

History of racists treatment of Asian-Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) communities. Few examples from the 19<sup>th</sup> and, 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, leading up to what is being experienced now in the 21<sup>st</sup> century:

In spite of already-existing anti-AAPI attitudes in the country – dating from the California Gold Rush period in the 1840s-1850s – an estimated 15,000 to 20,000 Chinese immigrants were brought into the country beginning in 1864 to do the tedious and dangerous work of completing the treacherous western section of the trans-continental railroad. Since the work took place in both sub-zero and sweltering weather, hundreds of Chinese laborers died from the back-breaking work, exposure to the weather, lack of protective gear, explosions, landslides, falls and other accidents on the job. The Central Pacific Railroad Company couldn't find enough white workers willing to do this risky work. Little credit – and extremely low pay (\$26/month for six-day weeks) – sub-standard food (which most had to pay for themselves) and poor accommodation – were the only reward for the sacrifices these men made.

In spite of this major contribution to the country's interstate commerce and travel – opening up the nation's East-West corridor – just 13 years after the railroad's completion, the Chinese Exclusion Act was passed by Congress and signed into law by President Chester A. Arthur in 1882. Its purpose was to keep all Chinese immigrants out – including those who had worked on the railroad and returned home to visit. Particularly targeted were Chinese women, who had begun to be sexualized and stereotyped as submissive prostitutes willing to do whatever a man wanted her to do. This has been credited with the beginning of the “model-minority” stereotype that became prevalent in the society at large – and internalized by some AAPI people, as well – always quiet, well-behaved, submissive, uncomplaining and academically over-achieving. This ten-year exclusion act was extended another ten years by the 1892 Geary Act, becoming the first time in American history that a specific nationality was targeted for exclusion from immigration for over two decades.

During the 1904 World's Fair in St. Louis, the most-visited exhibition was the 47-acre “Philippine Village,” basically a zoo where over 1,000 Filipinos – primarily Igorot people – received \$15/day while the barkers asked the spectating public such questions as “Are these savage animals or real human beings?” This went on for seven months, the organizers received thousands of dollars and the dehumanizing of AAPI populations marched forward, as American politicians tried to justify continuing colonization in the Pacific.

The best-known dehumanization of AAPI communities occurred during World War II, when over 120,000 Japanese-Americans were rounded up like cattle, removed from their homes and businesses, then forcibly relocated for three to four years in internment camps until well after VJ Day in August 1945. Since whatever property these families left behind was absconded with – legally or illegally – it is estimated by the Commission on the Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians that between \$2 billion and \$5 billion (in 2017 dollar equivalents) was lost by these families. Though Congress passed a reparations bill in 1988 – awarding \$20,000 to each surviving internee – there was no other effort to help in the transition back to life as they'd known it. Only about 80% of the internees returned to the places from which they'd been forcibly removed.