

OCTOBER 2022

Grandview Gardens Restaurant: In Their Own Words



Sophia Wong



Calvin Wong

Join the CHSSC October meeting as Sophia Wong and her cousin Calvin Wong discuss their memories of their families' restaurant, the Grandview Gardens.

樂觀園

Grandview
GARDENS

951 MEI-LING WAY • NEW CHINATOWN • LOS ANGELES

October 5, 2022 7:00 pm



Chinese Historical Society
of Southern California

南加州華人歷史學會

Free to attend.

RSVP via Eventbrite on

CHSSC website: <https://chssc.org>



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President's Message

A healthy salad

Most of us try to follow a healthy and balanced diet. This summer at CHSSC, there has been a varied menu of activities, which might signify CHSSC's healthy metabolism. We heard speakers at our regular monthly program dates, including insightful presentations by nine interns on the Five Chinatowns project on Sept 7. We travelled many miles to and within Yosemite National Park to learn about Chinese American history and its impact on our western American landscape. Our interns and board volunteers recorded oral interviews of Chinatown community pioneers for the Five Chinatowns project. Our archival team reviewed and cataloged many boxes of photographs and books. We responded to multiple research inquiries online and in person. We conducted walking tours for high school teachers from Pasadena, for Levitt Foundation staff, and for a smaller group from Ventura-Oxnard. We planned and ran a very successful members picnic and surplus book giveaway in our CHSSC back yard for over 70 people on August 27. We planned meetings for our grant-funded virtual walking tour. We had progress meetings with our Huntington-USC ICW partners. We connected with potential archival and/or exhibition partners in Oakdale CA and in L.A. County. We purchased and installed upgrades to our digital data network (i.e., our computer system!). We worked with our architect and tracked the permit progress of our capital improvement plans. And, we managed all of our administrative tasks including paying bills and property taxes, going to the bank, holding board meetings, doing regular housecleaning, taking out the trash, and maintaining the landscaping.

So we are healthy in that we maintain a high level of activity. Board and staff are on the premises daily, our newsletter gets written, printed and delivered every month and the next issue of *Gum Saan Journal* is going through final edits. We have stimulating planning and research discussions. We're on track to produce all of the content by next year for our Five Chinatowns book, and pretty soon we will have our capital improvement plans approved by the City of L.A. We do pay stipends to most (some get funding from outside grants) of our interns, and fortunately all of those costs are covered by grants from our generous donors. However, we do have ongoing administrative and upcoming capital costs, which include accessibility improvements to both restrooms in our Victorian-era houses, plus outside ramps and parking lot improvement to include a handicap space, upgrading the electrical, plumbing, and heating/AC systems, and finally to paint both houses and the archives building.

When we receive contractor bids, we will share an updated capital improvement budget with you. In the meantime, as we near the end of year, please consider setting aside a contribution toward our capital effort, which will help ensure continuation of our projects, increase the security of our important archives and digital data, and support our mission of preserving and sharing our important history.

Eugene Moy

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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.



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Grandview Gardens Restaurant: In Their Own Words

Last year the Louie Family Foundation awarded CHSSC a grant to research the history of the Grandview Gardens Restaurant. In order to learn more about the restaurant and its owners, CHSSC contacted the Wong family. Sophia Wong, daughter of Norman Wong, and her cousin Calvin Wong, son of Doc Wong, to learn more. Both Calvin and Sophia have had a continuing interest in the Wong family history as well as the history of the restaurant. They were very generous with their time and their artifacts. Join us at our meeting to learn about their interesting grandfather who started the restaurant in Old Chinatown and to hear stories of their experiences at the restaurant in New Chinatown.

The online exhibit that we created can be located on the CHSSC website: <https://chssc.org/>

Speakers



Sophia Wong, daughter of Norman Wong, was born in Los Angeles, her first home being on Marview Avenue in Chinatown. Her family moved to Monterey Park and later to Eagle Rock, where she attended Eagle Rock High School. Sophia graduated from USC with a bachelor's degree in Business Administration. She spent much of her career in the wholesale fashion industry. When not enjoying her current second career as store and events manager at the largest urban national park in the world, the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, you will find Sophia herping (looking for reptiles & amphibians), shooting photos, or playing Scrabble.



Born in Los Angeles, **Calvin Wong** and his family lived in Chinatown on Bernard St until moving to La Canada in the 1950s. After graduating from La Canada High school, he attended Cal Poly Pomona and received a BS in Mathematics. He then started a career in Information Technology as a programmer at Hughes Aircraft Company while getting an MBA degree from the University of Southern California Business School. Currently he is retired after 42 years in the Information Technology Industry.

An Archivist, Then Vs. Now

By: Amanda Galvez

I began my work with CHSSC in September 2021, as an Archives Intern. I was contracted to work 75 hours, and was brought on to process the Fritz Family Collection. Having a personal interest in historic buildings and architecture, as well as an interest in France, I was more than eager to begin working with the collection of the family that built the houses that CHSSC now occupies, works in, and owns.

In the beginning, I was pretty new to archival practices, but had a huge passion to work with tangible materials and objects. That passion carried me through my first internship stint, where I created a finding aid and uploaded it to the Online Archive of California, spent time digitizing many kinds of photographs relevant to both Old and New Chinatown, and overall got to realize the importance of working in a community-based archive and institution. *(continued on page 4)*



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(Amanda Galvez continued)

Saving stories, traditions, and memories of a culture is so rewarding. My main job as an archivist is to preserve past materials in the present, for the future. We are constantly bridging the gap between the past and the future—whether that is through observing and interpreting objects, communicating with and interviewing people, tasting and sharing food, or always striving to think critically and intentionally for our potential patrons and community members.

I was then invited back to be an Archives Intern for the winter term, starting in late January 2022 and ending in March 2022. In this time period, I processed and created a finding aid for the Susan Dickson Collection, created an ongoing virtual exhibit on a platform called Omeka centering the Lem Kay Collection, and continued digitizing materials.

In May 2022, I began a new term with CHSSC as a contracted Archivist, where my role slightly changed and expanded. Some of my new responsibilities have included:

- Serving as a facilitator for our collections and resources, in order to pair a researcher with materials that were best suited for their proposed projects. This is one of my favorite parts of being an archivist—working with a variety of patrons and hearing what they use our collections for. For example, CHSSC hosted a group of PhD students from around the country, where they translated rare Chinese materials, pulling materials for a historical architecture preservationist, and an art history graduate student.
- Serving as both a project manager and supervisor for our wonderful summer interns, Daisy and Taylor. I came up with workflow documents, organizational and communication documents, teaching documents, as well as assigned projects for Daisy and Taylor. Making sure we work on projects that are both important to CHSSC and our community, as well as to Daisy and Taylor's interests were super important! This summer they worked on creating inventories and finding aids for the Cambria Collection and part of the Paul Chace Collection.
- Serving as a teammate for my other archivists, where we bounced ideas and best practices off of each other, brainstormed potential projects and exhibits (both on-site and virtually on Omeka), and made sure important protocols, procedures, and communication documents were set in place.
- Serving as a continuous student - learning about the profession, how to improve my own professional skills, and constantly learning Chinese American history, and about the people that make up this community.

Some of my other projects I will continue to tackle include organizing our library by appraising and weeding our collection, as well as ensuring that our books are entered correctly into our Libib database system. Another big project is organizing the Paul Chace Library - a huge donation of several materials and boxes of books, archeological reports, gray literature, and papers/documents.

It is exciting to see how my roles, responsibilities, and work have fluctuated within this past year, and to see the growth within that. Overall, I've enjoyed the strength in connections I've made with CHSSC staff, community members, researchers, and of course, to our collections. Access is always a big idea that I have centered in my mind, hoping to create long lasting work for more people to learn from, enjoy, and be proud of.



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Reflections

By: Taylor Burnett



The archivist summer internship with the CHSSC has allowed me to gain a more thorough understanding of community based archival practices by working closely and learning from fellow archivist interns and staff members. At the beginning of the internship, I had very little knowledge about archival work and was not familiar with archival practices, concepts, and the process behind preserving and documenting history. Through working on the Cambria Collection and the Paul Chace Ephemera Collection, I became familiar with the methods and systems used to make archival information accessible to the general public. The first project we worked on was the Cambria Collection. This collection included two main parts: creating a finding aid and uploading it to the Online Archive of California and producing an online virtual exhibit that is accessible through CHSSC's digital archive.

Through the process of working on the virtual exhibit I learned how to digitize materials and navigate the web-publishing platform, Omeka. The second project we worked on was the Paul Chace Ephemera Collection. Work for this project included creating a finding aid for the selected boxes from the donated items. Through completing a second finding aid I became more familiar with archival concepts and methods.

My time working with the CHSSC has been an invaluable experience. I leave this internship with a greater appreciation for the work of archivists and their role in creating a sense of community through the preservation and documentation of the Chinese American experience.

By: Daisy Cabot



During my time as an intern with the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California, I was able to learn so much about not only the archival processes, but also about local Chinese history. Working together with the other archival intern, Taylor Burnett, we processed two collections. The first was the Cambria Collection, donated by the CHSSC's Archives Chair Linda Bentz. This collection contained reports, newspapers, photographs, and other materials pertaining to the Chinese population of Cambria in San Luis Obispo County, California. By working with the Cambria Collection, I learned how to: take an inventory for a collection, create a finding aid, upload the finding aid to the Online Archive of California, and make a webpage for the collection using Omeka S. The second collection, entitled the Paul G. Chace Ephemera Collection, is a collection of various artifacts, documents, and photographs donated by Dr. Chace as part of a much larger collection. With this, Taylor and I got more practice taking inventory and making a finding aid for materials other than documents and photographs. Some notable objects in the Paul G. Chace Ephemera Collection include findings from an archaeological dig in Riverside, California and some old Chinese coins.

Before this internship, I knew nothing about the workings of an archive. As a graduate with a History degree, I've used my fair share of online archives and understood the importance of archives, but never knew the work an archivist did. Now, I understand how to process a collection to not only preserve its contents but to also make them accessible to the public. Moving forward, I hope to obtain my Master's in Library and Information Science in order to work in a research library or archive. The skills I have gained at the CHSSC this summer under the helpful guidance of Linda Bentz and Amanda Galvez will no doubt aid me in this endeavor, and this experience has only encouraged me further to pursue this career path.



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2022 Yosemite Sing peak Pilgrimage Report

By: Karun Yee

Due to space limitations in our September NNN, we were unable to fit this very descriptive report of our Yosemite pilgrimage activities.

This was an adventure I will not soon forget. The dedication of the Southern California Chinese Historical Society and the astounding leadership of the group is truly remarkable. We were scheduled to use Wawona (southern tip of Yosemite) as home base reserving cabins, community center, and campgrounds for the group. All the logistics (transport, accommodations, food, and itinerary) were planned by this committee. All that changed with the advent of the Washburn fire raging near Wawona when all residents had to evacuate.

Within a week the entire venue moved to Lee Vining at the northern tip of Yosemite, with the help of Ranger Yenyen Chan's connections, Mono Vista RV park and campsite, Lee Vining motels, and the Lee Vining community center was our alternative which we quickly embraced, as we did not want to cancel the 10th anniversary of this event. Some people could not adjust to the change and dropped out. There were challenges like obtaining a Yosemite park permit to enter and digging out all your camping gear. The drive on Hwy 395 was still 3 ½ hours (from Sacramento, for me) but scenic.

We learned history by hiking in Tuolumne Meadows, Soda Springs, and the Parsons' cabin, on side trips to Mono Lake (under the stars), hiking to May Lake, where, at the trailhead, we saw an important marker. The 56-mile Great Sierra Wagon Road (later replaced by the Tioga Road), built originally for mining purposes in 130 days in 1882 by approximately 300 workers (70% of whom were Chinese), makes this area magnificently charming and meaningful. Many Chinese worked in the Valley and Wawona after falling in love with the area. The park depended on the Chinese people who worked the service industry infrastructure.

Walking on all these trails, and later in the Valley at the Sentinel Hotel and Chinese camp sites, and, lastly, at the Chinese Laundry building, with Ranger Chan gave us an opportunity to engage with members from all parts of California interested in preserving the Chinese history of the area. She was instrumental in gaining recognition of the vital role the Chinese played in establishing Yosemite as a national park. The camaraderie of the entire group made it feel like we were at summer camp having fun.

Our two guest speakers; Rich Lo (illustrator of *Mountain Chef*) made the journey from Chicago to tell us his experience with illustrating the story of Tie Sing. Our own David Soohoo from Sacramento lectured on Chinese and Tie Sing's history, on cooking ingredients (why we use them) and did a wok cooking demonstration (we got a chance to taste!!). The evening pot luck dinner was comprised of our new friends making food their mothers taught them to make and telling the stories behind the dishes.

My thanks to Eugene Moy, Jack Shu, and Bak Jong for such a wonderful experience. The beauty and splendor of Yosemite is such a special gift of nature I hope everyone has an opportunity to share. CACS is evaluating the idea of a field trip next spring to the Yosemite-Wawona area.

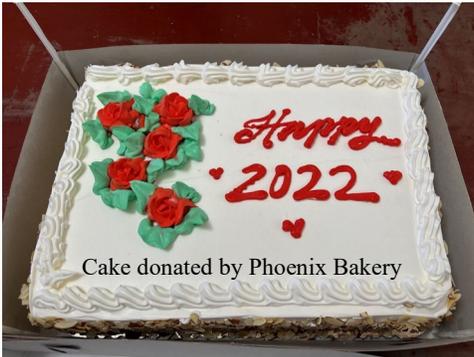


Karun Yee worked as an occupational therapist with California Children's Services specializing in adaptive equipment and training prosthesis patients. She and her late husband Douglas Yee loved California Chinese history and worked with many venues promoting cultural education in that field. They helped Phil Choy write "Canton Footprints", a landmark volume about the Sacramento Chinese. Karun currently serves as Historical Chair for the CACS (Chinese American Council of Sacramento) Foundation.



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2022 CHSSC Summer Picnic



See more pictures on our website: <https://chssc.org/2022-summer-picnic/>



In Remembrance of Dr. Benjamin Chang

1976 - 2022

The Teacher. Benji had a passion for teaching and for educational equity. He started at Castelar, but went on to teach at Columbia, Education University of Hong Kong, and Univ. of North Carolina Greensboro. In his first year at UNCG in 2019, he was nominated for Outstanding Teaching Award.

The Thinker. CHSSC was beyond fortunate that Benji volunteered his expertise and time for Gum Saan Journal since 2015. He wrote the editorials for GSJ 2020 on WW2 and GSJ 2022 on Resisting Racism. You can see his fingerprints on “Brief History of Hong Kong and Its Educational System” in GSJ 2019.

The Friend. His high school buds in Cerritos, his DJ and hip hop followers, his kung fu brothers, etc. all will miss Benji profoundly. But his best friend and wife was Jenny, who blessed him with 3-year old Rayen.



Chinese Historical Society of Southern California

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Donations for August and September

In Memory of Peggy Quon

Lai Wong

In Memory of Ruby Ling Louie

Cynthia Carter

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Upcoming Events

Every Thursday, 3:00-7:30 PM. L.A. River Farmers Market, at south end of L.A. River State Historic Park, 1245 N. Spring St., Chinatown, just north of the Gold Line station. Support fresh produce and prepared food vendors, local artisans. <http://lariverfarmersmarket.org/>