

Certificate of Identity

The Huntington's exhibition "What Now, Part 2" featured a certificate of identity from the U.S. Department of Labor. This Immigration Service Certificate of Identity document was issued to Chan Yuen Ying in San Francisco on September 8, 1922. For a 19-year period (1909–28), the U.S. government required Chinese people who had legal status to have a certificate of identity. Since Ying was married to immigration lawyer Kenneth Fung, she was able to come to the United States under an exception in the Chinese Exclusion Act. This official government document is part of our immigration history and provides us with insight into the foundations of our immigration policies.

Click on the image to watch a video about this certificate of identity.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OHclchqjyYU>

Now it's time to write questions for an interview!

Materials

- Piece of paper and something to write with or a computer/tablet

Steps

1. Imagine you are a journalist who can travel back in time to interview Chan Yuen Ying. What would you want to talk about? What would you like to know about her life? Would you ask what her hardships were? Or what it was like leaving China for America?
2. Write a list of questions you would like to ask her on a piece of paper or type them on a computer/tablet.

Questions

1. Read your questions aloud to your friends, family, or classmates. Compare your questions with the ones they wrote. Are any the same? Which ones are different?
2. This certificate of identity is more than 100 years old. What are some documents we have today that you think people will save and study 100 years from now? Why?

