results of the first month of British bombardment during the Second Opium War.[123] He sat in the Brig *Progressive Age* about half a mile away from the men-of-war with an unobstructed view of the destruction:

> When they were bombarding the city we could see the shells curving up and chopping right among the houses and often see the effect of the explosion. It was a horrible sight and I hope I shall never see anything like it again. When those big guns would roar I could fancy it the death knell of hundreds of those who had never heard of a Savior.[124]

Viewing the destruction aroused Woodard's sympathy and Christian concern. He resumed his letter two days later as the hostilities continued in the suburbs of Guangzhou. "I have seen large houses blown flat to the ground by the explosion of a shell, whole streets have been swept outside the city wall by the terrific engines of death."[125] While the destruction of Guangzhou captivated and horrified Woodard, he still considered how the attacks would impact trade. He predicted that the price of teas would increase as the fighting interrupted the production and transportation of tea to the market at Guangzhou. However, he believed that the freight business

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[121] Marcus L. Woodard to George Woodard, November 2, 1856, Marcus L. Woodard letters [photocopies], 1855-1862, Massachusetts Historical Society.
[122] Ibid.
[123] Stephen R. Platt hesitated to name the conflict a "war" since it was "haphazard and undirected" and "entirely one-sided, that had grown from its increasingly forceful attempts to revise the 1842 treaty from the Opium War to give British merchants even greater access to Chinese markets." Platt, *Autumn in the Heavenly Kingdom,* 27-28.
[124] Ibid.
[125] Ibid.

would be good for "some time to come" since he had been contracted to ship cotton while at Guangzhou.[126] And just as some American merchants found opportunities to profit from the conflict during the First Opium War, Woodard hinted that opportunities existed for Americans to profit during the war between the Qing empire and the British and French.

While the British continued fighting the Chinese in the Second Opium War, the US government maintained a policy of neutrality as it had during the First Opium War. Prior to the Second Opium War, the British, French, and American governments had been coordinating to negotiate a second round of treaties with China—something stipulated in the final article of the Treaty of Wangxia. US minister to China Peter Parker was eager to cooperate in joint negotiations and supported dispatching American military vessels to the mouth of the Hai River near Tianjin to pressure Beijing. However, after the British attacked Guangzhou, US politicians hesitated to join the war, and Secretary of State William Marcy and President Pierce convinced the President-elect James Buchanan and incoming Secretary of State Lewis Cass to maintain neutrality.[127] Marcy believed the British government had "objects beyond those contemplated by the United States and we ought not be drawn along with it however anxious it may be for our cooperation."[128] The US government remained neutral, not out of a sense of fairness toward the Chinese, but because they did not trust British intentions. In fact, the British concealed one of their central aims, the goal of legalizing opium, from their potential allies, the French and the Americans. Meanwhile, the Russians briefly considered participating in the British-French

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[126] Ibid.
[127] An exception to American neutrality, the *USS Jacinto* joined British and French vessels during an attack on Taku Forts near Tianjin in 1859. In 1856, American Commander James Armstrong attacked forts at Guangzhou in retaliation for offending the American flag. Historian Wei Jianyou interpreted this retaliatory attack, which had been denounced by the US navy and government, as American support of the British and French in the Second Opium War. J. Y. Wong, *Deadly Dreams: Opium, Imperialism, and the Arrow War (1856-1860) in China* (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 7, 266-275; Wei Jianyou, *Di'erci yapian zhanzheng* (The Second Opium War), (Shanghai: Renmin chubanshe, 1955).
[128] Qtd. in John Bassett Moore, *A Digest of International Law: As Embodied in Diplomatic Discussions*, Vol. V (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1906), 424.

military effort before deciding to join the Americans as neutral observers. The British were relieved because they speculated that if given the chance Russia could challenge British power in China due to the 4,000-mile long Russian-Chinese border.[129]

In 1859, another American observer, Henry H. Warden, an American partner of Russell & Co. at Shanghai, wrote of a two-week stay in Guangzhou soon after his arrival in China. The Second Opium War had a brief interlude in 1858, when Great Britain, France, Russia, and the United States each negotiated new treaties with China. However, advisers convinced the Xianfeng emperor that he should not accept the demanding stipulations. The treaties made at Tianjin opened additional ports to foreign trade, gave the four countries the right to station diplomatic legations in Beijing, and allowed travel on the Yangzi River and in the interior of China.[130] When the emperor refused to ratify the treaties, fighting continued in Tianjin and Guangzhou. The conflict had destroyed not only the Chinese part of the city, but also the factories, where foreign and Chinese merchants conducted trade. "The glory of that place has departed—I fear never to return," Warden wrote to his wife Elizabeth Beal Warden, who had stayed with their children in Kingston, Massachusetts. "As to the foreign factories, nothing remains but a heap of debris—even the garden has been destroyed and all trace of it obliterated…the amount of suffering must have been appalling."[131] After two years of additional

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[129] Russia and China did not have significant contact until 1640 when Russian explorers traveled eastward across Siberia and encountered Chinese in the Amur region. In 1685, the Qing wrote to the Russian czar, suggesting negotiations to resolve the land dispute, which resulted in the Treaty of Nerchinsk (1689). China and Russia further defined the northern border in the Treaty of Kyakhta (1729), which also opened Russian-Chinese trade in the border city of Kyakhta. These two treaties defined Chinese-Russian relations until the 1858 Treaty of Aigun, one of the unequal treaties with Western powers ratified after the Second Opium War. Alexander Lukin, *The Bear Watches the Dragon: Russia's Perceptions of China and the Evolution of Russian-Chinese Relations Since the Eighteenth Century* (Armonk, NY; London: M.E. Sharpe, 2003); Harry Schwartz, *Tsars, Mandarins, and Commissars: A History of Chinese-Russian Relations* (Philadelphia and New York: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1964).
[130] For a firsthand description of the negotiation of the US-China Treaty of Tientsin, see: Samuel Wells Williams, *Narrative of the American Embassy to Peking, in July, 1859* (Shanghai: Printed at the Office of the North China Herald, 1859).
[131] Henry H. Warden to Elizabeth (Beal) Warden, June 19, 1859, Warden Family Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society.

fighting, the war ended when the Qing ratified the treaties originally negotiated. Both foreigners and Chinese worked to reconstruct the buildings that had been destroyed during the fighting. Americans in the other treaty ports of Shanghai, Xiamen, Fuzhou, and Ningbo did not have to deal with the grand-scale destruction and resulting resentment from the local population that foreigners had encountered in Guangzhou since the First Opium War.

Global Connections in the Treaty Port Era

American politicians paid close attention to the development of the China trade, and American merchants understood that the "China trade" entailed more than trade in the treaty ports along the China coast. The experiences and practices of individual American merchants and their firms also point to the interconnectedness of Chinese ports with other business ventures in Asia and the Pacific. American commercial companies maintained offices in other important Asian ports such as Batavia (modern-day Jakarta), Manila, and Mumbai. The financial institutions needed to support global commerce in China, particularly the merchant bank Baring Brothers & Co., were located in London. Vessels departing from major US ports made multiple stops en route to China to conduct business, collect commodities, and resupply.

Since Great Britain had successfully used force in the First Opium War to open China, Americans looked to other places to employ gunboat diplomacy to gain commercial advantages. In the late 1850s, Americans scrambled to Japan after Commodore Perry's 1853-54 naval expedition that established diplomatic relations with the infamously insular nation. President Millard Fillmore charged Perry with negotiating a trade agreement with Japan. Multiple American vessels had attempted to visit Japan since 1790, but the Japanese government acquiesced when Perry visited Edo a second time with ten warships. On March 31, 1854, Perry

and Hayashi Akira signed the Convention of Kanagawa, which opened the ports of Shimoda and Hakodate to Americans and established an American consulate in Shimoda.[132]

The opening of Japan generated fervor among Americans, who hoped to make fortunes like some of the early American merchants who traded in China. Henry H. Warden of Russell & Co., conducted business mostly in Shanghai, but his work often took him to other ports. While in China he monitored the progress of a friend named George Rogers Hall in Japan. Hall, a physician from Rhode Island, graduated from Harvard Medical School in 1846 and then moved to Shanghai, where he established a hospital. He became very good friends with Edward Cunningham, and they married sisters from the Beal family from Kingston, Massachusetts—Helen and Elizabeth. Hall and his wife Helen lived in Shanghai together from 1850 to 1854 and had three sons—one whom they named Edward Cunningham Hall. After Helen and the children returned to Massachusetts in 1854, Hall abandoned his medical practice and went into business with his friend. When Japan opened, Hall decided to pursue new opportunities, and he traveled to Yokohama in 1859.[133] Warden wrote: "Some people supposed that he had a trading scheme for want of a chance at practice in his new profession."[134] Hall did not have immediate success in Japan. "I have heard from Hall who seems to have failed in finding *any* field for the practice of his profession as I understand it he is now waiting in Japan for the chance of finding some

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[132] Commodore Matthew Perry published a report of the expedition in three volumes: Francis L. Hawks, *Narrative of the Expedition of an American Squadron to the China Seas and Japan: performed in the years 1852, 1853, and 1854, under the command of Commodore M.C. Perry, United States Navy, by order of the Government of the United States* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1856).
[133] Although not mentioned in Warden's letters, George Rogers Hall was an avid botanist and imported a considerable number of Japanese plants to the United States using Wardian cases, which could preserve living species plants during long sea voyages. See: Sara Butler, "George Rogers Hall's Horticultural Activism," in *Foreign Trends in American Gardens: A History of Exchange, Adaption, and Reception*, edited by Raffaella Fabiani Giannetto (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2016); S.A. Sponberg, "Exploration and Introduction of Ornamental and Landscape Plants from Eastern Asia," in *New Crops*, edited by J. Janick and J.E. Simon (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd., 1993), 140-147; James M. Howe, Jr., "George Rogers Hall Lover of Plants," *Journal of the Arnold Arboretum* 4 (April 1923): 91-98.
[134] Henry H. Warden to Elizabeth (Beal) Warden, June 19, 1859, Warden Family Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society.

employment connected with trade."[135] He wrote his wife Elizabeth to tell her sister Helen that Hall had trouble finding work in Japan: "I have a letter from him in which he says that there had been only one case of sickness reported since his arrival. The case was one of toothache and he as the sufferer."[136] Hall could not find foothold in Japan in either medicine or commerce, and Warden planned on visiting Hall in Japan to assist him.

Meanwhile, in Shanghai, the opening of Japan stimulated trade. On October 2, 1859, Warden complained that he was "exceedingly busy" due to the newly-opened Japanese ports:

> Foreign trade is essentially new to the Japanese and there are all sorts of perplexities in dealing with them, the experience they have had at Nagasaki counts for nothing. Because there is no such thing as free enterprise between different ports of the country, and the present administration being inimical to foreign trade and foreigners it is very hard work to do much business with the people.[137]

Warden described foreigners in Japan as "leeches," drawn by the large profit to be made from exchanging foreign silver against Japanese gold. While he predicted that this line of trade would dry up, he anticipated that there would be other avenues of trade to pursue. "Every few days we get accounts which stir us up amazingly—we have got 4 vessels running between here and Japan. Hall at Kanagawa and [Thomas] Walsh at Nagasaki keep on asking for more cargo. They send back among other things cargoes of Seaweed which the Chinese buy for chow chow…"[138] While Warden believed that he and his associates in Japan were at the forefront of the trade, he recognized that knowledge of the opportunities in Japan was spreading quickly among foreign circles in East Asia, so he needed to act immediately to make a profit.

Warden, Hall, and many other American merchants did not plan to remain in Asia, but intended to return to the United States with a fortune to support them and make investments.

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[135] Ibid., June 21, 1859.
[136] Ibid., July 14, 1859.
[137] Ibid., October 2, 1859.
[138] Ibid.; "Chow chow" is pidgin for "food."

Estimating that it would take about three years to make a sizable profit, Warden asked his wife Elizabeth to think carefully about joining him in Shanghai, but left the decision up to her especially as she was expecting a third child and would not be able to travel until after she had given birth. The unequal treaties allowed for foreigners to bring their families to live with them in Chinese ports unlike the pre-1842 Canton system. Although some captains and supercargoes had brought their wives to China before the Treaty of Nanjing, women had to remain in Macao whereas men could travel to Guangzhou to conduct business. Henry Warden recommended to his wife Elizabeth that they leave the children in Kingston, Massachusetts with friends if she came to China, or if she could not part with them, then to bring them along with her. He also suggested people with whom she might make the voyage. "The ladies there who have come out without their husbands describe it as disagreeable, but very practicable, and satisfactory upon the whole, in comparison with stopping alone at home. I need not tell you that I see all the difficulties in your case, but…I think you will not regret coming when the voyage is over."[139] Warden suggested that Hall's wife and Elizabeth's sister, Helen, come out with her until her husband Hall was settled in Japan. Warden prepared for his family's arrival, contracting a house and ordering furniture from England and the United States, and Elizabeth and their children traveled to join him in Shanghai.

Despite some early difficulties, Hall ultimately succeeded in Japan and returned to Massachusetts with a "competency." Hall co-created one of the first important American trading houses in Japan, Walsh, Hall & Co. Thomas Walsh, an American commercial trader who had worked in Guangzhou and Shanghai, partnered with his brother and George Rogers Hall to export silk, tea, and cotton. Hall made his fortune within two years, just as the American Civil War was beginning, and returned to the United States in 1861 or 1862. The American Civil War

[139] Ibid., July 22, 1859.

disrupted the efforts of other US commercial traders who had remained abroad, and they had to work to re-establish themselves in East Asian ports after 1865.[140] The example of Warden, Hall, and their families represent the changing nature of American entrepreneurial life and activity in East Asia. They were not relegated to a single Chinese port, but had free access to many. Although merchants had long been making stops in Batavia, Manila, and Mumbai prior to 1842, the opening of Japan in the mid-1850s represented a completely novel venture inspired by China's opening and demonstrated the expansionist policy of the United States in the Pacific. Finally, freed from the regulations of the Canton system, foreign women and children more frequently accompanied male relatives to China. These transformations fundamentally altered the experience of American merchants in China from one of restriction to one that was much freer. This freedom however did not necessarily foster closer relationships with local Chinese residents as foreigners clung to the comfort and familiarity of foreign enclaves.

Conclusion

The promise of a lucrative trade in teas and silks drew Americans to Guangzhou following independence and continued to attract US commercial traders during the following decades. Their success as private traders in Guangzhou reinforced American independence and free trade. During the First Opium War, Americans acted as firsthand observers of the violence, and some profited from the conflict. While Qing officials tended to think of Westerners as a single—often troublesome—group, they singled out the British as the primary offenders. This gave cover to some US merchants to trade on behalf of the British during times of British-Chinese conflict. The First Opium War and the unequal treaties transformed the US-China relationship beginning in the 1840s, not only opening trade in four additional ports but also

[140] Ferry de Goey, "Western Merchants in the Foreign Settlements of Japan (c.1850-1890)," in *Commodities, Ports and Asian Maritime Trade Since 1750*, edited by Ulbe Bosma and Anthony Webster (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 112-126.

lifting many of the restrictions of the Canton system. While both Qing and US officials viewed the relationship between their two countries as primarily commercial, Caleb Cushing and later US officials pressed the Qing to institute Western-style diplomacy. The opening of China and competition with Great Britain prompted Americans to further develop their ties to global commerce, especially in Asia and the Pacific.

During and following the First Opium War, the US government showed increasing interest in US-China commerce and diplomatic relations and relied on commercial traders to provide expertise about China. Memories and myths about the regulations and restrictions of the Canton system persisted and shaped US commercial traders' attitudes about the Qing government as despotic and corrupt. Designed to control trade and foreign-Chinese interactions, restrictive Qing regulations during the pre-Opium War era also limited opportunities for American merchants to learn about China, resulting in significant gaps in their knowledge and persistent misconceptions. US merchants had developed specific skills and expertise related to commodities and the vagaries of commerce at Chinese ports, but they were not equipped to comment on the Qing government or China more broadly.

CHAPTER 2

"BY AN AMERICAN RESIDENT IN CHINA": CHINA EXPERTS FOLLOWING THE OPENING OF THE FIVE TREATY PORTS, 1844-1855

In Guangzhou, the Qing empire circumscribed the interactions of foreigners and Chinese, limiting the opportunities for learning about China. This paucity of information and the reluctance of China to further open itself to foreign nations' traders, missionaries, and tourists, made nearly any person with even marginal experience in China an expert on the country. The reverse also held true: Qing officials who had any experience became experts on foreigners. Clearly this system was ripe for cultural and commercial misunderstandings as newly negotiated treaties opened four additional Chinese ports.

This chapter considers how Americans in China publicly wrote about the opening of China during the years following the 1844 Treaty of Wangxia, and makes the methodological assumption that, as Mary Louise Pratt argued: "Important historical transitions alter the way people write, because they alter people's experiences and the way people imagine, feel and think about the world they live in. The shifts in writing, then, will tell you something about the nature of the changes."[1] I initially focus on the writings of two heads of the preeminent American China trade company, Russell & Co.: Robert Bennet Forbes' *Remarks on China and the China Trade* (1844) and Edward Cunningham's public letter, "Our Commercial and Political Relations with China, by an American Resident in China" (1855). Both Forbes and Cunningham took part in a debate among American merchants over how best to increase trade volume in China. The comparison of the two demonstrates how much the political and commercial landscape had changed in just over a decade.

[1] Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation,* Second Edition (London; New York: Routledge, 2008), 4.

The second part of the chapter uses Andrew Lincoln Ball's travel account, *Rambles in Eastern Asia* (1855), as a representative example of the kinds of attitudes and experiences Americans, unassociated with commerce and government, had when they visited the five ports. Ball, a recent medical school graduate traveled to all five treaty ports shortly after they were opened to Americans out of pure curiosity and a sense of adventure. There Ball experienced pushback on recent treaty stipulations, particularly while traveling in Guangzhou, which had a few short years before suffered a devastating defeat at the hands of the British. These three accounts of China by American residents provided detailed yet extremely narrow accounts of US-China relations. As prominent China traders and consular officials, Forbes and Cunningham were experts on China and US-China relations not only for the American public but also for the US government. As heads of Russell & Co., the largest American firm in China, they acted as agents on behalf of their clients, which required their presence and business acumen in Chinese ports to carry out banking, broker bills, insure cargo, carry freight, manage ships, and exchange goods. Many American businessmen with interests in China depended on and trusted their judgment.[2] Their public writings appealed directly to an educated American audience and to government representatives in Washington.

Robert Bennet Forbes's *Remarks on China and the China Trade*

Robert Bennet Forbes (1804-1889) was a member of the Boston Forbes family, which made its fortune in the China trade during the early nineteenth century.[3] He began working as a

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[2] John Lauritz Larson, *Bonds of Enterprise: John Murray Forbes and Western Development in America's Railway Age* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1984). See the introduction and first chapter, "The Liberal Merchant," for a succinct explanation of the commission business and the global network of blood-related businessmen who made up Russell & Co. and other similar companies.

[3] The Forbes family produced copious primary sources, and thus, scholars have studied the family extensively. A few works focus exclusively on Robert Bennet Forbes, including *Letters from China: The Canton-Boston Correspondence of Robert Bennet Forbes, 1838-1840*, edited by Phyllis Forbes Kerr (Mystic: Mystic Seaport Museum, 1996). Kerr, the great-great-granddaughter of R.B. Forbes, transcribed his journal and letters describing the China trade, the Opium War, Russell & Co.'s operations, relations with other foreigners in China and with the

sailor and went on his first voyage to Guangzhou as a thirteen-year-old. He commanded his first trading vessel in 1824 at the age of twenty. Although his father had lost much of his fortune, Robert Bennet Forbes benefited from connections with his extended family.[4] His uncle Thomas Handasyd Perkins, one of the first Boston merchants to trade in Guangzhou, founded the China trade company, J. and T.H. Perkins with his brother James in 1803, and they opened a Mediterranean office to acquire Turkish opium for the China market.[5] Robert Bennet Forbes's cousin John Perkins Cushing, one of the most highly respected foreign merchants in Guangzhou, was the head of Perkins & Co., the foremost American house in China until the commission house Russell & Co. absorbed it in 1827.[6] These family members supported Robert Bennet Forbes's maritime career and later facilitated his business career. Forbes traveled to and lived in Guangzhou three times. From 1830 to 1832 he was captain of the opium storeship, *Lintin*, and from 1838-1840 and 1849-1854 he was a partner of Russell & Co.[7]

When Robert Bennet Forbes was thirty, he joined the family business of commission work in China. "At this time of my life," he wrote years later, "at the age of thirty, I had become gray, and imagined myself approaching old age. I had attained the summit of my ambition; I was what was then thought to be comfortably off in worldly goods; I had retired from the sea

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Chinese, and she supplements these rich primary sources with essays on the China trade, Perkins & Co., the opium trade, and the Forbes family. Robert Bennet Forbes was also the subject of a biography and two Master's theses: James B. Connolly, *Canton Captain* (Garden City, NJ: Doubleday, Doran, and Co., 1942); James Michael Huberty, "Robert Bennet Forbes (1804-1889): A China Trader Between Two Worlds," (M.A. thesis, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, 1995); Virginia Ann DeFede-Cove, "Robert Bennet Forbes in China, 1838-1840: A Case Study in Yankee Entrepreneurship," (M.A. thesis, University of Vermont, 1986).

[4] Robert B. Forbes, *Personal Reminiscences* (Boston: privately printed, 1876).

[5] See Jacques M. Downs for a concise description of the American trade in Turkish opium: *The Golden Ghetto: The American Commercial Community at Canton and the Shaping of American China Policy, 1784-1844* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2014), 114-124.

[6] "Perkins and Company, Canton 1803-1827," *Bulletin of the Business Historical Society* 6, no. 2 (1932):1-5; David Shavit, *The United States in Asia: A Historical Dictionary* (New York: Greenword Publishing Group, 1990),117.

[7] Jacques M. Downs, "Fair Game: Exploitive Role-Myths and the American Opium Trade," *Pacific Historical Review* 41.2 (1972): 146.

professionally, and had become a merchant."[8] His brother, a partner in Russell & Co. gave Robert his power of attorney, and his cousin John Perkins Cushing wrote letters of introduction to "influential Chinese friends," including the Hong merchant Houqua.[9] Robert Bennet Forbes recalled: "I went under the best auspices, full of hope for a successful result."[10]

Robert Bennet Forbes witnessed much of the First Opium War and the resulting treaty negotiations after the Qing loss.[11] Robert Bennet Forbes's cousin Paul Siemen Forbes, US consul in Guangzhou from 1843 to 1854, gave Robert Bennet Forbes access to information about the state of commercial trade and diplomatic developments during a turning point in US-China relations. From this position, Robert Bennet Forbes felt well-informed about events in Guangzhou and penned a pamphlet intended to educate the American public about the old Canton system, the opium trade, and what Americans might expect from US-China relations in the future.

Robert Bennet Forbes published *Remarks on China and the China Trade*—a pamphlet roughly 50 pages long—in response to "frequently-asked questions" he received from Americans back home in the United States.[12] Forbes specifically addressed "the reading public," whom he claimed knew little of current and past relations with China and the prospects of future relations. Forbes intended the pamphlet not only for other commercial traders and merchants with an interest in China, but perhaps also for government officials and educated individuals wanting to learn more about the US-China relationship. Forbes exhibited a serviceable knowledge of the contemporary situation in Guangzhou based on his own experiences, but revealed an ignorance of the relatively brief history of US-China relations. For instance, he admitted that he did not

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[8] Forbes, *Personal Reminiscences*, 137.
[9] Ibid., 142-143.
[10] Ibid., 141.
[11] Ibid., 166; For an extended discussion of the conflict between Great Britain and China, see: Robert Bickers, *The Scramble for China: Foreign Devils in the Qing Empire, 1832-1914* (London: Penguin Books, 2011).
[12] Robert Bennet Forbes, *Remarks on China and the China Trade* (Boston: Samuel N. Dickinson, printer, 1844).

know which vessel had carried out the first complete voyage from the United States to China (the *Empress of China*) when he first set out to write the book. For the section of his book describing the history of US trade in China, he relied on well-known accounts by merchants like Samuel Shaw.

The questions answered in the book reveal a curiosity on the part of Americans to understand the basic workings of the Canton system. "Who are the Hong Merchants?" "How is the trade managed through them?" "What are the articles of traffic, and the circumstances which affect prices?" "What were the former restrictions, and how have they been modified by recent events in China?"[13] Other questions sought to understand the causes and consequences of Great Britain's "cruel and oppressive war," a hypocritical characterization since Americans benefited tremendously from the conflict.[14] As experts in Chinese language and moral authorities, missionaries largely shaped US government policy regarding the opium trade, and they lambasted the British, their war, and the peddling of opium as morally reprehensible.[15] Lin Zexu's crackdown convinced Russell & Co.—the largest American firm involved in the opium trade—to publicly renounce opium, and Forbes himself devoted several pages to a discussion of the immorality of the British war and their justification of opium trafficking. This was a feat of disassociation considering Forbes's own experiences as the captain of an opium smuggling vessel and his partnership in a company infamous for its trafficking of Turkish opium.[16] Although Forbes was writing for an American audience largely ignorant of the basic workings of trade in China, he occasionally included information on the current state of US-China trade and provided useful information for general readers and merchants. He focused on subjects that he

[13] Ibid., 3.
[14] Ibid., 4.
[15] Michael C. Lazich, "American Missionaries and the Opium Trade in Nineteenth-Century China," *Journal of World History* 17 (June 2006), 222-23.
[16] See Downs, *The Golden Ghetto*, 260-263.

had immediate knowledge of—the Canton system of trade, Hong merchants, and the Opium War—but that was where his knowledge of China ended.

Despite the limited nature of his book, reviewers in the United States vaguely praised his informed, clear communication of the facts. An anonymous reviewer for *The North American Review*, the nation's first literary magazine noted that in the United States many people debated the morality of the opium trade and the First Opium War without much or any knowledge of the context, making Forbes's book a welcome publication:

> We are very glad [...] that a sensible and well informed merchant, who has been long and most successfully engaged in trade with China, and who has resided for many years in Canton, in the most intimate relations with the Hong merchants there, has undertaken to publish a plain statement of many interesting facts, relative to our commercial intercourse with the empire, with which a few persons of his class are very familiar, though the public at large are sadly ignorant of them. He has executed his task with great simplicity and clearness, giving a succinct account of the origin of the trade...[17]

Although the reviewer generally praised Forbes, he criticized Forbes for treating the origins and nature of the opium trade as a purely commercial matter, ignoring the issue of most interest to the American audience—the morality of the opium trade. In the decades leading up to the First Opium War, American missionaries like E.C. Bridgeman and Samuel Wells Williams publicly denounced the opium trade in the *Missionary Herald* and the *Chinese Repository*. Bridgeman clearly labeled opium an evil in an extract of his journal published in the *Herald*: "The practice of smoking the 'black commodity' is widely prevalent, from the royal palaces to the meanest hovels, exerting, from one end of the empire to the other, and through all the ranks of society, a

[17] *The North American Review* 59 (Oct. 1844): 493-95.

most deadly influence."[18] Many Americans only learned of China and the opium trade from condemning accounts written by missionaries that focused on the morality of the opium trade.[19]

Another review by William W. Greenough, a Boston merchant, politician, and co-founder of the American Oriental Society, also praised Forbes' pamphlet:[20]

> It is published at a time when correct information is very much needed by the mercantile community upon the state of things in China, and when the tendency to wild speculations in her markets is rapidly on the increase. Whoever has attained experience, and generously unfolds it, is a public benefactor. Mr. Forbes has performed one of these quiet, unobtrusive services, and richly deserves the thanks of the public.[21]

Yet like the reviewer for *The North American Review*, Greenough noted that Forbes omitted any discussion of the "moral and physical effects" of opium: "Mr. Forbes, like every other well-wisher to his race, condemns the traffic, as alike wicked and impolitic. His object was to state the facts in the case, and to leave to others the natural inferences to be drawn."[22] Greenough and others must have been unaware that Forbes had been one of the most active participants in the opium trade to make a comment identifying Forbes as an opponent of the trade. Because the reviewers were unaware of the part that Forbes played, they instead identified Forbes as an expert and praised his insight and clear communication. Both reviews treated the pamphlet uncritically as pure statement of fact and transmission of knowledge. *The North American Review* stated that: "The single purpose of the writer being evidently to impart knowledge, and

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[18] E.C. Bridgeman, 8 April 1831 journal entry for the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in John O. Choules and Thomas Smith, *The Origin and History of Missions*, 9th edition (New York: Robert Carter, 58 Canal Street, 1848), 276.
[19] Lazich, "American Missionaries and the Opium Trade," 198-202.
[20] The American Oriental Society had been founded two years previously in 1842, and its journal published humanistic research using the languages and literatures of Asia and the Middle East. This demonstrated interest in Asian culture coincided with the end of the First Opium War and the further opening of China to foreign trade, a time when Americans recognized broadening commercial opportunities in Asia and increasingly had contact with other parts of the world.
[21] W.W.G. [William W. Greenough], "China: Its Population, Trade, and The Prospect of a Treaty," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 1, no. 2 (1844), 151.
[22] Ibid., 152.

not to answer any ulterior end."[23] Greenough approached *Remarks on China and the China Trade* in a remarkably uncritical manner, accepting Forbes's word as expert opinion.[24]

Forbes expressed strong opinions about the transition to the treaty port system. He acknowledged that it was still too early to tell how the new system would work. At the time of writing, trade had already commenced at Shanghai with "some difficulties" and had not yet even opened at ports such as Ningbo.[25] Forbes believed that four new ports meant that American merchants would be able to sell slightly more American goods in China than under the old Canton system, but he did not see the treaty port system as a panacea that would significantly improve business. He believed that many people overestimated the degree that foreign imports would increase and that opium placed limits on the amount of manufactured goods that China could buy:

> We [the United States and Great Britain] can neither of us afford to bring away bullion, or to return with bills in our pockets. Therefore it is clear, that we can only sell in China, profitably, just as many goods as will pay for the articles of export from China, which we respectively want. All of the spare *cash* to be had in China, is needed to pay for the opium grown under the auspices of the government of Great Britain, and under the immediate superintendency of the Honorable East India Company. Could the opium trade be abolished, there is no doubt that a compensation would be found in the increased sale of manufactured goods, because there would be more steady cash, and more industry in the country to pay for them.[26]

Forbes made a reasonable point concerning the limits of trade. During the period leading up to the First Opium War, not only teas and silks but also valuable silver had been flowing out of China in exchange for opium, limiting the amount of silver and goods that Chinese merchants could use to pay for other foreign products. An 1847 British House of Commons committee report on British-Chinese commerce confirmed this:

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[23] *The North American Review* 59, no. 125 (1844): 494.
[24] Barrett Wendell, "Memoir of William Whitwell Greenough," *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, Second Series 14 (1900-1901): 468-482.
[25] Forbes, *Remarks on China and the China Trade*, 55.
[26] Ibid.

> We find that the difficulties of the trade do not arise from any want of demand in China for articles of British manufacture or from the increasing competition of other nations…The payment for opium…absorbs the silver to the great inconvenience of the general traffic of the Chinese; and tea and silk must in fact absorb the rest.[27]

Both American and British merchants had discovered that China's demand for opium limited its capacity to acquire other foreign trade goods.

Forbes also doubted that trade in China would change because of the Chinese who "remained unchanged in their natures"[28]:

> The Consoo fund [a pool of money created by the Hong merchants from levies on foreign trade] no longer exists; the Hong monopoly is dead; but the ghosts of both will rise in some new shape to torment the trader. He will have permission to trade at five ports instead of one; but he will find himself directly, or through the Chinese merchant he deals with, so hampered by local difficulties, that he will be glad to go back to Canton, and *there will the bulk of the trade be carried on for all time to come.*[29]

Forbes framed the problem in terms of Chinese inflexibility. Chinese merchants and officials had conducted foreign trade at Guangzhou for centuries and would want to continue trade at an established port with familiar procedures. This point has some logic. In terms of diplomacy, the Qing court wanted to contain foreign relations in Guangzhou, where they had been carrying on unofficial relations through trade and where local people were accustomed to foreigners. However, Forbes also had personal reasons for predicting Guangzhou's continued domination of foreign trade. He had not only made a fortune in Guangzhou, but he was also a partner of the commission house Russell & Co. at that port. As such, he had an interest in maintaining the preeminence of Guangzhou as the center of foreign trade in China, where he had established commercial interests and connections with American, European, and Chinese businessmen. His prediction that trade would not increase much with the addition of newly-opened ports missed

[27] Qtd. In Karl Marx, *New York Daily Tribune,* September 20, 1858, accessed July 20, 2017, https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1858/09/20.htm.
[28] Ibid., 56.
[29] Ibid.

the mark. Initially, foreigners and Chinese at new ports struggled to develop the infrastructure and personnel needed to accommodate foreign trade. Guangzhou would remain the top treaty port on the coast of China for several years, but, by the early 1850s, Shanghai soon eclipsed it.[30]

Forbes not only postulated about the future of the ports, but he also considered how history would remember the first American envoy to China, Caleb Cushing. While Forbes was writing *Remarks on China and the China Trade*, Cushing had just arrived in China, and Qing officials received him rather indifferently: "The consul had informed the Imperial Commissioner [Qiying] that he was coming, who had asked, 'What for?' 'To make a treaty with China.' 'But you Americans are to be admitted to all the privileges which have been granted to Great Britain and to all nations,' was the reply."[31] Forbes correctly predicted the outcome of this first encounter: Cushing would try to gain audience in Beijing, and Qiying would adamantly refuse, just as he had refused during negotiations with the British. Cushing would appoint consuls to each port to ensure that Americans received the same privileges that the British had negotiated, and "suffer only the same annoyances that they suffer."[32] Forbes provided an accurate if truncated account of the US-China negotiations.

Since the Chinese continued to treat Westerners as a single group, by giving them the same privileges, Forbes then asked how Cushing and the United States distinguish themselves in the eyes of the Chinese. "Finally, he will be remembered in China as the first ambassador from a

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[30] See Chapter 4 for a discussion of the development of each new treaty port through the lens of the US consular service.

[31] Forbes, *Remarks on China and the China Trade*, 56-57.

[32] Ibid. At the time of treaty negotiations, Qiying, the primary Chinese official involved in the process with the foreign powers, had one major concern about Cushing. He worried that the American envoy would demand to take a letter from the US president in person to Beijing—the one demand that Qiying and the Qing government was avoiding at all costs. He did not know that Cushing's was more concerned with acquiring further commercial and extraterritorial privileges for Americans in China. When Cushing withdrew his request to visit Beijing, he more easily acquired additional concessions in other areas more important to him. For more detail on this dynamic see: Ping Chia Kuo, "Caleb Cushing and the Treaty of Wanghia, 1844," *The Journal of Modern History* 5, No. 1 (March 1933), 34-54; Downs, "Part III: Cushing's Treaty" in *The Golden Ghetto*, 259-320.

young country; and it is to be hoped he may not find himself enrolled in the archives of the Celestial Empire, as the 'tribute bearer of the flowery-flag nation KU-SHING.'"[33] Forbes's use of the term "tribute bearer of the flowery-flag nation" implied that the Chinese would dismiss the United States as a subordinate tribute-bearing nation and not as Forbes viewed the United States: as a young, ambitious nation meeting China as an equal.[34] Americans believed that the Chinese saw themselves as superior to Americans and other foreigners. Other outside groups showed their acceptance of this system by offering ritual tribute (貢 *gong)* to the emperor and, performing a full *koutou* (kneeling three times, each time bowing their head to the ground three times). In 1844, William W. Greenough of the American Oriental Society, epitomized this mindset:

> The Chinese consider all embassies as *tributary* in their nature. Indeed, any other object than the bearing of tribute does not enter their sphere of possibility, so perfectly well satisfied are they with their own invincible supremacy; and consequently no provision is made in their unalterable ceremonial for the reception of any mission on equal terms.[35]

Like Greenough, many Americans believed that the tribute system, exemplified the attitude of superiority that permeated every Chinese-foreign encounter.[36] Although Greenough did not

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[33] Ibid., 57; Here Forbes refers to the nickname that the Chinese gave to the United States when the first American vessel, the *Empress of China*, arrived in 1785. The vessel bore the Betsy Ross version of the flag with a circle of 13 stars in the upper left-hand corner. Chinese observers saw the stars as flowers and referred to the United States as the "flowery-flag nation" (**花旗**). George H. Preble, an author and US naval officer, wrote about this: "When the thirteen stripes and stars first appeared at Canton much curiosity was excited among the people. News was circulated that a strange ship had arrived from the farther end of the world, bearing a flag as beautiful as a flower. Everybody went to see the *Faw-kee-cheun* [花旗船], or flower-flag ship." George H. Preble, *History of the Flag of the United States of America* (Boston: James R. Osgood and Company, 1882), 298. A French missionary, Catholic priest, and traveller provided a negative translation of the term. Evariste Régis Huc wrote about a conversation he had with a prefect about the names of foreign countries and peoples in Chinese: "We give to the *Ya-me-ly-kien* (Americans) the name of 'Men of the Gaudy Banner,' because it is said that they carry at the masts of their vessels a flag striped with various colors." Evariste Régis Huc, *A Journey Through the Chinese Empire* (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1856), 349-350.

[34] John K. Fairbank argued that the tribute system that had been in place for roughly 1,000 years formed the Chinese anti-foreign attitude used in foreign relations. See his influential work: *Trade and Diplomacy on the China Coast, 1842-1854* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953).

[35] Greenough, "China: Its Population, Trade, and The Prospect of a Treaty," 157.

[36] James L. Hevia provides an assessment of the tribute system as a way of thinking about Chinese foreign relations in "Tribute, Asymmetry, and Imperial Formations: Rethinking Relations of Power in East Asia," *The Journal of*

believe that the Chinese would change, Forbes naively hoped that this perceived attitude would disappear with the first US-China treaty and closer interactions with Americans.

As the head of Russell & Co., Forbes had knowledge of the workings of the US-China trade, which he shared in his pamphlet *Remarks on China and the China Trade*. He arrived at the conclusion that additional ports would not increase trade volume and that Guangzhou would remain the primary port because of its long-established history as a center for commerce. However, not all American merchants agreed with this opinion, and they continued to debate the matter. By the 1850s, as Shanghai overtook Guangzhou as the center of China's foreign commerce, merchants continued to debate the likely outcome of further expansion into the interior of China.

Edward Cunningham and the Taiping Civil War

Eleven years after Forbes published his pamphlet, another partner in Russell & Co., Edward Cunningham, entered the debate over the expansion of trade in China. Like Forbes, he came from an important Massachusetts seafaring family. He first traveled to China in 1845, working as a clerk in the small commercial house of J.D. Sword & Co., then joined Russell & Co. in 1846 and later became a partner and managing partner (1850-1857, 1861-1863, 1867-

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American-East Asian Relations 16, no. 1/2 (2009): 69-83. Historians have used the tribute system to frame their understanding of Chinese foreign relations as early as the 1930s, and China historian John K. Fairbank most fully fleshed out the tribute system framework by exploring *why* the Chinese would have wanted to implement the system and foreigners would cooperate. He claimed that Chinese rulers wanted the validation of foreign powers to demonstrate their power to other Chinese, and that foreigners were willing to perform the ritual tribute to gain access to trade with China. Fairbank argued that this situation combined trade and diplomacy without directly acknowledging the engagement in either. Because China had only engaged with "lesser" powers and developed an entrenched, isolated culture, it was not prepared to handle demanding Western powers in the nineteenth century. Since Fairbank first introduced the tribute system theory, several scholars have critiqued aspects of the framework, most notably the static, unnuanced nature attributed to the Chinese. In addition to the superior position of China to its neighbors, Chinese Confucian culture also developed an attitude of disdain towards commerce and traders. Liu Xihong, the first Chinese ambassador to Germany, summed up the generally accepted view of commerce: "when the ranks of officials take in one more merchant, the country gets one more worm, the people one more thief" (qtd. in Charles Desnoyers, "Toward 'One Enlightened and Progressive Civilization': Discourses of Expansion and Nineteenth-Century Chinese Missions Abroad," *Journal of World History* 8, no. 1 (1997): 145.

1877).[37] From 1851 to 1854, he was simultaneously the acting US vice consul in Shanghai and the head of Russell & Co. Because of the rich opportunities available in the port and nearby markets, Russell & Co. moved its headquarters from Guangzhou to Shanghai.[38] Cunningham found himself at the center of US-China trade, like Forbes eleven years before.

In February 1855, Cunningham wrote a letter to US House representative William Appleton of Massachusetts, which Congress printed as a free-standing pamphlet in Washington, DC under the title, "Our Commercial and Political Relations with China, by an American Resident in China."[39]Appleton was a natural ally for merchant-consul Cunningham. Appleton was not only from Massachusetts, an important node in the US-China trade, but he also owned a counting house that did a large amount of business in the China trade.[40] *Hunt's Merchant Magazine and Commercial Review* reprinted the letter in its September 1855 issue, with the following editorial footnote: "MR. EDWARD CUNNINGHAM, the writer of the present article, is a member of the firm Russell & Co., at Canton and Shanghae [sic], China." In case readers doubted his credentials, the editors further commented: "Mr. Cunningham has resided in China for more than ten years, is a gentleman of great intelligence, and his statements are entitled to

[37] Downs, *The Golden Ghetto*, 323-324; Later Cunningham founded and was president of the Shanghai Steam Navigation Company in 1862-1863 and 1868-1869. See: Shavit, *The United States in Asia: A Historical Dictionary*, 116; Fairbank, *Trade and Diplomacy on the China Coast*, 399.
[38] Sibing He, "Russell and Company in Shanghai, 1843-1891: U.S. Trade and Diplomacy in Treaty Port China," paper presented to "A Tale of Ten Cities: Sino-American Exchange in the Treaty Port Era, 1840-1950—An Interdisciplinary Colloquium," Hong Kong University, 23-24 May 2011. Forbes was likely aware of the decision to move Russell & Co.'s headquarters in 1852. He wrote in his memoir: "I retained an interest in the house [Russell & Co.] until the end of 1854; and, through a private arrangement with Paul Forbes, I had a contingent interest until the end of 1857. My connection with Russell & Co. began on the 1st of January, 1839, continued till January 1, 1844; and, again, from January 1, 1849, to January 1, 1857." See Forbes, *Personal Reminiscences*, 223. See also Edward Cunningham, "Our Commercial and Political Relations with China, by an American Resident in China," Washington, Feb. 1855. Reprinted in *Hunt's Merchants' Magazine*, September 1855, 3.
[39] Cunningham, "Our Commercial and Political Relations with China."
[40] "William Appleton and Company Records, 1813-1889: A Finding Aid," Harvard Business School, http://oasis.lib.harvard.edu/oasis/deliver/~bak00190.

implicit confidence."[41] The editor assured its commercially-minded audience of Cunningham's credentials on the question of US policy regarding China.

While Cunningham published his letter in both government and commercial presses, he primarily sought to persuade Congress to support policies that would further open China to American trade. For him, this meant backing the Qing government in its war with the Taiping. In the letter, Cunningham first established the importance of trade with China, emphasizing the profitable teas and silks Americans could obtain there.[42] By expanding trade to all parts of China, he argued that Americans would find new markets for their goods, with less interference from corrupt Chinese officials and middlemen, and could more accurately assess the needs of Chinese markets in the interior.[43] Cunningham disagreed with other China traders who asserted that access to the interior and additional ports would not improve trade between the United States and China. To rebut dissenters, he posited two points: history had proved that additional access improved trade in Shanghai and Fuzhou, and, he believed, some traders opposed expansion because they did not want to have to broaden their operations to more ports and complicate their business dealings abroad.[44]

Cunningham saw the Taiping Civil War as a key development in China that could either threaten the continuation of US-China trade and diplomatic relations or create the opportunity for Americans and British to further open China. Cunningham spent the bulk of his dense, eight-page letter analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of the Taiping uprising. Foreign missionaries

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[41] Freeman Hunt and William B. Dana, eds., *The Merchants' Magazine and Commercial Review*, Vol. 33, September 1855, 276. *Hunt's Merchant Magazine*, the first American periodical dedicated to business, contained commercial statistics, commercial regulations and treaties, statistics of population, railroads, canals, and roads, mercantile law, and mercantile libraries and associations, the currency, insurance, banking, navigation, US and foreign commerce, and biographies of successful merchants. For more on the history of business periodicals in the United States, see: Donald E. Thompson, "Business and Economics Periodicals," *Library Trends*, 10(3), 1962: 360–373.
[42] Cunningham, "Our Commercial and Political Relations with China," 1-2.
[43] Ibid., 2.
[44] Ibid.

had hoped that the rise of the Taiping and their adoption of Christianity signaled an era of rapid conversion to Christianity, but, with time, they saw Taiping Christianity as a cheap imitation of Anglo-American Protestant Christianity. Hong Xiuquan, inspired by Christian teachings, believed that Shangdi (Sovereign on High), the high god of classical China, had chosen him to establish the Heavenly Kingdom on Earth. As a result, he denounced the imperial title of Huangdi, translated as "emperor" into Western languages, but in Chinese the *di* used both in Shangdi and Huangdi can be translated as either "god" or "emperor." Offended by the blasphemous title and office of the emperor, the Taiping wished to overthrow the Qing, restore China to the classical system of kingship, and promote the worship of God.[45] Foreign missionaries were encouraged by the Taiping adoption of familiar Anglo-American Christian practices—the memorization of the Ten Commandments, worship services during which Taiping soldiers prayed to Shangdi as the Heavenly Father, and the destruction of idols. After initially supporting the Taiping, foreign missionaries in China realized that Taiping Christianity was not the same as their Protestant religion, noting that it had local religious elements such as spirit possession, a practice viewed by Western Christians as superstitious and depraved.[46] Dismissing Taiping Christianity as a serious religion, Cunningham and others believed that Taiping leader Hong Xiuquan was instead using Christianity as a political tool. Cunningham discounted religion as a reason for supporting the Taiping over the Qing.[47]

Cunningham then considered the possibility of a Taiping military victory. Five years into the uprising, in 1855, the Taiping had succeeded in capturing Nanjing but had no other major

[45] Thomas H. Reilly, *The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom: Rebellion and the Blasphemy of Empire* (Seattle; London: University of Washington Press, 2004), 3-7.
[46] Ibid., 11.
[47] Initially, American missionaries supported the efforts of the Taiping, whose leader Hong Xiuquan instituted a type of Christianity among his followers. See Stephen R. Platt's book for a detailed narration of the Taiping Civil War with special attention paid to the roles that foreigners played as Taiping allies, critics, and concerned observers: *Autumn in the Heavenly Kingdom: China, the West, and the Epic Story of the Taiping Civil War* (New York: Vintage Books, 2012).

victories, making a complete Qing defeat unlikely. In terms of foreign relations, Cunningham also saw no advantage to dealing with the Taiping, who like the Qing required signs of deference and tribute. Instead, for Cunningham, the Taiping uprising threatened the stability of trade. Also, if the Taiping Civil War continued to disrupt the southern and central provinces where silk and tea grew, it could ruin foreign trade. “We have nothing to hope, and much to fear from it [the Taiping Civil War], if successful, while it gives no promise of advancement to China, religiously or politically.”[48]

Having dismissed the idea of supporting the Taiping, Cunningham then turned his attention to the Qing government’s position. He argued that the United States already had a treaty with the Qing for ten years, and that they would likely have closer ties if the United States and Great Britain offered aid, something that Cunningham condescendingly asserted would be “trifling to us, in our strength.”[49] This comment demonstrated a growing sense of American superiority toward the Chinese, and Cunningham imagined that the amount of aid—mostly in the form of a few naval warships—would not be a large commitment for the United States. He also hypothesized that some Taiping-sympathetic accounts minimized Qing military strength. The Qing government still maintained control of much of China and its revenue. By siding with the Qing, Cunningham boasted that the threat of foreign aid alone would boost the morale of the Qing army and hasten the end of the Taiping Civil War.

Although Cunningham pragmatically analyzed the state of the Taiping Civil War, he framed the discussion of American involvement in China as a patronizing “civilizing mission.” He wrote: “It may be considered our mission to guide and enlighten...to give [the Chinese] the

[48] Cunningham, “Our Commercial and Political Relations with China,” 6.
[49] Ibid.

blessings of civilization and christianity."[50] The benefits of Western "civilization" and the Christian religion seemed obvious to Cunningham, who complained that the Chinese stubbornly resisted, believing their own nation and culture superior:

> It is a consequence of ignorance and self-conceit that those afflicted...will admit no new element into their system, believing their condition perfect, and not to be improved by change. Arguments and representations are of no avail in inducing them to receive benefits, proofs of which are before their eyes, for their mental sight is blinded by their preconceived ideas of individual and national superiority.[51]

Although Cunningham appealed to the narrative of a "civilizing mission" that would uplift China through contact with Western nations, he admitted that the security of foreign trade remained the most practical reason for supporting the Qing: "The constant presence of foreign power upon the main thoroughfares of commerce will tend greatly to prevent disorders when tranquility is once restored, and give a security to our commerce which it has never had yet, and which its importance well deserves."[52] Cunningham more often pointed to the threats of the Taiping than the opportunities of opening China, playing upon the anxieties of American commercial traders and politicians. If they did not act, they might lose their hold on China, but they could secure their commercial and diplomatic interests by actively supporting the Qing. The British held the same view. Especially after the ratification of the Chinese-British Treaty of Tianjin in 1860, the British wanted to protect the privileges they had negotiated with the Qing despite the common

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[50] Ibid., 2.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Ibid., 7; Emily Conroy-Krutz would likely term this religious civilizing mission "Christian imperialism," an interest in spreading Anglo-American culture and Protestant religion, in which "governance [was] as a tool in this larger project" (10-11). She employs a broad definition of imperialism to argue that the work of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) from 1810 to 1865 in India, Hawaii, Burma, Singapore, and Liberia did reveals the variety of ways that the United States acted as an imperial power in the nineteenth century. See: *Christian Imperialism: Converting the World in the Early American Republic* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015).

opinion that the Taiping might have the potential to offer the Chinese people greater political freedom.[53]

Commerce and the Opening of China

In the mid-nineteenth century, China trade merchants debated the advantages and disadvantages of opening China further to foreign trade. Forbes believed that trade would remain roughly the same volume and that Guangzhou would continue as the center of Chinese-foreign trade, while Cunningham decried this position and sought to expand the American presence to not only additional ports but also the interior. The context of the years during which they wrote—1844 and 1855—partially accounts for their different takes on the issue. In 1844, when Robert Bennet Forbes wrote his pamphlet on the Guangzhou trade, the American commissioner to China Caleb Cushing was negotiating the first treaty between the United States and China. Great Britain had already negotiated a favorable treaty that opened four additional ports to trade and most favored nation status. However, Forbes remained skeptical of the new treaty port system. Guangzhou had been the center of Chinese-foreign trade for over 100 years, and he could not imagine that the volume of trade would significantly increase if the opium trade persisted or that any other port could surpass Guangzhou with its established infrastructure. Instead, Forbes focused on the diplomatic aspects of the first US-China treaty and optimistically contemplated whether the Chinese would look back on the Americans favorably, revealing a slightly humble, China-focused attitude. In contrast, by 1855, Cunningham and the United States had been emboldened by the foreign successes of the First Opium War and the recent opening of Japan. Thus, he took a strong, paternalist attitude about foreign-Chinese relations, invoking

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[53] John S. Gregory, "British Intervention Against the Taiping Rebellion," *Journal of Asian Studies* 19 (Nov. 1959): 11-24; Leslie Faulder argued that local British officials exercised "conditional neutrality" and "limited intervention" to balance British economic goals with competing opinions regarding the political, religious, and economic potential of Taiping rule in China. Leslie Faulder, "Conditional Neutrality, Limited Intervention: The Ad hoc Native of Britain's Taiping Policy, 1853-1862," (M.A. thesis, University of Colorado, 2014).

metaphors of an adult-child relationship and rhetoric of advancing Chinese civilization through increased contact with Americans and British, imparting the Chinese the "blessings of civilization and christianity."[54] As Cunningham over saw the transfer of Russell & Co. headquarters from Guangzhou to Shanghai, he saw Forbes' hypothesis about expansion fail and argued for further expansion into the interior. However, he did not simply want to expand to increase profits; he also linked commercial expansion to the security of lucrative tea and silk markets in the light of the Taiping Civil War.

The specific geographies of Guangzhou and Shanghai could partly account for the differences in opinion between Forbes and Cunningham. Both cities have harbors and navigable rivers leading to the interior, which make them attractive locations for ports. While the Pearl River in Guangzhou is 1,491 miles (2,400 km) long, the Yangzi River in Shanghai reaches much further into the interior at 3,915 miles (6,300 km) long. In Shanghai, Cunningham had a clear route to the products and peoples of China's interior and could more readily envision possibilities for expansion. After all, the Yangzi River offered more direct access than Guangzhou to one of the most commercialized areas of China, the Yangzi River Delta, which included important centers of tea and silk production.

Qing officials who worked with American commercial traders, consuls, and diplomatic envoys, knew about American ambitions to access China's interior markets. In 1853, the *daotai*, or circuit intendant, of Shanghai, the most powerful local official responsible for commerce and customs at the port, Wu Jianzhang, had been in communication with the US commissioner to China, Humphrey Marshall—a diplomat who was often impatient with Chinese bureaucracy—regarding his request to register American vessels to carry goods up the Yangzi River to Suzhou

[54] Cunningham, "Our Commercial and Political Relations with China," 1-2.

and other places inland. *Daotai* Wu expressed an understanding of Humphrey's request and the desires of American merchants to trade inland, beyond the port of Shanghai.

Wu Jianzhang had an unusual background for a top government official. Before he was *daotai*, Wu Jianzhang, came from Xiangshan, Guangdong, located on a peninsula close to Guangzhou, Macao, and Hong Kong, and was part of the Samqua Hong merchant family that worked closely with foreign merchants before the First Opium War. Wu Jianzhang, a comprador-merchant, paid his way into the Qing government first as expectant *daotai* and then climbed to the top of the Shanghai official hierarchy. Drawing from his past in Guangzhou, he marketed himself as an expert on foreigners and provided valuable guidance to his predecessor, Xianling, who, following the opening of Shanghai, found himself unprepared to deal with foreigners. Traditional Chinese culture derided merchants and commerce as corrupt, and the public commonly considered people who worked with foreigners as "traitors to China" (漢奸 *Hanjian*). Despite this bias, Wu Jianzhang capitalized on his experience with foreigners and his ability to speak *pidgin* English to market himself to the Shanghai government during a time when increasing trade with Westerners was turning foreigner expertise into an asset rather than a detriment.[55] According to historian John K. Fairbank, Wu most likely did not speak English with much fluency, but "even so he could probably say more to foreigners in English than he could to his own superiors in the [Beijing] dialect," since being from Guangdong, he spoke Cantonese and not the language of the Qing court, Manchu.[56]

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[55] Leung Yuen-sang, *The Shanghai Taotai: Linkage Man in a Changing Society, 1843-90* (Kent Ridge, Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1990), 53-56. For a discussion of the contradiction between the opportunities of Qing era commerce and traditional conservative Confucian values that discounted commerce as a profession, see: Richard John Lufrano, *Honorable Merchants: Commerce and Self-Cultivation in Late Imperial China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997)

[56] Fairbank, *Trade and Diplomacy on the China Coast*, 395.

Daotai Wu Jianzhang responded carefully to Marshall's request to allow American boats into the interior. Wu claimed that in principle he saw no problem with expanding Americans' trading jurisdiction. However, he doubted that the "young go-a-head merchants" of the United States would be satisfied with the slight expansion of their activities along the Yangzi River up to the city of Suzhou. Instead, he believed they would exploit the opportunity to learn more about the markets of the interior to bypass Chinese commercial middlemen. Wu did not see this, in and of itself, as a problem, but he worried about how the people of Suzhou and other inland places, unused to foreigners and foreign trade, would react. "Your language is not understood there, and your costume is utterly strange to them. These circumstances may cause some strange thoughts in the bosom of the ignorant and short-sighted people."[57] Thus, Wu predicted that misunderstandings might arise between local people of the interior and American traders, resulting in quarrels, deception, robbery, and murder, all of which, he claimed, would harm US-China relations. He went on to say that such risks had been the reason the Daoguang emperor and his ministers had decided to limit the number of treaty ports to five. In the ports, wholesale merchants could buy and sell and then distribute foreign goods conveniently and efficiently to other parts of China.

Wu Jianzhang's background and preference for the old Canton system also influenced his decision to deny American access to the Yangzi. Like Forbes, he complained about the time and resources required to prepare new ports for international trade: "For it requires years for the people of a port to get an acquaintance with foreigners, so as to render trade advantageous. This cannot be done in a morning or evening."[58] Wu regretted the end of the old system in Guangzhou and worked to recreate it in Shanghai. He hired people from Guangzhou to work in his Shanghai

[57] Taoutae Woo [*Daotai* Wu] to Humphrey Marshall, circa July 30, 1853, Humphrey Marshall Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
[58] Ibid.

office, part of a process that John K. Fairbank referred to as "the Cantonization of Shanghai."[59] He also pushed for the creation of a guild of merchants across the five ports to handle foreign trade, not wholly unlike the pre-Opium War Cohong guild.[60] *Daotai* Wu also made another claim that Westerners did not bring any uniquely valuable trade goods, and that the Chinese could acquire the same goods from other sources. Americans brought a mixture of manufactured goods and raw materials to sell in China. For example, in Shanghai during the first half of 1853, American vessels brought $693,206.35 worth of goods. $600,771.60 of this total came from types of cloth, mostly cotton goods but also woolens. Fox, beaver, land and sea otter skins—some of the original items brought to Guangzhou to trade—fetched $29,086.40. The remainder of American imports to Shanghai consisted of manufactured goods such as handkerchiefs and tin plates and less valuable amounts of agricultural products like sugar and rice as well as raw materials like lead, coal, and quicksilver.[61] Wu explained his position:

> The people are not acquainted with foreigners and foreign goods such as woolen and cotton cloth, *China can be without them just as well as with them*. If foreign vessels were permitted to go they would spend their time for nothing...I am a man brought up to this branch of business when I was young, and have tolerable experience in it, and in my present office I acquire not a little.[62]

Wu had taken his experiences from Guangdong and continued to apply them years later in Shanghai, where he used familiar arguments concerning Western trade to block expansion to the

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[59] See chapter 21 of Fairbank, *Trade and Diplomacy on the China Coast*, 393-409.

[60] Leung, *The Shanghai Taotai*, 55.

[61] Edward Cunningham to U.S. Legation in China, "Statement of Imports into this port [Shanghai] from 1st January to 30th June in vessels under the flag of the United States," July 5, 1853, *Despatches from U.S. Ministers in China, 1847-1906.*

[62] Taoutae Woo [*Daotai* Wu] to Humphrey Marshall, circa July 30, 1853, Humphrey Marshall Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. Here Wu practically echoes the famous 1793 letter from the Qianlong emperor to King George III concerning the English request to establish official commercial relations with China: "We possess all things. I set no value on objects strange or ingenious, and have no use for your country's manufactures." Emperor Qianlong's Letter to King George III, 1793, *Modern History Sourcebook*, http://academics.wellesley.edu/Polisci/wj/China/208/READINGS/qianlong.html.

interior.[63] Wu Jianzhang was a representative figure of US-China relations in a time of transition, from a relationship based purely on commerce to one that reluctantly began to incorporate elements of official Western-style diplomacy.

Benjamin Lincoln Ball's *Rambles in Eastern Asia*

Following the First Opium War, all foreigners could visit the five treaty port cities, and some Americans with the wherewithal chose to do so for pleasure. This created a class of travel writers outside of the commercial, shipping, and missionary spheres, who wrote about China for an American audience. Without the concerns of trade and religion, such writers focused more on travel and the day-to-day life of foreigners in China, but trade and diplomatic concerns often loomed large in their travel accounts. In 1848, just a few years following the opening of five treaty ports in China, Benjamin Lincoln Ball, a twenty-eight-year-old, affluent New Englander and an 1844 graduate of Harvard Medical School trained in dental surgery, traveled to China.[64] He spent a little over a year and a half in China including trips to Macao, Hong Kong, and all five treaty ports, and he published an account of these travels in 1855. His 400-page book consisted of letters to family members and journal entries that described in detail Ball's experiences abroad.[65]

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[63] Te-kong Tong argues that a decline in Manchu power led to a swing in domestic and foreign policies in the Qing government which took Lin Zexu and other Guangzhou Opium War-era "barbarian experts," including Wu Jianzhang, out of power. Te-kong Tong, *United States Diplomacy in China, 1844-60* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1964), 110-111.

[64] Thomas Francis Harrington, *The Harvard Medical School: A History, Narrative and Documentary. 1782-1905, Volume 3*, edited by James Gregory Mumford, (New York, Chicago: Lewis Publishing Company, 1905), 1475; Patricia Lim, *Forgotten Souls: A Social History of the Hong Kong Cemetery* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2011), 61, 109; Benjamin Lincoln Ball, *Rambles in Eastern Asia, including China and Manila, during several years' residence* (Boston: James French and Company, 1856).

[65] Benjamin Ball published one other book: *Three Days on the White Mountains, Being the Perilous Adventure of Dr. B.L. Ball on Mount Washington, During October, 25, 26, and 27, 1855, Written by Himself* (Boston: Published by Nathaniel Noyes, 1856). In it, he mentions the late completion of *Rambles in Eastern Asia* as the reason for a visit to the White Mountains later in the year than planned, during severe weather, precipitating the writing of a second book on his harrowing experience.

Even though Ball was not a merchant, his narrative still revealed the commercial nature of the US-China relationship and describes life at each treaty port. Living in Boston—a major US commercial hub— would have exposed Benjamin Lincoln Ball to the culture of US-China trade more than most places. Because of this, his decision to travel to China as a tourist should not be too surprising. His position in society as a wealthy doctor from Boston gave him access to the small, insular communities of foreigners in Chinese port cities, that included consuls, merchants, and missionaries, and his travel and work as a doctor put him in contact with Chinese residents at each treaty port. Although Ball had a different background from other foreigners in China, he still exhibited some of the same prejudices against the Chinese, whom he often described as heathens, liars, and thieves. Regardless, his account provided a rich source of description about each treaty port, the growing number of foreigners, and their interactions with local Chinese early in the treaty port era.[66]

Arriving in Guangzhou, Ball described the landing at the factories along the Pearl River and traveling to a Chinese hotel as a disorienting experience[67]

> When we reached the hotel, Acowo, with all sorts of gestures, showed us in very politely, though I did not know when I had entered the hotel. I could not perceive the difference between the streets and buildings: one seemed a continuation of the other. I saw a confusion of narrow passages, a mass of rickety-looking houses, dark entries, open doors, twisting stairs, and intricate turnings, and only knew that I had arrived at my room when they pointed out the bed…In view of all circumstances, it was to me a suspicious place.[68]

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[66] Mathew T. Brundage's 2015 dissertation uses Ball's book as one of many American narratives produced between the First and Second Opium Wars (1843-1856), a time when American writings about China proliferated, to examine American discourse on China and the Chinese as "antipodes" to the United States and Americans, revealing what Americans thought about themselves and their place in the world in the mid-nineteenth century. For Brundage, Ball represents a common American approach to China as fitting within the experiences of most Americans in China, which often framed their experiences with China in terms of a call to action for economic success, governmental duty, religious fervor, intellectual curiosity, or a sense of adventure. Mathew T. Brundage, "'Where we would extend the moral power of our civilization': American Cultural and Political Foreign Relations with China, 1843-1856" (Ph.D. dissertation, Kent State University, 2015).
[67] Art historian Johnathan Andrew Farris uses architecture as a frame to understand Chinese-Western relations in Guangzhou in his recent book, *Enclave to Urbanity: Canton, Foreigners, and Architecture from the Late Eighteenth to the Early Twentieth Centuries* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2016).
[68] Ibid.

For Ball, Guangzhou's streets and architecture were simply illegible—his idea of what a hotel should look like did not match what he saw. Ball perpetuated this attitude of superiority and misunderstanding in his book, which was read by missionaries, merchants, politicians, and others. *The New American Cyclopædia* (1858) entry on "Canton" provided an explanation of accommodations for foreign visitors in Guangzhou during the mid-nineteenth century:

> When a respectable stranger arrives here with letters of introduction, he is generally received and hospitably entertained at the mansions of the merchants, especially the English and American, who have generally commercial and dwelling establishments at Macao and Hong Kong. For the accommodation of the less fortunate European stranger there are a couple of hotels, conducted on semi-European principles; that is, Chinese in service, chamber accommodation, and filth, and European in diet; but to the curious and hardy traveller, the hotel of Acowo affords a far better opportunity for acquiring a knowledge of the people and city than a residence at one of the princely hongs.[69]

Since Ball was a young man without connections to the commercial world, he did not live in the rich, European-style apartments at one of the factories (hongs), but instead he was taken to a Chinese-run hotel for Europeans, proving that Guangzhou was still a city that was more comfortable for foreign merchants than tourists.

Ball described Chinese buildings and sections of the cities he visited in negative terms and wrote more about the details of European buildings.[70] While first approaching Guangzhou, he wrote: "As we neared the Factories [warehouses] the flags of the American and English Consulates appeared waving high above the buildings; and, soon after, several blocks of handsome European buildings came into the view. These, shut out before by the dingy red mass of Chinese buildings, now sparkled, in contrast, like diamonds in a heap of old rubbish."[71] This preference for European buildings could have been a simple matter of aesthetics or familiarity, but it also expressed a disdain for poverty. Ball made similar remarks about Shanghai. "We are

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[69] "Canton," *The New American Cyclopædia: A Popular Dictionary of General Knowledge*, Vol. 4 (Brownson-Chartres), edited by George Ripley and Charles A. Dana (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1858), 383-384.
[70] Ibid., 373-374.
[71] Ball, *Rambles in Eastern Asia,* 100.

now within about four miles of Shanghae [sic] and can easily distinguish the single foreign residences from the Chinese mass. The fine, large, commanding houses, of European construction, contrast like hotels by the side of the rusty, shed-like structures…there is much sameness between this and that near Guangzhou, except that there is more country and less of city here to be seen."[72] Ball had a somewhat more favorable opinion of Ningbo, one of the few Chinese places he described positively:

> Pursuing my course by a narrow path, made of flat stones,—the only path I found,—I walked about a mile up the river. The Chinese buildings were all superior to any I had before seen. The grounds look green and flourishing, the trees are inviting for shades, and the tombs and coffins which lay exposed to the air were as numerous as ever, every few minutes coming on some of them...Ningpo [sic], from an outside view of it, is the handsomest city that I have yet seen in China. It is, in fact, the only one to which the term handsome can be at all applied; for little is to be said of them.[73]

Even while Ball praised Ningbo for its attractiveness, he framed it as an outlier, criticizing Chinese cities in the process. Art historian Johnathan Andrew Farris categorized the type of Western tourism following the First Opium War to the mid-1870s as "mapping." Rather than actively engaging with a place, foreigners explored the city by identifying sites of interest in an attempt to know "the Chinese." However, the people of Chinese cities could counter attempts to "map" their cities. They could control the movements of foreigners through surveillance and the "press" (the gathering and observing) of a crowd—sometimes out of curiosity and sometimes to intimidate.[74]

Although the treaties allowed Ball and other Americans to travel to the five ports, he quickly discovered that this access was not total. Walls surrounded most major Qing cities, with

[72] Ibid., 225.
[73] Ibid., 248-249.
[74] Farris, *Enclave to Urbanity*, 145-46, 178-80. Mathew Brundage similarly wrote that he thought a broader process was in play with the unfavorable comparison of European and American buildings. Throughout his dissertation, he cited a wide range of comparisons including differences in food, gender roles, and religion. These comparisons, he argued, could be used to assess American understandings of themselves and their perceived place in the world. Brundage, "'Where we would extend the moral power of our civilization.'"

the harbor areas and urban areas outside the walls (referred to as "suburbs"). Prior to the opening of the five ports, foreigners had come to Guangzhou to trade under strict regulations that limited their movements to a small portion of the port and interaction with a select group of merchants and laborers. Then the treaties suddenly opened the city and its populace not just to traders and missionaries but to tourists and sailors, some who drank excessively, slept with prostitutes, stole, and caused disturbances. The people of Guangzhou grew increasingly hostile toward foreigners because of the inability to keep them at a distance.[75] Ball described how common Chinese treated him and other foreigners differently depending on the part of the city visited: "[The Chinese] were more civil than they would have been further in the city, as our course lay near the river, where they see and have more or less intercourse with foreigners."[76] In the urban areas outside the city walls surrounding Guangzhou away from the harbor areas, Ball encountered a range of reactions from curiosity to hostility.[77] At the cities of Fuzhou and Ningbo, Ball and his British acquaintances entered the city walls without much resistance, and he noted that the people of Ningbo were "not so fearful of foreigners here as in some other cities."[78] Based on his luck in entering the city gates in Fuzhou, Ningbo, Xiamen, and Shanghai, Ball decided to force his way beyond the city walls of Guangzhou:

> Those in the street did not pay much attention to me until I was under the arch of the gate; when I perceived, from the stir among them, that they were taking notice of it...Some of the Chinese tried to stop me, putting their hands before me; but I contrived to get by. I heard the frequent calls of, "Fan-qui-loa! fan-qui-loa! wilo, wilo, fan-qui-loa! (Foreign Devil! Foreign Devil! Clear out, clear out, Foreign Devil!") as I continued to crowd through them.[79]

[75] Tong, *United States Diplomacy in China, 1844-60*, 82-84.
[76] Ibid., 110.
[77] Ibid., 116.
[78] Ibid., 349-353.
[79] Ibid., 366.

He only made it part of the way into the inner city, all the while being reminded by locals that he was in the wrong place. Eventually two guards escorted him outside the walls again.[80]

Ball observed diplomatic developments regarding the "city question," of whether foreigners would be allowed into the walled portion of Guangzhou. "According to the treaty between the English and the Chinese, the city gates are to be opened on the sixth of April next, and foreigners allowed to do business inside, and to go in or out at pleasure. Although there are but a few days to that time, yet nothing definite can be known."[81] The British Governor George Bonham met with Governor General Xu Guangjin, who made excuses that the Chinese police would be unable to restrain the mob that did not want foreigners within the walls of the city. Ball saw truth in this claim: "All the people are opposed to the carrying into effect of that part of the treaty; and doubtless, the authorities are also."[82] As governor general and the Chinese official primarily responsible for foreign affairs, Xu Guangjin found himself in the impossible position of placating the emperor, foreigners, and residents of Guangzhou. If he sided with the foreigners and their claims regarding the language of the treaty, he would lose the respect of the people and perhaps his job. If he followed the people's wishes completely, he would offend the British and might restart the violent conflict between their two countries. Although foreigners in Guangzhou believed that the Daoguang emperor would order Xu to open the gates in compliance with the treaty, on March 30, Governor Xu received word from the Daoguang emperor that he should do as he pleased and act in accordance with the wishes of the people of Guangzhou. When April 6th arrived, with both the Chinese authorities and the people still against opening the gate for foreigners, Governor Xu informed British Governor Bonham that he would not open the gate.

[80] Ibid., 366-67.
[81] Ball, *Rambles in Eastern Asia*, 212.
[82] Ibid., 202.

Ball spoke with Chinese residents about the matter, and all opposed opening the gate. One Chinese merchant said that it had long been a custom that no foreigners were allowed inside the city gates of Guangzhou, and that the British already had Hong Kong and should not push for access where they were not wanted. Ball speculated that some Chinese did not know that the opening of the entire city to foreigners was stipulated in the treaty. Local Chinese also distrusted foreigners, particularly the British:

> They seem to be under an impression that the English have some sinister motives for going within the walls, besides those of trade. Some think that they wish to discover their arts; others believe that foreigners have the power of seeing into the earth, and that they are desirous to obtain possession of the money and treasures which, in some instances, are for security kept buried in large amounts.[83]

Meanwhile, merchants suspended trade, and Ball suspected that going beyond the warehouses at Guangzhou could be dangerous for foreigners.

On March 31, 1849, the Daoguang emperor sent an edict to Governor Xu regarding the wall, which Xu forwarded to the English plenipotentiary. The secretary of the British legation translated the edict into English:

> Walled cities are erected with the view of protecting the people; and by protecting the people only can the country be preserved…The Chinese government cannot thwart the inclinations of its people in order to comply with the wishes of strangers from afar; and foreign governments ought also to pay attention to the wishes of *our* people, and spare the power of the merchants.[84]

Xu appended a note to this edict explaining that his decision concerning the wall had not been personal but that he was simply following the emperor's instructions.

Although the main conflict of the First Opium War occurred between the British and Chinese, the animosity directed at the British extended to include Americans at times. Ball related several brief anecdotes that illustrated how the conflict drew in Americans and caused

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[83] Ibid., 213-214.
[84] Ibid., 216; A translation of the complete edict can be found in "China: Opening of Canton," *Allen's Indian mail, and register of intelligence for British and foreign India, China, and all parts of the East,* June 25, 1849: 365.

violent anti-foreigner reactions. An American had contracted a Chinese builder to construct a church but had not finished. Local Chinese seized and "bastinadoed" the builder (a punishment consisting of blows with a stick often to the soles of the feet and buttocks), causing the builder's death. Another Chinese man, Shing-Lee, bought some cotton yarn from an American business, and members of the Chinese cotton guild accused him of smuggling, forced him to return the cotton, took him into the city to magistrates, where he was tortured and beat to death.[85] By doing business with foreigners—even Americans, who had remained neutral in the Opium War—these men became traitors in the eyes of their neighbors.

Ball met a few Chinese who spoke English and told him about Chinese opinions of the American presence in the treaty ports. These men spoke English because of education at missions and from frequent interaction with American and British traders. Some made profit from their business dealings with Americans, such as Ayoú, who had lived in Boston for two years with Caleb Cushing after serving as his comprador in Guangzhou. Ayoú returned to do business in China and claimed that a Chinese man who spoke both English and Chinese could make good money.[86] Most foreigners, excepting missionaries, rarely made serious efforts to learn Chinese since they did not plan to stay long in China and perceived the language as being particularly difficult to learn, so traders and diplomats sought out anyone who could speak both Chinese and English with any fluency as aides. Another Chinese man from Singapore who spoke many languages claimed that it paid well.[87] Ball discussed the opening of city gates to foreigners with another Chinese merchant. Ball thought that since the Chinese had agreed to open the cities completely to foreigners that Qing officials and common people would not object. Ball's informant spoke about the understandable prejudice against the British, and the somewhat better

[85] Ball, *Rambles in Eastern Asia*, 207; "China: Opening of Canton."
[86] Ball, *Rambles in Eastern Asia*, 91.
[87] Ibid., 317.

opinion of the Americans. Ball asked whether it would be safe for him to enter the city gates, and the merchant answered that those who knew that Ball was American would not hurt him. The problem was Ball's appearance. For most Chinese, British and Americans were indistinguishable. Their faces looked the same, and they wore similar clothing. On other occasions, Ball had to explain that the light color of his hair did not mean that he was an Englishman from the "red-haired" nation (红毛 *hong mao* or *ang mo*)—a racial epithet for white people—and that people from many countries had the same kind of hair.[88] Such conversations indicated that Americans in China found themselves entangled in hostility directed at the British and foreigners more generally, particularly in Guangzhou where tensions over the "city question" would persist and then later erupt into the Second Opium War.

Conclusion

Unlike Cunningham, Benjamin Lincoln Ball made no attempt to appeal to the US government, writing instead for a more general audience. His book offered some insight into treaty port life for foreigners, struggles in Guangzhou over the "city question," and interactions between individual Americans and Chinese. He described person-to-person relations on the ground as cooperative with some Chinese like Ayoú profiting from their business associations with Americans. Others physically opposed the presence of Americans and foreigners in general in the treaty ports. Despite Ball's naiveté concerning the animosity of the Chinese toward the British and other foreigners, discerning American readers of his book received a fine-grained view of these relationships through Ball's admittedly Anglo-American perspective.

[88] Ibid., 131; Walter Henry Medhurst, *A dictionary of the Hok-këèn dialect of the Chinese language, according to the reading and colloquial idioms: containing about 12,000 characters, accompanied by a short historical and statistical account of Hok-këèn* (Macao: Printed at the Honorable East India Company's Press by G.J. Steyn and brother, 1832), 481.

Although Forbes and Cunningham held roughly equivalent positions in Russell & Co., they fell onto different sides of the debate over the opening of China. Forbes believed that Guangzhou would remain the dominant port in Chinese international trade and that opium would hinder the trade of American manufactured goods, while Cunningham advocated for the expansion of American merchants not only in key ports but also into the interior of China where they could directly buy from the producers of valuable commodities like tea and silk.

Forbes and Cunningham also held differing attitudes toward China and the Chinese. Although the past restrictions of the Canton system still rankled Forbes, he maintained a humble attitude toward the Chinese empire. He even concluded his pamphlet with a China-focused perspective, wondering how their historians would think back on the first diplomatic encounter between the United States and China. “He will be remembered in China as the first ambassador from a young country; and it is hoped that he may not find himself enrolled in the archives of the Celestial Empire as the ‘tribute bearer of the flowery-flag nation, KU-SHING.’”[89] He hoped that China would look back upon the Americans as equals and not as tribute-bearers from a lesser nation. Eleven years later, Cunningham wrote about the Chinese in a patronizing manner, comparing them to children and noting their need for the “civilizing” influence of contact with Western nations.

These differing attitudes also reflected the position of Americans vis-à-vis the Chinese in the mid-nineteenth century. In 1844, Americans were still trying to establish themselves as a power in China, independent from Great Britain, which had negotiated most favored nation status, giving other treaty nations the same privileges. US officials hoped to keep pace with their commercial rivals, the British. In 1855, Americans had spread to the new treaty ports in China and recently had opened Japan. Emboldened by these successes, Americans like Cunningham

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[89] Forbes, *Remarks on China and the China Trade*, 57.

embraced a patronizing "civilizing" mission in China and pushed for greater trading privileges. The next chapter examines the experiences of consuls in the four new ports in order to further explore important shifts in American thinking about China, commerce, and US-China relations.

CHAPTER 3

THE US CONSULAR SERVICE IN SHANGHAI, XIAMEN, FUZHOU, AND NINGBO, 1844-1854

Since Americans first arrived in China to trade, they appointed consuls at Guangzhou. At first US consuls did not exercise the full range of powers commonly associated with consulship. The Qing government did not recognize foreign consuls and would not issue "exequaturs," or the official written recognition authorizing consular powers in the country in which consuls are stationed. According to the business historian Ferry de Goey, consuls in China before 1842 were "at best spokespersons without consular powers, and their ability to offer protection to fellow countrymen was therefore limited."[1] Moreover, Americans had an official consul at Guangzhou for only 14 out of the first 50 years they traded at the port.[2]

Post-Opium War treaties officially recognized foreign consuls, at which point US consuls took on additional powers, duties, and responsibilities. Along with US commissioners, they acted as the primary intermediaries at the local level between Chinese officials and American residents and visitors to the new treaty ports of Shanghai, Xiamen, Fuzhou, and Ningbo. Even with official status, the US Congress allocated only the bare minimum of funds to support consulates in China. US consuls did not receive a salary until 1856, and the President often appointed business leaders from top US firms like Russell & Co., to assume consular work in addition to managing their firms in Chinese ports. As a result, consuls felt overburdened, undercompensated, and ill-equipped to carry out consular duties.

The British, French, and US treaties with China amassed several significant privileges in the five treaty ports: residency, extraterritoriality, the ability to fix tariffs on trade, and the right

[1] Ferry de Goey, *Consuls and the Institutions of Global Capitalism, 1783-1914* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2014), 61.
[2] Ibid., 78.

to post consuls.[3] On paper, the Western nations held a strong position at the beginning of the treaty-port era, but on the ground, day-to-day, these nations struggled to enforce the privileges they had negotiated. Some Chinese fiercely opposed foreign settlement especially within their city walls that protected administrative buildings and Chinese residences.

Competition with Great Britain often drove American ambitions in the Pacific and along the China coast. However, British and American consuls often collaborated in the face of shared concerns. Chinese officials encouraged the separation of foreigners from the Chinese population in places like Shanghai by setting aside land specifically for foreign settlement. Isolated from their home nations and local Chinese communities, British and Americans turned to each other and developed their own communities and public services. They built European-style houses, churches, hospitals, warehouses, racecourses, and other public works. Consuls from Great Britain, the United States, and France, frequently communicated with each other about their dealings with Chinese officials, banded together when they felt particularly threatened, and celebrated each other's successes in upholding treaty privileges. Many consuls of the mid-nineteenth century believed that naval power was the only way to enforce the treaty.

This chapter uses US consular records to explore how merchant-consuls in China mediated US-China relations during the first decade following the 1844 US-China Treaty of Wangxia in the four newly opened treaty ports of Xiamen, Ningbo, Fuzhou, and Shanghai.[4] Consuls communicated with the Secretary of State about the business of the consulate, often reporting the entry and exit of American vessels at the port and other matters that impacted American trade and well-being. They also dwelled on the basic concerns of running the consulate, requesting adequate salaries for themselves and key staff such as translators. The first

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[3] The French also pushed to legalize Christianity, which had been banned in 1724.

[4] Consular records refer to Chinese places using Wade-Giles or other forms of transliteration: Amoy for Xiamen, Ningpo for Ningbo, and Foochow or Fuh Chau for Fuzhou.

section of this chapter examines common duties and obstacles faced by American consuls during the mid-nineteenth century. The rest of the chapter studies the ways that consuls in each new port handled common problems such as consular salaries and keeping consulates staffed. Americans lagged commercially in Xiamen and Ningbo, leaving US consuls with few formal duties. However, in Fuzhou and Shanghai, robust Christian missions and burgeoning trade resulted in larger numbers of foreign residents and visitors, and, accordingly, consuls had more disputes to resolve. Consuls' knee-jerk response was to call for gunboats to enforce treaty provisions and when available used force first and communicated with the Qing afterward. Uprisings in China further complicated relations with the Qing, making the job of the US consul an important, if grossly unsupported, position in early US-China relations. Their struggles demanded the professionalization of the US consular service, reinforced the Opium War-era idea that force was the best treaty enforcement policy (despite evidence of its ineffectiveness) in China, demonstrated the poor state of the early formal US-China relationship, and revealed an American jealousy of and reliance on the British consular and naval resources.

The Mid-Nineteenth-Century US Consul

Early consular appointments combined the traditional responsibilities of the consul (encouraging commerce and protecting the rights of US citizens abroad) with the responsibilities of the diplomat (maintaining state-to-state relations). In the 1840 American edition of *A Dictionary Practical, Theoretical and Historical of Commerce and Commercial Navigation*, a book consulted by US officials like Caleb Cushing, Scottish economist James Ramsay MacCulloch listed the many important duties of a consul:[5]

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[5]Cushing referenced McCulloch's entry on the "Consul" in a letter: Caleb Cushing to John C. Calhoun, September 29, 1844, in U.S. Congress, Senate, *Message from the President of the United States*, January 22, 1845, 28th Cong., 2d. Sess., 1845.

> It is his business to be always on the spot, to watch over the commercial interests of the subjects of the state whose servant he is; to be ready to assist them with advice on all doubtful occasions; to see that the conditions in commercial treaties are properly observed; that those he is appointed to protect are subjected to no unnecessary or unjustifiable demands in the conducting of their business; to represent their grievances to the authorities at the place where they reside, or to the ambassador of the sovereign appointing him at the court on which the consulship depends, or to the government at home; in a word, to exert himself to render the condition of the subjects of the country employing him, within the limits of his consulship, as comfortable, and their transactions as advantageous and secure, as possible.[6]

The consul had to be versatile, vigilant, and dogged in protecting commerce and the rights and safety of American citizens, and communicate with the local Chinese government and US government in Washington. US consuls had the complicated task of enforcing a treaty, which China had reluctantly accepted. There were three main categories of consular duties: duties in relation to his own government, in relation to his fellow citizens, and in relation to the foreign government. For his own government, the consul wrote reports, kept records of communications, recorded the arrivals and departures of vessels, registered seamen, displayed the flag to defend the honor and status of his country, and during war, collected intelligence. For his fellow citizens, the consul issued passports and visas, provided notary services, handled issues relating to births, deaths, troublemakers (i.e. drunks, stranded seamen, bankrupt traders, the sick, and the destitute), and defended the provisions of the treaty, including duties on import and export, the use of ports, standard measurements, the right to lease and buy land, the right to build houses and storage facilities, the use of burial grounds, and the administration of the consular court. Treaties gave Americans and Europeans extraterritoriality in China, a privilege that Americans and Europeans insisted upon in supposedly "uncivilized" non-European countries.[7] Regarding the

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[6] J.R. McCulloch, *A Dictionary, Practical, Theoretical, and Historical, of Commerce and Commercial Navigation*, ed. Henry Vethake LL.D. (Philadelphia: Thomas Wardle, 15 Minor Street, 1840), 466.

[7] De Goey, *Consuls and the Institutions of Global Capitalism, 1783-1914*, 6, 9-11, 148. De Goey argues that the institution of consuls facilitated the development of global capitalism during the nineteenth century by combining many different political, judicial, and economic duties into one efficient, effective official. Governments extended protection to their citizens beyond state borders.

foreign government, the consul communicated directly with local authorities.[8] The combination of these duties resulted in exhausting work, particularly in busy ports.

Although consuls had a great deal of responsibility, the State Department gave them little instruction. New consuls received a manual called *General Instructions to the Consuls and Commercial Agents of the United States*, containing descriptions of consular duties and procedures for communication and record-keeping, a list of current ministers and consuls, and the latest instructions sent to all US consuls. While these instructions clarified State Department procedures, they did not prepare consuls for the specific contexts of their ports.[9] In addition to the *General Instructions,* consuls also received the consular records for the port from their predecessors, which might have been more instructive concerning ongoing matters. Armed with these documents, many consuls still struggled with the demands of the job. Often a single consul served the needs of the entire American expatriate community, despite the substantial number of tasks required. One State Department history described nineteenth-century consular posts as a "one-man show."[10] The President appointed consuls individually for an undetermined length of time and often chose China trade businessmen to fill consulships for the sake of convenience, but some unusual, seemingly unqualified choices indicate the presence of nepotism. If the duties of the post proved too much, a consul might appoint a vice consul, often selected from the local merchant community. In China and Turkey, due to unfamiliar languages, US consuls often hired interpreters as essential staff. At particularly active consulates, consuls hired marshals, who

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[8] Ibid., 9-11.

[9] Charles William Bradley to William L. Marcy, 1 October 1853, *Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Ningpo, China, 1853-1896;* U.S. Department of State, *General Instructions to the Consuls and Commercial Agents of the United States* (Washington: A.O.P. Nicholson, 1855).

[10] Walter B. Smith II, *America's Diplomats and Consuls of 1776-1865*: *a geographic and biographic directory of the Foreign Service from the Declaration of Independence to the end of the Civil Wa*r (Washington, D.C.: Center for the Study of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Service Institute, U.S. Dept. of State, 1986), 5.

would handle administrative matters for the consular courts and run the local consular prisons.[11] Often consuls had to pay for the services of these additional positions from their own pockets. However, in ports like Xiamen, with little commercial activity in the 1840s and 1850s, consuls had few duties, and therefore, did not call for additional personnel.

Xiamen

Xiamen—a city and port located on a six-island archipelago, northeast of Hong Kong—had long been a port of interest to foreigners. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Portuguese, Dutch, and English East India Company traded at Xiamen and nearby Quanzhou before lower duties and Qing law drove them to Guangzhou. During the First Opium War, the British bombarded and captured Xiamen. The British knew that Xiamen was a promising location for the tea trade, so they negotiated with the Qing to make it a treaty port following the war.[12] In November 1843, the first British consul arrived in Xiamen, and soon 20 British firms had representatives in the city. Xiamen also became a hub for opium smuggling. British trade flourished while US trade developed slowly. For the first ten years as a treaty port, American imports and exports in Xiamen ranged from 1,000 to 2,000 tons per year. Only in 1855 did trade jump up to 9,503 tons with Americans exporting tea and importing cotton and exporting rice and Chinese "coolies" to South American and the Caribbean—particularly Cuba and Peru—to work

[11] Ibid., 6, 37; Consuls and ministers held Americans who had committed crimes in China in special prisons run by the consulate while they awaited judgment and as punishment. Americans and Europeans were subject to the laws of their own countries (extraterritoriality) beginning in 1844 with the Treaty of Nanjing. Consuls and ministers tried criminal and civil cases in which Americans were defendants, settled the estates of Americans who died in China, and assisted in "mixed" cases that had both American and Chinese participants They drew jurors from the local American community in order to make judgments. American foreign relations scholar Eileen Scully uses the extreme example of American extraterritorial jurisdiction in China to explore a citizenship regime, which required expatriate Americans "to submit to a reasonable regulation" to demonstrate the value of his citizenship and the U.S. government's protection of him. Eileen Scully, *Bargaining with the State from Afar: American Citizenship in Treaty Port China, 1844-1942* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 1-19.
[12] James A. Cook wrote a dissertation about the Xiamen's overseas Chinese populations that contributed to Xiamen's global networks and cosmopolitanism. James A. Cook, "Bridges to Modernity: Xiamen, Overseas Chinese, and Southeast Coastal Modernization, 1843-1937," (Ph.D. diss., University of California, San Diego, 1998).

on plantations and to mine guano.[13] This was roughly one-sixth of the American trade being conducted in Guangzhou the same year.

The first US consul at Xiamen, Charles William Bradley, began his duties on August 1, 1849, five years after the United States concluded a treaty with China. Between August and the end of November, he did not see a single American ship at the port.[14] When he arrived in Xiamen, he was at the beginning of a diplomatic career that would take him to Singapore, Ningbo, Siam, and Hankou. A native of New Haven, Connecticut, Bradley graduated from the Protestant Episcopal Theological Seminary in New York in 1830 and then preached in Connecticut for ten years. He served as the Secretary of State of Connecticut in 1846-1847 before President Zachary Taylor offered him the post in Xiamen.[15] Bradley may seem like an odd choice for consul without any apparent experience or interest in China or foreign matters, but the early consular service had not yet professionalized in the mid-1840s, and consulships did not require any specific qualifications, sometimes resulting in dubious appointments. Bradley likely received the post on the strength of a personal recommendation to President Taylor. In the following years, he parlayed his first consulship in quiet Xiamen into a career as a consul in Asian ports.

Even though Americans did not conduct a huge amount of business at Xiamen during the late 1840s and early 1850s, examining the main consular developments at the port highlights

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[13] Eldon Griffin, *Clippers and Consuls: American Consular and Commercial Relations with Eastern Asia, 1845-1860* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Edwards Bros., Inc., 1938; Wilmington, Delaware: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 1972 reprint), 402; Renee Redman, "From Importation of Slaves to Migration of Laborers: The Struggle to Outlaw American Participation in the Chinese Coolie Trade and the Seeds of United States Immigration Law," *Albany Government Law Review* 3 (Jan. 2010), available at: https://ssrn.com/abstract=1658571.
[14] Charles William Bradley to John M. Clayton, 26 November 1849, *Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Amoy, China, 1844-1906*.
[15] *Memorial Biographies of the New-England Historic Genealogical Society, Vol. VI: 1864-1871* (Boston: New-England Historic Genealogical Society, 1905), 88-89. Bradley continued to have an active career in Asia, serving as consul in Xiamen (1849-1854), Singapore (1854-1857), and Ningbo (1857-1860). During this time, he negotiated a new treaty with Siam [Thailand] in 1857, and traveled with the Pei-ho Expedition into the interior of China in 1858. He held the office of Assistant in the China Imperial Customs at Hankou (1860-1863). He returned to the United States in 1863.

some common problems—the inadequacy of funds provided for American consulates, a strain of competition with British consulates, and the mundane but necessary work of reporting on commercial trends. Bradley still had some information to report to the Secretary of State, John. M. Clayton.[16] Bradley disclosed that at Xiamen, Guangzhou, and Shanghai, Chinese merchants were not buying cotton-manufactured goods such as sheeting, shirting, and drills but instead preferred the raw staple and cotton yarn. This was useful information for American China traders.[17] The relatively low volume of trade at Xiamen resulted in a small number of American residents, totaling seven individuals, five of whom were missionaries with the American Board of Commissioner for Foreign Missions from Boston.[18] With such a small constituency and with no signs of increased activity, Bradley's work remained modest.

Occasionally, disaster struck and disrupted the banal routine of the American consul. On December 23, 1849, a fire destroyed 476 large mercantile houses, which Bradley feared would negatively impact trade. During the fire, the Chinese authorities aided the Americans by placing a guard at Bradley's home to protect it from looting.[19] However, only four months later Bradley reported that American trading had recovered, and the fire had not impacted trade as much as he had expected.[20]

During Bradley's two-year tenure as consul in Xiamen, he attempted to improve the standing of the US consulate in comparison with the British. At Xiamen, the British consulate

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[16] John M. Clayton's tenure as Secretary of State is remembered primarily for negotiating the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty of 1850 with British minister Sir Henry Bulwer-Lytton, which guaranteed neutrality and movement across the isthmus of Panama, laying the groundwork for the eventual building of the Panama Canal. *Obituary Addresses on the Occasion of the Death of the Hon. John M. Clayton, of Delaware in the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States, December 3, 1856* (Washington: A.O.P. Nicholson, Public Printer, 1857), 17-20.
[17] Charles William Bradley to John M. Clayton, 23 March 1850, *Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Amoy, China, 1844-1906.*
[18] Ibid.
[19] Charles William Bradley to John M. Clayton, 1 January 1850, *Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Amoy, China, 1844-1906.*
[20] Charles William Bradley to John M. Clayton, 23 March 1850, *Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Amoy, China, 1844-1906.*

employed a consul, a vice consul, an assistant, a Chinese writer, a linguist, and servants—all salaried. Also, the British often had a warship stationed in the harbor. Bradley envied these resources and the concomitant standing of Great Britain in the foreign community. Although Chinese officials seemed friendlier with Americans than other foreigners, he thought that the small number of official American representatives reflected badly on the consulate, especially since he believed the Chinese appreciated displays of power. In 1849, hoping to strengthen the position of Americans in Xiamen vis-à-vis the British and the Chinese—and perhaps also for personal reasons—he requested that the US State Department instate his own son, Charles William Bradley, Jr., as vice consul at Xiamen.[21] He also hired Lin King Chin, a "well qualified Chinese," as linguist. Bradley offered "no other motive…than a sincere desire to elevate the dignity and power of the United States Government in the minds of the native rulers and of the people."[22] In addition to the small size of Bradley's staff, he complained that he had no suitable consular residence, and had to room with a British merchant and American missionaries. Bradley also worried about US trade in Xiamen. Unlike in Guangzhou and Shanghai, the volume of American trade in Xiamen not only trailed the British, but also the Spanish and Dutch.[23] He argued that America's humble showing negatively impacted the opinions of Chinese officials, who held the British consul in higher regard.[24] Yet with such a small American population and little US trade, Xiamen likely did not need more personnel. Although discontent with his circumstances, Bradley and his son continued to run the consulate until 1854.[25]

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[21] P.D. Coates, *The China Consuls: British Consular Officers, 1843-1943* (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1988).
[22] Charles William Bradley to John M. Clayton, 1 July 1850, *Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Amoy, China, 1844-1906.*
[23] Ibid.
[24] Charles William Bradley to John M. Clayton, 26 December 1850, *Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Amoy, China, 1844-1906.*
[25] Humphrey Marshall to Charles W. Bradley, Jr., June 21, 1853 in House of Representatives, 33rd Congress, 1st Sess., H. Doc. 123.

The next US consul at Xiamen, Thomas Hart Hyatt, like Charles William Bradley, was no merchant, and he used the consulship in Xiamen to escape the United States. Hyatt was born in Danby, New York, not far from Ithaca. After working in the newspaper industry, he served as US consul to the Empire of Morocco at Tangier from July 1848 to June 1850. He returned to New York for three years and then resumed work as a consul, this time in Xiamen, where he would serve from March 1854 to May 1861.[26] He left the United States with his twelve-year-old son Thomas Hart in tow, "desiring a furlough from the severe battle-din of political warfare which was raging so bitterly between the two sections of the divided Democracy…and to escape from the laborious and ungrateful toils and perplexities of daily editorial life."[27] Hyatt had no specific desire to travel to China, but instead wanted to escape the United States and was willing to assume any paying post, no matter how modest the salary. In 1854, the United States still had little trade at the port, however, the opening of the tea trade at Xiamen had the potential to expand commerce.[28]

Like Bradley, Hyatt argued that the government needed to provide more resources to maintain the status of the United States in Xiamen, but he provided a clearer, more calculated argument. The British consul received a salary of $6,000 a year, was provided with a house, and had a staff of interpreters, linguists, clerks, and servants. Although Hyatt admitted that the British amenities were unnecessary, he believed the Americans needed to strive to meet the standards the British set for American pride and to impress the Chinese. Like other consuls around the world, Hyatt waited for Congress to consider consular pay, and he argued that it would be better

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[26] Gail Unzelman, "Thomas Hart Hyatt: The Man and His Book," *Supplement to the Wayward Tendrils Quarterly* 23 (3), 2013.
[27] Thomas Hart Hyatt, "Random Leaves from our Note Books of Travel: A Voyage from New York to China, and Round the World, via Panama, San Francisco..." C*alifornia Rural Home Journal, 15 May 1865.*
[28] Thomas Hart Hyatt to William L. Marcy, October 1854, *Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Amoy, China, 1844-1906.*

to abolish the consular service than to provide it with so few resources.[29] Although Xiamen's trade picked up in the late 1850s, it remained far behind the major ports of Shanghai and Guangzhou and slightly behind Fuzhou, which would become an important node in the tea trade. As a result, the port did not attract the numbers of commercial traders and missionaries that tended to complicate the work of consuls. Interestingly enough, Thomas Hart Hyatt also appointed his son vice consul and marshal of Xiamen. In April 2, 1861, upon Thomas Hart Hyatt Sr.'s resignation of the consulship, his son became acting consul, a move that mirrored their predecessors, the Bradleys.[30] A minor post, the consulship at Xiamen provided few challenges but also few resources for the consulate. Xiamen did not offer robust enough trade to tempt merchants to become consuls there, instead attracting Americans who used the post as an excuse to leave their homes in the United States and begin again elsewhere.

Ningbo

About 500 miles north of Xiamen along the China coast, American trade also struggled to take off at the port of Ningbo. As a result, during the early years of the treaty port, several American consular workers provided uneven service to American residents. Unlike Xiamen, merchants intermittently filled the post of consul, and missionaries—more constant in their residence and interest in the port—filled in during gaps of consular leadership. The port offered some opportunities in the "coasting trade," in which vessels carried goods and passengers between Chinese ports, but also suffered from the increased traffic when runaway sailors needed aid. Russell & Co. agent Henry G. Wolcott had acted both as vice consul at Ningbo from 1844 to 1849 and as consul in nearby Shanghai (roughly 93 miles north of Ningbo) from 1846 to 1848. After acting as US consul at Xiamen (1849-1851), the State Department sent Charles William

[29] Ibid.
[30] Jules Davids, ed., *American Diplomatic and Public Papers: The United States and China* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1979), 11.

Bradley to Ningbo from 1853 to 1854. Before, during, and after Bradley's initial stay in Ningbo, Divie Bethune McCartee, an American Protestant medical missionary, who had founded a church and mission in Ningbo, fulfilled consular duties in the lesser position of consular agent until Charles William Bradley returned in 1856 to take over the consulship in a more permanent capacity. While Xiamen had potential as a tea trade port in 1853, Ningbo had no such prospects, and therefore, Bradley would not be able to collect any consular fees. The consul's salary "amount[ed] to scarcely more than half the cost of an economical subsistence, in the best times, at either of the ports of China," he wrote to William Learned Marcy, the US Secretary of State (1853-1857).[31]

Yet Ningbo—closer to the action of the Taiping Civil War—offered more excitement than Xiamen. Consul Charles William Bradley not only had to worry about his salary and the low volume of US trade, but he was also concerned about the Taiping Civil War and "the discomforts and dangers, which necessarily attend the progress of a civil war in the midst of a faithless and cruel people."[32] An incredibly bloody conflict that would cause 20 million deaths, the Taiping Civil War was the most destructive civil war in history. At first, American missionaries hoped that Hong Xiuquan's movement signaled that many Chinese would convert to Christianity more quickly than they had anticipated under the Qing, but after meeting with Hong Xiuquan, they concluded that he was deluded. Foreign governments disliked the instability that the war caused and feared that the strident anti-opium stance of the Taiping would not be in

[31] Although Marcy had served as Secretary of War for President James K. Polk from 1845 to 1849, he had little foreign policy experience when he became Secretary of State and had never traveled outside of the United States. However, he would go on as Secretary of State to handle several key foreign affairs, including negotiating the 1853 Gadsden Purchase with Mexico and attending to Commodore Perry's naval and trade negotiations with Japan. Charles William Bradley to William L. Marcy, 26 October 1853, *Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Ningpo, China, 1853-1896.*

[32] Charles William Bradley to William L. Marcy, 17 February 1854, *Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Ningpo, China, 1853-1896.*

their best interests.[33] Although most of the fighting occurred in the provinces of Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Anhui, Jiangxi, and Hubei, battles also took place in nearly all other provinces. Even isolated foreign communities felt the repercussions as the civil war displaced populations and disrupted trading networks.

In a letter to the Secretary of State just two months after his appointment to Ningbo, Bradley resigned his post. He cited the troubles caused by uprisings and the fact that he had not been given a salary early to cover moving costs, a benefit given to him as consul at Xiamen.[34] Not wanting to lose an experienced employee, the State Department agreed to compensate him from the date of his commission in order to cover the costs of travel to China.[35] The troubles of salary, the Taiping Civil War, and the difficulty in procuring passage to China again, still made Bradley reconsider his assignment to Ningbo, and he requested a vacant consular position in Singapore instead.[36] Daniel Jerome MacGowan, a Baptist medical missionary, ran the Ningbo consulate in the interim.[37]

Daniel J. MacGowan, an active member of the foreign intellectual community and regular contributor to English-language newspapers *The Chinese Repository* and *The North China Herald*, was an astute observer. Unlike the recalcitrant Charles William Bradley, he reported on the conditions of US-China relations at the port of Ningbo in his dispatches to the State Department. Although there was not much trade carried out at that port in the first ten years after opening, MacGowan relayed information about trade developments and other matters that

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[33] Gordon H. Chang, *Fateful Ties: A History of America's Preoccupation with China* (Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press, 2015), 61-63.
[34] Charles William Bradley to William L. Marcy, 29 November 1853, *Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Ningpo, China, 1853-1896.*
[35] Charles William Bradley to William L. Marcy, 6 December 1853, *Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Ningpo, China, 1853-1896.*
[36] Charles William Bradley to William L. Marcy, 17 February1854, *Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Ningpo, China, 1853-1896.*
[37] On October 8, 1854, Bradley arrived in Singapore to assume the consulship. Charles William Bradley to William L. Marcy, 17 October 1854, *Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Singapore, Straits Settlements, 1833-1906.*

concerned the consulate. During his year overseeing consular affairs, he witnessed an increase in the "coasting trade," the carrying of goods between Chinese ports, a business that the British and Portuguese had dominated up to that point. Runaway sailors also started to arrive in Ningbo "giving much annoyance to the native & to the local authorities."[38] For instance, MacGowan reported an incident that occurred shortly after his tenure as acting consul in *The North China Herald*:

> A tailor was stabbed the other day in two places by an American sailor. The wounded man applied to an American for relief, who at once requested the tautai [*daotai*] to apprehend the author of the outrage and send him to Shanghai for trial. On finding himself in the hands of a band of Chinese soldiers, the sailor satisfied the complainant by paying damages. Thus it may be seen that although there is no United States' Consul at this port any who suffer at the hands of Americans can obtain redress.[39]

When smaller ports like Ningbo did not have consular representation, Qing officials like the *daotai* had to send American offenders to the nearest consular court, in this case, Shanghai. Since he was fluent in Chinese, he felt compelled to translate correspondence with Qing officials as acting consul. This time-intensive work so occupied his time that MacGowan resigned, and he returned to the missionary work that had brought him to Ningbo in the first place.[40]

During the early years of the five-treaty-port era, Ningbo cycled through several temporary and wayward consular workers, none of them merchants. Charles William Bradley, disgusted with the lack of financial support from the US government and the turmoil caused by the uprisings of the mid-nineteenth century, sought greener pastures in Singapore. Russell & Co. agent Henry Wolcott had closer ties to the booming port of Shanghai than to the comparatively insignificant amount of trade in Ningbo. The consular workers with the closest connection to

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[38] Daniel J. MacGowan to William L. Marcy, 22 June 1855, *Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Ningpo, China, 1853-1896.*
[39] Daniel J. MacGowan, "Ningpo: From Dr. MacGowan's Chinese Paper, Assault by an American," *The North China Herald*, 21 July 1855, 204.
[40] Ibid.

Ningbo, Divie Bethune McCartee and Daniel J. MacGowan, filled in when needed, but were primarily interested in their missionary work. Bradley would return to Ningbo as consul in 1857, but his interests in diplomatic endeavors frequently took him away from his post until he resigned again in 1860.[41] Ningbo failed to attract many merchants, who instead took a keen interest in the tea- and silk-producing areas near Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Fuzhou.

Fuzhou

Fuzhou was a center of Chinese coastal and regional trade between mainland China, Taiwan, and the Ryukyu Islands. As the provincial capital of Fujian, Fuzhou was home to the governor general of Fujian and Zhejiang provinces, a garrison of Manchu bannermen, and a traditional center of learning.[42] Although treaties opened Fuzhou to foreigners in 1842, the port did not become a center of foreign trade until 1853. During its first few years as a treaty port, Fuzhou attracted more missionaries than traders. Because of its moderate population of American missionaries, Fuzhou required US government intervention on a regular basis, but consuls did not play a significant role at the port until the mid-1850s. In Fuzhou, missionary land disputes highlighted a Chinese acceptance of commercial and diplomatic activity in the city as opposed to missionary activity. Crises over land ownership forced American missionaries, consuls, and the US commissioner to China to recognize that a consistent consular presence was needed to manage such conflicts. Also in the post-First Opium War period, many Americans believed that gunboat diplomacy was the best method for treaty enforcement despite the dearth of American vessels along the China coast. Once missionaries and consuls realized that the US government and navy were ignoring their requests for naval support, they had no choice but to

[41] Griffin, *Clippers and Consuls*, 297-300.
[42] Ellsworth C. Carlson, *The Foochow Missionaries, 1847-1880* (Cambridge, MA: East Asian Research Center, Harvard University, 1974), 3.

accept the Qing government's proposed compromise of an alternate land plot for the missionaries.

In 1842, the Qing government balked at making Fuzhou a treaty port and discouraged trade there for a decade after opening to foreigners. An imperial edict forbade the inclusion of Fuzhou as a treaty port, but the British had successfully negotiated to open it because of its proximity to tea-producing regions. Initially, Qing officials forbade Chinese merchants from selling teas at the port, so only a small number of opium traders and missionaries resided there.[43] Methodist Episcopal missionary Robert S. Maclay, a long-time resident of Fuzhou, wrote about his experiences in his book *Life Among the Chinese*. He reported that the Qing government finally relented in 1853 and encouraged foreign trade in Fuzhou when domestic uprisings cut off regular sources of revenue in Guangzhou. Hoping to recover their losses, local officials Governor General Wang Yide (王懿德) and Lieutenant Governor Lu encouraged the tea trade in Fuzhou.

Foreign traders were eager to gain unrestricted access to the Fuzhou tea trade. Maclay wrote: "[Fuzhou's] proximity to the black tea-producing districts enables the foreign merchant to purchase his teas here at a lower price than at any other port in China, and he is able also at the opening of each season to lay down the new teas in London, New York, or elsewhere, about a month in advance of shipments from any other port in China."[44] Missionary Lyman B. Peet produced updates about the mission in Fuzhou, published by *The Missionary Herald*, the publication of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. He reported that in 1854, twelve major firms had established agencies in Fuzhou and had exported 30,000,000

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[43] Ibid.

[44] Robert S. Maclay also carried out mission work in Japan and briefly Korea in the 1870s and 1880s. R. S. Maclay, *Life Among the Chinese with Characteristic Sketches and Incidents of Missionary Operations and Prospects in China* (New York: Carlton & Porter, 1861), 151.

pounds of tea, employing not only foreign merchants but also Chinese women and children who picked the leaves and men who carried the tea crates from the warehouses to the ships. The tea trade also created a market for renting land and buildings to foreigners and their businesses. "This has created quite a stir. It puts money into the pockets of some, deprives others of their homes, and still furnishes profitable employment to large numbers of others, in tearing down and building up anew."[45] Peet himself viewed the increased economic activity as providing more opportunities for discussing Christianity with the people of Fuzhou.

Before this flurry of activity, missionaries constituted the main group of foreigners in Fuzhou. The Second Great Awakening (1790-1840), although no longer at its peak, drove American Protestants to evangelize around the world, and they saw the opening of China as an opportunity to access an expanding mission field. Missionaries were drawn to Fuzhou as a mission site because it was the capital of the Fujian province and a center of culture and commerce. Ships visited Fuzhou on a regular basis, so the mission could maintain direct communication with the church in the United States. The Min River provided access to the interior of China.[46] Three Protestant mission societies established operations in Fuzhou in 1847: the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM), the Northern Methodists, and the Church Missionary Society (CMS).

Local Fuzhou people disputed foreign land ownership in a series of drawn-out incidents in the 1840s and 1850s. When traders arrived at the port, they did not arouse the suspicion and opposition of local people. However, when consuls and missionaries settled in areas beyond the harbor, they encountered resistance. George Tradescant Lay, the British consul to Fuzhou in 1844, faced great opposition when he sought to build the British Consulate in a temple on Wushi

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[45] Lyman B. Peet, "Fuh-chau: Letter from Mr. Peet," *The Missionary Herald, relating to China and the Chinese, 1851-1860, Volume 5* (Cleveland: 1915), 232.
[46] Ibid., 140, 154.

Mountain (乌石山), within the walls of the city.[47] Eventually, Lay acquired a building at a coveted location inside the city walls.[48] Two CMS missionaries, Robert David Jackson and William Welton, also attempted to rent land on Wushi Mountain. At first, they easily received permission from the magistrate, Xinglian (兴廉), to rent rooms at Shenguan Temple. Two days later, Xinglian retracted his permission. Historian Ellsworth Carlson speculated that Xinglian, who did not usually deal with foreigners, had mistakenly believed the missionaries were consular employees, and that he would not be setting a new precedent by allowing them to live on Wushi Mountain.

Students and gentry protested the residence of the missionaries in Shenguan Temple. They signed petitions, created placards and pamphlets, and wrote letters to officials opposing the missionaries. Lin Zexu, famous for his anti-opium campaign in Guangzhou, supposedly wrote or approved the public letter. The protesters argued that the treaty allowed foreigners to live and trade in port or harbor areas (港口 *gangkou*), but made no mention of areas within the walled portion of the city.[49] The English version had looser phrasing, allowing residence "at the cities and towns of Canton, Amoy, Foochowfoo [sic], Ningpo, and Shanghai," without any mention of specific parts of the cities.[50] Protesters also cited the part of the treaty concerning the feelings of the local people. For them, the Shenguan Temple was a public space, a place where scholars studied, and they believed that the priests did not have the right to rent the rooms in the temple to foreigners. Fujian Governor Xu Jiyu (徐繼畬) and Governor General Liu Yunke (劉韻珂)

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[47] Ellsworth, *The Foochow Missionaries*, 3.
[48] Coates, *The China Consuls*, 14-18.
[49] The term *gangkou* is also used in the U.S.-China Treaty of Wangxia (1844), "*Wangxia tianyue (望厦條約),*" *1844,* https://zh.wikisource.org/wiki/%E6%9C%9B%E5%BB%88%E6%A2%9D%E7%B4%84.
[50] Letter from Lyman Peet, October 21, 1850, *The Missionary Herald, relating to China and the Chinese, 1851-1860, Volume 5* (Cleveland: 1915), 129.
"Treaty of Nanking," August 29, 1842, https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Treaty_of_Nanking.

appealed to the missionaries using persuasion and then intimidation, denying repairs to Shenguan Temple, forbidding the priests from taking additional rent money, and threatening the missionaries' Chinese language instructors. The British consul and the missionaries supported the missionaries' residence inside the city walls as part of a broader effort to enforce the treaty in all five treaty ports. Eventually, the Chinese officials compromised, relocating the missionaries to a building closer to the British consulate, where foreigners had lived before, and about which the people of Fuzhou did not feel so strongly. Magistrate Xinglian lost his position due to his involvement in the matter, and both British and American missionaries saw the acquisition of property within the walls of Fuzhou as a victory.[51]

In 1851, American missionaries and Chinese officials grappled over another land dispute—this time *outside* the city walls. In what the Americans would refer to as the "White-Colder case," the pattern of foreign land troubles continued. Mr. and Mrs. James Colder and Mr. and Mrs. Isaac W. White acquired land adjacent to the main Methodist residential property in the suburb of Nantai. White and Colder claimed that they had the approval of the district magistrate to build on the property, but they had not yet received the magistrate's seal allowing construction. Believing that approval was imminent, White and Colder hired laborers to construct a house. However, on November 5, 1851, when the laborers arrived to start construction, neighbors had posted placards warning the workers that they should not begin until the magistrate had authorized construction. In response to the protest, the magistrate retracted his unofficial authorization of the building. Neighbors continued to oppose building on the lot, arguing that having more foreigners in the neighborhood would cause disturbances. They believed that Chinese residents would move away, and the "good luck" (likely *feng shui*) of the

[51] Carlson, *The Foochow Missionaries*, 21-32.

neighborhood would suffer.[52] The claim concerning *feng shui* had some merit. On a corner of the lot, there was a small temple or altar, making it an inappropriate place for the missionaries to live. Ellsworth Carlson suggested a more mundane explanation for the neighbors' opposition. The missionaries had a choice between two lots. The owner of the lot they did not choose to rent from became one of the protest leaders, so at least part of the dispute may have stemmed from the scorned landlord. White and Colder attempted to bribe the protesters, as Chinese officials had recommended. Meanwhile, the missionaries and officials continued to negotiate with the magistrate, but did not receive official approval for the building. At one point, when negotiations appeared to be going well, White and Colder once more tried to build, but protesters again stopped them.[53]

Frustrated by the delays with Chinese officials, White and Colder turned to US government representatives in China. Fuzhou at that time did not have a permanent US consul, so Colder and White wrote instead to Peter Parker, the US *chargé d'affaires, ad interim*, and a former American medical missionary. Parker corresponded with the governor general of Guangdong and Guangxi provinces and commissioner of foreign affairs at Guangzhou, Xu Guangjin (徐廣縉), for over a year, and then with his successor, Ye Mingchen (葉名琛). Although both Xu and Ye promised to consider the matter, they never communicated anything about the matter to Parker or his successor, Humphrey Marshall. At this point, White and Colder requested that a vessel from the East India Squadron visit Fuzhou. On June 20, 1852, the *USS Plymouth* anchored at Fuzhou, and the first lieutenant, J.T. Gillis, failed to persuade the Fuzhou magistrate. Chinese officials refused to bend despite threats of naval retaliation. As in the Wushi

52 *Feng shui* is used to orient buildings, particularly spiritually significant structures but also homes, in an auspicious manner.
53 Carlson, *The Foochow Missionaries,* 38-40.

Mountain case, they pointed to the opposition of local people as a major reason for denying foreign land ownership and usage.

By 1853, both White and Colder, the missionaries who had originally rented the land, had departed Fuzhou permanently, but the dispute continued. Reverend Robert Samuel Maclay had taken over the fight for the land.[54] Maclay, a recent graduate of Dickinson College in Pennsylvania and ordained priest, had lived in Fuzhou since 1848.[55] The loss of the land annoyed the mission, which had carefully vetted and rented the plot. Maclay, the secretary and treasurer of the Mission, detailed its loss to the Fuzhou consulate in an itemized list including rent, building fees, the laborers' pay, additional money given to the landlord as a bribe to resolve the dispute, and the funds expended during the visit of the *USS Plymouth.* These costs amounted to $388.88.[56] The missionaries could not appeal to the local authorities, whom the landlord claimed, "will neither aid you nor constrain us." Maclay and the other missionaries encountered this attitude when they met with Chinese officials. He summarized the conflict:

> Our whole proceeding in renting & proposing to occupy the land in question has been so strictly within the provisions of the Treaty & the policy of the Chinese Authorities in this city has been so manifestly opposed to the Treaty that the question in the minds of the Chinese here resolves itself into this—Has the United States Government the power & disposition to secure to its citizens residing at Fuh Chau [Fuzhou], the rights & privileges guaranteed to them by the Treaty? [57]

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[54] Dr. Peter Parker played a key role in early U.S.-China relations as a medical missionary and diplomat. Not only was he the first Protestant medical missionary to China, but he also opened a hospital in Guangzhou. Because of his proficiency in Chinese, he participated in several important diplomatic endeavors including acting as secretary to Caleb Cushing during the negotiations the Treaty of Wangxia, the secretary of the US Legation (1845), and US Commissioner and Minister to China (1855-1857). See Edward Hose Gulick's *Peter Parker and the Opening of China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973) and Jonathan Spence, *To change China: Western advisors in China, 1620-1960* (Boston: Little, 1973).

[55] "Robert Samuel Maclay (1824-1907)," *Dickinson College Archives and Special Collections*, 2015, http://archives.dickinson.edu/people/robert-samuel-maclay-1824-1907; David Shavit, *The United States in Asia: A Historical Dictionary* (New York: Greenword Publishing Group, 1990), 326-327.

[56] Robert Samuel Maclay to Dr. Peter Parker, 3 January 1853, *Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Foochow, China, 1849-1906;* Shavit, *The United States in Asia*, 326-327.

[57] Ibid.

Maclay worried that if the Americans did not insist upon the stipulations of the treaty, that they would be unable to build elsewhere and that it could end with the removal of Americans from Fuzhou. He argued that the case, more than a simple land dispute, represented the standing of Americans in Fuzhou.[58] Perhaps he truly feared for the place Americans had carved out in the city, but his mission also had a great deal at stake.

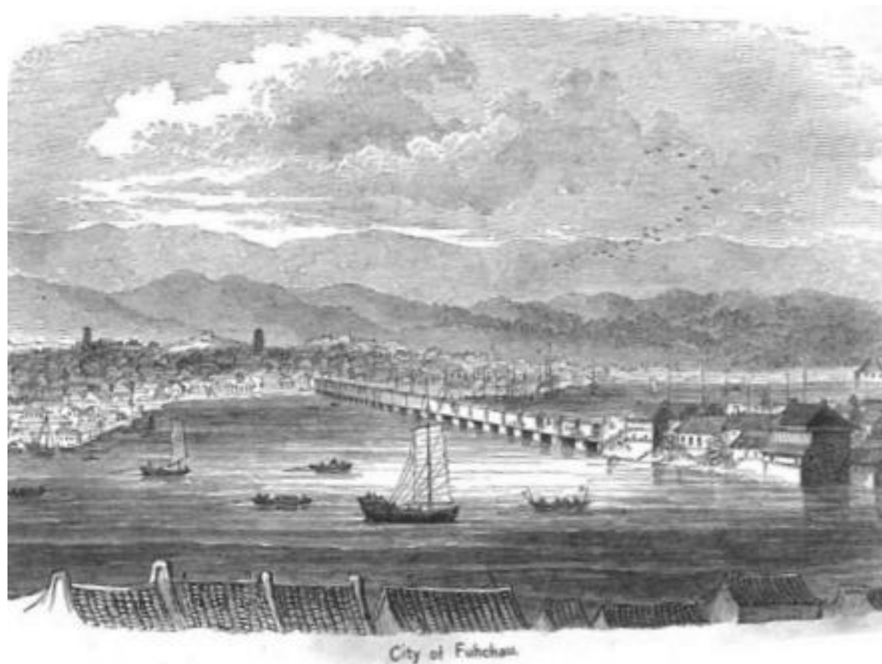

Figure 4.1: An image of Fuzhou from Rev. Robert Samuel Maclay's 1861 book *Life Among the Chinese: With Characteristic Sketches and Incidents of Missionary Operations and*

In his book *Life Among the Chinese* (1861), in a chapter titled "Buildings, Land-Tenure, Etc.," Maclay begrudged the work involved in acquiring land and building permissions in Fuzhou. "Intimately connected with the practical operation of a Christian mission in heathen lands, there is a large amount of what may be called civil engineering. The work of evangelizing the heathen would be much simplified, both in theory and practice, if the missionary could

[58] Ibid.

devote himself exclusively to preaching the Gospel."[59] Maclay's disdain for the topic reflected his negative experience managing the White-Colder case. He explained for his readers the process of obtaining land in Fuzhou as a foreigner. Unlike Guangzhou and Shanghai, the Chinese government did not set aside any land specifically for foreigners, so Maclay and others rented land where they could.[60] American consuls acted as notaries for foreign leases of land in Fuzhou, and the Chinese government required that 8% of the purchase be taken as tax when the land purchased had buildings.[61] The dispute happened during the period when foreigners and Chinese were both testing the boundaries of the treaty. Americans could live in Fuzhou, but the details of that concession had to be worked out in a manner that considered residents' resistance to living near foreigners, *feng shui,* and American desires to own land in Fuzhou and build upon it.

The US federal government did little to resolve such disputes, and American missionaries and diplomats stationed in China felt powerless to resolve the case. Because of the great distance from China and the lack of Chinese diplomatic ties in Washington, the State Department could do little beyond offering advice to diplomats and consuls, which would arrive months after requested. And although American warships of the East India Squadron provided some military support to the American communities in China, it was focusing its efforts in Japan in the early 1850s. Americans had real doubts about their ability to resolve the White-Colder case on their own. At the time of writing, Maclay and his fellow missionaries remained in a state of limbo: "We have had no communications whatever from the Chinese officers here, since I last wrote

[59] Maclay, *Life Among the Chinese*, 7-8, 158.
[60] Ibid., 163.
[61] Ibid., 166-167.

you, & our circumstances in regard to building remain but the same as they were then. Our situation is very trying: still we wait in hope."[62]

First Dwelling-House built by the Mission.

Figure 4.2: A drawing from Rev. Robert Samuel Maclay's book *Life Among the Chinese* (1861) of one of the first Mission buildings in Fuzhou.

On November 5, 1854, the new US consul, Caleb Jones, arrived at Fuzhou. The presence of a local US consul, a representative of the US government who acted as an advocate of commerce, protector of American citizens, and quasi-diplomat, did little to change the situation. Like the missionaries in Fuzhou, he felt that exerting force using the East India Squadron presented the best hope for enforcing the treaty. Jones wrote: "Nothing in my judgment is so well calculated, to secure justice from the authorities here, as the frequent visits of our ships of war. They should visit this port, hereafter as often as possible, even if they only remain a short

[62] Robert Samuel Maclay to J.P. Durbin, 7 October 1853, *Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Foochow, China, 1849-1906.*

time."[63] The missionaries appreciated his position on the matter and praised his efforts. Lyman Peet positively reported about Jones in *The Missionary Herald*: "In Caleb Jones, Esq., United States Consul, we find a warm-hearted and sympathizing friend and countryman, and one who has so performed the duties of his station hitherto as to secure for himself the respect and esteem of all classes, both native and foreigners."[64] The missionaries found a sympathetic ally in Jones.

On January 5, 1855, Caleb Jones claimed that he had succeeded in resolving the land lease issue for all American citizens, including the Methodist Episcopal Church missionaries, but he did not go into detail about how he accomplished that end.[65] Ellsworth Carlson, historian of the Fuzhou missionaries, attributed the resolution of the White-Colder case not to Jones but to a May 1854 visit from US commissioner Robert M. McLane, who reasoned with the missionaries. McLane claimed: "[I] satisfied these gentlemen, that this difficulty was not one in the power of their government to adjust."[66] Following this discussion, they gave up the disputed site and chose another location. Despite the constant appeals of Maclay and the other missionaries for US government intervention, particularly in the form of naval intimidation, the US commissioner ultimately told them there was nothing to be done, underlining American powerlessness to enforce the treaty without military resources and in the face of popular opposition in China.

With the land dispute dismissed, Jones recognized that other forms of anti-foreigner sentiment persisted in Fuzhou.

> Such is the feeling against foreigners here at present, that insults to them in the streets are of frequent occurrence. A few days since a China-man, grossly insulted Mrs. Jones, by deliberately spitting upon her, amid the jeers and laughter of the crowd around. Such a

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[63] Ibid.
[64] Lyman B. Peet, "Fuh-chau: Letter from Mr. Peet," *The Missionary Herald, relating to China and the Chinese, 1851-1860, Volume 5* (Cleveland: 1915), 232.
[65] Caleb Jones to William L. Marcy, 9 January 1855, *Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Foochow, China, 1849-1906.*
[66] No. 5, Robert M. McLane to William L. Marcy, 21 May 1854, *Despatches from U.S. Ministers to China, 1843-1906.*

> state of things is intolerable. When my own family are not protected from insult, one can scarcely expect, other treaty stipulations to be respected.[67]

The crowd treated Jones and his family the same way the people of Guangzhou had treated foreigners following the First Opium War—a time and place of intense anti-foreign sentiment. Jones' prediction about the danger to treaty stipulations turned out to be prescient.

Other incidents demonstrated the ineffectiveness of American naval power when it infrequently was present in Fuzhou. On November 15, 1855, Governor General Wang Yide announced increased duties on tea exports, to which foreigners immediately objected as counter to the treaty. Jones and the British consul Walter Henry Medhurst immediately sent a protest signed by all foreign merchants at Fuzhou to Wang.[68] When his own efforts failed, Jones called for increased naval visits to compel Chinese cooperation. However, American warships visited the port infrequently and often for short periods of time, rendering the threat of naval force less effective. One ship, the *USS Vandalia,* commanded by Commander John Pope, visited Fuzhou for three weeks beginning on October 18, 1855. While Pope and Jones met with local officials, two officers of the *Vandalia*, the gunner and the boatswain, went ashore to arrest deserters from an American ship, and a large group of Chinese men brutally attacked the officers. When Jones called for the seizure and punishment of the offenders, the Chinese authorities promised they would do so quickly. Jones attributed the quick response of the Chinese to the presence of the *Vandalia*:

> I am confident that the visit of the "Vandalia" will have a very beneficial effect, and I trust that we shall be favored by such visits more frequently in future. The large American interest here, imperatively demands a ship of war occasionally and the effect upon the Authorities is of the greatest importance.[69]

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[67] Ibid.
[68] Caleb Jones to William L. Marcy, 15 November 1855, *Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Foochow, China, 1849-1906.*
[69] Caleb Jones to William L. Marcy, 16 November 1855, *Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Foochow, China, 1849-1906.*

Jones presumed that the warship had an impact, but it could have easily been that in this case, the Chinese authorities agreed that the attackers were at fault. Yet they did not act on their promise to punish the Chinese men who attacked the *Vandalia*'s officers.

Jones's hopes for continued Chinese cooperation and communication did not come to fruition, and Fuzhou officials ignored his letters and threats, revealing the poor state of US-China relations in Fuzhou. He had written to the prefect of Fuzhou on many occasions, "I regret to say that I consider my communications, which have been respectful in character, courteous in language; & urgent in importance, have been treated by you & your predecessor in office, with cool indifference, if not, with perfect contempt."[70] Jones demanded the immediate arrest of the attackers and responses to his letters. If the Chinese again refused or ignored these demands, Jones threatened to stop the payment of duties—a realistic, actionable threat—and request American warships to visit Fuzhou and enforce the treaty—a threat unlikely to be carried out.[71] US consuls collected duties and then handed part of them over to Chinese officials to help pay for the administration of the port. Frustrated with the lack of communication, Jones complained that there had been three different acting prefects in Fuzhou in the previous three months, all serving for short periods, which likely accounted for the inconsistent communication.[72]

Prefects and other Chinese officials had been ignoring Jones amidst administrative turnover, but they did not reserve this treatment for the US consul. British consul Walter Henry Medhurst, who had grown up in China the son of a prominent missionary, shared his frustration

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[70] Caleb Jones to Viceroy [Governor-General] of Fuzhou, 5 December 1855, *Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Foochow, China, 1849-1906.*
[71] Ibid. This coercive practice called back to the eighteenth-century dealings of the English East India Company at Guangzhou, where both Chinese and foreigners threatened the "stoppage of trade" in exchange for their demands. John K. Fairbank, *Trade and Diplomacy on the China Coast: The Opening of the Treaty Ports, 1842-1854* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953), 398.
[72] Caleb Jones to William L. Marcy, 8 January 1856, *Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Foochow, China, 1849-1906.*

with Jones. Medhurst showed Jones a letter he had written to the British government requesting military reinforcement for the treaty. Jones noted that "if this is done, it will have a beneficial effect upon American interest."[73] Although Americans and British competed for trade with the Chinese in Fuzhou, that Medhurst shared information about military plans and treaty enforcement revealed a strain of cooperation running through the US-British relationship in China, where diplomatic successes benefited Americans and Europeans alike.

The provincial capital and commercial center of Fuzhou with its burgeoning tea trade attracted American merchants and missionaries in the nineteenth century. While traders faced no resistance from local people, consuls and missionaries encountered bitter opposition when they sought to settle in Fuzhou. Qing authorities and local Chinese residents did not oppose foreign commercial activities at the port, but resisted efforts of foreign diplomats and missionaries to live amongst them. Americans rented land and constructed residences, which triggered entrenched land disputes involving multiple stakeholders—missionaries, US consuls and diplomats, local Fuzhou people, and Chinese authorities such as Wang Yide. During this dispute, both the US and Qing governments failed to staff key positions meant to handle foreign matters, protracting conflicts and frustrating both sides in the process. Appeals to Peter Parker, the US government representative in Guangzhou, proved ineffectual as did the efforts of US consul Caleb Jones, who mistakenly saw the thinly-spread East India Squadron as the solution to treaty enforcement. His failure to effectively communicate with Chinese officials signaled a deterioration of treaty implementation at Fuzhou. Such failures pushed Americans to further pursue military power as a "solution" to poor US-China relations, and shared frustrations aligned them with their commercial rivals, the British. In Shanghai, through a series of dramatic incidents US consuls

[73] C. Alexander Harris, "Sir Walter Henry Medhurst," in *Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. Sidney Lee (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1909), 203; Caleb Jones to William L. Marcy, 8 January 1855, *Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Foochow, China, 1849-1906.*

would encounter a full constellation of consular concerns—a heavy workload, an understaffed consulate, minimal resources, accusations of abuses of power, encounters with Taiping Civil War soldiers, obstacles to treaty enforcement, and a necessary alliance with the British.

Shanghai

Unlike the other treaty ports, Shanghai had almost immediately increased traffic after opening to foreign trade. Located on the Yangzi River, Shanghai had more direct access to important Chinese tea and silk markets, which made the port attractive to foreign merchants. Although Shanghailanders (the British and Americans who lived in Shanghai) perpetuated the myth that the city was a simple "fishing village" that only flourished with foreign settlement, Shanghai had served as a major center for trade between China and Southeast Asia for centuries and was an important commercial port in the Yangzi region.[74] Jeffrey Wasserstrom noted that the British would not have been interested in making Shanghai a treaty port if it were a mere "fishing village" and must have recognized its value as a center of trade on the China coast.[75] Although Shanghai had a rich history prior to foreign involvement, the Treaty of Nanjing marked a turning point in Shanghai's development. British, Americans, and French quickly built up robust infrastructure for their small communities of merchants and missionaries. British Shanghailanders established warehouses, a consulate, and other buildings along the Huangpu River. Americans lived in the British settlement, while the French established a separate

[74]Linda Cooke Johnson, *Shanghai: From Market Town to Treaty Port, 1074-1858* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1995), 2-5.

[75] The German missionary Karl Gützlaff, who acted as an interpreter for the British during the First Opium War, likely helped put Shanghai on the list of treaty ports by extolling Shanghai's potential in his writings, including a narrative of a voyage that had a rare stop at Shanghai: *Journal of Three Voyages along the Coast of China in 1831, 1832 and 1833, with notices of Siam, Corea, and the Loo-Choo Islands* (1834). Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom, *Global Shanghai, 1850-2010: A history in fragments* (London and New York: Routledge, 2009), 1-4.

settlement. Around 1850 Shanghai had roughly 200 foreign residents. In comparison, the Chinese population numbered at around more than a third to just over one half of a million.[76]

Shanghai American Consul John N. Alsop Griswold, a member of a prominent Connecticut merchant and industrialist family, first came to China as an agent of the American firm of N. L. and G. Griswold and then headed Russell & Co.'s Shanghai branch and acted as US consul.[77] He ran the consular court, addressed the needs of destitute sailors who found themselves stranded at the port, and—for the pride of the consulate—obtained a flag staff to fly the American flag.[78] Because he could not write or speak Chinese, he also employed an interpreter to communicate with local officials.[79] All of these duties were typical for a mid-nineteenth century consul in China, but Shanghai's commercial success and domestic significance created additional work for Shanghai consuls.

Commercial activity not only led to increased foreign settlement but also increased the number of consular court cases and a heavier workload for Griswold. Unruly sailors especially plagued Griswold, who lamented the "disorganized" state of crews that captains haphazardly put together in California and then set loose in Shanghai. Griswold admitted that he did not have the manpower necessary to execute US law to prevent brawls and punish crimes that Americans committed against Chinese locals. Under the Treaty of Wangxia, US consulates could request the assistance of Chinese authorities in returning deserters and implementing other laws of the United States, but Griswold believed that Chinese aid was insufficient.[80] Therefore, he called for the appointment of an experienced US marshal, who could deal with deserters, destitute sailors,

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[76] Ibid., 28.

[77] Downs, "Fair Game: Exploitive Role-Myths and the American Opium Trade," 148; Fairbank, *Trade and Diplomacy on the China* Coast, 394.

[78] John N. Alsop Griswold to John M. Clayton, 3 July 1849, *Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Shanghai, 1847-1906.*

[79] John N. Alsop Griswold to John M. Clayton, 25 March 1850, *Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Shanghai, 1847-1906.*

[80] This exemption from the jurisdiction of local law in China, known as extraterritoriality, features in Eileen Scully's *Bargaining with the State from Afar.*

and others who violated American law in China. For two years, Thomas N. Johnson, fulfilled the duties of marshal, providing accommodations for prisoners for the annual salary of $1,000.[81]

All consuls in China complained about expenses and hoped that American warships would visit their ports to help enforce the treaty, but Shanghai consuls expressed the most discontent with their work. Upon hearing that the State Department was replacing John N. Alsop Griswold with Robert C. Murphy in October 1853, the vice consul and acting consul Edward Cunningham wrote to the Secretary of State. Embittered by the duties of the office, the disproportionate pay, and perturbed by the sudden replacement of Griswold, Cunningham took the opportunity to criticize the consular system. Consuls received $1,000 per year for judicial duties, and they could hope to receive fees of about $1,400 per year to pay for additional costs, such as the employment of vital staff members like a consular clerk, linguist and interpreter, as well as stationery and New Year gifts for Chinese officials. However, Cunningham estimated those expenses would exceed allocated funds by $2,200, requiring the consul to pay out of pocket and hope for reimbursement. Consuls were also expected to pay for their own housing, which would cost anywhere from $2,000 to 6,000.

By not paying consuls sufficient salaries or funds to cover basic consulate expenses, the State Department forced consuls to live in poverty or seek out additional sources of income, often commercial business. Yet consular work placed great demands on the time and energy of Shanghai consuls. This made it unlikely that they would have the time to oversee their own businesses. Cunningham protested this demanding situation:

No emolument of office would have induced either of those who have officiated for the

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[81] John N. Alsop Griswold to Daniel Webster, 1 December 1851, *Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Shanghai, 1847-1906*; Edward Cunningham to Thomas N. Johnson, September 15, 1853, *Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Shanghai, 1847-1906*; "Letter from the Secretary of State, asking an appropriation for the compensation of J.P. Cook, for services as United States marshal," House of Representatives, 35th Cong., 1st Sess., Ex. Doc. No. 115, 1858.

> last 4 years to undergo the toil and fatigue which the office has occasioned nor has there been other inducement than the desire to be of service to the country they represented, as there is no foundation, whatever in the generally received supposition that the office is of the least Mercantile value to the Merchant Consul who may hold it.[82]

Cunningham was speaking, of course, of himself. He had been conducting much of the business of the consulate since June 1851 while Griswold went on sick leave and resented the workload. Cunningham also found consular work to be thankless since some merchants assumed that he and other consuls used their positions for personal gain.[83]

Cunningham may have found the position of vice consul especially trying when he was accused of abusing his power in an 1852 mercantile dispute. This dispute, which it seems he did not report to the State Department, opened Cunningham and the office of American consul to criticism in the Shanghai merchant community. In August 1852, a tea purveyor from the interior possessed 2,089 packages of green tea, which he wished to sell. These packages, referred to as the "Yik-heang chop," were sold by two different Chinese brokers to two different buyers, one by the broker Lengu to the British firm Sykes, Schwabe & Co. on August 11. Cunningham claimed that Russell & Co. had purchased the teas from another broker named Kenkee on August 8—a date that Sykes, Schwabe & Co. disputed. On August 25, 1852, 500 packages of the Yik-heang chop arrived in Shanghai and were stored at a Chinese customhouse. By this point, both firms realized the teas were in dispute, and Sykes, Schwabe & Co. had applied to local Chinese authorities to resolve the matter since it revolved around the two Chinese brokers. However, at 2 am the night after the first boatload of tea arrived in Shanghai, to prevent the Chinese authorities from holding the tea while they resolved the matter, Cunningham sent two of the firm's clerks, accompanied with armed servants, to seize the tea. Since Russell & Co. paid a higher price for

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[82] Edward Cunningham to the Secretary of State, 24 October 1853, *Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Shanghai, 1847-1906.*
[83] Ibid.

the tea, it may not have been the original purchaser of the tea. Yet Cunningham argued that his company's claim was stronger since it not only had the signature of the broker but also the signature of the owner of the tea. The two firms disagreed over whether the signature of the tea owner was standard practice in Shanghai or not.[84] Only after Russell & Co. had already shipped the tea out of Shanghai did the firm agreed to arbitration to settle the matter. Over the course of three weeks, the English language Shanghai newspaper *The North China Herald* covered the tea incident, primarily through strongly-worded letters to the editor by representatives of the two firms and anonymous supporters.

The first letter to the editor, submitted under the *nom de plume* "Vigilance Committee," denounced Cunningham's abuse of consular power in the dispute.

> An expedition was started from Messrs. Russell & Co.'s premises, headed by two clerks of that firm and backed up by a large number of Canton coolies. This party, carrying with them the prestige of Consular rank and influence which is well known to be very great with the Northern Chinese, succeeded in driving away the previous party, and carried off the tea in triumph to Messrs. Russell & Co.'s premises.[85]

"Vigilance Committee" derided the conduct of Cunningham and Russell & Co. The anonymous writer suggested that others in the Shanghai mercantile community felt the same way: "There is also little difference of opinion as to the character of such a lawless and unmercantile proceeding. We have heard but one voice on this matter, whether English or American, and that is a voice of indignation and disgust."[86] While it is not possible to tell from one letter alone whether this was the case, a week later the newspaper acknowledged the claim as having some

[84] Sykes, Schwabe & Co. [George S. Spreckly], "Letter to the Editor," *The North China Herald*, September 11, 1852; Edward Cunningham, "Letter to the Editor," *The North China Herald*, September 18, 1852, 26.
[85] "Vigilance Committee," "Letter to the Editor," *The North China Herald*, September 4, 1852, 19.
[86] Ibid.

merit: “The remarks…were certainly severe, but we have yet to learn that this community considers them unjust.”[87]

The “Vigilance Committee” not only denounced Cunningham’s specific actions as an abuse of his judiciary power as acting vice consul, he also criticized the general practice of having acting merchants serve as consuls.

> There are some anomalies connected with this office which have long engaged the attention of foreigners in China. It is impossible to separate the interests of the merchant who holds the office from the dignity and impartiality which the office requires, more especially since law has been extended over Americans in China and the incumbent of the Consular seat is clothed with the sacred ermine. To appeal from the Consul merchant to the merchant Consul is an absurdity in a practical age.[88]

While American diplomats had intimated that there was a conflict in having active merchants fill consular positions, the tea dispute brought the thorny issue to light in one of the ports where Russell & Co. partners had been taking on the role of consul.

The next US consul Robert Murphy did not lead a mercantile house, and American residents appreciated the impartiality this supposedly would lend his decisions, particularly in the wake of Cunningham’s troubled tenure as acting consul. Murphy explained to Secretary of State Marcy the problem of using merchant-consuls: “The great need of an officer unconnected with trade has been forcibly exemplified in many instances during the troubles at this port, where questions have arisen involving principles of action which affect pecuniarily the interests of some, more than others, engaged in trade.”[89] Murphy was not a merchant. He had studied law and then worked for the Mexican Boundary Commission following the Mexican-American War before being appointed consul. Since he had come to Shanghai solely as a consul, he did not have an additional income to support himself. As a result, the government gave him a larger

[87] *The North China Herald*, September 11, 1852, 22.
[88] “Vigilance Committee,” “Letter to the Editor,” *The North China Herald*, September 4, 1852, 19.
[89] Robert C. Murphy to William L. Marcy, 4 March 1854, *Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Shanghai, 1847-1906.*

salary to cover his costs. During this time, Congress was becoming more aware of the needs of its consulates around the world and would soon pass legislation to transition to salaried-consul appointments.[90] European countries such as France had already made the transition from merchant-consuls to salaried consuls before 1800. For the US government, merchant-consuls provided an economical solution to protecting American interests and citizens abroad, but businessmen felt that the position gave consuls an unfair advantage.[91]

Soon after arriving in Shanghai the new consul Robert C. Murphy wrote to Secretary of State William L. Marcy, echoing many of his predecessors' concerns and made a compelling case for hiring a full-time interpreter. As consul, Murphy communicated daily with the *daotai*, or circuit intendant, who oversaw the waterways, grain tax and transport, salt production and sales, and—in the case of a circuit (*dao*) that included a treaty port—good relations with foreigners. China historian Leung Yuen-sang described the *daotai* during the second half of the nineteenth century as a "linkage man," who provided a "vital connection and channel of communication and interaction between two or more separate worlds or value systems and often works as a conflict manager" between "central and local diplomacy...between worlds of commerce and culture."[92] Consuls had to communicate with the *daotai* using Chinese, and the majority of Americans coming to China, excepting missionaries, did not usually learn Chinese fluently. In the mid-nineteenth century, many Americans perceived Chinese as a difficult language to learn.[93] Thus, the consulate required the services of an interpreter. Cunningham and Griswold employed a

[90] "Robert C. Murphy (1827-1888)," *The Civil War and Northwest Wisconsin*, accessed 5 April 2016, https://thecivilwarandnorthwestwisconsin.wordpress.com/the-soldiers/alphabetical-list-of-all-soldiers-from-northwest-wisconsin/robert-c-murphy/.
[91] De Goey, *Consuls and the Institutions of Global Capitalism, 1783-1914*, 8-9.
[92] Leung, *The Shanghai Taotai,* 3.
[93] A contributor to *The Chinese Repository*, an English-language periodical produced in Guangzhou, wrote in 1844: "It [Chinese] is a language uniquely difficult to acquire; and when acquired it proves to be the most imperfect, clumsy, and awkward of all the various instruments ever devised by man for the communication of thought." "Considerations on the language of communication between the Chinese and European governments," *The Chinese Repository*, 1 June 1844.

Chinese scholar or two at $600 per year each, but Murphy preferred hiring one of the local missionaries with Chinese skills who would cost more to employ, but with whom he could easily communicate.[94] Only two foreign institutions in China at the time emphasized learning Chinese—the British consular service and the Chinese Maritime Customs Service, whose British Inspector General from 1863 to 1911 believed that Chinese was necessary to work well with Chinese staff and to gain their approval.[95]

Besides common issues of salary and understaffing, Murphy had to manage the fallout of two violent encounters involving Americans and Chinese. In both cases, he relied heavily on military force over clear communication and diplomatic efforts with Qing officials, demonstrating a fundamental failure of the early formal US-China relationship. The Qing, generally unused to managing foreigners, were more concerned with stamping out the Taiping uprising. Americans and other foreigners had witnessed the success of force in opening China and extracting privileges and believed that force would also ensure that treaty privileges were respected. The consular records of these two events not only contain Murphy's reports on the incidents but also letters and documents written by naval officers involved and letters exchanged with other foreign consuls and Chinese officials in Shanghai. These documents show more cooperation between Americans and Europeans than with the Chinese. Ultimately, superficial resolutions to the two incidents would not result in any change in the US approach to China and treaty enforcement.

[94] Robert C. Murphy to William L. Marcy, 4 March 1854, *Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Shanghai, 1847-1906;* Chris Elder argues that locating a linguist competent in the local dialect was one of the main problems in opening business in Chinese treaty ports, citing riots between local people in Fuzhou with people from Guangzhou whom foreigners had brought to Fuzhou in order to act as interpreters. See Hsü Chi-Yü's (Xu Jiyu) account in Chris Elder, ed., *China's Treaty Ports: Half Love and Half Hate* (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1999), 12-14.
[95] Elder, *China's Treaty Ports,* 22, 86; Hans van de Ven, *Breaking with the Past: The Maritime Customs Service and the Global Origins of Modernity in China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 98-99.

The first incident began with the capture of a pilot boat—a small vessel meant to travel dangerous or congested waters. Captains unfamiliar with local waters hired pilots to navigate their vessels around treacherous spots. W.E. Ayers, an American, had purchased a pilot boat and received permission to display an American flag.[96] On March 6th, 1854, the pilot boat was traveling up Huangpu River to Shanghai with co-owner of the ship, Thomas Linklater—a British citizen and one of the first foreign pilots in Shanghai—at the helm.[97] The pilot boat drew near two Chinese imperial warships, the *Clown* and *Sir Herbert Compton*, which hailed the pilot boat, commanding it to stop.[98] The *Clown* fired upon the boat, forcing it to comply. Once the pilot boat anchored, Chinese imperial forces boarded, hauled down the US flag from its mast and threw it down the hatchway.[99] Seeing that Linklater was European, the men of the *Sir Herbert Compton* released him, but kept the six Chinese crewmembers prisoner aboard their vessel.[100] For the owners of the pilot boat and other Americans, the capture of the pilot boat and the disrespect of the American flag violated the treaty. Article XII of the Treaty of Wangxia allowed American vessels to travel and trade freely in the five treaty ports even when China was at war "full respect being paid to the neutrality of the flag of the United States."[101]

That evening when Ayers and Linklater, the boat's owners, informed Murphy of the incident, the US consul completely bypassed communication with local Chinese officials. Because of the perceived danger to the Chinese crew, he immediately contacted Captain Kelly of

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[96] Robert C. Murphy to William L. Marcy, 30 March 1854, *Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Shanghai, 1847-1906*.
[97] G. Lanning and S. Cooling, *The History of Shanghai* (Shanghai: Kelly and Walsh Limited, 1921), 380.
[98] Linklater's report in Robert C. Murphy to William L. Marcy, 30 March 1854, *Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Shanghai, 1847-1906.*
[99] Ayers' report in Robert C. Murphy to William L. Marcy, 30 March 1854, *Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Shanghai, 1847-1906.*
[100] Linklater's report in Robert C. Murphy to William L. Marcy, 30 March 1854, *Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Shanghai, 1847-1906*; Woo Taoutae [*daotai*] to Robert C. Murphy, 8 March 1854, *Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Shanghai, 1847-1906.*
[101] "Treaty of Peace, Amity, and Commerce, with tariff of duties, signed at Wang Hiya, (in the outskirts of Macao) July 3, 1844," https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Treaty_of_Wanghia.

the US sloop-of-war *Plymouth*, which happened to be at Shanghai, for assistance. Murphy sent W.E. Ayers with a letter explaining the situation: "Mr. Ayers fears that the lives of his men are in jeopardy, and therefore he feels that prompt action is absolutely necessary. I refer him to you for power to act, and if you can give him an armed boat to ascertain the exact state of affairs, it will perhaps be as well."[102] Upon receiving this note, Captain Kelly dispatched Lieutenant Guest with an armed boat and crew to the *Sir Herbert Compton.* Guest took the owners of the pilot boat with him: Ayers, Linklater, and Donaldson. They boarded the *Compton* and asked for the commanding officer to identify himself. A Portuguese man stepped forward, and Guest confronted him about the capture of the pilot boat crew, demanding their instant release. The Portuguese man claimed that in the absence of his commander he did not have the authority to release the prisoners or the boat.

Foreign mercenaries accounted for the international crew on the "Chinese" vessel named *Sir Herbert Compton*, one of the British vessels hired for the Yangzi River imperial fleet.[103] In 1853, in anticipation of Taiping rebels coming to the Yangzi Valley, *daotai* Wu Jianzhang engaged thirteen Portuguese lorchas (sailing vessels with Chinese junk rigs on a Portuguese or other European-style hull) and four American and British merchant ships, which he armed with guns. These ships formed the backbone of a Yangzi River flotilla. During the Taiping Civil War, both Qing officials and the Taiping acquired European and American boats, weapons, ammunition, and sailors in Hong Kong.[104]

Rather than waiting to pursue diplomacy to recover the pilot boat's crew, American naval officers took immediate action. When the Portuguese commander refused to release the

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[102] Robert C. Murphy to Captain John Kelly, 6 March 1854, *Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Shanghai, 1847-1906.*
[103] Notices in *The North China Herald* list the *Sir Herbert Compton* traveling to and from ports such as Bombay and Hong Kong, carrying opium and other goods. A notice on May 3, 1853, lists the 28-gun barque and the *Clown* as two of five vessels in in the Yangzi imperial fleet. "H.I.M.'s Fleet in the Yang-tsze," *North China Herald*, May 14, 1853, 164; "Shipping Intelligence," May 3, 1851, 160.
[104] Teng, "American China-Trade, American-Chinese Relations and the Taiping Rebellion," 93-117.

prisoners, Guest called his 20-man crew onto the *Compton*. They charged on board with cutlasses to cut loose the prisoners, who were tied to the main mast, and then returned to the *Plymouth*, barely escaping a violent conflict with the imperial forces.[105] With the crew in safety, US consul Robert Murphy wrote to *daotai* Wu Jianzhang to defend the American response: "The vessel is owned by a US citizen, was sailing under US colors, engaged upon the legitimate service for which it was bought, and has always been used, and under these circumstances was first fired into by the 'Clown.'"[106] Murphy viewed the crew's capture as a serious violation of the treaty, and he called for the punishment of the *Clown*'s crew to discourage similar events.

Daotai Wu believed that the pilot boat carried supplies intended for sale to rebels. The captain of the *Compton* reported that when his crew searched the pilot boat, they discovered shot in bags, which the pilot boat crew claimed they had used as ballast. Wu and the captain of the *Compton* suspected that rebels may have contracted the Americans to bring them the shot. Wu warned Murphy: "Give orders to all your Merchants not to give supplies to the Rebels on any account, as it is injurious to the peace of heaven."[107] If American merchants were bringing ammunition to rebels, they were violating the treaty. Article XXII of the Treaty of Wangxia protected American vessels *unless* they aided enemies of China.[108] Some Americans unabashedly took part in the arms trade during the Taiping Civil War. An 1855 report to the US Senate acknowledged that carrying arms on American vessels headed to China was a widespread practice:

> Such armament and freight are not unusual for vessels bound for the China seas; and vessels similarly equipped have heretofore been dispatched from this and other ports in

[105] Robert C. Murphy to Captain John Kelly, 6 March 1854, *Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Shanghai, 1847-1906.*
[106] Robert C. Murphy to Woo Taoutae [Wu *daotai*], 8 March 1854, *Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Shanghai, 1847-1906.*
[107] Woo Taoutae [Wu *daotai*] to Robert C. Murphy, 8 March 1854, *Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Shanghai, 1847-1906.*
[108] "Treaty of Peace, Amity, and Commerce, with tariff of duties, signed at Wang Hiya, (in the outskirts of Macao) July 3, 1844," https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Treaty_of_Wanghia.

> the United States, without suspicion or notice; and, apart from other circumstances, armament and guns in the China trade afford no cause to suspect any intended infraction of the neutrality or revenue laws, not any intended illegal or questionable employment.[109]

At the time of the pilot boat incident, Shanghai was under the control of the Small Swords Society, a political and military organization that supported the Taiping. The governor general had instructed Wu to stop all boats going in and out of the harbor to prevent supplies and ammunition from reaching Taiping and Small Swords rebels. Wu also told Murphy that he had communicated this in writing to the foreigners at Shanghai.[110]

Murphy refused Wu's explanation for detaining the American pilot boat and investigated his claims about the policy of searching vessels on the Yangzi. "It cannot be permitted for the Chinese Authorities to stop or molest the property of US citizens while under the protection of their flag. But any complaint against them must be lodged with me as the only officer known to the Treaty as having any jurisdiction over US citizens."[111] Murphy also distrusted Wu's claim that he had communicated the new policy regarding incoming and outgoing vessels, so he immediately contacted all of the European consuls and American merchants to check whether Wu had ever notified them of such a policy.[112] The French consul ad interim Benoît Edan, the Hamburg consul William Hogg, the Prussian consul D.O. King, and the Portuguese consul John Bowman all replied that they had not received notice of a blockade from the Chinese authorities. Rutherford Alcock, an experienced British consul who had served in Fuzhou and was then promoted to Shanghai, provided a more nuanced answer. *Daotai* Wu wrote to Alcock on November 21, 1853, intimating a kind of blockade. Alcock described the content of a translated,

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[109] United States Congress, *Senate Documents, Otherwise Publ. as Public Documents and Executive Documents: 14th Congress, 1st Session-48th Congress, 2nd Session and Special Session* (Washington: A.O.P. Nicholson, Senate Printer, 1856), 224.
[110] Ibid.
[111] Robert C. Murphy to Woo Taoutae [*daotai*], 8 March 1854, *Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Shanghai, 1847-1906.*
[112] Robert C. Murphy to Rutherford Alcock, B. Edan, D.O. King, J. Bowman, 14 March 1854, *Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Shanghai, 1847-1906.*

printed document: on account of military operations, all goods going to or coming from the interior would require passes. More importantly, Alcock cited a second official notice that stated when hailed by one of the Chinese warships, all boats would have to anchor. Finally, on December 26, Wu communicated that the Governor of Jiangsu had prohibited the sale of gunpowder to rebels and Chinese authorities would search vessels to confiscate munitions.[113] Responses from American merchants suggested that Wu had made proclamations but that other Chinese officials had not clearly enforced the orders.[114]

While Murphy communicated with other foreigners in Shanghai, he also pressed Wu to make reparations for "the gross insult offered to the US flag."[115] When Murphy received no response, he contacted Captain Kelly of the *Plymouth* to force the issue. The next day Captain Kelly went to the *Sir Herbert Compton* and demanded that they hoist the US flag at their fore-royal mast head and salute it with 21 guns. The commander of the *Compton* agreed, stating that the *daotai* had given him authority to make this and any other reparations needed. The crew of the *Compton* then saluted the US flag at noon on March 21. This ceremony satisfied the Americans that the Chinese crew had shown due respect to the US flag and rectified the situation.[116]

The conflict over the American pilot boat revealed the dysfunctional nature of diplomacy between Qing officials and Americans in Shanghai during a time of war. While *daotai* Wu had

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[113] Rutherford Alcock to Robert C. Murphy, 17 March 1854, *Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Shanghai, 1847-1906.*
[114] Smith Ring & Co. to Robert C. Murphy, 24 March 1854, *Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Shanghai, 1847-1906; The North China Herald*, 11 February 1854.
[115] Robert C. Murphy to Woo Taoutae [Wu *daotai*], 13 March 1854, *Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Shanghai, 1847-1906.*
[116] Captain John Kelly to Robert C. Murphy, 23 March 1854, *Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Shanghai, 1847-1906*; *The North China Herald*, 11 March 1854; *The North China Herald*, March 25, 1854, 134. The incident involving the *Sir Herbert Compton* received passing treatment in Robert Erwin Johnson, *Far China Station: The U.S. Navy in Asian Waters, 1800-1898* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1979), 73-74. Johnson presents the encounter briefly as part of a larger, mostly descriptive, chronological narrative of the U.S. Navy in Asia.

sent out a printed announcement about the new wartime policy of checking incoming and outgoing vessels, the Chinese officials failed to enforce the policy thoroughly by communicating it to the US consul and American merchants. The Americans saw the harsh response of the imperial Chinese forces to the pilot boat and its flag as excessive and offensive to the United States. American officials and merchants did not trust Qing officials to resolve the dispute in an acceptable, timely manner. Murphy and Kelly resolved the matter by completely bypassing peaceful communication with Wu and instead used naval force to recover the crew of the pilot boat. *Daotai* Wu felt that the Chinese warships and their crews had followed the correct procedures and suspected that the American pilot boat had violated the treaty by aiding rebels. Rather than addressing the root causes of the incident—poor communication between American and Qing officials and a failure to use diplomatic channels, an American tendency to pursue a military solution, and a serious investigation of the pilot boat's potential role in smuggling—Americans and Chinese were content with the superficial ceremony of saluting the American flag and promises to keep both sides in line.

Soon after the pilot boat incident, Americans, British, and Chinese clashed again when the Small Swords Society occupation put imperial forces and foreigners in close proximity. The pressures put on both Qing officials and the foreign community again resulted in hasty American action and miscommunications with Qing officials. On March 10, 1854, US consul Robert Murphy complained to *daotai* Wu about imperial Chinese soldiers encamped northwest of the foreign settlement. A missionary reported that Chinese imperial soldiers had entered his house and stole doors, fence, and other building materials.[117] Two weeks later "some Canton soldiers" from the camp destroyed the yard fence around the house of another American missionary and

[117] Robert C. Murphy to Woo Taoutae [Wu *daotai*], 10 March 1854, *Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Shanghai, 1847-1906.*

struck a woman.[118] Murphy continually wrote to *daotai* Wu about the altercations between the soldiers and American residents. On April 3, 1854, the situation escalated. British merchant James Bowman confronted four or five soldiers who stole building materials. The soldiers drew their swords, and Bowman fired his pistol striking one of the soldiers, eventually dispersing them. The officer of the guard conducted a search and found six armed men—three from Sichuan, two from Guangdong, and one from Hunan—whom he brought to the British Consulate. Consul Rutherford Alcock did not charge them with a crime but confiscated their weapons and set the Sichuan and Guangdong men free. One of James Bowman's employees recognized the sixth man from Hunan as one of the thieves. Alcock detained him, intending to turn him over to military officers at the camp. At that moment, soldiers appeared at the north and west edge of the foreign settlement's race course waving flags, brandishing spears, and discharging firearms, and members of the foreign community reported confrontations with the soldiers.[119] British and American marines from vessels stationed at Shanghai headed to the scene to find roughly thirty to forty imperial soldiers. The foreign marines and the imperial soldiers fought until nightfall.[120]

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[118] Robert C. Murphy to Woo Taoutae [Wu *daotai*], 25 March 1854, *Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Shanghai, 1847-1906.*
[119] Rutherford Alcock to Keih, 4 April 1854, *Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Shanghai, 1847-1906.*
[120] Ibid.

Figure 4.3: Robert C. Murphy's drawing of the incidents near the foreign settlement in Shanghai attached to a letter to Robert McLane, U.S. minister plenipotentiary at Canton, 5 April 1854, *Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Shanghai, 1847-1906.*

The British, American, and French consuls consulted and cooperated with each other following the skirmish. They jointly communicated to Shanghai officials about the incident and blamed unruly Chinese imperial soldiers, who appeared to be "little, if at all, under the control of their officers."[121] According to Rutherford Alcock, the soldiers appeared to have been firing indiscriminately upon passersby, and that only the arrival of men from the British ships and the American ship *Plymouth* stopped them. Alcock believed that this use of force had repelled the Chinese soldiers and concluded that only the complete obliteration of the nearby imperial encampment would prevent an invasion of the foreign settlement. The French consul, US consul Robert Murphy, and the commanders of the British and American naval forces agreed. Alcock contacted the provisional judge, special commissioner, Governor of Jiangsu, and commander of the soldiers, the Manchu official, Jirhangga[122]:

> The annoyance caused by the disorderly conduct of the troops encamped on the west border of the Race Course has long been matter of complaint. Their acts of yesterday put our lives in jeopardy. We are resolved to remain neutral in the present struggle between the people and their authorities; we entertain no idea whatever of assisting the City party [the Small Swords rebels].[123]

Alcock requested that Jirhangga move the soldiers to another location and threatened that foreigners would need to take matters into their own hands if there was the slightest delay.[124]

Jirhangga questioned that his soldiers were at fault and instead blamed trouble-making "vagrants." He suggested first that he and other Qing officials speak with the British vice consul Thomas Wade, who was fluent in Chinese, before taking further action. Jirhangga hinted that the 20,000 imperial troops and the considerable number of "vagrants" would not react well if attacked. Jirhangga himself described the Chinese soldiers who had first entered the foreign

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[121] Rutherford Alcock to Hogg, Cunningham, Murphy, Edan, and King, 4 April 1854, *Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Shanghai, 1847-1906.*
[122] The name Jirhannga has been romanized in several different forms: Keih-er-hanga (or simply "Keih"), Koergangah, Chi-er-hang-a, among others.
[123] Rutherford Alcock to Keih [Jirhangga], 4 April 1854, *Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Shanghai, 1847-1906.*
[124] Ibid.

settlement as "a number of vagrants out of employ, natives of different provinces."[125] Expressing surprise at the threats made by the Americans and British, he wrote: "Your nation has traded with the Inner Land during many years. His Majesty, our Great Emperor has behaved with the greatest kindness towards you. We have been on the best possible terms, as is shown by the fact that I have had the honor of frequent interviews with yourself, Consul Alcock, and with Vice Consul Wade."[126] He suggested that vagrants, disguised as soldiers, were at fault, and that he had ordered their arrest. Murphy agreed that part of the trouble arose from the soldiers' origins: "So far as foreigners are concerned no fresh danger can reasonably be apprehended, unless perhaps it be when new levies are drawn from the interior, they being unacquainted with foreigners some difficulty may arise from this."[127] Unlike Jirhangga, he believed that the real problem with the soldiers came from their inexperience with foreigners.

Both US consul Murphy and the British consul Alcock supported and encouraged each other in a joint military effort to destroy the Chinese encampments. The British Senior Naval Officer, Captain O'Gallaghan, and American Captain Kelly, the commander of the *Plymouth*, along with a group of volunteers from the Shanghai foreign community attacked and destroyed the encampment.[128] Murphy wrote to Alcock that what they had done was a noble, necessary, pre-emptive act:

> I have no hesitation in stating my candid conviction, that the determined and concurrent action of the three Treaty Powers, together with the Naval aid of Great Britain, and the United States, and the successful issue thereof, alone averted a calamitous state of affairs,

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[125] Keih [Jirhangga] to Robert C. Murphy, 4 April 1854, *Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Shanghai, 1847-1906.* The letter notes that British vice consul Thomas Wade, translated Jirhangga's communication. Thomas Wade, British diplomat and sinologist, would later become famous for contributing to the Wade-Giles romanization system for Mandarin Chinese.
[126] Ibid.
[127] Robert C. Murphy to William L. Marcy, 20 April 1854, *Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Shanghai, 1847-1906.*
[128] Rutherford Alcock to Hogg, Cunningham, Murphy, Edan, and King, 4 April 1854, *Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Shanghai, 1847-1906.*

which was rapidly developing, the result of which could not be estimated.[129]

Murphy framed the American casualties of the attack—two dead and four wounded—in the same terms, describing the men as "brave and chivalrous spirits" who "manifested a cool determination in the midst of danger… and achieved a security without which, their own lives, as well as many others might have been lost."[130] Despite treaties offering protection and relatively free trade in the treaty ports, the consuls took drastic actions to counter what they saw as growing threats to the foreign settlement in Shanghai. During the 1850s, Americans resolved disruptions in relations with the Qing by whatever means necessary.

Robert Murphy continued to collaborate with the British following the attack out of necessity. The US State Department had not increased funds to hire permanent linguists and interpreters at the Shanghai consulate, so Murphy relied on the British consulate to communicate with *daotai* Wu and Jirhangga. Murphy justified the collaboration because of the shared threat. "Our interest was in common."[131] The British agreed that the foreign consuls at the port should communicate with each other following the April 3rd attack "with a view to their acting in consent throughout the present crises in defence of a common interest."[132] The US consul and naval commanders agreed to communicate with the British to present a united front. In communications to Chinese officials following the attack on the Chinese encampment, US consul Murphy stressed the importance of the protection of all foreigners as a provision of the treaty. Murphy wrote to Jirhangga describing the events of April 3 and 4: "It was a hard necessity which compelled US citizens to fight against those whom they had for so many years

[129] Robert C. Murphy to Rutherford Alcock, 6 April 1854, *Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Shanghai, 1847-1906*; Robert C. Murphy to William L. Marcy, 20 April 1854, *Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Shanghai, 1847-1906.*
[130] Ibid.
[131] Ibid.
[132] Rutherford Alcock to Hogg, Cunningham, Murphy, Edan, and King, 4 April 1854, *Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Shanghai, 1847-1906.*

considered as friends."[133] Murphy's diplomatic posturing to Jirhangga placed blame on *daotai* Wu, whom he claimed had not made serious efforts to protect the foreign settlement as specified by the treaty: "This refusal to make even an effort to preserve your solemn Treaty stipulations, was the cause of the measures resorted to by Foreigners."[134]

Qing officials protested what they saw as the impulsive, overwrought response of razing the encampment.[135] Jirhangga explained the unrealistic demands of the foreign consuls. The British and American consuls insisted that the encampment be moved 2 to 3 *li* (roughly ⅔ to 1 mile) to the southwest very suddenly.[136]Alcock and Murphy had not taken into consideration the logistics of moving the encampment such as finding a new, suitable location for 20,000 soldiers, which Jirhangga claimed would require more than an hour or two.

> Only a few minutes were allowed to consult, before both sides fell to arms. If I had not restrained the soldiers, there would have been great loss of life. But you drove away those good soldiers who had committed no bad acts and their hearts are not pleased, but I have admonished them to keep the peace if possible. But the difficulties of my position cannot be expressed by words.[137]

Jirhangga blamed the foreigners for attacking too hastily and praised his own efforts in maintaining control of the rattled, angry soldiers.

Despite the heated conflict with foreigners, relations improved rapidly. Jirhangga eventually moved his troops to another location further away from the foreign settlement but still useful for the effort to retake Shanghai from the Small Swords Society. Robert Murphy wrote: "Foreigners are more respected than formerly, and the officials are more prompt in their

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[133] Robert C. Murphy to Keih [Jirhangga], 11 April 1854, *Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Shanghai, 1847-1906.*
[134] Ibid.
[135] Keih [Jirhangga], 17 April 1854, *Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Shanghai, 1847-1906.*
[136] A *li* (里) is a traditional unit of measure. Its value has changed over time, and during the Qing dynasty, a *li* could mean anything from 537 to 645m.
[137] Keih [Jirhangga], 17 April 1854, *Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Shanghai, 1847-1906.*

compliance with Treaty stipulations."[138] Jirhangga also gave orders for headmen to keep their soldiers in line in future to preserve good relations between the US and China.[139]

Despite Jirhangga's efforts to restore order among the imperial troops and improve relations at Shanghai, US consul Murphy pushed Secretary of State Marcy for a stronger naval presence in Shanghai to maintain military posturing to protect treaty rights. Murphy presented as evidence a letter signed by 111 foreign residents at Shanghai thanking Captain Kelly of the *Plymouth* and his crew for their part in the attack.[140] Murphy also contacted US commissioner to China Robert McLane, requesting that more US warships be stationed in Shanghai.[141]

Following the attack on the camp, Murphy and the other foreign consuls sought to explain themselves not only to Qing officials, but also to local Chinese. Murphy wrote to Secretary of State Marcy:

> It has always been the custom of the Chinese to make known political events by proclamation. For this reason it was agreed between H.B.M.'s consul and the Consul of France and myself, to issue a proclamation in Chinese expressing the causes which led to the difficulties with the Chinese soldiers, so as to contradict some proclamations said to have been issued by Chinese Officers on the same subject.[142]

The consuls posted a public notice in Chinese which sought to contradict "idle rumours" so "that all misgivings thence arising may be laid aside."[143] British consul Rutherford Alcock, US consul Robert Murphy, and French consul ad interim Benoît Edan explained the position of foreigners in Shanghai, who were subject to their own jurisdictions and according to the treaty were to be "[free] from molestation." Foreigners had remained neutral since Shanghai fell to the Small Swords Society in September 1853. The three consuls justified their neutrality through proverbs and adages: "A stranger can take no side in a domestic quarrel." They then explained the events

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[138] Robert C. Murphy to William L. Marcy, 20 April 1854, *Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Shanghai, 1847-1906.*
[139] Keih [Jirhangga], 17 April 1854, *Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Shanghai, 1847-1906.*
[140] William Hogg & others to Murphy, 12 April 1854, *Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Shanghai, 1847-1906.*
[141] Robert C. Murphy to Robert M. McLane, 5 April 1854 *Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Shanghai, 1847-1906.*
[142] Robert C. Murphy to William L. Marcy, 20 April 1854, *Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Shanghai, 1847-1906.*
[143] Ibid.

of April 3 and 4 from their point of view and concluded: "Be not therefore misled by the words and publications of idle men. Take warning rather by the past and for the time to come, be cautious of wantonly exasperating strangers, whose policy and inclination it is to refrain from interfering with you."[144] The public notice took on a proverbial tone here and employed a Chinese style of expression, so the consuls may have had assistance from Chinese allies in drafting the notice. The three consuls attempted to persuade local Chinese in a genre with which they would be familiar in an effort to stem anti-foreigner sentiment. While the consuls of the three treaty powers wanted to ensure the safety of the foreign residents, Qing officials like Jirhangga wanted to confirm that foreigners were not aiding the Small Swords or Taiping rebels. Alcock, Murphy, and Edan wrote another proclamation in English for the foreign community reminding them that if they violated the neutrality agreement that they would be forfeiting their rights and privileges under the treaty.[145]

The events of the 3rd and 4th of April 1854, like the pilot boat incident, revealed the stress the mid-nineteenth-century uprisings in China put on US-China relations, which fell to US consuls and their British and Qing counterparts to handle. Yet rather than resolving the conflict through diplomatic communication and negotiation, the US consul and his British and French counterparts immediately used force without truly exhausting peaceful options.

Conclusion

The US government periodically released new editions of *General Instructions to the Consuls and Commercial Agents of the United States* to provide updated information on State Department procedures. In 1838, the 42-page *General Instructions* included 51 instructions encompassing the expected roles of the consul and methods for communicating with the

[144] Rutherford Alcock, Robert C. Murphy, and Benoît Edan, 15 April 1854, *Despatches from U.S. Consuls in Shanghai, 1847-1906.*
[145] Ibid.

Secretary of State and the US minister. By 1855, the title of the document had ballooned to 238 pages, including updated procedures and information about specific circumstances in China, Africa, and Turkey. The State Department ostensibly singled out these places because, unlike other locations, the US consulates in China and parts of Africa and Turkey were perceived as truly foreign places. In addition to the 256 general instructions given to all consuls, China consuls had an additional nineteen—concerning extraterritoriality, the vagaries of government work in a place far removed from the United States, the protection of treaty rights in China, and one that asked consuls to make inroads to expand commercial rights:

> 270. In the present condition of China, it is believed that the United States consuls may do much by the exercise of a prudent, though firm and independent, course of conduct, to remove some of the onerous commercial restrictions existing in China, and obtained increased facilities of intercourse, not exclusively for the citizens of their own country, but to open the Chinese Empire generally to the commercial enterprise of all the civilized nations of the world. For the accomplishment of this object, consuls will do what they can within their proper sphere of action. Nevertheless, all treaty stipulations with China must be respected, and the settled policy of the United States of non-interference in the contests which arise between the people and their rulers, must be observed.[146]

This instruction pointed to the delicate position of consuls who tried to use their limited authority and resources to enforce the treaty and push to expand privileges while simultaneously maintaining good relations and respect in China.

In response to a stream of complaints from US consuls in China and around the world, Congress made substantial changes to the consular system and provided consuls with salaries. Consuls had informed Congress of their needs for carrying out basic mercantile and judiciary duties.[147] These reforms also happened to alleviate American merchants' concerns—particularly in larger ports like Shanghai—that consuls had too much power and could not separate their firm's interests from their duties as consuls. The federal government had long been aware of

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[146] United States, Department of State, William Learned Marcy, *General Instructions to the Consuls and Commercial Agents of the United States* (Washington, D.C.: A.O.P. Nicholson, 1855), 108.
[147] Smith, *America's Diplomats and Consuls of 1776-1865*, 12.

these issues, but the State Department was slow to act. In 1844, Caleb Cushing, who negotiated the first US treaty with China, summarized the problem of the US consular system in China for Secretary of State Calhoun:

> The ordinary commercial and other concerns of the United States in China call for the appointment of a public functionary there of a higher class than a mere unpaid consul, himself engaged in mercantile concerns, and for that reason not possessing the independence of position which is desirable in relation to his own countrymen as well as the Chinese, among whom commercial pursuits are not held in distinguished estimation.[148]

The Diplomatic and Consular Service Act of 1856 paid US consuls to Great Britain and France $17,500 per year; consuls to Russia, Spain, Austria, Prussia, Brazil, Mexico, and China $12,000 per year; and consuls to the remaining countries $10,000 per year. Additional employees such as commercial agents received much smaller salaries ranging from $3,000 to $5,000, and the act strictly forbade these employees from acting as merchants in any capacity while in office.[149]

US consuls in China operated under constraints familiar to consular appointees around the world (i.e. little compensation or guidance from the US government), but they also had to handle sensitive China-specific issues. Trade developed slowly in Xiamen and Ningbo, which led to an inconsistent consular presence, but Fuzhou and Shanghai attracted more trade, more Americans, and thus the need for a regular consul. Although these new ports needed consuls to encourage trade and protect the real estate claims of American missionaries, US consuls found their efforts stymied by both the Qing and US governments. Because of their lack of individual power, US consuls cooperated with British consuls, who shared many of the same concerns. Upholding and maintaining treaty rights benefited both Europeans and Americans under most

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[148] Caleb Cushing to John C. Calhoun, October 1, 1844, Despatch No. 98, *Despatches from U.S. Ministers to China, 1843-1906.*

[149] Ibid.; *An Act to regulate the Diplomatic and Consular Systems of the United States*, Statutes at Large, Vol. XI in *The United States Consular System: A Manual for Consuls and also for Merchants, Shipowners and Masters in their Consular Transactions* (Washington, D.C.: Taylor and Maury, 1856), 309-345.

favored nation status. Also in response to a sense of powerlessness, US consuls requested visits from the American East India Squadron, which they believed impressed upon the Chinese the need to uphold the treaty. However, during the early 1850s, the East India Squadron was primarily concerned with opening Japan to US trade and only visited Chinese ports occasionally. Mid-nineteenth century uprisings, particularly those led by the Taiping and the Small Swords Society, further complicated US-China relations and the work of the US consul, who had to navigate trade disruptions, arms smuggling, and outright fighting between foreign and Qing forces.

In the minds of Americans in China and the United States, force remained the primary tool for enforcing the treaty, and the results of the First Opium War, the pilot boat incident, and the conflict with the imperial army all seemed to confirm this line of thinking. It would take the cooperation of a set of leaders among the Qing, British, and American governments—specifically Prince Gong, Frederick Bruce, and Anson Burlingame—to reverse this mindset.

CHAPTER 4

FROM COERCION TO COOPERATION: FORMAL US-CHINA DIPLOMACY, 1840-1870

During the mid-nineteenth century, knowledge about China—and US-China relations—derived from a few key sources. Some American residents published detailed accounts of their travels in China (Benjamin Lincoln Ball's *Rambles in Eastern Asia*). Missionaries wrote of their efforts to proselytize the Chinese (Robert Samuel Maclay's *Life Among the Chinese*) and produced reference works and Chinese dictionaries (S. Wells Williams's *The Middle Kingdom: A Survey of the Geography, Government, Education, Social Life, Arts, Religion, etc. of the Chinese Empire and Its Inhabitants* and *Easy Lessons in Chinese*). While these works formed the backbone of knowledge about China for Americans, the US government turned to their representatives in China to provide information on the foremost matter of concern: commerce. Using intelligence from consuls in the five ports, the State Department and US commissioners in China together forged what came to be the nation's China policy.

This chapter uses letters from diplomats in China and Congressional records to elucidate the US government approach to US-China relations during the mid-nineteenth century and the nature of early official diplomacy in China. Some merchants and entrepreneurs directly communicated with Congress concerning treaties and business proposals. US consuls and diplomats reported to the Secretary of State who then relayed critical information to the President. Based on these reports, the Secretary of State and the President together decided the general position of the US government toward China, and Congress drafted details of the US approach through specific legislation. Yet in China, far removed from lawmakers in Washington, DC, US commissioners had to adapt to local conditions and had a fair amount of latitude to carry out diplomacy as they saw fit. Extensive government consideration of China diminished in the

1850s and 1860s due to debates over slavery and the American Civil War. Following the war, US ministers to China would vacillate between using diplomacy and military force to secure privileges until 1899 when Secretary of State John Hay advocated the Open Door Policy, keeping China equally open to all treaty powers.[1] US politicians, merchants, and naval officers ultimately had to confront the unpleasant truth that their fate in China was inextricably intertwined with their rivals, the British. Both American commercial success in Chinese ports and the freedom to pursue formal diplomatic strategies in Beijing depended on British military power.

This chapter first examines reports, memorials, and other documents concerning China, from 1840 to 1870, submitted to Congress, from the inception of the First Opium War (1839-42) through the nascent years of formal US-China relations. These documents reveal discourse about China and the Chinese, which perpetuated common stereotypes of the China as a large country, ruled by a despotic dynasty, yet halfway civilized with cultural and intellectual achievements. Although they ascribed negative qualities to China, merchants, entrepreneurs, and politicians saw opening China and supporting trade there as a key project in the American pursuit of Pacific commerce. American diplomats and politicians identified ignorance of China's laws and language as key obstacles in the way American security and diplomacy in China.

This chapter then turns to how two US diplomats, Commissioner Humphrey Marshall and Minister Anson Burlingame, enacted diplomacy based on US government interests and adapting to circumstances in China.[2] Following the first diplomatic negotiations between the United States and China in 1844 and a string of failed diplomatic attempts, Marshall focused his

[1] David L. Anderson, *Imperialism and Idealism: American Diplomats in China, 1861-1898* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1985), 1-15.

[2] During the nineteenth century, the State Department used a variety of terms for the main diplomatic envoy sent to China. From 1843 to 1857, the government commonly used the term "commissioner." From 1858 to 1912, the official term was "envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary."

efforts on establishing himself in the capital, Beijing, despite Secretary of State William L. Marcy's instructions to concentrate on commerce. Humphrey Marshall described frustrating differences in the expectations of Western diplomats and Chinese officials during his unsuccessful attempt to gain entrance to the court in Beijing. He even had difficulty in conveying his diplomatic credentials to the Xianfeng emperor during his one year as minister to China from 1853 to 1854. At first glance, Marshall's stubborn, demanding tone and his failure to accomplish this goal seem to indicate a lack of tact and diplomacy. However, he had the unenviable task of appealing to the Qing government that hoped to exclude foreigners from establishing Western-style diplomatic relations, particularly in Beijing. This diplomatic effort transpired during the height of the Taiping Civil War, which acted as a further obstacle.

American diplomats were admitted to Beijing several years later beginning with Anson Burlingame, who became a favorite of the Qing court because of his amiability and rejection of gunboat diplomacy in favor of a "cooperative policy" with the Qing and the European powers in China.[3] Following Burlingame's six years as US minister to China, in 1868, somewhat unexpectedly, the Qing government commissioned him to act as their first ambassador to the Western world including the United States, Great Britain, France, and Russia. During the embassy's visit to the United States, he negotiated a treaty that regarded the United States and China as equal states with equal rights. While Burlingame's mission appeared to reset US-China relations, ongoing conflicts in the United States over its relationship with China and Chinese immigrants would come to a head with the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882.

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[3] For more on the shift to a "cooperative policy" in China, see: David L. Anderson, "Anson Burlingame: American Architect of the Cooperative Policy in China, 1861-1870," *Diplomatic History* 1 (Summer 1977): 239-255; David L. Anderson, "Anson Burlingame: Reformer and Diplomat," *Civil War History* 25 (December 1979): 293-308; John R. Haddad, *America's First Adventure in China: Trade, Treaties, Opium, and Salvation* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2013), 208-230; S.S. Kim, "Burlingame and the Inauguration of the Co-Operative Policy," *Modern Asian Studies* 5 (1971): 337-354; Tyler Dennett, *Americans in Eastern Asia: a Critical Study of the Policy of the United States with Reference to China, Japan, and Korea in the 19th Century* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1922), 372-390.

China and the US Congress

During the First Opium War, two groups of China traders, one in Guangzhou and the other in Massachusetts, wrote to Congress with recommendations for US policy regarding the war. The first group based in Guangzhou presciently made requests for treaty negotiations with specific stipulations that would later be realized in the treaties negotiated with China after the First and Second Opium Wars. Yet the second group of merchants, their colleagues in Massachusetts, aware of the first petition to Congress, argued for further deliberation since Americans still knew little about China and its laws. American merchants and politicians would continue to discuss American ignorance of China's laws, language, and markets.

On May 25, 1839, Robert Bennet Forbes and seven prominent members of the American merchant community in Guangzhou, sent a memorial to Congress describing Lin Zexu's seizure of British opium and the imprisoning of all foreigners in their factories.[4] Forbes and the other traders called for the United States to join Great Britain, France, and the Netherlands in pressuring China to establish official commercial relations. They outlined a list of ideal provisions that would later be included in the first and second US-China treaties, including permission for foreign envoys to live near the court in Beijing, fixed tariffs on imports and exports, the allowance to transship goods, compensation for losses caused by the stoppage of trade, and reasonable punishments for crimes. The merchants also requested that, at the least, a commissioner with commercial knowledge be appointed and given access to a naval force to protect American business. Most Americans in China supported some form of American naval presence along the coast of China as the best way to protect Americans and their property.

[4] See chapter 3 for an introduction to Robert Bennet Forbes and an analysis of his book *Remarks on China and the China Trade* (1844).

Less than a year later, the House of Representatives received a second communication regarding US-China relations, this one from American China trade merchants not in China but in Massachusetts. Thomas H. Perkins and thirty-five merchants (and commercial firms) from Boston and Salem wrote regarding the First Opium War and their proposals for the US government, fearing that perhaps Congress might act too hastily otherwise.[5] Although Robert Bennet Forbes (and other traders in Guangzhou) and the businessmen in Boston and Salem worked together and essentially constituted the same interest group, they arrived at different conclusions of how best to approach commerce and diplomacy with China. Colleagues in England had informed the Massachusetts group that the British government had ordered naval forces in India to proceed to Guangzhou to begin a blockade and possibly attack the city. The British government confirmed this report.[6] The Massachusetts merchants were naturally concerned with the wellbeing of Americans and their business interests in China. Unlike their colleagues in China—some of whom were family members and business associates—the Massachusetts businessmen did not request the immediate negotiation of a commercial treaty. Instead they took a more cautious approach:

> The character, laws, and customs, of the Chinese nation, are so little understood, that, even granting our right to demand a change in their foreign policy, it would be unwise to authorize an envoy to negotiate with them, until the whole subject had been examined and considered in our national councils with all procurable information before them.[7]

They recognized that Americans lacked solid knowledge about the laws and customs of China and believed this a valid reason to delay negotiations, but other recommendations did not demonstrate the same humility. Perkins and the merchants arrogantly suggested that Americans

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[5] Dennett, *Americans in Eastern Asia*, 102-104.

[6] U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, *Commerce with China, Message from the President of the United States, transmitting the information required by the resolution of the House of Representatives of the 23d instant, in relations to the commerce of the United States with China, &c.,* 26th Cong., 2d Sess., 1840, H.R. Doc. No. 34.

[7] U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, *Communication from Thomas H. Perkins, and a great number of other merchants, of Boston and Salem, Mass.*, 26th Cong., 1st Sess., 1840, H.R. Doc. No. 170.

had a “right to demand” that China change its foreign policy, which they later stated was “based upon the established usages among other nations.”[8] While they claimed that Americans simply did not know enough about China and the Chinese to intervene in the war, apparently, they knew enough to demand that China conform to Western standards of diplomacy. The two memorials communicated contrary opinions to Congress, although both agreed on the use of naval force to protect American lives and property and to coerce Chinese conformity to Western-style trade and diplomacy.

Following the First Opium War as Americans prepared to negotiate its first treaty with China, members of Congress fell back on common stereotypes to describe China. In 1843, following the First Opium War, the House Committee on Foreign Affairs agreed with President John Tyler that Congress should allocate $40,000 to pay for the salaries and expenses of Caleb Cushing, the commissioner to China, and Fletcher Webster, the secretary of the mission (and the son of Secretary of State Daniel Webster). The report of the committee’s chair, John Quincy Adams, represented China as an empire of “numberless multitudes of men” ruled by an emperor who unjustly demanded that China occupied a much higher position in the world than the United States. Adams viewed the restriction of the US-China relationship to purely commercial exchange as “humiliating.”[9] Adams and Tyler depicted the Chinese empire as despotic and stubborn, a prevailing sentiment.[10]

One of the pressing issues in the treaty negotiations concerned whose laws would regulate American citizens in China. Before the negotiation of the treaty, Guangzhou officials had forcefully punished foreigners who broke Chinese law. In serious cases, they stopped trade

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[8] Ibid.

[9] U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, *China and Sandwich Islands* [To accompany bills H.R. Nos. 720 and 721], 27th Cong., 3d Sess., 1843, H.R. Doc. No. 93.

[10] U.S. Congress, Senate, *Message from the President of the United States, communicating a statement of the expenditures under the act of 3d March, 1843, providing the means of future intercourse between the United States and China,* 29th Cong., 1st Sess., 1845, S. Doc. No. 17.

with specific foreign nations until they could punish the offenders.[11] Following the Chinese defeat in the First Opium War, the British negotiated for extraterritoriality. Caleb Cushing scrutinized the history and concept of extraterritoriality in a letter to Secretary of State John C. Calhoun. In short, he concluded that the United States and China operated under different systems of law. The United States acted according to the "law of nations," which he acknowledged did not refer to *all* nations but to "Christendom." The practice of exemption from local law originated with the Capitulations of the Ottoman Empire, initially instituted by the Ottomans in the fifteenth century to attract merchants from European nations.[12] The demand for extraterritoriality rested on the idea that China and other non-Christian countries had barbaric practices, to which citizens from civilized countries should not be subject. However, according to Cushing, China did not neatly fit into the categories of civilized or barbaric:

> It is impossible to deny to China a high degree of civilization, though that civilization is, in many respects, different from ours; yet the magnitude of the Empire, the stability of its political institutions, the great advancement which the Chinese have made in the arts of life, the sedulous cultivation of letters, as well as the other useful and ornamental objects of intellectual pursuit, are such as to give China a title to the appellation of *civilized*, as many if not most of the States of Christendom can claim.[13]

Despite having most of the traits associated with "civilization," Cushing felt the need to reject Chinese jurisdiction over American citizens because "between them and us, there is no

[11] The Terranova affair was one of the most famous American cases of this sort. In 1821, a Chinese woman was selling items from a small boat when Francis Terranova, an Italian sailor on the Baltimore opium-trading vessel *Emily*, threw a pitcher overboard hitting her head, causing her to fall into the water and drown. The sailor was accused of murder, and local Chinese officials demanded that the Americans hand him over for a trial. The American community rallied around him until the officials blocked trade to pressure them to capitulate, which they did. The district magistrate removed Terranova from his ship and had him strangled. For an extended analysis of the Terranova affair with a clever title, see: Joseph Benjamin Askew, "Re-visiting New Territory: The Terranova Incident Re-examined," *Asian Studies Review* 28, no. 4 (2004): 351-371; Jonathan Goldstein, "A Clash of Civilization in the Pearl River Delta: Stephen Girard's Trade with China, 1787-1824," in *Americans and Macao: Trade, Smuggling, and Diplomacy on the South China Coast*, edited by Paul A. Van Dyke (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2012), 25-28.

[12] Caleb Cushing to John C. Calhoun, September 29, 1844, in U.S. Congress, Senate, *Message from the President of the United States of America communicating an abstract of the Treaty between the United States of America and the Chinese Empire*, 28th Cong., 2d Sess., 1845, S. Doc. No. 58; Teemu Ruskola, "Canton Is Not Boston: The Invention of American Imperial Sovereignty," *American Quarterly* 57:3 (September 2005): 859-884.

[13] Ibid.

community of ideas, no common law of nations, no interchange of good offices."[14] Also, Americans would be embarrassed if they were under Chinese jurisdiction while Westerners such as the British and Portuguese were not. The resulting US-China Treaty of Wangxia presented extraterritoriality without explaining these underlying assumptions and premises justifying the practice, simply outlining the new set of regulations. However, Cushing's letter revealed the Christian- and Eurocentric worldview that could not come to terms with an empire that had many of the trappings of "civilization" but without Christianity and the Western legal tradition. Extraterritoriality in China inspired Americans and other Western nations to demand extraterritorial arrangements in Japan and Siam in the 1850s.

With a commercial treaty in place, Congress considered multiple proposals for how best to secure and encourage American trade in China and the Pacific by turning its attention to the fields of transportation, communication, and cartography. On February 19, 1851, Frederick P. Stanton from the House Committee on Naval Affairs made a report on a proposition to establish a line of steamships to ship mail between the United States and Asia. At first glance, a straightforward proposal to maintain a line of communication between the US and China, the report also revealed how the House Committee on Naval Affairs perceived the place of the US in the world, particularly in relation to China. The committee was most impressed by a project presented by Ambrose W. Thompson, a Philadelphia steamship builder, endorsed by the government of Pennsylvania. Thompson proposed establishing lines of mail steamers from San Francisco to the ports of China with a stop in Hawai'i. Another set of steamers would sail from Philadelphia and Norfolk, Virginia to Belgium, England, and France. A transcontinental railroad would connect the two lines. Thompson suggested building ten steamships that would ordinarily be used as mail ships but since they would be armed, could be transformed immediately into

[14] Ibid.

warships if the Navy deemed it necessary. To further aid in this rapid conversion, the navy would assign its own commanders and watch officers to work on the mail ships. The chair of the Committee on Naval Affairs, Stanton, praised the economy of a dual-purposed line of steamships. The proposal connected commerce and communication, both free and peaceful activities, and merged them with the military. Perhaps Thompson and Stanton intended that the warships should be used for the security of Americans and their property, but the report leaves this point ambiguous. Despite Stanton's approval, the US government did not fund Thompson's proposal, and Thompson proposed other routes in the 1850s and 1860s first to Ireland and then the Isthmus of Chiriquí. Meanwhile, Congress waited until 1865 to award the Pacific Mail Steamship Company the first US mail contract between San Francisco and East Asia.[15]

Stanton's report also reflected the increasingly vital role of California in the Pacific and its strategic location. He wrote: "The acquisition of California presents facilities for trade and intercourse with China which ought not to be neglected."[16] With California statehood in 1850, Stanton and others anticipated the advantage of an American port, San Francisco, located closer to China than major European ports. The steamships would secure American interests not only in China but throughout the Pacific. Congress would hear similar requests during the next several decades from the Chamber of Commerce of the State of New York and the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce, which made comparable arguments in favor of establishing a steam mail line to China and Japan. In addition to providing security for trade, Americans would gain an advantage with quicker commercial communication between the United States and Asia, and

[15] Richard D. Martorelli, "'Beyond the Sea': Transpacific Shipping and Mail Carriage, 1900-1941," Postal History Symposium, October 22, 2007, https://postalmuseum.si.edu/research/pdfs/Martorelli-Transpacific_Shipping_and_Mail_Carriage.pdf; Peter A. Shulman, *Coal and Empire: The Birth of Energy Security in Industrial America* (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 2015).
[16] Ibid.

new transportation lines would draw trade, commerce, and people to American ports.[17] American merchants also supported other methods to secure the safety of Pacific voyages to China, including commissioning charts for portions of the Pacific Ocean to "protect and foster so great a commercial enterprize."[18] The promise of expanded trade with China intersected with the related fields of transportation, communication, and cartography.

American diplomats and consuls addressed another aspect of communication in US-China relations: a lack of Chinese language skills. Besides the commissioner and consuls at the treaty ports, the most important US government position in China was the secretary and interpreter of the legation. The secretary did much of the heavy lifting since he was responsible for all Chinese-language work and supervised Chinese assistants to communicate with Qing government officials. In the mid-nineteenth century, few American commercial traders or government officials wrote or spoke Chinese fluently, so the position of secretary often fell to missionaries who had rigorously studied the language for their mission work. In the early days of US-China relations, two American missionaries contributed to American diplomacy: Samuel Wells Williams and Dr. Peter Parker. Williams and Parker played indispensable roles in the running of the US legation, but their compensation failed to reflect their usefulness. On November 1, 1855, Samuel Wells Williams wrote Secretary of State William L. Marcy in response to his appointment as secretary and interpreter. He hesitated to accept the position immediately in part because of the inadequacy of the salary ($2,500). Between housing costs and

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[17] U.S. Congress, Senate, *Resolutions of the Chamber of Commerce of the State of New York,* 38th Cong., 2d Sess., 1865, S. Mis. Doc. No. 28; U.S. Congress, Senate, *Memorial of the Chamber of Commerce, San Francisco, praying the establishment of a steam mail line from San Francisco to Japan and China,* 37th Cong., 2d Sess., 1862, S. Mis. Doc. No. 25.

[18] Michael Block argues that trade with China drew American merchants to the Pacific and California long before Manifest Destiny. See: Michael D. Block, "New England Merchants, the China Trade, and the Origins of California" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Southern California, 2011). U.S. Congress, Senate, *Report* [To accompany bill S. No. 143], 32d Cong., 1st Sess., 1852, S. Doc. No. 43.; U.S. Congress, Senate, *Report* [To accompany bill S. 578], 34th Cong., 3d Sess., 1857, S. Rep. Comm. No. 370.

pay for Chinese assistants, Williams only had $1,000 remaining to support his family. He also noted that the commissioner to China received a salary of $15,000, and consuls received $4,000. Neither of these two positions required knowledge of the Chinese language.[19]

In 1856, when Peter Parker first accepted the position of secretary of the legation and Chinese interpreter, he also noted the issue of language within the ranks of American officials in China in a letter to US Secretary of State James Buchanan:

> Permit me, sir, in conclusion, to call your attention to the expediency of encouraging a young man or men of requisite abilities and qualifications coming to China to acquire the language, with the prospect of ultimately rendering it subservient to his government. Aside from the uncertainty of life, at a period not very remote, the present American sinologues may be, by age or other causes, unable to render the service which henceforth the relations of the two countries will constantly require, and the language is not one which, like other living tongues, may be acquired in one or two years.[20]

Parker noted the difficulty of learning Chinese as opposed to other languages, which likely prevented the US government from insisting that its diplomats learn the language. Instead, they almost exclusively relied on a small population of missionaries. Peter Parker was gratified to hear that the August 18, 1856 act to regulate the diplomatic and consular systems allocated salaries for Chinese interpreters—with varying levels of English proficiency—which satisfied part of his complaint.[21]

Three years earlier US commissioner Humphrey Marshall stressed the need for Chinese-language skills for US officials: "The American consulates in China are grossly deficient in the means of acquiring information, and in communicating it to the Chinese in the language of the

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[19] U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, *Letter from the Secretary of State, transmitting a copy of a letter from S. Wells Williams, the interpreter to the mission of the United States to China, asking an increase in salary*, 34th Cong., 1st Sess., 1856, H.R. Ex. Doc. No. 49.

[20] Peter Parker to James Buchanan, January 22, 1856, qtd. in U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, *Letter from the United States Commissioner in China, transmitting consular returns for fees, &c.*, 34th Cong., 2d Sess., 1856, H.R. Mis. Doc. No. 1.

[21] U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, *Letter from the Commissioner of the United States to China, transmitting accounts of the fees for judicial services and the expenditures at the several consulates during the year 1856*, 35th Cong., 1st Sess., 1857, H.R. Mis. Doc. No. 2.

latter."[22] He claimed that the British had more officials with a grasp of the language and therefore had a much better understanding of the local context. Marshall emphasized that Americans needed to invest in Chinese language learning to compete, and it should not be a matter of debate or a negotiable item in the budget. Indeed, the British placed more emphasis on training their diplomatic staff in the Chinese language. British diplomats were also concerned about the difficulty of the Chinese language, but could rely on student interpreters who learned the language under the tutelage of missionary-diplomat Thomas Wade in Beijing.[23]

Congressional reports utilized pervasive stereotypes about the Chinese to justify forcing the Qing to adopt Western free trade and the "law of nations." American entrepreneurs and merchants saw commercial opportunities in China and imagined global networks for American communication, transportation, trade, security, and naval power. The immigration of Americans to Chinese ports (and vice versa) created new sets of diplomatic issues for diplomats and Congress to legislate. Finally, these documents demonstrated legitimate attempts by the American government to overcome the obstacles of cross-cultural and language differences at the beginning of official US-China diplomatic relations. These policy and budget discussions shaped the broad outlines of America's China policy and the resources devoted to diplomacy and trade. Yet half a world away, far from the eyes of their superiors, what did American diplomats do with these policy points, budgetary decisions, and persistent stereotypes when they faced Qing officials?

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[22] Humphrey Marshall to James Buchanan, despatch No. 9, March 8, 1853, qtd. in U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, *Letter from the United States Commissioner in China, transmitting consular returns for fees, &c.*, 34th Cong., 2d Sess., 1856, H.R. Mis. Doc. No. 1.

[23] Ariane Knuesel, "British Diplomacy and the Telegraph in Nineteenth-Century China," *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 18 (2007): 517-537; Raymond Jones, *The British Diplomatic Service: 1815-1914* (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1983), 209-213; James L. Hevia, *English Lessons: The Pedagogy of Imperialism in Nineteenth-Century China* (Durham and London: Duke University Press; Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2003), 135.

Humphrey Marshall

In the mid-nineteenth century, US diplomats posted to China received general instructions from the Secretary of State, but the great distance between America and China and the months it took to receive a response from the State Department gave diplomats power to implement policy as they liked. Humphrey Marshall acted as US commissioner to China from 1852 to 1854, although he resided in China for only one year, from January 1853 to January 1854. Following Caleb Cushing's negotiation of the 1844 US-China treaty, Marshall was the first US commissioner appointed to China to pursue the implementation of formal diplomatic relations promised in the treaty. An inexperienced diplomat, Humphrey Marshall encountered resistance from American naval officers and Qing officials slow to meet with Marshall during a time of Chinese civil war. As Marshall attempted to carry out the most basic of diplomatic tasks—sending a communication to the Qing emperor—he discovered that both Americans and Chinese in the 1850s continued to think of the US-China relationship as one primarily grounded in commerce that did not require rigorous formal diplomatic engagement.

Humphrey Marshall came from a prominent Kentucky family with political roots. His grandfather, also named Humphrey Marshall, was the first cousin and brother-in-law of the fourth Chief Justice of the US Supreme Court John Marshall, fought in the Revolutionary War and was later a member of the US House of Representatives and the Senate. Marshall's father, John Jay Marshall, was a reporter for the Kentucky Court of Appeals, and his brother was a member of Congress and later the Chief Justice of the Kentucky Court of Appeals. Humphrey Marshall was a graduate of West Point and then practiced law in Kentucky. During the Mexican-American War, he raised the First Kentucky Cavalry. Based on his background as a soldier, lawyer, and his family connections, he was elected to Congress in 1849 as a Whig. He quickly

rose to prominence, and President Millard Fillmore appointed him commissioner to China. As commissioner, he dealt with US trade, the sudden increase in Chinese emigration to the United States due to the California Gold Rush, and Chinese resistance of Western commercial and political relations.[24] Upon his return to the United States, he again served in Congress and was re-elected as an American (Know Nothing) Party candidate. During the Election of 1860, he supported Kentuckian John C. Breckinridge, and Marshall made efforts to maintain peace leading up to the American Civil War. Although Kentucky was a neutral border state during the war, Marshall accepted a position in the Confederate Army as Brigadier General when Union troops entered the state. He resigned after one year and then was elected to the Second Confederate Congress. Soon after the end of the American Civil War, President Andrew Johnson restored his civil rights. [25]

Although US commissioner to China was technically a diplomatic post, many government officials considered commerce its primary concern. In a private letter, President Millard Fillmore wrote to Marshall about the nature of his mission:

> I infer from a part of your letter that you regard your mission as diplomatic, and that with that view you desire to go to Peking or as near or practicable to the emperor; and you say such instructions were issued to your predecessors. Your mission had generally been regarded by me, as one of rather a commercial and judicial character, the duties of which would be best performed at the Chief Commercial Emporium.[26]

In the 1840s and 1850s, the US commissioner acted as a head consul and needed to remain near the center of US-China trade on the south China coast, either at Shanghai or Guangzhou.

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[24] In 1852, there were about 25,000 Chinese immigrants in California, about 10 percent of the non-Indian population. Mark Kanazawa, "Immigration, Exclusion, and Taxation: Anti-Chinese Legislation in Gold Rush California," *Journal of Economic History* 65 (Sept. 2005): 779-805.

[25] *Dictionary of American Biography*, edited by Allen Johnson (Scribner's: New York, 1928), 310-311; Laurence A. Schneider, "Humphrey Marshall: Commissioner to China, 1853-1854," *The Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* 63, no. 2 (1965): 97; Kenneth Wesley Rea, "Humphrey Marshall's Commissionership to China, 1852-1854" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Colorado, 1970), 1-8.

[26] Millard Fillmore to Humphrey Marshall, September 22, 1852, Humphrey Marshall Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

However, Marshall strongly urged the Chinese to establish diplomatic relations according to Western norms and allow foreign envoys to reside in Beijing.

Marshall also expressed interest in actively upholding the stipulations of the US-China treaty. However, President Fillmore cautioned Marshall to work *with* his Chinese colleagues:

> I am gratified to hear that you intend to lend your assistance to the Chinese officers enforcing this salutary provision, and that you will promptly report any officer of this government to the department of State who is guilty of violation of its provisions. I need not say, however, that prudence would seem to dictate that your efforts should be in aid, and not independently of the Chinese authorities. The laws to be executed are their laws within their territories, and this consideration alone will suggest to you the proper course for you to pursue.[27]

Fillmore recommended a more cooperative, communicative approach to treaty enforcement when it involved Chinese citizens.

In a private letter to his friend George Law, a transportation entrepreneur, Marshall wrote candidly that he believed force would be needed to establish formal Western-style diplomacy in China. He suggested that commerce would only prosper following "a certain education of the Chinese mind, and that has yet to be imparted by intercourse with the people of Western nations."[28] Marshall conveyed a sense of Western superiority in terms of commerce and culture as wells as his own powerlessness to effect change:

> We must *force our way* to the usual intercourse that we hold with other countries. We never will enlarge our sphere of influence, until our Government demands practical equality in its intercourse with China and agrees to sustain a vigorous action here by an intelligent commissioner. At present my hands are tied and I am left without the means to accomplish anything. I am left to travel as best I may from one point of the country to another, and *I see* what should be done but *I am not backed* at home.[29]

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[27] Ibid.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Humphrey Marshall to George Law, May 8, 1853, Humphrey Marshall Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Marshall felt frustrated because he wanted to expand America's "sphere of influence" in China, but he characterized the Qing government policy as aloof avoidance of interaction with Western nations and Western-style diplomacy.[30]

Marshall also believed that the British were exercising an unfair amount of power, limiting American diplomatic influence. The British had developed an East Asian consular service separate from the general consular service, in response to the difficulty of learning Asian languages.[31] Around 1850 the British China service had roughly 30 employees—four consuls, four vice consuls, ten assistants, and Chinese secretaries and interpreters—dwarfing American representation. In the early 1850s with this support, the British advanced several new initiatives including negotiating for the allocation of land for the Shanghai International Settlement and creating the Chinese Maritime Customs Service. A British Inspector General oversaw the Maritime Customs Service, which made Marshall and other Americans wary of Britain's growing influence.[32] Also, when Marshall first arrived in Shanghai, the Taiping were in the process of seizing Nanjing, 185 miles inland from Shanghai. Marshall made a failed attempt to visit Nanjing to learn more about the Taiping, which some foreigners in China considered a blunder that threatened American—and Western—neutrality in the Taiping Civil War. The US vessel *Susquehanna* could not complete the trip upriver, but the British representative, Sir George Bonham, the governor of Hong Kong, decided to travel to Nanjing himself to clarify British neutrality in the conflict and to learn more about the rebels.[33] Marshall remained suspicious and was convinced that Bonham was withholding information: "The version given by his excellency of the visit leaves me so mystified by the insignificance of what he has attained

[30] Historian David Anderson asserts that Marshall and his successor, Robert McLane, both favored U.S. cooperation with France and Russia "to check the aggressive tendencies of Britain." Anderson, *Imperialism and Idealism: American Diplomats in China, 1861-1898* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1985), 9.
[31] Jones, *The British Diplomatic Service, 1815-1914*, 210.
[32] Van de Ven, *Breaking with the Past.*
[33] Rea, "Humphrey Marshall's Commissionership to China, 1852-1854," 45-52.

that I shall wait for further revelations."[34] However, the British faced many of the same obstacles to communicating with the Qing court that Marshall would. Both Guangzhou Imperial Commissioner Ye Mingchen and Shanghai officials had refused to forward their diplomatic communications to the Qing court.[35]

Despite his frustration with slow diplomatic progress with the Qing, Marshall pragmatically supported the sovereignty of the Qing in the Taiping Civil War as the best way to protect US commerce. In 1853 with the Taiping capture of Nanjing, many US officials at home began to consider whether the United States ought to support the Taiping over the Qing government. At first, many Christians supported the Taiping because of their adoption of Protestantism, and some Americans speculated that the war might result in freeing the Chinese from the oppression of imperial rule, resulting in a freer political system. According to an early historian of US-China relations, Foster Rhea Dulles, Marshall ran counter to American opinion at home, including incoming President Franklin Pierce. Marshall supported the stability of the Qing government because he believed it was the best way to protect American commerce. Americans already had a treaty with the Qing and had no guarantee that the Taiping would be more receptive to Western trade. If anything, the continued war further depressed trade and commerce.[36] Marshall, ever suspicious of British intentions, worried that Great Britain might intervene in the case of a Taiping victory to claim the spoils, disrupting American interests in the process. He saw evidence for this possible outcome in British encroachment into the management of customs in Shanghai. During September 1853 the Small Swords Society, a group formerly associated with the Taiping, captured Shanghai. Qing officials were no longer able to

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[34] Qtd. in Rea, "Humphrey Marshall's Commissionership to China, 1852-1854," 52.
[35] John K. Fairbank, *Trade and Diplomacy on the China Coast: The Opening of the Treaty Ports, 1842-1854* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1953), 371-392.
[36] Dulles, *China and America*, 51; U.S. Congress, *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, Vol. VII (New York: Bureau of National Literature, Inc., 1902), 2743.

collect customs duties, but Marshall and British consul Rutherford Alcock decided to collect promissory notes from traders for duties, an unpopular decision among American and British merchants. In the face of opposition, Marshall clung to the treaty made with the Qing:

> It is my purpose to perform, punctiliously, every obligation assumed by the U.S. under the treaty, and to refrain from embarrassing the public administration of Chinese affairs by throwing unnecessary obstacles in the way. No precedent, no example furnished by other powers, will induce me to forego the faithful and honest execution of our plain international obligations.[37]

Marshall was motivated to pursue diplomatic aims such as sending his credentials to the emperor and traveling to Beijing as part of a broader effort to support US commerce during tumultuous times in China.

With a strong faith in the rules and procedures set out in the treaty, Marshall attempted to send his written credentials from the US president and a letter of his own to the Xianfeng emperor. He hoped to hand them personally to the *daotai* in Shanghai, Wu Jianzhang, one of the primary officials charged with managing foreigners. However, the Qing court preferred that foreigners continued to send communications through officials at Guangzhou, the center of Qing foreign commercial relations since 1700. However, Wu promised to forward the documents and estimated that the emperor would reply in a month. Wu Jianzhang wrote Marshall once a month had passed and claimed that Marshall's letters might take an additional two or three months to reach the emperor. Marshall speculated: "This fact creates a grave apprehension that the letter has either not been forwarded or has been intercepted by some provincial authority, to whose hands necessity compelled the Taoutai [*daotai*] to confide it."[38] Irked by the delay in the emperor's response, Marshall resolved to take the letter to the Qing court himself, or at least as

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[37] Qtd in Dulles, 53; For a detailed study of American and British attitudes concerning the Taiping Civil War including coverage of Marshall's minority opinion see: Kapree Harrell-Washington, "From Revered Revolutionaries to Much Maligned Marauders: The Evolution of British and American Images in China of the Taiping Rebels," (Master's Thesis, Miami University, 2008); Fairbank, *Trade and Diplomacy on the China Coast*, 411-438.

[38] Humphrey Marshall to Matthew Perry, May 13, 1853, Humphrey Marshall Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

close as he could get, on his own. "I have exhausted the means pointed out by the Treaty to communicate with the Emperor to whom I am accredited."[39] At this point, Marshall stubbornly saw only two paths forward, to deliver the letter—what would have been a relatively simple task in most other countries—or petulantly return to the United States a self-declared failure to let another diplomat try. Despite the Qing Dynasty's history of excluding Westerners from the court in Beijing, Marshall did not believe that the emperor would risk making an enemy of the United States considering the precariousness of Qing rule during the height of the Taiping Civil War.

The main Chinese official assigned to handle foreigners, the imperial commissioner in Guangzhou, Ye Mingchen, had long avoided dealing with foreigners. In 1850-1851, Ye resisted British efforts to send letters to Beijing, and British Foreign Secretary Lord Palmerston (Henry John Temple) directed Hong Kong Governor George Bonham and Shanghai consul Rutherford Alcock to communicate British dissatisfaction to the Qing court via Shanghai officials. In May 1850, Bonham visited Shanghai and threatened the Manchu *daotai* Lin Gui (麟桂) and Governor General of the Liangjiang (the two provinces of Jiangsu and Jiangnan) Lu Jianying (陸建瀛) that he would take the British steam sloop *Reynard* to Tianjin to deliver British letters to the Qing court if no officials at Shanghai or Nanjing would do so. Although not authorized to forward foreign correspondence to Beijing, Lu decided to do so as a compromise, knowing that the Qing court would not tolerate a foreign presence at Tianjin but that the British were serious in their threat to travel north.[40] Marshall sought to exploit Qing officials' fear of foreigners traveling north to Tianjin and Beijing—something the Qing court desperately wanted to avoid.

Marshall urged the American East India Squadron to force Chinese compliance. He wrote to Commodore Matthew Perry, the commander of the squadron tasked with opening Japan to

[39] Ibid.
[40] Fairbank, *Trade and Diplomacy on the China* Coast, 376-377.

American trade, a long, drawn-out, belligerent letter about his goal to deliver his credentials to the emperor. Marshall was particularly insistent since he had difficulty persuading Perry's predecessor, Commodore John H. Aulick, to sail Marshall north.[41] Hoping for a better outcome, Marshall demanded that Perry allocate warships for a mission to Tianjin, the city along the east coast closest to Beijing.[42] Marshall claimed the presence of American warships would compel China to comply and asked that Perry take him to the mouth of the Hai River (or Peiho River), near Tianjin in northeastern China, on the way to Japan.

Marshall appealed to Perry's mission, arguing that relations in China would have an impact on American relations with Japan as well. He asserted: "For I entertain no doubt that the interest manifested by the American public in the success of your Expedition to Japan, rests upon the idea of future progress in peaceful and profitable intercourse with China."[43] Marshall was correct that American trade in China—and more broadly in the Pacific—had spurred efforts to open Japan. Americans hoped to expand their trade in Asia since they already had steady traffic between the United States and China. There were also rumors that Japan had vast coal supplies necessary for transpacific voyages, and whalers sought safe harbors in the North Pacific. Despite commercial expansion throughout Asia and the Pacific, China remained a primary destination for Americans.[44] Marshall suggested that Perry's mission to Japan was of secondary importance compared with maintaining the benefits of commerce already enjoyed in China. Marshall contradicted himself at the close of the letter: "But, sire, it is not my purpose to weight your obligations or to essay to judge the force of your introductions. I confess myself ignorant of their

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[41] Rea, "Humphrey Marshall's Commissionership to China, 1852-1854," 34-49.
[42] Humphrey Marshall to Matthew Perry, May 13, 1853, Humphrey Marshall Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Dennett, *Americans in Eastern Asia*, 242-258.

character and extent."[45] The Secretary of State William L. Marcy placed a good deal of importance on the mission to Japan and would instruct Marshall's successor to continue pursuing the opening of Japan if Perry's mission failed.[46]

Perry tersely replied that he could not allow any of his warships to aid Marshall, arguing that it was not part of his mission and not an urgent matter. He also reminded Marshall that no other Western power had been allowed to travel to Beijing—including the British who had warships and better personnel at hand—so it would not be an embarrassment to wait.[47] Taking all of this into consideration, Perry decided to defer to his orders from the US Navy, his "rulers at home," until the Qing government invited Marshall to Beijing. Perry and Marshall clashed over the matter not only because of their different missions but also because of their opposing attitudes. Perry had a practical perspective on the Chinese desire to not allow foreigners to Beijing, while Marshall remained recalcitrant and unable to understand the Chinese perspective. They could have been allies as US government agents interested in expanding American influence in East Asia. However, Marshall fixated on the US-China treaty and improving diplomatic relations with China and employed a tactless approach with Perry, who as a military commander had no obligation to carry out Marshall's bidding.[48]

Without Perry's assistance, Marshall moved closer to his goal of forwarding his credentials and letter to Beijing through sheer persistence. Marshall continually communicated

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[45] Ibid.
[46] U.S. Congress, Senate, *Message of the President of the United States, communicating, in compliance with a resolution of the Senate, the instructions to Mr. McLane, when appointed Minister to China*, 36th Cong., 1st. Sess., 1860, S. Ex. Doc. No. 39.
[47] Matthew Perry to Humphrey Marshall, May 16, 1853, Humphrey Marshall Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
[48] Laurence A. Schneider noted that other U.S. ministers to China after Marshall tended to follow this approach except for chargé d'affaires Peter Parker: Schneider, "Humphrey Marshall: Commissioner to China, 1853-1854," 120; Chester A. Bain provided a detailed narrative of the exchange between Perry and Marshall in "Commodore Matthew Perry, Humphrey Marshall, and the Taiping Rebellion," *The Far Eastern Quarterly* 10, no. 3 (1951): 258-270.

with Shanghai *daotai* Wu Jianzhang, and together they eventually determined that the best course of action was to meet with the Governor General of the Liangjiang Yiliang (怡良), who would facilitate the delivery of Marshall's documents to Beijing.[49] Wu corresponded regularly with Marshall about the shifting plans of the governor general, who was meeting with military commanders to discuss the recent Taiping occupation of Nanjing.

Marshall was aggravated about the delay in meeting with Yiliang, a meeting which he considered both a courtesy and a treaty requirement. Article XXXI of the Treaty of Wangxia instructed US officials to direct communications to the emperor either through the imperial commissioner (Ye Mingchen) or the Governor General of the Liangjiang (Yiliang).[50] Like British diplomats, Marshall had unsuccessfully attempted to communicate through Ye Mingchen, so he had turned to Yiliang. The Chinese version of Article XXXI was the same as the English version except it specified that the letter being sent to the emperor was "national credentials" (國書 *guoshu*).[51] Marshall faithfully followed both versions of the treaty. He wrote again of his impatience regarding the delay in meeting with Yiliang, especially since to Marshall it was all a formality to relay his credentials to the court in Beijing: "I see no reason why such a business matter should occupy more than five minutes of my time...There *is* a point at which patience ceases to be a virtue, and really I think we have nearly arrived at that point."[52] Marshall tried to discern to what extent the governor general was amenable to meeting, but he could not comprehend when Qing officials seemed to unnecessarily complicate matters by using

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[49] Wu Jianzhang to Humphrey Marshall, June 16, 1853, Humphrey Marshall Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
[50] "Treaty of Peace, Amity, and Commerce, with tariff of duties, signed at Wang Hiya, (in the outskirts of Macao) July 3, 1844," https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Treaty_of_Wanghia.
[51] U.S.-China Treaty of Wangxia (1844), "*Wangxia tianyue* (*望厦條約*)," 1844, https://zh.wikisource.org/wiki/%E6%9C%9B%E5%BB%88%E6%A2%9D%E7%B4%84.
[52] Humphrey Marshall to Wu Jianzhang, June 20, 1853, Humphrey Marshall Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

intermediaries to communicate with him, such as Wu Jianzhang and Shanghai consul Edward Cunningham.[53] Therefore, Marshall took it upon himself to write directly to Yiliang.[54] After sending letters back and forth, Yiliang finally agreed to meet on July 4, 1853 in Kunshan, a city near Shanghai.[55]

During their meeting, Marshall handed Yiliang his diplomatic credentials, informing Yiliang that he would travel to Beijing himself if the letter were not transmitted to the emperor as promised. Following the meeting, Yiliang, unsure of the content of Marshall's letter and wanting to avoid imperial censure, sent the letter to imperial commissioner Ye Mingchen, who examined the contents. Upon determining that the letter followed the conventions set out by the treaty, Yiliang forwarded Marshall's credentials to Beijing accompanied by a letter describing Humphrey's character to the emperor as "competent" and "clever."[56] After an exhausting series of exchanges, Marshall succeeded in sending his credentials to the court in Beijing, but that was as far as he could advance US-China diplomacy in a year. He was not able to travel to Beijing himself and felt that his mission had failed in establishing this basic aspect of diplomacy that would allow for more direct communication with the Qing court.[57]

In some ways, Marshall simply had a presumptuous vision of US-China relations. In a letter to the US consul in Guangzhou, Paul S. Forbes, Marshall revealed that he believed the true value of traveling to Beijing was to open China further to trade beyond the five ports and allow

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[53] Humphrey Marshall to Wu Jianzhang, June 29, 1853, Humphrey Marshall Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
[54] Humphrey Marshall to Governor-General I-Liang [Yiliang], June 29, 1853, Humphrey Marshall Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
[55] Wu Jianzhang to Humphrey Marshall, July 1, 1853, Humphrey Marshall Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; Wu Jianzhang to Humphrey Marshall, July 4, 1853, Humphrey Marshall Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
[56] Wu Jianzhang to Humphrey Marshall, July 10, 1853, Humphrey Marshall Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
[57] Historian of U.S.-China relations Foster Rhea Dulles characterized the response of Ye Mingchen, the imperial commissioner at Guangzhou, and Governor-General Yiliang as a clear rejection of Marshall's diplomatic efforts. See Dulles, *China and America*, 46.

Americans access to the interior. The last clause of the Treaty of Wangxia stated that after twelve years the United States and China would renegotiate the treaty, and Marshall naively hoped that he could have productive discussions with Qing officials: "[To go to Beijing], you know, is my main desire, and every day convinces me more and more of the great importance of succeeding in it. It is a necessary preliminary to the opening of China."[58] He claimed that commerce would not expand "while we are held at arm's length or while the Mandarins make a merit of *incivility* to the representatives of Western powers."[59] Although Marshall did not accomplish this aim himself, historian Laurence Schneider noted that he initiated communication with Ye Mingchen and Yiliang concerning a diplomatic presence at the court in Beijing, an important first step.[60] Another historian Chester A. Bain speculated that had Marshall not been recalled by the Pierce administration, he may have seen the fruits of his labors. In the latter half of the 1850s, Western powers used naval force in Tianjin to successfully demand a diplomatic presence at Beijing following the Second Opium War.[61]

Humphrey Marshall's legacy remains controversial. China historian John K. Fairbank took a rather unsympathetic view of Marshall as a person who "combined all the provincialism of a middle-Westerner, in the days when Anglo-American relations were none too cordial, with a fervid sense of the importance of his position."[62] Tyler Dennett, another influential scholar of US-China relations, unfavorably characterized him as "autocratic, dictatorial, pitifully vain, and gifted with singular capacities for controversy, yet intellectually he was an able man."[63] Te-kong Tong took offense at Dennett's interpretation, arguing that Marshall faced difficulties because he

[58] Humphrey Marshall to P.S. Forbes, June 21, 1853, Humphrey Marshall Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. See also: Arnold Xiangze Jiang, *The United States and China* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988), 8.
[59] Ibid.
[60] Schneider, "Humphrey Marshall: Commissioner to China, 1853-1854," 120.
[61] Bain, "Commodore Matthew Perry, Humphrey Marshall, and the Taiping Rebellion," 269.
[62] Fairbank, *Trade and Diplomacy on the China* Coast, 415.
[63] Dennett, *Americans in Eastern Asia*, 206.

conscientiously carried out his duties as commissioner and that the unstable state of US diplomacy in East Asia accounted for many of the "controversies" that plagued Marshall. For Tong, both historians and contemporaries misunderstood the challenges Marshall faced.[64]

Whether it was his efforts to communicate with the emperor or his commercially-motivated support of the Qing dynasty over the Taiping, Marshall relied on the treaty as a tool and reference to support his positions often despite the obvious resistance of Qing officials and American naval officers. Nevertheless, his year's work prepared the way for his successor Robert McLane to take a similar approach, which the United States adopted as policy for the remainder of the Taiping Civil War. Finally, Marshall's persevering criticism of Perry resulted in improved relations between the navy and future US diplomats, who enjoyed greater control over the use of naval vessels until the American Civil War.[65] Although Marshall came to China with little experience outside of Kentucky and Washington, DC, with no special knowledge of China or the Chinese language, he made some headway with his dogged pursuit of establishing formal diplomacy and following the stipulations of the treaty. Yet later diplomats who employed tact and personal charm, such as Anson Burlingame, made far greater strides diplomatically.

Anson Burlingame

In 1854, Marshall returned to the United States, and a series of US commissioners to China followed during the remainder of the 1850s—Robert McLane, Peter Parker, William B. Reed, and John E. Ward—all for one to two years each due to personal and political reasons. Robert McLane resigned the position due to poor health. Medical missionary-diplomat Peter Parker, who already worked with the US Legation as an interpreter, took over the duties of US commissioner for two years until a new administration in Washington under President James

[64] Te-kong Tong, *United States Diplomacy in China, 1844-60* (Seattle, Washington: University of Washington Press, 1964), 117.
[65] Bain, "Commodore Matthew Perry, Humphrey Marshall, and the Taiping Rebellion," 269.

Buchanan appointed William B. Reed.[66] During a focused, year-and-a-half commissionership, Reed negotiated a new commercial treaty with China, and three days following the signing of the supplementary documents of the Treaty of Tianjin, feeling that he had accomplished enough, took a mail steamer back to the United States.[67] His successor, John E. Ward, a Southerner with ties to the North through education and marriage, resigned his post soon after the outbreak of the American Civil War and returned to his home in Savannah, Georgia.[68]

During this time, major changes occurred in Chinese-foreign relations. After the First Opium War, anti-foreigner sentiment intensified in China, particularly in Guangzhou where foreigners continued to smuggle opium, and local Chinese strongly resisted the enforcement of treaty privileges. In October 1856, Qing authorities seized Chinese sailors aboard a British ship, the *Arrow*. When Imperial Commissioner Ye Mingchen did not rectify the situation to the liking of the British consul Harry Parkes, the British used the incident as justification for the Second Opium War, also known as the Arrow War (1856-1860).[69] The British demanded increased trading privileges in China, and the French soon joined them, while Americans remained neutral excepting one incident in which Qing forces fired upon an American vessel departing Guangzhou. Commodore James Armstrong of the American East India Squadron retaliated the following day by bombarding Chinese forts at Guangzhou but Secretary of State William L. Marcy later rebuked him.[70] Although Americans did not take part in the fighting and ensured that

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[66] Michael P. Riccards, *The Presidency and the Middle Kingdom: China, the United States, and Executive Leadership* (Lanham, MD; Oxford: Lexington Books, 2000), 21. For further discussion of these diplomats see: Yuan Chung Teng, "American China-Trade, American-Chinese Relations and the Taiping Rebellion, 1853-1858," *Journal of Asian History* 3 (1969): 93-117; Edward Vose Gulick, *Peter Parker and the Opening of China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973); George Baker Stevens, *The Life, Letters, and Journals of the Rev. and Honorable Peter Parker, M.D., Missionary, Physician, Diplomatist* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 1972); Foster M. Farley, "William B. Reed: President Buchanan's Minister to China, 1857-1858," *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies* 37 (July 1970): 269-280.
[67] Tong, *United States Diplomacy in China, 1844-60*, 254.
[68] Ibid., 255-256, 282.
[69] Dulles, *China and America*, 47.
[70] Ibid.

the Qing knew about their neutrality, they acquired the same privileges as the British and the French after the war. The new treaties opened 11 additional ports to foreign trade, admitted legations into Beijing, permitted missionary activity, legalized the opium trade, and granted foreign vessels the right to travel on the Yangzi River. The Xianfeng Emperor ratified this treaty in 1860, and several months later Abraham Lincoln appointed Anson Burlingame US minister to China.[71]

As minister to China, Burlingame ushered in the era of Western-style US-China diplomacy and reversed the US and European policy of using force to coerce Qing compliance with treaty stipulations. Instead, Burlingame used his charisma to create and promote a "cooperative policy" between the Qing, US, and European governments. Yet underlying his success as a diplomat in and the productivity of US merchants in China was an obvious fact: British military power, not American, ensured Qing compliance. Although Burlingame and the United States benefited, they had not participated (in any significant way) in the wars that made US-China relations and trade in ports like Shanghai and Hong Kong possible. However, US neutrality provided an advantage regarding diplomatic relations with China. In an instance of excellent timing, Burlingame announced his decision to give up his position as US minister in 1868 just as the newly-created Qing foreign office, the Zongli Yamen, had been contemplating appointing as Westerner as their envoy to the treaty power nations. For them, Burlingame was a natural choice—he advocated a peaceful, cooperative approach to China and was not a Briton. With Burlingame's appointment as China's ambassador, US-China relations reached new, unexpected heights as one of the oldest empires and one of the youngest nations collaborated. However, this development was short-lived. Burlingame died midway through his mission, and

[71]For further discussion of the Arrow War and the US-China Treaty of Tianjin (1858) see: Dulles, "Chapter IV: Revising the Treaties," in *China and America*, 45-62; Dennett, "Chapter XVII: William B. Reed and the Treaty of Tientsin," in *Americans in the Eastern Asia*, 311-332; Tong, *United States Diplomacy in China*, 173-254.

without the power of his personality, American officials returned to gunboat diplomacy as a preferred method for dealing with China.

Burlingame made a reputation for himself as a great orator and politician with an engaging personality, although some historians have described him and his political and diplomatic work as superficial.[72] He was born in New York and as a child moved with his family to Michigan. Anson Burlingame was an impressive speaker at an early age. For instance, as a college student, he gave a speech at a celebration of George Washington's birthday at a Methodist church in Detroit. Local newspapers praised the speech, and Anson Burlingame wrote to his parents that the accolades "puffed [him] to the skies."[73] He returned to Boston and attended Harvard Law School, practiced law in Boston, and then acted as a representative in the Massachusetts state legislature from 1853 to 1854.

Burlingame was elected to the US House of Representatives from 1855 to 1861, where his oratory skills developed further. In 1856, he gave his most famous speech following the caning of Charles Sumner on the House floor by South Carolina Representative Preston Brooks.

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[72] John Schrecker claims that historians' treatment of Burlingame has changed with the ebb and flow of US-China relations. From the late nineteenth through the first half of the twentieth centuries, Burlingame was a famous figure, lauded both in the United States and China. With the Communist victory in 1949, American scholars criticized Burlingame for his naivete, and in Maoist China historians attacked Burlingame as yet another agent of "American imperialism." See: John Schrecker, "'For the Equality of Men—For the Equality of Nations': Anson Burlingame and China's First Embassy to the United States, 1868," *Journal of American-East Asian Relations* 17 (2010), 33-34. Frederick Wells Williams (the son of missionary-diplomat Samuel Wells Williams) wrote the only standalone biography of Burlingame. He noted in 1912 that Burlingame's contemporaries did not take him seriously enough while he was alive and that those espousing anti-Chinese-immigration sentiments sought to discredit him and his treaty after his death. Frederick Wells Williams, *Anson Burlingame and the First Chinese Mission to Foreign Powers* (New York: Scribner's, 1912), viii-ix. Other recent work by Xu Guoqi views Burlingame's cooperative spirit positively as an instance of US-Chinese person-to-person diplomacy. See "Anson Burlingame: China's First Messenger to the World" in *Chinese and Americans: A Shared History* (Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press, 2014). US historian Dael Norwood posits another reason that historians and the public tend to pass over Burlingame is that he was a unique case that does not fit into larger historical narratives of the nineteenth century. Dael Norwood, "Reconstruction's Relations: The Geopolitics of the Burlingame Mission in the United States and China, 1868" (presentation, Annual Meeting of the American Historical Association, Denver, CO, January 7, 2017).

[73] Anson Burlingame to Joel and Freelove Burlingame, February 28, 1843, Anson Burlingame and Edward L. Burlingame Family Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; See also newspaper clippings in Folder 1, Box 1 of the Anson Burlingame and Edward L. Burlingame Family Papers.

When Sumner denounced President Franklin Pierce and Southerners who supported pro-slavery violence in Kansas, including Brooks's cousin Andrew P. Butler, Brooks took offense and later attacked Sumner. Burlingame repudiated Brooks's attack of Sumner, although he had to wait a month to deliver his speech after many other representatives had shared their own opinions. The speech exemplified Burlingame's oratorical style—hyperbolic circumlocution, better at eliciting emotional responses than producing succinct, logical arguments. Later printed by political opponents in Massachusetts ("who believe that on this occasion he said the right word, in the right way, and at the right time"), the speech filled 29 pages. Burlingame maintained an impassioned tone throughout the speech, but he reached melodramatic heights when he denounced Preston Brooks' attack:

> Again and again, quicker and faster fell the leaden blows, until he [Preston Brooks] was torn away from his victim, when the Senator from Massachusetts [Charles Sumner] fell in the arms of his friends, and his blood ran down on the Senate floor. Sir, the act was brief, and my comments on it shall be brief also. I denounce it in the name of the Constitution it violated. I denounce in the name of civilization, which it outraged. I denounce it in the name of humanity. I denounce it in the name of that fair play which bullies and prize fighters respect.[74]

In response, Preston Brooks challenged Burlingame to a duel. Burlingame, who was a "well-known marksman," accepted and chose the Canadian side of Niagara Falls as the location to circumvent the US ban on dueling.[75] Brooks, not expecting this response, did not appear at the duel.

Burlingame became a political celebrity in the anti-slavery movement as a result and went on a speaking tour across the United States. He wrote about the experience: "I am amazed

[74] Anson Burlingame, *Defence of Massachusetts: Speech of Hon. Anson Burlingame, of Massachusetts, in the United States House of Representatives, June 21, 1856* (Cambridge: Printed for private distribution, 1856). This volume comes with an amusing prefatory note about the publishers: "This edition of Mr. Burlingame's speech is printed at the suggestion of his constituents who have heretofore been his political opponents, but who believe that on this occasion he said the right word, in the right way, and at the right time."
[75] "OBITUARY: Hon. Anson Burlingame. New York Times (1857-1922)," *New York Times* (New York, New York), Feb. 24.

at the enthusiasm the people feel for me, personally, growing out of my conduct in the Brooks matter."[76] He continued: "I am on a mighty torrent of public feeling and how far it will bear me I cannot tell."[77] When Burlingame traveled to Indianapolis, 10,000 people came out to see him, creating a festive atmosphere with some in costume: women dressed up as states and men as "border ruffians."[78]

Although Burlingame had won elections for a seat in the House of Representatives in 1854, 1856, and 1858, in 1860 he spent so much time stumping for Abraham Lincoln that he neglected his own re-election campaign and lost his seat.[79] Lincoln and his Secretary of State William H. Seward first appointed Burlingame as ambassador to the Austrian Empire on March 26, 1861, but Austria objected to Burlingame's public support of Lajos Kossuth and the Hungarian independence movement. Lincoln then appointed him US minister to China.[80]

With the acceptance of foreign legations at Beijing and regular communication with the highest levels of the Qing government, Burlingame could focus on diplomatic work rather than the promotion of business and trade that had dominated the work of American diplomats up to 1861. This was reflected in his close relationship with the Zongli Yamen and European diplomats, his rejection of requests from individual American businessmen to promote or join entrepreneurial ventures in China, his involvement in early cultural diplomacy, and ultimately his development of the "cooperative policy."

As minister, Burlingame acted as the main point of contact between the United States and China. On July 20, 1862, he arrived in Beijing after visiting Guangzhou and Shanghai. As the

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[76] Anson Burlingame to Jane Burlingame, August 3, 1856, Anson Burlingame and Edward L. Burlingame Family Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
[77] Ibid.
[78] Anson Burlingame to Jane Burlingame, August 6, 1856, Anson Burlingame and Edward L. Burlingame Family Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
[79] Anderson, *Imperialism and Idealism*, 19.
[80] William H. Seward to Anson Burlingame, March 26, 1861, Anson Burlingame and Edward L. Burlingame Family Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

first American envoy residing in Beijing, he successfully cultivated a friendly relationship with Qing officials and members of other foreign legations. He was part of a small foreign diplomatic presence in Beijing, which included the legations of Austria-Hungary, Belgium, Great Britain, France, Germany, Holland, Italy, Japan, Russia, and Spain. Qing officials located the legations near the Imperial Palace in an area of the city historically used to house members of visiting tributary missions (東交民巷 *Dongjiaominxiang*).[81] His wife, Jane Burlingame, among the first diplomatic wives in China and perhaps the first American woman to live in Beijing, maintained a consistent correspondence with her family in the United States. A letter to her father provided an overview of Anson Burlingame's work:

> He has almost daily conferences with the Chinese officials, and a great deal of correspondence with his consuls in all parts of China. Every mail brings a large package of cases in which the consuls appeal to him for decisions. These bring his study of law very much into practice. He continues to receive from the home Government approval of all that he has done in China, and almost 'carte blanche' for the future.[82]

The State Department viewed the entry to the Qing court as a victory in and of itself, even if the British had exacted the privilege as a result of the Second Opium War while Americans enjoyed the spoils without having to fight.

In Beijing, Burlingame and other foreign diplomats did not meet personally with the emperor but instead with Manchu and Han officials from the newly-created, provisional "Office in General Charge of Foreign Affairs" (總理各國事務衙門 *zongli geguo shiwu yamen*), commonly referred to as the Zongli Yamen (Foreign Office).[83] The Zongli Yamen centrally organized offices that had contact with Westerners to direct foreign affairs not only in Beijing

[81] Michael J. Moser and Yeone Wei-Chih Moser, *Foreigners Within the Gates: The Legations at Peking* (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1993), 14-16.
[82] Jane C. Burlingame to George Livermore, May 24, 1863, Anson Burlingame and Edward L. Burlingame Family Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
[83] Knight Biggerstaff, "The Official Chinese Attitude toward the Burlingame Mission," *The American Historical Review* 41 (July 1936), 683.

but provincially and locally.[84] By cultivating a friendly, communicative relationship with Zongli Yamen officials, Burlingame positively impacted US-China relations more broadly. By the end of his tenure as US minister to China, Prince Gong—the half-brother of the deceased Xianfeng Emperor, regent along with Empress Dowager Cixi on behalf of her son the Tongzhi emperor, and head of the Zongli Yamen—praised Burlingame's administration and hoped that his successor would "do as well and in the same manner."[85]

Besides Burlingame's amiable personality and spirit of cooperation with both Qing officials and European diplomats, Burlingame's family played a role in his popularity in Beijing. In 1863, his wife Jane Burlingame conducted diplomatic visits with the wives of Zongli Yamen assistant directors Hengqi (恆祺) and Chonglun (崇綸), but faced obstacles in communicating effectively with them. It would have been inappropriate for a translator—all of whom were men—to join them, so Jane Burlingame and the Chinese women communicated with each other using gestures and by exchanging food and gifts.[86] Jane and Anson Burlingame's daughter "Gertie," the first Western child to live in Beijing, drew a lot of attention. Jane Burlingame wrote to her older son Edward, who was studying in Germany at the time: "The Chinese look at her as if she has dropped from the clouds."[87] She compared the phenomenon to the attention given to 17-year-old Japanese Tateishi Onojirô Noriyuki (popularly referred to by the nickname "Tommy"), who traveled with the 1860 Japanese embassy to the United States as an interpreter in training and became the star of the group. Wherever he went, large crowds came to see him,

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[84] Jennifer M. Rudolph, *Negotiated Power in Late Imperial China: The Zongli Yamen and the Politics of Reform* (Ithaca, NY: East Asia Program, Cornell University, 2008), 18-22.
[85] Samuel Wells Williams to Anson Burlingame, June 6, 1865, Anson Burlingame and Edward L. Burlingame Family Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
[86] Jane C. Burlingame to sister, June 2, 1863, Anson Burlingame and Edward L. Burlingame Family Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
[87] Jane C. Burlingame to Edward Burlingame, September 23, 1862, Anson Burlingame and Edward L. Burlingame Family Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

newspapers reported about his comings and goings, and women doted upon him.[88] In Beijing, Jane Burlingame and Gertie visited the Temple of Heaven, an imperial complex of Taoist buildings, where a large crowd gathered to see them. Gertie responded rather nonchalantly to her popularity: "I don't care if there are so many people. They only want to see the 'Chinchi' go by."[89] In Beijing, where the Chinese government had only allowed a limited number of foreigners, Burlingame's family added popular interest to his reputation and perhaps humanized foreigners.

Burlingame and his family were not only popular with the Chinese but also with other foreigners in Beijing. The British minister, Frederick Bruce, attributed the friendly relationship between the United States and Great Britain to Burlingame's attitude of cooperation toward Europeans and Chinese in Beijing.[90] Bruce was the son of the Seventh Earl of Elgin—of Elgin Marbles fame—who had a long and varied diplomatic career that took him to the United States, Hong Kong, Newfoundland, Bolivia, Uruguay, and Egypt before traveling to China with his brother, Lord James Bruce, the Eighth Earl of Elgin, in the late 1850s during treaty negotiations intended to end the Second Opium War.[91] Rather than relying on threats to use force or make demands, Burlingame consulted with the legations of Western nations to address any questions that arose concerning China-West relations, seeking to peacefully enforce the treaties without compromising the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Qing Empire.[92] Burlingame worked particularly closely with Bruce: "With Sir Frederick Bruce, the British minister, my

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[88] Jane C. Burlingame to Edward Burlingame, November 26, 1862, Anson Burlingame and Edward L. Burlingame Family Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; Masao Miyoshi, *As We Saw Them: The First Japanese Embassy to the United States* (Philadelphia: Paul Dry Books, 2005).
[89] Jane C. Burlingame to Edward Burlingame, March 25, 1863, Anson Burlingame and Edward L. Burlingame Family Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
[90] Frederick Bruce to Anson Burlingame, November 25, 1864, Anson Burlingame and Edward L. Burlingame Family Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
[91] Jones, *The British Diplomatic Service*, 206, 209; Michael J. Moser and Yeone Wei-Chih Moser, *Foreigners Within the Gates: The Legations at Peking* (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1993), 8.
[92] Dennett, *China and America*, 372-373.

conversations were elaborate and exhaustive. I said to him frankly, that we represented the first trading powers here, and that our interests were identical."[93] Frederick Bruce and Anson and Jane Burlingame also developed a close relationship. She wrote to her father that "Anson has at last found someone who can out-talk him in Mr. Bruce." He visited their home daily to talk politics, history, and Chinese affairs "until it seems as if they would never have anything to talk about again. But the next day they go at it again."[94] W.A.P. Martin, a missionary and educator, personally observed the relationship between the two: "Each imagined that he was leading the other. Like double stars, their influence was mutual, but in power of persuasion Bruce was no match for Burlingame."[95] Jane Burlingame also described how their residence was a meeting place not just for Burlingame and Bruce, but was a "resort" for other Europeans in Beijing, providing a welcoming, informal atmosphere for diplomats to meet.[96]

While Burlingame enjoyed personal prestige, respect, and close relationships with diplomats in Beijing, particularly with British minister Frederick Bruce, he quietly acknowledged that British military power made the US position in China possible. In 1865, Burlingame sent US Secretary of State Seward an article from a Boston newspaper by John Humphrey, the master of the American barque *Wild Gazelle*, who complained: "It is very mortifying to an American to be told by an Englishman, 'You are indebted to the British for what protection you have on the coast of China.'"[97] Although not often mentioned in his writings,

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[93] Anson Burlingame to William H. Seward, June 20, 1863, Despatch No. 42, in *Papers relating to Foreign Affairs accompanying the Annual Message of the President of the United States to the First Session of the Thirty-Eighth Congress, Part II* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1864), 860.
[94] Jane C. Burlingame to George Livermore, January 12, 1865, Anson Burlingame and Edward L. Burlingame Family Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
[95] Qtd. in Anderson, *Imperialism and Idealism*, 20.
[96] Jane C. Burlingame to George Livermore, March 13, 1863, Anson Burlingame and Edward L. Burlingame Family Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
[97] Anson Burlingame to William H. Seward, December 1, 1865, *Despatches from U.S. Ministers to China, 1843-1906.*

Burlingame could not help but acknowledge that American diplomacy and trade in China continued to depend on the threat and use of British military power against China.

Burlingame's success and long tenure as US minister to China drew the attention of businessmen in the United States, who contacted him regarding potential business ventures. His refusal to endorse them indicated a growing professionalism in US diplomacy in China as Burlingame refrained from promoting specific businesses in China. Augustine Heard Jr., whose uncle had formed the China trade company Augustine Heard & Co. in 1840, privately inquired how the US government would "look upon the introduction of Chinese labor into the US to till the lands of the South."[98] Heard opportunistically looked to the Southern labor market three months after the end of the American Civil War, hoping to fill the gap left by the abolition of slavery with a new form of cheap, unfree labor: Chinese indentured servants, or "coolies." Heard suggested that Americans no longer opposed the importation of Chinese labor in the South. Southern slave owners would not be threatened by the competition of another labor force as they would have been prior to 1865. Yet Northern philanthropists worried that Chinese laborers were deceived into accepting foreign contracts and then were sold to the highest bidder to toil for years with no recourse, and Congress had forbidden the transportation of coolies in American ships with the 1862 Anti-Coolie Act. To avoid the appearance of slavery, Heard proposed that plantation owners should not be able to sell the coolie contracts to others and instead commit to keeping the coolies at their plantations for the duration of the indenture.[99] While there is no record of Burlingame's reply, growing anti-Chinese sentiment in the United States due to labor

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[98] Harvard's Baker Library holds the papers of Augustine Heard & Co. and has created a beautiful online exhibit, "A Chronicle of the China Trade: The Records of Augustine Heard & Co., 1840-1877," *Harvard University, Baker Library*, accessed April 6, 2017, https://www.library.hbs.edu/hc/heard/index.html.
Augustine Heard Jr. to Anson Burlingame, July 13, 1865, Anson Burlingame and Edward L. Burlingame Family Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
[99] Ibid.

competition, particularly in California, as well as the illegal and taboo nature of the coolie trade makes it unlikely that Burlingame would have responded positively.

Burlingame's response to other commercial queries confirmed the changing nature of US diplomacy in China. On February 20, 1867, William C. Ralston, Oliver Eldridge, and Charles Lane of San Francisco wrote privately to see if the Chinese government would allow them to light Chinese city streets with gas. They hoped Burlingame would use his influence with officials to advocate for the project, perhaps indirectly through a commercial firm located in China. The businessmen believed the profits of such a project would fill their pockets, but they couched their proposal in terms of technological uplift: "As we are initiating the Great East into acquaintance with the civilization of our country, the time appears appropriate for the introduction of our convenience and amenities."[100] Unlike Caleb Cushing's use of the word "civilization," which referred to religion, law, and culture, these businessmen used the term instead as a stand-in for Western technology. Oddly, the authors went on to praise the Chinese for their "tractability":

> No people assimilate more kindly with the habits of our nation, or live more peacefully under our laws, than the gentle Chinese. As they are so tractable, as well as intelligent to avail themselves of all advantages, while residing amongst us, we infer they will easily understand & accept any improvements we may suggest, and firmly believe the reward of the inaugurators of the scheme now placed before you, will be incalculably great.[101]

This description—coming from San Francisco, the hotbed of anti-Chinese sentiment in nineteenth-century America—differed from common negative depictions that represented the Chinese as stubborn to adopt Western ways. Instead, Ralston, Eldridge, and Lane proposed that the Chinese looked forward to consuming Western goods and services. Burlingame jotted a note on the letter that he had responded to them on May 4, 1867 and could not in any way, directly or indirectly, involve himself with their proposal.

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[100] Oliver Eldridge and Charles Lane to Anson Burlingame, February 20, 1867, Anson Burlingame and Edward L. Burlingame Family Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
[101] Ibid.

Burlingame deflected requests to join American business ventures, but he facilitated cultural diplomacy and exchange. He wrote to American poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow about his poem, “A Psalm of Life,” that extolled taking control of life to make a difference in the world. Thomas Wade, the secretary of the British legation at Beijing, enjoyed Longfellow’s poetry and had translated part of “A Psalm of Life” into Chinese. He posted it onto the door of his study where Chinese visitors saw and commented on it. He later translated the entire poem and gave it to Dong Xun (董恂), a scholar and a minister at the Zongli Yamen. Dong Xun re-worked Wade’s literal translation into poetic form and painted this new Chinese-language version of the poem onto a fan. Burlingame promised Dong Xun that he would deliver it personally to Longfellow when he returned to the United States on a visit in 1865. Burlingame handed Longfellow the fan with the Chinese version of “A Psalm of Life” along with an English translation of the Chinese version. When Burlingame returned to China, he gave Dong Xun a book from Longfellow. “A Psalm of Life” was the first English poem completely translated into Chinese, marking an important moment of cultural exchange between Longfellow and scholar-diplomat Dong Xun.[102]

Chinese literary scholar and writer Qian Zhongshu (錢鍾書, 1910-1998) later provided a critical assessment of the two Chinese versions of Longfellow’s poem. He characterized Wade’s version as a “word-for-word, sentence-by-sentence crib to be smuggled into the examination hall,” which attempted to translate the literal meaning of the poem into Chinese.[103] Although Thomas Wade had better language skills than most Westerners in Beijing and would go on to be the first Professor of Chinese at Cambridge University, his translation was still incoherent. Dong Xun, who did not know any English, based his version of “A Psalm of Life” on Wade’s

[102] Anson Burlingame to Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, January 17, 1867, Anson Burlingame and Edward L. Burlingame Family Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
[103] Qian Zhongshu, 225.

imperfect translation. Qian Zhongshu commented: "All he had to hold onto was the intractable, even obscure translation, perceiving the original poem as if through a glass darkly and consequently misunderstanding or misrepresenting it."[104] Such informal often fumbling efforts characterized the early cultural exchanges between Chinese and Americans.

In 1865 when Burlingame returned to the United States for several months, he intended to resign his post as minister and re-enter American politics.[105] Instead, he and Secretary of State Seward refined Burlingame's "cooperative policy," in hopes of replacing the policy of the European powers, which favored the threat and use of force. Seward and Burlingame wanted to encourage expanded trade, better diplomatic relations, cultural exchange, religious rights, and free immigration with China.[106] Essentially, Burlingame formalized a policy that he had been practicing in China already for several years, which he based on his own understanding of peace and friendship between the United States, China, and the European powers. For Seward, the policy represented more of a pragmatic approach to cultivating American power in China, taking into consideration America's limited funds and naval power during and after the American Civil War. The policy also reflected Seward's strong interest in the Pacific, which would lead him to broker the purchase of Alaska from the Russians and take an interest in annexing Hawaiʻi. Seward trusted Burlingame to pursue a course of action that would strengthen the American position in Beijing and the future success of trade and commerce in China.[107] With the cooperative policy in hand, Burlingame returned to Beijing in September 1866 after an absence of 15 months.[108]

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[104] Ibid., 226.
[105] Dennett, *Americans in Eastern Asia*, 368.
[106] Gordon H. Chang, *Fateful Ties: A History of America's Preoccupation with China* (Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press, 2015), 93.
[107] Riccards, *The Presidency and the Middle* Kingdom, 23; Dulles, *China and America*, 65; Anderson, *Imperialism and Idealism*, 25.
[108] Anderson, *Imperialism and Idealism*, 32.

The Zongli Yamen and the Qing court held Burlingame in high regard. In November 1867, Burlingame was planning to resign his post as US minister and made plans to move to California. When Prince Gong and other officials learned of this, they invited Burlingame to the office of the Zongli Yamen, and Wenxiang (文祥) suggested that Burlingame become China's ambassador. Since they first arrived in Beijing, foreign diplomats had been pressuring Qing officials to send representatives to foreign capitals, and Qing officials responded that they would do so eventually but that it would be a gradual process.[109] For Qing officials, appointing Burlingame as their minister was a step toward Chinese representation abroad. In a letter to Secretary of State Seward, Burlingame noted the importance of the offer: "I may be permitted to add, that when the oldest nation in the world, containing one-third of the human race, seeks, for the first time, to come into relations with the west, and requests the youngest nation through its representative to act as the medium of such change, the mission is one not to be solicited or rejected."[110] Burlingame correctly assessed the unprecedented nature of the offer and the opportunity of a closer relationship with the Chinese. The Qing government also offered him the extravagant salary of $40,000 per year, which likely made the decision to accept the position even easier.[111] Jane Burlingame worried about the health of her husband, who had expressed a tendency toward insomnia during times of political excitement as a representative in the House. He would see even more exciting days as China's ambassador. Jane Burlingame wrote to her son, Edward: "I have been quite worried, for fear your father would be sick. It was too grave and responsible a matter for him to decide lightly, and he has been the 'sleepless Burlingame' that he

[109] Biggerstaff, "The Official Chinese Attitude Toward the Burlingame Mission," 682-683.
[110] Anson Burlingame to William H. Seward, December 14, 1867, in U.S. Congress, Senate, *Message of the President of the United States, communicating, in compliance with a resolution of the Senate of January 13, 1868, further information in relation to the appointment of Hon. Anson Burlingame to a mission by the Emperor of China,* 40th Cong., 2d Sess., 1868, S. Ex. Doc. No. 20, part 2.
[111] Undated State Department document, Box 2, Folder 2: "State Department and Diplomatic Documents, 1861-1870 and undated," in Anson Burlingame and Edward L. Burlingame Family Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

used to be in exciting political times in Washington."[112] Jane Burlingame's concerns for her husband's health were well justified, but meanwhile Burlingame and other diplomats and politicians discussed the appointment with great interest.

On November 22, 1867, shortly after the Qing government selected Burlingame as their ambassador, the Zongli Yamen's poetry aficionado, Dong Xun, wrote short poems about the relationship between the United States and China. Burlingame saved the English translations of the poems. Dong Xun celebrated the friendship between an old China and youthful United States:

> Hoary China of five thousand years,
> With the youthful Union only eighty,
> One on the east, the other to the west,
> Now join, the old & new
> To the joy of all mankind

Dong Xun also included some lines specifically addressed to Burlingame, who was nearing the end of his stay in China:

> As you sail away on your guest-laden craft
> Thousands of miles far off to the east
> Bearing with you from the Flowery Land
> The tokens of Imperial regard,
> Your virtuous desires, no longer confined,
> Will, I hope, soon see the world as our house[113]

Again, Dong Xun noted the friendship between the United States and China, the great geographical distance between the two, and wished Burlingame well as China's ambassador. The last two lines, especially the phrase "soon see the world as our house," suggested Dong Xun's desire that Burlingame would make the world become part of China's house ("our house"), as opposed to the Western world, which saw China as finally stepping onto the global stage.

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[112] Jane C. Burlingame to Edward Burlingame, November 23, 1867, Anson Burlingame and Edward L. Burlingame Family Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
[113] "Two Stanzas written by Tung Tajin [Dong Xun]," November 22, 1867, Anson Burlingame and Edward L. Burlingame Family Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

In October 1867, the Zongli Yamen had acknowledged in an internal circular letter that a foreign mission was necessary but that "suitable men" were required.[114] The Qing court and Zongli Yamen eventually determined that a foreigner, not a Briton, should represent China to bypass troublesome issues related to protocol of Qing ambassadors in foreign courts, primarily whether Qing officials should be expected to kowtow. Zongli Yamen officials had discussed Burlingame as a possible representative, and his timely resignation as US minister to China precipitated the Zongli Yamen's offer. Following the Zongli Yamen's appointment of Burlingame, Prince Gong wrote in a report: "Your minister has considered that it is not essential for a country to use its own countrymen as representatives; if the person is honest and trustworthy, it does not matter which region he comes from...your minister had a candid discussion with Burlingame and he accepted it with deep feeling."[115] Historian Xu Guoqi suggested that Burlingame may not have been entirely surprised by the offer to become China's envoy. Following Burlingame's official espousal of the cooperative policy two years earlier, Qing officials intimated that he might continue to represent Chinese interests when he returned to the United States.[116]

The Zongli Yamen provided Burlingame with a large retinue including Western, Manchu, and Chinese associates. Two Europeans with language skills joined the embassy: John McLeavy Brown of the British legation and Emile de Champs, a citizen of France, who had traveled with Zongli Yamen official Bin Chun (斌春) on an informal diplomatic tour of Europe in 1866. Burlingame had two assistant ambassadors: Zhigang (志剛), a Manchu official, and Sun Jiagu (孫家谷), a Chinese official, both employed by the Zongli Yamen. Along with these high-

[114] Xu, *Chinese and Americans*, 40-41.
[115] Qtd. in Xu, *Chinese and Americans*, 42.
[116] Ibid., 43.

ranking officials came 24 Chinese as secretaries of the mission.[117] Mark Twain, who had befriended Burlingame in Hawai'i, asked to travel with the Chinese mission to write about it as a correspondent: "Pray save me a place. Correspondents will hover about the Expedition anyhow, & so it will be best for the interests of China & the world, that one of them, at least, should be *reliable*."[118] Although Twain would not travel with the Chinese embassy in Europe, Burlingame encouraged him to write a serious article in the *New York Tribune* (August 28, 1868) about the treaty that would result from the embassy's visit to the United States, titled "The Treaty with China: Its Provisions Explained."[119]

In the United States, news of Burlingame's appointment arrived by early January 1868 via cable, and many newspapers viewed the development as part of a positive trend in US-China relations. One Philadelphia newspaper glowingly titled its article on Burlingame's appointment "Growing American Influence," applauding the news as "one of greatest honors ever paid to an American citizen, one of the greatest acknowledgments and compliments ever given abroad to this country, and one of the most useful positions ever awarded to one of our countrymen."[120] The *Congregationalist and Boston Recorder* also praised the appointment as a great compliment to Burlingame and the United States as part of a trend of improved, closer relations with China:

> The selection by the Emperor is not only a great compliment to Mr. Burlingame, but an expression of the rising influence and power of the United States as seen by foreign nations. The whole drift of recent events is to bring our country into close relations to the Celestial Empire. Steamers now run from San Francisco regularly about once in four

[117] Undated document in the State Department and Diplomatic Documents, Anson Burlingame and Edward L. Burlingame Family Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

[118] Mark Twain [Samuel Clemens] to Anson Burlingame, February 19, [no year given], Anson Burlingame and Edward L. Burlingame Family Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. For a further discussion of Burlingame's and Twain's relationship see: Hsin-yun Ou, Mark Twain, Anson Burlingame, Joseph Hopkins Twichell, and the Chinese," *ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature* 42, vol. 2 (2012): 43–74.

[119] Selina Lai-Henderson argues that Twain's friendship with Burlingame made Twain more sympathetic of the Chinese. See Selina Lai-Henderson, *Mark Twain in China* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2015), 39-41; Martin Zehr, "Mark Twain, 'The Treaty with China,' and the Chinese Connection," *Journal of Transnational American Studie*s 2, no. 1 (2010), 9.

[120] "Growing American Influence," *North American and United States Gazette*, February 10, 1868, 242.

> weeks; twenty thousand Chinamen are at work on the Pacific Railroad—without whom it could not be built—and the American missionary force in China is to be greatly enlarged as speedily as possible. Sometime since the Chinese Government adopted Wheaton's work on International Law; quite a number of young Chinamen are now acquiring an education in this country, and the Emperor already has in his employ a number of young Americans selected from the graduates of our first colleges.[121]

Although many newspapers praised the honor of Burlingame's appointment and what it represented in terms of the US-China relationship, they also noted its singularity. The *North American and United States Gazette* stated: "This honor is unique. Very few countries ever selected an ambassador before from among the citizens and officers of the country to be visited...And it is a little curious that the eldest empire of the world should have given this distinction to the youngest."[122]

The *Milwaukee Daily Sentinel* briefly recognized the importance of Burlingame's mission, but also criticized Burlingame:

> It is not strange that the Emperor of China...should wish to secure the services of a man who could drive a Yankee bargain with the European powers; but Mr. Burlingame is the Minister of the United States, and he sacrifices the dignity of the great nation which he represents when he puts his services in the market, like a mercenary attorney, to the highest bidder.[123]

In another editorial, the *Milwaukee Daily Sentinel* turned its ridicule to the Qing officials who would participate in Burlingame's mission and diplomacy in general. "Diplomacy in Twelve Easy Lessons" flippantly advised Qing diplomatic neophytes with a racist list of lessons, for instance: "When Ho-To-Wa-So-Ko-Chee invites Rt. Hon. Turveydrop Fitz Simmons to dine, rats must not appear upon the bill of fare."[124] The mixed American response to the mission would continue when Burlingame arrived in the United States in March 1868.

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[121] "Summary of the Week," *Congregationalist and Boston Recorder*, January 9, 1868, 16.
[122] "Growing American Influence," *North American and United States Gazette*, February 10, 1868, 242.
[123] "Mr. Burlingame's Mission," *Milwaukee Daily Sentinel*, January 4, 1868, n.p.
[124] "Diplomacy in Twelve Easy Lessons," *Milwaukee Daily Sentinel*, February 18, 1868, n.p.

Burlingame wished to avoid entangling China's embassy in American partisan struggles over Reconstruction, a distinct possibility due to his strong ties with Radical Republicans. Despite his best efforts, most Republicans praised the mission, while Democrats tended to criticize the mission. Burlingame attempted to present China in a favorable light to the American public and was careful to be respectful of the Chinese people in his word choice and in the crafting of the Burlingame Treaty (eight supplementary articles to the 1858 Treaty of Tianjin). The new agreement established reciprocal privileges for China to counteract previous unequal treaties made between China and the Western treaty powers.[125] The Burlingame Treaty did not introduce any novel issues but instead transformed Burlingame's "cooperative policy" into an official treaty agreement.[126]

Burlingame also encountered some resistance during his visit to Great Britain. Some British politicians and merchants feared that China would not observe the stipulations of a new treaty since they had refused to implement treaty stipulations in the past. Charles W. Dilke, a member of the British Parliament, provided Burlingame with recommendations for how best to refute the arguments of those who opposed the new treaty. He suggested focusing on the fact that the new treaty would be agreed to through China's free will rather than by force as had been the case for the past two British-Chinese treaties. Dilke agreed with Burlingame that peaceful treaties and diplomacy were preferable to entering upon "a demoralizing series of wars undertaken for the promotion of Trade."[127]

Charles Sumner also wrote to Burlingame with intelligence about the Chinese mission's reception in Great Britain. Sumner had been chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee

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[125] Schrecker, "'For the Equality of Men—For the Equality of Nations,'" 9-34; Tyler Dennett argues that the eight articles of the Burlingame Treaty did little more than reinforce common practices and stipulations negotiated in previous treaties. See Dennett, *China and America*, 380-383.
[126] Chang, *Fateful Ties*, 96.
[127] Charles W. Dilke to Anson Burlingame, January 30, 1870, Anson Burlingame and Edward L. Burlingame Family Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

since 1861 and had access to intelligence about the British. He suggested some Britons were initially upset that the Qing chose Burlingame, an American, and not one of their own, as China's emissary to the West and would sabotage treaty negotiations, but in the end, would not oppose the ratification of the treaty.[128] US Secretary of State William H. Seward confirmed this assessment: "There are rude outbursts of jealousy and suspicion in England which threaten you some annoyance there. Nevertheless, I think that with the exercise of your accustomed discretion you will be able to secure a fair hearing."[129] Seward suggested that Burlingame use any delays in Great Britain to cross the Channel and gauge the receptiveness of Berlin and Paris to negotiations. Despite some obstacles, Burlingame's mission negotiated a British-Chinese agreement, in which the British agreed to a peaceful approach if the Chinese observed the treaty's stipulations.[130]

Although Burlingame's mission encountered resistance in the United States and Great Britain, businesses and organizations largely welcomed the Chinese. The mission received a flurry of invitations to dinners, receptions, and weekend trips when the embassy traveled to San Francisco, Washington, Boston, New York, and other cities.[131] The Boston Chamber of Commerce, Boston Museum, Jay Cooke & Co. (a US bank headquartered in Philadelphia), and even the state of Rhode Island invited the Chinese embassy to meet with them. A probate judge

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[128] Charles Sumner to Anson Burlingame, September 6, 1868, Anson Burlingame and Edward L. Burlingame Family Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
[129] William H. Seward to Anson Burlingame, September 15, 1868, Anson Burlingame and Edward L. Burlingame Family Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
[130] Dennett, *Americans in Eastern Asia*, 368, 387.
[131] Hamilton A. Hill to Anson Burlingame, June 16, 1868, Anson Burlingame and Edward L. Burlingame Family Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; Foster Rhea Dulles depicts Burlingame's United States visit as completely welcome and a success. He notes one exception. Old China hands, Americans who had been to China and experienced a general Chinese resistance to Western expansion criticized Burlingame's rose-colored characterization of the future US-China relationship. While true, this interpretation glosses over the work that Burlingame and his Radical Republican allies did to arrange a meeting with President Johnson and other politicians in Washington. This also ignores the Democratic criticisms of the Chinese embassy made in newspapers across the country. John Schrecker provided a more nuanced account of China's 1868 embassy to the United States, "'For the Equality of Men—For the Equality of Nations.'"

John Kelley wrote about the rich resources of coal and iron in Indiana, hoping to attract Chinese investment.[132] In Great Britain, Burlingame and his contingent received similar invitations. The Birkenhead Iron Works in northwestern England wrote that they had heard that the Chinese government was considering building several vessels of war and invited the mission to visit their headquarters. They gave an overview of recent clients, which the Chinese no doubt were familiar with (since they had been on the receiving end of their attacks), most notably the British warship *Nemesis*.[133] By 1874, the Qing government had commissioned Birkenhead Iron Works to build iron-sided vessels, including the *Tien-tsin* [Tianjin] and the *Kwangtung* [Guangdong].[134]

Chinese members of the mission expressed their satisfaction with their American ambassador. Fengyi, one of the Chinese secretaries traveling with the mission, wrote to Isaac Livermore, Burlingame's father-in-law, whom he had met in the United States: "Between Chinese and Americans, mutual love always exists, as there is profound and everlasting friendship between the Government of the United States and that which your world-renowned son-in-law is representing."[135] Fengyi admired the new partnership between Burlingame and the Qing government: "Perhaps I may be allowed to say that wherever we go, success follows and that our distinguished Minister His Excellency Anson Burlingame has worked and is still working for the good of his new country [China] so much even the Europeans appreciate him very well for his fidelity."[136] Fengyi and other members of the embassy had developed friendly

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[132][Ambrose] E. Burnside to Anson Burlingame, June 11, 1868; P.M. Field to Anson Burlingame, August 18, 1868; Jay Cooke & Co. to Anson Burlingame, July 21, 1868; W.B. Rud to Anson Burlingame, July 10, 1868; Judge Kelley to Anson Burlingame, July 31, 1868, Anson Burlingame and Edward L. Burlingame Family Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

[133] Birkenhead Iron Works to Anson Burlingame, December 1868, Anson Burlingame and Edward L. Burlingame Family Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; Bruce A. Elleman, *Modern Chinese Warfare, 1795-1989* (London; New York: Routledge, 2005), 25.

[134] *Description of the Birkenhead Iron Works belonging to Messrs. Laird Brothers from "The Practical Magazine," June, 1874* (London: Printed at the Chiswick Press, 1874), 21.

[135] Fung-Yee [Fengyi] to Isaac Livermore, December 4, 1869, Anson Burlingame and Edward L. Burlingame Family Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

[136] Ibid.

relations with Burlingame's family while visiting Massachusetts, and they took the opportunity to forward a note to Isaac Livermore via Jane Burlingame. They complimented Boston and Cambridge, Massachusetts as the best foreign cities they had visited. Although they may have written this comment as a courtesy, the simple existence of these notes to Livermore speaks to the good feelings that the Chinese members of the embassy had about Burlingame and his leadership.[137] The relative success and pleasantness of the mission up to that point made Anson Burlingame's death an even more shocking event.

While the embassy was in St. Petersburg, Russia, Burlingame suddenly and unexpectedly died of pneumonia on February 23, 1870 at the age of 50. Secretary of State Hamilton Fish wrote to the US ambassador to Russia, Andrew G. Curtin, and expressed that the State Department had heard the news "with mingled feelings of surprise and grief" especially since Burlingame had died "in the midst of a career of usefulness and distinction of the civilized world."[138] The US government and people would "cherish with pride and gratitude the memory of his services to the country of his birth, and those he was rendering to mankind, in founding an intercourse between the Western Powers and China, based upon the Christian principles of Justice, peace and good will."[139] Many other diplomats, politicians, friends, and acquaintances communicated similar expressions of grief to Burlingame's family.

On May 10, 1870, the Tongzhi emperor issued an imperial edict upon the news of Burlingame's death with the seal of the Zongli Yamen. This edict, along with an English translation, was sent through the US Legation in Beijing to Burlingame's widow, Jane

[137] Che-ko-an and Sun-kia-sung to Isaac Livermore, December 4, 1869, Anson Burlingame and Edward L. Burlingame Family Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
[138] Hamilton Fish to Andrew G. Curtin, February 24, 1870, Anson Burlingame and Edward L. Burlingame Family Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
[139] Ibid.

Burlingame.[140] The US chargé d'affaires, Samuel Wells Williams, explained that it was customary to confer a title of nobility to deceased statesmen, and the imperial edict promoted Anson Burlingame to a rank on par with the members of the Privy Council. The Tongzhi emperor, who came to power as a boy in 1861, the same year that Western diplomats arrived in Beijing, lamented Burlingame's passing. He paid for funeral arrangements and gave the Burlingame family 10,000 silver taels.[141] The emperor concluded by explaining that the embassy's assistant ambassadors, Zhigang and Sun Jiagu, along with Chinese secretaries and interpreters, Emile de Champs and John McLeavy Brown, would help carry out these tasks and continue the work of the mission. Samuel Wells Williams's translation closely followed the original Chinese except for a few places where he indicated the role of various people mentioned (Zhigang and Sun Jiagu as fellow envoys of the mission, and Emile de Champs and John McLeavy Brown as secretaries of the mission). He also added a phrase that Burlingame had managed his duties "with the highest wisdom and earnestness," whereas the original Chinese does not express that exact sentiment. Rather it stated that Burlingame worked diligently without ceasing (不辭勞瘁 *bu ci lao cui*). This addition did not change the broad meaning of the letter, but Williams's translation was certainly more verbose in its praise of Burlingame.

While the Chinese embassy continued onto Brussels and Rome with little diplomatic success, many others mourned the loss of Anson Burlingame.[142] Historian and statesman George Bancroft, who was a diplomatic minister in Berlin at the time, wrote: "[Burlingame] was fulfilling his great duty of introducing China into the circle of civilized states and placing it

[140] Samuel Wells Williams to Jane Burlingame, May 23, 1870, Anson Burlingame and Edward L. Burlingame Family Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
[141] Tongzhi emperor, 同治帝 "同治九年四月初十日總理衙門恭錄 *Tongzhi jiunian siyuechu shiri Zongli Yamen Gonglu*" [Imperial Edict, Tongzhi reign, 9th year, beginning of the 4th month, 10th day, to the Zongli Yamen], 1870.; S. Wells Williams to Jane Burlingame, May 23, 1870, Anson Burlingame and Edward L. Burlingame Family Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
[142] Dulles, *China and America*, 74.

under the protection of international law, and his death is a loss not to the empire alone by which he was employed, but to humanity."[143] Mark Twain, known more for his caustic satire, wrote an uncharacteristically moving tribute of Burlingame whom he characterized as "a very, very great man" distinguished by a "chivalrous generosity" that he applied to all of his endeavors.[144]

Conclusion

In the mid-nineteenth century, the United States and China secured two commercial treaties with some provisions for diplomatic relations. American diplomats, politicians, and commercial agents worked—along with their counterparts in the Qing government and Chinese business—to negotiate the details. In Washington, DC, Congress legislated parts of the US-China treaties by allocating resources for diplomatic and consular salaries and also entertained proposals from entrepreneurs interested in China and the Pacific. In the process, they discovered some of the obstacles to improved relations with China, including a lack of Chinese language skills among American diplomats. The documents and reports transmitted to and produced by Congress also revealed persistent stereotypes about China—as an uncivilized, heathen, despotic empire—views that shaped US policy during a time when contact between Americans and Chinese had been circumscribed by Qing regulations. In most cases, the perception of China as different from the Western world justified the use of force to make demands of the Chinese to engage with the West in trade, allow extraterritoriality, and dismiss their preferred manner of conducting diplomacy. Yet it was not American force that coerced the Qing to sign unequal treaties. In the nineteenth century, British warships enforced treaty stipulations. Meanwhile the

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[143] George Bancroft to U.S. State Department, March 3, 1870, Anson Burlingame and Edward L. Burlingame Family Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

[144] "A Tribute to Anson Burlingame," in Charles Neider, ed., *The Complete Essays of Mark Twain* (New York: Doubleday, 1963), 3-6.

US navy provided only a vessel or two to visit Chinese ports, and Commodore Perry's fleet instead focused on opening Japan.

Although American diplomats received general instructions from the Secretary of State, they were mostly left on their own to develop diplomatic relations with the Chinese. Two American envoys to China resisted following the lead of other Western countries in their diplomatic efforts. Humphrey Marshall chose to support Qing sovereignty during the height of the Taiping Civil War, when it was unclear which side would or should prevail. Upon reflection, Marshall concluded that American trade would benefit the most from a stable Qing dynasty with which the United States had an established relationship. He also defied Secretary of State William L. Marcy's instructions to focus on commerce over diplomacy when he doggedly pursued forwarding his credentials to the Xianfeng emperor. His approach to diplomacy with China however had an impatient, tactless character. One of his successors, Anson Burlingame, more successfully pursued diplomacy. Admitted into Beijing in the wake of a British and French victory in the Second Opium War, Burlingame pursued peaceful, cooperative relations with the Qing and European diplomats. Later, he and Secretary of State William H. Seward formalized the "cooperative policy," they had different motivations. Seward came from a place of pragmatism, taking into consideration America's lack of resources during the American Civil War, while Burlingame personally believed that having a cooperative approach would yield the best results. Burlingame ran counter to the British approach of war that had reaped rewards, and successfully imagined an alternative to gunboat diplomacy. However, the "cooperative policy" and aspects of the Burlingame Treaty could not survive without his personality and leadership.

CONCLUSION

Americans and Chinese established formal diplomatic relations in 1844, but they had conducted diplomacy by other means, primarily commerce, since 1784. This study examined the history of early US-China interactions not to recount a celebratory narrative of American China merchants as adventurers and commercial trailblazers clearing the way for Western business, civilization, and religion—as some merchants viewed their activities. Rather, this dissertation revealed the power of American merchants in shaping US-China relations during the nineteenth century. Although they had a vested interest in American commercial success, their limited experiences, attitudes, and opinions about China, the Chinese, and Asian markets put US-China relations on an unstable foundation. Merchants resided within a few blocks of Chinese port cities, had brief interactions with local people, did not speak Chinese, and had narrow knowledge of the interior of China. Their understandings of China also relied upon misconceptions and stereotypes of China as a large, old, wealthy empire ruled by despots, who stubbornly resisted the benefits of Western civilization, religion, and free trade. These merchants believed that new markets just beyond their reach would balance trade if only the Qing saw reason. Although American merchants played a significant role in America's conception of China in commercial terms, the Qing government also took part. Before 1842, it was Qing policy that restricted foreigners to the port of Guangzhou, admitted merchants but barred missionaries, and made it a crime to teach foreigners the Chinese language. The Qing government played no small role in the creation of misconceptions and the dearth of knowledge about China. Yet once additional ports were opened to Americans and other foreigners, Americans continued to focus on commerce over formal diplomacy and cultural exchange.

This dissertation has illuminated the dominance of commerce in the early US-China relationship both before and after the Opium Wars. Like their European counterparts, Americans were drawn to China by luxury goods and dreams of commercial riches. American consumers certainly had a desire for luxury Chinese goods such as tea, porcelain, and silk, but US merchants had difficulty finding unique goods that they could trade to Chinese merchants, resulting in an omnipresent, troubling trade imbalance. On multi-year voyages, Americans traded itinerantly to bring sea otter pelts, sea cucumbers, sandalwood, and other Pacific luxuries to the market at Guangzhou, but these goods had limited demand, finite supplies, and were only able to partially pay for goods acquired in China. Silver and later Turkish opium made up the difference. Commerce dominated the US-China relationship despite efforts to develop formal diplomacy, cultural exchange, and Christian missions. Following the First Opium War, unequal treaties, although primarily commercial in nature, also promised the beginnings of formal diplomacy between China and the United States and allowed the entrance of not only merchants but also missionaries and other sojourners at four new ports. This development might have precipitated a change in the US government's approach toward China. However, both the US Congress and Qing government officials remained focused on commercial matters. Serious formal diplomacy and cultural exchange did not occur until after the Second Opium War when foreign legations gained entry to Beijing. Private American citizens showed interest in Christian mission efforts, but the US government failed to support, in any meaningful way, American missionaries.

This study has also revealed the corresponding reliance on the "expertise" of American China trade merchants in the US government. Congress printed and read accounts and letters written by American merchants such as Robert Bennet Forbes and Edward Cunningham, and US commissioners to China and the State Department counted on these same individuals to provide

information about American interests in the major Chinese treaty ports, Guangzhou and Shanghai. Due to their limited experiences under the Canton system and then in foreign enclaves in treaty ports, merchants such as Forbes and Cunningham relayed skewed and incomplete accounts of China and the Chinese that emphasized commercial concerns.

To secure commercial and diplomatic privileges, most early American diplomats in China, including commissioner Humphrey Marshall, looked to the American East India Squadron to coerce the Chinese to follow unequal treaties. Yet during the 1850s, the American East India Squadron was preoccupied with opening Japan—where Americans hoped to corner new markets—instead of securing American commercial interests in China. American East India Squadron vessels occasionally visited Chinese ports for a few days or weeks at a time, but such short, infrequent trips made no impact on Qing officials. In fact, American naval commanders, Commodore Perry included, knew there was no real need to provide much American military support in China. The British navy already had a strong presence along the China coast and because of most favored nation status, it was in the interest of the British to see that all Westerners continued to enjoy treaty privileges. If one Western nation suffered from a slippage in implementation, it created a dangerous precedent. For Americans, the status quo of irregular American naval support made little difference in securing American commercial interests in China. Yet having an American military presence would allow Americans to claim that their presence in China was justified, independent of their rivals the British. It was an uncomfortable fact for post-colonial Americans that their access to China hinged on British power. US minister to China and later China's minister to the Western treaty powers, Anson Burlingame, offered an alternative, cooperative vision of US-European-China diplomacy. While he seemed to be doing so out of an individual sense of morality, it aligned with the reality of scarce American military

resources in East Asia. If Americans did not have to depend on military force to conduct commerce and diplomacy in China, it meant less reliance on the British and put all Western powers on more equal footing.

In the early years of US-China trade, some American merchants such as John Murray Forbes and John Jacob Astor made fortunes, which they invested in the United States in railroads and real estate. Inspired by this success, many American merchants looked to China as a commercial emporium where fortunes could be made. Yet these aspirations were more commercial dreams than reality. While individual firms and merchants profited, in terms of bilateral trade, the United States almost always operated at a deficit, importing far more

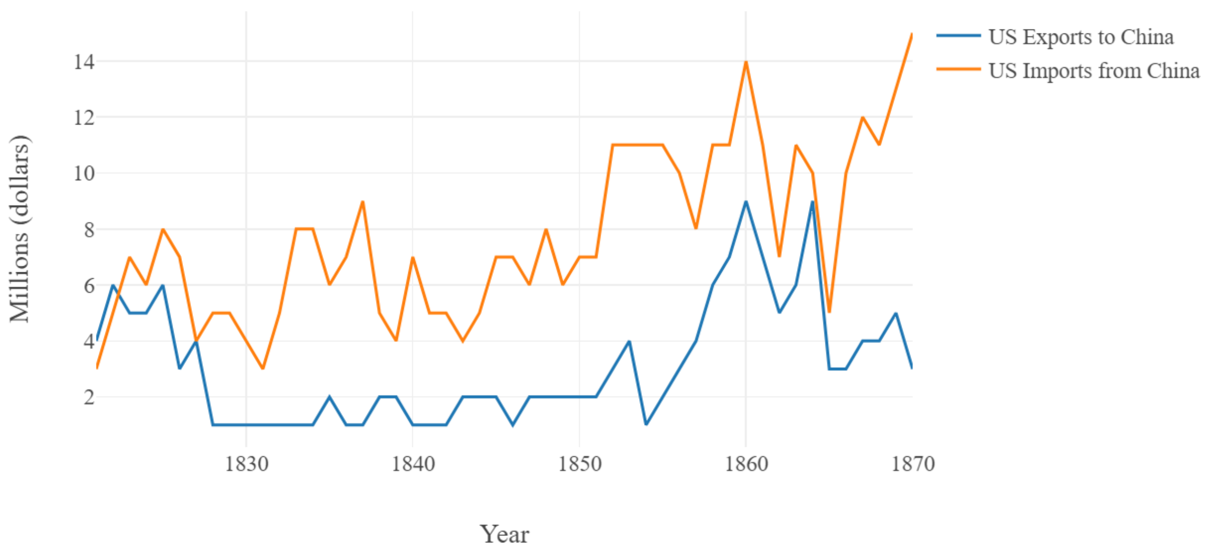

Figure 5.1: Source: Susan B. Carter et al, eds., *Historical Statistics of the United States: Millennial Edition Online* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), Series Ee546, Series E564.

Chinese goods than exporting American goods to China.[1] While China had goods that American consumers wanted, the United States had little to offer in return that Chinese markets needed. Commercial traders hoped that access to additional ports and markets of the interior would solve such an imbalance, but this was not the case. The mass market of the interior was impenetrable without infrastructure and personnel required to facilitate foreign commerce. In addition, these markets were poorer than the markets along the coast and unable to accept goods that Americans and other Westerners had to offer. These commercial dreams of the past are similar to current and past presidential initiatives that have an exaggerated sense of the potential results of increased access without having a strong understanding of how China manages trade flows and with no serious attempt to orient US exports for Chinese markets. The remainder of this conclusion will explore the problem of the US-China trade deficit and outline major transformations in US-China commodities, commercial relations, and diplomacy from 1784 to 1870 using significant and representative American voyages.

The first American China trade merchants aggressively pursued any leads they had about commodities valuable in the China market, but this stopgap measure only temporarily diminished the American trade deficit. American merchants knew from European sources that ginseng had been in demand during the eighteenth century, so the *Empress of China* carried a 30-ton cargo of ginseng.[2] The sale of the *Empress*'s Chinese return cargo—mostly teas—made a profit of $30,000 for the owners, a 25% return on their investment and an encouraging profit.[3]

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[1] Susan B. Carter et al, eds., *Historical Statistics of the United States: Millennial Edition Online* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), Series Ee546, Series Ee564, http://hsus.cambridge.org/HSUSWeb/.
[2] Paul E. Fontenoy, "An 'Experimental' Voyage to China," *Peabody Essex Museum*, December 3, 1996, http://www.pem.org/sites/neptune/voyage1.htm; Clarence L. Ver Steeg, "Financing and Outfitting the First United States Ship to China," *Pacific Historical Review* 22 (1953): 1-12; John W. Swift, P. Hodgkinson, and Samuel W. Woodhouse, "The Voyage of the *Empress of China*," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 63 (Jan. 1939): 24-36.
[3] Alain Le Pichon, "Howqua And the Howqua: How a Chinese Monopolist Saved American Free-Traders from Financial Ruin," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society Hong Kong Branch* 50 (2010), 101.

American merchants learned about another valuable commodity—Pacific Northwest sea otter pelts—from American John Ledyard, a member of the crew on Captain Cook's third Pacific voyage (1776-79). In 1789, the 212-ton Boston ship *Columbia Rediviva* carried the first American cargo of sea otter skins acquired along the Pacific Northwest and transported it to Guangzhou.[4] The *Columbia* traded copper and blue cloth to Native Americans in the Pacific Northwest in exchange for sea otter pelts. In Guangzhou, Hong merchants paid $45 on average per sea otter pelt for a total of $90,000. In return, the *Columbia* took on teas, silks, and a smaller amount of sugar and porcelain.[5] While this one vessel was successful, the luck of subsequent voyages varied depending on the number of pelts brought by other vessels and general demand at Guangzhou. American commerce with China was capricious, unpredictable, and risky. Although the British participated in the Pacific Northwest fur trade, Americans dominated, shipping sea otter and seal skins to China until 1826 by which time hunters had severely depleted the populations along the western coast of North America, and the Chinese market for furs ebbed.[6] After 1827, the American imports diminished from $3-6 million per year down to $1-2 million until 1853.[7]

American shippers turned to opium, a risky commodity in terms of diplomacy and business. Officially, the Yongzheng emperor had outlawed opium in the eighteenth century, and trafficking the drug could result in profits but at the risk of discovery by Qing officials. The

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[4] The *Columbia* was owned by several investors—Joseph Barrell, Samuel Brown, Charles Bulfinch, John Derby, Crowell Hatch, and John M. Pintard—to decrease the amount of individual risk. F.W. Howay, *A List of Trading Vessels in the Maritime Fur Trade, 1785-1825*, edited by Richard A. Pierce (Kingston, ON: The Limestone Press, 1973), 6.

[5] John Boit, "Log of the Columbia, 1790-1792," in *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society* 53 (June 1920), 227-264.

[6] James R. Gibson, *Otter Skins, Boston Ships, and China Goods: The Maritime Fur Trade and the Northwest Coast, 1785-1841* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1992); Adele Odgen, *The California Sea Otter Trade, 1784-1848* (Berkeley; Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1941); Robin Fisher, *Contact and Conflict: Indian-European Relations in British Columbia, 1794-1890, 2nd edition* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1992); Thomas N. Layton, *The Voyage of the "Frolic": New England Merchants and the Opium Trade* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997), 27.

[7] *Historical Statistics of the United States.*

British East India Company blocked Americans from dealing in Indian opium but could not prevent them from sailing to Smyrna to acquire Turkish opium—a less potent but still profitable variety. In 1805, the Baltimore brig *Entan*, under the command of Captain Christopher L. Gantt, arrived in Smyrna with a cargo of loaf sugar, pepper, coffee, and 129 cases of Havana cigars, and purchased quicksilver, Spanish dollars, and 33 cases of opium for the Guangzhou market.[8] In Turkey, Americans bought opium for $2.50 per pound and sold it at $10 per pound in Guangzhou.[9] Several American vessels made the same voyage from Smyrna to Guangzhou in subsequent years. By 1817, American-transported Turkish opium comprised ten percent of the opium brought to China.[10] After the War of 1812, American firms invested in even more voyages between Turkey and India with the largest firms Perkins & Co. and then Russell & Co. best able to weather the risky yet highly lucrative opium ventures.[11] Americans were happy to turn to the drug trade as a way to acquire Chinese trade goods, but accepted the accompanying risks even as the Qing government cracked down on opium in the 1820s and 1830s.

In 1821, due to increased efforts by the Qing to eradicate opium, trafficking shifted from Macao and Guangzhou to Inner Lingding Island. This development drew merchants further away from the official Canton system, watchful Qing officials, and court-sanctioned Hong merchants, encouraging growth of an illicit shadow economy that would not contribute revenue to Qing coffers. Intended to quell opium trafficking, the change in location made smuggling more secretive and easier to undertake further away from Qing customs officials. More and more

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[8] Charles C. Stelle, "American Trade in Opium to China, Prior to 1820," *Pacific Historical Review* 9 (Dec. 1940), 430; Hunt Janin, *The India-China Opium Trade in the Nineteenth Century* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 1999), 84.
[9] Aïssatou Sy-Wonyu, "Le Traité Burlingame: Une Matérialisation Politique du Mythe du Marché Chinois?" ["The Burlingame Treaty: A Political Materialization of the Myth of the Chinese Market?"] in *L'Échange: modalit*és et representations [*Exchange: practices and* representation], edited by Pierre Lagayette (Paris: Presses De L'Universitate Paris Sorbonne, 2005), 24.
[10] Layton, *The Voyage of the "Frolic": New England Merchants and the Opium Trade*, 28.
[11] Stelle, "American Trade in Opium to China, Prior to 1820"; Charles C. Stelle, "American Trade in Opium to China, 1821-39," *Pacific Historical Review* 10 (March 1941): 57-74.

merchants rendezvoused at the island for the smuggling of all kinds of goods, not only opium. During 1824 and 1825, George Newell, the master of the vessel *Mentor* owned by Bryant & Sturgis, kept a log detailing a voyage from Hawaiʻi to Guangzhou. In Hawaiʻi, the *Mentor* had acquired 160 piculs (over 21,300 pounds) of Hawaiian sandalwood and $11,280 in specie and bar silver.[12] Another vessel, the *Lascar* waited at Inner Lingding for the *Mentor* to arrive and take aboard its shipment of sandalwood, so only one ship would have to pay duties at Huangpu anchorage.[13] Even using such tactics, between 1804 and 1828, all the goods that Americans brought to Guangzhou only paid for 22% of the American imports of tea and other Chinese goods, so merchants used silver specie to pay the remainder.[14] In 1833, the end of the British East India Company's monopoly on the British China trade opened the Indian and Turkish opium markets to all free traders and led to the First Opium War. The unequal treaties resulting from the British victory in the war, while containing stipulations outlining procedures for diplomatic relations, were primarily commercial agreements. Through these treaties, the United States, which did not fight in the war, reaped huge benefits. Still the American diplomatic and commercial position was contingent on the military power British to force treaty negotiations and then enforce the treaty privileges.

Under the Canton system, Hong merchants had to accept fiscal responsibility for a vessel when it arrived at Guangzhou. These merchants tended to work with the same national groups, and in the case of Americans, their greatest business partner was the Hong merchant Houqua. In 1843, Houqua—one of the richest people in the world—died just as international trade in China transitioned from the old Canton system to the new treaty port system. A year later, Houqua's

[12] George Newell, *Log of the Mentor*, 1824-1825, available through: Adam Matthew, Marlborough. China, America and the Pacific, http://www.cap.amdigital.co.uk/Documents/Details/PEM_LOG209_MENTOR, accessed July 7, 2017.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Le Pichon, "Howqua And the Howqua," 103.

namesake, the first tea clipper, a 582-ton ship, the *Howqua* was built by American merchant A.A. Low, a former partner of Russell & Co., in tribute to the Hong merchant. This honor was representative of a trend. Although the Hong monopoly had been abolished, both Americans and Chinese continued to cling to relics of the Canton system. Americans considered the US-China relationship as primarily commercial and held onto ideas about China and the Chinese that they had developed within the confines of a few blocks along the harbor of Guangzhou. The Qing government also hoped to hold onto the practices and procedures of the Canton system, maintaining a distant relationship with foreigners, based in Guangzhou and not at the seat of Qing power in Beijing.

Post-treaty markets failed to answer the dreams of American traders, who hoped to balance trade with access to additional Chinese markets. In 1850, American merchants imported $7,000,000 in Chinese goods to the United States but only exported $2,000,000 in American goods to China. While access to additional ports had increased opportunities for acquiring Chinese goods such as tea, it had not significantly increased the demand for American goods in Chinese markets and had only widened the trade imbalance between the two countries.[15] The problem was that Americans were still not offering anything new in terms of trade goods, and it should not have been a shock that Qing China, a vast empire with regional commercial connections, could readily produce and acquire more locally the goods they required and desired.

For years, US consuls had acted as quasi-diplomats in China, mediating between Chinese merchants, Qing officials, and Americans. In addition to this, following the First Opium War, consuls were imbued with judicial powers. In ports like Shanghai and Guangzhou where merchants from the prominent American firm Russell & Co. took on consular roles, American and British merchants pointed to the conflicts of interest and abuses that could occur.

[15] *Historical Statistics of the United States*.

Meanwhile, consuls bemoaned the lack of resources and salary for the demanding position. In 1856, Congress passed an act that regulated the US diplomatic and consular systems across the world. Congress forbade active merchants from serving as consuls and allocated funds for consuls that would give them wages that could support themselves and family members without an additional income.[16] The US government began to disentangle commerce from formal diplomacy, which had a strong impact in China, where active merchants had long dominated posts in major ports.

British and French—not American—military force finally pried open the seat of Qing power to Western diplomats. Admitted to Beijing, foreign legations directly communicated with the newly-created Qing foreign office, the Zongli Yamen. Despite the youth of the United States and its neutrality during the Opium Wars, the American minister to China Anson Burlingame became a leader in the small foreign diplomatic world of Beijing. This was not due to the power of his nation in China or the world but was due to his personal charm. Popular with both Europeans and Qing officials, he pioneered a cooperative policy that sought a peaceful approach to China-West relations. This approach suited US Secretary of State William H. Seward, who knew the United States did not have the resources to enforce the treaties but still wanted to encourage American power in the Pacific. Qing officials, exhausted by domestic and international wars, appreciated a Western power taking a nonviolent approach. And European powers had begun to realize that forcing China to agree to undesired treaty stipulations required constant military intervention to enforce, and they were willing to explore other options. Thus, following Burlingame's lead, both China and Western powers briefly considered a new paradigm in China-West relations.

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[16] U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, *Letter from the Commissioner of the United States to China, transmitting accounts of the fees for judicial services and the expenditures at the several consulates during the year 1856*, 35th Cong., 1st Sess., 1857, H.R. Mis. Doc. No. 2.

As the US and Qing governments engaged in diplomacy, their commercial relationship remained the foremost concern. As China's envoy to the treaty powers, Anson Burlingame worked to amend the 1860 unequal treaties. In the eight articles of the US-China Burlingame-Seward treaty, reciprocity emerged as a dominant theme—in terms of consuls, freedom of religion, migration between the two countries if it was of one's free will (an oblique reference to the coolie trade), and use of public education and freedom to establish schools. Four of the eight articles acknowledged the commercial nature of the US-China relationship and gave China discretion regarding trade as long as it followed the spirit of the treaty.[17] Initially, commercial leaders in the United States welcomed freer immigration between the two countries as Chinese immigrants provided cheap labor in industries such as railroad building. However, by 1880, when the United States and China renegotiated, the United States suspended immigration in response to growing anti-Chinese sentiment especially in the western United States. The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 halted free and open immigration to the United States, making Burlingame's treaty a hopeful, but short-lived set of measures.[18] While Burlingame's vision of friendlier, more open relations now seems like an intriguingly positive alternative to the unpleasant history of anti-Chinese sentiment and exclusion in the United States, his successors ultimately did not choose this route. Even Seward who supported the "cooperative policy" did so primarily for strategic reasons, not like Burlingame who truly wished to cultivate friendship between China and the United States.

Building on recent scholarship on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century US-China commerce and the Pacific, this dissertation has critically examined the way that Americans

[17] Governments of the United States and the Chinese empire, "Burlingame-Seward Treaty," July 28, 1868, accessed August 5, 2017, https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Burlingame_Treaty.
[18] Erika Lee, *At America's Gates: Chinese Immigration during the Exclusion Era, 1882-1943* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2003).

approached China, primarily as a commercial market. Research produced in the past few decades has detailed the processes and procedures of international trade in Chinese ports, illuminated the inner workings and concerns of the Qing government, traced global business and kinship networks, and examined the impacts of the China trade on America's China policy, culture, and politics.[19] With this foundation, this dissertation investigated the intertwined strands of US-China commerce, diplomacy, and knowledge about China and argued that American and Chinese merchants and government officials' narrow focus on commerce dominated relations and structured American conceptions of China and the Pacific well past the beginnings of formal diplomacy.

In 1844, just as the United States and China were negotiating their first treaty, the head of the American commission firm Russell & Co., Robert Bennet Forbes, made a prediction that the "ghost" of the Hong monopoly would "rise in some new shape to torment the trader."[20] Forbes believed that, ultimately, established infrastructure and practices would draw American merchants back to Guangzhou after they experienced difficulties establishing trade at new ports. While Forbes was proved wrong in just a few short years as Shanghai displaced Guangzhou as the center of international trade in China, the Hong monopoly and the Canton system continued to haunt Americans in other ways. For several decades following the US-China Treaty of

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[19] Jacques M. Downs, *The Golden Ghetto: The American Commercial Community at Canton and the Shaping of American China Policy, 1784-1844* (Associated University Presses, Inc., 1997; reprint, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2014); Paul A. Van Dyke, *The Canton Trade: Life and Enterprise on the China Coast, 1700-1845* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2005); James M. Polachek, *The Inner Opium War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 1992); Dael Norwood, "Trading in Liberty: The Politics of the American China Trade, c. 1784-1862," (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 2012); Kendall Johnson, *The New Middle Kingdom: China and the Early American Romance of Free Trade* (Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2017); John R. Haddad, *The Romance of China: Excursions to China in U.S. Culture, 1776-1876* (Columbia University Press, 2008); Rachel Tamar Van, "The 'Woman Pigeon': Gender and the Anglo-American Commercial Community in Canton & Macao, 1800-1849," *Pacific Historical Review* 83, no. 4 (2014): 561-591; Rachel Tamar Van, "Free Trade & Family Values: Kinship Networks and the Culture of Early American Capitalism" (Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 2011); John D. Wong, *Global Trade in the Nineteenth Century: The House of Houqua and the Canton System* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

[20] Robert Bennet Forbes, *Remarks on China and the China Trade* (Boston: Samuel N. Dickinson, printer, 1844), 55.

Wangxia, the US and Qing governments continued to consider their relationship as purely commercial, a relic of the Canton system regulations that strove to limit foreign merchants. Only in the 1860s would diplomats like Anson Burlingame begin to make forays into cultural diplomacy and other non-commercial concerns. American officials for most of the late nineteenth century advocated the use of force in China and Japan to exact new commercial privileges and to force compliance with existing privileges, a practice seemingly validated by the results of the Anglo-Chinese Opium Wars. British gunboat diplomacy made it difficult for foreigners, Americans included, to imagine alternative approaches to diplomacy with China. In the business world, the early successes of the Canton system acted as a siren song for new generations of American businesspeople. Although the trade deficit with China only increased over the years, Americans and Europeans continued to seek new Chinese ports and markets, believing that they could only bypass middlemen and find new customers for American goods, their fortunes would improve. China's markets very rarely lived up to hype, and few businesspeople made fortunes easily and quickly. While China goods always had a market in the United States, the ability to make a fortune as a China trader was only possible for a select few commercial traders, whose large firms could weather the storms of risky but occasionally profitable commodities like opium. Persistent ideas about China and commerce from the Canton system era pervaded American thinking during the mid-nineteenth century and stories Americans told themselves about China for years to come.

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