



Locke Foundation Newsletter 樂居鎮基金會

Preserving Locke's history and legacy

www.lockeca.com

Fall 2012

lockefoundation@frontiernet.net

LOCKE FOUNDATION PRESENTS:

HARVEST MOON CELEBRATION

SATURDAY OCTOBER 27, 2012, 12:00-4:00PM

JEAN HARVE CENTER AUDITORIUM
14273 RIVER ROAD, WALNUT GROVE, CA



TERRA COTTA WARRIOR EXHIBIT BY YUEBIN GONG

STAGE ENTERTAINMENT: ACROBATS, DANCERS, MUSIC - MAH JONG TOURNAMENT
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TICKETS \$25.00 EACH.

PROCEEDS WILL BE USED TO FUND HISTORICAL PRESERVATION ACTIVITIES IN LOCKE.

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Be the first in your neighborhood to own a 4-foot terra cotta warrior. What a conversation piece for your atrium or patio! You can buy one at our October 27 event! Portion of the proceeds will be donated by the artist to Locke Foundation.

Locke Community Park segues to Locke Memorial Park

By Stuart Walthall

Photos courtesy of James Motlow

This is the second installment of a continuing series on the Locke Memorial Park. Those interested in reading the first installment may do so by visiting the Locke Foundation Web site at www.lockeca.com and clicking on the summer 2012 issue of the LF Newsletter. I would like to thank Elyse Marr, Whitney Marr, Clarence Chu, and Dustin Marr for providing information most helpful in the creation of this article.

For years Locke legend Connie King had a deep desire to see a memorial of some kind dedicated to the Chinese immigrants who struggled and succeeded in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta.

One particular day while Connie was visiting Rio Vista these desires turned into a smoldering rage. Upon seeing a monument dedicated to a wayward whale named Humphrey Connie exclaimed: "If Humphrey can get a monument why not the Chinese workers?"

Anyone who remembers Connie knows she had no problem expressing herself, and one individual who had received many earfuls from Connie was Locke businessman and current Locke Foundation Chairman Clarence Chu. Another recipient was Whitney Marr, who at the time was deeply involved in the design and construction of the Locke Community Park.

As the park neared completion Connie, Clarence, and Whitney each felt that there was more that could be done with the park. "Let's keep going" became their mantra, and they soon began making inquiries regarding the construction of a monument to be placed within the park that would commemorate the Chinese immigrants whose legacy deserved local recognition.

After contacting several artisans capable of creating a suitable statue or monument it became painfully obvious that the Locke Foundation did not have the resources to make the project happen. Most estimates were in the range of \$100,000!

However, during the monument inquiry period the wheels of fate were at work. Whitney Marr's daughter Elyse, a high school senior at the time, was currently working on a memorial project dedicated to an influential art teacher at her school who had recently passed away. In fact, Elyse had virtually taken over this devoted teacher's mission to inspire students to learn by building with their hands through 3D arts. She felt a strong sense of duty to have his program live on, and to help his students cope during a period of mourning.

Elyse initiated a project in which these students would design a ceramic wall installation dedicated to the memory of this inspirational teacher, thus helping these grieving students create a permanent symbol of their love and respect, along with helping to bring meaningful closure to a tragic life event.

It was during this period of Elyse's life, when her sense of duty and purpose was ignited and thriving, that her father Whitney asked Elyse if she would consider creating another monument. A monument dedicated to a vast number of individuals.

Elyse knew the *process*; visualize an idea, make the designs, carve the clay, create the molds, pour the bronze, erect the monument. However, she had never actually *done* the full process for the completion of one project. So after much discussion with her father Whitney and mother Doreen, Elyse became resolute: "This is what I should do". Her mind was made and the process began.

Elyse Marr: "During high school, I learned that art was a powerful tool of communication and had a unique way of penetrating people. It can make people pause. It can make people reflect. What better purpose for art than to have people pause and reflect on their own family, relationships, community, history. There were many people I deeply respected and a series of events that triggered this opportunity, and I had to react to them. I never thought that this monument was my creation. I felt that I was a channel that had the ability to express all of these inputs."

It was in 2006, the summer before her freshman year at Stanford University, that Elyse began solidifying her vision: "To give history a chance to be memorialized in a way that visitors of all walks of life can engage". She came before the Locke Foundation Board of Directors and presented her idea for a memorial monument. It would stand 7 ½ feet tall and it would be constructed of bronze and black granite. It would memorialize the Chinese immigrants who first came to California in search of gold; who built the railroads and constructed the levees; who worked in agriculture, and who built the town of Locke. Contained within Elyse's vision would be an additional dynamic: *recognition of cultural change, assimilation, and the future.*

The LF Board of Directors was impressed with Elyse's ideas. They agreed that it was indeed time to recognize the many achievements of the Chinese immigrants who had struggled under the yoke of oppression, racial discrimination, and poverty. The LF Board strongly approved the construction of the monument and voted to proceed with the project.

Energies then started being directed toward fundraising. Elyse would generously donate her time and energy to the

project; however, the cost for the monument would still run about \$20,000. Many individuals who had previously helped with funding for the community park were once again being called upon to help finance the monument.

At that time Elyse was an active freshman at Stanford and had many responsibilities as a new student at a prestigious university. Her schedule was full but she still managed to procure a small grant from the university along with an art space in which to work on



Granddaughter of Locke Family designs monument

the monument project.

Clarence Chu, realizing the time constraints associated with the project, decided to grab the bull by the horns and tackle his fundraising goals in a more dramatic fashion: He boarded a plane and headed to Hong Kong.

Chu was born and raised in Hong Kong and had many family members and associates currently living there. One of the first persons he approached regarding the project was his sister Lien Fan Chu. Clarence sat and explained in detail the proposed monument. His impassioned explanation must have made a strong impression on his sister. She asked: "How much do you need?" After informing her that it would take \$20,000 to build the monument she offered him \$25,000; the additional \$5,000 to be used to equip the new Locke Foundation office spaces in the recently completed Boarding House/Visitors Center.

Clarence returned to the U.S. ready to inform Elyse and



Marr family from left to right: Granduncle Jim Huey, Uncle Dustin Marr, Dad Whitney Marr, Mom Doreen Marr, Aunt LaRonda Marr, Grandfather Tim Lum, sister Kendra Marr. Kneeling: Elyse Marr. Photo courtesy of Nannette Le.

the LF Board that the Locke Memorial Project was now fully funded. Elyse's work could now proceed unimpeded by financial constraints.

Elyse envisioned a three-sided monument consisting of one forward-facing bronze panel and two adjacent panels of engraved granite. The bronze panel would present a pictorial history of Locke expressed through the achievements of the Chinese immigrants. It would be cast in five separate pieces then joined vertically to form a complete and unified image of the immigrant story.

The two adjacent panels would consist of highly polished black granite laser etched with a dedication to the legacy of the Chinese immigrants. The text would be inspired by the words of Locke matriarch Connie King; one panel written in English, the other in Cantonese. The Cantonese calligraphy would be translated and



drawn by esteemed Stanford professor Yin Chuang. (see photo)

Elyse Marr: "As one approaches the monument, before dwelling on any specific detail, I wanted to have an overall scroll-like appearance. I realized that from the onset it would present a flat image. Intentionally I had it tilt backwards. The breaks (created by the joining of the five separate pieces) would seem like the rungs of a ladder, a ladder the viewer

would climb visually.... transcending upwards. I wanted the inscribed panels to be bi-lingual, but I wanted the bronze panel to be the common language: a visual language."

Viewing the bronze panel from the top one sees a representation of the meandering Delta levee system; however, some levees have yet to be completed. Overhead, clouds loom and blend into the earth, and merge again into an image of two Chinese workers sharing the burden of hauling dirt during the construction of the levees. To their right, standing upright is another man, a slightly more modern man. His gaze directed out over the flat Delta landscape, gazing toward the future over the horizon.

Under that scene is a tableau of an oncoming railroad track. There are two Chinese workers laying track. The worker kneeling on the right of the track is dressed in old-fashioned clothing while the one on the left is wearing more modern clothes. The man in the old-fashioned clothes is aligning the track, diligently setting it in place, while the man in the more modern clothing is striking it. They work together on opposite sides of the broken track, forging a path together. Looking at the winding story that flows from one panel into another of this Chinese American history in California, the broken track is the only visual break, centrally located at eye level. With these two men setting the last stake in the ground, their action completes the flow of the visual story.

Elyse Marr: "I am fourth generation Chinese American. Chinese values are deeply embedded in me. I am not a historian nor do I have the immigrant experience. But I had the opportunity to explore myself and uncover the principles that guide my life and trace where they came from. I am a mixture of so many values. I share my common experiences with others. Part of me wanted to reference the American side, which is part of my future. Cultures change and merge. There is something beautiful about this. I want people to dwell on this scene."

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Life in the Foon Hop Store on Main Street

Oral interview by Alfred Yee

Born in Locke in 1925, Chester Cheung most fondly remembers his childhood from ages eight to nine years old. The small rural town was surrounded by pear and apple orchards, the Sacramento River, and a slough, making for an adventurous environment for a youngster.



Pals Mon Chan, Stephen Chan and Chester Cheung having the time of their lives in early 1930's.

Along with his "pals," he enjoyed swimming in the shallow part of the slough, the "frog pond," in which they could also catch frogs, or in the deep, dangerous Sacramento River, using an inner tube to safely float across the waterway. Fishing and playing baseball were always good fun but climbing over a fence to steal pears and apples was a thrill. Then there was the time he stole some cigars from his father's store to smoke. He and his friends climbed up onto the walkway of the water tower located in the back of

town to begin their imitation of adulthood. But inhaling smoke made them "sick in their stomach," turning their faces green. Smoking was not so much fun after all, and they decided to stay out late into the night to recover. Upon returning home, Chester's father asked where he had been all day. No confession was forthcoming but Chester's father knew that he had "done something very sinister." A spanking ensued, something that Chester and his father would later laugh about when reminiscing. Another memorable incident was when Chester delivered a chicken from his father's store to a woman customer. Dressed in a bathrobe, the woman met Chester at the door and paid for the chicken. At home the perplex Chester asked his father if the woman was sick because she wore a bathrobe. His father never answered because he could not come up with the words to explain to his innocent son that the woman was the town's madam, which Chester himself later found out.

Chester's most indelible education about life came from his schooling in China and his parents in Locke, from which he learned about self-discipline and human nature. When Chester was nine years old, he was sent to his father's village in China to live with his grandparents

and to receive a Chinese education in culture and language. It was part of his parents' long-range plan in which they would retire in China and their offspring will take care of them in their old age; therefore, Chester had to be prepared for life in China. But it was a stressful time for Chester. The carefree, playful times in Locke gave way to emphasis on self-discipline in which making industrious use of one's time became paramount. Chester always got pressure from his grandparents to "value time, make use of time, study hard," because "once it's past, it can't be replaced." Life in the village lasted one year, after which Chester moved to the city to live with his brother and continue his education there. Living in the city was more relax than in the village because it was more modern, but Chester had to return to America after two years because of the Japanese invasion of China in 1937.



Schooling in China was much different than in America. A school day lasted eight hours, and Chester attended classes six days a week, studying Confucian philosophy, poetry, letter writing, arithmetic, and English language. Although only in the middle grade of grammar school, Chester had to explain or "decipher" a story or riddle that he had for homework to his teacher the following day. But the lesson that became most important for Chester was that about human nature, ingrained through rote memory of Confucian philosophy. For example, Confucianism believed that human beings are born innocent but they must be taught how to be good; if not, they will change for the worse. The lessons of self-discipline and human nature carried over into Chester's life in Locke when he returned at age ten. His parents continued to provide guidance about life and values. They were very caring to their son and conservative in their ways, and were especially hard-working.

Chester's parents moved to Locke in 1918 or 1919 to join Chester's grandfather to operate a tofu store. Prior to the move, they were farm laborers but seized the opportunity to open a business after a gambling hall that occupied the building closed. Chester's father, grandfather, and uncle formed a partnership and called the store

Foon Hop. Foon was the grandfather's first name and Hop meant together. Initially selling only tofu made on the premise, the partners expanded into selling Chinese groceries and later cooked foods like roast pork, duck, and chicken and "all kinds of delicatessen." In addition to selling in Locke, the store delivered groceries to nearby towns and Chinese-owned ranches. Every week, Chester's father traveled to Sacramento to purchase groceries for their store, passing the Sacramento Municipal Airport along the way.

The weekly trips past the airport stirred Chester's father to pursue and accomplish what very few Chinese had done. Seeing the planes flying around the airport, he wanted to become a pilot and operate his own plane. He went into the airport and asked the personnel there if he can be trained to fly a plane. He received a book about flying and was sent on his way. Not able to read English, he enlisted the help of a female minister in Locke's Baptist Church to help him translate the text. In about a year, Chester's father felt confident enough to ask for flying lessons from the trainers at the airport. After a few months, Chester's father took his flight examination and passed, becoming a licensed pilot. He then purchased a bi-plane to pursue his passion, later buying a single-wing plane to commensurate with his advancing skills. It seems that he was a natural pilot who actually "flew by the seat of his pants" because he had limited ability to read and speak English during his quest to become a pilot.

The story of Chester's father's is testament to his determination to learn how to fly and to his success in business, which enabled him to purchase two airplanes, exemplifying the ideals of self-discipline and hard work for his descendants to emulate.



Like many families in Locke, Chester's family came from the Zhongshan District of Guangdong Province. His father was a paper son; his real surname is Chan. Chester attended Jean Harvie Elementary School, graduated from Rio Vista High School and UC Berkeley in Business Administration. He was drafted into the Air Force where he served as a bomber mechanic for 2 years. He married Frances Wong from San Francisco and settled in Sacramento where he worked for McClellan AFB and SMUD as a management analyst. They have 7 children and 8 grandchildren. They have returned to China several times to visit their relatives and check on the family's home in the village. They are healthy and active, enjoying life blessed with family and friends.



(Alfred Yee holds a Ph.D. in Asian American history from Ohio State University.)

Editor's comment. Chester grew up in the Great Depression and WW2; these folks have sacrificed, fought, bled and even died to preserve the way of life in US. Out of the Great Depression came what historians will surely call the Great Generation. The unparalleled freedoms and material well-being enjoyed in this country are a direct result of those who came before us.

Sacrifice and delayed gratification were a way of life. The generation growing up in an era of deprivation did not whine about what they did not have. They instead considered themselves lucky to have food, shelter and clothing. As the children of the Depression grew up, their character was molded by their parents, who always sacrificed and went without for their children.

Locke's Centennial Celebration in 2015

Cultural events

Logo design contest

Re-printing of Bitter Melon by Jeff Gillenkirk and James Motlow

Homecoming for former Locke residents

Join Locke Foundation for latest news

Volunteers Beautify Locke Grounds

By Stuart Walthall; photos courtesy Deborah Mendel

The spirit of volunteerism and community pride is alive and well in Locke these days. Led by willing volunteers and funding from the Locke Foundation, the community of Locke is undertaking a program of landscape maintenance and historic structure beautification.

One recent effort, led by Locke residents Tony Lee and Ernie Wester, along with help from another half dozen volunteers, prepped, primed, and painted the River Road view of one of Locke's



historic structures. Landscaping and weed removal was also accomplished during this initial phase of beautification. Lee and Wester shall continue leading this current project, which will also entail refurbishing the building overhang, walkway, windows, and facade.



Another volunteer effort, led by town resident Russell Ooms, has been the beautification of Locke common areas. Weed and trash removal, Community Garden tilling, Community Orchard and Demonstration Garden

maintenance, field area mowing, and road maintenance have all added to the general beautification of the town. Other helpers

include Brock Alexander, James Motlow and Stuart Walthall.

Anyone who has not visited Locke in the last few years will be pleasantly surprised by the overall improvement in the *look* of the place.

Many of the hundreds of visitors who came and enjoyed the Locke Asian Pacific Spring Festival in May

commented on how much nicer Locke is looking these days; not only Main Street but also the residential and garden areas.



The Locke Foundation, along with community volunteers, plans to continue this program of town beautification. There is much to be accomplished in the future; refurbishing and painting River Road views of historic structures, sidewalk repair, signage, and much more.

You can help by joining the Locke Foundation. (See back cover for membership form).



Locke Memorial Park Continued from Page 3

IN MEMORY OF THE INDUSTRIOUS
CHINESE PIONEERS OF CALIFORNIA
WHOSE STRENGTH AND SACRIFICE HELPED
BUILD THE TRANSCONTINENTAL RAILROAD,
CONSTRUCT THE LEVEES OF
THE SACRAMENTO SAN JOAQUIN DELTA, AND
DEVELOP AGRICULTURE IN THE CENTRAL VALLEY.
WITH DETERMINATION AND PERSISTENCE
THE CHINESE BUILT THE TOWN OF LOCKE AND
CONTINUE TO SHAPE CALIFORNIA.

DEDICATED OCTOBER 13, 2007
THROUGH THE INSPIRATION OF
CONNIE KING, LOCKE RESIDENT SINCE 1948

Rising into that scene is the foliage of a pear tree laden with ripe fruit. From within the foliage shines the sullen face of a Chinese laborer at work harvesting the Delta's most celebrated crop.

Elyse Marr: "In this panel, I reference the use of a corona effect over the central figure in a piece of work. I created a slight halo using the branch and leaves surrounding the face. I wanted to highlight the face,

not Christ-like but heroic, and to have this figure emerge, almost rising, out of the fruits of his labor. Yet at the same time, the detail in the gnarled tree trunk, the lines on the laborer's face and the leathery working hands made the figure humanizing, referencing a life with struggle and toils."

The trunk of the pear tree descends down the right hand side of the panel's lowest image presenting a broad view of Main Street Locke, seemingly anchoring the town and rooting it in history.

The gnarled bark of the tree is mirrored on the structures of Locke and in all the hands and faces of the people Elyse has placed on the panel. But there are no people in this image of Locke. No focus on any individual. No reference to past or present. However, if one pauses and reflects on this stark image of Locke..... and gazes at the imagery that

Elyse has placed in the overall panel..... one might just find oneself pondering..... the future.



The Locke Monument was officially dedicated, along with the Locke Memorial Park, in October of 2006.

The next issue of the Locke Foundation Newsletter will tell the story of the landscaping of the Memorial Park and the story of an unsung Locke heroine: Master Gardener Daisy Mah.

Locke Foundation welcomes newest members

Lifetime: Wai Moy, Loreen Huey,

Individual and Family:

Ron Chong	Holly Pauls
Vera Haile	Roberta Quan
Kenneth Lee	Richard Shinn
William Leigon	Traci Trapani
Elizabeth Lew	Susan and Rick von Geldern
Lim Mar	Susan Wilson
John Miles	

LF Wish List

LF is always seeking volunteers willing to devote their skills and experience toward our dedicated mission. Individuals whose interests include history, grant writing, interpretation, computer skills, graphic design, advertising, carpentry, painting, and fund raising are especially welcome. Even if you are simply a *people person* we would greatly appreciate your participation. Our Visitors Center is always in need of a volunteers willing to donate 4 hours per month as a greeter.

Miscellaneous Items Needed

- * Chairs, tables
- * Storage Shed
- * 2D & 3D Artwork
- * Gift Cards/Certificates
- * Raffle & Bingo Prizes
- * Postage
- * Copy Paper
- * Paint Brushes/Rollers
- * Primer Paint
- * Garden Tools
- * Soaker Hoses
- * Potting Soil
- * Asian Vegetable Seeds
- * Historic Locke Photos
- * Historic Locke Artifacts
- * Oral Histories of Locke
- * Cash

Call (916)776-1661 if you can help.

Locke Foundation Membership Application/Renewal

Last Name _____ First Name _____

Mailing address _____

Email address _____ Tel () _____ Fax () _____

I would like to volunteer for the following activities:

Event planning _____ Publicity _____ Membership recruitment _____

Write articles _____ Grant writing _____ Historical restoration _____

Membership Dues: circle one

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

_____ \$100 Business Annual/\$500 Lifetime

Make check payable to Locke Foundation. Please return this form with check to Locke Foundation
P. O. Box 1085, Walnut Grove, CA 95690. Tax ID: 20-0364281.

Office use only:

Date application received _____ Membership Year _____ Renewal _____

Locke Foundation
P. O. Box 1085
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