

Locke Foundation Newsletter 樂居鎮基金會
Preserving Locke's history and legacy

lockefoundation@frontiernet.net

Spring 2018

www.locke-foundation.org

Locke Asian Pacific Spring Festival
樂居鎮亞太春節聯歡

**Music
Dance
Raffles
Food**

The Year of the Dog
狗年大吉

**Lion Dance
Taiko Drums
and more**

Sponsors:

**Free Admission
Free Parking**

**Saturday, May 12, 2018
11am - 5pm Locke, California**

Locke Foundation is a 501(c)3 organization. FEIN: 20-0364281 www.locke-foundation.org 916-776-1684 / 916-776-1828

Meet 2018 Locke Foundation Board of Directors

We are pleased to introduce the 2018 Board of Directors who are passionate, tireless volunteers dedicated to the preservation of Locke's historic legacy. Each of them brings unique skills, knowledge and abilities to serve Locke Foundation.



Stuart Walthall, chairman of the Locke Foundation, has lived in Locke since 1983. Born and raised in Sacramento, he has been a private music teacher since 1973. He is also chairman of the East Sacramento Baby Boomers, a non-profit organization which raises funds for Sacramento charities. He is also active in Angels of the Fields, a Delta charity which brings Christmas to children of local farm workers.



Clarence Chu is vice-chair. Longtime investor and business owner in Locke, he has seen many changes in the town since arriving in 1976. His advocacy for the town resulted in partnership with Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency to make it possible for residents to buy their land. In 2017, he received the Founders Award from Chinese American Council of Sacramento for his lifelong commitment to the town of Locke.

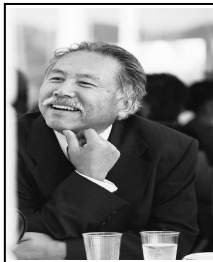


Anita Lo is Secretary. Born and educated in Hong Kong, she immigrated to California in 1997. Anita had worked in real estate sales for MacBride Realty and Edward Jones Financial before taking a job with the State of California. She is also a volunteer Lector and Eucharistic minister for Holy Cross Church. A dedicated volunteer of the Locke Boarding House since 2009, she teaches Chinese

Calligraphy class the first Sunday of each month at Locke. She plays the violin for Sacramento K Street Orchestra. She is a generous donor of her painting artwork to community causes.



An American-born Chinese from Hawaii, Eileen Leung serves as Treasurer. She is co-editor of the Locke Foundation newsletter with Stuart Walthall. A veteran event planner and fundraiser, she chaired the 2015 Locke Foundation Centennial Celebration and produced the Memorial Book. As president of CNYCA, she was also chair of the 2018 Chinese New Year Celebration Gala in Sacramento.



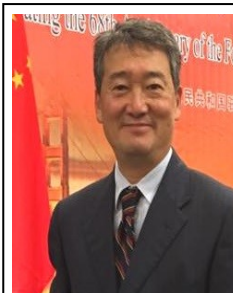
Born and raised in Locke, Dustin Marr is our primal link to the town's historic legacy. His family owned the Yuen Chong Market on Main Street serving Delta communities. Representing commercial property owners, his devotion to Locke continues to sustain the town.



Born and raised in Sacramento, Honey Lum is a manager for California Department of Community and Housing Development. Her extensive community service record includes; former president of Asian Pacific State Employees Association, current president of Chinese American Council of Sacramento, and board of directors for APAPA.



Darrel Woo, retired attorney with California Department of Insurance, serves on both Locke Foundation and Locke Management Association board. He is sits on the Sacramento City Unified School District Board of Education. In 2009 Darrel was elected the first male president of My Sister's House, a non-profit organization addressing the needs of women and children impacted by domestic violence



Douglas Hsia is one of our new board members. Born in Shanghai and educated in the USA, he has embraced Locke's community spirit. He serves on the boards of CACS (Chinese American Council of Sacramento) and APAPA (Asian Pacific Islander American Public Affairs.)



Mark Miller, interpretive analyst at State Parks, brings a unique background and perspective to helping Locke Foundation enhance its on historic preservation efforts. Retired from USAF, he is also a graduate student in anthropology at CSU Sacramento.

Locke Foundation Leads 2018 Chinese New Year Celebration in Sacramento

Locke Foundation is a member of the Chinese New Year Culture Association (CNYCA), a consortium of 17 Chinese organizations in the Sacramento Area which hosts a gala celebration for the community each year. Since Chinese New Year is one of the most colorful festivals in Chinese culture, this annual event is produced each year to showcase Chinese culture in our diverse community. Held at Hiram Johnson High School on Saturday, February 10, 2018, the event was chaired by Eileen Leung from the Locke Foundation. The planning and execution of the event required over 200 volunteers and performers. The day-long event was filled with lion dancers, cultural entertainment, arts and crafts, food vendors, children's games and community exhibits. Government and community organization dignitaries were on hand to extend greetings for the Year of the Dog. (Photos courtesy of Shiqiao Li.)



Top row, left to right: (1) Honor King Fu student demonstrates martial arts moves. (2) Children from Soul of Dance Art Ensemble. (3) Chair Eileen Leung awards Certificates of Appreciation to sponsors. Bottom photo: Grand finale.



Walnut Grove Branch Line Railroad in Locke

By Stuart Walthall

Much has been written about the early history of Locke and of the circumstances that led to its founding in 1915. That same year a catastrophic fire occurred in nearby Walnut Grove destroying most of the Chinatown section of that community. Some victims chose to stay while many opted to move one mile upriver, leasing land from the owners of the Locke Ranch, and building a new town - a new life. It's a compelling story of the early Chinese immigrant experience in California, and Locke stands as a legacy of those who endured the pain of poverty, discrimination and alienation - and ultimately prospered.

But let's take a look back to another factor leading to Locke's location and founding. Back before the three year period preceding Locke's founding, when Locke was known as Lockeport, the "town" consisted of three buildings - all built to service workers, primarily Chinese, employed at the adjacent waterfront warehouse known as the Southern Pacific Packing Shed.

Following the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad in 1869 railways systems began criss-crossing the western states in earnest, and Sacramento was a hub of west coast transportation. Agriculture was the driving economic force in the reclamation and development of the upper Sacramento River Delta during the second half of the 19th century, and riverboats were the main method of transporting agricultural products grown in the region.

A railroad needed to be constructed in order to compete with river traffic and to link the agricultural communities of the upper Sacramento River Delta with Sacramento and distant markets. Southern Pacific Railroad created a subsidiary known as the Sacramento Southern Railroad Company to meet those needs. The railway link which SRC constructed between Sacramento and the North Delta was called the Walnut Grove Branch Line Railroad (WGBLR). This rail line, constructed between 1908 and 1912, played a vital and crucial role in the subsequent agricultural boom in the region, as well as the development of numerous towns, including Freeport, Hood and the National Register-listed town of Locke.

The Walnut Grove Branch Line Railroad extended 24.5 miles from Old Sacramento to Walnut Grove, generally paralleling the Sacramento River and State Highway 160 (River Road). The WGBLR began adjacent to the Central Pacific Passenger Station in Sacramento at Front and I streets and continued south, passing along the east side of the Sacramento River. The track has been refurbished between Old Sacramento and Miller Park and is currently used for steam train excursions operated by the State Railroad Museum.

South of Miller Park the line was elevated and paralleled the Sacramento River on the west and Interstate 5 on the east for about 1.5 miles. It then passed over Interstate 5 and continued through Florin Road Shopping Center at ground (grade) level. South of Meadowview Road, adjacent to the town of Freeport, it once again is located on the river levee for about two miles before turning inland. The line continued inland on a 15 to 20 foot-high levee and passed a series of small lakes, marshes and ponds, paralleling Willow Slough for approximately four miles to the town of Hood - named after William Hood, Chief Engineer of the

WGBLR. It then paralleled Snodgrass Slough for several miles extending north of Locke, then continued one mile to the town of Walnut Grove.

Lengthy wooden trestles are still found along the line and dominate the approach to the remnants of the Snodgrass Slough Bridge, located behind Locke. The elevated elements of the bridge were removed in 1975, but one can take a stroll to the back of Locke, walk left (north) for about a mile on the back railroad levee (now devoid of tracks) and view the foundation of the swing-span bridge structure.



Snodgrass Slough Bridge, Photo courtesy of Sacramento River Delta Historical Society



*Southern Pacific Packing Shed in Locke
Courtesy of the Roy Graves Collection, Bancroft Library, UC Berkeley*

Lifetime Locke resident Dustin Marr vividly recollects a fully functioning Snodgrass Slough Bridge: "When we were kids would run and play on the two wooden walkways that paralleled the tracks on the bridge. I would climb down to the base and look at the gears that turned it. They were massive!" It is from this section of the WGBLR that a rail spur was constructed which led to Locke's Southern Pacific Packing Shed, now known as The Boathouse.

Originally spur tracks extended east and west from the main (north and south) railroad to access agriculturally oriented communities and farms within the Delta. These elevated spur tracks led to warehouses, sheds, or loading platforms within private ranches. These spur lines also led to passenger stations located along the rail line. Station accommodations were also built for railroad repair crews and workers.

Hood Junction, for example, had a cookhouse, bunkhouse, privy, sheds, stock corral and loading pens, as well as a passenger and freight loading platform. Other stations were developed at Baths, Del Rio, Freeport, Mofuba, Locke and Walnut Grove. Passengers were boarded at all of these stations, although Walnut Grove was the largest along the line.

Mail was brought in by railroad, as well as supplies and cargo. The services provided by Southern Pacific are fondly remembered by local Asian residents. For example, Tommy King, a Locke resident, recalled that his father would pick up slot machines, shipped cargo freight from Chicago, at the depot in Walnut Grove. Dustin Marr recalls how, as a child, he would watch the Branch Line deliver freight cars containing pre-fabricated home "kits" purchased from Sears and Roebuck. "The train delivered homes! It would drop them off at the Walnut Grove depot and then they were trucked over to Clappett Tract" (the portion of Walnut Grove located on the western side of the Sacramento River). "A lot of the homes on First Street are made from pre-cut home kits bought from a Sears catalog". Other residents recalled that mail was delivered by train to Locke, Hood and Freeport on a regular basis. As one Locke resident recalled: "There used to be a train in the back (of Locke) and it would take you to Sacramento or wherever you wanted to go in that direction. If you wanted to go to San Francisco you would pick up a freight ship."

Throughout the 1920s the Delta continued to prosper and development was rapid, aided by the transportation provided by the Branch Line Railroad. The development of the refrigerated car allowed pears from the upper Delta



and other produce to remain fresh during shipping. Delta produce continued to find its way to the East Coast where consumer demand was great. Typically, four freight trains and four passenger trains serviced the Delta per day in the 1920s.

In 1925 Southern Pacific enlarged the packing shed in Locke in direct response to the opening of several canneries in the area, resulting in a population boom.

Existing WGBLR tracks just east of Hood. Photo courtesy of Stuart Walthall.

By the late 1920s, the initial three Locke(port) businesses had grown into an established Chinese American community that had peaked at over 1,500 residents.

The decline of the Branch Line started in 1930, when the effects of the Great Depression began to hit the Delta region. In that year several Delta canneries were forced to close. In 1934 the passenger service provided by the Branch Line was halted, signaling the beginning of the end of the railroad. Freight service continued, although it also began to decline due to the Depression and automobile and truck competition. In addition to the ending of passenger service, routine track maintenance was deferred due to lack of funds. Several stations were dismantled and the land sold between 1939 and 1947. Spur lines, buildings, platforms and trestles were gradually retired from service after 1945 due to deterioration and lack of use.

By the early 1970s trains ran only three or four times per week and less than 200 carloads of goods were transported annually. The last train on the branch line was



Current view of Boathouse on River Road

operated on October 10, 1978. The run consisted of empty freight cars that had been in storage south of Hood. Soon after this run all automatic grade crossing signals south of Miller Park were removed and several railroad crossings were paved over.

The remainder of the line, however, including right of way, tracks between Sacramento and Walnut Grove, and under-crossings, are intact pursuant to purchase by the State of California.

So the next time you visit the historic and picturesque town of Locke, glance across the River Road to The Boathouse. Then take a moment to reflect upon the Walnut Grove Branch Line Railroad and the impact it had on Locke, the Sacramento River Delta and the rich history of the west.

Sources for this article include: WGBLR National Register Nomination Report; Bitter Melon-Stories from the Last Rural Chinese Town in America: Gillenkirch/Motlow; One Day, One Dollar: Peter C.Y. Leung; and Dustin Marr-current Locke resident.

Chinese New Year in Locke

If you plan it, they will come. The weather was perfect to celebrate the Year of the Dog on Main Street in Locke on Saturday, February 17, 2018. Nine frolicking lions from Eastern Ways started off the celebration with resounding drum beats. Emcee Jim Chong from Wokstar Production welcomed the enthusiastic throng with his witty antics. Visitors were told that while the town is over 100 years old, it needs financial support from the public to sustain its infrastructure to last another 100 years.

First time visitors milled around the refreshment table in the Boarding House taking in the dazzling array of historical artifacts. Elk Grove mayor Steve Ly presented a resolution to Locke Foundation president Stuart Walthall.

In the Chinese School, calligrapher Anita Lo prepared bookmarks with Chinese names. In the Jan Ying Building, Joy Kuo created exquisite bookmarks with classical Chinese water colors. A special guest included Alice Chang, who taught Locke children in the Chinese School in the late 1970's. Spry and intellectually sharp, she reminisced about her students.



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1. Eastern Ways
2. Boarding House crowds
3. Anita Lo creates bookmarks for Mei Mah and May King Lau.
4. Alice Chang, former teacher at Chinese School
5. Joy Kuo in Jan Ying Bldg demonstrates Chinese painting.
6. Stuart Walthall accepts resolution from Elk Grove Mayor Steve Ly.
7. Corliss Lee, former resident of Locke, leads visitors on tour of town.

Photos courtesy of Joe Chan, Anita Lo and Rachel Monet.



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Narcissus in Chinese Culture

The Chinese who arrived in the American Far West in the mid-1800s knew the country as *Gam saan* (Gold Mountain). In this unfamiliar territory, they encountered brutal working conditions and waves of racial prejudice from a nativist frontier culture. Like many isolated and homesick peoples, the newly arrived Chinese took solace in the familiar: traditional foods, conversation with their countrymen, and celebrations connecting them with the calendar of home. Foremost among their celebrations was the lunar New Year. A variety of flowers are intimately associated with Chinese New Year, but the landscapes of the Far Western frontier provided none of those early-blooming, emblematic species.



One flower, however, a narcissus (*Narcissus tazetta* subsp. *chinensis*) was imported from southeastern China as easily shipped, dormant bulbs. In China, the flowers of these bulbs had a centuries-old association with New Year celebrations. In the isolated frontier communities of the American West, these iconic bulbs were grown as they had long been grown in China: they were placed within shallow bowls filled with pebbles and water, just as paper white narcissus (*N. papyraceus*) are often grown for winter holidays today. The frontier-era Chinese called their narcissus *seui sin*

(water immortal flowers) in their melodic Cantonese dialect. The flowers are often known in English as "Chinese sacred lilies" or "joss flowers."

The Chinese who received bulbs from overseas frequently offered them as gifts to their American neighbors. As end-of-the-year holidays arrived, potted and flowering plants were given away as well. After blooming indoors, they were planted outdoors. The plants were perfectly adapted to survive in the summer-dry, Mediterranean-type climate of California. They cycle naturally from foliage and flowers to summer-dormant bulbs, just as they do within their ancient homelands of western Asia and the Mediterranean Basin. Climatically, they have traveled full circle.

However, gifts of flowers gave the Chinese no immunity to ill treatment by their American neighbors. Armed vigilantes forcibly removed most Chinese miners from local gold-mining areas. Some traveled to more distant and inaccessible locations where there was less competition and consequently less hostility. Many returned to China, and some drifted to safer urban enclaves such as San Francisco's Chinatown. They carried their horticultural skills with them, wherever they went.



Scholarship Opportunity for Delta Students

The Locke Foundation is pleased to announce the availability of three \$500 scholarships to be awarded to graduating high school seniors from Delta High School and Rio Vista High School. Deadline is Monday April 9, 2018. The scholarships will be awarded at the 2018 Locke Asian Pacific Street Festival on Saturday, May 12, 2018. Application forms can be accessed at LF web site.



Locke Foundation Membership Application/Renewal

Last Name _____ First Name _____

Mailing address _____

Email address _____ Tel () _____ Cell () _____

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

Make check payable to Locke Foundation. Please return this form with check to Locke Foundation, P. O. Box 1085, Walnut Grove, CA 95690. Contributions are tax deductible to extent allowed by law. Tax ID: 20-0364281.

Office use only:

Date application received _____ Membership Year _____ Renewal _____

Locke Foundation
P. O. Box 1085
Walnut Grove, CA 95690

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