

DECEMBER 2020

December Monthly Meeting



Tamara Venit-Shelton is an associate professor of history at Claremont McKenna College where she teaches courses on the American West, Asian American history, environmental history, and the history of medicine. She is the author of two books: *A Squatter's Republic: Land and the Politics of Monopoly* in California, 1850-1900 (University of California Press, 2013) and *Herbs and Roots: A History of Chinese Doctors in the American Medical Marketplace* (Yale University Press, 2019), which won the 2020 Phi Alpha Theta Award for Best Book.

Herbs and Roots: A History of Chinese Doctors in the American Medical Marketplace chronicles roughly two hundred years of Chinese medicine as a dynamic system of knowledge, therapies, and *materia medica* brought to the United States and transformed by immigrants, doctors, and patients as well as missionaries, scientists, and merchants. Chinese medicine has a long history in the United States, dating back to its colonial period and extending up to the present. Well before mass emigration from China to the United States began, Chinese *materia medica* crossed the oceans, in both directions: Chinese medicinal teas and herbs came west while Appalachian ginseng went east. Beginning in the 1850s, Chinese immigrants came to the United States and transplanted their health practices, sometimes quite literally by propagating medicinal plants in their adopted home. Chinese doctors established businesses that catered to both Chinese and non-Chinese patients. They struggled during the Great Depression and World War II, but conditions that seemed to precipitate the decline of Chinese medicine in the United States in fact laid the foundations for its rediscovery in the 1970s. Over time, Chinese medicine – along with other medical knowledge systems deemed “irregular,” “alternative,” or “unorthodox” – both facilitated and undermined the consolidation of medical authority among formally trained western-style medical scientists.

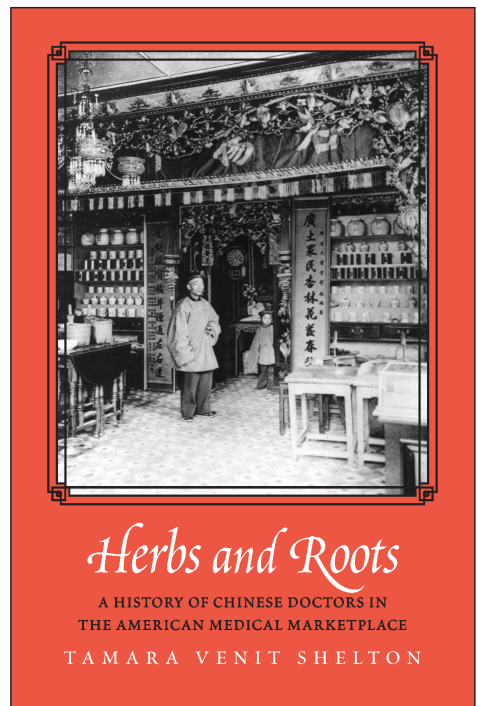
Dr. Venit-Shelton will also comment on the work of historic L.A. herbalists Tom Leung, Tom Foo Yuen, and Tom Shee Bin.

CHSSC Meeting will be online on Zoom:

Wednesday, December 2, 2020

Program: 7:00 PM

To register, go to chssc.org.





President's Letter

"We get by with a little help from our friends." These words, paraphrased from an old Beatles song reflect the workings of CHSSC since the coronavirus shutdown. After we closed to the public and laid off our employee, CHSSC became an all-volunteer organization again—like the early years. Board members came to the rescue. Board members had to check on the property daily, do the gardening, and handle all financial and office matters. However, the big challenge was to develop alternate strategies to fulfill our mission. In the summer we started updating our website. Beginning in September, CHSSC began having online monthly programs. Instead of conducting Chinatown walking tours, Gene Moy began presenting Chinese American history for other organizations via Zoom. With the help of grants, we have been able to fund 3 interns who help with the NARA files, our website, and our archives.

How can you help? You can join or renew your membership. So far, more than 1/3 of the renewing members have renewed at a higher level or have included a donation to CHSSC with their renewal. Our normal operating funds are generated by the Golden Spike Awards dinner. Since the dinner was cancelled, funding has been a challenge despite several large donations. CHSSC also needs volunteers. Updating the website will be a continuing project for the next year. If you can work remotely, we can put you to work.

This year I will miss the CHSSC Christmas potluck where we celebrate the season together with old friends. Let's make sure that next year our potluck will be better than ever.

Sincerely,
Susan Dickson

Cal Humanities has provided a generous grant to CHSSC to support our programs. Source funding is from the economic stabilization plan under the 2020 Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act via the NEH, the National Endowment for the Humanities.

The 2020 CARES Act allows people to donate up to \$300 in cash to a qualified organization (or \$600 for Married Filing Jointly) so their adjusted income will be reduced up to \$300.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

OFFICERS

Susan Dickson, President
Eugene Moy, Vice President
Laureen Hom, Secretary
Franklin Mah, Treasurer
Cindy Fong, Membership
Secretary

MEMBERS AT LARGE

Linda Bentz
Caitlin Bryant
John Chan
Gordon Hom
Bak Jong
Angela Lancaster
Felicia Tabing
Howard Wang

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.



DECEMBER 2020

November Program

BY SUSAN DICKSON

Sarah Heffner, an archeologist with the California Department of Water Resources Division of Environmental Services was introduced by archaeologist and Asian Studies scholar Kelly N. Fong. The focus of her talk was on the third Chinatown of Yreka, California. Sarah explained that the Chinese community was forced to move to a very undesirable part of town in a flood-prone area following a 1886 fire that they blamed on the Chinese. Historic photos, census records, and copies of the Sanborn insurance maps were used to tell the history of this segregated Chinatown area. The Chinese population began its main decline during the 30 years after 1910. By 1947 the buildings needed to be demolished. One building remained, but the remaining land was never redeveloped.

Her research uses artifacts unearthed during a 1969 excavation done before the construction of I-5 through the former Chinese community. Since it was a large-scale excavation, archaeologists conducted a salvage operation to find as many artifacts as possible. Sarah's analysis of the artifacts determined that the largest category of artifacts involved domestic food items while storage preparation and consumption was second. Some food preparation artifacts included stoneware cooking pans, a grinding bowl, a metal pan, a meat cleaver, and storage vessels. Other artifacts indicated that the Chinese practiced both traditional and European medicine: Chinese medicine vials and extract bottles as well as European patent medicine containers which mainly contained alcohol as a cure. There was one Chinese drugstore in Chinatown.

Sarah Heffner's research has been funded by a State Parks grant.



CHSSC Receives Award

On Saturday, November 14, the Aquarium of the Pacific awarded CHSSC with the Heritage Award at its yearly Autumn Festival, which celebrates Asian culture. CHSSC was recognized for our work preserving Chinese American history and culture and our outreach to a wider population.

The festival, which featured traditional dance, music, craftwork celebrating the diversity of cultures in China, Japan, Korea, and the Philippines, was a free online streaming event. The event culminated with the award presentation to Susan Dickson, who accepted the award on behalf of CHSSC.

Past honorees include: Chinese American Museum (2005), Angi Ma Wong (2009), East West Players (2010), and Pacific Asia Museum (2013).



DECEMBER 2020



Los Angeles Chinatown Court's Visit to Ventura

BY LINDA BENTZ

Between October 9 and 11, 2020 the Miss Los Angeles Chinatown Court participated in a Cultural Exchange Program in Ventura. CHSSC members Winston and Joanne Young organized this event. Since 2015, the Youngs have sponsored a trip to China for the Miss Los Angeles Chinatown Queen and her Court. However due to the pandemic, the trip to China was canceled this year.

Determined to provide a cultural event for the Queen and her Court, Winston and Joanne booked rooms for participants at the Crown Plaza Hotel in Ventura. Next, they contacted the Museum of Ventura County; Linda Bentz, Historian for the Ventura County Chinese American Historical Society (and CHSSC board member); and CHSSC members Grace and Ricky Leo to provide historical, archaeological and cultural activities in downtown Ventura.

The three-day program consisted of the showing of the documentary *Courage and Contribution: the Chinese in Ventura County*, exhibits prepared specifically for the Queen and her Court at the Museum of Ventura County, artifact analysis, a walking tour of Ventura's former Chinese community, a Tai Chi demonstration and a Chinese calligraphy class. CHSSC provided books pertaining to Chinese American history to the Queen and her Court to enhance their cultural experience.

CHSSC and the Ventura County Chinese American Historical Society would like to thank Winston and Joanne Young for including us in this wonderful, and educational, Cultural Exchange Program!



DECEMBER 2020

Gum Saan Journal in the Pandemic

BY SUSIE LING

This quarantine has nudged technology into all our lives. Our celebration of Chinese American WW2 veterans (the topic of our GSJ 2020), turned into a Zoom gathering over 900 people from across the nation. We miss the cookies, but our CHSSC meetings continue to expand our education. You have to embrace the positives.

Gum Saan Journal enjoyed technology positives. In fact, we present TWO special issues for 2021: “Life in the 1950s” and “The Eagle and the Dragon; Charles L. Leong, Journalist.”

We Zoom met with Judge Cerena Wong Burns of Santa Rosa. She said, “I haven’t lived in Los Angeles since 1972 but being raised in Chinatown Plaza in the 1950s is a treasure box in my heart.” We also Zoomed with Cerena’s gal pal from St. Bridget’s, Diana Young Klein, who jokingly said about growing up on Bernard Street, “I wondered why Mrs. Whiting was on ‘our’ street.” Louise Fritz Whiting was born at 411 Bernard Street, now the office of CHSSC, near 1891. “Life in the 1950s” also features Richard and Lily Leong Wong from other corners of LA Chinatown, as well as member Tennyson Kwok who marvels that this GSJ issue is #43 – his special number from his racing days. We are fortunate to include a first-person perspective from one of the last paper sons, Wong Chur Fun, who immigrated in 1951.

The quarantine opened an unexpected opportunity. Professor Russell Charles Leong, 2019 Golden Spike awardee, collaborated to do a special retrospective of GSJ on his father, pioneering journalist Charles L. Leong. Russell tore his house upside down looking for old pictures and documents. Via a flood of emails, texts, and voice conversations, we gathered pieces of Charles’ rich legacy. Using optical character recognition, we converted the old typed documents to Word. We did a little Photoshopping. Icy Smith, our graphic designer, added magic dust. You have to read this!

Working with a premier editor taught us a lot. Russell gifted CHSSC the seed money to adopt more technology and establish an online version of GSJ. That’s our New Year’s resolution. Look forward to GSJ 2021 and 2022.

Get TWO special Gum Saan Journals with the price of one membership.



UCLA Intern

Coryn Haridison is an aspiring archivist who is currently in her second year at UCLA's Master at Library and Information Science program. This fall Coryn began interning at CHSSC through the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and UCLA Community Archives Lab



DECEMBER 2020

Major Donors

James Louie \$1,000

John R. Jung \$500
(In memory of Phyllis Jung)

Winston and Joanne Young \$500

Richard Chung

Mabel Hogel

Helen and Darryl Quon

Yee Family Revocable Trust

Donors

Amazon Smile (unknown donor)*

Tennyson Kwok

Perry Lew

*You can support CHSSC through Amazon Smile, which you can find using your Amazon Shopping Ap. Under “Current Charity,” list CHSSC. Then CHSSC will get a small percentage of your purchases.



Chinese Historical Society of Southern California

南加州華人歷史學會

Chinese Historical Society of Southern California
411 Bernard Street
Los Angeles, California 90012
chssc1975@gmail.com • (323) 222-0856 •
www.chinesehistoricalsociety.org



Mission Statement

Established in 1975, the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California (CHSSC) unites people with a mutual interest in promoting the rich heritage of Chinese and Chinese American history. Our mission is to pursue, preserve and communicate the history and historical role of Chinese and Chinese Americans in Southern California.

What We Do

- ◆ Conduct monthly meetings public presentations on Chinese American History.
- ◆ Sponsor and participate in symposiums, exhibits and conferences.
- ◆ Conduct Chinatown walking tours for students and public.
- ◆ Lead the annual Lunar New Year Golden Dragon Parade.

Research and Publication

- ◆ Publication of multiple books by renown scholars.
- ◆ The *Gum Saan Journal* is the Society's annual publication.
- ◆ A significant research library.
- ◆ Maintain an archive consisting of oral histories, archaeological collections, photographs and family histories.



☐ New Membership

☐ Renewal

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Membership levels:

☐ Silver \$ 57.

☐ 100x100 Club \$100.

☐ Diamond \$ 300.

☐ Senior (60+) or student \$ 32.

Donation (tax deductible) \$ _____

TOTAL \$ _____

To join or renew your membership by credit card
visit our website at www.chinesehistoricalsociety.org

Please make checks payable to CHSSC.

☐ Check here if you would like the
newsletter mailed to your home.

☐ Check here if you would like
the newsletter sent via email.

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



Chinese Historical Society of Southern California

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

*Please help us save paper and postage,
email us to indicate your preference for an online newsletter at info@chssc.org.*

Community Calendar

December 1, 2020

Preserving Family Memories - Chinese American Museum of Chicago

<https://ccamuseum.org/dec-1-preserving-family-memories/>

December 9, 2020

Chinese American WWII Veterans Congressional Gold Medal virtual ceremony

<https://mailchi.mp/7344dbc7d108/november-11-2020-cgm-for-chinese-american-wwii-vets-ceremony-set-for-december-9?e=b166d804e8>

December 16, 2020

Talk Stories: An Asian American/Asian Diaspora Storytelling Show - Chinese American Museum of Chicago

<https://ccamuseum.org/dec-16-talk-stories/>



Chinese Historical Society of Southern California

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

*Please help us save paper and postage,
email us to indicate your preference for an online newsletter at info@chssc.org.*