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CHINESE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

A WALK THROUGH HISTORY

As part of the Los Angeles Bicentennial celebration, CHSSC is sponsoring a walking tour -- "Chinatown Los Angeles: Yesterday and Today". The project, continuing through November, consists of two tours with slide presentations -- "The Early Chinatowns" and "New Chinatown". Each describes the area of today's Chinatown since the 1850's, the evolution and destruction of previous Chinatowns, the generations-old customs, and the contributions of the Chinese to Southern California.

Tour A -- "Early Chinatowns" -- begins with a slide presentation at 425 No. Los Angeles Street in the Lung Kong Tin Yee Association building and progresses to the Garnier Building, built in 1890 by Philippe Garnier for Chinese commercial use only; the Union Station area; the Pico House, built in 1869-71 by Pio Pico, last Mexican governor of California; the Lugo House site, a two-story townhouse built in 1830 by Don Antonio Maria Lugo, patriarch of an early California family; the city's first fire house, built in 1884, now used as a museum; the Sepulveda House, built in 1887, a unique example of what is probably the only surviving Eastlake-style Victorian commercial brick building in Los Angeles; various stores and businesses on North Spring Street; and the area where China City was located in 1938-40. As a result of fire, part of the establishment was destroyed. At present, the remaining portion of China City houses the F. Sueie On Co., dealers of Chinese antiques and object d'art.

Tour B -- "New Chinatown" -- begins with a slide presentation at Castelar Grammar School, and continues on to the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association, an organization of family associations, district associations, fraternal societies and special organizations; the Kong Chow Temple; statue of Dr. Sun Yat Sen, founder of the Republic of China in 1911; Peter Soo Hoo, Sr. Fountain, dedicated to Mr. Soo Hoo and Mr. Herbert Lapham, co-founders of Chinatown; Little Joe's popular Italian Restaurant; Hop Sing Tong building, a fraternal society; various shops and restaurants in the area; Chinese language school and Confucius Church; Chinatown Branch Library and Castelar Elementary School; French Hospital, built in the 1860's and still operating on its original site; Capitol Milling Company, built in 1855; Bing Kung

Tong - "Chinese Free Mason"; Lung Kong Tin Yee Association (Four Families Association) present location, having moved from Old Chinatown in 1950.

The Society has received many favorable comments from tour participants. Both tours have been booked to capacity through November. In addition, there have been special tours for school children, senior citizens and various other groups. The great success of these tours are due entirely to the complete dedication of many CHSSC members -- Project Director Charles Wong; committee members Gordon Chow, Munson Kwok, Ella Quan, Gerald and Gloria Shue, Paul Louie, Bill Mason and Helen Young; Karen Huie and Adeline Bock for their expertise in assertive training and voice projection; Chong Lew, Frank Quan, Ron Kluzza, and David Chan for their invaluable assistance in their particular fields; and to the tour docents who faithfully attended training sessions for ten Saturdays, devoted many hours to studying their "scripts", and have driven countless miles to assist with the tour sessions. In alphabetical order, these dedicated docents are:

Barbara Ching	Emma Louie	Jerry Shue
Bill Chun-Hoon	Paul Louie	Howard Tang
Kaza Dong	Anna Lowrey	Betty Tong
Kenny Dong	Al Lum	Charles Wong
Edith Jung	Florence Lum	Chuck Yee
Munson Kwok	Eugene Moy	George Yee
Suellen Kwok	Marge Ong	John Yee
Albert Lew	Howard Quon	Sue Yee
Margie Lew	Bernice Sam	Helen Young
Florence Leong	Ella Quan	
Gilbert Leong	Robert Quan	

MEMORIES OF # 1619

By Louise Leung

(former byline: Louise Leung Larson)

EDITOR'S NOTE: Ms. Leung was the first Chinese woman reporter to be hired by a metropolitan daily newspaper. This was in the late 1920's when women reporters were rare, but a Chinese woman reporter was even more of a rarity. In subsequent years, Ms. Leung enjoyed an extensive and interesting career as a writer for a number of prestigious newspapers in southern California and elsewhere, covering a variety of subjects including some of her own personal experiences.

Ms. Leung is a CHSSC member, and was one of five women honored by the Society in October 1978 for their achievements as pioneers in their various fields.

Although retired since 1971, Ms. Leung still writes occasionally, and is now busily occupied with the writing of a family history for her children and grandchildren. The following article will be part of that book. Our thanks to Ms. Leung for her kind permission to print this warm and nostalgic account of her family's experiences in the Los Angeles of the early decades of the century.

On my rare trips to Los Angeles, I usually drive past a vacant lot on Pico near Union in the midst of a seedy, blighted neighborhood. The address is 1619 W. Pico and on that lot the Leung family home stood for 54 years. It became affectionately known at "1619" not only to family and friends but to many members of the Chinese community in Los Angeles who enjoyed its hospitality.

In 1913, when 1619 was still in the planning stage, there were reports that some neighbors opposed having a Chinese herbalist and his family settle on their neat middle class street. But Papa was not deterred. He spent countless evenings with the architect, pouring over drawings which were constantly revised as Papa thought of changes or additions.

My parents needed a large house. Six children had been born in the old Victorian house at Ninth and Olive where my parents came to live when they arrived in this country in 1902 from their birth places south of Canton, China. Two more were to be born at 1619. And there were usually relatives from China living with us, as well as students whom Papa befriended.

I have a faded newspaper clipping which describes the beginning of construction of "a three-story residence for Dr. Tom Leung. It will contain 15 rooms, with an office, reception hall, parlor, dining room, breakfast room and kitchen on the first floor. The second floor will contain a parlor, five bedrooms and a sleeping porch. On the third floor will be a library, two bedrooms and a roof garden. The baths will be finished in tile. . . ."

The house, the 50-foot lot, and three floors of new furnishings cost \$30,000, which Papa paid for in cash. His contention that buying on credit was a danger to the American economic system is currently being borne out. We children felt some trepidation about moving to the rural countryside of 1619. We had been accustomed to walking a few blocks to Hamburgers (now the May Co.) to Barker Brothers and other downtown stores. From 1619, downtown was an adventurous 15-minute ride on the P street car.

It was evening on the first day of 1914 that we made the big move. The imposing new house was ablaze with lights as we drove up in a cab. We children ran from room to room, from floor to floor, delighting in the airy big rooms, the brand new furniture, the fresh paint smell and the warmth from the steam radiators. From that first evening, 1619 enveloped us with a love and security I have never felt in any other home. Even the neighbors' hostility evaporated.

Papa had personally selected all the furniture from Barker Brothers, then located at Seventh and Broadway. Mama was happy to leave all decisions to him since she seldom ventured from the house. I have pages and pages of bills listing all the purchases, from Papa's brown leather chair (at \$95 the most expensive) to a 50 cent mop. That chair and Mama's red morocco leather chair (\$75) were placed in the second floor "parlor" where my parents relaxed and read each night. The mahogany dining table which could be extended to seat 20 comfortably at our many family festivities, cost only \$36. Some of this furniture is still in use in our various households. My best chair is a child's mahogany rocker (\$5.65). Some examples of prices for linens and draperies in those days - also furnished by Barker Brothers - were \$14 for 18 sheets, \$8 for 24 pillow cases and \$32 for velvet "portieres". Papa was not a bargain hunter; he insisted on the best.

Since our Chinese cook refused to use anything but a wood stove, Papa had a special range built with a large wok encased at one end where the rice was cooked. The rice had a brown crust at the bottom which was delicious when buttered. Our parents never touched butter, and to them cheese was an abomination. The big gas range next to the wood stove was rarely used until the cook, having earned enough money, went home to China.

The most unique place at 1619 was the herb room, with floor to ceiling drawers on one side, each drawer labeled with the herb it contained. On the other side was a long counter where the druggist filled out the herb prescriptions Papa wrote. Nearly always there were pots of herb tea simmering on the stove for patients who drank their medicine at the dining room table. So many kettles of tea were brewed that after a while the very walls of the first floor seemed permeated with the pungent, exotic smell of herbs.

We children weren't given allowances, but we could help ourselves to a seemingly inexhaustible supply of pennies, nickels and dimes in a cash drawer in the parlor. We were constantly running to the musty corner grocery owned by two old bachelor brothers. They had a large display of penny candies such as licorice whips and jaw breakers. Across the street at Carroll's Drug Store we bought ice cream sodas for a dime.

On hot summer days we played in the big cool basement where there was a sandpile, slide and ping pong table. We never lacked for room to play - in the big backyard, on the roof garden and the second floor balconies. But we were also required to study Chinese. How I dreaded those sessions in the library, lined with bookcases of Papa's Chinese volumes. Sometimes after dinner, Papa

would choose a few of us to ride with him to the end of the P streetcar line where, as he said, we could breathe fresh air. We walked around in the darkness and quiet, broken only by the crickets. There were no houses, no streets. I longed to be back in the warmth and light of 1619.

As we grew up, 1619 became the center of social activities for our friends and the home away from home for many students from China. There was always room for another at our dinner table. At 1619 we had our happiest holidays - Christmas, Thanksgiving, Chinese and American New Year. Chinese student clubs met at our home; we had mah jongg parties and dances with live bands. In the early years there were births and, much later on, weddings. When he was only 57, Papa died at 1619 in his big brass bed.

The house was never the same after that. Times were hard and no longer were there cooks and maids, house improvements, and spick and span maintenenance. Still, 1619 continued to be the favorite gathering place for relatives and friends. Three sons married and brought their wives to live at 1619. It became a family compound in the old Chinese tradition, with Mama as the gentle matriarch. Married daughters felt more at home there than in their own homes. The family grew. It seemed that Mama gave red eggs once or twice a year to celebrate the birth of a new grandchild. Another generation came to know and love 1619.

But even that capacious house was not large enough for the increasing family. One by one, the sons found new homes. Mama, ill from a stroke, went to live with a bachelor son in his new house built with a GI loan. For a while, 1619 stood empty, deteriorating as was the neighborhood. Finally it was sold to a dentist who used it briefly for his office and residence. Then it became a rooming house, shared by many families. It became shabbier and more neglected each time I drove past. I tried to imagine what had happened to the fragrant garden where Papa used to walk every morning smoking his water pipe, and to the roof garden where we had watched the fireworks displays on Fourth of July.

One morning in January, 1968, a front page picture in the Los Angeles Times showed a burning house. The caption read: "Firemen swarm over the front of a three-story rooming house at 1619 W. Pico Blvd. in vain battle to save structure from flames. The frame building, which served as home for eight families, was reported a total loss, with damage estimated at \$30,000. . . ."

It seemed ironic that 1619, when it was 54 years old and ravaged, should be worth \$30,000, the cash price Papa paid for it when it was brand new and splendid. I learned that overloaded electrical circuits had caused the fire. The city finally had the burned-out shell razed because it constituted a hazard.

The violent end of 1619 was like the violent death of a dear friend. Many years have passed, but it is still painful to drive past that empty lot on Pico near Union.

THE CHINESE IN HAWAII

by CLARENCE E. GLICK

(Editor's note: Dr. Glick, a long-time resident of the Aloha State, received his Ph.D degree from the University of Chicago. Currently a Professor of Sociology at the University of Hawaii, his professional interests for many years have centered on the study of the Hawaiian-Chinese population.

Our sincere thanks to the author for his kind permission to publish the following article, based on his book, "Sojourners and Settlers: Chinese Migrants in Hawaii", published in 1980 by the Hawaii Chinese History Center and The University Press of Hawaii. Our thanks also to CHSSC member Johnny Yee for obtaining the article with accompanying photographs, courtesy of Dr. Glick and the Hawaiian Chinese History Center.)

Adventurous and enterprising Chinese were in Hawaii not long after Captain James Cook, the first non-Polynesian discoverer, arrived in 1778. Soon after news of Cook's discovery reached England, British ships with Chinese crewmen aboard called at Hawaiian ports. It is thus quite probable that the practice of crewmen jumping ship accounts for the earliest of Hawaii's Chinese residents. However, it was a new supply of sandalwood reaching the Canton market in the early 1800's that really brought Hawaii to the attention of South China. Because the sandalwood came from the islands, Hawaii was called Tan Heung Shan -- Sandalwood Mountains -- a name used by Chinese in Hawaii to this day.

Perhaps "Sugar Cane Mountains" would have been more appropriate because sugar cane growing in the Islands was more important to the early Chinese than sandalwood, which quickly gave out. Before *Haoles* (Caucasians of north European ancestries) started to develop sugar plantations in the 1830's, Chinese had signed contracts with Hawaiian rulers to produce sugar with traditional Chinese equipment and methods. Chinese entrepreneurs were also associated with *Haoles* in early plantation ventures, importing and supervising Chinese laborers skilled in sugar-making from cane grown by the Hawaiians.

Early Migration

Between 1800 and 1850, a few score of Chinese came independently from South China. They ventured overseas in defiance of an imperial edict, later rescinded, which forbade Chinese to leave China under threat of execution upon return. The most successful of these pioneers became sugar planters and traders in the main port towns -- Honolulu, Lahaina, and Hilo. None of them brought Chinese wives; most of them established Chinese-Hawaiian families and spent the rest of their lives in the Islands.



Migrants on board ship arriving from China, 1901.
Hawaii State Archives

The largest number of Chinese migrants, some 46,000, came to Hawaii between 1850 and the annexation of Hawaii to the United States in 1898. Application to Hawaii of the U.S. Chinese Exclusion Act stopped Chinese labor immigration, although a few thousand Chinese in exempt categories were able to enter before World War II. Since World War II, there has been a new influx of about 5,000 Chinese, mainly after changes in the immigration laws in 1965.

About half of the pre-Annexation migrants signed contracts to work on *Haole*-controlled sugar plantations. The earliest of these indentured laborers, nearly 300 arriving in 1852, agreed to work for five years for three dollars a month plus food, lodging, and medical attention. Of course, agricultural labor was poorly paid everywhere in the world at that time and the dollar was worth much more then, but even so, the voluntary signing of such contracts reveals a great deal about the poor conditions at home from which these workers were anxious to escape. Later on the contract period was reduced to three years and by the 1890's pay rose to eighteen dollars a month (but without food). At the end of the contract period the migrant could renew the contract, stay on the plantation as a day laborer, move off to some other occupation in the Islands, or return to China. Not many renewed their contracts -- planta-

tion working conditions were harsh -- but the majority stayed on in the Islands for a while and tried their luck off the plantations.

Thousands of other Chinese who did not come as a contract laborers on sugar plantations were brought in by Chinese entrepreneurs to work in other enterprises, especially Chinese rice plantations. Next to sugar, rice production was the most important industry in the Island economy from the late 1870's into the first decades of this century. Rice plantations also employed thousands of Chinese who had completed contracts on sugar plantations.

During this same period, Chinese developed an amazing variety of other rural enterprises, including the growing of taro, coffee, bananas, pineapples, vegetables, and flowers; meat, poultry, and egg production; dairies, commercialized fishing, and even ranches for raising horses and mules for the sugar and rice plantations.

Nearly all the Chinese migrants came to Hawaii as landless villagers, thinking they would stay only long enough to make the "fortune" they wanted to take back home. Their dream was to buy farm land, become landlords, and live patriarchal lives in their native villages in new or remodeled family homes. If they were already married when they left for Hawaii, it was customary to leave wives and children with their parents. If the migrant was unmarried, his first visit back home was likely to be celebrated by a marriage arranged by his family; his return to the Islands would be delayed until the bride became pregnant and then she would be left with his parents. The *wah kiu* ("overseas Chinese") regularly sent money back to his family to give them a better life than they could have had if he had remained at home.

Over half of the pre-Annexation migrants ultimately went back to live in China permanently, with or without the fortune they had dreamed of, but for many, the short stay they had anticipated drew into decades. "When I landed, all I wanted was a thousand dollars in Chinese money," one migrant laughed after he had stayed in the Islands many years and had become a well-to-do merchant. Like many others, the longer he stayed the higher his ambition became.

Sojourners to Settlers

Several thousand migrants gradually changed from temporary sojourners to permanent settlers. Among them were a few thousand who had married or established common-law marriages with Hawaiian women, becoming ancestors of the large and proud Chinese-Hawaiian element in today's part-Hawaiian population. Some unfortunate men who had made and lost fortunes at the gambling tables, or through some misfortune became impoverished, were unable to return to China or unwilling to return to their clansmen as unwelcome failures. In contrast, many Chinese who had become successfully established in trades or businesses decided to have their wives and children join them in the Islands and began thinking of Hawaii as their permanent home and the future home of their descendants.

Not everything went smoothly for the Chinese in Hawaii, however. As in the mainland United States, particularly in California, there was a wave of anti-Chinese agitation in the 1880's and 1890's. One thing that roused antagonism among the *Haoles* was the fact that almost all the Chinese immigrants were young adult males. By 1884, Chinese had become nearly a fourth of the entire population and, more importantly, they were half of all the adult men in the Islands. *Haoles*, increasingly influential behind the Hawaiian royalty on the throne, were then less than a tenth of the Islands' population. The native Hawaiians, who still made up most of the population of the time, seem not to have taken much part in this agitation. Chinese migrants commonly enjoyed close relations with the Hawaiians -- they generally learned more Hawaiian than they did English, they lived in rural areas among the Hawaiians and traded with them, and many had Hawaiian wives and part-Hawaiian children.

Agitation among the *Haoles* became more strident when Chinese began moving from the plantations and rural occupations into the town and urban occupations, and began competing with them for jobs. Planters, of course, had welcomed the male contract laborers without families because they were less costly to import and required less housing and other amenities. However, "cheap labor" became "unfair competition" when the Chinese moved into the kinds of work *Haoles* had been doing. Eventually this agitation died down, partly because the Chinese became outnumbered by Japanese and other Asian immigrants. In any case, there were not enough *Haoles* to fill even half the jobs that were opening up in Hawaii because of the success of the sugar and pineapple plantations, military installations, and the expanding population.

Growth and Urbanization

The Chinese were in a favorable position to move with this economic growth into skilled, clerical, sales, business, and professional occupations. They had gone through their "rural period" in the Islands ahead of the other main Asian immigrant groups -- Japanese, Koreans, and Filipinos -- and did not yet have to face competition from them. Moreover, when Hawaii's economy was expanding, second and third generation Island-born, American-educated Chinese were prepared to move up occupationally. Even the China-born migrants in Hawaii were able to enter most skilled trades and businesses. Their experience was very different from that of China-born migrants in mainland U.S.A., a tiny minority facing strong competition and discrimination from Caucasians in most skilled trades and businesses.

The favorable conditions in Hawaii led to a remarkable geographical redistribution of the Chinese in the Islands. In 1890 most of the Chinese, predominantly China-born, worked in rural jobs. However, by 1950 most of the Chinese men, predominantly Island-born, were

employed in the city of Honolulu alone. At present ninety-five percent of all Chinese live in Honolulu and other urbanized areas of Oahu. They have become by far the most highly concentrated ethnic group in the Islands.

One major factor in the urban concentration of the Chinese in Hawaii was the disproportionate establishment of Chinese families in the towns and in Honolulu rather than in the country. In contrast to the laborers on sugar and rice plantations, a sizeable proportion of the Chinese who went directly into the towns brought or sent for wives. Chinese qualifying for entry under exempt-category provisions of the Exclusion Act -- mainly merchants, but also language-school teachers, Taoist priests, Christian clergymen, newspaper editors, doctors and other professionals -- could bring in wives and children, and they were mostly located in Honolulu and other towns. Many of the Chinese who moved into the towns from the country and became established in trades and businesses also decided to bring wives and children from China, or sent to China for brides. The Island-born Chinese were consequently also concentrated in the towns, the main exceptions being children born into the families of rice planters and of Chinese in independent farming communities such as Kula, Maui, and Kohala, Hawaii.

Education and Success

Young Chinese -- especially the boys at first -- were drawn into mission schools and later into the unsegregated public schools. Because of excellent employment opportunities in Hawaii, as well as the high value placed by Chinese on education (even though most migrants had little formal schooling), Chinese parents encouraged their sons to get as much education as possible. And they abandoned their traditional indifference and even opposition to the schooling of daughters on seeing that professional employment, especially as school teachers, was open to women. Many Island-born Chinese were sent to the U.S. mainland for professional training before it was available in the Islands, and hundreds of Island-born Chinese still go to mainland universities for undergraduate or graduate education each year. Before World War II a number of Island-born Chinese were also sent to universities in China for part of their education.

This strong emphasis on education has resulted in a highly favorable position for Chinese men and women in Hawaii. By 1970 nearly three-fourths of them were employed in higher-level jobs -- skilled, clerical and sales, proprietary, managerial, and professional. More than a fifth of the men and nearly a fifth of the women were in some professions, a much higher proportion than that of other ethnic groups. They also have higher incomes. Each census since 1950 has shown that the Chinese enjoy the highest median income of all ethnic groups in Hawaii, and survey data collected during the 1970's show that this has not changed.



First job for most migrant laborers was on Caucasian-controlled sugar plantations or Chinese-controlled rice plantations.

Hawaii State Archives. About 1900.

Interestingly enough, even though Hawaii's Chinese are heavily concentrated in Honolulu, less than five percent of them live in the section of the city that has long been called "Chinatown". In fact, the area has never been exclusively inhabited by Chinese; for more than fifty years more than half the residents have been members of other ethnic groups. A disproportionate number of the Chinese who live there today are "new" migrants who have come to Hawaii since 1965.

Nevertheless, there was a time when most of the large Chinese businesses were located in Chinatown and even today more of the businesses there are owned and operated by Chinese than by any other group. However, visitors exploring Chinatown will see that Japanese, Korean, Filipino, Hawaiian, and *Haole* businesses are interspersed among the Chinese. At the same time, they may learn that many more Chinese businesses are in other areas of the city than in Chinatown.

In the days when most Chinese businesses were in the old "Chinese quarter" migrant businessmen who had brought wives and children to Hawaii commonly established their families in rooms above or behind their business premises. Often these living quarters were crowded and inconvenient, but since they were regarded as only temporary, until the family returned to China, they were tolerated. When the families stayed

longer and it became apparent that they were going to settle in Hawaii, they looked for better homes in less congested areas, and Chinese families were dispersed throughout the city. (Chinese in Honolulu moved out of "Chinatown" much faster than Chinese in San Francisco, New York, and other mainland cities moved from their Chinatowns.)

Sojourner migrant parents, looking forward to the time when the family would return permanently to China, tried to pass on to their children customs and values that would help them fit into clan life on return to the village. Festivals and family celebrations are still recalled nostalgically by Island-born Chinese who never got back to China. At the same time, parents were disturbed by the "foreign" (i.e., westernized, American) ways of their children, and by their children's ignorance of their ancestral language and culture. Because of this several Chinese-language schools were started for children to attend after regular school hours and on Saturdays. Though they were fairly successful in inculcating some traditional values and some respect for the historical and cultural achievements of the ancestors' country, the schools were increasingly ineffective in teaching written and spoken Chinese. As time went on, Island-born Chinese children were less and less interested; today, when most school-age children of Chinese ancestry are of the fourth and fifth generations, only a handful attend Chinese-language schools and few can speak, read, or write Chinese.

Island Chinese are much more concerned about, and involved in, the political, cultural, and economic life of Hawaii's multiethnic community than in Chinese affairs. Although Chinese make up only about six percent of Hawaii's population, their political influence through elective and appointive offices is strong. Their American outlook and loyalty has been shown by their service in the wars America has been involved in during this century. Thousands of Island-born Chinese have served in the country's military forces. The survivors of those in World War I formed the Kau-Tom Post of the American Legion. Local Chinese veterans of later American wars have joined this post. The Kau-Tom Post and its Women's Auxiliary epitomize the outlook of Hawaii's Chinese. Orientation and commitment are American, but Chinese identity is not forgotten.

Chinese in the Islands still celebrate Chinese festivals. Chinese New Year, determined according to the lunar calendar, has always been the most important of these festivals, but it has changed its character. In earlier decades it was a family celebration with stores and businesses closed for several days, friends and relatives exchanging seasonal foods, and family reunions in the homes of parents or grandparents. Many families still observe some of the traditional customs in their homes, but now there is a more public and somewhat westernized celebration as well.

Although Chinese identity has not been lost, it is becoming more diluted by the high rate of "out-marriage" among Island-born Chinese. More than sixty percent of the Hawaii-born Chinese men and women marry persons of other ethnic groups -- mostly *Haoles*, Japanese, and part-Hawaiians. It is a tribute to the generally tolerant character of intergroup relations in Hawaii that along with this trend there is also a resurgence of interest among Island-born people of Chinese ancestry in "things Chinese". This is not a withdrawal into the past because of discrimination, but part of the general American interest in "roots". Recently, Hawaii's Chinese have been traveling to the People's Republic of China, not so much to visit their "ancestral villages", but more out of curiosity about the "new China", the country which has been closed to them for so many years.

Today

Although it is commonly thought that the present-day Chinese in Hawaii are descendants of sugar plantation contract laborers, this is something of a misconception. A larger proportion of Island-born Chinese families almost surely sprang from rice plantation entrepreneurs, independent farmers, craftsmen, merchants, and a few professional men who found Hawaii a pleasant land of opportunity and made it home for themselves and their descendants, many of whom are now fourth, fifth, and even sixth generation Island-born.

Thus, Chinese in Hawaii, while secure in their positions as partners and leaders in Hawaii's multiethnic society, also look back to their ancient culture and traditions with pride and satisfaction.

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As my presidency comes to a close, I look back and reflect on the past two years. It has been filled with many memories and accomplishments. The path our society has paved has been tremendous. Our membership has jumped over the 200th mark and I hope it will continue to soar.

There is still so much to learn and we are recording with pride the many contributions of our forefathers. Our projects have varied from the reenactment of the Golden Spike Centennial at Lang Station, the preservation of the historical sites in Fiddletown and Riverside, the history of Chinese cooking in the Golden Wok Culinary Art Exhibit, to our Oral History Project co-sponsored with UCLA now in its second stage and tapes are now being catalogued.

This year the biggest project that our Society has ever undertaken was the Chinatown Los Angeles Walking Tours. This has been the greatest contribution our Society has yet given to the community and a gift to the city of Los Angeles in celebration of its bicentennial anniversary. It was a unique opportunity to acquaint the public with contributions made by the early Chinese, and the history of Chinatown. The response from the public regarding the tours commending us has been overwhelming. We are in the process of putting together a booklet entitled, "Chinatown Los Angeles: Yesterday and Today" which will be completed next year.

Our contributions have been many. We have received resolutions from many city and state officials acclaiming our accomplishments. We can indeed be proud. Our Society is a unique one. We have many dedicated hard-working members, but the burden is heavy and our path is long. The story of the Chinese is just beginning to unfold – we can look back with pride that we had a part in it. I thank you for your support.

CHUCK YEE
President

THOUGHTS FROM MY CHINESE BRUSH

by MARGIE LEW, Editor

The Editor

A very special occasion was held on August 16 at the Golden Palace Restaurant in Los Angeles Chinatown -- Mr. and Mrs. Yee Chaw-Lai celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary and 89th birthdays with 400 relatives and friends in attendance. The evening's program, sentimentally and lovingly dedicated to the honorees, was excellently planned and executed by their 8 children and 32 grandchildren. The love and appreciation, expressed in various ways to the elder Yees, came "straight from the heart", to quote son George. There were songs written especially for the occasion, ethnic dances performed by the granddaughters, special tributes by each of the seven sons and one daughter, personal letters from President Ronald Reagan and Governor Edmund Brown, Jr., a beautiful scripted commendation from Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley, and a special commemorative plaque from several members of CHSSC (five Yee brothers are very active members of the Society -- John, Life Member; George, past Society President; Joe, Life Member; Johnson, Life Member; and Chuck, current Society President. Many of the Yee grandchildren have been willing and hard-working volunteers in the Society's various community projects).

The Yee family saga, published in the August 26 edition of the Los Angeles Times, told the story of how the older Yees met and married in 1911 in a small village in China. The young couple was separated for ten years when Yee Chaw-Lai came to the United States in 1916 to join his father in running a laundry in Midland, a small steel-mill town near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Finally, in 1925, Chaw-Lai saved enough money to send for his young wife and small son, Swan. Times were hard in Midland, as they were everywhere else. There were years of struggle, hardship, and sometimes hunger. The Yee family survived through the Depression and a period of strong anti-Chinese prejudice. Through it all, however, there was always a strong bond of love and devotion that held the family together through good times and bad, through happiness and sorrow. Today, due to the inspiration of the elder Yees, the sons and daughter have achieved individual success through hard work, perseverance and good educations, and **their** children are following in their footsteps and carrying on the family tradition. Thus it was that on August 16, the entire Yee clan had something very special to celebrate on this once-in-a-lifetime occasion, an occasion so filled with love and family devotion that even a crusty ole editor like myself felt a gentle but firm tug at my heart-strings

CHINESE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
1648 Redcliff Street . Los Angeles, California 90026

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MEETINGS: 1st Wednesday of each month at 7:30 p.m. Visitors welcome.

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