### Virtual Genealogy Fair 2013

**Wednesday, September 4, 10 A.M.–5 P.M. (EDT)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>#</th>
<th>LECTURE TITLE</th>
<th>PRESENTER</th>
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| 10 A.M.| 7  | Genealogy and the Freedman’s Bank: Records of the Freedman’s Savings & Trust Company | Damani Davis
|        |    |                                                                               | National Archives at Washington, DC                                       |
| 11 A.M.| 8  | Military and Civilian Personnel Records: The National Archives at St. Louis  | Ashley Mattingly & Theresa Fitzgerald
|        |    |                                                                               | National Archives at St. Louis, MO                                        |
| NOON   | 9  | Union Civil War Pensions                                                     | Claire Kluskens
|        |    |                                                                               | National Archives at Washington, DC                                        |
| 1 P.M. | 10 | Federal Penitentiary Records                                                 | Jake Ersland
|        |    |                                                                               | National Archives at Kansas City, MO                                      |
| 2 P.M. | 11 | Finding U.S. Colored Troops at the National Archives                        | Trevor Plante
|        |    |                                                                               | National Archives at Washington, DC                                        |
| 3 P.M. | 12 | Genealogy Through Navy Decklogs                                              | Mark Mollan
|        |    |                                                                               | National Archives at Washington, DC                                        |
| 4 P.M. | 13 | Oh, The Stories They Tell: Chinese Exclusion Acts Case Files at the National Archives & Records Administration | Marisa Louie
|        |    |                                                                               | (substitute for Susan Karren, National Archives at Seattle, WA)            |
Although the search for a Chinese Exclusion Act Case File may be difficult and challenging, the rewards can be great as these files may contain a treasure trove of information for the family and social historian. While limited to a specific ethnic group the richness of the records will have everyone scrambling to find a reason to use them.
Marisa Louie has been an archivist at The National Archives at San Francisco (located in San Bruno, California) since September 2009. She primarily works with Asian American genealogists and family historians interested in case files created by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (Record Group 85). Marisa holds a B.A. in American Studies and Environmental Studies from the University of California, Santa Cruz, and is a past participant in the "In Search of Roots" Chinese American cultural heritage program.
OH, THE STORIES THEY TELL:

Chinese Exclusion Acts
Case Files
at the
National Archives &
Records Administration
Who? Where? When?

• Any person of Chinese ancestry, whether U.S. citizen or alien, entering or re-entering the U.S.

• Ports from San Francisco to New York

• 1884–1943
What? How many?

- Photos, interrogations, forms
- Almost half million individual case files
Where do I look for these?

- Exclusion files were kept by the district that created the *first* file even if later travel occurred through different districts.

- INS records are held by the NARA facility that serves the state in which the port, district or city is located.
Everyone of Chinese descent...
Even the most American of professions...
Photos included in files can also show:

- Changes in fashion over time
- Americanization of the person
- Family portrait styles
- Interiors and exteriors of Chinese businesses
Watch your ancestor grow up

1893 (1 year old)

1899 (7 years old with father)

1906 (14 years old with sister)

1914 (22 years old)

1914 (22 years old with sister)
Chinese-American Families

San Francisco, February 1914
Chinese-American Families

San Francisco, May 1914
Chinese-American Families

1922
Interrogations

Applicant sworn, testified:

Q  What is your name?
A  Mrs. Yee Shing; my maiden name was Mary Kasky. (Speaks English)

Q  Of what race or blood are you?
A  I am a Finlander.

Q  Where were you born?
A  I was born in the state of Michigan.

Q  Who is this gentleman that accompanies you? (Indicating Yee Shing)
A  That is my husband, Yee Shing.

Q  You have made an application for a return certificate in order to accompany your husband to China. Have you any property in this country or any debts due you?
A  Yes, my husband and I own jointly a five room house in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, which stands in our names jointly. We paid $2500 when we bought it and we put $2000 for improvements.

Q  The title to that property stands in your names at this time?
A  Yes.

Q  On your return do you intend to occupy the house again?
A  Yes, we have it rented now.

Q  Did your husband exhibit the deed to this property to the officers in Minneapolis?
A  Yes, Mr. Seaman saw it, also the tax papers.

(Rights and duties as to return explained to applicant.)
Forms also give personal glimpses into family life.

Yee Shing, alias Harry Yee, of Sioux Falls, South Dakota, is making application for return certificate as a laborer under Rule 13 of the Chinese Regulations. His application is based upon duplicate certificate of residence No. 144813 and a five room house situated at 518 North Minnesota Ave., Sioux Falls, S. D. He has submitted a warranty deed and his last tax receipt covering this property, and I am of the opinion that he is entitled to the return certificate.

He has also made application for return certificates under Rule 16 of the Chinese Regulations for his five American born children, Lillian Yee, Vincent Yee, Eugene Yee, Edwin Yee, and June Yee. Birth certificates for each of these children have been furnished, and I have no doubt that they are citizens of the United States as alleged. Separate applications have been taken for each of the children for the reason that it may be that they will return to the United States at different times. The wife of Yee Shing, and mother of these children, is a white woman of the Finnish race, born in the state of Michigan. She is also going with Yee Shing and his children, and, of course, does not require any certificate under the Chinese Exclusion Law.
... and show that INS didn’t even always understand the laws
How do you prove you are who you say you are?

- Interrogations often focused on identification of family members in photos and descriptions of places the person was supposed to know.
  - Hand drawn maps by parent and child used for comparison
  - Fill-in-the-blank maps for persons who were returning to a city in which they claimed to have formerly lived
Interrogations

• Information varied depending on a person’s situation but usually included
  • name(s), age, place of birth, marital status, place of marriage, occupation

• May include
  • names of parents and siblings and where they live
  • number and names of children
  • travel history
  • descriptions of cities, towns and villages
Merchant? Laborer?

• Files contain documentation to help support and reject a person’s status

• Photos provides an interesting glimpse of 20th century business life in the U.S.

• Can be used to show the development of business districts
Olympia, WA – 5th and Columbia

ca.1903
Tuck Tung Co., Seattle, WA, ca.1905
gambling establishment?
Austin, Texas restaurant

513 Congress Ave.
Austin, Texas
ca. 1904
Chinese businesses

Lee Bing business
Mt. Holyoke, MA  ca.1904
Chinese businesses

Lace House Dry Goods Company
1517 Market St.
St. Louis, MO (ca. 1909)
U.S. Cities – Seattle

Seattle, 1890
A view of post-fire Seattle, 1903
Village map
How do I locate a file?

A case file number is gold!

• do you have any documents the person left behind – you may already have what you need

• Have you located a file for another family member – check for a cross-reference sheet
Certificates of Identity
May still be with owner and can lead to case file
Certificate of Residence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Certificate of Residence</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Issued to Chinese LABORER, under the Provisions of the Act of May 5, 1892, as amended by the Act approved November 3, 1893.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is to certify that a Chinese LABORER, now residing at

has made application No. 127735 to me for a Certificate of Residence, under the provisions of the Act of Congress approved May 5, 1892, as amended by the Act approved November 3, 1893, and I certify that it appears from the affidavit of witness submitted with said application that said

was within the limits of the United States at the time of the passage of said Act, and was then residing at

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 LABORER, viz:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME:</th>
<th>EXWON CHOW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AGE:</td>
<td>27 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOCAL RESIDENCE:</td>
<td>SEATTLE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OCCUPATION:</td>
<td>LABORER</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| COMPLEXION: | Wrinkled face, |}

And as a further means of identification, I have affixed hereto a photographic likeness of said

Given under my hand and seal this day of May, 1893, at Portland, State of Oregon.

Henry Hackett
Collector of Internal Revenue, District of Oregon.
Permits to Re-enter
An unusual cross-reference sheet

Charley Toy
7030/115
Indexes

- Not all are easily accessed but we have our ways
- INS created indexes (a few)
- NARA created indexes (not all electronic)
- some online
How else?

• Gather information from other family members

  □ when and where did the person first arrive or leave?

  □ who were they traveling with?
Using other family members to find information

- INS used information from other files to verify information given during interrogations. Files may include:
  - Cross-reference sheets
  - Carbon copies of interrogations from other files
Good Luck!!

Remember –

Gather documents

Get creative and

Ask an archivist!