



## Making History: Our Grand Historians

Philip P. Choy and Him Mark Lai



PHILIP P. CHOY

**O**n Friday, October 7, 2005, CHSA will celebrate the birthdays of historians **Philip P. Choy** and **Him Mark Lai** at the Conference Dinner Banquet at the Empress of China. These two individuals, whose decades of tireless work helped to build Chinese American Studies as we know it today, have become respected figures in fields as diverse as transnational history, historic preservation, and ethnic studies. Between the thirty-six years of teaching the first university-level Chinese American history course to presenting at **Branching Out the Banyan Tree**, Choy and Lai are indeed two who have made—and continue to make—history.



HIM MARK LAI

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### CHINESE AMERICAN STUDIES CONFERENCE

PRESENTED BY CHSA AND ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES DEPARTMENT AT SF STATE UNIVERSITY

#### Branching Out the Banyan Tree: A Changing Chinese America

OCT 6-9, 2005  
RADISSON MIYAKO HOTEL

**Pre-Registration EXTENDED to Sept. 19**

Pre-registration for CHSA members is only \$70, and includes admission to all conference sessions, pre-registration reception, and keynote luncheon. Registration info and forms online.

VISIT [WWW.CHSA.ORG](http://WWW.CHSA.ORG)

Reserve your place at CHSA's

*Making History*

Dinner Banquet on October 7!  
Tickets are \$80 each. Sponsor our special Longevity Tables for \$999.  
Please email [banquet2005@chsa.org](mailto:banquet2005@chsa.org) or call (415) 391-1188 ext. 105.

#### PHILIP P. CHOY

Born in San Francisco Chinatown in 1926, Philip P. Choy grew up in a family of five children. His father, a paper son, was part owner of a meat market on Grant Avenue; his mother, American-born though raised in China, worked in a sewing factory.

After attending San Francisco public schools and Chinese school, Phil enlisted in the Army Air Corps during World War II. While in basic training in Biloxi, Mississippi, he witnessed segregation in its extremity, which was to motivate his activities in later

years. Upon his return, Phil attended UC Berkeley on the GI Bill. Graduating with a degree in architecture, he would continue to work in residential and commercial design for fifty years.

As president of the Chinese Historical Society of America during the Civil Rights movement, Phil sensed a growing interest and demand for Chinese American history in schools and universities. His opportunity came in 1969, when he and fellow CHSA member Him Mark Lai co-taught the first Chinese American Studies course in the nation at San Francisco State University.

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## Introducing New Board Member Galin Luk

**G**alín Luk is proud to join the Board of the Chinese Historical Society of America. Born and raised in San Francisco, Galín attended San Francisco State University where he earned a B.A. and minored in Asian American Studies. While at SFSU, he presented at the 50th Anniversary Repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act and volunteered his time cataloging the Daniel K.E. Ching Collection.

Galín earned his law degree from the University of California at Davis. While at Davis, he was an active member of the Asian

Law Student Association. After law school, Galín attained the rank of Captain serving in the U.S. Marine Corps as a Judge Advocate. In the Marine Corps, he litigated trials as the Chief District Attorney and as the Senior Public Defender for Marine Corps Air Station, New River.

Galín now specializes in commercial, maritime and admiralty litigation with the law firm of Cox, Wootton, Griffin, Hansen and Poulos, LLP. He volunteers his time with local law schools and the Asian American Bar Association Mentor program. ☺

## Jeannie Woo Bids Farewell



**D**ear Staff, Board, and CHSA Members,

Almost ten years has passed since I began working with the Society first as a student volunteer transitioned to staff at 650 Commercial Street, then as a board member, and finally as the Collections and Exhibitions Manager on Clay Street. With this long association with CHSA it is with a touch of sadness that I let everyone know that I will no longer be with CHSA as of August 19, 2005. My work at the Society continuously fueled my interest in Chinese American history and beginning September 2005, I will be continuing my academic

research and obtaining my doctorate at U.C. Davis.

It has been a pleasure working with this organization and getting to know all the donors, long time members, and historical groups dedicated to the same cause. From my work at CHSA, I have learned about community service, dedication and determination from the long time members who have given of their time and labor, and perseverance in the face of adversity. With these tools on hand, I take them with me in my move to academia.

May the Society continue on its path toward preserving and researching Chinese American history while fulfilling the mission it set out for itself 42 years ago. Thank you again for the ongoing support of my work at CHSA and your encouragement of my own personal goal.

With best wishes, *Jeannie Woo*

## **Pandering to Sinophobia: The Chinese Question in Political Cartoons**

*Cartoon by G.F. Keller,  
published in the The  
Wasp, c 1870s.*



A collection of 19th century political cartoons found in popular press and regional newspapers, CHSA's newest exhibition, **Pandering to Sinophobia**, chronicles mounting national conflicts between politics, labor, and immigration that would lead to anti-Chinese violence and legislation.

Political cartoons, drawings that make satirical comments on political and socio-economic issues of the day, exaggerate features in humorous and often outrageous ways. In the pages of publications nationwide, images of the Chinese turned from benign to malicious as anti-Chinese sentiment intensified.

"In the second half of the 19th century, one major political controversy was the objection of the coming of the Chinese to America," says Philip Choy, the exhibition's curator. "This issue was exploited by the press, who caricatured the Chinese as physically different and as culturally inferior."

For Americans, who mostly had little exposure to Chinese living in the U.S., these cartoons influenced public opinion. The cartoonists' artistic licenses and cultural misconceptions would become the basis for prevalent stereotypes of the Chinese. In the images on display in the exhibition, viewers can grasp the hostility and tensions of this era, revealing the heatedly racist environment of the 19th century.

Pandering to Sinophobia will be open through January 15, 2006 in the Philip P. Choy Gallery. ☞

## **Fall 2005 Educational Programs Preview**



**CHSA** will collaborate with **Marvelous Stories, Wonderful Tales!** storyteller **Charlie Chin** for its Fall 2005 K-12 educational programming. Charlie, a New York City-bred musician, performer, and historian, has lived in the S.F. Bay Area for the past ten years.

Charlie will continue this summer's successful storytelling program and inject living personages into programs for older students. To

schedule a group or class for a visit to CHSA, please contact Program Coordinator Leonard Shek at [lshek@chsa.org](mailto:lshek@chsa.org), (415) 391-1188 ext. 107. ☞

## **Remembering C.C. Wang Exhibition Reception**



*Curator Adam Mikos (l) and  
guest speaker Arnold Chang  
with a landscape by C.C. Wang.*

CHSA paid tribute to the late artist and collector C.C. Wang at the opening reception for its new exhibition, **Remembering C.C. Wang**, on August 18, 2005.

With guests from the Asian Art Museum and the Chinese Culture Center, CHSA welcomed New York artist Arnold Chang, who wrote a brief essay for the exhibition catalogue (available at the CHSA bookstore.) Chang talked about his long association with Wang, his mentor and Chinese brush painting & calligraphy teacher. He also related Wang's immigrant experience to that of other Chinese immigrants, past and present, and explained how Wang's artistic work connected him with both countries.

Remembering C.C. Wang will be open in the Frank H. Yick Gallery through December 19, 2005. C.C. Wang will also be a topic of discussion in the panel "What is Chinese American Art?" at Branching Out the Banyan Tree, the October Chinese American Studies conference. ☞

# Making History: Our Grand Historians

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1



Though no longer actively teaching, Phil holds the title of Adjunct Professor of Asian American Studies at SFSU.

With his background in architecture, Phil has had a strong presence in historic preservation, serving on the San Francisco Landmark Advisory Board and the California State Historical Resources Commission. He conducted the extensive 1978 historical/cultural survey of San Francisco Chinatown. He was also an early advocate for the preservation of Angel Island Immigration Station, sitting on the Historical Advisory Committee and writing the case report to nominate the site to the National Registry of Historic Places. In Oroville, California, Phil designed the Temple Tapestry Hall to complement the adjacent historic Chinese temple and to house its extensive Chinese folk art collection.

Phil donated much of his time to the Chinatown YWCA, helping to secure landmark status for the Julia Morgan-designed building. His work would come full-circle, as he would later support CHSA's acquisition of the building. CHSA made the Chinatown YWCA building its permanent home and opened its Museum and Learning Center in 2001, thanks to Phil's tireless efforts.

Honored by countless organizations for his work in the community, Phil has also co-authored *The Coming Man: 19th Century American Perceptions of the Chinese* (with Lorraine Dong and Marlon Hom) and *A History of the Chinese in California: A Syllabus* (with Thomas

Chinn and Him Mark Lai). Phil has served as consultant and advisor for many projects, exhibitions, and media presentations on the Chinese American experience. Particular favorites of Phil's are the lifesize diorama of Chinese railroad workers at the Sacramento Railroad Museum, and the Chinese Pioneers exhibit at the Federal Courthouse.

Phil and his wife of 52 years, Sarah, have three adult children and five grandchildren, and live in San Francisco. Phil currently serves on the board of the Chinese Historical Society of America and most recently curated the exhibition "Pandering to Sinophobia: The Chinese Question in Political Cartoons". He continues to expand his collection of Chinese Americana.

## HIM MARK LAI

Born in San Francisco Chinatown in 1925, Him Mark Lai grew up in a family of five children. The son of immigrant garment workers, Him Mark attended San Francisco public schools and Nam Kue Chinese School. Graduating from UC Berkeley in 1947 with a degree in engineering, He would work for thirty-one years as a mechanical engineer for Bechtel Corporation.

Him Mark's involvement in the Chinese American community began shortly after graduation. During the 1950s he was president of Mun Ching Youth Club,

which was active in the cultural sector promoting better understanding of the People's Republic of China. In 1960, after having taken Stanford Lyman's pioneering Asian American studies course through UC Berkeley extension, Him Mark began his journey as a scholar in Chinese American Studies when he joined the Chinese Historical Society of America in 1965 and Chinese Culture Foundation of San Francisco shortly thereafter.

In 1967, as the Civil Rights Movement led to rising activism and ethnic awareness among Chinese Americans, Him Mark began writing articles on Chinese American history in the bilingual Chinese American weekly *East-West*. In 1969, he co-authored *A History of the Chinese in California: A Syllabus* (with Thomas Chinn and Philip Choy), which was followed by co-teaching the first Chinese American history course in the nation with Philip Choy at San Francisco State University. Subsequently, as a member of the state legislature advisory committee to preserve Angel Island Immigration Station, Him Mark would go on to co-author *Island: Poetry and History of Chinese Immigrants on Angel Island, 1910-1940* (with Genny Lim and Judy Yung. In addition to articles published in journals and edited publications, Him Mark has also served on the editorial committee of CHSA's journal, *Chinese America: History and Perspectives*, since 1986.

Him Mark's pioneering work is unparalleled in his advocacy and use of both Chinese language and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

## Conference "Town & Gown" Keynote Luncheon with Henry Der & Charles B. Reed

Education advocate **Henry Der** and California State University **Charles B. Reed** will speak about education and the Chinese American community at the conference keynote luncheon on Friday, October 7, 2005. Der and Reed will represent "Town" (community organizations) and "Gown" (universities) respectively, but will speak from their dual experiences with both.

Der, currently Senior Program Officer at the Evelyn & Walter Haas, Jr., Fund, served as the Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction for the California Department of Education from 1996-2001. Previously, he worked with Chinese for Affirmative Action (1974-1996) and as an English as a Second Language instructor. Dr. Reed, the chancellor of the CSU system since 1998, has worked in higher education for nearly two decades. He currently serves on several national education advisory boards

that build collaborative efforts between universities and other segments of the community. ☺

### Conference Field Trips: Sign Up Through September 19

CHSA has opened its Sunday, October 9, 2005 conference field trips to CHSA members and their guests. If you would like to tour SF Chinatown, the National Archives, Ng Shing Gung (San Jose), China Camp, Locke, Marysville Chinatown, or the Sacramento Delta, please contact Marisa Louie ASAP at (415) 391-1188 ext. 101, mlouie@chsa.org. ☺

### Conference Scholarship Offered to High School Students

The Office of the President at San Francisco State University (SFSU) is offering scholarships to high school juniors and seniors of Chinese descent to attend "Branching Out the Banyan Tree," the 2005 Chinese American Studies conference. These scholarships are offered to encourage students to learn more about Chinese American culture and history, and to pursue higher education through the California State University system. Students will be exposed to potential internships, employment, and volunteer opportunities in the Chinese American community.

Scholarship awardees will receive a scholarship to attend the 2005 Conference.

For more information, including an application, please contact Leonard Shek at (415) 391-1188 x 107 or by sending an email to conference2005@chsa.org. ☺

### Our Grand Historians

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

English language sources. Towards this end, he has published the bibliographies *Chinese Newspapers Published in North America, 1854-1975* (with Karl Lo; 1977) and *A History Reclaimed: An Annotated Bibliography of Chinese Language Materials on the Chinese of America* (1986), as well as a general history in Chinese, *Cong Huaqiao dao Huaren: Ershi shiji Meiguo Huaren shehui fazhan shi* [From Chinese overseas to Chinese American: A history of the development of Chinese American society during the twentieth century] (1992).

Stepping outside the boundaries of the United States, he was involved in the 1979 joint study of Taishan emigrant villages by UCLA and Guangzhou's Zhongshan University. This pro-

ject and subsequent participation in international conferences helped him better understand the Chinese American experience from a global perspective. These experiences also enabled him (with Albert Cheng) to initiate the In Search of Roots program at the Chinese Culture Center, where he helps to impart the importance of history and heritage to numerous young Chinese Americans.

Him Mark and his constant companion and wife of 52 years, Laura, live in San Francisco. He is currently working on the counterpart to his most recently published book, *Becoming Chinese American: A History of Communities and Institutions* (2004). Him Mark was also the subject of Evan Leong's 2004 documentary, *Him Mark Lai: A People's Historian*. ☺

## Chinese in Nevada

### VIRGINIA & TRUCKEE RAILROAD CHINESE CAMP PRESERVATION

From Gary Luce of Geocon Inland Empire, Inc.

"In 1859, the Virginia & Truckee Railroad was incorporated to provide the means to deliver materials to the mining camps and to take ores to the many mills along the Carson River. Construction started in February 1869. By April, 1200 workers, mostly Chinese who had worked on the Central Pacific Railroad, were living in some 38 camps. The railroad was completed in January 29, 1870. The entire 21-

**It is our belief that [the Chinese camps] should be studied in an effort to educate the public about the lives and history of the people who helped build the West.**

mile route, rising some 1600 feet, was been completed in only 13 months.

"In June [2005], the

Capital Engineering Design Team was awarded the contract for the remaining 16 miles of [the V&T Railroad] to be re-built. As part of this contract, we will provide a cultural resources inventory of sites identified in the Environmental Assessment for the project. We know of at least one Chinese railroad camp that will be extensively studied next year.

"The philosophy we have is to try to minimize impacts to the known sites and to thoroughly explore and catalog any cultural resources that we will have to impact. New Chinese camps are being found that were not previously documented. Most of these sites will not be impacted by construction. Though we are not required to document the sites, it

is our belief that they should be studied in an effort to educate the public about the lives and history of the people who helped build the West and were an integral part of one of the most historic railroads ever built."

For more information about the V&T Railroad Camps, please contact Gary Luce at [luce@geoconinc.com](mailto:luce@geoconinc.com). Thanks to Soot Jew.

#### "THE COMSTOCK'S CHINESE"

*Excerpted from an article by Steve Timko in the Reno Gazette-Journal, July 25, 2005*

Old figures freshly recompiled and released [in July 2005] by the U.S. Census Bureau show the decline of the Nevada's Chinese population in its early history.

Virginia City was Nevada's largest city for the first three census counts after Nevada became a state. In 1870 within the limits of Virginia City proper, 539 people were of Chinese descent, or almost 8 percent of Virginia City's population, according to census figures. Chinese immigrants called Virginia City Yin Shan, or "silver mountain."

By 1890, Virginia City was still Nevada's biggest city, but the Chinese population dwindled to about 3 percent. By 1900, the Chinese population in the declining Virginia City had dropped to 61, or slightly more than 2 percent of the population...

Sue Fawn Chung, an associate professor of history at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, said the census counts of Chinese populations in Virginia City could be low. The correct figure could be as high as 2,000, Chung said.

The history of Chinese in

Nevada begins not on the Comstock but in Carson Valley, Chung said. Mormon settlers brought in Chinese workers to Genoa around 1855 to build irrigation systems because the Chinese were experts at getting irrigation water to move not only down hills but also up hills, Chung said.

... Chinese workers provided much of the labor in building the railroad through Nevada, Chung said. And Chinese workers also did much of the lumbering that provided wood to build the mines and burn as fuel to smelt the ore, Chung said.

A combination of the anti-Chinese backlash and better economic opportunities elsewhere led to

the decline of the Chinese population along the Comstock, said Chung and Ron James, Nevada's historic preservation officer.

Few people of Chinese descent worked in the mines, James said. But they worked in several other positions, from laborers and servants to teachers, doctors, merchants and druggists.

Photographs of [Virginia City Chinese] are on display in the exhibit "On Silver Mountain" in the Fourth Ward School Museum and Cultural Center.

For more information, visit [www.fourthwardschool.org](http://www.fourthwardschool.org). CHSA thanks the Reno Gazette Journal for its permission to excerpt "The Comstock's Chinese." 

**Mormon settlers brought in Chinese workers to Genoa around 1855 to build irrigation systems because the Chinese were experts at getting irrigation water to move not only down hills but also up hills.**

## My Experience As a SALT This Summer

CHSA hosted the **Chinatown Beacon Center's Summer Assistant Leadership Training (SALT) Program** from June to August 2005. Led by CBC and CHSA staff, high school youth learned leadership and public speaking skills through projects and presentations. Utilizing CHSA's educational resources, SALT participants researched and engaged themselves in Chinese American history. We wish the SALT students well as they begin the new school year!

The following was written by **Vinson Chen**, a SALT student, who relates his experience in the program.

"Hello! My name is Vinson Chen. I am currently 16 years old, and attend school at Abraham Lincoln High School. My home is in the Sunset District, but I enjoy going to the Chinatown Beacon Center, as I could go to hang out with my friends and staff there. This is how I got into the SALT program this summer at the Chinatown Beacon Center housed in CHSA's Wells Fargo Learning Center.

"Through the SALT training, I've gained strength, balance and self confidence through the Hip Hop dance workshop. I've also bolstered my self confidence with the Improv workshop. In the public speaking workshop we did with Charlie Chin I've gained techniques to speak in public without fear. Through the tour of the CHSA museum with Phil Choy, I've learned the cultures and his-

tory of Chinese and Chinese Americans. In the research of Chinese American history with Leonard Shek, I've learned about the past and the present communities of Chinese Americans. Through these various activities, the SALT's have gained trust and understanding of each other.

"At the beginning of the summer, my thoughts were mostly to hang out with my friends that were also in the SALT program, having fun with the kids I met. But I found out that the SALT program was not just that simple. It was to become a leader through various activities, workshops and games.

"I have enjoyed this summer, even if it felt very short to me. I think I have accomplished a great deal in discovering who I am and forever keep this summer in my memories." ☺

In Development  
for April 2006

## Chinatown is Burning!

**Hugh Liang:  
Eyewitness to the  
1906 Earthquake  
and Fire**

**H**ugh Liang was a mere 15 years old and already an orphan when disaster struck San Francisco. Although the great quake left him penniless with nowhere to go, he managed to find success as a vaudeville performer and a local radio star. We have commissioned **Charlie Chin** to research his life story and develop a full "Chautauqua" living history presentation, premiering in April 2006.

If you have stories, memorabilia, or anything that may be connected with Hugh Liang's vibrant life, please contact Leonard Shek, Program Coordinator at [lshek@chsa.org](mailto:lshek@chsa.org) or (415) 391-1188 ext. 107. ☺

## "Petaluma's Chinese Heritage" Exhibition at Petaluma Museum

**T**he Petaluma Historical Library & Museum presents "Petaluma's Chinese Heritage," an exhibition on the historical presence of Chinese and Chinese Americans in Petaluma. Though numbers of Chinese in Petaluma and the surrounding Sonoma County dropped drastically by 1920, those who remained owned historic businesses in the town itself. The exhibition features artifacts from businesses run by the Jung and Lew families.

The Museum is located at 20 Fourth Street, Petaluma, tel (707) 778-4398. [www.petalumamuseum.com](http://www.petalumamuseum.com). An opening reception will be held at the museum on September 16, 2005 at 7 pm. ☺

## CHSA Board Announcement

**C**HSA's nominating committee is seeking candidates to serve on the Board of Directors, beginning in 2006. We are looking for individuals dedicated to promoting Chinese American history and culture. If you or someone you know possess the time, interest, and talent to become part of CHSA's Board, please submit either a resume or a short biographical statement to:

Willard Chin, Chair, Nominating Committee  
Chinese Historical Society of America  
965 Clay Street  
San Francisco, CA 94108

Contact Willard at (415) 972-3797 for more information. ☎

## Volunteer for CHSA!

**H**ave a few hours to spare every week?

Spend them at CHSA! We are currently looking for volunteers to sit at our front reception desk on a regular or on-call basis, or to help with mailings and light administrative work. Interested? Please e-mail us at [info@chsa.org](mailto:info@chsa.org), with the subject line "Volunteer," and let us know what you would like to do. ☎

The CHSA *Bulletin* is published bi-monthly. To contribute articles about Chinese American community and historical news and events, please submit articles to [suelee@chsa.org](mailto:suelee@chsa.org).

Editor: Marisa Louie || Design: Elaine Joe



### CHINESE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA

965 CLAY STREET

SAN FRANCISCO

CALIFORNIA 94108

415 391-1188 TEL

415 391-1150 FAX

[INFO@CHSA.ORG](mailto:info@chsa.org) EMAIL

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