In the second half of the 19th century is when immigration policy in the United States took a more discriminatory and nationalistic tone.

In response to growing laborers from Asia flowing to the West coast the Page Act of 1875. The act’s goal was to prohibit entry of immigrants considered to “undesirable” this in effect was Asian male laborers and female prostitutes. However, this would go on to practically stop all immigration of Chinese women into the USA.

There was also a $2,000 fine for those that would try to bring a person from China, Japan, or any other Asian with the intents to hire them for a long-term contract. The Page Act reinforced the stereotype that Chinese men and women were dishonest. The Page Act also responded to the perceived idea that was promoted by the American Medical Association that the Chinese brought in ”germs” that were “deadly” to Whites.

The Chinese Exclusion Act prohibited naturalization for Chinese immigration, provided deportation for those deemed to be in the US illegally (birth of illegal immigration in the US). Restricted immigration of Chinese laborers for over 10 years. It was renewed in 1892 by the Geary Act and was made permanent in 1902 and stayed in place until it was repealed in 1943.

The reasoning for this act was in response to the fear of the Chinese and cheap laborers. Here is a comic depicting the mood at the time. 

In 1885 the Alien Contract Labor Law made it illegal for immigrants to be under contract to perform work in the United States intending to come to the USA.