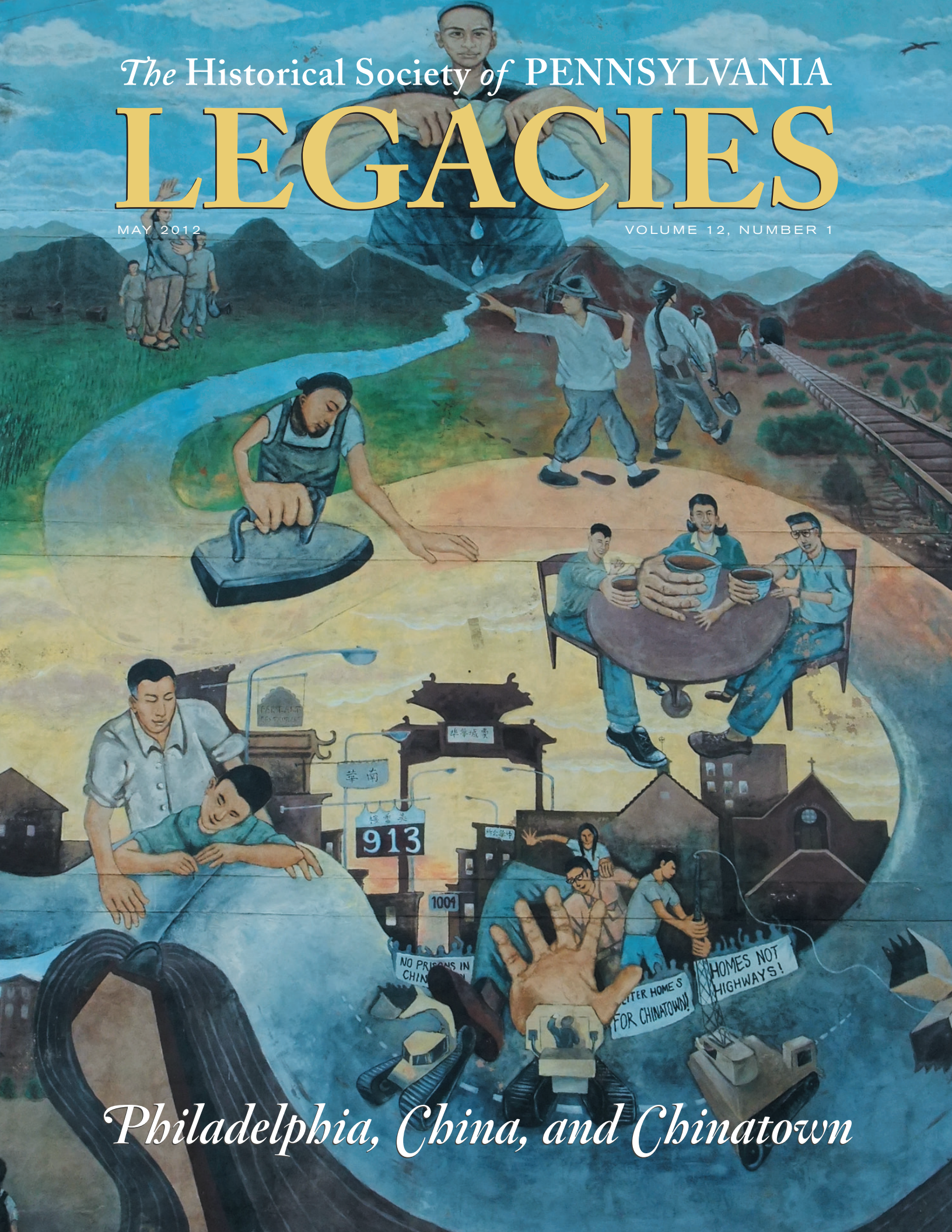
The Historical Society *of* PENNSYLVANIA

LEGACIES

MAY 2012 VOLUME 12, NUMBER 1



Philadelphia, China, and Chinatown

Recognizing Our Supporters

The Historical Society of Pennsylvania offers its sincerest appreciation to the Connelly Foundation for its recent three-year pledge to support our ethnic history programming. In 2002 HSP merged with the Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies; since that time, we have strived to perpetuate the institute's goal of promoting understanding and respect for America's ethnic, racial, and immigrant diversity.

Since the merger, HSP has experimented with different ways to increase the visibility and sustainability of the Balch name and mission. One of HSP's strategic objectives is to "define the Balch brand and develop a plan for integrating it into all programs and publications." This issue of *Pennsylvania Legacies*, focusing on the Philadelphia region's Chinese American community—and particularly on the development of Philadelphia's Chinatown—is just one example of how we carry over the Balch mission.

Thanks to the Connelly Foundation, over the next three years HSP will be able to implement educational programming focused on the history of immigration and our region's ethnic groups and promote use of the Balch collections by supporting a one-month research fellowship each year that will create new scholarship focused on ethnic and immigrant history. The goal of HSP's ethnic history programming is not only to educate about Pennsylvania's cultural heritage but also to provide historical context for contemporary issues and raise awareness about issues of tolerance and prejudice.

Over the next year, with support from the Connelly Foundation, we plan to complement this issue of *Pennsylvania Legacies* with a collaborative educational program in the fall as well as a genealogy workshop in the spring that focuses on researching Chinese ancestry. HSP's first Connelly-supported fellow will begin research this July.

The Connelly Foundation has a solid reputation for supporting diversity and cultural heritage throughout the Philadelphia region, specifically through its past support of the Balch Institute and of HSP's *PhilaPlace*, a website of neighborhood history and culture. We applaud the foundation for the valuable role it continues to play in our community.

Images of HSP programs celebrating various ethnic traditions, 2009–11.

The Historical Society of Pennsylvania inspires people to create a better future through historical understanding. We envision a world where everyone understands the past, engages in the present, and works together to create a better tomorrow.

To learn more about the Historical Society of Pennsylvania and how you can support its extraordinary collections, its programs, and its publications, please visit our website at www.hsp.org or contact Marygrace Gilmore, Senior Director of Development, at mgilmore@hsp.org or 215-732-6200 ext. 217.

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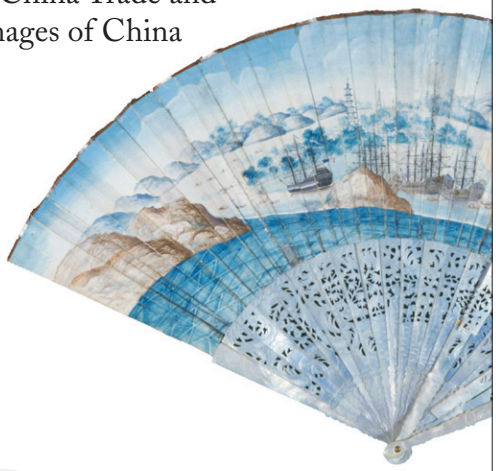
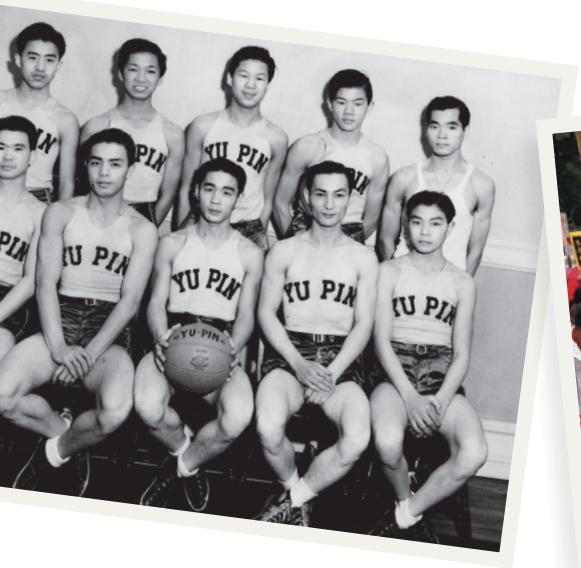
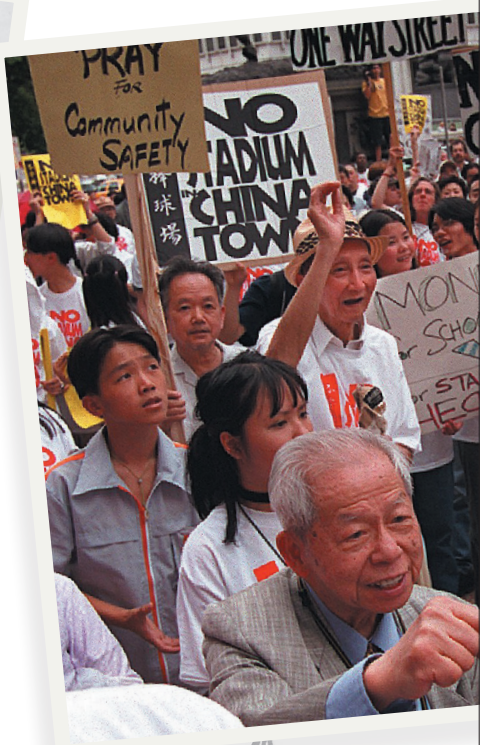






ON THE COVER

The mural at 10th and Winter Streets, created in 1995 by Arturo Ho, Giz, N. Phung, and H. Tran, emphasizes key themes in the history of Chinatown: the hard work of early sojourners and laundry workers, family life, the fight to Save Chinatown, the redevelopment of Chinatown, and current concerns about education. Photo courtesy of Tamara Gaskell.

Unless otherwise noted, all images in *Pennsylvania Legacies* are from the collections of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

 (ISSN 1544-6360)

China and the United States: A History with Deep Roots

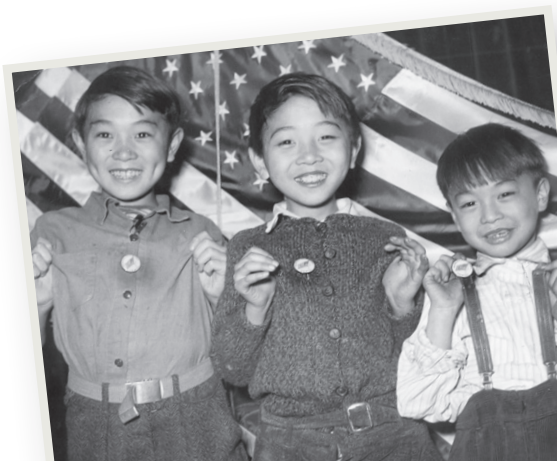
The relationship between the United States and China is both long and complicated. While we tend to think of the present era as the age of globalization, the United States has always been tied to the wider world, and Philadelphia, as the nation's earliest capital and leading port, was a cosmopolitan city from its earliest days. The city's global ties only increased in the 19th and 20th centuries as immigrants from around the world joined older immigrant groups in their search for economic opportunity and political and religious freedom. China and the Chinese people who have made Philadelphia their home are essential to the history of this city and nation.

Today, China is our largest trading partner. In 2011, the United States exported $103.9 million in goods to China and imported an astounding $399.3 million in return. This deficit and human rights concerns have vexed this important economic relationship. Meanwhile, Chinese immigrants continue to move to the United States. The 2010 census counted 17.3 million US residents of Asian descent, or 5.6 percent of the total population. That number represented a 46 percent growth in the Asian American population since 2000 (compared with 10 percent for the population as a whole), more than any other major racial group. Asians of Chinese descent, at about 4 million residents, made up the largest segment. In Philadelphia, there were over 30,000 residents of Chinese descent in 2010—up from fewer than 20,000 in 2000—making it the US city with the 10th largest number of Chinese American residents. It is much more than foreign trade, then, that binds these two nations together. Chinese Americans are—and have long been—an important part of our country's social fabric.

This issue of *Pennsylvania Legacies* focuses on the history of the United States' and Philadelphia's relationship with China and on the history of Philadelphia's Chinatown, which coalesced in the late 19th century and has become an essential part of this city of neighborhoods and of immigrants. As Jonathan Goldstein points out, the birth of the United States' China trade coincided with the birth of the nation, as merchants looked for new trading partners after British ports closed to US ships. Goldstein explores not only the importance of the early China trade to the prosperity of Philadelphia and the new nation (a troubled relationship even in those early years, as western merchants turned to the illegal opium trade to secure Chinese goods) but also early Americans' fascination with China and its "exotic" people, architecture, and goods. Kate Wilson describes the early development of Philadelphia's Chinatown, which, like other Chinatowns in eastern US cities, began as Chinese men were being driven out of the western states as work on the transcontinental railroad came to an end. Anti-Chinese sentiment led to passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882, and immigration restrictions meant that the Chinese community in the United States was primarily a community of men. Not until after World War II did restrictions ease enough to allow Chinatown to become a community of families. Roseann Liu takes up the story in the mid-20th century, when passage of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 and the Vietnam War spurred a new wave of immigration from Asia. Immigrants from Hong Kong and from other Southeast Asian countries, many of Chinese descent, settled in Chinatown, diversifying it socially and culturally. As more families settled in the neighborhood, residents struggled to build and protect the institutions that served families, and especially children. Liu tells the story of the founding of the only public school in Chinatown, the Folk Arts and Cultural Treasures School (FACTS), not established until 2005. Throughout the latter half of the 20th century, and still today, Chinatown's residents have had to fight to preserve their neighborhood. Located in the heart of Philadelphia's Center City, Chinatown has been boxed in and threatened by major development projects even as its population continued to grow. Mary Yee recounts the struggles of the Save Chinatown movement of the 1960s and '70s, describing what the movement accomplished not just by the buildings and institutions it saved but through the strength and power both individuals and the community derived from participation in this common struggle. That sense of connection and purpose continues to inspire Chinatown's residents and supporters today, including John Chin, director of the Philadelphia Chinatown Development Corporation, who concludes our issue with a Food for Thought essay that is both nostalgic and full of hope for Chinatown's future. Debbie Wei, a founder of FACTS, builds on several of these essays in our educator pages, providing teachers with suggestions on ways to use these articles in the classroom and with a lesson plan about movements for social justice and social change.

The history of Philadelphia's long relationship with China and of the Chinese immigrants and their descendants who have made this city their home is a significant chapter of our local and national story, one that speaks to larger issues of citizenship and rights, the meaning of community, and the diversity that enriches our cities and nation.

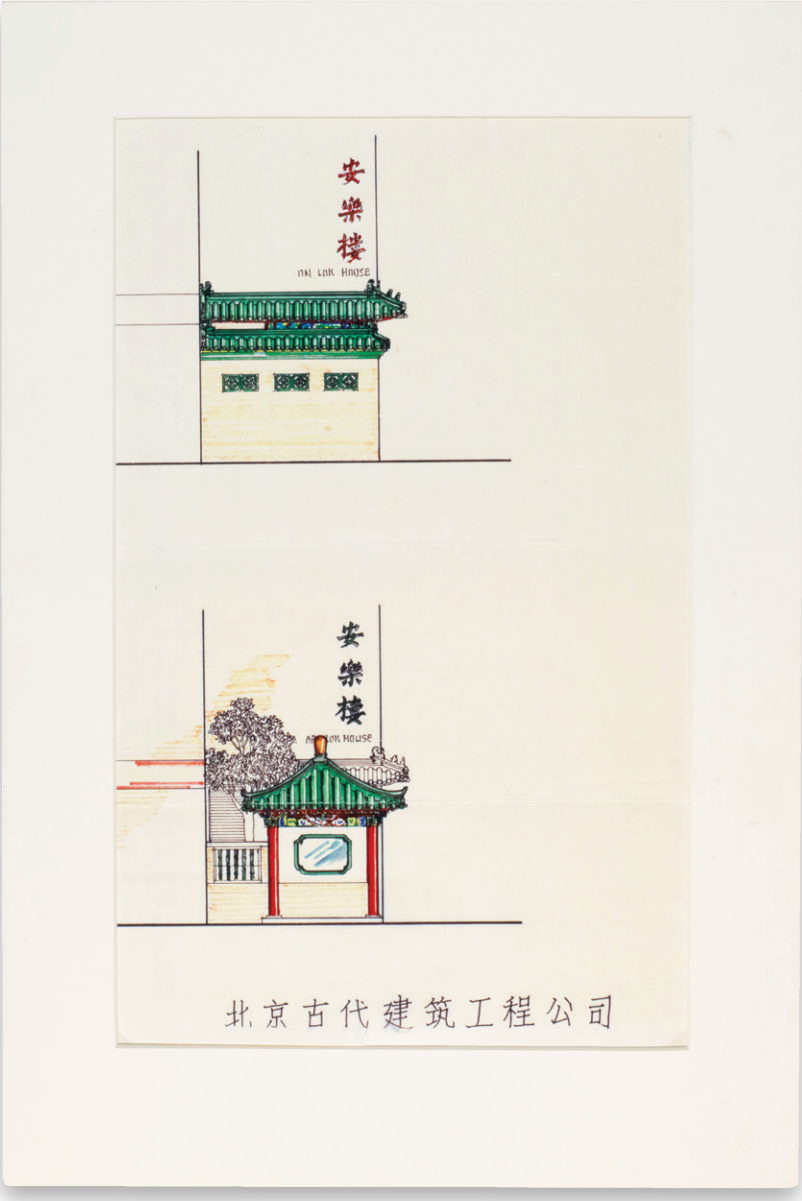
Tamara Gaskell
Historian and Director of Publications and Scholarly Programs



A Life of Service: The Reverend Dr. Yam Tong Hoh Papers

BY RACHEL MOLOSHOK

In the 1960s, even as the population of Philadelphia's Chinatown swelled as changes in immigration legislation allowed greater numbers of Chinese immigrants to come to the United States, the community's leaders faced great challenges in ensuring that Chinatown would continue not just to survive in the face of external threats, such as planned urban redevelopment initiatives that would have demolished its homes and businesses, but to thrive as a healthy and affordable place to work and live. Community leaders banded together to protect Chinatown as a neighborhood, but they also did much to assist individual immigrants as they negotiated day-to-day life. One such community leader was Rev. Dr. Yam Tong Hoh (1898–1986), who led an active life of service in the land of his birth as well as in the United States. His papers, housed at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, provide insight into the objectives and tactics of advocates at community-wide and individual levels.



Born and raised in Canton (now Guangdong), Hoh attended Stanford University and Columbia University's Teachers College, where he earned a master's degree and doctorate in education, respectively, and studied at San Anselmo Theological Seminary in California before returning to China to serve as principal of True Light Middle School, a Presbyterian school for girls. After shepherding the school through the majority of the Japanese occupation during World War II, he fled to the United States, where his family awaited him. In Philadelphia, he served as minister of the Chinese Christian Church and Center (CCC&C) from 1954 to 1967, after which he had a very active "retirement." Through his involvement in community organizations such as the Chinese Benevolent Association, Philadelphia Chinatown Development Corporation (PCDC), and continuing association with the CCC&C and other Chinese religious and cultural organizations, he participated in broad community campaigns to protect and promote Chinatown while continuing to aid individual Chinatown residents.

Given Hoh's deep involvement with his community, it is not surprising that he was active in the Save Chinatown movement of the late 1960s and '70s. Among his papers are the initial reports that raised awareness of the threats facing Chinatown and called the community to action. "Several years ago," the 1967 "Chinatown Report" begins, "The Chinese Benevolent Association was informed that our Chinatown was

(LEFT) Conceptual drawing for On Lok House. Rev. Dr. Yam Tong Hoh Papers. **(FAR LEFT) Three Chinese boys display buttons reading "American Chinese Patriot." These buttons were worn by Chinese Americans during World War II.** Courtesy of McDowell Bulletin Collection, Urban Archives, Temple University Libraries, Philadelphia.

being studied, and planned for, by the City agencies. . . . Six years passed. The Chinese community was then shocked into the realization that they were going to lose the Chinese Catholic Church, the school—along with its recreational facilities, and many homes." The report went on to outline the beginnings of a plan of action, including recommending a survey of the community, the formation of a nonprofit "for the expressed purposes of developing and improving Chinatown," and the compilation of a schematic drawing of the area. Yam Tong Hoh participated in the formation of the PCDC, and his records include drafts of the organization's bylaws, annotated with queries and commentary. His papers related to the Save Chinatown movement contain numerous reports, maps, environmental impact statements, survey results, handwritten notes for speeches on the challenges facing the neighborhood, and correspondence that details the innumerable incidents, setbacks, small victories, and constant bureaucratic negotiation involved in effecting community change.

As he worked with developers, Hoh was particularly concerned with the ways in which urban renewal efforts would affect the already precarious plight of poor, elderly Chinese residents, many of whom were in danger of losing their already substandard living quarters. His papers reflect the challenges he faced in trying to find affordable homes for elderly couples living in attics without heat in the winter or air conditioning during Philadelphia's sweltering summers and for old men with no relatives in the country trying to get by in small rooms with no readily accessible cooking or bathroom facilities. When possible, he tried to get these elders into existing subsidized senior living centers, but these could be lonely places for elderly Chinese; they were often isolated among staff and residents who did not speak their language or know anything of their culture. Accordingly, Hoh advocated for the establishment of low-income housing for Chinese seniors. As project coordinator with the PCDC's new Advisory Committee on Residence for the Elderly (ACORE), he worked with HUD, the State Department of Community Affairs and City Redevelopment Authority, private nonprofit foundations, and individuals to develop, plan, and construct the On Lok House Older Adult Living Center at 10th and Spring Streets, which was dedicated in 1985.

Hoh's collected papers also provide insight into the planning of Philadelphia's Chinatown's official centennial festivities. A report of a 1970s Philadelphia Chinatown Redevelopment meeting noted that, according to a study performed by Temple University's History Department, the 100th anniversary of the founding of Philadelphia's Chinatown was close at hand. Yam Tong Hoh was a member of the Provisional Preparatory Committee for the Centennial Celebration, which formed with the intent of organizing a 100-day program of activities, ceremonies, and celebration in September–December 1971. "Besides commemorating the 100th Anniversary of the founding of Philadelphia Chinatown," the organizers declared, "the Committee proposes to provide, at this special occasion, a prolonged series of activities so as to enable the Chinese Community and the Philadelphia Community at large to better understand each other and to appreciate the cultural heritage of the Chinese. It also proposes to make use of the occasion to unite the people of the Chinese community to plan and work together for the future development of the Philadelphia Chinese Community, making it better able to contribute to the life of our city as a whole."

Yam Tong Hoh, ca. 1950. Rev. Dr. Yam Tong Hoh Papers.

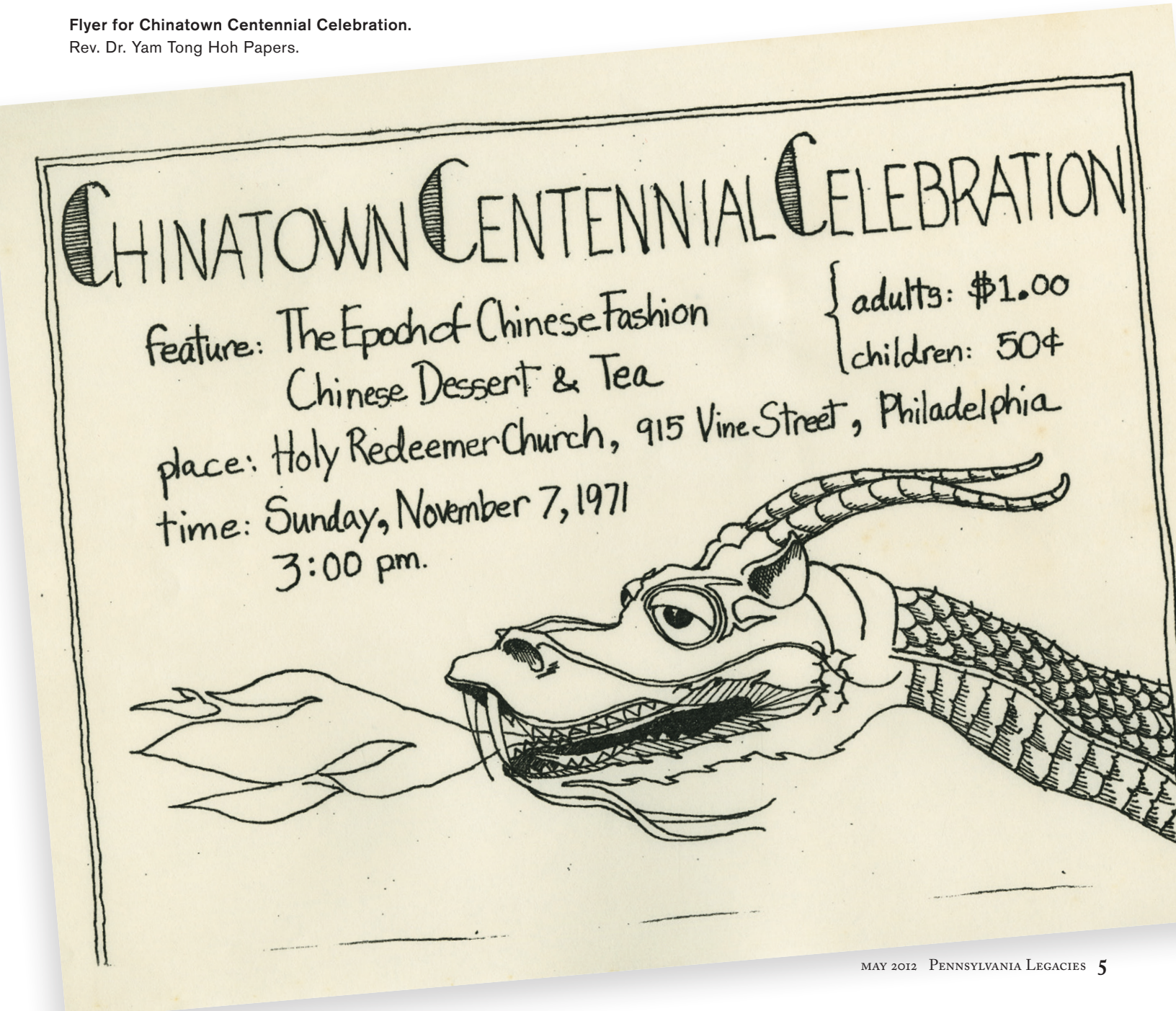
Hoh threw himself wholeheartedly into the preparations for this ambitious celebration, which included a block party, lectures on Chinese history, literature, and philosophy, four film screenings (three in Cantonese, one in Mandarin), a fashion show, Cantonese and Mandarin language contests, "Go" and "Elephant" chess tournaments, cooking demonstrations, art exhibitions, a children's party, concerts, and religious ceremonies. In a letter to a colleague at the Presbytery of Philadelphia, he wrote with pride, "Our Church and Center has had a big share in bringing about this celebration. It is my first baby since retirement." Hoh was particularly pleased with the Thanksgiving Sacred Music Festival held in October. "It was indeed a very happy and historic occasion," he wrote, "when the people from the three churches in Chinatown gathered together for the first time to praise the Lord."

Perhaps of most significance for those who want to learn more of the everyday lives of Chinese immigrants in Philadelphia are the records relating to the numerous families and individuals Hoh assisted in various capacities from the 1950s through '80s. As pastor of the CCC&C, Hoh helped organize the funds and sponsors required to bring Chinese immigrants into the United States and assisted these immigrants in finding work and housing, filling out immigration and naturalization paperwork, acquiring medical, social, and legal services, and communicating with landlords, doctors, teachers, and other officials.

One file among many illustrates not just the reverend's unceasing service to his community but the various challenges and joys experienced by a Chinese immigrant family over several decades. Hoh, in coordination with other volunteers from religious groups in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, arranged to meet Tung Wing Chung, his wife, and their eight children as they disembarked their plane. The volunteers collected cash, groceries, and household utensils and arranged a housewarming party for the new arrivals. Although Hoh only officially served as the Chungs' pastor for a few months, he assisted the family in numerous ways over the next 20 years. He helped them find a two-bedroom apartment at 11th and Race Streets and kept a copy of the lease in his files. In 1967–69 he

helped the family negotiate with insurance companies to pay the medical and funerary expenses of Mr. Chung's adoptive father. In early September 1969, he wrote to the vice principal of the Philadelphia High School for Girls to request that Yuk Fong Chung's schedule be changed so she could depart school earlier. As her mother did sewing work until five and her father's shift as a cook began at three thirty, she needed to be home to care for her six younger siblings in the afternoon. Hoh attended doctors' appointments with the Chungs, serving as translator, and in the early '70s, he assisted the family in becoming naturalized citizens. "I told them that they must study Eng and gave Mr. Chung some questions to study & forms they have to fill," a handwritten note records. He wrote down the questions the Chungs raised about the naturalization paperwork and did his best to answer them. Ten years later, he wrote a letter to Yuk Fong Chung, now grown and living in Flushing, New York. "Enclosed, herewith," he told her, "I am sending you the certificate of your baptism. . . . It was on a significant date—the day your family joined the Church and also the 'official' date of the end of my ministry at the Chinese Christian Church, although in reality, I continued to serve the Church for more than a year." Closing the letter, he provided an update on her family: "Your parents are very glad that they have gotten a new house or apartment in Chinatown. It is a lot more convenient and a better neighborhood. Hope you will come back to visit sometimes." And on January 29, 1986, he and his wife sent a handwritten note of congratulations to the Chungs: "Upon the happy occasion of the 20th Anniversary of the arrival of your family in America, We give thanks to Almighty God by Whose grace you are in this great Country." ■

Flyer for Chinatown Centennial Celebration.
Rev. Dr. Yam Tong Hoh Papers.



PHILADELPHIA'S
OLD CHINA TRADE
and Early American Images of China

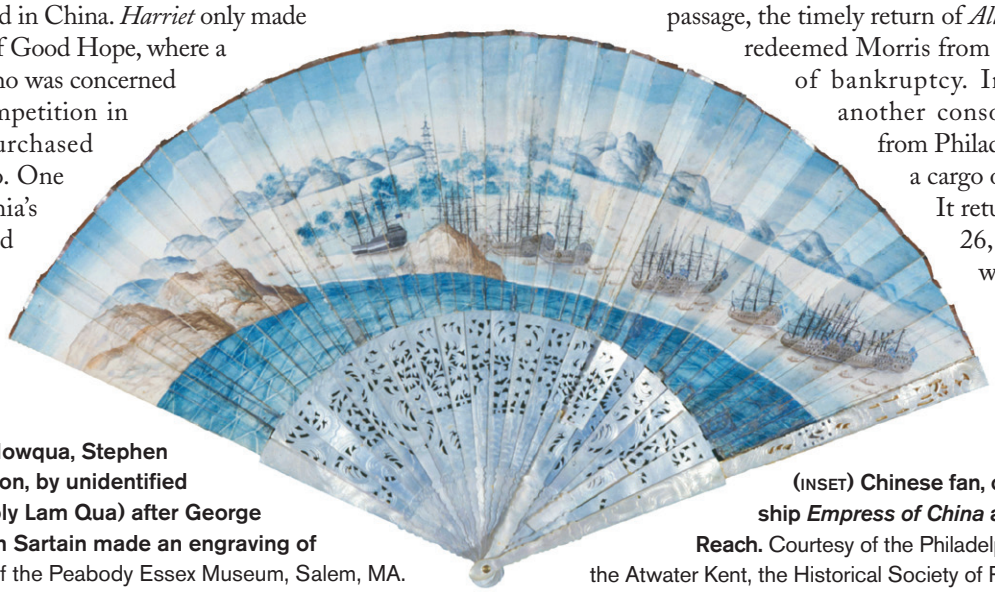
BY JONATHAN GOLDSTEIN

On September 3, 1783, Britain and the newly independent United States signed the Treaty of Paris, and Britain closed its West Indian islands to American traders. In a further blow to US commerce, the Spanish governor at Havana halted American trade to the Spanish West Indies that same year, contributing to an economic decline that hit bottom in 1786.

The new states suddenly found themselves not only without England's protection but with British ports closed to their commerce, their fisheries partly destroyed by war, navigation of the Mississippi blocked, and no significant trade between the states themselves. As the nation's largest port city, Philadelphia experienced these difficulties with particular force. Consequently, the city's merchants turned their thoughts to the East, that is, the Far East.

Halfway around the world, the Chinese port city of Canton beckoned, the one Chinese port open to Western traders. As early as 1783, the Hingham, Massachusetts, sloop *Harriet* attempted such a passage with a cargo of Appalachian ginseng root, an herbal medicine highly valued in China. *Harriet* only made it as far as the Cape of Good Hope, where a British sea captain who was concerned about American competition in the China trade purchased *Harriet*'s entire cargo. One year later, Philadelphia's Robert Morris joined with three other investors to finance the New York vessel *Empress of China*, also carrying ginseng, in the first successful American voyage to China.

Between 1784 and 1787, the voyages from Philadelphia of *United States*, *Alliance*, and *Canton* proved, like that of *Empress of China*, that direct Asian trade could be profitable. In 1784, a consortium of merchants sponsored the journey of *United States* from Philadelphia to China. Due to difficulties aboard ship, the vessel never reached its intended destination but did initiate direct American trade with India and with the pepper port of Acheen, Sumatra. In 1785, Robert Morris purchased *Alliance*, a refurbished Revolutionary War frigate, and sent it to Canton wholly on his own account. After an arduous passage, the timely return of *Alliance* to Philadelphia redeemed Morris from the imminent threat of bankruptcy. In December 1785, another consortium sent *Canton* from Philadelphia to China with a cargo of ginseng and specie. It returned to port on May 26, 1787, and its voyage was declared a major commercial success.



(OPPOSITE) Portrait of Howqua, Stephen Girard's agent in Canton, by unidentified Chinese artist (possibly Lam Qua) after George Chinnery portrait. John Sartain made an engraving of this image. Courtesy of the Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, MA.

(INSET) Chinese fan, ca. 1784, depicting the ship *Empress of China* at anchor at Whampoa Reach. Courtesy of the Philadelphia History Museum at the Atwater Kent, the Historical Society of Pennsylvania Collection.

Ships returned from China with tales of an exotic land and people and also with material goods. Philadelphians received their earliest visual images of the Chinese displayed upon artifacts that merchants . . . imported.

Encouraged by these successful experiments, the ever-cautious Stephen Girard, the merchant destined to be the most famous Philadelphia China trader, began to think seriously about co-investing in China voyages. One month after the return of *Canton*, he and 16 other investors underwrote the voyage of the first Philadelphia-built ship to enter the China trade, the 292-ton *Asia*, with John Barry as master. To limit his risk, Girard insured his investment and chose to be only a subscriber.

Girard was encouraged, however, by favorable US policies on overseas trade. Before the adoption of the national Constitution, individual states, including Pennsylvania, had levied tariffs on tea, and Congress passed its first tea tariff in 1789. These duties discriminated sharply in favor of goods brought to the United States on American ships, and particularly on those arriving directly from China. This preferential tariff contributed to the profitability of *Alliance*, *Canton*, *United States*, and *Asia* and encouraged Girard and other merchants to consider China voyages.

In 1795, Girard took the big step of commissioning the construction of his own fleet of ships specially designed for the China trade. He christened two of his ships *North America* and *Superb*. Because of his fondness for French Enlightenment philosophers, he named four others *Helvetius*, *Montesquieu*, *Rousseau*, and *Voltaire*. Eventually Girard had a total of eight ships in the China trade and others sailing to different ports. He never owned more than six ships at a time, three or four of which returned to Philadelphia each year with cargoes worth an average of $250,000.

Engraving of the frigate *Alliance*, from John Watson's *Annals of Philadelphia and Pennsylvania in the Olden Time* (Philadelphia, 1898), 2:338. Society Print Collection.

To build his China trade, Girard searched for a commodity to trade in Canton beyond ginseng and specie. He quickly seized upon opium, which had already become a staple of the trade by the 1760s. For Americans, however, opium was not easy to acquire. Only on the rarest of occasions would the British or Portuguese share their Indian opium sources. Furthermore, opium was illegal in China and had to be smuggled in. There were other risks involved, not only in China, but en route in such ports as Manila in the Spanish Philippines, where the import of opium was also prohibited.

A system developed, however, that worked smoothly so long as no one was caught. "You are aware that the trade in opium is illegal," wrote Philadelphia and Wilmington merchant John R. Latimer from Canton in 1829 to his brother Henry. "The system is perfect. A dealer pays the money down and at the same time receives the order to go to the ships for it. We never see it. Foreign merchants reside here constantly who are known to have no other business than the opium. All the Chinese traders fee the officers regularly for their commerce and it is smoked by all, from the highest mandarin down."

Girard took all of these factors into consideration and put aside his earlier caution to trade in opium, which promised to boost profits. Fortunately for Girard, his fellow Philadelphians Benjamin Chew Wilcocks and William Waln discovered a non-British source for opium—the Ottoman Empire's Mediterranean port of Smyrna. Ottoman opium was also available in Hamburg and Amsterdam. Wilcocks and Waln demonstrated, in pioneering voyages of 1804–05, that Smyrna opium could be shipped to Canton and sold at great profit. Such opium was considered to be of poorer quality than Indian opium but found a market among those in China who could not afford the more expensive variety, making the drug more accessible to even more addicts.

Girard learned the intricacies of the China smuggling trade. Howqua, his agent in Canton, admonished him about the risks of the contraband trade. In a letter dated April 21, 1820, Howqua reminded Girard that he had declined "securing American vessels in consequence of the apprehension that they may sometimes bring opium here for sale, which being a prohibited article would involve the security merchants in very serious difficulty with the Government in case of discovery." Nevertheless, Girard continued to make opium a staple of his China trade.

The cargoes that Philadelphians sent to China were more than a source of prosperity for many of their stateside owners and investors. Ships returned from China with tales of an exotic land and people and also with material goods. Philadelphians received their earliest visual images of the Chinese displayed upon artifacts that merchants such as Stephen Girard, Robert Morris, Benjamin Chew Wilcocks, and William Waln imported. Perceptions of China and the Chinese people were shaped not only by missionaries, mariners, and merchants but by the imagery on decorative arts. The early American China trade served as the vehicle for intercultural contact long before the mass media. The depiction of Chinese upon imported artifacts, and the reproduction of those images on domestic products, even antedated the large mid-19th-century immigration of Chinese to the United States.

Chinese Pavilion, Labyrinth Garden & Pagoda built on southwest corner of 24th and Frances (now Fairmount) Streets by Peter A. Browne, ca. 1823. Watercolor by David J. Kennedy.

Idealized Chinese people, landscapes, flora, fauna, and historical and mythological scenes entered early American homes emblazoned upon stone and fabric. During the 19th century, millions of yards of Chinese silk, much of it elaborately decorated with Chinese floral motifs, reached the United States, along with hundreds of thousands of decorated fans and thousands of sets of chessmen, each man painstakingly carved from white or red-dyed ivory. In Philadelphia, archeological digs in the Society Hill area have unearthed numerous types of Chinese porcelain in varied socioeconomic contexts: rich homes, poor homes, tavern sites. It appears that the China trade was not only a trade in fine art but in popularly consumed items. Whether an imported object was expensive or cheap, the decorative motif on both types of artifact conveyed a highly romanticized depiction of China and the Chinese. The most common porcelain decoration of all—the blue-and-white "willow pattern"—is believed not to be of Chinese origin at all. Rather, it was likely designed in about 1780 by Thomas Minton while he was working as an engraver at the Caughley, England, porcelain works. An example of his print was shipped to China, copied onto Chinese porcelain, and the result shipped back to the West, the first consignment arriving in England in 1792.

Simultaneous with the importation of goods manufactured in China, two distinct trends within the development of decorative arts in Philadelphia reinforced the essentially romantic image of the Chinese conveyed on imported goods. First, manufacturers made *chinoiserie*, or Chinese-style objects, stateside. Second, Philadelphians began not only to adorn the insides of stateside edifices in Chinese style but to construct building exteriors in the titillating, romanticized fashion thought of as Chinese.

The grafting of romantic Chinese motifs onto products of domestic manufacture was especially prevalent in early Philadelphia silverware, furniture, textiles, lithography, and watercolor painting. Chinese floral motifs encircled silver mustard pots, waste bowls, tea services, candlesticks, and coffee pots. Such decorations were inspired by almost identical Chinese export silver designs. Throughout the 19th century, artisans sculpted Chinese people atop silver tea kettles, while silversmiths such as Taylor and Lawrie and Ford and Tupper, both of Philadelphia, carved figures in *repousse* on the sides of their silver work. Chinese strutted up and down a tall painted pine clock made about 1750 by Gawen Brown and across an armchair of Renshaw and Barnhard of about 1805. Perhaps the most impressive Chinese figure in early American iconography is the large portrait of the Hong merchant Howqua, Stephen Girard's agent in Canton, seated amid the palatial grandeur of his villa. Philadelphian John Sartain made an engraving after the portrait allegedly made in Canton. Pagodas, those unmistakable Middle Kingdom motifs, were featured in the Philadelphia lithography of William B. Lucas and Alfred Newsam and in watercolors by David Kennedy and Benjamin Evans.

But it was in architecture where the pagoda motif and *chinoiserie* found fullest expression. As early as the mid-18th century, Americans were imitating their European cousins and attempting to create a romantic vision of China by erecting villas, gardens, amusement parks, and other public displays that were at least partially Chinese in their appearance or contents. The trend was apparent in the work of some of the period's most distinguished builders and architects. Outstanding examples included Benjamin Latrobe's Philadelphia Garden House, John Notman's Mount Holly, New Jersey, Chinese Cottage, and John. R. Latimer's Wilmington, Delaware, Manor. In 1859, Philadelphia architect Samuel Sloan designed Longwood, in Natchez, Mississippi, a superb example of the mid-19th-century "Oriental Villa" style. Longwood was the largest octagonal house in America and contained both Moorish and East Asian elements. Perhaps the most distinct utilization of specifically Chinese architectural style in early America was the 100-foot-high pagoda, complete with Chinese pavilion and garden, constructed in Philadelphia's Fairmount Park in 1828. This creation, sometimes referred to as The Temple of Confucius, was the product of the vivid imagination of Philadelphia attorney Peter Browne. The tower

The fascination with Chinese motifs tells us as much about America as about China. Through these objects Americans could imagine themselves inhabitants of an exotic world.

was an exact replica of a Canton pagoda familiar to western visitors to that port. Browne's Pagoda and Labyrinth Garden, as the complex was also known, probably combined refreshment facilities and botanical displays with some sort of entertainment, which together offered patrons the illusion of being transported to China.

One final way in which Philadelphians encountered a romanticized visual image of China was in the so-called "Museums of Chinese Curiosities." Advertised as "edifying" collections and, indeed, providing visitors with an impressive and unique opportunity to learn about this distant land and people through actual objects, the displays also served to amuse and titillate onlookers and in most cases also turn a profit. The best known of these was opened in Philadelphia by China trader Nathan Dunn. Dunn's Chinese Museum was the first such systematic exhibit of Asian objects in the United States. Between December 1838 and 1841, when the exhibit moved to London, over 100,000 Americans paid to see Dunn's assemblage of gaily costumed Chinese mannequins arranged beneath silk banners and lanterns. In 1847–49, John Peters, a member of Caleb Cushing's US diplomatic mission to China, set up a second Chinese Museum in Philadelphia. Peters's museum also traveled, beginning in Boston in 1845 and moving to New York in 1849.

To early Philadelphians, the museums, villas, parks, gardens, and smaller decorative objects offering visual images of China possessed a mysterious attraction. Objects displayed in homes or in museums such as Nathan Dunn's taught Philadelphians something about this remarkable new trading partner on the other side of the globe. At the same time, they promoted a romanticized vision. Fairy-like beings cavorted on porcelain, furniture, carvings, textiles, and paintings in a never-never land of cloud-like rocks, exotic plants, and airy pavilions. Elaborately clad mannequins served to entertain, as did pagodas and garden objects. Where in this romantic vision of China were the poverty, squalor, starvation, exploitation, and misery that were also present in the real China? The fascination with Chinese motifs tells us as much about America as about China. Through these objects Americans could imagine themselves inhabitants of an exotic world.

By the mid-19th century this idealized image of China faced competition. The introduction of photography offered Philadelphians an alternative to the romantic vision suggested by artisans. Tourists and news photographers, thronging aboard transpacific steamers to a China newly opened to the West after the Opium War, avidly snapped scenes with discordant elements not allowed to intrude onto saleable decorative artifacts. The simultaneous development of mass printing techniques in Philadelphia made possible the sharing of explicitly unpleasant subject matter previously purged from romantic décor.

The romantic vision of China imported to Philadelphia by traders such as Stephen Girard and Robert Morris was not displaced by the camera. That idealized image continues to be used by Chinese and American artisans down to the present, promoted by a flourishing trade in Chinese art items readily available in Philadelphia Chinatown curio shops as well as in Friendship stores and other emporia within China itself. Since the mid-19th century, however, the romantic image has had to coexist with the harsh reality of photography, which vividly depicts the hardships of the real China. The romanticized image of China that dominated for so long did not prepare Philadelphians for the realities of stateside encounters with Chinese. If anything, exaggerated and unrealistic images may have paved the way for the overwhelmingly negative American media treatment to which Chinese were subjected by the 1870s. ■

Jonathan Goldstein, a professor of East Asian history at the University of West Georgia, is the author of Philadelphia and the China Trade, 1682–1846: Commercial, Cultural, and Attitudinal Effects *(1978) and* Stephen Girard's Trade with China, 1787–1824: The Norms versus the Profits of Trade *(2011).*
He wishes to thank Philip Hatcher of the University of West Georgia for assistance with this article.

Cover of John R. Peters, *Miscellaneous Remarks upon the Government, History, Religions, Literature, Agriculture, Arts, Trades, Manners, and Customs of the Chinese: As Suggested by an Examination of the Articles Comprising the Chinese Museum* (Boston, 1847).

Nathan Dunn's Chinese Museum

DESCRIPTIVE SKETCH OF THE COLLECTION.

PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

Nathan Dunn, Esq., the proprietor of this vast and splendid Collection of Chinese Curiosities, having so far completed his arrangements as to be able to open it to the public, on the evening of Saturday, the 22nd December, 1838 . . .

The proprietor enjoyed facilities for gathering curiosities such as no foreigner perhaps besides himself ever possessed. He did not, indeed, go to China with this view originally, but, soon after his arrival there, the thought occurred to him that it would be easy to collect a cabinet sufficient to fill a small apartment, which would be both amusing and instructive to his friends in America. This happy conception, upon which he immediately proceeded to act, was the germ of that vast and astonishing gallery of rare and curious objects, which has now become one of the chief ornaments and attractions of our city. . . .

The Chinese Collection occupies the lower saloon of that noble edifice recently erected in Ninth street by the Philadelphia Museum Company. This apartment is one hundred and sixty-three feet in length, by seventy in breadth, with lofty ceilings, supported by twenty-two neat and substantial wooden pilasters. Behind each column, on either side of the vast and well-proportioned hall, has been fitted up a capacious case, which is enclosed by plate glass windows of the purest transparency. The inter-columniations are each occupied by two cases exactly the width of the pilasters, in like manner enclosed with plate glass. Not far from the entrance are two octagonal glass cases, occupying a portion of the ample space between the two ranges of pilasters, one of which is completely filled with a superb Chinese state lamp, of huge proportions, gorgeous materials, and rich workmanship. At the extreme end of the saloon, are a large pavilion, a silk draper's shop, and a Chinese street, nearly filled up by a palanquin and its bearers. So ample is the space, and so capacious and numerous the receptacles of this grand apartment; and yet such is the extent of the collection of curiosities gathered by Mr. Dunn, during his nine years' residence in China, that a large residuum remains in the store-rooms, for want of sufficient space in the hall for their convenient display.

It is no longer necessary to measure half the circuit of the globe, and subject one's self to the hazards and privations of a six months' voyage on distant and dangerous seas, to enjoy a peep at the Celestial Empire. This is a gratification which may now be enjoyed by the citizens of Philadelphia, for the trouble of walking to the corner of Ninth and Sansom streets, and by the citizens of other parts of the United States, at no greater peril of life and limb than is connected with locomotion by means of our own steamboats and railroads. The Collection is a splendid pageant, no doubt; and many, probably, will look upon it merely as such. To these it will be a mere nine days' wonder; an object to be stared at with idle curiosity, and remembered only as a useless gewgaw. For ourselves, we see it with far other eyes, and linger among its strange and multitudinous variety of objects for a widely different purpose. To us it is a volume redolent of instruction; the best we have ever seen on the Celestial Empire. It is, in effect, China in miniature. It almost realizes, in reference to the manners and civilization of that remote, unique, and interesting people, the fable of the woods moving to the sound of the lyre of Orpheus.

Advertisement for Nathan Dunn's Chinese Collection housed in the lower floors of the new building at Ninth and George (Sansom) Streets. Albert Newsam Print Collection.

Some readers, perhaps, will regard such expressions as sheer hyperbole, a mere rhetorical flourish. We utter, however, a simple verity, which will be responded to by every person of taste and intelligence who visits and examines the Collection. And we are prepared even to express a stronger opinion than this of the merits of this unique exhibition. It is well known that an impassable barrier excludes foreigners from all but a small patch of the Celestial Empire. Considering these restrictions, and the very limited sphere of observations that can be enjoyed by any stranger not connected with a diplomatic embassy, we have little doubt that a better idea may be obtained of the characteristic intelligence and national customs of the Chinese from Mr. Dunn's Collection, than by an actual visit, we do not say to China, but to the small portion of the suburbs of Canton, which is all that foreigners are permitted to see. Mr. D.'s Collection embraces innumerable objects from all parts of the Empire, the interior as well as the sea coast districts.

The many thousands of individual objects which this Collection embraces, are not, of course, susceptible of a perfect classification; yet the principal and most instructive of them may be ranged under the following heads:—Figures, of the size of life, in full costume, representing Chinese men and women, all of them being real likenesses; implements of various kinds; paintings; specimens of japan and porcelain ware; models of boats and summer houses; lanterns; natural productions, including birds, minerals, shells, fishes, reptiles, insects, etc.; models of pagodas; with a numerous assemblage of *et cetera*, which refuse to be classed. . . . ■

E. C. Wines, *A Peep at China, in Mr. Dunn's Chinese Collection; with Miscellaneous Notices Relating to the Institutions and Customs of the Chinese, and Our Commercial Intercourse with Them* (Philadelphia, 1839), pp. 2–14.

From Bachelor Enclave *to* Urban Village:

The Evolution of Early Chinatown

BY KATHRYN E. WILSON

In 1876, Philadelphia's press matter-of-factly noted the recent influx of Chinese into the city: "We do not know the actual facts respecting the movements of Chinese emigrants from the Pacific coast to the Atlantic States," reported the business-minded *North American*, "but if we may judge by what we see every day in the streets of Philadelphia, it must have been considerable. These Chinese are so common a sight that no notice is taken of them."

> *they all appear to be working at something. Their laundry enterprises have been quite successful, and they follow up that line of business so pertinaciously that it would not be at all surprising to see them get control of it. As they have not thus far engaged in any large industrial establishment in a body as operatives, there has been no trouble about them on the labor question. Nor can we discover that there is any distinct Chinese quarter. They seem to scatter, and all are neat and clean in attire and person.*

It was only a matter of a few years, however, until Philadelphians would become aware of the presence and growing size of a new Chinatown in their midst, a community that emerged at the same moment the federal government passed legislation effectively barring new immigration from China to the United States. For over 150 years, subsequent generations of Chinese and Chinese Americans have created and maintained a community and sense of place in this neighborhood.

Philadelphia's Chinatown, like many in the eastern United States, had its roots in the driving out of Chinese from the western states that followed the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869 and culminated in the Exclusion Act of 1882. Throughout the 1870s, violence and intimidation against Chinese laborers in California, Washington, and Oregon sent many east to cities such as Chicago, St. Louis, New York, Boston, and Philadelphia. According to Stewart Culin, a University of Pennsylvania anthropologist who studied the Chinese community in Philadelphia during the 1880s and '90s, in about 1869 a Mr. Thomas of Belleville, New Jersey, brought 50 Chinese laundrymen from San Francisco to work in laundries around the area. The first documented laundry in Chinatown was in 1870 at 913 Race Street, owned by Lee Fong. Fong, described by Culin as "an angular hollow-cheeked man," "doleful," but "very kind-hearted," also acted as a distributor of opium, Chinese tea, and incense. Later a restaurant was opened on the second floor above the laundry, "where the vender of tea and incense divided his time between his scales and his flat-iron." This place soon became the acknowledged center of the Chinese in Philadelphia: "On Sundays and Mondays it would be packed with Chinamen, and the strains of the Chinese fiddle could be heard over the never-ending click of the dominoes, from midday to midnight."

The 900 block of Race provided refuge to the Chinese in part due to its adjacency to the warehouse and central commercial district of Philadelphia. By the 1880s the area had long been a home for a diverse population of working people. At the turn of the century, 10th, 9th, Winter, and Spring Streets were dominated by row houses—many of them boardinghouses—that provided housing for skilled laborers of various ethnic backgrounds: Irish, German, Italian, Greek, Lithuanian, Russian, Ukrainian, and Mexican. Chinese merchants found a home among this diversity, concentrating on the 900 block of Race, where multiple generations of the same extended family or kin

(OPPOSITE) Far East Restaurant, 907 Race Street, in 1923, painting by Frank Hamilton Taylor.


CHINESE
RESTAURANT
FAR EAST
907
CHINESE
Frank H. Taylor
1923

Race Street in Chinatown, 1933.
Philadelphia Record Photograph Morgue.

network—mostly single men aged 25–60, since women were barred from entry—lived in tightly shared quarters. In the early 1900s, 925 Race was occupied primarily by Lees, 915 Race by Foongs, 931 by Mocks, while 929 Race was home to Jungs, and 906 provided a base for Youngs. This pattern had roots in the legal need of Chinese immigrants, under exclusion, to establish partnerships in some merchant concern to remain in the country and travel back and forth to China.

Each building was anchored by a first-floor business—a laundry, grocery, imported goods shop, or, later, restaurant—that provided a livelihood and a focus of public commercial activity. The second, third, and attic floors were devoted to living quarters as well as a variety of social functions. Yee Wah, at 915 Race Street, for example, dealt in Chinese merchandise, Chinese and Japanese art goods, and drugs on the first floor and stored stock on the second floor of the building. While some of the partners lived in quarters on the third floor, the fourth-floor attic was rented to Chinese men for sleeping quarters. In 1906 Tom Leing, a teacher and former laundryman who had come to Philadelphia in 1881, taught Sunday School classes over Yee Wah. By 1900, the neighborhood spreading from 8th to 10th and Race to Winter was predominately Chinese and firmly established in the public mind as Chinatown.

Although many of Philadelphia's Chinese, especially laundrymen, lived and worked at locations around the metropolitan area, Chinatown was the center of Chinese life in the city, serving a multitude of social, cultural, political, and economic functions. Chinatown's spaces were especially animated on Sundays, as men from around the region gathered on their one day off. Social life in this bachelor society, like commercial life, revolved around various kin, regional, and trade relationships. Much socializing took place in the many "Fongs" rented by small groups of Chinese immigrants sharing the same surname. These common rooms served multiple functions: club room or recreational space, sleeping quarters for visitors or those unemployed, even an isolation hospital or sick room for those who were ill. Tea was traditionally served at

Chinatown's spaces were especially animated on Sundays, as men from around the region gathered on their one day off. Social life in this bachelor society, like commercial life, revolved around various kin, regional, and trade relationships.

11 AM–12 PM on Sunday, accompanied by dim sum. Communal drinking of tea and spirits and games of chance such as mahjong and fan tan, usually for money, were common pastimes. Men traded gossip and conversation dominated by news from China. George Moy, longtime activist and community developer, recalls his father, a laundryman, taking him to the neighborhood in the 1930s and '40s to a grocery store or family association to hang out, "shoot the bull," and drink tea from a collective cup: "you come to Chinatown for your groceries and you converse and you want to get the gossip and what's happening to whose family, and parents always looking out to marry my son to some girl . . . you know . . . the thing of matching people up." These family and extended kin associations also supported the practice of ancestor worship, and many meeting rooms accommodated altars for this purpose.

For those out of work or coming from or going to China, the neighborhood was an important way station. Laundrymen routinely sold their laundries before departing for China, and the association common room provided temporary living quarters while their paperwork was being processed. Men transacted business in the common rooms or temporary sleeping rooms; in many cases the resident store also acted as bank. Chinatown was home to the emerging institutions of the Chinese community, such as the Chinese Consolidated Beneficial Association, Chung-Hua-Kung-So, which functioned to maintain order, protest abuse of "treaty rights," arbitrate disputes, certify documents and deeds, maintain a cemetery, do charitable work, and serve as a reception committee for foreign dignitaries.

One of Chinatown's oldest and one of its youngest residents read war bulletins posted by the local branch of United China Relief at Ninth and Race Streets. Philadelphia Record Photograph Morgue.

Chinatown became a cultural attraction to non-Chinese in the early 20th century. Restaurants such as the Far East, at 907–909 Race (one of the most famous and flamboyant Chinatown establishments of the period), served non-Chinese diners. Fueled by orientalist ideas of Chinese culture as mysterious and exotic, Chinatown became a destination for thrill seekers and a target for law enforcement officers. Tales of white slavery and violent "tong wars" circulated in the public press throughout the 1910s and '20s, and the Philadelphia police routinely raided the back rooms of Chinatown shops to arrest occupants on gambling and drug charges.

Although the population of Chinatown declined during the Great Depression (many returned to China as economic opportunity in the United States dried up), by the end of the 1930s world events brought China and, by extension, Chinatown into greater public visibility. The 1937 invasion of China by Japan sent the local media into Chinatown to highlight Chinese Americans' campaign for China war relief. In January 1938 community leaders cancelled the Chinese New Year parade and celebration so that the saved expenses could be sent to the Chinese Defense Fund. When the United States entered World War II, China's position as an ally engendered a more positive image of Chinese Americans and their contribution to the war effort. Young residents of Chinatown joined the armed services, such as Henry Wong, a 20-year-old Wharton student and the son of merchant and "mayor" of Chinatown, Wong Wah Ding. The elder Wong noted the contradiction inherent in his son's service in the face of continued Chinese exclusion: "I cannot become a citizen myself because of the law," the older Wong said, "but I am happy that my only son is giving his services to the country I love best."

After World War II, liberalized immigration policies and the newly acquired citizenship of Chinese American servicemen transformed Chinatown into a family community. At midcentury, a few merchant families formed the core of Chinatown families: the Jungs, Lees, Marks, Moys, and Louies. As more Chinese American men were able to marry and bring wives to America, the population of Chinatown burgeoned and the community increasingly took on the character of an urban village. Sundays continued to be important days for Chinatown as Chinese from

Basketball: Chinatown's "Sport of Survival"

BY KATHRYN E. WILSON

The basketball season is in full swing. Three teams, consisting of a Junior and Senior Boys teams and a Girls team. All three groups are doing fine in the strong competition that has been their [sic]. *The Juniors has won practically all their games thus far this season. They have handed defeats to such teams as King of Peace, St. Athanasius, Valley Park Juniors, St. Madelines, St. Mary of the Eternal, and have had one tie with Cathedral.*

The Seniors have had tough teams to handle and have seen victory quite a bit in the past few weeks. They have defeated the 8th District, King of Peace, Fairmount Civic, St. Joseph's Hawks and many other teams. We must always remember that very often the teams are six footers and the going is rather rough at times. They have shown splendid spirit and we know that as the season progresses that defeat will not show on their record.

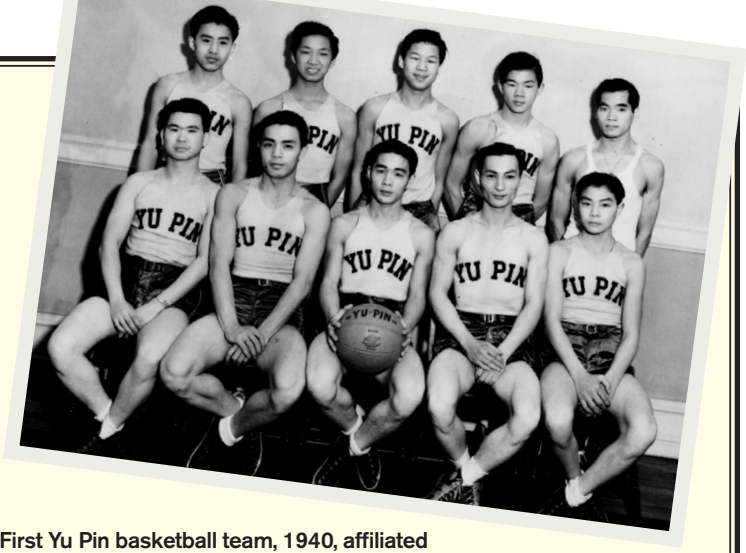
The girls are going the best ever. They have won all their games with the exception of one from St. Gabriel's. They have defeated Cathedral twice and St. Madeline's once. The team is working in unison and we can see the result of last year's workouts. Keep up the good work.…

Chinese Lantern, *Jan. 1949.*
Holy Redeemer Chinese Catholic Church Records.

Every Friday night, Joe Lowe and his friends gather at Holy Redeemer Chinese Catholic Church to play basketball in the basement gymnasium. Sometimes they relax after the game with beer, burgers, and memories. For these men who grew up in Chinatown, basketball is an important tradition that embodies both their childhood memories and their continuing commitment to the Chinatown community.

Lowe, who attended Holy Redeemer (or HR) in the 1960s, muses that basketball was "the sport of choice—or the sport of survival," played at the only gym in the neighborhood: "Most of my activity was done at Holy Redeemer. Holy Redeemer for me was where I went to school, where I played constantly during the summer. HR was always open at all hours. The gym was there, that was always open to us. We like to think it was 24/7 . . . we were in there all the time." Brendan Lee also remembers spending weekends at Holy Redeemer; "from Friday night to Saturday afternoon" he was at HR honing his skills. At HR, Lee and others were schooled by older brothers and friends who taught them a form of tough street ball that emphasized fast footwork, intricate passing, and long outside shots (since players who were often shorter of stature found it difficult to get to the net). They played all comers, including a team composed entirely of waiters who would join them on the court on Saturday mornings.

Formed in the 1940s, the Holy Redeemer basketball team, Yu Pin, played in the city Catholic league and faced teams from other Catholic schools in the region. Later the Chinese Christian Church and Center also formed a team. In addition to local matches, Yu Pin faced off against teams from other Chinatowns along the northeast corridor: New York, Boston, Baltimore, and Washington, DC. Over time, the network became national in scope and basketball formed an important focus for social life and connections between Chinatowns across the country. According to Glenn Hing, "it was a great thing, not only to play basketball, but the social aspect of it. There are a lot of marriages, a lot of friendships that have come out of that and will continue to come out of that."



First Yu Pin basketball team, 1940, affiliated with Holy Redeemer Chinese Catholic Church and School.
Holy Redeemer Chinese Catholic Church Photograph Colletion.

In 1972 when the Chinatown league formed a junior division, a group of younger players, including Brendan Lee and Harry Leong, decided to form their own team, the Philadelphia Suns. Lee recalls, "I distinctly remember sitting in HR in the lunch room before a junior tournament deciding on what we were gonna do with our own identity. Were we still gonna be HR or were we gonna be doing this? We had gone to a few tournaments before that and we saw the teams that broke away from their older teams too." Glenn Hing, another founder remembers "I think about 15 of us and it was a basketball team and these are the guys that I grew up with and am still in touch with you know, the crew so to speak. . . . we fared pretty well and then it just evolved into a youth organization." Harry Leong, currently center director at the Chinese Christian Church and Center, took on leadership of the group and former members stayed involved, eventually forming a nonprofit board and securing 501(c)3 status.

Under Leong's leadership, the Suns draw over 150 Chinese and other Asian American youth from around the area to play competitive basketball and volleyball, engage in community service, and preserve the art of the Lion Dance, performing each Chinese New Year. Both the gym at Holy Redeemer and an outside court at the Chinese Christian Church and Center playground are used depending on the weather. The older generation of players, like Brendan Lee and Joe Lowe, remain involved with the organization, which, according to Lee, "keeps kids off the streets" and reinforces Chinese cultural heritage: "a lot of being part of a Sun is making sure you are doing the right thing. You don't mess up, you come and if you want to play basketball you gotta do the Lion dance, you want to come play volleyball, you gotta do the Lion dance. You want to do this you gotta come out and do a community project with us. Everything is part of a lesson and values and getting something, earning something as opposed to expecting something." The Suns' Lion Dance holds a special place for many in the community since it is performed by the "kids from Chinatown."

Today Chinese American basketball remains as popular as ever. Most city Chinatowns sponsor local Chinese tournaments and leagues throughout the year, which feed into the North American Chinese Basketball Association (NACBA) Invitational Tournament held annually during Memorial Day weekend since 1981.

After World War II, liberalized immigration policies and the newly acquired citizenship of Chinese American servicemen transformed Chinatown into a family community.

around the area came to shop, worship, dine, and socialize. Community developer and longtime resident Cecilia Moy Yep remembers that before her family moved to Chinatown in the 1940s, they would visit the quarter each week: "My father wanted us also to come to Chinatown so that we could learn the culture and the language of Chinese." Chinatown had few restaurants at that time, and most catered to non-Chinese. A select few, however, appealed to the community's residents. After attending church at Holy Redeemer each Sunday, Yep's family "used to run for the booth at South China" because the restaurant would soon be crowded with Chinese diners eager to sample the "the noodles and everyday dishes" that they favored. Activist and educator Debbie Wei remembers driving every Sunday from Upper Darby in the 1960s to visit a little grocery store on Ninth Street: "My mom used to go there faithfully and you know, get the groceries that she would need for the week and stuff like cleavers." With new settlement came new family businesses, many of them restaurants and gift shops: Magic Fan, Dragon Gate, China Castle, and Lotus Inn were among the best known.

Holy Redeemer Chinese Catholic Church. Courtesy of Tamara Gaskell.

Churches and social/cultural organizations established during this period created programs to address community residents' needs: to improve neighborhood life, preserve Chinese culture, and provide services to new immigrants and growing numbers of Chinese American youth. Holy Redeemer Chinese Catholic Church, at 10th and Vine, had its genesis in a 1939 visit by Bishop Paul Yu Pin, then vicar of Nanking, China. The church formally opened its doors in 1941, the first Chinese Catholic church in the western hemisphere. Holy Redeemer, or "HR" as it is fondly referred to by community members, grew to play a large role in the lives of several generations of young Chinese who grew up in Chinatown from the 1940s through the '70s. It had the only school in the neighborhood and the only gymnasium. Early on the church hosted a youth group, the Yu Pin Club, which sponsored a variety of activities in the 1940s all aimed at Chinese American youth: football, baseball, men's and women's basketball teams, bowling, skating, flute and singing lessons, and Sunday evening dances. The club also published a newsletter, the *Chinese Lantern*, which reported on the successes of athletic teams, various club activities, and social gossip.

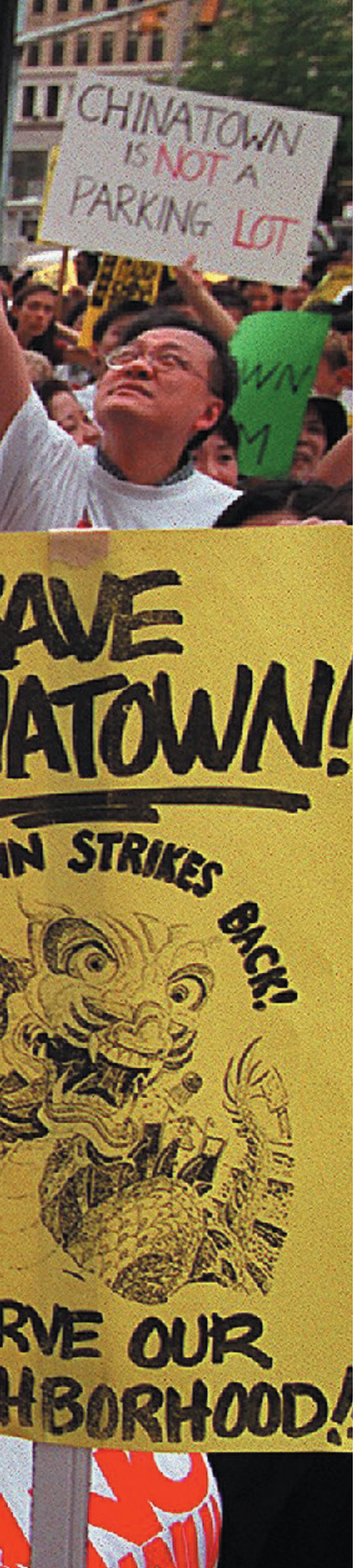
Also founded in 1941, first as a mission center and later a church and center, was the Chinese Christian Church and Center. Under the directorship of Mirabelle "Mitzie" MacKenzie, the center at 1006 Race adopted an open-door policy and sponsored Girl and Boy Scout troops, tutoring, and recreation (the center had a billiards and ping pong table). Later the church created a playground at 10th and Spring Streets. Although not a resident of Chinatown, MacKenzie was a tireless and beloved advocate for the community until her death in 2009. As former resident Kenneth Eng recalls, "you could come in, she's there, there's a basement, there's a ping pong table, pool table, you could do whatever you want and she let you do it, as long as you found a place. And I remember my family had just settled here, if I had a question about school, a question about a job, she always helped." Other organizations serving the community included the Chinatown Y, at 10th and Arch, founded by Taiwanese immigrant T. T. Chang, as well as youth activities sponsored by the Chinese Benevolent Association. These organizations were critical in providing services to a community neglected by the larger city for generations. They also formed the nexus of a new sense of place in Chinatown, becoming important sites of relationship and memory.

By the 1950s, the Chinatown neighborhood had become blighted. Adjacent to "skid row," the landscape was punctuated by flophouses and seemed to have a bar on every corner. Aside from the churches, the only place for children to play was neglected Franklin Square, known by all as "Bum Park." Yet despite blight, Chinatown was a safe haven for its residents, a small village in the heart of the city where they could settle when other neighborhoods were less welcoming. It was a neighborhood where one grew up "knowing everybody on the block and everybody knowing you whether you liked it or not," according to Glenn Hing, who now practices law on Ninth Street: "Everybody felt very, very safe growing up as a kid." Church centers and the watchful eye of residents were important safeguards for children whose parents often worked long hours in restaurants and other family businesses.

Community members—under the radar of city planners—worked to revitalize the area, rehabilitating old buildings in the neighborhood. As George Moy remembers, "there were more votes in the flophouses," and the community lacked the political clout to undertake larger change—a situation that would change in the 1960s. As Chinatown expanded again with a new wave of immigration from Hong Kong, the community began to feel the squeeze of urban redevelopment, a challenge that activated a new generation of Chinese American leaders. These new leaders would work to change the neighborhood's relationship to the larger city—and the face of Chinatown as a result. ■

Kate Wilson is associate professor of history at Georgia State University. She is currently at work on a book about Chinatown with the working title, "Ethnic Renewal: Space, Place, and Struggle in Philadelphia's Chinatown."


ONE WAY STREET
NO STADIUM in Chinatown
MONEY
SCHOOLS
STADIUM



Reclaiming Urban Space:

The Growth of Philadelphia's Chinatown and the Establishment of a Community School

BY ROSEANN LIU

I move out of the way just in the nick of time to avoid a herd of grade-schoolers charging out for recess. Within the din of playground noises I hear a variety of languages being spoken by students at the Folk Arts and Cultural Treasures Charter School (FACTS).

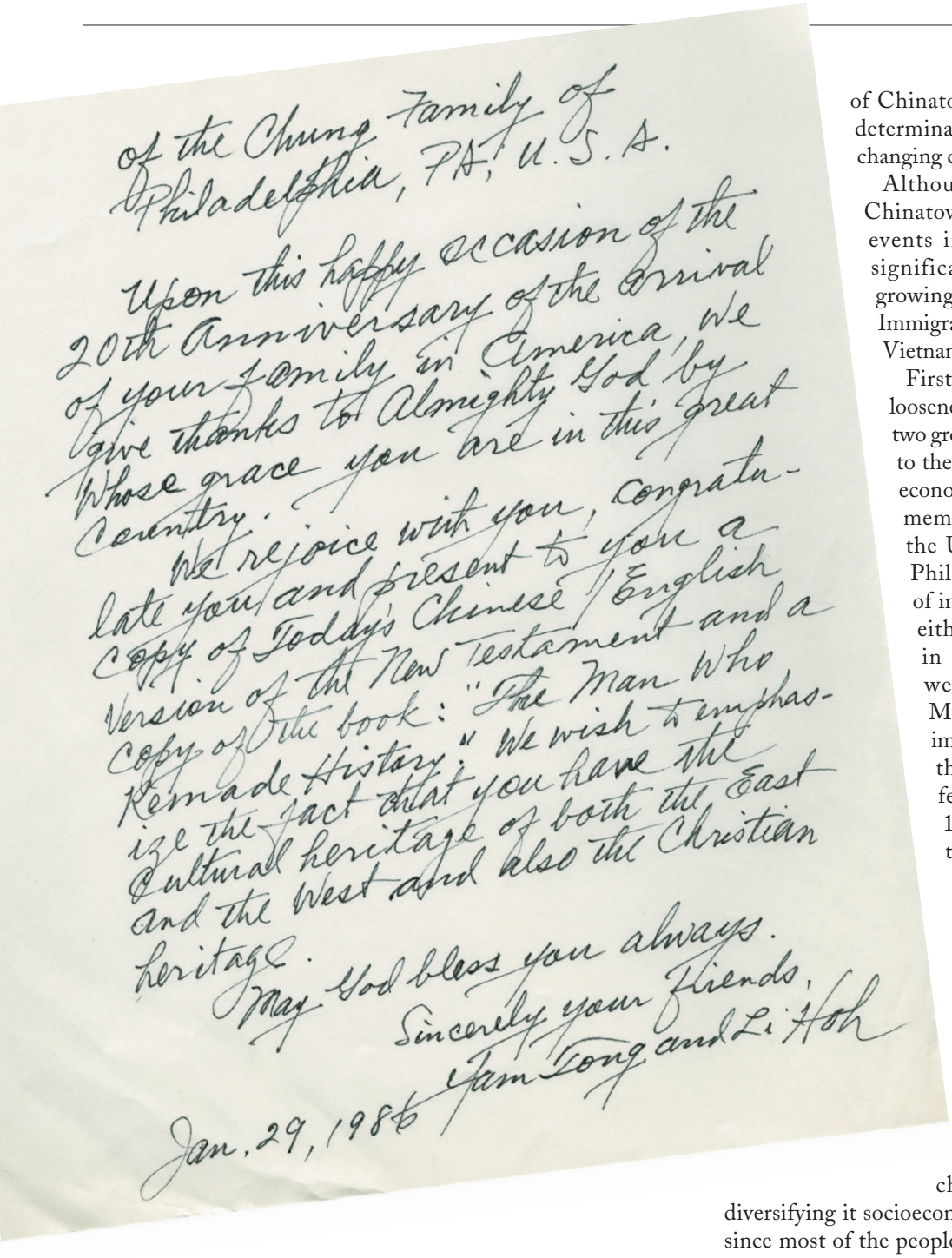
While many schools view students who speak English as a second language as disadvantaged, this community school in Philadelphia's Chinatown is founded on the principle of cultural reclamation and seeks to instill in its students a sense of pride in heritage and community.

Founded in 2005, FACTS is a K-8 school that reflects the demographic changes that have occurred in Philadelphia's Chinatown over the decades. It serves over 400 students from diverse racial, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds, with a large percentage of students from China and Southeast Asia, including Vietnam, Cambodia, and Indonesia. However, what makes FACTS unique among other schools in the area is not its remarkable diversity; it is that the school was founded as a grassroots strategy to establish local control over Chinatown development.

Although the school's youngest students may find it hard to remember a time when FACTS did not exist, the school's founders know all too well that the fate of this community school at one time hung in the balance. They bear the memories of a collective struggle to create a public school for this growing community. According to Deborah Wei, one of the founders, "As long as there aren't these big publicly funded institutional anchors, it's easy for the community to be decimated. There are certain things that mark a community, and a school is a big one. As long as there isn't a public school in your community, it's just a lot easier to say, 'You're not really a community.'" Therefore, the story of the battle to create this school is the story of Chinatown's decades-old struggle for recognition as a community. It is the story

(OPPOSITE) Yuk Fai Tsang chants "No Stadium in Chinatown" at June 2000 protest of baseball stadium proposal. *Philadelphia Inquirer,* June 9, 2000. Used with permission of Philadelphia Inquirer Copyright © 2012.

"There are certain things that mark a community, and a school is a big one. As long as there isn't a public school in your community, it's just a lot easier to say, 'You're not really a community.'"



of the Chung family of
Philadelphia, PA, U.S.A.

Upon this happy occasion of the
20th Anniversary of the arrival
of your family in America, we
give thanks to Almighty God by
whose grace you are in this great
country. We rejoice with you, congratu-
late you and present to you a
copy of Today's Chinese/English
Version of the New Testament and a
copy of the book: "The Man Who
Remade History." We wish to emphas-
ize the fact that you have the
cultural heritage of both the East
and the West and also the Christian
heritage.

May God bless you always.

Sincerely your friends,
Yam Tong and Li Hoh

Jan. 29, 1986

Letter from Yam Tong and Li Hoh to the Chung family, January 29, 1986, in commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the family's arrival in the United States. Families began immigrating to the United States in greater numbers after passage of the Immigration and Nationality Act in 1965. Rev. Dr. Yam Tong Hoh Papers.

of Chinatown's ongoing demand to exercise self-determination over the future of its growing and changing community.

Although community life in Philadelphia's Chinatown began in the late 19th century, two events in the years following World War II significantly transformed Chinatown into a growing community comprised of families: the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 and the Vietnam War.

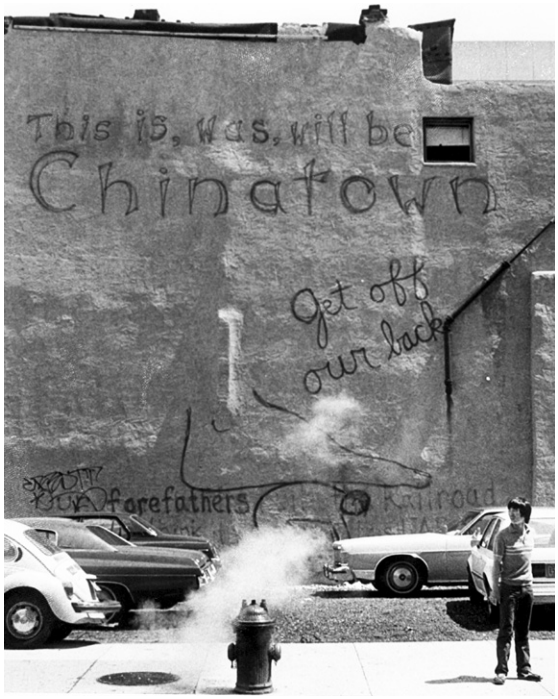
First, the Immigration and Nationality Act loosened regulations governing immigration for two groups: skilled workers who could contribute to the nation's transition from a postindustrial economy to a knowledge economy and family members of immigrants already residing in the United States. Because of this reform, Philadelphia's Chinatown attracted a wave of immigrants from Hong Kong, many who either possessed skills that were desirable in the United States' new economy or were reuniting with family members. Moreover, looking ahead, many Hong Kong immigrants took the opportunity to escape the social and political instability they feared would result with the impending 1997 handover of Hong Kong from British to Chinese control.

Second, because of events related to the Vietnam War, the United States granted asylum to refugees from a number of Southeast Asian countries. As a result, an influx of Vietnamese, Cambodian, and Laotian refugees, many of whom were of Chinese descent and spoke Cantonese, settled in Philadelphia's Chinatown in the 1970s and '80s and transformed the community's social and cultural landscape.

These new immigrants substantially changed the character of Chinatown, diversifying it socioeconomically and by pathways of migration, since most of the people who settled in Chinatown prior to the 1970s were from the Guangdong province in China. But perhaps most important to raising the community's consciousness and will for self-determination was the fact that these two events contributed to Chinatown's growth as a community with families and children. This demographic shift required Chinatown's

residents to reimagine their community and to create that desired community for their children.

Although the Chinatown community now included a growing number of children, there was a lack of schools to serve them. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, only two options existed for the community's children. Holy Redeemer Chinese Catholic School was located within Chinatown but was tuition-based and at full capacity. The other option was General George A. McCall Public School. Though only a mile outside of Chinatown, the school seemed socially and culturally distant from the community. While Chinatown fell within McCall's catchment area, many Chinatown families perceived the school as primarily serving the Society Hill community—a middle- and upper-class, nonimmigrant population—and unresponsive to the needs of Chinatown's children. For example, in those days, there were no bilingual teachers or programs for students of limited English proficiency, and there were no translators to help families communicate with teachers. Additionally, because the school district did not provide bus services for Chinatown's children, parents and grandparents walked four miles a day to take their children to and from school.



Wall at Ninth and Race with words "This is, was, will be Chinatown" written on it, as well as image of large foot on person's back and words "get off our back." ***Philadelphia Inquirer,*** **Aug. 24, 1983.** Used with permission of Philadelphia Inquirer Copyright © 2012.

Chinatown desperately needed a school in the community. However, urban planners were focused on generating revenue for the city and instead proposed to turn the area in and around Chinatown into a tourism hub. The construction of several urban revitalization projects threatened the community's survival and severely challenged the community's right to self-determination. The most significant of these threats was the construction of the Pennsylvania Convention Center—a massive facility that led to the demolition of Chinatown row houses and altogether displaced 23 families. This came on the heels of the demolition of a block of residential units to make way for the Center City commuter tunnel, which connected the city's two commuter rail stations. These two projects were serious incursions on Chinatown's space, dispossessing the community of its right to determine its own future. Cecilia Moy Yep, the director of the Philadelphia Chinatown Development Corporation (PCDC) in the 1980s, succinctly summed up the predicament of Chinatown: "We're being hemmed in." Despite these encroachments, Chinatown's residents maintained a defiant community spirit. A declaration of the community's right to exist and its claim to territory was scrawled on the side of an end unit slated to be condemned: "This is, was, will be Chinatown."

Chinatown continued to defy the odds by growing in the early 1990s with the arrival of immigrants from the Fujian province of China—a migration pattern that reflected what was occurring in many other US cities during that period. Mostly speaking Mandarin or Fujianese, this new group of immigrants transformed a community that had long been dominated by the Toisan and Cantonese dialects. This most recent wave of immigration created ever-greater need not simply for more schools but for schools that could meet the varied linguistic and cultural needs of Chinatown's growing and diverse population.

Community activists had lobbied hard for some time to change the schools that served Chinatown's children. But this process often felt as if every step forward resulted in two steps backward. Successful attempts to pressure the school district for changes were often short-lived, not surviving transitions in school administration because of the lack of larger institutional commitment. Once there was turnover of individuals in the administration, the changes that the community worked so hard for were quickly erased. Around the same time, activists also dreamed of starting a school that truly served the community. But it was the threat of building the Phillies baseball stadium in Chinatown that finally galvanized community leaders to reclaim urban space by establishing a community school.

In 2000, when the John Street administration proposed a plan to build the new Phillies baseball park in Chinatown, the community exploded. Lai Har Cheung, a youth community organizer, noted the impact that a baseball stadium would have on community and family life: "I'm living in South Philadelphia, my grandmother lives in Chinatown. The reason why my family moved is because of housing issues. Otherwise, I think we would have stayed together. And now they want to have another thing that keeps families away, to spread out people, to break apart families." The community was outraged, and organizers quickly mobilized over 1,500 people who took to the streets in protest, shutting down major arteries in Center City. Emblazoned on t-shirts and signs, the community proclaimed: "No Stadium in Chinatown." In a 2011 interview, Wei reflected upon the stadium proposal that occurred almost a decade ago, but did so with a sense of contemporary moral urgency: "When the city said, 'Well you're not going to do anything with that space anyway,' it felt like all these things were churning in our minds as critical to claim the space. We want to build things for the community in these spaces."

Although the stadium proposal catalyzed Chinatown's residents to claim this urban space as their own, the protests related to this were not simply instrumental acts against the construction of a sports arena. The struggle was not just over the decision of what to erect and what to tear down. In Chinatown's struggle for self-determination, the stakes have always been higher. It was and continues to be about the right of urban citizens to collectively determine the very quality and character of urban revitalization and to remake their communities accordingly.

In 2005, the community's collective will became obvious in the thousands of signatures and hundreds of letters written to the Philadelphia School Reform Commission in support of establishing a Chinatown community school. These petitions and letters served

"Chinatown shouldn't be a museum piece for tourists. It's a community."

as a referendum on the kind of Chinatown residents envisioned for the future. They envisioned a place that nurtured the growth of family and communal life, not one that simply nurtured the growth of a commercial district; a place of lived, local cultural expression, not kitsch displays of "culture"; in sum, a community, not a tourist commodity.

The founding of FACTS became an important strategy in grassroots efforts to reclaim the community's right to self-determination. After years of planning, FACTS now exists as a community school that serves the needs of Chinatown's families as well as families across the city. The school occupies a building in an area known as Chinatown North. In an ironic turn of events, the specific building where the school is located would have been demolished if the proposal for the Phillies stadium had been successful. Instead of an immigrant-friendly school that provides vital educational and social services to Chinatown's families, the space would have been occupied by a parking lot outside of the third baseline. The school stands as a symbolic and physical reminder of Chinatown's victory in claiming the right to reimagine and remake its community. To many community activists, establishing a school was key to sustaining grassroots neighborhood transformation because community schools not only enact ideas of community transformation in the present moment but also, importantly, educate future citizens to envision their "community of tomorrow."

When I listened to Wei talk about the future of Chinatown 10 years ago, something about the resonance in her voice assured me that she is in this battle for the long haul. "The future of Chinatown is going to be a huge battle. Even though we won the fight against the stadium, it's going to be a continual battle for the right of the community to exist, to exist with dignity, to exist having the things a community should have. We're gonna fight it, and then my children will probably have to fight it as well. Chinatown shouldn't be a museum piece for tourists. It's a community."

It is a warm June day, and a view of the outside shows the Philadelphia skyline, the old Reading Terminal train tracks, vacant lots with artists' renderings of things-to-come, and other telltale signs of historical and contemporary battles over the development of this community. From the inside, though, there are no signs of contention, only a consensus of excitement for a group of eighth graders celebrating their graduation. The girls are smoothing out the wrinkles in their dresses and holding their heads up high to keep their carefully pinned curls in place. The boys are working hard to look comfortable in their starched and pressed shirts. Parents are pressing toward the aisle with cameras in hand. This scene of community life defies the images of Chinatown that are promoted in tourism brochures. But it is a scene that the school's founders take pride in, for it is the outcome of their efforts to reclaim urban space and maintain a thriving neighborhood through investment in the community's next generation of leaders. ■

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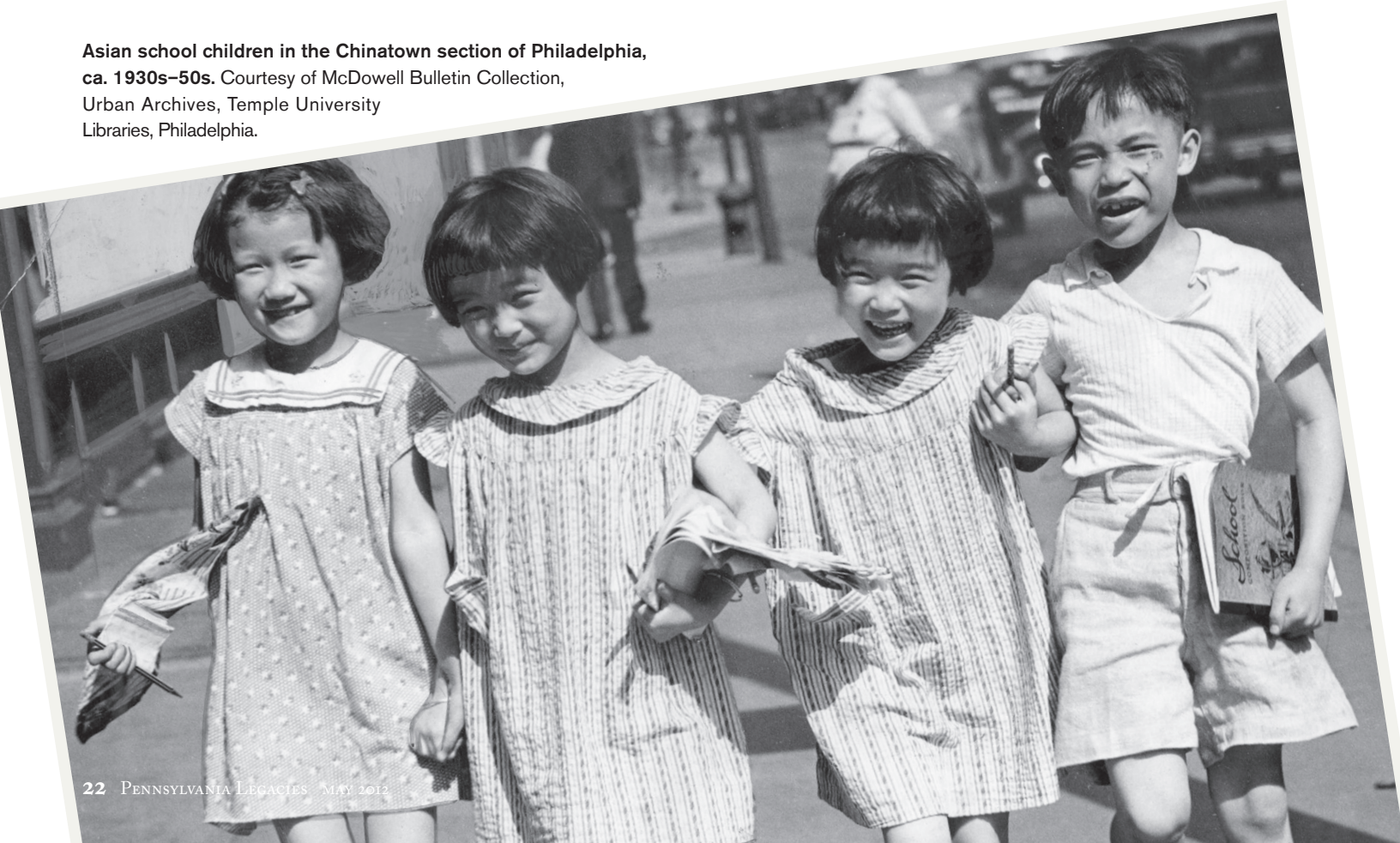


Asian school children in the Chinatown section of Philadelphia, ca. 1930s–50s. Courtesy of McDowell Bulletin Collection, Urban Archives, Temple University Libraries, Philadelphia.

Folk Arts and Cultural Treasures School Charter Application, extracts

WHO THE SCHOOL WILL SERVE

The Folk Arts–Cultural Treasures Charter School will be a kindergarten through eighth grade elementary school located in Philadelphia's Chinatown community. Opening as a K-5 elementary school in its first year, FACTS will add one grade per year until reaching grade eight and a capacity of approximately 440 students. FACTS will serve students of diverse racial, ethnic, linguistic and cultural backgrounds from around the city of Philadelphia. In particular, the school is designed to address the needs of immigrant students and non-English speakers with an emphasis on serving the needs of Philadelphia's Chinatown community. Because FACTS seeks to build bridges between and among immigrant communities and non-immigrant communities, FACTS will actively recruit students from non-immigrant families as well.

FACTS will be located in Philadelphia's Chinatown for a number of reasons. Chinatown is the city's oldest Asian American neighborhood, and has already commemorated over 125 years as a community. In recent years, the community has experienced a dramatic increase in population. Although it is a vibrant residential community, there are no recreation centers, public playgrounds, or parks in Chinatown, and the public elementary school serving Chinatown is 1.4 miles away. . . .

In addition to serving a Chinese immigrant community, Philadelphia's Chinatown attracts many Asian Americans who live scattered in neighborhoods throughout the city and who come to connect and identify with its community and cultural base. FACTS would serve the needs of this larger Asian American community. In addition, we intend to respond to the needs of relatively recent immigrants from Mexico and Central America who work in Chinatown, and who live in Chinatown and South Philadelphia. While there are a number of Spanish bilingual programs and schools in the District, we know of no such culturally appropriate (and culturally supportive) programs serving, and accessible to, these parts of the city.

The needs of Asian American immigrant students are well documented. According to U.S. census data (2000), Asian Americans comprise about 5% of the city's population. Because Asian Americans live in many different neighborhoods, no single school focuses specifically on the needs of Asian American/Asian immigrant students. Yet Asian immigrants as a group are among the fastest growing populations in Philadelphia. . . . In South Philadelphia alone, the Asian population has increased by over 110% in the last decade. . . .

In general, Asian American and immigrant children and youth face unique challenges. They face multiple oppressions of race, language, class, and immigration status. Their parents work long hours in restaurants, garment shops, and factories to pay off heavy debt burdens and to send money back to extended families in their native countries. This is especially evident in the Chinatown community which on the surface seems prosperous and thriving. However the reality for people who live there is very different. Over 74% of Chinatown's Asian children live below the poverty line, and the neighborhood is home to increasing numbers of recent immigrants who also confront extreme poverty. . . .

WHAT THE SCHOOL AIMS TO DO

FACTS will support young people's intellectual, expressive, social, and moral growth by engaging them as active contributors to their communities. FACTS will provide a culturally competent school setting which honors the languages and cultures of all the students in the building and which helps children develop the complex strategies they need to be both bicultural and bilingual. Most schools that serve immigrant students have full assimilation as a baseline expectation and goal. While we recognize the need for children to assimilate to mainstream culture, all too often, this has been at the expense of their own home cultures, and has caused pain and confusion among immigrant families. Our school seeks to educate and give children the necessary linguistic and social skills for becoming successful students in America, while at the same time affirming their home cultures. Allowing families to secure a physically and psychologically safe space for the acquisition of linguistic and social skills will enable children and families both a base, and the confidence, necessary to exercise their responsibilities as members of a democratic civil society. Folk arts, already vernacular means for creating such safe spaces and times, are important resources in this effort. . . .

FACTS has high aspirations for all of our students. We want them to be honest; to live with integrity; to be courteous and thoughtful. We want them to learn how to be responsible and how to be resourceful. . . .

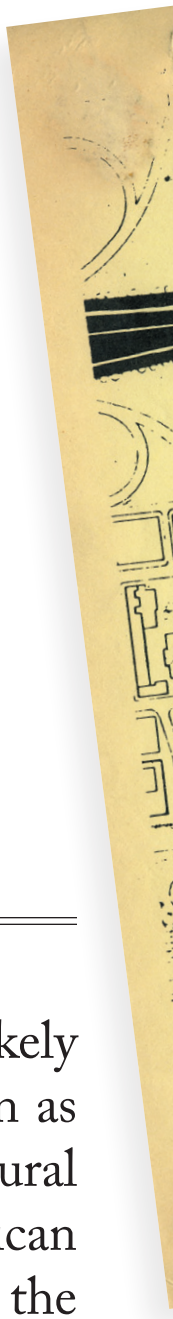
We want them to laugh and be happy in who they are and to respect themselves so that they can respect others. We want them to be excited about learning, to think, and read, and view the world critically. Of course we also want them to learn reading, writing, math, science, social studies, and world languages. But we recognize that the factual content and academic skills from these areas are embedded in the life experiences of our students, their families, and the communities in which they live. . . . Therefore FACTS seeks to create a learning environment that embraces these communities and the wisdom they contain. By weaving folk arts and folk traditions into the fabric of our school . . . FACTS will collectively build our school and community. . . . ■

Courtesy of FACTS. Photograph courtesy of Tamara Gaskell.

The SAVE CHINATOWN Movement:

Surviving against All Odds

BY MARY YEE



Those of us who came to Philadelphia after 1980 are likely to take for granted the existence of Chinatown. Then as now, Chinatown represented the spiritual and cultural center of not only the Chinese but of the Asian American community in the Delaware Valley. Even if families didn't live in the neighborhood, they came here to attend church, socialize in fraternal and district associations, buy Asian groceries, eat out, or just be around some folks who spoke their home language or looked like them.

In the 1970s, however, the survival of the neighborhood was in serious jeopardy due to several government projects—foremost among them, construction of the Vine Street Expressway, I–676.

The story of the Save Chinatown movement could be told as a litany of government projects, plans, consultant studies, community responses, and a catalogue of what got built and what didn't. But to do so would be to miss the deeper significance this struggle for social justice had in unifying the community and inspiring Asian Americans in Philadelphia and across the country. The experience of being part of this social movement deeply affected many community members, myself included. The Save Chinatown story is both about the historical events and the meaning the experience had for us.

From 1971 to 1977, the crucial formative years of the Save Chinatown movement and the Philadelphia Chinatown Development Corporation (PCDC), different sectors of the community united to fight the Vine Street Expressway; a wall of Market Street East (MSE) parking garages along Filbert Street; the 9th Street ramp to MSE; and the Center City Commuter Rail Tunnel (CRT). Along with the massive Reading viaduct west of 11th Street, these projects constricted Chinatown from growth on all four sides. The map of this "Noose around Chinatown" provided the visual representation that really galvanized the community. This image prompted metaphors of strangulation from the elders and cries of "cultural genocide" from more militant sectors.

Map of proposed Chinatown redevelopment project, including impact of the Vine Street Expressway and Market Street projects, 1973. Holy Redeemer Chinese Catholic Church is located below the "D" in "Genocide" within the path of the expressway. Courtesy of PCDC.

The pivotal event that instigated the Save Chinatown movement was the 1966 public meeting at the Free Library, where Chinatown residents first saw the proposal for the Vine Street Expressway, which was to replace the 12-lane Vine Street with an even wider depressed highway with service roads and several ramps. It would demolish most of Chinatown and the Holy Redeemer (HR) church and school.

Chinatown's beloved HR became the icon of the Chinatown struggle; planners intended to sacrifice it so that a mere 25-foot swath of one of Penn's original five squares, Franklin Square, could be saved. Built for Chinese American Catholics in 1941, HR served as recreational center and community hall—hosting basketball games and community meetings as well as weddings and wakes. However, we understood that saving HR and undoing the noose were not enough. We also had to fight for affordable new housing for working families and seniors. A quarter of Chinatown's housing stock had already been lost to the Independence Mall IV and the CRT projects. The lack of affordable housing was further exacerbated by increased demand from recent Chinese immigration.

The community responded by forming the Committee for the Preservation and Advancement of the Chinatown Community, the predecessor to the PCDC. In 1969, PCDC, originally a committee under the Chinese Benevolent Association (CBA), the traditional governing body of Chinatown, incorporated as a nonprofit charitable organization. The small group of dedicated Holy Redeemer alumni and parishioners were soon joined by the Sisters at Holy Redeemer; Mitzie Mackenzie, then director of the Chinese Christian Church and Center; second-generation Chinese American professionals; and university students.

One of PCDC's earliest challenges was to get CBA's approval to represent the community "in matters of urban renewal and physical development." The elders' attitude was that only they could speak for Chinatown, that the second generation was too Americanized, and that "you can't fight city hall." In time, PCDC overcame the political, cultural, and language differences between the first generation of men who had little formal education and spoke little English and the second generation of native-born and educated Chinese Americans who spoke little Cantonese. Subsequently, PCDC had the major task of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Just because the government says something is going to happen, it doesn't mean it has to happen.

(Gary Lee, Attorney)

mobilizing support from inside and outside Chinatown—community leaders; both first- and second-generation Chinese Americans; members of the faith-based institutions; professionals living outside of Chinatown; college students from the Asian American activist group Yellow Seeds; and community youth, many of whom had attended HR.

The threat to community survival prompted the different sectors of the community to bridge generational, religious, educational, and geographical boundaries. Adversity brought us together, tensions and all. Although PCDC was the recognized leader in the fight, the Save Chinatown movement also extended beyond PCDC. The youth, other community residents, and Yellow Seeds members sometimes took more aggressive and independent actions, such as confronting bulldozers to stop demolition, picketing in front of Cardinal Krol's residence, or exposing community sell-outs in print. A Chinese American cinematographer obtained an NEA grant to produce an independent documentary. Nonetheless, PCDC, with CBA, the churches, and Yellow Seeds, as the loyal opposition, forged a unity that could make concerted public action happen—such as a couple hundred people protesting at Philadelphia City Council or in Harrisburg.

By establishing our identity as a community and by being a public presence in political forums and in the media during the early years, we became a force to be reckoned with. We used the 1970 Environmental Protection Act to demand a full-scale Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), a legal document that would state fully the potential physical, social, economic, and cultural impacts of all the surrounding governmental projects. The convergence of a number of external factors aided our fight to save HR and defeat the enormous scale of the original expressway proposal. Following Chinatown demands in 1973, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) required an EIS. However, because of community protests and negotiations with the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, it took three years to finish just the Draft EIS (1977). In 1980, under pressure from escalating construction costs and the possibility of losing federal funding for I-676 to local mass transit, the Vine Street Task Force, comprised of city, state, and federal transportation officials, worked to resolve the alignment issue. With significant community input this time and revised traffic estimates, the final EIS (1983) recommended a scaled-down version of the expressway that left HR untouched; provided a pedestrian plaza at 10th Street to connect the north and south sides of Vine Street; and stipulated various design criteria to ameliorate noise, air, and visual impacts. Finally, with FHWA approval, construction was completed in 1991—15 years after the original 1976 Bicentennial target date.

Protestors, including Mary Yee, sitting atop a pile of rubble. *Philadelphia Inquirer,* Aug. 3, 1973. Used with permission of Philadelphia Inquirer Copyright © 2012.

HELP SAVE CHINATOWN!

COME TO THE EASTER SUNDAY RALLY
12 noon · April 22, 1973
10 th & Race Sts.

TOWN MEETING
8:30 PM · May 3, 1973
ON LEONG MERCHANTS ASSOC.
911 Race St.

CHINATOWN HAS BEEN PART OF THE PHILADELPHIA SCENE FOR OVER A HUNDRED YEARS. THE COMMUNITY CELEBRATED ITS CENTENNIAL IN 1972. ITS PEOPLE AND BUSINESSES CONTRIBUTE TO THE SOCIAL-ECONOMIC AS WELL AS TO THE CULTURAL WELL BEING OF PHILADELPHIA.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE VINE STREET EXPRESSWAY AND THE MARKET STREET EAST DEVELOPMENT ARE DETRIMENTAL TO THE FUTURE OF CHINATOWN, AFFECTING BOTH THE RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL STABILITY. AS TAXPAYERS, THE COMMUNITY HAS THE RIGHT AND THE RESPONSIBILITY TO DETERMINE ITS FUTURE. UNITED AS ONE STRONG VOICE, THE GOVERNMENT WILL WANT TO WORK WITH US. IN ORDER TO MEET THIS TASK, THE PHILADELPHIA CHINATOWN DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION WAS FORMED UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE CHINESE BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION. THE CORPORATION HAS BEEN WORKING WITH THE REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY, THE CITY PLANNING COMMISSION AND OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES.

YOUR INVOLVEMENT, SUPPORT AND UNDERSTANDING IS NEEDED. CHINATOWN BELONGS TO THE PHILADELPHIA COMMUNITY. CHINATOWN BELONGS TO YOU.

COME TO THE EASTER SUNDAY RALLY!
COME TO THE TOWN MEETING!

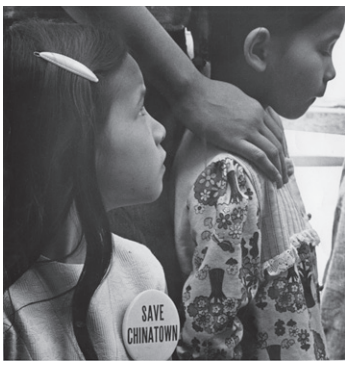
SPONSORED BY:
PHILADELPHIA CHINATOWN DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
AN AFFILIATE OF THE
CHINESE BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION
1006 RACE STREET
PHILADELPHIA, PA. 19107

A major consequence of the construction of the Vine Street Expressway would be the potential impact on the social and cultural functioning of Chinatown as a community. . . . The breakdown of Chinatown will be exacerbated by building the Expressway

(Draft EIS for Vine Street Expressway, 1974, pp. 81–82)

Many battles culminated in one momentous year, 1973. We forced agencies to recognize us by mobilizing vociferous protests to demand inclusion in the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation hearings at the State Office Building; to pressure Lynn Abraham, then executive director of the Redevelopment Authority, to prioritize relocation housing; and to pressure Philadelphia City Council to eliminate the footings and funding for the Ninth Street ramp. We also prevailed on Governor Shapp to redesign the Vine Street Expressway and petitioned the Archdiocese of Philadelphia to recognize our plight. The same year, our struggle received widespread coverage through the airing of Jon Wing Lum's documentary *Save Chinatown* on WPVI, Channel 6.

Our constant clamoring for a professional neighborhood plan to locate new affordable housing and community facilities resulted in the city-funded 1975 Gluck and Chadbourne Comprehensive Plan for Chinatown, which, importantly, sited new housing and extended the planning boundaries of Chinatown south to Arch and north to Callowhill Streets. When the funding moratorium for housing in Philadelphia was lifted in 1979, we pressed the Redevelopment Authority, Philadelphia City Council, and the politicians for a budget line item. This victory, by providing for relocation housing and an infusion of city investment into the neighborhood, signified the stabilization of Chinatown.



Children attend rally regarding the construction of the Vine Street Expressway and Market Street East in the Chinatown section of Philadelphia (DETAIL). Courtesy of McDowell Bulletin Collection, Urban Archives, Temple University Libraries, Philadelphia.

Because of Chinatown's Center City location, PCDC had to overcome a bureaucratic tangle of funding, zoning, construction, and land acquisition issues. Nonetheless, from 1982 to 1990, PCDC developed 164 new units of affordable housing and 22 commercial storefronts and collaborated with the Philadelphia Department of Commerce to build the landmark Chinatown Friendship Gate at 10th and Arch Streets. Because of PCDC's efforts, Philadelphia City Council passed Chinatown Special District zoning (1989), which protects the scale of the neighborhood and provides for compatible land uses. Between 1999 and 2003, 61 low/moderate-income dwelling units were added in Chinatown North, the area north of Vine Street between 9th and 11th Streets. All this has catalyzed private small business development in the community, now extending to the limits of the planning area. Having fought long and hard for survival, Chinatown has put down deeper and wider roots, nourished by the influx of Asian immigrants and their successful entrepreneurship. This would not be the case if PCDC and its allies had not waged the fierce struggle for existence and then pressured government to provide the necessary capital funding for projects that would symbolize its affirmation of Chinatown's right to exist, grow, and flourish.

But the Save Chinatown movement has other lasting legacies. We—members of the community—gained a sense of agency, added new identities, and confronted the unjust actions imposed by government policy. Had we not resisted what government officials and politicians thought was inevitable at the outset, we would probably have suffered the sad fate of Washington, DC's Chinatown, devastated by its convention center and the Verizon Center. We all strongly believe that community activism and a unified movement were crucial for Philadelphia's Chinatown's survival and that in the process we also disrupted the prevalent image of Asian Americans as passive.

As an active member of both Yellow Seeds and PCDC, I learned community organizing through the Save Chinatown movement. It laid the conceptual and practical foundation for my future work around issues of educational equity and social justice with other working-class communities and communities of color. For Harry Leong, being part of Wing's film crew made a deep and lasting impression. His exposure as a 10 year old to the community's protests at public meetings and in City Council nurtured the belief that it was his natural right to speak out and confront city hall. For Gary Lee, then in high school and now an attorney, going to meetings of Philadelphia City Council and with city and state officials instilled in him an appreciation of community activism and a healthy skepticism in regard to the inevitability of public plans. Jon Wing Lum regarded his documentary *Save Chinatown* as a social justice project, a participatory democratic exercise, and the beginning of a new genre, "catalytic cinema."

The success of the Save Chinatown movement and the longevity of PCDC can be attributed to the continuity of grassroots community

Flyer, in English and Chinese (front and back), advertising Easter Sunday rally and later town meeting to protest Vine Street Expressway development plans, 1973. Rev. Dr. Yam Tong Hoh Papers.

We learned that we need to be involved with community. We need to speak out for the community, especially with a community that is primarily an immigrant population.

(Harry Leong, Director, Chinese Christian Church and Center)

leadership provided by Cecilia Yep, longtime community resident and PCDC executive director emeritus, and George Moy, longtime PCDC board member and community advocate. From working-class families ethnically tracked into the laundry business, they saw Chinatown as central to their lives. They developed pride and confidence as circumstances demanded they challenge the power structure and take political action. They became community role models of commitment, tenacity, and courage.

Countering the stereotype of the passive Asian—"keep a low profile" and "don't make trouble"—the Save Chinatown movement represented the time that we broke the mold, overcoming feelings of inferiority and speaking out. For George Moy, speaking out on behalf of Chinatown compelled him to develop a more forceful public identity. Tony To, former Yellow Seeds member and now executive director of Homesight in Seattle, said, "It's an attitude you have to overcome because if in this country you don't do that, you will be encroached on." We all acknowledged our uncomfortable identity as members of an immigrant working-class community of color seen as compliant, submissive to authority, and always the "other." Our struggle to save Chinatown and to free ourselves of the stereotype went hand in hand, one reinforcing the other.

The interwoven story of people who lived the experience of Save Chinatown—people from different generations who played different roles and who found different meanings from their participation—is that epic David-and-Goliath struggle. The story of the Save Chinatown movement tells of the importance of community connections, of working together for common cause, and the strength and power that comes from a strong belief in what is right and just. Moreover, for many of us it was the first time that we had to confront the American political system in such a direct way. We became activists, challenging not only our own personal dispositions influenced by Asian culture but the bureaucratic and irrational decision making of government officials and politicians. Survival has been at the core of the immigrant experience, and our community has survived and grown because of the perseverance and forbearance of several generations of Chinese immigrants and their descendents.

What are the lessons that have come out of our struggle for recognition, respect, preservation, growth, and self-determination? I think most people who were involved in the movement would agree that the experience was a great civics lesson. The struggle demanded much personal sacrifice, long volunteer hours away from family, and frustrating confrontations with power. On one hand, it emboldened an ethnic neighborhood whose public identity had been that of a quaint place to dine or find Asian gifts and groceries and whose people were inscrutable. On the other hand, it taught us that we had to force the democratic system to be true to its own promise of giving voice to and protecting the livelihood of the minority as well as the majority. Nonetheless, we continue to see the primacy of profits and bureaucratic disregard for people's lives and livelihood. In 1985, the Convention Center took more Chinatown properties but never generated more business for Chinatown. In the last 15 years Chinatown has fought off a federal prison, a baseball stadium, and, most recently, a Foxwoods casino. Thus, economic injustice and political expediency continue to challenge our community's existence. No longer naïvely believing that we can avoid politics, we have engaged and strategized on many levels and learned to build coalitions and communities across the city and the country that have fought the structures of power. But like Sisyphus in his endless task, we seem never to be free of the onus of rallying at a moment's notice to confront the next threat. And we will do that to save Chinatown. ■

Mary Yee was active in the Save Chinatown movement as a graduate student and young professional in city planning. She came to Philadelphia having experienced the trauma of urban highway construction in Boston's Chinatown, a close-knit immigrant community that had been decimated by the Central Artery and the Southeast Expressway (I-93) in the 1960s, where the fracturing of relationships with neighbors, homes, community gathering places, and places of worship was not merely physical but spiritual.

Children march outside Holy Redeemer Chinese Catholic Church and School to protest the proposed demolition of their school to build the Vine Street Expressway. *Philadelphia Inquirer,* Apr. 8, 1966. Used with permission of Philadelphia Inquirer Copyright © 2012.

STATEMENT OF THE CHINATOWN COMMUNITY—OCTOBER 1973

PHILADELPHIA CHINATOWN DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

The Chinese community feels the need to reassert our stand with regard to our community. Chinatown, as an ethnic community and an important cultural nucleus, is a significant part of the City's social fabric and a worthy contribution to its commercial life. As such, we believe that Chinatown has a right to remain and to develop.

We have been in existence for over a hundred years. Our goals are no different from those of other communities around the City. We desire the establishment of a stable community with an environment conducive to growth and residential, commercial, and institutional development. We need housing affordable to our people and adequate community facilities. We need an opportunity and resources to plan for the future of our community as an integral whole—for the land use and development in the best interests of the community and the people of Philadelphia in general. We believe that the highway and urban renewal projects surrounding Chinatown, as presently conceived, would only act as a noose—preventing expansion and growth according to the needs of the Chinese community. We ask that Chinatown be accorded its rightful democratic demand to be able to participate in the decision-making processes which directly affect it.

Recent events have led people to believe that the Chinese community is against progress—against the City's attempt to promote commerce and revitalize the inner core. That is untrue. We believe that these things should happen in the interests of the people. However, when projects are promoted without regard to the rights and livelihood of the people they will affect, we feel that this is neither in the interests of progress nor of the City at large. On the contrary, we feel it is a great injustice to the basic principle of equal individual rights, on which are founded our great American democratic traditions.

We feel that it would benefit both the City and the community to be able to work together in solving their common problems as soon as possible. We feel that further discussion should focus on the following issues:

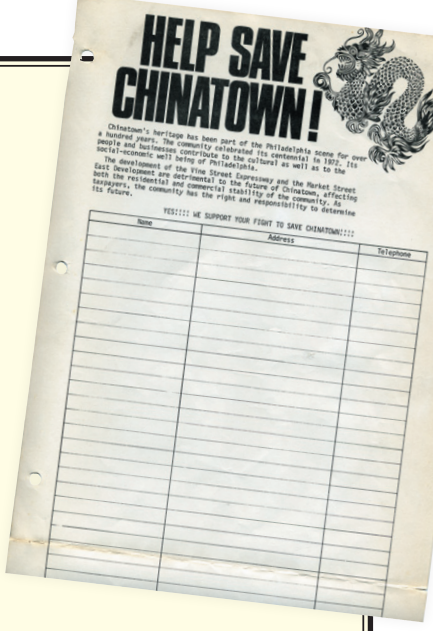
MAJOR ISSUES:

1. The Market Street East ramps along 9th and 11th Streets. The community is opposed to the construction of these ramps as presently designed. We feel that their construction would result in undue detrimental effects to the environmental, social, and economic health of our community. We believe that it would be in the best interests of both parties to require an Environmental Impact Study (EIS) in order to reassure the people of Philadelphia that no harmful effects would result from the Market Street East project.

2. A comprehensive proposal for Chinatown and the designation of Chinatown as an Urban Renewal Area. We feel that the community should be given a chance to plan for its future.

3. An appropriation of around $40,000 to hire consultants for a comprehensive plan. A full-time consultant would expedite the resolution of City-Community problems with a comprehensive proposal.

4. Allocations for housing and community facilities in the City's current Capital Programming. We feel that a commitment of this kind by the City on a significant scale would facilitate the working relationship between it and the community.


HELP SAVE CHINATOWN!

Chinatown's heritage has been part of the Philadelphia scene for over a hundred years. The community celebrated its centennial in 1972. Its people and businesses contribute to the cultural as well as to the social-economic well being of Philadelphia.

The development of the Vine Street Expressway and the Market Street East Development are detrimental to the future of Chinatown, affecting both the residential and commercial stability of the community. As taxpayers, the community has the right and responsibility to determine its future.

YES!!!! WE SUPPORT YOUR FIGHT TO SAVE CHINATOWN!!!!

Name	Address	Telephone

5. Recognition of P.C.D.C. as the official representative of the Chinatown community in matters concerning urban renewal and physical development.

OTHER ISSUES:

6. Chinatown's potential for expansion east to 8th Street, west to 13th Street, and north to Callowhill Street. Being the shortage of land and housing in Chinatown caused by government activity, we need to have more land in which to grow and develop.

7. Rezoning of the Chinatown area to be consistent with a community of residences and retail commercial establishments and other beneficial uses. We feel this is important to insure the stability of our community and to control future growth.

8. Low and moderate income housing for families and elderly.

9. More community facilities. Presently there is no public elementary school closer than the McCall School. There is no City recreation facility nor is there a facility for a senior citizen purpose.

10. Better municipal services. We feel that sanitation and care of the derelicts on Skid Row who are moving into Chinatown could be greatly improved.

11. The police parking lot at 11th and Race Streets. We feel that since this land is near the nucleus of Chinatown the Chinese community should be involved in determining its use.

12. Off-street parking in Chinatown. The residents of Chinatown have recently been harassed by ticketing of their cars parked in front of their houses in the early morning hours. Furthermore, there have been problems with customers getting their cars ticketed on the residential streets as well. Chinatown needs a resolution to its parking problems both in the interests of traffic efficiency and commercial viability. ■

Text and image of blank petition form protesting Vine Street Expressway development plans courtesy of PCDC.

Teachers' Page

Philadelphia's Chinatown's Fight for Survival: A Study of Movements for Social Justice

BY DEBORAH WEI

Introduction

Philadelphia's Chinatown, long viewed by policymakers and non-Chinatown residents as a tourist destination and a place to get a good, affordable meal, is a community with a long history. In studying the history of Chinatown, students can gain valuable knowledge about a range of histories, including the history of immigration policy in the United States, the formation of ethnic enclaves in urban environments, and the role of urban neighborhoods in the development of the city.

Philadelphia's Chinatown in particular offers additional lessons in contemporary community organizing as a means to effect social change. The resources in this primary-source activity document the evolution of a community over time and its ongoing struggle to maintain its geographic and cultural integrity. Members of this community have engaged in a wide range of civic activism—at times sanctioned by and at other times in defiance of local government.

As students investigate Chinatown's history, they can discover the role of tradition and legacy in shaping a community's response to struggle. They will also come to understand the role of community organizing in social change and how social change happens. Social change is a dynamic process, with disparate groups who lack power seeking unity in order to gain the strength to affect change. The materials used in this primary-source activity record the experiences of people whose lives, just for a moment in time, are altered as they pursue justice for their community. They present the complexities involved in collective action and help to humanize history for students. The efforts to save Chinatown offer a view into one way democracy works to shape our cities and our nation—a view from the ground up.

Objectives

Through study of the Save Chinatown movement in Philadelphia, students will be able to:

- Identify complex elements of struggles for social change and analyze and evaluate the perspectives of different individuals and organizations involved within a social change movement
- Compare and contrast different social movements in a single community to locate commonalities in tactics used over time
- Evaluate a range of primary-source materials for content, purpose, and effectiveness

Essential Questions

- How has social disagreement and collaboration been beneficial to Pennsylvania society?
- What role does analysis have in historical construction?

Primary Sources:

- "One More Piece of Chinatown Torn Down," *Urban Renewal Newsletter,* July 1975, published by Yellow Seeds
- Mike Liu, "Philadelphia Chinatown Fights Stadium Development," *Azine* (Asian American Movement Ezine), Aug. 15, 2009 (first posted on Dec. 15, 2000)
- Cynthia Burton, "Chinatown Leaders Plan a Protest Strike," *Philly.com*, June 7, 2000
- Kelly Patrick Gates, "DiCicco Gets Earful at Foxwoods Forum," *PlanPhilly*, Oct. 9, 2008
- "Saying No to Casinos in Chinatown," *ABC Pastor* (blog), video and images, Oct. 10, 2008

Other Materials

- Balch Exhibit: *The Gold Mountain, Building Philadelphia's Chinatown*
- Kathryn E. Wilson, "From Bachelor Enclave to Urban Village: The Evolution of Early Chinatown"
- Mary Yee, "The Save Chinatown Movement: Surviving against All Odds"
- *Save Chinatown*, documentary by Jon Wing Lum
- Analyzing Photographs Graphic Organizer
- Article Analysis Worksheet
- Documentary Analysis Graphic Organizer

Suggested Procedure

- Have students partner up and as quickly as possible write down what comes to mind when they hear the word "protest." Ask students, "What images come to mind? What words or phrases do you associate with protest? What emotions do you think are connected to protests? What causes have led people to protest?" Explain that you aren't looking for specific struggles they can remember, though they can cite them if they like, but for tactics used and the characteristics of protests. You can give students suggestions of tactics such as using signs and banners to display messages, physically occupying spaces for a period of time, writing letters, or organizing using social messaging such as Facebook or Twitter. You might cite recent protests in Egypt as an example of use of social media.
- After the students have a chance to brainstorm with their partners, ask them to share what they have discussed with the class.
- Ask students if those images/tactics might be the same ones used 10 years ago? 50 years ago? If many of the tactics are similar, ask students to go back to their mental images

and consider: Would everyone in the group agree with each other? Explain that often when history is presented it seems as if movements for social change are linear and clear, but actually they are much more complex than that. Explain that students will be focusing on a single community—Philadelphia's Chinatown—and its struggles to survive as a community.

- In preparation for this lesson, students will need a basic understanding of Chinatown's history. Teachers can use the Balch Institute exhibit *The Gold Mountain: Building Philadelphia's Chinatown* as an overview. Teachers may also assign the article by Kathryn E. Wilson, "From Bachelor Enclave to Urban Village: The Evolution of Early Chinatown," as homework in preparation for the exhibit analysis.

The Gold Mountain: Exhibit Analysis

Ask students how many of them pictured Asian Americans when they pictured people protesting. Explain that they are going to study a series of protests connected to Philadelphia's Chinatown. Ask students to brainstorm what they know about Philadelphia's Chinatown. What can be seen there? Have they ever visited? There are five sections in the online exhibit. Break students into small groups and assign each group a section to review and conduct the photographic analysis using the Analyzing Photographs Graphic Organizer. The sections are:

- "Bachelor" Society
- Chinatown and World War II: Historical Turning Point
- Family and Community Life in Chinatown, 1930s–1980s
- Activism and the "Save Chinatown" Movement
- Chinatown Today and Tomorrow

Have student groups identify and note details in the section of the exhibit they have been assigned. Have them consider the questions on the Graphic Organizer as they review the exhibit. Ask each group to pick one image from the section it is reviewing and fill in the organizer. Encourage students to consider the details carefully and in depth. For example: people/person; male/female; wearing; doing; holding; facial expression; scene; event; action; geography; architecture.

After completing all of the steps, have each group report about the section it has viewed. What information did the group get from the section? Ask students to share what surprised them about what they learned.

Primary-Source Analysis

Next, break students into five groups and give each group one of the primary-source materials cited above. Ask students to note (a) the issue being addressed, (b) examples of facts and opinions, (c) the tactics used and the purpose of the tactics, and (d) the who, what, when, where, why, and how. For this activity, students may use the Analyzing Photographs Graphic Organizer and the Article Analysis Worksheet as support as they work in groups to analyze their assigned articles. Students should write their results out on newsprint and post their groups' reports on the wall.

Hold a gallery walk. Have students walk around the room to look at each others' charts, noting similarities and differences.

Assign the article in *Legacies* by Mary Yee for students to read for homework.

Lead students in a discussion of the following: Yee's piece discusses different sectors and interests within Philadelphia's Chinese community. How important is it to unite people when there is an issue to protest? How does relative power affect that decision? What might be the particular challenges presented in mounting a campaign for social change in a community where large segments of the community do not speak English? Some of the struggles discussed in these sources occurred nearly 40 years apart. Why are there so many similarities in groups and tactics? Is social justice organizing a tradition passed down from generation to generation?

Save Chinatown: Documentary Analysis

In preparation for viewing the documentary, distribute the Documentary Analysis Graphic Organizer and have each student fill in the preview section. Show the documentary *Save Chinatown*.

While viewing the documentary, students should fill in the second part of the organizer.

After completing the documentary, you may have students fill in the last part as a form of assessment or utilize the questions as the basis for a class discussion. ■

Debbie Wei *has taught in Hong Kong and Philadelphia. She worked as the curriculum specialist in Asian Pacific American Studies in the School District of Philadelphia and was the founding principal of the Folk Arts and Cultural Treasures Charter School. She is currently the director of the Office of Multilingual Curriculum and Programs in the School District of Philadelphia.*

PA Standards

Subjects/Courses: US History/PA History (Grades 9–12); Civics and Government (Grades 9–12)
History: 8.1.12.A; 8.1.12.B; 8.2.9.D; 8.3.9.A
Civics and Government: 5.3.9.G; 5.3.12.H

The materials referenced in this primary-source activity, including links to all materials referenced, vocabulary, and suggestions for supplemental activities and assessment, as well as other educator resources, can be found on the HSP website at hsp.org/education.

Urban Renewal Newsletter **published by the Philadelphia Asian American activist organization Yellow Seeds, published front and back in both English and Chinese.**


urban renewal newsletter

SAVE CHINATOWN FIGHT FOR THE RIGHT TO DECENT HOUSING

PUBLISHED BY YELLOW SEEDS
NO. 3 JULY 1975

unless Chinatown's demands are met. It is to be remembered that that building and all those empty lots are a symbol of our need to struggle for our survival. It is symbolic in the same way when, last fall, Chinatown told the State that no more buildings were to come down until the Plaza over the highway was promised to us. The State did not make that promise and they took down another building. Obviously the State does not serve the people.

Teachers' Turn

Memory, Meaning, and Community

BY DEBORAH WEI

While the articles in this issue of *Legacies* focus on one Philadelphia ethnic community, the themes explored are ones that students in any locality could consider. Using Chinatown as an example, teachers can ask students to think about where they live and the distinct communities that they are a part of or with which they are familiar. These articles encourage students to consider such questions as: How and who do we remember? Who are the "heroes" in our community? How are neighborhoods established? What institutions make a village or neighborhood? When and how do we try to preserve our community? And when is change a positive, or a negative?

These issues are especially apparent in Philadelphia, which has been called a city of neighborhoods. Ethnic enclaves have dotted Philadelphia's streets since the city's founding. Many of these enclaves have either passed into history or changed significantly in ethnic makeup as the city developed and new generations of immigrants moved into the city and older ethnic groups dispersed or left for "greener pastures" in other areas of the city or its suburbs.

The example of Philadelphia's Chinatown, a community that has survived nearly 150 years, can help teachers explore the formation of ethnic enclaves and the changes in neighborhoods over time. Through a study of Chinatown, students can consider the meaning of community in the urban setting and why a community such as Chinatown would fight so long and hard to remain intact. Tied together by relationships and memories, this community continues a struggle for survival in what has now become Center City, as the center expanded to engulf it. Students can consider how the experience of Chinatown compares to that of other ethnic or self-defined neighborhoods. Teachers may want to use these articles to discuss the roles of culture, language, and race in the formation of communities.

Philadelphia's Old China Trade and Early American Images of China

Long before there was a Chinatown in the city, Philadelphians were both curious about and engaged with Chinese people and culture. From its earliest days as a country, Philadelphia was tied to China through trade. Philadelphia merchants brought back descriptions and objects from Asia that fueled America's fascination with China and its people, who were viewed as "exotic." Jonathan Goldstein describes Philadelphia's early trade with China, which, in addition to introducing Americans to this far-off land, created great wealth for several scions in Philadelphia who are memorialized in the names of the city's streets and schools.

Teachers may want to use this essay to have students ponder the role of historical memory and perspective and, in particular, naming in creating historical understanding. Before having students read the article, ask them if they have heard of the following historical Philadelphia people and/or the places named after them: Stephen Girard (Girard College, Girard Estates, Girard Avenue, Girard Elementary School), Commodore John Barry (Commodore Barry Bridge, Barry Elementary School), Robert Morris (Robert Morris University, Morris Elementary School, Morris Street). Ask them to focus on the role these men played in trade with China as they read the article. Have them re-read the section in which these men are highlighted and when they see the word "opium" substitute "cocaine" and when they see "Smyrna opium" substitute "crack." In small groups, have students discuss what was happening in China and the role these men had. Have each group report a summary of what was happening in its own words.

Tell students that in 2011, the Philadelphia Chinatown Development Corporation beautified an area at 10th and Vine Streets and created Chinatown Plaza. On the plaza is a prominent statue of Lin Zexu (pronounced Lin Zĕ Shōō). In March 1839 Lin became governor of Canton (now Guangdong) and immediately fought against the illegal opium trade in China. He arrested Chinese opium dealers and confiscated and destroyed opium from foreign ships. Britain declared war on China as a result. The series of wars around the opium trade is called the Sino-British War in Britain. In China it is called the Opium Wars. Eventually, China lost the war and Lin Zexu was exiled.

Ask students to consider the following questions:

- Why do Britain and China call the wars by different names? How does the naming of a war influence how history is remembered and portrayed?
- Why are public works such as streets, schools, and bridges named after men who made much of their fortune through illegal trade? What achievements do they think Philadelphians were honoring when recognizing these men? What do the names mean now? As history is uncovered and retold should public works be renamed? What would removal or changing of a name say about us? What are we saying when we name or rename something for Martin Luther King Jr., or Christopher Columbus? Should historical research play a role in renaming places? Should history be honored by not changing the names?

From Bachelor Enclave to Urban Village

Kathryn Wilson's article focuses on Philadelphia's Chinatown's early development. Like other Chinatowns across the country, it was impacted by de facto segregation and the passage of the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act, which severely restricted Chinese immigration to the United States. Those workers who

Henry Jung in his Chinatown shop.
Holy Redeemer Chinese Catholic Church Photograph Collection.

came before 1882 to work on the western railroads or in mines were hard pressed to find employment once that work was completed. Many moved east and, closed out of unions, found that the only work open to them was work that would not threaten white male workers, such as washing clothes and cooking, traditionally the purview of women. This labor also allowed Chinese men to open small businesses, which was crucial for maintaining US residency and the ability to travel back and forth to China under the Exclusion Act.

Activities:

- As students read Wilson's article, have them consider the term "urban village" in her title. Have them underline the places in the article that support the notion of Chinatown as an "urban village." What role did Chinatown play in the lives of Chinese spread throughout the Philadelphia area?
- Ask students to consider what institutions and businesses might be present in a place called a community or neighborhood in a city. Which of the institutions might be publically funded (e.g., post offices, schools, etc.)? Wilson describes several organizations, businesses, and institutions in early Chinatown. Were any of them publicly funded? Ask them to consider why there might not be any publically funded institutions in Chinatown. (Be sure to note, too, that there were many fewer publicly funded institutions anywhere in the city at this time, so part of the reason for a lack of such institutions is purely historical.)
- Ask students to research the Chinese Exclusion Act. Why was an act prohibiting the immigration of a particular ethnic group enacted in the United States? Teachers may refer students to the National Archives website (http://www.archives.gov/research/chinese-americans/) or the Library of Congress (http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/connections/chinese-cal/file.html) to analyze primary-source documents regarding the act.

Reclaiming Urban Space *and* The SAVE CHINATOWN Movement

One of my sons, now nearly 22, studied kung fu in Chinatown for many years. He saved his pocket money in order to visit one particular store to buy occasional candy. When I asked him why he always went to that store and not to a store where the candy might be less expensive, he replied "The owner of the store knows me and calls me by my Chinese name. He's always happy to see me." Such sentiments constitute the heart and soul of this community and those who love it and fight for its survival—sentiments highlighted in these two articles. Teachers can use these two articles to explore the concept and significance of community in the historical American landscape, whether communities created by exclusion (at the heart of Chinatown's formation) or by choice (as Chinatown now strives to be).

Mary Yee recounts the history and meaning of the Save Chinatown movement—a historical event that has become not a singular episode but an inspiration for the community's ongoing struggle for existence. Roseann Liu documents the strategy of one group of people to claim space and rights through its fight for the first publicly funded institution in the community purposely developed to serve that community. In hearing the passion of so many who have fought for Chinatown, students, who may take the city and its neighborhoods for granted, can begin to understand the importance of community to its members.

Activities:

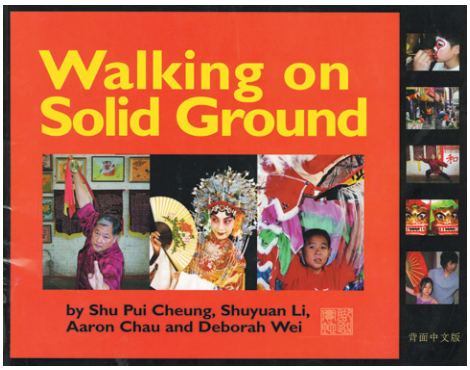
- Have students read Yee's and Liu's articles. These articles deal with more contemporary history and, in particular, highlight issues of community organizing and resistance. Explain to students that while both articles discuss efforts to ensure the survival of Chinatown, the activists involved utilized different strategies. Explain that a strategy is a plan of action over time designed to create a vision. What is the vision in each of these struggles? What do they think the overall strategy is that is represented in these two articles?
- Chinatown is usually viewed as a location for tourism and dining. Draw a T-chart on the board. On one side, ask students to brainstorm what areas marketed for "tourism and dining" might have in them? How might you know you are in an area that attracts tourists? On the other side of the T-chart, ask students to consider what a community might look like. Teachers may consider showing the video *Look Forward and Carry on the Past* (http://www.folkloreproject.org/folkarts/resources/documentaries/zPlayer/doc_lookForward.php). Ask students to discuss how the view of arts and culture for the community compares to a view of arts and culture for tourism. Take students on a tour of Philadelphia's Chinatown. Have students work in groups to document the things they see that indicate that Chinatown is a tourist destination and the things that indicate Chinatown is a community. ■

Debbie Wei is currently the director of the Office of Multilingual Curriculum and Programs in the School District of Philadelphia.

Legacies for Kids

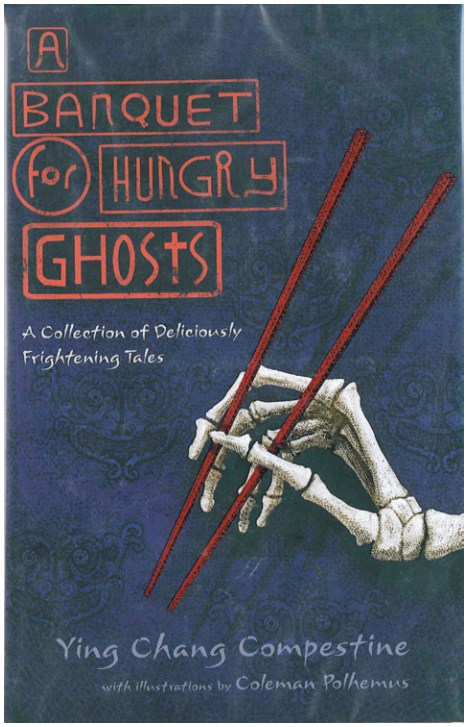
Book Reviews

BY SARAH STIPPICH



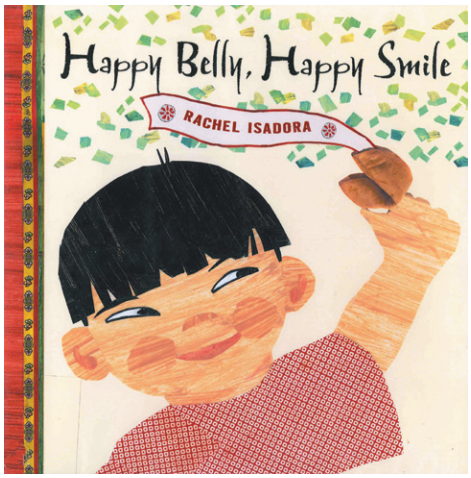
Walking on Solid Ground
By Shu Pui Cheung, Shuyuan Li, Aaron Chau, and Deborah Wei
Philadelphia: Philadelphia Folklore Project, 2004, 31 pp. Ages 5–12.

Truly a celebration of Chinatown's community, *Walking on Solid Ground* offers glimpses into the lives of three members of Philadelphia's Chinatown, each of a different generation. Shu Pui Cheung emigrated from Hong Kong and is now a kung fu teacher; Shuyuan Li, a Beijing opera singer, came from China; and Aaron Chau is a young student. Each embodies the spirit and values of Chinatown, a community that sticks together in the face of adversity and embraces a rich future. Half the book is in English; flip it over and read it in Chinese. Includes a glossary, bios, and further information.



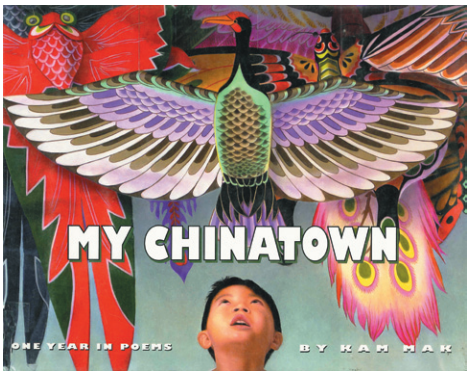
A Banquet for Hungry Ghosts: A Collection of Deliciously Frightening Tales
By Ying Chang Compestine
Illustrated by Coleman Polhemus
New York: Henry Holt, 2009, 180 pp. Ages 12 and up.

Take eight chillingly frightening stories set in China, top each with easy and delicious Chinese recipes, sprinkle generously with bite-size bits of historical background connected to the story and recipe and you have *A Banquet for Hungry Ghosts*. Based on traditions of placating ghosts with food offerings, the stories are titled according to recipe (for example, "Steamed Dumplings," a tale of a murderous ghost and the money-hungry businessman who crosses him). Some of the stories will make you lose sleep—and maybe your appetite! A well-rounded and tantalizing collection.



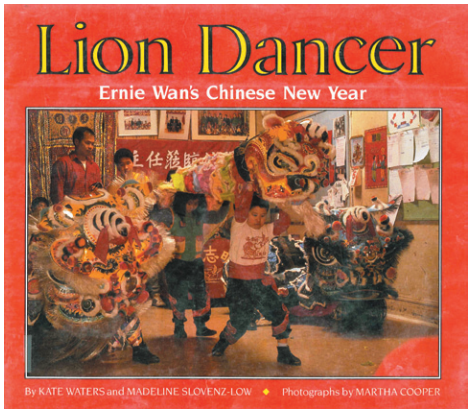
Happy Belly, Happy Smile
By Rachel Isadora
Boston: Harcourt, 2009, unpaged. Ages 3–5.

Louie's Grandpa Sam owns a restaurant in Chinatown, and on Fridays, Louie visits and has dinner there. He loves the hustle and bustle, the steamy kitchen, the busy cooks chopping vegetables, and the big fish tank. Isadora's lively, multicultural cast of characters practically jumps off the page, and backgrounds feature paper lanterns, dragons, and pots and pans in vibrant collage and painted, cut paper. A fabulous storytime pick for exploring the foods of Chinatown.



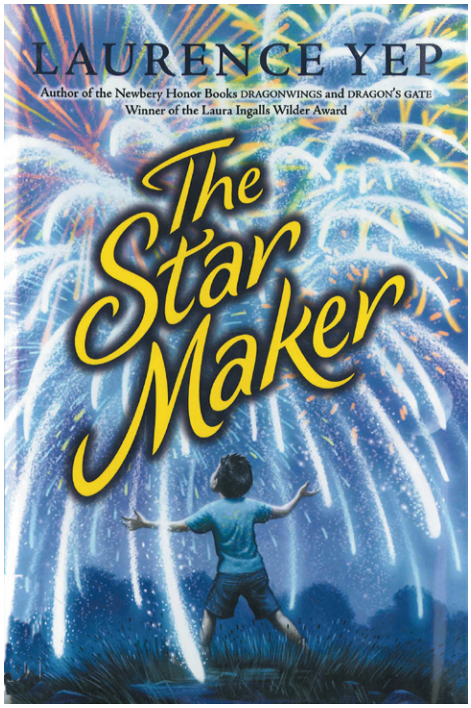
My Chinatown: One Year in Poems
By Kam Mak
New York: HarperCollins, 2002, 30 pp. Ages 5–8.

Every season has different things to offer in Chinatown: the bright red paper of spent firecrackers in winter, the glowing moon lanterns in fall, the dragon-boat races in summer. Our young narrator misses his home back in Hong Kong and finds it difficult to warm up to living in an American Chinatown. But each season brings him closer to appreciating and loving his new home. Each poem is paired with a lovely, full-page painted illustration.



Lion Dancer: Ernie Wan's Chinese New Year
By Kate Waters and Madeline Slovenz-Low
Photographs by Martha Cooper
New York: Scholastic, 1990, 30 pp. Ages 5–8.

Meet six-year-old Ernie Wan. A very important day is coming up for him: his first Lion Dance! Follow Ernie as he explores New York City's Chinatown, goes to Chinese school, and practices for his big role in the Chinese New Year parade. Photographs of Ernie's family and neighborhood really bring to life the sounds, smells, and tastes of Chinatown. An explanation of the Chinese lunar calendar and horoscopes follow.



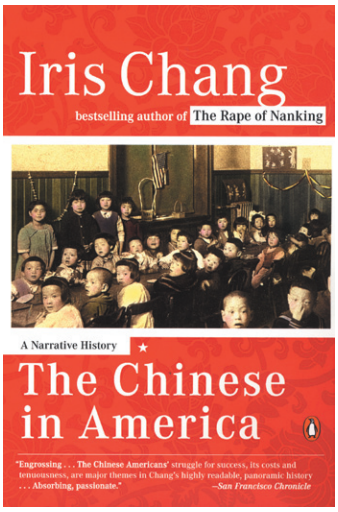
The Star Maker
By Laurence Yep
New York: HarperCollins, 2011, 100 pp. Ages 8–12.

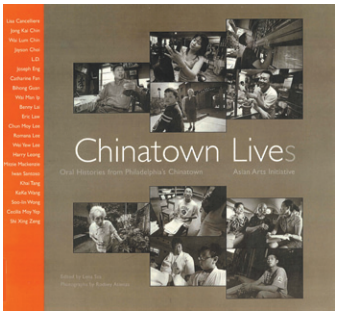
Artie, the youngest in the family, shouldn't have promised his pesky cousin that he would buy everyone firecrackers for Chinese New Year. But now he has to keep to his word, and even Uncle Chester, with all his connections with people in Chinatown, may not be able to help him. Based in part on Yep's childhood in 1950s San Francisco's Chinatown, *The Star Maker* features realistic characters and a setting that truly invokes the time and spirit of Artie's childhood.

Sarah Stippich is a children's librarian at the Free Library of Philadelphia.

Book Reviews

BY RACHEL MOLOSHOK





The Chinese in America: A Narrative History

By Iris Chang
New York: Viking, 2003

In her third and final book, bestselling author Iris Chang leads her readers back and forth across the Pacific from 19th-century Guangdong through the US gold rush, exclusion era, decades of global depression, world wars, revolutions, political paranoia, battles for civil rights, and the still-reverberating effects of the internet revolution and the rise of the new global economy. Chang's is a push-pull narrative, focusing not just on the experiences of the Chinese in America but on the effects of their immigration on the places they left behind. The ambitious scope of the project means that Chang is almost certainly guilty of oversimplification at times, but she provides a strong sense of the complexity and variety of Chinese American experiences. Her expansive, well-researched history points readers toward lesser-explored episodes, such as southern plantation owners' unsuccessful attempts to replace black slaves with Chinese field hands following the Civil War. Drawing largely on personal accounts found in correspondence, memoir, oral history, and the author's own reminiscences, Chang's nuanced and sensitive storytelling reveals the extent to which race, culture, and identity are endlessly fluid. In the end, she writes, "I can only close this book with a fervent hope: that readers will recognize the story of my people—the Chinese in the United States—not as a foreign story, but a quintessentially American one."

Remaking Chinese America: Immigration, Family, and Community, 1940–1965

By Xiaojian Zhao
New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2002

The significance of legislation in the early 1940s that finally allowed Chinese women and children to immigrate to the US en masse cannot be overstated. UCSB professor Xiaojian Zhao explores how the Chinese American population transformed from 1940 through 1965 from a "predominantly male Chinese immigrant community" into a "family-centered American ethnic community" and goes on to explore "the forces that unified all Chinese living in the United States into one group" during this era. She begins by outlining male Chinese Americans' long struggle to establish families in their new homes, then examines the impact of World War II on Chinese American women; a particularly fascinating chapter tells the previously unexplored stories of Chinese "war brides." Following such a long period of female exclusion, the role of women in the community and in individual families changed significantly as Chinese men and women alike adjusted to dramatically new ways of living. Later chapters look at the impact of Cold War politics on Chinese American family and community life. The story Zhao tells is a national one, and yet her case studies and impressive evidence base are drawn almost entirely from California. This quibble aside, Zhao has succeeded in creating a work of exceptional scholarship that is also accessible to the general reader.

Chinatown Live(s): Oral Histories from Philadelphia's Chinatown

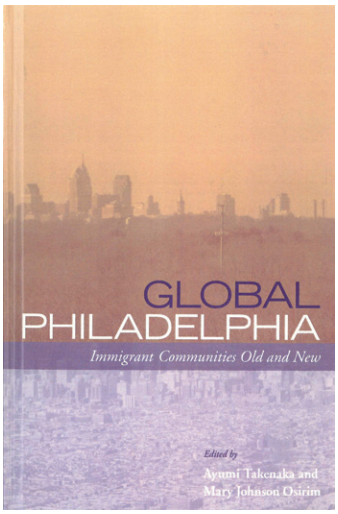
Edited by Lena Sze;
Photographs by Rodney Atienza
Philadelphia: New City Community Press, 2004
Distributed by Syracuse University Press

In 2002–04, the Philadelphia-based Asian Arts Initiative conducted an oral history project in which 24 self-identified Chinatown Philadelphians were interviewed. This book publishes edited excerpts from 22 interviews, accompanied by high-quality black and white photographs. Essays by editor Lena Sze, historian John Kuo Wei Tchen, and John William Chin, executive director of the Philadelphia Chinatown Development Corporation, provide background on Chinese immigration, Philadelphia's Chinatown, and the oral history project. The heart of the book, however, lies in its collected interviews and photographs. Through these snapshots, in words and images, we get a glimpse of the varied experiences and backgrounds of the people living and working in Philadelphia's Chinatown in the early 21st century. This is a short and ephemeral work, best characterized as a coffee-table book, but it does not claim to be more than "a snapshot of a community, both rooted and changing." As Tchen points out, "The

history of Philadelphia's first Asian settlement has yet to be written," and these interviews and photographs "offer us glimmers of a yet to be written people's history of this community." Hopefully, subsequent publications will soon rise to meet Tchen's challenge.

Global Philadelphia:
Immigrant Communities Old and New
Edited by Ayumi Takenaka and
Mary Johnson Osirim
Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2010

The editors of this collection describe *Global Philadelphia* as a "collaborative project" that brings together scholars from a wide variety of disciplines to explore how Philadelphia has shaped immigrants' lives and how they in turn have shaped Philadelphia. Although immigrants from all over the world have flocked to Philadelphia for 300 years, the city "has remained an understudied site of immigration to the United States" and is still "largely characterized as Black and White." This volume takes a comparative approach, with each chapter focusing on different groups and different time periods even as the pieces act together to emphasize that any study of immigration must consider transnational and historical contexts and relationships both within and between ethnic groups. Lena Sze's chapter on Chinese immigration points out that while general immigration to Philadelphia has declined, Chinese immigration to the city has remained consistent. Drawing attention to the increasing numbers of Vietnamese and Fujianese Chinese immigrants and the generational, class-based, and ethnic differences that exist in this relatively small community, she encourages her readers to question, "What does it mean to be 'Chinese'?"



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INTERESTING PLACES TO EXPLORE ON THE WEB

The Chinese American Experience: 1857–1892

immigrants.harpweek.com

This document-based website allows readers to explore the challenges faced by Chinese immigrants in America through news reports, editorials, poetry, fiction, and numerous political cartoons and illustrations that appeared in the pages of the influential magazine *Harper's Weekly.* Contextualized by brief historic and biographical essays, this collection provides a glimpse of the various ways in which the Chinese were viewed, discussed, and depicted by Americans in the mid- to late 19th century.

Becoming American: The Chinese Experience (PBS)

www.pbs.org/becomingamerican

The website for Bill Moyers's three-part series illuminates, through a variety of media, the experiences of Chinese Americans from the mid-1800s to the early 21st century. In addition to tracing the history of the Chinese in America, the program featured in-depth interviews with five prominent Chinese Americans, including AIDS researcher David Ho and artist/architect Maya Lin. The website provides videos, interview transcripts, firsthand accounts of historical eras and events, a time line, an educational quiz, a viewer's guide, and a multidisciplinary, document- and activity-based teacher's guide, as well as links to numerous excellent resources for further study.

Philadelphia Chinatown Development Corporation

chinatown-pcdc.org

Formed in the late 1960s in response to urban renewal proposals that threatened Chinatown's existence, the PCDC is still going strong today as a community-based, grassroots, nonprofit organization whose mission is to "preserve, protect, and promote Chinatown as a viable ethnic, residential, and business community." Its website provides information on local news, community events, urban planning and neighborhood improvement, community health initiatives, and a variety of other issues relevant to residents of Chinatown and the greater Philadelphia area. The website serves as a resource for those seeking information or assistance in matters such as taxes, healthcare, childcare and education, senior living, financial counseling, and immigration and legal services.

Chinese American Women: A History of Resilience and Resistance

www.nwhm.org/online-exhibits/chinese/1.html

Most narratives of Chinese American history tend to focus on the men who, often forced to leave their wives and children behind, crossed the seas to mine gold and build railroads. Throughout most of the 19th century, the population of Chinese American women was very small and often deliberately overlooked. This online exhibit, produced by the National Women's History Museum, presents a narrative history of the unique experiences of Chinese and Chinese American women in the United States from the mid-19th century through World War II, paying particular attention to the ways in which they resisted various forms of oppression and exploitation.

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A Walk through Chinatown

BY JOHN WILLIAM CHIN

A walk down the streets of Chinatown tickles my senses. Whiffs of Cantonese, Hunan, and Szechuan cooking emanate from the rows of restaurants. I see grandmothers harvesting their vegetables for the evening's dinner from their tiny backyard gardens; only a few lucky ones have backyards in Chinatown. I spot roasted ducks hanging behind the glass windows of delicatessens, and I crave for roasted duck and wonton rice noodle soup. I know the scalding soup will burn my tongue and can taste the flavor of broth that separates the phenomenal from the decent restaurants.

A stroll through Chinatown's streets, alleys, nooks, and crannies evokes pleasant childhood memories, but it also raises shadows of beloved spaces that have long since transformed (although it is sometimes difficult to keep track of all the stores that have come and gone). I walk by many of the row houses where my friends grew up and now see three, four, even five mail boxes, a sure sign their homes are now split into tiny apartments. Such signs of accommodation reflect the 63 percent growth in the number of people living in Chinatown since 2000, a growth contributing to the city's first recorded population increase in five decades. The pace of change in Chinatown quickens as the neighborhood grows. The Sunday hustle and bustle is unmistakable as I maneuver toward my favorite dim sum restaurant. The restaurants and vegetable and fish markets rely on this weekend crowd to offset the weekday losses. Many of these fledgling businesses work so hard to eke out a living that little time remains for anything else.

I sometimes worry that Chinatown's newcomers will take for granted the history of continuous struggle and responsive advocacy, now built into the neighborhood's collective memory. Will today's generation appreciate the cultural, social, and territorial battles that Philadelphia Chinatown Development Corporation (PCDC) and prior generations faced? There are clues of our history of struggle and advocacy. One glance upward at the intersection of 10th and Spring Streets reveals Mitzie Mackenzie Place renamed in remembrance of the young blonde missionary who established the Chinese Christian Church and Center 70 years ago. It was Mitzie who my mother begged to take me into her kindergarten class; I was not of age, and I was a rambunctious boy who was driving my mother to her wits' end. It was Mitzie who started ESL classes, a boys' club, girls' club, social services, and many other programs to help the immigrants of Chinatown.

I look across the street and see Tuck Hing, Chinatown's oldest continuously operated grocery store, and remember the youth who congregated on the corner to talk about the injustices the community endured. It seemed somebody came up with another "progressive" idea that would encroach upon Chinatown's identity and rights every seven years.

I walk up to the Vine Street Expressway and look across the 12-lane highway at the Holy Redeemer Chinese Catholic Church and School. It brings a smile to my face to know that the community successfully organized in 1966 to save the church. My parents, like so many other parents at that time, feared that the campus would be bulldozed to make way for the expressway, a detrimental verdict for the young people in the community. Saving the church also saved an important community cornerstone, which is teeming with children.

Chinatown seems constantly to stand at the center of urban development pressures. There was always someone who thought Chinatown was not good enough and should make way for "real" progress. Sadly, some of these plans did not include the people of Chinatown. I still remember our second home, a three-story row house at Ninth and Cherry Streets for which my father saved for years. Little did he know that the government planned to demolish homes and bury the Center City Commuter Rail Tunnel under Chinatown and that our future would include life across from a construction site for years. That construction site became a playground for my friends and me. We would climb the mountain of dirt, which was taller than my second-floor bedroom window. After construction was completed, that site became a beautiful grass meadow with cherry trees and where I flew my kite, if only for a fleeting moment. Some brilliant bureaucrat decided the site would better serve as a parking lot for

Cook in a Chinese restaurant in Chinatown. Holy Redeemer Chinese Catholic Church Photograph Collection.

Chinatown seems constantly to stand at the center of urban development pressures. There was always someone who thought Chinatown was not good enough and should make way for "real" progress.

the employees of the police administration building rather than one of the few parks for the children in Chinatown.

I could always fall back on Alder Street, which was my own private soccer field. The dead-end, asphalt-paved alley stood no more than 10 feet in width, and I would kick the soccer ball between the brick walls enclosing the alley without fear of bouncing it into the street. It was an acceptable play area because it was safe from the traffic and my parents could look out of our family restaurant kitchen door to keep an eye on me.

I loved growing up in Chinatown, but I didn't know our neighborhood was very different from others. I took for granted that skid row, modeling agencies, go-go bars, and the Trocadero, with its burlesque shows, were a part of normal life for all kids growing up. I didn't know that other neighborhoods did not have to fight off federal prisons, highways, and demolition of their homes. For the most part I accepted my life as normal, and the residents tried to make the best of the situation.

Chinatown's history is dotted with episodes of struggle and advocacy. Many of the long-time activists and founding members of PCDC, a grassroots community organization in Chinatown, can reel off the long list of struggles and injustices against the community. They remember their efforts to fight for preservation—the bus rides to the governor's office to stop the highway, the protests against the prison, and marches to city hall to stop the baseball stadium. Each time, the community somehow found the energy to rise up and protect its future.

The population in Chinatown has swelled in the past decade. Coupled with the fact that many Asians view Chinatown as the major hub of activity, Chinatown now has many more people who have a connection to it. Residents, workers, business owners, friends or relatives of residents, patrons, or visitors, they all plant stakes in our community. This dynamic has changed the way activism and engagement occurs. With technology and social media Chinatown has garnered a broader base of support to preserve and protect the neighborhood.

In 2008, the opportunity emerged for Chinatown's new support network to demonstrate its willingness to protect the neighborhood. Chinatown had to fight to prevent the Foxwoods Casino from coming to the Gallery marketplace, at the front doorstep of Chinatown. It was bad enough that the Sugar House Casino was less than two miles away. A casino next door would only make it all the more convenient and tempting for Chinese to gamble, giving rise to social and family upheaval and economic loss. Community members knew that gambling was a cultural problem. Almost everyone knew a relative or a friend who was negatively impacted by gambling, but the government could not see any statistical significance in the data. The intergenerational organizing that took place was amazing to witness. The newcomers and the new stakeholders readily joined with those veterans with memory of struggle and advocacy to build a broader coalition to halt the casino's encroachment upon Chinatown.

Chinatown Street. Courtesy of PCDC.

All the experience gained from the multitude of unjust burdens upon Chinatown has filtered down to the youngest generations. Today's generation is better prepared to organize and protect Chinatown and its people. Who could have predicted that I would be part of the generation that has led PCDC for the past 12 years?

Philadelphia's Chinatown is growing, thanks to three generations of concerned citizens, and the forecast remains positive. Buildings and people may come and go, but there is something magical about this place that captures people's hearts and forever leaves an imprint in people's memories. I have witnessed so much change in Chinatown. Yet, I can still walk anywhere and rekindle these memories that are forever stored in my heart. ■

John Chin is the executive director of the Philadelphia Chinatown Development Corporation (PCDC), a nonprofit organization offering affordable housing, affordable parking, commercial development, referral services, translation services, and notices of educational, employment, and financial assistance opportunities. He is committed to the preservation and growth of Chinatown for new immigrants, as it was a gateway to success for his family.

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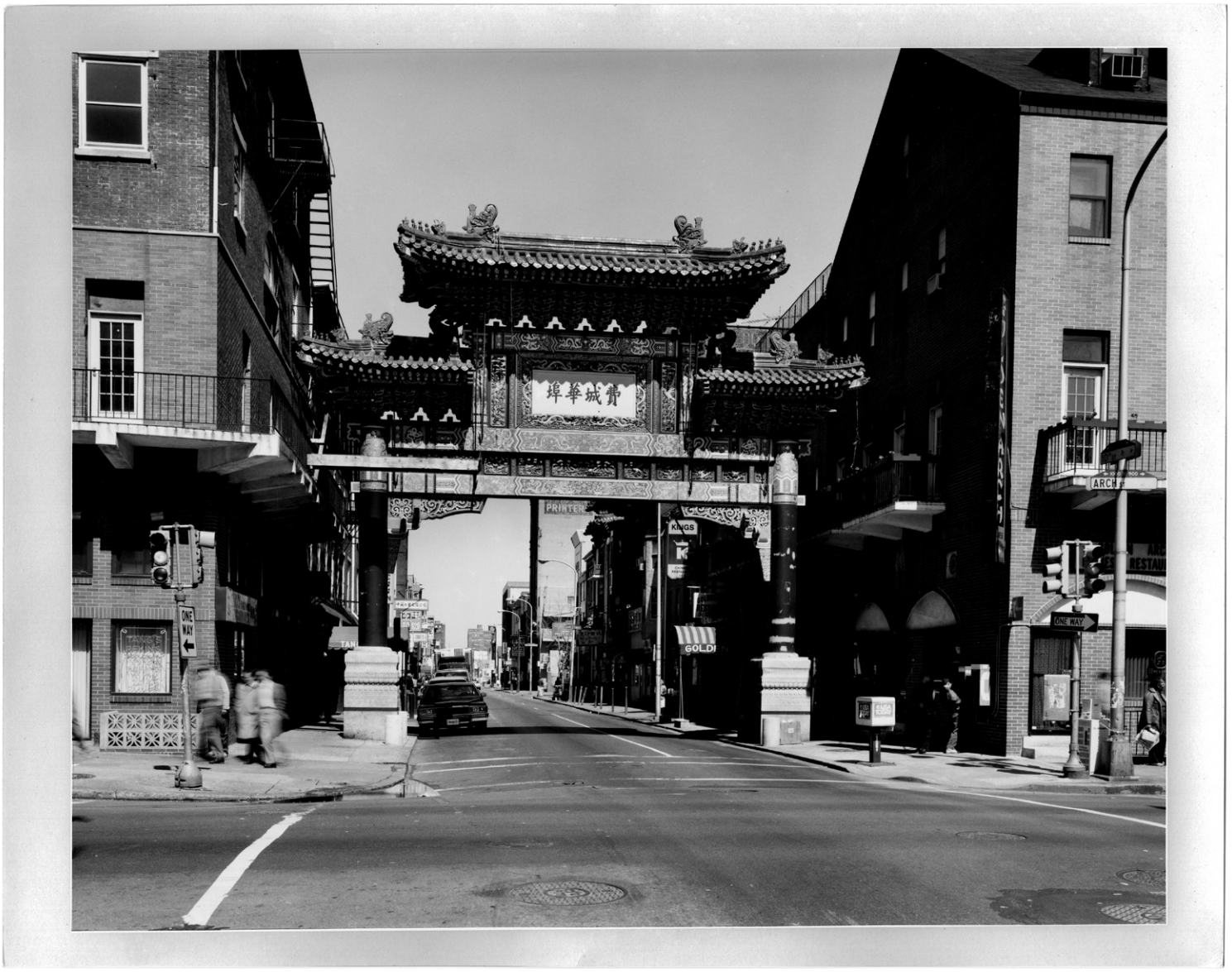

Photograph by Joseph V. Labolito, 1988, of the Chinatown Friendship Gate at 10th and Arch Streets. Penrose Collection © Joseph V. Labolito.