

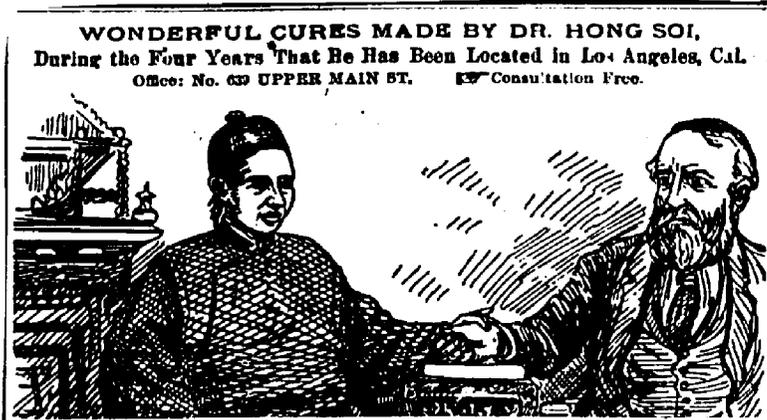


Gum Saan Journal

CHINESE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

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October 25, 1890

Los Angeles Times*

EARLY CHINESE MEDICINE IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

by William M. Bowen, PhD

"I am sorry for what I know of Chinese medicine; sorry to think that these degraded heathen can do things with their herbs which our own doctors, with all their skill and knowledge, cannot do" (quoted in Tisdale 1899:416).

INTRODUCTION

The labor power of the Chinese immigrants who came to the United States helped build the western frontier. But the cultural traditions the Chinese brought also made valuable contributions to the new land. One such tradition, which is a key

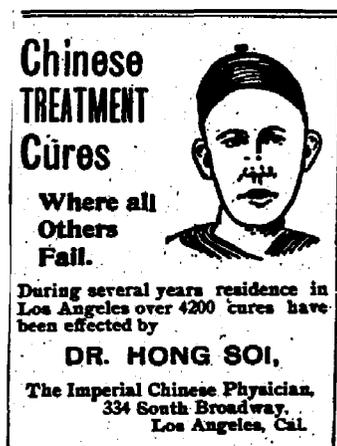
About the author:

William M. Bowen is a native of San Diego, California. He has been a student of Chinese medical and folk-healing practices for over twenty years. Recently he was awarded a PhD in anthropology from the University of California at Riverside. His dissertation research focused on Chinese medicine in America. He currently teaches in the Department of Anthropology at the University of California at Riverside.

*All advertisements photocopied from the Los Angeles Times.

component in the history of Chinese culture in the United States, is Chinese medicine, a fascinating discipline which played a highly important role in the health care of Chinese, Anglos, and Hispanics in the frontier days of historic Southern California (Chan & Chang p.32; Kao 1981; Schwartz 1984:2).

An excellent primary source of information about early Chinese medicine in Southern California, which has been virtually unexplored, is Chinese medical newspaper advertising, examples of which can be found in historic editions of the Los Angeles Times and Daily Star.



**Chinese
TREATMENT
Cures**

**Where all
Others
Fail.**

During several years residence in
Los Angeles over 4200 cures have
been effected by

DR. HONG SOI,
The Imperial Chinese Physician,
334 South Broadway,
Los Angeles, Cal.

October 13, 1895

Both the graphic image and the text of early Chinese medical advertisements contain a wealth of cultural and historical information about Chinese doctors, their patients and practice, as well as the overall cultural context in which they worked (Goodrum & Dalrymple 1990; Sinclair 1987:56,163; Mitchell 1986:18; Williamson 1978:102).

Twenty-seven graphic and fifteen classified Chinese medical advertisements were found in the course of a microfilm search of newspaper records. The advertisements cover the period 1871-1913, which can be considered as the "heyday" of early Chinese medical practice in Southern California. Although the sample is not

strictly random nor the total population, it is a representative selection, offering much new information, and opening a previously unexplored field of inquiry.

The advertisements, and related sources, lead to the identification of twenty-six Chinese doctors who practiced in the Los Angeles area during the period of study. Although there is some doubt as to the strict legality or the qualifications for the use of the terms "doctor" or "Dr." by the identified Chinese health practitioners, in every single case of advertising, this is how they referred to themselves. They did not call themselves, "herbalists" or "pharmacists", but rather, "Dr.", "doctor", "physician", or "physician and surgeon" (though it is doubtful they practiced surgery).

II. BACKGROUND

Chinese doctors began to arrive in the United States after 1848 (Ball 1925:186). They had a wide variation in medical training. Some were trained professionally in Chinese medical schools and universities, others learned medicine from their physician-fathers, and still others were self-taught. The ranks of these homeland-trained physicians were soon joined by others who taught themselves Chinese medicine through self-study after having arrived in the United States,

knowing this occupation would offer a good livelihood (Bowen 1993a:39-42).

By the latter part of the 1880s, word of the medical competency of Chinese doctors had spread. By then, many Anglos and Hispanics had joined Chinese in visiting Chinese herb stores and doctors' offices or writing in for herbs and medical advice through the postal service (Barlow & Richardson 1979:61; Schwartz *ibid*:73). By 1899 Chinese doctors were practicing medicine on a wide range of clientele in most of the major cities of the West Coast (Tisdale 1899:411).

Anglo patients came to know that well-practiced traditional Chinese medicine could often be more effective than the mainstream western medicine of the day. Chinese doctors also enjoyed popularity because they offered nonsurgical alternatives and natural herbal remedies, much to the relief of anxious patients. For certain ailments, such as venereal disease, traumatic injury, epidemic infectious disease, and blood poisoning, Chinese treatments came to be considered as definitely superior to western treatments (Schwartz *ibid*:43-45).

Many Anglos also visited Chinese doctors for private disorders, such as impotence or sexually-transmitted diseases, because of the confidentiality available from a Chinese physician (Muench 1988:16). Anglo women often found that their concerns were better treated by Chinese doctors because western doctors generally did not have well-developed treatment strategies for many women's complaints (*ibid*:14-15).

The Chinese doctors of Southern California geared their practice toward Anglo patients because it was such good business. Though they retained their traditional garb and queue, they printed their business cards in English and furnished their offices in American style. Many hung up their shingle in Anglo business districts and placed advertisements in English language newspapers such as the Los Angeles Times and the Daily Star—all in the hopes of attracting additional Anglo clientele.

CHIN QUONG ZIE,
CHINESE DOCTOR. Arcadia St., opp. Los
Angeles St., Los Angeles, Cal. Todo Los
Infirmidas, Se Ourado Aquí. j10-tf

March 8, 1882 (magnified classified)

Some of the earliest Chinese medical newspaper advertisements were also directed toward the Hispanic community of Los Angeles. Gene Tong, Ah Poo Ji Tong, and Chin Quong Zie each ran bilingual Spanish/English advertisements. Wong Him mentioned that he spoke Spanish fluently in some of his advertisements, a roundabout way to welcome Hispanic patients.

The more well-known highly-trained Chinese doctors, such as Dr. T. Foo Yuen and Dr. Li Wing of Los Angeles, charged high prices for treatment. Tisdale

(ibid:412-414), writing in 1899, said that their fees ranged from \$8-14.00 a week, with treatments rarely lasting less than three months. This is considerably more than the \$5.00 monthly fee advertised by a number of Anglo doctors of the day (Bowen 1993b).

The professional clientele of these doctors included Anglo lawyers, journalists, business people, and even physicians, some of whom readily admitted to the skill of Chinese doctors in the traditional diagnostic method of feeling the pulses at the wrists (Tisdale ibid).

During the period studied (1871-1913), Chinese doctors were not fully recognized by California law (ibid:415). The judicial record shows that some were arrested, brought to trial, and fined for the practice of illegal medicine. Others, however, were brought to trial and acquitted. In Los Angeles, there were attempts, usually unsuccessful, to enforce sanctions against the practice of Chinese medicine. All things considered, circa 1899, Chinese doctors could practice and advertise their medicine in Southern California practically without hindrance (ibid:416).

III. DECODING CHINESE MEDICAL ADVERTISEMENTS

Twenty-seven graphic advertisements and fifteen classified advertisements for Chinese doctors were found during a microfilm search of historic Southern California newspapers. Both the text and graphic images of these advertisements were examined for cultural and historical content.

The graphic advertisements consist of text, usually (but not always) a photograph or drawing, and often include patient testimonials. They range in size from about 1" by 1" to 5" by 8" and are found along side other medical and commercial advertisements of various sorts and sizes.

The classified advertisements are composed only of text (though one case included a very small graphic image) and are listed under headings such as "Specialists" or "Physicians and Surgeons" in the classified section of the newspapers.

In those cases where the image in the advertisement featured an Anglo patient with the Chinese doctor, special consideration was given to how their relationship was visually depicted. What did the image convey about personal, medical, and inter-ethnic relationships? For instance, did the doctor touch or look at his patient? How far apart were they placed? What did their facial gestures and body language convey about their relationship? Were there any meaning-inducing objects framed with them in the image?

The image shows three separate classified advertisements for Chinese doctors, arranged vertically. Each ad is enclosed in a rectangular border with a decorative top line. The first ad is for Dr. Gean, the second for Dr. Hong Sol, and the third for Dr. Wong. Each ad lists various medical specialties and provides an address in Los Angeles.

Specialists.
DR. GEAN FORMERLY PRACTICED
for several years as Chinese physician and surgeon in a large Hong Kong hospital. The Doctor makes a specialty of skin diseases, catarrh, head, throat, lung, liver, stomach, womb troubles and private diseases, etc. Consultation free. All sick are cordially invited to call at his office, NO. 157 N. LOS ANGELES ST. between First and Main.

DR. HONG SOL, THE FAMOUS PHY-
sician and surgeon, makes a specialty of and cures consumption, rheumatism, asthma, ruptures, dropsy, catarrh; also eyes and ears; diseases of the head, throat, lungs, liver, stomach, blood, etc. All sick are invited to call at the office, 255 UPPER MAIN ST. P. O. Box 862.

DR. WONG, THE WELL-KNOWN AND
practiced Chinese physician and surgeon, makes a specialty of all the various diseases of the body, head, throat, lungs, liver, stomach, blood, womb troubles, neuralgia, piles, etc. Consultation free. All sick are invited to attend. NO. 125 UPPER MAIN ST. P. O. Box 1827.

August 10, 1890 (classified ad)

The complaints the Chinese doctors listed in the advertisement as being able to treat were counted in order to determine what aspect of the total medical field they hoped to claim as their territory. Also recorded were any attempts to demonstrate competence, expertise, or authority. Though competency was most often established through the use of western medical titles such as "Dr." or "physician and surgeon" other methods, such as the use self-descriptors ("remarkable and successful healer"), years of experience and training, and associations or pairings with well-known persons or prestigious locations were also used. Finally, known dates of practice and office locations were recorded.

The patient testimonials included with the advertisements were examined. Testimonials are a valuable resource which can tell us much about types of patients (age, sex, ethnicity, social status), medical conditions, length of treatment, prior treatments, and outcomes.

IV. WHAT THE ADVERTISEMENTS REVEAL

Twenty-two of the twenty-seven graphic advertisements featured a photograph or drawing. Seventeen of these twenty-two portrayed a Chinese doctor in traditional garb. Four showed the Chinese doctor with a well-dressed Anglo male patient. In thirteen of the seventeen advertisements the doctor looked young and had somewhat Anglo-looking facial features. In the other four, the doctor looked middle-aged and more "Chinese".

**Dr. Wong's
SANITARIUM**

NERVOUS and CHRONIC DISEASES
quickly cured without the use of poisons.
Four thousand cures. Ten years in Los
Angeles.

DR. WONG.
713 E. Main St., Los Angeles.

December 23, 1894

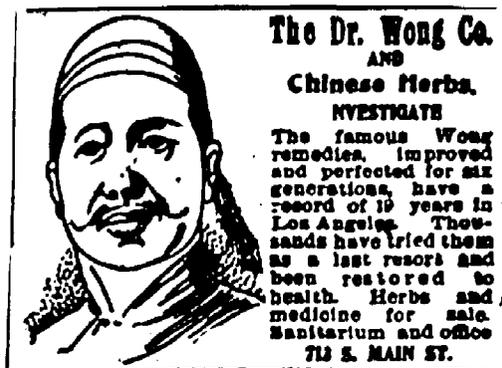
There were also three graphic images of buildings in the advertisements. Two were of Dr. Wong's sanitarium in Los Angeles, the other was an unidentifiable traditional Chinese building. There was also one image showing examples of "Complimentary Diplomas" (enscribed wooden planks; tokens given by grateful patients in China) and one of a western-looking dragon.

The Chinese doctor was often represented as young or boyish in the graphic images. He looks sincere and honest-looking, somewhat innocent, cleanly, usually clean-shaven (rarely a mustache), traditionally dressed, wears a hat, and displays a casual posture. His eyes appear to express compassion or vision.

This composite image can be contrasted to the representations of Anglo doctors found in comparable western medical advertisements of the day. Anglo doctors are usually portrayed with beards or mustaches, sometimes wearing spectacles, with a collar and tie, no hat, slicked back hair, tight-lipped, somewhat stiff composure, and eyes that expressed class, serious bearing, or a snobbish dignity

(Bowen 1993b).

The quality of youthfulness found in the images of Chinese doctors may be an attempt to convey that the Chinese doctor is youthfully healthy...and non-threatening. Given their length of practice statements they could not easily be as young as they look!



June 26, 1903

The Anglo-shading to their facial features appears to be an attempt to minimize racial difference. While a certain amount of “difference”, foreignness, or exoticness seems to have been an important selling point in advertising during this time period (ibid), perhaps it was feared that portraying the Chinese doctor as being too different or “too Chinese-looking” might trigger a discriminatory response. It is well known that Chinese, described as “foreign devils” or “degraded heathen” (Tisdale 1899), were often the subject of racial discrimination and even “anti-Chinese” rallies (e.g., San Diego Union March 4, 1882).

Although it is possible that the Anglo features were the result of chance factors or the shadings of an Anglo artist (e.g., Mr. Coon [Dr. Kwong’s image] or Mr. Rapp [Dr. Woh’s image]) unschooled in the fine points of ethnic representation, we must also consider that the doctors, such as Dr. Wong, Dr. Woh, Dr. Kwong and others, altered their advertising image periodically. It is suspected that they must of had some savvy about the power of an image to persuade.

The advertisements that featured a Chinese doctor with a Anglo patient are particularly important for helping to understand ethnic relations during the period of study. The subtext or deeper level of these visual images seems to be about appropriate or safe social and ethnic distance. For instance, in Dr. Kwong’s, Dr. Woh’s and Hong Soi’s advertisements, the patient’s and doctor’s face and body are portrayed as rather far apart (approximately 3 feet). This distance appears to be at about the outer edge of what we might normally think of as the necessary intimate space of a medical examination.

The table placed between the doctor and the patient can also be seen as a visual

Voluntary Testimonials

—GIVEN TO—

DR. WOHO,

The Eminent Chinese Physician.

No Opales or Poisonous Drugs are used in my Practice.



Fishes and Medicines of Absolute Purity constantly on hand and for Sale.

Dr. Woh's life work has been from early youth one of persistent and untiring cheerfulness, study and investigation, as fully as lay in his power to perfect himself in all branches of the art of healing human sickness and disease. Born in China, of illustrious parents, of a family whose ancestors have been for generations deservedly renowned as leading physicians, Dr. Woh naturally followed in the footsteps of his fathers. In China he has practiced his profession for several years, being at one time a physician in the Imperial Hospital, and in America for a long time. His great number of patients, his wonderful and many cures, and the great list of letters from grateful and thankful patients now prove him to be a remarkable and successful healer of sickness and all diseases.

For a long time I have been suffering with bladder and kidney troubles. No dieting or medicines seemed to do me good. I consulted the best physicians and surgeons in Los Angeles city. They gave me morphine and drugs, but no relief could I obtain. After suffering great pain and having my passage almost entirely stopped I, fourteen days ago, began using Dr. Woh's medicine. Today I am perfectly well. I do consider Dr. Woh the most successful physician in Southern California. C. A. BRIDGES, 219 and 221 S. Main St., Los Angeles, Cal., October 12, 1897.

I have tried many doctors for heart disease, but have derived no benefit until Dr. Woh, the Chinese physician, of Los Angeles, prescribed for me. Five months ago I began his treatment, and can now certify that he has done me great good. I recommend Dr. Woh to my friends as an able doctor. F. B. KING, Justice of the Peace, Burbank, Cal.

Dr. Woh has hundreds of similar testimonials, but space alone prevents further publication of them here. Dr. Woh is the oldest and best-known Chinese Physician in Southern California. His many cures have been remarkable, involving Female Troubles, Tumors and every form of disease.

All communications will be regarded as strictly confidential. Free consultation and all ailments are cordially invited to call on Dr. Woh at his office.

227 South Main st., between Second and Third sts.,
OPPOSITE CATHEDRAL, LOS ANGELES, CAL.

DR. WOHO— I have doctor'd with the best physicians of San Francisco for my heart disease, but I received no benefit. Thirty days ago I was recommended to you and began your treatment; before this I was twice completely prostrated in the public streets, but today I am a well man and I thank you alone for my recovery. Respectfully,
A. SIMPSON, 377 Gladys ave., Los Angeles, Cal.

January 19, 1898.

In Cleveland, O., many months ago I caught a severe cold, which settled on my lungs, terminating in asthma. The doctor said there was no hope of my recovery, but that a change to California might prolong my life. February last I came to San Bernardino and doctor'd with three physicians, but obtained no relief; finally Dr. Woh was recommended to me by a friend. I took his medicines and followed his directions and today I am perfectly well.

MRS. GRACE M. FIELD, San Bernardino, Cal., Oct. 20, 1897.

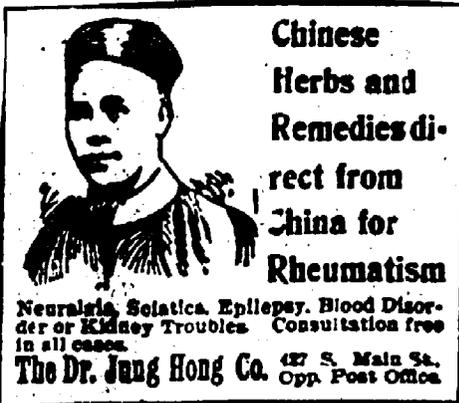
May 25, 1892

symbol or a boundary line demarcating a safe distance between the patient and the doctor. The lack of eye contact (eyes triangulate forward), emotion-less expressions, textual statements such as "without asking a question" or "no questions asked", and the non-intrusive pulse-feeling method of diagnosis depicted also signify boundaries or distance. Indeed, with pulse diagnosis, the only physical contact the Anglo patient might fear from the Chinese doctor would be the tabs of the doctor's thumb and four fingers on the patient's wrists.

Although the above images represent physical actualities, they also serve, as symbols or visual signage, to reassure a prospective Anglo patient that a safe and

formal social and ethnic distance may be had between the patient and the Chinese doctor. They, thus, assuage ethnic fears, which often rose to a fever pitch during this cultural period.

In the advertisements, the major ways the doctors attempted to demonstrate medical competence were (in order of importance): use of western medical titles such as “Dr.”, length of practice statements, descriptions of skill and/or personal character, association with well-known people, number or percentage of cures, testimonials of patients, association with a prestigious location or building (eg., “next door below Times building”), training or experience, age of Chinese medicine, number of different diseases cured, and number of different kinds of medicines utilized. Except for claims about the age of their medical system, these strategies of authority do not seem to be idiosyncratic to Chinese doctors, but were utilized by Anglo physicians who were their counterparts (Bowen 1993b).



**Chinese
Herbs and
Remedies di-
rect from
China for
Rheumatism**

Neuralgia. Sciatica. Epilepsy. Blood Disorder or Kidney Troubles. Consultation free in all cases.

The Dr. Jung Hong Co. 427 S. Main St.
Opp. Post Office

July 6, 1902

A count was made of illness terms appearing in the advertisements. The terms that appeared most frequently were: rheumatism, lungs, stomach, tumors (7 each), consumption, blood (or blood disorders), catarrh, asthma (6 each); liver, consumption, cancer, “all illnesses” (or “all diseases”), heart (5 each), female troubles (including diseases of women and womb troubles), kidneys (4 each); throat, head (3 each), blindness, “sick headaches”, indigestion, appendicitis, piles, neuralgia, sciatica (2 each). Thirty-five other terms, ranging from ringworm to insanity, epilepsy and rupture, were mentioned once each. This list indicates that the Chinese doctors were treating, or thought they could treat, a wide range of patient problems, from mild to severe, from the physical to the psychological.

In considering the gender of the Chinese doctors, no advertisements for women practitioners were found. Hence, it is assumed, that all early practitioners in the United States were male.

The advertisements listed only pulse diagnosis and herbal therapy. Herbal

medicine was touted as an alternative to the western chemical drugs and surgery of the day. No other therapies, such as acupuncture, moxibustion, or coin rubbing were advertised. This may be an indication of what was actually practiced or what the Chinese doctors felt comfortable advertising before the scrutiny of an Anglo audience. Perhaps Chinese doctors reserved acupuncture for their Chinese patients only. The evidence available does not make this point clear at all. Indeed, the evidence that acupuncture was practiced at all by early doctors is scanty at best.

The advertisements included twenty-one patient testimonials. All were penned by adults, of which, eleven were female and five male. In five cases gender was indeterminate. The length of the patients' illnesses ranged from two months to eleven years, with an average of about three years chronic suffering. More than half the patients had unsuccessfully tried other doctors first. The length of treatment by the Chinese doctors ranged from one to twenty-eight weeks, with an average range of about four to eight weeks. A small number of patients stated how long they had been well since treatment. The range was three weeks to two years. All the patients, except one, a Justice of the Peace, who claimed he had been done "great good", stated they had been cured.

If the ration of female to male (2 to 1) patient testimonials is indicative of larger trends, then there is a good possibility that Chinese doctors treated a greater percentage of female than male patients. Children, were not well represented in the advertisements. Only once was a child referred to in an advertisement text and only one testimonial made reference to a child.

V. CONCLUSION

During the period 1871 until 1913, Chinese medicine was on a near or equal footing with western-style medicine in Southern California. Both treated similar populations of patients, exhibited similar basic strategies for advertising, and situated their offices in centrally-located Anglo business districts. They differed only in technique, medications, and public image. Ethnicity issues appear to have influenced the public images displayed by Chinese doctors in their advertising. Ethnic fears and prejudices were addressed and assuaged through the use of non-threatening personal imagery, as well as by images of safe social distance.

On the whole, Chinese and Anglo medical advertisements of the period 1871-1913 paint a rather dismal picture of a large population of chronically suffering patients who wandered from doctor to doctor seeking relief. Despite the overall "hit and miss" status of the medicine of the day, Chinese doctors do seem to have been successful in helping a significant number of Chinese and non-Chinese patients. Indeed, one must conclude that Chinese doctoring, as a profession, made a substantial and important contribution toward the public good in frontier Southern California. Hence, it is appropriate that the early Chinese doctors be regarded with pride by the modern day Chinese community.

VI. KNOWN HISTORIC PRACTITIONERS IN LOS ANGELES

PRACTITIONER	ADDRESS	KNOWN DATE
1. Ah Poo Ji Tong	25 Commercial St.	1872
2. Dr. Bing	?	?
3. Chee Shee Kee	101 Marchessault St.	1887
4. Chin Quong Zie	Arcadia St.	1882
5. Fong Sue Nom	208 Marchessault St.	1913
6. Dr. Gene	No. 31 Los Angeles St.	1889
7. Gene Tong	Coronell Building	1871
8. Guarding Liu	?	1940s
9. H. T. Chan	1045 South Broadway	1913
10. Hong Soi	127 South Broadway	1890
	227 South Main	1893
11. Hoy Kung	rear of Pico House	1882
12. Dr. Jim Yen	319 ¹ / ₂ South Spring St.	1893
13. Dr. Jung Hong	427 South Main	1902
14. Dr. Kam	603 South Olive St.	1913
15. Dr. Kong	?	1898
16. Dr. Kwong	227 South Main St.	1890
	311 South Broadway	1892
17. Lee Yee Chun	22 & ¹ / ₂ East Side Plaza	1887
18. Li Wing	903 South Olive	1895
	1929 South Broadway	1897
19. Dr. Sing	17 & ¹ / ₂ Plaza St.	1887
20. Tom Foo Yuen	903 S. Olive Street	1895
	17 Barnard Pk.	1895
	1929 South Broadway	1895
21. Tom Leung	1619 West Pico	?
22. Tom She Bin	145-147 West 22nd St.	1913
23. Dr. Woh	233 West First St.	1890
	227 South Main	1892
24. Dr. Wong	713 South Main	1893/1913
25. Dr. Wong Fay	227 South Main	1895
26. Wong Him	639 Upper Main	1895
	117 Upper Main	1895

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CHINESE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
founded in Los Angeles, California, November 1, 1975
Incorporated under the Laws of California, December 23, 1976

The Purpose of the Chinese History Society of Southern California, Inc. shall be to bring together people with a mutual interest in the Southern California history of Chinese and Chinese Americans, to perform all the functions and activities of an historical society in pursuit of gaining, preserving, and communicating knowledge of this important history and to understand the significant Southern California historical role of Chinese and Chinese Americans.

Knowing the heritage of our community is basic to maintaining our democratic American way of life and to promoting a better appreciation of our rich, multi-cultural society.

General meetings are held monthly—except July and August, the first Wednesday, 7:30 p.m., Castelar Elementary School, Multi-purpose Room. At 840 Yale Street in Los Angeles Chinatown. Parking on school playground.

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Membership in the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California includes Gum Saan Journal and News 'n Notes, the monthly newsletter.

Gum Saan Journal, published since 1977, is issued in June and December yearly.

Editor:	Emma Woo Louie
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CASTELAR SCHOOL: A COMMUNITY PRINCIPAL'S PERSPECTIVE

by **William Chun-Hoon, Ph.D.**

During the fall of 1972 when I was serving as an administrator in the Los Angeles Unified School District's (LAUSD) Reading Task Force, I was appointed by Dr. John Lingel, Area F Superintendent, as the principal of Castelar School to replace Mrs. Hilda Reynolds, who was retiring in January, 1973. I had been with the Task Force since 1969 in the district's Developmental Reading Program to improve reading achievement in elementary schools. I was very receptive to this school assignment since it would give me the professional opportunity to be back in a school setting with children, teachers and community.

While assigned to the Task Force during the 1970-1971 school year, I had been involved with concerned Asian community activists from all parts of the district to establish the Asian Pacific American Education Commission. I recall that in Chinatown, the Chinese American Citizen's Alliance (C.A.C.A.) was urging the Board of Education to approve the Commission as a community advisory group to address Asian Pacific educational concerns.

C.A.C.A. members who took an active role in the Ad Hoc Committee and/or as founding commissioners were: Irvin Lai, Herbert Leong, Louise Leong, Paul Louie, Stanley Mu, James B. Wong, William K. Wong and myself. Other active community representatives were: Kenyon Chan, Morgan Chu, Bill Leong, Jolson Ng, Ella Quan, Richard Wong, and Kailim Toy, a student at Belmont High School.¹ Herbert Leong became the Education Commission's first president and subsequently its Executive Director.

My first impression of Castelar School in January, 1973, was its unique central location in Chinatown and the civic center. An urban planner or sociologist could not

About the author:

William Chun-Hoon retired in 1991 after a long and productive career in the field of education since 1957. In the years he served as principal of Castelar Elementary School, he brought school-community relations to new heights. He has received recognition from community organizations, the Apple Award given by the mayor of Los Angeles to volunteers in education and, at his retirement, kudos from the Los Angeles City Council, the Board of County Supervisors, and the State of California. Dr. Chun-Hoon is a native of Hawaii.

have designed a better community plan where the residential area, elementary school, child care center, public library, hospital, churches, Chinese School, markets, restaurants, police substation, adult school, family associations and social service center would all be within a block of each other. It is an environment that could only promote positive relationships beneficial to both school and community.

As I became more acquainted with Castelar School I discovered that it was founded in 1882 with the distinction of being the second oldest school (kindergarten-6th grade) in continuous existence in the LAUSD. The original classroom building burned down and was replaced in 1904 by a Victorian style wooden frame building located only a few blocks from the historic El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historic Park, the birthplace of Los Angeles.

Castelar was also the only predominantly Asian school in the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) of over 500 schools. I also learned that 60% of the students was limited English speaking and their two major languages were Cantonese and Spanish. A Cantonese and Spanish bilingual program had been initiated in kindergarten in September, 1972 but was designed to be phased in over a 5 year period.

Recruitment of bilingual certified teachers and aides had already begun with the staffing of 4 kindergarten bilingual classrooms. Eleanor Sue, a C.A.C.A. volunteer and Mr. B.P. Young assisted in the screening of personnel for Cantonese fluency; and Mr. Wei-Lin Lei provided the staff training.

In February, 1973, the first day of the spring semester, Dr. Lingel introduced me to the teachers and other staff at Castelar School. I became the first Chinese American principal in the LAUSD. At subsequent contacts and observations of teachers and other staff I was particularly impressed with their experience, creativity and concern for the children's education and welfare. Teachers Shirley Bishop, Ken Sleeper, Christine Soldate, Peggy Wong and Doris Wong, the bilingual coordinator were especially helpful in guiding me through several of the school's specially funded programs. At this time Dr. Lingel assigned Walter Simmons as Castelar School's Assistant Principal.

I recall that one of my first goals was to insure that this small school site of 2.7 acres would be able to provide sufficient classrooms for a growing population in grades K through 6th and a large children's center. Another goal was to implement the two bilingual programs—Spanish and Cantonese under the federal Title VII grant. But first an advisory council needed to be organized representing parents, school staff and community. The challenge would be to bring all school programs and various groups together to address the goals of the school. I learned very quickly from Wini Lee, a bilingual education aide, that a big part of the principal's job was to interact and be involved with parents and community groups. My initiation to community work was at Castelar School's Chinese New Year carnival booth— selling chances to win live gold fish. Each day and night during the festival Wini and I hauled the live (some dead) goldfish to and from an oxygen filtered tank in Maye Wong's Mae Wah Flower

shop on Hill St. Walt Simmons, our assistant principal and parents were busy parking cars on the school lot on Yale St. during the carnival and parade. That was my introduction to community involvement.

Literally, Castelar is a school in an emerging community and the community was in the school. Its growth and diversity during the late 1960's and two decades of 1970 and 1980 coincided with the development of Chinatown. I also remember that in this period there was a surge of social activism in this new Chinatown community by concerned individuals and organized groups. Offers of assistance to the school came from many segments of the community and greater Los Angeles. As a result, we now have a modern school campus consisting of 33 classrooms, administrative offices, an outdoor pavilion, a multipurpose room, a large children's center, 4 new classrooms, a complete library, and computer center.

In 1971, the Sylmar earthquake had heavily impacted the school. It was mandated by the state that the main 13 classroom building constructed in 1904 be vacated by 1975 because it did not meet state earthquake standards. The LAUSD Board of Education received California earthquake relief funds to erect the present building with 27 classrooms, a multipurpose room and a children's center in 1977 at a cost of \$2,500,000. Choy and Associates (Eugene and Barton Choy) were the architects. The landscaping was gratefully donated by the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association (CCBA) through its President, Mr. Poy Wong.



School and community members in front of newly constructed classroom building upon completion in 1977. Left: Dr. William Chun-Hoon, Principal; Ellen Inafuku, teacher; Gary Yee, CCBA; Dr. John Lingel, Superintendent; JoAnn Semon, parent; Walter Simmons, Asst. Principal; Regina Lai, parent; Cheang Yue Chuck, CCBA; Poy Wong, CCBA President.



1904 Victorian 13 Classroom building demolished in August, 1975. Sign on the left of the building reads, "To be vacated by 7/1/75."

During that 4 year construction period, nearly the entire student body and staff were temporarily housed in bungalow type classrooms on the playground and at the Chinese United Methodist Church and the Chung Wah Chinese School, both conveniently next door. Yale St. was closed to traffic during school hours to allow students to cross safely to use the Alpine Recreation Center playground and gym. Jan Landrum, Richard Montague, Edmund Soo Hoo and other Alpine staff were very helpful in assisting Castelar staff and stu-

dents utilize Alpine Center for recess and lunch play activities, physical education and assemblies.



Mural at entrance to Castelar School painted by Leo Politi, author and artist of children's books, in 1976.

Back in March, 1974 when the replacement building construction project was in its initial stage, the Castelar School Community Advisory Council completed a master plan for future school construction.² By 1992, nearly 20 years later, all of the plan's recommended projects for expansion and modernization had been completed. It included the conversion of the vacant school auditorium into a library which was expanded twice into its present

facility with much improved services.

A history of Castelar School would not be complete without mention of its partnership with a volunteer organization to establish a unique public library on its campus.

Chinatown Branch Library is of particular significance to the school and community. It was built largely through private donors and the efforts of the Friends of the Chinatown Library, a community support group of dedicated volunteers, organized in 1976. The first officers were Ruby Ling Louie, President; Dolores Wong, Vice President; Sam Joe, Treasurer; and JoAnn Semon, Secretary.

The initial group responsible for its establishment was the Chinatown Library Ad Hoc Committee which was organized in 1974 and chaired by Joyce Law, the first director of the Chinatown Service Center. Volunteers and representatives of local businesses, human care agencies, schools, benevolent and family associations, were active supporters. It seems that nearly every segment of the Chinatown community was involved but where to have a permanent site was the question.³

It was then that the Castelar School Community Advisory Council, the Los Angeles Library Commission along with the Ad Hoc Committee agreed to locate a public library at Castelar School and to jointly recommend this to the Los Angeles Unified School District. Finally, in 1976, encouraged by such widespread grass roots interest and support, LAUSD Superintendent William J. Johnston, Superintendent of Administrative Area F Dr. John Lingel, and the LAUSD Board of Education gave approval for a school-community library to be established at Castelar School on a no-cost lease basis.⁴

The library was first housed in the vacant school auditorium in 1977 and soon outgrew its tiny space. Juliana Cheng was the first senior librarian. It was largely due to her efforts, the Friends of the Chinatown Library and the response of the Chinatown community, that within its first year of operation, the library achieved its quota and acquired permanent status as a branch library.

The library you see today is the result of a cooperative public and private joint venture project coordinated by the Friends of the Chinatown Library. It was completed in 3 phases which spanned a period of 15 years from 1977 to 1990. The final expansion was the children's wing. Through these years, one of the Board members, Steve Leong, a retired Bechtel engineer, volunteered his expertness to these school and library construction projects.

On a typical school day Castelar School classes may be found at the library with the children's librarian. In the afternoon, elementary, middle and senior high school students would be sharing the facilities with adults and seniors. Since 1989 Castelar children have been participating in the after school "Grandparents and Books" program. On Saturdays, adult English conversation classes are held. Both projects are conducted by volunteers from the Friends of the Chinatown Library. Another popular activity for children is the vacation reading program which encourages greater leisure time reading. Two Castelar teachers, Cindy Fong and Susan Dickson, have been active on the Friends of the Library Board and each served two terms as President.

Castelar 6th grader, Lisa Chan expressed the sentiments of children in her poem published by Margie Lew in the December, 1986 library newsletter:

"The library is just the right place for me
No interruptions to keep you from studying
Constantly
We're so lucky to have a library close by
With books we can find with our very own eyes"

For many years deserving high school seniors and many former Castelar School students have had the opportunity to receive \$1,000 and \$1,500 college scholarships and grants from the Friends of the Chinatown Library. The scholarship fund began in 1986 with a \$10,000 donation by the King M. Luk Huang family in memory of parents Mr. & Mrs. Yau Kong Luk. Within the past 5 years donations from community individuals and groups have made it possible to offer an average of 10 scholarships each year. In 1992 the Jack Hom Scholarship Endowment Fund of \$100,000 was established.

I know this library would not have happened were it not for all the volunteers and extended community support.⁵ The Friends of the Chinatown Library fund raising effort was chaired by Mrs. Dolores Wong who almost single-handedly received private donations of over one million dollars from individuals, groups and businesses from all over the world to build and support the library. Moreover, many donors became personally involved in the library project and continue to be generous donors to this day. An example of this is the library's community room built and furnished in 1983 by Mr. F. Chow Chan and Mr. Lun Chan and dedicated to the memory of their parents Mr. and Mrs. Chung-Yat Chan and brother Mr. Chai Chan.

Another important addition to the Chinatown Library is the INTEX Computer Center dedicated in 1992. Castelar students use it during the school day but in the

afternoons and on Saturdays the Center is open to the public. Prior to this, Castelar students and staff had their initial experience with an Apple (IIE) computer lab through a \$15,000 California Technology Grant awarded to teacher,Carolynn Davis. The new Center was first conceived in 1986 by the Chinatown Library, Castelar School and Friends of the Chinatown Library. The Friends initiated the Center by donating a Novell network of 15 IBM compatible computers and software in a room adjoining the school and the library. The first contribution came from the Mae Ying Fong Memorial Fund in 1987. In 1992, Mr. Tien Zee, President of Intex Corporation, was so impressed by the Library/School Computer Project that he made a \$50,000 donation; thus the Center was named the Intex Computer Center.

Since Castelar School is located in the heart of Chinatown, the vast majority of the student body is Chinese in descent. Chinatown, since its inception in the mid-nineteenth century, has been a port of entry to American life for Chinese newcomers from all parts of Asia. Hispanic students are the next largest ethnic group followed by African-American and white students.

The composition of Castelar School's student body during my tenure as principal reflected the significant demographic changes which occurred in Los Angeles Chinatown. In 1965, before the new Immigration and Naturalization Act went into effect, Castelar School's enrollment stood at 529 students —54% Asian and 41% Hispanic; a relatively small elementary school.⁶ However, the cumulative effect of the immigrant reform legislation, the fleeing of refugees from Southeast Asia, beginning in 1975, resulted in Chinatown's growing population. By the spring of the 1980-81 school year, 15 years later, there were 1156 students—80% Asian, 19% Hispanic and 1% African-American and White combined.⁷

New arrivals at Castelar School prior to 1975 were primarily immigrants from Hong Kong, but beginning in September of that year we were enrolling large numbers of Southeast Asian refugees, more than any school in the district. Refugee families related many heartfelt accounts of their experiences including life threatening situations, missing loved ones, malnutrition, disease and incapacitating injuries.⁸ After fleeing their native country, they were temporarily housed in resettlement camps in the Philippines or Guam, and then brought to one of the refugee reception centers in the United States, such as San Diego's Camp Pendleton and centers in Arkansas and Pennsylvania for processing. Mr. Poy Wong and Dr. Sherwin Chan recall that they



Two Vietnamese Chinese students: Richard Vuu as the young Pu Yi in the 1987 film "Last Emperor" and Ke Huy Quan as Short Round in the 1984 film "Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom."

and other members of the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association (CCBA) commuted daily to Camp Pendleton during the summer of 1975 to work specifically with ethnic Chinese refugees. By summer's end, CCBA through its national network of associations had resettled 283 families with sponsors here in Chinatown and elsewhere in the United States.⁹ Among the first families CCBA helped to resettle and enroll at Castelar School in 1975 was the Tap Ngo family with 5 children from Cambodia.¹⁰ The First Chinese Baptist Church brought the Senh Tran Phoung family and their 6 children.¹¹ I recall that the school's need for classroom space at this time was so critical, Phyllis Chiu, a new teacher, had to use a small conference room as a teaching station.¹² Even though United States policy was to disperse Southeast Asian refugees throughout the country, there were many secondary migrations.¹³ During the years following the first wave of refugees in 1975 we began to notice a pattern of new refugee children transferring to Castelar from school's located in many parts of the country.

Normalization of diplomatic relations between the United States and the People's Republic of China in 1979 also brought more immigrant families to Chinatown and Castelar from southern China. Primary language surveys of new students from 1987 to 1992 revealed that within this 5 year period, Cantonese speaking students increased 65% from 203 to 311 students; 23 students were identified as Toishanese and 14 as Mandarin speakers.¹⁴

With this influx of new immigrants and refugees it was important that staff be able to communicate in the various Asian languages and Spanish. The school's office personnel: Sok Shum, Jenny Choi, Gin Gee, B.P. Young and coordinator Cheuk Choy were multilingual in Chinese including: Cantonese, Mandarin, Toishanese, Hakka, Chiu Chow and the Vietnamese language. Classroom aides spoke all of these languages and Khmer.¹⁵ Teachers were bilingual in Cantonese, Toishanese, Mandarin and Spanish.

The physical and mental health of the new arrivals from underdeveloped countries in Asia were concerns of the school staff. Mae Suto, Castelar's school nurse for 23 years, recounted the need for health care in the areas of vision, hearing, dental, tuberculosis, skin disorders and inadequate nutrition. Now retired, she remembers working closely with staff and parents to identify children with specific health defects and making referrals to community, district and city-wide medical resources.

Two school-community pilot mental health projects were launched focusing on



TIME magazine June 13, 1983 feature on "Los Angeles, The New Ellis Island" pictured new immigrant from China, 3rd grader, Yue Meng Huang (right) pledging allegiance at Castelar's morning assembly.

children who presented early signs of emotional, social and behavioral difficulties. The first, begun in 1973, involved Chinatown's Resthaven Mental Health Hospital and Castelar School. The project leader, Marleen Wong, a district psychiatric social worker, now Director of the LAUSD Mental Health Section, remembers that this was one of the first early intervention programs involving staff, parents and community resources.¹⁶ Assisting in the project was Marilyn Fong Choy, Castelar School counselor. The case conference team approach initiated here soon became standard school guidance practice.

In 1988, another school-community mental health project, "Focus on Youth" was funded by an Educational Partnership grant and coordinated by assistant principal, Linda Martin. Just as in the earlier Resthaven model, the heart of the program was the "Student Study Team" which brought together support staff, teachers and community agencies to focus on the child and family. Ann Ling Mok, now Deputy Executive Director of the Chinatown Service Center, was the consultant who provided staff training and guidance to the project.



CASTELAR SCHOOL LION DANCE TEAM: In 1989, Front Row L to R: Robert Ngo, Alex Sujo, Henry Lam, Kelly Soo Hoo, William Lee. Back Row L to R: David Vinh, Leng Chhor, Brian Lam, Steven Lee, Damien Garcia, Tony Chan.

I recall that the two most consistent and reliable community resources that out-reached to the school for over 20 years were the Department of Public Social Services, with social workers Bess Wong and Margaret Law, and the Chinatown Service Center staff including Dr. Larry Lew, Julie Cheng, Vicky Wong, Vanda Yung and Christine Hsu. They counseled with students and parents and participated in our case conferences.

Since 1973 the school and children's center have celebrated two community cultural events to recognize our major ethnic groups: Chinese New Year and Cinco de Mayo. Two teachers, Chris Soldate and Rafael Lerma coordinated these and other enrichment multicultural programs performed by students and staff for the school and community. The lion dance team and cultural dancers directed by Lauren Okayama, Children Center Supervisor and Stanley Ng (Fungi) of Alpine Center, were especially in demand all year long. I remember each year, during the Chinese New Year celebration, Lauren's husband, Keisho, friends Max Hendler and Jim Grant would create a huge replica of the year's animal that the children carried in the school program and parade. Max also designed the school's symbol, the dragon that went on the school's red "T" shirts.

During the late 1960's and into the 1970's a number of civic and socially concerned groups had been actively involved in improving the quality of life for Castelar School children. One of these groups involved college students tutoring limited

English speaking children on Saturdays. Stewart Kwoh, Director of the Asian Pacific American Legal Center, and one of the founders from UCLA, recalls that in 1969 UCLA Asian American student groups organized the Asian American Tutorial Project, especially for Castelar students. There were approximately 20 tutors from UCLA, Cal State Los Angeles, USC and Occidental College.¹⁷ Thereafter, for two decades "Saturday School" enrollment each year averaged 100-150 Castelar students tutored by equally as many college volunteers. In 1989, as part of the 20th anniversary celebration, both the Los Angeles City Council and Board of Education hailed the Castelar "Saturday School" project as an exemplary volunteer community service program.

Another community group, the Chinatown Education Project (CEP) organized the Dai Jung School that provided Saturday and summer English and enrichment classes. CEP also initiated a pilot ESL transition program at Castelar utilizing teachers and aides.¹⁸

Two civic organizations that have served Castelar for over 20 years are the Central City Optimists and the Chinese Women Juniors. Each year, as part of our Christmas holiday tradition, all of the children at the school and Children's Center receive packages of treats from the Optimist Santa Claus. These two groups have also been involved in our health fairs, heart walk, earthquake preparedness, scouting, school beautification, outings and other events.

Other long-standing community groups providing service and enrichment activities include the Colburn School of Performing Arts Community Service Orchestra conducted by Dr. Herbert Zipper who has performed biannual orchestral concerts at Castelar for 23 years; Asian American Drug Abuse Program (AADAP); Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE); Central Police Boosters Christmas Program; Coopers & Lybrand; East West Federal Bank; Cathay Bank; United Pacific Bank; and the Chinese Chamber of Commerce for their Chinese New Year donations.

In particular, I appreciated the help of the school's good neighbors around the block: Chinatown Branch Library, Alpine Recreation Center, Pacific Alliance Medical Center (formerly French Hospital), Chinatown Police Substation, Chinese United Methodist Church, First Chinese Baptist Church, Chung Wah Chinese School. Besides its normal use, Castelar has been heavily used as a community center for meetings and classes held by the school district, community organizations and government agencies. Lincoln Adult School has held evening classes to teach Mandarin, ESL and Citizenship. Since 1977, the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California has held its general monthly meetings in the school's multipurpose room; and in 1982 assisted the school in celebrating its 100th anniversary. Ella Quan, a past president of the Society and Castelar School's coordinator chaired the school commit-



Marvin Soo Hoo reads with Jun Fei Lin at Castelar "Saturday School." UCLA Daily Bruin photo, March, 1989.

tee that planned Castelar's celebration and published an account of it in the November, 1983 issue of the Gum Saan Journal.

Prior to 1973, parent involvement at Castelar School was through the school's parent-teacher association (PTA). However, in March, 1973, at the beginning of my assignment to Castelar, the LAUSD required that schools establish a local school council that was elected and which represented a cross section of the school and community. As I mentioned earlier, one priority was to organize the Castelar School-Community Advisory Council to advise the school on matters of education, health, safety and other issues. The first officers were President, Ruby Ling Louie and Vice-President, JoAnn Semon; and assisting us with the by-laws and procedures was Paul Louie, consultant with the Los Angeles County Human Relations Commission.¹⁸

I was pleased to see the number of parents becoming more actively involved and taking leadership roles. All of the school's meetings and communication to parents were in three languages: English, Spanish and Chinese. Bill Hong, parent of four children and a business leader, was one of our most active participants. Many parents such as Shirley Lee, began as a volunteer, then as an active member of the School Advisory Council before becoming its President. She subsequently became Castelar's order clerk who organized and catalogued the school's instructional materials and equipment. Active Hispanic parents who assumed leadership roles were: Joseph Lopez, Blanca Garcia, Michael Perez and Albert Ortiz. In 1990 the Board of Education began to institute other types of organizations for a school's shared decision-making such as the School Leadership Council.¹⁹

Castelar School parents are very supportive of the school's effort to instruct and care for their children; but I recall, two situations when they perceived that school district decisions were not in their best interest. One involved the proposed mandatory busing and the other concerned changing the school's calendar from a traditional to a year-round schedule.

Although *Brown vs. Topeka Board of Education*, the landmark U.S. Supreme Court decision to end racial segregation in our nation's schools occurred in 1954, it was not until 1978 that the LAUSD in *Crawford vs. Los Angeles Board of Education* took its first step to desegregate the district's schools. In the initial selection process, Castelar School, with 98% minority enrollment, was paired with two predominantly white elementary schools in San Fernando Valley.²⁰ However, parents and community groups were very opposed to what they referred to as "forced busing."

JoAnn Semon, a parent and community representative, remembers that on a single day 200 parents came to a morning meeting and 300 in the evening to meet with district administrators and Board members. They called attention to the large number of limited English speaking students and the lack of primary language support and social services at the receiving schools. Since it was already difficult for them to make an adjustment to a new community, busing would only compound their problems.²¹ The Board of Education in its final decision permitted Castelar School to remain a

neighborhood school.²²

It is interesting to note, however, that once their 6th graders completed their education at Castelar, parents have willingly applied for the district's voluntary busing program "Permits With Transportation" (PWT) to junior high schools in the San Fernando Valley. Beginning in 1976, the response had been so overwhelming that nearly an entire graduating 6th grade class numbering up to 150 students would exercise its option to attend secondary school in another community. I estimated that by the time Castelar students graduated from high school, 95% would have received an integrated education.

Throughout the decade of the 1970's I watched Castelar's enrollment steadily rise from a school population of 529 to a high point of 1156 students during the 1980-81 school year. The school became so overcrowded, it required all 12 classes in grades 1 and 2 to attend school on double sessions for half-a-day only.²³ Therefore, I proposed an alternative plan for parents to adopt a year-round schedule whereby only 75% of the student body would be in session at any given time during the year. The traditional 3 months summer vacation would be eliminated. Instead, there would be 3 week vacations interspersed throughout the year. I recall how difficult it was to explain to parents the concept underlying the year-round schedule that would alter their lives. But the prospect that first and second grade children would be able to attend a full day of school convinced them of its educational value.

In July, 1981 Castelar School became one of the first 44 schools in the district to convert to a year round schedule.²⁴ Through the skillful planning of Assistant Principal, Seth Sandberg and School Coordinator, Shirley Bishop, Castelar became the equivalent of four small schools (A,B,C,D) utilizing the school premises on a rotating basis to accommodate all students.

However, during the 4 years, 1981-1985 on the year-round schedule, there was a significant decline in each year's school enrollment. It dropped to 928 students in 1985, a loss of over 200 students or 20% of the student body since the year-round sessions began.²⁵ Parents and staff began to question the value of its continuation. Dr. Gay Wong, then president of the Castelar School Community Council, remembers the unprecedented concession from the LAUSD administration and Board to permit Castelar parents to vote whether to continue the year-round sessions or return to a traditional schedule. The result was a 90% vote to return to the traditional calendar for the 1985-86 school year.

However, in 1990, 5 years later, the district's School Utilization Office attempted to place Castelar School on the year-round calendar again. Parents of the School Leadership Council, Edmund Soo Hoo, Judy Wong, William Tong and Chi Mui, urged Board members and district administrators to allow Castelar to remain on the traditional schedule. I recall that community members and parents organized protests by picketing the school, signing petitions, demonstrating at the district office and appearing before the Board of Education. Board member Jackie Goldberg met with

parents at several community meetings and assisted Castelar in retaining the traditional calendar for the 1990-1991 school year. In the year after my retirement in December, 1991, the school district and parents would meet on this same issue a second time.

Back in 1984, one of my chief concerns was the impact that new families, from the CRA affordable housing being constructed in Chinatown, would have on the school's enrollment. However, by 1990, this situation was considerably alleviated when CRA funded the school's expansion of four new classrooms and an outdoor pavilion. I was grateful that the CRA Chinatown Community Advisory Committee (Al Lum, Chairperson and Don Toy, Castelar Expansion Subcommittee Chairperson) shared our concern and included Castelar School classrooms as one of its priority projects for community improvement.²⁶ The Board of Education in November, 1985 was proud to announce, as a result of this partnership, that Castelar School was the first school in the district to receive funds (\$285,000) for school expansion within a CRA project area.²⁷

CONCLUSION

As I reflected on my tenure I became quite aware that Castelar School is a social institution that continually interacts with its local community, and like all schools, is affected as well by events, issues and policies emanating from city, national and even international affairs. What happened 8,000 miles away in Vietnam—20 years ago; the opening of mainland China in 1979; national policies such as desegregation and immigration; and the Sylmar earthquake in 1971— all have had an impact on Castelar School.

I witnessed in Chinatown and Castelar School a spirit of volunteerism by concerned individuals and groups. Local businesses, public agencies and civic organizations freely gave their time to make this a better community and Castelar School was fortunate to be one of the beneficiaries.

Castelar School, in turn, has played a major role in providing an early foundation for the education of the children in this community—many of whom are recent arrivals. The classroom and support staff have met the changing needs of the school population in these two decades with their bilingual fluency, cooperative teaching and instructional skills. It was a stable faculty with the majority of teachers attaining permanent status. I was also impressed by the long service of Mrs. Micheline Reece who recently retired after teaching 35 years at Castelar School.

According to district pupil statistics, Castelar School has one of the most stable enrollments in the LAUSD—and one of the highest average daily attendance (ADA) among all schools in the district. This is testimony to the positive attitude of parents towards the education of their children as well as their increasing participation in school affairs.

It is remarkable and perhaps unprecedented in LAUSD that so many of Castelar

School's teachers were products of this school, growing up in Chinatown and returning to teach here. They are: Betty Chan, Jean Au, Ellen Inafuku, Lola DosRemedios, Marilyn Fong Choy, Suzie Chow, Lily Wong and Dr. Gay Wong, now a professor of education at Cal State Los Angeles. Dr. Wong went full cycle at Castelar—first as a student, a UCLA tutor, then as a Castelar School bilingual teacher and finally as a parent of two children attending Castelar School. She also served two terms as President of the Castelar School Community Advisory Council.

When I retired in December, 1991, it was noteworthy that Dore Wong, another graduate of Castelar School was assigned as principal. As a role model for her students, she remembers that it was the caring teachers and the school, just a block from her home, that inspired her to become a teacher.

These 19 years have been very rewarding for me and I consider it fortunate to have been personally associated with such a caring and supportive staff, concerned parents and a nurturing community which enabled us to meet the challenge of the 1970's and 1980's.



*L to R:
Ruby Ling Louie, William Chun-Hoon, Dolores Wong at library
celebration.*

FOOTNOTES

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- 9 Interview with Mr. Poy Wong and Dr. Sherwin Chan, August, 1994.
- 10 Interview with Mr. Tap Ngo and son Uy Cheng, January, 1994.
- 11 Interview with Mr. Senh Tran Phuong and daughter, Kelly Phuong . Kelly was in the first Castelar 6th grade class to voluntarily bus (PWT) to Madison Jr. High School in San Fernando Valley. She went on to graduate from UCLA.
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The Editor

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The Purpose of the Chinese History Society of Southern California is:

- (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 our rich, multi-cultural society.

General meetings are held monthly—except July and August—the first Wednesday, at 7:30 p.m., Castelar Elementary School, Multi-purpose Room. 840 Yale Street in Los Angeles Chinatown. Parking is available on school playground.

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