

Until we read Goldsworthy's article, we thought that St. Louis had been ahead of Chicago in getting its first Chinese resident. The following note, which was written two years ago, should now be corrected to take account of the facts that Goldsworthy has discovered.

In her new book, Dr. Huping Lo of Missouri's Truman State University writes,

"In 1857, Alla Lee, a twenty-four-year-old native of Ningbo, China, seeking a better life, came to St. Louis, where he opened a small shop on North Tenth Street selling tea and coffee. As the first and probably the only Chinese there for a while, Alla Lee mingled mostly with immigrants from Northern Ireland and married an Irish woman. A decade later, Alla Lee was joined by several hundred of his countrymen from San Francisco and New York who were seeking jobs in mines and factories in and around St. Louis."

When she writes that "a decade later, Alla Lee was joined by several hundred of his countrymen," Dr. Lo probably means after 1869, when the completion of the transcontinental railroad brought the first Chinese to Chicago and other parts of the Midwest. But this does not affect St. Louis's claim to having had the earliest Chinese resident. Alla Lee may have come up the Mississippi from New Orleans. As other essays on this website show, he was not the only early Chinese-American to have an Irish wife.

Reference: Huping Lo, *Chinese St. Louis: From Enclave to Cultural Community* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2004).

Research & writing by Ben Bronson and Chuimei Ho; copyright 2004-2006 by the Chinatown Museum Foundation.