

# Chinese immigration to the united states

Sociology



The Chinese in that period of time were migrating in search of better living conditions than were prevalent in China at the time, and the major incentive to go to America was the California gold rush which began in the 1850s. The gold rush attracted a huge immigrant population and led to an economic boom, which created a large demand for labor. The Chinese arrived to fill up this demand: " The pull effect of California is reflected in the Chinese ideogram for California, " Golden Mountain." California was just starting a spectacular economic boom based on the discovery of gold in 1848. Services were not only high, but they were also virtually unobtainable. It was this economic boom that first drew Chinese to California....."(Daniels, 1988)

The Chinese were a hardworking people, and soon made a reputation for themselves as a bunch of people who earned their pay through disciplined, long-suffering, honest toil. They became a favorite with the employers in America. Not only did they provide labor, but some of the Chinese also were entrepreneurs, merchants, and small-time tradesmen, who were welcomed into America for their reputation as honest, hardworking people with fair practices:

" In actuality, the first Chinese immigrants were well and widely received by the Americans. However, the first Chinese immigrants were wealthy, successful merchants, along with skilled artisans, fishermen, and hotel and restaurant owners. For the first few years they were greatly receipted by the public, government officials, and especially by employers, for they were renowned for their hard work and dependability".(Thinkquest. org, 1999)

But as the gold rush ended, the need for labor and other job openings disappeared, and the Chinese were resented in America because the other communities felt that the Chinese were responsible for the job shortages.

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This was true to an extent as more and more Chinese with unskilled labor capabilities came into America as "cookies". Employers would often employ Chinese in preference to immigrants from various parts of America because of their ability to work harder and stronger work ethics. With fewer jobs to go around, resentment against the Chinese grew:

" After the gold rush, Chinese immigrants worked as agricultural laborers, on railroad construction crews throughout the West, and in low-paying industrial jobs... With the onset of hard economic times in the 1870s, other immigrants and European Americans began to compete for the jobs traditionally reserved for the Chinese. With economic competition came dislike and even racial suspicion and hatred. Such feelings were accompanied by anti-Chinese riots and pressure, especially in California, for the exclusion of Chinese immigrants from the United States".(The Library of Congress, 2004)

This goes on to show that the Chinese immigrants were welcomed into America and treated well at first due to their superior work ethics. But with an abundance of cheap labor, they gradually fell out of favor with the other people in America, and soon legislations were passed in order to isolate the Chinese in America and prevent their further influx into the country.