

AT AMERICA'S GATES

CHINESE IMMIGRATION DURING

THE EXCLUSION ERA, 1882-1943

The University of North Carolina Press CHAPEL HILL AND LONDON

ERIKA LEE

In the United States, the great migrations of Asians, Europeans, and Mexicans from the 1880s to 1924 coincided with and helped instigate an expansion of the modern administrative state. They inspired the establishment of a state bureaucracy to enforce laws and to protect the nation's geographic borders as well as its internal borders of citizenship. Gatekeeping was also inextricably tied to the expansion of U.S. imperialism at the end of the nineteenth century. At the same time that the United States began to assert its national sovereignty by closing its gates to unwanted foreigners, it was also expanding its influence abroad through military and economic force, and it extended some of its immigration laws to its new territories.¹³

Closing America's gates to various "alien invasions" was additionally instrumental in articulating a definition of American national identity and belonging at the turn of the twentieth century.¹⁴ Americans learned to define "American-ness" by excluding and containing foreign-ness. Through the admission and exclusion of foreigners, the United States both asserted its sovereignty and reinforced its identity as a nation.

Immigration patterns and immigrant communities were profoundly changed by the new laws and the ways in which they were enforced. The ideology and administrative processes of gatekeeping dehumanized and criminalized immigrants, defining them as "unassimilable aliens," "unwelcome invasions," "undesirables," "diseased," "illegal." But gatekeeping is not only a form of state action. It is a result of interactions between immigrants and the state. Even those groups who were most affected by immigration restriction played active roles in challenging, negotiating, and shaping the new gatekeeping nation. In both their overt challenges and their everyday acts of resistance, immigrants defied their exclusion from the United States by moving around the barriers designed to exclude them while simultaneously staking their own claims to America.

In this section, Chapter 1 locates the roots of American gatekeeping in the debates, racialized discourses, and regulations surrounding Chinese immigration and exclusion. Chapter 2 focuses on the federal immigration officials charged with interpreting and enforcing the exclusion laws, demonstrating how they shaped the development of the U.S. immigration service locally and nationally.

THE CHINESE ARE COMING. HOW CAN WE STOP THEM?

Chinese Exclusion and the Origins of American Gatekeeping

IN 1876, H. N. CLEMENT, a San Francisco lawyer, stood before a California State Senate Committee and sounded the alarm: "*The Chinese are upon us. How can we get rid of them? The Chinese are coming. How can we stop them?*"¹ Panicked cries such as these and portrayals of Chinese immigration as an evil, "unarmed invasion" had been shared by several witnesses before the committee, which was charged with investigating the "social, moral, and political effects" of Chinese immigration. Testimony like Clement's was designed to reach a broad audience, and the committee hearings themselves were part of a calculated political attempt to bring the question of Chinese immigration to a national audience.² Many Californians had long felt beleaguered by the influx of Chinese immigrants into the state and now believed that it was time that the federal government took action. As the committee's "Address to the People of the United States upon the Evils of Chinese Immigration" stated, the people of California had "but one disposition upon this grave subject . . . and that is an open and pronounced demand upon the Federal Government for relief."³

At the time of the committee hearings, the United States was just begin-

ning to exert federal control over immigration. Its first efforts had begun one year earlier in response to the California lobby to exclude Asian contract labor and women (mostly Chinese) suspected of entering the country for "lewd or immoral purposes." The resulting Page Law, passed in 1875, represented the country's first—albeit limited—regulation of immigration on the federal level and served as an important step toward general Chinese exclusion.⁴ The U.S. Congress eventually heeded the call of Californians and other westerners to protect them from the so-called Chinese invasion with the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act.

Historians have often noted that the Chinese Exclusion Act marks a "watershed" in U.S. history. Not only was it the country's first significant restrictive immigration law; it was also the first to restrict a group of immigrants based on their race, nationality, and class. As Roger Daniels has written, the Chinese Exclusion Act was "the hinge upon which the legal history of immigration turned."⁵ This observation has become the standard interpretation of the anti-Chinese movement, but until recently, most accounts of Chinese exclusion have focused more on the anti-Chinese movement preceding the Chinese Exclusion Act rather than on the six decades of the exclusion era itself.⁶ Moreover, there has been little attempt to explain the larger impact and legacies of Chinese exclusion. For example, how did the effort to exclude Chinese influence the restriction and exclusion of other immigrant groups? How did the racialization of Chinese as excludable aliens contribute to and intersect with the racialization of other Asian, southern and eastern European, and Mexican immigrants? What precedents did the Chinese Exclusion Act set for the admission, documentation, surveillance, and deportation of both new arrivals and immigrant communities within the United States?

When the Page Law and the Chinese Exclusion Act serve as the beginning rather than the end of the narrative, we are forced to focus more fully on the enormous significance of Chinese exclusion. It becomes clear that its importance as a "watershed" goes beyond its status as one of the first immigration policies to be passed in the United States. Certainly, the Page Law and the Chinese Exclusion Act provided the legal architecture for twentieth-century American immigration policy.⁷ Chinese exclusion, however, also introduced gatekeeping ideology, politics, law, and culture that transformed the ways in which Americans viewed and thought about race, immigration, and the United States' identity as a nation of immigrants. It legalized the restriction, exclusion, and deportation of immigrants considered to be threats to the United States. It established Chinese immigrants—categorized by their

race, class, and gender relations as the ultimate example of the dangerous, degraded alien—as the yardsticks by which to measure the desirability (and "whiteness") of other immigrant groups. Lastly, the Chinese exclusion laws not only provided an example of how to contain threatening and undesirable foreigners, they also set in motion new modes and technologies of immigration regulation, including federal immigration officials and bureaucracies, U.S. passports, "green cards," and illegal immigration and deportation policies. In the end, Chinese exclusion forever changed America's relationship to immigration.

The Anti-Chinese Movement and the Passage of the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act

Chinese immigrants began to arrive in the United States in significant numbers following the discovery of gold in California in 1848. Most came from the Pearl River delta region in Guangdong, China, and, like the majority of newcomers to California, the Chinese community was comprised mostly of male laborers. They were only a small fraction of the total immigrant population of the United States. From 1870 to 1880, a total of 138,941 Chinese immigrants entered the country, 4.3 percent of the total number of immigrants (3,199,394) who entered the country during the same decade.⁸

Their small numbers notwithstanding, Chinese immigrants were the targets of racial hostility, discriminatory laws, and violence. This racism was grounded in an American Orientalist ideology that homogenized Asia as one indistinguishable entity and positioned and defined the West and the East in diametrically opposite terms, using those distinctions to claim American and Anglo-American superiority. Americans first learned to identify Chinese through reports from American traders, diplomats, and missionaries in China. Their portrayals of Chinese as heathen, crafty, and dishonest "marginal members of the human race" quickly set Chinese apart. At first seen as exotic curiosities from a distant land, Chinese immigrants came to be viewed as threats, especially as Chinese immigration increased throughout the gold rush period.⁹

Orientalist fears of the Asian "other" intersected and overlapped with domestic fears about American race, class, and gender relations. During the 1870s, massive population growth, coupled with economic dislocation in California in general, and San Francisco in particular, helped fan the fires of early anti-Chinese sentiment. By 1871, historians estimate, there were four workers

for every job, but Chinese laborers were producing 50 percent of California's boots and shoes. By 1882, Chinese made up between 50 and 75 percent of the farm labor in some California counties.¹⁰ Blaming Chinese workers for low wages and the scarcity of jobs, anti-Chinese leaders first charged that the Chinese were imported under servile conditions as "coolies" and were engaged in a new system of slavery that degraded American labor.¹¹ Chinese immigrants' purported diet of "rice and rats" was also cited as a clear sign that they had a lower standard of living, one that white working families could not (and should not) degrade themselves by accepting.¹² Samuel Gompers, president of the American Federation of Labor, framed this issue explicitly by asking, "Meat vs. Rice—American Manhood vs. Asiatic Coolieism. Which Shall Survive?"¹³ Such rhetoric heightened the appeal of groups like the Workingmen's Party of California. Founded in 1877 and headed by Irish immigrant Denis Kearney, the party's rallying cry was "The Chinese Must Go!" Local and national politicians alike used race- and class-based economic arguments to nationalize the Chinese question. As Gwendolyn Mink has illustrated, the anti-Chinese movement in California was a "building block of national trade-union politics" that "transposed anti-capitalist feeling with anti-immigrant hostility."¹⁴

Many of the arguments in favor of restricting Chinese immigrants also hinged explicitly on gender and sexuality. As Sucheta Mazumdar argues, a specific kind of Orientalism emerged in the West, with Chinese women symbolizing some of the most fundamental differences between the West and the "Far East."¹⁵ The almost 900 Chinese prostitutes in California in 1870 came to represent a sexualized danger with the power to subvert both the domestic ideal and the existing relations between white heterosexual men and women. Their mere presence made possible the crossing of racial and class lines and renewed fears of "moral and racial pollution."¹⁶ Chinese prostitutes were also believed to carry more virulent strains of venereal disease that had the power to "poison Anglo-Saxon blood." They allegedly not only threatened the morals of the larger society but, as exclusionists argued, could also cause its downfall.¹⁷

Historian Karen Leong reminds us that the ways in which both American and Chinese masculinity were constructed in the anti-Chinese debates were also central arguments for Chinese exclusion. Exclusionists claimed that Chinese men exploited women (by supporting the Chinese trade in prostitution) and immigrated alone, failing to establish families. Both actions, they argued, pointed to their lack of manhood.¹⁸ Chinese men also did not abide by the rules that divided labor by gender in American society. Expelled from mining camps, excluded from industrial and agricultural labor, Chinese men

had established an economic niche for themselves in laundries, restaurants, and domestic service, all occupations traditionally assigned to women.¹⁹ Their physical appearance and choice of clothing also disturbed American perceptions of proper gender roles. Prior to the Chinese Revolution in 1911, Chinese men shaved their foreheads and wore their hair in a queue as a symbol of loyalty to the Qing Empire. The loose garments that Chinese men often wore were also cause for scrutiny. In 1901, a California agricultural journal complained that "the good dollars which ought to be going into a white man's pocket" were instead going to the "Chinaman" and "that garment of his which passes for 'pants.'" Both the queue and the garments were seen as sexually ambiguous at a time when strict gender codes generally dictated short hair and pants for men, long hair and dresses for women.²⁰

Such class- and gender-based arguments for Chinese exclusion merged with charges that Chinese were racially inferior and would worsen America's existing race problems. Underlying the anti-Chinese movement was a larger campaign to impose and sustain white supremacy in the West. Californians had long envisioned their state to be an Edenic, unspoiled land where free labor might thrive. This image was disrupted by the "Chinese Problem."²¹ Alexander Saxton has demonstrated how the heirs to the Jacksonian Democratic Party—committed to territorial expansion, defense of slavery, and a belief in the racial inferiority of Africans and Native Americans—systematically nourished and exploited anti-Chinese sentiment and turned the Chinese immigration question into a centerpiece of California politics.²² When Chinese immigrants began arriving in America, the conquest of American Indians and Mexicans in the West had been accomplished only recently. Moreover, white anti-Chinese residents of California and other Pacific Coast states felt that the future of "their society" was particularly endangered because of their proximity to Asia.²³ In order to highlight the alleged racial threat that Chinese posed, the similarities between African Americans and Chinese immigrants were drawn most explicitly. Both the "bought" Chinese prostitute and the "enslaved" Chinese coolie were conflated with African American slaves. Racial qualities commonly assigned to African Americans were used to describe Chinese immigrants. Both were believed to be heathen, inherently inferior, savage, depraved, and lustful.²⁴ Chinese, like African Americans, were "incapable of attaining the state of civilization [of] the Caucasian." And while some believed the Chinese were "physiologically and mentally" superior to African Americans, they were more of a threat, because they were less assimilable.²⁵

Anti-Chinese activists' charges that Chinese were unwilling and, in fact,



A STATUE FOR OUR HARBOR.

"A Statue for Our Harbor," from *The Wasp*, Nov. 11, 1881. This well-known cartoon published in the *Wasp* in 1881 captured all of the themes of class-based economic competition, racial and health menace, conquest, and gender ambiguity explicit in the Chinese exclusion movement. Featuring a stereotypical image of the Chinese male coolie in place of the Statue of Liberty, the cartoon suggests that while New York's statue represented the promise of (European) immigration, California's statue symbolized how Chinese immigration would overrun the West and destroy the nation itself. Courtesy of the San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

incapable of assimilating were repeatedly used to introduce and support the idea of closing America's gates to Chinese immigration. Chinese immigrants were first set apart from both European immigrants and native-born white Americans. One witness before the 1876 California State Committee on Chinese Immigration described Chinese immigration as an unwelcome "invasion" of "new" and "different" immigrants, while the earlier classes of (European) immigrants were "welcome visitors." In this way, the country's immigrant heritage and identification as a nation of immigrants was largely preserved. Even more important, the witnesses continued to emphasize how Chinese were "permanently alien" to America, unable to ever assimilate into American life and citizenship.²⁶

These interrelated threats justified that legal barriers be established and that metaphorical gates be built and closed against the Chinese in order to protect Americans. Western politicians effectively claimed the right to speak for the rest of the country and to assert American national sovereignty in the name of Chinese exclusion. They argued that it was nothing less than the duty and the sovereign right of Californians and Americans writ large to exclude the Chinese for the good of the country. H. N. Clement, the San Francisco lawyer, explicitly combined the themes of racial difference, the closed gate/closed door metaphor, and national sovereignty to articulate this philosophy. "Have we any right to *close our doors* against one nation and open them to another?" he asked. "Has the Caucasian race any better right to occupy this country than the Mongolian?" He answered with an emphatic "Yes." Citing contemporary treatises on international law, Clement argued that the greatest fundamental right of every nation was self-preservation, and the Chinese immigration question was nothing less than a battle for America's survival. "A nation has a right to do *everything* that can secure it from threatening danger and to *keep at a distance* whatever is capable of causing its ruin," he continued. "We have a great right to say to the half-civilized subject from Asia, '*You shall not come at all.*'"²⁷

Both the West's history of extending and reinforcing white supremacy in the region and its unique relationship with the federal government paved the way toward Chinese exclusion and the larger development of a gatekeeping nation. The language and politics of the anti-Chinese movement closely followed other western campaigns of territorial expansion, expropriation of Native American lands, and the subjugation of African Americans and Mexicans. The exclusion of Chinese immigrants became a "natural" progression in the region's history

of racial oppression and segregation, but because immigration was recognized as a federal, rather than state or regional, issue, westerners could not achieve their directives alone. As one of the best examples of what historians have identified as a "quintessentially western story" of westerners relying upon the federal government to solve the region's racial and class problems, anti-Chinese activists designed a special plea for assistance to the U.S. Congress.²⁸ Their message was clear: Chinese immigration was both a "local grievance" and a "national question," the "darkest cloud" not only on California's horizon but on the republic's as well.²⁹ The threats, pleas, and cajoling worked. In 1880, unrelenting lobbying resulted in a revision of the Burlingame Treaty that had protected Chinese immigration since 1868. By March of 1882, midwestern congressman Edward K. Valentine (R-Nebraska) had articulated western exclusionists' message perfectly. "In order to protect our laboring classes," he proclaimed in the halls of Congress, "*the gate must be closed.*"³⁰ With the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882, the federal government rode to the rescue of the West once again. The exclusion of Chinese became yet one more chapter in the region's consolidation of white supremacy, but with enduring, national consequences.

The Example of Chinese Exclusion: Race and Racialization

One of the most significant consequences of Chinese exclusion was that it provided a powerful framework to be used to racialize other threatening, excludable, and undesirable aliens. After the Chinese were excluded, calls to restrict or exclude other immigrants followed quickly, and the rhetoric and strategy of these later campaigns drew important lessons from the anti-Chinese movement. For example, the class-based arguments and restrictions in the Chinese Exclusion Act were echoed in campaigns to bar contract laborers of any race. Southern and eastern European immigrants—like Chinese—were denounced as "coolies, serfs, and slaves." Such connections were persuasive. In 1885, the Foran Act prohibited the immigration of all contract laborers.³¹

The gender-based exclusions of the Page Act were also duplicated in later government attempts to screen out immigrants, especially women, who were perceived to be immoral or guilty of sexual misdeeds. The exclusion of Chinese prostitutes led to a more general exclusion of all prostitutes in the 1903 Immigration Act.³² Signifying a larger concern that independent female migration was a moral problem, other immigration laws restricted the entry of immigrants who were "likely to become public charges" or who had committed a

"crime involving moral turpitude."³³ As Donna Gabaccia has pointed out, such general exclusion laws were theoretically "gender-neutral." In practice, however, "any unaccompanied woman of any age, marital status, or background might be questioned" as a potential public charge. Clauses in the 1891 Immigration Act excluded women on moral grounds. Sexual misdeeds such as adultery, fornication, and illegitimate pregnancy were all reasons for exclusion. Lastly, echoes of the "unwelcome invasion" of Chinese and Japanese immigration were heard in nativist rhetoric focusing on the high birthrates of southern and eastern European immigrant families. Immigrant fecundity, it was claimed, would cause the "race suicide" of the Anglo-American race.³⁴

Race clearly intersected with these class- and gender-based arguments and played perhaps the largest role in determining which immigrant groups were admitted or excluded. The arguments and lessons of Chinese exclusion were resurrected over and over again during the nativist debates over the "new" immigrants from Asia, Mexico, and southern and eastern Europe, further refining and consolidating the racialization of these groups. David Roediger and James Barrett have suggested that African Americans provided the racial model for southern and eastern European immigrants. The terms "guinea," to refer to Italians, and "hunky," to refer to Slavic immigrants, were especially connected to these two groups often laboring in industries and jobs previously dominated by African Americans.³⁵ In terms of immigration restriction, however, new immigrants were more closely racialized along the Chinese immigrant model, especially in the Pacific Coast states. There, whiteness was defined most clearly in opposition to Asian-ness or "yellowness."³⁶ The persistent use of the metaphor of the closed gate, combined with the rhetoric of "unwelcome invasions," most clearly reveals the difference. African Americans, originally brought into the nation as slaves, could never really be "sent back" despite their alleged inferiority and threat to the nation. Segregation and Jim Crow legislation was mostly aimed at keeping African Americans "in their place." Chinese, who were racialized as polar opposites to "Americans," also clearly did not belong in the United States and were often compared to blacks. But unlike African Americans, they could be kept at bay through immigration laws. Later, immigration restrictions were expanded to include southern and eastern European and Mexican immigrants but never applied to African Americans.

As early-twentieth-century nativist literature and organization records illustrate, the language of Chinese restriction and exclusion was quickly refashioned to apply to each succeeding group. These connections—though clear

to contemporary intellectuals, politicians, and nativists—have not been made forcefully enough by immigration historians, who too often study European, Asian, or Latino immigrants in isolation from one another. John Higham, the leading authority on American nativism, has claimed that the anti-Asian movements were “historically tangential” to the main currents of American nativism. Edith Abbott, who authored one of the first comprehensive studies of immigration, argued that “the study of European immigration should not be complicated for the student by confusing it with the very different problems of Chinese and Japanese immigration.” Carl Wittke, considered a founder of the field, devoted much attention to Asians in his important survey of American immigration history but argued that their history was “a brief and strange interlude in the general account of the great migrations to America.”³⁷ Continued intellectual segregation within immigration history is a fruitless endeavor.³⁸ In the case of immigration restriction, it is now clear that anti-Asian nativism was not only directly connected to American nativist ideology and politics in the early twentieth century; it was in fact their dominant model.

Following the exclusion of Chinese, Americans on the West Coast became increasingly alarmed about new immigration from Asia, particularly from Japan, Korea, and India. Californians portrayed the immigrants as comprising another “Oriental invasion,” and San Francisco newspapers urged readers to “step to the front once more and battle to hold the Pacific Coast for the white race.”³⁹ Like the Chinese before them, these new Asian immigrants were considered threats because of their race and labor. The Japanese were especially feared because of their great success in agriculture. Moreover, unlike the Chinese community, which had a large proportion of single male sojourners, Japanese tended to settle and start families in the United States. The political and cultural ideology that came to be used in the anti-Japanese movement immediately connected the new Japanese threat with the old Chinese one. Headlines in San Francisco newspapers talked of “another phase in the Immigration from Asia” and warned that the “Japanese [were] taking the place of the Chinese.” Similar charges that the Japanese were unassimilable and exploitable cheap labor were made. And because the Japanese were supposedly even more “tricky and unscrupulous,” as well as more “aggressive and warlike,” than the Chinese, they were considered even “more objectionable.”⁴⁰ Political leaders made the connections explicit. Denis Kearney, the charismatic leader of the Workingmen’s Party, which spearheaded the anti-Chinese movement in San Francisco during the 1870s, found the Chinese and Japanese “problems” to be synonymous. A Sacramento reporter recorded Kearney in 1892 berating

the “foreign Shylocks [who] are rushing another breed of Asiatic slaves to fill up the gap made vacant by the Chinese who are shut out by our laws. . . . Japs . . . are being brought here now in countless numbers to demoralize and discourage our domestic labor market.” Kearney rousinglly ended his speech with “The Japs Must Go!”⁴¹ In 1901, James D. Phelan, mayor of San Francisco, spearheaded the Chinese Exclusion Convention of 1901 around the theme “For Home, Country, and Civilization.” Later, in 1920, he ran for the U.S. Senate under the slogan “Stop the Silent Invasion” (of Japanese).⁴²

The small population of Asian Indian immigrants also felt the wrath of nativists, who regarded them as the “most objectionable of all Orientals” in the United States.⁴³ In 1905, the San Francisco-based Japanese-Korean Exclusion League renamed itself the Asiatic Exclusion League in an attempt to meet the new threat. Newspapers complained of “Hindu Hordes” coming to the United States. Indians were “dirty, diseased,” “the worst type of immigrant . . . not fit to become a citizen . . . and entirely foreign to the people of the United States.” Their employment by “moneyed capitalists” as expendable cheap labor and India’s large population “teeming with millions upon millions of emaciated sickly Hindus existing on starvation wages” also hearkened back to the charges of a cheap labor invasion made against Chinese and Japanese immigrants.⁴⁴

Racialized definitions of Mexican immigrants also referred back to Chinese immigration. Long classified as racially inferior, Mexican immigrants often served as replacement agricultural laborers following the exclusion of Asian immigrants.⁴⁵ Although their immigration was largely protected by agricultural and industrial employers through the 1920s, Mexican immigrants were long-standing targets of racial nativism, and many of the arguments directed toward Mexicans echoed earlier charges made against the Chinese. Because the legal, political, and cultural understandings of Chinese immigrants as permanent foreigners had long been established, nativists’ direct connections between Chinese and Mexicans played a crucial role in racializing Mexicans as foreign. As Mae Ngai has shown for the post-1924 period, the characterization of Mexicans as foreign, rather than as the natives of what used to be their former homeland, “distanced them both from Anglo-Americans culturally and from the Southwest as a region” and made it easier to restrict, criminalize, and deport Mexicans as “illegal.”⁴⁶

Nativists used the Chinese framework to characterize Mexicans as foreign on the basis of two main arguments: racial inferiority and racial unassimilability. George P. Clemens, the head of the Los Angeles County Agricultural

Department, explained that Asians and Mexicans were racially inferior to whites because they were physically highly suitable for the degraded agricultural labor in which they were often employed. The tasks involved were those "which the Oriental and Mexican due to their crouching and bending habits are fully adapted, while the white is physically unable to adapt himself to them."⁴⁷ While Chinese were considered to be biologically inferior because of their status as heathens and their alleged inability to conform to an Anglo-American mold, Mexicans were degraded as an ignorant "hybrid race" of Spanish and Native American origin.⁴⁸ As Mexican immigration increased, fears of a foreign invasion of cheap, unassimilable laborers similar to the Chinese one permeated the nativist literature. Major Frederick Russell Burnham warned that "the whole Pacific Coast would have been Asiatic in blood today except for the Exclusion Acts. Our whole Southwest will be racially Mexican in three generations unless some similar restriction is placed upon them."⁴⁹ (Burnham, of course, conveniently ignored the fact that the Southwest—as well as most of the American West—had already been "racially Mexican" long before he himself had migrated west.) V. S. McClatchy, editor of the *Sacramento Bee*, warned that the "wholesale introduction of Mexican peons" presented California's "most serious problem" in the 1920s.⁵⁰ Increased Mexican migration to Texas was an especially contested issue, and nativists there pointed to the example of California and Chinese immigration to warn of their state's future. "To Mexicanize Texas or Orientalize California is a crime," raged one nativist.⁵¹ Chester H. Rowell argued that the Mexican invasion was even more detrimental than the Chinese one because at least the "Chinese coolie"—"the ideal human mule"—would not "plague us with his progeny. His wife and children are in China, and he returns there himself when we no longer need him." Mexicans, he argued, might not be so compliant or easy to send back.⁵²

Other nativists extended the racial unassimilability argument to Mexicans by claiming that they "can no more blend into our race than can the Chinaman or the Negro."⁵³ Anti-Mexican nativists increasingly called for restriction by framing the new Mexican immigration problem within the old argument for Chinese exclusion. Major Burnham blamed the reliance on cheap Mexican labor on the immigration promoters of the 1920s, just as Denis Kearney had blamed the capitalists and their "Chinese pets" during the 1870s. "It is the old Chinese stuff, an echo of the [18]70s, word for word!" wrote Burnham. Moreover, Burnham believed that immigration law—and specifically the same types of exclusionary measures used against the Chinese—were the

only remedy: "Let us refuse cheap labor. Let us restrict Mexican immigration and go steadily on to prosperity and wealth just as we did after the Asiatic Exclusion Acts were passed."⁵⁴

At the same time, some of the race- and class-based theories and arguments used against Asians and Mexicans were being applied to certain European immigrant groups, especially in the northeastern United States, where most European immigrants first landed and settled. The sense of "absolute difference" that already divided white Americans from people of color was extended to certain European nationalities. Because distinctive physical differences between native white Americans and European immigrants were not readily apparent, nativists "manufactured" racial difference. Boston intellectuals like Nathaniel Shaler, Henry Cabot Lodge, and Francis Walker all promoted an elaborate set of racial ideas that marked southern and eastern Europeans and others as different and inferior, a threat to the nation. In 1894, they formed a new nativist group, the Immigration Restriction League (IRL), in Boston.⁵⁵

Both Italians and French Canadians, for example, were often compared with Chinese immigrants. Italians were called the "Chinese of Europe," and French Canadians were labeled the "Chinese of the Eastern States." As Donna Gabaccia has argued, Chinese and Italians "occupied an ambiguous, overlapping and intermediary position in the binary racial schema." Neither black nor white, both were seen as in-between, or "yellow," "olive," or "swarthy." Their use as cheap labor also linked the two together. Italians were often called "European coolies" or "padrone coolies."⁵⁶ French Canadians were compared to Chinese immigrants because of their alleged inability to assimilate to Anglo-American norms. An 1881 Massachusetts state agency report charged that French Canadians were the "Chinese of the Eastern States" because "they care nothing for our institutions. . . . They do not come to make a home among us, to dwell with us as citizens. . . . Their purpose is merely to sojourn a few years as aliens."⁵⁷ In 1891, Henry Cabot Lodge opined that the Slovak immigrants—another threatening group—"are not a good acquisition for us to make, since they appear to have so many items in common with the Chinese."⁵⁸ Lothrop Stoddard, another leading nativist, went even further by arguing that eastern Europeans were not only "like the Chinese"; they were, in fact, part Asian. Eastern Europe, he explained, was situated "next door" to Asia and had already been invaded by "Asiatic hordes" over the past two thousand years. As a result, the Slavic peoples were mongrels, "all impregnated with Asiatic Mongol and Turki blood."⁵⁹

Such explicit race- and class-based connections to Chinese immigration

were effective in defining and articulating nativists' problems with newer immigrants. The old Chinese exclusion rhetoric was one with which Americans were familiar by the 1910s, and it served as a strong foundation from which to build new nativist arguments on the national level. The Immigration Restriction League used this tactic masterfully. In a 1908 letter to labor unions, the organization affirmed that Chinese immigration was the ultimate evil but warned that the Orient was "only one source of the foreign cheap labor which competes so ruinously with our own workmen." The IRL charged that the stream of immigrants from Europe and western Asia was "beginning to flow," and without proper measures to check it, it would "swell, as did the coolie labor, until it overwhelms one laboring community after another."⁶⁰

In a letter to politicians, the IRL defined the issues and the sides even more clearly. The letter asked congressmen and senators across the country to identify the "classes of persons" who were desired and not desired in their state. The IRL made this task simple by offering them pre-set lists of groups they themselves deemed "desirable" and "undesirable." The politicians needed only to check the groups in order of preference. In the "desired" categories, "Americans, native born," topped the list. The generic category of "persons from northern Europe" came second. Then, the specific groups of British, Scandinavians, and Germans followed. Asiatics, southern and eastern Europeans, illiterates, and the generic "foreign born" were all lumped together in the second list of supposed unwanted and excludable immigrants.⁶¹ The IRL could make no clearer statement: the new threat from Europe and the old threat from Asia were one.

Because of different regional politics and dynamics of race relations, divergent opinions about the connections between the old Asian immigration problem and the new European one existed on the West Coast. On the one hand, the parties behind the virulent anti-Asian campaigns broadened their appeals to preserve "America for all Americans" and called into question just who was a "real American." The San Francisco-based Asiatic Exclusion League implied that all aliens were dangerous to the country and passed a resolution that required aliens to disarm in order to prevent insurrection.⁶² Other nativists in California expressed fears of the degraded immigrants entering the country from both Asia and Europe. Homer Lea, the author and leading proponent of the Yellow Peril theory of Japanese domination of America, warned that the growing immigration from Europe augmented the Japanese danger by "sapping America's racial strength and unity."⁶³ The California branch of the Junior Order of United American Mechanics, a well-established nativist group,

allied itself with the Asiatic Exclusion League and announced that southern Europeans were semi-Mongolian.⁶⁴

On the other hand, western nativists continued the West's campaign to preserve a "white man's frontier" by emphasizing the differences between Europeans and Asians and by privileging whiteness at the expense of people of color. Significantly, many of the leading nativists were European immigrants and second-generation Americans themselves.⁶⁵ Denis Kearney, leader of the anti-Chinese Workingmen's Party, was an Irish immigrant. James D. Phelan, leader of the anti-Japanese movement, was Irish American. By leading racist campaigns against Asian immigration, Kearney and Phelan reaffirmed their own status as whites. In the multiracial West, such consolidations of whiteness were central to sustaining the existing racial hierarchy. The best expression of this sentiment occurred during the 1901 Chinese Exclusion Convention, an event organized to lobby for the permanent exclusion of Chinese immigrants. While attendees rallied around the convention theme of protecting the American "home, country, and civilization," keynote speakers strongly defended an open-door policy toward all European immigrants. In an impassioned speech, A. Sbarboro (an Italian immigrant/Italian American himself), president of the Manufacturers' and Producers' Association, declared that in California,

we want the Englishman, who brings with him capital, industry and enterprise; the Irish who build and populate our cities; the Frenchmen, with his vivacity and love of liberty; the industrious and thrifty Italians, who cultivate the fruit, olives, and vines—who come with poetry and music from the classic land of Virgil; the Teutonic race, strong, patient, and frugal; the Swedes, Slavs, and Belgians; we want *all good people from all parts of Europe*. To these, Mr. Chairman, we should never close our doors, for although when the European immigrant lands at Castle Garden he may be uncouth and with little money, yet soon by his thrift and industry he improves his condition; he becomes a worthy citizen and the children who bless him mingle with the children of those who came before him, and when the country calls they are always ready and willing to defend the flag to follow the stars and stripes throughout the world.⁶⁶

Sbarboro, by explicitly including Italians and Slavs, indeed, all immigrants from all parts of Europe, with the older stock of immigrants from France, Sweden, Germany, and Belgium, made clear that the distinction to be made was not among European immigrants but between European and, in this case,

Asian immigrants. Membership in the white race was tantamount. Southern and eastern European immigrants had the potential to become worthy citizens. Even the European immigrant's children would be American patriots some day. The belief that second-generation Chinese would do the same was unimaginable.

An increasing number of politicians and policy makers across the country disregarded Sbarboro's pleas to keep America's doors open to Europeans and instead supported restrictions on immigration from southern and eastern Europe. Nevertheless, Sbarboro's attempts to distinguish European immigrants from Asians pointed to significant differences in the ways in which European, Asian, and Mexican immigrants were racially constructed and regulated by immigration law. First, southern and eastern European immigrants came in much greater numbers than did the Chinese, and their whiteness secured them the right of naturalized citizenship, while Asians were consistently denied naturalization by law and in the courts. Whiteness permitted European immigrants more access to full participation in the larger American polity, economy, and society. Although they were eventually greatly restricted, they were never excluded. As Mae Ngai has shown, the 1924 Immigration Act restricted European immigrants according to their "national origins" (rather than race), presuming their shared whiteness with white Americans and separating them from non-Europeans. The act thus established the "legal foundations . . . for European immigrants [to] becom[e] Americans." Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Filipino, and Asian Indian immigrants were codified as "aliens ineligible to citizenship."⁶⁷

Mexican immigration differed from both southern and eastern European and Asian immigration on several levels. First was Mexico's proximity to the United States and the relatively porous U.S.-Mexican border, which facilitated migration to and from the United States. As historians have shown, Mexican immigrants were treated differently, even considered "safe" from mainstream nativism, because of their status as long-term residents and their propensity to be "birds of passage," returning home after the agricultural season ended rather than settling in the United States permanently.⁶⁸ In addition, Mexico's contentious history with the United States and the latter country's "legacy of conquest" aggravated already tense U.S.-Mexican relations, racialized Mexicans as inferiors, and structured Mexican immigrant and Mexican American life within the United States in ways that contrasted sharply with the lives of other immigrant groups. In the post-1924 period, Mexicans were categorized as "illegal," an all-encompassing racial category that not only negated

any claim of Mexicans belonging in a conquered homeland but also extended to both Mexican immigrants and Mexican Americans.⁶⁹

The significant differences in the ways that these immigrant groups were viewed functioned to shape both immigration regulation and immigrant life in distinct ways. Still, the rhetoric and tools of gatekeeping were instrumental in defining the issues for all immigrants and set important precedents for twentieth-century immigration. Each group held its own unique position within the hierarchy of race and immigration, but all eventually became subjected to an immigration ideology and law designed to limit their entry into the United States. By the early twentieth century, the call to "close the gates" was sounded in relation not only to Chinese immigration but to immigration in general. Thomas Bailey Aldrich, poet and former editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, reacted to the new immigrants from southern and eastern Europe arriving in Boston in 1892 by publishing "The Unguarded Gates," a poem demonizing the new arrivals as a "wild motley throng . . . accents of menace alien to our air."⁷⁰ Just as H. N. Clement had suggested "closing the doors" against Chinese immigration in 1876, Madison Grant, the well-known nativist and leader of the Immigration Restriction League, called for "closing the flood gates" against the "new immigration" from southern and eastern Europe in 1914.⁷¹ At the same time, Frank Julian Warne, another nativist leader, warned that unregulated immigration from Europe was akin to "throwing open wide our gates to all the races of the world."⁷²

The solution, all agreed, lay in immigration policy, and a succession of federal laws were passed to increase the control and regulation of threatening and inferior immigrants. The Immigration Act of 1917 required a literacy test for all adult immigrants, tightened restrictions on suspected radicals, and, as a concession to politicians on the West Coast, denied entry to aliens living within a newly conceived geographical area called the "Asiatic Barred Zone." With this zone in place, the United States effectively excluded all immigrants from India, Burma, Siam, the Malay States, Arabia, Afghanistan, part of Russia, and most of the Polynesian Islands.⁷³ The 1921 and 1924 Immigration Acts drastically restricted immigration from southern and eastern Europe and perfected the exclusion of all Asians, except for Filipinos.⁷⁴ In 1934, Filipinos were also excluded, and both Filipinos and Mexicans were singled out for massive deportation and repatriation programs during the Great Depression.⁷⁵ By the 1930s, exclusion, restriction, and deportation had been extended to other immigrant groups and codified into law and immigration service practices. The cycle that had begun with Chinese exclusion was completed.⁷⁶



"The Chinese Wall Goes Up," from *Puck*, Mar. 29, 1882. This cartoon was published just a few months before the Chinese Exclusion Act was passed by Congress. Symbolizing the existing racial and ethnic threats already plaguing the United States, the builders of the wall are European immigrant and African American men drawn in stereotypical fashion. The irony here is that while the United States builds a wall to exclude Chinese, immigrants and African Americans considered to be racially inferior threaten the nation from within. Prejudice, jealousy, competition, and fear are the building blocks of Chinese exclusion. Demonstrating the wide national appeal of the movement, the wall is held together with "congressional mortar" being doled out by President Grover Cleveland. Courtesy of the University of Minnesota Library.

The Example of Chinese Exclusion: Immigration Regulation

The concepts of race that developed out of Chinese exclusion provided the ideological structure within which other immigrant groups were compared and racialized. The passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act also ushered in drastic changes in immigration regulation and set the foundation for twentieth-century policies designed not only for the inspection and processing of newly arriving immigrants but also for the control of potentially dangerous immigrants already in the country. Written into the act itself were several major changes in immigration regulation. All would become standard means of inspecting, processing, admitting, tracking, punishing, and deporting immigrants in the United States. First, the Exclusion Act paved the way for the appointment of the country's first federal immigrant inspectors. Years before a federal immigration agency was established in 1891, the inspectors of Chinese

immigrants (under the auspices of the U.S. Customs Service) were the first to be authorized to enforce U.S. immigration law on behalf of the federal government.⁷⁷ Prior to the passage of the Page Law and the Chinese Exclusion Act, there was neither a trained force of government officials and interpreters nor the bureaucratic machinery with which to enforce the new law. The U.S. collector of customs and his staff had been granted the authority to examine Chinese female passengers and their documents under the Page Law, but the Chinese Exclusion Act extended the duties of these officials to include the examination of all arriving Chinese.⁷⁸ Under the new act, inspectors were also required to examine and clear Chinese laborers departing the United States.⁷⁹

Second, the enforcement of the Chinese exclusion laws set in motion the federal government's first attempts to identify and record the movements, occupations, and familial relationships of immigrants, returning residents, and native-born citizens. Because of the complexity of the laws and immigration officials' suspicions that Chinese were attempting to enter the country under fraudulent pretenses, the government's enforcement practices involved an elaborate tracking system of registration documents and certificates of identity and voluminous interviews with individuals and their families.⁸⁰ Section 4 of the Exclusion Act also established "certificates of registration" for departing laborers. Such certificates were to contain the name, age, occupation, last place of residence, and personal description of the Chinese laborer. This information was also recorded in specific registry books kept in the customhouse. The certificate entitled the holder to "return and reenter the United States upon producing and delivering the [document] to the collector of customs." The laborer's return certificate was the first document of its kind issued to an immigrant group by the federal government, and it served as a passport facilitating reentry into the country. Chinese remained the only immigrant group required to hold such reentry permits (or passports) until 1924, when the new immigration act of that year issued—but did not require—reentry permits for other aliens.⁸¹

The documentary requirements established for Chinese women emigrating under the Page Law and for exempt-class Chinese (merchants, teachers, diplomats, students, travelers) applying for admission under the exclusion laws also set in motion an "early . . . system of 'remote control' involving passports and visas" through which U.S. consular officials in China and Hong Kong verified the admissibility of immigrants prior to their departure for the United States. The Exclusion Act of 1882 placed this responsibility in the hands of Chinese government officials alone, but an 1884 amendment gave U.S. diplo-

matic officers the responsibility of verifying the facts on the so-called Section 6 certificates required of exempt-class Chinese so that the documents could be considered "*prima facie* evidence of right of reentry."⁸²

Eventually, in an effort to crack down on illegal entry and residence, the Chinese exclusion laws were amended to require all Chinese already in the country to possess "certificates of residence" and "certificates of identity" that served as proof of their legal entry into and lawful right to remain in the country. The rules regarding these precursors to documents now commonly known as green cards were first outlined in the 1892 Geary Act and 1893 McCreary Amendment, which required Chinese laborers to register with the federal government. The resulting certificates of residence contained the name, age, local residence and occupation of the applicant (or "Chinaman," as the act noted), as well as a photograph. Any Chinese laborer found within the jurisdiction of the United States without a certificate of residence was to be "deemed and adjudged to be unlawfully in the United States" and would be vulnerable to arrest and deportation.⁸³ The Bureau of Immigration used its administrative authority to demand a similar "certificate of identity" for all exempt-class Chinese, including merchants, teachers, travelers, and students, beginning in 1909. Although such certificates were supposed to serve as "indubitable proof of legal entry," they failed to protect legal immigrants and residents from government harassment. The requirement that all Chinese possess the certificates subjected the entire community—including immigrants and residents who were supposed to be exempt from the exclusion laws—to the same system of registration and scrutiny governing Chinese laborers. Apparently, the plan was an extension of an existing system of registration used for Chinese Americans entering the mainland from Hawaii.⁸⁴ No other immigrants were required to hold documents proving their lawful residence until 1928, when "immigrant identification cards" were first issued to any new immigrants arriving for permanent residence. These were eventually replaced by the "alien registration receipt cards" (that is, "green cards") after 1940.⁸⁵

The institution of these documentary requirements verifying Chinese immigrants' rights to enter, reenter, and remain in the country codified a highly organized system of control and surveillance over the Chinese in America. Much of the rationale behind them stemmed from the prejudiced belief that it was, as California congressman Thomas Geary explained, "impossible to identify [one] Chinaman [from another]."⁸⁶ This unprecedented method of processing and tracking immigrants eventually became central to America's control of all immigrants and immigration in the twentieth century.



Certificate of Identity of Wong Lan Fong, the author's grandmother, 1927. Beginning in 1909, all persons of Chinese descent, including U.S. citizens, were issued certificates to identify them as having been legally admitted into the country. No other immigrants were required to hold documents proving their lawful residence until 1928, when "immigrant identification cards" were first issued to new immigrants arriving for permanent residence. After 1940, these were replaced by the "alien registration receipt cards," or "green cards." Courtesy of the National Archives, Washington, D.C.

The Chinese Exclusion Act set another precedent by defining illegal immigration as a criminal offense. It declared that any person who secured certificates of identity fraudulently or through impersonation was to be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor, fined \$1,000, and imprisoned for up to five years. Any persons who knowingly aided and abetted the landing of "any Chinese person not lawfully entitled to enter the United States" could also be charged with a misdemeanor, fined, and imprisoned for up to one year.⁸⁷ Defining and punishing illegal immigration directly led to the establishment of the country's first modern deportation laws as well, and one of the final sections of the act declared that "any Chinese person found unlawfully within the United States shall be caused to be removed therefrom to the country from whence he came."⁸⁸ These initial forays into federal regulation of immigration would be even further codified and institutionalized seven years later in the Immigration Act of 1891.⁸⁹

The Closed Gate: Renewing and Expanding Chinese Exclusion, 1882–1904

The first result of exclusion was that Chinese immigration dropped dramatically. In 1882, before the Chinese Exclusion Act went into effect, 39,579 Chinese rushed to enter the United States. Thereafter, the numbers fell to an

all-time low in 1887, when immigration officials admitted only ten Chinese immigrants into the United States.⁹⁰ Other immigrants gained admission through the courts, but over all, Chinese exclusion was extremely effective in limiting Chinese immigration in the first two decades of the exclusion era. The number of Chinese departing from the United States also greatly increased (probably a result of a burst of anti-Chinese violence throughout the West after 1882). Statistics for most years are not available, but the Chinese Bureau in San Francisco recorded a total of 11,434 departures of Chinese residents in the first fourteen months after the Exclusion Act was passed, and the trend apparently continued throughout the 1880s.⁹¹ For the period from 1888 to 1890, the bureau's records indicate a total of 11,312 departures of Chinese residents.⁹² In 1888, the number of departures was still extremely high, and S. J. Ruddell, the chief inspector at the port, remarked that the excess of departures was "very noticeable." "The number of stores [in Chinatown] are decreasing every day," he testified before a congressional committee in 1890. The passage of the Exclusion Act, he continued, had made a "very marked difference" among the Chinese population, and if the trend continued, he predicted, the community might "completely disappear."⁹³ While some of the departing immigrants might have reentered the United States at a later date, immigration officials overwhelmingly agreed that the Chinese Exclusion Act itself prevented most Chinese from even attempting to immigrate to the United States.⁹⁴

The Chinese Exclusion Act was clearly successful in reducing Chinese immigration to the United States. Californians and other proponents of exclusion, however, believed that the 1882 act was a failure. Chinese immigration was not completely halted, and many believed that employers, the Chinese, and the federal courts took advantage of loopholes in the laws that, in their minds, made a mockery of the exclusion laws. As Lucy Salyer has shown, until 1903, federal district courts were indeed much more lenient in enforcing the exclusion laws than were the immigration officials at the ports of entry.⁹⁵

Calls to amend the laws were almost immediate. One and a half years after President Arthur had signed the Chinese exclusion bill, San Franciscans clamored for more laws and outlined a registration policy for all Chinese immigrants. In December 1884, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors unanimously passed a resolution that explained that while the Chinese Exclusion Act had "to some extent prevented the Chinese hordes from coming into this State as heretofore, . . . the ingenuity of these people in contriving means to land on our shores is almost incredible." The resolution called upon California senators and representatives to pass legislation instituting a strict registra-

tion and deportation system in order to "protect our people."⁹⁶ (Significantly, the registration provisions were later adopted by the federal government as part of the Geary Act of 1892.) In response, Congress passed a bill in 1884 that strengthened the existing exclusion law. Chinese laborers from any foreign country (not just China) were excluded, and immigration officials were required to record extensive identification information for all Chinese immigrants. The documentary requirements and the terms of criminal punishment for illegal immigration were also affirmed.⁹⁷

In 1888, Congress refined the terms of exclusion. Instead of explicitly prohibiting only Chinese laborers, the new provisions excluded *all* Chinese except "teachers, students, merchants, or travelers for pleasure or curiosity." The law also prohibited any returning Chinese laborer from entering the country unless he had a lawful wife, child, or parent in the United States, or had property or debts due him worth at least \$1,000. This aspect of the 1888 act was particularly harsh because it stipulated that the returning laborer's marriage had to have taken place at least a year prior to the laborer's application to depart and return to the United States and that the marriage had to be characterized as a "continuous cohabitation of the parties as man and wife."⁹⁸ The Scott Act of the same year nullified 20,000 return certificates already granted and immediately denied entrance to returning Chinese laborers.⁹⁹ Some California exclusionists even introduced legislation that called for the exclusion of all Chinese except for diplomatic officials.¹⁰⁰ Although these bills failed, they reflected the long-range goals of exclusionists.

The original Chinese Exclusion Act suspended the immigration of Chinese laborers for a period of ten years. When the act came up for renewal in 1892, Congress readily passed the Geary Act, sponsored by Thomas Geary, a California Democrat in the U.S. Senate. The amended act renewed the exclusion of laborers for another ten years.¹⁰¹ By 1898, the original Chinese Exclusion Act was extended to Hawaii. In 1901, the Chinese Exclusion Convention brought together 2,500 anti-Chinese delegates who represented not only laboring men but also business and professional groups united by the desire to "prevent the threatened invasion of Mongol hordes to the peril and degradation of American labor."¹⁰² The expiration of the Geary Act was a major topic of discussion. One of the stars of the convention was San Francisco mayor James Phelan, who highlighted California's citizens' role in "sounding the alarm" and serving as the "wardens of the Golden Gate" in the face of an onslaught of undesirable and dangerous Chinese immigrants.¹⁰³ Again, the metaphor of the gate—both as a San Francisco geographical landmark and as a symbolic barrier against

Chinese immigration—remained central to exclusionists' arguments. In 1902, Congress passed a bill that renewed the exclusion of Chinese laborers and extended exclusion to all insular possessions of the United States, including the Philippines.¹⁰⁴ In 1904, the Chinese Exclusion Act was extended without time limit, and it remained in effect until its repeal in 1943.¹⁰⁵

Conclusion

For Chinese immigrants, the year 1882 marked the end of one chapter in history and the beginning of a new one. From 1882 to 1904, the exclusion laws were expanded in scope and across geographic regions. Chinese immigrants felt the effects of these laws immediately, and Chinese immigration dropped dramatically. However, as later chapters will show, Chinese immigrants challenged and evaded the exclusion laws throughout the exclusion era.

The United States' relationship with immigrants reached a similar turning point. The Chinese Exclusion Act instituted the first of many restriction and exclusion laws, but its significance goes far beyond the legal realm. Chinese exclusion helped redefine American politics, race, class, and gender relations, national identity, and the role of the federal government in controlling immigration. The result was a nation that embraced the notion of building and guarding America's gates against "undesirable" foreigners in order to protect white Americans. Rooted in a western American desire to sustain white supremacy in a multiracial West, gatekeeping became a national reality and was extended to other immigrant groups throughout the early twentieth century. Both the rhetoric and the tools used to exclude the Chinese were repeated in later debates over immigration. In many ways, Chinese immigrants became the models against which others were measured. Nativists repeatedly pointed to ways in which other Asians, Mexicans, and Europeans were "just like" the Chinese and argued that similar restrictions should be extended to them as well. By the 1930s, immigration inspections, passport and other documentary requirements, the surveillance and criminalization of immigration, and the deportation of immigrants found to be in the country illegally all became standard operating procedures in the United States. Nativists no longer needed to ask "how can we stop immigrants?" They had found the answer in Chinese exclusion.

THE KEEPERS OF THE GATE

U.S. Immigration Officials and Chinese Exclusion

ONCE THE UNITED STATES passed the Chinese Exclusion Act, it faced the daunting task of interpreting and enforcing the law. The gate had been built and closed, but the new law introduced several pressing questions: who would enforce the laws, and how could the government ensure that they were administered correctly? Because the Chinese exclusion laws represented the government's first attempts to process immigrants arriving at American shores, the ways in which it answered these questions mattered not only for the Chinese in America but for immigration regulation in general. Both U.S. immigration officials and the federal district courts played important roles in the enforcement of the Chinese exclusion laws. As legal historians have demonstrated, until 1905, the courts provided an important channel through which Chinese immigrants successfully gained admission into the country after being first denied entry by immigration officials. Between 1882 and 1905, the federal district court for northern California and the state circuit court heard over 9,600 Chinese habeas corpus cases, which alleged that the Chinese petitioners (many of whom claimed U.S. citizenship) were indeed entitled to land and that they were being unlawfully detained. On average, the court overturned the

immigration officials' decisions to deny entry in over 50 percent of the cases.¹ Nevertheless, the courts reviewed the applications of only a fraction of the total number of Chinese immigrants seeking admission into the United States. While the courts admitted fewer than 5,000 Chinese in the first twenty-three years of the exclusion era, at least 53,162 Chinese immigrants and returning residents were processed and admitted into the country by immigration officials from 1894 to 1905.² In addition, after the Chinese were prohibited from using the courts in admission cases in 1905, all Chinese immigrants were processed through administrative channels. The vast majority of Chinese cases were thus not decided in the courtrooms but on the decks of arriving steamers, in the detention sheds built especially for Chinese, and later, at the immigration station on Angel Island in the San Francisco Bay.

As the self-proclaimed "keepers of the gate" at the port of San Francisco—by far the largest port of entry for Chinese and other Asian immigrants during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—federal immigration officials controlled the fate of many, if not most, Chinese arriving in and returning to America. But the impact of their decisions was felt on a larger scale as well and directly shaped American gatekeeping at the local and national levels.³ The immigration officials in San Francisco fit the model of lower-level government workers or "street-level bureaucrats" who became "de facto policy makers," as described by political scientist Michael Lipsky. As he argues, public policy is best understood by how it is implemented in "the crowded offices and daily encounters of street-level workers," not by how it is created in the legislatures or "top-floor suites" of high-ranking administrators. Left to themselves, the early immigration officials in San Francisco had the power to decide how to implement laws and to establish specific regulations and procedures. These decisions in effect became public policy. Taken together, the individual actions of these officials added up to an agency policy.⁴

Revealing the long-established connection between anti-immigrant politics and immigration law enforcement, many of the policies and procedures developed by these first immigration officials were expressly designed in response to the anti-Chinese politics permeating San Francisco at the end of the nineteenth century. Many local and federal immigration officials were notoriously biased against the Chinese, and anti-Chinese racism became institutionalized in official culture, correspondence, and hiring practices. Over time, efforts at reform did alter the makeup of the immigration service and some of the worst abuses were banned, but a deep-rooted suspicion of Chinese remained ingrained throughout the exclusion era.

Anti-Chinese Politics and the Chinese Bureau

The United States Customs Service, a department with no previous experience enforcing immigration laws, was called upon to enforce the exclusion laws because it already had a trained corps of government officials in place at the nation's ports, where immigrants first disembarked. It also had experience working with international steamship companies.⁵ Yet, the Customs Service received no clear instructions on how to enforce the law. The only attempt by the federal government to clarify its newfound role came in the form of a new official post known as the "Chinese inspector." Chinese government officials were supposed to screen prospective Chinese immigrants first to make sure that they were eligible to immigrate to the United States. A certificate, known as a Section 6 certificate (which referred to the provision in the 1882 Exclusion Act that stipulated which categories of Chinese were exempt from exclusion), was issued to each immigrant found eligible. Shipmasters were then supposed to create a list of all Chinese passengers aboard with a notation of their immigrant status. Once the ship arrived in the United States, the Chinese inspector was charged with giving final approval to those claiming a right to enter, but the guidelines he was given regarding the method and means of determining the veracity of immigrant claims were vague at best.⁶ Almost two weeks after the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act, the secretary of the treasury, who supervised the Customs Service, issued a circular informing the collectors of customs at each port of the terms of the Exclusion Act and of the general ways in which the certificates for departing laborers should be handled. However, as the day approached when free immigration of Chinese laborers was supposed to cease, no further guidance from the secretary was forthcoming. The Chinese consulate in San Francisco actually took the initiative to meet with the collector of customs at that port to issue certificates of identification and collector's certificates that would allow departing laborers to reenter. Not until three months after the Exclusion Act was passed did the Treasury Department provide more direction to the local collectors of customs.⁷ In later years, little improved. Only when new situations and questions arose did the inspector of customs request instructions from the Treasury Department.

The administration of the Chinese exclusion laws evolved in a piecemeal fashion, and by the 1890s, a general framework for the administration of the immigration laws had been established. At the top was the secretary of the treasury. Directly below him was the commissioner-general of immigration, who headed the Bureau of Immigration, which was established in 1891. In-

spectors were in place at each port of entry. Instructions from the Treasury Department in addition to court decisions and the provisions of the laws themselves constituted the primary enforcement regulations. But the loose administrative structure of the Customs Service and the absence of a strong and centralized immigration agency allowed the customs officials in San Francisco to develop local policies and interpret the exclusion laws in their own fashion during the first two decades of the exclusion era.⁸

Although they might have lacked a clear mandate from federal officials in Washington, D.C., the immigrant inspectors of the San Francisco Chinese Bureau received definitive directions from local politicians and labor leaders eager to exclude the Chinese. In August 1882, just three months after the Exclusion Act had been passed, in response to constituent complaints that the laws were not being enforced strictly enough, California congressman W. S. Rosencrans appealed to U.S. Treasury secretary Charles G. Folger. "Assure our people of the Pacific that your Department [can] provide for an effective surveillance over the execution of the law against Chinese immigration!" he pleaded.⁹ Politicians continued to keep in close contact with immigration officials throughout the exclusion era.¹⁰ Local newspapers also fanned the fires of anti-Chinese sentiment in California by consistently reporting on the routine work of the immigration officials and the arrivals of Chinese in San Francisco. They scrutinized the actions of the Chinese Bureau and were quick to launch their own investigations to expose leniency or corruption in the service. These sensationalist news stories sustained the anti-Chinese movement throughout the state of California and the Pacific Coast region well after the passage of the 1882 act.¹¹

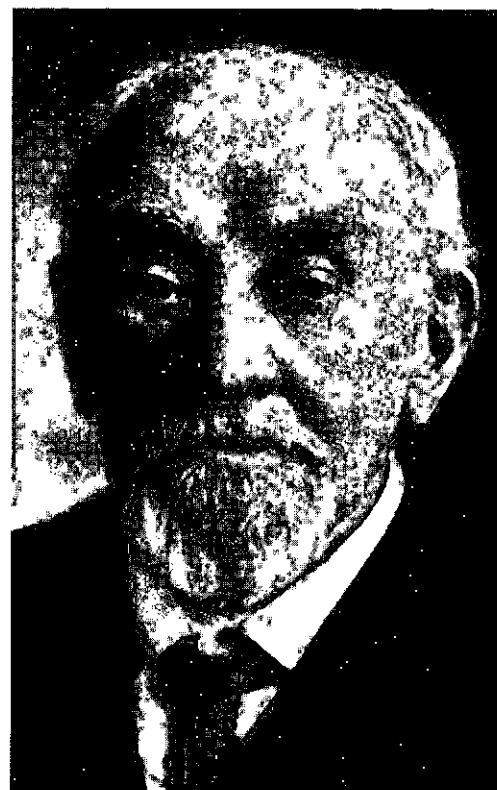
San Francisco immigration officials, California politicians, and the larger anti-Chinese public developed close and reciprocal relationships. Because the position of collector of customs was filled through a political appointment, he and the Customs Service found it politically expedient to act upon the will of the people and to comply with public demands for strict enforcement. Many of the lower-level officials in the service also owed their positions to local and state politicians.¹² In turn, San Francisco officials were routinely called upon to give their expert testimony and support to amendments to the exclusion laws in Washington, D.C. Acting as such dutiful public servants at the expense of Chinese, immigration officials in San Francisco could expect the necessary support from state congressmen and senators in their appointments and re-appointments.¹³

The effect of anti-Chinese politics on enforcement procedures was clear. Enforcement of the exclusion laws tended to follow the strictest interpretation possible. Immigration officials argued that the laws expressly allowed only five exempt classes of Chinese to immigrate—merchants, teachers, students, travelers, and diplomats. Any other Chinese would be excluded. Despite the fact that they were clearly not laborers, accountants, doctors, etc., as well as spouses and children of exempt-class immigrants, were to be excluded, for example. As the 1901 official regulations for the service stated, "The true theory is not that all Chinese persons may enter this country who are not forbidden, but that only those who are entitled to enter are expressly allowed."¹⁴ Moreover, decisions that might arouse public anger were not made lightly. When Treasury Department officials in Washington ordered the collector of customs in San Francisco to reverse his decision to deny entry to two Chinese students in 1885, the collector wrote back that such actions might incite violence. "The people of this coast are very sensitive in regard to Chinese immigration," he warned. Public outcry over Chinese immigration was even "more pronounced" than in previous periods, and mass meetings were being held all over the coast to drive Chinese immigrants out of the area. "In San Francisco," he continued, "there is a subdued undercurrent of hostility to this race," and unless federal officials were willing to encourage violence and riots, "the Government should use any endeavor to see [the exclusion laws] faithfully enforced."¹⁵

By 1896, San Francisco had earned the reputation as the most difficult processing center for both newly arriving Chinese immigrants and departing Chinese residents. Members of the latter group were required to deposit their statements and register their certificates forty-eight hours prior to their departure from the United States, for example. Thus, many residents had to arrive in San Francisco at least three days before their steamer was scheduled to sail for China. This was not a requirement at other ports. It appears that new Chinese immigrants chose more distant entry points like those in upstate New York, Vermont, and Maine, specifically because they were known to have higher admission rates. R. P. Schwerin, vice president of the Pacific Mail Steamship Company, the main steamer line traveling between China and the United States, complained to the Treasury Department in 1899. While 15 percent of all applicants had been refused landing in San Francisco during the previous year, the northeastern ports had not denied any.¹⁶

The public's anti-Chinese sentiment only partly explains the strict interpretations of the exclusion laws in San Francisco. Immigration officials in the Chinese Bureau were often participants, even leaders, of the Chinese exclusion movement and brought their own prejudices to bear on Chinese immigration cases. John H. Wise, collector of customs in San Francisco from 1892 to 1898, had been actively involved in the anti-Chinese movement leading up to exclusion. Originally a southerner from Virginia, Wise migrated to California in 1853 when President Franklin Pierce appointed him inspector of customs in San Francisco. By 1875, Wise had established a successful wool commission business and was serving on the San Francisco Board of Supervisors when it passed some of the most notorious anti-Chinese ordinances in the state and nation.¹⁷ A prominent Democrat, Wise was eventually appointed the collector of customs by President Grover Cleveland in 1892.

Wise described himself as a "zealous opponent of Chinese immigration," and he established a siege mentality among his subordinates.¹⁸ In 1895, he warned them to be on guard lest the "cunning of the Chinese defeat the vigilance of the Government officers."¹⁹ Wise's term as collector of customs was marked by an increasingly strict interpretation and enforcement of the laws that targeted all Chinese, even those who were supposed to be exempt. Wise began by establishing administrative procedures that made it more difficult for Chinese to enter and reenter the United States. In fact, as one historian has noted, Wise required more evidence from Chinese immigrants than "mandated by either Congress or the secretary of the treasury." For example, while the Chinese Exclusion Act had specifically stated that a "Chinese person other than a laborer could be admitted upon presentation of a certificate from the Chinese government certifying his right of admission," Wise required additional proof of status from exempt-class Chinese.²⁰ Beginning in 1893, he required every departing Chinese merchant to file with the customs office a photograph of himself and a sworn statement giving the name of each partner in the firm to which he belonged, the value of each partner's interest and the aggregate capital invested, the location and character of the business, and a photograph of the business headquarters. Upon his return, any merchant who claimed to be a partner in a certain firm was interrogated. His statements were then checked against the data already on file. If any discrepancies were found, the application was refused. This policy was Wise's alone and was not shared by other collectors in the country. As Wise wrote in one letter, "I cannot, of



John H. Wise, U.S. collector of customs at the port of San Francisco from 1892 to 1898, c. 1910. Describing himself as a "zealous opponent of Chinese immigration," Collector Wise instituted increasingly strict interpretations and enforcement of the exclusion laws during his term. He discouraged Chinese men in the United States from sending for their wives and made it much more difficult for all exempt-class Chinese, including native-born American citizens, from gaining admission or re-admission into the country. Because the port of San Francisco was the point of entry for the vast majority of Chinese immigrants, Wise's policies helped make gate-keeping in the West a model for the nation. Reprinted from George Meyer, *Municipal Blue Book of San Francisco*, 1915. Courtesy of the San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

course, tell you what interpretation of the law other Collectors may make, but this is mine."²¹

The integration of Wise's own anti-Chinese attitudes into his work as the chief immigration official in the country is notably revealed in the case of Wong Fong, whose fate was determined by Collector Wise in 1895. A longtime resident of the United States, Wong had traveled to China for a brief stay in the early 1890s. When he returned to San Francisco in 1895 to be reunited with his fiancée, Wise denied him entry into the country for reasons that are unclear. Wong was forced to spend time in the detention barracks by the wharf and grew ill. He requested traditional Chinese medicine and herbs in lieu of the poor-quality food given to detainees, but his requests were denied. Wong Fong then hired an attorney to persuade Wise to reverse his deportation decision, but Wise apparently was unmoved. The collector ordered Wong to be deported and even seemed to gloat at the prospect. In a letter to Wong's attorney, H. A. Ling of Los Angeles, Wise included the following poem that not only mocked Wong's predicament but also perpetuated stereotypes about Chi-

nese diets, to which exclusionists often referred to support claims that Chinese were racially inferior.

Now poor Wong Fong, he feels quite ill,
As I am told by Ling
And won't eat any nice birds' nests
Nor even will he sing.

So just to make this poor Wong Fong
Feel very good and nice
I've sent him back to China
Where he can eat his mice.

And poor Wong Fong, he had to leave
Behind his fiancée
And go back to China
Across the dark blue sea.

And Mr. Ling was left behind
And didn't [*sic*] get his fee
Because the cruel Collector
Sent Wong across the sea.²²

Wise's mocking attitude regarding the deportation and unfortunate circumstances of Wong Fong aptly reflects how deeply embedded anti-Chinese sentiment was in the early immigration service. Wise candidly told inquirers that he would look for any reason to exclude a Chinese and that "if proof [was] not of the most convincing kind, landing [would] be refused."²³ Such an approach to Chinese exclusion earned Wise enormous popularity and respect in California. As sociologist Mary Roberts Coolidge observed in 1909, Wise's methods were sound politics. "In California, an invariable symptom of official ambition for political preferment has been zeal in administering the exclusion laws," she wrote. "The sword hanging over the head of every officeholder for twenty-five years past has been leniency to the Chinaman."²⁴ Wise was so popular for his zealous enforcement of the exclusion laws that a majority of the members of the California state legislature attempted to draft him to be the Democratic nominee for governor.²⁵

Wise's less vigilant successors faced constant scrutiny. Collector Frederick

Smith Stratton, the last collector of customs to preside over the enforcement of the exclusion laws before the Bureau of Immigration took over in 1900, was criticized for addressing complaints raised by Chinese immigrants.²⁶ Both the local press and Stratton's superiors in Washington, D.C., also took exception to what they and the public believed to be his lax attitude. "Stratton has appeared reluctant to face the music in enforcing the Chinese exclusion act," an official in the Treasury Department told a reporter. "Now he has got to do that, as the law requires, or be ready to stand aside for somebody who will."²⁷ Fortunately for Stratton, his duties inspecting Chinese immigrants lasted only one year.

If John H. Wise represented anti-Chinese politicians, James R. Dunn, who became the chief inspector in the San Francisco office on May 15, 1899, represented the anti-Chinese labor contingent. Like Wise, Dunn possessed what sociologist Mary Roberts Coolidge called "extreme anti-Chinese prejudices" that resulted in "a sort of reign of terror" against the Chinese.²⁸ His biases likely originated from his strong connections with organized labor, one of the most vociferous sectors of the anti-Chinese movement. Described as a long-time ally of Terence V. Powderly, the former Knights of Labor leader and U.S. commissioner-general of immigration, Dunn enjoyed the full support of labor organizations throughout his tenure in San Francisco. In these circles, he was known as "an energetic and resourceful leader in the crusade against the Chinese."²⁹

Much of Dunn's motivation came from his frustration with the exclusion laws, which he thought were hopelessly weak and full of loopholes. Dunn especially resented the interference of the courts, which often overturned immigration officials' decisions to deny entry. Such rulings, he felt, made "monkeys" of the immigration officials and "let down the bars" that anti-Chinese exclusionists had worked so hard to erect.³⁰ To make matters worse, Dunn's superiors in the Treasury Department sometimes upheld the decisions by the courts. As a result, Dunn took it upon himself to enforce the laws and regulations to the very limits of technicality. He also instituted new rules aimed at hindering Chinese applicants. Dunn was even known to misrepresent the testimony of Chinese applicants and their witnesses in order to prevent their entry and to seize important papers and documents without returning them.³¹

During Dunn's tenure as chief inspector, Chinese immigrants found it harder to enter the country than ever before. Their certificates were doubly scrutinized, their witnesses were called into question, and their investigations took longer. According to Dunn's own estimates, the changes he instituted

doubled the number of Chinese immigrants forced to use attorneys when applying for admission. This need for outside help, Dunn observed, showed there was "no better proof of the strictness" of the Chinese Bureau's new system of enforcement.⁵² His superior, Commissioner-General of Immigration Terence Powderly, praised him. In his 1901 annual report, Powderly described Dunn as being "energetic, intelligent and capable" because nearly two-thirds of all Chinese applicants for the previous fiscal year had been denied admission.⁵³ In fact, the collector of customs in San Francisco found Dunn to be such an effective enforcer of the Chinese exclusion laws that in 1900 he urged the Treasury Department to allow Dunn to "be properly clothed with authority to determine *all* [Chinese] cases [without having to get the collector's final authorization] subject only to the appeal to the Department."⁵⁴

While his colleagues and superiors praised Dunn, Chinese immigrants and their supporters complained of increased hardship. In 1900, Reverend Ira Condit, a missionary and frequent spokesperson on behalf of the Chinese community in San Francisco, charged that Dunn's treatment of Chinese was dehumanizing and cruel. "When they do arrive," Condit explained, "merchants, laborers are all alike penned up, like a flock of sheep, in a wharf-shed, for many days, and often weeks, at their own expense, and are denied all communication with their own people, while the investigation of their cases moves its slow length along. A man is imprisoned as a criminal who has committed no crime."⁵⁵

The Chinese community also accused Dunn of misconduct in two highly publicized cases. One involved Chinese merchant Ho Mun, who arrived in San Francisco from the Portuguese colony of Macao in September 1899. Ho carried with him the proper certificates issued by the Portuguese authorities and the visa issued by the American consul at Hong Kong, but he was rejected on a minor technicality.⁵⁶ Ho was kept in the detention shed set up by the Pacific Mail Steamship Company. He became seriously ill, but Inspector Dunn refused medical care for him for over two months. Ho's lawyers finally succeeded in moving him to the county jail, but he died a few days later. Nothing Ho had done justified his long detention or his being refused basic medical attention.⁵⁷ Another case involved Lew Lin Gin, a child who was ordered deported by Inspector Dunn and then lost while under the care of the immigration service. Despite a thorough search of the steamer and the Chinese quarters, the child was never found.⁵⁸

These two cases enraged both Chinese and many Americans, and the publicity generated by the cases was used by immigrant advocates to call for

Dunn's transfer. The inspector, however, remained popular among the labor groups in San Francisco, and they began their own campaign to retain him. Twenty-four labor organizations rallied to his defense by sending a document defending Dunn, titled "Resolution in Favor of James R. Dunn," to both Congress and the president. Resurrecting the anti-Chinese rhetoric used in the 1870s, the resolution portrayed Dunn as a "fearless" champion of labor who had made "powerful enemies" among "those interested in the coming of Chinese to this country" (presumably large corporate employers).⁵⁹ Dunn received an outpouring of support from his fellow staff as well, but despite this goodwill, he was transferred to St. Louis in 1901.⁶⁰

Although Dunn was removed from the bureau in San Francisco, the spirit of his labor-friendly, restriction-minded approach to the enforcement of the Chinese exclusion laws remained intact and deeply embedded in the immigration service at all levels. At the core of this approach was the need for the "right type" of men to be employed as immigration inspectors. Politicians and anti-Chinese leaders believed that it was imperative that employees of the service have the right sort of background and frame of mind (that is, anti-Chinese views) in order to effectively enforce the exclusion laws. Therefore, California politicians lobbied for fellow Californians and Pacific Coast residents to be given "preference" over other candidates for immigration service jobs. U.S. senator George C. Perkins of California went so far as to suggest to Commissioner-General of Immigration Frank Sargent that candidates from the "interior states" would not be familiar with "the class of Chinamen who come to this country." Californians, on the other hand, had a lifetime's worth of "experience hav[ing] to deal with the Chinese" and were thus highly qualified. Just as white southerners insisted that their "special relationship" with African Americans made them the natural choice in solving the "negro problem," Californians argued that they knew best how to take care of the "Chinese problem."⁶¹

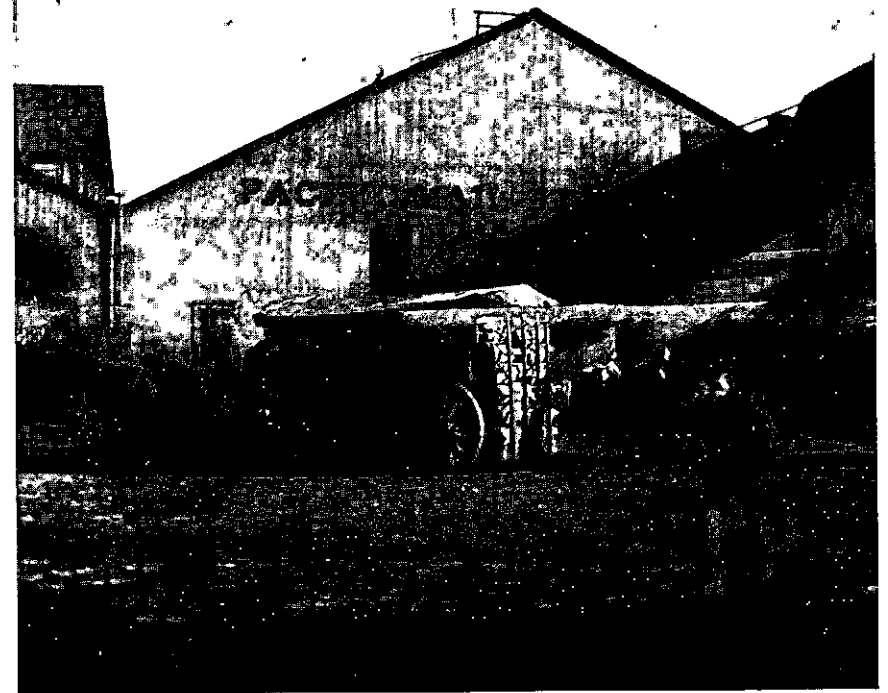
Descriptions of Chinese in official government correspondence and documents both reflected and reinforced the anti-Chinese racism that permeated the immigration service at large. On various forms and in correspondence and internal memoranda, immigration officials often referred to Chinese in derogatory terms such as "Chinaman," "coolie," or "Chink."⁶² The attitudes behind the use of these terms often translated into the physical mistreatment of Chinese immigrants. In 1899, a Treasury Department investigator found that the Chinese inspector in charge of detained Chinese often pushed the Chinese around, "useing [*sic*] force [that] is wholly unnecessary."⁶³ In 1909,

Mary Roberts Coolidge, sociologist and critic of the Chinese Bureau's enforcement of the exclusion laws, observed that the early immigration service "had been filled up with ignorant, narrow-minded men whose idea of effective enforcement was simply to shut out more Chinamen, no matter of what class, by greater severity, suspicion, and intimidation."⁴⁴

Successive heads of the San Francisco Chinese Bureau thus inherited a system in which biases against Chinese were built into all levels of enforcement procedures. At the same time, they continued to be affected by their own prejudices. John P. Jackson, who had been a former army official during the Civil War, succeeded John H. Wise as collector for the port of San Francisco in 1898. Although he generally adopted more lenient standards than those established by Wise, he also admitted to insiders that it would relieve him greatly "to deny them [Chinese immigrants] all in a body, as fast as they arrive."⁴⁵ He also admitted that in his view, the goal of the Chinese Bureau was simply to "reduce the number of Chinese in this country [so that] this country has one less Chinaman."⁴⁶ Moreover, Jackson continued to implement procedures and documentary requirements that were not required by law but were used to "terrorize" the Chinese. In a letter to fellow collector David G. Browne, Jackson conceded that the affidavits required by the Chinese Bureau as proof of exempt status served no real purpose except to inflict a sense of fear into the Chinese. "The requiring of affidavits in these cases is more of a moral terror held over the makers thereof than of any legal validity," Jackson explained. "Of course we never say anything of this outside, but leave the impression upon these Chinese applicants and their friends that the making of an affidavit in their cases has all the sanctity of the law."⁴⁷

Chinese Interpreters

Anti-Chinese prejudices were so institutionalized within the Chinese Bureau that they affected hiring decisions as well. In 1896 the Treasury Department instructed Collector John Wise in San Francisco to discharge all of his Chinese interpreters and to hire only white men in the future.⁴⁸ The same policies applied toward Japanese immigration as well.⁴⁹ Government officials believed that Chinese could not be trusted in immigration work. Many claimed that it was almost impossible to find an "honest Chinaman." In 1900, the special deputy of customs for the port of Plattsburg, New York, pointedly told an inspector at another port, "I suppose we want an honest Chinaman for inter-



Pacific Mail Steamship Company detention shed, 1899. Prior to the establishment of the Angel Island Immigration Station, Chinese applying for admission into the United States were detained in the Pacific Mail Steamship Company shed located at Pier 40 in San Francisco. Courtesy of the National Archives, Washington, D.C.

preter and if so I reckon we would have to go to Heaven to find him and I doubt whether there are any there or not."⁵⁰

These attitudes created immense problems in the government's ability to correctly interpret Chinese immigrant testimony. In addition, a lack of funding, a scarcity of qualified white interpreters, and the variety of Chinese dialects all resulted in inconsistent translations and haphazard spellings of Chinese names. In 1904, Commissioner-General of Immigration Frank Sargent admitted that "the Bureau has noted for years that frequently in papers made up by its officers, all of which relate to certain Chinamen, the names, or pho-



U.S. immigration officials of the U.S. Customs Service inspecting newly arriving Chinese at the Pacific Mail Dock, 1899. Before 1910, immigrant inspections and interrogations took place at the Pacific Mail Steamship Company's dock. The procedures first established by these immigrant inspectors and interpreters laid the foundation for the zealous enforcement of the exclusion laws across the country throughout the exclusion era. Courtesy of the National Archives, Washington, D.C.

netic monosyllables representing such names in English, will be spelled in two, three, and sometimes six or seven different ways."⁵¹

Under the government's restrictive and racist hiring guidelines, the ideal Chinese Bureau interpreter was expected to be white, to have some proficiency in Chinese, and to possess a flawless reputation for honesty and integrity. Whites who were affiliated in any way with Chinese were automatically excluded for their suspicious ties and assumed tendency toward corruption. For example, Tim Cox, an applicant for the interpreter's position in the San Francisco bureau in 1896, was found to be ineligible because of his "affilia-

tions with the Chinese." Fannie B. Watson, a white woman, applied for the post of Chinese interpreter in 1896 but was deemed completely disqualified "first because she is a woman, second because she is married to a Chinaman named Chew Mot . . . and [because] her affiliations with the Chinese still further disqualify her for the position."⁵² "Chineseness" apparently tainted whites in ways that made them as suspicious and dangerous as Chinese themselves.

The Chinese Bureau did hire a few white individuals who were apparently somewhat capable in translating Chinese testimony and documents. One was Carlton Rickards, one of only two white interpreters in the entire immigration service who knew Chinese in 1890. During fourteen years of study, Rickards had learned various Chinese dialects in San Francisco and was reportedly considered a reliable interpreter by both the service and the Chinese community. As he told a congressional committee, "I have been very often interpreter in the United States courts, and the statements I take on board the steamers from the Chinese are never questioned in the courts; the attorneys always admit them as true, and the Chinese have never questioned a statement that I have ever heard of."⁵³ In 1902, T. H. Gubbins became another white interpreter for the service. Gubbins, an American whose parents lived in Hong Kong at the time of his birth, had spoken both English and Chinese while he was growing up.⁵⁴ Immigration officials looked for other recruits among returning missionaries to China.⁵⁵

Individuals like Rickards and Gubbins were rare, and until the immigration service consented to hiring nonwhite interpreters, it was constantly plagued with an interpreter shortage.⁵⁶ Moreover, the immigration service was disappointed to find that white interpreters could not be trusted either. In 1899, Carlton Rickards was dismissed on charges that he had been involved in smuggling hundreds of Chinese into the United States through Port Townsend, Washington, three years earlier. As an agent for the department explained, smugglers used Rickards as the interpreter in cases where "it was necessary to admit a DUMB Chinaman," knowing that Rickards would insert the correct answers into the testimony in exchange for a bribe.⁵⁷

When the immigration service resumed hiring nonwhite interpreters, officials nationwide continued to distrust their Chinese staffs.⁵⁸ Collector Jackson of San Francisco was loath to hire Asian interpreters even when it was clear that the white interpreters available to the service had weak language skills.⁵⁹ In 1899, the acting secretary of treasury complained that it was "extremely difficult to secure the services of reliable and trustworthy Chinese interpreters."⁶⁰ The collector of customs in Plattsburg, New York, agreed. "I prefer a white to

be the Chinese interpreter if possible," he wrote to the commissioner-general of immigration in 1901.⁶¹ Since only a few Chinese interpreters were hired by the immigration service, they were extremely busy. Chinese interpreter Jin Fuey Moy, for example, was in demand all over the Northeast in 1899 and traveled from port to port. When he was not available, the business of examining Chinese applicants came to a standstill. In New York, a group of Chinese merchants was detained because no one was available to record the merchants' testimonies and conduct their exams.⁶²

One of the most curious and revealing examples of the immigration service's deep-rooted suspicion of Chinese interpreters involved John Endicott Gardner. He fulfilled both needs of the Chinese Bureau in San Francisco: not only was he able to speak and read Chinese and English fluently, he was white. Gardner, who grew up in Hong Kong, was hired as an interpreter and inspector in 1896 and later became one of the most influential officials in the country. He was recommended by the city's most prominent clergymen and politicians, among them the Reverend Ira Condit and a clerk of the U.S. District Court. Treasury Department agents found him to be the "best Chinese interpreter and translator on the Pacific Coast and one of the best in the country." He was also experienced, having served as an interpreter for the governments of both the United States and Canada, and his integrity was beyond question.⁶³

Gardner's initial acceptance into the service was less than certain, however, because he was only half-white, his mother being Chinese. At the time of his hiring in 1896, Collector of Customs John H. Wise was still under orders to prohibit the employment of interpreters of the Chinese race even though the service badly needed an able interpreter. The Treasury Department launched an investigation. Reliable sources informed the treasury agents that Gardner's father was English and his mother was "a native of China and a subject of the Emperor of that country." In his initial communication on the subject, Special Agent Moore wrote that this fact "would seem to bring Mr. Gardner within the prohibition of the Department that no Chinese be employed." On further investigation—and creative interpretation of the department regulations—the Treasury Department found a loophole that allowed it to hire Gardner. Although he had been born in China to a Chinese mother and an English father, he later became a United States citizen when his widowed mother remarried John Vrooman, an American missionary and later U.S. consul in China.⁶⁴ After Gardner's mother died, Vrooman adopted him and brought him to the United States. Encouraged by Reverend Condit, the Treasury Department finally ruled that Gardner was an American citizen and of American

parentage.⁶⁵ The Treasury Department's ruling in Gardner's case—that Gardner's Chinese blood was *not* a liability and thus did not subject him to the department's prohibition on Chinese employees—was evidence of a double standard. It would not apply to biracial Chinese immigrants and residents who desired to enter the United States.⁶⁶

Gardner was appointed as a Chinese interpreter, but his biracial status continued to hinder him in his initial years in the service. His superiors conceded that Gardner's intelligence and his knowledge of the Chinese language were beyond dispute, but because of his Chinese blood, he was not fully trusted. As Collector J. P. Jackson confided to the secretary of the treasury, "There are racial characteristics in Inspector Gardner's temperament (he being himself half Chinese, and having been born in China) that seriously impair his efficiency as an impartial and unbiased interpreter."⁶⁷ Gardner found himself vulnerable to charges of a more personal nature as well. E. Percivale Baker, a stenographer in the bureau who was later discharged for collaborating with lawyers to admit Chinese immigrants, attacked Gardner as a "half-breed Chinese . . . [whose] mother was from one of the lowest classes of prostitutes."⁶⁸ In 1899, a committee of Chinese merchants charged Gardner with mistreatment and sent a list of grievances to the Chinese consulate. The Chinese consul rejected the petition on the grounds that it contained trumped-up complaints designed to injure Gardner's reputation.⁶⁹ Despite such setbacks, Gardner endured the fits and starts of his early career in the San Francisco office and became an invaluable asset to the Bureau of Immigration.

Western Gatekeeping: San Francisco as the Model for the Nation

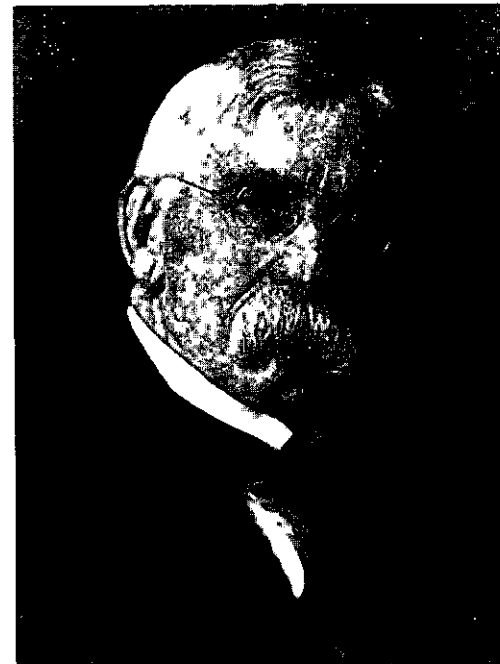
Western politicians' calls that the nation must "close its doors" to Chinese immigrants began the United States' transformation into a gatekeeping nation. The anti-Chinese politics within the Chinese Bureau in San Francisco, the numbers of Chinese it inspected (from 1899 to 1901 alone, three-fourths of all new and returning Chinese were reported to have been processed in San Francisco⁷⁰), and the effectiveness with which it enforced the exclusion laws gave the regional office a national reputation. Consequently, San Francisco immigration officials had an important impact on national policies and procedures, in some cases directly contributing to the administration of the exclusion laws across the country. San Francisco immigration officials were often called upon as Chinese experts in Washington, D.C., and it was not uncommon for collectors and immigration officials at other ports to send difficult cases to the

San Francisco office for advice on procedures.⁷¹ Chief Inspector James R. Dunn played a prominent role in regularizing enforcement procedures across the nation, and he routinely used San Francisco practices as the model to which all other ports should conform. In 1901, the collector of customs in Port Townsend, Washington, invited Dunn to advise him on enforcement procedures. Soon thereafter, Dunn traveled to Santa Barbara and San Diego to give advice. In 1901 and 1902, Dunn visited all of the other ports on the Pacific Coast, as well as Illinois and Ohio, to lend his expertise. Dunn was also regularly called to Washington, D.C., to express his opinions to the nation's leaders. As the "recognized expert of the Bureau of Immigration," he addressed Congress when it began to debate the permanent extension of exclusion in 1901, and he gave advice on certain features of the exclusion policy. He also met with President Theodore Roosevelt, who strenuously supported continuing and strengthening Chinese exclusion.⁷²

By the turn of the century, the official policy emanating from Washington clearly echoed the San Francisco ideology: the government should "facilitate the departure [of Chinese] and keep them from coming back."⁷³ Collectors of customs were instructed by their superiors in the Treasury Department that they "should be guided by the policy of our law . . . that Chinese are an undesirable addition to our society; that their presence is a disturbing element that tends only to evil and corruption, and that every presumption, every technicality and every intendment should be held against their admission and their testimony should have little or no weight when standing alone."⁷⁴

Vigilant Enforcers in Washington, D.C., 1882-1910

Exclusionists and the more vigilant officials in the Chinese Bureau in San Francisco found great allies in Washington, D.C., one of whom was Terence Vincent Powderly, who served as the U.S. commissioner-general of immigration from 1898 to 1902.⁷⁵ Powderly used the post to further the cause of labor in issues relating to immigration. He sought to restrict the number of immigrant laborers who he believed would take jobs away from the white workingmen of America and thereby endanger American values and civilization. Though he disclaimed animosity toward any race, class, or creed, Powderly's strict application of immigration laws arose not only from his pro-labor sentiments but also from a virulent strain of racism, especially against the Chinese and Japanese. In a New Year's message in 1902, Powderly proclaimed that European immigrants—"those sturdy men of Scotland, Germany, Ireland"—would always



Terence V. Powderly, U.S. commissioner-general of immigration from 1898 to 1902, c. 1915. Under his supervision, the Bureau of Immigration became more centralized and restrictionist. Powderly was successful in establishing tighter controls over the U.S.-Canadian and U.S.-Mexican borders and in extending the policy of Chinese exclusion to Hawaii and the Philippines. Courtesy Archives of the Catholic University of America (ACUA), T. V. Powderly Papers.

be welcomed, but "the others we must exclude for our own good." "Whatever is done," Powderly concluded, "the Chinese will be kept out."⁷⁶ Perpetuating the view that Asian immigration represented an invasion of racially inferior peoples, he wrote of his determination to "check the advancing hordes and whores who seek our shores in search of wealth and—if pressed—work." He also referred to the Japanese as the "syphilis-tainted, minions of the Mikado, the almond-eyed, pigeon-toed, pig-tailed, hen-faced legions of the celestial empire [who] might storm the citadel at San Francisco."⁷⁷ "I am no bigot," Powderly claimed, "but I am an American, and believe that self-preservation is the first law of nations as well as nature."⁷⁸

Throughout his tenure, Powderly consistently worked to strengthen enforcement of the Alien Contract Labor laws, and he remained an ardent supporter of Chinese and Japanese exclusion.⁷⁹ His goal was to exclude all undesirable—especially Asian—immigrants from the United States, and the Bureau of Immigration proved to be easily adapted to this task. Although the small budget allocated to immigration matters limited the efforts of immigration officials, Powderly allied himself with the many California politicians eager to strengthen the enforcement of the Chinese exclusion laws and successfully campaigned for more funds and more power for the Bureau of Immigration.

The relationship between Powderly and the Pacific Coast interests was an enduring one. As historian Delber McKee put it, with Powderly's appointment, "the spirit of [anti-Chinese leader] Denis Kearney took over the young bureau . . . and Californians soon realized their fondest hopes." The changes brought on under Powderly's administration were not sanctioned by any specific legislation but were implemented through internal administrative policies, a sign of the immense power he wielded on his own.⁸⁰

When Powderly entered office, he began to put into effect what one scholar has coined the "Powderly Exclusion Policy," immigration legislation and rules that would exclude *all* Chinese, save diplomats.⁸¹ His plan followed a concept outlined by journalist J. M. Scanland in 1900. "The exclusion policy does not exclude," Scanland wrote. "The only way to check this flow [from loopholes in the laws] is to repeal the favored clause excluding all except diplomats."⁸² When a June 1900 act of Congress shifted control of Chinese immigration to the commissioner-general of immigration, Powderly viewed the move as a clear mandate to expand the scope of exclusion.⁸³ Powderly's plan had three significant features that greatly curtailed remaining Chinese immigration and increased the deportation of illegal immigrants already in the United States. First, he sanctioned raids and harassment of Chinese communities. Second, he increased border enforcement along the U.S.-Canadian border to prevent Chinese illegal immigration. Finally, he sanctioned the geographical extension of the exclusion policy to Hawaii and the Philippines, two newly acquired American territories in which a sizable number of Chinese immigrants had settled. Powderly was particularly concerned about this last aspect of Chinese immigration, describing Hawaii as "a dumping ground of aliens."⁸⁴

Powderly filled the bureau with employees friendly to American labor and hostile to the Chinese.⁸⁵ He also instructed all immigration officials to base their decisions on only the most incontrovertible evidence. If an official had any doubt whatsoever regarding an applicant's right of entry, he was told to "relieve yourself . . . by rejecting the applicant, leaving him to his own recourse by appeal to the Department."⁸⁶ Because the Bureau of Immigration tended to uphold the rulings of the port officials, Chinese who appealed were usually turned down. The only recourse left to them was to then appeal to the courts, but this option was expensive, and as later sections discuss, Chinese immigrants' access to the courts was eventually barred.

Powderly's tenure as commissioner-general of immigration came to a humiliating end when President Roosevelt dismissed him in the spring of 1902. The cause was a controversy involving Powderly and his subordinates at Ellis

Island.⁸⁷ His policies regarding the enforcement of the Chinese exclusion laws, however, remained unchallenged.

Frank P. Sargent, former president of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen, replaced Powderly and served as commissioner-general from May 1902 until his death in 1908. Under Sargent, the bureau continued to refine its anti-Chinese policies. He explained to staff that he had been selected to "bring the enforcement of the immigration and Chinese exclusion laws up to the highest possible standard of excellence and efficiency."⁸⁸ As was the case with his predecessor, Sargent's interpretation of "excellence and efficiency" was the continued exclusion of Chinese on all possible fronts. Sargent was welcomed by the supporters of exclusion across the country who cited his long service in the labor movement, as well as his close relationship with labor leader Samuel Gompers. The *Peoria Journal* announced that since Sargent was a "true friend of labor," the exclusion laws would be enforced as they should be. "Commissioner Sargent is getting right after John Chinaman and is adopting more stringent measures to bar him out of the United States," the editor predicted.⁸⁹ He was especially welcomed in San Francisco, where one newspaper editor pointed out that Sargent was taking the restrictive stance that "California wants and needs."⁹⁰ Sargent himself pledged an energetic response to any attacks on the exclusion policy in the face of the "difficulties inherent in the character of the Mongolian race to be met and surmounted."⁹¹

Under Sargent's leadership, the numbers of Chinese denials and deportations increased, a fact that the commissioner considered one of his greatest achievements. In 1898, 7,195 exempt-class Chinese and returning laborers were admitted into the country, 280 were denied, and an additional 756 were arrested for being in the country illegally. Two hundred and twenty of those arrested were eventually deported back to China, making the ratio of admissions to denials and deportations 100:7. By 1904, the ratio changed to 100:57, with 2,676 exempt-class Chinese and returning laborers admitted into the country, 736 denied entry, 1,793 arrested, and 783 eventually deported.⁹² With such figures, Sargent could boast that the work of his administration was "highly beneficial." He pushed the exclusion movement forward by barring new entries and expelling Chinese already in the country.⁹³

Another active ally in the bureau's efforts to strengthen the Chinese exclusion laws was Californian Victor H. Metcalf, who was appointed secretary of commerce and labor (and supervisor of the Bureau of Immigration) by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1904. Known as a pro-labor, anti-Chinese politician, Metcalf was praised by the *San Francisco Chronicle* for his "clear judg-

ment" and "thorough knowledge of Chinese character" as exemplified in his anti-Chinese decisions.⁹⁴ The San Francisco papers noted in particular Metcalf's decision to limit the rights of returning Chinese American citizens who were born in the United States but had been taken to China by their parents and raised there. Individuals who had been absent from the United States for so long, Metcalf argued, should not be able to claim birthright citizenship.⁹⁵ Together, Sargent and Metcalf continued the work begun by Terence Powderly and the zealous immigration officials of the customs service in San Francisco.

Changes in the government's administration of the exclusion laws also helped to centralize and strengthen their enforcement. In 1900, Congress transferred the administration of Chinese exclusion to the commissioner-general of immigration, but the everyday enforcement of the law still remained with immigration officials in the Customs Service.⁹⁶ In 1903, all Chinese immigration matters were placed under the control of the Bureau of Immigration and its parent department, the newly created Department of Commerce and Labor.⁹⁷ In 1905 the *Ju Toy* Supreme Court ruling barred all Chinese, including those claiming U.S. citizenship, from appealing the bureau's decisions in the courts. This ruling gave the bureau unprecedented power that exceeded that of most federal agencies.⁹⁸ By 1905, then, both local and national officials had made the gates of exclusion bigger and stronger, further limiting Chinese immigration to America.

The New Gatekeepers on Angel Island, 1910-1940

While the transfer of power from the Customs Service to the Bureau of Immigration was meant to strengthen enforcement—a move that might automatically put the immigrant at a disadvantage—it also brought significant changes that cleansed the system of some of the most explicit anti-Chinese biases. By 1910, when the immigration station on Angel Island opened, a significantly different breed of immigration official was processing Chinese immigrants. Immigration officers had fewer direct ties to anti-immigrant movements, and civil service reforms instituted across the federal government had ended the system of political patronage in employment.⁹⁹ By 1910, the bureau had been transformed from a decentralized corps of officers scattered across the country and vulnerable to local politics into a powerful, centralized agency of career civil servants. Unlike earlier immigrant inspectors whose appointments were often politically motivated, the officials in the new bureau were selected by merit and promoted if they adhered to standards of expertise and efficiency.

Appointments to the immigration service were based on results of civil service examinations that tested mental ability and knowledge of immigration laws and rules. By the early 1930s, 35 percent of the inspectors had completed high school, 15 percent had some college education, and 4 percent had legal training. One-third had previously been employed as clerks, interpreters, guards, or messengers in the immigration service before being appointed to the position of inspector. Another third had worked in other departments in the federal government.¹⁰⁰ Unlike earlier immigration inspectors who had received little training, early-twentieth-century inspectors were required to take courses in immigration law, criminal law, and court procedure.¹⁰¹

Some of these changes reflected a larger transformation in civil service in the federal government during the early twentieth century, but, as Lucy Salyer has shown, the vocal protests of Chinese and other immigrant groups against the unchecked power of the Bureau of Immigration also motivated the agency to reform itself.¹⁰² As a means of placating immigrant groups, President Theodore Roosevelt appointed Oscar S. Straus, a Jewish immigrant, as secretary of commerce and labor in 1907. Entering the office on the heels of the Chinese boycott of American goods from 1905 to 1906, in which Chinese merchants in the United States and China charged the United States of discriminating against the Chinese, Straus was publicly sympathetic to Chinese demands and called for a less stringent enforcement of the Chinese exclusion laws. He advocated that admission should be the rule in Chinese cases and "exclusion the exception."¹⁰³ Straus also handled general immigration matters differently from his predecessors and offset the restrictionist character of the bureau. He consistently fought attempts to impose greater restrictions on immigrants, including the literacy test proposed by nativist groups like the Immigration Restriction League.¹⁰⁴

The agency's attempts at reform were considered a success by outsiders. In 1904, the *Chicago Herald* observed that under the treasury and customs officials, "the people of China have been treated as if it were a crime to seek an education in the United States, or to travel in this country, or to attempt to trade here." Government officials had considered it their "duty to find reasons for the exclusion of as many Chinese as possible." Since the transfer of the Bureau of Immigration to the Department of Commerce and Labor, the newspaper approvingly reported, there had been "a decided change in the policy and the practice of the officials."¹⁰⁵

Hart Hyatt North, then commissioner of immigration in San Francisco, carefully cut out the newspaper clipping and kept it in his scrapbook. Five



Hart Hyatt North (far right), commissioner of immigration, with employees of the U.S. Immigration Service at Angel Island, c. 1910. North served as commissioner at San Francisco from 1898 to 1909 and oversaw the construction of the immigration station on Angel Island. The new escape-proof island facility was credited with greatly increasing the rejection rates of Chinese immigrants. Courtesy of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

years later, when the Angel Island immigration station opened, North could boast of even more significant changes. In a letter to the commissioner of immigration in Philadelphia, he wrote, "the personnel of our force is better than almost ever before; most of the dead timber has been eradicated and we have additional new men who bid fair to be first rate."¹⁰⁶ North himself represented the new breed of official. A former lawyer and state congressman, North became commissioner of immigration in 1898 and was reappointed in 1905 and 1909 to the same post.¹⁰⁷ Chinese leaders like newspaper editor Ng Poon Chew described North as "the most honest, just and fair-minded man in the whole service at this port."¹⁰⁸

North's successor, Luther Steward, also demonstrated a commitment to hiring fair-minded officials. He candidly admitted that the early enforcement of the Chinese exclusion laws had often been unjust. "There was a great deal of prejudice involved," Steward told visitors to the Angel Island immigration sta-

tion in 1911. And while "some of the sore spots in the administration years ago [had] left their scars," Luther continued, "the present administration is devoid of any such [prejudice]. . . . We have striven earnestly to get broad-minded men who will not take any stand either for or against the applicant."¹⁰⁹ Steward might have been thinking of immigrant inspector John Birge Sawyer, who represented a new type of career bureaucrat that the Bureau of Immigration was now attracting.

Sawyer first entered the Chinese Bureau in Portland in 1902. He was a graduate of the University of California at Berkeley and had passed the civil service examination easily. He exemplified a new kind of government bureaucrat who viewed his work not as a stepping stone to an elected political office but as a career. Upon his appointment to the bureau in 1902, Sawyer recorded in his diary that he had "high hopes of the opportunity in government work."¹¹⁰ Unlike many of his predecessors who had been active in the anti-Chinese movement, Sawyer sought to enforce the exclusion laws without bias. While stationed in the Portland office, he even came to the rescue of a Chinese man being harassed by an unruly mob.¹¹¹ Sawyer's attitude and approach were apparently not anomalies in the new immigration service. After transferring to Angel Island, Sawyer observed that Chief Inspector Charles Mehan also "maintained a very sympathetic attitude toward . . . every Chinese coming before the office." In 1918, Sawyer left the immigration service, but he continued to work on Chinese immigration matters in his new post as the U.S. vice consul in Shanghai, China.¹¹²

Notably, immigrant inspectors continued to be predominantly male. A few women were employed to serve in other positions, especially as "matrons" who supervised female detainees. In 1910, the commissioner of immigration in San Francisco hired the first Chinese woman to look after the Chinese women in detention on Angel Island. Tye Leung, who had been affiliated with the Presbyterian Mission in San Francisco since 1902, was recommended for her reliability and good character. Leung was expected to not only serve as an interpreter for the Chinese women but to also keep an eye out for Chinese prostitutes attempting to immigrate. One of her specific duties was to gather "definite evidence of the intentions" of the women arriving in San Francisco. Women were also regularly employed as stenographers, but none seems to have worked as an immigrant inspector during the period of this study.¹¹³

By 1910, the immigration service had undergone a quiet transformation. In 1915, officials within the bureau admitted that the agency had to be more uniform in its procedures and had to adopt a higher standard of fairness. To some

extent, more formal procedures were adopted. A law division was established at the national level to integrate judicial procedures into the administration of the immigration laws.¹¹⁴ Nevertheless, reform did not mean the end of racism in either immigration policy or the immigration service itself. Officials on Angel Island maintained much of the enforcement system that had developed in earlier years. The exacting medical examinations and aggressive interrogations and cross-examinations continued and increased in intensity as officers attempted to cope with growing illegal immigration. As later chapters will discuss, many of the procedures continued to reveal an institutionalized suspicion of all Chinese and unfairly hindered the entry of legal immigrants. Moreover, the immigration service's efforts to reform itself coincided with the great resurgence of nativism that continued to target Chinese and other Asians, as well as Mexicans and southern and eastern Europeans. As anti-immigration sentiment spread and gained momentum throughout the country, the relationship between nativists and immigration officials strengthened and the voices of immigrant rights groups were drowned out.¹¹⁵

Despite claims of reform, many immigration officials still held prejudiced views that affected their handling of Chinese cases. One Chinese observer recalled that some of the new immigrant inspectors on Angel Island were known to "proceed on the premise [to] do everything . . . to trip you up, and deny you admission."¹¹⁶ Moreover, anti-Asian exclusionists in San Francisco continued to put pressure on officials to uphold the strictest standards of exclusion. In 1910, a scandal erupted in the San Francisco office over corruption among Chinese inspectors. When San Francisco commissioner of immigration Hart Hyatt North decided to remove the offenders, two inspectors who were particularly favored by the local press because they were "feared" by the Chinese, the *San Francisco Call* sarcastically praised him for taking "down some more bars on the exclusion gate," naming him "Idol of Chinatown."¹¹⁷ The following year, North was forced to resign because of pressure from Californians, and the Asiatic Exclusion League in particular, which attacked him for his allegedly lax enforcement policies regarding Asian Indians.¹¹⁸

Additionally, distrust of Chinese employees within the service continued to influence hiring decisions. Chinese who applied for interpreter positions on Angel Island were not hired on the basis of their application and credentials alone. They were also required to obtain a letter of recommendation from a reputable white person who could vouch for their characters. If they were hired, Chinese interpreters were not trusted to be alone with the immigrants for long periods of time and they were regularly shifted around during interro-

gations. Interpreter Edwar Lee explained the bureau's rationale: "They were afraid of collusion between the interpreters and the applicants coming in. So in order to play it safe, one case may have two to three [interpreters]. You hear a portion of the testimony, say from the father. All right when it come to the applicant, they ask for change in interpreter."¹¹⁹ Because interpreters might be taken away from cases midway through their processing, immigrant inspector John Birge Sawyer found that the system "paralyzed" the work of the entire office and caused "interruptions, delay, and confusion."¹²⁰ Despite such inconveniences the practice of separating Chinese interpreters from Chinese immigrants remained standard policy throughout the station's history.

The national headquarters of the Bureau of Immigration also reverted back to hiring outspoken nativists. No other immigration official promoted the nativist agenda more than Commissioner-General of Immigration Anthony Caminetti, who served from 1913 to 1920. A second-generation Italian American and the first commissioner in sixteen years who was not affiliated with the trade union movement, Caminetti was nonetheless a strong opponent of unrestricted immigration, especially from Asia.

A native Californian, Caminetti had been involved in both the anti-Chinese and anti-Japanese movements even before his political career began. In 1876, he was an officer in an anti-Chinese group in Jackson, California, which later became known as the Order of Caucasians. As a state congressman from 1890 to 1894, Caminetti called for an anti-Chinese mass meeting to rally support around the renewal of the Chinese Exclusion Act.¹²¹ In 1913, when he served in the California State Senate, Caminetti called for a constitutional amendment to disfranchise American citizens of Chinese ancestry.¹²² Caminetti used his position as commissioner-general to emphasize the western nativist theme of the Yellow Peril. In his annual reports, Caminetti consistently declared that Asian immigration continued to be a real threat to the United States.¹²³ In his 1916 annual report, for example, Caminetti recommended a ban on allowing Chinese American citizens to sponsor their foreign-born children. He wrote, "A Chinese who is a citizen of the United States merely by the 'accident of birth'" should not "be permitted to use his citizenship, especially when not cherished for any other purpose [other than] as a foundation upon which to introduce here one or more Chinese laborers, born to him abroad in his family village."¹²⁴ Caminetti's prejudices against the Chinese were deep-rooted and enduring. As his biographer put it, whether as a state congressman or the commissioner-general of immigration of the United States, Caminetti was "consistently anti-Chinese."¹²⁵ Even in 1920, when only 2,148 Chinese applied

for admission into the country, Caminetti argued that exclusion was absolutely necessary "for the protection of our own people and our own institutions."¹²⁶

The Chinese were not Caminetti's only targets. During his tenure, the bureau lobbied for the passage of the literacy test over the second veto of President Woodrow Wilson, as well as for the exclusion of Asian Indians and other Asian immigrants not already excluded by law. Caminetti also worked closely with Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer during the Red Scare of 1919-20 to arrest and deport suspected alien radicals.

Conclusion

By the time that the immigration station on Angel Island opened its doors in 1910, the immigration service locally and nationally had been transformed from a corps of untrained Chinese inspectors under the Customs Service's jurisdiction to a centralized and highly bureaucratic agency under the Department of Commerce and Labor. The Chinese exclusion laws and their enforcement by the first keepers of the gate were central to this transformation. The policies created in San Francisco became the models for the rest of the nation, revealing the important role that San Francisco and California played in shaping the country's immigration laws and agenda. The Chinese exclusion laws themselves also extended the state's power into new realms of immigration regulation, including deportation of immigrants and immigrant documentation, interrogations, and investigations. Likewise, the bureau's efforts to formulate policy and procedures coincided with the rise of the regulatory state in general and the movement to centralize and strengthen the U.S. Bureau of Immigration in particular.

One of the primary influences on the decisions of both the San Francisco and the Washington, D.C., offices of the Bureau of Immigration was a deeply rooted and institutionalized anti-Chinese racism that was reinforced by public sentiment and political pressure. As this chapter makes clear, the immigration service did attempt reform. Nevertheless, the nativist and anti-Chinese impulses remained entrenched in both the letter of the exclusion laws and the Bureau of Immigration's own practices. With the triumph of nativism in the 1920s, the bureau further solidified its role as an ally of nativists and exclusionists.

DEPORT AT AMERICA'S GATES

Throughout the Chinese exclusion era, the immigration station on Angel Island was widely recognized as "the main gateway" into the United States from Asia. Indeed, no other place symbolizes the Chinese immigrant experience during the exclusion era better than Angel Island. From 1910 to 1940, an estimated 175,000 Chinese immigrants were processed and detained in the station's barracks. While popularly called the "Ellis Island of the West," the immigration station on Angel Island was in fact very different from its counterpart in New York. Ellis Island, mainly a processing center for European immigrants, was governed by American immigration laws that restricted but did not exclude European immigrants. Angel Island, on the other hand, was the chief port of entry for Chinese and other Asian immigrants and represented American exclusion policies. Immigrants on Ellis Island usually spent only a few hours or at most a few days at the island depot, whereas Asians, and particularly Chinese, on Angel Island counted their detention time in weeks, months, and even years. Ellis Island was a processing station of entry, but Angel Island's purpose was to keep immigrants out. It became a symbol of exclusion, or, as historian Him Mark Lai has written, a "half-open door at best."¹ It both embodied and reinforced the racist immigration policies that singled out Chinese.

The “gateway to the Orient,” Angel Island served as a physical manifestation of the Chinese exclusion laws. Chinese were not the only immigrants to be processed and detained at the island, but over the course of the exclusion era, they made up the majority. Not only were Chinese, Japanese, and European immigrants subject to separate systems of immigration restriction and regulation, they were also physically segregated by race (Japanese and European immigrants in the upstairs barracks; Chinese below) and by gender, with separate barracks for women and men of each race. Now a National Historic Landmark, Angel Island remains the most significant monument to Chinese immigration and exclusion. The poems written and carved into the station’s walls by angry, frustrated, and homesick immigrants are especially powerful reminders of the costs and hardships of immigration under such a discriminatory regime. However, they are also evidence of immigrant resistance and perseverance, and it is this embodiment of the immigrant spirit that draws hundreds of thousands of visitors to the island every year.

This section focuses on the dynamic interaction of the excluders and the excluded in San Francisco and on Angel Island. Chapter 3 shifts our attention from the exclusion laws themselves to the ways in which exclusion enforcement institutionalized popular beliefs and stereotypes about Chinese. Procedures like those designed to counter the allegedly “natural” cunning and deceit of Chinese applicants or those based on the assumption that Chinese women were potential prostitutes and that Chinese Americans were fraudulent or inferior citizens further racialized Chinese as dangerous threats to the nation. Such government practices served as additional exclusion acts, making it even more difficult for Chinese to enter the country. Enforcement of the exclusion laws also drew upon—and in turn strengthened—the very meanings of race, class, gender, sexuality, and citizenship in America.

Chapter 4 explores Chinese immigration patterns and changing strategies of resistance to explain why Chinese continued to come to the United States and how they managed to get in while the exclusion laws were in effect. Transnational migration patterns and legal, political, and economic challenges to the exclusion laws all facilitated immigration and allowed additional classes of immigrants to apply for admission. Nevertheless, the policy of exclusion remained intact and largely unchanged. After 1910, in the midst of increasing nativism and immigration restriction, Chinese were most successful by learning how to negotiate their way through the exclusion laws instead of dismantling the policy altogether.

EXCLUSION ACTS

Race, Class, Gender, and Citizenship in the Enforcement of the Exclusion Laws

IN 1890, CARLTON RICKARDS, a San Francisco Chinese inspector, testified before a congressional committee on Chinese immigration and explained the methods he used to enforce the exclusion laws. “Of course I try to get evidence not for the Chinaman but against him, and then he has got to make his own proof,” Rickards explained. “My examination is taken for the collector [of customs] and is as much against the case as it can be.”¹ That Rickards used his powers as an inspector to favor the exclusion rather than the admission of Chinese immigrants was not contrary to government policy. Indeed, Rickards was merely following the Bureau of Immigration’s written rules and regulations, which clearly stated that Chinese were to be judged “excludable until they could be proven otherwise.”² Chinese immigrants confirmed that the exclusion laws were commonly enforced with a restrictionist mind-set. In 1908, Ng Poon Chew, the editor of the *Chung Sai Yat Po*, San Francisco’s daily Chinese-language newspaper, wrote that in the twenty-six years of its existence, the Chinese exclusion policy had “steadily increased in stringency. [It] has been carried out with such vigor that it has almost become an extermination law.”³

Rickards’s and Ng’s statements reveal that the ways in which immigration

laws were interpreted and enforced were just as important—if not more—than the actual laws themselves.⁴ Once passed, the exclusion laws raised significant questions about the policy of exclusion and the role of the government in controlling immigration. As the first federal immigration laws to require the screening of new arrivals, Chinese exclusion forced the United States into a new role of defining and distinguishing between admissible and excludable immigrants. Immigration officials were required to determine who was a member of the so-called exempt classes and who was not. The original Chinese Exclusion Act had provided exempt status for merchants, students, teachers, diplomats, and travelers. Additional court challenges brought by Chinese extended the exempt categories to include American citizens of Chinese descent and the wives and children of merchants. Such legal decisions and federal laws provided important guidelines. But the Chinese arriving in San Francisco were a diverse group of individuals who did not always fit into neat legal categories. Indeed, Chinese exclusion functioned on multiple, intersecting levels and raised significant questions that lawmakers had not anticipated: Who was Chinese? Who was a laborer, a merchant, a merchant's wife? What defined an American citizen of Chinese descent? And what were the standards of proof for all of these categories? The ways in which immigration officials answered these questions served as subsequent exclusion acts that further restricted Chinese immigration. Nineteenth-century stereotypes depicting Chinese as coolies, prostitutes, and pollutants and devious, unassimilable aliens merged with the new realities of exclusion and informed every aspect of admission and exclusion decisions.⁵ And by defining "Chineseness," "merchant," "merchant's wife," "prostitute," and "citizen," the exclusion laws and their enforcement helped to forge not only Chinese American identities, but also the concepts of race, class, gender, sexuality, and citizenship for Americans in general.⁶

A "Chinaman" Is a "Chinaman": Exclusion and "Chineseness"

By singling out Chinese alone for exclusion, the exclusion laws meant that Chinese, regardless of class, immigration, citizenship, or residency status, were treated differently from other immigrant groups. From the time that immigration officials boarded an arriving steamship to the time an immigrant or returning resident was finally "landed," or officially admitted into the country, Chinese were subjected to longer examinations, interrogations, and detentions than were immigrants from any other country. Exclusion based on race and

the identification of who was or was not Chinese, however, was problematical for immigration officials and created difficulties for Chinese, and for mixed-race Chinese in particular. Beginning in 1888, the Chinese exclusion laws were applied to "all persons of the Chinese race, whether subjects of China or other foreign power," as well as to "persons of Chinese descent."⁷ But how the government determined who was a person of Chinese descent reveals how Chinese racial identity, or "Chineseness," continued to be socially constructed. "Chineseness" was determined mostly by socially defined physical markers of race, but immigration officials also depended on symbols of actual or perceived common descent such as language, association, class, and behavior.⁸ These markers and symbols were more obvious to some officials than others, and thus the determination of who was or was not Chinese could be inconsistent.

One of the most notable cases illustrating this inconsistency involved Lawrence Klindt Kentwell, a Honolulu businessman and a student at Columbia University Law School in New York City who had an English father and Chinese mother. On several overseas trips in the 1890s and early 1900s, immigration officials in San Francisco and New York failed to recognize Kentwell as Chinese. His passport photo revealed a light-skinned, neatly groomed young man in suit and tie and hairstyle consistent with white American middle-class norms. According to Kentwell, immigration officials repeatedly "landed him like any other [non-Chinese] passenger."⁹ Perhaps trained to identify "Chineseness" primarily through physical traits that were emphasized in popular culture—dark, yellow skin, and slanted eyes—these immigration officials did not recognize Kentwell as Chinese.¹⁰ Class most certainly played an important role in their mistake. Kentwell traveled in the first-class cabin, unlike the majority of Chinese, who came in steerage. Moreover, his dress suggested that he was an American—or at least an Americanized—gentleman; most Chinese, it was believed, wore the "traditional" Chinese-style tunics and loose-fitting pants, as well as a queue. Though he was half Chinese and thus subject to the Chinese exclusion laws, Kentwell did not conform to assumed standards of "Chineseness" and was not detained or questioned during these early trips.

In February 1904, however, when Kentwell returned from the Philippines to his home in Honolulu, where immigration officials knew him to be of mixed race, he was treated quite differently. According to Kentwell, immigration inspector Robert Brown immediately singled him out on board the steamship and insulted and embarrassed Kentwell in front of fellow passengers, demanding to see his papers. Brown "hinted sarcastically" that he knew Kentwell "had Chinese blood in his veins," and, according to Kentwell, treated him

like a "common criminal."¹¹ Kentwell began a personal campaign protesting the government's classification of him as Chinese. "Race" and "Chineseness," Kentwell suggested, were not clearly defined and their meanings were applied inconsistently. He demanded clarification. In San Francisco and New York, he had been admitted without delay along with the white passengers on the ship. "Is it because the Chinese strain in my make up does not dominate the Anglo-Saxon, or perhaps my Chinese strain was not known to the mainland officers . . . that I did not meet the same fate as I did at the port of Honolulu?" Kentwell asked.¹² In letters to President Theodore Roosevelt, Commissioner-General of Immigration Frank Sargent, and Secretary of Commerce and Labor Victor Metcalf, Kentwell further contended that he should not even be classified as Chinese in the first place. "My father is an Englishman, and as I was born in British territory and under the law of nations, I am English, the Exclusion Act notwithstanding," he wrote.¹³

Immigration officials in Honolulu and Washington, D.C., did not agree. Kentwell was half Chinese by blood, they pointed out, and he was thus subject to Chinese exclusion. Moreover, they emphasized that Kentwell possessed other markers of "Chineseness." As Honolulu officials explained, Kentwell's association with the local Chinese community in Honolulu confirmed his Chineseness. Indeed, Inspector Robert Brown reported, Kentwell was "known to the Chinese people of Hawaii as Kam Duck Won" rather than by his English name.¹⁴ The Honolulu officers consistently referred to Kentwell in internal correspondence in the same manner as they did other Chinese: simply as another "Chinaman."¹⁵ Victor Metcalf also explained to Kentwell that his political allegiance to England was irrelevant. The Chinese exclusion laws "do not refer to Chinese in the political sense but as a race," he wrote. The government's inconsistent treatment of him was "undoubtedly due to such officials' ignorance of your being a person of Chinese descent."¹⁶ For Kentwell, the sting of racial discrimination had a highly politicizing affect. After being "officially" classified as Chinese and subjected to the exclusion laws, Kentwell dropped his protest over his individual treatment and began to lecture on the injustices of the Chinese exclusion laws in general.

As Kentwell's case illustrates, the exclusion laws forced immigration officials to refine their definitions and categories of "Chineseness." Blood and descent were ultimately used as the primary markers of racial identity, but immigration officials also learned how to use language, association, and appearance to identify Chinese persons as well. Kentwell's case was far from unique. As the government grew more adept at racial identification, other Chi-

nese of mixed descent found themselves similarly scrutinized by officials. The case of Mrs. J. Morton Riggs, a wealthy biracial resident of Honolulu and wife of a U.S. Marine Corps officer, for example, made headlines in 1904 when she was detained in San Francisco. Although Riggs was reportedly "attired in a conventional American gown" and had "no trace of the Asiatic in her features," she was still subjected to the same harsh treatment accorded all Chinese in San Francisco.¹⁷ Unlike her fellow first-class passengers who were allowed to disembark as soon as the steamer reached San Francisco, Mrs. Riggs was grilled by immigration inspectors and her papers were heavily scrutinized before she was allowed to land.

Race and exclusion intersected not only in the construction of "Chineseness" but also in the creation of race-based immigration procedures designed for Chinese only. This separate treatment meant that Chinese were singled out as soon as they arrived in port. Whenever a steamer with Chinese passengers arrived in San Francisco, an inspector and an interpreter boarded it and separated all Chinese passengers from non-Chinese passengers. They then gathered any documents, photographs, and papers they might have and interrogated each Chinese individually.¹⁸ Customs Service agents also kept track of all Chinese departing the United States. When a vessel with Chinese passengers departed San Francisco, the inspectors herded all of them into a specially erected corral and registered their names, ages, occupations, and former places of residence. These lists were kept by the Chinese Bureau and used when incoming steamers arrived.¹⁹

When the Angel Island immigration station officially opened on January 21, 1910, Europeans were separated from other races, and Chinese immigrants were kept apart from Japanese and other Asians. Men and women, including husbands and wives, were separated as well. They were not allowed to see or communicate with each other until they were admitted into the country. Children under age twelve were left with their mothers. The Chinese holding satisfactory papers, usually returning residents who had undergone a pre-investigation before departing the United States, were released. The others were ferried to Angel Island for further examination.²⁰

Once on Angel Island, immigrants underwent medical examinations by officers of the U.S. Public Health Service, who acted on and reinforced the belief that Chinese constituted a greater health menace than other immigrant groups. Illustrating what historian Alan Kraut has called the "medicalization of preexisting nativist prejudices," medical exams were used to detect any "dangerous or loathsome" infectious diseases among immigrants. On Ellis



Immigrants walking toward the administration building of the Angel Island Immigration Station, c. 1916. When immigrants arrived in San Francisco, Chinese were separated from non-Chinese. Some returning immigrants were processed upon disembarkation, but most were ferried to the immigration station on Angel Island, where the average detention lasted two weeks. In contrast, most European immigrants arriving at Ellis Island were usually processed in a matter of hours. Courtesy of the California Department of Parks and Recreation.

Island, each arrival was examined in a line inspection that sought to determine the general health of the immigrant, as well as to detect any signs of trachoma, mental illness, contagious diseases, or other maladies.²¹

Immigrant inspectors and physicians on Angel Island looked for many of the same ailments as their counterparts on Ellis Island. However, acting on the belief that Chinese as a race were more diseased than European immigrants (and therefore both racially threatening and racially inferior), officials also kept an eye out for parasitic diseases common among the Chinese, seeking to use them as grounds for exclusion. These so-called Oriental diseases, such as uncinariasis (hookworms) and filariasis (round worms), were treatable and posed no serious health threat to the American population, but Chinese

TABLE 1. APPLICATIONS FOR ADMISSION TO THE UNITED STATES AT ANGEL ISLAND, PORT OF SAN FRANCISCO, 1910-1924

Year	Chinese	Japanese	Other ^a	Total
1910	4,626 (53.6%)	N/A	N/A	8,620
1911	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
1912	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
1913	3,750 (42%)	3,477 (39%)	1,708 (19%)	8,935
1914	3,832 (38)	3,944 (39)	2,362 (23)	10,138
1915	4,548 (31.5)	4,982 (34.5)	4,896 (34)	14,426
1916	4,035 (29.4)	4,712 (34.4)	4,957 (36.2)	13,704
1917	3,558 (28)	4,218 (34)	4,708 (38)	12,484
1918	5,316 (30)	5,403 (31.7)	6,852 (39)	17,571
1919	3,792 (25)	N/A	N/A	14,913
1920	8,594 (38)	6,267 (27.5)	7,892 (34.5)	22,853
1921	4,707 (21)	N/A	N/A	22,751
1922	4,908 (35)	N/A	N/A	14,056
1923	5,009 (35)	N/A	N/A	14,348
1924	5,438 (33)	N/A	N/A	16,263
Total	62,113	33,003	33,375	191,062

Sources: U.S. Department of Commerce and Labor, *Annual Reports of the Commissioner-General of Immigration* (Washington: GPO, 1910-11); U.S. Department of Labor, *Annual Reports of the Commissioner-General of Immigration* (Washington: GPO, 1912-24).

Note: N/A = figures not available.

^a The Immigration and Naturalization Service did not keep regular statistics on the nationalities of other immigrants applying for admission at San Francisco. Some immigrant groups that were known to have been processed on Angel Island were Asian Indians, Mexicans, Spanish, Portuguese, Russians, and South and Central Americans.

afflicted with them were still detained. After 1917, clonorchiasis (liver fluke) was added to the list.²² As Nayan Shah has illustrated, such practices served as "medical borders" on Angel Island. They were justified as national necessities and perpetuated the long-standing notion that the Chinese were associated with particularly intolerable diseases.²³ Chinese leaders charged that the governmental regulations were discriminatory and arbitrary barriers erected to thwart the entry of Chinese immigrants. This distrust of American officials ran so deeply among Chinese that many believed that some diseases and afflictions

that were grounds for exclusion were not bona fide ailments but just additional means to unfairly exclude the Chinese. One American diplomat observed in 1907 that "many Chinese who have to do with American immigration officials do not believe that there is such a disease as trachoma, but believe that it is a device to keep them out."²⁴ As Mr. Jow, a former detainee on Angel Island in 1918 explained, "They examined you for everything. They just wanted to give us trouble."²⁵

Because the exclusion laws legitimized discriminatory treatment of Chinese immigrants, the way in which they were enforced supported underlying suspicions about Chinese held over from the anti-Chinese movement. Portrayals of Chinese as crafty, dishonest, cunning, and intelligent that were first made popular in the 1870s gained even more currency as anxiety over Chinese illegal immigration increased and took root in state policy.²⁶ Customs collectors in San Francisco complained that every steamer from Asia brought "vast numbers of the most cunning and prolific in desire to deceive the Customs officers of any race of people."²⁷ Journalists remarked that tracking Chinese immigration gave government officials "plenty of trouble" and required "all the ingenuity that a white man always requires in dealing with a Chinaman."²⁸ Commissioners-general in Washington, D.C., reported annually of the "natural difficulties" arising from dealing with the Chinese. They "looked alike," and immigration officials had great difficulty in "distinguishing [one] Chinese person from another." Charges that Chinese traded places with one another were also highlighted in government reports. Moreover, "all Chinese" possessed "totally different standards of morality" from whites and used their great "mental acuteness and ingenuity" to defeat the government. The exclusion laws, Commissioner-General Terence Powderly proclaimed, were thus "no match for the Chinese."²⁹

Immigration officials first responded with procedures designed to keep better identification records of Chinese immigrants and residents in the country. Written physical descriptions and photographs had been made part of the admission procedures during the very early years of exclusion enforcement. The Bureau of Immigration under Commissioner-General Frank Sargent instituted more drastic measures, most notably the Bertillon system, which the treasury secretary had recommended in 1902 and was approved by Congress and put into practice by immigration inspectors in 1903. The method, invented by French scientist and criminal detective Alphonse Bertillon in the 1880s, relied upon detailed body measurements as a means of identifying criminals.³⁰ Believing that photographs were not reliable tools of identification, Bertillon

recorded the length and width (or circumference) of subjects' forearms, feet, fingers, ears, heads, teeth, hair, and genitalia, claiming that these measurements alone provided exact identification markers. Commissioner-General Sargent was enthusiastic about using the Bertillon system on Chinese immigrants because he was confident that it would assist the government not only in distinguishing one Chinese applicant from another but also detect fraudulent entries. Inspectors were instructed to photograph all newly arriving and departing Chinese laborers and to conduct exhaustive physical examinations in accordance with Bertillon's methods. After the boycott of American goods in China, the system was dropped.³¹ Although the bureau was supposed to restrict the use of this humiliating system to the identification of Chinese laborers only, historian Delber McKee notes that in practice, "any Chinese person suspected of being a laborer—and most Chinese were—had to undergo the examination."³² Nativists and immigration officials alike connected all Chinese with criminals and criminal behavior. The Chinese considered the use of the Bertillon system one of the most objectionable features of Chinese exclusion enforcement. As an editor of a Chinese daily newspaper told an immigration service investigator in 1906, the Chinese regarded the system of minute measurement as "a great humiliation." "In their judgment," he explained, "it places them on par with criminals, and they lose face among their fellows when it is known that they have been subjected to this treatment."³³

Coinciding with these attempts to facilitate identification were immigration officials' redoubled efforts to verify Chinese claims of exempt status.³⁴ They thoroughly searched the luggage and belongings of a newly arriving Chinese for any evidence that might cast doubt on the veracity of his case. Moreover, because official Chinese records of births, marriages, and divorces were not available, intensive, complex, and detailed interrogations of Chinese applicants and cross-examinations of their witnesses were considered the best means to determine exempt status and thus became standard practice.³⁵ Inspectors first questioned applicants in great detail and then turned to the witnesses in separate hearings. All statements were checked against each other to substantiate the applicant's claim of exempt status. If any discrepancies arose during the testimony, the inspectors assumed that the parties did not know each other or that one or all of the subjects were lying and that the applicant's claim was false.³⁶ These procedures exposed the government's belief that Chinese were inherently cunning and devious.³⁷

The exhaustive interviews, background checks, identification procedures, and invasive physical examinations set Chinese apart from other immigrants.



U.S. immigrant inspector examining an immigrant's personal belongings, c. 1916. In an attempt to find evidence that might disprove an applicant's claim for admission, luggage and personal effects were routinely searched and even confiscated. Courtesy of the California Department of Parks and Recreation.

Government statistics detailing the cost of handling all arriving and departing Chinese provide evidence of the disproportionate amount of time, energy, and cost associated with examining Chinese immigrants. The Bureau of Immigration estimated that from 1903 to 1906, processing Chinese immigrants cost fifty to sixty times more than the processing of non-Chinese.³⁸

Over time, Chinese immigrants were able to end some of the discriminatory treatment they faced. In 1906, in addition to the Bertillon system of identification,³⁹ some of the medical exclusions related to filariasis and clonorchiasis that pertained to Chinese only were eliminated.⁴⁰ Nonetheless, racial bias continued to shape exclusion enforcement. By the early 1900s, the immigrant interrogations had grown longer and more complex. Because they placed Chinese at such a disadvantage, they were generally considered the most important part of the immigrant inspection process and remained in place throughout the exclusion era.

Coolie or Merchant: Exclusion and Class

Built into the exclusion laws was a class hierarchy that prohibited Chinese laborers but allowed some of the most privileged Chinese to enter the United States. This class bias also affected exclusion enforcement. It was common knowledge among immigrants, for example, that immigration officials treated Chinese traveling in first-class cabins with much less suspicion than those traveling in steerage. Immigrant inspectors apparently reasoned that passengers who were wealthy enough to pay for the finer accommodations were less likely to fraudulently claim exempt-class status. This "unwritten local regulation" had very real consequences. Passengers who traveled in first or second class tended to be released on the day of their arrival, whereas third-class passengers, regardless of their immigrant status, were brought to the detention station.⁴¹

Nevertheless, Chinese merchants, students, officials, and travelers were never automatically admitted or given special treatment solely on the basis of their class. Immigration officials feared (sometimes with justification) that Chinese claiming exempt-class status were either laborers in disguise or likely to become laborers after being admitted.⁴² They thus judged the class status of Chinese immigrants through the lens of race, and race through the lens of class status. Chinese applying for admission were viewed as Chinese first and merchants, students, or officials second. Sometimes class provided protection from racial discrimination; often times it did not.



A Chinese applicant being interrogated at Angel Island. Interrogations could last anywhere from a few hours to several days. Rigid enforcement of the exclusion laws by the U.S. government and illegal immigration among the Chinese turned the interrogations into exhaustive cat-and-mouse games. In one extreme case, an applicant was asked almost nine hundred questions. Courtesy of the National Archives, Washington, D.C.

Merchants, by far the largest group of Chinese professionals who applied for admission, came to be viewed through racialized markers of class that distinguished them from Chinese laborers. If the latter were supposed to be cheap, servile workers who competed with white workingmen, then Chinese merchants, officials rationalized, should be wealthy, educated, and refined gentlemen who posed no threat either to white labor or to American society in general.⁴³ Chinese merchants were thus expected to be highly literate, and the government required them to take a literacy test as early as 1906, nine years before a national literacy test for all immigrants was approved by Congress.⁴⁴ The literacy standards were sometimes extremely high. Ko Piu, who applied for admission as a merchant in 1911, passed the standard test by writing a sample business letter and bill in Chinese that was then translated and read by immigrant inspectors. He was denied entry, however, on the grounds that the letter, though accurate, indicated that he lacked "an extensive knowledge in business" and thus placed doubt on Ko's merchant status.⁴⁵

Chinese merchants were also expected to look like merchants. What this look actually entailed, of course, was extremely subjective, but it is clear that officials believed that bona fide merchants' wealth would be apparent in their dress and appearance. Thus, one Chinese immigrant applying as a merchant in 1912 was denied entry in part because officials judged his appearance to be "exceedingly poor." His handwriting, which they characterized as also "particularly poor," only confirmed their suspicions, and when the applicant's trunk was searched for additional evidence to be used in the case, his "poor quality" clothes were used as the final evidence to deny him entry.⁴⁶ In contrast, in another case, an immigration official reported that he was inclined to admit returning merchant Lee Kan because he had "the appearance of an exempt."⁴⁷

Lastly, immigration officials measured the merchant status of Chinese by whether or not they had performed physical labor. Returning merchants were required to testify that they had not engaged in manual labor for one year.⁴⁸ And Chinese warned each other to deny having skills that might be associated with common laborers. Soo Hoo Fong, an interpreter and immigration agent in the United States, thus advised Chinese applying as tailors that government officials were likely to deny them entry on the grounds that a tailor was a laborer. In the official interrogations, Fong warned, inspectors would try to pressure these applicants into admitting that they performed manual labor. To help applicants avoid being tripped up by inspectors' questions, Fong instructed his partner in China to advise new applicants to answer carefully. "Should they be asked: Do you know how to sew button holes? Are you an old

hand in threading needles? And in sewing garments? Tell them to say 'No, I don't know anything about manual labor.' To answer carelessly 'I am not a laborer' will make trouble. The most important thing is that they be taught to hold firmly to the contention that they are business people, having all the time been merchants."⁴⁹

Immigration officials also used physical examinations to uncover evidence that applicants had performed manual labor. As Hart Hyatt North, commissioner of immigration in San Francisco, explained to his superiors, "I have been making a physical examination of the faces, hands, shoulders, feet and legs of these people before passing upon their cases." North denied entry to one Chinese merchant applicant not only because of a slight discrepancy in his Section 6 certificate but also because the "applicant had calloused hands and the general appearance of a laborer."⁵⁰ Another inspector used skin color to determine whether applicant Lee Kwock Chow, a merchant's son, had performed labor outside. "Didn't you ever engage in farm labor? You look like you have been exposed in the open field to farm work all your life," he asked. Lee quickly retorted that he "was born dark."⁵¹

Commissioner North justified such examinations because he believed that "coolie importers" were bringing in "large numbers of coolie laborers under the guise of merchants." If it were not for his desire to vigilantly enforce the exclusion laws, North explained, he would happily cease the "exceedingly disagreeable and nauseating" examinations of "a lot of dirty Chinese."⁵² Demonstrating the subjectivity in such procedures, North's judgment that one particular applicant was a "coolie" was not shared by Commissioner-General Frank Sargent. The Bureau of Immigration in Washington reversed North's decision to deny the applicant entry, stating that the contradictions in the case were immaterial and that, moreover, the applicant's photograph attached to the file "was not that of a coolie."⁵³

While immigration officials continued to rely on overt class markers in the processing of Chinese merchants, over the course of the exclusion era, the admission and exclusion of this class became increasingly defined through the context of race. Merchants—along with other Chinese—came to face more stringent restrictions on their immigration, especially as the U.S. government narrowed the parameters under which merchants could be admitted. The original Chinese Exclusion Act did not provide a definition of "Chinese merchant," but by 1893, U.S. immigration regulations had defined him as a "person engaged in buying and selling merchandise at a fixed place of business and performing no manual labor."⁵⁴ The next year, the Treasury Department

instructed local immigration offices to keep records on all Chinese businesses. Chinese were required to provide for these files exact descriptions of business activities, the volume of merchandise, photographs of the establishments, and lists of all partners and the amounts of each person's share in the establishment. Businesses were then required to file updated lists every year, and immigrant inspectors would confirm the accuracy of this information by making site visits.⁵⁵ In 1901, new government rules narrowed the definition of merchant to exclude Chinese salesmen, buyers, book keepers, accountants, managers, store keepers, apprentices, agents, and cashiers. Managers and proprietors of restaurants and laundries were also excluded.⁵⁶ The Immigration Act of 1924 further narrowed the definition of Chinese merchant so that it only applied to those who were engaged in international trade. In 1932, an amendment to the act declared that only Chinese merchants who conducted trade between the United States and the "foreign country of which he is a national" would be considered bona fide. Merchants were also required to operate their mercantile establishment for the duration of their residence in the United States.⁵⁷

The government's restrictive redefinition of the term "merchant" served two purposes. As later chapters will illustrate, immigration officials suspected (often correctly) that Chinese took advantage of the elastic interpretation of the term in order to gain admission. The government's new restrictions and detailed requirements purportedly targeted immigrants who falsely claimed merchant status. But they also clearly served the goals of exclusionists by further limiting all Chinese immigration to the United States. The objective was no longer to exclude certain classes of Chinese who might threaten white workers, as the original Chinese Exclusion Act had been designed to do, but Chinese immigrants in general. Amendments to the laws, as well as new bureau regulations, thus affected professional Chinese who presumably served primarily the Chinese community, such as restaurant owners, interpreters, lawyers, and dentists.⁵⁸

Race took precedence over class in the processing of Chinese merchants in other ways as well. Reflecting the belief that all Chinese, regardless of class, were prone to lying, bureau regulations explicitly stated that claims for exempt status could not rest on Chinese testimony alone. Chinese merchants reentering the United States were required to have "two credible witnesses, other than Chinese, to testify on behalf of the applicant's status and mercantile business." Although the regulations did not specify that these witnesses were to be white, in practice, only white witnesses were used. For many years, these witnesses

were required to board the ship and identify the applicant in the presence of one of the inspectors.⁵⁹ Later, they were required to properly identify a photograph of the applicant and give sworn testimony of their association with him to the immigration service. The rationale behind this requirement reveals the ways in which immigration officials tied markers of Chinese class to whiteness. Bona fide Chinese merchants, the rule suggested, would conduct business with white businessmen. Such policies not only served to exclude Chinese based on their class and race but also functioned as additional barriers to Chinese immigration in general.

"Bad Women"/Dependent Women: Exclusion, Gender, and Sexuality

Because relatively few Chinese women immigrated to the United States during the exclusion era, much of the literature on Chinese immigrant women has understandably focused on their absence. Some scholars argue that from the 1870s on, the exclusion laws were the "most significant" of a multiplicity of factors contributing to lower migration rates for Chinese women. Laws targeting Chinese women preceded the general exclusion of Chinese laborers, and Chinese women were ignored in the list of so-called exempt classes in the original Exclusion Act. Those who did immigrate were forced to take their cases to court to secure the right to enter the country. Upholding the class hierarchy established in the laws, these court decisions allowed merchant wives and children to immigrate but excluded the wives of laborers. Wives of U.S. citizens also won the right to immigrate. These courtroom struggles and additional immigration restrictions, historian Sucheng Chan has argued, symbolized the "ever-tightening noose . . . [of exclusion] constrict[ing] the volume of Chinese female immigration."⁶⁰ Historian Adam McKeown, on the other hand, claims that the exclusion laws "played little role" in creating a gender imbalance among Chinese immigrants in the United States. While it was apparently more difficult for Chinese women to enter after 1882, he contends that the restrictive effects of the exclusion laws were "equal for both men and women." Other factors, he argues, especially transnational migration patterns and family structures, were more important in shaping Chinese female immigration to the United States.⁶¹ While the exclusion laws alone cannot explain the low number of Chinese women in the United States, their impact on Chinese female immigration should not be overlooked. Gendered interpretations of the exclusion laws by both immigration officials and Chinese families made it more difficult for women to come to the United States. To claim that the ex-

clusion laws eventually "opened more doors than [they] closed," as McKeown has, is to ignore the fact that few women were actually eligible to apply for entry through those doors on their own.⁶²

As with other Chinese applying for admission into the country, Chinese women were judged by intersecting notions of race, class, gender, and sexuality. As Chinese, they were assumed to be excludable, rather than admissible. As Chinese women, they were subjected to additional scrutiny based on immigration officials' fears that most female applicants were either practicing or potential prostitutes. Chinese merchant wives might deflect suspicions by emphasizing their class status, but all Chinese women were subject to the gendered provisions in the exclusion laws that classified and judged them primarily as dependents of males.

The belief that most Chinese women in the United States were prostitutes had fueled much of the anti-Chinese sentiment in the 1870s and continued to have a detrimental effect on Chinese women's admission cases during the exclusion era. Viewed as symbols of social decay, exploitation, and even slavery, Chinese prostitutes—and by extension all Chinese women—were considered to be one of the most dangerous threats of Chinese immigration. A series of sensationalized investigations of prostitution in San Francisco during the 1890s magnified the perceived danger and kept the issue alive in public discourse.⁶³

Exclusionists became especially concerned in 1890 when the federal district court in Oregon and the secretary of the treasury in Washington, D.C., ruled in favor of permitting the wives and minor children of Chinese merchants to enter the United States.⁶⁴ Correspondence to and from the immigration bureau in San Francisco following the two decisions indicates that many Chinese men desired to bring their wives and children to the United States. The service's correspondence logs record a multitude of inquiries from Chinese men and their lawyers from across the country, including the cities of Santa Rosa, Merced, Watsonville, Bakersfield, and Los Angeles, California; Omaha, Nebraska; Menominee, Mississippi; and Tampa, Florida. Most inquirers sought information about the admission regulations for merchant families.⁶⁵ Alarmed immigration officials were reluctant to accept the new rulings and responded by instituting additional measures to control or stop Chinese female migration. In 1895, John H. Wise, the collector of customs and chief of the Chinese Bureau in San Francisco, most likely spoke for many immigration officials when he warned inquirers that he would "do as much as I can to discourage Chinese from sending for their alleged wives and children. I am satisfied that . . . many women and young girls [would be] brought for immoral purposes.

It is well known that the cunning of Chinese often circumvents the vigilance of the officers."⁶⁶ In responses to letter after letter from Chinese themselves or their lawyers and acquaintances, Wise repeated this warning and explicitly discouraged the immigration of Chinese women.⁶⁷ When pressed to explain what documents Chinese women would need to land, Wise made it clear that *all* Chinese women would be considered prostitutes until they could prove they were not.⁶⁸

Chinese marriage customs and gender relations also provided the immigration service with ammunition to bar Chinese women. While Victorian American unions were believed to be based upon attraction, affection, and companionship between prospective spouses, traditional Chinese customs of arranged marriages and multiple wives were associated with subservience, concubinage, and prostitution. In the words of one American observer, all Chinese wives were "worse than slaves."⁶⁹ Immigration officials argued that such relationships among Chinese men and women hardly qualified as marriages at all and thus immigrants claiming to be married should be dealt with accordingly. As Collector Wise made it clear to one correspondent, "The Chinaman would have to demonstrate to me that woman is his wife according to our ideas of marriage."⁷⁰ To another Wise warned, "I shall demand, upon arrival of the alleged wives the most convincing proof that they are the wives of the Chinese residents." Exclusion policies dictated that "convincing proof" of the marriage did not include the unsupported testimony of the Chinese themselves. Only the testimony of white witnesses or documentation of the marriage—both of which were difficult to produce—would be accepted.⁷¹ Although this last regulation proved to be short-lived, immigration officials throughout the exclusion era continued to give preference to Chinese who were married according to American rather than Chinese customs.⁷²

The sensationalist furor over Chinese prostitution reached its peak at the turn of the century, but it continued to color the ways in which Chinese women were screened by immigration officials well into the twentieth century. Immigrant case files reveal that Chinese women who exhibited obvious class markers such as wealth and status faced less scrutiny and were less likely to be suspected of prostitution. Those who conformed to Victorian gender ideals of "respectability" and "decency" were also at an advantage.⁷³ Following the rationale used in merchants' cases, immigration officials expected bona fide merchant wives to possess fine clothing, a respectable manner, and, especially, bound feet, which were considered a mark of wealth and status in China. In 1885, for example, when Jow Ah Yeong and Chun Ah Ngon, a merchant's wife

and their daughter, respectively, arrived in San Francisco, their applications emphasized that both mother and daughter had "compressed feet," which, the affidavit explained, "is a mark of respectability." On the women's ticket jacket, the immigrant inspector made a special note of "small feet," and the two were admitted into the country.⁷⁴ Thereafter, immigration officials generally viewed bound feet as overwhelming evidence of a women's exempt-class status. In fact, bound feet became a marker not only of class but also of Chinese female virtue, a quality a prostitute would allegedly never possess. In 1899, Collector of Customs John P. Jackson went so far as to write that a "decent Chinese woman" was "known to be such by the proofs she presents, and having the badge of respectability of bandaged and small feet." Ironically, the U.S. government's reliance on bound feet to determine a woman's class membership occurred at the same time that Chinese reformers in China launched campaigns to ban foot binding as part of a larger movement for reform, modernization, and women's equality.⁷⁵

While markers of wealth, status, and respectability helped to distinguish elite Chinese women from Chinese prostitutes, many women—especially those who were not members of the merchant class—continued to be routinely suspected of being potential prostitutes and were often unfairly detained and/or denied entry.⁷⁶ One such case involved Lau Dai Moy, who applied for admission into the country as the wife of a U.S. citizen on June 12, 1917. Her papers were in order, but as part of the regular process at the immigration station on Angel Island in San Francisco, she and her husband Fong Dai Sing were brought in for extensive questioning. To immigration officials, the case appeared to be suspicious. Lau was much younger than her husband, and immigrant inspectors assumed that the two were not legally husband and wife (and that Lau was possibly a prostitute). Fong's own status as a citizen and his sponsorship of his wife were also scrutinized because immigration officials routinely assumed that Chinese claiming citizenship secured their own admissions through fraud. The inspectors grilled the couple about various aspects of their wedding ceremony, their home, and their family. The questions were exacting in their detail, and both Lau and Fong were expected to give specific answers that agreed with one another. Some of the questions put to Lau included the following:

- Q: What presents or ornaments has your husband given you?
- Q: When did your husband give you the hair ornament?
- Q: Did he buy that hair ornament in his home village?

Q: Did you really wear the gay head-dress and the bead[ed] veil at your wedding?

Q: Just when did you wear the head-dress?

Q: How long did you wear the head-dress?

Q: Did you wear it while you served tea?

Q: Who were the guests that you poured tea for?

Such detailed questions not only reflect the gendered procedures of exclusion—the questions asked Lau revolved around strictly feminine behavior—but also illustrate the ways in which the government sought to prove or disprove the validity of relationships and marriages. If there were too many discrepancies in a couple's story, the immigration officials ruled that the relationship was based on fraud and that the applicant was thus inadmissible. Discrepancies, of course, did not always mean a fraudulent case. As in the case of Lau and Fong, the interrogation revolved around very minute details of their arranged marriage and wedding ceremony that had taken place a year prior to the interrogation. Other questions involving their village, their house, and their shared life were even more difficult to answer because the couple had spent only a few months together before living apart for a year with little or no contact. Yet they were still expected to provide consistent answers or risk a denial. Because of discrepancies between her answers and her husband's, Lau was detained at the station for six weeks.⁷⁷

Lau's case was not an anomaly. Local Chinese leaders charged that reputable Chinese women were consistently asked "improper" questions that suggested that they were prostitutes, though the questions were seldom included in the official records.⁷⁸ Editor Ng Poon Chew consistently complained that the insinuations made by immigration officials would never be made "in the hearing of American ladies."⁷⁹ As late as 1940, sociologist Wen-hsien Chen found that "over-suspicion on the part of immigration officers [continued to cause] great embarrassment to respectable young Chinese women." Several women in the Chinese community in San Francisco told Chen that immigration officials suspected all Chinese women, save those who were able to travel in first class, of being prostitutes. Others claimed that any Chinese woman under sixty years of age who took third-class passage would be suspected of being a "bad woman."⁸⁰

Decisions related to a Chinese woman's admission to the country were also based on her dependent status, that is, her relationship to a male relative and sponsor and his ability to support her.⁸¹ Chinese women could—and increas-

ingly did—apply for admission independently as teachers or students. Nevertheless, all of the exempt categories listed in the exclusion laws—merchant, student, teacher, diplomat, and traveler—were those that, in most cases, only men could take advantage of in nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century China. Most women were thus not eligible to enter independently. From 1910 to 1924, of the total number of women who entered the country, 2,107 women (27 percent) entered as independent immigrants and 5,702 women (73 percent) entered as dependents. Most Chinese immigrant women, then, were dependent on men and their continuing relationships with them to gain entry to and to remain in the country. This dependent status both mirrored and strengthened American gender roles and ideology in U.S. immigration law. Women of all backgrounds immigrating independently not only were subject to the "likely to become a public charge" clause in immigration law, they were also considered morally suspect.⁸² But the ways in which the gendered face of immigration law intersected with Chinese exclusion made Chinese women especially vulnerable to the unequal environment and opportunities that resulted.

Since most Chinese women derived their right to enter the country from their male relatives' immigration status, they were dependent upon their husbands and fathers even before they arrived in the United States. With the decision to migrate placed largely in the hands of male relatives, some Chinese women did not have the option to come to the United States at all. Moy Sau Bik, for example, was eligible to enter the country as a merchant's daughter, but her father sold or gave her immigration slot to a male cousin, and the sponsorship papers he filed with the immigration service list a son instead of a daughter. Acting on the prevailing patriarchal Chinese attitudes that privileged sons over daughters, Moy's father apparently believed that his nephew was more worthy of immigration than his own daughter. Ineligible to enter as an independent immigrant herself and without the sponsorship of her father, Moy Sau Bik was effectively excluded from the country until she entered as a merchant's wife in 1931.⁸³

It is difficult to determine how many other families chose males to immigrate in the place of their female family members, but it is clear that there were simply more opportunities for males to come to the United States. This was especially true if the immigration involved fraudulent papers, which by the mid-1900s was increasingly the norm.⁸⁴ A 1925 investigation by the San Francisco immigration office, for example, revealed that most of the immigration slots claimed by exempt-class immigrants were for male children. During

TABLE 2. CHINESE WOMEN ADMITTED, BY CLASS, 1910-1924

Year	Merchant		Wife of U.S.		New or		U.S.		Teacher		Total Chinese Women Admitted (Including Other Classes)
	Merchant	Wife	Daughter	Citizen	Returning Merchant	Returning Laborer	Citizen	Student	No.	No.	
	No. (%)	No. (%)	No. (%)	No. (%)	No.	No. (%)	No. (%)	No. (%)	No.	No.	
1910	120 (35)	27 (8)	110 (32)	0	0	0	49 (14)	3	0	0	344
1911	136 (41)	19 (6)	80 (24)	0	0	0	69 (21)	5 (2)	0	0	329
1912	118 (32)	28 (8)	88 (24)	0	0	0	67 (18)	9 (2)	2	2	367
1913	155 (35)	28 (6)	126 (29)	0	0	1	95 (21)	19 (4)	0	0	442
1914	133 (33)	27 (7)	122 (30)	0	0	6 (2)	75 (19)	11 (3)	0	0	401
1915	107 (27)	15 (4)	106 (27)	2	2	7 (2)	55 (14)	29 (7)	0	0	394
1916	108 (29)	28 (7)	108 (29)	0	0	1	61 (16)	16 (4)	0	0	378
1917	111 (27)	23 (6)	110 (27)	2	2	8 (2)	102 (25)	2	0	0	409
1918	88 (20)	28 (7)	132 (31)	1	1	4	78 (18)	28 (7)	3	3	429
1919	91 (24)	24 (6)	91 (24)	2	2	7 (2)	50 (13)	33 (9)	0	0	377
1920	166 (30)	35 (6)	141 (25)	3	3	7 (1)	68 (12)	47 (8)	5	5	562
1921	271 (30)	59 (7)	290 (32)	3	3	15 (2)	119 (13)	59 (7)	4	4	896
1922	301 (26)	47 (4)	396 (34)	9	9	44 (4)	221 (19)	75 (6)	3	3	1,166
1923	319 (26)	56 (5)	387 (32)	4	4	43 (1)	238 (20)	52 (4)	4	4	1,208
1924	273 (21)	78 (6)	396 (31)	3	3	42 (3)	233 (18)	81 (6)	8	8	1,284
Total	2,756 (28)	522 (6)	2,848 (30)	29	29	185 (2)	1,580 (18)	469 (5)	29	29	9,565

Source: See Table 1.

a three-month period, 256 Chinese men who were American citizens and held the proper return documents reentered the port. The group claimed a total of 719 children, 670 of whom were males and only 49 females. The commissioner of immigration pointed to the skewed sex ratio of the group's foreign-born children and suspected fraud. "While individual families may have boys and no girls," he wrote, "it is, of course, absurd to suppose that such a proportion of boys to girls could exist among the children of men of any race." The surplus number of sons claimed as dependents, the San Francisco office concluded, probably filled immigration slots intended for others.⁸⁵ Given such statistics, it is not difficult to conclude that many other women, like Moy Sau Bik, were deprived of their opportunities to immigrate in favor of their male relatives or other males who purchased their family's immigration papers.

The immigration procedures designed to process Chinese dependents during the exclusion era also served as barriers to entry. Chinese family members applying as dependents were held responsible for meeting two sets of requirements, while independent immigrants only had to satisfy one. Wives and children of merchants and citizens first had to reconfirm the exempt-class standing of the sponsor himself. They then had to prove that the relationship to their sponsor did indeed exist. Dependent immigrants were, in effect, tested twice. In most cases, both exempt status and relationship were eventually established without too much difficulty, and the wife, son, or daughter was admitted. It was not uncommon, however, for problems to arise.

Even if the exempt-class sponsor of a potential immigrant was a longtime resident of the United States, the investigations pertaining to his or her immigration status could be lengthy. Yong Shee, for example, was detained for two months in 1915 while immigration officials investigated the status of her husband, Lee Kan, a merchant in San Francisco and partner in Chong, Kee, and Company. Because she was unable to apply for admission independently, Yong Shee had to rely on her husband. Thus, when immigration officials began to scrutinize her husband's company's holdings in order to determine that it was a bona fide mercantile establishment, at stake was not only Yong Shee's right to enter and reenter the country but also the status of the business. The couple hired an attorney, rallied friends and acquaintances to their cause, and eventually gained admittance to the country.⁸⁶ In another case, Jung Shee was almost denied entry because a recent injury had prevented her husband from working and supporting her. Fearful that the lack of a male provider would make Jung Shee a public charge, immigration officials released her only with assurances from relatives and social workers that Jung would be able to support her-

self.⁸⁷ Dependent status had severe consequences even for Chinese American women who were citizens by virtue of their birth in the United States. Under the 1922 Cable Act, Chinese American women who married "aliens ineligible to citizenship" lost their citizenship and could face problems reentering the country.⁸⁸

Defining Citizens: Exclusion and Chinese American Citizens

Some of the most significant issues raised by the Chinese exclusion laws involved Chinese Americans and their citizenship rights. Although the laws themselves were designed to regulate immigrants, the government's enforcement procedures extended to all Chinese, including those born in the United States who traveled abroad and sought reentry into the country. From 1894 to 1940, 97,143 Chinese claiming to be native-born citizens of the United States were readmitted into the country. They made up 48 percent of the total number of Chinese admitted.

Ideologies of race and citizenship acted in concert to extend the exclusion laws to include Americans of Chinese descent. Targeting Chinese Americans in this way was largely a result of the widespread support for Chinese exclusion in general, as well as the government's concern over illegal immigration, especially that involving Chinese who fraudulently claimed U.S. birth and citizenship. However, the idea that Chinese as a race were "unfit" for American citizenship, an argument resurrected from the 1870s, was also a motivating factor. All three of these factors combined to affect the ways in which Chinese American citizens were perceived and processed as they traveled to and from the United States. The conflation of the Chinese American citizen with the allegedly dangerous Chinese immigrant alien had an especially damaging effect on the Chinese community in America.

The argument that Chinese would not make good citizens had been a centerpiece of the anti-Chinese movement prior to 1882. In 1875, Representative Horace Page of California argued in Congress that Chinese were "a class of people wholly unworthy to be entrusted with the right of American citizenship." Citizenship among the Chinese, he continued, would only be used "for corrupt purposes by corrupt individuals."⁸⁹ Other politicians claimed that unlike "Aryan or European races," the Chinese lacked "sufficient brain capacity . . . to furnish motive power for self-government," having "no comprehension of any form of government but despotism."⁹⁰ In 1877, a congressional committee investigating Chinese immigration concluded that Chinese were "an

TABLE 3. CHINESE ADMITTED, BY CLASS, 1894-1940

Year	Total	Exempt Class		Returning Residents		U.S. Citizens	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1894	5,599	5,599	100	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
1895	2,075	2,075	100	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
1896	3,616	3,510	97	106	3	N/A	N/A
1897	6,517	5,478	84	1,039	16	N/A	N/A
1898	7,195	5,698	79	1,497	21	N/A	N/A
1899	5,718	3,925	69	1,793	31	N/A	N/A
1900	5,799	3,802	66	1,997	34	N/A	N/A
1901	4,064	1,784	44	2,280	56	N/A	N/A
1902	3,768	1,273	34	2,495	66	N/A	N/A
1903	2,982	1,523	51	1,459	49	N/A	N/A
1904	2,676	1,284	48	1,392	52	N/A	N/A
1905	3,153	1,348	43	1,711	37	634	20
1906	2,720	714	26	1,091	40	915	34
1907	3,215	788	25	1,498	47	929	29
1908	4,563	1,298	28	1,656	36	1,609	35
1909	6,245	1,818	29	1,897	30	2,530	41
1910	5,792	1,777	31	1,906	33	2,109	36
1911	4,986	1,142	23	2,205	44	1,639	33
1912	5,253	1,301	25	2,196	42	1,756	33
1913	5,496	1,303	24	2,022	37	2,171	40
1914	5,563	1,481	27	1,881	34	2,201	40
1915	5,467	1,628	30	1,849	34	1,990	36
1916	4,984	1,503	30	1,549	31	1,932	39
1917	4,567	1,240	27	1,309	29	2,018	44
1918	2,887	930	32	1,011	35	946	33
1919	2,969	1,084	37	930	31	955	32
1920	4,172	1,566	38	845	20	1,761	42
1921	7,315	2,806	38	1,270	17	3,239	44
1922	9,391	3,116	33	2,231	24	4,044	43

TABLE 3. CONTINUED

Year	Total	Exempt Class		Returning Residents		U.S. Citizens	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1923	9,889	2,766	28	2,433	25	4,690	47
1924	9,806	2,483	25	2,569	26	4,754	48
1925	5,909	911	15	1,975	33	3,023	51
1926	5,435	1,282	24	1,757	32	2,396	44
1927	6,339	1,349	21	1,814	29	3,176	50
1928	6,618	1,423	22	1,919	29	3,276	50
1929	7,045	1,716	24	1,795	25	3,534	50
1930	6,564	1,636	25	1,708	26	3,220	49
1931	6,456	1,175	18	1,697	26	3,584	56
1932	5,625	823	15	1,550	28	3,252	58
1933	4,593	653	14	1,155	25	2,785	61
1934	4,335	420	10	1,018	23	2,897	67
1935	4,687	497	11	896	19	3,294	70
1936	3,972	353	9	308	8	3,311	83
1937	5,112	905	18	709	14	3,498	68
1938	7,199	967	13	836	12	5,396	75
1939	5,495	984	18	183	3	4,328	79
1940	4,472	979	22	142	3	3,351	75
Total	248,298	84,116	35	67,039	29	97,143	48

Sources: U.S. Treasury Department, *Annual Reports of the Commissioner-General of Immigration* (Washington, D.C.: 1898-1902); U.S. Department of Commerce and Labor, *Annual Reports of the Commissioner-General of Immigration* (Washington: GPO, 1903-11); U.S. Department of Labor, *Annual Reports of the Commissioner-General of Immigration* (Washington: GPO, 1912-24); Helen Chen, "Chinese Immigration into the United States: An Analysis of Changes in Immigration Policies" (Ph.D. diss., Brandeis University, 1980), 181.

Note: These figures do not include Chinese allowed to pass in transit through the United States. N/A = figures not available. Due to inconsistencies in the sources, total percentages may not equal 100.

indigestible mass in the community." Prohibiting them from citizenship was not only desirable, the committee concluded, it was also a "necessary measure" for the good of the public.⁹¹ The Chinese Exclusion Act legitimized this belief by barring all Chinese immigrants from naturalized citizenship, but the question of birthright citizenship for Chinese born in the United States remained unresolved until 1898.

Following the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act, various politicians and anti-Chinese spokespersons attempted to extend the logic used to bar Chinese immigrants from naturalization to those born in the United States. Because Chinese were incapable of assimilation, they charged, even the second generation born in the United States would inherit the deficient characteristics that made their parents so objectionable to Americans. The first court case to rule on the question of birthright citizenship involved Look Tin Sing, a fourteen-year-old boy born in Mendocino, California, who attempted to re-enter the United States in 1884 after studying in China. As U.S.-born Chinese were not explicitly listed as an exempt class in the original Exclusion Act, and because Look Tin Sing had no other documentation proving his membership in another exempt class, he was denied entry by immigration officials in San Francisco. Look appealed, and the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California reversed the decision and ruled in his favor. Declaring that the Fourteenth Amendment provided that "all persons born or naturalized in the United States" were citizens, the court ruled that Look Tin Sing was indeed a citizen and that the Exclusion Act did not apply to him.⁹²

Dissatisfied with the court's decision, anti-Chinese exclusionists attempted to reverse it and the birthright citizenship it granted to Chinese. The forum they chose was the case of Wong Kim Ark, a San Francisco native returning from a visit to China in 1895. Born in 1873 to parents who ran a mercantile establishment in San Francisco's Chinatown, Wong traveled to China with his parents in 1890 and returned to the United States later that year. Collector Timothy Phelps promptly readmitted Wong into the country as a citizen. In 1895, Wong made a second visit to China. Upon his return, the notoriously anti-Chinese collector John H. Wise denied Wong readmission, basing his decision on his belief that Wong was not a citizen of the United States and, as such, excludable under the exclusion laws. Wong was placed under custody of the U.S. marshall and detained on board the steamship.⁹³ Wong hired Thomas Riordan, a prominent attorney in San Francisco, and filed a writ of habeas corpus in the federal district court alleging that he was being "unlawfully confined and restrained of his liberty on board the steamship 'Coptic.'" He also claimed the



Wong Kim Ark, c. 1898. A native-born Chinese American citizen, Wong Kim Ark was denied reentry into the United States in 1895 after a trip to visit his parents in China. He appealed, and his case eventually went to the U.S. Supreme Court, which affirmed that all persons born in the United States, including Chinese whose parents themselves were ineligible for citizenship, were indeed birthright citizens under the Fourteenth Amendment. Courtesy of the National Archives, Pacific Region, San Bruno, California.

right to reenter as a native-born citizen under the Fourteenth Amendment, stating that he had "always subjected himself to the jurisdiction and dominion of the United States, and had been taxed, recognized and treated as a citizen of the United States."⁹⁴

Henry S. Foote, the U.S. district attorney, argued the case on behalf of the U.S. government. In his opinion, the question at hand was whether or not

native-born Chinese could be considered citizens if their parents were not and could never become naturalized citizens. Foote argued that birth within the United States did not necessarily confer the right of citizenship, especially in the case of Chinese, who were unassimilable and unfit for citizenship. Foote claimed that Wong had been made a citizen only "by accident of birth" on American soil, but his "education and political affiliations" remained "entirely alien" to the United States.⁹⁵ Since both of Wong Kim Ark's parents were "subjects of the Emperor of China," Foote continued, Wong himself inherited this nationality and was also a "Chinese person and a subject of the Emperor of China." A child born in the United States may "nominally be a citizen" but if he is raised by alien Chinese parents, the district attorney reasoned, the child remained "an alien loyal to the country of his father and indifferent to the country of his birth."⁹⁶ Conflating "Chineseness" with "alienness" and implying that being "Chinese" and being "American" were incompatible, Foote declared that Wong could not possibly be considered an American citizen, for he had "been at all times, by reason of his race, language, color, and dress, a Chinese person."⁹⁷ Allowing Chinese such as Wong Kim Ark to be recognized as citizens, Foote warned, would be extremely dangerous. Foote asked, "Is it possible that any Court in the United States will deliberately force upon us as natural born citizens, persons who must necessarily be a constant menace to the welfare of our Country?" He answered, "We submit that such things cannot be without imperilling [*sic*] the very existence of our Country."⁹⁸ The district attorney concluded his brief for the court with the extreme position that even if Wong Kim Ark was found to be a citizen by birth, he should still be excluded by the Exclusion Act, because he was a laborer excludable by law.⁹⁹

Judge William Morrow of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California soundly refuted Foote's arguments. "It is enough that he is born here whatever the status of his parents," he wrote. "No citizen can be excluded from this country except in punishment for crime. The petitioner must be allowed to land, and it is so ordered."¹⁰⁰ U.S. District Attorney Foote appealed the decision but lost again in the U.S. Supreme Court in 1898. *United States v. Wong Kim Ark* affirmed that regardless of race, all persons born in the United States were, in fact, native-born citizens of the United States and entitled to all of the rights that citizenship offered.¹⁰¹

The rulings in the *Look Tin Sing* and *Wong Kim Ark* cases established the legal parameters in citizenship cases. Immigration officials, however, continued to wield enormous influence in the processing of returning U.S. citizens' applications. Left without any court-defined standards of *how* citizenship

would be determined in such cases, immigrant inspectors established their own means of measuring citizenship status and "American-ness." In cases of returning citizens, the ways in which officials interpreted and defined these categories were inextricably tied to racialized assumptions that positioned Chinese Americans as fraudulent or inferior citizens and perpetuated the construction of all Chinese as "perpetual foreigners."¹⁰²

Chinese claiming citizenship thus had to undergo the same lengthy investigative and interrogation processes to which aliens were subjected in order to prove their nativity and their right to reenter the country. Proof of birth in the United States was not easily verified. Because Chinese women often delivered their children at home, many citizens did not have birth certificates. After the 1906 earthquake and fire in San Francisco destroyed all birth records in the city, even if Chinese had such records they were nearly impossible to find. The immigration service was thus forced to accept applicant and witness testimony to prove birthplace.

Much like the ways in which relationships to white Americans were seen as favorable markers of class status in merchant cases, they were similarly interpreted to illustrate "American-ness" in citizenship cases. Beginning in 1892, a Department of Treasury mandate required Chinese to have two non-Chinese, that is, white, witnesses to verify their claims of nativity.¹⁰³ In 1895, as a means of determining his nativity, Wong Kim Ark was asked whether any white men in San Francisco knew he had been born there. Wong readily produced two white witnesses who remembered him as a young boy on Sacramento Street.¹⁰⁴ Yee Kim, returning to the United States in 1900, was asked the same question and was landed without any delay, largely because of the seven affidavits of well-known white citizens of Los Angeles in his file.¹⁰⁵ However, most Chinese Americans did not have these kinds of connections, for in the segregated Chinese communities in the United States, white witnesses to the birth of Chinese children were extremely rare. As one incredulous immigration official who disagreed with this ruling requiring white witnesses asked his superiors, "Who else [but the Chinese relatives of the applicant] would be likely to have the knowledge required as a witness in a case of native birth, if not those closely related to the party born?"¹⁰⁶ By 1902, the bureau had amended its regulations to allow the admission of citizens based solely on Chinese testimony.¹⁰⁷ Nevertheless, in practice, the presence of white witnesses continued to be viewed as favorable to a case, and Chinese American organizations continued to complain about it. In 1910, the Native Sons of the Golden State, a civil rights organization founded by Chinese American citizens, wrote to the

secretary of labor that white witnesses were increasingly difficult to find. They were "departing from the country, dying, or removing to parts unknown," thus making it almost impossible for citizens to prove their birth in the United States.¹⁰⁸

Returning U.S. citizens of Chinese descent were also judged according to how well they could speak English, how much they conformed to American customs and dress, and how well they could identify local landmarks and recite basic facts about U.S. history. It was not uncommon for immigration officials to note favorably that an applicant claiming citizenship dressed in American-style clothing and could speak English fluently. In recommending that applicant Moy Goon be landed in 1905, for example, immigrant inspector Alfred W. Parker noted that Moy was "an extraordinarily bright, intelligent Chinaman, dresses in American clothes, and speaks good English. By appearances and conduct, I should say that his claim to American birth is quite reasonable." Another reported that Moy used the American name "Charlie" and was "thoroughly Americanized" and "highly respected."¹⁰⁹

Chinese applicants claiming citizenship were also commonly required to pass a test in spoken English. Fon Toy, a native applying for reentry in 1905, responded in English to nearly half of the questions put to him during his examination, including those asked by inspector H. C. Kennah:

Q: How much can you speak?

A: I can ask a person's name and how much money will you give me.

Q: Well, let us hear you.

A: How much money you give me?

Q: You understand "wash clothes?"

A: Yes, wash clothes, iron collars, cuffs, shirts, and drawers.¹¹⁰

Largely because of Fon's ability to speak and understand some English, Kennah concluded that he was indeed a native-born citizen. In another instance, Lim Tong, who claimed to have voted for Benjamin Harrison in the 1888 presidential election, gave his 1905 testimony in English and was also landed easily.¹¹¹ On the other hand, when Lee Toy Mock, a citizen who was arrested on suspicion of being in the country illegally, failed to respond when he was examined in English and when "asked to do things in the English language," Inspector P. J. Farrelly concluded that Lee was not a citizen but an "alien [who] has not the slightest knowledge of the English language."¹¹²

Chinese American citizens were also tested on their geographical knowl-

edge, history, and familiarity with San Francisco or their claimed hometown. In 1905, Woo Wee Nuen, who was born in San Francisco, was grilled about specific dates and locations of events in San Francisco Chinatown: "Did you go to the Mid-Winter Fair? When was it held? Do you remember any fire at the Hong Far Lao restaurant? Do you remember any procession in honor of the opening of any Joss House in San Francisco? Can you name any streets in Chinatown here? Any theatres? What streets are the principal Joss houses on?"¹¹³ Lee Toy Mock was also asked equally detailed questions about the 1906 earthquake and fire in San Francisco and what Lee had been doing at the time of the quake. Inspector P. J. Farrelly peppered Lee with questions supposedly designed to determine if Lee was really in San Francisco in 1906: "Did it happen while you were asleep or were you awake when it occurred?" "Was it after dinner or before dinner?" "Was it after or before breakfast?" "What time did you have your breakfast?"¹¹⁴

Although some of these tests certainly helped immigration officials to expose fraud, the standards they set for Chinese American citizens were high, and sometimes unrealistic. The language test was especially challenging for many Chinese Americans. Well into the mid-twentieth century, most Chinese immigrants and their American-born children still resided in segregated urban enclaves and had little contact with non-Chinese. Although many American-born children did attend public school and learned English, not all of them learned to speak the language fluently.

As late as 1934, Lee You Fong struggled in vain against the government's institutionalized conflation of citizenship with the ability to speak English. The twenty-five-year-old Lee had never learned to speak English formally and instead spoke a very limited form of pidgin English common in Chinese communities. He had never attended an American school, and because he worked and lived in the segregated community of Chinatown, he had also never learned the language on his own. At his deportation hearing, Inspector F. O. Seidle framed the case against Lee on this lack of training in English. Seidle asked one of Lee's witnesses, "Can you offer any explanation why it is that he is unable to speak the English language with any degree of fluency whatsoever?" The relative answered, "He cannot speak English because he has not attended any American school. . . . There are some native born men [in Chinatown] who cannot speak English." Seidle, however, was not convinced. Lee's inability to speak English, as well as other inconsistencies in his case, led to his deportation.¹¹⁵

Even demonstrated fluency in English, proper documentation, "American-

ized" appearance, and well-respected white witnesses did not insure that an American-born citizen would be granted prompt reentry or would not be harassed. In 1924 and 1926, Chinese American citizens living in Hawaii and traveling to the mainland for temporary visits complained bitterly and loudly to the commissioner-general of immigration. These citizens, some of whom were territorial government officials, charged that while they carried the necessary documents establishing their native status and their right to enter the mainland United States, immigration officials in San Francisco needlessly detained them and gruffly grilled them about their native status.¹¹⁶ Edna and Sarah Hing, born in Springfield, Massachusetts, also complained of mistreatment during their return to the United States through San Francisco. Their immigration files note that they were fluent in English and that the immigration service had copies of their birth certificates, as well as affidavits from white family friends in Massachusetts. Nevertheless, the two experienced "a great deal of red-tape" upon their return. When they planned to go abroad for a second trip in 1923, Edna wrote to the commissioner of immigration, "We don't wish to leave the United States unless we're sure of getting back."¹¹⁷ Classified as U.S. citizens under the Constitution, Chinese Americans found that this status offered them little protection from the Chinese exclusion laws. Reinforcing the belief that Chinese as a race were unassimilable, immigration officials approached citizenship cases with an institutionalized suspicion. As later chapters will discuss, after 1906 the increase in immigrants making fraudulent claims to citizenship further exacerbated the situation.

Conclusion

After immigration policies are enacted into law, they take on lives of their own when they are interpreted and enforced on a day-to-day basis. The enforcement of the Chinese exclusion laws reveals how popular stereotypes became embedded in state policy and how immigration laws are used to control immigrant populations, define American race, gender, and class relations, and mark the parameters of citizenship. As Chapter 4 illustrates, the Chinese in America felt the adverse effects of the exclusion laws immediately, but they did not stop immigrating. Instead, they protested and challenged the policies and learned how to find and exploit the few passageways to the United States still open to them.

*I clasped my hands in parting with my brothers and classmates.
Because of the mouth, I hastened to cross the American ocean.
How was I to know that the western barbarians had lost their hearts
and reason?
With a hundred kinds of oppressive laws, they mistreat us Chinese.
—Anonymous Poem Carved into the Barrack Walls,
Angel Island Immigration Station*

ONE HUNDRED KINDS OF OPPRESSIVE LAWS

The Chinese Response to American Exclusion

THE CHINESE EXCLUSION laws affected every aspect of the lives of Chinese immigrants and the Chinese in America. They determined who would be able to immigrate, they shaped immigration strategies, and they influenced Chinese activism during the exclusion era. Although the laws severely limited Chinese immigration, they did not prevent Chinese immigrants from entering the country. Worsening political and economic conditions in China combined with employment opportunities in the United States encouraged thousands of Chinese to immigrate in spite of U.S. attempts to exclude them. The estimated 300,955 Chinese who from 1882 to 1943 successfully gained admission into the United States for the first time or as returning residents and native-born citizens did so by constantly adapting their migration patterns to fit the shifting terrain of the exclusion laws.

Immigrant correspondence, newspapers, and government records demonstrate how Chinese formed and maintained transnational networks that helped to facilitate migration during the exclusion era.¹ That Chinese were also consistent and vocal critics of the discriminatory American immigration laws helped as well.² These efforts, however, ultimately failed to overturn the

policy of exclusion. Consequently, by 1910, Chinese in America had shifted their strategies from diplomatic and legal attacks against the policy of exclusion itself to campaigns to reform the ways in which the laws were enforced. This tactical change was shaped by class- and citizenship-based differences within the Chinese community and reflected attempts by merchants and Chinese American citizens to distinguish themselves from other Chinese applying for admission or readmission. Seeking to protect their own limited advantage as members of the merchant class or as American citizens under the law, these two groups eventually turned away from appeals and actions based on racial solidarity. At the same time, individual Chinese employed daily acts of resistance. They astutely conformed to or evaded the regulations established to exclude them. They also relied upon well-organized networks of family and friends, immigration lawyers, and sympathetic whites. In the end, many managed to find the means to immigrate within the confines of the laws and the rigid and restrictive ways in which they were enforced.

In Search of Gold Mountain: Chinese Immigration Patterns

The Chinese who emigrated to the United States were but one segment of a much larger population of Chinese who sought new lives abroad as part of an international migration of labor that stretched from Southeast Asia to South America. Chinese bound for the United States during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries came almost exclusively from the southeastern coastal regions of China. More than 60 percent of the Chinese in the United States today trace their roots to the districts of Namhoi, Punyu, Shuntak, Sunwui, Sunning (renamed Toisan), Hoiping, Yanping, and Heungshan in the Pearl River delta in Guangdong province. Scholars estimate that over 70 percent of the Chinese living in California in the nineteenth century came from Toisan, Sunwui, Hoiping, and Yanping alone.⁵

The inhabitants of the Pearl River delta region, the seat of European and American trade in China, initially benefited from the infusion of international capital. Over time, however, the delta suffered from the adverse effects of imperialism in the form of increased taxes and the unequal economic relationship between China and its trading partners. Overpopulation, ethnic and civil conflicts, and a range of natural disasters created further instability. Residents of the region who could no longer make a living on the farms or as laborers first went to larger cities. Such migration often became the initial steps to sojourns abroad. Like other immigrants to America, Chinese were not all from the

poorest segment of society but were members of the middling classes who migrated in order to accumulate additional wealth and to maintain their family's prosperity and status in China for future generations.⁴

In the early twentieth century, China experienced further economic, political, and social instability as attempts to restore order under the Qing Empire faltered and Japan defeated China in the Sino-Japanese War (1894-95). European imperialist powers tightened their grip on China's economy by forcibly occupying more territory and port cities. The Chinese revolution led by Sun Yat-sen in 1911 failed to bring the needed stability. Powerful warlords emerged as the power brokers in many parts of the country, and foreign imperialism continued to hinder China's economy. Internal rivalry between Sun Yat-sen's Guomindang (Nationalist) Party and the Communists beginning in the late 1920s and a full-scale war with Japan in the 1930s continued to foster economic, social, and political insecurity and provided additional incentives for Chinese to seek work and even permanent resettlement abroad.

In the United States, industrialization and the expansion of American capitalism created an incessant need for labor, and employers remained more than willing to hire Chinese laborers in spite of the exclusion laws. In 1905, labor contractors in the American West even complained to immigration officials that because of their strict enforcement procedures, there were "fewer Chinese available every year." They were eager to hire Chinese labor whenever possible, for, the contractor explained, "we would put to work every Chinaman we could get." Labor shortages were so rife that another contractor told the immigration service that he was unable to take contracts because he could not secure the necessary Chinese laborers.⁵ Five years later, immigration officials in California admitted that as a result of the exclusion of Chinese and Japanese laborers, there was a "large demand for all kinds of unskilled labor in this State." Farms and railroad companies offered "all sorts of inducements" to get laborers into the country, and the California state labor commissioner admitted that the Chinese labor shortage was a severe blow to the state's agricultural economy.⁶ But contractors were not the only employers eager for Chinese labor. Immigration officials who in their official capacity approved of restricting immigration from Asia were at the same time hiring Chinese servants to work in their households. In 1905, Victor H. Metcalf, one of the leading anti-Chinese politicians in California and the secretary of the Department of Commerce and Labor, which supervised the Bureau of Immigration, made inquiries in San Francisco about hiring Chinese servants for his Washington household.⁷

Chinese were no longer dominating the labor market at the turn of the century, as they had prior to exclusion, but the economic incentive for Chinese to continue immigrating remained high.⁸ The low wages a laundry worker earned in the United States were still better than what he could earn in China. During a productive week in the 1920s, for example, a laundryman could earn up to fifty dollars. He could generally support his family in China on that salary if he was frugal.⁹ When the Great Depression caused a dramatic wage decrease (to only twenty-five dollars a week), the laundryman was still able to support his family. Sociologist Paul Siu found that in the 1920s and 1930s, immigrants with a little bit of savings were still able to buy a laundry for the relatively low sum of \$2,800–\$3,000.¹⁰ Such opportunities continued to lure Chinese immigrants to the United States, and although Chinese did not find the mountains of gold they had wished for, they did find jobs that could better provide for their families than the vocations available to them in China.

For some Chinese, the exclusion laws did act as a major deterrent. Fong Ing Bong, an applicant for admission in 1907, explained to immigration officials that he “understood it was impossible to get in before,” so he did not even try.¹¹ Many others, however, viewed immigration as the only means available to improve their economic and social standing in an increasingly unstable and tumultuous environment. Frequently, migration to the United States was regarded as nothing less than a means of survival. As Lee Chi Yet, orphaned at a young age in Poon Lung Cheng, Toisan, put it, he was “kill[ing] himself for nothing” as a farmer in the early 1900s. With the situation in his village desperate, he emigrated to the United States in 1917.¹² Conditions were equally bad in Jeong Foo Louie’s village of Kung Yick, Toisan; 40 percent of its inhabitants traveled to the United States in the early twentieth century.¹³ Like the villages of Lee Chi Yet and Jeong Foo Louie, others in Guangdong province were filled with talk about going to the United States and fantastic tales of wealth in *Gam Saan*—Gold Mountain.

Despite the restrictions on laborers in the exclusion laws, Chinese from the farming and laboring classes continued to make up a bulk of the immigrants. Eighty to 90 percent of exclusion-era immigrants were young, able-bodied men who planned to work and send money home.¹⁴ As Table 4 indicates, returning laborers and U.S. citizens (who most often took laboring positions) made up 56 percent of all admissions and readmissions into the country from 1910 to 1924, while new and returning merchants, as well as sons of merchants, made up a total of 30 percent of all admissions and readmissions during the same period. As conditions worsened in the Pearl River delta, an increasing

TABLE 4. CHINESE MEN ADMITTED, BY CLASS, 1910–1924

Year	New Merchant No. (%)	Returning Merchant No. (%)	U.S. Citizen No. (%)	Returning Laborer No. (%)	Merchant Son No. (%)	Total (Including Other Classes) No.
1910	228 (4)	869 (16)	2,060 (37)	1,037 (19)	882 (16)	5,606
1911	199 (4)	1,092 (23)	1,570 (33)	1,113 (23)	404 (9)	4,778
1912	170 (3)	1,093 (22)	1,689 (34)	1,092 (22)	412 (8)	5,029
1913	105 (2)	986 (19)	2,076 (40)	1,035 (20)	555 (11)	5,220
1914	180 (3)	881 (16)	2,126 (40)	994 (19)	647 (12)	5,372
1915	238 (5)	958 (18)	1,935 (37)	882 (17)	624 (12)	5,267
1916	242 (5)	859 (18)	1,871 (39)	689 (14)	605 (13)	4,815
1917	180 (4)	689 (16)	1,906 (44)	610 (14)	560 (13)	4,365
1918	128 (5)	520 (19)	868 (32)	487 (18)	274 (10)	2,737
1919	136 (5)	512 (17)	905 (31)	411 (14)	190 (6)	2,963
1920	102 (2)	525 (13)	1,693 (41)	313 (8)	443 (11)	4,128
1921	284 (4)	702 (10)	3,120 (42)	353 (5)	986 (13)	7,427
1922	642 (7)	762 (9)	3,823 (43)	1,423 (16)	1,012 (11)	8,859
1923	495 (5)	978 (11)	4,452 (48)	1,410 (15)	1,002 (11)	9,350
1924	452 (5)	1,226 (13)	4,521 (48)	1,298 (14)	745 (8)	9,410
Total	3,781	12,652	34,615	13,147	9,341	85,326

Sources: U.S. Department of Commerce and Labor, *Annual Reports of the Commissioner-General of Immigration* (Washington: GPO, 1910–11); U.S. Department of Labor, *Annual Reports of the Commissioner-General of Immigration* (Washington: GPO, 1912–24).

number of nonlaborer Chinese immigrated to the United States as well. By the 1920s, village storekeepers, Hong Kong merchants, office clerks, politicians, schoolteachers, students, seamen, and others were seeking fortunes in the United States.¹⁵

Chinese male outnumbered Chinese female immigrants throughout the exclusion era. Patriarchal cultural values that discouraged and even forbade “decent” Chinese women from traveling abroad, traditional patterns of male sojourning and transnational family structures, anti-Chinese legislation, and the expense and trouble associated with immigration all discouraged Chi-

nese women from joining their husbands, brothers, and fathers in the United States. Over time, however, changing attitudes about gender roles in China, the easing of cultural restrictions on Chinese female emigration, an expansion of the exempt categories, and an increase in educational and employment opportunities in the United States prompted an increase in female migration.¹⁶ Immigration authorities also began to turn their attention from controlling Chinese prostitution to stemming the problem of Chinese illegal immigration, which, as will be discussed in Chapter 6, tended to involve males. An estimated 40,000 Chinese women were admitted into the United States from 1882 to 1943. Although the numbers of male and female immigrants were never equal, immigration statistics do indicate a trend toward parity over time.¹⁷ In 1900, women made up only 0.7 percent of the total number of Chinese immigrants entering the country. In 1910, that figure had risen to 9.7 percent. In 1920, they made up 20 percent of incoming immigrants, and by 1930, the figure had increased to 25.7 percent. These statistics do not include American citizens of Chinese descent.

Chinese female immigrants were a diverse group, but the class biases in the laws continued to structure their immigration patterns. From 1910 to 1924, the largest group of Chinese female applicants (34 percent) were either wives or daughters of Chinese merchants. Thirty percent were wives of U.S. citizens, and 18 percent were U.S. citizens. Only 5 percent of female applicants were students. The remaining women applied for admission as new or returning merchants (often taking over a business from a deceased husband), returning laborers, teachers, or under other miscellaneous categories. (See Chapter 3, Table 2.) The increase in female migration beginning in the second half of the exclusion era reflects a significant change in Chinese immigration patterns away from temporary stays in America and toward permanent settlement. This does not mean that the exclusion laws had any less of an impact on immigration patterns and admission processes. Rather, Chinese grew increasingly adept at challenging and negotiating their exclusion from the United States.

Transnational Migration and Its Limitations

Chinese immigrated to the United States for a variety of reasons, but many often came as sojourners—immigrants who worked abroad temporarily with the intention of returning home. Practiced in Asia for centuries and by European, Asian, and Mexican immigrants to the United States during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, sojourning benefited both the immigrant and

TABLE 5. CHINESE ADMITTED, BY SEX, 1870-1960

Year	Males		Females		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	
1870	14,624	92.9	1,116	7.1	15,740
1871	6,786	95.1	349	4.9	7,135
1872	7,605	97.7	183	2.3	7,788
1873	19,403	95.6	889	4.4	20,292
1874	13,533	98.2	243	1.8	13,776
1875	16,055	97.7	382	2.3	16,437
1876	22,521	98.9	260	1.1	22,781
1877	10,518	99.3	76	0.7	10,594
1878	8,641	96.1	351	3.9	8,992
1879	9,264	96.5	340	3.5	9,604
1880	5,732	98.8	70	1.2	5,802
1881	11,815	99.4	75	0.6	11,890
1882	39,463	99.7	116	0.3	39,579
1883	7,987	99.5	44	0.5	8,031
1884	241	86.4	38	13.6	279
1885	12	54.5	10	45.5	22
1886	25	62.5	15	37.5	40
1887	8	80.0	2	20.0	10
1888	21	80.8	5	19.2	26
1889	90	76.3	28	23.7	118
1890	1,401	81.6	315	18.4	1,716
1891	2,608	92.0	228	8.0	2,836
1892-95	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
1896	1,382	95.9	59	4.1	1,441
1897	3,334	99.1	29	0.9	3,363
1898	2,061	99.5	10	0.5	2,071
1899	1,627	99.3	11	0.7	1,638
1900	1,241	99.3	9	0.7	1,250
1901	2,413	98.4	39	1.6	2,452
1902	1,587	91.3	44	2.7	1,631

TABLE 5. CONTINUED

Year	Males		Females		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	
1903	2,152	98.2	40	1.8	2,192
1904	4,209	97.3	118	2.7	4,327
1905	1,883	95.5	88	4.5	1,971
1906	1,397	94.1	88	5.9	1,485
1907	706	91.7	64	8.3	770
1908	1,177	93.2	86	6.8	1,263
1909	1,706	92.7	135	7.3	1,841
1910	1,598	90.3	172	9.7	1,770
1911	1,124	86.0	183	14.0	1,307
1912	1,367	85.0	241	15.0	1,608
1913	1,692	83.7	330	16.3	2,022
1914	2,052	87.2	302	12.8	2,354
1915	2,182	88.4	287	11.6	2,469
1916	1,962	87.6	277	12.4	2,239
1917	1,563	84.8	280	15.2	1,843
1918	1,276	81.0	300	19.0	1,576
1919	1,425	84.0	272	16.0	1,697
1920	1,719	80.0	429	20.0	2,148
1921	3,304	82.3	713	17.7	4,017
1922	3,622	81.1	843	18.9	4,465
1923	3,239	79.5	835	20.5	4,074
1924	3,732	79.9	938	20.1	4,670
1925	1,526	88.7	195	11.3	1,721
1926	1,182	86.0	193	14.0	1,375
1927	830	79.0	221	21.0	1,051
1928	668	71.8	263	28.2	931
1929	800	74.7	271	25.3	1,071
1930	721	74.3	249	25.7	970
1931	523	69.9	225	30.1	748
1932	317	58.2	228	41.8	534

TABLE 5. CONTINUED

Year	Males		Females		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	
1933-47	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
1948	257	7.2	3,317	92.8	3,574
1949	242	9.7	2,248	90.3	2,490
1950	110	8.5	1,179	91.5	1,289
1951	126	11.6	957	88.4	1,083
1952	118	10.2	1,034	89.8	1,152
1953	203	18.6	890	81.4	1,093
1954	1,511	55.0	1,236	45.0	2,747
1955	1,261	48.0	1,367	52.0	2,628
1956	2,007	46.0	2,443	54.0	4,450
1957	2,487	48.5	2,636	51.5	5,123
1958	1,396	44.0	1,799	56.0	3,195
1959	2,846	47.2	3,185	52.8	6,031
1960	1,873	51.0	1,799	49.0	3,672

Sources: Fu-ju Liu, "A Comparative Demographic Study of Native-Born and Foreign-Born Chinese Populations in the United States" (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1953), 223; Helen Chen, "Chinese Immigration into the United States: An Analysis of Changes in Immigration Policies" (Ph.D. diss., Brandeis University, 1980), 201.

Note: N/A = figures not available.

the family and community he left behind.¹⁸ Most of the young men in the southern Chinese countryside tried to leave by the time they were of working age, and in some villages, as many as 80 percent of the men went overseas. The remaining village population relied on them for income.¹⁹ The United States was just one of the destinations of Chinese immigrants during the early twentieth century, but it had a special appeal to the Chinese. Immigrant Wong Ngum Yin reflected most sojourners' hopes in a 1916 letter to his elder brother. "After years of planning and trading [in America]," Wong wrote, "property [in China] is regained, hundreds of *mous* of fields acquired and a mansion for the use of my maiden [wife] and myself is built. I clothe myself in the finest of fur garments and mount a fat horse. Upon bended knees I care for my parents and freely provide for my family. All these [are] my desires!"²⁰



Chinese female immigrants on Angel Island, c. 1917. Although the exclusion laws themselves and the ways in which they were enforced made it extremely difficult for Chinese women to immigrate to the United States, they did so in increasing numbers by the 1910s and 1920s. Here, a Chinese interpreter and two immigrant inspectors review applicants' paperwork. Courtesy of the California Department of Parks and Recreation.

A successful sojourn involved not only the accumulation of wealth but also the maintenance of transnational economic and familial ties between the sojourner and his family and village back home. Evelyn Nakano Glenn and Madeline Hsu have demonstrated that such "split-household families" were created and perpetuated by the sojourning strategy but not destroyed by it.²¹ Immigrant letters reveal that Chinese sent a constant stream of remittances home to their villages. One envelope seized by the Bureau of Immigration listed as its contents "\$15.00 in three gold pieces, for my father Louie Yee Ung of Lung Tsue village, from son Louie Sere Mow." Another included "one \$5.00 gold piece, for my son Louie Kim Ming of Ngoot Ming village, from Louie Yee Fon, Stockton, California."²² Sojourners in the United States could arrange to send remittances home through *Gam Saan jong*, or, literally, "Golden Mountain firms," which were based both in the United States and in Hong Kong. Prospective immigrants in Hong Kong could also use these companies to buy

tickets, arrange health exams, secure proper documentation, fill out consular forms, and purchase foodstuffs and other items for the long journey across the Pacific.²³

Letters sojourners received from family members in China kept them abreast of the latest developments in the family and village, and the letters sojourners sent helped to preserve their patriarchal roles as fathers and heads of households. Wong Jou, for example, who worked as a store clerk in San Diego, was informed regularly of the successes and failures of family members, marriages and births, land conditions, the development of the village, and other news through letters from his wife, Lee Shee, and their son Wong Cheung. A 1926 letter Wong Jou received from son Wong Cheung contained a bevy of information: the youngest son, Wong Fai, was "entirely cured" from his addiction to opium; the price of unshelled rice was low, so the family had discontinued leasing land for rice cultivation; cousin Wong Chor's son was to be married soon; mother's health was failing and she thus needed some deer horn; and the public roads in the district were recently completed so that automobiles were now able to be used there. Wong Jou's presence was strongly felt in his home village of Kue Tou, Heungshan, through his own letters as well. In 1934, when he received a letter informing him that Wong Fai had resumed his opium smoking, Wong Jou, reinforcing his role as father and disciplinarian, replied with a severe rebuke to his youngest son to put an end to the habit.²⁴

Letters and remittances bound Chinese immigrants to their families and villages, but these ties could be fragile. It was not uncommon for the *Chung Sai Yat Po*, San Francisco's main Chinese-language daily newspaper, to print advertisements of Chinese looking for lost relatives. In 1906, a relative of Lam Chang from Toisan placed a notice in the paper stating that Lam had been in the United States "for more than twenty years and has not sent any letters home." "If any relatives or friends knows his whereabouts," the notice continued, "would you please let him write to me?"²⁵ A worried mother inquired about her son Ng Sou from Namhoi in another notice: "He has not sent information or money home. We do not know his whereabouts and whether he is still alive."²⁶ Deer Cheung's two brothers placed an ad asking readers who might know his whereabouts to "persuade him to pack up quickly to embark on a return trip" in order to console their elderly father.²⁷ Immigration records also reveal that the number of visits to China that immigrants were actually able to make over the course of their sojourn was limited. A survey of over six hundred immigrants reveals that only 4 percent were able to make two visits home to China, and only another 9 percent made one visit.²⁸ For those Chinese

whose legal status was uncertain, travel back and forth was especially risky—and costly. It was not uncommon to have to buy expensive immigration documents for each visit abroad.²⁹ Even families who had successfully maintained contact through the mail grew weary of the separation. Wong Jou's family had communicated by letter between San Diego and Kue Tou for more than twelve years. But Lee Shee's last letter to Wong Jou was full of despair. The youngest son had resumed his opium habit and refused to listen either to his older brother or to his mother. Lee Shee was on the verge of forcing her son out of the house, and she begged Wong Jou to return home. "I am getting old, so just come home and don't hesitate about it," she wrote. There is no record documenting whether or not Lee Shee's entreaties resulted in her husband's return to China.³⁰

Sojourning as a strategy to preserve or increase wealth and to accumulate lands in the homeland also failed to live up to immigrant expectations. Again, immigrant letters indicate that despite remittances coming from the United States, families in China experienced difficulty getting out of debt. Lew Git, a fruit and vegetable seller in Los Angeles, made seventy-five dollars a month and sent nearly all of it back to his wife and two children in Ming Gong village, Toisan. Similarly, Wong Sheong Yin and his son, working in Hollister, California, both regularly sent the bulk of their paychecks home. Both the Lew and Wong families wanted to use the money to buy land and build houses in a new section of the village reserved for Gold Mountain families. Correspondence between members of the Wong family in 1906 reveal that the remittances were going only to the family's creditors. Wong Ngum Yin at home in China bluntly asked for more money. Each plot of land in the "new village" cost one hundred dollars, and the family was in such poor financial health that they had already borrowed two hundred dollars from "old Jock Sut" to simply cover their living expenses and their old debt. "In these days, without money, you cannot be happy in matters either large or small," wrote Wong Ngum Yin. "This is certainly a fierce way."³¹ The Lew family was in no better shape. In October 1918, Lew Chew Mei, Lew Git's oldest son, reported that the family had borrowed one hundred dollars at 12 percent interest to buy land. Three months later, Lew Git had been able to send home only sixty dollars. In the meantime, the family had borrowed additional money from another lender to repay the previous debt and an additional three hundred dollars to begin construction on a house. By May 1919, Lew Git had sent back fifty dollars, but the debts continued to pile up. Lew Git concluded that he alone could not pay for the family expenses and attempted to bring Lew Chew Mei into the United States

to earn money to repay the debts. Convinced that Lew Chew Mei was not the "real" son of Lew Git, however, immigration officials in San Francisco denied entry to the younger Lew and returned him to China in July of 1921. Lew Git remained in the United States, trapped by his family's burden of debt.³²

Challenging Exclusion

Despite the hardships involved, many Chinese continued to respond to exclusion by maintaining transnational households, even for several generations.³³ Others engaged in fierce battles against the laws and the ways they were enforced, charging the U.S. government with racial discrimination and injustice. Beginning in the 1880s, Chinese immigrants began to both challenge the legality of the exclusion laws through the judicial system and protest American exclusion policies as individuals and through community organizations. They hired lawyers and used the courts to affirm the rights of merchant families, returning laborers, and American citizens of Chinese descent and their families to enter and reenter the country. Many of the early court cases were sponsored by the Chinese consulate or the Chinese Six Companies, the umbrella organization for the large kinship and mutual benefit organizations established in the United States to serve Chinese immigrants and preserve order in the community.³⁴ Chinese were extremely successful at using the federal courts to overturn individual denials by the immigration service.³⁵ At the same time, Chinese in America also used the courts to challenge the policy of exclusion itself, including a failed Supreme Court challenge to the 1892 Geary Act, which extended the ban on immigration for ten years and required all Chinese to register with the federal government.³⁶

Outside of the courts, Chinese protested American exclusion policies through a variety of forums. Both Chinese diplomats and working-class immigrants were persistent and vocal critics of the discriminatory treatment Chinese immigrants received.³⁷ In 1892, Yung Hen, a poultry dealer in San Francisco, asked a newspaper reporter, "Why do they not legislate against Swedes, Germans, Italians, Turks and others? There are no strings on those people. . . . For some reason, you people persist in pestering the Chinamen."³⁸ In 1899, a Chinese woman told government immigration investigator Oscar Greenhalgh that the Chinese "had as much right to land in America as the Irish, who [are] always drunk and fighting."³⁹ Thirty years later, anger and a sense of injustice remained deeply ingrained among Chinese in America. As Woo Gen, a Chinese merchant in Seattle excitedly explained to interviewers in 1924, "We

have exclusion law on Chinese. All other countries have what are called immigration laws."⁴⁰

Chinese leaders sent petitions, memorials, and letters to American presidents Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, and Woodrow Wilson.⁴¹ In 1900, Chinese minister Wu Ting-fang complained to the American secretary of state that Chinese were "entirely at the mercy of inquisitors, who . . . are generally unfriendly, if not positively hostile, to them."⁴² Chinese American organizations also fielded complaints about immigration officials and the draconian conditions and procedures of exclusion enforcement.⁴³ In 1913, the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, an organization of Chinese merchants, and the Chinese-American League of Justice of Los Angeles complained to the Bureau of Immigration that "many immigration officers apparently interpret the exclusion laws to suit their own personal prejudices and desires. Each [one] acts as judge, jury, and executioner in every case involving the rights of Chinese to land, or live in the United States."⁴⁴ Such attitudes about immigration officials even appeared in Cantonese folk rhymes. One described the immigration officers as "wolves and tigers, all ruthless, all wanting to bite me." Another complained of the "unendurable tyranny of immigration officials."⁴⁵

Chinese also protested their detention and the deplorable conditions in the detention shed maintained by the Pacific Mail Steamship Company at San Francisco's Pier 40, where they awaited the outcome of their cases. Established to house Chinese prior to the opening of the immigration station on Angel Island, the quarters consisted of only one room, with a total of six windows and one exit. Although it had been built to house two hundred inmates, at times it held more than twice that many. Additional bunks were added, but they were placed in the aisles, which only exacerbated the chronic overcrowding in the shed. The ventilation was poor, and the inmates often fell sick, and some even died.⁴⁶ One immigrant inspector declared the place a "veritable fire trap."⁴⁷ Another referred to the detention shed as having "inhuman" conditions.⁴⁸ Immigrants themselves referred to it generally as the *muk uk*, or "wooden barracks," but more commonly the terms "iron cage" and "Chinese jail" were used.⁴⁹ So bad were the conditions that a detainee named Huey Dow complained to the commissioner of immigration that he felt as if he were "a prisoner expiating a crime."⁵⁰ Wong Ngum Yin, another immigrant detained in the shed, charged that the American "barbarians" had "neither mercy or compassion and are like the lions and the tigers. Our countrymen hate them."⁵¹ In 1902, Chinese detainees' anger over the miserable conditions reached the boiling point. Several immigrants who were in transit from Latin

America back to China had been detained for over seven months. Loy Yuen Wing spoke for the group in a mass meeting and threatened to "tear the shed apart" unless they were immediately returned to China on the very next boat.⁵² Other Chinese grew so frustrated that they risked their lives to escape. Between September and November of 1908 alone, thirty-two Chinese succeeded in escaping the shed.⁵³ Although the numerous protests and complaints did result in some slight improvements to the detention shed in 1903, it remained a problem until its closing in 1909.⁵⁴

Despite their consistent complaints, Chinese failed to change significantly either the laws or the government's enforcement procedures. The Bureau of Immigration remained largely unmoved and unresponsive. Chief Inspector James Dunn of San Francisco denounced Chinese charges that immigration officials were overly zealous and hostile as "stinging epithets" and defended the force without having investigated the validity of the charges.⁵⁵ Likewise, Commissioner-General of Immigration Frank Sargent claimed that any harshness or inconvenience involved in enforcing the Chinese exclusion laws were not the result of "the injustice or inhumanity of the officers, but of the failure of the Chinese themselves to comply with the provisions of the law."⁵⁶ Even when Harold Bolce, the Bureau of Immigration's special investigator, concluded that the Bureau of Immigration did indeed resort to "unnecessary harshness in the enforcement of the Chinese exclusion laws," Sargent dismissed the report and questioned Bolce's own motives.⁵⁷

In 1905, Chinese were dealt another blow when the federal district courts were barred by the Supreme Court from hearing Chinese admission cases in *Ju Toy v. United States*. Following the decision, Chinese anger and frustration over the exclusion policy and continued racial discrimination reached a climax. Responding to racial injustice in the United States and reflecting the growing Chinese nationalism throughout China, Chinese merchants in China staged a boycott of American goods in May of 1905. In a demonstration of what historian Yong Chen has described as a newfound trans-Pacific Chinese nationalism, teachers, students, urban professionals, laborers, and women in China and Chinese in the United States joined them.⁵⁸ Nevertheless, American diplomats in China, as well as American immigration officials in the United States, continued to deny that Chinese immigrants attempting to enter the United States were treated harshly. Commissioner-General Sargent went so far as to charge that the boycotters were simply "interested in the importation of coolies." Any relaxation of Bureau of Immigration policies, he warned, would result in the "emasculat[ion], if not repeal of the exclusion policy."⁵⁹

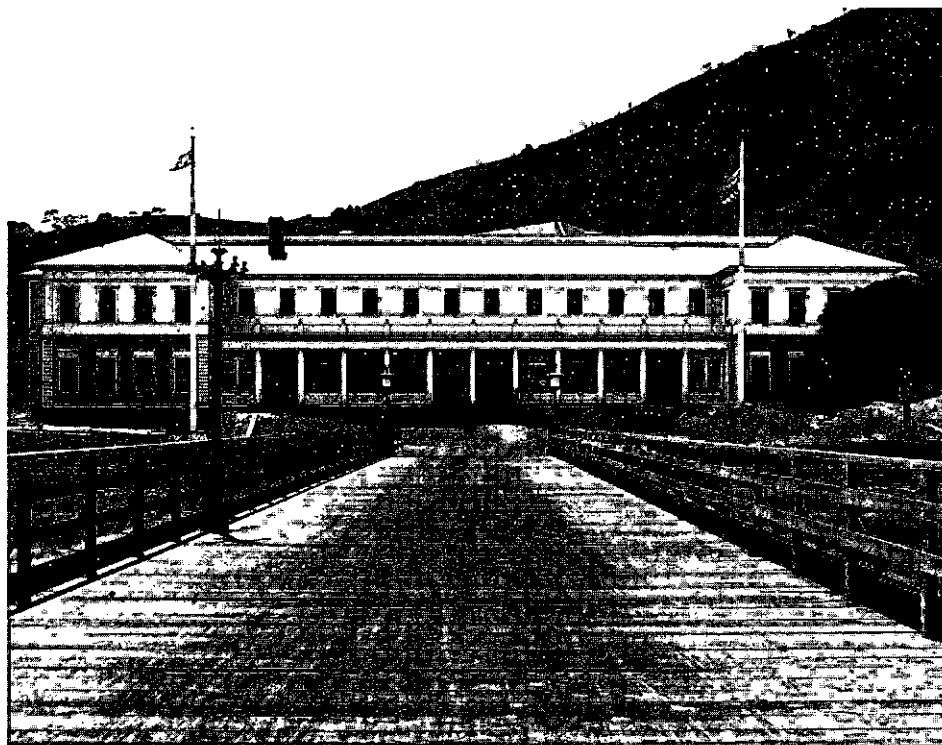
While the boycott eventually collapsed, Secretary of Commerce Victor Metcalf and President Theodore Roosevelt did respond to the protests by supporting some changes in enforcement procedures. "In the effort to carry out the policy of excluding Chinese laborers . . . grave injustices and wrongs have been done to this nation and to the people of China," Roosevelt wrote.⁶⁰ Immigration officials were reminded that the purpose of the Chinese exclusion laws was "to prevent the immigration of Chinese laborers and not to restrict the freedom of movement of Chinese persons belonging to the exempt classes. . . . The law must be enforced without harshness."⁶¹ Many of the rules that the Chinese had found so onerous were dropped; others were modified or liberalized. One of the most important changes was the end of the Bertillon system of identification. The new rules also allowed attorneys to examine and make copies of testimony in preparation for their cases, and the time given to make an appeal was lengthened.⁶² In a further concession to the Chinese, the commissioner-general of immigration ordered in 1907 that Chinese applying for admission could have their attorneys and interpreters present at their hearings, though their representatives could not participate in the proceedings.⁶³ Although such changes were welcomed, the Chinese boycotters in the United States and in China had fallen far short of convincing the United States to repeal the laws. Indeed, both the secretary of commerce and labor and the president of the United States had reiterated their full support of the policy of exclusion. At the height of the agitation, the secretary had confirmed his "full recognition of the fixed character of the present policy" and President Roosevelt had likewise assured the American people that there was no "serious proposal to alter the immigration law as regards to the Chinese."⁶⁴

By 1906, the policy of Chinese exclusion was thus firmly entrenched in American immigration law. There is no better symbol of its institutionalization than the new immigration station on Angel Island. First conceived of in 1903, its establishment represented the achievement of several goals of the Bureau of Immigration. As San Francisco commissioner of immigration Hart Hyatt North explained, the new station would provide immigration officials with larger offices and Chinese immigrants with better detention quarters. Most important, its location on an island would be the most effective means of keeping a watchful eye over the resourceful Chinese. They would be separated from their Chinese friends and families who might try to coach them on how to pass the interrogations, a practice common among the "wily Chinese," North explained. They would also be segregated from the rest of the nation, thereby protecting Americans from their threatening presence. Furthermore, it was

escape-proof. Angel Island, North explained, was "ideal," for "it is impossible for anyone to escape by swimming to the mainland."⁶⁵

Congress approved the building of the station in 1905, and the facility was completed in 1908.⁶⁶ Although leaders in San Francisco's Chinatown vehemently opposed the move, the immigration station on Angel Island officially opened on January 21, 1910. The next day, over four hundred passengers, mostly Chinese, were transferred from their ships to the station without incident.⁶⁷ The editors of the *Chinese World*, a Chinese-language newspaper in San Francisco, marked the event with a special editorial on the treatment of Chinese immigrants under the exclusion laws. At the Pacific Mail Steamship Company detention shed, the editors explained, the "mistreatment of us Chinese confined there was worse than for jailed prisoners." The barren offshore island, they predicted, would be no better.⁶⁸ The editors had reason to be pessimistic. Admission through the island station proved to be much more difficult for Chinese immigrants. The number of Chinese rejected increased dramatically only one year after the facility began operating. According to the annual report of the commissioner-general of immigration, the ratio of rejections to admissions was approximately 73 percent higher in 1910 than in 1909; 92 percent higher than in 1908; 89 percent higher than in 1907; and 100 percent higher than in 1906. He credited the opening of the Angel Island station for the increased rejection rate.⁶⁹

Chinese continued to protest their treatment by immigration officials for years after the Angel Island station opened. The Chinese Six Companies issued a circular throughout San Francisco's Chinatown calling on residents to "protest for equal rights," and it sent telegrams to Hong Kong and Canton warning new immigrants to avoid entering the United States through San Francisco's new station.⁷⁰ It also joined forces with the Chinese Chamber of Commerce to send a lengthy petition to the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce in May 1911. The petition documented numerous cases of alleged injustice. Angel Island immigration authorities responded by inviting the San Francisco Down Town Association, a local commercial organization, Robert Dollar of the Dollar Steamship Company, and Ng Poon Chew, editor of the *Chung Sai Yat Po*, for an extensive tour of the immigration station. The group was appalled at what they witnessed and concluded that the examinations were "unreasonable." An applicant, the commission reported, was "considered guilty until he proves himself entitled to land." The "high standards of proof required of Chinese in admission cases and the ways in which applicant and witness testimonies were read against one another," they charged, "were sufficient to exclude every man,



Wharf and administration building, Angel Island Immigration Station, c. 1910. Despite strident protests by the Chinese American community, the immigration station on Angel Island was opened in January 1910. The station was considered "ideal" because its island location made it escape-proof. Courtesy of the National Archives, Washington, D.C.

woman, and child from landing."⁷¹ In addition, the observers reported that detainees were allowed to leave their quarters only once or twice a week for one-half hour. Moreover, they complained, the lavatories were "exceedingly unsanitary," and the hospital was horribly inadequate. The dormitories were so crowded and dismal, in fact, that one visitor demanded of the commissioner of immigration, "Is this a jail . . . and must all Chinese imprisoned here be treated as felons? This is not the least unlike a cattle pen!"⁷² Some improvements to the facility were eventually made, but the substandard conditions in the "island cage" continued to symbolize the enduring reach of Chinese exclusion.

By 1910, Chinese had begrudgingly accepted that the exclusion policy could not be overturned and they focused instead on attacking the methods with which it was enforced. At a 1911 dinner for Chinese and American merchants

in Hong Kong, the American vice consul general there reported that the group was no longer quarreling with the actual laws, only with the "regulations imposed by the officials."⁷³ In a 1924 letter, leaders of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce also seemed to express a bitter acceptance of exclusion: "Let the American government do as it pleases, we as a nation seem powerless to resist, witness the encroachments of this government through its Labor Department upon our vested treaty rights."⁷⁴ In 1927, sociologist R. D. McKenzie observed that the Chinese in America had "stopped fighting against the principle of exclusion" but continued to focus on the method of enforcement.⁷⁵

The post-1910 Chinese response to exclusion reflected internal class- and citizenship-based divisions within the community, with merchants and citizens protesting on behalf of their classes only instead of all Chinese, as they had done earlier.⁷⁶ As Ng Poon Chew conceded in 1908, the exclusion of Chinese laborers had become a "fixed policy in the United States." What was now at issue was how the exempt classes would be treated.⁷⁷ Thus, much like the ways in which established, acculturated European immigrants scorned the newly arrived "greenhorns" and Mexican Americans attempted to distinguish themselves from recent Mexican immigrants, Chinese merchants and Chinese American citizens also sought to distance themselves from returning laborers and other Chinese attempting to enter the country illegally.⁷⁸

Chinese merchants were an especially vocal group that insisted on better treatment from immigration authorities. As early as 1884, representatives and lawyers for the Chinese Merchants Exchange in San Francisco had sent a lengthy petition to President Chester A. Arthur calling attention to the alleged mistreatment of merchants and their families. They emphatically pointed out their class-based rights to enter and reenter the country.⁷⁹ In 1900, Chinese minister Wu Ting-fang complained that merchants were being imprisoned "for weeks and months, compelled to await the pleasure of the Bureau of Immigration for examination." Immigration inspectors acted as "inquisitors," and the general mistreatment resulted in "untold mental and financial suffering."⁸⁰ After the Chinese exclusion laws were renewed and the immigration station on Angel Island was built, merchants increased their calls for justice on the basis of class privilege and the future of U.S.-Chinese commercial relations. In 1910, Chinese merchants in Hong Kong wrote President William Howard Taft charging that the "rash, unjustified actions and conduct" of immigration officers were designed to intentionally "prevent a merchant or student from landing."⁸¹ In 1911, Chinese merchants and sympathetic representatives of the Down Town Association of San Francisco sent a ten-page memorial

to President Taft reminding him that China and her population of four hundred million could "make the United States her closest occidental neighbor, the marketing place for her requirements." However, the merchants passionately warned, the mistreatment of Chinese merchants on Angel Island could potentially destroy commercial relations between the United States and China. The memorial concluded with fifteen detailed recommendations for improving conditions and the handling of merchant cases.⁸² A 1918 telegram from the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association to President Woodrow Wilson repeated how Chinese merchants were central to Chinese-U.S. trade and then demanded an end to the "ruthless insults" made by immigration officers to "unoffending merchants" and their families.⁸³ In the 1920s, the Chinese Chamber of Commerce charged the immigration service with harassing "honorable men and women" of the exempt classes with "absurd technicalities" and with launching a "reign of terror" on merchants and their families who were deported "on very flimsy pretext of very catchy questions after days of examination and months of detention."⁸⁴

Chinese Americans also used their status as citizens to demand better treatment by immigration officials. In 1910, the Native Sons of the Golden State, one of the leading Chinese American citizens' organizations and the Chinese American Citizens Alliance's predecessor, issued a formal complaint to the secretary of commerce and labor. Among its many grievances, the group charged that Chinese Americans suffered from constant harassment by immigration officials both when traveling abroad and when residing in the United States. "The regulations of your department are oppressive and unjust to the native born citizen of Chinese parentage," the letter stated.⁸⁵ Another letter writer complained to President Woodrow Wilson that both reputable Chinese merchants and American citizens were "held like criminals for months . . . without opportunity to consult counsel or their friends or families." These citizens, he emphasized, were "AMERICAN CITIZENS IN THE FULL MEANING OF THE LAW."⁸⁶ Ng Ah Ben, a citizen attempting to bring his son into the country, also tried to distinguish himself from others who acquired native status through fraud. In a personal appeal to Commissioner of Immigration Hart Hyatt North in 1909, he wrote, "I was born and raised in this country, having lived here for more than thirty years and it could be said that I am a good man. I swear that I never tell a lie. This boy is really my own son. It is different from other cases."⁸⁷

These protests involved a common strategy of explicitly setting apart Chinese merchants and citizens from other Chinese applying for admission into

the country. In emphasizing how Chinese merchants (and, more important, Chinese-U.S. trade) benefited the United States, Chinese merchants and their allies made clear that they were "inoffensive" and not a detriment or threat to American society, as Chinese laborers allegedly were. Likewise, American citizens of Chinese descent demanded equal treatment as citizens under the law. The injustice of Chinese exclusion enforcement, they charged, was that no distinction was made between Chinese merchants, Chinese American citizens, and the common laborer. Despite their class and citizenship status, merchants and citizens were housed along with Chinese "coolies," said another letter writer. Chinese laborers were "justly suspected of disease and vermin" and therefore deserved the harsh treatment, but merchants, students, and citizens deserved more courtesy.⁸⁸

In 1910, the Bureau of Immigration responded to its critics with new instructions designed to facilitate the examination of students, merchants, returning citizens, and their families on the arriving steamships. The new rules specifically provided that all officials, merchants holding Section 6 certificates, citizens with return certificates, pre-investigated returning merchants, students, and teachers, and pre-investigated wives and children of returning merchants and natives were to be examined on the boat only. All others (returning laborers, returning merchants and citizens who had not been investigated before departure, wives and children of merchants and citizens arriving for the first time) were to be examined on Angel Island. Although these new rules probably did help facilitate the immigration and reentry of some merchants and citizens, they failed to substantially improve the treatment of those who were detained. Immigration authorities were still instructed to vigilantly enforce the exclusion laws in all Chinese cases. Moreover, if any doubts were raised about an applicant's eligibility to enter the country during the investigation on the steamships, he or she was transferred to Angel Island for further review.⁸⁹ Merchants and citizens thus continued to be subjected to many of the same procedures and practices of exclusion applied to all Chinese aliens. They continued to file complaints with local and national immigration service offices for the remainder of the exclusion era, but they also learned to adapt to the government's harsh enforcement policies.⁹⁰

Adapting to Exclusion

The first of the different strategies the Chinese used to negotiate their way around exclusion was to educate themselves about the details, loopholes, and

enforcement procedures of the exclusion laws. Beginning in the 1880s, Chinese and their friends turned to federal immigration officials for information about admission and readmission standards and regulations. Hundreds of letters of inquiry written by Chinese residents and their attorneys, ministers, neighbors, politicians, and friends poured into the San Francisco Chinese Bureau from Norfolk, Virginia; Rochester, New York; Peoria, Illinois; Denver, Colorado; Springfield, Massachusetts; East Las Vegas, New Mexico; Baltimore, Maryland; Jersey City, New Jersey; Boise City, Idaho; Fairmont, Nebraska; New Brunswick, New Jersey; Memphis, Tennessee; Augusta, Georgia; as well as San Francisco, Los Angeles, New York, and Boston.⁹¹ Networks of kin also proved to be essential in facilitating an immigrant's journey to the United States and his navigations through the bureaucratic maze established by the Bureau of Immigration. New immigrants first relied upon a steady stream of information and advice from their relatives already in America. While Wong Quong Ken sailed to San Francisco in 1917, for example, news of his impending arrival was sent by Wong Gong Kim, whose two brothers were already settled there. "If he should write you for assistance," instructed Wong Gong Kim, "be sure to go to the immigration office and give him whatever assistance needed. If you have to spend a little money for him, it will be all right; he will give it back to you when he is landed."⁹² Likewise, Lee Young Sing in Hong Kong wrote to his brother in San Francisco asking him to look after a clansman about to arrive in the city and to give advice to their young nephew who was also sailing soon and "knew very little about things in the world."⁹³ Other letters and interviews chronicle how Chinese emigration was often financed by relatives. Arthur Lem, who immigrated to the United States in 1925, explained that "the cost was usually assembled by the applicant's close friends and family members. Everyone was very willing to help another family member to come to the Gold Mountain."⁹⁴ In 1906, Wong Ngum Yin relied upon his uncles and cousins in San Francisco to gain his release from the detention shed and to provide clothes to protect him from the cold. "I will surely repay you [and not] bring shame unto our Tribe," he promised.⁹⁵

At that exciting but oftentimes terrifying moment when a steamer finally docked in San Francisco, new immigrants could count on their relatives to greet them, and there were always huge crowds of friends and relatives of newcomers waiting for them on the steamship docks. In December of 1899, Wong Hong and Chew Dong Ngim were part of one such crowd in San Francisco. They had made a special trip to the Pacific Mail Company dock to welcome young Fong Tim, the son of one of their Chinatown friends and probably a

fellow villager from Ting Ching village in the Ying Ping district. Fong Tim, recognizing the two faces in the crowd, nodded his head and waved.⁹⁶ The two family friends would later spend much time in the interrogation room filing affidavits and answering questions on behalf of Fong Tim. They were expected to know every minute detail about the Fong family and were subjected to an intensive examination.⁹⁷ Witnesses had to be prepared to answer questions not only about their friend or relative but also about themselves and their right to be in the United States. They thus put themselves at risk of government scrutiny every time they testified on behalf of a new applicant. In 1903, when merchants Lee Jung and Ching Bow provided affidavits and testified in front of the Bureau of Immigration on behalf of Lee Jung's nephew Lee Kwock Chow, for example, they had to answer just as many questions about themselves and their exempt status as they had to answer about Lee Kwock Chow. The bureau investigated the two witnesses' claims of exempt status, recorded details about their joint business, checked their names against the firm's partnership list, and demanded their registration certificates.⁹⁸

The immigration interrogations were often not only hostile but also lengthy. When Fong Dai Sing, a native, returned to the United States in February of 1899, he was denied entry. He took his case to court. His uncle Fong See and a family friend Lee Yow Son had to testify twice, once at the Bureau of Immigration's office and then again in the courthouse. The entire process spanned several months, during which time both witnesses needed to be available for questioning.⁹⁹ That Chinese willingly traveled great distances, invested many hours, and allowed themselves to be scrutinized by the government in order to help relatives and friends is evidence of the importance of family networks in the immigration process. Sociologist Wen-hsien Chen wrote in 1940 that Chinese aliens without relatives or friends in America were at an inherent disadvantage. If denied entry, these immigrants "seldom made an effort to force entry." Those who had relatives and friends in the United States had the financial and moral support to fight the decision and "make every effort to secure entry" to the United States.¹⁰⁰

Chinese responses to the exclusion laws also had important class-, gender-, and citizenship-based dimensions. Fully aware of the markers by which immigration officials judged Chinese cases, applicants learned to conform to these government standards. Chinese merchants, for example, emphasized their class status. When Lee Fook's attorney appealed his client's case to the secretary of the treasury in 1899, he referred to Lee as a "capitalist," a "gentlemen of means, of elegant leisure." "Certainly a Capitalist is not one of the class against



Male immigrants before U.S. immigration officials and a Chinese interpreter on Angel Island, c. 1916. In an effort to impress immigration officials, Chinese often wore their best clothes during their interviews. Western-style suits in particular were considered signs of economic success and acculturation and were interpreted favorably by immigration officials. Courtesy of the California Department of Parks and Recreation.

which the exclusion laws are to act," the lawyer chided.¹⁰¹ Likewise, knowing that immigration officials generally treated first-class passengers better than those in steerage, Lee Chi Yet saved his wages as a laundry worker for an extra year in order bring his wife over in first class. When Wong Lan Fong did arrive at Angel Island in 1927, she was processed and admitted within one day.¹⁰²

Chinese women also defied exclusion through daily acts of resistance, what Lisa Lowe has called "immigrant acts."¹⁰³ Although they often held unequal positions within their own families and communities, Chinese women proved to be quite resourceful, developing strategies to overcome the barriers erected by the Chinese exclusion laws. Exempt-class Chinese women, for example, learned how to avoid being branded as prostitutes or women of questionable morals. One way was through evidence of "proper character," including credible testimony, documentation, or clear markers of class. One of the first

women to apply for admission through the port of San Francisco after the Chinese Exclusion Act was passed was Leong Cum, a U.S. citizen born in Lewiston, Idaho. Applying for readmission in May of 1884, Leong made sure to distinguish herself from less desirable female applicants. A garment maker by profession, Leong supplied immigration officials with three affidavits, each of which emphasized that she was "a woman of excellent reputation and irreproachable character." One of the affidavits was from Jerome Millian, a Chinese interpreter who likely worked for the immigration service. Both the affidavits and Millian's endorsement worked in Leong's favor. She was landed two days after her initial arrival.¹⁰⁴

Chinese women applying for admission as wives of merchants had to go one step further. They had to prove not only their status as respectable women but also their membership in the merchant class. Because early immigration officials expected merchant women to possess fine clothing, a respectable manner, and especially, bound feet—a symbol of wealth and status in traditional China—Chinese women and their attorneys learned to highlight these traits. In 1901, Gee See, a merchant's wife residing in Los Angeles, submitted an application for return admission complete with a full-length photograph and an X ray of her feet. Her affidavit explained that she was "a small-footed woman or bound-footed woman." The photograph showed Gee See sitting down and holding a small child. Her small feet were clearly displayed. The X ray was described as showing "conclusively that the feet of this woman are what is known as 'small' or 'bound,' the position of the bones and their abnormally small size distinctly appearing."¹⁰⁵ In 1915, the attorneys for Lam Yin Shee, another wife of a merchant, convinced immigration officials that because their client had bound feet, she was "undoubtedly a woman of the better class; that there can be no question to her respectability in any way."¹⁰⁶

Chinese merchants and U.S. citizens also quickly learned how to emphasize their class and citizenship status and their relationships with whites in order to better negotiate immigration service regulations. They relied upon sympathetic neighbors, friends, politicians, employers, attorneys, and ministers from across the country to file affidavits, write letters, and even travel to the immigration office to testify on behalf of a returning Chinese resident.¹⁰⁷ As the Bureau of Immigration valued (and at times required) testimony from whites over Chinese in order to substantiate claims of entry and reentry into the United States, this assistance and support was very valuable. In 1889, A. S. Schell, a longtime resident of Knights Ferry, California, wrote to a lawyer to assist his two neighbors, American-born citizens Jin Young and Charley Foo,



Gee See and child, 1901. Because U.S. immigration officials during the exclusion era routinely suspected Chinese women of being prostitutes, Chinese women presented their bound feet as proof of their respectability. This photograph, attached to Gee See's application for admission, clearly showcases her bound feet and western-style furnishings, symbols of wealth and position. Gee See and her lawyer also included an X ray of her feet as further proof of her status as a merchant's wife. Courtesy of the National Archives, Washington, D.C.

in their attempts to reenter the United States. The letter was full of compliments, and Schell used his influence to sway immigration authorities in favor of his friends. "I trust that with your assistance, backed up with this and perhaps other testimonials, he will have no difficulty in landing. Both are excellent and good men," Schell wrote. Schell also sent around a petition to a dozen more non-Chinese residents of Knights Ferry who signed it, corroborated the two Chinese residents' good characters, and called for the prompt admission of their two neighbors. Jin Young and Charley Foo were landed.¹⁰⁸ Likewise, in 1890, McConnell Jenkins, of Logansport, Indiana, wrote to Collector of Customs James Blaine on behalf of a longtime Chinese neighbor who desired to go to China to visit his mother and then return to the United States. "He is a

laundryman, a good citizen, industrious, temperate, and highly esteemed by all who have business relations with him," McConnell wrote.¹⁰⁹

The social and class standing of witnesses in Chinese immigrant cases could have a profound impact on their outcomes. In Leung Fook On's case, immigration officials discredited his claim to reenter the United States based on the character of his witnesses. William D. Schultz, F. Rothman, and W. D. Hobro were plumbers, "Hebrews," and suspected to be "professional witnesses" who were paid for their services. While all three men vehemently protested the charges, their involvement cast doubt on Leung's claims.¹¹⁰ On the other hand, Wong Let, a merchant in Riverside, California, astutely recognizing that credible white witnesses from the middle and upper classes increased his chances of reentering the country, secured affidavits from a number of merchants, lawyers, and even the city marshal, postmaster, and ex-postmaster, confirming his long-term residence in the city and the status of his business. A later affidavit was filed by J. S. Noyes, a superior court judge for the state who supported the character of both Wong and the witnesses attached to the case.¹¹¹

Chinese also turned to Christian organizations like the Young Men's Christian Association and the Presbyterian Mission Home in San Francisco to substantiate their claims. Both organizations were active in the Chinese American community and were well respected by the immigration service. In 1915, the YMCA even had a full-time immigration secretary in San Francisco, and the YMCA and the Mission Home frequently intervened on behalf of Chinese immigrants and returning residents. In 1915, for example, Lee Sue Ben, a returning student and former teacher at the YMCA in Canton, China, sought the organization's assistance while he was being detained on Angel Island. Frank B. Lenz, the YMCA's immigration secretary, wrote a letter to the immigration inspector in charge and pointed out Lee's right to enter the United States. He also urged a "speedy settlement of the case."¹¹² Lee also wrote to influential Chinese newspaperman Ng Poon Chew to ask for his assistance. Ng wrote directly to Samuel Backus, commissioner of immigration in San Francisco, to "find out what the trouble is" with the student's landing. He also urged a prompt admission.¹¹³ After several days of detention, Lee was finally landed the day after Commissioner Backus received the letters.

Donaldina Cameron, director of the Presbyterian Mission Home, a "rescue" home for Chinese prostitutes, was a particularly important ally to Chinese immigrants attempting to enter the United States.¹¹⁴ Historian Judy Yung notes that "it was generally known that a supporting letter from Donaldina Cameron . . . often helped get cases landed."¹¹⁵ In 1916, Cameron came to the assistance

of Lee Kan, a Chinese merchant whose wife and two sons were being detained on Angel Island. In her letter to the commissioner of immigration, Cameron stated that she had known Lee Kan for some years and that he was indeed a bona fide merchant. At Lee's request, Cameron had even traveled to Angel Island to meet the family, and in her letter, she asked that parole be granted for the wife and youngest child if the family could not be landed immediately. She also made an investigation herself into Lee's status and reported to the immigration service, "I have made special inquiry and investigation to further assure myself that Mr. Lee Kan's interests [are] centered in the store. . . . I have been assured from reliable sources that he has been at all times engaged in the mercantile business. . . . In view of these and other facts, I trust that in due course of time it will be deemed advisable to land the family of Mr. Lee Kan."¹¹⁶ With Cameron's help, Lee Kan's family was finally landed.

Such assistance from non-Chinese acquaintances, friends, and allies enabled Chinese to continue immigrating to the United States while the exclusion laws were in effect. Indeed, Chinese immigrants learned to depend on non-Chinese acquaintances and allies in some of the same ways that they depended on their own families. The fact that so many Chinese immigrants and Chinese American citizens were successful in enlisting non-Chinese to speak on their behalf reflected their astute adaptation to the rigid regulations established by the immigration service. It also highlights a high level of interracial cooperation that is often overlooked in existing analyses of Chinese immigration and exclusion.

Immigration Attorneys

By far, Chinese immigrants' most valuable resource during the exclusion era was an organized network of immigration lawyers who facilitated Chinese entry and reentry by keeping track of the necessary paperwork and lobbying on behalf of clients, tasks that would have been extremely difficult for Chinese to accomplish on their own. The number of immigration lawyers performing Chinese immigration work grew in direct proportion to the increasing complexity of the exclusion laws and their ever more severe enforcement. Chinese had a long history of hiring the best American lawyers to challenge anti-Chinese legislation even before 1882.¹¹⁷ This practice continued into the exclusion era, especially as Chinese appealed to the courts to overturn immigration officials' decisions to deny them entry. Collector John Wise noted in 1895 that "the interests of the Chinese are looked out by a Chinese Consul and also by shrewd lawyers."¹¹⁸ In 1899, the Treasury Department found that the

Chinese, as a rule, were represented by the "very best attorneys in the city."¹¹⁹ One might suspect that only those Chinese with the most financial resources could afford to hire lawyers, but Chinese from all class backgrounds routinely sought legal counsel despite the cost. Sociologist Wen-hsien Chen observed that by the 1930s, "without exception," all Chinese aliens arriving at the port for the first time with an application for permanent residence were looked after by lawyers and that even returning Chinese residents secured the services of an attorney "as a safeguard" because of the precarious nature of immigration investigations.¹²⁰ A survey of over six hundred Chinese who entered the United States during the exclusion era revealed that 90 percent had hired immigration attorneys to process papers and to represent them before immigration authorities.¹²¹

Immigration attorneys were not allowed to participate in or be present at the initial hearings and interrogations conducted by the immigration service, but if Chinese applicants were denied entry, their attorneys could examine their files in order to rebut the decision. Attorneys lacked access to the entire files, but, despite this handicap, they continued to be invaluable assets to new and returning immigrants.¹²² They effectively and consistently pointed out flaws in immigration officials' judgments, oftentimes forcing a reversal in the decision. They were also known to marshal outside experts, previous rulings and court decisions, witnesses, and evidence to challenge the government's findings.¹²³ As Commissioner of Immigration John D. Nagle commented in 1927, attorneys remained "indispensable" allies to the Chinese.¹²⁴

Most of the lawyers who represented Chinese clients in the first decades of exclusion were San Francisco's prominent attorneys who worked not only on behalf of individual Chinese clients but also for the Chinese Six Companies and the Chinese consulate. Thomas Riordan, for example, was the principal attorney representing the Chinese in the 1880s and 1890s and was retained by the Chinese consulate to represent all high-profile cases. His successor, Oliver P. Stidger, also became a vocal critic of the exclusion laws and built a formidable practice based on Chinese immigration business.¹²⁵ In 1915, Stidger was listed as the official attorney for the Chinese Chamber of Commerce as well, and the firm of Stidger, Stidger, and Kennah became one of the leading law firms representing Chinese immigrants.¹²⁶ In 1924, Oliver Stidger published a pamphlet regarding the 1924 Immigration Act and its negative effects on Chinese immigrants and Chinese Americans.¹²⁷ George A. McGowan, along with his partner, Alfred L. Worley, also represented a great majority of Chinese immigrants from the early 1900s to the 1920s. According to their professional

letterhead, the licensed attorneys and counselors at law practiced in both the federal and state courts and retained an office in the prestigious Bank of Italy building in downtown San Francisco.¹²⁸

Other individuals representing the Chinese before the Bureau of Immigration acted more like brokers, arranging for witnesses to testify before the immigration service, filing witness affidavits, and arranging for more experienced counsel if necessary. Some had deep-rooted connections with the Chinese community; a few had even been former members of the Bureau of Immigration and found that their inside knowledge of the agency translated into lucrative employment opportunities outside of the service. Clarkson Dye, an immigration broker who was regularly used by Chinese immigrants beginning in 1909, for example, was also an insurance agent in Chinatown.¹²⁹ Henry C. Kennah, a member of the Stidger, Stidger, and Kennah law firm, had been an immigrant inspector in San Francisco for several years in the early 1900s and apparently joined Oliver Stidger and his son, Jason, in their practice around 1912.¹³⁰ While the vast majority of lawyers and brokers representing Chinese before the immigration service were white, there is evidence that beginning in the 1920s, a few Chinese American attorneys were practicing and representing immigrants as well. In 1920, for example, an attorney by the name of Chan Chung Wing, of the law firm of Wing, O'Malley, and McGrath, represented Quan Shee, a merchant's wife applying for admission into the country at San Francisco.¹³¹

That the business of immigration lawyers was a lucrative one cannot be doubted. In 1885, Treasury Department officials estimated that an attorney's fee for habeas corpus cases was no less than \$100.¹³² Moreover, as long as the exclusion laws remained in effect, the demand for skillful lawyers remained high. Advertisements placed by lawyers and others claiming expertise in Chinese immigration matters appeared throughout the pages of the *Chung Sai Yat Po*. In 1906, Alfred Worley claimed that "most Chinese in this city" depended on him and that "the charge was fair." Alongside his photograph, Worley claimed that "if you entrust me with a case, I will handle it with heart and soul."¹³³ Charlie D. O'Connor claimed in his advertisement to have worked at the Bureau of Immigration for over ten years, and he promised "fast, convenient, and cheap" service.¹³⁴ R. H. Jones promised readers that he would come to their assistance in person should they "have obstacles with the immigration service" when they came back to the United States. Likewise, the firm of Ball, Straus, and Atwood boasted that lawyer Straus "had a very good mastery of Chinese."¹³⁵

Attorneys proved their worth in a variety of ways. When Chin Sing, a native returning from China to the United States, was denied reentry after a two-year absence in 1911, for example, he counted upon his attorneys to file the necessary documents and arrange for witnesses to travel to Angel Island. Immigration authorities had denied him admission on the suspicion that he was not the real Chin Sing but an impostor. Although Chin could speak English and demonstrated a "good knowledge" of his hometown of Dutch Flat, California, he had neither the necessary certificate of identity that proved his status as a returning native (it had been burnt in a fire) nor any witnesses (preferably white) who could identify him and confirm his birth in the United States. Chin hired attorneys George McGowan and Alfred Worley to appeal the decision and launch a search in Dutch Flat for any old acquaintances who could come and testify on his behalf. After a two-month search, the lawyers located two witnesses and brought them to Angel Island, where they and Chin immediately recognized each other. Chin was finally landed in July 1911, five months after he had first arrived back in the United States.¹³⁶

The various strategies adopted by Chinese immigrants and returning residents and citizens to adapt to and negotiate their way through the exclusion laws proved to be highly successful. As Table 6 indicates, most Chinese men and women who applied for admission were allowed to enter the country. From 1910 to 1924, the average admission rate for both men and women under the exclusion laws was 93 percent. This figure does not, however, take into account the number of Chinese excluded under the general immigration laws.¹³⁷ Moreover, the gap between the number of Chinese rejected and the number of non-Chinese rejected is quite large. As Table 7 indicates, from 1908 to 1932, an average of 28 percent of all Chinese applicants were denied entry under both sets of laws. In comparison, Table 8 demonstrates that during this same period, only 3 percent of all non-Chinese immigrants and immigrant aliens were denied entry under the general immigration laws. Chinese were clearly being excluded from the country at a greater rate than other immigrant groups. In the end, both the discriminatory exclusion laws and the unfair application of the general immigration laws placed very real limits on Chinese immigrants.

Conclusion

In spite of the exclusion laws, Chinese immigrants did not abandon their dreams of coming to Gold Mountain, and they remained consistent and vocal critics of the exclusion policy during the sixty-one years that it was in effect.

TABLE 6. ADMISSION RATES OF CHINESE WOMEN AND MEN,

Year	Women		Men		Total Admissions
	No.	Rate	No.	Rate	
1910	344	92%	5,606	86%	86%
1911	329	95	4,778	88	88
1912	345	94	5,029	93	91
1913	442	94	5,220	94	94
1914	401	94	5,372	93	93
1915	394	98	5,267	95	95
1916	378	97	4,815	92	92
1917	409	95	4,355	94	94
1918	429	96	2,737	90	91
1919	377	96	2,963	96	96
1920	562	99	4,128	97	97
1921	896	99	7,427	96	97
1922	1,166	99	8,859	95	95
1923	1,208	97	9,350	93	94
1924	1,284	95	9,410	93	93

1910-1924

Sources: U.S. Department of Commerce and Labor, *Annual Reports of the Commissioner-General of Immigration* (Washington: GPO, 1910-11); U.S. Department of Labor, *Annual Reports of the Commissioner-General of Immigration* (Washington: GPO, 1912-24).

Believing that exclusion targeted them unfairly, the Chinese in America mobilized in an attempt to overturn the laws altogether and, failing that, at least to change the ways in which they were enforced. Their efforts garnered some significant victories, and Chinese immigrants demonstrated an adept understanding of the American judicial system and the protections it was supposed to extend.

Chinese learned to adapt to exclusion utilizing a wide range of strategies. Merchants and Chinese American citizens used their class and citizenship status to lobby for preferential treatment. Many other Chinese relied upon extensive and well-organized networks of family, white allies, and lawyers.

TABLE 7. CHINESE DEBARRED UNDER EXCLUSION LAWS AND GENERAL IMMIGRATION LAWS, 1908-1932

Year	Exclusion under Debarred		General Immigration under Debarred		Total Debarred
	No.	Laws	No.	Laws	
1908	190	177	1,263		367 (29%)
1909	413	133	1,841		546 (30)
1910	819	90	1,770		909 (51)
1911	605	164	1,307		769 (59)
1912	350	83	1,608		433 (27)
1913	333	69	2,022		402 (20)
1914	322	88	2,354		410 (17)
1915	228	40	2,469		268 (11)
1916	377	60	2,239		437 (20)
1917	279	42	1,843		321 (17)
1918	261	47	1,576		308 (20)
1919	101	71	1,697		172 (10)
1920	60	108	2,148		168 (08)
1921	80	324	4,017		404 (10)
1922	225	379	4,465		604 (14)
1923	321	449	4,074		770 (19)
1924	509	542	4,670		1,051 (23)
1925	255	433	1,721		688 (40)
1926	256	221	1,375		477 (35)
1927	451	147	1,051		598 (57)
1928	400	62	931		462 (50)
1929	376	8	1,071		384 (36)
1930	287	4	970		291 (30)
1931	260	7	748		267 (36)
1932	168	23	534		191 (36)

Sources: Wen-hsien Chen, "Chinese under Both Exclusion and Immigration Laws" (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1940), 122, based on U.S. Department of Commerce and Labor, *Annual Reports of the Commissioner-General of Immigration* (Washington: GPO, 1908-11), and U.S. Department of Labor, *Annual Reports of the Commissioner-General of Immigration* (Washington: GPO, 1912-32).

TABLE 8. NON-CHINESE IMMIGRANTS AND NON-IMMIGRANT ALIENS
DEBARRED UNDER GENERAL IMMIGRATION LAWS, 1908-1932

Year	Total Applicants	Total Debarred
1908	935,597	10,902 (1.2%)
1909	954,646	10,411 (1.1)
1910	1,222,307	24,270 (2.0)
1911	1,052,649	22,349 (2.1)
1912	1,035,935	16,057 (1.6)
1913	1,447,165	19,938 (1.4)
1914	1,436,122	33,041 (2.3)
1915	458,355	24,111 (5.3)
1916	385,615	18,867 (4.9)
1917	378,905	16,028 (4.2)
1918	219,150	7,297 (3.3)
1919	245,647	8,626 (3.5)
1920	633,371	11,795 (1.9)
1921	991,942	13,779 (1.4)
1922	446,236	13,731 (3.1)
1923	694,025	20,619 (3.0)
1924	909,586	30,284 (3.3)
1925	483,825	25,390 (5.3)
1926	516,656	20,550 (4.0)
1927	557,756	19,755 (3.5)
1928	519,470	18,839 (3.6)
1929	497,454	18,127 (3.6)
1930	454,447	8,233 (1.8)
1931	290,423	9,744 (3.4)
1932	181,935	7,064 (3.9)

Sources: U.S. Department of Commerce and Labor, *Annual Reports of the Commissioner-General of Immigration* (Washington: GPO, 1908-11); U.S. Department of Labor, *Annual Reports of the Commissioner-General of Immigration* (Washington: GPO, 1912-32).

Note: Non-immigrant aliens refer to either permanent residents of the United States returning from temporary visits abroad or permanent residents of other countries making temporary visits. The figures do not include immigrants or non-immigrant aliens from the Philippines, who were classified separately. See U.S. Department of Labor, *Annual Reports of the Commissioner-General of Immigration* (Washington: GPO, 1920), 10.

As the laws and their enforcement increased in severity, Chinese grew more and more resourceful. Instead of accepting the exclusion laws, some Chinese turned to circumventing them, and as Chapters 5 and 6 make clear, illegal entries increasingly characterized Chinese immigration and had a profound effect on America's approach to gatekeeping.

tion of individuals and populations serves to protect and promote the needs of the nation-state ("Governmentality," 99-102). See also Skocpol, "Bringing the State Back In," 7, vii; Skowronek, *Building a New American State*, ix; and Shah, *Contagious Divides*, 3-4.

23. On the importance of exploring key moments in nation-building, see Thelen, "Nation and Beyond," 966-69.

24. William Deverell ("Fighting Words," 39, n. 24, 51) writes that the West "is both the place and the process of national fulfillment." Historians generally agree upon the West's significance in the anti-Chinese movement. For an alternative argument that discounts both the importance of California politicians and the pressure from workers, see Gyory, *Closing the Gate*, 1, 16.

25. On the intersections of law, state authorities, and ordinary lives, see Reagan, *When Abortion Was a Crime*, 1, 3.

26. The broader significance of law's relationship to society is explained in Merry, *Colonizing Hawaii*, 8, and Zolberg, "Matters of State," 71, 73. For traditional studies of immigration law, see, for example, Marion T. Bennett, *American Immigration Policies*; Divine, *American Immigration Policy*; LeMay, *From Open Door to Dutch Door*; Bernard, ed., *American Immigration Policy*; and Hutchinson, *Legislative History*. On nativism, see Higham, *Strangers in the Land*; Higham, "Instead of a Sequel"; David Bennett, *Party of Fear*; Knobel, "America for the Americans"; Perea, *Immigrants Out!*; and Reimers, *Unwelcome Strangers*.

27. Salyer, *Laws Harsh as Tigers*, 94-110.

28. Daniels, *Coming to America*, 265-84.

29. Pre-exclusion era statistics taken from Yung, *Unbound Feet*, 22. Because the government did not record Chinese arrivals in a consistent manner over the entire exclusion era, the above figure includes immigrants only from 1882 to 1891 and immigrants and returning citizens from 1894 to 1940. Statistics for the years 1892-93 and 1941-43 are not available (*AR-CGI* [1898-1924]; H. Chen, "Chinese Immigration," 181; Liu, "Comparative Demographic Study," 223).

30. These goals have been outlined in Henry Yu, "On a Stage Built by Others," 152. I have also tried to capture what Lisa Lowe (*Immigrant Acts*, 7-9) has called "immigrant acts," which refer to both the history of immigration exclusion acts and the acts of resistance in which Asian immigrants and Asian Americans engaged. See also Okihiro, *Margins and Mainstreams*, 148-76.

31. Here, I rely upon critical race theory to illustrate how laws, legal doctrine, and institutions reflect and reproduce the existing racial power, hierarchies, and categories in society writ large (Omi and Winant, *Racial Formation*, 55). On critical race theory, see Crenshaw et al., eds., *Critical Race Theory*, xxv; Delgado and Stefancic, eds., *Critical Race Theory*, xv-xix; Johnson, "Race Matters," 544; Chang, *Disoriented*; Gotanda, "Exclusion and Inclusion"; and Haney-López, *White by Law*. See also Lowe, *Immigrant Acts*; Robert Lee, *Orientalism*; and Palumbo-Liu, *Asian/American*.

32. McKeown, "Transnational Chinese Families," 74. For early American-centric studies, see Rose Hum Lee, *Chinese in the United States of America*; Barth, *Bitter Strength*; Sung, *Mountain of Gold*; Nee and Nee, *Longtime Californ*. On transnationalism in general, see Schiller, "Transmigrants and Nation-States," 94, 96, 99, and Gjerde, "New Growth on Old Vines," 42. Important recent scholarship on transnational Chinese immigrant communities includes McKeown, *Chinese Migrant Networks*; Hsu, *Dreaming of Gold*; and Y. Chen, *Chinese San Francisco*.

33. McKeown, "Transnational Chinese Families," 74, 78, 83, 87; Hsu, *Dreaming of Gold*, 3; Y. Chen, *Chinese San Francisco*, 3, 7, 57, 145-47.

34. Recent studies on early-twentieth-century illegal immigration in general pay little or no attention to Chinese illegal immigration, and studies that do focus on exclusion-era Chinese illegal immigration concentrate mostly on the so-called paper son practice. On the latter, see, for example, Ngai, "Illegal Aliens and Alien Citizens," 116-72, and Hsu, *Dreaming of Gold*, 55-89.

35. *AR-CGI* (1901), 46; *AR-CGI* (1909), 127.

36. Anonymous, Poem Number 31, in Lai, Lim, and Yung, *Island*, 66.

Part One

1. See, for example, LeMay, *Gatekeepers* and *From Open Door to Dutch Door*; Glazer, *Clamor at the Gates*; Zucker and Zucker, *Guarded Gate*; and Gyory, *Closing the Gate*.

2. *New York Times*, Jan. 7, 1996.

3. For an argument related to the importance of national partisan politics in the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act, see Gyory, *Closing the Gate*, 1-2.

4. Erika Lee, "Immigrants and Immigration Law"; Barkan and LeMay, *U.S. Immigration*, xxii.

5. Gabaccia, *From the Other Side*, 26.

6. Kraut, *Silent Travelers*, 3.

7. Immigration Act of 1917 (39 Stat. 874). My thanks to Margot Canaday for this citation.

8. Omi and Winant, *Racial Formation*, 55; Ngai, "Architecture of Race" and "Illegal Aliens and Alien Citizens." See also Sánchez, "Race, Nation, and Culture"; Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color* and *Barbarian Virtues*; and Barrett and Roediger, "Inbetween Peoples."

9. Sánchez, "Race, Nation, and Culture," 66-84; Gabaccia, "Is Everywhere Nowhere?," 1132-33; Lowe, *Immigrant Acts*, ix.

10. Hing, *Making and Remaking Asian America*, 1-6. See also Saldivar, *Border Matters*, 96-97, and Behdad, "INS and Outs," 103-13.

11. Ngai, "Architecture of Race," 67-92.

12. Some exceptions are Torpey, *Invention of the Passport*, 1; Palumbo-Liu, *Asian/American*, 31; Fitzgerald, *Face the Nation*, 96-144; and Zolberg, "Matters of State," 71-93.

13. On the connections between immigration and U.S. imperialism, see Jacobson, *Barbarian Virtues*, 26-38.

14. Lowe, *Immigrant Acts*, ix; Thelen, "Nation and Beyond," 966.

Chapter One

1. California State Senate, *Chinese Immigration*, 275.

2. Gyory, *Closing the Gate*, 78; Mink, *Old Labor and New Immigrants*, 73.

3. California State Senate, *Chinese Immigration*, 4.

4. Act of Mar. 3, 1875 (18 Stat. 477); Peffer, *If They Don't Bring Their Women Here*, 28; Hutchinson, *Legislative History*, 65-66; Salyer, *Laws Harsh as Tigers*, 5.

5. Daniels, "No Lamps Were Lit for Them," 4. See also Gyory, *Closing the Gate*, 1, 258-59, on the significance of the Chinese Exclusion Act.

6. Recent exceptions are Salyer, *Laws Harsh as Tigers*; Chan, ed., *Entry Denied*; Chan and Wong, eds., *Claiming America*; Ngai, "Legacies of Exclusion"; Hsu, *Dreaming of Gold*; and McKeown, *Chinese Migrant Networks*.

7. Lucy Salyer (*Laws Harsh as Tigers*, xvi-xvii) has demonstrated how Chinese exclusion shaped the doctrine and administration of modern immigration law.

8. *AR-CGI* (1906), 43; Liu, "Comparative Demographic Study," 223; H. Chen, "Chinese Immigration," 201.

9. Said, *Orientalism*, 55; Gotanda, "Exclusion and Inclusion," 129-32; Tchen, *New York before Chinatown*, xx; Miller, *Unwelcome Immigrant*, 36, 83-94; Robert Lee, *Orientalism*, 28.

10. Mink, *Old Labor and New Immigrants*, 74-75; Chan, *This Bittersweet Soil*, 51-78; Salyer, *Laws Harsh as Tigers*, 10.

11. As Sucheng Chan notes, the coolie trade in Asian Indian and Chinese laborers sprung up

in response to the end of slavery in the Americas in the early nineteenth century. These individuals often traveled and labored under extremely coercive and exploitative conditions. The Chinese who migrated to the United States did not come as coolies. Instead, they usually came using their own resources or under a credit-ticket system that financed their passage. Opponents of Chinese immigration often made no distinction between the free and semifree migration of Chinese to the United States and coerced coolies to other parts of the Americas. Labeling all Chinese immigration as a coolie migration helped to galvanize the anti-Chinese movement (*This Bittersweet Soil*, 21, 26, 31).

12. On anti-Chinese arguments in general, see Gyory, *Closing the Gate*; Saxton, *Indispensable Enemy*; Mink, *Old Labor and New Immigrants*; and Leong, "Distant and Antagonistic Race."

13. Gompers, "Some Reasons for Chinese Exclusion."

14. Mink, *Old Labor and New Immigrants*, 72, 96. On labor's role in California, see Saxton, *Indispensable Enemy*, 261-65.

15. Mazumdar, "Through Western Eyes," 158-59.

16. Scholars differ on the exact number of prostitutes in California in 1870. See Chan, "Exclusion of Chinese Women," 141 n. 44; Cheng, "Free, Indentured, Enslaved," 23-29; Robert Lee, *Oriental*, 88-89; and Pfeffer, *If They Don't Bring Their Women Here*, 28-42.

17. Miller, *Unwelcome Immigrant*, 163, 171; Robert Lee, *Oriental*, 90; Leong, "Distant and Antagonistic Race," 141.

18. Leong, "Distant and Antagonistic Race," 133.

19. *Ibid.*, 142; Robert Lee, *Oriental*, 104.

20. *Pacific Rural Press*, Nov. 9, 1901, 292. My thanks to Linda Ivey for this citation.

21. Robert Lee, *Oriental*, 47.

22. Saxton, *Indispensable Enemy*, 94-96; Almaguer, *Racial Fault Lines*, 153-82.

23. Daniels, *Asian America*, 3-4.

24. Mazumdar, "Through Western Eyes," 164; Takaki, *Iron Cages*, 216-17.

25. U.S. Congress, Joint Special Committee, *Chinese Immigration*, 289-92; K. Scott Wong, "Cultural Defenders and Brokers," 6.

26. California State Senate, *Chinese Immigration*, 260, 10.

27. *Ibid.*, 276-77 (emphasis original).

28. White, "Race Relations in the American West," 396-416; Friday, "In Due Time," 308.

29. California State Senate, *Chinese Immigration*, 280, 288.

30. Gyory, *Closing the Gate*, 238 (emphasis original).

31. Mink, *Old Labor and New Immigrants*, 109. Act of Feb. 26, 1885 (23 Stat. 332).

32. Act of Mar. 3, 1903 (32 Stat. 1222).

33. The 1882 Regulation of Immigration Act (Act of Aug. 3, 1882 [22 Stat. 214]) also excluded lunatics, convicts, and idiots. The 1891 Immigration Act added polygamists and "persons suffering from a loathsome or dangerous contagious disease" (Act of Mar. 3, 1891 [26 Stat. 1084]).

34. Gabaccia, *From the Other Side*, 37.

35. Barrett and Roediger, "Inbetween Peoples," 8-9.

36. Recent studies on racial formation in the West illustrate the importance of moving beyond the white and black binary. See Foley, *White Scourge*; Almaguer, *Racial Fault Lines*; and Friday, "In Due Time."

37. Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, preface and afterword; Abbot, *Historical Aspects of the Immigration Problem*, ix; Wittke, *We Who Built America*, 458. Many of these oversights were first pointed out by Roger Daniels in "Westerners from the East," and "No Lamps Were Lit for Them," 3-18.

38. Sánchez, "Race, Nation, and Culture," 66-84; Gabaccia, "Is Everywhere Nowhere?," 1115-35.

39. *San Francisco Examiner*, June 16, 1910; *San Francisco Post*, May 24, 1910.

40. *San Francisco Bulletin*, May 4, 1891, as cited in Daniels, *Asian America*, 111; Asiatic Exclusion League, "Proceedings," July 1911.

41. Daniels, *Politics of Prejudice*, 20.

42. Chan, *Asian Americans*, 44.

43. *San Francisco Examiner*, Aug. 7, 1910, as cited in Salyer, *Laws Harsh as Tigers*, 127.

44. *San Francisco Daily News*, Sept. 20, 1910.

45. Sánchez, *Becoming Mexican American*, 19.

46. Ngai, "Architecture of Race," 91.

47. Hoffman, *Unwanted Mexican Americans*, 10.

48. Foley, *White Scourge*, 54.

49. Burnham, "Howl for Cheap Mexican Labor," 48.

50. McClatchy, "Oriental Immigration," 197.

51. Foley, *White Scourge*, 55.

52. Rowell, "Why Make Mexico an Exception?" and "Chinese and Japanese Immigrants," 4, as cited in Foley, *White Scourge*, 53.

53. Burnham, "Howl for Cheap Mexican Labor," 45.

54. *Ibid.*, 48.

55. Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 132-33.

56. Gabaccia, "Yellow Peril," 177-79.

57. Massachusetts Bureau of Statistics of Labor, *Twelfth Annual Report*, 469-70. My thanks to FlorenceMae Waldron for this citation.

58. Lodge was quoting the U.S. Consul in Budapest (Lodge, "Restriction of Immigration," 30-32, 35, as cited in Jacobson, *Barbarian Virtues*, 76-77).

59. Stoddard, "Permanent Menace from Europe," 227-78.

60. J. H. Patten, Asst. Secretary, Immigration Restriction League, Letter to Unions, Oct. 15, 1908, IRLS.

61. J. H. Patten, Asst. Secretary, Immigration Restriction League, to Congressmen and Senators, n.d., *ibid.*

62. Asiatic Exclusion League, "Proceedings," Feb. 1908, 19, 71, and Dec. 1908, 17, 19.

63. Lea, *Valor of Ignorance*, 124-28; Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 166, 172.

64. *CR*, 61st Cong., 1st sess., 9174; Asiatic Exclusion League, "Proceedings," Feb. 1908, 55, 57; Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 174.

65. As David Roediger, Matthew Frye Jacobson, and Noel Ignatiev have shown, Irish and southern and eastern European immigrants commonly constructed and asserted their "whiteness" by allying themselves (and sometimes leading) other racist campaigns against African Americans, Native Americans, and Asian and Mexican immigrants (Roediger, *Wages of Whiteness*; Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color*; Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White*).

66. *San Francisco Call*, Nov. 22, 1901.

67. Ngai, "Architecture of Race," 70.

68. Cardoso, *Mexican Emigration*, 22; Sánchez, *Becoming Mexican American*, 20; Hoffman, *Unwanted Mexican Americans*, 30-32.

69. Ngai, "Architecture of Race," 91.

70. Solomon, *Ancestors and Immigrants*, 82-88; Jacobson, *Barbarian Virtues*, 181.

71. Grant and Davison, eds., *Alien in Our Midst*, 23.

72. Warne, *Immigrant Invasion*, 295.
73. Immigration Act of 1917 (39 Stat. 874).
74. The Quota Act of 1921 (42 Stat. 5, sec. 2); Immigration Act of 1924 (43 Stat. 153). On the 1924 act, see generally Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 308-24.
75. Divine, *American Immigration Policy*, 60; Melendy, "Filipinos in the United States," 115-16, 119-25.
76. One estimate places the number of Mexicans, including their American-born children, deported to Mexico at one million. See Balderrama and Rodriguez, *Decade of Betrayal*, 122.
77. The Immigration Act of 1891 established the Superintendent of Immigration (26 Stat. 1084). In 1894, the Bureau of Immigration was established (28 Stat. 390). The immigration service dates its inception to 1891.
78. Pfeffer, *If They Don't Bring Their Women Here*, 58-59; W. Chen, "Chinese under Both Exclusion and Immigration Laws," 91. The Page Law was also enforced by U.S. Consuls in Hong Kong (Act of Mar. 3, 1875 [18 Stat. 477]).
79. Act of May 6, 1882 (22 Stat. 58), secs. 4, 8.
80. See, for example, the CAF, SF.
81. Act of May 6, 1882 (22 Stat. 58), sec. 4; Act of May 26, 1924: the Immigration Act of 1924 (43 Stat. 153); e-mail communication with Marian Smith, historian, INS, Oct. 24, 2000. See also Torpey, *Invention of the Passport*, 97-99.
82. Act of May 6, 1882 (22 Stat. 58), sec. 4; Act of July 5, 1884 (23 Stat. 115); Coolidge, *Chinese Immigration*, 183-85; Pfeffer, *If They Don't Bring Their Women Here*. I borrow the description of "an early . . . system of 'remote control' involving passports and visas" from Torpey, *Invention of the Passport*, 97-99.
83. Act of May 5, 1892, "Geary Act" (27 Stat. 25), sec. 7, and Act of Nov. 3, 1893, "McCreary Amendment" (28 Stat. 7), sec. 2.
84. *AR-CGI* (1903), 156; *AR-CGI* (1909), 131.
85. The use of "immigrant identification cards" was first begun under U.S. consular regulations on July 1, 1928. Green cards were the product of the Alien Registration Act of 1940 and the corresponding INS Alien Registration Program (Act of June 28, 1940 [54 Stat. 670]; e-mail communication with Marian Smith, historian, INS, Oct. 26, 2000; Smith, "Why Isn't the Green Card Green?").
86. Coolidge, *Chinese Immigration*, 209-33; Torpey, *Invention of the Passport*, 100.
87. Act of May 6, 1882 (22 Stat. 58), secs. 7 and 11.
88. *Ibid.*, sec. 12.
89. Act of Mar. 3, 1891 (26 Stat. 1084), and Act of Aug. 18, 1894 (28 Stat. 390).
90. *AR-CGI* (1903), 32.
91. Collector of Customs to Secretary of the Treasury, Dec. 3, 1883, CCF.
92. U.S. Congress, House, Select Committee, *Investigation of Chinese Immigration*, 270-71.
93. *Ibid.*
94. *Ibid.*, 279.
95. Salyer, *Laws Harsh as Tigers*, 69-93.
96. Resolution No. 17,673, Office of the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors, San Francisco, Dec. 10, 1884, CCF.
97. 23 Stat. 115. See Tsai, *Chinese Experience*, 66.
98. Act of Sept. 13, 1888 (25 Stat. 476, sec. 6, at 477).
99. Act of Oct. 1, 1888 (25 Stat. 504, sec. 2). The United States acted in retaliation in response to a rumor that China would not sign the new U.S.-China treaty.

100. Sandmeyer, *Anti-Chinese Movement in California*, 102.
101. Act of May 5, 1892 (27 Stat. 25).
102. Act of July 7, 1898 (30 Stat. 750); Act of Apr. 30, 1900 (31 Stat. 141); *San Francisco Call*, Nov. 22, 1901.
103. *San Francisco Call*, Nov. 22, 1901.
104. Act of Apr. 29, 1902, "Chinese Immigration Prohibited" (32 Stat. 176).
105. Act of Apr. 27, 1904 (33 Stat. 428).

Chapter Two

1. From 1882 to 1890, over 7,000 cases were heard in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California. From 1891 to 1905, 2,600 cases were heard in both the federal district and circuit courts of California (Fritz, "Nineteenth Century 'Habeas Corpus Mill,'" 348; Salyer, *Laws Harsh as Tigers*, 34, 75, 80-83).
2. Adapted from H. Chen, "Chinese Immigration," 181.
3. Previous studies have focused on immigration officials in the context of legal battles and legal doctrine. See Salyer, *Laws Harsh as Tigers*, 37-68. On the usage of "keepers of the gate," see Edward W. Cahill to George Fitch, Nov. 9, 1934, File 12030/1, AIHF. The federal agency charged with enforcing U.S. immigration laws has undergone numerous changes in name since its formal inception in 1891. Currently, it is known as the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service. During the exclusion era, the immigration officials who enforced the Chinese exclusion laws worked under the auspices of the U.S. Customs Service and then the Bureau of Immigration, housed first under the Treasury Department, then the Department of Commerce and Labor, and finally, the Department of Labor. I use the specific agency name (that is, Bureau of Immigration), but I also use the generic term "immigration service" throughout the book to refer to the agency that handled immigration issues during the exclusion era.
4. Lipsky, *Street-Level Bureaucracy*, xii, 3-4, 13, 24.
5. Prince and Keller, *U.S. Customs Service*, 173; Smith and Herring, *Bureau of Immigration*, 3, 7.
6. The act also vested the collectors of customs in each district where Chinese laborers entered and departed with the authority to issue return certificates, register all departing Chinese laborers, and record all facts about them necessary for identification (W. Chen, "Chinese under Both Exclusion and Immigration Laws," 95, 88-89).
7. *Ibid.*, 86; McClain, *In Search of Equality*, 150.
8. W. Chen, "Chinese under Both Exclusion and Immigration Laws," 40; Salyer, *Laws Harsh as Tigers*, 38-40.
9. W. S. Rosencrans to Charles Folger, Aug. 22, 1882, CCF.
10. See, for example, Hart Hyatt North to Frank P. Sargent, Sept. 10, 1905, Folder 1, Box 1, H. H. North Papers, BL.
11. See, for example, *San Francisco Bulletin*, Nov. 21, 1883. Salyer, *Laws Harsh as Tigers*, 39.
12. George C. Perkins to H. H. North, Feb. 5, 1907, Folder 13, Box 1, H. H. North Papers, BL; George C. Perkins, to Frank P. Sargent, Oct. 23, 1903, File 10070, CGC.
13. H. H. North to Julius Kahn, Mar. 6, 1906, Folder 1, Box 1, and George C. Perkins to H. H. North, Dec. 18, 1905, Folder 13, Box 2, H. H. North Papers, BL.
14. James R. Dunn to Collector of Customs, Apr. 20, 1901, File 6346, CGC.
15. John Hager to Treasury Secretary, Dec. 16, 1885, CCF.
16. R. P. Schwerin to John W. Linck and Converse J. Smith, Feb. 9, 1898, File 224, CGC; R. P. Schwerin to John Wise, Dec. 14, 1896, GCC.

17. Meyer, Taylor, and Johnson, *Municipal Blue Book*, 159; McClain, *In Search of Equality*, 52, 63-67.
18. *Alta California*, Sept. 23, 1885, cited in Janisch, "Chinese, the Courts, and the Constitution," 671.
19. John Wise to Special Agents Johnson and Bean, Apr. 3, 1895, GCOCC.
20. Salyer, *Laws Harsh as Tigers*, 65; Act of May 6, 1882 (22 Stat. 58).
21. John Wise to Js. E. Hannon, Aug. 21, 1893, GCOCC.
22. John Wise to H. A. Ling, Aug. 21, 1895, *ibid.*
23. John Wise to Mr. Nelso, Esq., Dec. 8, 1893, *ibid.*
24. Coolidge, *Chinese Immigration*, 328.
25. Burdette, *American Biography and Genealogy*, 1029.
26. F. S. Stratton to the CGI, June 12, 1902, File 5125, CGC.
27. Ira E. Bennett to Senator George C. Perkins, Oct. 29, 1902, Stratton Papers, BL.
28. Coolidge, *Chinese Immigration*, 319.
29. *Ibid.*, 319; McKee, *Chinese Exclusion*, 30.
30. James Dunn to Richard K. Campbell, Apr. 11, 1901, File 2580, and James Dunn to CGI, Dec. 8, 1900, File 2345, CGC.
31. Coolidge, *Chinese Immigration*, 320.
32. James Dunn to J. D. Powers, Nov. 28, 1899, File 532, CGC.
33. *AR-CGI* (1901), 49.
34. Walter S. Chance to Treasury Secretary, July 26, 1900, File 1617, CGC.
35. Condit, *Chinaman as We See Him*, 87.
36. The certificate allegedly did not state the exact time during which Ho had been engaged as a merchant (James Dunn to Treasury Secretary, Feb. 16, 1900, File 1094, CGC; Coolidge, *Chinese Immigration*, 321).
37. James Dunn to Treasury Secretary, Feb. 16, 1900, File 1094, CGC; Coolidge, *Chinese Immigration*, 321-22.
38. Oliver P. Stidger to George C. Perkins, Sept. 16, 1901, Files 3758, 3692, 3227, 3545, CGC.
39. "Resolution in Favor of James Dunn," Nov. 15, 1901, File 4200, CGC.
40. File 6661, CGC; Coolidge, *Chinese Immigration*, 319.
41. George C. Perkins to Frank Sargent, Oct. 23, 1903, File 10070, CGC.
42. See, for example, file entries referring to "American Citizens of Chink Descent" and "Telegram Complaining of Photographing Chinks," File 55,144-156 and 54,261-129, Subject Index to Correspondence and Case Files of the INS, 1903-52, National Archives Microfilm No. T-458, National Archives, Washington, D.C.
43. Report to Walter S. Chance, Mar. 21, 1899, File 52730/84, INSSC.
44. Some historians have noted that Coolidge may have been overly biased against the immigration service. I have found that Coolidge's claims were substantiated more often than not. See Chan, "Writing of Asian American History," 8, and Coolidge, *Chinese Immigration*, 313, 328.
45. Special Agents Linck and Smith to the Treasury Secretary, Feb. 6, 1899, File 53108/9-A, INSSC.
46. J. P. Jackson to Treasury Secretary, Mar. 16, 1899, File 215, CGC.
47. J. P. Jackson to David G. Browne, June 15, 1900, GCOCC.
48. John H. Wise to Special Agent Moore, Dec. 8, 1896, GCC.
49. *AR-CGI* (1899), 29.
50. Special Deputy of Customs to J. R. Mason, Esq., Aug. 10, 1900, Correspondence, 1872-1928,

Port of Odgensburg, New York, Records of the U.S. Bureau of Customs, RG 36, National Archives, Northeast Region, New York.

51. Frank P. Sargent to Commissioner of Immigration, Nov. 19, 1904, File 52231/1, INSSC; Jones, *Surnames of the Chinese*.
52. Special Agent Moore to John H. Wise, Dec. 10, 1896, GCC.
53. U.S. Congress, House, Select Committee, *Investigation of Chinese Immigration*, 296.
54. T. H. Gubbins to Terence V. Powderly, Jan. 30, 1902, File 4557, CGC.
55. Collector of Customs to CGI, May 28, 1901, CCTR.
56. U.S. Congress, House, Select Committee, *Investigation of Chinese Immigration*, 296.
57. Oscar Greenhalgh to Walter S. Chance, Mar. 3, 1899, File 52730/84, INSSC; *San Francisco Call*, Mar. 9, 1899.
58. The exact date when this occurred is unclear, but by 1899, interpreters who were Chinese were appearing in official correspondence (U.S. Congress, House, Select Committee, *Investigation of Chinese Immigration*, 296).
59. H. A. Moore to John G. Carlisle, Nov. 13 and 26, 1896, and Assistant Treasury Secretary to H. A. Moore, Nov. 21, 1896, cited in Prince and Keller, *U.S. Customs Service*, 176.
60. Acting Secretary of Treasury to Collector of Customs, Apr. 7, 1899, CCTR.
61. Collector of Customs to CGI, May 28, 1901, CCTR.
62. Acting Secretary of Treasury to Collector of Customs, Apr. 7, 1899, CCTR.
63. Special Agent Moore to John Wise, Dec. 10, 1896, GCC.
64. Con and Wickberg, *From China to Canada*, 58.
65. The Treasury Department apparently consulted the U.S. Attorney on the matter of Gardner's citizenship as well (*ibid.*).
66. See the case of Lawrence Kentwell in Chapter 3.
67. J. P. Jackson to Treasury Secretary, Mar. 30, 1899, File 53108/9-B, INSSC.
68. E. Percivale Baker to CGI, Aug. 29, 1901, File 3648, CGC. For Baker's discharge from the service, see *San Francisco Examiner*, Nov. 29, 1899.
69. Lyman J. Mowry, Esq., to J. P. Jackson, May 18, 1899, and John Endicott Gardner to W. S. Chance, May 20, 1899, File 392, CGC.
70. Coolidge, *Chinese Immigration*, 320.
71. John Martin to John H. Wise, Dec. 3, 1896, GCOCC.
72. On Dunn's work publicizing San Francisco as a model, see James Dunn to CGI, Dec. 10, 1900, Files 2477 and 2478, CGC. For Dunn's Port Townsend trip, see James R. Dunn to CGI, May 7, 1901, no file number, Box 20, *ibid.* For Dunn's Santa Barbara and San Diego trips, see James Dunn to CGI, Aug. 16, 1901, File 3684, Box 23, *ibid.* For Dunn's trips to Illinois and Ohio, see U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Immigration, *Chinese Exclusion*, 310, and James Dunn to CGI, May 4 and Aug. 16, 1901, and May 4, 1902, File 3684, CGC. For Dunn's report to Washington, D.C., and visit with President Roosevelt, see James R. Dunn, "Report," Oct. 21, 1901, File 4794; James R. Dunn to CGI, Feb. 10, 1903, File 6553; and James Dunn to Treasury Secretary, Mar. 26, 1902, File 4794, *ibid.*
73. J. P. Jackson to Treasury Secretary, Sept. 5, 1899, File 736, *ibid.*
74. Special Agents Link and Smith to the Treasury Secretary, Feb. 6, 1899, File 53108/9-B, INSSC.
75. Lombardi, *Labor's Voice in the Cabinet*, 125.
76. *Washington Times*, Jan. 1, 1902.
77. Terence Powderly to David Healy, July 12, 1899, cited in Falzone, *Terence Powderly*, 180.
78. Terence Powderly to John H. Mulligan, Aug. 17, 1897, cited in *ibid.*, 181.

79. Smith and Herring, *Bureau of Immigration*, 5; Falzone, *Terence Powderly*, 177-78.
80. McKee, *Chinese Exclusion*, 29-30.
81. *Ibid.*, 28.
82. Scanland, "Will the Chinese Migrate?," 21, cited in McKee, *Chinese Exclusion*, 29.
83. McKee, *Chinese Exclusion*, 32.
84. *AR-CGI* (1899), 34.
85. Terence Powderly to J. C. Scottron, Jan. 24, 1902, as cited in Falzone, *Terence Powderly*, 181.
86. McKee, *Chinese Exclusion*, 33.
87. Falzone, *Terence Powderly*, 188.
88. F. P. Sargent, "Memorandum," c. 1905, File 52704/12, INSSC.
89. *Peoria Journal*, Aug. 21, 1902, Scrapbooks, 1902-5, RG 85, Records of the INS, National Archives, Washington, D.C.
90. *San Francisco Examiner*, May 15, 1905.
91. *AR-CGI* (1902), 71.
92. "Disposition of Chinese Arrived at U.S. Ports and Chinese Arrested within the U.S.," *AR-CGI* (1904), 160.
93. F. P. Sargent, "Memorandum," c. 1905, File 52704/12, p. 137, INSSC.
94. *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 20, 1904.
95. V. H. Metcalf, "Memorandum," July 15, 1904, File 12592, CGC.
96. The Sundry Civil Act of June 6, 1900 (31 Stat. L., 588, 611).
97. "An Act to Establish the Department of Commerce and Labor" (32 Stat. L., 825).
98. *Ju Toy v. United States*, 109 U.S. 253 (1905); Salyer, *Laws Harsh as Tigers*, 94-116.
99. Skowronek, *Building a New American State*, 47.
100. Van Vleck, *Administrative Control of Aliens*, 25-26.
101. Howe, *Confessions of a Reformer*, 255. For coursework required of immigration officials, see Rak, *Border Patrol*, 10-11.
102. Salyer, *Laws Harsh as Tigers*, 66.
103. Straus, "Spirit and Letter of Exclusion," 481-85, cited in Salyer, *Laws Harsh as Tigers*, 166.
104. Salyer, *Laws Harsh as Tigers*, 219; Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 127-28; McKee, *Chinese Exclusion*, 206-9; Lombardi, *Labor's Voice in the Cabinet*, 59-60.
105. *Chicago Record-Herald*, Nov. 4, 1904, in William E. Curtis to Hart Hyatt North, Nov. 4, 1908, Folder 9, Box 1, H. H. North Papers, BL.
106. H. H. North to J. S. Rodgers, June 9, 1909, Folder 3, Box 1, H. H. North Papers, BL.
107. North was a native Californian, born in Marysville and raised in Oakland. He graduated from the University of California at Berkeley, became a lawyer, and served as a Republican state representative from Alameda County in 1894. He was also the brother-in-law to architect Julia Morgan (*San Francisco Examiner*, Jan. 28, 1898, 2:1).
108. Ng Poon Chew to President William H. Taft, Sept. 19, 1910, File 53108/24, vol. 4, INSSC.
109. Acting Commissioner Luther Steward, "Visit Paid the Angel Island Immigration Station," June 6, 1911, File 52961/24-D, pp. 80-81, INSSC.
110. Diaries of John Birge Sawyer, Jan. 1907, vol. 1, pp. 41, 46, 55, BL.
111. *Ibid.*, 65.
112. *Ibid.*, Nov. 17, 1917, vol. 2, p. 166; see also Salyer, *Laws Harsh as Tigers*, 39. Interestingly, Mehan was previously a renowned "catcher" of Chinese immigrants suspected of crossing the U.S.-Mexican border illegally. See Chapter 5.

113. Daniel Keefe to Secretary of Commerce and Labor, Feb. 7, 1910, File 52961/26-C, INSSC; *AR-CGI* (1915), 41-42; Selig, "Lapses from Virtue," 15-19.
114. Salyer, *Laws Harsh as Tigers*, 224-25.
115. *Ibid.*, 225-26, 244.
116. Interview with Edwar Lee, Angel Island Interviews, BL.
117. *San Francisco Call*, Sept. 16, 1910.
118. "Summary Report upon the Administration of Immigration Commissioner H. H. North," Mar. 25, 1911, File 53108/24-A, pp. 29-30, INSSC; Jensen, *Passage from India*, 104.
119. Angel Island Interviews, BL, Part II, p. 4.
120. Diaries of John Birge Sawyer, vol. 2, pp. 119-20, BL.
121. Giovenco, "California Career of Anthony Caminetti," 390-91, 361-72.
122. Lim P. Lee, "Sociological Data." My thanks to Judy Yung for sharing this article with me.
123. *AR-CGI* (1913), 10.
124. *AR-CGI* (1916), xvi; *AR-CGI* (1917), xxi.
125. Giovenco, "California Career of Anthony Caminetti," 371-72.
126. *AR-CGI* (1920), 177.

Part Two

1. Him Mark Lai, "Island of Immortals," 100.

Chapter Three

1. U.S. Congress, House, Select Committee, *Investigation of Chinese Immigration*, 298.
2. Rule 7, U.S. Dept. of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of Immigration, *Treaty, Laws, and Regulations* (1905), 47.
3. Ng, *Treatment of the Exempt Classes*, 1-2.
4. Recent studies have just begun to pay attention to immigration law enforcement. See Salyer, *Laws Harsh as Tigers*, and Calavita, "Paradoxes."
5. Here I borrow from the six "faces" of the Oriental that Robert Lee (*Oriental*s, 8-10) has identified in American popular culture. See also Calavita, "Paradoxes," 14-18.
6. Lisa Lowe (*Immigrant Acts*, 14) writes that "the history of racial formation of Asian immigrants and Asian Americans have always included a 'class formation and a gender formation' that [were] mediated through such state apparatuses as the law."
7. "Immigration of Chinese Laborers Prohibited" (Scott Act) (25 Stat. 476).
8. On how "Chineseness" was similarly defined in Canada, see Anderson, *Vancouver's Chinatown*, 18. On the symbols of "Chineseness," see Robert Lee, *Oriental*s, 2.
9. L. K. Kentwell to Victor H. Metcalf, Feb. 27, 1906, File 466-C, CAF, H.
10. On the racialization of Chinese in popular culture, see Robert Lee, *Oriental*s, 1-14.
11. L. K. Kentwell to Victor H. Metcalf, Feb. 27, 1906, File 466-C, CAF, H.
12. *Ibid.*
13. L. K. Kentwell to Theodore Roosevelt et al., Nov. 20, 1905, *ibid.*
14. Robert Brown to CGI, Dec. 18, 1905, and Mar. 26, 1906, *ibid.*
15. F. M. Bechtel to Charles Mehan, Aug. 16, 1905, *ibid.*
16. Victor H. Metcalf to L. K. Kentwell, Mar. 9, 1906, *ibid.*
17. *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 21, 1904.
18. Rules 5-6, U.S. Dept. of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of Immigration, *Treaty, Laws, and Regulations* (1905), 42.

19. U.S. Congress, House, Select Committee, *Investigation of Chinese Immigration*, 279, 281, 297, 299.
20. Him Mark Lai, "Island of Immortals," 91; Lai, Lim, and Yung, *Island*, 8.
21. Act of Mar. 3, 1891 (26 Stat. 1084); Kraut, *Silent Travelers*, 2, 51, 54-55.
22. Y. Chen, *Chinese San Francisco*, 214.
23. Shah demonstrates that even the extensive reliance on new scientific methods such as bacteriology continued to be shaped by public health service physicians' racial assumptions (*Contagious Divides*, 179-203).
24. Confidential Dispatch to CGI, Jan. 24, 1907, File 51881/85, INSSC.
25. Judy Yung, interview with Mr. Jow, File 13, AIOHP.
26. On 1870s stereotypes, see Takaki, *Iron Cages*, 223, and Miller, *Unwelcome Immigrant*, 36, 83-94.
27. Collector of Customs to John Sherman, June 5, 1877, Press Copies of Letters from the Collector to the Secretary of the Treasury, 1870-1912, Port of San Francisco, Records of the U.S. Customs Service, San Francisco, RG 36, National Archives, Pacific Region, San Bruno, Calif.
28. Ralph, "Chinese Leak," 518.
29. *AR-CGI* (1903), 96-97; *AR-CGI* (1900), 46.
30. On the Bertillon system in general and its usage in Chinese exclusion, see Rhodes, *Alphonse Bertillon*, and U.S. Dept. of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of Immigration, *Facts Concerning the Enforcement*, 32. For a Chinese description of the Bertillon system, see K. Scott Wong, "Liang Qichao," 15. The Bertillon system became linked to early methods to advance eugenics in the United States. See Kevles, *In the Name of Eugenics*, 16, and Higham, *Strangers in the Land*, 149-57.
31. *AR-CGI* (1902); Act of June 30, 1903 (32 Stat. 1112); U.S. Dept. of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of Immigration, *Treaty, Laws, and Regulations* (1903); "Chinese Exclusion," *Outlook* 76 (Apr. 23, 1904): 964; Calavita, "Paradoxes," 21-24.
32. McKee, *Chinese Exclusion*, 74.
33. The editor was most likely Ng Poon Chew of the Chinese-language daily *Chung Sai Yat Bo*. Harold Bolce, Chinese Inspector, to Secretary of Commerce and Labor, May 29, 1905, File 53059/8, p. 47, INSSC.
34. *AR-CGI* (1900), 46.
35. John D. Nagle to T. Y. Tang, Aug. 17, 1927, File 55597/912, p. 5, INSSC.
36. U.S. Congress, House, Select Committee, *Investigation of Chinese Immigration*, 279-82, 297-300, 324-28.
37. *Ibid.*, 324.
38. Coolidge, *Chinese Immigration*, 310-11.
39. U.S. Dept. of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of Immigration, *Treaty, Laws, and Regulations* (1906).
40. Him Mark Lai, "Island of Immortals," 94, 102 n. 28.
41. W. Chen, "Chinese under Both Exclusion and Immigration Laws," 99.
42. "Memorandum," Apr. 5, 1922, File 54261/147-A, p. 2, INSSC.
43. On the construction of the image of the Chinese coolie in popular culture, see Robert Lee, *Oriental*, 51-53.
44. "Memorandum," May 18, 1906, File 52600/48, INSSC.
45. Philip B. Jones to Inspector in Charge, Nov. 8, 1911, File 10508/151, CAF, SF.
46. John Endicott Gardner to Chinese Inspector in Charge, Sept. 21, 1912, File 11215, *ibid.*
47. Immigrant Inspector to Commissioner of Immigration, Jan. 12, 1916, File 14894/2-2, *ibid.*

48. Rules 5-6, U.S. Dept. of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of Immigration, *Treaty, Laws, and Regulations* (1905), 42.
49. Soo Hoo Fong to Kam Tong, Feb. 12, 1898, File 53108/9-B, INSSC.
50. H. H. North to CGI, Aug. 3, 1904, File 12811, CGC.
51. Interrogation of Lee Kwock Chow, May 31, 1903, File 37775/9-25, CAF, SF.
52. H. H. North to CGI, Aug. 3, 1904, File 12811, CGC.
53. Frank Sargent to H. H. North, Aug. 9, 1904, File 12811, CGC.
54. "McCreary Amendment to the Geary Act," 28 Stat. 7 (1893).
55. U.S. Treasury Dept. Circular 14877, Apr. 19, 1894; Chinese Partnership Case Files, 1894-1944, Records of the INS, San Francisco, RG 85, National Archives, Pacific Region, San Bruno, Calif.; U.S. Dept. of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of Immigration, *Treaty, Laws, and Regulations* (1906), 10, 23.
56. James Dunn to Collector of Customs, Apr. 20, 1901, File 6346, CGC. The Bureau of Immigration apparently reinstituted restaurant managers and proprietors as merchants around 1914, but the Immigration Act of 1924 redefined all persons connected with restaurants as laborers again.
57. Act of July 6, 1932 (47 U.S. Stat., 607); W. Chen, "Chinese under Both Exclusion and Immigration Laws," 140-41.
58. W. Chen, "Chinese under Both Exclusion and Immigration Laws," 141.
59. Rule 27, U.S. Dept. of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of Immigration, *Treaty, Laws, and Regulations* (1905), 50. In reading several hundred Chinese immigrant files, I did not come across a single case involving witnesses who were African American, Hispanic, non-Chinese Asian, or American Indian.
60. Chan, "Exclusion of Chinese Women," 95, 97.
61. McKeown, "Transnational Chinese Families," 74, 78, 83; McKeown, *Chinese Migrant Networks*, 30-32.
62. McKeown, "Transnational Chinese Families," 74, 78, 83.
63. On Chinese prostitution in general, see Cheng, "Free, Indentured, Enslaved," 3-29; Tong, *Unsubmissive Women*; Chan, "Exclusion of Chinese Women"; Pfeffer, *If They Don't Bring Their Women Here*; Edholm, "A Stain on the Flag"; and Grey, "Confession of a Chinese Slave-Dealer," 124-53, 159-70.
64. The court decision was *In re Chung Toy Ho and Wong Choy Sin*. Chan, "Exclusion of Chinese Women," 114; John Wise to A. L. Fitzgerald, Esq., Eureka, Nevada, Dec. 29, 1893, GCOCC.
65. See, for example, Correspondence to John Wise, Collector of Customs, Feb.-June 1895, GCOCC.
66. John Wise to W. F. Thompson, Feb. 26, 1895, *ibid.*
67. *Ibid.*
68. John Wise to R. R. Swain, Esq., Feb. 14, 1895, *ibid.*
69. See J. P. Jackson to Treasury Secretary, Nov. 24, 1899, File 987, CGC; Littleton, "Worse Than Slaves," 164-70; Pascoe, *Relations of Rescue*, 35-36.
70. John Wise to R. R. Swain, Esq., Feb. 14, 1895, and E. B. Johnson to R. S. Pena, Apr. 30, May 16, 1895, GCOCC.
71. John Wise to A. L. Fitzgerald, Esq., Dec. 29, 1893, *ibid.*
72. John D. Nagle to Mr. T. Y. Tang, Aug. 17, 1927, File 55597/912, p. 19, INSSC. The 1907 regulations do not list any requirement of white witnesses to marriages (U.S. Dept. of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of Immigration, *Treaty, Laws, and Regulations*).

73. On the influence of class and Victorian gender ideals on Chinese female immigration in general, see Chan, "Exclusion of Chinese Women," 138-39, and Pascoe, *Relations of Rescue*, 4.
74. File 10-23-85/180, CAF, SF.
75. John P. Jackson to the Treasury Secretary, Mar. 30, 1899, File 53108/9-B, INSSC. On campaigns to ban foot binding in China, see Ping, *Aching for Beauty*, 36-44.
76. Chan, "Exclusion of Chinese Women."
77. File 16327/3-3, CAF, SF.
78. Statement Sent to the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce, May 20, 1911, File 52961/24-C, INSSC.
79. Ng, *Treatment of the Exempt Classes*, 10.
80. W. Chen, "Chinese under Both Exclusion and Immigration Laws," 201.
81. Chan, "Exclusion of Chinese Women," 114.
82. Gabaccia, *From the Other Side*, 26.
83. File 10193, Chinese Exclusion Case Files, Seattle, Washington, Records of the INS, RG 85, National Archives, Pacific Alaska Region, Seattle, Washington; interview with Gladys Huie.
84. See Chapter 6.
85. *AR-CGI* (1925), 23.
86. File 14894/2-2, CAF, SF.
87. E. J. Sims to INS District Director, Apr. 21, 1942, File 38813/7-16, CAF, SF.
88. Act of Sept. 22, 1922 (42 Stat. 1021); Chan, "Exclusion of Chinese Women," 128-29.
89. *CR*, 43d Cong., 2d sess. (1875), 1082.
90. *CR*, 44th Cong., 2d sess. (1877), vol. 5, p. 3, 2005; U.S. Congress, Joint Special Committee, *Chinese Immigration*, vii.
91. U.S. Congress, Joint Special Committee, *Chinese Immigration*, vii.
92. *In re Look Tin Sing*, C.C.D. Cal., 21 Federal Reporter 905, 910 (C.C.D. Cal. 1884); U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Immigration, *Alleged Illegal Entry*, 153; Zhang, "Dragon in the Land of the Eagle," 313-18.
93. Interrogation of Wong Kim Ock [sic], July 16, 1890, 12017/42223, Box 458, RCCF.
94. Petition for Writ on Behalf of Petitioner, Nov. 11, 1895, Wong Kim Ark, Folder 11198, Box 594, Admiralty Case Files, Records of the U.S. District Court, RG 21, National Archives, Pacific Region, San Bruno, Calif.
95. Brief on Behalf of the U.S., Nov. 19, 1895, pp. 3-4, and Opinion Rendered *In the Matter of Wong Kim Ark*, Jan. 3, 1896, p. 5, *ibid*.
96. Brief on Behalf of the U.S., Nov. 19, 1895, pp. 4-5, *ibid*.
97. Petition for Writ on Behalf of Petitioner, Nov. 11, 1895, and Points and Authorities of U.S. District Attorney, Nov. 11, 1895, *ibid*.
98. Brief on Behalf of the U.S., Nov. 19, 1895, p. 6, *ibid*.
99. Points and Authorities of U.S. District Attorney, Nov. 11, 1895, *ibid*.
100. Opinion of Judge Morrow, Jan. 3, 1896, p. 14, *ibid*.
101. *United States v. Wong Kim Ark*, 169 U.S. 649, 694 (1898); Salyer, *Laws Harsh as Tigers*, 99.
102. On Asian Americans as "perpetual foreigners," see Lowe, *Immigrant Acts*, 4.
103. U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Immigration, *Alleged Illegal Entry*, 9.
104. Interrogation of Wong Kim Ock [sic], July 16, 1890, File 12017/42223, Box 458, RCCF.
105. File 10039/41, CAF, SF.
106. Collector of Customs to the Treasury Secretary, Mar. 30, 1899, File 53108/9-B, INSSC.
107. It is not clear when this regulation was formally dropped, but in his 1902 *Annual Report*,

the CGI noted that Chinese were gaining admission as citizens on a regular basis through Chinese testimony only (*AR-CGI* [1902], 76-77).

108. S. G. Carpenter to Charles Nagel, Sept. 23, 1910, File 52961/24-B, INSSC.
109. Report from Alfred W. Parker, Oct. 5, 1905, File 10079/6, CAF, SF.
110. Interrogation of Fon Toy, Jan. 25, 1905, File 10039/2, *ibid*.
111. Interrogation of Lim Tong, June 27, 1905, File 10062/19, *ibid*.
112. Interrogation of Lee Toy Mock, Feb. 7, 1930, File 12020/16793, Box 3, IF, SF.
113. Interrogation of Woo Wee Nuen, Aug. 22, 1905, File 10067/19, CAF, SF.
114. Interrogation of Lee Toy Mock, Feb. 7, 1930, File 12020/16793, Box 3, IF, SF.
115. July 26, 1934, deportation hearing, File 12020/23-401, IF, SF.
116. W. W. Husband to John D. Nagle, Apr. 26, 1924, File 55383/30, and Wallace R. Farrington to Secretary of Labor, Aug. 16, 1926, File 55383/30, INSSC.
117. Edna Lois Hing to Commissioner of Immigration, Jan. 25, 1923, File 14517/1-9, CAF, SF.

Chapter Four

1. Other studies that have emphasized the transnational character of Chinese migration include McKeown, *Chinese Migrant Networks*, 4-7, 19-23, 25-32, and "Transnational Chinese Families," 73-110; Y. Chen, *Chinese San Francisco*, 3, 7, 57, 145-47; and Hsu, *Dreaming of Gold*, 3-11.
2. See generally McClain, *In Search of Equality*, 3; Salyer, *Laws Harsh as Tigers*, xv; and Okihiro, *Margins and Mainstreams*, 151.
3. Chan, *This Bittersweet Soil*, 17, 19-21; Y. Chen, *Chinese San Francisco*, 20-22; Hsu, *Dreaming of Gold*, 18-23.
4. Chan, *This Bittersweet Soil*, 11-16; Y. Chen, *Chinese San Francisco*, 22. On the impact of Chinese remittances from America on families and villages in the district of Toisan, see Hsu, *Dreaming of Gold*, 31-54, 108-12.
5. Harold Bolce to Secretary of Commerce and Labor, May 29, 1905, File 53059/8, pp. 44-46, INSSC.
6. Hart Hyatt North to CGI, Mar. 24, 1910, File 53108/24, vol. 4, INSSC.
7. Victor H. Metcalf to Hart Hyatt North, Oct. 2, 1905, Folder 4, Box 2, H. H. North Papers, BL.
8. By the 1920s, 48 percent of Chinese in the United States worked in small businesses, laundries, restaurants, or stores. Twenty-seven percent were domestic workers. Only 11 percent worked in agriculture and 9 percent in manufacturing and skilled crafts. The occupations of the remaining 5 percent of workers is unknown (Chan, *This Bittersweet Soil*, 77).
9. Siu, *Chinese Laundryman*, 85.
10. *Ibid*.
11. Statement of Fong Ing Bong, Sept. 28, 1907, File 10209/77, CAF, SF.
12. Interview with Wallace Lee.
13. "Summary of Interview with Jeong Foo Louie," AIOHP.
14. *AR-CGI* (1890, 1897-1932); W. Chen, "Chinese under Both Exclusion and Immigration Laws," 206.
15. Siu, *Chinese Laundryman*, 107.
16. Chan, "Exclusion of Chinese Women," 95, 97; Yung, *Unbound Feet*, 55-63.
17. U.S. government statistics for Chinese immigrant admissions are highly inconsistent. When the U.S. Bureau of Immigration categorized immigrants by sex, it recorded 127,012 total Chinese immigrants (9,868 Chinese women) admitted from 1882 to 1943. These figures do not include citizens returning to the United States. When immigrants were categorized by immigration status, the total number of Chinese admitted for the same period, including Chinese in transit

through the United States as well as Americans of Chinese descent, was 422,908. From 1910 to 1924, when the number of Chinese immigrants was broken down by both sex and immigration status, Chinese women made up an average of 9.4 percent of the total pool. Taking this average percentage and multiplying it by the more complete figure of 422,908 Chinese admitted, the actual number of Chinese women (both immigrants and citizens) who entered or reentered from 1882 to 1943 was probably closer to 40,000. See tables "Immigrants Admitted" and "Summary of Chinese Seeking Admission to the U.S." in *AR-CGI* (1890, 1897-1932), and H. Chen, "Chinese Immigration," 181, 201, 206.

18. U.S. Congress, Joint Special Committee, *Reports of the Immigration Commissioner*, 384-85. On sojourning as a migration strategy in general, see Wang, "Sojourning," 1-3; Cinel, *National Integration*, 98, 104; Sánchez, *Becoming Mexican American*, 38-62; McKeown, *Chinese Migrant Networks*; and Hsu, *Dreaming of Gold*.

19. Nee and Nee, *Longtime Californ*, 16.

20. Wong Ngum Yin (a.k.a. Wong Hock Won), "Composition," enclosed in Inspector in Charge to CGI, Oct. 29, 1906, File 13928, CGC. A *mou* is a Chinese measurement for land.

21. Nakano, "Split Household," 38-39. See also Hsu, *Dreaming of Gold*, 90-123.

22. Translated Chinese Envelopes, June 10, 1918, File 2, Box 1, DIF, SF.

23. Hsu, *Dreaming of Gold*, 31-40.

24. Wong Cheung to Wong Jou, and Lee Shee to Wong Jou, 1926-38, Translated Chinese letters, File 37176/12-17, CAF, SF.

25. *Chung Sai Yat Po*, July 14, 1906.

26. *Ibid.*, Mar. 24, 1906.

27. *Ibid.*, Jan. 30, 1906.

28. Data compiled by author and derived from a random sample survey of immigration records of Chinese individuals who entered the United States through the port of San Francisco from 1884 to 1941. Return visits were documented by applicants' reentry papers (CAF, SF).

29. See, for example, Tung Pok Chin, *Paper Son*, 21.

30. Wong Cheung to Wong Jou, and Lee Shee to Wong Jou, 1926-38, Translated Chinese letters, File 37176/12-17, CAF, SF.

31. Wong Ngum Yin to Wong Sheong Yin, July 1906, enclosed in Inspector in Charge to CGI, Oct. 29, 1906, File 13928, CGC.

32. Lew Chew Mei to Lew Git, Oct. 1918, Jan. 1919, May 1919, File 19612/11-9, CAF, SF. On cycle of debt, see also Siu, *Chinese Laundryman*, 111, and Hsu, *Dreaming of Gold*, 40-53.

33. Nakano, "Split Household," 38; Leung, "Laundryman," 5-6; Nee and Nee, *Longtime Californ*, 17; Hsu, *Dreaming of Gold*, 108.

34. The formal name of the Chinese Six Companies was the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association. McClain, *In Search for Equality*, 156-57, 93; Chan, "Exclusion of Chinese Women."

35. Salyer, *Laws Harsh as Tigers*, 81-83.

36. *Fong Yue Ting v. United States*, 149 U.S. 698, 713 (1893); Salyer, *Laws Harsh as Tigers*, 47-58.

37. For Chinese diplomats and local elites, see Yow, "Chinese Exclusion," 314-30, and K. Scott Wong, "Cultural Defenders and Brokers," 8.

38. *San Francisco Morning Call*, Sept. 14, 1892, 8.

39. Oscar Greenhalgh to Walter S. Chance, Mar. 16, 1899, File 52730/84, INSSC.

40. Interview with Mr. Woo Gen, July 24, 1924, Document 183, SRR.

41. See Files 52363/14, 52961/26-B, 53620/115-C, INSSC.

42. Wu Ting-fang to John Hay, Dec. 26, 1900, Notes from the Chinese Legation in the U.S. to

the Dept. of State, Records of the U.S. Department of State, RG 59, National Archives, Pacific Region, San Bruno, Calif.

43. See Files 54152/75, 55597/912, 54152/75, 52961/24-B, INSSC.

44. "Report of the Special Committee," Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Chinese-American League of Justice of Los Angeles, California, Jan. 4, 1913, File 53620/115, INSSC.

45. Rhymes No. 12 and 10, in Hom, *Songs of Gold Mountain*, 85, 83.

46. F. H. Larned to Assistant Secretary of Commerce and Labor, Nov. 23, 1908, File 52270/21, INSSC; P. A. Surgeon to Collector of Customs, Jan. 13, 1909, File 52999/44, *ibid.*

47. Richard Taylor to CGI, Mar. 25, 1909, File 52270/21, *ibid.*

48. H. H. North to CGI, Sept. 20, 1909, File 52999/14, *ibid.*

49. See Rhyme No. 5, in Hom, *Songs of Gold Mountain*, 78. Apparently, conditions were no better at the detention houses at other ports. See R. J. Wilding, M.D., to E. V. Skinner, Jan. 18, 1904, File 52704/2, INSSC, and E. V. Skinner to James A. Towney, July 8, 1903, File 7902, CGC.

50. Huey Dow to Collector of Customs, Nov. 1902, File 9903/66, CAF, SF.

51. Wong Ngum Yin (a.k.a. Wong Hock Won), "Composition," enclosed in Inspector in Charge to CGI, Oct. 29, 1906, File 13928, CGC.

52. John Endicott Gardner to J. H. Barbour, Apr. 19, 1902, File 4862, CGC.

53. F. H. Larned to Secretary of Commerce and Labor, Jan. 28, 1909, File 5220/71, INSSC. See also *San Francisco Call*, Sept. 9 and Nov. 29, 1908.

54. *Chung Sai Yat Po*, Jan. 17, 1903. See File 5986, CGC; Daniel Keefe to Secretary of Commerce and Labor, Aug. 7, 1909, File 52270/21, INSSC; and William R. Wheeler to Secretary of Commerce and Labor, Jan. 28, 1909, *ibid.*

55. James Dunn to CGI, Feb. 1, 1901, File 2580, CGC.

56. "Memorandum," c. 1905, by Frank P. Sargent, File 52704/12, INSSC.

57. Frank P. Sargent to Secretary of Commerce and Labor, May 29, 1905, and Harold Bolce to Secretary of Commerce and Labor, May 29, 1905, File 53059/8, *ibid.*

58. Y. Chen, *Chinese San Francisco*, 148-61; Salyer, *Laws Harsh as Tigers*, 97-101, 139; Tsai, *Chinese Experience*, 77-79; Mei, Yip, and Leong, "Bitter Society," 46.

59. *AR-CGI* (1905), 78-81.

60. *Ibid.* (1907), 143-44.

61. "Enforcement of the Chinese Exclusion Laws—General Instruction," June 24, 1905, Dept. Circular No. 81, File 52423/40, INSSC.

62. Among the other changes in the rules and regulations concerning the enforcement of the Chinese exclusion laws were (1) the clause the "burden of proof shall be on the applicant" was omitted; (2) certificates that had heretofore been kept by immigration officials were now returned to all those immigrants who were admitted into the country; (3) the definition of merchant was liberalized; (4) no photographs of mercantile establishments were allowed to be used as evidence against the applicant; (5) the definition of student was liberalized; (6) Chinese who were admitted as members of the exempt class but who later became laborers were not to be arrested as before; (7) exempt-class Chinese who were waiting to enter the country were to be allowed to be released on \$2,000 bond rather than required to serve detention until their cases had been determined. See U.S. Bureau of Immigration, *Facts Concerning the Enforcement*, 1906, 28-45, and Coolidge, *Chinese Immigration*, 297-301.

63. The CGI later rescinded this order in 1908, claiming that very few Chinese actually used this privilege, but after Secretary of Commerce and Labor Charles Nagel visited San Francisco in 1910, he reinstituted the rule (Salyer, *Laws Harsh as Tigers*, 221-22).

64. *AR-CGI* (1907), 141, 144.

65. H. H. North to George C. Perkins, Dec. 7, 1903, Box 1, H. H. North Papers, BL.
66. U.S. Congress, House, *Immigration Station on Angel Island*, cited in Him Mark Lai, "Island of Immortals," 91.
67. *Chinese World*, Jan. 22, 1910; *San Francisco Chronicle*, Jan. 23, 1910, as cited in Him Mark Lai, "Island of Immortals," 91.
68. *Chinese World*, Apr. 5, 1910, as cited in Him Mark Lai, "Island of Immortals," 91.
69. *AR-CGI* (1910), 126.
70. Feb. 3, 1910, circular found in San Francisco Chinatown, translated by John Endicott Gardner, File 52961/24, INSSC.
71. "Joint Report of Committee on Foreign Affairs," June 6, 1911, File 52961/24B, INSSC.
72. *Chung Sai Yat Po*, June 8 and Oct. 24, 1911, translated by John Endicott Gardner, File 52961/24 D-E, and "Transcript of Stenographic Notes," June 6, 1911, File 52961/24-D, INSSC.
73. "A Report of the Recent Position of American-Chinese Commercial Transaction," c. 1911, File 52961/24-B, INSSC.
74. Mr. T. Y. Tang to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Apr. 28, 1927, cited in McKenzie, *Oriental Exclusion*, 42-43.
75. McKenzie, *Oriental Exclusion*, 43-44.
76. Such class-based divisions also manifested themselves in the public health campaigns affecting Chinatown. See Shah, *Contagious Divides*, 115.
77. Ng, *Treatment of the Exempt Classes*, 1.
78. On Jewish and Mexican immigrants, see, for example, Cahan, *Yekl*, and Gutiérrez, *Walls and Mirrors*, 5.
79. Chinese merchants to Chester A. Arthur, Oct. 27, 1884, CCF.
80. Wu Ting-fang to John Hay, Dec. 26, 1900, File 2615, CGC.
81. Chinese merchants and students in Hong Kong to William Taft, Mar. 20, 1910, File 52961/24, INSSC.
82. Memorial to His Excellency the President of the United States of America, Sept. 20, 1911, File 52961/24-E, *ibid*.
83. Telegram to Woodrow Wilson, Oct. 10, 1918, File 53620/115-C, *ibid*.; McKenzie, *Oriental Exclusion*, 42-43.
84. McKenzie, *Oriental Exclusion*, 42-43, 127.
85. S. G. Carpenter to Charles Nagel, Sept. 23, 1910, File 52961/24-B, INSSC. On the history of the Native Sons, see Chung, "Fighting for Their American Rights."
86. C. P. Converse to Woodrow Wilson, June 8, 1916, File 54152/75, INSSC.
87. Ng Ah Ben to H. H. North, Dec. 3, 1909, File 28004/10-1, CAF, SF.
88. A. F. Haines to Secretary of Labor, Dec. 2, 1921, File 53620/115-C, INSSC.
89. CGI to Commissioner of Immigration, San Francisco, Mar. 17, 1910, File 52961/24-A, *ibid*.
90. See, for example, Telegram from the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association to President Woodrow Wilson, Oct. 10, 1918, File 53620/115-C, *ibid*., and Mears, *Resident Orientals*, 127.
91. See various letters, Box 4, CCF.
92. Wong Gong Kim to Wong Teung Kim, June 18, 1917, Box 1, DIF, SF.
93. Lee Young Sing to Lee Wooy Hong, Oct. 4, 1916, *ibid*.
94. Arthur Lem to Author, Jan. 13, 1996.
95. Wong Ngum Yin to cousins at Yuen Wo, July 1906, in Inspector to CGI, Oct. 29, 1906, File 13928, CGC.
96. Testimony of Fong Tim, Dec. 1, 1899, File 34240/8-19, CAF, SF.
97. Testimony of Wong Hong and Chew Dong Ngin, Dec. 6, 1899, File 34240/8-19, *ibid*.

98. Testimony of Lee Jung and Ching Bow, June 5, 1903, File 37775/9-25, *ibid*.
99. File 16327/3-15, *ibid*.
100. W. Chen, "Chinese under Both Exclusion and Immigration Laws," 402.
101. George Pippy to Treasury Secretary, July 24, 1899, File 624, CGC.
102. File 26002/1-9, CAF, SF; interview with Wallace Lee.
103. Lowe, *Immigrant Acts*, 9. See also, in general, Yung, *Unbound Feet*.
104. File 5-12-84/SS Oceanic, CAF, SF.
105. File 4098, Oct. 15, 1901, CGC.
106. Attorneys Stidger and Kennah to Commissioner of Immigration, Mar. 9, 1915, File 14144/5-6, CAF, SF.
107. See letters, 1889-91, to the Secretary of State and the Treasury Secretary, CCF.
108. File 9267/11, CAF, SF.
109. McConnell Jenkins to James Blaine, Jan. 3, 1890, CCF.
110. Report of Papers of Leong Fook On, Mar. 21, 1899, CGC.
111. Acting Treasury Secretary to John H. Wise, Sept. 7, 1895, GCC.
112. Frank B. Lenz to Charles Mehan, Jan. 25, 1915, File 14071/11-20, CAF, SF.
113. Ng Poon Chew to Samuel W. Backus, Jan. 26, 1915, File 14071/11-20, *ibid*.
114. Pascoe, *Relations of Rescue*, 78-79, 104, 106, 118, 167.
115. Yung, *Unbound Feet*, 66; Pascoe, *Relations of Rescue*, 96-98, 186-87.
116. Donaldina Cameron to Commissioner of Immigration, Jan. 26, 1916, File 14894/2-2, CAF, SF.
117. See, generally, McClain, *In Search of Equality*.
118. John Wise to Charles H. Page, 1895, GCOCC.
119. Oscar Greenhalgh to Walter S. Chance, Mar. 11, 1899, File 52730/84, INSSC.
120. W. Chen, "Chinese under Both Exclusion and Immigration Laws," 428-29, 6.
121. All data compiled by author and derived from a random sample survey of 608 immigration records of Chinese individuals who entered the United States through the port of San Francisco from 1884 to 1941 (CAF, SF).
122. Attorneys could examine only the stenographer's record of the hearing. They could not view the service's internal analysis of the case (Salyer, *Laws Harsh as Tigers*, 149).
123. See, for example, George McGowan in File 16288/14-15, CAF, SF.
124. John D. Nagle, "Comment on Proposed Chinese General Order No. 11," Aug. 1927, File 55597/912, INSSC.
125. McClain, *In Search of Equality*, 93, 336 n. 43, 345-46 n. 18.
126. Stidger's position is referred to in Fong Wing to Samuel Backus, May 6, 1915, File 14315/4-8, CAF, SF.
127. Stidger, "Highlights of Chinese Exclusion and Expulsion."
128. Around 1921, McGowan and Worley apparently disbanded, but each continued to represent Chinese immigrants (George A. McGowan to Edward White, Feb. 9, 1921, in File 19938/6-8, CAF, SF).
129. Papers of Wong Bing, Aug. 26, 1903, File 19981/4-29, *ibid*.
130. Henry Kennah served as an inspector from 1903 until 1912.
131. See firm letterhead in Thomas R. McGrath to Edward White, May 13, 1920, File 19034/16-17, CAF, SF.
132. O. L. Spaulding to Daniel Manning, Nov. 2, 1885, CCF.
133. *Chung Sai Yat Po*, Jan. 30 and 31, 1906.
134. *Ibid*., Feb. 27, 1906.

135. Ibid., Jan. 1, 1910; Nov. 22, 1906.

136. File 18703/13-5, CAF, SF.

137. The excludable classes under the general immigration laws included, among others: idiots, feeble-minded and insane persons, persons likely to become a public charge, persons afflicted with a contagious disease, prostitutes and other immoral aliens, procurers of prostitutes, contract laborers, illiterates, and alien enemies.

Part Three

1. Salyer, *Laws Harsh as Tigers*, 37. See also Wu, "Chinatowns," 102 and Hsu, *Dreaming of Gold*, 71-85.

2. Andreas writes: "Characterizing the state as simply reacting to a growing border problem fails to capture this dynamic. Even while failing to control illegal border crossings, law enforcement has shaped their location, routes, methods, and organizations." See Andreas, *Border Games*, 7, 12, 22-23, 25.

3. Gutiérrez, *Walls and Mirrors*, 254 n. 64.

4. See, for example, Ko-lin Chin, *Smuggled Chinese*, and Paul J. Smith, ed., *Human Smuggling*.

5. Haines and Rosenblum, *Illegal Immigration in America*, xi.

6. Gutiérrez, *Walls and Mirrors*, 254 n. 64.

7. Haines and Rosenblum, *Illegal Immigration in America*, xi.

Chapter Five

1. Testimony of Lim Wah, 12020/22130, Dec. 2, 1932, Box 13, IF, SF.

2. Since illegal immigration is, by nature, difficult to quantify and detect, this estimate is speculative. Government figures recorded only the numbers of immigrants caught while crossing the border and do not account for those who were successful in evading the authorities. Because no full record exists for both the northern and southern border, this estimate is also compiled from a number of sources. See *AR-CGI* (1903), 102; Paulsen, "Yellow Peril," 113-28; *AR-CGI* (1910), 146; and Fry, "Illegal Entry," 173-77.

3. Index to the *San Francisco Call*, 1894-1903.

4. The INS apprehended 450,152 individuals in the area surrounding the San Diego border during the fiscal year of 1994 alone. See U.S. Dept. of Justice, INS, "Operation Gatekeeper." On the regulation of immigration across the northern and southern borders, see Dunn, *Militarization of the U.S.-Mexico Border*; Andreas, *Border Games*; and Ramirez, *Crossing the 49th Parallel*. Studies that do acknowledge the significance of Chinese immigration and exclusion along the U.S.-Mexican or U.S.-Canadian border include Sánchez, *Becoming Mexican American*; Delgado, "In the Age of Exclusion"; and Sadowski-Smith, "Undocumented Border Crossings."

5. For studies related to the American West and to the northern and southern borderlands that use transnational and hemispheric frameworks, see Peck, *Reinventing Free Labor*, 1-7; Truett, "Neighbors by Nature," 3; and Sabin, "Home and Abroad," 308, 311, 333. See also Thelen, "Nation and Beyond," 965-75.

6. Resident Chinese laborers who had been in the United States at the time of the act's passage were allowed to reenter the country (David Lai, *Chinatowns*, 52).

7. "Chinese in B.C.," *Puget Sound Argus* (Port Townsend, Wash.), June 15, 1883; "More About the Chinese," *ibid.*, July 9, 1883.

8. An Act to Restrict and Regulate Chinese Immigration into Canada, July 20, 1885, ch. 71, 1885 S.C. 207-12 (Can.); Roy, *White Man's Province*, 59-63; Wynne, "Reaction to the Chinese," 483; Con and Wickberg, *From China to Canada*, 55, 57.

9. *AR-CGI* (1903), 97.

10. Canadian Royal Commission on Chinese and Japanese Immigration, "Report," 271, cited in Zhang, "Dragon in the Land," 238; U.S. Congress, House, Select Committee, *Investigation of Chinese Immigration*, 1.

11. Ralph, "Chinese Leak," 517.

12. From 1901 to 1903, for example, the bureau reported that 3,445 Chinese crossed the Canadian border and entered the United States. Of those, 1,782 were released and 1,663 were eventually deported ("Arrests of Chinese Persons Crossing the Land Boundaries of the United States," *AR-CGI* [1903], 102).

13. An Act Respecting and Restricting Chinese Immigration, July 18, 1900, ch. 32, 1900 S.C. 215-21 (Can.); An Act Respecting and Restricting Chinese Immigration, ch. 8, 1903 S.C. 105-11 (Can.). For U.S. government complaints, see *AR-CGI* (1904), 138; *AR-CGI* (1910), 143; and *AR-CGI* (1911), 159.

14. Marcus Braun to CGI, "Report," Sept. 20, 1907, File 51630/44D, p. 31, INSSC.

15. Roy, *White Man's Province*, 67; Ralph, "Chinese Leak," 515.

16. David Lai, "Chinese Opium Trade," 23; Ralph, "Chinese Leak," 520-23; De Loreme, "United States Bureau of Customs," 77-88.

17. Kim and Markov, "Chinese Exclusion Laws," 16-30; *AR-CGI* (1903), 98-99.

18. U.S. Congress, Joint Special Committee, *Reports on Charge of Fraudulent Importation of Chinese*, 8.

19. Reynolds, "Enforcement of the Chinese Exclusion Law," 368; *AR-CGI* (1904), 137-41; *AR-CGI* (1909), 128.

20. Stanford, *Chinese Americans*, 106.

21. U.S. Dept. of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of Immigration, *Facts Concerning the Enforcement*, 63.

22. *AR-CGI* (1909), 130.

23. "Statements Made Before W. B. Howell, Assistant Secretary, in Reference to the Unlawful Admission of Chinese Persons into the United States," Nov. 26, 1898, File 53266/58-A, INSSC.

24. Richard H. Taylor, Immigrant Inspector, Buffalo, to Inspector in Charge, Niagara Falls, N.Y., Apr. 7, 1915, File 53788/1-V, *ibid.*

25. *United States v. Wong Kim Ark*, 169 U.S. 649, 694 (1898).

26. *AR-CGI* (1903), 96-97.

27. Salyer, *Laws Harsh as Tigers*, chs. 2-3.

28. John E. Gardner to F. P. Sargent, May 30, 1903, File 7808, CGC; U.S. Dept. of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of Immigration, *Facts Concerning the Enforcement*, 95-96.

29. Salyer, *Laws Harsh as Tigers*, ch. 3.

30. *AR-CGI* (1897), 758; *AR-CGI* (1904), 149, 626; U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Immigration, *Alleged Illegal Entry*, 153; Zhang, "Dragon in the Land," 349-50.

31. U.S. Dept. of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of Immigration, *McGettrick Certificates*, 1.

32. Ralph Izard to Walter S. Chance, Oct. 11, 1898, File 53266/588, INSSC.

33. John H. Clark to CGI, Oct. 27, 1911, File 52150/1, *ibid.*

34. *AR-CGI* (1903), 101.

35. Yen, *Coolies and Mandarins*, 292; Craib, "Chinese Immigrants," 8, 22, 24; Hu-DeHart, "Racism and Anti-Chinese Persecution," 2-4, 13.

36. Hu-DeHart, "Racism and Anti-Chinese Persecution," 2-3; Hu-DeHart, "Immigrants to a Developing Society," 276-82, 294; Craib, "Chinese Immigrants," 8; Cumberland, "Sonora Chinese," 195-96. Anti-Chinese sentiment in Mexico even turned to violence and all Chinese were expelled from Sonora in the 1930s.