March Monthly Meeting: 150 Years of Chinese Workers in Salmon Canneries

Back in the Gold Rush days, in 1852, William Hum, an adventurous young man, 19 years old, travelled from Maine to California by way of Panama. He did not come to prospect for gold; but made a living by fishing in the Sacramento River. A few years later, he and his brothers, John and George, and a friend, Andrew Hapgood, founded the first salmon cannery on the west bank of the Sacramento River. In 1870, George Hume hired the first 15 Chinese workers for their cannery on the Columbia, thus beginning a four-decades-long Chinese dominance in the labor market of the salmon canning industry. Each year, thousands of Chinese migrant workers labored in canneries that dotted the Pacific Coast from California to Alaska. Before WWII, the salmon canneries employed more Chinese than most other industries in the US. This year, 2020, marks the 150th anniversary since the first group of Chinese cannery workers was employed back in 1870.

Speakers Jim and Philip Chiao spent 3 summers working in Alaska canneries during their college years; and have personally experienced the life of cannery workers in the early 1970s. Recently, they have documented their Alaska experiences in a blog on their website. They will take the audience on a guided historical tour of Chinese American and Chinese workers in the canning industry. They will trace the beginning of the industry, the expansion and dominance of Chinese workers in the labor market, and its eventual demise. Along the way, they will highlight the major events/stories that shaped the industry and affected the Chinese workers, such as the Hume brothers who started the first canneries and set the precedent of hiring Chinese laborers, the formation of the cannery town Astoria at the mouth of the Columbia River, the invention of the “Iron Chink” that displaced Chinese butchers, and the majestic sailing ships from APA’s Star Fleet that carried Chinese cannery workers back and forth between San Francisco and Alaska.

For more information about the personal stories of the speakers in Alaska canneries, the “China gang”, and other Chinese workers, please visit their website: https://chinesecannerylaborers.home.blog/
Walking Tour with Las Encinas Elementary

Wednesday, February 12 dawned bright and warm. Alpine Recreation Center was the staging point for a vivacious group of 22 second and third graders from Las Encinas Elementary School read to begin a tour of Los Angeles Chinatown. Veteran Linda Chong and newbie Cindy Fong led a 1 1/2 hour tour, splitting the group in half so that shouting wasn't necessary. The students were mesmerized by the Chinese Temple, played with Cathy Bank's abacuses, and stared at Superior Poultry's pictures of 7 kinds of chicken and a solitary rabbit. They continued with a visit to the West Plaza, its fountain and statues of Dr. Sun Yet Sen and Bruce Lee, all of it new to them. Touring a traditional Chinese herb store, they stared at various bins and jars of preserved goods, recognizing boxes of tea and cookies. Finishing with lunch at Ocean Restaurant, they had a great time!

Thank you to our donors!

Richard Chung
Richard Liu
Rita Takenouchi
Golden Dragon Parade:
For this year’s Chinese New Year’s parade, CHSSC members were joined by Rotary Interact Club members from ten high schools: Our sizeable group proudly carried American flags at the beginning of the parade despite the unseasonably hot weather. A smaller than usual crowd (possibly due to the coronavirus scare) warmly greeted us as we marched through Chinatown.

As usual, other CHSSC members, their friends and families gathered outside our Heritage center on Bernard Street to enjoy the parade as it passed by. Once again all of the lion dancer troupes performed in front of our houses before receiving their red envelopes. A good time was had by all.

Golden Dragon Parade (clockwise from most left photo):
Four generations of the Bill and Margie Yee family came to march in and watch the parade at the CHSSC houses.
The CHSSC led the parade with the help of local high school students. Photo courtesy of O.C. Lee
The Immortals Lion Dance Troupe stop by the CHSSC houses for lucky money, much to the

(Above) The Firecracker 10k/5k Run/Walk:
Left photo: Marjorie Chun-Hoon with children Craig and Kristi, and family friend, Elizabeth Chikuami (R) at the Chinatown Firecracker 10k/5k Run/Walk.

Right photo: Bill Chun-Hoon’s family and friends who participated in the Firecracker 5k walk, which was dedicated to Bill due to his long-time support of the organization.
February Meeting Recap: Arthur Dong and Hollywood Chinese

Author and filmmaker, Arthur Dong, has had a life-long interest in film and its history. San Francisco Chinatown, where Arthur grew up, had 5 movie theaters which showed movies produced in Hong Kong: Ku Fu movies: romantic comedies; and Chinese opera.

However, the focus of his talk was the change to the American film industry. After the successful, but controversial movie The Tong Man in 1919, the film studios realized that the public loved the Chinese movies so there was money to be made. When the movies were made by Hollywood, Hollywood defined what the Chinese were all about: vice, slave traders, opium users, prostitutes, and criminals.

Arthur’s presentation included clips from vintage movies, promotional movie flyers and posters, and brief clips of commentaries from writers, actors and directors. Early films had white people in yellowface such as Boris Karloff in The Mask of Fu Manchu. In 1937 The Good Earth, which attempted to counter negative stereotypes of Chinese, starred Louise Rainier in yellowface, but had 75 supporting actors. Arthur traced the careers of prominent actors, including Anna May Wong, Key Luke, Benson Fong, James Hong, Nancy Kwan, and Beulah Quo. He also included a photo of CHSSC member Marge Lee Chun-Hoon as a child and her mother, Jennie Lee, in their roles as supporting actors.

Arthur’s presentation gave interesting highlights of information and images from his book Hollywood Chinese: The Chinese in American Feature Films. If you missed his talk, watch our newsletter for opportunities to attend another presentation at different venues.
Recognizing iconic Asian American food purveyors, and a legendary eater and food blogger, who have enriched Southern California with flavor and community.

**HONORING:** Phoenix Bakery · New Moon Restaurant · Santa Ana Food Market · David R. Chan

**APRIL 25, 2020**
**NBC SEAFOOD RESTAURANT**
**404 S. ATLANTIC BLVD.**
**MONTEREY PARK, CA 91754**

**SOCIAL HOUR:** 5:00PM
**DINNER:** 6:00PM
I wish to (be a):
__ Silver Table Sponsor ($1,250)
__ Gold Table Sponsor ($5,000)
__ Diamond Table Sponsor ($10,000)

Sponsor Name: ____________________________________________
Please list guest names: _______________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________
OR
Please reserve __ tickets @ $100 per person (members), __ tickets @
$125 per person (non-members). Please attach any seating requests.

__ I want to donate raffle item(s); Please call me at
(________) _____________________________
__ I want to place an ad in the event program; Please email me at:
_______________________________
__ I will not be able to attend, but please accept my donation in the
amount of $____________________

Name _______________________________ Title _________
Company ___________________________________________
Address _______________________________________________________________________
City _____________________________ State _______ Zip _______________

Checks are accepted. Please remit form and submit payment to: CHSSC, 411 Bernard Street,
Los Angeles, CA 90012
Credit Card transactions can be processed online at: www.chssc.org or phoned in during
regular business hours Mon–Fri 10:30AM–2:30PM at (323)222–0856.
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.

CHSSC Membership Form

☐ New Membership  ☐ Renewal

Name ____________________
Address ____________________
City ____________________
State _______ Zip _____
Phone ____________________
Email ____________________

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

Membership levels:
☐ Silver $ 57.
☐ 100x100 Club $100.
☐ Diamond $ 300.
☐ Senior (60+) or student $ 32.

Donation (tax deductible) $_______

TOTAL $_______

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
CFHGSC Meeting: Chinese Surnames, and Chinese Dialects & Language Families
The Chinese Family History Group of Southern California’s March meeting will be a double header featuring Patrick Chew speaking on Chinese Surnames at 10:00AM and Chinese Dialects and Language Families at 1:00PM. Join us for a light lunch at 12:00PM.

CHSSC Visitor’s Center
415 Bamboo Lane
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Saturday, March 28, 2020—10:30AM (Part 1), 12:00PM (Lunch), 1:00PM (Part 2)

Saturday, April 4, 2020—10:00AM-12:00PM
CHSSC: Ching Ming Ceremony at Evergreen Cemetery
We will again be observing Ching Ming at Evergreen Cemetery. After we clean the graves next to the historic Chinese Shrine, we will place flowers, light incense, and visit the gravesite of Donaldina Cameron. A light lunch will be provided. Please help us bring rakes, brooms, rags, and buckets to be used.

Historic 1888 Chinese Shrine
Evergreen Cemetery
204 N. Evergreen Ave.
Los Angeles, CA 90033

Saturday, April 25, 2020
CHSSC 2020 Golden Spike Awards Dinner
The theme this year is Chinese American Food Legacies: Serving Community and will recognize iconic Asian American food purveyors, and a legendary eater and food blogger, who have enriched Southern California with flavor and community.

Honoring: Phoenix Bakery, New Moon Restaurant, the Santa Ana Food Market, and David R. Chan.

RSVP on chssc.org or email info@chssc.org for more information.

Monday, April 30-May 8, 2020
Los Angeles Asian Pacific Film Festival/No. 36
We are excited to announce that the 36th Los Angeles Asian Pacific Film Festival will be presented April 30-May 8, 2020 at select cinemas in the Los Angeles area. A key highlight of Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, the Festival is the culmination of broad support from cinema artists and audiences alike. We are also a proud Academy Award®-qualifying film festival for the Short Film Awards. More information will be announced in the upcoming weeks, so stay tuned! For more information:

www.festival.vcmedia.org/2020