

**STUDY GUIDE**

# **FINDING CLEVELAND**

**Where Far East meets Deep South**

A documentary short film by  
**LARISSA LAM & BALDWIN CHIU**

Length: 14 minutes

[www.findingcleveland.com](http://www.findingcleveland.com)

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What were new things you learned from watching Finding Cleveland?
2. Give examples of discrimination that Chinese faced that were mentioned in this film.
3. How has your view of the Chinese in America changed after watching this film?
4. How does this immigrant story differ from other Chinese immigrant stories in other parts of the country? How does it differ from other immigrant groups?
5. Why is it important to learn about the history of immigrants from different countries?
6. What do you know about your grandparents or ancestors who first came to the U.S.?

## ACTIVITIES

1. Find Mississippi on a map.
2. Use [Google Earth](#) to find Cleveland, MS. Look for Delta State University, then search for Charles W. Capps, Jr. Archives. That is where the Mississippi Delta Chinese Heritage Museum in our film is located. Explore other parts of the city.
3. Draw your family tree.
4. Ask your parents or grandparents about how they came to the U.S. or how your ancestors came to the U.S. Then document it on video, audio recording or in writing. Ask them about their struggles and lessons they learned.

## ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

**Q. Why were the last names of Baldwin Chiu's grandfather and great grandfather "Lou" instead of Chiu?**

A. In Chinese, the surname comes first. Baldwin's great grandfather's Chinese name was "Chiu Jong Lou". Immigration assumed "Lou" was the surname and not "Chiu." Thus, they gave him the name "CJ Lou" and he was also known by, "Chas J Lou". When Baldwin's grandfather came to the US, his Chinese name was "Chiu Kim Chung" or Kim Chung/KC for short. Immigration automatically gave him the name, "KC Lou" to match his father, CJ Lou's, last name. It was a common occurrence that immigration misinterpreted the names. When Baldwin's father became a naturalized U.S. citizen, he restored his surname to "Chiu."



## ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

**Q. How did the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act affect the Lou/Chiu family?**

A. The Chinese Exclusion Act was passed by Congress in 1882 and was the first and only federal law enacted that specifically targeted people of a certain nationality. It prevented Chinese from entering the U.S. with only a few exemptions: mainly merchants, diplomats and scholars, who were basically university students. It also prohibited Chinese from becoming U.S. citizens. Initially, there were also restrictions on Chinese women and family members coming to the U.S. which also prevented Baldwin's grandmother and aunt (Charles' mother & older sister) from joining KC Lou in America.

Additional Congressional Acts passed in later years, in 1892 and 1902, extended and made permanent the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act. It also required people of Chinese origin to carry identification at all times or they could be deported. Subsequent immigration acts expanded the immigration restriction to not just the Chinese but people from other countries in Asia, Africa plus Eastern and Southern Europe.

The Chinese Exclusion Act was not repealed until 1943 with the passage of the Magnuson Act, which was a result of needing China as an ally during World War II. However, it set a quota that only permitted 105 Chinese immigrants each year. Heavy immigration restrictions remained and many other Asian countries were still excluded and until 1965 with the passage of the Immigration and Nationality Act.

**Q. What were the first jobs worked by the first group of Chinese immigrants that came to Mississippi?**

A. They worked on plantations doing farming work that former slaves once did.



## ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

**Q. Why did the Chinese move on to become grocery store owners?**

A. The Chinese were not making the amount of money as expected on the plantations. When The Chinese Exclusion Act passed, it prevented Chinese from becoming laborers. They had to be merchants if they wanted to stay in the U.S. During this time of Jim Crow laws, many white grocery stores did not want to sell to black customers. The Chinese opened grocery stores predominantly in black neighborhood to make a living by selling groceries to the underserved black community. The Chinese families would live in the grocery stores as well because they were not allowed to live in the white neighborhoods.

**Q. How did the early Chinese children get their education if they were not allowed in white schools?**

A. During segregation, like the African American children, Chinese children were not allowed in many white schools in the south. Many Chinese parents initially homeschooled their children. Eventually, the Chinese, with the help of the local church, created mission schools. The schools would generally consist of one main classroom where children of various ages between grades 1-12 would be taught by one teacher.

**Q. Why do family stories like these matter?**

A. This is an American story even though it's an Asian American family. The Asian American voice has been misrepresented and underrepresented in both history books and media (film/TV/radio). It's important to know that there are many families like these that have been in America for a very long time and they have made great contributions to America. When these stories aren't heard, the misperception is that Asians and other minority groups are foreign outsiders, and thus not American.



## FINAL THOUGHTS

Thank you for watching and discussing *Finding Cleveland*. Hopefully this inspires everyone to seek out their own family stories. We are all immigrants or descendants of immigrants. Let's learn and share about the struggles that previous generations endured that have led us to where we are today. Let's learn how they overcame those challenges and how we can rise together rather than apart. It's important to tell diverse family stories because all of our stories, collectively, make up history.

More importantly, we hope to see all U.S. History curriculum include the story of the Chinese and other people of color when segregation and the American South is discussed. Please tell more teachers and schools about our film and this often overlooked chapter in American history. All our stories matter.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

**FAR EAST DEEP SOUTH** - Watch our new 76-min follow up film that expands on the Chiu/Lou family's story and new discoveries they made. The film goes deeper into the history of the Chinese in the segregated South and discussed the relationship between the Chinese and African American communities there. It also shows the impact exclusionary immigration laws had on families like the Chius. It's an emotional film that explores the themes of race, immigration and American identity. Find out where to watch at [fareastdeepsouth.com](http://fareastdeepsouth.com).

### **MISSISSIPPI DELTA CHINESE HERITAGE MUSEUM - PHOTO COLLECTION**

View historical photos of different aspects of the lives of the MS Delta Chinese families.

Visit our website [findingcleveland.com](http://findingcleveland.com) for more resource links.

