"HOP ALLEY"
Myth and Reality of the St. Louis Chinatown, 1860s-1930s

HUPING LING
Truman State University

Meet me in St. Louis,
Meet me at the Fair.
Don't tell me the lights are shining
anywhere but there.

—*Meet Me in St. Louis*

In the late nineteenth century, the booming city of St. Louis, Missouri, attracted many from different parts of the world. It is during this time that Chinese started to arrive in St. Louis. The first recorded Chinese immigrant was a tea merchant named Alla Lee, who is reported to have arrived in 1857 from San Francisco.[1] By the end of the nineteenth century, the Chinese community in St. Louis had grown to about three hundred. This community was physically centered in "Hop Alley," a seemingly mysterious place that inspired tall tales to the contemporaries and is little known to the present St. Louisans. Along Seventh, Eighth, Market, and Walnut Streets, Chinese hand laundries, merchandise stores, grocery stores, restaurants, and tea shops were lined up to serve Chinese residents and the ethnically diverse larger community of St. Louis, the fourth largest city in the United States at the time.

So far, more than two hundred works have been published depicting the multicultural and multiethnic St. Louisans with African, German, Irish, Italian, and Jewish heritage that greatly help our understanding of the city as a multicultural metropolis from the beginning. Among these works, only a few deal with Chinese in the region, and most of them are merely a collection of data.[2] The underrepresentation of Chinese in scholarly work reflects the marginalized existence of Chinese in the past and the lack of recognition of the significance of the Chinese to the region at present.

By employing archival documents and manuscripts, census data, published and unpublished records from government and private agencies, local newspapers, and oral history interviews, this article attempts to construct the history of

AUTHOR'S NOTE: *The author wishes to thank Dr. David Goldfield, the editor of the journal, and two anonymous readers.*

JOURNAL OF URBAN HISTORY, Vol. 28 No. 2, January 2002 184-219

the St. Louis Chinatown from the 1860s to 1930s. In constructing the history of St. Louis Chinatown, this article examines how social elements of class, gender, race, and sexuality defined the lives of residents in Hop Alley. For instance, the well-off Chinese merchants and their wives were portrayed favorably by the press, while at the same time most Chinatown residents had to endure police roundups and public contempt. Similarly, some fortunate newcomers blended into the middle-class American society, while most working-class Chinese immigrants suffered from urban problems of poverty, crowded housing, and crime. Furthermore, despite social prejudice and legal sanction against interracial marriage, interracial social and sexual relations developed as a result of crossing and overlapping of cultural, racial, and spatial boundaries in the American urban setting. The reality of Hop Alley reveals that new immigrants and ethnic ghettos were not urban problems as portrayed by sensational journalism and perceived by urban bosses of the time but were energetic and vital elements of urban growth and progress. The backbone of working-class immigrants supported the U.S. industrial machine, and ethnic ghettos enriched and enlivened American urban experiences. Therefore, this article will also address issues of urban labor, urban space, and urban ethnicity and race relations in the field of American urban studies from the perspectives of the Chinese urban community.[3] The poignant history of Chinese St. Louisans also offers valuable lessons and insights relevant to the present urban policy concerning ethnic ghettos and new immigrants.

EARLY ARRIVALS: FROM THE GOLDEN STATE TO THE MOUND CITY

An early report of Chinese arrivals in St. Louis indicates that they came in "a considerable number" from San Francisco in 1869.[4] It is unclear, however, whether they came from China and then directly to St. Louis via San Francisco, or whether they had lived in San Francisco for a while and then migrated to St. Louis. With either possibility, their connection with San Francisco (and later with New York and other major urban Chinese communities in the United States) is a common feature in the immigration and settlement patterns of Chinese in St. Louis.

Individual Chinese had immigrated to America as early as 1785.[5] More than half a century later, the discovery of gold in California in 1849 triggered the bulk of Chinese immigration. In the following three decades, about 300,000 Chinese had entered the United States and primarily worked as miners in gold mines, laundry and grocery operators in urban communities, farm laborers in agricultural areas, or fishermen in fishing villages in California.[6] Although California continued to hold the majority of Chinese population in the United States for the following years, it experienced a slow and steady decline of

Chinese in the total population. Chinese composed 9.2 percent of the total population in California in 1860, 8.7 percent in 1880, and 3.1 percent in 1900.[7]

The anti-Chinese movement compounded by the economic depression in the West Coast in the last decades of the nineteenth century contributed to the redistribution of Chinese immigrant population in the United States. Economic discrimination came in the form of special taxes and levies targeted at the Chinese. In 1850s, a Foreign Miners' Tax was passed and enforced to discourage Chinese miners from working in the gold mines.[8] In 1870, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors passed an ordinance to charge laundrymen without horses for their delivery wagon, practically Chinese, $15 for every three months.[9] Meanwhile, violent physical attacks and abuse were also utilized to intimidate Chinese. In 1862, a committee of California Legislature reported a list of eighty-eight Chinese miners murdered by European Americans.[10] In 1871, the earliest documented urban anti-Chinese riot erupted in Los Angeles. According to William Locklear's study, a primarily white male mob was gathered to hang, shoot, and burn twenty-one Chinese in the Chinatown area.[11] Elmer Sandmeyer's work recorded thirty-one urban centers in California where burning of Chinese businesses and residences had taken place.[12]

Meanwhile, the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad in 1869 also contributed to the dispersion of Chinese laborers. During the last stage of the construction of the Central Pacific Railroad, 90 percent of a workforce of ten thousand were Chinese. The suddenly unwanted Chinese laborers now competed with European Americans for jobs, causing further tension on the West Coast. Although most of the discharged railroad workers found jobs in agriculture in California, many others had to migrate South and East, working in southern plantations or in new booming towns such as St. Louis in the Midwest.[13] It is very likely that among the considerable number of Chinese coming from San Francisco in 1869 some were former railroad crewmen.

While the anti-Chinese sentiment on the West Coast pushed Chinese out, the industrial development in the United States provided Chinese immigrants with opportunities for survival outside of the West Coast. Some of those who moved from the Golden State settled in St. Louis (nicknamed "the Mound City"), where original Indian inhabitants had left many of their enormous temples and burial mounds. The choice of their new settlement in St. Louis was not an accident. The conclusion of the Civil War in 1865 soon promoted the rapid industrial transformation of the United States. By the end of the nineteenth century, the country had produced three times as many manufactured goods as in 1860. Coinciding with the industrial growth, population increase was evident in every major American city. The 1870 census shows that the population of St. Louis had reached 310,000, making it the fourth largest city in the United States, only trailing behind New York, Philadelphia, and Brooklyn.[14] Ambitious town boomers such as Logan Reavis, the owner of a local newspaper, the *St. Louis Daily Press*, even started a campaign to move the national capital to St. Louis. Although the campaign was ill-fated, his book *St. Louis: The Future*

Great City of the World (published in English and German and widely distributed in Europe, especially in Germany) may have successfully inspired a considerable number of European immigrants to come to St. Louis in the 1870s and 1880s.[15] Chinese immigrants, although very unlikely to have read Reavis's book, were also attracted by the economic opportunities provided by the rapid industrial development and arrived in the Mound City. Following the arrival of a large number of Chinese immigrants from San Francisco in 1869, another group of Chinese immigrants arrived in St. Louis from New York in January 1870 to work for F. A. Rozier & Company, a mining company.

In the last decades of the nineteenth century, St. Louis was a city of rich ethnic diversity. Immigrants from other continents composed one third of the city's population. Of the city's total population of 310,864 in 1870, 112,294 were foreign born, among whom the majority was from Germany (59,040) and Ireland (32,239).[16] In 1880, of the total population of 350,518 in St. Louis, 105,013 were foreign born, with German (54,901) and Irish (28,536) immigrants still comprising the bulk of foreign-born population.[17] In 1890, of the city's total population of 451,770, there were 114,876 foreign born.[18] Most of the ethnic communities were crammed in the north and south sections by the river and surrounding the city's business district. In the North, Biddle Street, a street consisting of twenty-six city blocks running from the river on the East to Jefferson Avenue on the West, had been home to German, Irish, Jewish, and Italian immigrants, and African Americans.[19] In the South, Chinese formed its commercial, residential, and recreational center known as Hop Alley (see Table 1).

MYTH OF HOP ALLEY AND THE INSTITUTIONALIZED DISCRIMINATION

The earliest Chinese settlers congregated in an area stretching East and West between Seventh and Eighth Streets, and North and South between Market and Walnut Streets, which became the Chinatown of St. Louis, more commonly known as Hop Alley. Hop Alley was the name of a small alley running between Walnut and Market Streets where most boarding houses and apartment buildings were occupied by Chinese residents. It is not known how this neighborhood came to be called Hop Alley, but the name was widely used in contemporary newspapers and other accounts to represent the Chinese business district in St. Louis downtown where Chinese hand laundries, merchandise stores, grocery stores, herb shops, restaurants, and clan association headquarters were located.

Escaping the anti-Chinese violence on the West Coast, Chinese in St. Louis were still not spared racial and cultural prejudice and institutionalized discrimination. Hop Alley, like many Chinese communities in other parts of the country, has been historically stereotyped as an exotic and mysterious place often

TABLE 1
Chinese Population in St. Louis City in Comparison with Total Population, 1870-1930

Year	*Total Population*	*Chinese Total*	*Chinese Men*	*Chinese Women*
1870	310,864	1	1	
1880	350,518	91	91	
1890	451,770	170	164	6
1900	575,238	312	310	2
1910	687,029	423		Several
1920	772,897	328		
1930	820,960	350		

SOURCE: Adapted from the U.S. Census and *St. Louis Globe-Democrat.*

associated with crimes of opium manufacturing, smuggling, smoking, tong fighting, and murder. Most media news about Chinatown in St. Louis was filled with such stories of terrors. In 1875, the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, a major daily newspaper in St. Louis, reported that

> police throughout the nation were alerted for renewal of warfare between Chinese "tongs"—secret fraternal and commercial societies. A six-month truce ended with the murder of a Boston man who set up a restaurant in a rival tong's area. Within hours, shooting erupted in several cities, including St. Louis, where the "king" of Chinatown was shot down by six gunmen.[20]

In 1883, the so-called "Highbinder Murder Case" took place in St. Louis Chinatown. An African American man named Johnson was killed in an alley between the Seventh and Eighth and Market and Walnut Streets, and later his head was found in a basket of rice. The local police believed that a conflict between the African American man and a Chinese gambler who was connected with the Highbinders, the Chinese secret societies allegedly associated with many murders in large Chinese communities, was the cause of the murder.[21] Without any witness, police arrested six Chinese men as suspects of the murder. They were vigorously prosecuted but the court was unable to convict them due to lack of evidence.[22] Not only were the local police inclined to suspect Chinese as criminals, the news media even mistakenly regarded all Chinese residents in St. Louis as Highbinders. The *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* estimated that there were "about three hundred Highbinders in St. Louis," practically the total Chinese population in St. Louis then.[23]

The prejudice promoted by the stereotyped and negative media image of Chinese from the media certainly made the Chinese an easy target, and the institutionalized discrimination against Chinese was more responsible for a series of actions undertaken by the local law enforcement agencies in the name of executing Chinese exclusion laws in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In 1882, the U.S. Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act, responding to the pressure from various interest groups of labor unions,

farmers, politicians, and nativists. This act, known as the Geary Act, barred the entry of Chinese laborers for ten years and was renewed for another ten years in 1892 when it was to expire. When the ten-year term was over again in 1902, Congress finally extended all Chinese exclusion laws indefinitely in 1904. Under these exclusion laws, all Chinese immigrants in the United States were required to register with the immigration authorities and carry a Certificate of Residence with them; any Chinese laborer without such a document would be subject to deportation.

Aroused by the exaggerated media reports and guided by the Chinese exclusion mentality, St. Louis law enforcement agencies assumed that there was a large number of illegal laborers and criminals among the Chinese in the city, and therefore took action targeting the entire Chinese population in St. Louis. On August 25, 1897, St. Louis police rounded up all 314 Chinese in the city as requested by a government agent who was investigating reports that illegal Chinese immigrants had been smuggled into the city. Thirteen Chinese men were found without proper legal documents and were arrested to await deportation.[24] In the first two decades of the twentieth century, St. Louis police repeatedly raided Hop Alley and apprehended scores of Chinese individuals allegedly charged with smuggling, manufacturing, and sale of opium.[25] The roundup of illegal Chinese residents in St. Louis in the 1890s to 1910s was part of the nationwide crusade launched by the immigration authorities; it spearheaded the series of police raids of Chinese communities throughout the country, for instance, in Boston in 1903 and in Cleveland in 1925.[26]

These negative media reports and institutionalized legal actions effectively demonized Chinatown and alienated Chinese from the larger society. St. Louis citizens frowned on Chinatown, and children were taught to avoid Chinatown. One local resident recalled his impression of Chinatown during his early childhood: "When I was a boy it was a great stunt for the older boys to tell the younger ones 'tall' stories about 'Hop Alley' and display their bravery by escorting them through the forbidden passageway."[27]

LIFE IN HOP ALLEY: BUSINESSES AND RECREATION

What was life really like in Hop Alley? 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, however, 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, who was then a twenty-three-year-old young reporter for the daily *St. Louis Republic* and still unknown to the general public, went to Hop Alley to write a sensational and somewhat biased story about Chinese in St. Louis in 1894. 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. Dissertations on social life in China, like that on the discovery of roast pig by Lamb, are common library familiarities, and the movements of the Chinatown at the Golden Gate have been recorded and re-recorded.

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, a meal partaken at one of which will form the subject of a later discussion. 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.

Besides this social quarter with its homes and resorts; besides the widely scattered array of red sign laundries and occasional Chinese stores, there is a feature, not so much social as dependent thereon, which possesses interest to a degree. This latter is nothing more nor less than a Chinese graveyard, as such deserves distinct, if not honorable, mention. Those who have ever studied the heathen Chinese and his history, either social, political or religious, know too much of him to credit the statement of the presence of a Chinese-American graveyard in St. Louis. Yet with some modifications this statement is true, as will be duly detailed. Perhaps it is more of an American graveyard with the Chinese element as a dependent feature, and perhaps the Mongolian end is more of a way-station resting place en route to China; but, nevertheless, it is a Chinese graveyard, and a very interesting one at that. They are resting there awaiting that

> auspicious moment when fate and fortune shall decree that their bones shall be removed to that celestial haven.[28]

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, and reveals a great cultural curiosity about the Chinese among the general population in St. Louis. It also offers a starting point for the following discussions.

HAND LAUNDRIES

Dreiser's report first portrayed the Chinese laundries in St. Louis. Clearly, Chinese hand laundries were ubiquitous in St. Louis in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and hand laundry was the primary trade and profession for Chinese in St. Louis. It is questionable whether the Chinese population had reached one thousand, and about five hundred Chinese were operating laundries by the end of nineteenth century as described in Dreiser's story. Other sources, however, could easily verify that there were more than three hundred Chinese dwelling in the Chinatown area and that most of them were working in Chinese hand laundries in Hop Alley and the peripheral area.[29] Court records further prove laundry as the primary occupation of 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 years.[30] Before he was arrested in 1906, Jeu Young, a Chinese laborer who came to St. Louis in 1904, was running a Chinese laundry at 3408 Olive Street.[31] Chu Dock Yuck, another Chinese labor on 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.[32]

In addition to the above sources, *Gould's St. Louis Directories* have provided significant information on Chinese hand laundries in St. Louis. 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, HapKee 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.[33] In the following year, the number of Chinese laundries almost doubled—ten Chinese laundries were listed among the thirty-six laundries of the city.[34] The number of Chinese laundries continued to increase until 1888 (when seventy-three Chinese laundries were listed), and then starting from 1890 Chinese laundries suddenly disappeared from the directory for reasons unknown.[35]

According to *Gould's St. Louis Directory*, the sixteen years from 1873 to 1889 constituted the initial stage of Chinese hand laundry business in St. Louis. During this period, Chinese laundries not only increased in number but also gradually spread beyond the boundary of Hop Alley. From 1873 to 1879, Chinese laundries were unexceptionally located in the Chinatown premise, mainly clustering 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.[36]

Chinese hand laundries started to reappear again in *Gould's St. Louis Directory* from 1911, and they continued to be the primary occupation of Chinese in St. Louis until the end of the 1930s. These three decades witnessed the peak time for Chinese hand laundry business in St. Louis. During this period, Chinese hand laundries were characterized by clan domination and geographical dispersion. Surnames of Kee, Lee, Leong, Sing, Wah, and Wing were the ones that appeared in the directories most frequently.[37] Lee, Lung, Sing, and Wah clans were predominant in the 1910s, and were joined in the 1920s by 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, approximately comprising more than 60 percent of the total laundries in the city. In the listings, Lee and Sing stood out as the 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 the chain immigration; common surnames well indicate the blood tie or lineage among the laundrymen. Second, it speaks of the necessity of the ethnic networking in initiating and operating the business.

Along with the 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 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.[38] Intimidated by the power of On Leong, Chinese laundrymen abided by the rule. More important, the Chinese laundrymen followed the rule of the market—supply and demand determination—to operate laundry wherever there was a demand or lack of a Chinese laundry. 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 other Chinese urban communities of San Francisco, New York, Chicago, and Milwaukee.[39]

The Chinese laundry as a predominant trade among the Chinese in St. Louis also reflects the occupational segregation of Chinese nationwide. In San Francisco, Chicago, and New York, laundry has been a primary Chinese business as documented in works by Victor G. Nee and Brett de Bary Nee, Paul Chan Pang Sui, and Renqiu Yu.[40]

This occupational segregation was largely a result of the socioeconomic conditions of Chinese immigrants during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Most Chinese immigrants came from villages in Guangdong province, China. Few could speak English prior to immigration or possessed any skills required by the industrial world. Without English language and marketable skills, they were readily excluded from the mainstream labor market. They could only engage in trades that mainstream laborers were unwilling to embrace. Laundry seemed to be such a trade, as washing clothes was tedious, time consuming, and back breaking, and only working-class housewives endured the drudgery. Laundry was also practical; it required limited skill and very little capital. All a laundryman needed to operate a laundry was a scrub board, soap, iron, and an ironing board. Chinese laundrymen could canvass a neighborhood, seek out a low-rent location, and open a business. An interview in Paul Chan Pang Siu's classic study of Chinese hand laundries in Chicago offers a wonderful example of how this process worked:

> I don't know how the laundry became a Chinese enterprise in this country. But I think they just learned it from each other. After all, laundry work is not difficult; it requires no high skill. All one has to do is watch how others do it. It would not take long either.
>
> In the old days, some of those fellows were really ignorant though. They did not know even how to write down numbers. When a bundle of laundry was done, he had to put down the amount charged for the work. Being so illiterate, he could not write the numbers. He had a way though and what a way! See, he would draw a circle as big as half dollar coin to represent a half dollar, and a circle as big as a dime for a dime, and so on. When the customer came in to call for their laundry, they would catch on to the meaning of the circles and pay accordingly. It is indeed laughable.[41]

The predominance of hand laundries among Chinese businesses in St. Louis was also a result of the immigration and settlement patterns of Chinese here as most Chinese immigrants came from major Chinese communities of San Francisco, New York, or Chicago, and had maintained ethnic ties with these places through businesses or relatives and friends.[42] When Chinese immigrants fled the social prejudice and economic competition of the larger cities, they brought their capital and previous working experiences with them. Laundry had been a familiar territory and they would naturally invest in laundries again in the city of their new destination.

Consequently, the operation of Chinese hand laundries in St. Louis resembled in many ways that of Chinese laundries in other Chinese communities across the country. According to Siu, the typical interior arrangement for the Chinese laundry consisted of four sections. First, the front section usually occupied one third of the space of the house, functioning as the office workshop of the laundryman. Here the laundryman ironed, labeled laundry, and waited on his customers. In this section, he kept the necessities for his business: the ironing bed, the abacus, the laundry shelves, the lock-counter, and the secret cash drawer. Second, immediately behind the curtained doorway at the center of the house and usually between the laundry shelves, were the living quarters. Third, the drying room was located in the center or rear part of the house. In the center of the room was an old-fashioned coal stove that was used for drying the wet laundry. About a dozen strong wires were strung across in parallel lines to put up the wet laundry. Finally, there was the rear section, where almost all the laundryman's machines were located, including the washing machine, washing sink, and steam boiler.[43]

Sam Wah Laundry in St. Louis was almost a replica of the Chinese laundry described by Siu. A typical Chinese hand laundry in St. Louis, Sam Wah Laundry began operation at least in 1887. It was first run by Chinese laundryman Sam Wah at 329 Market Street. It seems that Sam Wah had been doing well in the business. After 1912, Sam Wah opened two laundries at 1408 North Jefferson Avenue and 4298B Finney Avenue. After 1915, Sam Wah was running four to five laundries simultaneously, including the one at 4381 Laclede Avenue that survived until 1986. In 1922, the aging Sam Wah brought his two nephews, Gee Kee One (also known as Gee Sam Wah) and Gee Hong, from Canton, China, to join him. Gee Kee One and Gee Hong first worked for their uncle in the laundry at 4381 Laclede Avenue, and later inherited the laundry after Sam Wah passed away. The brothers operated the laundry under the same name with more or less the same techniques until it finally closed in 1986 when the two proprietors passed away.[44] A story of the laundry published in *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* on November 12, 1978, provided a graphic picture of the laundry:

> The Sam Wah Laundry is on Laclede Avenue, a few hundred feet east of Newstead and a turn north through a door into St. Louis, a half century ago.
>
> Inside—after passing under a rubber tree plant that grows westward along a system of ceiling hooks and jerry-built supports, a plant that soars out of its pot near the wall and achieves the form of a dragon—is the shop of the brothers Gee Sam Wah and Gee Hong, long out of Canton, China. Wah is 88 years old, Gee is 86.
>
> With its worn wooden washtubs, its drum dryer powered by a noisy and archaic direct current motor, its naked light bulbs and sagging wooden floors, the San Wah Laundry seems ready to stand for a spot in the Smithsonian Institution, or at least the Museum of Westward Expansion, this paint-peeling and dusty memorial to a part of the Chinese role in American history.
>
> . . . The Gee brothers live and work in Spartan quarters. They apparently sleep on mats near an old stove. The walls of the laundry are adorned in places by an

odd mixture of pictures and photographs—religious art, mostly Jesus Christ at various ages, a newspapers photo of Chairman Mao and former President Gerald R. Ford shaking hands, 1962 calendars from the Canton Market and the Wing Sing Chong Co., Inc., both of San Francisco, and a glossy photo of a standing room hockey crowd at the Checkerdome. There are numerous snapshots of weddings and assembled families.

Gee Sam Wah still uses an antique hand atomizer when he irons shirts. He has had the atomizer since his days in Canton, which probably means at least 80 years or more. Despite the appearance of disorganization, regular customers do not need a ticket, said Wah. The launderers have a system of numbering the bundles and remembering the faces. They do not forget regular customers, and no one, apparently, has had reason to complain. Not-so-regular customers get a ticket. Everything is lettered in Chinese.

Gee Hong and Gee Wah, by western standards, are certifiable workaholics. Even in their 80s, the two are up ironing and washing early in the morning and are at it still late at night, say longtime customers.

They had a television set, presumably for relaxation, but it has been broken and unused for some time. There is also a sickly-looking radio on the premises.[45]

Like Sam Wah Laundry, most Chinese hand laundries were small, and working conditions were harsh. However, they were indispensable to the growing population of St. Louis. Even though the washing machine was already invented and entered into middle-class households in the last decades of nineteenth century, Chinese hand laundries had a widespread reputation of being inexpensive and making clothing last longer, and therefore enjoyed a large number of patrons. In the 1920s, Sam Wah Laundry charged fifteen cents for men's shirts and twenty cents for women's shirtwaists.[46] In the early 1930s, J. H. Lee Laundry, owned by Jung Chooey and his uncle, charged only ten cents for laundering a shirt, a price cheaper than many Chinese laundries as it was located in an African American neighborhood.[47]

Unlike mainstream businesses that sought customers largely through advertisement that was recognized as a key for the success of a business since the beginning of the twentieth century, Chinese laundries maintained and expanded their clientele primarily by the quality of their services and word of mouth of their loyal customers. Looking through the Business Directory and Mercantile Register of St. Louis from 1903 to 1910, almost the peak years of Chinese hand laundry in St. Louis, one can find very few Chinese laundries listed in them.[48]

The low price of Chinese hand laundries was made possible by an extremely frugal way of living. To minimize their cost of living, they lived in the back of their laundries. Mrs. Lillie Hong came to St. Louis in 1924 at the age of five and spent most of her working years in the family laundry after her marriage in 1935. She recalled her life in the laundry: "We did the ironing in the front, and the back part, we had a couple of bedrooms . . . and the kitchen was in the back."[49] Tak Jung migrated to St. Louis in 1930 to join his father when he was nine years old. His father then was running a laundry business on Academy and Delmar, one block of Kingshighway. Like the Hongs, Tak Jung's family also

lived in the back of their family business. By using bunk beds, they fitted a family of eight, Tak Jung's parents and six children, into two back rooms.[50] In large families, teenage children often slept in the laundry. James Leong was born into his family laundry in St. Louis at 4360 Lee Avenue in 1924. During his high school years, he slept on a cot in the laundry that was extremely hot and humid in summer and freezing cold in winter:

> I usually stretch the army cot out. . . . In the summertime, didn't have to put nothin' on there except the sheets, but in the wintertime, had to throw a mattress on top of the army cot. . . . In the morning, I get up six o'clock and light up the boiler and let the steam come up, let it get hot, and then I start work about an hour. And about the time eight o'clock, grab a little bit to eat and take the bus to go to school.[51]

While laundry owners with large families crowded in the back rooms of laundries, many laundry operators without families simply combined their living quarters with the laundry. To Gee Kee One and Gee Hong, the back of their laundry was their living quarters throughout their long hard working lives; they slept on mats near a gas stove and cooked in the back part of the laundry.[52]

In addition to minimizing the cost of living, Chinese laundry workers had to work long hours to increase the profit margin. Consequently, laundry work was characterized by long hours and hard, monotonous toil. Most Chinese laundry operators worked from early morning to late night on repetitive tasks. Lillie Hong started working in the family laundry J. H. Lee on Olive Boulevard and Vandeventer Avenue since her marriage in 1935 to Chooey Hong, who had been operating the laundry since the 1920s. She recalled her typical working day as follows:

> We got up at six o'clock to do washing. We had an old washing machine made of wood. We had to hang up clothes on wires and let them dry in one room. We heated iron in a stove. If it was too hot, we ducked it in a bucket of water. We worked from six or seven in the morning till late night with no rest, no break. You were on your feet all day long.[53]

Tak Jung described the similar experiences when he worked at his father's laundry as a youth in the 1930s:

> We had a machine for washing, but ironing had to be done by hand. . . . The irons are cast irons heated up and then you have a handle as a grip so you won't burn your hands. Then they ironed clothes. When the iron cools, they put it back on the stove and heat it again and take the hot one, so there's a lot of walking back and forth from ironing board to the heating . . . a lot of elbow grease put into ironing.

Tak's family worked year-round without taking any vacation. They maintained a constant workload and took only half days off on Sundays.[54]

As exemplified in the above cases, the Chinese hand laundries were family ventures. The low price of their service and the hard work required a collective effort of the entire family. Not only did the parents work, but children of all ages also participated in the laundry work. Lillie Hong's nine children all worked in their family laundry. "After school," she recalled, "my children came back to home and they all helped in the laundry. They iron front and back of sleeves, and front and back of shirts. I then folded them."[55] James Leong started working in the laundry at the age of seven, starching the detachable white collars which men wore with dress shirts in those days:

> We used to have thousands of those collars. . . . They starched it. Then you had to smooth them out. And the little boys, you know, four or five years old—they had a great big, long board to put it on the table. . . . The collars all starched already, but they are in bundles. You have to separate it. Smooth 'em out with your hand and stack 'em up. . . . Each one was on a hook—a great big, long pole, and you hang that pole up on a wire and let it dry. . . . And then they wet it again and then they used a machine to iron it out, and it makes it real hard, real white.[56]

James Leong worked in the family laundry early in the morning before he went to school and went back to work again right after he came from school. This work pattern continued throughout his college years.

OTHER BUSINESSES: GROCERY STORES, RESTAURANTS, TEA SHOPS, AND OPIUM SHOPS

Although Dreiser's story failed to mention Chinese grocery stores, they emerged as another important Chinese business in St. Louis to provide ingredients for Chinese cooking and laundry supplies for hand laundries. *Gould's St. Louis Directory* first listed two Chinese grocers in 1888: Lung Wah at South 813 Market Street and Wah Quong Sun at 714 Market Street.[57] In the following year, Lung Quong On at 25 South Eighth Street and Jeu Hon Yee, a Chinese woman at 924 Locust Street, were also added to the listing.[58] From the 1890s to 1900s, Chinese grocers slowly but steadily increased, with the total number ranging from four to six.[59] The years between 1912 and 1914 witnessed a sudden increase of Chinese grocers with a total of a dozen.[60] During the 1920s, the number of Chinese grocers decreased but remained steady, with a half dozen listed regularly.[61]

As Chinese grocery stores were growing, they consequently attracted media attention. On July 29, 1900, the Sunday magazine section of *The St. Louis Republic* featured an article entitled "The Chinese Colony of St. Louis" written by Dick Wood portraying a group of respectable Chinese merchants who were running grocery stores in Chinatown, including Quong Hang Choung and Company at 722 Market Street, Quong On Lung at 17 South Eighth Street, and Quong Sun Wah and Company at 23 South Eighth Street. According to the

article, most of these affluent merchants had acquired a thorough English education in Sunday schools during their youth in America. Lee Mow Lin, an entrepreneur who owned Quong On Lung store, elaborated in fluent English a quite sophisticated view when he was asked by Dick Wood about his opinion on the Boxers.

> In China, we have had dissensions and rebellions, as has been the case with many other nations not nearly so old, and there may be some who would gladly welcome a change in the Government, a shifting around of rulers—much the same as new blood is welcomed in the leader of a herd. The lawless element may gain, or may already have gained, the upper hand, but if so the bad effect will be nullified by the great unity and philosophy of the Chinese as a race. There are good and bad of all people and we have our share of both, but the good will survive.[62]

The three stores cited above were the most established and stable ones among all Chinese grocery stores in St. Louis, and they were listed in *Gould's St. Louis Directory* continuously from 1906 to 1910.[63]

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.[64] These grocery stores sold merchandise imported from China, including native-made Chinese cloths with intricately embroidered bits, tea, and Chinese ingredients for cooking. They also sold fresh vegetables in bunches that were delivered daily by Chinese farmers on the other side of the river in Illinois. Many of the Chinese stores were, however, not limited to serving only the local customers—they also handled the ordering and shipping of supplies to Chinese laborers in southern and southwestern states.[65]

Lillie Hong recalled that in the 1920s there were still many Chinese grocery stores on Eighth and Market Streets. The ones that she could remember names of were Oriental Tea on Eighth Street and Lung Sing Co. on Market Street. They sold canned goods and packages of vegetables.[66] The Chinese grocers usually ordered merchandise from distributors in Hong Kong, San Francisco, New York, or Chicago on credit. Annie Leong's parents came to St. Louis from Hong Kong via San Francisco in 1924 and ran Chinese restaurants and grocery stores since then. "Our merchandise came from San Francisco, New York, and Chicago." Annie Leong recalled her childhood experiences:

> 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.[67]

Chinese restaurants or chop suey shops were also part of the business in Chinatown. Chinese restaurants first were eating places primarily to satisfy the need of Chinese bachelors who would come to eat during Sundays when they were not working. These restaurants usually served authentic Chinese dishes or delicacies that only appealed to the taste buds of Chinese tongues. To write a story on St. Louis Chinese for the daily *St. Louis Republic*, Theodore Dreiser visited a Chinese restaurant at 19 South Eighth Street at one midday in January 1894. The restaurant was not busy at all; the owner, cook, and waiter were sitting in the front room chatting, smoking, and drinking tea. When Dreiser showed the proprietor a letter of introduction from a Chinese friend written in Chinese, he was told, "Come a Sunday. Got glood dinner Sunday. Come a flive clock; bling flend." On Sunday at five, Dreiser and his friend came to the restaurant that was filled with Chinese eaters. Dreiser and his friend ordered the "chicken, duck, rice and China dish," and they seemed to have enjoyed the experience:

> The first dish set on the bare table was no longer than a silver dollar and contained a tiny dab of mustard in a spoonful of oil. Three dishes of like size followed, one containing pepper jam, the other meat sauces. Tea was served in bowls, and was delicious. The duck, likewise the chicken, was halved, then sliced crosswise after the manner of bologna sausage, and served on round decorated plates. One bowl of chicken soup comprised the same order for two, which was served with dainty little spoons of chinaware, decorated in unmistakable heathen design. Rice, steaming hot, was brought in bowls, while the mysterious China dish completed the spread. This dish was wonderful, awe-inspiring, and yet toothsome. It was served in a dish, half bowl, half platter. Around the platter-like edge were carefully placed bits of something which looked like wet piecrust and tasted like smoked fish. The way they stuck out around the edges suggested decoration of lettuce, parsley and watercress. The arrangement of the whole affair inspired visions of hot salad. Celery, giblets, onions, seaweed that looked like dulse, and some peculiar and totally foreign grains resembling barley, went to make up this steaming-hot mass.[68]

With time, more and more Americans were exposed to the taste of Chinese food, and as the demand increased, Chinese entrepreneurs expanded their services to the American public and many chop suey shops consequently emerged in St. Louis. According to the court records, Thomas Kee, who came to St. Louis in 1903, was running a chop suey house at 2032 Market Street in 1906.[69] The *St. Louis Republic* reported that in 1910, St. Louis police raided a chop suey restaurant located at 2301 Washington Avenue.[70]

A fried dish of rice, chopped meats, and vegetables, chop suey could be easily prepared and was widely accepted by non-Chinese eaters as representative of Chinese food. Chop suey shops and larger Chinese restaurants not only served Chinese eaters but catered to European Americans as well. Annie Leong's parents opened a restaurant at 714 Market Street 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 received local American customers who came from theaters in the late evening.[71]

Like Chinese hand laundries, the Chinese grocery and restaurant businesses also heavily depended on unpaid family members for their operation. Annie Leong recalled how her family restaurant was operated in the 1930s and 1940s:

> The whole family worked. If you didn't get paid, it was okay. My mother worked in the dining room and kitchen of the restaurant. My dad worked as a chef. During the depression era, they survived and they made a living out of it. . . . We worked seven days a week, from eleven o'clock in the morning to mid-night [*sic*]. . . . We [she and her brothers] did everything. We wrapped wontons, we took care of the dining room area, and we set up restaurant. Then if they needed you, you could cook too. So we did whatever was needed. It was just natural, and you just did it. We were going to school besides that and we had to do our homework too. You were studying between customers. After school, you would study, and it would get busy during dinner hours, and you took care of all the customers. In between, you would study a little, and then you took care of customers. After the dinner rush was over, maybe about eight o'clock or something, you could really have more time to study. I guess that was something you never thought about and that was something you did.[72]

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.[73] Since then, Alla Lee's tea shop and residence changed locations several times, mostly outside the Chinatown, yet were continuously listed in the *St. Louis Directory* until 1880.[74] Alla Lee was born in Ningbo (a city near Shanghai), China, in 1833. He came to St. Louis in 1857 at the age of twenty-four. There he set up a tea shop from which he made a modest income. In the following year, Alla Lee married a young Irish woman named Sarah Graham and they had several children. Through his wife, Lee seemed to be more associated with the Scots-Irish community than with his fellow Chinese. Yet he consciously defended the dignity of his native culture.[75]

Hop Alley was also home to opium shops, although most of them were not the "high-class opium joint abominations" that Dreiser was looking for. By 1899, according to the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, there were thirty to forty opium dens in Hop Alley.[76] This figure was probably exaggerated by the media, as there were only four Chinese grocers and there was no Chinese laundry or restaurant listed in the *St. Louis Directory* of the year.[77] The rapid decline of opium dens in Hop Alley was a direct result of police raids at the time. According to the court records from the Eastern Division of the Eastern Judicial District of Missouri, most Chinese apprehended by the police in the 1910s were charged with the crime of unlawfully manufacturing or selling opium as exemplified in the following cases.

On July 8, 1914, Hop Hing was found manufacturing five pounds of opium for smoking and was consequently arrested. He was indicted on March 4, 1915, by the district court and was ordered to pay a fine of $2,000. Unable to pay the fine, Hop Hing was instead jailed for thirty days.[78]

On October 31, 1914, Leong Choey was arrested by the St. Louis police when they searched and found two pounds of gum opium in his residence at 700 North Jefferson Avenue that did not have the proper U.S. revenue stamps. Leong Choey therefore was charged by the district court for unlawfully manufacturing opium suitable for smoking purposes without having given bond required by the commissioner of Internal Revenue of the United States. He was ordered to find sufficient bail in the sum of $1,500. Leong Choey was again arrested on April 19, 1915, when he sold about one eighth of an ounce of opium to Maud Furla at the price of $1. He was indicted again for a violation of the provisions of the Act of December 17, 1914, entitled "an Act to provide for the registration of, with collectors of internal revenue, and to impose a special tax upon all persons who produce, import, manufacture, compound, deal in, dispense, sell, distribute, or give away opium or coca leaves, their salts, derivatives, or preparations, and for other purposes."[79]

On May 10, 1915, Sing Lung was charged for illegal possession of one pound of crude opium as he did not register with the Collector of Internal Revenue of the United States. The district court indicted him for the violation of the Act of December 17, 1914. His attorney T. Morris argued that as "a mere consumer of opium," Sing Lung did not violate the law. However, the district court still decided to deliver Sing Lung to the St. Louis City Jail on February 24, 1916.[80]

On August 13, 1915, Wong Lung was arrested for possessing 30 grains of smoking opium in his residence at 802 Market Street. F. T. Diggs, the deputy collector of Internal Revenue, believed that Wong Lung did not register under the provisions of the Act of December 17, 1914. As a result, the district court judge David P. Dyer sentenced Wong Lung to prison on January 27, 1916.[81]

Due to the frequent raids from St. Louis police, most opium shops were closed by the first decade of the twentieth century. Only four or five merchants in St. Louis were running opium dens, and they usually charged more for the drug than their counterparts in New York or San Francisco. The opium shops had the appearance of Indian camps instead of that of a merchandise store. The opium addicts usually came to opium shops at night. After paying sufficient money, an opium fiend would crawl up the bunk, rest his head on the pillow which was a wooden bench covered by cloth and matting, and enjoy the health-destroying smoke.[82]

The frequent police raids of Chinese opium dens also resulted in business collaboration between the Chinese and African Americans. As running opium dens in Chinatown would risk arrest and even deportation, some Chinese opium den owners began to choose "Chestnut Valley," an African American

neighborhood just north of Chinatown, to operate the business. The 1896 Annual Police Report indicates that fourteen opium dens in Chestnut Valley were owned by Chinese. Chinese also did banking with African Americans. It was believed that in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, 50 percent of the businesses owned by African Americans in Chestnut Valley borrowed money from Chinese money lenders, as banks owned by whites refused to lend money to African Americans.[83]

RECREATION

Dreiser's story largely described the social life of Chinese in St. Louis in which gambling was conceived as the primary recreational activity. After a long week of toiling in laundries, the Chinese laborers longed to relax themselves a little. The absence of family life in America left them few choices for emotional comfort and physical recuperation. Many would gather to gamble till they lost all the money they carried with them. Others would visit Chinese restaurants to eat authentic Chinese dishes and chat with their clansmen about their families and relatives in China.

Dreiser's depiction was flawed by the prevalent bias that most Chinese were opium addicts and gamblers, and he could not go beyond his limitation to explore more about Chinatown life. Many other social activities of Chinese in St. Louis unnoticed by Dreiser took place on Sundays. In the last decades of the nineteenth century, the Chinese in St. Louis were most likely to be bound by their clan associations such as Jue, Lee, and Leong surname associations.[84] Like Chinese immigrants on the West Coast, Chinese in St. Louis largely came from Canton and its adjacent counties, so-called *Sam Yap* (San Yi) and *Sze Yap* (Si Yi). *Sam Yap* means "three counties," including Namhoi (Nanhai), Punyi (Panyu), and Shuntak (Shunde) counties. *Sze Yap* means "four counties," including Sunwui (Xinhui), Toishan (Taishan), Hoiping (Kaiping), and Yanping (Enping) counties. Among the Chinese in St. Louis, those who bore the surnames of Jeu and Leong from villages in Sunwui (Xinhui) and Lee from Toishan (Taishan) were predominant, and they set up surname associations for mutual aid and protection in a foreign land. These surname associations usually rented a flat with a kitchen from apartment buildings in Hop Alley for clan business meetings and social gatherings. On Sundays, clansmen would bring Chinese ingredients to the association and use the kitchen facility there to cook special Chinese dishes that they did not have time and means to do during the busy working week.[85]

If the weather were nice and sunny, many would sit on the benches outside the shops in Hop Alley to feel the touch of warm rays of sun. They had been confined in the dim and damp laundries for a week, and now they were free from the backbreaking drudgery of laundries. They could enjoy the warm breeze outside, catch up on news with each other, share some laughter with clansmen, and watch Chinese children playing in the alley.[86]

To these Chinese, Hop Alley was not a place of sin and vice but a place of good food, comfort, joy, and relaxation. According to the *St. Louis Republic*, the Chinese in 1910 "scattered through the city in a puzzling way peculiarly Chinese," and Chinese usually lived behind their laundries. On Sundays, however, they would close their laundry shops and hurry to Hop Alley for recreation.[87]

Moreover, Hop Alley was a place that served as a substitute for their families in China. Isolated by cultural prejudice, a language barrier, and the drudgery of daily work, Chinese laborers found ethnic solidarity in Hop Alley. They came to Hop Alley every Sunday feeling that they were going home, where they were called uncles by children of the Chinese families there.[88]

Chinese in St. Louis also found comfort and solidarity in other social and cultural activities. As early as the arrival of the first group of Chinese in St. Louis, Chinese had been celebrating the Chinese holidays. On February 10, 1880, the daily *St. Louis Republic* reported a celebration of the Chinese New Year that had taken place in a Chinese laundry:

> The Chinese population in St. Louis yesterday arrayed in their best raiment and prepared to celebrate their New Year's day which always comes on the 9th day of February . . . at a Chestnut street laundry. There everything presented a holiday appearance. Bundles of washing were packed away under tables and corners, while the ironing-boards were covered with Chinese bon-bons, consisting of a species of eatables which no Christian would dare sample. The only delicacy which greeted the eye was a lot of oranges which were hanging to an artificial tree before which a celestial with head bent low, muttered some Asiatic prayer. He stopped short when the reporter entered, and looking up said:
>
> "Watchee wantee?"
>
> "Do you do any washing to-day?" asked the reporter.
>
> "No washee, no workee to-day. Dis Chinaman's lew year."
>
> " . . . Are you going to have a big time?"
>
> "No, no. Only little time. Out in Californy Chinamen have big time. Only little time here. . . . No joss-house here, no get dlunk, no good time, no big time, only little time. . . . Chilamen here today take it a rest. Put on best clothes. Go see udder Chilamen. Smoke pipe, get little dlunk. Just have a little time."[89]

EARLY WOMEN AND FAMILY LIFE

Dreiser did not provide information about family life in Hop Alley. Other sources, however, allow us to detect the earliest Chinese women and family life in St. Louis. Like Chinese immigrants in other parts of the country, early Chinese in St. Louis were predominantly men who had left families behind in China. There was only one Chinese man in St. Louis recorded by the 1870 census. The 1880 census counted 91 Chinese men in Missouri, most of whom were residing in St. Louis. There were 170 Chinese in St. Louis, at most 6 of whom were women, in the 1890 census. In 1900, the counts were 310 Chinese

men and 2 Chinese women, and in 1910, the numbers were 300 men and several women.[90]

However, the census alone could not tell the complete story of the Chinese in St. Louis, and Chinese women arrived in St. Louis almost as early as their male counterparts. In 1869, the first group of Chinese immigrants came to St. Louis from San Francisco. According to William Hyde and Howard L. Conard, who edited the first book on St. Louis history, *Encyclopedia of the History of St. Louis*, a Sunday school was immediately established on Eleventh and Locust Streets to teach the Chinese children English.[91] These children were sons of Chinese merchants or laborers who were born in China or San Francisco and came to St. Louis with their parents or more likely fathers and other relatives. It is uncertain if there were Chinese women in 1869 since no written record has been found to prove it. Following the first group, in January 1870 another smaller group of Chinese arrived in the city from New York. The daily newspaper *Missouri Republican* reported that "among the number [there are] some women" and that they would "take charge of the boarding house for the men at the works."[92] Therefore, it is certain that Chinese women arrived in St. Louis as early as 1870.

It is unclear that these women came to St. Louis as single women or as wives of Chinese immigrants. However, it is clear that these Chinese women were working along with Chinese men who were likely their husbands. Prior to the Civil War, the area south of Market Street was the French town where houses were mostly single-family residences. As in most American urban communities, the post–Civil War industrialization and urbanization soon swept away the single houses and constructed multifamily apartment buildings and boarding houses in their places to meet the demand of a swelling population. Hop Alley was one of the streets in the area where many tenements and boarding houses were constructed. In this neighborhood, a typical rent in the late nineteenth century was a quarter a day or six quarters a week. One could get room and board for less than $15 a month.[93] Cheap housing of the area attracted new immigrants, including Chinese who congregated around Hop Alley where boarding houses or apartment buildings made up most of the Chinese residential community in St. Louis and demanded personnel for the management of these properties.[94] These early Chinese women managed boarding houses that were usually lodging a dozen single Chinese men each. They earned their living by cooking, cleaning, and mending for the Chinese men, a working pattern very much resembling that of German and Irish immigrant women in the town. According to James Neal Primm's masterful work, in the late nineteenth century most German and Irish immigrant women in St. Louis found employment in domestic services.[95]

In addition to the working Chinese women, affluent Chinese merchant wives also arrived in the city at around the turn of the century and individual Chinese women were reported by the local news media. The *St. Louis Republic* recorded Mrs. Jeu Hon Yee as the only Chinese woman in the city prior to the

turn of the century who was joined by Mrs. Fannie Toy shortly after 1900.[96] On October 4, 1908, the *St. Louis Republican* took an entire page to feature a story covering four Chinese women residing in St. Louis. "St. Louis boasts a colony of Chinese women," the article stated.

> Although the total population of the aforesaid "colony" is but four wee bits of femininity from the Flowery Kingdom—still it is a colony, and a large one, considering the obstacles which Uncle Sam places in the way of Chinese women who came to this country.
>
> The St. Louis contingent of Chinese women is proportionately larger, considering population, than any city in the country excepting San Francisco. Chicago boasts but half a dozen women from the land of Confucius, while New York, with its much-boasted Mott Street, and its half block of cramped Chinese quarters, has but five who are duly registered with the immigration authorities.[97]

Association with the Chinese merchant class and being Americanized were the common traits of the four Chinese women. Three of the four women, Mrs. Juy Toy, Mrs. Jo Hon Ye, and Mrs. Huy Tin, were wives of well-to-do Chinese businessmen in St. Louis. Miss Mei Chun was the daughter of a wealthy Chinese tea merchant. Mrs. Juy Toy was born in China in 1889 and came to San Francisco when she was a little girl. Her father, a prosperous merchant in San Francisco, enrolled her in public school. She made rapid progress in public school and graduated from San Francisco High School when she was seventeen, which made her one of the two Chinese girls who graduated from San Francisco High School at the time. After graduation, she was married to a St. Louis Chinese merchant, proprietor of a chop suey restaurant on Sixth Street, a laundry on Marcus Avenue, and a mercantile store in San Francisco. She lived with her husband at 2629 Marcus Avenue. According to the article, both Mrs. Juy Toy and her husband were quite Americanized. "I am no longer Chinese—I am an American," she told the reporter. "I was married like American women are and live just like people of this country do. Chinese dress and Chinese customs are no longer a part of my life and I am a member of an American church, and try to do just like the American women do."[98] Her husband had been in the country for seventeen years, but never revisited his native land.

Mrs. Jo Hon Ye was born into a rich merchant family in Hong Kong. During her girlhood days, she enjoyed all the pleasures that the daughter of a wealthy Chinese merchant would. She married a Chinese merchant in San Francisco and the couple suffered the peril of the San Francisco earthquake and the consequent fire in 1906 that burned all their possessions. They came to St. Louis to start all over. Within two years her husband was able to own a grocery store on Eleventh Street and they enjoyed prosperity again.[99]

Mrs. Huy Tin was also a high school graduate of San Francisco. Her husband owned a dry goods store on Market Street. With her education, Mrs. Huy Tin acted as a bookkeeper for the store in addition to being the female head of her husband's household.[100] Miss Mei Chun was the only unmarried member

of the four. She was a student at Forest Park University and was only seventeen years old when the story was written.

These wealthy merchant wives consciously made efforts to adjust to the modes of life in their new home and succeeded to a large degree. They wore western dresses and spoke fluent English. Like middle-class American women of the time, they enjoyed a leisurely life. They went to see circuses and shows and attended various social functions. Mrs. Juy Toy went to see the circuses and shows often and was fascinated by the romance presented in the shows. "That is why I like to see the American plays so much," she commented. "The girl loves the man or she does not marry him."[101] Miss Mei Chun was reportedly "so popular that few social functions of the West End are complete without her presence."[102] They were also open-minded, outgoing, and adventurous, enjoying the freedom American life provided them. Mrs. Jo Hon Ye also enjoyed the circuses and shows, but nothing delighted her more than streetcars. She loved seeing the kaleidoscopic views of city life from the windows of the streetcars. She described her feelings when riding a streetcar:

> Although I came to San Francisco many years ago and have seen many strange sights, I always find something new everywhere I go. I think the streetcars are so funny. They start and stop whenever the man who runs them wants them to, and one can see so many different kinds of people riding on them.[103]

She also enjoyed the thrill when she rode an elevator up and down in a department store.

The Americanization of these women was also revealed by their connection with various churches throughout the city. Mrs. Juy Toy regularly went to the Union Methodist Church and followed the tenets of that religious belief in the same manner as her American counterparts. Mrs. Jo Hon Ye also belonged to a church and she attended Sunday school and religious services every Sunday. Like the other two women, she was also a member of the Union Methodist Church and she took an active part in much of the church work.[104]

The lives of affluent Chinese merchant wives in St. Louis seem to represent a pattern different from that of their counterparts in larger Chinese communities where women were more likely preservers of traditions.[105] The absence of a larger ethnic community might have contributed to the departure from traditional behavior. Without an ethnic community, these Chinese women would have to interact with the larger society. More important, their fluent English facilitated their assimilation, while their financial security enabled them to enjoy a lifestyle similar to that of the American middle class. Their socioeconomic status made it easier for the American public to view them as more acceptable and assimilable.

While well-to-do Chinese women attempted to Americanize, petty Chinese merchant wives struggled to raise their large families in Hop Alley and many expected to retire in China. Lillie Hong's family history well illustrates the

struggle, which resembled that of her counterparts in other Chinese communities across the country.[106]

Lillie Hong and her mother came to the United States in 1924 to join Lillie's father, who was running a Chinese restaurant named Mandarin House at 4500 Delmar with his brother in St. Louis. Their steamboat *President Coolidge* took them to Seattle, Washington. They then took a train to St. Louis. On arrival in St. Louis, Lillie Hong and her family settled in a two-bedroom apartment in Hop Alley, where Lillie Hong's mother Gene Shee gave birth to Lillie's four sisters and two brothers. One room of the apartment was used as bedroom, and the other served as living room and kitchen. Without a refrigerator in their kitchen, the family had to buy twenty-four pounds of ice daily to fill an ice box on the porch to keep food from being spoiled. Since Gene Shee never learned to speak English, Lillie Hong, as the family's eldest daughter, had to do the daily chore of buying ice from the nearby American grocery store. As the family was growing constantly, they had to find ways to fit the nine people of the family into the one bedroom. A big piece of board was the bed for all of the children. This living condition was typical among Chinese families in Hop Alley, as most Chinese families were large. After she came back from school, Lillie Hong had to take care of her younger siblings and help her mother with the family chores of cooking, laundering, and cleaning (see Figure 1).

Like most Chinese children of Hop Alley, Lillie Hong attended the nearest American public school: Madison School. It was eleven blocks away from Hop Alley. Although there was a streetcar to the school, Chinese parents could not afford the fare of five cents. The Chinese children would walk to school from home and then walk home from school daily. In St. Louis's hot and humid summer and wet and cold winter, the walk seemed very long to them. Also, like most Chinese children of her age, Lillie Hong quit her education at the eighth grade, as her parents felt that she had received enough education since she knew how to read and write in English.[107]

Lillie Hong's growing up experience was not unique to Chinese immigrant families in St. Louis. In many ways, it resembles the lives of other new immigrants and minorities in the city. The Irish community's "Kerry Patch" was a place of stark poverty and crime where immigrant families were crammed in multifamily tenements. The African American neighborhoods in St. Louis were described as "stinking slums" by visitors.[108]

Living in a multiethnic urban community, interracial marriages and interracial sexual relationships became inevitable for the Chinese in St. Louis. The earliest case of interracial marriage was the union of Alla Lee and his Irish wife Sarah Graham. Alla Lee came to St. Louis in 1857 from San Francisco, where he served as an interpreter for a missionary of the Episcopal Church. As a newcomer, Alla Lee settled in the Irish neighborhood near Biddle Street. A young man of twenty-four years, he fell in love with an Irish woman, Sarah Graham, and they were married in 1858 at the Second Presbyterian Church. Their

Figure 1: Lillie Hong with mother, brother Paul, and sister Rose in the back of family apartment in Hop Alley, St. Louis, Missouri, 1927.
SOURCE: Courtesy of Lillie Hong.

daughter Emma was born the next year, the first of their several children. This interracial marriage probably affected Alla Lee's social and political life. His friends were mostly Irish immigrants. In the election year 1868, a local democratic party activist took him to the courthouse to take the oath of citizenship; therefore, he could practice his rights immediately.[109]

While Alla Lee's interracial marriage was accepted by the Scots-Irish community in St. Louis, other interracial marriages and interracial sexual relationships met with resistance in the white society. In 1910, census enumerators found a number of Caucasian wives of Chinese men living in the Hop Alley

area. The local newspaper, *St. Louis Republic*, recorded the matter with an obvious tone of disapproval.[110] A couple of interracial sexual relationships in the same year even invited a police raid. Sadie Walden was a twenty-six-year-old divorced European American woman. She met Chinese man Leon Ling four years ago in a Chinese Sunday school at Garrison and Lucas Avenues where she was teaching after her divorce from Frank Walden. When she was ill and ran out of money, Leon came to her assistance. Soon afterward she went to Colorado, and when she returned she rented lodging upstairs of the Chinese chop suey restaurant at 2301 Washington Avenue where Leon Ling worked. Later, her seventeen-year-old stepsister, Marguerite Helm, came to live with her. Sadie Walden loved Leon and intended to marry him. Her sister Marguerite was also in love with a Chinese merchant who owned a silk store downtown. Marguerite consulted her mother about her marriage and was advised to wait until she was eighteen. She took the advice. On August 22, 1910, St. Louis police suddenly raided the chop suey restaurant with the excuse of searching for a Chinese man who was alleged to have murdered a white woman in New York with whom he had a love affair. The two sisters and four Chinese men were arrested in this raid but released later. Not intimidated by the incident, Sadie Walden claimed that she was going to go with Leon for a marriage license very soon.[111]

This incident well exhibits the nationwide antagonism against the interracial sexual relationships between European Americans and Chinese, who were perceived as culturally exotic and physically inferior and therefore unassimilable. The public disapproval was not only prompted by cultural bias and racial prejudice but also legally supported by antimiscegenation laws, then in force in thirty-eight states.[112] Although sporadic interracial marriages survived in places in America in the nineteenth century, such as the unions of Chinese men and Irish women in New York City, Chinese men and Irish/Polish women in the Midwest, and Chinese men and Black/Mulatto/Irish/French women in the South,[113] many interracial sexual relationships met social resistance and at times violence, such as the anti-Chinese riot in Milwaukee in 1899, the police raid of Boston Chinatown in 1903, and the policing of New York Chinatown from 1880 to 1915 against interracial sexual relations.[114]

SUNDAY SCHOOLS AND EARLY AMERICANIZATION

While Hop Alley represented the Chinese tradition, a certain degree of Americanization had taken place among Chinese in St. Louis from the beginning of the Chinese settlement in St. Louis. In the process of Americanization of Chinese, Christian organizations played an initial and important role. When the first group of Chinese came to St. Louis from San Francisco in 1869, a Sunday school was immediately established on Eleventh and Locust Streets to

Figure 2: Chinese ladies (mostly wives of laundrymen) outside of the First Chinese Church in St. Louis Gospel Center, St. Louis, Missouri, 1924.
SOURCE: Courtesy of Lillie Hong.

teach Chinese children English to instill Christian values in them.[115] A decade later, Chinese in St. Louis had increased to one hundred. Christian organizations felt the urge to set up more Sunday schools. In 1878, Mr. D. D. Jones, who could speak Chinese, was dispatched to St. Louis by the Chicago Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) to establish a Sunday school. In 1897, the 28th anniversary of the establishment of the first Chinese Sunday school in St. Louis was held. In 1898, Sunday schools for Chinese increased to include Second Presbyterian Church, Dr. Niccolls's Chapel on Taylor and Westminster Place, the Presbyterian Church on Grand Avenue, and the Congregational Church on 29th Street and Washington Avenue.[116]

The first Chinese church in St. Louis was called the St. Louis Chinese Gospel Mission. It was founded in 1924 by Miss Lee Chiles, a missionary who had worked in China for more than ten years. Due to her health condition, she returned to St. Louis in 1924. In spite of her poor health, Miss Chiles went from laundry to laundry to ask Chinese to go to the church.[117] After she gathered a group of Chinese children, the weekly Chinese Sunday school began. The Chinese Sunday school borrowed space from St. Louis Gospel Church on Washington Street where the American congregation had services in the morning, and a Chinese service and Sunday school were held in the afternoon. Miss Chiles was persistent and enthusiastic in teaching the Chinese followers English. In this endeavor she was more successful with Chinese children than with older Chinese women. Lillie Hong remembered that "whenever Miss Chiles

Figure 3: Sunday school children outside of the St. Louis Gospel Center, St. Louis, Missouri, 1924.
SOURCE: Courtesy of Lillie Hong.

came to Chinatown, these Chinese ladies would run away. They said it was too hard to learn English."[118]

Miss Chiles was aided by a group of devoted local American Christians from the St. Louis Gospel Church who were not the educated elite but rather small business owners and members of the working class.[119] The Radfords, a devoted Christian couple, would come to "pick up children and the people from Chinatown and drive them up to the church on Washington street" for the afternoon service. Others, such as Mr. and Ms. Bachman and Ms. Comfort, taught Sunday school and visited Chinese newborns and their families.[120] Chinese parents often regarded church as a good place for their children to go but not for themselves, especially the fathers. Therefore, in the first decades of the century, the congregation was largely composed of women and children.[121] Lillie Hong started going to church with her aunt as soon as she came to St. Louis in 1924 (see Figures 2 and 3).[122]

Sunday schools had become vehicles for ambitious Chinese youth to climb up socially. Many Chinese youth attended Sunday schools, where they learned English and American ways of life. Jeu Han Yee came to San Francisco in 1870 when he was a child and lived there for ten years. Then he came to St. Louis in 1880 and attended Sunday school regularly. Through his Sunday school training, he became a skillful writer and reader of English. His English skills facilitated his success as a well-off tea merchant.[123] Another Sunday school student, Jeu Hawk, came to St. Louis as a boy in 1880. Eighteen years

later, he graduated from the college at Des Moines, Iowa, and emerged as an eloquent pastor of a Chinese congregation in Portland, Oregon.[124] For many Chinese, church was also a place to maintain friendships with other Chinese families. For instance, Tak Jung's family and Hong family would often share Sunday dinner after the service.[125]

CHINESE AT THE ST. LOUIS WORLD'S FAIR

In 1904, St. Louis opened itself to the world for the grand extravaganza of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, also know as the St. Louis World's Fair. Countries from around the globe sent their native products and artifacts proudly to show the world. The Chinese Qing government dispatched two envoys to St. Louis to supervise the preparation of the Chinese display. In May 1903, Sir Chentung Liang Cheng, envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary, arrived for Dedication Week. In July of the same year, Wong Kai Kah, imperial vice-commissioner, came to St. Louis to oversee the construction of the Chinese Pavilion.[126] Wong conveyed his government's enthusiasm by participating in the fair and assured the directors: "Embroideries, silks, porcelains, teas and other products of Chinese industry, and a great many other things illustrative of Chinese resources and progress will be exhibited. China has set aside 750,000 taels (about $500,000) for this purpose."[127]

Under Wong's supervision, the Chinese Pavilion began construction. A Shanghai firm of Englishmen, Atkinson and Dallas, was hired to design the main building, a replica of the country home of the Manchu Prince Pu Lun, who had been appointed as the official head of the Chinese delegation to the fair. At the entrance of the Chinese Pavilion, a Chinese pagoda consisting of six thousand hand-carved pieces of wood inlaid with ebony and ivory was erected by skillful Chinese artisans. The eaves were also decorated with figures from Chinese mythology in bright Chinese enamel. A replica of the palace bedroom with a square curtained court bed and carved tables and chairs provided a glimpse of Chinese court life to the visitors.[128]

Unfortunately, the bulk of the two thousand tons of commercial exhibits from China did not receive the attention they deserved as they were placed in other fair buildings, most in the Palace of Liberal Arts and some in the Education Building. These Chinese exhibits from different parts of China included scrolls, ivory, jade, porcelain, maps, stamps, coins, and models of temples, houses, shops, and an examination hall.[129]

The enthusiasm of the Chinese in participating in the World's Fair, however, was dampened by the suspicious American immigration authorities. In 1882, the Chinese Exclusion Act had been passed to prohibit the entry of Chinese laborers. To prevent any Chinese laborers from being smuggled into the country, the U.S. Immigration Service became more vigilant during the fair. Chinese merchants, who were supposed to come to St. Louis for the World's Fair,

were detained in a shed in San Francisco for days and weeks to wait being cleared. Many of them, unable to bear the humiliation of detention, interrogation, and the posting of the required $500 in gold bond, returned to China.

For those who did make it to St. Louis, American immigration officers set up strict rules of movement to restrict them. There were 194 Chinese employed for the construction and operation of the exhibits. They were registered, photographed, and required to report daily. Failing to report for forty-eight hours, a laborer would be considered a fugitive.[130] During the fair, a rumor spread that 250 Chinese had agreed to pay $850 for transportation to the fair with the intention of escaping once inside the United States.[131] The mistreatment that Chinese received during the fair was certainly upsetting to their country fellows in St. Louis.

During the construction of the Chinese Pavilion, the Chinese exhibits and topics relating to Chinese cultures captured the local newspapers.[132] Wong Kai Kah gave a series of lectures on Chinese art and philosophies.[133] The Chinese delegation also threw many splendid parties to St. Louis elite, at which the four hundred silk dresses brought by Mrs. Wong greatly impressed St. Louisans.[134] These events and activities helped to create a more positive image of Chinese in St. Louis.

CONCLUSION

The construction of the history of St. Louis Chinatown from the 1860s to 1930s displays a lively, dynamic, and productive ethnic community contradicting the popular stereotype of Chinatown as a mysterious quarter of sin, vice, and crime.

The post–Civil War industrialization and urbanization attracted the laborers from other shores, yet economic recession and nativist sentiment prompted the Chinese Exclusion. The successive police raids on the St. Louis Chinatown from the 1880s to 1920s reflected the nationwide anti-Chinese crusade. The deliberate and systematic police roundups in Chinatown further reinforced the negative stereotypical image of Chinatown created by the press and effectively retarded the building of the ethnic community.

Despite the institutionalized discrimination, Hop Alley existed with remarkable resilience and energy. St. Louis Chinatown was not merely a ghetto plagued by urban problems of crowded and unsanitary living and working conditions and crimes. In fact, it was a lively commercial, residential, and recreational center for Chinese. The hand laundries, grocery stores, restaurants, and tea shops were essential businesses enabling the survival and success, in some cases, of the early Chinese settlers. These businesses, especially hand laundry, were also indispensable to the larger St. Louis communities that readily utilized the much needed services available to them due to the presence of the Chinese immigrants. The elbow grease of the Chinese laundrymen

certainly made the industrial machine of St. Louis run smoother and better. No matter how small the Chinese population became from time to time, they contributed unproportionally—less than .10 percent of the total general population provided 60 percent of the laundering services for the city.

Clan dominance and geographical dispersion, the two characteristics of Chinese hand laundry in St. Louis, were closely related to the modes of urban development. While clan dominance was a result of the chain immigration and urban ethnic networking, geographical dispersion of Chinese laundries coincided with urban sprawl. As cities grew and population increased, the affluent dwellers fled the downtown areas and dispersed to the peripheral neighborhoods. Laundry, as a service industry, had to follow its clientele throughout the city.

As laundry provided services to the larger community, Chinese grocery stores, restaurants, and tea shops primarily sustained the survival of Chinese residents. The importance of these businesses not only lay in their supply of merchandise and offering of services essential for the daily existence of Chinese immigrants, but also in their absorption of Chinese immigrant laborers who were excluded from the general labor market. Moreover, these businesses contributed to the metropolitan atmosphere that the city boomers were eagerly pursuing.

While providing services needed by the ethnic Chinese community and the larger St. Louis communities, Hop Alley was also a haven for most Chinese where they could find joy, comfort, and solidarity, emotional commodities difficult to obtain anywhere else. As the working spaces of laundries, restaurants, grocery stores, and tea shops defined the daily lives of Chinese laborers, the institutions of family and community were closely tied to their immigrant experiences. The lack of family life among early Chinese immigrants had been mistakenly used by some first as evidence of Chinese cultural peculiarity, sojourning mentality, and incapability for Americanization, and later as an excuse for Chinese exclusion. Hop Alley, however, depicts a different picture where Chinese family life existed and many Chinese immigrants had made the effort to settle and even assimilate into the host society. For those who had family and children, Hop Alley was their home and community. For those who could not have families with them due to Chinese exclusion laws, financial difficulties, and cultural restraints, Hop Alley was a necessary substitute for family life and an emotional outlet. Interactions with community members in Hop Alley during Sundays could restore their energy drained by week-long toiling. Hop Alley normalized their abnormal immigrant life in America.

Situated in a multiracial urban center, interracial relations inevitably affected the lives of Chinese individuals. Interracial marriage and interracial sexual relations were direct products of the interracial interaction. The sharing of urban space and experiences resulted in the unions of Chinese and non-Chinese (including European Americans) that could be banned but not stopped.

While interracial sexual relations were disapproved by the American public and legal system, interracial religious and social interactions were encouraged in churches and related activities. Sunday schools were an effective means to evangelize the "heathen" Chinese. Taking advantage of the services of Sunday schools, many Chinese youth obtained education unavailable to them otherwise and later achieved upward socioeconomic mobility and assimilation.

The unfair treatment Chinese received during the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair was further evidence of the Chinese exclusion mentality prevalent in the United States. However, the participation of Chinese in the fair and the cultural activities about China and Chinese before and during the fair projected a positive image of Chinese in St. Louis.

In conclusion, the myth and reality of Hop Alley, St. Louis Chinatown, represent the nature and complexity of American urban history. A scholarly revisit of St. Louis Chinatown promotes our understanding of American urban history, ethnic and immigration history, and Asian American history as well. The story of Hop Alley could also offer useful lessons to present urban policy makers in dealing with new immigrants and ethnic ghettos.

NOTES

1. C. F. Blake, "There Ought to Be a Monument to Alla Lee," *Chinese American Forum* 15, no. 3 (January 2000): 23-5.

2. For works on ethnic St. Louisans, see Washington University, *A Partial Bibliography of Resources on the History of St. Louis Ethnic Cultures* (St. Louis, MO: Sociology Department, Washington University). It lists 201 studies relating to the history of St. Louis ethnic cultures divided by ethnic groups, yet no work on Chinese is listed. For works on Chinese in St. Louis, see C. Fred Blake, "The Chinese of Valhalla: Adaptation and Identity in a Midwestern American Cemetery," in *Markers X, Journal of the Association for Gravestone Studies*, Richard E. Meyer, ed. (Worcester, MA: Association for Gravestone Studies, 1993), 53-89; Liangwu Yin, *A Summary of the Preliminary Findings of the Chinese Community in the St. Louis Area* (St. Louis, MO: s.n., 1989); and the St. Louis Chapter of the Organization of Chinese Americans, *Ironing Out the Fabric of Our Past: An Oral History of Five Chinese Americans in St. Louis, The Early 1900's* (St. Louis, MO: 1993).

3. For works discussing urban issues and problems, see, for example, Louis K. Loewenstein, ed., *Urban Studies: An Introductory Reader* (New York: Free Press, 1977); Blake McKelvey, *American Urbanization: A Comparative History* (Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman, 1973); Dennis Sobin, *The Future of the American Suburbs: Survival or Extinction* (Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1971); Michael Sorkin, ed., *Variations on a Theme Park: The New American City and the End of Public Space* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1992); Jon C. Teaford, *The Twentieth-Century American City: Problem, Promise, and Reality* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986); Robert J. Waste, *Independent Cities: Rethinking U.S. Urban Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998); and Robert C. Weaver, *The Urban Complex: Human Values in Urban Life* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1964).

4. William Hyde and Howard L. Conard, eds., *Encyclopedia of the History of St. Louis* (New York: Southern History Company, 1899), 357-8.

5. Roger Daniels, *Asian America: Chinese and Japanese in the United States since 1850* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1988), 9.

6. For more detailed discussion, see, for example, Sucheng Chan, *This Bittersweet Soil: The Chinese in California Agriculture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), *Asian Californians* (San Francisco: Materials for Today's Learning, 1991); Thomas W. Chinn, *Bridging the Pacific: San Francisco Chinatown and Its People* (San Francisco: 1989); Ping Chiu, *Chinese Labor in California: An Economic Study*

(Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1967); Sandy Lydon, *Chinese Gold: The Chinese in the Monterey Bay Region* (Capitola, CA: Capitola Book Company, 1985); Sylvia Sun Minnick, *Samfow: The San Joaquin Chinese Legacy* (Fresno, CA: Panorama West, 1988); and Alexander Saxton, *The Indispensable Enemy: Labor and the Anti-Chinese Movement in California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971).

7. Daniels, *Asian America*, 70.

8. Sucheng Chan, *Asian Americans: An Interpretive History* (Boston: Twayne, 1991), 46.

9. Chan, *Asian Americans*, 46.

10. Chan, *Asian Americans*, 48. See also Roger Daniels, ed., *Anti-Chinese Violence in North America* (New York: Arno Press, 1978).

11. William R. Locklear, "The Celestials and the Angels: A Study of the Anti-Chinese Movement in Los Angeles to 1882," *Historical Society of Southern California Quarterly* 42 (1960): 239-56.

12. Elmer C. Sandmeyer, *The Anti-Chinese Movement* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1973), 48, 97-8.

13. For Chinese in the South, see Lucy M. Cohen, *Chinese in the Post–Civil War South* (Baton Rough: Louisiana State University Press, 1984), 82-3.

14. U.S. Department of the Interior, Census Office, *United States Ninth Census: 1870, Vol. I, Population* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1872), 386. There had been doubts and questions on the accuracy of the 1870 census enumeration. In competing with Chicago as the fourth largest city of the country, the census enumerators in St. Louis probably had overcounted the city's population in the 1870 census. See Bradley W. Steuart, ed., *St. Louis, MO 1870 Census Index* (Bountiful, UT: Precision Indexing, 1989).

15. James Neal Primm, *Lion of the Valley: St. Louis, Missouri* (Boulder, CO: Pruett, 1990), 273-75.

16. U.S. Department of the Interior, Census Office, *United States Ninth Census 1870, Vol. I, Population* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1872), 386-91.

17. U.S. Department of the Interior, Census Office, *Statistics of the Population of the United States at the Tenth Census* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1883), 538-41.

18. U.S. Department of the Interior, Census Office, *Report on Population of the United States at the Eleventh Census: 1890, Vol. I, Part 1* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1895), 466.

19. For more detailed discussion, see George Lipsitz, *The Sidewalks of St. Louis* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1991), 34-7.

20. "50 Years Ago—Wednesday, 26 August, 1925," *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, 26 August, 1925.

21. Highbinder was the name given to members of certain oath-bound Chinese secret societies in American cities with large Chinese populations by American police and the press. It was believed that these secret societies had their origin in the Great Hung League, or Hung-men, a political organization aimed at overthrowing the Manchu Dynasty in China. Hung-men required an aspirant for membership to take the following oath: "I swear that I shall know neither father nor mother, nor brother nor sister, nor wife nor child, but the brotherhood alone. Where the brotherhood leads or pursues, there shall I follow or pursue. Its foe shall be my foe." The terms *highbinders* and *tongs* were often used interchangeably. For works on Chinese secret societies, see, for example, Yung-Deh Chu, "Chinese Secret Societies in America: A Historical Survey," *Asian Profile* (Hong Kong) 1, no. 1 (1973): 21-38; William Hoy, *The Chinese Six Companies* (San Francisco: California Chinese Historical Society, 1942); and C. C. Reynolds, "The Chinese Tongs," *American Journal of Sociology* 40 (March 1935): 612-23.

22. Hyde and Conard, *Encyclopedia of the History of St. Louis*, 1024.

23. "75 Years Ago—Thursday, 8 June, 1892," *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, 9 June, 1967.

24. "75 Years Ago—Wednesday, 25 August, 1897," *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, 25 August, 1972.

25. Chinese Exclusion Cases Habeas Corpus Petitions, U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Missouri, St. Louis, Records of the District Courts of the United States, RG 21, National Archives—Central Plains Region, Kansas City, Missouri.

26. K. Scott Wong, " 'The Eagle Seeks a Helpless Quarry': Chinatown, the Police, and the Press, the 1903 Boston Chinatown Raid Revisited," *Amerasia Journal* 22, no. 3 (1996): 81-103; Shirley Sui-Ling Tam, "Police Round-Up of Chinese in Cleveland in 1925: A Case Study in a Racist Measure and the Chinese Response" (master's thesis, Case Western Research University, 1988).

27. Letter from Orville Spreen to Miss Douglas, 6 January, 1951, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

28. Theodore Dreiser, "The Chinese in St. Louis," *St. Louis Republic*, 14 January, 1894, p. 15.

29. "75 Years Ago—Wednesday, 25 August, 1897," *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, 25 August, 1972; Chung Kok Li, interview by the author, 12 October 1998, tape recording and transcript, Bridgeton, MO.

30. *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.

31. *U.S.A. vs. Jeu Young*, Chinese Exclusion Cases Habeas Corpus Petitions, Case 3849, Box A-1, 849.

32. *U.S.A. vs. Chu Dock Yuck*, Chinese Exclusion Cases Habeas Corpus Petitions, Case 3849, Box A-1, 849.

33. *Gould's St. Louis Directory*, 1873, p. 1036.

34. *Gould's St. Louis Directory*, 1874, p. 1106.

35. *Gould's St. Louis Directory*, 1875-1889.

36. *Gould's St. Louis Directory*, 1873-1889.

37. Please note that Kee is not a Chinese surname—it was given to Chinese as a surname by the U.S. immigration officials.

38. Li. The restriction was established by the Chinese laundry associations as early as the 1860s in San Francisco and Virginia City.

39. Victor G. Nee and Brett de Bary Nee, *Longtime Californ': A Documentary Study of an American Chinatown* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1973); Renqiu Yu, *To Save China, to Save Ourselves: The Chinese Hand Laundry Alliance of New York* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992), 9; Paul C. P. Siu, *Chinese Laundryman: A Study of Social Isolation* (New York: New York University Press, 1987); and Victor Jew, "Broken Windows: Anti-Chinese Violence and Interracial Sexuality in 19th Century Milwaukee," *Asian Pacific American Genders and Sexualities*, Thomas K. Nakayama, ed. (Tempe: Arizona State University, 1999), 33.

40. Nee and Nee, *Longtime Californ'*; Yu, *To Save China, to Save Ourselves*, 9; Siu, *Chinese Laundryman*; and Jew, "Broken Windows," 33.

41. Siu, *Chinese Laundryman*, 52.

42. Hyde and Conard, *Encyclopedia of the History of St. Louis*, 357-58; *Missouri Republican*, January 23, 1970; and numerous newspaper articles in *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, *Missouri Republican*, and *St. Louis Republic*.

43. Siu, *Chinese Laundryman*, 58.

44. *Gould's St. Louis Directory*, 1887-1952; *Polk's St. Louis Directory*, 1955-1980.

45. John M. McGuire, "Chinese Laundry Being Press," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 12 November, 1978, p. 3G.

46. Papers Relating to the Campaign to Save Sam Wah Laundry, Correspondence, 1978-1986, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis.

47. Lillie Hong, interview by the author, 2 February, 1999, tape recording and transcript, Ballwin, MO.

48. *Business Directory and Mercantile Register of St. Louis, 1903-1904*, compiled and published by the Mercantile Directory Company, 108 Vine Street; *Gould's St. Louis Directory*, 1905-1910, published by St. Louis Gould Directory Co., 316 N. Eighth Street, Missouri Historical Society Library.

49. Hong.

50. St. Louis Chapter of the Organization of Chinese Americans, *Ironing Out the Fabric of Our Past*, 1, 5.

51. St. Louis Chapter of the Organization of Chinese Americans, *Ironing Out the Fabric of Our Past*, 2, 5.

52. McGuire, "Chinese Laundry Being Pressed"; Eliot F. Porter, interview by the author, January 5, 1999, transcripts, St. Louis, MO.

53. Hong.

54. St. Louis Chapter of the Organization of Chinese Americans, *Ironing Out the Fabric of Our Past*, 6.

55. Hong.

56. St. Louis Chapter of the Organization of Chinese Americans, *Ironing Out the Fabric of Our Past*, 7.

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

58. *Gould's St. Louis Directory*, 1889.

59. *Gould's St. Louis Directory*, 1890-1910.

60. *Gould's St. Louis Directory*, 1912-1914.

61. *Gould's St. Louis Directory*, 1919-1929.

62. Dick Wood, "The Chinese Colony of St. Louis," *St. Louis Republic*, July 29, 1900 (magazine section), p. 2.

63. *Gould's St. Louis Directory*, 1906-1910.

64. See Huping Ling, *Surviving on the Gold Mountain: A History of Chinese American Women and Their Lives* (Albany: The State University of New York Press, 1998), 64-70.

65. Wood, "The Chinese Colony of St. Louis."
66. Hong.
67. Annie Leong, interview by the author, 17 December 1998, tape recording and transcript, St. Louis, MO.
68. Dreiser, "The Chinese in St. Louis."
69. *U.S.A. vs. Jeu Lime*, Chinese Exclusion Cases Habeas Corpus Petitions, Case 3849, Box A-1, 849.
70. "2 Sisters Arrested in Chop Suey Raid," *St. Louis Republic*, 22 August, 1910.
71. Leong.
72. Leong.
73. *St. Louis Directory 1859* (St. Louis, MO: R. V. Kennedy & Co., 1859).
74. *Kennedy's St. Louis Directory*, 1860; *Edward's St. Louis Directory*, 1864-1871; and *Gould's St. Louis Directory*, 1872-1880.
75. *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; and Blake, "There Ought to Be a Monument to Alla Lee."
76. "Gradual Disappearance of the Chinatown of St. Louis," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 25 September, 1902.
77. *Gould's St. Louis Directory*, 1899.
78. *U.S.A. vs. Hop Hing*, U.S. District Court for Eastern Division, Eastern Judicial District of Missouri, St. Louis, case 6023, RG 21, National Archives—Central Plains Region, Kansas City, Missouri.
79. *U.S.A. vs. Leong Choey*, U.S. District Court for Eastern Division, Eastern Judicial District of Missouri, St. Louis, cases 6036 and 6092.
80. *U.S.A. vs. Sing Lung*, U.S. District Court for Eastern Division, Eastern Judicial District of Missouri, St. Louis, case 6160.
81. *U.S.A. vs. Wong Lung*, U.S. District Court for Eastern Division, Eastern Judicial District of Missouri, St. Louis, case 6159.
82. "Gradual Disappearance of the Chinatown of St. Louis."
83. *St. Louis Police Annual Report*, 1896; African Americans borrowing money is according to the author's conversation with the local preservationist, March 16, 2001.
84. Hong; Wood, "The Chinese Colony of St. Louis."
85. Leong.
86. Leong.
87. "Hop Alley to Be Invaded: Census Enumerators Will Be There Today," *St. Louis Republic*, 1 May 1910, (II), p. 16.
88. Leong.
89. *St. Louis Republic*, 10 February, 1880.
90. U.S. Census, 1870-1910
91. Hyde and Conard, *Encyclopedia of the History of St. Louis*, 357-58.
92. *Missouri Republican*, 23 January, 1870.
93. Classified advertisement, *St. Louis Republic*, 29 July, 1900, (magazine section), p. 9.
94. *St. Louis Republic*, 14 August, 1910, (magazine section), p. 4.
95. Primm, *Lion of the Valley*, 166.
96. *St. Louis Republic*, 14 August, 1910, (magazine section), p. 4; *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 3 February, 1901, (magazine section), p. 2.
97. "Only Four Chinese Women in St. Louis," *St. Louis Republican*, 4 October, 1908, pt. 5, p. 4.
98. "Only Four Chinese Women in St. Louis," p. 4.
99. "Only Four Chinese Women in St. Louis," p. 4.
100. "Only Four Chinese Women in St. Louis," p. 4.
101. "Only Four Chinese Women in St. Louis," p. 4.
102. "Only Four Chinese Women in St. Louis," p. 4.
103. "Only Four Chinese Women in St. Louis," p. 4.
104. "Only Four Chinese Women in St. Louis," p. 4.
105. See Ling, *Surviving on the Gold Mountain*, 61-72.
106. Ling, *Surviving on the Gold Mountain*, 95-101.
107. Hong.
108. Primm, *Lion of the Valley*, 339.

109. *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; and Blake, "There Ought to Be a Monument to Alla Lee."

110. "Hop Alley Census Adds 300," *St. Louis Republic*, 2 May, 1910, p. 14.

111. "2 Sisters Arrested in Chop Suey Raid," *St. Louis Republic*, 22 August, 1910.

112. See 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.

113. See Ling, "Family and Marriage of Late-Nineteenth and Early-Twentieth Century Chinese Immigrant Women"; John Kuo Wei Tchen, "New York Chinese: The Nineteenth-Century Pre-Chinatown Settlement," *Chinese America: History and Perspectives, 1990* (San Francisco: Chinese Historical Society of America, 1990), 176-77; Sarah R. Mason, "Family Structure and Acculturation in the Chinese Community in Minnesota," *Asian and Pacific American Experiences: Women's Perspectives*, Nobuya Tsuchida, ed. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1982), 160-71; Cohen, *Chinese in the Post–Civil War South: A People without a History*, 147; and James W. Loewen, *The Mississippi Chinese: Between Black and White* (Cambridge, MA: 1971), 75.

114. Jew, "Broken Windows"; Wong, " 'The Eagle Seeks a Helpless Quarry' "; and Mary Ting Yi Lui, "The Chinatown Truck Mystery: The Elsie Sigel Murder Case and the Policing of Interracial Sexual Relations in New York City's Chinatown, 1880-1915" (Ph.D. dissertation, Cornell University, 2000).

115. Hyde and Conard, *Encyclopedia of the History of St. Louis*, 357-58.

116. Hyde and Conard, *Encyclopedia of the History of St. Louis*, 357-58.

117. St. Louis Chapter of the Organization of Chinese Americans, *Ironing Out the Fabric of Our Past*, 12.

118. Hong.

119. "70th Anniversary, 1924-1994," St. Louis Chinese Gospel Church, November 1994, 3.

120. Hong.

121. "70th Anniversary," 3.

122. Hong.

123. Hyde and Conard, *Encyclopedia of the History of St. Louis*, 357-58.

124. Hyde and Conard, *Encyclopedia of the History of St. Louis*, 357-58.

125. St. Louis Chapter of the Organization of Chinese Americans, *Ironing Out the Fabric of Our Past*, 12.

126. Irene E. Cortinovis, "China at the St. Louis World's Fair," *Missouri Historical Review* 77 (1977-78): 59-66.

127. *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 3 July, 1903; Mark Bennitt, ed., *History of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition* (New York: Arno, 1976), 289.

128. Cortinovis, "China at the St. Louis World's Fair," 63.

129. Cortinovis, "China at the St. Louis World's Fair," 63-64.

130. Cortinovis, "China at the St. Louis World's Fair," 66.

131. Henry S. Iglauer, "The Demolition of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition of 1904," *Missouri Historical Society Bulletin* 22, no. 4 (1965-66): 457-67.

132. See, for example, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, 3 July, and 18 October, 1903; and *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, December 5, 1904.

133. *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, 5 December, 1904.

134. Cortinovis, "China at the St. Louis World's Fair," 63.