Michael Schutz

Lesson Plan and Action Statement

NEH Summer

**Action Statement:**

Having participated in this Institute, I have learned much more about Asian-American history and have developed a much deeper understanding of American history. You cannot have American history without Asian American history. I will take what I have learned and use it to develop and teach better lessons in my classes next year.

1. Early Asian American immigration
   1. Below is a two day lesson that I will do on Asian American immigration and its impacts before 1930
2. Japanese internment and World War II
   1. I will work next winter to improve the lessons that I already do on this topic, including incorporating the story and video of Frank Nishimura.
3. Modern Asian American History
   1. I plan to use the sections from the book *So You Want to Talk About Rac*e, by Ijeoma Oluo, on Affirmative Action and the Model Minority stereotype to give students a better understanding of those very important and relevant topics as we study more modern issues.

MIchael Schutz, July 3, 2021

**Lesson Plan** - Immigration and Discrimination against Asian Americans 1849-1930

**Objective:**

Students will be able to identify major events in Asian-American history, analyze different causes and effects of those events, and evaluate the relative causes for discriminatory laws.

**Essential Question:**

In what ways did Asian Americans resist against discrimination during this time period? Was that resistance successful? Why or why not?

**Do Now:**

The 1913 California Alien Land Law prohibited "aliens ineligible for citizenship" from owning agricultural land or possessing long-term leases over it

On a scale of 0-5 (with 5 being extremely), how unjust was the Alien Land law?

Consider the following: in 1790 Congress defined eligibility for citizenship by naturalization as limited to “free white persons.”

Taken together, what is the result? Has your first answer changed?

**Instruction**

Today and tomorrow we will look at immigration to the United States from Asia, and Asian American history focusing on a few major events and policies. Taken together, I will ask you at the end to answer the essential questions.

Begin with a mini lecture that includes the following ([Slideshow](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1ekxT9Hd0oodu8_PUzDect3o-GsNXhcsh6UqouKgD5Ug/edit?usp=sharing)):

* Chinese immigrant labor
* LA massacre of 1871, 19 Chinese killed
* Chinese Exclusion Act and Gentleman's Agreement
* 1892 Geary Act required all Chinese to carry “papers” proving that they were allowed to reside in the US, required white witness
* Angel’s Island

**As a class** - Read the first document. What is he protesting? What are the main arguments of Wong Ar Chong? Was he successful? Why?

Day 2 do now - What else was going on in America (or around the world) from 1880-1920?

**Independent Work**

Students are then expected to analyze the remaining four documents in pairs.

For each document students should practice contextualization, and close reading, then consider how it can help them answer the essential questions.

*Source: Letter from Wong Ar Chong to William Lloyd Garrison, February 28, 1879.*

*Wong Ar Chong was a Chinese American tea merchant in Boston. He wrote this letter to William Lloyd Garrison, a prominent abolitionist and social reformer. Garrison had publicly debated Senator James G. Blaine of Maine, arguing against the senator’s support for banning Chinese immigration.*

The able Senator from Maine says the Chinese must go... I claim for my countrymen the right to come to this country as long as other foreigners do...

The Honorable Senator calls us heathens, but I should judge from the tone of his letter that he was somewhat lacking in Christian charity. Let him look at the records of fire in Chicago and yellow fever in New Orleans, and he will find Chinamen giving as much as any other people. He says that China people pay no taxes in this country, but I think if he will look into the matter he will find that they pay as much taxes in California as any other foreigners… He says that China people are not healthy, do not keep their places as clean as other people, that they smell badly, etc. I could mention several other nationalities, each having its own particular smell...

If the Chinese are allowed to come to this country and enjoy the same privileges as the people from any other foreign land, they will educate themselves and conform to your laws and manners and become as good citizens as any other race... The Chinese must not be blamed because other men have no work. It is not their fault. If merchants carried on business within their means, instead of failing and going through bankruptcy, then laboring men would have plenty of steady work.

San Francisco, April 8, 1885.

To the Board of Education—

Dear Sirs:

I see that you are going to make all sorts of excuses to keep my child out of the Public schools. Dear sirs, Will you please to tell me! Is it a disgrace to be Born a Chinese? Didn’t God make us all!!! What right have you to bar my children out of the school because she is a chinese descent. They is no other worldly reason that you could keep her out, except that. I suppose, you all goes to churches on Sundays! Do you call that a Christian act to compel my little children to go so far to a school that is made in purpose for them. My children don’t dress like the other Chinese... Besides, if I had any wish to send them to a chinese school I could have sent them two years ago without going to all this trouble. You have expended a lot of the Public money foolishly, all because of a one poor little Child. Her playmates is all Caucasians ever since she could toddle around. If she is good enough to play with them! Then is she not good enough to be in the same room and studie with them? You had better come and see for yourselves. See if the Tape’s is not same as other Caucasians, except in features. It seems no matter how a Chinese may live and dress so long as you know they Chinese. Then they are hated as one. There is not any right or justice for them...

Mrs. M. Tape.

*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 merchandise store.

On the third day of November (1885) 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. 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 1,000 people in the crowd of white people though I cannot tell how many… 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.

The outrages I and my family suffered at the hands of the mob has utterly ruined me. 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.

*Chinese Equal Rights League Appeal to the People of the United States, 1892*

WHEREAS, The Congress of the United States, by an act approved May 5, 1892, unjustly and wickedly discriminating between foreign residents from different countries, has traversed and contravened the fundamental principles of common law and the Constitution of the United States, and has ignored the assertion of the Declaration of Independence —that all men are born with equal rights ; and

WHEREAS, The Chinese residents of the United States claim a common manhood with residents of other nationalities, and believe that they should have that manhood recognized according to the principles of American freedom,

We, the citizens of the United States, in mass meeting assembled, do hereby resolve and declare that the said bill is monstrous, inhuman and unconstitutional;

We, the members of the Chinese Equal Rights League in the United States, who have adopted this country and its customs in the main, are at this moment engaged in a perilous strugøle in which our dearest rights as men and residents are involved. Doubtless the reading public is acquainted with the fact that during the last session of the Fifty-second Congress, a Bill was... made to humiliate every Chinaman, regardless of his moral, intellectual and material standing in the community, neither his long residence in the country is considered...

As residents of the United States we claim a common manhood with all other nationalities, and believe we should have that manhood recognized according to the principles of common humanity and American freedom.

We appeal to the humane, libertv-loving sentiment of the American people, who are lovers of equal rights and even-handed justice, a people from whom sprung such illustrious characters as Washington, Jefferson, Clay, Sumner, lastly Lincoln, the citizen of the world, the friend of humanity, and the champion of freedom

Must this growth [toward justice] be retarded simply on account of the doings of a misguided element who have suffered their feelings to control reason, encouraging a prejudice fiendish in its nature and purpose against a class of people who are industrious, law-abiding and honest?

We, therefore, appeal for an equal chance in the race of life in this our adopted home— a large number of us have spent almost all our lives in this country and claim no other but this as ours. Our motto is: "Character and fitness should be the requirement of all who are desirous of becoming citizens of the American Republic."

**Closure and guided discussion assessment:**

**What caused the discrimination?** racism, some claim it was over jobs, but with such low numbers, and the lack of concern about other groups of workers makes this an unsatisfactory answer

**In what ways did Asian Americans resist against discrimination during this time period? ?** assimilation vs. keeping culture, strike, lawsuits

Martin Luther King, Jr., reminded us that “the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice.”

**King is saying racism can be overcome, but it sometimes takes a long time and a long fight. Was it overcome during this time period?** not really

**Why were these efforts not wholly successful?** few allies, the law was not on their side, without citizenship there are few protections, weak home countries, deeply entrenched white supremacy

**How can we do better today?**

**Final quote from Frederick Douglass:**

*The lesson of the hour* speech, 1894

How can the “Negro” problem be solved?

“Let the white people of the North and South conquer their prejudices. Let the American people cultivate kindness and humanity. Let the South abandon the system of mortgage labor and cease to make the Negro a pauper, by paying him dishonest scrip for his honest labor. Let them give up the idea that they can be free while making the Negro a slave. Let them give up the idea that to degrade the colored man is to elevate the white man.”