
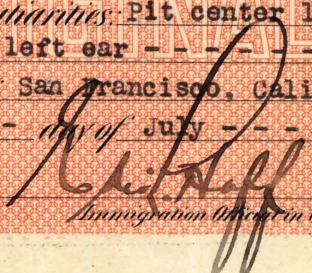


The American Dream

In the early days of the 20th Century, in the southern part of China, was born a boy named Chow Sun Ho. His family called him "Ho". The region in which he was born was called Jung San, which means "central mountain". It was near the Portuguese colony of Macao, and less than a day's journey from the great city of Canton. But he and his family lived in a smaller town. His parents were farmers. They were not impoverished; neither were they wealthy. And although they were frugal and hard working, they knew, that as peasant farmers, there was little hope of achieving real prosperity for themselves or their children, including Ho. For although hard work and frugality are required to become prosperous, something else is needed as well: opportunity.

Then one day opportunity did come. The possibility arose for Chow Sun Ho, then a boy of 9 or 10, to go to America, the Land of Opportunity. His family knew that many of them would never see the boy again. Still they chose to send him.

What must it have been like for the boy? To be put on a boat, sail across the broad Pacific Ocean. To arrive in a country with strange language, strange customs, strange buildings, and even strange climate.

DESCRIPTION	
	Name: CHOW ON
	Age: 10 - - - Height: 4 - - - Wt. 42 - - -
	Occupation: Student, San Francisco, Calif. - - - - -
	Admitted as: Son of Son of Native, (parol evidence) -
	#30465/8-2, SS Pres. Madison, June 6, 1931 - - - -
	Physical marks and peculiarities: Pit center left cheek; numerous pits near left ear - - - - -
Issued at the port of San Francisco, Calif. - - - - -	
this 7th - - - - - day of July - - - - - 1931	
 Immigration Officer in Charge. JWL	

He had come from the central mountains to the central valley -- the Great Central Valley of California. Here, he was once again a farmer, but even the farming was different here: different crops, different methods. But he adapted--children of that age do. And he adapted to his new home in other ways as well, learning English, and even taking on an American name, "Raymond".

By the time he was a young man, World War II had begun. He joined the U.S. Army and volunteered

to be a paratrooper--to jump from airplanes into battle. When I, myself, was in the army, the paratroopers were considered the elite. He fought in North Africa, Italy, and France. He risked his life for his new country. But, although he was wounded in battle--a piece of shrapnel is still embedded in his back--he survived the war and when it was over he returned to California.



He found a job working for an optical company, who taught him how to make eye glasses--a craft he would pursue the rest of his working life.



Having established work for himself, he returned to China--to Jung San--not to stay, but to find a bride to take back with him to his new home. The woman he chose was Yim Pu Yee. What must it have been like for her? But he knew. And he helped his new wife through the transition.



They lived first in Oakland. Eventually they built a house in Kensington, a small suburban community north of Oakland.

They started a family: First a daughter, Dixie.



Then a son, Robert; then another daughter, Alice.



Both he and his wife continued to work to provide for their children: he as an optician, and she as a seamstress.

They raised their children. They provided for their material needs. They put them through school and encouraged dilligance in their studies. They taught them right from wrong. They taught them the Chinese values of hard work and frugality. They taught them the true roots of love, which is not passion as some would believe, but rather acceptance and harmony.

Now his children are grown and have families of their own. Even his grandchildren--of which there are six: Elizabeth, Jessica, Jedidiah, Sarah, Michal, and Mia--are grown as well.



Last week Raymond (Sun Ho) Chow died after a long illness. His family came together to support and console his widow and each other. For a strong family is another value he brought with him from China. I came too, for I am now part of that family: You see, I married his eldest daughter.

We buried him on a hill overlooking the San Francisco Bay. The ceremony was mixture of Christian, Chinese and military. A minister said a prayer. A U.S. Army bugler played taps. From his grave one can look across the bay to the Golden Gate, from which he entered this country 70 years ago.

And although I mourn his death, I also rejoice at his life. He did nothing less than achieve the American Dream. He raised a family who love and will miss him. He built a home for that family. He put his children through college. He achieved a prosperity that the young Chow Sun Ho could never have imagined in rural China. He did it by following the Chinese values of hard work and frugality. But after all, isn't that how one achieves the American Dream?