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Reconceptualizing Chinese American Community in St. Louis: From Chinatown to Cultural Community

HUPING LING

IN 1857, ALLA LEE, a 24-year-old native of Ningbo, China, seeking a better life, came to St. Louis, where he opened a small shop on North Tenth Street selling tea and coffee. As the first and probably the only Chinese there for a while, Alla Lee mingled mostly with immigrants from Northern Ireland and married an Irish woman.¹ A decade later, Alla Lee was joined by several hundred of his compatriots from San Francisco and New York who were seeking jobs in mines and factories in and around St. Louis. Most of the Chinese workers lived in boarding houses located near a small street called Hop Alley. In time, Chinese hand laundries, merchandise stores, herb shops, restaurants, and clan association headquarters sprang up in and around that street. Hop Alley became synonymous with Chinatown.

Local records indicate that Chinese businesses, especially hand laundries, drew a wide clientele; and thus the businesses run by Chinese immigrants contributed disproportionately to the city's economy. They provided 60 percent of the services for the city during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, although Chinese comprised less than 0.1 percent of the total population.² While the city's residents readily patronized their businesses, they did not welcome the Chinese themselves, regarding them as "peculiar" creatures. Hop Alley was seen as an exotic place where criminal activities such as opium manufacturing, smuggling, smoking, tong fighting, and murder existed. Despite frequent police raids and bias among other residents, Hop Alley survived with remarkable resilience and energy until 1966 when urban renewal bulldozers completely leveled the area to make a parking lot for Busch Stadium.

While the old Chinese settlement around Hop Alley was disappearing, a new suburban Chinese American community had been quietly, yet rapidly, emerging since the 1960s. In the next few decades, the ethnographic distribution changed considerably with more Chinese residing in St. Louis County, which constitutes the suburban municipali-

ties in the south and west areas outside of St. Louis City. The U.S. censuses indicate that the number of suburban Chinese Americans increased from 106 (30% of the total Chinese in St. Louis area) in 1960 to 461 (80% of the total) in 1970, 1,894 (78% of the total) in 1980, and 3,873 (83% of the total) in 1990.³ Since 1990, the Chinese population in the Greater St. Louis area has increased rapidly to 9,120 according to the U.S. census of 2000.⁴ Various unofficial estimates, however, show the figure to be between 15,000 and 20,000, with an overwhelming majority scattered in suburban communities and constituting one percent of the total suburban population of the St. Louis metropolitan area.⁵

Although the Chinese population in St. Louis has increased substantially, one cannot easily spot either a commercial or residential Chinese district. Signs of Chinese American presence, however, are clear. More than half of the city's modern buildings and structures have involved the engineering design of a Chinese American consulting firm, William Tao & Associates. Two weekly Chinese-language newspapers vie to serve the community. Three Chinese-language schools offer classes of Chinese language, arts, and culture to St. Louis Chinese American youth. A dozen Chinese religious institutions are attracting significant numbers of members. More than forty community organizations independently or jointly sponsor a wide array of community activities ranging from cultural gatherings of hundreds to the annual Chinese Culture Days held in the Missouri Botanical Gardens with more than 10,000 visitors. More than 300 Chinese restaurants cater to St. Louisans who are fond of ethnic cuisine.

How does one understand this phenomenon of a not quite visible yet very active and productive Chinese American community? How did it evolve, and is it unique? For more than a decade, I have had ample opportunities to be an observer and participant in this community, interacting with its leaders and residents in a broad array of activities and researching its historical evolution. My work has taken me to libraries and archives, public and private agencies, as well as cemeteries with Chinese burial sites, Chinese restaurants, grocery stores, bakery and floral shops, law firms, acupuncture clinics, and residences. In this study, I aspire to propose a model of "Cultural Community" to define the Chinese American community in St. Louis since the 1960s and its significance and applicability to our understanding of the multiethnic and multicultural American society.

DEFINING CULTURAL COMMUNITY AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE

Resting on the framework of social space, this study proposes a new model of the Chinese American community in St. Louis as a "cultural community." A cultural community does not always have particular physical boundaries, but is socially defined by the common cultural practices and beliefs of its members. A cultural community is constituted by the Chinese-language schools, Chinese religious institutions, Chinese American community organizations, Chinese American cultural agencies, Chinese American political coalitions or ad hoc committees, and the wide range of cultural celebrations and activities facilitated by the aforementioned agencies and groups. The St. Louis Chinese community since the 1960s is a typical cultural community. Its members dwell throughout the city and its suburban municipalities, and there are no substantial business and residential concentrations or clusters to constitute a "Chinatown" or even a "suburban Chinatown." Nevertheless, the Chinese St. Louisans have formed their community through various cultural activities organized by community organizations and cultural institutions. They have preserved their cultural heritage and achieved ethnic solidarity without a recognizable physical community.

A cultural community also can be identified by its economy, demography, and geography. Economically, the overwhelming majority population of a cultural community is professionally integrated into the larger society; therefore, the ethnic economy of the community does not significantly affect the well-being of its members and the community as a whole. Demographically, a cultural community contains a substantial percentage of professionals and self-employed entrepreneurs whose economic well-being is more dependent on the larger economy than on an ethnic economy. The former are employed mostly by the employers of the larger society, and the latter, though self-employed, also depend on the general population for their economic success. The working-class members, in terms of population, constitute only a minor part of the Chinese American community. Geographically, a cultural community is more likely to be found in hinterland and remote areas where the transnational economy has limited penetration.

Unlike the Chinese suburban communities in Flushing (New York), Monterey Park (California), or in Vancouver and Toronto where Chinese Americans/Canadians invest substantially in banking, manufacturing, real estate, and service industries, Chinese Americans in St. Louis

are primarily professionals employed mostly by mainstream companies and agencies.⁶ Therefore, economic interest and economic networking are less likely the dominant motives for the formation of the St. Louis Chinese community. In St. Louis, Chinese congregate more frequently in cultural institutions of Chinese-language schools, Chinese Christian churches and Buddhist temples, and cultural activities organized by various community organizations.

Moreover, this community does not have clearly defined physical boundaries, either in the inner city or in the suburbs. Therefore, the prevalent terms of Chinese American settlements—"Chinatowns," "urban ghettos," "ethnic enclaves," "suburban Chinatowns" or "ethnoburbs" focusing on the physical space of the Chinese American communities—are less adequate in explaining the Chinese American community in St. Louis.⁷

The significance of the cultural community model goes beyond the interpretation of the St. Louis Chinese American community. First, the idea of cultural community could serve as a new model for Chinese American communities, where the Chinese professionally assimilated into the larger society and their economies are not much connected with the Chinese ethnic community. This model could be found in areas where there are no Chinese populations sufficiently large to constitute physical ethnic concentrations, but the Chinese American populations are still substantial enough to form social communities even without physical boundaries. The cultural community model thus could provide an alternative theory for understanding the complexity of the contemporary Chinese American community.

Second, the cultural community model helps one better understand the issue of cultural identity. A cultural community is formed not because of economic need of mutual aid, but because of the psychological need for cultural and ethnic identity. When the Chinese Americans are scattered throughout middle- or upper-middle-class neighborhoods, it is difficult and less practical to establish a physical Chinese ethnic concentration. But the desire to share, maintain, and preserve Chinese cultural heritage validates the necessity to form a cultural community in the forms of Chinese-language schools, Chinese churches, Chinese community organizations, Chinese cultural agencies, long-term or ad hoc political committees, and cultural celebrations and social gatherings. On these occasions, the presence of a larger number of Chinese Americans makes cultural and ethnic identity easily recognizable. Cultural identity or eth-

nic solidarity in turn provides comfort to the Chinese who do not have significant ethnic surroundings in a regular daily life.

Third, the cultural community model exhibits a certain stage of assimilation and acculturation of ethnic groups in their American experiences. History has indicated that an immigrant or ethnic group's socioeconomic advancement in America generally goes through three stages: 1) physical concentration for economic survival; 2) cultural congregation for ethnic identity; and 3) political participation or coalition for sense of democracy and justice.⁸

Most immigrant or ethnic groups in their socioeconomic evolution in American society need first to survive. Survival in an alienating and less welcoming, often hostile, environment necessarily and inevitably would result in a practical strategy of mutual aid, which naturally binds the members of an ethnic group together and forms a physical ethnic community. Such ethnic communities have historically been identified as "ghettos," "enclaves," ethnic settlements such as "Germantown," "Jewishtown," "Chinatown," or replicas of the ethnic groups' original cultures signified by the name of capital city of a sending country, such as "Little Tokyo" and "Little Saigon." In this stage, a physical ethnic settlement is essential to facilitate the survival of the ethnic group.

When an ethnic group has integrated professionally and economically into the larger society, its chief concern is no longer mutual aid for survival, and this change accounts for the abandonment of a physical ethnic settlement.⁹ The economically integrated yet geographically dispersed ethnic group is now more concerned about how to maintain and preserve its cultural heritage without the physical ethnic settlement. European immigrants up to the 1960s had mostly constituted the earlier and larger ethnic components of America. Most of these groups had by this time moved out of the ethnically distinguished communities and had merged into the mainstream or "white" society. However, the economically assimilated European ethnic groups, especially the smaller ones such as the Jews, still have relatively pressing needs to preserve a distinctive ethnic and religious heritage to identify themselves. These needs therefore have produced a variety of Jewish communities embodied in synagogues, schools, theaters, and cultural and social gatherings.¹⁰ Asian immigrants also have demonstrated similar patterns of preservation of ethnic identity. Scholars have documented the importance of cultural institutions such as Christian churches and community organizations in stabilizing the Korean American communities in New

York.¹¹ Similarly, Chinese Americans in St. Louis since the 1960s have formed a cultural community. In this stage, cultural and social space, rather than physical space, constitutes the ethnic community.

When an ethnic group is economically secure, it also actively participates in mainstream political life in the form of electoral and coalition politics and in currently controversial issues to preserve democracy and social justice. The establishment of the Organization of Chinese Americans in 1973 and its continuing battles against discrimination and social injustice against Chinese Americans are the most illustrative examples. The "Committee of 100," formed after the Tiananmen Square incident in 1989 and consisting of 100 prominent Chinese Americans, has served as an active lobby to promote a positive relation between the United States and China.¹² Since the 1990s, Asian Americans have been more involved in local and national politics in order to protect their civil rights and freedom. In this stage, political manifestation of an ethnic community is more visible.

In summary, in the survival stage, a physical concentration of an ethnic community is imperative. In a later stage, to fulfill cultural and political needs, different forms of community structures such as cultural facilities, social gatherings, political activities, or even internet/cyberspace effectively constitute a cultural community.

SOURCES AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The sources employed in the study can be divided into basically two categories—information from American government records and public media, and evidence from the Chinese community. The formation and evolution of Chinese communities in America have traditionally been perceived as products of American public policies and the enforcement of immigration legislation and other laws concerning Chinese immigrants and Chinese Americans. To have a comprehensive understanding of American public policies and their practice, I have gathered sources from three levels of national, regional, and municipal records.¹³

Chinese St. Louisans have not been merely passive victims of institutionalized exclusion and discrimination, public prejudice, and racial profiling; they have been active agents who collectively and individually shaped their communities and their history. For this study, I have developed a standardized oral history interview questionnaire regarding immigration background, education, employment, marriage, family and socio-political activities for a two-hour long interview and interviewed

more than sixty individuals from the St. Louis area. The interviewees were located through business and commercial directories and through public and private agencies and were selected to represent a diverse sampling of Chinese Americans in the region. The two local Chinese language weekly newspapers, *The St. Louis Chinese American News* and *The St. Louis Chinese American Journal*, established in 1990 and 1996 respectively, have represented a strong voice of Chinese St. Louisans.

I also have kept in mind that the history of Chinese St. Louisans cannot be studied in isolation. Consequently, I have placed the micro case study of Chinese St. Louisans in the broader macro framework of St. Louis history, Chinese American studies, American ethnicity and immigration studies, and American urban studies. In this attempt, I have consulted with both primary and secondary sources.

CHINESE COMMUNITY IN ST. LOUIS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF MIGRATION AND ASSIMILATION THEORIES

The concept of cultural community has emerged after a careful study and comparison of different theoretical hypotheses and interpretations. Among American academics, interest in migration and assimilation is nearly as old as the country itself. They have produced a vast literature and countless theories to explain how these processes shape the national character and account for the experience of various groups as they become part of American society.

While European immigrants generally assimilated into the “white” American culture after generations of hard work and sacrifice, Chinese, along with Japanese and Koreans, were perceived by the public as members of a peculiar and debased race and therefore were deemed “unassimilable”; and the study of the peculiarity of the East Asians had been classified as the “oriental problem.”¹⁴ It was this “nonassimilability” of the Chinese that contributed to the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882 that banned the entry of Chinese laborers into America until 1943, when it was finally repealed. Consequently, scholarship on Chinese immigration has largely focused on the causes and impact of the Chinese exclusion laws during the exclusion era.¹⁵

Paul C. P. Siu was probably one of the Chinese American scholars who first proposed the “sojourner” hypothesis.¹⁶ Gunther Barth similarly claimed that Chinese immigrated only to accumulate wealth and return home; this rendered Chinese incapable of involving themselves in

the mainstream culture.¹⁷ Resonating with kindred writings by Asian scholars,¹⁸ the sojourning theory became the linchpin for most American scholarship on Chinese exclusion during the 1960s.

Two decades later, scholars challenged the sojourning theory with evidence that, from the outset, the Chinese established permanent settlements and integrated into the host society in Hawaii¹⁹ and in continental America. Scholars have documented the presence of the Chinese as settlers in fishing villages in the Monterey Bay region, in the California agricultural areas of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, in the Rocky Mountain region, and in Midwestern cities during the late nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.²⁰

In the post-World War II era, Chinese settlements have been overwhelmingly family-oriented communities. The male/female ratio of the Chinese in America, after a century of imbalance, finally reached parity in the 1970s.²¹ Moreover, inspired by the civil rights movement, millions of ethnic Americans began to reassess their cultural heritage and to demand a more appropriate representation of their cultures in mainstream America. Reflecting on the demographic and social changes, academics thus have incorporated issues relating to family and community into the scholarship. Rose Hum Lee first studied Chinese family organization and social institutions in Chinese communities of the Rocky Mountain region.²² Stanford M. Lyman examined the family, marriage, and the community organizations among the Chinese Americans.²³ My own study examined the changing roles of Chinese immigrant women in the context of marriage.²⁴

Recent studies of Chinese immigration have seen renewed interest in nationalism and ethnic identity, focusing on the impact of political, cultural, social, and economic conditions of the sending countries, and on the patterns of immigration and settlements. Noting that immigrants have lived lives across geographical borders and maintained close ties to home, some anthropologists employed the term "transnationalism" to describe such cross-national, cross-cultural phenomena;²⁵ and a number of historians have endorsed the idea in their monographs.²⁶ Scholars also have probed the meaning of ethnic identity by different approaches. Ling-chi Wang's study classifies five types of Chinese identity in the United States, all epitomized in Chinese phrases: (1) *luoye guigen* or the sojourner mentality, (2) *zhancao-chugen* or total assimilation, (3) *luodi shenggen* or accommodation, (4) *xungen wenzu* or ethnic pride and consciousness, and (5) *shigen qunzu* or the uprooted.²⁷

Meanwhile, Asian scholars of Chinese overseas and American

sinologists have associated the identity of Chinese overseas with their host countries. Wang Gungwu noted that the postwar Chinese overseas preferred to see themselves as “descendants of Chinese (*huayi* or *huaren*)” to “sojourners” (*huaqiao*), and their communities as “new kind of local-born communities.”²⁸ Harvard scholar Tu Wei-ming proposed a broader, tripartite division of China as “cultural China,” including not only “societies populated predominantly by ethnic and cultural Chinese”—Mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore, but also the Chinese diaspora of 36 million as well as “individual Chinese men and women . . . who try to understand China intellectually and bring their conception of China to their own linguistic community.”²⁹

How does the Chinese community in St. Louis fit the above models? Transnationalism emphasizes the two-way or multidirectional movements of migrants, but the Chinese community in St. Louis seems more to hover within its own social boundaries. The diasporic paradigm and the idea of cultural China remain as workable hypotheses, but they still lack specificity and precision in defining a Chinese community that economically integrated into the larger society yet culturally clung to Chinese heritage. Hence, it is clear that we need to develop a new theoretical model to interpret the Chinese American community in St. Louis since the 1960s.

CHINESE URBAN COMMUNITIES AND URBAN STUDIES

Examination of the Chinese American community in St. Louis since the 1960s in the context of Chinese urban and suburban communities and urban studies further indicates the necessity of a new theory and propels the ever-evolving scholarly interpretations.

Chinese immigration to the United States has been largely an urban phenomenon since the early twentieth century. Table 1 shows that in the 1930 census, 64 percent of the 74,954 Chinese in the United States resided in urban centers. A decade later, Chinese population totaled 77,504 and 71 percent of them lived in major American cities. By the 1950 census, more than 90 percent of the Chinese population resided in cities,³⁰ and the trend continues upward. The urban presence of Chinese Americans undoubtedly identifies urban studies as a significant focus within Chinese American studies.

Like other immigrant groups, Chinese immigrants settled predominantly in entry ports and major urban centers, where they established their communities known as Chinatowns. Scholars have attempted to

TABLE 1
Percentage of Chinese Population in the U.S. by Urban
and Rural Residence, 1930–2000

| Year | Total | Urban | Rural | Percentage of Urban |
|------|-----------|-----------|--------|---------------------|
| 1930 | 74,954 | 47,970 | 26,984 | 64.0 |
| 1940 | 77,504 | 55,028 | 22,476 | 71.0 |
| 1950 | 117,140 | 109,036 | 8,104 | 90.5 |
| 1960 | 236,048 | 225,527 | 10,557 | 95.5 |
| 1970 | 431,583 | 417,032 | 14,551 | 96.6 |
| 1980 | 812,178 | 787,548 | 24,630 | 97.0 |
| 1990 | 1,645,472 | 1,605,841 | 39,631 | 97.6 |
| 2000 | 2,432,585 | 2,375,871 | 56,714 | 97.7 |

Source: Figures of 1930 and 1940 are computed according to Shih-shan Henry Tsai, *The Chinese Experience in America* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1986), 105. The rest of the table is tabulated according to the U.S. Census, 1940–2000.

define Chinatown in terms of its socioeconomic and cultural functions. Historian Mary Coolidge in 1909 described San Francisco Chinatown as a “quarter” in the city formed by Chinese to “protect themselves and to make themselves at home.”³¹ Sociologist Rose Hum Lee provided a similar description of Chinatown as an area organized by Chinese “sojourners for mutual aid and protection as well as to retain their cultural heritage.”³² Chinatowns, Lee wrote, are “ghetto-like formations resulting from the migration and settlement of persons with culture, religion, language, ideology, or race different from those of members of the dominant groups.”³³ Examining Chinatown from the condition of racial discourse, anthropologist Bernard P. Wong viewed it as a racially closed community, while geographer Kay Anderson interpreted it as “a European creation.”³⁴ Probably the most comprehensive scholarly conceptualization of Chinatown has been made by geographer David Lai: “Chinatown in North America is characterized by a concentration of Chinese people and economic activities in one or more city blocks which forms a unique component of the urban fabric. It is basically an idiosyncratic oriental community amidst an occidental urban environment.”³⁵

Lai’s definition of Chinatown explains well the Chinese settlement in downtown St. Louis prior to its demolition in 1966, but shows an inability to elucidate the Chinese American community in the area since the 1960s. In order to contextualize the model of “cultural community” that I develop in this study, a historiographical examination of how Chinatowns throughout America would be useful.

By 1940, according to Rose Hum Lee's study, Chinese Americans had established Chinatowns across the country in 28 cities; San Francisco, New York, and Los Angeles were the largest, in that order. Of the country's 77,504 Chinese, 69 percent or 53,497 congregated in these Chinatowns.³⁶ Although Lee omitted St. Louis from this list of Chinatowns, a separate study by her suggests that St. Louis, with a Chinese population of 236 in 1940, should be ranked 22nd between Newark (259) and New Orleans (230).³⁷

Although Chinese American settlement has been an urban phenomenon, the studies of Chinatowns in America have long been limited to the three major Chinese urban communities of San Francisco, New York, and Los Angeles and their social structures. Numerous works on San Francisco Chinatown have appeared.³⁸ A rich body of literature on New York Chinatown also emerged. Bernard P. Wong, for example, analyzed the dynamics of the interpersonal relationships of the Chinese and their contributions to the economic well-being and social life of the community,³⁹ their adaptation in New York,⁴⁰ and the formation and manipulation of the patronage and brokerage systems there.⁴¹ Peter Kwong meanwhile examined the internal social structure of New York Chinatown.⁴² Underneath the appearance of ethnic cohesion, Kwong argued, New York Chinatown was a polarized community including "Uptown Chinese," professionals and business leaders engaged in property speculation, and "Downtown Chinese," manual and service workers who had to work and rent a tenement apartment in Chinatown.⁴³ Min Zhou's work on the socioeconomic life in New York Chinatown challenged the earlier notion of Chinatown as an urban ghetto plagued by urban problems, viewing it instead as an immigrant enclave with strong socioeconomic potential.⁴⁴ Scholarship on New York also proposed different models than Chinatown. Hsiang-shui Chen's work on the post-1965 Taiwanese immigrants in the neighborhoods of Flushing and Elmhurst of Queens asserted that these communities were no longer Chinatowns, as their residents had scattered and mixed with other ethnic groups.⁴⁵ Jan Lin's study regarded New York Chinatown as a global town.⁴⁶ The writers also investigated the work force and unionism within the New York Chinatown community—Chinese hand laundrymen and Chinese women garment workers—as represented by Renqiu Yu and Xiaolan Bao respectively.⁴⁷ More recently, some scholars have utilized a comparative approach in their work.⁴⁸ Finally, Chinatowns in Los Angeles have also attracted scholarly attention recently. Timothy P. Fong's book *The First Suburban Chinatown*, presented the experiences

of the multi-ethnic residents within the changing Monterey Park community and analyzed the intra—and inter-ethnic political strife there.⁴⁹ John Horton viewed the multiethnic diversity of Monterey Park as the key to understanding the middle-class city in a world whose economy has been undergoing rapid internationalization of capital and labor.⁵⁰ Similarly, Yen-Fen Tseng asserted the Chinese ethnic economy in Los Angeles has formed multinuclear concentrations in suburban communities in San Gabriel Valley. The inflow of capital and entrepreneurs from the Chinese diaspora has made the valley's economy an integral part of the Pacific Rim economy.⁵¹ Leland T. Saito's study also examined Monterey Park, giving special attention to Asian Americans' participation in local political campaigns.⁵² Wei Li proposed a new model of ethnic settlement—*ethnoburbs* (ethnic suburbs), suburban ethnic clusters of residential areas and business districts in large metropolitan areas that are intertwined with the global, national, and place-specific conditions.⁵³

Studies meanwhile have argued that Chinatown also can be classified by social structure, socioeconomic functions, and ethnic compositions and physical space. In terms of the social structure of Chinatowns, scholars are debating whether Chinatowns are communities of ethnic cohesion or ethnic-class cleavage. While earlier works looked at Chinatowns as communities of order and ethnic harmony, more recent studies by Peter Kwong, Chalsa Loo, and Jan Lin have viewed Chinatown as oppressive and polarized communities where ethnic capitalists and a political elite have exploited those with less education, skills, money, and knowledge of English, but also have had to meet challenges from this group.

In terms of socioeconomic functions of Chinatowns, writers have differed over whether Chinatowns would prevent the assimilation of the Chinese immigrants into American society. While some scholars have focused on the social and economic problems of ethnic communities, others have viewed Chinatowns as dynamic ethnic economic successes. The former view, represented by Rose Hum Lee, Peter Kwong, and Chalsa Loo, found that the Chinatown masses were trapped in an ethnic confinement and thus hampered in upward social mobility and cultural assimilation. Min Zhou's work, on the contrary, emphasized that the Chinatown economy provided employment opportunities to new immigrants that would help the social and cultural integration of the second and third generations.

In terms of ethnic composition and physical space of Chinatowns,

debate has centered around whether Chinatowns were isolated and homogenous Chinese urban ghettos or multi-ethnic suburban communities. The latter argument, represented by Hsiang-shui Chen, Timothy P. Fong, Yen-Fen Tseng, Jan Lin, and Wei Li, asserted that, with the diverse socioeconomic backgrounds of the new immigrants since the mid-1960s, the Chinese communities are no longer homogenous and urban-bound, but are mixed with other ethnic groups increasingly living in suburbs.

It is generally understood that any settlement includes two basic elements: physical space and social space. Physical space provides geographical boundaries in which the settlement is defined and its members interact with one another in a variety of economic, social, and cultural activities. While the physical space is easily recognizable, the social space of a community is not necessarily clearly demarcated by a physical space and could extend beyond the physical boundaries of the settlement. Most studies discussed above have focused on the physical space of any given Chinese community, whether it is urban or suburban, thus overlooking the social spatial aspect. Prior to the appearance of suburban Chinese communities, there was little problem interpreting Chinatowns within physical spatial boundaries. The traditional Chinatowns in San Francisco, New York City, Chicago, and many other urban centers, including the old Chinatown in St. Louis, unquestionably fit the model of urban ethnic ghetto or enclave. Yet ever since the emergence of suburban Chinese communities, such as Oakland in the San Francisco Bay area, Flushing in Queens, New York, and Monterey Park in Los Angeles, scholars have faced the challenge of how to interpret them accurately. The suburban Chinatown interpretation by Timothy P. Fong has recognized continuity between the urban ethnic enclave and the suburban Chinese communities. By contrast, the “ethnoburb” model by Wei Li has noted the contrast between the traditional urban Chinese settlement and the ethnoburbs.⁵⁴ Yen-Fen Tseng has seen that the expansive growth of upper-class professional jobs and service/petty manufacturing jobs at the same time has created dual cities in Los Angeles.⁵⁵ Similarly, Jan Lin has attributed congestion in the inner city to the emergence of “satellite Chinatowns” in the suburban areas.⁵⁶ Yet, all of these models focus primarily on the geographical parameters of the new Chinese suburban settlements, and thus are unable to explain an ethnic community without a geographical concentration.

Clearly, without looking at the social space of the Chinese settlement in St. Louis, it is difficult to explain the causes behind the emergence and existence of new suburban Chinese communities that have been

scattered and blended with other ethnic groups. Since the physical spatial definition alone is not adequate to explain these dispersed suburban settlements, one needs to study the socioeconomic structures of the suburban Chinese communities not only from their physical spatial parameters, but also from their social spatial dimensions.

CHINESE AMERICANS IN ST. LOUIS: HOP ALLEY AND BEYOND

This section examines the evolution of the St. Louis Chinese community from a physical Chinatown to a cultural community. What was life really like in Hop Alley? Although the absence of first-hand written records by Chinese residents has produced difficulty for scholars, a critical reading of media reports and use of archival manuscripts and oral history materials enables us to restore a more realistic picture of life in Hop Alley in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

In 1894, Theodore Dreiser, the author of *Sister Carrie* (1900), who was then a 23-year-old reporter for the daily *St. Louis Republic*, went to Hop Alley to write a sensational and somewhat biased story about Chinese in St. Louis. Here is an excerpt of the story.

Within the confines of St. Louis at present there are about 1,000 Chinese. Within the same confines there are nearly half as many laundries operated by Chinamen. The public is familiar with the Chinese laundry and the Chinese method of labor. It knows how they toil, is fully aware of their manner of clothing themselves and has read endless accounts of what they eat or are supposed to eat. . . .

St. Louis has no Chinatown and no specific Chinese quarters. The red and white signs one can stumble across almost anywhere between De Hodiamont and East St. Louis. She has no high-class opium-joint abominations and no progressive Chinese emporium to which upper tendom pays homage and money at one and the same time. She has, however, what it is difficult elsewhere to find—a Chinese rendezvous. In this rendezvous, restaurants, lounging and smoking rooms, a few Chinese families and general sociability prevail; and more, this rendezvous has the patronage and good will of the entire Chinese element in this city.

When a St. Louis Chinaman wishes to “blow himself” he takes the requisite cash and saunters down that portion of South Eighth street lying between Walnut and Market streets. Here he finds every opportunity to dispose of his week’s wages or profits, or, perhaps, his laundry—for laundries have been lost and won in this block. Sundays and Mondays are

days off in the laundry business. At noon Sundays all the laundries in the city are closed for the day, and in a short time the different car lines begin dropping Chinamen by ones and twos in the vicinity of Eighth and Market streets. Some straggle around on foot, and by 2 o'clock, it is safe to say, there are several hundred Mongolians in this block enjoying themselves in a way peculiarly Chinese. The crowd shifts and changes all afternoon and evening, but never grows less. As far as one sporty John "goes broke" at the game of fan-tan another takes his place, and the broken one stoically gazes on while the winner keeps on winning and the loser drops out.

The more pretentious of the resorts in this neighborhood have restaurants as side issues. . . . The more pretentious keepers of these more pretentious resorts have wives and oblique-eyed babies, who are occasionally permitted to disport themselves, clad in the tiniest little blue frocks, on the front steps of the paternal dwelling. It is usually when the morning sun is streaming its genial rays into Eighth street that these little codgers may be seen, and then for a not over-length period. John has discovered "lat Melicans" are deeply interested in these queer little babies and are entirely too fond of stopping to enjoy their company.⁵⁷

Dreiser's lengthy article on Chinese in St. Louis indicates the economic significance of the early Chinese settlement as a peculiar component of the ethnically diverse city. Raking through words such as "Celestials," "Mongolians," "Chinaman," and "heathen," popular terms referring to Chinese widely-used by writers of the Victorian age, it also reveals a great cultural curiosity (and bias as well) about the Chinese among the general population in St. Louis.

Dreiser's report is the first to describe the Chinese laundries in St. Louis. It is, however, questionable whether the Chinese population had reached 1,000 and whether about 500 Chinese were operating. Other sources fortunately verify that more than 300 Chinese dwelled in the Chinatown, most of whom worked in Chinese hand laundries in Hop Alley and the peripheral area.⁵⁸ Court records further note laundry as the primary trade for Chinese in St. Louis prior to the 1930s. In the first decades of the twentieth century, St. Louis police raided Chinatown frequently and arrested Chinese laborers without Certificates of Residence. Most of these Chinese laborers worked in Chinese laundries. For instance, Jeu Lime, one of the arrested Chinese laborers, claimed that he was born into a Chinese merchant family in San Francisco in 1881. In 1886, at the age of five years, he came to St. Louis. He had worked as a laundryman in the past several years.⁵⁹ Chu Dock Yuck, another Chi-

nese laborer in custody, was born in San Francisco in 1881 and came to St. Louis in 1909. Since then, he had been working in a hand laundry at 450 Elm Street.⁶⁰ In addition to the court records, the census also reveals information, though laconic, about the Chinese laundrymen. The 1890 census recorded a Chinese man named Amon Donn running a Chinese hand laundry in the St. Louis downtown area.⁶¹

If the above sources still seem sporadic or anecdotal about the Chinese hand laundrymen, *Gould's St. Louis Directories* provided systematic and significant data on the Chinese hand laundry business. Chinese hand laundries first appeared in *Gould's St. Louis Directories* in 1873. In that year, six Chinese laundries were listed among the total thirty laundries in the city: Ah Wah at 810 and 811 Pine Street, Hap Kee at 511 Market, Lee Yee at 623 Locust, Sing Chang at 12 South Sixth Street, Wah Lee at 320 Chestnut Street, and Yet Sing at 112 North Seventh Street.⁶² In the following year, the number of Chinese laundries almost doubled—ten Chinese laundries were listed among the thirty-six laundries of the city.⁶³ The number of Chinese laundries continued to increase till 1888 when seventy-three Chinese laundries were listed, and then starting from 1889 Chinese laundries suddenly disappeared from the directory for reasons unknown.⁶⁴

According to *Gould's St. Louis Directory*, the sixteen years from 1873 to 1889 constituted the initial stage of the Chinese hand laundry business in St. Louis. During this period, Chinese laundries not only increased in number, but also gradually spread beyond the boundaries of Hop Alley. From 1873 to 1879, Chinese laundries clustered within Chinatown, mainly along Sixth, Seventh, Eighth, Market, Chestnut, Pine, Locust, and Elm streets. After 1880, a few laundries opened in the peripheral area of Chinatown such as Washington and Chouteau avenues, while the majority still remained in the Chinese district.⁶⁵

Chinese hand laundries started to reappear in *Gould's St. Louis Directory* from 1911, and the laundry business continued as the primary occupation of Chinese in St. Louis until the end of the 1930s. During these decades, the heyday of the Chinese hand laundry business in St. Louis, two distinctive features—clan domination and geographical dispersion—characterized Chinese hand laundries. Surnames of Kee, Lee, Leong, Sing, Wah, and Wing appeared in the directories most frequently.⁶⁶ The Lee, Lung, Sing, and Wah clans predominated in the 1910s; these were joined in the 1920s by the Kee, Leong, Lum, Wing, and Yee clans. Since 1927, *Gould's St. Louis Directory* began to list Chinese hand laundries under a separate heading as Chinese laundries,

which comprised more than 60 percent of the total laundries in the city. In the listings, Lee and Sing stood out as two most frequent surnames. The predominance of certain clans in the Chinese laundry business illustrates at least two important implications regarding patterns of immigration and urban ethnic adaptation. First, it reveals that many Chinese laundrymen came to America as links of chain immigration; common surnames well indicate the blood tie or lineage among the laundrymen. Second, it speaks of the necessity of ethnic networking in initiating and operating a business.

Along with clan domination, geographical dispersion was evident among the Chinese hand laundries from the 1910s to 1930s. Unlike the early stage of the Chinese laundry business when most Chinese laundries were concentrated in the Chinese business district, now the Chinese laundries were scattered throughout the city. The geographical dispersion was partially a result of the self-governance of the Chinese community in order to prevent competition among the Chinese laundries. On Leong Merchants and Laborers Association, the primary Chinese business organization founded in 1909 and the de facto Chinese government in St. Louis, ruled that “there was only one Chinese laundry allowed within the perimeter of a mile” and the violation of the restriction could result in unexpected catastrophe or murder of the offender.⁶⁷ Intimidated by the power of On Leong, Chinese laundrymen abided by the rule. More importantly, the Chinese laundrymen followed the rule of the market—supply and demand—to operate a laundry wherever a Chinese laundry was lacking. Since the primary clientele of the Chinese hand laundry was non-Chinese, it was natural for Chinese laundries to spread out in the city to meet the demand. This trait was not unique to Chinese laundries in St. Louis; a similar pattern was found in the Chinese urban communities of San Francisco, New York, Chicago, and Milwaukee.⁶⁸

Although Dreiser’s story failed to mention Chinese grocery stores, they had already emerged as another important Chinese business in St. Louis, providing ingredients for Chinese cooking and laundry supplies for hand laundries. *Gould’s St. Louis Directory* first listed two Chinese grocers in 1888.⁶⁹ From the 1890s to 1900s, Chinese grocers slowly but steadily increased, from four to six,⁷⁰ but the years between 1912 and 1914 witnessed a sudden increase to a total of a dozen.⁷¹ During the 1920s, the number of Chinese grocers decreased but remained steady, with a half dozen listed regularly.⁷²

Different from Chinese hand laundries that primarily served non-

Chinese in St. Louis and therefore dispersed across the city, grocery stores catered to the Chinese community and consequently clustered around the Chinese business district, resembling the patterns prevailing in other urban Chinese communities.⁷³ In the 1900s, these grocery stores sold merchandise imported from China, including tea, cigars, cooking ingredients, Chinese cloth with intricately embroidered parts, and supplies for laundries. The Chinese grocery stores also sold locally produced fresh fruits, vegetables, and fish delivered daily by Chinese farmers on the other side of the river in Illinois. Many of the Chinese stores also handled the ordering and shipping of supplies to Chinese laborers in the southern and southwestern states.⁷⁴

Annie Leong's family history offers a good example of how the Chinese grocery stores were operated. The Leong family owned a Chinese restaurant downtown and a grocery store in Hop Alley during the 1920s and 1930s. They ordered merchandise for their grocery store from wholesalers in San Francisco, New York, and Chicago. Annie Leong and her brothers spent their time after school working in the family grocery store. Annie Leong recalled her childhood experiences retailing goods: "We got them on credit and we have thirty days to pay. If you don't have a good credit, you have to pay right away. They gave us wholesale price, and we retail them. The whole family helps to do the business. After the operation whatever is left is our profit."⁷⁵

In addition to grocery businesses, some Chinese merchants in St. Louis operated general merchandise stores. Oriental Tea was such a store in business as early as the 1920s. Bigger than most grocery stores with single ownership, the Oriental Tea had several partners to finance and operate the store, and sold supplies to Chinese laundries and restaurants. Richard Ho's father was a partner of the Oriental Tea, who brought then 10-year-old Richard Ho from Canton, China, to St. Louis in 1928. Richard Ho later worked in the store as a driver of a small panel truck to deliver ordered goods to Chinese laundries and restaurants and accepted new orders from them for the next round.⁷⁶ The operation of the Chinese general merchandise stores in St. Louis well resembled that of their counterparts on the West Coast, as documented in scholarly writings.⁷⁷

Chinese restaurants and chop suey shops also had been part of the business in St. Louis Chinatown. The Chinese restaurants in St. Louis were first established to serve the Chinese workers, mostly laundrymen who took a half-day off on Sunday afternoon and came to Chinese restaurants to satisfy a week-long craving for good Chinese food. Most

of these restaurants were located in the Hop Alley district, as the Chinese laundrymen would normally come here for socialization and recreation on Sunday. Around the turn of the century, some of the Chinese restaurants not only served dishes for casual eaters, but also began to cater banquets for special occasions such as weddings and holiday celebrations. Dishes for these special occasions could range from \$2 to \$20 a plate, far more expensive than the regular price of 40 to 80 cents.⁷⁸ Restaurants with such capacity would be quite lucrative. Some of the Chinese restaurant owners could make a handsome income from the business and could thus take on a more American appearance. One downtown Chinese restaurant owner, described by the media as “a dapper little Chinaman,” dressed stylishly with a “mohair suit, lavender silk hose, and tan shoes, diamond stud and Panama hat.”⁷⁹

When Chinese food became more popular in the first decades of the twentieth century, more chop suey shops emerged in St. Louis. Both chop suey shops and larger Chinese restaurants not only served Chinese eaters, but also catered to European Americans and African Americans. Annie Leong’s parents opened a Chinese restaurant at 714 Market Street in St. Louis in 1924. The restaurant served Cantonese cuisine of shark fins, bird nests, steamed fish, barbecued pork, duck, and rooster to Chinese guests from China and other places in the United States. It also frequently received local American customers who came from theaters downtown in the late evenings.⁸⁰

In addition to grocery stores and restaurants, Chinese merchants also opened tea shops. The earliest recorded tea shop was run by Alla Lee in 1859 located at 106 North Tenth Street.⁸¹ After that, Alla Lee’s tea shop and residence changed locations several times, mostly outside Chinatown, yet it was continuously listed in the *St. Louis Directory* until 1880.⁸² Alla Lee came to St. Louis in 1857 at the age of twenty-four and married a young Irish woman named Sarah Graham, who bore several children for him. The income from the tea shop supported Lee and his growing family.⁸³

The Great Depression dispersed the Chinese St. Louisans and reshuffled their economy. The Depression caused at least two demographic changes among Chinese in St. Louis: the movement of Chinese population from St. Louis to China and other states of the country and the gradual decline of the Chinese hand laundry. During the first decades of the century, the population of Chinese in Missouri had been steadily increasing from 449 in 1900, to 535 in 1910, 412 in 1920, and 634 by

1929. Ten years later, however, the figure had dropped to 334, almost a fifty percent decrease.

Facing economic difficulty, many Chinese immigrants saw their hope of working and saving money diminishing and decided to return to China. Lillie Hong's parents made such a decision in the 1930s. They married their eldest daughter Lillie, who was seventeen years old, to a Chinese laundryman twenty years her senior in 1935. In return, they received \$1,000 in dowry money from Lillie's husband, with which they were able to return to China with their younger children.⁸⁴ Some St. Louis Chinese went to California, New York, or other states in search of better economic opportunity. Lillie Hong's childhood friends all left St. Louis with their families in the 1930s, most for California.⁸⁵ Among the Chinese St. Louisans who left St. Louis in the 1930s and 1940s, a few later established small colonies in northern California.⁸⁶

After World War II, the Chinese population in St. Louis witnessed another transformation. The wartime economic recovery and prosperity continued in the postwar years, when Americans enjoyed the greatest economic expansion of the century. The gross national product rose from \$200 billion in 1945 to almost \$300 billion in 1950 and over \$500 billion by 1960. Reflecting the national trend, the St. Louis economy also expanded. The major businesses such as St. Louis Union Trust Company, Union Electric, Southwestern Bell, Ralston-Purina, Monsanto Chemical, and McDonnell Aircraft grew rapidly. Economic expansion in St. Louis attracted newcomers from other parts of the country as well as from overseas. The population of St. Louis jumped from 1,090,278 in 1940 to 1,262,145 in 1950 and 1,263,145 in 1960.⁸⁷ As thousands of Americans moved to St. Louis, professionals from China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong—engineers, scientists, and physicians—also came to the city for better economic opportunity.

Meanwhile, the urban renewal movement in St. Louis was threatening the physical existence of the city's Chinatown. Starting from 1955, the Redevelopment Authority began clearing land. The 454-acre Mill Creek Valley site between Lindell-Olive and Scott avenues was cleared in 1955, and Twentieth Street and Grant Avenue in 1959. Next, the downtown district was to be demolished. A group of downtown businessmen formed the Civic Center Redevelopment Corporation that contracted with the Land Clearance for Redevelopment Authority to carry out the downtown renewal project. The century-old commercial district, old residences, and industries were to be razed to make room for thirty-

four commercial buildings, twenty-six industrial buildings, and extensive parking and loading facilities.⁸⁸ The centerpiece of the downtown renewal was Busch Stadium; the Chinatown district was earmarked for its parking lot.

The Chinese community reacted to the downtown renewal with deep sorrow and a reluctance to move, but no organized resistance. In early February 1963, Chinatown residents greeted each other “Gung Hay Fot Choy,” but wondered if they were going to have a “happy and prosperous New Year.”⁸⁹ Many who grew up in the alleys of Chinatown lamented the district’s imminent disappearance. The elder bachelors resided in the flats above the Chinese businesses or in the apartment buildings worried where they should move. The Chinese leaders were no more prepared than other members of the community. The presidents of On Leong were not sure if the Association would move to a new building. By 1965, about three-quarters of the buildings in the Chinatown district had been purchased by the Civic Center Redevelopment Corporation, and the officials of the Civil Center were negotiating with the On Leong to purchase two buildings owned by the Association. On Leong finally bought a building at 1509 Delmar by the end of 1965.⁹⁰ On August 1, 1966, the close of Asia Restaurant, long a favorite eating-place for many St. Louisans and the last remaining business in Chinatown, quietly signaled the end of an old and respected St. Louis neighborhood. Three days later, On Leong moved its headquarters to 1509 Delmar. Two weeks later the last building in Chinatown was leveled. “Hop Alley” quietly vanished.

When the St. Louis Chinatown and On Leong were struggling for survival, the city received its new arrivals from China. According to the census, by 1960, the Chinese population in St. Louis area totaled 663. A decade later, the Chinese population had more than doubled, reaching 1,451. By 1980, the Chinese population was 2,418, a fourfold increase within two decades.⁹¹

Beginning from the 1960s, the economy of Chinese St. Louisans also underwent a remarkable transformation. While the Chinese hand laundries disappeared one by one, Chinese restaurants mushroomed throughout the area, especially in shopping malls and plazas. As the occupational shift from hand laundries to restaurants took place, the newly-arrived Chinese American professionals were recruited mostly by a number of major employers of the region—Washington University, Monsanto Chemical (changed to Pharmacia in 2001), McDonnell-Douglas (later

changed to Boeing when purchased by that corporation in 1999), Ralston-Purina, Emerson Electric, and Anheuser-Busch.

Several characteristics marked the Chinese economy in St. Louis after the 1960s. First, the Chinese restaurant businesses were associated with a dual nature of dependence on ethnic networking in labor and capital and dependence on mainstream society in the market. On the one hand, Chinese restaurant business depended on ethnic networks for collecting capital, recruiting laborers, and ordering supplies, a characteristic common among overseas Chinese businesses in America, Canada, and Southeast Asia.⁹² Capital to start a restaurant business often came from family savings and loans from members of kinship groups. Laborers were recruited mostly from unpaid family members and underpaid relatives or clansmen. Supplies were ordered at wholesale price from ethnic wholesalers. Ethnic networks thus were indispensable to the operation of the Chinese restaurant business in St. Louis.

On the other hand, as a food service industry, the Chinese restaurant businesses also had to rely on the consumers they served, not only Chinese customers, but patrons of all ethnic backgrounds as well. The dependence of Chinese restaurants on the mainstream society for its clientele inevitably connected the ethnic Chinese economy with the larger economy. To find a profitable market and to reduce competition with co-nationals, the Chinese restaurants had to be geographically dispersed, which enabled the survival and possible success of individual Chinese restaurants, but also hindered them from forming ethnic business concentrations in any given geographic locality. The geographical dispersion of Chinese restaurant businesses in St. Louis was partially responsible for the absence of a Chinese business district.

Second, the Chinese professionals enjoyed a complete professional and economic integration with the larger society. Primarily employed in major mainstream enterprises, they were sheltered from risking the ups and downs of running a small business but completely subjugated to the economic force of the larger society for livelihood and career advancement. Consequently, they were more concerned about the larger economy than about the Chinese ethnic economy.

The duality of the Chinese restaurant businesses with ties in both the ethnic business sector and mainstream economy and the economic integration of Chinese professionals affected, if not determined, the formation of a new type of Chinese community in St. Louis, a community without physical boundaries but dominated by common cultural interests of its members. Meanwhile, the urban renewal movement repeat-

edly frustrated the community's attempts to build a physical Chinese commercial district. Hop Alley, St. Louis's historic Chinatown, was demolished after the 1950s for urban renewal. Urban renewal projects in the 1970s halted Chinese efforts to build a new Chinatown on Delmar Boulevard. The concerns and fears that future urban renewal development would nullify any Chinatown-building effort effectively prevented Chinese St. Louisans from making plans to redevelop a Chinatown, while the denigrating stereotypes associated with Chinatowns discouraged many in the community from pursuing that objective.⁹³

Yet there still was a need for the existence of an ethnic community in order to survive, to succeed, and to secure the achievements. The survival and security now were not so much focused on economic needs as previously, since most Chinese in the region were professionals and enjoyed a middle-class lifestyle. Rather, they now focused on cultural, emotional, and political needs. Culturally, Chinese St. Louisans needed to preserve the Chinese ethnic identity they feared they might lose as the population dispersed. The establishment of Chinese-language schools and celebrations of Chinese culture were the direct results of the desire to preserve cultural identity. Although most of the Chinese professionally and economically integrated into the larger society, the feelings of cultural displacement and cultural conflict resulting from an immigrant life caused emotional anxieties that could be soothed better by sharing issues and values with other members of the ethnic community. Moreover, to protect their socioeconomic achievements and to make further progress, the Chinese had to form a single and louder voice; an ethnic community would serve as means of political empowerment. These cultural, emotional, and political needs therefore validated the existence of an ethnic community. Thus, in the place of a physical Chinese community, a Chinese cultural community emerged.

Different from many of the Chinese American communities throughout the country, the cultural community in St. Louis did not have identifiable physical boundaries. Instead, the cultural community was defined within social boundaries of community organizations, Chinese churches, and Chinese-language schools, as well as the dispersed Chinese restaurants, grocery stores, and other service businesses. Although these, of course, did occupy physical structures, they did not form a physical Chinatown nor commercial district since they were scattered throughout the city. However, the cultural activities sponsored by these community organizations generated a sense of community that, in turn, defined the cultural community's social/emotional space. The cultural community

therefore can be understood in two dimensions: physical and social/emotional. The facilities of the cultural institutions or community organizations, either owned or rented, constituted the physical space of the cultural community. The activities took place in these facilities created the social space of the cultural community. The latter depended on the former but was more significant than the former for the creation of the cultural community.

Unlike other types of Chinese communities with physical boundaries, the physical space of the cultural community was undefined and often unidentifiable, for much of the community organizational structure occupied no fixed physical space. In contrast, the social space of the cultural community was visible and easily recognizable when the Chinese-language classes were held, religious congregations convened, and cultural activities took place. The three components that defined its social boundaries were the community organizations, Chinese churches, and Chinese-language schools. These also help us understand the cultural community's social/emotional dimension.

The new community organizations in St. Louis included the St. Louis Chinese Society, the St. Louis Chapter of the Organization of Chinese Americans (OCA), the St. Louis Taiwanese Association, the St. Louis Chinese Jaycees, the Chinese Liberty Assembly, and the Chinese Cultural Center (the St. Louis Overseas Chinese Educational Activity Center). The Chinese churches consisted of the St. Louis Gospel Church, the St. Louis Chinese Christian Church, Taiwanese Presbyterian Church, St. Louis Chinese Baptist Church, Lighthouse Chinese Church, St. Louis Chinese Lutheran Church, Lutheran Asian Ministry in St. Louis, Lutheran Hour Ministries, Light of Christ Chinese Missions in St. Louis, St. Louis Tabernacle of Joy, Mid-America Buddhist Association, St. Louis Tzu-Chi Foundation, St. Louis Amitabha Buddhist Learning Center, St. Louis International Buddhist Association, and St. Louis Falun Dafa. The Chinese language schools were the St. Louis Chinese Academy and the St. Louis Chinese Language School.

From the very beginning, the cultural community, as framed by these institutions, possessed some unique characteristics. First, in examining the physical dimension of the cultural community, the absence of a geographical concentration of physical structures, facilitating community activities relating to Chinese American culture, was evident. Nearly none of the Chinese community organizations owned or rented property either as headquarters or as places for their meetings and other activities. Instead, the Chinese community organizations convened in meeting

rooms available at institutions of the mainstream society or at homes of board members and rented spaces from private or public facilities for their public cultural activities. Although most Chinese churches did have a permanent structure, either rented or owned, for their congregations, they were scattered in suburban municipalities. The Chinese-language schools similarly required stable locations for their regular weekend classes, but managed to rent rooms from churches or educational institutions to meet their needs for space. The absence of a geographical concentration of cultural facilities partially resulted from the residential pattern of Chinese St. Louisans who had spread among suburban middle—or upper-middle-class neighborhoods, but partially from the decisions by Chinese St. Louisans to shun ethnic concentration out of fear of racial profiling.⁹⁴

Second, professionals predominated in the cultural community. Politically, the professionals, especially those from Taiwan, had been the key power holders of the cultural community. They established and operated most of the community organizations and institutions. They were primarily responsible for all the cultural activities and events that took place in the community. Cultural rather than economic interest explains the involvement of the professionals in the cultural community. They were economically integrated into the larger society and therefore had little vested interest in exploiting the ethnic community for economic benefit, but they still needed an ethnic community for their own cultural welfare and that of their offspring.

Third, a class cleavage or confrontation, present in other types of Chinese American communities, was absent in the Chinese cultural community in St. Louis. There the distinction between the community elite and masses was blurred as both the community leaders and members belonged to the same socioeconomic bracket. Although a working class existed in the cultural community of St. Louis, it was dispersed throughout the city in the kitchens of Chinese restaurants and in the back of Chinese grocery stores and thus was unable to develop into a visible and influential social force.

Without physical boundaries, the cultural community still proved a functional, cohesive, and tightly knit ethnic structure. Though without physical concentrations, the myriad organizations and cultural institutions still created a visible and indispensable ethnic community. Through its wide array of activities and events, the cultural community effectively bound its members together and rendered them invaluable social/emotional services. The cultural community thus proved itself an alter-

native model for ethnic community, when a physical ethnic concentration was absent and a physical ethnic community difficult to construct.

After its building period from the 1960s to 1980s, the Chinese American cultural community in St. Louis entered a stage of rapid development in the 1990s and the early 21st century. Demographically, it embraced a more diverse population including a large number of Chinese students and professionals from mainland China since the late 1980s. The presence of mainland Chinese has resulted in the structural realignment within the cultural community that is embodied in the increasing numbers of business owners and professionals from China, the incorporation of the teaching of simplified Chinese characters in the Chinese-language schools, and the growing influence of the St. Louis Chinese Association—a community organization primarily consisting of mainland Chinese.

The rapid growth of the cultural community also is reflected in the development of the Chinese-language media and the diversification of the new ethnic economy. The birth and growth of the Chinese-language press in the community have been monumental in promoting the Chinese ethnic economy, preserving Asian American ethnic heritage, and forming a bridge between the Chinese American cultural community and the larger society. In 1990, *St. Louis Chinese American News* was established to meet the needs of the ethnic community. Another Chinese newspaper, *St. Louis Chinese Journal*, was founded in 1996. The new ethnic economy of the cultural community is more diversified; it embraces not only a growing and more competitive food service industry, but also the rapidly expanding nontraditional service industries of real estate, health, insurance, construction, architecture and design, legal consultation, accounting, auto repair, and computer service.⁹⁵

Meanwhile, the cultural community has become more politicized than ever before. The complexity of the community has divided its members along various lines of linguistics, origins of birth, professional training and occupations, political inclinations, religious beliefs, and cultural interests. While the Chinese St. Louisans are profoundly divided, they are at the same time united under the common interest and commitment to preserving and promoting the ethnic Chinese American culture and to protecting and improving their conditions through socioeconomic integration and political empowerment.

CONCLUSION

It is known that members of an ethnic group congregate in social organizations and cultural activities to foster ethnic identity. In Boston, as historian Oscar Handlin has written, different groups of immigrants all formed their own ethnic social organizations: "Canadians gathered in the British Colonial Society while Scotsmen preserved old customs, sported their kilts, danced to the bagpipe, and played familiar games, either in the ancient Scots Charitable Society, the Boston Scottish Society, or the Caledonian Club (1853). Germans, who felt that Americans lacked *Gemuthlichkeit*, established independent fraternal organizations which often affiliated with native ones."⁹⁶ These social groups enhanced ethnic identity and eased the daily copings of uprooted peoples.

In St. Louis, earlier immigrant groups, such as the Germans, the city's largest immigrant population, had experienced a similar identity-forging process. Questioning the conventional perception of immigrant communities as "ethnic ghettos" in her work on St. Louis Germans from 1850–1920, Audrey L. Olson contended that there was no "homogenous physical community" of Germans in St. Louis. In its place, however, the Germans in St. Louis in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries established scores of *vereine* or societies. The various societies shared a common trait in that "they were carriers of *Gemuthlichkeit*, an untranslatable term connoting conviviality, camaraderie and good fellowship, love of celebrations, card playing, praise of this so-called German way of life, and all of these washed over by flowing kegs of good lager beer."⁹⁷ The reasons behind the flourishing *vereine*, Olson wrote, are "diversity of purpose," "the lack of a physical community and . . . mobility patterns," and "dissension among Germans."⁹⁸ Though lacking a coherent physical community, the heterogeneous Germans were able to hold their immigrant community together through common cultural habits and customs, holiday traditions, and recreations. Such a community, largely focused on cultural unity, was defined by Olson as "a *gemutlich* community."⁹⁹

Even the smaller immigrant groups in St. Louis, such as the Japanese, also enjoyed a comparable experience a half-century later. In a study by Miyako Inoue on the recent Japanese Americans in St. Louis, the author noted the lack of a physical Japanese American community, as most Japanese Americans in the 1980s resided in white neighborhoods, belonged to white churches, and associated with white friends. However

different from the Germans, the Japanese assimilated into the mainstream society as a result of their dispersed residential pattern.¹⁰⁰

A Chinese community structure similar to the cultural community in St. Louis is also found in Kansas City, Missouri. Prior to World War II, about four hundred Chinese lived in the city. The majority were bachelors from the *siyi* district or “four counties” of Taishan, Xinhui, Kaiping, and Enping in Guangdong Province, China, who concentrated in the laundry, restaurant, grocery, and traditional Chinese medicine businesses. More than thirty hand laundries, over twenty restaurants, three grocery stores, and three doctors of Chinese medicine were protected by the chief community organization, On Leong. The Chinese population in Kansas City drastically declined after the war when most Chinese moved to the coastal areas or returned to China. In the early 1950s, a few Chinese students and resident physicians at St. Joseph Hospital and St. Luke’s Hospital and two Chinese restaurant owners constituted all the Chinese population in Kansas City. More Chinese moved into the city in the 1960s, with a majority working in the Midwest Research Center at the University of Missouri at Kansas City and the Kansas University Medical Center as scientists and technicians. Other Chinese professionals—architects, engineers, professors, and accountants—and small business owners also gradually joined the community. In 1966, about 150 Chinese in Kansas City gathered to celebrate the Chinese New Year and to decide to form the Kansas City Chinese Association, composed of mainly professionals.¹⁰¹ Since then, the Chinese Association has been the dominant community organization, responsible for the Chinese New Year celebrations and other cultural activities. After the 1970s, the Taiwanese Chinese professionals constituted the majority of the Chinese in Kansas City and formed the Kansas City Chinese Liberty Assembly. In 1973, the Greater Kansas City Chinese Language School was established to teach the classic Chinese characters.¹⁰² Two decades later, in 1993, the Chinese restaurant owners formed the Kansas City Chinese Restaurant Association.¹⁰³ A second Chinese language school, the Kansas City Modern Chinese Language School, was founded in 1999 teaching simplified Chinese characters to serve the growing population from mainland China.¹⁰⁴ In the same year, a group of professional musicians initiated the Kansas City Chinese Musicians Association.¹⁰⁵ The rich and diverse cultural events sponsored by the community cultural institutions and organizations have constituted a cultural community in Kansas City.¹⁰⁶

The above cases indicate that throughout American history, whether

on the coasts or in hinterland, whether in major metropolises or in more remote urban centers, most ethnic groups whether large or small, craved for ethnic cohesion and consequently instituted a broad range of ethnic social organizations and cultural celebrations. When a physical ethnic community existed, the social and cultural organizations become integral parts of the community. When a physical ethnic community was absent, the social and cultural organizations emerged as the community infrastructure, thus constituting a cultural community or the local variants of a cultural community.

The history of Chinese St. Louisans demonstrates a significant transition of this population from Chinatown residents to Chinese Americans of a cultural community. Unlike the old Chinatown, which was physically situated in the downtown district of St. Louis, the new Chinese cultural community that emerged in metropolitan St. Louis since the 1960s does not physically contain either a commercial or residential concentration. However, the Chinese American cultural community in St. Louis is not an “imagined community,” to borrow a notion from Benedict Anderson,¹⁰⁷ but a real community measured by both physical area and social space. It is a community without physical boundaries, but with clearly identifiable social connections. The myriad community organizations and cultural institutions have served as community infrastructures, essential in forming a physical and symbolic embodiment of the cultural community. The wide array of cultural and political activities taking place in the community has supplied abundant opportunities for substantial and meaningful interpersonal and intergroup interactions that constitute the social space of the cultural community. As the post-modern approach favors the notion of a community with flexible and sometimes overlapping boundaries, a nation could be conceived as a “community” whose members share a deep “fraternity” or “comradeship.”¹⁰⁸ A nation could also be understood as a “symbolic universe” that consists of “individual men and women” who intellectually preserve their ethnic identity within their “linguistic communities.”¹⁰⁹ In America, a nation of nations, the concept of a cultural community, one that is “less-territory-centered,”¹¹⁰ would precisely describe the social construction of ethnic groups.

Two factors chiefly have contributed to the emergence of a cultural community—socioeconomic integration and preservation of ethnic identity. Socioeconomic integration naturally would dissolve an ethnic physical community, making way for a different form of community. As shown in the history of the Chinese St. Louisans, while a physical ethnic

community disappeared as its members integrated economically and residentially into the larger society, a cultural community arose in its place.

However, socioeconomic integration alone is not sufficient enough to explain the formation of a cultural community. Socioeconomic integration may cause the dispersal of an ethnic population, resulting in the loss of a physical ethnic community, but it does not necessarily create a different form of ethnic community in its place. Integration historically has led to the assimilation of different ethnic groups into the larger or "white" society. Only when an integrated ethnic group is conscious about preserving its ethnic identity may a cultural community emerge. Fearing possible loss of an ethnic identity because of the integration, an ethnic group would strive to create a community to preserve its identity. If a physical community proves unfeasible, a cultural community or its variants alternatively might arise, which is exactly what has happened to the Chinese Americans in St. Louis. The dispersion of the Chinese ethnic economy and the integration of the Chinese professionals have been attributed to an absence of physical concentrations of the Chinese community, either commercial or residential. Nevertheless, a strong sense of being Chinese and the keen desire to preserve the Chinese identity have motivated the Chinese St. Louisans to build the cultural community's infrastructures of community organizations, Chinese churches, and Chinese language schools. Consequently, a cultural community is born. The reconstruction of the history of the Chinese St. Louisans is not merely another case study of the Chinese American communities. The model of cultural community can be applied to communities where the physical concentrations of the ethnic minority groups are absent, where the ethnic minority groups have integrated economically and professionally into the larger society but have remained culturally distinctive, and where the members of ethnic minority groups are overwhelmingly professional. Ironically, the development of an ethnic cultural community indicates the socioeconomic progress of an ethnic minority. Such cultural communities are not advocates of cultural separatism, but a celebration of multiculturalism or cultural pluralism in a multicultural and multiracial society.

NOTES

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1. *Missouri Republican*, 31 December 1869; *Louisville Courier-Journal*, 30 December 1896; Lucy M. Cohen, *Chinese in the Post-Civil War South: A People Without a History* (Baton Rouge and London, 1984), 86–87; *Kennedy's St. Louis Directory, 1859–1863*; *Edward's St. Louis Directory, 1864–1871*; *Gould's St. Louis Directory, 1872–1879*; 1860 Census; and C. Fred Blake, "There Ought to be a Monument to Alla Lee," *Chinese American Forum* 15, no. 3 (January 2000): 23–25.

2. This claim is based on the author's tallies of Chinese laundries and non-Chinese laundries in St. Louis during the last decades of the 19th and the first decades of the 20th centuries, the census data, and information from news reports.

3. The definition of St. Louis has been changing historically. Prior to 1876, St. Louis City was within St. Louis County, and it became an independent city in 1876. The terms of St. Louis area or St. Louis region have generally referred to St. Louis City and St. Louis County. According to the 1990 U.S. Census, however, St. Louis Metropolitan Statistical Area constitutes St. Louis City and 11 other counties—seven on the Missouri side, and five on the Illinois side (St. Louis City is counted as both city and county). Since an overwhelming majority of Chinese Americans reside in St. Louis City and St. Louis County of Missouri, the term St. Louis region in this study refers to St. Louis City and St. Louis County, Missouri, and all statistics are drawn accordingly.

4. Profile of General Demographic Characteristics: 2000 Data Set: Census 2000 Summary File 2 (SF 2) 100-Percent Data Geographic Area: St. Louis, MO-IL MSA Race or Ethnic Group: Chinese alone.

5. The Chinese in Metropolitan St. Louis include American-born Chinese, and Chinese from Mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Korea, Vietnam, and southeast Asian countries. Except the Census, there are not any kind of official statistics on Chinese population in St. Louis that has increased rapidly since 1990. The author has discussed the issue with leaders of various Chinese community organizations, and their estimate of Chinese population in St. Louis ranges from 15,000 to 20,000.

6. Hsiang-shui Chen, *Chinatown No More: Taiwanese Immigrants in Contemporary New York* (Ithaca, 1992), 31; Yen-Fen Tseng, "Chinese Ethnic Economy: San Gabriel Valley, Los Angeles County," *Journal of Urban Affairs* 16, no. 2 (1994): 170; Jan Lin, *Reconstructing Chinatown: Ethnic Enclave, Global Change* (Minneapolis, 1998), 39; Peter S. Li and Yahong Li, "The Consumer Market of the Enclave Economy: A Study of Advertisements in a Chinese Daily Newspaper in Toronto," *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 31, no. 2 (1999): 43–60; Peter S. Li, "Self-Employment Among Visible Minority Immigrants, White Immigrants, and Native-Born Persons in Secondary and Tertiary Industries of Canada," in *Canadian Journal of Regional Science* 20, no. 1, 2 (Spring-Summer 1997): 103–18; "Unneighborly Houses or Unwelcome Chinese: The Social Construction of Race in the Battle over 'Monster Homes' in Vancouver, Canada," *International Journal of Comparative Race and Ethnic Studies* 1, no. 1 (1994): 14–33; "Chinese Investment and Business in Canada: Ethnic Entrepreneurship Reconsidered," in *Pacific Affairs* 66, no. 2 (Summer 1993): 219–243.

7. For studies of "urban ghettos," see Peter Kwong, *Chinatown, New York: Labor and Politics, 1930–1950* (New York, 1979), and *The New Chinatown* (New York, 1987). For studies of "ethnic enclave" see Min Zhou *Chinatown: The Socio-economic Potential of an Urban Enclave* (Philadelphia, 1992). For studies of "suburban Chinatowns" see Timothy P. Fong, *The First Suburban Chinatown: The*

Making of Monterey Park, California (Philadelphia, 1994); Tseng, "Suburban Ethnic Economy: Chinese Business Communities in Los Angeles" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 1994) and "Chinese Ethnic Economy." For studies of "ethnoburbs" see Wei Li, "Spatial Transformation of an Urban Ethnic Community from Chinatown to Chinese Ethnoburb in Los Angeles" (Ph.D. diss., University of Southern California, 1997), "Anatomy of a New Ethnic Settlement: the Chinese Ethnoburb in Los Angeles" *Urban Studies* 35, no. 3 (1998): 479–501, "Los Angeles' Chinese Ethnoburb: From Ethnic Service Center to Global Economy Outpost" *Urban Geography* 19, no. 6 (1998): 502–17, and "Building Ethnoburbia: The Emerging and Manifestation of the Chinese Ethnoburb in Los Angeles' San Gabriel Valley" *Journal of Asian American Studies* 2, no. 1 (February 1999): 1–28.

8. Examples supporting such a pattern could be found in ample works. See, for example, Oscar Handlin, *Adventure in Freedom: Three Hundred Years of Jewish Life in America* (New York, 1954); Rowland T. Berthoff, *British Immigrants in Industrial America 1790–1950* (Cambridge, Mass., 1953); R. A. Birchall, *The San Francisco Irish, 1848–1880* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1980); Lawrence Cardoso, *Mexican Immigrants to the United States* (Tucson, Ariz., 1980); Dino Cinel, *From Italy to San Francisco* (Stanford, Calif., 1982); Dennis Clark, *The Irish in Philadelphia* (Philadelphia, 1974); Roger Daniels, *A History of Indian Immigration to the United States* (New York, 1989); and Hasia R. Diner, *Erin's Daughters in America: Irish Immigrant Women in the Nineteenth Century* (Baltimore, 1983).

9. See, for example, H. Arnold Barton, *A Folk Divided: Homeland Swedes and Swedish Americans, 1840–1940* (Carbondale, 1994); Hsiang-shui Chen, *Chinatown No More*; Irving Cutler, *The Jews of Chicago: From Shtetl to Suburb* (Urbana, 1996); and Eileen Tamura, *Americanization, Acculturation, and Ethnic Identity: The Nisei Generation in Hawaii* (Urbana, 1994).

10. See Handlin, *Adventure in Freedom*.

11. See Kyeyoung Park, *The Korean American Dream: Immigrants and Small Business in New York City* (Ithaca, 1997).

12. See "100 Chinese Americans Will Be Speakers and Resources," *New York Times*, 10 June 1991, A1.

13. Various immigration records in the National Archives at Washington, D.C., and Chinese Exclusion Act Cases in the Pacific Sierra Regional Archives at San Bruno provide abundant information on the practice of Chinese exclusion at the national level. At the regional level, the Chinese Exclusion Cases Habeas Corpus Petitions (1857–1965), and Records of U.S. District Court for the East District of Missouri from the National Archives-Central Plains Region, Kansas City, Missouri, offer invaluable data on the early Chinese immigrants in the state of Missouri. At the local level, I searched manuscripts and data from the St. Louis City Hall, Police Department, and various public and private libraries and archives. The U.S. Census and the Annual Report of Immigration and Naturalization Service also provide a tremendous wealth of data on Chinese at national, regional, and local levels.

14. Two excellent studies have discussed the "oriental problem" from different perspectives. John Kuo Wei Tchen, *New York before Chinatown: Orientalism and the Shaping of American Culture, 1776–1882* (Baltimore and London, 1999) examines the evolution of American perception of Orientalism from a positive portrait of cultural curiosity and admiration to the negative Darwinist and racist term. Henry Yu, *Thinking Orientals: Migration, Contact, and Exoticism in Modern America* (Oxford, 2001) investigates the rise and fall of the Chicago school of Asian American studies known as the studies of the "Oriental Problem."

15. See, for example, Mary Coolidge, *Chinese Immigration* (1909; New York,

1969); Stuart Creighton Miller, *The Unwelcome Immigrants: The American Image of the Chinese: 1875–1882* (Berkeley, 1979); Lucy E. Salyer, *Laws Harsh as Tigers: Chinese Immigrants and the Shaping of Modern Immigration Law* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1995); and Andrew Gyory, *Closing the Gate: Race, Politics, and the Chinese Exclusion Act* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1998).

16. Paul C. P. Siu, "The Sojourner," *American Journal of Sociology* 50 (1952): 34–44; and *The Chinese Laundryman: A Study of Social Isolation* (New York, 1987).

17. Gunther Barth, *Bitter Strength: History of the Chinese in the United States 1850–1870* (Cambridge, Mass., 1964).

18. See Wang Gungwu, *Community and Nation: Essays on Southeast Asia and the Chinese* (Kuala Lumpur, 1981); *China and the Chinese Overseas* (Singapore, 1991); and *The Chinese Overseas: From Earthbound China to the Quest for Autonomy* (Cambridge, Mass., 2000).

19. Clarence E. Glick, *Sojourners and Settlers: Chinese Migrants in Hawaii* (Honolulu, 1980), 102–125.

20. See Sandy Lydon, *Chinese Gold: The Chinese in the Monterey Bay Region* (Capitola, Calif., 1985), 156–161; Sucheng Chan, *This Bittersweet Soil: The Chinese in California Agriculture, 1860–1910* (Berkeley, 1986), 390–399; Sylvia Sun Minnick, *Samfow: the San Joaquin Chinese Legacy* (Fresno, Calif., 1988), 246; Laura Wang, "Vallejo's Chinese Community, 1860–1960," in *Chinese America, History and Perspective* (San Francisco, 1988), 153–168; Rose Hum Lee, *The Growth and Decline of Chinese Communities in the Rocky Mountain Region* (New York, 1978), 234–239; David Beesley, "From Chinese to Chinese American: Chinese Women and Families in a Sierra Nevada Town," *California History* 67 (September 1988): 168–179; and Sarah R. Mason, "Liang May Seen and the early Chinese Community in Minneapolis," *Minnesota History* (Spring 1995): 223–33.

21. The U.S. Census, 1870–1970; Huping Ling, *Surviving on the Gold Mountain: A History of Chinese American Women and Their Lives* (Albany, 1998), 115, Table 4.1.

22. See Rose Hum Lee, *The Growth and Decline of Chinese Communities in the Rocky Mountain Region* (New York, 1978).

23. Stanford M. Lyman, "Marriage and the Family among Chinese Immigrants to America, 1859–1969," *Phylon* 24 (1968): 321–30, and *Chinese Americans* (New York, 1974).

24. Huping Ling, "Family and Marriage of Late-Nineteenth and Early-Twentieth Century Chinese Immigrant Women," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 19, no. 2 (Winter 2000): 43–63.

25. Nina Glick Schiller, Linda Basch, and Cristina Blanc-Szanton, eds., *Towards a Transnational Perspective on Migration: Race, Ethnicity, and Nationalism Reconsidered* (New York, 1992), ix.

26. For historical works with transnationalism approach, see, for example, Renqiu Yu, "Chinese American Contributions to the Educational Development of Toisan 1910–1940" in *Amerasia* 10, no. 1 (1983): 47–72, and *To Save China, to Save Ourselves* (Philadelphia, 1992); Haiming Liu, "The Trans-Pacific Family: A Case Study of Sam Chang's Family History," *Amerasia* 18, no. 2 (1992): 1–34; Madeline Y. Hsu, *Dreaming of Gold, Dreaming of Home: Transnationalism and Migration Between the United States and South China, 1882–1943* (Stanford, 2000); Yong Chen, *Chinese San Francisco 1850–1943: A Trans-Pacific Community* (Stanford, 2000); Adam McKeown, *Chinese Migrant Networks and Cultural Change, Peru, Chicago, Hawaii, 1900–1936* (Chicago, 2001).

27. Ling-chi Wang, "Roots and the Changing Identity of the Chinese in the United States," in *The Living Tree: The Changing Meaning of Being Chinese Today*, ed. Tu Wei-ming (Stanford, 1994), 185–212.

28. Wang Gunwu, "Among Non-Chinese," in *The Living Tree*. For other studies on the identity of Chinese overseas by scholars in Asian countries, see, for example, Zhuang Guotu, "Huaqiao yici mingcheng kao" [A Study of the Concept of Huaqiao], in *Nanyang Wenti* [The South Pacific Study] 1 (1984): 13–19; Chu Hong-yuan, "Huaqiao xiangdui lun" [The Relative Meanings of Huaqiao: From Nation-State to Borderline], in *Proceedings: The 4th International Chinese Overseas Conference* (Taipei, 2001).

29. Tu Wei-ming, "Cultural China: The Periphery as the Center," in *The Living Tree*, 13–15.

30. Percentage computed according to *U.S. Census of Population: 1950*, Vol. IV, *Special Reports*, 3B–19.

31. Coolidge, *Chinese Immigration*, 402.

32. Lee, *The Growth and Decline*, 147.

33. Rose Hum Lee, *The Chinese in the United States of America* (Hong Kong, 1960), 52.

34. Bernard P. Wong, *A Chinese American Community: Ethnicity and Survival Strategies* (Singapore, 1979), 18; Kay J. Anderson, *Vancouver's Chinatown: Racial Discourse in Canada, 1875–1980* (Montreal and Kingston, 1991), 9.

35. David Lai, "Socio-economic Structures and the Viability of Chinatown," in *Residential and Neighborhood Studies in Victoria*, ed. C. Forward, University of Victoria, Western Geographical Series, No. 5 (1973): 101–29.

36. Lee, "Decline of Chinatowns," 423.

37. Lee, *The Growth and Decline*, 34.

38. Victor G. and Brett de Bary Nee, *Longtime Californ': A Documentary Study of an American Chinatown* (New York, 1972). For other works on San Francisco Chinatown, see, for example, Helen Virginia Cather, *The History of San Francisco Chinatown* (San Francisco, 1974); Laverne Mau Dicker, *The Chinese in San Francisco: A Political History* (New York, 1979); Rose Hum Lee, "The Recent Immigrant Chinese Families of the San Francisco-Oakland Area," *Marriage and Family Living* 18, no. 1 (1956): 14–24; Ronald Riddle, *Flying Dragon, Flying Streams: Music in the Life of San Francisco's Chinese* (Westport, Conn., 1983); and John Kuo Wei Tchen, *Gentle's Photographs of San Francisco's Old Chinatown* (New York, 1984); Thomas W. Chinn, *Bridging the Pacific: San Francisco Chinatown and Its People* (San Francisco, 1989); Chalsa M. Loo, *Chinatown: Most Time, Hard Time* (New York, 1991), 3; Yong Chen, *Chinese San Francisco, 1850–1943: A Trans-Pacific Community* (Stanford, 2000); Nayan Shah, *Contagious Divides: Epidemics and Race in San Francisco's Chinatown* (Berkeley, 2001).

39. Bernard P. Wong, *A Chinese American Community*. For other works on New York Chinatown, see Julia I. Hsuan Chen, *The Chinese Community in New York* (San Francisco, 1974); Chia-ling Kuo, *Social and Political Change in New York's Chinatown: The Role of Voluntary Associations* (New York, 1977); Betty Lee Sung, *Gangs in New York's Chinatown* (New York, 1977); and Betty Lee Sung, *The Adjustment Experience of Chinese Immigrant Children in New York City* (New York, 1987).

40. Bernard P. Wong, *Chinatown: Economic Adaptation and Ethnic Identity of the Chinese* (New York, 1982), 107.

41. Bernard P. Wong, *Patronage, Brokerage, Entrepreneurship and the Chinese Community of New York* (New York, 1988).

42. Kwong, *Chinatown, New York; The New Chinatown*.
43. Kwong, *The New Chinatown*, 5, 175.
44. Zhou, *Chinatown*, xvii.
45. Hsiang-shui Chen, *Chinatown No More*, ix.
46. Jan Lin, *Reconstructing Chinatown*, xi, 12–17.
47. Renqiu Yu, *To Save China*; Xiaolan Bao, *Holding Up More Than Half the Sky: Chinese Women Garment Workers in New York City, 1948–92* (Urbana, 2001).
48. Xinyang Wang, *Surviving the City: The Chinese Immigrant Experience in New York City, 1890–1970* (Lanham, Md., 2001).
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50. Horton, 8.
51. Tseng, “Chinese Ethnic Economy.”
52. Saito.
53. Li, “Spatial Transformation;” “Anatomy of a New Ethnic Settlement;” and “Building Ethnoburbia.”
54. Li, “Anatomy of a New Ethnic Settlement.”
55. Tseng, “Chinese Ethnic Economy.”
56. Lin, 107–120.
57. Theodore Dreiser, “The Chinese in St. Louis,” *St. Louis Republic*, 14 January 1894, p. 15.
58. “75 Years Ago—Wednesday, August 25, 1897,” *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, 25 August 1972; Chung Kok Li, interview by the author, 12 October 1998, tape recording and transcript, Bridgeton, MO.
59. *U.S.A. vs. Jeu Lime*, Chinese Exclusion Cases Habeas Corpus Petitions, Case 3849, Box A–1,849, U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Missouri, St. Louis, RG 21, National Archives-Central Plains Region, Kansas City, Missouri.
60. *U.S.A. vs. Chu Dock Yuck*, Chinese Exclusion Cases Habeas Corpus Petitions, Case 3849, Box A–1,849.
61. Claudia Phodes to Huping Ling, 18 February, 2002, Huping Ling Collection.
62. *Gould’s St. Louis Directory*, 1873, p. 1036.
63. *Gould’s St. Louis Directory*, 1874, p. 1106.
64. *Gould’s St. Louis Directory*, 1875–1889.
65. *Gould’s St. Louis Directory*, 1873–1889.
66. Please note that many of the surnames mentioned here are probably not real Chinese surnames, as non-Chinese might refer to individual Chinese by the name of the store, or confuse the Chinese given name with the surname. Kee, for instance, is the Cantonese pronunciation of “ji” meaning “a store” or “a brand.”
67. Chung Kok Li, interview by the author, 12 October 1998. The restriction

was established by the Chinese laundry associations as early as in the 1860s in San Francisco and Virginia City (the author thanks Sue Fawn Chung for providing the information).

68. Nee, *Longtime Californ'*; Renqiu Yu, *To Save China*, 9; Paul C. P. Siu, *Chinese Laundryman*; and Victor Jew, "Broken Windows: Anti-Chinese Violence and Interracial Sexuality in 19th Century Milwaukee," in *Asian Pacific American Genders and Sexualities*, ed. Thomas K. Nakayama (Tempe, Ariz., 1999), 33.

69. *Gould's St. Louis Directory*, 1888.

70. *Gould's St. Louis Directory*, 1890–1910.

71. *Gould's St. Louis Directory*, 1912–1914.

72. *Gould's St. Louis Directory*, 1919–1929.

73. Ling, *Surviving on the Gold Mountain*, 64–70.

74. Dick Wood, "The Chinese Colony of St. Louis," *The St. Louis Republic*, 29 July 1900 (Mag. Sec.), p.2.

75. Annie Leong, interview by the author, 17 December 1998.

76. Richard Ho, letter to Huping Ling, 3 August 2002, Huping Ling Collection.

77. Ling, *Surviving on the Gold Mountain*, 65–67.

78. Wood.

79. "Housekeeping in St. Louis Chinatown," *St. Louis Republic*, 14 August 1910 (Mag. Sec.), p. 4.

80. Leong, interview.

81. *St. Louis Directory 1859* (St. Louis, 1859).

82. *Kennedy's St. Louis Directory, 1860*; *Edward's St. Louis Directory, 1864–1871*; and *Gould's St. Louis Directory, 1872–1880*.

83. *Missouri Republican*, 31 December 1869; *Kennedy's St. Louis Directory, 1859–1863*, *Edward's St. Louis Directory, 1864–1871*, *Gould's St. Louis Directory, 1872–1879*; 1860 census about Alla Lee; and Blake, "There Ought to be a Monument to Alla Lee."

84. Hong, interview.

85. Hong, interview.

86. Richard and Evelyn Ho to Melissa M. Szeto, 24 July 2001, Huping Ling Collection; Richard Ho to Huping Ling, 30 March 2002, Huping Ling Collection.

87. The U.S. Census, 1940–1960.

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89. Beulah Schacht, "Chinatown Going Down—Maybe Chop Chop," *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, 25 January 1963.

90. Earl C. Gottschalk, "Chinese Community Mourns Passing of Its Tradition," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 14 February, 1965.

91. *Census of Population: 1960, Vol. 1 Characteristics of the Population*, Part 27, Missouri, 153; *1970 Census of Population, Vol. 1 Characteristics of the Population*, Part 27, Missouri, 155–156; and *1980 Census of Population, Vol. 1 Characteristics of the Population, Chapter B. General Population Characteristics*, Part 27, Missouri, 14.

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93. Interviews with Chinese community leaders.

94. William Tao, interview by the author, 4 Feb., 1999; and Walter Ko, interview by the author, 2 June 2001.
95. St. Louis Chinese American News, *St. Louis Chinese American Yellow Pages*, 2003.
96. Oscar Handlin, *Boston's Immigrants 1790–1865: A Study in Acculturation* (Cambridge, Mass., 1941), 160.
97. Audrey L. Olson, *St. Louis Germans, 1850–1920: The Nature of an Immigrant Community and Its Relation to the Assimilation Process* (New York, 1980), 134.
98. Olson, 134.
99. Olson, 281.
100. Miyako Inoue, “Japanese-Americans in St. Louis: From Internees to Professionals,” *City and Society* 3, no. 2 (1984): 142–52.
101. Guogan Wu, “An Overview of the Chinese Community in Kansas City,” *Kansas City Chinese Journal*, 1, 8 March 2001.
102. *Kansas City Chinese Journal*, 7 December 2000.
103. *St. Louis Chinese American News*, 14 December 2000; and *Kansas City Chinese Journal*, 7, 28 December 2000, 1, 8 March 2001.
104. *Kansas City Chinese Journal*, 9 August 2001.
105. *Kansas City Chinese Journal*, 28 December 2000.
106. *Kansas City Chinese Journal*, 14, 28 December 2000, 4, 18 January, 1 February, 10 May, 9 August 2001; *St. Louis Chinese American News*, 14 December 2000.
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108. *Ibid.*, 7.
109. Tu, “Cultural China,” 13–14.
110. Linda Trinh Võ, and Rick Bonus, eds, *Contemporary Asian American Communities: Intersections and Divergences* (Philadelphia, 2002), 6.