

# NEWS'N NOTES



## Chinese Historical Society of Southern California

411 Bernard Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012  
Phone: 323-222-0856 Email: info@chssc.org  
Website: www.chssc.org

EMBER 2019

# CHSSC Annual Holiday Potluck!

Join us in spreading holiday cheer through singing, sharing food, and enjoying time with family and friends.

Please either bring your favorite dish (serving 4-6 people), or \$5 for admission. Children are free.

Give the gift of membership this holiday season, or check out our Chinatown bookstore and online store at [chinesehistoricalsociety.org](http://chinesehistoricalsociety.org) for more gift ideas.



**\*\*CHSSC will be meeting at the San Gabriel  
Presbyterian Church\*\***

**Wednesday, December 4, 2019**

6:30PM (check-in and refreshments), 7:00PM (program) to 9:00PM

**San Gabriel Presbyterian Church**

200 West Last Tunas Dr.

San Gabriel, CA 91776

*Located next to Chase Bank*

Street parking is available on Las Tunas Dr. and in the church parking lot behind the church. Additional parking is behind Chase Bank which can be accessed from either Las Tunas or Del Mar.

For any questions, please contact [chssc1975@gmail.com](mailto:chssc1975@gmail.com).

## CH&C Wish List!

- Electric tea kettle
- A never-ending supply of coffee beans
- Large conference table
- Matching chair set
- New refrigerator
- Large area rug
- A Victorian chaise lounge!



*A special thank you to: Helen Chan, Cindy Fong, Winnie Lew, Doreen Nakayama, Phoenix Bakery, and Judy Sai for donating snacks and treats to our Monthly Meeting!*



## November Monthly Meeting Recap

Our November speaker, Devin Fitzgerald, is the Curator of Rare Books and the History of Printing at UCLA. In order to explain the history of the development of printing in China, he brought wood blocks that were carved with Chinese calligraphy. A brief video showed that the process of printing one page took only 13 seconds. Stone lithography replaced woodblocks.

The focus of Devin's work is to study the printing of Chinese materials in California by the Chinese. In 1854 Chinese circulars were already being printed, but there is no evidence of Chinese books being printed at this time. When reading one of the 6 Chinese newspapers from 1890, Devin discovered advertisements for books that were for sale. During this period, the Bay Area both exported and imported Chinese books. He infers that the Chinese in America were more literate than had been thought previously.

As part of his work, Devin collects Chinese books written in the U.S. before the 1920s. He has been able to buy books through Chinese eBay. Devin purchased some of the 30 titles of books that had been sold by a Modesto herbalist, N.S. Sue. Surprisingly, CHSSC has a collection of some of the same books in its Sam Chang collection.

Devin Fitzgerald ended his talk with a request: if you have some old books written in Chinese, please consider donating them to UCLA.



*Devin Fitzgerald (center) with a Chinese book reprinted in the 21st century using the centuries-old original woodblocks; Linda Bentz (L), and Laurel Sardiñas (R).*

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Eugene W. Moy, Membership Secretary

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John Chan

Wendy Chung

Cindy Fong

Laureen Hom

Winifred Lew

Franklin Mah

## 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-Americans community in support of a better appreciation of the rich, multicultural society of the United States.

# SUPPORT CHSSC AND RENEW MEMBERSHIP NOW!

2019 has been a busy and eventful year for the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California, and 2020 promises to be even busier. We organized all of the activities we have on our annual calendar: 1) monthly program meetings featuring historians, writers, and filmmakers; additional programs and presentations were organized in Cerritos, Arcadia, and Irvine; 2) leading the large marching unit, with support from young Rotarians in the Lunar New Year parade in Chinatown; 3) the annual Golden Spike Awards dinner, at which we recognized journalists and writers; 4) our 8<sup>th</sup> annual Yosemite-Sing Peak Pilgrimage, attended by over 50 hikers and backpackers; 5) a table at the Archives Bazaar at USC-Doheny Library; and 6) our December holiday potluck event; 6) publishing a monthly newsletter to keep members informed of our activities.

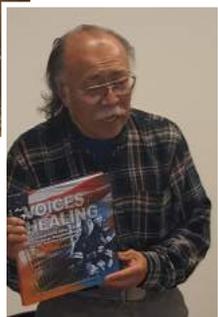
In addition to all the scheduled activities, some of our other initiatives have kept us busy. Some of us journeyed to Utah in March to represent CHSSC at the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the completion of the transcontinental railroad, which was made possible with the efforts of tens of thousands of Chinese workers. CHSSC representatives travelled to San Francisco and New York to network with other Chinese American organizations. We conducted over a dozen walking tours, for school groups, senior groups, and other historical organizations. We collaborated with the Chinese American Museum on programs. We raised funds to meet a challenge grant for capital improvements to our property that will enhance safety and comfort for staff and visitors. We received a grant to organize our collection of reference books and pamphlets. And on top of all that, we have made a big push to scan and digitally organize important collections in our archives, including the Chinese American World War II Veterans Collection, AND to work with a crew of archival interns at CHSSC and at the National Archives branch in Riverside to both digitally archive more research materials and create research aids.

We take great pride in the work that we are doing, all of which promotes access to local and Chinese American history and advances the awareness of the contributions of pioneering Chinese Americans. We do this with just two part time staff and an energetic unpaid board of directors and other volunteers. Our property taxes, insurance, and other operational expenses keep rising, and we depend on membership dues and donations to help us break even. At this time, I am encouraging you, your family, and your friends, to renew your membership, or join our membership if not already a member, and to consider an additional donation to help us through the coming year. We have been preserving and promoting our community's history since 1975. Please help as we enter our 45<sup>th</sup> year with your renewal and/or donation by using the form in this newsletter or the online form on our website our temporary web address: [www.chinesehistoricalsociety.org](http://www.chinesehistoricalsociety.org)).

I thank you in advance for your support, and look forward to seeing you all in 2020!

Sincerely,

Eugene W. Moy, Membership Chair and member since 1976





**Chinese Historical Society  
of Southern California**

**南加州華人歷史學會**

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Los Angeles, California 90012  
chssc1975@gmail.com • (323) 222-0856 •  
www.chinesehistoricalsociety.org



**Mission Statement**

Established in 1975, the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California (CHSSC) unites people with a mutual interest in promoting the rich heritage of Chinese and Chinese American history. Our mission is to pursue, preserve and communicate the history and historical role of Chinese and Chinese Americans in Southern California.

**What We Do**

- ◆ Conduct monthly meetings public presentations on Chinese American History.
- ◆ Sponsor and participate in symposiums, exhibits and conferences.
- ◆ Conduct Chinatown walking tours for students and public.
- ◆ Lead the annual Lunar New Year Golden Dragon Parade.

**Research and Publication**

- ◆ Publication of multiple books by renown scholars.
- ◆ The *Gum Saan Journal* is the Society's annual publication.
- ◆ A significant research library.
- ◆ Maintain an archive consisting of oral histories, archaeological collections, photographs and family histories.



New Membership

Renewal

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

To join or renew your membership by credit card visit our website at [www.chinesehistoricalsociety.org](http://www.chinesehistoricalsociety.org)

Membership levels:

Regular \$ 57.

Supporting \$ 300.

Senior (60+) or student \$ 32.

**Donation** (tax deductible) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to CHSSC.

Check here if you would like the newsletter mailed to your home.

Check here if you would like the newsletter sent via email.

We are a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, tax ID 95-3155357



DECEMBER 2019



|                    |              |
|--------------------|--------------|
| Elizabeth Xiu-wong | Raymond Wong |
| Freeman Lee        | Russell Low  |
| Gene O. Chan       | Susanna Tom  |
| James Tom          | Tamiko Wong  |
| La Mei             | Vicky Tong   |
| Wong               |              |

## The Last Mile: Embracing Contributions of Chinese Railroad Workers

By Tennyson Kwok

California State Railroad Museum Oct 26, 2019—A gala and fundraising dinner was held at the California State Railroad Museum on the evening of October 26, organized by the *US-China Railroad Friendship Association*. Chinese Railroad Workers’ Descendants were honored. In all, nineteen Chinese Railroad Worker Descendants attended. Southern California descendants represented at the Cindy Yee table were Jessica Mei (O.C. Lee), Vicky Tong (Eric Young) and Russell Low.

*Photos courtesy of O.C. Lee, Tennyson Kwok, and Cindy Yee.*



*Top photo: the Chinese Railroad Workers’ Descendants were honored by the California State Railroad Museum.*

*Clockwise from left: besides the new monument, the museum has permanent exhibits that honor the Chinese railroad workers; Tennyson Kwok, Larry Jung, Judy Wong, Jessica Wei, and O.C. Lee from L.A. pose in the museum; Actress Nancy Kwan and Steven Lee (who had come up with the idea of a monument to honor the Chinese men who worked up in the High Sierras) standing with a submission from an artists for the monument. It is a golden spike with Chinese faces sculpted into the rod; The Chinese Railroad Workers monument was unveiled (in background).*



# Chinese Exclusion Act Case File Digitization Project

by Linda Bentz

The Chinese Exclusion Act Case File Digitization Project is in phase two of operations. We launched phase one of the project with our partners Save Our Chinatown Committee, San Bernardino State University and the National Archives in Riverside in November 2018. Four student interns from San Bernardino State University began the digitization process. As of May 2019, eight boxes have been digitized, representing a total number of 8,505 documents from Bakersfield, Nogales and San Diego.

Recently six interns from the University of California at Riverside were hired to continue the digitization of the Chinese Case Files. The student's names are Licheng Wang, Maya Gortarez, Jacqueline Jimenez, Vivienne Lu, Esther Esho and Jillian Surazial. The interns will complete their work at the end of February.

The National Archives has 700 boxes of Record Group 85, which contain documents related to the enforcement of Chinese Exclusion within the Southern California region. Files provide vital information pertaining to Chinese immigrants applying for approval to travel to China and return under the terms of the 1894 Gresham-Yang Treaty. The content of these files include photographs, physical descriptions, transcripts of interviews with applicants who discussed place of birth and date of immigration to the United States, cities of residence, occupation and previous residences since arrival. Chinese Exclusion Act Case Files often feature interviews with additional Chinese residents, family members and business associates. Since Chinese merchants were exempted from Chinese Exclusion Acts (1882 to 1943), these files also contain similar applications from merchants with variations based on their need to prove non-laborer status.

The records contained in the Chinese Exclusion Act Case Files at the National Archives at Riverside provide priceless information for individuals conducting family research, historians researching immigration patterns of immigrant communities and their social and economic networks, gender studies, diaspora studies and transnational associations by district.



NATIONAL  
ARCHIVES

NATIONAL HISTORICAL  
PUBLICATIONS  
& RECORDS COMMISSION

## CHSSC November Outreach

**November 2** – A dozen members of our sister organization, the Little Tokyo Historical Society, enjoyed a Chinatown lunch and walking tour led by Eugene Moy.

**March-April 2020** – We're already getting bookings for walking tours next year!



*We would like to thank:*

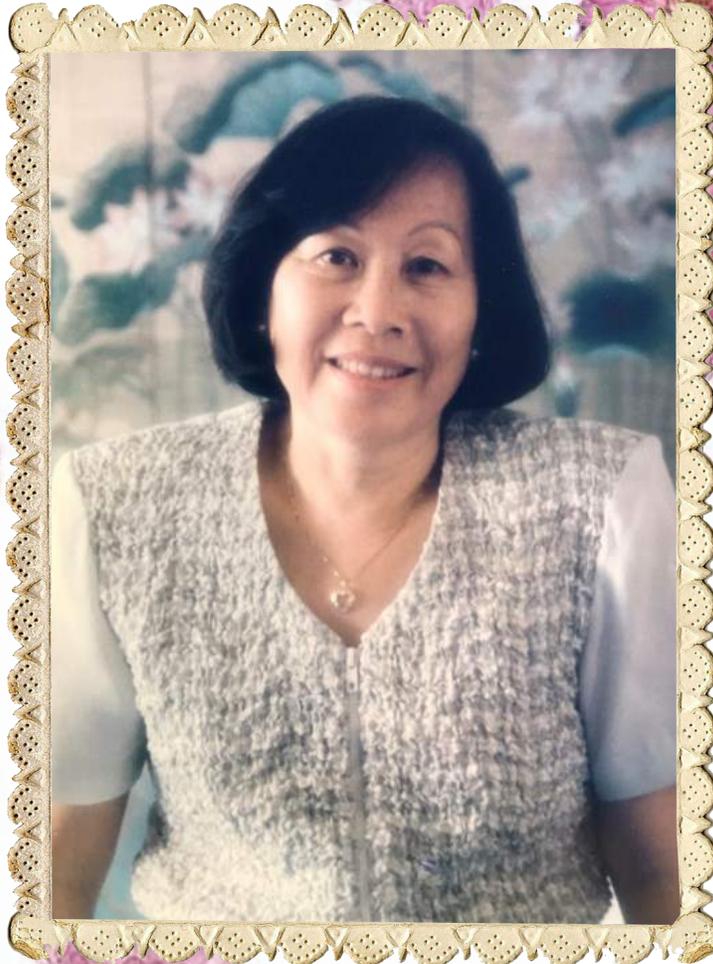
KENNETH CHAN, SUSAN DICKSON,  
KATHRYN KWOK, WINIFRED LEW,  
DOROTHY SCHOON, SALLY WONG,  
AND TERRI & TIMOTHY WONG (IMO  
WILLIAM CHUN HOON)

SUSAN DICKSON, KAY FONG,  
RANDALL JAY FOO, AND EUGENE MOY  
(IMO MILTON QUON)

*for their thoughtful donations.*

# *Isobel Jean Lew*

September 7, 1930—October 30, 2019



Isobel Jean Lew of Fullerton, California, died October 30, 2019. She was married to Chong A. Lew for over 50 years. She was born on September 7, 1930 in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. She was the youngest child of Shing Wong and Shee Chow, and her family was one of the pioneer Chinese immigrant families in Ottawa written about by bestselling author Denise Chong in her book, "Lives of the Family: Stories of Fate and Circumstance," and featured on the website <https://livesofthefamilies.wordpress.com/shing-wong/>.

After Isobel spent her youth growing up in Ottawa, she moved to Toronto and spent the next fifteen years of her adult life working in government and the University Of Toronto. She also volunteered for various local charities, including serving on the steering committee of the Mon Sheong Foundation to establish affordable senior housing in the Toronto area.

After marrying Chong, they settled first in Los Angeles, and later moved to Fullerton. Isobel was an

active member of Cornerstone United Methodist Church in Placentia, California (formerly the Chinese United Methodist Church of Orange County in Fullerton), and was also involved in the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California and the Chinese Association of Orange County. In her free time, she enjoyed reading as well as listening to talk shows and Christian programs on the radio.

Isobel was the last surviving member of her siblings. She is survived by her husband Chong; her son Jonathan Lew (with his wife Audrey) of Irvine, California; her daughter Alison Penn of Hesperia, California; and grandchildren Amanda Penn, Matthew Penn II, and Barnabas Lew. She is also survived by many cousins, nephews and nieces, and grandnephews and grandnieces.

*In lieu of flowers or gifts, the family requests that donations be made to the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California in memory of Isobel Lew.*



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Please help us save paper and postage,  
Email us to indicate your preference for an online newsletter at [info@chssc.org](mailto:info@chssc.org)

## Community Calendar

**November 15, 2019-Sunday December 1, 2019 (final show)**

### ***The Great Leap***

When an American basketball team travels to Beijing for an exhibition game, the coaches find themselves in a conflict that runs deeper than the strain between the countries, and a young player's actions abroad become the accidental focus of attention.

Building tension right up to the buzzer, this sharp-witted new drama written by Lauren Yee (*Cambodian Rock Band, King of the Yees*) and directed by Tony Award winner BD Wong is about much more than making the shot, as two men with a past and one teen with a future struggle for their own personal victories. The play is presented by the Chinese American Museum in association with East West Players.

Pasadena Playhouse  
39 S. El Molino Ave.  
Pasadena, CA 91101

**Tuesday, December 3, 2019, 7:30PM**

### ***Hollywood Chinese: Why Stop at the Doc?***

*Hollywood Chinese* started life as an acclaimed documentary. Next came an exhibit at the Chinese American Museum, which is currently on display at the legendary Formosa Café in West Hollywood. Now, Arthur Dong has just released the latest iteration of the *Hollywood Chinese* story: a lavish coffee table book. Using *Hollywood Chinese* as a case study, Film Independent presents a show-and-tell-all seminar where the filmmaker/author will share the secrets of his ongoing success in sustaining a living through expanding the life of his films. Arthur's book will be available for purchasing and signing.

Film Independent  
5670 Wilshire Blvd, 9th floor  
Los Angeles, CA 90036

**Wednesday, December 4, 2019, 7:30PM**

### ***The Farewell Screening with Q&A with Director Lulu Wang***

A diasporic Chinese family reunites in China, under the pretense of a wedding. In reality, they are using this excuse to say goodbye to the matriarch, Nainai, who, unbeknownst to her, has been diagnosed with cancer. A discussion with director Lulu Wang follows the screening.

Tickets: \$20 General Admission, \$10 Hammer Members with valid discount code. Tickets available on Eventbrite.com.

Hammer Museum  
10899 Wilshire Blvd.  
Los Angeles, CA 90024

**Sunday, December 15, 2019, 2:00PM-4:00PM**

### **Book Talk: *The Ninja Daughter* by Tori Eldridge**

A presentation (with slide show) about mixed-race culture, Chinese pioneers in Hawaii, and the inspiration for author Tori Eldridge's debut novel.

Ms. Eldridge will speak on the following subjects:

- Chinese in Hawaii from personal ancestral history and family anecdotes with facts drawn from Chinese Historical Society, Hawaii History Organization, Hawaii Chinese Historical Center, and Chinese Pioneer Families of Maui, Molokai, and Lanai.
- The differences between growing up mixed race in Hawaii compared to California and other parts of the United States (Advantage vs. discrimination).
- How all of this inspired a thriller about a Chinese-Norwegian modern-day ninja in Los Angeles.

Bruggemeyer Library  
318 S. Ramona Ave.  
Monterey Park, CA 91754