

A Family History
The Gee Family
Oroville, California
By Herbert W. Gee

As presented to Mr. Charles L. Miller
Department of Parks and Trees
City of Oroville, California

June 1, 2001

1330 Silver Oak Way,
Sacramento, CA 95831

June 1, 2001

Dear Mr. Miller:

It was indeed an honor, being included in the Fiesta Grand Parade and I really appreciate the courtesies extended to me and our families.

Sorry it took so long to send you a picture of our store as per your request. I have looked over our albums and there is only one small photo of our store. I think it is best to have the picture enlarged together with several others that may be of interest.

To better understand our property, I am enclosing a map showing the layout of the brick portion of our store and our adjoining buildings. I drew up the map for The Park Commission "Members who came to interview me in 1982. The rental bedrooms on the right and in the rear up to the kitchen area together with the covered back yard were torn down when the railroad workers stopped coming to Oroville. When my brother Edward and I graduated from CAL Berkeley, we did not have the time to stay in Oroville, so my mother closed up the store and moved to San Francisco where she already had a place. As time goes on, the wooden portion of the property was in disrepair so we had it torn down except the brick building which was then demolished in 1954.

The first picture shows the brick building portion of our store at 1698 Broderick St. at the end of Oak St. At the top was a wooden facade with a sheet metal covering. The dark band just below the facade was the support of a porch that extended out to the edge of the sidewalk. In the early days when we have the roast pig, we hung it on a hook from the porch

rafter and sold the roast pork on a chopping block. The conduit in the center lead to a light in the middle of the porch. The iron window was on the left. The front iron doors was behind the screen doors in the center. There was an iron door in the back. The brick front was covered with a coat of white stucco. The Chinese grapefruit tree planted by my father over a hundred years ago is on the left with fruits visible in the picture. The car in front was my 1947 De Soto.

The second picture shows the backyard of our store. Please note that we have already taken down the covered portion of our backyard and the four bedrooms up to the kitchen area. The loft with the peak roof was where we stayed during the flood of 1907. The small tree on the right is an orange tree. The taller tree in back is the Chinese grapefruit tree.

The third picture shows my father holding my brother Edward. Ed and Mable met when they were at Cal Berkeley. When Mable graduated in 1933, she went back to Canton where her brother was the Governor of the Province. Ed left for Canton right after graduation in 1934 and they were married that year. Ed and Mable came back to California when the Japanese invaded China and they settled in Berkeley. They have 3 sons and daughter Gloria. Ed passed away in 1980 at age 70 in Berkeley. Mable died in 1998 at age 92 in Berkeley.

The fourth picture shows me about age one. Unfortunately, my father passed away in late 1911 and I was born on February, 1912, so I never knew my father. After finishing Bird Street Grammar School, our mother sent Ed and me to a High School in San Francisco and Chinese School in the evening. After I graduated from Cal and before I found a permanent job, our daughter Marilyn (dec., 1997) was born in Oroville. Eventually, I

found work in my chosen profession as a Bridge Designer with the State Bridge Department (now known as Cal Trans). I retired 33 years after 31 years with the Dep't.

The fifth picture shows my mother with my brother Edward on the left and me on the right. My mother was born and raised in Marysville. It was an arranged marriage. My mother was 19 and my father was 48 when they married. The marriage lasted less than 3 years when my father with heart trouble died.

The sixth picture is another one of me standing on the levee in back of our store.

The seventh and eighth pictures are not very historically significant being more recent.

In 1978, with the invitation by Mr. James Lenhoff, the Historian of the Oroville Heritage Council, my brother and I, together with our families, attended the unveiling of the Plaque commemorating the location of the Christian Mission School. The school was destroyed by the flood of 1907. The Plaque is located about 500' east of the Temple on the other side of Broderick St.

In the dedication photo, my brother Edward is second from the left and I am third from the left.

In the group picture, taken in front of James Lenhoff's home at 1084 Montgomery St. My brother is eighth from the right, my wife is ninth from-the right and our daughter (dec. 1997) is eleventh from the right. I am sixth from the left and Mable is seventh from the left. Gloria was in Hong Kong at the time.

Incidentally, Mr. Lenhoff salvaged the sign with our store name on it from the wrecker. The sign consisted of 3 Chinese letters painted black on a gold back ground on 2' x 4' board. It was hung in Mr. Lenhoff's kitchen.

I am enclosing my Oroville Bird St. Grammar School Graduation Diploma and The Grammar Grade Penmanship Certificate. During the Park Commission interview in 1982, Mrs. Lillian Tandy mentioned that the two Articles should belong in a museum, so I am taking up her words on it.

Rather than just send you these pictures without an explanation doesn't mean much, although it may take up some of your valuable time it will give you a little insight of our families.

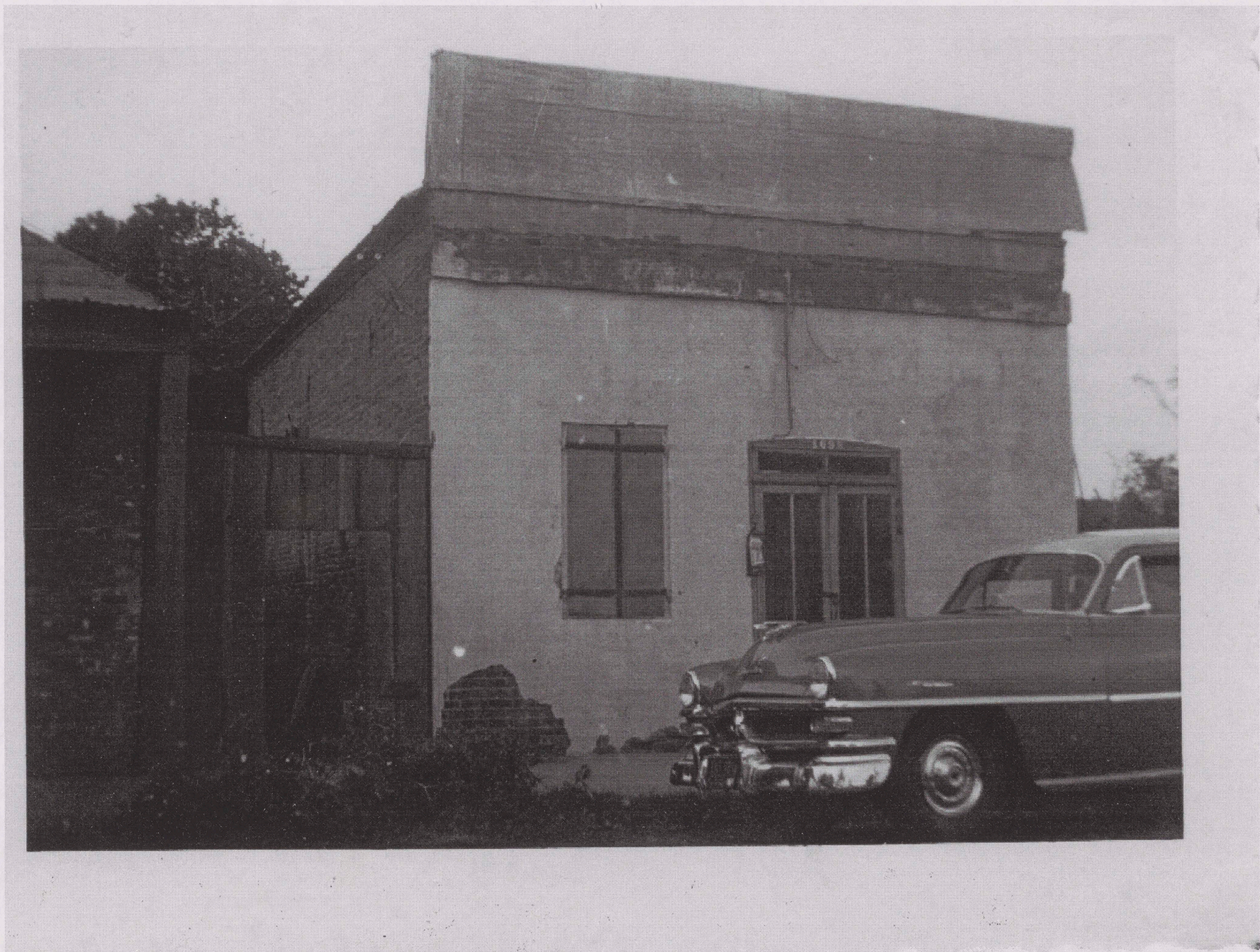
Michelle, the Historian, may be interested in the foregoing.

Since I have been away for over 45 years, occasionally, I and members of our families, came back to visit the Temple and see the Chinese grapefruit tree. I never forget my birth place in Oroville.

Yours truly,

Herbert Gee

Herbert Gee





Backyard of Jee Wah Tong - Oroville





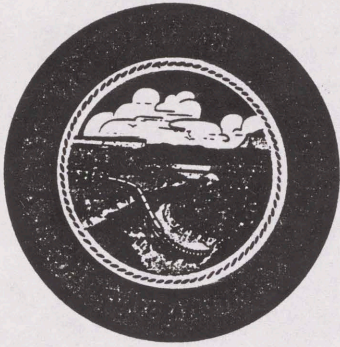






***Chinese Christian Mission School Dedication
Feb. 27, 1978***





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DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND TREES
(530) 538-2415

June 26, 2001

Herbert Gee
1330 Silver Oak Way
Sacramento, CA 95832

Dear Mr. Gee:

Thank you so much for the generous gifts. The City of Oroville Park Commission voted unanimously to accept your donation at their June 25, 2001 meeting. The history behind all of the wonderful and interesting items will be at the temple for many years to come. These items are a great addition to the Chinese Temple for everyone to enjoy.

The Park Commission appreciates your past contributions to the Chinese Temple. If you should have any questions or if I may be of assistance, please feel free to contact me at (530)538-2415.

Sincerely,

Charles L. Miller
Director of Parks and Trees