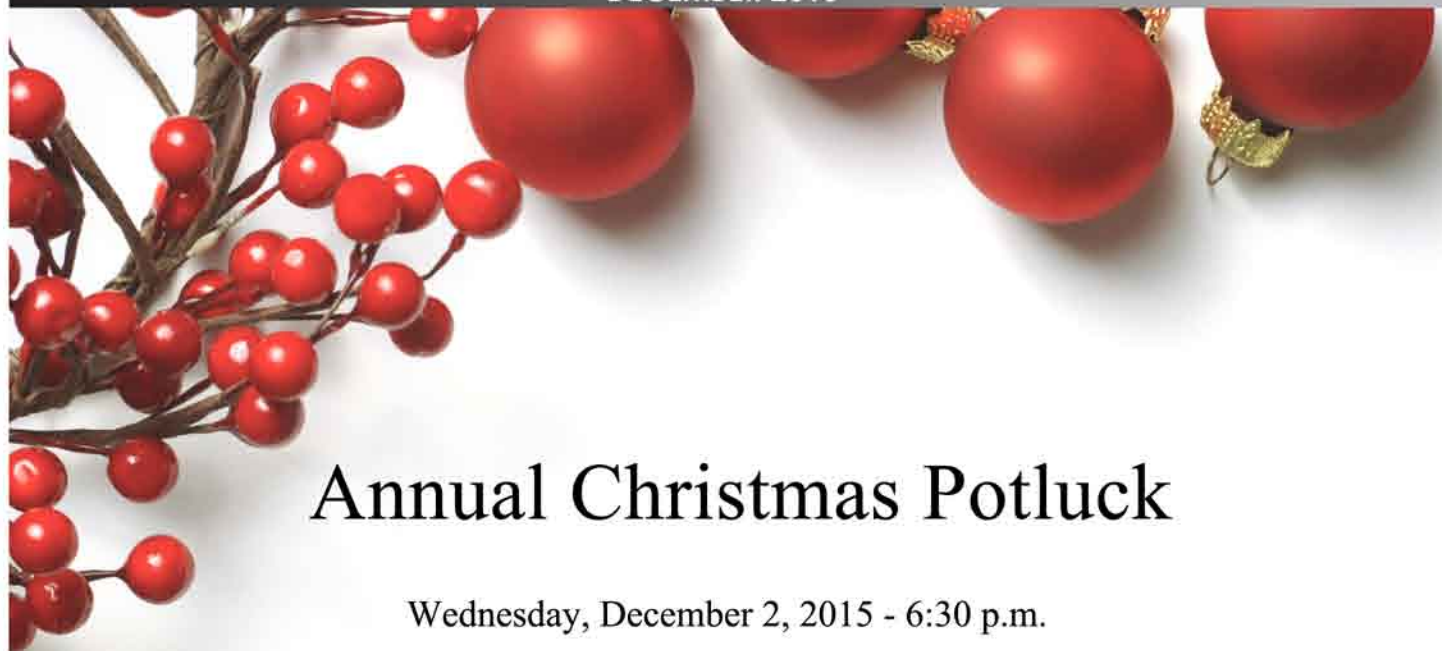


DECEMBER 2015



## Annual Christmas Potluck

Wednesday, December 2, 2015 - 6:30 p.m.

*Castelar Elementary School*  
*840 Yale Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012*

Free parking - enter via College Street

Bring your favorite dish or  
\$5. for admission, children are free.



Bring your whole family. Sing Christmas carols.

Catch up with fellow members and friends.

Don't forget to purchase Christmas gifts from  
our selection of fine publications and of course,  
renew your 2016 CHSSC membership.





## From Chinatown to Christ and Back

We would like to thank Chinese Historical Society of Southern California member and friend Jonathan Lew for sharing his experience with CHSSC in our last meeting. This presentation was a great follow up to our 40th Anniversary Dinner, as Jonathan shares his experiences as a boy who grew alongside the CHSSC. Through his parents, Chong and Isobel Lew, he was able to take part in many CHSSC field trips and was there to witness many organizational milestones. Jonathan also cites Christianity as a major factor in nurturing his interest in Chinese American History eventually leading him to move back to Chinatown as an adult. We are grateful for the Lew family's support of the CHSSC throughout all the years, and are glad that we were able to impact Jonathan's life in a positive way. We hope that his story inspires other members to share their own memories of their time with CHSSC.



Jonathan Lew at the November CHSSC meeting.

Photo by O.C. Lee

To view or download the photos from  
CHSSC 40th Anniversary Celebration, visit:  
[snapitstudio.zenfolio.com/p1026014632](http://snapitstudio.zenfolio.com/p1026014632)

To book Studio Booth Service for your next event, contact:  
[studiobooth@snapitstudio.com](mailto:studiobooth@snapitstudio.com)

## Board of Directors

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Shirley Chu Ng

## 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, multicultural society of the United States.



DECEMBER 2015

## Notes on Chinese American History

*This is the first of a new monthly column in News & Notes where CHSSC member Will Gow discusses the state of the field of Chinese American History.*



I've been a CHSSC member for more than a decade now and am currently a doctoral candidate in the Ethnic Studies Department at UC Berkeley. After spending eight years with the CHSSC helping to develop and execute projects like video documentary Revisiting East Adams and community

history projects like Chinatown Remembered, I decided to apply to graduate school at the relatively late age of 33 to see if I could make a career in Asian American history. The first major decision I had to make was whether to

apply to history departments or Ethnic Studies departments, the two places in the American university system where Asian American history is practiced. The decision was not easy.

Asian American history as a field has its genesis out of Ethnic Studies. In 1969, students with the Third World Liberation Front at San Francisco State and UC Berkeley went on strike to demand courses that reflected their lives and personal histories. As a result of the strikes, the field of Ethnic Studies was born. Most of the early scholars in Chinese American history were involved in Ethnic Studies in some way. Foundational scholars like Sucheng Chan, Ron Takaki, Ling-chi Wang, and Judy Yung, were all associated at some time with Ethnic Studies at UC Berkeley.

*Continues on following page*



Los Angeles prepares for China Nite Celebration in 1938, Peter SooHoo Senior Collection, Chinatown Remembered Project photo digitization, CHSSC.



DECEMBER 2015



Peter SooHoo leads a Chinatown band in the 1930s. Peter SooHoo Senior Collection, Chinatown Remembered Project photo digitization, CHSCC.

For most of the 1970s and into the 1980s, Ethnic Studies departments were often the only places to study Asian American history in the American university system. UC Berkeley eventually became the first university in the country to offer a Ph.D in the field.

By the mid-1990s, American history programs increasingly recognized Asian American history as a field. By contrast, Ethnic Studies was in the middle of a shift toward cultural studies. Since the mid-1990s, as cultural studies has grown in prominence in Ethnic studies, community history has increasingly found itself marginalized within the field. Certainly if one looks at the annual Association of Asian American Studies Conference, the number of panels on literary and cultural studies now outnumber the panels on history.

Despite these changes, I chose UC Berkeley's Ethnic Studies program because I preferred to take an interdisciplinary group of core courses focused on the history, politics, and culture of people of color in the United States that was often grounded in a framework of social justice. I also appreciated that Asian American history itself could

be my specialty within Ethnic Studies. American history programs by contrast usually require students to take core courses in American history with a field of specialization such as twentieth century US history of which Asian American history can then be a sub-specialty.

I am now in my fourth year in the Ethnic Studies program at UC Berkeley. I have passed my qualifying exams and am embarking on my dissertation, which will focus on the history of Los Angeles Chinatown and its relationship to Hollywood cinema in the 1930s and 1940s. I am excited to have the opportunity to write this column and discuss the current state of the field of Asian American history with my fellow society members. I envision this column as a place to address academic trends and new publications in the field of Asian American history and also as a way to share some of my research on the history of Chinese Americans in Southern California.

*William Gow is a doctoral candidate in Ethnic Studies at UC Berkeley. He welcomes comments and questions and can be reached at [wgow@outlook.com](mailto:wgow@outlook.com)*



DECEMBER 2015



Photo by Peter Zhaoyu Zhou

### *In Memoriam*

## Eugene (Gene) Cooper, 68

A larger than life figure, sinologist Eugene (Gene) Cooper of anthropology at USC Dornsife inspired generations of students with his fierce intellect and outspoken personality during a career that spanned 35 years.

Born on May 18, 1947, to a Jewish family in New York City, Cooper was the son of a New York Department of Labor employee and a high school secretary. He grew up in Brooklyn, N.Y., and was the first member of his family to graduate from college, receiving his bachelor's degree in anthropology from State University of New York at Buffalo in 1968. He earned his masters and his Ph.D. in anthropology and East Asian studies at Columbia University in 1976.

A sinologist who specialized in Chinese folk custom, Cooper was also an expert on Chinese civilization, the overseas Chinese diaspora, economic anthropology/political economy, marriage, family and kinship, peasant society, popular culture, and American folklore. He consulted with businesses, industry leaders and legal professionals on Chinese rural industrial production, the import/export sector and Chinese habit and custom.

A fluent Mandarin and Cantonese speaker, Cooper was one of the first foreigners to enter China after the Cultural Revolution and had met the wife of Chinese Communist revolutionary and People's Republic of China founding father Mao Zedong.

An early supporter of the Chinatown Branch Library where he served on the Board of the Friends of the Chinatown Library and a member of the scholarship committee. Dr Cooper also established a Friends Grants-in Aide scholarship subcommittee to assist needy students. Dr Cooper also had a leadership role in the Asian Pacific Library at USC.

He was a past CHSSC board member, has been a guest speaker on several topics, a musician who performed at our BBQs, member of the Shrine Preservation Committee, speaker at Ch'ing Ming programs. Gene Cooper was a tremendous colleague, mentor, and community member. All of us who knew him were fortunate to have him in our lives.

Cooper is survived by his sons, Raphael Cooper and Gabriel Cooper, his younger brother, Robert Cooper, and his wife, Xiao Zhen Zhang. Our deepest sympathies go to his family and those who loved him.

*Includes excerpts from article written by Susan Bell*

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### *In Memoriam*

## Natalina Carmela Chew

April 29, 1935 - September 17, 2015

Natalina Chew was the wife of late William Chew former CHSSC Board Member and author of *Nameless Builders of the Transcontinental Railroad*. The Chinese Historical Society of Southern California has since acquired a collection William Chew's documents and research materials used for his book. Bill and Natalina were early and long-time dedicated CHSSC members.



# Chinese Historical Society of Southern California

411 Bernard Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012

Phone: 323-222-0856 Email: [chssc@hotmail.com](mailto:chssc@hotmail.com)

Website: [www.chssc.org](http://www.chssc.org)

*Help us save paper and postage, email us for your online newsletter at [chssc@hotmail.com](mailto:chssc@hotmail.com)*

## Community Calendar

### **Wednesday, December 2, 2015 – 6:30PM**

#### **CHSSC Annual Christmas Potluck**

Castelar Elementary School

840 Yale Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012

Join us for delicious food, Christmas carols and great company. CHSSC books and memorabilia will be on sale, as well as membership renewals for 2016. Admission: Please bring your favorite dish or \$5. Children are free.

### **Thursday, December 3, 2015 6:00PM – 9:00PM**

#### **16th Annual APA Community Holiday Toy Drive + Reception**

Japanese American National Museum

100 N Central Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90012

Admission: Bring an unwrapped new toy valued at \$20 (or more) or a minimum donation of \$20. Admission includes food, beverages, desserts, entertainment, and access to the museum's exhibits. Entertainment: Priska, DJ Richie Menchavez of TRAKTIVIST.com

For more information please visit: [www.apatoydrive.org](http://www.apatoydrive.org)

### **Saturday, December 5th, 2015 – 6:00PM**

#### **C.A.C.A. Annual Holiday Potluck**

(for more details contact Rick Eng)

C.A.C.A. Los Angeles lodge

415 Bamboo Lane, Los Angeles, 90012

Admission: A dish that serves 8-10 people or \$15

### **Monday December 7, 2015 at 5:30pm-7:30pm**

#### **Assemblymember Ed Chau's annual Holiday Toy Drive and Make a Difference Awards**

Almansor Court Salons III & IV

700 S Almansor St, Alhambra, CA 91801

Please bring unwrapped toys/items in their original packaging for families in need (optional). All toys collected will be distributed to non-profits of the 49th District.

Light refreshments served. Please RSVP by December 3, 2015 to 323 264-4949 or email to Daisy at [daisy.ma@a.ca.gov](mailto:daisy.ma@a.ca.gov).

### **Sunday, December 13, 2015 1:00PM-3:00PM**

#### **Congressmember Judy Chu and**

#### **Trustee Mike Eng's Holiday Party and Toy Drive**

Live Oak Park Community Center

10144 Bogue Street, Temple City, CA 91780

Please bring a new toy to benefit needy children and local organizations. Food and refreshments will be provided.

RSVP: Becky (626) 667-4699 or [rsvpforjudychu@gmail.com](mailto:rsvpforjudychu@gmail.com)

### **Sunday, Dec. 13, 2015 10:00AM - 6:00PM**

#### **USC Pacific Asia Museum**

46 North Los Robles Avenue

Pasadena, CA 91101

#### **Filipino American Holiday Celebration**

The USC Pacific Asia Museum will be celebrating the arts and culture of the Philippines. Admission to the galleries and the day's programming are FREE all day.

More Info: [www.pacificasiamuseum.org](http://www.pacificasiamuseum.org)