Introduction
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This 2011 edition of *Chinese America: History & Perspectives* explores the status of Chinese in the United States from the 1830s to 2008. The articles provide us with insights into how White America reacted to a Chinese woman during the era of Andrew Jackson, how a Caucasian elementary school teacher encouraged children in Chicago to emphasize Chinese cultural heritage in performances throughout the city during the 1930s, how three Chinese Americans—Chingwah Lee, Laura Lai, and Arthur Tom—overcame obstacles to become successful in their respective endeavors during the mid-twentieth century, how a Taiwanese restaurant specializing in Shanghai-style dumplings established a franchise store in Southern California in 2000, and finally, how transnational travel affects the identities of Chinese children adopted by U.S. families in the twenty-first century.

“*The Chinese Lady and China for the Ladies: Race, Gender, and Public Exhibition in Jacksonian America*” by John Haddad tells us about importers Nathaniel and Frederick Carne, who had been selling expensive luxury goods from France to wealthy Americans, but by the 1830s saw that the rising middle class in the United States was a potential market for high-quality but less expensive products from China. Hoping to sell such goods as shawls, silk boxes, lacquered furniture, fans, and snuffboxes in America, the Carnes wanted a marketing strategy that would draw attention quickly and dramatically to their products. They worked with one Captain Obear, who persuaded the father of Afong Moy from the Guangzhou area to let her board the *Washington*, a merchant vessel laden with Chinese goods headed for the U.S. market, in 1834. Afong Moy, with her interpreter, appeared in numerous cities in the eastern portion of the United States, from New York to Washington and onward to Richmond and New Orleans, against the backdrop of beautiful Chinese products. While she was obviously used as a marketing tool, the Carnes charged the public to see her. The advertisements emphasized her tiny, bound feet—an attraction that persuaded many Americans to pay the rather high admission fee to see her. As Haddad observes, Afong Moy became a “household name” after just several months in the United States. Newspaper articles publicized her appearances, her demeanor, and, of course, her bound feet. She even met members of Congress and President Jackson himself, as well as Philadelphia doctors.

Through his research into this fascinating event, Haddad tells us about America’s perception of the Chinese, the China–United States trade, and the subtle similarities during this period between American middle-class women and Chinese women, both of whose societies demanded that females be relegated to the home. Haddad also speculates on why Afong Moy might have agreed to make such a trip, and why she stayed in the United States for some years after the Carnes’ marketing trip was over.

“*Drumming Up Chineseness: Chicago’s Chinese Children’s Rhythm Band in the 1930s and 1940s*” by Jeff Kyong McClain relates the story of Olga Huncke, who taught at Chicago’s Haines Elementary School, which during the 1920s and 1930s had a growing number of Chinese students. Miss Huncke organized a group of approximately fifty Chinese youngsters dressed in traditional Chinese garb to perform as a band before the National Association of Music Clubs meeting in Chicago in 1927. From that beginning, Miss Huncke incorporated more and more aspects of Chinese culture into her classes, including Chinese music and poetry. Her classes performed plays inspired by Chinese history and culture. These performances understandably generated considerable attention within the Chinese community in Chicago, but news about Miss Huncke’s students was also reported in the *Chicago Daily Tribune* and the North American Chinese press.

Miss Huncke began to focus increasingly on the Chinese Rhythm Band. While only approximately 16 percent of her students were of Chinese ancestry during the 1930s, she had all of her students of various nationality groups play instruments inspired by Chinese orchestras, such as drums, the *pipa*, and the *erhu*. This band performed at weddings, art exhibits, and conventions. During the Sino-Japanese War, the band was used during patriotic activities, including the visit by Madame Chiang Kai-shek to the United States in 1943 to support China’s wartime campaign. The band traveled to
various towns in the Chicago area to raise funds for China, and eventually even performed at an anti-Fascism event. Jeff Kyong-McClain's article provides us with valuable information regarding how a teacher and her band of youngsters served to rally the public around the cause of Chinese nationalism.

Jean Dere's article “Born Lucky: The Story of Laura Lai” reveals little-known but very interesting facets of the life of Laura Lai, the spouse of Him Mark Lai, whose contributions to the study of Chinese Americans were innumerable and remarkable, and to whom the Chinese Historical Society of America owes a great deal of gratitude for his constant support. While many of us know about Him Mark, fewer people know about Laura Lai. Jean Dere's article fills this gap.

The piece starts with a quotation from Laura Lai: “I was lucky.” That good fortune was reflected early in her life, when Laura’s father insisted that instead of saving a slot for a “paper son” to go to the United States, he should report that he had a daughter. Unlike her mother, who felt that boys were superior, her father treated girls and boys with an even-handed attitude. Laura attended elementary school in Hong Kong, came to the United States in 1949, and lived in San Francisco Chinatown, where she continued with her education. She regularly went to the Mun Chem club, where she eventually enjoyed participating in the club’s drama and met Him Mark. Laura was able to pursue a successful career of her own. She started as a keypunch operator at Union Oil, then moved to PG&E and was promoted to a supervisory position. Later she trained to be a computer operator, and again, because of her skill on the job and her ability to develop strong interpersonal relationships, she was made a supervisor at a PG&E subsidiary, Pacific Gas Transmission.

“Chingwah Lee: San Francisco Chinatown’s Renaissance Man” by Atha Fong tells us about one of the cofounders of the Chinese Historical Society of America. Fong examines Chingwah Lee’s very public presence as a leader whose mission was to improve the image of Chinese Americans. Born in 1901 in San Francisco to a Chinese doctor and his wife who had immigrated from China, Chingwah was exposed to racial prejudice at a very early age. Yet his parents never shunned their Chinese ancestry: they communicated to Chingwah and his eight siblings their appreciation for Chinese artifacts, an emphasis on a strong family unit, and the belief in working hard. Fong's article shows how Chingwah was able to become a bridge to White society as well. By World War I, Chingwah had cofounded Chinese Boy Scouts Troop 3. That troop sold Liberty Bonds for the United States during the war and took over one thousand American soldiers and sailors on sightseeing trips through Chinatown.

Chingwah's intellectual pursuits took him to UC Berkeley, where he was engaged in a myriad of activities, including the Chinese Christian Students’ Association and the International Club, while taking courses in anthropology, psychology, Russian, lumbering, and agronomy, to name a few. One of the evolving themes of his adult life was that his own generation of Chinese Americans, while imbued with certain facets of Chinese culture, was also very much involved with “American” culture. He also wanted to prove that Chinese Americans were a major asset to the United States.

His career took various twists and turns as he worked as the Chinese YMCA boys’ secretary, then became Gray Line Tour’s chief Chinatown tour director, started publishing the Chinese Digest with Thomas Chinn, went to Hollywood to perform in The Good Earth, gained renown as an expert on Chinese art, and founded the Chinese Historical Society of America with Thomas Chinn, C. H. Kwock, H. K. Wong, and Thomas Wai Sun Wu in the 1960s. Atha Fong provides us with a tribute to a man who has left important legacies to the Chinese community. As she points out, more needs to be revealed about the Chinatown pioneers, like Chingwah, of the early to mid-twentieth century, whose work preceded the advent of Asian American Studies programs in the 1960s and 1970s.

William Wong’s oral history of Arthur Tom, who lived from 1912 to 2006, provides us with a fascinating picture of Oakland’s Chinatown during the early twentieth century through the eyes of Arthur, who succeeded in pursuing a fulfilling career at the California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). The article traces the Chinese people who lived on Sixth, Seventh, Eighth, Webster, and Harrison Streets in Oakland; it also describes the schools attended by the children in Chinatown and the businesses catering to the population there. Arthur Tom pursued an education in business while working part-time at a Caucasian-owned restaurant. He sought an opportunity to advance himself by taking a civil service exam for a clerical job with the DMV. He passed and became the only Chinese person working for the DMV at that time. While there was pervasive prejudice in Oakland against the Chinese—reflected in restrictive housing covenants, for example—Arthur never felt discrimination within the DMV itself. He received a series of promotions to supervisory positions.

With the advent of new information systems, Arthur displayed his talent in converting numerous DMV offices to the use of computers. He also helped standardize the training of new driver’s license examiners in the state. Throughout this experience, he gained the confidence of White colleagues. His work background and open personality also stood him in good stead when he joined the Army Air Corps during World War II and worked in Atlantic City taking case histories of problematic soldiers for the military’s psychiatric boards. Through this oral history, we gain a feeling for Arthur’s sense of well-being both on and off the job.

“Flexible Authenticity: Din Tai Fung as a Global Shanghai Dumpling House Made in Taiwan” by Haiming Liu presents the unique history of a popular Chinese restaurant in Taiwan that successfully expanded to many countries in the world, including the United States. Liu initially summarizes the history of Chinese restaurants in the United States, from the early days of Cantonese restaurants to the post-1965 restau-
rants, which reflected the wide range of culinary regions of China from which immigrants came. His article then focuses on the Din Tai Fung restaurant in Taipei, a city known as a center of Chinese regional cuisine. Founded by Yang Pin Ying and his wife, Li Pam Mae, Din Tai Fung specialized in Shanghai-style steamed dumplings. Its owners tried hard to simulate the dumplings that people remembered from eating Shanghai-style dumplings in mainland China. Customers indeed saw the dumplings as authentic, and the restaurant was so popular that it drew long lines of patrons every day.

By 2000 Din Tai Fung had established restaurants in many metropolitan areas of the world, and its owners decided to open a franchise in Arcadia, California. Liu describes the family's approach to this new opening. He also relates why the Arcadia restaurant's customer base grew beyond the local Taiwanese immigrants. The article suggests that Din Tai Fung is one of many Taiwanese-based business enterprises that have met with success in the United States, and analyzes the reasons for this phenomenon. Din Tai Fung has now established stores in mainland China as well.

Jillian Powers joined a group of Chinese children adopted by American families as these families took their adoptees back to China for a “homeland tour” in 2008. “Chasing China: Adoption Tourism, Images of China, and the Negotiation of Asian American Identity” provides us with numerous insights into these families as well as a sociological look at transnational adoptions. She describes the differences between adopting parents of the past, who did little to socialize their children into their birth cultures, and parents now, who feel that their adopted children should maintain some connection to their cultural heritage.

While traveling with the three American families in China, Powers focused on observing and interviewing members of the families. She relates how some families reacted to the poverty evident in China, how some parents connected with the children's former caregivers, and how distanced some of the children felt from China itself. Powers concludes that during the tour, the children's attempts to pass as Chinese, which usually failed, tended to bring the children together. As Powers states, “While [the children] were engaging with the homeland and the people in the land of their birth, they were not of them, but they were of each other.” The children had a generalized pan-Asian identity that fits into the current trend of multiculturalism in the United States—that is, to claim and respect separate ethnic identities. Powers's article is an important addition to our understanding of American families and multiculturalism.

*Chinese transliterations are consistent within each essay but not throughout the publication.*