

## Chinese Exclusion Act Case Files

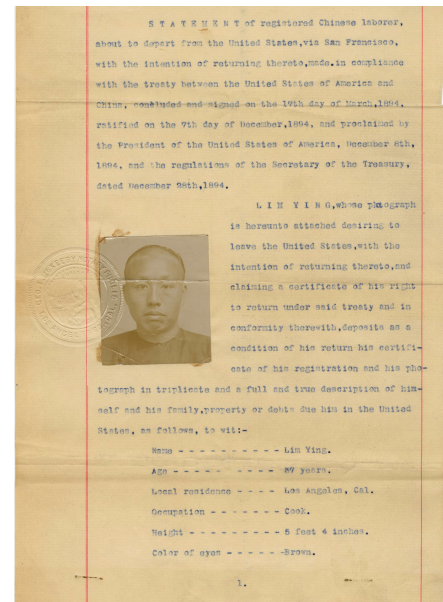
BY LINDA BENTZ

In our continuing effort to share Chinese Exclusion Act Case files, each month we will highlight a file found at the National Archives Riverside Division. Details of Lim Ying's file, augmented with family information, are featured here.

Lim Ying, sometimes known as Charley Lim Ying or Lim Yong, worked in the home of Phineas Banning (sometimes referred to as General Banning) in Wilmington, California. Banning is known as "The Father of the Port of Los Angeles" and he was also a founder of the city of Wilmington.

Lim Ying was born in Tung Sing Village in Toishan in 1862, and came to the United States when he was 15-years-old. By 1880, he was working for Phineas Banning in Wilmington. Two years later he visited China and returned to California in 1883. Over the course of his life, he was able to visit his family in China four times. A few months after each visit, a son was born in the homeland. Lim's last visit to China was in 1897.

Upon Lim's return to the Banning estate in the 1883, he gave the family a gift of wisteria seeds carried overseas from China. A biographer of the Banning family shared this story.



Lim Ying Chinese Exclusion Act Case File #390: 1897. Courtesy of National Archives Riverside Division

*The General was going over some accounts in his study when there was a knock at the door. At a word from Banning the door opened and there stood Lim Yong, with his hands folded under his long silk sleeves, his queue hanging down his back . . .*

*At once the "Boss Man" welcomed him back, then remembering what Lim Yong had said, [Banning] asked if he had kept his promise to bring him some Chinese flower seeds. The cook asked to meet him in the garden that day at a certain time.*

*When Phineas and his wife and the daughters gathered in the grounds, at the side of the stable and carriage house, Lim Yong came from the basement of the house and showed the General some seeds cupped in his hand. The cook had already dug a shallow hole in the ground and a full watering can was nearby. With much ceremony [he placed] the seeds in the hole, covered them with soil, and watered them carefully. Then he stood erect and said, "Soon big vine," as he spread his arms wide. "Big blooms" (Krythe, 1957: 226).*

The wisteria vine is alive and well at the Banning estate today. It has gained such notoriety, that beginning in 1931 the Wisteria Festival became an annual community event held in late March or early April to coincide with the blooming of the wisteria vine planted by Lim Ying. [See **Page 6** for the rest of this article.]



### President's Letter

During this COVID-19 era, CHSSC has faced many challenges, but we have community support and new opportunities. During the past month, two people joined CHSSC and 32 people have renewed their memberships. Many of those who renewed, renewed at a higher level of membership or included a donation with their membership. In addition, we received donations to our general fund from the Firecracker 10K Run Committee. The two large grants, the LA County Grant from Supervisor Hilda Solis and the California Humanities Grant, will help us fund outreach and programming.

Behind the scenes CHSSC continues to move forward. Work on the new multi-media center is in the final stages. The archivist provided by a LA as Subject grant has begun work on organizing our digital archives. Money donated to CHSSC to digitize the Chinese Immigration files in Perris, California allowed us to fund the NARA purchase of a \$13,000 state-of-the-art digital scanner. Also, an intern will continue her research on the history of Old Chinatown. In addition, two Ph.D. candidates have been conducting dissertation research with information from CHSSC archives and publications.

During these stay-at-home times, the internet has become a necessary fixture in our lives. CHSSC holds monthly Zoom board meetings. Board members meet with our intern, our new archivist, and other organizations on Zoom. Beginning in September, CHSSC will hold our monthly meetings with a speaker on Zoom. Zoom will allow us to have interesting, well-known speakers from other places. Not everyone has access to Zoom so we will have to work out details of recording the meeting so that our membership can watch it later online. We will work out the details and let you know in the September newsletter.

Susan

### Eugene Moy's Metro Presentation: "Why I Love LA Chinatown"

As part of our Society's continued outreach, Eugene Moy was invited to make an online presentation on July 15 for LA's Metro organization regarding LA Chinatown. During his 47-minute-long slide lecture, Eugene covered the history of Chinese migration to the New World and specifically to America. He related the work of Chinese immigrants in fishing, farming, mining and railroad construction; the work of Chinese as employees in American homes and as independent business owners. Gene's cogent lecture touched on Chinese discrimination, culminating with the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and its subsequent lifting. All this information was folded into the history of LA Chinatown, its development, and contemporary issues facing the community. Thank you, Gene, for continuing to highlight our history to the larger community!

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

#### OFFICERS

Susan Dickson, President  
Linda Bentz, Vice President  
Felicia Tabing, Secretary  
Teresa Chung, Treasurer  
Gordon Hom, VP for programs

#### MEMBERS AT LARGE

John Chan  
Wendy Chung  
Cindy Fong  
Laureen Hom  
Winifred Lew  
Franklin Mah  
Eugene Moy

### 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.



## Nominations to the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California Board of Directors 2020-2021

The following have been nominated to the  
CHSSC Board of Directors for the 2020-2021  
term.

### Officers

President – Susan Dickson  
Vice President – Eugene Moy  
Secretary – Laureen Hom  
Treasurer – Franklin Mah  
VP for Programs – Open Seat  
Membership Secretary – Cindy Fong

### Members at Large for 2-year Term

John Chan  
Linda Bentz  
Caitlyn Bryant  
Gordon Hom  
Bak Jong  
Angela Lancaster  
Felicia Tabing  
Howard Wang  
(One open seat)



## Nomination Form

If you have a nomination for the board, either email your nomination to [info@chssc.org](mailto:info@chssc.org) or mail this form to CHSSC, 411 Bernard Street, Los Angeles, by **8/21/2020**.

President \_\_\_\_\_

Vice President \_\_\_\_\_

Vice President, Programs \_\_\_\_\_

Secretary \_\_\_\_\_

Treasurer \_\_\_\_\_

Membership Secretary \_\_\_\_\_

Member at Large \_\_\_\_\_

### 2020 Election Procedures

The CHSSC Bylaws state that the slate is to be announced 30 days before the June election. At the monthly meeting the floor is open to nominations. In March, the CHSSC board decided to push the election to September. If you have someone whom you would like to nominate to be an officer or a member-at-large, please send your nomination by mail or email to CHSSC prior to our September Zoom meeting. Members may self-nominate, and board members must be CHSSC members in good standing. Any nominations will be announced at that meeting and the voting will be online or by mail.



### Meet our Nominees!



CAITLYN BRYANT

Born and raised in Pasadena, CA, Caitlyn Bryant is the great granddaughter to Peter Soohoo Sr. As a child, she frequented Chinatown and is currently the owners representative and leasing consultant for some of the properties there. She is currently the CEO of Make Good Company, a consulting firm in Los Angeles.

I am excited about the opportunity to be on the board of the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California. I have been volunteering at the Annual Yosemite Pilgrimage for the past years with Dutch oven demonstrations and taking pictures to memorialize the events. I also attended the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Transcontinental Railroad at Promontory Summit. As such, I bring the curiosity and interest to learn more about the historical role of Chinese and Chinese Americans in Southern California.

I have over 25 years of volunteer experience through a variety of organizations including the Firecracker 10k, Pasadena Tournament of Roses, Boy Scouts of America, and Girl Scouts of Greater LA. With these vast experiences, I bring and add diversity of thought with new and fresh ideas to the board.

BAK JONG



ANGELA LANCASTER

Los Angeles based Train Attendant for Amtrak and Member of CHSSC since 1980. Angela lives in Portland, Oregon part-time with her husband, Tom. Prior to the current pandemic, much of her time was spent in Los Angeles, either working for the Railroad or documenting Los Angeles, specifically Chinatown, through her photography. Angela has run in every Chinatown Firecracker 10K/5K every year since 1981. She hopes to be of service in any capacity to assist CHSSC.



HOWARD WANG

Dr. Wang served for over 30 years at UCLA and California State universities, with the latest role as the Associate Vice President for Student Affairs prior to serving as Associate Dean/Adjunct Professor at Duke Kunshan University in Kunshan, China. He also served as an Adjunct Professor in Higher Education at Beijing Normal University while he was in China. He was an associate editor and had written several chapters in a recently published book on global university student affairs.

While in the U.S., Dr. Wang was an advocate for social justice and addressed educational issues facing the Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities in the greater Los Angeles counties. He was a member of the U.S. Environment Protection Agency's task force for Region VI to deal with fish contamination in San Pedro Bay, Los Angeles. He received the API Heritage Month Role Models Award in 2007. He was nominated in 2010 by Congressman Mike Honda for President Obama's consideration to serve on the White House Advisory Commission on AAPI Affairs. He was later appointed to serve on Congresswoman Loretta Sanchez's AAPI Advisory Committee. Dr. Wang served as keynote speaker at many community groups and received many awards from professional associations and community organizations in Orange County.

He received his BA in Biology from Oregon, and Clinical Microbiology from Wisconsin. He has a MA and Ph.D. degree (Higher Education Administration) from UCLA. Dr. Wang is a resident of Walnut, California.





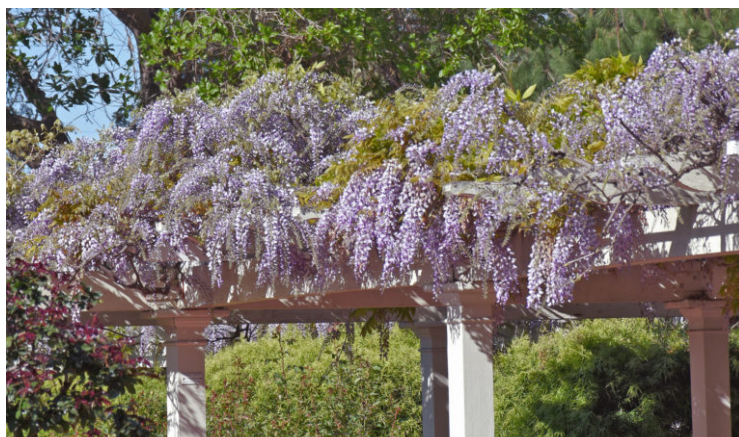


## Chinese Exclusion Act Case Files

[From **Page 1**] Over the years, thousands of people attend the spring event to listen to music, enjoy tours of the residence and meet the Wisteria Princesses selected by the student body from Phineas Banning High School. Today the festival has changed to become The Friends of the Banning Museum Regale annual fundraiser. At the event college scholarships are awarded.

Lim made his fourth visit to China in 1897. Under the tenets of the Chinese Exclusion Act Laws, when Chinese residents desired to visit their homeland, with the intention of returning to the United States, they were required to seek permission and documentation, known as a return certificate, from federal authorities. Procedures to obtain a return certificate included interviews with the applicant, their Chinese business partners, and testimony from Anglo-American witnesses. If a resident was not a merchant, a return certificate could be acquired if the applicant was owed \$1000.

In 1897, Lim was working on Catalina Island at the Metropole Hotel. The Banning family purchased Catalina Island in 1892. They planned to make the island a premiere resort destination. During Lim's interview for his return certificate he stated that he was the head cook at the Metropole Hotel and he earned \$100 per month. He also invested \$800 in a store in Los Angeles; the Po Sang Store located at 320 Marchesault Street. While working at the hotel, Lim sent his money to the Sung Hoy Bank in Hong Kong. A debt was also owed to Lim Ying by Lim Sang Choy in the amount of \$300.



<https://www.thebanningmuseum.org/wisteria-festival-of-times-gone-by/>  
Photo by Simie Seaman



*Lim Ying at the Metropole Hotel on Catalina Island*  
Courtesy of the Huntington Library.

Lim Sang Choy was the second cook at the Metropole Hotel. Living in Los Angeles since 1887, he had invested \$1000 in the Gee Ning Tong Store at 418 North Los Angeles Street. Lim was a member of the Baptist Mission in Los Angeles.

After a successful trip to China, Lim Ying continued to work on Catalina Island at least until 1900. Continued research is required to learn more about Lim's life in California. It is known that he had three sons and two daughters. He died, in China, in 1929.

Please visit the National Archives website at <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/5830001> to view additional Chinese Exclusion Act Case files.

### List of Works Cited

Krythe, Maymie, *Port Admiral Phineas Banning 1830-1885* (San Francisco: California Historical Society, 1957).

Lim Ying, Chinese Exclusion Act Case File #390, Record Group 85: 1897. National Archives Records Administration, Riverside Division.

# THE 8TH ANNUAL YOSEMITE PILGRIMAGE IS GOING VIRTUAL



Join us in commemorating the contributions of Chinese Americans in Yosemite National Park and the Sierra Nevada.

## Saturday, August 1 at 10am-11am PST

Learn about the National Park Service's recent progress turning a historic laundry building into a site that tells the stories of people in the park we do not often hear about.

While we can't replicate the tastes and smells of our annual pot-luck dinner, the event will feature a fun and informative food activity and cooking demonstration.

To register, please send an email to [yosemitesingpeak@gmail.com](mailto:yosemitesingpeak@gmail.com) and you will receive a Zoom link for the program.

For additional information please contact Dennis at [darguelles@npca.org](mailto:darguelles@npca.org)



Chinese Historical Society  
of Southern California

南加州華人歷史學會



# GRANTS AND DONATIONS

## Grants

California Humanities Grant \$7,565\*  
LA County Grant: Supervisor Hilda Solis \$1,250

## Major Donors

L.A. Chinatown Firecracker Run Committee, Inc.  
Bill Chun-Hoon 5K Walk  
Albert and Yvonne Chang  
Tennyson Kwok  
Richard and Jeanie Liu

## Donations

Brenton Chinn  
John Jung  
Kenneth and Diana Klein  
Kary Lee  
Paul Lee  
Rose Marie Lee  
Margaret Nicolson  
Wilem Wong  
Donna Young

\* Chinese Historical Society of Southern California is pleased to announce we are the recipient of CA CARES Humanities Relief and Recovery Grants. Administered through California Humanities, the grants provide much-needed funds to assist the public humanities sector across California during the pandemic. California Humanities awarded \$1,556,149 in CA CARES Humanities Relief and Recovery grants to 251 individuals and nonprofit organizations across California.





## Chinese Historical Society of Southern California

411 Bernard Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012  
Phone: 323-222-0856 Email: [info@chssc.org](mailto:info@chssc.org)  
Website: [www.chssc.org](http://www.chssc.org)

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

### Community Calendar

**July 30, 2020 1:00 pm-2:00 pm**

**I'm Not Who You Think I Am: A Book Talk with  
Maeley Tom**

Join the Chinese Historical Society of America for a book talk with former politician and Bay Area native Maeley Tom.

[https://www.eventbrite.com/e/im-not-who-you-think-i-am-a-book-talk-with-maeley-tom-tickets-112259093972ckf9\\_3i\\_tdE6Via7ciALWCgReZjxQdBWgpuLg12hw1NNiKjVQ\\$](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/im-not-who-you-think-i-am-a-book-talk-with-maeley-tom-tickets-112259093972ckf9_3i_tdE6Via7ciALWCgReZjxQdBWgpuLg12hw1NNiKjVQ$)

**August 1, 2020, 10:00 am-11:00 am PST**

**The 8th Annual Yosemite Pilgrimage (Virtual)**

Join us in commemorating the contributions of Chinese Americans in Yosemite National Park and the Sierra Nevada. To register, please send an e-mail to [yosemitessingpeak@gmail.com](mailto:yosemitessingpeak@gmail.com) and you will receive a Zoom link for the program.

**August 12, 2020, 7:00 pm-8:30 pm**

**Virtual Lecture: Chinatown's Historic Signage**

Taking a moment to spotlight Chinatown's unique history of outdoor advertising, this virtual program by design historian Thomas Rinaldi will explore the ways in which graphic design, technology, and cultural undercurrents converged to produce one of New York's quintessential urban landscapes. <https://posterhouse.org/event/lecture-chinatowns-historic-signage/>

Have you checked out our updated website for CHSSC and Community events? Look for upcoming webinars and Zoom conferences about Chinese American culture and history.