



NEWS 'n NOTES

CHINESE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

July 1980

A MEMORABLE DAY IN SAN LUIS OBISPO.....

A chartered bus (Embee Buses, Inc. of Pasadena), filled to capacity with 54 happy passengers, wended its way up Highway 101 on Saturday, June 21 -- destination: San Luis Obispo. This was the beginning of the long-awaited field trip planned by the Society. First stop was at Gaviota, for the shortest 12-minute break on record! Then on to Avila Beach, a few miles south of San Luis Obispo, where a dozen more Society members were waiting to greet the group. Also on hand to welcome us was Dan Krieger, president of the San Luis Obispo County Historical Society, who was our guide for the bus tour through town, pointing out the various interesting and historical places along the way -- underground tunnels built by Chinese railroad workers, the location of camp sites where these workers lived, a Chinese brickyard, the Southern Pacific depot, an old Victorian house (restored to its original beauty) where lived a doctor who took care of the sick and injured Chinese laborers. Highlights of the tour included a visit to the beautiful Mission San Luis Obispo de Tolosa, built in 1772 by the Franciscan Fathers; John Yee's running commentary of interesting historical facts pertaining to the role played by the Chinese in the area; our 70-member group standing single-file on Vista Point with our bright yellow-and-red banner, waiting for a train that never came! However, we did see a train coming through the tunnels, but it was not the one we were waiting for; the very warm welcome extended to us at the Mission by members of the SLOCHS; a walk through the Mission Plaza and vicinity with its unique shops reminiscent of the "good ole days"; and finally, a visit to the famous Ah Louis store, the only remaining building in what was originally the Chinatown area. This building has been designated as California State Registered Historical Landmark No. 802. Built in the early 1880's by Ah Louis, the biggest labor contractor for Chinese workers in that period, the store is now operated as a gift shop by his youngest son Howard, who gave us a brief history of the Louis family. Also present were brothers Fred, a retired Army colonel, and Young, the oldest son, who works as the chief projectionist for the Fremont Theater, a position he has held for over 60 years.

Before heading homeward, the group enjoyed a sumptuous dinner at the San Luis Bay Inn, formerly known as The Millionaire's Club.

The entire trip was a most delightful event. San Luis Obispo is a lovely Spanish town; the people we met were warm and friendly; even the weather was perfect -- a clear blue sky with a cool refreshing breeze blowing over beautiful Avila Bay. And it was enlightening to learn of the important part played by the Chinese pioneers in this area, especially the great influence of one Ah Louis and his family.

Without the assistance and cooperation of certain persons, this field trip would not have been as outstanding an event as it turned to be. So, to the following Society members and friends, a warm and special "thank you" is extended:

-first of all, to John Yee, for the countless hours devoted to planning and coordinating the trip, and researching for the historical facts which gave special meaning to this journey;
-to Dan and Liz Krieger and other members of the San Luis Obispo County Historical Society for their warm and wonderful welcome;
-to Tom Moore, Embee Bus driver, for his expert driving and accommodating manner;
-and to Young Louis, a gentleman of great warmth and charm, who possesses a remarkable memory (at 88 years, yet!) for family records and historical incidents of years long past. Young wrote and printed a special tour guide pamphlet containing many interesting facts relating to various points of interest along the tour. He presented the Society with a plaque displaying two receipts, dated July 18, 1888 and Nov. 17, 1891, for merchandise delivered by the Pacific Coast Steamship Co. and the Wells Fargo Express Co. to the Ah Louis store. This plaque, accepted by President Chuck Yee, is as unique as Young Louis himself, a remarkable member of a most remarkable family.

HELP! HELP!

The Lotus Festival will be held on Saturday and Sunday, July 12 and 13. The Society is sponsoring a booth, selling pineapples to raise funds for our many projects. We need more help -- lots of help. Call Howard Quon at 393-7339.

PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

A Society salute to members Francis & Gladys Waddingham. They were recently honored by the Inglewood Exchange Club with the "Book of Golden Deed Award" and by the Madera Lions Club with the "Annual Achievement Award." Both of the awards were for outstanding community service. Earlier this year, Francis received the "Older American Recognition Day Award" from the County of Los Angeles. Gladys was honored with the same award in 1977. Congratulations.

COME TO A BAR-B - Q

Centinella Valley Historical Society will have a Barbeque at the Centinella Adobe located at 7634 Midfield, Inglewood, August 17, 1980, noon to 3 pm. Come and visit the historical birthplace of the city of Inglewood.

LIFE MEMBER

Welcome to our latest life member - Johnson Yee.