

Pre-Visit Packet

Family Journeys: The Chinese American Experience **Grades 9-12**

Program Overview

A trained museum educator will lead your students in an interactive hour-long program in the permanent gallery. The program includes directed discussions, exploration of the permanent exhibit and hands-on activities to allow students to experience history from original sources. Students will learn about successive waves of Chinese immigrants, their motivations for coming, where they settled, how they were treated, how they adapted to their new lives, how they defined their cultural identity and how they shaped American society.

Concepts/Themes covered in this program:

Family, Community, Immigration, Government, Citizenship, Identity, Culture, Empathy, Change.

Curriculum Connections:

The program is tailored to the grade level and curriculum goals of your students. For **Grades 9-12**, this program is designed to complement the New York City social studies learning standards in the areas of global history, geography, U.S. history and government.

Suggested Pre-Visit Activity 1

Where is Home?

Aim: To make connections between our homes and the American immigrant experience.

Materials: Paper and pens/markers

1. Remind students that America has been home to diverse immigrant groups for hundreds of years. Discuss the guiding questions with your students and generate a list of their definitions of “home”.
2. Guiding questions: *Where is home for you and what makes it your home? Is where you consider home the same place as where your parents and/or grandparents might consider home?*
3. Have students get into pairs or groups and read through a few phrases about home and then discuss whether or not they agree or disagree with each phrase. Then discuss together as a class.
 - a. “Home is where the heart is.”
 - b. “There’s no place like home.”
 - c. “Home is where you hang your hat.”
 - d. “A (wo)man’s home is his/her castle.”
4. *Extension:* Have students write a short journal entry from the perspective/voice of a newly arrived immigrant to the U.S. How might that person have been feeling about the home he/she just left? What might be the reactions to his/her new home?

Suggested Pre-Visit Activity 2

Immigration

Aim: To examine American immigration and its significance in the history of the U.S.

Materials: Large index cards, chart/butcher paper, colored pencils/markers

1. Tell students that immigration in the United States is an on-going story and the diverse groups of immigrants contribute to the story of immigration.
2. Ask each student to research an event in the history of American immigration. Have them consider the following questions: *Why is their event significant in the history of immigration? What might be some of the results or consequences of the event?*
3. Have students record and illustrate their event on a large index card. Their illustration should be based on images they saw during their research. Remind them to think about: *What details will they include so that viewers will understand their event?*
4. Create a visual timeline on large chart paper. Have each student adhere his or her event on the appropriate spot of their timeline.
5. Students can view the class time line and share their event with the whole class. This project can also be done in pairs or in groups. *What are some of the reasons that immigrants left their countries to make new homes in America? How has America treated its immigrants historically?*
6. *Extension:* Have students examine and research Angel Island immigration and read primary sources and view images of the Asian immigrants who passed through. First-person accounts and poetry written at that time are possible resources.

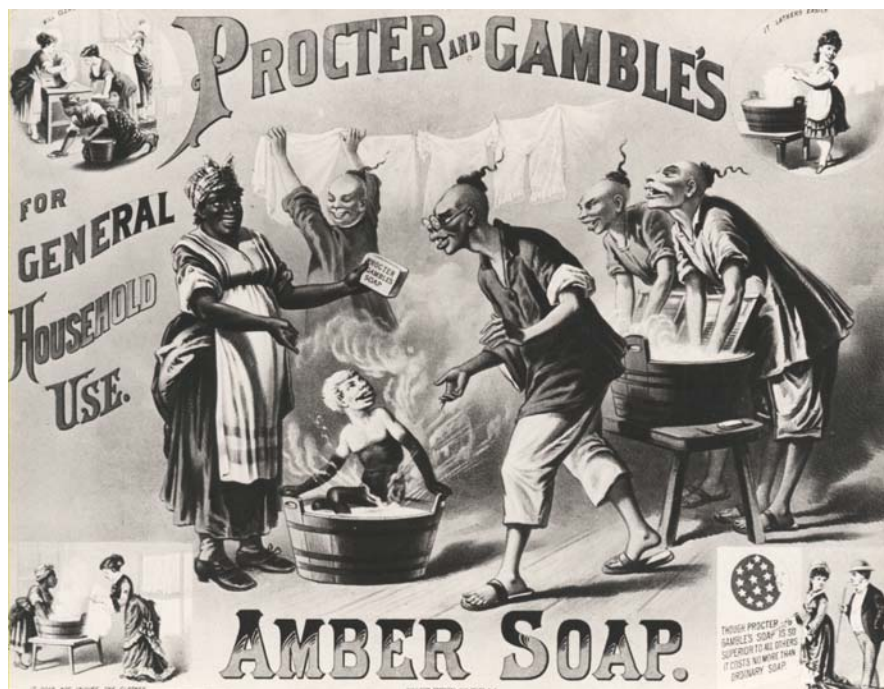
Suggested Pre-Visit Activity 3

Stereotypes

Aim: To define 'stereotype' and use images to critically analyze racial/cultural stereotypes

Materials: Copies of Proctor & Gamble's soap advertisement

1. Have students come up with a definition for the word **stereotype**: *a generalization not based on fact, often with traits of one person applied to an entire race or ethnic group.*
2. Guiding questions: *How are stereotypes harmful? Are all stereotypes inaccurate? Have you ever stereotyped others or been stereotyped yourself?*
3. Show students a copy of the Proctor and Gamble Soap advertisement and have them make a list of things they see that are stereotypes (of African Americans and Chinese Americans.)
4. Guiding questions: *What is taking place in the image? What message is being conveyed about African Americans and Chinese Americans? What fears are expressed in the image?*
5. *Extension:* Have students research other images (pictures, cartoons, advertisements, etc.) that also convey stereotypes. Bring in images to class, post them up around the room, and have students choose a few that they find interesting to respond to creatively. Have small group and whole-class discussions about these images.



"Proctor and Gamble's Amber Soap. For General Household Use,"
Advertisement from ca. 1880. Source unknown.

Vocabulary List:

Grades 9-12

Discrimination: the act of discriminating, or making a difference on a basis other than individual merit.

Prejudice: judgments or opinions formed without grounds that are directed against an individual, group, or race.

Primary Source: first-hand accounts of events, practices, or conditions (i.e. documents, letters, articles, etc)

Racism: a belief that racial differences determine human capacities and produce a superiority of a particular race.

Secondary Source: accounts of the past that are created by people who are not first-hand witnesses of the event.

Sojourner: one who stays as a temporary resident (see: journey)

Stereotype: generalization not based on fact, often with traits of one person applied to an entire race or ethnic group.

Adapted from Merriam Webster Online

Teacher Resource – Book List

Non-fiction

Chang, Iris. (2004) *The Chinese in America: A Narrative History*. NY: Penguin Books.

Kwong, Peter & Miscevic, Dusanka. (2007) *Chinese America: The Untold Story of America's Oldest New Community*. New York, The New Press.

Takaki, Ronald. (1998) *Strangers from a Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans*. New York: Back Bay Books.

Hall, Bruce. (1998) *Tea that Burns: A Family Memoir of Chinatown*. NY: The Free Press.

Lai, Him, Lim, Genny & Yung, Judy (1999) *Island: Poetry and History of Chinese Immigrants on Angel Island, 1910-1940*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.

Lee, Erika. (2007) *At America's Gates: Chinese Immigration During the Exclusion Era, 1882-1943*. The University of North Carolina Press.

Torres, Ben F. (1995) *The Rice Room: Growing Up Chinese-American from Number Two Son to Rock 'n' Roll*. New York: Plume Penguin Books.

Wong, Kevin S. (2005) *Americans First: Chinese Americans and the Second World War*. Harvard University Press.

Wong, William. (2004) *Oakland's Chinatown: Images of America*. Great Britain: Arcadia Publishing.

Fiction

Chang, Lan S. (2005) *Inheritance*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company

Chieng, Chieh. (2006) *A Long Stay in a Distant Land*. New York: Bloomsbury Publishing.

Chin, Frank. (1991) *Donald Duk*. Minneapolis: Coffee House Press.

Chu, Louis. (2002) *Eat a Bowl of Tea*. Lyle Stuart.

Kingston, Maxine H. (1989). *The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Childhood Among Ghosts*. New York: Vintage.

Kingston, Maxine H. (1989) *China Men*. New York: Vintage.

Jen, Gish. (2008) *Typical American*. New York: Vintage.

Jin, Ha. (2000). *Waiting*. New York: Vintage.

Tan, Amy. (2006) *Joy Luck Club*. New York: Penguin Books.

Poetry

Chang, Victoria. (2005) *Circles*. Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press.

Chin, Marilyn. (2003) *Rhapsody in Plain Yellow: Poems*. New York: W. W. Norton & Co.

Chung, Frances. (2000) *Crazy Melon and Chinese Apple*. Wesleyan.
Lee, Li-Young. (1986) *Rose*. New York: Bookslinger.
Ping, Wang. (2003) *The Magic Whip*. Minneapolis: Coffee House Press.
Su, Adrienne. (1997) *Middle Kingdom*. New York: Alice James Books.
Sze, Arthur. (2001) *Silk Dragon*. Copper Canyon Press.
Wei, Shao. (2003) *Pulling a Dragon's Teeth*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.

DVD/VHS

Moyers, Bill. (2003) *Becoming American: The Chinese Experience*. PBS Special

Brief Timeline of Chinese American History

- 1785** - The arrival of three Chinese seamen in Baltimore marks the first record of Chinese in the United States.
- 1840-1842** - Great Britain and China engage in the Opium Wars. China loses political control of Hong Kong to Great Britain and is forced to open ports to British commerce.
- 1861-1865** – U.S. Civil War.
- 1863-1869** - Chinese workers help to build the U.S. Transcontinental Railroad.
- 1882** - The United States passes the Chinese Exclusion Act, suspending the immigration of Chinese laborers to the United States and denying Chinese the right to become American citizens. It is the first U.S. restriction on immigration based on race and nationality, and stops large scale Chinese immigration for sixty years.
- 1898** – In “Wong Kim Ark v. United States”, the U.S. Supreme Court concedes that a child of Chinese descent born in the United States is an American citizen.
- 1906** – The earthquake and fire in San Francisco destroys municipal records, opening the way for the immigration of Chinese “paper sons.”
- 1910** - Angel Island Immigration Station opens in San Francisco Bay as an entry point and detention center for Asian immigrants.
- 1913** - The California Alien Land Acts prohibit Chinese and Japanese from owning land. Other states pass similar laws.
- 1915** - The Chinese American Citizen’s Alliance forms to protect the civil rights of Chinese in the United States.
- 1920** - American women gain the right to vote.
- 1922** – The Cable Act decrees that any American woman who marries “an alien ineligible for citizenship shall cease to be a citizen of the United States.”
- 1924** – The National Origins Act is passed, which restricts immigration by establishing national quotas that discriminates against immigrants and virtually exclude all Asians. It lasts until the 1960s.
- 1940** - The U.S. government closes Angel Island Immigration Station.

- 1941-1945** - During World War II, Asian Americans voluntarily enlist in the U.S. Armed Forces in large numbers.
- 1943** - The Chinese Exclusion Act is repealed and Chinese in the United States are given the right to become naturalized citizens. The quota for Chinese immigrants is set at 105 per year.
- 1955- late 1960's** - The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) creates the Chinese Confession Program, which offers legalized status in exchange for confession of illegal entry into the country. The program results in nearly 14,000 confessions, which allows the INS to bar future immigration.
- 1965** - The Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965 abolishes restrictive quotas based on race and nationality. Chinese American population nearly doubles between 1960-1970.
- 1970** - Asian American students, artists, and community activists establish Basement Workshop, an Asian American community arts center in New York's Chinatown organizing publication services, literary events, exhibitions and community-based projects.
- 1972** - President Richard Nixon visits China at an historic summit with Zhou Enlai and Mao Zedong. These talks open the way for Chinese Americans to visit China for the first time in 22 years.
- 1979** - President Jimmy Carter declares a week in May as Asian Pacific American Heritage Week. Eleven years later U.S. president George Bush officially extends it to a month-long celebration.
- 1982** - The murder of Vincent Chin sparks national awareness of anti-Asian violence. His murderer, a man distraught by the decline of the Detroit auto industry, did not spend a single day in prison for his crime. In response, the Asian American community creates the advocacy group American Citizens for Justice.
- 1996** - Washington voters elect Gary Locke to the governor's seat. Locke becomes the first Chinese American to become the governor of a U.S. state.
- 2000** — The Museum of Chinese in America celebrates its 20th anniversary. MOCA is one of a handful of museums dedicated to Chinese American history.

Adapted from MOCA publication, "Timeline: 400 years of History of Chinese in the Americas"

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