



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

7407 La Jolla Boulevard
La Jolla, CA 92037

www.raremaps.com

(858) 551-8500
blr@raremaps.com

Official Map of Chinatown in San Francisco Prepared under the supervision of the Special Committee of the Board of Supervisors July, 1885 [with:] The Chinese at Home and Abroad.

Stock#: 71464
Map Maker: Farwell
Date: 1885
Place: San Francisco
Color: Color
Condition: VG+
Size: 21 x 8 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Visualizing Vice and Race in 19th-Century San Francisco.

Fascinating thematic map, issued in 1885, covering San Francisco's Chinatown and showing occupancy, prostitution, gambling, Chinese temples, etc.

The map came out at the height of the anti-Chinese panic in the United States, and California in particular, and no doubt helped fuel that sentiment.

The map covers the area between California and Broadway and Kearney and Stockton, showing the footprints of hundreds of buildings individually and coloring them by the following characteristics:

- General Chinese Occupancy
- Chinese Gambling Houses
- Chinese Prostitution
- Chinese Opium Resorts
- Chinese Joss Houses [Temples]
- White Prostitution

The map is reminiscent of Charles Booth's mapping of London, and actually predated Booth's *Life and Labour of the People of London* by several years.

The PJ Mode Collection ([1093](#)) quotes from Shah Nayan's *Contagious Divides*, and we reproduce that commentary here:



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**Official Map of Chinatown in San Francisco Prepared under the supervision of the
Special Committee of the Board of Supervisors July, 1885 [with:] The Chinese at Home
and Abroad.**

"This map reflects the pervasive bias against the Chinese in California and in turn further fostered the hysteria. It was published as part of an official report of a Special Committee established by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors "on the Condition of the Chinese Quarter." The Report resulted from a dramatic increase in hostility to the Chinese, particularly because many Chinese laborers had been driven out of other Western states by vigilantes and sought safety in San Francisco ([Nayan] Shah[, Contagious Divides: Epidemics and Race in San Francisco's Chinatown,] 2001, 37).

"The substance and tone of the Report is best illustrated by a few excerpts: "The general aspect of the streets and habitations was filthy in the extreme, . . . a slumbering pest, likely at any time to generate and spread disease, . . . a constant source of danger . . . , the filthiest spot inhabited by men, women and children on the American continent." (Report 4-5). "The Chinese brought here with them and have successfully maintained and perpetuated the grossest habits of bestiality practiced by the human race." (Ibid. 38).

"The map highlights the Committee's points, particularly the pervasiveness of gambling, prostitution and opium use. It shows the occupancy of the street floor of every building in Chinatown, color coded to show: General Chinese Occupancy|Chinese Gambling Houses|Chinese Prostitution|Chinese Opium Resorts|Chinese Joss Houses|and White Prostitution.

"The Report concludes with a recommendation that the Chinese be driven out of the City by stern enforcement of the law: "compulsory obedience to our laws [is] necessarily obnoxious and revolting to the Chinese and the more rigidly this enforcement is insisted upon and carried out the less endurable will existence be to them here, the less attractive will life be to them in California. Fewer will come and fewer will remain. . . . Scatter them by such a policy as this to other States"" (Ibid. 67-68).

The map was also issued separately in a larger format, which can be seen
here: <https://www.davidrumsey.com/luna/servlet/s/bzybeu>

Detailed Condition:

Octavo. Publisher's green cloth. Title, iii, [Part I half-title], 118, [blank], [Part II half-title], 114 pages. (Top edge lightly dampstained throughout.) Color-lithographed folding map separated but presented and in VG+ condition.