

FEBRUARY 2016

## Y.C. Hong: Advocate for Chinese American Inclusion

Wednesday, February 3, 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.



Y.C. Hong's business card/business flyer, ca. 1928.  
Photo courtesy of The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens.

The "Y.C. Hong: Advocate for Chinese Inclusion Exhibit" presentation to the CHSSC led by Li Wei Yang, Curator of Western History of the Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens and creator of the Exhibit, and Nowland C. Hong, son of Y.C. Hong. Li Wei Yang will cover the background and concept for the present exhibit at the Huntington, information on the exhibit itself and the significance of the Hong Family papers at the Library. Nowland Hong will provide some family remembrances of his father, mother and the family.



Y.C. Hong and Governor Ronald Reagan, late 1960s.  
Photo courtesy of The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens.

Y.C. Hong was the first Chinese American admitted to the California Bar in 1923. For fifty years, Hong used his legal expertise to forward Chinese American Civil rights. An authority on immigration law, he guided many Chinese immigrants in their transition to the United States during the Chinese exclusion act and beyond. In his lifetime, Hong processed more than 7,300 immigration cases (1904-1965) now housed at the Huntington Library. Among his other accomplishments, Hong was one of the founders of New Chinatown and was an involved member in the Chinatown community through his activity in Chinese Americans Citizen's Alliance (C.A.C.A.). Li Wei Yang goes into more detail in his article on Y.C. Hong in the CHSSC's latest Gum Saan Journal volume dedicated towards Chinese Americans in the legal profession.

"Y.C. Hong: Advocate for the Chinese Inclusion Exhibit" is currently open for viewing to visitors of the Huntington Library through March 21, 2016. The collection, donated by Hong's son Roger, contains manuscripts, correspondence, coaching books, maps of Chinese Villages, family photos, and more. These documents and items give a comprehensive view of Y.C. Hong's life, and a chronology of Chinese fighting against exclusion.

The Huntington is located at 1151 Oxford Rd., San Marino, Calif., 12 miles from downtown Los Angeles. It is open to the public Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday from noon to 4:30 p.m.; and Saturday, Sunday, and Monday holidays from 10:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Closed Tuesdays and major holidays. Information: 626-405-2100 or [huntington.org](http://huntington.org)





## 50 Years of the Miss Chinatown Pageant

The Miss Los Angeles Chinatown Pageant has been a glamorous, unique and integral part of the Chinese American community for over 50 years. The pageant court members representing the community have been active in numerous community events during their reign at parades, festivals, banquets, fundraisers, grand openings and other civic functions.

On Jan 13, 2016 at the monthly meeting of Chinese Historical Society of Southern California, several of the past and current pageant court members gave a retrospective talk about the history, the court's experiences, and their career path during and after their reign.

Also congratulations to Dorothy "Dottie" Schoon who was crowned Miss Los Angeles Chinatown Queen for a day.

*-Photos and written by O.C. Lee*



## Board of Directors

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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.



**FEBRUARY 2016**

Dear friends of the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California,

As the year closes, my task as the CHSSC Membership Secretary begins in earnest. We appreciate your previous generous support of CHSSC by joining our organization. We want to encourage you to renew your membership to support the mission and programs of CHSSC. The membership fee includes the receipt of our monthly newsletter, News 'N Notes, our yearly Gum Saan Journal, and discounts on our publications and products.

CHSSC has been one of the most active community organizations in Los Angeles Chinatown. It holds monthly meetings throughout the school year that are free to the public. As an educational organization, volunteers, as well as staff, conduct walking tours and attend local conferences. Our outreach also includes scheduling talks at surrounding venues and supporting local organizations. CHSSC continues to collect oral histories and other information about the history of the Chinese in America. At our annual fund-raising dinners we recognize and honor, with the Golden Spike Awards, exceptional accomplishments of Chinese Americans, organizations and institutions in Southern California: we have honored our community leaders, pioneering businesses of New Chinatown who continue to serve the community, and veterans who have offered their lives for the protection of the nation and its citizens.

CHSSC has published two books during the past two years. Long-time member and pioneer Chinese American woman orthodontist Dr. Annie Siu wrote a memoir, Roads Into and Out of Chinatown. Also, Victoria Moy captured the personal stories of Chinese American veterans from World War II to Afghanistan in her book, Fighting For the Dream.

This past November we celebrated 40 years of accomplishments and comraderie. As we look forward, CHSSC needs to expand our vision. In the past, we have only been able to fund CHSSC through special donations from those committed to our mission. Therefore, I am hoping that in addition to your support through membership, that you will also consider giving a donation this year to support our mission.

Sincerely,

Susan G. Dickson  
Membership Secretary



Please Renew  
Your Membership Now!

Renew online! [www.chssc.org/join/membership.aspx](http://www.chssc.org/join/membership.aspx)



Chinese Historical Society  
of Southern California

南加州華人歷史學會

## Membership

### Silver

Monthly newsletter.  
Free Gum Saan Journal.  
Discount on field trips to historical sites.  
Discount on publications and products.  
Admission to Heritage Center during  
non-public hours (call in advance)

### 100 x 100 Club

All benefits of Silver membership.  
Invitation for 2 to special events.

### Diamond

All benefits of 100 x 100 Club membership.  
2 complimentary tickets to Annual Gala Dinner.

### Student/Senior (60+)

All benefits of Silver membership.

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☐ New Membership ☐ Renewal

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Visa/MC # \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Silver \$ 57.

☐ 100 x 100 Club \$ 100.

☐ Diamond \$ 300.

☐ Student or Senior (60+) \$ 32.

Donation (tax deductible) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### Chinese Historical Society of Southern California

411 Bernard Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Phone: 323-222-0856

Email: [chssc@hotmail.com](mailto:chssc@hotmail.com)

Website: [www.chssc.org](http://www.chssc.org)

### Make checks payable to CHSSC

We are a 501(c)3  
non-profit organization,  
tax ID: 95-3155357

I am interested in helping with:

☐ Programs

☐ Publications

☐ Research

☐ Publicity

☐ Fundraising

☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_



## Notes on Chinese American History

*This is a monthly column about Chinese American History by CHSSC member, William Gow.*

**T**he Mei Wah Drum Corps was one of the most significant Chinese American youth groups of the 1930s and 1940s. Under the leadership of its two adult sponsors, David SooHoo and Maye Wong, the group traveled around Southern California and as far away as Las Vegas performing in local parades and competitions. Founded as a girl's basketball team in the early 1930s, the Mei Wah Club eventually formed a drum corps to perform at events like the 1938 Moon Festival and opening of Union Station.

As the original members like Eleanor SooHoo, Iris Wong, and Barbara Jean Wong graduated from high school and attended college, the group grew with them. The original members recruited new members, and the group thrived. Even after the Mei Wah Drum Corps gave their final performance at the opening of the Los Angeles CCBA headquarters in 1952, some of the women still met informally to raise funds for various local charities.

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Despite being one of the most well-known Chinese American youth groups of the period, no historian has published a full history of the group, and basic factual information about the group remains undocumented.

For example, in what year did the Mei Wah club form? The CHSSC publication *Linking Our Lives*, which remains the best and most comprehensive published history of Chinese American women in Los Angeles, tells us authoritatively that the club was founded in January 5th of 1931, but the publication does so without citation. In contrast, Maye Wong in an interview conducted for the Southern California Chinese American Oral History project tells us that the group was formed in 1932.

While fragments of the group's history have been archived in various collections, there remains no single repository of the group's papers or records. This lack of information is only amplified with less well known but certainly no less important Chinese American youth organizations of the period, like the Guardsmen and the Lo Wah club.

History is written through archives, and the sad fact remains, that historically most archives haven't cared much for Chinese American history. Both public university archives and private institutional ones have until recently not bothered to collect Chinese American materials. Groups like the CHSSC and CAMLA have done an admirable job of archiving what they can, but their institutional resources remain comparatively limited. As such, when Chinese American organizations folded or when prominent figures in the community passed on, many mainstream institutions were uninterested in archiving their records. interested in local Chinese American history?

The story of the Mei Wah club is not unknown. It is documented in the memories of the women who were part of the club and in stories passed down from grandmothers to granddaughters. This history is stored in boxes packed safely away in closets or in family photo albums on people's coffee tables. The question remains is there a way to maintain these records allowing individual community members and institutions control over them, but also to make them available to others in the community that are interested in local Chinese American history?

In next month's column, I will examine one possible solution to addressing this issue of archiving Chinese American history.



The Mei Wahs. Standing (L to R): Josephine Chan Lee, unidentified, unidentified, Rachel Lee, Franche Lee, Mae Fung. Kneeling (L to R): Mary Lee, Camille Wong, Nellie Wong, Ella Mark Chan, Mabel Choy Lee, Susan Lee. (Kathleen S. Yep Collection)

If you have comments or questions about the column or if you are interested in sharing your photos, historical documents, or family history with me for use in my dissertation at UC Berkeley on Chinese Americans in Los Angeles in the 1930s and 1940s, I invite you to email me at [wgow@outlook.com](mailto:wgow@outlook.com)





FEBRUARY 2016

# 117th Golden Dragon Parade

Saturday, February 13, 2016 - 12:00 noon

Participants must wear a red top and black bottoms.  
Meet at Hill St. & Ord St. in front of the Chinatown Library



Join us in the Lunar New Year Festivities with the CHSSC! Take part in the 117th Golden Dragon Parade by marching with the CHSSC flag unit, or relax with fellow friends and members at the CHSSC headquarters on Bernard St. Every year, thousands of individuals line the parade route with many more watching the telecast. With over 100 years of tradition in Southern California, the Golden Dragon Parade has become the premiere cultural event for celebrating the Lunar New Year in the greater Los Angeles area.

The day of the Lunar New Year is the most celebrated holiday of the year for nearly 1.5 million persons of Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese descent in Southern California. It is celebrated with colorful festivals, parades, and most importantly, large family gatherings. It is also a time when ancestors are fondly remembered and families give thanks for their blessings. As always, the CHSSC wishes to do everything we can to keep these traditions alive, so that future generations can take part in them as well.

We invite you to be a part of this important annual celebration- as a spectator, participant, or sponsor.

For additional information  
email [CHSSC@hotmail.com](mailto:CHSSC@hotmail.com) or call (323) 222-0856



On January 27, 2016 CHSSC board member Rick Eng belatedly presented the Spike Driver Award to Stewart Kwoh awarded to his mother, the late Beulah Quo

The CHSSC Spike Driver Award was awarded to the founders and charter members who came together in 1975 with a common purpose and goal. This goal was to seek, preserve, and share the history of Chinese in America.

To commemorate their work, we honored each charter member with a personalized spike driver with their name engraved. We chose the spike driver because of its symbolic significance to the Chinese American community. Similar to the Chinese railroad workers who laid the tracks that served as the foundation for transportation in the U.S., the Charter Members laid the foundation of our organization.





## Chinese Historical Society of Southern California

411 Bernard Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012

Phone: 323-222-0856 Email: [chssc@hotmail.com](mailto:chssc@hotmail.com)

Website: [www.chssc.org](http://www.chssc.org)

*Help us save paper and postage, email us for your online newsletter at [chssc@hotmail.com](mailto:chssc@hotmail.com)*

### Community Calendar

**Wednesday, February 3, 2016 - 6:30pm**

**Y.C. Hong: Advocate for Chinese American Inclusion**

presented by Nowland C. Hong, son of Y.C. Hong and Li Wei Yang, curator of the Y.C. Hong Collection at Huntington Library

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.

**Saturday, February 6, 2016, 5:30-8:30pm**

**Save Our Chinatown Committee's Ring in the Year of the Monkey - 8th Annual Chinese New Year Celebration**

Lotus Garden Restaurant, 111 E. Hospitality Lane, San Bernardino 92408. Honorees: Ray Johnson, James and Dean Koga. Enjoy a traditional 10-course Chinese banquet, a festive Chinese lion dance, live auction and more! \$60 per person or \$100 per couple Reserve your tickets online today at [www.saveourchinatown.org/programsandevents.html](http://www.saveourchinatown.org/programsandevents.html) Proceeds will support efforts to preserve Riverside Chinatown. For more information about the event, call Margie at (951) 787-0318 or e-mail at [saveourchinatown@gmail.com](mailto:saveourchinatown@gmail.com).

**Monday, February 8, 2016**

Chinese New Year's Day - Year of the Monkey

**Saturday, February 13, 2016**

**117th Annual Golden Dragon Parade**

Join us in the Lunar New Year Festivities with the CHSSC! Take part in the 117th Golden Dragon Parade by marching with the CHSSC flag unit, or relax with fellow friends and members at the CHSSC headquarters on Bernard Street.

**Exhibit Ending on Sunday, February 14, 2016**

**"Delectable Delights," an exhibit of student artwork from the 2015 National Art Competition** Participating students in grade levels kindergarten – high school created paintings and drawings using the theme, "What's your favorite Chinese food memory?" The public can view the exhibit in the main library lobby located at the Bruggemeyer Library, 318 S Ramona Ave, Monterey Park, CA 91754, For more information contact the Reference Desk at (626) 307-1368.

**Wednesday, February 17, 2016 | 1:30pm -2:45pm**

**Finding Samuel Lowe: From Harlem to China  
A Discussion with Paula Madison**

Three successful black siblings from Harlem, Paula Williams Madison and her brothers, were raised in Harlem by their Chinese Jamaican mother. The three discover their heritage by searching for clues about their long-lost Chinese grandfather, Cal State LA | University Student Union Theater 5154 State University Dr. Los Angeles, CA 90032 Free to the public | RSVP to [rsvp@camla.org](mailto:rsvp@camla.org) More info: <http://findingsamuellowe.com/>

**Saturday, February 20, 2016 2:00pm**

**Best selling Author LISA SEE will discuss her book**

**"On Gold Mountain: The One Hundred Year Odyssey of My Chinese-American Family"**

She will discuss how she researched her family's history and share research tips Cerritos Library Skyline Room 18025 Bloomfield Ave, Cerritos, CA 90703

**Saturday / Sunday, February 20th & 21st, 2016**

**Firecracker Walk Run Bike Ride**

More Info: [www.firecracker10k.org/](http://www.firecracker10k.org/)