

## **Chinese Railroad Workers in North America Project**

*Source: Stanford University led a project from 2012-2020 to recover Chinese railroad history from the 1800s. A professor from the University of Irvine, California named Yong Chen wrote an article synthesizing his research for the project. An excerpt from that article is provided below.*

The conditions under which Chinese laborers worked could sometimes be fatal. At the end of 1866 an entire “gang” of Chinese laborers on the Central Pacific Railroad were buried by a snow slide, and five of them died before they could be exhumed. An accident on the Western Pacific Railroad in November 1869 killed five Chinese workers and injured another. In addition to fatal accidents in the winter, in the summer of 1868, for example, several Chinese men were killed by falling rocks near the CPRR Summit Tunnel. According to a newspaper account, the explosives that they used to make the tunnels sometimes ignited before they could get to safe shelter. The exact number of workers who lost their lives building the first Transcontinental Railroad is not known because records were not kept.

<https://web.stanford.edu/group/chineserailroad/cgi-bin/website/uncovering-and-understanding-the-experiences-of-chinese-railroad-workers-in-broader-socioeconomic-context/>