

# Locke Foundation Newsletter 樂居鎮基金會

## Preserving Locke's history and legacy

lockefoundation1915@gmail.com

Fall 2025

www.locke-foundation.org

### A Decade after the Locke Centennial

By Stuart Walthall

In Chinese astrology, the Year of the Snake, particularly the Wood Snake in 2025, is associated with transformation. It's a time for reflection and embracing new opportunities. It also marks the 110<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of Locke.



Locke Town Centennial Celebration

It's been a decade since the Locke Foundation staged its exceptionally successful Locke Centennial Celebration. In that 10-year duration, the Locke Foundation experienced a remarkable period of growth, influence and especially new opportunities.

The mission of the LF is to educate the public about the history, culture and legacy of the town of Locke. That mission has expanded to include the surrounding Sacramento Delta and foothill communities, including heritage sites.



Former residents of Locke assemble on Main Street on May 9, 2025, to celebrate Locke's Centennial.



THE LOCKE BOARDING HOUSE MUSEUM

The Locke Boarding House Museum, staffed and operated by the Locke Foundation and California State Parks, has become the first-stop destination for visitors to Locke. In operation since 2006, the Boarding House has flourished in the previous decade.

With generous help from numerous LF volunteers, the

Locke Boarding House now stands as the Mother Ship for all things related to local Chinese history and the immigrant experience. The Foundation has become a trusted repository for historic materials donated by individuals and organizations and curated by knowledgeable staff.

The LF Artifact and Archival Program has dedicated hundreds of man-hours collecting, preserving, cataloging, digitizing and displaying the vast collection of Locke's precious artifacts which reflect Locke's century-plus history. The collection also includes artifacts and historic materials from surrounding heritage communities.

The previous decade has also ushered in a comprehensive program of Boarding House displays. New rotating exhibits, augmented by informative signage, are offered to the public every 3 to 6 months - a good reason to visit the museum several times throughout the year.



The Locke Foundation is pleased to announce a recent collaborative endeavor with California State Parks: *The Delta Meadows Project*. California State Parks is in the process of classifying and preparing a General Plan for the Delta Meadows property, which includes the Locke Boarding House. This process will determine the park unit's uses and create a plan for its management, development, and operation. Delta Meadows will ultimately include a walking trail, water recreation, bird watching, and docent-led tours.

Speaking of docent-led tours, this last decade has brought a dramatic increase in Locke Historic Walking Tours. Led by knowledgeable and friendly guides, these tours offer the public an in-depth and fascinating glimpse into Locke's past and present. Several dozen tours are given annually, enlightening hundreds of adults and students with the rich history, picturesque beauty, and current culture of Locke.

## A CONTINUOUS DECADE

There were several projects that operated continuously throughout the previous decade. These activities reflect the viability of the LF by offering the public consistency and uninterrupted meaningful programs.

The Locke Foundation Newsletter has been published quarterly throughout the previous decade. That's 40 continuous issues. Unlike other newsletters which primarily print articles and photographs pertaining to their own organization's social activities - awards ceremonies, dinners, etc. - the LF Newsletter focuses on education. It has evolved into a valuable resource for scholastic institutions, authors, historical organizations, media, and the public. Its content has been reprinted in numerous publications.

The Locke Asia Pacific Spring Festival, staged by the Locke Foundation, has been celebrated continuously on Main Street Locke for over a decade. These festivals have attracted thousands of visitors to our historic and singular community. In addition to the fun and family-friendly entertainment extended to visitors, these events have enlightened the public on the historic significance of Locke through exhibits, lectures, demonstrations, and film.



Approaching the decade mark is the Locke Chinese New Year Celebration. This second LF signature event has become as popular and well attended as the Asian Pacific Spring Festival. Staged during the Chinese Lunar New Year, this celebration emphasizes the traditions of Chinese culture.

The Locke Foundation Membership Program has been going strong for over a decade. Since its inception, the Membership Program has garnered over 250 dues paying Friends of Locke Foundation supporters. Membership benefits include subscriptions to the LF newsletter, informational materials, Historic Walking Tour brochures, and advance notification of LF events and activities. How to join the Locke Foundation: <https://locke-foundation.org/about/membership/>

It's been over a decade since the first few precious seeds were planted in Locke's infant Chinese Demonstration Garden. In the passing years the space expanded, more authentic Chinese plants were cultivated, and the garden has flourished. The demonstration garden was created by the Locke Foundation to display the vegetables, fruits and herbs grown by the original Chinese residents of Locke whose daily lives revolved around tending the gardens which fed their families and neighbors. The gardens were also a hub of social interaction and a means of community unification. The demonstration garden has been a popular stop for visitors who venture off busy Main Street



and stroll the quiet back streets of Locke.

Other programs and projects in continuous operation for the previous decade include: presentation and maintenance of the Locke Memorial Park and Monument located on Main Street; the Locke Memorial Tile Project - [https://locke-foundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/2023\\_locke\\_tile\\_form.jpg](https://locke-foundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/2023_locke_tile_form.jpg); and the Locke Foundation Scholarship Program, which provides financial assistance to worthy local high school seniors.

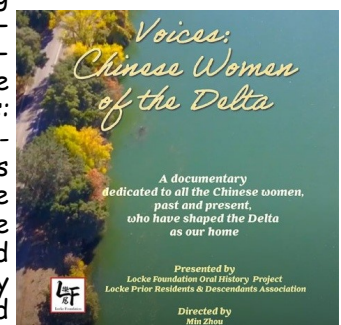
## DURING THE DECADE

The Locke Foundation has also filled the previous decade with additional programs, activities, and accomplishments.

In 2016, the town of Locke received a historical marker from the Native Sons of the Golden West. It is proudly displayed in the Main Street Park.



The mission of the LF Oral History Project is to collect interviews of past and present residents and families of the Sacramento River Delta. These meaningful interviews are being preserved for future generations. The LF OHP Committee also produced the documentary film "Voices: Chinese Women of the Delta" which explores the lives lived by the early Chinese women residents of the Delta. The film premiered at the California History Museum and was featured in the Sacramento Asian Film Festival.



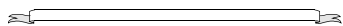
The LF initiated CAHN, Chinese American Heritage Network, which consists of 14 heritage locations banded together to showcase the historical presence of the early Chinese pioneers who came to mine the gold fields, build the railroads, levees and California. The LF hosts the CAHN webpage: <https://locke-foundation.org/other-interesting-chinese-heritage-locations/>



The LF has developed working relationships with the Sacramento Film Commission, local media, and numerous publications. These associations have resulted in enhanced exposure for Locke. Full length films, documentaries, and television news coverage have been shot in Locke during the past decade.

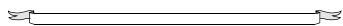
Print media has also highlighted Locke's unique history and culture. In addition to local media affiliates, outlets such as the BBC, NY Times, Nikkei West, HBO, NPR, SF Gate, NBC Bay Area, Chinese American History Perspectives, and others have published features on Locke and the Locke Foundation.

The Locke Boarding House Museum has been awarded BEST OF THE DELTA - Best Museum Award three consecutive years, and in 2023 the Locke Foundation was chosen as Sacramento County Non-Profit of the Year.



#### Locke Sweeps Best of Delta Awards 2020

Best Small Town: Locke  
 Best Restaurant Take-out: Loke Garde3\n  
 Best Souvenir-Gift Shop: Chinese Cultural Shop, Seekers  
 Best Art-Gallery: Moon Café Gallery, Ning Hou  
 Best Museum: Locke Boarding House Museum  
 Best Annual Event: Locke Asian Pacific Spring Festival



### THE NEXT DECADE

With its eye on the future, the Locke Foundation is looking forward to its next decade of growth in visibility and purpose. We are thriving and the legacy lives on.

The LF has grown into an influential and viable institution, capable of supporting other organizations. The Foundation plans to further develop collaborative relationships with historical and cultural organizations, governmental agencies and scholastic institutions.

The LF will increase its participation and support of activities presented by local communities, historical societies, ethnic organizations, and cultural clubs.

Locke is located within the first National Heritage Area, a place where natural, cultural and historic resources combine to form a landscape of national importance. LF Directors are actively involved with the Delta NHA Advisory Committee.

The Locke Foundation is the only organization whose sole mission is to advocate for the town of Locke, its history, culture and legacy. The LF plans to utilize its 501c(3) non-profit status in the procurement of grants which will bring benefit to Locke by preserving its physical integrity, promote business, increase visitation, and celebrate the uniqueness of Locke - *The largest, most complete example of a rural agricultural Chinese American community in the United States.*



### Locke Foundation Launches New Volunteer Program

The Locke Foundation is excited to launch a new Volunteer Program, inviting community members to play an active role in preserving and sharing Locke's history.

Our first volunteers, Faye Ong and Jason Lundberg, are already making an impact. Faye will lead school tour groups, helping students connect with the stories of Locke and the Delta Chinese American experience. Jason is heading the archiving project, working alongside longtime docent Lili Kan to organize and safeguard historic artifacts.

This program expands opportunities for volunteers to support the Locke Foundation's core mission of ensuring that the significance of Locke will not be forgotten. With Lili, Faye, and Jason setting the example, we look forward to building a strong team dedicated to keeping Locke's history alive.

If you are interested in helping preserve the history and culture of Locke, we invite you to join the Locke Foundation Volunteer Program. To learn more, please contact James Xiao at [LockeFoundation1915@gmail.com](mailto:LockeFoundation1915@gmail.com).

### Save the Dates for 2026 Locke events

February 14, 2026, Saturday, Chinese New Year Celebration Year of the Horse

May 9, 2026, Saturday, Locke Asian Pacific Street Festival

## 1882 Foundation Launches Day of Art, History and Community in Sacramento

Article by James Xiao  
Photos by EJPix Sacramento

The 1882 Foundation, headquartered in Washington DC, is a non-profit, non-partisan organization, which seeks to broaden public awareness of the history and continuing significance of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. This legislation effectively cut off immigration from a single country, China. Ted Gong is its executive director.

On August 9, 2025, the 1882 Foundation hosted a day-long event in Sacramento honoring the legacy of Chinese railroad workers and celebrating the unveiling of a National Historic Landmark plaque for the Chinese Camp at Summit Tunnel.



LF booth helpers: Betty Louie, Millie Dong, Mark Miller and Honey Lum.

The Locke Foundation was proud to support and take part in this historic occasion, which also marked the opening of the 1882 Foundation's new West Coast office in Sacramento. The program featured talks exploring the role of Chinese American labor-

ers in building the Transcontinental Railroad, the development of Sacramento's Chinatown, and rediscovering Chinatowns along the Transcontinental Railroad route.

History exhibits and an art show featuring local Chinese American artists added to the day's atmosphere of reflection and celebration. The event kicked off with a talk by historian Phil Sexton on the Chinese Camp National Landmark. Next a panel discussion including Alfred Yee, Brian Lee and Norman Fong on Sacramento's Chinatown was moderated by Derrick Lim.

For too long, the contributions of Chinese American railroad and agricultural workers have gone unrecognized in American history. Events like this bring those stories into the light, offering a more complete and honest picture of the nation's past.

By standing with the 1882 Foundation, the Locke Foundation affirms the importance of remembering, teaching, and honoring these contributions so that future generations understand their place in the American story.



Josh Kaizuka, president of Florin's JACL chapter, discussing the importance of remembering the historical contributions of Chinese Americans.



Supporters of 1882 event: Mark Miller, Logan Currin, Douglas Hsia, Max Ulman, Amy Trang, Ted Gong, Honey Lum,



## Highlights of Second CAHN Meeting

By Douglas Hsia

Four years ago in Locke, a group of stewards of Northern California's Chinese American heritage sites met to collaborate, share resources, and coordinate events to create a consortium. This collaboration gave birth to the Chinese American Heritage Network (CAHN), whose members since then have shared a digital home through Locke Foundation's website.

On August 16, 2025, representatives convened at the historic CHSA building in San Francisco. The conference attendees included:

- Angel Island Immigration Station - Ed Tepporn
- Auburn Joss House - Elizabeth Wong
- CHSA - David Lei and Walter Lim (Co-President)
- Eureka Chinatown Project - Katie Buesch and Alex Service
- Hanford China Alley - Steve Banister and Sonia Ng
- Locke Foundation - Douglas Hsia and Carol Lee
- Red Bluff - Jessica Chew, Angel Sabillo, and Bruce Chew
- Friends of Sacramento Chinatown - Norm Fong
- Chinese Historical & Cultural Project (San Jose) - Chris Joaquim and Dave Yick
- Chinese Benevolent Association of Stockton - Mike Mak and Lanette Louie
- Mendocino Kwan Tai Temple - Denise Lee
- UC Berkeley - Professor Anna Eng
- San Francisco City Guides - Bill Louie, award-winning docent
- Chinatown Media & Arts Collaborative (CMAC) - Steve Gong
- Former Auburn Joss House representative and current CAHN Secretary - Sam Dunham

The day opened with a walking tour of San Francisco Chinatown's historic back alleys. Many tongs and family associations remain discreet about their operations, but through David Lei's longstanding relationships, doors were opened and nuanced stories were shared. One striking example was the after the erection of San Francisco's Comfort Women monument in St. Mary's Square which prompted Osaka to sever its sister-city relationship.

A sumptuous lunch proved to be the best people-connector, reinforcing CAHN's mission statement: *"Connecting Chinese American Locations."*

Each member was allotted four minutes to introduce themselves, share accomplishments, raise concerns, and highlight opportunities for cooperation. Messages from absent members, Isleton Bing Kong Tong and Walk of Remembrance from Randy Sabado were read aloud by Secretary Sam Dunham, ensuring that all voices were included.

Coordinator Douglas Hsia presented a four-year progress report. While much cooperation had already taken place, he noted that important tasks remained ahead: creating a dedicated website, pursuing grant opportunities, and developing a common project to unify members' work.



Delegates to CAHN meeting assemble in front of Kam Lok Restaurant.

To carry CAHN forward, an executive slate was elected:

- **Coordinator** - Douglas Hsia
- **Secretary** - Lanette Louie
- **Treasurer** - Sam Dunham
- **Webmaster** - Katie Buesch

### Shared Themes

Discussions ranged widely:

- From celebrating **Chinese New Year** to planning for **America 250**.
- From New York City's recognition of Chinese New Year as a school holiday to the importance of engaging elected officials.
- From strengthening support ecosystems and grant writing to enhancing programming, vision, and website planning.

### Looking Ahead

The next CAHN meeting will be hosted in **2026 by the Chinese Historical & Cultural Project (CHCP) of San Jose**. No conference would be complete without a convivial dinner. Over good food and conversation, members were delighted by a surprise appearance from **Labubu**, a popular cultural icon brought to life by member Mike Mak, who worked the crowd in costume — proof that CAHN is not only rooted in heritage but also attuned to contemporary culture.

## Clarence Chu receives 2025 Lifetime Achievement Award

Article by Stuart Walthall

Locke Foundation Director Clarence Chu receives DELTA CHAMPIONS - Lifetime Achievement Award for 50 years of service to the town of Locke.

In 1976, Clarence Chu, his sister Chu Lien Fan and her husband Ng Tor Tai, was told by friends from San Francisco that Locke Ranch was for sale. When the family came to look at the Locke property their first impression about the town of Locke was it did not look Chinese at all, but more like a Hollywood set for a Wild West movie. There was not much Chinese culture left except for the Chinese. However, the interest in purchasing the Locke estate was established immediately by the Chu family. They felt because of their ethnic background they could help to preserve the town's history and culture.

In 1977 the Locke family estate decided to sell to Locke Property Development Corporation owned by Clarence and his family.

Clarence quickly held a meeting with the resident building owners. There were 60 Chinese, and 12 non-Chinese residents present at the meeting. He could speak their native Chung Shan dialect. He immediately felt close to them and, likewise, they to him.

The Chinese residents were concerned about whether his company would honor the land lease which they had with former Locke Ranch owners. Clarence was able to comfort these Chinese residents, many of whom were elderly, and assure them that the basic structure of the town would remain the same. There would be no dramatic changes. He made sure they could continue to use the open space for their community vegetable gardens. He asked the County Board of Supervisors to support the creation of a subdivision. Without owning the land under their homes, the residents would never feel secure. Their homes would be merely "personal property".

He also urged the County to make right the historic wrong in the Alien Exclusion Act, which prevented Chinese from owning and purchasing land in the first place. All five Sacramento County Supervisors voted to approve the creation of the subdivision so the residents could buy the land under their homes.

Locke Property Development sold the land to the County for a fraction of the price they could have received in an open market. By doing so, Locke building owners were able to purchase the land under their buildings for a mere \$3000-\$5000 per lot. The town's 51 parcels are now privately owned.

Clarence also purchased several buildings, including the Joe

Shoong Chinese School, the Dai Loy Gambling Hall, the Locke Boarding House, and the Jan Ying Association building, refurbished them, and generously opened these historic buildings to the public.

It was also through Clarence's efforts that the Locke Boarding House Museum was created. He envisioned a visitors' center which would educate the public about the rich history and culture of Locke. He established a working relationship with California State Parks, facilitated the sale of the building to State Parks, who in turn completely refurbished the structure to its original condition.



Locke Foundation board members

The Locke Boarding House Museum, operated by California State Parks in conjunction with the Locke Foundation, has become a first-stop family friendly destination for the thousands of visitors who come to Locke.

Clarence was also instrumental in the construction of the Locke exterior fire suppression system, the new town sewer system, and is currently working on a new water system which will bring fresh potable water to all Locke residences and businesses.

Clarence Chu, more than any other individual, has worked to preserve the history, culture and legacy of Locke: The largest, most complete example of a rural agriculture Chinese American community in the United States.

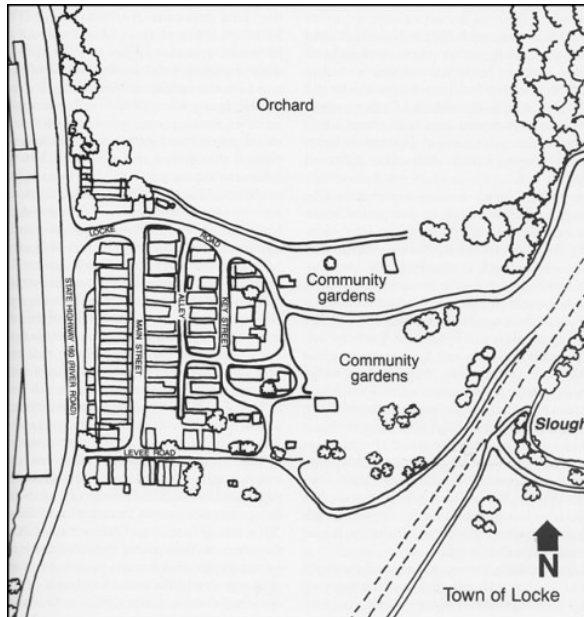
The Locke Foundation is grateful to Clarence Chu for the time, energy, resources and love he has generously given to the community of Locke.



Chu Family members: Renee, Kelvin, Clarence, Eva and Christine



## Visit the historic town of Locke



Visitors are welcome to Locke and there are no fees for visiting. The entire town is a historical site, but also a living community; therefore, visitors should respect the privacy of Locke's residents.

Guided tours are available to groups of a minimum of ten people Saturday through Sunday. Other days are available for group tours and school groups by reservation. Chinese language tours are also available upon request.



*Knox College  
students from  
Illinois*

Tour fees are \$7 per person, \$5 for students and seniors (Age 62 and older), duration of the tour is 90 minutes.

To schedule a tour, or for more information, please contact the Locke Foundation at 916-776-1684, 916-776-1828, or [locke.foundation@lockefoundation.org](mailto:locke.foundation@lockefoundation.org).

## Mid-Autumn Festival October 6, 2025



The Mid-Autumn Festival (also known as Moon Festival or Mooncake Festival), is a traditional festival celebrated by many Chinese and Southeast

Asian people. It is the second most important holiday after Chinese New Year with a history dating back over 3,000 years, when the Emperor of China worshipped the moon for bountiful harvests.

The festival is held on the 15th day of the 8th month of the Chinese lunisolar calendar with a full moon at night, corresponding to mid-September to early October of the Gregorian calendar. On this day, the Chinese believe that the moon is at its brightest and fullest size, coinciding with harvest time in the middle of Autumn.

In Chinese culture, roundness symbolizes completeness and togetherness. A full moon symbolizes prosperity and reunion for the whole family. At Mid-Autumn Festival people eat mooncakes together with family, or present mooncakes to relatives, friends, and business associates to express love and best wishes. Moon cakes are popular gift items to celebrate the Moon Festival; they are usually filled with sweet lotus paste, nuts and salted egg yolks. They are available at any Chinese grocery store and sell for \$25-\$50 for box of 4.



## Locke Foundation Membership Application/Renewal

Last Name \_\_\_\_\_ First Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_ Tel ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Cell ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to volunteer for the following activities:

Guided tour docent \_\_\_\_\_ Boarding House 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

### 2025 Board

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Vice-Pres: Clarence Chu  
Secretary: Douglas Hsia  
Treasurer: Eileen Leung

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Carol Lee  
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Stuart Walthall  
Mark Miller

New Email for Locke Foundation: [lockefoundation1915@gmail.com](mailto:lockefoundation1915@gmail.com)