

METHODOLOGY

This survey was accomplished through research conducted at various archival facilities, reviews of topic-related literature, community outreach connections, and oral histories. The historic context addresses social, political, and cultural history, and is developed in accordance with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation*. The survey covers all areas within Phoenix city limits and restudies previous reports and resources already listed on the National Register of Historic Places and the Phoenix Historic Property Register to determine their significance under the historic context *Asian Americans in Phoenix, 1870-1960*.

BOUNDARY

The boundaries of the study area are the current boundaries of the City of Phoenix. Unlike previous city-sponsored studies, where other ethnic groups were concentrated in smaller locations within the city boundaries, Asian Americans were widely spread throughout the urban area, including previously unincorporated areas that were subsequently brought into the city through annexation. Therefore, the focus of this study required taking into account the fluctuations of the various ethnic groups' settlement patterns as well as the dynamics of the city's annexation process. While some properties located within city limits were easily identified by address, others required knowledge of cadastral survey coordinates and irrigation laterals to locate some sites.

ARCHIVAL RESEARCH

Archival collections, public records, oral histories, reports and publications were examined at several facilities in central Arizona, including: Arizona Historical Foundation; Arizona Historical Society - Tempe; Arizona State Library, Archives and Public Records; Arizona State Parks – State Historic Preservation Office; Arizona State University – Asian Pacific American Studies; Arizona State University - Hayden Library; City of Phoenix Historic Preservation Office; Maricopa County Assessor's Office; Maricopa County Recorder's Office; Phoenix Public Library – Burton Barr Library; and the Phoenix Museum of History. Additional information about the sources is included with the citation and within the bibliography section of this document.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

Initial outreach efforts included contacting the Asian American Association of Arizona, which in turn, put the researchers in contact with members of Asian Indian, Cambodian, Chinese, Filipino, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean, Laotian, Malaysian, Pakistani, Singaporean, Taiwanese, Thai, and Vietnamese

communities. Press releases and invitations were issued and a series of public meetings were conducted at Arizona State University's Downtown Campus. These public meetings included mapping and genealogy exercises, and identified potential historical sites, as well as oral history candidates. One-on-one meetings with various interested parties within the communities were also conducted on request, as were meetings with members of the Arizona Buddhist Temple, Japanese Americans Citizens League, and Japanese Free Methodist Church. Events attended include the Chinese Fourth of July Celebration and Miss Chinese Arizona Pageant and the Japanese Free Methodist Church annual picnic. At the former, a booth was set up to disseminate information and hand out survey forms; a presentation was given at the latter. An online survey form was also created to facilitate information gathering.

Organizations contacted through written correspondence included: Chinese American Citizens Alliance – San Francisco; Chinese American Professional Association of Arizona; Chinese Chamber of Commerce of Arizona; Chinese Restaurant Association of Arizona; Chinese Senior Citizen Association; Chinese United Association of Greater Phoenix; Chinese Welfare Council; Filipino American Historical Society; Desert Jade Woman's Club; Gujarati Cultural Association; Honeywell Asian Employee Network; Japanese Americans Citizens League; Lung Kong Family Association; Manila Oriental Foodmart; Ong Ko Met Family Association; Organization of Chinese Americans; Philippine American Chamber of Commerce; Phoenix Chinese School; Wong Family Benevolent Association; Yee Fung Toy Family Association; and Ying On Merchants & Labor Benevolent Association.

ORAL HISTORIES

The development of the historic context narrative and the inventory of historic properties were supported by the use of oral histories with members of the Asian American communities. Earlier interviews were conducted with Asian Americans by the Arizona Historical Society as part of a 1970s oral history project, and by the Phoenix Museum of History as part of an exhibit on Chinese Americans in Phoenix, three decades later. Through Arizona State University's Asian Pacific American Studies Program (APAS) collaborative oral history project with the Japanese American Citizens League, additional information was also located. APAS also provided student interns who conducted and transcribed oral history interviews specifically for this project as part of their studies at ASU.

FIELD SURVEY

The identification of properties to be evaluated for this survey presented some unique challenges. There were four distinct ethnic communities found to have a presence in Phoenix before 1960, each with its own unique history and

settlement patterns. The dispersal of potential associated properties over a broad geographical area included a wide variety of commercial, residential, agricultural, and institutional types, most of which exhibit no intrinsic physical characteristics that would indicate their association with a particular ethnic group. Identification of properties required extensive examination of city directories, and heavy reliance on oral histories and community outreach. Community members accompanied the survey team on reconnaissance surveys of distinct property types, such as Japanese flower garden sites, Chinese groceries, and Filipino neighborhoods. This resulted in the generation of a list of more than five hundred potentially significant properties that existed historically in Phoenix. Investigators visited each site and 117 extant properties were identified, examined, photographed, and subjected to further research and study to assess significance and integrity.

INTRODUCTION

The following historic context provides a general overview of the history of Asian Americans in Phoenix from 1870 to 1960. The narrative begins by defining what constitutes an “Asian American” and why. The context then shifts its focus to the various Asian American groups living in Phoenix. The emphasis is on Chinese Americans and Japanese Americans, but also includes information on Filipino Americans and other smaller groups.

The structure of the context begins with a general history of each major group, followed by a narrative of that group’s history in Phoenix. While it may appear that the Chinese and Japanese are given precedence by population size, the narrative is actually more closely tied to the timeframe in which the various groups arrived. For example, the Chinese, as a distinct culture, were the first Asians to immigrate to the United States in large numbers and the first to arrive in Phoenix. Other Asian groups are introduced in the general order of their appearance here.

When possible, each ethnic group’s section details changes in residential, commercial, and cultural aspects of the various communities. Since each group has its own unique history, their respective narratives are not equally balanced, i.e., the Chinese focused more on commercial enterprises while the Japanese turned almost exclusively to agriculture. Filipinos and Asian Indians were fewer in number, and less information was available about these groups, so their histories are not as lengthy and detailed.

THE DEFINITION OF ASIAN AMERICANS

Traditional geography considers Asia to be a continent, a part of the Africa-Eurasia landmass lying east of the Suez Canal and Ural Mountains and south of Caucasus Mountains and the Caspian and Black seas. It is demarcated from the continents of Africa and Europe by an imaginary line that runs along the Red Sea, through the Isthmus of Suez, the Dardanelles, the Sea of Marmara, the Bosphorus, the Black Sea, along the Caucasus Mountains, through the Caspian Sea, up the Ural River to its source, and then along the Ural Mountains to the Kara Sea near Kara in Russia. This geographical notion of place is anachronistic, and instead we commonly think of Asia as excluding Turkey, the Middle East, the Arabian subcontinent, and Russia. Still, this definition is too broad and the term Asian usually refers to a subcategory of people and not to everyone on the continent. The term Asian also sometimes refers to people in the Asia-Pacific region and includes islands in the Pacific Ocean. For the purpose of this report, the term Asian will be that which is used on an official level by the federal government.

The United States Census defines Asian as a “person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam. It includes ‘Asian Indian,’ ‘Chinese,’ ‘Filipino,’ ‘Korean,’ ‘Japanese,’ ‘Vietnamese,’ and ‘Other Asian.’”¹ Each of these ethnic groups is further defined by their sub-categorization of themselves.

Asian Indian includes people who indicate their race as “Asian Indian” or identify themselves as Bengalese, Bharat, Dravidian, East Indian, or Goanese. Chinese includes people who indicate their race as “Chinese” or who identify themselves as Cantonese, or Chinese American. In some census tabulations, written entries of Taiwanese are included in this group, while in others they are shown separately. Filipino includes people who indicate their race as “Filipino” or who report entries such as Philipino, Philippine, or Filipino American. Japanese includes people who indicate their race as “Japanese” or who report entries such as Nipponese or Japanese American. Korean includes people who indicate their race as “Korean” or who provide a response of Korean American. Vietnamese includes people who indicate their race as “Vietnamese” or who provide a response of Vietnamese American. Cambodian includes people who provide a response such as Cambodian or Cambodia. Hmong includes people who provide a response such as Hmong, Laohmong, or Mong. Laotian includes people who provide a response such as Laotian, Laos, or Lao. Thai includes people who provide a response such as Thai, Thailand, or Siamese. “Other Asian” includes people who provide a response of Burmese, Indonesian, Bangladeshi, Pakistani, or Sri Lankan. Historically, however, some of these groups were categorized under other terms; Bangladesh and Pakistan were part of British India until 1947 and Sri Lanka was formerly referred to as Ceylon.²

The aforementioned definitions are probably the best fit for this report since historically, those Asians that have been subject to discriminatory immigration laws and other “anti-Asian” legislation were typically from the groups identified by the census and not from other areas of the Asian continent, such as Siberia and the Middle East. Legislative and judicial actions tended to focus on specific Asian ethnic groups, as evident in the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, and in Supreme Court cases of the 1920s, such as *Ozawa v. United States* and *Thind v. United States*, in which Chinese, Japanese, and Asian Indians were not granted the right to become citizens. Eventually, the various state and federal laws that limited the freedom of certain Asian immigrants were repealed, but the *de jure*

¹ *Profiles of General Demographic Characteristics, 2000* (Washington: United States Department of Commerce, 2001), A3-A4.

² *Ibid.*

and *de facto* discrimination of the era covered by this study, these Asian American groups can easily be defined as a historically minority groups.³

³ Harry H. L. Kitano and Roger Daniels, *Asian Americans: Emerging Minorities*, 2nd Edition (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1995), 12-13, 16-19.