

## NEW YORK CITY CHINATOWN, OUR REMEMBERANCES

By William (Bill) Chin and  
Gloria (Chin) Fong (widow of Benson Fong, Charlie Chan's #1 son)

Our mother, June Dye Wong Chin, was born at 37 Mott Street in 1902. She truly was a New Yorker and although we lived in Detroit, we spent most summers in NYC Chinatown. Everyone there had a NY sense of humor. I thought the many nicknames were really funny, such as "Red Tie," "Radio," etc.

An old photograph of my mother and friends enjoying a party at the "Gee's Beach Club" was one of our favorites. The "beach club" was tongue-in-cheek for what current New Yorkers call "tar beach!" Many a hot summer day was spent at the "Gee's Beach Club," which was the rooftop of my godparents, Harvey and Margaret Gee's building.

Our parents and their friends would gather around the Chinatown Pharmacy at 47 Mott Street run by Uncle Hing and Uncle King. Some of their friends included Uncle Shavey Lee "The Mayor of Chinatown." Mother had two unique friends, Emily Shek, who went on to become an officer in the Women's Army Corp (WAC's) and Hazel Ying Lee, who became a pilot with the WASP, women pilots ferrying fighters and bombers during World War II. Unfortunately Hazel was killed in a crash in Michigan. They were truly noteworthy Chinese-Americans.

Mother also attended True Light Church under Miss Mary Banta. Going to the church's summer camp in Bradley Beach, New Jersey, enjoying the boardwalk and Asbury Park are such wonderful memories that we savor. It was during the Depression, but we felt we had everything.

We cherish the memories of our mother, especially since we lost her in 1944.