

Detroit Michigan--250th Anniversary

Chinatowns' East & West serves as Detroit Chinatown (1951)

On a beautiful memorable day in July of 1951, Detroit Michigan was celebrating its 250th birthday with a grand parade down Woodward and Michigan Ave. Since the "Motor City's" Chinatown was small in comparison to either the San Francisco or New York Chinatown, the family and business associations of all three Chinatowns agreed to have the St Mary's Chinese all girls High School Drum Corps from the "City by the Bay" and a Dragon Dance Team from the "Big Apple" represent Detroit's Chinatown in the parade. It should be noted that the St. Mary's Drum Corps had a stellar reputation since they have been invited to march in the famous New Year's Day Rose Bowl Parade in Pasadena California several times.

The Detroit Chinatown's 250th anniversary parade segment was a colorful display of the St. Mary's Drum Corps in their beautiful Chinese uniforms marching in precise formations followed by the equally colorful Dragon Dance Team winding down the avenues to the rhythmic beat of the drum, gong, and cymbals to the delight of the crowd along the parade route. All that was missing in this atmosphere of excitement & awe was the booming sound of firecrackers and smoke for many Midwesterners who probably have never saw so many Chinese Americans in one place at any one time. A festive day indeed, concluding with a tasty Chinese Banquet in Chinatown with the bonus of guys and gals socializing and spending some quality time together from San Francisco, Detroit, and New York. A great example of collaboration and logistics planning between the three Chinatowns working together to portray the Chinese American Image in Detroit's 250th birthday celebration was a huge success for all involved.

The familiar faces in the NY Dragon Dance Team are Walter Chin, Tommy Seeto, Wylee Leung, Eugene Eng, Chin Poo, Willie Joe, Doug Louie, David Chinn Jr., Milton Gee, James Ong, Danny Lee, Arthur Ng, and Howard Louie. My apologies are extended to one and all for not remembering the other team members or the senior officials who were with us; whereas, I can only recall them by their Chinese names. Detroit was a beautiful city and the experience of traveling to another Chinatown and Michigan opened my eyes to a world outside of New York via a living lesson in civics and geography. But the highlight of the trip for me was socializing and learning from these lovely and talented St. Mary Chinese High School girls.

Many of the Chinatowns in the USA have either vanished or gotten smaller with only a few storefronts. However, the East and West coast Chinatowns have expanded and satellite Chinatowns are now in the other boroughs in New York and suburbs of Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Washington DC.

Enjoy the New York Dragon Dance Team photo and you may even recognize or remember one or two of your friends at their respective age in the 50's?

Let us now come together at the 2016 Chinatown Reunion among friends old and new and a note of **"Thank You" to Richard Chu & his Team** for their fine efforts in making this reunion a reality...Continue ***...Celebrating the Past... Enjoying the Present (every moment of it)...and Believing in the Future....***

Daniel (Danny) Lee, February 2016, Nashua, New Hampshire

"Happy Chinese New Year" 4714, "Year of the Monkey".....



New York City Chinatown Dragon Dance Team 1951

Detroit Michigan 250th Anniversary Celebration

Left-Right:

Top Row: (X), Walter Chin, Tommy Seeto, Wylee Leung, Eugene Eng, (X) Chin Poo, Willie Joe, Doug Louie, David Chinn Jr. Mr. Louie, Mr. Ng

Middle Row: (X), Milton Gee, (X), (X), (X), James Ong, Daniel (Danny) Lee

Bottom Row: (X), (X), (X), (X), Arthur Ng, Howard Louie, (X), (X)