



## A Railroads Lesson Plan

### The Chinese Expulsion Act of 1882

by [Gwen Whiting](#)

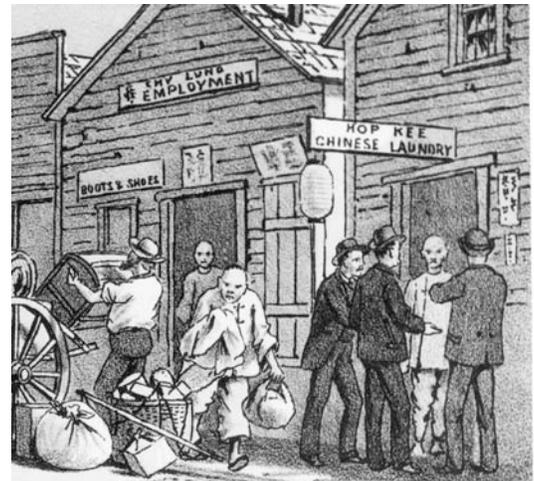
This may be used as a Constitutional Issues Classroom-Based Assessment for Washington state middle school students.

#### The Issue At Hand:

In May 1882, Congress, responding to pressure from unions, passed the Chinese Exclusion Act. This treaty with the Chinese Government banned Chinese emigrants from entering America and called for the deportation of any who arrived after 1880. Was the Exclusion Act the best solution? What were its positive and negative outcomes?

Chinese immigrants began arriving in America in significant numbers in the 1850s, most from the southern provinces of China, where war, persecution and famine caused the deaths of millions. American businessmen actively sought Chinese laborers in mines and other industries, using them to provide much of the labor for building the transcontinental railroads. At first praised as diligent workers, praise turned to hostility as the railroad was completed and competition for other jobs increased. Anti-Chinese political activity and violence erupted between 1880-1900 throughout the West, resulting in scores of deaths.

This curriculum asks students to examine legislation and determine the stakeholders and parties involved, using the 1885 expulsion of Chinese people in Tacoma as a case study. Students are asked to define values and issues related to the events of the late 1880's in their examination of this time period and its influence on Northwest communities. They will then examine the relevance of this subject to modern constitutional issues through classroom discourse and a position paper on a contemporary topic or a local manifestation of this Act.



Chinese people are shown being forced to leave their homes and businesses in Seattle. This detail is from an issue of *West Shore* magazine, published in 1889 after anti-Chinese riots. *Washington Historical Society Collections.*

#### DOWNLOAD AREA

Download the PDFs required for this lesson:

-  [The Lesson Plan](#)
-  [Primary Source Documents](#)
-  [Secondary Source Documents](#)
-  [Student Worksheets](#)
-  [Other Teacher Materials](#)
-  [Rubrics](#)

#### Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRs):

This lesson plan satisfies the following EALRs: Civics 1.1.2b, 4.1.2a, 1.2.2a, History 1.1.2b, US1.2.2, and Social Studies skills 3.1.3a. [Click here](#) to print out the material for your reference.

### CBA Scoring Rubric and Notes:

The Office of State Public Instruction has created a scoring rubric for the Constitutional Issues Classroom-Based Assessment. [Click here](#) to download and print this rubric for your information.

### Essential Questions for Students:

- Who was involved in the expulsion of Chinese people from Tacoma? What motivations did they have? Were they economic, political, social?
- What kind of effect did the Chinese Exclusion Act have on the people it targeted? How has it influenced their descendents' lives today?
- How does this topic relate to us today? What is the role of the United States government in regard to immigration? What issues are the same as they were in the 1880's and what issues have changed? Why is this topic important?

### Essential Understandings:

- The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 had an impact on Chinese communities throughout the United States that is still felt today.
- The Exclusion Act was only one of a number of anti-Chinese legislative actions targeted at decreasing the number of Chinese immigrants allowed in the United States. Although the act was later repealed, other discriminatory laws were still in place.
- The motivations that provoked anti-Chinese violence and political action were complex and involved a number of economic, social, and political factors.
- The coming of the railroad played a significant role in immigration into the West, encouraging eventual settlement in Washington state.

### Primary Sources for Student Understanding:

1. [The Chinese Exclusion Act](#)
2. [Letter from James Wickersham](#)
3. [Statement from Lum May](#)
4. [Images from WSHS Collections](#)
5. [Images from West Shore magazine](#)

**Primary Source:** A piece of evidence created during the time period under investigation by someone who participated in, witnessed, or commented upon the events being studied. It is a surviving record of a past event. Photographs, diaries, and artifacts can all be considered primary sources.

### Secondary Sources for Student Understanding:

1. [Chinese Immigrants Overview](#)
2. [Exclusion in Washington Overview](#)
3. [Chinese Immigrants in the American West](#)
4. [Run Out on the Rails They Built](#)

**Secondary Sources:** Books, articles, essays, and lectures created, often using primary sources, that describe and interpret a time period after events have taken place.

### Other Teacher Resources:

5. [The Chinese Exclusion Act: a brief history\\*](#)
6. [Chronology of Asian-American History\\*](#)
7. [Reflections on Exclusion\\*](#)

(\* denotes external website links)

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## Instructions for Teachers: SESSION ONE

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### Part I.

Prepare yourself by getting familiar with the content of this lesson plan. Review all primary and secondary sources listed above. The following optional readings have also been provided for teacher use. They show a modern perspective on the effects of exclusion. They also provide a timeline of some of the events before and after the Chinese Exclusion Act.

The Chinese Exclusion Act:  
A Brief History  
(external link)

Chronology of Asian  
American History  
(external link)

Reflections on Exclusion  
(external link)

As the culminating activity, students will be asked to consider a constitutional issue of their choice relating to this topic. You may wish to lead up to this unit by suggesting that students collect clippings from current publications on subjects such as civil rights or immigration in order to make comparisons between the late 1880's and today.

### Part II.

Provide students with an overview of this lesson by explaining to them that they will be studying the Chinese Exclusion Act. You may wish to share some of the details from the teacher reading about the Exclusion Act or read it out loud.

Pass out copies of essays about Chinese and European immigrants in your classroom. You may either wish to split the group in half and have each half read a different section and compare verbally or you can have students read both essays in their entirety.

You may wish to have a world map on hand so that students can reference different parts of the world as they are working through the assignment. Ask them to use the [vocabulary organizer](#) as they complete the readings so that they can organize their thoughts for classroom discussion throughout the lesson.

#### On the Chinese Exclusion Act

"1882 is a watershed. For Chinese Americans, all our reference points begin from here. The 1882 legislation is unique in U.S. immigration law because the Chinese were singled out by name thereafter, as 'aliens ineligible for citizenship' - hereafter no Chinese will be admitted to naturalization. Preemptively barred from the possibility of citizenship. That's even bigger than excluding a people just from entry."

- Connie Young Yu, historian

Chinese  
Immigrants

European  
Immigrants

Vocabulary  
Organizer

### Part III.

After students have been given the opportunity to read these essays, project a world map. Ask them to point out the area from which the groups in their readings came.

Engage the class in discussion about the following points:

- *What factors influenced the move of these peoples?*
- *Take a look at this map. What resources existed in the homeland of those immigrating to the United States? What resources existed in the lands they were entering?*
- *What role did the railroad play in immigration? Why would Chinese labor on the railroad have influenced settlement patterns in the Pacific Northwest?*

Draw students into a discussion about how the railroad played a part in the movement of resources and people from one place to another. Ask how the resources available in home countries would have created similarities and differences between cultures. Do they think that

this would have played a part in the roles that immigrants played in other countries? What other factors played a part?

#### Part IV.

In class or as homework, have students read Run out on the Rails They Built. Ask them to continue using their Vocabulary Organizer to add to their concept of what immigration meant. As they complete this, ask that they do the Issue Analysis Worksheet and explain that they will be exploring what happened more in depth in the next class session.

#### Here to Stay?

Most immigrants of this period, whether from Asia or Europe, came as sojourners with plans to return home after acquiring wealth. This idea was not unique to the Chinese population, although it was often represented as such. European immigrants had return rates equal to those of Asian immigrants.

### SESSION TWO

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#### Part I.

As you bring students back together for this session, debrief some of the things that they learned in their readings. Divide them into smaller groups and pass out copies of the Chinese Exclusion Act.

Use this legislation as part of a jigsaw exercise. Give each group a different section of the Act to read and explain to them that they will be presenting to the class what they believe their section means. Using the first section, model the expectations by providing them with a brief description of the Act and its implications for the Chinese community.

After students have been given the opportunity to discuss their sections in small groups, bring them together to explain various sections to the class. You may want to offer them the possibility of presenting this material verbally, dramatically, or artistically, depending on time constraints and the learning styles of your students.

#### Part II.

Pass out copies of the James Wickersham letter and Lum May Statement. You may have students read both letters or keep the class in their smaller groups to discuss amongst themselves.

James  
Wickersham letter

Lum May  
statement

After they have had the opportunity to study both documents, discuss the following points:

- *What is a stereotype, and do you see any in these documents? If so, what are they?*
- *Think about stereotypes that you have experienced. How did they make you feel?*
- *What stereotypes did other Americans have about Chinese people? What stereotypes do you see in James' Wickersham letter?*
- *How did some of the Chinese people that you read about try to counter stereotypes?*
- *Was there anything in what you read that surprised you? Why do you think it did?*
- *How do you challenge a stereotype? What effects can the perceptions of other people have on an individual's life?*

#### Part III.

Ask students to review their "Run Out on the Rails They Built" essay again. As a class, identify the issues at stake and some of the stakeholders involved. You may wish to write this on the board, creating a simple chart with space to write about each individual stakeholder. Using the

Issue Analysis Worksheet as a guide, encourage students to evaluate the motives of each individual stakeholder in preparation for Session Three.

Issue Analysis  
Worksheet

**Part IV.**

Explain to students that in the next class session, you will be conducting a Socratic seminar. Ask them to prepare by writing questions to ask during the course of the session using the Who Questions? Worksheet. Explain to them that this seminar will require them to participate by asking and answering questions of their classmates.

You will need to read the Socratic Seminar Handout to prepare for this session beforehand.

Who Questions?  
Worksheet

Socratic Seminar  
Handout

**SESSION THREE**

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**Part I.**

In this session, students should be prepared to discuss the topic of Chinese expulsion - its origins and its effect on people today, the relationship between this event, and modern immigration and/or civil rights issues.

Review the following guidelines for your class. Students should know that it's good to:

- *Use your readings as you need to during the discussion. This is not a test. Use evidence to back up arguments.*
- *It is okay to pass when asked to contribute.*
- *Do not participate if you are not prepared.*
- *Ask that the point be clarified for you if you become confused.*
- *Keep the discussion focused on the point at hand.*
- *Take turns speaking and be respectful of fellow participants. All viewpoints have equal validity- there is no "right" or "wrong" answer.*
- *Talk to each other, not just to your teacher.*

Remember that the Socratic seminar is an exercise to allow students a chance to explore this topic through discourse with their peers. Your role as teacher/leader is to guide the discussion, and ensure that students remain on-topic and treat one another with respect.

Wrap up this session by asking students to reflect on the topics discussed in the seminar. You may ask them to do a freewrite about their experience to help them process the discussion; however, it is not recommended that this freewrite be graded. It needs to be a low-stakes writing assignment.

**SESSION FOUR**

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**Part I.**

Tell students that they are now ready to begin exploring constitutional issues that affect them today. Ask them to look at what they have learned about the Chinese Exclusion Act and think about how they could incorporate that information in a topic closely related to a current issue. Among topics you might suggest for student use are civil rights and immigration.

Remind them that they must select a debate and identify the different stakeholders involved. Using their recent work on the Chinese expulsion, review positions and values discussed earlier.

Explain to students that they will need to do the same when writing their position paper. Tell them that they will need to choose a position, and outline that in the paper, presenting a solution to the problem based on historical and Constitutional analysis. Provide them with the graphic organizer below for them to use as they draft their position paper.

Graphic Organizer

[WashingtonHistoryOnline](http://WashingtonHistoryOnline.org) offers a tremendous number of primary and secondary sources that can be used for this paper. Depending upon the amount of time you have, you may have your students devote only a few days to this assignment, or, alternatively, they may extend their research into many other sources, ultimately devoting more time to the writing and presentation of their papers.

Hand out the [Classroom-Based Assessment checklists and rubrics](#) to assist them in meeting the learning outcomes. These checklists will assist students in planning and organizing their papers.

After students have drafted their persuasive essays, pair them up and have them switch papers. Ask them: *Are you persuaded by your partner's recommendation? Why or why not? What evidence have they used?*

### POSSIBLE EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

- Suggest that students visit the Chinese Reconciliation Project Foundation website at [www.cprftacoma.org](http://www.cprftacoma.org) to find out how Tacoma is addressing the issue of expulsion in their community. This website has a powerpoint presentation available that could be used as part of classroom discussion.
- You may also wish to have students do further exploration of the topic by examining related events outside of Washington. You could suggest that they research the effects of exclusion in other parts of the country or even other parts of the world. Ask if they can find examples of this type of legislation or social rule in other cultures.
- Have students search the Washington State Historical Society's online collections for artifacts pertaining to this period of history. Print out some of the photographs and ephemeral pieces and have students examine them. Ask them to form a hypothesis about the significance of the object and then conduct research to see if they can find other evidence to prove or disprove their original assumptions.
- Schedule a visit to the Washington State History Museum so that students can use the ideas in this lesson plan to examine other periods in Washington state history.

#### **An Early Fight against Exclusion**

In 1885, residents of Olympia, Washington passed a resolution opposing efforts to remove the Chinese by force. When white rioters threatened to do so anyway, Sheriff William Billings deputized local businessmen to help him keep order.

In 1997, Gary Locke, the first Chinese American governor of Washington state, reflected on the efforts to discuss anti-Chinese violence in the Pacific Northwest. He said in part:

*In the history of every minority in America, there are stark contrasts of light and dark. There are tales of terrible oppression and persecution -- and, on the same page -- tales of incredible courage, and passionate advocacy for equal rights.*

*As we work to restore the historical memory of the anti-Chinese, anti-immigrant violence of the 1880s, we must also -- and equally-- work to restore our historical memory of the people who opposed it.*

*We should build... monuments to the citizens and the sheriff in Olympia, who put their lives on the line when they stood between an angry, armed mob and their intended Chinese victims.*

*It is not enough to vilify the bigots. We must never forget to celebrate the heroism of those who stood up to them.*

- Adapted from the *Becoming American: The Chinese Experience* website at <http://www.pbs.org/becomingamerican/>

Forty seventh

Congress of the United States, At the First Session,

Began and held at the CITY OF WASHINGTON, in the DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, on Monday, the fifth day of November, eighteen hundred and eighty-one.

Act

To execute certain treaty stipulations relating to Chinese.

Whereas, In the opinion of the Government of the United States the coming of Chinese laborers to this country endangers the good order of certain localities within the territory thereof: Therefore, Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That from and after the expiration of ninety days next after the passage of this act, and until the expiration of ten years next after the passage of this act, the coming of Chinese laborers to the United States, and the same is hereby, suspended; and during such suspension it shall not be lawful for any Chinese laborer to come, or, having so come after the expiration of said ninety days, to remain within the United States.

SEC. 2. That the master of any vessel who shall knowingly bring within the United States on such vessel, and land or permit to be landed, any Chinese laborer, from any foreign port or place, shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor, and on conviction thereof shall be punished by a fine of not more than five hundred dollars for each and every such Chinese laborer so brought, and may be also imprisoned for a term not exceeding one year.

SEC. 3. That the two foregoing sections shall not apply to Chinese laborers who were in the United States on the seventeenth day of November, eighteen hundred and eighty, or who shall have come into the same before the expiration of ninety days next after the passage of this act, and who shall produce

from any vessel of any Chinese person not lawfully entitled to enter the United States, shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor; and shall, on conviction thereof, be fined in a sum not exceeding one thousand dollars, and imprisoned for a term not exceeding one year.

Sec. 12. That no Chinese person shall be permitted to enter the United States by land without producing to the proper officer of customs the certificate in this act required of Chinese persons sailing to land from a vessel. And any Chinese person found unlawfully within the United States shall be caused to be removed therefrom to the country from whence he came, by direction of the President of the United States, and at the cost of the United States, after being brought before some justice, judge, or commissioner of a court of the United States and found to be one not lawfully entitled to be or remain in the United States.

Sec. 13. That this act shall not apply to diplomatic and other officers of the Chinese Government traveling upon the business of that government, whose credentials shall be taken as equivalent to the certificate in this act mentioned, and shall exempt them and their body and household servants from the provisions of this act as to other Chinese persons.

Sec. 14. That hereafter no State court or court of the United States shall admit Chinese to citizenship; and all laws in conflict with this act are hereby repealed.

Sec. 15. That the words "Chinese laborers", wherever used in this act, shall be construed to mean both skilled and unskilled laborers and Chinese employed in mining.

J. M. McKim  
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

David Davis  
President of the Senate, pro tempore.

Approved May 6, 1882.

Charles A. Smith

House of Representatives U. S.  
Washington, D. C.

April 21, 1916.

Mr. Herbert Hunt,  
c/o Tacoma Daily News,  
Tacoma, Washington.

My dear Mr. Hunt:

I have your note of April 13th asking me for some detailed information about the Chinese Expulsion. You ask who wrote the resolution appointing the Committee of Fifteen. Frankly, I do not know. I feel quite sure that I did not do it but I am inclined to think that Ren Taylor may remember better than I who did it. I was not on the committee as it was first organized. I was drawn on it later but I was on the Committee on the day of the expulsion and was with the members of the Committee all that day from the time the whistle blew before noon until the last act in the evening.

To be quite frank with you I did not know the Chinese were to be expelled from Tacoma that day until the whistle blew and the crowd began to gather. I well remember that Meyer Kaufman came to me as soon as he heard the whistle blowing and he saw the people coming toward us and said to me in his excitable way "My God, Wickersham, there is going to be trouble here today. Are they going to put the Chinaman out of town?" I assured him that I did not know and that I was as ignorant that there was a plan already arranged as he was. Kaufman and I staid together all day and he was exceedingly nervous. He ran a large drygoods store in Tacoma and he felt just as I did that if by any accident or through any disorder on account of drunken men or otherwise some Chinaman should be killed or some serious matter of that kind happen ~~that~~ the Committee of Fifteen would be on the road to Walla Walla. With this horrible vision before us all day we certainly did what we could to protect the Chinamen from imposition and assault and did the best we could to protect their property from destruction. We sympathized with their willingness to remove themselves and their property to Portland and we greatly desired to have it done in such a way that we would not be compelled to retire to the privacy of a cell at Walla Walla, McNeil's Island, or some other quiet retreat. Luckily we managed to control

the situation during the day and while we were all indicted many times and had some interviews with the United States Marshal backed by United States troops we did escape sequestration of our persons as guests of the government.

I have always felt that we did a great and good work for the Pacific coast that day. There are on the Pacific Coast of Asia millions of Chinese and even Japanese who would flood the Pacific coast if the bars were once lowered. I never objected to the Chinese because of their criminal activities or their immorality but rather the reverse. They appear to me to be a very hard-working, industrious and honest people. However, their system of development under intense suppression has made them much more to be feared than if they were criminals. A Chinaman can live on what an American family would throw from its table. He and every member of his family would work from early in the morning till late at night and live in a very modest hut. The fear I have always had was not that the Pacific coast would be overrun by criminals and a foreign race of base and immoral character but that we would be confronted by millions of industrious hard-working sons and daughters of Confucius who, if given an equal chance with our people, would outdo them in the struggle for life and gain possession of the Pacific coast of America. For that reason I have always objected to the Chinese coming into the United States and into competition with our people. We can not compete with them, not because of their baser qualities, but because of their better qualities. I am yet just as much opposed to their entrance into competition with our people on the Pacific coast as I was at the time of their expulsion by the Committee of Fifteen but I am not afraid to do them the credit of saying that I fear their good qualities much more than I do their bad ones.

You ask me who usually presided as chairman of the Committee of Fifteen's meetings. My recollection is that it was E. G. Bacon, although Big Jake Ralph and our mutual friend A. U. Mills were always present. I have a large picture of a group of the men who were indicted showing more than fifteen. As a matter of fact something like thirty-five or forty men were indicted although not all of the Committee of Fifteen. The picture I have was taken at the corner of old C and Eleventh street. Of course, this picture was

taken before any of the big buildings that stand there now were erected.

I regret that I do not know exactly what you want so I am unable to give you as many facts as I am sure you would like to have nor as many as I could give you if I was present and could talk to you about it.

I have just read the clipping from the News of April 18th under the heading "Tacoma holds 'Open Forum' on old expulsion of Chinese". I think you made a very fair statement of the reasons for expelling the Chinese from Tacoma at that time. I remember meeting with the men who organized the Committee of Fifteen over Weisbach's store building on Pacific Avenue.

Very truly yours,

*James W. Rusham*

Delegate from Alaska.



# LUM MAY STATEMENT: JUNE 3, 1886

Territory of Washington  
County of King  
June 3, 1886

Lum May being duly sworn on his oath saith:

I was born in Canton, China, and am a subject of the Chinese Empire. I am aged about 51 years. Have been in America about eleven years and have been doing business in Tacoma for ten years. My business there was that of keeping dry goods, provisions, medicines and general merchandize store.

On the third day of November I resided with my family in Tacoma on the corner of Railroad Street some little distance from Chinatown. At that time I would say there were eight hundred or nine hundred Chinese persons in and about Tacoma who... were forcibly expelled by the white people of Tacoma. Twenty days previously to the 3rd of November, a committee of white persons waited upon the Chinese at their residences and ordered them to leave the city before the 3rd of November. I do not know the names of [the] white persons but would recognize their faces. The Committee consisted of 15 or 20 persons... who notified the Chinese to leave.

I asked General Sprague and other citizens for protection for myself and the Chinese people. The General said he would see and do what he could. All the Chinese after receiving notice to leave were frightened lest their houses should be blown up and destroyed. A rumour to that effect was in circulation. Many of them shut up their houses and tried to keep on the look out.

About half past 9 o'clock in the morning of November 3, 1885, a large crowd of citizens of Tacoma marched down to Chinatown and told all the Chinese that the whole Chinese population of Tacoma must leave town by half past one o'clock in the afternoon of that day. There must have been in the neighborhood of 1000 people in the crowd of white people though I cannot tell how many. They went to all the Chinese houses and establishments and notified the Chinese to leave. Where the doors were locked they broke forcibly into the houses smashing in doors and breaking in windows. Some of the crowd was armed with pistols, some with clubs. They acted in a rude boisterous and threatening manner, dragging and kicking the Chinese out of their houses.

My wife refused to go and some of the white persons dragged her out of the house. From the excitement, the fright and the losses we sustained through the riot she lost her reason, and has ever since been hopelessly insane. She threatens to kill people with a hatchet or any other weapon she can get hold of. The outrages I and my family suffered at the hands of the mob has utterly ruined me. I make no claim, however, for my wife's insanity or the anguish I have suffered. My wife was perfectly sane before the riot.

I saw my countrymen marched out of Tacoma on November 3rd. They presented a sad spectacle. Some had lost their trunks, some their blankets, some were crying for their things.

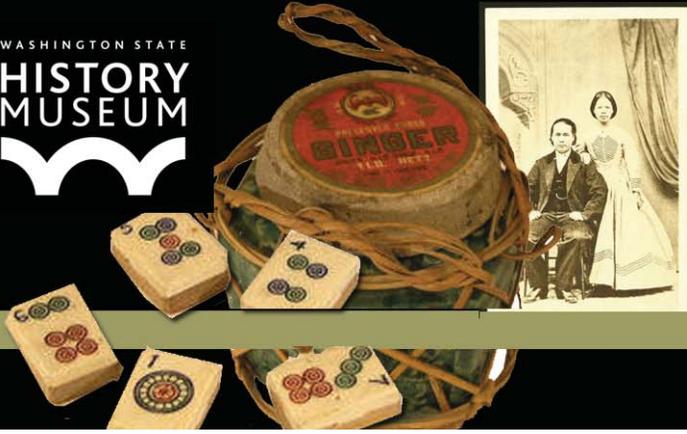
Armed white men were behind the Chinese, on horseback sternly urging them on. It was raining and blowing hard. On the 5th of November all the Chinese houses situated on the wharf were burnt down by incendiaries...

A few of the Chinese merchants I among them were suffered to remain in Tacoma for two days in order to pack up our goods or what was left of them. On the 5th of November, after the burning of the Chinese houses on the wharf I left Tacoma for Victoria where I have since resided... No Chinaman has been allowed to reside in Tacoma since November 3rd.

Mayor Weisbach appeared to be one of the leaders of the mob on the 3rd of November. I spoke to him and told him that Mr. Sprague had said the Chinese had a right to stay and would be protected. He answered me: "General Sprague has nothing to say. If he says anything we will hang him or kick him. You get out of here." I cried. He said I was a baby because I cried over the loss of my property. He said, "I told you before you must go, and I mean my word shall be kept good."

I desire to add to this that... it is ten years since we began business there.

Lum May



# Chinese Immigrants

China was a country torn by conflict in the 1800s. After the Opium Wars with England, China was devastated by poverty and famine. The country had experienced a long period of autocratic rule under the Qing dynasty, with a series of famines in the 1840s. The poverty that followed and religious differences were two of the causes of the Taiping Rebellion in 1850. This rebellion would last 20 years and cost nearly 30 million lives.

## GOLD MOUNTAIN DREAMS

In 1851, reports of gold came from the West, having been discovered at Sutter's Mill in 1848. Nearly 3,000 Chinese came to the U.S. in the hopes of making their fortune. Like other immigrants, they hoped to send this money to families back home. They referred to the nearby city of San Francisco as Gim Saam, or "Gold Mountain" because of the wealth believed to exist there.

An  
"autocratic"  
government  
is one where  
unlimited power  
is held by a  
single person.

Many Chinese immigrants came from the southern provinces of Guangdong and Fujian. Many Chinese Americans today trace their ancestors to the Pearl River Delta in Guangdong Province. The south was strongly affected by the rebellion. Being near to the seaport of Hong Kong, inhabitants of these provinces had more opportunities to leave the country.

In 1910,  
women  
numbered only  
5% of the  
entire Chinese  
population in  
the U.S.

Almost all of those who left for America were men. There were several reasons for this. Limited economic resources kept many families from making the journey together. The United States frontier was believed dangerous. Those who made the journey thought it was safer and easier to support a family from across the ocean.

Immigrants often planned to bring their family over once they had settled. However, laws were later put in place to limit the number of Chinese people who could enter the country. This prevented many families from being reunited.

## TOWARDS THE WEST



Those who came to the U.S. began to develop communities that consisted of more than mining. The Chinese people also became merchants, students, artisans, and would later be one of the primary groups working on the transcontinental railroad.

4 out of 5 workers on the Central Pacific line through the Sierra Nevada were Chinese.

The westward movement of settlers and gold seekers emphasized the need for a transcontinental railroad. The Central Pacific Railroad began to lay track for a line to California. Little progress on the western end of it was made because of a scarcity of labor and the rugged terrain of the Sierra Nevada mountains. The Central Pacific hired Chinese

## WHY WASHINGTON?

workers, finding them successful in all phases of construction. These laborers leveled roadbeds, bored tunnels, blasted mountainsides and laid track for the railroad's completion.

The Central Pacific was not the only railroad interested in staking a claim to the Pacific Northwest. In 1873, the Northern Pacific decided to follow in its footsteps and hired 300 Chinese laborers to complete a line from Kalama to Tacoma. Many of these people chose to stay in Washington territory, forming communities and starting businesses. Railroad work was available mainly on a seasonal basis, from March to September. After this work had finished, many workers moved into other industries, such as salmon canning.

In the beginning, this situation was acceptable to Euro-American workers. As long as the bulk of Chinese laborers remained in menial employment, they were not seen as a threat to the job market. In 1883, the country fell into a depression. As finding work became more and more difficult for all citizens, resentment against Chinese labor began to rise among part of the population.

In the late 19th century, there were over 100 incidents of anti-Chinese violence in the Pacific Northwest.

the



The Toone family (also known as the James family) of Olympia, Washington is pictured above as photographed in the 1890s. Jim Ah Toone took possession of the Gold Bar restaurant in Olympia on March 8, 1892. The Gold Bar was the meeting place of the first Territorial Legislature of Washington in 1852.

Expulsions resulted in the forced departure of the Chinese people from the communities of Tacoma and Black Diamond in the 1880s. Despite this and other hardships, many of those who had come to Washington chose to stay, strengthening their communities through civic action.

## ONLINE

The West the Railroads Made

<http://www.washingtonhistoryonline.org>

This website features resources about the Chinese Expulsion in Washington state and nationwide. Visit the "Chinese Immigrants in the West", "Run Out on the Rails They Built", or "The Tacoma Method" pages to find out more about this topic.

## IN PRINT

Chew, Ron. *Reflections of Seattle's Chinese Americans: The First 100 Years*. Seattle: Wing Luke Asian Museum, 2005.

McCunn, Ruthanne Lum. *Chinese American Portraits: Personal Histories 1828-1988*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1996.

Morgan, Murray. *Puget's Sound: A Narrative of Early Tacoma and the Southern Sound*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003.

Pfaelzer, Jean. *Driven Out: The Forgotten War Against Chinese Americans*. New York: Random House, 2007.

by Gwen Perkins

Washington State History Museum, 2007

All images on these pages are from the Washington State Historical Society Collections.



# EXCLUSION IN WASHINGTON

## EXCLUSION

In 1882, for the first time in United States history, Federal law forbade entry of an ethnic

group of laborers on the basis that they endangered public safety and order. This was done through the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act.

This act provided a 10 year ban on Chinese labor immigration. The only Chinese people who were permitted to enter the country were those who obtained government certification. This certification was only given to non-laborers- students, government officials, etc.- but proving this was often difficult given the loose structure of the law.

Exclusion also meant that new requirements were placed on those who had already entered the country. State and Federal courts no longer had the right to grant citizenship to Chinese resident aliens. However, they could still deport these people.



The passage of this act came after a long period of anti-Chinese discrimination. There were more than 200 incidents of ethnic cleansing in the last half of the nineteenth century, many of them occurring before the passage of the Act.

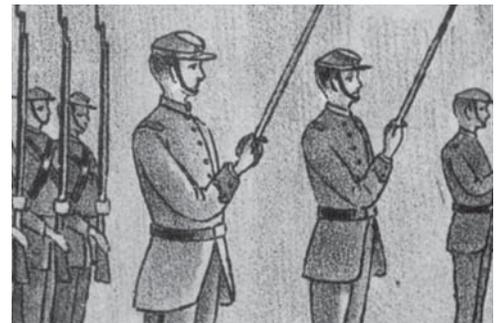
VS.

Several other Americans perceived Chinese immigrants as a threat. One accusation was that the Chinese weakened the community by sending money back to their families in China. Another concern was that Euro-American jobs were threatened by immigrant labor because Chinese workers often received wages that were much lower than their Euro-American counterparts. This was not done to undercut Euro-American wages but rather because of the lower pay received by all minorities in this period.



## EXPULSION

As economic depression struck the Pacific Northwest, some non-Chinese workers and labor unions began to feel that the solution to unemployment issues was in the expulsion, or forced removal, of Chinese people from the area. On September 2, 1885, a group of British and Swedish miners attacked their Chinese counterparts at Rock Springs, Colorado. They killed 28 men, wounded 15 and drove hundreds of Chinese workers into the desert. The news traveled nationwide and only days later, the first of Washington's expulsions occurred.



The images to the right are details from *West Shore* magazine, based in Oregon. They depict the 1886 anti-Chinese riots in Seattle. This publication expressed views against the violence while still referring to the Chinese as an "undesirable" group of immigrants. Washington State Historical Society Collections.



## TIMES OF TROUBLE: WASHINGTON'S CHINESE PEOPLE IN THE 1800S

- 1850 "Ah-Long" becomes the first- and only-Chinese man to be recorded in the Washington Territorial Census.
- 1853 Washington Territory is established. A measure is adopted to deny Chinese people the right to vote.
- 1860 Still only one Chinese person is recorded in the census. This person is believed to have been Chin Chun Hock.
- 1868 Chin Chun Hock begins a store in Seattle called the Wa Chong Company.
- 1869 Seattle is incorporated as a township.
- 1873 300 Chinese people from Portland arrive in Olympia to lay track from Kalama to Tacoma for the Northern Pacific Railroad. Eventually, the Northern Pacific will hire over 15,000 Chinese laborers.
- 1876 Census records report 250 Chinese people living in Seattle.
- 1880s Economic depression strikes Washington.
- 1882 The Chinese Exclusion Act is passed.
- 1885 A riot in Rock Springs, Wyoming on September 2nd of this year sparks anti-Chinese violence in the Northwest. One action occurs on September 9th when the mining community of Black Diamond expels their Chinese population. In November, the citizens of Tacoma do the same.
- 1886 In February, a Seattle citizen committee forces more than 350 Chinese onto wagons and puts them on the steamer, *Queen of the Pacific*. Territorial Governor Squire declares a state of insurrection and requests federal troops. Martial law is not ended until July of that year.
- 1899 Chin Gee Hee, a merchant, predicts in an *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* interview that there will be no Chinese in Seattle within 10- 12 years.

### 1885: TACOMA

The Chinese expulsion in Tacoma was unusual in that

it was not spontaneous but had been planned. A number of city officials and Knights of Labor union members participated in the plan to remove all Chinese people from their city. On November 3, this group of citizens moved through the city, forcing people from their homes and businesses and driving them into the street. Although there were those, like Reverend W.D. McFarland, who protested, they were not able to stop the expulsion from taking place.

Mow Lung, a Chinese merchant, later recalled: "I saw a mob of several hundred men on the street. They came to my store and kicked off the door. They took hold of the Chinese that were in the houses, some of whom were Chinese women, including my wife, and pulled them out of the doors... The mayor of Tacoma, Mr. Weisbach, was there at the time with the mob." More than 200 Chinese people were forced out of Tacoma that night. Most of them never returned, leaving Tacoma the only major west coast city without a "Chinatown".

### 1886: SEATTLE

On February 7th, a citizen committee in Seattle told the Chinese people living there that they were being forced to leave the city. More than 350 people were forced onto wagons and hauled to Seattle docks where they were placed on a steamer bound south. Territorial Governor Watson Squire stopped the ship from leaving that night. He then proclaimed a state of insurrection and declared martial law, requesting government intervention. Federal troops were sent to Seattle, where they remained until July of that year.

### 1886: OLYMPIA

In a November 1885 town meeting,

Olympians had drafted a resolution on what they termed the "Chinese Question":

*"Be It Resolved: [...] while we fully realize the fact that we have too much of the Chinese element in our midst, we as clearly recognize the fact that they are here in and by the virtue of law and treaty stipulations, and that we are decidedly opposed to their expulsion by force or by intimidation, or by any other unlawful means, but we will at all times give our aid and support to any measures looking to a peaceable and lawful riddance of that element and a final solution of the 'Chinese question'."*

True to this statement, on February 9th, 1886, when presented with rioters attempting to expel the Olympia Chinese community, citizens responded. Sheriff William Billings deputized prominent residents who patrolled city streets. They arrested the leaders of the riot who were then tried, convicted and sent to prison on McNeil Island.

The term "Pai Hua" or "the Driven Out" would later become the way in which some Chinese people would refer to the expulsions. They were not passive victims- after the events in Tacoma, with the aid of the Chinese embassy, Chinese-American citizens would file civil claims against the government seeking reparations.

The Chinese Expulsion Act was followed by the Geary Act, 10 years later. This Act forbade the entry of all Chinese people into the United States. It also forced Chinese immigrants to wear photo identity cards around their necks in order to prove their legal status. More than 100,000 Chinese-Americans refused this government order to wear these cards. This was the largest mass civil disobedience in United States history at this time in history.

Chinese-Americans continued to struggle against prejudice in the country which they had come to call home. The community began to share their resources, forming businesses and using the judicial system to defend their civil rights.

It was their struggle in two court cases, *Yick Wo v. Hopkins* (1886) and *Wong Kim v. United States* (1898) that led to changes in citizenship laws. As a result of these court decisions, the U.S. Supreme Court confirmed the citizenship of any person born in the United States. Also confirmed was equal protection of the law for all citizens, regardless of race or nationality.

But it was not until 1943 that the Chinese exclusion laws would be officially repealed. Washington state senator Warren G. Magnuson sponsored an act to do so. This act, signed by President Franklin Roosevelt, established an annual quota of 105 Chinese immigrants. It did, however, allow the Chinese to apply to become naturalized citizens for the first time.

This change came about in part because of the United States' entry into World War II. As Chinese-Americans were finding gradual acceptance into society, this was because of the war with Japan. China and Japan had been enemies for centuries. With China as the ally of the United States in the conflict, attitudes began to change. However, as laws discriminating against the Chinese were repealed, Japanese Americans across the United States were being placed in internment camps.

The contributions of the Chinese people to Washington have continued. 1962 saw the election of Wing Luke to the Seattle City Council. Wing Luke was the first Chinese American to be elected to office in a large U.S. city on the mainland. In 1997, Gary Locke, 21st governor of Washington, became the first U.S. governor of Chinese descent.

The time of the expulsion was not forgotten, however. Locke remembered it in a 1997 address:



*"In the history of every minority in America, there are stark contrasts of light and dark. There are tales of terrible oppression and persecution- and, on the same page- tales of incredible courage, and passionate advocacy for equal rights.*

*As we work to restore the historical memory of the anti-Chinese, anti-immigrant violence of the 1880s, we must also- and equally- work to restore our historical memory of the people who opposed it.*

*We should build... monuments to the citizens and the sheriff in Olympia, who put their lives on the line when they stood between an angry, armed mob and their intended Chinese victims.*

*It is not enough to vilify the bigots. We must never forget to celebrate the heroism of those who stood up to them."*

## FIND OUT MORE

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by Gwen Perkins

Washington State History Museum, 2007

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!! Introduction

!! People

- \*\*\* Visionaries
- \*\*\* A World Made Smaller
- \*\*\* Rail Conflict

- : European Immigrants
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- : Pullman Porters and Maids
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- : Opening the American Frontier

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## Rail Conflict



### Chinese immigrants: In the American West

Chinese immigrants began arriving in America in significant numbers in the 1850s at California gold mines. Most came from the southern provinces of China, where war, persecution and famine caused the deaths of millions. Charles Crocker, one of the "Big Four" California businessmen who helped fund the Central Pacific Railroad, led the way in giving the immigrants jobs. Ignoring protests from white foremen, Crocker said, "Who said laborers have to be white to build railroads?" Opposition quickly disappeared, however, as Chinese laborers proved hardworking and courageous.

Chinese provided the bulk of the labor for the transcontinental railroads. They

struggled with rocks, snow and biting wind in the mountains. "Landslides tore away work that had taken weeks or months," burying Chinese and other workers. Swinging from baskets suspended by ropes, Chinese men drilled holes in the face of rock walls to hold dynamite. Hundreds died on the cliffs and in the tunnels.

Initially this situation was acceptable to white workers. Chinese laborers were not a threat as long as they stuck with menial work, said historian Richard White. Resentment grew, however, when Chinese workers attempted to move into other industries. Protests against Chinese labor grew until Chinese expulsion became legal in 1882.

**“Who said laborers have to be white to build railroads?”**

**- Charles Crocker**

Such attitudes and so much violence would make it easy to dismiss the Chinese as mere victims. But that would be an injustice, according to Liping Zhu, who wrote about Chinese immigrants living in Idaho. He argued that as Chinese in Idaho adopted aspects of Western culture, whites grew more tolerant; Chinese immigrants "had remarkable access to economic upward mobility" compared to their lives in China and in the end "tasted more success than failure in their search for better lives".



The map above shows the provinces from which most Chinese migrated overseas. From *A Chinaman's Chance*. [click to zoom >](#)



# WHAT'S IN A WORD? IMMIGRATION

What does the word mean?

What are some facts about this word?

**IMMIGRATION**

Who is connected to this word? How?

What stories does this word tell?

# WHO DECIDES? ISSUE ANALYSIS

There are a number of different positions on the question of immigration. This was just as true in the 1800s as it is today. All issues involve differing beliefs and value systems that lead to different positions regarding solutions to those issues. As you read the essays provided to you, think about the people involved in these historical events. When people have opinions, influence and an investment in an issue, they are considered stakeholders. Use this worksheet to keep track of these stakeholders, their position on immigration, their values and what they believe to be true.

**STAKEHOLDERS:** Individuals or groups who have opinions on the issue.

**POSITIONS:** Where different people "stand" on the issue; and/or what they think the solution is.

**BELIEFS:** Ideas held by stakeholders that they believe to be true. Often beliefs are strongly related to values.

**VALUES:** The important ideas which help a person decide what is important. These values might involve money, status, or religion among things.

## VALUES

There are hundreds of different values. It can be hard to name what these are. Listed below are some types of values that may help you as you analyze this issue. Feel free to use your own. Those listed are simply to help you get started.

**ECONOMIC:** The use and exchange of money, materials and/or services

**EGOCENTRIC:** Focused on fulfilling a stakeholder's own needs

**ETHICAL/MORAL:** Responsibility to others, rights and wrongs and ethical standards.

**LEGAL:** Relating to laws, law enforcement, lawsuits or regulations.

## THE ISSUE:

STAKEHOLDER	POSITION	BELIEFS	VALUES

# WHO QUESTIONS? THE SOCRATIC SEMINAR

## What is a Socratic Seminar?

A Socratic seminar is a discussion in which students take part. This method of teaching is based on the Greek philosopher Socrates and his theory that students learned most effectively when engaged in open-ended dialogue.

You, as the teacher, will ask a question and students' role is to answer the question, using the material studied. The question that you begin the dialogue with may vary, depending on your focus of study but should be open-ended and provide material for thought.

Some potential prompts for a lesson plan dealing with issues of immigration and expulsion are as follows:

- *What were the motivations of the leaders of the anti-Chinese movements in Seattle and Tacoma?*
- *What kind of effect did the Chinese Exclusion Act have on the people it targeted? How has it influenced their descendants' lives today?*
- *What is the role of the United States' government in regards to immigration? What issues are the same as they were in the 1880s and what has changed?*

While the first question will be asked by the teacher, the role of the instructor is to guide, rather than lead, the discussion. This is a chance for students to explore the topic in depth. As part of this exercise, students are asked to bring their own questions to the discussion. Be sure to allow time for some of those points to be discussed.

Review the guidelines below with your students before they begin.

## Guidelines for Participants in a Socratic Seminar

1. Refer to the text when needed during the discussion. A seminar is not a test of memory. You're not "learning a subject"; your goal is to understand the ideas, issues, and values reflected in the text.
2. It's okay to "pass" when asked to contribute.
3. Don't participate if you're not prepared.
4. Don't stay confused. If you don't understand what someone is saying, ask them to explain further.
5. Stay on the topic currently being discussed. If another idea comes to your mind, make a note about it so that you can come back to it later.
6. Don't raise your hand. Instead, take turns speaking.
7. Listen carefully to what everyone has to say. Respect others- you may disagree with their points or opinions but the seminar is for discussion, not argument.
8. Speak up so that everyone can hear you.
9. Talk to the rest of your class, not just to the leader or teacher.
10. Discuss ideas rather than each other's opinions.

# WHO QUESTIONS? P R E P A R A T I O N

## What is a Socratic Seminar?

A Socratic seminar is a discussion in which you and your classmates will take part. Your teacher will ask a question and your role as student is to answer the question, using what you have studied so far. Read through the guidelines below and consider what you have read so far.

## Guidelines for Participants in a Socratic Seminar

1. Refer to the text when needed during the discussion. A seminar is not a test of memory. You're not "learning a subject"; your goal is to understand the ideas, issues, and values reflected in the text.
2. It's okay to "pass" when asked to contribute.
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6. Don't raise your hand. Instead, take turns speaking.
7. Listen carefully to what everyone has to say. Respect others- you may disagree with their points or opinions but the seminar is for discussion, not argument.
8. Speak up so that everyone can hear you.
9. Talk to the rest of your class, not just to the leader or teacher.
10. Discuss ideas rather than each other's opinions.
11. You are responsible for the seminar.

**Before you come to the seminar, write at least one question in each of the following categories to share:**

**CONNECTION TO THE PRESENT:** Write a question connecting these events to the world you live in today.

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**CLOSE-ENDED QUESTION:** Write a question that will help everyone in the class come to an agreement about events or characters in the text. This question usually has a "correct" answer.

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**OPEN-ENDED QUESTION:** Write an insightful question that will require proof and discussion to discover or explore the answer to the question.

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