

After an avalanche of emails on our stories of what was reported as the first two first-degree murder convictions in San Mateo County in 1865, involving Hop Chung and Muck Sow, we dug a little deeper.

After a short search, we found newspaper accounts of their one-day trials. Muck Sow went first, then Hop Chung. Both confirmed to the judge that those were their real names. Frontier justice was swift. Both were sentenced to hang.

We also found the original account of their crime and escape, which you may find interesting, as well as extensive evidence that Half Moon Bay (then called Spanishtown) had a significant Chinese presence and a Chinatown, but more on that later.

History. It ain't always pretty.

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