



CHINESE IN BOSTON: 1870–1965

WING-KAI TO AND THE CHINESE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF NEW ENGLAND

(The first comprehensive photographic history of early Chinese Americans in Boston)

Chinese Americans in Boston trace their historical origins to pioneering settlements of merchants, workers, and students in different parts of New England. After the 1880s, hundreds of Chinese arrived in Boston. Beginning as a bachelor male-dominated society, the Chinese in Boston gradually developed stronger bonds of family and community life. Spared natural disasters which characterized the Chinese immigrant experience in the West, Boston's Chinatown nonetheless faced challenges of urban renewal and environmental degradation. Through their participation in community organizations, merchant activities, educational opportunities, and civic protests, the Chinese in Boston persevered, simultaneously maintaining their Chinese identity and acculturating into American culture. They formed a close-knit community that distinguished Boston's Chinatown as one of the oldest and most enduring Chinese neighborhoods in the East Coast.

Wing-kai To is an associate professor of history and coordinator of Asian studies at Bridgewater State College. The Chinese Historical Society of New England (CHSNE) was founded in 1992 to document, preserve, and promote the history and legacy of Chinese immigration in New England.

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