



NEWS 'n NOTES

CHINESE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

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September 2008

September Program

Happy Birthday Mazu Empress of Heaven, Goddess of the Sea

A Documentary Film

By

Jonathan H.X. Lee, Ph.D.

This documentary film explores the emerging transnational Empress of Heaven community in San Francisco Chinatown, among new immigrant Taiwanese-Americans. It illustrates how traditional religion is altered and adjusted to meet the demands of contemporary life, in Taiwan and America.

Please join us and find out what happens to rituals and religious experience when religion, technology, and sensory experiences are combined in new and previously unimaginable ways?

Dr. Lee holds a doctoral degree in East Asian religions, from the University of California at Santa Barbara, Religious Studies Department. His current research and publication centers on Chinese and Chinese-American religious communities, in particular on the Taiwanese-American Mazu cult.

Wednesday, September 10, 2008 @ 7:00 p.m.

Castelar Elementary School Multipurpose Room,
840 Yale Street, Los Angeles Chinatown.

Open to the public: free admission and parking.
Enter at College Street between Yale & Hill Streets

Around CHSSC

Proper Handling of Human Remains

AB2514, a measure proposing proper handling of human remains was introduced by Assembly Member Mike Eng on February 21, 2008. It was placed on hold in the Senate Appropriation Committee August 7, 2008. During the legislative process, CHSSC and its representatives were among the organizations and individuals that wrote letters of support and testified at hearings.

In 2005, human remains and artifacts were discovered during a Los Angeles Metropolitan Transportation Authority construction project near Evergreen Cemetery. Many of the human remains were determined to be of Chinese descent and the artifacts that were discovered date back to the late 1800s and the early 1900s. The discovery was held for six months before a local historical organization, the CHSSC, was able to intervene.

AB 2514 establishes a procedure that would allow interested cultural or historical organizations to be notified whenever certain human remains are discovered. Currently, such protocols apply only for Native American burial sites.

Mike Eng is continuing his efforts at protecting archaeological human remains.

Update on Riverside Chinese Cultural Preservation

The Riverside City Planning Commission voted unanimously on August 21, 2008, to approve a proposed development of an office building on the site of historic Riverside Chinatown which is on the list

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(*"Riverside," from page 1*)

of National Register of Historic Places. The Riverside Chinese Cultural Preservation Committee (RCCPC) countered with an alternate proposal that would protect the underground archaeological remains and pay tribute to the memory of Chinese American pioneers. After three months of negotiation with Doug Jacobs, the developer and the Riverside City Planning Commission the parties involved failed to reach a reasonable compromise.

Earthmoving equipment is already on the site. The only hope at this point is the Riverside City Council, which is the final authority in the matter. CHSSC Board of Directors supports the RCCPC and will write a letter of support addressed to the Mayor and City Council.

On August 3, 2008, RCCPC's general membership ratified the Committee's position. The Committee's top priority is to protect the undisturbed archaeological resources in the site of Riverside's Chinatown and to retain its listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Anyone interested in getting involved please contact Deborah Wong, Ph.D., a member of the RCCPC Executive Committee, @ deborah.wong@ucr.edu.

Historic Chinatowns

An exhibition, *A Sense of Place: Remembering Riverside's Chinatowns*, was launched July 26, 2008 and will continue through October 4, 2008. The exhibit explores the Chinese Americans in Riverside from late 19th century to early 20th century as they made a new life in a new country away from the familiar surroundings of China.



Portrait of Chinese Servant with a walking stick. Employed by the Beltner family, c. 1890. Reproduction courtesy of Riverside Metropolitan Museum.

In 1879, a thriving "Chinese Quarter" was established but the residents were forced out by anti-immigrant sentiments and white laborers who felt that the Chinese took away jobs from them. The primarily bachelor community relocated to another part of Riverside and a second Chinatown, name for the village where most of the residents came from, "Little Gom-Benn" sprung up in 1886.

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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MISSION STATEMENT

The Chinese Historical Society of Southern California was organized in November, 1975. The purposes of the Society are: 1) to bring together people with a mutual interest in the important history and historical role of Chinese and Chinese Americans in Southern California; 2) to pursue, preserve and communicate knowledge of this history; and; 3) to promote the heritage of the Chinese and Chinese American community in support of a better appreciation of the rich, multi-cultural society of the United States.

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Chinese American Stories Workshop

This is a second Chinese American Stories workshop series following a successful series in 2007, led by award-winning playwright Henry Ong. This year's workshop will be conducted by another award-winning playwright, Judy SooHoo.

If you are serious about writing your family's history, then this workshop is for you. There will be guided writing exercises, sharing of participants' writings and feedback to help you enhance your writing skills.

Meeting dates are on the following Saturdays from 10:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.: September 27, October 4, 18, 25, November 1, 15, 22, and December 6.

All meetings are in the conference room of CHSSC at 415 Bernard Street in Los Angeles Chinatown. The workshop is free to CHSSC members and \$10 per session or \$50 for the entire series for non-members.

Space limited, call 323-222-0856 to RSVP.

Note: There will be a field trip on October 4, to the National Archives Pacific Region Office in Laguna Nigel. See page 7 for details.

Interview with Judy SooHoo (JS) Workshop Leader About What to Expect in the Workshops

Anna Gee (AG): How did you become a writer? How did you know you wanted to be a writer?

JS: I was always interested in stories and how the story got created. I started writing to understand what made the world tick. The best writing inspires the humanity in all of us.

AG: What is the difference between writing for a play and other formats?

JS: With a play, dialogue is King. The set, lighting and sound designers interpret the work. In type of writing we will be doing is what I call "creative non-fiction." We will learn tool and techniques of fiction writing---scene, setting, description, dialogue to create a written piece---in a sense a writer is responsible for the total story.

AG: What is the goal of the workshop?

JS: The intention of the workshop is to have everyone leave with a piece of writing (whether that is 1 page or 10 pages) that is his or her best expression at the time. My goal is to have people writing stories of their heritage.

AG: Can you describe what we will be doing in the workshops?

JS: We will read examples from writers, do guided exercises, read work from other writers in written work.

AG: What if I miss a meeting?

JS: That's fine. Life happens. Writing work can be made up. The important thing is to be engaged in the process and committed to learning more.

AG: What are reasons to take the workshops?

JS: To be in a group makes writing a little less solitary. Hear other stories of fellow Chinese Americans. Learn or refine skills.

Genealogical Resources in the National Archives

By Anna Gee

"Paul Wormers' presentation was very comprehensive... He was excellent. There were some very interesting questions. Although I've been to the archives, I learned a lot." Bill Chun Hoon

"We had almost 40 people attend - a record number! So many people commented on how much they got out of the program and how impressed they were with Paul Wormser. I was too - he did a fantastic job of tying in Chinese-american history with the kinds of documents found at the archives on C-A's. He put it all together..." Bo-Gay Tong Salvator

"...the resources he gave us (especially the CD-ROM) will make the process of accessing our families records there so much easier." Jonathan Lew

("Genealogical," continued on page 7)

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Re-Introducing: Portraits of Pride— The Book Series

By L.P. Leung

The Portraits of Pride (PoP) project is dedicated to improving the awareness of the role of Chinese Americans in American history. They individually broke through the closed doors and made cracks in the glass ceilings of discriminatory barriers encountered during this historically significant period in America.

Portraits of Pride – The Book Series – are a collection of fascinating stories of Chinese Americans who have achieved much in spite of discrimination against them. Perhaps the reader might find answers in these books to the question of how so many Chinese Americans, in disproportionately high numbers, achieved stratospheric career heights.

"Portraits of Pride, Book 1" (PoP-1) – published in 2004 – focused on 39 life stories of California Chinese-Americans from the 20th century's Great Depression and World War II era.

"Portraits of Pride, Book 2" (PoP-2) – Chinese-American Legacies – First 160 years in America" – now being readied for publication in 2008 – expands the historical footprints to include more generations and national in scope. They are presented in three sections:

Section 1: Group Portraits. The portraits focus on the near-forgotten heroes that constructed railroads; built levees in reclaiming millions of acres of fertile farmland; introduced crop rotations by farming many varieties of fruits and vegetables; and pioneered the California fishing industry. Included are recent 20th century groups of professionals in engineering, science, and academia that contributed to our military, space, and industrial power and educational excellence.

Section 2: Portraits of Unsung Heroes. These stories include many who have won national and international prestigious awards in the arts, literature, films, education, science, engineering, mathematics,

and others. They were (and are) giants in their fields but not as widely known to the general public.

Section 3: Portraits of Superstars. This group of well-known superstars includes Nobel laureates in science, and exceptional professionals in music, architecture, sports, acting, etc. in divergent fields and disciplines.

The Chinese Americans' early struggles and eventual successes remind us to be more appreciative of our forebears and compatriots for their achievements with their sense of family, hard work, education, and their love for an adopted country. Younger generations – endowed with much greater opportunities, liberty, and justice – can now shoot for the stars.

History Social Science Curriculum Frameworks and Evaluation Committee

Dr. Wing Mar, of the PoP Committee and CHSSC staff Marian Chew attended the History Social Science (HSS) Curriculum Frameworks and Evaluation Committee (CFCC) meeting on June 5, 2008, in Downey, California. They handed out booklets which contained a PoP Introduction by Dr. Mar and positive feedbacks from recipients.

Wing and Joyce Mar had an opportunity to speak to the panel of educators about PoP. They reminded the panels all that is taught today in schools about the Chinese are that they were gold miners and railroad workers. The lessons need to be expanded to include the later immigrants.

Since then, they have sent a copy of PoP to an editorial director of Glencoe McGraw-Hill, a publishing company in Ohio and contacted Raymond Aubele, a social science expert. Both of them were present at the meeting.

The CFCC aims to provide guidance for instruction in public schools where students will understand historical trends and current social conditions. This will prepare students who are future voters and leaders to make informed decisions.

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Acknowledgements

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- **Gilbert Hom** donated 2 books, *Canton Footprints* by Philip P. Choy, about the Chinese Americans contribution to the development of Sacramento. See News 'n Notes August 2008 edition for more information. Another book Gilbert donated is the 2008 edition of *Asian American and Pacific Islander Community Directory for Los Angeles and Orange Counties*. This directory is published by UCLA's Asian American Studies Center.

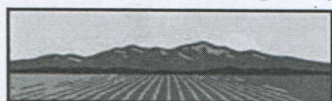
An Evening of Visual Life Histories and Short Documentaries

The culmination of the Chinatown Remembered Oral History Project about life in Los Angeles Chinatown in the 1930s and 1940s, was the screening of the resulting video at the Henry Hwang Theater August 9, 2008. It was shown to a packed audience of about 200. It was indeed an evening of visual life histories and short documentaries as stated in the program.

Local student volunteers did an impressive job with the program brochure. College interns and members of the Los Angeles Chinatown Youth Council developed and wrote the bulk of the writing in the brochure.

William Gow, the Project Director explains that the 1930s and 1940s was a pivotal time of change for Chinese Americans in Los Angeles. It is a generation who came of age and forged an identity quite different from the previous generation.

Please come to CHSSC's Heritage Center to see the Chinatown Remembered Exhibition. This project was made possible, in part by a grant from the



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California Council for the Humanities as part of the Council's statewide *California Stories* Initiative.

The Riverside Chinatown exhibition is at the University of California at Riverside's Sweeney Art Gallery, 3800 Main Street, Riverside, CA 92501. Gallery hours are 12-5 pm Tuesday to Saturday, 6-9 first Thursday of the month. For more information see www.sweeney.ucr.edu/events/_pdf/Summer08_SenseofPlace.pdf.



Photos courtesy of Regents of the University of California

In the CHSSC bookstore is *Wong Ho Leun: An American Chinatown*, a 2-volume book on the history and archaeology of Riverside Chinatown, edited and published by the Great Basin Foundation, San Diego, 1987. The book includes a biography of the last resident of Riverside's Chinatown George Wong also known as Wong Ho Leun.



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HOWARD LOUIS, 1908-2008 SAN LUIS OBISPO PIONEER

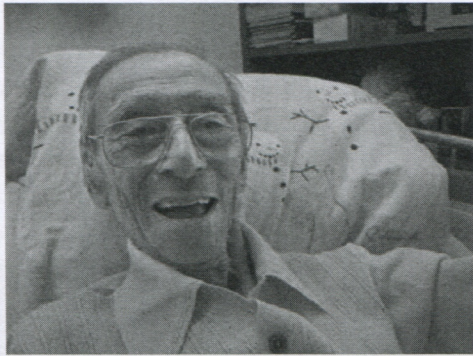


Photo taken the day before Howard Louis' 100th birthday.

Courtesy of San Luis Obispo Tribune.

Mr. Howard Louis—a well-loved member of CHSSC and one of San Luis Obispo's most important native sons—passed away in his home in that city on August 15, 2008, at the age of one hundred years and ten days.

Howard "Toby" Louis (Wong Toh) was born on August 5, 1908. He was the youngest of five sons and three daughters of the important Central Coast historical figure, Ah Louis.

Ah Louis (Wong On) settled in San Luis Obispo in 1870, opening a mercantile business in 1875 in the city's Chinatown that would later be named the Ah Louis Store. Doubling as the family residence where Howard was born, the store was the bank, counting house, and post office for Chinese immigrants who helped build the Southern Pacific Railroad and many Central California road and tunnel projects. Though Ah Louis died in 1936 and San Luis Obispo's Chinatown is long gone, the Ah Louis Store still stands at Palm and Chorro streets—a designated landmark tangibly connecting nineteenth century Chinese American history to the present day.

Howard worked in the family store as a youngster. He has also told of crawling between buildings to collect discarded metal which he resold for 10 cents a pound. Another enterprise was collecting baby pigeons, or "squabs," from nests in the downtown area, which he could sell for 25 cents as a delicacy.

In his teen years, Howard Louis was a San Luis Obispo High School track star, winning several medals and state awards, and became captain of his high school football team. At UC Berkeley, he studied economics with a specialty in transportation. After graduating from

Berkeley, Howard inherited the family store in 1935, and fought in World War II under General Patton.

On Howard's watch, the store moved from dispensing food and provisions to selling giftware, porcelain, rosewood furniture and jade carvings. In later years he kept it open part-time, largely for the benefit of old friends and visitors wanting to know the story behind the California historic landmark.

In 2002, Toby Louis was CHSSC's guest speaker at its 27th Anniversary celebration at the Los Angeles' Empress Pavilion. Then, as always, his humor and warmth shone through: He revealed one of the secrets of his longevity lay in abstaining from drinking and smoking, while a little later he told of selling corn whiskey from 50 gallon barrels in the early days of the family store. He shared poignant memories from his childhood, as when he lost his mother before reaching his second birthday. He said that friends said, "She was like a doll." He told of Ah Louis' wish to return to China to live out his life and accompanying him to visit his home village where his father was saddened by the lack of progress. ("27th Anniversary Fall Dinner Celebration," *News 'n Notes*, November, 2002: www.chssc.org/NewsNotes/NN_Master.htm.)



L to R, Toby, his father Ah Louis and unidentified man, in front of the family store in 1936.

Photo courtesy of the Louis family.

Howard told a Cal Poly San Luis Obispo biographer in 1997: "There is nothing that makes me more proud than to talk about my father's accomplishments and for people to see the Ah Louis store, which I believe serves as a contribution to the Chinese culture in San Luis Obispo. I am Chinese-American, striving to learn the best of two cultures. But I haven't lost my Chinese identity. I do whatever I can to bring all our Chinese community together."

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"...inspired me to get back to the compilation of my family history. I [had] found a tremendous amount of historical data at San Bruno and a bit at Laguna Niguel. I look forward to future presentations and other workshops..." Anna Gee of San Gabriel Valley

According to Paul Wormser, director of the Laguna Niguel location, the National Archives, at its 12 regional locations and 44 other facilities, is the repository of the historically valuable records of the federal government. This includes census information, military records, passenger arrival records of non-citizens entering the US by ship, and naturalization records, all of interest to people doing family history research.

The 1880-1930 census are especially good sources of information because field workers actually went house by house, gathering as much information as possible. The US had immigration offices in Vancouver and Tijuana mostly to catch Chinese crossing the borders, and thus there are records from these field locations. In the past, there was a period of time when Mexicans would smuggle Chinese across the border!

But this is not all. As Paul Wormser pointed out, the Exclusion Laws were harsh, but they now provide a source of valuable information for someone doing family history research. There are 300linear feet of material related to Chinese Exclusion and immigration.

If a sojourner returned to the US, a very detailed return certificate application would have been filled out before departure, and this was compared to make sure the same person was coming back. There were often physical descriptions and photos, which could be valuable information to the family researcher. For further information on this presentation and help with your family history research, contact us.

Announcements

First Field Trip for 2008 for CHHSC and the Family History Workshop Series

On Saturday, October 4th, we will have a field trip to the National Archives and Records Administration Pacific Region Laguna Niguel. The day will be very flexible. You can get to Cerritos early and browse the Library. You can carpool and leave your car at the

Library or you can go straight to the Archives yourself. Some will stay at the Archive until closing, some will have to come again and others may want to leave early.

If you want to carpool, the day will begin by meeting at the Cerritos Library at 18025 Bloomfield Ave, Cerritos Ca. 90703 at 9:00 am. The Cerritos Library is 22 miles from CHSSC. The National Archive is 57 miles from CHSSC and 35 miles from Cerritos. Depending on the numbers, there will be two vans that can easily carpool to National Archives in Laguna Niguel at 24000 Avila Rd, Laguna Niguel, CA 92677

There are multiple reasons for this trip. We can preview and get to know what is available to us. Others will get into deep research. There will be those who have been there, those who have no idea what is available. On this trip, we will get to know one another better and build stronger friendship. We can help each other and discover things together. This is also a preview of a future overnight trip to The San Bruno National Archives. Please contact or email the NARA ahead with your requests for information and remember to bring your death certificate or permission to view documents for those relatives under 75 years of age.

If you are interested or need more information email me, **Gordon Hom**, gcrdcn@yahoo.com. We will link you with phone numbers in case you get lost, maps, websites and just answer any concerns.

There is a new addition to CHSSC's video collection, *By Light of Lanterns, An Untold History of Monterey's Chinese Fishermen*. It is produced at Teledramatic Arts and Technology Department of California State University at Monterey Bay. It is about the pioneering Chinese American fishermen of Monterey Bay. Visitors are welcome to the CHSSC Heritage Center to view the videos in our library and they can be borrowed.

Miss Chinatown Pageant application deadline is Friday, October 3, 2008. Applications can be picked up during business hours at the Chinese Chamber of Commerce of Los Angeles, 977 N. Broadway, Ground Floor, Suite E, in Chinatown.

Community Calendar

Through November 2, 2008

Saturdays and Sundays 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Historic Chinatown in Neon Postcards: An Installation

445 Gin Lin Way, Los Angeles Historic Chinatown

Admission: \$2.00

Contact DSR @ 213-628-7335

Sunday, September 7, 2008

Chinese American Museum

(213) 485-8567

12th Annual History Maker Awards Banquet

Universal Hilton Hotel

Thursday, September 11, 2008, 8:00 p.m.

Documentary movie, **Hollywood Chinese**, with introduction by director Arthur Dong

Thursday, September 25, 2008, 8:00 p.m.

Chinese silent movie made in 1929, **Red Heroine**, with live accompaniment by Devil Music Ensemble
Pacific Asia Museum

46 N. Los Robles Avenue, Pasadena, CA 91101

Free with museum admission

RSVP, 626-449-2742 x 31

Saturday, September 13, 2008, 5:00 pm—10:00 pm

Mid Autumn Moon Festival

Los Angeles Chinatown Central Plaza

951 N. Broadway

Los Angeles, CA

Free admission

Friday, September 26, 2008

Chinatown Service Center

37th Anniversary Dinner

Empress Pavilion

Los Angeles Chinatown

For more information call Dinner Planning Committee,

213-808-1760

\$250 per ticket

Saturday, September 27, 2008

Autumn Moon Festival

South Pasadena Chinese-American Cultural Association

South Pasadena High School

CHSSC will have a table at the Festival

Free parking on campus

Free admission



Chinese Historical Society of Southern California

415 Bernard St.

Los Angeles, CA 90012-1703

