

University of Central Oklahoma
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**Political Economic Racism: California's Policy Regarding its Asian Immigrants,
1848 -1943**

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

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By

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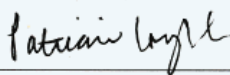
THESIS APPROVAL

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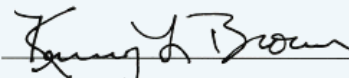
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Abstract of Thesis

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Name: Marcus Kent

Title of Thesis: Political Economic Racism: California's Policy Regarding its Asian Immigrants, 1848-1943

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Abstract: From 1848 – 1943, California enacted a policy known as political economic racism: the act of discriminating against a particular ethnic group economically through the political process. The target of their legislation was Asian immigrants, specifically the Chinese and the Japanese. As the Chinese arrived with countless others as part of the Gold Rush, they quickly faced discrimination, and legislative acts against them. During the 1850s, California enacted several laws designed specifically toward the Chinese. One such law, the Foreigner Miners Tax, generated significant revenue for the state. The Chinese were paying their portion of taxes to a government that provided services to a people that did not like Chinese. Labor groups ultimately formed, pushed for, and received in 1882 an Exclusion Act preventing Chinese laborers from entering into the U.S.

The Japanese started to arrive two years after Chinese Exclusion. They faced a similar treatment from Californians as they worked well in agriculture. Labor groups fought for alien land laws preventing the Japanese from owning land in the state. Several other states, including the District of Columbia, had an alien land law similar to that of proposed Californian law. The state believed their law was in line with existing U.S. treaties with Japan. The law passed in 1913, but the state followed with more

amendments in 1920, 1923, and in 1927. Each law made it more difficult for the Japanese to own, lease, or work on farms in California.

California was not the only state to develop political economic racism. Washington, Montana, and Wyoming, also followed in California's footsteps and enacted the policy as well. The incidents that occurred in these states are reflection of the anti-Asian attitudes that California helped perpetuate. The following will show how California developed the policy of political economic racism and its effects on the state and on areas outside of California.

Introduction

In late April 2010, Arizona Governor Jan Brewer signed into law a new immigration bill designed to restrict the movement of illegal immigrants in the state. The governor claimed she addressed an issue that the federal government continued to avoid. The law, however, was too vague. Although on the surface the public is well aware the bill's purpose is to intimidate and scare illegal Mexicans into leaving and to pressure the federal government into action, nowhere in the law does it define what exactly constitutes an illegal immigrant. Does the white British student who overstayed his or her visa fit this definition? Arizona's candor in addressing its illegal immigration issue is similar to that of California's Chinese and Japanese questions from 1848 – 1943. Multiple governors across the American West confronted the issues associated with the massive influx of Asian immigrants. California, however, developed a specific policy in dealing with the matter. The state spearheaded the movement in creating an environment known as "Yellow Peril." A combination of race, economics, and politics resulted in various legislation at the state level designed to drive the Chinese or Japanese away from California. However, as more and more Asians immigrated to the area despite their attempts, the western states, led by California and labor groups, pushed for and received exclusion laws for the Chinese and eventually the Japanese. James Goldsborough in "California's Foreign Policy" (1993) summed up a common fear, "Californians have always believed that their worse problems came from abroad."¹ The purpose of this thesis

¹ James O. Goldsborough, "California's Foreign Policy," *Foreign Affairs*, 72.2 (Spring 1993): 92.

is show how primarily California, along with states west of the Mississippi River, instituted and implemented a policy of political-economic racism: the act of economically discriminating against a particular ethnic group through the political process. The Chinese and the Japanese became the sole targets of legislation designed to impact them economically. Various labor groups campaign for laws specifically tailored for these groups because they became very successful where white people had previously failed.

Although other states west of the Mississippi River demonstrated similar positions to that of California, they did not have the economic nor political influence California possessed. The Golden State accessed the Asian markets, a growing source of trade for the U.S. The second chapter details the history of Chinese immigration into the nation as part of the gold rush. From there, the story continues with the railroad, factories, all the way to the Exclusion Act in 1882. Despite the attempts of the Six Companies and the clergy, who defended Chinese immigration in the state, This chapter serves as the blueprint for what is to come for the Japanese, who would arrive in California just two years after the Exclusion Act passed. Chapter three continues the story of the Chinese immigrants from after the Exclusion Act passed to its repeal in 1943. Despite the pressure from California and labor unions across the country in getting Chinese excluded from entering the country, labor issues with the Chinese continued. Companies across the U. S. routinely sought out Chinese labor for work and even smuggled them into the country for projects. This section will show that despite the working man's desire to not see any more Chinamen, corporations in the country contained a different viewpoint.

Chapters four and five focus and directs attention toward the Japanese immigrants, who started to arrive in 1884. As the Exclusion Act took effect, Chinese numbers diminished and Californian companies wanted cheap labor. The timing worked out in the corporations favor as the Japanese rushed into the state. But as the Japanese worked for low wages, they started to save and purchase farm land. Soon, Japanese owners hired Japanese tenants, starting a revolution that led to white California believing their state was again under a “Yellow Peril.” In the early part of the twentieth century, labor groups pushed for and received, multiple alien land laws aimed at preventing Japanese ownership of the land in California. Although other states possessed similar laws to California, the Japanese government only focused its attention on preventing passage of the law in that particular state due to overwhelming presence of its citizens residing there. Despite political and economic pressure, a series of alien land laws passed that helped led to the decline of Japanese land ownership.

The rise and fall of both Chinese and Japanese labor in California are both linked to economics, political disposition of the state, and racist laws towards these particular groups. Although other immigrant groups faced various forms of discrimination, they are pale in comparison to the degree in which Asian immigrations became persecuted for making a living. The following is the account of Chinese and Japanese immigration in California from 1848 through 1943. It focuses on their arrival, impact on the state and country, and how these groups responded to their treatment.

Chapter One: The Development of Political Economic Racism

One cannot investigate the anti-Chinese movement in California without examining Ping Chiu's *Chinese Labor in California: An Economic Study*. Chui, a professor of history at the University of Wisconsin, dived into the matter, looking at it with an economic angle. The purpose of the work “is an attempt to describe and analyze the role of Chinese immigrants within the framework of the general economic development of California.”² Looking at a variety of primary sources such as state and federal documents, newspapers, and other premiere scholars, Chui created a manuscript that stands apart from his peers. While most historians who look at the anti-Chinese from more of a political perspective, *Chinese Labor* focuses entirely on the economics, giving a more complete and accurate historical account of the past.³

The book does an excellent job of narrating the Chinese involvement in the economy over the decades. It chronicles the movement from the gold rush to the railroad to the factories. One of the sources used in *Chinese Labor* was J. D. Borthwick's *Three Years in California* (1935). Borthwick noted the Chinese carried a “feminine way of handling tools.”⁴ Also of mention was the evidence of their inexperience in mining matters. The Chinese possessed amateur skills at best yet found a way of completing

Ping Chiu. *Chinese Labor in California, 1850 – 1880: An Economic Study*. [Madison: University of Wisconsin], 1963, ix.

³Ibid, ix.

⁴Ibid, 10-11.

large tasks together. One of the newspapers used in *Three Years in California* was the *Alta California*. This publication documents the daily events in California, including events on the railroad. At one particular juncture in construction, the Chinese workers went on strike. This, however, did not last long. Within a week, the crew went back to work.⁵ Chiu used Census information as a base to help determine when the Chinese entered the agriculture sector of the economy. Because information is so limited, few Chinese are believed to have worked in that industry till the 1870s.⁶

In Martin Brown and Peter Philips's *Competition, Racism, and Hiring Practices among California Manufacturers, 1860-1882* (1986), the authors acknowledge the balance between racism and market structure. Brown and Philip's, like Chiu, look at a variety of primary documents, such as economic reports and newspapers, they examine "the extent to which racism pressures forced the substitution of white women for in-place male Chinese workers in four California manufacturing industries."⁷ As Chinese workers became shut out of gold mining they turned to manufacturing in order to earn a living taking over traditional women's jobs. The industries that Brown and Philips researched began hiring Chinese immigrants during the 1860s when women began to enter the state in numbers. The Woolen Mills, Canneries, Boots & Shoes, and Cigar industries all

⁵ Ping Chiu, *Chinese Labor in California, 1850 – 1880: An Economic Study*, [Madison: University of Wisconsin], 1963, 47.

⁶ *Ibid*, 73.

⁷ Martin Brown and Peter Philips, "Competition, Racism, and Hiring Practices among California Manufacturers, 1860-1882," *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, 40.1 (Oct., 1986): 62.

slowly became dependent on their labor. In testimony on Capitol Hill, a woolen mill operator mentioned finding and training women for job became difficult. Male white labor dried off in the 1860s and grew to be expensive due to the boom the state experienced. The owners in those industries experimented with Chinese labor and the rewards paid off as it developed into a cheaper way to do business. As a result, women found themselves slowly moved out of the job market.⁸ The owner of a jute factory told Congress that his crew consistently “almost entirely Chinese, except the foreman, we tried to get Scotch help, white girls. We imported them for that very purpose, but could not keep them a fortnight. They ran away.”⁹

In Alexander Saxton's *The Indispensable Enemy: Labor and the Anti-Chinese Movement in California*, (1971) uses a plethora of primary documents. Among them are state and federal documents and newspapers. Saxton relies on Hubert Howe Bancroft's *History of California* and Ira B. Cross's *A History of the Labor Movement in California*. The author states “the purpose of this study is to examine the Chinese confrontation on the Pacific Coast, as it was experienced and rationalized by the white majority.”¹⁰ Like Chiu, Saxton too uses the *Alta California* and Census reports as a part of his primary documents. *Indispensable Enemy* uses the *San Francisco Examiner* heavily when

⁸ Ibid, 61 – 64.

⁹ Terry E. Boswell, “A Split Labor Market Analysis of Discrimination Against Chinese Immigrants, 1850-1882,” *American Sociological Review*, 51.3 (June 1986): 362.

¹⁰ Alexander Saxton, *The Indispensable Enemy: Labor and the Anti-Chinese Movement in California*, [Los Angeles: University of California Press], 1971, 2.

discussing the Denis Kearney's Workingman's Party. In the summer of 1877, the WPC staged a variety of events. One event in particular started the night of July 23. Near San Francisco's city hall, a crowd gathered near a sandlot. Throughout the course of the day several speakers made speeches regarding working conditions. As the day turned into night, a walking band of hoodlums aggravated a portion of the crowd. The irritated group went out into the city and started fires and vandalized twenty to thirty Chinese homes. The *Examiner*, a pro-union publication, speculated as to who the criminals could be.¹¹ Saxton differed from Chiu as he focused on the political aspects of events. Although Saxton address the economics and its importance to the unfolding events, he does not go into the depth in which Chiu does.

Saxton draws on Ira Cross's research as he discusses the number of labor unions active in San Francisco from 1882 - 1883. Most trade unions represented a craft usually in one of three big industries: building trades, maritime, and metal trades.¹² The unions lacked effective leadership in the late 1870s into the early 1880s. Saxton and Cross both cite labor union leader Frank Roney and his autobiographical work *Frank Roney, Irish Revel and California Labor Leader* as the main source of information during the time regarding labor union activities. While Roney briefly left California to Nevada and became a socialist, he shortly returned to California.

In the buildup towards the exclusion act other newspapers besides the *Examiner*

¹¹ Alexander Saxton. *The Indispensable Enemy: Labor and the Anti-Chinese Movement in California*. [Los Angeles: University of California Press], 1971, 114.

¹² *Ibid*, 160.

hyped up the anti-Chinese rhetoric. The *San Francisco Truth* published stories about Chinese involvement in labor. Also the Trades Assembly “prepared a statistical survey of Chinese penetration.”¹³ In the report findings they exposed the industries that the Chinese affected the most, particularly “the cigarmakers, tailors, boot and shoemakers, makers of male and female underclothes, brush and broom making and the manufacture of slippers.”¹⁴ *Indispensable Enemy* uses these sources to show how widespread the anti-Chinese attitude was at the time.

As the Chinese question died down as a result of the Exclusion Act in 1882, in the early part of the twentieth century an event took place in California that made President Theodore Roosevelt upset at an entire state and led to whispers of war on both sides of the Pacific Ocean. The incident occurred in San Francisco in 1906 as the local school board voted unanimously to remove their Japanese students and segregate them from the white students. In a review of, *Theodore Roosevelt and the Japanese-American crises: An account of the International Complications Arising from the Race Problem on the Pacific Coast* (1962), Thomas Bailey wrote extensively on the San Francisco School Board decision segregate Japanese students from their schools and the aftermath of their decision, not just for Californians, but for the United States .

Bailey was an assistant professor at Stanford University and wrote numerous articles and books on Japanese immigrants in California. Using a wide-array of primary documents such as letters from key politicians, newspaper, and secondary sources from

¹³ Ibid, 169.

¹⁴Ibid, 169.

other scholars in the field, Bailey broke down a complex issue into an enjoyable read. Although the casual reader will not find some of the material as interesting as historians or anyone looking to do a project on discrimination, students in the field of political science or history readily can use this book as a reference to an event that often goes unnoticed. He discredits those who believe the anti-Japanese movement was primarily a city phenomenon. By showing the support of the anti-Asian groups during this time, he conveys the statewide discrimination against the Japanese.

Bailey's "purpose of the present volume is to examine critically the causes, course, and results of these developments in Japanese-American relations."¹⁵ Throughout the book, he often quoted Roosevelt and his frustration with not only the politicians in California but also the people themselves. The author showed the depth of the problem in the eyes of the president and how something the school board thought affected only them was in fact a major international crisis. In memos to Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, who later became chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, the president writes "it gives me a feeling of disgust to see them challenge Japanese hostility and justify by their actions any feeling the Japanese might have against us."¹⁶ The author's application of such letters effectively displays the concern Roosevelt conveyed during the crisis.

¹⁵ Bailey, Thomas A, "Theodore Roosevelt and the Japanese-American Crisis: An Account of the International Complications Arising from the Race Problem on the Pacific Coast," [Stanford: University of Stanford Press, 1964], vi.

¹⁶ Ibid, 3.

Bailey uses a variety of newspapers during the time to help prove his premise. He frequently supplies the San Francisco papers active during the time such as *Chronicle*, *Argonaut*, and the *Bulletin*. The newspapers provided Bailey with a great source of information as some of the information printed in the newspapers, through fact checking, over exaggerate the Japanese and create perceptions that do not exist for the people of California during the time. The author also looked at foreign newspapers such as the *Japan Weekly Mail* to get an outsiders perspective on the events unfolding in California. Bailey well rounds the points of view to give the reader the big picture yet while still focused on the incident in San Francisco.

The author again used Roosevelt's own words in putting an end to the crisis and easing the Japanese concerns, at least until the alien law appeared six years later. Roosevelt believed that presidents needed to lead during the extreme events and that required the cabinet to follow suit. Because of that philosophy, the commander-in-chief ordered a fleet to sail into the Pacific Ocean. Although the administration began scheduling the expedition two years earlier, Roosevelt wanted to convey a message of strength and understanding. The author exercised the notes from a correspondent of the *London Times* as well as the *Lodge Letters* to effectively show this.

The racism illustrated by Californians during this period often referred to as "race prejudice." Californians fear and discrimination of not just the Japanese, but also their Chinese residents as well, is similar to that of the southern states view toward blacks. During the incident, the author shows how the southern politicians agreed with the school board's decision and supported them openly on the floor of the Congress. The racism,

whether in the form of boycotts, acts of violence, or segregation, did not end in 1906. It continued in California and their actions affected the nation. Bailey wrote how Roosevelt predicted the Californians continued resentment of its Japanese subjects made war seem inevitable between the U. S. and Japan. Overall, Bailey proves his thesis by showing case casing the short and long term implications of the San Francisco school board's decision to segregate their Japanese students from the rest of the general public. The detail the author goes into in the work is extensive, well written, and shows the state of affairs in California in a neutral aspect that the reader can enjoy.

Theodore Roosevelt was not the only president plagued by the state of California. Roger Daniels, author of *Politics of Prejudice* (1962), wrote how the Wilson administration became bogged down in their state of affairs in 1913, seemingly out of nowhere, just like Roosevelt. The Californian government sent word to Wilson they planned on passing an alien land law, with the intent of prohibiting the Japanese from owning land. The Japanese, along with European interest, protested the legislation coming from California. Wilson became two-faced on the alien land law issue out west and eventually did not fight to challenge it.

Daniels outlined in great detail the immigration and cultural presence of the Japanese in California. He documents the birth of Japanese emigration in 1884, the few numbers they first explored the New World, all the way to the eventual Exclusion Act in 1924. The book provides a viewpoint that characterized the race relations in California between its Asian and white communities as an intense struggle for the future of the state. The Japanese numbers continued to grow, their presence ever more widespread, and a sense to be more than just farm helpers went into effect. The Japanese immigrant

population grew to 2.1% in 1920, they accumulated wealth more quickly and worked more efficiently over their white counterparts. The measure of how much that affected society on an economic level brings questions.

Daniels addressed the economic impact the Japanese produced and how it translated into political action in the state. Looking primarily at Masao Suzuki, who was an economics professor at Mills College, the author looks at the different occupations, the wages associated with it, and the general overall wealth of the Japanese community during that time. Daniels discussed a wealth of primary documents throughout the book, detailing the arrival and the impact the Japanese community had while in California. He looks at immigration reports from the state of California, census information, as well as labor reports to accurately portray the farming issue. The Japanese amassed land more rapidly than their white counterparts and in some communities provided the majority of a particular crop such as tomatoes, particularly in the Sacramento area. The anger and frustration began to boil over as white farmers and labors demanded action to combat what they saw as a growing menace. Newspapers often over exaggerated Japanese success stories to showcase an impending doom that will engulf their state if something is not done soon. They tried boycotts, even violence, but the Japanese pumped more emigrants to the U. S.

The term “race prejudice” is used throughout the work to describe the emotion characterized by the laboring class over the perceived Yellow Peril that existed not just in California but in other western states as well. With the Japanese population growing and no end in sight, the author writes how the only grievance Californians sought became the

legislative process. The working class previously “defeated” the perceived Chinese menace in 1882 with an Exclusion Act. They believed the state needed to start the process against the Japanese in order to combat the growing challenges they faced. Beginning in 1911, they began to look into alien land law legislation. Other states passed similar measures to either limit or prevent immigrants from owning land and they saw it as an opportunity to accomplish a similar goal. Daniels effectively showed that, although in 1911 the labor groups failed to gain traction for their cause, it laid the ground work for what became the Alien Land Law of 1913. The phrase “ineligible to citizenship” became a hot button issue throughout the nation. The Japanese became ruled not eligible for citizenship in 1892. Wilson requested that the phrase dropped from the final version of the bill to appease Japanese complaints. The Japanese fought to prevent the alien land law from passing the California state legislature. Led by Viscount Chinda, the Japanese Ambassador, the author explains how the Japanese ambassador met with Wilson and Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan in an attempt to stop the bill. The Japanese, however, confronted many obstacles and grew desperate. With seemingly no true effort from the Wilson Administration, other than a token gesture of sending Bryan to California to talk to California state leaders, the Japanese faced reality: the racism in California grew rampant and manifested itself into legislation.

With Daniels’s research and writing style, the book is excellent for historians, politicians, or anyone looking to learn about a piece of legislation that is often left out of the history books. The author broke down the various sides on the argument, why the alien land laws affected so many different groups of people, and the how the laws impacted not just the immigrants, but citizens all across the state. Although Roosevelt

and Wilson both faced similar adversity in dealing with a Japanese situation in California, the perceived Yellow Peril, and the racism that followed, eventually led to a black eye for the U. S.

Just as the state shifted from the Chinese to the Japanese, the land of California transformed greatly for generations from the mid nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. From the time of the Gold Rush or Silicon Valley, the area consistently built upon the previous decade.¹⁷ With the help of the railroad, the nation expanded bringing immigrants from all over the world, particularly from Asia. In Richard Walker's *California's Golden Road to Riches: Natural Resources and Regional Capitalism, 1848-1940* (2001), he disagrees with those who described the region as resource rich and neglected to realize the importance of other economic sectors.¹⁸ The technology and manufacturing sectors of the economy supported an ever growing agriculture economy, one that became increasingly dependent, and however continued to bring in people from the Far East.¹⁹

As the region out west became more diverse from the influx of the different immigrants, so did the faces on the farm land. In Robert Higgs's *Landless by Law: Japanese Immigrants in California Agriculture to 1941* (1978), he studies the success of

¹⁷ Richard A. Walker, "California's Golden Road to Riches: Natural Resources and Regional Capitalism, 1848 – 1940," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 91.1 (March 2001): 180.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, 167.

¹⁹ Robert Higgs, "Landless by Law: Japanese Immigrants in California Agriculture to 1941," *The Journal of Economic History*, 38.1 (March 1978): 206.

the Japanese in the 2nd half the twentieth century by examining their role in California's agriculture system. From 1890 to 1920, Japanese immigration went up rapidly and by the summer of 1909, 30,000 Japanese worked on farms.²⁰ Higgs addresses the impact of one particular group on society and agreeing with fellow scholars such as Roger Daniels, author of *Politics of Prejudice* (1962). Daniels outlined in great detail the immigration and cultural presence of the Japanese in California. The book provided a viewpoint that characterized the race relations in California between its Asian and white communities as an intense struggle for the future of the state.

The economic impact the Japanese immigrants effected on society is debatable. The Japanese immigrant population grew to 2.1% in 1920, the Japanese immigrants clearly accumulated wealth more quickly and worked more efficiently over their white counterparts. The measure of how much that affected society on an economic level brings questions. Masao Suzuki, a professor of economics, agreed with some of his colleagues that the Japanese immigrants played an important part the everyday life of California but argued that their overall impact is inflated. In his *Success Story? Japanese Immigrant Economic Achievement and Return Migration, 1920-1930* (1995), he analyzes *Landless by Law* but focuses his research on the returning Asian immigrant looking at Higgs, Daniels, and Thomas Sowell among others. He describes how initially the alien land laws had some effect, but as the laws prevented Japanese mobility economically, the immigrants moved back. More immigrants returned to Japan than the country emigrated.

²⁰ Robert Higgs, "Landless by Law: Japanese Immigrants in California Agriculture to 1941," *The Journal of Economic History*, 38.1 (March 1978): 206.

The passage of the 1913 and 1920 alien land law bills impacted the Japanese farmers as the total number of acres owned by them dropped by 34% by 1930.²¹

Miller, Daniels, and Saxton, among others, mainly address the political discourse of events by result of the economic pressures being assaulted against politicians during the respective time. Most historians follow suit in Miller and Daniels's research and focus the bulk of their attention on political rather than the economic in a way that Chiu or Brown and Philip's have. Later historians have attempted fill in the gap on the Chinese labor issue, focusing on the years after the Exclusion Act became and law, and before its repeal. Lawrence Douglas Taylor Hansen's *The Chinese Six Companies of San Francisco and the Smuggling of Chinese Immigrants across the U.S.-Mexico Border, 1882-1930* (2006), is one of many that illustrates that although most Chinese were forbidden to enter the U.S., companies still demanded Chinese labor to work on their projects.

The term political economic racism comes out of a result of years of research into the Chinese and Japanese labor movement in California. In Isabella Black's article *Labour and Chinese Immigration* (1963), she describes how three things led to legislation being passed against Asian immigrants; those items were race, politics, and economics. In many respects, the items fed off each other. The Asian immigrants were easy to point out and many did not try to assimilate into American culture. More and more Asians would arrive, becoming prosperous, setting into motion political action as a way to stem the tide in favor of the white man.

²¹ Masao Suzuki, "Success Story? Japanese Immigrant Economic Achievement and Return Migration, 1920-1930," *The Journal of Economic History*, 55.4 (Dec., 1995): 895.

While the term political economic racism may be new, it is not without precedent. African-Americans in the South faced extreme prejudice after the Civil War ended. Among the hardships was economic discrimination. The Irish encounter a similar position in Northern cities when they started to look for work. Signs were held up in buildings saying “NINA”, No Irish Need Apply. While there was no law passed not allowing the employment of Irish workers, some could not find a ways of supporting themselves. Californians used political economic racism on Mexicans when they started to become wealthy prior to the Asians. No matter the race, white Californians turn to the political system as a way of dealing with a particular ethnic group that posed a threat to them economically.

Chapter Two: The Chinese Question: From the Gold Rush to Exclusion, 1848 – 1882

In 1848 James Marshall discovered gold in California, propelling the region into a transformation of rapid growth. Immigrants from all across the globe flocked to the future state to stake a claim. Among this group, the Chinese went from being one of the most welcomed groups to being the subject of several laws designed to impede their progress, both economically and materially.²² What happened in California from 1850 – 1882 became nothing short of political-economic racism: an attempt to economically exclude a particular ethnic group through the political process. In order for this to occur, the masses become convinced a minority group threaten their way of life and the political process is the only available course of action. Californian's systemic effort to undermine its Chinese immigrants, through political-economic racism, eventually resulted in the Exclusion Act of 1882.

As merchant traders carried word the following year of the discovery of gold in the U.S., the Chinese government welcomed the news and allowed its citizens to leave because overpopulation became an issue. The allure and attraction of California stimulated many but most could not afford to make the journey. In order to make the trip, Chinese middlemen, who carried no government affiliation, paid for their trip and in exchange they kept the immigrants' earnings until they paid them off. The Six

²² Martin Ridge, "Disorder Crime, and Punishment in the California Gold Rush," *Montana: The Magazine of Western History*, 49.3 (Autumn 1999): 12.

Companies, who established themselves in California, typically made these loans.²³

Although many historians refer to this as “debt peonage,” it did not dissuade many on the prospect of becoming rich overnight and returning to China.²⁴ Years of poor farming conditions from the Yangtse floods, many farmers from the Kwangtung (Guangdong) Province in the Pearl River Delta region, departed from Hong Kong to the U.S. with no mining experience or training. The Taiping Rebellion (1851 – 64) and the Hakka-Punti War also caused immigration waves to America as well as internal struggle from the opium trade.²⁵

Although few in numbers, Chinese women appeared at the start of the gold rush and generally became prostitutes once in America. The Chinese viewed their daughters as an economic commodity because the son inherited everything. In 1849, Ah Toy became San Francisco’s most famous prostitute. Despite being illegal, American obsession with exotic women brought over females such as Ah Toy across the Pacific to make money and she became an exception to every rule. She spoke fluent English and charged an

²³ Terry E. Boswell, “A Split Labor Market Analysis of Discrimination Against Chinese Immigrants, 1850-188,” *American Sociological Review*, 51.3 (June 1986): 358.

²⁴ Daniel Cornford, “‘We All Live More like Brutes than Humans’: Labor and Capital in the Gold Rush,” *California History*, 77.4 (Winter 1998/1999): 85 – 86.

²⁵ Randall Rohe, “Chinese River Mining in the West,” *Montana: The Magazine of Western History*, 46.3 (Autumn 1996): 14; Kristofer Allerfeldt, “Race and Restriction: Anti-Asian Immigration Pressures in the Pacific North-west of American during the Progressive Era, 1885 – 1924,” *The Historical Association*, 88.289 (2003): 58.

ounce of gold dust just to look at her.²⁶ Her occupation led her to court over the next few years over various issues. But as male Chinese businessmen brought in more prostitutes and expanded throughout the state, some women, such as Ah Toy, took a new role as wife.²⁷ Elmer Sandmeyer's *The Anti-Chinese Movement in California* (1991) draws upon various accounts from immigrants. He discussed how the majority of women brought to the state came as prostitutes. For women this was their "debt peonage." The authorities looked the other way for prostitutes in general. The state passed the Page Law of 1875 in order to stop Chinese women from entering but a network still brought them in.²⁸ In 1866, California enacted a law designed to limit Chinese prostitution to certain geographic areas. The state attempted in 1870 to prohibit Chinese prostitutes from entering by fining captains of ships bringing them in. Despite the prospect of the state commissioner of immigration keeping part of the fines and the request of help on the matter to a British delegation in Hong Kong, prostitutes continued to flow into California.²⁹

²⁶ Nancy J. Taniguchi, "Weaving a Different World: Women and the California Gold Rush," *California History*, 79.2 (Summer 2000): 153.

²⁷ *Ibid*, 154.

²⁸ George Anthony Peffer, "From under the Sojourner's Shadow: A Historiographical Study of Chinese Female," *Journal of American Ethnic History*, 11.3 (Spring 1992): 44.

²⁹ Yong Chen, *Chinese San Francisco, 1850 – 1943: a Trans-Pacific Community*, [Stanford: Stanford University Press], 2000, 98.

In the two years since the discovery of gold, only 500 Chinese miners operated in California, and 1,000 Chinese people landed in the U.S. As the Chinese began to arrive by the boatloads white miners sensed they followed in the footsteps of Mexican labor.³⁰ In 1851, over a twenty-four hour period, more than 1,000 Chinese landed in San Francisco looking for the chance to strike it rich. The following year, 20,000 Chinese went to California heading for the mining towns.³¹ Once in America, the Six Companies oversaw the immigrants, making sure they did not flee back to China or elsewhere to escape their debt. The Californian government allowed them to associate with authorities to enforce contracts. The Six Companies frequently served as an un-official part of the government in this capacity. Most of the new arrivals intended to return to China once they found riches. Of the nearly 100,000 who entered the U. S. by 1867, only around 45,000 remained.³²

As the Chinese emigrants flooded into California, the state already began preparations of its discriminatory policy towards them. In 1850, the state enacted the Foreigner Miners Tax, which required non-U. S. miners to purchase a licensing fee of \$20 a month. Originally, the tax targeted Mexicans, and roughly 10,000 of them left the state. Although

³⁰ Daniel Cornford, "We All Live More like Brutes than Humans?: Labor and Capital in the Gold Rush," *California History*, 77.4 (Winter 1998/1999): 84 – 86.

³¹ Quoted in Rodman W. Paul, "The Origin of the Chinese Issue in California," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 25.2 (Sept., 1938): 181 – 191.

³² Terry E. Boswell, "A Split Labor Market Analysis of Discrimination Against Chinese Immigrants, 1850-1882." *American Sociological Review*, 51.3 (June 1986): 357.

the state repealed the law the following year, it soon needed another one to combat the growth of the Chinese immigrants.³³ The allure of the gold mines led to whites avoiding regular work and California needed cheap labor in order to keep pace with the boom taking place. One state senator introduced legislation to fix the wages of Chinese workers for durations of ten years or less through a system of contract labor. Newspapers cried foul, and one legislator submitted a report against the law.³⁴ In the 1850s, the emergence of companies replaced individuals working on placer mines. Banks lowered interest rates, encouraging more claims, and explosives reached the west coast, making mining more dangerous for the individual. These two factors led people to join companies.³⁵ Daniel Cornford's *We All Live More like Brutes than Humans: Labor and Capital in the Gold Rush* (1998), looks at Rodman Paul's *California Gold* (1947) as the modern study and examines the sources used. Cornford acknowledged that although data estimating miner's wages was shaky, the wage of the miners decreased from \$20 per day in 1848 to \$3 per day by the mid 1850s. Even though the cost of living went down as well, white miners typically blamed the Chinese immigrants for the decline. Although both works are labor-

³³ Daniel Cornford, "We All Live More like Brutes than Humans': Labor and Capital in the Gold Rush," *California History*, 77.4 (Winter 1998/1999): 86.

³⁴ Rodman W. Paul, "The Origin of the Chinese Issue in California," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 25.2 (Sept., 1938): 187.

³⁵ Terry E. Boswell, "A Split Labor Market Analysis of Discrimination Against Chinese Immigrants, 1850-1882," *American Sociological Review*, 51.3 (June 1986): 359.

orientated, historians often cite *California Gold* to showcase the effects of gold's impact on the state.³⁶

In 1851 the Chinese developed two huiguan, or districts associations, in San Francisco. These organizations comprised of people who spoke similar dialect back in China. Several more companies developed over time and they eventually became known as the Six Companies. The Six Companies provided a variety of support such as legal assistance once immigrants adjusted to life in America.³⁷

The anti-Chinese movement began the following year as white miners attempted to exclude Chinese from mining at several sites throughout the state.³⁸ But the new tax stemming from the protest from white miners became dwarfed by one state legislator's comments:

"The time is not far distant when absolute prohibition of entry will be necessary for our own protection... We respectfully recommend that the attention of Congress shall be called to this subject, and that we forward to our own Representatives instructions to seek a remedy at the hands of the Federal Government by proper treaty provisions...

³⁶ Daniel Cornfold, "'We All Live More like Brutes than Humans': Labor and Capital in the Gold Rush," *California History*, 77.4 (Winter 1998/1999): 80.

³⁷ Lawrence Douglas Taylor Hansen, "The Chinese Six Companies of San Francisco and the Smuggling of Chinese Immigrants across the U.S.-Mexico Border, 1882-1930," *Journal of the Southwest*, 48.1 (Spring 2006): 39-48.

³⁸ Randall Rohe, "Chinese River Mining in the West," *Montana: The Magazine of Western History*, 46.3 (Autumn 1996): 17.

determining here at home to exercise the right of our State sovereignty, and protect ourselves should necessity demand.”³⁹

The white miners mustered enough political strength to impose a new levy against them that previously attacked Mexicans for similar reasons. This tariff initially started at \$3 but later rose to \$4. This became the first of several targeted pieces of legislation aimed at the Chinese. This tax became a large revenue generator for the state since the Chinese paid the majority of the taxes, and in some counties the tax provided 50% of the income. Even as the governor called upon the state legislature to limit Chinese immigration, collectors of the tax often killed Chinese immigrants when they failed to pay, and the collectors rarely faced reprimand.⁴⁰ Eighty-eight Chinese men died as a result of failure to pay the tax; only two officers were convicted of a crime.⁴¹

In 1852 and 1853, the state legislature passed a law requiring each ship to post a \$500 fee for its passengers. Ships passed the cost along to the passengers and each paid a share of the \$500 and the amount varied by the number of people onboard. By 1855, a new ordinance passed mandating each passenger aboard a ship pay \$50, and in 1858 a new law prohibited Chinese and Mongolians entering California at all. Although the state Supreme Court declared both laws unconstitutional, the atmosphere started to lean towards exclusion, and by the end of the 1850s, several counties wrote laws prohibiting

³⁹ Rodman W. Paul, “The Origin of the Chinese Issue in California,” *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 25.2 (Sept., 1938): 189.

⁴⁰ Isabella Black, “American Labour and Chinese Immigration,” *Past & Present*, 25 (July 1963): 63.

⁴¹ Memorial: The Chinese Six Companies. An Address to the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States, San Francisco, Dec. 8th, 1877, 47.

Chinese in their by-laws.⁴² California attempted to exclude the Chinese three years later and threatened fines and jail time of anyone convicted for bringing them into the state.⁴³

During the beginning of the Chinese question in California, several local newspapers asked their readers to consider the economic consequences of either taxing Chinese miners or forcing them out entirely. Mining communities benefited from the revenue generated by the immigrants in the form of schools and hospitals. The *Auburn Herald* put it bluntly saying “expel the Chinamen and Bankrupt the State. We do not believe it practicable or desirable that the Chinamen shall be expelled.”⁴⁴ In the early 1850s, the governor insisted that the legislature look into curbing the growing Asian immigration to make sure the state kept the gold in the country. White miners often viewed Chinese labor as a form of slavery and they frequently claimed the Chinese lowered the standard of living for everyone.⁴⁵ The state committee of Mines and Mining

⁴² Mark Kanazawa, “Immigration, Exclusion, and Taxation: Anti-Chinese Legislation in Gold Rush California,” *The Journal of Economic History*, 65.3 (Sept., 2005): 9; Isabella Black, “American Labour and Chinese Immigration,” *Past & Present*, 25 (July 1963): 63.

⁴³ Isabella Black, “American Labour and Chinese Immigration,” *Past & Present*, 25 (July 1963): 62 – 65.

⁴⁴ Quoted in Mark Kanazawa, “Immigration, Exclusion, and Taxation: Anti-Chinese Legislation in Gold Rush California,” *The Journal of Economic History*, 65.3 (Sept., 2005): 10.

⁴⁵ Terry E. Boswell, “A Split Labor Market Analysis of Discrimination Against Chinese Immigrants, 1850-1882,” *American Sociological Review*, 51.3 (June 1986): 356.

issued a report stating the state revenue was dependent upon the Chinese.⁴⁶ Sacramento County, the second largest Chinese enclave and yet one of the most anti-Chinese communities, received \$1,200 a month from the foreigner miners tax.⁴⁷ By March 1855, the legislature considered three separate bills pertaining to prohibition of Chinese from mining.⁴⁸

Of all the different types of mining, river mining started as the primary method of extracting gold in California with the American River being one of the first sites. However, heavy rains forced many whites to abandon this idea after they turned up empty. This led to the Chinese moving in and taking over areas such as the Yuba River at the beginning of 1852. Companies generally contained twenty-five to fifty men, and within a few years they controlled several mining streams. In 1857, the *Sacramento Union* noticed the wealth the immigrants earned in these mining operations and their ability to successfully invest money. The following two years saw even more Chinese move into the industry as white miners flocked to other sites. With one site pulling in \$40,000 a week, the individual Chinese immigrant possessed large amounts of territory entering the 1860s. Water companies built irrigation systems on placer mine sites in order

⁴⁶ Mark Kanazawa, "Immigration, Exclusion, and Taxation: Anti-Chinese Legislation in Gold Rush California," *The Journal of Economic History*, 65.3 (Sept., 2005): 14.

⁴⁷ Cheryl L. Cole, "Chinese Exclusion: The Capitalist Perspective of the Sacramento Union, 1850-1882," *California History*, 57.1 (Spring 1978): 12 – 13.

⁴⁸ Mark Kanazawa, "Immigration, Exclusion, and Taxation: Anti-Chinese Legislation in Gold Rush California," *The Journal of Economic History*, 65.3 (Sept., 2005): 10.

to control the flow of water. Placer mines are sites located in rivers or streams, and by charging high fees for the control of water, these companies fell victim to strikes by white miners. White miners retaliated against Chinese miners because they believed the Chinese weakened their position. Having drained the Merced River by 1861, several newspapers commented on the work of the Chinese and their ability to accomplish a great deal without using machinery. They frequently worked areas that previous owners believed to be dry or un-workable. In one such instance, a Chinese company leased an area for three thousand dollars and left with a significant amount of gold.⁴⁹

Gold was not the only industry the Chinese sought to make a living; they also went on to found California's salt-water fishing industry. With four chief areas of operation, the greatest camp resided in San Francisco Bay. After the Foreigner Miner's Tax in 1854, some Chinese entered the industry having failed at mining. In 1860, the state legislature passed a law taxing Chinese fishermen \$4 a month. The levy caused an exodus of fishermen, and the loss of revenue led to its repeal in 1864. During the 1870s, a conservation wave swept across the U. S., especially among regulatory agencies. In 1880, the state attempted to exclude the Chinese all-together from fishing as the anti-Chinese rhetoric reached its shores. Whites, along with other Caucasian groups, wanted to remove the Chinese from fishing areas. Although ruled un-constitutional, the state tried to

⁴⁹ Randall Rohe, "Chinese River Mining in the West," *Montana: The Magazine of Western History*, 46.3 (Autumn 1996): 19 – 22.

prohibit the Chinese from earning a living.⁵⁰ Although the courts struck down laws they found unconstitutional, the police force in general lacked the courts' enthusiasm when helping Chinese immigrants. Before the California State Senate, George Duffield, a Sacramento police officer, believed, the Chinese did not care about the U.S.'s laws and customs.⁵¹ In 1859, Shasta County Sheriffs needed help from the governor to assist in controlling a mob that attempted to force the Chinese out of the city. The local newspaper advocated for keeping the immigrants in town.⁵²

From the gold and other natural mineral production came the ever-growing demand to better ship products across the U. S. By January 1853, the senate heard the calls of a Pacific railroad subsidy bill by Senator William Gwin. Although his calls for a transcontinental railroad fell on deaf ears, Californians soon rejoiced as Republicans took control of the White House and Congress in 1860. With a solid Republican majority, Californians saw their dreams come true as President Abraham Lincoln signed the Pacific Railroad bill into law. The 1862 and 1864 bills provided substantial amounts of federal assistance for the construction of the railroad. As the gold rush era ended, the Chinese

⁵⁰ L. Eve Armentrout-Ma, "Chinese in California's Fishing Industry, 1850-1941," *California History*, 60.2 (Summer 1981): 143 – 144.

⁵¹ John C. Lammers, "The Accommodation of Chinese Immigrants in Early California Courts," *Sociological Perspectives*, 37.4 (Oct., 1988): 457.

⁵² Judson A. Grenier, "Officialdom: California State Government, 1849-1879," *California History*, 81.3/4, (2003): 155.

began to look for work elsewhere.⁵³ The Central Pacific Railroad, owned by white Californians, issued calls for thousands of white laborers, only to receive a lukewarm response and they turned to the Six Companies to bring in workers. Shortly after construction began on the railroad, the Irish workers pressed for higher pay.⁵⁴ Charlie Crocker decided to try Chinese for the railroad after one of his assistants suggested to try them since the labor pool diminished with each passing day. The government paid his company handsomely for each mile of track laid, and the corporation faced falling behind because workers threatened to strike. One of Crocker's top assistants commented how the Chinese built the Great Wall; therefore, they could do railroad construction.⁵⁵ Although the Chinese usually broke strikes, they became preferred as the Irish and other white employees generally quit once having earned enough money. In the last few years of railroad construction, the Chinese competed against each other for jobs as more skilled Chinese looked for work, which led to various strikes. By the time construction of the railroad finished in 1869, the Central Pacific employed mostly Chinese.⁵⁶

⁵³ Robert J. Chandler, "An Uncertain Influence: The Role of the Federal Government in California, 1846-1880," *California History*, 81.3/4 (2003): 231.

⁵⁴ Cheryl L. Cole, "Chinese Exclusion: The Capitalist Perspective of the Sacramento Union, 1850-1882," *California History*, 57.1 (Spring 1978): 14.

⁵⁵ Craig Storti, *Incident at Bitter Creek: The Story of the Rock Springs Chinese Massacre*, [Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1991], 5 – 23.

⁵⁶ Terry E. Boswell, "A Split Labor Market Analysis of Discrimination Against Chinese Immigrants, 1850-1882," *American Sociological Review*, 51.3 (June 1986): 356.

In the 1860s, white owners of cigar businesses ended a boycott of hiring Chinese, and by the start of the following decade they rolled the majority of cigars in San Francisco. The cigar industry employed more Chinese as the years passed in order to keep costs down as a way to compete with manufactures on the east coast. To help boost sales, white cigar distributors issued a special stamp acknowledging white male workers made the product, and the California State Legislature supported the notion. Despite the attempt of being a company that employed only whites, several workers testified their companies hired Chinese.⁵⁷ One factory owner commented how finding good young workers became difficult. They frequently worked poorly or ran off to do other things. He proclaimed, “You take a Chinaman, a green China boy, into your factory and show him just how to do a thing, and if you leave him and come back, it is a year afterward, you find him doing the work precisely as you instructed him.”⁵⁸

The Chinese entered the agriculture labor market by the 1870s in Sacramento and San Joaquin counties. Within a decade, some white landowners employed Chinese as land tenants. Some grew fruit trees and until the trees matured, the owners charged a small rent. When the trees bore fruit, the rent increased due to the ability to sell the fruit for profit. By the 1880s, agriculture became one of the leading economic industries for the state and the Chinese. Large scale farms needed seasonal help and with the immigrants

⁵⁷ Martin Brown and Peter Philips, “Competition, Racism, and Hiring Practices among California Manufacturers, 1860-1882,” *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, 40.1 (Oct., 1986): 71.

⁵⁸ Ping Chiu, *Chinese Labor in California, 1850 – 1880: An Economic Study*, [Madison: University of Wisconsin], 1963, 59.

often running the farm, picking who to hire and setting the pay rate, the Chinese often received those jobs.⁵⁹

The 1870s brought a whirlwind of change to Californians as the state, and several cities passed laws against the Chinese. These included “minimum lodging space laws, bans or taxes on use of poles to carry laundry or vegetables, bans on the wearing of queues (braids), prohibitions from owning land, and prohibitions on being hired from municipal works.”⁶⁰ In previous decades the Republicans condemned those who wanted to physically force the Chinese from the state. But by the 1870s, the economic climate made the party change its tune and started to move towards exclusion.⁶¹ In 1871 in Amador County, a strike broke out as the company decided to cut wages. They slashed the wage down to \$2 per day and shortly after the protest began. The “Amador War” became the Amador County Laborer’s Association with its four hundred members versus their employer. The group wanted an increase in pay and to prohibit Chinese employment with the company as much as possible. The union achieved its pay increase but failed to limit

⁵⁹ Sucheng Chan, “Chinese Livelihood in Rural California: The Impact of Economic Change, 1860-1880,” *The Pacific Historical Review*, 53.3 (Aug., 1984): 293 – 294.

⁶⁰ Terry E. Boswell, “A Split Labor Market Analysis of Discrimination Against Chinese Immigrants, 1850-1882,” *American Sociological Review*, 51.3 (June 1986): 364.

⁶¹ Cheryl L. Cole, “Chinese Exclusion: The Capitalist Perspective of the Sacramento Union, 1850-1882,” *California History*, 57.1 (Spring 1978): 9.

hiring of Chinese.⁶² As the Panic of 1873 swept into the west, San Francisco approved a measure taxing Chinese laundries with 1) \$2.00 quarterly for laundry employing one horse-drawn vehicle; 2) \$4.00 quarterly for laundries employing two or more vehicles; 3) \$15.00 quarterly for laundries employing no vehicles.⁶³ The economic recession left many whites without work even though the Chinese possessed jobs. The downturn combined with drought in 1876 – 77 hurt agriculture and “the Chinese again became the scapegoats for the difficult economic situation.”⁶⁴ With the completion of the railroad, east coast manufactures brought their products out west. This led to a decline in wages and the formation of “anti-coolie” clubs to combat Chinese labor.⁶⁵

Most of the Chinese who went to America wanted to acquire large sums of money with the purpose of buying their family out of tenant farming in China. The average wage in California was \$30 a month, in which case an immigrant could pay off his debt in a matter of a few months, profit the rest after the debt was paid, and then return to China with a healthy amount. The Californian government enacted other laws specifically targeting the Chinese. The state charged the Chinese a Hospital Tax with when such

⁶² Daniel Cornford, “‘We All Live More like Brutes than Humans’: Labor and Capital in the Gold Rush,” *California History*, 77.4 (Winter 1998/1999): 98.

⁶³ Roger Olmsted, “The Chinese Must Go!” *California Historical Quarterly*, 50.3 (Sept., 1971): 287.

⁶⁴ Eric W. Fong and William T. Markham, “Anti-Chinese Politics in California in the 1870s: An Intercounty Analysis,” *Sociological Perspectives*, 42.2 (Summer 2002): 192.

⁶⁵ Terry E. Boswell, “A Split Labor Market Analysis of Discrimination Against Chinese Immigrants, 1850-1882,” *American Sociological Review*, 51.3 (June 1986): 365.

services were not available to them. A Laundry Tax became imposed on the Chinese, charging \$15 if one did not use a vehicle for the purposes of collecting and delivery laundry. The charge became less if one used a vehicle to obtain laundry.⁶⁶

California was not the only place that suffered from Chinese labor strikes. In the fall of 1874 in Rock Springs, Wyoming, coal miners of the Union Pacific wanted a wage increase to go along with the increase in demand of coal. The governor visited the town and asked the men not to strike, which set to take place in a few days. After the governor's comments, a negotiator told the crowd that the company intended to bring Chinese into the mines they worked if a strike occurred. Prior to the deadline, Union Pacific official sent a request for Chinese labor in case the situation was not resolved. In early November, around 500 miners at two sites walked off the job and encouraged other miners in the area to do the same. The mood turned ugly as the union picketed the mines after the company paid laid-off workers off. Governor John Thayer sent troops to Rock Springs to protect the mines and company employees. The workers requested a meeting with the governor and he became less sympathetic to their cause. Thayer intended on leaving troops in the city for as long as possible.⁶⁷

As the strike continued, the governor returned to Rock Springs, only this time he brought Chinese strikebreakers with him. Thayer warned the workers the U. S. Army

⁶⁶ Craig Storti, *Incident at Bitter Creek: The Story of the Rock Springs Chinese Massacre*, [Ames: Iowa State University Press], 1991: 5 – 23.

⁶⁷ Craig Storti, *Incident at Bitter Creek: The Story of the Rock Springs Chinese Massacre*, [Ames: Iowa State University Press], 1991: 64 – 68.

would enforce law and order if violence erupted. Union Pacific posted a list of employees eligible to return to work, the others needed to leave town within two days. As the miners angrily left town, the Chinese went to work in the mines. The company became quickly satisfied at their rate of progress and how pleased they appeared to be working in the mine. Union Pacific sent word to the governor's office thanking him for his continued support. The strike may have been over in Rock Springs but resentment toward the Chinese lingered. The company routinely gave them the best rooms to operate in, leaving white miners left to the more dangerous rooms. White miners routinely shifted between rooms in favor of Chinese. Union Pacific closed a mine and refused to offer employment to any of its white employees; the Chinese however, quickly received work, leaving some white miners without work for months.⁶⁸

Violence against the Chinese became a common occurrence as the economy went down. In 1871, fifteen Chinese hung in the streets of Los Angeles following riots, and twenty-five Chinese businesses burned to the ground in 1877. The movement reached its boiling point as even bigger riots took place in the months ahead.⁶⁹ In late July 1877, San Francisco became the epicenter of the anti-Chinese movement as a white mob attacked a crowd in San Francisco's "Chinatown." 10,000 San Franciscans shouted "Death to the capitalist" as they assaulted Chinese.⁷⁰ The Workingmen's Party of California (WPC)

⁶⁸Ibid, 68 – 83.

⁶⁹ Isabella Black, "American Labour and Chinese Immigration," *Past & Present*, 25 (July 1963): 67.

⁷⁰ Cheryl L. Cole, "Chinese Exclusion: The Capitalist Perspective of the Sacramento Union, 1850-1882," *California History*, 57.1 (Spring 1978): 19.

started to organize in the wake of the riots throughout the city. The community told countless stories of women being the victim of Chinese labor and having to go into prostitution. The story of Mary Wollaston became a common occurrence. Her family lost the farm due to floods, and when her father passed away, she left for the city to find work. Wollaston found a job, only to be replaced by less expensive Chinese workers.⁷¹

The WPC and a San Francisco newspaper sensationalized her story, along with others, to show how white women, as well as white men, found themselves pushed out of the labor market by Chinese immigrants.⁷² Although women did work with Chinese, companies frequently separated the two from one other.⁷³ With the onset of the depression sweeping across the nation in the mid-1870s, many companies turned to immigrant labor. For women that meant being squeezed out of an already decreasing job market. As Chinese immigrants entered the shirt industry, wages fell from \$1.25 to \$1.00. Although the completion of the transcontinental railroad brought more competition from the northeastern states, the depression, coupled with Chinese immigrants, lowered wages. Even though women could not vote or join labor unions, California Senator Aaron Sargent in 1876 stated, “[the Chinese] has taken labor from women—such work as gave them honest and virtuous independence, and has driven too many of them to resort to

⁷¹ Martha Mable Gardner, “Working White Womanhood: White Working Women in the San Francisco Anti-Chinese Movement, 1877-1890,” *Journal of Social History*, 33.1 (Autumn 1999): 74.

⁷² *Ibid*, 73 – 75.

⁷³ Martin Brown and Peter Philips, “Competition, Racism, and Hiring Practices among California Manufacturers, 1860-1882,” *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, 40.1 (Oct., 1986): 72.

practices of shame and guilt.”⁷⁴ The WPC was not the only force directly behind the anti-Chinese movement. The Knights of Labor, along with *The Truth*, a pro-labor newspaper, published articles in support of the cause. The National Labor Union had supported exclusion in 1870, and the Industrial Congress and Industrial Brotherhood followed suit in 1874. Unions as far away as New England advocated limiting Chinese immigration.⁷⁵ By the end of the decade the *San Francisco Evening Bulletin* described how the business class began to change its opinion: “the merchants have been the last to realize it but I think that nearly all of them understand now that their business is falling off because the laboring man cannot earn money to buy.”⁷⁶

In *Working on White Womanhood: White Working Women in the San Francisco Movement, 1877-1890* (1999), Martha Mable Gardner writes about the similar tones historians use when generalizing the anti-Chinese movement. Drawing conclusions based upon the Workingmen’s Party of California’s documents and newspapers, she illustrates the women’s involvement before and after the Exclusion Act. Gardner describes how the many Mary Wollaston’s stories became a vehicle for which the white male working class to protect itself to get the Chinese excluded from the U. S. The white males took the

⁷⁴ Martha Mable Gardner, “Working White Womanhood: White Working Women in the San Francisco Anti-Chinese Movement, 1877-1890,” *Journal of Social History*, 33.1 (Autumn 1999): 78.

⁷⁵ Isabella Black, “American Labour and Chinese Immigration,” *Past & Present*, 25 (July 1963): 72.

⁷⁶ Robert Seager II, “Some Deminational Reactions to Chinese Immigration to California, 1856 – 1892,” *The Pacific Historical Review*, 28.1 (Feb., 1959): 60.

articles and exaggerated them to appear to be an everyday occurrence.⁷⁷ Denis Kearney became one of the influential leaders behind the cause leading the WPC. He ended each speech with “the Chinese must go!” This party sent 50 delegates to the state’s constitutional convention and became a major player at the table.⁷⁸

Section two of the new Constitution affirmed “No corporation now existing or hereafter formed under the laws of this State, shall, after the adoption of this Constitution, employ, directly or indirectly, in any capacity, any Chinese or Mongolian. The Legislature shall pass such laws as may be necessary to enforce this provision.”⁷⁹ He wanted to drive the Chinese out of California by any means possible. In 1878, he told a crowd in San Francisco, if weapons fail to drive away the Chinese the ballot box will.⁸⁰ Kearney generally promoted his cause every Sunday in sand lots across California and on an east coast trip, he met with the president and promoted WPC party’s policies.⁸¹

The clergy in California became the main ally of the Chinese. They viewed the immigrants not as labor servants but rather as people to convert to Christianity. As the

⁷⁷ Martha Mable Gardner, “Working White Womanhood: White Working Women in the San Francisco Anti-Chinese Movement, 1877-1890,” *Journal of Social History*, 33.1 (Autumn 1999): 74.

⁷⁸ Isabella Black, “American Labour and Chinese Immigration,” *Past & Present*, 25 (July 1963): 64.

⁷⁹ Elmer Clarence Sandmeyer, *The Anti-Chinese Movement in California*, [Chicago: University of Illinois], 1973, 70.

⁸⁰ “Kearney Coming,” *The New York Times*, 11 July 1878, 3.

⁸¹ “Denis Kearney at the White House,” *The New York Times*, 29 August 1878, 1.

mood turned sour and violence broke out in several cities against the immigrants, the church attempted to make its voice louder. It opposed the 1877 Shelly bill making its way through congress. The proposal called for a \$250 head tax as a way to restrict Chinese immigration. Although not all members of the cloth embraced the Chinese, the church frequently pointed out that they made the railroad and other economic successes possible.⁸²

For the election of 1867 both political parties adopted policies against Chinese citizenship. In 1870, several labor union sent a warning to the leaders of the Six Companies stating they believed it no longer safe for the Chinese to keep coming to America.⁸³ By 1876, the politics of discrimination showed at all levels throughout the government. The two major parties gave their stance on where they stood with the Chinese question. The Democrats favored exclusion while the Republicans wanted to study the effects of Chinese immigration. Each party appealed to its base in order to increase the chances of winning. In October and November 1876, a special Senate Committee held meetings in San Francisco to publicly discuss the Chinese situation. One of the state's U. S. Senators, A. A. Sargent, chaired the panel after the death of Senator Oliver Morton, who defended the Chinese. Sargent wrote the group's majority report urging Congress for the exclusion of Chinese laborers into the country. Although the

⁸² Robert Seager II, "Some Deminational Reactions to Chinese Immigration to California, 1856 – 1892," *The Pacific Historical Review*, 28.1 (Feb., 1959): 61-62.

⁸³ Elmer Clarence Sandmeyer, *The Anti-Chinese Movement in California*, [Chicago: University of Illinois], 1973, 46 – 47.

Senator took shots at Chinese women, claiming all entered as prostitutes, laboring men became his focus, and he declared in his report:

“The Chinese have reduced wages to what would be starvation prices for white men and women, and engrossed so much of the labor in various callings that there is a lack of employment for whites; and young men are growing up in idleness, while young women, willing to work, are compelled to resort to doubtful means of support.”⁸⁴

The official spokesman of San Francisco said:

“The burden of our accusation against them is that they come in conflict with our labor interest; that they can never assimilate with us; that they are a perpetual, unchanging, and unchangeable alien element that can never become homogenous; that their civilization is demoralizing and degrading to our people; that they degrade and dishonor labor; that they can never become citizens, and that an without interest in the country it inhabits, is an element both demoralizing and dangerous to the community within which it exists.”⁸⁵

The Joint Select Committee noted the Chinese paid nearly \$14 million in taxes each year and have contributed greatly in the economic development of the state. Despite the financial advantages, the state legislature assembly sent the congress a memorial detailing how undesirable the Chinese appeared throughout the state.⁸⁶ With Republican Rutherford B. Hayes winning the election, a congressional commission investigated the effects of the Chinese and found that California benefited from their presence economically. This report did little to dampen the growing mood on the west coast and throughout the nation. In December 1877, the Six Companies testified in San Francisco

⁸⁴ Luther W. Spoehr, “Sambo and the Heathen Chinese: California’s Racial Stereotypes in the Late 1870s,” *The Pacific Historical Review*, 42.2 (May 1973): 191.

⁸⁵ Elmer Clarence Sandmeyer, *The Anti-Chinese Movement in California*, [Chicago: University of Illinois], 1973, 25.

⁸⁶ Elmer Clarence Sandmeyer, *The Anti-Chinese Movement in California*, [Chicago: University of Illinois], 1973, 44.

before a special joint house and senate Committee to defend Chinese immigration to America. The Congress questioned various people from different backgrounds about all aspects of the Chinese. The Rev. Otis Gibson went before the committee and held

“After an experience of about twenty years among this people, [the Chinese] I do not hesitate to express my opinion that in simple brain power and possibilities of culture, the Chinese race is equal to any other people in the world. They are capable of learning our language, laws, customs, principles of government, our theories and practices. We know nothing which the Chinese are incapable of learning.”⁸⁷

Benjamin S. Brooks, whose Chinese family emigrated to the U. S. during the Gold Rush, testified how the Irish facilitated anti-Chinese legislation. On paper, the anti-foreigner laws in California went against everyone, but the Chinese became the sole victims of the laws. Solomon Heydenfeldt, a former Associate Justice of the Supreme Court in California, told the Congress California benefited from the presence of Chinese labor. Cornellis B.S. Gibbs, an adjuster of marine losses, described the Chinese as honorable, educated, and very good businessmen.⁸⁸

Three years after commission ended, the house passed a bill allowing for only fifteen Chinese people, per year, to enter the U. S. The senate agreed with their house colleagues and went even further by advocating America leave Articles V and VI of the Burlingame Treaty. Article V of the treaty allowed free emigration of Chinese and American citizens to each other’s country. Article VI gave citizens privileges while they traveled abroad to China or to the U. S. The Chinese viewed such potential changes as a detriment to the

⁸⁷ Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association. *Memorial: The Chinese Six Companies. An Address to the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States*, [San Francisco], Dec. 8th, 1877, 4.

⁸⁸ *Ibid*,15-16.

negotiations of a new accord. Hayes cited the Treaty of Tientsin of 1858, mentioning America held rights in China because of it; he vetoed the bill. Although he stopped the measure, Hayes went to work on his own form of immigration control and wrote in his diary “that such an invasion [of Chinese workers] can not permanently override our people. It cannot safely be admitted into the bosom of our American society.”⁸⁹

Hayes sent a committee to Beijing in August 1880 to address the immigration issue directly with the Chinese. Although they disliked existing accords, they wanted to leave the Burlingame Treaty intact and became open to limiting certain types of people for emigration. By November 8 the two sides reached an agreement that allowed the U. S. to “regulate, limit, or suspend” Chinese immigration but not fully exclude them. Shortly after Hayes signed the treaty, Congress went to work on drafting legislation to override the president. By 1882, Chester A. Arthur occupied the White House and faced the ultimate question on Chinese immigration. The house approved a twenty-five year suspension of Chinese laborers. In the buildup to the bill’s passage, “anti-Chinese racism was a important rhetorical tool that members of Congress returned to again and again in making the case for exclusion.”⁹⁰ The president vetoed the bill on similar grounds that Hayes blocked the measure. Congress amended the bill and passed a new exclusion law

⁸⁹ David L. Anderson, “The Diplomacy of Discrimination: Chinese Exclusion, 1867 – 1882,” *California History*, 57.1 (Spring 1978): 36.

⁹⁰ Kitty Calavita, “Collisions at the Intersection of Gender, Race, and Class: Enforcing the Chinese Exclusion Law,” *Law & Society*, 40.2 (June 2006): 250.

that prohibited most Chinese from entering for a ten-year period. Arthur caved in to the political pressure and signed the bill.⁹¹

Long before California entered the Union, the region exhibited the similar characteristics to the future state. Spanish and Mexican settlers frequently pursued discriminatory policies against Native Americans. The Chinese arrived and, in the beginning, things went well. Then, white miners wanted them out the mines, out of the shorelines, off the railroad, and out of business and legislation became the only way to combat the belief of the Chinese dominating the economic state of affairs or “Yellow Peril”. In contrast to the population of Chinese, in 1860 Germans totaled 21,646, the Irish 33,147, while the Chinese reached 34,935. By 1870, the Germans totaled 29,699, the Irish 54,421, the Chinese 48,790, yet it is the latter that faced the most prejudice. Historian Isabella Black wrote, “They attacked the Chinese on economic, political, and racial grounds.”⁹² Historian Terry Boswell concluded:

“The lack of widespread competition between whites and Chinese outside the west, along with the attention paid to relatively minor conflicts, suggest that naturalization of the anti-Chinese movement was the result of political and ideological forces which spread beyond their economic origin.”⁹³

⁹¹ David L. Anderson, “The Diplomacy of Discrimination: Chinese Exclusion, 1867 – 1882,” *California History*, 57.1 (Spring 1978): 39 – 44; Kitty Calavita, “Collisions at the Intersection of Gender, Race, and Class: Enforcing the Chinese Exclusion Law,” *Law & Society*, 40.2 (June 2006): 249 – 255.

⁹² Isabella Black, “American Labour and Chinese Immigration,” *Past & Present*, 25 (July 1963): 69.

⁹³ Terry E. Boswell, “A Split Labor Market Analysis of Discrimination Against Chinese Immigrants, 1850-1882,” *American Sociological Review*, 51.3 (June 1986): 366.

Ultimately, California's economic discrimination against its Chinese immigrants led to political action taking place.

Chapter Three: The Chinese Question: From Exclusion to Acceptance, 1882 – 1943

On May 6 1882, Chester A. Arthur signed the Exclusion Act prohibiting Chinese labor immigration for ten years. Labor unions along with their political allies achieved an objective that many desired. This piece of legislation, however, led to unintended

consequences California, where the anti-Chinese movement started, throughout the country. The purpose of this chapter is to showcase the effects of the Exclusion Act and how a combination of race, politics, and economics dominated the reasons as to why it took until World War II to repeal it.

After the act passed women quickly faced discrimination because Congress never discussed women. Secretary of Treasury Charles Folger, who enforced the Exclusion Act, believed women carried the status of a “laborer” if husband was so categorized.

Overlooked by the legislative branch, Chinese immigrant women were believed to be prostitutes.⁹⁴ Although some women fit the definition of a laborer, wives generally did not. The notion of an independent woman coming to America seemed remote. Chinese men often returned to China to marry, only to return to America with wife in hand. Since these women did not possess a return certificate, immigration frequently denied their entry into the country.⁹⁵ The Chinese went to work to find ways around the law, and the most commonly used approach was the “slot” system in which one claimed to be the son of a Chinese immigrant already in country; these laborers became known as “paper sons.” The San Francisco earthquake in 1906 further helped people in this cause because

⁹⁴ Kitty Calavita, “Collisions at the Intersection of Gender, Race, and Class: Enforcing the Chinese Exclusion Law,” *Law & Society*, 40.2 (June 2006): 251.

⁹⁵ *Ibid*, 255.

the ensuing fire destroyed many records. Claiming to be a student or a tourist became another widely used method around the law.⁹⁶

After the Exclusion Act, businesses in the U. S. sought out the Six Companies with the intention of bringing Chinese into the country for temporary work. Although illegal, companies needed help to complete projects or for seasonal work and hired the immigrants for specific jobs such as mining or agriculture. Prior to the Exclusion Act, businesses sent request through the Six Companies for perhaps up to hundreds of men for work. The U. S. government suspended big businesses main supply of labor but not the desire for companies to do work cheaply, thus smuggling immigrants into the U. S. became their solution. Relying on a different variety of groups, sneaking Chinese across the border from Mexico and Canada became a booming enterprise.⁹⁷

In order to help combat the ever-growing tide of immigration into the country, in February 1903, the U. S. released special inspectors of the Justice Department of their duties, and handed them over to commissioner general of immigration in the Department of Labor and Commerce. Five years later, the Immigration Service created the China Division in order to stop the flow of illegal immigration along the border with Mexico. Despite being few in numbers, these “Chinese inspectors” patrolled areas along the Rio

⁹⁶ Peter C. Leung, “When a Haircut Was a Luxury: A Chinese Farm Laborer in the Sacramento Delta,” *California History*, 64.3 (Summer 1985): 212.

⁹⁷ Lawrence Douglas Taylor Hansen, “The Chinese Six Companies of San Francisco and the Smuggling of Chinese Immigrants across the U.S.-Mexico Border, 1882-1930,” *Journal of the Southwest*, 48.1 (Spring 2006): 48.

Grande and along the railways. Also in the interior, some smugglers developed relations with U. S. customs officials allowing for an easier transition of the immigrants into the country. Smugglers received anywhere from \$5 to \$25 per person getting the immigrants across the border and as much as \$40 to \$50 if the group they led got to a particular destination. America decided to toughen up its border security and as a result, the fees immigrants needed to pay in order to cross into the U. S. went up.⁹⁸

During the 1880s smugglers used the railroad and the towns of El Paso and Ciudad Juarez became the focal point of their operations. Operating an “underground railroad,” these stations took immigrants to destinations ranging from New York to San Francisco. The railroad carried the bulk of the load until 1905 when U. S. Immigration Service stepped up its surveillance along the border near El Paso. Roughly 35,000 to 40,000 Chinese arrived in Mexico prior to 1910; however, the Mexican census claims only 13, 203 in the country. The Six Companies established a presence in the country for the sole purpose of helping the Chinese immigrants better make the adjustment to life in America. Prior to landing in Mexico, the Six Companies taught the immigrants some English and knowledge about American culture and traditions. Once they entered the U. S. the Six Companies gave them jobs in the fields in which they worked to better facilitate their transition.⁹⁹

In 1912

⁹⁸ Lawrence Douglas Taylor Hansen, “The Chinese Six Companies of San Francisco and the Smuggling of Chinese Immigrants across the U.S.-Mexico Border, 1882-1930,” *Journal of the Southwest*, 48.1 (Spring 2006): 49-50.

⁹⁹ *Ibid*, 50.

several members involved in the smuggling operation were arrested, and immigration officials deported the Chinese who had attempted to sneak across the border. Although these incidents rarely happened once the Chinese landed safely at their destination and blended into society local authorities grew powerless to determine one's legal status. The U. S. contacted Mexican officials about the influx of Chinese residents in their country. Mexico informed America its Constitution allowed the Chinese to enter and they did not monitor the Chinese as they moved about the country. In 1916, the smugglers' suspended operations as the U. S. launched an invasion into Mexico to chase after General Villa following his attack in New Mexico. The activities picked up again a short time later; however, very few operations occurred due to the German U-Boat presence. In 1921 America enacted the Quota Law heavily restricting the number of immigrants by country and region. The law resulted in an increase of the number of Europeans wanting to enter the country through Mexico illegally. This only lasted a few years because congress created the Border Patrol in 1924 to combat the growing flow of illegal Mexican immigration; An issue that lingers to the present day. The Great Depression ended the run of smuggling Chinese into the U. S. With high unemployment all throughout the country, and businesses closing doors, nobody needed Chinese labor. The Six Companies dedication to the Chinese over the decades never dropped.¹⁰⁰ In

1888 Congress passed the Scott Act prohibiting Chinese workers from reentering the country. For years the Chinese fished off California, only to sell their goods in Baja,

¹⁰⁰ Lawrence Douglas Taylor Hansen, "The Chinese Six Companies of San Francisco and the Smuggling of Chinese Immigrants across the U.S.-Mexico Border, 1882-1930," *Journal of the Southwest*, 48.1 (Spring 2006): 55.

Mexico, for a final destination to China. The act disallowed the Chinese to continue their frequent fishing excursions and returning to the U. S.¹⁰¹ On May 5 1892, the Geary Act became signed into law under President Grover Cleveland. In addition to extending the exclusion act for another ten years, it required all Chinese laborers currently in the U. S. to carry a certificate of residence. This document needed to include a photograph as well as detailed information pertaining to the individual. The Six Companies sent word to all Chinese immigrants not to comply with the law.¹⁰² In 1894, the Chinese and U. S. governments signed the Gresham-Yang treaty adding more immigration restrictions on the Chinese. The Chinese obtained reassurances their citizens “received” protection under the laws of the U. S. Congress saw no need to change any of the exclusion, but in March 1894, the Chinese protested American restrictions.¹⁰³ The Treasury Department, which oversaw all immigration into the country, knew nothing about the Minster’s comments. By August Senator Stephen White of California introduced a new treaty on the floor of the Senate. He wanted to enact Section 6 of the Exclusion Act of 1884, Section 13 of the Scott Act, and called for “all shipmasters to furnish list of Chinese

¹⁰¹ Robert H. Duncan, “The Chinese and the Economic Development of the Northern Baja California, 1889-1929,” *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, 74.4 (Nov., 1994): 617.

¹⁰² Lawrence Douglas Taylor Hansen, “The Chinese Six Companies of San Francisco and the Smuggling of Chinese Immigrants across the U.S.-Mexico Border, 1882-1930,” *Journal of the Southwest*, 48.1 (Spring 2006): 46.

¹⁰³ George E. Paulsen, “The Abrogation of the Gresham-Yang Treaty,” *Pacific Historical Review*, 40.4 (Nov., 1971): 459.

persons abroad their vessels upon arrival in the United States.”¹⁰⁴ Yang, along with the State Department, concluded the proposal violated constitutional rights. A new law also appeared requesting to deny the Chinese, who were denied admission, the right to a court appeal. Yang objected the latest discriminatory matters aimed at his people.¹⁰⁵

With the treaty of Paris in 1898 the U. S. received control of the Philippines as part of concession by Spain. Congress established a commission to investigate the status of Chinese on the islands. Major-General E. S. Otio, who governed the territory, applied the exclusion laws to the Chinese in September. It took a year for the new Chinese Minister, Wu Ting-fang, to find out about the decision. By 1902, the U. S. denied entry of Chinese immigrants to territory conquered because of the Spanish-American War by enacting the Scott Act. Two years after that conflict, the Chinese hoped to terminate the Gresham-Yang treaty in order to help ease restrictions. Both sides appeared ready to negotiate a new treaty, but congress wanted no part in it as anti-Chinese sentiment remained strong. In 1904, the U. S. government extended the exclusion ban indefinitely.¹⁰⁶

Labor unions accomplished their

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, 460.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, 460-461.

¹⁰⁶ Delber L. McKee, “The Chinese Boycott of 1905-1906 Reconsidered: The Role of Chinese Americans,” *The Pacific Historical Review*, 55.2 (May 1986): 172; Duncan, Robert H, “The Chinese and the Economic Development of the Northern Baja California, 1889-1929,” *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, 74.4 (Nov., 1994): 642.

objective: Chinese exclusion. These groups turned their attention to the Chinese still in the country. In the following decades, riots and boycotts of Asians became frequent. One of the first of these events happened in Tacoma, Washington, in September 1885. The town's mayor led a campaign to relocate 700 Chinese residents to San Francisco. Tacoma became convinced a population of 700 constituted an economic threat to a city population of 40,000. It started in 1884 when a water company hired Chinese labor over white labor when unemployment for white males increased due to a sluggish economy in the area. This event activated the lingering anti-Chinese sentiment into overdrive. The white laboring class attacked the Chinese since they managed to stay afloat during uncertain times. The group publicly noted those who refused to participate in their plans.¹⁰⁷

In February Mayor R. Jacob Weisbach called for a mass meeting to discuss the struggle against the Chinese. During the event, the mayor, along with a real estate agent, suggested the town declare Chinese businesses in violation of various health codes and then Tacoma could condemn their stores. The clergy recommended segregating the Chinese from the population in order to keep the peace. The option to forcibly remove the Chinese became publicly discussed. During the summer, the *Tacoma Ledger* promoted anti-Chinese activities. The movement gained strength as Weisbach formed an anti-Chinese League and they wanted to drive Asians out of their area.¹⁰⁸ Citizens from the town organized a committee discourage Chinese employment and to boycott Chinese

¹⁰⁷ Jules Alexander Karlin, "The Anti-Chinese Outbreak in Tacoma, 1885," *The Pacific Historical Review*, 23.3 (Aug., 1954): 273-4.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid*, 274.

businesses. By late September, Weisbach won the election for president of the Paget Sound Congress. It soon announced a directive for towns in the area to create committees for notifying the Chinese to leave by November 1.¹⁰⁹

In early October a rally occurred in Tacoma after they appointed their committee. The *Ledger* reported 500 men marched to protest for the expulsion of the Chinese. However, a minister told the *Portland Oregonian* roughly 325 men attended the event. Cries of “The Chinese must go,” reminiscent of the late 1870s in San Francisco began to fill the streets. The same committee allegedly threatened the Chinese with harm if they ignored the group’s demand. A prominent farmer in a nearby town become worried about Tacoma’s reputation and warned about the town’s direction after the march; His concerns soon carried weight. On October 6, the chamber of commerce of Tacoma debated three different resolutions about removing the Chinese. A well-known lawyer in the area approved of removing the Chinese but not by force. He represented wealthy interest who wanted the town’s integrity to remain strong. He also recommended anyone inciting violence be arrested. John E. Burns proposed a resolution advocating the lawyer’s sentiments and the Chamber of Commerce approved it by a vote of forty-one to twenty-two. The editor of the *Tacoma News* lost his job after two violently laced editorials became published. As much as people disliked the Chinese, they wanted a peaceful exit for them.

Governor Watson Squire kept a watchful eye on the situation and started to become involved after a local sheriff sent him a letter requesting additional forces in

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, 274.

order to maintain law and order. Weisbach received a similar correspondence and the sheriff received additional local reinforcements. Squire later received letters from leading Tacoma citizens informing him the situation cooled from previous extremes. The governor fell out of favor with the public as newspapers across Washington attacked him. He made a trip to Tacoma to curry favor with the locals and before the Chamber of Commerce, he stated in a speech, “[He was] heart and soul with those who wanted to see the Chinese leave us and supplant their places with white people... to have territory rid of Chinese, and peacefully and lawfully he would go as far as any to accomplish this end.”¹¹⁰ Squire returned to the capital only to find an invitation to attend an anti-Chinese rally in Tacoma the day before the Chinese needed to leave the city. He declined the invite but sent a letter urging a peaceful solution. The *Seattle Call* hoped Squire’s career in public service would soon end because of the Tacoma affair. By the end of October, most of the Chinese inhabitants of Tacoma left without incident.¹¹¹

On November 2, nearly 500 men, along with additional police units, went to every Chinese residence informing them they needed to leave town that day. Although the crowd used imitation tactics by using a show of force, no violence ensued. The governor sent word to the Secretary of the Interior L. Q. C. Lamar of the incident, and he previously told the Chinese consul about the upcoming dismissal of Chinese from the town. The town soon rejoiced for several days as their Chinese resident now lived

¹¹⁰ Jules Alexander Karlin, “The Anti-Chinese Outbreak in Tacoma, 1885,” *The Pacific Historical Review*, 23.3 (Aug., 1954): 278.

¹¹¹ *Ibid*, 278.

elsewhere. Their joy, however, ended rather quickly as members of the town faced legal issues stemming from the removal.¹¹²

Another major incident occurred in 1897 as the small town of Butte, Montana, organized a boycott of mainly Chinese but also Japanese labor throughout the city. The town ordered the Chinese to leave in 1884 and it failed to gain support. By 1890 the town contained one of the largest Chinatown's in the Rocky Mountain area. The labor unions tried before in 1891-1892 to drive the Asian immigrants away from the city. Their boycott then proved to be un-successful as many more Chinese flocked to the area in search of work. But as the effects of the economic downturn in 1893 lingered across the country, many of the residents not just in Butte, but people throughout the nation, blamed the Chinese for the economy going south.¹¹³

The Chinese first arrived in Montana in the 1860s during the state's gold rush. By the start of 1870, more than 2,000 Chinese lived in the state. In addition to working the mines, the Chinese also worked in restaurants and laundry facilities. The Chinese community began to grow in Butte causing resentment among the white laboring class. The labor unions supported immigration restriction believing it made the state economically competitive and socially made the city more attractive as the Chinese numbers decreased. The Hotel and Restaurant Keepers, along with the Cooks and Waiters Assembly, started another boycott aimed at the Chinese and the businesses that employed

¹¹² Ibid, 281-283.

¹¹³ Stacy A. Flaherty, "Boycott in Butte: Organized Labor and the Chinese Community, 1896-1897," *Montana: The Magazine of Western History*, 37.1 (Winter 1987): 36.

them. Together they created a small committee to develop and fund a boycott in order to drive the Chinese away.¹¹⁴ The group held meetings to discuss options having remembered the previous boycott failed. As word of a possible boycott spread other labor joined the cause even though their industries employed no Chinese.¹¹⁵

The editor of the Butte *Sunday Bystander* affirmed that the goal of the boycott was to secure a good wage for the white man. The Silver Bow Trades and Labor Assembly endorsed the boycott on January 13, 1897. P. H., Burns, President of the organization, wrote in a newspaper article:

“America vs. Asia, progress vs. retrogression, are the considerations now involved. American manhood and American womanhood must be protected from competition with these inferior races and further invasions of industry and further reductions of the wages of native labor by the employment of these people must be strenuously resisted.”¹¹⁶

The Silver Bow Trades and Labor Assembly now turned their attention to winning over hearts and minds of the residents of Butte. One of the ways they attempted to accomplish this involved showing people the community to help out women. The Hotel and Restaurant Keepers Union embraced this notion and mentioned how women started to drift towards prostitutions as a means to support themselves because the Chinese took jobs away from them. The *Bystander* continued to print stories justifying the boycott and encouraged people to join in. Anti-Chinese propoganda littered the streets as organizers

¹¹⁴ Ibid, 36.

¹¹⁵ Ibid, 36.

¹¹⁶ Stacy A. Flaherty, “Boycott in Butte: Organized Labor and the Chinese Community, 1896-1897,” *Montana: The Magazine of Western History*, 37.1 (Winter 1987): 41.

attempted to highlight the Chinese through misrepresentation. One particular image depicted a Chinese baker holding a rat while making bread. Some members of the assembly walked around the town telling fellow residents not to use Chinese businesses. The owner of a lodging house fired her Chinese cook because of the protest as most of her tenants carried union cards. The owner of another lodging establishment, Eva Althoff, became victim of the boycott as well. She refused to fire her Chinese workers and sent the unions a message not to boycott her business or face financial recourse; she then requested police protection. The unions placed pressure on Althoff by getting a local grocery store owner to convince her that if she refused to fire the Chinese workers, the unions intended on getting the men who leased to her, out of her building. The unions also told the tenants if they refused to leave they faced possible firing or their place of work could be boycotted. The *Bystander* declared, “anyone who opposes anything that is no American in its nature as the general boycott against Asiatic races simply put themselves in ridiculous light, and the sooner they find this out the better they will be.”¹¹⁷ Althoff later compromised by agreeing to hire white people in the future and paying the union forty-five dollars. Newspapers announced how this agreement became a victory in the cause.¹¹⁸

The boycott

claimed many Chinese victims. A once prominent vegetable gardener, who received thirty to forty dollars a day, made very few sales. The unions boycotted one of the few

¹¹⁷ Stacy A. Flaherty, “Boycott in Butte: Organized Labor and the Chinese Community, 1896-1897,” *Montana: The Magazine of Western History*, 37.1 (Winter 1987): 41.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid*, 41.

doctors in the town because he married a Chinese woman and dealt with Chinese and Japanese goods. The walking committee prevented patrons from entering a popular Chinese restaurant. The owner, Hum Fay, went to the city for assistance citing how he paid his taxes and needed city help. Despite his plea and several more visits his situation remained unchanged. Many Chinese employed at various industries lost their jobs as unions threatened the companies that employed Chinese. Japanese businesses also faced similar stories and nearly 350 Chinese left Butte. On April 16, 1897, Judge Hiram Knowles approved a temporary restraining order halting the boycott. The Silver Bow Trades and Labor Assembly replied by stating they would obey the court order but continued to no longer use Chinese businesses. The case reached the court's docket in 1898, the plaintiffs announced the U. S. and Chinese governments launched investigations into the matter. Knowles finally decided the case on May 18, 1900, siding with the Chinese.¹¹⁹ The boycott movement against the Chinese in America soon faced repercussions in the U. S.

The incidents in Tacoma and Butte motivated Ho Yow, the Imperial Chinese Consul-General, wrote *Chinese Exclusion, A Benefit or a Harm?* (1901), nearly twenty years after the Exclusion Act passed. He acknowledged the legislative succeeded in limiting Chinese immigration to the U. S. The diplomat, however, wrote, "Bricks and mortar do

¹¹⁹ Stacy A. Flaherty, "Boycott in Butte: Organized Labor and the Chinese Community, 1896-1897," *Montana: The Magazine of Western History*, 37.1 (Winter 1987): 44.

not comprise the Great Wall which the United States has built against China.”¹²⁰ The political barrier Congress passed drew parallels to one of the Seven Wonders of the World. The Chinese built the Great Wall as a defense against invaders Yow argued. America’s response by enacting a bill designed to discriminate against a group who built the railroad and respected U. S. laws created discontent in China. The Consul-General wanted to know what laws the Chinese broke in order for them to be treated differently from other immigrant groups. Yow acknowledged most Chinese intend to return to China once they earn enough money.¹²¹ He accused politicians of fanning the flames of anti-Chinese rhetoric for their advantage. Yow mentioned how San Francisco, a beacon for all of California, seen its glory days fade as its population and commerce drop as trade with China dried up. Denis Kearney and his sand-lot crew wanted Chinese exclusion, Yow decreed, but at the economic consequences that transpired. Losing hundreds of millions to a very big market is not a sound way to conduct business. He complimented American labor and noted Chinese labor “is not cheap.” American machinery produced more goods than the Chinese ever could by hand. The Chinese worked predominately in agriculture after 1882 as American hired Chinese to work jobs they typically did not do. Yow

¹²⁰ Ho Yow, “Chinese Exclusion, a Benefit or a Harm?” *The North American Review*, 173.538 (Sept., 1901): 315.

¹²¹ *Ibid*, 316.

foreshadowed what every president since Theodore Roosevelt realized: The U. S. needs the Chinese market.¹²²

James D. Phelan, San Francisco's mayor at the beginning of the twentieth century, responded to Yow's article, and warned the Chinese moved east and those states will soon experience the Chinese question firsthand. The mayor refuted points made by Yow, highlighting the legislative process included ballots in which the masses voted not the state legislation. Washington, D. C., even sent an investigation in 1876 to determine the effects of Chinese immigration in California. The committee recommended the Exclusion Act because the potential for a national panic increased if the Congress "failed to protect the white population of the country."¹²³ Commerce between the U. S. and China increased after the Exclusion Act. The U. S. Consul at Amoy reported a rise in flour, tobacco, and other American made products. The mayor noted how a factory attempted to employ only white women, only to close its doors as it failed to compete with the Chinese because they lived off the bare minimum. Although the Chinese made a living in California, their inability to become citizens is a fight often raised. Phelan attacked the Six Companies, accusing them of being "masters" of the Chinese immigrants in America.¹²⁴

¹²² Ho Yow, "Chinese Exclusion, a Benefit or a Harm?" *The North American Review*, 173.538 (Sept., 1901): 316-317.

¹²³ James A. Phelan, "Why the Chinese Should Be Excluded," *The North American Review*, 173. 540 (Nov., 1901): 664.

¹²⁴ *Ibid*, 672.

Yow and Phelan possessed different viewpoints, but the debate over Exclusion Act also continued in China. In Shanghai, China, a U. S. boycott started in August 1905 over the immigration issue as the Congress made permanent the temporary provisions in the 1882 Exclusion Act the year before. The movement spread to Canton, China and even to Chinese communities abroad. The Chinese government no longer tolerated the Exclusion law and wanted to find a way to get the U. S. to change its regulations. President Theodore Roosevelt wanted a more open immigration reform in order to help commerce between the two countries but he understood the difficulty in getting it through the Congress. The potential Chinese boycott affected industries across the nation. Asiatic Association Secretary John Foord, who campaigned for a new immigration treaty with China, sent Roosevelt a telegram expressing businesses looked increasing more nervous because of the threat of a boycott.¹²⁵ Roosevelt understood the Chinese position and wanted the Congress to act but organized labor enjoyed strong support in both chambers. He believed, “legislative action was ‘needed in our own interest... for it is short sighted indeed for us to permit foreign competitors to drive us from the great markets of China.’”¹²⁶

The Chinese chambers of commerce made it clear a boycott of American goods seemed intimate to Foord and the secretary passed the information along to the president. The Asiatic Association believed the problem resided in America and if the country

¹²⁵ James J. Lorence, “Business and Reform: The American Asiatic Association and the Exclusion Laws, 1905-1907,” *The Pacific Historical Review*, 39.4 (Nov., 1970): 429.

¹²⁶ *Ibid*, 430.

changed its immigration laws, specifically altering the language for the definition of a laborer, a boycott would be avoided. The *San Francisco Chronicle* argued the Asiatic Association generated the boycott to curry favor for the passage of a new immigration treaty with China. The Chinese government took action and instructed its citizens to avoid a boycott and despite their request the protest continued. Roosevelt worked with advisors to construct a balance for allowing a more open policy for Chinese immigration. David Foster introduced the Foster Bill, which changed the definition of a laborer and honored Chinese visas for students and businessmen at American ports. Roosevelt planned to use armed force if the Chinese became un-willing to end the boycott and sent a warship to Shanghai to get the point across.¹²⁷

On March 14, 1906, business leaders appeared before a house subcommittee to testify about the boycott in China. American exports topped more than \$58 million in 1905 and most of that came from cotton textiles produced in the south.¹²⁸ The American Consul told the committee American trade and interest in China became downgraded over the boycott issue. After the hearings ended, the Asiatic Association sent more materials over to the Congress in support of their position and for the passing of the Foster Bill. California Republicans publicly condemned the Foster Bill as part of their re-election campaigns. With the chances of the bill passing now remote, the president compromised

¹²⁷ James J. Lorence, "Business and Reform: The American Asiatic Association and the Exclusion Laws, 1905-1907," *The Pacific Historical Review*, 39.4 (Nov., 1970): 432.

¹²⁸ Joaquin Miller, "The Ruinous Cost of Chinese Exclusion: A Laboring Man to Laboring Men," *The North American Review*, 186.624 (Nov., 1907): 424.

by adding in amendments regarding the admission of Chinese into the country.¹²⁹ The boycott made America aware of how much it was economically dependent upon China as a market and it relaxed some of its strict provisions.¹³⁰ The Exclusion Act left several loop holes for immigration into the U.S. The Chinese were required to produce special certificates for the exempt classes in the Exclusion Act.¹³¹ The Chinese knowledge of the U.S. interrogation system by immigration officials became exceptional to the point where they made up villages that never existed to help their case of staying in the country. Background checks took weeks because immigration officials verified papers with officials in Washington, D. C., and confirmed stories with relatives and siblings. If any part of their stories contained inaccurate information, immigration officials believed the immigrants' story to be false. The Chinese government worked together with U. S. immigration officials in order to confirm the validity of stories. Prior to 1905, the American consul in Hong Kong confessed as much as 75% of the visas issued contained misleading information.¹³²

¹²⁹ James J. Lorence, "Business and Reform: The American Asiatic Association and the Exclusion Laws, 1905-1907," *The Pacific Historical Review*, 39.4 (Nov., 1970): 431-432.

¹³⁰ H. M. Lai, "Island of Immortals: Chinese Immigrants and the Angel Island Immigration Station," *California History*, 57.1 (Spring 1978): 89.

¹³¹ Adam McKeown, "Ritualization of Regulation: The Enforcement of Chinese Exclusion in the United States and China," *The American Historical Review*, 108.2 (April 2003): 378.

¹³² *Ibid*, 394.

Although immigrations allowed many people into the country, troublesome passports rarely affected businesses in San Francisco as the Chinese guilds became influential labor unions in their districts. These guilds even collected money to help build a new hospital for the community. Gam Yee Hong, one of the most powerful unions during the 1880s, attempted to protect its members by falsifying records. In 1896, a disagreement between a factory owner and the Bing Lai Guild resulted in the factory being the victim of an attempt of arson. Some Chinese labor unions claimed more than 1,000 members. As the years went on, union membership decreased as deaths and retirements ensued. To replace those workers, women and the emergence of American born Chinese entered the picture. Unions went from having more than 1,000, contained around 200 by the mid 1920s. Guilds throughout the city became unaware of how weak their positions developed. The leadership of the unions turned conservative by the 1930s and during the Great Depression, they frowned upon anti-labor activity. Also, with numbers declining, some unions passed resolutions encouraging women to join. The guilds few remaining members kept working despite others walking out. In 1938, a union organizer reached out to Gam Yee Hong to join forces. Hong declined the invitation because that particular union employed women.¹³³

As the U. S. entered World War II with the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor, the enemy of America's enemy became an ally. As the new Chinese – U. S. partnership ensued the Exclusion Act and the prohibition of the Chinese to become American citizens created a

¹³³ Mark Him Li, "Chinese Guilds in the Apparel Industry of San Francisco," *History & Perspectives*, (2008): 17-23.

diplomatic black eye for America. On February 20, 1943, Representative Martin Kennedy of New York introduced a resolution in the house calling for an end to Chinese exclusion and to grant them citizenship. Chiang Kai-Shek wrote, “A people which have shared with us the common danger and will share with us the eventual victory, a people which have earned our friendship, our gratitude, and our respect, have by the same token surely earned our franchise.”¹³⁴ The Japanese used the exclusion law as part of their propaganda against the Allies.¹³⁵ The American Federation of Labor, announced through Californian Representative Ward Johnson, they intended to fight the repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act.¹³⁶ To counter, Richard J. Walsh, editor of *Asia and American* magazines, formed the Citizens Committee for Repeal of Chinese Exclusion.¹³⁷ In San Francisco, the heart of the anti-Chinese movement for decades, the Board of Supervisors urged the Congress to pass a repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act.¹³⁸ On October 8, 1943, the House Committee on Immigration passed a resolution in favor of repealing Chinese exclusion by a vote of 8 to 4. The bill also limited Chinese immigration to 105 because of quotas.¹³⁹ President Franklin Roosevelt pleaded with the Congress to send him an accord,

¹³⁴ “Would Lift Chinese Ban,” *The New York Times*, 20 February 1943, 3.

¹³⁵ “Assails Bias On Chinese,” *The New York Times*, 29 April 1943, 5.

¹³⁶ “Score Easing Chinese Ban,” *The New York Times*, 26 May 1943, 3.

¹³⁷ “Committee to Fight Exclusion of Chinese,” *The New York Times*, 7 July 1943, 19.

¹³⁸ “Exclusion Act Repeal Urged,” *The New York Times*, Carl Glick, 20 September 1943, 20.

¹³⁹ “House Group Votes To End Chinese Ban,” *The New York Times*, 8 October 1943, 6.

ending Chinese exclusion in America. He regarded it “as important in the cause of winning the war and of establishing a lasting peace.”¹⁴⁰ On November 26, 1943, the Senate repealed the Chinese Exclusion Act and sent it over to the White House for the executive's signature.¹⁴¹

Overall, the effects of the Exclusion Act continued long after Congress passed the act in 1882. When the economy went bad, the white laboring class feared Chinese immigrants as many believed they wanted their job. Next, the group needed to feel secure about their surroundings and took steps in order to accomplish this task. Boycotts, based entirely off race, became a common trend throughout much of the country. The people accomplished the ultimate prize in Chinese exclusion, and their prejudice against the Chinese remained deep. It showed as labor unions held firm on supporting renewal and eventual permanent exclusion, and as people forced their Chinese residents to leave town. The prejudice declined with the Great Depression and World War II as the nation needed allies. The Congress moved quickly to repeal the Exclusion Act and right a wrong that lasted 61 years. The Chinese accomplished equality, on paper at least, and acknowledgment of their contributions to American society from the time of the Gold Rush to the present.¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰ “President Urges Congress Repeal Chinese Exclusion Act as War Aid,” *The New York Times*, 12 October 1943, 1.

¹⁴¹ “Senate Sends Bill to Admit Chinese To The President for His Signature,” *The New York Times*, 27 November 1943, 5.

¹⁴² Rose Hum Lee, “A Century of Chinese and American Relations,” *Phylon*, 11.3 (3rd Qtr., 1950): 240-245.

Chapter Four: California's Alien Land Laws of 1913 and 1920

In 1919, President Woodrow Wilson (1856 – 1924) told a crowd in St. Louis that Germany would rebuild its forces and attack Europe again if the United States (U. S.) failed to ratify the Treaty of Versailles.¹⁴³ The same sense of foresight led him to avoid fighting California's Alien Land Law in 1913. California Governor Hiram Johnson (1866 – 1945) saw the issue on the level of state's rights, and since many other states enacted similar laws, a Japanese protest seemed mute.¹⁴⁴ The Japanese ambassador, Viscount Chinda, contested the state legislature.¹⁴⁵ In the eyes of many Californians, the state turned yellow due to the flood of Asian immigrants over the years. The Japanese continual success led to white people demanding action to check the immigrants

¹⁴³ <http://www.woodrowwilson.org/students_sub/students_sub_show.htm?doc_id=398875> Biography of Woodrow Wilson, accessed on 13 February 2010; "Wilson scores all who oppose treaty," *Washington Post*, 6 September 1919, 1.

¹⁴⁴ "Plan direct attack against Japanese," *New York Times*, 22 April 1913, 1.

¹⁴⁵ "California bills stirs up Japan," *New York Times*, 4 April 1913, 3.

economically and materially. Given the economic and cultural trend of California, Wilson made the right decision not to aggressively denounce California's Alien Land Law of 1913.¹⁴⁶

Dr. J. F. Steiner, who was a resident of Japan and taught at a mission college there, said

“[that] during the negotiations at Washington in 1913 between Viscount Chinda and the Federal Government concerning the California alien land law, the Japanese ambassador was given repeated assurances by both the President and the Secretary of State that the enactment was based on purely economic considerations and was not the outcome of racial prejudice.”¹⁴⁷

Dr. T. Iyenaga, professor at the University of Chicago, argued that the situation based mainly off race. This chapter will argue that is it a combination of the two: race and economics.¹⁴⁸ What happened in California in 1913 became nothing short of political economic racism: an attempt to economically exclude a particular ethnic group through the political process. Californians despised the growing success of Japanese farmers, the capital they created, the wealth that went with it, and the former found a political way that limited their way of life.

¹⁴⁶ “All Europe Protests,” *Los Angeles Times*, 10 April 1913, 11.

¹⁴⁷ Henry P. Fairchild and E. T. Williams, “Our Immigration Policy,” *Geographical Review*, 9.1 (January 1920): 71.

¹⁴⁸ “Vote for Japanese Iyenaga's solution,” *New York Times*, 1 May 1913, 2.

The Japanese population in California began in 1884 when the Japanese government began emigrating its' citizens to the U. S.¹⁴⁹ Within a matter of a few years substantial numbers of Japanese immigrants arrived for the first time and during the summer of 1909 nearly 30,000 worked in agriculture, according to the Immigration Commission.¹⁵⁰ During that time they formed groups that supported themselves in a variety of ways, creating a sense of community.¹⁵¹ All throughout the state, "Japtowns" appeared, just as "Chinatowns" decades earlier. The Japanese concentrated heavily in a few areas, whereas other parts of the state, the likely hood of finding any Japanese decreased. The Chinese and Japanese societies often sought each out other because both became looked down upon by the heavily dominate white society. In one particular community, after a funeral, the Japanese ate at Chinese restaurants. Togetherness over the shared context of discrimination in all its various forms between the Chinese and Japanese varied place to place. Both definitely sympathized with each other over their plight and the struggle against it.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁹ Robert Jiobu, "Ethnic Hegemony and the Japanese of California," *American Sociological Review*, 53.3 (June 1988): 357.

¹⁵⁰ Robert Higgs, "Landless by Law: Japanese Immigrants in California Agriculture to 1941," *The Journal of Economic History*, 38.1 (March 1978): 206.

¹⁵¹ Robert Jiobu, "Ethnic Hegemony and the Japanese of California," *American Sociological Review*, 53.3 (June 1988): 362.

¹⁵² Joan S. Wang, "The Double Burdens of Immigrant Nationalism: The Relationship between Chinese and Japanese in the American West, 1880s-1920s," *Journal of American Ethnic History*, 27.2 (Winter 2008): 32.

In March 1905, Americans still heavily sought Japanese as advertisements called upon immigrants to make the trip across the Pacific Ocean.¹⁵³ The population grew so rapidly that the census of 1910 failed to accurately count the number of Japanese in the state.¹⁵⁴ Multiple reasons as to why the number could be larger includes the San Francisco earthquake and fire in 1906 that destroyed most of the city's vital records and illegal immigration from Canada.¹⁵⁵ The Japanese brought more than just their culture with them, they brought a work ethic that led to economic and discriminatory issues.

The first wave of Japanese who arrived in the New World at Angel Island, which opened in 1910, were called the "Issei" and with low numbers, probably mostly students made the trip. But as more landed from Hawaii and Japan, they quickly found a way to support themselves by working in agriculture.¹⁵⁶ When the Japanese first appeared they received

¹⁵³ Roger Daniels, *The Politics of Prejudice: The Anti-Japanese movement in California and the struggle for Japanese exclusion*, [Los Angeles: University of California Press], 1962, 8.

¹⁵⁴ Robert Higgs, "Landless by Law: Japanese Immigrants in California Agriculture to 1941," *The Journal of Economic History*, 38.1 (March 1978): 206.

¹⁵⁵ Roger Daniels, *The Politics of Prejudice: The Anti-Japanese movement in California and the struggle for Japanese exclusion*, [Los Angeles: University of California Press], 1962, 32.

¹⁵⁶ Joan S. Wang, "The Double Burdens of Immigrant Nationalism: The Relationship between Chinese and Japanese in the American West, 1880s-1920s," *Journal of American Ethnic History*, 27.2 (Winter 2008): 30.

joy from the business and farm employers.¹⁵⁷ Part of the reason for the warm welcome started in 1882 when the U. S. passed the Chinese Exclusion Act that created a shortage of workers.¹⁵⁸ Like the Chinese, who worked on the Gold Rush and the transcontinental railroad, the Japanese labored longer hours for less pay. But unlike the Chinese, business failure for them equaled shame. The Japanese are a strong people and carried with them a sense of national pride because the victory over Russia. Fifteen hundred Japanese celebrated in Sacramento to show support for their country.¹⁵⁹ Through hard work the Japanese amassed wealth and became the major patrons of Chinese gambling dens provided more than \$10,000 a year in major cities.¹⁶⁰

The money generated by the community led to the Japanese tenants invariably occupied more valuable land than their white neighbors. One of the reasons included the fact that they paid more for the land they wanted. Among the counties they paid extra for: Orange, Sacramento, Solano, and San Joaquin. Bankers profited from advancing credit to the Japanese. Other reasons as to why the Japanese flourished with the land they had

¹⁵⁷ Fred H. Matthews, "White Community and "Yellow Peril," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 50.4 (March 1964): 612.

¹⁵⁸ Joan S. Wang, "The Double Burdens of Immigrant Nationalism: The Relationship between Chinese and Japanese in the American West, 1880s-1920s," *Journal of American Ethnic History*, 27.2 (Winter 2008): 30.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid*, 39.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 33.

purchased grew because of their ability to work more efficient.¹⁶¹ The Japanese came to supply the majority of tomatoes in the Sacramento area and worked crops that required special care.¹⁶² With the growing Japanese success, many Californians latched onto the growing anti-orient sentiment that lingered from the time of the Chinese.¹⁶³ The Immigration Commission even concluded that the Japanese paid more for land than whites and it failed to slow their progress.¹⁶⁴

Decades of Asian immigration to the U. S. made the Japanese indistinguishable from the Chinese, and anti-Chinese aggression descended upon the newcomers of the Far East.¹⁶⁵ The Californian government passed anti-coolie, or anti-Chinese, legislation from the 1850s well into the twentieth century. The foreigner's miners tax in the early 1852 assured that every Asian in the state paid a special fine.¹⁶⁶ Although early Japanese immigrants tried to adopt American customs, the economic value of their land, coupled

¹⁶¹ Robert Higgs, "Landless by Law: Japanese Immigrants in California Agriculture to 1941," *The Journal of Economic History*, 38.1 (March 1978): 213.

¹⁶² Robert M. Jiobu, "Ethnic Hegemony and the Japanese of California." *American Sociological Review*, 53.3 (June 1988): 359-360.

¹⁶³ Robert Higgs, "Landless by Law: Japanese Immigrants in California Agriculture to 1941," *The Journal of Economic History*, 38.1 (March 1978): 214-15.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid, 210.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid, 214.

¹⁶⁶ Daniel Cornford, "'We All Live More like Brutes than Humans': Labor and Capital in the Gold Rush," *California History*, 77.4 (Winter 1998/1999): 86.

with their home government's desire for them to be treated as equals, led to discrimination against them.¹⁶⁷ Backlash came in a variety of forms including a boycott of Japanese businesses and slogans such as "Keep California White."¹⁶⁸ By 1905 the Japanese became the sole targets of legislation. Having defeated the Chinese with the Exclusion Act in 1882, the laboring class turned its attention elsewhere.¹⁶⁹ Californians tried in 1911 to get an alien land law bill through its Congress and failed.¹⁷⁰ Soon white Californians would turn to the state legislature in order to prevent the Japanese from becoming successful through agriculture.¹⁷¹

The final version of the California Alien Land Law of 1913 contained multiple sections and went through different drafts. Sections one and two contained the most controversial parts. The first section said:

¹⁶⁷ Joan S. Wang, "The Double Burdens of Immigrant Nationalism: The Relationship between Chinese and Japanese in the American West, 1880s-1920s," *Journal of American Ethnic History*, 27.2 (Winter 2008): 36.

¹⁶⁸ Eliot Grinnell Mears, "California's Attitude Towards the Oriental," *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, (1925): 203.

¹⁶⁹ Oliver C. Cox, "The Nature of the Anti-Asiatic Movement on the Pacific Coast," *The Journal of Negro Education*, 15.3 (Autumn 1964): 608.

¹⁷⁰ Robert M. Jiobu, "Ethnic Hegemony and the Japanese of California," *American Sociological Review*, 53.3 (June 1988): 359.

¹⁷¹ Robert Higgs, "Landless by Law: Japanese Immigrants in California Agriculture to 1941," *The Journal of Economic History*, 38.1 (March 1978): 215.

“All aliens eligible to citizenship under the laws of the United States may acquire, possess, enjoy, transmit and inherit real property, or any interest therein, in this state, in the same manner and to the same extent as citizens of the United States, except as otherwise provided by the laws of this state.”¹⁷²

The second section held, “All aliens other than those mentioned in section one of this act may acquire, possess, enjoy, and transfer real property, or any interest therein.”¹⁷³

California’s Attorney General stated that “it [the alien land law] seeks to limit their presence by curtailing their privileges which they may enjoy here.”¹⁷⁴ The state made no secret that they wanted to prohibit Japanese success and their progress. If the alien land law bill accomplished that goal and Japanese emigration to the U. S. curtailed, the state needed no further amendments.¹⁷⁵

A potential problem with the law became apparent: Does it contradict the 1894 and 1911 treaties with Japan allowing citizens of the opposite nation to acquire property?¹⁷⁶ Some believed that the treaties merely allowed citizens the “right to own houses and factories

¹⁷² “California Alien Land Tenure Law,” *The American Journal of International Law*, 8.3 (July 1914): 177.

¹⁷³ *Ibid*, 177.

¹⁷⁴ Gabriel J. Chin, “Heart Mountain symposium articles: Citizenship and exclusion: Wyoming’s anti-Japanese alien land law in context,” *Wyoming Law Review*, (2001): 4.

¹⁷⁵ Robert Higgs, “Landless by Law: Japanese Immigrants in California Agriculture to 1941,” *The Journal of Economic History*, 38.1 (March 1978): 215.

¹⁷⁶ Theodore Wosley, “The California Japanese Question,” *The American Journal of International Law*, 15.1 (Jan., 1921): 58.

and shops and to lease land” and not purchase land.¹⁷⁷ An associated problem arose as the Japanese for years acquired land in California.¹⁷⁸ When the alien land law bill first appeared Japanese officials assumed nothing can prevent California from passing legislation.¹⁷⁹ Interpretation of the treaties and what they literally meant became the central issue. Although not written in either treaty specifically giving the Japanese the right to own land, it can be an assumed right, given the amount of privileges given to them regarding land ownership, and their treatment U. S. citizens regarding land possession in Japan. Japan’s laws state that Americans can own land in Japan.¹⁸⁰ The cycle of excluding instead of assimilating bloomed and nothing prevented what was to come. One Californian State Representative commented of the purpose of the alien land bill was to force the Japanese out of the state.¹⁸¹

After a public hearing about the Panama-Pacific Exposition, the state legislature of California investigated the matter of immigrants, specifically Japanese, and their ability

¹⁷⁷ “Japan not a worry,” *The Washington Post*, 12 April 1913, 5.

¹⁷⁸ “Influx of Japanese annoys Canadians,” *Los Angeles Times*, 13 April 1913, 11.

¹⁷⁹ “Tokio press is violent,” *New York Times*, 16 April 1913, 3. Note to the reader: “Tokio” is how it how the *New York Times* spelled it.

¹⁸⁰ “Japanese Law relating to foreigners rights’ of ownership in land,” *The American Journal of International Law*, 5.3 (July 1911): 175.

¹⁸¹ “Plan direct attack against Japanese,” *New York Times*, 22 April 1913, 1.

to purchase or lease land.¹⁸² Different measures appeared in the two chambers of the legislature but both wanted to accomplish one thing: “the elimination of the Japanese farmers.”¹⁸³ State politicians crafted the bill similar to that of a 1897 federal alien land law regarding ownership in the District of Columbia.¹⁸⁴ With overwhelming support at the state and local levels, California sent Secretary of State, William Jennings Bryan notice that the passing the measure seemed concise.¹⁸⁵ The people, frustrated and downright jealous of the Japanese immigrants, needed a way to curb their growth: both economically and materially.

Viscount Chinda led the struggle to make sure the alien land law bill did not pass the California state legislature. He met with Secretary Bryan and by the end of the meeting, Bryan confirmed that Japan objected to the proposed law.¹⁸⁶ The Secretary monitored the growing situation carefully knowing that the potential for an international incident seemed likely.¹⁸⁷ He recalled the San Francisco school segregation incident that embarrassed the previous administration.¹⁸⁸ On April 10, 1913, Wilson met with Bryan

¹⁸² “Alien land law on slate,” *Los Angeles Times*, 4 April 1913, 12.

¹⁸³ “Curb on the Japanese,” *The Washington Post*, 4 April 1913, 1.

¹⁸⁴ “California bill stirs up Japan,” *New York Times*, 5 April 1913, 3.

¹⁸⁵ “Say California demands anti-alien legislation,” *Los Angeles Times*, 6 April 1913, 11.

¹⁸⁶ “California bill stirs up Japan,” *New York Times*, 5 April 1913, 3.

¹⁸⁷ “Say California demands anti-alien legislation,” *Los Angeles Times*, 6 April 1913, 11.

¹⁸⁸ “California bill stirs up Japan,” *New York Times*, 5 April 1913, 3.

and members of the Californian U. S. house of representatives and let it be known that he refused federal involvement in the matter taking place in California as long as the law did not interfere with any treaty obligations.¹⁸⁹ On April 12, 1913, Chinda met with the president and asked him to “look into the legislation to see if anything could be done to make it acceptable to his country.” Frustration brewed in Japan and it began to boil over.¹⁹⁰

Other nations became worried what the alien land law intended as European nations expressed concern what it meant for their business dealings in California. Different alien land law bills varied in intent and principles in Europe owned stock in several large corporations, owned significant amounts of valuable property, and they wanted their assets maintained. The proposed legislation affected their economic interest greatly.¹⁹¹ Nations across the pond looked into defeating the measure all together because it potentially threatened their commercial endeavors.¹⁹² Italy made a formal diplomatic inquiry to the State Department regarding the matter.¹⁹³ China contemplated filing a

¹⁸⁹ “Bills stirs Japanese,” *The Washington Post*, 10 April 1913, 4.

¹⁹⁰ “Influx of Japanese annoys Canadians,” *Los Angeles Times*, 13 April 1913, 11.

¹⁹¹ “All Europe protests,” *Los Angeles Times*, 10 April 1913, 11; “Land bills strike Europe,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 17 April 1913, 5.

¹⁹² “Invested capital is w issue in alien land case,” *Christian Science Monitor*, 17 April 1913, 7.

¹⁹³ “War on U. S. urged,” *The Washington Post*, 18 April 1913, 1.

protest over the alien land law bill.¹⁹⁴ Weeks later, the alien land law bill became amended to suit European interest. California signaled to the world that hard work and money are appreciated there, just not if you are from Asia.¹⁹⁵

The citizens of Japan also watched the events unfolding in California with vested interest. Many began to see California as prejudice and planned to boycott the state if it passed any form of its alien land law. Some also threatened a boycott of Japanese participation in the Panama-Pacific exposition.¹⁹⁶ The American Asiatic Association of Japan sent a message to its American counterpart saying

“on account of serious unfriendly agitation throughout Japan due to proposed California legislation, strongly recommend sending United States Ambassador, also concerted action against legislation adverse to Japanese. Otherwise American interest will suffer seriously.”¹⁹⁷

The Japanese became hopeless due to distance, a history of anti-Asian discrimination throughout the state, and a Wilson Administration whose candor on the matter seemed mute.

On April 12, 1913, Chinda became instructed to present a formal declaration of protest to the U. S.¹⁹⁸ Rumors floated around that Japanese lands in California were going to be

¹⁹⁴ “China may also protest,” *New York Times*, 8 May 1913, 2.

¹⁹⁵ “Land bills strike Europe,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 17 April 1913, 5.

¹⁹⁶ “Protest by Europe,” *The Washington Post*, 17 April 1913, 1.

¹⁹⁷ “Protest by Europe,” *The Washington Post*, 17 April 1913, 1.

¹⁹⁸ “Land law protest is made by Japan,” *New York Times*, 13 April 1913, 2.

confiscated as a result of the legislation.¹⁹⁹ As the alien land law bill became amended, members of the Tokyo Chambers of Commerce wrote to the people of California “Japanese pay profoundest respect noble spirit America. Regret repeated appearances anti-Japanese bills your Congress. We hope earnestly not pass any bills which destroy good feeling between American and Japan.”²⁰⁰ On April 13, 1913, the alien land law held in line with existing treaties.²⁰¹ The changes failed to satisfy the Japanese government and the situation grew desperate.²⁰² The Constitutional Party in Japan recommended a Californian boycott and citizens wrote letters of protests in an attempt to persuade public opinion.²⁰³ The Japanese understood that if the bill passed in the California Legislature, the only course of grievance became the U. S. Supreme Court.²⁰⁴

On April 16, 1913, President Wilson held through on his promise to the Japanese ambassador, he began to look into the issue. Wilson met with members of his Cabinet to

68 “Declines to act,” *Los Angeles Times*, 12 April 1913, 11.

²⁰⁰ “Test case by Japan,” *The Washington Post*, 15 April 1913, 3.

²⁰¹ “Land law protest is made by Japan,” *New York Times*, 13 April 1913, 2.

²⁰² “Revised land bill doesn’t suit Japan,” *New York Times*, 16 April 1913, 3; “Tokio press is violent,” *New York Times*, 16 April 1913, 3.

²⁰³ Kawakami, Kyoshi, “Aliens in California,” *New York Times*, 22 April 1913, 10; “Alien land bill ready for test in California,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 13 April 1913, 1.

²⁰⁴ “Test case by Japan,” *The Washington Post*, 15 April 1913, 3.

discuss possible options.²⁰⁵ He concluded that if any law passed, it mirrored laws already in existence. One of the proposed bills contained a clause making those “ineligible to citizenship” unable to acquire land. The Japanese became ruled ineligible for citizenship in 1892 in a federal circuit court decision and it was re-affirmed in 1900 and nobody challenged the ruling in the Supreme Court.²⁰⁶ Wilson sent a telegram to Johnson that urged him to drop the phrase from the final bill. The president turned down an opportunity to visit with a delegation from California who wanted to explain the state’s position on the matter. Wilson merely kept in touch with the California Legislature informally and took a wait and see approach. His two-faced tactic on the issue is half-hearted. He could have scheduled a meeting with Chinda, the delegation, and attempted to find a diplomatic solution.²⁰⁷

But just as Wilson seemed apathetic to the plight of the Japanese situation in California, he decided to get more involved. He ordered Bryan to telegram Johnson and asked him to eliminate parts of the bill that aimed directly at the Japanese.²⁰⁸ The Secretary also met with Chinda to provide reassurance that the two governments still contained friendly relations.²⁰⁹ The president scheduled another meeting of the Cabinet to further discuss the

²⁰⁵ “Land bills strike Europe,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 17 April 1913, 5.

²⁰⁶ “Invested capital is w issue in alien land case,” *Christian Science Monitor*, 17 April 1913, 7.

²⁰⁷ “California is cautioned by the President,” *Christian Science Monitor*, 19 April 1913, 1.

²⁰⁸ “Move by Wilson to quiet Japan,” *New York Times*, 20 April 1913, 1.

²⁰⁹ “Move by Wilson to quiet Japan,” *New York Times*, 20 April 1913, 1.

new developments.²¹⁰ Wilson sent Bryan to California in an attempt to get the legislature to change their mind regarding aspects of the bill.²¹¹ The chief of state still held that the issue was a matter of states rights and that the federal government's involvement in the issue was to insure the law did not violate treaty obligations.²¹² Johnson defended his state's actions by citing several other states that already contained similar alien land law legislation, some of them very recently. In 1912, Arizona and several other states enacted similar measures that California now attempted to accomplish.²¹³ He held that any legislation that passed fulfilled any treaty obligation between the U. S. and Japan.²¹⁴

Outside influences affected the perception of the fairness of the alien land law bill. The 1894 and 1911 treaties with Japan allowed for land and Americans living in the country vouched the claim and provided ways of acquiring land. A doctor living in Tokyo told that the situation in California prevented him from successfully raising money to build a new hospital. Also, Dr. Iyenaga mentioned that war talk appeared in Japanese newspapers.²¹⁵ Although in Tokyo on April 17, roughly 20,000 people "cheered wildly as a member of the Diet demanded the sending of the Imperial Fleet to California to protect

²¹⁰ "Federal action expected," *New York Times*, 22 April 1913, 2.

²¹¹ "New alien bill is anti-Japanese," *New York Times*, 30 April 1913, 1.

²¹² "California is cautioned by the President," *Christian Science Monitor*, 19 April 1913, 1.

²¹³ "Plan direct attack against Japanese," *New York Times*, 22 April 1913, 1.

²¹⁴ "New alien bill is anti-Japanese," *New York Times*, 30 April 1913, 1.

²¹⁵ "Vote for Japanese Iyenaga's solution," *New York Times*, 1 May 1913, 2.

Japanese subjects and maintain the nation's dignity,"²¹⁶ the war talk appeared to be nothing more than rumblings in the streets of Japan. One Japanese naval officer believed that conflict for the two countries seemed remote. The economic consequences for the two countries made war not an option.²¹⁷ The phrase "ineligible to citizenship" disappeared from the final version of the bill due to the indirect reference that the Japanese being sole targets of the legislation.

The Japanese fought against several things working against them. One was a belief that they were dishonest businessmen.²¹⁸ The African American community reported that the Japanese economic success made them a target; something white Californians believed needed to be eliminated.²¹⁹ The Chinese League believed it became appropriate to restrict the Japanese because the law, if passed, distinguished between dominate Asian ethnic groups. This happened because the Chinese owned less land than the Japanese.²²⁰ Another problem the Japanese encountered that while talking to reporters, Wilson

²¹⁶ Roger Daniels, *The Politics of Prejudice: The Anti-Japanese movement in California and the struggle for Japanese exclusion*, [Los Angeles: University of California Press], 1962, 61.

²¹⁷ "Washington is hopeful," *New York Times*, 23 April 1913, 1.

²¹⁸ "Topics of the Times," *New York Times*, 22 April 1913, 10.

²¹⁹ David J. Hellwig, "Afro-American Reactions to the Japanese and the Anti-Japanese Movement, 1906 – 1924," *Phylon*, 38.1. (1st Qtr., 1977): 98.

²²⁰ Joan S. Wang, "The Double Burdens of Immigrant Nationalism: The Relationship between Chinese and Japanese in the American West, 1880s-1920s," *Journal of American Ethnic History*, 27. 2 (Winter 2008): 37.

mentioned that the current treaties with Japan to not give Japanese citizens the right to own land.²²¹ Article 1 of the 1911 treaty with Japan does not allow them to own land but does allow for them “to lease land for residential and commercial purposes” and “to own or lease and occupy houses.”²²² The heart of the issue lay with the Californian people themselves whose blind discrimination against a foreigner, whom through capitalism achieved success quicker, reached the point where their bigotry became law. One U. S. Congressman wanted an investigation into how California violated treaties between the U. S. and Japan.²²³

On April 22, Wilson contacted the leadership of California and expressed concern over the bill’s legality. Johnson held firm on his belief of the bill’s justified intentions. Having heard enough from Johnson, Wilson sent Bryan to California. During Bryan’s four day trip by train to the west coast, all proceedings regarding the alien land law shut down. During this time the phrase “ineligible to citizenship” dropped from the legislation. Bryan arrived in California with virtually no orders from Wilson and it showed with his lack of effort. Although the meetings ran behind closed doors, any hope the Japanese carried at stopping the legislation ended. Shortly after Bryan departed back for Washington, the California legislature passed the alien land law bill by a vote of 35 to 2 in the Senate and

²²¹ “Declines to act,” *Los Angeles Times*, 12 April 1913, 11.

²²² U. S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, 1911, 1, Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1911, 318.

²²³ “Japan will seek prompt redress,” *New York Times*, 7 May 1913, 3.

72 to 3 in the assembly. On May 19, Johnson signed the bill into law after a brief delay at the request of Wilson.²²⁴

Although Wilson attempted to derail the alien land law bill, he lacked the political desire to mount a campaign against it as he would Article X of the League of Nations. The president knew that the issue to be a matter of states rights and decided not to heavily pursue the matter and reward came his way in 1916. Wilson ran for re-election and needed California to win. The state voted for him and he skilled his way into a 2nd term in office. His forward thinking and judgment allowed him not to overplay an important issue, one that could have cost him an election. As the controversy took off, Wilson argued,

“The incident justifies the employment of every influence the Federal Government may have with the Governor and Legislature of California to persuade them so to modify the bill as to give Japan no real ground for the claim that her subjects are being discriminated against specifically.”²²⁵

Although Wilson was not governor of the state, he decided not to do more. He merely wanted to maintain positive relations with Japan and leave the incident behind him.²²⁶

The alien land bill limited leases to the Japanese to more than three years and prohibited further land purchases by them. Johnson defended his state’s actions but knew of easy

²²⁴ Roger Daniels, *The Politics of Prejudice: The Anti-Japanese movement in California and the struggle for Japanese exclusion*, [Los Angeles: University of California Press], 1962, 62.

²²⁵ “Federal action needed,” *New York Times*, 22 April 1913, 2.

²²⁶ Henry Blumenthal, “Woodrow Wilson and the race question,” *The Journal of Negro History*, 48.1 (Jan., 1963): 18.

ways around the law so where the Japanese could still do business. The Japanese government took the issue up with Washington for several more months, believing California violated treaty rights. Wilson continued to point out that the state legislature passed a law to which specifically fails to mention the Japanese in particular. Although Japan eventually let the issue rest, the people of California sought to close the loop holes seven years later.²²⁷

After the alien land law bill passed, the Japanese went to work to find ways around it. One of the ways at circumventing the law became to borrow the name of an American citizen of legal age. The American-born Japanese people in Hawaii frequently supplied their names to those in California to help out. Americans who sympathized with the Japanese occasionally gave a name as well. The Japanese created dummy corporations, as another loop-hole, where a major of the stock was owned by American citizens on the land. A law firm became specialized in the legal matter and more than 300 Japanese businesses formed because of it.²²⁸ The Japanese community quickly learned whom to trust and whom preyed upon them and word spread throughout communities.²²⁹ They did all of this despite the fact that throughout the state there was little enforcement

²²⁷ Roger Daniels, *The Politics of Prejudice: The Anti-Japanese movement in California and the struggle for Japanese exclusion*, [Los Angeles: University of California Press], 1962, 63.

²²⁸ Robert Higgs, "Landless by Law: Japanese Immigrants in California Agriculture to 1941," *The Journal of Economic History*, 38.1 (March 1978): 216 – 217.

²²⁹ Robert M. Jiobu, "Ethnic Hegemony and the Japanese of California," *American Sociological Review*, 53.3 (June 1988): 362.

of the alien land law bill. Even with the 1923 and 1927 amendments, the Japanese owned and worked on land up until World War II.²³⁰ The Alien Land Law of 1913 succeeded at first as the numbers of Japanese owners decreased, but then the numbers rose exponentially and doubled by 1922. The children of the Issei, U. S. citizens by birth, never encountered the effects of the any of the alien land law bills. The “Nisei” generation owned the farms of other family members, all on paper at least and perfectly legal.²³¹

After seven years of loop holes and circumventing the law, at least in the eyes of some of the citizens in California, anger and frustration to reached a boiling point. Various anti-Japanese groups united around a clause designed to do what they believe the Alien Land Law of 1913 failed to do. The Native Sons and Daughters and the Legionnaires gathered signatures and presented an initiative for the 1920 ballot. The group believed that they should make “a state law that will make it impossible for Japanese to get possession of the soil.”²³² Although the measure passed, the group’s efforts to plug the holes failed. By 1920 the Japanese became well versed in the legal system and Nisei generation owned the land. For the most part, the U. S. justice system

²³⁰ Robert Higgs, “Landless by Law: Japanese Immigrants in California Agriculture to 1941,” *The Journal of Economic History*, 38.1 (March 1978): 219 – 222.

²³¹ Robert M. Jiobu, “Ethnic Hegemony and the Japanese of California,” *American Sociological Review*, 53.3 (June, 1988): 359.

²³² Roger Daniels, *The Politics of Prejudice: The Anti-Japanese movement in California and the struggle for Japanese exclusion*, [Los Angeles: University of California Press], 1962, 88.

worked. The state legislature clearly supported the measure and ordered an in depth review of all Japanese land holdings in the state. Their findings affected voters and advocated for even further initiatives. The new governor “pointed out that the pending initiative measure would ‘exhaust the state’s power in dealing with this great race problem.’”²³³ He added that issue could only be solved by the U. S. Congress with an exclusion act, just like the Chinese. By the summer of 1920 the issue roared on as political campaigns became in full swing. Candidates from both parties pressed for the issue in their various campaign stops. All throughout the state, newspapers supported the new alien land law. The proposition passed with the state with a solid majority vote of 668,483 to 222,086.²³⁴

The process for the new amendment started in early February 1920. The state Superior Court heard a case in which a Japanese man controlled land in the name of his American born children. The judge ruled that the Japanese man acted improperly and wanted the two sides to find common ground on the issue.²³⁵ Later that month, the state attorney general took to court another Japanese man who owned a home in San Francisco.²³⁶ The Japanese started purchasing land under corporate titles with American names as their

²³³ Ibid, 88-89.

²³⁴ Roger Daniels, *The Politics of Prejudice: The Anti-Japanese movement in California and the struggle for Japanese exclusion*, [Los Angeles: University of California Press], 1962, 90.

²³⁵ “Scores Japs Evading Anti-Alien Land Law,” *Los Angeles Times*, 7 February, 1920, 14.

²³⁶ “Fight Japs as home owners,” *Los Angeles Times*, 28 February, 1920, 13.

directors in order to shield themselves from the law.²³⁷ With the Japanese having worked the legal system effectively, one Japanese diplomat said of the alien land law bill of 1913 “we who are in the foreign service are between the devil and the deep sea so far as our mouth is concerned.”²³⁸ Even though labor groups won a victory in an attempt to get Japanese off Californian land, their fight was just getting started.

The 1913 and 1920 alien land laws in California are examples of political economic racism. The Japanese were the only targets of the legislation and other ethnic groups were ignored. The Japanese simply became too successful in agriculture and an overzealous white majority used the only weapon they could to defeat them economically: the political process.

²³⁷ “Japanese start drive for land,” *Los Angeles Times*, 15 March, 1920, 13.

²³⁸ “Would lesson state’s rights,” *New York Times*, 21 May 1913, 2.

Chapter Five: California's Alien Land Laws of 1923 and 1927

The 1920s witnessed increased activity on the alien land law front, as well as an exclusion act for the Japanese. Although California possessed laws aimed at making sure the Japanese did not own land, labor groups noticed their lack of compliance with the law. They decided to continue their assault to make sure the Japanese did not own, possess, or lease any real property. The purpose of this chapter is show the further development of alien land laws and the exclusion act.

On January 27, 1922, the Japanese Association of America announced that Louis Marshall, an expert on constitutional law, was hired as an attorney to challenge California's alien land laws in the U. S. Supreme Court.²³⁹ The attacks against the alien land laws continued, however, at the state level. The following month, Raymond L. Flick filed a motion to prevent N. Satow, a Japanese citizen, from purchasing his “twenty-eight

²³⁹ “Thousands to win land case for Japs,” *Los Angeles Times*, 28 January 1922, I2.

shares of stock in the Merced Farm Company.”²⁴⁰ A Sonoma county grand jury indicted Y. Akado for allegedly entering into an agreement with W. A. Cockerill in an attempt to violate the alien land laws. Cockerill was accused of acquiring land for Mr. Akado. Akado supposedly gave Cockerill a payment of \$150 for his service, after he received the land. Akado's defense claimed that since Mr. Cockerill maintained the title for the land, no violation of the alien land law occurred. The California State Supreme Court took up the matter, the first case to go before the state, challenging the laws. Since the Japanese are not eligible for citizenship, the Federal Courts handled all previous alien land law claims.²⁴¹

On May 1, the California State Supreme Court declared a provision in the alien land law as unconstitutional. The court ruled that parents can serve as guardians of land for their American-born children. Japanese resident Haya Yano brought the suit to court over the estate he purchased for his daughter. In the Court's ruling, the judge stated, “The child is a native of the United States and of the state of California. Nothing can be denied to her because of her race or color that is not denied to all citizens, regardless of race or color.”²⁴² Also, the *Los Angeles Times* published, “the court held, because the right of privilege of a father to be the guardian of own minor child does not in any respect depend upon or rise out of his nationality or his eligibility to citizenship in this country. It has no

²⁴⁰ “Third attack on alien land law,” *Los Angeles Times*, 28 February 1922, I4.

²⁴¹ “First test of land law,” *Los Angeles Times*, 7 March 1922, I1.

²⁴² “Japs when in court ruling,” *Los Angeles Times*, 2 May 1922, I1.

relation thereto.”²⁴³

By mid August, the *Grizzly Bear*, the publication of the Native Sons and Daughters of the Golden Coast, publicly condemned Governor Stephens's tactics on handling the Japanese Question. The editor of the *Grizzly Bear*, Clarence R. Hunt, said “Gov. Stephens has done absolutely nothing, except talk, in the campaign against the Japs, and he failed even to talk until the alien land law was adopted in 1920 by an overwhelming vote.”²⁴⁴ Hunt continued his written assault on the governor by claiming he was allowing the Japanese to invade the state peacefully while the governor called his opponents “cheap” merely for following the law and removing the menace known as the Japanese. Hunt called for on Stephens to fight not only the Japanese growth in the state but, also to eliminate it all together. He believed Japanese development was the single greatest threat the state ever faced, placing it above the Chinese.²⁴⁵ The editorial got Governor Stephens's attention and the following month, a suit was filed in order to forcibly re-take land leased to Tojuero Tagami.²⁴⁶

By 1923, Californians believed the 1913 and 1920 alien land laws had become ineffective. A new tide of anti-Japanese grew, and another alien land law pressed its way in the California State Legislature. Tojuero Tagami, who possessed property near Fort MacArthur, challenged the laws as the state attempted to relieve him of his ownership of

²⁴³ “Japs when in court ruling,” *Los Angeles Times*, 2 May 1922, I1.

²⁴⁴ “Governor's Jap policy flayed,” *Los Angeles Times*, 15 August 1922, III1.

²⁴⁵ “Governor's Jap policy flayed,” *Los Angeles Times*, 15 August 1922, III1.

²⁴⁶ “File suit to try and take land,” *Los Angeles Times*, 22 September 1922, III1.

the land. Tagami claimed the alien land laws violated the U. S. treaty with Japan because it allows for the leasing of land for commercial use.²⁴⁷

The Japanese challenged the laws in the Supreme Court. Louis Marshall, representing Japanese interest, claimed the laws violated the fourteenth amendment as the alien land laws attacked the Japanese because of their color and race. California Attorney General Webb argued the Japanese refused to allow people, who are eligible to become citizens, access to the land that they own. The state of California believed citizens “who have sympathy with our institutions and can be compelled to contribute to its preservation [of the land].”²⁴⁸ Webb continued with his remarks believing the government needed to protect the white man and compared the events in California as a possible Civil War.²⁴⁹

On July 11, the Superior Court in California ruled in favor of Tagami. Judge Hewitt claimed he used “a liberal interpretation” of the law and believed California violated the U. S., Japanese treaty of 1911, making the alien land laws void since Japanese residents are allowed to lease land for commercial use.²⁵⁰ California appealed Judge Hewitt's decision and took the matter to the Supreme Court. On November 12, the Supreme Court sided with California and upheld the alien land laws. The court held firm

²⁴⁷ “New attack on land law: Japanese strikes at alien act in another way,” *Los Angeles Times*, 30 January 1923, II6.

²⁴⁸ “Domination of California by Japs is feared,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 24 April 1923, 5.

²⁴⁹ “Domination of California by Japs is feared,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 24 April 1923, 5.

²⁵⁰ “Japanese winner in land case; Court rules Orientals may hold restate,” *Los Angeles Times*, 12 July 1923, II19.

that “that states could prohibit from owning land alien eligible to citizenship but who had not declared their intentions.”²⁵¹ The Court even cited a letter that Viscount Chinda wrote to Secretary of State Bryan in 1916, acknowledging the fact the Japanese possessed no legal right to own land in America.²⁵²

The new alien land law went further than its predecessor and stated aliens ineligible to citizenship could not lease land. Californians the economic base of which the Japanese immigrant lived.²⁵³ The Japanese responded by writing carefully written cropping contracts in order to shield themselves from the law. The contracts provided temporary relief as nobody knew the legality of such contracts. In July 1921, Webb declared the contracts illegal. The Japanese Agriculture Association (JAA) met and discussed options of handling the recent turn of events. In a second meeting, the assembly decided to raise \$25,000 for the purposes of challenging the law. The Central Japanese Association of Southern California launched a similar compliant unknown to the JAA. The two groups teamed up, even shared expenses, and decided to separating challenge the law but render the decision made by the court system binding for their separate court cases. In court, the Japanese won one case but lost another. After appeal after appeal and cases reaching the U. S. Supreme Court, two years of legal struggle ended as the high court declared the 1920 alien land law not in violation of the Constitution or the 1911 U. S. treaty with

²⁵¹ “States can bar aliens' owning land, Is ruling,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 13 November 1923, 3.

²⁵² “States can bar aliens' owning land, Is ruling,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 13 November 1923, 3.

²⁵³ Jules Becker, *The Course of Exclusion 1882 – 1924: San Francisco Newspaper Coverage of the Chinese and Japanese in the United States*, [San Francisco: Mellen Research University Press], 1991, 163.

Japan.²⁵⁴

The Japanese Association of America recognized the fight against the alien land laws ended with the Supreme Court decision and instructed all Japanese citizens to comply with the laws. Despite the compliance the organization said, “we thought this law was in violation of the Constitution. If we had not looked to America with absolute faith in her spirit we could never have appealed to the Supreme Court for the better protection of our rights.”²⁵⁵ Because of the ruling, many Japanese sought to leave California after the harvest ended. The Japanese supplied nearly half of the lettuce and cauliflower in the state. White farmers in the Santa Marie Valley already looked to produce more than what the Japanese did once they left town.²⁵⁶

The campaign for a “white California” was finally showing results as “more than 30,000 Japanese farmers are preparing to abandon nearly 500,000 acres of California's richest crop lands.”²⁵⁷ The Japanese lost 458,056 acres that generated \$ 67,145,730 worth of produce.²⁵⁸ The Japanese dominated many of the crops in the state. They supplied “celery, 85 to 90 percent of State total; berries, 90 to 95 per cent; asparagus, 70 to 75; cantaloupes, 65 to 70; onions, 85 to 90; tomatoes, 75 to 80; mixed vegetables, 90 to 95;

²⁵⁴Ibid, 163-8.

²⁵⁵ “Japanese bow to land act,” *New York Times*, 3 December 1923, 10.

²⁵⁶ “Japanese quitting farms: Many Orientals leaving Santa Barba,” *Los Angeles Times*, 21 December 1923, II10.

²⁵⁷ “Japanese will quit California farms,” *New York Times*, 16 December 1923, E1.

²⁵⁸ “Japanese will quit California farms,” *New York Times*, 16 December 1923, E1.

grapes, 25 to 30; deciduous fruits, 70 to 75; lettuce, 85 to 90.”²⁵⁹ As Senator Hiram Johnson sought re-election, on the campaign trail he made a speech saying “At the next session of Congress it is no secret that the California congressional delegation intends to make its fight for exclusion.”²⁶⁰

At the time of the alien land law of 1923 discussion in California, in Washington, D.C., the house Committee on Immigration passed a measure severely reducing the number of emigrants allowed to enter the country. The measure included a provision that excluded the Japanese from coming to America. The bill affirmed “an immigrant not eligible for citizenship shall not be admitted to the United States unless within the class specified in [certain] subdivisions.”²⁶¹ The Chairman of the Immigration Committee, Albert Johnson, explained the “provision is in accordance with the United States Supreme Court decision and does not interfere with any treaties.”²⁶² Because of that, the Congressman believed that the State Department and the Japanese government held no grounds from which they could protest. Even though the committee worked on the bill for months, Asians, specifically the Japanese, became the committee's main goal of

²⁵⁹ “Japanese will quit California farms,” *New York Times*, 16 December 1923, E1

²⁶⁰ Jules Becker, *The Course of Exclusion 1882 – 1924: San Francisco Newspaper Coverage of the Chinese and Japanese in the United States*, [San Francisco: Mellen Research University Press], 1991, 172.

²⁶¹ “Would bar Asiatics, Reduce all quotas: House Committee adopts provisions to halve,” *New York Times*, 6 February 1923, 5.

²⁶² “Would bar Asiatics, Reduce all quotas: House Committee adopts provisions to halve,” *New York Times*, 6 February 1923, 5.

whose numbers they sought to reduce, not exclude.²⁶³

The Japanese Foreign Minister, K.Matsui held his government wished to be treated like other nations of the world. He proclaimed the “Japanese are disturbed over the increasing restrictions upon Japanese residents by the United States and the proposals now before Congress for exclusion of Japanese.”²⁶⁴ Japanese newspapers responded differently to the news of possible exclusion. The *Yorozh Chono* took “an extreme view” of the situation, while as the *Tokio Nichi Nichi Shimbun* expressed disappointment and suggested “that Japan obtain from America approval for Japanese expansion in Manchuria and Mongolia in return for Japan's recognition of America's discriminatory treatment of the Japanese.”²⁶⁵ The Japanese government balanced their response by replying they did “not intend to demand that the United States grant citizenship to the Japanese but regrets such application of naturalization laws as to accord discriminatory treatment to Japanese settlers.”²⁶⁶ The Japanese sought to express the right way to confront the immigration bill

²⁶³ “Would bar Asiatics, Reduce all quotas: House Committee adopts provisions to halve,” *New York Times*, 6 February 1923, 5.

²⁶⁴ “Japan urges Parley to fix immigration: Foreign Minister says Empire is disturbed,” *New York Times*, 8 February 1924, 5.

²⁶⁵ “Japan takes up Exclusion Bill: Washington measure may be discussed in Diet – Press comment hostile,” *New York Times*, 12 February 1923, 2.

²⁶⁶ “Japan takes up Exclusion Bill: Washington measure may be discussed in Diet – Press comment hostile,” *New York Times*, 12 February 1923, 2.

at a later time.²⁶⁷

Shortly after representatives from various industries testified on Capitol Hill, the senate Committee on Immigration expressed a different view from their colleagues in the house and held they could not vote on the measure based off the “present conditions in the chamber.”²⁶⁸ The witnesses believed the economy would suffer without a steady supply of labor coming into the country. They also argued that several states already faced a shortage of labor and did not believe any exclusion clause was needed. R. C. Marshall Jr., the General Manager of the Associated General Contractors, recently arrived from Los Angeles, and was told by companies that Japanese labor was needed for work. The projects in questioned called for more than 300,000 men. At the National Immigration Conference, business and political leaders met to gather ideas about the immigration issue in order to submit their ideas to Congress. Dr. Henry Osburn pleaded for selective immigration. He believed the nation was being threatened by the number of emigrants entering and that it endangered the nation's top stock. Osburn mentioned the Japanese cannot become citizens.²⁶⁹

In March of the following year, the senate passed its version of the immigration

²⁶⁷ “Japan takes up Exclusion Bill: Washington measure may be discussed in Diet – Press comment hostile,” *New York Times*, 12 February 1923, 2.

²⁶⁸ “Will not change Immigration Law: Republican leaders decide Congress cant pass new act at this session,” *New York Times*, 21 February 1923, 2.

²⁶⁹ “Favors Selective Immigration Law: Old American Stock Dying Out, Dr. Osburn,” *New York Times*, 14 December 1923, 20.

bill by a vote of 62 to 6. The senate version differed from their house colleagues in that it banned Asiatics the moment the president signed the bill into law.²⁷⁰ The Japanese Ambassador, Masano Hanihara, condemned the actions of the U.S. Congress. Chairman Johnson downplayed the idea the Ambassador's letter influence the vote. The Minnesota Senator believed that prior to Hanihara's letter, the senate possessed enough votes to pass the immigration bill. Also, the Chairman's understanding of the "gentlemen's agreement" was that if it failed, an exclusion act was possible. He held the view Asians could not assimilate into American culture and therefore, the U.S. should limit the amount of people from that region who wish to enter.²⁷¹ President Calvin Coolidge attempted to play both sides of fence as he wanted to keep the exclusion clause in the immigration bill, yet do so as not to offend the Japanese. The White House statement surprised members of the senate on the Foreign Affairs and Immigration committees. The senators mentioned both the house and senate agreed to continue the "gentlemen's agreement" and the conference committee expressed no desire to discuss it any more. Chairman Johnson continued to argue for Japanese exclusion, not a quota, and he also equated the Japanese to the Chinese and believed the Congress needed to pass a similar act.²⁷²

²⁷⁰ "Immigration Bill passes the Senate by vote of 62 to 6: Ban on Asiatics is made," *New York Times*, 19 April 1924, 1.

²⁷¹ "Says Japanese ban was long planned: Chairman Johnson Declare's that Hanihara's note only gave greater vote in the Senate," *New York Times*, 22 April 1924, 3.

²⁷² "Coolidge seeks way to satisfy Japanese: Anxious to Preserve Exclusion Feature of Immigration Bill without giving offense," *New York Times*, 26 April 1924, 14.

Standing before the senate Committee on Immigration, James Phelan, a former senator from California, argued for Japanese exclusion. He reminded the chamber the U.S. government drew a line in the sand between those who are eligible for citizenship and those who are not. Phelan believed the Japanese avoided its obligations in the “gentlemen's agreement” and that nearly 38,000 women arrived in the country fraudulently.²⁷³ The following month in April, Hanihara warned of “grave consequences” if an exclusion act passed the Congress.²⁷⁴

In early May, the President announced he wanted the date of when the immigration bill went into effect pushed back by many months. This demand angered senators on both parties and even the Senators who represented the White House's position took backlash at the idea. Senators Johnson and Shortridge, both from California, believed the matter needed to be resolved through the Congress, not the White House. Chairman Johnson announced he planned to submit his conference to the floor of the House for debate the following day. Both sides geared up for the debate, including California Congressman John Raker, who led the Pacific Coast states and the fight for the exclusion amendment. Senator Johnson proclaimed on the floor the Japanese in his state

²⁷³ “Charges Japanese Agreement: Former Senator Phelan tells Committee Immigration,” *New York Times*, 14 March 1924, 9.

²⁷⁴ “Japanese protest further exclusion: Formal note holds House bill brands them as untrustworthy – Appeals to our honor,” *New York Times*, 12 April 1924, 1.

requested more brides be sent across the ocean.²⁷⁵ Despite the President's call for an extension, his words fell on deaf ears as the immigration bill passed the House by a vote of 308 to 58 and a senate vote of 69 to 9. Even if Coolidge vetoed the measure, both chambers possessed the votes to override.²⁷⁶

After a few days of consultation with his senior advisors, Coolidge realized the fight to delay Japanese exclusion was over. The Japanese government was expected to make a formal protest when the president signed the immigration bill into law.²⁷⁷ In response to the congress passing the exclusion act, the U.S. Ambassador to Japan resigned.²⁷⁸ On May 26, President Coolidge signed the immigration bill into law. He stated if the Congress simply passed a Japanese Exclusion Act, he would have vetoed it. Californian Senator Hiram Johnson said of the immigration bill "it is a matter of congratulation and rejoicing that California finally prevails in the long struggle for the protection and

²⁷⁵ "Senator's attack Coolidge's Action on Japanese: Members of both parties assail extension of exclusion date in hot two-hour debate," *New York Times*, 9 May 1924, 1.

²⁷⁶ "Huge votes for Exclusion: House 308 to 58, Senate 69 to 9, Pass Immigration Bill. Ignore Coolidge's plea measure made effective July 1," *New York Times*, 16 May 1924, 1.

²⁷⁷ "Japanese lose hope of Exclusion veto: Government is expected to make formal protest when immigration act is signed," *New York Times*, 19 May 1924, 3.

²⁷⁸ "Conference on Exclusion: President and Hughes Discuss plan of action. Disapprove," *New York Times*, 20 May 1924, 1.

preservation of its own.”²⁷⁹ Senator Samuel Shortridge of California said “we of California who have urged the exclusion of alien ineligible to citizenship are profoundly grateful to those from other sections of the country who have assisted us.”²⁸⁰

The day after the immigration bill took effect, protest erupted across Japan. The incidents made the Japanese government warn Americans living in Japan to avoid public places as the day was marked as anti-American day in Tokyo.²⁸¹ At the national Grange Convention, the executive committee adopted a resolution passed by the California chapter expressing support for the immigration bill. The organization boasted its involvement in securing the bill's passage. The Grange protested any more immigration changes “on the ground that the present provisions are a necessary safeguard to the American farm home and to the white race.”²⁸²

The issue of Japanese exclusion first began in 1916. The house voted for an immigration bill which included a provision prohibiting Japanese immigration. President Wilson met with the Japanese Ambassador and the White House convinced the Congress to pass a

²⁷⁹ “Exclusion Law is scored: President calls that part of the act “unnecessary and deplorable,” *New York Times*, 27 May 1924, 1.

²⁸⁰ “Exclusion Law is scored: President calls that part of the act “unnecessary and deplorable,” *New York Times*, 27 May 1924, 1.

²⁸¹ “Japanese protests carried to shrines: Crowds ask Ancient Deities to aid Japan because of our exclusion “insult,” *New York Times*, 2 July 1924, 21.

²⁸² “Grange declares for Japanese ban: Adopts Resolution offered by Californians opposing change in law,” *New York Times*, 18 November 1924, 3.

different immigration bill that did not include a ban on Japanese immigration. One of the big reasons for the change was that Commerce Secretary Herbert Hoover met with Chairman Johnson. Hoover told him that American companies in Japan faced \$ 200 million in losses because the government threatened to cancel their contracts if the bill passed. While Coolidge pondered over signing the immigration bill, an article appeared, saying, “Leaders among the exclusionists faction...believe that if the bill is vetoed California will be lost to the President in the November election and swing over to the Democratic side for the reason that Democrats in both houses have voted solidly for Exclusion.”²⁸³ This situation allegedly weighed on Coolidge's mind in determining whether to allow the measure to pass.

During the Great Depression, Japanese families suffered right along millions of other families as they just tried to get by. When the Japanese in California began to lose their farms, many sought work outside of agriculture. This void on the farmland created a shortage of workers. Many Japanese turned to Mexicans or Filipinos who worked on Japanese farms seasonally when their labor was needed. The Japanese preferred these groups because of their ability to work longer hours for less pay. This worked out well initially, however, as time went on, Mexicans refused to accept the low wages and strike for a better wage. The Japanese responded by using small Niesi school children to work on the farm. The children solution only provided temporary relief and the two sides eventually negotiated a deal.²⁸⁴

²⁸³ Jules Becker, *The Course of Exclusion 1882 – 1924: San Francisco Newspaper Coverage of the Chinese and Japanese in the United States*, [San Francisco: Mellen Research University Press], 1991, 191-2.

²⁸⁴ Sandra O. Uyenten, “Struggle and Survival: The history of Japanese immigrant families in California,

The Niesi generation affected the Issei directly as they knew both Japanese and English. With their being no language barrier, many Niesi went into town and sought cheaper goods when it was available. In 1934 in Los Angeles, the Issei attempted to appease the Niesi by offering “Niesi Week” and hired them for the occasion. The event failed to galvanize that particular generation and they soon returned to their old ways of not purchasing Issei made products.²⁸⁵ Many Japanese women during this time worked alongside their husband on the farm to help out the family. In the event of their husband’s death, many women took over the head of the household role and continued the family business. The oldest child usually assisted the mother in the family business. One woman described her hardship of widowhood “I was left with seven children, and the youngest was only two years old. I worked in place of my late husband, growing vegetables and making noodles by machine to sell.”²⁸⁶

The Niesi generation attempted to break away from the family business by getting a higher education. Although some received degrees from universities throughout California, the schools acknowledge the inability of this group to locate work. The Depression only made the prospects of this groups finding work outside the family even more difficult. The University of California at Berkeley said “The supply of applicants more than exceeds the demand for positions of all kinds, and California employers are

1907-1947,” Diss. University of California, 1988: 167-8.

²⁸⁵ Sandra O. Uyenten, “Struggle and Survival: The history of Japanese immigrant families in California, 1907-1947,” Diss. University of California, 1988: 170-1.

²⁸⁶ Ibid, 183-4.

not disposed in a friendly manner toward the Japanese and Chinese.”²⁸⁷

On December 7, 1941, the empire of Japan launched a surprise attack on the U.S. Navy base in Hawaii at Pearl Harbor. In response, the U.S. declared war on Japan. But inside the country, a different kind of battle raged. The government announced the formation of internment camps of all Japanese-American citizens and up to 100,000 people needed to move.²⁸⁸ As the Japanese lived in the camps, some communities attempted to squeeze the Japanese economically so where they would not return. In Oregon, towns erased the names of its Japanese citizens who actively served in the U.S. military.²⁸⁹

Many Japanese returned to California after the war ended and started to rebuild their lives. Although California no longer practices political economic racism against its Asian immigrants, the lessons of the past can be applied to the present. Given the growth of the Hispanic population in California over the past three decades, new legislation to prevent economic of a particular group is not needed.

²⁸⁷ Ibid, 186.

²⁸⁸ “Evacuation area set up for Japanese in Pacific States,” *New York Times*, 4 March 1942, 1.

²⁸⁹ “‘Squeeze’ of Nisei is worrying WRA,” *New York Times*, 26 Feb 1945, 26.

Conclusion

The mid-nineteenth century marked a turning point in American history, the echoes of which continue on till this day. The Chinese arrived with welcomed arms, only to be quickly treated with disdain. Californians used violence and economic sanctions against the Chinese as they increasingly saw them as not as fellow immigrants, but as something to be feared. Labor groups, along with the Californian State Legislature, enacted laws designed to curtail Chinese economic progress. These laws proved to be ineffective as wave after wave of Chinese immigrants landed in California and found success.

Businesses continued to desire and hire Chinese labor over other ethnic groups. White labor pressured the Congress into passing the Exclusion Act in 1882. Although originally constructed to prohibit Chinese labor for ten years, the legislation soon went permanent. The environment known as Yellow Peril, the fear of the Asian immigrant, was not over.

The Japanese started to arrive just two years after the Chinese became excluded. They experienced the same type of the Chinese first received; then came the discrimination. Although the Japanese government protested, California passed an alien land law in 1913 with additions in 1920, 1923, and 1927. The Western states, led by California, pushed for an Exclusion Act for the Japanese. The California legislature anti-Japanese sentiment carried on for decades and its ugly head roared up again for the internment camps of

Japanese Americans during World War II.

The same type of Yellow Peril that existed for the Japanese immigrants continues to exist in the form of discrimination toward illegal Mexicans. For years they worked, supported their families, living peacefully among Americans. Groups similar to that of the Native Sons and Daughters and the Legionnaires support propositions that call for Mexicans to leave. California's Dr. Jekyll and Ms. Hyde approach to foreigners follows in the same form of their ancestors. They love the immigrants to do the labor but once when they start being successful, it is time for them to leave, and bring in another group to exploit.

Whether Chinese, Japanese, or illegal Mexicans these groups influenced the many different aspects of life for Californians and the rest of the U. S. The political economic racist approach lives on as the illegal Mexicans gain traction and attempt to move up the socio-economic ladder.

Just as the Japanese found themselves nervous with the state of affairs in 1913, nearly 70 years later, the illegal Mexicans, predominately in California, but spread throughout the U. S., experience similar conditions. Both worked jobs or in industries Americans typically did not work. Both labored for low wages, housed in ethnic similar communities, and experienced discrimination in their time. Although most of the Japanese arrived legally, the illegal Mexicans in the U. S. feel the pressure from political interest groups who strive to remove them. Even though the round-up would cost millions, detention centers to hold the Mexicans over for deportations do not exist, and the process would create several other local, state, and federal nightmares. These interest groups share the same fears Californians possessed in the early 1910s. Whether Japanese

or illegal Mexicans, communities should attempt to bring people together and not segregate them from society. Over the years in California the proposed propositions regarding illegal Mexicans speak no different from the anti-alien legislation passed against legal immigrants. Both state the same thing: please leave, go home, and do not return.²⁹⁰

The legislation signed by Arizona Governor Jan Brewer in the spring of 2010 echoes the type of legislation signed by several California Governors and U.S. Presidents. Although the act was not economically motivated, it carries all too familiar tones of racism that California often expressed during its Yellow Peril. The political economic racism passed by California from 1848 - 1943, set the standard for race prejudice during its time. We must strive to avoid such legislation in the future as we continue to build a great nation.

²⁹⁰ Richard A. Walker, "California's Golden Road to Riches: Natural Resources and Regional Capitalism, 1848 - 1940," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 91.1 (March 2001): 167-199.

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