Embracing Isolation: Chinese American Geographic Redistribution during the Exclusion Era, 1882-1943

Susan B. Carter* February 5, 2013

ABSTRACT

The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 was the first race-based immigration restriction in American history. It prohibited the entry of Chinese laborers and legitimated a host of new discriminatory policies and practices that circumscribed the activities of Chinese Americans residing in the country. This paper explores the geographic responses of Chinese Americans to the harsh new reality ushered in by the law. Using data from the IPUMS and ICPSR digitized census files, hand-coded entries from published census volumes, and Exclusion-era Chinese case files, this paper describes and analyzes for the first time the forces that shaped the geographic redistribution of the Chinese American population in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.

I reject the standard view that Chinese Americans were "confined to Chinatowns" during Exclusion and document instead their wide geographic dispersion. Chinatowns in the West shrank. This was true of those in big cities like San Francisco, Portland, and Oakland but also of those in smaller places such as Stockton, Sacramento, and Butte. Many Chinese returned home. Others left for cities in the Northeast, Midwest, and South. While new Chinatowns outside the West were established, I show that much of the migratory flow out of the West was directed toward smaller cities without Chinatowns.

I model Chinese American locational choices in terms of three motivations: a desire to live in their own ethnic communities, the need for remunerative employment, and the contrasting preferences of solitary male sojourners and co-habiting families raising children. Multivariate regression analysis suggests that the community motive played a strong positive role throughout the Exclusion Era, with larger Chinatowns especially attractive, but, during the period of Chinese population decline, its influence on geographic distribution was outweighed by the employment motive.

Discrimination coupled with good access to capital and labor led the Chinese to embrace laundry and restaurant service. Chinese Americans dispersed throughout the country in an effort to locate near potential customers, often becoming the only person of their race living in their community. Success on Gold Mountain came at the price of an unparalleled degree of social isolation. Beginning in the 1920s, the recovery of the Chinese American population improved the economic viability of Chinatowns and offset the centrifugal effect of laundry and restaurant employment.

Keywords: Chinese Americans, Chinese Exclusion Act, regional migration, occupational choice, discrimination, service industry.

JEL Classification: J15, J18, J21, J24, J49, J71, J78, L81, N31, N32, N81, N82, R23.

* Professor Emerita, Economics, UC Riverside and Visiting Scholar, UC Berkeley. E-mail: <u>susan.carter@ucr.edu.</u> Earlier versions of this paper were presented at the Social Science History Association meetings, Boston and Vancouver; the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Beijing; the Population Association of America meetings, San Francisco; the Immigration and Entrepreneurship Conference, University of Maryland; and the UC Berkeley Demography Brown Bag. I would like to thank participants in these meetings, especially Ron Lee, Bob Barde, and Jonathan Fox, for their many helpful comments and suggestions. Special appreciation goes to Richard Sutch for his unwavering support and excellent insights through many drafts. Thank you, Richard!

Introduction

The Chinese Exclusion Act (1882-1943) ended the unrestricted immigration that brought over 280 thousand Chinese to the United States in the middle of the nineteenth century (Carter *et al.* 2006, Series Ad138). Prior to the California Gold Rush, few Chinese lived in America. But strong labor demand in California initiated by gold's discovery combined with war and famine in China prompted a migratory flow that brought the Chinese American population to 35 thousand after only a decade. In succeeding years the population grew increasingly rapidly so that by 1880 it topped 100 thousand (Carter *et al.* 2006, Series Aa156).

The Chinese Exclusion Act brought this regime to an abrupt end. The Act took aim at the key component of the migratory flow by thwarting the entry of laborers and discouraging those already in the United States from remaining. Perhaps emboldened by the Exclusion Act -- the first race-based immigration restriction in U.S. history – federal, state, and local governments; unions; voluntary societies; universities; professional organizations; and other groups imposed restrictions that touched virtually every aspect of life. Chinese Americans were forbidden to naturalize. In many states they were forbidden to marry outside their racial group. Chinese Americans were formally barred from certain occupations. Their children could not enroll in most public schools. They faced other forms of harsh discrimination in labor and housing markets, including vigilante violence (Chan 1986; Hrishi and Chin 2002; Konvitz 1946; Kung 1962; Kwoh 1947; Lee 2003; and Pfaelzer 2007). The cumulative effect of these initiatives was to reduce the flow of Chinese immigrants to a trickle. By the 1890s inflows could not offset losses from return migration and death. By 1920 the Chinese American population had dropped to only a little more than half its pre-Exclusion level.

The population decline was accompanied by a marked inter-regional redistribution. As Figure 1 shows, in 1880 almost 97 percent of Chinese Americans lived in the West but in the decades that followed that percentage dropped precipitously so that by 1950 it was less than 60 percent. The difference between the initial geographic isolation of the Chinese and their subsequent redistribution was even more pronounced than the better-known experience of nineteenth-century blacks and their Great Migration in the first half of the twentieth century (also displayed in Figure 1). Before the Great Migration in 1890, about 90 percent of blacks lived in the South; by 1950 the percentage had fallen to 68.

Like the experience of blacks, the Chinese movement out of their original region of settlement was simultaneously a movement from rural to urban places. As Roger Daniels noted, "Chinese became, like certain other immigrant groups, predominantly not only urban but large-city urban" (Daniels 1988: 68).

Figure 2, which plots the share of Chinese, foreign-born whites, and blacks in cities of 100,000 or more, shows that in 1860, when all Chinese lived in California and when San Francisco was still a small town, literally no Chinese lived in large cities. But the growth of western cities and the rapid movement of the Chinese to cities in California and adjacent states caused their urban population share to grow much more rapidly than those of other groups. By the 1920s the Chinese had become the most urban of America's ethnic and racial minorities.

Daniels equates Chinese migration to big cities with migration to cities with established Chinatowns. Following his discussion of Chinese urbanization he writes:

Initially, large city meant San Francisco, which Chinese called *dai fou* or "big city." By 1940, however, only 17,782 of 55,030 large-city Chinese Americans (32.3 Percent) lived in San Francisco, with an additional 3,201 (5.8 percent) across the bay in Oakland. Seven other cities had more than 1,000 Chinese in 1940; there were 12,302 in New York, nearly 5,000 in Los Angeles, and just over 2,000 in Chicago. Seattle, Portland (Oregon), Sacramento, and Boston each had between 1,000 and 2,000 Chinese (Daniels 1988: 69-70).

In his discussion of Chinese American geographical redistribution during the Exclusion Era, Stanford Lyman simply asserts that the Chinese migrated to Chinatowns and that they did so as a strategic,

defensive retreat.

In the four decades that followed the completion of the Transcontinental Railway in 1869, the strikes and contracts established in the wake of the triumph of the labor movement drove the Chinese worker out of the many different kinds of work in which he had found a niche and confined him to Chinatown (Lyman 1974: 73).

A sudden decline in the industry (in single-industry small towns) put most of the whites out of work and tended to bankrupt the Chinese stores and restaurants that served them....(Y)ounger Chinese were inclined to move away from them to the metropolitan Chinatowns where they might find more job opportunities and a greater supply of marriageable women. The result was that the number of Chinese communities in the United States declined while the density of settlement in the larger Chinatowns increased (Lyman 1974: 80).

By contrast, writing in the late-1940s and generalizing from her study of Chinatowns in the Rocky Mountain West, Rose Hum Lee felt that Chinatowns were on the decline. She argued that disruptions caused by World War II combined with physical and economic encroachments from the larger community had undermined their viability. "[C]essation of imports from China and the overwhelming competition offered by American-owned enterprises serving Chinese dishes bring an end to the tourist-attracting features of Chinatowns" (Lee 1949: 431). She felt it was only a matter of time before "...the number of Chinatowns in this country will decrease almost to the vanishing point. Only those of historical or commercial importance,

as in San Francisco and New York, will remain" (Lee 1949: 432). My research challenges both of these generalizations.

Here I develop new, county- and ward-level data on trends in Chinese American geographic shifts and explore their causes and consequences. This paper is part of a larger project elucidating the economic demography of the Chinese American population during the Exclusion Era. While the legal and political history of the Exclusion Era is well-established, the processes by which Chinese Americans navigated that difficult era remain unknown. Writing more than 20 years ago Roger Daniels called attention to the absence of any "dense corpus of scholarly books and articles based on expertise in pertinent areas of history, economics, sociology, anthropology, and folklore" (Daniels 1988: xiv). To this list we might add the discipline of demography. Little has changed in the interim. The Chinese are mentioned only in passing in Michael Haines's and Richard Steckel's 736-page magnum opus, *A Population History of North America* (2000) and in Richard A. Easterlin's 43-page survey, "Twentieth-Century American Population Growth" (2000). Scholars rightly refer to the period as the "dark ages' of Chinese American history, 'a deplorable lacuna in American historiography" (Chan 1991, quoted in Lee 2003, p. 8).

The problem stems from the limited reporting of information in the published censuses. As Table 1 shows, at the county level the census reported little more than the number of persons, their gender, and their place of birth. Even age was reported only sporadically for the Chinese. There was no systematic reporting of year of immigration, industry, occupation, marital status, or living arrangements. Scholars' descriptions of fundamental topics such as the rate of population change, fertility, mortality, international migration, internal migration, living arrangements, literacy, English language skills, and industrial and occupational attainment is, of necessity, conducted at the national level or based on case studies. The digitized samples from the census manuscripts developed at the University of Minnesota's Population Research Center are of only limited help (Ruggles *et al.* 2010). This is because of the small numbers of Chinese in America at the time and, because -- with the exception of the 100-percent sample for 1880 -- the IPUMS samples themselves are small. As Table 2 shows, there are fewer than 1,000 Chinese in three of the five IPUMS samples for 1900 through 1940. In this paper I draw on previously-uncoded published census reports, the digital records assembled by Ancestry.com, and the IPUMS samples to create new, systematic data on Chinese American population by county and new measures of their residential segregation and isolation.

Mapping Chinese Residential Redistribution

Figures 3 through 12 make use of these newly-coded population figures to map, at the county level, the number of Chinese Americans per square mile for ten successive censuses beginning in 1860. The maps reflect both the changing size of the total Chinese population and its geographic redistribution. Because the data are highly skewed, with most counties having only small Chinese populations, I use a logarithmic scale to amplify differences at the low end of the distribution. Without the logarithmic adjustment the population in the many sparsely-settled counties would not be visible on the maps.

For the years 1860 through 1920 the maps reveal a remarkable redistribution of the Chinese American population out of California and into every other part of the country, including the South, a region generally shunned by European immigrants (Dunlevey 1988). Though they were increasingly likely to live in urban counties, outside the West Chinese Americans also established new residences in rural and suburban areas, presaging by a full century the recent tendency of new immigrants to settle in non-gateway destinations (Donato, Tolbert, Nucci, and Kawanno 2008; Hirschman and Massey 2008; Massey 2008, Liang and Li 2012; Singer 2004; and Zuniga and Hernandez-Leon 2005). The geographic dispersion proceeded most rapidly in the years immediately following passage of the Exclusion Act and coincided with the decline of the Chinese American population overall.

Table 3 expresses the same information but in a different form. Column 1 of Table 3 displays the percentage of counties with at least one Chinese American resident. In 1860, when the Chinese were concentrated in the mining and construction camps of California's Sierra Nevadas and in and around San Francisco, only 1.8 percent of counties had at least one Chinese American resident. In these counties the median number of Chinese was 193. The Chinese American diaspora is evident in the decades that followed as the percentage of counties with at least one Chinese resident increased and the median number of Chinese per county declined. By 1900, 43 percent of U.S. counties could claim at least one Chinese American resident, even though the total population of Chinese Americans had fallen to fewer than 90,000 persons. As the Chinese American population continued to shrink in the 20 years that followed, their geographic reach diminished only slightly. With falling numbers, though, Chinese Americans had to tolerate smaller and smaller co-ethnic communities in order to maintain their geographic range. Columns 2 and 3 of Table 3 show a drop in both the mean and median population in counties with at least one Chinese American to only 51 and 3 by 1920. It is clear from these data that in spite of the hardships they faced, the Chinese were not "confined to Chinatowns."

Figure 13 uses these county-level data to display the percentage of the Chinese population in each of the eight cities chosen by Daniels to illustrate what he viewed as an increasing importance of Chinatowns in the years following Exclusion. Only New York traces the pattern implied by his summary. San Francisco's Chinatown suffered a major decline in both its share of the total Chinese population as well as in absolute numbers between 1890 and 1920. This decline was quite independent of the oft-mentioned damage inflicted by the 1906 earthquake. In fact, the decade following 1900 exhibited a *smaller* decline than that of either the preceding or following decades. Sacramento's Chinese community peaked in the 1870s. The Los Angeles Chinese community experienced its most rapid growth during the 1880s. Portland, Oregon's peaked in 1900. Chicago, Seattle, and Oakland's Chinatowns peaked in the 1920s.

Daniels' and Lyman's stories would have fared more poorly still if the large Chinese communities in small Western cities and towns had been included in their analyses. In 1860, the Sierra mining districts claimed far more Chinese than San Francisco. A few tiny California communities such as Walnut Grove and Locke in Sacramento County, Chinese Camp in Tuolumne County, and China Camp in Marin County were each home to several thousand Chinese. Later on, some of the largest Chinatowns were located in smaller-sized cities such as Butte, Montana; Stockton and Fresno, California; and Phoenix, Arizona (Lee 1978[1947]: 42).¹ At the same time, many large cities had only tiny Chinese populations. Figure 14, which plots the distribution of the Chinese population in cities of 100,000 or more in each of the censuses of 1870 through 1950, shows that in every year 56 or more percent of these large cities had fewer than 100 Chinese residents.

To further explore the "Chinese in Big Cities means Chinese in Chinatowns" equation, Figures 15 through 17 display statistics on the percentage of Chinese in cities of 100,000 or more together with the percentage of Chinese in Chinatowns as measured by three different Chinatown proxies. The criteria for big city – city with a total population of 100,000 or more -- is the one used by Daniels and Lyman. The criteria for "Chinatown" is less satisfactory. "Chinatown" refers to an enclave of Chinese offering offering their ethnic goods and services. As Wikipedia warns at the top of its entry for "Chinatown," "Not to be confused with places Chinese Americans live."² While there are many splendid histories of individual Chinatowns, there is no comprehensive, authoritative history of American chinatowns as a whole. Lacking a better measure, I construct three proxies for "Chinatown" based on the number of Chinese Americans living in a county in a given census year. The "thousand-or-more-Chinese-residents" criteria sets the bar at

¹ More recently, suburban towns such as Monterrey Park, San Marino, Arcadia, and San Gabriel in Southern California have emerged as new small-town centers for Chinese residential concentration (Zhou 2008: 85).

² Accessed February 5, 2013.

a little less than the number that qualified Boston for tenth rank among the country's largest Chinatowns in 1920. Because the Chinese American population was so much greater in both earlier and later years, the criteria of 10th rank was considerably higher in the years before and after 1920 (see Table 4). I have been able to document the existence of an organized Chinatown for all counties included in this measure in the year of their inclusion. The "three-hundred-or-more-Chinese-residents" criteria adds cities with organized Chinatowns such as New York in 1880 and Boston, Chicago, Philadelphia, and Brooklyn in the 1890s. But it also includes New Orleans in 1940 and 1950, even though its Chinatown dissolved in the 1930s and cities such as Providence, Yonkers, and Cambridge in 1950 even though none of these cities ever supported an organized Chinatown. The "one-hundred-or-more-Chinese-residents" criteria brings in communities with emerging Chinatowns such as Boston and Chicago in 1880 and Newark, New Orleans, St. Louis, Baltimore, Kansas City (MO), and Jersey City in 1890, but it also includes many other cities which never had organized Chinatowns.³

The data displayed in Figure 14 suggest than neither Daniels' and Lyman's assertions regarding Chinatowns' increasing importance in the aftermath of Exclusion nor Lee's impression of their demise in the 1940s accurately describe Chinese Americans' geographic redistribution. As the share of the Chinese-American population living in big cities increased over time, the share of Chinese living in Chinatowns traced a U-shape, falling in importance during the first four decades after Exclusion and then rising with the recovery of the Chinese population beginning in the 1920s.⁴ The pattern for the West, shown in Figure 15, is similar to, though less pronounced than, that for the nation as a whole. Outside of the West -- Figure 16 -- the percentage of Chinese in Chinatowns grew in tandem with the percentage in large cities up through 1900, but from 1900 through 1920 the percentage in Chinatowns fell even while the the percentage in large cities continued to rise. In the 1920s the percentage in Chinatowns resumes its growth, along with percentage in large cities.

Measuring Chinese Residential Segregation

To highlight change over time and to facilitate a comparison with the better-known black experience, I calculate two measures of residential segregation using the Duncan dissimilarity index and

³ With some additional effort I believe I can improve the quality of my "Chinatown" indicator.

⁴ The rise after 1920 in the percentage of Chinese in Chinatowns of 300 or more and 100 or more is exaggerated by the inclusion of counties without organized Chinatowns.

the Leiberson isolation index.⁵ The widely-used Duncan dissimilarity index, D, calculates the proportion of group A that would have to move in order to have its proportional distribution across geographic units match those of the others, the Bs (Duncan and Duncan 1955). D is computed as: $\frac{1}{2} = \frac{N}{i=1} \frac{Ai}{Atotal}$

 $\frac{Bi}{Btotal}$. Because D compares the *proportionate* distributions of two groups it is symmetrical – that is, the proportion of As who would have to move in order to equalize the two distributions is the same as the proportion of Bs.

The Leiberson isolation index P*, first proposed by Bell (1954) and later modified by Leiberson (1980), is specifically designed to take account of group size. It estimates the probability of interaction either between members of different groups or among members of the same group, assuming that interactions occur at random but are limited to those residing within a given geographic unit. The probability of an A interacting with another A is given by:

 $_{a}P^{*}{}_{a} = \begin{array}{c} n \\ i=1 \end{array} \frac{ai}{A} \quad \frac{ai}{ti}$ where a_{i} = number of subgroup a in subarea iA = total number of subgroup a in all subareas t_{i} = total population in subarea i

Unlike D, P* is not symmetrical. It is meant to highlight the fact that small groups are more likely than others to interact with the larger society and that members of the larger society are less likely to have direct contact with these numerical minorities. More formerly, the probability of a randomly selected A interacting with a B, $_{a}P_{b}^{*}$ is $1 - _{a}P_{a}^{*}$ and the probability of a randomly selected B interacting with an A is $_{b}P_{a}^{*} = (_{a}P_{b}^{*})$ (A/B). The isolation index, $_{a}P_{a}^{*}$ can increase for two different reasons. One is if the proportionate geographic concentration of the group – its D – rises. The other is if the number of As rise relative to the number of Bs. Because the isolation index P* is partly dependent on a group's relative size while the dissimilarity index D is not, it is possible for the measures to display different trends over time.

⁵ In this I follow Cutler, Glaeser, and Vignor (1999) in their exploration of trends in racial and ethnic segregation among blacks and among foreign-born whites. Unfortunately, "isolation" is used in two opposite ways in the sociological literature. For Lieberson. isolation means that a group is geographically isolated *from the rest of society*. I follow the lead of Paul C. P. Siu (1987[1953]) and use isolation to mean that group members are geographically isolated *from one another*.

Long-Term Trends in Chinese Residential Segregation and Isolation

Figure 18 presents values of D and _aP*_a for Chinese alongside comparable figures for blacks. The indices were calculated for the decennial census years 1860 through 1950 using county-level data for the country as a whole. They show high levels of black segregation and isolation in 1860 when 89 percent of blacks were still enslaved (Carter *et al.* 2006: Series Aa147 and Aa148). In that year over 70 percent of blacks would have had to have moved from their country of residence in order to match the residential distribution of non-blacks; the isolation index indicates that the county in which the average black lived was 47 percent black. These levels are well above the 60 and 30 percent thresholds for segregation and isolation remained roughly constant after the abolition of slavery up through 1910 but fell dramatically in the decades that followed. By 1950 blacks were neither segregated nor isolated according to these measures, at least not at the county level.

The trends in these indices for blacks are consistent with scholarly work on the timing and impact of the Great Migration. As William Collins notes,

Whereas only about 535,000 blacks emigrated from the South on net between 1870 and 1910, the following 40 years witnessed the net emigration of 3.5 million, primarily to the urban North. As a result of this exodus, 20.4 percent of the blacks born in the South made their homes outside of the region by 1950 compared with only 4.3 percent at the turn of the century. The Great Migration literally changed the complexion of the urban North and in doing so transformed the "Negro problem" from a rural southern peculiarity into a phenomenon of nationwide scope (Collins 1997: 607).

Panel A of Figure 19 displays segregation and isolation indices for blacks separately for the South and for the rest of the country (the "North"). They indicate that *all* of the decline in black segregation for the country as a whole, as shown in Figure 18, was due to the movement of blacks out of the South. Within the South and also within the North there is no noticeable trend in black (de)segregation. The isolation indices behave differently. By sharply reducing the black share of the Southern population, the Great Migration meant that at the county level, the average Southern black became more likely to interact with whites. While black isolation in the North increased after 1920, the *level* remained far below that in the South. Thus the decline in overall black isolation shown in Figure 15 was the product of both the movement of the black population to the North and the fall in black isolation within the South.

In 1860 the Chinese were even more geographically segregated than blacks. The Chinese had begun arriving in large numbers only a decade earlier, following the discovery of California gold. These immigrants were overwhelmingly young-adult males. Their youth and the predominance of males suggest

that these were sojourners – migrants who came to accumulate assets which they proposed to use to pay off debts, purchase land, or start businesses after returning to their home country. To this end they worked hard and lived simply while in the U.S. After several years they returned home.

Immigrants from other nations also behaved as sojourners. Foreign-born whites were also young – median age 36 years -- and men outnumbered women by 1.5- or 2-to-1 (Carter *et al.* 2006: Series Ad223 and Ad224). But the Chinese were unusual in the single-minded way in which they embraced the sojourner model. Throughout the era of unrestricted Chinese immigration, the median age of Chinese ranged from 28 to 30 years, the foreign-born share of the population remained above 90 percent and men outnumbered women 20-to-1. It would appear that remarkably few Chinese migrants intended to remain permanently in the United States. It is perhaps unsurprising, then, that the very concept of "sojourner" was first developed by Paul C.P. Siu to describe the behavior of the Chinese laundryman, "...one who clings to the cultural heritage of his own ethnic group and tends to live in isolation, hindering his assimilation to the society in which he resides, often for many years" (Siu 1987[1952]: 34).

At the time of the 1860 census, which was the first to include a separate tabulation for "Asiatics", all lived in the then-sparsely settled state of California. Within California, the Chinese were more likely than others to live in mining camps. San Francisco, California's largest city, was only the third most populous county for Chinese (See Table 4). The Chinese segregation index for 1860 for the U.S. as a whole, shown in Figure 13 indicates that fully 99 percent of Chinese would have had to have moved to a different county in order to make their geographic distribution match that of the non-Chinese population.

In successive decades the number of Chinese immigrants increased but the character of their migration did not change. If anything, Chinese immigrants' U.S. sojourns become even briefer. The trend is clear in column 3 of Table 5 which displays a measure of the contribution of immigration to Chinese American population change, calculated as the number of immigrants who arrived over the previous decade divided by that decade's population change. In the decade of the 1850s it took 1.2 immigrants to increase the Chinese population by one person. In the decade of the 1870s, after the steam ship reduced travel times and costs, making it easier for sojourners to schedule brief stays, almost three immigrants were required to generate the same one-person net increase. The median age of the resident population remained low, the fraction foreign-born remained high, and the disproportion of males actually increased.

The increasingly temporary character of Chinese migration is also indicated by the change in their living arrangements. Over time fewer lived as household heads and more lodged in group quarters. In 1880 almost 40 percent of Chinese American males lived in these rooming houses and barracks (Table 6).

Between 1860 and 1880 the Chinese moved to other western states where they worked in mining, agriculture, construction, and personal services. As western mining claims were exhausted and the pace of railroad-building slowed, the Chinese took up personal service work, set up independent laundry operations, and moved to still newer regions of the country. Following the end of the Civil War and the emancipation of slaves, Chinese were recruited to fill Southern agricultural jobs abandoned by newly-freed blacks (Cohen 1984). Some Northern industrialists transported Chinese to their factory towns in an effort to break strikes (Randolph 1947). The founders of what would become large Chinatowns in New York, Boston, Chicago and other big cities in the East and Midwest established their first footholds. Still other Chinese gained admission to Eastern colleges and universities (Chang 2003: 93-115). Nonetheless even by 1880, 97 percent of Chinese remained in the West.

The Chinese Exclusion Act ended this regime. The number of migrants fell. The median age of residents rose. The foreign-born share and the sex ratio both fell as natural increase became a more important source of population change. The men who remained were increasingly likely to head their own households and less likely to live in group quarters. Nonetheless, while the sex ratio declined substantially, it still remained extremely high. When scholars describe the Chinese in this era as an "aging bachelor population" (Chew and Liu 2004: 60) they have these statistics in mind. Although Kenneth Chew and John Liu (2004) demonstrate that migration remained quantitatively important, it did not come close to matching the earlier levels (Tables 5 and 6).

For the country as a whole, the decline in Chinese population was accompanied by a fall in geographic segregation from a level of .944 in 1880 to only .639 in 1920 (Figure 15). The overall decline was a product of the movement of the Chinese out of the West *and* a decline in Chinese segregation in other parts of the country (Figure 16). These two changes more than offset the increase in Chinese segregation within the West. What is most striking, however, is the behavior of the Chinese isolation index which fell from a high of .178 in 1860 to only .0078 by 1920. The decline in the index was a product of both the declining numbers of Chinese in the United States and the increasing dispersion of those who remained. When Paul C. P. Siu subtitled his dissertation on the Chinese laundryman "A Study in Social Isolation," he was summarizing the experiences of the Chicago-area laundrymen he interviewed in depth. These geographic indices suggest, though, that Siu's conclusion that "...the laundryman's life organization is oriented to social isolation" (Siu 1987[1953]: 4) had much more general applicability.

Chinese Residential Segregation in Cities with Chinatowns

The analysis thus far was conducted using county-level data. Though it is much more difficult to measure, scattered evidence suggests that even in cities with Chinatowns, many Chinese live outside their boundaries. In early-twentieth-century New York newspaper reporters noted:

There are 7,000 Chinese in and about New York. Of these...less than 2,000 live in the triangle formed by Mott, Pell, and Doyers streets....Chinatown, as the whites know it, is really only the market place and the Tenderloin of the Chinese population. Five thousand of the 7,000 live outside. Some of them are married and keep their families in Harlem flats or Brooklyn houses; some of them lodge behind their laundries ("Chinatown's Strange People and their Strange Ways," 1905).

The Chinese are pretty well scattered now all over the city. Laundries and chop-suey restaurants are everywhere....But it is, to tell the truth, as difficult to find "the Chinese quarter" in New York as it is to find "the Judenstrasse" in Amsterdam. The neighborhood called Chinatown has been preserved as a show place for sightseers of questionable taste ("Chinatown" 1910).

Xinyang Wang (2001: Chapter 4) describes the increasing proportion of New York City Chinese living outside New York's Chinatown in the first half of the twentieth century.⁶ Siu (1987[1953]) also noted the presence of Chinese laundries and their resident proprietors throughout Chicago's residential neighborhoods in the 1940 and 1950s.

The newly-released five-percent IPUMS sample from the 1930 census makes it possible to calculate the proportion of Chinese in cities with Chinatowns who actually lived in those ethnic enclaves. The results, reported in Table 7 and depicted in Figure 20, indicate that with the exceptions of San Francisco and Boston, where the share of Chinese in the city living in Chinatown was 97.7 and 88.5 percent, respectively, many Chinese lived in other parts of those cities. These calculations suggest that if it were possible to calculate segregation and isolation indices using a smaller geographic unit of analysis the Chinese would appear even more dispersed than they do using the county-level measures.

Modeling Economic Opportunity

To explain the changing geographic distribution of the Chinese American population I begin with the standard economic model of migration developed by Simon Kuznets and Dorothy Swain Thomas. Their key proposition was that "the distribution of a country's population at any given time may be viewed

⁶ Although Wang's focus is the Chinese, his calculations measure the proportion of *all Asians* living outside New York's Chinatown. Since there were significant numbers of Japanese living in the city -- but outside of Chinatown – his estimates exaggerate the proportion of Chinese living elsewhere.

as a rough adjustment to the distribution of economic opportunities" (Kuznets and Thomas, 1957: 2). Change in the locus of economic opportunity inspires migration. A corollary of their insight is that if opportunities differ across groups, their geographic distributions will differ as well.

For native-born white men, opportunity in the nineteenth century took the form of newly-opened logging, mining, and agricultural lands in the West while women were attracted to urban manufacturing centers in the East. In the twentieth century opportunity for native-born males and females appeared in urban areas enjoying rising incomes and rapid job growth (Gallaway and Vedder 1971). For foreign-born whites, urban manufacturing was a magnet (Carter and Sutch 2008). For blacks there was little opportunity anywhere until World War I labor shortages sent recruiters to the South, initiating strong migrant flows into northern industrial cities, particularly those that weren't attracting foreign-born whites (Lemann 1992, Collins 1997).

Opportunity for Chinese Americans was different still. Four considerations shaped their locational decisions: safety, proximity to cultural goods and services, employment opportunities, and family ties.

<u>Safety</u>

The Exclusion Act did little to reduce violence directed toward the Chinese. It may have even encouraged it. Jean Pfaelzer (2007) describes continuing episodes of mob action that resulted in murder, the seizure of Chinese property, and the forced abandonment of Chinese businesses and homes. Peter Kwong and Dušanka Miščević quote a Chinese social commentator at the time as saying, "They call it exclusion; but it is not exclusion, it is extermination." They go on to relate the experience of one who lived through it:

"Every Saturday night, we never knew whether we would live to see the light of day," a Chinese who once operated a laundry near a mining camp recalled after he moved to New York. "Saturday was the night for the miners to get drunk. They would force their way into our shop, wrest the clean white bundles from the shelves and trample the shirts which we so laboriously finished." One time, after a miner accidentally hit his face against the flat side of an iron, he "came back with a mob who ransacked our shop, robbed us of the \$360 that was our combined savings and set fire to the laundry. We were lucky to escape with our lives, so we came east" (Kwong and Miščević 2005: 110-111).

The threat of violence is widely regarded as a major impetus for Chinese migration out of the West. Kwong and Miščević conclude:

As a result of the 'open season,' most Chinese decided to leave small and isolated areas of the western frontier and move into larger cities, where a concentration of other Chinese could offer some protection. It is arguably during this period that the established Chinese communities on the

West Coast in cities such as San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Sacramento became entrenched as permanently segregated Chinatowns. Other Chinese refugees from the hostile Wild West set up Chinatowns in metropolitan areas in the Midwest and on the East Coast, such as in Chicago, St. Louis, Boston, Philadelphia, and New York (Kwong and Miščević 2005: 110).

<u>Community</u>

Community is universally valued. As Douglas Massey and Chiara Capoferro put it:

A salient characteristic of immigration throughout the world is its geographic concentration. Immigrants tend not to disperse randomly throughout destination nations, but to move disproportionately to places where people of the same nationality have already settled....Because international migration is costly in both monetary and psychic terms, migrants display a strong tendency to draw upon social ties they have with current or former migrants in order to reduce the costs and risks...(Massey and Capoferro 2005: 25).

The intensity of the racial hostility directed toward them and their cultural distance from white

America must have made Chinatowns particularly attractive to Chinese American migrants. Chinatowns

offered ethnic foods, medicines, clothing, and related items as well as religious, educational, legal,

protection, entertainment, and employment services. Voluntary, fraternal, and self-help associations set up

offices in Chinatowns. They offered meeting places for friends and relatives. Sui emphasized their centrality:

The majority of Chinese laundrymen speak pidgin English. Some talk so brokenly that their customers can only guess at what they are saying....The world outside the laundry is cold and strange....In leisure time and social events, the Chinese have a world of their own which is based upon the social solidarity of the families, the clans, and the kinship system" (Siu 1987[1953]: 138).

Rose Hum Lee's description of the structure of Butte Montana's Chinatown illustrates the lengths to which

the Chinese went in order to create this "world of their own."

The Chinatown is so situated that the populace of the city can walk past the structures owned by the Chinese and yet never see Chinatown Alley, which is the community's main street. The property owners had the Alley paved and the Chinese walk up and down their community without using any of the main thorough-fares of the city if they so desire. The Alley extends southward for two streets and all of the business establishments owned by the Chinese face the Alley. This enables the inhabitants to maintain social distance as well as avoid contacts with members of the larger community....Here, sojourners converse with each other in their native tongue, maintain an entirely different set of customs and habits, and frequent the institutions they developed (Lee 1978[1947]: 154).

The strenuous efforts of Chinese who lived outside of Chinatowns to visit on a regular basis are further evidence of Chinatowns' appeal. A *Washington Post* reporter notes in 1905 that Chinese living outside of New York's Chinatown "...come into Chinatown by night to buy at the stores, to feast at the

restaurants, to spend money in the gambling houses or in other places of questionable reputation that flourish in this Chinese Tenderloin" ("Chinatown's Strange People and their Strange Ways," 1905). Rhoades Murphy reports on the close connection of New England Chinese to Boston's Chinatown:

(Boston's) Chinatown comes to life on Friday night and until late Sunday is a hive of activity for Chinese laundrymen and restaurateurs from as far away as Springfield, Mass., and Portland, Maine. They come to see friends and relatives, to speak their own language and live in their own customs, and to find recreation (Murphy 1952: 250).

Yet, as we have seen, through the 1920s an increasing proportion of Chinese lived outside these havens.

Employment

Employment is fundamental to any migration decision. In the years following Exclusion, Chinese American employment options narrowed significantly. Violence or threat of violence prompted many Chinese to leave industries and communities where they had earlier found opportunity (Saxton 1971; Light 1972; Brown and Philips 1986; Daniels 1988; and Kwong and Miscevic 2005, 106-115). Professional organizations barred them. Occupational licensing restrictions prohibited them from practicing law, accounting, and medicine in most states. Barbering and race track work were similarly restricted (Konvitz 1946, 190-200). Persons with advanced degrees found that their expertise was not marketable in that harsh environment (Kwoh 1947).

Even laundry workers found their livelihoods threatened by laws requiring laundrymen to be U.S. citizens (a status denied those born in China) and laundries housed in brick buildings (Yu 1995, Jung 2005). Disparaging attitudes toward the Chinese were pervasive, finding expression even in scholarly journals. As Gavin Wright observes: "It is chilling to go back to [John R.] Commons' 1909 article and find him railing against the 'competitive menace' of the 'Chinaman' and the 'foreign immigrant' as stridently as he does against 'prison labor, child labor, and long hours of labor'" (Wright 1987, 333). As late as 1927, almost 50 years after the passage of the Exclusion Act, a survey of Americans found "only 27.0 percent who said they would accept Chinese as fellow workers, 15.9 percent as neighbors, and 11.8 percent as friends" (Tsai 1986: xi).

Chinatowns, relative sanctuaries in hard times, found their economies undermined. Prior to Exclusion the increasingly rapid flows of immigrants had generated a disproportionate increase in demand for the ethnic goods and services Chinatowns provided. As Shih-Shan Henry Tsai notes, representatives of San Francisco's Chinese Benevolent Association were the first contacts in-coming Chinese made upon their arrival in America and the last before their departure.

As soon as an immigrant ship arrived from China, the company sent an interpreter to the wharf to welcome the arrivals. In the company headquarters, the new immigrants were furnished water, fuel for cooking, and a room in which to spread their mats. Chinese laborers from inland towns and mining camps, embarking for return to China, often stayed in the company houses (Tsai 1986: 48).

The virtual elimination of sojourners with Exclusion radically reduced demand for these services in gateway cities. The precipitous drop of the Chinese American population overall further reduced demand for the ethnic goods and services on which employment in these enclaves depended. Just when the Chinese needed them most, Chinatowns' capacity for support was in decline.

Self-employment in industries catering to the general public offered an alternative. While occupational licensing restrictions closed many self-employment fields, a few remained open. Industries with low capital requirements such as cigar making, laundries, and restaurants were accessible even to potential entrepreneurs of modest means and limited credit. But economic viability depended upon public acceptance of the product. Public acceptance wasn't too difficult to obtain in manufacturing since minority producers could easily hide their identity. A famous illustration is the response of Chinese cigar manufacturers to an energetic campaign by West Coast white unions to distinguish their cigars from those of the Chinese by attaching "Made by White Labor" rings to their products. The Chinese easily circumvented the opprobrium by applying identical labels to their own cigars (Brown and Philips 1982). What finally drove the Chinese out of the industry was the increasingly capital-intensive character of the manufacturing process which undermined the competitiveness of small firms.

Services remained accessible, but in services such as laundries and restaurants the identity of the provider was there for all to see. In western frontier towns Chinese services may have found acceptance because there were few alternatives. East of the Rockies, Lawrence McGlinn argues that "the small number of Chinese and the large number of other controversial immigrants," reduced the resistance to them (McGlinn 1995: 433). Alternatively, Rose Hum Lee argues that Chinese laundries were able to appeal to non-Chinese customers by offering a differentiated service.

Chinese laundry operators must depend upon a specialized group of customers, i.e., those who prefer their washing and ironing (especially shirts and personal items) to be done meticulously and who are willing to pay a higher price for this service (Lee 1949: 428).

The fact that laundry work was widely considered to be "women's work" may have also reduced the opposition of organized white males (Ong 1983, 1991; Siu 1987[1953]; Wang 2004).⁷

⁷ Nonetheless, Chinese laundrymen faced plenty of resistance. See Yu (1995).

Beginning in the early twentieth century when competition from steam laundries intensified, the Chinese moved out of laundries and became restaurateurs (Carroll 1924; "Chop Suey Verses Shirts" 1924). Like other immigrant groups, the Chinese restaurants first appeared in Chinatowns and catered to their ethnic community. Over time they began to attract outsiders. Lee suggests that Chinese restaurants attracted patrons, "...seeking a varied Chinese menu amid an unusual atmosphere and those seeking larger servings of food for the price paid" (Lee 1949: 429). These patrons were members of the growing middle class who drank coffee, lemonade, ice tea, and sodas instead of alcoholic beverages and favored light meals that could be quickly served. Female wage workers, an especially rapidly-growing portion of this middle class, flocked to establishments that didn't require a male escort (Whitaker 2002, Haley 2011). Along with lunch rooms, tea rooms, and soda fountains, Chinese restaurants responded to these emerging



"SEITZ IN CHINATOWN." *Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly* May 1893; Vol. XXXV., No.5.; APS Online, pg. 18.

new tastes.

In the 1890s Chinese restaurants began moving outside of Chinatowns and their exotic cuisine entered the cultural mainstream (Barbas 2003; Carter 2011; Coe 2009; Comer 2000; Light 1974, Liu 2009). Newspapers instructed curious readers in the use of chopsticks and in the intricacies of ordering from Chinese menus ("Seitz in Chinatown," *Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly* May 1893; Vol. XXXV., No.5.; APS Online, pg. 18.

. In 1900 the *New York Times* declared the city "chop suey' mad" ("Heard About Town" 1900). By 1909 a New England newspaper was so overwhelmed with requests for Chinese recipes that it sent a reporter – a young woman accompanied by a male escort who covered the police beat -- to a Chinese restaurant to investigate. Her article began with the obligatory misgivings:

I shall never forget the wave of homesickness and the longing for Boston baked beans that swept over me as I picked up the menu and read: "Chow Quay Fah Geey Chee," "Deung Lee Tong Lung," "Ting Hong Sut Gee," "Sut Gee Geey Won Hoom," "Yun Yung How Goey," "Son Ping Dong Gwe," "Chun Fah Goon," "Lung Chun Fung Yik," "Gwa Pee Toon Op," "Suh Gum Young Ju Wah Me," "Sub Gum Goke Su Men," "Sub Gum Yung Yu Wah Me" (Brown 1909).



Sallie Joy Brown. "Along the Chop Suey Trail." Along the Chop Suey Trail." *Chicago Daily Tribune* (1872-1963); June 13, 1909. ProQuest Historical Newspapers Chicago Tribune (1849-1986): F1.

But she soon changed her mind, describing "...a great contrast between what I expected and what I experienced." Not long after she was advising readers on where they could buy specialty ingredients concluding: "Surely the New England housewives have much to learn from the Chinese chef" (Brown 1909). By 1920 Sinclair Lewis was celebrating the Chinese restaurant as a reliable antidote to the confines of small-town life. Seeking a break from Gopher Prairie, he had Carol and Will Kennicott travel to Minneapolis to eat at a Chinese restaurant where they "...sat at a teak and marble table eating Eggs Fooyung, and listened to a brassy automatic piano, and were altogether cosmopolitan" (Lewis 1920: 231). By 1921 some New Englanders were eating "Zone Ying Chicken, Canton Style" and "Duck Chop Suey with French Mushrooms" for their Thanksgiving dinners.⁸ New Yorkers had their choice of "...more than 250 Chinese restaurants..., many of them elaborate, with silk-embroidered panels covering their walls and tables of teakwood with inlaid mother-of-pearl in ornate designs" (Carroll 1924). It was the lure of the exotic that kept patrons coming back: "Somehow water lily tea, or tead loo hon tea, seems more delicious than tea served as just tea. So does bird's nest chicken broth sound nicer than chicken soup" (Carroll 1924). Growing up in gritty Lowell Massachusetts in the 1930s, Jack Kerouac recalled, "the snaky scrolls and beansprouts of the Chinese dark interior rich heartbreaking family booth in the restaurant, where I always felt so humble and contrite ... the nice smiling Chinese men would really serve us that food of the

⁸ The Peacock was one of two Chinese restaurants in Portland (Maine) at that time. Its ad in the 1921 City Directory featured "Chinese and American Food Served," and "Business Men's and Business Women's Luncheon from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m."



smell so savory hung in the linoleum carpet hall downstairs (Kerouac 1959: Kindle Edition, locations 1220-1228).

Despite the public's growing interest in eating out, long hours, intense competition, and paper thin profit margins discouraged those with better options from becoming restaurateurs (Carter 2012).⁹ Thus the foreign-born, blacks, and women were all more than twice as likely as native-born white males to own and operate restaurants. Further evidence that restaurant work was an option of last resort is that the onset of the Great Depression produced a surge in the number of new restaurants even though demand for restaurant meals fell. Many of the new restaurateurs were former industrial employees

who would otherwise have been out of work (Carter 2012). The Chinese embraced the industry for the same reason as widows, blacks, the foreign-born, and the Depression-Era unemployed: they had few alternatives. Yet, as Table 8 shows, the laundry and restaurant shares of Chinese employment was far higher than that of other oppressed groups. In 1880 11 percent of Chinese were employed in these two industries. Their share grew steadily during Exclusion until, by 1940, they accounted for 56 percent of Chinese employment nationwide and over 87 percent in the Northeast. The end of Exclusion coupled with the strong labor demand of the World War II years produced substantial reductions, especially in laundry work by 1950.

Chinese Americans' extraordinary embrace of entrepreneurial roles in these industries must also be credited to the terms of the Exclusion Act. By restricting Chinese admissions to merchants, the Act actively selected for those individuals most likely to become entrepreneurs. As Alejandro Portes (1995)

⁹ This paper draws on Chinese Exclusion case files for several extended families who ran a Chinese restaurant in Northampton, Massachusetts from 1920 through 1953 to document the finances of these operations. The records suggest that the salaries of Chinese workers were considerably below those of full-time equivalent retail employees (not a high-pay group), though the Chinese workers also earned a small return on their invested capital.

has shown, the strongest predictor of entrepreneurial activity among U.S. immigrants is a history of entrepreneurial activity in their home country

Because it singled out the Chinese for special restrictions and barred sojourners – the primary segment of the Chinese population wishing to enter -- the Chinese viewed Exclusion as deeply discriminatory and unfair and rejected its legitimacy. Their response, according to Peter Kwong and Dušanka Miščević: "... was to find a way to get around them [the exclusion laws] in order to maintain the chain migration" (Kwong and Miščević 2005: 137).

Tactics aimed at circumventing the law were developed in response to each of its elements. To enter as a merchant required proof of assets and membership in a U.S. business (Hsu 2000: 73).¹⁰ As this requirement could be satisfied by having one's name listed as a partner in an ongoing American business, a trans-pacific market for partnership papers quickly developed and Chinese American businesses came to have many more "owners" than non-Chinese establishments of a similar size. For example, when Northampton Massachusetts' *Royal Chinese and American Restaurant* was sold in 1927, the buyer was a six-person partnership with a total capitalized value of only \$7,200 or about \$93,200 today.^{11, 12}

While many Chinese American restaurants were relatively small like the *Royal*, the ready supply of capital from investors eager to buy access to the American market allowed some entrepreneurs to launch far grander enterprises. Thus in 1907 two Chinese residents of Los Angeles were able to go to Chicago to establish "the most gorgeous chop suev restaurant in the world." According to the *LA Times*:

Funds will be contributed by Chinese all over the United States. It will be akin to the "popular subscription" companies of our own people. Dr. Tom Leung is said to be the head of the scheme. Before attempting to open the restaurant he and George Lem will visit the Chinese quarters of Kansas City, Philadelphia, possibly New York and several other eastern cities with a view of meeting and consulting the stockholders.

Although there are already 125 chop suey places in Chicago this will eclipse them all. It is said that the fittings will be of black Egyptian and white marble. The walls will be hung throughout with silk. The furnishings and building will cost about \$125,000, the furnishings alone will amount to \$75,000. It is possible that the same syndicate will later build a chop suey place in Los Angeles ("Will Surprise Chicago: Los Angeles Chinese to Open the Most Handsomely-appointed Restaurant in the Windy City" 1907).

Elaborate Chinese restaurants "equipped with jazz bands and large dance floors" began appearing in New York City's theatre district about 1910. In 1924 the operator of one reported:

¹⁰ In 1924 this requirement was tightened to allow entry only for merchants engaged in international trade (Hsu 2000: 73). ¹¹ Computed using Measuringworth.com "real price" equivalency.

¹² U.S. Department of Labor, Immigration Service, Chinese Exclusion Case File No. 2500/7356. Testimony taken March 14, 1928.

In the enterprise I am with, we started sixteen years ago with \$5,000 and four partners. As the business increased we drew in new capital and now have an investment of \$100,000 in three restaurants shared by forty partners, some of whom are in Canton and Hong Kong and have never been to America. All are Chinese, and range from bankers and importers to truck farmers and grocers. The Chin Lee restaurant [nearby] cost \$120,000 to establish and fit up, and is owned by 250 partners while Yoengs [yet another neighborhood restaurant], representing an investment of \$100,000 is the property of 100 partners (Carroll 1924: 6).

Chin Lee also established restaurants in Lowell, Lynn, and Boston, Massachusetts and in Pawtuckett, Rhode Island (Chen 2003; *Lowell Massachusetts City Directory 1920; Lowell Courier-Citizen 1937:* 11). Tom Lee, proprietor and manager of the *Chop Suey American Restaurant* in Pittsfield, Massachusetts also operated three laundries in that city (*Pittsfield, Massachusetts City Directory 1930*). The *Far East Chinese and American Restaurant* in New Haven advertised itself as the "largest restaurant in town" (*New Haven Connecticut City Directory 1930*).

Not surprisingly, some of these restaurateurs were able to amass sizeable fortunes. In 1911 the *Washington Post* reported on a Boston Chinese American restaurant owner, Jang Po, who made an estimated \$500,000 and was returning to his family in China. Po "served chop suey to Bostonians...for 38 years....He began the sale of chop suey here in 1879. Now he owns a restaurant that occupies almost a block" ("Fortune From Chop Suey" 1911). Nonetheless, it is not clear that opportunities seized upon by the Chinese would have appeared attractive to others. As the New York City theatre district restaurant proprietor testified:

We Chinese think it is best not to take American partners, for we make profits very slowly and there is risk that we lose from time to time. What is nothing in profit to most clever Americans is good business to Chinese (Carroll 1924: 6).

The Exclusion law prohibited merchants from "the performance of any manual labor, except as is necessary in the conduct of such business as a merchant" (Daniels 2004: 23). "Manual labor" in the context of Exclusion included activities such as cooking, washing, and waiting on tables, in other words, activities that would be required of a small-scale restaurateur. Immigration officials were careful to ascertain that "merchants" with a stake in a restaurant were not involved in its actual operation.

For example, about a year after Cheng Gong Wong and his partners purchased Northampton's *Royal,* immigration agents interviewed two local businessmen, Leo and and his uncle Joe Lenkowski, owners of a meat and grocery store next door, to ascertain whether Wong's behavior was consistent with his merchant status. The Lenkowskis would have been familiar with Wong's activities since, according to their own testimony, they "...entered the restaurant two or three times a week for deliveries and sometimes

to eat." Joe recalled that Chueng Gong Wong sometimes worked at the cashier's booth, at other times he was in the kitchen, "watching the buying," or "at the cash register taking cash and looking around out in the kitchen." "I have never seen him do much dirty work." Leo added, "I never see him doing much work and while I don't know what he is saying, I notice him talking as though giving orders and I notice they mind him."¹³

The Exclusion law's prohibition against their manual labor increased merchants' interest in sponsoring the migration of those who were free of such restrictions – persons entering as merchants' sons or as the China-born sons of American-born Chinese. Not only did such immigration further the Chinese goal of maintaining family chain migration, it was essential to the viability of their American businesses.

To make his China-born children eligible for U.S. entry the merchant/father had to either bring them with him on first entry or register them with U.S. immigration officials. Following a return to China and subsequent reentry into the United States, he had to add to his registry any children born to him during his home visits. American-born Chinese males were also entitled to sponsor their China-born children's entry. Before leaving for China these men were required to first establish their American citizenship with immigration authorities, usually by showing an American birth certificate. Upon their return from China they could either bring their China-born children with them, or, as was more common, simply testify that a child or children had been born to them while abroad. These claims of children born in China created "slots" that could later be used to bring those children to America, or, with the help of various contrivances, to bring persons who would otherwise be denied entry.

There soon developed an active market in the purchase and sale of these "slots," with prices based on the current age of the person whose identity had been placed in the records. In 1934 a typical price was \$100 for each year plus additional fees (Kwong and Miščević 2005: 138). Transnational Chinese organizations facilitated the purchase and sale of "slots" and provided coaching in strategies designed to evade U.S. border control. Unrelated persons making use of these "slots" were referred to as "paper sons" (since almost all were males) or more generally "paper families" (Lau 2007).

U.S. immigration officials quickly learned of these schemes and developed elaborate strategies aimed at detecting fraudulent claims (Ngai 2005). Enforcement was tough and even persons with legitimate claims faced harsh interrogation and possible rejection at the border (Barde 2008). Nonetheless, Madeline Hsu finds that, "Both immigration officials and Chinese themselves estimated that of those who

¹³ Chinese Exclusion Case file 2500/7356, p. 8, March 15, 1928.

entered the United States during the period of Exclusion, 90 percent did so using fake papers" (Hsu 2000: 68). Hsu describes the starkly contrasting attitudes of the Chinese and the U.S. border control:

Taishanese were well acquainted with the restrictiveness of the Exclusion laws and the zealousness of the immigration bureau. They accepted as a matter of course that in order to enter the United States they would have to assume an identity or status that was not their own. As pointed out by one immigrant, "Most people bought papers, so they were all fake. It was O.K. as long as it obeyed American rules and regulations. Immigration inspectors were less sanguine about this state of affairs. "There is an openness about the whole matter that is simply astounding. The tremendous fraud is hardly disguised." However, for most Taishanese, there were no other options (Hsu 2000: 71-72).

Table 9 reports on an effort to assess the relative importance of China-born children of American fathers in the Exclusion Era Chinese population. It displays the distribution of China-born Chinese across citizenship statuses at each of the censuses from 1900 through 1950 as calculated from the IPUMS samples for each year. The figures for 1940, for example, indicate that at least 11.4 percent of China-born Chinese were American citizens by virtue of having an American father and, despite the prohibition on Chinese naturalization, that at least another 9.5 percent of China-born Chinese were either naturalized citizens or in the process of becoming naturalized.¹⁴ Reports across census years are inconsistent, however, this is a topic that requires further investigation.

Persons entering as a China-born child of a Chinese merchant or as a China-born child of an American-born Chinese weren't subject to the work restrictions imposed on those admitted as merchants. Because they could work at any job, they formed an important compliment to the capital and entrepreneurial skills provided by merchants. Access to this supply of compliant, low-wage labor may have given the Chinese a competitive advantage over other laundry owners and restaurateurs.¹⁵

The experience of merchant Chueng Gong Wong who, with his five partners purchased Northampton's *Royal* restaurant in 1927, provides some evidence on the role of paper sons in the operation of these Chinese business enterprises. Wong first entered the United States at the port of San Francisco in 1917 at the age of 32 accompanied by his son, Bak Pang Wong, 14. Chueng Gong Wong also claimed two additional sons, ages 9 and 6, who remained at home with their mother. According to his application, Chueng Gong Wong had been a leather merchant first in China's Sun Ning district and later in Hong Kong.

¹⁴ These percentages increase to 12.8 and 10.7 percent respectively if one assumes that the China-born Chinese whose citizenship status was not reported were distributed across citizenship statuses in the same manner as those whose citizenship status was reported.

¹⁵ Pawan Dhingra (2012) describes similar conditions among contemporary Indian American motel owners.

He valued his assets at \$10,000 or about \$321,000 in today's dollars.¹⁶ Immigration officials accepted his financial credentials but were skeptical of his claim that Bak Pang Wong was his son. They felt Chueng Gong Wong was much younger than his stated 32 years – perhaps too young to have fathered a 14-year old. They also felt that father and son showed a "total lack of resemblance." In the end, though, the two were admitted as "Merchant" and "Minor son of Exempt Chinese" under Section 6 of the Chinese Exclusion Act.¹⁷

After a brief stay in San Francisco, Chueng Gong Wong settled in Boston where he worked as a bookkeeper for *King Wah Restaurant* in Boston's Chinatown and then, about 1920 moved to Lynn, Massachusetts where he became a bookkeeper for the *Far East Restaurant*. In answer to questions posed by an Immigration Service inspector in 1925 he testified that although he came to the United States as a merchant, he found few attractive mercantile investments and eventually decided to invest in restaurants -- \$440 in *Far East Restaurant*, Gloucester, Massachusetts; \$100 in the *King Wah* where he worked as a bookkeeper; and miscellaneous amounts in several other small restaurants that had closed by the time of his interview.¹⁸ In 1925 Chueng Gong Wong left for a year in China, where he claimed to have fathered yet another son and arranged for the immigration of his two middle sons, Bak Sing Wong, 19, and Bak Sum Wong, 15.

Meanwhile Bak Pang Wong, the 14-year-old at the time of his arrival in 1917 did not move with his father to Boston but instead settled in Portland Maine where he resided as a lodger above the *Oriental Restaurant* along with nine other Chinese, all Wongs. One of the other men living in this establishment may have been a closer blood relative than Chueng Gong Wong. Bak Pang Wong entered the local grammar school and worked evenings as a waiter. According to the school's principal, J.A. Milliken, he attended school regularly and was "an excellent pupil."¹⁹ In 1922, after graduating from the 8th grade at age 18, he requested and received a return certificate as a student which allowed him to reenter the United States with fewer administrative restrictions. The immigration officer conducting the hearing declared him "able to speak and understand English. No interpreter was used."²⁰

Returning from China in 1923, after marrying and having a child, Bak Pang Wong went to work as a waiter in the same Boston Chinatown restaurant, the *King Wah*, where Chueng Gong Wong had served

¹⁶ Calculated using "Measuring Worth" on the web at: <u>http://www.measuringworth.com/uscompare/relativevalue.php</u>.

¹⁷ Chinese Exclusion Case file 16048-5-9, WONG Bak Pang, March 30, 1917. Chueng Gong Wong's height was 5'7-7/8", 5'8" in American shoes, tall for a Chinese man at this time (Morgan 2004). Bak Pang Wong, 14, was 5' ³/₄".

¹⁸ Chinese Exclusion Case file No. 2500/6377, October 2, 1925.

¹⁹ Chinese Exclusion Case file 2520/20, Portland Maine, December 19, 1921.

²⁰ Ibid.

as bookkeeper upon first arriving in America. In 1926 Bak Pang Wong made a second trip to China, returning in 1927 after fathering a second son. It was then that he, in partnership with his father and four others, purchased Northampton's *Royal Restaurant*. Father Chueng Gong Wong served as manager and was paid \$75 per month. Though he lived in Lynn in the eastern part of the state he made regular visits. Two cooks were each paid \$85 per month, an assistant cook \$75, and a waiter \$65. Bak Pang Wong, who

took the role of assistant manager, was paid \$75 per week. Though two of Chueng Gong Wong's younger sons had arrived in the United States, neither was involved in the business.

The partners rented two floors in a handsome downtown building shown in the lower right-hand corner in the photograph to the right, using the ground floor for the restaurant and the floor above for storage and living space. Room and food were probably provided as part of their compensation. The *Royal* could seat 62 people and earned \$34,372 in revenues the previous year, generating a dividend of \$70 for each of the six shares or an annual rate of return of 5.8 percent on their \$1,200 investment.²¹



Royal Chinese and American Restaurant, Northampton, MA circa

In 1931 Chueng Gong Wong's son Bak Sum Wong, then 20, bought out one of the partners and went to work as a cook though the other son who arrived in the U.S. at the same time worked in New York. Bak Pang Wong continued as assistant manager through 1932 when he made another trip to China. Once back in the U.S. he returned to Northampton for two years before again leaving for China in 1936, apparently for good.

Thus business relationships among close family members were not much tighter than those with other members of the extended clan. What is most striking is the geographic mobility of individuals and the rapid turnover of pesonnel in any given location. Altogether, from the time of the *Royal's* opening in 1920 through 1938 at least 16 different individuals worked at the restaurant for a total of at least 63 person-years. Thus on average the restaurant employed 3.5 persons at any one time and the average employee stayed 3.9 years. A bar graph summarizing the staffing and turnover at the restaurant is presented in Figure 21.²²

²¹ U.S. Department of Labor, Immigration Service, Chinese Exclusion Case File No. 2500/7356. Testimony taken March 14, 1928.

²² These calculations are based on reports in the annual city directories for Northampton and included only persons who resided on the premises. Merchants such as Chueng Gong Wong were not reported.

The exceptional geographic mobility of these individuals who moved back and forth between China and the United States and among U.S. cities is consistent with the pattern observed by McGlinn for Chinese laundry workers:

Although laundry buildings were usually rented rather than owned, a profitable location could be worked for decades by a succession of Chinese who learned about it through their association or through friends. One laundryman could move on when a more profitable laundry became available, selling the original laundry equipment to a newcomer in the region. Laundries that were not profitable would be quickly abandoned, the equipment moved elsewhere, and the laundryman in search of a new opportunity (McGlinn 1995: 436).

Chinese Americans had begun to embrace self-employment and to form powerful networks even before the Exclusion Act. After the law's passage these became the dominant form of their social organization (Li 1976; Light 1972; Light and Gold 2000; Light and Rosenstein 1995).

In 1938 the *Royal* was purchased by Chong Wong, 58, a California-born restaurateur who lived with his wife, ten children, and a nephew. He and his family had previously operated a restaurant in Dover New Hampshire, a town with a population of about 14,000. The move to Northampton probably meant a bigger, livelier restaurant for Chong Wong and his growing family. Though Chong Wong died only a few years after his move, his family continued to operate the restaurant through the early 1950s, closing it when the children decided to take up other occupations.

Table 10 provides an estimate of the relative importance the male partnerships and nuclear families in the operation of Chinese restaurants and laundries during Exclusion. To generate these estimates I begin with the self-employed Chinese males in these sectors in the censuses of 1910 through 1950, the years for which this information is available. All of these self-employed men were also household heads. I then calculate the proportion of households headed by self-employed men in which no spouse was present. As Table 10 shows, households comprised of male partners like those that operated Northampton's *Royal Restaurant* during the 1920s and 1930s were dominant throughout the Exclusion Era, accounting for virtually all laundry operations and at least three-fourths of restaurants. To estimate the share of the labor force in each industry accounted for by male business owners, partners, and their adult male employees I calculate the size of households with and without spouse present and assume that where no spouse was present all household members worked and where a spouse was present half of household members worked and where a spouse was present half of household members were involved, the other half being children too young to work. These calculations suggest that late as 1940, when the sex ratio among Chinese had dropped to the relatively low level of 285 (from a high of 2679 in 1890 (See Table 5)) only 13 percent of laundries and 28 percent of restaurants were

run by traditional nuclear families. By 1950, however, the traditional nuclear-family-based business model had become dominant in both industries. Although several recent memoires of children who grew up in family-run Chinese laundries and restaurants portray these as the historic norm (Jung 2007, 2010), the estimates presented in Table 10 suggest that they are largely a post-Exclusion development.

Family

Families raising children would have been much less geographically mobile than single male sojourners, whose goal while in the United States was to earn as much money as possible in the shortest period of time. Over the first half of the twentieth century families raising children became an increasingly important share of the Chinese American population. The growing importance of these families and of the nuclear-family-based Chinese businesses described above was made possible by an increase in the female share of the Chinese American population.

Few Chinese women came to America during the era of open migration. These flows were dominated by male sojourners. Exclusion erected particularly formidable barriers against women's entry, excepting only the wives and daughters of merchants. As Table 11 indicates, in 1900, women comprised only 3.4 percent of the foreign-born Chinese who accounted for over 90 percent of Chinese Americans.²³ By 1940, women's share had grown to almost 18 percent of adult foreign-born Chinese and 37.4 percent of adult Chinese Americans overall. By then, almost 40 percent of male household heads 25 years and older lived with a spouse. The growing importance of these families and the declining importance of male partnerships, would be expected to slow the Chinese response to geographic shifts in economic opportunity.

Empirical Modeling

To assess the relative importance of these safety, community, employment, and family motives in the locational decisions of Exclusion-Era Chinese Americans I use multivariate regression analysis. The unit of observation is the county in a given census year. Because I am interested in migration, I construct lagged variables to measure change over the previous decade. Because of the pronounced West-East gradient in Chinese geographic redistribution -- in 1880 only three percent of all Chinese lived outside the West but by 1950 42 percent did so – I focus on locational choices outside the West, "East" for short.

²³ See Table 5.

My sample includes counties outside the West with populations of 25,000 or more in 1880 for which consistent data is available in the censuses of 1880 through 1950. Selecting according to these criteria produces a balanced panel of 4,277 county/year observations (611 x 7). In 1880 it includes 92 percent of the Chinese population and 79 percent of the total population; by 1950 it extends to 98 percent of the Chinese and 86 percent of the total.

The dependent variable is Chinese population change per thousand total population in the base year. Unfortunately, this variable captures several sources of population change – change due to in- or outmigration but also that due to births and deaths. A better measure would have focused exclusively on in- and out-migration, but the absence of systematic data on the age, gender, and nativity of the Chinese American population at the county level forces me to rely on gross population change. It is important to note that among the many factors that influence migration into and out of "Eastern" counties are migration to and from China as well as the migration out of and back into the West. "Chinese Immigration," one of the independent variables, measures the percentage change in the *total* Chinese American population in the United States over the decade. *Ceteris paribus*, this measure would be expected to have a positive impact on the migration of Chinese to any "Eastern" county.

One set of independent variables assesses the community motive for migration. "Chinatown" measures Chinese as a share of the county's total population ten years earlier and is used to gauge the propensity of Chinese to migrate to counties where other Chinese had already settled. I also include a squared term, "Chinatown Squared," to capture possible non-linearities in the relationship. A third community measure, "Chinatown 100" indicates whether a given county was within 100 miles of an established Chinatown. The appendix provides a detailed description of the construction of this variable. A fourth community measure is a term interacting Chinese population ten years earlier with change over the previous decade in the *entire* population of Chinese in the U.S. "Chinatown*Chinese Immigration" assesses the relative attraction of Chinatowns during periods of rapid Chinese population growth. The expected sign on all four of these terms is positive: Chinese in this era preferred to live in their ethnic communities, larger communities were differentially attractive since they offered a greater range of ethnic goods and services, a county close to an established Chinatown provided greater access than one outside this perimeter, and Chinese population growth from immigration increased demand for the adjustment and relocation services available only in large Chinatowns.

The employment motive is more difficult to assess since the ICPSR county-level data set does not include direct, consistent measures of occupational structure, wages, or unemployment. To proxy for

change in economic opportunity I use non-Chinese population change per thousand of the total population in the base year, "Non-Chinese Δ ". As Kuznets and Thomas observed long ago, change in the locus of economic opportunity inspires migration. Thus migration can serve as a proxy for shifts in economic opportunity. A positive coefficient on "Non-Chinese Δ " would indicate that the Chinese responded to the same general stimuli such as high wages, low unemployment, and job growth that motivated the migration of the non-Chinese.

Change in the sex ratio, "Sex Ratio Δ " measures an economic opportunity that may have been particularly attractive to the Chinese. During the Exclusion Era, the laundry and restaurant services provided by the Chinese were in greater demand in communities with disproportionate shares of males without wives to do their washing and cooking.²⁴ A large black share of the population, "Black Share" represented opportunity of a different sort. Because of their limited access to capital and because of white discrimination, black communities were often underserved by laundries and restaurants and also by small groceries and other retail shops. The Chinese focus on profitability and their status as sojourner – one who clings to the culture of his own ethnic group – provided both a financial incentive to fill the gap and the psychological distance required to endure the racial hostility of whites and blacks alike (Lowwen 1971, Shankman 1978). Offsetting this opportunity was the generally sluggish economy of the South where most blacks lived. European immigrants tended to avoid the South (Dunlevy 1988). There is no reason to expect the financially-oriented Chinese to have behaved otherwise. Change in real GDP per capita over the previous decade, "GDP Δ ," identifies prosperous decades when the rewards to migration might be expected have been greatest.

To assess the impact of the growing share of women and the appearance of nuclear families I include three variables. The first is change in the percentage of the Chinese population female in the state over the previous decade, "% Female Δ ." I use state rather than county-level data only because gender is not consistently reported at the county level in the published censuses. The coefficient on "% Female Δ " is expected to be positive since it is correlated with Chinese population increase due to births. Including this term helps make "Chinese Δ " a better measure of Chinese population change due to migration. I create two additional variables by interacting "% Female Δ " first with "Non-Chinese Δ " and then with "Chinatown." "% Female Δ * Non-Chinese Δ " measures the impact of families raising children on the propensity of the

²⁴ Sex ratios among Chinese in this era were extremely high. Thus the sex ratio is endogenous in this formulation. Unfortunately Chinese population by sex is not available at the county level for many of the years included in this analysis. Because the Chinese comprised such a small share of the total population (the mean value across all county/year observations in the sample is only 0.01 percent with a maximum value of 0.7 percent) this problem is not quantitatively important.

Chinese to move along with the non-Chinese population. The expected sign is negative since families raising children are unlikely to be as geographically mobile as single males. "% Female Δ * Chinatown" measures the impact of the increasing share of women on the propensity of the Chinese to move to counties where other Chinese already reside. The expected sign on this term is ambiguous. On the one had, families raising children might have had a particularly strong preference for Chinatowns where their children could learn the Chinese language and culture. On the other hand, Chinatowns may have exerted a relatively stronger pull on the solitary men who did not have a near-by family for support.

Because of large differences in population across my county/year observations, I weigh ordinary least squares regressions by the total county population in the base year. Table 13 presents results for four different specifications based on the pooled cross-section-time-series data described above. Column 1 shows results for various measures of the community, employment, and family motives. The specification reported in Column 2 introduces time dummies to help account for unobserved economic and political shocks which may have compelled more or fewer Chinese to migrate. The introduction of these time dummies causes the time-varying measures "Chinese Immigration" and "GDP Δ " to be dropped from the equation. Column 3 introduces state-specific dummies in case omitted, persistent features of particular areas are contributing to spatial differences in Chinese migration. The final specification, reported in Column 4, includes both time and state dummies. The "Chinatown 100" variable is included to measure possible spatial correlations – for example, the impact of Boston's Chinatown on Chinese migration to nearby Cambridge. Because of its inclusion, my coefficient estimates are unbiased, however I have not at this point corrected for the impact of spatial correlation on the error terms. For this reason the standard errors are understated and the statistical significance of the coefficients is exaggerated.

Results

The results are reported in Table 13. Except for a few special cases which I discuss below, the coefficients are all highly significant and stable across specifications. Contrary to expectations, Chinese migration into the "East" is greatest when the Chinese population in the U.S. was falling as was the case from the 1890s through the nineteen-teens. As the Chinese population began to recover in 1920s and beyond, a disproportionate share of the newcomers settled in the West. The positive coefficients on "Chinatown," "Chinatown Squared," and "Chinese Immigration * Chinatown" imply that, after controlling for other influences, the Chinese were drawn to counties where other Chinese were already living. Moreover, the bigger the Chinese population, the bigger the draw, especially during decades when the Chinese

American population was growing. The results suggest that new arrivals were differentially attracted to communities offering ethnic goods and services. The insignificance of the "Chinatown 100" term implies that ,after controlling for the effect of the county's own Chinese population, easy access to an established Chinatown had no additional effect. The inclusion of state fixed effects in specifications 3 and 4

The employment measures all display the expected positive signs. The Chinese migrate to the same counties as the non-Chinese except that their response is much greater. The coefficient on "Non-Chinese Δ " implies that a ten percent increase in non-Chinese migration to a county is accompanied by a 56 percent increase in the migration of the Chinese. The positive coefficients on "Sex Ratio Δ " and "Black Share" indicate that the Chinese were also attracted to opportunities the rest of the population mainly ignored. The absence of statistical significance on "Sex Ratio Δ " in specification 3 which includes the state dummies merely reflects the fact that the state dummies are picking up the influence of unbalanced sex ratios. By contrast, "Black Share" is statistically significant *only* in specifications three and four where the state dummies are included. This result is consistent with findings in the literature on the destinations of European immigrants who avoided the South because of its low wages and unfavorable business climate. Only after controlling for these unfavorable conditions through the inclusion of state dummies is the attraction of the underserved black market evident. The positive coefficient on "GDP Δ " indicates that Chinese migration to the East was strongest during the more prosperous decades. These results imply that the slight reversal in Chinese movement out of the West during the 1930s, shown in Figure 1, is largely a consequence of the Great Depression.

The last three variables measure family motives in migration. An increasing share of women in the Chinese population was positively associated with growth of the Chinese population. As mentioned earlier, some of the growth could be the result of more birth's in these counties. The negative coefficients on the interaction terms "%Female Δ * Non-Chinese Δ " and "%Female Δ * Chinatown" imply that the increasing presence of women altered the pattern of Chinese geographic relocation. More women slowed Chinese response to the shifting geographic locus of economic opportunity and reduced the relative attraction of Chinatowns, changes exemplified by the arrival of Chong Wong and his family at the *Royal Restaurant* in Northampton in 1938. Instead of moving every three- or four-years like the solitary males who preceded them, these Wongs stayed.

The push and pull of all the influences on Chinese geographic relocation are well-illustrated by the experience of Omaha. Omaha's population increased nearly three-fold during the 1880s, drawn to jobs created by the founding of the Union Stockyards and the establishment of the first of Omaha's many

meatpacking plants. The sex ratio grew from 1.29 to 1.32. The Chinese community grew from 14 to 90, an almost six-and-a-half-fold increase. In the years that followed the Chinese population rose and fell with the city's economic booms and busts, never reaching more than 150 persons. In the early 1920s, when the Chinese population topped 100 persons, an effort was made to establish a Chinatown (Otis and Erickson, 2000), however sluggish city growth in the 1920s and the economic collapse of the 1930s led, instead, to the eventual outmigration of most of the city's Chinese.

Portland, Maine provides another example. Portland's economy grew rapidly following the completion of the Grand Trunk Railway in 1853, linking the city to Montreal and making Portland the primary ice-free winter seaport for Canadian exports for the next 70 years. Its economy developed in tandem with the growth of trade conducted along this route (Connolly 2010). Though the sex ratio wasn't high (93.4 in 1890), it grew slowly with the arrival of the Irish longshoremen who staffed the port. The first Chinese arrived in the 1870s. By 1920 this city of about 100,000 was home to 73 Chinese, almost all of whom worked as either laundrymen or restaurateurs. When Canada nationalized the Grand Trunk and rerouted trade to Halifax, Nova Scotia in 1923 the Portland economy was devastated. About the same time, the deployment of icebreakers allowed ocean-going vessels to reach Montreal directly by sea year-round, intensifying Portland's loss. Portland's deep economic decline prompted a sharp drop in its Chinese population. By 1940, only 18 remained.

The coefficient on the black share of the county population is statistically different from zero only in equations three and four which control for state fixed effects. These results suggest that the Chinese, like other migrants, tended to avoid the South in general, though the presence of an underserved black population acted as an attractor. The history of the Chinese community in New Orleans is instructive in this regard. The earliest Chinese settlers in New Orleans migrated from the nearby plantations where they had been recruited in the aftermath of the Civil War to replace newly-freed Blacks. By 1900 they formed a community of 437, drawn, perhaps by the city's large black population share (roughly a fourth of the total throughout this period). Ultimately, though, the city's relative decline led the Chinese to abandon New Orleans in favor of faster growing Southern cities, especially Baltimore, Washington, San Antonio, and Houston.

Conclusions

This is a first effort to generate systematic, quantitative evidence on the internal migration of Chinese Americans during the Exclusion Era. By assembling county-level data on the number of Chinese

Americans for the census years 1880 through 1950, I am able to demonstrate not only their movement out of western mining and construction camps and into large cities, many of them outside the West, but also their dispersal into smaller cities and towns. The desire for safety and employment appears to have outweighed the desire for community for those who moved East. With most employment options closed to them, Chinese Americans pursued the best of those that were available -- the founding of small laundries and restaurants that catered to non-Chinese customers. Pursuit of these entrepreneurial efforts required many Chinese to relocate outside of their own communities. They survived Gold Mountain, but at the cost of an unparalleled degree of social isolation.

In concluding his investigation of Chinese laundrymen in the Chicago area during the 1940s and early 1950s, Paul Siu famously remarked, "..the laundryman's life organization is oriented to social isolation and segregation, and...the laundry is the instrumentality to that effect" (Siu 1987[1953]: 4). This study suggests that Siu's findings have applicability far beyond the temporal and geographic boundaries of his work.

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Table 1											
Data on the Chinese in the Published Censuses, 1880 - 1950											
	Т	otal Populatio	n		Gender			Age			
Year	Nation	State	County	Nation	State	County	Nation	State	County		
1880	Х	Х	Х	Х	Х						
1890	Х	Х	Х	Х	Х		Х				
1900	Х	Х	Х	Х	Х						
1910	Х	Х	Х	Х	Х						
1920	Х	Х	Х	Х	Х		Х				
1930	Х	Х		Х	Х		Х				
1940	Х	Х		Х	Х	Х					
1950	Х	Х		Х	Х						
		Nativity		Literacy			<u>Cc</u>	onjugal Condit	ion		
Year	Nation	State	County	Nation	<u>State</u>	<u>County</u>	Nation	<u>State</u>	<u>County</u>		
1880											
1890											
1900	Х	Х		Х							
1910	Х			Х							
1920	Х			Х							
1930	Х	Х		Х							
1940	Х	Х									
1950	Х										
	5	Speaks Englis	<u>h</u>		Occupation		Industry				
Year	<u>Nation</u>	<u>State</u>	County	Nation	<u>State</u>	County	<u>Nation</u>	<u>State</u>	County		
1880											
1890											
1900				Х							
1910											
1920				Х							
1930											
1940											
1950											

Source: Published census volumes.

Table 2										
Chinese American Population: Continental United States and Hawai'i Published Census and IPUMS, 1860 -2000										
	Continental U	nited States	Haw	ai'i						
	Published		Published							
<u>Year</u>	<u>Census</u>	<u>IPUMS</u>	<u>Census</u>	IPUMS						
1850	0	7 ¹	0	0						
1860	34,933	344 ¹	0	0						
1870	63,199	611 ¹	0	0						
1880	105,465	106,866 ²	0	0						
1890	107,488	0	17,002	0						
1900	89,863	908 ³	25,767	6,543						
1910	71,531	611 ⁴	21,674	4,309						
1920	61,639	645 ¹	23,507	225						
1930	74,954	838 ¹	27,179	0						
1940	77,504	782 ¹	28,774	0						
1950	117,629	1,355 ¹	32,376	0						
1960	198,958	2,000 ¹	38,197	412						
1970	382,795	4,001 ¹	52,039	584						
1980	755,726	37,870 ¹	55,916	2,789						
1990	1,575,326	74,395 ¹	68,804	3,465						
2000	2,374,521	109,841 ¹	56,600	2,556						

Notes: ¹1-percent sample. ²100-percent sample. ³10-percent sample. ⁴5-percent sample.

Sources: Published census volumes and Steven Ruggles, J. Trent Alexander, Katie Genadek, Ronald Goeken, Matthew B. Schroeder, and Matthew Sobek. *Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 5.0* [Machine-readable database]. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2010.

Table 3										
Percentage of Counties with at Least One Chinese American Resident and Average and Median Numbers of Chinese Americans in Counties with at Least One Chinese American Resident, 1860-1960										
	Average Number of Median Number of									
	Percentage with	Chinese Americans	Chinese Americans							
	One or More	in County with	in County with							
Year	Chinese Americans	Chinese Americans	Chinese Americans							
1860	1.8	896	193							
1870	8.0	335	17							
1880	16.3	242	6							
1890	35.6	105	2							
1900	43.4	73	2							
1910	37.5	64	3							
1920	39.3	51	3							
1930	31.7	76	4							
1940	24.9	101	4							
1950	36.6	104	6							
1960	41.0	183	6							

Sources: 1870, 1880, 1890, and 1960: Haines, Michael R., and Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research. *Historical, Demographic, Economic, and Social Data: The United States, 1790-2002* [Computer file]. ICPSR02896-v3. Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributor], 2010-05-21. doi:10.3886/ICPSR02896.v3. 1900 through 1950: Hand-transcribed from published census reports.

		Table 4							
		Cou	Inties with Large	est Chines	e American	Population			
			18	60 through	1960				
1	860			1870			1880		
County	State	Pop	County	Stata	Pon	County	State	Pon	
El Dorado		<u>1 762</u>	San Francisco		<u>12 030</u>	San Francisco		<u>21 790</u>	
Calaveras		3 657	Sacramento	CA	3 596	Sacramento		4 893	
San Francisco	CA	2 719	Nevada	CA	2 627	Alameda	CA	4,000	
Amador	CA	2,568	Placer	CA	2,027	Butte	CA	3 793	
Placer	CA	2,000	Yuha	CA	2,337	Nevada	CA	3 005	
Sierra	CA	2 208	Butte	CA	2 082	Santa Clara	CA	2 695	
Butte	CA	2,177	Alameda	CA	1,939	Clatsop	OR	2,317	
Napa	CA	2,147	Boise	ID	1,754	Placer	CA	2,190	
Tuolumne	CA	1,962	San Joaquin	CA	1,629	Yuba	CA	2,146	
Mariposa	CA	1.843	Amador	CA	1,627	San Joaquin	CA	1,997	
1	800	.,• .•		1000	.,•=:	- Cull Courdant	1010	.,	
Country	Ctoto	Den	County	Ctoto	Don	County	1310	Don	
<u>County</u>		<u>POP.</u>	<u>County</u>		<u>12 05/</u>	<u>County</u>		<u>POP.</u> 10.592	
San Francisco Multromob		20,000	San Francisco Multromob		10,904	San Francisco Multromob		10,302	
		3,104	Now York		0,012	Alamada		5,707	
Los Angeles		4,424	New YOIK		4,094	Alameua New York		4,000	
Alamada		4,371		CA	<u> </u>			3,001	
France		0,011	Los Angeles	CA	3,209	Los Angeles		2,002	
Cente Clare		2,730	Aldifieud San Jaaguin	CA	2,211	Sacramento		2,143	
Santa Glara		2,723	Sali Juaquili Eroopo	CA	1,075	Cook		1,900	
San loaguin		1,970	Santa Clara	CA	1,773	Erospo		1,042	
	000	1,070	Santa Ciara	4020	1,750	FIESHO	4040	1,377	
1	920	_	1930			1940			
County	<u>State</u>	Pop.	County	<u>State</u>	<u>Pop.</u>	County	State	<u>Pop.</u>	
San Francisco	CA	/,/44	San Francisco	CA	16,303	San Francisco	CA	17,782	
Alameda	CA	4,505	New York	NY	6,268	New York	NY	10,370	
New York	NY	3,862	Alameda	CA	3,700	Los Angeles	CA	5,330	
Los Angeles	CA	2,591	Los Angeles	CA	3,572	Alameda	CA	3,947	
COOK	IL	2,438	Соок	IL	2,875	Sacramento	CA	2,471	
Sacramento	CA	1,954	Sacramento	CA	2,792	COOK	IL	2,171	
Nuitnoman	UR OA	1,888	Philadelphia	PA	1,672	King	VVA	1,814	
San Joaquin		1,819	SUTTOIK	MA	1,649	Wulthoman	UR	1,619	
King	VVA	1,360	Wuitnoman	UR	1,4/1	Suffolk San Jacavia	MA	1,439	
SUTTOIK		1,110	Kings	NY	1,405	San Joaquin	CA	1,419	
1	900	1							
<u>County</u>	<u>State</u>	Pop.							
San Francisco	CA	24,813							
New York	NY	13,687							
Los Angeles	CA	9,187							
Alameda	CA	7 760							
Sacramento	CA	3 860					1	1	
Cook		3,000							
King		3,302						<u> </u>	
King	VVA	2,704							
Kings	NY	2,268						ļ	
Suffolk	MA	2,145							
San Joaquin	CA	2,127							

Table 5													
Characteristics of the Chinese American Population,													
1850 – 1950													
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)					
			Immigration										
		Number of	as Share of										
Year		Recent	Population	Sex	Median		Percentage	2					
1001	Population ¹	Immigrants ²	Increase ³	Ratio ⁴	Age ⁵		Born in Chir	na					
						Published							
						<u>censuses</u>	IPUMS	Ancestry.com6					
1850	671	35		∞	24		100.0						
1860	34,933	41,397	1.19	1858	28		97.7						
1870	63,199	64,301	2.27	1284	30	88.0	98.4						
1880	105,465	123,201	2.91	2107	30	88.0	97.4 ⁷						
1890	107,488	61,711	30.50	2679		98.2							
1900	89,863	16,515	-0.94	1887	40	90.7	90.0						
1910	71,531	20,605	-1.12	1430	43	79.4	79.1						
1920	61,639	21,278	-2.15	696	40		69.9	69.2					
1930	74,954	29,907	2.25	395	31		58.8	44.9					
1940	77,504	4,928	1.93	285	31		48.1						
1950	117,629	16,709	0.42	144	24		43.5						

¹1850: Ancestry.com 1860-1950: Carter *et al.,* 2006: Series Aa156.

² Carter *et al.*, 2006: Series Ad138. Value shown is the total number of immigrants from China in the previous ten years.

³ Calculated as the number of immigrants arriving over the previous decade (column 2) divided by population change (population in year t minus population in year t-1 from column 1.

⁴1850: Calculated from Ancestry.com 1860-1950: Calculated from Carter *et al.*, 2006: Series Aa169 and Aa182. Sex ratio is the number of males per 100 females.

⁵ Calculated from the IPUMS samples. There is no IPUMS sample for the 1890 census.

⁶ Number of Chinese born in China from Ancestry.com. There are no Ancestry.com records for the censuses of 1940 and 1950. Total number of Chinese from published censuses. See text for discussion.

⁷ Calculated from the100-percent IPUMS sample.

Table 6									
Living Arrangements of Chinese American Males, 1860 – 1950 Percentage of Total ¹									
	(1)	(2)	(3)						
Year	Head of Household	Non-Relative in Household	Group Quarters						
1860	22.1	45.7	2.6						
1870	19.1	48.3	20.6						
1880	15.1	42.9	39.5						
1890 ²									
1900	22.4	44.3	24.4						
1910	27.5	41.0	21.4						
1920	28.6	27.7	31.8						
1930	31.3	32.6	11.3						
1940	34.6	13.5	16.0						
1950	33.3	11.1	5.6						

Notes: ¹Omitted category is relatives of head living in households. ²There is no IPUMS sample for the 1890 census. *Source:* Computed from Steven Ruggles, J. Trent Alexander, Katie Genadek, Ronald Goeken, Matthew B. Schroeder, and Matthew Sobek. *Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 5.0* [Machine-readable database]. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2010.

Table 7						
Chinese in Chinatowns Percentage of Chinese Living in Chinatowns, Cities with Largest Established Chinatowns, 1930						
City	Percentage					
San Francisco	97.7					
New York	51.4					
Oakland na						
Los Angeles	65					
Chicago	59.7					
Sacramento	na					
Philadelphia	21.9					
Boston	88.5					
Portland	38.5					
Seattle	na					

.

Notes: Computed as percentage of Chinese residence in city ward with largest number of Chinese residents. *Source:* 1930 five-percent IPUMS sample. Steven Ruggles, J. Trent Alexander, Katie Genadek, Ronald Goeken, Matthew B. Schroeder, and Matthew Sobek. *Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 5.0* [Machine-readable database]. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2010.

Table 8 Industrial Distribution of Chinese American Employment by Region, 1860 – 1950								
4000	-			.				
<u>1860</u>	lotal	Northeast	Midwest	South	West			
Restaurants	0.0				0.0			
Laundries	5.0				5.0			
All else	95.0				95.0			
<u>1870</u>								
Restaurants	0.2				0.2			
Laundries	11.0				11.0			
All else	88.8				88.8			
<u>1880</u>								
Restaurants	0.4	0	0	0	0.4			
Laundries	13.9	100	100	0	11.9			
All else	85.7	0	0	100	87.7			
1900								
Restaurants	0.5	0	0	0	0.6			
Laundries	34.1	81.6	100	85.7	16.9			
All else	65.4	18.4	0	14.4	82.5			
<u>1910</u>								
Restaurants	7.4	9.2	11.1	8.5	5.6			
Laundries	20.9	60.2	66.7	31.9	7.4			
Food stores	6.2	0.0	0.0	31.9	12.7			
All else	71.7	30.6	22.2	59.6	87.0			
<u>1920</u>								
Restaurants	17.3	32.8	47.8	22.2	12.2			
Laundries	22.1	55.5	39.1	44.4	11.5			
All else	60.6	11.7	13.1	33.4	76.3			
<u>1930</u>								
Restaurants	27.7	42.0	32.4	34.4	15.6			
Laundries	24.7	42.0	50.0	21.9	6.6			
All else	47.6	16.0	17.6	43.7	77.8			
1940								
Restaurants	29.8	43.7	42.3	14.8	20.3			
Laundries	25.3	43.7	38.5	25.9	12.4			
All else	44.3	12.6	19.2	59.3	67.3			
<u>1950</u>								
Restaurants	29.8	42.9	33.3	10.9	25.9			
Laundries	12.7	21.4	33.3	15.2	4.3			
All else	57.5	15.7	33.4	73.9	69.8			

Notes: "Chinese" identified using the race variable. Industry identified using the "IND1950" variable. Percentage distribution across industry includes only those identified with an industry. "Restaurants" are IND1950 code 679, "Eating and Drinking Places." "Laundries" are IND1950 code 846, ""Laundering, cleaning and dying." Columns for each year total to 100.

Source: Steven Ruggles, J. Trent Alexander, Katie Genadek, Ronald Goeken, Matthew B. Schroeder, and Matthew Sobek. *Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 5.0* [Machine-readable database]. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2010.

Table 9												
Citizenshin Status of Chinese Born in China 1900 1950												
	Onizensnip otatas of onniese born in onnia, 1900 1950											
Year	Citizen	Naturalized Citizen	1 st Papers	Not a Citizen	Not Reported							
1900	4.8	2.1	0.7	92.4								
1910	8.8	3.8	4.5	82.9								
1920	0	3.7	0.9	95.4								
1930	0.1	3.0	0.7	96.2								
1940	11.4	8.9	0.6	68.6	10.6							
1940*	12.8	10.0	0.7	76.7								
1950	7.5	39.7	0	45.4	7.4							
1950*	8.1	42.9	0	49.0								

Note: *Calculations assume that the status of those whose citizenship status was not reported distributed identically to those whose citizenship status was reported.

Source: Steven Ruggles, J. Trent Alexander, Katie Genadek, Ronald Goeken, Matthew B. Schroeder, and Matthew Sobek. *Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 5.0* [Machine-readable database]. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2010.

	Table 10											
Household Characteristics of Self-Employed Chinese Males and Labor Force Organization in Laundries and Restaurants, 1910 – 1950												
	Laundries Restaurants											
	% of	Househ	old Size	% of Labor	% of	Househ	old Size	% of Labor				
	Households			Force in Sole	Households			Force in Sole				
	without	With	Without	Proprietor or	without	With	Without	Proprietor or				
	Spouse	Spouse	Spouse	Partnership	Spouse	Spouse	Spouse	Partnership				
Year	Present	Present	Present	Operations	Present	Present	Present	Operations				
1910	98.7	7.0	2.2	96.0	89.5	2.5	3.6	92.4				
1920	96.3	6.5	2.3	90.2	80.0	5.3	7.1	84.3				
1930	91.7	4.8	1.9	81.4	76.1	6.6	5.5	72.6				
1940	86.9	7.1	2.3	68.2	72.2	5.6	1.8	45.5				
1950	33.3	5.7	1.8	46.4	41.2	6.2	3.4	27.7				

Notes: Self-employment estimated using the IPUMS "Class of Worker" variable. The "Class of Worker" variable is first available in 1910. Laundries and restaurants identified with the IPUMS' consistently-coded industry variable, IND1950, codes 846 and 679, respectively. Presence of spouse identified with IPUMS SPLOC variable, constructed to indicate whether the person's spouse lived in the same household. Household size measured with IPUMS NUMPERHH variable indicating the number of persons who lived in the household. Reported means are based of values of NUMPERHH less than 9999, the missing value indicator. Labor force in sole proprietor or partnership operations estimated as entire household in households without spouse present. Labor force in nuclear family operations estimated as half the household in households with spouse present. Relative weight of each sector given by the percentage of households of self-employed males with and without spouse present.

Source: Steven Ruggles, J. Trent Alexander, Katie Genadek, Ronald Goeken, Matthew B. Schroeder, and Matthew Sobek. *Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 5.0* [Machine-readable database]. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2010.

Table 11										
Chinese Male Household Heads with Spouse Present and Percent Female of the Total, Native-Born, and Foreign-Born Chinese Population 1900-1950										
	Male Household		Percent Female, Persons 1	5+						
<u>Year</u>	Head 25+ with Spouse Present	<u>Total</u>	Native Born	Foreign Born						
1900	25.6	15.0	41.7	3.4						
1910	18.5	8.7	29.9	5.3						
1920	25.1	10.3	22.2	6.2						
1930	30.5	14.7	22.2	11.3						
1940	39.2	21.5	26.8	17.9						
1950	72.9	37.4	44.1	32.7						

Source: Steven Ruggles, J. Trent Alexander, Katie Genadek, Ronald Goeken, Matthew B. Schroeder, and Matthew Sobek. *Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 5.0* [Machine-readable database]. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2010.

Table 12									
Summary Statistics									
County/Year Data Counties Outside the West Population of 25,000 or More in 1880									
1880s through 1940s Variable N Mean Std. Dev.									
Chinese Δ	4277	0.045	0.224						
Chinese Immigration	4277	-0.006	0.200						
Chinatown	4277	29.30	246.49						
Chinatown Squared	4277	61,579	1826350						
Chinatown 100 mile	4277	493	1701						
Chinese Immigration * Chinatown (000)	4277	-0.003	0.060						
Non-Chinese Δ	4277	0.112	0.244						
Sex Ratio Δ	4277	-0.006	0.038						
Black Share	4277	0.122	0.204						
GDPΔ	GDPΔ 4277 1.241 0.2424								
% Female Δ 4277 0.044 0.083									
%Female Δ * Non-Chinese Δ	4277	0.048	0.091						
%Female Δ * Chinatown	4277	1.639	21.198						

Notes: The sample is comprised of all counties outside the West with a population of 25,000 or more in 1880. Means are for county/year observations. "Outside the West" excludes states in the Mountain Division: Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming and in the Pacific Division: California, Oregon, Washington as well as Alaska and Hawai'l which were not states during the years to which this study pertains.

The dependent variable, "Chinese Δ " is the change in the county's Chinese population over the decade per thousand total population in the base period.

For the independent variables, "Chinese Immigration" is the percentage change in the total Chinese population in the United States over the previous decade. "Chinatown" is Chinese population of the county in the base year. "Chinatown Squared" is "Chinatown." "Chinatown 100 mile" is the population of an organized Chinatown that is within 100 miles of the county. Counties with no organized Chinatown within 100 miles are coded zero for this variable. For a detailed description of the construction of the "Chinatown 100 mile" variable, see the Appendix. "Chinese Immigration * Chinatown" interacts "Chinese Immigration" and "Chinatown" and then divides by 1,000. "Non-Chinese Δ " is the change in the county's total non-Chinese population over the decade per thousand total population in the base period. "Sex Ratio Δ " is the change in the county's sex ratio (males per hundred females) over the previous decade. "Black Share" is the black share of the total county population. "GDP Δ " is the ratio of the decadal average of real GDP per capita in the decade to the decadal average of real GDP per capita in the previous decade. "%Female Δ " is the change in the state over the previous decade. "%Female * Chinatown" interacts "%Female" with "Chinatown." "%Female * Non-Chinese Δ "."

Sources: Haines, Michael R., and Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research. *Historical, Demographic, Economic, and Social Data: The United States, 1790-2002* [Computer file]. ICPSR02896-v3. Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [distributor], 2010-05-21. doi:10.3886/ICPSR02896.v3 supplemented with hand-transcribed data. Carter, Susan B. et al. *Historical Statistics of the United States Millennial Edition* 2006, series Ca11.

		Table 13					
		Determinants of Chinese American Geographic Redistribution Across Counties Outside the West 1880s through 1940s					
		Weighted Least Squares Regressions (t-statistics in parentheses)					
			1	2	3	4	5
		Chinese Immigration	-0.271		-0.263		
			(-7.28)		(-7.21)		
Community motives		Chinatown	2.409	2.534	2.098	2.274	2.636
			(22.09)	(24.56)	(17.73)	(20.31)	(25.35)
		Chinatown Squared	6.77e-09	7.59e-09	7.07e-09	8.15e-09	1.13e-08
		· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	(3.83)	(4.54)	(3.66)	(4.46)	(6.73)
		Chinatown 100 mile	-1.97e-06	6.79e-07	-1.1e-05	-6.20e-06	3.11e-07
			(-1.25)	(0.45)	(-5.45)	(-3.17)	(0.16)
		Chinese Immigration * Chinatown	1.455	1.356	1.430	1.334	1.259
			(25.70)	(25.19)	(25.58)	(25.08)	(22.84)
Employment motives		Non-Chinese Δ	0.504	0.462	0.508	0.464	0.483
			(23.36)	(22.29)	(23.60)	(22.31)	(23.73)
		Sex Ratio Δ	0.478	0.739	0.312	0.618	0.746
	$\mathbf{<}$		(3.85)	(6.25)	(2.49)	(5.17)	(6.64)
		Black Share	0.012	0.006	0.211	0.158	0.138
			(0.41)	(0.20)	(3.15)	(2.51)	(2.40)
		GDP Δ	0.151		0.152		
			(6.79)		(7.00)		
		%Female Δ	1.061	0.800	0.900	0.670	1.333
Family			(2.73)	(2.17)	(2.31)	(1.82)	(3.51)
motives		%Female Δ * Non-Chinese Δ	-1.012	-0.577	-0.818	-0.435	-1.132
			(-3.09)	(-1.85)	(-2.55)	(-1.40)	(-3.88)
	' I	%Female Δ * Chinatown	-0.003	-0.003	-2.50	-0.003	-0.004
			(-20.25)	(-21.47)	(-19.22)	(-20.67)	(-23.81)
		Constant	-0.685	-0.371	-0.786	-0.472	-0.590
			(-18.16)	(-12.07)	(-12.52)	(-8.27)	(-5.34)
						. ,	
		Time dummies	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
		State dummies	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
		Time/State Interaction dummies	No	No	No	No	Yes
		Ν	4277	4277	4277	4277	4277
		R ²	0.3851	0.4584	0.4205	0.4891	0.6496

Sources: See Table 12.

Notes: Unit of observation is the county in a given year. Dependent variable is change in the Chinese population over the previous decade divided by the total county population in the base year. Weight is total population in the base year. T-statistics in parentheses below estimated coefficients. For definition of variables see Table 12.

Figure 1 Chinese and Black Populations by Region 1860-1960



Sources: Haines and ICPSR 2010 computer files and hand-coded values from published census volumes.

























Figure 14 Chinese American Population in Cities of 100,000 or More, 1870-1950 Cumulative Distribution



Chinese Population, Log Scale









Figure 19 Segregation and Isolation Indices, Residence by County

Blacks in South and Rest of Country

Chinese in West and Rest of Country



Figure 20 Chinatown Population as Share of Chinese Population within 100 Miles


Figure 21 Restaurant Name and Staffing at Northampton's Chinese Restaurant 1920-1938

