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Immigration

Chinese Immigration

Chinese people started immigrating to America in large groups in the mid 1800s. In China, people faced famine, poverty, overpopulation, and natural disasters. Many Chinese people were looking for a way to make their lives more livable. Soon Chinese people saw an opportunity for a better life in America. The news about the Gold Rush reached China quickly and drove many people to seek their fortune. However, when they came, life was not as good as the immigrants had hoped. The Chinese immigrants in America faced discrimination, difficulty finding jobs, and were the victims of crime.

One major reason people left China was the horrible weather problems in China in the mid 1800s. There was a big drought that led to a famine, so many people were left poor and without food. In addition to the drought, the North Yellow River had flooded. The drought and the flood destroyed a lot of farmland which resulted in lot less farmland for people. In southeast China, the Pearl River Delta still had good land for growing food. Too many people moved went there so it got over crowded, which resulted in many people not having enough space and wanting to leave China.

Another major reason people left was because of limited job opportunities. Many Chinese people did not have enough money or opportunities to get a job. China was a land of farmers yet due to the terrible weather problems, the fields were ruined so people could not grow enough

food to sell or eat. This was one reason people were poor and didn't have jobs to earn money to feed their families.

The final reason people left was because of China's politics. When people protested, their voices weren't heard and it likely resulted in violence or death. The rulers did not care for the poor, hungry people or for their people. China was very crowded, and because of that, there was a large amount of hungry people. There was a civil war that lasted 14 years or from April 1927 to May 1950 and killed 20 million people that was between groups of Chinese people. It was split up into 2 stages, from 1927 to 1937 and the second one from 1946 to 1950. The Chinese Civil War was fought between the Kuomintang (KMT)-led government of the Republic of China, and forces loyal to the Communist Party of China (CPC). This resulted with many people hurt and many people off to go find a better country.

Since life was so difficult in China, many people wanted to come to the United States. Many Chinese wanted better land and weather, so Chinese came in large group around the 1850s. When the Chinese came, people lented the Chinese money for the ship, the Chinese would pay them back with their money that they would earn once they got a job.

Another huge reason people came was the Gold Rush. The Gold Rush was a big gold hit during the mid 1800s. The California Gold Rush began at a place called Sutter's Mill, near Coloma, California. On January 24, 1848, James Marshall, found shiny metal in the tailrace of a lumber mill Marshall was building for Sutter on the American River. Once he found gold, many people came to find more and become rich. Many Chinese people thought they would get rich, so they came to work in gold mines. but many did not see what was coming.

In addition, the final reason people came was was the Pacific railroad. The Chinese came because they thought they would get jobs building the railroad. It was dangerous, but they needed money. The railroad was a full time job, so they would earn enough money to support their families.

Once the Chinese arrived in the United states they faced many challenges. One challenge the Chinese faced was discrimination. They were discriminated because of they ways they looked and how their culture was. There were also many Anti-Chinese attacks and meetings. They even got discriminated against by the government. One law called the Exclusion Act banned almost all Chinese from America for 10 years from 1882 to 1892. There was another ban. The Chinese could not legally immigrate until 1943. When Americans could not find jobs after the Gold Rush, they blamed the Chinese for taking the jobs, soon the Americans blamed the Chinese for everything that went wrong. During the Gold Rush there was a Miners' Tax for the Chinese only, then the Americans stole their gold. The Chinese were clearly discriminated against, which was a challenge, but they pushed through.

Even though there were many challenges that Chinese faced, they also had many successes. One big success of the Chinese was the Chinatowns. The Chinatowns were neighborhoods made for and by the Chinese because they spoke differently and did different things from the Americans. They allowed immigrants to maintain their culture, live with other immigrants and not have to acculturate. The Chinatowns were formed when the Chinese were being discriminated against. Chinatowns are mostly located in 'big' cities, some example of the big cities they're in are: San Francisco, Boston, Los Angeles, and Chicago. There are about 50 Chinatowns in the United States of America.

Another big success of the Chinese was the Chinese laundries. In California during the 1800s men considered cleaning a woman's job. There also weren't as many women there at the time. The Chinese started laundries because they realized what men thought and the Gold Rush was over. That's when Chinese laundries became a big success and there are still Chinese laundries to this day.

The story of Chinese immigration is the story of people leaving a country with poor crops, poor weather and limited opportunities. They came to America for a better life during the Gold Rush and the building of the Pacific Railroad. When they came they faced challenges of discrimination and theft. There was even a ban against Chinese immigration. Now there are about 2.8 million Americans who come from Chinese decent.