

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

lockefoundation@frontiernet.net

Fall 2018

www.locke-foundation.org



Funds raised will  
benefit the  
Locke Museum  
Renovation Project

\$55/Person  
\$500/Table of 10

**Locke Foundation Reunion Dinner  
and Fundraiser**

Sunday October 28, 2018, 6 - 8 pm  
Hong Kong Islander Restaurant  
5675 Freeport Blvd.  
Sacramento, California  
95822

Visit us at [locke-foundation.org](http://locke-foundation.org) or contact Anita Lo 916.208.2849  
Locke Foundation is a 501-c-3 organization. FEIN: 20-0364281

# Evolution of Chinese Family Associations, Part I

By Eileen Leung

When the early immigrants to San Francisco first arrived from Guangdong, they were met by members of Family Associations, or *huigan* 會館 which were established by overseas immigrants to facilitate the transition of new immigrants from ship to shore, provide work referrals and social support upon arrival. Often they were composed of persons from the same clan or village and had the same surname. Regional and clan ties created the need for individual Chinese associations.

Widespread discrimination, differences in language and culture led the first Chinese immigrants to help their own countrymen. Because the basic unit of Chinese society is the family, these Family Associations included all relatives and anyone remotely related by blood or marriage. Those with same surnames were welcome; they did not have to come from the same village, district or ancestors. Some of the functions included provide lodging, provide English-language training, medical care, financial assistance, bury the dead, disinter and repatriate remains to China for burial. Those who were too sick to work or were destitute were given funds to return to China. Each association would settle disputes among members and represent the general interests of people from its districts. A surname association provided mutual aid and social networking; the sole criterion is descent from an alleged common ancestor, with no limitation on locality.

There are subtle nuances among *huigan* 會館, *shantang* 善堂 and *gong suo* 公所. *Huigan* literally means "meeting hall"; they were the first to be organized as early as 1852 due to the need for self-defense against violence. *Shantang* (benevolent association) were a subset of *Huigan* organized to handle benevolent needs of immigrants such as repatriating remains of deceased members for burial. *Gong suo* means "public place". Clans with few members would often align themselves with similar clans to form a critical mass.

Examples of Family Associations included Wong Kong Har (Wong), Gee How Oak Tin (Chan, Chin, Chun surnames), Lum Sai Ho Tong (Lum, Lim), Yee Fung Toy (Yee). and Lee Family Association.

Village or district associations claimed a common village and subdialect. Today they are known as benevolent associations or fellow villagers' associations. Examples include Toisan Villagers' Association, See Yup Association, Lung Doo Benevolent Association, and Lung Kong Benevolent Association.

Since there were few aristocratic families or highly educated immigrants in the new country, to coordinate administrative functions, the *huigan* were managed by the merchant class in San Francisco. Membership dues were used

to cover operating expenses. This is typically how they provided services to new immigrants:

1. Meet new arrivals at wharf, bring them to association building, register them as members.
2. Furnish sleeping quarters with cooking facility
3. Arbitrate disagreements
4. Clear debts of members before they could depart for China and issue exit permit because steamship companies required exit permit before selling ticket.
5. Maintain a cemetery, provide medicine and burial expenses for poor, donate passage money for sick and elderly.

Like many organizations, the *huigans* endured internal strife and bickering, which led to secession of factions to form their own organizations. There were few established rules; accusations of mismanagement of funds were rampant.

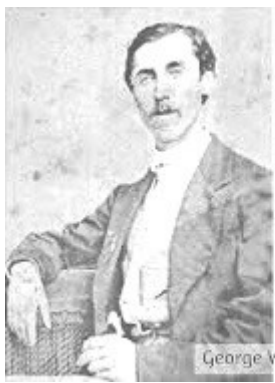
US cities with largest number of surviving family associations include San Francisco, Oakland, New York City and Honolulu. In San Francisco, most of the association buildings are located on Waverly Place, Stockton St. and Grant Avenue. In Oakland, they are located on 7th-9th Street between Franklin and Webster Streets; in New York City, on Mott Street; in Honolulu on Maunakea and Hotel Streets. Membership dues continue to sustain their operations; these associations also own valuable real estate in their association headquarters. If they are 501-c-3 organizations, their meeting hall is generally exempt from local property tax.

These organizations also existed in countries wherever overseas Chinese immigrants settled including Canada, United Kingdom, Singapore, Malaysia, Cuba, Central and South America.

These family associations would eventually come under the umbrella of the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association 中華會館 or Six Companies, which wielded considerable political clout when the Chinese were faced with discrimination, pogroms and violence from the white society. When new immigrants came as "paper sons", they would obviously join their real Family Association instead that of their fictitious Family Associations. The Six Companies used its strong financial clout to finance legal battles in the court system to address grievances.

**Topics for future newsletters will include merchant organizations, secret societies and Chinese Benevolent Associations/Six Companies.**

## From Sacramento Union Archives: August 22, 1909



George W. Locke



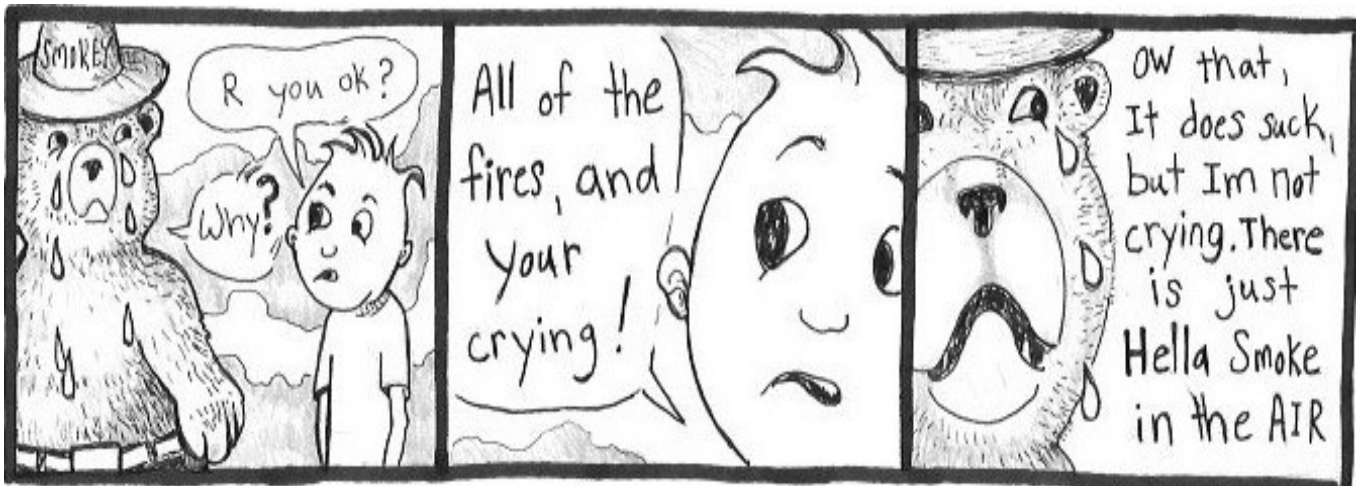
George W. Locke, the oldest of Sacramento's merchants, passed away at his home at 1601 L Street, yesterday afternoon, after an illness of 9 months. He was identified with the growth of Sacramento city and county. He arrived in California in 1850 and shortly thereafter the furniture and house fitting establishment of Locke and Lavenson was formed. This was terminated a number of years ago and the business was conducted under the name of George W. Locke & Son. Until early last winter, Mr. Locke although in his 79th year, was an active member of the firm, his wide business knowledge being drawn

upon as long as he was able to offer counsel.

Besides his established business in the city, Mr. Locke held valuable tracts of land in the Island District down the river and was reputed to be wealthy. In 1915 he allowed a Chinese community from Walnut Grove to rebuild a town on his ranch, which eventually became the town of Lockeport. Until a few years go, he was an ardent sportsman, and a member of some of the old-time gun clubs. He was of high moral integrity and the lesson taught him in childhood that a man's word should be as good as his bond was never forgotten.

George W. Locke was a member of Sacramento lodges, F. and A. M., and was a member of Sacramento Commandery, and under the auspices of the Masonic fraternity, his funeral will be held from his late home next Tuesday.

The deceased was a native of New York State, and at the time of his death was 79 years, 2 months and 8 days old. He was the husband of Louisa and the father of George G. Locke and three grandchildren.





## Tribute to Locke Native Son: Morrison Chun (1920-2018)

By Morrison Chun Children

Morrison "Morrie" Chun left the mortal world peacefully in his sleep on May 29, 2018 in Berkeley, CA. He would be 98 years old on August 28. He was active and independent until his final days. Morrie's smile, kindness, and convivial spirit will be missed by his family, relatives, and friends. His beloved wife Helen, 4 children, 9 grandchildren, and 2 great grandsons: Stephen/Doris, Douglas/Cynthia (Marrisa/Joe-Obadiah & JD), Madeline/John (Ian & Lillian), Brian/Temmie (Emerald, Timothy, Evelyn, Nicholas) celebrated his life surrounded by ones he loved on Saturday, June 2, 2018. His final resting place is Sunset View Cemetery in El Cerrito, CA, accompanying his parents.



Morrie was born in 1920 in Locke and grew up there until 1940 when he left for college. The Chinese name for Locke means "happy living". Morrie's parents Kam Chun and Lum Shee ran a dry goods store Wah Lee & Co. He always remembered Locke fondly and returned there regularly to visit with his family. Born in the Territory of Hawaii, Kam Chun arrived in Sacramento in 1906; he ran a store with Moon Chew and Lee Bing in Walnut Grove. When a fire destroyed Walnut Grove's China-

town, Kam Chun opened the Wah Lee Store, at 19131 Main Street, a purveyor of dry goods including work clothing, work shoes, (including name brands like Hanes, Levi's, Rough Rider) household necessities and fabrics.



As a citizen of the Territory of Hawaii, Kam Chun did not have to endure detention at Angel Island. However, when

his wife, Lum Shee arrived in San Francisco, she was subject to interrogation regarding her marriage back in the village. Their village was Cha In (Tea Garden) in Zhongshan District of Guangdong, China. They spoke Zhongshan dialect like other residents of Locke.

Morrie is the eldest of 8 siblings, followed by Amelia "Min" (d), Edna (d), Lorraine, John (d), Richard "Dick", Keith and Sylvia (d). He attended the local segregated public school (Walnut Grove Oriental School) and graduated from Courtland High School. He was the only child in the family to attend Chinese language school for 8 years, because during the Great Depression, his parents couldn't afford the \$2 per month for his younger sibs. As a youngster Morrie achieved such proficiency in Chinese that he was charged with the task of reading the Chinese newspaper to inform the townspeople of the tumultuous happenings and war events in China.

Morrie's knowledge in reading, writing and speaking Chinese facilitated his military training at Yale University. During WWII he served as a 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant and liaison to the Chinese Nationalists. He traveled through China, flew over Burma and into India where he spent 6 months at the war's end. He is the only Chun family member who is fluent in both Cantonese and Mandarin. In Asia, he witnessed tremendous human suffering, tragedies and pain caused by war. He was saddened by what he saw and those images remained with him. He tells those stories again and again.

Morrie excelled academically. He attended UC Berkeley with scholarship in 1940 to study chemistry. He resided at the Berkeley Chinese Congregational Church, a 2-story wooden structure on Addison Street while attending UC Berkeley. Because he worked as a caretaker for the church, he was able to live there rent-free. Morrie has been forever grateful for the support he received from the church and devoted his life for God's work. He treasures the fellowship and friendships. He believes in charity.

Studying at UC on a limited budget, Morrie ate most of his meals at the Canton Café, which was located on University Avenue next to where McDonald's is now. For \$5 he could buy a meal ticket good for 24 dishes. 3 to 4 Cal students got together. Each bought a dish and they shared. Rice was free, no tax, no tip.

During the summer breaks, Morrie went back to Locke to pick fruit in the pear orchards. He often told us that he was paid \$0.05 a box and he was able to pack 40 boxes a day to pay for his studies. All the Chun siblings worked in pear orchards and canneries. They climbed ladders to gather fruit

into homemade wooden baskets lashed together with split willow gathered from river banks. The girls worked in the canneries packing pears for market. "My sisters used to wipe the pears, just rub the white residue off with their bare hands; it was lead arsenic." Other families worked in asparagus fields: it was back-breaking labor to cut the stalks by hand.



In December 1943, Morrie graduated from UC Berkeley, College of Chemistry in just 3 years with Phi Beta Kappa honors. After the war, he obtained his MS degree from UCB. He was a student of the renowned Professor Joel Hildebrand—the father of chemistry there.

Upon graduation, Morrie worked at the California Ink Co (later Tenneco) for 32 years. He did research in pigments and dyes and had a number of patents. In his retirement years, he worked as a realtor for Mason McDuffie.

Morrie met Helen when they both were undergraduate students and the two married on September 14, 1946 at the chapel of Grace Cathedral in San Francisco and raised us 4 children. Their 72nd wedding anniversary is coming up this September. Morrie asked about Helen, our Mom, many times during his last few days at the hospital to make sure that she was taken care of. Family has always been the heart of his life. We have had so much fun together.

Our Dad lived a simple life, which made him appear ordinary. But in fact he is extraordinary in many ways. His Chinese name 陳偉雄 fits him well.

偉 – stalwart and of great stature

雄 – hero (powerful and mighty)

Morrie's special gift to his children is to help each of us see and utilize the values and gifts within ourselves to be sincere and useful persons. He gave us vision for our lives. He said that hard work kills no one.

Morrie believed in education and encouraged us to study hard and explore - music, swimming, scouts, Tuolumne camp, studying overseas. He planned well, invested wisely, and saved for the future. "Dollar cost averaging", "the rule of 72", he'd told us. He was a star with the abacus and slide rule. Morrie made it a regular habit to go the main Berkeley Public Library every week to keep current and abreast. He

was a voracious reader.

Morrie, our Dad, lived simply, ate simply, dressed simply. But he lived fully because he was resourceful, never wasteful and only took what he could use.



Front row: Helen and Morrison Chun. Back row children and spouses: Douglas Chun (Cynthia), Stephen Chun (Doris), Madeline Farnkopf (John) and Brian Chun (Temie).

Morrie was in every sense an environmentalist and a conservator of our earth's natural resources even before the terms ecology and environmental science became every day terms. He didn't waste water; turned off lights whenever not in use; and initiated recycling in his earlier



On Memorial Day, 2013 Morrie went to Washington DC as a representative of the US Army to present a wreath at the WW2 Veterans Memorial to honor those who served this country.

days. He received a special public recognition award from the Berkeley City Council and Mayor Tom Bates for his efforts in significantly reducing energy and water usage at the Church.

Morrie loved working in the garden, something that came



from his experience as a young man picking fruit in the orchards near Locke. He had his fruit trees and enjoyed grafting new varieties. We had all sorts of fresh produce growing up. He also did much grocery shopping and cooking.

Morrie was extremely hands-on. He believed in fixing things himself whenever he could and did preventative maintenance, e.g. servicing his car, remodeling the kitchen, the bathrooms, and painting the house. By example Dad showed that it's important to keep ourselves both mentally and physically active and fit. Up until his last 10 days, he exercised every day. He walked without using a cane.

Morrie, our Dad is kind, loving, honest, generous, good natured and peaceful. He is really wonderful! We love our father. We miss him dearly.



#### Editor's Note:

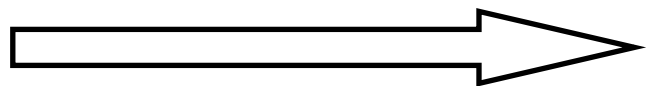
After Kam Chun suffered a stroke in 1968, the Wah Lee store was managed by Morrie's sister, Lorraine Chun Fong, until the 1970's, when it closed. In 2003, the Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency subdivided the town of Locke and offered building owners the opportunity to purchase the property under their building. Lorraine Chun Fong purchased the property.

Morrison Chun's family represented the resilient and indomitable spirit of families who lived and settled in Delta towns. They worked hard to eke out a living; education was stressed as the key to improvement of their economic status. Because it was difficult to find a decent job, it was easier to open their own business to support families. All of Morrison's children and grandchildren graduated from universities and entered professional careers.

## New Exhibits at Boarding House

2019 will be the 150th anniversary of the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad which connected east and west coast of America by rail at Promontory Summit, Utah. Thousands of Chinese workers toiled to complete this massive project which changed the course of American history. The Chinese Railroad Workers Descendants Association will be celebrating the contribution of our ancestors to the building of America. These contributions have been overlooked or ignored in history books because fear-mongering led to rampant discrimination of Chinese. The Golden Spike Conference in Salt Lake City from May 8-11, 2019, will educate, motivate, inspire and celebrate the history of Chinese in America. Over 20,000 are expected to attend the festivities which will include a visit to Promontory Summit. Please don't miss the opportunity of a life time. Details on the celebration are available at [www.goldenspike150.org](http://www.goldenspike150.org)

To honor the contributions of Chinese labor to American history, Locke Foundation is pleased to present 2 outstanding exhibits at the Boarding House Museum. The opening reception will be on Saturday, November 10, 2018. Docents will be on hand to describe the scope of this engineering marvel, exploitation of Chinese immigrant labor and lack of recognition for their back-breaking effort.



*Locke Foundation presents*  
*The Chinese Helped Build The Railroad*  
*The Railroad Helped Build America*  
*and*  
*Chinese and the Iron Road*

*華工修建美國鐵路*

*Exhibit runs through March 31, 2019*

***Opening Reception: Saturday, November 10, 2018***

***11 am—3 pm***

*Interpretive panels honoring the contributions of Chinese Railroad Workers who completed the Transcontinental Railroad in 1869, on loan from Chinese Railroad Workers in North America Project at Stanford University and Chinese Historical Society of America.*

*Locke Boarding House Museum (free admission)*

*13913 Main Street*

*Walnut Grove, CA 95690*

*Tues and Fri: noon-4 pm*

*Sat and Sun: 11: am-3 pm*

## 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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