

"I felt the discrimination and realized that America was not a free country," Whang Sa Sun concluded. With no home government advocating on their behalf like the Japanese, Koreans were left to fend for themselves.<sup>48</sup>

Mary Paik Lee never grew accustomed to the rampant discrimination that she and other Koreans faced in the United States. Her father taught her from a young age that Koreans needed to "show Americans that we are just as good as they are" through both words and actions. She bristled at the ignorance, bigotry, and racism that she felt every day when she and her family were forced to live in the worst parts of town, called names, and forced to sit in the worst sections of the movie theater. But more often than not, she called attention to these actions and demanded equal treatment. When Mary was not allowed to enter the doors of the local Presbyterian church in Willows, California, by the minister, who told her "I don't want dirty Japs in my church," she told her friend's father, who happened to be a local judge and a member of the church. The next weekend, the minister himself came out to welcome Mary. When her English teacher consistently gave the nonwhite students lower grades than the whites, Mary protested. She recognized that Koreans were "in the same hopeless state" as African Americans and Mexicans, and in the multiracial neighborhoods in which she lived, the three groups bonded and patronized each other's stores to help out. "The first generation laid the foundation for the future by teaching their children," she explained.<sup>49</sup> Like many others in this first generation of Korean Americans, Mary and her family struggled through their first years in the United States, keeping their dreams of a better future in both Korea and the United States alive.

## South Asian Immigrants and the "Hindu Invasion"

On April 6, 1899, San Francisco newspapers reported on four Sikh men who had just arrived on the steamship *Nippon Maru*. The quartet—described as a "picturesque group"—included some of the first South Asians to ever arrive in the city. Former British Army soldiers, they had been away from their native district of Punjab for twenty years. For much of that time, they had been in Hong Kong, where at least one of them was a sergeant with the British police. Bakkshield Singh, who spoke English fluently, told reporters that the men intended to "make their fortunes" in the United States and then return home. The *San Francisco Chronicle* gushed with praise for the dashing soldiers in the service of the British crown.<sup>1</sup>

Less than ten years later, however, the same newspapers had nothing but condemnation for a different group of South Asians arriving to work in the lumber mills and on the farms and railroad lines up and down the Pacific Coast. Like other Asian immigrants, South Asians made up a fraction of the total number of foreigners coming to the United States at the time. Compared to groups like the Chinese, Japanese, and Filipinos, South Asians were even smaller. A mere 8,055 were admitted into the United States from 1910 to 1932. Nevertheless, a virulent pattern of anti-Asian racism had been set. They arrived at a time when anxieties over Chinese and Japanese

immigration were at a peak, and as headlines of a “Hindu Invasion” splashed across newspapers, all the public saw was another Asian immigrant threat.<sup>2</sup> By 1917, South Asians were excluded from the United States.

But as British subjects whose homeland was an integral part of the British Empire, South Asians occupied a unique place in the United States, and their experiences and status in America were shaped by the U.S.’s relationship with Great Britain. South Asian demands for fair treatment in the United States were also tied to British imperialism in India, for many immigrants were convinced that their unequal status in the country was directly tied to India’s subjugation under the British. Like Korean immigrants, they became increasingly involved in anticolonial and nationalist struggles to free their homeland from foreign rule. Thus, as they struggled to make a living, create families, and sustain communities in America, they also worked hard to keep the dream of a free India alive.

British colonial rule in South Asia, the end of the African slave trade in the British Empire, and the campaign to bring Asian labor to British colonies like the British West Indies helped propel 419,000 South Asians to British Guiana, Trinidad, and Jamaica as indentured laborers from 1838 to 1918. The immigration of South Asians to Canada and the United States overlapped with this mass migration. By the early twentieth century, decades of economic dislocation, high taxes, and farming losses caused by British colonial policies in South Asia had further destroyed farming families. Making matters worse, the emigrant-sending region of the Punjab (in present-day India and Pakistan), also suffered from a population explosion, droughts, famines, and severe epidemics.<sup>3</sup>

At the same time, modern transportation routes made immigration more accessible than ever before. By the end of the nineteenth century, 2,000 miles of new roads combined with 2,000 miles of railway connected the Punjabi heartland to all major cities and ports in the country. Immigrants commonly took the Grand Trunk Road and the British-built railway from Punjab to New Delhi. They could then travel by train to Calcutta, where they could board steamers to the British colony of Hong Kong. From there, international steamships could take them anywhere in the world.<sup>4</sup>

Passage to North America was much more expensive and longer for

South Asians than it was for Chinese, Japanese, and Koreans, but steamship companies were eager to facilitate immigration between South Asia and North America.<sup>5</sup> After exclusionary laws in the United States and head taxes in Canada halted their lucrative business in Chinese immigration, company agents advertised cheap fares and flooded the Punjabi countryside with flyers describing “opportunities of fortune-making” in Canada and the United States. As one immigrant from Julundra explained, the circulars typically stated that “if men were strong, they could get two dollars a day.” Forty men went abroad from his village alone in just two years.<sup>6</sup>

Relatives and friends already in North America also promoted immigration. One Punjabi immigrant recalled how reports “on the ease with which [immigrants] could make money in America” came from numerous sources and convinced him that his future lay on the other side of the Pacific. “So I decided to go,” he explained.<sup>7</sup> Dr. D. R. Davichand, a Punjabi immigrant in Vancouver, wrote such convincing letters to friends and relatives back home that he is credited with bringing several hundred Punjabis to Canada to work in British Columbian sawmills in the early 1900s.<sup>8</sup>

They were a diverse group of Sikhs, Muslims, and Hindus. The vast majority came from the Punjabi districts of Jullundur, Hoshiarpur, Gurdaspur, Ludhiana, Ferozepur, and Amritsar. Like other Asian immigrants at the time, most were young single men in their early twenties who had been independent farmers in their native villages and were seeking work as laborers in North America. But there was also a small number of students, merchants, and peddlers. Given the cost of emigration, U.S. and Canadian policies, and their intention to return home, many who were married generally left their wives and children at home. They often ended up being away for years, migrating throughout the British Empire before landing in Canada and the United States. For them, North America was often just another stop in their circuitous life of migration.

Tuly Singh Johl’s journey to Canada and the United States mirrors the experiences of many early-twentieth-century South Asian immigrants. The youngest of four brothers, Tuly grew up in the Punjabi village of Jundialla in the 1880s. With two older brothers working in the sugarcane fields of Australia, his family was just one of many that survived by sending some members abroad. By the time that Tuly himself was old enough to immigrate,

the news of good money to be made in Canada lured him away from his wife and young son. He traveled first to Hong Kong and then to Vancouver. The morning after his ship arrived in Vancouver, Tuly went to work in a lumber mill. Four months later, a visit from friends who were working in the Washington lumber mill town of Bellingham convinced him and three other men to cross the U.S. border, where South Asians could quickly find jobs at the Bellingham Bay Lumber Mill, the Morrison Mill, and Larson's Mill. Tuly earned up to \$2 a day. It was 22 cents less than what white workers received, but it was still a fortune compared to the 5 and 15 cents a day he could have expected at home.<sup>9</sup>

South Asians like Tuly Singh Johl did not have any trouble finding work. They arrived on the West Coast of the United States at a time of extraordinary economic expansion in the lumber, railroad, fishing, and agricultural industries. With Chinese, Japanese, and Korean labor immigration prohibited, the resulting labor shortage caused recruiters to turn to South Asian, Filipino, and Mexican laborers. By the 1910s, South Asians were hired in droves to keep California's agricultural industry booming. They worked in the fruit orchards of the Vaca Valley, the beet fields of Hamilton, Oxnard, and Visalia, the celery, potato, and bean fields near Stockton, and the orange groves in southern California. The work was backbreaking, and white and Japanese growers routinely discriminated against the newly arrived South Asians by paying them lower wages than other groups. In 1911, a U.S. government commission found that South Asians did the "roughest, most unskilled work" that whites shunned, and they often did it for less pay than any other group.<sup>10</sup>

Day laborers often formed work groups ranging from two to fifty members and elected a boss who negotiated the terms of their contract and managed their interests. Men often lived together, worked as a unit, and divided earnings equally. Discriminated against in the housing market, they often lived in dilapidated houses, woodsheds, or barns, sleeping in a group in one room. Under these conditions, some were able to send as much as two thirds of their wages home. Muslim workers also found ways to manage their eleven-hour workday around their faith by bringing prayer into the fields with them. Through these and other tactics, South Asians survived and carved an economic foothold in California agriculture. By 1919, South

Asians occupied over 88,000 acres of land in the state, mostly in the Sacramento and Imperial Valleys.<sup>11</sup>

Most South Asian immigrants arrived at West Coast ports and remained in California, Oregon, and Washington. But there were other, smaller groups of South Asian peddlers and seamen throughout the Northeast, Midwest, and South as well. Historian Vivek Bald has traced their origins to a group of Bengali Muslim peddlers who sold embroidered silks and other "exotic" trinkets and goods to tourists in New Jersey beach towns, cities in the South, and tourist destinations in the Caribbean and Central America. In New Orleans, where a number of Bengalis married and started families with African Americans, they occupied a racial status that traversed the segregated world of white and black. As "dark-skinned men from the East," they were members of neither group. But as Bald describes, their daily lives were embedded in working-class neighborhoods, and their families played important roles in the history of black New Orleans.<sup>12</sup>

Hundreds of South Asian seamen, including Bengali Muslims and others from the Punjab, Kashmir, and the Northwest Frontier regions of present-day Pakistan, also made new lives for themselves in northeastern port cities and in Midwest industrial belt cities. When World War I ushered in an increase in transatlantic shipping, the number of British steamships arriving in New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore rose, carrying dozens of South Asian workers who labored under indenture-like conditions in the ships' engine rooms and kitchens. Many deserted their ships and found work in the expanding shipbuilding, steelworks, and munitions factories. These ex-seamen became part of working-class neighborhoods in New York, Baltimore, and Detroit, marrying local women and forming blended families.<sup>13</sup>

Connected as they were to British imperial networks, South Asians primarily migrated to Canada and then to the United States in the early twentieth century. But small numbers came to the United States through Latin America as well. Vasaka Singh was twenty-five years old when he left his village in Lahore on a journey that took him to Europe, Central America, Mexico, and California. He first traveled to Genoa, Italy, where he boarded a steamer that took him to the Canal Zone in Panama. He worked there for a year before trying his fortune in Guatemala and then Mexico. By the time Singh arrived in Salina Cruz, revolutionary violence had made Mexico

unsafe. He fled for his life and boarded a U.S. transport ship carrying refugees out of Mexico with the hope of joining his cousin in Stockton.<sup>14</sup>

Suchiat Singh was another whose global journey took him from his home in Punjab to the Panama Canal Zone, on to Lima, Havana, and then Veracruz. “I was a farmer in my country,” he explained to U.S. immigration officials in 1914. But in Panama, he was a laborer, and in Havana he peddled cloth. His circuitous journey throughout the Americas ended at the U.S. Immigration Station on Angel Island, where he was denied admission and returned to India.<sup>15</sup>

Like other Asian immigrants in the United States, few women and families made the journey across the ocean. Traditional gender roles that discouraged women from leaving home, the expense of immigration, discrimination in the United States and Canada, and immigration policies that made it almost impossible for women and children to come kept the South Asian immigrant population mostly male.

Kala and Vaishno Das Bagai and their three sons were among the few families who did make the journey to the United States. Kala was just eleven years old and Vaishno twelve when they were married in the Punjabi city of Peshawar. The couple eventually welcomed three sons, Brij, Madan, and Ram, into their lives. In 1915, they decided to move to the United States. “Why did we come to America?” Kala pondered decades later. “The Ghadar [Indian nationalist] movement wanted to take the British out of India. Mr. Bagai was in that movement. He said, ‘I don’t want to stay in this slave country; I want to go to America where there is no slavery.’” Family and friends advised Vaishno to leave Kala and the children behind. That was the custom of most men going abroad. But Vaishno insisted, and the whole family boarded a steamship heading across the Pacific Ocean.

Unlike the majority of South Asian immigrants who came as laborers and were subjected to the U.S. government laws that barred persons “likely to become a public charge,” the Bagais had no trouble entering the country. U.S. immigration officials at the Angel Island Immigration Station were at first suspicious of the family since so few women and children were coming to the United States at the time. Indeed, the sight of South Asian women in San Francisco was such a rare occurrence that Kala Bagai’s arrival at the port was covered by the *San Francisco Call-Post* with a photograph of Kala

and her son, Ram. The article claimed that Kala Bagai was the “first Hindu woman to enter the city in ten years” and focused on the diamond nose ring that she wore. But immigration officials’ suspicion quickly evaporated when Vaishno showed them the \$25,000 in cash that he had brought with him to begin his new life. The Bagais left Angel Island and started their lives in the United States.



25. Brij, Kala, Ram, Vaishno, and Madan Bagai, c. 1920–1921.

After being admitted into the country, Vaishno relished his new life in the United States. He wore American suits, spoke English fluently, and adopted Western manners. He bought a home, ran an import business and general store in San Francisco called Bagai’s Bazaar, and became involved in the

San Francisco-based Ghadar Party, organized by South Asian immigrants to revolt against British rule on the Indian subcontinent. In 1921, Vaishno applied to federal court in San Francisco and became a naturalized U.S. citizen.

Kala, however, struggled with learning English and everyday tasks like shopping and caring for her three young boys. "In India we had servants to take care of our children, and mother-in-law, and so on. But here, when I came, we didn't have anybody, so I couldn't take care of my children," she explained. She also chafed at the harsh discrimination the family faced every day. The family achieved a dream when they bought their first home in the city of Berkeley. But when they pulled up to their new neighborhood on moving day, they found that the neighbors had locked up the house to prevent them from moving in. "All of our luggage and everything was loaded on the trucks," recounted Kala Bagai. "I told Mr. Bagai 'I don't want to live in this neighborhood. I don't want to live in this house, because they might hurt my children, and I don't want it.' He agreed. We paid for the house and they locked the doors? No." The family moved back to San Francisco and lived above their store at 3159 Fillmore Street.<sup>16</sup>

With so few South Asian women and children in the United States in the early twentieth century, the Bagais were a rare South Asian immigrant family in the country. Far more common were the multiethnic families of South Asians and Puerto Ricans, African Americans, and West Indians in the Northeast and South or Punjabi-Mexican families in southern California. In the Imperial Valley, along the Mexican border east of San Diego, Punjabis were among the newcomers who arrived after the massive Imperial Irrigation District project created hundreds of thousands of acres of fertile land. Barred from marrying white women by California's antimiscegenation laws, many South Asian men began to seek out Mexican partners around World War I. Inder Singh, an Imperial Valley farmer, told an interviewer in 1924 that his Mexican wife not only provided companionship but also economic security in spite of the Alien Land Laws that prevented him and other Asian immigrants from owning land in the state. "Through her I am able to secure land for farming. Your land law can't get rid of me now; I am going to stay." By the 1930s, a vibrant Punjabi-Mexican community had been established in the county.<sup>17</sup>

Worlds were also built among immigrants outside the formal boundaries

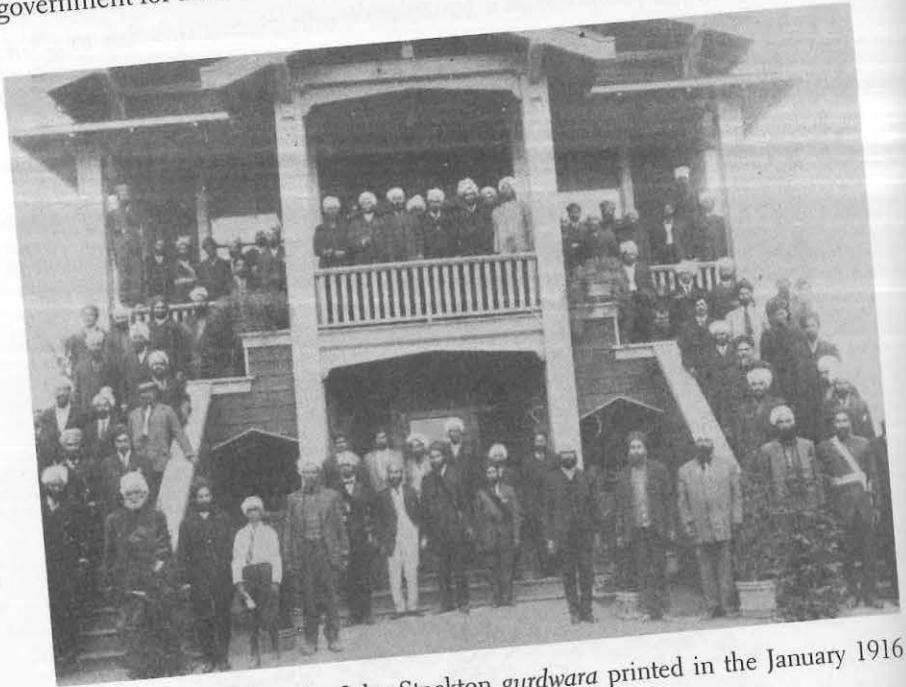
of nuclear families, ethnic neighborhoods, and community organizations. Immigrant workers on the move could still form attachments and associations among one another and across racial and ethnic lines, what historian Nayan Shah describes as "stranger intimacy." Sometimes this took the form of the work gang that acted as a cooperative unit. Sometimes this took the form of interracial sex and same sex relations. Stranger intimacy helped foster community and survival in a hostile land.<sup>18</sup>



26. Vaishno Das Bagai.

Compared to other Asian immigrants like the Chinese, Japanese, and Filipinos, South Asians found that their smaller numbers constrained their choices. There were not as many formal organizations providing assistance,

and the group lacked a central ethnic neighborhood like San Francisco's Chinatown, Seattle's Japantown, or Stockton's Little Manila. Like Koreans, South Asians were also colonial subjects and could not rely on their home government for assistance or protection.



27. Exterior photograph of the Stockton gurdwara printed in the January 1916 issue of *The Hindustanee Student*.

Despite their relative numbers, South Asians did build important community, religious, and political organizations that provided communal support, a way to practice their faith, and a means to express their growing support for Indian nationalism. The Pacific Coast Khalsa Diwan Society was formed in the early 1900s in Stockton to help Sikhs practice their faith, and by 1912 it had established the first Sikh gurdwara (temple) in the United States. By 1915, one U.S. government official reported that there were numerous gurdwaras "scattered all over the Coast."<sup>19</sup> They were primarily places of worship and faith for practicing Sikhs. But they also served as community centers and meeting places where some of the first organizations were formed to discuss Indian nationalist politics and community

affairs. The Sikh temple in Stockton also helped immigrants detained at Angel Island by summoning U.S. resident witnesses to testify in cases and paying for medical treatment at the station hospital. For many newly admitted immigrants, the Stockton gurdwara was often the first place they would go to in order to connect with family and friends and to find employment and housing.<sup>20</sup> Muslims and Hindus also relied on their own organizations. The Moslem Association of America was formed in 1919 in Sacramento. The Hindustani Welfare and Reform Society of America was founded in 1919 in El Centro, and the Hindu American Conference was formed in Sacramento in 1920.<sup>21</sup>

Along with their work, families, associations, and communities, another central aspect of South Asian American life in the early twentieth century was the Indian nationalist movement. British subjects in name, South Asians in the United States expected to have the same rights, privileges, and responsibilities as other British subjects. When the British government failed to protest the rampant discrimination that South Asians faced in North America, they realized that their equal status was merely a fiction. Increasingly, South Asians found the revolutionary message of Indian nationalists more and more appealing. They believed that if they could control their own country, they could also control their own destinies in North America.

Indian nationalist activities in North America were first organized in Canada by Taraknath Das in 1907. An educated Bengali who had arrived in Vancouver from Seattle via Japan, Das served as a translator for the U.S. government in Vancouver and helped found the Hindustan Association in Canada. He also began publishing the *Free Hindustan*, a nationalist newspaper that became the first South Asian publication in Canada. Because the paper openly advocated the cause of Indian independence, the British government closely monitored it and even went so far as to urge the U.S. government to repress publication. The United States declined to do so, but government officials did order Das to cease his involvement in the Hindustan Association or resign from his government post. Das chose resignation. The *Free Hindustan* was banned from the Canadian mails shortly thereafter, and Das moved to Seattle, where he attended the University of Washington. He continued his political work by organizing the growing number of South Asian students

arriving in the United States and Canada. He was soon joined by fellow Indian nationalist Teja Singh. They and other Indian nationalists spread news and encouraged others to join them in revolution. The movement grew from a fledgling group into a growing political force that was connected to a global anticolonial movement.<sup>22</sup>

By the 1910s, the Hindustan Association of America had chapters on a number of major university campuses. Das developed strong relationships with U.S.-based anarchists and Industrial Workers of the World leaders. In 1913, Har Dayal, a recently arrived nationalist and lecturer, helped Das organize the Pacific Coast Hindustani Association. After it had established branches up and down the coast of the United States and Canada, it renamed itself as the Ghadar Party to organize against British rule in India. The word *ghadar*, meaning “mutiny” or “revolution,” became the title for the association’s newspaper, *Hindustan Ghadar*, printed in both Urdu and Punjabi. Ghadar activities and publications aimed to engage local South Asian communities in the cause of Indian independence and to foster a collective identity for the immigrants as nationalists. Unlike earlier nationalist movements that were either reformist or religiously based, the Ghadar movement explicitly advocated revolution, by violent means if necessary. Ghadarites hoped to invade India from outside and inspire a massive revolt against British rule. Dayal and other Ghadar leaders such as Kartar Singh Sarabha, Gobind Behari Lal, Sohon Lal Pathak, and Muhammad Manlavie Baraktullah published the newspaper and traveled to farms, lumber mills, and railroad camps in both Canada and the United States to lecture about the injustices of British colonialism.<sup>23</sup>

For many South Asians, the Ghadar movement promised a way to achieve both independence in India and equal treatment in the United States and Canada. As Ghadar leader Gobind Behari Lal explained, “it was no use to talk about the Asiatic Exclusion Act, immigration, and citizenship.” Nationalists had to strike at the British because “they were responsible for the way Indians were being treated in America.”<sup>24</sup> This appeal made sense to many South Asian farmers and laborers in the United States and Canada. They made donations, joined the Ghadar Party, and the movement spread.<sup>25</sup>

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While South Asians viewed their struggles in North America as part of a global struggle for freedom in India, white Americans and Canadians viewed them as just another Asian immigration problem. South Asians were simply added to the list of despised “Asiatics” like Chinese and Japanese, and the arguments for their exclusion grew louder. The Bellingham *Reveille* editorialized that the “Hindus” were “repulsive in appearance and disgusting in their manners.”<sup>26</sup> Religious Sikh men, who wore the dastar, a turban head covering that is a symbol of the Sikh faith, were especially targeted, with one Washington newspaper describing them as “dirty and gaunt and with a roll of pagan dry-goods wrapped around [their] head[s].”<sup>27</sup> South Asians were labeled the least assimilable of all the Asian immigrants, and were, according to the 1911 U.S. Immigration Commission, a government committee charged with investigating U.S. immigration policy, “universally regarded as the least desirable race of immigrants thus far admitted to the United States.” Given the fact that the commission had just studied thirty-nine immigrant groups in the United States, placing South Asians at the bottom of the heap was significant. The commission recommended that the United States should reach an understanding with the British government to prevent “East Indian laborers” from coming to the United States.<sup>28</sup>

Racial tension and violence targeting South Asians escalated in the summer of 1907 in Bellingham, Washington, and built on the region’s established pattern of organized legal and extralegal violence directed toward Asians. Chinese miners had been driven out of Bellingham, Tacoma, and Seattle as early as 1885, and Japanese mill hands had been threatened with expulsion by whites in the early 1900s. By the summer of 1907, when South Asian workers came to Bellingham, white workers were ready. They demanded a “whites only” policy at the Whatcom Falls Mill Company.<sup>29</sup>

When a mass firing of Asian workers in the mills did not materialize, a thousand union supporters marched down the main streets of Bellingham on Wednesday, September 4, shouting “Drive out the Hindus.” At eight in the evening, a mob of white men began pulling South Asians out of their residences and bunkhouses, dragging them off streetcars, and driving them out of town or to the city jail. By the end of the night, 200 South Asians were in jail. The next day, the rest of the South Asian community gathered up what they could find of their belongings and left Bellingham by boat or train

for Vancouver, Seattle, or Oakland with the taunts of the gathered crowd ringing in their ears.<sup>30</sup>

The "Hindu problem" in Bellingham was apparently solved. Three days later, Vancouver was ripped apart by a related anti-Asian riot that swept through the Chinese and Japanese quarters and left destruction in its wake. The Gentlemen's Agreements with Japan followed, and Japanese laborers were thereafter barred from both countries.<sup>31</sup> Although South Asians were not the primary targets of the Vancouver riots, exclusionists in both countries remained focused on finding a way to stop South Asian immigration as well. Canada acted first.

Exclusionists in British Columbia called for all-out immigration restriction. But as a member of the British commonwealth, Canada had to be mindful of international relationships and imperial responsibilities. The colonial India office warned against discriminating against South Asians in Canada to avoid negative repercussions within British India. And British officials gently reminded their hotheaded counterparts in British Columbia that as British subjects, South Asians could not easily be excluded from Canada anyway. In Ottawa, officials came up with an ingenious solution. Government investigations had revealed that most South Asians had to board two ships on their journey from Calcutta to Canada; one from Calcutta to another Asian port, usually Hong Kong or Shanghai, and another to cross the Pacific Ocean to British Columbia. Canadian ministers used this information to issue an order-in-council to temporarily prohibit immigrants who had not come on a "continuous voyage" from the country of their birth or citizenship when entering Canada. Since there was no direct steamship service between India and any Canadian port, the January 1908 Continuous Journey order effectively barred South Asians without exception. This law achieved exclusion of South Asians without explicitly discriminating against British Indian subjects.<sup>32</sup>

With Canada closed, the United States became the primary North American destination for South Asian immigrants after 1908, and the numbers of South Asians entering the country grew dramatically. San Francisco quickly became the most important port of entry, and by April 1910, Hart Hyatt North, the commissioner of immigration at San Francisco, reported that "the Hindus are coming here at the rate of 80 to 100 a week."<sup>33</sup> A new phase of the "Hindu invasion" began.



28. In this 1910 cartoon, an American railroad baron welcomes two South Asians into the United States as cheap laborers. Their vermin-infested clothes and impoverished and ape-like appearance clearly mark them as "undesirable citizens," but without any restriction laws in place, throngs of other South Asians line up to enter the country. "Undesirable Citizens," *San Francisco Daily News*, June 28, 1910.

San Francisco newspapers claimed that the "Hindus" were being used as cheap laborers by "moneyed capitalists" to further degrade white workingmen. National publications referred to the "Hindu Invasion" and the "Tide of Turbans" descending on the West Coast. All of these claims had been made before to exclude Chinese and Japanese immigrants. The one original argument was that South Asians were "the most undesirable," because they were dangerous "revolutionaries" pledged to overthrow British domination.<sup>34</sup>

That South Asian immigration needed to be stopped was clear to Asian exclusionists. But like their counterparts in Canada, officials in Washington, D.C., proceeded cautiously. South Asians were technically British subjects,

and it was unclear how U.S. exclusion policies might affect British imperialism and Anglo-American relations. U.S. politicians, immigration officials, and anti-immigrant activists first looked to Canada. They praised the actions of the Canadian government in stopping the “threatened invasion of undesirable Asiatic immigrants,” as California congressman Julius Kahn explained.<sup>35</sup> U.S. commissioner-general of immigration Daniel Keefe specifically approved of Canada’s Continuous Journey law, and he exhorted his fellow immigration officials to find similar solutions.<sup>36</sup>

The fact that there was no legal way to exclude South Asians was of little concern to Keefe. “It is true, of course, that there is no law directed at the exclusion of Hindus as a race,” Keefe conceded to a fellow immigration officer. However, the commissioner continued, there were still ways to exclude them.<sup>37</sup> If the immigrants were “not found to belong to some of the definitely excluded classes such as paupers, criminals, or contagiously diseased,” for example, they should be excluded by other means, including being “persons of poor physique” or persons “likely to become public charges,” Keefe instructed in 1913. Government surgeons would then “render certificates to that effect,” thereby supporting the made-up grounds for exclusion.<sup>38</sup> For example, immigration officials might use immigrants’ “poor physical condition” to question whether they would be able to perform hard labor or become an unemployed public burden.<sup>39</sup> Americans’ staunch opposition to South Asians could also provide “practically the sole ground upon which the Department could exclude Hindus.”<sup>40</sup>

Under Commissioner-General of Immigration Keefe, U.S. immigration officials began to enforce U.S. immigration policies to achieve an informal system of exclusion. The most common tactic was to try to establish that the applicant under investigation was “likely to become a public charge” and then exclude him under that provision of the general exclusion laws.<sup>41</sup> Because the definition and context of the “likely to become a public charge” clause was so vague and subjective, excluding South Asians under this category was effective. In 1910, for example, immigration officials on Angel Island denied entry to one immigrant because he had “a very poor physical appearance,” and was “weak and emaciated looking.”<sup>42</sup> Such practices inspired Rajani Das, a U.S. government investigator, to contend that South Asians were “illegally or on small pretext detained . . . by immigration

officials.”<sup>43</sup> Statistics from the U.S. Bureau of Immigration best illustrate the stark reality of South Asian exclusion. From 1911 to 1915, 55 percent of all South Asian applicants were denied admission. In comparison, immigrant inspectors on Angel Island rejected 9 percent of Chinese applicants during the same years.<sup>44</sup>

Despite this high rejection rate, opponents to South Asian immigration remained convinced that a federal immigration law was the only permanent solution to the “Hindu problem.” Several bills were introduced into Congress in 1913 and 1914 proposing to exclude South Asians along the same lines as the Chinese Exclusion Act, but no bill resulted. Total exclusion would have to wait. In the meantime, South Asians began to organize a protest against their exclusion from North America that would have long-standing repercussions around the world.

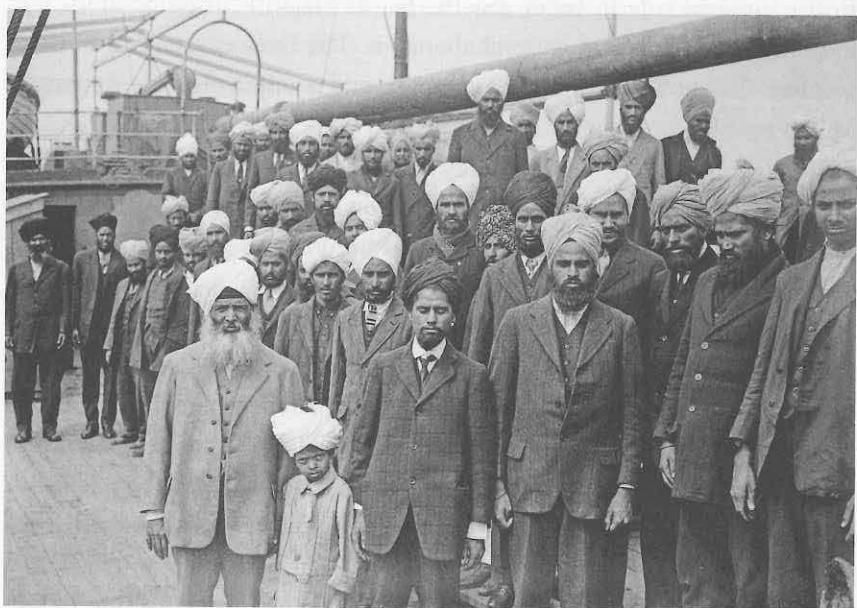
It began in Canada. Canadian lawmakers were mistaken in believing that they had completely solved the “Hindu” immigration problem with the 1908 Continuous Journey decree. South Asians, already chafing under British colonial rule in India, saw the law as blatantly discriminatory, and some launched a campaign to challenge it. The most spectacular of these involved Gurdit Singh, a Sikh contractor, and a ship called the *Komagata Maru*.

In 1914, Singh chartered a boat to bring South Asians directly from India to Canada. He advertised passage on the *Komagata Maru* and pledged “not [to] return back until the real result will be out.”<sup>45</sup> The *Komagata Maru* sailed on April 6, 1914, from Hong Kong with a Japanese crew of 40 and 165 Sikhs. In Shanghai, it picked up 111 additional passengers, and by the time it left Kobe and Yokohama, there were 376 people (340 Sikhs, 24 Muslims, and 12 Hindus, all from Punjab) on their self-designed “continuous journey” to Vancouver.<sup>46</sup> Rumors in the press began to fly around the world about the shipload of “Hindoos” destined to “force” their way into British Columbia in spite of the Continuous Journey law.<sup>47</sup> The stage was set for a showdown.

On May 21, 1914, the *Komagata Maru* arrived at Victoria harbor. Gurdit Singh announced that as British citizens, he and the passengers of the *Komagata Maru* had “a right to visit any part of the Empire. We are determined

to make this a test case.”<sup>48</sup> The *Komagata Maru* was allowed to proceed on to Vancouver, but it was not allowed to dock. Instead, she had to put down her anchor about a half mile offshore. No passengers were allowed to leave the ship, and immigration agents in Vancouver established a special patrol around the ship to prevent any passengers from escaping.

The arrival of the *Komagata Maru* set off protests by whites, who gathered at the harbor to proclaim that “yellow races are not wanted in Canada.”<sup>49</sup> But support for the *Komagata Maru* passengers also came from far and wide. Local Sikhs in Vancouver shouted words of encouragement from the docks, provided supplies, and organized fund drives to support the legal efforts. On May 31, a mass meeting of about 500 South Asians gathered in Vancouver to pledge donations and to pass resolutions to the government of India detailing the plight of the ship and its passengers.<sup>50</sup> The San Francisco-based *Ghadar* newspaper lambasted the Canadian government in its pages. U.S.-based activist Taraknath Das rushed to the border town of Sumas, Washington, to lend his support.<sup>51</sup>



29. Sikhs aboard the *Komagata Maru* in Vancouver Harbor, 1914. Gurdit Singh is at left wearing a light colored suit.

By the end of June, Singh had been negotiating with city, provincial, and dominion officials for an entire month, and time was running out for the *Komagata Maru*. On July 6, the passengers were ordered deported by the Supreme Court. Immigration officials boarded the *Komagata Maru* three days later to negotiate the ship’s departure, but tensions escalated. Passengers threatened to hold immigration official Malcolm Reid hostage unless they received food and other provisions. When the ship was again ordered to leave the harbor on July 18, passengers mutinied and refused to let the crew control the ship. Vancouver immigration officials and the local city police made plans to forcibly remove all passengers and place them on another steamship to Hong Kong. They prepared the *Sea Lion*, the largest tugboat available in the city, to effect the transfer. Immigration agent Reid brought together 175 police and special officers, including the chief of police, for the mission, which was to begin at 1:00 a.m. on Sunday, July 19.

The government’s plan went awry almost immediately. A “strenuous fight” ensued as the officers on the *Sea Lion* tried to board the ship. Passengers cut the grappling ropes and defended their ship. During the fifteen-minute battle, the tug’s windows were smashed, its captain suffered two broken ribs, and the chief of police was wounded. The police turned a water hose on the mutineers. Three gunshots came from the *Komagata Maru*. The *Sea Lion* limped back to shore with twenty injured men.<sup>52</sup>

The federal government finally intervened and sent a senior minister from Ottawa to negotiate with Gurdit Singh and the passengers. It also sent one of its two navy cruisers to assist with the task of securing the ship. By July 23, the crisis was over. The *Komagata Maru* had received provisions, the passengers gave control back to the crew, and the ship voluntarily left Vancouver harbor accompanied by the Canadian navy vessel.

The *Komagata Maru* incident had primarily been a challenge to Canada’s Continuous Journey law. But it was also part of a larger anticolonial movement in which South Asians challenged British rule throughout the empire in 1913 and 1914. The extent to which British officials felt threatened by the *Komagata Maru* challenge was made clear when the ship finally arrived in the city of Bajbaj, about ten miles from Calcutta, in September 1914. The passengers wanted to disembark and make a religious procession to Calcutta, but British police refused, fearing that they would spread

revolutionary unrest among the local population. Instead, the *Komagata Maru* passengers were ordered to board a special train that would take them directly to Punjab. The passengers resisted, and shots were exchanged. Twenty-six people died. Gurdit Singh and twenty-nine former passengers fled. Almost all of the rest were arrested and imprisoned as subversives.<sup>53</sup>

The *Komagata Maru* incident transformed the United States' own efforts to exclude South Asians. Commissioner-General of Immigration Anthony Caminetti quickly employed the specter of the *Komagata Maru* to argue that the United States was on the brink of a similar tragedy, and he urged the passage of federal legislation. In a special letter to Congressman John Burnett, chair of the Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, he concluded that the country faced nothing less than an "emergency" situation regarding "Hindu migration."<sup>54</sup>

The movement to exclude South Asians gained additional support as the U.S., Canadian, and British governments became increasingly alarmed that South Asians in North America were engaging in the Indian independence movement, promoting sedition against the British government, and even raising money to buy arms. By 1910, the United States had replaced Canada as the main site for organizing and promoting Indian nationalism in North America, and South Asian immigration became identified as a threat to national security. The Ghadar Party and its leaders, especially Har Dayal, were put under U.S. surveillance efforts that complemented the Canadian and British surveillance of South Asian communities throughout North America.

Beginning in 1911, William C. Hopkinson, the Canadian agent hired in 1908 to conduct surveillance within the Vancouver South Asian community, was also hired by the U.S. government as an immigrant interpreter in 1911. He was recognized by the United States as Canada's "best posted man on Hindu matters."<sup>55</sup> For several years, he passed information between the two governments and regularly traveled across the border to meet with informants, conduct undercover work, and gather information on Indian nationalist activities in North America. Copies of his reports routinely went to both the Canadian and U.S. governments as well as to the Colonial Office in London.

The belief that Indian nationalists posed a security threat was magnified

when Hopkinson was murdered in a Vancouver courtroom in October 1914 by Indian nationalist Mewa Singh. And when 2,000 Indians left North America in late 1914 to lead a rebellion against the British in India, the British government responded with executions, arrests, trials, and more surveillance.<sup>56</sup> Such high-profile cases lent momentum to the cause of South Asian exclusion in the United States. Linked to revolutionaries in British India and assassinations in Canada, South Asian immigration began to be viewed with increasing alarm.

By 1916, congressional debate on South Asian exclusion resumed. This time, the discussion centered on the issue of geographic exclusion or a "barred zone." The so-called Barred Zone Act was a compromise piece of legislation. On one side were the die-hard exclusionists who had fought for a bill "openly excluding all Asians." On the other side was the administration of President Woodrow Wilson, which believed that such a blatantly discriminatory clause would infuriate the Japanese government.<sup>57</sup> The compromise "barred zone" law officially excluded "inhabitants of most of China, all of India, Burma (Myanmar), Siam (Thailand), and the Malay states, part of Russia, all of Arabia and Afghanistan, most of the Polynesian Islands, and all of the East Indian Islands," with an estimated population of 500 million people. Since Chinese and Japanese had already been excluded by separate laws and diplomatic agreements, South Asian immigrants were the clear targets. On February 5, the Immigration Act of 1917 was passed with the Asiatic Barred Zone in place, and another gate was closed to Asian immigration.<sup>58</sup> At the same time, South Asians fell victim to western states' Alien Land Laws that prevented them from owning and leasing land. And in 1923, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Bhagat Singh Thind v. The United States* that South Asians were not eligible for naturalized U.S. citizenship.

The impact of these laws and policies on South Asian immigrants in the United States was immediate. Discrimination against South Asians became rampant. They were barred from many professions. When they did find employment, they were offered lower wages than white and other Asian workers. They were only given the hardest and "lowest kind" of work, and their complaints about unsafe working conditions or unfair wages were ignored. They faced discrimination in theaters, movies, restaurants, and



30. Photograph of Bhagat Singh Thind in his U.S. Army uniform, from 1918. Thind enlisted in the U.S. Army and trained at Camp Lewis, Washington.

zens on the grounds that they were not white, as the law required, Thind took his case to the U.S. Supreme Court. He claimed that he was a descendant of the Aryans of India and belonged to the Caucasian race, and was thus "white" within the meaning of U.S. naturalization law. The Supreme Court disagreed. The "great body of our people," the court stated, recognize the racial differences between whites and South Asians and "instinctively . . . reject the thought of assimilation" of South Asians into [white] Americans.<sup>61</sup> Thind was denaturalized.

Other South Asians who had become naturalized citizens were also unceremoniously denaturalized. By 1924, Vaishno Das Bagai was stripped of his U.S. citizenship. Without citizenship status, Bagai was subject to California's Alien Land Laws. He was forced to sell his home, his San Francisco

store, and other property. The final insult came when the U.S. government refused to grant him a U.S. passport to visit friends and relatives in India in 1928. They suggested that he reapply for a British passport, but having once renounced his British citizenship in the name of Indian nationalism, Bagai refused to reclassify himself as a British subject. Feeling trapped and betrayed, he committed suicide by gas poisoning in 1928. He left one letter to his family and another to the *San Francisco Examiner* explaining that he had taken his own life in protest. "I came to America thinking, dreaming and hoping to make this land my home . . . and tried to give my children the best American education. . . . But now they come and say to me I am no longer an American citizen," he wrote. "Now what am I? What have I made of myself and my children? We cannot exercise our rights. Humility and insults, who is responsible for all this? Me and the American government. Obstacles this way, blockades that way, and bridges burnt behind." Vaishno left behind his young widow, Kala, and three young sons.<sup>62</sup>

The Bagai family was slow to recover after Vaishno's tragic death. But he had left behind detailed instructions on how to manage the family finances, and Kala was extremely resourceful. She focused on raising her children and saw them off to college. She also remarried. Her second husband was Mahesh Chandra, a family friend in San Francisco and a fellow Indian nationalist.<sup>63</sup> When the 1946 Luce-Celler Act amended the Immigration Act of 1917 and allowed "natives of India" to apply for admission to the United States, Kala and her sons became naturalized U.S. citizens. India gained its independence from Great Britain the next year.

## "We Have Heard Much of America": Filipinos in the U.S. Empire

U.S. colonial rule in the Philippines began two years before Francisco Carino was born in 1900 in a small town in the province of Ilocos Sur. By the early twentieth century, there were American missionaries, teachers, doctors, and colonial officials all over the new colony, and American-style schools taught U.S. geography, history, government, and civics. Growing up learning about "the best of America," Carino was convinced that the United States was full of "riches, beauty, and grandeur." "We have heard much of America as a land of the brave and the free, land of opportunity," he told an interviewer.<sup>1</sup> Spurred on by these images and facilitated by U.S. policies that classified Filipinos as "U.S. nationals" rather than as foreign immigrants, 150,000 Filipinos crossed the Pacific to Hawai'i and the continental U.S. during the early twentieth century.

The rampant prejudice and discrimination Carino experienced in the United States, however, broke his heart. Landlords would not rent apartments to him. Employment agencies did not hire him. Restaurants and barber shops refused to serve him. Signs that read "Positively No Filipinos Allowed" or "No Filipinos or Dogs Allowed" were common in many California towns. "The color of the skin makes all the difference" in the United States, Carino observed.<sup>2</sup> Writer Carlos Bulosan put it more bluntly: "It is a crime to be Filipino in California."<sup>3</sup>

U.S. imperialism and the status of Filipinos as U.S. nationals shaped every aspect of Filipino migration to the United States as well as their experiences within the U.S. empire. The U.S. colonization of the Philippines set in motion the second wave of Filipino migration to the Americas (following the thousands who came during the Manila galleon era). And the American presence in the islands had taught Filipinos that they were part of America. But when they arrived in the United States, their status as Asians and as a colonized people translated into unequal treatment. They were included in the United States, but not as citizens. They could be in the United States, but were relegated to the lowest and most exploitable positions. They suffered racism, but in ways different from other Asians. They were "little brown brothers" in the United States, and that status came with its own set of problems.<sup>4</sup>

The Philippines became a U.S. colony, along with Puerto Rico and Guam, following the end of the Spanish-American War in 1898. The United States had annexed Hawai'i earlier that year, and with its new possessions became a formidable imperial power. Just as the Philippines had been central to Spain's Pacific empire beginning in the 1500s, it now became a valuable gateway for U.S.-Asian trade after 1898. But it was a hard-won victory. Filipino revolutionaries led by Emilio Aguinaldo refused to recognize the United States' sovereignty. They battled American soldiers during the brutal Philippine-American War that lasted over three years until 1902. In the end, 4,500 American soldiers lost their lives. As many as one million Filipino civilians died from battle, violence, starvation, and disease.<sup>5</sup>

With the colonization of the Philippines came the need to incorporate Filipinos into the United States in some way. Citizenship was out of the question. Filipinos were described in racial terms as uncivilized savages, brutal rapists, and even dogs and monkeys. At best, they were characterized as children in need of (U.S.) guidance. As the young lawyer William Howard Taft, chairman of the U.S. commission that established the colonial government and future U.S. president, explained, Filipinos were "little brown brothers" who would need "fifty or one hundred years" of close supervision "to develop anything resembling Anglo-Saxon political principles and skills."<sup>6</sup>

U.S. rule transformed the Philippine economy in ways that benefited American investors but not Filipinos. For example, the United States continued to expand the Philippines' export-oriented economy first established by the Spanish. American companies and owners bought farmland to use for export crops, including sugar, and by the twentieth century the Philippines was exporting so many of its agricultural products and natural resources that it could no longer feed itself. Even basic necessities like rice and textiles had to be imported, and economic policies that kept the Philippines an unindustrialized export economy led to dislocation and inequalities. Small family farms, especially in the provinces of Ilocos Norte and Sur, Pangasinan, Tarlac, La Union, and Abra on the island of Luzon, became divided into unsustainable plots by the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Tenancy, landlessness, poverty, and migration followed.<sup>7</sup>

The United States' role in the Philippines was characterized by President William McKinley as one of "benevolent assimilation." The United States would educate, civilize, and uplift Filipinos so that they could one day rule themselves.<sup>8</sup> And Filipinos were considered "U.S. Nationals," an unequal legal classification that granted Filipinos "ward" status (like Native Americans) without citizenship rights. Colonized U.S. national status did, however, allow Filipinos to migrate from one part of the United States to another with few obstacles. Unlike immigrants, Filipinos were not subjected to immigration laws or immigrant inspections, and 150,000 migrated to the Hawaiian islands and the United States while other Asians faced increasing restrictions. Filipinos were also the only foreign nationals allowed to enlist in the U.S. armed forces. They were restricted to joining only the U.S. Navy and were mostly relegated to demeaning "women's work" as Navy stewards who prepared and served the officers' meals and cared for their living spaces. Still, the incentive to join was high. With military service came good salaries, exemptions from immigration laws after 1935, and expedited naturalization after 1940. Thousands of Filipinos enlisted in the U.S. Navy and joined the navy's "brown skinned servant force" as a career.<sup>9</sup>

The proliferation of American culture in the Philippines also spurred migration. With missionaries, teachers, doctors, and many other Americans active throughout the Philippines as part of the U.S.'s efforts to "uplift"

the country, Filipinos were schooled from a very young age to admire the United States and to think of themselves as American. With its commitment to freedom and democracy and its huge cities, "beautiful streets and parks, big factories, [and] great men," as Francisco Carino described, the United States was believed to be a "land of Paradise."<sup>10</sup> A culture of migration took root.

The first Filipino men and women to come to the United States came at the invitation of the U.S. government under the Pensionado Act of 1903. This law brought a few thousand elite Filipino students, known as *pensionados*, to attend American universities around the country, but they were expected to return to the Philippines to become "successful and powerful [pro-U.S.] leaders" of the Philippines.<sup>11</sup>

By the early twentieth century, the Philippines was identified as the next site in the United States' ongoing search for Asian labor. Filipinos were attractive for a number of reasons. First, they could enter the United States easily because of their status as U.S. nationals. Second, like Koreans, they could be used to compete with the Japanese plantation workers in Hawai'i who were leading successful labor movements for higher wages and better working conditions.

Soon, labor agents known as "drummers" were flocking to the Philippines. Traveling from town to town, they showed movies in the town plaza that promoted the great adventures and economic opportunities that awaited Filipino workers in Hawai'i. One movie scene even showed bosses handing out check after check to waiting Filipinos. Migration fever quickly spread. "*Kasla glorya ti Hawaii*," "Hawai'i is like a land of glory," Filipinos would repeat to one another.<sup>12</sup> In 1906, the first fifteen Filipino laborers arrived in Hawai'i on the SS *Doric*. Between 1907 and 1919, recruiters from the Hawaiian Sugar Plantation Association brought over 24,000 Filipinos. From 1920 and 1929, 48,000 followed. *Hawaiianos*, or those returning from Hawai'i, were the best type of advertisement for going abroad. Some had saved up enough to purchase land. Others strutted around in shiny white shoes, expensive-looking suits, and Stetson hats. "Of course I lost no time in making up my mind to go," Dolores Quinto recalled after seeing *Hawaiianos* return to his village. Soon, he, his wife, and their children joined the throngs of others on their way to Hawai'i.<sup>13</sup>

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Thousands of Filipinos signed contracts that took them to Hawai'i as *sakadas*, or laborers, who were part of the global sugar plantation economy that stretched from the Caribbean to Hawai'i. They were bound to work for three years at wages of \$18 a month and gained transportation back home if they worked for a total of 720 days. The transition to life as a plantation laborer occurred as soon as the steamships reached Hawai'i. "As we came down the gangplank," one new arrival remembered, "we shouted the plantation of our destiny. 'Waialua Sugar Company!' 'Puunene Maui' people shouted. I shouted 'Naalehu, Hawai'i.' " As they assembled with other laborers, plantation officials placed a *bango*, a metal tag with a number stamped on it, around their necks that identified them as lowly plantation workers. Their new lives in Hawai'i had begun.<sup>14</sup>

Like Chinese, Japanese, and Korean plantation laborers, Filipinos worked in a new world of labor from "siren to siren." The work was dusty, hot, physically difficult, and monotonous. Workers complained of aching backs, the sharp, spiny needles of the cane leaves, reddish clouds of dust, and the searing sun. They left camp at five in the morning and did not return until after the end-of-day whistle at eight.

Filipinos shared in these difficult tasks with other plantation laborers from Asia. But as the last group to arrive in Hawai'i, they occupied the lowest position in the plantation hierarchy. As writer Milton Murayama explained, the plantation was like a pyramid with the white plantation manager living at the top in the big house; the Portuguese, Spanish, and Japanese foremen, living in decent homes just below. Chinese, Japanese, and Korean workers lived in wooden frame houses below them, and finally there was the rundown Filipino camp. The sewer system ran downhill too, with the result that the Filipino camp was the smelliest and most unsanitary.<sup>15</sup> Over time, the tales of returning *Hawaiianos* were less about glory and more about hardship. "Narigat ti Hawai'i, hardship is Hawai'i." "Go back, brother . . . go on home," the returning Filipinos would tell those who would listen.<sup>16</sup>

The migration was slower to the continental United States. The first Filipinos to arrive in San Francisco were likely Filipino servants or stewards to U.S. Navy officers. There were also students or former plantation workers coming from Hawai'i. The 1920 census counted 5,603 Filipinos in the

states. By the 1920s, transpacific U.S. and Japanese steamship companies were making regular trips from Manila to San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Seattle. The conditions were crowded and unsanitary, but the third-class tickets that most Filipinos bought were cheap and steamship company agents did a good job of drumming up business with "stories of 'streets strewn with gold.'"<sup>17</sup> The first Filipinos to arrive directly in California came in 1923 and numbered around 2,000.<sup>18</sup> After 1924, when new U.S. laws closed the door even further to other Asian immigrants, more than 4,000 Filipinos arrived in California each year. By 1930, there were 56,000 in the country.<sup>19</sup>

As U.S. nationals, Filipinos primarily migrated to the United States. But small numbers often landed first in Canada and Mexico before traveling on to the United States. A common transpacific route from Manila brought Filipinos to Hong Kong, Tokyo, or Kobe, and then to Vancouver or Victoria. If they were bound for the United States, the passengers would then take a smaller boat to San Francisco. Some were quarantined in Vancouver before they were allowed to land in the United States. There were a small number of Filipinos who landed in Mexico as well.<sup>20</sup>

Most of the Filipinos migrating to the United States were young men joining their fathers, uncles, cousins, brothers, and friends already laboring in farms in California's Central Valley or in canneries in the Pacific Northwest and Alaska. The few women who did migrate to the United States came as students, accompanied their husbands, or were sent to join family already there. Throughout the decades, the gender ratio remained highly unequal. In 1930, there were only 2,500 Filipino women in California out of a total of 42,500 Filipinos. Despite their small numbers, Filipinas played important roles building families, contributing to family economies, and keeping bonds of extended family strong. They formed their own women's organizations and helped promote Filipino culture.<sup>21</sup> Large extended families made up of relatives and nonrelatives also became central to Filipino lives in America. The small numbers of Filipino children were cherished and families often modified the traditional *compadre* (or godfather) system to include nonrelatives. It was not uncommon to have 200 men be invited to be godparents at the time of a birth, for example.<sup>22</sup>

In California, Filipinos worked in a variety of jobs. Twenty-five percent worked as janitors, dishwashers, and "all kinds of service boys," according

to writer Manuel Buaken, chamber boys, houseboys, elevator boys, door boys, and busboys.<sup>23</sup> However, most Filipinos, around 60 percent, worked in what writer Carey McWilliams called “factories in the fields.”<sup>24</sup> By the 1920s, California agriculture was a multimillion-dollar business with a long history of exploiting immigrant labor. The delta region between the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers produced most of the world’s supply of asparagus as well as large amounts of strawberries, potatoes, and lettuce. These crops required small armies of laborers who had to withstand brutal working conditions ranging from heavy winter rains to summer temperatures of over 100 degrees. Chinese, Japanese, Koreans, and South Asians had been among the state’s first migrant farmworkers. Filipinos and Mexicans became the dominant workforce in the fields by the 1920s and 1930s. While growers routinely claimed that Asians and Mexicans were physically more suited to the harsh agricultural work than whites, it was likely the low wages and terrible work conditions that kept whites away. “Under these adverse conditions,” Buaken explained, “white workers don’t even try.”<sup>25</sup>

By 1930, approximately 18,000 Filipino immigrants were engaged in agricultural work in the United States. Traveling between the major agricultural centers like Delano, Stockton, and other cities and towns in California, they followed the crops and kept California’s farms profitable.<sup>26</sup> Eliseo Felipe, who began working in Stockton soon after his arrival in 1933, traveled even further to Wyoming, Montana, and Utah with the harvest. “I stayed in different camps because crops followed the different seasons,” he told an interviewer. “So when asparagus is over here, we are already done, getting ready for grapes. Then when the grapes is over, the tomatoes are ready to ripen up. We had to go where the job was. Name it, baby, I was there. I was not particular. I just wanted to work.”<sup>27</sup>

Farmworkers fought a never-ending battle against the dust from the fields that choked their lungs and covered their skin and had to make repeated visits to the doctor to swab their throats clean.<sup>28</sup> In Salinas, Filipinos worked eight to ten hours a day, with only brief breaks for meals. For their labor, they earned 15 cents an hour up until 1933, when the wages were raised 5 cents. They were, according to McWilliams, among the “most viciously exploited” laborers recruited by California growers to “make up their vast army of ‘cheap labor.’ ”<sup>29</sup>



31. Filipino asparagus cutters in California during the 1920s.

Even if they laboriously followed the harvests throughout the U.S. West, most Filipinos could only find farmwork for ten months of the year. The growing Alaska cannery business offered other employment opportunities for some of the remaining months. The regular season began in June, and a steady stream of Filipinos made their way up north from California after the asparagus harvest to work as “Alaskeros.”

By the 1930s, 15 percent of Alaska cannery workers were Filipinos. Their job was to clean, pack, cook, label, and box all the fish delivered to the cannery doors. It was difficult work that all had to be done by hand. Pablo Mabalon remembered, “ours was the work of a mule. The work schedule was indefinite and the hours were long. You needed will and strength to keep up with the work.”<sup>30</sup> Promises of high wages kept Filipinos going up north. Workers were recruited with guaranteed seasonal earnings. In the late 1920s, this was between \$250 and \$300 for six months’ work. This promising amount, however, was soon whittled down by debts that workers incurred to the labor contractors, who were often other Asian immigrants. Workers could purchase goods—often at grossly inflated prices—at the company store, for example. And there were also gambling debts and fees paid to prostitutes brought into the cannery districts. As a result, it was not uncommon for a worker to be left with only \$30 or \$40 at season’s end.<sup>31</sup>

Stuck in what Manuel Buaken called "a pit of economic slavery," Filipinos began to organize collectively. In 1928, the Stockton-area Anak ng Bukid, or Children of the Farm, became the first formal Filipino American labor organization. The first Filipino strike occurred in Watsonville in 1930. Over the next six years, there were more than twenty Filipino labor disputes throughout the San Joaquin and Imperial Valleys, and by the mid-1930s there were seven different unions. One of them was the Filipino Labor Union, the FLU, formed by D. L. Marcuelo, a Stockton businessman, in 1933. It soon had 4,000 members.<sup>32</sup>

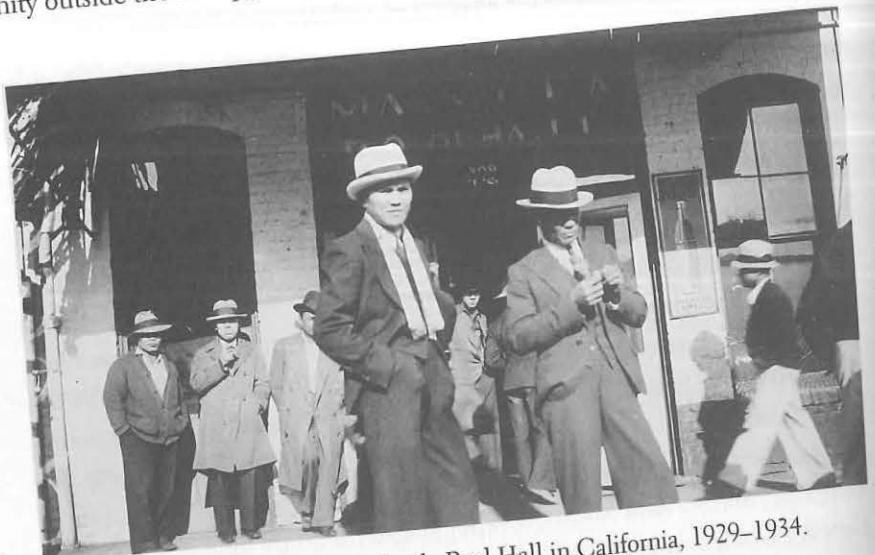
The Filipino Labor Union took its first stand for higher wages, union recognition, and improved working conditions in August 1933 in the Salinas Valley. Seven hundred Filipino lettuce workers walked off the job to protest their 20 cents an hour wage. The strike failed when growers quickly brought in Mexican, South Asian, and other Asian laborers as strike breakers. Growers continued to pit one group against the other, and it also organized Filipino labor contractors to oppose the labor union.

The FLU tried again the next summer. The Salinas lettuce strike began on August 27, 1934, with a combined group of 6,000 Filipino lettuce pickers and white laborers who packed and stored the lettuce. Soon, the lettuce industry in Monterey County had been brought to a standstill. When the white strikers agreed to negotiate, the Filipinos held their ground and faced an onslaught of violence. The growers rallied local police and armed vigilantes to threaten and beat up the strikers. The camp of FLU president Rufo Canete was burned to the ground and more than 100 rounds were fired into it. The union's headquarters were raided and the leaders arrested for unlawful assembly. By the time the FLU called an end to the strike nearly a month after it had begun, its ranks had been severely depleted, and it negotiated from a compromised position. Still, the labor union was able to win some important concessions. Wages were raised to 40 cents an hour, and the FLU was recognized as a legitimate union. More importantly, the Salinas lettuce strike helped introduce Filipinos to the larger U.S. labor movement. After the FLU organized another strike in Salinas two years later, the American Federation of Labor chartered the formation of a combined Filipino-Mexican agricultural union.<sup>33</sup>

Over the years, Filipino labor activism continued and matured. On April 6, 1939, an independent, all-Filipino union called the Filipino Agricultural Laborers Association (FALA) was formed. Made up of diverse groups of Filipinos (Ilocanos, Visayans, and Tagalogs), FALA represented an effort to unite Filipinos around shared goals of economic security and the campaign to fight discrimination. The union did not waste any time testing its power. It called for a general strike of all asparagus workers the next day if demands for a wage increase were not met. It was the height of the profitable asparagus season, and growers were faced with the potential loss of that season's multimillion-dollar crop. Most growers accepted the union's demands, and the nonviolent strike was considered a rousing success. By 1940, FALA had organized branches throughout California's agricultural belt.<sup>34</sup>

Since Filipinos were barred from living in most neighborhoods, "Little Manilas" made up of Filipino residents, families, and businesses sprang up in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle, Chicago, New York, and Washington, D.C.<sup>35</sup> Stockton's Little Manila was the largest in the country and was well known for its many Filipino businesses and vibrant community. By the 1920s, migrant farmworkers could return from weeks or months away following the crops to recuperate and reconnect in Stockton. They might first pick up their mail and grab a plate of adobo at the popular Lafayette Lunch Counter, run by Pablo Mabalon. They might then buy food at the Manila Grocery Company, read Filipino newspapers like the *Philippine Examiner* published in the city, play pool at Philip's Philippine Billiard Parlor, get their hair cut at the Manila Barber Shop, buy a suit at Los Filipinos Tailoring Shop, have a photograph taken at J. Y. Billones' photo studio, hear the latest labor news at the Sons of the Farm offices, search for jobs at the Filipino Employment Agency, and worship at Catholic St. Mary's. And if they were looking for female companionship, they might stop in at the Lu-Vi-Min Club, named after the major Philippine regions of Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao. Dressed in their best suits with their hair slicked back, thousands of Filipinos would meet up in Little Manila's taxi dance halls to hear live bands play the popular jazz tunes of the era and pay to dance with hired female dancers. Many blew through a whole day's wages of \$1 to \$2 in ten or twenty minutes.<sup>36</sup>

Stockton's Little Manila helped sustain and nourish the Filipino American community in the United States for generations. As historian Dawn Mabalon explains, in Little Manila, Filipinos could become something other than the "debased, exploited, faceless laborer hunched over endless miles of asparagus, celery, or beets." Instead, they gathered in their best clothes to meet with friends and "asserted their right to flourish on the streets of Stockton." The city's Little Manila remained the largest Filipino community outside the Philippines from the 1920s to 1970s.<sup>37</sup>



32. Filipinos in front of Manila Pool Hall in California, 1929–1934.

As their migration to the United States grew steadily in the 1920s, Filipinos were increasingly seen as a problem. No longer contained in a far-off U.S. colony, they symbolized the inherent contradiction between the U.S.'s benevolent assimilation policies of Filipinos in the Philippines and the virulent and violent anti-Asian racism that affected all Asians in the United States. By the 1930s, Filipinos were increasingly characterized not as "little brown brothers" but as another "Asiatic invasion" that was worse than the Chinese, Japanese, and South Asian "invasions" that had preceded them.<sup>38</sup>

The anti-Filipino movement first drew on Filipinos' colonized status and perceptions of the Philippines as a backward colony. Filipinos were often

portrayed as uncivilized peoples who were criminally minded. San Francisco law enforcement officials reported in 1931 that "there is not one of them [Filipinos] who is not a potential criminal."<sup>39</sup> They were compared to Native Americans and called "untamed headhunters." The president of California's Immigration Study Commission went so far as to label Filipinos "jungle folk" with a "primitive moral code."<sup>40</sup> Judge D. W. Rohrback in Monterey County described Filipinos as "little brown men about ten years removed from a bolo and breechcloth."<sup>41</sup> V. S. McClatchy, editor of the *Sacramento Bee*, argued that the growing number of Filipinos "swarming into the United States . . . would lower citizenship standard[s], and if left unchecked . . . would lead to the destruction of the republic."<sup>42</sup> Congressman Richard J. Welch agreed and told the public in 1930 that Filipino immigration was "one of the gravest problems that has ever faced the people of the Pacific Coast." Both supported an all-out ban on the new invasion.<sup>43</sup>

But the primary complaint against Filipinos seemed to be that they upset the existing racial hierarchy between whites and nonwhites in the United States. Compared to other Asian immigrant communities, more Filipino men paired up with white women. As a consequence of crossing the taboo of interracial sex, Filipino men were constantly charged with having unbridled sexual passions that were dangerous to white women and to decent society. A witness from Salinas testified before the U.S. House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization that Filipinos were a "social menace as they will not leave our white girls alone."<sup>44</sup> In 1933, California's attorney general extended the state's antimiscegenation civil code to include Filipinos, and thereafter Filipino-white marriages were illegal.<sup>45</sup>

With such deep-rooted and passionate racism circulating in towns and cities in the U.S. West, it was common for Filipinos to be victims of violence. California was the most dangerous place. In January 1930, the Northern Monterey County Chamber of Commerce passed a number of anti-Filipino resolutions. In Stockton, hotels and landlords refused to rent to Filipinos. Police routinely arrested Filipinos at random or raided gambling halls. "The streets were not free to my people," Carlos Bulosan wrote. "We were suspect each time these vigilant patrolmen saw us driving a car."<sup>46</sup> Connie Tirona remembered the vivid shock she felt when, as a young girl, she witnessed two Filipino men being dragged by white riders on horseback for the

purported crime of talking to white women.<sup>47</sup> Manuel Buaken chronicled arrest after arrest of his fellow Filipinos by police officers and others. His cousin Remigio Santiago was accosted by Hollywood officers while waiting for a car on Hollywood Boulevard. Wenceslao Tambolero, a journalist for the *Philippine Star Press*, was arrested and put in a Los Angeles county jail after leaving a theater in the early hours of the morning. Buaken himself was reading a magazine in Los Angeles when two policemen came up to him and tried to arrest him for no reason.<sup>48</sup>

Anti-Filipino violence in California escalated in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Filipino immigration was at an all-time high, the Filipino labor movement was growing in strength and number, and new white migrants entering the state as part of the great Dust Bowl migration from Texas, Oklahoma, and Arkansas brought with them a regional culture where Jim Crow segregation, lynchings, participation in the Ku Klux Klan, and racial terror were common. On New Year's Eve in 1926, white men went in search of Filipinos in Stockton's hotels and pool halls, and by the end of the night, eight men had been stabbed and beaten. Over the next few years, Filipinos were expelled from the Yakima Valley in Washington, Filipino laborers socializing with white women were attacked in Dinuba, California, and mobs attacked Filipinos in Exeter, Modesto, Turlock, and Reedley. In December 1929, a mob of 400 white men attacked a Filipino dance hall in Watsonville after a local newspaper published a photograph of a Filipino man and white teenage girl embracing. Even though the couple was engaged and had the blessings of the girl's family, the incident touched off many political pronouncements against the economic and moral threat that Filipino immigrants posed. Four days of rioting ensued after the attack on the dance hall, leaving many Filipinos beaten and one dead. In 1930, a group of white youths bombed the Stockton Filipino Federation of America building.<sup>49</sup>

In the wake of the Watsonville race riots, labor and patriotic organizations, including the California Joint Immigration Committee, the American Federation of Labor, and the American Legion, all made Filipino exclusion a central issue at their national meetings. They warned that current U.S. immigration policies were allowing throngs of dangerous and unassimilable Filipinos to enter the country and wreak havoc on American communities.

These supporters of Filipino exclusion, however, also recognized that they had to overcome a major legal and political obstacle. Similar to the problem that Canada faced with its attempts to bar South Asians from one part of the British Empire to another, Filipinos were U.S. nationals and colonial subjects and could not be excluded from coming to the United States.



33. Members of the Filipino Federation of America in Stockton, California, pose in front of their building after it was bombed in 1930.

An odd coalition of Philippine nationalists in the Philippines and Filipino exclusionists in the United States worked together to craft a compromise. As Congress debated proposals to exclude Filipinos in 1930, representatives from the Philippines strategically used the congressional hearings to advance the cause of Philippine independence. If Filipino exclusion bills were successful in becoming law, the Philippine delegation pointed out, the United States would be the only imperial power to ban its own subjects from entering the mother country. Such blatant discrimination targeting Filipinos might jeopardize U.S. economic and political interests in the Pacific and would tarnish the U.S.'s reputation in the world more generally, they warned. At a time when the United States was on its way to becoming

a major global power, such reasoning had an impact. Filipino exclusion without independence for the Philippines, the nationalist leaders continued, would be "unjust" and "un-American." Pedro Gil, a leader in the Philippine House of Representatives, testified that if the U.S. Congress wanted to restrict Filipino immigration, it would first need to grant independence to the Philippines.<sup>50</sup> By the end of the 1930 hearings, support for Filipino exclusion without independence was faltering. Exclusionists began to entertain proposals for a compromise.

The result was the Tydings-McDuffie Act (officially known as the Philippine Independence Act), which was signed into law by President Franklin D. Roosevelt on March 24, 1934. It granted the Philippines commonwealth status and a promise of independence after ten years. It also changed the status of Filipinos from U.S. "nationals" to "aliens." The Philippines were henceforth to be considered a "separate country" with an annual immigration quota of fifty. The bill then went to the Philippine Senate for approval. The exclusionists had won. But so had Filipino nationalists. On the other hand, prospective Filipino migrants had lost, including a group caught in legal limbo.<sup>51</sup>

While the bill was traveling west across the Pacific, several steamships were bringing Filipinos east. Marcelo Domingo and a cousin traveled to San Francisco on the *President Hoover* along with dozens of other Filipinos. Domingo and his cousin were bound for Watsonville, where another cousin promised them work in the fields. But when they arrived in San Francisco, immigration officials did not know what to do with them. The Filipino passengers had sailed from Manila to the United States after the Tydings-McDuffie Act had been signed into law in the United States, but before the law had been accepted by the Philippine government in May. Filipino passengers on five other ships arrived in San Francisco under similar conditions. In total, 261 Filipinos would face questions about their legal status. Would they be considered under the old rules since they had been at sea when the law had gone into effect? Or would they automatically be excluded once they arrived in the United States?

Domingo and the rest of the Tydings-McDuffie Filipinos, as they were called, were allowed to enter the country on parole after being photographed and fingerprinted. The International Institute of San Francisco, a settlement

house that had formerly been part of the Young Women's Christian Association, was tasked with taking responsibility for the parole of the Filipino "boys." But when the Filipinos' appeals were dismissed and they were given deportation orders in February 1935, institute officials could not locate their charges. Many had either moved away as part of their lives as migratory laborers or deliberately went into hiding to avoid deportation. The U.S. Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization took over, and the manhunts conducted by Angel Island officials took place up and down California, across the United States, and even into the Philippines. Immigration officials interviewed family members, neighbors, employers, Selective Service Board officers, and postmasters in their quest to find, arrest, and deport the Tydings-McDuffie Filipinos. The manhunts lasted years, and in most cases, individuals like Marcelo Domingo were never found.<sup>52</sup>

The new policy of treating Filipinos as aliens rather than nationals worked in concert with the U.S. government's new use of repatriation, or removal, of undesirable immigrants in the country, as another method of international immigration control. The Filipino Repatriation Act of July 10, 1935, stated that any Filipino born in the Philippines and living in the United States could apply for the "benefits" of repatriation to the Philippines. The U.S. would pay for all expenses, but there was one catch: any repatriate would be barred from entering the United States ever again.

Just as Americans had justified colonizing the Philippines through "benevolent assimilation," U.S. officials used the language of benevolence to encourage Filipinos to volunteer for repatriation. San Francisco Commission of Immigration's Edward Cahill called repatriation a "Big Brotherly gesture of help and assistance." He and other officials hoped that 30,000 Filipinos, or about half of the total Filipino population in the United States, would leave of their own accord. But others, like journalist Carey McWilliams, called repatriation "a trick, and not a very clever trick, to get [Filipinos] out of this country."<sup>53</sup>

Filipinos were suspicious of the law, with some linking it directly to Filipinos' unequal status as U.S. nationals and the damaging effects of U.S. imperialism in the Philippines. Pedro Buncan submitted his application to return home to the Philippines in June 1935, but he did so with great bitterness. As he wrote to the U.S. secretary of labor:

In the Philippine Public Schools we learn your Constitution and also the American Texts books which contained the two rotten Phrases Equality and Freedom. These phrases lure the mind of the poor Filipino youths. We have come to the land of the Free and where the people are treated equal only to find ourselves without constitutional rights. . . . We . . . did not realize that our oriental origin barred us as human being in the eyes of the law.<sup>54</sup>

The Filipino repatriation program lasted for three years, but it did not bring the results the U.S. government hoped for. The first boat of Filipino repatriates sailed for Manila in 1936. The last one sailed in 1939. In total, only 2,190 Filipinos returned to the Philippines out of 108,260 Filipinos residing in the entire United States.<sup>55</sup>

Targeted for exclusion and repatriation, Filipinos grew increasingly disillusioned in the years leading up to World War II. For Filipinos who had been raised to learn, recite, and cherish American political beliefs and values, the discrimination they faced in the United States was devastating. "I was born under the American flag, I had American teachers since I was six," Manuel Buaken explained to employers who refused to hire Filipinos. "I am a loyal American," Buaken protested. "But no sale."<sup>56</sup> It would not be until World War II that Filipinos began to feel like they belonged in the United States.

## Border Crossings and Border Enforcement: Undocumented Asian Immigration

In 1918, a joint sting operation between the U.S. Postal Service and the Bureau of Immigration uncovered a complicated plan to bring undocumented Japanese immigrants into the country across the the U.S.-Mexican border. The Postal Service had intercepted a letter written by a man named Nakagawa who described "a new way to come into America" via Mexico to an unknown friend. As the Gentlemen's Agreement between the United States and Japan barred Japanese laborers, Nakagawa first instructed his friend to get a passport to Mexico directly, or to Argentina or Peru, and then make his way to Mexico. "After [that], you can proceed into the United States," he wrote. Included with the letter was a hand-drawn map that showed a route heading from Salina Cruz up the coast to Acapulco, Calexico, and then on to Yuma, Arizona.

Painstakingly handwritten next to specific geographic landmarks on the map were helpful notations and bits of cautionary advice:

- On landing you go eastward to the Black Hill. Then go northward along the auto road. If you were captured by the soldiers let them take you, but when you come about a day journey from Mexicali you give them about \$5.00 and you will be free.

- If you fortunately come to this lake you might stay and work for a little while for there are many Japanese cotton plantations north from this place.
- Food: take 4 cans of milk and some bread. You must be careful about water, for there is no water in the desert.
- Some people go to Nogales. But sometimes they are killed by the natives. So you had better not go that way.<sup>1</sup>

The Asian exclusion laws were effective in restricting immigration, but by the early twentieth century, immigration to the United States had become a thriving aspect of international business and a way of life for many families around the world. Enduring dreams of America continued to encourage immigration, including undocumented immigration across the U.S.-Canadian and U.S.-Mexican borders. Attempts by the U.S. government to secure its northern and southern borders established the country's first border security policies and practices. But these efforts did not end Asian undocumented immigration. Instead, Asian immigrants redirected their efforts to other locations and employed increasingly complex and dangerous methods to achieve their goals. The first immigrants to be excluded from the United States, Asians became the first undocumented immigrants.

Undocumented immigration was the logical if highly unintentional outcome of the exclusion laws. The efforts to exclude Asian immigrants from the United States contrasted too sharply with the demand for immigrant labor and immigrants' intense need and desire to seek entry. Government laws restricted immigration, but gaps in enforcement provided the very openings (and high profitability) of undocumented immigration. Because government statistics recorded only the numbers of immigrants caught while crossing the border, we will never know how many Asian immigrants entered the United States without documentation. Official government estimates identify 17,300 Chinese immigrants who entered the United States through the back doors of Canada and Mexico from 1882 to 1920.<sup>2</sup> Other sources report that as many as 27,000 Chinese and Japanese immigrants entered without documentation between 1910 and 1920.<sup>3</sup> Additional records reveal that the scope of Asian undocumented immigration spanned all

possible entry points into the country, including the northern and southern borders on both the Pacific and Atlantic Coasts, as well as the Gulf Coast and all points in between.

As the United States attempted to control undocumented immigration, border stations and border guards appeared in previously unguarded areas. And immigrants who were on the wrong side of the line found themselves in a quandary: The first undocumented Asian immigrants were likely Chinese railroad workers who had been legally admitted into the United States but had traveled north to work on the Canadian Pacific Railway. When the Chinese Exclusion Act was passed in the United States in 1882, they found themselves stuck north of the border. Because they were not residing in the United States at the time of the passage of the act, they were ineligible for the laborers' identification certificates that allowed laborers already residing in the United States to return to the country. They did what many others would do later: they simply crossed the largely unguarded 4,000-mile border between the United States and Canada and became undocumented immigrants.<sup>4</sup>

The huge expanse of unguarded borders made surreptitious entry into the United States a relatively easy affair in the late nineteenth century. Because steamships routinely traveled between Hong Kong and British Columbian ports, such as Victoria and Vancouver, the U.S.-Canadian border provided the first convenient back door into the United States. Canada's Chinese head taxes (first established in 1885) did not prove to be a sufficient deterrent for immigrants motivated to enter the United States, and in the wake of the U.S. exclusion laws Chinese immigration to Canada actually increased.

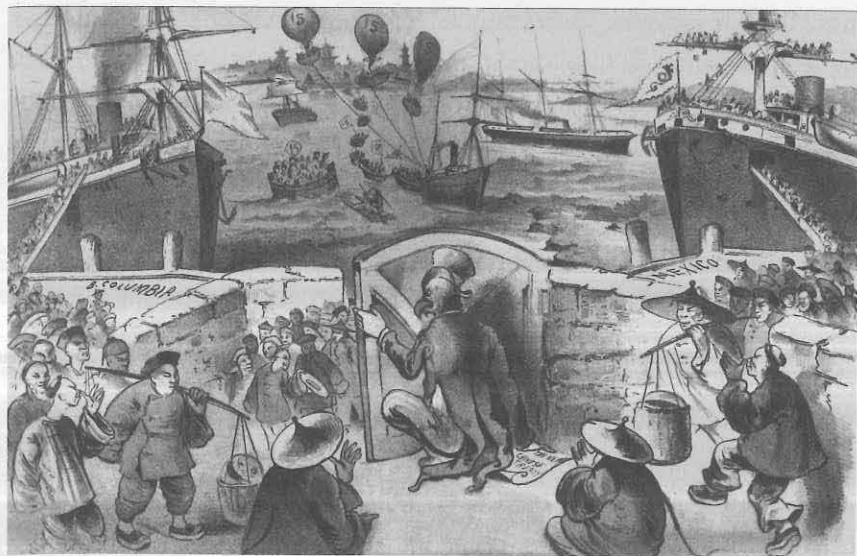
Chinese first used well-established smuggling routes in the Vancouver-Puget Sound area, paying anywhere from \$23 to \$60 in the 1890s and up to \$300 one decade later to enter the United States.<sup>5</sup> Other popular entry points were along the northeastern border. After the Canadian Pacific Railway was completed, immigrants could land in Vancouver, travel by train across the country to the east, and then enter the U.S.<sup>6</sup> In 1909, a reporter in Buffalo found that two to four Chinese were brought into the city each week, at a price of \$200 to \$600 apiece.<sup>7</sup> Chinese were then frequently taken on to Boston and New York City.<sup>8</sup>

Border crossings were by their very nature risky endeavors. In 1906, the

Bureau of Immigration reported on one entry that ended in tragedy. A Chinese immigrant was hidden inside a Canadian rail car full of ice traveling south from Windsor, Ontario to Detroit. The trip was normally a short one and the immigrant was supposed to be removed from the car as soon as the train crossed the border. Unfortunately a snowstorm delayed the train, and he froze to death.<sup>9</sup> In Buffalo, another tragedy occurred: ten Chinese attempting to cross Lake Erie were caught in a severe storm that dashed their open boat against the sea wall. Six drowned.<sup>10</sup>

Until 1923, when Canada passed a more complete Chinese exclusion bill, the Canadian-U.S. border remained the easiest way to enter the United States for any Chinese immigrant willing and able to pay the Canadian head taxes. This migration across the border prompted one Oregon magazine editor to complain about the growing “Chinese leak” coming in from Canada. “Canada gets the money and we get the Chinamen,” he wrote.<sup>11</sup>

Beginning in the 1890s, Chinese began to enter the United States from the U.S.-Mexican border as well. The start of regular steamship travel between China and Mexico in 1902 led to increased Chinese immigration to that country, and while many Chinese stayed and settled in Mexico, many others, perhaps a majority, eventually tried to enter the United States. The U.S. government estimated that 80 percent of Chinese arriving in Mexican seaports eventually reached the border with the help of Mexican guides or on their own. Chinese border crossings were an “open secret,” and the city of El Paso was especially known as a “hot-bed for the smuggling of Chinese.”<sup>12</sup> According to Chinese inspector Clifford Perkins, Chinese “hid in every conceivable place on trains: in box cars loaded with freight, under staterooms rented for them by accomplices, and even in the four-foot-wide ice vents across each end of the insulated Pacific Fruit Express refrigerated cars, iced or not.”<sup>13</sup> In 1907, U.S. immigrant inspector Marcus Braun was forced to admit that a “deplorable condition of affairs” existed along the Mexican border that, despite the “vigilance” of officers, could not prevent the steady stream of Chinese coming in.<sup>14</sup> Two years later, the commissioner-general of immigration added a slightly different take: “a Chinaman apparently will undergo any hardship or torture, take any risk or pay any sum of money . . . to enjoy the forbidden, but much coveted privilege of living and working in the United States.”<sup>15</sup>



34. This cartoon illustrates the threat of Chinese undocumented immigrants coming into the United States through Canada and Mexico. Uncle Sam guards the seaport while floods of Chinese enter undetected and thumb their noses at the U.S. government. “And Still They Come!” *The Wasp*, December 4, 1880.

Just as the Chinese exclusion laws in the United States set in motion Chinese undocumented immigration across the U.S.-Canadian and U.S.-Mexican borders, Japanese, Canadian, and U.S. policies had a similar effect on Japanese immigrants. In 1900, the Japanese government began to issue U.S.-bound passports only to students and merchants. The 1908 Gentlemen’s Agreements additionally made direct immigration to the United States and Canada impossible for working-class Japanese. Moreover, President Roosevelt’s executive order prohibiting secondary migration from Mexico, Canada, and Hawai’i also effectively closed legal immigration from these locations. If Japanese laborers wanted to enter the country, they had to do so without documentation.

Booking passage to Canada and then crossing the border into the United States was one option. U.S. immigrant inspector Charles Babcock reported from Blaine, Washington, that the area was “most advantageous to those

who desire to cross the border unnoticed." The so-called Border Road heading east of Blaine had well-trod trails leading both north and south and its heavily wooded areas provided "excellent cover" during the day when the travelers usually slept. Some of the roads heading south toward Bellingham were so well marked that "Japanese who desire to go this way find the matter easy . . . and no pilot is needed to guide them."<sup>16</sup>

Increased Japanese migration to Canada was a source of major concern on both sides of the border. U.S. immigration officials charged that U.S. steamship companies were using Victoria as a "dumping ground" for Japanese immigrants destined for the United States.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, residents of British Columbia were entering a state of panic in response to the "Japanese hordes" entering the country. Newspaper articles described the never-ending numbers of Japanese arriving in the province and officials' inability to stop it.<sup>18</sup>

Just as U.S. government officials were beginning to understand the cross-border Japanese migration from Canada, it was becoming clear that the Mexican border presented even larger problems. Immigrant inspector Marcus Braun was dispatched to investigate the situation in 1907 and sent back reports of an uncontrolled border. Over 10,000 Japanese had been "imported" to the United States from Mexico since 1905, but Braun observed that "at the present moment, you cannot find a thousand in all the Republic of Mexico."<sup>19</sup> Statistics partially bear out his point. From 1901 to 1907, 10,956 Japanese entered Mexico. But in 1909, only 2,465 still resided in the country.<sup>20</sup> Japanese government documents from the same period also confirmed that "hundreds of Japanese were scattered over [the U.S.-Mexico border] area just waiting for a chance to cross the border," and others observed that Japanese immigrants "went to every length to get to America, crossing over the Pacific Ocean and the deserts and mountains of Mexico."<sup>21</sup>

Japanese used the same routes and strategies first developed by the Chinese. Some carried passports to enter Mexico and held labor contracts to work in Mexican mines and plantations, but then quickly deserted these workplaces to immigrate to the United States. Dengo Kusakabe arrived in Mexico in 1906 destined to work at a coal mine, for example, but as his train traveled toward his destination, he jumped. He ran as far and as fast as he could but was arrested and brought to the mine. After that, opportunities to

escape were few and far between. "The coal mine company personnel shot without hesitation at us Japanese trying to escape," Kusakabe explained. The mine bosses continually told Kusakabe and his fellow Japanese, "even if you escape, you can't make it because in the mountains there are huge snakes and wild animals and you will be eaten alive." Despite these dangers, Kusakabe and a small band of other Japanese workers snuck out of the mine one night and followed the railroad tracks. Local Mexicans helped them with directions and offered them food. Along the way, they met other Japanese who were also fleeing Mexico for the United States. They finally entered the country at Eagle Pass, Texas.<sup>22</sup>

Some Japanese entered Mexico with valid passports and then immediately crossed the border on their own or in small groups. Fukuhei Saito described how he and a group of fellow laborers landed at Salina Cruz in 1906 and set out northward. They traveled through an area dense with cactus plants and were stung by "millions of thorns." They stole vegetables from farms at night and struggled to catch rain in empty cans or bottles to satisfy their thirst. When there was no rainwater to be found, they sucked water left standing in hoofprints. "We just wanted to get into America without being caught on the way," he explained. They traveled this way for two weeks until they, too, entered the country at Eagle Pass.<sup>23</sup>

Undocumented Asian immigration was a big business. The disconnect between national immigration policies that restricted immigrants on the one hand and national and global economies that still depended upon immigrant labor on the other created a lucrative underground business dealing in the dreams of desperate immigrants. Steamship companies and labor agencies were either complicit or actively involved in shepherding undocumented immigrants into the country. Asian immigrants were also aided by a highly sophisticated, transnational, and interracial network of undocumented immigration agents, guides, and accomplices. Chinese and Japanese immigrants arriving in Mexico, for example, were routinely in touch with relatives and friends already in the United States who provided money, directions, Chinese-English or Japanese-English dictionaries, and maps to speed their journeys.<sup>24</sup>

Asian undocumented immigration also relied upon a great diversity of

accomplices—men of different races, classes, ethnicities, and nationalities—who worked together and sometimes formed common bonds. In 1914, an extensive list of persons arrested for aiding and abetting the undocumented immigration of Chinese into Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and southern California, for example, included Anglo, Chinese, and Hispanic names.<sup>25</sup>

Many involved in the business were longtime smugglers of opium, liquor, or other contraband goods. Others took advantage of their occupations or locations along the borders to profit from the undocumented immigration business. In Mississippi, a “certain ring of Greeks” in Bay St. Louis brought Chinese through Mexico, housing them temporarily in their store and factory. In the Pacific Northwest, an Italian named Quinto Mariano charged Chinese immigrants \$50 each for safe passage into Washington. One former U.S. Army map surveyor was caught selling customized maps of the U.S.-Mexico border to Chinese immigrants and their guides. And in 1908, a government investigation found evidence that former El Paso chief of police Edward M. Fink was “the leader of one of the gangs of smugglers” in El Paso who charged \$100 to Chinese seeking entry.<sup>26</sup>

Immigrants also relied upon experienced guides to pilot them across dangerous and unfamiliar terrain. Members of Canada’s First Nations were known to guide Chinese from Canada into the United States along the northern border. Mexicans were the primary guides along the southern border, working in conjunction with Chinese and/or Americans. In 1910, Mar Been, a Chinese merchant in El Paso, spearheaded a business that employed two Mexican women to help Chinese immigrants coming in from Juárez. He also had an agreement with a “negro” brakeman on the Santa Fe railroad, who, in exchange for money, stopped the train at Montoya, Mexico, and “put the Chinese boys in the Pullman car.”<sup>27</sup>

Asian undocumented immigration in the U.S. borderlands also inspired frequent racial crossings: attempts by Asians to “pass” as members of other races in order to cross undetected. In 1904, the *Buffalo Times* reported that white “smugglers” routinely disguised Chinese as Native Americans. Dressed in “Indian garb” and carrying baskets of sassafras, they crossed the border from Canada to the United States without raising suspicions. Along the southern

border, Chinese disguised themselves as Mexicans, cutting their queues, adopting Mexican clothes, and even learning to say a few words of Spanish, especially *Yo soy mexicano*. Along the Gulf Coast in the southern United States, Chinese were even known to disguise themselves as African Americans.<sup>28</sup>

Frequent interethnic interactions among Chinese, Japanese, and South Asian immigrants in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands sometimes forged common understanding and cooperation. A Mexican farm manager took in Miyoji Fujita and his five companions when they were extremely ill and stranded in the desert. He found a doctor and provided food and housing for the group until they were able to continue their trek northward. “Gracias to the kind Mexican . . . who saved my life!” Fujita recalled years later.<sup>29</sup> In 1915, a group of twenty-three Japanese, three Chinese, and thirty-five South Asians pooled their resources together to charter a small merchant vessel at Mazatlán, Sinaloa, before heading to San Felipe and Mexicali in the northern Baja Peninsula. When the boat reached San Felipe, the group split up. The South Asians and Chinese began the trek northward into the desert. The Japanese stayed behind to care for sick compatriots. One week later, they followed their shipmates into the desert. Three days into their journey, they stumbled upon the bodies of several of their South Asian friends. They had perished from dehydration in the desert. The Japanese returned to San Felipe, losing seven members of their party along the way. While deliberating what to do next, the Japanese were reunited with the remaining fourteen South Asians, and the group shared food and medicine. Together, they then hired Mexican guides and went back into the desert for the second time. After walking for ten days, the group arrived in Mexicali.<sup>30</sup>

But interracial alliances forged in the underground business of undocumented immigration could be fragile. Mexicans were not always willing to assist Asian immigrants, and some were well-known informants, employees of the U.S. Bureau of Immigration, and even witnesses in U.S. courts.<sup>31</sup> And despite their common predicaments, not all Asians wanted to be treated similarly. Japanese, in particular, tried to distinguish themselves from other Asians. They wished to be treated like European immigrants who enjoyed better treatment and privileges from U.S. immigration officials.<sup>32</sup>

Beginning in the early 1900s, the U.S. government turned its attention to its border security problem and launched major investigations of Asian undocumented immigration. The first was conducted by Immigrant Inspector Marcus Braun, who was instructed by his superiors to “leave no stone unturned.”<sup>33</sup> Braun’s 1907 multivolume report, complete with photographic and other exhibits, became the blueprint for U.S. border policy for years to come. He included descriptions of undocumented immigrant smugglers at work, the safe houses they used, and the strategies they employed. His investigations included details on many undocumented European and Middle Eastern immigrants trying to evade U.S. immigration laws that barred individuals likely to become public charges, but the focus of his report was on Chinese and Japanese undocumented immigration. He issued a passionate call for “eternal vigilance” along the border.<sup>34</sup>

This first meant putting some boots on the ground. In 1902, there were only sixty-six U.S. border inspectors (the U.S. Border Patrol would not be formally established until 1924), mostly along the northern border. The next year, the number had increased to 116, again mostly along the Canadian border. By 1907, there were nine examining stations along the Mexican border, and inspectors were stationed at every point where the railroads crossed the line. Two years later, 300 officers and other employees of the U.S. Bureau of Immigration were working along both the northern and southern borders.<sup>35</sup> Even with these improvements, the border remained porous and easily passable. Rowboats could be taken over the Rio Grande, and carriage roads, paths, highways, and mountain trails remained unguarded. Immigrant inspector Marcus Braun described the Mexican border as “a joke, a hollow mockery.”<sup>36</sup> Border enforcement also became more centralized. In 1907, the U.S. Bureau of Immigration created a new administrative unit called the Mexican Border District that included Arizona, New Mexico, and most of Texas. Demonstrating the importance of Chinese immigration in constructing southern border enforcement, the first commissioner hired to manage the new Mexican district was Frank W. Berkshire, who had overseen the Chinese service along the New York–Canadian border and in New York City.<sup>37</sup>

The United States also adopted other measures to induce Canada and Mexico to cooperate in its attempts to secure its national borders. With

Canada, the United States was able to use border diplomacy to achieve its means; with Mexico, it institutionalized a unilateral form of border policing. Both reflected the imperialist nature of U.S. border regulation in the early twentieth century. Along the northern border, the U.S. pressured Canada to assist in the enforcement of U.S. immigration laws, while strongly encouraging its northern neighbor to adopt Chinese immigration laws that were more compatible with U.S. goals. The “Canadian Agreements” brokered between Canadian steamship and rail companies and the U.S. commissioner-general of immigration allowed U.S. immigration inspectors to enforce U.S. immigration laws on arriving steamships and on Canadian soil at specifically designated border points. By 1923, Canada transformed its regulation of Chinese immigration altogether to more closely mirror U.S. law.<sup>38</sup>

The U.S. government attempted to export U.S. immigration policy south to Mexico as well. But tense relations and a long history of border conflicts between the two countries translated into different border policies. Because Mexico had few federal immigration regulations, the United States could not simply piggyback or extend its own immigration policies onto an already existing framework as it had in Canada. While the country was ruled by Porfirio Díaz, Mexico also encouraged foreign immigration and had few restrictions. Moreover, Mexican officials—already wary of growing U.S. influence in the country—were less amenable to assisting U.S. immigration officials than their Canadian counterparts. They consistently argued that Chinese undocumented immigration was an American, not a Mexican, problem. They also refused to grant official permission to U.S. agents to conduct sting operations on Mexican soil targeting Chinese immigrants attempting to cross the border, and they did not allow Mexican inspectors or police to cooperate in the enforcement of U.S. immigration policies.

Instead of border diplomacy and cooperation, the southern border became closed to Chinese immigration through policing and deterrence. Immigration officials at the border were charged with the mission of preventing undocumented entries in the first place and apprehending those caught in the act of crossing the border. To accomplish this, they imposed a three-pronged system of surveillance within Mexico and the United States, patrols at the border, and immigration raids, arrests, and deportations of Chinese already in the United States.<sup>39</sup>

Relying upon a large network of immigration officers, train conductors,

consular officials, and Mexican, indigenous, and U.S. informants, the U.S. government tracked the movement of Chinese immigrants in Mexico and watched for any attempts to cross the border. Immigration inspectors began to inspect trains and question all Chinese passengers. The United States also greatly increased the number and duties of immigrant inspectors along the southern border and established its first border patrols to prevent Chinese immigrants, and in later years, other immigrants, from crossing into the United States.<sup>40</sup>

Lastly, the Bureau of Immigration instituted a "vigorous policy" of immigration raids, arrests, and deportations of immigrants suspected of being in the United States without documentation. "Let it be known," Commissioner-General of Immigration Frank Sargent declared in 1906, "that even thickly settled city districts will not afford, as in the past, a safe harbor for those who clandestinely enter."<sup>41</sup> Special agents, commonly known as "Chinese catchers," were assigned to find and arrest Chinese unlawfully in the country. Over the next few years, the numbers of Chinese arrested for entering the United States without documentation rose dramatically. In 1899, the ratio of Chinese admitted to Chinese deported was 100:4. Five years later, it was 100:61.<sup>42</sup>

At the same time, the U.S. government began to use more sophisticated equipment in their pursuit of undocumented immigrants and their accomplices. Beginning in 1914, the U.S. Bureau of Immigration launched an aggressive campaign to identify and arrest suspected agents. In 1914, the commissioner-general proudly reported that seventy-five "smugglers of contraband Chinese" and over 400 Chinese immigrants had been arrested.<sup>43</sup> Changes in U.S. immigration laws facilitated this work. The Immigration Act of 1917 subjected smugglers to a \$2,000 fine and five years' imprisonment. Anyone who transported immigrants without documentation was fined \$1,000 under the 1924 Immigration Act, and under the same act, ship captains were fined \$1,000 if any of their crew jumped ship.<sup>44</sup> The U.S. Bureau of Immigration also began to use two patrol boats along the California-Mexico coasts and increased their speed and cruising radius in order to apprehend greater numbers of undocumented immigrants. In 1917, the U.S. Navy joined in the border security efforts and took over operation of the patrol boats.<sup>45</sup>

U.S. border enforcement measures were partially successful. Japanese immigrants noticed it right away. Japanese native Shinji Kawamoto, arrested in 1907 for attempting to bring in Japanese without documentation from Mexico, remarked that business had been much easier in the past, but that now "the laws seemed to be enforced more rigidly."<sup>46</sup> Nevertheless, national border enforcement measures merely redirected undocumented immigration. As some border crossing sites became more heavily patrolled, immigrants and their agents and guides began to use even more circuitous and complex routes into the United States. Many strategies involved false documents, forged identities, and long routes.

After an increase in the number of patrolmen along the border near California and Arizona, for example, Chinese turned away from the heavily trafficked areas toward more remote, interior entry points through Texas and New Mexico. The Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico also became new back doors into the United States, with Chinese being hidden on fruit vessels from Cuba and then disappearing somewhere in Florida once the boats landed. By the 1910s, U.S. diplomats based in Jamaica were observing that the island had also become a "convenient stepping-stone to gain access to other countries which do not want them."<sup>47</sup>

In addition to finding more complicated and long-distance routes to enter the country, Asian immigrants increasingly turned to deception as well, aided by an illicit market in forged and fraudulent documents. In 1903, the Bureau of Immigration reported that growing numbers of Chinese were crossing the border and then fraudulently claiming U.S. citizenship in order to enter the United States.<sup>48</sup> Forged documents and false claims were common among Japanese immigrants as well. Some Japanese who had entered the United States before 1907 possessed government-issued U.S. head tax receipts showing their legal entry into the country. After the U.S. executive order barred Japanese in Hawai'i, Mexico, and Canada from entering the continental U.S., these head tax receipts became lucrative commodities that were bought and sold on the black market. The receipts were, one immigrant inspector ruefully admitted in 1907, "the most convenient safeguard for those who enter surreptitiously."<sup>49</sup>

One particularly elaborate scheme involved surreptitious border

crossings, Mexican guides, forged head tax receipts, and U.S. government employee accomplices. In early 1908, four Japanese immigrants were arrested in Denver on suspicion of entering the country without documentation. The resulting investigation led officers to El Paso and across the border into Juárez. Over a dozen witnesses, including Japanese immigrants, agents, immigration officials, railroad officials, El Paso police officers, restaurant owners, and waiters, were eventually interviewed in connection with the case. When the investigation was concluded, one Japanese agent was in the El Paso county jail, twelve Japanese immigrants had been arrested and deported, the white Japanese interpreter at the U.S. Bureau of Immigration office in El Paso had disappeared, and a U.S. immigrant inspector had been dismissed.<sup>50</sup>

The increase in long routes and elaborate undocumented immigration schemes revealed how immigrants quickly learned to adapt to the U.S. government's border policies with new strategies of their own, a pattern that would characterize undocumented immigration into the U.S. in later years. Special Immigrant Inspector Roger O'Donnell testified before Congress in 1914 that the inspectors along the Mexican line were "as vigilant as men can be," working both day and night. Still, there remained "hundreds of miles where there is no inspection whatever because we have not the men to put there."<sup>51</sup> The same was true for the northern border. Moreover, after new immigration restrictions were placed on other immigrant groups, including the literacy provision (1917) and the 1921 Quota Act, which restricted immigrants from southern and eastern Europe, the number of European and Middle Eastern immigrants using the border route into the United States increased sharply. Immigrant agents who had previously assisted Chinese into the country surreptitiously now turned their sights to the other immigrants.<sup>52</sup>

By the 1920s, historian Patrick Ettinger explains that U.S. officials had "resigned themselves to creating a border that might serve as a deterrent, rather than a barrier, to undocumented immigrants" from Asia, Mexico, and Europe.<sup>53</sup> Secretary of Labor James Davis conceded in 1927 that even if the U.S. government placed the army on the Canadian and Mexican borders, "we couldn't stop them; if we had the Navy on the water-front we couldn't stop them. Not even a Chinese wall, nine thousand miles in length and built over rivers and deserts and mountains and along the seashores, would seem to permit a permanent solution."<sup>54</sup>

In 1924, the U.S. government took one step closer to putting an army and a wall along the U.S.-Mexican border by establishing the U.S. Border Patrol. Today, immigrants seeking to enter the U.S. from Mexico are the primary targets of U.S. border security efforts. But the origins of undocumented immigration into the United States and U.S. border policies date back to the age of Asian immigration and exclusion.

As the United States increased its border security efforts, other countries, especially Mexico, were left with the unresolved problem of Asian immigrants stuck on their side of the border. Local and federal laws were passed in Mexico to address unwanted Chinese immigration, but by the 1930s anti-Chinese sentiment had reached a crisis point with the worldwide economic depression and massive unemployment. In 1930, a Mexican government report likened Asian immigration to Mexico to "una invasión como en país conquistado," an invasion of a conquered country.<sup>55</sup>

U.S. policies toward Mexican immigrants also helped to shape new responses to Chinese immigration in Mexico. When one million Mexicans were forcibly repatriated from the United States during the 1930s, Mexican calls to do the same to the Chinese intensified.<sup>56</sup> Mexican anti-Chinese leaders argued that "if the United States is permitted to practice acts of expulsion against foreigners of friendly nations . . . we would be a thousand times more justified . . . to free ourselves of such prejudicial exploiters as the Chinese. We should throw out of the country, *as is done to our countrymen in the United States*, all those foreigners who cannot prove their legal residence within our country."<sup>57</sup>

As calls of "out with the Chinese" came from Sonora, Governor Francisco Elías responded. He called for the strict enforcement of existing anti-Chinese laws, including a new federal law that required at least 90 percent of employees in commercial businesses be native Mexicans.<sup>58</sup> Chinese faced fines and forced closings if they did not comply. When their protests failed to change the laws, Chinese in Sonora began to leave in 1931.<sup>59</sup>

Some relocated to other parts of Mexico. Others tried to return to China. Vigilante groups in Sonora rounded up remaining Chinese and took them by the truckload to the U.S. border.<sup>60</sup> Mexican officials also forced Chinese without documentation to cross the international line into the custody of U.S. Border Patrol officers. In October, newly elected Sonoran governor

Rodolfo Calles (son of the president) issued two more orders against the Chinese community. The first ordered local officers to arrest any Chinese merchants who tried to reopen their businesses. The second penalized Chinese-Mexican interracial unions in violation of existing antimiscegenation laws.<sup>61</sup>

Then the expulsions began. Over a year and a half, an estimated 20,000 Chinese were forcibly expelled from Sonora and other neighboring states, such as Sinaloa and Nayarit.<sup>62</sup> Forced from their homes, suffering from heavy economic and property losses, and harassed at every point along their journey, the Chinese arrived at the U.S.-Mexico border in a miserable state. Mexican officials reportedly inflicted one last indignity on departing Chinese by demanding a 50 peso exit fee. In September of 1931, the expulsion of all Chinese residents from Sonora had been accomplished, and Governor Calles announced with satisfaction that the "bitter twenty-year campaign" to terminate the "Chinese problem" had finally been won.<sup>63</sup>

Mexico's attempts to solve its Chinese problem shifted the burden to the United States, where the expulsion of Chinese from Mexico became a "most vexatious and expensive" situation, as the commissioner-general of immigration described it.<sup>64</sup> At first, U.S. border officials speculated that the expelled Chinese could be granted political refugee status and be temporarily detained in the United States before quickly returning to China. However, only a small number of Chinese immigrants had the funds to follow this course. As the U.S. government realized, most of the Sonoran Chinese were unable to pay for either their travel from the border to a seaport like San Francisco or for a steamship ticket back to China. They remained stuck just on the other side of the border, and jails in Nogales, Douglas, Bisbee, and Tucson became overcrowded.<sup>65</sup> In San Francisco at the Angel Island Immigration Station, the detention barracks were also overcrowded with Chinese refugees from Mexico.<sup>66</sup>

Months after the expulsion had started, the United States was still grappling with the problem as anti-Chinese campaigns moved to other Mexican states, and the number of Chinese expelled to the United States continued to grow. In March 1932, U.S. newspapers reported that 1,000 additional Chinese could be expected to cross the border before the end of the month. Five months later, U.S. immigration officials reported that Chinese refugees

were being rounded up almost every night along the border and placed in a detention camp until they could be deported back to China.<sup>67</sup> The cost of housing and transporting the Chinese became the burden of the U.S. government. From September 1931 to June 1933, the number of Chinese refugees deported from the El Paso district alone was 3,523, at a cost of about \$466,000.<sup>68</sup>

The U.S. government attempted to return the Chinese to Mexico, but found that this was "impossible."<sup>69</sup> The commissioner-general of immigration and the secretary of labor vented their frustration in the pages of their annual reports. In 1933, the commissioner-general complained of the "formidable charge" that the expulsions had forced on the bureau, a financial burden it could ill afford. The most frustrating aspect of the situation, he continued, was that in his opinion this was not even a U.S. problem. "It is a serious enough expense to deport these aliens who smuggle themselves into this country, but it is much more exasperating to have to bear the burden of removing those who are virtually forced upon us."<sup>70</sup>

Expelled Chinese Mexicans had a very different perspective on their plight. One Cantonese folksong described the helplessness and despair Chinese Mexicans felt at being caught between two hostile nations.

*Stay at home and lose opportunities;*

*A hundred considerations lead me to sojourn in Mexico.*

*Hated and prejudice against foreigners take away our property and many lives.*

*Unable to stay on—*

*I sneak across the border to the American side,*

*But bump into an immigration officer who sternly throws the book at me  
And orders my expulsion back to China.<sup>71</sup>*

- 26 Lee, *Quiet Odyssey*, xlvi, lvii, 14.
- 27 Choy, *Koreans in America*, 114; Kim, *Koreans in America*, 66–68.
- 28 Lee, *Quiet Odyssey*, xlviii.
- 29 Choy, *Koreans in America*, 99–101; Kim, *Koreans in America*, 29; Lee, *Quiet Odyssey*, xlix.
- 30 Lee, *Quiet Odyssey*, 58.
- 31 Kim, *The Quest for Statehood*, 26.
- 32 Ibid., 8–10.
- 33 Ibid., 26. See also Kim, *Koreans in America*, 49; and Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore*, 283.
- 34 Kim, *The Quest for Statehood*, 41.
- 35 Choy, *Koreans in America*, 141–49; Lee, *Quiet Odyssey*, xxix.
- 36 Choy, *Koreans in America*, 148–52.
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### Chapter 7: South Asian Immigrants and the “Hindu Invasion”

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#### Chapter 8: "We Have Heard Much of America": Filipinos in the U.S. Empire

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- 21 Mabalon, *Little Manila*, 163–73.
- 22 Espiritu, *Home Bound*, 64.
- 23 Manuel Buaken, *I Have Lived with the American People* (Caldwell, ID: Caxton, 1948), 188, 82.
- 24 Carey McWilliams, "Exit the Filipino," *The Nation*, September 4, 1935. 60 percent from Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore*, 318.
- 25 Melendy, *Asians in America*, 75; Buaken, *I Have Lived*, 195.
- 26 España-Maram, *Creating Masculinity*, 5.
- 27 Interview with Eliseo Felipe by Judy Yung, April 23, 2009, cited in Lee and Yung, *Angel Island*, 278–79.
- 28 Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore*, 319; Mabalon, *Little Manila*, 77.
- 29 España-Maram, *Creating Masculinity*, 21; McWilliams, "Exit the Filipino."
- 30 Melendy, *Asians in America*, 82–83; Mabalon, *Little Manila*, 71.
- 31 Melendy, *Asians in America*, 82–83.
- 32 Buaken, *I Have Lived*, 62; Mabalon, *Little Manila*, 90.
- 33 Howard A. DeWitt, "The Filipino Labor Union: The Salinas Lettuce Strike of 1934," *Amerasia* 5, no. 2 (1978): 1; Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore*, 322–23.

- 34 Mabalon, *Little Manila*, 220–23.
- 35 Dorothy B. Fujita-Rony, *American Workers, Colonial Power: Philippine Seattle and the Transpacific West, 1919–1941* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); and España-Maram, *Creating Masculinity*.
- 36 Mabalon, *Little Manila*, 112–29, 133.
- 37 Ibid., 147.
- 38 *San Francisco Examiner*, September 9, 1930, and November 28, 1930.
- 39 Melendy, *Asians in America*, 66.
- 40 Ibid., 65; Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore*, 325.
- 41 Buaken, *I Have Lived*, 169–70.
- 42 "Ban Demanded on Philippine Influx to U.S.," *San Francisco Examiner*, Sept. 9, 1930.
- 43 "Welch Assails Invasions of Filipinos Here," *San Francisco Examiner*, Nov. 28, 1930. See also "Filipinos Declared Unfit by Citizenship Speaker," *San Francisco Chronicle*, Feb. 22, 1930.
- 44 Melendy, *Asians in America*, 67.
- 45 Ibid., 52–53.
- 46 Bulosan, *America Is in the Heart*, 121. See also Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*, 113, 116; Dawn Bohulano Mabalon, "Life in Little Manila: Filipinas/os in Stockton, California, 1917–1972" (PhD dissertation, Stanford University, 2003), 61, 63; Rick Baldoz, "Valorizing Racial Boundaries: Hegemony and Conflict in the Racialization of Filipino Migrant Labour in the United States," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 27:6 (2004), 983.
- 47 Espiritu, *Home Bound*, 66.
- 48 Buaken, *I Have Lived*, 89–94.
- 49 Mabalon, "Life in Little Manila," 60–1; Mabalon, *Little Manila*, 92–95; Melendy, *Asians in America*, 53–54; Baldoz, "Valorizing Racial Boundaries," 977–79; Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*, 105, 114; Brett Melendy, "California's Discrimination against Filipinos, 1927–1935," in *Letters in Exile: An Introductory Reader on the History of Pilipinos in America*, ed. UCLA Asian American Studies Center (Los Angeles: UCLA Asian American Studies Center, 1976), 40; Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore*, 327–28.
- 50 Rick Baldoz, *The Third Asiatic Invasion: Migration and Empire in Filipino America, 1898–1946* (New York: New York University Press, 2011), 157, 160, 164–65, 174–76.
- 51 Philippine Independence Act (48 Stat. 456), March 24, 1934; España-Maram, *Creating Masculinity*, 172–73 (fn 9); Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*, 119; Baldoz, *The Third Asiatic Invasion*, 177.

- 52 Marcelo Domingo is a pseudonym. File 34028/14–20, Investigation Arrival Case Files, National Archives, San Francisco, CA; Lee and Yung, *Angel Island*, 281–85.
- 53 Edward Cahill to Col. D. W. MacCormack, August 26, 1935, in "Filipinos, Mistreatment of by Officers of the Service," File 55874/464B, INS Subject Correspondence, National Archives, DC; Lee and Yung, *Angel Island*, 290–91.
- 54 Pedro B. Duncan, New York City, to the Secretary of Labor, June 6, 1935, and other letters from writers across the country, in "Filipinos, Mistreatment of by Officers of the Service."
- 55 Lee and Yung, *Angel Island*, 290–93.
- 56 Buaken, *I Have Lived*, 79.

#### Chapter 9: Border Crossings and Border Enforcement: Undocumented Asian Immigration

- 1 Translated letter included in F. W. Berkshire, Supervising Inspector, Mexican Border District, to Commissioner-General of Immigration, August 27, 1918, File 54270/1, INS Subject Correspondence, National Archives, Washington, DC.
- 2 Because no full record exists for both the northern and southern borders, this estimate is compiled from a number of sources: U.S. Department of Commerce and Labor, *Annual Report of the Commissioner-General of Immigration* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office) (hereafter cited as AR-CGI) (1903), 102; George E. Paulsen, "The Yellow Peril at Nogales: The Ordeal of Collector William M. Hoey," *Arizona and the West* 13, no. 2 (Summer 1971): 113–28; U.S. Department of Commerce and Labor, *Annual Report of the Commissioner-General of Immigration*, (hereafter cited as AR-CGI) (1910), 146; and C. Luther Fry, "Illegal Entry of Orientals into the United States Between 1910 and 1920," *Journal of American Statistical Association* 23, no. 162 (1928): 173–77.
- 3 Fry, "Illegal Entry of Orientals," 173.
- 4 David Lai, *Chinatowns: Towns Within Cities in Canada* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1988), 52.
- 5 Hyung-chan Kim and Richard W. Markov, "The Chinese Exclusion Laws and Smuggling Chinese into Whatcom County," *Annals of the Chinese Historical Society of the Pacific Northwest* (1983): 16–30; U.S. Department of Commerce and Labor, AR-CGI (1903), 98–99.

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- 7 James Reynolds, "Enforcement of the Chinese Exclusion Law," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences* 34 (September, 1909): 368; U.S. Department of Commerce and Labor, AR-CGI (1904), 137–141 and AR-CGI (1909), 128.
- 8 Stanford Lyman, *Chinese Americans* (New York: Random House, 1974), 106.
- 9 U. S. Bureau of Immigration, *Compilation from the Records of the Bureau of Immigration of Facts Concerning the Enforcement of the Chinese-Exclusion Laws: Letter from the Secretary of Commerce and Labor, Submitting, in Response to the Inquiry of the House, a Report as to the Enforcement of the Chinese-Exclusion Laws* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1906), 63.
- 10 U.S. Department of Commerce and Labor, AR-CGI (1909), 130.
- 11 Julian Ralph, "The Chinese Leak," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, March 1891, 520; Lee, *At America's Gates*, 154, 175–76.
- 12 Ralph, "The Chinese Leak," 524; U.S. Department of Commerce and Labor, AR-CGI (1907), 111; Raymond B. Craib, "Chinese Immigrants in Porfirian Mexico: A Preliminary Study of Settlement, Economic Activity and Anti-Chinese Sentiment," Research Paper Series No. 28 (Albuquerque: Latin American Institute, May 1996), 8; J. W. Berkshire to Commissioner-General of Immigration, Oct. 17, 1907, File 52212/2, part 1, p. 3, INS Subject Correspondence, National Archives, Washington, DC.
- 13 Clifford Perkins, *Border Patrol: With the U.S. Immigration Service on the Mexican Boundary*, 1910–54 (El Paso, TX: University of Texas at El Paso, 1978), 17.
- 14 U.S. Department of Commerce and Labor, AR-CGI (1907), 111.
- 15 U.S. Department of Commerce and Labor, AR-CGI (1909), 127.
- 16 Charles Babcock to U.S. Commissioner-General of Immigration, September 28, 1907, and October 7, 1907, "Smuggling-Vancouver," File 51893/102, INS Subject Correspondence, National Archives, Washington, DC.
- 17 John H. Clark to F. P. Sargent, November 18, 1907, File 51931/14A, *ibid.*
- 18 Newspaper articles in "Japanese via Kumeric, Seattle, 1907," File 51630/44, *ibid.*
- 19 Marcus Braun to F. P. Sargent, June 10, 1907, in "Braun's Second Detail to Mexico, Braun's Report," File 52320/1A, *ibid.*
- 20 Chizuko Watanabe, "The Japanese Immigrant Community in Mexico: Its History and Present," (Los Angeles: California State University, 1983), 28.

- 21 Ito, *Issei*, 67–68.
- 22 *Ibid.*, 70–72.
- 23 *Ibid.*, 67–68.
- 24 U.S. Department of Commerce and Labor, AR-CGI (1907), 110; Report by Marcus Braun to Frank P. Sargent, Feb. 12, 1907, File 52320/1, INS Subject Correspondence; Telegram, April 12, 1907; and Marcus Braun to Commissioner-General of Immigration, April 13, 1907, in “Japanese Conditions—Mexican Border, 1907,” File 51931/11, INS Subject Correspondence, National Archives, Washington, DC.
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- 26 Lee, *At America's Gates*, 164.
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- 32 T. F. Schmucker to Commissioner-General of Immigration, April 8, 1907, File 51931/7, INS Subject Correspondence, National Archives, Washington, DC.
- 33 F. P. Sargent to Marcus Braun, November 12, 1906, File 52320/1, *ibid.*
- 34 Marcus Braun to F. P. Sargent, June 10, 1907, in “Braun's Second Detail to Mexico, Braun's Report,” File 52320/1A, *ibid.*
- 35 Lee, *At America's Gates*, 175.
- 36 Marcus Braun to Commissioner-General of Immigration, “Report,” Feb. 12, 1907, File 52320/1, 11, INS Subject Correspondence, National Archives, Washington, DC.
- 37 Lee, *At America's Gates*, 186.
- 38 *Ibid.*, 176–79. On Canadian-U.S. negotiations, see for example, John H. Clark, U.S. Commissioner of Immigration, Montreal, Canada, to U.S. Commissioner-General of Immigration, July 16, 1912, File 51931/21, INS Subject Correspondence, National Archives, Washington, DC.
- 39 Lee, *At America's Gates*, 179–87.
- 40 Perkins, *Border Patrol*, 9; John M. Myers, *The Border Wardens* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1971), 23.
- 41 U.S. Department of Commerce and Labor, AR-CGI (1906), 95.

- 42 Lee, *At America's Gates*, 180–87.
- 43 U.S. Department of Labor, AR-CGI (1914), 21.
- 44 Ito, *Issei*, 77.
- 45 U.S. Department of Labor, AR-CGI (1917), xxiv.
- 46 Statement of Shinji Kawamoto, Taken at County Jail, El Paso, Texas, April 30, 1908, by George J. Harris, in “Investigation of Immigration Officials—El Paso, 1908,” in File 51893/55B, INS Subject Correspondence, National Archives, Washington, DC.
- 47 See series of letters from C. O. Cowley to Frank P. Sargent, Commissioner General of Immigration, D.C., May 9, 1904, May 3, 1904, and June 5, 1904, 51841/164 and American Vice Consul, Kingston, Jamaica, to Secretary of State, June 25, 1912, in File 52090/4D, *ibid.* See also U.S. Department of Labor, AR-CGI (1914), 233.
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- 50 “Four Smuggled Japanese Aliens—El Paso, 1908,” File 51893/55 and “Investigation of Japanese Smuggler—El Paso, 1908,” File 51893/55A, *ibid.* For a summary of the case, see Richard Taylor, Inspector in Charge, El Paso, TX, to Frank Sargent, Commissioner-General of Immigration, March 18, 1908, in File 51893/55A, *ibid.*
- 51 U.S. House, 63rd Cong., 2nd Sess., “Hindu Immigration,” Hearings before the Committee on Immigration Relative to Restriction of Immigration of Hindu Laborers, February 26, 1914, pt. 3 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1914), 118–19.
- 52 U.S. Department of Labor, AR-CGI (1923), 20, 15–21.
- 53 Patrick Ettinger, “We Sometimes Wonder What They Will Spring on Us Next: Immigrants and Border Enforcement in the American West, 1882–1930,” *Western Historical Quarterly* 37, no. 2 (Summer 2006): 180.
- 54 *New York Times*, June 19, 1927; Emily Ryo, “Through the Back Door: Applying Theories of Legal Compliance to Illegal Immigration During the Chinese Exclusion Era,” *Law & Social Inquiry* 31 (2006): 127.
- 55 Secretaría de Gobernación, *El Servicio de Migración en México por Landa y Pina Jefe del Departamento de Migración* (México, D.F.: Talleres Gráficos de la Nación, 1930), 5, 24, 6; Chao Romero, *The Chinese in Mexico*, 183–85.
- 56 Francisco E. Balderrama and Raymond Rodriguez, *Decade of Betrayal: Mexican Repatriation in the 1930s* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995), 133–34, 121.

- 57 Espinoza, *El Ejemplo de Sonora*, 176, 185 (emphasis mine).
- 58 Jacques, "The Anti-Chinese Campaign in Sonora, Mexico, 1900–1931," 229–30, 232; Chao Romero, *Chinese in Mexico*, 186–87.
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- 60 Evelyn Hu-DeHart, "Immigrants to a Developing Society: The Chinese in Northern Mexico, 1875–1932," *The Journal of Arizona History* 21, no. 3 (1980): 305.
- 61 Humberto Monteón González and José Luis Trueba Lara, *Chinos y Anti-chinos en México: Documentos para Su Estudio* (Gobierno de Jalisco, Secretaría General, Unidad Editorial, 1988), 134–37; Espinoza, *El Ejemplo de Sonora*, 110–11.
- 62 *Arizona Daily Star*, September 1, 1931, and September 4, 1931.
- 63 Espinoza, *El Ejemplo de Sonora*, 140; Charles C. Cumberland, "The Sonora Chinese and the Mexican Revolution," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 40, no. 2 (1960): 191, 203.
- 64 U.S. Department of Justice, AR-CGI (1932), 5.
- 65 *Arizona Daily Star*, September 1, 1931; *New York Times*, September 4, 1931.
- 66 *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 13, 1932.
- 67 *New York Times*, March 20, 1932, and August 6, 1932.
- 68 U.S. Department of Labor, *Annual Report of the Secretary of Labor* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1933), 59.
- 69 U.S. Department of Justice, AR-CGI (1932), 5.
- 70 Ibid.
- 71 Hom, *Songs of Gold Mountain*, 89.

#### Chapter 10: "Military Necessity": The Uprooting of Japanese Americans During World War II

- 1 Uchida, *Desert Exile*.
- 2 Roger Daniels, "The Decisions to Relocate the North American Japanese: Another Look," *Pacific Historical Review* 51, no. 1 (1982): 71. Peruvian statistics from Akemi Kikumura-Yano, ed., *Encyclopedia of Japanese Descendants in the Americas: An Illustrated History of the Nikkei* (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira, 2002), 273.
- 3 A variety of terms have been used to describe the wartime removal and confinement of Japanese Americans, Japanese Canadians, and Japanese Latin Americans during World War II. The U.S. government itself created

positive-sounding euphemisms like "evacuation," "relocation," and "assembly center" to describe its wartime actions. The most common terms are "internment," "internee," and "internment camp." As scholars, activists, and community members have pointed out, these terms are not correct. "Internment" refers to a legal process applied to nationals of a country with which a country is at war. In the United States, a system of international laws regulated treatment of prisoners of war and civilian enemy nationals in World War II. These could include an individual hearing before a government board that could lead to some recourse. An estimated 11,000 Japanese, German, and Italian nationals were interned during the war by the United States. In contrast, the vast majority of the Japanese Americans who were forcibly removed from their communities were U.S. citizens and had no such recourse. As historian Roger Daniels points out, "they were incarcerated not for suspected subversion or membership, but because of their ethnicity." The terms "internment" and "internee" may be technically correct for noncitizens of Japanese descent, but in this book I follow the lead of the Civil Liberties Public Education Fund and use the terms "removal," "incarceration," "confinement," and "inmate" to best describe the experiences of Japanese American citizens who were forcibly relocated and incarcerated during the war. See Roger Daniels, "Words Do Matter: A Note on Inappropriate Terminology and the Incarceration of the Japanese Americans," in *Nikkei in the Pacific Northwest: Japanese Americans and Japanese Canadians in the Twentieth Century*, eds. Gail M. Nomura and Louis Fiset (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2005): 190–214; Civil Liberties Public Education Fund, "CLPEF Resolution Regarding Terminology" <http://www.momomedia.com/CLPEF/backgrnd.html#Link%20to%20terminology> (accessed March 18, 2013).

- 4 United States and Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, *Personal Justice Denied* (Washington, DC; Seattle: Civil Liberties Public Education Fund; University of Washington Press, 1997), 54 (hereafter cited as U.S. CWRIC, *Personal Justice Denied*); Greg Robinson, *A Tragedy of Democracy: Japanese Confinement in North America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 47–48.
- 5 Robinson, *A Tragedy of Democracy*, 46.
- 6 Ibid., 39, 36–37, 44–47.
- 7 Roger Daniels, *Prisoners Without Trial: Japanese Americans in World War II* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1993), 25–26.
- 8 "Memorandum on C. B. Munson's Report 'Japanese on the West Coast,'" November 7, 1941, Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of