

Map of the Anti-Chinese Expulsion and Riot

Seattle, Washington
February 7-8, 1886

Compiled by Tim Greyhavens

www.noplaceproject.com

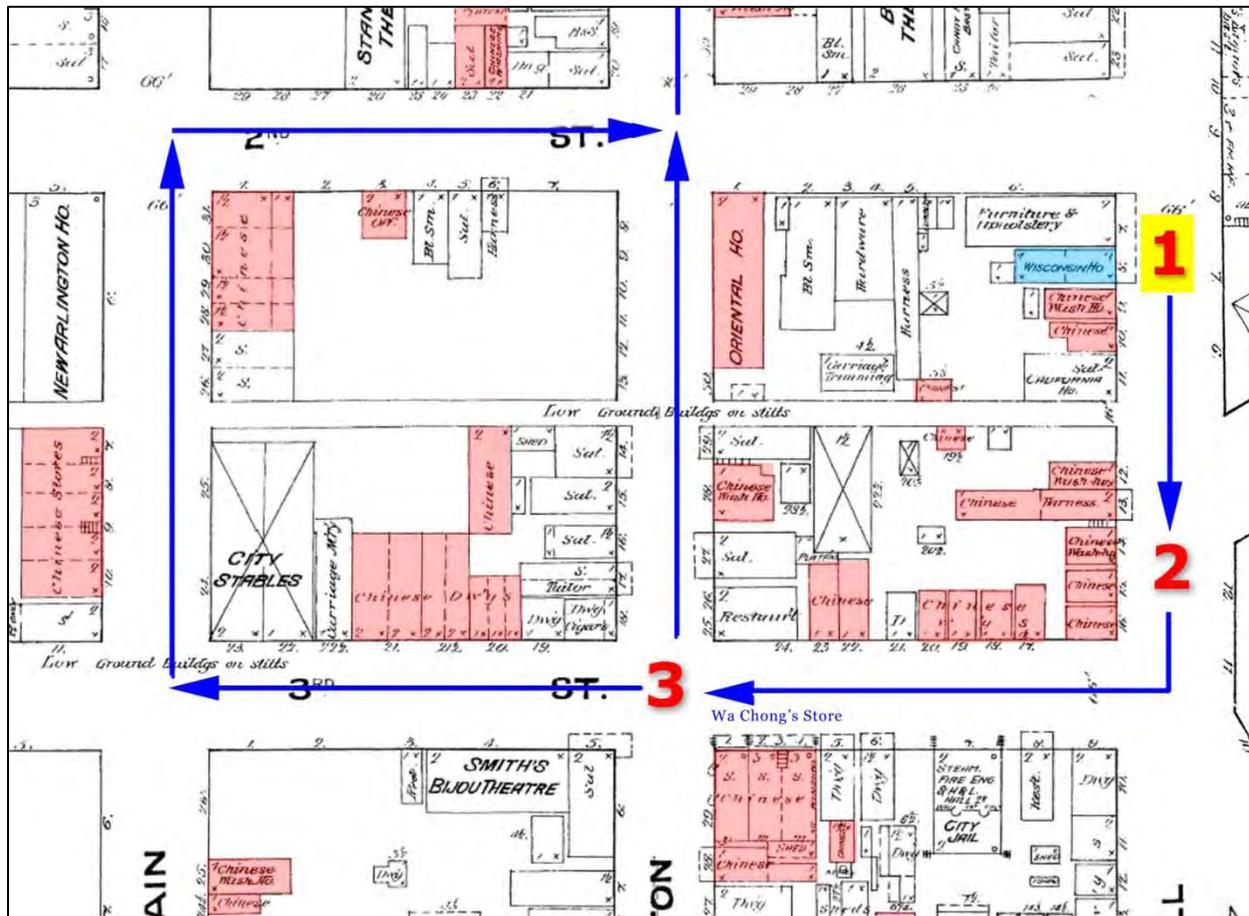
206.769.1370

Unless otherwise noted, the details in this document were taken from various articles published in the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* and other Seattle newspapers from February 7th to the 21st, 1886. While these articles clearly have Anglo-European biases, they are by far the most detailed accounts of what happened during that period. I have checked them against other accounts and reports, listed at the end of this document, for any inconsistencies or later corrections. Unfortunately, there are almost no known accounts written by the Chinese people who were expelled. Without more information, the true story of the events that took place may never be known. I believe this map provides a reasonably accurate description of the events as described by the Euro-Americans who recorded them.

It should be noted that the events outlined here cannot be taken out of context with events that took place in Seattle and elsewhere during the previous year. Historian Jules Alexander Karlin quoted this contemporary news report from Seattle: "For months the times have been bad. The peculiar industries of the region are all depressed....Our towns are full of idle men." He concluded that "The employment of Chinese while whites were unwillingly idle aroused intense resentment and bitterness in Seattle. Consequently, workingmen played the most prominent role in the agitation in the belief that, if the Chinese were driven out, more employment would be provided for white labor." (Karlin, p. 1)

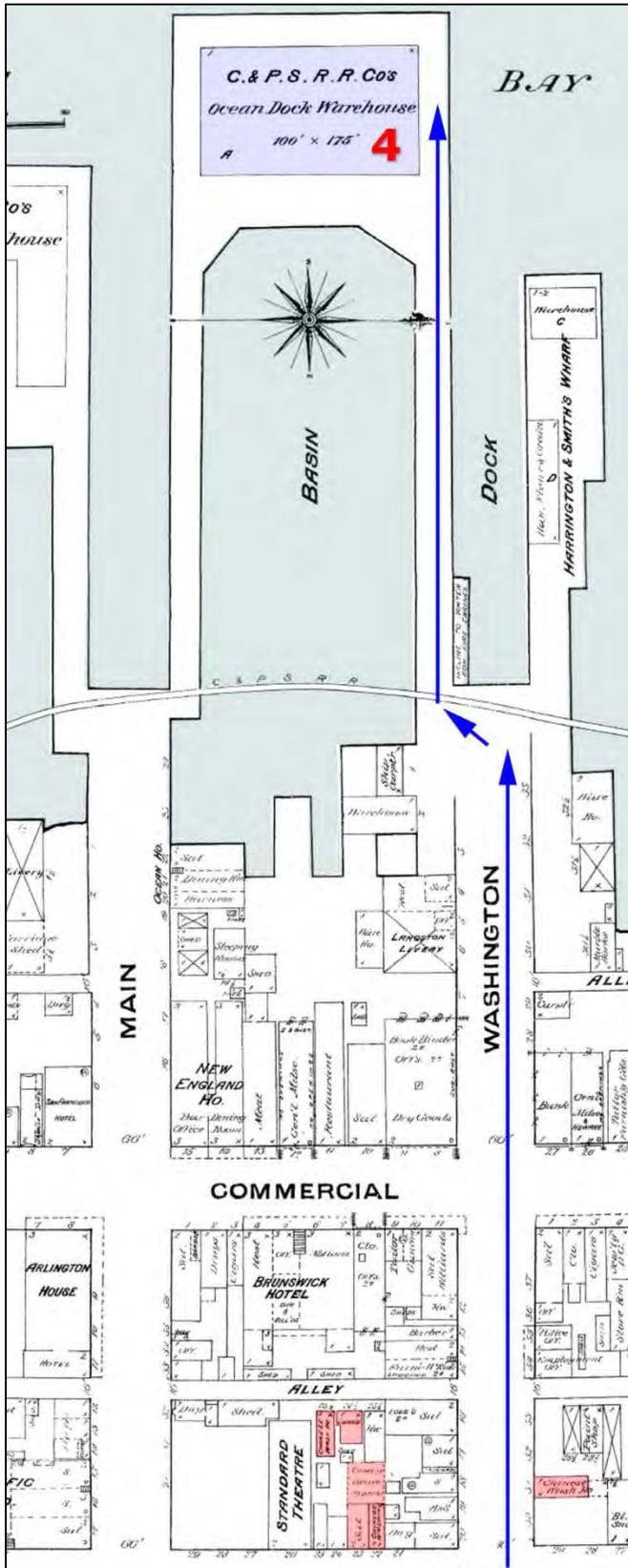
On the next page you'll find a map of the sequence and routes of events that took place on February 7th and 8th, 1886. Click on any of the red numbers to see details about that area, or go to page 3 to start the sequence of details.

Map Detail A



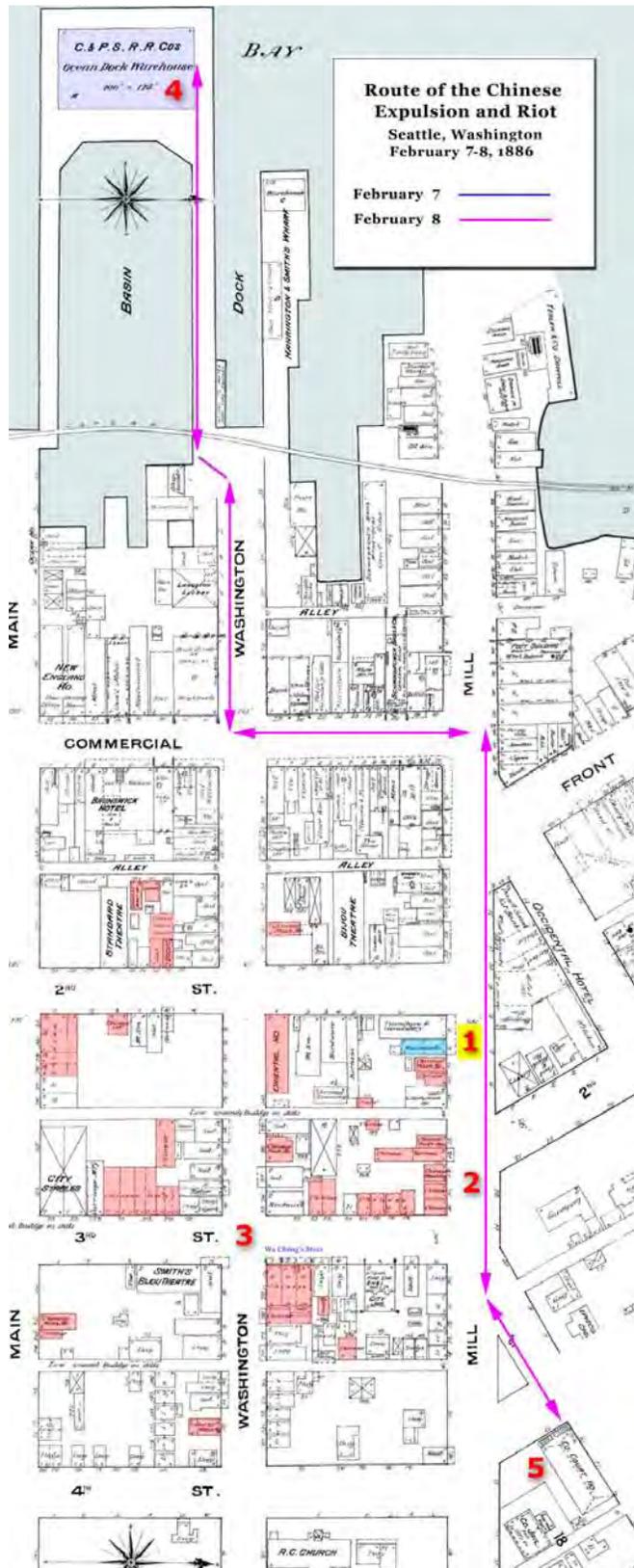
1. Shortly after 7:00 a.m. on February 7th, a group of 15-20 men, led by Lewis Kidd, M. McMillan and P. Wickstrom [no first names have been found], assembled at the Wisconsin House on Mill Street near Second (#1). From there the group started down Mill Street and began entering nearby Chinese businesses (#2) under the guise of checking to see if the city's recently enacted "Cubic Air Ordinance" was being violated.
2. At the same time several other groups also entered homes and businesses throughout the rest of the Chinese community (#3). While one or more people in a group questioned the owners of a residence or business, others in the group began packing up any belongings or goods that were in the building. Soon it became clear that the real intent on the "inspections" was to expel the Chinese from Seattle. Other groups began going to homes where Chinese were employed as cooks or servants; they demanded that any Chinese in the household come with them. While many people complied with these demands, a few, including the wife of Seattle Mayor Henry Yesler, refused. Weeks later, the Chinese who were defended in private homes were some of the very few who did not leave Seattle.
3. While the city police were aware of what was going on, they were outnumbered at least ten to one by the anti-Chinese mobs. As long as there was no threat of physical violence to the Chinese the police initially did not try to intervene.

Map Detail B



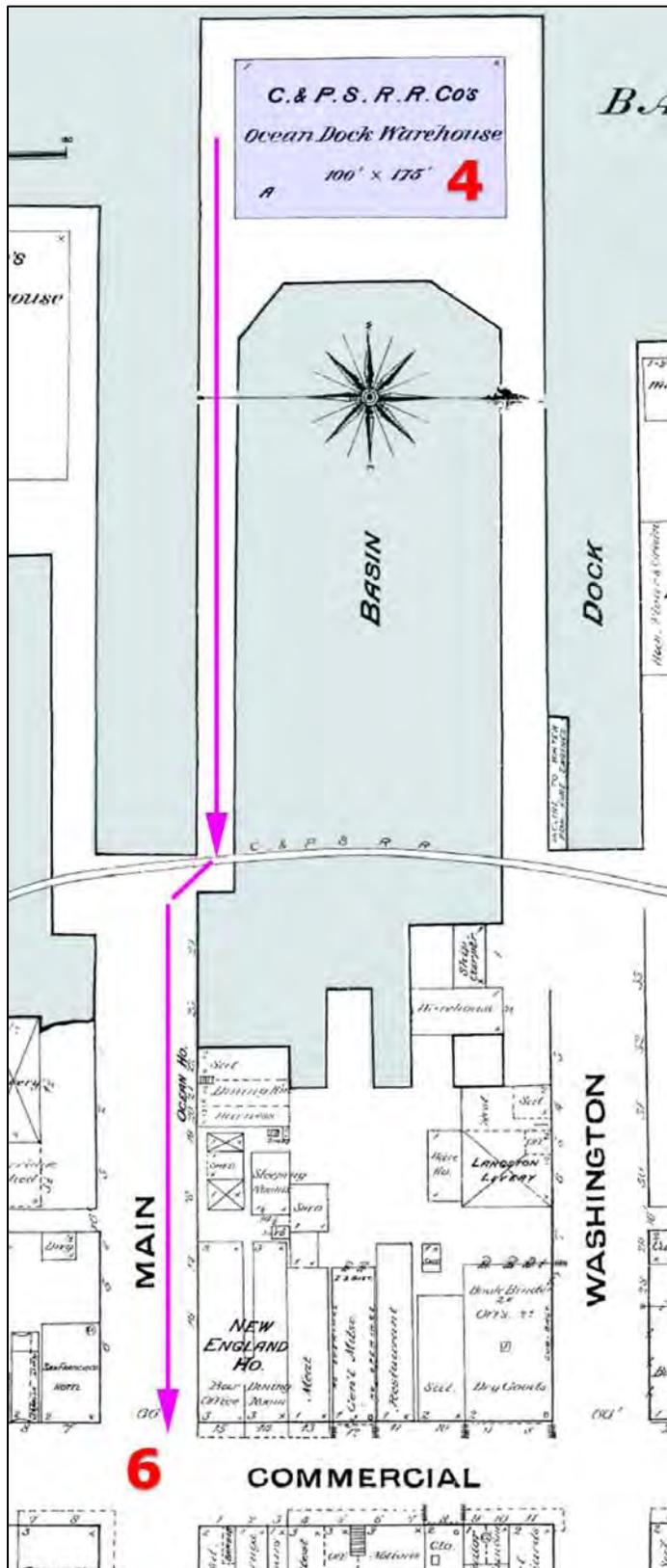
4. By mid-morning groups of white men began escorting the Chinese and wagons loaded with their belongings to a large warehouse at the end of the Ocean Dock (#4). The intent was to put the Chinese on the steamer *Queen of the Pacific*, which was scheduled to sail at 1:00 p.m.
5. Somewhere between 10:30 and 11:00 a.m. bells rang in one or more nearby churches and the city's Fire Engine House. This was a prearranged signal for King County Sheriff McGraw and large group of armed deputies to assemble in the event of trouble. The local militia intervened to prevent any physical violence, but they were still outnumbered and were unable to prevent the Chinese from being taken to the dock.
6. At the same time a Chinese merchant swore out a writ of *habeas corpus* at the local courthouse, and King County Judge Ronald Green ordered the captain of the *Queen* to stay at the dock and to bring any Chinese who were supposed to board his ship to court the next morning.
7. By 1:00 in the afternoon, an estimated 350 Chinese residents and their belongings had been assembled at the Ocean Dock warehouse. Given the large number of Chinese at the dock and the Judge's orders to see all of them in court, the leaders of the expulsion decided to keep the Chinese in the warehouse overnight. Armed guards from both sides made sure that an uneasy peace was kept Sunday night.

Map Detail C



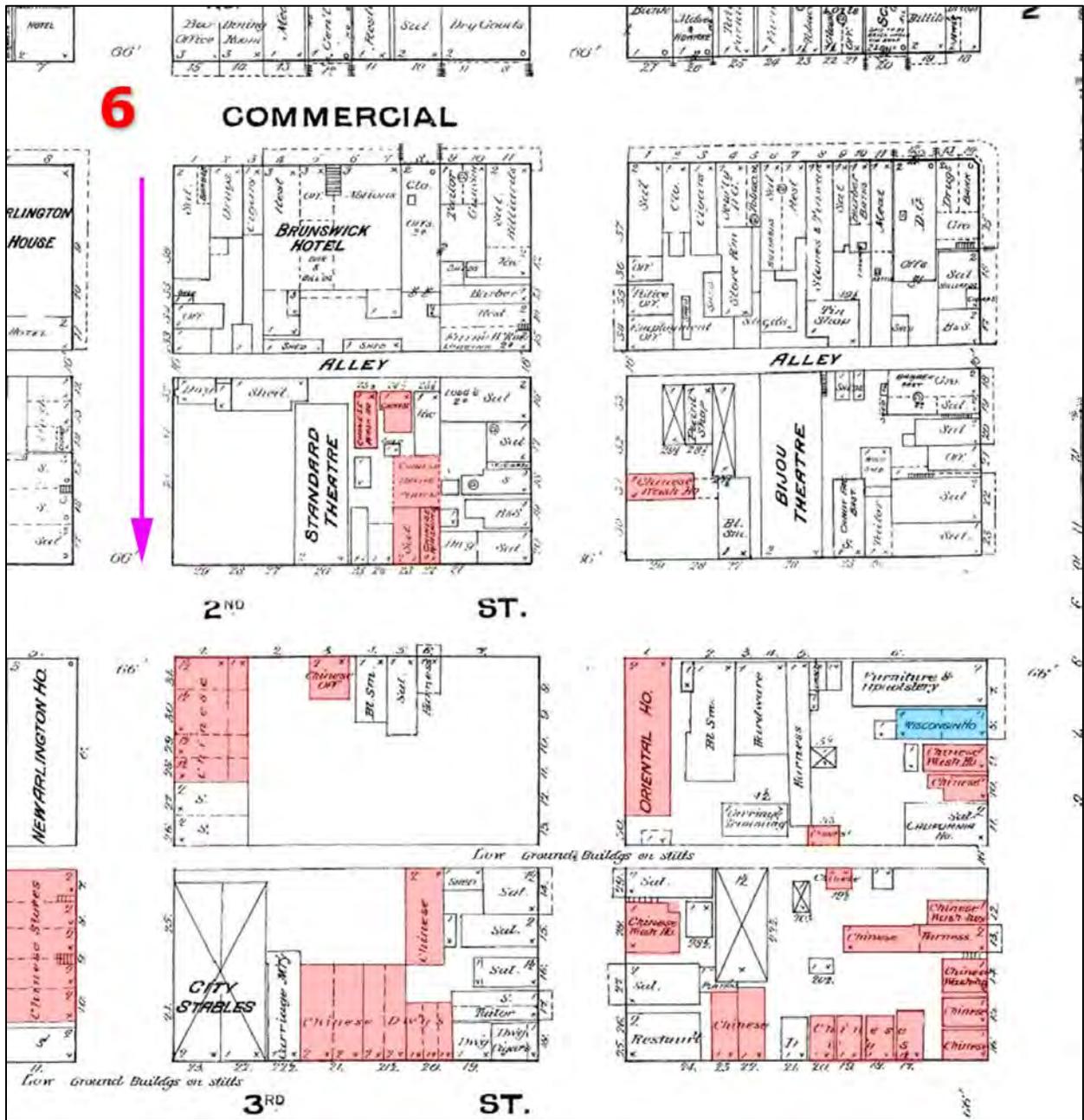
8. On Monday morning, February 8th, Sheriff McGraw, with an escort of the Home Guard and two militia companies, brought most of the Chinese men at the dock (#4) to the County Courthouse (#5) for an 8:00 a.m. hearing. Judge Green told the Chinese residents that they did not have to leave unless they wanted to, although he also stated that nearly all of the people in Seattle wished they would leave. He then made a special point of asking each person individually if he wanted to leave. Of the 105 men present, only sixteen said they wanted to stay.
9. The Sheriff and the militia then accompanied everyone back to the Ocean Dock. During the night fares had been raised from the anti-Chinese forces, and 196 people were allowed to board the *Queen*. She finally set sail at noon. This left at least 100 people still on the dock and unable to leave until another ship arrived. Since the next ship was not scheduled to arrive until February 14th, the Sheriff and other officials in charge decided that the Chinese should return to their homes until that date.

Map Detail D



10. After the *Queen* left the Sheriff and the Home Guards started to lead the Chinese back to their homes. As soon as they left the dock they were met by jeering crowds who demanded the Chinese be taken back to the dock.
11. At the intersection of Main and Commercial (now First Avenue South) (#6), a crowd of several hundred protestors blocked the procession and refused to let the Chinese go any further. When the head of the militia, Captain George Kinnear, ordered the crowds to disperse, a dozen or more men rushed the militiamen in front and tried to seize their guns. In the ensuing struggles several shots were fired, and five of the agitators were wounded. One later died from his wound. The Chinese protected themselves by moving behind their boxes of belongings, and no one from the Chinese community was hurt.
12. After the gunfire subsided and the wounded were removed, the crowd again began taunting the officers. Within a short time reinforcements from the Seattle Rifles and Company D of the militia arrived, and the two sides faced off for almost an hour before the crowd backed down and began to disperse.

Map Detail E



13. By mid-afternoon the remaining Chinese were able to return to their homes, accompanied by large numbers of militia. Governor Squire declared martial law, and guards were posted at every intersection throughout the Chinese community. Due to the militia's presence there was no further direct intimidation of the Chinese, but everyone who remained was rightfully fearful for their lives and property.
14. Six days later, on the 14th, the steamer *George W. Elder* carried another 110 Chinese people to San Francisco. This left about 50 Chinese still in the city. Over the next two weeks most of them left by train and other ships, and by the end of the month only "a handful" of Chinese remained in Seattle.

Sources

- Bagley, Clarence B. *History of Seattle, From the Earliest Settlement to the Present Time*. Chicago, S. J. Clarke, 1916. Volume II, Chapter XXV, "The Anti-Chinese Agitation and Riots", pp. 455-478
- Hildebrand, Lorraine Barker. *Straw Hats, Sandals and Steel: The Chinese in Washington State*. Tacoma: Washington State Historical Society.
- Karlin, Jules Alexander. "The Anti-Chinese Outbreaks in Seattle, 1885-1886." *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, April, 1948. pp. 103-130
- Kinnear, George. *Anti-Chinese Riots in Seattle, Wn., February 8th, 1886*. Seattle: Self-published, 1911
- McGraw, John H. "The Anti-Chinese Riots of 1885," *Washington State Historical Society, Publications II (1907-1914)*. Olympia: 1915, pp. 388-397.
- Morgan, Murray. *Puget's Sound: A Narrative of Early Tacoma and the Southern Sound*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003
- Pfaelzer, Jean. *Driven Out: The Forgotten War Against Chinese Americans*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007
- Report of the Governor of Washington Territory to the Secretary of the Interior, 1886*. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1886
- Schwantes, Carlos A. "Protest in a Promised Land: Unemployment, Disinheritance, and the Origin of Labor Militancy in the Pacific Northwest, 1885-1886." *The Western Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 13, No. 4 (Oct., 1982), pp. 373-390
- Schwantes, Carlos A. *Radical Heritage: Labor, Socialism and Reform in Washington and British Columbia, 1885-1917*. Seattle: 1979, pp. 22-29
- Seattle Daily Call, Seattle Daily Press and Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, editions from late 1885 to early 1886. available on microfilm at the Seattle Public Library.
- Wynne, Robert E. *Reaction to the Chinese in the Pacific Northwest and British Columbia, 1850-1910*. Doctoral dissertation, University of Washington, 1964.