

From “Yellow Peril” to “Model Minority” in Popular Media: Continuity in Asian American
Representation Before and After World War II

A SENIOR ESSAY

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of History

The Colorado College

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

Bachelor of Arts

By

Xiaoling Keller

May 2017

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Amy Kohout, my senior essay advisor, for all of her time and effort she put in to help me along the way. I appreciate her quality insight, immense amount of patience and enthusiasm greatly. She has pushed me to think and write more than I ever thought I could.

I am also grateful for the Faculty and Staff of the History Department for teaching me these past four years and helping me become a more thoughtful historian.

I would like to acknowledge my parents for giving me the opportunity to learn at this college and their endless support in life.

Finally, I would like to recognize the friends who have been there for me through this whole process. Their encouragement, humor and general help has been much appreciated.

Asian Americans in the United States have a long history of being discriminated against. While it was easier to see before World War II, anti-Asian sentiment still exists today. In the 1880s when Chinese immigrants first came to the United States to mine for gold, white Americans feared for Chinese success in America and China's rise of power in the world, but this same fear has continued into contemporary times. In the first half of this paper, I demonstrate how anti-Asian sentiment is clear and acceptable in society through the publication of newspapers, political cartoons, advertisements, pamphlets and other images. In 2014, authors, John Kuo Wei Tchen and Dylan Yeats, compiled and published an archive of anti-Asian publications from the 1880s.¹ Some of the political cartoons are described, pictured and analyzed in this essay as they relate to the perpetuation of blatant anti-Asian sentiment in newspapers and magazines. After World War II and the emergence of the "model minority", anti-Asian sentiment is more subtle but yet so clear to others. By newspapers publishing positive headlines exclaiming Asian success, the threat of Asian success subtly laid under the positive headlines and the real issues Asian Americans face in the workplace, schools and everyday life were dismissed. Madeline Hsu, author of *The Good Immigrants: How the Yellow Peril Became the Model Minority*, argues that one of the reasons Americans think Asians are so intelligent and successful in America is because the only immigrants the United States would accept from China in the 1950s were the scholars and high skilled workers.² Additionally, author of *The Color of Success: Asian Americans and the Origins of the Model Minority*, Ellen Wu, adds the great lengths that Asians went to becoming accepted in America and proving their loyalty as geopolitics continued

¹ John Kuo Wei Tchen and Dylan Yeats, *Yellow Peril! An Archive of Anti-Asian Fear* (London: Verso, 2014).

² Madeline Y. Hsu, *The Good Immigrants: How the Yellow Peril Became the Model Minority* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015).

to shape American fear of foreigners.³ In a way, Asian Americans created the “model minority” image, but the consequences and anti-Asian sentiment that follows the term was not intended or desired. Asian Americans experience discrimination firsthand but white Americans continue to write about Asian American success. As white Americans read the headlines and the stories of Asian success, the general stereotypes of the “model minority” without understanding its complexities were perpetuated. This term “model minority” isn’t about progress for Asian Americans but rather white Americans feeling threatened thus creating stark differences between Asian Americans and true Americans which is represented through books, newspapers and magazines. The most common discussion surrounding the “model minority” addresses the use of media to perpetuate the successful image of Asians but in this paper, the addition of white anxiety as a leading cause to the image perpetuated is discussed. White people claim to be losing power to Asians but yet they’re still the ones to be labeling Asians as the “other” and subtly labeling them as a threat to be conscious of as white people comment on their rise in educational attainment and economic success. By tracing political cartoons, articles, advertisements, books and other images from 1879 to as recent as 2011, Asians are consistently cast as “different” compared to Americans; Asians are either a blatant threat to society or too good for society.

Asian Americans as the “Yellow Peril” from the 1870s to the 1940s

The term “Yellow Peril” in American history is about the anxiety white Americans feel about Asians reaching the possibility of being better than Americans in economic and educational ways of American life. German Kaiser Wilhelm claims to have had a dream of a Buddha upon a dragon in a storm, riding towards Europe which caused him to name this fright as the “Yellow Peril”. In 1895, he commissioned Hermann Knackfuss to create a painting

³ Ellen D. Wu, *The Color of Success: Asian Americans and the Origins of the Model Minority (Politics and Society in Modern America)*, Reprint ed. (Princeton: Princeton Univ Press, 2015).

representing his dream so he could present it to the leaders of Europe and America to show the threat of the East rising in power against the West (Figure 1).⁴ The white people on the left side of the image are dressed in elaborate garb with armor as they prepare to defend themselves against the threat from the East. This painting shows the valiant leader pointing to the East as if to say, see, the East will invade but the West will defend its honor and land. The Buddha on the right side of the image rides atop a dragon to emphasize how different the East and West are and that the East was the one causing issues to the West by advancing into the Western territory. Additionally, the white characters in the painting are clear and portray an easy message to read while the Buddha is in a dark storm which creates an aura of fear and mystery.



Figure 1. “Peoples of Europe, Defend Your Holiest Possessions” by Hermann Knackfuss (1895)
 Source: John Kuo Wei Tchen and Dylan Yeats, *Yellow Peril! An Archive of Anti-Asian Fear*, 2014

⁴ Ibid., 12.

The term “Yellow Peril” seems to be synonymous with looming dread encroaching on ones territory and civilization as seen in the figure above with the Buddha riding in with a storm looming behind. “Yellow” refers to those of Asian descent and “Peril” means serious and immediate danger. In the United States during the late 1840s and onwards, the influx of Asian, specifically Chinese, immigrants caused much distress and discomfort for the white citizens trying to find gold and establish themselves in the new western land. From the time the Chinese arrived, anti-Asian actions, legislation, political cartoons, articles and pamphlets made it clear that this land was not open to everyone and not as free as people believed.

First, three crucial pieces of anti-Asian legislation should be mentioned, the Miners tax of 1850, the *People vs. Hall* court case of 1852 and the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. In 1848, James W. Marshall found gold in the American River in northern California which soon led to thousands of people flocking to find their fortune, many of which were Chinese men.⁵ Many Chinese people left China because of the political and economic instability, with the hopes to find gold, get rich and provide for their family back home. At first, the gold seemed plentiful, so Chinese men weren't seen as a threat or competition but as gold started dwindling, Chinese men were highly discouraged to continue looking. Chinese men were clearly not welcomed in the new land as many were threatened, beaten and killed. One of the first laws to affect Chinese immigrants was the Foreign Miner's License Tax of 1850, a tax of twenty dollars a month on anyone who wasn't a U.S citizen. Three years later, the tax was set to more reasonable value of four dollars a month but the tax still harshly penalized Chinese immigrants for being Chinese.⁶ In

⁵ Erika Lee, *The Making of Asian America: A History*, Reprint ed. (New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2016), 59.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 62.

1854, the court case, 'People vs. Hall' determined Chinese status in the United States as one who couldn't testify in court because they were "a race of people whom nature has marked as inferior, and who are incapable of progress or intellectual development beyond a certain point...".⁷ The Supreme Court of the State of California had only the following written; "The 394th section of the Act Concerning Civil Cases provides that no Indian or Negro shall be allowed to testify as witness in any action or a proceeding in which a white person is a party" in their legislation.⁸ When an Asian man witnessed a white man murder someone, the court had to rule that the Asian race fit into the Indian and Negro category. Although this case decides the inability of Asian people to fit into society, like other pieces of legislation involving minority groups such as other people of color, women, and the impoverished, this piece of legislation majorly restricted their social movement so they couldn't be a threat or disruption to society. Lastly, the culmination of anti-Asian sentiment in California led to the Exclusion Act of 1882, which was the first piece of legislation barring access of a race, the Chinese, into the United States.

Newspapers, posters and attention from the general public but more specifically, white working class people, perpetuated this anti-Asian sentiment in a series of political cartoons, articles, advertisements and pamphlets. They depicted Asians as "other" and a threat to society. The slogan "The Chinese Must Go" was used and yelled at informal gatherings in California in the late 1870s, specifically by labor leader, Denis Kearny.⁹ With such a large population of Chinese men working jobs, white laborers were getting frustrated and angry and declared that the

⁷ People vs. Hall (September 08, 1854), United States of America Supreme Court of California Resources 28 Cal.3d 143.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Roger Olmstead, "The Chinese Must Go!," *Calif Hist Q J Calif Hist Soc* 50, no. 3 (September 3, 1971):, accessed April 5, 2017, <http://ch.ucpress.edu/content/5/3/285>.

Asians needed to go because they were taking all the jobs. In the 1879 “Machinery Monopolizes Labor” political cartoon by George Frederick Keller, a large train looking like a big mechanical monster with the word ‘Progress’ is taking in animals and cotton from a trough labeled ‘Raw Materials’ as it spews out manufactured goods (Figure 2).¹⁰ There are several people standing by idly and looking at the large mess of goods in front of them. One man is gesturing to the pile as if to say, look, we must do something to stop this mess from becoming too large to handle. The white people in this image are well dressed in suits and clearly in the forefront as they make their message clear. Two main but subtle parts of this is the writing in the smoke saying, “The real chinaman is at the root of all evil” and the man with a long braid hiding in the dark and blurred background is pulling the lever to make the machine work. This man is not dressed in a typical suit but rather a traditional Chinese shirt that was a lot longer and plainer than American clothes. This type of political cartoon specifically targeted the Chinese for causing issues in society and directly pointed out the mess they were making, even if it looked beneficial for Americans.¹¹ The loss of American control needed to be addressed if the white man was to continue their superiority.

¹⁰ John Kuo Wei Tchen and Dylan Yeats, *Yellow Peril!: An Archive of Anti-Asian Fear* (London: Verso, 2014), 352.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 353.



Figure 2. "Machinery Monopolizes Labor" by George Frederick Keller (1879)
 Source: John Kuo Wei Tchen and Dylan Yeats, *Yellow Peril! An Archive of Anti-Asian Fear*, 2014

An article in 1881, titled "Our Pacific Coast Problem" by O. Gibson frequently used the word "it" in reference to Chinese people. He said, "It enters into all our political and business discussions; it invades our courts, our schools, and our religious assemblies; it finds its way into

our homes, around the table and fireside, and even into our secret chambers, as an ever-present, ever-disturbing factor in our lives.”¹² The points of concern for the ‘Pacific-coast problem’ laid out in the article are as follows: “1. The number and character of the Chinese in America, 2. The origin, extent and grounds of the anti-Chinese sentiment, 3. The doctrine of human brotherhood, and the time-honored American policy of open doors for all to enter. 4. Reciprocity relations and their necessary operation.”¹³ In the section about the character of the Chinese, the article acknowledged “they are usually represented as the most vicious, immoral, filthy and corrupt people in the world, without conscience or moral sense; but in almost the next breath their enemies pronounce them the most frugal, industrious, patient, painstaking and persevering people on earth.”¹⁴ There is acknowledgement of disgust as well as possible threat to society. An argument about Christianity being the superior religion and creating superior people was also discussed. Chinese people were the inferior race because of their lack of understanding and faith of Christianity and if one religion is to reign over the other, it would surely be Christianity. In the anti-Chinese sentiment section, the discussion about white stress about the Chinese infiltrating the economy comes up as Gibson said, “In the general depression and discontent it is somewhat natural that public attention should have been turned to them[Asians], and the opposition greatly extended and intensified.”¹⁵ One claim that the Chinese didn’t use American products and that their earnings weren’t invested in the economy but rather just sent back to China. Another claim

¹² O. Gibson and John F. Miller, “Art. II. - Our Pacific Coast Problem: The Chinese in America,” *The Methodist Quarterly*, American Periodicals, no. 33 (January 1881); accessed April 5, 2017, 28.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 30.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 31.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 34.

was that they didn't buy real estate or pay any taxes, and that they didn't do anything to support the government or national institutions. These various claims were made to further the anti-Asian sentiment. Additionally, Asians were said to be "an inferior race, incapable of assimilation, of becoming citizens or Christians, and withal a most dangerous element in our society."¹⁶ The presumed danger to society lay in the questionable loyalty of Asians to the United States as their homeland rose in power. The last section, 'Reciprocity relations and their necessary operation' addressed the economic and political rise of China by saying "China is not the puny, helpless power we have been accustomed to regard her; but, with the throbbings of a new civilization and a new life, is awaking like a giant from long slumber, and will ere long be able to compel respect from the nations of the earth."¹⁷ China's presence was seen as incredibly important to recognize and mitigate before it became too powerful for America's influence and the fears of Americans became confirmed as China rose to power. China's threat was political as it competed with the United States, social as Chinese people interrupted society, and cultural as Chinese people brought in new and very different ways of living.

Another political cartoon in 1882, "What Shall we do With Our Boys?" by George Frederick Keller, depicted an aggressive Asian looking octopus character multitasking by packing tobacco, making shoes, sewing clothes while sitting above a board that says, "Chinese Trade Monopoly" (Figure 3).¹⁸ The octopus was addressed in traditional Chinese garb and the face had exaggerated slanted eyes, a devilish look with a malicious smile, and a long braid that was flying to emphasize how quickly Asians were working and taking over the economy. The

¹⁶ Ibid., 43.

¹⁷ Ibid., 43.

¹⁸ John Kuo Wei Tchen and Dylan Yeats, *Yellow Peril!: An Archive of Anti-Asian Fear* (London: Verso, 2014), 351.

octopus character was typically used in political cartoons of the time to illustrate monopolies with their large tentacles getting a tight grasp on many different things and people all at once. In both settings, targeting business monopolies and targeting Asian control, the meaning is negative and caused worry and anger of white middle class workers. On the other side of Keller's 1882 cartoon is a bunch of white men hanging around while a policeman is escorting someone away in the background.¹⁹ The white men are dressed in nice suits and their facial expressions are recognizable as human and benevolent. The high wall between the spiteful Asian octopus and the innocent white men emphasizes the stark contrast between the two. This cartoon is an example of Asian control over the economy causing white men to be out of work and therefore getting into trouble. As the white working class was losing work and the economy was going downwards, the blame was easily put onto Asian immigrants and the anti-Asian sentiment grew. Not only was the poor economy an issue but there was a new fear of the consequences in the rise of white unemployment and idleness. This is classic example of Asians disrupting civilized society with the Asian grasp on the economy causing harm to the white man's life and economic success.

¹⁹ Ibid.



Figure 3. “What Shall We Do With Our Boys?” by George Frederick Keller (1882)
 Source: John Kuo Wei Tchen and Dylan Yeats, *Yellow Peril! An Archive of Anti-Asian Fear*, 2014

An article in 1884, titled “The Chinese in Early Days” by James O’Meara depicted Chinese culture as exotic and their lack of assimilation, in addition to the economic struggles Americans faced due to the presence of Chinese people. O’Meara said, “they rooted into many departments or specialties of merchandise and trade until they rooted out white competition. They have driven from employment the boys who now become hoodlums through lack of employment...”²⁰ This statement ties into the previously mentioned political cartoon, “What Shall we do With Our Boys?” as Asian employment caused white males to lack employment, thus pushing them into getting into trouble. O’Meara continued to describe the aggressive nature of Asians in the economy as he said, “they push and burrow their way into factories and trade,

²⁰ James O’Meara, “The Chinese in Early Days,” *Overland Monthly and Out West Magazine: (1868-1935)*, May 1884, 480.

and in time undermine the business to establish themselves upon the bankruptcy and ruin they have caused, to grow rich for themselves...” and O’Meara ultimately said that they were not qualified for citizenship as a race.²¹

In 1886, Shober & Carqueville Lith Co., printed an advertisement called “The Magic Washer, Manufactured by Geo. Dee, Dixon, Illinois. The Chinese Must Go” with the Uncle Sam smiling and kicking Chinese men down a hill while holding a proclamation that says “to all whom it may concern, hereafter no family will be without Magic Washer under penalty of being dirty” (Figure 4).²² The Chinese men are easily recognized with their long braid, slanted eyes, traditional Chinese garb and unfriendly faces. Their hands are also drawn to make them look more goblin like. As for Uncle Sam, he is well dressed in a traditional American and patriotic suit as he stands tall and confidently holds the proclamation showing America’s dominance and power over the Chinese. The bottom of the advertisement said “The Chinese Must Go, We have no use for them since we got this WONDERFUL WASHER: What a blessing to tired mothers: It costs so little and don’t injure the clothes.”²³ As the Chinese made a prosperous business in washing laundry, white society didn’t like this rise in wealth and prosperity so advertisements like this were made to attract people to buying a washing machine, thus putting Chinese people out of work.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Shober & Carqueville, *The Magic Washer, manufactured by Geo. Dee, Dixon, Illinois. The Chinese Must Go*, Chicago: Shober & Carqueville Lith Co., 1886.

²³ Ibid.



Figure 4. “The Magic Washer, Manufactured by Geo. Dee, Dixon, Illinois. The Chinese Must Go” by Shober & Carqueville Lith Co., (1886)

Source: Library of Congress: Prints and Photographs Online Catalog

In the article “How Great is This “Yellow Peril”?” published in 1900 by the *New York Times*, the conflict between Christianity and the Asian world was discussed as “the dreadful theory that the invasion of China by the allied forces would bring on a war of unexampled

magnitude, with all of China on the one side and the Christian world on the other.”²⁴ Once again, the non-Christian Asian population in America threatened Christianity and civilization. This was also at the time of the Boxer Rebellion in China. The Boxers were a group of peasants who wanted to drive out foreigners, like the Japanese, Americans, and British, from the land so that the Qing Dynasty could remain in power.²⁵ Many Catholic and Protestant missionaries were going into China and converting people to Christianity which threatened the Chinese traditional faith of Confucianism and Buddhism. The Boxers committed several acts of violence towards anything or anyone foreign but they especially hated Chinese who had been converted to Christianity because they saw them as traitors to their own society.²⁶ This conflict of religious belief and struggle for power represented the conflict of Eastern vs. Western culture and the inability to work together.

In 1902, a pamphlet titled “Some Reasons for Chinese Exclusion” with the words “Meat vs. Rice” and “American Manhood vs. Asiatic Coolieism, Which Shall Survive?” was “Published by the American Federation of Labor” (Figure 5).²⁷ Not only was the general public worried about the invasion of Asians but worker unions were also concerned which further supported the anti-Asian sentiment towards Asian impact on employment and the economy. This was the year that politicians extended the Chinese Exclusion Act indefinitely. This pamphlet

²⁴ “How Great is This “Yellow Peril”,” *New York Times*, August 2, 1900, accessed April 5, 2017, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

²⁵ Robert Leonhard, “The China Relief Expedition Joint Coalition Warfare in China Summer 1900” (PhD diss., The Johns Hopkins University), accessed April 13, 2017, <http://www.jhuapl.edu/ourwork/nsa/papers/China%20ReliefSm.pdf>.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ John Kuo Wei Tchen and Dylan Yeats, *Yellow Peril!: An Archive of Anti-Asian Fear* (London: Verso, 2014), 23.

pointed out the stark contrast between Asian and American lifestyle and that one would ultimately beat out the other. This could have been in fear that Asian culture would beat out American culture if immigration wasn't restricted, but it could also have been that American culture would survive because it was clearly better. Regardless, the title page of the pamphlet clearly showed the unlikely possibility of both cultures being able to co-exist.

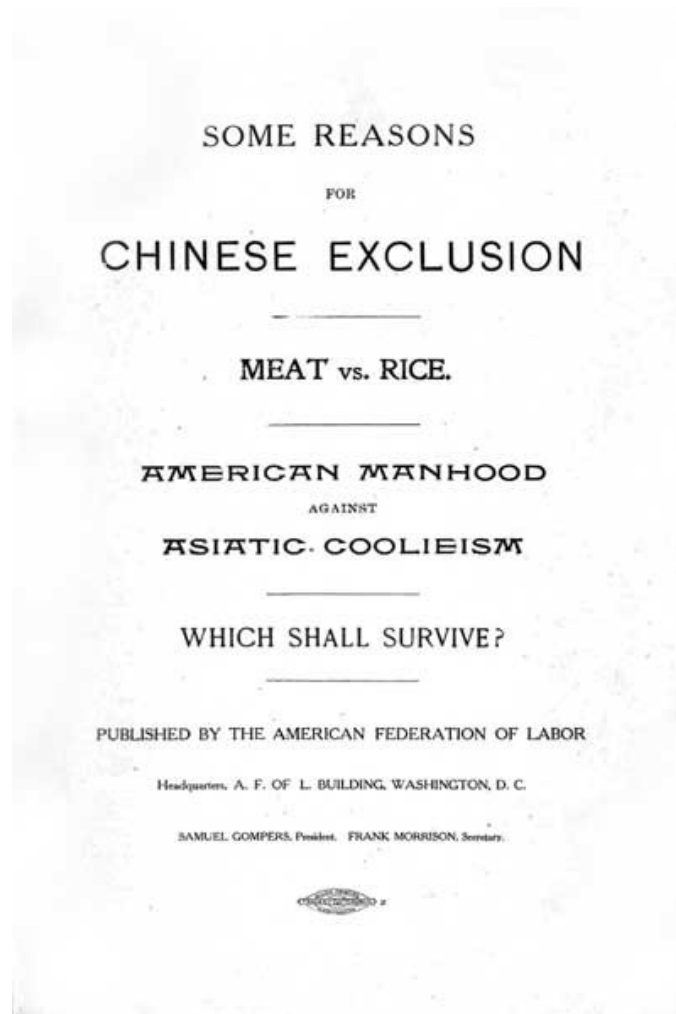


Figure 5. “Some Reasons for Chinese Exclusion” by The American Federation of Labor (1902)
 Source: John Kuo Wei Tchen and Dylan Yeats, *Yellow Peril! An Archive of Anti-Asian Fear*, 2014

These political cartoons, articles and other images provided the general public with reasons for anti-Asian sentiment so that society would conclude that they would be better off

without Asian immigrants, particularly Chinese immigrants. First, material goods were seen as a good thing but not when there was too much production and too much of a mess on American soil with the money going to China. Second, China's domination in American trade and the economy left white workers out of jobs. Third, White people were advised to buy the washing machine in order to stop Chinese progression and so the Chinese would have to return to China out of desperation for work. Fourth, American and Chinese culture were in direct competition but the United States only had room enough for one culture, so ultimately, one culture and that group of people needed to go, and it wasn't going to be American culture. Chinese control of the economy was the biggest fear depicted in the political cartoons and articles but religious and lifestyle differences were also framed as encroaching on American life. Chinese people were seen as malicious and scarily more successful at life in the United States than Americans in the United States, which caused the perpetuation and high usage of the term "Yellow Peril", and the slogan "The Chinese Must Go".

Alongside the various anti-Asian publications, authors, Tchen and Yeats described Asians as the scapegoats for the economic distress of the time period. They said,

"If the political culture can't quite deliver its promises, it will appease the white working class by creating an external enemy and blaming the victim. From the 1880s onwards, the decades in which Chinese and then other racialized "Oriental" workers were excluded and marginalized, the system of the machine could survive by redirecting class injustices and inequities through repeated sounds of stereotyping others from various parts of Asia and the Pacific, and scapegoating the goats."²⁸

Minority groups will always be the scapegoat for discontent with society because someone needs to take the blame and it's typically the ones in power who can divert the attention and place the blame on these less fortunate and influential. This happened back in the 1880s and

²⁸ Ibid., 353.

it happens today, as Chinese people are blamed as the ones who are taking the jobs and as companies move their businesses to Asia promoting the Asian economy as America's economy stays stagnant.²⁹

As religious differences between West and East were previously discussed as conflicting, geopolitics in the 1900s also increased tensions and the term “Yellow Peril” became more prevalent. After Japan defeated Russia in a war over the Korean Peninsula, European powers felt even more threatened by Asian countries expanding into new territory.³⁰ A political cartoon titled “The Asian Empire”, by Georges Bigot in 1904 depicted a Japanese man with a bloody sword, on top of a sinking world with dead bodies in the bloody water, and with a yellow background (Figure 6).³¹ The man was clearly Asian because of his traditional Japanese military uniform and slanted eyes. The world says Empire D’asie (Asian Empire) on it and the blood is only trickling down upon the European countries leaving Asian clean and above the water. Yeats said “...the Japanese embrace of the promise of expansionism called into question the already fragile assumptions of white supremacy and helped crystalize a set of fears around a new term that could be read back into history or projected onto the future: the Yellow Peril.”³² Political cartoons like this perpetuated fear of Asians and linked bloodshed to Asian expansion and the color yellow to all the evil things about the Asian empire and Asians.

²⁹ Elizabeth Kolbert, “America's Top Parent: What's behind the “Tiger Mother” craze?,” *The New Yorker*, January 31, 2011, , accessed April 6, 2017, <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2011/01/31/americas-top-parent>.

³⁰ John Kuo Wei Tchen and Dylan Yeats, *Yellow Peril!: An Archive of Anti-Asian Fear* (London: Verso, 2014), 23.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 125.

³² *Ibid.*, 196.



Figure 6. “The Asian Empire” by Georges Bigot (1904)

Source: John Kuo Wei Tchen and Dylan Yeats, *Yellow Peril! An Archive of Anti-Asian Fear*, 2014

In the 1904 article in the *Atlantic Constitution*, “Kaiser Fears Yellow Peril: German Sentiment Favors Russia in the East”, the dispute between Russia and Japan was discussed. The article said, “the common talk in ministerial quarters is that this is not a simple contest for territory in Korea or Manchuria, but rather a combat of civilization and of race ideals, and if one

must choose between the white and the yellow, Germany stands by the whites.”³³ The fear of losing control in the East was a consistent theme in the remarks throughout the article. Another article in 1904, expressed the imminent threat of the “Yellow Peril” on the American economy. This article, titled “The Real “Yellow Peril”” said “The Chinaman’s competition is blighting and damming to American standards of living and cannot be tolerated if the labor of the Caucasian is to remain self-respecting and measurably prosperous.”³⁴ Again, the fear that Asian people were putting white people out of work, disrupting society and causing anxiety was shown throughout these two articles. Anti-Asian sentiment dealt with racial tensions in the United States with the influence of tense international relations between China and the United States. These fears were consistently confirmed as the Chinese infiltrated society and threatened white worker’s employment domestically while China’s economy strengthened abroad.

A book cover, mentioned in Tchen and Yeats’ book, to re-emphasize the struggle to preserve white supremacy as Japan shocked the world by beating Russia in 1904 was Lothrop Stoddard’s *The Rising Tide of Color Against White World-Supremacy* (Figure 7).³⁵ This image depicted a red background with three colored people lunging toward what is assumed to be Europe. The distinct silhouettes of a person with a spear, a feathered headdress and large earrings, a person with a sword and classic Asian rice hat, and a person with a gun and turban are moving forward. Lothrop Stoddard argued that European countries were getting too distracted in

³³ “Kaiser Fears Yellow Peril: German Sentiment Favors Russia in the East,” *The Atlanta Constitution (1881-1945)*, February 14, 1904, accessed April 5, 2017, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

³⁴ “The Real ‘Yellow Peril’”, *The Atlanta Constitution (1881-1945)*, March 5, 1904, accessed April 5, 2017, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

³⁵ John Kuo Wei Tchen and Dylan Yeats, *Yellow Peril!: An Archive of Anti-Asian fear* (London: Verso, 2014), 216.

their world that they couldn't see the real threat: the "Yellow Peril". He claimed that "Japanese victory was a literal and symbolic affront to white superiority that inspired inferior races everywhere to claim modernity for themselves."³⁶ Stoddard wanted European alliances to interfere with and break up alliances between Asian and African regions in order to not lose European control and to specifically stop immigration of Asian people into Africa, Europe and the Western Hemisphere. This is one of the few anti-Asian images that acknowledges and uses other minority groups in the message of threat to white superiority. Later, the term "model minority" will be briefly shown that one of its uses was to divide minority groups by placing Asians above other people of color because of Asian work ethic which diminished and continues to diminish the hard work of other people of color.

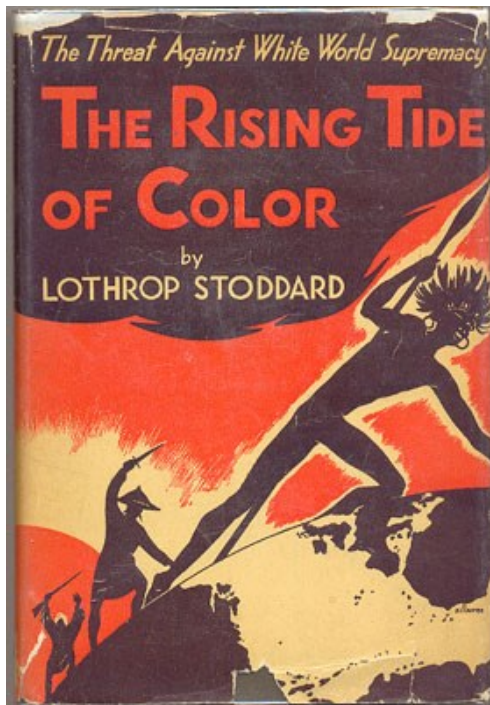


Figure 7. *The Rising Tide of Color Against White World Supremacy* by Lothrop Stoddard (1904)
 Source: John Kuo Wei Tchen and Dylan Yeats, *Yellow Peril! An Archive of Anti-Asian Fear*, 2014

³⁶ Ibid.

In 1906, an article titled ‘The “Yellow Peril”’ continued to address the Asian threat to the economy and American influence. It said Representative McKinlay of California “is afraid that through these qualities [high opinion of the intelligence, industry and capacity for rapid progress] they will drive American producers out of foreign markets, and even become the industrial masters of the world.”³⁷ It continued to elaborate that not only would Asians succeed in the American economy but that it would also be easy for them to do it. The article reads “Another assumption of the sufferer from the “yellow peril” disease is that Chinese and Japanese will reach the pinnacle of industrial expertness with hardly an effort and that while they are advancing with unexampled rapidity Americans will remain at a standstill.”³⁸ The idea that not only would Asians succeed in ease, but American progression would slow and lose its power, was one not to be overlooked. Similarly, to the ‘Some Reasons for Chinese Exclusion’ pamphlet, support for anti-Asian sentiment with reasons besides the economy targeted cultural differences that were too big to overcome.

According to the 1915 article, “The Yellow Peril” published in *The Los Angeles Times*, the Japanese race was biologically and culturally not good enough for citizenship. The article said “The Japanese are possessors of a civilization which was hoary with years centuries before Pericles ruled in Athens: a civilization incapable of assimilation with ours or conversion to ours.”³⁹ It later said, “we fear he may seek the form of our citizenship but because we know that he can never possess the spirit of our citizenship that we would, by law and by treaty, close our

³⁷ “The ‘Yellow Peril’” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, July 5, 1906, accessed April 5, 2017, ProQuest Historical Newspapers, 7.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 8.

³⁹ “The Yellow Peril,” *Los Angeles Times*, July 12, 1915, accessed April 7, 2017, ProQuest Historical Newspapers, 114.

doors against his incoming.”⁴⁰ The main argument for probable failure of cultural assimilation was the fact that Japanese literature didn’t discuss the idea of human freedom or equal rights and therefore, a republic like America would not be a place for Japanese people. If the Japanese people couldn’t assimilate, then there was no point for them to inhabit the land and cause disorder in society.

In 1921, a new take on the term “Yellow Peril” came to play in the article “Yellow Peril” Not an Issue” which argued that intermarriage was the worst case scenario. The threat of Asians overpopulating through immigration was one threat but the real threat to white supremacy was the intermingling of races. The article said “...it is in the best interest of both races that there shall be no mingling of blood.”⁴¹ The article described the fear of yellow blood and bodies populating the United States at a faster pace than white people and the consequences that would follow. The issue of intermarriage was not new at this time; this issue dated back to white European settlers marrying the indigenous people and causing much confusion and discontent of mixed race offspring. In the perspective of white Americans, to keep this from happening, Asian exclusion in legislation had to be continued.

The Impact of World War II and the Postwar Period on Asian Americans

World War II was a major turning point for Asian Americans. The geopolitics at the time distinguished allies and enemies for the United States. Japan was an enemy and therefore Japanese Americans were interned after the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, while the Chinese were seen as allies and therefore welcomed into society unlike the previous years. In *The Era of*

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ “‘Yellow Peril’ Not an Issue,” *Los Angeles Times (1886-1922)*, October 6, 1921, accessed April 5, 2017, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

Franklin D. Roosevelt 1933-1945: A Brief History With Documents, a document included was the poster on April 30, 1942 signed by J. L. DeWitt, Lieutenant General, U.S. Army Commanding where the “instructions to all persons of Japanese ancestry” were listed.⁴² These instructions for, now known, as Japanese internment were about how to follow orders for immediate evacuation to prison camps in the middle of nowhere to make sure the Japanese couldn’t plan an attack on the United States. In Ellen Wu’s book, *The Color of Success: Asian Americans and the Origins of the Model Minority (Politics and Society in Modern America)*, she said that World War II is a pivotal moment as she noted Japanese internment and “the Chinese, by contrast, enjoyed sounder social footing as a result of their real and presumed ties to China, the nation’s partner in the Pacific War against Japan.”⁴³ This was the first time that Americans had a reason to distinguish Chinese from Japanese citizens.

Fears about the “Yellow Peril” changed as Chinese and Japanese people were differentiated during this time of American strife as the threat of Japan made it easier for Chinese people to rise in social status. In a 1941 article, “How to Tell Your Friends From Japs” in TIME magazine, a list of characteristics as “a few rules of thumb -- not always reliable” between Chinese and Japanese men was given with four photographs as examples (Figure 8). Some of the characteristics included: “Those who know them best often rely on facial expression to tell them apart: the Chinese expression is likely to be more placid, kindly, open: the Japanese more positive, dogmatic, arrogant”; “Japanese are hesitant, nervous in conversation, laugh loudly at

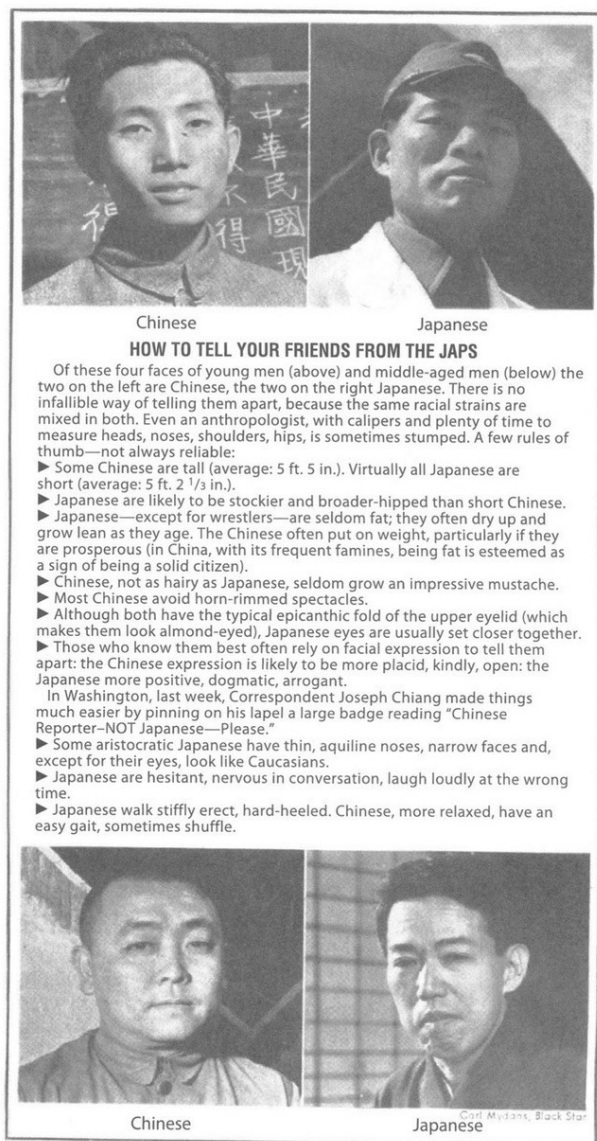
⁴² Richard D. Polenberg, *The Era of Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1933-1945: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000) 99.

⁴³ Ellen D. Wu, *The Color of Success: Asian Americans and the Origins of the Model Minority (Politics and Society in Modern America)*, Reprint ed. (Princeton: Princeton Univ Press, 2015), 43.

the wrong time”;; “Japanese walk stiffly erect, hard-heeled Chinese, more relaxed, have an easy gait, sometimes shuffle.”⁴⁴ There was also a note among one of the bullet points saying “In Washington, last week Correspondent Joseph Chiang made things much easier by pinning on his lapel a large badge reading “Chinese Reporter -- NOT Japanese – Please.”⁴⁵ Bullet points for identifying the difference of a Japanese person and a Chinese person definitely weren’t the best guidelines to follow because the bias presented in the article clearly directed the reader to think the Chinese person was better than a Japanese person. The significance of this publication in TIME magazine is that this issue of distinguishing between Asian races needed to be addressed at a national level. Even though Asian immigrants had been living in America for a couple of decades, the confusion between Asians was still prevalent and it wasn’t until World War II, people felt the need to differentiate.

⁴⁴ Sam Kishawi, “‘How to tell your friends from the Japs’ in TIME, 1941 vs. ‘Turban Primer’ in RedEye,” Sixteen Minutes to Palestine, August 7, 2012, accessed April 5, 2017, <https://smpalestine.com/2012/08/07/how-to-tell-your-friends-from-the-japs-in-time-1941-vs-turban-primer-in-redeye-2012/>.

⁴⁵ Ibid.



▲ Time magazine explains how to make arbitrary racial distinctions, 1941.

Figure 8. "How to Tell Your Friends From Japs" published by TIME magazine (1941)
 Source: Sam Kishawi, "'How to tell your friends from the Japs' in TIME, 1941 vs. 'Turban Primer' in RedEye," Sixteen Minutes to Palestine, August 7, 2012.

Additionally, to improve China and U.S. relations, in the 1940s and 50s, an international exchange was set into place to bring more Chinese scholars into the United States. Madeline Hsu wrote in *The Good Immigrants: How the Yellow Peril Became the Model Minority* that the acceptance of scholars and high skilled workers in the United States helped better international

relations but also created a narrow view of the Chinese because of this carefully chosen immigration population. The U.S. selected intelligent Chinese citizens to immigrate and study and work in the U.S., trying to foster a good relationship with China and use cheaper, immigrant work in high valued production. On the other hand, China benefited from gaining a Westernized education in certain fields.⁴⁶ As this could be seen as a good thing, the effects of this selected immigration has been proven to have negative unintended consequences. By only wanting scholars, this propelled the Asian image of outsmarting the whites, thus perpetuating a fear of infiltration and threat, again. This feeling takes a few years to emerge, as does the term “model minority”.

Political Initiatives to Bridge China and the United States

As the Sino-Japanese War was being fought, China had the support of the United States and as World War II happened right after, China and the United States allied against Japan. The Chinese Exclusion Act lasted from 1882 to 1943, in addition to other quotas on Japanese immigration and South East Asian immigration, but as China - U.S. relations intensified, liberalists believed cultural exchanges could benefit each country. The Fulbright program supported this mission as J.W. Fulbright said, “civilization is what educational exchange programs are all about. They are concerned with increasing man’s knowledge of science and the arts. But they are primarily concerned with increasing man’s understanding of himself and of the national and world societies in which he lives.”⁴⁷ After World War II, The United States was definitely in the liberal mindset of making friendly relations with other countries to achieve and

⁴⁶ Madeline Y. Hsu, *The Good Immigrants: How the Yellow Peril Became the Model Minority* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015), 35.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 111.

sustain a more peaceful world without the threat of communism. The attraction to Chinese immigrants was to reach out to those immigrants who could enhance the economy and adapt to the Western lifestyle. In fear of China becoming communist, the United States tried to get Chinese people to assimilate and understand the advancement of western civilization and capitalism. The medium in which they tried to achieve this goal was international education programs to hopefully educate future leaders with a western education.

Examples of this cultural exchange going well in the beginning were “students such as I.M. Pei and Nobel Prize winning physicists Li Zhengdao and Yang Zhenning, who were educated in the United States [because they] demonstrated the possibilities of cultural convergences between Chinese and Americans and presented living examples that Americans could welcome and economically benefit from the presence of the right kind of Chinese: educated, westernized, well-mannered and possessed of practical skills and talents.”⁴⁸ Bringing Chinese people into the capitalist system seemed like a benefit for the Asian immigrants experiencing a better lifestyle and in return, the United States would benefit from their work and productivity while appearing to be helpful as it worked to include Chinese people. Unlike the political cartoons, articles, pamphlets and advertisements in the 1880s discussing the impracticality of Chinese people fitting into the culture, these students proved successful in assimilating to American culture.

Chiang Kai Shek, the leader of the Republic of China, and his wife, Soong Mei-Ling, also embodied this Western influence in the Asian world, culturally and politically. Madame Chiang Kai Shek was not only educated in the United States but also Christian. When returning to China after her studies, “Song Meiling occupied herself with a variety of charitable causes, seeking worthy outlets for her Christian values and American education” which is what

⁴⁸ Ibid., 9.

American liberalists had imagined happening after creating the bridge between these two countries.⁴⁹ As she spoke to Congress in appeal for aid to China she spoke of their similarities and “these evocations of common history, experiences and commitment to democracy and freedom,” which made Madame Chiang “a charismatically brave soul symbol of how reasonably educated and Christian Chinese could be like Americans, not only in friendships forged through times of war but also for employment and even citizenship in the United States”.⁵⁰ Hsu wrote that these western assimilated Chinese were considered ‘good’ immigrants, thus creating better relations because the United States saw their western influence extend beyond its borders and into the east where the rise of communism was still threatening. Fear and anxiety of Americans about Asians pressured Asian groups into assimilating and as the media perpetuated and fostered this notion, the term “Model Minority” emerged.

Another movement besides the westernized scholars at this time was the Asian American community voice against communism to show and prove their loyalty to the United States. In the late 1940s and 50s, the fear of communism and communist leaders infiltrating the government was spread like wildfire by senator Joseph McCarthy, who spoke out about this threat to the nation. The mistrusting and skeptical environment of the government and other members of society, even neighbors, took over the nation. In 1949, as Chairman Mao established the People’s Republic of China, Chinese people felt the need to prove their loyalty more than ever before. As the Japanese had to prove their loyalty during and after World War II, community leaders in Chinatowns, largely populated Asian areas in cities such as Los Angeles, Chicago and New York, began hosting rallies against communism. Ellen Wu’s book discussed these movements as

⁴⁹ Ibid., 88.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 90.

an anti-Asian crusade that “accomplished what its architects had set out to do: it afforded Chinese Americans a way to signal and reinforce perceptions of their loyalty to the United States and Nationalist China.”⁵¹ The Chinese Nationalist Daily even published a list of talking points to follow when conversing with Americans. The list is as follows,

“1. We, the Chinese-American citizens, pledge our loyalty to the United States, 2. We support the Nationalist Government of Free China and her great leader, President Chiang Kai-shek, 3. We support the United Nations Charter and the efforts made by the United Nations troops who are fighting for a united, free and independent Korea, 4. The Chinese Communists are the stooges of Soviet Russia. Those who are invading Korea are the Chinese COMMUNISTS, not the peace-loving people of Free China.”⁵²

These publicly loyal acts to the United States made Americans a lot more accepting of Chinese people because of the western assimilation the Chinese finally accomplished.

Ellen Wu also discussed the movement when the Japanese tried to claim their loyalty by raising awareness and memorializing the Nisei Soldier. She said, the “JACL’s designation of October 30 as Nisei Soldier Memorial Day suited the gamut of the group’s objectives. At one level, the yearly event paid homage to sacrifices of Japanese Americans in the armed forces with observances around the country. At another level, Nisei Soldier Memorial Day functioned as purposeful outreach to encourage public support for the elimination of anti-Japanese discrimination.”⁵³ She continued by saying that “military service has allowed them[Japanese] the chance to prove their loyalty to the United States, upset existing notions of their “character,” and gain access to socioeconomic mobility through the GI Bill. As a direct result of the Pacific war,

⁵¹ Ellen D. Wu, *The Color of Success: Asian Americans and the Origins of the Model Minority (Politics and Society in Modern America)*, Reprint ed. (Princeton: Princeton Univ Press, 2015), 122.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 112.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 87.

Japanese residents of California have lifted themselves higher in a few postwar years than they had done in the preceding half century.”⁵⁴ Both the Chinese and Japanese continued to prove their loyalties to the United States to be accepted. From being excluded and threatened, the Asian population seemed to be rising socially, which led to the development of the “Model Minority”.

Asian Americans as the “Model Minority” from the 1950s to Today

The term “Model Minority” in American history is about the anxiety white Americans feel about Asians being better than Americans in economic and educational ways of American life. Again, Asians are seen as a threat to the American economy, education system, and society in general. Although this term has a positive connotation, like the cultural exchange, the consequences are negative. This term still makes Asian people different and ‘other’ in the eyes of white Americans. This term first appeared in the 1966 *New York Times* article by William Pettersen titled “Success Story: Japanese American style.”⁵⁵ Pettersen placed emphasis on the hard work Japanese Americans did to place them in a better view in the American eye. He described their success in society by saying, “by any criterion of good citizenship that we choose, the Japanese Americans are better than any other group in our society, including native-born whites.”⁵⁶ In this case, the compliment was genuine, but this later turned into a threatening tone that Japanese Americans were outperforming white Americans. After this publication, the term “model minority”, was used a lot more to promote a more positive image of Asian Americans.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 160.

⁵⁵ William Pettersen, “Success Story, Japanese American Style,” *New York Times Magazine*, January 9, 1966, 21.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

Another major article portraying the “model minority” image was the 1966 *U.S. News & World* report, “Success Story of One Minority Group in U.S.”.⁵⁷ The story published was about the success Chinese Americans had achieved. It said, “the large majority are moving ahead by applying the traditional virtues of hard work, thrift and morality.”⁵⁸ The report discussed the low crime rates of Chinese people and in Chinatowns, largely populated Asian areas in cities such as Los Angeles, New York and Chicago. Teachers praised the Chinese student’s work and parental involvement in their children’s education. The article focused on all the positive things Chinese people had done to raise in social mobility. The discussion was also about the discrimination that Chinese people had once faced but had managed to rise above and work through. The report stated, “at the same time, it must be recognized that the Chinese and other Orientals in California were faced with even more prejudice than faces the Negro today. We haven’t stuck Negroes in concentration camps, for instance, as we did the Japanese in World War II.”⁵⁹ The article portrayed Chinese Americans in such a positive light, that the discrimination Asians had faced in the past and faced at the time of publication was completely diminished because of their newfound success. It wasn’t a coincidence that these two articles were published in 1966 during the civil rights era. These authors pointed out that if Asians could overcome their discrimination than the nation couldn’t possibly be as racist as black people were claiming it to be at the time.

In the magazine, *Change*, Bob Suzuki wrote, “Asian Americans as the “model minority” outdoing whites? Or media hype?” in 1989. His take on this issue was that the media used and

⁵⁷ “Success Story of One Minority Group in U.S.,” *U.S. News & World Report, Inc.*, December 26, 1966, 6.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 8.

perpetuated the “model minority” articles like “Outwhiting the Whites” and “The Triumph of Asian Americans” by using bits of data, such as the fact that Asian families had a higher median family income and succeeded in higher educational levels than white people, to support this claim of the “Model Minority”.⁶⁰ The 1970 U.S. census confirmed the media’s hype by publishing the report stating that Asian Americans did in fact have a higher median family income.⁶¹ As people continued to say Asian Americans were doing better, and the media produced stories with headlines supporting those claims, the “model minority” term became well ingrained in people’s minds. The articles pointed out the inconsistencies and inaccuracies that were overlooked and dismissed. As scholars, mentioned in Suzuki’s article, looked at the 1970 U.S. census report and did more research, they found that although the median family income was higher, the reasons were as follows: “1) There was a larger proportion of Asian families in which both spouses worked than among white families. 2) Asian children remained with their families longer and thereby contributed longer to the family income and 3) Asian families were larger on average and therefore had more earners contributing to family income.”⁶² Articles not addressing the complexity of the issue perpetuated the fear of Asian Americans outperforming Americans. This was seen as unacceptable in the eyes of white Americans because of their perceived loss of control over society.

Many people had the assumption that Asians do well because newspapers and magazines had consistently said that Asians had a higher median family income. Most people didn’t, and still don’t, know that the positions Asian people typically fill are lower in status. As stated

⁶⁰ Bob H. Suzuki, “Asian Americans as the ‘Model Minority’,” *Change*, November 1989, accessed April 6, 2017, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁶² *Ibid.*

before, there are a few reasons why Asian families had a higher median income in comparison to white families. Discrimination in workplaces and life was and still is quite prevalent for Asian Americans but yet the issues are not talked about as often. In Diana Fong's 1982 article "America's 'Invisible' Chinese", she said, "We also tend to choose self-employment partly because of discrimination in private industry. There and elsewhere, while equal opportunity makes it easier to enter, it's still harder for minorities to move up on the institutional ladder. Thus, discrimination limits occupational choice."⁶³ In 1989, Bill Sing from the *Los Angeles Times* talked to a Chinese-American engineer, Alice Lei, for the complaint she filed with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.⁶⁴ She said that Asian Americans were quite often the victims of systematic discrimination because of the "model minority" image. Sing said, "that image of Asians achieving success through quiet achievement - while helping them to get hired at bottom and middle levels - works against them in promotions to senior positions."⁶⁵ Asian Americans were and still are less likely to file complaints or question a discriminatory system if they are unfamiliar with corporation policies. The report continued to explain, "Asian-Americans make up 8% of all professionals and technicians in the private sector, but only 1.3% of all managers, according to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission."⁶⁶ Public perception, as seen in popular magazines and newspapers, was that Asians were taking over the market and causing issues and tough competition for white success, but the statistics proved otherwise.

⁶³ Diana Fong, "America's 'Invisible' Chinese," *New York Times*, May 1, 1982, accessed April 6, 2017, ProQuest Historical Newspapers, 27.

⁶⁴ Bill Sing, "Asian-Americans Find Themselves Resisting a 'Demure' Stereotype," *Los Angeles Times (1923-Current File)*, February 13, 1989, accessed April 6, 2017, ProQuest Historical Newspapers, G12.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

One major event relating to economic distress of white workers due to Asian presence in society was the murder of Vincent Chin. In June of 1982, two white men murdered a man named Vincent Chin because as a perceived Japanese man, the two men thought Chin was the cause for economic despair in Detroit at that time. Vincent Chin was not Japanese, he was Chinese but that didn't matter to the two men who beat him so viciously that Chin died four days later. There was more coverage on this story in the later years reflecting on the significance of this act than at the time of the murder. A year later, the *Los Angeles Times*, commented that "...the unusual circumstances of his death and the failure, in this instance, of the criminal-justice system have nationwide significance."⁶⁷ The story covered the main details which stated Ronald "Ebens, an automobile factory foreman, mistook Chin for a Japanese and accused him and his "countrymen" of undermining the American economy with the sale of Japanese cars in the United States."⁶⁸ As the two men, Ebens and his stepson Michael Nitz were taken to court, the Judge, Charles Kaufman "fined each man \$3,700 and put them both on three years' probation."⁶⁹ This leniency in punishment caused much public protest among Asians, Asian Americans and allies as they questioned the decision. A few years later in 1988, a *New York Times* article by Vincent Canby, titled "Who Killed Vincent Chin?": Answer is Complex", pointed out that Vincent Chin was "a young, thoroughly assimilated Chinese American ... having a night out with his pals (white)" as if to make sure the picture is clear that Chin was a "good" Asian who

⁶⁷ "Justice, Perhaps, for Vincent Chin," *Los Angeles Times (1923-Current File)*, July 31, 1983, accessed April 6, 2017, ProQuest Historical Newspapers, D4.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

didn't deserve this death.⁷⁰ A comment from Chin's mother was as follows, "She was brought up to be in a conspicuous and self-effacing in a white world. She always worried that her son was fooling himself when he assumed he had been accepted."⁷¹ Although it seemed as if times were changing and Asians were being accepted, the distinct difference in color and the depressed economy proved to have deadly consequences for Vincent Chin. A year later, in 1989, an article in the *Los Angeles Times* asked the questions "Was Vincent Chin the casualty of a drunken brawl or racial vendetta? Is the proper question: *What* killed Vincent Chin? If so, is the proper answer: A society that tolerates and even abets racism?"⁷² From the account of the night and the punishment given to the two men, the answer is clear that this account was mainly based on race and propelled by intoxication. Additionally, the punishment to follow was softer on the two white males than would have been for two males of color.⁷³

In 2012, an article in the *New York Times* called, "Why Vincent Chin Matters" was written by Frank Wu. He started off the article by saying "...They [Vincent Chin and his friends] were accosted by two white men, who blamed them for the success of Japan's auto industry. "It's because of you we're out of work" they were said to have shouted, adding a word that can't be

⁷⁰ Vincent Camby, "Who Killed Vincent Chin?": Answer is Complex," *New York Times (1923-Current File)*, March 11, 1988, ProQuest Historical Newspapers, C22.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Howard Rosenberg, "A Haunting Account of Death of Vincent Chin," *Los Angeles Times (1923-Current File)*, July 18, 1989, accessed April 6, 2017, ProQuest Historical Newspapers, E9.

⁷³ Cganemccalla, "Blacks Receive 60% Longer Sentences For Same Crimes," Newsone, 2012, , accessed April 18, 2017, <https://newsone.com/1859475/black-people-receive-60-longer-sentences-for-same-crimes/>.

printed here.”⁷⁴ Wu pointed out the distinction between people of color and white people and the place in society those groups fit -- one group lumped together as “other”. He said, “yet for all of our diversity, we share an experience of otherness. The fifth-generation Japanese American from California, the Hmong refugee in Wisconsin, the Indian engineer in Texas the Korean adoptee in Chicago and the Pakistani taxi driver in New York -- all have at times been made to feel alien, sometimes immutably so.”⁷⁵ Despite the perception of progress for Asian Americans, society is far from accepting, as Wu said, “Thirty years after Mr. Chin’s death, hate crimes seem to be a remote threat for Asian-Americans. But it is premature, if tempting, to celebrate progress.”⁷⁶ He concluded by saying, “History also teaches us that before Asian Americans were seen as model minorities, we were also perpetual foreigners. Taken together, these perceptions can lead to resentment. And resentment can lead to hate.”⁷⁷ Wu pointed out the white anxiety in both prewar and post war periods of Asian success and competition. By seeing Asians as model minorities or perpetual foreigners, both views are resented and both views perpetuate anti-Asian sentiment.

Newspapers and magazines have typically reported the large number of Asians being accepted into the nation’s top universities and colleges but Asian American discrimination in higher education existed and still exists. In William Ponder’s 1987 *Los Angeles Times* article “What is the Best?” a comment from a woman, Jean Toh, was said that “Asian-American students had to score higher on tests, achieve higher grade point averages and outperform all

⁷⁴ Frank H. Wu, "Why Vincent Chin Matters," *New York Times (1923-Current File)*, June 23, 2012, accessed April 6, 2017, ProQuest Historical Newspapers, A19.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

other groups. The fact that Asian-Americans must be better than their white counterparts in pursuing higher education smacks of racial discrimination.”⁷⁸ Universities in California have had and still have a particularly hard time distinguishing minorities who are entitled and minorities who are eligible for enrollment. William Ponder, Assistant Director, Undergraduate Admission-Outreach of UC Riverside, said “since the late ‘60s, the university has tried to balance both [entitlement versus eligibility], with some success...the reality is that as a public institution, entitlement is critical. As the debate between entitlement and eligibility rages on, all of us will be victim to the results.”⁷⁹ Affirmative action has been there to help underrepresented groups, but Asian Americans were and still are often left out of Affirmative action because of their higher test scores and high educational status. In the 1987 *TIME* cover story, “The New Whiz Kids: Why Asian Americans are Doing so Well and What it Costs Them,” it said, “John Bunzel, a senior research fellow at the Hoover Institution, a conservative think tank at Stanford, says he has found indication that Stanford, Harvard, Princeton and Brown discriminate against Asian Americans in their admissions policy” (Figure 9).⁸⁰ Universities have commented on the desire to have a diverse socioeconomic and academic body, so accepting too many middle class Asian Americans into engineering and mathematical fields would be a problem. Judge Ken M. Kawaichi, co-chairman of the Asian American Task Force on University Admissions commented, “the campus they envision is mostly white, mostly upper middle class with a limited

⁷⁸ William Ponder, “What Is the Best?,” *Los Angeles Times (1923-Current File)*, August 16, 1987, accessed April 6, 2017, ProQuest Historical Newspapers, M5.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Brand, David, Jennifer Hull, Jeannie Park, and James Willwerth. “COVER STORY The New Whiz Kids Why Asian Americans are doing so well, and what it costs them.” *TIME*, August 31, 1987, 42-47. Accessed April 6, 2017, 45.

number of blacks, Hispanics and Asians.”⁸¹ Although this article discussed the intricacies of the “model minority” the cover shown below is six happy Asian students smiling with their books and with a computer on the side. One of the boys in the background has a basketball but the rest all have their hands on something academic. This is a stereotypical image of Asian Americans that people think of when they think of the “model minority” and it glazes over the real struggles Asian Americans face in their educational lives.



Figure 9. "The New Whiz Kids: Why Asian Americans are Doing so Well and What it Costs Them" Cover on TIME Magazine (1987)

Source: Brand, David, Jennifer Hull, Jeannie Park, and James Willwerth. "COVER STORY The New Whiz Kids Why Asian Americans are doing so well, and what it costs them." *TIME*, August 31, 1987.

⁸¹ Ibid.

In 1984, Berkeley's admission of Asian students dropped in acceptance rate but the school denied discrimination when questioned. A *Chicago Tribune* article in 1987 followed up on Berkeley's admissions change and commented that "The university denies it [the quota] but it has shifted from a reliance on the objective criteria of grades and test scores to a more subjective point system that gives extra credit for English proficiency, foreign language proficiency and involvement in high schools extracurricular activities. Asian leaders see that shift is having a discriminatory impact."⁸² The foreign language tests could be seen as a good thing but the tests did not include Asian languages. Additionally, adding emphasis on extracurricular activities favored those who could afford the cost and time for participating, in comparison to those who needed to work after school. Once Asian American students get accepted into a university or college, they still struggle. School support for Asian Americans is lesser than black and Hispanic support because of the "model minority" label. Asian Americans are told that they aren't supposed to struggle with school but in college, cultural and linguistic differences can create a variety of hardships.⁸³ Richard Bernstein wrote an article on "Asian Students Harmed by Precursors' Success" in 1988 for the *New York Times* saying "While the Asians have a high graduation rate, about 60 percent, it is still lower than that of whites, who graduate at a rate of 66 percent."⁸⁴ This discussion continued to 2008 in Tamar Lewin's article "Report Takes Aim at 'Model Minority' Stereotype of Asian-American Students" in the *New York Times*. This article

⁸² Clarence Page, "Prejudice follows prominence for a 'model minority'" *Chicago Tribune*, November 18, 1987, accessed April 6, 2017, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

⁸³ Richard Bernstein, "Asian Students Harmed By Precursors' Success," *New York Times (1923-Current File)*, July 10, 1988, accessed April 6, 2017, ProQuest Historical Newspapers, 16.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

points out that over generalizing Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders has been detrimental to other groups like Hmong, Samoans, Bengalis and Sri Lankans. The educational backgrounds of various Asian groups vary so widely that it is unfair to group everyone together. Many Hmong and Cambodian adults have never finished high school but most Pakistanis and Indians have at least a bachelor's degree.⁸⁵ This term is used to encompass all Asian Americans but it is highly inappropriate to do so. The threat of all Asians outperforming Americans in education, especially in higher education is a skewed one. Asian Americans, those with and those without strong educational backgrounds, feel the consequences of the "Model Minority" term across the board.

Another aspect of the fear that Asians will outperform white people really came to light as the book, *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother*, by Amy Chua published in 2011. The themes of East vs. West in economics, education and parenting was shown through Chua's memoir. As Amy Chua says on her website, this book "is a story of my family's journey in two cultures...It's not a parenting book; it's a memoir."⁸⁶ She stands by her belief that children are just the extension of herself and therefore she wants to push them to their greatest potential. She also says on the homepage of her website that "we in America can ask more of children than we typically do, and they will not only respond to the challenge, but thrive. I think we should assume strength in our children, not weakness. And I think it is 100% All-American to do so."⁸⁷ Amy Chua was raised by "very strict Chinese immigrant parents" so they pushed her like she

⁸⁵ Tamar Lewin, "Report Takes Aim at 'Model Minority' Stereotype of Asian-American Students," *New York Times (1923-Current File)*, June 10, 2008, accessed April 6, 2017, ProQuest Historical Newspapers, A18.

⁸⁶ "Amy Chua - The Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother," Amy Chua From Author Amy Chua Comments, 2011, accessed April 13, 2017, <http://amychua.com/>.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

pushed her children and she still feels like she owes her parents everything. The parenting style and culture of East vs. West is a consistent theme throughout her book as Chua reflects on having been raised in a traditionally Eastern way while raising her children in the West. Her opening to the book is “This was supposed to be a story of how Chinese parents are better at raising kids than Western ones. But instead, it’s about a bitter clash of cultures, a fleeting taste of glory, and how I was humbled by a thirteen-year-old...”.⁸⁸ Once her book was published in 2011, it became a *New York Times* bestseller and the fear of Asian success in America as well as China’s rise in the world became even more apparent to the general public, just like the “yellow peril” articles and political cartoons perpetuated the anti-Asian sentiment.

In the *New Yorker* article by Elizabeth Kolbert in 2011, “What’s behind the “Tiger Mother” craze?”, Kolbert spoke about the popular book.⁸⁹ She spoke to the difference between East and West and the threat of the rise of the East. She said, “It’s impossible to pick up a newspaper these days -- though who actually *picks up* a newspaper anymore? -- Without finding a story about the rise of the East. The headlines are variations on a theme: “Solar Panel Maker Moves Work to China”; China Drawing High-Tech Research From U.S.”; IBM Cutting 5,000 Service Jobs; Moving Work to India.”⁹⁰ Not only was Asia a threat to the economy, again, but the American education achievement levels were threatened by China too. One of the reasons for concern about education came about when the Programme for International Student Assessment, or PISA, tests were announced. It was the first time that Chinese students had participated in the

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Elizabeth Kolbert, “America's Top Parent: What's behind the ‘Tiger Mother’ craze?,” *The New Yorker*, January 31, 2011, , accessed April 6, 2017, <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2011/01/31/americas-top-parent>.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

assessment and children from Shanghai ranked first in every area. Students from the United States came in seventeenth in reading, twenty-first in science, and thirty-first in math.⁹¹ This was a wake up call for education policy makers, educators and parents as Eastern vs. Western educational strategies were brought into question.

In the *Wall Street Journal*, Erin Patrice O'Brien's 2011 article "Why Chinese Mothers Are Superior", spoke about Amy Chua's book and like Kolbert, talked about Westernized and Asian parenting. O'Brien pointed out that Western parents care too much about their child's self-esteem and that Asian parents don't, that Asian parents can push their children to perfection because their children owe everything to their parents and lastly, that Chinese parents know what's best for their children and therefore will decide what their children should partake in or not.⁹² These very different cultural values have quite the impact and Chua so clearly illustrated the brutality as well as the practicality of her Chinese parenting. The image attached in this article is a photo of Amy with her two daughters, Sophia and Lulu behind her (Figure 10). Amy's arms are crossed as if to emphasize her power and rigidity of parenting. Lulu is on the piano with a perfectly straight back and Sophia is with her violin on the other side of Amy. They are all smiling and showing off their talents, Amy's parenting, Lulu's piano playing skills, and Sophia's violin skills. This image of the happy, successful Asian family is the one that people connect with the "model minority" image.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Amy Chua and Erin Patrice O'Brien, "Why Chinese Mothers Are Superior," *The Wall Street Journal*, January 8, 2011, accessed April 6, 2017, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052748704111504576059713528698754>.



Figure 10. Photo Included in "Why Chinese Mothers Are Superior" by Erin Patrice O'Brien (2011)

Source: Chua, Amy, and Erin Patrice O'Brien. "Why Chinese Mothers Are Superior." *The Wall Street Journal*, January 8, 2011.

A point noted in Clare McHugh's article "Home Truths, Marching On" in the *Wall Street Journal* in 2011, was that McHugh believed Amy Chua was such a harsh mother because "she[Amy] [feared] that her children [would] be pampered and decadent, growing up in America's prosperity. So she [insisted] that they do physical labor."⁹³ Ironically, this view says that Asian parents are a bit threatened by American success and how that environment will affect their children negatively, thus causing the parenting to be harsher which in turn makes American parents threatened by the intensity of Asian parenting and the success Asian children have based up the pressure they receive from their parents.

In Annie Murphy-Paul's 2011 article "Tiger Moms: Is Tough Parenting Really the Answer?" in *TIME* Magazine, Paul also discussed Amy Chua's book. Like other reviews of the book, Paul pointed out the Western versus Asian way of parenting. Paul said, "Though Chua was born and raised in the U.S., her invocation of what she describes as traditional 'Chinese parents'

⁹³ Clare McHugh, "Home Truths, Marching On," January 11, 2011, accessed April 6, 2017.

has hit hard at a national sore spot: our fears about losing ground to China and other rising powers and about adequately preparing our children to survive in the global economy.”⁹⁴ Paul’s article also touches upon the growth in China’s economy and China’s outstanding performance from PISA. This incredible fear of losing control over the economy and educational realm to Asian causes such distrust and discomfort for Americans that the feeling of two cultures unable to co-exist unfortunately continues from the time period before World War II addressed earlier.

The portrayal of Asians in the newspapers, magazines, pamphlets, books, advertisements and other publications has moved from the “Yellow Peril” and too different to assimilate to the “Model Minority” and Asians succeeding in educational and economic areas. This is typically seen as positive shift but the feeling behind each term is one of anxiety and making sure that Asians will be seen as “other”. The “Yellow Peril” term was blatantly racist and exclusionary but the new term, the “Model Minority” is one where the implications of Asians taking jobs and spots at the top universities and colleges is subtly there. Through these articles, political cartoons, pamphlets and advertisements, analyzed in chronological order, parts of the Asian American narrative lay out the complexity of Asian American history in America that typically goes unnoticed by the catchy headlines; such as “The New Whiz Kids Why Asian Americans are doing so well, and what it costs them” and, “Why Chinese Mothers Are Superior”. As Tchen and Yeats, Hsu and Wu added to the complexities of “yellow peril” and “model minority” terms, the discussion about the political use for the term by white people goes unobserved. The “model minority” is here to serve as a term to emphasize difference and subtly recognize the perceived threat of the East over the West. As white people become anxious about their loss of control in the United States, their narrative is still the one to shape the narratives of other people of color.

⁹⁴ Annie Murphy Paul, “Tiger Moms: Is Tough Parenting Really the Answer?,” *TIME*, January 20, 2011, accessed April 6, 2017, <http://content.time.com/time/printout/0,8816,2043477,00.html>.

After this past presidential election of 2017, white supremacy became incredibly apparent. Trump voters either blatantly acknowledged their discontent with other races threatening white supremacy while others subtly made up other reasons to vote for him, such as interest in Trump's economic policy, to deny their racism. People of color face hardships in the United States and people tend to recognize that fact. However, the way in which the "model minority" term is used, is a manipulative way to create a divide among white and Asian and other minorities, while simultaneously seeming like a progressive and positive term. Black and Hispanic people are consistently compared to Asians to prove that minorities can succeed in America despite not being white but as seen through the publications in the past hundred and forty years, Asian people will still be separated from true white Americans. Asian Americans have definitely risen in society but not with the help of the "model minority" term; in the end, labels for Asians have really stemmed from white anxiety about the weakening of white supremacy and the rise of Asian success in the United States and China's success in the world. Western vs. Eastern ways continue to be debated and in competition and shall continue competing based upon such stark cultural differences but as the geopolitics narrate lives, people need to question at what cost these labels have on the lives of other. The "model minority" image discussed and perpetuated in newspapers and magazines has transformed from the "yellow peril" image but no matter what Asians do in society, they will always be perceived as different. According to these publications, only natural white Americans will be able to live without critique from popular media because other people of color either don't work hard enough or they work too hard take jobs or positions in schools that white people want. If only publications posted a balanced number of stories portraying Asians and other people of color in various ways so that these detrimental labels and stereotypes couldn't be perpetuated as much. Asian Americans have faced hardships since

stepping off the boat back in the 1880s and as newspaper's political cartoons and articles reflect popular opinion from white Americans, the narrative of Asian Americans as the "yellow peril" in the United States unfolded. The narrative continued and continues to unfold in the "model minority" term and the fear white people have about losing control to Asian success is deeply rooted in both the "yellow peril" and "model minority" term.

Bibliography

- "Amy Chua - The Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother." Amy Chua From Author Amy Chua Comments. 2011. Accessed April 13, 2017. <http://amychua.com/>.
- "How Great is This "Yellow Peril"." *New York Times*, August 2, 1900. Accessed April 5, 2017. ProQuest Historical Newspapers.
- "Justice, Perhaps, for Vincent Chin." *Los Angeles Times (1923-Current File)*, July 31, 1983. Accessed April 6, 2017. ProQuest Historical Newspapers.
- "Kaiser Fears Yellow Peril: German Sentiment Favors Russia in the East." *The Atlanta Constitution (1881-1945)*, February 14, 1904. Accessed April 5, 2017. ProQuest Historical Newspapers.
- Kishawi, Sam. "'How to tell your friends from the Japs' in TIME, 1941 vs. 'Turban Primer' in RedEye." Sixteen Minutes to Palestine. August 7, 2012. Accessed April 5, 2017. <https://smpalestine.com/2012/08/07/how-to-tell-your-friends-from-the-japs-in-time-1941-vs-turban-primer-in-redeye-2012/>.
- "Success Story of One Minority Group in U.S." *U.S. News & World Report, Inc.*, December 26, 1966, 6-9.
- "The "Yellow Peril"." *Chicago Daily Tribune*, July 5, 1906. Accessed April 5, 2017. ProQuest Historical Newspapers.
- "The Yellow Peril." *Los Angeles Times*, July 12, 1915. Accessed April 7, 2017. ProQuest Historical Newspapers.
- "The Real "Yellow Peril"." *The Atlanta Constitution (1881-1945)*, March 5, 1904. Accessed April 5, 2017. ProQuest Historical Newspapers.
- "Yellow Peril " Not an Issue," *Los Angeles Times (1886-1922)*, October 6, 1921. Accessed April 5, 2017, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.
- Bernstein, Richard. "Asian Students Harmed By Precursors' Success." *New York Times (1923-Current File)*, July 10, 1988. Accessed April 6, 2017. ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

- Brand, David, Jennifer Hull, Jeannie Park, and James Willwerth. "COVER STORY The New Whiz Kids Why Asian Americans are doing so well, and what it costs them." *TIME*, August 31, 1987, 42-47. Accessed April 6, 2017.
- Camby, Vincent. "'Who Killed Vincent Chin?': Answer is Complex." *New York Times (1923-Current File)*, March 11, 1988. ProQuest Historical Newspapers.
- Cganemccalla, "Blacks Receive 60% Longer Sentences For Same Crimes," Newsone, 2012, , accessed April 18, 2017, <https://newsone.com/1859475/black-people-receive-60-longer-sentences-for-same-crimes/>.
- Chua, Amy, and Erin Patrice O'Brien. "Why Chinese Mothers Are Superior." *The Wall Street Journal*, January 8, 2011. Accessed April 6, 2017. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052748704111504576059713528698754>.
- Fong, Diana. "America's 'Invisible' Chinese." *New York Times*, May 1, 1982. Accessed April 6, 2017. ProQuest Historical Newspapers.
- Gibson, O., and John F. Miller. "Art. II. - Our Pacific Coast Problem: The Chinese in America." *The Methodist Quarterly*, American Periodicals, no. 33 (January 1881): 28-45. Accessed April 5, 2017.
- Hsu, Madeline Y. *The Good Immigrants: How the Yellow Peril Became the Model Minority*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015.
- Kolbert, Elizabeth. "America's Top Parent: What's behind the 'Tiger Mother' craze?" *The New Yorker*, January 31, 2011. Accessed April 6, 2017. <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2011/01/31/americas-top-parent>.
- Lee, Erika. *The Making of Asian America: A History*. Reprint ed. New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2016.
- Leonhard, Robert. "The China Relief Expedition Joint Coalition Warfare in China Summer 1900." PhD diss., The Johns Hopkins University . Accessed April 13, 2017. <http://www.jhuapl.edu/ourwork/nsa/papers/China%20ReliefSm.pdf>.
- Lewin, Tamar. "Report Takes Aim at 'Model Minority' Stereotype of Asian-American Students." *New York Times (1923-Current File)*, June 10, 2008. Accessed April 6, 2017. ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

- McHugh, Clare. "Home Truths, Marching On." January 11, 2011. Accessed April 6, 2017.
- Olmstead, Roger. "The Chinese Must Go!" *Calif Hist Q J Calif Hist Soc* 50, no. 3 (September 3, 1971): 285-94. Accessed April 5, 2017. <http://ch.ucpress.edu/content/5/3/285>.
- O'Meara, James. "The Chinese in Early Days." *Overland Monthly and Out West Magazine: (1868-1935)*, May 1884, 477-481.
- Page, Clarence. "Prejudice follows prominence for a 'model minority'" *Chicago Tribune*, November 18, 1987. Accessed April 6, 2017. ProQuest Historical Newspapers.
- Paul, Annie Murphy. "Tiger Moms: Is Tough Parenting Really the Answer?" *TIME*, January 20, 2011. Accessed April 6, 2017. <http://content.time.com/time/printout/0,8816,2043477,00.html>.
- People vs. Hall (September 08, 1980), United States of America Supreme Court of California Resources 28 Cal.3d 143.
- Pettersen, William. *Success Story, Japanese American Style.* New York Times Magazine, January 9, 1966, 20–21, 33, 36, 38, 40–41, 43.
- Ponder, William. "What Is the Best?" *Los Angeles Times (1923-Current File)*, August 16, 1987. Accessed April 6, 2017. ProQuest Historical Newspapers.
- Polenberg, Richard D. *The Era of Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1933-1945: A Brief History with Documents.* Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000.
- Rosenberg, Howard. "A Haunting Account of Death of Vincent Chin." *Los Angeles Times (1923-Current File)*, July 18, 1989. Accessed April 6, 2017. ProQuest Historical Newspapers.
- Shober & Carqueville. *The Magic Washer, manufactured by Geo. Dee, Dixon, Illinois. The Chinese Must Go.* Chicago: Shober & Carqueville Lith Co., 1886.
- Sing, Bill. "Asian-Americans Find Themselves Resisting a 'Demure' Stereotype ." *Los Angeles Times (1923-Current File)*, February 13, 1989. Accessed April 6, 2017. ProQuest Historical Newspapers.
- Suzuki, Bob H. "Asian Americans as the 'Model Minority'." *Change*, November 1989, 12-19. Accessed April 6, 2017. ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

Tchen, John Kuo Wei, and Dylan Yeats. *Yellow Peril!: An Archive of Anti-Asian fear*. London: Verso, 2014.

Wu, Ellen D. *The Color of Success: Asian Americans and the Origins of the Model Minority (Politics and Society in Modern America)*. Reprint ed. Princeton: Princeton Univ Press, 2015.

Wu, Frank H. "Why Vincent Chin Matters." *New York Times (1923-Current File)*, June 23, 2012. Accessed April 6, 2017. ProQuest Historical Newspapers.