

# *A Hidden History: The Chinese Community*

**INTRODUCTION** – The Autry Museum of the American West is a museum located in Griffith Park in Los Angeles, California. The Autry Museum tell stories about the diverse peoples of the American West. Groups of people who have something in common such as culture, ethnicity, interests, location, race, or religion are called communities. You can learn about different communities in the American West by looking at artifacts from the Autry Museum. Artifacts are documents, objects, and artwork.

Below is an artwork from the Autry Museum that tells a story about the Chinese community. The Chinese community has been, and continues to be, an important part of the American West. Thousands of Chinese **immigrants** came to the United States, especially California, in the 1850s during the California Gold Rush. Chinese gold miners were treated unfairly. They were often attacked while looking for gold. Chinese gold miners also had to pay a **foreign miners tax** to look for gold. Many of these men became cooks and **launderers** or found other jobs instead.

Look closely at the artwork below. It shows Chinese gold miners looking at a gold nugget as other men watch in the distance. Find some clues (e.g. tools) that show these men are gold miners. Then circle these clues on the artwork.



*The Gold Nugget, Chinese Camp 1850 by Mian Situ*

## ***Glossary***

**Foreign:** having to do with a different country

**Immigrants:** people who move from one country to another country

**Launderers:** people who wash, dry, and iron clothes

**Tax:** money collected by the government from people or businesses for public use

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**PART 2** – After looking closely at Artwork #1 from PART 1, describe what you see by answering the questions in the chart below. Write your answers in the space provided or on a separate document.

ART ANALYSIS QUESTIONS	MY DESCRIPTION
What types of different people do you see?	
What are the different people doing?	
What type of transportation do you see?	
What do you see in the environment (clouds, land-forms, plants, etc.)?	
What do your eyes focus on in the artwork? Why?	
What else do you notice about the artwork?	
What questions do you have about the artwork?	

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**PART 3** – Art tells stories. What do you think Artwork #1 from PART 1 is about? Make a **hypothesis** about what story you think the artist is trying to tell others through this artwork. Write your hypothesis in the space below or on a separate document.

I think Artwork #1 is about \_\_\_\_\_

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***Glossary***

**Hypothesis:** educated guess

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**PART 5** – Now that you have learned what Artwork #1 is about by reading the object label from PART 4, answer the questions about the object label in the chart below. Write your answers in the space provided or on a separate document.

OBJECT LABEL QUESTIONS	MY ANSWERS
Who is the artist?	
What is the title of the artwork?	
What year was the artwork created?	
What is the artwork's medium?	
Which historical event (event from the past) is the artwork about?	
Who was included in the artwork?	
Does the artwork hide the history of anyone? If so, who was hidden in the artwork?	

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**PART 7** – After looking closely at Artwork #2 from PART 6, describe what you see by answering the questions in the chart below. Write your answers in the space provided or on a separate document.

ART ANALYSIS QUESTIONS	MY DESCRIPTION
What types of different people do you see?	
What are the different people doing?	
What type of transportation do you see?	
What do you see in the environment (clouds, land-forms, plants, etc.)?	
What do your eyes focus on in the artwork? Why?	
What else do you notice about the artwork?	
What questions do you have about the artwork?	

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**PART 8** – Art tells stories. What do you think Artwork #2 from PART 6 is about? Make a hypothesis about what story you think the artist is trying to tell others through this artwork. Write your hypothesis in the space below or on a separate document.

I think Artwork #2 is about \_\_\_\_\_

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**PART 10** – Now that you have learned what Artwork #2 is about by reading the object label from PART 9, answer the questions about the object label in the chart below. Write your answers in the space provided or on a separate document.

OBJECT LABEL QUESTIONS	MY ANSWERS
Who is the artist?	
What is the title of the artwork?	
What year was the artwork created?	
What is the artwork's medium?	
Which historical event (event from the past) is the artwork about?	
Who was included in the artwork?	
Does the artwork hide the history of anyone? If so, who was hidden in the artwork?	

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**PART 12** – After looking at both pieces of artwork, answer the questions below about Artwork #1 and Artwork #2. Write your answers in the space provided or on a separate document.

Which artwork hides the Chinese workers?

Artwork # \_\_\_\_\_ hides the Chinese workers.

Which artwork includes many Chinese railroad workers?

Artwork # \_\_\_\_\_ includes many Chinese railroad workers.

Which artwork best tells the story of the Chinese community in the 1800s? Explain why you think this.

I think Artwork # \_\_\_\_\_ best tells the story of the Chinese community in the 1800s because \_\_\_\_\_

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**PART 13** – After learning about the Chinese community through artwork, create an artwork that tells a story about one of your communities. Plan your artwork before creating it by answering the questions in the chart below. Write detailed answers in the space provided or on a separate document.

ARTWORK PLAN QUESTIONS	ANSWER EXAMPLES	MY ARTWORK PLAN ANSWERS
Which community do you want to tell a story about through artwork?	Family community Neighborhood community Religious community School community Sports community Other community	
What type of artwork will you create?	Drawing Painting Other artwork	
What materials will you need to create your artwork?	Chalk Colored pencils Crayons Cup with water Markers Paint Paintbrushes Paper Paper towels Pens Pencils Other materials	
What story will your artwork tell about your community? What will your artwork be about?	Think of an event that is important to your community such as a/an: Celebration Ceremony Historical event Other event	
What else will you include in your artwork?	Animals Environment People Places Transportation Other things	

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**PART 14** – Create your artwork using your plan from PART 13.

**PART 15** – After you create your artwork, write an object label that includes detailed information about your artwork using the object label format below. You can also look at the object labels in PART 4 and PART 9 to help you with your label. Write your object label in the space below or on a separate document.

## **Object Label Format**

***My artwork's title***

Date my artwork was created

**My name**

My artwork's medium

Write an artwork description explaining what your artwork is about.

## **My Object Label**

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