



Chinese St Louis: From Enclave To Cultural Community

Huping Ling

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Chinese St. Louis offers the first empirical study of a Midwestern Chinese American community from its nineteenth-century origins to the present. As in many cities, Chinese newcomers were soon segregated in an enclave; in St. Louis the enclave was called "Hop Alley." Huping Ling shows how, over time, the community grew and dispersed until it was no longer marked by physical boundaries. She argues that the St. Louis experience departs from the standard models of Chinese settlement in urban areas, which are based on studies of coastal cities. Developing the concept of a cultural community, Ling shows how Chinese Americans in St. Louis have formed and maintained cultural institutions and organizations for social and political purposes throughout the city, which serve as the community's infrastructure. Thus the history of Chinese Americans in St. Louis more closely parallels that of other urban ethnic groups and offers new insight into the range of adaptation and assimilation experience in the United States. Author note: Huping Ling is Associate Professor of History at Truman State University and the author of *Surviving on the Gold Mountain: A History of Chinese American Women and Their Lives*.

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