

The AACCP Newsletter

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The Chinese Walls Historic Plaque Dedication

By Leonard D. Chan

Including an interview with Historian Connie Young Yu

On February 9, 2008 a group of people gathered to fill the Carriage House at the Folger Estate Stable in Wunderlich Park, Woodside, California. They were there for the dedication of a plaque honoring the Chinese builders of walls that were built on the property in the 1870s.

Susan Lang, Co-Chair of the Folger Estate Stable Committee, was one of the featured speakers. Ms. Lang's speech gave the audience some background on the events that lead to this day's dedication. Here is a summary of her speech.

Susan Lang along with other member from the community formed the Folger Estate Stable Committee, which was an affiliate of the non-profit organization called the Friends of Huddart and Wunderlich Parks. Their mission at first was to renovate the Folger Estate Stable. They eventually expanded their renovation and preservation efforts to include all the surrounding buildings and element of the site which included the Chinese walls. Their mission has grown further to include creating programming that educates children and adults about the history and legacy of the site.

The walls and other elements of the site are listed on the national registry of historic places. How the site got this designation began as an effort to raise money for their renovation mission. After an aborted attempts at writing the application they eventually hired an architectural historian to do the writing. He recommended that the whole site be registered under a historic district designation. His findings helped enlightened the Friends of Wunderlich Park about the walls' historic significance.

The application was accepted in 2004 and the site is now officially named the Folger Estate Historic District. The historic designation protects all the elements of this district, including the walls, from removal and alteration.

They have brochures that provided a self-guided walking tour of the site.

Throughout the whole process of the project, Susan Lang and her organization knew that they wanted to introduce the Chinese community to the treasures of this site and most especial to the wall. They eventually made contact with prominent Chinese members of the community including Rosalyn Koo, Wade Loo, and historian Connie Young Yu. Connie Yu helped research the history of the site and worked to educate everyone about her findings.

After an entertaining performance by musician, storyteller, and author Charlie Chin, historian Connie Young Yu spoke to the audience about her research on the wall. Here is a summary of her speech.

Simon L. Jones was the original property owner who hired the Chinese workers that build the wall. Simon Jones was in the import export trade and had a Chinese partner named Fung Tang. Amazingly, more may be known about Fung Tang than Jones. Connie Yu commented about how she was able to get information on Fung Tang by just Googling him on the Internet, whereas she was unable to even find a picture of Jones.

Jones was born in 1813 in Cowbridge, Wales England and immigrated to Texas as a teenager. During his time in Texas, he was a Texas Ranger, a cattleman, a businessman, a politician, and eventually married the daughter of the governor of Louisiana. In 1852, a friend of his encourages Jones to move to California. At the time, Jones was in his 30s and was relatively old compared to the other fortune seekers that headed to California.

Jones started an auction house that sold tea and other commodities. There he met and eventually partnered with a young Chinese merchant named Fung Tang who established the Hong Kong branch of the S. L. Jones Co. Such relationships were atypical for this time period, because there was a lot of anti-Chinese sentiment during the post-Civil War era.

In 1872 Jones purchase 1500 acres of timberland in Woodside. In order to develop this large property, he needed lots of labor, so he asked his partner Fung Tang to help him find contract Chinese laborers.

Contrary to common perception, during the early days, there were lots of Chinese people living in Woodside. Many of Woodside's early residents were often wealthy San Franciscans that moved out of the city to live on big estates. Each of these large estates required a lot of labor to maintain them. The Chinese made up a great deal of this labor force.

With the help of the Chinese laborers Jones was able to clear his land for roads, cattle grazing, raising horses, and growing grapes and fruit trees.

The S. L. Jones Company became a big exported of dried fruits to China. One of the common items that Chinese travelers took with them on their journey back to China was raisins.

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Give Us Your Feedback

Please feel free to send us your reviews, comments, and book suggestions. You can contact us at -
aacpinc@asianamericanbooks.com

Up Coming Events

Here are some events that AACCP will soon be attending. Invite us to your events.

Date/Time	Event	Location
Feb. 23	Day of Remembrance 2008	Merced, CA
Mar. 2 11am-5:30pm	Chinese New Year's Celebration	Stockton Civic Aud. 525 N. Center St. Stockton, CA
Mar. 7-9	California Council for the Social Studies Conference	California Council for the Social Studies Conference
Mar. 15	The Many Faces of Chinese America: A Visual Presentation	800 Middle Ave. Menlo Park, CA
Mar. 29	Shinenkai N. CA Japanese American Seniors	Union City, CA
Other Event of Interest that AACCP May Not Attend		
Feb. 2-24	Chinese New Year Celebration Events in SF	Chinatown San Francisco, CA
Feb. 23 5:30pm	Chinese New Year Parade	San Francisco, CA
Mar. 8-9	128th Bok Kai Festival, Parade, and Bomb Day	3rd & D St. Marysville, CA
Mar. 13-23	26th San Francisco International Asian American Film Festival	San Francisco, Berkeley, San Jose, CA
Mar. 14-16	The Chinese Language Conference 2008	The Hilton Hotel Financial District San Francisco, CA
Mar. 16-20	Association for Asian American Studies National Conference	Hyatt Regency McCormick Place Chicago, IL
April 3-5	Nat. Assoc. for Ethnic Studies Conference	Westin Peachtree Plaza Hotel Atlanta, GA
April 18-19	National Association for Asian and Pacific American Education (NAAPAE) 30th Annual Conference	Double Tree Guest Suites Hotel Santa Monica, CA

The Chinese Walls

(Continued from page 1)

Chinese railroad workers built some spectacular walls in the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Connie Yu speculated that some of those wall-building skills were utilized to build the walls in Woodside.

Next up was Daniel Quan - the designer of the plaque. Daniel

Editor's Message

Hello Everyone,

My friend Gary noticed that I'm back to the usual schedule for the newsletter - late. Sorry about that. I don't want to make excuses, but for those friends and regular readers of this section of the newsletter that have been asking about what I've been up to, I'll explain anyway.

Since the last newsletter, AACCP has held or been to seven different events. If I include my visit to the Chinese Walls on Feb. 9th, make it eight. Wow, even by AACCP's standards, that's a lot. Between all of the preparations for the events, the events themselves, and then the unpacking from the events, we've been working on publishing a new book, writing a grant proposal, and planning our next San Mateo Asian Pacific American Heritage Celebration in May.

As busy as we are, we still welcome your invitations to events and at the same time invite all of you to volunteer and help us. We always welcome your help.

Speaking of which, I'd like to make one last plea for our special fundraising drive. AACCP is trying out a new special contribution fund that will go back to educators at the California Council for the Social Studies (CCSS) conference in March 2008. For every ten dollars donated, we will give a visitor to our booth at the conference, one \$10 voucher towards the purchase of a book. We have from now until March 7 to raise as much money as possible for this fund. So far the campaign has NOT been going well. I hope in the next few weeks we can turn it around. Please join our cause and donate. Thank you.

Start here to make a donation -
<https://aacpinc-best.securesites.com/secure/dform.htm>

Okay change of subjects - Cynthia (Thia) Konda founder of the *Okasan and Me* program tells me that her website has been update and that she is working on the Mandarin CD recording arrangements for *Okasan and Me*. Check out her website at okasanandme.com.

Thank you Martin Jung, Judy Hu, Daniel Quan, and most especially Connie Young Yu for your help with this month's newsletter article.

Leonard Chan
Executive Editor

Quan is an architect and historian. Here are Daniel Quan's own notes for his speech.

The overarching theme, around which these Chinese walls, and many other similar achievements, are focused, is the theme of "great accomplishments put forth by everyday people." It is not just about these stone walls, but about the great body of work that was collectively done by the many immigrant laborers who came to America. These laborers contributing to the building of this country and helped form the backbone of California's economy

through their efforts. Many brought skills and ideas from their homeland and adapted them for use in this country.

We can see evidence of stone wall construction by Chinese laborers in retaining walls in the Sierra along railroad right of ways, We can even find them in Hawaii in agricultural terraces where stone lined irrigation canals exist that were built by Chinese laborers. In the 1800s, Chinese ingenuity and inventiveness were used in the salt ponds around San Francisco Bay to move water. The same was true in mining. At the same time, the majority of farm labor in California was Chinese. Experimentation with new species of fruits and vegetables, irrigation systems and the development of the flower industry were all connected to Chinese efforts. Even road building was an industry once employing Chinese labor.

This event celebrates these collective accomplishments and honors all the unsung heroes that labored tirelessly to enrich our lives today.

Daniel Quan mentioned that he is collaborating with Connie Young Yu on other Chinese American related historical projects and that they hope to write a book about it some day.

Here are my follow-up questions answered by Connie Young Yu.

Do you have any specifics about the dimensions of the walls - highest point, number of stones, approx. weight of one of the stones, length of the longest section, etc.?

The most striking looking wall, draped in fern in the Spring, is behind the stable, the highest point being nearly 10'.

There are other pathways and walls in the park and estate area that are part of this network built by Chinese. I do not have specifics on length, height etc. There is a long stretch of wall, shorter than the one behind the stable, that leads to the mansion (that was Folger's, then Bushnell's, and now another owner who lives in Texas) and it is off-limits (private property).

Do you have any idea about where the stones were quarried from? How far did they have to move the stones? Was the material used all sandstone? Do you have any ideas about the tools that were used to build the walls?

The material is sandstone, locally quarried. Note the boulder to which the plaque is affixed, it is from Huddart Park, a couple miles down the road. No other material is used. No mortar, which is what makes the wall so special.

Pickaxes, shovels were the tools for fitting the stones.

Any idea about how long it took them to build the walls?

I have no idea how long it took to build the walls -- work on the property began when Jones bought it in 1872. (walls may have been constructed over a period of years.) It took a while for all the timber to be cleared. Grapevines take 3 years to bear fruit. So it may not be accurate to say the walls were built in 1872 -- work might have begun then.

Are there any bookkeeping records, like how much each worker was paid and how many people were hired on? Did the builders leave any artifacts, maybe some graffiti?

No bookkeeping records at all. No artifacts. No archeology has been done on the site.

What other information do you have on Fung Tang?

The information on Fung Tang came from one brief page in "A History of the Sam Yup Benevolent Association in the United States." He came with his uncle from China. His uncle started a general merchandising store (with partner from Kowkong) called Tuck Chong Co. at 739 Sacramento St. Very brief background.

But I Googled Fung Tang and got the excellent photograph dated 1870, which is amazing. It is at the California Historical Society (<http://content.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/hb309n990m/>). Jones was very prominent in San Francisco commerce, but I have spent countless hours seeking his photo in vain. I found his obit in the SF Main Library and his biography in *Bay of San Francisco*, published in 1892. Newspapers (Chinese papers, too) carried ads for S.L.Jones Co.

How far along is your book project with Daniel Quan? Will it be coming out this year?

Daniel may have indicated to you that we're just at the beginning stages of our project on Chinese laborers, still researching, with many areas to investigate. We have no projections on completion date. (We're also working on other history projects.)

Is there anything that still needs to be done to help restore, preserve, and maintain the wall? Are funds still needed and if so where should people donate the money to?

Our "Friends of the Walls" project is completed. The historic marker to Chinese workers is in Woodside permanently. An awareness of the contributions of Chinese to the development of the area-- has been made that did not exist before. As Susan Lang said, the Walls have endured better than the stable. They do not need to be restored or improved upon, but left the way they are for all to appreciate. The finishing touch is the plaque.

Could you tell me when CHSA got involved with the wall? Is the Friends of the Walls a separate organization?

"Friends of the Walls" are the supporters /donors to this, an informal title, and CHSA is our (non-profit) sponsor.

"The Chinese Walls" project started when Susan Lang contacted the Chinese Historical Society of America about the Walls in the fall of 2006, asking for interpretation, since the Stable & surrounding area is listed on the National Registry of Historic Sites. As a board member of CHSA and historian, I volunteered to take on the task. I also live in nearby Los Altos Hills.

I first saw the walls in Oct. of 2006, at a meeting with Susan Lang, who also contacted San Mateo residents and OCA members, Rosalyn Koo & Wade Loo. In Jan. of 2007 I called Sue Lee, Executive Director of CHSA and Anna Naruta, an archeologist with CHSA and Daniel Quan, designer, to come look at the Walls. (also David Crosson, exec. director of CHS)

All were impressed. I was very excited to learn of the partnership of Jones and the Chinese merchant, Fung Tang and making the connection with the walls. The Folger Committee co-chairs Jill Daly & Susan Lang were most encouraging about making the history public. They pointed out the Folger Stable plaque and suggested that there be a plaque to the Chinese Walls history also,

and that I get a group going to make it happen. The "*Friends of the Walls*" was informally formed by myself, Daniel Quan, Roz Koo, and Cynthia Wu Wilcox. CHSA was the sponsoring group and helped to promote the project.

Our fund-raiser was "*Celebrating the Walls*" supper and history program on 9/30/07. Daniel produced a design for the plaque -- everyone had an idea of the purpose. Donations & support came from local residents, the Folger Stable Committee, CHSA board, "friends" who love history. An exciting event held right at the stable with the CHSA exhibit "Remembering 1882" created an awareness of Chinese American history.

That was also the spirit of the Dedication event, the first weekend of the Lunar New Year. Many of those who were present on 2/9/08 were contributors from the start, and it was significant that many people -- not just one big donor -- gave towards the marker and historical recognition of Chinese workers.

Walls built by Chinese used to be visible in the gold country and

many agricultural areas, but most are gone now. Here in San Mateo County, "*Chinese Walls*" are standing for all to see.

The Folger Stable Project continues, and the Stable will soon be restored to its former glory, and the surrounding Walls, listed on the National Registry of Historic Places, will remain protected and standing proud.

What are some of the things that CHSA is doing related to the wall? Will there be other events, maybe an exhibit at your museum for the people that can't get down to Woodside?

Sue Lee announced in her talk that there is a newly opened exhibit "*The Chinese of California*" co-sponsored by CHSA at the California Historical Society on Mission St. (in San Francisco) that gives an excellent & extensive historical background.

The walls are not featured in the exhibit, but the viewer can put the life of the 19th century worker into context of the Exclusion Law and struggle to survive in California. People can support continuing work on this history by joining the Chinese Historical Society of America.



Connie Young Yu and Daniel Quan



Wall Behind the Stables

News from the San Jose Day of Remembrance

The San Jose Day of Remembrance (SJ DOR) was held this past Sunday February 17, 2008. Nearly 300 people were in attendance. In case you are unfamiliar with this event, it marks the day that President Franklin Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 on February 19, 1942. This order was the directive that sent over 110,000 Japanese Americans and Japanese residents of the United States to Internment Camps.

The SJ DOR also noted that this year marks the 20th anniversary of *Civil Liberties Act of 1988*. This was the federal law that granted reparations to most of the former internees. A speaker at the SJ DOR mentioned the legislation before Congress that will investigate and potentially lead to reparations for those that were incarcerated, but did not previously receive any redress. This includes such groups as the Japanese Latin American WWII internees.

Please read our previous articles on the subject in our Feb. 2007 and April 2005 newsletters. Our Feb. 2007 article mentioned this bill, so the legislation appears to be stalled in Congress. Go to the *Campaign for Justice* website to see what you can do to help pass this bill.

AACP Newsletters

Feb 2007 - <http://asianamericanbooks.com/newslets/nl0207.htm>

April 2005 - <http://asianamericanbooks.com/newslets/nl0405.htm>

Campaign for Justice

<http://www.campaignforjusticejla.org/>

AACP's Revised Internment Book List

AACP has a revised web page listing many of the books and materials that we've carried dealing with the Japanese American World War II experience. We hope to be updating this page from time to time. We'll keep you informed of the page's development. <http://asianamericanbooks.com/ibib.htm>

ADDITIONS TO OUR WEBSITE

The following books are discounted for subscribers to our newsletter. The discounts on these books end March 9, 2008.

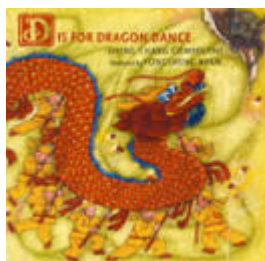


New Clothes for New Year's Day

By Hyun-Joo Bae
2007, 30 pages, Hardback.

New Clothes for New Year's Day is a story about a Korean girl that dresses up in new traditional style clothes for the Lunar New Year. This book is beautifully illustrated and includes an informative note section on some of the customs practiced by Koreans during the Lunar New Year and the symbolism behind wearing new clothes for New Years.

Item #3492, Normally \$15.95 ... for newsletter subscribers **\$12.76**

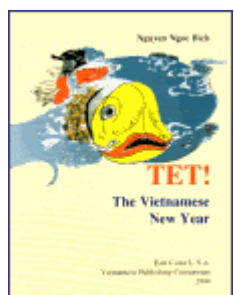


D is for Dragon Dance

By Ying Chang Compestine
Illustrated by YongSheng Xuan
2006, 30 pages, Hardback.

D is for Dragon Dance is an alphabet book where each letter of the alphabet describes something that is associated with the celebration of the Chinese New Year. Under Z, you get a Chinese Zodiac table and at the very end of the book there are notes on the Chinese New Year and a recipe for New Year's dumplings.

Item #3490, Normally \$17.95 ... for newsletter subscribers **\$14.36**

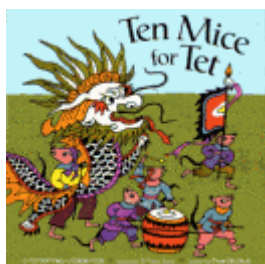


Tet! The Vietnamese New Year

By Nguyen Ngoc Bich
2004, 143 pages, Paperback.

Tet!: The Vietnamese New Year is one of the most comprehensive books written in English on the subject of the celebration of Tet. Have you ever wondered why the Vietnamese Zodiac differed from the Chinese Zodiac in having a cat instead of a rabbit? It's in this book. That and much more can be found in this informative primer.

Item #3493, Normally \$25.00 ... for newsletter subscribers **\$20.00**

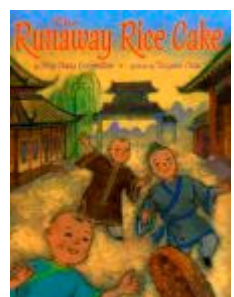


Ten Mice for Tet

By Pegi Deitz Shea and Cynthia Weill
Illustrated by To Ngoc Trang
Pham Viet Dinh
2003, 28 pages, Hardback.

Ten Mice for Tet is a number book where each number going from 1 to 10 is used describe various things that the mice characters do to celebrate Tet. The book's wonderful illustrations are done using embroidery. Along with the informative endnotes, this book is a good introduction to how Vietnamese celebrate the New Year.

Item #3494, Normally \$15.95 ... for newsletter subscribers **\$12.76**



The Runaway Rice Cake

By Ying Chang Compestine
Illustrated by Tungwai Chau
2001, 32 pages, Hardback.

When the mother of a poor family uses their last bit of rice flour to make a small but special New Year's rice cake for the family, she doesn't realize how special it is until it jumps out of the pan and runs off to avoid being eaten. *The Runaway Rice Cake* is a whimsical tale about sacrifice and sharing. The book includes an endnote on how Chinese celebrate the New Year and also includes recipes for nián-gāo (New Year rice cakes).

Item #3489, Normally \$17.95 ... for newsletter subscribers **\$14.36**

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