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CHINESE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

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New and Exciting Information about the National Archives as a Resource for Chinese Americans

This issue presents an in-depth look at materials pertaining to the Chinese American experience that are in the holdings of the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) Regional Archives System. We have the honor of publishing this information compiled by Ms. Waverly Lowell, Director of the National Archives-Pacific Sierra Region; information not known in its entirety heretofore.

The Regional Archives System comprises an exciting and largely untapped resource for researching Chinese immigration history, social history and family history for Chinese Americans, particularly those whose families were established prior to 1950. However, the bulk of documents is found in nine of the 13 regional archives, which are strategically located across this nation.

As one NARA brochure states: "Although the National Archives was created primarily for use by the Government, its rich stores of material are available to all: historians interpreting the past, journalists researching stories, students preparing term papers, and persons tracing their ancestry or satisfying their curiosity about particular historical events. The National Archives serves as the Nation's memory for a multitude of purposes."

Historically, the National Archives, located in Washington, D.C., was established in 1934. It was primarily at the urging of historians belonging to the American Historical Association that documents of enduring value to our nation's official life have been preserved and are still being archived. Thus it is that the National Archives "capture the sweep of the past" from the 1700s to the present. Public access to documents, however, is subject to certain regulations as Ms. Lowell will point out.

In 1969 regional archives were established for preserving the records collected by field offices of federal agencies. Documents pertaining to the Chinese American experience, however, vary from one regional archives to the next. Therefore you are urged to carefully peruse the listing for each record group—you may find something that may satisfy your curiosity about a particular historical event or that is of value for your family history.

Relatively few people realize what wonderful things can be found in the regional archives. Robert Jung, one of our Society's members, is very fortunate to possess a copy of the China passport issued in 1883 to his father. (See Gum Saan Journal, December 1993

issue) The original passport is in the archives of the Pacific-Sierra Region but Bob did not know of its existence until May 1982 when our Society held a dinner to memorialize the centennial of the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act. Jo Ann Williamson, the Director at the time, had lent us an enlarged copy of this passport for a special display of various documents required of the Chinese during the Chinese exclusion period. A flurry of excitement occurred when Bob exclaimed, "That's my father's name on that passport!" I was later told the staff at the Pacific-Sierra Region Archives was thrilled to hear this good news.

You will find the regional archives staff happy to assist you if you decide to pursue some avenue of research. The Editor and the Editorial Board of Gum Saan Journal are proud to present this research opportunity to you, a member of your family, or a friend. Our ancestors may have expected to find streets in America paved with gold but, for us, there are actually nuggets of gold in the regional archives that contain precious information for Chinese American history and personal history. We are grateful to Ms. Waverly Lowell and the people who contributed to this article for supplying a guide to the Regional Archives System as a source for such research.



Chun Jan Yut and his sister Chun Mew Sim (case 12017/2617). National Archives-Pacific Sierra Region, San Bruno, CA. Records of the San Francisco District INS (RG 85).

A debt of gratitude goes to Robert & Edith Jung for their generous gift toward the publication of this issue.

HISTORICAL RESOURCES FOR CHINESE AMERICANS AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES, REGIONAL ARCHIVES SYSTEM

**compiled by Waverly B. Lowell, Director,
National Archives-Pacific Sierra Region
from a Reference Information Paper**

A major source for research on Chinese American immigration, travel, trade, and social history during the late-19th century to the mid-20th century is the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) Regional Archives System. NARA is the custodian of our federal documentary heritage and its mission is to preserve and make available for public research federal records of enduring value. Many original historical documents concerning the development and growth of our country are found in the National Archives in Washington, D.C. But a major portion of the National Archives collection of historically valuable records, created by federal field offices, is held by the NARA Regional Archives System.

All of the 13 regional archives (see page 7) have records pertaining to Chinese Americans and nearly all have contributed to this article on their particular holdings.¹

The bulk of these records begins in 1882 with the implementation of a Chinese exclusion policy, commonly referred to as the Chinese Exclusion Act. This policy was actually implemented through a series of acts that proposed to prevent the immigration of all but a few "exempt classes" of Chinese persons to the United States. The acts began with an 1880 treaty allowing the U.S. to legislate against Chinese laborers and ended with the repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Acts by Congress on December 17, 1943. A number of additional laws following the repeal also affected Chinese immigration and naturalized citizenship.

Certain federal agencies were particularly active in enforcing the exclusion laws. Initially the Customs Service took the lead because of the maritime nature of immigration. In 1900 the Office of the Superintendent of Immigration, which had been established in the Department of the Treasury in 1891, became the chief agency responsible for administering federal policy mandated by the Chinese Exclusion Acts. This office evolved into today's Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). Immigration-relation decisions

About the author:

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made by these federal agencies were sometimes appealed to federal district courts, which also heard criminal cases involving Chinese alleged to be living in the U.S. illegally.

Records in the National Archives document the thoughts and actions of federal officials and other persons involved with Chinese exclusion-related policies. They also document the strategies and activities of Chinese and Chinese Americans who struggled against the prohibitive effects of these policies. The large number of records relating to individual immigrants provides a rich source for Chinese American family history, while others constitute an invaluable source for Chinese American community and commercial history.

Record Groups

The National Archives maintains records not by subject, but in "record groups" that correspond to the government agency that created them. Although this arrangement makes subject access more difficult at times, it preserves the organizational and contextual integrity of the records, without which they cannot be understood. The information in this article is organized by record group (RG) and, within each record group, by the particular regional archives holding relevant records. Often the documents in one record group can be linked with those in another. For example, an INS case file may include the case file number of a related district or circuit court case, and vice versa. Another example: INS immigration case numbers can sometimes be retrieved from information provided on ship passenger arrival lists.

Description of the documents within each record group will begin with a history of the federal agency that created them. This will be followed by the name of the regional archives, its locality, and a listing of the specific series of records or documents. Series description will include, whenever possible: date range, quantity, system of arrangement, availability and explanation of finding aids, reference to related microfilm publications, and other information that may assist researchers.²

Although only some regional archives have identified records from the district courts, courts of appeal, and Customs Service, it is likely that records relating to Chinese exclusion and Chinese Americans can be located in the holdings of these Federal agencies nationwide.³ The great majority of National Archives records, including those held by the regional archives, is open to the public for research. In some instances the National Archives is not able to provide public access due to federal legislation. The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) exempts specific categories of information from public disclosure. Access to some files or portions of documents may be restricted due to law enforcement and/or privacy concerns.⁴

This article describes records created by nine federal agencies that document Chinese immigration and the Chinese American experience. Some records, such as those generated by the U.S. District Courts (RG 21), the Immigration and Naturalization Service (RG 85), and the Bureau of the Customs (RG 36) are described in great detail. Other records, including those created by the Bureau of the Census (RG 29), Public Health Service (RG 90), U.S. Attorneys (RG 118), U.S. Navy (RG 181), U.S. Courts of Appeal (RG 276), and the U.S. Marshal's Service (RG 527) are described more succinctly.

This information is intended to encourage Chinese Americans and others to understand and use the holdings of the NARA Regional Archives System for researching family and community history, Asian American studies, and related fields of study.

RECORDS OF DISTRICT COURTS OF THE UNITED STATES

Record Group 21

U.S. district and circuit courts were created by the Judiciary Act of September 24, 1789. The jurisdiction and powers of these federal courts have varied with subsequent legislation, but district courts generally have had original jurisdiction in admiralty and bankruptcy cases, suits for penalties or seizures under federal laws, non-capital criminal proceedings, and suits exceeding \$100 in value in which the United States was the plaintiff. Circuit courts heard appeals from the district courts, and had original jurisdiction over actions involving aliens or citizens of different States as well as law and equity suits where the matter in dispute exceeded \$500. In 1891 the appellate jurisdiction of the circuit courts was transferred to the newly created courts of appeals (see RG 276). The Judiciary Act of 1911 abolished the circuit courts and provided for the transfer of their records and remaining jurisdiction to the district courts.

Most states initially had one district and one circuit court. Additional districts were created as the business of the courts increased. As a result, the court would hold session in various cities within a district. In 1812, circuit courts were authorized to appoint U.S. commissioners to assist in taking bail and affidavits. The commissioners' functions were expanded by subsequent legislation and court rules, and their powers have included authority to issue arrest warrants, examine persons charged with offenses against federal laws, initiate actions in admiralty matters, and institute proceedings for violation of civil-rights legislation.

Territorial district courts, generally established by the organic act that created the territory, had jurisdiction over federal civil, criminal, and bankruptcy actions as well as civil and criminal jurisdiction similar to that of state courts. Records created by a territorial court acting in its capacity as a federal court often became the property of the federal district court when the territory became a state.

Most court records are case files arranged by type of action, such as civil or criminal, and then numerically by case number. These usually include original papers issued by the court or filed by attorneys, such as indictments, subpoenas, complaints, motions, depositions, affidavits, exceptions, findings of fact, opinions, judgments, and decrees. Bankruptcy case files may include schedules of assets and liabilities.

Some older case files include exhibits, though after the 1920s, exhibits were usually removed from the files to be returned to the litigating parties upon conclusion of the proceedings. Transcripts of testimony heard by the court are occasionally found in these case files. Early case files, especially those dated before 1900, sometimes offer only a fragmentary record of proceedings, though the record for a case can sometimes be filled in by other sources, such as court record books (including some on microfilm) and newspa-

per or other published accounts.

Records for a case can usually be located by the name of the court and by case number. The number can sometimes be determined from docket, minute, or order books. Docket books provide a summary of proceedings in each case. Minute books are a daily chronological record of court proceedings. Order books provide the text of each order or judgment. The books often have indexes to the names of the parties involved in the proceedings. Such books are not available for all courts. There is no cumulative index by subject, case name, or other access point. Additional information is sometimes available from the clerk of the court involved.

Habeas Corpus, Criminal, Naturalization and other Case Files

Of special interest to Chinese American researchers are thousands of case files relating to *habeas corpus* actions brought in both the circuit and district courts during the late 1800s and early 1900s to contest the Chinese exclusion actions of federal immigration officials. Cases against Chinese, however, are interfiled with all other cases, so there is no separate series of Chinese case files. Besides court proceedings, some files contain exhibits such as photographs, copies of questioning by immigration officials, passports, and certificates of identity from Chinese consulates.

ORIGINAL

Received by J. H. ...
May 5, 1913

In compliance with the provisions of Article II of the Treaty between the United States and China, of November 17th, 1880, and Section 6 of the Act of the Congress of the United States of America, approved July 3rd, 1894, entitled "An Act to amend an Act to exempt certain family attachments relating to Chinese, approved May 6th, 1899."

This Certificate is issued by the Subdelegate, who has been designated by the Government of China to issue such certificates to citizens of such Government being Chinese person or persons of Chinese descent, to show that the person named hereinafter is a member of one of the exempt classes described by the said Treaty and Act and as such has the permission of said Government to go to and reside within the territory of the United States, after an investigation and verification of the statements contained herein by the heretofore mentioned agent of the United States in this country.

The following description is submitted for the identification of the person to whom the certificate relates:

Name in full, in proper characters of home: P. H. Chen

Title or official rank, if any: None

Physical characteristics: None

Date of birth: 25th October, 1887

Height: 5' 10" 8 inches

Former occupation: Student

When passed: 1898-1899

Where passed: W. C. K. ...

How long passed: 1 year

Present occupation: Student

When passed: 1908-1913

Where passed: Chinese Consulate, San Francisco

How long passed: 7 years

Last place of actual residence: Worse Kwan, 11 Branch, ...

(NOTE:—If a merchant the following blanks should be filled out.)

Title of present or last business: _____

Location of said mercantile business: _____

How long said business has been pursued: _____

Amount invested (or 25) in said business: _____

Present amount value of said business: _____

Specific character of merchandise handled in said business: _____

(NOTE:—If traveler the following blanks should be filled out.)

Financial standing of home in his own country: _____

Probable duration of his stay in the United States: _____

Issued at Yokohama Japan, this 28 day of June 1913.

Lee Shue Tsung
CHINESE CONSUL-GENERAL, (Acting) San Francisco

This duly authorized diplomatic (or consular) officer of the United States hereby certifies that the person named in the above certificate is, in all respects, a member of one of the exempt classes described in the foregoing certificate and has been found to be a bona fide member of such class and accordingly affixes his signature and official seal in order that the same may be admitted to the United States upon identification as the person represented by the attached photograph, once which I have duly filed my official seal.

Wm. ...
AMERICAN CONSUL-GENERAL



Cho Ming Tsa. Certificate for Chinese subject of exempt class, 1913. National Archives-Pacific Sierra Region, San Bruno, CA. Records of the San Francisco District INS (RG 85).

Criminal case files document federal criminal action taken against Chinese who were considered illegal entrants under the Chinese Exclusion Acts. Case files may contain indictments, complaints, opinions, judgments, subpoenas, decrees, photographs, passports, certificates of identity from Chinese consulates, transcripts of interrogations, and other supporting documents.

Although the Chinese Exclusion Acts barred most Chinese immigrants from becoming naturalized U.S. citizens during the years of exclusion, post-1943 naturalization documents provide information that may prove helpful to family history researchers and others. Naturalization records kept by the federal courts may include such documents as certificates of and petitions for naturalization, depositions, and declarations of intent. Naturalization records created prior to October 1906 usually contain relatively small amounts of family history information.

Also documented in federal court files are cases relating to such matters as illegal contract labor and alleged violation of federal tax provisions by merchants on such goods as cigars, liquor, and opium. In addition, common law, equity, and bankruptcy case files provide information on the operations of businesses, some of which may have been owned by Chinese or Chinese Americans.

The 1905 Supreme Court case *U.S. v. Ju Toy* enabled the Department of Commerce and Labor to be the final level of appeal and due process for immigrants and returning travelers claiming U.S. citizenship, thereby virtually eliminating the role played by the federal Courts.

National Archives-Mid-Atlantic Region in PHILADELPHIA

- **Eastern District of Pennsylvania.**

Criminal case files, 1882-1942: Finding aids include criminal case file docket books, indexes of plaintiff and defendant names in individual docket books.

National Archives-Great Lakes Region in CHICAGO

- **Western District of Michigan**, Northern Division at Marquette.

Declarations of intention, 1887-1909 (2 volumes, less than 1 cubic foot): The names of at least 22 Chinese nationals, who had renounced allegiance and fidelity to Kuang Hsu, Emperor of China, are in these records. Only the individual's name, signature, nationality, and filing date are provided. But these are noteworthy cases because: 1) they were filed well within the period after the Chinese Exclusion Acts became law, yet the U.S. District Court in Marquette accepted them and, 2) they were filed in the rather remote Upper Peninsula of Michigan, suggesting that a certain number of Chinese were residing in this region during this period. Finding aids include a list of declaration numbers, names, and filing date.

- **Western District of Michigan**, Southern Division at Grand Rapids.

Criminal case files, 1863-1966 (113 cubic feet): Finding aids include a list of case numbers with the names of defendants, name of the Michigan town where the

offense was committed, filing date for the earliest document in the case file, and number of pages in the file.

National Archives-Central Plains Region in KANSAS CITY, MO.

- **Northern and Southern Districts of Iowa**
- **Eastern and Western Districts of Missouri**
- **Districts of Kansas, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota and South Dakota.**
Criminal case files, 1890-1920: Finding aids include docket books containing name indexes of plaintiffs and defendants.

National Archives-Southwest Region in FORT WORTH, TX

- **Eastern District of Louisiana, New Orleans Division**
General case files, 1806-1932: Records include equity case files relating to Chinese deportation, 1915-1919. Docket books with indexes are available.
- **Southern District of Texas, Galveston Division**
Index to Chinese residing in Galveston; no date: This bound volume lists the Chinese in Galveston who met immigration requirements to reside with the U.S. Entries are arranged alphabetically by name.
- **Western District of Texas, El Paso Division**
Equity case files relating to deportation of Chinese, 1892-1915: National Archives Microfilm Publication M161: *Equity Case Files from the Western District Court of Texas at El Paso Relating to the Chinese Exclusion Acts*, 1892-1915, Roll 1, contains an index to the files.

National Archives-Rocky Mountain Region in DENVER

- **New Mexico Territory, Third Judicial District**
Mixed Civil case files, 1900-1911, Criminal case files, 1890-1911. Docket books with indexes are available as finding aids.

National Archives-Pacific Southwest Region, LAGUNA NIGUEL, CA

- **Arizona Territorial Court, First through Fifth Judicial Districts**
Dockets and case files, 1882-1912: Most cases were first heard by a commissioner, with a territorial justice then sanctioning the decision or hearing an appeal. For cases not appealed, the commissioner's dockets are the best source of information. Some dockets contain indexes.
- **Arizona District Court: Globe, Phoenix, Prescott, and Tucson Divisions**
Criminal case files, 1912-1969. An index is available.
Commissioners Docket, 1912: These dockets contain a summary of the actions taken during a hearing before a commissioner. Photographs of the defendants are often attached to the docket sheet. Arranged numerically by case number.
- **Southern District of California-Central Division, Los Angeles**
General case files, 1887-1907,
Civil and criminal case files, 1907-1967. Indexes are available.

- **Southern District of California-Southern Division, San Diego**
Criminal case files, 1929-1969: Cases from 1929-1952 are indexed.

National Archives-Pacific Sierra Region in SAN BRUNO, CA

- **U.S. Circuit Court, Northern District of California, San Francisco**
Records of U.S. Commissioners, Chinese *habeas corpus* cases, 1884-93, Civil and appellate case files, 1863-1911: Several case files document actions brought by Chinese individuals to contest alleged discriminatory policies employed by the City and County of San Francisco. Indexes to the names of the parties involved are available on microfiche.
- **U.S. District Court, Northern District of California, San Francisco, 1850-1950.**
Admiralty (private) case files, 1851-1955: Indexes available on microfiche. Related records include microfilm number I19, "Memorandum books, *habeas corpus* cases, 1882-1906." This microfilm reproduces five registers, arranged numerically by case number of *habeas corpus* cases in admiralty files. The registers list the name of the petitioner, place of detention, name of the attorney, and final disposition of the petition. These are not indexes.
Chinese *habeas corpus* case record book, 1892-1899,
Register of Chinese *habeas corpus* cases in admiralty, 1882-1906 (microfilm number I19),
Petition and record of naturalization, 1907-1969,
Index to Naturalization in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California, 1852-ca.1989, National Archives Microfilm Publication M1744.
- **U.S. District Court, District of Hawaii, Honolulu**
Records of the Territorial Court, in existence until 1959, are included.
Application for writ of *habeas corpus* case files, 1900-1952,
Habeas corpus docket books, 1900-1959,
Chinese deportation case files, 1927-1940,
Chinese deportation docket book, 1927-1940,
Naturalization case files, 1927-1959.

National Archives-Pacific Northwest Region in SEATTLE

- **U.S. Circuit and District Courts in Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington**
Civil and criminal case files, 1860-
Records include *habeas corpus* cases, appeals of INS rulings, cases relating to the failure to register and receive a certificate of identity, and other criminal activity, including smuggling. Oregon cases are filed under judgment roll number rather than docket number. Finding aids include docket books and plaintiff and defendant indexes.

RECORDS OF THE BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

Record Group 29

The holdings of each Regional Archives include microfilm copies of the nationwide U.S. population census from 1790 through 1920. The censuses provide information about residents of organized Chinese communities as well as Chinese individuals and families living outside these communities. Microfilmed or published book indexes are available for most census records. Soundex indexes exist for the 1880, 1900, 1910, and 1920 censuses.

RECORDS OF THE U.S. CUSTOMS SERVICE

Record Group 36

The Customs Service, created by an act of July 31, 1789, became part of the Department of the Treasury when that department was established in September 1789. The Service has been responsible for the enforcement of numerous laws and regulations pertaining to the import and export of merchandise, collection of tonnage taxes, control of the entrance and clearance of vessels and aircraft, regulation of vessels involved in the coastwise and fishing trades, and the protection of passengers. A Bureau of Customs was established on March 3, 1927 to supervise these activities and, in 1942, it assumed the responsibilities of the Bureau of Marine Inspection and Navigation relating to the registering, enrolling, licensing, and admeasurement of merchant vessels. This responsibility was assigned to the Coast Guard in 1967.

The act that established the Customs Service in 1789 also provided for the creation of collection districts in various coastal, river, Great Lakes, and inland ports. A collector of customs in each district was responsible for the enforcement of all rules and regulations, including the protection of American seamen and passengers and the forwarding of basic data on immigration, imports and exports. Occasionally the collector acted as the depository for federal funds and collected taxes for the Bureau of Internal Revenue. A naval officer in each district, coordinate in rank with the collector, was required to keep separate accounts and copies of all manifests and entries and to countersign certain of the collector's accounts. A surveyor, under the collector's supervision, kept a daily record of all vessel arrivals and clearances, and was assisted by inspectors, weighers, and gaugers in the collection and payment of bounty allowances and fees and the admeasurement of foreign vessels for tonnage duties.

Prior to 1900, when the INS assumed administration of the Chinese Exclusion Acts, the collector of customs was involved in administering the Chinese exclusion policy. Correspondence and policy records document the activities and views of Customs officials who carried out these duties.

National Archives-Pacific Southwest Region, LAGUNA NIGUEL, CA.

• Los Angeles Collection District

Letters sent, 1882-1918,

Incoming correspondence, 1883-1908. These letters relate to all manner of

administrative actions. Letters specifically relating to the Chinese reflect concern that Chinese aliens were being smuggled from Mexico to California via ships landing near Santa Barbara. The records are arranged chronologically in volumes, some of which are indexed by subject or addressee.

- **San Diego Collection District**

Outgoing general correspondence, 1885-1909,

Letters sent regarding the Revenue Cutter Service, 1894-1913,

Special Agents' letters sent, 1885-1909,

Letters received from the Treasury Department, 1881-1919,

Special Agents' letters received, 1894-1909. Much of this correspondence concerns the enforcement of the Chinese Exclusion Acts as well as such topics as individuals under investigation and attempts to intercept Chinese being smuggled in from Mexico.

- **San Diego Collection District, Calexico (CA) Office**

Outgoing general correspondence, 1904-1916,

Incoming official correspondence, 1902-1916. Calexico was established as an entry point along the border with Mexico. Most of the correspondence concerning Chinese immigration relates to the capture of individuals who attempted to cross the border illegally. Arranged chronologically.

- **San Diego Collection District, Campo (CA) Office**

Correspondence of the Deputy Collector in Charge. Situated just north of the border with Mexico, the Campo office's main duties were to regulate traffic crossing the border. The correspondence reflects concern about Chinese entering the U.S. illegally and discusses an investigation of members of the Campo Chinese community.

National Archives-Pacific Sierra Region in SAN BRUNO, CA.

- **San Francisco Collection District**

Letters sent to the Secretary of the Treasury, 1869-1912 (70 volumes, 9 cubic feet):

The records relate to all Customs district functions and to local and regional political and economic matters, such as the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and the 1906 San Francisco earthquake and fire. Arranged chronologically by date sent.

Letters received from the Office of the Secretary of the Treasury, 1895-1912 (60 volumes, 13 linear feet): Arranged chronologically by date sent. Most volumes after 1886 are indexed alphabetically by name of addressee.

Letters received, 1894-1928 (250 volumes, 43 linear feet): These consist of letters received from American and foreign Customs offices, from other federal agencies such as the Consular Service and the INS, and from merchants, brokers, and steamship companies. Arranged chronologically by date received.

Letters sent to other federal agencies and to the general public, 1895-1915 (38 volumes, 3 linear feet): Arranged chronologically by date sent and are indexed

alphabetically by name of addressee.

National Archives-Pacific Northwest Region in SEATTLE

• Puget Sound Collection District

Letters received from Chinese Inspectors, 1897-1902,

Addressee files of letters sent re: Chinese and immigrants, 1898-1900,

Register of Chinese laborers departing from the U.S., 1882-1888. These are arranged chronologically.

Records of A.L. Blake pertaining to Customs activities in Port Townsend, Washington, 1881-1884 (5 volumes, 3 linear inches): This series includes a journal with entries dating from August 13, 1881 to December 20, 1884, and a letter press book whose sole contents is a 14-page letter dated 1887. The journal, compiled by Blake when he served as Customs Inspector in Port Townsend, contains brief entries focusing on weather observations, dates and names of ships arriving and departing, reports of opium smuggling, and rumors of illegal entry by Chinese nationals. Blake's 1887 letter alleges corrupt practices by four Customs employees at Port Townsend.

In re Identification of
CHIN SHEE
Wife of Merchant,
applying to enter the
United States.

STATE OF CALIFORNIA, } SS.
COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO.

Photo of husband
Chin Shee
1911

Photo of applicant
Chin Shee
at wife
1911

That he is a merchant and a member of the firm of Yan Sang & Co.,
130 Waverly Place, San Francisco, California;

That applicant departed from the United States in 1906, from the
Port of San Francisco, and has just returned to the United States
on the SS "Riberia" of July, 1911, ticket #10148;

That the status of applicant as a bona fide merchant was pre-
investigated prior to his departure by the United States Immigration
Service and favorably noted upon;

That applicant now brings with him upon his return to America,
his wife, Chin Shee, whom he has married since he has been abroad,
and that the purpose of this statement is to identify his said wife,
a correct photograph of whom is hereto affixed, together with a
correct photograph of applicant;

WHEREFORE applicant trusts that his said wife may be landed
without delay by virtue of her status as a member of the exempt class.

李 世
(Signed)

Subscribed and sworn to before me
this 10 day of June, 1911

W. M. Swain

Chin Shee (case 10481/10143). Application for wife of a merchant and affidavit of marriage, 1911. National Archives-Pacific Sierra Region, San Bruno, CA. Records of the San Francisco District INS (RG 85).

RECORDS OF THE IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE

Record Group 85

The Office of Superintendent of Immigration was established in the Department of the Treasury by an act of March 3, 1891, and was designated a bureau in 1895 with the responsibility for administering alien contract-labor laws. In 1903 it became part of the Department of Commerce and Labor. Functions relating to naturalization was added in 1906, and it was renamed the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization. In 1913 it was transferred to the Department of Labor as two separate Bureaus of Immigration and of Naturalization, which were reunited by Executive Order on June 10, 1933, to form the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). The INS, which became part of the Department of Justice in 1940, administers laws relating to admission, exclusion, deportation, and naturalization of aliens; patrols U.S. borders; and supervises naturalization work in designated federal courts.

Many of the regional archives hold INS records created primarily during enforcement of the Chinese Exclusion Acts, 1882-1943. Although the acts were repealed in 1943, some case files may contain correspondence and other documents dated as late as the 1960s. Most case files relate to Chinese immigrants and Chinese Americans departing and reentering the U.S., but there are some files for other immigrants who came under the jurisdiction of the Chinese Exclusion Acts, such as Japanese, Koreans, and Filipinos. Laws passed after 1943, such as the War Brides Act and the "Confession Program," generated records that may also be contained in these files.

It helps to know about the different exclusion laws to understand the types of records that were generated. Different laws required different kinds of forms and documents. Various acts suspended immigration of Chinese laborers, permitted reentry of certain Chinese laborers who left the U.S. temporarily, and created the Section 6 exempt status for teachers, students, merchants, and travelers to be admitted upon presentation of a certificate from the Chinese government. The Geary Act of May 1892 required Chinese to register and secure a certificate to use as proof of their right to be in the United States.

The San Francisco earthquake and fire had a major impact on the course of Chinese exclusion bureaucracy. The events of April 18, 1906 destroyed the city's Hall of Records, including vital records of marriages, births, and deaths. Because these records were destroyed, a legal Chinese resident who requested the right from INS to return to China to bring back his family might claim to have more children than he actually did. He would receive the paperwork allowing for their immigration, use what he needed for his own family, and sell or use the extra "slots" to bring in non-immediate family members or village members. These individuals became known as "paper sons."

As INS officials became aware of the existence of paper sons, they developed the interrogation process to weed them out. This made it more difficult for immigrants to enter the U.S. legally. The transcripts of these interrogations, found in many Chinese immigration files, provide a more complete case file for each immigrant as well as a broader view

of their family and the community and village they left behind.

Merchants were excepted from exclusion. A man who could prove his merchant status could obtain a merchant's certificate, allowing him to travel to China or emigrate to the U.S. This status also allowed him to bring in his wife and family if he could provide proof of relation. The records generated by the application process for a merchant's certificate include the merchant's testimony, merchant's passport, testimony of white business colleagues or customers, records of the business, and photographs.

A 1900 law required all Chinese in Hawaii to register and obtain a certificate of residence. To obtain these certificates, the applicant had to submit to an investigation at the INS office. Proof of naturalization by Hawaii and certificates of Hawaiian birth before the islands became a U.S. territory in 1900, as well as special birth certificates for Chinese born in Hawaii, were used to acquire certificates of residency and citizenship.

Locating Exclusion Case Files

A typical Chinese Exclusion Acts immigration case file contains such immigrant-related information as the subject's name, place and date of birth, physical appearance, occupation, names and relationships of other family members, and family history. Specific INS proceedings are also documented. Because of the nature of INS investigations, case files provide links to file numbers for related cases, including those for other family members.

Documents in the files may include applications; certificates of identity and residency; transcripts of INS interrogations and special boards of inquiry; INS findings, recommendations, and decisions; witness statements and affidavits; individual and family photographs; maps of immigrant family residences and villages in China; correspondence; coaching materials; and original marriage certificates.



All the children and grandchildren of Mr. and Mrs. Lim Lip Hong (case 12017/5542), ca. 1914. National Archives-Pacific Sierra Region, San Bruno, CA. Records of the San Francisco District INS (RG 85).

To locate a case file, the researcher must know the name of the immigrant or traveler used on the papers. This may be different than their real or commonly used name. It also helps to have the name in Chinese to verify the name on the file. INS officials often did not understand the arrangement of Chinese names and used family names in the place of given names and vice versa. In addition, forms of address, marital status, or respect, such as "Ah" or "Shee," were taken to be actual names and were listed on the index as such. In some cases they misheard, misunderstood, or misspelled the actual name. In other cases Chinese names were converted to Hawaiian names for phonetic reasons, such as "Chung" to "Akuna."

If individuals never left the U.S., chances are they were not affected by the Chinese exclusion laws, and case files for them may not exist. Holdings of regional archives relating to these INS Chinese exclusion records are described in the following.

National Archives-Northeast Region in NEW YORK CITY

• New York District Office

Chinese Exclusion Acts case files, 1880-1960 (252 cubic feet): Files are arranged by case number. Finding aids include a detailed database listing name, aliases, hometown, occupation, ports of entry, and other details. Names are in English and Chinese using the four-corner coding system.

National Archives-Mid-Atlantic Region in PHILADELPHIA

• Philadelphia District Office (District 4)

Case files of Chinese immigrants, 1900-1923: Included are files on resident Chinese laborers and merchants of Pennsylvania, southern New Jersey, West Virginia, and Delaware. Also included are descriptive lists of Chinese seamen on vessels arriving at the Port of Philadelphia, a special census of Chinese taken in 1905, and administrative files. The files are arranged numerically by case number, 1 to 3415, with gaps. This series is also available as National Archives Microfilm Publication M1144, *Case Files of Chinese Immigrants, 1895-1920, From District No. 4 (Philadelphia) of the Immigration and Naturalization Service*, (51 rolls).

Chinese letters sent, 1895-1903 (6 volumes): The records are press copies of outgoing letters from Chinese Immigration Inspectors to the Office of the Collector of Customs for Philadelphia. They relate to the administration of the Chinese Exclusion Acts, particularly the enforcement of the provision of the convention of December 8, 1894, providing for the reentry of certain classes of Chinese laborers. Arranged chronologically.

Letters sent concerning Chinese, 1904-1911 (12 volumes): The records are press copies of outgoing letters, chiefly to the Office of the Commissioner General of the Immigration Service, the Collector of Customs for Philadelphia, Chinese Inspectors, and Chinese aliens. They concern the administration of Chinese exclusion laws and regulations, including matters relating to the entry, detention, arrest, and deportation of Chinese aliens; requests of Chinese for certificates of

residence; and instructions for inspectors concerning the handling of Chinese appeal cases. Also included are copies of testimony taken in the appeal cases of aliens concerning their unlawful entry to the United States. Records are arranged chronologically.

Register of Chinese cases, 1897-1903 (6 volumes): The registers list name, occupation, date, case number and decision rendered by the Immigration Office concerning deportations. Arranged alphabetically by given name.

Office diary relating to Chinese cases, 1903-1904 (1 volume): The diary includes entries for letters sent and received relating to Chinese cases; ships boarded that employed Chinese crewmen; visitors, both Chinese and other interested parties, to the district office; and action taken on Chinese Cases. Arranged chronologically.

Reports of boarding officers of vessels with Chinese crews, 1912-1915: These reports show name of vessel, nationality, name of ship's master, where and when the vessel was boarded, port of origin, number of passengers, number of Chinese crewmen, and name of boarding officer. Arranged chronologically.

Requests for investigation of Chinese desiring to leave the U.S., 1895-1903: The records consist of letters from the Office of the Collector of Customs requesting that the Chinese Inspector of the Bureau investigate Chinese individuals who had requested permission to leave the U.S. for a visit abroad. The letters include the name, occupation, and address of persons requesting permission to leave. Arranged chronologically.

Daily reports of Chinese cases investigated, 1909-1911: Investigations of evidence submitted by Chinese applicants for admission and of laborer's return certificates, as well as ad interim determination of status, were reported to the Bureau's central office each day. These reports provide the name of the office and the name, class, and port of entry of each individual being investigated. Arranged chronologically.

Miscellaneous records relating to Chinese cases, 1900-1911: Included are regulations governing passage of Chinese in transit through the U.S., the expense account of the Chinese Inspector, personal letters of Chinese persons confiscated by the Bureau, identification cards of Chinese seamen, rough drafts of the Special Census of Chinese (1904) for West Virginia, and unidentified still photographs of Chinese persons.

Identification papers of Chinese appearing at the Philadelphia Exposition of 1899: Identification papers were given to each Chinese person sent by the Chinese government to exhibit the arts, crafts, religions, and social life of China at the Philadelphia Exposition. The individual's name, age, height, physical description, occupation, and place of residence are listed, and a photograph of the individual is attached.

- **Baltimore District Office (District 5)**

Case files of Chinese immigrants, 1904-1940: The files typically include correspondence

with the central and district offices of the INS, the Customs Service, and private citizens relating to the admission, exclusion, and departure of Chinese laborers, merchants, students, and seamen. Arranged by file number.

National Archives-Great Lakes Region in CHICAGO

- **Chicago District Office (including suboffices in Milwaukee, Wisconsin and Gary, Indiana)**

Correspondence of the Chinese Division, 1893-1924 (8 cubic feet): Included are letters received and letters sent by inspectors engaged in the enforcement of Chinese immigration laws. Arranged numerically, 1/1 to 27/19, in a subject-numeric system.

Chinese case files, 1898-1940 (66 cubic feet): These are arranged numerically by file number.

- **St. Paul District Office**

Chinese case files, 1906-42 (10 cubic feet): These are arranged numerically and consecutively for each fiscal year.

National Archives-Southwest Region in FORT WORTH, TX

- **El Paso District Office (District 15)**

Letters received, 1896-1911: These letters to collectors of customs and immigration inspectors relate to detention, admission, and deportation of immigrants; certificates of identity; and administrative matters. Arranged in rough chronological order. Some volumes of letters are indexed by name and subject.

Letters sent, 1894-1912: The letters are press copies from the inspector-in-charge at El Paso to the Commissioner-General of Immigration, Chinese inspectors, and others concerning administrative matters and the admission, detention, and deportation of immigrants. Arranged in rough chronological order. Some volumes of letters are indexed by name and subject.

Correspondence, 1908-1909: Included are letters received from the inspector-in-charge at Tucson, and some letters sent by the Chinese inspector at Benson, Arizona, relating to administrative matters and to trains inspected for illegal immigrant passengers. Arranged in rough chronological order.

Correspondence, 1911-1919: This consists of case files of letters received by the supervising inspector at El Paso from inspectors at field offices concerning the enforcement of immigration laws, particularly violations of contract labor provisions. Arranged numerically by file number.

Statements of aliens and related findings of a Board of Special Inquiry, 1905-1908: These relate to deportation proceedings held in Tucson. Included are statements by aliens, health certificates, and arrest warrants. Arranged chronologically.

List of Chinese deported from Arizona, 1907-1908: The records consist of "Description of Chinese Person Deported" forms, which include photographs and date deported. Arranged numerically and indexed alphabetically by name of deportee.

National Archives-Pacific Southwest Region, LAGUNA NIGUEL, CA.

- **Los Angeles District Office**

Chinese Exclusion Acts case files, 1893-1943 (159 linear feet): The files are arranged by various filing codes dependent on the time period. An index is currently being compiled.

- **Bakersfield (CA) Local Office**

Chinese Exclusion Acts case files, 1899-1955 (< 2 linear feet).

- **Calexico (CA) Local Office**

Chinese Exclusion Acts case files, 1920-1968 (78 linear feet).

- **Los Angeles Local Office**

Chinese Exclusion Acts case files, 1932-1950 (28 linear feet).

- **Nogales (AZ) Local Office**

Chinese Exclusion Acts case files, 1922-1944 (<1 linear foot).

- **San Diego Local Office**

Chinese Exclusion Acts case files, 1911-1976 (4 linear feet).

- **San Pedro (CA) Local Office**

Chinese Exclusion Acts case files, 1894-1965 (78 linear feet).

All local office case files are arranged sequentially by case file numbers, and indexes are currently being compiled.

National Archives-Pacific Sierra Region in SAN BRUNO, CA.

- **San Francisco District Office**

There is no thorough index to the case files of the San Francisco District Office, although there is a name index to the certificates of identity issued. An index is currently being compiled, beginning with the early files. Case numbers may sometimes be found by using ship passenger lists on microfilm; that is, if the ship and approximate date of arrival are known. But at least for the present, the primary way to obtain case file numbers for particular persons, including family members, is to contact the INS San Francisco District Office.

Arrival investigation case files, 1884-1944 (1060 cubic feet),

Return certificate application case files of natives departing, 1903-1912,

Return certificate application case files of lawfully domiciled laborers departing, 1903-1912,

Return certificate application case files of lawfully domiciled merchants, teachers, and students departing, 1903-1912,

Return certificate application] case files of Chinese departing, 1894-1912,

Certificate of identity books, 1909-1936 (1 cubic foot),

Angel Island construction and maintenance files, and telephone cable files, 1910-1940,

Return certificate application case files of Chinese departing, 1912-1944 (255 cubic feet),

Case files of investigations not resulting in warrant proceedings in the San Francisco

district and investigations within the San Francisco district at the request of other service offices, 1912-1950 (4 cu. ft),

Case files of immigration fraud investigations, 1914-1924 (less than 2 cubic feet):

This is a very large case file containing materials from the Vauer and Densmore investigations. Included are Chinese village maps, extensive family genealogies, photographic logs of recent deportees, passenger lists, interrogations of immigrants and suspect INS employees, and coaching papers.

Case files of investigations resulting in warrant proceedings, 1912-1950 (16 cubic feet),

Boat files, 1911-1941,

General correspondence, 1915-1941,

General immigration case files, 1944-1955 (262 cubic feet),

Chinese partnership case files, 1894-1944 (42 cubic feet): These files relate to individual merchants and merchant firms. Included are partnership lists, directories, and street maps of merchant firms in San Francisco and other California cities.



Exterior of Pow Hing and Company, general merchants, Riverside, CA. (case 13486/5-18). Exhibit in the case of Hom Kim Sang, son of a merchant, ca.1914. National Archives-Pacific Sierra Region, San Bruno, CA. Records of the San Francisco District INS (RG 85).

General immigration case files, 1944-1955, for Fresno, Oakland, Sacramento, Stockton, and Salinas, California.

Records of arrivals and disposition of Japanese, 1928-1942 (unnumbered microfilm),

San Francisco Chinese mortuary records, 1870-1933 (unnumbered microfilm),

Certificates of identity for Chinese residents, 1909-ca.-1946 (unnumbered microfilm),

War brides with children, 1946-1948 (unnumbered microfilm),

Register of Chinese departure case files, 1912-1943 (unnumbered microfilm),

Records of miscellaneous [Chinese] immigration cases from other ports, 1911-1912 (unnumbered microfilm),

Registers of Chinese departing from and returning to the United States, 1882-1908 (unnumbered microfilm),

Chinese passenger lists, 1897-1905 (unnumbered microfilm),

Registers of alien students admitted under the Immigration Act of 1924, 1924-1946 (unnumbered microfilm),

Index of Chinese court certificates, ca. 1885-1905 (unnumbered microfilm),

Records of natives [U.S.-born Chinese Americans] departing, 1909-1913 (unnumbered microfilm),

Alphabetical index of Chinese partnerships in and outside of San Francisco, California, no date (unnumbered microfilm),

Daily records of applications [by Chinese laborers] for return certificates, 1903-1912 (unnumbered microfilm),

Daily records of applications [by Chinese merchants, students, and teachers] for return certificates, 1903-1912 (unnumbered microfilm).

- **Hawaii District Office, 1900-ca.-1960** Finding aids include an index to the case files arranged alphabetically by name.

Outgoing correspondence of the chief immigration officer, 1903-1904 (1 cubic foot),

Index to applicants for reissuance of certificate of identity, 1910-? (1 cubic foot),

Card index to case files (4 cubic feet),

Early Chinese immigration case files, 1903-1915 (37 cubic feet),

Case files of arrest warrants and deportation orders, 1913-1942 (3 cubic feet),

Applications for certificate of citizenship-Hawaiian Islands, 1924-1941 (2 cubic feet),

Applications for admission as U.S. citizens (non-Chinese), 1924-1928 (3 cubic feet),

Case files of non-immigrants admitted as students, teachers, and ministers, 1917-1938 (2 cubic feet),

Applications for return certificates by lawfully domiciled Chinese laborers, 1919-1937 (47 cubic feet),

Case files of Chinese applicants for Form 431, merchants return permit, 1912-1936 (8 cubic feet),

Case files of Chinese applicants for Form 430, American citizens of Chinese race for pre-investigation of status, and Chinese applicants for admission as U.S. citizens, 1916-1942 (73 cubic feet),

Case files of Chinese applicants for admission as wives of merchants, teachers, and ministers, 1916-1939 (4 cubic feet),

Case files of Chinese applicants for admission as wives of native-born American citizens of Chinese descent, 1916-1941 (2 cubic feet),

Case files of Chinese applicants for admission as children of Chinese merchants, teachers, and ministers, 1913-1940 (3 cubic feet),

Case files of Chinese applicants for admission as children of native-born American citizens of Chinese descent, 1916-1935 (2 cubic feet),

Visa files of Chinese applicants for admission as Section 6 students, teachers, and travelers, 1916-1942 (8 cubic feet),

Visa files of Section 6 Chinese applicants to proceed to the continental U.S. (1 cubic foot),

Case files of applicants for duplicate certificates of [Hawaiian] residence, 1921-1938 (less than 1 cubic foot),

Case files of applicants for duplicate certificates of identity, 1920-1941 (1 cubic foot),

Case files of Chinese applicants for admission as wives and/or children of Chinese naturalized under the Hawaiian Kingdom and pre-examination of status of Chinese claiming such naturalization, 1919-1929 (2 cubic feet),

Case files of U.S. citizens of Chinese race applying for certificates of citizenship-Hawaiian Islands-departing to the continental U.S. or foreign destinations, 1924-1944 (59 cubic feet),

Landing statements, 1903-1924 and 1946-1959 (35 cubic feet),

General immigration case files, 1944-1949 (28 cubic feet),

Certificates of citizenship, 1926-1955 (29 cubic feet): These records are arranged chronologically in two date span groups: 1926-1928 and 1928-1955, and thereunder by certificate number.

Register of Chinese confession cases, 1957-1968: The register lists the name and immigration case file number of each interrogee, and is arranged chronologically by date of case.

Records of the Chung Shin Tong, Lung Doo section, ca. 1943-ca. 1951: Arranged by type of record (membership lists, membership receipts, or minute books) and thereunder chronologically by year (unnumbered microfilm, 5 rolls),

General immigration case files, 1949-1954.

National Archives-Pacific Northwest Region in SEATTLE

• Seattle District Office

Chinese Exclusion Acts case files, 1895-1943 (650 cubic feet): The files are arranged by office or suboffice (including Helena, Montana; Port Townsend;

Seattle [two subseries], Sumas, Washington; and Vancouver, British Columbia—where the U.S. consul maintained some records—and thereunder by case number. The numbering systems are unique to each office or suboffice. A name index is currently being compiled. Dates of case files vary with the office.

List of Chinese certificates of identity issued, 1911-1938: The list contains the person's name, certificate number, city of residence, and section of the law under which admitted. It is arranged by certificate of identity number which corresponds roughly to date of issue.

• **Portland District Office** (84 cubic feet for all series)

Chinese Exclusion Acts case files, 1891-1943: The files are arranged in two groups: 1891-1914 and 1914-1943. The first group is arranged by type of file (returning, landed, refused, miscellaneous) and thereunder by file number. The second group is arranged by file number. Finding aids include a box list for the first group of records. National Archives Microfilm Publication M1638, *Returning and Landing Records*, may also be useful as a finding-aid.

Testimony of witnesses, 1893-1894: These are brief synopses of witness testimony for "returning Merchant Chinese." The testimony usually relates to business associations and confirmation of identity. Marginal comments usually indicate the disposition of the case (admitted or rejected). Arranged chronologically, with indexes in the front of the volume.

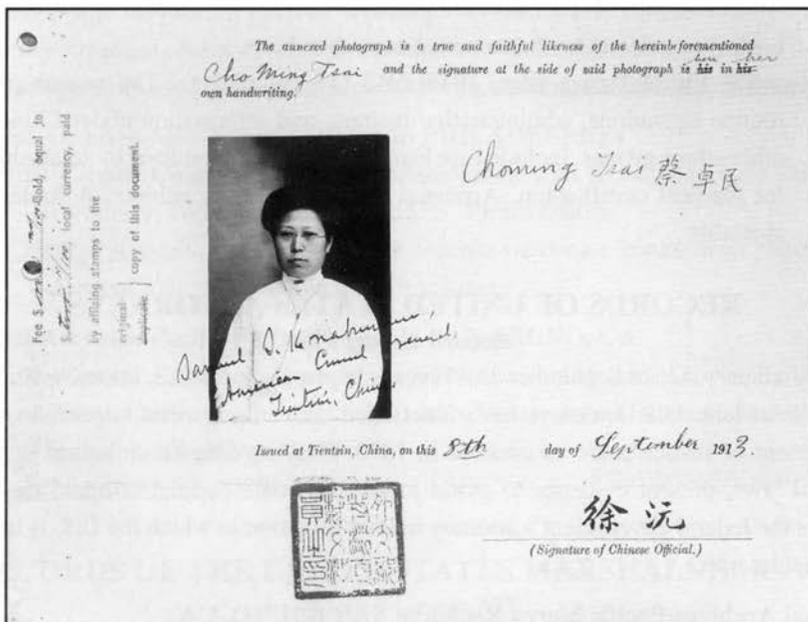
Partnership books, 1890-1901: The volumes vary in content, but most contain information about businesses in Oregon and some have information on businesses throughout the Pacific Northwest. Some volumes indicate individuals' arrival dates, whether refused or admitted, and their business relationships. Arranged alphabetically by the name of the company.

Chinese arrest book, 1903-1941: This volume was maintained by the Chinese inspector at Portland and lists those Chinese arrested for various offenses but primarily for alleged violations of the Chinese Exclusion Acts. The case number for the person arrested is usually provided. Arranged by date of arrest, with an index at the front of the volume.

Registers of merchants & laborers, 1882-1899: These volumes include the certificate of identity number, name, place of last residence, occupation, vessel and date on which the person departed. Some entries indicate whether the person returned, and on what date and vessel. Arranged chronologically by date of departure. These volumes appear to have been created by the Customs Service in Portland but were then transferred to the INS. Similar volumes exist for Seattle among the records of the Customs Service (RG 36).

List of Chinese landed and refused in Astoria [Oregon] and Portland, 1893-1903: These volumes listing arriving Chinese sometimes include the name of the business they were affiliated with; the name of the ship they arrived on; the last

place of residence in the U.S., if returning from abroad; and certificate of identity number. Arranged by date of arrival.



C.R. Chen (case 128/24-2). Certificate for Chinese subject of exempt class, 1913. National Archives-Pacific Sierra Region, San Bruno, CA. Records of the San Francisco District INS (RG 85).

RECORDS OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE, 1912-1968

Record Group 90

The Public Health Service, originally called the Marine Hospital Service, had its origins in an act of July 16, 1798, which authorized hospitals for the care of sick and disabled American merchant seamen. The scope of its activities was greatly expanded by subsequent legislation. It was part of the Department of the Treasury from 1798 to 1939, the Federal Security Agency from 1939 to 1953, and became part of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare in 1955.

The Public Health Service operates marine hospitals, hospitals for specific diseases, medical facilities for federal penal institutions, quarantine and health stations, and research institutions and laboratories. It conducts research in the cause, prevention, and control of disease and disseminates health information.

National Archives-Pacific Sierra Region in SAN BRUNO, CA.

- **San Francisco Quarantine Station, Angel Island, California.**

In 1896 a San Francisco Board of Health ruling led to an action remanding all incoming Chinese and Japanese ship passengers to the station. The records are concerned primarily with general station administration and operations rather than with individual immigrants.

Correspondence, 1890-1926 (70 volumes, 12 cubic feet): This consists of several series of letters sent or received, some in letter press copy books. Arranged chronologically. Folder lists are available and a few volumes of the letter press books are indexed by the names of correspondents.

General administrative files, 1918-1948 (15 cubic feet): The records concern routine operations, administrative matters, and information about Chinese and other ethnic groups. Included are lists of passengers submitted by steamship lines for medical certification. Arranged alphabetically by subject. A folder list is available.

RECORDS OF UNITED STATES ATTORNEYS

Record Group 118

The Judiciary Act of September 24, 1789, made provision for U.S. attorneys appointed by the President. U.S. attorneys have functioned under the general supervision of the Department of Justice since its creation in 1870. They investigate violations of federal criminal laws, present evidence to grand juries, prosecute Federal criminal cases, and serve as the federal government's attorney in civil litigation in which the U.S. is involved or has an interest.

National Archives-Pacific Sierra Region in SAN BRUNO, CA.

- **Northern District of California, Southern Division (San Francisco)**

Civil, criminal, and appeals cases concerning immigration, 1905-1942 (4 cubic feet)

RECORDS OF NAVAL DISTRICTS AND SHORE ESTABLISHMENTS

Record Group 181

National Archives-Pacific Sierra Region in SAN BRUNO, CA.

- **12th Naval District, Treasure Island, San Francisco**

Commandants records, 1851-1960: These records include a small amount of material concerning the use of naval personnel to control crowds reacting to the arrival of Chinese immigrants at San Francisco in the late 1800s, and a 1945 report entitled "Chinese Situation in the San Francisco Area."

RECORDS OF THE U.S. COURTS OF APPEALS

Record Group 276

The courts of appeals are intermediate courts created by an act of March 3, 1891, to relieve the Supreme Court from considering all appeals in cases originally decided by federal trial courts. They review final and certain interlocutory decisions of district courts (see RG 21) except where the law provides for direct review by the Supreme Court. They also review orders of federal administrative bodies such as the Securities and Exchange Commission and the National Labor Relations Board.

The records include case files of appeals by defendants charged with violation of the Chinese Exclusion Acts. Case files may contain copies of indictments, complaints, opinions, judgments, subpoenas, decrees, transcripts of interrogations, and other supporting documents. Arranged consecutively by case number, with cases involving Chinese interfiled with other types of cases. There is no separate series of criminal appeals for Chinese cases.

National Archives-Mid-Atlantic Region in PHILADELPHIA

- **Third Circuit Court of Appeals** (Philadelphia), with jurisdiction over Delaware, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Criminal Appeals, 1882-1942: These records are docket books, with plaintiff and defendant indexes available in each volume.

National Archives-Pacific Sierra Region in SAN BRUNO, CA.

- **Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals** (San Francisco) with jurisdiction over Alaska, Arizona, California, Guam, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, the Marianas Islands, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington.

Appellate case files, 1891-1969.

RECORDS OF THE UNITED STATES MARSHALS SERVICE

Record Group 527

The Judiciary Act of September 24, 1789, made provision for U.S. marshals appointed by the President. They have functioned under the general supervision of the Department of Justice since its creation in 1870.

U.S. marshals execute and serve writs, processes, and orders issued by U.S. courts, U.S. commissioners or magistrates, and commissions. They also notify the Department of Justice of defiance of federal authority.

National Archives-Great Lakes Region in CHICAGO

- **Indiana; Southern District**

Correspondence regarding Chinese immigration cases, 1905-1915 (1 volume, less than 1 cubic foot): Included are reports summarizing actions taken in Chinese immigration cases, both before and after the issuance of orders for deportation, and correspondence with the Commissioner General of Immigration concerning Chinese immigration matters. Arranged in rough chronological order.

These records provide a rich resource that has not received the attention it deserves. The scope, quantity and quality of material is unique in the documentation of immigrant groups. The faces, communities, businesses and stories revealed in these documents are inspiring and tragic; they need to be studied and share. It is hoped that this article will promote research for both family history and scholarly studies.

Footnotes

1. I would particularly like to thank Lisa Miller and Nancy Malan for their editorial assistance; Daniel D. Nealand for his contribution to the introduction; and the following staff from the contributing Regional Archives: Robert Morris, Kellee Blake, Beverly Watkins, Scott Forsythe, Martin Tuohy, Don Jackanicz, Michael Brodhead, Margaret Hacker, Paul Wormser, Eileen Bolger, Bill Greene, Lisa Miller, Neil Thomsen, Laura McCarthy, and Sue Karren.
2. According to the Society of American Archivists' 1992 *A Glossary for Archivists, Manuscript Curators and Records Managers* by Lewis J. and Lynn Lady Bellardo: "Series are file units or documents arranged in accordance with a filing system or maintained as a unit because they result from the same accumulation or filing process, the same function, or the same activity; have a particular form; or because of some other relationship arising out of their creation, receipt or use. A series is also known as a record series."
3. Each regional archives has a published guide to its holdings, lists of its holdings of National Archives microfilm publications, and special reference lists, available upon request.
4. Individual immigration case files relating to events more than 75 years old are generally public records, open to the public for research. Case file documents relating to events less than 75 years old may be subject to restrictions on public access based on Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C.552) sections (b)(6) and (b)(7)(c). In attempting to examine any information in the files subject to personal privacy restrictions, a researcher can act as an authorized representative of the subject individual upon furnishing the Archives with evidence of the subject individual's consent. The Archives always requires that a researcher furnish reasonable and appropriate identification, such as a valid driver's license. Protection of privacy is not applicable if the subject of the file is deceased. Researchers are asked to provide evidence that the person covered in a requested record is deceased.

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- **National Archives-Rocky Mountain Region**
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Alaska

CHINESE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Founded Los Angeles, California, November 1, 1975

Incorporated under the laws of the State of California, December 23, 1976

Office: 969 No. Broadway, Los Angeles

Telephone: (213) 621-3171

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, multicultural society.

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

OFFICERS for 1995-1996

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Gum Saan Journal, published since 1977, is issued twice a year, in June and December. It is currently available by subscription only at \$5.00 a year.

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Additional copies of Gum Saan Journal and books published by the Society are available for purchase. Please write Publications Committee, CHSSC, P.O. Box 862647, Los Angeles, CA 90086-2647 for listing and cost.



Gum Saan Journal

CHINESE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

DECEMBER, 1995

Vol. 18, No. 2

COLLECTIVE VISION WITH COLLECTIVE SPIRIT:

**The Chinese Historical Society of Southern California,
1975 to 1995**

by Marjorie Lee

Question: *Field trips — oral histories — community research projects — walking tours — 8-page newsletters — a cemetery shrine and a heritage & visitors center together... WHAT have we created?*

Answer: *WE have created an incredibly friendly, ambitious, seriously funny, inquisitive, not-for-profit, completely volunteer, over 300+ strong membership community organization whose mission has remained dynamically enthusiastic over the last 20 years!*

Dedication to the Devoted

They dreamed and sought... they planned and implemented... they worked and fought... and now, 20 years later — we celebrate! Who are “they”? “They” are the many loyal, dedicated, and energetic members of the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California (CHSSC). They have placed the Chinese Americans in Southern California on the road map of American history. And they have earned the respect of their own community.

Committed to an “appreciation of our Chinese American heritage,” CHSSC has researched, preserved and presented powerful testimony to the presence of Chinese Americans in Los Angeles and the greater Southland. Twenty years later, the Society’s membership —over 300 strong, of whom 20% are non-Chinese Americans— represents a multiplicity of professions, interests, and heritages with a common, collective dream and vision. It is to them, and their tireless efforts, that these pages are dedicated.

Humble, Bold Beginnings

Next to discovering the secret recipe for Phoenix Bakery’s flaky, sticky-sweet butterflies is the all-impossible task of summarizing the Society’s achievements, contributions, and creations of the past 20 years in just a few pages. The space is insufficient to list all of

About the author:

Marji is the Library Coordinator for the Asian American Studies Center Library at UCLA. She has made the Society her inspirational ‘home’ since she was a graduate student in Asian American Studies. She is currently working on the Society’s WWII Veterans Project.

Message from the President of CHSSC:

The years of 1994 and 1995 have seen us marching boldly forward with a firm vision on our projects and goals and with the faith that our Society can move mountains. Since we are celebrating our 20th anniversary, I believe we have matured to a point where we can take on greater things but the success in reaching our goals must rest on the shoulders of a committed membership. We must share the same vision in order for our mission to be accomplished.

As President of our Society, I can only provide the leadership; I can only gently nudge and motivate the membership into action to achieve our goals. The following are some of our projects in action:

1) purchase of the property at 411-415 Bernard Street in Los Angeles for a Chinatown Heritage and Visitors Center. Plans call for construction of a 3-story building at the rear of the property for offices, classrooms, and a research and storage archive.

2) completing the first phase in preserving the Chinese Cemetery Shrine, built in 1888, at the Evergreen Cemetery in Boyle Heights.

3) joint publication of the book *Origins and Destinations: 41 Essays on Chinese America* by our Society and UCLA Asian American Studies Center.

4) a new Oral History Project about Chinese American World War II Veterans in Southern California. Plans call for publishing a booklet on the project. This was inspired by the Fall dinner program held on November 10, 1994 when veterans who "Served with Honor" were honored.

5) our Society now qualifies for Study and Research grants because we have the largest collection of Chinese artifacts in the United States. One collection contains 200,000 artifacts excavated from old Chinatown located near the Union Station. It was given to us by the Metro Transit Authority of Los Angeles. We received and assumed ownership of a collection of 116 boxes of Chinese artifacts from the Santa Barbara Historical Society. Plans call for an Artifact Traveling Display and Loan Program sometime in the future.

I hope this brief list of activities will whet your enthusiasm so that you will be inspired to become involved—if you have not already done so—in our activities and projects. Our Society is doing many exciting things but the bottom line is membership participation in order for us to be successful in our mission.

Sincerely,

Irvin Lai

December 1995

its people, places, and programs. So, it is my intention to acknowledge the Society's devoted, hard-working, and resourceful members, not by individual name but by their collective efforts.

Interviews with some members and a look through past monthly "News 'n Notes" and *Gum Saan Journal* issues have enabled me to capture essence and heart of their accomplishments.

Achievements

- **Monthly meetings & newsletters.** Few community organizations can boast a 10-month calendar of general meetings that have spanned 20 years. Similarly, for two decades, the monthly newsletter "News 'n Notes" has been sent to the membership on a regular basis. Members anticipate receiving the N 'n N simply because its many pages are filled with anything and everything anyone would want to know about the comings and goings of Chinese Americans in the Southland.

- **Historical tours.** The ambitious field trips planned and led by the Society were designed to expose, educate and engage its members and friends of known and just-known history. The great Mother Lode country expedition, explorations to Locke, Marysville, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Riverside, and Ventura, the Hawaii excursion, filled members with a deep sense of pride and awe over testimonies of resiliency, resourcefulness, and survival.

- **Spring/Fall Dinner Programs.** Attendance by hundreds of members and friends at dinner programs was affirmation that the Society was indeed discovering, developing, and producing essential "food" to nurture a community hungry for a history neglected in textbooks. Many programs recognized Chinese American pioneers from different walks of life. These included honoring actors, women, entrepreneurs at China City, members of the legal profession and World War II veterans. These programs were breath-taking, not-to-be-missed, occasions that warmed the heart and strengthened the human spirit.

- **Training & Oral History/research Projects.** A unique relationship with UCLA's Asian American Studies Center resulted in the Society's first major oral history project and an all-day workshop on researching family history. The oral history project yielded 165 interviews and nearly 1,500 photographs and archival memorabilia of Chinese Americans who resided in Los Angeles before 1945.

A new research project will be focusing on Chinese American World War II veterans who lived and are living in Southern California. To date, over 70 veterans have been identified.

- **Discovery & Preservation.** An especially proud moment in the life of our Society took place on September 5, 1976 when members took part in the Golden Spike Ceremony that celebrated the linking of Los Angeles to San Francisco by rail 100 years ago. CHSSC was invited by the Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society to take part in this ceremony held at Lang Station, in the town of Saugus. On that day, our Society installed a bronze

plaque, recognizing the neglected contributions of over 3,000 Chinese laborers who built the Southern Pacific Railroad, especially the San Fernando Tunnel, which in 1876 was the longest one west of the Appalachians. Many lives were lost. Over 7,000 feet long, the tunnel required excavation of one and one-third miles of solid rock through the mountain range out to Soledad Canyon.

Due to archaeological discoveries of early "Chinatowns" in cities like Santa Barbara, Ventura, Redlands, and Riverside, our Society has greatly gained in knowledge of local Chinese American history and culture.



Golden Spike Ceremony: l to r: the late Chuck Yee and journalist Frank Kwan holding the gold spike in front of the CHSSC plaque at Lang Station. 5 September 1976.

Contributions

- **Service projects.** In appreciation and recognition of the community, CHSSC has participated in and supported many community events and issues. These include the El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historic Park Museum of Chinese American History, the Chinese New Year Firecracker Run, Lotus Festival, health fairs, the Chinatown Library's English Conversation Center, and Moon Festival, just to name a few.

- **Camaraderie.** The enthusiasm and common vision of the founders and charter members generated an impressive growth in the Society. Attracted by the friendliness, sincerity, and vision of the members, many have been drawn to the Society. First, because of its warmth and second, out of a infectious interest in the history of Chinese Americans in Southern California.

- **Educational empowerment.** Walking tours, guest lectures in high school and college classes, and even a national conference on the "Origins and Destinations" of Chinese Americans represent just a few of the Society's educational efforts.

• **Publications.** The Society has published a Walking Tour *Map* and brochure of Los Angeles Chinatown and three books: *Linking our Lives*, a monograph on the role, contributions, and identity of Los Angeles' Chinese American women; *Sweet Bamboo*, an autobiographical account of a local Chinese American family; and *Origins and Destinations: 41 Essays on Chinese America*, a valuable collection of academic and community essays.

• **Scholarship awards.** Committed to investing in future generations of young, potential scholars, the Society has offered some scholarships to students with an interest in Chinese American history.

• **Leadership.** In 1975 CHSSC was established by 106 Charter members. The three co-founders are Paul Louie, Bill Mason, and Paul DeFalla. The presidents have been:

1975-1976	Stan Lau
1976-1977	George Yee
1978-1979	Gerald L. Shue
1980-1981	Chuck Yee
1982-1983	Eugene W. Moy
1984-1985	Munson Kwok
1986-1987	Ella Y. Quan
1987-1988	Angie Ma Wong
1989-1991	Kipham Kan
1991-1992	Thomas A. McDannold
1992-1994	Sue Yee
1994-Present	Irvin Lai

NEW—BIG—FAST—and BEST! embodied the dream of the late George Yee and echoed by all succeeding presidents. Still, the secret to the Society's success is collective vision with collective spirit which yielded not the success of any one president but rather that of an energetic, dedicated, and dependable membership.

Concrete Creations

• **Los Angeles Chinatown Heritage & Visitors Center.** By far the boldest and most daring vision conceived by the Society is the Heritage & Visitors Center consisting of two Victorian-era houses. The acquisition of this costly and crucial property will give the Society a "home" by which it can fulfill the Purpose of our organization which is stated at the back of the latest *Gum Saan Journal* issues.

• **Chinese Cemetery Shrine.** This 107-year old City Historical Monument is considered the only remaining structural evidence of the Chinese presence in 19th century Los Angeles. Were it not for the efforts and lobbying of members, it would have been lost. Purchase of the plot of land on which it stands and the preservational work on this edifice also fulfills the Purpose of our Society.

The end ... for a new beginning

As we revel in the fond, warm, and engaging memories of our past accomplishments, I recall the energy, enthusiasm, and passion of the members. At each meeting I had attended, I was impressed by the eager collection of Chinese Americans traveling from throughout the Southland to learn more about a history they share in common. They, along with Society members of other ethnicities, have found much more: a sense of continuance, activities and opportunities for community betterment through knowledge.

In looking forward to the next 20 years, the Society anticipates the continuing help, support, and dedication of its members—old, new, past, present and future—to finish building our “home,” to continue discovering and preserving knowledge of the past, the recognition of the present, and the education of the generation to come.



CHSSC field trip to Angel Island May 30-June 1, 1986

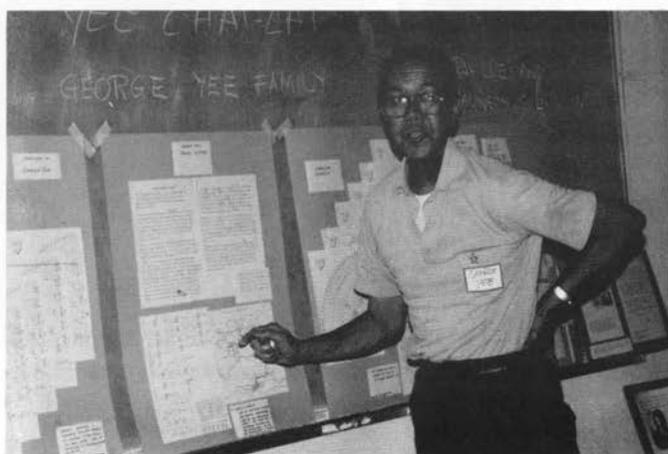
Courtesy of Eugene W. Moy.



Lotus Festival Dragon Boat Race: Eugene W. Moy and his intrepid crew. Circa 1980s.



Dr. Alex Saxton, now retired Professor of History at UCLA. Speaker at our Fall Dinner program, 1 October 1983.



Family History Workshop: The late George Yee at the CHSSC workshop on Family History for the Chinese American, held 23 July 1983 at Rolfe Hall, UCLA. Photos Courtesy of Paul Louie.



Our Society's "home."

A NEW HOME

by Eugene W. Moy

On the threshold of its 20th year, the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California (CHSSC) has embarked upon its most ambitious project ever: the **Los Angeles Chinatown Heritage and Visitors Center**.

The purpose of the project will be to:

- preserve two Victorian-era houses in place, documenting a historic multiethnic community in the process
- serve as a cultural resource for Chinatown and Los Angeles community history through exhibits and various program activities including providing museum-quality archival facilities in a new 12,000 sq. ft. building
- serve as the new headquarters for the Society.

The site is at 411-415 Bernard Street and includes two outstanding examples of Victorian residential architecture. One house was built in 1886, the other in 1888, both by the owner of the property, Philip Fritz. Philip Fritz was an immigrant from the Alsace region of France and a carpenter by trade, working as a construction foreman for the Southern Pacific Railroad's Bridges and Buildings Department. His granddaughter, Louise M. (Fritz) Whiting lived on the property, except for a brief interruption, for 100 years.

The \$1.9 million Heritage and Visitors Center project was authorized by the member-

About the author:

Eugene Wong Moy is Chairman of the Building Committee. He works for the City of South Gate as a Redevelopment Project Manager. His favorite pastime is spending as much time with his family as possible.

Photos courtesy of the author.

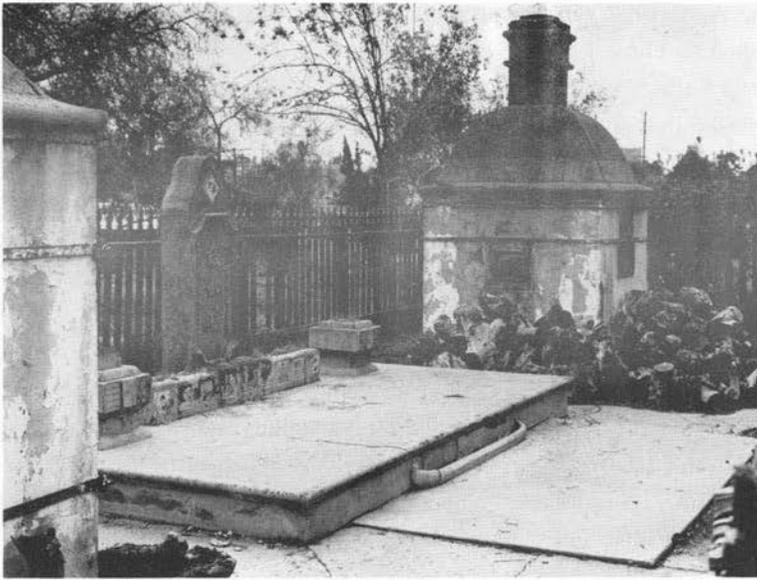
ship at the April 1994 general meeting. Since that time, the Building Committee has accomplished its Phase I goal of closing escrow on the property, stabilizing the houses with paint and other maintenance, and opening the houses to the public on a regular basis with interim exhibits and displays. To further public awareness of the project, a number of events have been held, including two barbecues, a ceremony for the transfer of the Old Chinatown archeological collection from the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) to the CHSSC, and a holiday arts and crafts boutique. In addition, the site served as a set location for Requiem, a feature film directed by Elizabeth Fong Sung.

Phase II has now begun, and will include preparation of complete architectural and engineering plans, and a capital fund-raising drive for restoration and new building construction. In addition to support from the community, further financial assistance is anticipated from government and foundation sources. When sufficient funds are in place, hopefully within 12-18 months, Phase III of development, the actual construction, will then begin. With luck and perseverance, we are projecting a 1997 or 1998 Grand Opening.

Much has been accomplished to date through the diligent efforts of many outstanding volunteers. However, much remains to be done, and interested potential volunteers are invited to leave their name and number at the CHSSC message center at (213) 621-3171.



In the foreground is the second Victorian-era house, separated by a driveway. Landscaping by Eugene Moy and many CHSSC volunteers.



Photograph appeared in Los Angeles Times 11 March 1962 article "Portion of Cemetery for Indigent May Be Sold." (used by permission of UCLA Special Collections)

The Nineteenth Century Los Angeles Chinese Cemetery Shrine: An Important Historic Icon for Los Angeles*

by Randall Bloch

On August 31, 1990, the Los Angeles City Council, acting on the recommendation of the City's Cultural Heritage Commission, designated Historic/Cultural Monument No. 486 the 19th Century Los Angeles Chinese Cemetery Shrine.

In early 1990, when I first visited the Chinese section of Evergreen Cemetery located in Boyle Heights, I sensed that it was an important, but unappreciated, historic place. I filed papers with the Cultural Heritage Commission to nominate the former Chinese section of Evergreen Cemetery, including the Shrine, as a city historical monument. After its presentation on June 20, 1990 to the Commission, the CHSSC Board of Directors voted that evening to support the idea of preserving the Shrine.

About the author:

Randy Bloch, who is on the CHSSC Board of Directors, is a legal assistant at the Western Center on Law and Poverty. A native of Los Angeles, he is passionate about saving the few remaining symbols of the city's history.

*Adolfo Nodal, Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs General Manager, referred to the Shrine as: "A major icon for the City of Los Angeles that is almost as important as Watts Towers." in a meeting to discuss its conservation.

Scholars of local Chinese American history generally agree that this is the oldest structural evidence of Chinese presence in Los Angeles. Respected architectural conservator, Peter Snell, explained the importance of cemeteries:

Cemetery monuments are the most traditional and ancient form of historical record keeping. They serve only for a short time as an object of mourning but stand for centuries to attest and confirm the facts which are the substance of history. Moreover, they serve the collective memory of the community which is a precious thing.¹

The Chinese cemetery shrine consists of two 12-foot high burners or “kilns” that flank a central altar and is about 1,000 square feet in size. One burner is decorated with the date September 1888 and Chinese characters signifying “precious oven.” The memorial stone that toppled from the altar now lies in storage. To guarantee a comfortable transit to the afterlife, the Chinese burn incense, gold and silver paper representing money, prayer papers, and the favorite clothing of the deceased. Elaborate presentations of edibles such as roast pig, poultry, fruits, and potable spirits, were also placed by the Chinese pioneers on the altar at burial and seasonal rites such as Ch’ing Ming—the Chinese Memorial Day—and Chung-Yang Chieh or Hungry Ghosts Day.



*South funeral burner of Chinese Cemetery Shrine and one of the City historic plaques.
Courtesy of Randall Bloch.*

Before 1877, Chinese burials were at the City Cemetery on Fort Moore Hill, where the Los Angeles Unified School District offices are located. When the new City Cemetery opened on the piece of land donated to the City by Evergreen for an indigent graveyard, a Chinese section was established.² City Cemetery then became County Cemetery in 1917. In 1937, all recorded Chinese burials in the County Cemetery were evacuated and returned to China in a joint effort by the Ning Yung, Yin Hoi and Kwong Chow associations.³ After 1924 there were no more Chinese or other burials in this cemetery but Chinese families

continued observing funeral rituals until approximately 1965.⁴

Ironically, in 1964, the need for more burial sites led Evergreen Cemetery to purchase back most of the 9-acre strip it originally gave the City. This ground was covered with 8 feet of fill except for the Chinese Cemetery Shrine which stands in a shallow depression. The wheel turned full circle in 1993 when Evergreen was purchased by the Wah Wing Sang funeral company. Mr. Glen Wong, the current manager, coincidentally, is the great-grandson of Wong Han Cept, a caretaker of the original Chinese cemetery.⁵

After the Shrine was declared a historical monument, a Shrine Preservation Committee was formed, composed of Randy Bloch, Eugene Cooper, Elmo Gambarana, Robert Kwan, Irvin Lai, Eugene Moy, Earl Wong, Cy Wong, and Susan Woo-Yamasaki. At its urging, the Society voted in 1991 to purchase the land on which the Shrine stands. Its cost was \$14,000.00. After a successful fund-raising campaign, CHSSC won an \$8,750 Department of Cultural Affairs grant, the first ever awarded for restoration of a City monument.

The Shrine Committee has completed Phase 1 of restoration by the creation of a retaining wall, wrought-iron fence with a gate and steps for access to the monument and a drainage system. Its total cost was slightly over \$17,000, including the land. A Ribbon-Cutting and Plaque Dedication Ceremony was held on June 3, 1995.⁶ In August, two City of Los Angeles historic plaques—one in English and one in Chinese—were permanently installed at the foot of the monument. Budgeted at \$22,000.00, Phase 2 will involve reinforcement and refurbishing of the structural elements and will be carried out in 1996 and 1997. As Dr. Munson Kwok remarked in his thoughtful keynote address at the June 1995 ceremony: “These pieces of stone bond us to our pasts.”

Endnotes:

1. Letter from Peter Snell to the author, March 1991.
2. Edwin Carpenter, *Early Cemeteries of the City of Los Angeles*. Los Angeles: Dawson's Book Shop, 1973.
3. *Los Angeles Times*, 8 July 1937.
4. *Los Angeles Times*, 11 March 1962; interview with Jack Lazenby, former manager of Evergreen Cemetery, June 1990; interview with Ernesto Saucedo, Head Groundskeeper, Evergreen Cemetery, August 1995.
5. Interview with Glen Wong, Manager, Evergreen Cemetery.
6. “Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony Held at Chinese Memorial Shrine,” *Rafu Shimpo*, (Los Angeles Japanese Daily News), 5 June 1995, p. 1.



Artifacts of old Los Angeles Chinatown.

Courtesy of Roberta S. Greenwood.

Rediscovering Old Chinatowns

by Roberta S. Greenwood

Los Angeles Chinatown

The years between 1989 and 1991 witnessed the re-emergence of the streets, sidewalks, and bricks of old Chinatown, and the personal possessions of those who lived there more than 100 years ago, down to the coins, dishes, jewelry, and eggshells left behind. As the tunnels for the new Metro Rail Red Line inched behind Union Station, archaeologists worked literally under the railroad tracks, to recover with care the artifacts and building remains which would otherwise be destroyed. Since some of the early community had already been destroyed in the 1930s by the railroad passenger tunnels, and the construction contractor was required to keep the trains running, the archaeologists had only a total of six weeks, in three different episodes, to dig in undisturbed areas which had been buried beneath 15 feet of fill brought in to lay the tracks. The number of individual features—such as building foundations or trash pits—reached 59, and the artifacts numbered into the tens of thousands.

All the material caught in the archaeological screens at the end of each working day was sent to the laboratory, where each bagful was washed and sorted. Many members of

About the author:

Roberta S. Greenwood is a historical and prehistoric archaeologist whose favorite research interest is the Chinese American site.

the CHSSC came to help, especially with translating the Chinese characters on porcelain, glass bottles, stoneware jars, and even fragments of newspapers which had survived being discarded and then buried. All ceramic fragments were sorted by type, pattern, color, and form, and reconstructed as far as possible, resulting in the identification of a minimum of 787 rice bowls, 256 spoons, 2951 brown stoneware jars and lids used to ship many imported products, and many other tablewares, not even counting all the fragments. Other traditional possessions included 153 dominoes, 117 bone and ivory toothbrushes, 666 little aqua glass medicinal vials, hundreds of Asian coins, 10 clay cooking stoves, ink stones, and 1377 glass gaming counters.



Buttons, remains of a doll, a cup and small plate saucer. Courtesy of Roberta S. Greenwood.

The importance of the excavations was what they reveal about a way of life that was not reported in books, and too long ago to be remembered. For example, although it is often said that only single men lived in Chinatown, the quantity of dolls, marbles, rings, bracelets, and shoes, shows that women and children were there. School enrollments and birth statistics provide further evidence. The food remains such as the cleaved bones of pigs and chickens, remains of fish, cuttlefish, turtles, and seeds of Chinese olive, winter and bitter melons, and lychee showed that the people clung to a traditional diet. It was possible to relate many personal names and businesses to specific addresses occupied and to the features left behind.

In 1995, after the comprehensive technical report was written, as part of the environmental requirements, Catellus Corp, the Rapid Transit District and Metropolitan Transportation Authority donated the artifacts, together with field records, catalogue and computer database to the CHSSC.

Santa Barbara Chinatown

Rescued from potential discard, another collection of Chinese American artifacts has been donated to the CHSSC for curation, display, and interpretation. More than 100 years ago, the "High Lung First Class Laundry" operated in the old Hill-Carrillo Adobe at 15 Carrillo Street in Santa Barbara. When the Santa Barbara Trust was restoring the structure, archaeologists discovered a brick well 18 feet deep, which was filled with cultural materials: rice bowls, soy and spirits bottles, buttons, food remains, and other items that filled 116 double-sized cartons. The collection was trucked temporarily to a laboratory at UCLA where volunteers sorted through the carefully labeled bags. After discarding pebbles, gravel, and other fill, the whole and nearly whole vessels still fill 30 cartons. The collection will be catalogued and analyzed by Roberta Greenwood, after which it will come to the CHSSC along with the catalogue and an article for *Gum Saan Journal*.

These two collections has made CHSSC one of the foremost repositories of Chinese cultural materials in America for study and reference.



High Lung First Class Laundry, site of the Santa Barbara archaeological dig.

Courtesy of Santa Barbara Historical Society.

CHINESE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
Founded Los Angeles, California, November 1, 1975
Incorporated under the laws of the State of California, December 23, 1976
Office: 969 No. Broadway, Los Angeles
Telephone: (213) 621-3171

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, multicultural society.

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

OFFICERS for 1995-1996

President: Irvin Lai	Treasurer: Munson Kwok
Vice-President: Sue Yee	Financial Sec'y: Franklin Mah
Secretary: Henrietta Yuan	Membership Sec'y: Cy Wong

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Annual membership dues are currently \$25.00 for active members; \$10.00 for spouse or member of the same household, senior citizens and students; \$50.00 for institutions; \$300.00 for individual Life membership; \$100.00 for Corporate membership; and \$1,000.00 for Life Patron. For further information, please write Membership Secretary, P.O. Box 862647, Los Angeles, CA. 90086-2647. Tele: (213) 621-3171.

Gum Saan Journal, published since 1977, is issued twice a year, in June and December. It is currently available by subscription only at \$5.00 a year.

Editor:	Emma Woo Louie
Editorial Board:	Paul G. Chace, Ruby Ling Louie, Thomas A. McDannold, and Dennis S.Y. Ng

Additional copies of Gum Saan Journal and books published by the Society are available for purchase. Please write Publications Committee, CHSSC, P.O. Box 862647, Los Angeles, CA 90086-2647 for listing and cost.