

Timeline of Chinese Immigration and Exclusion

- 1842** China lost the First Opium War to Britain. The Qing Dynasty signed a treaty favorable to British trade interests and ceded Hong Kong Island to the British Empire.
- 1848** Gold was discovered at Sutter's Mill, California; thousands of Chinese immigrants departed from Hong Kong to mine for gold in California.
- 1850** California instituted the Foreign Miners' tax, which targeted Chinese and Latino miners.
The Taiping Civil War began in China. 20-30 million died as a result, and millions more were displaced by its end in 1863.
- 1852** Approximately 17,000-25,000 Chinese in California.
- 1854** California Supreme Court ruled that Chinese did not have the right to testify against white citizens in *People v. Hall*.
- 1860** United States trade with China tripled from 1845 levels.
China lost the Second Opium War to France and Britain. The Qing Dynasty signed a treaty favorable to Western interests, including the legalization of the opium trade.
- 1865** Central Pacific Railroad recruited workers directly from China.
- 1868** China and U.S. signed the Burlingame Treaty. It guaranteed Chinese immigration to the U.S., protection of Chinese citizens, and helped U.S. trade interests in China.
- 1869** First transcontinental railroad completed.
- 1871** A white mob tortured and hanged 17 to 20 Chinese in Los Angeles.
- 1873** Panic of 1873 led to a major economic depression in the U.S. The effects of the depression were felt into the 1880s.
- 1877** A white mob rioted against Chinese in San Francisco, killing several and extensively damaging Chinese-owned property.
- 1878** A U.S. federal court ruled in *In re Ah Yup* that Chinese were not eligible for citizenship.
- 1879** New California State Constitution forbade corporations and governments offices in California from employing Chinese.
- 1880** Approximately 105,000 Chinese in America (less than 10% of California's population); California passed anti-miscegenation law (Chinese and whites could not marry).
- 1882** Chinese Exclusion Act restricted Chinese immigration (in one year, the number of new lawfully admitted Chinese immigrants dropped from 40,000 to 23).

Document A: Pioneer Laundry Workers Flyer (Modified)

The document below is an 1878 flyer by the Pioneer Laundry Workers Assembly in Washington D.C. The group was part of the Knights of Labor, an influential labor union in the United States at the time.

MEN FROM CHINA come here to do LAUNDRY WORK. The Chinese Empire contains 600,000,000 inhabitants.

The supply of these men is **inexhaustible**. Every [Chinese man] doing this work takes BREAD from the mouths of OUR WOMEN. So many have come of late, that to keep at work, they are **obliged** to cut prices. . . .

Will you oblige the AMERICAN LAUNDRIES to CUT THE WAGES OF THEIR PEOPLE by giving your **patronage** to the **CHINAMEN**? We invite you to give a thorough investigation of the STEAM LAUNDRY BUSINESS of the country; in doing so you will find that not only does it EMPLOY A VAST NUMBER OF WOMEN, but a great field of labor is opened to a great number of mechanics of all kinds whose wages are poured back into the trade of the country.

If this undesirable element "THE CHINESE EMIGRANTS" are not stopped coming here, we have no alternative but that we will have California and the **Pacific Slope's** experience, and the end will be that our jobs will be eliminated UNLESS we live down to their animal life.

We say in conclusion that the CHINAMAN takes labor from our country without the returning prosperity to our land the way the labor of our labor does to our glorious country.

Our motto should be: OUR COUNTRY, OUR PEOPLE, GOD, AND OUR NATIVE LAND.

Source: 1878 flyer by the Pioneer Laundry Workers Assembly.

Vocabulary

inexhaustible: unlimited

oblige: force

patronage: business

Chinaman: a term for someone from China that is now outdated and offensive

Pacific Slope: the American West

Document B: *New York Herald* (Modified)

A financial crisis triggered a “panic” in 1873, and a six-year economic depression followed.

Effect of the Panic: Trade and Transportation Unusually Dull.

The express companies are suffering very materially from the crisis. . . . The Southern steamers and the railroads that generally do a large business in carrying freight to the West are experiencing the effects of the panic in a way that is proving quite unprofitable. . . .

The sales of houses have not been numerous enough of late to be worth talking about. . . .

There has been a large **diminution** in the business of importing. It results not less from the unwillingness on the part of importers to form new contracts than from the decrease on the part of the consumer and the **retailer**. In other words, the crisis seems to have taught a widespread lesson—a little **economy** and less extravagance. . . . The country will lose from the depression of the retail trade many millions of dollars. When so many hundred thousand people are thrown out of employment, and money becomes **stringent**, a drop in the overall economy will occur. . . .

The decline in cotton prices has been continuous. . . .

The grocery trade has suffered severely in consequence of the panic. . . .

Source: *New York Herald*, Tuesday, November 4, 1873.

Vocabulary

diminution: reduction
economy: tight budgeting

retailer: seller of goods
stringent: scarce

Document C: Congressional Testimony of California Attorney General (Excerpted)

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

Source: *Frank Pixley, former Attorney General of California, in testimony to the Joint Committee of the two Houses of Congress on Chinese Immigration, October 21, 1876.*

Vocabulary

assimilate: become like

homogeneous: the same, alike

Document D: Wong Ar Chong's Letter (Modified)

Wong Ar Chong was a Chinese American tea merchant in Boston. He wrote this letter to William Lloyd Garrison, a prominent abolitionist and social reformer. Garrison had publicly debated Senator James G. Blaine of Maine, arguing against the senator's support for banning Chinese immigration.

The able Senator from Maine says the Chinese must go. . . . I claim for my countrymen the right to come to this country as long as other foreigners do. . . .

The Honorable Senator calls us **heathens**, but I should judge from the tone of his letter that he was somewhat lacking in Christian charity. Let him look at the records of fire in Chicago and yellow fever in New Orleans, and he will find **Chinamen** giving as much as any other people.

He says that China people pay no taxes in this country, but I think if he will look into the matter he will find that they pay as much taxes in California as any other foreigners. . . .

He says that China people are not healthy, do not keep their places as clean as other people, that they smell badly, etc. I could mention several other nationalities, each having its own particular smell. . . . If the Chinese are allowed to come to this country and enjoy the same privileges as the people from any other foreign land, they will educate themselves and conform to your laws and manners and become as good citizens as any other race. . . .

The Chinese must not be blamed because other men have no work. It is not their fault. If merchants carried on business within their means, instead of failing and going through **bankruptcy**, then laboring men would have plenty of steady work.

Source: *Letter from Wong Ar Chong to William Lloyd Garrison, February 28, 1879.*

Vocabulary

heathens: derogatory word for people who aren't Christian

Chinaman: a term for someone from China that is now outdated and offensive

bankruptcy: financial failure

Chinese Immigration and Exclusion: Graphic Organizer

Why was Chinese immigration restricted in 1882?

STEP 1: Read the timeline carefully. Write a hypothesis for why Chinese immigration was restricted in 1882.

STEP 2: Read Documents A-D. For each, write any evidence you find for why Chinese immigration was restricted in 1882.

<p>Document A: <i>Pioneer Laundry Workers Flyer</i></p>	<p>Focus Questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Who wrote the document?2. Who did this organization represent?3. Why might the members of this organization have held these views? <p>What evidence does this document provide about why Chinese immigration was restricted in 1882?</p>
<p>Document B: <i>New York Herald</i></p>	<p>Focus Question:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. How might the economic conditions described Doc B have influenced the opinion of the Pioneer Laundry Workers in Doc A?

<p>Document B: <i>New York Herald</i> (continued)</p>	<p>Does this document provide evidence about what led to the restriction of Chinese immigration in 1882? Why or why not?</p>
<p>Document C: Congressional Testimony of Frank Pixley</p>	<p>Focus Questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What is Pixley's argument for ending Chinese immigration?2. Where had Pixley been attorney general? How might this corroborate information in the timeline?3. Where did Pixley give this testimony? What does this suggest about American voters' opinions about Chinese immigration? <p>What evidence does this document provide about why Chinese immigration was restricted in 1882?</p>
<p>Document D: Wong Ar Chong's Letter</p>	<p>Focus Questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Who wrote the document? How was the author's perspective different than the authors of the other documents?2. Despite the differences in perspective, how does the author's letter corroborate Document A? How does it corroborate Document C? <p>What evidence does this document provide about why Chinese immigration was restricted in 1882?</p>

Chinese Immigration and Exclusion Essay

In the space below, answer the following question: *Why was Chinese immigration restricted in 1882?*

Write a clear thesis sentence and support it with evidence from the documents and the timeline.