



# Locke Foundation Newsletter 樂居鎮基金會

Preserving Locke's history and legacy

[www.lockeca.com](http://www.lockeca.com)

Spring 2013

[lockefoundation@frontiernet.net](mailto:lockefoundation@frontiernet.net)

Come  
to  
Locke  
on  
May 11  
and  
let the  
good  
times  
roll



**Locke Foundation**  
**樂居基金會**  
Presents

## Asian Pacific Spring Festival

樂居春季文化藝術表演

Come Celebrate Asian Pacific Heritage Month  
Saturday, May 11 from 11 AM to 5 PM  
Main Street, Locke, California



Lion Dance - Food - Music  
- Martial Arts Demonstration -  
Taiko Drums - Chinese Acrobat - Origami - Chinese  
Calligraphy - Folk Dance - Mah Jong Demonstration -  
Poker Tournament at the Dai Loy Gambling Hall - Arts &  
Crafts - Community Exhibits - Cultural Displays - Raffle  
and more

**FREE ADMISSION**

Information Contact:  
Visit us at: [www.lockeca.com](http://www.lockeca.com)  
Please call: 916.776.1661 or 916.776.1828



## Locke Memorial Park: *Final Installment of a Continuing Saga*

by Stuart Walthall

Photos courtesy of James Motlow and Clarence Chu

*This is the final installment of a four-part series on the Locke Memorial Park. Part One addressed the design and construction of the park. Part Two told the story of the creation of the Locke Monument while Part Three addressed the landscaping and aesthetic features of the Park. Those interested in reading the previous three installments may do so by visiting the Locke Foundation Web site at [www.lockeca.com](http://www.lockeca.com) then clicking on the summer, fall, and winter issues of the Locke Foundation newsletter.*

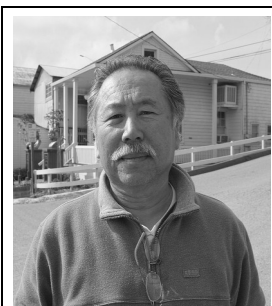
The focus of this article will be the story of the Locke Memorial Tile Walls and the person responsible for the creation and continued success of this meaningful and historic project. But before delving into the story of this local hero I am going to write a few words regarding another significant native son.

Previous articles told the stories of individuals whose tireless efforts and committed determination led to the creation of the Locke Memorial Park and Monument. This series introduced you to such local luminaries as Locke Legend Connie King whose dream of a sacred memorial ultimately came to fruition. And standing beside Mother Connie was Locke businessman Clarence Chu, the point man and organizer, fundraiser and spokesman for the entire Memorial Park Project.

This series also introduced you to Park designer Whitney Marr and his talented young daughter Elyse, creator of the Locke Monument. And you met Daisy Mah, who landscaped and planted the Park with her vision of meaningful beauty.

What great fortune to have had such a skillful and dedicated group of volunteers whose roots are so deeply planted in Locke's native soil.

But as the series progressed, with materials being researched and interviews conducted, it became obvious that there was yet another individual who had been equally important to the completion of the Locke Memorial Park Project. He was a catalyst and a common denominator. He was a hard worker and an innovator. His name is Dustin Marr, who has lived his entire life in



Dustin Marr

Locke. His grandparents Marr Yok Qwong and Gee Lee Marr lived on the east corner of Main and Levee Street since the 1920s. Dustin's father George Marr owned the Yuen Chong Market on Main Street, a business Dustin continued to operate until 2008. From that market Dustin bore witness to nearly all of the history of postwar Locke.

As a child he ran the streets and fished the sloughs. He attended the local schools, drove the levees, and was a part of the living culture of Locke. Throughout the years he had always been there to lend a helping hand to those in need. He has become a font of information regarding all things Locke. And like it or not, he has become *an elder*.

Dustin always seemed to shun the limelight yet was always there in the thick of things when work was to be done and projects needed to be accomplished. His ideas, always practical and pragmatic, were tempered with the experience and abilities to execute them.

Dustin also has the gift of persuasion. He was responsible for the recruitment of his brother Whitney Marr into the Memorial Park Project. Then Dustin's niece Elyse joined the team. It was Dustin who suggested approaching Daisy Mah for the task of designing and landscaping the Parks floral features.

Whitney, Elyse, Daisy, and Dustin: these were the Four Horsemen of the Locke Memorial Park (Marr or Mah in Cantonese means *horse*). Through the efforts of these four individuals, along with help from numerous others, the Park has become what it is today: A place of rest and reflection, and a symbol of Locke's past, present, and future.

A debt of gratitude is owed to Dustin Marr for the time, energy, and skills he has so generously given to all aspects of the Locke Memorial Park Project.

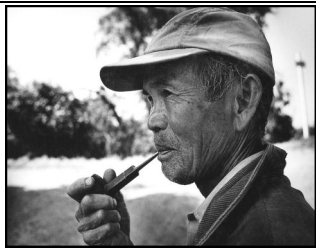
But there was still one more person to be approached by Dustin; a person with strong local ties in addition to considerable skills. This combination made him a perfect candidate for recruitment into the Locke Memorial Park Project. Dustin had known this indi-



Nelson Loo

vidual and his family for many years. He had watched him grow up on Levee Street and had seen this young man mature into what he has become today: a professional mason. His name is Nelson Loo.

Nelson is the youngest of nine children born to Sun and Mary Loo. All nine siblings, five daughters and four sons, are alive and currently living in the surrounding cities of Sacramento, Elk Grove and Lodi. His parents, like so many of the Delta's Chinese population, had emigrated from the Pearl River Delta region of Guangdong Province, Canton China.



*Sun Loo*

Nelson spent the first five years of his life living in Courtland (6 miles upriver from Locke). He and his family then moved to Elk Grove where his father managed the Barry Ranch.

Nelson had strong childhood connections to Locke due to the fact that most of the workers employed at the Barry Ranch were Chinese laborers who lived in Locke. Nelson's father also owned a house on Levee Street, which he rented out to various Chinese families through the years. Nelson vividly remembers as a young child coming to Locke with his father in order to clean and paint the Levee Street house in preparation for new renters. He was frequently at his father's side when Mr. Loo would come to Locke to help a friend, visit a family, or simply to give one of his workers a lift home.

After living in Elk Grove for nine years Sun Loo retired. That's when Mr. Loo, along with his wife and children still living at home, packed up and moved to the Levee Street house.

Nelson was now 14 years old and ready to enter Delta High School in Clarksburg (15 miles upriver from Locke). At this time, during the 1970's, Locke still had a thriving remnant of its once larger Chinese population. The community gardens located behind the town still served as a focal point of residential activity. And these gardens flourished. Sun and Mary Loo kept the family well fed from the vegetables they grew in their garden spot. According to Nelson his Mother was a very good cook. Apparently Sun Loo was also an excellent cook but would prepare only one meal per year: Chinese New Year.



*Mary Loo*

Life in Locke was well suited for Nelson's greatest passion: *fishing*. He helped put food on the table with his fishing pole, dropping his baited line into the Sacramento River or any of the numerous sloughs that crisscross the Delta landscape. His target fish were stripers and black bass. Nelson was often joined by his Locke buddies, young men such as Kai Wong and the Lee brothers Norman and Marty (whose older brother Anthony still lives on Levee Street).

Sometimes Nelson's older friend Dustin Marr would join him on a fishing adventure, or the two of them would sit in the Yuen Chong Market staring and yelling at Dustin's 14 inch black and white TV as their favorite team, the San Francisco 49ers, played football on Sunday afternoons.

Nelson started to drive, work odd jobs, and grow into a young adult. Having graduated from high school he was ready to start steady work.

He took a man up on a job offer. This man, Frank Susich, owned and operated a brick laying and stone mason business in Galt. Nelson apprenticed with Susich for 4 years, and as his skills increased, so did his reputation. Nelson designed and built beautiful fireplaces and outdoor BBQs. His craftsmanship became renowned, his skills in demand, and his work was being featured in such publications as Sacramento Magazine. All the while Nelson was also honing his skills as a worker of stone.

Then in 2008, Nelson became his own boss. He was now a professional stone mason running his own company, Nelson Loo Masonry Contractor, located in Elk Grove.

But Nelson had also become a *target fish* of sorts. Dustin Marr was about to catch and recruit him into the Locke Memorial Park Project.

When Nelson *volunteered* his services to the project the park was merely a vacant lot. The dirt that covered the lot had become trash-filled and depleted. A deep layer of surface soil had to be dug up and removed. Consequently, the level of the remaining ground was dramatically lower than that of the sidewalk fronting the park.

A three foot high retaining wall had to be constructed around the perimeter of the park before fresh top soil could be brought in. This meant digging (by hand and shovel) a trench along the park's entire 180 foot border. It was Dustin who tackled this back breaking job.

Next, cinder blocks were stacked in the trenches,



reinforced with steel, and then filled with concrete. Eight foot lengths of 3 inch diameter pipes were placed in the concrete-filled cinder blocks. The pipes would later be put to use in supporting the wooden fences that would ultimately enclose the park.

It was during the construction of the perimeter retaining walls that another idea was being refined. This idea would lead to the creation of three significant and meaningful elements of the park: The Locke Memorial Tile Walls.



Tiles placed upon the walls would contain expressions of remembrance, respect and love, and would stand as tribute for generations to come. Contributions generated through tile sales would help the Locke Foundation in achieving its mission goals: *the preservation and celebration of Locke's unique historical, architectural, and cultural legacy.*

When the Memorial Tile Walls were first being considered it was suggested that the preexisting five foot tall concrete retaining wall that abuts the rear levee could be used to display the tiles. However, the ancient wall proved to be too rough, crooked, and small. Plus, it leaked.

A new and larger wall had to be constructed. It had to be attractive yet reverent, grand in scale but not obtrusive. It would become a testament to Nelson Loo's construction skills and an expression of his aesthetic sensibility.

The new wall would stand six feet tall and span twenty feet in length. Complimenting it would be two smaller Memorial Tile Walls centrally located within the Park. Concrete pedestals on which the walls were to be erected had to be constructed. It was essential that these footings be absolutely level and straight. Interestingly, no levels were used in this process. Nelson aligned the pedestals the old fashioned way: *by using string.* And his method worked perfectly.

Once the concrete and re-bar pedestals were poured and cured it was time to stack the cinder blocks. These blocks would serve as the internal structure of the walls. Re-bar was utilized both vertically and horizontally

in their construction. The walls were then framed with faux stone and their surfaces coated with a layer of concrete. It was upon these smooth surfaces that the memorial tiles would be placed. The completed walls showed no indication of the cinder block structure on which they were constructed.

It was now time to bring in the new top soil necessary for supporting the walkways and sustaining the park's floral features. The soil would be gathered from the field area behind the town.



Yet another local volunteer stepped forward to accomplish this monumental task: Richard Nielsen. Using the vehicle and equipment which he himself donated, Nielsen scooped, loaded, and hauled four full dump truck loads of soil to the park site. He then spread and graded it toward the Main Street entrance of the park, thus ensuring proper drainage.



The Memorial Tile Walls were accentuated by the addition of the clean soil. With their pedestals now at ground level, the walls conveyed an enhanced sense of stability and permanency. Plus, *they looked great!*

But Nelson and Dustin were still not done working. They then went on to construct the wooden fences that enclose the Park.

Readers are invited to come to Locke and inspect the beautiful fences that were built. And while you are at it, check out the Locke Memorial Tile Walls. Then take a few moments and gaze at the Locke Memorial Monument. Enjoy the park's flora and landscaping as you walk the pathway. Or simply relax in the seating area under the Chinese gazebo. You might just find yourself pondering the amazing community effort involved in the creation of....  
THE LOCKE MEMORIAL PARK.

## Joe Shoong's Philanthropy Comes to Locke

By Eileen Leung



Joe Shoong was born in 1879 in Zhongshan County, China. He immigrated to the US when he was 20 years old. Starting out as a garment worker, he became self-made millionaire and founded the National Dollar Store chain.

The first store was opened in Vallejo in 1901, named China Toggery. The first official branch in Sacramento was

opened in 1916. By the time of his death in 1961, his chain had grown into 54 stores from coast to coast. While mainstream America perceived Chinese as incapable of management positions, Shoong hired a Chinese to manage each of his stores. Despite anti-Chinese legislation and labor issues, Shoong defied the odds, achieved financial success, created managerial positions for Chinese and gave back to the community. He lived in an Oakland mansion with 5 cars. His children were educated at Stanford and Berkeley. He was a Shriner and 32nd degree Mason.

Not only was he one of the wealthiest Chinese American businessmen in US, but he was a generous philanthropist.

- In 1931 he paid off the construction debt for Chinese Central High School in San Francisco.
- In 1937 he donated \$24k to the Chinese Hospital in San Francisco and \$15k to the Chinese War Relief Association.
- In 1938 he donated \$70k to UC Berkeley for scholarships.
- In 1945 the Joe Shoong Foundation was created with an endowment of \$1 million whose earnings were used to restore a theater in Oakland, support Bay Area churches, schools, charities and community groups.
- In 1928 he built a Chinese school for 350 children in his ancestral village in Long Doo District, Zhongshan County.

Built in 1915 funded by the Kuo Min Tang, the schoolhouse in Locke was first used by the KMT members as a meeting place and also used by the community as a town hall. In 1926, the building's use was changed to teach the Chinese language to local kids. The school was called Kuo Ming School. In the early years, the Chinese children, after regular



school, would study at this school until dinner. The Kuo Ming school

was closed around 1940 for a few years. Around 1954, with the help of the Joe Shoong Foundation, the Chinese school was renovated and reopened under the name of Joe Shoong School. The school was closed in the mid-eighties due to lack of Chinese children in town. Today it is open to the public and filled with artifacts from Sun Yat Sen's visit to Delta in early 1900's to raise funds for the overthrow of Qing dynasty in 1911.

The Shoong Family also donated funds to establish the Chinese Culture Center in Chinatown Oakland which houses a Chinese language school and community center.



Joe Shoong's daughter, Doris Lee, a community philanthropist in Las Vegas donated land to build the Joe Shoong Park in Clark County, Nevada.





# Sun Yat Sen's connections to Hawaii and Delta Chinese

By Eileen Leung



2011 was the centennial anniversary of the overthrow of the Qing dynasty, last vestige of monarchs whose absolute power besieged the lives of the Chinese people for several millennia. Sun Yat-sen is viewed as the architect of the revolution which led to the establishment of Asia's first republic.

Sun had strong connections to the US, studying at Punahou School in Hawaii that President Barack Obama would attend 100 years later. He spent his teenage years in Hawaii among family and friends and made 6 visits between 1879 and 1910. It was in Hawaii that Dr. Sun and few hundred Chinese first vowed to end years of imperial rule in China. Here he founded the Xing Zhong Hui (興中會) which later evolved into the KMT in 1912. "This is my Hawaii; Here I was brought up and educated; it was here that I came to know what modern, civilized governments are like."

In 1908, Sun was held at San Francisco's detention sheds for 17 days, compliments of US Immigration that only recognized the Qing government at that time. The experience did not dampen his admiration for an American-style democracy and his wish to establish a government "of the people, for the people and by the people," based on Abraham Lincoln's ideas.

The leader of the Chinese national revolution visited the United States seven times, mostly staying in northern California. Spending almost a decade of his life in America, he definitely touched the lives of overseas Chinese here. The Sun Yat-sen Memorial Hall of San Francisco (836 Stockton Street) was the original site for the *Young China Morning Post*, an official newspaper of Sun's KMT to spread Chinese revolutionary ideas in North America. Chen Po-hang, director of the Memorial Hall, said for over 70 years there has been a bronze statue of Sun Yat-sen standing in St. Mary's Square near San Francisco's Chinatown, exactly the spot where Sun stood to lecture overseas Chinese. Chen also pointed out the location of the Presbyterian church where Sun used to stay and the noodle shop where Sun used to eat on credit.

A bronze statue of Sun stands in front of the Chinese Benevolent Association of Sacramento, California. Late in the Qing Dynasty, many people from Xiangshan County, Guangdong Province in China, where Sun was born, emigrated to

the Sacramento Delta. Sun visited the delta several times to raise funds. Zhao Si Hong, a collector of Sun's memorabilia, owns different denominations of the bonds Sun had issued through the Chinese secret society of Hongmen (or Chee Kung Tong) in San Francisco. Zhao also has some lottery tickets from those days, bought as donations by the overseas Chinese. As a result of Sun's fiery eloquence, an estimated US\$400,000 was collected, which funded weapon purchases and recruitment for the 10 failed national insurrections to overthrow the Qing Dynasty. Without the support of overseas Chinese communities, the success of Sun's revolution, though not impossible, would certainly have been delayed.

Respect for Sun is shared by both Taiwan and China. Both sides have elevated Sun to an equally high historic position despite 60 years of fierce ideological struggle between the Communist PRC and the Nationalist ROC. Sun is respected as the founding father by the Taipei government, while he is referred as "a revolutionary pioneer" by the Beijing government. This watershed event will be celebrated throughout the year not only in Taiwan and PRC, but in all overseas Chinese communities.

## SYS Statue unveiled at Locke Festival

At its annual celebration of Pacific Heritage Month on May 14, 2011, the Locke community welcomed the unveiling of 2 bronze statues: Sun Yat Sen, founder of Republic of China, who visited Delta towns in the early 1900's to raise funds for overthrow of the Qing dynasty. This was a gift from Zhongshan Municipality. The second statue of Confucius was a gift from Lien Fan Chu, Locke Development Company. Delegates from the PRC Consulate office gave introductory remarks. Multi-ethnic entertainment followed. The festival was supported by donations from several community organizations including Confucius Temple, SCCF, Locke Foundation, Organization of Chinese Americans-Greater Sacramento Area, and Chinese American Council of Sacramento.



*Rambunctious lions herald the arrival of bronze statues in front of Joe Shoong School. Photo courtesy of Locke Foundation.*

## LIFE MEMBERS

Ball, Jacqueline  
 Chu, Clarence  
 Eng, Alex/Joyce  
 Harris, Dan  
 Huey, Loreen  
 Irani, Melissa/Saeed  
 Leung, Eileen  
 Miles, John/Vicky  
 Miller, Wayne L  
 Minnick, Sylvia Sun  
 Moy, Wai  
 Sasaki, Irvin  
 Spalding, Norman/Flora  
 Woo, Darrel/Nancy

Ann Young and Carolyn Horn from the Casa Garden Restaurant, operated by the Sacramento Children's Home, donated garden tools to be used in the Locke Chinese Demonstration Garden.



L-R: Deborah Mendel, Ann Young, Carolyn Horn and Stuart Walthall. (Photo courtesy James Motlow).

## ANNUAL LF MEMBERS

Abelson, David/Carol  
 Adams, Janet  
 Alexander, Candy  
 Alexander, Brock  
 Appleton, Rich  
 Blanchard, Elizabeth  
 Braziel, Pat/Sam Anderson  
 Briggs, Milton/Janet  
 Chan, Raymond/Kathryn  
 Chape, Elizabeth  
 Chong, Ronald  
 Clarr, Kelly  
 Duff, Patricia  
 Flaherty, Robin  
 Gillenkirk, Jeff  
 Gualco, James/Marilyn  
 Haile, Vera  
 Huey, Jim/Kazuko  
 Jones, Bert  
 Jung, Priscilla/Robert  
 Kan, Darwin/Lili  
 King, Michael  
 Korth, Linda/Kipling  
 Lai, Collin  
 Lee, Jeff Kan

Lee, Johnny  
 Lee, Kenneth  
 Leigon, William  
 Lew, Elizabeth  
 Lo, Anita  
 Loosen, Suzanne  
 Mah, Daisy  
 Mar, Lim  
 Marks, Norm  
 Mendel, Deborah/Russell Ooms  
 Motlow, James  
 Neary, Tom  
 Owyang, Lucky  
 Pauls, Holly  
 Pederson, Penny  
 Quan, Roberta  
 Shinn, Richard  
 Trapani, Traci  
 Von Geldern, Susan/Rick  
 Walthall, Holly  
 Walthall, Stuart  
 Wiles, Tom  
 Wilson, Susan  
 Xi, Li

Many thanks to the following individuals who made donations in 2012. These gifts enable us to purchase some of the items on our wish list.

Jan and Bill Adams, Jim Huey, Anita Lo, Raymond & Kathryn Chan, Pat Braziel & Sam Anderson. Irvin Sasaki also donated toward the (Connie King Memorial ((his words)) Demonstration Garden Fund.



## 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 Volunteer \_\_\_\_\_ Media/Publicity \_\_\_\_\_ Membership recruitment \_\_\_\_\_

Contribute articles \_\_\_\_\_ Contribute artifacts \_\_\_\_\_ Grant writing \_\_\_\_\_

Visitor Center Help \_\_\_\_\_ Legal skills \_\_\_\_\_ Fundraising \_\_\_\_\_

### 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  
Walnut Grove, CA 95690

### 2013 Board

President: Clarence Chu  
Vice-Pres: Eileen Leung  
Secretary: Eileen Leung  
Treasurer: Brock Alexander  
At Large: Dustin Marr  
Pat Braziel  
Deborah Mendel  
Mike McCuen  
Joyce Eng  
Darrel Woo  
Jay Correia

Newsletter: Eileen Leung  
Stuart Walthall  
Cartoonist: Brock Alexander