

## **Hong Kong and the Overseas Chinese Exhibition Series (July 2019)**

The renewed permanent exhibition under planning will not be confined to the development of Hong Kong internally; it will also look at Hong Kong from an international perspective. With this mission in mind, we are going to organise an exhibition series on the overseas Chinese community, focusing first and foremost on the Californian Chinese.

Even though California is only one state in the United States, it is iconic in the history of Chinese emigration. Most early Chinese Americans lived and worked in California, or travelled between the United States and China via California. The majority of the Chinese people who left Guangdong for the United States made California their first stop in the US.

Hong Kong was China's first gateway to the world, and played an indispensable role in the interaction between the two sides of the Pacific Ocean as an in-between place. In 1848, news of the discovery of gold mines in California first spread to Hong Kong. When the news was confirmed the following year, large numbers of Chinese people left Guangdong for San Francisco. From 1850 to 1939, more than 6.3 million Chinese travelled abroad via Hong Kong, and 7.7 million Chinese returned to their hometowns through Hong Kong – most of them travelling between California and China. As the Chinese population in the United States grew, companies specialising in trade with the US, known as "Golden Hill companies", flourished. Chinese food items and groceries wanted by overseas Chinese were shipped to California via Hong Kong, and goods from California were shipped to Hong Kong for sale both locally and in Guangdong. Hong Kong became an important trans-shipment centre in both directions.

As Hong Kong's status as a transit point between China and overseas countries, along with the network and interaction between the two sides of the Pacific, played an important role in shaping the history of both Hong Kong and the United States, we will spare no effort in borrowing a large quantity of artefacts from the US and showcasing the inseparable relationship between the Chinese emigrants and Hong Kong.



Advertisement by the Pacific Mail Steamship Company, which specialized in scheduled routes between San Francisco, in the US, and Hong Kong.

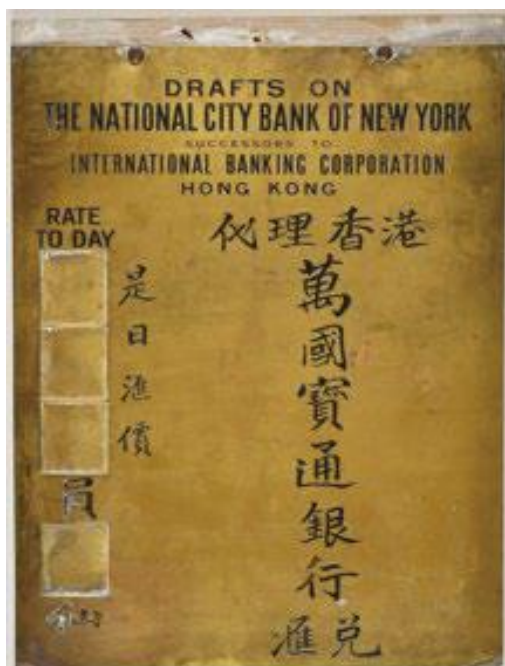


Hong Kong-brand rose wine for sale in the US.





Barrel of soybean sauce shipped from Hong Kong to the US.



An exchange rate notice put up by an agent of the Hong Kong office of the National City Bank of New York for a remittance service for the overseas Chinese community in the US.