

# NEWS'N NOTES



**Chinese Historical Society  
of Southern California**

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

APRIL 2016

## Revisiting East Adams

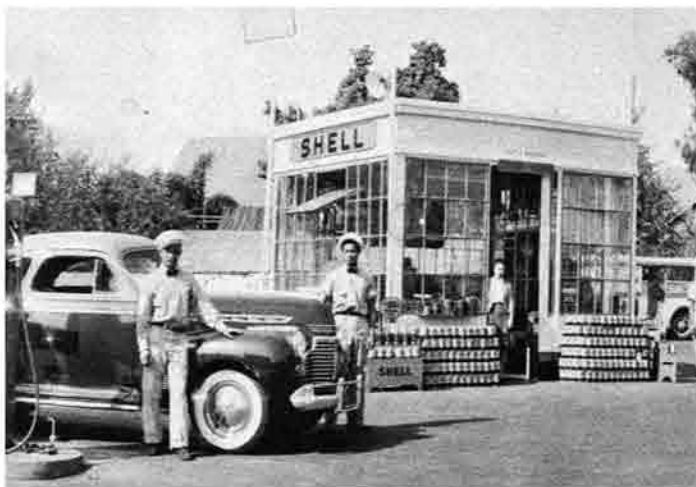
Wednesday, April 6, 2016, 6:30 p.m.

*Castelar Elementary School*  
840 Yale Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012

Free parking - enter via College Street

Refreshments will be served.

This event is free and open to the public.



At our next meeting, we will be screening "*Revisiting East Adams*". "*Revisiting East Adams*" is a documentary directed by past CHSSC board members Jenny Cho and William Gow, and was distributed by the CHSSC in 2004. We are delighted to be joined again by director Jenny Cho who will be visiting us from Maryland. For those who know Jenny, her contributions to the CHSSC have been prolific. This will be a great opportunity to ask her about the making of "*Revisiting East Adams*", as well as catch up with her current projects. We will also be joined Roy Chan and Calvin Hai, who are both featured in this film.

*Revisiting East Adams* captures the history of a Chinese American community in downtown Los Angeles from the 1930s to 1950s. During this period, the intersection of East Adams and San Pedro Street was home to a vibrant Chinese American community that preserved Chinese culture through social and religious organizations such as the Chinese Presbyterian Church, Chinese schools and various youth groups. East Adams was also a self-sustaining community whose residents earned a living by working at local businesses such as the City Market on 9th Street, the CFO gas station, and the Kwong Hing Lung grocery store. The stories of these former Chinese residents expand our understanding of the history of Los Angeles.





APRIL 2016

## Night of Terror - The Destruction and Rebirth of Pasadena's Chinatown

At our last meeting, we were joined by local Pasadena writer and historian, Matthew Hormann, to discuss Pasadena's Chinatown and the event that ultimately caused the displacement of the Chinese in Pasadena in 1885. At a time when anti-Chinese sentiment was at its height, locals were looking for any reason to drive the Chinese out of Pasadena. A structure fire that occurred in the morning of November 6, 1885, was the catalyst that set forward a series of events that led to the Chinese exile from Pasadena. Already frustrated with the Chinese, rumors that the Chinese started this fire had spread. As a result, a mob of 100 white men gathered and began to harass the workers of Yuen Kee's laundry, at the corner of Green and Fair Oaks. A stone was thrown, knocking over a kerosene lamp, engulfing Yuen Kee's laundry in flames. As the 9-10 Chinese workers fled, the mob threw sticks and stones at them and looted the laundry. By nightfall of November 6, 1885 the Chinese of Pasadena had left.

Below is a Pasadena Newspaper photograph of an effigy of a Chinese Man hanging. The next day, when the Chinese returned to inspect the wreckage caused by the riots, they were met by the grim image; a message that the Chinese were not welcome back. The Chinese residents who were still needed to work in local homes, orchards, and packing houses, relocated to a new Chinatown settlement outside the city limits at California and Raymond.

We would like to thank Mr. Hormann for joining us and for his efforts to accurately portray this event.

For a more detailed account of the events, please read Matthew Hormann's full article Night of Terror at:

[www.pasadenaweekly.com/cms/story/detail/night\\_of\\_terror/15163/](http://www.pasadenaweekly.com/cms/story/detail/night_of_terror/15163/)

### **The Anti-Chinese Agreement.**

Following is the agreement referred to a fortnight ago :

We, the undersigned property owners of Pasadena, believing the presence of any Chinese stores, laundry, or other business carried on exclusively by Chinese is a great detriment to the adjoining property, do hereby positively agree not to allow anything of the kind on our property.



## Board of Directors

### Officers

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Winifred Lew, Vice President  
Gordon Hom, VP for Programs  
Helen Quon, Secretary  
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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.





APRIL 2016

## 2016 Ching Ming Festival

Saturday, April 2, 2016  
11:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M.

*Los Angeles County Crematorium  
in Boyle Heights  
3331 E. First St., Los Angeles, CA 90063*

Enter From First Street by Concord Street  
This event is free and open to the public.  
A light lunch will be served.



CHSSC will host the Annual Ching Ming (Chinese Memorial Day) Festival. Ceremonies will begin at the Los Angeles County Crematorium and continue at the historic Chinese Memorial Shrine at Evergreen Cemetery. The Shrine stands at the center of what was once a 19th century Chinese cemetery. Built in 1888 by the people of Los Angeles' Old Chinatown, the Shrine is considered the earliest extant Chinese structure in Los Angeles. The site remains culturally and historically significant and has been designated Los Angeles Historic/Cultural Monument No. 486. It is owned and maintained by the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California. Please join us for this culturally rich event.

## 2016 Wawona Sing Peak Pilgrimage

The National Park Service is celebrating its 100th Birthday this year. Help commemorate the contributions of Chinese in the building of much of the infrastructure of the Sierras, in working in historic lodging facilities, and in the creation of National Parks.

For the fourth year, the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California is helping to sponsor an annual pilgrimage to historic sites in Yosemite National Park. The dates and events for this year are:

- Friday, July 22 – Ranger-led hike to May Lake, walk a part of the original Tioga Road completed in 1883 by Chinese road builders.
- Saturday, July 23 - Presentations by authors and historians about the role of Chinese in the Sierras and National Parks, given in various locations in the Wawona area near the southern entrance of the park. The day will end with a pot luck dinner and evening program.
- Sunday, July 24 - Various drives and short hikes to historic sites in Wawona and Yosemite Valley.
- Monday through Wednesday, July 25-27 - Three day backpacking trip to Sing Peak. This involves a two night wilderness camping trip with some off trail hike to the peak on the 26th. Space is limited by wilderness restrictions.



Finding accommodations in Yosemite during the summer is very difficult, so I want to encourage anyone interested in attending this year to make your plans and secure lodging now. We have a limited number of spaces left on wilderness permits for the backpacking trip to Sing Peak. Let me know if you are interested in this adventure. Save these dates and make reservations for accommodations in or around Wawona, July 22nd to 24th now! Additional information and a more detailed schedule will be available on this webpage in a few months.

If you are interested in this project or want to volunteer and stay in a group campsite or participate in the backpacking trip, contact the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California at [chssc@hotmail.com](mailto:chssc@hotmail.com) or Jack Shu at [jkshu@cox.net](mailto:jkshu@cox.net).





## Notes on Chinese American History

*A monthly column about Chinese American History by CHSSC member, William Gow.*

Everyone tells me that my grandfather spoke Spanish well. As a Chinese American who was born and raised in Oxnard, California in the early part of the twentieth century, this should come as little surprise. During the first few decades of the twentieth century, Oxnard witnessed a general decline in its Chinese American population at the same time that the population of other immigrant groups increased. Not just in Ventura County but throughout Southern California, Chinese American laborers who had been such a dominant force in California agriculture in the late nineteenth century were replaced in the early twentieth century, first by Japanese Americans and then by Mexican Americans. Those Chinese Americans who remained in Ventura County during the period lived side by side with other immigrants. Certainly my grandfather's ability to speak Spanish was a testament to the close business and personal relationship he had with local Mexican Americans.

Throughout Southern California, the history of Chinese Americans like my grandfather overlapped significantly with the history of other ethnic groups. Indeed one can make a strong case that the history of Chinese Americans in Southern California should always be studied relationally to other ethnic communities. As early as the 1940s, journalist and historian Carey McWilliams acknowledged the diverse history of Southern California. But in his 1946 book *Southern California: Island of the Land*, McWilliams described Southern California as an "archipelago of social and ethnic islands, economically interrelated but culturally disparate."

Scholarship has come a long way since the 1940s. Today historians increasingly examine the experiences of Chinese Americans in Southern California not as disparate "islands" but rather relationally to the history of other ethnic groups. Natalia Molina has examined the interrelationship between Chinese Americans, Japanese Americans, and Mexican

Americans in relationship to public health policy in Los Angeles in the first half of the twentieth century. Mark Wild traces the development of multi-ethnic neighborhoods in Los Angeles's central core during roughly this same period. Isabella Quintana researches Chinese Americans and Mexican Americans in and around Los Angeles Chinatown from the late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries.

Here at the CHSSC we have also tried to document a history of the Chinese American experience that takes into account these multiethnic relationships. More than a decade ago, I served as a producer and writer on the documentary *Revisiting East Adams* directed by Jenny Cho. The video focused on the Chinese American community that developed at the intersections of East Adams and San Pedro Streets in Los Angeles. Far from the isolated "social and ethnic islands" that McWilliams describes, the neighborhood was a bustling community where Chinese Americans lived side by side other ethnic groups.

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Unidentified workers at Gow Markets in Oxnard, California. Undated. Gow Family Collection.





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One of the anchors of this community was the CFO Gas Station, run in part by a Chinese American named Abe Chin. Abe was a mixed race man who as a teenager in the late 1930s played in the series of all Chinese American football games between San Francisco and Los Angeles to raise money for Chinese war relief. After the United States entered World War II, Abe, whose mother was African American, served with other African Americans in a segregated military unit, the Tuskegee Airmen. Abe Chin's experiences as a mixed race Chinese American speaks to the difficulty of treating Chinese American history as distinct. Professional scholars have only recently begun to catch on to what those of us who have lived in the Chinese American community for generations have long known: Chinese American history is deeply intertwined with the history of other ethnic groups.

*A member of the CHSSC for more than a decade, I am currently a doctoral candidate in Ethnic Studies at UC Berkeley where I am writing a dissertation on the history of Los Angeles Chinatown in the 1930s and 1940s. I am currently looking for community publications, newspaper clippings, or family history from the time period. If you have community history to share or would like to provide general feedback, suggestions, or questions about the column, you can email me at [wgow@outlook.com](mailto:wgow@outlook.com)*

**Now Online:**  
**CHSSC charter member,**  
**Emma Louie,**  
**has launched a website dedicated**  
**to Chinese American Surnames.**

We encourage all who are interested to visit:

**[chinese-amer-surnames.com](http://chinese-amer-surnames.com)**

## Don Nakanishi (1949-2016)

The CHSSC regrets to share news of the passing of Don Nakanishi. Professor Nakanishi was a pioneer in Asian American studies and ethnic Studies, and director emeritus of the UCLA Asian American Studies Center. He was a much beloved and inspired mentor to many students and younger colleagues. Professor Nakanishi received numerous awards for his scholarly achievements and public service. He placed a strong emphasis on commitment to the community and on education that was useful. Professor Nakanishi is recognized for establishing Asian American studies as a viable and relevant field of scholarship, teaching, community service and public discourse. Our condolences go to the family of Professor Nakanishi.

As requested by the family:

In lieu of flowers, please consider making a contribution to the Don T. Nakanishi Award for Outstanding Engaged Scholarship for Graduate & Undergraduate Students at the UCLA Asian American Studies Center

([www.aasc.ucla.edu/news/nakanishiaward2015.aspx](http://www.aasc.ucla.edu/news/nakanishiaward2015.aspx)) or to the

Nakanishi Prize at Yale University

([yalecollege.yale.edu/student-services/funding-opportunities/nakanishi-prize](http://yalecollege.yale.edu/student-services/funding-opportunities/nakanishi-prize)).

Read more about Professor Nakanishi's life and accomplishments at: [www.aasc.ucla.edu/news/nakanishi1949\\_2016.aspx](http://www.aasc.ucla.edu/news/nakanishi1949_2016.aspx)

## Elsie Young Ho (1915 - 2016)

Elsie Young Ho was born in Honolulu, HI to Wah Kam Young and Bo Ngam Sum, the third of eight siblings. She came to Los Angeles in 1934 to attend the University of Southern California where she met the love of her life and husband of 50 years, Guy C. Ho, DDS. Elsie grew up in Honolulu, HI, and graduated from McKinley High School. Her hospitality and baking skills were reknown. She was the epitome of grace and elegance. An avid emailer and "Facebook friend" at the age of 100, she stayed in touch with a great circle of admirers who will miss her beyond words. Elsie Ho was long time member of the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California. Elsie is survived by her children Steve, Diana (Dean Gamburd) and Tina (Augusto Wing), grandson Steven Lustig (Rajina Utreja-Lustig), granddaughter Elisa Wing, great granddaughter Aleena Mei Lustig, sister Florence Wong of Honolulu, HI, and many family members and friends. In lieu of flowers, please consider a gift to one of the following organizations: - Guy C. Ho Endowed Scholarship, University of Southern California Dental School, Office of Dental Development, 925 West 34th Street, DEN 201, Los Angeles, CA 90089-0641. - Class of 1971 Scholarship Fund, Scripps College, 1030 Columbia Avenue, Claremont, CA 91711. - Friends of the Chinatown Library, 639 Hill Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012. For more information: [celebratingelsie@dianaho.com](mailto:celebratingelsie@dianaho.com).

Published in the Los Angeles Times see more at:

[www.legacy.com/obituaries/latimes/obituary.aspx?pid=177671656#sthash.TDij8a1Y.dpuf](http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/latimes/obituary.aspx?pid=177671656#sthash.TDij8a1Y.dpuf)



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### Community Calendar

#### **Saturday, April 2, 2016**

CHSSC Ching Ming, LA County Crematorium

#### **Sunday, April 3, 2016, 2:00pm - 3:30pm**

"Voices from the Bottom of the South China Sea"

Greater San Gabriel Valley-Los Angeles

For more information call the Reference Desk at (626) 307-1368.

Monterey Park Bruggemeyer Library

318 S. Ramona Ave. Monterey Park, CA 91754

#### **Tuesday April 5, 2016**

Author Stacey Lee on her YA book,

Under a Painted Sky

Whittier Public Library and Whittier Public Library Foundation

Whittwood Branch: 10537 Santa Gertrudes (562) 567-9950

[Whittierlibrary.org](http://Whittierlibrary.org) and [whittierplf.org](http://whittierplf.org).

#### **Thursday, April 7, 2016, 6:30pm**

Dr. Gay Yuen: The Stories Behind Surnames

Whittier Central Library: 7344 Washington Avenue

(562) 567-9900

[whittierlibrary.org](http://whittierlibrary.org) and [whittierplf.org](http://whittierplf.org).

#### **April 23-25, 2016**

Asian and Pacific Islander Americans in Historic Preservation (APIAHIP),

including updates on our upcoming 2016 National APIA Historic Preservation Forum (in Stockton, CA),

the East at Main Street Mapping Project, and other events and issues related to historic sites and places significant to Asian and Pacific Islanders across the US.

#### **Thursday, April 28, 2016 6:30pm**

Li Wai Wang, curator, Y.C. Hong Exhibit

Story of Y.C. Hong Civil Rights Leader

Whittier Central Library: 7344 Washington Avenue

(562) 567-9900

[whittierlibrary.org](http://whittierlibrary.org) and [whittierplf.org](http://whittierplf.org).

#### **Thursday, May 19, 2016 7:00pm**

San Marino Book Talk and Signing with Arthur Dong

Crowell Public Library 1890 Huntington Dr. San Marino, CA 91108

Info: (626) 300-0077.

#### **Chinese Couplets comes to Television!**

See trailer @ <https://vimeo.com/153130821>

"Chinese Couplets" is journalist filmmaker Felicia Lowe's most probing, soulful, and accomplished documentary. A half century and thousands of miles later . . . an epic tale spanning four generations of tenacious women unfolds.

Broadcast dates:

- COMCAST: Cinema Asian America, March 1 – 31st FREE Video on Demand

<http://xfinitytv.comcast.net/microsites/asian-american>

- KCET, Los Angeles – Sunday, March 6, 6am and 2pm Public screenings:

- Los Angeles Asian Pacific Film Festival, April 21 – 28 <http://vconline.org/festival> (check program)

- American Library Association Conference, June 23 -28 <http://2016.alaannual.org/> (check events)

Contact: [Felicia@lowedownproductions.com](mailto:Felicia@lowedownproductions.com) (415) 860-3205