

JANUARY 2016

## 50 Years of the Miss Los Angeles Chinatown Pageant



The 2015 Miss Los Angeles Chinatown Court and the Miss Los Angeles Chinatown Alumni on February 7, 2015

Photo by Tom Eng

Wednesday, January 13, 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.



The Miss Los Angeles Chinatown Pageant has been a glamorous, unique, and integral part of this community for over 50 years. The court members representing the Chinese American community have been active at numerous community events during their reign at parades, festivals, banquets, fundraisers, grand openings, and other functions. Come learn about the pageant's history, the court's experiences, their career during and after their reign, and see some historic photos and pageant items. Various pageant court members from the current and past courts will be present to share their experiences.

This event is scheduled one week after the Miss Chinatown Fashion show (1/9/15), one week before the Little King & Queen Contest (1/23/15), and two weeks before the 2016 Miss Chinatown Pageant (1/30/15).





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## Annual Christmas Potluck

On December 3, 2015 we began the holiday season with our annual Christmas Potluck. One of the organization's oldest traditions allows for members and friends to catch up, tell stories, and buy gifts. For this potluck, we recreated our 40th anniversary cake (courtesy of Board Member Rick Eng) for members to take pictures with. This year was a milestone year and we are glad everybody was able to join us in the festivities for one last hurrah. We wish everyone a happy holiday season. Take care and we will see you all next year!



Photos by O.C. Lee

### Board of Directors

#### Officers

Donald Loo, President  
Winifred Lew, Vice President  
Gordon Hom, VP for Programs  
Helen Quon, Secretary  
Susan Dickson, Membership Sec.  
Simon Chhuor, Treasurer

#### Members at Large

Linda Bentz  
John Chan  
Rick Eng  
Kelly Fong  
Gilbert Hom  
Henry Leong  
Richard Liu  
Franklin Mah  
Eugene W. Moy  
Shirley Chu Ng

### 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.



JANUARY 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.*

On my recent visit to my great-aunt, she showed me a photo of her father, my great grandfather, Wong ah Gow, that she kept in her personal collection. I had never seen this part of my great-aunt's photo collection, but I had seen the photo. Taken in 1910, my great-grandfather sent the photo to US immigration services in San Francisco affixed to a signed affidavit from a white business associate certifying my great-grandfather's merchant status. The document was one of hundreds that the US government archived as part of my great-grandfather's case to challenge the detention of his son, my great uncle, on Angel Island.

I have always been fascinated by the photographic archive of Chinese exclusion at the National Archive in San Bruno, California. On the one hand, it was in this archive that I first saw this photo of my great-grandfather. The archive, thus, provided me a photograph of my great-grandfather before I had seen other photos of him in our family collections. Yet at the same time, the photo archive remains a brutal record of the long history of anti-immigrant legislation in the United States and is a reminder to me of how my own family suffered from it.

The process of photographing and cataloging every Chinese immigrant in the United States began with the Geary Act of 1892, which renewed the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. The Geary Act created the first photo requirements for immigration documents in the nation's history. The law stated that all Chinese laborers residing in the United States had one year to register for a certificate of identity. As part of the process, the government forced Chinese laborers to submit two photos of themselves to immigration officials.

As Anna Pegler-Gordon points out in her book, *In Sight of America: Photography and the Development of U.S. Immigration Policy*, many of the people who opposed the photographic requirements of the Geary Act did so in part because the only people whose photos had been archived in large numbers by the government before the Geary Act were criminals. The law thus linked these Chinese American identity certificates to criminality in the minds of many of the nation's residents.



Photo of Wong Ah Gow from the Gow Family Collection





JANUARY 2016

*Continued from previous page*

In response to the passage of the Geary Act, Chinese Americans engaged in one of the largest nineteenth century acts of American civil disobedience. Under the direction of the CCBA, more than 100,000 Chinese Americans refused to register in protest of the law. In the face of mounting pressure, Chinese Americans were eventually forced to acquiesce to the laws requirements.

My great-grandfather must have had some type of affective connection to this photo. After all, he saved the image and passed it on to his youngest daughter. Perhaps the emotions were negative. This must have been a horrific time in his life. My great-grandfather's teenage son sat in US government detention, and my great-grandfather must have known that there was a real chance that his son could be sent back to Taishan, as had happened four years earlier when his eldest son attempted to immigrate. Of course, the photo might also have elicited feelings of pride or accomplishment. My great-grandfather was eventually successful in his attempts to free his son, and my great uncle went on to live happily in the United States for the rest of his life. We have no way of knowing what a nineteenth century immigrant like my great-grandfather felt about the Geary Act or the role of photography in the process. In this regard, the photographic archive leaves us with only questions not answers.

IN RE:  
WONG QUOKYAP;  
MINOR SON RESIDENT CHINESE MERCHANT.

State of California, )  
County of Ventura, ) ss.

We, the undersigned, being first  
duly sworn and severally sworn upon oath,  
each for himself and not one for the other, doth depose and say:

That we are acquainted with Wong Ah Gow who makes the foregoing affidavit and whose photograph is attached hereto, and that said Wong Ah Gow is a merchant lawfully domiciled and resident in the Town of Hueneme, County of Ventura, State of California, and engaged in business therein as a member of the firm of Gee Wo. & Co., which said firm is engaged in buying and selling and dealing in general merchandise at a fixed place of business, to-wit, on Fourth Street ~~near~~ Green Broad Street in said Town of Hueneme.

That said Wong Ah Gow has been a merchant and a member of said firm for more than one year last past, and during said time has engaged in the performance of no manual labor except such as was necessary in the conduct of his business as such merchant.

And we further state that we know the reputation of said Wong Ah Gow for truth and veracity, and that the same is good.

Signatures:

*E. G. G. G. G.*

Address:

*Hueneme, Cal.*



Photo of Wong Ah Gow from the National Archives in San Bruno.  
Chinese Exclusion Act Case File 1201729238 Box 299

*William Gow is a doctoral candidate in Ethnic Studies at UC Berkeley.*

*Comments and questions for William Gow can be emailed to [wgow@outlook.com](mailto:wgow@outlook.com) or mailed to the him care of the CHSSC.*



JANUARY 2016

*In Memoriam*

## David Fon Lee

January 17, 1920 - December 1, 2015

Close friend Dr. Bill Chun-Hoon writes:

Dear Yuki, Sharon and Family,



David and I were close friends and associates in Chinatown. He reached out to help me when I was assigned to Castelar School in 1973. He was very active in Chinatown business through General Lee's and improved the businesses in Chinatown through his position as president of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce. In that role, he developed good relations with the greater Los Angeles businesses. For a number of years he brought great success to the celebration of the Chinese New Year. He and I worked together to establish the New Year's carnival and the parade in Chinatown. Through his effort he brought about very positive relations between Chinatown and greater Los Angeles. The Chinese Chamber of Commerce became a respected organization. All this and he was also able to make General Lee's a highly rated restaurant in Los Angeles. Besides his leadership in the business and civic activities, David was also widely recognized as a strong ambassador of relations between the US and China even before diplomatic relations between the two countries. Through his friendship and relations with China, he was able to develop a people to people contact between China and the US through his visits. Since my ancestors were from Chung Shan, as was David's, I accompanied him on his trips to China. David was also host to China's delegation of athletes & diplomats during the 1984 Olympics. The Friends of the Chinatown Library owe a lot to David for his significant contribution to the establishment of the Chinatown Library, which today is a success in serving the Chinatown community. Our prayers go to David and his family and we wish all a blessed Christmas. We are grateful for David's life mission to make our society a better place to live. – Bill Chun Hoon, Close Friend

David was active in the CHSSC and made significant contributions to CHSSC publications: *Chinatown in Los Angeles* by Jenny Cho and *Gum Saan Journal 2014: Voices of Chinatown*. Besides his daughter, Lee is survived by his wife, Yukie Lee, and two grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his son David Lee Jr., who died at 19 in 1988, and by stepson Steven Sasaki. We would like to thank David, Yukie, and family for their support of the CHSSC over the years.

*In Memoriam*

## Fung Lun Chan

November 1, 1921 - November 8, 2015

Most people in Los Angeles Chinatown know him through his famous strawberry cake sold at Phoenix Bakery. After studying baking in America and Hong Kong, Lun joined the family business in the 1940s where he developed Phoenix Bakery's signature strawberry cake. His cake has become synonymous with birthdays, congratulations, and various celebratory occasions. Due to increasing demand, Phoenix Bakery moved to its current location on Broadway. A recipe that has stood the test of time, Lun's legacy spans multiple generations and continues to live in the hearts, minds, and stomachs of Angelinos.



Phoenix Bakery received a Golden Spike Award from the CHSSC in 2013 for its innovation and impact on the Chinatown community. Just this year, Lun's Strawberry Cake was the centerpiece at the CHSSC's 40th Anniversary celebration. Lun is survived by Dorothy, his wife for 64 years, his sister Chee Fat of Sacramento, three sons-Dolan (Arlene), Youlen (Jean) and Leland, and 6 grandchildren-Stefanie, Randy, Amanda, Alissa, Christina, and Melissa.





## Chinese Historical Society of Southern California

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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, January 13, 2016 - 6:30pm**

##### **50 Years of the Miss Los Angeles Chinatown Pageant**

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**Now through March 22, 2016 - Mon.-Fri. 12:00pm-4:30pm,**

**Sat.-Sun. 10:30am-4:30pm, Closed Tuesdays**

##### **Y.C. Hong Exhibit**

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

Drawn from The Huntington's You Chung Hong family papers, acquired in 2006, this exhibition is the first opportunity for the public to get a deeper sense of the life of an extraordinary figure in Chinese-American history.

The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens

1151 Oxford Road San Marino, CA 91108

626.405.2100

#### **Thursday, January 21, 2016 - 4:30pm**

##### **Curator Tour - Y.C. Hong:**

##### **Advocate for Chinese-American Inclusion**

Curator Li Wei Yang leads a private tour of the exhibition "Y.C. Hong: Advocate for Chinese-American Inclusion," which traces the life of an extraordinary figure in the history of early 20th-century Los Angeles. Members: \$15. Non-Members: \$20. Register online.

The Huntington Library, Art Collections and Botanical Gardens

1151 Oxford Road

San Marino, CA 91108

626-405-2100

#### **Saturday, January 23, 2016 - 9:00am - 4:30pm**

##### **Taste of Art: From Ancient Roots to Chinatown**

The history of Chinese immigration in early Los Angeles and the development of contemporary Chinese-American cuisine are explored in this cooking workshop and gallery discussion inspired by the exhibition "Y.C. Hong: Advocate for Chinese-American Inclusion." Members: \$85. Non-Members: \$100. Register online.

The Huntington Library, Art Collections and Botanical Gardens

1151 Oxford Road

San Marino, CA 91108

626-405-2100