OHIO AND CALIFORNIA FARMERS’ REACTION TO THE
‘CHINESE QUESTION’, 1879-1906

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PROLOGUE

James A. Garfield was warned that he needed the West Coast vote if he wanted to be President of the United States. To gain support along the West Coast, he added a Chinese immigration plank to his platform in his letter accepting the 1880 Republican Presidential nomination. His stance on the issue was enough to win the nomination and Presidency but did not carry as strong an anti-Chinese sentiment as the West Coast would have liked. Garfield placed Chinese immigration in one of the closing paragraphs of the letter, asserting that Chinese immigration needed to be handled with treaty negotiations not laws, stating:

The recent movement of the Chinese to our Pacific coast partakes but little of the qualities of such an emigration, either in its purposes or its result. It is too much like an importation to be welcomed without restriction; too much like an invasion to be looked upon without solicitude. We cannot consent to allow any form of servile labor to be introduced among us, under the guise of immigration. Recognizing the gravity of this subject, the present administration, supported by Congress, has sent to China a commission of distinguished citizens, for the purpose of securing such a
modification of the existing treaty as will prevent the evils likely to arise from the present situation.¹

Garfield was confident that the negotiations would work and Chinese laborers would not need to be banned with a law. Treaty negotiations would allow for civility to remain between both China and the United States. Garfield continued that he:

confidently believed that these diplomatic negotiations will be successful, without the loss of commercial intercourse between the two powers, which promises great increase of reciprocal trade and the enlargement of our markets. Should these efforts fail, it will be the duty of Congress to investigate the evils already felt, and prevent their increase by such restrictions as, without violence or injustice, will place upon a sure foundation the peace of our communities, and the freedom and dignity of labor.²

Garfield would go on to win the Presidency, and he signed the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882. He wanted to use treaties to limit Chinese immigration. With treaty negotiations he thought that trade would not be affected, as it would be with Chinese Exclusion. The Chinese Exclusion Act and subsequent legislation show the process towards closing the borders to Chinese laborers.

Understanding farmers’ responses to the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 requires an understanding of the anti-Chinese legislation that preceded it. Three years prior to the Chinese Exclusion Act, Congress debated and passed the Fifteen Passenger Bill in 1879, which would have limited the number of Chinese that could be brought into the United States on a single boat. If a ship had more than fifteen Chinese onboard they would not be allowed to dock in U.S. ports.


² Ibid.
This bill made it past both houses of Congress but was vetoed by President Rutherford B. Hayes on the grounds that it violated the Burlingame Treaty. The House of Representatives attempted to override President Hayes’ veto but was unsuccessful.\(^3\) Congress took this defeat in stride; instead of limiting Chinese entry with new laws, they started treaty negotiations with China. Negotiations finished in 1880 and the Angell Treaty amended the Burlingame Treaty. The main reason that President Hayes had vetoed the Fifteen Passenger Bill. Under the Angell Treaty the United States was still not allowed to prohibit the entry of Chinese as a whole, but the U.S. now had power to restrict entry to some Chinese. Armed with this new power, Congress again attacked the Chinese immigration issue in 1881.\(^4\)

After their initial failure, Congress was not deterred and in 1880 started the process over. There were several changes that made passing a Chinese immigration law more likely: the Angell Treaty and the swearing in of a new President James A. Garfield in March 1881.\(^5\) These two events made it easier to pass exclusion because there were no longer treaty restrictions that prohibited limiting Chinese immigration. Garfield had run on a platform that used anti-Chinese rhetoric. Yet Garfield was not a strong proponent of Chinese immigration restriction. While in the House of Representatives, Garfield did not vote on the Fifteen Passenger Bill, despite being present for the vote. In his acceptance letter for the Republican nomination he stated, “The recent movement of Chinese to the Pacific Coast…too much like importation to be welcomed without restriction; too much like an invasion to be looked upon without solicitude.”\(^6\) There are multiple statements in this letter that show Garfield’s stance on Chinese immigration. First, Garfield did not vote on the Fifteen Passenger Bill while he was there, suggesting his indifference to the

\(^4\) Ibid, 84-86.
\(^5\) Ibid, 88-89.
issue. The fact that Garfield was from the Midwest and did not vote in the previous Chinese limiting legislation shows that Gyory’s vote trading thesis (the idea that politicians from different parts of the country voted favorably on issues that did not affect them so that others would vote with them when needed) may be viable. Garfield did not mention Chinese immigration until nearly the end of his acceptance letter, showing that it was not a major priority like education, finance, or defense, all topics mentioned before immigration. Garfield was vying for votes on the West Coast, where race was supposed to be an important concern. He was warned that if he did not adopt an anti-Chinese stance he could not carry the West Coast, so he offered treaty negotiation as his policy.  

The Chinese Exclusion Bill that passed on May 6, 1882 was almost identical to the bill that President Chester A. Arthur vetoed in April. The difference was the length of exclusion. The April bill was for twenty years, while the one in May was limited to ten years. What the two bills had in common was a ban on all Chinese laborers, both skilled and unskilled, and the prohibition of naturalization for Chinese persons in the United States. If Chinese were already in the United States at the time of passage they were to be issued a certificate from the government allowing them to return to the United States if they were to leave. The bill in May passed for a few different reasons. First, the newly negotiated Angell Treaty allowed for the limiting of Chinese immigration. That is one of the reasons that President Arthur gave for vetoing the April bill—the restriction was simply too long. The new bill was shorter and more accommodating to China. Secondly, both major parties switched to a platform that allowed for banning Chinese

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immigration. The bill passed was known as the bill “to execute certain treaty stipulations relating to the Chinese” but quickly became known as the Chinese Exclusion Act.\(^\text{9}\)

In May of 1882 the Chinese Exclusion Act was passed for the first time, but this law was just the beginning of a long road toward the exclusion that was yet to come. In 1884, just two years later, the law became even more restrictive. There was an amendment added to the original bill that applied Chinese exclusion to anybody coming from China, as well as to Chinese coming to the United States from anywhere else in the world. This prohibition also included those of Chinese descent but still allowed diplomats, students, merchants, and businessmen to enter; only laborers were affected by the new restriction.\(^\text{10}\) This stopped all Chinese descendants from entering the United States simply because they were of Chinese descent; for instance, some Chinese individuals had never set foot in China but were still banned from entering the United States.\(^\text{11}\)

Exclusion law was revisited in 1888, yet another election year, and candidates were trying to gain votes by appearing to be the most anti-Chinese.\(^\text{12}\) President Grover Cleveland had negotiated a new treaty with China earlier that year. The Bayard-Zhang Treaty of 1888 would have allowed for a complete exclusion of Chinese immigrants to the United States. However, when Cleveland sent the treaty to the Senate to be ratified and Senators added an amendment that revoked the certificates for the Chinese currently outside of the United States. Because of this amendment, China did not ratify the treaty and it did not go into effect. Congressmen assumed the Chinese government would ratify the treaty and thus went ahead and passed the Scott Act in 1888, which revoked the certificates from all Chinese abroad; they would not be allowed back

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\(^{9}\) Ibid, 216-217.
\(^{12}\) Ibid 238.
into the United States. This law was upheld by the Supreme Court, which ruled that Congress had the right to make this kind of legislation.\textsuperscript{13}

With the original Chinese Exclusion Act set to expire in 1892, Congress again set about to limit Chinese immigration. The Bill became known as the Geary Act of 1892. The Geary Act had the same provisions as the 1882 Act and added many new stipulations. Chinese laborers were now required to carry a certificate proving that they were residents of the United States. If they were caught without a resident permit they could be deported but only after a year of labor. Chinese could appeal to the court to prove that they were residents, but only after they acquired one credible white man to testify on their behalf.\textsuperscript{14} By this time, the law had been strengthened twice, once in 1884 and again 1888. After little debate and with no real opposition to the proposed law, it was passed.\textsuperscript{15}

With the Geary Act set to expire in 1902, its final extension was passed. Proposed by Senator Orville Platt, a Republican from Connecticut, who offered up a simple bill that “extended existing Chinese exclusion laws indefinitely, so long as those laws were not inconsistent with any treaty obligations.”\textsuperscript{16} The law had been in effect for over two decades. In that time resistance had faded, and the final iteration was passed with little resistance. This law would not be repealed until 1943.\textsuperscript{17}

The exclusion laws created serious problems for California farmers, as seen in the example of George Washington Pierce Jr. In 1893 he switched his 1,200-acre farm near Davisville, California from staple crops to a specialized almond ranch. Switching to almonds

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid, 238-280.
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid, 282.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid, 282.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid, 320.
\textsuperscript{17} Fred W. Riggs, \textit{Pressures on Congress: A Study of the Repeal of Chinese Exclusion}, (New York: King’s Crown Press Columbia University, 1950), 38-42. For more information on the repeal of Chinese Exclusion and the specifics of the repeal refer to the first two chapters of Riggs.
caused a problem for Pierce however. The number of laborers needed increased, depending on the harvest as much as quadrupling.\(^{18}\) He could no longer harvest his almond crop with the available white labor that was both scarce and unreliable; he found his solution in Chinese laborers.\(^{19}\) Pierce found that the Chinese laborers were excellent workers. He found, unlike many of his previous white workers, most of the Chinese stayed for the entire harvesting season. The Chinese also met Pierce’s strict quality harvest standards, something his white workers had not been able to do without direct supervision from Pierce.\(^{20}\) He was so pleased with the Chinese laborers that he continued to employ almost exclusively Chinese laborers until he could no longer get them in 1904. During his years of using Chinese labor, his profits increased three-fold, because of “increased selling prices, high yields, and a dependable labor force.”\(^{21}\) For Pierce, the loss of Chinese labor created a problem that until now, has escaped the notice of politicians then and scholars today.


\(^{19}\) Ibid, 578.

\(^{20}\) Ibid, 574-578.

\(^{21}\) Ibid, 578.
INTRODUCTION

George Pierce’s attitude contradicts historians’ claim that anti-Chinese racism was one of the main reasons for Chinese Exclusion’s passage in 1882. While racism cannot be completely disregarded, Pierce’s example shows that farmers had different and opposing ideas. Farmers based many of their decisions on their own self interests. They did what was best for them economically and did not rely on social cues as much as urban workers. Pierce was not an isolated case; farmers across Ohio, California, and the country rallied in support of Chinese immigration. The pro-Chinese immigration stance that farmers took in the late nineteenth and early twentieth-centuries did not always equate to a pro-Chinese stance. Many times, farmers still had racist tendencies and ideologies towards the Chinese but they were outweighed by farmers’ own self interests. They cared more about keeping the farm running prosperously than they did about racist ideologies. Historian Luther Spoehr went further than the “we-they” dichotomy to describe racism. He asserts that the “we-they” definition of racism is too broad and has caused many generalizations and when specific events are studied it starts to come unraveled.22 He bases his definition on John Higham’s definition in Strangers in the Land, using distinct strains of racial nationalism and racial naturalism. Racial nationalism focused on political and cultural sources of racist ideology, while racial naturalism focused on biological differences. Both had the same result: minority groups being

overwhelmed and prejudiced against by the majority group. Spoehr agrees that both strains existed, but in the late nineteenth-century they merged and characteristics of both were used against the Chinese in the United States. Farmers in the late nineteenth-century adhered to explanations of the biological differences and cultural stereotypes of the Chinese but still chose to employ them because of self-interests.

Scholars make these claims because they did not study farmers; this is evident in the treatment that historians have given to nineteenth-century American farmers’ response to Chinese immigration. There have been multiple monographs focusing on Chinese Exclusion but the farmer’s opinion and response are left out, despite being a substantial part of the population in 1880, with numbers nearing 410,000. This thesis examines the debate that farmers had on Chinese immigration leading up to Chinese Exclusion, as well as their response to that Act, starting in 1879 with the first bill introduced in Congress to limit Chinese immigration on a national scale and through 1906 when the Boxer Indemnity was set up as a scholarship for Chinese scholars in the United States is examined. The Extension Act was passed in 1902, but policy was not set in stone until after the Boxer Rebellion payments. The Fifteen Passenger Bill in 1879 was not made into law but provides a good starting point because it showed that the country was willing to consider banning Chinese immigration. As a national piece of legislation to limit Chinese immigration, it shows that the entire country was thinking about Chinese immigration, not just the West Coast. Chinese Exclusion did not end until 1943 but ending this study in 1906 allows for a tighter, more detailed analysis of the farmers’ responses to the Chinese exclusion issue. 1906 in particular makes a logical stopping point.

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23 Ibid, 187-188.
24 U.S. Census Bureau, Statistics of Agriculture, Tabular Statement, 1880.
point because it is after Chinese Exclusion had been extended indefinitely and when policy on the outcomes of the Boxer Rebellion were set, formalizing American foreign policy towards China until the outbreak of World War II.25

To gauge the response of the American farmer, the Patrons of Husbandry (Grange) is the main focus of attention here. The Grange had an annual membership of roughly 100,000 in 1880 when Chinese immigration became a national issue.26 The Grange was a nationwide organization that provided a good gauge of the American farmer not only because it represented over a quarter of all farmers in the country, but also because the Grange has extensive records available to scholars. Grange members met yearly to make policy and propose legislation for the upcoming year. At these yearly conventions, many different topics came up of interest to American farmers which were discussed and voted upon. At many of these meetings the topic of immigration was discussed. Other topics discussed included hunting legislation, agricultural education, and other topics pertinent to farmers. By examining the Grange and farmers’ responses it can be seen that previous scholars have relied heavily on race to a degree that was not true for most American farmers. They do eventually pass a resolution in support of Chinese Exclusion but not until that law had existed for twenty years.

Many scholars assert that racism was the root cause for Chinese Exclusion. They argue that this racism was powerful but confined primarily to California (the California thesis) or that it was nation-wide (national racism thesis) and thus propelled the entire nation to support Chinese Exclusion. Sucheng Chan, in This Bittersweet Soil (1986) advances the California thesis. She shows that Chinese laborers in California were

26 Stephanie Wilkins, email correspondence with Author, October 10, 2017.
discriminated against and pushed out of many of the endeavors that they attempted. She only examines California, making the state appear as an exception to what was happening in the rest of the country. Chan, for instance, focuses on Chinese agriculture limited only to California. She shows that in the period from 1860 to 1910, Chinese immigrants were able to work as truck farmers, tenants, and in few cases, were able to own their own farms in California. In these ventures, they faced problems from white farmers, owners, and neighbors. While many did succeed in their ventures, it was not without conflict with the white population. Throughout her book Chan focuses on two main ideas: hard work and racism. Without hard work, the Chinese workers would not have succeeded. For example, when Chan discusses Chinese being truck farmers, she shows how they had to travel distances to get to mining villages to sell their vegetables and produce.\textsuperscript{27} Chinese in California were not only used as farm laborers but as laborers to reclaim land for farming. Chan recounts a story of how marsh land was cheap; it was bought up and Chinese were paid to cultivate and reclaim it. The pay received was minimal and in some cases, was just a few acres of the land that they had reclaimed.\textsuperscript{28} The California thesis has two seminal works setting up the framework for it: Mary Roberts Coolidge’s \textit{Chinese Immigration} (1909) and Elmer Clarence Sandmeyer’s \textit{The Anti-Chinese Movement in California} (1939).\textsuperscript{29} These two works attest that California was the hotbed for Chinese Exclusion and Chinese hatred. It was because of California and their racism that Chinese

\textsuperscript{28} Cheng, \textit{This Bittersweet Soil}, 177-189.
Exclusion was passed. Alexander Saxton’s *The Indispensable Enemy* (1971) looks at a national reason for anti-Chinese agitation but focuses on nineteenth-century California.

The other main thesis that is used to explain the passage of Chinese Exclusion is the national racism thesis. Mae M. Ngai, in *Impossible Subjects* (2004) manifests this thesis. She examines the entire United States and concludes that racism was not limited to California and the West Coast but was rampant throughout the entire country. In examining the entire country, she is forced to make many generalizations with limited evidence. In taking the entire country into account, Ngai generalizes about entire states and regions. She cannot go into great depth and provide examples for the entire country and still have a manageable monograph. She focuses heavily on the West and Southwest and generalizes that the rest of the country follows the same path and ideology. Stuart Creighton Miller’s *The Unwelcome Immigrant*, (1969) is the seminal work of the national racism thesis. In this work, he shows that negative stereotypes of the Chinese were not merely a regional idea, but spread throughout the whole country. To do this, he examines events in the United States as well as in China. Miller attributes most of the negative stereotyping to the Opium Wars. Because China lost the Opium Wars quickly and decisively, they were perceived as backwards. There are flaws in this theory, as Andrew Gyory points out; this thesis uses as evidence people with anti-Chinese thoughts, which does not mean that they are going to carry out anti-Chinese actions. Miller’s other major flaw is his unwillingness to look at the politics and demographics behind the passage of the legislation, in favor of labor unions and other aspects.

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32 Gyory, *Closing the Gate*, 8-11.
Erika Lee continues the national race thesis, advancing that racism across the United States was the main thrust keeping Chinese out of the country and the reason exclusion was passed. In *At America’s Gate: Chinese Immigration During the Exclusion Era, 1882-1943* (2003), Lee starts after Chinese Exclusion has been passed, and looks at the ways in which Chinese immigrants enter the country. She looks at the Paper son system, interrogations conducted at Angel Island, and border crossing from either Mexico or Canada. In this chapter, she discusses how it is less rigorous and easier to get into the United States if you are Mexican. Mexicans were for the most part not detained at the border and crossed in and out of the United States freely, while Chinese were held for months when they tried to enter the United States. To land in Mexico and cross the border was easier; as they were not screened, they just had to learn a few Spanish words, darken their skin with soot, and physically cross the terrain.\(^{33}\) The Canadian border was easier to cross because it was not protected as well, but Canadian laws started to mirror American laws and getting into Canada became harder.\(^{34}\)

Liping Zhu moves away from the West Coast and racism, but does not venture far. He studied small towns in Idaho looking at the Chinese population and the problems that they faced. Zhu concludes that Chinese were still discriminated against but not as bad because in an isolated village everybody is needed to survive. He demonstrated how Chinese were discriminated from entering mining, and instead forced to do laundry and cook.\(^{35}\) Because of the small population and the need of everyone to survive, the Chinese faced less racism and discrimination when they moved past the West Coast, to isolated

\(^{34}\) Lee, *At Americas Gate*, 151-157.
villages. Along these same lines, when Chinese laborers moved to the Midwest they faced less discrimination as well. This is shown in Wayne Hung Wong’s, *American Paper Son* (2006). In this autobiography, he recounts moving from California to Nebraska and then Kansas and how there were more opportunities and less racism in the Midwest.36

In more recent Chinese exclusion historiography, these two theses have been challenged by scholars looking to reasons other than racism to explain why exclusion was passed. The two major challenges come from Andrew Gyory and Lon Kurashige. Gyory argues that political opportunism rather than racist ideology underlays the national adaption of Chinese Exclusion. He asserts much of the racist ideology started in California and spread to the rest of the country through politicians, since running for a national office required the electoral support of the West Coast vote. To gain the West Coast vote, both parties took on an anti-Chinese platform.37 In trying to win the West Coast, parties spread West Coast racism throughout the entire country and that is how Chinese Exclusion was passed. Kurashige uses the same idea of examining politicians, but he concludes that while there is always a group in favor of exclusion, there was also always a group that was against exclusion.38 Previous scholars have not focused on the groups that were opposed to exclusion. Kurashige concludes that the group he labels as the “egalitarians” over time changed and lost membership but they never completely disappeared. The “egalitarians” based their argument on the Declaration of Independence

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37 Gyory, *Closing the Gate*, 1.
and the idea that “all men are created equal.” In contrast, the “exclusionists” Kurashige shows targeted Asians since they were not eligible for citizenship; their mother county was economically inferior to the United States; and the country had been colonized by Western powers, and thus viewed with a civilizational stigma. Not only did exclusionists prey on these vulnerabilities of the Asian population, they also stoked the fire of anti-Asian immigration with ideas of labor competition, espionage, and the idea of a human flood overwhelming America.

Works on Grange history too, shed little light on how and why farmers came to oppose and then support Chinese Exclusion. Most provide little examination and most are less than a paragraph. In Solon Buck’s and Denis Nordin’s books, two prominent works on the Grange, Chinese exclusion is tied into other ideas that the Grange endorsed or rejected. It does not get a standalone treatment or analysis. Buck incorporated Chinese immigration in with other issues that the Grange supported, such as women’s suffrage and temperance. Nordin does examine the Grange’s stance on immigration. He ties Chinese immigration into the larger immigration stance and nativism, spending less than a page discussing the issue.

In this thesis, I follow similar lines as Kurashige, examining a group that is opposed to Chinese Exclusion. I argue that the National Grange as well as the state chapters of the Granges of Ohio and California were not in favor of Chinese Exclusion nor its ban on Chinese immigration. Farmers in general and the Grange members in

40 Ibid, 12.
41 Ibid.
particular needed cheap labor to keep their farms prosperous and running and the infusion of Chinese laborers provided a cheap and necessary source of labor for the farmers. The farmers refused to exclude the Chinese solely on ideas of race and instead were influenced by economic factors that played a crucial role is the political decisions that farmers made.

Farmers in California and Ohio faced different economic problems in relation to Chinese laborers, but both states make good test cases for farmers’ ideas and reactions to the “Chinese question.” Ohio is a strong test case because in the late nineteenth century it was a microcosm of the United States with respect to farmers. The average farm in Ohio in 1880 was just over ninety-nine acres, consisting mostly of family farms. The United States at that time had farms with average acreages of under one hundred and thirty-five acres. Ohio farms were comparable to what the average farm across the nation looked like. In addition, this state’s agricultural sector in proportion to its industrial and urban sectors mirrored the nation. Hence, Ohio provides an important comparative example with which to understand the salient characteristics of California and the West Coast. Ohio did not, however, have as large a Chinese population as California.

Farming in California was and still to this day is agribusiness. They were not family farms. The average farm size in California in 1880 was 461.5 acres compared to the 135 acres for the national average at that time. In addition, California was not a typical representation of the American farmer, but they had a large Chinese population that made immigration an issue. The large population of Chinese immigrants is why

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44 U.S. Census Bureau, Statistics of Agriculture, Tabular Statement, 1880, 87.
many previous scholars chose California to study. Many of the immigrants prior to the enactment of the Chinese Exclusion Act were laborers, many have asserted. This drove wages down and was one of the prime reasons for many people in California to rage against Chinese immigrants. Sucheng Chan does a good job analyzing the different county records in California, but in these she only shows where the Chinese were and how they were treated. She does not analyze who was forcing them out of truck farming or who was leading the exclusion propaganda. Was it farmers or was it people in urban areas around the Chinatowns?

Taking both Ohio and California together sheds light on the importance of region and demographic factors for farmers whose primary concern was operating their farms profitably. While Ohio did not have a large amount of Chinese, they did still have a Chinese population. Farmers did not completely disregard race; it was still seen and discussed. They did not want to ban Chinese immigrants solely because they were Chinese. To uncover to what extent race played a factor in their thinking requires an analysis of the coded language of race; it must also be considered even though they may not have been using overtly racist language that they did not harbor racialist tendencies. Such motives may still be present in the way that they refer to the Chinese. Gerald Prescott in his article examining various size farms said “Immigrants were welcome, indeed needed, in post-Civil War California, …Egalitarianism, in short, played no part in the far, elite’s defense of the Chinese.”47 They defended the Chinese as a group of workers but not as people, still referring to them as heathens and aliens.48 They were racist towards Chinese laborers, but they defended the Chinese’s right to be in the

48 Ibid.
country, since they filled the much-needed labor required for their farms to operate profitably. Just because the farmers defended Chinese laborers does not mean that they did not harbor racist feelings toward them. While it is impossible to know what nineteenth-century farmers were thinking, examining their rhetoric sheds light on what stance they wished to portray.

Nineteenth-century American farmers reveal that there is still more to be studied in the field of Chinese Exclusion. I show that racism is more complicated than how previous historians have described. While racism still played a part, economics and self-sustainability played a larger role for the American farmer. To that end, the sources that I use to prove this are Grange records. I use three different sets of Grange records: National Grange, California State Grange, and Ohio State Grange. The National Grange records are stored at the National Grange headquarters in Washington D.C. and they cover the years 1866 to the present day. The California State Grange records are located in Paradise California, at the state Grange headquarters. The years covered are 1873 to the present. Ohio State Grange records are housed at the state Grange headquarters in Fredericktown, Ohio. They too cover 1873 to the present.

These three Grange archives have many resources for their respective location. Some of the most relevant resources are the yearly convention journals. Yearly conferences were held in the later part of the year and set the policy for the upcoming year. These provide insight into what the Grange was debating. They set the official policy. What they do not provide is whether the policy was acted on. The archives hold letters written by Grangers to elected officials, as well as meeting minutes and resolutions made.
These sources are not the only sources available. Other sources include governmental archives. William McKinley was elected an Ohio Representative in the late 1870s; he served various governmental offices representing Ohio, and he later became President. He has a large archive located in Canton, Ohio. The archive contains letters and requests written to him by his constituents on many issues including Chinese immigration and exclusion. Senator Stanley Matthews is another source for Ohio’s opinion of Chinese exclusion. His documents are housed in the Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library, the Cincinnati Historical Society, and the Ohio State University.

This thesis will follow along the line of recent historiography and moves away from racism and explores other avenues to explain farmers’ reactions to the ‘Chinese Question’. Not knowing what the farmers were thinking, the use of their rhetoric and writing will be the primary analysis for this work. In the first chapter, the National Grange will be examined and compared with the industrial response of the American Federation of Labor (AFL), showing that the Grange’s national policy was for inclusion rather than exclusion. Chapter 2 looks at the ‘Chinese question’ and the response from Ohio farmers and Ohioans in general. Ohio did not have a large Chinese population, and they wanted to bring more Chinese laborers into the state. Chapter 3 examines the farmers’ responses to Chinese immigration in California. This shows that while largely considered the hotbed of racism toward Chinese labor, California farmers were accepting of Chinese laborers because they faced the same problems as farmers around the country: labor shortages. Finally, the fourth chapter explores the idea of gender and how it related to Chinese immigration and Exclusion. This chapter briefly examines how farm labor was gendered and how farmers of the late nineteenth century employed female labor,
looking at how Chinese women were barred from entering the country and finally how farmers may have reacted to female Chinese laborers.
CHAPTER 1
NATIONAL GRANGE RESPONSE V.
NATIONAL INDUSTRIAL LABOR RESPONSE

Why race was recessive for many in the Grange is attributable to their organization. The Grange was founded in 1867 by Oliver Hudson Kelley and the six others. The Grange was founded on the idea of advancing the interests of the farmer as well as inclusion of all members, whether it be men, women, or children so long as they were affiliated with farming. Family, not race, therefore, was their organizing principle. By including women and children, Grange membership skyrocketed after their founding and leveled off about a decade later. Historian Solon J. Buck looked at this as a decline in the strength of the Grange, while later historians have interpreted the change as a shift in power, not a decline in the Grange. Dennis Nordin examines the decline of the Grange in the West and the South and the increase in membership in “New England, New York, Pennsylvania, and the Eastern Middle West,” showing a shift in membership, not a decline. This shift in membership helps explain why the Grange was not in favor of Chinese exclusion. The Midwest and the East were facing severe labor shortages and needed workers in both agriculture and industrial sectors. The Grange was founded on a

50 Solon Justus Buck, *The Granger Movement*.
51 Dennis S. Nordin, “A Revisionist Interpretation of the Patrons of Husbandry, 1867-1900,” 631.
non-partisan basis but within a decade began to choose sides on partisan issues. In 1877, the first resolution was introduced in support of banning Chinese immigration by a California representative; the resolution was not acted on nor voted on as a final resolution. The Grange was founded on certain values—inclusion of everyone involved in farming, regardless of race or gender; non-partisanship on political issues; and steadfast defense of rural America. They quickly dropped the non-partisan mantra in 1875, in response to other farm organizations that were taking on more divisive issues, such as immigration. Until 1902, the Grange’s platform on immigration was to limit admission of people from abroad based only on their ability to care for themselves, with no consideration of race or national/regional origin. Taking a stand on immigration, the Grange showed that they were now willing to stand on issues that were divisive to farmers. Earlier, they had focused on issues that most farmers could agree on, such as railroad regulation, elevator price regulation, and storage regulation.

The National Grange covered all part of the United States in the late nineteenth century. Preeminent historian of the Grange, Solon Buck, in The Granger Movement, looks at the founding of the Grange through the 1880s and he concluded that the Grange was declining in power and members. Buck looked at the Grange stronghold in the Deep South and West. Denis S. Nordin challenges Buck’s assertion. He said that membership had not declined significantly, but shifted. The membership shifted from

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strength in the South and West to strength in the East and Midwest.\textsuperscript{58} Buck is correct in his assertion that membership in the South had dropped, but overall the membership of the Grange stayed stable throughout the late nineteenth century and early twentieth-century.\textsuperscript{59} Many of the Southern members had switched memberships over to the Farmers Alliance, because of their willingness to take part in politics.

The National Grange set the policy for the State Granges to adapt and follow as they saw best for their state. The rise in membership in the Midwest and the East is one of the reasons that Ohio is one of the states that was most vehemently against the Chinese Exclusion Act. Ohio and the Midwest had both labor shortages and a lack of Chinese in the region. Ohio and the rest of the Midwest made up most of the leadership in the National Grange.\textsuperscript{60} While the leadership is made up of mostly Eastern and Midwestern representatives, every state that had a state Grange had members at the National Convention.\textsuperscript{61} The representation was similar to the United State Senate; each state has an equal number of representatives. With Midwestern leadership, that is ideas that were equated to the public.

The National Grange, founded in principles of animal husbandry and farming techniques, was also an inclusive organization. They would allow members to have full status as long as they met basic requirements such as affiliation with a farm (farmer,
farmers’ wives and children, or tenants), as long as there was some kind of direct farming connection. From its founding in 1867, women and children were members of the Grange.\textsuperscript{62} The National Grange did not pass a resolution of support for Chinese Exclusion until 1901, when the Extension Act was being considered. By that time there was less organized opposition to the passage of Chinese Exclusion.\textsuperscript{63} “By that time, a consensus supporting the exclusion policy had jelled in Congress,”\textsuperscript{64} said legal historian Martin Gold. There was no longer a solidified opposition to Chinese Exclusion, but there was still opposition; however, it was more sporadic and less organized than it was for the Fifteen Passenger Bill and the original Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882.\textsuperscript{65} Between the original act and the Geary Act, there were two amendments added that strengthened the Chinese Exclusion Act and helped to solidify anti-Chinese sentiment.\textsuperscript{66}

Prior to 1902, the National Grange took a stance on immigration similar to the Page Act. They only wanted to ban immigrants who could not support themselves:

Criminals, paupers, all persons without visible or legitimate means of support who will not work, are also consumer, but they are of no benefit to farmers or anybody else, and detract rather than add, to the general welfare. They consume, not their own but the property of farmers and others. All persons who produce nothing and render no valuable service to society, even though high livers and money getters, stand morally and economically in the category of the destructive class, in opposition to the constructive and productive classes. We have too many of them, both home and foreign born,

\textsuperscript{62} Buck, \textit{The Granger Movement}, 41-43.
\textsuperscript{63} Gold, \textit{Forbidden Citizens}, 282.
\textsuperscript{64} Ibid, 282.
\textsuperscript{65} Kurashige, \textit{Two Faces of Exclusion}, 63-71.
\textsuperscript{66} Gold, \textit{Forbidden Citizens}, 220.
and the gates of immigration should be promptly closed against the admission of more. It is time a sharp distinction be made between the useful and the injurious, the productive and the destructive classes, with a helping hand and a warm welcome to useful activity, and a “cold shoulder” and stern repression to laziness and piracy.\(^6^7\)

The Grange did not want to keep all immigrants out, just ones that would tax the system. They did not want anybody that could not support themselves to be in the country, whether they be an American-born citizen or an immigrant. The Grange was advocating for a screening process but they did not give specifics on how to tell if somebody was going to be industrious or not. This is the same stance that the Grange adopted up until Chinese exclusion was extended indefinitely in 1902.

The Grange later claimed that over half a million lazy European immigrants have landed on the shores of the United States in the last year. The Foreign Relations Committee was to urge Congress to make a law limiting the wave of “worthless” European immigrants.\(^6^8\) There was no mention of Asian immigrants; they were primarily concerned with European immigration.

While some have made the argument that an immigration policy like they were advocating for was based on racism, it can be seen from their above statement that it was not. They mention only Europeans in their statement, people of the same background as many of them.\(^6^9\) While many shared a common lineage, they were still considered “new


\(^{68}\) Ibid, 186.

\(^{69}\) Eliot Grinnell Mears, “California’s Attitude Towards the Oriental,” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* vol. 122 (November, 1925): 206. Mears asserted that competition was not between descendants of white pioneers and Chinese but between later European immigrants and Chinese. The whiteness comes from the length of time, in the United States not necessarily the color of
European” and classified as less entitled to the United States. The Grange did not want to have to pay for and care for these indigent immigrants. If they could not care for themselves, the Grange thought that, they did not deserve to be in the United States taxing the system. The Grange did not take the idea of race completely out of their Chinese Exclusion debate but it was minimalized. They did not care what ethnicity the laborer was, only that they would work and not exploit the system for their own gains.

California representative, Brother Steele, introduced the following resolution in 1877, before the Fifteen Passenger Bill was being considered: “Resolved, that the National Grange use its influence with Congress to obtain such modifications of the treaty with China as will prevent the further importation of Chinamen to this country.”

After going to committee, it was reported that they took Brother Steele’s resolution into consideration and “report adversely thereto.” They do not give any reasoning as they did in 1901. There are two probable reasons: first, the Burlingame Treaty was still in effect and they knew that nothing could be done, or the more likely reason, it would not benefit the whole farming network, just those along the West Coast.

After the original Chinese Exclusion Act passed Congress in 1882, the National Grange met in November for their annual convention. At this convention, the recent law was brought up by representatives from California. They were asking for the National Grange for endorsement of the law. The resolution was read and passed on to the Good of the Order Committee.

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71 Ibid, 132.

take no action in this matter.” The reason that they gave was that it may be of value to the farmers of California, but it did not benefit the National Grange. At that time, various regions of the country were suffering from labor shortages. By limiting Chinese laborers, there would be even less of a labor pool, while the Grange was trying to keep the number of laborers abundant. In the Southwest, Chinese immigrants and Mexican immigrants were used to keep wages down and farms profitable. Starting in the early twentieth century, Mexican immigration became an issue as well and slowed again, causing a shortage of labor in the region. In the wheat growing areas of the country at the turn of the twentieth century it still took almost 150-man hours to grow 100 bushels of wheat. That was just to get the seed in the ground—the harvesting process still took more time and labor. In 1900, the labor need was still great in the grain growing areas. C.J. Bell, the Master of the Vermont State Grange, advocated for Chinese immigration, saying, “the lack of sufficient help at almost every season of the year is a great hindrance to our prosperity.” If there were more Chinese laborers in Vermont, there would not be such a labor shortage. They faced labor shortages all year around, especially during planting and harvesting.

73 Ibid, 93.
74 Ibid, 93.
75 James A. Young, “Hay Making: The Mechanical Revolution on the Western Range,” Western Historical Quarterly vol.14, no. 3 (July, 1983): 323. He talks about how in many cases farmers would have to share hired laborers to have enough laborers to get everyone’s crops off. This shortage of labor was all throughout the 1870s and 1880s. The labor shortage came after the farmers had mechanized and needed less laborers.
77 Paul K. Conkin, A Revolution Down on the Farm: The Transformation of American Agriculture Since 1929 (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2008), 2008. The exact number is 147 man hours needed. The Grain growing regions are the Midwest as well as parts of Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Kentucky.
However, the National Grange took an anti-Chinese immigration stance after the turn of the century. At their annual convention in November 1901, the National Grange passed the following resolution: “Resolved, That we regard Chinese immigration as undesirable and detrimental to the best interests of this country, and therefore demand the reenactment of the Chinese exclusion law.”\textsuperscript{79} Compared to their earlier statement on Chinese immigration, this was a clear shift; they talked about the good of the entire country. Their change in view was fostered by the agricultural revolution. Farms were beginning to mechanize and, there were less laborers needed because of this,\textsuperscript{80} making the issue of Chinese immigration less a farming issue than it had been in the late nineteenth century. By the time that the final iteration of the Chinese Exclusion Act passed in 1902, there was less opposition to it in general\textsuperscript{81}.

The Grange, in their history, has been one of the most inclusive organizations. They have allowed women and children full membership since their founding. They did not have an institutional policy of racism or sexism. However, that does not mean that they did not have de jure racism, but never limiting the Chinese based on race. In many case they are praised as some of the best workers. The Master of the California State Grange, G.W. Worthen, praised Chinese laborers in 1902 when the extension bill was being considered. He said, “the Chinamen seem to be best for picking strawberries and like work as they can squat to the ground easily… All Chinamen ought not be excluded

\textsuperscript{80} James A. Young, “Hay Making: The Mechanical Revolution on the Western Range,” 314, 323. With farm sizes staying the about the same, mechanization saved labor costs. One man with a scythe could harvest one acre of hay in ten hours. Switching to machines not only made this a faster process.
\textsuperscript{81} Gold, \textit{Forbidden Citizens}, 282.
...I think that the Chinese are more honest than the Japanese."82 The same state that introduced a resolution to lobby Congress to pass a law limiting Chinese immigration in 1877 now says that Chinese are industrial and hard working. The Vermont State Grange Master, in the same issue, was “inclined to believe that while everyone is allowed to come to this country the Chinese should not be excluded.” He went on to say that “if the farmer can procure any who are by nature industrious and frugal in their habits, it would be a great help to our business.”83 He was saying that Chinese laborers were industrious and frugal. Both of these aspects were what the farmer was looking for in workers. He praised the Chinese. Being from Vermont may play a factor in the comments, as there was a larger Granger population in the state and region, but there was only a small Chinese population in the state.

Not only did various state Granges praise the Chinese on their work ethic, but the National Grange did as well. In 1877, the same year that a California representative introduced a resolution urging Congress to enact a Chinese limiting law, the National Grange not only rejected the resolution, but whole-heartedly praised the Chinese. “When we learn to work our soil as economically as the Chinese, an acre will feed at least three persons.”84 Not only do they give the Chinese praise but they say that they can learn from them, implying that the Chinese were more advanced in the field of agriculture.

The National Grange, while called “The World’s Greatest Equality Club,”85 is not, however, because not everyone was viewed as completely equal. They were not as egalitarian as they were portrayed to be, by many of the Grange scholars. The Grange,

82 “The Grange And Chinese Exclusion: What State Masters Say.,” Rural New Yorker, January 4, 1902, 9. This article has the response from multiple State Grange Masters.
83 Ibid, 9.
84 William M. Ireland, Journal of Proceeding 1877, 42.
85 David H. Howard, People Pride, and Progress, 105.
while they were inclusive to many members, did not transfer inclusivity to Chinese immigrants. They were still seen as Chinese first and farmers second. While the Grange praised Chinese laborers, they did not always advocate for their inclusion, only if it was beneficial to the Grange as a whole. Organized farm laborers as a group were open to Chinese immigration. When compared with the national labor organization, the American Federation of Labor (AFL), the Grange was the more open and welcoming organization.

The AFL, founded in 1886 after the original Chinese Exclusion Act was enacted, was a group founded on similar ideas to the Grange and farmers. They were interested in doing what was best for the skilled laborers.\textsuperscript{86} They however, had very different ideas on the issue of Chinese immigration. The Grange was open to Chinese immigration and resolved not to support resolutions made in support of Chinese exclusion. The AFL, in November of 1901, held a Chinese exclusion convention in San Francisco. At this convention, they adopted, penned and sent to the Senate, “Some Reasons for Chinese Exclusion. Meat vs. Rice. American Manhood against Asiatic Coolieism. Which Shall Survive?”\textsuperscript{87} In this document, they laid out their objections to Chinese immigration. They used economics as the main reason for exclusion. The AFL stated, “the presence of Chinese and their competition with free white labor is one of the greatest evils with which any country can be afflicted.”\textsuperscript{88} The AFL asserted that hiring Chinese laborers was similar to slavery. They argued that slavery was a better system than Chinese laborers because slaves did not drain the economy of money.\textsuperscript{89} Not only were slaves

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item Ibid, 25.
\item Ibid, 15-16.
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cared for better when they became sick or as they aged but they were “kind and faithful,” while Chinese were “cruel and treacherous.” The real basis for their claim that slavery was a better system comes again from an economic basis. They showed that in 1884 Chinese laborers in California made around two-hundred sixty dollars. Of that, only a small portion stayed in the United States and was used for rent or other expenses that Chinese laborers incurred. The rest was sent back to China or paid to Chinese importers for goods ordered from China. They were not helping the American economy but, the opposite, they were draining it because they sent the majority of their money away. By working in the United States, they were only helping themselves and China, not the United States economy.

The AFL considered what banning Chinese would do to the U.S. economy. They concluded that commerce would not be severely hurt by banning Chinese laborers. They said that it would be bad for China to embargo the United States in retaliation because China sold the United States more product than the United States sold them. The United States imported almost twenty-seven thousand dollars’ worth of Chinese goods while exporting just over fifteen thousand dollars’ worth of goods to China. Trade would not be hurt because China was getting the better deal in trade agreements, the union said. They continued on, “our trade with China has constantly increased, in spite of our restriction policy. A decrease in our Chinese population will reduce the imports of foodstuffs and clothing used by Chinese but will have no effect whatever on the imports of silk and teas.” Decreasing the Chinese population would have a good effect on

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90 Ibid, 16.
91 Ibid, 13.
92 Ibid, 23.
93 Ibid, 23.
American commerce. There would be less items that the Chinese in the United States needed and more product that American merchants could sell and make a profit on. The United States was not the first to ban Chinese immigration; the AFL asserted that “almost every country has imposed restrictions upon the immigration of Chinese coolies.”94 The AFL went on to argue that China did not regard the restrictions and bans as an unfriendly act. China was thankful for trade with the United States. “America is at no disadvantage in its commercial dealings with China on account of the domestic policy of Chinese exclusion.”95 Due to the fact that Chinese exclusion would not hurt trade with China, the AFL is in favor of it. While the AFL asserted that trade with China had not been hurt by Chinese exclusion, scholars have shown that there were groups in China boycotting American goods.96 Trade was affected by the American policy of Chinese exclusion. Trade was not the only way that China resisted the exclusions acts. They resisted in official and social ways as well. In 1893 the Chinese government refused to provide an exhibit to the World’s Fair held in Chicago. The Chinese government “will make no exhibit because of the action of our government in regard to emigration from that country to this,” reported an Ohio agricultural newspaper.97

The AFL did not want to ban the Chinese for only economic reasons but for moral and social reasons as well. They argued that Chinese were amoral. They did not come to the United States to stay, which was evidenced by their lack of a family structure. If they were coming to stay and contribute to society, they would have brought their families.

94 Ibid, 30.
95 Ibid, 30.
96 Hongshan Li, U.S.-China Educational Exchange: State, Society, and Intercultural Relations, 1905-1950, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2008), 192. The groups that led the boycotts were students and merchant. While the boycott started after the AFL penned this document it shows that their ideas were not correct. China did retaliate, not the government but the people.
97 “About the World’s Fair II,” The Ohio Farmer, March 16, 1893, 19.
The Chinese women that came to the United States were primarily prostitutes, according to the AFL. Of the Chinese women in California in the 1890s, 567 were professional prostitutes, another 761 had no family structure and were suspected prostitutes, with only fifty-seven living in a family structure.\textsuperscript{98} There was a lack of female Chinese because of previous legislation passed in 1875 banning suspected prostitutes.\textsuperscript{99} The women were only part of the Chinese morality problem, though. The union went on to say, Chinese men worked for such cheap wages and ate nearly nothing. The AFL argued that Chinese were bringing the white working wages down. They also argued that no laborer of European descent could have lived off what the Chinese laborer lived from. Chinese were destroying the American workforce; they were dragging it down, stated the AFL. They not only brought the wages down for white workers but they also displaced the white working class.\textsuperscript{100} In California, the Chinese laborers created the “blanket man” problem, as well as displaced young farm boys in rural areas. The “blanket” men were white workers who had been displaced by Chinese laborers and were forced to wander from farm to farm trying to find work.\textsuperscript{101} Chinese were dragging the white working class down to their level. They had to live off less and less until they had nothing left and were forced to beg and wander for work and rest wherever they could lay their blanket.

Housing issues was another problem that the AFL had with Chinese immigration. The Chinese were able to work so cheaply because they did not eat much and they did not need much room to live. The AFL included a chart showing the addresses where the Chinese lived. There are two numbers in the chart: the number legally allowed under the

\textsuperscript{98} Morrison, \textit{Some Reasons for Exclusion}, 18.
\textsuperscript{100} Ibid, \textit{Some Reasons for Exclusion}, 15.
\textsuperscript{101} Ibid, 15.
cubic air law and the actual number of Chinese living there. In one house, the cubic air law allowed for ninety-seven occupants while there were 276 Chinese living in the residence. They were saving on rent as well as food.

The Chinese were non-assimilative, the AFL argued. They could not be brought in to the predominate American culture. “They send their money out of the country to China;” the AFL claimed, adding, “most of them have no intention of remaining in the United States, and they do not adopt American manners, but live in colonies, and not after the American fashion.” They saw the Chinese immigrants not as permeant, but as temporary money makers and then they would leave, stealing money from the US economy. While the Chinese immigrants were here, they did not conform to American norms: they did not dress in American fashion or have American style families, and did not follow American manners. By not conforming to the culture that they were in, they were unassimilable. If they were not able or willing to assimilate to American culture, they should be banned, according to the AFL.

They went on at the end of the document to make resolutions on Chinese Exclusion. They first looked back at some of the other resolutions that they made and were sent to Congress. In 1881, they were strongly in favor of Chinese Exclusion:

Resolved, That we use our best efforts to get rid of this monstrous evil (which threatens, unless unchecked, to extend to other parts of the Union) by dissemination of information respecting its true character, and by urging upon Representatives in the United States Congress the absolute

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102 Ibid, 17.
necessity of passing laws entirely prohibiting the immigration of Chinese to the United States.\textsuperscript{104}

Chinese were threatening to the American worker. The AFL did not want the Chinese problem to expand beyond the West Coast. It is shown with the Grange that they were not worried about the spread of Chinese immigration; in some places they welcomed it. E.W. Westgate, Master of the Kansas State Grange said, “If the Chinese would furnish efficient and cheaper farm labor than can now be obtained it would be a direct benefit to the farmer.”\textsuperscript{105} The AFL was worried about something that workers in other areas were accepting of. In 1900 the AFL passed another resolution stating that Congress should both reenact and strengthen the Chinese exclusion laws already on the books. They now not only had a Chinese problem but Japanese immigration had become a problem in the years between the resolutions.\textsuperscript{106} In 1901, when the document was written, they again asked for the reenactment of Chinese Exclusion for the benefit of both their own generation and generations still to come.

The rhetoric and scope of the National Grange and the AFL offer contrasting positions. The Grange took a calm and peaceful approach to the ‘Chinese question’, while the AFL was hostile toward the ‘Chinese question’. The Grange did not talk about the Chinese in derogatory terms; in fact, they praised both the mainland Chinese and the Chinese immigrants in the United States, even as they switched their stance to anti-Chinese immigration in 1901. The AFL, on the other hand, looked at Chinese immigration as an invasion. They talked about how the Chinese had invaded the West Coast. They made remarks about driving the Chinese from the fields for the benefit of the

\textsuperscript{104} Ibid, 25.
\textsuperscript{106} Morrison, \textit{Some Reasons for Exclusion}, 25.
white farmers and displaced rural workers. Finally, they said, “a peaceful invasion is more dangerous than a war[-]like attack.” They could plan and counter a war-like attack while they cannot plan for a peaceful invasion. They did not realize that it was an invasion until it was too late. While the Grange may have been using coded language, it does not appear that they did because they specifically said the wanted to keep the European pauper out. The AFL was using outright hostile language, saying that they considered all Chinese laborers paupers.

Both the National Grange and the AFL used an economic approach to come to their stance on Chinese exclusion. They came to different conclusions. The AFL thought that unlimited Chinese immigration was bad because it would drag wages down and white Americans could not live at the same level of poverty and nourishment as the Chinese. Unlimited Chinese immigration would bring the entire white race down. The National Grange saw Chinese immigrants as industrial people. They could make do with little and worked hard to produce what they did have. They saw Chinese immigration as a good thing because many areas of the country were experiencing labor shortages. By dispersing the Chinese population, the labor shortage problem could be solved. They chose not to endorse Chinese exclusion until much later.

Examining the two organizations representing agricultural and industrial labor respectively, it is seen that they have differing options on Chinese exclusion. Much of the historiography on Chinese Exclusion is focused on industrial labor and not agricultural.

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109 Ibid, 27.
By focusing on the agricultural side, it can be seen, as historian Lon Kurashige show there emerged a contingent of egalitarians not in favor of Chinese exclusion.\textsuperscript{110}

\footnote{Kurashige, \textit{Two Faces of Exclusion}, 3-7.}
CHAPTER 2

OHIO: PAUPERS, CRIMINALS, AND ANARCHISTS NOT WELCOME

“Ohio has been, and in many important respects, a composite of the nation,” Kevin Kern and Gregory Wilson assert.\textsuperscript{111} Ohio was a good representation of the nation. Ohio had many cosmopolitan cities, suburban areas, and rural areas, similar to that of the larger United States. Northeast Ohio resembled the Northeastern and Mid-Atlantic regions of the country. These areas shared a decline in industry but still had strong labor ties. They were also both highly populated regions. The Midwestern United States was represented by Ohio’s Northwest. The population in these areas was largely white and lived off of agriculture. There were small areas of industry, but these areas were mainly supported by agricultural ventures and revenues. The southern part of Ohio was representative of the West and some areas of the South. Multiple large cities made up Ohio’s southern portion. They had urban areas surrounded by suburbs and small rural areas.\textsuperscript{112} Being that Ohio was a microcosm of the larger United States, it makes a good test case for how farmers reacted to Chinese immigration in the larger nation. Ohio farms were also varied in products and were similar in size to that of the national average.\textsuperscript{113}

While Ohio did not have a large Chinese population, there were still a sizeable number of Chinese in Ohio. According to the 1880 census there were just over a hundred

\textsuperscript{112} Ibid, 485-487.
Chinese in Ohio.\footnote{U.S. Census Bureau, 1880 Census: Volume 1, Statistics of the Population of the United States, Table XIX Sex of the Colored Chinese and Japanese and, 544.} The census broke down where the Chinese were located by county, with most being in the northern county, Cuyahoga. Cleveland, located in Cuyahoga county, was where a large portion of the Chinese in the state lived and worked. Ohio had a total population of 3,198,062 in 1880, with the Chinese population comprising well under one percent of the total Ohio population.\footnote{U.S. Census Bureau, Resident Population and the Apportionment of the U.S. House of Representatives, Ohio, 1.} While not as large as the Chinese population on the West Coast, Ohio still did have a Chinese populace. Cuyahoga county had twenty-two of Chinese making them the largest grouping in the state. They did not have as large an impact on the area as they did in Californian urban areas. Ohio was representative of the entire country in the late nineteenth century with regard to Chinese population. Overall, a small Chinese population was located in one place.

Founded in 1873, the Ohio State Grange articulated the aspirations of the average American farmer for more equitable treatment, both for themselves and their fellow Americans. Some of the early issues that the Ohio State Grange advocated for were women’s suffrage, railroad legislation, and compulsory education; they were successful in passing legislation in all of these areas. Another area that the Ohio State Grange supported was immigration reform.\footnote{John F. Dowler, \textit{Ohio State Grange: Centennial History, 1873-1973}, (Ashville:19734), 153,154.} The Ohio State Grange held the same ideas as the National Grange on immigration reform: keep out those who burdened the system. They wanted to keep paupers and criminals out. They only wanted immigrants that could work and support themselves and not burden the taxpayers. Before the Ohio State Grange was organized into a state-wide organization there were local chapters. Local chapters of the
Grange formed as early as 1868. The Ohio State Grange was made up of many different types of farmers (dairy, grain, fruit, hog, etc.). This made the group less militant, as one type of farmer could not control the leadership of the Grange; it took multiple different types of farmers to form their leadership. This wide range of farmers made for less of a consensus within the State Granges as they had to appease multiple different ideas and needs. The lack of consensus did not take away from the power that the Grange wielded in Ohio politics. They were still a powerful influence in politics. Having a diverse group of agricultural products helped preserve Ohio farmers when markets crashed or prices dropped. Only a portion of their crop and income was affected. They still had other products to sell and were still bringing in an income. Thus, they were not hit as hard as single crop farmers in other parts of the country.

Despite their willingness to take sides on the important political issues of their day, the Ohio State Grange was careful not to allow their official stance to erupt into partisan warfare. As the Ohio State Grange articulated, “as we value the permanence of our noble Order for good, to guard carefully the door that leads to partisan warfare.” While trying to stay nonpartisan, they also passed a resolution saying that the Ohio Grange Executive Committee should examine proposed legislation for both the nation and Ohio. When there was legislation favorable for the Ohio State Grange, a petition should be made up and sent to all subordinate Granges. They are to then sign the petition.

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118 Knepper, *Ohio and Its People*, 278.
119 Ibid.
120 Ibid, 276.
and send it back to the State Grange where they will forward it to the correct representative, whether that be state or national.\textsuperscript{122} They are also to remonstrance when legislation is detrimental to the interests of the Grange.\textsuperscript{123} Chinese immigration reform was an issue that they never mentioned, but they took a stance on immigration in general. While these issues could be seen as partisan, they got around it by the Ohio State Grange coming to a consensus, with all in agreement. In the larger nation it was partisan, but within the organization, they were all in agreement; therefore, it was nonpartisan.

Another reason that the Ohio State Grange may not have brought up the idea of Chinese immigration directly was that it was not an issue in Ohio. There were farm labor shortages that Chinese laborers could have helped to alleviate. However, being that there was only a small Chinese population in Ohio, it is not known if it would have worked. The Chinese that were in Ohio were based primarily in urban areas, not in agricultural areas. So, the farmer did not often have contact with Chinese immigrants.

For example, in 1879, the same year that the Fifteen Passenger Bill was being considered, the Ohio State Grange said that there was no North, no South, no East, and no West, but an entire country. They were working towards the betterment of the entire country, not just parts. They made a resolution that they supported everyone, regardless of class or industry: “Resolved, That we are opposed to class legislation, whether in professions or industries of life, but would give each and all their just legitimate rights.”\textsuperscript{124} They did not want to hold anyone back from succeeding in this country. In 1882, the same year that Chinese Exclusion was signed into law, the state Grange of Ohio made their stance even more explicit. They were talking about Chinese immigrants.

\textsuperscript{122} Ibid, 32.
\textsuperscript{123} Ibid, 32.
\textsuperscript{124} Ibid, 46.
without saying Chinese. Farmers had often described the Chinese as industrious and honest, the type of people that they were welcoming in 1882. They still only wanted to keep out criminals, paupers, and burdens on the taxpayers:

…while we welcome industrious, honest, sincere lovers of liberty and justice from all lands, who desire to become in spirit and life, Americans, and participate with us in developing our immense dormant resources, thus enriching their adopted country as well as themselves, we earnestly petition Congress to modify our laws so as to prevent anarchist, criminals, and paupers from foreign countries landing upon our soil.\footnote{125}

The Grangers did not characterize newly arriving immigrants as honest and hard working as they did with Chinese immigrants. When they referenced keeping out “paupers, anarchists, and criminals,” they were likely referring to people coming from continental Europe, because of how they had referred to them in the past as well as how they were seen as bringing long standing feuds with them.\footnote{126} The Chinese, on the other hand, were docile and easy to work with and handle, according to farmers.

Chinese Exclusion was a hotbed issue at the time, but the Ohio State Grange throughout the period were welcoming to industrious immigrants. The annual Grange convention was held in December of 1882 while the Chinese exclusion was passed and signed in May of that same year. By saying immigrants “from all lands,” they referred to Chinese immigrants. The National Grange in 1882 failed to endorse the exclusion. They were asked to endorse it by the California representative, but decided it was not what was

\footnote{125 T.R. Smith, \textit{Journal of Proceedings of the Tenth Annual Session of the Ohio State Grange of Patrons of Husbandry} (Springfield: Ohio Farmers’ Advance Printers, 1882), 48.}

\footnote{126 Edward Self, “The Abuse of Citizenship,” \textit{The North American Review}, vol. 136 no. 319. (June 1883), 542. This article is particularly helpful because it was written when the Grange was discussing these same issues. It shows how much of the problem was European in nature.}
best for the entire country. The resolution was quashed in the Good of the Order Committee. The committee was chaired by Ohio State Grange Master J.H. Brigham, showing how the Ohio Grange not only stood with the National Grange on their Chinese immigration stance but they also helped to formulate it.

The debate over Chinese immigration continued in national politics, and the Ohio Grange too weighted in. They still did not mention Chinese by name but were blunter in 1882. “We must insist upon legislation as will give equal protection to all.” They wanted equal protection for not only themselves, the farmers, but for other laboring classes and everyone in the country, as well. They did not limit it to only citizens, but all people in the country. The Ohio State Grange went on to congratulate legislators that are in accordance with Grange ideology. “We heartily endorse those of our legislators who stood firm against encroachments of monopolies… and all legislation tending to oppress the people.” The Chinese Exclusion Act was passed just a few months prior to this annual convention. While they were interested in themselves and the interstate legislation, they also cared about all of the people oppressed in this country. Chinese laborers were oppressed by the legislation banning them from entering the country. By explicitly referring to the oppressed people, the Grange was referring to the law that prohibited Chinese laborers from entering the country. This law was oppressive to the Chinese and the farmers, because they could not get laborers.

The Ohio State Grange in 1887 duplicated their 1879 resolution and passed it again. They were still in favor of immigration reform that only kept out “anarchist,

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128 Ibid, 53.
130 Ibid, 51, 1882.
criminals, and paupers.” They still valued comers from “all lands.” Not only were they welcoming of people from all lands, but the Ohio Grange praised the Chinese for their work in agriculture. In the Masters opening address, he compared the Emperor of China to many of the Great founding fathers: George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and John Adams. They were all farmers. “Farming …stands equal in dignity to any other calling… the Emperor of China, in order to show his respect to agriculture… he held the plow and turned the furrow.” Master Brigham, showed the rich history that the Chinese civilization had as well as compared their leader to some of the great leaders in the United States. Brigham then discussed how the “social, moral and political character of the country depended on the conditions of the tillers of the soil.” He discussed the United States while referencing back to China. Their leader still tilled the soil and cared about the agricultural endeavors of his people. Because the Emperor of China valued agriculture, it is felt that so did the laborers that practice it both in China and abroad. Thus, Chinese agriculturalists would be welcomed in Ohio because tillers of the soil are moral and intelligent.

The Ohio Grange continued to stand up for farmers’ issues and rights, these issues included representations and Chinese immigration. In 1888, just after the Scott Act was passed, the Ohio State Grange continued with their stance on keeping out the unwanted and burdensome classes such as criminals, anarchists, and paupers. They also took a stand that agricultural labor is not being represented well. They demanded rights for

132 Ibid, 17.
133 Ibid, 17.
agricultural laborers both in Ohio and the nation. It is worth quoting at length to show how they were thinking not only of Ohio farmers but of the larger laboring class that includes the Chinese immigrants:

Recognizing the fact that agriculture furnishes employment for such a large body of laborers engaged in tilling the soil and believing also that agriculturist of the country have not been represented in State or National legislation, as the interests of this class demand and which they are justly entitled, and believing that the interests of all classes would be enhanced and protected by wise legislation looking to the fostering care and protection this great industry in all departments demands.\(^{135}\)

The Ohio State Grange stated that they were not being protected and taken care of by the government. They were not being represented in either the state or national government. The farmers of Ohio felt that they were not being represented by their elected officials and they also realized that they needed to have proper interactions with their elected officials. The Master of the Ohio State Grange in September of 1895 responded to a call for petitions to elected officials, by stating that he did not endorse the idea. He argued that petitions have little effect, they are thrown in the trash: “they are like a snow flake on a river, a moment of white and then gone forever.”\(^{136}\) He argued that “fool farmers” were the only people that petition the government. All others rely on people in Washington D.C. to handle their petitioning and that is what he advocated for: lobbying Congress at the correct time, not bombarding them with petitions. Ohio farmers praised Chicago in 1893, for their willingness to break from the national government. Chicago was only

\(^{135}\) Ibid, 32.

doing what the national government was doing to the Chinese. The national government had broken the contract with the Chinese by excluding them.\footnote{137} If they had been represented, Chinese exclusion may not have passed. In 1900, 52 percent of the Ohio population was still rural. They were still the majority block in Ohio politics but they were being ignored in favor of the industrial sector.\footnote{138} When they said that classes should be protected, they were not only talking about their own farming class but the class of other farmers and agricultural laborers as well, including the Chinese. By 1888, many of the issues that the Grange advocated for had already been approved by Congress or the State Legislature. Railroad legislation, mutual insurance, dog tags, wool storage houses, and pure foods laws had all already been made law. Chinese immigration reform and temperance were the two major points that were still not in accordance with Grange ideology.\footnote{139} These two points were what they were referring to when they said that they were not being represented.

The Ohio State Grange discussed how they were not being represented well by the elected officials of the state and the country, \textit{The Ohio Farmer}, Ohio’s premier agricultural newspaper, took it one step further; they argued that the elected officials represent the city. The newspaper reported the various ways that taxation was hurting the American farmer. In the piece “Principles of Taxation,” \textit{The Ohio Farmer} examined how farmers who testified before the commission were treated differently from other respondents. They were asked different simpler versions of the questions asked. The

\footnote{137} “Excluding the Chinese,” \textit{The Ohio Farmer}, June 1, 1893, 10. Chicago did not agree with limited openings on Sundays. They did not agree with the new regulation. Chicago protested and broke faith with the national government. \textit{The Ohio Farmer}, argued that it was okay for Chicago to break faith with the national government because the national government had broken faith with the Chinese government and its people. They use the breaking of contracts and treaties as breaking faith.\footnote{138} Knepper, \textit{Ohio and Its People}, 278.\footnote{139} Dowler, \textit{Ohio State Grange}, 153.
farmer was asked questions with “only slight changes or revisions.” The Ohio Farmer also spent time looking at how the cities were getting more representation and how city politicians did not know what the farmers of Ohio needed. In the June first edition, the differences between the farm and the city are laid out. Farmers were affected by labor laws that had been passed banning children from working and limiting women’s ability to work. These laws were made by urban politicians; the laws were implemented because it was a problem in the cities not in the country. The Ohio Farmer continued on that on the farm women and children were needed to perform vital farm labor, not only in the house but in the fields and barns as well. In the city, brick layers did not bring their wives and children to work with them because they were not needed. The labor systems in the two areas were not the same and making laws that fixed one section, hurt the other area. The article went on to show how the laws had prevented farmers from using their children’s labor because they followed the law. The affect that the law had on rural Ohio was that it brought in more foreign laborers that were willing to break the law and let their wives and children work: “foreigners are increasing proportionally on our farms because, as a rule, they are more willing than American farmers to make farm help of their wives and children.” The split between urban and rural parts of Ohio is seen within the article. They did not know what each other needed, but laws were made by the urban politicians that affected the farmers. By not understanding how the farm ran, these laws hurt the Ohio farmer. The issue did not penetrate into the Chinese exclusion debate within the state, as both areas had similar thinking on allowing Chinese to enter the country and Ohio.

140 “Principles of Taxation,” The Ohio Farmer, October 12, 1893, 11.
141 “The Law of Wages,” The Ohio Farmer, June 1, 1893, 10.
Steadfast in their non-partisan belief, in 1892 just after the Geary Act passed, the Ohio Grange again did not name any specific country to ban immigration from. However, this year was different; there was a large Cholera outbreak in Europe. With a large cholera outbreak in Russia, Spain, and other parts of Europe, the Ohio State Grange asked for restriction for a term of one year from places that were affected by the cholera outbreak. This was the first year that they used the word restriction to describe their immigration reform policy. They still did not mention any nation by name, just the countries where cholera was prevalent. The Ohio Farmer, in October of 1893 reported the streamliner Russia had to be quarantined after six passengers died aboard and they exhibited cholera symptoms. The statistics from the outbreak did not list any deaths in China. The majority of deaths around the world came from Russia, Spain and the United States. With the Geary Act extending Chinese exclusion and making Chinese immigrants register, one would think that Chinese immigrants would be mentioned, but again they were not. There was not discussion of the Geary Act or endorsement of it. They only wanted to “prohibit immigration injurious to our country” to keep out the sick and burdensome.

Throughout much of 1893, The Ohio Farmer focused on the Geary law that passed the previous year. Starting in January the newspaper reported that the Supreme Court was examining the constitutionality of the law. The newspaper reported, “Chinese exclusion was presumed unconstitutional by a United States judge.”

143 “General News,” The Ohio Farmer, October 12, 1893, 11.
144 Encyclopedia Britannica, 265.
146 “General News Items,” The Ohio Farmer, January 26, 1893, 11.
followed the Geary Act as it traveled through the supreme court, to when the law was ruled constitutional. *The Ohio Farmer* was not in favor of the law. They condemned the Pacific Coast and the politicians who pushed for the passage of the law:

The decision of the Supreme Court of the United States, declaring the Geary Chinese exclusion law of 1892 constitutional, thus making it the duty of the government to remove all unregistered Chinese, has brought the subject to the immediate attention of the people of this country. They have examined the law critically, and universally condemned it. It was passed at the dictation of political hoodlums on the Pacific Coast.¹⁴⁷

The newspaper went on to compare the United States’ treatment of Chinese immigrant laborers to Russia’s treatment of Russian Jews, stating Americans should be ashamed of how they have treated the Chinese, and that they were no better than the Russians:

and is on a par with the act of Russia in banning Jews from her borders. America denounces Russia’s intolerance, and demonstrates her insincerity and inconsistency by doing the same thing, and substantially for the same reason. Let America hide her head in shame, and never lift up in defense of human freedom and all the sacred God-given rights of humanity. … The Chinese come here to work. They will work for what wages they can. They are faithful servants.¹⁴⁸

The article ends with who they assume is the real culprit pushing for and extending Chinese Exclusion: politicians. Politicians did not have to worry about losing the Chinese vote and Chinese Exclusion was an easy way to gain support:

¹⁴⁷ “Excluding the Chinese” *The Ohio Farmer*, June 1, 1893, 10.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.
They do not seek a voice in the administration of the governmental affairs, but are willing to submit to the American government. They have no political power, and hence become the subjects of the wrath of American politics. They can be handled with impunity; “without gloves” for they have no votes. The fact that no Chinaman has yet been a burden on our people- that you do not find them in our almshouses, insane asylums, and jails- does not count. … It is the Geary law that is wrong … The Chinese in this country are peculiarly susceptible to good influences; many others are not. We would favor a law to deport every anarchist, pauper, and criminal who lands in this country, but let the inoffensive and industrious Chinese alone.\textsuperscript{149}

\textit{The Ohio Farmer} aligned its stance with that of the Ohio State Grange.\textsuperscript{150} Both, representing the same constituency, wanted only to keep out criminals, anarchists, and paupers. While the Grange did not mention the Chinese by name, the newspaper did. They wanted to keep the Chinese immigrants in the country; they described the Chinese as inoffensive and industrious and said they should be able to stay in the United States. The Chinese did not fall into the category of offensive immigrants. They were not paupers or criminals; they were industrious, and the farmers and Grangers alike were in favor of industrious workers. Evidenced by Kansas State Grange Master M.W. Westgate in 1902, when he said, “if the Chinese would furnish efficient and cheaper farm labor

\textsuperscript{149} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{150} While \textit{The Ohio Farmer} was not the official newspaper of the Ohio State Grange they aligned with each other on many issues. Grange news and activities were printed regularly in the paper. The newspaper also enjoyed a large readership among Grange members.
than can now be obtained it would be a direct advantage to the farmer."\textsuperscript{151} Farmers needed cheap, efficient, and industrious labor. The Chinese could supply it.

The Chinese were not only inoffensive and industrious but they were assimilable. While labor organizations such as the AFL preached that the Chinese were unassimilable, the newspaper showed that the Chinese were very much assimilable. They stated: “most of the [the Chinese] are members of a sabbath school class, and have bank accounts. They work wherever work is to be obtained, and save their money. Not one has been an object of charity. Let us find some worthier object of persecution and oppression.”\textsuperscript{152} The Chinese were trying to become American and assimilate. They went to sabbath classes to learn the Christian faith; they opened bank accounts and saved money, proving that they were staying in the country. This showed that the AFL had characterized Chinese immigrants incorrectly. \textit{The Ohio Farmer} ends with their most bold statement, “the Geary law is unjust, absurd, and unchristian.”\textsuperscript{153} They were steadfast in their defense of the Chinese. The Geary law was what was wrong, not the United States Supreme Court and not the Chinese.

In October of that same year the Geary law was again in the news and on the minds of Ohio farmers. The Secretary of the Treasury had recently sent a revised estimate to the Senate to update the cost of deporting the Chinese that did not comply and register under the Geary law. His estimate was 10,333,000 dollars. The price had gone up substantially because steamships had raised their prices for San Francisco to Hong Kong.

\textsuperscript{152} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{153} Ibid.
from 35 to 51 dollars, anticipating the increase in deportations.\textsuperscript{154} The original estimate to deport the unregistered Chinese was six million dollars. That was the estimate right after the Geary law had been decided constitutional by the United States Supreme Court in a non-unanimous decision.\textsuperscript{155} The paper remarked that “the matter presents grave difficulties and complications,”\textsuperscript{156} referring to the deportation of so many Chinese. They proved to be correct when the streamliners raised their rates. The Geary law not only hurt the farmer but it was also detrimental to the American government as well. By enforcing the decision, the government stood to lose millions.

The Geary law was a point of major contention for the Ohio farmers as well as people across the country. Over a hundred delegates went to Pittsburgh, in November 1893, to the National Reform Association’s annual meeting. At this meeting a resolution was passed to “protest against the Chinese exclusion law.”\textsuperscript{157} Delegates were to go back to the areas and remind their elected officials that the United States was a Christian nation and the Geary law was unchristian and needed to be reformed to Christian moral standards.\textsuperscript{158} Readers of \textit{The Ohio Farmer} were some of the delegates and took the advice. There were responses printed in the paper suggesting that there was some limited action taken by the readers to reform the Geary law.

After the successful defense of the Geary law by the Supreme Court, Chinese immigration was not an issue for Ohio farmers and the Ohio State Grange. They were unable to get the Geary law reformed. Thus, immigration reform was not brought up again in the Ohio State Grange until 1902, the same year that the law extending exclusion

\textsuperscript{154} “Washington News,” \textit{The Ohio Farmer}, October 12, 1893, 11.
\textsuperscript{155} “General News,” \textit{The Ohio Farmer}, May 18, 1893, 11.
\textsuperscript{156} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{157} \textit{The Ohio Farmer}, November 23, 1893, 10.
\textsuperscript{158} Ibid.
indefinitely was passed. That year the *Rural New Yorker* asked state Grange Masters from across the United States “Do you think the introduction of Chinese or Japanese labor would be of real interest to the American farmer? Do you think the farmer should oppose the proposed law?” Ohio State Grange Master F. A. Derthick is worth quoting because he is so strongly in favor of Chinese immigration and of the Chinese as a people.

The farmers have neglected their own interests, while all business and manufacturing interests have secured better environment, and are able to pay such wages that farmers cannot necessarily help. I am opposed to Chinese exclusion as people, but favor a strict scrutiny of all coming here from whatever country. The China men here have never assassinated our rulers nor led in a revolt against our laws, and are now building, I am told, a monument to President McKinley in their own country. The hired help question on the farm is the question to-day. We must have laborers.

Master Derthick made multiple points in his response. He first confessed that Chinese exclusion was hurting Ohio farmers in their search for labor. He followed along the same lines that the Ohio State Grange had been espousing since 1879: they only wanted to keep out harmful immigrants. In Derthick’s explanation, the Chinese did not fit the mold for harmful. They have been peaceful citizens that have not killed our leaders, like children of Polish and French immigrants. The Chinese needed to be scrutinized like any other immigrant coming to this country but they did not need to be singled out.

Farmers had held themselves back in other areas so that they fell behind other sectors of

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160 Ibid.
161 Leon Czolosz the assassin of President McKinley was of Polish decent while Charles Guiteau the assassin of President Garfield was of French decent. Both were however, born in the United States.
the economy. By allowing Chinese immigration the farmers would be helping themselves. They did not get good wages because of self-injuries but they could afford cheap Chinese labor and that would be a benefit to the farmer. In previous years, the Chinese had been described as industrious in agricultural endeavors and they would make great workers for farmers.\footnote{See discussion of 1887, for the industrious nature of Chinese farmers.} He ended with the plea that they must have laborers, showing the shortage of labor in the state. Harkening back to the reason that the National Grange would not pass a resolution of support of exclusion in 1877. It had helped only part of the country and caused a labor shortage in other parts.

The Ohio State Grange was not the only group in Ohio to take issue with Chinese immigration legislation. The oldest newspaper in Jackson county, \textit{The Jackson Standard}, reprinted an article on May 4, 1882, titled “The President’s Veto.” Jackson county sits in the southern part of Ohio and was predominantly a rural and agricultural community at the time. They chose to run “The President’s Veto” on the front page of the paper, before much of their own community news and crop reports. The article started off with a rousing, “The overwhelming mass of the American people said Amen with a hearty approval when learning that the President vetoed the infamous Anti-Chinese Bill.” They contested that the majority of Americans did not agree with the bill. This was similar to Grange writings in the way that they described the Chinese laborers as honest and good workers, as well as, how they both were against anti-Chinese legislation based on moral grounding. The article author found the idea of exclusion “despicable and mean to the last degree, without any good reasons for it and in defiance of the best reasons against it.” He felt that there were no good reasons to ban Chinese laborers and there were many good reasons to allow them to continue coming to the United States. The author went on
to state that exclusion is “utterly unworthy of the character of the American people.”

Then came a bold comparison: the author compared the Chinese laborers to the Pilgrims landing at Plymouth Rock. He asserted that both had the right to be in America. The author ended the article with “We are opposed to exclusion in any form, or for any period, or in application to any race that may peacefully seek a home on this continent.” While the author of this article is unknown it had similar rhetoric to that of the Grange. The author however, took the rhetoric a step further than the Grange did. He directly stated that he is against Chinese Exclusion rather than just hinting to it as the Grange did. This also came from an area where the Grange has a strong presence in Ohio.

The Grange, while reluctant to mention the Chinese by name in official sources, did discuss Chinese immigration. They did not come to a clear stance on the issue but it proved that the Grange was aware of the Chinese immigration question. The Grange Visitor reported that at many of the county picnics the Chinese question was brought up. The article only pointed out that the issue was discussed, it did not state whether or not the Grange supported or rejected Chinese immigration. Proving that the local and county Granges discussed the issue gives merit to their official stance of only excluding paupers, criminals, and anarchists. Had the Chinese been the issue, it is likely that they would have named them as one of the three that need to be excluded. The lack of a substantial Chinese population did not stop the Grange from discussing Chinese immigration, as it had become a national issue.

Ohio Senators stood with the Grange on the idea of Chinese exclusion. They were not in favor of it. Stanley Matthews and John Sherman, senators from Ohio during the

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164 “Echoes From the Picnic,” The Grange Visitor, September 5, 1895, 1.
1870s and 1880s, both voted against bills restricting Chinese immigration and fought hard against their passage. Sherman served from March of 1861 to March of 1877 and then again from March of 1881 to Feb of 1887. Matthews was appointed in March of 1877 as Sherman’s replacement and served until March of 1879. Matthews fought hard in his short Senate career to keep Chinese immigration open. He voted against the proposed Fifteen Passenger Bill in 1879. He had many trepidations about the proposed bill, the first being that the opinion of the larger public and his constituents did not understand and were not given time to understand the bill. He argued the Senate rushed into this bill without getting input proper from the people of the country.165

Matthews continued on that Congress has the right to break a treaty as they have broken many peaceful treaties when they issue declarations of war but this is not the same circumstance. He argued that the only reason that Congress wanted to break the legal treaty between China and the United States was because China was not a Christian nation or a fighting nation. He questioned if the treaty were with Great Britain, France, or Germany would the United States wish to break the contract.166 “Would it be consistent with obligations of international law, would it be consistent with the courtesy that prevails in international intercourse, would it be consistent with our own self-respect.”167 Not only was he in agreement with the Ohio State Grange but he used similar rhetoric. The ideas of morality perforated Matthews’ speech. He argued that the United States if they passed this law would not only be doing the immoral thing but also the unchristian

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166 Matthews asserted that if the treaty was it with another Western country that there would be not be a problem. It was because the Chinese were Eastern and largely could not protect themselves against Western advance, they were breaking the treaty.
167 Ibid, 4.
thing. The rhetoric used showed the upbringing of a Christian home that focused on morals, similar to the way that many Grangers were brought up. While Matthews used foreign relations for the basis of his argument, he came to the same conclusion that exclusion should not be in this country. The argument is slightly different but the rhetoric is similar. Both used morality to justify their stance on Chinese exclusion.

Matthews persisted on, asking if China had done anything to break their end of the treaty. He asserted they had not, and since they had not broken their end, what right did the United States have to break their end. After being interrupted, he continued and stated that he did not believe the Representatives from the Pacific Coast as to the severity of the blight they were facing from Chinese immigration. Matthews pointed out that the Chinese immigrants were intelligent, “they know the force and meaning of words, and they understood a good deal about the relation of things.” They could not approach the Chinese and just break the treaty that they understood. The United States needed a good reason to break the treaty. The influx of Chinese immigration to the Pacific Coast was not a good enough reason to break the Burlingame Treaty, according to Senator Matthews.

Matthews then took a turn and attacked the sanctity and hardiness of the United States. “We are told that these people are aliens to us, aliens in thought, aliens in religion, aliens in language, aliens in dress, aliens in race, aliens in every circumstance of civilization, and that their presence is [a] fatal poison to our body-politic. Ah, Mr. President, I thought the American civilization was a robuster child than that.” He showed that the American nation should be able to weather this storm of Chinese

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168 Ibid, 1, 6.
169 Ibid, 6.
170 Ibid, 6.
immigration. They should be able to persevere and continue without breaking the Burlingame Treaty or passing the Fifteen Passenger Bill. He ends his opposition speech with the idea that limiting the Chinese is not a labor issue but a “conflict of the races,” saying that everyone can live on the same planet, why can they not live on the same continent? Senator Matthews was vehemently opposed to any restriction of Chinese. He held many of the same convictions as the Grange did on the issue of Chinese immigration. Matthews attacked the nation as weak if they could not withstand friendly immigration from China. When the idea of adjournment was brought up, Matthews protested not until the issue was resolved. He was passionate to in derailing the proposed bill.

After his career in the Senate, Stanley Matthews went on to become a Supreme Court Justice, where he continued a stance favorable to Chinese laborers. In Yick Wo vs. Hopkins, Matthews and the other Justices found in favor of the Chinese laundry men in San Francisco, ruling the ordinance unconstitutional. They also ruled that while the Chinese were not citizens, they were still entitled to the protections of the Fourteenth Amendment. Matthews wrote the opinion and found that the law was just another attempt to control the Chinese in extralegal ways. Matthews continued his favorable immigration stance throughout his life time.

Hailing from a Grange stronghold, Southern Ohio, Stanley Matthews came from the Cincinnati area. During the Civil War Matthews left his position as the U.S. Attorney

\[\text{\ldots}^{171}\text{ Ibid, 8.}\]
for the Southern District of Ohio to join the Union Army.\textsuperscript{175} Being that he hailed from a Grange stronghold, he had close contact with Grangers. This contact could have affected his Chinese immigration stance. Senator Matthews and the Ohio State Grange both based their opinions of Chinese immigration on moral values. Matthews was never a member of the Grange but shared many of their ideas. He made a career of defending Chinese immigration.

By the close of the nineteenth century, Ohio’s Chinese population was growing. While many were still in the urban areas like Cleveland, there were some in the rural sectors. The consensus that Ohioans had on the ‘Chinese Question’ helped to foster the growth in Chinese immigrants. In 1899, Loo Fook finally saved enough to leave California after eighteen years. He moved to Cleveland Ohio. He opened a laundry that was successful. By 1910 Fook opened a second laundry in Toledo. By 1912 he had made enough to travel back to China and retire. He left his laundries to his children. Inspired by the success of Fook, others from his village in China immigrated to Toledo to open up successful businesses. Fook’s granddaughter Doris Helder recounted her family’s tale and roots to northern Ohio. Her parents had many tasks being some of the first Chinese in the area; they had to maintain the laundry and make sure that their children adapted to American culture.\textsuperscript{176}

The Sing family\textsuperscript{177} provides yet another example of how the Chinese were able to prosper in Ohio and how the consensus of the entire state provided a better place for the Chinese to come to. They also prove that The Ohio Farmer was correctly classifying the

\textsuperscript{176} Liyan Chen, “1 Chinese Family Blazed Trail to Northern Ohio in 1900s,” \textit{Toledo Blade}, September 2, 2012.
\textsuperscript{177} The family name was changed from Fook to Sing by immigration agents.
Chinese. One of the major focuses of Helder’s parents was to make sure that they were adapting to American culture. They went to Sunday school weekly. They did not want to be outcasts; they were here to stay and they were proving it by becoming as American as they could without being allowed to become citizens. They followed the laws of their new country. The children that immigrated to the country after Fook retired were not able to bring their wives. The Page Act and the original Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882 severely limited the Chinese women that could enter the country. The Chinese coming to northern Ohio followed the law and did not bring their spouses.

The Ohio State Grange remained steadfast in their immigration reform policy in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. They fell in line with the ideology of the National Grange. They did not want to ban any certain group, nationality, or race of immigrants but keep out only the ones that were going to be a burden to the American system: anarchist, paupers, and criminals. The Ohio State Grange did not waiver on this policy. They wanted what was best for the American and Ohio farmer. Banning Chinese laborers would not have been what was best for the farmer; they needed cheap labor to keep their farms prosperous. The rhetoric that they espoused was based on good morals and doing the right thing. Ohio farmers fought for the possibility of having Chinese immigration.

Much of Ohio was in tune with the Grange’s stance on Chinese immigration. Farmers, newspaper editors, and Ohio Senators from across the state were all using similar rhetoric, that of morals and wanting to keep Chinese immigration open. They all had slightly different reasoning but they were able to realize that Chinese immigration should be allowed and kept open. The Grange used a mix of moral values and economics.

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178 Chen, “F Family.”
to come to their stance, while Senator Stanley Matthews used legal and moral reasons to come to his stance. Finally, the editors of *The Ohio Farmer* used a mix of economics and religion to come to their stance. While they were all a little different, they were able to form a consensus across the state. This consensus led to the growth of Chinese immigration to the state. The growth happened notably in Cleveland and Toledo northern cities. There were others spread out in the state. This mirrored the larger United States. California had the majority of the Chinese population, with a smaller amount spread out over the rest of the United States. With Ohio as a microcosm of the larger United States, did the rest of the country feel the same way? California provides a good counter to Ohio. While Ohio had reached a consensus on the ‘Chinese Question,’ California had many different views on how to handle Chinese immigration.
CHAPTER 3

CALIFORNIA: ECONOMICS THEN RACISM

Nineteenth-century farmers of California showed a range of reactions to Chinese immigration. Some were pro-Chinese immigration while others were anti-Chinese immigration. By the late nineteenth century, many of the farmers in the state were pro-Chinese immigration, but there were farmers on both ends of the spectrum more tended to favor allowing Chinese immigration, not all on the same level and rate, but they still wanted to allow Chinese into the country so that they could work on their farms. This can be attributed to different reasons: the Chinese laborers had proved themselves to be good workers time and time again, and the Chinese were also a more economically practical form of labor for farmers trying to run a profitable farm. Chinese laborers were paid less and worked harder and more productively than white laborers and the population was more spread out in the rural parts of California than it was in the urban areas, such as San Francisco. The population diffusion helped farmers to see Chinese more as fellow human beings and less as the stereotypes that they were portrayed as in the cites. Thus, racism was subservient to economics and work ethic in the later parts of nineteenth century. By examining nineteenth-century California farmers, it is revealed that they had a closer relationship with Chinese laborers, allowing the farmers to form their own opinions of
Chinese rather than let the stereotypes from the city influence their judgment. The split between urban and rural California was an important factor that led to Chinese exclusion.

The range of Chinese inclusion and exclusion went past the California farmer and to the entire population of the state. The Chinese are “peaceable, industrious and economical, apt to learn and quite as efficient as white laborers,” said former Republican California Governor and railroad magnate, Leland Stanford. Stanford stated this with regard to the completion of the western portion of the Central Pacific railroad. He also claimed that without Chinese labor the railroad would not have been completed on time and contracts would have been left unfulfilled. “Industrious, peaceable, economical, and apt to learn” were the same characteristics that farmers described when they discussed the Chinese. While Governor Stanford had other motives for praising Chinese laborers, this statement still showed that there was not a consensus on Chinese laborers in California. Chinese were praised and favored when they were needed, but when they were no longer needed they were treated poorly and excluded. Along with Stanford, the farmers of California were pro-Chinese and wanted to keep Chinese labor flowing freely in the state. There were many different reasons that the Californian farmers wanted to keep Chinese labor. The farmers were mainly in favor of Chinese labor for economic reasons. California farms were different from farms in other areas of the county: they were larger and more diverse. While eastern and midwestern farms were typically smaller

179 Vaught, “Orchardist’s Point of View,” 575. Pierce on his almond ranch had a good relationship with his hired hands both white and Chinese. In his journals he referred to them by first names when discussing a singular worker or “the boys” when discussing multiple workers. He knew his workers and trusted them.


in size and run by a single-family, California farms were typically larger and run as an agribusiness.\textsuperscript{182} The average size of the California farm was 402 acres, as compared to the national average of 135 acres and ninety-nine acres in Ohio.\textsuperscript{183} The size of farms in California increased the need for laborers; a single family could not have farmed that many acres by themselves. Because of the large volume of Chinese present, they easily filled the gap in the labor need. Historian of California labor, Vicki Ruiz, examined Mexican women and unionization. She shows that farming in California had switched from largely staple crops to smaller orchards and berry farms by the 1870s.\textsuperscript{184} The farms were smaller in size, but they needed a larger amounts of labor than staple crops. Fruits and berries required attention throughout the year, not just during planting and harvest. The switch from staple crops to fruits and berries increased the labor requirements. Berries and fruits required constant pruning and care, while staple crops were largely self-sustaining throughout much of the year. Comparatively, Ohio also faced a labor shortage at certain times of the year but they had relatively few Chinese, most residing in the urban areas. The farmers of California came to need Chinese labor, and therefore, they defended Chinese immigration.

**Chart 1.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>United States</th>
<th>California</th>
<th>Ohio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>199 Acres</td>
<td>466 Acres</td>
<td>114 Acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>153 Acres</td>
<td>482 Acres</td>
<td>111 Acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>135 Acres</td>
<td>402 Acres</td>
<td>99 Acres</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{182} U.S. Census Bureau, Farm Census 1880, 87., Rolle and Verge, *California*, 266.
\textsuperscript{183} U.S Census Bureau, Farm Census 1880, 87.
\textsuperscript{185} U.S Census Bureau, 1880 U.S. Census: Volume 3 Report on the Production of Agriculture, 59.
The split in California seemed to lay along geographic lines rather than class lines. The urban centers of California (controlled by the Workingmen’s Party and unions) were staunchly anti-Chinese, while the agricultural areas dominated by the Grange appeared to be more anti-exclusion. This was because of the population density as well as perceptions of the Chinese by the different areas. Irish immigrants made up a huge portion of the immigrant population in California cities. Scholar Mary Roberts Coolidge said that the Irish made up a quarter of the over two-hundred thousand immigrants in the state. She also asserted that the Irish immigrants aligned themselves with the democratic party, because of their mutual interest on the labor issue. The Irish population was largely in the urban areas of the state. Denis Kearney, leader of the Workingmen’s Party and Irish immigrant, settled in San Francisco. While there is still some aspect of class in the urban rural divide, it is the areas themselves and the interactions with Chinese that made the divide, not the class of the people. Gentry farmers as well as small farmers, came to realize that they needed Chinese in order to remain prosperous.

Economics and Chinese work ethic were the major deciding factors in the opinions formed by California farmers. Racism, however, must be considered as well. In many cases racism was intertwined with economics and the thoroughness of work done by Chinese. Racism often becomes of secondary importance, when interwoven with economics. This did not mean that farmers did not have racist tendencies or ideologies-

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186 Coolidge, *Chinese Immigration*, 64.
187 Ibid.
but they were minimized. It meant that California farmers came to depend on Chinese labor and in doing so defended them. Many times, Chinese labor was not the first choice but they were still a choice. California farmers were not egalitarian but they were practical. They wanted laborers to be able to land in this country so that they could hire and exploit them for their own goals and prosperity. Unlike their urban counterpart, farmers still wanted Chinese in the country. They were still racist towards them, just not as racially hostile as the urban population was. Historian of Asian Americans, Beth Lew-Williams, asserts that while economics was a major factor, farms in Central and Southern California experienced labor shortages and needed labors, and Chinese workers filled these roles. She asserts that not only was the prosperous agricultural economy a draw but there was also less racism in Central and Southern California. The Chinese moved from the center of anti-Chinese fervor to the periphery. Labor shortages in the areas promoted white farmers in Central and Southern California to guard and defend their Chinese laborers better. The Chinese were also treated better because of labor shortages and the dependence that farmers had on the Chinese, asserts Lew-Williams. Roger Daniels states that as early as 1848 California agriculturalists were trying to attract and bring in Chinese labor.

Individual farmers demonstrated the dependence that nineteenth-century California farmer had on Chinese labor. California fruit farmer, A. Schell, penned a letter to President Rutherford B. Hayes in December of 1877 with regard to the United States

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190 Lew-Williams, *The Chinese Must Go*, 220. San Bernardino, Monterey, Ventura, Tulare, Los Angeles, and Santa Barbra counties were hit especially hard by labor shortages, and had their Chinese population skyrocket between 1880 and 1890.  
191 Ibid.  
Senate committee that was set up to investigate Chinese immigration. Schell, had experience hiring and working with Chinese laborers in his over thirty years of being fruit farmer in the state. On his farm, he wrote, he used both Chinese laborers and white laborers. He said that he preferred Chinese laborers over white laborers for two different reasons, the first being that Chinese “are peculiarly adapted [sic] to work in woolen mills and vineyards are docile and easily managed [sic] and controlled [sic].”193 He praised Chinese laborers as good workers and who were easy to control, making them the better of the two candidates. He went on to characterize white laborers as drunks and bad workers: “white laborers when they get a few dollars ahead go off on a drunk and spree.”194 Schell discussed how he would rather keep his Chinese laborers, but feared that his farm would face arson if he kept his Chinese labor over his white labor.195 By the late 1870s and 1880s Schell’s farm was typical of Southern California farms.196

In his letter to President Hayes, Schell stated that he had gone before the Senate investigating committee in California in 1876 and testified on behalf of the Chinese. Of the six State Senators on the committee, none of them were friendly toward the Chinese cause. Schell went on to say “there never could be a more one [-] sided affair” than the committee that he testified before.197 He believed that the Chinese were not getting adequate representation in the California state legislature. He told the President to take what he heard with some skepticism because the Chinese were not being fairly represented. “This out cry [sic] and foray against Chinaman on the grounds that he

193 A. Schell to President Hayes Dec. 12, 1877.
194 Ibid.
195 Ibid.
196 Ruiz, Cannery Women, 22.
197 A. Schell to Hayes, December 12, 1877. Of the seven members on the committee that Schell testified to four of them represented San Francisco, another two from urban areas, only one from a rural part of California.
injures the laboring white chaps is without foundation [sic].”\(^{198}\) The majority of the people that testified before the State Senate Committee were from San Francisco; very few were from areas that were not urban. Had there been a more diverse group of Senators, Schell believed that the Chinese would have been represented better by a more diverse group.\(^ {199}\)

The National Investigating Committee that Schell spoke of in his letter was headed by Senator Aaron Sargent of California, who concluded that the Chinese immigration was detrimental to California and the West Coast.\(^ {200}\) While that was the official opinion submitted and entered into record, it was not the only one. Senator Oliver P. Morton of Indiana had originally chaired the Committee. He heard much of the testimony and made notes, but died before the Committee had finished its work. Morton’s notes were published and entered into the Congressional Record. Hearing the same testimony, he came to the conclusion that the “investigation failed to prove that California had suffered either morally or economically from the presence of the Chinese.”\(^ {201}\) Schell went one step further then Morton, when he said, “the condition of the laboring white chaps is much better in this state when nearly all the Chinamen are congregated [sic], than in the Eastern States where no Chinaman prevails.”\(^ {202}\) California farmers were at an advantage because it had so many Chinese laborers. They were able to do more than the Eastern states who faced labor shortages frequently. Not only were the

\(^{198}\) Ibid.
\(^{199}\) Ibid.
\(^{200}\) Luther W. Spoehr, “Sambo and Heathen Chinee: Californians’ Racial Stereotypes in the Late 1870s,” \textit{Pacific Historical Review} vol. 43 no. 2 (May, 1973): 185-205. In this article Spoehr used the same Senate Investigating Committee as evidence to conclude that the racial stereotypes with based on racist ideology.
\(^{202}\) Schell to Hayes.
white workers in California in a better position than their brethren in the East, but this success was due to having Chinese laborers, something that industrial urban centers feared and tried to limit.

Schell’s closing paragraph is worth quoting at length. He reiterated that the Chinese in California were being disparaged and that the national legislature was the best hope for keeping Chinese laborers flowing. He also showed that he had spoken with his California officials and that they were too set in their ways to be persuaded to a more pro-Chinese stance:

I hope the government as far as lies in its powers will not let great wrong be perpetrated upon the defenseless Chinaman—nor that the treaty existing between our government and China will be modified to appease this unreasonable out cry. I am formally acquainted with both Sargent and Booth, also Magton and Pachieo- but they are all against the Chinaman it is no use to say anything to them. If the Chinaman has any friend at Washington perhaps it would be well to let him read this letter as well as yourself.203

Schell said he had talked to the local inspectors and local elected officials, but they were so entrenched in anti-Chinese sentiment that it was useless to try and persuade them. The only hope that the Chinese laborers had, lay with the national government in Washington. Schell urged the President to pass the letter along to any elected official that was friendly towards the Chinese cause. The anti-Chinese sentiments of Sargent and Booth, both from San Francisco, as opposed to Schell, who was in a rural area, show that there was a split between the urban and rural areas on how Chinese immigration should be handled.

203 Ibid.
The letter to President Hayes came a year after Schell had testified before the California Senate and the committee to investigate Chinese immigration. In his testimony, Schell was less pro-Chinese immigration than he purported to be in his letter. In his testimony he stated: “I find there to be good and bad laborers among all classes. I prefer to employ white men when I can get them, but they cannot be had, and I am obligated to take Chinese. Were it not for Chinaman, much of my work would be left undone.” When he testified, he said he preferred white labor, but in his letter to the President, he said he preferred Chinese labor and feared for his farm if he dismissed his white labor. Was it the intervening time that changed his mind, or was it anonymity that allowed him to speak his thoughts? Schell felt that the Chinese were not represented well at the investigation; that could have led him to water down his testimony, as to not seem completely pro-Chinese. He still recognized the fact that he needed Chinese laborers to run his farm and tend to the livestock, but he did not say he preferred them. Because Schell did not know Hayes, he could share his personal feelings to the President without being attacked for them.

Apart from preferring white labor, Schell was still an avid proponent of Chinese labor. He discussed how Chinese were good workers, educated, and committed to their employers:

I never met but one Chinaman who could not read and write his own language, and I have met a great many white men that could not do it. ...so far as the labor element is concerned, I think they [Chinese] are an important element in this State. How you may be affected in the city I

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204 California State Legislature, *Chinese Immigration; Its Social, Moral, and Political Effect: Report to the California State Senate of its Special Committee on Chinese Immigration*, (Sacramento: State Office, 1878), 149.
cannot say, but I know in the country, if the Chinese element of labor was taken away from us it would be a great detriment. In the country there is no competition between Chinamen and white men, but I find the difference: the Chinaman will stay and work, but the white man, as soon as he gets a few dollars, will leave and go elsewhere.

Schell not only showed that Chinese were educated and loyal, but he demonstrated the difference between the urban and rural parts of California. In the rural area where he lived, he needed Chinese labor because there was not enough white labor to sustain all the farms in the area. Even if there were enough white laborers to sustain all the farms, they were likely to leave after only a short time. Chinese laborers typically stayed until they were dismissed by their employer. Schell closed with a final thought: “but in the country we cannot depend on him [white laborers]. I do not know how it is in the city.”

The country population did not know what the city needed and the city urbanites did not know what the country needed. Ideally, there needed to be input from all areas of the state and country. That was not the case in California, as San Francisco controlled the debate on exclusion.

Schell was not the only farmer that realized that Chinese labor was what made farming economical for California farmers. Others, including Joaquin Miller, a staple crop farmer in Central California, joined him in 1907. Miller wrote an article as a response to Chinese exclusion. He had lived and worked through over two decades of exclusion and saw the detrimental effects that it had on California. Miller took the economic angle even further than Schell did, agreeing that Chinese should have free

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205 Ibid.
206 Ibid, 150.
access to the United States. He showed that not only had banning Chinese laborers hurt the farmer, but it also hurt the American consumer.  

Eventually, because farmers had to pay more for labor, the price of farm goods would have to rise so that farmers could continue to make a profit.

Miller observed that average farmers in California were barely making ends meet. He first discussed how he was an average small farmer in California; with his land and crops, he was able to pay his taxes and have a little bit left over. It was getting harder every year, however. Prices were skyrocketing from seven dollars per ton to put hay in the barn to fifteen dollars per ton in 1907 alone. That was over a one-hundred percent increase in just one year. Miller attributed this increase to the labor shortage brought on by Chinese exclusion.  

Farmers were unable to get laborers to harvest and deliver the hay they needed to feed their livestock. Without hay and other crops, meat prices would go up, according to Miller. The hay was there, Miller said, “there are not tons, but hundreds and hundreds of tons, of hay rotting and rustling in the dust only a few miles from my back door.”  

The problem was finding people to harvest and transport this hay.

Miller had an idea that would get the hay harvested and delivered to the Californian farmers. He wanted to “Repeal the Chinese Exclusion Act, and also make it safe and agreeable for the Japanese, and you will have all the cheap labor that you like, and at your own price.” Repealing Chinese exclusion would allow more laborers to come to the country. More laborers would take away the power of the few that were demanding higher prices for their labor. Rural laborers had too much autonomy over their

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208 Ibid, 422.
209 Ibid.
210 Ibid, 423.
labor. Workers negotiated their own wage; wages were not decided on across the board, or by crops prices. Laborers in the urban areas did not have the same autonomy over their labor. The way to bring labor prices back down was to bring laborers back. Bringing laborers back required exclusion to be repealed.

Without Asian immigration, farmers were the only group to suffer from higher labor costs. Farmers had to raise their prices to continue making a profit. “You are paying just about triple the price now. Why? Because the farmer is paying more than a triple price for his labor.”211 It was only when consumer good prices went up that people began to notice there was a problem. Farm issues were not an issue to the general public until it affected them directly; this further showed the divide between the urban and rural sector. Miller then stated that no laborer from the city, whether black or white, wants to come to the agricultural districts and work, saying, “no laborer in the city wants to get to work on the farm, be he white or black.”212 On the other hand the “Cantonese” and “little brown Nipponese” desired to come to the fields and work. He estimated that they would come by the thousands.213 Miller stated; “the little yellow Cantonese laborer and the little brown Nipponese, growing close to the ground and able to get down to the work they so much need, want to get into the fields by thousands and thousands.”214 If allowed, these new laborers would bring down prices and save “many a good man, the real laborer” from bankruptcy and hard times.215 But because labor leaders and politicians in the city

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211 Ibid, 424.
212 Ibid.
213 Ibid.
214 Ibid.
215 Ibid.
were staunchly anti-Chinese and did not support repealing Chinese exclusion, Miller asserted, prices would continue to go up.216

Miller agreed with Schell, and he too explained how the Chinese were better suited to field work than their white counterparts. He stated that he could have had white laborers for double the price, but that was not the only drawback that he faced. Miller stated: “even when I could get white labor to help me, they didn’t know their work as Chinese do; besides, they were sometimes, drunken and dirty, body and soul.”217 He asserted that white laborers were drunkards and dirty, both in their physical body as well as their soul. They were morally not good people.218 He described the Chinese laborers as “growing close to the ground,” meaning that they were short, the perfect size to do agricultural work; they could bend down for hours and their backs would not hurt.219 This is important in not only berry farming, as Schell was in, but also for the staple crop farming which Miller did. Chinese were needed to gather and bind the crop after it had been felled. As Miller noted earlier, they were also needed to transport the crops from the field to the barn.

In his closing statement, Miller attacked unions and urban centers. He stated that the farming population was larger than that of the city and that the city dwellers, while influential, should not have had as much power bestowed on them as they did. “Remember that all San Francisco put together is only a very small portion of California, and that all California is only a small portion of the United States.”220 Miller did not

216 Ibid.
217 Ibid, 425.
219 Ibid.
220 Ibid, 426.
believe that San Francisco and California were the most important factor in the debate over Chinese exclusion. While San Francisco and California did have large populations of Chinese, the issue affected the entire nation and needed to be addressed by the federal government and the nation as a whole. He believed that the city (San Francisco) had been given too much power in the decision over Chinese immigration. Denis Kearney and the Workingmen’s Party controlled much of the Chinese immigration debate in San Francisco and throughout much of the state. Kearney’s forcefulness scared off many potential allies, including the California State Grange. The farmers in California did not ally themselves with the Workingmen’s Party, and at many times found themselves at odds with them. At the 1878-79 State Constitutional Convention, the Grange and the Workingmen’s Party were two of the largest voting blocs; however, they could not agree on many things. Chinese immigration was one of the issues that they disagreed on. The Grange was in favor of immigration while, the Workingmen supported limiting immigration. Miller did not like the fact that such a small part of the state was controlling something that affected farmers so profoundly, stating “and yet you, a small, contentious portion and faction of a single city, assume to say that California and all this vast interior of new homes shall let their crops rot to humor your blindness, which has already doubled, trebled the price of your own bread!” He hated that people in San Francisco had so much power in the debate over exclusion and that they could not see that it was hurting them as well.

221 Rolle and Verge, California, 217.
Many others agreed with Miller’s assertion, proclaiming that San Francisco and California were disproportionally represented in the debate over exclusion. Eliot Grinnell Mears, the Executive Secretary for the Survey on Race Relations that was headquartered at Stanford University, opened his article with: “In the field of Oriental-American relations, the significance of California is out of all proportion to its areas and population.”

California needed to be considered, but only within limits and proportionally to the rest of the country, not to their area and Chinese population. Throughout the essay, he argued that California, while important to understand, is not the be all end all in Chinese immigration; other views and places also need to be taken into account. Mears, too, discussed how the Chinese were “docile” and “easy going.” They did not seek equality and readily filled the labor gap that California had. He stated “they [the Chinese] supplied a demand which had never been satisfied by native or other foreign workers; therefore, they deserve their due credit.”

The Chinese were largely responsible for the upstart of California. When the Chinese were needed as laborers, they were accepted more readily and they were treated better. Once the labor need was filled, the Chinese became detested and the exclusion debate started.

As industrialization swept California, agricultural-based rural Chinese laborers moved to the cites and higher wages. The Chinese laborers went where the money was; therefore, they moved to the cities. “The Chinese, who had done most of the truck farming half a century ago, have left the country for the city and are seldom seen in

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225 Ibid, 201.
226 Ibid, 201.
227 Rolle and Verge, California, 191.
agricultural pursuits,” said Mears. The city drew not only Chinese laborers away from the country, but white laborers as well. Both groups followed the money and went to the city, leaving the rural agricultural areas with a greater shortage of laborers. Because of the labor shortages in the country, food prices skyrocketed, as Miller discussed. Chinese laborers moving to the city also caused them to be more compressed and less spread out. This concentration made them easy targets for industrial laborers and the Workingmen’s Party. Both the AFL and the Workingmen’s Party focused on Chinese immigration within California cities, notably San Francisco. Farmers in the rural parts of California were not concerned with Chinese laborers as long as they showed up and worked hard. Work ethic, timely attendance, and the ability to stay longer than a few days, were qualities that the Chinese possessed that made them desirable. White workers, on the contrary, would leave after only a few days of work. Chinese workers stayed until the work was done, while white workers often left after the first pay. Historian Cletus Daniel discussed California farmers’ opinions on white workers as “slothful and irresponsible.” Farmers could not depend on white workers. Hence, farmers preferred Chinese laborers to white laborers.

Urbanite interpretations and images of the Chinese contradicted rural perceptions in California. In the urban parts of California, where there was a higher population of Chinese immigrants, people were generally in favor of exclusion. This can be attributed

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228 Mears, “California’s Attitude,” 206.
to the density of population, as well as to the popular stereotypes that were perpetuated in
cities through illustrations, images, and plays.\textsuperscript{233} These illustrations and images showed
the Chinese immigrant as small, easily manipulated, dark and cunning. The Chinese were
portrayed as not being able to think for themselves. They acted how they were told and
they did as they were told; however, they did not always listen, and thus got themselves
into trouble.\textsuperscript{234} Many of these images first appeared in popular magazines that had a large
readership like \textit{Harper’s Weekly} and the \textit{Wasp}.\textsuperscript{235} While these periodicals enjoyed a
nationwide distribution, much of it occurred in urban centers. In the rural areas, the
images were seen, but they were not perceived as literal as they were in the urban centers.
The rural population still viewed the derogatory images but they were not taken as literal
depictions, as many times they were in the cities, especially in the cities where there was
a heavy presence. The images were not taken as literal representations by farmers
because farmers had a closer, more personal relationship with their hired Chinese
laborers. Farmers were also doing what was best for their own self-interest, as well. They
saw that the Chinese were able to think for themselves and handle complex tasks that
were prevalent in berry farming. The personal relationship that they had with Chinese
immigrants led them to form their own opinions, rather than believe the stereotypes
portrayed in the cities.

Illustrations and images were not they only way that the Chinese were
stereotyped. Many plays depicted the Chinese in the United States in a negative light.

University Press, 1999), 1,4,54. and Dave Williams, \textit{The Chinese Other 1850-1925: An Anthology of
\textsuperscript{234} For examples of these illustrations see Robert G. Lee 5, 32, 53. In these images the Chinese are
seen being manipulated into voting a certain way, the dirtiness of a Chinese wedding day, and playing
instruments.
\textsuperscript{235} Lee, \textit{Orientals}, 53, 73, 84.
Two plays in particular show how Californians felt about the Chinese. “Peaceful Expulsion” by Ambrose Bierce is a short dramatic play that showed the Chinese as easy targets. It focused around a speech given by Mountwave, an elected politician, and his workingman colleague Hardhand. In this skit, Mountwave is giving an anti-Chinese speech to Workingmen when a Chinese man enters. He is verbally attacked while being chased away. All the while, Mountwave and his group are singing, “For Chinese expulsion, hurrah! To mobbing and murder, all hail! Away with your justice and law—We’ll make every pagan turn tail.” Chinese in this play faced both verbal attacks as well as possible physical violence. They were attacked for being different, stealing jobs, and being over populated in the United States, according to the play. The chorus song showed that urban Californians did not care about the law, they were open to killing Chinese as long as it meant they would be eliminated.

The second play that illustrated how Chinese were treated and portrayed in California is “The Chinese Must Go” written by Henry Grimm in 1879. While this play was never taken on by professional actors, it was performed multiple times at Anti-Coolie Clubs across California by amateur actors. This play took place in San Francisco and portrayed the Chinese as cunning, devious, and conniving. The play was meant to show how much of a problem the Chinese were in the state, according to the Workingmen. It detailed how Chinese workers would brag about how much work they had and how they were able to make so much money. They worked for cheaper than the American workers, they did not have to support a wife or children in the United States, and they did not eat a lot. This showed that whites perceived Chinese as not only greedy and cunning, but also

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237 Ibid, 97.
as amoral. The lack of Chinese women was also seen as amoral and led to the rise of Chinese prostitution. Not only were Chinese cunning, but they were successful. They took any job they could get no matter the wage. This forced unemployment onto the white population. Finally, this play demonstrated the way that whites perceived the Chinese Six Companies. They were the leaders and protectors of the Chinese. When the white family, in the play, is unable to pay their Chinese laborers, the Chinese Six Companies steps in to get the payment by forcing the white family to sell some of their jewelry. The family is unable to pay because there are no jobs available at a decent wage. The play showed many of the stereotypes against the Chinese in the 1870s and 1880s. These stereotypes were, however, confined to California and centers where there was a large Chinese population. In the Eastern and Midwestern states, Chinese where largely seen as curiosities. In the years of Chinese immigration, Chinese were not seen the same way. They were praised for their industrial character, quiet nature and cleanliness. But because they became competition for white laborers in San Francisco, this view had to be changed to paint the Chinese in a negative light. Largely done in Anti-Coolie Clubs, which were centered in the city, this play showed the urban representation of Chinese, not the Chinese laborers that Schell and Miller described. Historian of the West John R. Wunder said that anti-Chinese actions took different forms in different parts of the West. He asserted that while there were some violent outbreaks, the anti-Chinese forces present in California focused more on forcing Chinese out rather

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238 Ibid, 99-120.  
240 Williams, The Chinese Other, 99-120.  
241 Lee, Orientals, 28.  
242 Yen Ching-Hwang, Coolies and Mandarins: China’s Protection of Overseas Chinese During the Late Ch’ing Period (1851-1911), (Kent Ridge: Singapore University Press, 1985), 209.
than hurting and killing them. He said in other areas of the West the focus was more on violence and less on forcing Chinese out of the area.\textsuperscript{243} California proved to one of the safer places in the West for Chinese. While they were still not treated well and were forced out of their homes, there was over all less violence in California. While helpful, this information needs to be used with some skepticism, the number of anti-Chinese outbreaks was probably higher, because Chinese did not report all of the attacks and violence for fear of further retribution.\textsuperscript{244} The plays illustrate not only how the Chinese were portrayed in the cities but also how they were treated and acted against.

Popular images and representations of Chinese immigrants in plays were not the only reasons that urban dwellers loathed them. As historian Alexander Saxton pointed out in \textit{The Indispensable Enemy}, Chinese immigration into San Francisco picked up in the late 1860s and early 1870s. Immigration came just after there had been an increase in the economy. The increase in immigrant population was not met with a corresponding increase in the availability of jobs. The Chinese came in at the opportune time and capitalized on the newly created jobs. They were seen as driving the economy down by Denis Kearney and his Workingmen’s Party, as well as the AFL.\textsuperscript{245} The AFL asserted that, “whatever business or trade they [the Chinese] enter is doomed for white labor.”\textsuperscript{246} They asserted that Chinese workers pushed white workers out of almost all work in the city, which was not true as Chinese made up only a small portion of the entire population.

\begin{footnotes}
\item[244] Ibid, 214.
\end{footnotes}
The AFL went on to say that it was the Chinese that brought wages down.\textsuperscript{247} They did not recognize that the economy had only stabilized from its rapid climb. In reality, the economy did not decrease; it had merely leveled out. It did not continue to grow, but merely stayed even; however, this was portrayed as a decrease. Rural areas did not face the same issue because their regions had not witnessed a steady climb in wages and jobs. They switched from staple crops to smaller more labor-intensive crops around the same time. This helped to insulate them from one crop draining the soil and allowed them to have steady income year-round. Crops came in at different times, and that led to steadier employment and a better rural economy.\textsuperscript{248}

Stereotypes were only part of the reason that city dwellers were against Chinese immigration. Historian Luther Spoehr, argues that stereotypes only help to fuel the racist sentiment that already existed in California cities. He looks at two strands of racism, racial nationalism and racial naturalism. Racial nationalism used literature, political, and social sources to form an in group and an out group. Racial naturalism, on the other hand used biological attributes as their source of differentiation.\textsuperscript{249} Spoehr, argued that both came together in California in the 1870s to led to Chinese exclusion. The idea that connected the two forms of racism was how the Chinese were perceived by the white population and not how the Chinese came to arrive and how they felt they were treated.\textsuperscript{250} Focusing on the perceiver not the perceived showed that racism was a major contributing

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{247} Ibid, 14. \\
\textsuperscript{249} Luther W. Spoehr, “Sambo and Heathen Chinee: Californians’ Racial Stereotypes in the Late 1870s,” Pacific Historical Review vol. 43 no. 2 (May, 1973): 187. \\
\textsuperscript{250} Ibid, 188. 
\end{flushright}
factor to how the stereotypes were perpetuated and how they were used to further the cause of limiting immigration.

Popular images and plays showed the stereotypes, with underlying racist ideology, that Chinese faced in urban centers of California. These images and plays may have trickled into the countryside, but that is not the way that farmers and rural Californians described Chinese laborers in their letters and writings. Farmers’ descriptions detailed how the Chinese were good workers who would continue their work even after they had been paid. They were apparently good at crouching down and were detail oriented, both important traits for berry farming.251

Individual farmers were not the only ones to praise Chinese laborers and disavow anti-Chinese sentiment. The State Grange of California that represented many farmers in the state shared many of the same feelings as individual farmers like Schell and Miller. The California State Grange in 1885 said, “if the Grange represents the farm, the farm should be represented by the Grange.”252 The Grange represented the interests of farmers across the state, not just a small elite few. This caused a rift between Grangers and gentry farmers. Gentry farmers were made up of large farm operators and had greater political connections, while the Grangers were smaller farmers or workers on the gentry’s farms.253 Gentry farmers were quicker to accept and defend Chinese immigrants; however, the Grangers did come around to an anti-exclusion stance. Gentry farmers stated that the Chinese had little to do with the economic problems that California faced in the late 1870s and early 1880s. They argued that it was Eastern products coming in

253 Gerald L. Prescott, “Farm Gentry vs. the Grangers: Conflict in Rural America,” 343.
that flooded the market and the demands of white laborers that caused the economic problems.\textsuperscript{254} Products from the East started to flood the California market after the completion of the railway system. This caused prices to drop on California-made goods, and thus wages went down as prices went down. Second, white workers demanded higher wages in response, forcing employers to find a cheaper source of labor in the Chinese.\textsuperscript{255} The gentry believed that Chinese laborers were a vital part of large farms in California because they kept the farms profitable.\textsuperscript{256} Historian of California agriculture David Vaught’s microstudy of one gentry farmer, George Washington Peirce Jr. shows how Peirce came to rely on foreign labor to run his 1,200-acre ranch just outside of Davisville.\textsuperscript{257} In 1901, during the height of Chinese exclusion, Pierce received ten Chinese laborers that he had ordered, at the local Chinese grocery. He paid them the same wage that he paid his white workers.\textsuperscript{258} He continued to hire Chinese laborers until he could no longer get them. He used them because they “met his expectations for quality in their harvest work.”\textsuperscript{259} By 1917, in the midst of World War I, there was a labor shortage on nut ranches in Southern California. To remedy the problem, farmers and horticulturalists advocated for Chinese labor. They described the Chinese as trained agriculturalists who could produce a bountiful crop. They asked for the importation of 25,000 new Chinese laborers.\textsuperscript{260} In the late 1870s Grangers still saw the Chinese as competitors, but this would change over the next decade. Historian of California agriculture Lawrence Jelinek demonstrated how the state Grange of California

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{254} Ibid, 338.
\textsuperscript{255} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{256} Ibid, 339.
\textsuperscript{257} David Vaught, “‘An Orchardist’s Point of View’: Harvest Labor Relations on a California Almond Ranch, 1892-1921,” 565-566.
\textsuperscript{258} Ibid, 578.
\textsuperscript{259} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{260} Ibid, 586.
\end{footnotes}
represented and fostered the ideas of farmers. He asserted that within one year of their founding there were over two hundred thirty local Granges in the state, with over 13,000 members.\textsuperscript{261} Local Granges represented the farmers of that area. By including locals from around the state, the interests of all Californian farmers were represented in the organization. Jelinek further showed that Chinese had immediate and subtle effects that were noticed only after Chinese exclusion passed and there were less Chinese to work. The immediate effect felt by the farmers was the struggle to find laborers at a decent price and to keep the Chinese laborers that they already had. The subtler effect that the farmers determined was that Chinese laborers were gentle, making them the best for picking and packing fruit.\textsuperscript{262} The better the fruit was treated and the less rough handling it received, the better prices for which it could be sold when it reached its destination. Both reasons tie back into economics. Grange members came to these same realizations, and they acted on them in the 1880s.

The California State Grange, at its annual conventions, showed a progression in its stance on Chinese immigration. In 1878, Grangers were staunchly anti-Chinese, but by 1887 they had flipped to a more pro-Chinese stance.\textsuperscript{263} Industrial labor organizations, centered in the cites, tried to recruit farmers into their anti-Chinese fervor, but farmers were not persuaded to join with them.\textsuperscript{264} By 1893 Grangers were attacking the white workers in these groups as “low tramps and bummers,” saying that given the opportunity to work they would not do so.\textsuperscript{265} They were separating themselves from the urban

\textsuperscript{261} Jelinek, \textit{Harvest Empire}, 45.
\textsuperscript{262} Ibid, 52-53.
\textsuperscript{264} Alexander Saxton, \textit{The Indispensable Enemy}, 229.
\textsuperscript{265} Pacific Rural Press (San Francisco, August 26, 1893), 151.
workers and the Workingmen’s Party. At the 1884 California State Grange convention, A.P. Roache, Master of a subordinate Grange, laid out what and who Grangers were. He said, “they are those honest, progressive men and women who are producers, who earn their possessions and all they have by honest labor and economy.” The Grangers in 1883 did not mention Chinese immigration or exclusion. Being that they worked hard to lobby for the passage of exclusion, it would be expected that they congratulate themselves and the legislature. By 1885, the California State Grange was again advocating for tougher immigration restrictions for Chinese laborers. According to the Grange, the law passed in 1882 was not effective enough. They stated, “The hated flood pours in to-day in but slightly diminished volume.”

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266 J.V. Webster, *Journal of Proceedings of the Twelfth Annual Session of California State Grange, Patrons of Husbandry*, (San Francisco: Carlos White Steam Printers, 1883), 59. This speech was given by Roache as part of the welcome, but was printed in the Journal of Proceedings.

267 Prescott, “Gentry Farmers,” 338. At the Second California Constitutional Convention in 1878 and 1879 the Grange was well represented. They did not agree with the Workingmen’s Party and were favorable to Chinese immigration in that meeting of representatives. They may have been characterized as more favorable because they were in direct opposition to the Workingmen. While at their own annual meeting they were not in direct opposition.

268 J.V. Webster, *Journal of Proceedings of the Eleventh Annual Session of California State Grange, Patrons of Husbandry*, (San Francisco: Carlos White, Steam Printers, 1883). In examining the records of the convention, it is remarkably absent of any mention of Chinese exclusion or immigration. It would be expected that there would be some mention. In other years that had sent thanks to Congress for enacting laws that they had advocated for but they did not for exclusion.

been stopped but was only reduced. Referring to the Chinese as “the hated flood” showed that they did not agree with the gentry farmers yet.

In 1885, with Chinese immigration only reduced, there was still more work to be done. While the Grange wanted harsher immigration laws they also wanted to utilize the Chinese that were already in the country because they were muscular and could develop the resources of California efficiently. They had contradicting views on Chinese immigration within their organization. They wanted to limit them on one hand. But on the other, they wanted to utilize them for the good laborers that they were. The next year, California Grangers took their immigration policy even further. They promoted sweeping immigration reform. They wanted to limit not only Chinese immigration but immigration from across the globe. According to the Grange, not all immigrants were bad, there were a few good immigrants, but the majority came from morals that did not align with those of the Grange. They welcomed immigrants that came to this country to better themselves and the country itself, ones “who are true to their obligations and who believe this to be a better country for the poor laborer than where they came from.” By being true to their obligations and working hard for what they were given, such immigrants would be accepted by the farmers of the Grange. The California State Grange just the year previous had praised Chinese laborers as possessing these traits. The State Agricultural Society of California also took on the Chinese labor question in 1886. They came to the conclusion that it was the politicians who kept the issue alive, saying, “politicians selfishly keep up the crusade, and would sacrifice individual interests of

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270 Ibid, 27.
272 Ibid.
others, only to make it more desirable to remove the cause [Chinese].” Farmers realized that Chinese labor was needed, but California politicians dragged out the Chinese debate and hurt their constituents. Like Joaquin Miller, the State Agricultural Society of California demonstrated the difference between urban and rural areas. The politicians were representing the urban centers when they kept the ‘Chinese Question’ alive.

Finally, in 1887 the California State Grange flipped their opinion on Chinese immigration. They wanted to keep out the “PROMISCUOUS INVASION FROM EUROPE.” They needed to be protected from European espionage. They went on to say, “We have found it necessary to resist Chinese immigration, yet the Chinaman is an inoffensive and desirable creature when compared with the bomb throwing anarchist.” The Chinese in the span of just a few years had gone from a major problem facing California farmers to “inoffensive and desirable”—they were now the ones to welcome. The organization that represented all farmers had finally come around to supporting the ideas of both large and small farmers. They took the same stance that many had been espousing since the mid 1870s. With their change in stance, the Grange showed that it was not just a few individual farmers that were in favor of Chinese labor, but the majority of California farmers. This showed that in many ways racism was subservient to economics and work ethic, according to farmers. These same attributes were not as valued in the urban centers, and the Chinese were acted against with violence.

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275 Dewey, *Journal of Proceedings 1887*, 37. The Promiscuous invasion form Europe referred to European immigration. It was seen as an invasion because so many were coming at the time.
276 Ibid.
277 Ibid, 37-38.
278 Ibid.
The California State Grange took their new stance seriously. Once anti-Chinese themselves, they began to sponsor anti-boycotter meetings.\(^{279}\) One tactic used by urban Californians to disparage the Chinese was anti-Chinese boycotts.\(^{280}\) People in California would actively buy products made only with white labor. These products often cost more than the same product that was produced with Chinese labor. Customers, paid the higher price to discourage the Chinese from coming and working in the state. Boycotting Chinese goods started with cigars and then spread to other industries.\(^{281}\) The Grange, however, did not support these boycotts and bought Chinese made goods. The grassroots base of the Grange made it an effective buying power when it came to undermining the Chinese goods boycotts.\(^{282}\) The California State Grange kept up their pro-Chinese immigration support for many years to come. In 1889, they switched to a stance that mirrored the National Grange: advocating exclusion of paupers and similar people who would tax the system.\(^{283}\) That same year, they continued to discuss the labor issues in the state, advocating for relatively unrestricted work for prisoners. They wanted the prisoners to work so that they were not a burden to the taxpayer.\(^{284}\) If they could grow their own food or work in the fields close to the prisons, they would not be taxing the system as harshly. The farmers did not want to have to care for people that could care for themselves. The farmers took their new stance on immigration and labor seriously. Even after people had become paupers, they still advocated for them to work so that they were

\(^{279}\) Street, Beasts of the Fields, 356.
\(^{281}\) Ibid. Gyory, Closing the Gate, 131-135.
\(^{282}\) Street, Beasts of the Fields, 356.
\(^{284}\) Ibid, 125.
not burdening the system as badly. In 1902, California State Master G.W. Worthen remained neutral on the Chinese exclusion issue when he said:

It is true that during the fruit-picking season in this state there seems to be a scarcity of help and many are grateful to employ Chinese, Japanese, or any help they can get. … I think however, that if we had more families in neat houses it would be better for us than to have Chinese. … All Chinamen ought not be excluded. A few make good citizens.\(^{285}\)

Worthen remain relatively neutral on Chinese exclusion. He recognized that the Chinese played a vital role in California agriculture, but he would prefer if there was more white labor used. He also stated that he only used white labor but knew that not all farmers could be as particular about the laborers that they hired. Chinese were allowed to be in the county but they were not the preferable labor source according to California State Grange Master Worthen. He would prefer a more Jeffersonian style of farming, centered on individual farmers and their families.\(^{286}\) While the Chinese were needed they were not wanted according to Worthen.

In the town of Stockton California, in the San Joaquin Valley, farmers realized that they had to have Chinese labor. Many people in the community came to the aid and defense of the Chinese: farmers, newspaper editors, and civil leaders. These people realized the problem they faced with labor shortages. Many of them refused to fire their Chinese laborers just because a white worker had applied for the job. The Chinese not


only kept their jobs but were praised in the way that they did their work.\textsuperscript{287} Refusing to fire their Chinese help just to create a white job was seen as disrespectful and was uncommon in the Valley. This is the same sentiment that farmer A. Schell eschewed in 1877.\textsuperscript{288} He would have rather kept his Chinese laborers but was forced to fire them for fear of arson.\textsuperscript{289} Located less than a hundred miles from San Francisco, the hotbed of immigration, it is remarkable that anti-Chinese sentiment did not proliferate to the area. While there were some anti-Chinese feelings in the area, they came from the city and did not originate with farmers.

The same can be seen with farmers in the Santa Clara Valley. Located just south of San Diego, the farmers of the Santa Clara Valley realized that they needed Chinese laborers to be prosperous.\textsuperscript{290} Historian Cecilia Tsu, shows that farmers in the Santa Clara Valley were dependent on Chinese labor to run their farms. Without the Chinese they were unable to harvest their fruit and berry crops.\textsuperscript{291} Chinese laborers made up seven percent of the population in the Santa Clara Valley, less than San Francisco but still substantial.\textsuperscript{292} Of that seven percent, all worked in agriculture, whether it be in tenant farming, as laborers, or in horticulture. To justify their use of Chinese labor, the Valley farmers gave them tedious, menial, and hand work, all gendered jobs. This showed that they equated Chinese labor as equal to women’s and children’s work.\textsuperscript{293} The work, however, was often classified as labor-intensive and required experienced labor. This

\textsuperscript{287} Street, Beasts of the Field, 779. This is originally from the Stockton Daily Independent, in an article in March 7, 1886. The article showed the ways that farmers came to the aid and defense of Chinese laborers in the San Joaquin Valley.
\textsuperscript{288} A. Schell to Hayes, Dec 12, 1877.
\textsuperscript{289} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{290} Cecilia Tsu, “Independent of the Unskilled Chinaman”: Race, Labor, and Family Farming in California’s Santa Clara Valley, Western Historical Quarterly, vol. 37, no. 4 (Winter 2006), 480.
\textsuperscript{291} Ibid, 477.
\textsuperscript{292} Ibid, 476.
\textsuperscript{293} Ibid, 483.
contradicted farmers’ opinion of Chinese doing women’s work. Many also commented on the how the Chinese were better suited for the work and how it was “unendurable” to white workers, saying, “picking prunes requires either a kneeling or stooping position, quite natural for the Celestial and almost unendurable for the American.” More contradictions appear in the statement as Ralph Rambo praised the Chinese by asserting that they were suited for the work but they were still discriminated against because of their race and ethnicity. The Santa Clara Valley provides a good example that white farm owners and operators were reliant on Chinese laborers and this caused them to be more pro-Chinese immigration than the rest of the California populace. Chinese laborers still faced racial prejudice that did not fully include them in the larger culture. Chinese laborers were discriminated against for other reasons as well. Chinese were not passive agents; they began making demands, which were eventually met, when they realized that white farm owners needed them. These demands included wages and boarding. The Chinese always wanted to do what was best for their families back in China. Farmers resisted these demands in many different ways, because they did not want the Chinese to have power over them.

The Santa Clara Valley is comparable to Ohio. Both areas had family-run farms, not agribusinesses, for the most part. That is not the only way that they were comparable. Prominent politicians that weighted in on the Chinese Exclusion debate hailed from both areas. In Ohio, there was Stanley Matthews, Senator and Supreme Court Justice, who was an anti-exclusionist. In the Santa Clara Valley, James Phelan, notable as the Mayor of

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294 Ibid, 486. Originally found in F. Ralph Rambo, Remember When…A Boy’s Eye View of An Old Valley, (San Jose, 1965), 22.
San Francisco, and later a U.S. Senator. He had a mixed legacy with the Chinese labor question. He ran on a staunchly anti-Chinese platform in 1892, but leased almost two-hundred acres to Chinese farmers, giving them a place in the state.\(^{296}\) In both areas the Chinese were needed to fill labor shortages and remain prosperous, and both locations had politicians that were semi-friendly to the Chinese cause. There was less anti-Chinese sentiment in the Santa Clara valley because of the farmers reliance on Chinese labor,\(^ {297}\) suggesting that racialist rhetoric gave way to keeping the family farm going. Racism becomes intertwined with running the farm; on many occasions racism is subservient to profitability. Keeping the farm running is the main goal, not limiting Chinese laborers.

California farmers both before and during the Chinese Exclusion Era, advocated for keeping Chinese immigration open. This was seen in individual farmers like A. Schell and Joaquin Miller, as well as, in groups of farmers such as the California State Grange. Finally, it is best seen by entire regions of the state such as the Santa Clara Valley, coming to rely on Chinese labor to keep their farms prosperous. While urban centers and politicians continued to toe the line of exclusion, farmers and rural areas came to a pro-Chinese stance, not out of egalitarian ideology, but for economic reasons. Chinese laborers accepted lower wages and were more easily exploited than their white labor counterparts. Since the Chinese were paid less, they became the preferred source of labor. The money saved by hiring cheaper and more efficient labor could be put back into the farm, making sure that there was a profit. Ultimately, the farmers’ voices would be ignored in favor of the opinion of urban centers. Because farmers were not pro-Chinese for egalitarian reasons, the Chinese were still prejudiced against and still belittled by

\(^{296}\) Ibid, 50.
\(^{297}\) Ibid, 9.
farmers. But they were treated better than they were in the cities because farmers relied on them to supply cheap and efficient labor. Without the labor that the Chinese supplied, many of the farmers would not have been able to compete with products coming in from the East and from larger California farms. Farmers still saw Chinese laborers as different and they were treated as such, but because farmers depended on Chinese labor so heavily they came to defend Chinese immigration. Nineteenth-century California farmers also had a closer, more personal relationship with their hired Chinese laborers. Because of this relationship, farmers saw the Chinese for what they really were hard working and morally good people. They were not as influenced by stereotypes as people in the urban areas were. With racism and economics intertwined so profoundly, it is easy to see why farmers defended Chinese. Racism on many occasions became subservient to economical needs.
CHAPTER 4

GENDER

Chinese exclusion studies have often left out the gender aspect of the debate. What role did gender play in the “Chinese Question”? By examining the gendered aspects of labor and exclusion it is revealed that women did not play a large role in the ‘Chinese Question.’ Women made up only a small percent of Chinese immigration leading up to and into the Exclusion Era. Gender did play a role in the debate, a small role. Chinese laborers were many times subjected to the feminine roles, whether it be in the mining camps or in farming. In the cities they were not subjected to such feminine roles as often, with laundries being the exception, but it was still an issue.

Chinese women did not have a significant population in the United States until much later in the twentieth century. While they were only a small percent of the population, they were still major characters in the Chinese Exclusion debate. People in urban centers looked to the lack of women on one hand and on the other they looked at the occupation and condition of the Chinese women that were in the United States; both were used to argue against Chinese immigration. This points to the contradictions that Chinese women faced. Historian Sucheng Chan showed that Chinese women never made up more than ten percent of the Chinese immigrant population in the United States in the
late nineteenth century. Between 1870 and 1890 the female Chinese population fluctuated between three and seven percent of the total Chinese population in the United States. While this is not a large percent, it has been used by many historians and leaders of the time to draw conclusions about Chinese immigration. Industrial unions such as the American Federation of Labor (AFL) used Chinese women’s immigration as a way to show that Chinese were amoral. They said, Chinese immigrants did not conform to American family structures; there were many men living together in a household with few or no women. The AFL in their *Some Reasons for Chinese Exclusion*, pointed out that only fifty-seven of the almost fourteen hundred Chinese women in San Francisco lived within a family structure. The rest were either prostitutes or suspected prostitutes. This proved to the AFL that all of the Chinese in the country were immoral. While there were Chinese prostitutes, it is doubtful that the number was as high as the AFL reported. To be suspected as a prostitute there was little evidence needed. Any woman that did not live within a family structure was suspected of being a prostitute, so in their totals they included students, widows, and other women who did not live in an American style family. Chinese prostitutes were not just a problem to the Chinese, but they spread their immorality to the white population as well, with the AFL saying “its effects upon the boys in the community.” It was not just Chinese men that visited Chinese prostitutes, but white boys and men in the surrounding communities as well. The problem had to be stopped, and according to the AFL and other industrial labor organizations like

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299 Ibid.
301 Ibid.
302 Ibid, 19.
the Workingmen’s Party, the way to stop prostitution was to exclude all Chinese immigrants from entering the country. Chinese women were a problem because they were here, but they were also a problem because they did not come to the country.

The industrial leaders were also quick to point out that the majority of Chinese immigrants were male. Chinese women did not come to the United States in the numbers that the male population did. While it was not unusual for the male population to immigrate first, it was unusual for the female population to make up such a small percentage of the population for such a long time. This can be explained in a few different ways. First, the Page Law of 1875 placed major restrictions on the women that could enter the United States from Asian lands. In testimony to the California Senate Investigating Committee, Giles H. Gray, Surveyor of Customs for the Port of San Francisco, stated how effective the Page Law was at limiting Chinese women:

> When women come here, a letter is sent by the American Consul in Hongkong, enclosing [sic] photographs of the women, and saying that he is satisfied that they do not come within the prohibited classes…. Before women are permitted to go on board ships, they must have photographs taken at their own expense, and must swear to a certain state of facts. They must tell whence they came, where they are going, what their occupation is, whether married or single, why they go to a foreign country, etc., and produce witnesses who must also swear to a similar state of affairs. If the Consul is satisfied that they are respectable women, tickets are sold to them, and they can come here. … Since last July there have arrived here
not more than two hundred and fifty women, but previous to that every steamer brought two hundred and fifty and upwards.\textsuperscript{303}

Surveyor Gray stated how effective the law was at limiting Chinese women from entering the country. The flow of Chinese women had been controlled at the Port of San Francisco, the main entry point for Chinese in the United States. While there were other ports, there was significantly less immigration to them. Labor organizations used this decrease in female population to their advantage. Again, they stated that the Chinese were not coming to this country and conforming to American norms since they did not bring their wives or children. Gray told of the decrease in Chinese prostitutes as a result of the Page Law, but historian Lucy Salyers, looking at a wide range of sources, found that, when Chinese women were kept out, it created a larger prostitution problem than there had been prior to the law.\textsuperscript{304} Many Chinese women were kidnapped into the business, while others entered voluntarily. They had their way to the United States paid and, vouched for and in return, worked as prostitutes. As a result of the Page Law, prostitution became an even more lucrative and competitive business, asserts Salyer.\textsuperscript{305}

There were still women and families that abided by the law and stayed in China while their husbands or fathers immigrated to the United States. This is evidenced in Toledo, Ohio. “There were few Chinese women in Toledo because of the Chinese Exclusion Act. My mother was able to come here only because my dad’s birth certificate showed that he

\textsuperscript{303} California State Legislature, \textit{Chinese Immigration; Its Social, Moral, and Political Effect: Report to the California State Senate of its Special Committee on Chinese Immigration}, (Sacramento: State Office, 1878), 219.


\textsuperscript{305} Ibid, 42-43.
was born in California.\textsuperscript{306} The mother was only able to come to the United States because of the California birth of her husband. Many others were not allowed to come to the country and Toledo specifically. Women were obeying the law and staying in China, for the most part.

The Page Law is not the only way that Chinese women were restricted. Immigration for Chinese women was also self-restricted because of the sojourner way that United States immigration was seen. Chinese men would come to this country for short periods of time, to make as much money as they could to send back to their family in China. According to historian of Asian American history, Erika Lee, the successful sojourner not only needed to make a lot of money in the United States, but they also had to keep transnational networks open. They needed to have connections on both sides of the Pacific to be successful. They needed to have people that they trusted to transport the money back to their family.\textsuperscript{307} Because the goal was to make money and return to China, there was no need for immigrants to bring their family with them. They would be returning to them in order. Bringing a wife and children would mean that more money was spent in the United States. There would be more mouths to feed and more people to house. Between the Page Law of 1875 and the sojourner method of immigration, Chinese women did not make up a large percent of the immigrant population.

While there were few Chinese women, there were plenty of Chinese men that readily filled the roles that would have typically gone to women. Liping Zhu, historian of Chinese immigrants in the United States, looked at this in his monograph, \textit{A Chinaman’s Chance}. In this work he expands past California to look at Chinese immigration in Idaho.\textsuperscript{306} Liyan Chen, “1 Chinese Family Blazed Trail to Northern Ohio in 1900s,” Toledo Blade, September 2, 2012. Accessed March 29, 2018. \textsuperscript{307} Erika Lee, \textit{At America’s Gates}, 120-123.
He shows that because of the remoteness of the mining camps in the Rocky Mountain Idaho region Chinese immigrants were treated better and were not as prejudiced against as they were in San Francisco. The Chinese were a vital part of the community, without which it is doubtful that the region would have prospered. Chinese were rarely allowed to be involved in mining operations, but they were able to prosper as cooks and laundry men.\textsuperscript{308} The Chinese immigrants were pushed to these minor roles but they managed to prosper. The white men of the camp could not have survived without the Chinese men. Chinese prepared almost all of the meals and did all of the laundry in the entire camp, and they made a profit at it. The Chinese charged white miners hefty prices to perform these feminine tasks. The laundry men also kept all of the gold that came out in the wash.\textsuperscript{309} The Chinese laundromen were so successful that they drove white women and children’s laundries, in the area, out of business. Zhu recounts how, on many different occasions, the Chinese, in their non-mining pursuits, were doing better than the white miners.\textsuperscript{310}

Chinese immigrants taking the role of women and children was not confined to mining or areas away from civilization. Historian Cecelia Tsu shows that Chinese taking women’s and children’s roles was also done in farming. She shows that farmers of the time assigned their Chinese laborers to women’s work, but Tsu argues that the Chinese were performing dynamic work that was also being done by white laborers. Classifying the work that Chinese were doing as women’s work was a way of showing superiority to the Chinese laborers. In her work, Tsu examines how the fruit growers in the Santa Clara Valley portrayed themselves with masculine qualities, saying “fruit growing required

\textsuperscript{308} Liping Zhu, \textit{A Chinaman’s Chance: The Chinese on the Rocky Mountain Mining Frontier}, (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 1997), 118-120.
\textsuperscript{309} Ibid, 117-118.
\textsuperscript{310} Ibid.
certain masculine qualities, and a orchardist must be ‘observant, industrious, intelligent, a reading man, and must have some extent the mercantile faculty.’”\textsuperscript{311} The owner-operators of the small family farms had to possess these qualities, their help did not have to have these same qualities. The Chinese farm hands or Chinese tenant farmers that white farmers had had qualities such as “exacting, careful, particular, and hand work.”\textsuperscript{312} These qualities translated to menial and tedious work often refused by white male laborers. The same qualities were seen in women. They had to be careful and exacting not only in child rearing, but also in their work on the farm.\textsuperscript{313} Women and Chinese laborers filled the same roles according to the white farmers in the region. Tsu challenged this as she shows that hired white workers were paid the same amount and did the same work as the Chinese field hands. The only difference was the two groups were separated and did not work the same plots. She asserts that the Santa Clara Valley needed Chinese labor to maintain its prosperity. They tried to show that there were no Chinese in the region and that they were independent of Chinese laborers, but that was not the case, as Tsu points out. The way that white farm owners rationalized having Chinese laborers was through assigning them women’s work and giving them tasks that were considered feminine.

Women were seen working family farms across the county in the late nineteenth century. This is best personified in the Grange, which was founded on inclusion of women and children, with a membership requisite of being affiliated with farming. One of the founders of the Grange Oliver H. Kelley, included women in leadership roles from its founding. Agricultural historian Denis Nordin said:

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\textsuperscript{311} Cecelia Tsu, “‘Independent of the Unskilled Chinaman’: Race, Labor and Family Farming in California’s Santa Clara Valley,” 479.
\textsuperscript{312} Ibid, 483.
\textsuperscript{313} Ibid, 481-483.
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From the beginning when Oliver Kelley’s niece induced him to give women an equal place in the organization, the order tested the leadership talents of ladies and concluded from their performances that society did not necessarily operate best with men doing the talking and with women doing the listening. Results of the Grange’s experimenting must have been satisfying because the order never wavered on the question of extending suffrage and equal rights to the fairer sex.\(^{314}\)

Not only were women coming to Grange meetings, they were actively participating in them, and they held leadership roles. At least four of the thirteen offices had to be held by women; the rest of the offices could also be held by women, but it was not mandatory.\(^{315}\) Women were a vital part of the organization of the Grange. While this is often attributed to Kelley’s niece, it is also logical that women would play such a prominent role because they were vital for the success of family farms. The National Grange supported women’s suffrage as early as 1874, and continued to pass a resolution in favor of equal women’s suffrage in the Grange until it was passed nationally in 1919.\(^{316}\) Women were expected to work in the home as well as the field. Women worked as well as reared the next generation of workers. Agricultural historian Paul Conkin shows that women were vital to a farms success and how they had to manage both house work and farm work:

Women’s work was never done. During the busy harvest time, they worked in the fields or barns; at threshing time, they prepared huge meals for the crew. They did at least half the milking, gathered slop for the hogs, and did planting cultivating, picking, and preserving of garden vegetables.

\(^{315}\) Ibid, 11-12.
\(^{316}\) Dowler, *Ohio State Grange*, 153.
They had full responsibility for the chickens…. They cooked three hot meals a day, seven days a week…. Women did laundry, ironing, and mending clothes.317

Conkin shows how women were an integral part of life on the family farm. Chinese labor being compared to farm women is not as negative as it appears. In many places in California and across the nation Chinese were needed to keep family farms running. While they may have been given tasks that were seen as feminine, they were still a vital part of the family farm.

While gender did not play a huge role in the Chinese exclusion debate, it still has to be considered, as the relationship of farmers to Chinese and to women were similar. The farm could not survive without either in their respective areas. Chinese and women helped to maintain the prosperity of the family farm, whether it be in California, where both were plentiful and needed, or in Ohio, where there were few Chinese and women took on an even larger role. Industrial labor organizations like the AFL and Workingmen’s Party, based largely in urban centers, were the groups that used the presence and the lack of presence of women as evidence to exclude Chinese immigrants. They were able to turn issues in multiple directions to make them fit their anti-Chinese agenda, while in the rural areas they did not have an issue with Chinese women or lack thereof. If they would have come, they too, likely, would have worked on the farms. Women and children working on farms was commonplace. Gender did not play a huge role in American farm life in the late nineteenth century, as women were expected to work in both the home and the barn or fields. It is not surprising that farmers, and the

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organizations that represented them, did not make a big deal out of the disproportionate number of Chinese women in the United States.\textsuperscript{318}

\textsuperscript{318} For further information on Chinese women in the city see, Judy Yung, \textit{Unbound Feet: A Social History of Chinese Women in San Francisco}, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995). Yung shows the transformation of Chinese women in San Francisco, for information lining up with the work see her “Bound Feet” chapter.
CONCLUSION

The American farmer is often understudied even though, until 1900, they comprised the majority of the American population at the same time that Chinese Exclusion became an issue. By examining farmers’ opinions on various issues such as Chinese immigration, it is seen that they often have differing opinions than the other groups in the country. This happened for different reasons because farmers’ values differed from urbanites. They still had racist tendencies, but they were outweighed by the need of prosperity, both economic and physical. To run a farm profitably was their main concern. Chinese were cheaper laborers than their white counterparts; they were also perceived as better workers and morally superior. Whereas, white laborers were often described by farmers as drunkards and bad workers.

Chinese laborers were more easily exploited than their laboring white counterparts. Farmers used Chinese first because they were a cheap labor source, but they realized that the Chinese were also good workers. They preferred Chinese labor to white labor, for both economic reasons and their good work ethic. Farmers across the nation had different reasons for favoring Chinese labor. Many also had different, more personal interactions with Chinese laborers. They all had similar opinions on how Chinese exclusion should be handled. Ohio farmers used moral and economic reasons, as well as tradition to reach their opinion on Chinese exclusion. Farmers of California also used economics as a justification for use of Chinese labor.
Ohio farmers proclaimed their opinions in newspapers and in the words of their elected officials. In one of the newspapers dedicated to agriculture in Ohio, *The Ohio Farmer*, they rallied against Chinese exclusion because it was unamerican and unchristian. The rest of Ohio was also in favor of not excluding Chinese, as seen with Senator Stanley Miller and with newspapers across the state. Articles across the state were against the Chinese exclusion, whether it be the original act in 1882 or the Geary law of 1892. Both were attacked as being against the American tradition and not the Christian thing to do. In some cases, authors called the United States hypocrites, citing Russian Jew persecution and Pilgrims landing at Plymouth Rock as evidence.

California, as opposed to Ohio, did not have a consensus on Chinese immigration policy. In the urban centers, there was a hatred of Chinese laborers and a push for exclusion, while in the rural part of California they had a closer relationship with Chinese immigrants and did not push for their exclusion. Elected officials were also split. Governor Leland Stanford praised the Chinese in one of his speeches and while this is not an endorsement, it is more than many other politicians did to support Chinese immigration. San Francisco mayor James Phelan also had a complicated relationship with the Chinese during his time in the Santa Clara Valley. He relied on Chinese labor to have prosperous land, and even rented land to Chinese with very agreeable terms. However, when he ran for mayor of San Francisco he did so on a staunchly anti-Chinese platform. The complicated relationship that elected officials had with the Chinese can be attributed to the electorate that they were trying to appeal to. The largest voting blocs were in urban centers, where anti-Chinese fervor ran rampant. While they may not have felt that way they had to appear that they were anti-Chinese to garner votes.
California farmers had much the same reactions as Ohio farmers; they realized that the Chinese were needed to maintain a prosperous farm. Individual farmers such as A. Schell and Joaquin Miller realized this and tried to persuade others. Schell testified before the California Senate committee that was tasked with investigating Chinese immigration in 1876. The next year, after he realized that he was in the minority and he had not persuaded the California leaders to vote in favor of immigration, he wrote to President James A. Garfield. In his letter, Schell, again showed how the Chinese were needed in the rural areas of California because they filled the labor gap and had proven themselves to be good workers on many different occasions. Joaquin Miller voiced his opinions publicly, writing a journal article arguing that Chinese immigration restrictions were not only hurting the farmer, but the effects were becoming disastrous for consumers as well. Individual farmers were not the only ones to argue against Chinese exclusion; farmers’ organizations such as the Grange did as well. While they were slower to come to the aid of the Chinese, by the late 1880s they were firmly aligned in a pro-Chinese immigration stance. Rather, they attacked the European invasion of immigrants that was occurring. They acknowledged that they had previously been anti-Chinese, but then realized that they needed the labor. Finally, entire regions reached similar conclusions: they needed Chinese labor as seen specifically in the Santa Clara Valley. Cecelia Tsu demonstrates that the Valley was not as independent of Chinese labor as they claimed to be. They relied on Chinese labor and Chinese tenant farmers; without them much of their crop would have withered and died. Valley farmers grew berries, fruits, and other specialty crops that needed constant attention and pruning. Without the Chinese this work would not have been done, as there was not enough white labor in the area. Even with
women and children working there was not enough labor. While the farmers did not come to their anti-exclusion stance for egalitarian reasons, they did come to defend and fight for the end of exclusion. The Chinese were still not seen as equal, but they should still be allowed to enter and live in the country, according to rural Californians. Race and economics became tightly intertwined and in many cases, race was pushed to the backseat and economics took the larger priority.

While the farmers of California became anti-exclusionists, and wanted to allow Chinese to enter the country, urban centers remained staunchly anti-Chinese. The urban centers did not want Chinese immigration, claiming that the Chinese should not be allowed to land in this country. The cities’ public opinions were largely shaped by industrial labor organizations and their leaders. Denis Kearney and the Workingmen’s Party, as well as the AFL, had much of the power and controlled the opinion of the entire state. Urban centers are where the California thesis comes from. When looked at as an entire state it is seen that much of California was in favor of Chinese immigration. In the cities, they did not have as many close interactions with Chinese as they did in the rural parts of the state. This led them to be guided by stereotypes of Chinese rather than actual involvement with them. There were contradictory views between how the Chinese were viewed in the cities and how they were viewed in the rural areas. There was a similar division in Ohio, but it was not as pronounced as it was in California.

Nationally, farmers continued to grapple with how to handle Chinese immigration. Looking at the National Grange sheds some light on the situation, but it needs further study. The National Grange did not endorse Chinese Exclusion until much later than many of their industrial labor counterparts. The issue was brought before the
National Grange on many different occasions; however, they did not endorse exclusion until 1901, when a West Virginia representative introduced it. They had not endorsed it prior because such a resolution would not have benefitted the entire Grange, just the Pacific Coast. By 1901, the agricultural revolution had taken place and mechanization had led to less of a need for labor. Now immigration became a national problem because there was no longer a labor shortage. The issue was no longer just a farm problem but a problem for the entire nation.

Ohio and California farmers faced both similar and different problems on the issue of Chinese immigration. Ohio had a relatively small Chinese population in the late nineteenth century. Chinese immigrants were seen as somewhat of an oddity in Ohio and the Midwest. The Chinese in Ohio were largely centered in non-rural areas. Chinese in Ohio urban regions were treated differently and better than Chinese along the Pacific Coast in urban areas. Farmers protested the Geary law fiercely even though they had little contact with Chinese immigrants. While in California there was an abundance of Chinese immigrants, they too were concentrated in the urban centers of the state. They were not seen as an oddity in California, but were seen in a dualistic way depending on the part of California that was examined. In the urban centers they were seen as a nuisance and a “yellow peril,” while in the rural areas they were seen as good workers who were morally sound and preferred because of their size.

Historians have debated over the national race thesis and the California thesis. While both of these theses have some elements of truth to them they also both do not fully explain why and how Chinese exclusion was passed. They do not encompass all of

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the people, and they need to broaden who they examine. They have typically focused on urban areas and industrial labor but, by examining farmers, it is seen that neither the California thesis or the national race thesis are an adequate explanation for Chinese exclusion when farmers are taken into account. By examining farmers in the National Grange as well as farmers in Ohio and California Lon Kurashige’s egalitarian thesis is challenged. Farmers were not completely egalitarian towards the Chinese, but they favored inclusion of Chinese rather than exclusion. Most egalitarians based their stance on Chinese immigration on America’s liberal traditions, tracing back to the Declaration of Independence. All people were granted certain inalienable rights. The American farmers, in comparison, based their view of the Chinese on economics and work ethic. Farmers wanted to allow Chinese immigrants to enter the country, so that they could be used as farm laborers; they wanted to exploit the Chinese labor for their own gain. This shows that farmers, while more egalitarian than their industrial labor counterparts, still had racist tendencies and did not see the Chinese as equal to white labor.

By examining farmers, it is seen that economics was their main deciding factor when considering issues that affected the farm. Racism is often subservient to economic factors. Farmers in Ohio and California were inclined to advocate for Chinese immigration rather than restriction, because the Chinese, in their opinion, were better workers than white laborers, as well as better suited for the hardships of berry farming. The idea that Chinese were suited for berry farming shows that racism was still prevalent. Chinese were chosen because of their stature and exploitability, not because they were the best laborer for the job. One of the reasons that farmers wanted to have Chinese laborers in berry and fruit farming was that they were low to the ground and that it would

\(^{321}\) Ibid, 34.
not hurt their backs. They focused on stature rather than actual factors that would make Chinese good laborers. They came to realize that the Chinese were also good workers and took care to package the fruit carefully, but that was only after they were picked because of their size. While they were a good choice because of their work ethic and size it was also economics that made the Chinese a good choice; they were cheaper than white laborer.

While Ohio and California both faced labor shortages, what made them different was the labor pool that they had available. California had a larger supply of newly arrived Chinese laborers while Ohio had very few. They, however, came to the same conclusion that Chinese immigrants should be allowed to enter the country. Ohio farmers as well as politicians urged for Chinese inclusion. Farmers came at the ‘Chinese question’ from an economic and moral standpoint while Senator Stanley Matthew and other elected officials fought for Chinese immigrants along diplomatic lines. He used existing treaties to defend immigration. He wanted to know what gave the Senate the right to break the Burlingame Treaty if China had held up their end of the treaty. He argued that they did not have that right until the other party discontinued or broke the treaty. The Ohio State Grange not only wanted to keep Chinese immigration open for economic reasons, but moral reasons as well. The Grange saw Chinese were industrious and morally good people, not fitting into the three groups that they wanted to keep out: criminals, anarchists, and paupers. In many ways, they were the exact opposite of paupers and anarchists. The state of Ohio had a unified stance of pro-Chinese immigration. California, on the other hand, did not have a unified stance on the ‘Chinese question’.

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Farmers favored Chinese immigration, while urban centers and politicians were fiercely anti-Chinese. California fruit farmer A. Schell said that the Chinese could not get a fair representation in California because the politicians were so anti-Chinese that they would not listen when somebody like himself tried to defend the Chinese. While stereotypes abounded in urban centers, farmers had close interactions with their hired Chinese laborers that forced farmers to accept the Chinese as the good workers that they were.

If the opinions of farmers and people in rural areas were taken into consideration and not overlooked by politicians of the time, would Chinese exclusion have passed? By examining Ohio as a microcosm of the larger United States and California as the Chinese population center it can be seen that farmers valued Chinese labor and it probably would not have passed had farmers been rightly considered. Farmers still made up over half of the population in 1900 but were overlooked in the political arena. By examining Ohio as a microcosm of the larger United States and California as the Chinese population center it can be seen that farmers valued Chinese labor and it probably would not have passed had farmers been rightly considered. Farmers still made up over half of the population in 1900 but were overlooked in the political arena.³²³ Farmers in two of the larger states were in favor of Chinese immigration. Had their elected officials taken their voices into account, it is likely that exclusion would not have passed as easily as it did, if at all.

Further study is needed to understand the larger farm opinion on Chinese immigration. This study can be expanded to cover the entire country, expanding to a more encompassing view of how Asian immigrants were perceived. Were Japanese, Filipino, and Southeast Asians treated the same way that the Chinese were? Were they all seen as worthy to enter the country but then discriminated against and exploited for their cheap labor? In studying the entire country, it could reveal that the majority of the population (rural and agricultural) were not in favor of Chinese exclusion, which would open up questions that need to be addressed—why was exclusion passed if the majority

³²³ Knepper, Ohio and Its People, 278.
of the country did not support exclusion? Expanding this study to include the entire exclusion era would also be beneficial. It could show that the same divide between rural and urban areas was prevalent in other debates as well, such as Japanese internment and colonization. Finally, it could show that while farmers were early supporters of Chinese immigration, they may not have kept that stance throughout the entire era. With the agricultural revolution and the expanding use of machinery, labor was becoming less and less a farming issue. Did the agricultural revolution affect the farmers stance on Chinese and other Asian immigration?

While generally overlooked, a study of the late nineteenth century American farmers provides an interesting point of study. Showing that by overlooking farmers an inaccurate understanding of how many Americans in the nineteenth-century needed the Chinese was created. If California did not have an anti-Chinese consensus as the California thesis purports, and the entire nation did not have an anti-Chinese consensus as the national race thesis claims, so why then did Chinese Exclusion pass? Many have looked to politics for the answer; while this is partially true, it is not the entire reason. Politics and economics need to be examined together to fully understand why exclusion was passed. Politicians kept the exclusion debate alive, but only certain politicians did this--the ones that represented economically-stalled urban areas. Economics also proved to be the main motive for farmers’ opinion on Chinese immigration and exclusion. They looked first at what was best for the farm and secondly, at the racial stereotypes that went along with Chinese immigration.
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