

# Why did americans pass the 1882 chinese exclusion act?

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During the late 1800s, The Gilded Age was in full effect. After the Decade of Crisis, when thousands of settlers came to the West in search of gold, reconstruction began. While many of these temporary settlers left when the Gold Rush was over, some stayed like the Chinese.

They worked on the Transcontinental Railroad, more commonly as replacements for fellow Irishmen, Germans, Englishmen, or Italians who were unreliable for miscellaneous reasons. Tensions rose between the two groups once the railroad was finished in 1869. By 1878, courts ruled that any Chinese man couldn't be naturalized.

Americans then passed the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882 which denied all Chinese the right to American citizenship, even those born in the United States. Americans passed the Chinese Exclusion Act because they resented the competition for work, they had stereotypical hatred toward the Chinese, and they felt exclusion was the Chinese's only protection.

Americans passed the Chinese Exclusion Act because they resented the competition for work. When approximately 25, 000 Chinese had immigrated to America, about 15, 000 of them were employed by the Central Pacific Railroad.

After the railroad was finished, many Chinese continued to find work elsewhere within the West. " Today, every avenue of labor, of every sort, is crowded with Chinese slave labor worse than it was eight years ago. The boot, shoe, and cigar industries are almost entirely in their hands...

They monopolize nearly all the farming done to supply the market with all sorts of vegetables" (Doc C). After the Fourteenth Amendment was passed, slavery was no longer an issue in all U. S. territories, although Americans saw Chinese labor equivalent to the same threatening competition of slavery from the early 1800s.

The Chinese argued that their work was fair, hard, and respectable work that had no resemblance to slavery, and demanded a high market price. " No one would hire an Irishman, German, Englishman, or Italian when he could get a Chinese, because our countrymen are so much more honest, industrious, steady, sober, and painstaking" (Doc D).

Americans denied Chinese citizenship and lives in the United States is mere fear of their virtues which were mistaken as vices. Americans passed the Chinese Exclusion Act because they had stereotypical hatred toward Chinese.

Many Americans saw the Chinese as pseudo-men, they were short and small with ponytails. The Chinese were also underestimated and seen as uneducated. Document A: Anti-Chinese Play, 1879, The Chinese Must Go, states that a Chinese man thinks white men are foolish for having families and less money for themselves. This document fails to mention that Chinese women were banned from immigrating to the U. S. in 1870, then courts preventing Chinese workers to have families in the America once interracial marriage was banned later on in 1879.

Document A also says that a Chinese man reminds Frank B. of his mother's debt of six dollars to himself. In reality, no uneducated man would so boldly

denounce their employer for pay, let alone know how much from what month. Not only were the Chinese killed and discriminated against in anti-Chinese violence through your the late 1800s, but America's courts made it nearly impossible for them to pursue happiness. The Chinese Exclusion Act only made this hatred more apparent. Americans passed the Chinese Exclusion Act because they felt that exclusion was the only protection for the Chinese.

Within one year of the act being passed the Chinese immigration dropped from 40, 000 to 23, 000. This difference smoothed out a lot of heat between Americans and Chinese because there were less Chinese " flocking into our States" (Doc C).

Even the Chinese felt the resentment once they were denied any sort of naturalized or natural born citizenship. " More than half the Chinese in this country would become citizens if allowed to do so, and would be patriotic Americans. But how can they make this country their home as matters now are! ...

Under the circumstances, how can I call this my home, and how can any one blame me if I take my money and go back to my village in China? " (Doc D). The Chinese felt more comfortable and protected going back to their homes across the pond than what homes they made in the United States through hard work and opportunity.

Document B illustrates Columbia, America's feminine symbol, standing between a group of aggressive Irish and German thugs and a lonely Chinese

man who seems to have done nothing to provoke them, other than being Chinese.

Artist, Thomas Nast portrays that not only is America trying to stop the anti-Chinese violence, but that the only way the Chinese can be protected and safe is separated from the people of America. The Chinese were victims of the later 19th century, who were persecuted for their virtues, not their vices.

Americans banned any sort of legal citizenship and immigration to appease the jealous society of the West. The Chinese Exclusion Act was passed because the ignorant and judgmental Americans hated to see someone else do what they did with better ethics and spirits, therefore their aggressive acts resulted in racial exclusion.