

NEWS'N NOTES



**Chinese Historical Society
of Southern California**

411 Bernard Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012
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Website: <https://chssc.org>

October 2026



**Chinese Historical Society
of Southern California**

南加州華人歷史學會

TEXTILES, TAXES, AND TIFFS: REINFORCING THE INFRASTRUCTURE OF OUR ARCHIVES



Aramis Sandoval



David Castro



Riona Tsai



Zakary Ostrowski



Zoe Lee-Divito



Christine Garcia

Join the CHSSC archivist and summer interns in a panel discussion exploring their work processing new and old collections, organizing the archive, and creating a stronger foundation to preserve Chinese and Chinese American histories.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2026

7:00 - 8:00 PM

To register, go to the CHSSC website: <https://chssc.org/>



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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Crescendo of Consciousness

Somebody told me once that CHSSC slows down in the summer. Fake news!!! It has been anything but slow. Welcome October! Our tradition is to commit to one monthly program – not two in one week! With each project, there are three stages (1) planning and publicity, (2) the actual coordination, and then (3) the follow-up promotion (e.g. thankyou's, YouTube, articles, photographs, Instagram). Thankfully, I work with a fantastic and talented team of dedicated volunteers – although we could really use more help and support.

Dr. Selia Tan expanded on Taishan and Kaiping; Grant Din warned against the closure of the National Archives; we celebrated the opening of a Cantonese exhibit at Monterey Park Library; we had several programs with China Society around LACMA's exhibit on "Fashioning Chinese Women;" and we joined the commemoration of the 150th Anniversary of Lang Station. The Chinese American Museum of Los Angeles had their 30th gala. UCLA Asian American Studies has their Foundations and Futures webinar series, and the Huntington Library has a 2-day conference entitled "Asian Exclusion and the Battle for Birthright Citizenship."

Here's a micro view: Grant Din's group, Save Our National Archives (change.org), had hoped to generate 10,000 supportive e-signatures. I watch them collect more than 100+ per day. Now, they put their new goal at 20,000 e-signatures! They have a letter writing campaign just before the forthcoming midterm elections.

I think we can only conclude that there is growing consciousness that Asian Americans are an integral part of America's democratic legacy. We are an indispensable part of this nation's diversity.

Of important note is that we are not the only ones generating this happy noise and roar. Nowadays, it is the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society, the Monterey Park Library, and the Huntington Library that are actually initiating thoughtful and innovative programs and projects. And what the young academics, artists, and archivists are brewing! Wow.

Subscribing to and sharing our Instagram and Facebook accounts help turn up our volume. And yes, we need your ideas, your membership, and your financial donations. Together, let's make a difference.

Susie Ling

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Mission Statement

The purpose of the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California, Inc. shall be:

- to advocate for a wider understanding of the significance of the role of Chinese and Chinese Americans in the history of Southern California;
- to bring together people with a mutual interest in the Southern California history of Chinese and Chinese Americans;
- to perform all the functions required to acquire, preserve, and communicate knowledge of this important history; and
- to promote a better appreciation of our rich multi-cultural society.



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Textiles, Taxes, and TIFFs: Reinforcing the Infrastructure of our Archives

Join the CHSSC archivist and summer interns in a panel discussion exploring their work processing new and old collections, organizing the archive, and creating a stronger foundation to preserve Chinese and Chinese American histories.



David Castro, Archives Committee Chair

David Castro worked as a CHSSC intern for over 5 years while he worked on his Masters in Library and Information Service from San Jose State University, specializing in Archival and Record Management. Currently, David works as a Special Collection and Archive Processing Specialist at California State Polytechnic University, Pomona.



Riona Tsai, CHSSC Community Archivist

Riona, who began working as a CHSSC intern is now CHSSC's full-time archivist. As an intern she is proud to have done 4 of our online Story Maps. Some of her work is administrative, writing procedure, organizing our system, and updating our inventory. She also oversees the work of interns and works with scholars and community members who come to CHSSC.



Zoe Lee-Divito, Assistant Archivist

Zoe Lee-Divito is a UCLA grad student working as a CHSSC intern. She received her BA in History with a minor in Chinese. Previously, Cloe worked with La Historia Historical Society on a digital mapping project and at Stanford University doing archaeology fieldwork.



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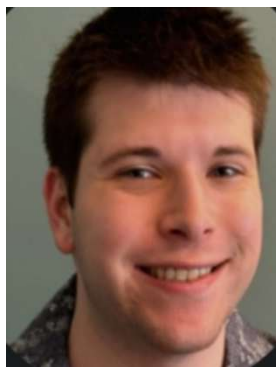
Aramis Sandoval

Aramis Sandoval is a recent graduate of UCLA's Master of Library and Information Science program (MLIS) where he focused on archival studies. He also holds a Bachelor's Degree in History from California State University, Fullerton. As a CHSSC archival intern, Aramis will be developing a processing plan for the newly acquired Annie Soo Hoo Leung collection.



Christina Garcia

Christina Garcia received her B.A. in English at Loyola Marymount University, her M.F.A. in Creative Writing from California State University, Long Beach, and her M.L.I.S. from the University of Denver. She worked as an intern at California State University, Northridge's Urban Archive. Currently, she is processing oversized print materials and the Gum Saan Journals.



Zachary Ostrowski

Zachary recently earned his Master of Library and Information Science from UCLA, specializing in archives. He has gained hands-on experience in archival processing, digitization, preservation, and metadata through his work with the Gilb Museum of Arcadia Heritage, Los Angeles County Arboretum Library, and Altadena Historical Society.

Changes to Program Registration

We are making some minor changes to simplify the registration process for virtual programs. In the past, we've used Eventbrite but encountered technical difficulties that caused issues with signing up and joining in on programs. Starting with our October program, we will be using Zoom registration. We will still provide the link for registration, and this will allow for a faster sign-up, communication, and easier access to the Zoom link to join the program. If you have any questions, reach out to info@chssc.org



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Picnic Fun at CHSSC



150 Years Anniversary of Lang Station: September 5, 2026





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Expanding Our Reach on Zoom, YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Libib, and on Websites

Believe it or not, even fuddy-duddy historians at CHSSC are extending our communication breadth. We apologize for our technological hiccups on past Zoom webinars, but we are learning. Dr. Selia Tan preferred face-to-face presentations; we thought of taping her. Within 24 hours of posting, there were 75 views of her presentation on our CHSSC YouTube channel.

About 30 of us drove to the 150th Anniversary at Lang Station (including Munson Kwok who was there in 1976), but we did an Instagram (CHSSC Instagram) and shared photos on CHSSC Facebook that afternoon. It is fun to watch people “like” and write comments. Even more exciting to have “subscribers” and “shares.”

Libib.com/u/chssc has our book collection listed in categories. And on gumsaanjournal.com, we’ve uploaded our whole book, *Bridging the Centuries* (2001). If you explore our chssc.org website, there are archives, oral histories, and online exhibits, past newsletters, and other gems. Every day, we respond to inquiries on our info@chssc.org address.

Our mission statement was and is clear: we want to inform the public about the experiences and wonderful contributions of nearly 200 years of the Chinese American legacy. We are using technology as means to expand that audience.

In no way is any of this easy. CHSSC is very, very thankful--especially to Ricky Leo, Victoria Hong, San Tong, Gordon Hom, Anita Lee, Pete Sparks, Angela Lancaster, and Isaac Chu.

Donations

Ronald R Chan
Bruce Chin
Andrew Chong
Orlance C. Lee
Becky Liu
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Ponnappa Ptakkamakul
Clifford Tom

Donations

Feng-en Tu
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Benita Yu

In Memory of Marian Chew

Richard & Jeannie Liu
Patricia and Harry Mar



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Grant Din on Our National Archives

Jewish refugees, Native American boarding school students, Punjabi pioneers, Alcatraz prisoners, Japanese picture bride, pre-WW1 veterans, and more. How are they related?

Their stories are in the 80,000 “A-files” at the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) building in San Bruno. In this public facility, there are 100,000 cubic feet of primary documents that tell the stories of diverse Americans. Because of its location near San Francisco and Angel Island, over half the files are on Chinese Americans.

On the official NARA website, it reads “The National Archives of San Francisco will be closing in the next few years.” But the reasons are not indicated. There are hints that the files will be transferred very soon to Kansas City - 1800 miles away from the public that wants to view and research these public records.

Grant said, “NARA belongs to the American people. I was able to search for my maternal grandfather’s file and paternal grandfather’s file. And this led me to find other relatives.” Grant not only searched for his own roots, but he researched the files of Kane Mineta, mother of Congressman Norman Mineta. He found Kehar Singh’s file; Kehar is the grandfather of author/lawyer Valarie Kaur.

And Grant told the story of Li Keng (Gee) Wong. Li Keng came through Angel Island when she was seven years old in 1933. Her U.S.-born father had applied for his family. But because of the anti-Chinese immigration restrictions of the time, Li Keng had to pretend that her mother was not her mother – but her “Ah Yi” or her father’s sister. She said that she was drilled to tell the immigration officer that her mother was dead. The transcripts indicate that the little girl held up to the pressure. Li Keng went on to become an elementary school teacher for 35 years –improving the lives of over 1000 youngsters.

Grant continues, “At NARA, there are paper files; there are photographs; there are hand drawn maps; there are even *kosekis* (Japanese family registries). And there are professional archivists who know their work in San Bruno.” It would take special archivist experience to decipher 80,000 A-files. Marji Lee, an archivist herself, said, “Collecting and cataloging is one thing. Stabilization, search, retrieval, delivery, and interpretation is another.”

In a July statement, the Society of American Archivists expressed “alarm over the closure of NARA facilities across the country.” They indicate that this government agency is already “woefully underfunded.”

Rick Eng of the Chinese American Citizens Alliance was our program moderator, and he asked what could be done to stop this administration’s intentions. Grant referred us to “SONA” – Save Our National Archives and the petitions and letter-writing campaign they’ve instigated. (See change.com.) Grant said, “Right now, you can walk into the San Bruno office and touch and feel your own ancestor’s records. There is nothing like that connection.”



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Community Events

Sept 26 – CAM Gala at Bonaventure Hotel

Sept 27. 3 pm – Eugene Moy at Saugus Train Station Museum

Sept 30 – Closing of Monterey Park Library exhibit “Cantonese Pioneers Building North America”

Oct 2 And 3 - Asian Exclusion and the Battle for Birthright Citizenship, Huntington Library, Registration required.

Oct 3, 12 – Eugene Moy at South Pasadena Library

Oct 6, 7-8– “The Rise and Fall of the Overseas Chinese” at the Huntington Library. Registration required.

Oct 19. 4-5:30 – Webinar on “Indigenous Hawaiian Identity, Culture, and Rebirth of the Sacred.” UCLA’s Foundations and Futures series

Nov 14, 10-12 at Chinatown Library: CHSSC's program on "Edmund Soohoo: The Heart of Chinatown"