

Investigating the Origins of Philadelphia's Chinatown

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In Philadelphia at 913 Race Street a historical marker stands in front of a building where a Chinese migrant named Lee Fong opened a laundromat in 1870. It reads simply, "Philadelphia, Chinatown, Founded in the 1870s by Chinese immigrants, it is the only 'Chinatown' in Pennsylvania. This unique neighborhood includes businesses and residences owned by, and serving, Chinese Americans. Here, Asian cultural traditions are preserved, and ethnic identity perpetuated." Yet the marker, and often conventional history, leaves out significant details regarding Philadelphia's early contact with China which dates to the period before American independence from Britain. Early trade with China included opium which destabilized that country and led to the migration of thousands to the western hemisphere. As for the founder of Chinatown, Lee Fong, surprisingly little is known. The purpose of this research is to tell the story, as best as possible, of Lee Fong and the struggles of other Chinese immigrants who came to the United States in the latter half of the 19th century using books, scholarly and newspaper articles, and the City of Philadelphia archives. This research implicates white supremacist ideology in the persecution of Chinese immigrants. White supremacist attitudes towards Chinese people were clearly expressed in legislation which institutionalized anti-Asian racism in the laws which governed immigration, naturalization, the right to vote, and the right to serve on juries. In answering the related question of the origins of Chinatown, this research centers the accomplishments of Lee Fong and his fellow immigrants who successfully resisted efforts to exclude and expel them to establish an ethnic enclave that survives today.

Laozi (老子), the famous Chinese Daoist philosopher, is credited with the saying, "The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step." This proverb likely came to mind for many of the thousands of Chinese immigrants who in the latter half of the 19th century stepped onto boats headed east to begin a journey of more than six thousand miles to the Golden Mountain (金山) of America (1). Sadly, many of these men and women were driven from their new homes in the western United States by threats, discrimination, and brutal violence (2). Many of these immigrants were forced to migrate again several thousand miles further east to escape terrible conditions. Around 1870, one of those immigrants, Lee Fong, arrived in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and helped establish Chinatown.

This article is about Lee Fong and the thousands of Chinese immigrants and their difficult struggle for equality. To cover the topic adequately requires a discussion of the global political, social, and economic forces that shaped the world prior to 1870. Whereas a complete biography of Fong is outside of the scope of this article because the source material dedicated to him is scarce, it is possible to tell part of his story through fragments gleaned from books, newspaper articles, and city archives. This research is indebted to the work of Jonathan Goldstein, who examined the extensive trade that developed between China and Philadelphia before 1846. Goldstein documented the involvement of Philadelphia's merchants in the trade

of opium, which destabilized China and led to large numbers of Cantonese people to emigrate to the Western Hemisphere. Other researchers such as Roger Daniels, Beth Lew-Williams, Najia Aarim-Heriot, and Sucheng Chan each documented the violence and discrimination encountered by early Chinese immigrants once they reached America. Their research concluded that racism and hostility, often state-sanctioned, led to a second migration of many Chinese immigrants further east to cities like Philadelphia. Kathryn E. Wilson's extensive study of Philadelphia's Chinatown led this author's research to Stewart Culin's 1891 article, which sheds more light on the origin of Philadelphia's Chinatown and Lee Fong. This research also utilized articles published during the 1870s in the Philadelphia Inquirer and business directories and deed indexes found in Philadelphia's city archive to trace the development of the ethnic enclave. Lastly, an original death certificate for a fellow Philadelphian, a man named Lee Fong, was found in the city archive.

It is not my intention to ignore the suffering of other Asian groups during this period, such as that felt by Japanese, Korean, Filipino, and other Asian immigrants. Anti-Asian racism was rampant during this period of American history. I have chosen to focus on the Chinese experience because of the explicit anti-Chinese sentiments expressed in American legislation and other primary sources. My main goal with this paper is to tell the story of Lee Fong and to connect

his story to the movement of Chinese people in the Western Hemisphere while foregrounding the attempts of Whites to exclude and expel them because of their race. Fong and other Chinese immigrants overcame white supremacy, violence, and institutionalized racism to help build America through strength and ingenuity. They helped connect the continent by constructing the transcontinental railroad. They labored in mines and on farms to enable economic expansion in the West. They built businesses in cities and created enclaves for themselves, one of which would become Philadelphia's Chinatown.

PHILADELPHIA'S EARLY CONTACT WITH CHINA

In 1891, sociologist Stewart Culin authored an article for *The American Anthropologist* that documented the social organization of Chinese immigrants in America. He concentrated his research on Philadelphia and other cities in the Eastern United States. In his article, Culin identified Fong as “one of the pioneers, the first indeed to establish himself in the city of Philadelphia” (3). By some reports, Fong, also known as Ah Lee – ‘Ah’ being a Chinese term of endearment – established his laundry business at 913 Race Street in 1870 (4). However, Philadelphia's contact with China started long before Fong arrived in the city.

Philadelphia, founded in 1682, quickly became an important node on the vast British trading network that included Chinese ports (5). A significant obstacle to direct trade was found in the terms of the 1651 Navigation Act, which stipulated that British colonies could not trade directly with the “Orient.” Instead, America, at the time a colony of Great Britain, had to purchase Chinese goods from the British East India Company. It was not until after the Revolution that Philadelphians could legally establish direct trade with China. Despite these restrictions, Americans engaged in the smuggling of imported tea and porcelain and the export of ginseng root, which was highly valued in China. In 1771, intellectual elites found establishing trade with China to be the key to rapid expansion in North America. The Philadelphia-based American Philosophical Society (APS), which counted Benjamin Franklin as a founding member, published the following in its inaugural journal, *Transactions*:

By introducing the produce of those countries which lie on the east side of the old world, and particularly those of China, this country may be improved beyond what heretofore might have been expected. And could we be so fortunate as to introduce the industry of the Chinese, their arts of living and improvements in husbandry, as well as

their native plants, America might in time become as populous as China (6).

After the American War of Independence, Philadelphia financier Robert Morris helped organize a shipment of 30 tons of Appalachian ginseng destined for Canton, China aboard the recently christened *The Empress of China*. The 1784 voyage was lucrative. Merchants brought back an assortment of Chinese products on the *Empress* to sell on American markets, which generated a healthy 25% return for investors. The voyage impressed wealthy American businessmen, many of whom began to make plans for their own expeditions. Meanwhile, Congress passed the 1790 Naturalization Act, which granted the right of naturalized citizenship to “free white persons” thereby institutionalizing discrimination against people of color, women, and enslaved and indentured people (7). White Americans wanted Chinese goods and access to Chinese markets but had little interest in Chinese immigrants.

The Philadelphia-Canton trade flourished between 1784 to 1846. However, in 1803, it took on a more ominous dimension as Philadelphia merchants discovered they could replace shipments of specie with opium obtained from Smyrna, Turkey (8). Although the British supplied most of the opium imported into China, Philadelphia business concerns handled roughly 10% of the trade. Records suggest that as trade increased, opium addiction rapidly increased among Chinese people, which caused widespread health problems and poverty. For example, in 1817, approximately 3,600 chests of opium were unloaded in Canton. By 1838, the number had reached 28,307 chests as demand soared (9). The effects of opium trafficking on the Chinese economy were devastating. As opium imports increased, Chinese silver reserves were quickly depleted. The Qing government's efforts to block opium smuggling resulted in two wars with Britain, the first starting in 1840.

The First Opium War (1840-1842) had significant consequences for Canton. First, the 1842 Treaty of Nanking forced China to open five additional ports to foreign trade and hand over Hong Kong to the British, which became the new center of overseas commerce. This outcome disrupted the local Cantonese economy as it was previously the only port open to foreign exchange. The Second Opium War (1856-1860) led to the 1858 Treaty of Tianjin and the 1860 Convention of Peking, which legalized opium throughout China and increased rates of drug addiction (10). These factors contributed to violent feuds between the Cantonese Hakka and Punti clans and the outbreak of the Hakka led Taiping Rebellion (1850-1864). The grim realities of life in Canton created powerful incentives for Chinese people to emigrate to America and other destinations in

the Western Hemisphere (11).

The Canton trade had lasting impacts on Philadelphia and the surrounding region. Prominent Philadelphians such as Robert Morris and Stephen Girard made fortunes. Chinese decorative products, silks, and porcelain could be found in many homes in the city. Among the items brought back on *The Empress of China* was a Chinese rooster, which was quickly bred into the ubiquitous “Bucks County Rooster” (12). Yet, for all the exchange of material culture, the average Philadelphian had virtually no direct knowledge of Chinese people because any information about China came second hand from the small group of Americans who had made the journey to Canton. These reports were not always favorable. For example, a periodical from 1811, *Port Folio*, found that Chinese people “exhibit a most deplorable contrast to everything that is great, wise, noble, and honorable.” The magazine’s editor, Charles Caldwell, was a professor of natural history at the University of Pennsylvania and a strong proponent of the “American School” of ethnology which stratified racial hierarchies (13). White supremacy was reaffirmed in the Naturalization Acts of 1795, 1798, and 1802, all of which preserved the “free white person” clause. It was only until 1870 that the act was modified to include people “of African descent.” Significantly, any Chinese that would enter the United States would be legally classified as “aliens ineligible for citizenship” until 1943 (14).

CHINESE MIGRATION TO THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE

Lee Fong entered this racially conscious United States sometime before 1870. More source material is needed to establish exactly why he decided to emigrate and the details of his journey to Philadelphia. The dearth of archival records related to Fong may be due to his lack of citizenship or institutionalized racism against the Chinese immigrants who came to America during this period. It may also be related to the limitations of 19th century record keeping. Likely no single factor accounts for Lee Fong’s virtual invisibility until he arrived in Philadelphia. Instead, a combination of causes makes a full reconstruction of his life in China and his early movement in America all but impossible. Therefore, we can only speculate about his motives to emigrate and the exact path he followed to Philadelphia. It is possible he was part of one of the groups of Chinese immigrants who arrived after the discovery of gold at Sutter’s Mill in 1848. News of gold reached China that same year. In 1849, 325 Chinese people joined the rush to California. In 1850, the number rose to 450 and again in 1851 to 2,176. In 1852, the number jumped dramatically to

20,026 (15). Roger Daniels estimated that over 100,000 Chinese people immigrated to the United States between 1849 and 1870 (16).

Most Chinese immigrants could not afford to pay for a ticket to the United States and had to finance their journey through the “carrier-ticket system.” Whereas some immigrants would be considered free persons, those who used the carrier-ticket system were effectively indentured or semi-free because they needed to work, often for many years, on behalf of their sponsors. Worse still was the so-called “coolie” system, which emerged after the abolition of the African slave trade (17). This system of unfree labor began as early as 1810, when Portuguese plantation owners transported Chinese people to Brazil to cultivate tea. By the 1870s, a broker could obtain Chinese laborers, desperate to escape deteriorating living conditions in China, for between \$120 and \$170. Upon arrival, assuming the laborer survived the arduous journey, the broker could sell the laborer for between \$350 and \$400 (18). The trade was particularly hard on those transported to Peru and Cuba, where only 1 in 10 survived the experience (19). Although some Chinese immigrants who came to the United States were free or semi-free via the carrier-ticket scheme, other Chinese immigrants into the Western Hemisphere were unfree laborers. Fong may have reached this hemisphere through any of the above means. Although more research is needed to trace his journey, what little documentary evidence is available provides an important glimpse into the lives of these Chinese immigrants.

Once in the country, Lee Fong, like many Chinese laborers, may have been employed in the backbreaking effort to build the transcontinental railroad or the equally grueling mining industry. The Central Pacific Railroad, which was building the western section of the transcontinental line, actively recruited Chinese labor to avoid employing African Americans (20). Chinese immigrants also worked in trading, agriculture, light manufacturing, and common labor, but most often in mining. It was also in mining that Chinese immigrants experienced some of the worst discrimination and violence. In California, Chinese miners were targeted by various legal measures such as the 1850 Act for the Protection of Foreigners, which, among other provisions, required that foreign miners obtain licenses from the state (21). They were also forced to pay a Foreign Miners’ Tax (22). In 1853, a White man, George Hall, murdered a Chinese miner, Ling Sing. Hall’s conviction was overturned in 1854 by the California State Supreme court in *People v. Hall* because the witnesses to the crime were Chinese (23). Whites continued to commit violence against Chinese immigrants with impunity. Chinese men ducked rocks thrown by children in Sacramento

and fled angry mobs in Los Angeles. The violence gradually escalated until 1885, when it exploded at Rock Springs, Wyoming, where 28 Chinese miners were massacred (24). Despite the widespread and sometimes state-sanctioned violence and discrimination they faced in America, Chinese immigrants were not passive, but rather, responded with “intelligent cooperation and self direction” to succeed in business and spread across the country (25).

THE EMERGENCE OF CHINATOWN IN PHILADELPHIA

We do not know exactly why or when Lee Fong traveled to Philadelphia. He may have been trying to escape violence and intimidation in the West, but he also could have been pursuing a new economic opportunity. Although numerous sources credit Fong with establishing a laundry business in 1870 at 913 Race Street, a space he likely rented, the city archives contain little information about Fong. The city deed index records the property as owned by Frederick Seelhorst from 1853 until 1867, when it was transferred in 1867 to James Watson. In 1880, the property was transferred to James Wood (26). Gopsill’s Philadelphia City Directory had no mention of Lee Fong or “Fong Lee” in 1870 (27). Likewise, the City Business Directory had no listing for any Chinese laundry (28). Under “Laundries,” there were 13 non-Chinese businesses listed with names like McCarty or Wilson. These findings suggest that Fong might not have advertised, at least initially. Whether this was because his customers were fellow Chinese immigrants is unknown. Surprisingly, there was no mention of Chinese immigrants in Philadelphia in 1870 in the largest newspaper at the time, the Philadelphia Inquirer. The first mention of “Chinatown” appeared in the Inquirer in 1871, the year after Fong opened his laundry. However, the Chinatown referenced in the article was in San Francisco. The unknown “Special Correspondent of the Inquirer” wrote:

The Chinese theatre is situated in ‘Chinatown,’ a portion of the city monopolized by the Orientals, consisting of tumble-down shanties, resembling the ‘Ghetto’ at Rome, for Chinamen never invest more in real estate than is absolutely necessary to protect themselves and their wares (29).

The absence of any mention of a local Chinatown suggests that Philadelphians were initially unaware of the growing enclave or indifferent towards its existence. However, readers of the Inquirer who took the Special Correspondent’s description of the Chinatown in San Francisco at face value may have been predisposed to

form a negative view of the rapidly expanding Chinese community in their midst.

Based on archival records, the laundry business rapidly expanded for Fong and other Chinese immigrants in the 1870s. In 1874, Gopsill’s Business Directory listed 47 laundries. Of those listed, six had distinct Chinese names: Sam Ah, Yet Hing, Hap Lee, Hung Lee, Ty Sing, and Sam Weng. Again, there is no record of Lee Fong. However, he might have been related to the Lees or at least part of the same company (30). Meanwhile Chinese people challenged racist laws in Federal Court. In the landmark case *In re Ah Yup* (1878), a Chinese immigrant, Ah Yup, petitioned the existing 1875 Naturalization Law, which stipulated the following:

1. A native of China, of the Mongolian race, is not entitled to become a citizen of the United States under the Revised Statutes as amended in 1875.
2. A Mongolian is not a “white person” within the meaning of the term as used in the naturalization laws of the United States (31).

Yup’s petition was denied, clearly implicating white supremacist ideology in the creation of laws, which rendered the declaration that “all men are created equal” facile and hypocritical. Based on the evidence, racist legislation did not dissuade the growth of Chinese business in Philadelphia. By 1877, the number of laundries had increased again to 95. Of those listed, 31 had distinct Chinese names, with the surnames Lee and Sing being most prevalent. The Lees operated seven laundries and the Sings five (32).

GLIMPSES OF LEE FONG

Lee Fong helped the Chinese community maintain its cohesion and identity, and the business he established functioned as a central hub for the growing enclave. No photographs of Lee Fong exist, and there are few firsthand descriptions, such as Culin’s portrayal of him as “an angular hollow cheeked man . . . more like the portrait of a corpse than of a human being,” “doleful,” but “very kind hearted” (33). We know from Culin that in addition to his laundry business, Lee Fong distributed Chinese tea, incense, and in a great twist of historical irony, opium. Eventually a restaurant would open on the floor above his laundry and, according to Culin, the location became the “acknowledged center of the Chinese in Philadelphia.” The site quickly became a popular meeting place for other Chinese immigrants. Culin witnessed throngs of revelers gathering weekly to the sounds of traditional music on Sundays and Mondays. From this center, Lee Fong provided essential services to his community:

It was he that drew up money-orders and copied in a round hand the English addresses on outgoing letters. He was the postmaster, too, and like some of his official brethren in the rural districts, would let every one help himself. Moreover, he was the apothecary, and compounded the long Chinese medical prescriptions that were brought to him with alarming frequency, with scrupulous care. He himself had written the prescriptions, as I afterwards learned. Besides, he maintained the dignity of the colony, especially in its relations with the outside world. Even the policeman was respectful in addressing him, and he was always spoken of by Americans as Mr. Expansive Harmony, from the name of the shop, of which he was regarded as the wealthy proprietor (34).

In 1882, despite his ostensibly privileged status, Fong was arrested with his cousin, Lee Wang, for illegal gambling (35). It is unclear if he was convicted of any crime. This was the same year Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act (1882), which barred the entry of any Chinese laborers into the country (36). This was the latest legislative reaction of Whites to the perceived threat of the “yellow peril,” but the act can also be interpreted as simply the anti-Chinese expression of white supremacist ideology, which had previously targeted African Americans (37). Glimpses of racist White attitudes were recorded not only in floor debates on the measure but also in contemporary literature. The progressive reformer, Jacob Riis, reflected common White assumptions about Chinese people in his book, *How the Other Half Lives: Studies Among the Tenements of New York* (38). For example, he wrote that all attempts to Christianize “John Chinaman” would be “abortive.” He also betrayed a concern for White racial purity when he wrote about the corrupting effects of opium on young women who were turned into “white slaves” in “dens of vice and their infernal drug” (39). Always the astute observer, Riis’ solution to the problem was to open immigration to Chinese women to protect the White race (40).

The Chinese Exclusion Act had little effect on Lee Fong as he, or someone with the same name, relocated or started a new business in South Philadelphia sometime before 1888. Records in the city’s archive do not indicate exactly when he opened this new laundromat. However, in 1888, the *Inquirer* reported a case of passing counterfeit coins involving Fong and a fellow laundryman, Hop Chung. One article described Fong as “an intelligent Mongolian, whose laundry is at No. 1826 South Sixth street” (41). After accepting

the counterfeit currency, he hammered the coin to the wall “as a relic.” Several things become clear from the article. First, Fong’s command of the English language allowed him to serve as an interpreter for the other victim in the case. Second, the article established that the Federal District Court permitted Chinese people to serve as witnesses in court cases, at least against people accused of counterfeiting. The accused, Ignazio Iello, was described as “a swarthy complexioned Italian.” For his crime Iello was sentenced to 17 months at Eastern State Penitentiary and fined \$100. Finally, the location of Fong’s new business address, 1826 South Sixth Street, was well outside the boundaries of Chinatown. This was consistent with the patterns described in San Francisco in which many Chinese businesses were established outside of Chinatown, but the Chinese homes were racially segregated in a small area (42). Beth Lew Williams found that only 14% of the homes located within the 12-block enclave that constituted San Francisco’s Chinatown shared borders with non-Chinese households. What is unclear from the article is whether this Lee Fong was the same Lee Fong who opened the original laundry on Race Street. It is possible that a different Lee Fong owned the South Sixth Street laundry, because neither the article nor extant records in the city archive clearly establish a link.

That same year, Congress passed the Scott Act of 1888. The act made the entry of Chinese people unlawful, except for certain classes such as “Chinese officials, teachers, students, merchants, or travelers for pleasure or curiosity” (43). This act was followed by the Geary Act of 1892. The act stipulated that “any Chinese person or person of Chinese descent, when convicted and adjudged under any of said laws to be not lawfully entitled to be or remain in the United States, shall be removed from the United States to China” (44). Had the law been in place at the time of Lee Fong’s arrest in 1882, it is possible he would have been deported. Fong and other Chinese immigrants were living in dangerous times, yet somehow prevailed in the face of discriminatory attitudes and legislation. Chinese immigrants, like Fong, successfully overcame racist systems of control which sought to exclude and expel them by creating and expanding businesses in cities across the country. These businesses provided Chinese people the means to establish deep roots that enabled their communities to grow, survive, and thrive up until the present day.

Lee Fong left us with little trace of his life after 1888 apart from a death certificate bearing his name uncovered in the city archive. He died on March 6, 1897 (45). His body was found at 835 Race Street, just a few doors down from the laundry he established at 913 Race Street in 1870. The official cause of death

was pneumonia. His “Color” was described as “Yellow.” Interestingly, the age recorded on the certificate was thirty-seven. If the recorded age (37) was accurate, then he would have been born in 1860, making him only 10 years old when Chinatown was established around 1870. Rather than definitively answering questions about Lee Fong, research only raises more questions about the man and his role in the enclave. Is this the same Lee Fong who by some accounts established Chinatown or another immigrant with the same name? We may never know.

A quantitative analysis published in 2004 revealed that, even after the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act, a significant amount of Chinese migration occurred (46). The demographic composition of the emigres returning home and the arrival of new migrants suggest coordination with social organizations that helped regulate the flow of immigration. The study’s findings challenge the “aging bachelor” thesis that had been taken for granted in the conventional history, which held that the 1882 Exclusion Act created a stranded group of aging Chinese immigrants who died as bachelors. Instead, census data suggested that older Chinese men returned home and, in their place, younger workers arrived in the United States. Did the Lee Fong who established Chinatown return home and in his place another Lee Fong entered the United States? Again, we may never know.

CONCLUSION

This article set out to tell the story, as best as possible, of Lee Fong and of the struggles of other Chinese immigrants who came to the United States in the latter half of the 19th century. In answering the related question of the origins of Chinatown, this paper has centered the accomplishments of Lee Fong and his fellow immigrants who successfully resisted efforts to exclude and expel them by establishing an ethnic enclave that has survived until today. However, this research is limited in addressing the questions of why Lee Fong emigrated to the United States and why he was credited with founding Philadelphia’s Chinatown. Few records were found in the city’s archives for Lee Fong. Perhaps it should come as no surprise given the anti-Asian racism that raged throughout America during this period. Future research may use other methods to uncover more information about Lee Fong and other immigrants who helped establish Chinatown, for example, a broader search of newspapers in existence at the time, such as the Philadelphia Bulletin, or interviews with residents who have dwelled in Chinatown for generations.

This article contributes to the history of Chinese immigration and Philadelphia’s Chinatown in three

important ways. First, it establishes a link between Philadelphia’s participation in the trade of opium, the destabilization of China and the emigration of Chinese people to the Western Hemisphere. Second, the paper implicates white supremacist ideology in the persecution of Chinese immigrants. White supremacist attitudes towards Chinese people were expressed in legislation that institutionalized anti-Asian racism in the laws governing immigration, naturalization, the right to vote, and the right to serve on juries. These attitudes belied the professed principle that every person is “endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.” Third, this research shows that the origins of Philadelphia’s Chinatown reside within conditions caused by global social, political, and economic forces which exerted themselves long before the arrival of Lee Fong. Therefore, this research asks not who founded Chinatown, but rather seeks to understand the processes that enabled this enclave to arise as a positive response to racist persecution. As race continues to loom large in questions of American identity and citizenship, close examination of this racist period of American history takes on a new urgency. The failure to recognize our country’s history of exclusion and violence will only serve to perpetuate the mythos of untainted American greatness. After all, it was not too long ago that new immigration laws were proposed to exclude people based on their religion, and pandemics were blamed on people based on their race.

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6. Goldstein, *Philadelphia and the China Trade*, 17.
7. Najia Aarim-Heriot, *Chinese Immigrants, African Americans, and Racial Anxiety in the United States, 1848-82* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003), 15.
8. Goldstein, *Philadelphia and the China Trade*, 47.
9. Goldstein, *Philadelphia and the China Trade*, 62.
10. The war also had impacts for Philadelphia merchants. First, many Philadelphia shipping firms closed because of the

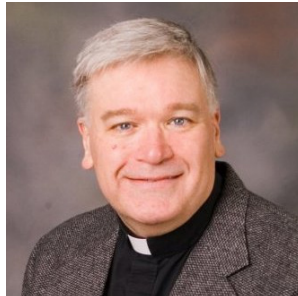
- enormous amount capital required to relocate as the primary axis of American trade shifted from Philadelphia and Canton to New York and Hong Kong. Second, San Francisco emerged as a major transshipment center for Chinese goods. The eventual completion of the transcontinental railroad and regular steamship service would only increase the prominence of that city. Philadelphia continued to flourish economically, but its China trade was significantly diminished, Goldstein, Philadelphia and the China Trade, 66.
11. Sucheng Chan, *This Bittersweet Soil: The Chinese in California Agriculture, 1860-1910* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 20.
 12. Goldstein, *Philadelphia and the China Trade*, 74.
 13. Goldstein, *Philadelphia and the China Trade*, 72.
 14. Cathy J. Schlund-Vials, Kevin Scott Wong, and Jason Oliver Chang, eds, *Asian America: A Primary Source Reader* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017), 21.
 15. One of the Chinese immigrants we know about, Huie Kin, hailed from the Taishan District of Canton Province. This was the same region devastated by the Opium Wars. In 1868, 14-year-old Huie travelled via a small junk to Hong Kong and boarded a steamship bound for America. His family had borrowed the money for his ticket from a wealthy acquaintance. By the time he arrived in America, the Gold Rush was long over, so Huie took a job as a domestic servant in a White household in San Francisco. He earned a salary unimaginable in Taishan, about thirty dollars per month. After paying for room and board Huie could afford to send remittances back to his family which was more than enough to pay for their living expenses. Huie's case was not typical. Lew-Williams, *The Chinese Must Go*, 21.
 16. Daniels, *Asian America*, 12.
 17. Chan, *This Bittersweet Soil*, 21.
 18. Chan, *This Bittersweet Soil*, 23.
 19. Aarim-Heriot, *Chinese Immigrants*, 31.
 20. Aarim-Heriot, *Chinese Immigrants*, 80.
 21. Aarim-Heriot, *Chinese Immigrants*, 37.
 22. Schlund-Vials, *Asian America: A Primary Source Reader*, 4.
 23. Schlund-Vials, *Asian America: A Primary Source Reader*, 31.
 24. Lew-Williams, *The Chinese Must Go*, 91.
 25. Culin, *American Anthropologist* 4, 347.
 26. City of Philadelphia. Registry Office, *Deed Indexes 1867-1880*. Box 2-N8-169, City of Philadelphia, Department of Records, City Archives, RG81, Department of Public Health and Charities.
 27. In Chinese culture, the last name is usually spoken first as a matter of custom. Therefore, when asking a Chinese person what their name is, they may answer Lee Fong. In the European style their first name would be Fong and the last name would be Lee. This fact somewhat complicated my research and required careful examination of sources using both forms: Lee Fong and Fong Lee when searching, James Gopsill, *Gopsill's Philadelphia City Directory* (Philadelphia: James Gopsill, 1870. Microfilm, Drawer #7, Reel #15, City of Philadelphia, Department of Records, City Archives, RG81, Department of Public Health and Charities).
 28. James Gopsill, *Gopsill's Philadelphia Business Directory* (Philadelphia: James Gopsill, 1870. Microfilm, Drawer #9, Reel #1, City of Philadelphia, Department of Records, City Archives, RG81, Department of Public Health and Charities), 234.
 29. *Philadelphia Inquirer*, "A Chinese Theatre," October 24, 1871, 25.
 30. James Gopsill, *Gopsill's Philadelphia Business Directory* (Philadelphia: James Gopsill, 1874. Microfilm, Drawer #9, Reel #2, City of Philadelphia, Department of Records, City Archives, RG81, Department of Public Health and Charities), 242.
 31. Schlund-Vials, *Asian America: A Primary Source Reader*, 49.
 32. James Gopsill, *Gopsill's Philadelphia Business Directory* (Philadelphia: James Gopsill, 1877. Microfilm, Drawer #9, Reel #3, City of Philadelphia, Department of Records, City Archives, RG81, Department of Public Health and Charities), 206.
 33. Wilson, *Ethnic Renewal*, 19.
 34. Culin, *American Anthropologist* 4, 349.
 35. Wilson, *Ethnic Renewal*, 30.
 36. Schlund-Vials, *Asian America: A Primary Source Reader*, 45.
 37. Aarim-Heriot, *Chinese Immigrants*, 188.
 38. Jacob A. Riis, *How the Other Half Lives: Studies Among the Tenements of New York* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 67.
 39. Riis, *How the Other Half Lives*, 70.
 40. Riis, *How the Other Half Lives*, 76.
 41. *Philadelphia Inquirer*, "Victimizing Chinamen," August 22, 1888, 2.
 42. Lew-Williams, *The Chinese Must Go*, 91.
 43. Schlund-Vials, *Asian America: A Primary Source Reader*, 49.
 44. Schlund-Vials, *Asian America: A Primary Source Reader*, 53.
 45. Perhaps the broader term of "Asian" had not entered the American racial lexicon. It is also interesting that although race dominated so much of White discourse, this simple document used instead the category "Color." It suggests a White Black binary which Asians challenged as a new category, *Certificate of Death: Lee Fong*. Filed 6 Mar 1897, City of Philadelphia, Health Office. Original Document, Box DEA-547, City of Philadelphia, Department of Records, City Archives, RG81, Department of Public Health and Charities.
 46. Kenneth S. Y. Chew and John M. Liu, *Population & Development Review* 30, no. 1 (2004): 57-78.



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Frank Schlupp ('25) is a history major from Northeast Philadelphia. His main research interest is anti-Asian racism and how it shapes the writing of American History. Last year, the College of Professional Studies inducted Frank into the Alpha Sigma Lambda Honor Society. He is also a member of the Archbishop's Commission on Racial Healing, which seeks to confront racism through encounter and dialogue. After graduation, Frank plans to pursue a master's in education and teach high school social studies in Philadelphia.



Mentor

Joseph Ryan, OSA, PhD

Fr. Joseph Ryan, OSA, PhD is an Associate Teaching Professor in the Department of History. Fr. Ryan earned his Ph.D. from American University in the History of Medicine and Immigration in 1997. His research interests include: the History of Childbirth, the History of Surgery, American Catholic History, and the History of Irish Americans. He teaches courses on United States History, the History of Medicine, the History of Migration, and the history of the Irish in America.