

## Revisit Park City Old China Town Site

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On Saturday I had the opportunity to go to Park City, Utah and attend a Chinese culture event called “Revisit Old China Town Site”. Park City is known for its Utah Olympic Park hosted the 2002 Winter Olympics and now predominantly a training facility. Lined with its old town main street, there are vintage buildings built during a 19<sup>th</sup>-century silver mining boom. Beautiful as it is, there is no Old China Town anymore and that erased history is literally a scar in the memory of the Utah American Chinese Community due to the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act.

We gathered at the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of Park City Library. The first thing that we did was we made dumplings with local Park City residents.





There are a lot of different styles of dumplings in China, representing all kinds of good luck symbols. For example, if you take the skin and fold it over into what looks like a silver pound, it represents that you'll be richer in the coming year.

Then we did presentations on Chinese history in Utah. My friend, Zibo, did one on the China bridge in Park City. By 1893, about 400 Chinese residents, most were railroad workers, lived in Park City, roughly 10% of the population. The China bridge was a small, rickety bridge that was funded by a local mine company to build over Chinatown so that people walking east from Main Street to Rossie Hill need not pass through the Chinese neighborhood. Barred from most work in the mining industry, many Chinese residents made ends meet by running restaurants and laundries, or servants and house cooks. Unfortunately, in 1898 the bridge burned down and many Chinese people left the city. In 1903, local labor unions called for a boycott against Chinese-owned businesses. It seems like all residents lost the memory that it was Chinese railroad workers who built one of the first railroads to Park City. Only 3 Chinese families, one operating a laundry and others running restaurants, remained by the 1920s. After WWII, even these families had to leave. The China bridge was eventually replaced with a long staircase and then a parking garage was named after the bridge which is still standing today. Little physical mark was left in Park City since all were demolished.



*Park City, c. 1890s. Courtesy of Park City Historical Society and Museum, Himes-Buck Digital Collection*

I did a presentation on Goji berries in Utah. It was about how during the building of the transcontinental railroad the Chinese laborers had brought over Goji berries to Utah and the Goji berry plants had flourished in our dry soil. It's also about the Phoenix Tear Nursery in Cache Valley who helped tell the story of these plants and their past.



The next and final thing the audiences and organizer did was walk around Chinatown with a “dancing dragon”, a character of a Teamwork. We walked to the China bridge parking garage, took photos, told the stories and then walked back. The local Park City residents, policemen and tourists gave us lots of warm welcomes, hugs, applause and supports.



It was a very fun day. I hope, the next time, humanity could shine in the darkness.