

MAY 2020

President's Letter

With the onset of COVID-19, challenges to our mission exist. Since our beginning in 1975, CHSSC has had monthly educational programs during the school year. Orders from the governor for everyone to “shelter in place” forced us to cancel our monthly meetings this Spring. We miss learning about Chinese American history as well as the camaraderie of our meetings, but the safety of our membership is foremost. Also, we postponed our yearly fundraising event, the Golden Spike banquet. In addition, the health scare prompted us to close the Heritage and Visitors' Heritage Center for the foreseeable future.

Recently, the board began plans for the future. Part of prudent fiscal management is to examine income versus costs. With the closing of the Center, we laid off our employee, Laurel Sardiñas. Marian Chew is taking a leave of absence until the fall. Since the Golden Spike banquet normally generates operational and personnel funds, board members have been stepping up to handle the Society's business. The board has realized that the income derived from yearly memberships does not fully cover the production, printing, and mailing of the newsletters. Unfortunately, most members want a copy mailed to them. Membership also includes the yearly Gum Saan Journal. This year's issue was particularly expensive due to its length. Perhaps CHSSC might need to charge an additional amount to those who want a mailing in the future.

Part of future planning is determining the new board. Normally, CHSSC announces the slate of officers for the next year in this issue of the newsletter. At the May meeting we open up the floor for nominations so we can vote at the June meeting. Since we are not having a May or a June meeting, we have decided to extend the deadline for nominations until August 1 so that the elections can be held in September.

The strength and success of our organization over past 45 years has been the dedication of its board members and volunteers, in addition to our staff. Thank you for your continued support through your membership and donations.

Susan



May and June Meetings are Cancelled



CHSSC RECEIVES \$5,000 GRANT FROM THE CATHAY BANK FOUNDATION

[Excerpted from the program book for the CHSSC Annual Awards Dinner that recognized Cathay Bank as a pioneering bank in 2007]

In 1962, the first Chinese American bank in Southern California, Cathay Bank, opened its doors in Los Angeles Chinatown. Its motto was and is “An Open Door for All.” Its 777 N. Broadway address, designed by architect Eugene Kinn Choy, was a symbol of a new era of Chinese American entrepreneurship. It was founded to provide and promote economic development of the Los Angeles Chinatown community.

At a time when there were no banking services available in Chinatown, a group of individuals recognized the need for financial services to Chinese Immigrants and their businesses in order to promote economic development within the community.

Cathay Bank Foundation is a nonprofit affiliate with a mission “to enhance the growth and success of communities where the Bank serves”. The Foundation’s stated objectives are to create opportunities in the areas of affordable housing, community and economic development, and education.

April Donations:

Sylvia SooHoo- tablecloths

Ben and Doreen Nakayama- major donors

Cathay Bank Foundation- major donor

IMO Frieda Wong: Gene Moy, Susan Sing, Susan Dickson, and Helen and Darryl Quon

IMO Greg Wallace: Helen and Darryl Quon

IMO Howard Chan: Helen and Darryl Quon

Board of Directors

OFFICERS

Susan Dickson, President

Linda Bentz, Vice President

Felicia Tabing, Secretary

Teresa Chung, Treasurer

Gordon Hom, VP for programs

Eugene W. Moy, Membership Secretary

Members at Large

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 American community in support of a better appreciation of the rich, multicultural society of the United States.



Do you know these WWII vets and their families?

The 2020 Gum Saan Journal focused on the WWII. The main stories were from interviews conducted by CHSSC members when Marji Lee was collecting information for our book, Duty and Honor. We would like to provide a free copy to their families, but we don't have address information. If you know how to contact a family member, write CHSSC at info@chssc.org

Fred Gong
Jay Soon Nin
Jim Wah Gee

James Wing Woo
Robert Chow
Herbert Leong

Colonel Bernie Jew
Daniel Ang
Harry Gee

Chinese Exclusion Act Case Files

Linda Bentz

The National Archives at Riverside has curated 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 contents 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 first exempted, then closely documented during the Chinese Exclusion era (1882 to 1943), these files also contain similar applications from merchants with variations based on their need to prove non-laborer status. The Chinese Historical Society of Southern California, along with Save Our Chinatown Committee, has created a partnership with the National Archives at Riverside to digitize Chinese Exclusion Act Case Files. Through the work of interns from Cal State San Bernardino and the University of California at Riverside, many thousands of pages of files have been digitized. Files are organized by district, and the digitized files from the Nogales District are now online and available for viewing at this address:

<https://catalog.archives.gov/id/5831061>.

Individuals who would like to tag or comment on the files can register as a Citizen Archivist at the National Archives website. We will let you know when the next group of files is uploaded for viewing online.



NATIONAL
ARCHIVES

New Multimedia Library

Linda Bentz

The Chinese Historical Society of Southern California is creating a Multimedia Library. Housed at 415 Bernard Street, as part of the Chinatown Heritage Center, our new Multimedia Library will allow us to share our digital assets with the community. These assets include audio interviews, films, photographs, reports, lectures, databases, transcripts and so much more. CHSSC has collected books, magazines, reports, paintings and artifacts for over 40 years. We have shared these items with the public through exhibits, presentations and symposia. However, our audiovisual assets have been stored in the archives, and on servers for years. This precious information was unavailable to the public. Now, through gifts from generous donors, the Multimedia Library is under construction. We have purchased state of the art equipment and uploaded our assets to servers that comply with the most modern technological standards. Please stay tuned for the announcement of the grand opening of the Multimedia Library.

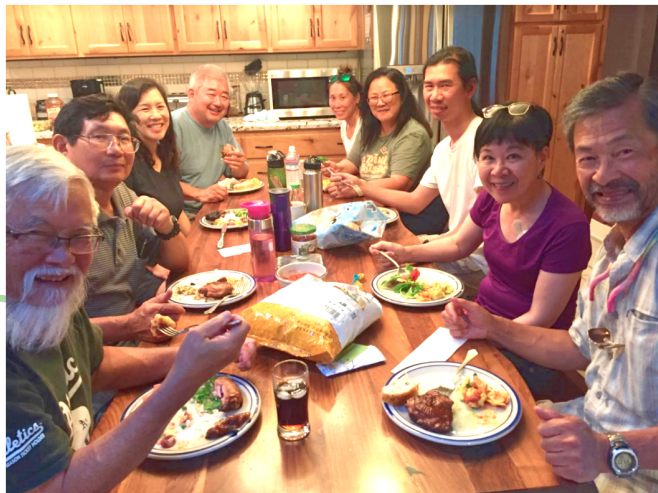


MAY 2020

A Look Back At Yosemite



Above: Annie Tang and Susan Sing at Olmsted Point



Above: Dinner at the cabin in 2019



Above: Mapping out a hike on the 2019 trip



Above: Lower Chignualna Falls



Right: The Chinese laundry building



Recent Outreach and Research Activities

Normally, we provide a monthly update on outreach activities such as walking tours and speaking engagements for the public. And normally, the Spring months of March, April and May are the busiest for such outreach, especially when the weather is warming up, and teachers are trying to augment the classroom experience for their students. Due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, five scheduled walking tours, representing about 100 Chinatown visitors, have been cancelled. But the CHSSC has continued to be a resource for researchers despite our library and archives not being physically accessible to the public. In response to a request from a university student from England working on a thesis on Chinese American identity during the Vietnam War era we were able to scan and digitally send specific articles she had identified from publications that we just happen to have. How did an overseas student know to come to us? Partly due to the efforts of our archival team of consultant archivists and interns, led by Linda Bentz, in the last couple of years, the CHSSC has a presence on the Online Archive of California (<https://oac.cdlib.org/>). In addition, our own website, <https://chssc.org/>, containing contributions by many of our members, has been a rich,

and still developing, resource, for local Chinese American history. Our library contains specialized subject material that has been donated by many of our members, or written by our members. The student from England needed articles from, among others, Volume 1 No. 1 (March 1971) of UCLA's *Amerasia Journal*, which was donated by Susie Ling a few years ago, and from *Fighting For The Dream*, a compilation of oral interviews of Chinese American military veterans by Victoria Moy published in 2014 by CHSSC. Our library has value!

The CHSSC's *Duty and Honor Collection* has also been a source of documentation to support applications by veterans and their families who have been registering for the Chinese American World War II Veterans Recognition Project (<https://www.caww2.org/preservation>). Thanks to the collection efforts in 1995-1998 by project director Marjorie Lee and her team, we have been able to search for and provide backup documents from our archives during this time when many agencies and institutions are closed to the public. The CHSSC Archives are proving their value!



Above: one of CHSSC's visits to Yosemite, learning from Ranger Yenyen Chan

Our condolences to
Rose Marie Lee on the
passing of her husband,
Bowmond Lee.
We also express
condolences to
Dr. Allen Wong and
family on the passing
of wife and mother,
Frieda Ching Wong.



Chinese Historical Society of Southern California

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Phone: 323-222-0856 Email: info@chssc.org
Website: www.chssc.org

*Please help us save paper and postage,
email us to indicate your preference for an online newsletter at chssc@hotmail.com*

Community Calendar

CHSSC Needs Your Email

We need to be able to contact you during these changing times.
Would you be willing to receive your News 'N Notes via email?
Let us know.

To provide your current email write us at:
chssc1975@gmail.com

May CHSSC monthly meeting:
CANCELLED

June CHSSC monthly meeting:
CANCELLED

The 2020 Yosemite/Sing Peak Pilgrimage, our 8th annual gathering, will not be held at the park to comply with restrictions on group gatherings. However, the planning team is working on a first-ever Yosemite Chinese American History online event. Stay tuned!