



Locke Foundation Newsletter 樂居鎮基金會

Preserving Locke's history and legacy

www.locke-foundation.org

Winter 2016

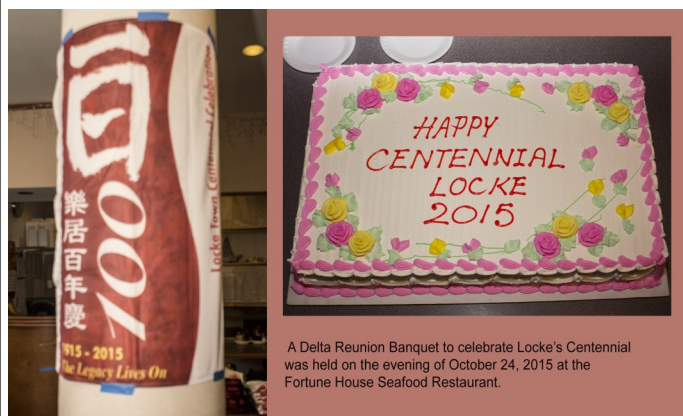
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The Way It Was

150 guests attended the Locke Centennial Reunion dinner on Saturday, October 24, 2015, at Fortune House Seafood Restaurant in Sacramento. Guests included former residents of Locke, Isleton and other Delta towns. Some former residents reminisced about their humble beginnings in Locke; others brought children and grandchildren; kudos to Anita Lo for coordinating the event. Current and former residents had a great time renewing friendships and swapping stories.



All photos courtesy of Joe Chan Photography.



Centennial in Review

- April 25, 2015: Gateway to Gold Mountain exhibit opens depicting the Angel Island Experience (1910-1940).
- May 9, 2015: Over 600 attended gala celebration in Locke featuring dignitaries, stage entertainment, guest lectures, tours.
- May 9, 2015: Centennial issue of newsletter released
- Centennial book, Remembering 100 Years 1915-2015 published.
- October 24, 2015: Locke reunion banquet attended by 150 guests.
- November 15, 2015: Angel Island lecture featuring Grant Din from Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation and closure of Gateway to Gold Mountain exhibit.

Locke Reunion/Centennial - Fortune House October 24, 2015



Lights, Camera, Action in Locke

Written by Stuart Walthall Photos By Douglas Hsia and Jim T. Chong

Main Street Locke, lined with its rustic and evocative structures, was the setting for two nationally broadcasted television shows and a full scale movie production. Starting in late October, co-hosts and crew from the Travel Channel's popular "Ghost Adventures" series came to Locke hoping to capture ghostly images and signs of paranormal activity. A large contingent of local Asian American stand-ins, dressed in period clothing, was recruited to add authenticity to the Ghost Adventure's main staple: reenactments. GA's host, lead investigator, and executive producer Zak Bagans interviewed numerous town residents regarding any apparitions or mysterious events they may have witnessed in Locke. Bagans, along with his director, would then recreate the creepy reckonings of the local population by staging (and restaging) impromptu reenactments of their spectral encounters, often times enlisting locals as "actors" for the re-creations.



Asian American stand-ins during filming of Ghost Adventures

It was entertaining and interesting to witness the fast-paced production and spontaneous staging of this popular and highly successful television series. Did Ghost Adventures witness and film any real ghostly apparitions? Find out in April of 2016 when the Travel Channel airs the Locke story on Ghost Adventures.



Ghostly reenactment in Locke's Star Theater

Several days following the taping of Ghost Adventures, a crew from NBC's Today Show arrived in Locke to create a Halloween themed package. With hopeful ambitions of capturing a spooky story, Today Show reporter Dylan Dreyer, along with the production team from Ghost Adventures, walked Main Street, explored Locke's nooks and crannies, and recorded a lot of fluffy banter. A short segment was taped in the darkened Dai Loy Gambling Hall Museum, and then incorporated into the Today Show Halloween story. Although no phantoms were detected, Dreyer did manage to conjure up a bit of drama during the filming of this sequence.



Dylan Dreyer and crew in the Jan Ying Building

Unfortunately, the Today Show misidentifies Locke as a spooky "mining" town frozen in time (Locke is a farming town). And despite Dreyer and the crew coming up empty in their ghost encounters quest, the Today Show did bring national exposure to Locke, while handing out a fun and cheesy trick-or-treat to its viewers. To watch the four minute Today Show segment shot in Locke, Google: Dylan Dreyer hunts for ghosts.

During the filming of Ghost Adventures and the Today Show, an ensemble of nearly two dozen cast and crew were gathering in the Delta for the shooting of "Girl Trip", a horror -comedy about two best friends on a road trip, bent on destroying each other, and making a fatal stop in a shady town off the Sacramento River. The film stars Catherine Black (American Psycho) and Brooke Lenzi. 'Girl Trip' was co-authored by the two actresses, with Black directing the film and Lenzi producing it. Brooke's

mother Karen Zehnder lives in Courtland and owns the Lotus Gallery building located on River Road in Walnut Grove. Zehnder's home served as base camp for the upriver portion of the film project. Karen had the monumental task of feeding (and nurturing) the company for the entire six-day shoot.



Brooke Lenzi and Catherine Black at Al's Place

Several of the actors and technicians were hosted by Locke residents during the downriver shooting of the film. Other members of the cast and crew stayed in Walnut Grove and Courtland. Al's Place Bar and Restaurant was the setting for the Locke segment of the movie. The production team took advantage of late night closing hours of Al's Place by shooting scenes from 11:00pm to 5:00am. It was evident as the week wore on that cast and crew were growing weary from long late hours spent staging and filming, but the young and talented team remained enthusiastic and focused.

The Moon Cafe Gallery on Main Street served as headquarters for the Locke filming. From the gallery cast and crew were fed, make-up applied, hair was styled, and banks of laptops were manned by techies and assistants handling

communications, scheduling, and media relations.

Filming of "Girl Trip" wrapped on November 3, 2015 and now goes into the lengthy process of color correcting, editing, and scoring. The short film is scheduled for festival release in 2017.

Look for even more film and television projects to be staged within the picturesque and photogenic backdrop of Locke.

Include Locke Foundation in Your Estate Plans

A legacy gift is a planned future donation to a charity, given through a will or other form of designation. It is a decision that each person makes in his/her own financial planning. If you appreciate the work carried out by the Locke Foundation during your lifetime, please consider a gift that keeps on giving.

Your estate's gift to the Locke Foundation helps to ensure that Locke's historic legacy is carried forward in perpetuity. The Locke Foundation recognizes donors who demonstrate their support through a bequest or other planned gift. We encourage you to join this very special group of donors.

With a planned gift, you can make an impact on generations to come. Your attorney can help you design an estate plan that protects your family, preserves your property, and supports us. Contact the LF for more information: lockefoundation@frontiernet.net.

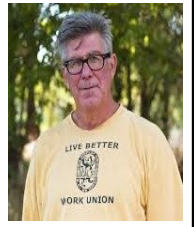
Ghost Adventures in Locke





Why is there an Italian Restaurant in a Chinese Town?

By Jeff Gillenkirk and James Motlow



The year 1901 was not a good time for Chinese immigrants in San Francisco. The Chinese Exclusion Convention was held in Metropolitan Hall, featuring political figures from across the West who joined forces in San Francisco to extend the Chinese Exclusion Act into the 1940s. The convention was hosted by Mayor James D. Phelan, a strong opponent of Chinese immigration who would later run for election to the U.S. Senate on an "End Asian Aggression" theme and the slogan, "Keep California White." But another event that happened that year prefigured better days ahead for Chinese-Anglo relations.

Early in the morning of February 22, 1901 the 3,500 ton passenger ship *Rio de Janeiro* struck a rock off Fort



Point in San Francisco and went down with 210 people on board. "She had moved scarcely a mile when the river fog came down and enveloped the vessel completely, shutting out all sight of land and sky," read a February 24, 1901 front page account in the San Francisco Chronicle. "She struck off Fort Point ledge and then slid back with the

strong current into the deep water just off the ledge, and is now lying about thirty fathoms deep at a point between a quarter and half a mile from Fort Point."

Alessandro Adami was one of several Italian fisherman based at San Francisco's Fisherman's Wharf who saw the disaster and sped in his fishing boat out to the wreck. Adami and his compatriots helped pluck 80 persons, including 43 Chinese crewman, from the icy waters on that foggy February morning. In an interview on April 12, 1978 at his home



in San Francisco, Adami's son, Alexander, described how his father recounted the facts of the tragedy.

"The ship loomed up in front of him in the fog," Alexander Adami recalled

his father telling him. "It had come into shore and then pulled out. He could see it was in trouble. It had damage to the bottom and he saw a fellow with a megaphone yelling for help. So he got the Coast Guard and then made two or three trips to pick up the people floating near the wreck. My dad must have saved mostly Chinese lives."



San Francisco's Chinese population never forgot his father's deeds, said the younger Adami. Raised in a time when Chinese and Italian youths were bitter rivals who would attack each other whenever anyone crossed Pacific Street, then the border between Chinatown and North Beach, Alessandro Adami, his family and other Italian fishermen from that time forward enjoyed the respect and gratitude of the local Chinese. The Chinese Six Companies, the leading commercial and political organization in San Francisco's Chinatown, gave \$200 to each of the Italian fishing crews that had helped rescue the *Rio*'s Chinese crewmen. Adami also remembered that "the Chinese used to come to the house on holidays. They'd bring firecrackers and Chinese candy to us kids."

The Italian-America Bank - today the Bank of America - also granted an award of \$100 to each of the rescue teams, along with a plaque commemorating their humanitarian heroics.

In 1932 the story took a wildly different slant when Alessandro Adami's other son, Al, became enmeshed in an underworld dispute and was given refuge in the Chinese community of Walnut Grove. By 1934, thanks to the heroics of his father, Al Adami was given special favor by merchants in the all-Chinese town of Locke and opened a bar and restaurant



which became known throughout Northern California: "Al the Wop's." Featuring an unusual menu of steak, bread and peanut and stiff drinks from its lengthy bar at the front of the house, Al's has been serving clientele from neighboring ranches, the State Capitol in Sacramento, and tourists from all over Northern California from the 1930's until the present day.

In a dramatic maritime discovery in December, 2014, the wreckage of the *Rio de Janeiro* was discovered with a remote submersible, broken and covered with sediment, only half a mile from San Francisco in 287 feet of water. Scientists from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration took 3-D and sonar images of the sunken ship.



"It is a great discovery," Robert Schwemmer, maritime heritage coordinator for the Office of National Maritime Sanctuaries, told the San Francisco Chronicle. The wreck of the *Rio de Janeiro* was the biggest maritime disaster in this region. "It is often called the Bay Area's *Titanic*," he said.

While treasure hunters still dream of finding the \$6 million in gold bullion rumored to be aboard the *Rio*, most experts consider the value of the sunken ship to be virtually nil. The *Rio* will likely remain where it is, buried in more than a century of mud and debris, like a maritime graveyard. But just as vivid as the memory of the sinking of the *Rio* is the enduring legacy of the Italian restaurant that thrived in the midst of the nation's last surviving all-Chinese town. Alessandro Adami's heroics led to his son being sheltered in the embrace of Chinese patrons in Locke, California, where year around Al the Wop's still serves up cocktails and a formidable cut of beef to its loyal patrons. Few of them know this improbable and inspiring story about how an Italian fisherman's restaurant ended up in the middle of an all-Chinese town. Now you can tell them all about it.

Jeff Gillenkirk and James Motlow are co-authors of Bitter Melon: Inside America's Last Rural Chinese Town, a collection of photographs and oral histories about the people who built and lived in the town of Locke, California.

Locke Demo Garden Update

By Stuart Walthall

2015 marked the most fruitful and productive year to date for the Locke Chinese demonstration garden. Following a complete renovation of the garden space, which included the replacement of the old water pipe system, the addition of truck loads of organic compost and manure, and the addition of a drip irrigation system, the demo garden flourished like the original Chinese gardens once did in post war Locke.

The demo garden has become a favorite destination for Locke tourists, and has given visitors an opportunity to learn about the diet, lifestyle, and culture of the once thriving Chinese population of the town. Plus, it has become a fun place for kids and families to walk, touch, and sometimes taste a bit of the past.

Bitter melon (fu gwa), Winter melon (dong gwa), bok choy, gourds (hulu gwa), long beans, Chinese cucumbers (wong gwa), Chinese dates (hong jo), Luffa (cee gwa), and more were grown in the demo garden this past season. All thrived.

With funding from the Locke Foundation, and a lot of hard work from community volunteers, the Locke Chinese demonstration garden has become an integral part of the town and a source of community pride.



Painting by Beth Chape

The Chinese Confession Program

By Eileen Leung

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Review of Immigration Policy

The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 barred laborers from entering US and prohibited Chinese already in the US from acquiring naturalized citizenship. Confined to ghettos, Chinese Americans remained "permanent foreigners" marginalized from mainstream society well into the 20th century.

To counter Japanese propaganda that accused US of being anti-Asian, The Chinese Exclusion Act was repealed by the 1943 Magnuson Act, which permitted Chinese nationals already residing in the country to become naturalized citizens and allowed their families to enter under non-quota family reunification. It also allowed a national quota of 105 Chinese immigrants per year which was sorely inadequate. The 105 included Chinese not only from China but overseas Chinese from any country in the world.

The Chinese in US always maintained strong familial, cultural and political ties with their home country because the official policy of exclusion and ineligibility for citizenship offered little hope to become American. According to Him Mark Lai, racial exclusion guaranteed the Chinese in America would have no interest in American political affairs. Ethnic presses featured homeland news prominently; the leaders of Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association were active members of the KMT party.

Immigration became a political football. The US was a strong ally with China from the Sino-Japanese War through WW II. However, the successful overthrow of the KMT by the Communists in 1949 altered US-China relations and intensified conflict among Chinese American political groups. China's role in the Korean War led Americans to suspect any Chinese American of allegiance to Communist China. By 1950, US considered China its main enemy. To crush Anti-American activities in the McCarthy era, the US government launched an all-out effort to break up Chinese immigration networks.



Interview of detainee. Photo courtesy of Chinese American Museum of Los Angeles

Why was the Confession Program initiated?

The INS grew weary of Chinese immigrants using fraudulent means to enter US as paper sons. They viewed illegal immigration as circumventing the law; the Chinese believed paper immigration was acceptable because the Exclusion laws were illegal. Typically young men claimed they were born in US and taken back to China at an early age. Since the 1906 earthquake destroyed all birth records, INS had no way to disprove these claims. The Chinese also took advantage of Americans' ignorance of the lunar calendar, local dialects and village customs to explain any discrepancies in birth dates and familial relationships.

Even if the immigrants were denied entry, the Chinese sought relief through the courts and won many cases through habeas corpus. These victories became the documentation where none previously existed. While interrogations became intense, elaborate and grueling, they did not solve the problem. They only enlarged the body of evidence used by subsequent immigrants from the same fictitious family.

What was the Confession Program?

It was started in 1956 in the SF district office of INS, frustrated by its inability to authenticate the identity of immigrants. The inability to verify testimonies of fictitious siblings was viewed as fraud. In 1957 the Confession Program was extended to rest of country and impacted Chinese communities in New York City, Boston and Chicago. This confession program was imposed only by the discretionary authority of INS; no congressional legislation was enacted to authorize it. It was also set up to prevent Communists from entering US fraudulently.

How was it carried out?

If Chinese who entered by fraudulent means voluntarily disclosed their "paper son" status, INS would assist confessors to "adjust their status". They were eligible for suspension of deportation and permanent resident status if they resided continuously for 7 years. They had to surrender their passport and be amenable to deportation. Aliens who served in armed forces for 90 days were eligible for naturalized citizenship. However, there was never a guarantee of immunity.

Confession and testimony against others were exchanged for immunity from prosecution. While this solved individual cases, it did nothing to eliminate the system of paper sons. By securing confessions of entire families, INS hoped to eliminate an entire false family tree. The confessors had to name everyone in the blood and fictitious family. It could take as long as one year to obtain a confession. The INS cross-referenced the confessor's statements with all files of the real and fictitious families.

Posters were tacked on lampposts, and community leaders

asked Chinese Americans to come forward. The FBI could stop people on the street and question them about their birth status. The confusion and terror engendered broad mistrust in Chinatown. Many families were bitterly divided to confess or not. Anonymous tip lines, telephone calls, letters were used to turn families in for revenge or personal gain. Everyone wondered who was confessing and who was named. The INS used bilingual agents to raid family association halls to access membership rolls because they knew fictitious families joined their real family's clan association.

If you sent money home to relatives in China, you could be considered supporting the Chinese Communists. (This spawned remittance agencies in Hong Kong that facilitated the indirect transfer of money from US to China). Some children turned their parents in. People were called in for informal interviews where they were confronted with evidence that someone else in the tree already confessed. Many families had children born in US, graduated from college and held responsible positions in government; they were reluctant to confess and jeopardize these professional careers. Others welcomed the chance to confess, to finally regain lost identities. Real and paper families were forced to reconcile. The vast majority of confessors successfully achieved legal status, but a small number were deported; others remained because US attorney declined to prosecute—a mixed blessing because these people had no status. They could stay in the US indefinitely, but once they stepped out, they could never come back in.

The Chinese Benevolent Association mobilized mass opposition to the grand jury's mass subpoenas and offered legal counsel and support. Confession legalized immigrants but did not bring social legitimacy. This was not amnesty because an amnesty program provides forgiveness and removes stigma of a crime.

How effective was the Confession Program?

From 1957-65, 13,895 confessed; another 22,083 were implicated and 11,294 paper slots were closed. INS records show that 25.8% of the 117,6329 Chinese counted in 1950 census entered fraudulently, excluding Hawaii.

Confession Program ends in 1970

The practice of buying papers ceased in early 1950's because the US consulate in Hong Kong was blocking most derivative citizen claims.

Most importantly, the 1965 Immigration & Nationality Act abolished the restrictive national origins system originally passed in 1924 in favor of a quota and preference system. The first Asians to immigrate to the U.S. under this Act were mainly professionals and political refugees. Once they arrived in the U.S., they applied for permanent resident status and eventually for U.S. citizenship. Then many took full advantage of the family reunification preferences of the 1965 Act to bring over spouses, children, siblings, and parents.

Thus began the cycle of **chain immigration and sponsorship** -- initial Asian immigrants (many of whom came as professionals or refugees) would attain permanent resident and later citizenship status and would sponsor family members and relatives. After these family member and relatives arrived in the U.S. and became permanent residents and citizens, they in turn would sponsor their family members and relatives, and so on.

Unintended consequences

1. Suspicion and mistrust toward government agencies. Progressive organizations became completely isolated; anyone who supported the Communist liberation of China was suspect.
2. Structure of basic family unit had to accommodate fictitious kin through birth and marriage. Real names and fictitious names became hopelessly entangled.
3. Secrecy and deception had to be maintained even among friends. Parents were ashamed to tell their children they entered this country illegally. Some families passed on false histories to their children and grandchildren.
4. Some families changed their fictitious surname to real surname; others continued to use the fictitious surname because too many records had to be changed including children's college transcripts and tombstones.
5. English newspapers about outstanding students would include fictitious surnames, while the Chinese newspaper would use the real surnames of the same individuals.
6. Odd mix of shame and pride, anger and joy from retrieval of family histories.
7. The Confession Program targeted cities with large populations of Chinese immigrants. Those living in remote areas like South Dakota or Montana could remain undetected indefinitely.
8. Many members of Min Ching (liberal SF Chinese American Youth Club), including Kathy Lowe, were indicted in court and forced to surrender their citizenship papers because their parents had entered US fraudulently. "When [your citizenship] paper was taken away from you, you lost everything. It was, you know, you feel tragic," Kathy says in *The Chinatown Files*. "You didn't even know why it happened. I thought that if you lost your citizenship, you could get it back in a couple years. But that's not what happened. Every time you ask them, they say your case is in the process. They would never give me a reason why I was not given a chance. I really cannot tell my children how proud I am to be in this country," Kathy says bitterly. "I cannot tell my kids this country has given me so much that I should be proud of. After all these years, I cannot say that."

The Paper Son legacy and Confession Program affected anyone who had family or friends who immigrated to the US between 1910 and 1940. Many past and current Chinese American scholars and leaders came from families who were once paper sons.

Once mainly composed of the U.S.-born, virtually all Asian American ethnic groups are now predominantly foreign-born due to the influx of so many immigrants as a result of the 1965 Act. Among other consequences, their presence has contributed to the revitalization (as well as the new development) of many Asian enclaves in several major metropolitan areas in the U.S. Unprecedented numbers of immigrants from Asia have led to many demographic, economic, and cultural shifts in the Asian American community and mainstream American society in general.

Locke Foundation Membership Application/Renewal

Last Name _____ First Name _____

Mailing address _____

Email address _____ Tel () _____ Fax () _____

I would like to volunteer for the following activities:

Volunteer docent _____ Donor _____ Visitor Center Volunteer _____

Contributor to newsletter _____ Media contacts _____ Landscape maintenance _____

Membership Dues: circle one

_____ \$25 Individual Annual/\$200 Lifetime _____ \$50 Family or Non-Profit Organization Annual/\$300 Lifetime

_____ \$100 Business Annual/\$500 Lifetime

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