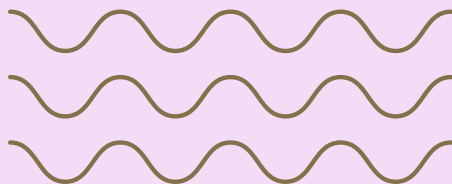
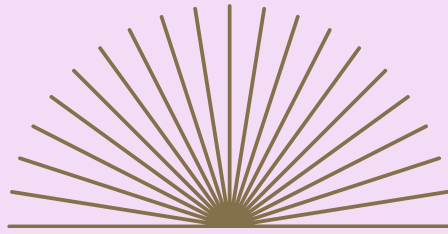


# CHINESE IMMIGRATION TO THE DELTA





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# INTRODUCTION

CHINESE IMMIGRATION PLAYS A HUGE ROLE IN AMERICAN HISTORY. THROUGHOUT THIS ZINE, MY HOPE IS THAT YOU WILL HAVE A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE HISTORY OF THE CHINESE AMERICANS AND THEIR EARLY SETTLEMENT TO THE UNITED STATES. YOU WILL HAVE A CHANCE TO LOOK AT THE HISTORY OF THEIR IMMIGRATION, A PERSONAL FAMILY'S MIGRATION STORY, THEIR FAMILY BUSINESS, THEIR EXPERIENCES LIVING IN THE MISSISSIPPI DELTA, AND WHY STORIES LIKE THESE ARE IMPORTANT TO LEARN ABOUT.



# HISTORY

1840'S - 1870'S

THE MIGRATION OF CHINESE FAMILIES TO AMERICA BEGAN IN THE LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURIES DURING THE END OF THE CIVIL WAR. THIS MOVE WAS INFLUENCED BY THE CAREER OPPORTUNITIES THAT WERE IN HIGH DEMAND OF EMPLOYMENT. DURING THAT TIME, WESTERN AMERICA HAD MAJOR CAREER OPPORTUNITIES OVER THE YEARS, SUCH AS THE GOLD RUSH, THE TRANSCONTINENTAL RAILROAD, AND OTHER HIGH-INTENSITY LABOR OPPORTUNITIES THAT AVAILABLE FOR EMPLOYMENT. AT THE END OF THE CIVIL WAR, THE CHINESE WERE BROUGHT IN AS REPLACEMENTS FOR THE AFRICAN AMERICANS WHEN SLAVERY WAS ABOLISHED. THEY WERE HIRED TO TAKE OVER ROLES IN AGRICULTURE SUCH AS HARVESTING, FARMING, AND PLANTING COTTON. WHEN THE CHINESE CAME TO THE SOUTH AND BEGAN WORKING ON THE PLANTATIONS, THEY WERE QUICKLY FACED WITH THE REALITY OF THE HARSH WORK ENVIRONMENT WERE IN. SUCH CONDITIONS MOTIVATED THEM TO MOVE AWAY FROM THEIR PROFESSIONS IN AGRICULTURE AND PURSUE THEIR OWN FAMILY BUSINESSES.

## 1880'S - 1940'S

IN 1882, THE UNITED STATES PASSED ITS FIRST SIGNIFICANT LAW THAT PROHIBITED IMMIGRATION FOR A SPECIFIC RACE. THIS LAW WAS CALLED THE CHINESE EXCLUSION ACT. THIS LAW WAS IN PROGRESS FOR TEN YEARS AND WAS THEN EXTENDED BY ADDING NEW REQUIREMENTS AND RESTRICTIONS, CALLING IT THE GEARY ACT, WHICH REQUIRED THEM TO REGISTER AND HOLD CERTIFICATION OF RESIDENCE IN THE UNITED STATES AT ALL TIMES OR FACE DEPORTATION. THE UNITED STATES PASSED THIS LAW BECAUSE OF RACIAL AND ECONOMIC HOSTILITY BETWEEN THE AMERICANS AND THE CHINESE IMMIGRANTS, SINCE THE AMERICANS FELT THAT THE CHINESE WERE "STEALING" JOBS FROM THEM. HOWEVER, IN 1943 THE LAWS WERE ABOLISHED BECAUSE THE UNITED STATES JOINED ALLIES WITH CHINA AGAINST JAPAN DURING WORLD WAR II.

CERTIFICATE OF RESIDENCE, LU  
SEE LEN, FARMER, AGE 40 YEARS,  
OF SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA.  
Provided by Slate.com

No. 98776 ORIGINAL

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
Certificate of Residence.

Issued to Chinese Lu See Len under the Provisions of the Act of May 5, 1892.

This is to Certify THAT Lu See Len a Chinese  
now residing at 1112 P St. S. E. S. E.  
has made application No. 98776 for a Certificate of Residence, under the provisions of the Act of  
Congress approved May 5, 1892, and I certify that it appears from the affidavits of witnesses submitted with said  
application that said Lu See Len was within the limits of the United  
States at the time of the passage of said Act, and was then residing at 1112 P St. S. E. S. E.  
and that he was at that time lawfully entitled to remain in the United States and that the following is a descriptive  
list of said Chinese Lu See Len viz:

NAME: Lu See Len AGE: 40 years  
LOCAL RESIDENCE: 1112 P St. S. E. S. E.  
OCCUPATION: Farmer HEIGHT: 5' 8" COLOR OF EYES: Black  
COMPLEXION: Dark PHYSICAL MARKS OR PECULIARITIES FOR  
IDENTIFICATION: None  
and as a further means of identification I have annexed hereto a photographic  
likeness of said Lu See Len

GIVEN UNDER MY HAND AND SEAL THIS  
of 18 day  
State of California

98776  
O. M. McElreath  
Collector of Internal Revenue,  
District of California

2-108

# CHINESE BUSINESSES IN MISSISSIPPI

AFTER WORKING IN SUCH HARSH WORK CONDITIONS ON THE PLANTATIONS AFTER THE CIVIL WAR, THE CHINESE MIGRANTS KNEW THEY NEEDED TO PURSUE OTHER CAREER OPTIONS, SO THEY DECIDED TO OPEN GROCERY STORES THROUGHOUT THE DELTA. THESE STORES CONTAINED A LIVING QUARTERS ABOVE THE GROCERY AREA, SINCE THEY WERE NOT ALLOWED TO OWN RESIDENCES. THIS ALSO ALLOWED THEM TO BE CLOSE ENOUGH TO THEIR WORK SPACE SO THAT THEY COULD BE AVAILABLE FOR LONGER HOURS OF THE DAY. SOME STORES WOULD STAY OPEN VERY LATE INTO THE EARLY MORNING, ALLOWING THEM TO EARN EXTRA MONEY.



Image of Chinese family working in their family store provided by [Somewheresouthtv.com](http://Somewheresouthtv.com)



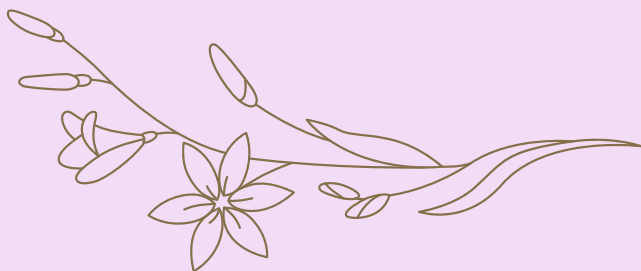
THERE WAS STILL RACIAL SEGREGATION GOING ON DURING THIS TIME PERIOD, AND ALTHOUGH THEY WERE NEITHER BLACK NOR WHITE, THEY DID FACE THEIR OWN RACIAL DISCRIMINATION. BECAUSE THE WHITE PEOPLE DID NOT SEE THEM AS THEIR EQUAL, THERE DEFINITELY WAS SEPARATION BETWEEN THE TWO RACES. THE SAME CAN BE SAID FOR THE CHINESE AND THE BLACKS. THE BLACKS DID NOT SEE THEM AS THEIR EQUAL EITHER, HOWEVER, THE CHINESE WERE ABLE TO MAINTAIN SUCCESSFUL BUSINESSES AND SELL TO BOTH RACES ENOUGH TO SUPPORT THEIR FAMILIES.



Image of Chinese family store provided by [Somewheresouthtv.com](http://Somewheresouthtv.com)

# CHILDREN'S ROLES IN FAMILY BUSINESSES

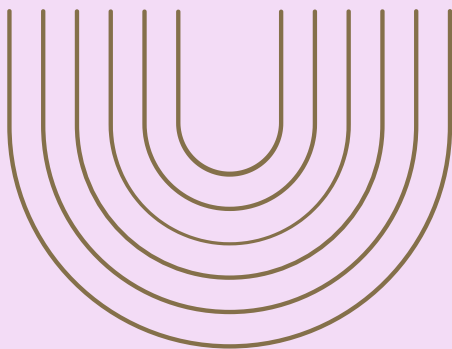
THE CHILDREN ALSO PLAYED A HUGE ROLE IN THE STORES, AS THEY WOULD SPEND MOST OF THEIR TIME OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL WORKING FOR THEIR FAMILIES IN THE STORES. THE CHILDREN WERE EXPECTED TO RECEIVE AN EDUCATION WHICH WAS AVAILABLE TO THEM. THE STORES WERE A NORMAL PART OF THE FAMILY'S EVERY DAY LIFE. BECAUSE THE FAMILIES LIVED IN THEIR STORES, THE STORES WERE A CENTRAL PART OF THEIR LIFE AND OFTEN WERE A LARGE PART OF THEIR MEMORIES. CHILDREN WORKING IN THE STORES WAS NOT FROWNED UPON AS WE MAY SEE IT NOW. IN FACT, IT WAS A PART OF THEIR CULTURE AND HIGHLY ENCOURAGED BY THE FAMILIES. ONE SOURCE EVEN ACCOUNTS THAT THE PARENTS WOULD GO BY THE RULE THAT IF THE CHILD WAS TALL ENOUGH TO REACH THE COUNTER, THEY WERE ABLE TO WORK! THE FAMILY RAISED THEIR CHILDREN TO KNOW HOW TO WORK IN THE STORES SO THAT THEY COULD JOIN THE BUSINESS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.






# BIOGRAPHY OF FAY AND JAUNITA DONG

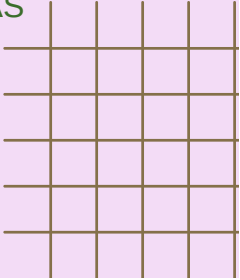
THE FAMILY OF FAY AND JUANITA DONG SHARED THEIR EXPERIENCES OF GROWING UP IN A CHINESE-AMERICAN HOUSEHOLD IN AN INTERVIEW BY KIMBERLY LANCASTER AND JENNIFER MITCHELL. IN THE INTERVIEW, THEY EXPLAIN THEIR CHILDHOOD AND THEIR FAMILY'S STORY OF THEIR MIGRATION TO THE UNITED STATES. FAY'S PARENTS FIRST MOVED TO SEATTLE BUT FIGURED THEY WOULD FIND A BETTER LIFE FARTHER EAST. THEY THEN MOVED SOUTH TO MISSISSIPPI WHERE THEY OPENED THEIR FAMILY STORE IN A TOWN CALLED DREW. THERE, HER PARENTS STARTED A LIFE AND RAISED THEIR FAMILY THERE. THEY SENT THE CHILDREN TO SCHOOL AND HAD THEM WORK IN THE STORE AS WELL.





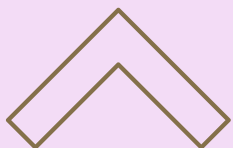
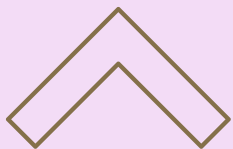
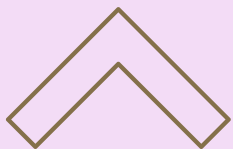
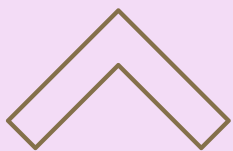
YOUR PSHE ELABORATED ON THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THEIR FAMILY AND THE WHITE AND BLACK PEOPLE. SHE EXPLAINED THAT THERE WAS DEFINITELY RACISM TOWARDS THEM FROM THE WHITE FAMILIES WITHIN THEIR COMMUNITY, BUT THERE WERE ALSO GROUPS OF PEOPLE THAT DID NOT TREAT THEM UNFAIRLY AND INSTEAD TREATED THEM AS FAMILY. SHE THEN EXPLAINED THAT THE BLACK COMMUNITY SAW THEM AS MERCHANTS AND THEY WERE TREATED KINDLY BY THEM AND RECEIVED MORE RESPECT FROM THEM.

DESPITE THE HARDSHIPS THEY FACED AS AN “IN BETWEEN” RACE, THEY ALSO WERE ABLE TO SUPPORT THEMSELVES AND CREATE A SUCCESSFUL LIFE. WHEN ASKING ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF MOVING BACK TO CHINA, JAUNITA SAID THAT IT WAS NEVER A THOUGHT THEY ENTERTAINED, “ESPECIALLY AFTER YOU HAVE FAMILY HERE. YOU CAN SEE WHAT A BETTER LIFE THAT THEY CAN HAVE HERE AND THEIR FUTURE.” FAE ADDED, “IT WAS COMFORTABLE HERE.”



# SIGNIFICANCE

IT IS IMPORTANT FOR FURTHER GENERATIONS TO REMEMBER THE EARLY STAGES OF AMERICAN HISTORY AND HOW THAT PLAYED A ROLE IN CHINESE IMMIGRATION. THESE STORIES AND FIRST-HAND EXPERIENCES PLAY A HUGE ROLE IN ENLIGHTENING GENERATIONS OF ALL ETHNIC GROUPS TO SEE THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE CHINESE IMMIGRANTS AND HOW THEY MADE A WAY FOR THEIR FAMILIES TO SURVIVE IN AMERICA, EVEN AFTER THE HARSH RACISM THEY FACED FROM THIS COUNTRY. THE TRUTH OF THEIR IMMIGRATION AND SETTLEMENT SHOULD BE TOLD TO REMIND US OF HOW WE GOT TO WHERE WE ARE TODAY. ECONOMICALLY, THIS COUNTRY WOULD NOT HAVE COME THIS FAR IS SUCH A SHORT AMOUNT OF TIME IF IT WERE NOT FOR THE CHINESE. THESE ENCOUNTERS SHOULD ALSO SHED LIGHT ON HOW WE SHOULD TREAT OTHERS AS EQUAL INDIVIDUALS, NOT SLAVES BASED ON THE SHADE OF THEIR SKIN. IF WE HOPE TO SEE A BRIGHTER FUTURE WITH LESS RACISM, WE MUST REMEMBER WHERE WE CAME FROM AND USE IT TO REMIND US THAT WE MUST NOT REPEAT THE DARKNESS IN OUR PAST. WE SHOULD ACCEPT ALL RACES FROM EVERY CORNER OF THE EARTH AND TREAT THEM EQUALLY.



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