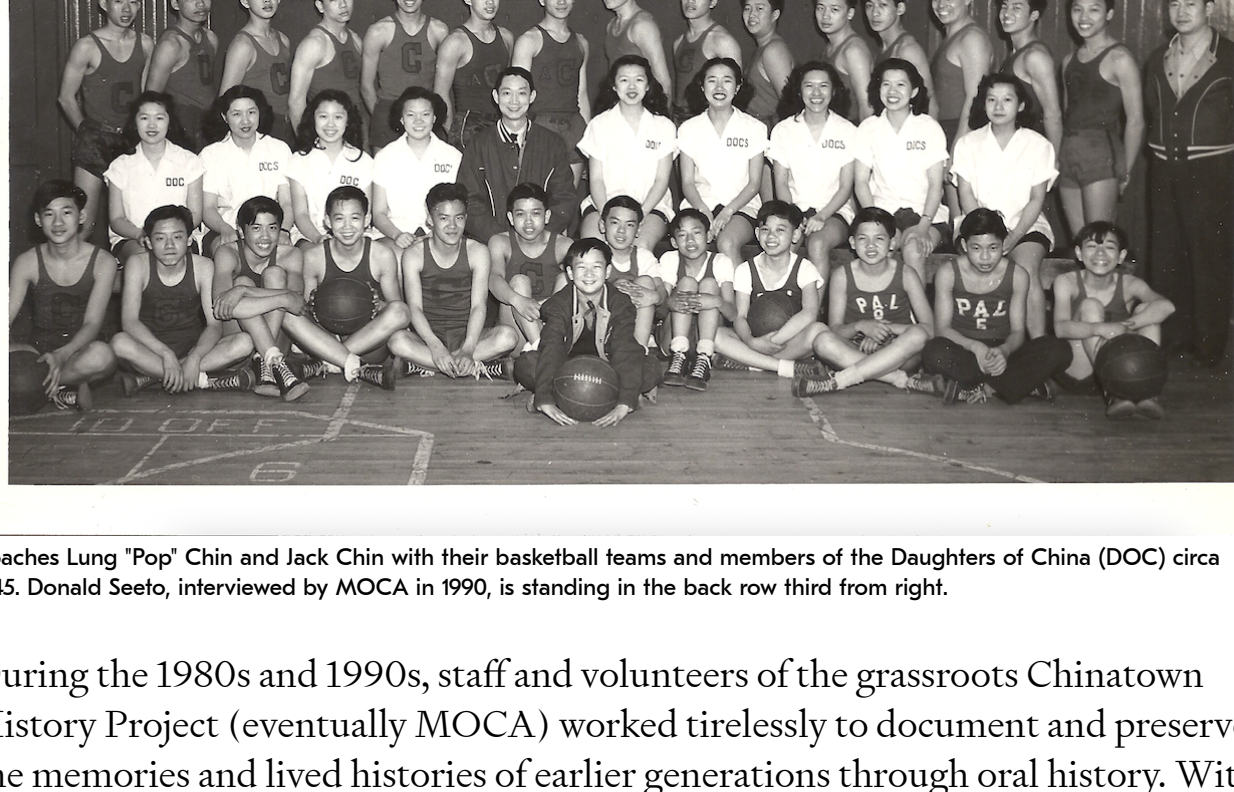


MOCA Collections

Newsletter

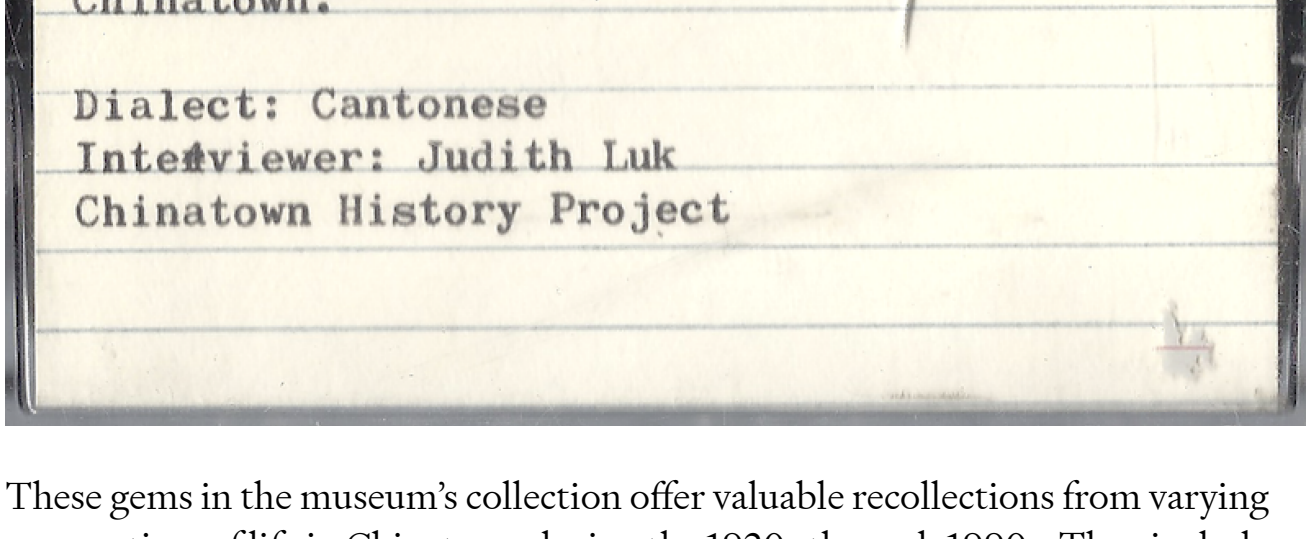
July 2024

Oral Histories About Chinatown During the 1920s-1990s Now Accessible Online



Coaches Lung "Pop" Chin and Jack Chin with their basketball teams and members of the Daughters of China (DOC) circa 1945. Donald Seeto, interviewed by MOCA in 1990, is standing in the back row third from right.

During the 1980s and 1990s, staff and volunteers of the grassroots Chinatown History Project (eventually MOCA) worked tirelessly to document and preserve the memories and lived histories of earlier generations through oral history. With the support of a grant from the **National Historical Publications & Records Commission (NHPRC)**, MOCA staff are currently cataloging and making these oral histories with Chinatown elders digitally available for the first time on **MOCA's oral history archive platform OHMS**.



These gems in the museum's collection offer valuable recollections from varying perspectives of life in Chinatown during the 1920s through 1990s. They include interviews with **Donald Seeto** about playing and coaching youth basketball in New York Chinatown during the 1940s and 1950s; **Dr. Paul Chu** about attending the neighborhood school P.S. 23 during the 1930s through 1940s; and **Cora May Chin**, who reflects on changing gender norms since her girlhood and her mother's bound feet generation, when women were still relatively few in Chinatown. Visit **OHMS** to listen to these and many more newly processed oral histories.



MOCA's oral history processing work is being made possible by a grant from the **National Historical Publications & Records Commission (NHPRC)**. Over the course of three years, the grant will support the digitization of 150 of MOCA's oral histories. This effort is part of a larger ongoing Digitizing and Sharing MOCA's Oral Histories initiative to restore, digitize, and make freely accessible the over 600 interviews the museum has conducted and collected since its inception in 1980.

GHHN Grant-Funded Conservation of Yueqin Complete



Before Treatment Photograph

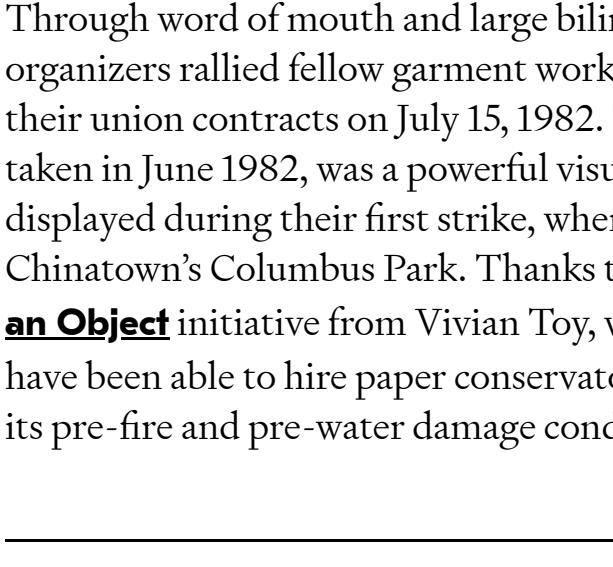


After Treatment Photograph

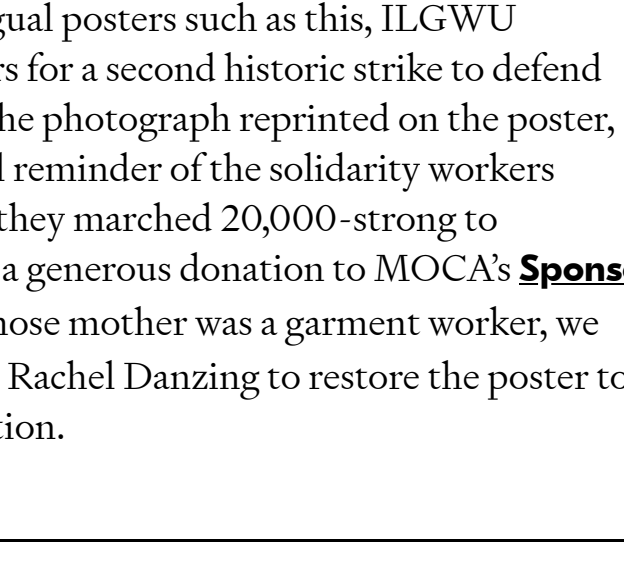
This year, we received another NYSCA/GHHN Conservation Treatment Grant from the **Greater Hudson Heritage Network (GHHN)** to support the repair of a yueqin from our Chinese Musical and Theatrical Association Collection. The Chinese Musical and Theatrical Association was an amateur Cantonese opera club started by mostly restaurant and laundry workers in New York Chinatown in 1931. They inherited many of their elaborate costumes from professional troupes who went out of business during the Great Depression and imported many of their traditional musical instruments from Hong Kong and China. The *yueqin* (月琴, Cantonese *yutkam*) — a traditional Chinese pluck string instrument with a round hollow soundboard, a short fretted neck, and four nylon or silk strings — played a prominent part in Cantonese instrumental ensembles prior to 1926.

Many instruments from the collection were damaged during the January 2020 fire at MOCA's archives or subsequent salvaging process. Thanks to the generous NYSCA/GHHN funding, we were able to hire **A.M. Art Conservation** object conservator Anne Léculier King to repair the yueqin. The repaired instrument will help the museum visually tell the story of this important worker-founded club that has preserved Cantonese opera within the Chinatown community for multiple generations.

1982 Garment Workers Strike Poster Fully Funded and Treatment Complete



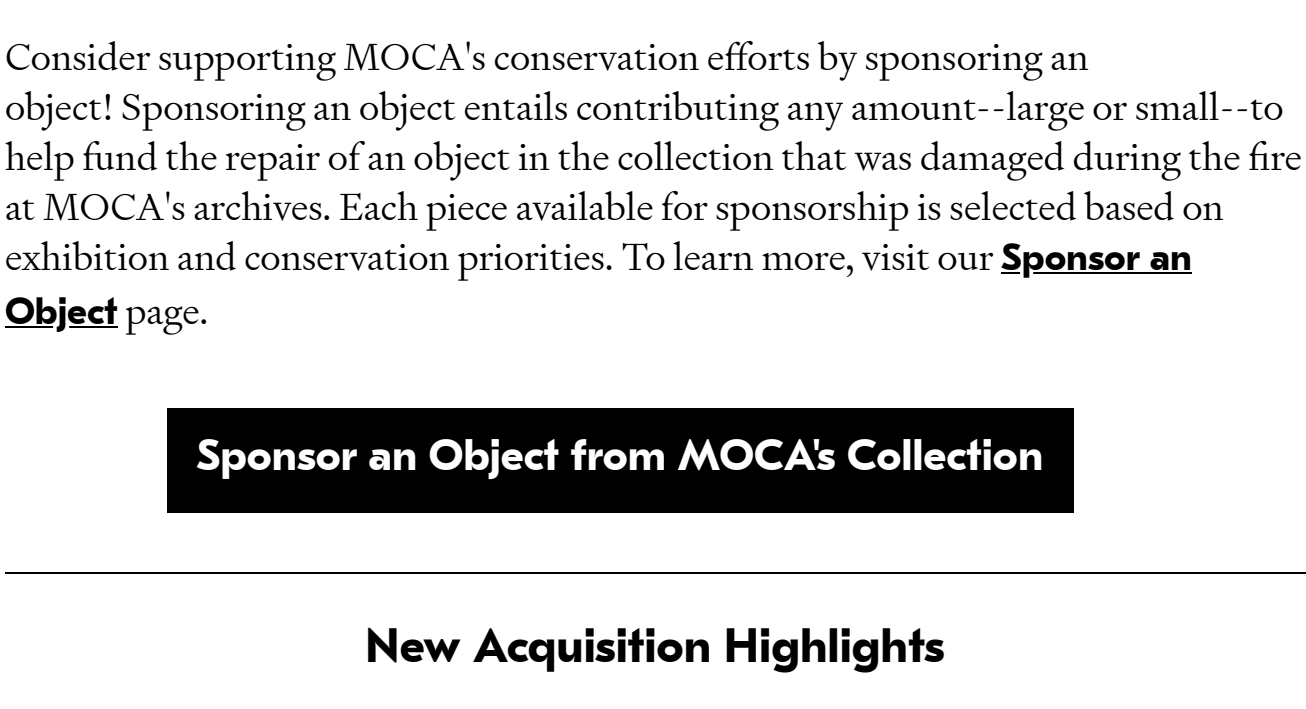
Before Treatment Photograph



After Treatment Photograph

Through word of mouth and large bilingual posters such as this, ILGWU organizers rallied fellow garment workers for a second historic strike to defend their union contracts on July 15, 1982. The photograph reprinted on the poster, taken in June 1982, was a powerful visual reminder of the solidarity workers displayed during their first strike, when they marched 20,000-strong to Chinatown's Columbus Park. Thanks to a generous donation to MOCA's **Sponsor an Object** initiative from Vivian Toy, whose mother was a garment worker, we have been able to hire paper conservator Rachel Danzing to restore the poster to its pre-fire and pre-water damage condition.

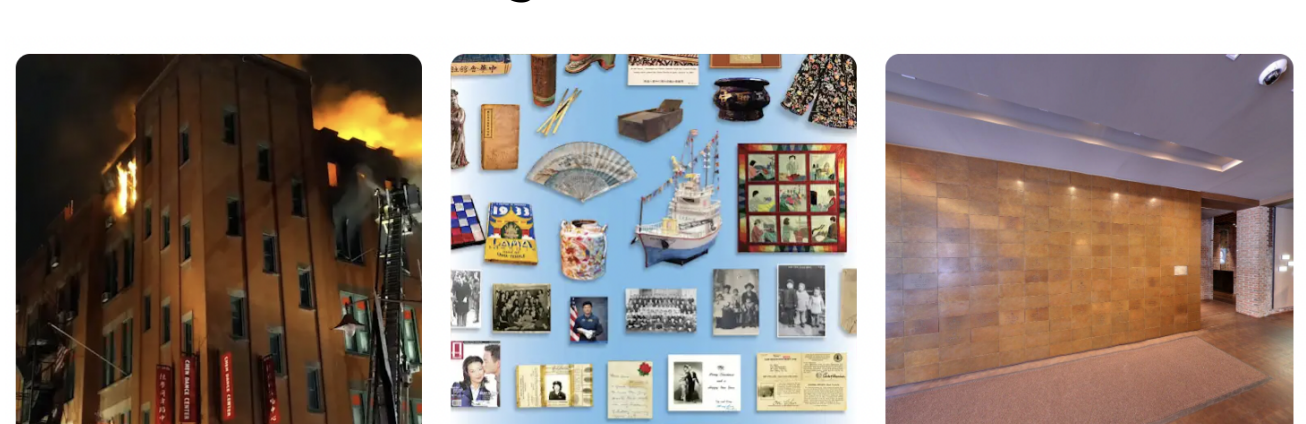
Sponsor an Object



Consider supporting MOCA's conservation efforts by sponsoring an object! Sponsoring an object entails contributing any amount--large or small--to help fund the repair of an object in the collection that was damaged during the fire at MOCA's archives. Each piece available for sponsorship is selected based on exhibition and conservation priorities. To learn more, visit our **Sponsor an Object** page.

Sponsor an Object from MOCA's Collection

New Acquisition Highlights



MOCA continues to acquire new objects into our vast 85,000-object collection. Visit our **New Acquisitions** page or click on an icon above to read more about the Hawaiian Chinese Restaurant House of P.Y. Chong Wartime Menu and other exciting recent acquisitions.

Google Arts & Culture



In 2021, MOCA launched a partnership with Google to make hundreds of digitized images from MOCA's collections freely available on the Google Arts & Culture digital platform.

The latest virtual exhibition, **Chinatown Then and Now: Through the Lens of Emile Bocian**, juxtaposes historical photographs of New York Chinatown with those from the present day and highlights some of the ways that the neighborhood has changed.

MOCA's special virtual exhibition, **Trial by Fire: The Race to Save 200 Years of Chinese American History**, tells the story of the Museum's race against the clock to retrieve, rescue, and repair its archives.

With a Single Step: Stories in the Making of America is a digital version of MOCA's permanent exhibition, and **My MOCA Story** is a crowdsourced social-media storytelling project launched by MOCA at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Explore Google Arts & Culture

Consider Supporting the Work of MOCA Collections

The small staff at MOCA's Collections and Research Center do vital work to care for and offer access to an extensive collection of 85,000+ objects documenting and supporting research on Chinese American history. After the fire, all of the collections need rehousing and an estimated 73 percent need restoration. Support our work through donating to **MOCA's Fire Recovery Fund**. Include the note, "Donation to MOCA's Fire Recovery Fund." Each contribution helps us preserve MOCA's historical treasures for generations to come.

Donate to MOCA's Fire Recovery Fund



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