

The US Opium Families - the central societal pillars of the American gilded age

- **The Delano family**, ancestors of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, amassed a fortune in the “China Trade”. Warren Delano Jr. was the Chief of Operations for Russell & Company and was a prominent figure in the opium business.
- **The Astor family**, associated with John Jacob Astor, the first multimillionaire in the United States, used the opium profit to build a real estate and finance empire in New York.
- **The Perkins family**, a wealthy Boston mercantile family involved in both the slave trade and the opium trade. They very “charitably” used the opium income to fund many Boston institutions like the Perkins School for the Blind and Massachusetts General Hospital. This reminds one of the famed Jewish Sackler family of Purdue Pharma, who gave the world Oxycontin and art galleries.
- **The Russell family**, the largest American trading house of the mid-19th century in China, founded by Samuel Russell in 1824 and heavily involved in smuggling Turkish and Indian opium.
- **The Forbes family** of Boston, related by marriage to the Perkins family, also gained considerable wealth from the opium trade through Russell & Company. Notable family members involved included Robert Bennet Forbes and John Murray Forbes.
- **Other Boston Brahmin families**, including the Cabots, Cushings, and Welds, used the capital from smuggling opium to build significant fortunes.

THEY STILL CONTROL AMERICAN POLITICAL LANDSCAPE