

INSTRUCTOR GUIDE

# CHINESE IN AMERICA

An IHI Curriculum

500

YEARS

OF

IMMIGRATION





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Front Page Illustration: “Empress of China” Arrival in Whampoa in 1784, Raymond Massey



## Note to Instructors

Welcome and thank you for teaching this course.

The object of the course is simple: to educate young people about the rich history of Chinese people in America, which is often left out of textbooks. We originally designed this course to teach young Chinese Americans in Chinese Schools; however, the curriculum can be easily adapted to other educational environments. We were inspired to start teaching this course because of anti-immigrant beliefs and policies that have resurfaced in force over the past several years. Many of the same things that have happened to Chinese immigrants in the past are happening again today to other immigrants, including newly arrived Asian immigrants. Rhetoric used to justify Chinese Exclusion included arguments that Chinese immigrants could never become American because they're dirty, dangerous, and unassimilable. Contemporary parallels to this kind of language are everywhere, with the current U.S. president as the most vocal mouthpiece. These racist ideas are effectively deployed to garner widespread support for discrimination and exclusion.

Asian Americans are the fastest growing demographic among undocumented immigrants in the United States today, and we believe that the knowledge imparted by this course will resonate with our students, even as certain parts of the Chinese community grow more conservative. As such, we hope that three overarching themes of the course will help develop young people into leaders for a more just, inclusive, and colorful America.

- 1) **Social Justice.** Many of the problems that we face today as a community stem from the same fundamental problems of racism and xenophobia that plagued Chinese communities a hundred years ago. The course's topics aim to gradually introduce students to complex theories behind a progressive vision for social justice, including ideas like systemic white supremacy. We hope you will leave your students with a critical framework they can use not only to understand our current reality, but also to imagine a better future.
- 2) **Community.** In many ways, things seem to have come a long way from the time of Chinese Exclusion. Some of that is because of historical coincidence, but most of it is because of the courage of communities to take action against injustice and inequality. There is power and hope in building community, and the foundation of building pan-ethnic coalitions rests on empathy and understanding. We hope that this course will show your students

the importance of taking action, as well as the value in working with other communities.

- 3) **Voice.** The value of this course is premised on the idea that knowledge is power, and that education can unify and galvanize communities. Common experiences tie the Asian American community together, but these perspectives and voices have been silenced in mainstream history classes. We must regain the power of these common narratives by remembering them and passing them on. Ultimately, we want students to leave the course with the understanding that the history of the Chinese in America is part of their heritage, and to never doubt that their voice and their story have power. And we hope they will one day use that power to improve the world that we live in.

We wish you luck, and we hope you will find teaching this course as rewarding as we did!

Happy teaching,

Julia Wang & Kathy Lu



## How to Use this Guide

Based on the needs of the pilot program in New Haven, this curriculum was built as a **semester-long class** comprising eleven class sessions, including one introductory session attended by interested parents and one end-of-semester “celebration” session, where families are invited to come see the students give final presentations. Our pilot program model used two co-teachers who jointly taught the class in a local Chinese School every week. Each class session is designed to take **45 minutes** to teach, but can be easily adapted to be shorter or longer depending on your individual educational needs.

We have found that **high school students** are the most suited to learning the class material. They have often already learned important foundational information from other parts of U.S. history, such as the Civil Rights Movement and World War II, and they tend to be mature enough to handle the more difficult topics, such as anti-Asian violence.

The start of each lesson plan begins with a **Key Ideas** section meant to summarize the most important takeaways each student should learn by the end of the lesson. The Key Ideas section is then followed by a list of **Required Materials**. Throughout each lesson plan, we include tips for instructors, such as optional details to add or questions to ask students, as **Suggestions** that are marked by the lightbulb icon.

As you will see, class sessions typically take the following format:

- 1) **Journal Reflections:** At the start of the class, students spend about five minutes sharing what they wrote in response to the previous week’s journal prompt.
- 2) **Class Presentation & Discussions:** The class then transitions into teacher-led lectures. These presentations **should not take longer than 25 minutes**, and they should be guided with visuals from a Class PowerPoint (see attached PowerPoint folder). Discussions are typically interspersed throughout the presentation.
- 3) **Journaling:** Classes will usually end with students spending 5-8 minutes writing in their journals in response to the given prompt.

## General Teaching Tips

- This class is designed for **co-teachers**, which also builds in leeway for occasional absences due to illness. We have found it most effective to have co-teachers alternate between leading discussions versus giving presentations. Ex: Teacher A will give the lecture while Teacher B will lead the interspersed discussions in one week, and the positions will be flipped the next week. This kind of set arrangement keeps classes as organized as possible even with multiple teachers.

- Because discussions are a big emphasis in the class, we recommend arranging the seats into **a large circle** so that students can see each other's faces.
- Chinese Schools and other heritage language schools typically take place over the weekend or during weekday evenings, and students may find it difficult to focus. To help combat this, make the class presentations as **interactive** as possible, and ask questions of the students even when not specifically built into the curriculum.
- We find that using Powerpoint presentations with mostly **visual sources** have been effective in keeping the students' attention and inspiring questions and discussion. To that end, we have attached a visual companion of helpful images with their sources in the Appendix—but these images should only be a starting point! Take the time to search for other pictures that will make your lecture more engaging. Please cite their sources in your Powerpoint to indicate that the images' usage fall under Fair Use in the Copyright Act.
- High school students may be a little rowdy, so reference the **ground rules** (outlined in the **Introductory Session**) whenever necessary to reinforce them. Otherwise, letting things slide may make the class unmanageable later on.
- Some high school students will already be conditioned to **take notes** throughout the session. If they are, encourage them to do so, as it will help with information retention. If they do not take notes automatically, however, we recommend letting them simply listen. We have found that the class material is engaging enough to hold students' attention without forcing them to take notes, and we are hoping to make the class somewhat of a safe haven from the drudgery of high school.
- You should use your budget to obtain nice mini-size journals for the students—it's always more fun to write in something prettier. We *highly recommend collecting the journals* at the end of each class and storing them for students during the week. Otherwise, students will inevitably forget the journals at home, causing unneeded hassle.

## Reading List

Instructors are encouraged to read through the following book list before teaching the course, especially if you do not have a strong background in Chinese American history already. Articles and specific chapters in each book are highlighted below as **must-reads** if time is limited and indicate for which class they would be most helpful.

- *The Making of Asian America*, Erika Lee (2015)
  - Introduction & Chapter 1 (Lesson 1)
  - Chapters 3-4 (Lessons 2-3)
  - Chapter 9 (Lessons 4-6)
  - Chapters 12-13 (Lessons 4-6)

- *A New History of Asian America*, Shelley Sang-Hee Lee (2014)
  - Chapter 2 (Lesson 1)
  - Chapter 6 (Lesson 4)
  - Chapter 8 (Lesson 5)
  - Chapters 11-12 (Lessons 6-7)
- *The Good Immigrants: How the Yellow Peril Became the Model Minority*, Madeline Hsu (2015)
- Uyematsu, Amy. "The Emergence of Yellow Power in America (an excerpt)." *Gidra*. October Issue. 1969. <https://www.dartmouth.edu/~hist32/Hist33/Uyematsu.PDF>
- Ishizuka, Karen. *Serve the People: Making Asian America in the Long Sixties*. Verso, 2016.



## Introductory Session

*An introductory session can be helpful for classes that have just been introduced to Chinese Schools. Because parents will be unfamiliar with a class like this one (e.g., “Why would I want my child to learn history in Chinese School?”), an introductory session will help drum up interest and hopefully increase student enrollment for the next lesson, during which teachers will begin teaching the actual substantive material. For this introductory session, parents should be invited to come and ask questions during the first half of the class, and then students will engage in introductory activities.*

- Materials:**
- 1) Printer paper (for I Am/I Am Not activity)
  - 2) Colored pens or similar (for I Am/I Am Not)
  - 3) Whiteboard markers or chalk
  - 4) Small journals for each student
- 

### I. General overview of the class (15 min.)

- Students will learn about the history of Chinese in America
  - History is long and rich, spanning more than three centuries
  - Chinese Americans have made significant contributions to U.S. society
  - This history is not taught in schools because it is not valued → Chinese Schools are an ideal setting to learn about this forgotten part of our heritage
- Students have the opportunity to develop important college-preparatory skills:
  - Critical thinking and analysis
  - Research, especially primary sources
  - Discussion
    - Each class session includes college-style seminar discussions
  - Writing
- Any questions from the parents?



*Give parents the opportunity to leave, as the rest of the session will be directed towards students, unless they would like to observe.*

### II. Student introductions (7 min.)

- Go around the circle and ask students to provide their:
  - Name
  - Grade
  - School
  - Favorite memory from the summer or winter break

- If there is time, play an icebreaker.



*Suggested icebreaker: Two truths and a lie (it can be played while sitting and gives students an opportunity to share more about themselves).*

### III. Ground Rules (5 min.)

- Remind everyone that this is a community, and we want to create a space where everyone's input is valued. Write ground rules on the board as they are introduced.
- 1) One mic
  - One person talks at a time.
  - If you have a question or comment during lecture, raise your hand.
- 2) Open heart, open mind
  - Be open and respectful to other people's views.
  - Work well together.
  - Be focused – We know it's the weekend, but try to stay focused. Ask questions if there's anything that you don't understand.
- 3) Step up, step down
  - Speak up if you haven't spoken all class!
  - Try to speak less if you realize you've been dominating the conversation.
  - We want to hear from a diversity of views; everyone has something to add.

### IV. "I Am/I Am Not" Activity (15 min.)

- **Drawing (5 min.)**
  - Have participants write words or draw images on a sheet of paper. On one side, write "I am not..." and fill in the statement with all the things that people assume about you because of your race or ethnicity. On the other side of the paper, write "I am..." and fill in the statement with things that represent who you are, your complexities, the way you fit people's assumptions and the ways you don't.
- **Sharing & Debrief (10 min.)**
  - Ask each participant to share their "I am not" and "I am" statements, and choose one statement from each side of the paper to explain. Allow audience to ask follow-up questions.
  - For debrief, ask:
    - What were some themes you heard, or things that people shared that you really agreed with?
    - What does this tell us about what it means to be Asian American?
    - Why have people chosen to identify as "Asian American"? Why not just "Asian" or just "XXX/ethnicity"?

- V. Why this class? (3 min.)**
- “I Am/I Am Not” activity highlights stereotypes of Asian Americans now, and how they are not accurate reflections of us as individuals
    - But where did these stereotypes come from? [e.g., Were Asians always so studious/quiet?] This course looks at the origins of some of these stereotypes and pull back the curtain on perceptions toward Chinese Americans and Asian Americans.
  - How many of you are taking A.P. U.S. History or planning on it? Have you ever learned about the history of Chinese or Asian immigrants in this country?
    - We’re not spotlighted in history.
    - There are all these stories, many hidden and unknown, that most of us never learn about. We think that’s pretty problematic considering Asians are the fastest growing population in the United States.
    - There is a long and rich history. We didn’t all come here at once, despite what stereotypes say.
  - We hope this is an interesting and fun class, and you’ll develop some really important skills, such as analytical thinking and public speaking, along the way.
    - To help with the last point, we’re going to give everyone journals that we’ll leave time for you to use and reflect in at the end of every class.
  - Structure of the class:
    - Start with journal sharing for 10 minutes.
    - Then, lecture and discussion.
    - Finally, leave 5-10 minutes for reflection in journals.



## LESSON ONE | First Chinese in America

**Key Ideas:**

- *Chinese people have roots in America dating as far back as before the American Revolution.*
- *Trade, economic opportunities, and imperial aspirations created routes of exchange.*
- *These routes allowed Chinese (and other Asian) people to leave Asia and settle in the New World.*

**Materials:** 1) Class PowerPoint  
2) Whiteboard markers or chalk  
3) Student journals



### Discussion Module (10 min.)

When did you or your parents come to the United States?

What year do you think the first Chinese came to the Americas? Which part of America?

*Suggestion: Write guesses about the first Chinese on the board.*

#### I. When did the first Chinese come to America?

- To understand this, we first have to look at Chinese history:
  - The most recent dynasty was the Qing dynasty (dynasties indicate the period of Chinese history, ruled by a particular family). During the Qing, China vastly expanded its empire.
  - Because China was very large and bordered other lands and the sea, by the 1700s there was a lot of trading between China and other countries. Important ports, like in Guangzhou (Canton), connected Chinese merchants and sailors to the outside world.

- Merchants from China also left to trade elsewhere, such as in Singapore, Malaysia, and the Philippines. Many of them stayed and married local women, forming families and communities there.
- As early as the 1500s, Chinese sailors worked on ships that sailed from the Philippines to Spanish territories in North and Central America.
  - 40,000-100,000 Asians came to Acapulco during this time period.
  - Asian crewmembers received half or none of the wages they were promised (compared to Spanish sailors). The journey was so difficult that many of them refused to sail back to Asia and instead took their chances in the Americas.
- Other than sailors, Asian slaves from India, Burma, Macau, etc. were also transported to the Americas.



*Suggestion: Introduce this last point by telling students that one other major category of Asian immigrants who were NOT sailors also came during this time period. Ask for guesses. Then ask students whether they have ever learned in schools about slaves who were not black.*

## II. Why did the first Chinese come to America?

- This had to do with the Spanish Empire:
  - Christopher Columbus sailed to the Americas in 1492 in search of Asia, or India to be exact. Europeans wanted to trade with places like India and China for spices, silk, and tea. Explorers like Columbus went in search of Asia.
  - By 1565, Spain had established colonies in the Philippines and many places in Latin America. Ships went back and forth to trade tea and spices (which arrived in the Philippines from other places in Asia) in exchange for gold and silver. This was the beginning of the Trans-Pacific trade.
  - At this time, people already moved a lot within Asia, taking ships to different places for trade. Chinese sailors were already in the Philippines, working on merchant ships. Many of them were hired by Spanish ships going to the Americas from the Philippines carrying spices, silk, tea, and other things they wanted to trade for silver.
- Later, trade of the British Empire brought more Chinese people to the Americas:
  - The East India Company traded with China, because of the high demand for tea, china, and silk in Britain and the United States (“China-mania”).
    - George Washington owned several “exotic” Chinese tea sets as prized possessions.
  - Even the early United States wanted to establish trade with China. In 1783, the ship *Harriet* went from Boston to China, only a few days after the British retreated from the U.S.! She carried North American ginseng to China and brought back teas, silks, porcelains, and fans.

### **III. Where did they go?**

- Chinese sailors left Asia in ships sailing to America, and some of them stayed when they arrived. Some settled in California, then a Spanish settlement, and others lived in South and Central America, such as modern-day Mexico, Chile, and Peru.
- Some Chinese came to the United States in the late 1700s and early 1800s. There were early settlements of Chinese in cities such as New York, Boston, and Baltimore.
  - The most famous early Chinese woman in America was Afong Moy. Advertised as a “beautiful Chinese lady,” she was “on exhibit” as part of circuses across cities on the East Coast. She was showcased in a “Chinese Saloon,” often for eight hours a day, with paper lanterns, gold and red drapes, Chinese furniture, and paintings. Many bought tickets to gawk at her. She eventually went to work in a circus, but was soon replaced by a different Chinese lady. Her fate is unknown.



*Suggestion: Ask students why they think people paid money to view a Chinese person (imagine something like that happening today!). Try to draw out responses about the “exotic” or “alien” nature of the Chinese to white settlers, and connect that to the interchangeability/disposability of Afong Moy.*



### **Journaling Module (8 min.)**

Does this history surprise you?

When you see an Asian person in the United States, do you think that person is a recent immigrant? Do other people think the same? Why? Is the same assumption made about someone who is not Asian? Why?



## LESSON TWO | 19th-Century Chinese Immigration to the U.S.

**Key Ideas:**

- *In the 19th century, the first large wave of Chinese immigrants came to the United States.*
- *Most of them were male laborers, who came to work in the mines and on the railroads. Many of them left China because of the lack of economic opportunities and political upheaval.*
- *The western side of the First Transcontinental Railroad was built mostly by Chinese workers, yet their experiences are largely absent from mainstream history books.*
- *Life was very difficult, and Chinese workers received discriminatory treatment.*

**Materials:** 1) Class PowerPoint with Promontory Point railroad photo  
2) Whiteboard markers or chalk  
3) Student journals

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**I. Journal Reflections****(5 min.)**

- Ask students to share what they wrote during last class's journaling session.



*Suggestion: Pick a student to start, then go around in a circle. Pick a different starting student for each class.*

**Discussion Module (5 min.)**

What were the reasons that your own family immigrated?

How are they different or similar to what you have learned in school about other groups of immigrants (e.g., colonists, Irish/Italian immigrants, Eastern-European immigrants, etc.)?

*Suggestion: Start off by sharing instructor's own family's experience.*

## II. Why did the Chinese leave China?

- Opportunities<sup>1</sup>
  - Most of the people who left China to come to the U.S. were from the province of Canton.
  - Canton was the province where there was most contact with the outside world because of its large port, where merchants came to trade with China. This included one very controversial product: opium.



*Suggestion: Ask students if they know what opium is. Describe its effects, and link it to today's opioid epidemic to indicate its addictive and debilitating result.*

- The opium trade led to the Opium Wars, because the British wanted to keep trading opium for tea, but Chinese officials did not want more import of opium into China because it was a very addictive drug and was ravaging Chinese society. The British did not want Chinese officials to interfere, because they knew that opium was addictive and therefore people would keep buying it in exchange for the goods Britain wanted, such as tea and china.
- The British accused China of interfering with free trade and used it as justification to start a war. They were also much more advanced in their weaponry and ships, and China lost the war. The Opium Wars occurred the first time from 1839-1842 and the second time from 1856-1860.
- When China lost the First Opium War, the officials were forced under the Treaty of Nanking to continue the opium trade and open even more ports for trading (Canton, Amoy/Xiamen, Ningpo/Ningbo, Shanghai). These new ports led to competition with Canton, which led to fewer jobs in Canton and more unemployment. People left to find more jobs.
- During the Second Opium War, which China also lost, Britain forced the expansion of the coolie trade, which recruited, sometimes forcibly, Chinese workers to go to the British colonies, especially in the Caribbean, for very little pay. These workers were supposed to replace slave labor after the abolition of slavery in the British Empire.
- The mid-1800s was a very turbulent time for China. In addition to the Opium Wars, there were many internal wars in China.



*Suggestion: If students are interested, give greater detail about the wars, especially the Taiping Rebellion (1850-1864).*

- Between 1840 and 1900, 2.5 million Chinese left China. Many of them came to North America.

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<sup>1</sup> Note to instructor: if students are too young, briefly summarize that China had many wars during this period and high unemployment, so people left to find jobs abroad; otherwise go into greater detail as below.

### **III. Why did the Chinese come to America?**

- Specific events created job opportunities.
  - 1848: Discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill; start of Gold Rush; many Chinese went to California in search of gold mountain (recall San Francisco is “old Gold Mountain” in Chinese)
  - 1863: Beginning of construction for the western line of the First Transcontinental Railroad by the Central Pacific Railroad
  - 1865: 50 Chinese were hired to work, and eventually 15,000 were hired from China, making up 80% of the workforce
  - By 1870, there were 63,000 Chinese in America, 77% in California
- Note that this was something American employers facilitated. Workers were recruited from China and promised high wages and great working conditions.
  - In addition to the Transcontinental Railroad, regional companies also hired Chinese workers.
  - This was during a time when Chinese labor was considered a potential replacement for slaves as cheap labor (this was concurrent with the Civil War).



#### **Discussion Module (5 min.)**

Why did American companies want to hire Chinese workers instead of hiring from within the United States?

*Suggestion: Discuss cheap labor and the potential for exploitation without consequences, as Chinese workers were effectively stranded in the United States (passage was very expensive) and largely unable to appeal to government authorities for help. You may also discuss the replacement of slavery with coolie labor and its justification for perpetuating slavery in the South.*

### **IV. How did the Chinese get to America?**

- Invention of steamships made travel much easier.
  - “Credit-ticket system”: The company paid for the worker’s passage, and the worker paid back fare and interest by working at the company; this often took years. (In 1865, it cost \$50-55 to go from HK to SF, which is about \$719 in 2017.)
- Journey took weeks, and people often died from illness and poor conditions on the ships.



*Suggestion: Ask students to make connections to other passages to America. Ex: slavery, indentured servitude, etc.*

## V. What was life like for the Chinese in America?

- Discrimination and unequal treatment — Chinese workers were paid much less than white workers (white workers got \$35/month + food and lodging, whereas Chinese workers got \$26-35 with no food or lodging). They also worked the most dangerous jobs (opening up the Sierra Nevada).



*Suggestion: Ask students what “a Chinaman’s chance” means. This saying used to be very popular, and is equivalent to saying “there’s no chance of [whatever].” It originated in railroad construction, where Chinese workers were forced to descend into crevices of mountains in buckets to throw lit dynamite inside, in order to widen the cracks. Many of them had “a Chinaman’s chance” of surviving because it was difficult to pull the bucket back up quickly enough to escape the explosion.*

- Bachelor societies: They had no family and no spouse (very hard for women to come to the U.S.); many intended to make enough money and go home, but often ended up spending their whole lives here.



### Journaling Module (8 min.)

Look at this famous photo of Promontory Point on the PowerPoint. This is the most famous photo commemorating the completion of the Trans-Continental Railroad. It was taken where the Eastern and Western parts of the Trans-Continental Railroad were connected and supposedly showcases this historical moment. What do you notice about this photo?

Why do you think no Chinese workers were included in this photograph even though they made up 80% of the workforce?

*Suggestion: If needed, prompt students about how foreign/non-white workers may be “invisibilized” in American history, whereas white inhabitants are glorified. Connect this to current events.*



## LESSON THREE | The Anti-Chinese Movement & Chinese Exclusion

**Key Ideas:**

- *The Chinese Exclusion Act was passed in 1882 and sought to exclude Chinese laborers from entering the United States. Chinese laborers made up almost all Chinese coming to the country.*
- *The Exclusion Act was passed after strong anti-Chinese sentiment swept the country.*
- *The Exclusion Act was the first law that banned a specific nation or ethnicity from the country – but it would not be the last.*

**Materials:** 1) Class PowerPoint with anti-Chinese ads from Exclusion  
2) Whiteboard markers or chalk  
3) Student journals

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**I. Journal Reflections (5 min.)**

- Ask students to share what they wrote during last class's journaling session.

**Discussion Module (8 min.)**

Show the anti-Chinese ads and cartoons on the PowerPoint and ask:

- 1) What is the picture depicting? Who is the person in it?
- 2) If the picture is advertising a product, what is it advertising?
- 3) What stereotypes about Chinese people are being displayed?
- 4) Are those stereotypes the same or different from common stereotypes about Chinese people now?
- 5) Why do you think these pictures portray Chinese people in this way?

**II. What led to the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act?**

- Strong anti-Chinese sentiment in the two decades leading to the Exclusion Act (1860s to 1880s)

- Economic threat to white workers: recall from Lesson 2 that Chinese workers were paid less and did more undesirable work (probably had less bargaining power).
  - From 1870-1880, Chinese immigrants only made up of 4.3% of the total number of immigrants → was there any truth to claims that the Chinese were taking over?
  - So what was the real reason?
- Racism and xenophobia (***define for younger students***): Chinese described as bringing “moral and racial pollution.” Refer back to the anti-Chinese ads.
  - Senators supporting the Exclusion Act compared the Chinese to “rats,” “beasts,” and “swine,” who competed with white workers with “machine-like” “muscles of iron.”



### Discussion Module (5 min.)

What contemporary parallels can you think of in relation to how Chinese immigrants were perceived during this time period? Do you think these racist depictions are serving the same purposes today?

*Suggestion: Discuss today’s depictions of Latinx immigrants, South Asian and Middle Eastern immigrants, and Black Americans.*

### III. How were Chinese people treated during this period?

- Discriminatory treatment in the law
  - As early as the 1850s, California passed anti-Chinese laws, either specifically targeting Chinese people (e.g. Chinese Police Tax) or only enforced against the Chinese (e.g. Foreign Miner’s Tax which collected \$5 million taxes from the Chinese—between 25-50% of California’s total state revenue!).
  - Federal laws in 1860s restricting Chinese immigration:
    - 1862: Coolie Trade Act
    - 1875: Page Act (effectively banned Asian women from entering—why? To prevent establishment of Chinese families and decrease likelihood of permanent settlement)
    - May 6, 1882: passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act
    - These were part of a series of laws that restricted the way Chinese people lived, worked, or married.
- Racial violence
  - White mobs often lynched Chinese people and ran Chinese populations out of the town.

- 1871: Los Angeles, white mobs lynched 17 Chinese men after a white policeman was shot by a Chinese suspect. 500 LA residents (10% of the city's population) formed a mob that dragged the Chinese out of their homes to gallows downtown.
- 1885: Eureka, CA – the entire Chinese community (300 in total) was rounded up after a city councilman was accidentally killed in crossfire between two Chinese people.
- 1885: Rock Springs, WY – historians have considered this the biggest lynching in American history. 28 Chinese people were killed. The rest of the Chinese population was rounded up and driven out of town into the desert.
- This was a recurring pattern. Also in 1885, a Tacoma mob forced all 800-900 Chinese residents out of the city, some of them dragged out of their houses forcibly. Many walked as many as 100 miles to find a safer city—British Columbia, Portland, OR, etc. Three days later, Seattle also demanded that all Chinese residents leave.



*Suggestion: Acknowledge that these graphic descriptions of anti-Chinese violence are difficult to grapple with, but that they are important parts of history that we must not forget. Invite reflections from students if they would like to debrief this difficult material.*



### Journaling Module (8 min.)

This journal entry will follow the format of “head, heart, and hands.” Head: Name one thing you learned today. Heart: Describe how it made you feel. Hands: What do you want to do in response?

*Suggestion: If students seem quiet or subdued because of the nature of this lesson’s material, tell them that next time, we will discuss how Chinese communities were able to resist these forms of discrimination.*



## LESSON FOUR | Resistance and Response: Fighting the Exclusion Act

**Key Ideas:**

- In addition to Chinese immigrants, other Asian immigrants also faced racism and exclusion in the law. Discrimination and xenophobia were shared experiences of many communities, including other Asian immigrant groups.
- Chinese Americans and other Asian Americans used many different strategies to resist the unfair and unequal laws that targeted them.
- Two major tools of resistance were: 1) fighting the laws in courts, and 2) resisting the laws more informally.

**Materials:** 1) Class PowerPoint  
2) Whiteboard markers or chalk  
3) Student journals

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I. **Journal Reflections** **(5 min.)**

- Ask students to share what they wrote during last class's journaling session.



### Discussion Module (8 min.)

Split the students off into pairs and ask them to brainstorm methods of resistance to racist laws such as Chinese exclusion.

How would you react if you were in their shoes?

Would you leave? Would you stay and fight for equality? If so, how?

*Suggestion: Encourage students to write down a list of responses, with reasons, and then ask each pair to share with the larger group.*

## II. How did Chinese Americans use the courts to resist racist laws?

- Chinese communities, with the help of advocates, brought cases in state and federal court arguing that the Chinese Exclusion Act and other discriminatory laws were unconstitutional.



*Suggestion: You may need to briefly explain to students what the process of challenging laws in courts entails, i.e., courts have the power to strike down laws found unconstitutional, so you can plead your case in front of a judge, and it may go all the way from lower courts to the Supreme Court.*

- ***Wong Kim Ark v. United States*** (1898): In 1898, Wong brought a case to the Supreme Court arguing that the Chinese Exclusion Act could not apply to him because he was an American citizen. Wong was born in the U.S. and went to China for a visit, during which the Exclusion Act was passed. Wong was denied entry back into the U.S., and he brought his case all the way to the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court ruled that Wong was an American citizen and not subject to the Exclusion Act, because the Fourteenth Amendment declared all persons “born or naturalized in the United States and subject to the jurisdiction thereof are citizens of the United States.” Because of the *Wong Kim Ark* decision, even though Asian immigrants could not become citizens under the laws of the time, their children who were born in the U.S. were citizens. This is also the flagship case for birthright citizenship (likely the reason why many students in the class are citizens!).
- ***Yick Wo v. Hopkins*** (1886): Many Chinese people opened laundries in the late 1800s. However, many cities passed laws that made it difficult for Chinese people to have businesses. Yick Wo was a Chinese immigrant who owned a laundry in San Francisco, which passed a law that required a license in order to open a laundry. These licenses were distributed by the Board of Supervisors, which only rejected Chinese applicants. Out of more than 200 Chinese applicants, zero were granted licenses. Out of the non-Chinese applicants, virtually all were granted licenses. Yick Wo was denied a license and arrested for operating a laundry without the license. Yick Wo brought his case all the way to the Supreme Court arguing that the discriminatory enforcement violated the equal protection and due process clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment.



### **Discussion Module (5 min.)**

The laundry license law in Yick Wo did not mention Chinese people or any other race or ethnicity. Remember that it was only explicitly racist in how it was enforced, rather than how it was written. Do you think that this law was racist or discriminatory? Why/why not?

What do you think is the difference between a law that explicitly prescribes discrimination (e.g., the Chinese Exclusion Act which explicitly targets Chinese), versus a law that sounds neutral but has a discriminatory effect?

### **III. How did Chinese Americans use other methods to resist racist laws?**

- Resisting the law:
  - **Paper sons**—many people came to the U.S. even after the passage of the Exclusion Act because they used papers claiming that they were the sons of Chinese American citizens (who had been born to the citizens' wives in China). This was very risky and incredibly difficult because of the grueling interrogation of Chinese newcomers at Angel Island (the West Coast version of Ellis Island).
  - **Border smuggling schemes** – many arrived in Canada or Mexico and used guides to cross the border secretly.
    - Special agents called “Chinese catchers” were specifically instructed to track down and arrest undocumented Chinese. In 1899, the ratio of Chinese admitted to Chinese deported was 100:4. Five years later, it was 100:61.



*Suggestion: Connect this to modern ICE raids targeting the Latino immigrants.*

- Support from the homeland
  - 1905: There was a boycott of American goods by Chinese merchants in protest of treatment of Chinese in the U.S.
- Domestic activism
  - Wong Chin Foo was a famous Chinese American activist in this time. He was the founder of the weekly newspaper called *Chinese American* in 1883. Wong also formed the Chinese Equal Rights League in 1892.



*Suggestion: Ask students why founding a weekly newspaper is so important. Emphasize the importance of communication and spreading accurate information—otherwise, Chinese communities remained isolated from each other and could not band together for greater strength.*

- In 1915, the Chinese American Citizens Alliance was formed to protect civil rights of Chinese Americans.



### Journaling Module (8 min.)

What does it mean to “resist” bad laws by breaking them? How do you feel about the paper son scheme as a way to resist discriminatory laws?

Can you connect it to other examples in history, such as civil disobedience?

*Suggestion: Depending on the age of the students, you may need to briefly describe what civil disobedience entails and the role it played in the Civil Rights Movement.*



## LESSON FIVE | The Second Generation & World War II

**Key Ideas:**

- *By the 1920s, a new generation of Chinese Americans had emerged, with different senses of identity than their predecessors. This marked the Second Generation of Chinese in America.*
- *While the Second Generation comprised U.S. citizens, they still experienced different treatment than their non-Chinese counterparts and did not enjoy full rights as citizens due to their race and ethnicity.*
- *World War Two was a turning point for the way that Chinese Americans and Japanese Americans were viewed because of the war being fought in the Pacific Theater.*
- *Chinese Americans gained elevated status due to the alliance between the U.S. and Nationalist China (led by Chiang Kai-shek), leading to the repeal of the Exclusion Act in 1943. However, the Communist takeover of China led to suspicion of Chinese Americans during the Cold War.*

**Materials:** 1) Class PowerPoint (including *Life* magazine feature)  
 2) Whiteboard markers or chalk  
 3) Student journals

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- |  |                 |
|--|-----------------|
| <b>I. Journal Reflections</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask students to share what they wrote during last class's journaling session.</li> </ul>  | <b>(5 min.)</b> |
| <b>II. Introduce Final Project</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Find a primary source significant to your family's immigration experience in the United States.           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A primary source is an object—such as a photograph, diary, or piece of art—that provides <i>firsthand evidence</i> of the time period that you are studying. Here, you can pick an old photograph, a letter from your grandparents to your parents, or even a small household item like a pouch or a fan.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Interview your relatives about the object, and write your findings into a paper. You will give a final presentation on your findings at the end of the term.</li> <li>• Give students Final Project hand-outs (see Appendix for samples).</li> </ul> | <b>(5 min.)</b> |



*Suggestion: while it is not required that teachers introduce the final project during this lesson, we recommend giving the students plenty of time (i.e. at least 4 weeks) to prepare for this assignment.*

### **III. Who else immigrated to the United States leading up to WWII?**

- During the nineteenth and the early twentieth century, other groups of Asian immigrants also moved to the United States, including Japanese, Korean, Filipino, and South Asian people.
- Similar to Chinese immigrants, these other communities of immigrants also faced discrimination. Immigrants from other Asian countries faced restrictive quotas and experienced discriminatory laws forbidding them to have legal rights such as citizenship and interracial marriage.
- In 1905, the Gentleman's Agreement signed between Teddy Roosevelt and the Japanese government provided that the Japanese government would restrict people from leaving Japan to immigrate to the U.S.
- In 1917, the Immigration Act formally prohibited immigration from East Asian countries into the United States.

### **IV. How did World War II affect how these different groups of Asian immigrants were treated?**

- World War Two was important in changing how Japanese Americans and Chinese Americans were viewed, but in vastly different ways.
- To understand why this happened, we have to look to what was going on in Asia.
- Japan bombed Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941 and the United States entered the war, first against Japan and later against Germany.
  - The war, however, had been happening in Asia for several years before then. Japan invaded Manchuria, in what is today northeastern China, in 1931; in 1937, the second Sino-Japanese War officially began after Chinese and Japanese troops clashed at Marco Polo Bridge (just outside Beijing).
  - The Chinese government (Nationalist at the time) allied with the United States, which helped the war effort against Japan. Madame Chiang Kai-shek, the beautiful English-speaking wife of the leader of the Nationalists in China, became a famous symbol of Chinese friendship and admiration. She campaigned in the United States for support in China's war efforts against the Japanese, and was the first Chinese and only second women ever to address both houses of Congress! She was frequently on "Best Dressed Women" lists in *Time* and *Life* magazines.



*Suggestion: Highlighting Song Meiling (Madame Chiang) can be interesting for students because she was a strong female figure of the time period, and she also managed to win an astonishing level of celebrity in*

*America. As a result, she was instrumental for securing American aid in the war.*

- As a result of the war, Japanese Americans were seen as suspicious, while Chinese Americans were portrayed as allies or “good Americans.”
  - Executive Order 9066—Japanese Americans were all put into “war relocation camps;” their loyalties were questioned.
    - Note that this did not happen to German-Americans, even though the U.S. was also fighting against Germany.
  - Chinese Americans were seen as “good Americans,” and Chinese American communities took up the war effort.
    - E.g. the 14<sup>th</sup> Air Service Group; Flying Tigers—fought for the U.S. in the war
    - They distinguished themselves from Japanese Americans by wearing badges indicating that they were of Chinese descent.
      - *Life* magazine ran a feature on how to tell Chinese and “Japs” apart, with side-by-side photos.



*Suggestion: The *Life* magazine feature should be included in this lesson’s PowerPoint and is a good opportunity to make the presentation more interactive. You can ask students what they see in the feature, and what their reactions are.*

- 1943—Magnusson Act repealed the Chinese Exclusion Act.



### Discussion Module (5 min.)

What factors do you think led to the repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act? What do you think were America’s primary motivations in doing so?

Should we care that the repeal was primarily due to foreign policy reasons, rather than genuine remorse or anti-racism?

*Suggestion: Students may be interested to learn that Song Meiling’s influence in the U.S. government was one pivotal factor leading to the repeal. Encourage students to think about how prominent figures in China influenced treatment of immigrants in the U.S.*



### Journaling Module (8 min.)

What do you think about the different treatment of Japanese Americans versus Chinese Americans during the war? Do you think it was right for Chinese Americans to find ways of distinguishing themselves from Japanese Americans?



## LESSON SIX | The Civil Rights Movement & the Immigration & Nationality Act

Please note that this lesson in particular is quite long. Depending on your class format, you may find it most effective to split the lesson into two separate class sessions.

### **Key Ideas:**

- *The Civil Rights Movement is an oft-studied topic in schools, but the focus has traditionally been on the efforts of a few prominent individuals, such as Martin Luther King Jr. and Rosa Parks.*
- *However, the Civil Rights Movement had its roots in grassroots organizing, which required the efforts of thousands of individuals planning and participating in protests, boycotts, and marches.*
- *The key pieces of legislation that came out of the Civil Rights Movement were: 1) The Civil Rights Act (1964), 2) The Voting Rights Act (1965), and 3) the Immigration and Nationality Act (1965). Civil Rights activists opposed the racist immigration laws that existed throughout early 20<sup>th</sup> century and also championed for the passage of more equal immigration laws.*
- *The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 changed immigration patterns to the United States and allowed many more Chinese and other Asian immigrants to come to the United States.*

### **Materials:**

- 1) Class PowerPoint
- 2) Whiteboard markers or chalk
- 3) Student journals
- 4) Video on Chinese Americans in the Mississippi (online)

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#### I. Journal Reflections (5 min.)

- Ask students to share what they wrote during last class's journaling session.

#### II. What was the Civil Rights Movement?

- Play the first 3-4 minutes from an AJ+ segment about Chinese Americans in the Mississippi (available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2NMrqGHR5zE>).



### **Discussion Module (5 min.)**

What have you learned about the Civil Rights Movement in school?

*Suggestion: Key ideas or people will likely include MLK Jr., Rosa Parks, Montgomery bus boycott, segregation, Brown v. Board of Education, etc.*

- After the Civil War and Reconstruction, the southern states instituted a system called “Jim Crow” that made African-Americans second class citizens. These state laws made it very hard for them to vote, participate in politics, go to school, get paid equally, or obtain justice under the law. Lynchings occurred frequently and with impunity.
  - Example: Emmett Till
- African-Americans were required by state law to go to separate schools, use separate restrooms, eat at separate restaurants, sit in the back of the bus, etc. in a system known as segregation. They were not allowed to marry people outside of their own race in many states.



*Suggestion: Connect segregation to the laws imposed in the West on Chinese Americans and other Asian Americans.*

- Beginning as early as the 1930s, African-American community leaders began targeted campaigns to combat Jim Crow laws and violence against African-American communities.
- The Movement culminated in the early 1960s with large protests and boycotts against segregation and led to the passage of several laws that eliminated segregation in places like schools and public spaces and protected African-Americans’ right to vote.
  - Note that the Civil Rights Movement’s success in passing the Civil Rights Act (discussed below) also eliminated these restrictions against Asian Americans.

- **Timeline of Civil Rights Movement**



*This timeline is provided mostly for the benefit of instructors. You will likely not have time in class to go into detail about these events, but it may be a good idea to highlight for students a few of the most significant milestones.*

- 1948: Executive Order 9981 (desegregated the armed services post-WWII)
- 1954: *Brown v. Board of Education* (desegregated public schools)
- 1955- Montgomery Bus boycott

- 1957- Desegregation at Little Rock. Protest of black students going to a Little Rock high school (the Little Rock Nine) got so bad that Eisenhower had to send in the Arkansas National Guard.
- 1960- Lunch counter sit-ins. Student protestors would sit in at lunch counters until they were acknowledged and served food. If arrested, other students would take their place.
- 1961- Freedom rides. In 1960, the Supreme Court decided that interstate travel should not be segregated. White and black people traveled on buses together in the face of violence and death to enforce this law (Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee).
- 1963- March on Washington to promote civil rights, where *I have a dream* speech was given. Also of note: Pauli Murray, Jane Crow, and the fight against sex discrimination.
- 1964- Freedom Summer. Freedom schools teaching black history and “Citizenship curriculum” were established, and voter registration drives were held.
- 1964 - Civil Rights Act passage
- 1965- Selma, Edmund Pettus Bridge. During the Bloody Sunday voting rights march, Alabama police attacked protesters, leading to the Voting Rights Act.

### **III. The Civil Rights Movement succeeded because of organizing campaigns that unified the strength of communities**

#### **Case Studies:**

##### *1. Montgomery bus boycott*

- Considered the first large-scale U.S. demonstration against segregation. The boycott took place for over a year, from Dec. 5, 1955 to Dec. 20, 1956.
- The boycott was sparked by the arrest of Rosa Parks, who refused to give up her seat on a bus. The City Ordinance required African-Americans to give up their seats for white passengers if the “white section” of the bus was filled.
- Rosa Parks, the secretary of the local chapter of the NAACP, was selected to represent the cause of desegregating the bus system in Montgomery. Her arrest became the call for the boycott.
  - The Women’s Political Council (a group of black women working on civil rights) circulated flyers calling for a bus boycott on December 5, the day Parks was to be tried in court.
  - News of the boycott plan spread: African-American leaders lent their support to the plan, black ministers announced the boycott in church on Sunday, December 4, and the African-American newspaper in Montgomery published a plan for action.
  - African-Americans represented more than 75% of the bus ridership in Montgomery, and for a whole year, carpools and cheap taxi rides were organized so that people could keep up the boycott. Many others also chose to walk to work.

- Ultimately, the busing law was invalidated in Montgomery federal court thanks to the five black women who brought the case. The boycott reached national attention and highlighted the struggle for civil rights across the nation.



*Suggestion: Emphasize the role of ordinary individuals, local organizations, and women.*

2. *Freedom Summer* (teaching black history, “Citizenship curriculum”)
- In 1964, the local Council of Federated Organizations working with the national civil rights groups SNCC and CORE launched a voter registration project in Mississippi.
  - MS was chosen because of its historically low levels of African-American voter registration (less than 7% of the state’s eligible black voters were registered to vote in 1962).
  - Black Mississippians and more than 1,000 out-of-state and mostly white volunteers organized voter registration drives. They established “Freedom Schools” and held courses on black history, including a “Citizenship curriculum.” The schools were meant to continue the efforts to improve voter registration.



*Suggestion: Connect these schools to efforts to have African-American history taught in schools, and why there should be similar Asian American history curriculum now.*

- Their efforts were met with resistance and violence by the local police, KKK, and even state authorities.
  - Three men working on the project—two white and one black—were found beaten to death, and their deaths led to a national outcry and precipitated the passage of the Civil Rights Act



*Suggestion: If the students are a bit older, you may find it interesting to spend time talking through the optics of two white men who died for this cause and the division it created.*

#### **IV. What was the Immigration and Nationality Act and why was it important?**

- In 1965, Congress passed the Immigration and Nationality Act, which ended the national quota system that had previously dominated U.S. immigration law (beginning with the Chinese Exclusion Act).
- The passage of the Act led to significant increases in immigration, particularly from Latin America and Asia, countries whose citizens had been severely restricted from coming to America.
- Some statistics:

- Between 1911-1920, about 5.74 million immigrants entered the country, mostly from Europe.
- During 1980s, a record 7.34 million immigrants came in to the United States. More than 80% of all immigrants came from either Asia or Latin America.
- ***Several events led to the passage of the INA:***
  1. The Cold War:
    - a. Communist takeover of China in 1949
    - b. Competition in the scientific sphere, especially the arms race: U.S. recruited Chinese scientists to come and conduct research. There was the creation of a visa scheme in the 1950s for scientists from Asia.
      - This was advantageous to the U.S., who could make sure these skilled scientists did not work for the Soviet Union instead.
      - The INA preferred immigrants who had “advantageous” skills.
  2. The Civil Rights Movement
    - a. The passage of the Civil Rights Act in 1964 eliminated the racist legal hierarchy of segregation; African-Americans and all people of color could not be discriminated against in public accommodations, employment, etc.
      - Civil rights leaders also called to end racist immigration quota systems, seeing them as a form of oppression, like Jim Crow.
    - b. The INA eliminated racial quotas that created in effect a “second class” in immigration.
- Three major changes enacted in the INA:
  - Abolished national origins quotas
  - Established preference categories based on family reunification and professional skills, which advantaged Asian immigrants (recall the visa scheme of the 1950s)
  - Established a global cap on immigration.
- Huge impact: Many more professional, highly skilled individuals were admitted under the employment preference categories
  - Began to lay the foundation for the model minority myth, building off of the “good Asian” stereotype that was already constructed during the WWII war effort, as well as the student population that was never officially excluded under the Exclusion Act.



### **Journaling Module (6 min.)**

Did any of this history surprise you? How is it different than what you learned in school?

*Suggestion: If students are puzzled as to why we didn't focus on Chinese Americans today, tell them we will discuss the impact of the Civil Rights Movement (and the INA) on Asian Americans during our next class.*



## LESSON SEVEN | Yellow Power & the Formation of Asian American Identity

**Key Ideas:**

- *In the Civil Rights Movement, the collective identity of Asian America was born. Asian American activists modeled their strategies after black activists, and students all over the country began educating themselves about common experiences through Asian American history.*
- *The rise of the Asian American identity led to more unified activism and greater political power.*
- *The Yellow Power Movement, concentrated in California, used this power to form coalitions with other non-Asian American groups and successfully agitate for common goals, such as ethnic studies programs.*

**Materials:** 1) Class PowerPoint  
2) Whiteboard markers or chalk  
3) Student journals  
4) A Song for Ourselves documentary (available online)

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**I. Journal Reflections (5 min.)**

- Ask students to share what they wrote during last class's journaling session.
- Ask students if they have any questions about the **Final Project**. Go around and share what object each student has selected as their primary source.



*Suggestion: If students encounter difficulties in getting their parents to be interviewed, pass out and discuss the handout on **Final Assignment Tips** and consider an optional module on **Oral History** (see Appendix).*

**Discussion Module (5 min.)**

We talked a lot about black activists and leaders in the Civil Rights Movement last week. Where do you think Chinese Americans were doing this movement? Thinking about yourself as a Chinese American, what role would you have wanted to play?

*Suggestion: Reference the “in-between” status discussed in last week’s video about Chinese Americans in the Deep South.*

## **II. How did the Civil Rights Movement affect Asian Americans?**

- They were hugely influenced by black civil rights leaders to engage in greater self-reflection and community education.
  - If “black is beautiful,” where are Asian Americans located in the U.S. racial landscape?
    - Note that Asian Americans have been struggling with their “in-between” status for decades.
  - They borrowed from Freedom Summer and black studies to engage in political education of their own.
    - The community educated themselves with material very similar to what we have learned in this class. Many of them were recent immigrants totally disconnected from Chinese American history. They learned about the plight of the railroad workers, Chinese exclusion, and Japanese internment for the first time.
  - This led to the birth of the collective identity of “Asian American.”



### **Discussion Module (8 min.)**

What does being Asian American mean? What are the benefits of a collective identity like Asian American? Are there drawbacks?

*Suggestion: Possible topics of discussion might include the power of community unity, the common stereotypes that all Asian Americans face, or the diversity in cultures and national origins among the Asian American community.*

## **III. What role did Asian Americans play in the Civil Rights Movement?**

- Asian American groups had long participated in local activism.
  - The Red Guard Party was a “street gang” in San Francisco modeled after the Black Panthers. They advocated for causes such as healthcare, education, and housing access in Chinatown.
  - The Yellow Brotherhood in L.A. was made up of Japanese American former gangsters who wanted to address community issues, like a drug epidemic.
- The Yellow Power Movement emerged, located mostly on the West Coast.
  - Activists participated in the Third World Liberation strikes at San Francisco State University for ethnically diverse faculty and an ethnic studies program for about five months—the longest campus strike in U.S. history! Ended in the creation of the U.S.’s first ethnic studies program.

- Education is a key to unlocking power because it can uncover common histories and unite communities.



*Suggestion: Link back to why this Chinese American History course is so important.*

- Asian Americans were also active in opposing the Vietnam War.
  - There was collective identification with the Vietnamese, as Asian Americans in the U.S. military and at home experienced racism. They were also troubled by graphic images of killed Vietnamese (with faces that looked just like theirs) on U.S. media.
- Watch an excerpt (05:30-07:00 and 08:15-15:00) from the “**A Song For Ourselves**” documentary, available at this link:  
[http://www.tadashinakamura.com/Tadashi\\_Nakamura/A\\_Song\\_For\\_Ourselves.html](http://www.tadashinakamura.com/Tadashi_Nakamura/A_Song_For_Ourselves.html)
  - This documentary spotlights Chris Iijima, a very influential singer-songwriter during the Yellow Power Movement. He used song as a tool to unify the Asian American community and raise political awareness of civil rights. Think about how this video is also using oral history as a tool! These interviews are all preserving people’s memories that are kept nowhere else but their minds; without these oral histories, they would be lost forever.



### Journaling Module (8 min.)

How did the documentary excerpt make you feel?

Were you surprised by the power of song in the Asian American movement? Why do you think people found the Yellow Pearl’s songs so compelling?



## LESSON EIGHT | Vincent Chin & Asian American Activism

**Key Ideas:**

- *The death of Vincent Chin led to nationwide, pan-Asian organizing for justice.*
- *Chin's death showed that ethnic differences among Asian groups didn't matter when it came to racially motivated violence against one particular ethnic group.*
- *The organizing around Chin's death provides one example of how Asian Americans made a tragedy a powerful mobilizing force.*
- *Thanks to the political activism of Asian Americans after Chin's death, there is greater nationwide recognition of the Asian American political entity and their history.*

**Materials:** 1) Class PowerPoint  
2) Whiteboard markers or chalk  
3) Student journals  
4) Excerpt of *Vincent Who?* documentary (available online)

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**I. Journal Reflections (5 min.)**

- Ask students to share what they wrote during last class's journaling session.
- Remind students about **final presentations**. They should plan to prepare a three to five minute presentation on their final projects. Review some basic public speaking tips:
  - Make good eye contact, and speak slowly and clearly.
  - To give your audience a visual, bring in your object (if small enough). If not, try to bring a photograph.
  - Use note cards with bullet points, and try not to read from them.



### **Discussion Module: Check In (8 min.)**

We have learned a lot of difficult history this term, particularly on the kind of oppression that Asian Americans faced and how this has shaped history. We wanted to check in with everyone on how they're feeling about this history.

*Suggestion: Encourage students to express their emotions. While there is no easy way to engage with what may be deeply painful history, emphasize some course themes:*

- Acts of bravery and refusal of passive victimization*
- Creative modes of resistance*
- Importance of community building*
- Preservation of narratives that we learned this term*

Today, we are going to learn about one example of activism in the face of racism against Asian Americans.

#### **II. Who was Vincent Chin?**

- Vincent Chin was born in Detroit in the 1960s and grew up in Chinatown.
- On June 19, 1982, on the night of his bachelor party shortly before he was to be married, Vincent Chin was beaten to death by two white men who yelled racial slurs like “Chink” and “Jap” at him. One of them yelled, “It’s because of you that we’re out of work,” assuming that Chin was Japanese. (At the time, the economy was unstable and many white auto workers blamed the Japanese car industry for “stealing their jobs.”)
- Chin’s murderers, Ronald Ebens and Michael Nitz, were eventually put on probation and never went to prison. Instead, they paid a \$3,000 fine.

#### **III. How did the Asian American community respond to Chin’s death?**

- *Vincent Who* documentary excerpt (watch 01:22-02:45):  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I\\_rwnyM1vtE&t=13s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I_rwnyM1vtE&t=13s)
- Vincent Chin’s death was a galvanizing force for both Chinese and Asian American groups.
  - Asian Americans in Detroit organized marches and protests around the city with the slogan “Remember Vincent Chin.” Soon, Asian American groups in the Bay Area, Los Angeles, New York, Chicago, and other major cities also organized around Chin’s death to advocate for civil rights for Asian Americans, including launching a Department of Justice

- investigation into the murder. (Lily Chin, Vincent's mother, was a tireless fighter for justice and became a movement leader.)
- This was the first instance of a national, widespread "pan-ethnic" Asian American organizing.
    - *Pan-ethnic* means instead of focusing on individual ethnic groups, people of Asian descent rallied around their shared experiences and struggles.
    - Asian Americans realized that assimilation and ethnic differences were not enough to prevent racism or even racial violence against them. Vincent Chin became a rallying point for an Asian American identity. Anyone who "looked" Asian was perceived to be the same as other Asians and thus were subject to common discrimination.
  - Recall our previous classes on other Asian immigrants and their experiences with discrimination.



### **Discussion Module (6 min.)**

Divide into groups of 2-3 students and discuss:

What experiences do Asian Americans have in common with each other? Have you ever experienced discrimination or racism on the basis of your race?

Do you think it's important for Chinese Americans to work with other Asian Americans in combating racism, even if it's not directed toward Chinese people specifically? Why?

*Reconvene and discuss with the whole class.*

#### **IV. What was the legacy of the Vincent Chin?**

- Asian American activists turned the tragic murder of Vincent Chin on its head: Instead of emphasizing ethnic differences, activists forged a pan-Asian identity.
  - "Asian American" is a pan-ethnic, political identity.
  - May Asian American organizations sprang up, and alliances were created between different organizations in different parts of the United States.
  - Congress-members from Michigan sponsored and eventually passed the Hate Crime Statistics Act in 1990, which requires information to be collected on anti-Asian violence and other hate crimes.
  - Asian American History month was signed into law in 1992 and designated to be May. May was chosen to commemorate the immigration

of the first Japanese to the U.S. on May 7, 1843, and to mark the anniversary of the completion of the transcontinental railroad on May 10, 1869.

- Many Asian American groups have opposed recent discriminatory policies against other groups, particularly the Muslim Ban.
  - They cited historical examples of similar injustice: Chinese Exclusion (<https://www.facebook.com/WingOnWoAndCo/photos/a.206389929723033.1073741828.158197537875606/377878142574210/?type=3&theater>), Japanese Internment ([http://www.arabamericanmuseum.org/images/q\\_1.jpg](http://www.arabamericanmuseum.org/images/q_1.jpg)).



### Journaling Module (8 min.)

This journal entry will follow the format of “head, heart, and hands.” Head: Name one thing you learned today. Heart: Describe how it made you feel. Hands: What do you want to do in response?

*Suggestion: Before journaling, emphasize to students that it's okay to feel hurt, angry, or even uncertain. Highlight that this course has hopefully shown the students that there are many ways to respond to this history and to confront the continuing inequality and oppression that exist today.*



## LESSON NINE | Archie Bunker Simulation & the Model Minority Myth

**Key Ideas:**

- *White supremacy is a systemic problem that is rooted in our institutions. Individuals can carry the project of white supremacy forward, but society's preexisting structures will tend to perpetuate inequality even without individual intervention.*
- *The Archie Bunker simulation is meant to demonstrate the systemic nature of white supremacy in a fun and interactive manner, while highlighting the "in-between" role played by different Asian American communities.*
- *The Model Minority Myth stereotypes Asian Americans as the "good minority" that has managed to achieve success in America without outside help. These kinds of "positive" stereotypes still have deeply damaging consequences because they encourage further oppression of other minority groups while keeping disadvantaged Asian American communities isolated from receiving the services they need.*

**Materials:**

- 1) Tape
- 2) Markers
- 3) Fake currency (ten \$100 bills, five \$200 bills, five \$500)
- 4) Post-it notes (with jobs written on them, including CEOs, assistant managers, managers, waiters/waitresses, and cashiers)
- 5) Name tags for participants with Group 1, Group 2, Group 3, or Group 4 written on them

### Archie Bunker Neighborhood Simulation

(30 min.)

This simulation is adapted with our gratitude from the Asian American Justice Toolkit.



*This activity is intended to be fun and interactive for the students—please encourage them to speak amongst themselves and talk back to the "mayor." The "mayor" and "police" should also improvise based on the script to adapt to the changing circumstances of the simulation (and just to keep it more spontaneous and fun)!*

### Set up (6 min.)

To begin, areas of the room will be taped off and labeled with numbers, but the participants are **not** to know what each area represents. See graphic on the following page.

Ask people to count off into four groups. No one is in Group 5 at the start of the game. Distribute name tags and tell them to stand in their group's territory. If there are not enough people (there should be at least three per group), additional teachers can act as group members. The mayor and police can be played by the same teacher/facilitator.

- The facilitator(s) will play the role of the mayor and police.
- As mayor or police, please demonstrate only tacit discrimination, not explicit. Keep an eye on different groups communicating with each other. If they do so in a way that seems “rebellious” or “disruptive,” then crack down on them based on their privilege status. Ex: Forgive them if they are in Groups 1 or 2, but send them to prison (Group 5) if they are in Groups 3 or 4.
- Avoid physical violence.

(Groups, not to be told to participants at the start of the game:

1. White
2. “Model” Asians
3. Invisibilized Asians
4. Black
5. Prison)

**Distribute wealth to the different groups:**

- Section 1 - \$500  
 Section 2 - \$300  
 Section 3 - \$100  
 Section 4 - \$100



### **Round 1: Community Expansion (8 min.)**

*Narrate:*

*Each of the sections of the room represents a different community. Please go to your assigned communities. You are to stay within your community and not leave. Your goal is to build and improve your community.*

*You all feel want to expand and grow your community. Many of you do not have enough space to thrive. With your community, come up with a statement that will convince the mayor to allow to you to expand your community.*

Give 2-3 minutes for the group members to discuss amongst themselves. Then have each group send one representative up and form a line in front of the mayor with their requests. The mayor will allow Group 1 to cut the line and hear their request first. Then the mayor listens to the other requests according to who is next in line.

*To Group 1:* Oh, you need more space? Yeah, it looks a bit crowded where you all are. Is a third of the room enough? No? You can have half the room.

*To Group 2:* You are so hardworking, so of course, you deserve more space. We will double your space.

*To Group 3:* Why do you need more space? You already have so much room and your community is flourishing.

*To Group 4:* You want more room? If you worked hard like Group 2, you can get more room. But if you really want space, you can go on ahead to Area 5. That's where you should belong anyway. [Send person to Area 5 and they are not allowed to leave]

At the end of this, Group 1 will have doubled their space and now their community takes up half the room. Group 2 also doubles in space, taking up a quarter of the room. The other communities remain unchanged.



### **Round 2: Night Patrol (5 min.)**

*Narrate:*

*It is now nighttime and the police are on patrol to make sure you are all in line with the law - to remain within the community. The police walks through each of the communities.*



*Suggestion: This activity may take longer than the class session allows. In this case, facilitator may choose to combine Round 2 with Round 3 (i.e. skip the patrol, but send Group 4 member to jail in the “Finding Jobs” round)*

*To Group 1:* I don't even need to look over this area. There is definitely going to be no trouble here.

*To Group 2:* This group of people is obeying their rules as usual.

*To Group 3:* Some of the members are almost stepping out of their boundaries, but it is fine. What trouble can they cause?

*To Group 4:* Hey [points to one of the people, regardless of if they are actually out of bounds], you are stepping out of your boundary. This is a violation of the law. You must pay a \$100 fine. Next time I catch you again, I will send you over there [points to Area 5]. Optional phrases: “This is a lawful order. Step back inside!”, “Stop resisting!”

### **Round 3: Finding Jobs (8 min)**

*Narrate:*

*Members from your community want to find jobs to support their families and themselves. The possible jobs offered at the moment, in order of descending salaries, are CEO of a tech company, manager of a consumer goods company, waiter/waitress at a dim sum restaurant, and cashier at a fast food restaurant. Discuss what jobs you would want and why, and send two representatives up for jobs.*

[3 min later] *Narrate: Line up in front of me to get your jobs. It is first come, first serve.*

Again, let Group 1 cut the line and get first pick.

*To Group 1:* What job would you like? I think both of you are fit to be CEOs of the tech company. [hands them CEO post-it]

*To Group 2:* We have manager positions open at the consumer goods company, but I don't know if you can handle being the manager. However, we do have an assistant manager position that we can offer you. [hands them assistant manager post-it]

*To Group 3:* Huh? Whaaaat aaare yoooou saaaying? I can't understand you. Speak English please or go take English classes. Since your English is so bad, it seems like you can be a waiter/waitress for the dim sum restaurant. [hands them waiter/waitress post-it]

*To Group 4:* Oh, and for you. You must be a high school or college dropout. Do you even have a diploma? One of you can work as cashier for McDonalds and the other one at

Burger King. Are you not happy? You should at least be happy I gave you a job. [hands them cashier post-it]

#### **Round 4: Promotion (8 min.)**

*Narrate:*

*It is another month and you would like raises to your job positions or your salaries. Please come up with a convincing argument for why you deserve higher pay or promotion.*

Again, Group 1 gets to cut the line.

*To Group 1:* You need more investment in your company to help expand it? Sure, we will throw a few thousand dollars into it.

*To Group 2:* You have been working pretty hard, so I guess I can promote you from assistant manager to manager. Your salary will go up by \$50.

*To Group 3:* Huh? I still can't understand you. Have you been taking English classes? You have been here for a few months and you still cannot understand English? Come back when you brush up on your language skills.

*To Group 4:* Unfortunately, cashier is the only position available right now. And you see, there is no need to increase your wage. We are abiding by the law and paying you the minimum wage. What more do you want? Besides, look at Group 2. They worked hard and look at them now. They are managers now.

#### **Final Round: Debrief and Discussion (15 min.)**

Have the students discuss in their groups the following questions. Reminder: The groups were 1) White; 2) “Model” Asians (wealthy, smart, hardworking, docile); 3) Invisibilized Asians who don’t fall into the “model” category; and 4) Black.

*Which community do you think you are and why?*

*How did the activity make you feel?*

*Why did your group get X money/space/jobs?*

*What did Area 5 represent?*

Have the students discuss their conclusions from above. Discuss the following as a group:

*How were groups pitted against each other?*

*How were the “Asian” group stereotypes used to justify violence and discrimination?*

*Who are the invisibilized Asians?*

*What are the effects of comparing invisibilized Asians to “model” Asians?*

Topics the teachers should consider discussing if time allows:

- 1) The “model minority myth” and what it is
- 2) The myth’s origin in the Civil Rights era to criticize African-American activists and pit the Asian American community against other communities of color
- 3) The costs and benefits of the myth for various groups
- 4) The effect of the myth and the “bamboo ceiling”
- 5) The mass incarceration of African-Americans
- 6) The history of SE Asian immigrants and how they are “invisibilized”
- 7) Institutions that legitimize racism and pit groups against each other (schools, government, police, housing, etc.)
- 8) The limitations of this activity (other groups and dynamics that were not represented)



## LESSON TEN | Being Chinese (and Asian) American Today

*This last class should be reserved for student presentations of final projects and concluding remarks. We encourage teachers to organize a “class party” and invite the parents to attend to hear the presentations. We have also included below a sample “local history” module to teach to the parents, as well as sample concluding remarks. Teachers should make similar remarks to tie together the themes of the course, adapting, of course, to the particular Chinese School community.*

- Materials:**
- 1) Student presentations
  - 2) Journals to return to the students
  - 3) Essays with comments to return to the students
  - 4) Materials for a final class celebration, such as food



### Class Presentations

Students should each give a 3-5 minute presentation on their paper.

They are encouraged to bring the primary source or a photo of it to show everyone.

The students should not read directly from their paper but instead make notecards with 10-15 bullet points to discuss their main ideas.

**Suggestion:** After presentations, teachers should make concluding remarks about the themes in the papers (such as resilience, courage, respect for their parents' struggles, etc.) and congratulate the students on their work.

### II. Local History (New Haven): Yung Wing and the Chinese Educational Mission

- In 1854, Yung Wing became the first Chinese student to graduate from a North American university (Yale).

- Like many Chinese laborers who came during the 1850s and 1860s, Yung Wing was from the province of Guangdong.
- However, he came from a wealthy family and was well educated. A Yale-educated missionary noticed him and brought Yung to the U.S. to study.
- Yung remained in the U.S. and even volunteered for the Union Army during the Civil War.
- Yung wanted to provide more Chinese students with the educational opportunities he had and established the Chinese Educational Mission.
  - Over a decade, he sent 120 Chinese students to American schools; those who graduated returned to China to become leaders in various fields like engineering, academia, and government.
  - Yung championed political reform in the Qing dynasty and advocated for a better relationship between China and the United States.
  - In 1876, Yale awarded him an honorary Doctorate of Laws.
- Despite Yung's status as a privileged Chinese person, he nevertheless experienced discrimination like the majority of Chinese laborers in the U.S.
  - Yung worked with merchants and scholars and even married a white American woman.
  - He became a naturalized American citizen in 1852 but had his citizenship revoked in 1902 while he was traveling in Hong Kong. He eventually returned to the U.S. illegally in order to see his son graduate from Yale.



*Suggestion: Emphasize this point to the parents, as it provides a good parallel to undocumented immigration, particularly Dreamers, today. Yung Wing had served in the army, married a white woman, and received high honors from one of the best universities in the nation, but his ethnicity was enough to doom him.*

### **III. Concluding Remarks—why teach this course? [sample]**

- This course is a continuation of Yung Wing's legacy. In this course, we learned about lives of the Chinese in America throughout the centuries that we have been here, which is a part of our heritage as today's Chinese in America. We also wanted to teach this course because the experience of Chinese, and indeed, Asian Americans is so rarely studied in schools. Yet they form an incredibly important part of American history. Chinese Americans constructed one of the most important railroads in American history, and their presence, particularly in the West Coast, shaped the outlook of the United States as a nation.
- We hope this course has shown the students not only the importance of the Chinese in America and their history, but also the need to take action and find solidarity with other groups.
- Finally, we hope the students have realized the power of their stories, and will use their voice to make a difference.

### **IV. Return papers and journals**

## Appendix

*Here you will find supplemental materials, including the visual companion, printable Final Project hand-outs for the students, and an optional Oral History module to guide students in interviewing their families for the Final Project.*

## Visual Companion

### LESSON ONE: First Chinese in America

*Qing Dynasty circa 1800s, from qingdynasty.com:*



*Spanish Empire circa 1600, from Wikipedia:*



*Manila galleons route, from Wikipedia:*



*East India Company tea, from pinterest.com:*



*Poster about the tea trade, from British Library blog ([blogs.bl.uk](http://blogs.bl.uk)):*



*Afong Moy, first recorded Chinese woman in America, from Wikipedia:*



*Property of Julia Chang Wang and Kathy Lu, not to be distributed or reproduced without owner permission*

## LESSON TWO: Nineteenth-Century Chinese Immigration to the U.S.

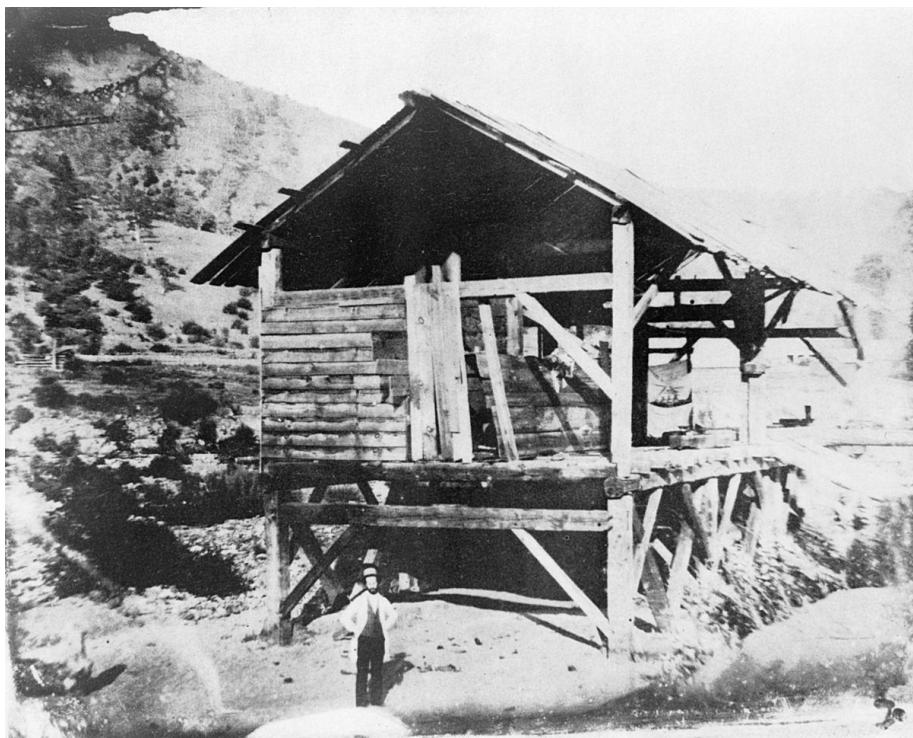
*Opium Den, from Wikipedia:*



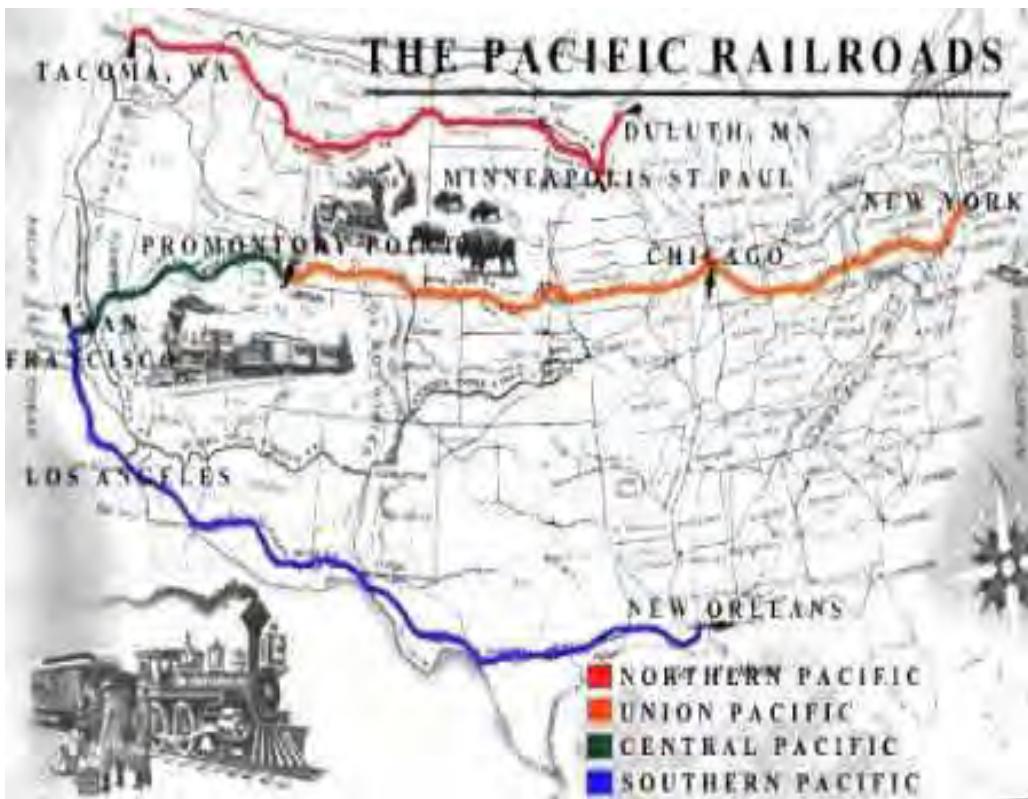
*Opium trade route, from MIT Visualizing Cultures:*



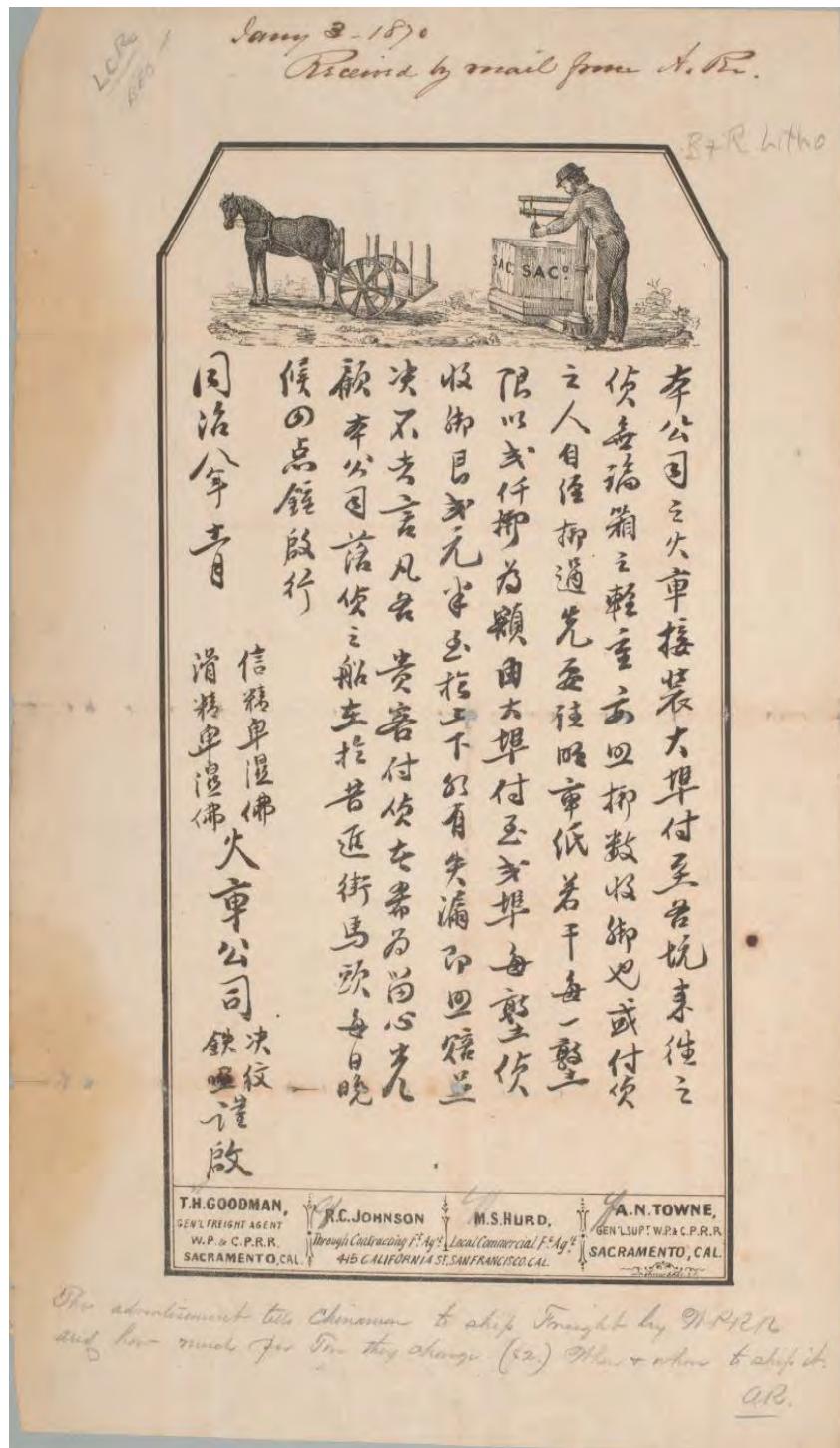
*Sutter's Mill, from Wikipedia:*



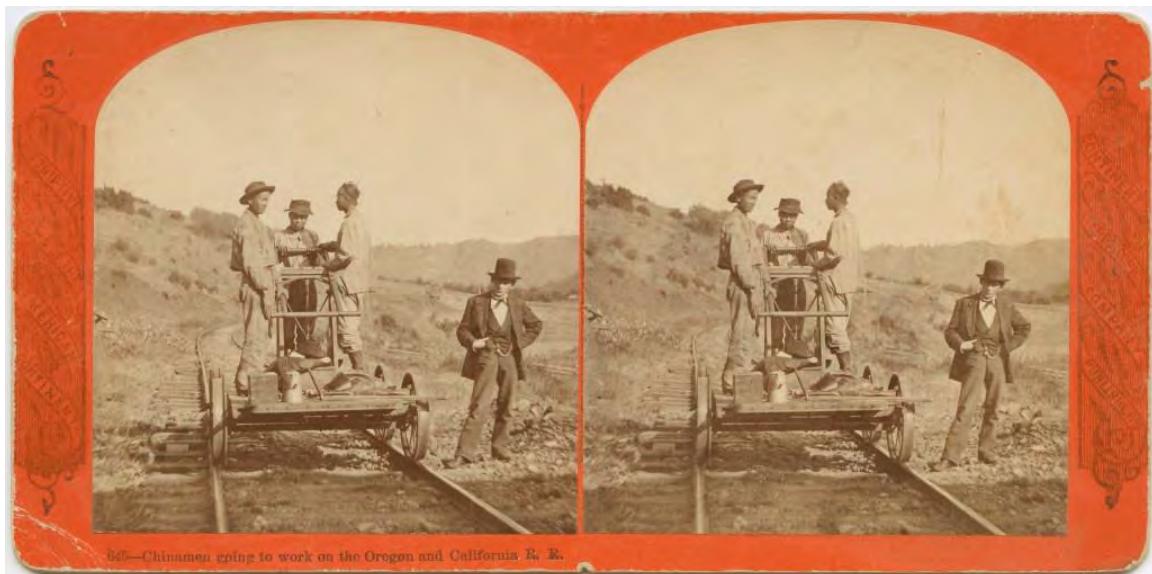
*First Transcontinental Railroad, from American Historama:*



Advertisement for Chinese laborers, from Stanford Chinese RR Workers in North America (<http://web.stanford.edu/group/chineserailroad/cgi-bin/wordpress/615>):



*“Chinamen going to work on the California and Oregon R.R.” from California History Room, CA State library, Sacramento (<http://web.stanford.edu/group/chineserailroad/cgi-bin/wordpress/981>):*

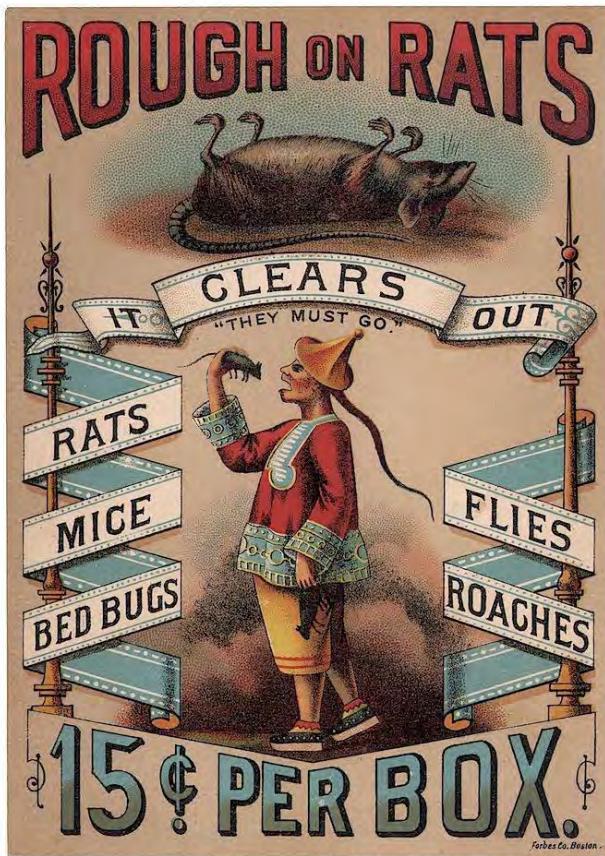


*Promontory Point, from Wikipedia:*



### LESSON THREE: The Anti-Chinese Movement and Chinese Exclusion

*Anti-Chinese advertisement, from Forbes Co. Boston*



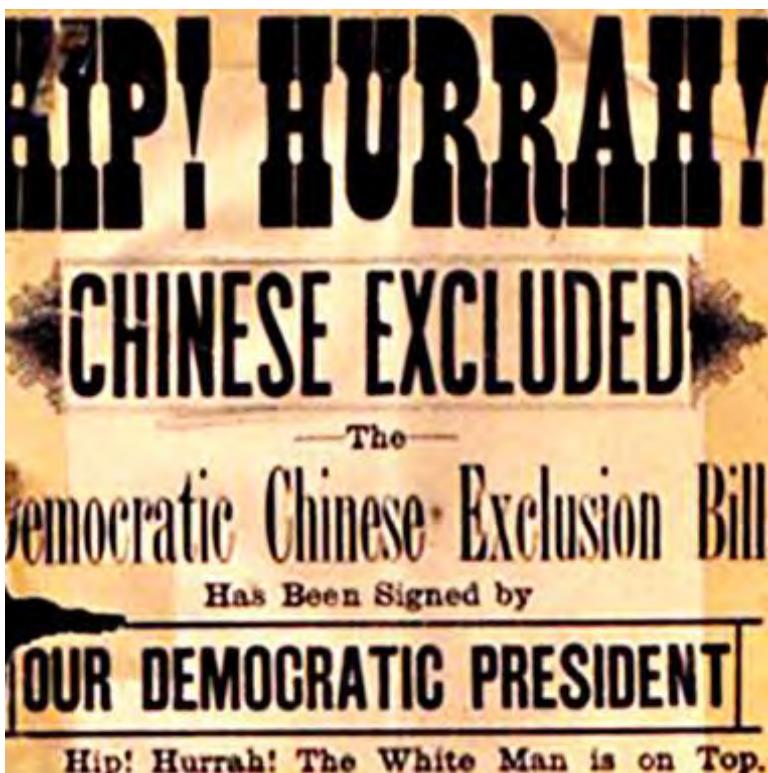
*Anti-Chinese cartoon, from Harper's Weekly (7 August 1869), Thomas Nast:*



*Anti-Chinese cartoon, from <https://chineselaundry.wordpress.com>:*



*Chinese Exclusion poster, from [historicalimages.wordpress.com](http://historicalimages.wordpress.com):*



*Rock Springs Massacre, WY (1885), from wyohistory.org:*



## LESSON FOUR: Resistance and Response: Fighting the Exclusion Act

*Wong Kim Ark, from the U.S. National Archives:*



*Chinese Laundry (Prescott, AZ), from Chinese Laundries:*



The Chinese American, from [firstchineseamerican.com](http://firstchineseamerican.com):



*Wong Chin Foo, from firstchineseamerican.com:*



## LESSON FIVE: Second Generation and World War II

*Japanese sugar plantation workers in Hawaii in 1890, from immigrationtounitedstates.org:*



*Punjabi family in America in 1900, from the Asia Society:*



*Japanese troops in China during WWII, from Sino-American Relations:*



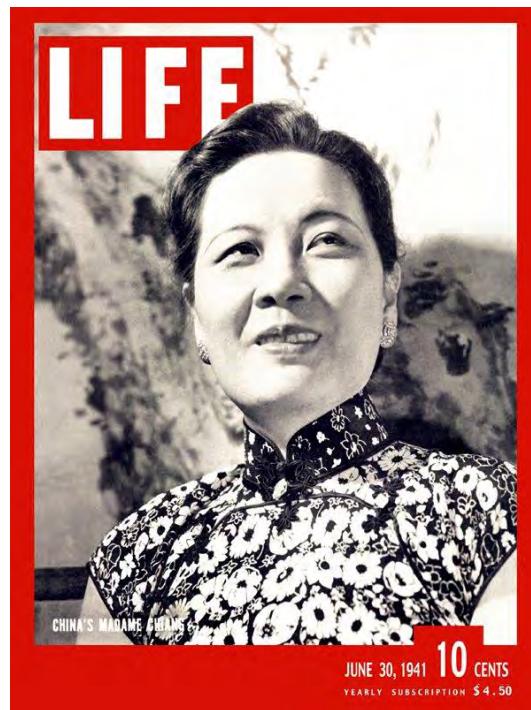
*Soong Meiling (Madame Chiang) with Eleanor Roosevelt, from ChinaFile:*



Madame Chiang Kai-Shek, from Time:



Madame Chiang Kai-Shek, from Life:



Japanese internment executive order, from history.com:



*Japanese concentration camp at Manzanar, from NPR:*



*Japanese Americans in concentration camps, from Seattle Times:*



WWII magazine cover, from Museum of Chinese in America (New York):



Life Magazine feature (Dec. 22 1941):

HOW TO TELL JAPS FROM THE CHINESE

ANGRY CITIZENS VICTIMIZE ALLIES  
WITH EMOTIONAL OUTBURST AT ENEMY

In the first discharge of emotions touched off by the Japanese assaults on their nation, U.S. citizens have been demonstrating a distressing ignorance on the delicate question of how to tell a Chinese from a Jap. Innocent victims in cities all over the country are many of the 75,000 U.S. Chinese, whose homeland is our staunch ally. So serious were the consequences threatened, that the Chinese consulates last week prepared to tag their nationals with identification buttons. To dispel some of this confusion, LIFE here adds a rule-of-thumb from the anthropometric conformations that distinguish friendly Chinese from enemy alien Japs.

To physical anthropologists, devoted debunkers of race myths, the difference between Chinese and Japs is measurable in millimeters. Both are related to the Eskimo and North American Indian. The modern Jap is the descendant of Mongoloids who invaded the Japanese archipelago back in the mists of prehistory, and of the native aborigines who possessed the islands before them. Physical anthropology, in consequence, finds Japs and Chinese as closely related as Germans and English. It can, however, set apart the special types of each national group.

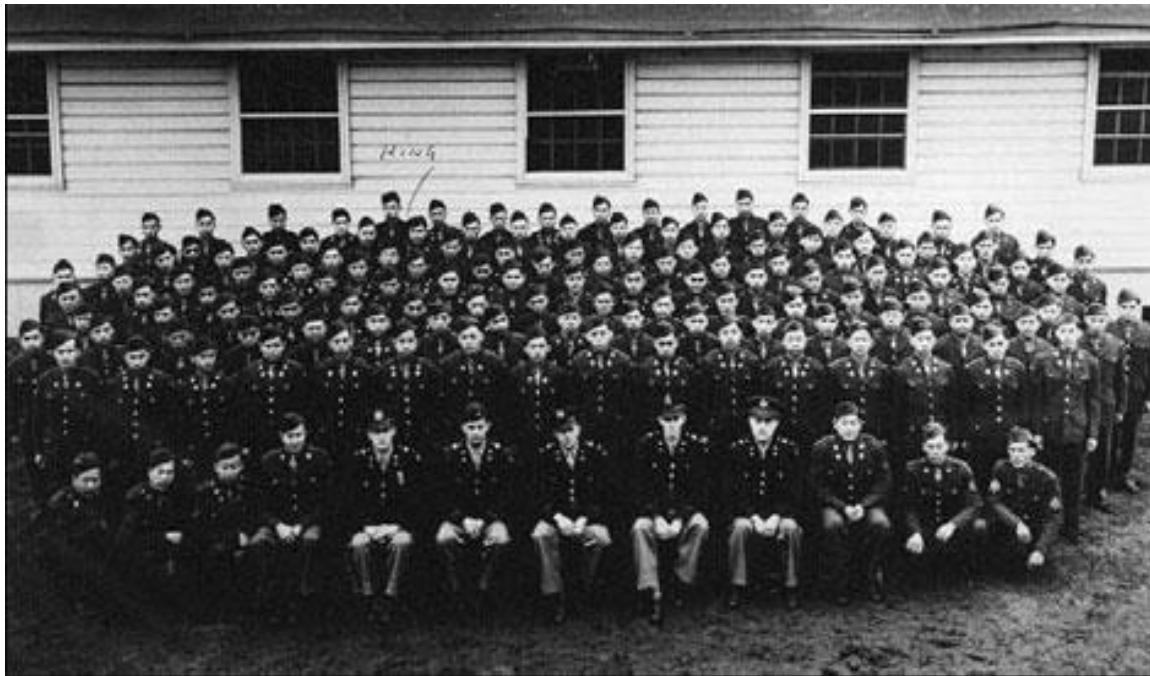
The typical Northern Chinese, represented by Ong Wen-hao, Chungking's Minister of Economic Affairs (*left, above*), is relatively tall and slender built. His complexion is parchment yellow, his face long and delicately boned, his nose more finely bridged. Representative of the Japanese people as a whole is Premier and General Hideki Tojo (*left, below*), who betrays aboriginal antecedents in a squat, long-torsoed build, a broader, more massively boned head and face, flat, often pug, nose, yellow-ocher skin and heavier beard. From this average type, aristocratic Japs, who claim kinship to the Imperial Household, diverge sharply. They are proud to approximate the patrician lines of the Northern Chinese.

**Chinese public servant, Ong Wen-hao,** is representative of North Chinese anthropological group with long, fine-boned face and scant beard. Epicanthic fold of skin above eyelid is found in 85% of Chinese. Southern Chinese have round, broad faces, not as massively boned as the Japanese. Except that their skin is darker, this description fits Filipinos who are often mistaken for Japs. Chinese sometimes pass for Europeans; but Japs more often approach Western types.

**Japanese warrior, General Hideki Tojo,** current Premier, is a Samurai, closer to type of humble Jap than highbred relatives of Imperial Household. Typical are his heavy beard, massive cheek and jaw bones. Peasant Jap is squat Mongoloid, with flat, blob nose. An often sounder clue is facial expression, shaped by cultural, not anthropological, factors. Chinese wear rational calm of tolerant realists. Japs, like General Tojo, show humorless intensity of ruthless mystics.

Chinese journalist, Joe Chiang, found it necessary to advertise his nationality to gain admittance to White House press conference. Under Immigration Act of 1924, Japs and Chinese, as members of the "yellow race," are barred from immigration and naturalization.

*First American Volunteer Group (AVG) of the Chinese Air Force, aka “Flying Tigers,” from pinterest.com:*



## LESSON SIX: Civil Rights Movement & the Immigrant & Nationality Act

*Little Rock Nine, from history.com:*



*Lunch counter sit-in, from britannica.com:*



*Rosa Parks, from historyextra.com:*



*Freedom Summer rally, from wbur.org:*



*Civil Rights Movement protest, from the New York Times:*



*Civil Rights Movement protest, from wnyc.org:*



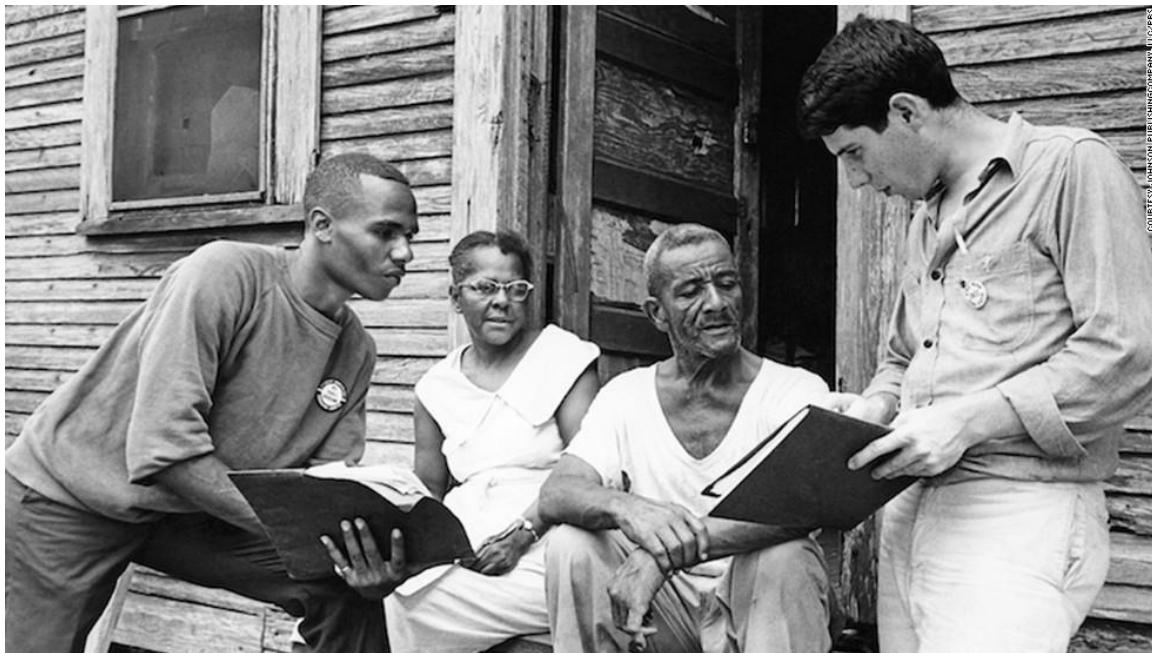
*Montgomery Bus Boycott, from history.com:*



*Montgomery Bus Boycott, from blackpast.org:*



*Freedom Summer voter registration, from CNN:*



COURTESY OF JOHNSON PUBLISHING COMPANY/LOC/PBS

*Freedom Summer murders, from PBS:*



*President Lyndon B. Johnson signing the INA into law, from migrationpolicy.org:*



## LESSON SEVEN: Yellow Power & the Formation of Asian American Identity

*Yellow Power Movement demonstration, from Reappropriate.co:*



*Yellow Brotherhood of Los Angeles, from Densho.org:*



**YELLOW BROTHERHOOD** taking to the soap and chamois at the car wash held recently at Centenary Methodist Church in Los Angeles. The

proceeds from the car wash are going toward the establishment of a youth study and recreation center in the Crenshaw area.

*Anti-War protest (1968), from Asian Community Center archives:*



*1968 campus strike for ethnic studies, from San Francisco State University:*



*Leaders of the 1968 campus strike (Richard Aoki, Charlie Brown, and Manuel Delgado), from Brown University:*

# SOLIDARITY!



*Joanne Nobuko Miyamoto and Chris Iijima (Yellow Pearl) in A Song for Ourselves, from Center for Asian American Media:*



## LESSON EIGHT: Vincent Chin and Asian American Activism

*Vincent Chin, from NBC News:*



*Justice for Vincent Chin button, from Museum of Chinese in America (New York):*



*Justice for Vincent Chin rally, from NBC News:*



## Final Project

Find a primary source from your parents' or grandparents' life that is significant for their experiences as Chinese immigrants (or children of immigrants).

Examine the primary source and interview your parents, grandparents, or anyone else who can tell you more about the primary source.

Write an essay that talks about your findings. The essay should be double-spaced, 3-4 pages for 8th graders, and 4-6 pages for high school students.

- What did you learn?
- How did it relate to our course this term?
- Did finding this primary source change the way you think about the Chinese American experience? If so, why and how?

*This essay needs to be written in complete sentences, observing grammar and spelling rules. However, it can be narrative or expository; just make sure you are answering the questions that the prompt provides.*

**Essay Due Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Presentation:** Everyone will bring in their primary source (or a photo of it if it is too fragile or precious to bring in) and talk about their findings for 3-5 minutes on \_\_\_\_\_ (our last class)

## Final Assignment Tips

**1) How to approach your parents about this assignment:**

“For my class in Chinese school, we have to write a paper about an object that is meaningful to our family’s experience as immigrants in America. Do you have anything from the early years when you first came to this country or that you brought from China?”

*Examples:* An old hat, a photograph, a dish or special chopsticks, gift from family in China, a letter, etc.

**2) Sample intro paragraph: old medicine bag**

This is a medicine bag that my grandmother gave my parents when they left for the United States. It is a small black and white cloth bag with a zipper on top. It was a makeup bag that my grandmother used to store her medicine, and she gifted it to my mother when they decided to come to the United States. One of my grandmother’s biggest fears was my mother falling ill without anyone to care for her, especially in a strange country, so the bag was one way of trying to protect my mother even from thousands of miles away. It is now worn around the edges. When my parents first arrived in New York, they kept the medicine bag in their bedroom. Whenever my mother had a cold, she took one of the many kinds of medicines that her mother had packed for her.

**3) Sample questions about the object:**

- What is this object?
- When did you get it? From where? From whom?
- What did you use it for?
- When you look at it now, what does it remind you of? Does it remind you of particular events or people?
- Has the way you use this object changed? How?
- In what way does this remind you of first coming to America?

**4) Sample questions about your parents/family’s experience:**

- When did you first come to America?
- What was life like when you first got here? (If your parents are reluctant to speak, you can give them more concrete prompts, such as: “Use 3 adjectives to describe what it was like. Why did you pick those adjectives?”)

- What did you do when you first arrived in America? How were you treated by your coworkers? Your neighbors?
- What did you miss about China when you first came here? What do you miss about China now?
- How has your life changed when you first arrived? Did you have to overcome any obstacles? What were they? How did you overcome them?
- What do you want your children to know about your experience as an immigrant?

## Optional Module: Oral History



*Suggestion: This may be covered in 7-10 minutes during a class after the distribution of the final assignment.*

### 1. **What is oral history?**

- It is the preservation of oral accounts, especially interviews, of people's experiences, both past and present, for the historical record.
- They usually take the form of recorded interviews in which the subject tells the story of his or her life experience, either in its entirety or during a specific moment or period.

### 2. **Why do we do oral history?**

- Oral history provides a rich source of information about a specific period of time.
- It often contains information that we would not be able to obtain elsewhere.
- It presents different perspectives on a particular event or time period.
- It is a great way to preserve your own family history as well as the histories of a community that might not be as well-known or studied.

### 3. **What should we keep in mind when doing oral history?**

- Because oral history involves having conversations with individuals, we want to keep in mind some things that we don't worry about when it comes to written sources:
  - **Be patient:** Your interview subject has a story to tell, but it might not come in coherent or organized form (in fact, this is true for written records as well!).
  - **Be empathetic:** Your interview subject may be telling you about a difficult or traumatic part of their past, and this may bring back emotional responses. Always be understanding and respectful of your interview subject.
  - **Be responsive:** Doing oral history requires active listening and asking follow-up questions when appropriate.

**Takeaway:** A lot of the history of Chinese Americans and Asian Americans is gathered from the oral histories of those who lived through significant moments that we discuss in this course. Oral history is one important way to preserve the experiences of those who are marginalized or underrepresented because there may be fewer representations of their experiences in books, movies, papers, etc. Oral history is also important for presenting multiple perspectives on the same event or time period.

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*Civil Rights Movement:*

- Daryl J. Maeda, *Chains of Babylon*
- Charles Payne, *I've Got the Light of Freedom*

*Immigration and Nationality Act:*

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*Third Wave/Post INA immigration:*

- Madeline Hsu, *The Good Immigrants: How the Yellow Peril Became the Model Minority*

*Legal cases:*

- *United States v. Wong Kim Ark*
- *Chae Chan Ping v. United States*
- *Yick Wo v. Hopkins*
- *Tape v. Hurley*

*Activities:*

Asian American Racial Justice Toolkit, <https://www.asianamtoolkit.org>

## Acknowledgements

*Special thanks to the following individuals for their research contributions:*

Rita Wang  
Stella Xu  
Janis Jin  
Alexander Wang

*We are additionally grateful to the Museum of Chinese in America (in New York City) for providing activity resources and images.*