

Locke Foundation Newsletter 樂居鎮基金會

Preserving Locke's history and legacy

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Winter 2019

www.locke-foundation.org

Why is 2019 a banner year in Chinese American history?

2019 marks the 150th anniversary of the completion of the first Transcontinental Railroad. Authorized in 1861 by President Lincoln, the massive railroad project was funded by the Big Four American businessmen: Hopkins, Huntington, Crocker and Stanford. Laborers from China provided crucial manpower to complete it. However, when it was first completed in 1869, the commemorative photo taken at Promontory Point, Utah, did not feature any of the Chinese laborers; they had not been invited to the celebration.

The Chinese helped build the railroad; the railroad helped to build America by uniting both coasts by rail to foster the development of commerce and westward expansion.

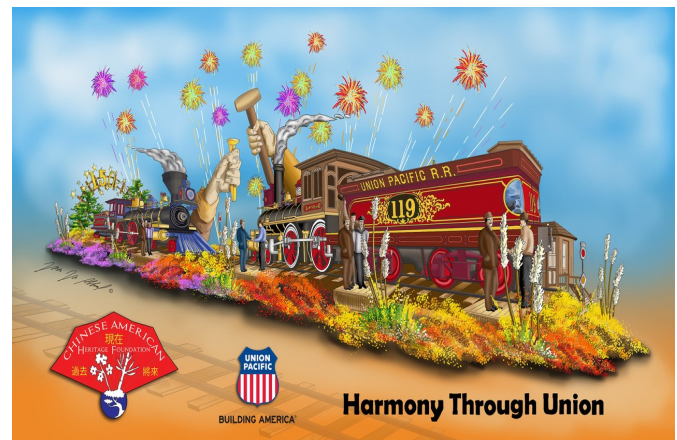
One of the floats in the 2019 Rose Bowl Parade on January 1, 2019, will feature the commemoration of the completion of the railroad; this float named Harmony Through Union is sponsored by Union Pacific and Chinese American Heritage Foundation

On May 8, 2019, the Chinese American community is expected to turn out in full force at Promontory Point to make sure the achievements of the nameless Chinese laborers are not forgotten. 20,000 are expected.

A national conference sponsored by Chinese Descendants of Railroad Workers Association will be held in Salt Lake City from May 8-11, 2019, featuring a jour-

ney to the Visitors' Center at Promontory Point, guest speakers and displays of this project.

Many communities will be sponsoring commemorative activities. The California State Railroad Museum will be presenting free melodramas for elementary school children, enhanced exhibits on Chinese railroad workers during the week of May 8, 2019.



Funds are being raised for a Chinese Railroad Workers Memorial Monument at Gold Run in Placer County.

Celebrate Chinese New Year in Locke February 16, 2019, noon - 3 pm



The 12th animal in the Chinese New Year zodiac cycle is represented by the character 豬 which can mean pig, swine, boar or hog. To remain politically correct, we shall refer to 2019 as the Year of the Boar.

The Locke Foundation will offer the following activities in celebration of the Lunar New Year. On Saturday, February 16, 2019, rain or shine. Eastern Ways will kick off the event with a lion dance at 12 noon sharp, followed by martial arts demonstration. Other activities include tea ceremony, calligraphy demonstration, traditional Chinese music, Chinese games of chance and light refreshments.



WWII SERVICE RECORD of GEORGE MARR of LOCKE, CA

August 8, 1923—December 10, 1980

by Whitney Marr

On December 7th, 1941, Pearl Harbor was attacked and the United States entered World War II. Among those who joined the armed forces were Chinese Americans showing their patriotism and loyalty to their country and also to strike a blow for their native China who had been fighting the Japanese Empire since 1931 in what is known in China as the War of Resistance (against Japanese aggression). Organized War relief efforts in the Chinese American community was an on-going effort with famine and humanitarian aid being sent back to the country of their origin and Chinese government leaders actively participating with visits to Locke and the west coast Chinese centers for the sale of Chinese national war bonds to the overseas Chinese to fund the war effort.

It's estimated that between 12,000 and 20,000 Chinese American men, representing up to 25 percent of the men in their portion of the U.S. population, served during World War II with 75 percent served in non-segregated units. A quarter of those would serve in the U.S. Army Air Forces, some of were sent to the Chinese-Burma-India theater for service with the 14th Air Service Group (where Tommy King of Locke volunteered). Another 70 percent would go on to serve in the U.S. Army in various units, including the 3rd, 4th, 6th, 32nd and 77th Infantry Divisions in Europe (where Stanford King of Locke volunteered to serve in a tank destroyer battalion). Prior to the war, the U.S. Navy had recruited Chinese Americans (where brothers Chin and Bill Owyang of Locke volunteered and served). Some also served with the First American Volunteer Group of the Chinese Air Force: the Flying Tigers (where John Lee of Ryde volunteered). Chinese American women were accepted into the Women's Army Corps in the Military Intelligence Service. They were also recruited for service in the Army Air Force, with a few later distinguishing themselves as civilian Women Airforce Service Pilots whose members included Hazel Ying Lee of Portland, Oregon, and Maggie Gee of Berkeley, California.

My father's story is no different. George Marr was a senior in high school in Rio Vista in 1941, and some of his classmates were some of the names mentioned above. At the time, he was looking forward to graduating from high school, just finished up as a varsity football season and enjoying his senior year of high school. The arc of his life was about to change dramatically, with the news that America was entering the war.

My dad who was born here in Ryde, CA, had ambivalent feelings about his American citizenship because of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882; he lived and saw every day in Locke the effects of these anti-Asian laws and the how they had affected his community and families. He also attended a segregated grammar school with the "Oriental" kids (largely Chinese and Japanese kids) of the area in Walnut Grove, so he perceived himself as a third class citizen in his native-born America - he identified himself as a Chinese with his Mother country of China.

If I could ask my dad: Is there a material difference between the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and the recent

Supreme Court ruling affirming President Donald Trump travel ban on Muslims? If he could answer, he'd say, "No difference at all. Well, maybe 136 years."

George Marr did keep up with the news, seeing the newsreels of suffering in China foisted upon the Chinese cities by the Japanese armies of occupation in China which were regularly broadcasted to the movie goers at the Walnut Grove Theater as he was trying to enjoy the main feature of a Hop-a-Long Cassidy movie. So what was going on in the world at the time through movies and radio was immediate to all Americans. Germany and Japan were fighting a war of global domination.

George graduated high school in June of 1942, and life already had become more austere with the war effort taking the priority for goods and materials that were strategic for weapons and machines and mobilization were needed to win the war. He finished up one last harvest with his father in the Delta, working in the pear farms around Locke. He stayed in the Delta long enough to experience the enforcement of Executive Order 10666 by President Roosevelt in January of 1942, where the Japanese of Walnut Grove and Locke were relocated from their homes to internment camps in the interior of the Continental US. It was hard to realize that the kids he went to school with in grammar school, played football with in Rio Vista, were now seen as enemy aliens. He had a great respect for the Japanese Americans who subsequently volunteered to the Army to fight for the USA in Europe.

After bringing in one last crop for that year, my Dad, who was the only child of his family, drove to Sacramento to enlist in the Army Force. The Air Force utilized the new strategic technology of the time, which was reason enough for my Dad to enlist there. He went through basic training in several bases the US in the South and Midwestern United States.

The Armed Services determined the capacity of the individuals through intelligence and personality testing, training and physical drilling and examination. My dad was deemed fit for service, and he was cleared for overseas combat deployment in the South Pacific. He was placed into bomber training as a waist gunner on a B-24 Liberator monikered Pretty Baby: the latest large 4-engine bomber hand built in San Diego by a company of Rosie the Riveters. The B-24 had a crew of ten persons. My dad was a natural gunner, which emerged in gunnery school as he understood the necessity of "leading" his targets, a skill he learned duck hunting in the Delta.

He shipped out by airplane to Port Moresby in New Guinea on the south side of the Iron Range of the Malay Archipelago, camping out in primitive conditions where an airstrip had been carved out in the jungle for the large contingent of 48 heavy bombers deployed in the region. He served as a waist gunner on this airplane throughout his deployment with the 90th Bombardment Group of the 5th Air Force. At the time, the Japanese forces were unstoppable, racking up victory after victory with their superior airplanes and

advanced Navy, controlling the air, land and sea around Philippines, Southeast Asia, and China, as well as two Aleutian Islands - a part of the United States. The fear was that an invasion of Australia was imminent, so, strategically, the 90th Bomb Group was there to protect Australia's coast in case it was ever to be invaded.



The crew of the Pretty Baby. George Marr front row, second from right.

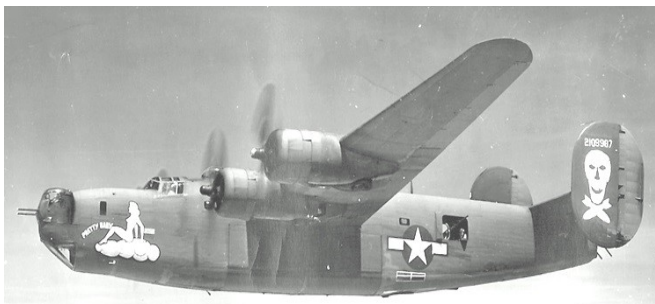
My dad volunteered for every reconnaissance mission that came up, eager to do his part in the War. Along with his gunnery duties on the plane, the waist gunner was also tasked with aerial photography of potential targets, and photographing after bombing missions as well, to assess the success of the missions after the bombing mission. He also participated in the bombing of Biak Aerodrome, bombing enemy airstrips, strafing and bombing enemy sea vessels and tankers transporting men or materials in the vicinity, and the bombing of Wewak in South New Guinea and Rabaul in New Britain. It was after one of these missions that the B-24 my dad was on developed trouble and had to be ditched in the ocean. After a time, the ten man crew stood on the wing of the floating aircraft and waited for rescue. After a long while, an amphibious rescue plane spotted the crew and the sinking B-24 and landed in the water to bring them all back to base. For rest and relaxation, the crew was put on a short leave to Australia.

For his work in the Pacific Theater of Operations, my dad achieved the rank of Staff Sergeant. His decorations for meritorious service included the Air Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal, and the Philippine Liberation Medal. In the time he was stationed in the South Pacific 37 crews of the Bombardment Group and their planes were lost in action, mishaps and bad weather.

The B-24, Pretty Baby, was replaced quickly with another one that wasn't painted camouflage green, as the war was coming to a close, and Allied aircraft no longer needed camouflage and the new planes were bright silver with the bare aluminum exposed, saving in weight and assembly time. The old nose art moniker was painted onto the new craft and the new B-24 began its new round of missions. My dad's war service was quickly coming to an end, however. Having racked up so many reconnaissance missions, he had qualified for a trip back home - completing his required 300 hours of flight missions in record time. The Air Force had sent him back for B-29 training state-side: training crews for the new Super Fortress of the sky.

It was while he was on this training that my dad was in a stream fishing somewhere on the West Coast, something he had enjoyed doing in the Delta as a boy. It was here that he learned that after 2 atomic bombs being dropped on Japan - the War was over. He had come such a long way since September 1942 to August 1945 - he experienced such intense violence in that short time. He reflected on that - and how, in those three short years, his life had undergone such a complete change.

The Chinese veterans of the war came back home to a world that had undergone a change as well. Many took advantage of the GI Bill, offering a college education for the returning men and women veterans. The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1924 was repealed by an Act of Congress in December 1943 in the midst of the War. The world had become a different place, and internally, the veterans were also changed by their ex-



Pretty Baby in flight: an actual photo of George Marr in the waist gunner position.

periences in the war. My father's carefree boyhood Delta days were a distant past and his future of coming back to Locke, running the Yuen Chong Market, meeting and marrying my mom, and having his first child, Celestine, was still in his future.

George and Serena Marr operated the Yuen Chong Store in Locke, California, from 1960 to 1980; his son Dustin ran the store until 2007. This store served as the town's central hub of business activity. Besides selling fresh meat and vegetables, it sold general merchandise and dry goods.. (Photos courtesy of Whitney Marr.)



2019 Calendar of Community Programs

- February 2, Saturday, Sacramento Museum Day includes Locke Boarding House. Free
- February 9, Saturday, Isleton Asian New Year Festival. Free
- February 9, 2019, Saturday Chinese New Year Celebration, Hiram Johnson High School, Sacramento. \$6/adults; \$1/child.
- February 16, Saturday, Locke Chinese New Year celebration. Free
- February 23, Saturday, San Francisco Chinese New Year Parade
- March 3, 2019, Stockton Chinese New Year parade and fair, Civic Center. Free
- March 9-10, 2019, Bok Kai Festival and Parade, downtown Marysville. Free
- May 18, Saturday, Locke Asian Pacific Street Festival, Locke Main Street. Free
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Make a Charitable Gift to the Locke Foundation

Here are several ways you can honor Locke's legacy through the Locke Foundation:

IRA Gift: For those aged 70.5 and older, you can make a gift directly from your IRA to meet your required minimum distribution without paying federal income tax on the withdrawal. This provision may be attractive to retirees who don't need all the current income from their IRA to meet current living expenses. A transfer from your IRA to the Locke foundation (up to \$100,000) counts toward your RMD and no tax is due.

Leave a gift to the Locke Foundation through your will or living trust without reducing your current income. Gifts of retirement plan assets can provide tax advantages and can be given to LF by naming us as a beneficiary.

Have books, photos or artifacts relevant to life in Locke or other Delta communities? Donate them to Locke Foundation to preserve and share for future generations.

For more information on arranging a planned gift to LF, please send email to lockefoundation@frontiernet.net



October 2018 fundraiser

Locke Foundation held its 4th annual October fundraiser on Sunday, October 28, 2018, at HK Islander Restaurant. Over 160 persons came out to enjoy the 9-course dinner and support the Locke Foundation. Highlights of the event included presentation of \$1000 check from Walnut Grove Rotary by Larry Gorham. Deputy Consul General Ren Faqiang from San Francisco delivered greetings and presented Locke foundation with a proclamation and check for \$500. Proceeds will be used to enhance quality of Boarding House offerings.



Clockwise: (1) Party-goers browse raffle tables. (2) Banquet room at HK Islander. (3) LF chair Stuart Walthall accepts gift from Walnut Grove Rotarian Larry Gorham with Douglas Hsia. (4) LF Board of Directors. (5) Born and raised in Locke, nonagenarian Willis Tom entertains audience with Impossible Dream. (6) LF chair Stuart Walthall accepts gift from Deputy Consul of China Ren Faqiang with Douglas Hsia.

Photos courtesy of John Cho.



New Shop on Main Street

By Stuart Walthall

A fascinating shop with a lot of eye appeal has opened its doors for business in Locke. Located at 13952 Main Street, SEEKER LOCKE brands itself as a vintage store. Sale items include art, jewelry, hand crafted items, modern & vintage clothing, ethnic pieces, rugs, kitsch and a ton of oddities. Owner/operator Virginia (Ginny) Giles states it succinctly: "SEEKER LOCKE is a mixture of retro and modern". Eclectic would also be a good adjective.

SEEKER LOCKE conducts business in a significantly historic structure. Built in 1915 by Locke principal founder Lee Bing, the building was later sold to Key Sing who operated a pool hall and beer joint. After the pool hall it became the town barbershop run by a Japanese barber from Isleton. Then it became a for-rent social hall owned by twelve local men who branded it the Tenderloin Twelve or simply "The T-12". It was then sold to Locke businessman and Locke Foundation Vice Chairman Clarence Chu who operated the Locke Art Center for many years. Now Chu rents the space to Ginny Giles for her new business venture.

Giles opened SEEKER LOCKE with a bang on October 13, 2018. Main Street rang with the sound of street musicians and the bustle of curious crowds perusing and patronizing Ginny's shop. Food and drink were provided and festivities continued well into the night.

Locke is a perfect backdrop for Giles' other interests. She is a fine artist and talented photographer. She has a keen sense of style, dressing herself and her patrons in modern and vintage fashions from her variegated racks. She also has a strong sense of community.

She supports local artists and craftspeople by offering a venue to display and sell their works. She has been coming to the Delta since she was 16 years old. (She won't say how long that's been). Giles: *"Locke has always been my favorite town to explore and experience. It has a strong sense of history. It's filled with stories. It's mysterious. I am so fortunate to have landed here in Locke"*.

We welcome Ginny Giles and SEEKER LOCKE to the community of Locke.

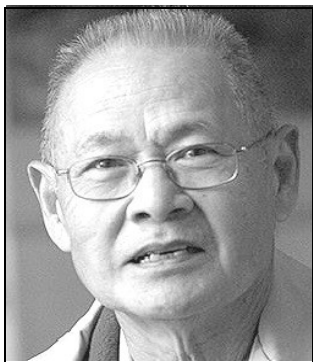
Store Hours: Wed. through Sun. 11:00 am to 5:00 pm.

Contact: m.me/SeekerLocke or Facebook: Seeker Locke



In Memoriam: John Chun, former Locke resident 1930-2018

John Chun passed away peacefully in his sleep on July 17, 2018, at the age of 88 years. A native of Locke, John loved to fish in the Sacramento Delta where he lived with his parents, three brothers and four sisters. He served in the Navy on the USS Boxer during the [Korean War](#). In 1959, he worked as an auditor for the California State Controller's Office. In 1973, he worked for the Department of Health as an accounting officer until his retirement in 1992. An avid gardener, John loved to share his homegrown apples, tomatoes and zucchini with family, friends and neighbors. He was a member of the VFW Chung Mei Post 8358. He enjoyed traveling to Europe and Asia after his retirement. He also loved playing bridge, mahjong and solitaire in his later years. John will be lovingly remembered by his wife of 50 years, Betty; daughter, Laura; son-in-law, Gregory Urquiga; granddaughter, Ellis; sister, Lorraine (Henry) Fong; brothers, Keith (May) Chun, Richard Chun; and many nieces, nephews and friends. He is predeceased by his brothers and sisters, Morrison (Helen) Chun, Amelia (James) Wong, Edna (Walter) Tim and Sylvia (Clarence) Jang. Funeral service were held on Saturday, July 28, 2018, in El Cerrito.



Chinese Railroad Worker Photo Exhibit Heralds 10th anniversary of Locke Boarding House

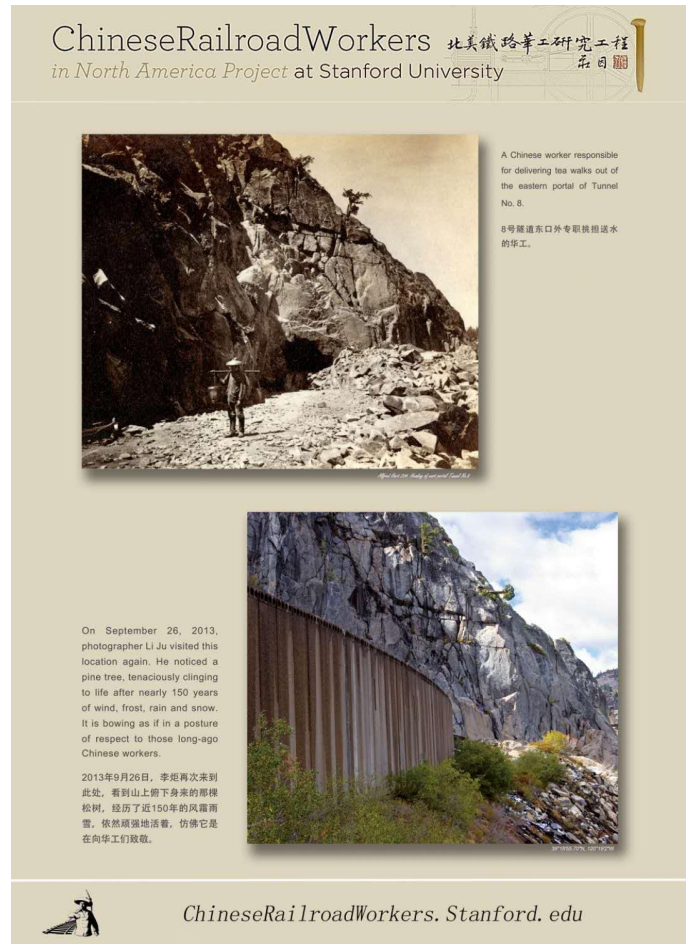
The official opening of the Chinese Railroad Worker exhibit at the Locke Boarding House was held on Saturday, November 10, 2018. This exhibit consists of 60 panels on loan from Stanford University; they depict the pivotal role Chinese railroad workers played in the construction of America's first Transcontinental Railroad. It also consists of 7 panels on loan from Chinese Historical Society of America and railroad artifacts from California State Railroad Museum.

Titled "The Chinese Helped Build the Railroad. The Railroad Helped Build America", the Stanford exhibit tells the transnational history of the railroad through past and present images of sites on a railroad line that required the labor of thousands of Chinese workers to complete. Sixty panels pair black-and-white 19th-century photographs by Alfred A. Hart of the Western railroad line with bold, full-color images of the same sites by Li Ju, a contemporary photographer and computer engineer based in Beijing.

This day also commemorated the 10th anniversary of the opening of Boarding House Museum on November 11, 2008, with speakers from State Parks, Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency and Locke Management Association with dinner on Main Street.



Locke Foundation board members Mark Miller and Douglas Hsia prepare outdoor signs for visitors. Photo courtesy of Stuart Walthall.



Actual rail spokes and ties from Transcontinental Railroad on display courtesy of California State Railroad Museum. Photo courtesy of Clarence Chu.

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

2018 Board

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Treasurer: Eileen Leung

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