

**Table 5.1** Immigration by Origin, Leading Sending Countries and Regions, 1871-1930

Decade	Italy	Austria-Hungary	Germany	Russia*	Britain	Canada	Scandinavia	Ireland	Asia	Mexico
1871-1880	55,759	72,969	718,182	39,284	548,043	383,640	243,016	436,871	124,160	5,162
1881-1890	307,309	353,719	1,452,970	213,282	807,357	393,304	656,494	655,482	69,942	1,913
1891-1900	651,893	592,707	505,152	505,290	271,538	3,311	371,512	388,416	74,862	971
1901-1910	2,045,877	2,145,266	341,498	1,597,306	525,950	179,226	505,324	339,065	323,543	49,642
1911-1920	1,109,524	896,342	143,945	921,201	341,408	742,185	203,452	146,181	247,236	219,004
1921-1930	455,315	63,548	412,202	61,742	339,570	924,515	198,210	211,234	112,059	459,287
Total										
1871-1930	4,625,677	4,124,551	3,573,949	3,338,105	2,833,866	2,626,181	2,178,008	2,177,249	951,802	735,979

Sources: See Appendix B, Tables 5, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 22, 23.

\* Soviet Union after 1917.



**Figure 6.4** An Ellis Island interrogator is flanked by an interpreter and a man aspiring to enter.



**Figure 6.5** Immigrants were subjected to a medical exam.

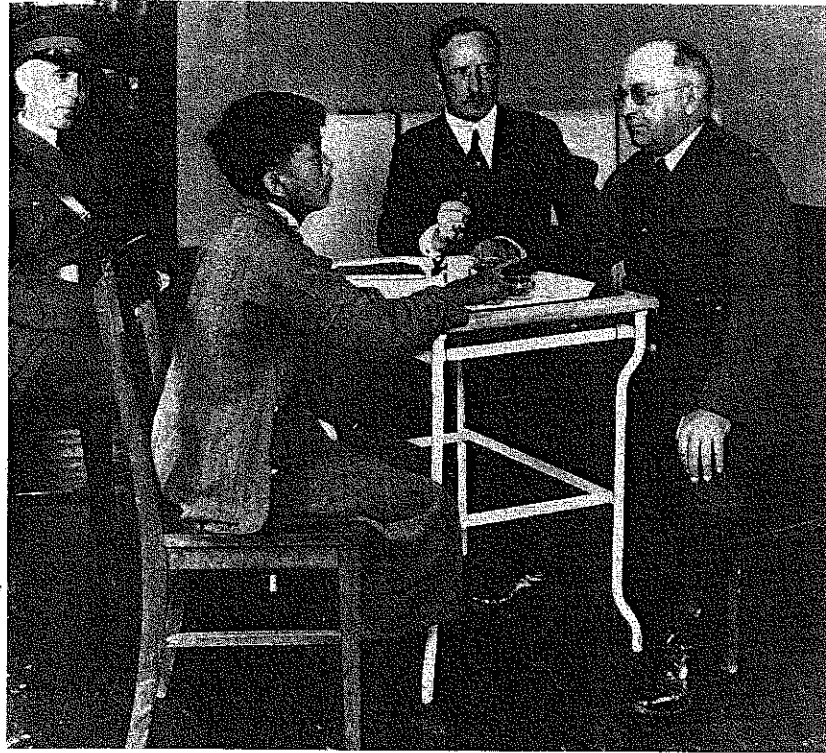


Figure 6.6 Chinese boy being interrogated at Angel Island.

much longer. The posture of the immigration service in the West was more severe. On the East Coast, in places like Ellis Island, immigration officials tried mainly to manage and document the flow of European immigrants and make sure that a few people who were sick or criminal were kept out. In the West, their task was racial. To be sure, White immigrants entered through San Francisco. But Angel Island existed specifically to intercept, interrogate, and send back Chinese immigrants. In time, Japanese and some other Asians were added to their number.<sup>25</sup>

Where European immigrants at Ellis Island might have to wait a couple of hours or even overnight before they were allowed to enter, Chinese immigrants at Angel Island had to wait weeks, months, or even years. Where 2 percent of the Europeans who applied for entry were sent back, Asians were sent back at more than ten times that rate. Z. B. Jackson, an Angel Island immigration inspector, recalled: "[O]ur job was to go over every minute detail of the history of an arriving child—where he lived, where he went to school—and compare what he said with what his father said." They were looking to flush out paper sons and daughters (Figure 6.6). While they were interrogating, the prisoners languished. Lee Puey You recalled that "Everyone was feeling low. We all suffered, emotionally. No one had any energy. We slept all day. So much mental anguish, you know, we cried more than anything else. It was hard. And time went by so slowly." Mock Ging Sing remembered that during his imprisonment, "Every night at ten they turned out the lights. There would be a guard posted to watch over us in case we ran away or somehow escaped from the



Figure 6.18 An Americanization class at the Holcomb Steel Company.

Americanization of immigrant peoples in the areas of schooling, community formation, culture, agriculture, health, household maintenance, the press, citizenship, the legal system, and industrial relationships.<sup>116</sup> These studies, though often sympathetic to immigrants, nonetheless treated them as an undifferentiated mass. Who particular immigrants were and how they lived their lives—these were not issues. The issue was how to turn immigrants into Americans, by systematically analyzing every arena of social life and then making plans to transform it into undifferentiated Americanness. Many other scholarly studies, notoriously those undertaken by members of the University of Chicago department of sociology and their academic offspring at Stanford, U.S.C., the University of Washington, and the University of Hawai'i, were all part of a related attempt to study immigrants in order to understand them—less for the purpose of empowering them than in order to control them.<sup>117</sup>

The ugly side of the Americanization movement became especially evident after World War I's anti-German hysteria and the 1919 Red Scare brought a hard edge of anti-immigrant feeling into public discourse. Gradually, in the late 1910s and 1920s, the Americanization movement was transformed from immigrant advocacy into part of the longstanding anti-immigrant movement. According to Robert MacNeil and William Cran, in the "Good English Makes Good Americans" campaign, "Children earned points for snitching to teacher on language errors of their classmates." The Chicago Woman's Club American Speech Committee introduced the following loyalty oath for schoolchildren:



Anglo-Americans for the same jobs. ... [E]mployers have limited the immigrants' chance for the type of acculturation that comes from association with other workers on the job. ... Segregated residential areas have resulted in segregated schools.<sup>15</sup>

Every town with a substantial Mexican-derived population had a *colonia* or *barrio*, a densely populated slum with ramshackle housing, few sewers or paved streets, desperate crowding, and substandard schools (Figure 7.1). Perhaps a third of the population of such places were immigrants; the majority were American-born. Oxnard, California, and many other towns have such *colonias* to this day. Schools were not segregated just because neighborhoods were segregated. Many towns and cities across the Southwest, from Houston to Los Angeles, had established separate, subpar schools for Mexican American children, even where, as in California, racial segregation was specifically barred by law.<sup>16</sup>

Mexican Americans did body labor under worse conditions and for lower pay and benefits than Anglo workers. At the depths of the Depression, many were forced off the land and into cities in search of employment. They were shunned by the American Federation of Labor (AFL); only the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) and the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) would take them on. Mexican American workers organized separate unions, often affiliated with the CIO, throughout the 1930s and 1940s. White southern politicians made sure that the most important New Deal worker protections did not apply to Blacks and Mexicans, by exempting agricultural and domestic work from the National Labor Relations Act and the Society Security Act. The 1930s saw a sharp decline in the numbers

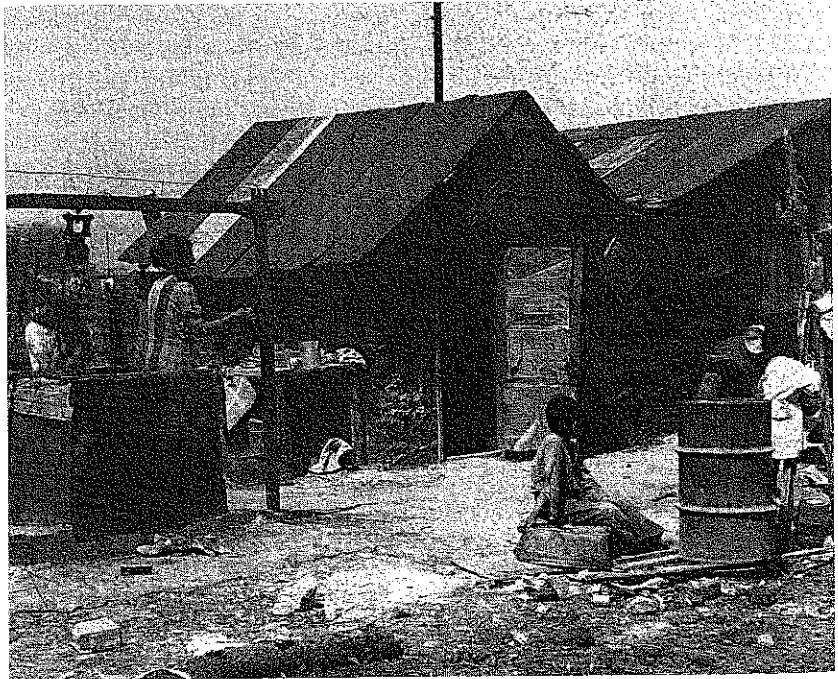


Figure 7.1 House and yard of a Mexican family in San Antonio, Texas, 1939.

## Samuel Gompers Racializes Chinese American Labor, 1908

... Beginning with the most menial avocations they [the Chinese] gradually invaded one industry after another, until they not merely took the places of our girls as domestics and cooks, the laundry from our poorer women and subsequently from the white steam laundries, but the places also of the men and boys, as boot and shoemakers, cigarmakers, bagmakers, miners; farm laborers, brickmakers, tailors, slippermakers and numerous other occupations. In the ladies' furnishing line they gained absolute control, displacing hundreds of our girls who would otherwise have found profitable employment. Whatever business or trade they entered was, and is yet, absolutely doomed for the white laborer, as competition is simply impossible. Not that the Chinese would not rather work for high wages than low, but in order to gain control he will work so cheaply as to bar all efforts of his competitor. But not only has the workingman and workingwoman gained this bitter experience, but certain manufacturers and merchants have been equally the sufferers. The Chinese laborer will work cheaper for a Chinese employer than he will for a white man, as has been invariably proven, and, as a rule, he boards with his Chinese employer. The Chinese merchant or manufacturer will undersell his white competitor, and if uninterrupted will finally gain possession of the entire field. Such is the history of the race wherever they have come in contact with other peoples. None can withstand their silent and irresistible flow, and their millions already populate and command the labor and trade of the islands and nations of the Pacific.

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The cigar, boot and shoe, broom making, and pork industries were for many years entirely in the hands of the Chinese, depriving many thousands of Americans of their means of livelihood. As their power grew they became more independent, and in the pork industry they secured so strong a hold that no white butcher dared kill a hog for fear of incurring the displeasure of the Chinese. This state of affairs became so obnoxious and unbearable that the retail butchers could no longer submit, and with the assistance of the wholesale butchers and the citizens generally finally succeeded in wresting the monopoly from the hands of their Chinese competitors.

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**Asiatic Labor Degrades as Slave Labor Did.** For many years it has been impossible to get white persons to do the menial labor performed by Chinese and Japanese—"It is Mongolian's labor and not fit for whites." In the agricultural districts a species of help has been created, known as the blanket man. White

From Samuel Gompers and Herman Gutstadt *Meat vs. Rice: American Manhood Against Asiatic Coolieism: Which Shall Survive?* (San Francisco: Asiatic Exclusion League, 1908).

immigrants had been hardy pioneers' passage was made simple at least able were now moving to the "natural selection" had become a "inferior" body of immigrants these distinctions often were interpretations—of genetics, it appeared not be transformed by life in the United States. These daily strident calls for immigration restriction laws of 1921

racial thinking influenced questions of race defining a "white" person once apparent because of the research on racial development of peoples. Who is not "white"? A series of Supreme Court decisions of "whiteness" while Congress isolation.

progression of thinking regarding "race" in twentieth-century America. The first utilized and portrayed as an unassimilable, leader of the American Federation of Labor, Chinese worker, while stereotyping Americans, and suggests that only one race. The Asiatic Exclusion League (1911) mental and moral differences," Asians are society of the United States. Asian nations, as illustrated by the next document of the United States changed when he came by Chinese immigrants. The next led to again include distinctions of distinctions. One (1915) argues that in immigration streams, was being furthermore, it contends that the former transform people was a "pathetic" belief racial mixture would lower the "racial document (1914) agrees that immigrants "both in appearance and morality. into the century, as evidenced by U.S. Mexicans and Mexican Americans in on would further the "mongrelization" of s the Supreme Court's 1923 ruling that 1 whether an Indian American was

laborers seldom find permanent employment; the Mongolian is preferred. During harvest time the white man is forced to wander from ranch to ranch and find employment here and there for short periods of time, with the privilege of sleeping in the barns or haystacks. He is looked upon as a vagabond, unfit to associate with his employer or to eat from the same table with him. The negro slave of the South was housed and fed, but the white trash of California is placed beneath the Mongolian. The white domestic servant of today is expected to live in the room originally built for John, generally situated in the cellar, or attic, and void of all comforts, frequently unpainted or unpapered, containing only a bedstead and a chair. Anything was good enough for "John"<sup>1</sup> and the white girl must be satisfied as well. Is it any wonder that self respecting young women refuse to take service under such conditions? And what is true of agricultural laborers and domestics applies, equally, to all trades in which Mongolians are largely employed. Absolute servility (civility is not enough) is expected from those who take the place of "John" or "Togo" and it will take many years to obliterate these traces of inferiority and re-establish the proper relations of the employer and the employed.

\* \* \* \*

### Have Asiatics Any Morals?

Sixty years' contact with the Chinese, twenty-five years' experience with the Japanese and two or three years' acquaintance with the Hindus should be sufficient to convince any ordinarily intelligent person that they have no standard of morals by which a Caucasian may judge them. A reference to the report previously quoted sheds considerable light upon the subject:

It is a less difficult problem to ascertain the number of Chinese women and children in Chinatown than it is to give with accuracy the male population. First, because they are at present comparatively few in numbers; and second, because they can nearly always be found in the localities which they inhabit. This investigation has shown, however, that whatever may be the domestic family relations of the Chinese empire, here the relations of the sexes are chiefly so ordered as to provide for the gratification of the animal proclivities alone, with whatever result may chance to follow in the outcome of procreation. There are apparently few families living as such, with legitimate children. In most instances the wives are kept in a state of seclusion, carefully guarded and watched, as though 'eternal vigilance' on the part of their husbands 'is the price of their virtue.' Wherever there are families belonging to the better class of Chinese, the women are guarded and secluded in the most careful manner. Wherever the sex has been found in the pursuance of this investigation under other conditions, with some few exceptions, the rule seems to be that they are here in a state of concubinage merely to administer to the animal passions of the other sex, with such perpetuation of the race as may be a resultant consequence, or else to follow the admitted calling of the prostitute, generally of the low-

<sup>1</sup>"John" (or "John Chinaman") was a derogatory term used to refer to all Chinese men.

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 name implies. . . .

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Though much more could be said upon each phase of this great and burning  
 question we have tried to touch upon all of them sufficiently to enable our readers  
 to obtain reliable information on a subject that is yet barely understood east of the  
 Rocky Mountains. It must be clear to every thinking man and woman that while  
 there is hardly a single reason for the admission of the Asiatics, there are hundreds  
 of good and strong reasons for their absolute exclusion.

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As a fitting close to this document we submit the remarks made by one of the  
 greatest of American statesmen, Hon. James G. Blaine, February 14, 1879, when a  
 bill for restriction of Chinese immigration was before the United States Senate.  
 Mr. Blaine said:

"Either the Anglo-Saxon race will possess the Pacific slope or the Mongolians  
 will possess it. You give them the start today, with the keen thrust of necessity behind  
 them, and with the inducements to come, while we are filling up the other portions of  
 the Continent, and it is inevitable, if not demonstrable, that they will occupy that space  
 of the country between the Sierras and the Pacific.

"The immigrants that come to us from the Pacific isles, and from all parts of Eu-  
 rope, come here with the idea of the family as much engraven on their minds and  
 hearts, and in customs and habits, as we ourselves have. The Asiatic can not go on with  
 our population and make a homogeneous element.

"I am opposed to the Chinese coming here. I am opposed to making them citizens.  
 I am unalterably opposed to making them voters. There is not a peasant cottage inhab-  
 ited by a Chinaman. There is not a hearthstone, in the sense we understand it, of an  
 American home, or an English home, or an Irish, or German, or French home. There is  
 not a domestic fireside in that sense; and yet you say it is entirely safe to sit down and  
 permit them to fill up our country, or any part of it.

"Treat them like Christians say those who favor their immigration; yet I believe  
 the Christian testimony is that the conversion of Chinese on that basis is a fearful fail-  
 ure; and that the demoralization of the white race is much more rapid by reason of the  
 contact than is the salvation of the Chinese race. You cannot work a man who must  
 have beef and bread, alongside of a man who can live on rice. In all such conflicts,  
 and in all such struggles, the result is not to bring up the man who lives on rice to the  
 beef-and-bread standard, but it is to bring down the beef-and-bread man to the rice  
 standard.

"Slave labor degraded free labor. It took out its respectability, and put an odi-  
 ous cast upon it. It throttled the prosperity of a fine and fair portion of the United  
 States in the South; and this Chinese, which is worse than slave labor, will throttle  
 and impair the prosperity of a still finer and fairer section of the Union on the Pa-  
 cific coast.

"We have this day to choose whether we will have for the Pacific coast the civi-  
 lization of Christ or the civilization of Confucius."