



CHINA CAMP STATE PARK

FRIENDS OF CHINA CAMP

HERITAGE DAY

China Camp Village

August 26, 2017

11am-4pm

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Once again Friends of China Camp is partnering with China Camp State Park, the Marin Chinese Cultural Association, and the Redwood Empire Chinese Cultural Association to celebrate our annual Heritage Day. Join us to honor the legacy of China Camp Village and the local seafaring community within it. There will be a Lion Dance, Chinese cultural dancing, singing, music, tai chi demonstrations and art. Also, the Grace Quan junk ship will make an appearance!

Bring the family! This event is suitable for all ages. Parking will be limited at the upper Village parking lot, additional shuttle parking will be available at the China Camp Ranger Station at 101 Peacock Gap Trail about a mile north of the village.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS:

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| 11:00 – 11:30 | Visit Museum, view artwork, crafts |
| 11:30 – 12:00 | Marin Chinese Cultural Assn. Lion Dancers |
| 12:00 – 12:15 | Redwood Empire Chinese Assn. Chorus |
| 12:15 – 1:00 | Redwood Empire Cultural Dancers
Youth group & dancers |
| 1:00 – 1:30 | Guest speakers |
| 1:30 – 2:00 | Stephen Shen, musician & Tao Yan, vocalist |
| 2:00 – 2:30 | Visit Museum, view artwork, crafts |
| 2:30 – 3:00 | Arrival of <i>The Grace Quan</i> , accompanied by traditional boats |
| 3:00 – 3:30 | Tai-chi with David Cheung – join in! |
| 3:30 – 3:45 | Ribbon Dance with Louise Lipsey and children participation |
| 3:45 – 4:00 | Raffle drawing for paintings |



ONGOING ACTIVITIES:

- ◆ *THE GRACE QUAN* (reproduction Chinese junk) & traditional boats
- ◆ Exhibition and Sales by local artists – 20% of sales to Friends of China Camp, Inc.
- ◆ Crafts – origami, animal tracks on clay, Chinese lanterns
- ◆ Marin Wildcare
- ◆ Marin History Museum
- ◆ SF Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve
- ◆ San Rafael Fire Foundation
- ◆ China Camp Nature & Education
- ◆ SF Maritime National Historic Park
- ◆ Friends of China Camp, Inc. membership and day pass table
- ◆ Sale of T-shirts, photo cards, horoscope necklace, and hats



All profits benefit trail restoration, campground improvements, Village upkeep, and other needs at China Camp. Friends of China Camp, Inc. operates China Camp State Park and receives no funding from the state.

Why Do We Celebrate Heritage Day?

Almost every summer for decades, bright red lanterns are strung up along the Village awnings, preparations are made for the morning performance of the great Lion Dance, local artists carefully hang their paintings along aging wooden walls, and the Grace Quan junk slices its way across the bay to return to its place of origin. Meanwhile hundreds of Bay Area residents make their way to China Camp to become immersed in rich cultural traditions embedded in the park's history.

Heritage day celebrates the layers of community and the local maritime culture that have made China Camp what it is today. It is also a day to remember, honor, and celebrate the legacy that has been left behind by Chinese American immigrants despite over a century of prejudice, discrimination and displacement. 2017 will be the first year that the event is celebrated without Frank Quan, the last shrimper at China Camp. He passed in August 2016 at the age of 90. This local icon is fondly remembered for his generosity and welcoming personality. He was much loved and respected by his community and locals in the Bay Area.

Frank was the last resident of the hundreds of Chinese-American families that once lived at China Camp. Before the turn of the 20th century there were over two dozen Chinese shrimping villages in the San Francisco bay, and China Camp village is the last one remaining. It leads one to ask, 'What happened to everyone who lived here, and why don't they live here now?'

Chinese immigrants, who had been in Marin County as early as 1855, found work as laborers at John McNear's ranch along the San Pablo hills. They supplemented their income by fishing for shrimp along the shores of San Pablo Bay, setting up temporary camps around the McNear property.

They had given up their life in their homeland, said tearful goodbyes to their families, and bravely crossed an ocean heading towards a great unknown. They took a chance on the open waters of the American Dream, and when they arrived, many were handed dams and diversions.

The lives of the Chinese immigrants who lived at China Camp were deeply interwoven with the ebb and flow of the bay. Many of the immigrants were from Canton, a province of China along the Pearl River and South China Sea. They brought with them incredibly efficient shrimping technology; the product of centuries of innovation within a vibrant coastal seafaring culture. A bustling town of over 500 people quickly sprung up by the mid 1880's.

The growing California population demanded dams and aqueducts that redirected freshwater from the delta into farmland and later into urban development schemes in southern California. Over the course of the 20th century the perimeter of the bay was diked, filled in, and developed; by 1990 over 95% of the estuarine marshland in the San Francisco Bay was gone. As a result of the dramatic marsh habitat loss and increasing salinity of the water, the bay and the people who depended on it saw a dramatic decline in grass shrimp among other aquatic creatures. In their most abundant years they could catch and process over 3 million pounds of shrimp to ship back to China. Compare that to today, where shrimpers often catch no more than 100,000 to 200,000 pounds of shrimp *annually*.

Then there were the political and socioeconomic dams that were meant to hinder the Chinese from reaching their goals as individuals and as a people. Due to blatant nationalist racism, in 1882 the Federal government passed the Chinese Exclusion Act; a deliberate attempt to keep Chinese from immigrating to the United States under the xenophobic fear of immigrants 'stealing' American jobs. There was growing resentment among European American fishermen due to the economic successes of the Chinese-American shrimping industry in the San Francisco Bay. As a result, in 1905 a ban was placed on exporting shrimp from the Bay to China and in 1911 the highly efficient Chinese bag nets were outlawed as well.

The dramatic decline in shrimp populations in the bay combined with the stiff restrictions placed upon the local Chinese made it almost impossible to make a sustainable living shrimping along the bay. The residents would have to pack up once more, say goodbye to their community, and find a new way of life. Families moved on and sought new industries to pursue. Around the bay Chinese buildings were abandoned, torn down, and paved over.

However, the story does not end with the barriers, rather they serve as a marker to show the strength of a generation of people. Where there were walls, people still managed to survive and overcome obstacles by their own tenacity and ingenuity. China Camp itself still remains due in large part to the Quan Family's adoption of new shrimping technology as well as their iconic bayside cafe. Not to mention the mobilization of the local community to protect the historic site as a State Park in the mid 1970's.

Though no one lives at the China Camp Village anymore, you can still see the history embedded in the land, and in the people who visit. On weekends you can still come to the cafe and meet the radiant Georgette Quan Dahlka, Frank's cousin and also an original resident of the Village. She has many stories about her childhood sorting and drying shrimp and helping her family operate the cafe.

Friends of China Camp is honored to continue the tradition of Heritage Day each year to prove that though there have been many changes over the years, the community is still here to celebrate that unbroken flow of ancestral spirit.