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Work And the Human Condition

Annotated Bibliography

This annotated bibliography offers sources and references for a study concerning the work of the nineteenth century Chinese in the Northwest, and the racial hostilities and ramifications that ensued.

"A Chinese Peddler in Tacoma: Handled Roughly on the Street by Anti-Chinese Citizens." Tacoma Daily Ledger 20 Sep. 1892: 5.

An article about a Chinese peddler emerging on the streets of Tacoma. According to the article, Aleck Lee was the first peddler immediately following the exodus of the Chinese from Tacoma. When Lee was approached by a local police officer, he was quick to show him his legal peddling license. Next, the officer "conveniently" left Lee, while later a mob emerged. This contingent "gave him a severe thumping", revealing that hostilities towards the Chinese still existed. Also, this article gives an example of a less popular type of work by the Chinese in Tacoma, peddling.

Barth, Gunther. Bitter Strength: A History of the Chinese in the United States, 1850-1870. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1964.

This book explains how the Chinese originally left China among political and social discord. With the discovery of gold in California, the Chinese saw an opportunity to increase their wealth in America. However, as Barth points out, their intention was not to be immigrants, but sojourners. The Chinese ambition was to work in the United States and then return to China more affluent, with capabilities of assisting their economically strapped families. Once the influx of Chinese labor became rapid, creditor-merchants monopolized the travel arrangements. They would pay for the Chinese voyage to America in exchange for their work. However, this forced the Chinese into indentured servitude. By being tied to the creditor-merchants, and thus the American capitalists who would buy out the workers rights from the merchants, the Chinese lost their freedom. By being treated as a commodity with limited mobility, this book reveals how the Chinese were transformed from sojourners into immigrants because they lacked the means to return to China.

Brown, Dee. Hear That Lonesome Whistle Blow: Railroads in the West. New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1977.

From the author of Bury My Heart and Wounded Knee, this work has a section focusing on how the Chinese became laborers for the Central Pacific Railroad. Central Pacific and Union Pacific were the two companies allotted the rights to construct the transcontinental railroad, with Central Pacific beginning on the West Coast and building east. With the

terrain rugged and difficult, Central Pacific was desperate for laborers. While originally heading to California to partake in the gold rush, there was a large contingent of Chinese in the area looking for work. Despite skepticism due to their small physical stature, the Chinese proved to be valuable because of a rigorous work ethic and a willingness to work for lower wages without the threat of a labor strike. Within years of the operation, the Chinese were an estimated ninety-percent of the Central Pacific labor force. Brown also reveals how the tasks of the Chinese on the railroad were life threatening, such as drilling and laying explosives for tunnels.

Brown, Dee. Hear That Lonesome Whistle Blow: Railroads in the West. New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1977: 75.

This is a photograph of a Chinese laborer on the railroads. The visual provides a look at the work attire the Chinese traditionally wore: a circular, pointed hat; blue, silk shirt, and sandals. Also, the figure is small in comparison to the back drop of photo, which consists of jagged, enormous sandstone. It's a vivid portrayal of the difficult, hazardous terrain the Chinese laborers had to work through on the railroads in order to complete the transcontinental railroad.

Chin, Doug, and Art Chin. Uphill: The Settlement and Diffusion of the Chinese in Seattle. Seattle: Shorey Publications, 1973.

Study focusing on the morphology and urbanization of the Chinese in Seattle. This critique is centered on four questions: 1) Why did the group first settle where it did? 2) Why did it move in certain limited directions and areas and not in others? 3) What were the events and relationships that caused the Chinese to cluster? to disperse? 4) What are the characteristics of its growth or decline? The authors make the important assertion that Seattle's Chinese population exploded due to the development of the Northern Pacific railroad, where two thirds of the employees were Chinese. This analysis provides excellent maps which shows the historical development of Chinatowns in Seattle, as well population graphs concerning the demographic percentage of Chinese in certain areas of the city. Also, the authors explain the types of labor the displaced Chinese workers accepted once they became urbanized in Seattle, such as building the Lake Washington Ship Canal.

"Chinese Headquarters, Puyallup, WA". Bonney, W.P. History of Pierce County, WA, Vol. 1.

Each Chinese settlement had a headquarters where news was received and jobs were contracted, such as this photo of one in Puyallup. The Chinese who settled in this region probably worked in agricultural fields and other "non-skilled" areas of labor. During the expulsion era, farmers and manufacturers in the area were asked to dismiss their Chinese employees.

"From China with Courage" in Great Hall of Washington History: One Thousand Miles of Track and Land, Washington State History Museum

A concise yet important exhibit distinguishing how the Chinese came to work on the railroads in Washington state. As in California, when the need for labor on railroad construction came about, the Chinese were contracted out through the merchant-creditors who “owned” their indentured services. Over one thousand Chinese helped build the railroads in the Cascades. And, also like the California experience, the Northern Pacific railroads would not have been completed had it not been for the Chinese and their strong, convicted work ethic.

Hildebrand, Lorraine. Sinophobia: The expulsion the Chinese from Tacoma and Seattle. Nashville: Diss. Fisk University, 1976.

This source is an extensive, comprehensive annotated bibliography for Hildebrand's graduate thesis. She has compiled over four hundred sources in her research with concise, yet explanatory, annotations for each citation. Hildebrand's objective is to reveal that the Chinese "were expelled (from Seattle and Tacoma) not because they were animals, but because they were hard working, industrious and honest people". She attempts this by not only addressing the 1885 Tacoma expulsion, but also by tracing the anti-Chinese movement from the late eighteenth century to the after effects of the expulsions and riots of the nineteenth century. Obviously, this source provides multiple links to other sources regarding the history of the Chinese in Washington state. Today, Hildebrand serves on the committee for the Tacoma Chinese Reconciliation Project.

Lomax, Alfred. “Oregon City Woolen Mill” Oregon Historical Quarterly 32 (1931): 240-61.

Gives a history of the Oregon City Woolen Mill. This is another example of hostility towards the Chinese. Though the Chinese were only a fraction of the mills employees, a post-Civil War recession caused the mill to cut jobs, and the Chinese consequently became the scapegoat. A statement by citizen Haram Straight, Jr., at a local rally, sums up the Oregon City sentiment. “Resolved, that we, the citizens of Oregon City here assembled, utterly condemn and denounce the discharge of white laborers and employment of Chinese in their place... unprincipled and against the peace and welfare of this community” (Lomax, 257).

Mack, Robert. The Seattle and Tacoma Anti Chinese Riots of 1885 and 1886. Cambridge: Harvard College, 1972.

Mack claims Seattle and Tacoma Anti-Chinese riots were not necessarily about racism or labor-capital disputes, but revolved around local power struggles between the Anti-Chinese laborers and community politicians. The Anti-Chinese were frustrated because the Chinese held labor positions during a time of a economic recession. The Chinese would work for lower wages with an emphasis on sending their earnings back to China to support their families. This duality of working for less coupled with impermanence frustrated the non-Chinese laborers. Also, due to lack of statehood, immigration continued with no enforcement by the federal government. With little federal

involvement, the Anti-Chinese felt they had no political backing looking after their interests. Their antagonists were the local capitalists and business owners who were routinely hiring the Chinese because of their work ethic and cheap labor. Also, the elite owners were those who held the local power. Mack dissects how the conflict between the local laborers and capitalist owners inspired the laborers to focus their animosity toward the Chinese, which led to their expulsion in Tacoma. Excellent source revealing how labor, class and race led to a heated struggle in the Northwest.

McArthur, Scott. "Eviction of Chinese put Tacoma in news." The Tacoma News Tribune 18 Sep. 1955: 8. Analysis of 1885 Chinese Expulsion.

Not only goes into detail about the committee organizing methods, but provides motives behind it. With a recession in place and competition for jobs extremely high, laborers resented the Chinese for their extreme work ethic. However, by witnessing their cramped communal living arrangements, the main component for the expulsion argument was their "heathen" and "uncleanly" way of life. Article also gives examples of the work the Chinese took part in, such as "menial work in the town's homes and hotels, conducting small businesses and laundries, and working in Tacoma's many mills".

"Racial Violence, Ethnic Cleansing: Fear and Loathing in the West" in Great Hall of Washington History, Washington State History Museum

An exhibit briefly summarizing two major incidents in the west regarding physical aggression towards the Chinese. First, it tells the account of the 1885 mining camp brutalities in Rock Springs, WY. Two mining camps were competition for the fertile grounds, the Chinese and the white miners. An argument occurred, where two Chinese were beaten. Later in the evening, a mob, armed with rifles, attacked the Chinese settlement, killing 28. The second incident this exhibit discusses is the 1885 Tacoma expulsion of the Chinese, nearly 600 in all. This exhibit gives the reader a clear, if although brief, understanding of two dramatic occurrences of racial hostilities in American history that are dominantly overlooked.

"Tacoma's Chinese Quarter: One Place Where the Celestials May Live in Peace." Tacoma Daily Ledger 4 Jan. 1897: 1.

Historical article by anonymous author details a Chinese boarding house on Tacoma waterfront. Owned and managed by Dong Kong, author claims this building only refuge left for Chinese in Tacoma. Though this is over a decade since the 1885 exclusion of the Chinese, Kong states his communal home, with packed beds and a shared kitchen, is only place in Tacoma where the Chinese feel safe. Also, Kong is reluctant to show the author and other outsiders certain rooms of the house. This secrecy shows the fear and isolation in which the few Chinese of the area were living in, and Kong's work is an example of the Chinese labor attitude of taking care of another.

"The Anti-Chinese Vets: Expulsion Day Celebrated by a Mass Meeting in the Tabernacle." Tacoma Daily Ledger 4 Sep. 1892: 3.

Seven years after 1885 expulsion, sentiments against Chinese are still strong. Town meeting celebrating the anniversary pays homage to the members of the committee (citizens and town leaders) behind the Chinese expulsion. Important note that reporter states most of the audience are laborers, those who had been in competition with the Chinese for work. Continual applauses as "veterans" proclaim they vow to continue to keep Chinese excluded.

“The Hatch Mill, Pacific Avenue, Tacoma”. Hunt, Herbert. Tacoma, Its History and Its Builders, Vol. 1.

A picture of the Chinese shanties on Pacific Avenue in 1885. On November 5, 1885, two days after the Chinese expulsion, local officers searched these living quarters to see if anyone had remained. Once a tenement was cleared and secured, the officers would then lock the doors to the building. A fire “mysteriously” broke out in one of the quarters during the search. Within two hours, all the tenements were burned to the ground. Ironically, Tacoma officers stated there wasn’t a hose long enough to reach the buildings. After the fire, the fire hose the town possessed (though was never used during the incident) had various, unexplained slits cut throughout.

“The Men who Delivered Tacoma from the Chinese”, 1884. Reprinted: Tacoma Daily Ledger, Tacoma, WA. 30 March 1902: 2.

A group photo of the 27 men who were behind the 1885 Tacoma expulsion of the Chinese. This picture is an adequate primary source for the contemporary anti-Chinese sentiment. Two examples are the uses of the words “delivered” in the title, and “crusade” in the caption. The language emphasizes how prominent the angst was against the Chinese, and how the media capitalized on the locals anxiety by demonizing the Chinese.

“Chinese section crew, Tenino, 1883” in Great Hall of Washington History: One Thousand Miles of Track and Land, Washington State History Museum

A photograph of a Chinese section crew. There are three Chinese manually operating a rail cart, while a white dignitary (perhaps owner, probably superior) poses on the end of the cart, standing erect and looking stoic. Good visual to see the Chinese regalia; traditional with silk robes and cone-like hats. Also, the three Chinese are in a subordinate position, fixed to do the manual labor of the rail cart while the superior presides over them. A solid representation of where the Chinese stood as social unequals during this time period, and here in the South Sound region.