



The Cultural Fabric of Philadelphia

**An Intimate Look at
Philadelphia's Immigrant Communities**

Photography by Dave Lakatos

VOLUME ONE: CHINESE · DOMINICANS · GERMANS · INDONESIANS · LIBERIANS · VIETNAMESE



ABOVE: This Indonesian family shows their cultural pride at their food booth at the annual Indonesia Week street festival in South Philadelphia.

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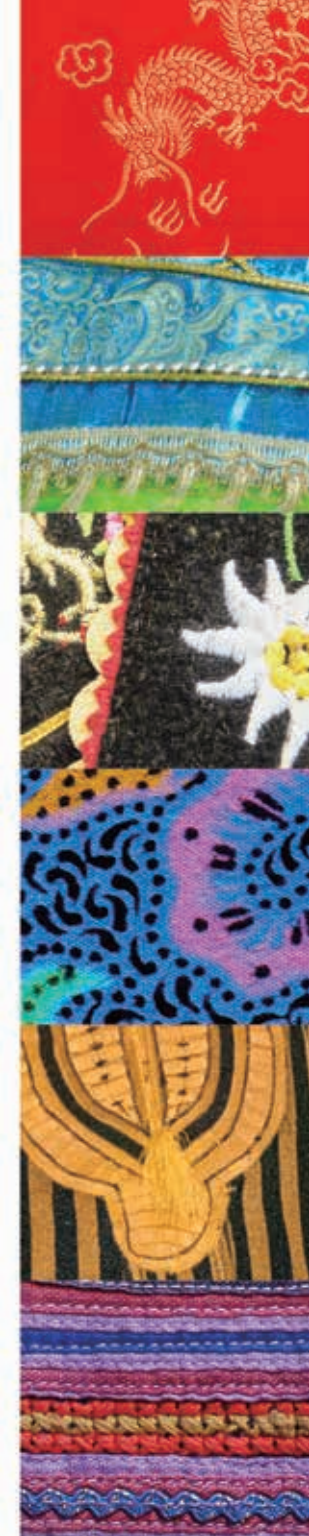
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ABOVE: Liberian grandmothers gather at the Multicultural Community Family Service offices in Upper Darby for a program focused on socializing and craftmaking.

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FOREWORD

The City of Philadelphia prides itself on being a World Heritage City, welcoming to all people who choose to call it home. From the first immigrants who founded this City in 1682, to those that continue to join our community today, Philadelphia is better for its diversity and inclusiveness.

Philadelphia is often referred to as a city of neighborhoods, where communities of many different cultures put aside their differences and work together to create a better place for their families to live. Our neighborhoods are also home to the many unique cultural traditions that bring life to our city.

Immigrant communities contribute to Philadelphia in many ways—sharing their values and traditions, religious practices, food, music, customs and arts which broaden and strengthen our communities. Their work ethic and entrepreneurial spirit also helps drive our local economy.

The Cultural Fabric of Philadelphia, Volume One photo book provides a glance into six immigrant communities and highlights their contributions to the cultural and economic development of our great city. More importantly, this photo book illustrates the commitment of these six immigrant communities to our city and will provide all of us with a unique opportunity to see the world from one another's point of view.

In Service,



James F. Kenney
Mayor
City of Philadelphia

LEFT: Mayor Kenney during the naturalization ceremony held during halftime of the 2016 Philadelphia International Unity Cup Soccer Championship Game at Citizen's Bank Park.





INTRODUCTION

Philadelphia has a rich immigrant past. Based on the increasing numbers arriving in Philadelphia, the City will also have a rich immigrant future. Philly's immigrant communities add not only cultural but monetary wealth, contributing considerably to the City's economy.

Immigrants and their communities are now experiencing a challenging time throughout the country. Greater education about and awareness of immigrant communities is now necessary, nationally as well as here in Philadelphia. People need to recognize the value of immigrants as people, as neighbors, and as economic drivers.

The Cultural Fabric of Philadelphia, Volume One photo book project was designed to highlight the stories of these selected communities. It seeks to increase awareness and understanding of these immigrants, to show who they are and what they bring to the City of Philadelphia.

The purpose of the overall Cultural Fabric of Philadelphia program, however, is two-part:

1. the preparation of the "coffee table"-type photo books that tell Philly's immigrant community stories; and
2. building community pride, self-respect and empowerment through community outreach and engagement in the book-building process, using community (and cross-community) meetings that foster cultural development and problem solving.

The overall goal of the Cultural Fabric of Philadelphia's program is to increase the understanding and awareness of Philly's immigrant communities—in all Philadelphians.

LEFT: Part of a Vietnamese Flag and Heritage event at City Hall in April 2016.





ABOUT THE BOOK TEAM

This photo book project was community-led. This means that the cultural stories in this photo book were told by the community, spearheaded by the following committed and passionate leaders.

COMMUNITY LEADERS

Chinese Community: **Jackie Wong**, Community Advocate; **John Chin**, Executive Director, Philadelphia Chinatown Development Corporation; **Stephanie Sun**, Project Coordinator, Welcoming Center for New Pennsylvanians

Dominican Community: **Dante Sanchez**, CEO, Cognitive Behavioral Services, Inc.; **Pedro Rodriguez**, City of Philadelphia, Director of Human Resources

German Community: **Tony Michels**, President, German Society of PA; **Lydia Sarson**, Executive Director, German American Chamber of Commerce, Philadelphia; **Al Taubenberg**, Councilman-at-Large, City of Philadelphia; **Fred Hess**, Chief of Staff, City Councilman Taubenberg's Office

Indonesian Community: **Hani White**, Indonesian Economic Development Professional and Co-Founder of Feed The Barrel; **Indah Nuritasari**, Program Manager, Women's Opportunities Resource Center

Liberian Community: **Voffee Jabateh**, CEO and Executive Director, African Cultural Alliance of North America (ACANA); **Portia Kamara**, Executive Director, Multicultural Community Family Services

Vietnamese Community: **Vicky Ung**, President, The Greater Philadelphia Vietnamese American Community; **LeQuyen Vu**, Executive Director, Indochinese American Council; **Cecelia Vo**, Program Manager, Indochinese American Council

PROJECT DIRECTION AND SUPPORT

Peter Gonzales, President and CEO, The Welcoming Center for New Pennsylvanians



ABOUT THE PHOTOGRAPHER: DAVE LAKATOS

With formal studies and training starting in the early 1990s, Dave started building on his passion for documentary-type “storytelling” photography. This building process eventually turned into a business as Lakatos Photography in the late 1990s. Through studios in West Chester and South Philly, Dave has provided wedding, portrait, commercial and model/band photography services and products for over two decades.

Dave has now returned to his main photography passion—documentary-style photography of people and the world they live in—with the Cultural Fabric of Philadelphia program. Dave has also formed LifeWork Photo Inc., a nonprofit corporation whose mission and vision is to use photography to support social causes and help organizations with projects that result in the betterment of communities and the lives of the people that live in them.

To see more of Dave’s photography, visit dave1photo.com. To keep up with the Cultural Fabric of Philadelphia projects on the Blog, as well as other social cause photo projects with which Dave is involved, visit lifeworkphoto.org.

ABOUT THE DESIGNER: KATHRINE FORSTER KUO

Kat Kuo has cheerfully provided freelance graphic design and illustration to clients nationwide since 1999. She seeks joy in both work and life and often finds it in color, food, and people, all of which combined to make the process of designing this book terrific fun.

You can explore Kat’s design work at facebook.com/katkuo.design.





Chinese

IN PHILADELPHIA



In Philadelphia, the history of Chinatown began in the 1870s, when Chinese immigrants first came to that part of the City. Chinatown started with laundrymen and small merchants, but quickly added many other types of businesses, like medical, law, and financial. Professional businesses were usually on the upper floors of the restaurants and small storefronts.

THIS PAGE: The head of a lion dance costume. Learn more about lion dances on page 30.

These businesses initially served Chinese clients from Philadelphia, but then drew customers from the larger region (e.g. New Jersey and even Baltimore). The 2000 census showed over 17,000 Chinese-Americans in Philadelphia. According to *The Metro Chinese Weekly*, this population grew to over 29,000 in 2010, and 150,000 in 2011. In 2011 it was estimated that most Asians in the Philadelphia area were living outside Chinatown.

Many Chinese immigrants moved into the early Chinatown to acclimate to American life. They used events like the Lunar New Year to maintain their traditions. Nowadays, the Chinese New Year celebration in Chinatown is an exciting spectacle enjoyed by all Philadelphians.

The dramatic growth in Chinatown led to a need to effectively manage its development. This led to the start of the Philadelphia Chinatown Development Corporation (PCDC). PCDC has a vision of a “living community” for Chinatown. This vision includes housing as well as family and community institutions. The Chinese Friendship Gate, at 10th and Arch Streets, is a physical embodiment of this vision. PCDC has also recently held a groundbreaking for a major new cultural and business center right in the heart of Chinatown.

Chinese-American entrepreneurs have also integrated into the broader Philadelphia. No matter where you go in the City, you can find a Chinese-owned business. Entrepreneurship and a strong work ethic run deep in Chinese culture, fueling immigrants’ success.

RIGHT: The Chinatown Friendship Gate, a 40-foot tower that was built by Chinese artisans in 2008, provides an appealing entrance to Philadelphia’s Chinatown.





LEFT: Cecilia Moy-Yep, sometimes referred to as the “Godmother of Chinatown”, has a long history of advocacy and support for the community in Chinatown. As well as being the founder of the Philadelphia Chinatown Development Corporation (PCDC), Cecelia has worked hard for many Chinatown community development projects, such as the Hing Wah Yuen neighborhood that provided subsidized housing for Chinese immigrants in the community.

BELOW: The Penang Chinese and Malaysian restaurant on 10th Street in Chinatown is a sign of the neighborhood’s dynamic and multicultural growth.



RIGHT, ABOVE: The many Chinese bakeries in Chinatown serve as gathering spots for residents coming from or going to their jobs. These bakeries also serve as social gathering spots for residents to catch up with old friends or read the news.

RIGHT, BELOW: The Tea-Do Contemporary Tea House is an example of the new look and feel of small Chinatown businesses, drawing Chinese and non-Chinese customers of all ages.







LEFT: Chinatown's street market shops and small stores do a brisk business in support of Philadelphia's economy.

ABOVE: A Chinese market in the Bustleton section of Philadelphia, home to many Chinese-Americans who have moved out of Chinatown.





LEFT: Steaming hot tea generally accompanies a Chinese meal.

ABOVE, LEFT: Michael Chow immigrated to Philadelphia in the mid-1970s from Hong Kong. He began working in restaurants, as did many Chinese immigrants during that time, and studied cooking. Mr. Chow now owns a string of Sang Kee Peking Duck restaurants in the Philadelphia region.

ABOVE, RIGHT: Many Chinese immigrants to Philadelphia still get their start in the restaurant business.



ABOVE: Hot pot is a popular meal in China, as well as in some Philadelphia Chinese restaurants. A metal pot containing one or more flavors of boiling broth is placed in the center of the table, and raw ingredients are provided for diners to cook in it. Noodles are generally added last, after the cooked foods' flavors have enriched the broth.

RIGHT: Peking Duck visible through the window of a restaurant on Race Street in Chinatown.







In Chinese culture, education is considered one of the keys to success.

ABOVE: Inspired by one of her teachers to pursue education, Carol Wong (far left) saw a need for early childhood schooling for Chinese immigrants over 25 years ago. In 1993, she opened the Chinatown Learning Center, an important community resource now providing a second generation of children with the skills that immigrants need to be successful in their new homes.

LEFT: This immigrant worked in hospitality while raising four children in Chinatown, all of whom graduated from college.

OPPOSITE PAGE: Kids playing outside at the Holy Redeemer Chinese Catholic Church and School playground. Holy Redeemer Church was dedicated in 1941, the first church built for Chinese parishioners in the western hemisphere.





LEFT, ABOVE: The Philadelphia Suns Chinese youth group perform a lion dance for a meeting of professionals at the Convention Center. The Suns were established in the early 1970s with a goal of building sportsmanship and volunteerism in Chinatown's youth.



LEFT, BELOW: The basketball court for the Chinese Christian Church and Center (CCC&C) is sited in the center of the houses that run along 10th and Spring Street in Chinatown. Normally used by the Philadelphia Suns basketball team, it's also a place for fun and games at CCC&C's annual picnic.

RIGHT: Youth from the Philadelphia Suns visit the construction site of the Eastern Tower Community Center at 10th and Vine Streets. The Suns will play their youth basketball at the gymnasium that will be a part of this new community center.







LEFT: A young child improvises her own steps while a dance group performs at the annual picnic for the Chinese Christian Church and Center.

ABOVE: A Catholic service in Mandarin at the Holy Redeemer Church in Chinatown. Masses are also held in English and Cantonese.



ABOVE: Many Buddhist Chinatown residents worship at the Pu Men Temple on Race Street.



ABOVE: These men are dressed to participate in one of the many festivals and parades that take place in Chinatown.



LEFT and RIGHT: Scenes from the 2017 Hoyu Folk Culture Festival in Chinatown. Brought to Philadelphia by immigrants from Fujian province in China, this is a celebration of ancient Chinese gods and the memory of one's ancestors.

BELOW: Mabel Chi Chan addresses a crowd at her restaurant for a traditional dinner held every year to celebrate the Hoyu Festival.





LEFT: Traditionally, lighting firecrackers using a pole and rope was meant to scare away evil spirits. Here Race Street residents and a lion dancing group take part in the 2017 Chinese New Year festivities.

ABOVE: Lion dancing is an integral part of Chinatown's New Year celebrations; the dance mimics the animal's movements to bring good fortune.

RIGHT: The mural at 10th and Vine Streets tells the story of Chinese immigration to America. The top shows the first Chinese that came to the west coast of America to work on the Union-Pacific Railroad. The lower portion of the mural traces Chinese immigration to Philadelphia, with difficulties and hard-won successes.

