

Deadwood, South Dakota, to Host Grand Celebration of Chinese Immigrant History

To commemorate the outstanding contributions of early Chinese immigrants to the development of the American West, the City of Deadwood in South Dakota will host a major celebration in the famous Black Hills region. This event will not only reflect on the struggles and achievements of Chinese pioneers but also deepen public understanding of Chinese immigration history and the broader story of westward expansion in the United States.

Unlike many Chinese immigrants in other parts of the country—often derogatorily called “coolies” and subjected to harsh discrimination as laborers or servants—the Chinese community in Deadwood, South Dakota, like other historically marginalized groups such as Jewish and African American settlers, earned respect and inclusion, and actively contributed to the development of the local community.

One of the most outstanding figures among them was **Wong Fee Lee (黃輝利, 1841–1921)**. According to family oral history, Wong was born in the village of Bak Saar, present-day Guangdong Province, China. He immigrated to the United States in 1863 and arrived in Deadwood Gulch in December 1876 in search of opportunity. Unlike most Chinese immigrants whose ultimate goal was to earn money and return to their homeland, Wong chose to call Deadwood home. He built a family, founded businesses, actively integrated into American society, and shared Chinese culture with his neighbors. Known for his honesty in business, kindness, and generosity, Wong purchased large amounts of Liberty Bonds and regularly donated to public causes, earning the deep respect of the residents of Deadwood.

Wong Fee Lee ran enterprises in mining, commerce, and other sectors. In 1885 and 1896, he constructed two sturdy brick buildings known as the **Wing Tsue Bazaar**, which for many years served as the center of Deadwood’s Chinatown. He was also actively involved in community affairs—donating to Independence Day celebrations, organizing Chinese participation in local firefighter competitions (with his sponsored Chinese firefighting hose team winning championships for several years, and The Chinese Hose Team of America, who won championship of the great Hub and Hub race at Deadwood, Dakota territory, July 4th, 1888), inviting townspeople to join in Chinese New Year and Ghost Festival celebrations, and purchasing cemetery plots for the burial of Chinese residents.

In 1902, Wong was denied re-entry into the United States due to the **Chinese Exclusion Act**, but with the help of influential South Dakotans and federal officials, he successfully returned to Deadwood. In 1919, he suffered a stroke during a meeting of the **Society of Black Hills Pioneers**, later returning to China, where he passed away in 1921.

To honor Wong Fee Lee and other Chinese pioneers, the City of Deadwood has commissioned a **life-sized bronze statue** in his likeness, with a grand unveiling ceremony scheduled for **3:00 p.m. on June 26, 2025**, at **566 Main Street** in Deadwood's historic Chinatown. The unveiling is part of the **Fourth Wong Family Reunion**, which will take place from **June 24 to June 26**. **Bart Hamm**, owner of **Mr. Wu's Casino**, and **Brin**, the casino manager, will host a festive celebration featuring a whole roasted pig, traditional Chinese cuisine, drinks, and a lion dance performance by a troupe from Las Vegas. The festivities will continue on **June 27 and 28**, with additional live music performances.

South Dakota, located in the American Midwest, is world-renowned for its stunning natural landscapes and deep historical roots. Especially in the **Black Hills**, where the celebration takes place, visitors can explore the iconic **Mount Rushmore National Memorial**, featuring the colossal carved faces of four American presidents, including George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. Also in the region are **Wind Cave National Park** and **Custer State Park**, known for their extraordinary beauty. These attractions draw millions of visitors from around the world each year.

South Dakota and the City of Deadwood warmly invite members of the public—especially scholars, tourists, entrepreneurs, and descendants of the Wong family who are interested in Chinese American immigration history, the development of the American West, and U.S. cultural, social, and economic history—to join this historic event in Deadwood this June. It is a unique opportunity to experience firsthand the heritage of this historic town and the splendor of the American West.

We warmly welcome you to Deadwood, South Dakota—come witness history and honor the footsteps of our forebears!

南达科他州焦林（Deadwood）市隆重举办华人移民历史庆祝活动

为纪念早期华人移民对美国西部开发做出的卓越贡献，南达科他州焦林市将在著名的黑山（Black Hills）地区举行盛大的庆祝活动。这一活动不仅将回顾华人先驱的奋斗历程，也将提升人们对于华人移民历史与美国西部拓荒历史的了解。

与其他地区早期被蔑称为“猪仔”的华人移民往往作为劳工或佣人遭受严重歧视不同，南达科他州焦林市的华人移民在当地与包括犹太人、非裔在内的其他曾遭受歧视的族裔一样，均受到社区的尊重与接纳，并得以积极参与社区建设。

Wong Fee Lee（黄辉利，1841-1921）便是其中的杰出代表。根据家族口述历史，黄辉利出生于中国广东省的白沙村。他于1863年移民美国，并于1876年12月抵达焦林山谷（Deadwood Gulch），寻求发展机遇。不同于多数华人移民，最终目的是挣钱后，返回故土，黄辉利则他执着地选择扎根此地，组建家庭，创办企业，积极融入美国当地社会，与邻里们分享中华文化。他诚信经商、待人友善，热心公益，慷慨好施，购买了大量的自由债券，积极捐助当地公益事业，因而深得焦林市当地广大居民的敬重。

黄辉利经营矿业、商贸及多个企业，于1885年和1896年分别建成两栋名为永聚商场（Wing Tsue Bazaar）的坚固砖结构建筑，长期作为当地唐人街的社区中心。他还积极参与当地社区事务，如捐助独立日庆典，组织华人参与当地消防比赛，华人消防队在他赞助下连续数年蝉联冠军。邀请焦林市居民参加华人春节和中元节活动，并在墓园购买墓地安葬当地华人。

1902年，他曾因《排华法案》被拒绝返回美国，在南达科他州著名人士和美国政府要员帮助下成功重返焦林市。他于1919年在一次先驱者协会会议中风，后返回中国，于1921年去世。

为缅怀黄辉利及其他华人先驱，焦林市特别竖立了一尊黄辉利的等身青铜塑像，并计划于2025年6月26日下午3点在历史悠久的焦林市唐人街566号梅恩街举行隆重的揭幕仪式。这次仪式也是第四届黄氏家族团聚活动的一部分，家族活动将从6月24日持续到6月26日。焦林市的吴氏赌场（Mr. Wu's Casino）的老板Bart Hamm和经理Brin将操持举办盛大的庆祝活动，包括烤全猪、中餐佳肴、饮料及来自拉斯维加斯的中华狮舞表演。庆祝活动将延续至6月27日和28日，期间还将提供现场音乐表演。

南达科他州位于美国中西部，以壮丽的自然风光和深厚的历史蕴涵而闻名世界。特别是在本次盛会举行的Black Hills地区，拥有举世闻名的拉什莫尔山国家纪念公园（Mountain Rushmore），在高耸的山崖之上镌刻着华盛顿、林肯等四位最著名的美国总统巨型头像。大风洞国家公园和猎地国家公园，更是景色壮观，举世无双。这里每年吸引着来自全球的数百万游客。

此次庆祝活动特别得到了南达科他州州长拉里·罗登（Larry Rhoden）的支持。州历史遗产保护官关学君（Garry Guan，类似于中国的“省文物局长”）将代表罗登州长出席活动，并颁布罗登州长，将2005年6月26日定为南达科他州的《焦林市黄辉利及黄氏家族纪念日》（Deadwood City's Wong Fee Lee & the Huang Family Day），表达州政府对华人移民贡献的高度重视。

我们南达科他州暨焦林市诚挚邀请您和所有对华人移民史和美国西部开发史以及美国文化、社会、经济、贸易感兴趣的朋友们、学者们、企业家们，特别是黄氏大家族的成员们，6月下旬莅临美国焦林市，共襄盛举，亲身体验这座历史名城和美西壮丽风光。相信你们此行不仅可以深入了解华裔美国人一页珍贵的历史，享受美妙的人文与自然，也将促进美中西部华裔美国人的发展。

热忱欢迎您来到南达科他州焦林镇，共同见证历史，追忆先贤足迹！