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The unwanted immigrant

Frank A. Bozich III
James Madison University

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The Unwanted Immigrant

An Honors Program Project Presented to
the Faculty of the Undergraduate
College of Arts and Letters
James Madison University

by Frank Anthony Bozich III

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FACULTY COMMITTEE:

HONORS PROGRAM APPROVAL:

Project Advisor: Dr. Chris, Arndt
Associate Dean & Professor, History

Bradley R. Newcomer, Ph.D.,
Director, Honors Progra

Reader: Dr. Michael, Galgano
Professor, History

Reader: Dr. Yongguang, Hu
Assistant Professor, History

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Introduction

The 1800s saw the influx of several immigrant groups in the United States. Of all these immigrant groups however it was the Irish and Chinese that would have the greatest effect on United States history in the 1800s. Both attempting to escape the problems of their homeland, these two groups came to the United States for a new start. Upon arrival however, both Irish and Chinese immigrants would encounter a violent force that sought to eliminate them from their new home; this force was nativism. In the wake of nativism, Irish and Chinese immigrants experienced numerous injustices and hardships that were the result of persecution from their native white American contemporaries. Unlike other immigrant groups however, the Irish desired to join their aggressor and become part of the white ethnic group. By doing this, the Irish hoped that they would finally be able to escape the persecution that they had not only experienced in the United states but also previously in Ireland. In order to join the elite white racial group and no longer be considered inferior, the Irish began to systematically adopt nativist ideology and practices. This was not enough however, for their nativist counterparts. For them, the Irish had yet to prove themselves as being truly nativist; truly white. Thus, the Irish began to attack and persecute their fellow minority groups such as African Americans. It was not until the Irish encountered the Chinese in California that they truly found a group that by actively persecuting them they could secure their own position in society. From 1849-1880, Irish immigrants became the most pronounced supporters and advocates of the anti-Chinese movement in California. In time they formed political groups to aid them in their quest to eliminate the Chinese in order to be considered white themselves. This drastic change that the Irish went illustrates many things about American society but more importantly it raises a key question: is being racist part of what it means to be an American?

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conducting at the time. As a result of all of these people and more, this thesis was able to be written and because of that I dedicate it to them.

Chapter One: The Meeting of Diasporas

The journey was finally over. After more than a month of travel, the ship had landed. Thoughts of new lives unaffected by the troubles of Ireland raced through the minds of Irish immigrants as they walked off their ships and into the Boston and New York City harbors. Most hoped that the new land would allow them to start a new life free of the torments they experienced in their homeland. On the other side of the United States, Chinese immigrants fleeing a war torn country came to California with the hope of making enough money to send back to their families. Unfortunately, for the incoming Irish immigrants and the 34,933 Chinese who immigrated to the United States from the late 1840s to 1860s, these hopes and dreams would never be realized.¹ Almost all of them encountered a new problem unlike anything they had ever experienced. This new obstacle was white nativism.² From the beginning of the 1800s, white Americans met Irish and Chinese immigrants with nativism that sought to subjugate the two groups as outsiders. As nativist sentiments spread, violence between these groups slowly increased. Unlike their Chinese counterparts, after facing white nativism on the East Coast the Irish began to adapt to their new surroundings. Irish immigrants adopted the beliefs of white nativists and did anything in their power to show how American they were willing to become. With the news of the Californian Gold Rush, Chinese and Irish immigrants alike rushed to

¹ U.S. Census Bureau, Race for the United States, Regions, Divisions, and States: 1860 - Con., September 13, 2002, raw data,

[Http://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0056/tabA-19.pdf](http://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0056/tabA-19.pdf).

² The policy of favoring the natives of a country over the immigrants Collins English Dictionary, 10th ed. (Glasgow: HarperCollins, 2009), s.v. "Nativism."

California. For the Irish, the Chinese represented the perfect means by which they could illustrate their patriotism but also better their position. Within a short period of time, Irish immigrants became the face of anti-Chinese sentiments in the United States of America. Through this environment of hate, Irish immigrants believed they could achieve their ultimate goal of joining the white elite ethnic group of the United States. By adopting nativist and racist practices, Irish immigrants believed they could show the world that they were just as deserving of being called white as their contemporaries.³

³ Research on Irish immigration into California should begin with Elmer Clarence Sandmeyer, *The Anti-Chinese Movement in California*, Illini Books ed. (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1991); Alexander Saxton, *The Indispensable Enemy: Labor and the Anti-Chinese Movement in California* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1971); Anna Noel Naruta, "Creating Whiteness in California: Racialization Processes, Land, and Policy in the Context of California's Chinese Exclusion Movements, 1850 to 1910," PhD Diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2006 (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Dissertations Publishing, 2006); Ray A. Billington, *The Origins of Nativism in the United States, 1800-1844* (New York: Ayer Co Pub, 1974); Sue Fawn Chung, *Asian American Experience: In Pursuit of Gold: Chinese American Miners and Merchants in the American West* (Champaign, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2011); Roger Daniels, *Coming to America: A History of Immigration and Ethnicity in American Life*, 2nd ed. (New York: HarperCollins, 2002); Bill Ong Hing, *Making and Remaking Asian America Through Immigration Policy 1850-1990* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993); Benson Tong, *The Chinese Americans* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2000). The leading sources that explore the effect nativism had on Chinese immigrants and Californian society are Yucheng Qin, *The Diplomacy of Nationalism: The Six Companies and China's Policy Toward Exclusion* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009); Steve Spencer, *Race and Ethnicity: Culture, Identity and Representation* (London: New York: Routledge, 2006). For detailed journal articles on Chinese immigrants and nativism, see Mark Kanazawa, "Immigration, Exclusion, and Taxation: Anti-Chinese Legislation in Gold Rush California," *Journal of Economic History* 65, no. 3 (September 2005): 779-805. Edlie Wong, "Comparative Racialization, Immigration Law, and James Williams's Life and Adventures," *American Literature* 84, no. 4 (December 2012): 797-826. Important primary sources on Chinese confrontation with nativism in California, include Charles Westmoreland, *Majority Report of the Committee on Mines and Mining Interests* (Sacramento, CA: Committee, 1856). John Bigler, *An Analysis of the Chinese Question* (San Francisco: San Francisco Herald, 1852). For in-depth primary source newspaper articles on Chinese immigration and nativism, Weekly Alta California, comp., "The Chinese," *Weekly Alta California* (San Francisco, California), June 18, 1853, 5, sec. 24. Anonymous, "Estimate Number of Chinese in California," *Daily Placer Times and Transcript* (San Francisco, California), August 13, 1852, 4, sec. 741.

As more immigrants began pouring into the United States, nativist beliefs became commonplace throughout the country. The rise in the nativist beliefs however raised an important question amongst native-born Americans: what did it mean to be an American? Initially, immigrants from England viewed themselves as colonist rather than “Americans.” Towards the late eighteenth century however, the idea of being an American gradually became more prevalent. Especially after gaining independence from Britain, the notion of being an American and a citizen of America became a popular topic in the United States. This national identity blossomed but was severely hindered with the outbreak and aftermath of the Civil War.

Besides large events, such as military conflicts, which either hindered or enhanced the notion of being an American, the American identity became identifiable through a series of important themes. These themes included race and ethnicity as well as the English language, Christianity, religious commitment, English concepts of the rule of law, and the right of the individual. These concepts that stemmed from Anglo-Protestant culture were the foundation of the American identity. When these basic tenets of Anglo-Protestant culture came into conflict with beliefs held by immigrants from different cultural backgrounds, a new aspect of the American identity emerged: racism.⁴

While these racist views originated in Europe, Americans often expressed them more openly by forming nativist movements and parties. First originating on the East Coast, these movements were formed with the goal of excluding Irish and German influence from American society. One of the most influential of these nativist movements was known as the Know Nothing movement. Originating in New York in 1843, the Know Nothing movement was an

⁴ Samuel P. Huntington, *Who Are We? The Challenges to America's National Identity* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004), Forward-10.

anti-Catholic organization, which sought to rid American society of any Catholic influence. To the Know Nothing movement Catholic immigrants especially the Irish represented the source of Catholic influence. Seeing these new immigrants as the allies of tyranny and opponents of material prosperity, the Know Nothing movement organized into a political party called the Native American or American party and ran on a platform focused on excluding foreign immigrants. Although the movement faced difficulties getting anti-foreign legislation passed, the movement made life extremely difficult for immigrant workers.

Racism, just like the core beliefs of Anglo-Protestant culture, became a main aspect of what it meant to be an American. When new members from different cultural backgrounds were introduced into American society, native-born Americans have normally responded negatively to their presence. Within a short period of time, native-born Americans go from acknowledging the differences or sympathizing with the new members of their society to illustrating why these newcomers are the source of all of their societies problems. This quick turn toward hostilities on the part of native-born Americans is a result of the introduction of new beliefs into their cultural environment that differs or, in the worst-case scenario, contradicts their own beliefs.

This transition toward hostility is perfectly illustrated by how native-born Americans treated Irish immigrants when they began rapidly arriving in the 1840s. A *Charleston Courier* article from 1828 states that the American people were nothing but sympathetic toward the Irish for the horrors that they endured during the Great Potato Famine.⁵ In addition, the article argues that since the United States public works system was horribly under staffed Irish workers should

⁵ Jim Donnelly, "The Irish Famine," [Www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/victorians/famine_01.shtml), February 17, 2011, accessed December 15, 2015, http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/victorians/famine_01.shtml.

move to the United States where nearly 30,000 jobs would waiting for them.⁶ This hospitable invitation by the United States media apparatus soon wore thin as popular sentiment began to turn upon the once warmly invited Irish population. In 1856, the *Richmond Whig* published an article condemning Irish immigrants. In this article, the newspaper argues that the once valued class of worker immigrants, such as the Irish, had lost nearly all of its value. Instead, all this class seeking to do is to ignore the laws of the United States and utilize the freedom the United States gave them to drink all of the whiskey they can possible find. To the *Richmond Whig*, the only way to fix this problem was for the United States government to focus on true Americans rather than immigrants who abuse the rights of natural born citizens.⁷ As a result of their Catholic beliefs, Irish immigrants were viewed as servants of the papacy. This belief caused numerous native-born Americans to believe that Irish immigrants were incapable of being fully committed to being citizens of the United States.

Since their arrival in the United States, Irish immigrants wanted to be considered members of the white ethnic group. Despite their wishes however, Irish immigrants were constantly viewed as inferior human beings by both their previous British and new American neighbors. This hatred toward Irish immigrants by their new nativist neighbors emerged as a result of several socio-economic reasons. One of the major reasons was that Irish immigrants were Catholic. For Protestant Americans, Catholicism was a remnant of a Europe that that was a threat to liberty and the American way of life. As a result, native white Americans believed that Irish immigrants could never be true Americans because they were required to answer to the

⁶ Anonymous, "Emigration from Ireland, and Immigration into the United States," *Charleston Courier* (Charleston, SC), August 02, 1828, News/Opinion sec.

⁷ Anonymous, "Principles and Policy of the American Party," *Richmond Whig* (Richmond, VA), April 08, 1856, News/Opinions sec.

pope due to their religion. Within a short period of time, these anti-Catholic views materialized as politic movements. One of the main political leaders of these anti-Catholic movements was Samuel F. B. Morse. Raised in a strictly Calvinist home, Morse was a staunch believer in preserving protestant values and fighting against the power of the papacy. In the middle of the nineteenth century, these beliefs caused Samuel Morse to become politically active. Emerging quickly as a political leader in anti-Catholic and anti-immigration movements, Morse advocated all members to unite against what he referred to as the Catholic menace. In order to encourage the formation of anti-Irish sentiments amongst his peers, Morse began writing letters to newspapers and writing anti-Irish literature. The most famous of these works was his *Foreign Conspiracy Against the Liberties of the United States*. Within this document, Morse argued that foreign Catholic nations and the Vatican were subsidizing Irish immigration to the United States with the hope of one day making subjecting it to Roman Catholic rule. Morse's views began to spread like wildfire across the Northeast. Native white Americans soon engaged in violent protests such as the Philadelphia Nativist Riots of 1844 that sought to eliminate their Irish Catholic neighbors' churches. As these riots continued, organizations like the Order of the Star Spangled Banner and the American party, which began in the 1840s and 1850s, emerged that called for organized political movements against the Irish.⁸

Besides the anti-Catholic sentiment, Irish immigrants were persecuted because they were viewed as an economic threat by their native white American counterparts. Coming off the boats that brought them to the United States, Irish immigrants were extremely poor after having come from Ireland where the Irish potato famine was causing poverty to drastically increase across

⁸ Samuel F. B. Morse, *Foreign Conspiracy against the Liberties of the United States* (New York: H. A. Chapin &, 1841).

Ireland. The Irish Potato Famine or the Great Famine occurred between 1845 and 1852 and resulted in the deaths of approximately one million people.⁹ The effects were worse in Ireland however because potatoes were a staple food for most of Ireland's population.¹⁰ By the time the Potato Famine had ended, nearly 25 percent of Ireland's population had perished and millions more had immigrated to foreign countries, the main of which was the United States.¹¹ Crossing the Atlantic Ocean in boats known as "coffin ships," Irish immigrants faced horrible conditions that caused many to die during the passage. Those that survived often emerged from the coffin ships looking extremely sickly and disease ridden.

Attempting to escape the hardships of the Great Irish Potato Famine, Irish migrated in massive numbers to the east coast of the United States. Irish immigrants accounted for half of the population of immigrants who came to the United States in the 1840s. In the 1850s, the overall percentage of the immigrant population that the Irish accounted for decreased but still amounted to about one-third. Coming from a desperate situation in Ireland, Irish immigrants had very few possessions and almost no money to their names. As a result of this, Irish immigrants lived in the poorest areas of cities such as the Five Points district of New York City. The conditions of these poverty stricken areas were horrific. English author Charles Dickens described the Five Points as "reeking everywhere with dirt and filth" with "lanes and alleys, paved with mud knee deep."¹² In

⁹ Jim Donnelly, "The Irish Famine," [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/victorians/famine_01.shtml), February 17, 2011, The Irish Catastrophe, accessed December 15, 2015, http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/victorians/famine_01.shtml.

¹⁰ David Ross, *Ireland: History of a Nation* (Gloucester, UK: Geddes & Grosset, 2002), 226.

¹¹ Christine Kinealy, *This Great Calamity: The Irish Famine 1845-52* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1995), 357.

¹² Charles Edward White, *The Beauty of Holiness: Phoebe Palmer as Theologian Revivalist, Feminist, and Humanitarian* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 1986), 63.

addition to poor living conditions, Irish immigrants often found themselves working low wage jobs as substitute labor when native-born Americans went on strike. This was the case because most Irish immigrants were unskilled laborers. As a result of both living in horrific conditions and working low wage jobs, numerous Irish immigrants believed they had no choice but to resort to criminal activity. In 1859, 55 percent of the individuals arrested in New York City were of Irish origin. Together, these aspects of the lives of Irish immigrants caused them to almost immediately come under attack from nativist forces along the eastern coast of the United States. Nativist forces began to portray Irish immigrants as dirty, drunken, animalistic papists who were destroying the American identity. In addition, nativists argued that all of the United States economic woes were a result of Irish immigrants who were taking the jobs of hard working native-born citizens. Faced with extreme nativist sentiments, when the opportunity presented itself Irish immigrants began heading west with the hope of once again starting new lives. For many, this new start that they had been looking for was California. But although many Irish immigrants began heading westward, they never truly forgot the hardships they experienced at the hands of nativist forces and were determined never to experience them again.¹³

Upon their arrival, Irish immigrants settled in cities because it was too expensive to move to the more rural areas of the United States. In cities such as New York and Philadelphia in the 1800s, Irish immigrants lived in horrible conditions. Seeing the massive influx of immigrants in the 1820s and 1830s, landlords began to subdivide their small two store houses and renting the houses to multiple low income families. Due to massive poverty, Irish immigrants began

¹³ Kevin Kenny, "Irish Immigrants in the United States," iipdigital.usembassy.gov, February 13, 2008, accessed September 15, 2015, <http://iipdigital.usembassy.gov/st/english/publication/2008/03/20080307131416ebyeessedo0.6800043.html#axzz3lqqziu5M>.

occupying these “tenement houses” because they did not have the wealth to live anywhere else.¹⁴ This level of poverty caused many Irish immigrants to take any job that they could in their new home.¹⁵ Seeking to take advantage of their situation, many business owners began offering Irish immigrants jobs that received less pay and often were done in horrific conditions. Irish men and women found employment in factory jobs and millwork, domestic service, and as physical laborers.¹⁶ Almost every one of the jobs offered to Irish immigrants in these sectors involved unskilled labor as well as tasks that were deemed to subhuman to be performed by native white immigrants. For close to no pay, Irish men worked in mines, cleaned city streets, and worked in steel making factories where it was common place to be severely burned by molten steel. Irish women found employment in the homes of wealthy native white Americans as servants as well as employment in textile factories. Despite the hard work of Irish adults, many families still lacked the necessary income to survive. As a result of this, Irish children also sought employment shining shoes and selling newspapers in an attempt to make a little more money for their families. Soon native white American business owners began to realize the benefits of employing Irish immigrants who were willing to work for almost no money at all. This realization caused business owners to begin to employ significantly more Irish immigrants which caused widespread discontent among native white Americans.

Another reason for nativist sentiments toward Irish immigrants were the preexisting prejudices that were held about them. Believing them to be lazy and dirty people, nativist

¹⁴ Tyler Anbinder, *Five Points: The Nineteenth-Century New York City Neighborhood* (New York: Free Press, 2001), 1-6.

¹⁵ Tyler Anbinder, *Nativism and Slavery: The Northern Know Nothings and the Politics of the 1850's* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 1-50.

¹⁶ Hasia Diner, *Erin's Daughters in America: Irish Immigrant Women in the Nineteenth Century* (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1983), 50-80.

Americans continually harassed Irish immigrants. This stereotype first emerged during the Norman conquest of Ireland in the twelfth century. In his book *The History and Topography of Ireland*, Gerald of Wales, a Norman leader in the conquest of Ireland, stated that the Irish people were a barbarous people who only devoted themselves to leisure and laziness. In addition, Gerald of Wales claims that the Irish populace lives just like the animals that they rely on so much for survival.¹⁷ These stereotypes of the Irish being lazy and dirty like animals continued in the minds of the English people. By the 1800s, the Irish were considered to be equivalent or even inferior to members of the African race by their European counterparts. English as well as other European and American peoples believed that people of Irish descent shared many physical characteristics with apes and thus associated the Irish people with Africans who they also believed were one step above apes. As a result of this, English intellectuals began to argue that people from Ireland did indeed belong to another race. In the scholarly monograph *Races of Britain* from 1862, John Beddoe, the president of the Anthropological Institute of England, argued that the population of Ireland was extremely ape like compared to their English counterparts. In order to illustrate this difference, Beddoe designed a scale known as the Index of Nigerscence that ranked the peoples of Great Britain. On this scale, Beddoe rated people of Irish descent as being closely related to their “Africanoid” counterparts where as individuals of Anglo-Saxon descent were not at all.¹⁸ With the support of English intellectuals like Beddoe, beliefs that people of Irish descent were in fact part of another race quickly began to spread through Europe and the Americas.

¹⁷ Gerald of Wales, *The History and Topography of Ireland*, ed. Betty Radice, Revised ed. (London: Penguin Books, 1982), 100-110.

¹⁸ John Beddoe, *The Races of Britain: A Contribution To The Anthropology Of Western Europe* (London: Ostara Publications, 1885), 10-50.

Prejudice towards Irish immigrants in the United States began simply as a desire, on the part of white nativists, to separate themselves from the “lazy” and “dirty” Irish. This desire for separation was constantly illustrated to the Irish through signs and job offers that were published in local newspapers. As early as 1827, business owners began refusing to hire Irish immigrants and began posting on advertisements for job openings “no Irish need apply.” This limitation that was placed on Irish immigrants can be seen through an advertisement in the *American* out of New York City in 1827.¹⁹ The advertisement lists a job opening for a cook that is neat and fidelity. Shortly after listing these traits, the advertisement states “no Irish need apply”. This illustrates how white nativists did not want “dirty” Irish immigrants in any job that involved them touching something that they would later touch. As public distain toward Irish immigrants continued to grow, the window for good employment opportunities shrank dramatically. For a large portion of the 1800s, Irish immigrants could only find work in jobs that involved extremely hard work, little pay, and horrific conditions.²⁰

These continued to develop amongst nativist Americans until they too began to view Irish immigrants as members of a separate race. Like their English contemporaries, native white Americans viewed Irish immigrants as inferior. For native white Americans, the Irish race was far below the white race and was barely superior to the African race. In addition to this belief, native white Americans began to blame the problems of the United States on immigration, especially Irish immigration. This belief that Irish immigrants were the cause of all problems in the United States and added no value to society can be seen through the work of political

¹⁹ Anonymous, "Wanted," *American* (New York City), December 20, 1827.

²⁰ Thomas J. Curran, "Assimilation and Nativism," *The International Migration Digest* 3, no. 1 (Spring 1966): 15-25, accessed October 30, 2015, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3002916?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents.

cartoonist from the era. In an issue of *Harper's Weekly*, the drawing below entitled “*St. Patrick's Day, 1867... Rum, Blood, The Day We Celebrate*” by cartoonist Thomas Nest illustrates the nativist view of Irish immigrants. Despite his drawing being finished after the Gold Rush period, Nest illustrates what many throughout the United States had viewed the Irish as for decades.



In his drawing, Nest portrays the individuals of Irish descent as ape-like creatures that are aggressively beating native white police officers. This portrayal of individuals of Irish descent mirrors that of the description provided by Gerald of Wales in the twelfth century illustrating how these prejudices spread over the centuries to the United States. In addition, this drawing illustrates how native white Americans believed Irish immigrants to be members of a separate race and how Irish immigrants could never be valued members of society because they had no respect for the rule of law. Instead, Irish immigrants are nothing but animals that seek to destroy not only the sanctity of the rule of law but also the American way of life.

²¹ Thomas Nest, "St. Patrick's Day, 1867... Rum, Blood, The Day We Celebrate," cartoon (New York: Harper's Weekly, 1867). See Turabian on citing a newspaper

Met with nativism and racism at every turn, Irish immigrants were faced with only one choice: adapt to their new hostile environment. Irish immigrants began attacking their African American counterparts as a way to show others as well as themselves that they were becoming Americanized. Irish immigrants became staunchly against the abolition movement in the United States. This was done in an effort to separate themselves from the African community as much as possible. By doing this, Irish immigrants hoped to escape the common held belief that Irish immigrants were just “Negros turned inside out” or Africans were just “smoked Irish”. Thus, Irish immigrants began to act like their Nativist American counterparts.²² They began to act violently toward their African neighbors and physical altercations were common. Seeking to improve their social status and separate themselves from their African American counterparts, Irish immigrants began to adopt racist views toward their Black contemporaries because they did not want them taking the low paying job market that they had been able to dominate. Thus, in order to prove themselves native white Americans that they were in fact white, Irish immigrants learned from their oppressors and actively suppressed African Americans in order to aid their own position.²³ Within time, the Irish would implement this strategy against their Chinese counterparts with the hope that it would allow them access to the elite white ethnic group of the United States.

The Irish oppression of African Americans involved the Irish attempting to discredit and attack their counterparts. On July 19, 1858 a conflict emerged at an African American celebration where reforms to the government and the notion of freedom were being discussed. The main speaker at this celebration was a tremendous orator and managed to captivate the entire

²² Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (Milton Park, UK: Routledge, 1995), 49.

²³ Art McDonald, "How the Irish Became White," [Www.pitt.edu](http://www.pitt.edu/~hirtle/uujec/white.html), accessed October 30, 2015, <http://www.pitt.edu/~hirtle/uujec/white.html>.

audience. After his speech had ended, an Irishman who was standing in the crowd stated that the speaker spoke well for a nager [sic]. In response, the African Americans surrounded him stated, “you must know he is only half African.” The Irishman continued to ridicule the speaker by saying well if he is only half nager [sic] then a whole nager [sic] might be the prophet of Jeremiah.²⁴ This interaction illustrates how Irishmen at the time sought to belittle their African American counterparts in order to separate themselves from them as much as possible. In this altercation, the Irishman sought to do this by ridiculing the intelligence of the speaker and by doing so ridiculing all African Americans who were listening to him.

In addition, over time native white Americans began to realize that Irish immigrants were the most outspoken attackers of blacks along the East coast. A writer for the newspaper *Irish American* named James Dawson described the violent nature of Irish immigrants toward their black counterparts. In an 1851 article, Dawson states that while a minority of Irish view blacks as rational beings the majority believes they are a soulless race that would shoot a black man much like one would shoot a wild hog.²⁵ This article illustrates how aggressively Irish immigrants sought to subjugate the African Americans around them in order for their own personal gain. By 1851, Irish immigrants viewed African Americans as animals. Supporting this belief was an Irish immigrant named John Mitchel. An anti-abolitionist, Mitchel believed that anyone of African descent was a beast and that those that disagreed were idiotic. In 1854, Mitchel supported his beliefs when he said the following in regards to slavery:

We deny that it is a crime, or a wrong, or even a peccadillo, to hold slaves, or to buy slaves, to keep slaves to their work by flogging or other needful coercion... and as for being a

²⁴ Anonymous, "Paddy on Africa," *Plain Dealer* (Cleveland, OH), July 19, 1858, News/Opinion sec.

²⁵ James Dawson, *Irish American* (New York), December 6, 1851.

particular in the wrongs, we, for our part, wish we had a good plantation, well stocked with healthy Negroes in Alabama.²⁶

Mitchel's statement shows how willing the Irish wanted to change their beliefs in order to be accepted by the white community. In addition, this statement is important because it shows that Mitchel is speaking not just for himself but for all Irish immigrants who supported slavery. For Mitchel and Irish immigrants like him, supporting slavery was yet another way that they could earn acceptance among larger white society in the United States. An editorial in the *Irish American* in 1850 states this action by Irish immigrants to do anything in order to become accepted into white America when it states that the Irish must become "true Americans in heart and soul."²⁷ This quote illustrates what would serve as the guide for Irish immigrants in their quest to become white. They would become American by not only being the best possible American they could but by adopting the most extreme versions of American values.²⁸

When Irish immigrants began heading west as a result of the Californian Gold Rush of 1849, they brought these newly learned nativist ideals with them. Perhaps more importantly, Irish immigrants brought a model of how to utilize racism and nativist views to increase their own status within society. Once they arrived in California, they realized they had to once again fight for their position in society because the prejudices against them had followed them to their new home. In addition, Irish immigrants faced with another group that, from their perspective,

²⁶ John Mitchel, "Peasants into Patriots," *The Citizen*, January 14, 1854, accessed February 13, 2016.

²⁷ Anonymous, *Irish American* (New York), June 29, 1850.

²⁸ Christian G. Samito, *Becoming American Under Fire: Irish Americans, African Americans, and the Civil War Era* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009), 19-21.

sought to take a piece of their socio-economic success. This group was Chinese immigrants. Believing that this new group was indeed a threat, Irish immigrants began to openly attack Chinese immigrants and force them out of a home that the Irish believed belonged to them.

Like the Irish, Chinese immigrants saw the United States as refuge from chaos in their homeland. Before the first wave of Chinese came to California, many Chinese were experiencing considerable hardship as a result of the continual conflicts in China. In 1839, the First Opium War began between Great Britain and the Qing Empire after the Chinese government sought to expel opium and all British merchants who traded in China. In response to this, the Emperor ordered his officials to begin confiscating and destroying opium carried by British merchants. The English government saw this action as the destruction of British trade and declared war on the Qing Empire. As a result of having a more technologically advanced military, Britain systematically was able to defeat China in every military engagement. After a humiliating defeat in the war, the Chinese realized that the Qing Empire had let the Great Middle Kingdom²⁹ become militarily and politically inferior to the smaller European powers of the West. This realization deeply troubled the intellectuals and officials of the Chinese Court because for centuries they had considered themselves superior and more civilized than their European counterparts. This is evident through the first official meeting between British and Chinese diplomats in 1793. In accordance with the orders of the China's government, the British ambassador displayed a sign across his ship's mast that read "tribute from the Red Barbarians."³⁰

²⁹ The Chinese saw China as the center between heaven and the rest of the world.

³⁰ W. Travis Hanes, III and Frank Sanello, *The Opium Wars: The Addiction of One Empire and the Corruption of Another* (Naperville, IL: Sourcebooks, 2002), 14.

This quote is an example of the kind of nativism Chinese immigrants themselves would be facing in fifty-six years.

Beyond struggling with the increasing power of Western countries, China was plagued with starvation as well as economic and social woes. People were struggling to find the basic necessities such as food and shelter while the emperor and his court lived in luxury. Socially, many of China's young were becoming upset with the lack of opportunities that were present for them if they failed or performed poorly in the civil service examinations. All these issues caused China to be in a state of chaos. This mismanagement of China by the Qing Empire caused civil unrest to develop throughout the country. Shortly after its defeat in the First Opium War, the Qing Empire found itself battling internal revolts and trying to manage an extremely unstable country. The largest of these revolts against Qing rule was the Taiping Rebellion, which lasted from 1850-1864. Led by Hong Xiuquan, who claimed to be the brother of Jesus, the Taiping rebellion sought to expel the Qing Dynasty and establish the Taiping Tianguo, the Heavenly Kingdom of Great Harmony. During the course of this conflict alone, an estimated 20 million lives were lost. This unstable environment caused numerous Chinese to immigrate to the United States. Another reason Chinese people began to immigrate to the United States was the rumor of gold and the promise of a new life which developed as a result of the Californian Gold Rush of 1849. These factors caused thousands of Chinese, mainly from Guangdong in southeast China, to leave by way of Canton and flood into the United States. Upon their arrival to the United States, most ended up in California, where they encountered their American counterparts who were also seeking the promise of a new life.³¹ Just as their Asian counterparts started gravitating towards

³¹ Sue Fawn Chung, *Asian American Experience: In Pursuit of Gold: Chinese American Miners and Merchants in the American West* (Champaign, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2011), 1-6; Yucheng Qin, *The Diplomacy of Nationalism: The Six Companies and China's Policy Toward*

California so did European and United States immigrants. White immigrants began to move westward with the hope of escaping the problems of their old homes and establishing a new life.

This new life free from chaos and violence never occurred however. Unfortunately for Chinese immigrants during the early 1800s, the chaos and problems of China followed them to the United States. As a result of this, Americans just like their British counterparts began associating certain traits with the incoming Chinese populace. Among these traits associated with Chinese individuals by their Europeans counterparts were that they were lazy, stubborn, amoral, and drug addicts. This negative view towards the Chinese soon developed into a racist one as Europeans began to regard Chinese as inferior on account of their cultural traditions and the inability of the Qing government to effectively organize the country. After the emergence of these racist attitudes towards the Chinese, Europeans turned to science in an attempt to scientifically prove that people of Chinese descent were inferior to Europeans due to biological factors. The early scientific schools of Cultural and Biological Anthropology, developed a theory of biological factors, which argued that the white race was superior to all the other races. The supporting evidence ranged from the belief that whites were superior as a result of having bigger brains to having lived in a northern climate. Eventually racist rhetoric based in “science” determined that peoples of Eastern and South East Asian descent were members of an inferior race known as “Mongoloids.”

Exclusion (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009), 13-22.; Roger Daniels, *Coming to America: A History of Immigration and Ethnicity in American Life*, 2nd ed. (New York: HarperCollins, 2002), 239-250. Jonathan D. Spence, *God's Chinese Son: The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom of Hong Xiuquan* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1997); Benson Tong, *The Chinese Americans* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 2000).

Originating in the work of Samuel George Morton, the human race was believed to be comprised of four different races, Caucasian, Asian or Mongoloid, Native American, and African, rather than just one. In his work *Crania Americana*, Morton argued that he could tell the intellectual order of all the races by measuring their brain sizes. Morton's intellectual order placed Caucasians as the most sophisticated part of humanity, followed in descending order by Asians, Native Americans and finally, Africans. Morton's work began to draw a following rather quickly as numerous physicians and scientists began to follow his teachings. Of these followers the two most famous were George Gliddon, an American Egyptologist, and Josiah C. Nott, an American physician. Together these two men began working to support Morton's theories with their own work. This support finally came in the form of a scholarly monograph entitled *Types of Mankind: Or Ethnological Researches*. In this monograph the two argued that Caucasians were not only the most superior race on the planet but that the white race came about as a result of a completely separate lineage of ancestors. Known as polygenism, the belief that all races emerge as a result of completely separate origins, helped further develop the notion of white dominance over the world. As the racial theories of Morton, Gliddon, and Nott continued to spread, so too did nativist and racist sentiments toward non-white members of society.³²

As these racist views spread, the population within the United States began to move westward and carried these views with them. For the white immigrants, the urge to expand westward began early in the 19th century. A leading advocate for American expansionism, John

³² Ray A. Billington, *The Origins of Nativism in the United States, 1800-1844* (New York: Ayer Co Pub, 1974); Friedrich Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of History, 1828-1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975 reprint ed), 152-173; Steve Spencer, *Race and Ethnicity: Culture, Identity and Representation* (London: New York: Routledge, 2006), 31-37; Josiah C. Nott and George Gliddon, *Types of Mankind: Ethnological Researches*, 6th ed. (Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo and Company, 1854), 70-80, 81-87, 180-190, 406-410.

Quincy Adams wrote to his father stating that the whole continent of North America was destined to be under the control of people who all shared the same language, customs, religion, and political principles. Adams' dream soon developed into a belief system known as Manifest Destiny. Emerging in the 19th century, Manifest Destiny was the belief that white Americans, as a result of divine decree, had the duty to settle and exploit any resource on the land of the North American continent. As a result of being supported by extremely influential Americans such as John Quincy Adams, Americans and immigrants alike began to adopt the basic tenets of manifest destiny. With this belief system supporting their actions, Americans slowly began to push westward in the belief that their cultural background was superior to those that surrounded them. As a result of this belief, it became common practice for white Americans to eliminate any person of a different race or religion found on desired land because they were enabling the will of god. For those who supported Manifest Destiny and those seeking a new place to start over, the beginning of the Californian Gold Rush was a dream come true.³³ California was abundant in natural resources that were, in the eyes of incoming immigrants, ripe for the taking.

With the support of the United States government, Americans moved westward in wagon trains. The most common trail for those interested in the Californian Gold Rush was the California Trail, which followed the Oregon Trail until Fort Hall, Idaho where it broke off and headed for Sutter's Fort, California. During this two thousand mile journey, Americans covered the harsh terrain of the United States interior encountering great obstacles along the way. These obstacles included the never ending plains of the Midwest, the barren deserts of Nevada and the

³³ Walter A. McDougall, *Promised Land, Crusader State: The American Encounter with the World Since 1776* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1997), 57-100. Robert J. Miller, *Native America, Discovered and Conquered: Thomas Jefferson, Lewis & Clark, and Manifest Destiny* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2006), 117-160.

seemingly impenetrable Sierra Nevada mountain range.³⁴ In addition to the great physical hurdles encountered during the journey, migrants also had to face biological obstacles. The most common were diseases that involved gastrointestinal illnesses, the worst of which was cholera. Cholera was extremely lethal for American migrants. Often transmitted through the consumption of food and water, cholera caused its victims to die as a result of the dehydration caused by the loss of the victim's bodily fluids through diarrhea. By the time these difficult challenges had been overcome, families had often lost numerous possessions and loved ones. Despite these losses, after a grueling journey of approximately four and a half to five months, American migrants arrived in a land that would grant them the promise of new prosperous lives. However upon arriving in California, American emigrants soon found the widely advertised gold fields occupied by a group of people who had long considered California their home.³⁵

Before rumors emerged of lakes and mountains filled with gold, the first immigrants began to stake out their claims in the Californian gold fields. Participating in both mining and ranching activities, *Californios* emerged as the first settlers of non-Northern European descent to partake in economic activities during the Gold Rush years. Natives of Mexican origin, *Californios* had chosen to stay in California after California became a part of the United States in 1848. During the years following the United States annexation of California, *Californios* lived in relative autonomy and were instrumental in developing California's agricultural economy. Although *Californios* and their ancestors had lived in California for one hundred years, white Americans still regarded them as foreigners. As a result, numerous *Californios* saw their lands

³⁴ The Sierra Nevada mountain range is located between California and Nevada and runs approximately four hundred miles from north to south.

³⁵ Mary Hill, *Gold: The California Story* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1999), XI-3; John D. Unruh, *The Plains Across: The Overland Emigrants on the Trans-Mississippi West, 1840-60*, 1st ed. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 28-51.

and properties taken away in the wake of white nativism. This loss of long-held rights by minority groups in California was typical once nativism gained a foot hold in Californian society.

The lure of the wealth one could obtain in California presented a way to escape the harsh nativist forces they were experiencing in the East Coast. As a result of this opportunity, Irish immigrants resorted to two different courses of action. First, numerous Irish immigrants began abandoning their religious beliefs and cultural heritage to embrace the beliefs of native-born Americans. Second, Irish immigrants closed their homes and began moving westward across the American frontier with the hope of starting again in California. California, unlike the East Coast of the United States, had remained largely isolated from nativist beliefs. For Irish immigrants, this presented a great opportunity to restart their lives without constantly being regarded as the root of all of society's problems. This urge to leave the east coast is illustrated through an experience had by a Mr. Maguire, an Irish immigrant and writer. He states that when he told he informed another Irish immigrant he was leaving for California the Irish immigrant fell to his knees and begged Mr. Maguire to take him with him. The immigrant pleaded with Mr. Maguire saying that if left he would soon be pushed out of his job and end up in a poor house. According to the immigrant, all he wanted was to live in a place like California where no bailiff or other individual could eject him.³⁶ This desire to head west only intensified among Irish immigrants after news of the discovery of gold in California. Regardless of their choice, Irish immigrants never forgot the way they had been treated by their nativist neighbors. What many Irish

³⁶ Michael C. O'Laughlin, *Irish Families on the California Trail*, ed. Irish Family Journal, 1st ed. (Kansas City, MO: Irish Genealogical Foundation, 2003), 7.

immigrants failed to realize was that the nativist behavior that they had encountered in the east had forever changed them. Upon arriving in California, Irish immigrants came face to face with an immigrant much like themselves who craved their own new life out of California's rich soils. And much like their nativist neighbors in the East, Irish immigrants refused to let that happen.

Upon arriving in California, Irish migrants soon realized that the Chinese were the main focus of nativist aggression in California much like the Irish had been in the East. Irish immigrants adopted anti-Chinese attitudes for numerous reasons. First, Irish immigrants viewed Chinese immigrants as a threat to their economic success. In addition, numerous Irish migrants adopted nativist beliefs in an attempt remain out of the focus of Californian nativists.³⁷ By adopting nativist sentiments, Irish immigrants were able to achieve a degree of Americanization. Within a few years, Irish immigrants became one of the most outspoken anti-Chinese groups in California often partaking in extremely violent acts against Chinese migrants.³⁸ These two groups first encountered each other while working in the mines of the land that both believed could secure their future.

³⁷ Anonymous, "The Chinese in California, 1850-1925," Loc.gov, accessed November 23, 2013, <http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/connections/chinese-cal/file.html>.

³⁸ Anonymous, "The Californios," Pbs.org, 1998, accessed November 11, 2013, <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/kids/goldrush/california.html>. Charles Hughes, "The Decline of the Californios: The Case of San Diego, 1846-1856," review of *Decline of the Californios*, *The Journal of San Diego History*, summer 1975, <http://www.sandiegohistory.org/journal/75summer/decline.htm>. Malcom Campbell, "Ireland's Furthest Shores: Irish Immigrant Settlement in Nineteenth-Century California and Eastern Australia," *Pacific Historical Review* 71, no. 1 (February 2002): 87-90.

Chapter Two: The Consequences of Competition

Beginning with their competition in California's mining industry, Chinese and Irish immigrants immediately began to clash as a result of labor competition. Initially, conflict between these two groups was minimal. Within a short period of time however, Irish immigrants and their white, native-born Americans recognized the threat Chinese immigrants posed to their economic success. This occurred for several reasons. First, the clash between the labor groups was a result of Irish immigrants' refusal to become a vilified minority again like they had been in the East Coast of the United States. Initially, much to the dismay of Irish immigrants, native white born Americans viewed Irish immigrants as almost on the same level as Chinese immigrants. This can be seen not only by the stereotypes that followed Irish immigrants to California but also by legislation that was passed targeting Irish and Chinese laborers. Known as the Foreign Miners Tax, this piece of legislation placed a tax on all foreign miners that sought to

conduct mining activities in the state of California.³⁹ Realizing that they would once again be subjected to the lower levels of society, Irish immigrants took action. Learning a lesson from the nativists who had discriminated against them in the east, Irish immigrants began to target and purposefully persecute Chinese immigrants. This was done in an effort to establish themselves as equals to their native-born American counterparts in Californian society. This desire to assert themselves in their new home in California was not the only reason for this harsh persecution. Chinese immigrants were willing to work for significantly less wages than any of their fellow laborers from different ethnic groups. Due to their willingness to work for virtually no money at all, Chinese immigrants became the favored labor force by business leaders in Californian society. Within a decade, Chinese laborers dominated the laborer industry especially in the mining sector and much more noticeably in the labor force used to build the Continental Rail Road. As this trend of using Chinese laborers instead of white laborers continued through the 1850s and 1860s, Irish immigrants began to feel their chances for socio-economic success slipping away and as a result became more violent and malicious in their attacks on their Chinese counterparts.⁴⁰

Most Irish immigrants ended up settling in San Francisco. After the discovery of gold, San Francisco began to rapidly expand. Over the course of 22 years, San Francisco went from a city of just 1,000 inhabitants to a city of 150,000. Coming early to California, Irish immigrants were at the beginning of this rapid expansion of economic commerce that presented great opportunities to become rich and established. In 1852, San Francisco had over 4,200 first

³⁹ Jean Pfaelzer, *Driven Out: The Forgotten War Against Chinese Americans* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2007), 29-40.

⁴⁰ Kevin Kenny, *The American Irish: A History* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 69-157.

generation Irish immigrants, all of whom were eager to find employment. Most Irish found work in the rapidly developing mining sector of California's economy. In addition, Irish immigrants found employment in different areas of California's manufacturing sector. Irish immigrants found themselves in these areas mainly due to the mining and manufacturing sectors demand for unskilled labor. This increase in these sectors saw the rise of numerous ironworks, brass foundries, shipyards, food processing plants, sawmills, flour mills, wagon-making establishments, and factories of various types all of which employed Irish immigrants.

Just as the Irish had done in the East Coast, they sought to occupy the cheap labor aspect of California's economy. Unlike their experience on the east coast however, Irish immigrants had considerable upward mobility through these unskilled labor position into more white-collar oriented work.⁴¹ This was due to the fact that San Francisco was still an emerging urban frontier and work was readily available. Despite finding work in these sectors, many of the prejudices that Irish immigrants faced in the East followed them to California. Business owners viewed Irish laborers as drunkards who were unreliable when it came to their work performance. Many native white Californians viewed Irish immigrants as inferior due to the nature of the work that most of them were employed in. In addition, Irish immigrants were still viewed as drunkards that spent all of their income on alcohol instead of supporting their family. Much to the discontent of Irish immigrants, most individuals in California still held many of the same prejudices that the nativist held along the east coast. Unlike in the East Coast however, Irish immigrants did not

⁴¹ R. A. Burchell, *The San Francisco Irish, 1848-1880* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1980), 1-180.

have another “race” that they could actively subjugate to improve their position. This all changed with the arrival of Chinese immigrants.⁴²

Drawn to California by James W. Marshall’s discovery of gold at Sutter’s Mill in Coloma, California in 1848, the Chinese were fascinated by the rumors of enormous amounts of gold. Eager, Chinese miners soon flooded into California in search of the precious metal. They were not the only miners however that sought to make it rich in California. Groups of miners from countries around the globe came to California with the hopes of striking it rich. Often focusing most of their attention along the banks of rivers and streams, early miners often engaged in a work intensive mining technique known as panning. The oldest form of gold mining, panning was very cheap to perform, but often yielded little product. As the gold rush continued, new, more elaborate methods for mining gold soon developed such as draining rivers, then sluicing the newly exposed river bed and hydraulic mining. Although these new methods produced a greater yield of gold they often caused conditions to be more dangerous. Due to these dangerous mining techniques, injuries and fatalities were quite common throughout mining camps. In addition, disease such as cholera only made mining for gold even harder for miners. According to *The Alta California*, the conditions in which mining took place were extremely severe in the city of Nevada. Miners suffered from a lack of profit as was as the inability to access basic necessities such as water. *The Alta California* went even further and states that after another winter the miners would be forced to leave their dig sites due to the horrible conditions.⁴³

⁴² Iris Chang, *The Chinese in America: A Narrative History* (New York: Penguin Books, 2003), 126.

⁴³ Oakland Museum of California, "Gold Fever," Museumca.org, 1998, Prospecting, accessed November 11, 2013, <http://www.museumca.org/goldrush/fever13.html>. Anonymous, "Sacramento Intelligence," *The Alta California* (San Francisco), July 13, 1850, News/Opinion sec.

Amidst these conditions, miners' hard work often met with little success, causing most to actually lose money during the gold rush. Consequently, miners often took what little earnings they had and turned to saloons and gambling houses for comfort. Consumed by despair, White miners continually became angrier as they witnessed foreign miners finding gold when they could not. Besides dealing with horrible conditions like their counterparts, foreign miners also had to deal with racial persecution at the hands of their white nativist neighbors. For Chinese miners, the aggression they faced from their white contemporaries was far more severe than it was toward other foreign groups. Armed with a belief in Manifest Destiny and current nativist rhetoric, white miners began to forcibly remove the Chinese miners from their own private mining claims. White nativist began targeting Chinese immigrants because they tended to be more successful at finding gold than white miners. This is a result of centuries of improved ancient mining techniques and a harden work ethic on the part of the Chinese. Despite the numerous other immigrant groups that were present in California, nativists targeted most of their discrimination towards the Chinese. Despite native white Americans targeting Chinese immigrants, other foreign groups such as the Irish began to take on nativist stances toward them. Although Irish immigrants eventually became the main nativist aggressor toward the Chinese, this hostility did not occur immediately. Initially, it was native white Americans who were persecuting Chinese immigrants as well as Irish. In mining, this discrimination toward Chinese immigrants by nativist white Americans and Irish immigrants occurred due to the conditions of their work place and the techniques of Chinese miners that caused them to be more productive. Often focusing most of their attention along the banks of rivers and streams, early miners often engaged in a work intensive mining technique known as panning. The oldest form of gold mining, panning, was very cheap to perform, but often yielded little product. As the gold rush

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This lack of wealth and poverty made Irish and white nativist Americans alike look for someone to blame. Their solution was the Chinese. Members of a dramatically different cultural tradition, white nativists and Irish immigrants believed that it was these strangers who were the source of their problems. This superstition was only enhanced any time a Chinese miner found gold. For white nativist Americans, the gold that Chinese immigrants were mining belonged to them and any attempts by a minority group to possess that wealth was threat to them. Armed with Manifest Destiny and current nativist rhetoric, white miners began to forcibly remove the Chinese miners from their own private mining claims. An instance of this violence occurred on November 16th, 1852. Reported by *San Francisco Alta California* newspaper, a group of white miners went into a neighboring Chinese camp and began forcibly removing Chinese workers by any means necessary. When law enforcement attempted to put an end to the event, they found

⁴⁴ Oakland Museum of California, "Gold Fever," Museumca.org, 1998, Prospecting, accessed November 11, 2013, <http://www.museumca.org/goldrush/fever13.html>. Anonymous, "Sacramento Intelligence," *The Alta California* (San Francisco), July 13, 1850, News/Opinion sec.

themselves powerless and by the time it had come to an end no witnesses could be found that were willing to testify against the white miners.⁴⁵

Another instance of white nativists attempting to remove Chinese miners from their claims occurred in 1855. On March 24th, 1855, Charles De Long recounted what he viewed as just another normal day. During this day De Long recorded in his journal that he had a stiff neck, prospected the creek, and shot a “Chinamen.” For De Long, the shooting of a “Chinaman” was just another part of his daily activities as he stated that he often hunted Chinese while he looked for gold. To him the life of a “Chinaman” was basically worthless and its only real value coming in the form of entertainment which one receives from abusing a “Chinaman.” This violent behavior by nativist white Americans slowly became more common as nativist sentiments continued to flourish. Despite the numerous other immigrant groups that were present in California, nativists targeted most of their discrimination towards the Chinese. The extent of this hatred is illustrated in an 1858 article in the *Daily Globe*. Discussing the idea of including freed Africans in Californian society, the article argues that people should not be worrying about whether or not freed Africans are included into society. According to the author, individuals should be worrying about the massive swarm of Chinese immigrants that are coming to California. The author argues that it was common knowledge that the African was an inferior race but he asserted that the Chinese were far worse, stating “the introduction of the Chinese is a political wrong.” Furthermore, the author states that Africans ultimately will “[fall] back to the

⁴⁵ Anonymous, "San Joaquin News," *The Alta California* (San Francisco), November 16, 1852.

state of degradation from which he was rescued by whites” whereas the Chinese will not.⁴⁶ This extreme racism illustrates just how infused California had become. These ideals were common whether they were being recorded in a man’s journal or being published in major newspapers. White Californians actively created a hot bed for the spread of racist and nativist ideals by supporting or ignoring such acts of hatred. Seeing these act of nativism, Irish immigrants once again experienced what seemed to be a key aspect of being an American; the discrimination of minor groups. Although unique in its own way, this discrimination towards Chinese occurred in part of an emerging labor conflict between Irish and white nativists against Chinese immigrants.⁴⁷

The first conflict between the Irish and Chinese occurred as a result of competition for economic success within California’s economic sectors. This conflict first appeared in the mining industry. In mining, Chinese immigrants were more successful as a result of their possessing better and more refined techniques of mining than their nativist counterparts. Chinese immigrants tended to be more knowledgeable than their counterparts when it came to ditch work and reservoir construction since these techniques had been practiced for centuries in China.⁴⁸ In addition, these techniques often led to Chinese immigrants to be more successful than other miners. What made Chinese mining techniques more effective than their contemporaries was the fact that they were significantly more persistent in performing them. While many white and Irish

⁴⁶ Anonymous, "Exclusion of Free Negroes," *Daily Globe* (San Francisco), April 8, 1858, News/Opinions sec.

⁴⁷ Oakland Museum of California, "Gold Fever," Museumca.org, 1998, Miner's Life, accessed November 11, 2013, <http://www.museumca.org/goldrush/fever12.html>.

⁴⁸ Michael Teitelbaum, *Chinese Immigrants*, ed. Robert Asher (New York: Facts On File, 2005), 27.

miners would give up on their claims after a short period of time of not finding success, Chinese miners would not. They would continue to mine their claims until they saw profit or moved on to claims previously occupied by white miners and start their process again. Most times, this paid off and Chinese miners saw a good deal of profit. The fact that Chinese miners often became prosperous by mining claims that was previously being mined by whites enraged nativist elements.⁴⁹

For white miners, especially Irish workers, Chinese immigrants were taking up all the opportunities California had to offer. Seeing the effect that Chinese immigrants had on mining, Irish immigrants became increasingly frustrated with their socio-economic situation and viewed the Chinese as the source of this problem. Behind this notion however was the desire to become American. In the East, Irish immigrants had sought to become American by attacking the black minority to show the similarities between them and the white majority. In California, they shifted their scorn to the Chinese. As nativism began to be publicly accepted and expressed by a majority of Californian society, Irish immigrants brought back out their nativist tendencies in earnest.

Chinese immigrants were almost immediately cast as outcasts in Californian society. This was due to the drastic differences in customs, clothing, beliefs, food, language, and values between Chinese immigrants and their white counterparts. The response to the drastic differences between these two groups caused Chinese immigrants to form their own community in California's cities known as Chinatowns. The vast difference between Chinese immigrants and their American peers made them a suitable target for Irish nativists. Coming to California with a

⁴⁹ Anomyous, "The Chinese Experience in British Columbia," [Www.library.ubc.ca](http://www.library.ubc.ca/chineseinbc/mining.html), accessed October 30, 2015, <http://www.library.ubc.ca/chineseinbc/mining.html>.

desire to make money anyway possible, Chinese immigrants often found employment working for little pay in mining and manufacturing. In these sectors however, Chinese immigrants began to prove themselves as hard workers and set themselves apart from other workers by utilizing traditional Chinese work practices that increase the rate that work was finished. These aspects that Chinese immigrants brought to the work place were extremely valued by business owners. For business owners, Chinese workers represented an excellent way that they could save money.⁵⁰ Unlike other workers even the Irish, Chinese immigrants were willing to work for close to no pay at all. As a result of this, within a few years more and more Chinese immigrants began to be employed in the mining and manufacturing sectors of California's economy.

As more Chinese immigrants began to be hired by business owners however, other groups such as Irish immigrants began to find themselves out of work. This new form of cheap but effective labor found in the work of Chinese immigrants began to threaten California's Irish community's hold on cheap labor within California. For the Irish, this new competition posed a chance of destroying everything that they had hoped to achieve in California. Despite the competition Chinese immigrants posed in the work place, it was not until Irish immigrants were grouped as equal to Chinese immigrants that Irish immigrants began to actively attack Chinese immigrants. This grouping occurred with the passing of the Foreign Miners Tax. In this act stated that all foreign miners or non-Americans were required to pay a twenty dollar tax per month for engaging in mining practices. Besides being angry at the enormous tax that was placed on them, Irish immigrants were furious that they once again were being grouped into the bottom section of society. Determined to stop this from happening a second time, Irish immigrants as

⁵⁰ Krystyn R. Moon, *Yellowface: Creating the Chinese in American Popular 1850's-1920's* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2005), 55.

well as native white Americans began to form Anti-coolie clubs. These clubs served as a union for white miners which sought to improve and promote their interests.

After establishing their lives in California, Irish immigrants almost immediately realized the potential that the future state had to offer. Irish immigrants began working across the state focusing on industries such as mining. Through industries such as mining, Irish immigrants began to realize the potential wealth that California could offer them. The Irish were not the only group that came to this realization however. Other immigrants of various ethnic backgrounds began flooding into California. Irish immigrants saw these new groups as potential threats to their future success. Out of these groups, it was the Chinese immigrants that the Irish identified as the largest threat for they too had come to California in search of the precious material that also lured in the Irish; gold.

Within a short period of time, tensions between white nativists and Chinese migrants reached a boiling point. Starting as early as 1849, white miners in California demanded that all foreign miners be banned and forever excluded from working in mines. After realizing the government of California was not going to do anything to help them, miners took matters into their own hands. According to numerous contemporary accounts, native-born miners began forcing foreign miners from their dig sights and claiming these sights for themselves. Once these nativist miners began forcing out foreign miners it was only a matter of time before they began focusing specifically on Chinese immigrants. This extreme anti-Chinese sentiment began to occur because Chinese miners were more successful than their white counterparts. This was a result of many of the Chinese having practiced traditional mining in China for years prior to coming to California. Beginning in Tuolumne County in 1849, miners passed local ordinances restricting Chinese miners from actively working on mining claims which were rightfully owned

by Chinese immigrants. These anti-Chinese sentiments developed with the help of the American Know-Nothing Party and the Democratic Party of California. Shortly after this, numerous other counties began to pass their own local ordinances in an effort to eliminate Chinese miners from mining land which they believed should be used only by white Americans. Coming under massive pressure from miners, the government of California decided to act and developed a law which would help protect California's miners. Instituted in 1850, the Foreign Miners Tax required all foreign miners to pay twenty dollars per month to obtain a license to mine gold. Through this law, the Californian government sought to increase the state's revenue by exploiting the undesirables of the state. This made life for Chinese immigrants extremely hard as a large amount of their income had to be dedicated to paying off the state government.⁵¹

This tax was well received throughout the state immediately upon its institution. In an article from *The Weekly Pacific News* on June 1, 1850, newspaper writers celebrated the law as an effective way to keep foreigners from exploiting Americans' rights. In addition, the law also criticized native Californians who did not support the law and viewed it as illegal and oppressive, stating that they were taking the side of aliens rather than that of the state and her citizens. Meeting resistance from minority miners as well as sympathetic white Californians, the law was often protested through newspapers. However, when white Californians went against the Foreign Miners Tax, they were often regarded as traitors and un-American. After the Foreign Miners Tax's institutionalization, newspapers began to report confrontations between foreigners and natives throughout California. On June 1, 1850, *The Alta California* reported that during a town

⁵¹ Mark Kanazawa, "Immigration, Exclusion, and Taxation: Anti-Chinese Legislation in Gold Rush California," *Journal of Economic History* 65, no. 3 (September 2005): 784-787; Sucheng Chan, *This Bittersweet Soil: The Chinese in California Agriculture, 1860-1910* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1989), 58.

meeting a Mexican native drew a pistol on a native-born American. Although no shots were fired, native-born Americans armed with guns filled the streets and ultimately caused one known injury. Instances like these made life only harder for Chinese immigrants as Californians became more and more violent towards foreigners.⁵²

Nativism began to spread to other sectors of California besides mining as Chinese immigrants began to occupy more positions in California's economy. White Americans began attacking their Chinese contemporaries. One of the most common ways that the rise of nativism in California was displayed was through nativist views and opinion pieces in Californian newspapers. One of the most outspoken newspapers against Chinese immigration was the *Alta California*. Founded by Irish-American Samuel Brannan in 1846 under the name of *California Star*, the *Alta California* quickly became one of California's most popular newspapers following several mergers with other fellow newspapers. Over the course of the mid-1800s, the *Alta California* became a key newspaper for spreading anti-Chinese sentiment throughout California. In 1850, the newspaper illustrated its opinion of its Chinese neighbors by discussing their homeland; China. In this article, the *Alta California* discusses the benefits of trade with China because it will help bring "steam and civilization" to her shores.⁵³ This claim of the bringing of civilization to China illustrates how individuals from China were perceived to be less civilized than their white counterparts. Similar to nativist sentiments from the East Coast, this article illustrates the beginnings of widespread nativist sentiments toward Chinese immigrants in

⁵² Anonymous, "An Act for the better regulation of the Mines, and the government of Foreign Miners," *Statutes of California* (1850), 221–23. Anonymous, "Tax Upon Foreign Miners," *Weekly Pacific News* (San Francisco, CA), June 1, 1850, News/Opinion sec. Leo. S, "Sonora-Disturbance in the Mines," *The Alta California* (San Francisco, CA), June 1, 1850, News/Opinion sec.

⁵³ Anonymous, "Steamers," *Weekly Alta California* (San Francisco), October 5, 1850, News/Opinions sec.

California. As Chinese immigration began to increase, native-white Americans started to view this new emerging populace as the most severe threat to white Californian's rights. This belief began to emerge because whites become frustrated by the success that many Chinese immigrants were experiencing and by the drastically different culture and customs of Chinese immigrants. Native white Californians began their assault on Chinese immigrants by criticizing their heritage. A March 1851 article from *The Alta California* describes the distinctions that make Chinese immigrants and their "celestial brethren" significantly different from their white counterparts. By referring to Chinese immigrants as celestial, the article purposefully attacked the Chinese belief that their homeland was divinely given to them and ruled by a god-emperor.⁵⁴

Native-white Americans continued to illustrate their nativist views toward Chinese laborers as the source of all of Californian's economic woes through their elected political leaders. In 1852, the governor of California John Bigler openly attacked the rights of Chinese miners throughout the state. Bigler, a Democrat, became the first Californian governor to complete a term in office and then win reelection. Bigler was able to secure the office of governor twice because as a rising politician he gained the support of white miners by supporting their beliefs that Chinese miners were a direct threat to their livelihood. After winning the election for governor, Bigler aligned himself with California's anti-Chinese elements. He began to attack Chinese miners with the hope of removing them from Californian mines. In a speech given to the Californian State Legislature in 1852, Bigler argued that Chinese immigration was an enormous threat which could no longer be ignored.⁵⁵ He claimed that if left unchecked,

⁵⁴ Anonymous, "California an Agricultural State," *The Alta California* (San Francisco, CA), March 31, 1851, News/Opinion sec.

⁵⁵ John Bigler, *An Analysis of the Chinese Question* (San Francisco: San Francisco Herald, 1852). Pgs?

Chinese immigration would cause great damage to the state and her citizens. Showing how severe the Chinese threat was, Bigler said that if left unchecked, white Californian miners would lose their jobs and would be left unemployed thus eliminating a huge section of California's economy. Claiming to have found a solution to the Chinese problem Bigler argued that in order to stop the Chinese threat, the state legislature needed to increase taxes on the current Chinese populace and restrict all those that had not sworn away allegiance to China herself, from working the mines. Besides increasing taxes on Chinese miners, Bigler also sought to drive Chinese immigrants out through head taxes. In the late 1850s, Bigler's Democratic Party passed legislation that instructed all newcomer Chinese immigrants to pay \$50 per person within the next three days. This hurt white ship owners who transported Chinese immigrants to California so they organized and brought this piece of legislation to the Supreme Court which ruled it unconstitutional. Despite this, John Bigler and the Democratic Party set the tone for the passing of nativist legislation against Chinese immigrants.⁵⁶

Widespread support for the governor's speech and subsequent actions was evident in newspapers throughout the state. On the May 1, 1852, *The Sacramento Weekly Union* stated that the governor had the will of the people and the state government at his back in his quest to solve the Chinese issue.⁵⁷ Agreeing with Governor John Bigler, native white Americans continued their attempts to attack Chinese immigrants with California's legal power. Known as *People v Hall*, this court case surrounded the murder of a Chinese miner, Ling Sing, by white Californian

⁵⁶ George Henry Tinkham, *California Men and Events: Time 1769-1890* (Stanford University Libraries, 1915), 95.

⁵⁷ Anonymous, "Governor's Special Message," *Sacramento Weekly Union* (Sacramento, CA), May 1, 1852, News/Opinions sec.

George W. Hall.⁵⁸ The main evidence against Hall was compiled by three eyewitness accounts of other Chinese miners. After reviewing Clause 14 of the Criminal Act, which stated that no person of black, mulatto, or Indian descent should be able to give evidence in favor of, or against a person of white descent, the Supreme Court made its decision. On October 1, 1854 Judge Ch. J. Murray delivered the verdict which stated that due to the generalized language used in the 14th clause of the Criminal Act, all peoples of non-white descent, including Chinese, had no right to prosecute against or aide white people in the Californian court system. By committing to this decision, California's state government became fully committed to the ideas of both the anti-Chinese and nativist causes. As a result of this decision, Chinese individuals found themselves defenseless against the violent actions of their white nativist neighbors. According to an article in *The Daily Placer Times and Transcript* on October 9, 1854, Judge Ch. J. Murray stated that if the case ever became doubtful he would have been forced to make his decision based on the popular opinion of the time.⁵⁹ Due to this statement *The Daily Placer Times and Transcript* referred to Judge Ch. J. Murray as a "learned judge", demonstrating their approval of the judge's approach to solving legal matters between whites and nonwhites.⁶⁰

As political moves by the Californian State legislature continued to target Chinese immigrants, native white Americans began to view Chinese immigrants as the worst kind of foreigner. As early as 1853, nativist elements made their position known and made sure Chinese

⁵⁸ People v Hall (1854).

⁵⁹ ⁵⁹ Anonymous, "People; Respondents; George W. Hall," *Daily Placer Times and Transcript* (San Francisco), October 9, 1854, News/Opinion sec.

⁶⁰ Anonymous, "People; Respondents; George W. Hall," *Daily Placer Times and Transcript* (San Francisco), October 9, 1854, News/Opinion sec. You could combine these two notes in to one note

immigrants had no long term plans to stay in California. On June 18th, 1853, *The Weekly Alta California*, reported that unlike other foreigners who could one day become naturalized, Chinese immigrants would never gain the rights and privileges of white citizens. Referring to them as the “bottom of the pit,” this article also stated how people throughout the state regarded them as worse than beasts that prey on inferior meat. For these nativists the main section of their argument was that because the Chinese were racially inferior to whites they did not deserve to enjoy the rights their white neighbors were enjoying.⁶¹

As a result of the political efforts of individuals such as John Bigler, nativist sentiments in California had drastically increased by the late 1850s. Californians began to view the actions of a single Chinese immigrant as representative of the entire Chinese populace in California. Thus when a single Chinese immigrant did something illegal the entire group began to be viewed negatively. Whites from all over the state began to stereotype the Chinese as a race of thieves, liars, and heathens who sought to upset and overturn the United States’ democracy. *The Daily Democratic State Journal* displayed this nativist view in one of its late January issues. On January 29th, 1856, the newspaper reported that two Chinese men had stolen money from the city of Sacramento and fled shortly after. According to the newspaper, these two Chinese men were following the same amoral and villainous footsteps that all their brethren from the land of China were bound to follow. To this newspaper and its readers, the actions of these two Chinese men represented the evil nature of the Chinese race as a whole.⁶² Unlike the Chinese, the Irish were not subjected to the same degree of racism. Despite this, Irish immigrants still were subjected to

⁶¹ Weekly Alta California, comp., "The Chinese," *Weekly Alta California* (San Francisco, California), June 18, 1853, News/Opinion sec.

⁶² Anonymous, "Chinese Money Thieves," *Daily Democratic State Journal* (Sacramento), January 29, 1856, News/Opinion sec.

the nativist sentiments of their white native born counterparts. In an article in the *Daily Evening Bulletin* published in April 11, 1857, the court proceedings of a drunk in public charge are discussed.⁶³ In this article, the author states that the defendant, an Irish immigrant by the name of Mr. John Brown, should not be punished by the court of law because he was just fulfilling his duty as an Irishman to get drunk. He states that “Brown had done no more than thus approve himself a good Irishman, [and] the Judge ought not to punish [him]” for being drunk. Although not as radical as the nativism brought against Chinese immigrants, Irish immigrants still had to constantly combat stereotypes that had stuck with them since they lived in the British Isles.

Over the course of the 1850s, native white Americans slowly became paranoid about their Chinese neighbors. In an attempt to determine how many Chinese immigrants there were in California, newspapers as well as the State Register conducted censuses. On August 13, 1852, *The Daily Placer Times and Transcript* reported that the number of Chinese immigrants coming to California would soon equal that of all other immigration to California from all other parts of the world. According to the writers, the purpose of this article was to provide an accurate estimate of the number of Chinese in California for the benefit of their readers. Just a year later the *Alta California*, released an article that broke down California’s population. They reported that the total population of California was 328,000, including 215,000 Americans (presumably native born whites), 25,000 Germans, 25,000 French, 17,000 “Chinamen,” 20,000 of “Spanish blood”, 5,000 miscellaneous foreigners, 20,000 Indians, and 2,500 “Negros.” In addition to this population census, the *Alta California* made a point to illustrate that over the course of a year

⁶³ Anonymous, "John Brown Tight," *Daily Evening Bulletin* (San Francisco), April 11, 1857, News/Opinions sec.

California had lost 1,200 “Chinamen.”⁶⁴ Despite the attempts of the article to accurately illustrate California’s population, the author ends the article by saying that the numbers given were mere estimates.

Another attempt was made just five years following this first census to once again estimate the amount of Chinese immigrants present in California. In 1857 however, the *Los Angeles Star* reported the accurate population numbers given by the State Register. In this official report a new group emerged that took up a high percentage of California’s immigrant population: the Irish. According to the *Los Angeles Star*, of the 332,380 people in California, 10,000 were Irish immigrants. In addition, this new population census argued that the number of Chinese immigrants in California had drastically increased to 38,687.⁶⁵ This census is important because it illustrates the emergence of both Irish and Chinese populations in California. In addition, this census shows that despite being outnumbered Irish immigrants continually attacked Chinese immigrants and competed against them. Although not actively attacking each other in the 1850s, Irish and Chinese populations would soon come into conflict in the 1860s when both parties worked on the Transcontinental Railroad. In addition, the increase of Irish immigrants in California is important because it illustrates the influx of nativist views from the East coast that the Irish carried with them. This influx of nativist ideas would cause Irish immigrants to actively attack Chinese immigrants while they worked with each on the railroad and later when the Irish organized themselves politically in the 1870s.

⁶⁴ Anonymous, "The Population of California," *Daily Alta California*, December 23, 1853.

⁶⁵ Anonymous, "Population of the State," *Los Angeles Star*, June 6, 1857.

Despite all of this aggression toward Chinese immigrants by California's native white American population, California's businesses still viewed the Chinese economically beneficial to California. In fact, business owners actually advocated for more Chinese labor and wanted to provide an incentive for them to come to the United States. As a result of the lack of support by business owners few popular anti-Chinese groups emerged during the 1850s and early 1860s. One of the few to do so however was a Know-Nothing chapter that was founded in 1854. The desire for Chinese labor on the part of California's business men can be seen through a discussion on a reduction of taxes. In 1856, the Californian state legislature proposed a reduction to the tax rate on people of Chinese descent. In charge of analyzing the situation around the bill and the bill itself, the California Committee on mines and mining interests was asked to investigate the matter. The Committee, comprised of sitting members of the legislature, came up in support of lowering the tax on Chinese immigrants. This decision was not made with full support of the committee however. The Committee broke into two factions that can easily be identified as the majority and minority.

The minority of the committee was extremely upset by the decision and outlined their objections to the bill in a document to the state legislature entitled *Minority Report of the Committee on Mines and Mining Interests*. Within this document the minority argues that the greatest threat to California's survival was the Chinese threat and that if left unaddressed it could spell disaster for future generations. In addition, the minority argued that the desire of the Californian state legislature to reduce the existing tax on Chinese immigrants negatively affected the livelihood of white miners. According to the minority, the existing tax was also important because it provided motivation for the Chinese immigrants to eventually leave the state. In addition, the minority argued that the Chinese population of California was an undesirable one

and should not be allowed to have the same rights as other Californian citizens. Of all the reasons for the minority did not want to reduce the tax on the Chinese populace, the one they stressed the most was the fact that they did not want Chinese workers in Californian mines. The Minority Committee stated that although it was the duty of all good Christians to illuminate the dark heathen places of the world with god's gospel. Despite this sacred duty however, the Minority Committee states that it would gladly ignore this sacred duty so that the Chinese never worked in another Californian mine again. Realizing the importance of Asian trade, the minority stated that trade between China and California should continue; however, Chinese immigration to California should be stopped at all costs.⁶⁶

Unlike the minority members of the committee, the majority members believed that the tax on Chinese people should be reduced and all Chinese people should be granted the rights of citizens. Although the majority wanted Chinese immigrants to remain in California, this desire only came about due to nativist sentiments similar to the minority of the committee. Unlike the earlier sentiments of the time this committee viewed Chinese immigrants as children that the state needed to protect. Arguing that the Chinese were a weak people, this committee only wanted to keep Chinese people within the state so that they could continue exploiting them for their labor.⁶⁷ For the majority, the exploitation of Chinese labor was the way the California would become economically successful. Without Chinese cheap labor, the majority feared that the Californian economy would fail and spiral out of control. Thus for the majority, the treat the

⁶⁶ S. H. Dosh, John D. Scellen, and J. W. Mandeville, *Minority Report of the Committee on Mines and Mining Interests* (Sacramento: Committee, 1856); Charles Westmoreland, *Majority Report of the Committee on Mines and Mining Interests* (Sacramento: Committee, 1856). Pgs?

⁶⁷ S. H. Dosh, John D. Scellen, and J. W. Mandeville, *Minority Report of the Committee on Mines and Mining Interests* (Sacramento: Committee, 1856); Charles Westmoreland, *Majority Report of the Committee on Mines and Mining Interests* (Sacramento: Committee, 1856). Pgs?

Chinese immigrant population posed to California was less than the benefit they presented toward its economy.

This desire of Californian business owners to keep Chinese labor caused tensions between white nativist and Chinese immigrants. In the 1860s however, this labor conflict would concern Irish immigrants more than their nativist American neighbors. These tensions became extremely apparent when the two groups began working together on the Central Pacific Railroad. Seeking to create a cross-continental railroad, the Congress of the United States commissioned the Central Pacific Railroad with constructing a network of rails from California to Promontory Utah. The man put in charge of this immense project was named Charles Crocker. Born in Indiana, Crocker left his home state to strike it rich in the Californian Gold Rush. After his attempt at mining failed, Crocker set up shop selling dry goods and became extremely successful. Some of his success also occurred as a result of his connections and membership to the extremely powerful Republican party of California. Through his connections within the Republican Party, Crocker was able to secure construction rights to the Central Pacific railroad after Congress passed the Pacific railroad bill in 1862. Despite being widely recommended for the job, Crocker had never participated in construction. Regardless of this, Crocker claimed that he was more than fit for the task because he knew how to manage men. He claimed that during the time he spent mining he had learned what it was to be a worker and thus would be able to more effectively control and prompt a good work ethic. In time however, Crocker soon realize that motivating men to work on the railroads would be a harder task than he anticipated.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ PBS, "Charles Crocker," Pbs.org, Construction Boss, accessed September 27, 2015, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/general-article/tcrr-ccrocker/>. Other sources to supplement this?

In the early stages of construction, Crocker was able to find plenty of workers to fill his construction teams. These workers ranged from native-born Americans to immigrants mostly coming from Ireland. As workers began to realize the intense work load that was required of them, many began to quit or went on strike until they received an increase in pay. In 1865, Crocker and the Central Pacific Railroad had enough work for 4,000 laborers. Despite this, there were only 800 laborers signed on at any given time and delays were common. These delays were not only because of Crocker's lack of a consistent labor force but also because of the difficult ways in which supplies had to be delivered. During the 1860s, the only ways by which Crocker could get supplies for his railroad was to ship them around the Cape of South America or acquire them from the east. These ridiculously long supply lines often increased delays and caused workers to perform work to a lesser quality. For instance, since supplies were in low abundance Crocker had his workers only spike every seven of ten rails in order to speed up the rate of construction. It was in these difficult times that Crocker began looking for a new source of labor to hopefully cut down on the severe delays that the Central Pacific railroad was experiencing. Crocker found his solution in the form of Chinese laborers. Despite finding his solution, Crocker still had a hard time implementing it. Just like many of the other cultural groups such as the Irish, Chinese immigrants were subjected to nativist sentiments. Chinese workers were considered unreliable due to their different cultural beliefs while Irish immigrants were considered drunks who only spent their income on liquor. Despite arguments from fellow board members, Crocker was able to convince the board to give Chinese labor a try.⁶⁹

⁶⁹ PBS, "Workers of the Central Pacific Railroad," Pbs.org, Labor Shortage & Impressive Workers, accessed September 27, 2015, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/general-article/tcrr-cpr/>. Other sources? Best to avoid relying only on PBS documentary

Within a short period of time Crocker got his chance. A group of Irish workers began to protest about their wages and refused to work. Believing that fear of competition would cause the Irish workers to return to their jobs; Crocker authorized his native born Irish foreman James Strobridge to hire Chinese laborers to replace the dissenting Irishmen. Initially, Strobridge was strongly against the hiring of any Chinese workers. While in a meeting with Crocker, Strobridge stated that if he hired Chinese workers the rest of his white workers would leave. In addition, Strobridge stated that the Chinese were not physically strong enough for the work because they only averaged about 120 pounds in weight and four feet ten inches in height.⁷⁰ Ultimately convinced, Strobridge agreed to hire fifty Chinese workers from the surrounding area. Almost immediately, the dissenting Irish workers returned to work upon hearing the news that Chinese laborers were being brought in to replace them. Irish immigrants acted this way because, just as they had done along the east coast, they did not want to lose their monopoly on cheap labor in California. Unfortunately for Irish immigrants however it was too late.

As Crocker and Strobridge continued to watch their new hires, they were extremely impressed by the work ethic of Chinese laborers. Regardless of where they placed them, Chinese workers performed magnificently and continually outperformed their white counterparts. This event was captured by *Lippincott's Magazine* in 1868. The magazine reported that the Chinese toiled without ceasing and that this untiring persistence allowed him to accomplish more work than the Caucasian.⁷¹ Realizing their potential, Crocker began to recruit Chinese laborers from across California and even sent recruiters to China. Following this massive recruitment campaign, the number of Chinese laborers skyrocketed. In 1868, nearly 12,000 Chinese

⁷⁰ Quoted in John Hoyt Williams, *A Great and Shinning Road*, p.96.

⁷¹ "The Chinese in California," *Lippincott's Magazine*, March 1868, 36-40.

immigrants signed on to the Central Pacific Railroad to work as laborers; making up about 80% of the Central Pacific Railroad work force. Initially, Chinese workers were given a low wages at around \$28 dollars but as time passed they saw their wages grow to around \$31 dollars.⁷² As a result of this increase in labor, the Central Pacific Railroad quickly began overcoming delays and increased their construction performance dramatically.

The use of Chinese labor presented several benefits for the railroad. The main benefit of utilizing Chinese immigrants was the fact that they worked in well organized groups. These groups also known as *Huiguan* 會館 were family associations that often consisted of individuals from the same regions in China. Emerging as a result of a rise in anti-Chinese sentiment in the 1850s, *Huiguan* sought to provide economic social and legal support to all Chinese immigrants in their surrounding area. Specifically, *Huiguan* helped Chinese immigrants pay for their passage to the United States, provided legal consulting, and helped new comers find employment. As time passed, *Huiguan* became more powerful to the point where by the 1860s there were six main *Huiguan* that dominated Chinese society in the United States: the Sam Yup company, the Yeong Wo Company, the Kong Chow Company, the Nig Yung Company, the Hop Wo Company, and the Yan Wo Company. Together, these *Huiguan* were referred to as the Six Companies.

Besides the aid these organizations provided to Chinese immigrants, white nativist Americans and Irish laborers were more enraged by the relationship they had with white business owners. The *Huiguan* worked with factory and business owners by allowing them to hire

⁷² Stephen E. Ambrose, *Nothing Like It in the World: The Men Who Built the Transcontinental Railroad 1863-1869* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000), 152.

Chinese workers in large groups for cheap. Believing that the success of Chinese immigrants relied solely on the fostering of comradeship, *Huiguan* began pairing Chinese immigrants from the same regions and religious beliefs into these large groups. This policy of the *Huiguan* resulted in greater work ethic and organization among Chinese work crews. Although effective, these work crews were extremely hated by white nativist and Irish laborers because they were against one key aspect of the American Identity; individualism. To white nativists and emerging nativist Irish laborers, the American dream was about making one's fortune and livelihood through one's own hard work. Thus, this coming collectivist mentality on the part of Chinese workers only further alienated them from their white contemporaries. Besides this policy, *Huiguan* emphasized and actively supported Chinese immigrants working for low wages due to the belief that workers in general should be paid a lower wage. This greatly benefited business owners who were now able to get more of a work force for less money.⁷³ Within a short period of time, these policies caused Chinese labor to become the preferred method of labor throughout the state of California. This large scale organization of their Chinese counterpart angered white and Irish laborers.

During the construction of the railroad, these Chinese work gangs that consisted of approximately twelve to twenty men per team. Each of these teams was led by a white work boss who was normally of Irish descent. These work bosses oversaw every aspect of the Chinese work day and even were responsible for handing out wages to Chinese workers. Despite the skill and work ethic of Chinese laborers, they were still relegated to performing the unskilled labor intensive and dangerous jobs while white workers monopolized the skilled labor. As a result of

⁷³ Him Mark Lai, "Historical Development of the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association/ Huiguan System," *Chinese America: History and Perspectives*, 51st ser., 1, no. 3, 13-51, accessed November 7, 2015.

this, Chinese laborers were responsible for moving fallen trees, grading, and placing charges in rock that would be detonated. Regardless of having small unskilled tasks, Chinese immigrants worked hard and completed work assignments in record times. The initial gamble that Crocker had made on Chinese labor had worked off and the Central Pacific Railroad continued to hire Chinese workers in earnest.⁷⁴

This drastic increase in Chinese labor was not warmly welcomed by the other workers of the Central Pacific Railroad, specifically Irish immigrants. For Irish laborers, the presence of Chinese workers was a sign that the wealth they sought to gain from the construction of the railroad was being taken away. This became more and more clear as leaders within the Central Pacific Railroad began to support releasing all Irish labor for Chinese labor. In a letter to his friend Oliver, General Dodge, a chief engineer officer, states that “As soon as we can get Chinese labor instead of Irish, we can reduce the cost of labor by 50 percent.”⁷⁵ Comments like these enraged Irish immigrants. Once again they were being swept aside by a society who they desperately wanted to be a part of. And for the Irish, the loss of yet another chance at a new life was something that they were unwilling to accept. Turned away from the East Coast by nativists, the Irish soon realized that the Chinese were a threat and this problem could only be solved by mimicking the actions of their nativist aggressors on the East Coast.

So armed with the nativist beliefs that many of them had adopted in the East, Irish workers began the first stage of publicly attacking Chinese laborers; physical and verbal harassment. On the slopes of the Promontory Mount in 1869, Chinese and Irish work crews

⁷⁴ John Hoyt Williams, *A Great and Shining Road: The Epic Story of the Transcontinental Railroad* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1988), 97-100.

⁷⁵ As cited in Williams, *Shining Road*, 272.

worked within very close proximity to each other. Irish workers began yelling and tossing frozen pieces of earth at the Chinese workers. The Chinese ignored them and continued to work. This action only served to enrage the Irish workers. They went after the Chinese laborers with picks and began beating the Chinese. Unlike previous occasions, the Chinese workers fought back against the Irish. Angered by the Chinese resistance, the Irish workers tried to set off several charges near the Chinese without warning. As a result, several Chinese workers were severely injured.⁷⁶ Clashes such as these categorized the relationship between Irish and Chinese work crews. Irish crews, angered by the valued placed on Chinese labor by the Central Pacific sought to beat them and even kill them in order to remove them from their lives. Some of this was fueled by Crocker's perceived favoritism of the Chinese. For instance, as the Central Pacific work teams made their way towards the summits of the Sierra Nevada Mountains Irish masons began requesting more money due to the intensity of their work. Crocker's response was quick. He immediately began training Chinese workers in masonry and sent them to work in the Irish workers stead. After continual attacks against his Chinese workers, Crocker gave his Irish workers an ultimatum. He stated that they could either work with the Chinese or be replaced by another Chinese crew. Although this stopped most attacks, Crocker's decision only further intensified the hatred Irish immigrants had toward their Chinese counterparts. Following Crocker's decision to support his Chinese workers, Irish workers continually to believe that the Central Pacific Railroad was punishing them for not working as long or for as little pay as the Chinese.

⁷⁶ As cited in Wesley S. Griswold, *A Work of Giants; Building the First Transcontinental Railroad*, First ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1962), 303.

Irish workers continued to build hatred toward their Chinese neighbors who they believed were stealing their last chances at a new life.⁷⁷ After being told to stop physically attacking Chinese workers, Irish immigrants began to use verbal propaganda to attack their Chinese contemporaries. One such way that they did this was through songs. Published in 1969 in the *Workingman's Advocate* and reworked in 1877, the song "John Chinamen" discusses the threat that Chinese proletarian labor posed against white families. The song states:

Let the mechanic pack his traps, and ready make to flit; He cannot live on rats and mice, and so he needs must quit, then, while he can with babes and wife, let him in peace retire, lest in the shadowed future near his children curse their sire. At full cost of bloody war, we've garnered in a race, one set of men of late we've freed, another takes his place. Come Friends, we'll have to leave this land to nobles and to slaves for, if John Chinamen comes in, For us—there's only graves.⁷⁸

This is important because it illustrates two very important points from the Irish perspective. First, the Irish immigrants were in fact white and equal to their native white contemporaries. The second is that nativism was increasing in California as a result of the economic competition Chinese laborers presented. In the song it states that there was one group of men that were freed, referring to African Americans, and one group that has come to take their place, referring to the Chinese. In addition, this song is important because it sees Irish immigrants making a clear distinction between individuals of white and nonwhite origin. The song states that the white family structure will be destroyed as a result of the slaves found within Californian society, specifically referring to African Americans and Chinese. Along this line, the song ends on a very ominous tone saying that if John Chinamen comes there will only be graves for the Irish. In addition, to creating songs, Irish immigrants began repurposing Irish nationalist

⁷⁷ Stephen E. Ambrose, *Nothing Like It In the World: The Men Who Built the Transcontinental Railroad 1863-1869* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001), 327. Short title after first citation

⁷⁸ "John Chinaman," in *The Blue and Gray Songster* (San Francisco: S. S. Green, 1877), 16-17.

tunes as anti-Chinese propaganda. An example of this was the Irish song “Twelve Hundred More”. Linking Irish nationalism to the construction of an exclusive white American nationalism, “Twelve Hundred More” asserts that the arrival of Chinese will put honest white men out of work. Besides providing popular ways to encourage anti-Chinese sentiments, these songs are important because they show Irish immigrants at the front of anti-Chinese activities. These songs could be sung by any individual and despite containing nativist rhetoric could be disguised as just another popular song to sing. Through activities such as these, Irish immigrants were able to spread anti-Chinese rhetoric throughout California. In the 1870s these propaganda songs would become essential tools for Irish political movements like the Workingman’s Party of California.⁷⁹

After the end of construction of the Central Pacific Railroad on April 20th, 1869, white laborers, especially Irish workers, began to return to their homes across California bringing their anti-Chinese sentiments as well as their east coast nativist beliefs with them. In an effort to stop the spread of Chinese immigrants into other economic sectors, Irish immigrants began forming groups, similar to that of the Know-Nothings from the East Coast, that demanded the expulsion of Chinese immigrants from California.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Robert G. Lee, *Orientalism: Asian Americans in Popular Culture* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999), 64-71.

⁸⁰ PBS, "Workers of the Central Pacific Railroad," Pbs.org, Labor Shortage & Impressive Workers, accessed September 27, 2015, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/general-article/tcrr-cpr/>.

Chapter Three: The Irish Party

Before Irish immigrants began forming anti-Chinese political parties, they experienced several economic hardships that pushed them closer towards nativist rhetoric. Beginning in 1869, the United States was continually plagued by economic setbacks. One of the most important setbacks was known as the Black Friday Panic of 1869. This panic occurred when Jay Gould and James Fisk sought to corner the gold market on the New York Gold Exchange. Gould and Fisk sought to manipulate the gold market prices for their own benefit. Late into the summer of 1869, Gould and Fisk started purchasing incredibly large sums of gold causing prices to rise and stocks to plummet. As a result, the value of every American dollar shrunk by 30 to 40 percent. Additionally, when the gold hit the market the premium crashed causing the price of gold and US currency to plunge. This inflicted great harm to the United States economy and savings of the American people.⁸¹ And this was only the beginning; the populace of the United States continued to suffer economically as a result of the outbreak of equine influenza in 1872 and the

⁸¹ Kenneth D. Ackerman, *THE GOLD RING: Jim Fisk, Jay Gould, and Black Friday, 1869* (Falls Church, VA: Viral History Press, LLC, 2011), 50-60.

demonetization of silver in 1873. Yet it was the Panic of 1873 that truly pushed the people of the United States to their breaking point.

With worsening economic conditions during the Panic of 1873, United States citizens scrambled to secure their monetary possessions. Panicked citizens headed to the banks to withdraw their money. Frank Leslie's illustration in the *Illustrated Newspaper* on October 4th 1873 shows thousands of citizens engulfed in chaos trying to retrieve their life savings from the bank.



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This illustration perfectly captures the effects this period of economic depression had on United States citizens. Individuals were so concerned about their economic future that they were fighting with fellow citizens on the footsteps of their local bank. Individuals even resorted to

⁸² Frank Leslie, "The Panic - Run on the Fourth National Bank," *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* (New York), October 4, 1873.

begging because the economy had declined so rapidly that they had virtually no other way to feed their families. This economic crisis also had devastating consequences for the United States banking system. One of the major companies involved in the United States banking system at the time, Jay Cooke & Company, was forced to declare bankruptcy. The railroad industry also took a hard hit with 115 of the nation's railroads going bankrupt within the first year of the crisis. More importantly however, national unemployment drastically increased reaching as high as 25 percent at its peak in cities such as New York.⁸³

But economic hardship spread further than New York. California was hit especially hard by this period of economic crisis. The economic mobility after the gold rush in California was declining as a result of the national economy. Although a few enjoyed prosperity during this time, many suffered failure and disappointment in their attempts to carve a new life for themselves. This sense of failure was even more present in those who had participated in the building of the Transcontinental Railroad. Lured in by promises of wealth from railroad, workers felt disillusioned after these promises proved to be false.⁸⁴ This was especially true for the Irish. Following the completion of the railroad, California entered a period now referred to as the "Terrible Seventies". This period saw a rise in labor supply, competition for cheap goods and a national depression occurring in 1873, which caused a drastic cut in wages. Collectively, these elements caused high levels of unemployment throughout most of the 1870s. These economic

⁸³ John Soennichsen, *The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882* (Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2011), 45-50.

⁸⁴ Ellis Paxson Oberholtzer, *A History of the United States Since the Civil War* (New York: MacMillan Company, 1917), 520-530.

conditions and entrenched nativist views, coupled with a continual rise in the Chinese populace, enraged the Irish workingman.⁸⁵

Nowhere were the economic woes of the Panic of 1873 and the rise of Chinese immigration felt more than in San Francisco. From 1852 to 1870, census reports state that the number of Chinese immigrants in California increased from 25,000 to 49,277.⁸⁶ ⁸⁷ Of the 49,310 Chinese immigrants in California, most lived in San Francisco making up the second largest foreigner group behind the Irish. This rise in the Chinese population coupled with the harsh effects of the Panic of 1873 pushed more and more Irish immigrants to associate wage reduction and low employment with Chinese immigration. In San Francisco, these nativist views were widely held by the city's inhabitants. The city's population was almost 50 percent foreign-born. Of the white foreigners, 41 percent were Irish. Not only a large portion of the city's populace but the Irish were also a key part of the laborers within San Francisco, making up 25 percent of white labor. Due to San Francisco's high population of both Chinese and Irish immigrants, the city was at the forefront in the fight against Chinese labor competition.⁸⁸

⁸⁵ Working People of California (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1995), 287-290, accessed January 21, 2016.

⁸⁶ Anonymous, "The Chinese Question," *Evening Bulletin* (San Francisco), March 1, 1862, News/Opinions sec.

⁸⁷ Anonymous, "Population, By Race, Sex, and Nativity," [Www2.census.gov](http://www2.census.gov/prod2/decennial/documents/1880a_v1-13.pdf), 1880, Population, By Race and By States and Territories: 1880, 1870, 1860, accessed February 26, 2016, http://www2.census.gov/prod2/decennial/documents/1880a_v1-13.pdf.

⁸⁸ Bruce Baum and Duchess Harris, eds., *Racially Writing the Republic: Racists, Race Rebels, and Transformations of American Identity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009), 148-150.

Beginning in 1870, Irish laborers in two important San Francisco industries began organizing workers to take a stand against Chinese labor: the cigar and cobbler industries. Organizing themselves into national trade unions such as the Cigar Makers' International Union and the Knights of St. Crispin, workers demanded reform. In the spring of 1870, the Knights of Crispin initiated several campaigns that commanded an increase in wages and the elimination of Chinese labor from the industry. These demands culminated with the Knights and several other organizations coming together and calling for a mass meeting of workers that today is referred to as the first Anti-Chinese Convention of California. Before this meeting took place, white workers began marching through the streets of San Francisco, waving signs that read, "Our Women are degraded by Coolie Labor", "No Servile Labor shall Pollute our Land", and "The Coolie Labor System leaves us no Alternative- Starvation or Disgrace". The leader of this demonstration continued by saying the goal of this movement was to rid California of "Mongolians". In order to do this, the leaders of this demonstration devised a plan to set up a state anti-Chinese convention with the sole objective of "oppos[ing] the immigration of Chinese laborers and cultivate public opinion up to the abrogation of the treaty with China." Never before had so many organizations joined together in the name of nativists policies. However, the demonstration did not stop there. The day following this mass show of anti-Chinese sentiment, the demonstration leaders sent a message to the heads of the Chinese Six Companies that stated: "We do not consider it just to us, or safe to the Chinamen to continue coming to the United States, and request them (the Companies) to give such notice to the public authorities of the Chinese Empire."⁸⁹

⁸⁹ As seen in Sandmeyer, *The Anti-Chinese Movement in California*, 47.

The ability of organizations like the Knights of St. Crispin to organize around a set of common goals marked the beginning of Irish organized political groups against Chinese immigrants. Through the demands and actions of the Irish laborers one thing is consistently expressed, Irish laborers always referred to themselves as members of the United States. In addition, they argued that their demands were to protect the virtue of their country and the United States' women from the Coolie threat. This became the main goal of the Irish political movement: the desire to join the white ethnic group by using nativism and racism to bring down their Chinese counterparts.⁹⁰

Through the demonstration and the bold actions of its leaders, the state of California rallied behind the cause and held its first Anti-Chinese Convention in August of 1870. After assembling, the convention agreed on several resolutions that were to be adopted. Following the convention, attendees actively began encouraging that these resolutions on the Chinese issue be implemented throughout the state. The importance of this meeting was not lost on the Californian newspapers. Following the passing of these resolutions, the *Daily Evening Bulletin* in 1870 offered a summarization of them. The article states that the goal of the convention was to promote “the adoption of the eight hour [work] system, the active opposition to any coolie labor and all classes of people who employ it in any shape.” In addition, the article states that “the protection of the rights of labor, to be the first duty of the rulers of the Republic.” Furthermore, the article states that the convention called for the state to “[oppose] the immigration of Chinese, voluntary or otherwise” and more importantly “denounce the Chinese as heathens, who

⁹⁰ Elmer Clarence Sandmeyer, *The Anti-Chinese Movement in California*, Illini Books ed. (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1991), 47.

[worship] their idols beneath the cross of Christianity.”⁹¹ The convention’s strong demands illustrate the different methods by which Irish workers chose to criticize Chinese laborers and make themselves seem like part of white America. They call upon the notions of civic duty stating that the government has to take an anti-Chinese stance in order to protect its citizens. Furthermore, the Irish refer to the Chinese as heathens who will destroy the holiness of Christianity the bedrock of white America’s belief system. This is especially important because by stating Christianity rather than Catholicism, the Irish are attempting to bring native born whites and themselves under one unifying belief system and thus lessening the gap between them. By utilizing these different methods to criticize Chinese immigrants, the Irish are attempting to systematically scare native born whites into joining their anti-Chinese cause.

Following the first Anti-Chinese Convention in 1870, nativist sentiments were common place throughout the white labor force in California. In 1871, these anti-Chinese sentiments reached a tipping point with the first organized mob attack on individuals of Chinese descent. Occurring in Los Angeles on October 24, 1871, the mob began organizing itself following the death of a man by the name of Robert Thomas who was helping police stop a shoot out between two Chinese warring factions.⁹² After news reached them that Chinese immigrants had assaulted two police officers and killed a Robert Thomas, a mob formed on the corner of Commercial and

⁹¹ Anonymous, "The Anti-Chinese Convention," *Daily Evening Bulletin* (San Francisco), August 19, 1870, News/Opinion sec.

⁹² C. P. Dorland, "CHINESE MASSACRE AT LOS ANGELES IN 1871," *Annual Publication of the Historical Society of Southern California* 3, no. 2 (1894): 23, accessed February 26, 2016, JSTOR [JSTOR].

Main Streets determined to avenge their fallen white neighbor. Demanding justice, the mob entered the Chinese quarter of the city and began assaulting the inhabitants and burning their property. The mob began setting fire to houses, stealing Chinese property, and lynching Chinese. After the violence ceased, eighteen people lay dead, several buildings burned and a sizable amount of property had been looted. This horrific act of violence rocked the state and was condemned by the new Governor Newton Booth at his inaugural address. But this act of mass violence was only the beginning. Another act of mob attack occurred in the town of Chico, rivaling in violence that of its predecessor.

Unlike the mass violence that occurred in Los Angeles, the Chico event was widely reported by newspapers such as *The Chronicle*. In an article, *The Chronicle* quotes other newspapers that refer to the Chico butchery as embarrassing: “All the efforts of the people of the Pacific Coast to secure limitation of Chinese immigration must be impotent so long as American brutality and barbarism are suffered to display themselves in this hideous fashion.” This article shows that despite the wishes of the Irish, the Chinese issue was not viewed as a national issue. A majority of Americans viewed these acts of violence as another example of Irish brutality. These acts of horrific violence would not be the last of the 1870s and 1880s; however, the lack of national support showed the Irish that they needed to change their methods if they sought to be included in the same racial group as their white native-born counterparts and receive their support.⁹³

Aiming to gain national support, Irish immigrants became politically active and sought to join a political party that shared their anti-Chinese views. The two main parties in California in

⁹³ Sandmeyer, *The Anti-Chinese Movement in California*, 48-49.

the 1870s were the Democratic and Republican Parties. The Democratic Party of California was the older of the two and had been instrumental in gaining California's statehood, gaining huge support throughout the state in the 1850s. This support began to wane however as the Democratic Party developed split views of slavery. One part of the Democratic Party believed slavery was morally wrong while the other, known as the Chivalry faction, believed slavery, and the subjugation of inferior races, was morally right. The disagreements on slavery weakened the Democratic Party, leaving room for the new party to form: The Republican Party. The Republicans supported free men and free soil within the state of California, policies favored by northern businessmen and abolitionists. However, despite the rise of the Republican Party and its own party's divisions, the Democratic Party still managed to remain the primary party of California. Following the end of the Civil War, the Democratic Party rapidly declined as a result of coming out on the wrong side of slavery and internal fighting. As a result of its decline the Republican Party received an influx of support in California. Afraid of losing their support base, the Democratic Party became staunchly anti-Chinese in the 1870s.⁹⁴

Agreeing with the Democratic Party's views on Chinese immigration, the Irish began supporting it as their first political party. Seeing the potential benefits in the supporting white and Irish laborers, the Democratic Party gave its support to the anti-Chinese movement. At the Democratic Convention in 1873, the party issued a statement stating,

"We regard the presence of the Chinese in our midst as an unmixed evil, ruinous alike to the people and the state, while the prospect of an increase of their numbers is appalling to the hearts of all; and we demand that the incoming legislature, through its own enactments and its urgent appeals to congress, take steps not merely to prevent the further influx of the Mongolian horde upon us, but to secure the speedy exodus of those already here; and to this end we urge

⁹⁴ R. Hal Williams, *The Democratic Party and California Politics, 1880-1896* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1973), 20-22.

that measures be at once instituted to decrease the subsidy to the Pacific Mail Steamship Company, and to abrogate the so-called Burlingame treaty.”

This statement caused the Democratic Party to give its full support to the anti-Chinese movement. By doing so, they received support from Irish workers and white workers alike. In addition, by supporting the anti-Chinese movement they united Irish and native white workers in one specific cause.⁹⁵ By uniting over the Chinese issue, workers regardless of their religious or ethnic background, white or Irish, began to join together against a common foe. Through their common hatred for the Chinese, Irish and native born white workers began mending their relationship.

During the middle of the 1870s, the anti-Chinese movement became organized with mobs, propaganda, labor groups, and political parties supporting it. One way in which the anti-Chinese party sought to eliminate its adversary was to pass nativist laws. The most radical of these laws was the Lodging House Ordinance or “Cubic Air” Ordinance. Enacted in 1870, this ordinance stated that there had to be 500 cubic feet of air in a room for each occupant. If one was found in violation of this law, a fine of 10 to 500 dollars could be charged or an individual could spend up between 5 to 90 days in jail. This law illustrates the Legislature’s attempt to drive Chinese out of cities and eventually out of California. Due to the nature of the ordinance, it was not consistently enforced. Whites were not subject to the law while Chinese would be jailed. As a result of the high cost of rent, Chinese immigrants had no choice but to crowd into small rooms. Thus by stating there was an air capacity for members within a house or apartment, the Californian State Legislature was attempting to remove its unwanted Chinese population. This law resulted in numerous Chinese immigrants being jailed from 1870 to the early 1880s. Due to

⁹⁵ Sandmeyer, *The Anti-Chinese Movement in California*, 49.

overcrowding in the jail system, law enforcement had to take periodical breaks from enforcing this law. Despite this, the anti-Chinese movement continued to utilize this law to prove that the Chinese lived in dirty and unclean environments where they squeezed as many individuals as they could into small houses. In order to illustrate the uncleanly nature of the Chinese and to support the “Cubic Air” Ordinance, city health officers were continually sent into Chinatowns. In one specific health inspection the officers referred to the Chinese as a “moral leper” whose “habits and manner of life are of such character as to breed and engender disease wherever they reside.” Furthermore, the health inspector states,

Vice in all its hideousness is on every hand. Apartments that would be deemed small for the accommodation of a single American, are occupied by six, eight, or ten Mongolians, with seeming indifference to all comforts. Nothing short of ocular demonstration can convey an idea, of Chinese poverty and depravity.⁹⁶

This description of a Chinese neighborhood illustrates the desire of the anti-Chinese movement to spread discontent amongst all Americans towards their Chinese contemporaries. In this report the health inspector not only refers to Chinese immigrants as a moral leper but states that they cause disease to develop all around them. By publishing this report and by the Democratic Party supporting it, the anti-Chinese movement sought to make Chinese immigrants into social outcasts within Californian society. They wanted Americans to view Chinese immigrants as dirty, and disease ridden individuals who only took up space in California. With the support of the Democratic Party, especially its large amount of Irish members, the anti-Chinese movement continued to publish more articles and reports that were aimed at turning public opinion against Chinese immigrants. Despite joining the anti-Chinese movement, the Democratic Party did not prove to be the party that Irish immigrants wanted to push their anti-

⁹⁶ San Francisco Board of Supervisors San Francisco Municipal Reports, 1872–73. San Francisco, CA: Spaulding & Barto Printers; 1873

Chinese agenda and eventually become a member of America's white elite. The party had continued to decline in popular support and was failing to aid the Irish in their ultimate goal of joining the white ethnic group of the United States. Faced with this realization, Irish nativists decided to form their own political party that truly had their best interests at heart.⁹⁷

In the wake of economic woes and competition for labor, Irish immigrants realized it was time to form their own political party rather than support the Democratic Party. As a result of this, the first Irish-led political party was the Workingmen's Party of California.⁹⁸ Formed in 1877 in response to a nation-wide railroad strike, the Workingmen's Party of California advocated fair wages and an end be brought to the Chinese monopoly on cheap labor. The man responsible for this party's emergence and rapid popular was a man named Denis Kearney. Born in Ireland in 1847, Kearney and his family moved to San Francisco in 1868. Almost immediately upon arriving in California, Kearney became involved in the labor movement and acquired almost immediate fame.⁹⁹ Known for his violent and colorful speeches, Kearney attracted massive crowds of people and began amassing numerous followers. Under Kearney's leadership, the Workingmen's Party of California sought to prevent corrupt businesses from continuing to perpetrate the economic hardships of the period. According to the Workingmen's Party, the main reason that so many white Americans were suffering was a result of the Chinese. Kearny argued that Chinese immigrants had a firm control on laborer intensive jobs because they were willing to work for next to nothing while other workers needed a decent wage. The intensity of

⁹⁷ Sandmeyer, *The Anti-Chinese Movement in California*, 50-51.

⁹⁸ R. Hal Williams, *The Democratic Party and California Politics, 1880-1896* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1973), 16-18.

⁹⁹ Andrew Gyory, *Closing the Gate: Race, Politics, and the Chinese Exclusion Act* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 110.

Kearney's hatred for the Chinese is evident through his speeches.¹⁰⁰ In an 1878 speech entitled "Our Misery and Despair," Kearney attacks wealthy business owners, the presence of Chinese individuals in society and the continuation of Chinese immigration. In this speech Kearney argues that "Our moneyed men have ruled us for the past thirty years. Under the flag of the slaveholder they hoped to destroy our liberty. Failing in that, they have rallied under the banner of the millionaire, the banker and the land monopolist, the railroad king and the false politician, to affect their purpose." Furthermore, he argues that "We have permitted them to become immensely rich against all sound republican policy, and they have turned upon us to sting us to death. They have seized upon the government by bribery and corruption. They have made speculation and public robbery a science. They have loaded the nation, the state, the county, and the city with debt. They have stolen the public lands. They have grasped all to themselves, and by their unprincipled greed brought a crisis of unparalleled distress on forty millions of people, who have natural resources to feed, clothe and shelter the whole human race." According to Kearney, the presence of the extremely wealthy was extremely profound, especially in the city of San Francisco. In San Francisco, the starving poor were struggling to get by while the wealthy lived in palaces across the city. Continually faced with poverty at every turn, numerous laborers began supporting Kearney's beliefs. Just like Kearney, laborers, both Irish and white, had become tired with the drastic wealth gap that had emerged between the extremely wealthy and the extremely poor was horrific. For many of the laborers of California, Kearney and his Workingmen's Party had finally begun talking about the aspects of society that were crushing the lives of average working men.

¹⁰⁰ Kevin Starr, *Endangered Dreams: The Great Depression in California* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 9-16.

Despite the transgressions of the wealth millionaires that existed in Californian society, the worst aspect of this elite group to Kearny was the fact that they imported Chinese labor. Referring to his Chinese counterparts as cheap working slaves, Kearney argues that Chinese immigrants were the root cause of every harmful event that plagued the American people. For Kearney, the Chinese further degraded white labor because they were utterly controlled by companies and were used to replace hard working Californians. This speech is important not only to illustrate the extreme nativism that Irish immigrants had incorporated into their rhetoric but because it shows Irish immigrants actively trying to portray themselves as a member of “White California.” This is evident in Kearney’s attempt to sympathize with Americans as a whole and by stating that Chinese were degrading white labor. Kearney is intentional in his choice of words in this speech. By using “white labor” rather than just labor, Kearney is actively attempting to bridge the gap that was present between white nativists and Irish immigrants.¹⁰¹

In a further effort to make Irish immigrants members of the United States’ white racial group, Kearney continued in his 1878 speech to illustrate the horrible societal affects Chinese individuals. Besides presenting a clear economic threat, Kearney explains how Chinese immigrants were destroying the American way of life. Kearney states that their presence causes fathers to not be able to feed their families or provide work for their sons. In addition, Kearney argues that the basic institution of the family is under attack when he states “The father of a family is met by them at every turn. Would he get work for himself? Ah! A stout Chinaman does it cheaper. Will he get a place for his oldest boy? He cannot. His girl? Why, the Chinaman is in her place too! Every door is closed. He can only go to crime or suicide, his wife and daughter to

¹⁰¹ Denis Kearney, “Our Misery and Despair” (Sandlots, San Francisco, 1878), accessed January 21, 2016, <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5046/>.

prostitution, and his boys to hoodlumism and the penitentiary.” After stating the harmful effects of the Chinese immigrant, Kearney once again clarifies that Irish immigrants are not the cause of California’s problems and are in fact American just like white nativists. He states, “do not believe those who call us savages, rioters, incendiaries, and outlaws. We seek to ends calmly, rationally, at the ballot box”. This statement illustrates how Kearney is attempting to throw off the stereotypes that were commonly held towards Irish immigrants. In his statement, Kearney portrays Irish immigrants as peaceful intellectuals who only seek to right the wrongs of the corrupt society around them and make America great again. To end his speech, Kearney makes a final attempt to eliminate the gap that separates white nativists from Irish immigrants by saying that together the American people must choose whether the United States will be American or Chinese and that they must be prepared to fight for it. Through this speech, Kearney and his Irish supporters not only sought to promote anti-Chinese sentiment but also to improve the position of the Irish. This speech illustrates not only the goal of Irish immigrants but of Irish nativist political movements: to be accepted by their white nativist neighbors as an equal member of the white community.¹⁰²

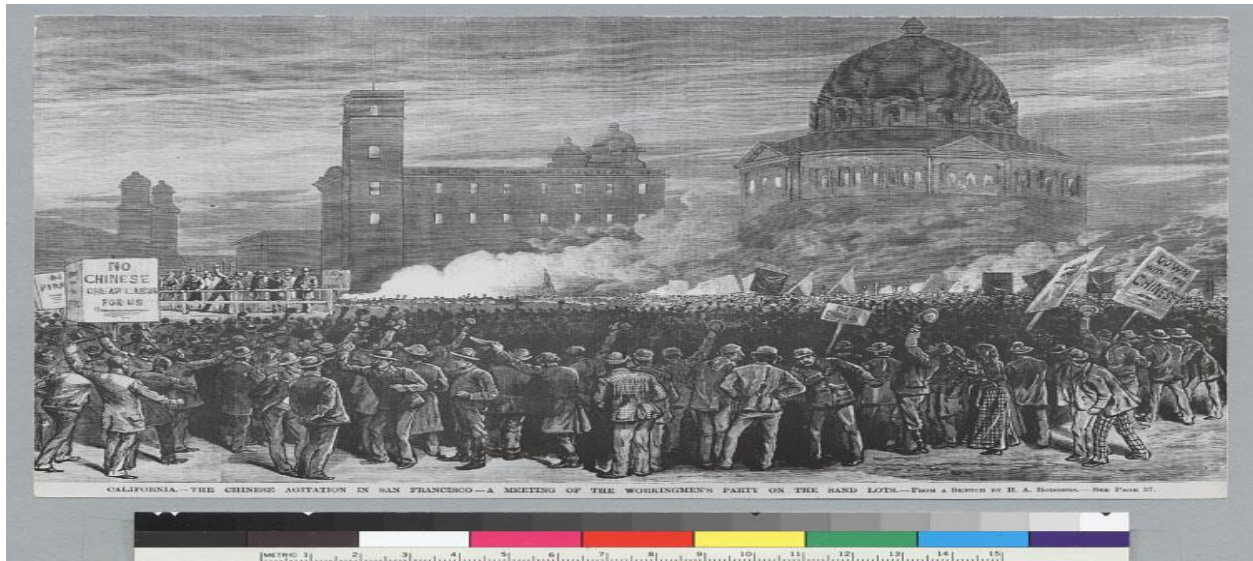
Determined to join white California, Denis Kearney and his Workingmen’s Party of California sought to influence public opinion in support of their views. By doing this, Kearney sought to make the Chinese issue not just an Irish one but an American issue causing class and ethnic barriers to break down between Irish and white Americans. In order to accomplish this, the Workingmen’s Party of California held open meetings in a vacant lot outside San Francisco’s City Hall which came to be known as the “Sand Lot.” At the first meeting of the Sand Lot,

¹⁰² Denis Kearney, ""Our Misery and Despair"" (Sandlots, San Francisco, 1878), accessed January 21, 2016, <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5046/>.

members of the Workingmen's Party and bystanders began to create a list of their complaints about their economic and social situation. Containing numerous demands, this list cited several aspects of California's economy that they demanded be fixed. These demands included members of the Workingmen's Party to support striking railroad workers, an end to all government economic support for railroads and military intervention during strikes, an eight hour work day, and a confiscatory tax on the wealth.

As the meeting progressed, anti-Chinese sentiment began to spread through the crowd. This nativist sentiment hit a fever pitch when individuals attending the meeting took up arms and began attacking Chinese immigrants as well as Chinese-run businesses. Now known as the San Francisco Riot of 1877, members of the Workingmen's Party as well as bystanders looted, burned, and destroyed Chinese places of business and took the lives of several Chinese immigrants. Lasting for approximately three days, the rioters moved from attacking Chinese run businesses, such as laundry mats, and attacked the Pacific Mail Steamship Company which helped provide transport for Chinese immigrants to get to the United States.¹⁰³ This riot is key to the Irish moving closer to being considered white in the eyes of California's public because it illustrates how an Irish movement was able to influence the general public into committing attacks of extreme violence. In an effort to illustrate the massive nativist sentiment that were generated as a result of these Sand Lot meetings, artist H. A. Rodgers drew an illustration entitled "California—The Chinese Agitation in San Francisco—A Meeting of the Workingmen's Party on the Sand Lots".

¹⁰³ Jerome A. Hart, *In Our Second Century: From an Editor's Note-book* (San Francisco: Pioneer Press, 1931), 52-63, accessed January 21, 2016, <http://www.sfmuseum.org/hist2/kearneyism.html>.



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This illustration depicts massive numbers of people at a Workingmen's Party rally in San Francisco. There are individuals holding "No Chinese Cheap Labor For Us" signs, as well as men holding banners. Most importantly though, this image depicts the power and popularity that the Workingmen's policies had achieved in such little time. In a time of great economic despair the people of California began to turn to the Workingmen's Party and to the Irishmen who led it.

Following this immense display of support, the Workingmen's Party began winning legislative elections throughout the state. In the beginning of 1878, the party won legislative elections in Alameda and Santa Clara counties. In March of that same year, members of the Workingmen's Party of California won elections for mayor in Oakland and Sacramento. In addition, the party had fifteen thousand members in that same year in San Francisco; one of California's most important cities. Within the following months, Kearney and his party had

¹⁰⁴ H. A. Rodgers, "'California—The Chinese Agitation in San Francisco—A Meeting of the Workingmen's Party on the Sand Lots''," digital image, <http://calisphere.cdlib.org/>, 2011, accessed January 21, 2016, <http://content.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/hb8n39n9d0/>.

established branches in 40 of the state's 52 counties, and had won several elections at municipal levels. The Workingmen's Party continually saw a rise in support due to its ability to bring members of different ethnic and class groups together. For the members of the Workingmen's Party there was no difference between an Irish worker and a native born white worker; they were both just men attempting to make a living. This belief in unity between all men regardless of class and ethnicity can be seen through the Workingmen's Party's Manifesto or central document. Written by Kearney and his fellow officers on October 16th in 1877, this document outlined the core principles of the party and all those who joined its ranks. The document states:

"We call upon our fellow workingmen to show hands, to cast their ballots aright, and to elect the men of their choice... The American citizen has a right to express himself as he pleases, as he thinks, and to arm himself as he will; and when organized and strong enough, who shall make him afraid? There is none."¹⁰⁵

This document is important because it shows how committed the Workingmen's Party was to creating solidarity among all workingmen in California. It did not matter to Kearney what the ethnic background. For Kearney, the important aspects of a worker were that he was white and a true American. Utilizing this logic, Kearney continually pushed Irish immigrants deeper into the white ethnic group by creating solidarity with them and their white counterparts. By bonding over their commonalities rather than their differences and focusing on the great uniting factor between them; they were all American.

¹⁰⁵ As seen in Cross, *Labor Movement in California*, 99.

By 1878, the Workingmen's Party became a powerful and popular political party in California that appeared to many to be permanently situated in California's politics.¹⁰⁶ Of the many reasons that the party continued to gain popularity, the most important reason was that its politics were founded on nativist beliefs and anti-Chinese rhetoric. The Workingmen's Party's most renowned policy was its opposition to the Burlingame-Seward Treaty of 1868. Formed as a means to expand on the preexisting treaty of Tianjin of 1858, this treaty sought to ease immigration restrictions for Chinese immigrants so that more would come and work in the United States. This treaty was popular among California's wealthy business owners because it encouraged a steady wave of cheap Chinese labor.¹⁰⁷ By the 1870s however, this treaty became extremely unpopular due to a drastic rise in anti-Chinese sentiments. For Kearney, this treaty represented the way that all Chinese immigrants were being allowed into California and it was his mission to eliminate the influx of Chinese immigration. Deciding to take his opinions to the highest authority, Kearney wrote a letter to President Hayes discussing the consequences the treaty would have on Chinese immigration. Whether done intentionally or unintentionally, Kearney's letter was eventually published in a local newspaper entitled the *Evening Bulletin*. In his letter, Kearney states that Chinese workers should not even be considered immigrants for "they are imported here by these companies held in subjection, and [then] return to china with their money." Furthermore, Kearney states that the Chinese are also ruining the laws of the United States by "[buying] immunity from crime" and "causing the suppression of free speech." Kearney ends his letter to the president by saying; "send the Chinamen away from us" so that the

¹⁰⁶ R. Hal Williams, *The Democratic Party and California Politics, 1880-1896* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1973), 16.

¹⁰⁷ Office of the Historian, "Burlingame-Seward Treaty of 1868," History.state.gov, accessed January 21, 2016, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1866-1898/burlingame-seward-treaty>.

American people will be saved.¹⁰⁸ This drastic condemnation of the Burlingame-Seward Treaty and its perceived consequences illustrates the strong stance of Kearney and the Workingmen's Party toward Chinese immigration. In addition, however, this letter illustrates Kearney's fight against corrupt business actions that he believed were being conducted daily by California's wealthy business owners. Together, these stances by Kearney and his party continued to build support for him within California and in the United States. For many, Kearney was speaking for all workers who struggled to meet ends means and by challenging the President of the United States directly he had achieved an almost hero status. By conducting acts such as these, Kearney continued to break down gaps between Irish laborers and their counterparts as individuals became more concerned with removing the true threat to their success; the Chinese and corrupt business owners. By taking a hard stance on Chinese immigration and business corruption, the Workingmen's Party of California replaced the Democratic Party and became the sole challenger to the Republican Party.

Kearney's numerous anti big business speeches won him a huge amount of support from the lower classes but had made him a criminal to Californian's wealthy and powerful elite. One such wealthy individual was Charles Crocker. Having acquired large quantities of wealth during his time as supervisor of the Central Pacific Railroad, Crocker established himself as a man of great power and authority in San Francisco. Crocker decided to put his influence to use. For Crocker, anything could be his as long as he had enough money to purchase it. One example of this was how Crocker set his eyes on designing an establishment that could house the wealthy

¹⁰⁸ Anonymous, "Kearney Meetings. Communistic Ideas Expressed," *Evening Bulletin* (San Francisco), November 26, 1877.

elites of San Francisco as well as Crocker's soon to be mansion. It was Crocker's desire for this new neighborhood to be located on one of the highest point in San Francisco: Nob Hill. There was one obstacle in Crocker's plan--Nicholas Yung. Owner of a majority of the northeast corner of the hill, Yung's property represented the last piece of land that Crocker needed in order to finish his vision. Unfortunately, however, Yung refused to sell his land despite several offers by Crocker to pay market value and at one point even double market value. As his mansion neared completion, Crocker became desperate and decided that if Yung would not be bought out then he would be forced out. Realizing that Yung and his family only wanted to stay on their land due to the excellent view it presented, Crocker ordered his workmen to construct a forty foot high fence around Yung's property that not only eliminated the view but limited the amount of sunlight and fresh air they received as well.¹⁰⁹ Within a short period of time, this forty foot tall fence became a tourist attraction for the people of San Francisco. In time, even a cable car was constructed so that individuals could see the sight with relative ease. After Crocker settled in his massive mansion, three of his wealthy friends did as well, building massive mansions of their own. Together these four individuals lived above the rest of San Francisco's citizens on Nob Hill surrounded by their wealth and apparent power. Despite many looking at Nob Hill in wonderment and wishing to one day join its ranks, Dennis Kearney despised everything Nob Hill represented. For Kearney, Nob Hill illustrated the corrupt nature of capitalism and of California's businessmen who had gained their wealth through coolie labor. It was these wealthy individuals that posed the greatest obstacle to the Workingmen's Party's goal of eliminating Chinese immigrants from the shores of California however. For these wealthy individuals,

¹⁰⁹ Edward Ball, *The Inventor and the Tycoon: A Gilded Age Murder and the Birth of Moving Pictures*(New York: Double Day, 2013), 152-153.

supporting the workingmen's would only be self-damaging. By refusing to utilize Chinese laborers, business owners would be purposely reducing their profits coming. In time however, these wealth elites would experience the consequences of going against Kearney and his followers.¹¹⁰

Seeking to gain support from every white in California, whether through common goals or intimidation, Kearney called for the Workingmen's Party to hold a mass rally on top of Nob Hill. On October 29th, 1877 his calls were answered. Workingmen's Party members from around the San Francisco area amassed on top of Nob Hill. Numbering in the thousands, workingmen lit great bonfires that illuminated Kearney who had constructed an improvised platform on which he could address his followers. Hoping to intimidate the millionaires around him, Kearney roared; "The Central Pacific railroad men are thieves, and will soon feel the power of the workingmen." He continues by saying;

When I have thoroughly organized my party, we will march through the city and compel the thieves to give up their plunder. I will lead you to City Hall, Clean out the police force, hang the Prosecuting Attorney, burn every book that has a particle of law in it, and then enact new laws for the workingmen. I will give the Central Pacific just three months to discharge their Chinamen, and if that is not done, Stanford and his crowd will have to take the consequences. I will give Crocker until November 29th to take down the fence around Yung's House, and if he doesn't do it, I will lead the workingmen up there and tear it down, and give Crocker the worst beating with the sticks that a man ever got.¹¹¹

The threats presented by Kearney were just the beginning. In December of 1877, Kearney resumed his threats following a brief sentence in jail for inciting riots. Kearney once again attacked the wealthy that benefited from Chinese labor by saying "When the Chinese question is

¹¹⁰ John Ott, *Manufacturing the Modern Patron in Victorian California* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2014), 165-167.

¹¹¹ As quoted in Ira Brown Cross, *A History of the Labor Movement in California* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1935), 100.

settled, we can discuss whether it would be better to hang, shoot, or cut the capitalists in pieces.”¹¹² By launching his campaign against the business owners who benefited from the use of Chinese labor, Kearney rallied the poor and out of work men who had suffered greatly during the Panic of 1873. These threats brought in all white workingmen under a common goal to eliminate the cheap labor that was being used to replace them. Even more important than this however is the fact that Kearney is able to bridge class and ethnic barriers through his remarks. Californian workingmen stopped worrying about whether the man next to him was Irish and became more concerned with dealing with what they perceived to be the bigger threats to their livelihoods and society. Through these actions, Kearney was bringing the Irish closer and closer into the fold of white America.¹¹³

In the months and years to follow the name Kearney struck fear in the hearts of wealthy business owners. In an article in the *Evening Bulletin*, the author states that Kearney and his mobs “[received] propositions of violence, incendiarism and wholesale hanging with apparent approval, [that] can bring a great city to a standstill in a few weeks.” The author of the article continually refers to Kearney and his mobs as inflicting a “reign of terror” over the city of San Francisco.¹¹⁴ These instances of intimidation by Kearney and the Workingmen’s Party illustrate the fear that they instilled in even the most powerful members of Californian society. Kearney

¹¹²As quoted in Cross, *Labor Movement in California*, 107.

¹¹³ Kevin Starr, *Endangered Dreams: The Great Depression in California* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 12-14.

¹¹⁴ Anonymous, "Wellock's Testimony and Kearney's Los Angeles Speech," *Evening Bulletin* (San Francisco), January 25, 1878.

made each wealthy elite and business owner who profited off Chinese labor fear that continuing to do so would result in the acts of violence that the Workingmen's Party had threatened. Even more threatening to wealthy business owners than Kearney's threats was the fact that he had the numbers to back up what he threatened. The Irish population of San Francisco in 1870 was approximately 13 percent of the city's total population and made up over 21 percent of the workforce. These numbers only continued to grow over the coming decade and by 1880 one-third of San Francisco's total population was of Irish descent.¹¹⁵ Through threats, violence, and mob mentality, Kearney instilled fear into the hearts of any individual who opposed him.¹¹⁶

Following his defiance of San Francisco's elites, an increase in support of Kearney and the Workingmen's Party of California seemingly began to emerge from the general public. Wanting to take advantage of this opportunity, Kearney began advocating in speeches for more violent ways to deal with Chinese immigrants. Kearney's desire to use violence to remove the Chinese is evident in a speech he gave following his release from prison. He states "we are going to use force now to carry out our plans. Let the vigilantes, if the dare, go outside the law. How many of you have muskets? Form yourselves into a military organization; and when the next steamer comes are you ready to march down to the wharf and stop the leprons Chinamen from landing? I will make all the necessary preparations, and buy up all the second-hand guns we can get. We will call upon the mayor and the General Government to help us in our hour of peril, and

¹¹⁵ Anonymous, "Irish San Francisco," Foundsf.org, accessed February 10, 2016, http://foundsf.org/index.php?title=IRISH_San_Francisco.

¹¹⁶ John Ott, *Manufacturing the Modern Patron in Victorian California* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2014), 37-38.

prevent the Pacific Mail Steamship Company, the Ocean pirates, from landing them.”¹¹⁷ Through this speech, Kearney advocates his followers to take a very violent attack against the Chinese. Rather than go to the ballots, Kearney is asking his followers to form military groups and attack new coming Chinese immigrants and the men who transported them. This new rhetoric on the part of Kearney illustrates the lengths to which the Workingmen’s Party was willing to go in order to ensure the removal of the Chinese.

In 1878 Denis Kearney sought to spread this new rhetoric of the Workingmen’s Party of California to the East Coast with the hope of gaining support for the anti-Chinese movement. In addition, Kearney was determined to illustrate that an Irish born immigrant had risen to the top of political life and was just as if not more formidable than his white counterparts. Kearney’s first stop on his East Coast tour was visiting other work unions in Boston. During one of his speeches in Boston Kearney continued his efforts to assimilate Irish immigrants into the ranks of white nativists. He states; “we don’t [come] here as English, Scotch, nor Dutch, nor are we just Catholic, Protestants, Atheists, or Infidels. Let there be no sects. We are workingmen”.¹¹⁸ This statement was met with cheers from the audience, calling out in support of his statement. It was at this point that Irish immigrants had finally begun to be integrated into the white ethnic group and achieve some class and ethnic solidarity. Through his speech, Kearney attempts to eliminate issues that white nativists had problems with Irish immigrants, such as Catholicism, and refocus them on issues they have in common like making a decent wage. In addition, Kearney supports

¹¹⁷ Workingman's Party, *The Labor Agitators, Or, The Battle for Bread: From Miscellaneous Selections: Anti-Chinese Movement & Chinese Exclusion* (San Francisco: Geo. W. Greene, 1879), 31.

¹¹⁸ Denis Kearney, *Speeches of Denis Kearney, Labor Champion* (New York: Jesse Haney, 1878), 13.

his desire for Irish immigrants to be considered white by telling his audience about the true threat to the American way of life; the Chinese. Concluding his statements by reminding the audience of the threat Chinese immigrants posed to America, Kearney states “The Chinese Government has sent an Embassy to this country to establish Consulates in California. We can take care of the Chinaman. It is designed to distribute Chinese throughout the United States. They have a population of 450,000,000 in China, and I can smell them afar off.” He continues by saying “Let me caution workingmen not to employ Chinese laundry men. They are filthy; they spit on clothes, and if they have any disease it is transmitted to men and women...” In an attempt to solidify the Chinese as dirty individuals, He states “Do you want leprosy here?” This was met with a resounding no from the audience which Kearney then followed with then do not employ them. Kearney ended by describing the lengths to which workingmen should go to remove the Chinese menace from their country. He states; “we will do it with our bullets if our ballots fail. We will drive these moon-eye lepers back by steamship and by sail”.¹¹⁹ These anti-Chinese statements and the support they received from not only the Workingmen’s Party but from East Coast white workers who were in attendance shows the power that Kearney and his Party had achieved in a very short period of time. In addition, these comments show just how effective the Irish run Workingmen’s Party was at refocusing nativist sentiments away from them and on to the Chinese.

Kearney’s speech in Boston was not the only time that he and the Workingmen’s Party of California attempted to assimilate Irish immigrants into the elite white ethnic group of the United

¹¹⁹ Kearney, *Labor Champion* (New York: Jesse Haney, 1878), 13.

States. Another example of this, can be seen through the party's manifesto. Released on October 16th, it states:

We have made no secret of our intentions. We make none. Before you and the world, we declare that the Chinamen must leave our shores. We declare that white men, women, and boys, and girls, cannot live as the people of the great republic should and compete with the single Chinese coolies in the labor market. We declare that we cannot hope to drive the Chinamen away by working cheaper than he does. None but an enemy would expect it of us; none but an idiot could hope for success; none but a degraded coward and slave would make the effort. To an American, death is preferable to life on a par with the Chinese.¹²⁰

This manifesto illustrates Irish immigrants' efforts to associate themselves with white Americans. Rather than saying the Workingmen's Party of California, the party issued their statement as if they are speaking for the entirety of the United States white population and are looking out for their best interests. By doing this, Irish immigrants are actively attempting to bring down ethnic barriers between them and their native-born white counterparts. In addition, associating their goals with those of the general white populace of the United States helped Kearney and his followers gain support in select cities around the United States. With growing support from other states around the nation, Kearney turned his eyes on a new goal; changing the Californian state constitution.

After returning from Boston, Kearney and the Workingmen's Party demanded that a new state constitution be formed. For the party, the only way by which the Chinese menace could be fully removed from the state was through legal means. Before the constitution could be reformed however, the Californian legislature ordered a special election for delegates who would be sent to the convention. The election for these delegates occurred in June with the Workingmen's Party, the Republicans, and the Democrats each holding their own tickets. Following the

¹²⁰ As quoted in Cross, *Labor Movement in California*, 98-99.

election, a total of 152 delegates were elected. Of these, 50 were elected from the Workingmen's Party, 85 from non-partisan nominees, 9 were Republicans, and 8 delegates were Democrats.¹²¹ This balance of power presented a unique opportunity for the Workingmen's Party to stamp their beliefs into this not document.

After being approved by voters, Californian representatives met at the 1879 California Constitutional Convention to discuss the reworking of their state's document. After tackling issues such as land ownership and water rights, the constitutional convention turned to the topic that they would spend the majority of their time discussing: the Chinese. In order to deal with this matter effectively, the convention formed a Committee on the Chinese which was tasked with drafting anti-Chinese provisions for the new constitution. Making up the largest voting bloc at the constitutional convention, (approximately one-third), the Workingmen's Party saw this as a perfect way to instill their values into California's new constitution.¹²² After a long discussion, the constitutional convention finally released its new constitution entitled *The Statutes of California*, which passed at the twenty-third session of the Legislature in 1880. In this document, the convention laid out its plan for the Chinese immigrants of California. The Statutes argues that as a result of the evils arising from the Chinese aliens who lived in the state their removal was necessary. Referring to them as vagrants, paupers, mendicants, criminals, and invalids afflicted with contagious or infectious diseases, the convention states that they sought to remove Chinese immigrants from the state. In order to accomplish this, the convention listed a series of

¹²¹ Noel Sargent, "The California Constitutional Convention of 1878-9," *California Law Review* 6, no. 1 (November 1917): 7, accessed January 21, 2016, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3474812?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents.

¹²² Noel Sargent, "The California Constitutional Convention of 1878-9," *California Law Review* 6, no. 1 (November 1917): 1-22, accessed January 21, 2016, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3474812?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents.

restrictions on Chinese immigrants living within the state. First, the convention declared that no corporation existing or formed afterward could employ directly or indirectly any Chinese. Second, the convention states that no Chinese shall be allowed to be employed by any state, county, municipal, or public work unless they are being punished for a crime. Finally, the convention declared that the presence of any alien that could not become a US citizen was viewed as a threat to the state and that the state would do all in its power to prevent their immigration. To conclude their section regarding Chinese immigrants, the convention states that the state legislature reserved the right to pass any laws that sought to further eliminate the Chinese from California.¹²³

This new state constitution is important for various reasons. This document illustrates how Kearney and the Workingmen's Party helped to make infused anti-Chinese sentiments a part of the state's constitution. While nativism was present long before the party's existence, no anti-Chinese movement had succeeded in changing the laws of the state to support their nativist sentiments. Within California, Kearney had finally achieved his goal of spreading anti-Chinese rhetoric and was on step closer to bringing Irish immigrants into white American society. In addition, Kearney managed to integrate Irish immigrants in with the rest of California's white population. Throughout the entire document, there is no mention of Irish immigrants and there is no specific section for them like their Chinese counterparts. Instead, there is just one section following the conventions section on Chinese immigrants. Entitled miscellaneous subjects, this section discusses laws pertaining to the rest of California's citizens besides the Chinese. By

¹²³Constitution of the State of California, Californian State Legislature, Twenty-third Session of the Legislature 1880, <http://archives.cdn.sos.ca.gov/collections/1879/archive/1879-constitution.pdf>

entering this group, Irish immigrants finally achieved what they had attempted to do on the east coast years earlier; they finally became part of the general public rather than an outside group.¹²⁴

Following the constitutional convention, Chinese immigrants were denied access to courts, the right to vote, state licenses, employment, and the right to purchase property. This document declared all Chinese a threat to the survival of the state. In addition, the document proclaimed that the state would actively take steps to stop any further immigration and in time eliminate all Chinese immigrants for California. This success made the Workingmen Party more powerful than ever. Kearney began placing supporters in positions of power. In 1879, Kearney decided to back Reverend Isaac Kallloch in exchange for the candidates support in issues the Workingmen's Party was advocating. Previously a staunch critic of Kearney and his anti-Chinese campaign, Kallloch changed his views following Kearney's offer to support his bid for mayor. After hearing that he would receive support from the Workingmen's Party, Kallloch began to support the anti-Chinese movement and actively condemned the presence of Chinese immigrants. Kearney's ability to change critics into supporters illustrates the power of the Workingmen's Party.¹²⁵

Despite this ability, there were still some who resisted Kearney and the Workingmen's Party. Charles De Young, an editor of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, used his column to condemn Kearney and Kallloch. After De Young utilized his newspaper to criticize Kallloch, Kallloch responded by making insulting remarks toward De Young's mother. Enraged by Kallloch's

¹²⁴Constitution of the State of California, Californian State Legislature, Twenty-third Session of the Legislature 1880, <http://archives.cdn.sos.ca.gov/collections/1879/archive/1879-constitution.pdf>

¹²⁵ Alexander Saxton, *The Indispensable Enemy: Labor and the Anti-Chinese Movement in California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 139.

comments, De Young shot the mayor nominee in the back while riding past him in a carriage. Shortly after attacking Kalloch, supporters of the Workingmen's Party found De Young but before they could take their revenge a police officer arrested him. After hearing the violence that De Young had inflicted on a Workingmen's Party candidate, workers began to flood the streets of San Francisco demanding vengeance. A crowd assembled at the Sand Lots outside City Hall where De Young was being held carrying rifles demanding his life as recompense. Across the nation, people watched as San Francisco stood on the brink of revolt. The *Boston Pilot* likened the scene to the events of the reign of terror during the French Revolution.¹²⁶ Similarly, the *Irish World and American Industrial Liberator* stated that "police massed themselves at the City Hall behind Gatling guns in terror."¹²⁷ Hearing of the events transpiring in San Francisco, Kearney returned to the city after having been touring in other parts of the state. He met the crowd and ordered them not to take up arms or to participate in any violent actions. In addition, Kearney asked the crowd to disperse quietly and be patient. Within in an hour the crowd had dispersed and the streets were once again calm. As a result of this act of violence, Kalloch gained sympathy and successfully won election as mayor of San Francisco. This marked one of the first times that a Workingmen's Party candidate was elected to a position of considerable power in California.

Kearney's ability to subdue an angry mob illustrates the drastic change in social status that Irish immigrants had undergone in the last few decades. Upon initially arriving to the Americas, the Irish were branded as "Others" but by 1879 an Irish immigrant had risen to the top levels of political power with the help of his Irish founded political party the Workingmen's

¹²⁶ *Boston Pilot* (Boston), 1879.

¹²⁷ *The Irish World and American Industrial Liberator*, August 1879.

Party of California. Even though Kearney just a few years early had called for military violence against Chinese immigrants and their supporters, He calmed down a mob that would have surely attacked City Hall if he all but gave the word. This restraint helped the Workingmen's Party in other elections to come as many began to see them as truly having the best wishes for California at heart. Besides their success with the election in regards to mayor, the Workingmen's Party managed to be elected to seventeen assembly-men, eleven senators, the chief justice, and five associate justices of the Supreme Court. This was yet another success for what seemed to be an unstoppable political party.¹²⁸

The success of Kearney and the Workingmen's Party of California caught the attention of the Greenbackers in the East. Also known as the Greenback Labor Party, the members of this party supported anti-monopoly ideology and sought to fix the nation's economy. Hoping to win the presidential election of 1880, the Greenbackers wished to consolidate their forces with the Workingmen's Party of California with the hope that this would win them California. For the Greenback Labor Party, the best way to consolidate these two movements was to get the Workingmen's Party of California's leader on board. In 1880, the Greenbackers reached out to Kearney and invited him to a high-level planning convention in Washington D.C. For Kearney, this offer was too good to be true. This offer presented him with a chance to complete his two major goals on a national level: preventing further Chinese immigration while also securing the status of Irish immigrants.

However, this alliance failed to work out. Upon arriving in Washington D.C. Kearney actively began calling himself a Greenback and stating that while the Chinese problem was a

¹²⁸ Saxton, *The Indispensable Enemy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 139-145.

major issue the most important was that of fixing the economy. While in the East, Kearney continued to follow a trend of separating himself from the views that had made him and his party successful. Believing he could help bringing support to the cause, the Greenbackers asked Kearney to speak at several cities across the East Coast. Over the course of his tour of the East Coast, Kearney did not mention the Chinese issue at his appearance in New York City nor in his two appearances in Chicago. By the end of his trip, the anti-Chinese rhetoric had been completely dropped by one of its most adamant supporters. After returning home from his visit East, many of Kearney's followers on a national level were left disillusioned. In the wake of Kearney abandoning his views on the trip, many nationally began to view Kearney as a convert to the Greenbackers. Kearney experienced further lack of support both nationally and at home when prosperity began to return to California in late 1879 and early 1880. In the eyes of the Workingmen's Party and Kearney however, they were successful in bringing the anti-Chinese movement to light on a national level. A member of their party had been recognized on the national stage and even offered a seat at the table of a national political party. Despite Kearney's failure to bring up the anti-Chinese movement as frequently as he did in California many still became aware of it simply as a result of his presence. Kearney had become the face of this movement and where ever he went individuals knew what had made him famous. The effectiveness of this popularity can be seen through the United States Congress's decision to support Chinese immigration restrictions.¹²⁹

Despite losing national support, Kearney was still very much a major political figure in California. When he returned home in 1880, Kearney called for more anti-Chinese legislation

¹²⁹ Gyory, *Closing the Gate* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 138-146.

and had Mayor Kallloch convince the San Francisco's Board of Health investigate health problems in the city's Chinatown. After conducting an investigation, the Board labeled San Francisco's Chinatown a nuisance and called for its immediate reduction. When the board failed to act on their declaration however crowds of people marched to local factories and demanded that any Chinese worker be dismissed to which many factories complied. Seeing the potential of the situation, Kearney began speaking at the Sand Lots. During his speeches condemning Chinese labor and celebration the actions of the crowd who went to the factories, fellow listeners began openly calling for the hanging of manufacturers. Kearney and the Workingmen's Party also began to call for the complete closing and removal of San Francisco's Chinatown.¹³⁰

These actions were met with widespread uproar from Chinese-American civil rights activists. Formed in response to the anti-Chinese movement and nativism spread by the Irish run Workingmen's Party, this movement sought to gain equality for Chinese individuals. One of the most famous Chinese activists was Wong Chin Foo. Born in Jimo, Shandong Province, China, Wong was one of the very first Chinese immigrants to become naturalized in 1873. Following his naturalization, Wong became dedicated to fighting for Chinese civil rights in the United States. One of the most prolific writers in the San Francisco press, Wong Chin Foo rigorously rejected the ideals of Kearney and his party. The tension between these two men escalated to the point where Wong Chin Foo challenge Kearney to a duel stating that he could have "his choice of chopsticks, Irish potatoes, or Krupp guns". In response, Kearney stated that Wong Chin Foo was an "almond-eyed leper." In 1883, Wong Chin Foo published *Why I am a Heathen*. In this

¹³⁰ Anonymous, "Chinatown Declared a Nuisance," [www.sfmuseum.org](http://www.sfmuseum.org/hist2/nuisance.html), accessed January 22, 2016, <http://www.sfmuseum.org/hist2/nuisance.html>.

monograph, Wong Chin Foo stated that when Kearney slipped into heaven he would “organize a heavenly crusade to have me and others immediately cast out and into another place.”¹³¹ This response showed just how dedicated the anti-Chinese movement and its main promoters the Irish had become in their quest to prove themselves as members of the white ethnic part of society. In this quest for recognition, the Irish, especially those like Kearney, had become so dedicated to eradicating the Chinese that they were willing to forcibly take over state government and resort to violence. By attempting to become white, the Irish had indeed taken on all of the qualities that unified those that persecuted them when they first arrived in the United States. The Irish had become white nativists. Despite Kearney’s position, by the end of 1880 the Workingmen’s Party of California lost its power and began to disappear. This occurred once the laws that they had put into place during the Californian Constitution of 1879 ruled unconstitutional by the courts and overturned. Regardless of this, The Workingmen’s Party did leave behind a reliable and strong labor movement in San Francisco that for many years after their demise would have a large influence on politics. More importantly however is the fact that together the Workingmen’s Party and Denis Kearney brought the anti-Chinese movement to the national stage and paved way for the now infamous Chinese Exclusion act of 1882.¹³²

After anti-Chinese sentiment and the views of Workingmen’s Party of California were brought to the nation’s attention there was no turning back. After the formation of the Workingmen’s Party, Congress attempted to pass legislation against Chinese immigrants in order to appease the anti-Chinese movement and its mass supporters that had originated in California.

¹³¹ Wong Chin Foo, *Why I Am a Heathen* (1887), accessed January 22, 2016, JSTOR [JSTOR].

¹³² Scott D. Seligman, *The First Chinese American: The Remarkable Life of Wong Chin Foo* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2013) 140-150 and XXiii.

In 1878, Congress passed legislation that prevented vessels entering the United States from carrying more than fifteen Chinese passengers at a time. President Rutherford B. Hayes, who believed Chinese labor crucial to the US economy, vetoed the bill. The anti-Chinese movement responded with outrage. In order to regain public support, President Hayes ordered James B. Angell to negotiate a new treaty with China. The Angell Treaty of 1880, sought to improve on the Burlingame-Seward Treaty that stated the United States would suspend immigration of any skilled or unskilled laborers from China. The treaty also stated that the United States would allow the immigration of “white collar” professionals and that the livelihoods of Chinese immigrants in the United States would be protected. More importantly than any of these new restrictions, is a sentence at the end of the proclamation in the treaty. Beginning with the third paragraph of the proclamation states:

Whereas the Government of the United States, because of the constantly increasing immigration of Chinese laborers to the territory of the United States, and the embarrassments consequent upon such immigration, now desires to negotiate a modification of the existing treaties which shall not be in direct contravention of their spirit

This is important because it points out the President’s desire to make this new treaty. It states that the reason a new treaty must be made is due to the embarrassments caused as a result of Chinese immigration. This illustrates just how popular anti-Chinese sentiment was at the time. In this formal treaty between the United States and the Qing Dynasty in China, the diplomats utilize the words embarrassment to describe the influx of Chinese immigrants to the US. This statement could also be referring to the fact that the people of the United States had been subjected to numerous embarrassments such as losing jobs and barely being able to scratch by a living. Either

way one thing is clear, anti-Chinese sentiment was so rampant by 1880 that the United States government had to take action.¹³³

Believing that he had done enough to satisfy the American people's need for laws against Chinese immigrants James B. Angell returned to the United States. But Angell was wrong; the American people were still not satisfied. In 1882, Congress would finally indulge the American people in their desire for an exclusionary act. Known as the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, the Act suspended all Chinese immigration for a ten year period at which time congress intended to pass the act again. In addition, the act states that if any Chinese immigrant that came to the United States after the act remained then they would be doing so unlawfully. Furthermore, Congress states that these individuals who remain illegally will be forced to board any boat heading from a foreign port. Despite making it illegal, congress also sought to discourage any American from attempting to bring in Chinese labor illegally. As a result, the act states that if any master of a vessel is caught bringing Chinese immigrants into the country they would be charged five hundred dollars for every Chinese worker they brought. To conclude this act, Congress states that no State court or the court of the United States shall be allowed to grant citizenship to Chinese individuals. The Irish achieved their goal of alienating another group to the point where they themselves were no longer considered a threat. Through their political movements in California, the Irish successfully spread disseminated anti-Chinese sentiments and nativism through every level of United States society. As a result, the Irish finally became part of "White America".¹³⁴

¹³³ Angell Treaty, 4 Proclamation-Article I (1880).

¹³⁴ Chinese Exclusion Act (Forty-Seventh Congress 1882).

Following the passing of the Chinese Exclusion Act, anti-Chinese sentiment only continued to flourish. Riots broke out, targeting Chinese citizens. One of the most infamous of these riots was the Rock Springs Riot. Occurring on September 2, 1885 in Rock Springs Wyoming, a riot broke out after white workers insisted that all Chinese workers in mines had no right to be working at their mining posts. Almost immediately armed conflict and fighting occurred between Chinese and white miners. By the time the riot had ended around 28 Chinese workers were killed and 75 Chinese homes burnt. As a result of this riot, a wave of violent anti-Chinese acts began to sweep through the Pacific Northwest. A year after the Rock Springs Riot, another riot emerged in Seattle. Here, white laborers were angered that Chinese workers had moved from their mining jobs and moved into construction work within the city. Angered that Chinese immigrants still occupied jobs belonging to Americans, white laborers in Seattle made their way into Chinese homes to forcibly remove Chinese workers. In order to stop the rioters, President Grover Cleveland had to send in federal troops which led to clashes between federal troops and rioters. In the aftermath of the riot, 200 Chinese individuals were removed from Seattle. Similar incidents continued to occur in many of the West Coast States seeing anti-Chinese attack Chinatowns and Chinese property.¹³⁵

Over the course of four decades, Irish immigrants went from being outsiders in the East Coast to leading political figures in California. To achieve this massive social movement, Irish immigrants utilized the tools of their oppressors: racism and nativism. They learned to adapt to their hostile environment by they themselves becoming the leading hostile force within it. By doing so Irish immigrants achieved what they came to the United States to accomplish in the first

¹³⁵ Daniel J. Tichenor, *Dividing Lines: The Politics of Immigration Control in America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), 107.

place; to become American. Through racism and extreme nativist rhetoric, the general populace of the United States began to accept Irish immigrants as members of the white ethnic group.

While certain prejudices remained and still do till this day, Irish immigrants managed to escape the racist and nativist sentiments that had kept them as inferior members of society. They escape their label as being inferiors not by fighting against their oppressors but by joining them. From the 1840s-1880s, Irish immigrants exposed the one true unifying factor that makes Americans regardless of where they are from Americans: racism.

Conclusion

The consequences of nativism were severe and swift. Faced with nativism upon their arrival, Irish immigrants wanted nothing more than to be accepted into white America. Although they tried different ways of accomplishing this goal, in the end the way they were able to achieve this was by embracing the tactics of the nativist who had been attacking them. They attempted to use these tactics on African Americans living in the East Coast but ultimately this proved to be a failure. It was not until the Irish began moving west where they found a place that they would solidify their place in white America: California. Although not immediate, Irish immigrants slowly began moving their way up in Californian society and when they became face to face

with Chinese immigrants they found the aliens that would serve as their ultimate tool for becoming white. In the late 1860s, the Irish first began attacking Chinese immigrants on a systematic scale. They produced songs that portrayed racist images of the appearance of Chinese immigrant as well as published article condemning their place in labor. Despite this, Irish immigrants still lacked organization which would prove to be the key in their mission to join the ranks of white America. In 1870s, this organization occurred when Denis Kearney and his Irish dominated Workingmen's Party of California emerged. From the 1870s through early 1880s, the Irish used this political movement to change stereotypes about themselves while diverting attention on to what they stated was the ultimate threat to the American way of life: the Chinese. Within a short period of time, this party became well respected nationally and became instrumental in spreading the anti-Chinese sentiments that would one day lead to the Chinese Exclusion Act. As a result, the Irish, through their work in California, became the main promoters and arbitrators of anti-Chinese sentiment. This once incredibly poor group of immigrants had become in a series of a few decades one of the staunchest group of nativists the United States has ever seen.

The way that these events transpired leads to several interesting questions: Is racism part of the American identity? Does the American way of life require American citizens to reject what we perceive to be alien in nature? In other words, in order to become American do immigrants need to adopt the nativist and racist ideals that today we consider to be part of our regrettable past? After conducting this study of Irish nativism, the sad answer to these questions is yes. As seen through the Irish, they were only able to become accepted as Americans after they had committed horrific acts of racism and violence. Some may argue that this no longer applies to American society as we have become far more tolerant and civilized. This assumption

however is simply not the case. The United States has a long history of nativism and alienating foreign groups. Like the Irish, many of these groups have had to adopt nativist terminology or beliefs in order to escape the hardships placed upon them by white American nativists. Only time will tell of this trend will come to an end in the United States but as seen in through recent historical events, racism and nativism are still very much part of the American identity.

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