

Locke Foundation Newsletter 樂居鎮基金會

Preserving Locke's history and legacy

lockefoundation@frontiernet.net

Summer 2022 www.locke-foundation.org

Main Street Rocks at Locke Asian Pacific Spring Festival, May 21, 2022

Photos by Norval Chan

Main Street Locke buzzed with excitement on Saturday, May 21, 2022, as the town prepared for the onslaught of visitors to celebrate Asian Pacific Heritage Month. This popular street festival had been cancelled for 2 years due to the pandemic.

Pulsating drums from Eastern Ways heralded the procession of colorful lions frolicking along Main Street. Visitors quickly scrambled to get prime seating under the canopy. The martial arts demonstration was followed by the lions visiting merchants and "picking the greens".



Sacramento Taiko Dan drummers ready to roll.



Eastern Ways lions posed at starting line-up.



Volunteers Anita and Nelson greet visitors at Locke Foundation merchandise booth.



Italian Ice stand draws crowd to cool off.



Audience in rapt anticipation



Emcee Jim Chong with young vocalist from Voices with Raquela.

2022 Scholarship Winners Announced

Six local high school seniors have been awarded 2022 Locke Foundation Scholarships. Presented on May 21, 2022 during the Locke Asian Pacific Spring Festival, these outstanding students each received a Locke Foundation Scholastic Achievement Certificate in addition to a cash award.

Scholarship recipients were chosen on the basis of grade point average, extracurricular activities, public service, need and quality of essays penned on the theme: "What is the historical significance of Locke, Ca?"

This year's scholarship winners, five from Delta High School in Clarksburg and one from Rio Vista High School, were truly outstanding. The six awardees, which included a Valedictorian and a Salutatorian, had an overall grade point average of 4.1.

Recipients of 2022 Locke Foundation scholarships include: Nancy Duenas-Ramirez - Delta HS Valedictorian. Nancy will be attending UCLA as a psychobiology major. Tyler Stump - Delta HS Salutatorian. Tyler will attend California Polytechnic University and will major in construction management. Elle Hollinger - Delta HS. Elle will attend UC Santa Barbara as a business major. Roman Musso - Delta HS. Roman will be a biology major at S.F. State University. Melissa Mandujano Rojas - Rio Vista HS. Melissa will attend UC Davis as an animal science major. Jacquelyn Gutierrez - Delta HS. Jacquelyn will be attending CSU Sacramento as a health science major with an interest in becoming a nurse.

The Locke Foundation would like to thank Rio Vista HS counselor Yesenia Alduenda and Delta HS counselor Melissa Gomez for their assistance and encouragement.

Sponsors for 2022 Locke Foundation Scholarship Awards are: Lien Fan Chu, Deborah Mendel & Russell Ooms, Norman & Flora Spalding, and LF Directors Clarence Chu, Douglas Hsia and Stuart Walthall.

The Locke Foundation is proud to honor these six rising stars. Each path is bright ... each future filled with promise.



L-R: Douglas Hsia, Caro I Lee, Corliss Lee, Virginia Giles, Honey Lum, Melissa Mandujano Rojas, Eva Chu, Clarence Chu, Mark Miller, Eileen Leung, Stuart Walthall, Nancy Duenas-Ramirez, Tyler Stump, and Jacquelyn Gutierrez .

Eva Chu choreographed a spectacular revue of cultural entertainment featuring dance, music and song.

Sacramento County Supervisor Don Nottoli was presented with a resolution for outstanding public service from the LF Board president Stuart Walthall. Mr. Nottoli was an ardent supporter of Locke initiatives and was credited with working to advocate for Locke's welfare.



Lily Zhu demonstrates Chinese tea ceremony



David SooHoo explains cooking history of Chinese immigrants to full house.

The Locke Foundation expresses heartfelt appreciation to its sponsors and volunteers for making the festival a success.

Tofu manufacturing in Locke

Article by Carol Lee



Long before tofu became a popular plant-based food, it was already manufactured and sold in Locke. In 1915, the Foon Hop Grocery Store was established at 13959 Main Street in Locke by Choy Poy Chan. Unique to the store, its tofu

was exceptional and authentic to the way tofu was originally made. Tofu made in the past was much more flavorful, refined in texture, and labor intensive compared to methods used today. Harry Sen, Chan's grandson, recalls the original process.



Mung beans were soaked all day then poured into the grinding stone. A slurry of ground beans and water was created. That slurry drained down into a bucket at the base of the grinder, ready to be cooked.

Cooking was done in a large wok that sat atop the rectangular brick base Harry's uncle built. Within the brick base, firewood from the local pear trees stoked the fire that heated the wok.

Mung bean grindstone As a young boy Harry used a large paddle to stir the slurry to keep the concoction from burning.

Once cooked, the tofu was further processed into one of two types. Harry's two aunts would complete the final steps. The cooked mixture was squeezed through a cloth and the liquid became tofu after a curdling agent was added. The curd was strained through cloth again to retrieve the tofu solid. The strained mixture was poured into individual cloth-lined bowls.

The fine cloth was carefully folded so that when set the tofu would form a block. The cloth was removed when the tofu was firm, revealing the solidified block. The firm tofu was stacked onto trays and refrigerated.



The second type of tofu was the light and silky "Tofu Fa". Because it was so delicate, it was placed in one large metal container and stored cold. Prized as a dessert, brown sugar or "Wong Tong" syrup was drizzled over the "Tofu Fa". It was especially popular in summer months when the old bachelors would line up to receive a freshly ladled bowlful to be enjoyed on the spot.

WHY IS HOP SING SO ANGRY?

by Whitney Marr

Photos courtesy of James Motlow

Growing up in Locke in the 1960's, we baby boomers loved television shows, and the most popular was *Bonanza*: the 1860's trials and tribulations of the Cartwrights, a pioneer family of bachelor men in the Lake Tahoe Basin - shown on Sunday nights in living color - which can still be seen in re-runs on TV today.

Added to the series was the character Hop Sing, the Chinese houseman and cook played by the Chinese American actor Victor Sen Yung (1885-1973) who stepped and fetched for the Cartwright family of the Ponderosa Ranch - alternately servile and non-threatening then boisterous and angry, Hop Sing was the comedic counterpoint to the Cartwrights dramatic weight in this wild west drama. We in Locke were big fans of Hop Sing. He was of my grandparent's generation who were pioneers themselves in the farms and ranches of the Sacramento River Delta of California.



Victor Sen Yung gave Hop Sing an amusing character: humorous, inscrutable, loyal, confounding, and a throwback to the Chinese culture of his father's native China. Victor himself grew up in San Francisco's Chinatown, a second generation Chinese American with Jung Shan roots.

My entire family enjoyed *Bonanza* especially when Hop Sing, the only Asian American on TV at the time, took the stage to yell at the Cartwrights for not conforming to his house rules. As the Cartwrights struggled to understand Hop Sing's Cantonese outbursts from their housekeeper, their eyebrows were always raised in surprise or puzzlement at this Asian immigrant to the new world bent on trying to serve this all-male Cartwright family.

My mom, a Chinese immigrant from Jung Shan (China) herself, also loved the screaming of Hop Sing - giving voice to her own frustrations of serving under her own demanding family of father and mother-in-law, husband, and four kids. She'd break out in laughter as Hop Sing angrily yells at the Cartwrights in her native Cantonese, "You bunch of idiots! Why do I have to serve you bunch of dunces?!" Victor improvised into the TV camera punctuating the scene - My mom would laugh to herself, "Yes, Hop Sing, my sentiments exactly, I feel you brother."

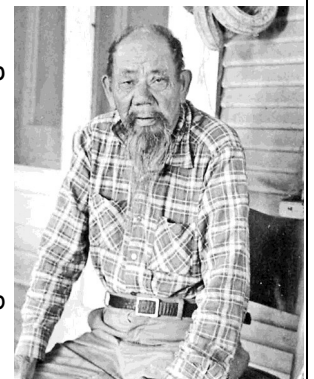
I always wondered, why is Hop Sing so angry? Reflecting on it now, I see that he was isolated from his Chinese community and stuck in a dead-end job

with a group of non-communicating clueless ranchers who expected him to care for them, cook for them and do their laundry. Hop Sing worked for a dollar a day, isolated from his community and native culture and language, always misunderstood, and served this white family who had a different language, values, and tastes than himself. What was a racially stereotyped, trapped, underappreciated Asian man supposed to do? With no support system, no family of his own, he was expected to clean house and create meals for a group of privileged empire builders. And he was a single man due to anti-Asian laws of the times: outlawing intermarriage between Asians and Whites, limiting immigration from Asia at the time, outlawing land ownership: laws within a society that created a bachelor society of aging, single, and marginalized Asian men.

Luckily for me, I had my own society of bachelors in Locke to enlighten me to the realities of race relations in the Delta. And, unlike Hop Sing, these aging single men in Locke, even though they shared Hop Sing's history of racism and economic isolation, were beyond anger. They were placid, kind, gentle, resigned, easy-going and philosophical about their plight. And I remember them, their stories, and their effect on the group of us baby boomers growing up in Locke. We called them all "Baak" an honorific title which means "Senior Uncle on my Father's Side" even though in most cases they were not blood related at all to us, and we honored them with this title when we greeted them each time when passing them on that single street of Locke. Always impeccably dressed in their old work clothes - behind their lined faces, a history of coping with isolation and crippling arduous work in the agricultural fields toiling to care for and reap the harvest to make a living and, in many cases, send money back to their families in China so that they also might prosper from their work. These were the men who carefully criticized and corrected my Kung Fu demonstrations and rewarded me with coins if I gave them a decent show afterwards.

My own shortened cast of characters playing Hop Sing from my own real-life *Bonanza* show in Locke consisted of:

Gum Lung Gung: who was an actual labor contractor during the building of the Transcontinental Railroad; who used that money to later open gambling houses in Locke and the Delta and raise a multi-generational family in North-



Leong Chow 周亮

ern California. He spent much of his time raking and burning leaves during the Autumn season. We called him "Gung" meaning grandfather in Cantonese - even though he was not blood related to us.

Gum Poh: who actually had bound feet from the old country via San Francisco was a prosperous "Poh" or grandmother who stepped daintily in her long silk cheong saam or Chinese dress and always gave the kids in town sweet treats of preserved tropical fruit or coconut.

Ah Lung: who drove me and my brother as children in the early morning to pick pears in the fields during the summer. I taught him two words of English: "LEE-TIRE" which was to retire or quit work - a concept that was foreign to him. And I taught him the word "WAY-CATION" another foreign notion of vacation: time away from work which he could not conceptualize or realize. And he spent a good minute screaming out the words as he made his rounds. For his part, he always associated the pink snowball cupcakes I had for lunch with the smooth painted faces of Chinese opera singers: because they were "oh so smooth and pretty: they're just like your cheeks sonny-boy" he

would kid me relentlessly as I tried to swallow the pink marshmallow frosting which was so pretty and un-ranch like meals the other farm-workers were having.

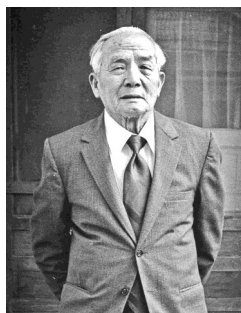


Hoy Kee Au 歐開基

Hoy Kee Baak: an old gambling house card dealer who was single, smoked a pipe and was a great cook. After spending afternoons catching prized black bass in the rivers, he would keep the fish alive in his bathtub until he was ready to steam them for dinner. He impressed on me the concept

of "gee ouh," which is opportunity mixed with luck so that prosperity for the individual could be realized. So, his question to me was always: Do you or do you not have "gee ouh" today? And of course, my answer was most emphatically, "I have it!"

So Yueng: who famously retired from a single man's life of pear ranching to marry and start a family at the age of sixty-two; he raised two daughters and a son in town. He was also another great cook who fried the vats of delicious chicken for the entire village during festival times.



So Yung Ng 吳壽容

Ah Seung: who questioned me as to why I never shed a tear at my aged, dear grandma's (who had lived with us) recent funeral. The question was more a question of who would be there to remember him when his time came. And all I could really say was that my dad had shown us that males do

not ever really cry, and I expressed my appreciation to him for being at the funeral for my grandmother and part of the two-mile long funeral procession of cars to and from her burial site in the Chinese section of the cemetery in neighboring Rio Vista.

Mun Doh: who was the village scavenger of food for his meals yet practiced his classical Chinese calligraphy in a sand pit next to his hut. A pitiful hunched over figure for the entire town was also a learned figure and scholar with quiet dignity.

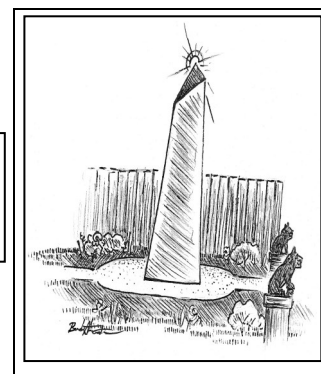


Douglas Owyang, Alwyn Chan, and Whitney Marr. Photo courtesy of Tom Kay the Butcher circa 1959.

As it has often been said: it takes a village" to raise a child. I, luckily, came from a real village: the town of Locke, with many aged villagers of single men who never lost their dignity. Even though they struggled mightily, smoked tobacco to ease their pain, abused alcohol, used drugs (opium) to cope, gambled on their futures and through it all, against all odds, contributed to the greater society

- even if it was a society largely closed off and foreign to them. This was the impetus for Connie King (who saw to the final resting places of over twenty members of the bachelor community of Locke) together with my daughter, Elyse Marr, to build a monument in Locke (in 2007) as a memorial to the Chinese workers so that their lives, work and contributions would not be forgotten.

Memorial Park Monument designed by Elyse Marr in pen and ink graphic by Brock Alexander.



Article submitted as a part of the Oral History Project for the Locke Foundation. Whitney Marr grew up in Locke from 1955 to 1973 and currently lives in Orinda, CA.

Locke's hometown hero spares the roast duck

By Eileen Leung

The iconic roast ducks hanging in the windows of Chinese restaurants once sparked a controversy in California, where legislators chose to accommodate an ethnic minority despite public health concerns.

In the early 1980s, county health inspectors forced restaurant owners in Los Angeles' Chinatown to toss the ducks and cited them for keeping them at room temperature for too long. The state's retail food code dictates that, except during preparation cooking and cooling, potentially hazardous food must be kept at or above 135 degrees Fahrenheit or at or below 41 degrees.



The public health standard was designed to prevent bacteria growth that can cause food illnesses. "For years, restaurant owners just accepted the fines as the cost of doing business even though they thought it was insane," said former Los Angeles City Councilman Michael Woo.

The Chinese have been eating roast duck since the 13th century, when it was first prepared for an emperor of China. Although the dish has evolved over the years, duck continues to be a symbol of Chinese cuisine.

To this day, roast duck remains a staple in Chinese cuisine and is frequently served on ceremonial occasions.

A local activist with experience in the restaurant business, the late-Irvin Lai persuaded Assemblyman Art Torres, whose district included Chinatown, to introduce a bill that would allow restaurants to hang Chinese-style roast ducks at room temperature.



Chinese restaurateurs were forced to toss their roast Peking ducks because the preparation involves hanging and drying the meat at room temperature for several hours, a tradition that violated health codes. When officials threatened to remove the Chinese delicacy from L.A.'s Chinese restaurants, Lai spearheaded the effort to prove them wrong. His impassioned testimony before the state Legislature helped win the health code exemption that ensured the longevity of the popular dish in America.

Woo, who was a legislative aide for state Sen. David Roberti, personally drove a roast duck from San Francisco to Sacramento for testing. A food laboratory at UC Davis had offered to measure the growth of bacteria. "The finding was that the level of bacteria was 'acceptable' and not unsafe," Woo said.

On July 6, 1982, Gov. Jerry Brown signed the bill into law exempting Chinese-style roast duck from time and temperature regulations in the retail food code for up to four hours after the duck is prepared. It also exempts raw duck from the prescribed temperature measures for up to two hours if the duck is subsequently cooked at or above 350 degrees Fahrenheit for at least 60 minutes.

(a) Whole Chinese-style roast duck shall be exempted from Section 113995 for a period not to exceed four hours after the duck is prepared, since the methods used to prepare these foods inhibit the growth of microorganisms that can cause food infections or food intoxications...

(b) For the purpose of this section, "Chinese-style roast duck" shall include, but is not limited to, Chinese-style barbecue duck, dry hung duck, and Peking duck. Chinese-style roast duck means duck that is prepared as follows:

- (1) The abdominal cavity is cleaned.
- (2) The duck is marinated.
- (3) The cavity is closed prior to cooking.
- (4) The duck is roasted at a temperature of 177 degrees Celsius (350 degrees Fahrenheit) or more for at least 60 minutes.

Irvin Lai 1927-2010

Irvin Lai was a legend in the Chinese American community. Born in 1927 on a farm in Locke, California, Lai moved to Los Angeles in the early 1940's with his family and began to work in the restaurant business. Irvin attended Belmont High School, played varsity football and experienced life as an American.... of Chinese descent.

As with many men of his generation, World War II inspired Lai with a deep sense of commitment to his country. This patriotism moved Lai to act as a fully vested citizen, but also gave him the courage to demand he be treated as one as well. But his heart and all his spare time were devoted to serving the community, a virtue he acquired from his mother, Effie Lai, a volunteer social worker who helped new immigrants from China adapt to life on California's old frontier.



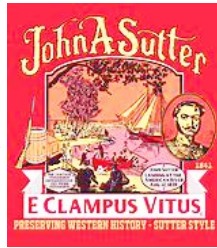
Throughout his life, Irvin Lai took on many causes affecting the Chinese American community, from his fight against a ban on Chinese roast duck - a debacle that went all the way to California's Supreme Court - to his coordination of local responses to the illegal exhumation of hundreds of unmarked Chinese graves during the construction of the Metro Gold Line.

Even as he approached his 80s, he continued to speak out for those who could not, especially the bones discovered in a long-lost potters field outside Evergreen Cemetery. Believed to belong to Chinese railroad workers who helped pioneer the American West in the early part of the last century, these gravesites were disturbed during the Metropolitan Transportation Authority's 2005 Gold Line extension in Boyle Heights. After more than two years of attending meetings with officials, a memorial wall has been erected and paid for by the MTA. We might not have gotten this far without a strong advocate like Irvin."

Locke's Dai Loy Gambling Hall Honored

By Stuart Walthall
Photos courtesy of May Mo and Stuart Walthall

One of Locke's most iconic (and notorious) buildings has received long overdue recognition. Thanks to the generosity of E Clampus Vitus, the Dai Loy Gambling Hall, constructed the year of Locke's founding in 1915, now sports a beautiful bronze plaque containing the history and legacy of this once-thriving gaming establishment.



E Clampus Vitus (ECV), also known as the Clampers, is a fraternal organization dedicated to the preservation of the heritage of the American West. The Clampers funded and installed the historic plaque, now located on the exterior of the Dai Loy Gambling Hall and visible to Locke's many visitors who stroll picturesque Main Street.



Carol Lee of the Locke Foundation worked closely with Clamper Kai Wada Roath - 74th Noble Grand Humbug of Yerba Buena #1, Mother Lodge of E Clampus Vitus (Clampers appreciate absurdity) in the creation of the plaque's text.

The plaque dedication ceremony was staged on May 7, 2022. The ceremony was attended by numerous Locke residents, Clampers and guests, including current Dai Loy owner and Locke Foundation Vice Chairman Clarence Chu. Special guests included Darwin Kan and Jeff Kan Lee, grandsons of Lee Bing, original owner operator of the Dai Loy Gambling Hall.

The Clampers' generosity extended far beyond their gift to the town. On the day prior to the plaque dedication, approximately 200 Clamper volunteers, arriving from ECV Chapters scattered throughout Northern California, came to Locke in order to stage a major town clean up. Armed with weed-whackers, lawn mowers, hammers and nails, these dedicated volunteers gave Locke a much needed facelift. Thanks to Al the Wop's Bar and Restaurant co-owner Eric Heath, a 30 yard dumpster was brought in and filled to capacity with refuse, vegetation and unwanted items.

The Town of Locke is grateful to E Clampus Vitus for the generosity, time, energy and good will they have given to our community. The Clampers ROCK!



L-R: Clarence Chu, owner of Dai Loy, Darwin Kan and Jeff Kan Lee, grandsons of Lee Bing, and Stuart Walthall, president of Locke Foundation.

LF catalogs Museum Artifacts

Since its inception over 15 years ago, The Locke Foundation has gathered, restored and displayed a vast collection of artifacts, archival materials, clothing and ephemera. The Foundation is now digitally cataloging hundreds of items which reflect and celebrate the history, culture of legacy of the town of Locke,



Volunteer Michael Ma

When the cataloging is completed, the collection will be presented in a digital format on the LF website for use by academic institutions, historical organizations, authors, media and the general public.

Visit the Boarding House Museum to enjoy these treasures. Anyone who is interested in donating or loaning artifacts that depict life in Locke and other Delta towns can contact Stuart Walthall: stuartwalthall@aol.com

LF named Nonprofit of the Year



State Senator Bill Dodd (District 3) has named Locke Foundation Nonprofit of the Year in Sacramento County. He praised LF's work to preserve the nation's largest and most complete example of a historic, rural Chinese American community encompassing more than 50 commercial and residential buildings on the east bank of the Sacramento River.

"Locke is a significant cultural place that serves as a poignant reminder of the contributions and hardships of early Chinese immigrants to California. I am honored to recognize the foundation and its volunteers for their dedication and service."

Stuart Walthall, president of Locke Foundation, "I would like to thank Senator Dodd for bestowing this honor on our organization."

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 _____

Donation: _____ Designated purpose (if any) _____

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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