

November 2026

**Nov
14,
2026**

- Chinatown Branch Library
- 639 N. Hill Street, Los Angeles, CA
- 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
- In-person screening
- No cost

RSVP: info@chssc.org



Special Screening of “EDMUND SOOHOO: THE HEART OF CHINATOWN”

A 50-minute documentary tribute to Edmund Soohoo (1949–2024), founder of the Firecracker 10k and a key trailblazer in the LA Chinatown community.

Directed by Walt Louie

PANELISTS:

- Walt Louie (Director, Editor, Writer)
- Susan Soohoo (Executive Producer)
- Peter Chow (Firecracker Advisory Board)
- Al Soo-Hoo (Fong Lum Association, past President)



Presented by



Community Supporters





Chinese Historical Society of Southern California

November 2026

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Pasadena is the 9th largest by population of Los Angeles' 88 incorporated cities. Nicknamed the "Crown City", Pasadena has international limelight as the home of the Rose Parade, the Rose Bowl – and the Eaton Fire. Pasadena has always been a study of contrasts for me. We have Millionaire's Row (Orange Grove Blvd), and we have homeless. We have Cal Tech and a troubled unified school district. It is a progressive city, but with deep footprints of segregation and discrimination. And there are secrets.

Today, Pasadena has about 6.3% Chinese while nearby cities like Arcadia has 39% Chinese and Monterey Park has 48% Chinese. Why? Is this partly because of the scars of the November 6, 1885 anti-Chinese race riot on Fair Oaks Avenue? 140 years ago, rioters blamed Chinese for "everything", and burnt their stores on Mills Alley - plus an effigy. According to the newspapers, at Mills Place, Yuen Kee and Lin Kee had laundries, and Quong Wung Chung had a "Chinee and Dry Goods" store. After November 6th, Chinese were barred from living in downtown – unless of course they were a servant. Racial covenants were in place until the 1963 Rumford Act in California.

The newspapers suggested 60 to 100 Chinese were chased out of downtown Pasadena in 1885. As the city had 391, were Chinese 20% of the total population? The 1880 census only has 18 Chinese listed. Of the Chinese males enumerated, there were 4 servants, 3 laundryman, and 11 laborers. Who were the other 40 to 80 that were victimized in November of 1885?

I dove into the old census records available on the County Library website. As birth place is recorded, it is easy to spot the early Chinese pioneers. Not surprisingly, the Caucasian civil servants had a horrible time transliterating Chinese names. I can't find anything like "Yuen Kee" or "Quong Wung Chung" in the 1880 census. I do see:

Kee Luen, 23, laundryman
Jung Ah, 15, laundryman
Tong Ah, 24, laundryman

Is Kee Luen the same as Kee Lin? What is his surname? Names like "Ah Jung", 15, are virtually impossible to trace further. Was that even his name? With 18 listed, was there that severe an undercount of Chinese Americans?

[Continued on page 5]

Board of Directors

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Susie Ling, President
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Isaac Chu, Secretary
Anthony Miu, Treasurer

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Linda Bentz
Samson Chow
Susan Dickson
Gordon Hom
Victoria Hong
Angela Lancaster
Eugene Moy
David Castro

Mission Statement

The purpose of the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California, Inc. shall be:

- to advocate for a wider understanding of the significance of the role of Chinese and Chinese Americans in the history of Southern California;
- to bring together people with a mutual interest in the Southern California history of Chinese and Chinese Americans;
- to perform all the functions required to acquire, preserve, and communicate knowledge of this important history; and
- to promote a better appreciation of our rich multi-cultural society.



Chinese Historical Society of Southern California

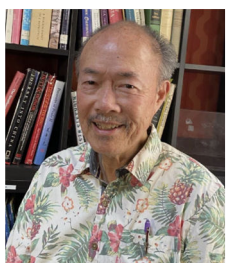
November 2026

EDMUND SOOHOO: HEART OF CHINATOWN” ON NOVEMBER 14 AT CHINATOWN BRANCH LIBRARY

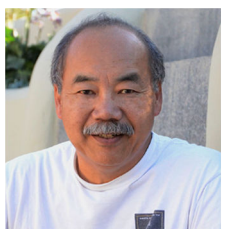
In 1949, Edmund Soohoo was born near Chinatown, and he was always around Chinatown. Some considered him a “regular guy” - but he had a super large heart. With a sociology degree from Cal State Los Angeles, Edmund worked at Resthaven Psychiatric Hospital in Chinatown, Alpine Recreation Center in Chinatown, and Chinatown Teen Post. He was a Board Member at Fong Lun Family Association, Historical Cultural North Neighborhood Council (HCNNC), Chinatown Community Advisory Committee (CCAC), etc. etc. In 1978, Edmund was a founding member of Los Angeles Chinatown Firecracker Run. Preparing for its 4th run in the forthcoming Year of the Ram, Firecracker Run donates its net proceeds to four elementary schools and several Chinatown nonprofits – including CHSSC.

After Edmund passed in 2024, director Walt Louie interviewed about twenty people telling the story of Edmund’s dedication to community and service. It is also the story of Chinatown. With this film showing, CHSSC has invited panelists Professor Walt Louie of Santa Monica College, Peter Chow from Firecracker Run, Al Soo-Hoo from Fong Lung Association, Susan Soohoo, Executive Producer of the film, and emcee Robert Chong, Vice President of the Chinese Historical Society

Speaker Bios and Headshots



Al Soo-Hoo is a true “son of (New) Chinatown”. He grew up on the streets of what is now referred to as Central Plaza. His family operated a gift shop there: South China Gifts. Al has volunteered in several (local) community-based non-profits, including the Chinese Historical Society of So. CA, the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, and the Chinese American Citizens Alliance. He is a Past President of the Friends of the Chinese American Museum and is currently serving on their Board of Directors. He has participated in historical and cultural presentations regarding Chinatown’s legacy. His ties with Edmund SooHoo were life-long in the Chinatown community, especially through the Fong Lun Association.



Walt Louie, the son of immigrant parents, was born and raised in San Francisco's Chinatown. After attending UC Berkeley as an undergraduate, Walt did grad work at SF State University. His broadcast television career started at the SF PBS and CBS stations. After his move to Los Angeles, he worked primarily as a freelance editor. He has had a wide range of experience: sitcoms, live sports, reality series, features and TV films, and documentaries. He has worked on productions throughout the world. Professor Louie has taught workshops and classes at Loyola Marymount University, University of Hawaii, and UCLA.



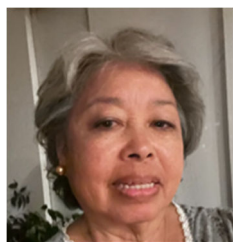
Peter Chow, a long-time resident of Chinatown, migrated from Hong Kong in 1960. After a long and distinguished career with UPS, Peter retired and focused on spending time with his family, including two sons and two grandchildren. In 1999, Peter began volunteering for LACFRC (L.A. Chinatown Firecracker Run Committee, Inc.) where Peter served on, and led, several LACFRC committees. Peter has also served on the Board of Director and is currently an advisory Board Member for the L.A. Chinatown Firecracker Run Committee.



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Speaker Bios and Headshots (cont.)



Susan Soohoo immigrated to Los Angeles in 1959 with her family from Hong Kong. She attended Castelar Elementary School where she met her lifelong girl-friends and Edmund.

Susan worked in finance for the majority of her career, before co-founding a graphic design / advertising firm. Susan has been with Visual Communications, a non-profit Media Art Organization, for twenty plus years as their Office/Operation Manager. She was also the Financial Supervisor for a financial advisor firm in Pasadena until she retired.



Eugene Moy accepting The Character and Spirit Award from LA as Subject board members.

Wong Kim Ark's great granddaughter visits CHSSC.



Donations

Andrew Chong

Al SooHoo

Angela Lancaster

Eugene Moy

Ponnapa Prakkamakul

In Honor of Margie Lew's

105th Birthday

Susan Sing

In Honor of Marian Chew

L.P. Leung

In Memory of Janis Ong

Cindy Fujimoto

In Honor of Betty Soo

Hoo Wong

Sgt. Joseph K. Wong



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[President's Letter continued]

In the 1860 census of “San Gabriel Township”, there were 155 residents, mostly born in California or Mexico. None were of Asian descent. In the 1870 census of San Gabriel Township, there were 436 individuals with 6 Chinese enumerated. Wo Hup (22) was a house servant for Benjamin Davis Wilson, an early American mayor of Los Angeles. It is unfortunate that the 1890 census was destroyed by fire. By 1900, Pasadena reported a total population of 9,117 with 85 Chinese males. The mainstream population was then from “Canada Eng”, Sweden, Russia, New York, Iowa, Ohio, etc. A lot of the 85 Chinese were cooks and laundrymen. Dear Hoi (49) had a curio store, and Lew Gim Son (43) was a “China merchant”. Of note were eight vegetable peddlers. In 1910, it is said that 102 Chinese were in Pasadena with an overall population of 30,291. As that Pasadena census is over 600 pages, it is hard for me to scan for those that came before me. Some of the Chinese pioneers were then in their 40s and servants. Near this time, the Chinese population started giving way to younger Japanese and Filipino servants, and some Japanese American families. In 1907, 5 Issei took over a Cantonese laundry and renamed it Meiji Laundry at 244 West Colorado. Bryan's Cleaners and Laundry, an African American enterprise, opened in 1938 – and is still open. From interviews, we know other African American women took in laundry.

Other records suggest that Fong See, Lisa See's great-grandfather, opened a branch of F. Suie One Company in Pasadena in 1906, now at 1335 E. Colorado Blvd. Albert and Ann Lowe moved their family to Pasadena in 1939 from Calexico (see 2015 Gum Saan Journal); their descendants are still in the neighborhood. It is said that Lin Kee became the first Chinese man to get married in the city of Pasadena, but who did he marry in this time when interracial marriage was illegal? When did the first Chinese American woman settle in Pasadena? When was the first Chinese American child born?

I'm stumped. There are Chinese American shadows here and there. If the intent is to erase and marginalize our contributions and history, they all did an excellent job.

Susie Ling

Special thanks to:

- Will Lew for moving the old shed. (It was a ton of work moving all the chairs and getting bulk pick-up to take away the old pieces.)
- Camellia Tse and Sam Chow for plants and planting (They paid for native plants.) Photo attached courtesy of Susan Sing.



Camellia Tse planting



Chinese Historical Society of Southern California

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Textiles, Taxes, and Tiffs: Reinforcing the Infrastructure of Our Archives

By Linda Bentz

The CHSSC archival team took center stage at the October monthly meeting, highlighting the important work underway to preserve, organize, and make accessible the Society's historical collections.

David Castro, Archives Chair, introduced Community Archivist Riona Tsai, Assistant Archivist Zoe Lee-Divito, and summer interns Zakary Ostrowski, Christine Garcia, and Aramis Sandoval.

Riona emphasized the importance of safeguarding the Society's collections through careful preservation practices, fire suppression measures, and disaster preparedness planning. These efforts are essential to protecting irreplaceable historical materials for future generations.

Under Zoe's supervision, Zakary and Christine worked with CHSSC's institutional records, an evolving collection documenting more than 50 years of the Society's history. Christine concentrated on digitizing materials and organizing photographs, while Zakary focused on preservation, identification, and organization. He was particularly interested in the community history revealed through the Society's institutional records, which offer valuable insights into the people, activities, and events that have shaped the organization.

Aramis undertook the processing of a recently donated collection documenting the life of Annie Yee Soo Hoo, an important member of Los Angeles's Old Chinatown. Annie, who lived from 1880 to 1920, was married to Soo Hoo Leung and was the mother of ten children. The collection includes photographs, textiles, clothing, handwritten letters, and other personal belongings that offer a glimpse into her family life and experiences. Aramis researched appropriate methods for describing, cataloging, and preserving these treasured materials, ensuring that they will remain accessible to researchers and future generations.

Together, these projects demonstrate that archival work is about much more than caring for historical objects and documents. It is about uncovering stories, preserving community memories, and creating connections between the past and present. Through the dedication of our archivists, interns, and volunteers, CHSSC continues to strengthen the foundation of its archives while ensuring that the rich and diverse history of Chinese Americans in Southern California will be preserved, studied, and shared for generations to come.



Chinese Historical Society of Southern California

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MEMBERSHIP FORM

411 Bernard St, LA, CA 90012

chssc.org

Full Name	:	<input type="text"/>
Address	:	<input type="text"/>
City/State/Zip	:	<input type="text"/>
Phone	:	<input type="text"/>
Email	:	<input type="text"/>
New Membership	:	☐
Renewal Membership	:	☐

Membership Levels

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Regular Annual (\$60) | ☐ |
| 100x100 Club (\$100) | ☐ |
| Diamond (\$300) | ☐ |
| Senior or student (\$50) | ☐ |
| Add hardcopy newsletters (\$30) | ☐ |
| Tax Deductible Donation | <input type="text"/> |

TOTAL TO "CHSSC"

Our *News and Notes* newsletters are emailed unless extra postage of \$30 is included for hardcopies. Members also receive *Gum Saan Journals*. Please send check payable to CHSSC - or join or renew your membership online at chssc.org with bank card or PayPal.

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 roles of Chinese and Chinese Americans in Southern California.

As a 501(c)(3), We make public presentations, maintain a historical archive, do research, and maintain a library. Visit our website, YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram pages. And join us.



**Chinese Historical Society
of Southern California**

411 Bernard Street, Los Angeles CA 90012

Community Events

November 11: Single's Day in China =)

November 16: 10am-12pm noon – “Edmund Sohoo: The Heart of Chinatown” at Chinatown Branch Library

December 16: 11am – CHSSC Christmas Party in Cerritos