



A VERY SPECIAL PARK

# Heritage

The Newsletter of Green Lawn Cemetery  
Winter 2023

## Family Inquiry Leads to Cultural History Lesson

A family recently contacted the cemetery to inquire about the location of their great grand uncle, Joe Chan. His obituary and online sites indicated a Green Lawn burial, but he was not in our online database. This most often indicates the remains were later moved, and in this case the details reveal a unique chapter in our community history.

At 20, Chan Lee immigrated to the U.S. in 1878 from Kwantung Province, China to work on the transcontinental railroad. He then moved east establishing laundries in Atlanta and North Carolina before making his way to Columbus in 1903 with his wife and three children. The Chinese population of Columbus was tiny at this time (Chan's wife was one of only three full Chinese women living in Ohio), and when the Lees had another son, Chan Moon, he was celebrated as the first Chinese baby born in Columbus. Moon grew up to attend the University of Michigan and served with the Flying Tigers.

Chan Lee and his wife later moved to Cleveland where his wife died during the Spanish Flu outbreak of 1918. Chan himself passed in 1924 and was returned to China for burial.

Joe Chan was one of the older children born in North Carolina. He was the first Chinese student enrolled in Columbus public schools.

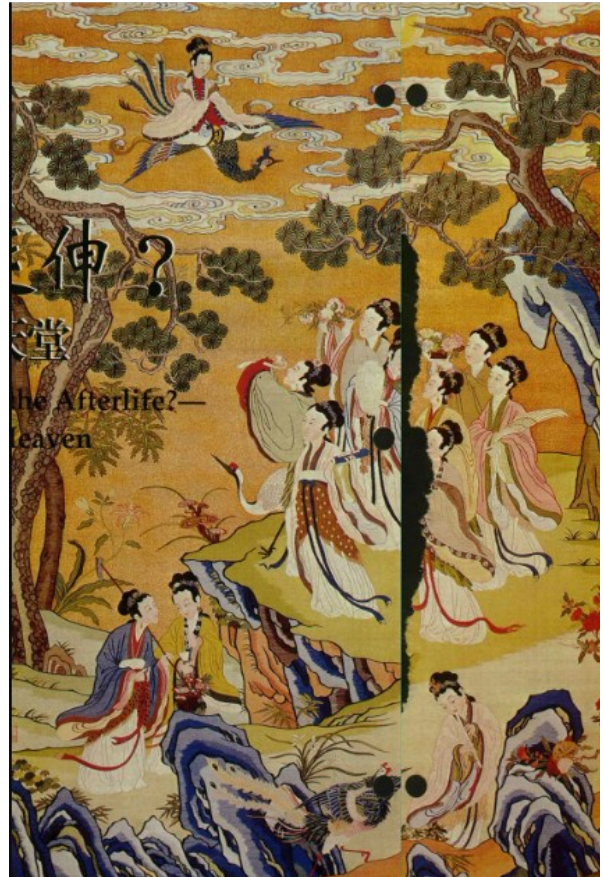
On May 19<sup>th</sup>, 1915, at age 17, Joe died at the Franklin County Tuberculosis Hospital and was buried at Green Lawn. Interestingly, his death in 1915 did not prevent his being drafted in 1918!

To find Joe, we identified the sections Green Lawn used for single graves in 1915, then scanned thousands of lines looking for burials that were later removed. When this occurs, a red line is put through the entry in the lot book with a note on when and where the remains were taken, and other records such as the individual interment card are removed from the records. We found Joe's entry in Section 76, Single Space 87, with a note that he had been "removed and shipped to China October 22, 1936".

This coincided with family records that his mother had also been removed from Lakeview Cemetery in Cleveland and shipped to China in October of 1936.

Reburial was a custom practiced in southern China in ancient times. The remains would be dug up after many years, cleaned, and the bones reburied in a crock. This also happened in Europe, but there it was often later in history to conserve cemetery space, while in China and SE Asia this seems to have been a ceremonial task. As the Chinese spread in the 19<sup>th</sup>

*(Continued on page 3)*



*Influenced by 3 non-exclusive major religions, local tradition, and foreign influences, Chinese views of death and the afterlife are rich and complex. This tapestry depicts one possible afterlife.*

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## President's Message



Kelly Casto, President GLCA

Hello!

What this winter has lacked in snow it has made up for in maintenance projects at Green Lawn!

One big project is a new roof and skylights over the north room as well as some electrical and lighting work in Huntington Chapel. Another is the removal of the 12' tall iron gates and wood doors from the Hayden mausoleum and getting them in for repair and restoration. It required 10 people to lift one of the iron gates! Our ongoing effort to repair old storm sewers continues, but already our roads have had much less problems with standing water.

While working on repairs, we also have our eyes towards the future. Plans for new outdoor crypt space are moving forward and we are planning some impressive additions to commemorate our 175th anniversary in 2024.

I would like to thank Memorial Properties for their hard work managing the upkeep of Our Very Special Park, and our families and donors for continuing to make this work possible!

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## Recent Gatherings at Green Lawn

**Right:** “Remember the Fallen...Honor Those Who Serve...Teach Children the Value of Freedom.” Green Lawn Cemetery was proud to host Wreaths Across America on December 17th for the laying of Remembrance wreaths. Over 900 wreaths were placed on veterans’ graves in Section 104—the largest veterans’ section in Green Lawn Cemetery, as well as the graves of our five Medal of Honor recipients.



**Left:** The Winter Walking tour on January 24th drew quite a crowd. 80 visitors joined Doreen Uhas Sauer and Randy Rogers on this two-hour guided tour. It began inside Huntington Chapel, then meandered outside to explore more of Green Lawn’s treasures. Proceeds benefit restoration projects at Green Lawn.

## Family Inquiry Leads to Cultural History Lesson

(Continued from page 1)

century, the practice continued, especially in North America, with the new twist of returning the remains to China. Ostensibly this was to allow families to make sacrifices at the family altar and maintain the graves.

That said, this was an expensive practice, and there is some question as to why repatriation became such a strong tradition in America and Canada.

Typically the remains were disinterred with elaborate ceremony resembling a traditional funeral with offerings of food and wine, firecrackers and other actions to remove any malignant spirits from the area, burning of paper to provide clothing in the afterlife, and incense to appease the god Joss. Often remains were easily identified because a brick with the person's name was entombed with the body. The remains were then placed in



*A modern Chinese funeral service*

tin-lined wood boxes about 1' x 1' x 3' (yes, some disassembly required...).

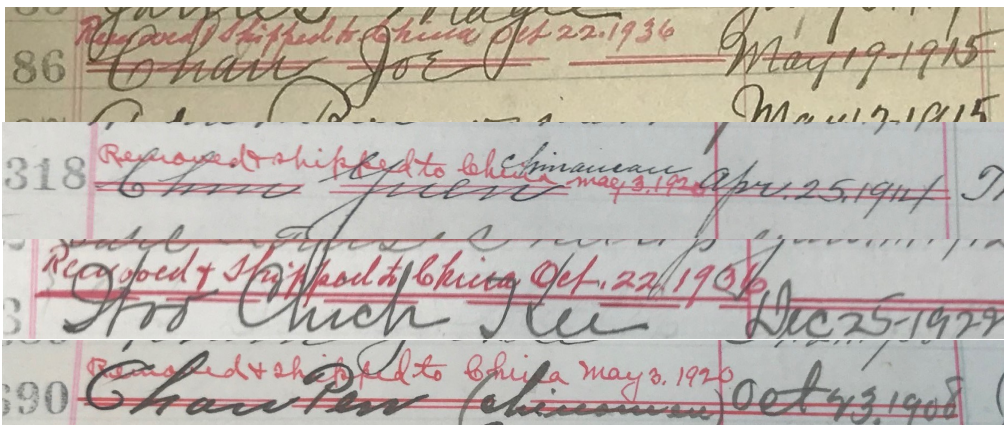
The boxes went to San Francisco, then Hong Kong, and finally to China where in most cases family would claim the body and attend to local burial. Unclaimed remains would be buried communally in a charity cemetery. (The Lees went back to their home village and were undoubtedly cared for by the family)

This entire process was facilitated by the local chapters of the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association. That this was a cottage industry supported by soliciting donations from Chinese families probably explains the practice more than any actual preference or religious belief. A few even spoke against it as an economic drain on Chinese communities still trying to establish generational wealth and an unnecessary disturbance of the dead, but the practice remained in vogue for most of a century.

The first Chinese burial at Green Lawn was Ong Que Ching, who was noted as having a full Chinese burial on August 30, 1886. He was also among the first group of four removals in September of 1895, a day long event that made regional headlines both for its ceremony and ghoulishness. Before that day was over, one of the workers was seen screaming and running from the cemetery never to return, followed by dark laughter from his co-workers!

Green Lawn was a popular cemetery for the Asian community up until the 1950s when a prominent Chinese businessman died and a request for a Sunday funeral was denied. Green Lawn had long adhered to a policy of no Sunday burials with only a few exceptions in cases of small pox and similar diseases. It was a decision Green Lawn later regretted, as the Chinese community moved to Union Cemetery, and only over the last 20 years have they started to return to Green Lawn.

This tradition complicates genealogy and leaves the cemetery with little trace of the pioneer generations of the Chinese community beyond lined out entries in our books. Fortunately these records and news accounts of families like that of Chan Lee and his son Joe Chan preserve their story and allow us to tell it today.



Entries from our lot books showing Chinese burials that were later removed to China, Joe Chan is the top entry. Note that in some cases the deceased was recorded at the time of burial as a "Chinaman". Racist by today's standards, these notes on some minority burials do help us in studying the history of the cemetery - in this case it helps us see that while Blacks and White burials were segregated during this period, Chinese-Americans were buried in "White" sections.

## In The News...a selection of articles related to our feature

Editors Note: these articles are shared as they were printed and do not always conform to modern sensibilities

Columbus Dispatch (published as Columbus Evening Dispatch) - February 28, 1910 - page 2  
February 28, 1910 Columbus Dispatch (published as Columbus Evening Dispatch) Columbus, Ohio Page 2

### SECOND CHINESE BABY IS BORN IN COLUMBUS

Parents Are Mr. and Mrs. Chan  
Lee, Who Already Have  
Five Children.

The second Chinese baby to be born in Columbus arrived Sunday afternoon at 4:15 o'clock, the happy father being Chan Lee of 423 East Long street. A boy was born to Mr. and Mrs. Chan about two years ago, it having the honor of being the first Columbus-born Chinese baby. The baby which arrived Sunday is a boy, making the fifth boy in his family, and there is also a little girl, making six in all.

The new arrival has been given a name. He will be called Chan San, as the Chinese family name is always given first instead of last, as in America, and had this new little Chan followed the example set by his ancestors for centuries back he would have been born in Canton, as that city has been the home of the Chans for many years. The boy which arrived two years ago is called Chan Moon.

Dr. Magruder attended Mrs. Chan, and both she and the baby are doing nicely. The baby's American name, at the suggestion of Sun Joly, will be "Denny."

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Columbus Dispatch (published as Columbus Evening Dispatch) - May 19, 1915 - page 17  
May 19, 1915 Columbus Dispatch (published as Columbus Evening Dispatch) Columbus, Ohio Page 17

### JOE CHAN DEAD.

Was First Chinese Boy to be Admitted  
to Columbus Public  
Schools.

Joe Chan, aged 17, son of Lee Chan, Chinese landryman, died at the Franklin county tuberculosis hospital Wednesday morning. He was the first Chinese boy ever admitted to the public schools of Columbus, and the first one that had attained to the high school. Prior to his illness he was a student at Commercial High school, where he was very popular among both students and teachers. The boy was very bright and showed an aptitude at his books that was considered unusual.

He was born in Salisbury, N. C. Besides his parents he leaves five brothers and two sisters. Two of the boys and one of the girls are now in the public schools. The family has resided in Columbus for 12 years. The father conducts a laundry and the family lives at 423 East Long street.

Funeral services will be conducted at Schoedinger's chapel, Saturday morning at 10 o'clock, Rev. H. W. Kellogg of the Broad Street M. E. church, officiating. Burial will be made in Green Lawn cemetery.

Columbus Dispatch (published as Columbus Evening Dispatch) - October 27, 1908 - page 3  
October 27, 1908 Columbus Dispatch (published as Columbus Evening Dispatch) Columbus, Ohio Page 3

### Chinese Funeral

Chinamen of Columbus and neighboring cities secretly conducted services over the remains of Chan Pia, formerly of 208 North Third street, in Green Lawn cemetery, Monday. There were no people but Chinese present, and no Chinese women at that. The funeral services were conducted Sunday afternoon, at the undertaking establishment on Spring street, and the spirit of the Chinaman was sent on its way to the beating of tom-toms and through an aroma of joss sticks.

Columbus Dispatch (published as Columbus Evening Dispatch) - March 25, 1914 - page 14  
March 25, 1914 Columbus Dispatch (published as Columbus Evening Dispatch) Columbus, Ohio Page 14

**WANTED—Experienced white woman to work in laundry. Chan Lee Laundry, 423 E. Long St.**

## In The News...a selection of articles related to our feature

Columbus Dispatch (published as Columbus Evening Dispatch) - April 10, 1905 - page 1  
110, 1905 Columbus Dispatch (published as Columbus Evening Dispatch) Columbus, Ohio Page 1

### IN FULL REGALIA CHINESE MASONS DECORATE GRAVE

Leave Eatables for Departed  
Chong Gin.

Also a Vacant Chair in Fan  
Tan Game.

Celestials' Decoration Day  
Ceremonies Carried Out  
at Green Lawn.

With all the pomp and ceremony conceived by the Oriental ritual for Chinese Free Masons, about 40 Celestials, all members of the Columbus colony, gathered at Green Lawn cemetery Sunday morning to pay their respects to the memory of Chong Gin, a Chinese Free Mason, who died about three years ago and who was buried in that cemetery.

#### IN FULL REGALIA

A number of sight-seers gathered about the group of Orientals who were clothed in their full regalia of the order, and watched the ceremony with interest.

The old custom of exhuming the bodies after burial, and sending the bones back to Chinese soil for interment, in order that the dead might see "Heaven," has been abandoned, as it was an expensive custom, and civilization and

enlightenment has disclosed to "John" that the spirit of the departed Chink can take as happy a flight from one clime as from another. Consequently the annual rites over the dead are now performed in this country, as well as in China, by the faithful Mongolian.

#### DECORATION DAY.

Sun Joly, the chop suey man, and one of the most intelligent of the Columbus Chinese colony, explained that the date for such ceremonies in China changes with the Chinese calendar. This year it was on February 6, and in a measure, he explained, it compared to Decoration day, as the observance is general, and is accompanied by parades and music and general festivities.

#### LEFT EATABLES.

The Chinamen who visited Green Lawn Sunday, to carry out the Masonic rites over the grave of Chong Gin, placed all kinds of eatables upon the mantel, including chop suey, rice, chicken, oriental candies and fruits, tobacco and cigarettes. After partaking of the feast made at the side of the grave, the Celestials departed for the home of one of the party to finish the day in a game of "fan tan" with a vacant seat for the dead Chinaman placed at the table.

Columbus Dispatch (published as Columbus Evening Dispatch) - August 22, 1904 - page 10  
August 22, 1904 Columbus Dispatch (published as Columbus Evening Dispatch) Columbus, Ohio Page 10

### FOR CHINESE DEAD.

Graves of Deceased Friends at  
Green Lawn Remembered.

"The Feast of the Dead" was celebrated Sunday by the Chinese of Columbus at Green Lawn cemetery. It is a custom of the ancient race to annually gather round the graves of deceased friends and perform certain ceremonies. This peculiar ceremony is celebrated in August an incense is burned and tomtoms beaten. There is only one Chinaman buried in Green Lawn now, but formerly there were ten or twelve who were subsequently transferred to the Chinese cemetery at San Francisco.

## News from Memorial Properties

*Operating Green Lawn Since 2019!*

### “It’s All Been Taken Care Of...”

Memorial Properties is committed to providing guidance and support *before* a death occurs in your family. Through our community outreach program we offer education and the opportunity to pre-arrange for the inevitable. And our family service counselors are trained to guide you through the entire process.

Offering organizations, companies, and faith congregations a presentation on the topic of pre-arrangement is one way we fulfill this commitment to the central Ohio community. Another is through free preplanning luncheons at familiar local establishments where people feel welcome and comfortable. This setting allows people to learn and ask questions in a relaxed environment.

Once people understand the many benefits of pre-arrangement it often makes sense to act. When you buy a cemetery plot or cremation niche today you pay a fixed price protecting you against surging inflation. It also prevents emotional overspending that so often occurs when a survivor must make quick decisions under emotional distress. Finally pre-arrangement affords you the opportunity to make smaller, affordable payments over time, rather than paying one lump sum at the time of death.

Rather leaving you’re loved ones wondering what you would have wanted, you can make sure your preferences and final wishes are expressed - before you are gone. Do you want cremation or burial? Interred in an a mausoleum or below ground. Where do you want your ashes scattered? What kind of headstone or memorialization do you want? Do you want a traditional service with your favorite hymns and music, or just a simple graveside service. Planning and expressing *your* preferences before *your* passing keeps your family from having to guess what you would have wanted. In other words, peace of mind.

That’s the beauty of pre-arrangement. It meets the needs of the future with satisfaction of security, for both you and your loved ones.



## Upcoming Green Lawn Cemetery Events

**Wednesday, February 22, 11:30am or 6:00pm: Preplanning Seminar (Lunch or Dinner):** Preplanning for your funeral or cremation just makes sense. Join us at TAT Ristorante De Famiglia for a free seminar and complimentary meal. You will learn about the considerable savings possible, sparing your family emotional burden, and more. Call 1-833-535-0558. Reservation Code 4002.

**Sunday, April 9, 7:00am: Easter Sunrise Service.** Emmanuel Lutheran Church will be hold Easter Sunrise Service in the historic Huntington Chapel mausoleum. Emeritus Pastor Floyd Stolzenburg will officiate.

**Saturday, April 15, 1:00pm: Green Lawn Cemetery Bike Tour:** Green Lawn partners with Outdoor Pursuits to offer guided bike tours narrated by Matt Wolf and Randy Rogers. Tours begin and end at Green Lawn Abbey at 700 Greenlawn Avenue. Bring your own bike or Outdoor Pursuits can provide one. Helmets are required. This is a fundraiser and advanced registration is required t: <https://app.donorview.com/wkX4O>

**Saturday, April 22, 10:00am-12:00pm: Earth Day Litter Cleanup.** Volunteers are needed to help keep Green Lawn Cemetery green, clean, and dignified. All supplies and tools provided. Held in partnership with Earth Day Columbus 2023. Meet beside the Green Lawn Cemetery main office for orientation.

**Sunday, April 30, 2:00-4:00pm: Green Lawn Cemetery Spring Walk.** Join us on the path less traveled as Executive Director Randy Rogers and author Doreen Uhas Sauer lead us on a narrated tour of unique sculptures, graves with unusual stories about residents of yesteryear. Starts inside the historic Huntington Chapel. This is a fundraiser and advanced registration is required at [www.greenlawncemetery.org/events](http://www.greenlawncemetery.org/events)

**Sunday, May 14, 9am-3pm: Mother's Day at Green Lawn.** Pick up a complimentary carnation in honor of Mothers who are missed and remembered on this special day. Carnations are a symbol of the purity, strength, and endurance of a Mother's love. The Huntington Chapel will be open for visitation.

**Monday, May 29, 9am-3pm: Memorial Day Open House.** Hosted by Green Lawn Abbey and Green Lawn Cemetery. Join us for refreshments at The Abbey and a lunch cookout in front of Huntington Chapel. Guided tours of Green Lawn Abbey and the historic Huntington Chapel are planned. All are welcome!

## Latest Events and Updates

**Website:** <https://www.greenlawncemetery.org/events/>

**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/GreenLawnCemeteryColumbus>



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**Starting October 24th:**  
9:00 AM - 5:00 PM



**OFFICE**

Monday - Friday  
9:00 AM - 4:30 PM  
Saturday  
9:00 AM - 2:00 PM  
Sunday  
By appointment



**CHAPEL**

Visit Office for access



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**Special Thanks to our Green Lawn Trustees and  
Volunteers**

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