

FEBRUARY 2021

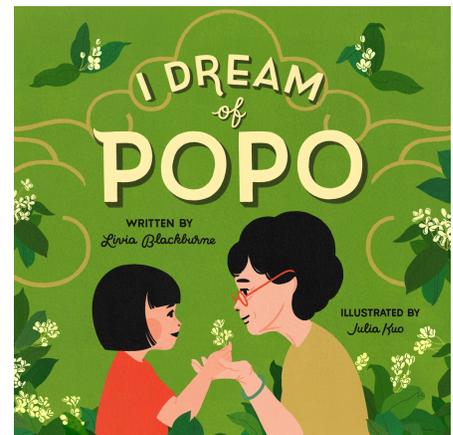
## Reflections on an Immigration Story: In Conversation with Livia Blackburne



Livia Blackburne is the New York Times bestselling author of the picture book *I Dream of Popo*, about a young girl who immigrates to California from Taiwan and her relationship with the grandmother she leaves behind. The book is written, illustrated, and edited by Taiwanese Americans, giving the book an authentic perspective on the immigrant experience. Publisher's Weekly and Kirkus magazine have both given it starred reviews, which they reserve for books of exceptional merit. Before becoming an author, Blackburne studied biochemical sciences at Harvard University and earned her PhD in cognitive neuroscience at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

In her presentation, Blackburne will talk about the immigrant experience, the importance of having minority groups tell their own stories, and about her own journey toward becoming a writer.

Blackburne and the book's illustrator Julia Kuo discuss the inspiration behind the book in at <https://smarturl.it/popotrailer>. *I Dream of Popo* is available for purchase at [Amazon](#), [Bookshop](#), and most major retailers. A limited number of signed copies are available at [Once Upon a Time](#) children's bookstore in Montrose (Glendale).



*My hope is that Chinese American children across the country will get the opportunity to see themselves reflected in the story, and that the book will serve to honor and preserve our heritage for the next generation.*

*When I was growing up, I had a hard time finding children's books written by and about Chinese people, so I'm grateful to have the opportunity to publish this story.*

**CHSSC Meeting will be online on Zoom:**

Wednesday, February 3, 2021

Program: 7:00 PM

To register, go to [chssc.org](http://chssc.org).



## President's Letter

Community outreach has always been a cornerstone of the mission of CHSSC. Formerly, our outreach included monthly face to face program meetings held for many years at Castelar Elementary School and then at C.A.C.A. LA Lodge, Chinatown Walking tours, marching in the Chinese New Year parade, manning CHSSC booths at conventions and community events, writing a monthly newsletter, publishing books, and our yearly *Gum Saan Journal*.

With the temporary closure of the Visitors and Heritage Center due to the pandemic, the board has to expand our vision of outreach. Knowing that outreach is about making connections, CHSSC has been expanding our connections in order to encompass a wider audience. Our monthly program meetings moved online in September making our programs available beyond the LA area. Our connections to community groups such as the China Society and Chinese American Museum have become even more important as we partner for public online programs because these partnerships increase the variety of program subjects and viewership.

Our website, which is in the process of being revamped, connects us to the world. On one level, it is a resource that contains an up-to-date listing of pertinent and interesting Zoom meetings throughout the U.S. More importantly, CHSSC will launch our online media center that will allow public access to our significant archives during 2021. Our archives, which we have been digitizing for several years, will be an important resource for those interested in Chinese American history. In addition, CHSSC is creating an additional website to showcase the *Gum Saan Journal*. *Gum Sann Journals*, which we began publishing in 1977, have been digitized and will be available online.

A last connection that has allowed CHSSC to move forward during the pandemic is our connection to institutions and individuals. Currently, CHSSC scholars are helping ICW (Institute of California in the West) on their Old Chinatown project. CHSSC has begun working with UCLA on a book about the five Chinatowns. UC Riverside has provided 6 interns to help with the research for the ICW and UCLA projects. Through USC's LA As Subject grant, CHSSC has had an archivist to help us with organizing our digital resources. Institutional financial support through grants has helped us afford to continue our efforts: Cathay Bank, Supervisor Kathern Barger, Cal Humanities and the Society of Architectural Historians each funded grants during 2020. The Louie Family Foundation has funded an online exhibit which will be available in May. Our connection to both large and small donors has supported us during the challenges of this past year.

Happy Year of the Ox,

Susan Dickson

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## MISSION STATEMENT

The Chinese Historical Society of Southern California was organized in November 1975. The purposes of the Society are:

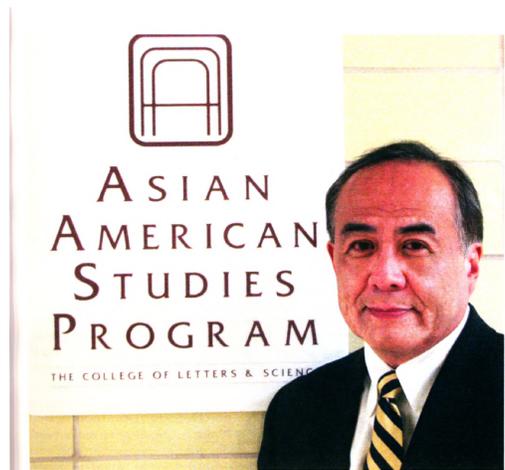
1. to bring together people with a mutual interest in the important history and historical role of Chinese and Chinese Americans in southern California;
2. to pursue, preserve, and communicate knowledge of this history; and
3. to promote the heritage of the Chinese and Chinese American community in support of a better appreciation of the rich, multicultural society of the United States.



## Victor Jew's "Long Time Midwestern": Recovering the Lost History of the Chinese American Midwest"

BY CINDY FONG

Our January meeting introduced Victor Jew, PhD. Speaking on the topic of the Chinese American presence in the US Midwest. Dr. Jew began with a reminder of the longtime presence of Chinese Americans on American shores, including records attesting to their presence in the mid-west by the 1870s. Graphics highlighted the six largest Asian American urban populations based on the 2010 census. In 1974, Asian American students at the University of Wisconsin conducted a survey of the Asian American population in the Midwest based on the 1970 census. Results were published in the student newspaper "Rice Paper." In 1991, the first Asian American Studies Program was established in the mid-west at the University of Wisconsin at Madison.



In Watertown, WI in the 1870s, there is a newspaper account of a Chinese. "He caused a sensation walking down the street." Records of other Chinese persons date from 1870. The census reports of 1880, 1890, and 1900 show, by county, growth of Chinese American populations. From 1850-1902, anti-Chinese violence drove Chinese Americans to the mid-west in order to escape persecution. For economic reasons, migration also occurred from the American south and east into the mid-west. However, this did not prevent violence. IN 1889, Milwaukee was the scene of anti-Chinese violence. Chinatown in St. Louis, Chicago, and Detroit were built and subsequently demolished due to urban renewal and development.

More opportunity for second generation Chinese Americans did emerge. However, racial discrimination prevented some from acquiring white collar jobs for which they were qualified. After World War II, more opportunity arose. In 1965, greater immigration was granted due to an overhaul of federal immigration policy. The 1970s economic downturn resulted in job loss from companies like TRW and Hughes Aircraft.

Dr. Jew remarked on the contributions of mid-western leaders such as Grace Lee Bogs and the legacy of Vincent Chin.

This program was recorded and can be viewed on our YouTube channel:

<https://youtu.be/ErjUFphE87Y>



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## UCR Public History Interns



**Connor Green** is a fourth year History Major at University of California, Riverside. Connor began interning at CHSSC this year through UCR's Public History Practicum.

**Jillian “Jill” Surdzial** is a first year in the UCR Public History MA/PhD program. She has been working with CHSSC since November 2019 in digitizing and transcribing Chinese Exclusion Act Case records, as well as directing new interns in collecting data about Los Angeles’ East Adams Chinatown. She hopes to use innovative new ways of presenting history—like story maps— to promote a better understanding of local historical narratives.



**Aaijah Love** is currently a hard-working History undergraduate at UCR, aspiring to build connections within her community and knowledge about the field of Public History. Although at the beginning of her educational career, this Winter she has taken on an internship with the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California to help her establish skills such as local archiving, analyzing data and working on a team to achieve an overall goal of educating the public on local history.

**Shawna Ho** is a fourth year Psychology student at UC Riverside. She is extremely interested in Asian American History and believes her background in Chinese linguistics and history will be beneficial to this organization. Her work at the CHSSC currently include translating and working with community archives.





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**Marivel Palone** is an aspiring law student who is currently in her 4<sup>th</sup> year at University of California, Riverside studying History and Law & Society. This winter, Marivel began interning at CHSSC through her work with Professor Catherine Gudis and the Public History Practicum at UCR.

**Samantha Vela** is a fourth year student at UCR, majoring in History Law & Society with a specific concentration in Southeast Asian history. Samantha is currently interning at CHSSC through the University of California, Riverside, in an effort to learn more about the process of archiving public history.



**Brianna Vasquez** is a fourth-year undergraduate student at the University of California Riverside. Her major is History with a concentration in United States history. She began interning for CHSSC this winter. Brianna is aspiring to go to law school. During her free time, she partakes in her sorority Pi Beta Phi philanthropy, entitled Read > Lead > Achieve. The sorority members work with the Riverside community's Title One schools, to help the students become advanced readers. To do this Brianna and her sorority's raise money to provide books and other school supplies to the school and they also work with the children one on one to practice their reading skills.

The interns are working with the Public History Program at UCR. They are documenting the East Adams community by working with census data, oral histories, Chinese Exclusion Act Case files, newspaper accounts and WPA neighborhood census records. If anyone has information about East Adams please contact us at [info@chssc.org](mailto:info@chssc.org).



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## Judy Yung

(January 25, 1946 – December 14, 2020)

BY SUELLEN CHENG AND MUNSON KWOK

We are extremely saddened to learn the passing of Judy Yung, Professor Emerita of American Studies at the University of California, Santa Cruz. She was an American historian respected and admired by her peers, students, and her community. She was inspiring and always stood firm in telling impactful Chinese American stories. She was an incredible spokesperson for generations of Chinese American women whose stories would have never been heard without her.

Judy Yung was passionate about telling the true and moving stories of our community. She dedicated more than 40 years in researching, preserving, and sharing the experiences of Chinese in America. An award-winning author, she wrote numerous books about both Chinese American and women's history. The collection of Judy's research and publications is considered an invaluable part of the records in the field of American history. Her pioneering research and insightful interpretations not only have enhanced public understanding of Chinese American history, but also transformed the narrative of American history. She insisted on challenging the stereotypes of Chinese Americans as passive victims and the model minority by using forgotten voices that she and others helped salvage. For her extraordinary contributions to the field of American history and for her outstanding teaching Judy was honored with more than a dozen of awards by many organizations including the Association for Asian American Studies, UC Santa Cruz, the Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation, and the National Women's History Museum. She was passionate about serving her community starting with her early career as a librarian. She created in 1983 an exhibition on the "The History of Chinese American Women at Chinatown Cultural Center. From 1982, she devoted more than twenty years serving the Chinese Historical Society of America (CHSA) on its Board of Officers, as Editor, and Publication Chair. Working closely with Him Mark Lai, she encouraged scholars as well as community historians and to publish. After her husband Eddie Fung's passing, she moved back to San Francisco. The experience of dining with Judy in her old Chinatown neighborhood was special. At a quick lunch there, she would recount all the ingredients of every delicious dish that was served at the historic San Francisco *Sam Wo* restaurant and the stories of the people who were involved.

We were blessed to have Judy as the speaker of several educational programs sponsored by the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California (CHSSC) and the Chinese American Museum (CAM). Judy, as one of the panelists, contributed to the CHSSC's 1992 *Origins and Destinations: A Conference on Chinese Americans*. In May 2012, she presented to us a program that paid tribute to Him Mark Lai. In March 2015, she spoke to us about the book, *Island: Poetry and History of Chinese Immigrants on Angel Island, 1910-1940*.

Judy's last major project that we know of was to co-curate the California State Museum's *Gold Mountain Exhibit* opened in 2020. Starting as a community advisor in a large group including CHSSC members Suellen Cheng, Munson Kwok, and Eugene Moy, she became the main contributor to shaping the narrative thread for the exhibit designer. Once committed, she would put not only her knowledge but her passion to it. She insisted that the exhibit content should have accurate information. She made a special one-day



trip to conduct interviews at the Bruggemeyer Library in Monterey Park to get the Southern California story just right, particularly in the San Gabriel Valley. As a responsible but efficient scholar, she planned, “We can skip dinner to maximize my interview time with you all.” She did, and rushed to catch that last flight back to San Francisco.

Further, Judy significantly revised the exhibit agenda to assure that the legacy of Chinese women in California was correctly captured and satisfactorily represented.

Judy will be remembered not only for her pioneering works on Chinese American women history but also as a generous teacher and friend with warm heart and gracious spirit. Her commitment and passion for history and generous spirit are an enduring inspiration to us and to future generations.

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# Chinese Historical Society of Southern California

411 Bernard Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012  
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