

READING

Chinese Immigrants Write to President Grant

Please note that this reading contains certain racial epithets. We have chosen to include them in order to honestly communicate the bigoted language of the time.

A MEMORIAL FROM REPRESENTATIVE CHINAMEN IN AMERICA TO HIS EXCELLENCY U. S. GRANT, President of the United States of America. (1876)

Sir: — In the absence of any consular representative, we, the undersigned, in the name and in behalf of the Chinese people now in America, would most respectfully present for your consideration the following statements regarding the subject of Chinese immigration to this country:

First — We understand that it has always been the settled policy of your honorable government to welcome immigration to your shores, from all countries, without let or hinderance. The Chinese are not the only people who have crossed the ocean to seek a residence in this land.

Second — The treaty of amity and peace between the United States and China makes special mention of the rights and privileges of Americans in China, and also of the rights and privileges of Chinese in America.

Third — American steamers, subsidized by your honorable government, have visited the ports of China, and invited our people to come to this country to find employment and improve their condition.

Fourth — Our people in this country, for the most part, have been peaceable, law-abiding and industrious. They performed the largest part of the unskilled labor in the construction of the Central Pacific Railroad, and also of other railroads on this coast. They have found useful employment in all the manufacturing establishments of this coast, in agricultural pursuits, and in family service. While benefiting themselves with the honest reward of their daily toil, they have given satisfaction to their employers, and have left all the

results of their industry to enrich the State. They have not displaced white laborers from these positions, but have simply multiplied industries.

Fifth — The Chinese have neither attempted nor desired to interfere with the established order of things in this country, either of politics or religion. They have opened no whiskey saloons for the purpose of dealing out poison, and degrading their fellow men. They have promptly paid their duties, their taxes, their rents and their debts.

Sixth — It has often occurred, about the time of the State and general elections, that political agitators have stirred up the mind of the people in hostility to the Chinese; but formerly the hostility has subsided after the elections were over.

Seventh — At the present time an intense excitement and bitter hostility against the Chinese in this land, and against further Chinese immigration, has been created in the minds of the people, led on by his Honor the Mayor of San Francisco and his associates in office, and approved by his excellency the Governor of the State and other great men of the State. These great men gathered some twenty thousand of the people of this city together on the evening of April 5, and adopted an address and resolutions against Chinese immigration ...

Eighth — In this address, numerous charges are made against our people, some of which are highly colored and sensational, and others, having no foundation in fact, are only calculated to mislead honest minds, and create an unjust prejudice against us. We wish most respectfully to call your attention, and through you the attention of Congress, to some of the statements of that remarkable paper, and ask a careful comparison of the statements there made with the facts in the case ...

With sentiments of profound respect, LEE MING How, President, Sam yeep Company. LEE CHEE KWAN, President, Yung Wo Company. LAW YEE CHUNG, President, Kong Chow Company. CHAN LEUNG Kox, President, Wing Lung Company. LEE CHEONG CHIP, President, Hop Wu Company. CHANG KONG CHEW, President, Yan Wo Company. LEE TONG HAY, President, Chinese Y. M. C. A.¹

¹ Excerpted from August Layres, [*The Other Side of the Chinese Question in California...*](#), (1876) available on University of British Columbia Open Collections website, accessed April 6, 2021.