

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

GOING *DOWNTOWN* IN HISTORY: CHINATOWN NEW YORK CITY'S LANDMARKS TELL THE STORY OF A PEOPLE AND A CITY

NEW YORK, NY – Not surprisingly, Chinatown New York City, one of the oldest neighborhoods in Manhattan, has several landmarks bearing the “oldest” title within its limits. The oldest Jewish cemetery can be found here, as can the oldest standing residence in New York City.

Of course, Chinatown offers landmarks of a more modern breed as well. Where else in this country but Mott Street and its surrounding area can over 10 separate Asian cuisines be enjoyed? The neighborhood is a culinary capital, whose food reflects the rich and diverse history of immigrants from virtually every Eastern region in the world.

Even born-and-raised New Yorkers are bound to learn something new from visiting Chinatown's historic landmarks. A short walk through the neighborhood's bustling streets is an explorer's delight. After all, the history of Chinatown is the history of New York City itself, and history loves company.

Following is a list of landmarks located in Chinatown New York City.

- **Chatham Square (cross streets)**, also known as Kim Lau Square, is the site of the Kim Lau Memorial Arch. Located in the middle of the square, it was erected in 1962 in memory of the Chinese Americans who died in World War II. The square is named after the Earl of Chatham, William Pitt, who supported the American opposition to the Stamp Act, a tax on printed papers imposed on all American colonists by the British in 1765. The arch is named for Lt. Benjamin Kim Lau, an aircraft commander in the Second World War. Just east of the square, on Division Street, lies Confucius Plaza, where a statue of the famous philosopher stands.
- Just south of Chatham Square along St. James Place is the **First Shearith Israel Cemetery**. The cemetery dates back to 1683, making it not only the oldest Jewish cemetery in New York City but the oldest standing *artifact* in New York City. Buried here are 18 Jewish Revolutionary-War era soldiers and patriots, as well as the first American-born rabbi. The original 23 settlers, who had already been expelled from Spain and Brazil, were descendents of survivors of the Spanish Inquisition.

- **East Broadway** is the heart of the new Fujianese community. Slightly northeast of the traditional borders of Chinatown, this three-block area near Manhattan Bridge is lined with authentic Fujianese rice-noodle shops, herbal medicine shops, and fresh markets.
- **Mott Street** is the oldest Chinese-inhabited street in New York, and today remains one of Chinatown's most vibrant thoroughfares. Its fine restaurants, interesting markets and unique shopping opportunities have made Mott Street Chinatown's unofficial main draw, drawing tens of thousands of non-residents on any given weekend.

Mott Street also has a historic site that visitors will probably miss unless they look up. At 41 Mott Street is a large white building topped with the only remaining wooden pagoda roof in Chinatown. Such roofing was outlawed in the early 1900s because they were perceived to be fire hazards. The site of the oldest Chinese store in New York, established in 1891, is 32 Mott Street. The Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association (CCBA) building is also located on Mott Street at number 62.

- **Collect Pond** is an area that was once the site of Manhattan's largest body of water in the 1700s. Once teeming with freshwater fish, the pond covered the area between present-day Franklin and Worth Streets from Lafayette to Baxter Streets. By the turn of the Nineteenth Century, the pond had become almost entirely depleted and was turned into a waste site, earning the nickname of "Collect Pond" because that's exactly what the garbage did: collect. By 1808, it was decided that the Pond simply had to be drained and, as a result, a canal was built to drain the filthy water into the sea. This canal was later paved over to create modern-day Canal Street.

Though advised against it, developers started building on the newly drained land without waiting for it to settle. The new homes were no sooner completed than they began to crack and lean. No residents of even modest means would move in and, as a result, the area soon became the infamous Five Points.

- **Five Points** was established when developers began to build poorly constructed housing on the former Collect Pond site. Located on a corner of present-day Columbus Park, the site marked the intersection of five streets whose neighborhood become Manhattan's first true slum. Over 40,000 residents – almost all of them living in poverty – dwelled in less than half a square mile. These desperate living conditions gave rise to dangerous gangs including the Plug Uglies and the Dead Rabbits, both of whom were immortalized in Martin Scorsese's 2002 film *Gangs of New York*.
- The **Museum of Chinese in the Americas** allows visitors to learn about the Chinese community and view exhibits featuring personal stories, photographs, mementos, and poetry. Displays showcasing Chinese customs and religions are also available to the public. The museum is located at 70 Mulberry Street on the 2nd Floor. For visitors' information, call 212-619-4785.
- Standing at 18 Bowery on the corner of Pell Street, the **Edward Mooney House** is the oldest dwelling in New York City. Erected in 1785 by Edward Mooney and used as a residence until the 1820s, the building has been home to a variety of businesses since, including a hotel, tavern, pool hall, restaurant and bank. Today, the house is a recognized Historic Landmark and open to the public.

- The **Church of the Transfiguration** was built in 1801 by the English Lutheran Church and sold to the Roman Catholic Church of the Transfiguration half a century later. Since its inception, the church has served as a place for immigrants to become adjusted to their new lives in America, and today offers services in Cantonese, Mandarin, and English.

About Chinatown New York City

Chinatown New York City, combines authentic Asian-American culture with the energy and influence of the most exciting city in the world. With over 200 restaurants, numerous Asian bakeries and tea houses, jewelry shops, arts and antique stores, an active nightlife and dozens of cultural attractions and landmarks, Chinatown stands as a world within a city. Whether dining, shopping, or strolling down the charming, narrow streets, visitors to Chinatown New York City, will find virtually limitless opportunities for new experiences and added insight.

Located on the east side of Lower Manhattan, Chinatown New York City, is the largest in the United States. The neighborhood has been growing steadily since the mid-1800s, and today stands as a vibrant community offering the opportunity to enjoy and explore Asian-American culture. Chinatown New York City is easily accessible via many New York City MTA subways and buses, as well as several convenient area parking garages. For more information, visit www.ExploreChinatown.com.

Note to editors: NYC & Company, the city's official tourism marketing organization, is a private, membership-based non-profit dedicated to building New York City's economy and positive image through tourism and convention development, major events and the marketing of the city on a worldwide basis.

NOTE: You are receiving this message because your name and contact information was provided to M. Silver Associates by an authorized media database, source and/or you have requested to receive communications from us. To unsubscribe, please click here: unsubscribe@msilver-pr.com. Please allow 24 hours for updates.

###