By early summer 1865, 43 miles of track had been completed and daily passenger and freight service between Sacramento and Clipper Gap begun. The Chinese had worked out so well that Crocker wanted more Chinese workers to work for the Central Pacific. Because Crocker recruited the industrious and hard-working Chinese, they eventually became known as "Crocker's pets". Since there were not enough Chinese in California to fill the ranks of the needed workers, Crocker contracted with Koopmanschap in San Francisco to recruit more Chinese directly from China (Ambrose 2000:152; Paananen and Tsui 1987). This effort was expanded to include thousands of Chinese immigrants.

Crocker's decision to employ more Chinese laborers became important to the construction of the Central Pacific through the Sierra Nevada mountain range (Williams 1988:94-95). Beyond Clipper Gap, the proposed railroad route consisted of rugged ridges and along the sides of steep cliffs that had narrow ledges, if any ledge at all. In addition, the uneven terrain required that gorges, valleys and the low lying gaps between the high peaks and ridges that had to be crossed also had to be filled to even the grade. In order to remedy this situation, the Chinese dug cuts through the ridges and filled in the low areas to form the required high embankments, where possible (Williams 1988:94-95). At other locations, it was necessary to construct bridges over streams and long trestles across canyons that could not be filled with rock and soil. At other locations, it was necessary for the workers to bore tunnels through the granite mountains and cut ledges into the sides of rock cliffs (Williams 1988:94-95).

One particular difficult and dangerous job was the construction of the grade along the area known as "Cape Horn"(Williams 1988:113-114). This feature consisted of steep cliffs reaching to a height of 1,332 feet above the river canyon floor (Chew 2004:19; Cooper 2005: 125). Since there was no place to stand to work, a ledge or shelf had to be cut into the cliff face. The method employed to create this work space consisted of the smallest and lightest weight Chinese worker to be lowered in wicker type baskets down the face of the cliff, where they worked with hammer and chisels to create blasting holes (Williams 1988:114) (Figure 9.10). Once the holes were complete black power charges were prepared and placed in the holes with long fuses (Williams 1988:114). After the holes were finally prepared, a single Chinaman or in some cases several men were lowered to light the fuses (Williams 1988:114). Then the charges were lit, they were hauled to safety, hopefully as quickly as possible, before the fuse hit the charge (Williams 1988:114). On a few occasions, the men were not retrieved fast enough and they were killed by the ensuing explosions (Williams 1988:114).

Another major set of obstacles had to be overcome. This work required the construction of a series of tunnels through the solid granite mountains (Chew 2004:19; Williams 1988:112-114,184-187). One particular difficult impediment was the 1,695 foot long Summit Tunnel (Tunnel Number 6). At this location, more than 9,000 Chinese would work boring drill holes, setting black power charges, and cleaning away the debris on this project alone. This part of the railroad was slow and difficult, yet vital to the success of the Central Pacific (Williams 1988:113-114,186-187). The work on this tunnel was so difficult and slow going that workers were kept employed throughout the winter months, when work at other sites usually ceased. When heavy snows fell, workers were required to dug tunnels through the snow between their cabins and the work site (PBS 2008). In order to keep men and equipment moving the corridors