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**From Underground Chinatown to Hall of China: Chinese Representation at San Diego's
1915 and 1935 Expositions in Balboa Park**

A thesis presented

by

Michael Yee

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in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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California State University, San Marcos
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**From Underground Chinatown to Hall of China: Chinese Representation at San Diego's
1915 and 1935 Expositions in Balboa Park**

Abstract

“From Underground Chinatown to Hall of China” explores the representation of the Chinese and Chinese Americans in San Diego’s two expositions in Balboa Park. The first, the 1915-16 Panama-California Exposition (PCE), degraded the Chinese as the enigmatic “Celestials” and, at the time, the community that composed Chinatown had little agency. The Fun Zone at the PCE featured a demeaning attraction called “Underground Chinatown.” It offered a salacious view of opium users, an imprisoned slave girl, and rampant gambling, all in a maze of vice and subterranean mystery. The attraction was created by out-of-town managers that specialized in admission-pandering attractions. For the second exposition, the 1935-1936 California-Pacific International Exposition (CPIE), the Chinese community exerted more control over their representation. They built their own international cottage as the Hall of China, developed exhibits in the main halls and grounds, and produced the “China Day” festivities. This thesis asserts the Chinese community, both native and foreign born, had built enough economic agency to control their representation at the second exposition. The autonomy and the opportunity to develop better images was also facilitated by overall changes in the relationship between China and the United States. This thesis further argues that a significant Chinese American (second generation) presence was presented along with Chinese culture and traditions.

Though discrimination and segregation were still rampant in San Diego and throughout the United States, the economic power that the community had secured between the two expositions allowed the Chinese community to present an image of respectability and build bridges to the white community.

Keywords: Chinese Images, Chinese Americans, San Diego, Balboa Park, Panama-California Exposition, Panama-California International Exposition, California-Pacific International Exposition, Chinatown.

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Abbreviations

APTHD, APHD	Asian Pacific Thematic Historic District
CACA	Chinese American Citizens Alliance – San Diego
CACA Grand Lodge	Chinese American Citizens Alliance – San Francisco
CCBA	Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association – San Diego, Chinese Benevolent Association
CCBA-SF	Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association – San Francisco
CPIE	California-Pacific International Exposition – 1935-1936
HoC	Hall of China, House of China
HPR	House of Pacific Relations
PCE	Panama-California Exposition - 1915
PCIE	Panama-California International Exposition – 1916

Introduction

In 1893 the *San Diego Weekly Union* reported that a “pig-tailed and quilted Celestial... [was] astride a bicycle and steering down the street in sublime indifference to cheers or sneers. He was Quon Mane Kee, A Chinese merchant...”¹ The article was a pointed insult directed at a rising Chinese businessman. His long queue - described as a “pig-tail”- and “quilted” clothes were considered strange. His “indifference” implied mysteriousness and ignorance. These condescending attitudes towards the Chinese continued for decades and impacted the community of Chinatown in San Diego.

In 1915, the Panama-California Exposition (PCE) opened in San Diego’s Balboa Park and featured a salacious and demeaning exhibit called “Underground Chinatown.” This exhibit reinforced the public’s distorted perception of Chinatowns. Visitors walked by depraved opium drug users, a Chinese “slave prostitute girl,” and flagrant gamblers, all contained within a mysterious maze of vice.² The attraction was created by out-of-town managers that specialized in admission-pandering attractions. The Chinese New Year festivities at the exposition was promoted as a time to “blow the lid off” and celebrate excessively. San Diego newspapers carried sensational stories about drug, sanitation and gambling problems in Chinatown before, during, and after the run of the exposition. Chinese San Diegans had no control over the insulting Chinatown attraction. The concession hired Chinese employees but planning and execution was run by white promoters. There were few to none Chinese American citizens of voting age in 1915. In terms of the San Diego economy, Chinese residents had very little power—confined by racism to jobs primarily as laborers. The business community of Chinatown was still in the process of being born.

¹ “Local Intelligence,” *San Diego Weekly Union*, September 7, 1893, 8.

² “Underground Chinatown,” *San Diego Examiner*, January 29, 1915, 4.

Twenty years later, the California-Pacific International Exposition (CPIE) opened on May 29, 1935 on the grounds of the 1915 Exposition in Balboa Park. The second exposition celebrated American business, progress, and international connections, and was a hoped-for tonic to alleviate the Great Depression blues. The white planners of the 1935 exposition did not dictate Chinese involvement as they had in 1915. The Chinese community controlled their own representation and that of China. The community developed, decorated, and staffed their own Hall of China in the international cottages as a Chinese exhibit.³ The big “China Day” celebration in October 1935 was directed by the Chinese community - they produced the event with VIP speakers and performers at the Organ Pavilion and organized a parade from Chinatown to the exposition grounds.⁴ Quon Mane and Company and other merchants demonstrated their financial strength by investing and developing exhibits in the main halls and grounds, and proudly promoted their Chinese goods. Chinese merchants advertised en masse in the newspapers for the exposition.

By the 1930s American attitudes towards the Chinese changed. Japan’s aggression and conquest of the northern province of Manchuria evoked sympathy for the Chinese. Although patronizing and based in white supremacy, more positive attitudes towards the Chinese grew as American Christian missionaries continued to push into China and U.S. Chinese communities. The novel *The Good Earth* painted a sympathetic portrait of the rural Chinese and allowed Americans weary of the Depression to empathize with the Chinese. Though perceptions of the Chinese evolved, the dominant culture still discriminated against them and legally they remained separated and under legal restrictions - the Chinese Exclusion Act was not overturned until 1943.

³ *House of China 50th Anniversary program: 1935-1985*, House of China, 6.

⁴ China Day program October 13, 1935, California Pacific International Exposition, House of China.

Though Chinese images became more benign in some ways, they still reinforced white superiority.⁵

The expositions in Balboa Park offer dual lenses to examine the stark differences between how the Chinese were represented from 1915-16 to 1935-36. This thesis argues the Chinese community developed enough economic agency over the twenty years so they exerted more control over their participation and representation at the second exposition.

This thesis also asserts that Chinese Americans became the public face at the exposition. This allowed the organizers of the Chinese participation to celebrate Chinese history and culture but also to emphasize the Americanness of the community in San Diego. The president of the Hall of China was a college educated American citizen who also served as the master of ceremonies at the “China Day” festivities. The widely publicized manager for Quon Mane’s business was his American-schooled nephew. Some Chinese merchants emphasized their American Chinese connections. Though discrimination and segregation still impacted the Chinese community, the treatment of American Chinese tilted more towards the positive. The evolution from demeaned to respectable had begun.

⁵ T. Christopher Jespersen, *American Images of China 1931-1949* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 2.

Historiography

The historiography of the Chinese in America focuses primarily on the cities in the American West and New York City. In his seminal book *Strangers from a Distant Shore* (1989), Ronald Takaki examines Chinese immigration to America; he presents San Francisco in particular as the quintessential Chinatown in America. San Francisco's Chinatown started as a gateway for Chinese laborers heading into the American West and morphed into an urban Chinese enclave as the Chinese retreated from a hostile rural environment. Similar retreats for refugees appeared in cities across the west and in New York City. Takaki argues that the Chinese were "forced to become 'strangers' by economic interests – the demand of white capitalists for a colonized labor force and the 'ethnic antagonism' of white workers – as well as by an ideology defining America as a homogeneous white society."⁶ The American West needed labor, but that need would ebb and flow. Takaki weaves the struggles of a Chinese labor force with poignant tales of sojourners' personal stories. The Chinese saved their money and scraped together a minimal life with plans of returning home to China with wealth and respect. America did not permit long term Chinese migration and blocked their assimilation, as exhibited by hostile treatment and legislation, exemplified by the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. This Act restricted the majority of willing Chinese immigrants, especially laborers. Certain categories were allowed: merchants, students, teachers, diplomats, and travelers. The Act also eliminated eligibility for citizenship for all Chinese people both foreign and native born. Takaki asserts that in the nineteenth century, the Chinese worked in every aspect of the American economy: agriculture, mining, manufacturing, and transportation construction. However, he points out

⁶ Ronald Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans* (Boston: Little Brown, 1989), 130.

Chinese rural employment became nearly non-existent by 1920. The Chinese retreated into a segregated San Francisco Chinatown where their employment, social, and recreation needs were satisfied by an insular community that provided protection, employment, and social interaction.⁷

Takaki further explores how Chinatowns became “Guided Ghettos” in the early 1900s as the Chinese survived during the Chinese Exclusion era. Despite conditions that were often squalid and the mainstream attitude towards the Chinese that was contemptuous, tourism to Chinatown became a lucrative industry. On the other coast, New York City’s Chinatown grew quickly from the expulsion of the Chinese from the West. In the decades before World War II, second generation Chinese Americans navigated the dual worlds of America and traditional China, while they fought against discrimination.⁸

Min Zhou in her book *The Socioeconomic Potential of an Urban Enclave* (1992) argues that Chinatowns served three functions. Her historical background of New York’s Chinatown is useful in understanding Chinatowns across the nation. First, Chinatowns served as residential shelters and havens. Segregation and community suppression was the norm, and the Chinese were only allowed to live in the less desirable parts of town. Second, Chinatowns anchored employment opportunities. The Chinese were forced into and found economic niches that avoided competition with the general workforce. Laundry was a common occupation as it was considered undesirable work in both the rural west as well as in cities. Many jobs outside of Chinatown were not available due to discrimination, so working as a servant or cook fulfilled the need for employment. Chinese restaurants originally served an insular community, though eventually Chinese food earned widespread acceptance. Third, Chinatown was the social center

⁷ Takaki, *Strangers*, 80-130.

⁸ Takaki, 230-269.

of the Chinese workers in an alien and hostile environment. Chinese isolation in America was both involuntary and voluntary. She argues:

Denied structural assimilation because of discrimination, the Chinese had no choice but to develop insulated enclaves for self-protection. In a society where most of the options of life were unavailable to them, immigrant Chinese tended to depend on each other. Involuntary segregation developed and strengthened a sense of ethnic identity and solidarity, which in turn reinforced ethnic segregation.⁹

Discrimination and hostility, violence, and a steady stream of oppressive laws that forbade migration and citizenship defined Chinese American involuntary segregation. Voluntary segregation persisted because of the Chinese immigrants' language barriers and their long term intent to return to China.⁵

The mythology of Chinatown is explored by Emma Teng in her analysis of San Francisco's Chinatown. She cites a 1893 Baedeker's travel handbook that stated; "The Chinese Quarter is one of the most interesting and characteristic features of San Francisco... the most interesting time to visit is at night, when everything is in full swing until midnight."¹⁰ She argues that the act of bohemian slumming in Chinatown was an escape from the bourgeois society and norms of the West for white Americans. Teng asserts photographer Arnold Genthe was fascinated with the adventure and mystery of Chinatown and thus he immortalized San Francisco's Chinatown in his 1908 book *Pictures of Old Chinatown*. Genthe pursued his photographic project primarily as an artistic effort, overshadowing the documentary value of the medium. Teng asserts Genthe's images combined with commentary by Will Irwin produced a

⁹ Min Zhou, *Chinatown: The Socioeconomic Potential of an Urban Enclave* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992), 33-36, 180-201. To understand modern-day Chinatowns, the enclave economy, and the historic Chinatown in New York City, Zhou studies how Chinatown is defined and thrives as an immigrant-enclave. She examines the assimilationist and ethnic enclave theories using 1980 demographic and economic data

¹⁰ Emma Teng, "Artifacts of a Lost City: Arnold Genthe's Pictures of Old Chinatown," *Re/collecting Early Asian America: Essays in Cultural History* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002), 57.

sensationalized image of Chinatown. She makes the same charge against novelist Frank Norris. Norris' story "The Third Circle" tells the sordid tale of a white woman's abduction and later rescue from San Francisco's Chinatown. This perpetuated America's fear of white slavery and Chinese cunning. Teng argues the impact of Genthe, Irwin, and Norris in 1908 definitively added to the exotic and dangerous image of Chinatown. I will argue these perceptions extended to San Diego's smaller Chinese outpost.

Looking at Chinatowns as a world-wide phenomenon, Vanessa Künnemann and Ruth Mayer insightfully provide *Chinatowns in a Transnational World: Myths and Realities of an Urban Phenomenon*. Ruth Mayer eloquently describes Chinatowns, as "complex urban phenomena shaped by immigration politics, racialized discourses revolving around public health and citizenship, tourism, trade relations, commercial exchanges, missionary ambitions, labor exploitation, and cultural self-fashioning."¹¹ Mayer additionally highlights two arguments relevant to San Diego's Chinatown. She argues that Chinese businessmen self-orientalized as an economic tool to promote Chinatown, highlighting their agency. Mayer also reinforces how the mythic images of San Francisco Chinatown affected how Chinatowns around the world were perceived, using a global perspective that includes England and Germany.

In terms of San Diego's Chinatown, a few articles have been written about the Chinese in the city. Historian Elizabeth Macphail authored two significant articles in the *Journal of San Diego History*. Macphail described Chinatown's intermixture with the Stingaree red-light activities and opium use in late 1800s. Her subsequent article details the origins of the Chinese Mission in the 1880s and the social services and religious education it offered to the Chinese

¹¹ Ruth Mayer, "A 'Bit of Orient Set down in the Heart of Western Metropolis,' *The Chinatown in the United States and Europe*," *Chinatowns in a Transnational World: Myths and Realities of an Urban Phenomenon* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 1.

immigrants. Her analysis is a narrative account of the leaders and their impact as the Mission evolved from serving only Chinese laborers to Chinese American families. Arthur McEvoy's *Journal of San Diego History* article about the Chinese fishing industry from 1870 to 1893 argues that early Chinese fishermen were valued as seafood merchants and an asset to local San Diego commerce. A railroad line built north to San Bernardino starting 1880 used primarily Chinese laborers. This opened up the economy, spurred fish industry competition, from which the Chinese were ironically pushed out, and Chinese ocean-going fishing declined rapidly by the 1890s.¹²

A few Master of Arts theses discuss the Chinese in San Diego. Sociologist Judith Liu's 1977 thesis is a significant historical contribution with her focus on 1860 to 1900. She asserts that the *San Diego Union* reported on Chinese activities only when the white community was involved or when the Chinese were treated as objects of amusement. Liu identifies the persecution of the Chinese amid community concerns about Chinese immorality and gambling habits. Her research documents important topics such as occupations, labor agitation, the role of the Chinese merchant, and effects of discrimination. These provide important input to this thesis' coverage of the formation of San Diego's Chinatown.¹³

Murray Lee, the first curator of Chinese American History at the San Diego Chinese Historical Museum, authored a book in 2009 that describes in rich detail the historical facts, events, activities, and personalities of the Chinese in San Diego from the 1860s to about 2000. He covers all the key elements of the Chinese past in San Diego: Chinese fishing, railroad and

¹² Elizabeth MacPhail, "San Diego's Chinese Mission," *The Journal of San Diego History* 23, no. 2 (1977); "Shady Ladies in the Stingaree," *Journal of San Diego History* 20, no. 2 (1974); Arthur McEvoy, "In Places Men Reject: Chinese Fishermen at San Diego, 1870-1893," *Journal of San Diego History* 23, no. 4 (1977): 16.

¹³ Judith Liu, "Celestials in the Golden Mountain: The Chinese in One California City, San Diego, 1870-1900" (Master's Thesis, San Diego State University, 1977); Andrew Griego, "Mayor of Chinatown: the life of Ah Quin, Chinese merchant and railroad builder of San Diego" (Master's Thesis, San Diego State University, 1979).

construction, early Chinatown and the Stingaree, occupations and organizations, leading families and businesses, the Chinese transition from 1915 to 1930, the last Chinatown years of 1930-1940, World War II Chinese Americans, and recent San Diego Chinese. This thesis relies on Lee inclusion on hard-to-access sources, such as immigration interrogation transcripts, oral interviews, and less accessible newspapers. His analysis using both the 1920 and 1930 Census detailed schedules against an eight-block area generally known as Chinatown, and now designated as the Asian Pacific Thematic Historic District, was particularly valuable. His book provides an invaluable overall account of the San Diego Chinese community.¹⁴

For a substantive analysis of the inter-connections between World's Fairs and Chinese and Japanese communities, Abigail Markwyn's *Empress San Francisco* examines San Francisco's 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition (PPIE) in detail. She argues San Francisco Chinese community's supported China's involvement in challenging the racist treatment of the Chinese. China was wary of California's anti-Asian atmosphere, anti-laborer laws, and tourist harassment, but through aggressive fair promotion the Chinese government was convinced to build a "Chinese Village" at the exposition there. She documents objections to PPIE's "Underground Chinatown" attraction and how the concession was modified. Those themes illuminate the similar situation in San Diego.¹⁵

The most in-depth examination of San Diego's two expositions is pursued by Matthew Bokovoy. He delves deeply into archival sources in *San Diego's World's Fairs and Southwestern Memory 1880-1940*. He argues both expositions romanticized the

¹⁴ Murray Lee, *In Search of Gold Mountain: A History of the Chinese in San Diego, California* (Virginia Beach: Donning Company Publishers, 2010).

¹⁵ Abigail Markwyn, *Empress San Francisco: The Pacific Rim, Great West, and California at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2014).

Spanish, Mexican and Native American cultures in America to stand out among the country's expositions. Native American and other participants had agency and some sympathetic management but fought against stereotyped expectations of the time. At the same time, he does not discuss the images of the Chinese presented at the expositions.¹⁶

The Chinese community had little influence at the first exposition. This thesis examines the lack of control in the 1915-1916 timeframe, and documents the small but distinctive Chinatown during the 1920s and 1930s. It further reveals the Chinese community's progress and change over time during the period between the two expositions resulted in more positive representations at the second 1935-1936 exposition.

Methodologies/Nature of this Project

This hybrid thesis relies on content analysis of primary sources. Those primary sources include historic newspapers, historic records and materials from the Panama-California Exposition and California-Pacific International Exposition, and records from relevant Chinese community organizations. They include records preserved by the San Diego History Center, the San Diego Public Library, and the National Archives and Records Administration. The secondary sources, with their focus on other Chinatowns and Expositions, provide valuable historical background approaches applicable to understanding how San Diego's Chinese participated and were portrayed in both of San Diego's expositions. The digital component is an

¹⁶ Matthew Bokovoy, *San Diego World's Fairs and Southwestern Memory, 1880-1940* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005).

ArcGIS StoryMap web project that presents a smartphone-based walking tour of San Diego's Asian Pacific Historic District.¹⁷ The walking tour allows visitors to activate their tour on a smartphone using a QR code or web link. The tour provides historical background and stories, directions, descriptions, and historic and current images. The StoryMap software is "responsive," which means the website adapts its usability to the screen size of the user's device. The significance of this is a dramatic increase in access for public history about San Diego's Chinatown using modern smartphone technology. A related important impact is that Storymap, a widely available software system, can easily promote historic sites and ideas, especially for grass-roots and under-funded causes and organizations.

The URL for the related digital history project is as follows:

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/7f1cfde5d5814bf4a8bdcd582963b3d8>

¹⁷ Michael Yee, Walking tour of Asian Pacific Historic District, May 2, 2020, <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/7f1cfde5d5814bf4a8bdcd582963b3d8>

Chinese in the United States

To understand the Chinese and Chinese Americans in San Diego, an overview of the general U.S. experience is critical. Gold in the mountains of the west gave the United States the reputation as the promised land - “Gum Saan” or “Gold Mountain,” drawing the first Chinese to the United States. In the early and mid-1800s the Chinese struggled to support their families in China, facing flood, famine and internal warfare. Many initially left China for Southeast Asia, Philippines, Cuba, and Peru looking for work. The 1848 discovery of gold prompted the Chinese and many more forty-niners to beat a path to California in the heady days of 1849 and after. The first Chinatown in the United States was in the gateway city of San Francisco. U.S. travel by Chinese workers was facilitated by Chinese transnational small businesses using a credit ticket system, where immigrants borrowed for travel expenses with a promissory payment upon return. Associations composed of groups with a shared dialect or hometown (district associations) met each incoming ship from China and organized mining connections, housing, transportation, mutual aid, and employment for newly arriving immigrants from China.¹⁸

From the 1850s to 1880s, gold and silver mining camps developed in the West predominantly in California, Idaho, Oregon, Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming. In 1860, seventy percent of Chinese in California were working in mines.¹⁷ The mining environment became competitive and hostile and most Chinese and foreign miners were subjected to threats, violence, or punitive fees from competing American miners or local governments, ultimately excluding many from mining. Some Chinese miners were successful, mostly by working undesirable or

¹⁸ Erika Lee, *Making of Asian America* (New York: Simon & Schuster 2015), 51.

¹⁷ Erika Lee, *Making*, 71.

abandoned claims. Many shifted to working in the less desirable jobs such as heavy unskilled labor, cooking, or laundry.

While building the transcontinental rail line starting in 1864, the Central Pacific Railroad headed east from Sacramento and desperately needed laborers. The Chinese became the main workforce for grueling railroad construction work. By 1867 the rail company employed 12,000 Chinese, which was ninety percent of their entire work force. Chinese workers cleared trees, leveled, blasted and tunneled through mountains, suffered through snow avalanches and harsh conditions, as they laid track. They were paid thirty-one dollars a month, one third less than white workers. The triumphant photograph heralding the transcontinental completion in 1869 included no Chinese workers.¹⁹ Railroad construction throughout the west fueled by Chinese laborers carried on through the 1890s.²⁰

During the nineteenth and early twentieth century, the Chinese advanced the development of the West through their labor and agricultural expertise. They took on industrial and manufacturing jobs such as cigar and box making in the cities. As laborers, they built irrigation channels and dikes, drained marshes, created productive farming land, and planted and picked agricultural crops. Chinese farm workers made up fifty to eighty percent of the 1880 labor force in some California counties. Some successful tenant farmers leased land from white landowners and used their farming expertise learned from their South China homeland. Rural Chinese farms and towns sprouted up in California, including the Chinese town of Locke in the Sacramento delta.²¹

¹⁹ Lee, *Making*, 72-73.

²⁰ Takaki, *Strangers*, 84-86.

²¹ Takaki, 88-91.

The Chinese filled a labor void and pursued laundry work, whether it was in Chinatowns, rural towns and camps, or cities and towns across the United States. Laundry was not a traditional Chinese male occupation and was viewed as women's work. Chinese men moved into this business because they would not compete with white men for jobs, they did not require much capital to start, and laundries qualified as a desirable merchant business.

As Chinese communities grew in the mid-1800s to early-1900s, they were governed by three types of associations: 1) territory/county, dialect, or merchant associations (huigan); 2) surname, clan or family associations; and 3) and tongs/secret societies. The huigan (meeting halls) were district or local associations and were the top of the hierarchy of Chinese organizations in the United States. Each American huigan spoke a similar southern Chinese dialect such as Cantonese, and worked with their compatriots for housing, employment, socializing, funeral services, and handling disputes. The surname associations, known as clan or family associations, were built on the concept of ancestral halls in a village. In the United States, these associations provided social and mutual aid, and could be single or multiple clans banding together based on current or ancestral Chinese linkages.²² Secret societies, or tongs, formed for mutual assistance for the Chinese workers and as a response to the hostile environment in America.²³ Many grew out of alliances of Chinese who rebelled from traditional power structure or sought political or economic power. The tongs often pursued illegal activities that gave

²² Him Mark Lai, *Becoming Chinese American: A History of Communities and Institutions* (Walnut Creek: Altamira Press, 2004), 55-57.

²³ Takaki, *Strangers*, 118-119.

Chinatown its stereotypical bad reputation.²⁴ The general American community often lumped all unfamiliar Chinese organizations together as “tongs.”²⁵

Within the hostile environment of the West in the 1870s through the 1890s, the pattern of Chinese immigration to the United States, and where the Chinese lived and worked, changed significantly. New laborer immigration continued to be restricted because of the Exclusion laws. Discrimination and violence in small rural Chinatowns forced the Chinese into urban enclaves for protection. These enclaves further supported employment in the ethnic-labor markets.²⁶ The Chinese echoed that movement in San Diego first as part of the rural and fishing expansion in California, then as the Chinese Exclusion Era took hold the Chinese retreated into urban enclaves such as San Diego’s Chinatown.

Origins of San Diego’s Chinatown

The Chinese moved into San Diego around the same time as Alonzo Horton established New Town San Diego in 1867. The muddy flats near the water at the end of First Street allowed for a Chinese fishing village of 12 redwood shacks to form in the late 1860s separate from the more desirable blocks of New San Diego. The Chinese ran a robust fishing industry that exported seafood to China and provided welcome fresh market fish to the local population. They dominated the local fish trades until the 1880s.²⁷ The fishing village around 1870 edged into the

²⁴ Stanford Lyman, *Chinatown and Little Tokyo: Power, Conflict, and Community Among Chinese and Japanese Immigrants in America* (Millwood: Associated Faculty Press, 1986), 69.

²⁵ Judy Yung, *Unbound Voices: A Documentary History of Chinese Women in San Francisco* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999), 147.

²⁶ Takaki, *Strangers*, 239-240.

²⁷ Arthur McEvoy, “In Places Men Reject: Chinese Fishermen at San Diego, 1870-1893” *Journal of San Diego History* 23, no 4 1977.

Stingaree red light district on “...both sides of I Street, between Second and Third,” where “...two hundred feet of continuous small redwood dwellings, two or three rooms deep” were located.²⁸ As New Town grew in the 1870s and 1880s, the Chinese remained segregated in the least desirable parts of town below H Street (now Market Street) and west of 5th Avenue.²⁹

Sociologist Judith Liu demonstrates the San Diego Chinese faced persecution and discrimination in the late 1800s. She discusses a petition seeking pledges to dispose of the Chinese in the city. Additionally in July 1877 an arsonist targeted several buildings in Chinatown with gasoline and set them ablaze, but a volunteer fire crew put the fires out. Private businesses such as the Palmer House (a boarding house) and San Diego Tannery announced they would not hire Chinese. A state holiday was proclaimed to encourage protests against the Chinese in March 1882 and San Diego citizens were urged to attend an anti-Chinese meeting. All of this hostility funneled into local political and economic support for the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act. The hostile climate continued after passage of the Act and the Chinese were fired from land clearing jobs in Coronado and in the San Diego Public Works water division in 1886.³⁰

With San Diego’s economic boom of the 1880s, the saloon, gambling, and prostitution district known as the Stingaree gained notoriety. One hundred and twenty rowdy saloons existed in the area by 1888. The Stingaree red-light district overlapped much of Chinatown, as both prostitution and the Chinese were restricted to this part of town. The police preferred to keep the

²⁸ Don Stewart, *Frontier Port: a Chapter in San Diego’s History* (Los Angeles: W. Ritchie Press, 1966), 14.

²⁹ Lee, *Gold Mountain*, 100-101.

³⁰ Judith Liu, *Celestials in the Golden Mountain: The Chinese in one California City, San Diego, 1870-1900* (Master’s Thesis, San Diego State University, 1977), 62-68.

illicit activity contained to prevent vice from spreading elsewhere in the city.³¹ In 1912, a reporter recapped the police's position on prostitution:

The evil scatters instead of disappearing. The contention of the [police] department heads is that at present they have the denizens of the district in hand, know where they are and what they are doing, and that in short, they are in perfect control of the situation.³²

The newspapers conflated the Stingaree with Chinatown in late 1800s. In an article about a Chinese festival, the *San Diego Union* stated:

Men of Chinatown held a fete in the middle of Third street in front of their Masonic temple. ... a goodly number of strangers had assembled, attracted by the lurid glare of their numerous bonfires and the solemn notes of their chants and incantations. ... [After the festival] quiet and peace one more reigned supreme in Stingaree.³³

Although the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 forbade Chinese laborers from coming to the United States, for a short time the Chinese population in San Diego grew because of a temporary real estate boom. The completion of the California Southern Railroad in 1885 from San Diego to Riverside created transcontinental access and powered the economic explosion.³⁴ Ah Quin was a major reason for the success of that railroad line; he arrived in San Diego in 1880 to recruit Chinese railroad construction workers. He opened a store to supply the Chinese workers, and then expanded his businesses to include farming, a restaurant, a pawnshop, and a Japanese store. Quin became a community leader, court interpreter, and the unofficial mayor of Chinatown.³⁵ Liu argues the Chinese population grew from 229 in 1880, peaked in late 1880s

³¹ Elizabeth, MacPhail, "Shady Ladies," 2-3.

³² "Reform Leaders ask police to slam 'lid' on Stingaree," *San Diego Union*, October 2, 1912, section 2, 13.

³³ "Chinese Masonic Fete," *San Diego Union*, May 7, 1891, 1.

³⁴ Douglas Lowell, "The California Southern Railroad and the Growth of San Diego Part I" *Journal of San Diego History* 31, no. 4 (1985).

³⁵ Susie, Lan Cassel, "To Inscribe the Self Daily: The Discovery of the Ah Quin Diary," *Chinese in America: A History from Gold Mountain to the New Millennium*, ed. Susie Lan Cassel (Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press, 2002), 62-63.

while San Diego enjoyed a “Great Boom” with the Chinese working in heavy construction, then fell to 909 in 1890.³⁶ Liu analyzed the distribution of the Chinese in the county and found in 1890 San Diego Ward No. 5 had the largest population at 323 in the segregated Chinatown. But the Chinese also lived in other city wards which varied in population from three to ninety-nine across the county. National City reported twenty-one Chinese while San Marcos/Escondido/Bernardo reported twelve.³⁷

Chinatown Emerges at the Turn of the Twentieth Century

By the turn of the century, San Diego’s Chinatown had declined from its population heyday ten years earlier, shrinking by more than half. In 1900 only 414 Chinese remained. This was a quiet time for Chinatown as the threats that the “Chinese Must Go” of the Chinese Exclusion Act era thirty years previous had faded away. Other legal restrictions were enacted such as the Geary Act of 1892 that required resident permits for the Chinese and made the Chinese immigrant restrictions permanent. The hostile environment further discouraged the Chinese, but immigrants continued to trickle back and forth, throughout the West and to San Diego. The Chinese Exclusion restrictions still permitted Chinese merchants to enter the U.S. and conduct business. San Diego’s Chinatown had been a bachelor society of male laborers, but a few merchants brought their wives to the United States, and so a few families began to populate Chinatown.

³⁶ U.S. Census 1900: Volume 2 Population, Part 2, Table 20.

³⁷ Judith Liu, “Celestials,” 58.

Chinese businesses operated successfully in the small Chinatown and they supported community efforts. The Hom family operated Woo Chee Chong Chinese merchandise store on Third Street, first opened in 1899, and they contributed one dollar to the city's 1901 Fourth of July celebration fundraiser, along with seventeen other Chinese businesses and donors.³⁸ Twenty-eight Chinese businesses were tallied in 1894 by John Lynch, of the U.S. Immigration Service. These businesses included groceries and general merchandise, restaurants, a lottery joint, and Chinese fancy goods. A county assessment list in 1896, compiled by Murray Lee, showed forty-seven Chinese businesses paying property taxes in amounts ranging from five dollars to eight-hundred and fifty dollars.³⁹

One of the most successful was Quon Mane who ran a popular Chinese merchandise store Quon Mane and Company.. He advertised in the newspapers on the same pages as J. Jessop and Sons Jewelers. He used slogans in a savvy Christmas ad such as "Wonderful Presents from the Land of Joss... Quon Mane Quotes the Lowest Price FIRST!"⁴⁰ Quon was born in the Hoiping district of Guangdong Province. He came to California in 1881 and worked as a houseboy for the mother of retailer George Marston. Mentored by Marston, he began importing and selling Oriental goods and products.⁴¹ Despite his success he was still subjected like all residents of Chinese heritage to discrimination and disparagement.

The transnational character of Chinatowns continued with political activism reaching from China and impacting San Diego. Local fundraising campaigns sprouted up to support the

³⁸ "Celebration Programme," *San Diego Weekly Union*, June 20, 1901, 6. Other Chinese donors and businesses that donated \$1.00 each were Yee Loy & Co, Wing On & Co, Ho Sow Tong, Sing Yick Chong, Hop Wo Chong, and Hong Far.

³⁹ Lee, *Gold Mountain*, 162-177.

⁴⁰ Quon Mane ad, *San Diego Union*, December 10, 1916, 15. In Chinese tradition, the family name is listed before the given name.

⁴¹ Lee, *Gold Mountain*, 185-186.

revolution against China's Qing dynasty. In 1911 the Chee Kung Tong occupied a key two story brick building at 428 Third Avenue. This tong was also known as the Chinese Free Masons, and the words "Masonic Building" at one time were displayed on the upper floor parapet. This group supported Dr. Sun Yat-sen's cause in the founding the Republic of China in 1911. ⁴²

The addition of a second generation in the Chinese community made up of Americans of Chinese descent was exemplified by the founding and growth of an association steeped in American pride and not wedded to Chinese traditions. This was the Native Sons of the Golden State (NSGS) founded in San Francisco in 1895. This fraternal organization fought for civil rights and against discrimination, worked to earn the respect of foreign-born Chinese, and promoted assimilation into American culture. Elements of their mission included "to fully enjoy and defend our American citizenship," "effect a higher character," and "practice the principles of Brotherly Love and mutual help."⁴³ San Diego's February 18, 1918 charter was announced by an unknown Chinese newspaper that "listed its first twenty-six officers and associates."⁴⁴ Other evidence suggests the parlor was active, but not chartered, in 1913. ⁴⁵ NSGS changed its name to Chinese American Citizens Alliance in 1915.⁴⁶

⁴² Lee, *Gold Mountain*, 217. For a review of Chinese community organizations in late 1900s, see Ying Zeng, "The diverse nature of San Diego's Chinese American Communities," *The Chinese in America: A History from Gold Mountain to the New Millennium*, Edited by Susie Lan Cassel, (Walnut Creek: Alta Mira Press, 2002).

⁴³ Sue Fawn Chung, "Fighting for Their American Rights: A History of the Chinese American Citizens Alliance," *Claiming America*, ed. K. Scott Wong, Sucheng Chan (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998), 97-99. NSGS, composed of U.S. born Americans of Chinese descent, purposely modeled their organization structure after the 19th century Native Sons of the Golden West (NSGW). NSGW was composed of U.S. born Americans of European descent that championed Euro-American ideals and nativist causes at the time.

⁴⁴ Suellen Cheng, "San Diego CACA Lodge History from archives," email January 29, 2020, to author, San Diego Chinese Historical Museum. Suellen Cheng is CACA Grand Lodge Historian emeritus. A newspaper clipping image is included, but the source is not known. Stanford University Libraries is indexing the CACA Grand Lodge collection.

⁴⁵ Lee, *Gold Mountain*, 211.

⁴⁶ Chinese American Citizens Alliance website, Accessed October 5, 2019, <http://www.cacanational.org/htmlPages/history.html>

Protestant churches organized the California Chinese Mission to convert the state's Chinese as early as 1870. Presbyterian, Methodist, Episcopal, and Baptist missionaries and mission schools competed to uplift and convert the Chinese to teach their brand of Christianity and teach them English. Lee Hong convinced the superintendent of the California Chinese Mission, William Pond, to set up a San Diego Chinese Mission School in 1885 under the First Congregational Church. San Diego leader and merchant George Marston supported the effort. Marston hosted the Chinese Mission School on land he owned at 645 First Street. A dormitory in the back rented rooms for five dollars per month. William Pond lauded superintendent Margaret Fanton in 1912: "Our Chinese Mission here has never been in better hands than now. It is making way against a hardened mass of Chinese superstition and wickedness."⁴⁷ Even concerned white religious leaders considered the Chinese as lesser beings and in need of guidance and salvation.

From 1900 to 1910, the Chinese population in San Diego grew slightly from 404 to 480. The city's population more than doubled rising from 17,700 to 38,578, reflecting the shrinking size of an already small Chinatown. San Diego's Chinese population still participated in the 1915 Panama-California Exposition but were affected for the worse by the chain of events during the exposition's development.

⁴⁷ Karl Fung, *The Dragon Pilgrims: A Historical Study of a Chinese-American Church* (South Hill WA: Providence Press (1989), 23-32. In 1907 the state-wide California Chinese Mission was changed to the California Chinese and Japanese Mission to reflect the increasing outreach to the Japanese.

Origins of 1915 Exposition

Planning for the Panama-California Exposition (PCE) began in 1909 with an audacious dream to promote San Diego as the closest American port to the newly opened Panama Canal. San Diego leaders eagerly anticipated that access to Panama trade would announce the city's arrival to the world. The San Diego Chamber of Commerce and the tiny City of San Diego bravely took on the preeminent American west coast city, San Francisco, which was proposing its own Panama Pacific International Exposition (PPIE) also for 1915.⁴⁸

During the planning stages San Francisco earned congressional and federal recognition first, and hence the exclusive right to invite the nations of the world to its exposition. San Diego organizers accepted a lesser deal to host a regional exposition with a narrower scope. They continued to push for federal support and eventually succeeded securing some in spite of San Francisco opposition. San Diego's expo planners eagerly sought some kind of international exposure, despite having been thwarted by San Francisco. The San Diego exposition, titled the Panama-California Exposition, focused on the anthropological themes of the American Southwest and Latin America and on a "synopsis of man's evolution through a demonstration of the myriad processes which mark the present acme of civilization, and embody the history of man."⁴⁹ Many in society believed in eugenics and improving American European racial stock and that primitive societies were to be viewed as curiosities. The anthropology exhibit later evolved into the Museum of Man.⁵⁰ San Diego's exposition became the nucleus for the

⁴⁸ Robert W. Rydell, *All the World's a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Exposition, 1876-1916* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984) 209-219.

⁴⁹ Robert Rydell, 217.

⁵⁰ Bokovoy, *San Diego World's Fairs*, 78-80. The lead scientist of PCE's anthropology exhibit, Dr. Ales Hrdlicka, "lamented [how certain genetic theories] had been enlisted to justify Euro-American ideologies of Aryan racial supremacy."

nationally known city park in Balboa Park.⁵¹ But before the exposition could open to the world, city leaders decided that something had to be done about the squalor along the waterfront, the red-light district, and Chinatown.

Clean up and impact

During the Progressive Era, from 1890 to 1920, Americans tackled the problems stemming from urbanization, industrialization, excessive capitalism, immorality, and political corruption. One of the areas of attention was in sanitation and public health.

In San Diego, leaders were concerned with an opium problem, which they believed was sold and abused primarily in Chinatown. The city brought in Fred C. Boden, an inspector from the California State Board of pharmacy in 1911 to tackle opium addiction. The *San Diego Union* announced that “Boden and a force of San Diego officers turned Chinatown upside down Saturday night; yesterday they turned the Celestials quarter inside-out.” The article detailed “38 cans of opium were found, each containing five taels of opium, and a Chinese tael is equivalent to about one-quarter pound.” The reporter used the term “Celestial” as a disparaging term for a Chinese immigrant. He described intriguing dark hidden passageways, the tale of an inspector who forced his way into a room but wrecked a chimney instead, and how opium was cleverly packed inside of lemons. The reporter enticed readers with language such as “these [opium in lemons] are really works of art and show the craftiness and skill of the ‘Heathen Chinese’.” He highlighted the “foreign” and irreligious nature of the targets by describing:

⁵¹ The Panama-California Exposition’s animal collection evolved into the world-famous San Diego Zoo.

In one place the officers would be ransacking and turning things topsy turvey, while next door, perhaps, a New Year's celebration was going on full blast. The search yesterday was conducted to the monotonous beat of tom-toms and the discordant tones of Chinese instruments.⁵²

Both white and Chinese users were caught in the raids. The reporter included the arrests of Rica Bowman "a women of the underworld," Dr. E. L. Reyber, the detention of four white men, and ten Chinese men. The white arrestees were listed by name, whereas the Chinese were seen as anonymous sub-humans, not worthy of public shame, and reflected the racism against the Chinese at the time.

The city pursued the clean-up to revitalize the buildings and infrastructure, in particular the Stingaree and Chinatown. Much of this fell to Walter Bellon who was hired as a health inspector in 1910.⁵³ Bellon's responsibilities included acting as an inspector of plumbing, incinerators, tenements, and general health conditions. He inspected hundreds of buildings in Chinatown and city-wide in a quest to clean up the city's worst sanitation and housing conditions. As a result, he ordered many buildings to be demolished.⁵⁴ He achieved notoriety by being the public face of the sanitation effort and being amenable to reporters' requests for interviews.

In October 1914 Bellon reported to the President of the Public Welfare Commission Cora Carleton that 947 buildings were inspected which included 595 tenement houses, twenty- eight hotels, and 240 lodgings and buildings. Bellon further stated that 7,762 "nuisances" (sanitation or safety problems) were abated, which included 4,363 written notices and about 3,400 verbal

⁵² \$2,000 Worth of Opium found; Raiders terrorize Chinatown," *San Diego Union*, January 30, 1911, page 18.

⁵³ San Diego History Center Archives, Bellon Collection MS10, <https://sandiegohistory.org/archives/archivalcollections/ms10/>, Accessed April 21, 2020. Bellon would become Chair of the County Board of Supervisors in 1937, 1941, and 1942.

⁵⁴ Elizabeth MacPhail, "Shady Ladies" 2-3.

notices.⁵⁵ The reporter wrote that “according to Bellon, when he started tenement inspections [some buildings] were unfit for swine, much less humans. Particularly was this true where many Mexicans and other foreigners inhabited small rooms in rumbled down buildings.” In a *San Diego Union* article entitled “Chinatown Violates Lodging House Act Says City Inspector,” Bellon declared in August of 1914: “Were it not for the fact that there are no other quarters for the Chinese to go, many of the buildings probably would be condemned.”⁵⁶

Still, almost sixty buildings were targeted for removal in and around Chinatown and the local newspapers covered those efforts. One article with the title of “Chinese Prove Health Dept. Problem” quoted Bellon: “People have been crying to clean up the waterfront. We did it. ... Then they wanted a clean Chinatown. We are cleaning that up and next we intend to shoot right through town and clean it all up.” This article that named five white owners and one Chinese owner whose buildings were noticed (G. W. Hazzard, Louis Londt, F. Ganteraux, C.P. Berger, S. W. Crum, and Quong Yee Wo) indicated the substandard living conditions were driven mainly by white owners.⁵⁷ Another article insulted the Chinese about their building construction: “described as vest pocket editions, which have been made ‘collapsible’ by sturdy little chaps who have not yet the strength to wield a hammer and drive tacks straight.”⁵⁸ The article titles and dismissive wording offered proof of the continued hostility against the Chinese.

Bellon did make some positive comments about the Chinese. In an *Evening Tribune* article, he stated “Many of these families are very good Chinese... and we don’t know what to do with them.”⁵⁹ As the building removals took effect, both he and the *San Diego Union* noted

⁵⁵ “Lodging House Conditions Better,” *Evening Tribune*, October 6, 1914, 3.

⁵⁶ “Chinatown Violates Lodging House Act,” *San Diego Union*, August 28, 1914, section 2, 1.

⁵⁷ “Chinese Prove Health Dept. Problem,” *San Diego Evening Tribune*, October 5, 1915, 1.

⁵⁸ “Six Stables in Chinatown Go,” *Evening Tribune*, September 29, 1915, 3.

⁵⁹ “Chinese Prove,” *Evening Tribune*, October 5, 1915, 1.

that the Chinese residents had built homes for their elderly. In 1915, Bellon commented “They are more charitable than many of our charitable institutions. They take religious care of their old folks and of the feeble.”⁶⁰ In an interview done years later, he complimented a Chinese butcher saying “This Chinaman had a kind heart, and we became good friends. He also owned a small ranch in Mission Valley, a vegetable route, and sold lottery tickets about town too. He was within the law, considered a good businessman of modest means.”⁶¹ Bellon was more tolerant than most, but he was still patronizing towards the Chinese.

Chinatown did indeed have its problems. Addiction in the Chinese and white communities was a common problem. Many Chinese lived in unsanitary conditions caused by problematic white-owned tenement housing and poverty. The Chinese were forced into geographically segregated areas and locked into poverty by employment discrimination. The fact that many Chinese and their few families lived respectable lives was overlooked. However, as noted earlier, the sensationalist writings and attitudes of the time exaggerated the problems of the Chinese and would be reflected at the upcoming exposition.

⁶⁰ “New Chinatown Developing Following Demolition; Poor to have Home,” *San Diego Union*, October 23, 1915.

⁶¹ Walter Bellon collection MS10, San Diego History Center Archives. Reprinted in Lee, *Gold Mountain*, 117-118

The 1915 Exposition

Inspired by the opening of the Panama Canal, San Diego's City Park was renamed Balboa Park in 1910 to honor of the first European explorer to "discover" the Pacific Ocean, Vasco Nunez de Balboa. Four iconic permanent buildings, California Building (which includes the California Tower), Botanical Building, Puente Cabrillo (Cabrillo Bridge), and the Organ Pavilion, were constructed along with many temporary buildings that highlighted southwest, Spanish Colonial, and Latin America themes as well as the business opportunities of the Panama Canal and the West.⁶²

Exposition planners made clear their priority was to establish a new urban identity for the city. Balboa Park's building complex was a "city on the hill" that stood on the central mesa, overshadowing the attempts to highlight the park's natural beauty. Spanish colonial architecture in New Spain and Mexico inspired architect Bertram Goodhue who designed the buildings. An amalgamation of Spanish, Mexican, Amerindian, and Latin America designs resulted.⁶³ The theme of anthropology, or the science of man, became the distinctive theme for this exposition as a way to legitimize San Diego's world's fair.⁶⁴

⁶² Richard Amero, *Journal of San Diego History* (<https://sandiegohistory.org/journal/1990/january/expo/>, Accessed September 10, 2019. For a substantial digital history project about Balboa Park, the 1915, and 1935 expositions, see Jonathon Bechtol's project <https://public.csusm.edu/becht004/index.html>, Accessed September 10, 2019.

⁶³ Bokovoy, *San Diego World's Fairs*, 200.

⁶⁴ Robert W. Rydell, John E. Findling, and Kimberly D. Pelle, *World's Fairs in the United States* (Washington DC. Smithsonian Institution Press, 2000) 68-71.

Fairgoers also needed to be fed and entertained. Reporter Mary S. Gulliver from the *Los Angeles Times* contrasted the buildings and exhibitions with the Isthmus fun zone. She stated:

So much has been said and written about the peace and beauty of the architecture and grounds ... that one might be led to believe that the San Diego exposition is all 'highbrow.' Nothing of the sort, for it is the Isthmus, the long amusement street, with its gaiety and laughter, its varied concessions and their 'speilers,' that completes the big fair, and with its noise and carefree spirit.⁶⁵

The "fun zone" at the 1915 exposition was called the Isthmus, in honor of the Isthmus of Panama. The zone housed the Alhambra cafeteria, "German Rotisserie," a Spanish restaurant, orange juice and ice cream stands, and many other concessions to feed the masses. Café Cristobol hosted elegant dining and banquets. Attractions such as the "Panama Canal," "Racing Coaster," "Hawaiian Village," "Japanese Streets of Joy" (a Japanese company's concession), and "Neptune's Wonderland" (a sea life attraction) entertained fairgoers. The "Painted Desert of the Santa Fe" displayed Native American families brought from New Mexico to represent the Native Americans in their native surroundings. This village was designed by the Fred Harvey Company, which ran hotels and restaurants along the railroad lines in the west in the late 1800s to the mid 1900s. These Native American families performed purportedly traditional rituals and elaborate dances. Some were authentic but others were designed for the fair-goers' romanticized expectations. The fact this concession, which was profit-driven, was in the Isthmus, and not in the "formal" exhibition grounds, signaled its intent for amusement and entertainment.⁶⁶ Among the other concessions was "Underground Chinatown."

⁶⁵ Mary Gulliver, "Fun on the Isthmus Feature of the Fair," *Los Angeles Times*, April 11, 1915, VII.

⁶⁶ Bokovoy, *San Diego's World's Fairs*, 200-202.

Chinese Representation

During the exposition planning, San Diego's Chinese businessmen strived to be supportive community citizens, even though legislation prevented them from being U.S. citizens. In 1910 the *San Diego Union* announced that seven-hundred dollars was contributed by four Chinese businessmen: Tom Bong three hundred dollars, and Fond King, Hom Haw, and Quon Fun each gave one hundred and fifty dollars to the exposition fund. The article also continued with a jab at the "alien" supporters with an unreadable name: "Each ... signed his name in hieroglyphics that resembled the lettering on a tea box..." An unnamed source stated that additional "sons of Peking" would be forthcoming to support the exposition.⁶⁷

The new Republic of China, formed in 1911, demonstrated its interest in the Panama-California Exposition. A business delegation from China came to San Diego and was feted at a dinner at the Cristobal Café by exposition vice president Frank J. Belcher and Mayor Edwin M. Capps. David Z. T. Yui spoke on behalf of the delegation: "We come to America ... to learn of your wonderful enterprise, your wonderful fellowship, your feeling of brotherly love, your hospitality, and your strides in industry, science, education, that we may mould [sic] a second great republic..."⁶⁸ A bronze plaque commemorated the PCE visit. The plaque stated in part:

Presented by the Chinese Commercial Commission to San Diego Chamber of Commerce in appreciation of the courtesy shown to them on their tour of the United States in the year of nineteen hundred and fifteen by Chen Hsun Chang President, Chi Chich Nieh Vice President.

The plaque bore images of the flags of the U.S. and the Republic of China alongside important images representing each country: an elegant Chinese incense burner and the American Liberty

⁶⁷ "Chinese Subscribe Exposition Money," *San Diego Union*, February 3, 1910, 8.

⁶⁸ "Big Brother Across Sea Charms Chinese," *San Diego Union*, May 12, 1915, 3.

Bell.⁶⁹ The complimentary wording of the speech and the plaque indicated China's strong interest in building beneficial trade and relationships as a fellow republic.

However China's presence at and influence over the 1915 PPIE in San Francisco was greater than in San Diego. The U.S. government officially invited countries to participate in the PPIE. The Chinese government funded and built a 100,000 square foot educational Chinese Village that included representations of the Imperial Palace. Chinese exhibitions in PPIE's Palace of Education and Palace of Transportation signaled China's efforts to present itself as a modern country.⁷⁰

The Chinese were represented at San Diego's Panama-California Exposition in three ways. The Chinese New Year celebration at the Isthmus, to be discussed later, was enjoyed by many. A Japanese company Kyosen Kai ran one Chinese exhibit area along with seven Japanese exhibition booths in the Foreign and Domestic Arts Building.⁷¹ In this one building, the emphasis was on the unique industries not only of Japan but also Asia. Little is known about the Chinese products or portrayals in this exhibition hall but their incorporation was clearly marginal.

The third Chinese representation at the PCE was the financially successful but salacious attraction "Underground Chinatown," one of the key entertainment features of the Isthmus.⁷²

See Figure 4 in the Appendix for a map of 1915-1916 Chinese representation. The concession

⁶⁹ Chinese Commercial Commission plaque 1915, San Diego Chinese Historical Museum. On display at the museum as of December 2019

⁷⁰ Abigail Markwyn, *Empress San Francisco*, 134.

⁷¹ Official Guidebook of the Panama-California Exposition San Diego 1915 (San Diego: Panama-California Exposition Commission, 1914), 51, <https://archive.org/details/officialguideboo00pana/mode/2up>, Accessed December 27, 2019.

⁷² Robert Rydell, *All the World's a Fair*. Attractions representing mysterious China were popular as social entertainment in the late 1800s and early 1900s. As early as 1897, the Tennessee Centennial and International Exposition in Nashville sent out a contingent from the "Chinese Village" on a promotional train to advertise.

fed the prurient interests of the white exposition visitors, and underscored the perception of Chinatowns, and San Diego by inference, as dirty vice-filled spaces. An elaborate faux Chinese gate brashly announced the attraction to Isthmus visitors. Measuring the equivalent of three stories, two fancy four tiered pagodas anchored both sides of the attraction. Four massive poles with mounted dragon heads held up a Chinese roofed gate and stylized Chinese electric-driven lettering that announced “Underground Chinatown.” A Chinese theatre was built into the complex. A diminutive ticket booth in the center advertised admission of ten cents.

Just beyond the ticket booth was a “typical” Chinatown street, featuring a joss house (temple), a Chinese merchandise store, a rickshaw or cart, a produce stand and the “Sing [sic] & Co.” laundry.⁷³ Wretched opium smokers, cunning gamblers, and a slave prostitute girl were portrayed by wax figures. These were all stereotyped representations of the Chinese. Visitors walked through a mysterious maze of dingy wood-paneled stairwells designed to confuse. A 1916 photograph showed one room with two Chinese men drinking alcohol, a white male, and a white policeman with a gun drawn. A shadowy figure lurks behind bars in the back. The Chinese men were likely wax figures. The two white men may have been wax figures also, or the photograph was staged. In any case, the attraction implied Chinatown was filled with vice.⁷⁴

⁷³ Underground Chinatown street scene, 1915 California-Panama Exposition, San Diego History Center Archives, 90:18258.

⁷⁴ Underground Chinatown room scene, 1915 California-Panama Exposition, San Diego History Center Archives, 90.



CHINATOWN

This is not a fair representation of the Chinese people in America. It is an interesting representation by wax figures, of habits and practices once in vogue in a well known Coast city. While "a good show for the money," one's natural thought is that of thankfulness that what it represents has largely passed away.

Figure 1. "Underground Chinatown" attraction ⁷⁵

The *San Diego Examiner* newspaper in its sensational tone described the sordid version of "Underground Chinatown:"

We enter the wily celestials domain, and the moment the pagoda gates [open] with their welcoming electric twinkle, we invade another world...
 ... the reiterative beat of brazen gong blend naturally with the guttural jargon that immediately assails our ears. From half-opened door and barred window we catch the full flavor of John Chinaman's street.
 ... down these crippled stairs a cobbler bends to his trade; from that grilled window, scarcely a foot square, there peeks out an almond-eyed slave girl... ...
 Now for the opium den. Note the dealer rolling the 'pill,' see that twitching browed fellow on the upper bunk who is just succumbing to the cheating influence of the mad drug...
 ...Just watch the face of that cunning dealer whose features are set to meaningless solidity as he counts out gains and losses. Fan-tan players next invite attention

⁷⁵ *Exposition Beautiful* (San Diego: Pictorial Publishing Company, 1915), p 77, Google Books (Accessed February 02, 2020).

with their native decks of cards, their strange system of counting and their stolidity of countenance also.⁷⁶

An exposition brochure in the *San Diego Examiner* further painted a seedy tale that revealed the attitudes of foreign-ness, vice, and trickery:

Then underground, did you say? To the rattle of oriental tom-tom and the squeak of the flageolet you enter a string in Chinatown, pass the 'Mayor's Office', scent the incense of the joss house, then descend to the murky but fascinating gloom of the earth's bowels where you are made 'hep' [sic] to 'ways that are dark and tricks that are vain.'⁷⁷

The "Mayor's office" referenced the era's common practice of having an unofficial mayor to speak for the Chinese community.

The real story of the attraction's origin and organizers is not clear. In a March 1918 *Billboard* notice, W.B. Adams stated he created "Underground Chinatown" in San Diego, and it was affiliated with Johnny J. Jones Expositions for the 1918 season.⁷⁸ Challenging that, Fred C. Wolfe claimed in *Billboard* in May 1918 that he created "Underground Chinatown" in Redondo Beach in 1913. The next year he took the same attraction to Venice, California. The firm Southern California Amusements then formed in 1914 to prepare for the San Diego exposition. Wolfe, a promoter with an eye towards attendance and profit, claimed he took "Underground Chinatown" to San Diego and then built a similar attraction at the San Francisco PPIE.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ "Underground Chinatown," *San Diego Examiner*, January 29, 1915, 4. This is on microfilm at the San Diego Central Public Library. For a complete transcript of this article, see Murray Lee's *In Search of Gold Mountain*, 247-248.

⁷⁷ *San Diego Examiner*, January 1, 1915, 2.

⁷⁸ "Original Underground Chinatown," *Billboard*, March 6, 1918.

⁷⁹ Fred Wolfe, "Underground Chinatown," *Billboard*, May 11, 1918.

A third claim arose in a 1938 *Billboard* magazine article, that attributed “Underground Chinatown” to Sid Grauman, the celebrated early 1900s movie theatre developer and promoter. Grauman’s attraction had “opium smoking dens, slavery, and other morbid things.”⁸⁰ To add to the debate underscoring Grauman’s participation, historian Robert Rydell argues that Sid Grauman and Chinese businessman Kee Owyang produced the San Francisco “Underground Chinatown” and that Owyang was involved with other Chinese attractions at expositions. However, Rydell does not cite the sources for his information on the San Diego’s attraction.⁸¹

What is certain is that Art Phillips, a local actor, managed San Diego’s “Underground Chinatown.” His claim to fame was his comedic vaudeville Chinese monologue act in yellowface. White performances in yellow-face, using make-up to imitate a Chinese or Asian character, was a popular entertainment form at this time and was similar to the insulting black-face minstrel tradition. His act was a common demeaning presentation of the Chinese. Phillips was lauded by the *San Diego Union* for a non-exposition benefit show with “A genuine comedy treat will be given by Art Phillips, manager of ‘Underground Chinatown’ at the exposition, when he gives his Chinese monologue.”

⁸⁰ “Chinatown” *Billboard*, 1938. The article stated “attractions were moved [from PPIE] to San Diego, where Sid Grauman, now owner of the Grauman’s Chinese Theatre in Hollywood, had Underground Chinatown, an exhibit showing opium smoking dens, slavery, and other morbid things.” Henry Seber was a manager whose task was to run the \$350,000 San Diego Panama Canal exhibit profitably. Seber also ran attractions at the San Francisco’s 1915 PPIE.

⁸¹ Rydell, *All the World’s a Fair*, 217.



Figure 2: Art Phillips featuring his Chinese Monologues act ⁸²

The paper featured a photograph, shown above in Figure 2, of Art Phillips squatting and grinning in yellow-face and Chinese-like attire. The article further remarked “Those who have heard Phillips when he was doing vaudeville time say that this act is the most hilariously funny of any act of its kind.”⁸³ He managed and performed at the attraction and was widely known for his “Chinese monologues,” being a “live wire” on the Isthmus and as an “entertainer of rare ability.”⁸⁴

The attraction was heavily advertised as a key feature of the Exposition. Newspaper ads proclaimed “Underground Chinatown The Greatest Novelty Show on the Isthmus.” These ads ran alongside ads for the “War of the Worlds” attraction, the Alhambra Cafeteria, Levy’s

⁸² “Excellent Bill arranged for Benefit,” *San Diego Union*, March 4, 1915, S2, 1.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ “Chinatown Manager Leaves Exposition,” *San Diego Union*, March 6, 1915, s2, 1.

Cristobol Café featuring fifty cent luncheons, and the “Pala Chief Gem Mine.”⁸⁵ Following a heavy rain and flood, Phillips directed a Chinese employee to declare there had been a drowning in Underground Chinatown. According to the *San Diego Union Tribune*: “Phillips, ... dispatched the wild-eyed Chinese over the Isthmus for help... the messenger soon assembled a curious crowd... they were passed in, one at a time for 10 cents each.” The “bodies” were in fact wax figures in eighteen inches of water due to the heavy rain.⁸⁶ The end result was a nice boost in admissions at the expense of the Chinese.

San Francisco’s 1915 PPIE featured a similar denigrating “Underground Chinatown” in their amusement zone and roused criticism from the Republic of China. The Chinese Consul complained to fair officials, as did the San Francisco Chinese community. Robert Rydell asserts the threat of a trade fallout with populous China convinced the fair organizers to revise the attraction. The Chinese government had funded and built a separate “Chinese Village” on the main grounds as a trade and education exhibition. They threatened to shut down the village unless some action was taken about “Underground Chinatown.”⁸⁷ “Underground Chinatown” was reluctantly suspended then re-imagined as “Underground Slumming.” But the similarities between the old and new PPIE “Underground” attractions remained.⁸⁸

The San Diego Chinese community likely objected to the insulting portrayal of the Chinese and Chinatown. Though few in number relative to San Francisco, they still had the

⁸⁵ “Gleaned on the Prado and Isthmus,” *San Diego Union*, January 24, 1915, 9.

⁸⁶ “Gleaned on the Prado,” *San Diego Union*, January 24, 1915, 9. Phillips appeared to succeed with his Chinese character for many years. In the 1924 play “Defying the Law” at the Hippodrome in Los Angeles, Art Phillips headed up the vaudeville. The play was “a tense melodramatic story of love and hate... tells the story of Peitro Savori, a struggling young artist, who falls under the influence of Dr. Chong Foo, a crafty Chinese, who is engaged in the business of smuggling Chinese into this country.” “Story of Love and Hate,” *Los Angeles Times*, September 14, 1924 part III, page 27.

⁸⁷ Rydell, *All the World’s a Fair*, 200.

⁸⁸ Abigail Markwyn, *Empress of San Francisco*, 136-138.

backing of the Chinese government. On April 2, 1915 the *Evening Tribune* reported the Chinese Consul was preparing a formal protest against “Underground Chinatown.” Director General H.O. Davis was aware of the rumor but told the press that “no formal demand had been made by the consul general or any Chinese association.” He added: “No request has been made and I do not know what action will be taken if we are asked to close ‘Underground Chinatown.’” The article further noted the attraction’s initial popularity and that word of the pending protest against the exhibit had resulted in even larger attendance.⁸⁹

Mary Gulliver’s *Los Angeles Times* report on April 11, 1915 revealed more about the concession and controversy. She was fascinated with the mysterious “Underground Chinatown” with its “Chinese inscriptions and names on the doors,” the joss house on the Chinatown street, the sleeping quarters and opium and gambling dens. She also noted “So realistic are the wax figures and illusions that the Chinese government is taking steps to have the concession closed as they consider it an aspersion on Chinese customs and life.” She recounted a Chinese theatrical troop of eight came to perform but left when they heard about the Chinese government’s planned protest.⁹⁰

However change was already underway at “Underground Chinatown.” On March 6, 1915 the *San Diego Union* announced: “Chinatown Manager Leaves Exposition.” The article lamented Art Phillips departure noting he was one of the “live wires” of the Isthmus and that there was “no more popular manager.” The article did not mention unfair treatment of the Chinese, any objections from Chinese San Diegans, or the pending rumors of protest by the Chinese Consul.⁹¹ On April 18, 1915 the *Union* stated that the attraction “has added some new

⁸⁹ “Chinatown may be lost to Isthmus,” *San Diego Evening Tribune*, April 2, 1915, 6.

⁹⁰ Mary Gulliver, “Fun on the Isthmus.”

⁹¹ “Chinatown Manager Leaves Exposition,” *San Diego Union*, March 6, 1915, section 2, 1.

features the past week...” and “to the Easterner the life of the Chinese as here shown is very instructive and entertaining.”⁹² When the *San Diego Union* covered the visit by the Chinese Commercial Commission on May 11, 1915, the article noted the visitors were taken on a tour of two buildings and “the Isthmus, visiting the principal amusement places and apparently enjoying themselves greatly.” The article is silent on “Underground Chinatown” but it would seem unlikely that the delegates were unaware of the exhibit.

Although the concession was not renamed, as it had been in San Francisco, the departure of Art Phillips suggested that “Underground Chinatown” had undergone some form of revision, the degree to which remained unclear. What was clear, however, was that organizers responded to the controversy over the attraction by altering its publicity. The 1915 pictorial book *Exposition Beautiful*, speaking as the voice of fair management, displayed an “Underground Chinatown” photograph with this caption:

This is not a fair representation of the Chinese people in America. It is an interesting representation by wax figures, of habits and practices once in vogue in a well-known Coast city. While a good show for the money, 'one's natural thought is that of thankfulness that what it represents has largely passed away.⁹³

With this response, the objections of the Chinese Consul were only superficially addressed by the exposition's management. In the end for 1915, local Chinese influence and numbers were much smaller than in San Francisco. San Francisco's Chinese trade overshadowed San Diego's. San Diego's “Underground Chinatown” remained open through 1915 despite the protests.

The PCE organizers did make adjustments for the 1916 season. The San Diego concession was re-branded as “Underground World” and used elements from PPIE's version,

⁹² “Gleaned from the Prado and Isthmus,” *San Diego Union*, April 18, 1915, 10.

⁹³ *Exposition Beautiful*, 77. This is displayed as Figure 1 earlier.

which closed at the end of 1915. The concession still traded on the mystic of “Underground Chinatown.” A *San Diego Union* advertisement read “Underground World Combining the features of P.P.I.E. Underground Slumming and underground Chinatown showing the true life of the underworld.”⁹⁴

In spite of “Underground Chinatown,” the Chinese community attended the exposition. A 1915 photo shows an important family of the time, the Hom/Seid family riding on a rattan electriquette - a unique battery powered riding cart.⁹⁵ The community came out for the Chinese New Year celebrations at the exposition that ran from February 12 through February 14, 1915. Chinese organizations and residents from around the state attended the celebration, on the invitation and encouragement of Quon Mane, the leading Chinese businessman and the unofficial mayor of Chinatown.⁹⁶ Quon organized the performers for the main event and invited the Chinese from around the state. At least one train was booked to bring Chinese visitors in from Los Angeles.⁹⁷

But there was a disappointing side to the exposition’s Chinese New Year celebration. The Chinese and this Chinese holiday were used by the exposition planners to stage a blowout event to bring in more fairgoers. The theme of slumming at the “exotic” Chinese celebration was evident in the advertising. The main dragon performance was used to bring more attention to “Underground Chinatown.” The location of the Chinese New Year performances was the Isthmus fun zone, not the Organ Pavilion where large gatherings and “respectable” events took

⁹⁴ “Underground World” advertisement, *San Diego Union*, March 18, 1916.

⁹⁵ Seid 1915 Exposition and electriquette family photo, Courtesy of David Seid, President, House of China. The photo has comments denoting adults “dad,” “mom,” and “aunt Lillian,” and children under around five years old: “Pearl,” “Freeman,” and “me.”

⁹⁶ “Chinese plan to celebrate at Expo,” *San Diego Evening Tribune*, February 4, 1915. Ah Quin, the former unofficial mayor of San Diego’s Chinatown, passed in 1914.

⁹⁷ “Big Time Planned by Local Chinese,” *San Diego Sun*, February 4, 1915, 7. San Diego History Center Archives collection.

place. By setting the celebration in the fun zone, the primary audience for this celebration was not the Chinese community. The Chinese performers and visitors became part of the attraction. The true audiences were the fair visitors from the general community, as shown by the following newspaper coverage.

The *Evening Tribune* stoked the celebration's publicity efforts by evoking fun, titillation, and mystery in its description of the celebration:

Plans are well in hand... to a grand climax at that mystic time. "The Hour of the Rat," which Chinese custom declares to be the time when the lid is off. Every Chinese organization of standing in the state will be represented in the celebration. Chinese bands will furnish weird music for native dances. Already an excursion has been arranged to bring Chinese from Los Angeles and its contiguous territory. In a merry whirl will go on the exposition of the unusual celebration. How Chinese live, how they eat, how they make love, how they gamble, how they conduct their courts and in fact every custom of the country will be shown. The highlight of the show featured an expensive \$15,000 Chinese performance dragon from out of town.⁹⁸

The language of the article exoticized and diminished the Chinese community. The reporter teased the reader with phrasing like "how the Chinese live, how they eat, how they make love." The reference for "how they conduct their courts" reflected how Chinese communities were internally self-governed, addressing their disputes as independently as possible. The *San Diego Sun* stated "The quaint customs of the Flowery Kingdom, the mystic beliefs and creeds, the wierd [sic] celebrations and strange observances of traditional history will be blended into a kaleidoscopic review of color and activity..."⁹⁹

After a night of raucous partying, the *San Diego Union* described the atmosphere:

They came early and remained late. The lid was off. This morning there are many who doubtless have a dark brown recollection of the

⁹⁸ "Chinese Plan," *Evening Tribune*, February 4, 1915.

⁹⁹ "Big Time Planned by Local Chinese," *San Diego Sun*, February 4, 1915, p7. San Diego History Center Archives collection.

night before. Weird strains from Canton and Peking will haunt them. The pungent odor of incense will choke their nostrils. It was a great night, this opening of the Chinese New Year celebration on the Isthmus and was attended by a crowd of 10,000 or 12,000 people.¹⁰⁰

The *Union* continued with its description of the celebration as an exotic event for Americans to celebrate at and gape at:

Last night's celebration of Chinese New Year, ... furnished features galore for American spectators. To these quaint ceremonies of the Orientals were interesting... intently watched by a crowd declared to be the largest attending the Exposition since its opening night. ... "Promptly at 8 o' clock the door of the dragon's abode in Underground Chinatown [sic] was swung open. The monstrous head, vari-colored and terrifying, peered through the opening."¹⁰¹

There was yet another negative representation of the Chinese at the exposition.

Embedded in the widely advertised "War of the Worlds" attraction in the Isthmus was the representation of the Chinese as one of the enemies attacking New York City as part of an elaborate battle performance within a massive three-story structure. The fighting featured imagined interplanetary communication, an alliance of nations from the Orient and Africa, naval and air battles surrounding New York City, which were all initiated by a treacherous adventurer named Rabinoff.¹⁰² Commentary provided a link to the Chinese: "...War of the Worlds, a spectacular performance depicting the destruction of New York in the year 2000 by superbombs. The destroyers were men from China, become a world power, allied with Negroes from African republics."¹⁰³ The audience appeal was a technological Armageddon by non-white enemies.

¹⁰⁰ "Thousands see Chinese Celebration," *San Diego Union*, February 14, 1915, 1.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid*, 3.

¹⁰² "Balboa Park History January – June 1915," Amero Collection, San Diego History Center Archives, <https://sandiegohistory.org/archives/amero/balboapark/bp1915/>, Accessed October 15, 2019.

¹⁰³ "Raymenton," "Balboa Park History – 1936," Amero Collection, San Diego History Center Archives, <https://sandiegohistory.org/archives/amero/balboapark/bp1936/>, Accessed October 15, 2019.

While this attraction was developed as a profitmaking venture, the promoters eventually declared bankruptcy.¹⁰⁴

The Panama-California Exposition's emphasis on Latin American and the opportunities of the Panama Canal were the underpinnings of the exhibitions built on education, trade, and business focused on the Pacific rim. However, in the Isthmus fun zone, education and science took a back seat to fun and exploitation, so the disparaging treatment of the Chinese took on a prominent role. But that did not stop this exposition from being a success.

As 1915 came to a close, the tenement clean-up of Chinatown continued from efforts started a couple of years earlier. Two million visitors paid for admission to the exposition, although military personnel were not included in the count. The exposition was so successful that the organizers re-opened it as the Panama-California International Exposition (PCIE) for 1916. Some of the international exhibits at the San Francisco Panama-Pacific International Exposition were shipped to San Diego, so San Diego could now better claim the "International" moniker. An additional 1.7 million attended the second year for a total attendance of 3.7 million. A three-month closing run in 1917 allowed San Diegans to enjoy the remnants of their World's Fair.¹⁰⁵ After closing, the sullied representation of "Underground Chinatown" and the Chinese then faded away. The small San Diego Chinatown returned to its quiet existence in a forgotten and segregated corner of downtown San Diego.

¹⁰⁴ "Balboa Park History – 1936," Amero Collection, San Diego History Center Archives, <https://sandiegohistory.org/archives/amero/balboapark/bp1917/>, Accessed November 4, 2019. Promoters requested a \$18,167 advance from exposition planners but declared bankruptcy as recorded in a 1917 auditor report.

¹⁰⁵ "Balboa Park History 1917," Amero Collection, San Diego History Center Archives, <https://sandiegohistory.org/archives/amero/balboapark/bp1917/>, Accessed November 10, 2019.

San Diego Chinese between the Expositions

After the 1915-1916 exposition, the Chinese community continued to forge ahead building businesses and organizations as families began to grow. The Chinese Exclusion era continued to limit the immigration of Chinese within the United States and locally. The 1920 Census reported a shrinking number of Chinese in the city of San Diego: the population totaled 254 which included 217 men and 37 women. This was down from 348 Chinese in the city in 1910.¹⁰⁶ Historian Murray Lee analyzed the eight-block area roughly known as “Chinatown,” using this 1920 census.¹⁰⁷ Of the children recorded as Chinese there were thirty-two males and ten females aged 19 and under within the city, the majority of which of lived in Chinatown.¹⁰⁸ Despite a small growth in the numbers of Chinese-American children, the Chinese community’s percentage of the city’s population fell dramatically—it went from 1.2% in 1910 to 0.3% in 1920. In contrast the city’s total population grew significantly from 39,578 in 1910 to 74,683 in 1920.¹⁰⁹

The occupations of the Chinese in Chinatown remained limited. Lee reports Chinese residents included thirty-five cooks and servants, as the service industry was still a primary occupation for the Chinese. A dozen laundry workers were identified, along with retired, unemployed, or disabled men. A doctor and a herbalist represented the health field. Henry

¹⁰⁶ U.S. Census 1910, population characteristics - California, Table II, p 180.

¹⁰⁷ For the purposes of comparison, the Chinatown blocks are now known as the Asian Pacific Thematic Historic District (APTHD). Chinatown extended to 2nd Avenues and K Street, but modern construction sits on those sites and were not included in the APTHD.

¹⁰⁸ Murray Lee, *Gold Mountain*, 251-253. Lee’s analysis uses slightly different age ranges for children than the census.

¹⁰⁹ U.S. Census 1920, population characteristics, supplemental tables for Indian, Chinese, Japanese, p 128, Population table 51, 184.

Lowe had the rare job of bank clerk. And finally the census schedules revealed one truck farm owner and a handful of vegetable peddlers and farm workers.¹¹⁰

The Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association (CCBA-SF) arrived from San Francisco in 1921 and created a local umbrella CCBA organization to represent the local Chinese and handle community issues and disputes. The evidence is not clear how San Diego's Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association (CCBA) operated in the early years. CCBA's leadership in San Francisco, which was exclusively male, was selected through a rotation system made of the different Chinese associations there.¹¹¹ San Diego's CCBA leadership was not a council of associations. The Chinese Benevolent Association also did not have relationships with the political forces in China, so it acted more politically neutral.¹¹² Records do not reveal how the leadership was selected for CCBA, but since there were so few adult American-born Chinese men, it is likely CCBA was led by China-born male merchants.

The CCBA played an important role in community relations. In the spring of 1927 Chinese troops attacked foreign concessions and consulates in Shanghai and Nanking.¹¹³ CCBA likely facilitated a full-page *Evening Tribune* advertisement during this rough time in U.S.-China relations:

BELIEVING that because the present situation in China, a great deal of misapprehension exists in the mind of the American public, the Chinese merchants of San Diego take this method of expressing their friendship and good will, and their consequent interest in American and local affairs... Young Chinese who have been educated in America want to

¹¹⁰ Murray Lee, *Gold Mountain*, 272. The term "truck farmer" referred to small scale market farmers.

¹¹¹ Him Mark Lai, "Historical Development of the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association/Huiguan System," *Chinese America: History and Perspectives 1987* (San Francisco: Chinese Historical Society of America, 1987), 23-27.

¹¹² Zeng Ying, "Chinese American Community Organizations: History and Perspectives," *International Christian University Publications 3-A, Asian Cultural Studies Special Issue 11* (2002) 199. Accessed google scholar April 30, 2020. Ying asserts CCBA began in San Diego in 1907.

¹¹³ Jonathan Spence, *Search for Modern China*, 3rd Ed (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2013), 319.

help their country advance. They do not foster any Bolshevist ideas and have no desire to become war-lords.¹¹⁴

The attacks on American representatives in China and the predominant anti-Communist fervor of 1920s America were the likely reason this advertisement was run. Sixteen businesses were listed, with the last organization shown as “Chinese Benevolent Assn.” at 428 Third Street.

The local lodge of the Chinese American Citizens Alliance (CACA) continued to “insure the legal rights of its members and secure equal economic and political opportunities for them.” In 1921 CACA contributed to construction of the CACA Grand Lodge in San Francisco. The San Diego lodge supported the Grand Lodge as it pursued a \$67,000 legal effort to amend the 1924 Immigration Act. That amendment, eventually successful, allowed Chinese wives married to American citizens to enter the United States.¹¹⁵ The lodge was a local advocate for political and civil rights. Henry Lowe, local secretary, stated “our committee composed of American citizens of Chinese descent ... appealed to congress for relief” and “as American citizens we should have equal rights to pursue and enjoy happiness in our domestic affairs.”¹¹⁶ Nationally, the CACA Grand Lodge published a Chinese-language newspaper starting in 1924, *Chinese Times*, that reported on current events and was a “voice of Chinese American communities.”¹¹⁷

Secret societies or “tongs,” remained active in San Diego in the 1920s. Illegal gambling operations continued in Chinatown. One of the largest tongs with branches across the nation, Bing Kong Tong set up a San Diego branch in 1922, and received fellow members fleeing San

¹¹⁴ “So the American People May Know!” advertisement, *Evening Tribune*, April 18, 1927, 3.

¹¹⁵ Suellen Cheng, email “CACA San Diego Lodge” to author, January 28, 2020, San Diego Chinese Historical Museum.

¹¹⁶ “Chinese Native Sons Give Stand,” *San Diego Union*, August 28, 1926, 4. Lowe said “We do not deny our unwillingness to support Senator Shortridge for re-election” because Shortridge opposed the amendment. Lowe used the term “The Chinese Native Sons” as a connection to their earlier name.

¹¹⁷ Suellen Cheng, email “CACA San Diego Lodge.”

Francisco who then could easily retreat to Mexico.¹¹⁸ They fought with the Hop Sing Tong as reported around 1917 and between 1922 and 1924. A long-time resident, Mamie Lowe Chan, reported a man was killed near where they lived on Fourth Avenue, and another was killed by the CCBA building. The Ying On Tong, merged with the Suey On Tong, and later became the Ying On Labor and Merchants Association, was also active during this time.¹¹⁹ It is likely these “tong wars” were one of the reasons why CCBA was established in San Diego to handle disputes within the Chinese community.

The Chinese Protestant influence continued to grow. The Chinese Mission School under the First Congregational Church outgrew a dilapidated building on First Avenue by 1926. Fundraising for a new building, under the leadership of new pastor Ching Chong (C.C.) Hung, raised \$17,000. The Southern California Congregational Conference added another \$17,000, and merchant George Marston donated the land. The new building was renamed The Chinese Mission. It was dedicated on November 22, 1927 at 645 First Street. The new expanded mission could better provide Christian worship services, English classes, housing, and space for social gatherings. The two story dormitory building in the back housed rooms renting for six dollars a month. While the white church leadership wanted their adherents to return to China and spread the Christian faith there, Hung began to feel his Chinese congregants should remain in the United States and learn English so “they may be able to understand the American thoughts and customs, and hence lead a more successful life in America.” He also wished for “closer friendship between the Chinese and Americans by interpreting China to America and vice versa.”¹²⁰ Services were regularly held: Chinese and English services on Sundays at 8 P.M.,

¹¹⁸ Zeng Ying, "Chinese American Community Organizations," 195-212.

¹¹⁹ Murray Lee, 207-217; Fung, *Dragon Pilgrims*, 49.

¹²⁰ Karl Fung, *Dragon Pilgrims*, 35-39.

English night school at 7 P.M. five nights a week, Chinese classes for English speaking children six nights a week, Sunday school and Friday “Christian Endeavor” for young people.¹²¹

Researcher Zeng Ying argues the influence and support provided by the Chinese Mission was one of the reasons why district or class associations were less active in San Diego.¹²²

Chinese businesses were listed in the region’s directories which indicated Chinatown had built a thriving business community. In the 1925 City-County directory forty-eight merchants were listed under the heading “Chinese Merchants.” Within Chinatown some key merchants included: Woo Chee Chong, an Oriental grocery store run by the Hom Family, the Hong Far Company run by the Hom/Seid family, and the Quin market run by the family of Ah Quin, all in Chinatown.¹²³ Outside of Chinatown, Quon Mane and Co at 1159 5th Avenue added two more stores in La Jolla and Coronado. Five merchants were listed under the heading “Chinese Herbs,” with one, Eastern Herb Company, paying extra for a bolded listing and an advertisement in the directory. This quarter page ad displayed a photograph of Chinese herbalist T.K. Hee and the phrasing “Imported Chinese Herbs-Good for All Diseases. Helps the Digestion and Blood... Our specialty imported HERBS of over 3000 VARIETIES have been used in China for thousands of years, and all ailments of whatever nature successfully benefited.”¹²⁴ The advertisement phrasing by the Eastern Herb Company and the inclusion of so many Chinese businesses demonstrated their intent and ability to attract a diverse clientele, despite the Chinese community’s small size. This also reflected the increasing economic success of Chinese and Chinese American businesses. The economic foundation of the Chinatown was gaining strength.

¹²¹ Elizabeth MacPhail, “San Diego’s Chinese Mission,” *Journal of San Diego History*, 23, no. 2 1977.

¹²² Zeng Ying, “Chinese American Community Organizations,” 197.

¹²³ Woo Chee Chong began at 540 Third Avenue, moved to 470 Third Avenue, then larger quarters with a loading dock at 14th Avenue, and add three more stores in Kearny Mesa, Oceanside, Chula Vista by the 1990s. The Quin Market at 445 3rd Avenue was run by the Quin family formerly led by patriarch Ah Quin.

¹²⁴ *San Diego City and County Directory 1925*, San Diego Directory Co. Inc., p 1120-1130, 108.

The Great Depression hit the world, nation, and San Diego hard. Matthew Bokovoy, in analyzing the economic situation of San Diego prior to the 1935 Exposition, noted that in 1928 San Diego's economy was already slowing. But by 1930, 5,800 residents were unemployed and by June 1933 that number was 23,000.¹²⁵ Chinatown felt the economic hardships as well. A February 1930 *San Diego Union* article noted that "Chinese New Year's day passed unobserved...It is the first time in the history of the city that a demonstration, usually featured by the setting off of innumerable firecrackers, has not been staged. Chinatown was quiet all day." The article also commented on the state of Chinatown: "For the last few years there has been a gradual falling off of enthusiasm locally. San Diego's Chinese population numbers about 400."¹²⁶

Gambling and lotteries still existed in Chinatown despite attempts by police to shut them down. In February 1935 the *San Diego Union* reported on surprise raids by District Attorney Thomas Whelan, followed by two Chinatown raids by police, that netted ninety-one arrestees, forty of whom were Chinese. The article stated:

The Chinatown raids, two of the most spectacular made here in months, were staged in the 400 and 500 blocks on Third Avenue. Surprising the alleged lookout in front of one of the places, the district attorney's men rushed into the establishment just before the 'outside' man had a chance to pull a rope that would have dropped a heavy bar behind the door of the place.

The white "maintainers" (operators) of these establishments were named, but there was no mention of any Chinese names in the police raids. However, bail for each Chinese man was

¹²⁵ Bokovoy, *San Diego World's Fairs*, 151.

¹²⁶ "Chinese New Year Passes without celebration here," *San Diego Union*, February 3, 1930, 1.

\$500, each “maintainer” \$250, and each “visitor” ten dollars.¹²⁷ Pastor Karl Fung at the Chinese Community Church, who wrote the church’s history in 1989, argued that after the 1935 raid “large scale gambling in Chinatown was eliminated for good.”¹²⁸ It is worth noting how strongly American society considered gambling as a vice to be stopped. But for the Chinese, gambling was an accepted recreational activity.¹²⁹

Although images of exotic criminality still prevailed, by the 1930s had grown more family oriented. Murray Lee repeated his eight-block analysis using the 1930 Census and identified 240 residents of Chinese descent, out of a total of 568 persons. Significantly, seventy children under the age of eighteen years were identified as Chinese. The blocks under review were diverse, with an additional 119 Japanese, ninety-one white, eighty-six black, nineteen Mexican, ten Filipino, two Hawaiian, and one Native American resident.¹³⁰

Of the Chinese, fifty were in restaurant work, with six proprietors, one listed as “partner” (business partner/co-owner) eighteen cooks, twenty-one helpers (employees) and one baker. Eighteen were involved in laundry, with one owner and the rest employees. Twenty-two were in the grocery business with eleven proprietors, seven partners, and four employees. The medicinal herb business had three owners and two partners. Produce work employed fifteen Chinese with three business owners, one partner, with the rest truckers or laborers. The remaining people included general service (five), clerical (four), miscellaneous (three), plus ninety-four children and wives categorized as unemployed and twenty-four recorded as retired.¹³¹

¹²⁷ “91 held in gaming raids: Drive made by Whelan and police,” *San Diego Union*, February 15, 1935, 1-2. Coincidentally, this day also featured a front-page headline about the House of Representatives approving \$350,000 for the upcoming San Diego exposition.

¹²⁸ Fung, *Dragon Pilgrims*, 42.

¹²⁹ Anise Wu, Joseph TF Lau, "Gambling in China: socio-historical evolution and current challenges," *Addiction* 110, no. 2 (2015): 210-216.

¹³⁰ Lee, *Gold Mountain* 271.

¹³¹ Lee, 271-276.

Chinatown was changing as new diverse residents started living in the area. The Japanese called the neighborhood “Nihonmachi,” or Japan Town. There were 119 Japanese residents of the 568 people in the eight-block area. Proprietors and workers labored in hotels, pool halls, the service industries, or were unemployed which included women and children. Ninety-one African Americans lived in the eight-blocks, with more likely nearby. They were involved in service industries, labor, construction, hotels and restaurants. This included three business owners, three hotel proprietors, and two Navy retirees. An overlapping area was called “Harlem of the West,” which came from the Douglas Hotel and Creole Palace club at Market and Second Avenue which hosted entertainers during the 1930s and 1940s such as Duke Ellington, Billie Holiday, and the Mills Brothers.¹³² The segregated Ideal hotel was nearby. Of the ninety-one white residents, hotels employed twenty people with ten of them proprietors. Other occupations included retail, construction manufacturing, service, restaurant, miscellaneous, and unemployed. Filipinos also moved in, with this wave arriving from 1906 to 1934 as laborers and farm workers. They were known as “nationals” but they were neither citizens or aliens.¹³³ Their numbers were small by comparison. Of the ten Filipinos recorded, four were proprietors of barbershops, one of a shoe-shine stand, and the rest laborers. Two Hawaiians and nineteen Mexicans completed the residential mix.¹³⁴

Chinese members of the community participated in meetings and attempted to educate white leaders. The *Evening Tribune* described a 1930 talk entitled “Better Understanding of the Chinese” given by S. T. Liu, a prominent local Chinese banker, at the CCBA building. This was

¹³² Leland Saito, “African Americans and Historic Preservation in San Diego: The Douglas and the Clermont/Coast Hotels,” *Journal of San Diego History* 54 no. 1, 2008, accessed April 20, 2020, <https://sandiegohistory.org/journal/v54-1/pdf/douglashotel.pdf>. The Creole Palace and Douglas Hotel is at Second and Market, adjacent to the APTHD.

¹³³ Judy Patacsil, Rudy Guevarra Jr, Felix Tuyay, *Filipinos in San Diego* (Charleston SC, Arcadia Publishing, 2010), 9.

¹³⁴ Lee, 271-276.

an event of the Community Welfare Council with the purpose “to effect greater community understanding and more closely weld the bonds which bind San Diego’s foreign born to the country of their adoption.” The article noted “more than 60 representatives of between 25 and 30 different racial groups in San Diego” attended, and George W. Marston complimented the council and the Chinese hosts.¹³⁵ Though Marston was supportive, Liu had to take on this extra effort to educate others. The somewhat positive tone of the article contrasts with the mostly negative newspaper coverage twenty years earlier.

Despite continuing negative stereotypes in the media and harsh conditions such as segregation and discrimination, multiple external trends influenced more positive views of the Chinese in the 1930s. Japan’s 1931 invasion of Manchuria in northern China drew the opposition of the U.S. government.¹³⁶ America had viewed itself as a paternalistic Christian nation with dreams of bringing wisdom and salvation to the Chinese. The missionary movement in San Diego, California, the nation, and extending to China were examples of that push. Historian T. Christopher Jespersen argues American missionary zeal softened the hard attitudes against the Chinese. A key figure, Henry R. Luce, who lived in China until the age of fourteen, used his bully pulpit as the co-founder of *Time* magazine and became the most vocal voice that promoted an Americanized Christian China. Chinese leader Chiang Kai-shek conversion to Christianity fueled those missionary hopes. Jespersen further asserts American business eagerly sought Chinese business opportunities. Pearl Buck’s sympathetic depiction of a heroic Chinese farmer in her 1931 novel *The Good Earth* mirrored American’s plight with the Depression and the Dust Bowl.¹³⁷

¹³⁵ “Reveals Aims, Ideals of Chinese,” *Evening Tribune*, July 19, 1930, 5.

¹³⁶ Jonathan Spence, *Search for Modern China*, 352.

¹³⁷ T. Christopher Jespersen, *American Images of China 1931-1949*, 24-27.

The evolution of America's perception towards the Chinese had internal causes as well, primarily increasing agency by the Chinese community itself. The Chinese business community survived the Great Depression and continued with their advertising to the general community. Organizations such as CCBA and CACA continued to assert community, business, and legal pressure and fight for the rights of the Chinese community.

The 1935-36 Exposition

The organizers of the 1935 California-Pacific International Exposition (CPIE) aimed to boost the depression-era economy and promote San Diego. The actions of the 1935 directors were significantly different from 1915; they invited the Chinese community to participate and permitted the community to present itself to fairgoers and the world. This section will cover the 1935 exposition and how the Chinese community participated in the exposition in four significant ways: the Hall of China, the "China Day" exposition event, a full-page newspaper page sponsored by Chinese merchants welcoming the exposition, and multiple Chinese goods exhibitors led by the Quon Mane family. The 1935 organizers did not make the same choices as their predecessors did in 1915. While there were salacious attractions like a nudist colony and a bawdy fun zone, there was no disparaging Chinatown attraction.

Preparations for San Diego's second exposition began in August 1933 as a vision of Frank Drugan, a former Scripps Howard newspaperman and well-connected Democrat from Los Angeles. He was inspired by Chicago's Century of Progress World's Fair in 1933-1934 which demonstrated economic modernization through consumer prosperity while boosting the Great

Depression economy. Chicago's Fair proved such a success that subsequent fairs became known as century of-progress expositions.¹³⁸

Drugan saw a similar opportunity in San Diego, using the 1915 exposition infrastructure. He felt "Balboa Park [was] a complete exposition plant." He talked with select Chicago Fair exhibitors to book San Diego as their next destination. But Drugan faced weak support in San Diego at first. The region was in the midst of the Great Depression. A Centennial committee passed on an opportunity in 1934 to organize a celebration to honor the 100-year establishment by the Californios of an "ayuntamiento" (city council) due to concerns over cost. However, Drugan rallied San Diego leaders and enlisted his supporters in Southern and Baja California elite business circles, including the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce.¹³⁹ San Diego had to move quickly, as other expositions loomed on the horizon: Dallas' Texas Centennial Exposition was scheduled for 1936, Cleveland's Great Lakes and International Exposition for 1937, San Francisco's Golden Gate International Exposition for 1939-1940, and New York's World's Fair for 1939-1940. The city had renovated many of the temporary buildings using federal funds in 1922, but had declared them unsafe in the early 1930s. The prospect of the upcoming exposition and community protests saved most of the 1915 buildings.¹⁴⁰ A furious round of planning and fundraising took place in 1934. The official corporation was formed by San Diego businessmen on July 27, 1934 and they were moving fast. In January of 1935 a fresh wave of permanent building construction started, and through tremendous effort, five months later the California-Pacific International Exposition (CPIE) opened on May 29, 1935.¹⁴¹

¹³⁸ Rydell, *World of Fairs*, 217.

¹³⁹ Matthew Bokovoy, *San Diego World's Fairs*, 150-155.

¹⁴⁰ Bokovoy, *San Diego World's Fairs*, 150-155.

¹⁴¹ Richard Amero, "California-Pacific International Exposition-Chapter 1 Planning and Preparation," *Journal of San Diego History*, <https://sandiegohistory.org/archives/amero/1935expo/ch1/>, Accessed September 10, 2019.

The exposition combined exhibits celebrating New Deal federal programs as well as others highlighting American business and consumerism. New Deal government dollars were used to entice corporate participation. Organizers offered discounted exhibition space and relief expenditures to offset construction costs as incentives. The exposition received federal and state appropriations of \$800,000, with an operating budget of \$2 million.¹⁴² The *San Diego Union* proudly announced in February 1935 that the House of Representatives by a vote of 305 to 39 approved \$350,000 in federal monies, of which \$125,000 was for the construction of the Federal building and the balance for preparation and maintenance.¹⁴³

San Diego's take on the century-of-progress expositions extended the themes of modern and futuristic architecture. Architect Richard Requa designed the new buildings around a new Palisades zone with modern interpretations of Aztec, Mayan, and southwestern styles. Requa, in his 1937 book, acknowledged the exposition leadership including President Frank Belcher, Chairman G. Aubrey Davidson, Managing Director Zack Farmer (who was also Managing Director of the 1932 Los Angeles Olympiad) and other key figures.¹⁴⁴ New exhibition halls were built using the corporation-funded building model pioneered by Chicago's fair. These CPIE buildings included the Ford Building, Ford Music Bowl, Shell Oil Building, Standard Oil Tower to the Sun, and the Firestone Singing Fountains.¹⁴⁵ North of the Palisades, the Calle de Prado, the main street from 1915, anchored the existing baroque Spanish-Mexican colonial style building complex. The fun zone, called the Zocalo, was in the northeast section of the exposition, in roughly the same location as in 1915.

¹⁴² Bokovoy, *San Diego World's Fairs*, 161-162.

¹⁴³ "Expo funding passed by House," *San Diego Union*, February 15, 1935, 1-2.

¹⁴⁴ Richard Requa, *Inside Lights on the Building of San Diego's Exposition: 1935* (1937) (Reissue Copyright, Parker H Jackson, 1997), 35-40, https://c100.org/books/Inside.Lights_Requa.pdf, Accessed April 30, 2020.

¹⁴⁵ Rydell, 217.

Chinese and the 1935-36 Exposition

Exposition organizers wanted this second exposition to be as expansive as possible. Frank Drugan, the Executive Secretary, became the Director of Foreign Participation. From that role, he developed a group of international cottages into the House of Pacific Relations (HPR). The word Pacific emphasized the concept of pacific as “peaceful” and was not related to the Pacific Ocean or the Pacific Rim. HPR’s mission statement stated “The purpose of the House of Pacific Relations, International Cottages and its members is to create a spirit of understanding, tolerance and goodwill among the various national and ethnic groups represented in the community.”¹⁴⁶ HPR’s original statement of purpose was to “promote social and cultural education by the rendition of programs by members of the respective cottages typical of their native culture.” HPR believed that America could show a world with many different people living together in peace.¹⁴⁷ Ironically, some countries represented, such as Germany and Japan, would soon aggressively attack and engulf the planet in World War II.

In a Christmas greeting in December 1935 the HPR director Frank Drugan made a case for peace:

At this moment questions of life and death are convulsing civilization... The result has been increased discord: and, yet, there remains a simple formula whereby we can, if we will, make human harmony attractive. If instead of deliberately getting together to argue and quarrel, we get together deliberately to delight one another, our international parties may become popular.”

Drugan further explained HPR:

It is a collection of beautiful hacienda-type Spanish bungalows... Representatives [include the] British Empire, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Italy, Japan, Germany, Yugoslavia, Mexico, Portugal, Norway, China, Sweden, Irish

¹⁴⁶ House of Pacific Relations Website, <https://www.sdhpr.org/aboutus.html>, Accessed September 5, 2019.

¹⁴⁷ James Vaughn, “International Balboa Park: The House of Pacific Relations,” *Journal of San Diego History* 60, no. 4, 2014. 316-320.

Free State, and a group of nineteen Latin American nations...¹⁴⁸

The bungalows were small cottages of about 15'x30' with similar Spanish designs and tiled roofs built around a central lawn.

The HPR organizing committee, led by Drugan, approached Chinese community leader Sun Mow Hom, the English Secretary for the CCBA. The role of English Secretary was critical because that officer spoke on behalf of CCBA to the wider community. His daughter Gladys Hom recounted in 1975:

[The] Exposition...Committee came to our home requesting my father, Sun Mow Hom, to get the Chinese community to participate in the Exposition. Daddy (English Secretary) (sic) went to the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association and enlisted the aid of See Jin Tom (President) and Soon Kwai Tom (Chinese Secretary) to work within the community.¹⁴⁹

CCBA negotiated with the exposition before taking on the commitment. Hom then worked with other CCBA officers and business owners to decorate the Chinese international cottage. That cottage became the Hall of China at HPR. See Figure 5 in the Appendix for a map of 1935 Chinese representations at the CPIE. The Hall displayed Chinese art and furniture and was staffed with volunteers who greeted visitors. The community rallied as active participants in the exposition.¹⁵⁰

CCBA actively sought to project both American and Chinese images. Twenty-year old Ernest Hom was a rising figure in the Chinese community. As a student at San Diego State College, Hom had won a national debating contest.¹⁵¹ He was conversant in both English and

¹⁴⁸ House of Pacific Relations 1935 Christmas greeting, House of China collection courtesy of David Seid. The House of Pacific Relations continues to operate in the original location and structures in Balboa Park. HPR was built on the site of the Montana state exhibition building from the 1915 exposition.

¹⁴⁹ *House of China 50th Anniversary program: 1935-1985*, House of China, 5.

¹⁵⁰ *House of China 50th*, 5.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

the Cantonese Chinese dialect. Hom was named President of the Hall of China, under the auspices of CCBA. This was the same baby Ernest Hom from the 1915 exposition electric photograph and by 1935 he had risen to become a Chinese American community leader.¹⁵² Hom served as President of the Hall of China for four years, attended University of California at Berkeley, and later pursued a law career in Washington D.C.¹⁵³

The Hall of China (HoC) displayed a painted logo of the Republic of China by the front door of its cottage. Each host group for a hall decorated the interior, greeted visitors and provided foreign participation programming. The front room held Chinese furniture and arts donated from San Francisco Chinese merchants and the local Quon Mane Chinese arts store. A small patio off this room looked northwest towards Palm Canyon. An adjacent kitchen provided space for food preparation. HoC and CCBA leadership organized and staffed the Hall of China for visitors every Sunday and on holidays.¹⁵⁴

The Chinese represented themselves within the House of Pacific Relations through the Hall of China. The “Underground Chinatown” attraction in 1915-1916 had been developed by white professional fair promoters. In contrast HoC and its Chinese American leadership controlled their representation, including the Hall’s interior design and entertainment. Records appear to indicate HPR treated HoC fairly. The *San Diego Union* announced the selection of foreign nation exposition chairs in alphabetical order by country name. The president of the British Empire cottage was listed first. Second was K.H. Chow, chairman, Chinese Exposition Committee, Hall of China. “Villa Danebrog,” the Czechoslovak house, was listed third,

¹⁵² David Seid email, April 24, 2019. Hom family photo from David Seid, House of China.

¹⁵³ Linda Devine (Daughter of Ernest Hom) email to author, November 5, 2019.

¹⁵⁴ *House of China 50th*, 5.

followed by eleven others.¹⁵⁵ Additionally in the 1935 HPR Christmas card fifteen photos of each house are displayed in a collage. The Hall of China is placed prominently in the upper left corner of the card and the image showed a huge crowd in front of the Hall.¹⁵⁶

HPR's bylaws stated an individual member must be a citizen and be "of good character and reputation." Members of the Hall were also members of the HPR. The organizers of the HPR made an exception for the Hall of China regarding the citizen membership requirement, as anyone Chinese was barred by the Chinese Exclusion Act from citizenship.¹⁵⁷

A Chinese Exposition Committee supported the exposition's efforts and helped with connections to the Chinese Consul. A declaration from the consulate in San Francisco authorized Chinese participation at the Hall of China. The Chinese Consul was even ready to support a separately proposed but never built Chinese Village attraction in the fun zone area.¹⁵⁸ The Committee welcomed the Chinese Consul from Los Angeles with an honored speaking role at the Hall of China's dedication on May 26, 1935.¹⁴⁵ Other speakers included Ernest Hom and Tom Mow, the President of CCBA. Ernest Hom, as a U.S. born Chinese American, spoke as President of the Hall and served as a main public face for the exhibit, ultimately channeling the presentation of Chinese culture through a Chinese American. A fireworks show of 10,000 firecrackers celebrated the dedication of the Hall.¹⁵⁹ The exposition opened to the public three days later.

China Day, scheduled on Sunday October 13, 1935, was the highlight for the Chinese community and a success for the exposition. Famed Chinese aviatrix Katherine Fun Cheung

¹⁵⁵ "14 nations pick Expo committee," *San Diego Union*, June 2, 1935.

¹⁵⁶ House of Pacific Relations 1935 Christmas greeting, House of China collection courtesy of David Seid.

¹⁵⁷ Vaughn, "House of Pacific Relations," 330.

¹⁵⁸ CPIE collection, Box 16 folder 9, San Diego Public Library.

¹⁵⁹ "L.A. Chinese Consul will join Dedication," *San Diego Union*, May 26, 1935, 7.

flew her plane from Los Angeles and brought other prominent Chinese Southern Californians.¹⁶⁰ The Los Angeles CACA lodge donated \$10 towards the event, and the CACA San Diego lodge likely made a donation as well.¹⁶¹ A four-part schedule started at the Organ amphitheater at 2:30 PM.¹⁶² See Figure 5 for locations.

Part One of China Day featured opening remarks by Chinese community leaders and Chinese government officials. Three music performances were mixed into this opening ceremony, including a vocal music performance by the Chinese Girls Glee Club. The speakers included Mr. N. D. Foon, Chairman of the China Day Committee and Ernest Hom representing the Chinese Exposition Committee. Both the Chinese and American anthems were sung. The Consul-General of China, the Honorable C.C. Huang, and his Vice Consul Y.S. Kiang, spoke representing the Chinese government. It is worth noting that Ernest Hom was the master of ceremonies for the festivities, again emphasizing a Chinese American presence. The result celebrated Chinese culture while establishing the Americanness and equality of Chinese community of San Diego.¹⁶³

A festive parade from Chinatown through downtown to Balboa Park comprised Part Two of China Day. The logistics of starting the parade two miles south in Chinatown and returning to the exposition grounds must have been daunting. The parade started at 6:30 PM at the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association building at 428 Third Avenue in Chinatown, headed north up Sixth Avenue, entered the west exposition entrance and ended at the Organ amphitheater. See Figure 5. The program listed the parade entries: “1. Chinese and American flags; 2. Chinese

¹⁶⁰ Lee, *Gold Mountain*, 288.

¹⁶¹ Suellen Cheng, “San Diego CACA” email January 29, 2020.

¹⁶² China Day program, California-Pacific International Exposition, House of China. October 13, 1935.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*

Band; 3. Official Cars; 4. Sixty Chinese Girl Flag Bearers; 5. Chinese Angels Scattering Flowers; 6. Chinese Orchestra; 7. Students Drill; 8. Chinese Pioneers of California; 9. Lion Dance.”¹⁶⁴ The 50th Anniversary program for House of China showed a China Day photograph of Chinese women dressed in white cheongsams (Chinese dress) as they marched on a tree-lined field towards the Organ Amphitheater (Pavilion). The program also showed a marching band strutting along a downtown street in American dress with dark jackets and white pants, led by a drum major. The emphasis was on young citizens proud to be Americans and proud of their Chinese heritage. In a third photograph Ernest Hom stood with a dozen Chinese and white dignitaries, all dressed in western suits, on the Organ Amphitheater stage.¹⁶⁵

Part Three featured extensive performances by Chinese and Chinese American musicians. The eleven acts included the Drum and Bugle Corps by the students of the “Yoon Wo” School, the Chinese Girls Glee Club, and Miss Barbara Jean Wong, a “talented juvenile stage and radio artist.” Also featured was the “Peiping Operetta” by vocalists Soo Yong and James Zoe-Min Loo and accompanied by the Mandarin Orchestra.¹⁶⁶

Chinese fireworks capped off Part Four of China Day. The program was designed to emphasize the unique qualities of Chinese fireworks and to represent “historical and legendary events.” These displays included depictions of “Wuchang the birthplace of the Chinese Revolution” and “the friendship between the United States and China” represented by “portraits of George Washington and Dr. Sun Yat-sen, the father of the Chinese republic.”¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ House of China 50th Anniversary program: 1935-1985, House of China, 6.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ China Day program October 13, 1935, California-Pacific International Exposition, House of China.

The agenda for China Day festivities showed intentionality in how the Chinese presented their own performers and constructed Chinese representation. The Chinese cultural and historical elements of the day were intermixed with American references for the intended audiences of fellow Chinese, tourists, and the San Diego community at large. The Chinese organizers announced they were both proudly American and Chinese. Although fireworks were common to exposition celebrations, the China Day fireworks event demonstrated a particular Chinese expertise as well as art.

The Chinese merchant store Quon Mane and Company was a major Chinese contributor to the exposition. Quon Mane himself had organized the Chinese New Year performance at the 1915 exposition. Despite the depression, by 1935 his businesses, now run by family, funded and sponsored a Chinese goods exhibit at the House of Charm building and a Quon Mane store at Spanish Village.¹⁶⁸ See Figure 5. Building permits show the business contracted for electrical work in Balboa Park along with 12 other businesses.¹⁶⁹ Quon Mane and Company targeted white clientele interested in luxury and high-end Chinese arts and products.¹⁷⁰ The slogan in 1935 was “Importers of Chinese and Japanese Arts Gifts.” At the 1915 exposition a Japanese business had exhibited Japanese goods with Chinese goods secondary. This time, Chinese goods offered by a Chinese merchant were the primary offering. In 1935, the Quon Mane store moved further away from Chinatown to 1159 Fifth Avenue (Fifth and B) to be closer to its growing white customer base.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁸ “California-Pacific International Exposition, Exposition edition,” *San Diego Sun*, 1935, B10. San Diego History Center Archives.

¹⁶⁹ Permits, *San Diego Union*, May 22, 1935, page 8.

¹⁷⁰ Lee, *Gold Mountain*, 185-186.

¹⁷¹ “Company Ready for Business in New Location,” *San Diego Union*, November 17, 1935, 2, 4.

Chinese businesses advertised together to support the CPIE. In the *San Diego Sun*, nine businesses took out a full-page ad with the heading “A Welcome from our Chinese Merchants.” The headline was in stylized oriental-style brush strokes. Henry Lowe, noted as “one of the younger generation Chinese,” wrote an article “Chinese Aid Exposition, Boost City.” The following businesses advertised: Woo Chee Chong-fireworks; Great Eastern Café-Chinese Foods and Dancing; Quon Chock-Chinese herbalist; Pekin Café-Chop Suey; Eastern Herb Company-3000 varieties of Chinese herbs; National Dollar Stores-operated by American-Chinese; Shanghai Café-dine, dance, good food; Gim Wing & Company-importers of Chinese merchandise; San Diego Toggery (Eng Lee & Company)-wearing apparel; and Quon Mane Treasures from the Orient.¹⁷²

Representations of China were scattered throughout the CPIE. Other Chinese and Asian merchants prepared exhibits as well. K.H. Chow displayed Chinese goods in the Palace of Better Housing along with “Oriental goods” exhibitors “Moroccan Palace” and A. Shammah. Chekiang Company also displayed Chinese goods in the House of Charm along with Quon Mane and Company.¹⁷³ The Ford Motor Company was a leading corporate sponsor and funded the Ford building and Ford Music Bowl at the western end of the Palisades. To encourage driving, with an international flavor, a themed “Roads of the Pacific” was constructed in the canyons by the Ford Pavilion. Visitors could drive new Ford V-8 cars along 200 foot segments of road, which were landscaped to represent notable countries along the Pacific. One segment was the Chinese road leading from Peking (Beijing) to the Summer Palace.¹⁷⁴ In the end, the emphasis

¹⁷² California-Pacific International Exposition, exposition edition, *San Diego Sun*, 1935, section B, 10.

¹⁷³ Amero Collection MS76, Binder 107, San Diego History Center.

¹⁷⁴ Amero Collection, San Diego History Center, accessed April 1, 2020, <https://sandiegohistory.org/archives/amero/ford/>

on driving and buying cars overshadowed the Pacific, Asian, and Chinese themes of the Roads attraction. See Figure 5.

Gold Gulch represented a forty-niner mining camp and featured a stereotyped Chinese restaurant and laundry. Some evidence indicates that the concession contained Chinese games run by a Mr. Mahill who had contracted with Mr. J David Larson, Waldo T. Tupper, S.C. Low and P. Chew. However the concession, at one point, registered a \$2,000 loss due to maintaining a “crew of dealers,” heavy expenses, and limited operating hours.¹⁷⁵ Nonetheless it indicated that a white concession developer still laced some form of gambling with Chinese mystique and that Chinese stereotypes were not completely eliminated.

The California-Pacific International Exposition succeeded in spite of some initial depression era cost concerns. The 1935 fair was so successful that it was extended into 1936 and over the two years 6.7 million people attended. This was below expectations but the fair still produced a \$44,000 profit. The exposition employed thousands, brought in millions in tourist dollars and boosted San Diego during the rough times of the Great Depression.¹⁷⁶ Significantly for San Diego’s long-term benefit, the new wave of permanent buildings funded by New Deal and corporate powers strengthened the public arts and culture core pivotal to Balboa Park’s enduring role as a premier city park.

¹⁷⁵ CPIE collection, Box 16 folder 9, San Diego Public Library. This document is in a folder marked “Chinese Village,” but there is no evidence the village was constructed. Additionally, a Chinese restaurant and laundry is documented in Gold Gulch by Amero and Bokovoy.

¹⁷⁶ Robert Rydell, John Findling, Kimberly Pelle, *Fair America: World’s Fairs in the United States* (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2000), 87.

Chinatown During and After the Second Exposition

In the years of and following the CPIE, the Chinese community continued to slowly grow and connect with the greater San Diego community. Chinese San Diegans developed more agency and more economic strength. Select Chinese products were advertised as goods of quality and status symbols of high society. Since the 1920s, the Quon Mane store featured fine goods from China and other parts of Asia displayed behind elegant wood and glass counters. Glass cabinets along the walls complemented the refined look of six Chinese men and three Chinese women in western suits and attire. A three-foot floral display and simple but modern chandeliers completed the picture of elegance.¹⁷⁷

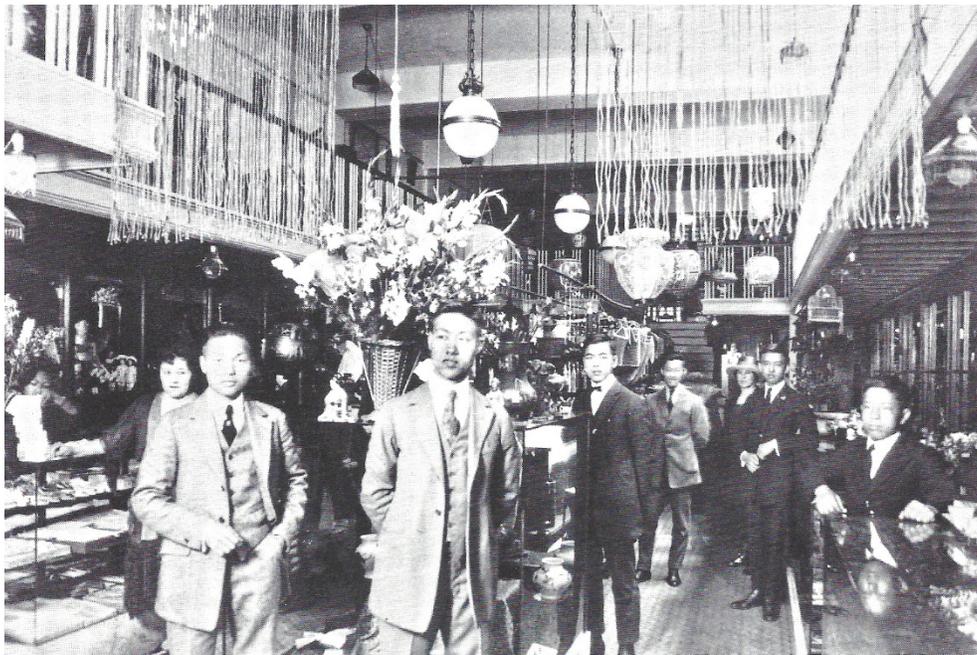


Figure 3 – Quon Mane and Co. Albert Quon is man on left – 1922. © San Diego History Center.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁷ Lee, *Gold Mountain*, 185-186.

¹⁷⁸ Quon Mane and Company photo – 1922, San Diego History Center Archives.

The Quon Mane store advertised alongside ads for fur trimmed coats for sixty-five dollars and quality Streicher's shoes (\$2.50 - \$3.50). The ad ran below the "Society in the Service" column.¹⁷⁹ The Quon family promoted a Christmas Bazaar as another targeted advertisement. The ad stated: "A veritable treasure trove of gift suggestions awaits the Christmas shopper at Quon Mane's...Copper, Brass, Lacquer and Glassware... White Porcelain and Carved wood... Jewelry...Embroidery and Silk Robes...You will be thrilled by a thousand attractions."¹⁸⁰ The CPIE helped propel the business forward as a legitimate representation of both China and the United States.

The roles and faces of younger community leaders Ernest Hom, Albert Quon, and Henry Lowe highlighted the Chinese American presence while the history and culture of China was presented to exposition audiences. When the Chinese consul Yi Seng Kiang visited, Chinese community leader and herbalist Quon Choak hosted the consular officer, and the reporter considered fellow guests Mr. and Mrs. Albert Quon and Henry Lowe to be important as well.¹⁸¹ The Chinese Americans attending were being presented and acknowledged. Chinese merchants also emphasized their appeal to the American audience and their Americanness. The National Dollar Store proudly declared itself as being run by an "American-Chinese."

The exposition allowed the Chinese American community to challenge negative attitudes and images. By giving Chinese San Diegans an authorized and mainstream platform, Americans were exposed to more positive images of the Chinese. The exposition's promotion of foreign relations supported tolerance and interest in countries abroad.

¹⁷⁹ Jewelry of Charm ad by Quon Mane, *San Diego Union*, November 25, 1934, 3.

¹⁸⁰ Quon Mane's Christmas Bazaar ad, *San Diego Union*, December 9, 1934, 4.

¹⁸¹ "Consul Attends Expo Hall of China Rites," *San Diego Union*, May 27, 1935, 2, 8.

After the exposition, some in Chinese community continued to gain economic strength. A local developer claimed the Quon Mane and Company store benefited his business. Walter Trepte announced his renovation of a major building in downtown San Diego at 5th Avenue and B Street. It had three anchor businesses and the lead business was Quon Mane's new flagship store at 1159 Fifth Avenue. By this time, the three-store chain of Quon Mane and Company, founded by Quon Mane and Quon Leon, was managed by Albert Quon (nephew and son respectively). The building featured unique Chinese designs and terra cotta ornamentation imagined by architect Earl F. Giberson who had also designed Grauman's Chinese Theater in Los Angeles, according to the *San Diego Union*.¹⁸² Quon simplified his advertising strategy with a shorter tag line "Quon Mane, Oriental Arts." The business was savvy and successful by having sister stores at 1206 Orange Avenue in Coronado and 7810 Girard Street in La Jolla.¹⁸³ This indicated a proud association by the business and general community to this leading Chinese business, in contrast with the disrespect shown to Quon in his earliest years.

Chinatown was an entertainment destination during the exposition era. One of the reasons was due to its proximity to downtown's theaters. The Nanking Cafe Chinese restaurant advertised weekly in the 1930s with the slogan "The bright spot of Chinatown." This restaurant, founded in 1928, declared itself as San Diego's first "dine and dance" Chinese restaurant.¹⁸⁴ In the *San Diego Union's* Cafes-Hotels-Resorts section, the Nanking Cafe advertised "Dine; Complete Chinese Menu; Wine – Beer; Dance 8 PM to 2 AM; Saturday open until 3 A.M. On the same page, Wally's Orange Ballroom advertised: "Claude Kennedy's Famous 9-piece Colored Band" at Broadway and Front streets, which was near Chinatown with "No Admission

¹⁸² "Fifth Avenue Building to be Ready Nov. 1 for Tenants," *San Diego Union*, October 20, 1935, 1.

¹⁸³ Quon Mane ad, *San Diego Evening Tribune*, January 16, 1936.

¹⁸⁴ "Café to Celebrate seventh anniversary," *San Diego Union*, 12, 2.

or cover charge.”¹⁸⁵ Chinatown drew in people from all walks of life for entertainment, while remaining a home to an increasingly diverse community.

Religion remained an important part of the Chinese community. Kei Tin (K.T.) Wong became pastor for the Chinese Mission in February of 1937. His salary was \$360 per year provided by the Southern California Congregational Conference. He introduced a pledge offering system so the mission would be adequately funded, and he could earn a living to support himself and his wife. Wong felt a Chinese language school was important for Chinese American children. The local Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association enthusiastically supported his request for financial support. This first Chinese language school, the Chung Wah School opened in March 1937 to twenty students in the street level floor of the CCBA building at 426 Third Avenue. The enrollment was up to eighty by late 1938, including one European-American child. The younger students studied Cantonese as it was the most common language spoken in America, though the older students studied Mandarin as the official Chinese language.¹⁸⁶

Reverend Wong also initiated a Boy Scout Troop to serve the growing numbers of Chinese American boys. Troop 101 was chartered on June 30, 1940 and an investiture service was held on July 14, 1940 for twelve boys. Scoutmaster Paul Yee and assistants Edward Tom, Philip Tom, and Kenneth Jair were supported by white Boy Scout leaders including chairman Walter P. Winters and Sidney Franz. The troop, numbering from twenty-four to forty, worked on merit badges, learned to swim, and went camping in local mountains such as Cuyamaca. A Cub Pack 401 was formed soon after to bring in younger boys.¹⁸⁷ This showed that Chinese

¹⁸⁵ “Cafes-Hotels-Resorts,” *San Diego Union*, May 12, 1935, 2.

¹⁸⁶ Karl Fung, *Dragon Pilgrims*, 50-55.

¹⁸⁷ Lee, 276-277.

American families asserted their rights for their children to participate in San Diego's community organizations and activities.

Community perceptions distinguished between Chinese traditions and American practices. The *San Diego Union* announced that King Quon, son of Quon Mane, married Lenore Chew in a quiet ceremony without the usual Chinese wedding trappings. The paper proclaimed "Quon's Son weds in Yuma; Oriental Rites forsaken" and noted the newlyweds met as honor students at San Diego High School. Quon attended Roosevelt Junior High School and was the high school Boy's Day History Art Editor.¹⁸⁸ The article covering the Quons' wedding explained the couple forsook "the ancient, elaborate 10-day ceremonies of the Far East." They simply left by auto for their honeymoon. This newspaper made this comment about the new generation but also remarked on traditional Chinese culture.¹⁸⁹ Quon signed up for the draft and his draft card listed U.S.A as his country of citizenship but his birthplace was Canton China.¹⁹⁰ He appeared to have lived as an American citizen, but the newspaper did not fully treat him as one. The Chinese Exclusion Act would have forbade him from being a citizen if he was not born in the United States. Quon's situation highlighted the ambiguity of his status as a Chinese American. Quon could have fought for the United States and in San Diego he fought to be treated as an American.

Community leader Quon Choak also straddled the worlds of China and America. He was born in Canton, China and lived in San Diego for thirty-eight years before he passed away in 1938. The *San Diego Union* recognized him as a Chinese community leader, and chair of the Chinese association, believed to be CCBA. Quon hosted the Chinese Consul from Los Angeles

¹⁸⁸ King Quon San Diego High School Yearbook 1935, Ancestry.com, Accessed April 22, 2020.

¹⁸⁹ "Quon's Son Weds in Yuma; Oriental Rites Forsaken," *San Diego Union*, June 2, 1936, 1.

¹⁹⁰ King Quon draft card, Ancestry.com, Accessed April 22, 2020.

when he visited the exposition in May 1935. He served for twenty years as a court interpreter. He could not have become a citizen due to the Chinese Exclusion Act, yet he was “intensely loyal to the United States and to San Diego” according to Henry Lowe. He left his wife and children in China, not returning to them like a sojourner during the Gold Rush days. Living here, he was likely one of many who chose to live in the United States. His community service offered proof he wished to be a good resident. His and many other stories of similar China-born San Diegans offer a significant but nuanced part of San Diego’s Chinese American community.¹⁹¹

World War II arrived and brought massive changes to San Diego. The San Diego Chinese wore “I am Chinese” buttons to separate themselves in white eyes from the Japanese. The Chinese Exclusion Era finally ended in 1943 when the United States repealed its oppressive legislation that forbid Chinese laborers from entering the country and had stifled the growth of the Chinese American communities. Restrictions eased on where the Chinese could live, and so the segregated Chinatown dissolved as the Chinese moved into other neighborhoods of San Diego in the late 1940s and 1950s.¹⁹²

¹⁹¹ “Consul Attends Expo Hall of China Rites,” *San Diego Union*, May 27, 1935, s2, 8. “Rites Tomorrow for Quon Choak,” *San Diego Union*, May 13, 1938, s 2, 14.

¹⁹² Leland Saito, “Reclamation and Preservation: The San Diego Chinese Mission, 1927-1996,” *Journal of San Diego History* 49 no. 1, 2003.

Conclusion

At the 1915 Panama-California Exposition (PCE) the vice-filled attraction “Underground Chinatown” was popular with fairgoers but remained an insult to the Chinese that year. A rebranded “Underground World” in 1916 changed little in response to protests, and the racist casting and attraction remained for the additional year. The 1915 era San Diego Chinatown was perceived to be a crime ridden neighborhood. The Chinese New Year celebration was manipulated to benefit the demeaning and profit-driven Chinatown concession. The Chinese community had little control over their representations at the exposition.

At the 1935-36 California-Pacific International Exposition (CPIE) the Chinese community demonstrated its new economic agency. The exposition sought what was called at the time “foreign participation.” Chinese merchants in San Diego, despite not being foreign at all, used their financial strength to develop a robust array of Chinese exhibits in multiple locations for the exposition. The leading Chinese exhibitor was Quon Mane and Company in the House of Charm and at Spanish Village. The Hall of China, as a major Chinese exposition presence in the House of Pacific Relations, was self-supported with contributions of Chinese furniture and art from local and San Francisco Chinese merchants. San Diego Chinese businessmen pooled their resources to advertise in the newspapers, showing their united economic strength and support of the exposition. Chinese restaurants advertised their unique dining and entertainment options to the white community.

The 1935 CPIE offered the Chinese community the opportunity to participate as a community partner because of their increased economic power. The Chinese community directed their involvement and through their agency presented the multi-faceted “China Day” festivities. The opening ceremonies and the evening performances were held in the official event

space at the Organ Pavilion, and not in the Isthmus fun zone as during the 1915 PCE. The festive ceremonies and parade presented both American and Chinese images to the public. The Hall of China presented Chinese pride, with a Chinese American persona.

The Chinese community pushed forward with a new version of reality: A good American could be of Chinese heritage. The 1935 exposition allowed for the Chinese community to actively present its American citizens to the world. The Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association (CCBA), composed of leaders born in China, rallied the community to develop the Hall of China, and named Ernest Hom, an American citizen, as the Hall's first President and visible public leader. Hom also served as the master of Ceremonies for the China Day festivities. Henry Lowe was a spokesperson for the Chinese community. Following the exposition the Chinese community actively sought to live the American lifestyle through the Chinese Mission, school activities, and the Boy Scouts.

The 1930s Chinatown morphed into a multi-ethnic community composed of Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, Black, Mexican, and white residents. Segregation kept people of color still hemmed into less desirable neighborhoods, and the residents lived and co-existed in their diverse neighborhood that was still called Chinatown. Chinatown became a less foreboding place and benefited as a downtown entertainment location.

Chinatown San Diego faded from public consciousness until the 1980s when downtown redevelopment brought attention back to this neglected neighborhood. The Gaslamp Quarter was defined and defended as a national historic district, driven by the desire for historic preservation and profitable redevelopment. The San Diego Chinese community, now well dispersed across the city and county, had built up enough community and economic power to defend its historic birthplace. In 1987 the San Diego City Council declared an eight-block area

historically known as Chinatown as the Asian Pacific Thematic Historic District. This designation remembers Chinatown, the Japanese Nihonmachi (neighborhood), the Filipino Quarter, and the Pacific Islander presence. The Chinese preservation effort was spearheaded by passionate community leader Dorothy Hom, supported by the Chinese Historical Society of Greater San Diego and Baja California with the first two presidents in Sally Wong and Tom Hom.

A 1994 master plan outlined how new development should honor the handful of remaining buildings from the earlier Asian era. The plan's goal was to "re-establish the District as the social and cultural destination for the Asian community within San Diego." The Asian community was encouraged to invest in the district through community festivals, events and business improvement. The plan set up a structure to recognize the histories and contributions of the Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, and Pacific Islanders, and lay a foundation so the district would become a tourist and business destination and add to the arts and culture downtown and in the San Diego region.¹⁹³ The Chinese Mission building was moved as part of downtown redevelopment. In 1996 the building was restored and opened as the San Diego Chinese Historical Museum at 404 Third Avenue, led by founding executive director Dr. Alexander Chuang and eventual Chair Dr. Lilly Cheng. The museum's goal is to celebrate the history, art and culture of China and the contributions of Chinese Americans. It also anchors the Asian Pacific Historic District. The Sun Yat-sen Memorial Extension, built of new construction, was added in 2004 at 328 J Street.¹⁹⁴ The Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association at 428 Third

¹⁹³ *Asian Pacific Thematic Historic District Master Plan*, San Diego, Centre City Development Corporation, 1994, 2-5, <https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/asian-pacific-thematic-master-plan-1.pdf>, Accessed March 2, 2020.

¹⁹⁴ *San Diego Chinese Historical Museum 20th Anniversary Program, January 2006*, San Diego Chinese Historical Museum. Two six-foot tall stone lions, donated by dedicated volunteers Dr. Alexander and Agnes Chuang, were placed in front at 3rd Avenue and J Street in 2016, as "guarding lions" protecting the district. The lions are affectionately known as Alex and Agnes.

Avenue contributes to the district with the annual Chinese New Year Food and Cultural Faire, while the Philippine Library and Museum on 536 Fifth Avenue recognizes the Filipino past. The Asian Pacific Historic District helps to remind society of the positive *and* negative portrayals of the Chinese and Asian communities. Chinese representation at the Balboa Park expositions changed from the negative stereotypes in 1915 to more accepted images directed by the Chinese community itself in 1935.

Appendix

Figure 4: Chinese representation map - PCIE 1916

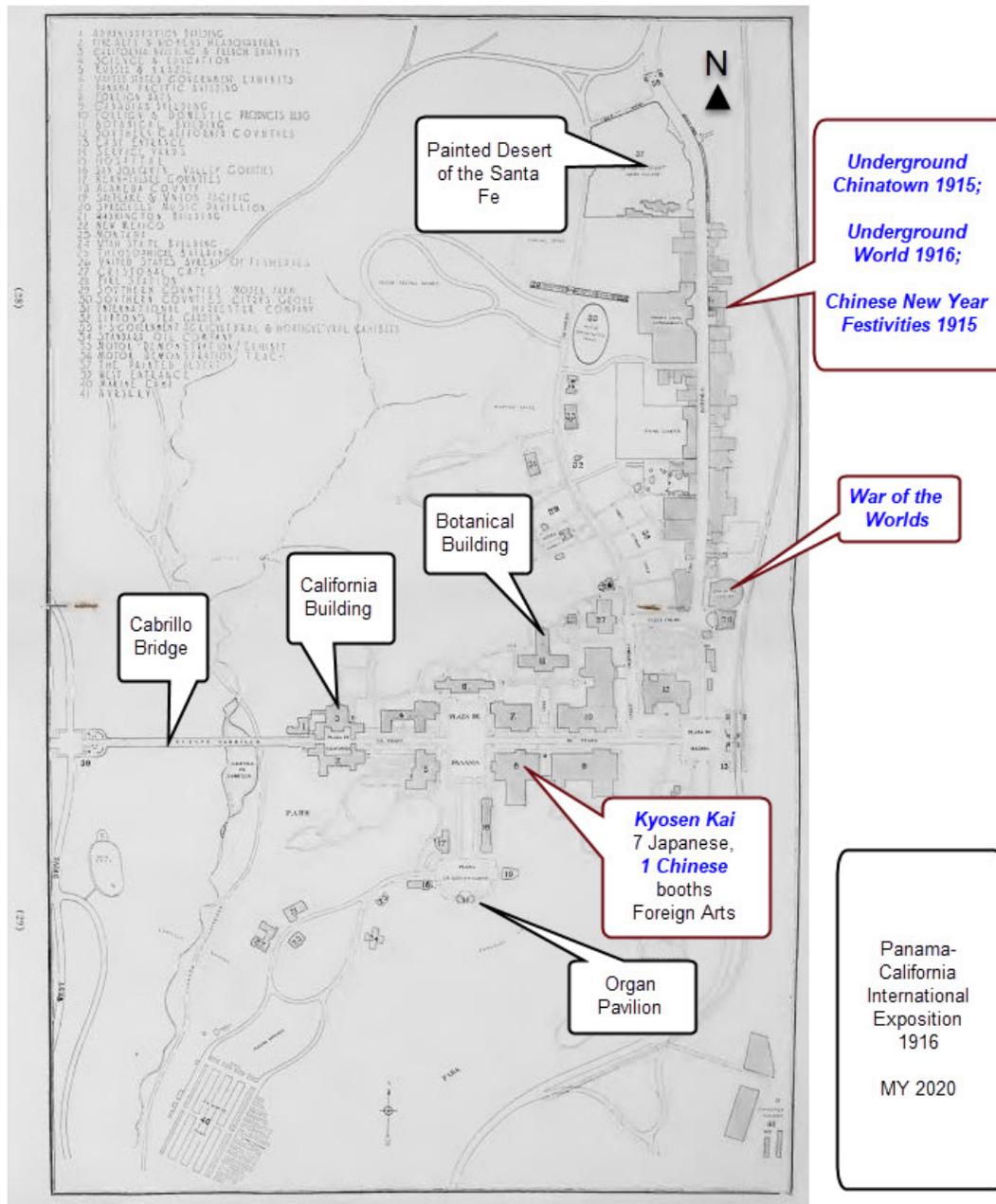


Figure 4. Chinese representation at PCIE 1916. Red and blue notes in italics indicate locations of Chinese representation. Black notes indicate major exposition locations. Notes added by author.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹⁵ *Official Guide and Descriptive Book of the Panama-California International Exposition* (San Diego: National Views Co, 1916), 38, <https://doi.org/10.5479/sil.941604.39088011863016>, Accessed March 31, 2020.

Figure 5: Chinese representation map – CPIE 1935-36

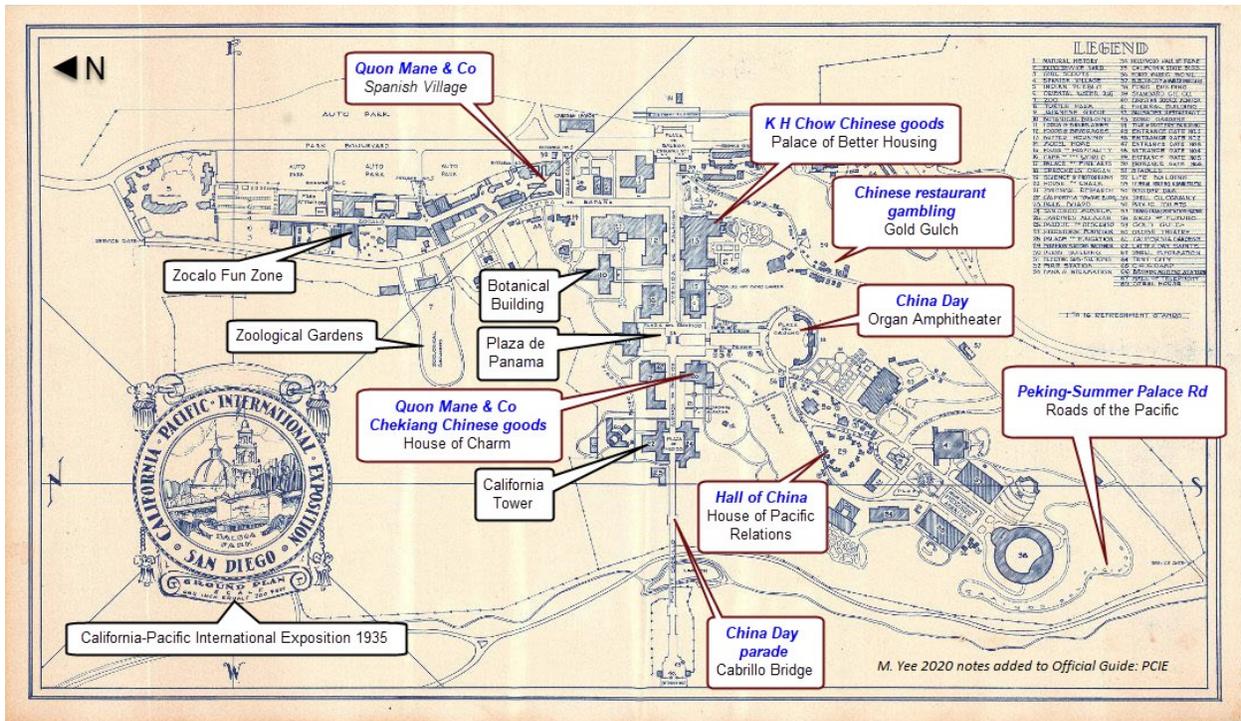


Figure 5. Chinese representation at CPIE. Red and blue notes in italics indicate locations of Chinese representations. Black notes indicate major exposition locations. Notes added by author.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁶ “Exposition Ground Plan A72,” *Official Guide: California Pacific International Exposition*. California-Pacific International Exposition, https://balboaparkconservancy.org/pams-parkview-3-cultural-landscape-report-matters-balboa-park/1935exposition-groundplan-a_72/, Accessed October 25, 2019.

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