



September 2024

# PANEL: BEFORE THE DESTRUCTION: THE THRIVING OLD LOS ANGELES CHINATOWN AS SEEN THROUGH THE 1930 CENSUS

Join us to explore Old Los Angeles Chinatown on the eve of its destruction in the 1930s. The presenters will provide an analysis of the Chinese community using data from the 1930 federal census. This talk will illustrate how the residents lived during a time marked by exclusion, yet persevered through strong family ties, continued immigration, and shared labor relations

## GUEST SPEAKERS



Samuel  
Yee



Cheng Rui  
Zhu



Sophie  
Cornish



Naomi  
Sun

## Key Discussions & Insights from our interns



Wednesday, September 4th, 2024



7:00PM - 8:00PM



Chinese Historical Society  
of Southern California

南加州華人歷史學會

FREE TO  
ATTEND

RSVP VIA EVENTBRITE ON  
CHSSC WEBSITE:  
[HTTPS://CHSSC.ORG](https://chssc.org)



## Incoming President's Message

Amazingly, our summer is nearly over, and it's Back-To-School time again, with the resumption of our monthly programs. For September, we'll hear how at least one group of students has been busy analyzing 1930 census data for Old Chinatown to support continuing research on that historic community. For us, the audience, taking in our monthly programs and reading our publications has been a continuous learning process. That learning process has been a dynamic and organic one, one that has involved a continuously changing cast of participants and contributors, and that is one reason why we, in our 49<sup>th</sup> year, have been so successful in our public history programs.

Further down in this newsletter, you will see the slate of new board members to be voted upon. You will see a mixture of old and new names. I am stepping in for this coming year, but also look forward to seeing who's coming up the ladder and working with new people who will bring fresh ideas and approaches. The CHSSC bylaws are proposed to be amended to reflect current times. Additionally, one does not have to be a board member to be involved. We have committees that produce some of our content and keep us running. We have committees working on monthly programs, website and social media, CHSSC finance, property management/maintenance, archives – physical and digital, newsletter production. We have a need for a person or team willing to help with monthly hosting of our Zoom meetings. It is the contributions of our community talent that has helped us through the past 49 years (read down to see immediate president Ricky Leo's comments). I hope you can join me and our enthusiastic, motivated, and talented team for activities and programs in the coming year, OUR 50<sup>th</sup> YEAR!

Eugene Moy

### Revised Bylaws September 4, 2024

At the end of the September program meeting, the membership will vote on the revised bylaws. You can review the changes by clicking on this link: <https://chssc.org/chssc-by-laws-revision-may-15-2024>

## Board of Directors

### Officers

Ricky Leo, President  
Gordon Hom, Vice President  
Susan Dickson, Secretary  
Franklin Mah, Treasurer  
Laureen Hom, Membership Secretary

### Members at Large

Linda Bentz  
Robert Chong  
Cindy Fong  
Annalise Harlow  
Angela Lancaster  
Grace Leo  
Albert Lowe

## 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.



# Chinese Historical Society of Southern California

September 2024

## Before the Destruction: The Thriving Old Los Angeles Chinatown as Seen Through the 1930 Census.

Throughout the summer, interns at the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California conducted research on the historical Los Angeles neighborhood known as Old Chinatown. Using data from the 1930 federal census, they explored the experiences of Chinese Angelenos during the height of anti-Chinese sentiment and the worst economic collapse in U.S. history. Their work not only strives to paint a more accurate picture of how our ancestors lived during a time marked by exclusion, but also to disrupt problematic stereotypes that alienate and demonize the Chinese. Their presentation will share their findings on Old Chinatown and its residents, including family relationships, immigration, and labor.

Samuel Yee is a graduate from UCLA with a bachelor's degree in Asian American Studies and Economics. Having grown up in Oakland, California, he strives to uplift both his local community and the greater Asian American diaspora. Some of Samuel's college highlights include collaborating with UCLA's Asian American Studies Center as an author researcher for their multimedia textbook. Additionally, he was able to work with the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California, analyzing census data for Los Angeles Chinatowns. He has most recently worked as a fellow at Education Trust-West, a non-profit organization that strives to improve the experiences and outcomes of students of color in California. Over the next year, Samuel plans to apply to various graduate programs with the hope of eventually becoming a teacher of Asian American Studies. As an aspiring educator, he is passionate about expanding ethnic studies outside of the academy and empowering all students of color.



Cheng Rui (Emma) Zhu is a Chinese-American student that will be studying at Georgetown University and intends to major in history and politics, pursuing a focus on transnational and Chinese diaspora history. She grew up in both Connecticut and Beijing. She has worked on CHSSC projects including the Stanford Survey of Race Relations, oral history transcription, and was a previous intern for the Five Chinatowns book project. Outside of CHSSC, she has also been a docent for other Chinese and Chinese American historical museums. In the future, she hopes to make AAPI history more accessible in secondary and higher education, especially for the East Coast region.



Naomi Sun is from Pasadena, CA. She is currently completing her last semester at California State University, Northridge and will receive a Bachelor of Arts in History in the winter. Naomi has an avid interest in the unique blend of cultures that are prominent in ethnic communities in America. She is thrilled to take part in a project that highlights the history of Old Chinatown. In her free time she enjoys reading, cooking, and visiting Los Angeles' many museums with her partner.

Sophie Cornish is a senior in high school at Aptos High School in Santa Cruz. She enjoys running, reading, and going to the beach in her spare time. Sophie's family has extensive history in the Los Angeles area, and she has enjoyed being able to connect to that through this project.





# Chinese Historical Society of Southern California

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## 2024 Sing Peak Pilgrimage

By Tennyson Kwok

Since this year's Sing Peak Pilgrimage was based in Lee Vining, just outside the east entrance of Yosemite, we went on two roads north of Yosemite Valley that the Chinese helped build, the Tioga Pass road and the wagon trail to Bennettville Mine. We also hiked up to May Lake, a very beautiful high elevation lake. The hikes were a little trying for those not totally acclimated to the altitude, approximately 10,000 ft., but the end of the trails made the hikes worthwhile.



The Bennettville Mine, with Ranger Yenyen Chan describing mining (pictured on left).

Along the Tioga Pass Road, Olmsted Viewpoint was spectacular. On the right, is a view of Half Dome's east side.

Photo By Tennyson Kwok

May Lake (pictured below) is definitely a beautiful lake. In the background is Mount Hoffman, at 10,840 feet, it is in the geographical center of Yosemite.



Photo By Tennyson Kwok



Photo By Allan Der

After the delicious pot luck dinner, in the Lee Vining Community Center, Eugene Moy addresses the group. About half of the participants had never attended a Sing Peak Pilgrimage, and many came from out of state. Wonderful turnout.



Photo By Allan Der

The Sing Peak Pilgrimage Group Picture on Tuolumne Meadows Bridge, built in 1912.



Photo By Allan Der



# Chinese Historical Society of Southern California

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## 2024-2025 CHSSC Board Nominations

<b>President</b>	Eugene Moy
<b>Vice President</b>	Robert Chong
<b>Secretary</b>	Susan Dickson
<b>Treasurer</b>	Steve Tom
<b>Directors-At Large</b>	Linda Bentz, David Castro, Isaac Chu, Gordon Hom Lauren Hom, Angela Lancaster, Susie Ling, Albert Lowe

The voting for the new CHSSC board will be held at the end of the September program. The slate was presented in May, but was delayed after Ricky Leo withdrew his candidacy.




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Steve Tom was born and raised in Los Angeles, and currently resides in Glendale with his wife, Cathy, and son, Christian. His oldest son, Jason and daughter-in-law, Sandy reside in Monrovia and are expecting their first child in October, 2024. Steve attended Castelar, Nightingale, and Marshall High School. He holds a BS degree in Business Administration, Accounting from Cal State L.A. He spent 30+ years in the Entertainment Industry in Finance and Accounting roles. Retired for 8+ years, he enjoys travelling, volunteering, and eating(!). He has volunteered to teach ESL, prepare Income taxes through AARP Tax Aide, and has done some bookkeeping for Chinatown Firecracker. His great passion is Pickleball.

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Born in Taiwan and raised in the Philippines, Susie's first project with CHSSC was co-authoring *Linking Our Lives*. Since 2003, she has been *Gum Saan Journal* editor. Susie has been the Associate Professor of Asian American Studies and History at Pasadena City College since 1984.

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## Influence of the 1885 Rock Springs Massacre on the Leo Clan

By Ricky Leo, CHSSC President 2023-2024

This past June in Salt Lake City, Utah, I was honored to represent CHSSC at the Conference on Rural Chinatowns and Hidden Sites sponsored by the 1882 Foundation and Utah Division of History. The Leo clan left their home in Taishan, China to escape floods, famine, foreign invasions, peasant rebellions and to seek opportunities overseas, including the discovery of gold in California in 1848 and the building of the railroads in the American West starting around 1860. Although they are a small percentage of the Chinese population, about 40 percent of the Chinese in Rock Springs at the time of the massacre were from my clan.

Would you believe that I knew nothing about the 1885 Chinese Massacre until I met Professor Dudley Gardner in 2019? I was born and raised in Rock Springs, Wyoming so this certainly piqued my interest. Through my research, I discovered that my hometown was established as one of the many camps along the transcontinental railroad. Because of the high-quality coal, the Union Pacific Railroad opened mines there in 1869. By 1875, the coal miners in Rock Springs were demanding an increase in pay. The Union Pacific Company made the decision to hire the Chinese and within sixty days, three hundred Chinese laborers were at work in the Rock Springs coal mines. They were willing to work for less, which kept wages low and made the white miners very unhappy.

Tension continued to build between the European and Chinese miners in Rock Springs. But what was the flashpoint that ignited the violence? On Tuesday, September 1, 1885, an error was made in the assignments of rooms in No. 5 Entry, No. 6 coal mine, when one room assigned to the Chinese was mistakenly assigned to a white miner. The following morning, on September 2, a fight broke out when the white miner showed up for work and the Chinese miners were already at work. This led up to the massacre where 28 Chinese were killed, approximately 15 wounded, and 79 of the homes and shacks in Chinatown were looted and burned to the ground. 13 of the men killed were from the Leo clan, 7 of the wounded were also from the Leo clan. The Leo clan was probably the most seriously impacted.

How did I end up in Rock Springs? Well, my father, Lui Gain Thyn, a.k.a. Sonny Leo, immigrated to the United States in 1938 when he was 13 years old. Through my research I also found out that he came to this country as a paper son of (Lau) Leo Hung, whose father was a miner in Rock Springs. Leo Hung arrived in the United States in 1913 and moved to Rock Springs in 1914.

The sculpture, "Requiem", designed by Lander, Wyoming artist David Alan Clark, was chosen to memorialize the Chinese Massacre of 1885 in Rock Springs. It will be a 7-foot-tall bronze statue of Ah Say, whose real name was Leo Wing Jun, holding a tattered banner. I was honored to be asked by the designer to be the model for the statue because of my connection to the Leo clan. It will be unveiled in 2025 at a ceremony commemorating the 140<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the massacre.





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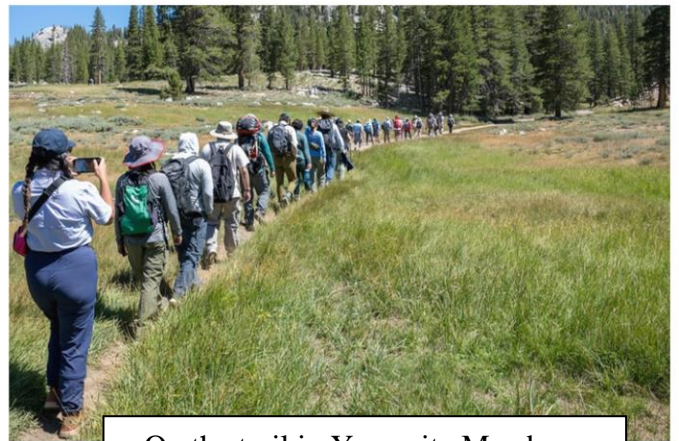
Eugene Moy asks "WHO WILL TELL OUR HISTORY?" at end of presentation at potluck dinner at Lee Vining Community Center.



Ranger Yenyen Chan talks at Parsons Lodge in Yosemite Meadows



Ranger Yenyen Chan pauses on the trail in Tuolumne Meadows



On the trail in Yosemite Meadows

All photos by Tennyson Kwok

# Chinese Historical Society of Southern California



411 Bernard Street, Los Angeles CA 90012

Tel 323-352-8824 email [info@chssc.org](mailto:info@chssc.org) website [www.chssc.org](http://www.chssc.org)

## Donations for August

### *Donations*

*Anonymous*

*The Blackbaud Giving Fund (2)*

*Bruce Chin*

*Dolly Gee*

*Haunt Ghost Tours*

*Sophia Vielmas*

### *In Memory of Marilyn Lee & Kenneth Lee*

*Bob Lee*