

China Camp's Living Treasure, Shrimp Fisherman Frank Quan, Dies.



Friends of China Camp wishes to announce, with great sadness, the passing of Frank Quan on August 15.

Frank Quan was born in China Camp Village in 1925, and was the last remaining resident of this former shrimping village established by Chinese immigrants in the mid-1800s. His grandfather came to China Camp in the 1880s, and his family ran shrimp fishing operations, as well as a cafe and a boat rental business, for generations. In WWII, Frank served in the United States Navy as a Signalman.

In 1976, the California State Parks Foundation acquired much of the San Pedro peninsula, and developer Chinn Ho donated the 36-acre site of China Camp Village to be preserved as a California State Park, and as a living memorial of the Bay Area's Chinese-American history.

From the start Frank was instrumental in the transformation of China Camp into a State Park, while at the same time keeping the essential community spirit and historic lifeways of his family and the village alive. Frank was always in motion, and worked around the village until the end, maintaining historic buildings and machinery, keeping his shrimp fishing boat afloat and gear ready for the next drag of his shrimp net. His weekends were busy cooking and serving visitors shrimp salad and clam chowder in the village's historic cafe, just as his mother and aunt had done since before the 1950s.

Mr. Quan served for decades as an invaluable member of the board of Friends of China Camp, helping to bridge and unite the efforts of California State Parks staff, volunteers and the Village community. All could be found in Frank's cafe on any given weekend day, enjoying lively conversation and local gossip.

"Frank was such a rare character, really the true living history of China Camp," said John Muir, long-time friend and board member of Friends of China Camp. "When you visit the Village, it feels like you have stepped back in time, and a lot of that feeling is there thanks to Frank. He will be deeply missed by so many here. The way he welcomed friends and park visitors, and engaged with people of all ages, and his constant devotion to the care and the life of the Village was such a gift, and will resonate here for a long long time."

Frank Quan wanted everyone to feel at home in China Camp Village, for he loved the community who loved China Camp. Plans for a public memorial and celebration of Frank's extraordinary life will be forthcoming; details will appear on the Friends of China Camp website, <friendsofchinacamp.org> as they become available. Heritage Day, August 27, has been canceled.