

OCTOBER 2016

Summer Journeys: *Searching for Chinese American Stories*

Wednesday, October 5, 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.



This month we will celebrate the start of our 2016-2017 program season, by having a "Show and Tell" of journeys that members took in the summer months that involved learning about historic Chinese American communities or Chinese American history in general. We will be joined by guest speakers Tennyson Kwok to present on his trip to Yosemite and Sing Peak, and Eugene Moy on historic Chinese American places in Nevada, Idaho, Montana, and Alberta that he and spouse Susan drove and walked through.

The following is a statement from Tennyson Kwok about his experience:

"The Sing Peak Pilgrimage began 4 years ago. The Pilgrimage started when a Chinese American Yosemite Park Ranger, Yenyen Chan (who made a video about the contributions of the Chinese to Yosemite), and retired State Park Ranger, Jack Shu, collaborated for to organize the Pilgrimage. A Yosemite peak is named Sing Peak. Tie Sing was a highly regarded camp cook who served Yosemite visitors in its early days. He had the honor of the 10,500 ft. peak named after him even before his death in 1916. It seemed natural to name the event in his honor. The pilgrimage was in two parts. The first three days consisted of short hikes to locations where Chinese built roads, and Yenyen Chan gave historical background during the hikes. The second three days was a backpacking trip to the top of Sing Peak, but only the adventurous attendees undertook this part. I met many wonderful people on this year's Pilgrimage and I have been asked to present my experience to the CHSSC."

If you have a story or images to share related to your own journeys through Chinese American history, we invite you to contact us at chssc@hotmail.com or give us a call at (323) 222- 0856.





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Mid-Autumn Moon Festival

On Saturday, September 17, 2016 the CHSSC hosted a potluck here at the Bernard Street headquarters in observance of an important Chinese tradition, the Mid-Autumn Moon Festival. It was a festive night shared by members, friends, and visitors. We were so grateful to be joined by multi-talented musicians Jason Chu and Leo Xia who gathered a sizeable crowd through their performance of original works. The music, cool autumn weather, and night sky provided an intimate ambiance to the CHSSC backyard that created the perfect setting for enjoying the full moon. For those who couldn't join us, we hope to host more events similar to this one in the future. As always, we are glad to have this opportunity to connect with our members and introduce new people to the CHSSC.

Our performers Jason and Leo tell their story through their music, and the CHSSC will always support the ongoing narrative that is told through the next generation of Chinese Americans.

Please listen to and support the music of Jason Chu by visiting his website:
www.jasonchumusic.com

And Leo Xia at: www.facebook.com/lXiaMusic



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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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Finding Stan Lau

When I first spoke to Stanley Lau by telephone in early September, I confessed to him that he was “Moby Dick” to my Captain Ahab. Much like the fabled elusive behemoth in Meville’s epic, Stan would be my obsession in the planning of the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California’s 40th Anniversary celebration last October. Why? He was a Charter Member, ranking fifth in the hierarchy that was defined on the first dues paid. He was also the first President of CHSSC. He was an integral part of the history of the Society in its formative years of organization building.

Central to our fete honoring CHSSC’s first four decades were the initial 106 members to sign up between November 1, 1975, and December 31, 1976. They would be forever designated Charter Members. During preparations for the celebration, I was fortunate to have interviewed many Charter Members who added rich layers to this great narrative, but I had hope to record the words of the founding president. Sadly for me it didn’t happen at the Anniversary. However, persistence pays off.

I wrote personal invitation to Stan hoping he would attend the 2016 Golden Spike Awards Luncheon held last month at the Hilton of Los Angeles/San Gabriel. To my delight he responded to my letter with a kind handwritten note. Unable to attend the awards luncheon, Stan did kindly accept my invitation to lunch at a Pasadena area restaurant, which we did early September accompanied by another CHSSC icon, Eugene W. Moy. A rewarding afternoon. —Rick Eng



Stan Lau Found Left to right.: Rick Eng, Stan Lau and Eugene Moy

In Memoriam

Nancy Yee

With regret, we share news of the passing of Nancy Yee, an active member of the Chinatown community, and a great friend to many of our members and staff here at the CHSSC. Nancy was devoted to enriching the Chinese American community through her work at the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, as well as the Chinese American Citizens Alliance. She was also an accomplished actress with roles in *Enemy of the State* (1998), *3rd Rock From the Sun* (1997-1998), *The King of Queens* (1999-2007), *Dumb and Dumber To* (2014), and much more. Our sincere condolences go to the family and friends of Nancy Yee.

Nancy’s story is compelling, and she details her life as part of the “Coming to America” series, presented by the Monterey Park Bruggemeyer Library. You can watch her interview at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=3XcOQc_i614





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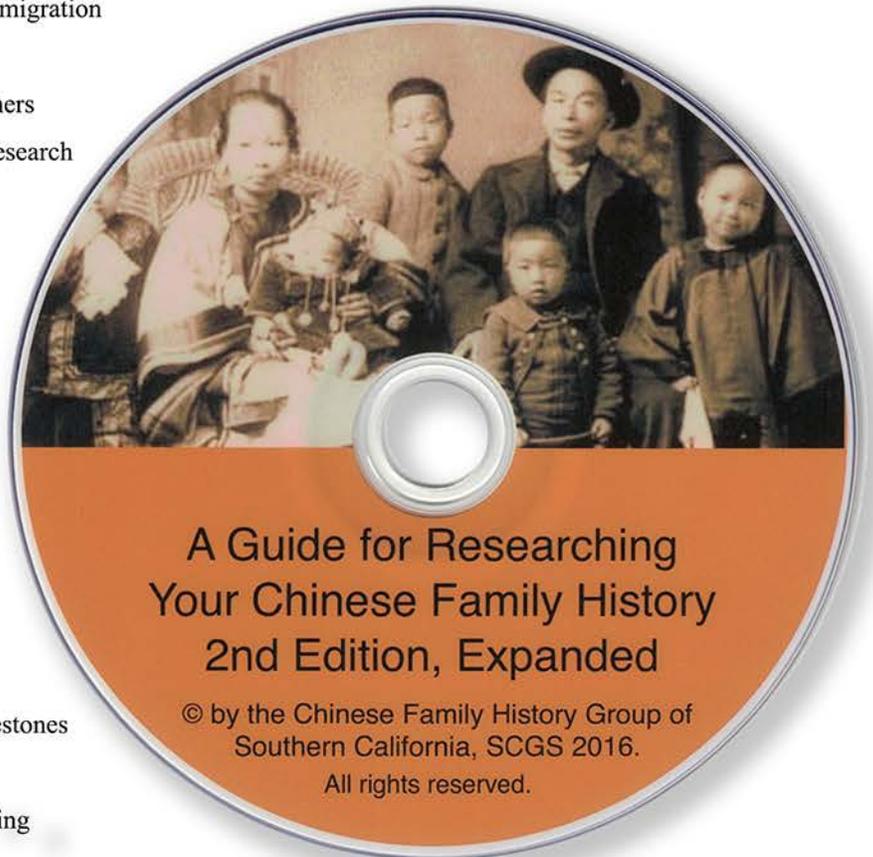
Chinese Family History Group of Southern California A Guide for Researching Your Chinese Family History

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REVISED, UPDATED AND EXPANDED to 95 PAGES ON DVD

CONTENTS:

- Timeline of Events Impacting Chinese American Immigration
- Chinese Family History Research Sources
- How to Interview Chinese Family Members and Others
- How to Navigate Around Chinese Names in Your Research
- How to Access Records at NARA
- How to Find Public Documents for a Paper Son or Paper Daughter
- You Chung (Y.C.) Hong Research Materials at the Huntington Library
- Digitizing Chinese Characters
- Chinese Clan/Surname Genealogy Books (Zupu & Jiapu)
- Chinese Cemeteries:
 - How to Visit Chinese Cemeteries in Los Angeles, San Francisco & Honolulu
 - How to Find Chinese History Information on Gravestones
- How to Find and Visit your Ancestral Village
- Tracing Chinese Family History Through DNA Testing
- Organizing and Preserving Family Documents
- Ways to Pass on Family History Information to Future Generations
- Print Resources and Special Collections in the Southern California Region
- Internet Resources for Chinese Family History



Available for \$20 donation at CFHGSC monthly meetings
or by mail order from CHSSC (add \$4 s/h).

For mail order instructions, email cfhgsc@gmail.com or chssc@hotmail.com



Notes on Chinese American History

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

Building on my last few columns on Chinese American genealogical research, this month I begin to introduce books in Asian American history for those who want to gain a basic understanding of the field in order to better situate their research within a larger historical framework. This month I discuss perhaps the most widely read Asian American history ever published, Ronald Takaki's *Strangers from a Different Shore*.

Published for the first time in 1989, Ronald Takaki's book presents a history of Asian Americans beginning in the mid-nineteenth century and continuing until the 1980s. Organized largely around specific ethnic groups, Takaki's work focuses on the experiences of Chinese Americans, Japanese Americans, Korean Americans, Filipino Americans, South Asian Americans, and to a lesser extent Vietnamese Americans. Telling each of these groups' stories individually, Takaki sets out to show how these immigrant groups came to be seen as "strangers" in American society. Takaki explains how despite the similarities of American immigrants from Asia and Europe, too many classic works in American history have "equated 'American' with 'white' or European." (7) As a result Asian Americans are too often left out of standard histories of the United States.

While European immigrants to the United States may have been treated as "strangers" at first, they eventually came to be seen as Americans. On the other hand, Takaki argues that Asian Americans, "could not transform themselves as felicitously," (12) because they "had qualities they could not change or hide—the shape of their eyes, the color of their hair, the complexion of their skin." (13) In this way, Takaki introduces the importance of race to our understanding of Asian American history. At the same time, he begins to lay the groundwork for understanding the history of Asian Americans as people of color, who share experiences with African Americans, Latinos, and Native Americans. Takaki explains how unlike European immigrants, Asian Americans were barred from becoming naturalized citizens until 1952, by the Naturalization Act of 1790 because they were not white. At the same time that he traces the effects of American racism of the history of Asian Americans, Takaki also argues for the importance of seeing Asian Americans as subjects of history: "as men and women with minds wills and voices." (7) Takaki makes clear that Asian Americans weren't just historical victims of racism; they were also complex social actors, who had the ability to influence their own histories.

Takaki's strength as an author lies in his ability to present this complex academic history in an accessible manner. The first edition of his book comes in at 491 pages excluding footnotes, and yet despite the book's length, Takaki's writing style and coherent structure maintain the readers attention throughout. Takaki's ability to weave together a variety of sources in ways that show both the agency and humanity of Asian Americans is nothing short of masterful. In his chapter, "Gaam Saan Haak," on nineteenth century Chinese immigrants, the types of sources that Takaki quotes from include newspapers, anti-Chinese legislation, telegrams written by Chinese immigrants, the US Census, essays by white missionaries, popular songs and plays about the Chinese, Cantonese poems, legal contracts, letters, folk songs, and a Chinese-English phrasebook. Of course, the book is not without its faults. As perhaps the most widely read Asian American history book ever published Takaki's book has been critiqued by scholars on a number of fronts ranging from the way Takaki footnoted his sources to the way Takaki incorporated women's voices into the text. Despite these weaknesses, *Strangers From*

a Different Shore remains an excellent introduction to the field of Asian American history. Of course, it is not the only introduction to the field, and I will discuss other introductory works that readers can read in future columns.

Ronald Takaki, *Strangers from A Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans* (New York: Penguin Books, 1989)

William Gow is currently a doctoral candidate in Ethnic Studies at UC Berkeley, where he is writing a history of Los Angeles Chinatown in the 1930s and 1940s. He has been a CHSSC member for more than a decade. He invites feedback, suggestions, or questions about the column and his academic work. William can be reached by email at wgow@outlook.com

New Chinatown, China City, and Hollywood Cinema:

*An Oral History of Los Angeles
in the 1930s and 1940s*

Do you have memories of Los Angeles
Chinatown in the 1930s and 1940s?

Have you heard stories from parents
or relatives from the period?

Would you like to have your oral history archived
at UCLA's Center for Oral History Research?

UC Berkeley graduate student William Gow, working with faculty advisor Professor Shari Huhndorf, seeks oral history participants as part of his doctoral dissertation research in Ethnic Studies. The project seeks both US-born adults who have memories about the Chinese American community in Los Angeles in the 1930s and 1940s, as well as other adults who have heard stories about the Chinese American community directly from those who lived in Los Angeles in these decades.

Share your stories of Chinatown in the 1930s
and 1940s and help preserve the history of the
Chinese American community in Los Angeles.

For more information, email William Gow at
williamgow@berkeley.edu
or call William at 310-795-4730.



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

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Community Calendar

Wednesday, October 5, 2016 6:30PM

Monthly CHSSC Meeting

"Summer Journeys :

Searching for Chinese American Stories"

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

Wednesday, October 5, 2016 7:30pm

The Home My Heart

A young woman yearns to preserve what is inevitably lost to time. A village with a unique history spanning three shores whose people paid in tears and blood for their own. One great-great-great-great-great-granddaughter's path to finding her roots and learning why her ancestors sacrificed so much for her. A people's story and home in danger of being destroyed forever. Directed by Can To • Chinese and English (with subtitles) 45 minutes
Chinese American Museum at El Pueblo Historical Monument
425 North Los Angeles Street Los Angeles, CA 90012
www.camla.org
Please reserve your seat by emailing rsvp@camla.org

Thursday, October 6, 2016 6:00PM

"My Life In China" aims to build understanding and compassion for the immigrant/refugee experience.
California State University, Northridge
Oviatt Library Ferman Presentation Room
18111 Nordhoff Street Northridge, CA 91330

Wednesday, October 12, 2016 4:00pm to 5:30pm

Fateful Ties:

A History of America's Preoccupation with China

The Oliver H. Palmer Professor in Humanities and Professor of History at Stanford University, Gordon H. Chang will speak about his book, "Fateful Ties: A History of America's Preoccupation with China" (Harvard University Press: 2015) that studies the long history of America-China relations. Chang covers this history from Jamestown to today and gives historical context for the current American fixation with China. He suggests that this fascination continues centuries of American interest in China, an interest that is peculiar to the United States.

UCLA Powell Library - East Rotunda

405 Hilgard Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90095
(310) 825-1938

RSVP requested: <http://chang-aasc.eventbrite.com/>

Tuesday, October 25, 2016 7:30pm Free; No reservations
Painters, Carvers, and Style in Chinese Woodblock Images

Suzanne Wright discusses the partnerships between Chinese painters and woodblock carvers who worked together to produce exquisite prints.

Rotherberg Hall
Huntington Library, Art Collections and Botanical Gardens
1151 Oxford Road
San Marino, CA 91108
(626) 405-2100