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THE WAR AGAINST CHINESE RESTAURANTS

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ABSTRACT

Chinese restaurants are a cultural fixture—as American as cherry pie. Startlingly, however, there was once a national movement to eliminate Chinese restaurants, using innovative legal methods to drive them out. Chinese restaurants were objectionable for two reasons. First, Chinese restaurants competed with “American” restaurants, thus threatening the livelihoods of white owners, cooks, and servers and motivating unions to fight them. Second, Chinese restaurants threatened white women, who were subject to seduction by Chinese men taking advantage of intrinsic female weakness and nefarious techniques such as opium addiction.

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The efforts were creative. Chicago used anti-Chinese zoning, Los Angeles restricted restaurant jobs to citizens, Boston authorities denied Chinese restaurants licenses, and the New York Police Department simply ordered whites out of Chinatown. Perhaps the most interesting technique was a law, endorsed by the American Federation of Labor for adoption in all jurisdictions, prohibiting white women from working in Asian restaurants. Most measures failed or were struck down. The unions, of course, did not eliminate Chinese restaurants, but Asians still lost because unions achieved their more important goal by extending the federal immigration policy of excluding Chinese immigrants to all Asian immigrants. The campaign is of more than historical interest today. As current anti-immigration sentiments and efforts show, even now the idea that white Americans should have a privileged place in the economy, or that nonwhites are culturally incongruous, persists among some.

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INTRODUCTION

This Article explores a lost chapter in the history of racial regulation in the United States. For roughly thirty years, in the last
decade of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth, a national movement sought to use the law to eliminate Chinese restaurants from the United States. These efforts, described as a “war,” are largely unknown.

Chinese restaurants were considered “a serious menace to society” for two reasons. First, by employing Chinese workers and successfully competing with other restaurants, white union members

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1. See PROCEEDINGS OF THE SIXTEENTH GENERAL CONVENTION HOTEL AND RESTAURANT EMPLOYEES’ INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE AND BARTENDERS’ INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE OF AMERICA 107 (1911), reprinted in 20 THE MIXER AND SERVER (Jere L. Sullivan ed., 1911) (noting application of union in Billings, Montana “to finance a crusade in opposition to Asiatic invasion, concurred in and remittance made”); After the Chinese: An Effort to Expel Them from the Principal Cities of Montana, DAKOTA FARMERS’ LEADER (S.D.), Feb. 3, 1893, at 3 (“[l]abor organizations of Butte, Anaconda and Missoula waged war against the employment of Chinese, and threats of boycott were made against citizens employing them in any capacity or patronizing Chinese laundries or restaurants. . . . Already all but one Chinese restaurant have [sic] been closed.”); D.F. Beauchamp, Bugle Call for War on “Unfair” Eating Houses Is Sounded, MIXER & SERVER, Mar. 15, 1909, at 59, 59 (“Ogden sounded the first note in the battle against Chinese and Japanese restaurants, which will be relentlessly waged henceforth in Ogden.”); O.M. Boyle, News of the Labor World, S.F. CALL, Mar. 19, 1910, at 7 (“The cooks’ helpers union, local No. 110, is still quietly engaged in carrying on the war against Asiatic employes [sic]. It hopes in a short time that employers will supplant the Japanese and Chinese in kitchens of restaurants, cafes and hotels. The organization is carrying out the wish of the San Francisco labor council in this matter.”); Labor Declares War on Chinese Restaurants, WASH. TIMES, Feb. 16, 1913, at 7 (stating that “[a]ll members of the city government who vote for licenses for Chinese restaurants will be placed on the political unfair list of organized labor, and a campaign will be conducted against [sic] them by the Central Labor Union”); May Declare Boycott: Cooks and Waiters’ Unions Opposed to Chinese Restaurants, ST. PAUL GLOBE (Minn.), Mar. 22, 1902, at 7 (“The Cook and Waiters’ Union has decided to make war on the Chinese restaurants that are running in Minneapolis . . . .”); O.O. McIntyre, New York Day By Day, WASH. HERALD, May 2, 1918, at 6 (reporting that the New York district attorney’s office “has declared war to the death on the chop suey caravansaries.”); Montana, OMAHA DAILY BEE, June 6, 1891, at 11 (“A movement is on foot in Butte to carry on a war against Chinese restaurants.”).


claimed the restaurants denied “[t]heir own race a chance to live.”4 Second, Chinese restaurants were characterized as morally hazardous to white women. One observer noted that “[b]eer and noodles in Chinese joints have caused the downfall of countless American girls . . . .”5 Accordingly, Americans recognized “the necessity for stamping out” the “iniquitous Chinese Chop Suey joints . . . .”6

The effort failed; “there are more Chinese restaurants in the United States than McDonald’s, Burger King, and KFC restaurants combined.”7 But the campaign, unsuccessful in its nominal goal, helped propagate the idea that Chinese immigrants were morally and economically dangerous, and contributed to the passage of the Immigration Acts of 19178 and 1924,9 which almost completely eliminated Asian immigration to the United States.

The movement against Chinese restaurants was led by labor unions. Part I discusses the early important techniques of riot and boycott. These methods were at best partially successful. Accordingly, as Part II explains, opponents of Chinese restaurants turned to a range of other legal methods to eliminate Chinese restaurants. Protection of white women from sexual exploitation emerged as a key rationale for suppression. Concern with the moral dangers of Chinese immigrants in America dramatically escalated in 1909 after Elsie Sigel, granddaughter of a Union Army general, was murdered by a New York Chinese restaurant worker who had “seduced” her. The case made the problem of moral contagion presented by Chinese restaurants a prominent national issue. A major legal method of suppressing Chinese restaurants was the white women’s labor bill, which prohibited white women from working for or patronizing Chinese restaurants. Police-enforced segregation was another

6. Minneapolis Labor After the Chinese, LAB. WORLD (Minn.), Nov. 19, 1904, at 1.
Opponents of Chinese restaurants also employed discriminatory licensing and enforcement measures. Part III.A discusses the end of the war. For the most part, the legal efforts to suppress Chinese restaurants failed and Chinese restaurants became an accepted, even traditional, feature of American society. Yet, the unions achieved their larger goal. Congress enacted laws restricting not just Chinese but all Asian immigration, with the aim of permanently ending Asian competition with white labor in the United States. The Article concludes by exploring the implications of this episode for American race law.

I. LABOR UNIONS AND THE CHINESE RESTAURANT THREAT

A. Union Opposition to Chinese Restaurants

The Supreme Court has suggested that “the freedom to compete—to assert with vigor, imagination, devotion, and ingenuity whatever economic muscle [a business] can muster” is essential to “economic freedom and our free-enterprise system . . . .” Yet, those who fear they may lose out may be less eager to compete and let the most meritorious prevail. Workers already established in a labor market may prefer to exclude rather than compete with new entrants, such as immigrants. There is evidence that immigration, at least in the United States, enhances overall wealth; that is, a dynamic and growing economy benefits the country as a whole, albeit not necessarily equally across demographic groups. Nevertheless, until well into the twentieth century, unions preferred exclusion to competition, at least with respect to Asians.

10. See infra notes 324–28 and accompanying text.
11. See infra notes 366–73 and accompanying text.
14. See Brian Burgoon, Janice Fine, Wade Jacoby & Daniel Tichenor, Immigration and the Transformation of American Unionism, 44 Int'l Migration Rev. 933, 941 (2010) (“[O]rganized labor passionately advocated Chinese exclusion . . . .”); id. at 942 (“With the AFL’s strong support, the Immigration Act of 1924 ultimately erected formidable barriers to southern and eastern Europeans and reinforced Asian exclusion.”); Arthur Mann, Gompers and the Irony of Racism, 13 Antioch Rev. 203, 207–08 (1953) (discussing AFL’s role in Asian immigration restriction, and noting “[t]hroughout their activities against the Asiatic, the AFL led by Gompers and
For most of U.S. history, the country was open to unlimited numbers of immigrants.\textsuperscript{15} Although criminal conviction, disease, and certain other characteristics disqualified a prospective immigrant, there were no numerical limitations on immigration until 1921.\textsuperscript{16}

The open-border policy applied to all races except Asians.\textsuperscript{17} Particularly in the western United States, political, moral and economic considerations led to a perceived “Yellow Peril,” the danger that untold numbers of racially dangerous Asians would come to the United States and undermine its basic character.\textsuperscript{18} Thus, unlike immigration in general, Asian immigration was tightly controlled. In the late nineteenth century, U.S. law also resolved the fate of other nonwhite racial groups like Native Americans and African Americans.\textsuperscript{19}

Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882,\textsuperscript{20} but that did

\textsuperscript{15} Gerald L. Neuman, \textit{The Lost Century of American Immigration Law (1776-1875)}, 93 COLUM. L. REV. 1833, 1834 (1993) (“Neither Congress nor the states attempted to impose quantitative limits on immigration [until 1921].” (emphasis added)).

\textsuperscript{16} Act of May 19, 1921, Pub. L. No. 67-5, § 2, 42 Stat. 2.

\textsuperscript{17} Gabriel J. Chin, \textit{The Civil Rights Revolution Comes to Immigration Law: A New Look at the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965}, 75 N.C. L. REV. 273, 281 (1996) [hereinafter Chin, \textit{The Civil Rights Revolution}] (“Asians were the only group whose immigration was restricted on the basis of race.”).


\textsuperscript{19} Gabriel J. Chin & Daniel K. Tu, \textit{Comprehensive Immigration Reform in the Jim Crow Era: Chinese Exclusion and the McCreary Act of 1893}, 23 ASIAN AM. L.J. 39, 41 (2016) (“As the great historian Oscar Handlin explained: By the end of the [nineteenth] century the pattern of racist practices and ideas seemed fully developed: the Orientals were to be totally excluded; the Negroes were to live in a segregated enclave; the Indians were to be confined to reservations as permanent wards of the nation . . . .” (quoting OSCAR HANDLIN, RACE AND NATIONALITY IN AMERICAN LIFE 48 (1957)) (alteration in original)). Many believed the United States was intrinsically a white country, that is, that it should be run for the benefit of whites. Thus, Senator John Perceval Jones of Nevada argued in favor of the Chinese Exclusion Act:

Does anybody pretend to tell me that it is a blessing to this country that [African Americans] are here? It is no fault of ours that they are here; it is no fault of theirs; it is the fault of a past generation; but their presence here is a great misfortune to us today, and the question of the adjustment of the relations between the two races socially and politically is no nearer a settlement now than it was the day Sumter was fired upon . . . [The Chinaman’s] race is socially more incongruous to ours and less capable of assimilation with us than is the negro race . . . . What encouragement do we find in the history of our dealings with the negro race or in our dealings with the Indian race to induce us to permit another race-struggle in our midst?

\textsuperscript{13} CONG. REC. 1744–45 (1882).

\textsuperscript{20} Act of May 22, 1882, ch. 126, 22 Stat. 58; see Chin, \textit{The Civil Rights Revolution}, supra note 17, at 281.
not end hostility toward Chinese immigrants. A key reason the anti-Chinese movement did not declare victory was that Chinese exclusion statutes were facially temporary. Because Congress had to reconsider the question periodically, Chinese exclusion was a continuing political issue until it was made permanent in 1902. Even then, the issue was not resolved. By 1902, Japanese and other Asian immigrants were migrating to the United States, and their racial assimilability—and therefore their right to immigrate—became prominent public policy questions.

Chinese immigrants in the United States had limited opportunities for employment. Some jobs required licenses that were limited to U.S. citizens, a status Chinese immigrants could never achieve because of racial restrictions on naturalization. Even without the force of law, social discrimination restricted employment opportunities. Accordingly, many Chinese workers were employed in services and by

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21. For example, the Supreme Court found such discrimination against Chinese laundries in San Francisco unconstitutional in *Yick Wo v. Hopkins*, 118 U.S. 356, 363 (1886).


24. See, e.g., *In re Hong Yen Chang*, 24 P. 156, 157 (Cal. 1890) (denying admission to the California state bar based on Chinese race), abrogated by 344 P.3d 288, 291 (Cal. 2015).

small businesses, such as restaurants and laundries.

Because Americans seemed to like Chinese food, the restaurant business was promising. The popularity of “chop suey” and other Americanized or American–Chinese dishes resulted in “the subsequent sprouting of Chinese restaurants.” Their numbers grew rapidly in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In 1870, with 63,000 Chinese residents in the United States, Chinese restaurants employed only 164 Chinese persons. By 1920, despite a decline in the overall Chinese population, over 11,400 workers were employed by

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26. LEE, A HISTORY, supra note 2, at 76 (“By the early twentieth century, restaurants were a mainstay for many immigrant families, who opened up chop suey houses catering to non-Chinese clientele across the country. As Chinese moved across the United States, so did Chinese laundries and restaurants.”); RONALD TAKAKI, STRANGERS FROM A DIFFERENT SHORE: A HISTORY OF ASIAN AMERICANS 240 (1989) (“By 1920, 58 percent of the Chinese were in services, most of them in restaurant and laundry work . . . .”); Samantha Barbas, “I’ll Take Chop Suey”: Restaurants as Agents of Culinary and Cultural Change, 36 J. POPULAR CULTURE 669, 673–74 (2003) (noting that the Chinese “had been forced out of the general labor market by hostile labor unions, exclusionary legal policies, and racial discrimination, and segregated into an ethnic labor niche. The new work opportunities . . . centered primarily around service occupations, such as laundry and restaurant work, based in Chinatowns and catering to largely Chinese customers”); Siegen K. Chou, America Through Chinese Eyes, 24 CHINESE STUDENTS MONTHLY 81, 83 (1928) (“Restaurant and laundry business is synonymous with the Chinese”); Huping Ling, Family and Marriage of Late-Nineteenth and Early-Twentieth Century Chinese Immigrant Women, 19 J. AM. ETHNIC HIST. 43, 47–48 (2000) (noting that Chinese individuals worked at laundries, restaurants, and boarding houses in the early 1900s).


28. B.L. SUNG, THE STORY OF THE CHINESE IN AMERICA 202–03 (1967); see also ANNUAL REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER GENERAL OF IMMIGRATION TO THE SECRETARY OF LABOR 403 (1920) (“The bureau, of course, is well aware of the fact that throughout this district as well as the whole country Chinese restaurants and similar enterprises are growing in number, size, and evident prosperity . . . .”); Andrew P. Haley, The Nation Before Taste: The Challenges of American Culinary History, 34 PUB. HIST. 53, 74 (2012) (describing the growth of Chinese restaurants in various U.S. cities); W.V. Hill, Cleveland, Ohio, MIXER & SERVER, Aug. 15, 1919, at 63, 63 (“Chinese restaurants were springing up like mushrooms . . . .”).


31. This of course was due to the exclusion policy.
Chinese restaurants in the United States— the industry had grown substantially, and had become a much more important source of employment for Chinese workers.

There was always some complexity in the relationship between the American public and Chinese restaurants. Though both the white and Chinese communities patronized them, Chinese restaurants were nevertheless regarded as exotic and potentially dangerous. In 1887, an aficionado wrongly predicted that “visions of kittens and rats would keep the Chinese restaurant from being largely patronized.” Newspapers reported that chop suey joints served dog meat, rats, garbage, and human children. Nevertheless, while there were many suggestions that Chinese restaurants were “not so good either in a moral or a culinary way,” few claimed that the food was intrinsically unpalatable.

Unions opposed Asian immigration in general and Chinese restaurants in particular. The Cooks’ and Waiters’ Union is an ancestor of the modern-day UNITE-HERE. Its members competed directly with Chinese restaurants, and the union was a powerful force; by 1903, its membership exceeded 50,000. It was affiliated with the American Federation of Labor (AFL), which by 1914 claimed nearly two million

32. See Light, supra note 30, at 385.
34. Society Eats Dog Hash, BOURBON NEWS (Ky.), Oct. 13, 1905, at 3; see also Cat Chop Suey, CAUCASIAN (N.C.), Sept. 19, 1907, at 1 (reporting on Chicago’s Chinese restaurants).
35. MONROE CITY DEMOCRAT (Mo.), Oct. 18, 1906, at 3.
38. See A Chinese Restaurant, ROCHESTER DEMOCRAT & CHRON., July 23, 1904, at 6; Chopstick Dinners, A Fad with Would Be Bohemians, DAILY BOOMERANG (Wyo.), Mar. 3, 1901, at 4; In Washington’s Chinatown, SUNDAY STAR (D.C.), Aug. 6, 1905, at 6 (“The local Chinatown is not a motley, ill-assorted colony of celestials like that in Mott street, New York, but an orderly and well-regulated community. Lawlessness and disorder by Chinamen are unknown quantities there, and the police therefore rarely, indeed, have occasion to invoke its quaint precincts for the purpose of arresting some offender.”).
39. MIXER & SERVER, Apr. 15, 1903, at 20.
members. The unions passionately supported Chinese Exclusion and expansion of the exclusion policy to all Asian races. A report in *The Mixer and Server*, a national union publication, explained:

View this matter from every angle, without heat or racial prejudice, and the fact stares us in the face that there is a conflict between the American wage-earner and the workers or employers from the Orient. Our Government has been compelled to close its doors to Asians in recognition of this fact.

In his famous essay *Meat vs. Rice: American Manhood Against Asiatic*

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40. REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE THIRTY-FOURTH ANNUAL CONVENTION OF THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR, HELD AT PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA NOVEMBER 9 TO 21, INCLUSIVE 1914, at 45 (1914) [hereinafter THIRTY-FOURTH ANN. CONVENTION].

41. See REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE THIRTY-EIGHTH ANNUAL CONVENTION OF THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR, HELD AT ST. PAUL, MINN. JUNE 10 TO 20, INCLUSIVE 1918, at 110–13 (1918). An editor of *The Mixer and Server* once wrote:

The American Federation of Labor was one of the first great organizations to appreciate and recognize the havoc which had been wrought by the competition of Asians, and it required . . . them to go unqualifiedly on record for Asiatic exclusion. They have allowed no opportunity to escape, they have been advocating and still continue to advocate, the exclusion from America of all Asiatic workers, for such workers are a menace to any peoples with ideals such as have become a part of the life of Americans.


43. *Chinese Problem Again Comes Up*, MIXER & SERVER, July 15, 1916, at 4, 4; see also, e.g., Wm. F. Kavanagh, *Jersey City, N.J.*, MIXER & SERVER, May 15, 1904, at 76, 76 (“Such dishes as chop suey can only be digested by those who are opposed to organized labor.”).
Coolieism, Which Shall Survive?, 44 Samuel Gompers, AFL president and a leader of the exclusion movement, 45 put the conflict in decidedly culinary terms, symbolized by the foods each group customarily consumed. Unions saw the lower wage scales in Chinese restaurants as a threat, 46 but rather than trying to unionize Chinese restaurants and their employees, unions sought to eliminate the “unfair” competition by driving the restaurants out of business. In this, the interests of unions sometimes dovetailed with the business interests of restaurant owners who would profit from the closure of their competitors. 47

B. Boycotts

Asians were generally barred from union membership. The Cooks’ and Waiters’ Union excluded even U.S. citizens of Asian ancestry because it was “true to one principle—nothing doing with either Chinks, Japs or other Asiatics.” 48 To fight the “iniquitous chop suey joints,” unions demanded contract terms that discharged Asians

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44. SAMUEL GOMPERS & HERMAN GUTSTADT, MEAT VS. RICE: AMERICAN MANHOOD AGAINST ASIATIC COOLIEISM, WHICH SHALL SURVIVE? (1902).

45. Mann, supra note 14, at 207–10.

46. For example, in 1905, a Chinese cook in San Francisco earned from $25.00 to $35.00 monthly working fourteen to sixteen hours, seven days a week. A.E. Yoell, Oriental vs. American Labor, 34 ANN. AM. ACAD. POL. & SOC. SCI. 247, 250 (1909). Some white cooks worked “merely” ten to thirteen hours, six days per week, earning in a week what a Chinese cook earned in a month. Id. Accordingly, the demands of the union in San Jose in 1905 included “a day of rest each week, the exclusion of Chinese labor and the recognition of the union.” Joseph J. O’Brien, San Jose, Cal., MIXER & SERVER, Feb. 15, 1904, at 70, 70. “The bulk of the cooks [in hotels and boarding houses] are Chinese, but the local is determined to drive them out.” Id. at 71.

47. One of the Tendencies, DAILY HONOLULU PRESS, Sept. 12, 1885, at 2 (“Ask the restaurant keeper and he will tell you ‘We cannot compete with the Chinese restaurants.’”).

from their jobs, barred union members from working with Asians, and prohibited Asian owners from displaying union house or bar cards. Anti-Chinese sentiment inspired some union creativity; reportedly, “the first union label was used by San Francisco Cigarmakers in opposing the product of Chinese Cigarmakers.”

Early methods of eliminating Chinese competition also included threats and violence. In what one observer called “race wars,” unions drove Chinese workers and enterprises out of Portland, Tacoma, and various towns and cities in Idaho and Montana. In some places, such

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49. See Boycott Raised, L.A. HERALD, Feb. 16, 1903, at 2f (reporting that Asian cooks were barred from unionized hotels and restaurants in Sacramento); Exclusion That Excludes, MIXER & SERVER, Nov. 15, 1905, at 30, 30 (noting that in Vallejo and Santa Rosa, waiters' and bartenders' unions “served ultimatums upon the employers of Asiatic labor in the saloons and restaurants that they must either employ none but white union labor or be placed on the unfair list”); Frank Holt, What Our Organizers Are Doing, MIXER & SERVER, May 15, 1909, at 14, 14 (“As a result of their activities there is not an Oriental working in any of the bars, restaurants, or lodging houses of the city, and the Jap in San Jose is practically being eliminated.”); A.W. Oaks, Victoria B.C., MIXER & SERVER, July 15, 1913, at 35, 35 (noting that one negotiating term of union in Victoria, British Columbia, as “a demand for white cooks, as this has been a strong Chinese cook city heretofore. . . . So you see we are sending a few Chinks back, back, back to old China town; and that is not the finish”).

50. After the Chinese: An Effort to Expel Them from the Principal Cities of Montana, supra note 1; see also Boyle, supra note 1; O.M. Boyle, News of the Labor World, S.F. CALL, Feb. 28, 1907, at 9 (“All but one of the restaurants in Palo Alto employ Japanese or Chinese cooks and dishwashers. These eating houses have been notified by their union patrons that they will take no more meals at them unless white help is substituted for the Mongolians.”); Edward Flore, Decision No. 1177, MIXER & SERVER, Nov. 15, 1922, at 9, 9 (noting declaration that “no member of our International Union be permitted to work with Asians”).


52. The Union Label: Why We Favor It and Why It Is Opposed, 16 TOBACCO WORKER 11, 12 (Nov. 1912); see Justin Seubert, Inc., v. Reiff, 164 N.Y.S. 522, 524 (N.Y. Sup. Ct. 1917) (noting that “[i]f the manufacturer deals in ‘Chinese, tenement house, or scab cigars,’ or if his name appears upon a box containing such cigars, the label may be refused, at the option of the local union”).


54. HARRY W. LAIDLBER, BOYCOTTS AND THE LABOR STRUGGLE: ECONOMIC AND LEGAL ASPECTS 75 (1913) (“The greatest success of any boycotts waged during [1883–85] was found in those conducted in the Western States against the Chinese. . . . These boycotts, however, often involved more than mere boycotting. . . . In Portland, Oregon . . . [t]he agitation led to the discharge of 400 Chinese in 40 firms. . . . In Tacoma, Washington more than 700 Chinese were escorted from the city by prominent citizens. In Idaho and Oregon the workers threatened to hang any coolie who came their way.”).
as Selma, California,\textsuperscript{55} and Silverton, Colorado,\textsuperscript{56} unions targeted restaurants in particular.

Boycott was another important union tool. Boycotts were often explicitly connected to immigration restriction. For example, in the course of debating a resolution to extend Chinese exclusion to other Asian races, one delegate to the Socialist National Convention of 1910 captured the history when, speaking of the 1880s, he noted “[t]he Chinese must go,” and explained that “[w]e instructed our men to boycott the Chinese laundries, Chinese restaurants, Chinese servants of all kinds. We fought the Chinamen and their exclusion took place.”\textsuperscript{57}

Boycott was national union policy. At the 1914 AFL convention, a New Jersey delegate introduced the following resolution:

\begin{quote}
WHEREAS, Chinese restaurants and Chinese laundries give no employment to American labor; therefore be it

WHEREAS, Chinese are not eligible to citizenship; and

WHEREAS, American laundries and American restaurants give employment to American labor; therefore be it

RESOLVED, That this, the Thirty-fourth Convention of the American Federation of Labor, requests its affiliated membership to give their patronage to American laundries and restaurants.\textsuperscript{58}
\end{quote}

The convention modified the resolution, approving an exhortation to “patronize union restaurants and laundries” and reminding members

\textsuperscript{55} See, e.g., Anti-Chinese Agitation: Two Restaurant-Keepers Ordered To Leave Selma, REC.-UNION (Cal.), Aug. 21, 1893, at 1; Driving out Celestials, SALT LAKE TRIB., Aug. 20, 1893, at 2.

\textsuperscript{56} Ban on Yellow Men, SALT LAKE TRIB., Feb. 13, 1902, at 7; see also Chinese Want Protection, SPOKANE DAILY CHRON., Feb. 12, 1902, at 5 (noting that the U.S. Secretary of State wrote to the governor seeking protection for Chinese).

\textsuperscript{57} PROCEEDINGS: NATIONAL CONGRESS OF THE SOCIALIST PARTY 96 (1910). Another example of the connection between restaurant competition and immigration policy occurred at the 1909 convention of the California Federation of Labor. At the same meeting where they resolved “that the terms of the Chinese Exclusion Act should be enlarged and extended so as to permanently exclude from the United States and its insular territory all races native of Asia other than those exempted by the present terms of that Act,” they cataloged the forms of competition by Asian workers, noting, among other occupations, that “[c]ooks have a problem to look after in these dear Jap boys and sly Chinese,” and that “[t]here are about twenty Chinese restaurants in San Francisco, employing about 180 Chinese, and seventy Jap restaurants with about 300 employees [sic].” PROCEEDINGS OF THE TENTH ANNUAL CONVENTION OF THE CALIFORNIA STATE FEDERATION OF LABOR 14, 55 (1909).

\textsuperscript{58} THIRTY-FOURTH ANN. CONVENTION, supra note 40, at 294.
of existing support for systematic Asian exclusion. Because Chinese workers were generally excluded from membership, the resolution as passed was tantamount to a national boycott.

Other unions also endorsed boycotts. In 1915, the Hotel and Restaurant Employees International Alliance and the Bartenders International League voted to boycott “Japanese and Chinese Restaurants and Chinese Laundries,” and decreed that establishments employing “Asiatics” could neither hire white union members nor display union credentials. Notably, some members argued that the wiser course would be to invite Chinese workers into the union. But the prevailing sentiment was that the union should “chase the slant-eyed celestials and the little brown skinned fellows back to the place where they belong.”

*The Mixer and Server* and other media reported boycotts in cities

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59. *Id.* at 469.


61. One delegate argued: “[O]rganize the Asiatics, put them into unions and you will have a chance to determine the question of wages, hours and conditions, otherwise the problem will be with you indefinitely and as difficult to solve as it seems to be now.” *Id.* at 156; *see also* Charles E. Sands, *Correspondence: Springfield, Mass., Mixer & Server*, Aug. 15, 1919, at 66, 67 ("We must either . . . drive them out of business or we must accept them as members. The Chinese waiters and cooks of New York City, I understand, a short time ago were on strike for the 12-hour work day for six days a week, . . . so it seems, no matter what creed or color the working men or women are, they are up against the same problems.").

62. *Proceedings of the Eighteenth General Convention Hotel and Restaurant Employees’ International Alliance and Bartenders’ International League of America, supra* note 51, at 156; *see also*, e.g., Eileen V. Wallis, *Earning Power: Women and Work in Los Angeles 1880-1930*, at 75 (2010) (noting that Waitresses Union Local No. 98 “made discrimination against Asians a key part of its activities” and endorsed a boycott of Japanese restaurants); Paul Scharrenberg, *California State Federation of Labor, Mixer & Server*, Mar. 15, 1916, at 28, 29 (reprinting resolution that “the California State Federation of Labor again records itself as opposed to the sponsoring or employing of Asiatics in any manner; and in favor of an extension to the Chinese Exclusion law so as to bar all Asiatics”); *Thoroughly Rout Typo Insurgents, L.A. Herald*, Aug. 19, 1911, at 10 (reporting that “[a] resolution was adopted . . . that all members of the union should refuse to patronize Chinese laundries, restaurants and other establishments”).
across the country, including in Phoenix, Tucson, and Willcox, Arizona; San Francisco, California; Brockton, Massachusetts; Duluth, Minneapolis, and St. Paul, Minnesota; Butte, Billings, and Deer Lodge, Montana; Tonopah, Nevada; Cleveland, Ohio; El
Paso, Texas, Ogden, Utah, and Casper, Wyoming. There were probably others that did not make the news.

Chinese restaurants were typically inexpensive, and union members were tempted to patronize them, boycotts notwithstanding. One union official lamented “[see]ing union men, sneaking in the side doors of Chinese restaurants.” Leaders warned that patronizing “Asiatic” businesses encouraged them to remain in the United States, and therefore that eating Chinese food meant “the continuation indefinitely of a terrible struggle against these barbarians.” Unions imposed fines to compel compliance, but, as one union organizer reported, “a lot of union men seem to have, I am sorry to say, a fancy for Chop Suey.”

Litigation in Cleveland, Ohio, made clear that the boycotts of Chinese restaurants were unlike other sorts of labor action; not

74. W.M. Kuglin, MIXER & SERVER, Oct. 15, 1903, at 54, 54 (promising “a hot chase after the scalp of Chinks and Japs”).
76. See CHEN, supra note 2, at 127–29 (discussing affordability and generous portions of Chinese restaurant meals); LIU, supra note 2, at 53 (“Chop suey’s marketability was due to its modest price.”); R.E. Croskey, MIXER & SERVER, May 15, 1916, at 23, 23; Luxurious and Inexpensive Chinese Restaurant Now Night Club ‘Yellow Peril’, BROOK. DAILY EAGLE, Oct. 31, 1928, at 2, 3 (noting “ridiculously” low prices); Oppose the Chinese: Asiatic Immigration League Members Give Views, WASH. EVENING STAR, Aug. 21, 1908 at 4 (noting that advocate of immigration restriction stated “that Chinese prices in America are too low for competition by Americans”); Salt Lake City and Neighborhood, INTERMOUNTAIN CATH. (Utah), Mar. 26, 1903, at 8 (noting that Chinese restaurants “are more cheaply conducted than the others”).
78. Chinese Problem Again Comes up, MIXER & SERVER, July 15, 1916, at 4, 4; see also A.C. Beck, What Our Organizers Are Doing: Salt Lake City, Utah, MIXER & SERVER, Aug. 15, 1913, at 23, 23 (noting that workers in Salt Lake City patronized Chinese restaurants).
79. No Love for the Heathen, REC.-UNION (Cal.), Jan. 29, 1892, at 1 (noting that Butte, Montana unions fined any member “who patronizes Chinese restaurants, laundries, or stores, or any establishment where Chinese help is employed”); see also, e.g., Delia A. Hurley, What Our Organizers Are Doing: Brockton, Massachusetts, MIXER & SERVER, May 15, 1917 at 23, 23 (noting a $5 to $15 fine); J.P. McGinley, What Our Organizers Are Doing: Casper, Wyoming, MIXER & SERVER, July 15, 1914, at 37, 38 (noting a $5 fine); Thomas J. Durnin, What Our Organizers Are Doing: Lowell, Massachusetts, MIXER & SERVER, Jan. 15, 1912, at 17, 17 (noting a $2 to $10 fine).
80. Fred Harding, What Our Organizers Are Doing: Toronto, Ontario, MIXER & SERVER, Apr. 15, 1908, at 19, 19; see also M.P. Scott, What Our Organizers Are Doing: Vallejo, California, MIXER & SERVER, Jan. 15, 1908, at 27, 27 (reporting that in Vallejo, California, while fines were imposed “the movement is none too strong, and it is going to be a pretty hard problem to enforce”).
designed to recruit new union members or to persuade businesses to sign a contract, these boycotts instead sought to render Asian workers unemployed or to shutter Asian businesses.\textsuperscript{81} In 1919, Cleveland unions recognized the seriousness of “the Chinese situation,” observing growth from “one small [Chinese restaurant] twenty years ago to all of 25 at the present time . . . .”\textsuperscript{82} Union members picketed two new Chinese restaurants, the Golden Pheasant and the Peacock Inn,\textsuperscript{83} and the latter responded with a lawsuit.\textsuperscript{84} Judge Foran enjoined the picketers, finding that they were encouraging patrons to eat elsewhere because the restaurants were operated by “Chinamen and members of the yellow race, and that Americans should not patronize a Chinese restaurant, but should confine their patronage and support to restaurants operated by Americans or by white persons.”\textsuperscript{85} The court scolded the unions, noting “that all men, even including Chinamen residents of the United States, stand equally before the law,”\textsuperscript{86} and reasoning that because the picketing was not an attempt to unionize the workers, and because it was “admitted that Chinamen [could] not belong to any local of defendants’ international union” as they were not citizens,\textsuperscript{87} the unions’ real aim was to “compel[] the management to discharge Chinese waiters and employ white waiters, and in default of so doing, compel the restaurant to cease doing business.”\textsuperscript{88}

\textsuperscript{81.} See generally J.W.O., \textit{The Boycott as a Weapon in Industrial Disputes}, 116 A.L.R. 484 (originally published in 1938) (discussing permissible and impermissible types and methods of boycotts).

\textsuperscript{82.} Hill, \textit{supra} note 28, at 63, 63.

\textsuperscript{83.} Id.


\textsuperscript{85.} Id. at 261. Judge Foran was uniquely qualified to decide the case because he was a member of Congress when the Chinese Exclusion Act was revised and previously served as president of the Coopers International Union. \textit{Foran, Martin A., CASE W. RES. U.: ENCYCLOPEDIA CLEV. HIST.}, https://case.edu/ech/articles/f/foran-martin-a/ [https://perma.cc/3N4Y-X4L7].

\textsuperscript{86.} Park, 22 Ohio N.P. (n.s.) at 289.

\textsuperscript{87.} Id. at 263–64. While Chinese people were wholly excluded, the court noted that African Americans could join segregated locals: “In other words, while the colored brother may belong to the same church, he is not permitted to worship in the same pew.” \textit{Id.} at 264.

\textsuperscript{88.} Id.; see also id. at 279 (“In the instant case, or the case now at bar, it is admitted freely and candidly that the purpose is to drive the Peacock Inn restaurant out of business . . . .”); W.H. Curtis, \textit{Correspondence: Sumpter, Ore.}, \textit{MIXER & SERVER}, Jan. 15, 1904, at 62, 62 (“A problem that is to confront the labor organizations of this country is the question of how to prevent the employment of Chinese cooks in the hotels and restaurants of this country.”); Hill, \textit{supra} note 28, at 63, 63 (asking a Chinese restaurant to employ union help). Similarly, during the Minneapolis boycott of 1902–03, “[t]he Chinese proprietors say that they were directed to employ union men
Even when not enjoined, nonviolent boycotts were rarely wholly successful. Chinese immigrants were interested in the restaurant business and in being employed, and the public wished to patronize the establishments. Accordingly, market forces created substantial headwinds for the unions, as Judge Foran observed:

[T]he law of competition in business controls business relations as immutably as the law of gravitation controls matter. If a Chinaman can furnish better food at less cost than a white man, he will be patronized, and I know of no law that will compel or force any patron to pay a higher price for inferior food merely because it is prepared and served by a white man.89

Since there was no law reserving the food business to whites, the unions sought to create one.

II. CHINESE RESTAURANTS AND THE LAW

A. White Women’s Morality and Chinese Restaurants

When boycotts failed, unions invoked another rationale for their objections to Chinese restaurants—that the establishments harmed white women.90 As such, they sought to persuade policymakers and law enforcement that the establishments should be eliminated or restricted using legal methods.

Chinese restaurants were associated with depravity. Chinese restaurants and Chinatowns were often tourist attractions.91 Middle- and upper-class whites visited Chinatown restaurants out of “morbid curiosity”92 for an evening of “slumming.”93 Thus, the Chicago Tribune

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89. Park, 22 Ohio N.P. (n.s.) at 264.
90. We do not have a strong conclusion on whether the desire to protect white women was genuine or manufactured for political purposes, both because it is hard to get in the minds of the actors, and it is not clear that it matters. Even if unions and politicians sincerely believed Chinese restaurants posed a danger to white women, that belief was undoubtedly influenced by racism and by their belief that suppressing Chinese restaurants would be to their financial and political advantage.
91. See generally Barbara Berglund, Chinatown’s Tourist Terrain: Representation and Racialization in Nineteenth-Century San Francisco, 46 AM. STUD. 5, 5 (2005) (“Chinatown also became a popular tourist destination for the city’s visitors and a local place of amusement for its residents.”).
92. WILLIAM MCAFADD, GUARDING A GREAT CITY 171 (1906).
93. CHEN, supra note 2, at 105; see also JUNG, supra note 29, at 39; Barbas, supra note 26, at 671–73 (stating that “slummers” visited San Francisco and New York Chinatown as early the
reported on an 1891 trip to New York’s Chinatown, where English visitors admired the “cleanliness of the kitchen and the cookery” of the restaurant—but according to the article, they had only “seen the curious and clean side of Chinatown.” 94 The visitors were then taken to the “dives of Chinese immorality” where “sternness and pity mingled in their faces” at the sight of young white girls smoking opium “face to face” with Chinese men.95 So-called lobbygows escorted and promised protection to Chinatown tourists, even hiring residents to act out stereotypical vices.96

Newspapers offered lurid reports that Chinese restaurants were fronts for opium dens,97 and that Chinese men used opium “as a trap for young girls.”98 There were regular reports of young girls being rescued from opium dens.99 This statement from a Congressional hearing on opium regulation is representative:

In the Chinatown in the city of Philadelphia there are enormous quantities of opium consumed, and it is quite common, gentlemen, for these Chinese or “Chinks,” as they are called, to have as a concubine a white woman. There is one particular house where I would say there are 20 white women living with Chinamen as their common-law wives. The Chinamen require these women to do no work, and they do nothing at all but smoke opium day and night. A great many of the

1870’s); Haley, supra note 28, at 74; Light, supra note 30, at 383; Barred from Chinatown, N.Y. DAILY TRIB., Oct. 25, 1910, at 7 (stating that the “rubber neck” men who come to visit Chinatown were barred by police); Elsie Sigel’s Death Warning Against Fatal Lure of Chinese, SPOKANE PRESS, June 26, 1909, at 1, 6 [hereinafter Fatal Lure of Chinese]; John Jung, The Sour Side of Chinese Restaurants, CHINESE AM. F., July 2013, at 17, 18 n.5; Opposes “Slumming”: Maj. Sylvester Takes Issue with New York Police, WASH. POST, Nov. 1, 1910, at 16. See generally Claws of the Dragon Losing Grip on New York’s Famous Chinatown, SUN (N.Y.), June 15, 1913, at 3 (discussing New York’s Chinatown no longer presenting the spectacles it once had).

94. Through the Slums: Lady Henry Somerset Visits the Dens of New York, CHI. DAILY TRIB., Nov. 29, 1891, at 2.

95. Id.

96. See Light, supra note 30, at 389–90.


98. Rescued from Opium Den, DAILY ARDMOREITE (Okla.), Nov. 26, 1908, at 2; see Even Doctors Are Victims, BOS. DAILY GLOBE, Mar. 6, 1911, at 8 (stating that “numbers of Boston young women who patronize Chinese restaurants because of a taste for chop suey . . . [became] confirmed opium smokers” in the “Chinese dives” on Harrison Avenue); White Girl Is Held Captive, BOS. DAILY GLOBE, Sept. 7, 1909, at 14 (recounting the recovery of a white girl kept as a prisoner in Chinatown).

99. See, e.g., Rescued from Opium Den, supra note 98.
girls are girls of family, and the history of some of them is very pathetic. You will find those girls in their younger days went out with sporty boys, and they got to drinking. The next step was cigarettes. Then they go to the Chinese restaurants, and after they go there a couple of times and get a drink in them they want to “hit the pipe.” They do it either out of curiosity or pure devilishness.100

The idea of white female victimization became a media trope. In 1899, the play King of the Opium Ring by Charles E. Blaney and Charles A. Taylor was performed at the Columbus Theater and the Academy of Music in New York.101 Later produced around the United States and Canada, it featured a clown who rescued a young white woman from the balcony of a Chinese restaurant.102 Similarly, popular novelist Frank Norris exploited “the reputed Chinese fondness for slave girls. . . . One of his white women characters, accompanied by her fiance, is kidnapped in broad daylight in a Chinese restaurant.”103 Movies depicted similar scenes,104 and renowned “realistic” artists painted Chinatown vistas.105 Thus, there was a popular perception that Chinese restaurants were purveyors of vice,106 and served as late-night

102. DALLES DAILY CHRON. (Or.), Oct. 6, 1900, at 4.
104. See Daniel Czitrom, The Politics of Performance: From Theater Licensing to Movie Censorship in Turn-of-the-Century New York, 44 AM. Q. 525, 541 (1992) (describing films depicting Chinatown, such as LIFTING THE LID (Biograph 1905) and THE DECEIVED SLUMMING PARTY (Biograph 1908)).
106. See Light, supra note 30, at 368; see also Assails Board, BOS. DAILY GLOBE, Feb. 1, 1901, at 6 (quoting statements made before the Massachusetts Legislature, including “They have suffered to exist for a long time Chinese resorts [sic], frequented by both sexes, where scenes of the most revolting character are nightly enacted under the eye of the police, with no effort on the part of the board to stop this everlasting evil.”); Barred from Chinatown, supra note 93 (discussing a prohibition on visitors to Chinatown due to its vices); Girl Exposes Opium Den, INDIANAPOLIS STAR, Feb. 22, 1910, at 5 (describing the drugs and alcohol provided by a Chinese restaurant used as an opium den); Girls Drink Beer at All Hours in Chop Suey Houses, CHI. DAILY TRIB., May 16, 1914, at 1 (discussing a 1914 investigation of 26 Chinese restaurants in Chicago); The Chinese Restaurants, BOS. DAILY ADVERTISER, Aug. 12, 1899, at 4. But see Reform Chinatown Here; No Fights, No Opium Now; All Games Are Innocent, WASH. POST, Mar. 25, 1917, at F2 (describing the Chinatown of the past while commenting on its recent reform).
substitutes for closed saloons. Narratives that opium use went hand in hand with Chinese restaurants served that purpose, too. In an era when many Americans lawfully used over-the-counter patent medicines containing opiates or cocaine, Congress passed the Smoking Opium Exclusion Act of 1909, reminding the public that the Chinese and their habits were distinctively problematic, presenting a danger to the larger community.

A modern analyst might approve of the evidence that otherwise rigid racial and gender codes of the time were relaxed in Chinese restaurants. Nevertheless, while Chinese restaurants generated patronage by flaunting exoticism and offering freedom, the implication of something naughty, or worse, caused some to fear for the

107. See To Make War on Restaurant Drinks, EL PASO HERALD, Oct. 5, 1913, at 4-B; see, e.g., Chop Suey Dealer Is Fined, OMAHA SUNDAY BEE, Oct. 16, 1910, at F8 (reporting fine for selling liquor after eight o’clock); Three Killed and Nine Wounded in Political Riots at Rock Island, EL PASO HERALD, Mar. 27, 1912, at 5 (quoting the mayor of Rock Island, Illinois as stating “The whole trouble from its inception may be traced to the fact that I favored the law against disorderly saloons and chop suey joints.”).


110. One commentator argued that “America’s first anti-narcotic law was passed with racist animus, fueled by media distortion and the willingness of lawmakers to scapegoat people of color.” Richard Dvorak, Cracking the Code: “De-Coding” Colorblind Slurs During the Congressional Crack Cocaine Debates, 5 MICH. J. RACE & L. 611, 644–45 (2000).

111. CHEN, supra note 2, at 105 (“The ambience [sic] was not the only reason that attracted [African Americans] to the Chinese restaurant; it was one of the few public places that welcomed them.”). As one newspaper reported: “Whites, blacks, and Mongolians mingled without sign of prejudice.” Two Mott Street Restaurants: Open All Night—Free Tea and Cigarettes, and Mixed Company, SUN (N.Y.), Feb. 28, 1892, at 21; see also In Washington’s Chinatown, supra note 38 (“Another of the original chop suey and yet quo mein restaurants in Chinatown is familiarly known as Moy’s. . . . These resorts do a rushing business after the bells have tolled the midnight hour, and often a motley array of customers are to be found in them while the city sleeps—men, women and boys, black, white and yellow and all shades of morality, some drunk, some sober and others who eat great quantities of yet quo mein in their efforts to get sober, as that dish is said to have quite a sobering effect on the whiskey-soaked rounder of the night.”).
restaurants’ young white patrons.112

Labor unions exploited the fear that “iniquitous Chinese Chop Suey joints” were sources of moral contagion for young white women, and therefore urged “the necessity [of] stamping them out.”113 One union-friendly narrative asserted that the restaurants were intrinsically immoral both for driving down wages and as a source of “distressing temptation” for “hundreds of young women.”114 In 1912, one observer cautioned against such temptation, noting that “[b]eer and noodles in Chinese joints have caused the downfall of countless American girls,”115 not long after the Bridgeport Herald reported in 1904 that “[m]any a young girl received her first lesson in sin in Chinese

112. See Berglund, supra note 91, at 17 (“In the tourist literature, Chinese restaurants, for example, were portrayed as violating norms of public health as well as various food taboos.”); Light, supra note 30, at 383 (discussing concern among whites regarding the depravity of social conditions in Chinatown); 300 Arrested as N.Y. Police Raid 30 Joints, WASH. HERALD, Apr. 15, 1918, at 8 (“Many young girls evidently not out of their ‘teens were found in the raid. In most of these cases as soon as the police entered the men escorts of the girls deserted them.”); Hurley, supra note 79, at 23, 23 (noting “the demoralizing effect the behavior permitted in those places is liable to have on the community.”). The sponsor of an anti-Chinese restaurant measure reported:

I have been called upon to attend many young girls who have become addicted to the use of drugs. Questioning disclosed the fact that the ‘habit’ had been contracted in so-called Chinese restaurants, operating in this state. He also stated that he believed [t]he moral features of the bill should receive the support of each and every person interested in safeguarding young womanhood.

J.P. McGinley, What Our Organizers Are Doing: Great Falls, Montana, MIXER & SERVER, Apr. 15, 1915, at 29, 30 [hereinafter McGinley, What Our Organizers Are Doing: Great Falls, Montana]; see also Police Capture 178 In Chop Suey Raids, N.Y. TIMES, Apr. 15, 1918, at 8 (quoting an assistant district attorney as stating “there are many persons left in this city who believe that the Sabbath should be observed. Chop suey restaurants at 2 o’clock or later in the morning are not fit places for young girls 16 or 17 and there were several of this age detained”); J.P. McGinley, What Our Organizers Are Doing: Helena, Montana, MIXER & SERVER, Mar. 15, 1915, at 32, 32 [hereinafter McGinley, What Our Organizers Are Doing: Helena, Montana] (stating “this bill, if enacted into law, will go a long way towards decreasing the popularity of the Chinese restaurants in the State”).

113. Minneapolis Labor After the Chinese, supra note 6; see also Emanuel Koveleski, What Our Organizers Are Doing: Superior, Wisconsin, MIXER & SERVER, Aug. 15, 1909, at 41, 42 (“As far as the restaurants in Duluth are concerned, conditions are deplorable. I find more Chinese running restaurants in this city and white women working for them than I ever seen in all my career.”). Chinese restaurants reportedly employed children. See MINUTES OF THE NEWARK CONFERENCE OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH 65 (1911); REPORT FROM THE MASSACHUSETTS STATE CHILD LABOR COMMITTEE, in PROCEEDINGS OF THE SEVENTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE NATIONAL CHILD LABOR COMMITTEE 167–69 (1911) (stating that Chinese restaurants sometimes used children as “night messenger[s]” for immoral purposes); Redskins Hot After Scalp, L.A. TIMES, July 9, 1903, at 13 (stating that “in many instances [Chinese restaurants] employed as waiters on table, Indian boys”).

114. Minneapolis Labor After the Chinese, supra note 6.

115. Chinese Restaurants in Madera, supra note 5.
restaurants. Similarly, the Chicago Tribune reported police statistics showing that “more than 300 Chicago white girls” had succumbed “to the influences of the chop suey ‘joints’” and concluded that “[v]anity and the desire for showy clothes led to their downfall,” as they smoked, drank, and “permitted themselves to be hypnotized by the dreamy, seductive music that is always on tap.”

Just as concerns about the moral peril of interracial relationships drove legal policy regarding African Americans, some Americans feared early Chinese restaurants because of the perceived danger of interracial relationships stemming from understandings about the particularly intense sexuality of Chinese men. But because of the Chinese exclusion policies, there were many more Chinese men than women in the United States. By some accounts, there were more than twenty-five Chinese men for every one Chinese woman in 1890. Hence, it is not surprising that there was a demand for commercial sex in America’s Chinatowns, or that Chinese men sometimes married white women—a practice frowned upon even in jurisdictions that did

116. Chinese Dens of Iniquity That Are Well Protected by the Authorities, Bridgeport Herald (Conn.), Aug. 28, 1904, at 11.
118. “Chinese men were thought to lust after White women, `seeking to assuage their perilous hunger by luring these women behind the partitions of their laundries or restaurants into their private lairs, then seducing them with wine and opium so that they could have sexual relations with them.’” Sandra Ka Hon Chu, Reparation as Narrative Resistance: Displacing Orientalism and Recoding Harm for Chinese Women of the Exclusion Era, 18 CAN. J. WOMEN & L. 387, 394 (2006) (quoting Tania Das Gupta, Families of Native People, Immigrants, and People of Colour, in CANADIAN FAMILIES: DIVERSITY, CONFLICT AND CHANGE 146, 160 (N. Mandell & A. Duffy eds., 2d ed. 2000)). Unions emphasized this danger to their advantage. As Professor Mann notes: Gompers raised the sexual bugaboo, an always potent weapon in racial bigotry. He wrote: ‘Time was when little girls no older than twelve years were found in Chinese laundries under the influence of opium. What other crimes were committed in those dark and fetid places when these little victims of the Chinaman’s wiles were under the influence of the drug is too horrible to imagine.’ The Chinese, in fact, love to ‘prey upon American girls,’ and prefer them to their own kind, whom they willingly leave behind in the old country.
Mann, supra note 14, at 209.
120. See Light, supra note 30, at 375; see also TAKAKI, supra note 26, at 239 (noting the near-absence of Chinese women in America, even in Chinatowns).
122. John Kuo Wei Tchen, Quimbo Appo’s Fear of Fenians: Chinese-Irish-Anglo Relations in
not prohibit interracial marriage by statute.\footnote{123} Purporting to explain the phenomenon that “[i]n Hop Alley, several Chinese have white wives,” the \textit{St. Louis Post} reported that “respectable girls and women” might often visit Chinese restaurants “on sight-seeing expeditions,” or upon giving into “the chop suey habit,” and meet Chinese husbands as a result.\footnote{124} According to a Massachusetts government study, a marriage certificate to a Chinese husband was “a frequent excuse” for a white woman’s presence in a Chinese restaurant,\footnote{125} and a required one if she was to stay the night in New York’s Chinatown in 1909.\footnote{126} Retired New York police commissioner William McAdoo claimed that “the so-called Chinese wives are probably, taken altogether, the most wretched, degraded, and utterly vile lot of white women and girls that could be found anywhere.”\footnote{127} It “gave a girl a bad name” just to work in a Chinese restaurant.\footnote{128}

\begin{quote}
\textit{New York City, in \textit{The New York Irish} 125, 129 (Ronald H. Bayor & Timothy J. Meagher eds., 1996) (“Chinese Irish marriages were sufficiently noticeable in New York City to merit regular comment in the city’s newspapers . . . .”).}
\end{quote}

\footnote{123. \textit{See} Huping Ling, \textit{“Hop Alley”: Myth and Reality in the St. Louis Chinatown, 1860s–1930s}, 28 \textit{J. Urban Hist.} 184, 209 (2002) (noting “nationwide antagonism against the interracial sexual relationships between European Americans and Chinese”); \textit{Committee Kills Bills Presented on Miscegenation: Detroit Negroes Elated over Failure of House to Get Vote}, \textit{The Broad Ax} (Utah), Mar. 22, 1913, at 2 (“Agitation which resulted in the determination to press the inter-racial marriage prohibition [in Michigan] began immediately after the Jack Johnson-Lucile Cameron union, and received a local impetus when a Chinese restaurant keeper married a White girl.”); \textit{see also} \textit{Another ‘Friend’ of Hing To Be Deported}, \textit{Ariz. Republican}, Oct. 2, 1909, at 3; \textit{Believe Admirer of White Wife May Have Slain Chinamen}, \textit{Pittsburgh Press}, Sept. 4, 1913, at 1 ( “[W]ealthy Chinese restaurant man, found hacked to death in his bed yesterday, was the victim of a disappointed sweetheart of his young white wife . . . . [T]hey met when she] was working [as a mission worker] in the Chinese section when Elsie Sigel was murdered in New York.”); \textit{Detroit Chinaman and White Girl to Marry}, \textit{Detroit Free Press}, Mar. 27, 1907, at 8 (“Charlie Jinwing, First Celestial to Sell Chop Suey Here, Inaugurates Another Innovation by Securing License to Wed Miss Evelyn G. Clark.”); \textit{Finds Wife a Chinaman’s Bride; Charges Bigamy}, \textit{St. Louis Post-Dispatch}, June 7, 1907, at 4 (“When told that . . . her daughter had married a Chinaman, Mrs. McGraw fell back in her chair with a groan.”); \textit{In Washington’s Chinatown, supra note 38 (“This celestial is not the only citizen of Chinatown who married a white wife. Several others have taken unto themselves Caucasian brides, and have half-breed children . . . . Most of these white wives are said to follow their husband’s example and become hitters of the opium pipe.”.”).}

\footnote{124. \textit{St. Louis Police Will Regulate Chinese Resorts}, \textit{St. Louis Post-Dispatch}, June 21, 1909, at 3.}

\footnote{125. \textit{The Commonwealth of Mass.}, supra note 121, at 16.}

\footnote{126. \textit{Fatal Lure of Chinese}, supra note 93.}

\footnote{127. \textit{McAdoo}, supra note 92, at 171.}

\footnote{128. \textit{Free Labor Bureau Helps Young Girls}, \textit{Lab. World} (Minn.), Mar. 9, 1912, at 1. But sexual immorality was not limited to Chinese men. The 1914 Wisconsin Vice Committee reported that “couples who are desirous of indulging in immoral practices [enter Chinese restaurants because] they serve as convenient meeting places for those who are as yet ashamed to enter wine rooms and saloons. . . . The appearance of innocence . . . lead[s] inexperienced young people to}
Not all white women visiting Chinatowns went for amusement or vice.\(^{129}\) Christian missionaries entered to evangelize, but sensational newspaper reports claimed that female missionaries often succumbed to “the fatal lure of Chinese.”\(^{130}\) One clergyman explained: “I know the possible dangers of social intercourse between the races . . . so our Chinese school is watched very strictly.”\(^{131}\) The oldest Chinese mission worker in New York stated that she did not “believe in young girls teaching Chinamen” because the Chinese continue to “hold a fascination for young American girls after they once come in contact . . . .”\(^{132}\) Some worried young female missionaries would end up like other white women who “consort[ed] with the Mongolians for a thimbleful of [opium].”\(^{133}\)

*Munsey’s Magazine* published “Woman’s Love of the Exotic” suggesting the public perception of the issue:

> A DANGEROUS ASSOCIATION [I]n the beginning, [they] were probably religious in their cast of thought; and they went down to Chinatown, at first, with the sincerest and most innocent motives . . . . In time, familiarity brought about a new feeling, and made the interest a personal interest, quite as much as a religious one. The very fact that white men despise Chinese, and often ill-treat them, stirred what may be called a maternal instinct in the women who made themselves responsible for the welfare of their charges. Just as a mother loves most tenderly her most misshapen and ill-favored child, so these girls felt their hearts moved by the thought that their ‘converts’ had all the world against them. Then, again, the personality of the Orientals, with their insidious ways and fawning manners, made the appeal still stronger. Add to this the fact that religious emotion is very closely related to one that is physical, and we find a combination which explains why so many of these young women went astray, and why in


\(^{130}\) *Id.* at 4–44; I.L. Nascher, The Wretches of Povertyville: A Sociological Study of the Bowery 134 (1909); *Fatal Lure of Chinese, supra* note 93 (“The police say the Chinamen go to Sunday school only to learn English and to associate with well bred white girls . . . . The high caste Chinamen flock to the Sunday school that has the prettiest teacher.”).

\(^{131}\) *St. Louis Police Will Regulate Chinese Resorts, supra* note 124. Similarly, a Kansas City detective thought that “[s]ociety should . . . prevent young white girls from wrecking their lives by attempting to Christianize Orientals.” *Follow Trail Set By the Black Book, WASH. TIMES, Sept.* 8, 1913, at 2.

\(^{132}\) *Fatal Lure of Chinese, supra* note 93.

\(^{133}\) *Nascher, supra* note 130, at 134.
In June 1909, a tragic crime made concerns about the Chinese restaurant threat to white women even more acute. As is recounted in Professor Ting Yi Lui’s award-winning book *The Chinese Trunk Murder*, Leon Ling, a New York Chinese restaurant worker, murdered Elsie Sigel, a young white missionary from a prominent family. In part because Ling was the subject of an unsuccessful national manhunt, the crime became a prolonged sensation, and created an intense demand for a governmental response to the problem of Chinese restaurants.

Ms. Sigel was described as a Christian missionary seduced by her Chinese pupil. Lurid headlines such as *Was Strangled by Her Chinese Lover: Granddaughter of General Sigel Slain in the Slums of New York* captured public attention. Unfortunately for Chinese restaurants, not only was Ling a restaurant worker, but Ms. Sigel’s body was found in a trunk in Ling’s room above another Chinese restaurant. The subsequent “wave of suspicion” put Chinese restaurants across the country in the spotlight. Police and an alert citizenry often identified Asian men, more or less at random, as Leon Ling, and officers in all parts of the United States raided Chinese businesses looking for Ling or intercepting white female visitors. Describing a case of mistaken identity, a Connecticut newspaper reported that “[t]o be a Chinaman these days is to be at least a suspect of the murder of Elsie Sigel.”

134. *Id.*

135. *See LUI, supra note 129, at 2–5 & n.2; see also St. Louis Police Will Regulate Chinese Resorts, supra note 124 (asking the chief of police what he would do in light of “attention [being] called to the Chinese problem in American cities by the murder of Elsie Sigel”).

136. *See LUI, supra note 129, at 197.*

137. *See Fatal Lure of Chinese, supra note 93; Girl Found Murdered in Chinatown’s Room a Sigel, WYO. SEMI-WEEKLY TRIB., June 6, 1909, at 1.*


139. The restaurant was in Midtown Manhattan, not Chinatown, however. *See Fatal Lure of Chinese, supra note 93; Girl Found Murdered in Chinatown’s Room a Sigel, supra note 137.*

140. *See, e.g., Police Search Joints for Suspected Chinese, BRIDGEPORT EVENING FARMER (Conn.), June 21, 1909, at 1 (noting that Bridgeport police were “scouring the Chinese joints of the city to-day . . . in a search for Leon Ling”).

141. *See LUI, supra note 129, at 12–16; see also Thinks Elsie Sigel To Blame, WYO. STOCKGROWER & FARMER, July 7, 1909, at 4 (“It is a mistake to send attractive young women down to the slums to teach these classes in mission schools.”).*

142. *These are Hard Days for Chinese, BRIDGEPORT EVENING FARMER (Conn.), June 22, 1909, at 1; see also Missing Chinese Reported Found in Many Places: New York Police Hear Rumors of Capture from All Parts of United States, WATERTOWN LEADER (Wis.), June 25, 1909, at 6.*
Soon after the murder, an Oregon newspaper stated “that the Sigel revelations have disgusted the Americans, and at present it is considered bad form to eat in a Chinese restaurant.”

The press followed the case for years. In 1911, the Washington Post and The New York Times made obligatory references to the Sigel murder in articles reporting on the capture of the then-notorious opium smuggler “Boston Charlie,” a case that was related to the Sigel murder only in that both cases involved Asians.

The press coverage of the Sigel murder also resulted in calls for race-based regulation under the guise of protecting young women like Elsie Siegel. For example, the Washington Times commented that “[e]very State in the Union should pass laws that would prohibit a white girl from ever crossing a Chinaman’s threshold.”

1. The White Women's Labor Law. The moral peril of white women working in Chinese restaurants was recognized early on. In 1899, reporters posed the question, “[c]an any means be devised to prevent the employment of white girls in Chinese restaurants?” But after Elsie Siegel’s murder in 1909, there was a national movement to keep women out of Chinese restaurants. State governments in Arizona, Iowa, Massachusetts, Montana, Oregon, and Washington, as well as city governments in Los Angeles, Pittsburgh, and San Francisco, considered legislation or decrees banning white women from patronizing Chinese restaurants or being employed there. A similar bill also became law in Saskatchewan, Canada.

143. SUNDAY OREGONIAN, July 18, 1909, at 2; see also Chop Suey Profits Lessen, LOGANSPORT PHAROS TRIB. (Ind.), Aug. 23, 1909.

144. Alleged Opium Chief Held, WASH. POST, Jan. 31, 1911, at 3; Hold Chinaman as Head of Opium Ring, N.Y. TIMES, Jan. 31, 1911 at 1; see also, e.g., Elsie Siegel Case Is Recalled: Murder of Girl by Chinaman Brought To Mind by Chink's Arrest, DAILY MISSOULIAN (Mont.), Sept. 3, 1911, at 7 (reporting, after immigration arrest, that “[a]lthough the authorities declined to explain what connection, if any, the arrest had with the Siegel case, it was reported today that the police had found an important clue”).

145. The Washington Post stated that a “batch of letters” seized along with Charlie did not have “any bearing on the murder of Elsie Sigel by Leon Ling . . . .” Alleged Opium Chief Held, supra note 144.


147. Follow Trail Set by the Black Book, supra note 131.

148. Children’s Society, REC.-UNION (Cal.), May 9, 1899, at 4.

The national nature of the effort is reflected in a resolution at the 1913 AFL convention, pledging the organization’s “best endeavors to secure the passage of a law prohibiting the employment of white women or girls” in Chinese and Japanese restaurants across the United States, because “the evils arising from [such] employment . . . constitute, both morally and economically, a serious menace to society.” Notably, the resolution’s text reflected the dual economic and moral concern about Chinese people. In addition, it suggested that the menace was not presented by Chinese restaurateurs alone; Leon Ling was Chinese, yet somehow other Asians were equally worthy of regulation.

It is not clear that such employment bans, proposed before the Nineteenth Amendment and therefore in many jurisdictions without the participation of female citizens, were agreeable to the women theoretically in need of protection. Reports at the time tended to show women were interested in such employment. An article in the Arizona Republican in 1916 reported that a wealthy woman “advertised for a cook and in thirty days one replied. In the same column of the paper was an ad for a girl cashier in a Chinese restaurant and forty answered in one day.” Whether in the best interests of white women or not, the idea turned into legislation or other action in a number of jurisdictions.

The Pittsburgh City Council passed an ordinance in 1910 banning all women from Chinese restaurants as patrons or employees, and

150. REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE THIRTY-THIRD ANNUAL CONVENTION OF THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR HELD AT SEATTLE, WASHINGTON NOV. 10–22, INCLUSIVE 1913, supra note 3, at 370; see also THIRTY-FOURTH ANN. CONVENTION, supra note 40, at 90 (noting that “[t]his question is one that should be considered by state legislatures and city councils, where organizations in the Pacific and intermountain states are doing their utmost to carry out the purposes contained in this resolution”); Resolutions Acted on by Convention at Fairbault, LAB. WORLD (Minn.), July 28, 1917, at 2 (noting recent AFL resolution “that the executive council of the Federation be instructed to work out some plan that will prevent the employment of white women in ‘chop suey’ or ‘noodle’ houses”).

151. As Professor Mae Quinn noted, anxiety about urbanization with its concomitant intermingling, coupled with the changing roles of young women in American society led to innovative efforts to regulate female behavior. Mae C. Quinn, From Turkey Trot to Twitter: Policing Puberty, Purity, and Sex-Positivity, 38 N.Y.U. REV. L. & SOC. CHANGE 51, 68–76 (2014). There was reason to suspect that some allegedly protective or paternalistic labor legislation was not meant to protect women from exploitation or their own misjudgment, but rather to reserve the best opportunities for men. See Frances Olsen, From False Paternalism To False Equality: Judicial Assaults On Feminist Community, Illinois 1869-1895, 84 MICH. L. REV. 1518, 1534 (1986).

restricting their hours of operation. A supporter argued that regulation was necessary, as a slippery moral slope awaited many girls, who may have been “enticed into the restaurants on the plea of getting something to eat, and because of the novelty of the situation,” but ultimately became “persuaded to stay until it [was] too late for a girl to go” back to a home with strict rules. Notably, the police disagreed. The captain of detectives stated that “[they] never had any trouble with those restaurants,” and that “the Chinese give us less trouble than any other class.” Nevertheless, the City Council passed the measure 49 votes to 2.

But in a masterful message, the mayor vetoed the bill noting that the restrictions on female patrons and operating hours were “not imposed on any other restaurant in the city,” and therefore they were “plainly directed against the Chinese as a race,” and potentially invalid under *Yick Wo v. Hopkins* alone. He also criticized the arbitrary grounds on which the director of the Department of Public Safety could deny or revoke a license, including the preliminary requirement that the applicant be “of good moral character,” and the fact that a license could be revoked based on “the visit of disreputable persons to said restaurant or chop suey houses.”

Massachusetts saw a protracted effort to keep women out of Chinese restaurants. In 1910, Representative Donovan introduced the

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155. *Id.* at 2.


159. *Id.* at 286; *see also Mayor Magee Gives Advice to Councils*, Gazette Times (Pittsburgh), Jan. 10, 1911, at 2.
“yellow peril bill,” prohibiting all women under twenty-one from entering Chinese restaurants as patrons or employees, and requiring a non-Asian male escort for older women. The bill passed a first and second reading, despite legislators observing that the law applied to Chinese women married to Chinese men, and therefore forbade a Chinese woman from dining with her husband. Attorney General Dana Malone, agreeing with those legislators, opined that the bill “if passed, would be unconstitutional and void,” causing the House to reject the bill 117 to 53. Persistent legislators reintroduced the bill in 1911, at which point the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court issued an advisory opinion unanimously finding the law unconstitutional. The bill was withdrawn the next day.

Montana legislators encountered federal resistance after considering a ban. The Montana Senate approved a bill supported by the Montana State Federation of Labor, a group eager to drive Chinese restaurant competition away, entitled “An Act to prohibit the employment of females, except of the Asiatic Race, in restaurants, eating houses, laundries, and other similar occupations controlled and

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160. Yellow Peril Bill in Bay State, TELEGRAPH, Mar. 22, 1910, at 3.
163. See Letter to the Editor, No Exception Made, BOS. DAILY GLOBE, Feb. 28, 1910, at 8.
166. BOS. DAILY GLOBE, Jan. 15, 1911, at 51.
167. In re Opinion of the Justices, 94 N.E. 558, 560 (Mass. 1911); see JOURNAL OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF MASSACHUSETTS 748–51 (1911); Chinese Restaurants, SUN (N.Y.), Apr. 27, 1911, at 8; Prohibited by Constitution, BOS. DAILY GLOBE, Mar. 23, 1911, at 15.
169. The Montana State Federation of Labor at its 1915 convention proposed “to prohibit the employment of white women with, by or for males of the Chinese or Japanese races . . . .” McGinley, What Our Organizers Are Doing: Helena, Montana, supra note 112, at 32.
170. The delegates emphasized the proposal’s economic impact, noting that “this bill, if enacted into law, will go a long way towards decreasing the popularity of the Chinese restaurants in the State.” Id.
conducted by persons of the Asiatic Race, and providing penalties for
the violation thereof”171 by a vote of 31 to 0 with 9 abstentions.172 The
House committee reviewing the bill recommended concurrence in the
Senate bill on March 2, 1915,173 but the next day, the full House
reported to the Senate that the committee had recommended rejecting
the bill and the House agreed.174 As it turns out, an intervenor from the
federal government, U.S. Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan,
had written to the House opposing the bill.175 An April 1915 report in
*The Mixer and Server* explained that the “wheels of opposition” to
Montana’s bill “did not stop until they reached the ‘big house’ in
Washington, D.C., from whence returned an administration mandate
signed by ‘Grape Juice’ Bryan, to the effect ‘[t]hat legislation of that
character was very objectionable to the “royal” dignitaries from the
Orient . . . .’”176

Other jurisdictions gave more passing consideration to similar
bills, including Arizona,177 Oregon,178 Washington,179 and Wyoming.180

171. *Senate Journal of the Fourteenth Legislative Assembly of the State of
Montana 607* (1915). The title of the bill left little to the imagination as to its content, which
made it “unlawful for any person . . . to employ in any restaurant, eating house, laundry or other
occupations owned, conducted or controlled by persons of the Asiatic race, any female as a
servant, waitress or employee therein within the State of Montana, except females of the Asiatic

172. Senate Journal of the Fourteenth Legislative Assembly of the State of Montana, *supra*
note 171, at 527.

173. *House Journal of the Fourteenth Legislative Assembly of the State of
Montana 584* (1915).

174. *Senate Journal of the Fourteenth Legislative Assembly of the State of
Montana, supra* note 171, at 607.


176. *Id.*

177. *Special Session of the Arizona Legislature Appears a Certainty*, EL PASO HERALD, May
7, 1912, at 5 (reporting that some Arizona legislators supported a prohibition). A 1916 report from
Arizona in *The Mixer and Server* claimed, “Arizona should have such a law on its statute books”
and that it “must come sooner or later.” Williams, *supra* note 171.

(1919). Oddly, according to the Journal of the Oregon Senate, on February 20, 1919 the “bill failed
to pass” with 14 yeas, 13 neas, 2 absences, and 1 excused. *Oregon Legislative Assembly,
Proceedings of the Senate, Journals of the Senate and House 256* (1919).

179. *An Act Prohibiting the Employment of Females of the White or Caucasian Race by
Chinese, Japanese or Other Mongolians, and Providing for the Punishment Thereof*, S. 146, 13th
Leg., Reg. Sess. (Wash. 1913); see also *Thousands Greet Governor Lister*, MORNING OREGONIAN,
Jan. 16, 1913, at 7 (statement by Governor recommending enactment of bill).

180. *Official City Council Proceedings*, ROCK SPRINGS MINER (Wyo.), Sept. 9, 1918, at 8
(noting “petition signed by a number of reputable citizens of the town requesting the council to
pass an ordinance preventing girls under twenty from working in Chinese restaurants” and
directing the city attorney to draft an ordinance).
In California, leaders in Los Angeles\textsuperscript{181} and San Francisco\textsuperscript{182} appear to have been troubled by white women working in Chinese restaurants, although no laws appear to have been passed. There is one report of a ban imposed by judicial action. Iowa District Court Judge Lawrence De Graff reportedly issued an order enjoining the owner of a Chinese restaurant from serving women. However, he quickly reversed himself, finding that it was “not equitable to enjoin the owner of a chop suey restaurant to prevent women from partaking of Chinese meals there.”\textsuperscript{183}

The Pittsburgh ordinance and Massachusetts legislation excluded women as patrons as well as employees, while the other proposed legislation applied only to female employees. No laws were proposed to ban only female customers while allowing women to be employed in Chinese restaurants. It is not clear why jurisdictions chose one version or other, but even the narrower measure is consistent with fears of Chinese sexual exploitation, economic protectionism, or both. A legislature primarily concerned with seduction could easily conclude that employees were at vastly greater risk because of the economic relationship and the amount of time spent in the company of Asians. Similarly, a legislature focused solely on economic issues could

\textsuperscript{181} In September 1912, the \textit{Los Angeles Times} reported that police chief and future mayor Charles E. Sebastian promised to “recommend to the Police Commission that an order be issued barring all white female help from oriental eating places” on penalty of license revocation. \textit{Segregation Orders: Police May Prevent White Women from Working for Chinese or Japanese Restauranteurs}, L.A. TIMES, Sept. 4, 1912, at II7. Two years later, the \textit{Los Angeles Herald} reported that “[t]he police commission gave its unanimous approval today to the plan of Chief of Police Sebastian to exclude white girls as cashiers or waitresses from restaurants and cafes run by Japanese or Chinese.” \textit{Bar White Girls as Jap Waitresses}, L.A. HERALD, Mar. 10, 1914, at 3. But see \textit{To Draw Race Line: Councilman Complains of Conditions in Oriental Cafes and Would Put White Men in Charge}, L.A. TIMES, Sept. 29, 1917, at I9 (“When the Japanese or Chinese proprietors play to the trade of Americans and employ white girls to assist them there should be a stop to the practice.”).

\textsuperscript{182} San Francisco officials considered, but do not appear to have enacted, legislation preventing white women from working in Chinese and Greek restaurants. \textit{May Prohibit White Chop Suey Waitresses}, S.F. CALL, Oct. 4, 1913, at 3. Interestingly, the City Attorney found that the legislation aimed at Greek restaurants was unconstitutional “class discrimination,” but that validity of similar legislation aimed at Chinese restaurants “would be a debatable question,” reasoning that if “such places as generally operated are against the welfare of white women, it is more than probable that the constitutionality of the legislation as to them would be upheld on the ground of a reasonable exercise of the police power.” Percy V. Long, City Att’y of the City & Cty. of S.F., City Att’y of S.F., Opinion Letter on Employment of Females in Greek and Chop Suey Restaurants (Sept. 29, 1913), \textit{as reprinted in Official Opinions of Percy V. Long, City Attorney of the City and County of San Francisco, State of California}, at 426, 427–28 (1917).

\textsuperscript{183} \textit{Women May Eat Chop Suey}, BEE: OMAHA, Oct. 11, 1911, at 2.
conclude that denying Chinese restaurants access to an English-speaking workforce might effectively impair their ability to operate.

2. Emergency Police Authority To Protect White Women. By the 1920s, it seemed clear that legislation expressly targeting Chinese restaurants was unconstitutional. At the time, Professor William Bennett Munro wrote that “[t]he provisions of an ordinance must apply equally to all persons in the same category,” explaining that “it would not be a discrimination to provide that all restaurants shall be closed on Sundays while hotel dining rooms are permitted to remain open for the use of bona fide guests,” but finding “a clear case of discrimination” in a provision “stipulate[ing] that all Chinese restaurants shall remain closed while other restaurants are privileged to remain open.”

However, emergency police authority kept white women from patronizing or working in Chinese restaurants. Most prominently in the wake of the Sigel murder, but also on other occasions, police simply ordered white women and girls out of Chinese restaurants or neighborhoods. In 1909, the head of the Washington, D.C. police department issued orders forbidding all “young white girls” from entering Chinese restaurants, and in the same year, the probation officer in Kalispell, Montana, ordered that “all white girls under twenty years of age working in the Chinese restaurants of that city to surrender their positions.” Following the Sigel murder, New York police vowed to end the “slumming” expeditions and the tourist attractions of Chinatown. In 1910, the New York deputy police commissioner announced that he was going to “force white women away from Chinatown and keep them away,” and went after opium joints where tourists “were taken to be shown a white woman rolling opium pills in company with a decrepit Chinese,” and a “chop suey restaurant where white girls ate in company with Chinese residents of the neighborhood.”

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186. HARLOWTON NEWS (Mont.), Aug. 13, 1909, at 1 (stating the move “will be heartily endorsed by every one who knows of the degrading influences surrounding any establishment operated by an Oriental”).
189. First-Vice Attack Made on Chinatown, supra note 187. Officers also noted white women
The commissioner also reinstated a midnight curfew, at which point whites were “to be driven out of” the Chinese quarter and “the restaurants and other places kept by Chinese [were] to be closed.”190 Policeman patrolled each block, asking all visitors where they were going and asking those without satisfactory explanations to leave.191

Newspapers reported an escalation of such efforts on April 14, 1918 when the New York Police Department carried out chop suey raids all over the city,192 to fulfill the district attorney’s declaration of “war to the death on the chop suey caravansaries.”193 The Washington Herald reported that police and detectives entered “[t]hirty chop suey restaurants in New York’s tenderloin, from Broadway and Forty-Second Streets, through the upper West Side as far north as 110th Street . . . in one of the most spectacular raids ever made here.”194 Officers blocked the Chinese restaurants’ doors,195 and asked approximately one thousand people why they were there.196 Of those questioned, 178 were ordered to the police station for further investigation,197 including women failing to show a wedding ring to prove they were married to their male companions.198 The price of freedom for such detainees was a promise that “he or she would not be found in the Chinese restaurants after hours” in the future.199 The raid led to no arrests, as the district attorney reportedly wanted to collect evidence to prosecute “the real owners of certain Chinese restaurants,”200 in order to vindicate local parents who had sent him one hundred letters claiming that their daughters had “been lured to

residing with Chinese men and prepared a list for “Tenement House Inspectors.” Id.

191. Barred from Chinatown, supra note 93.
192. Police Capture 178 in Chop Suey Raids, supra note 112.
193. The Washington Herald reported that “James E. Smith, assistant district attorney of the county of New York . . . has declared war to the death on the chop suey caravansaries.” McIntyre, supra note 1. District Attorney Smith claimed that he realized that the “chop suey places are the worst dives in the city” and that he did not “care a snap about the protest that may be made after these raids.” Police Capture 178 in Chop Suey Raids, supra note 112.
194. 300 Arrested as N.Y. Police Raid 30 Joints, supra note 112.
196. 300 Are Captured in Chop Suey Raids, THE SUN (N.Y.), Apr. 15, 1918, at 14; 300 Arrested as N.Y. Police Raid 30 Joints, supra note 112; Police Capture 178 in Chop Suey Raids, supra note 112.
197. Police Capture 178 in Chop Suey Raids, supra note 112.
198. 300 Arrested as N.Y. Police Raid 30 Joints, supra note 112.
199. Police Capture 178 in Chop Suey Raids, supra note 112.
200. 300 Are Captured in Chop Suey Raids, supra note 112.
chop suey houses” and were “evilly treated or menaced.” 201

By April 16, 1918, the Chinese restaurant owners retained counsel for a legal battle described as “[a]n up to date tong war.” 202 Prosecutors determinedly planned to charge restaurant owners with maintaining a public nuisance, among other tactics, and urged the board of aldermen to require licenses of chop suey restaurants. 203 Meanwhile, counsel for the restaurants insisted that “[i]t was illegal to order persons who were dining peaceably in these restaurants to leave.” 204

It may seem odd that the police could force women out of Chinese restaurants when the legislatures that created the police could not. The concept of emergency power may explain this anomaly. Even today, there is a plausible argument that the police can order people to “move on” at their whim, and arrest them if they do not. 205 Of course, the police are free to act unilaterally, even forcibly, to protect lives and property in emergencies. 206 Even today, authorities can discriminate on the basis of race when necessary to meet a pressing exigency. 207 In those circumstances, police orders are specific and temporary, while laws are normally general and permanent—or at least open ended—and thus represent a greater intrusion.

In addition, the war against Chinese restaurants was fought in a largely premodern era of law. Because many of the provisions of the Bill of Rights did not yet apply to the states, the police were much freer. In that era, the police regularly made “arrests on suspicion,” 208 that is,
without probable cause or reasonable suspicion. New York police captain Alexander Williams is credited with the famous assertion that “there is more law in the end of a policeman’s nightstick than in a decision of the Supreme Court.” These factors may explain why the police believed they had broad authority to force compliance with what they deemed important rules of conduct. If white women and girls placed themselves at great and immediate risk by consorting with Chinese people, the police had the authority to order them away or arrest them.

B. Discrimination Against Chinese and Chinese Restaurants

While laws expressly targeting Chinese restaurants or Chinese people as such were unconstitutional, the door was left open for facially neutral measures. Those opposed to Chinese restaurants could identify the characteristics of Chinese restaurants and target them, either through substantive law or enforcement priorities. In several ways, opponents did both.

1. Explicit Citizenship-Based Business and Employment License Discrimination. An easy way to eliminate Asian restaurateurs would have been to require citizenship for licensure or employment. This was
in some sense facially neutral because white people could be noncitizens too. As Asians were ineligible for naturalized citizenship, however, this would likely have been an insurmountable barrier to licensure or employment for those not born in the United States.\footnote{For older noncitizen licensing cases, see G.V.I., \textit{Constitutionality Of Discrimination Against Aliens In Legislation Relating To Licenses}, 39 A.L.R. 346 (1925).} Some steps were taken in this direction, but they ultimately faced legal barriers.

In a textbook example, four Chinese restaurants in Portland, Oregon, were denied liquor licenses on the ground that the owners were “not citizens and under the charter cannot be permitted to sell liquor.”\footnote{\textit{Licenses of Chinese Taken}, \textit{MORNING OREGONIAN}, Dec. 22, 1911, at 18. Newspapers reported that the “Chinese places fought” back, but it was the white-owned Pekin Restaurant that challenged the denial. See \textit{Chinese Places Fought}, \textit{MORNING OREGONIAN}, Jan. 20, 1912, at 7; \textit{Licenses to Be Given}, \textit{MORNING OREGONIAN}, Jan. 11, 1910, at 16 (stating that Pekin’s lawyer said it was owned by whites).} Similarly, in 1906, the Chicago City Council considered a bill requiring citizenship-based special licenses of “chop suey” restaurants,\footnote{\textit{Law Will Check Chinese}, \textit{CHI. DAILY TRIB.}, Apr. 28, 1906, at 5.} making it unlawful “for any person to keep, conduct or manage any place in this city where any fruit, ice cream or chop suey is sold . . . unless a license therefor is first obtained.”\footnote{\textit{Law Will Check Chinese}, supra note 216; see also \textit{Chop Suey for Citizens: Chicago Ordinances May Drive Chinese and Greeks Out of Business}, \textit{EVENING STATESMAN (Wash.)}, May 8, 1906, at 8 (reporting on the ordinance).} The \textit{Chicago Tribune} reported “that the Chinese would be barred permanently as they cannot become citizens,” but an alderman replied that the city “could get along without any chop suey places.”\footnote{The full report states that “Chicago’s Chinese colony was given a severe jolt when it was announced at the city collector’s office that many of them owning chop suey restaurants and other eating places would have to go out of business through inability to obtain licenses.” \textit{Chicago Law To Bar Chinese Restaurants}, \textit{BEMIDJI DAILY PIONEER (Minn.)}, Apr. 12, 1918, at 1.} In 1918, another similar proposal was considered,\footnote{The Chicago Municipal Code of 1922 § 3452 (Samuel Adams Ettelson ed., 1922).} but it does not appear that either the 1906 or 1918 proposal resulted in laws restricting licenses to citizens. By 1922, the Chicago Municipal Code required those seeking restaurant licenses to have “good character and reputation,” and have premises “suitable for the purpose,”\footnote{The Chicago Municipal Code of 1922 § 3452 (Samuel Adams Ettelson ed., 1922).} leaving ample room for discretion, but imposing no requirement that applicants be citizens.
Around the same time, Massachusetts legislators, apparently inspired by a union report, proposed to limit victualer’s licenses—that is, licenses to sell food—to citizens. But the legislation failed, reportedly after it “received an unfavorable report from the committee on legal affairs: they claim that the bill aims at Chinese restaurants and as the Chinese are not citizens and cannot become citizens that the bill is unfair.”

State laws and municipal ordinances requiring citizenship to operate a restaurant were probably doomed long before they were enacted. As early as 1880, a California court invalidated a statute providing that “[n]o license to transact any business or occupation shall be granted . . . to any alien not eligible to become an elector.” In Asakura v. City of Seattle, a 1924 case involving a Japanese immigrant, the Supreme Court invalidated a Seattle ordinance restricting pawnbroker licenses to citizens, shutting the door on other similar measures.

Another attempt to eliminate Chinese restaurants was to prohibit employment of Chinese workers. In 1914, Arizona enacted the Anti-Alien Employment Act, which prohibited businesses from employing more than 20 percent noncitizens in their workforces. Because Chinese restaurants typically employed Asians, and Asians were ineligible for naturalization, the law could have closed most or all Chinese restaurants. Therefore, the March 1914 issue of The Mixer and

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221. Commonwealth v. Lavery, 73 N.E. 884, 884 (Mass. 1905) (affirming conviction for “assuming to be a common victualer” without a license because “the keeping of a place where [the public] may purchase food . . . [is] carefully regulated by statute, which makes it unlawful for any one to engage in these employments without first obtaining a license.”).

222. This union report explained that “[t]he Chinese question here is indeed a serious one,” Delia A. Hurley, What Our Organizers Are Doing, MIXER & SERVER, Nov. 15, 1917, at 16, 19, and two months later a bill was introduced providing that “only persons who are citizens be granted victualers’ licenses,” JOURNAL OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS 76 (1918).


224. Charles E. Sands, Correspondence, MIXER & SERVER, Apr. 15, 1918, at 59, 59.


226. Id. at 332.

227. Asakura v. City of Seattle, 265 U.S. 332, 343 (1924); see also Poon v. Miller, 234 S.W. 573, 576 (Tex. Civ. App. 1921) (holding that a citizenship requirement in a statute that barred a Chinese person from receiving a license to sell fish was void).


229. See New Tong Murders; 500 Chinese Seized, N.Y. TIMES, Sept. 19, 1925, at 1 (noting Chinese companies’ complaints that deportations “would cripple their businesses, as a shortage of Chinese cheap labor could not be filled with white help”).
Server foresaw victory for the Cooks’ and Waiters’ Local 631 of Phoenix, Arizona, noting that union members were “able, through their systematic work, to close a few Chinese restaurants, and now have American restaurants instead . . . .” 230 The report predicted that “before long every restaurant in Phoenix will be conducted by white people instead of the Chinks.” 231 Chinese restaurant workers sued, 232 but before their case could be heard, a federal court struck down the statute based on a suit by an Austrian restaurant worker. 233 In a decision upheld by the Supreme Court, the district judge found that the right to labor was property and that the law violated equal protection. 234

2. Discriminatory Administrative Discretion To Deny Licensing.
The growth of the regulatory state on federal, state, and local levels meant that government permission was required to engage in increasingly more activities. Just as Chinese laundries were discriminated against, as reflected by Yick Wo, 235 Chinese restaurants were also targeted. Court decisions and newspaper reports across the country reflect administrative policies to deny licenses to Chinese restaurants. 236

For example, Chicago imposed restrictive zoning. In 1911, a lawmaker was interested in excluding Chinese restaurants from Wabash Avenue, but the city’s lawyers concluded that a ban could not rest on “[t]he presumption that opium smoking and gambling will be indulged in,” 237 and pointed to “the celebrated California laundry

231. Id.
236. Of course, blanket denial of licenses was not a universal policy. In Havre, Montana in 1905, unions requested that the city issue no licenses to Chinese; city officials refused for fear of lawsuits. From the Standpoint of the Optimist, HAVRE HERALD (Mont.), May 12, 1905, at 1.
237. Opinion of Dec. 6, 1911, reprinted in 4 OPINIONS CORP. COUNS. AND ASSISTANTS, FROM APR. 1, 1911, TO DEC. 31, 1912, at 486 (1914) (issuing opinion by Corporation Counsel, senior
cases in support of the idea that particular races could not be singled out. Yet just two weeks later, the city council voted to order city commissioners “to refuse the issuance of permits for contraction or remodeling of any building or buildings by any Chinaman” in the district near Wabash Avenue and Twenty-Third Street, noting an “invasion” of Chinese residents in that neighborhood, and concluding that would “materially affect and deprecate the value of property in said vicinity.”

In El Paso, a union campaign against Chinese restaurants bore fruit after “[u]nion men [were] appointed at the head of five departments in the city.” According to the AFL’s journal, this was the “clear reason why” in 1915 “six Chinese restaurants [were] replaced by Americans.” In Brockton, Massachusetts, unions also turned to regulators to oppose the renewal of the licenses of Chinese restaurants. In short, where Chinese restaurants needed the permission of the bureaucracy to operate, taking control of that bureaucracy provided unions and their supporters leverage in the fight against their competitors.

The courts seemed to accept regulatory findings that Chinese restaurants were problematic. An illustrative example came about after the city of Pittsburgh denied incorporation to a Chinese club and restaurant. In an 1891 decision rejecting an appeal of the denial, the Pennsylvania trial court explained that incorporation was only authorized “where there is a worthy object, which cannot well be accomplished without incorporation” and “[c]onsidering who the subscribers are, and the purposes set forth in the articles of association, there would be great danger of the association being perverted to purposes injurious to the community.” Similarly, in 1932 the New
Jersey Supreme Court upheld the denial of a dance license to a Chinese restaurant, noting that some of the officers were “Chinamen” as were all of the employees and managers, and that one of the grounds for denial was “that it was detrimental to the young people of the neighborhood.”

While the reported cases do not always reflect racial considerations, they suggest that authorities had ample power to regulate Chinese restaurants using facially neutral statutes. Regulatory boards and commissions denied licenses to Chinese restaurants, not on a case-by-case basis, but as a matter of what newspapers reported as blanket policy. Los Angeles authorities denied a liquor license to the Hong Kong Restaurant because “[s]erving drinks with meals there [did] not meet with the [police] chief’s approbation.” The chief’s sentiments were in keeping with general police opposition to “Chinese chop suey restaurants outside of Chinatown,” based on the judgment that such restaurants had a “tendency to disturb the peace.” Similarly, the San Francisco Call reported on the denial of a license to a Chinese restaurant in Palo Alto, observing that “[t]here has never been a Chinese business house in Palo Alto and it has been the policy of the citizens to keep such places out at all hazards.” There were similar reports in Minneapolis,

the refusal is occasioned by the fact that [he] rents a portion of the building he occupies for a Chinese restaurant”).


246. Id.

247. Do Not Relish “Chop Suey”: Citizens of Palo Alto Oppose Opening of a Chinese Restaurant in College Town, S.F. CALL, July 29, 1905, at 6; see also Palo Alto Is Aroused, S.F. CALL, July 6, 1905, at 6 (“The citizens have never permitted a Chinese business place of any sort to become established in Palo Alto. This was ordinarily prevented by peaceful means, but on one occasion both the Chinaman and the landlord were given twenty-four hours to leave town—and they went.”); Ready To Appeal, S.F. CALL, Oct. 7, 1905, at 6 (noting that “[t]he sentiment of the people is strongly against the Chinese”). The International Chinese Business Directory of the World (Wong Kin ed., 1913) lists no Chinese businesses of any kind in Palo Alto or Stanford.
These examples indicate that operating a business was understood to be a matter of grace, not right, and that regulators felt free to conclude that the right number of Chinese restaurants was none.

License denials were sometimes successfully challenged. In March 1914, the Massachusetts Commission for the Investigation of White Slave Traffic issued a damning report after investigating many Chinese restaurants, and a series of license denials followed, including one sought by Yee Toy of Lynn, Massachusetts. The commissioners reasoned that “there should be no more Chinese restaurants in the city and that Chinese restaurants shouldn’t be allowed to compete with those of Americans as they have no interest here.” Toy successfully requested reconsideration after presenting a petition bearing two thousand names. Toy enjoyed temporary success and received his license, but the following month, the police charged him with “assuming to be a common victualer.” In another instance, the mayor of Malden, Massachusetts refused to sign a license because the restaurant employed no Americans. The Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court issued a writ of mandamus requiring him to sign.

Charles Shue, one of Boston’s “best-known Americanized

248. Chinaman Loses License: Sam Jay Was Unable To Keep His International Cafe Orderly, MINNEAPOLIS J., Feb. 13, 1905, at 6 (reporting that the liquor license of a Chinese restaurant had been revoked and that “[i]t is not likely that another license will be granted to a Chinese restaurant keeper as the mayor considers them incapable of handling boisterous, bibulous Americans”).

249. Moline’s Mayor Taboos Chop Suey, ROCK ISLAND ARGUS (Ill.), Jan. 22, 1912, at 10 (reporting that the Mayor “gave notice that no more chop suey houses would be allowed in Moline in connection with saloons and that the present one would have to close up”). The “chop suey joint” was closed as a public nuisance; the attached saloon remained open. Grants Writ To Close Up Joint, ROCK ISLAND ARGUS (Ill.), Feb. 27, 1912, at 5.

250. Chinese Sues Pastor for Defamation, ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH, Dec. 17, 1911, at 14 (reporting that the excise board “issued an order closing all the chop suey restaurants, and giving as the reason for its action that public sentiment appeared to be strongly opposed to such places”).


253. Id. Massachusetts law provided that issuance of a license was “not . . . required” but was left to “the sound judgment of the licensing board.” Liggett Drug Co. v. Bd. of License Comm’rs of N. Adams, 4 N.E.2d 628, 634 (Mass. 1936).


256. Id.

257. Summon Mayor Blakely, BOS. DAILY GLOBE, July 11, 1915, at 15.

258. To Ask Mandamus Writ, BOS. DAILY GLOBE, July 1, 1915, at 3.
Chinamen” unsuccessfully applied for a restaurant license in 1918, and he was left with the licensing board’s decision that “no more licenses for Chinese restaurants would be granted.” Based on the successful appeals in some cases, it appears that many of the license denials were legally improper, either because they were based on race and therefore in violation of Yick Wo, or for some other reason. But being in the right legally benefits only those with the financial means and tenacity to file a lawsuit.

3. Discriminatory Law Enforcement. To be sure, some of the misconduct reported in Chinese restaurants, and some of the criminal convictions for Chinese restaurateurs, represented actual wrongdoing. However, law enforcement’s special focus on Chinese restaurants may well have played a part. There is little reason to believe that Chinese people were disproportionately inclined to break the law; after all, “there is a connection between where police look for [crime] and where they find it.” Thus, the many reports of apparent selective enforcement, or promises to place Chinese restaurants under particular scrutiny, suggest at least the possibility that Chinese entrepreneurs were arrested or deprived of licenses for conduct which would not have led to adverse action if committed by members of other, less closely supervised groups.

In 1899, the Boston police commissioners ordered all Chinese restaurants to close by midnight. The Boston Daily Globe reported that the action was “part of the commissioners plan to drive the Chinese places from Boston.” A month later, the Boston Daily Advertiser debunked “a rumor, which somehow got about town yesterday, to the effect that the board of police commissioners is seriously considering the question of closing up those Chinese restaurants for good and for all. It is doubtful whether any power is vested in the board to issue an arbitrary order of that kind.” However, “[i]t goes without saying that public morals would be much promoted by shutting them up and keeping them shut.”

260. Id.
262. No Chop Suey After 12, BOS. DAILY GLOBE, July 3, 1899, at 17.
263. Id.
265. Id.
Chicago authorities also paid special attention to Chinese restaurants. In June 1905, the city council considered a resolution calling for investigation of Chinese restaurants, based on concerns about the presence of women in the restaurants at night, stemming from their belief that the restaurants had simply replaced the wine rooms banned by a previous mayor. By October 1, the restaurants were under investigation by the state attorney’s office and the police. Reverend J. E. Copus reported in the Rosary Magazine that “[t]he police department . . . promised to ‘get after’ the ‘chop suey dump’.” The Chicago police chief ordered “[r]igid inspections at frequent intervals” for Chinese restaurants and ice cream parlors, and “the prohibition of young girls or youths after reasonable hours.” One lieutenant recommended revocation of the license of a Chinese restaurant for violating a midnight closing ordinance and further promised “a crusade on the many Chinese restaurants in his district.”

Five years later, the police still paid close attention to Chinese restaurants, as one police inspector warned that “[y]oung white girls are daily insulted and even attacked by Celestials.” The following year, the Chicago police chief issued a “special order” against the sale of liquor in Chinese establishments; this announcement was followed by raids.

In 1909, the Elsie Sigel murder continued to impact discretionary enforcement by police. The St. Louis police chief promised that

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266. Attack Segregation of Vice, CHI. DAILY TRIB., June 10, 1905, at 7.
267. See Ordered to Fight Vice, CHI. DAILY TRIB., Oct. 1, 1905, at 2 (reporting that while the presence of women in saloons at night would be objectionable, women were frequently present in Chinese restaurants at night).
268. Id. The wine rooms and the restaurants could serve liquor at all hours, escaping restrictions on saloons, which had to close by 1:00 A.M. Ordered to Fight Vice, supra note 267. Similarly, in New York in 1900, when larger resorts were closed; there was “a flocking of women to cheap Chinese restaurants.” Police Grant New License to Gamblers, N.Y. TIMES, Mar. 19, 1900, at 2.
269. Ordered to Fight Vice, supra note 267.
271. Mayor Defended By Foe, CHI. DAILY TRIB., Nov. 9, 1905, at 3.
272. Id.
274. Search for White Slaves, MARION DAILY MIRROR (Ohio), Dec. 31, 1909, at 1.
275. See Chinese Men Mix Sin with Chop Suey, CHI. DAILY TRIB., Mar. 27, 1910, at 3.
276. See Ling, supra note 123, at 209 (stating that more than a year after the murder in New York, St. Louis Police raided a Chinese restaurant in hopes of finding the accused killer Leon Ling).
“[t]he Chinese chop suey restaurants and Hop Alley will be closely watched by the police of St. Louis, who have had their attention called to the Chinese problem in American cities by the murder of Elsie Sigel . . . .” 277 The chief further explained that although he could not “understand a white woman’s desire to go into a Chinese restaurant and eat,” it was “a problem for the woman herself,” for which the police could not “molest her,” or invade the restaurant’s “right to stay open . . . .” 278 Despite this challenge, the chief assured that “we can and will watch these places strictly,” before offering that “[i]n [his] opinion, the immigration laws are too lax. 279 There are too many Chinese of bad character permitted to enter the United States as things are now.” 280

Throughout 1909, the police also watched the Chinese restaurants in Detroit closely, and “maintain[ed] a sharp lookout” on Sam Lee’s restaurant because there were “reports that white men and women have languished in the dark, smutty rooms under the restaurant and lived in the fumes of the opium rather than face the world as it is.” 281 Around the same time, headlines in many cities continued to report raids on Chinese restaurants, including one story that the district attorney in Washington, D.C. in 1914 advised officers to pay special attention to “restaurants where liquor is served to women, motion picture theaters, and Chinese restaurants.” 282 The special attention was truly coast to coast: in Portland, Oregon the police raided over sixty-five mostly Chinese establishments pursuant to an ordinance prohibiting “barred-door[s],” 283 and in Portland, Maine, a Chinese restaurant was closed based on misbehavior by soldiers, sailors and

278. Id.
279. Id.
280. Id.
281. See Chinese Fear That Sing Pui, Denied Dream Drug, Will Die, DETROIT FREE PRESS, Aug. 1, 1909, at 9 (explaining that police were monitoring Sam Lee’s Chinese restaurant); Chink Arrested for Opium Sale, DETROIT FREE PRESS, May 23, 1909, at 1 (stating that police officers arrested the proprietor of a Chinese restaurant after patrolling the area and observing a known drug addict enter the restaurant).
283. 100 Doors Smashed by Axes of Police, MORNING OREGONIAN, May 9, 1919, at 21.
“lewd” women who patronized it, after which the restaurant’s lawyer claimed that closing this restaurant while ignoring similar misconduct in others amounted to racial discrimination.

Remarkably, the possibility for the discriminatory enforcement of a facially neutral Minneapolis ordinance against Chinese restaurants was explicitly built in during the drafting of that ordinance. Minneapolis mayor J.C. Haynes wrote to the city council, then considering an ordinance regulating restaurants and hotels, requesting that the law include authority to revoke licenses because of “certain abuses in some of these places, notably certain cafes and so-called chop suey houses.” The ordinance as enacted provided that licenses “shall be subject to revocation at any time by the City Council, in its discretion, or by the Mayor.”

Given these perspectives, it would hardly be surprising if police found violations in Chinese restaurants based on facts which would not have led to charges in other venues. As observed by Justice Jackson, who was at one time the U.S. Attorney General, “[a] prosecutor stands a fair chance of finding at least a technical violation of some act on the part of almost anyone.” This is particularly so in a highly regulated public place such as a restaurant, providing many opportunities to find infractions.

4. Prohibition of Private Booths. Chinese restaurants in the early decades of the twentieth century typically had private booths consisting of small rooms with doors or curtains. A national movement to

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285. Id.
286. 36 PROCEEDINGS OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF MINNEAPOLIS, MINN. FROM JANUARY 1, 1910 TO JANUARY 1, 1911, at 810 (1911).
287. Id. at 1063.
290. See Jan Whitaker, Restaurant Booth Controversies, RESTAURANT-ING THROUGH HISTORY (Aug. 27, 2012, 7:13 PM), http://restaurant-ingthroughhistory.com/2012/08/27/restaurant-booth-controversies/ [https://perma.cc/WAR3-P7LW]; see also State v. Ito, 131 N.W. 469, 469 (Minn. 1911) (“This is a Chinese restaurant and chop suey house. We went into a private
prohibit booths and private rooms was probably aimed at least in part at Chinese restaurants. The U.S. Public Health Service published a model ordinance prohibiting booths in restaurants, citing “recurring complaint[s] . . . that in “chop suey” places . . . the boxes, partitions, and booths made favorable places of solicitation and operation for pimps and prostitutes,” and explaining that its requirement for “the partitions to be removed” would mean “the entire establishment was thrown open to public gaze and opportunity of unlawful acts destroyed.”

As the Supreme Court has noted, land use and zoning requirements can impose a “substantial obstacle” on disfavored targets. But as late as 1971, the Supreme Court was reluctant to invalidate facially neutral laws because of discriminatory motivation. In *Palmer v. Thomson*, the majority wrote that “no case in this Court has held that a legislative act may violate equal protection solely because of the motivations of the men who voted for it.” Accordingly, laws prohibiting booths could be enacted with the frank purpose of disadvantaging Chinese restaurants. While *Yick Wo*

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291. U.S. PUB. HEALTH SERV., VENEREAL DISEASE ORDINANCES 29 (1919). According to their critics, closed booths allowed Chinese restaurants to “def[y] regulation” with nothing more “than a flimsy curtain between the hilarious and a possible policeman.” Rinehart, supra note 290, at 12; see also Police Commissioners Make Good Their Threats To Punish Saloon Men by Suspension of Many Licenses, DAILY L.A. HERALD, Sept. 2, 1900, at 5 (The Woman’s Christian Temperance Union stated: “We, representing the motherhood of our beloved state, do beseech you to listen to our appeals and that of all good citizens to abolish the stronghold of Satan called the booth”); To Make War on Restaurant Drinks, supra note 107.

292. See Whole Woman’s Health v. Hellerstedt, 136 S. Ct. 2292, 2316 (2016) (“[T]he surgical center requirement places a substantial obstacle in the path of women seeking an abortion.”).


294. Id. at 224; see also, e.g., Yee Gee v. City & Cty. of San Francisco, 235 F. 757, 760 (N.D. Cal. 1916) (upholding San Francisco ordinance limiting hours of laundries, noting “[s]o long as the act is fair upon its face, and capable of even-handed and impartial application to all who come within its terms, the mere motive actuating its enactment cannot be inquired into as a ground for avoiding it” (citations omitted)).
prohibited discriminatory enforcement, those targeted would have to prove governmental misconduct.\(^{295}\)

Ogden, Utah saw a prolonged battle against Chinese restaurants and repeated tests of prohibitions on booths, and a version of the prohibition ultimately sustained remains in force.\(^{296}\) An April 4, 1902 article in the *Ogden Standard* reported that “[f]or some years past it has been difficult for the restaurants, owned by white men and in which none but white employes [sic] is hired to make enough profit.”\(^{297}\) There were four Chinese restaurants in the city, but the article warned that more were coming.\(^{298}\) The hotel and restaurant employees organized, hoping “that more of the laborers patronage will be turned to the restaurants owned by white men and employing white help.”\(^{299}\) The Central Trades and Labor Council declared a boycott,\(^{300}\) and “ask[ed] the [City] Council to prohibit girls under 18 years of age from going to these places and asks the Council to abolish the wineroom system in vogue in such places,” which the newspaper predicted would require remodeling of a “dozen . . . Chinese restaurants on Twenty-fifth street alone.”\(^{301}\)

The booth ordinance became law.\(^{302}\) The *Salt Lake Tribune* reported that the ordinance was “aimed at Chinese restaurants, as it appears, they were the only ones called upon to comply with the law.”\(^{303}\) On June 1, 1903, the *Salt Lake Herald* reported that Ogden’s Chinese restaurants were “hard to kill off” and “thriving in spite of opposition.”\(^{304}\) In March 1904, Judge Rolapp declared the booth ordinance invalid.\(^{305}\) But the controversy did not end there. The *Ogden Standard* continued to warn that “[d]anger to the morals of young men and young women lies in the ‘chop suey’ houses,”\(^{306}\) and in that spirit,

\(^{295}\) See, e.g., *Ex parte Quong Wo*, 118 P. 714, 716 (Cal. 1911) (upholding laundry zoning ordinance).

\(^{296}\) *Ogden, Utah Municipal Code § 5-3D-4(H)* (2017).

\(^{297}\) *Chinese Restaurants*, *Ogden Standard* (Utah), Apr. 4, 1902, at 5.

\(^{298}\) *Id.*

\(^{299}\) *Id.*

\(^{300}\) *Boycott Inaugurated*, *Salt Lake Trib.*, Apr. 10, 1903, at 3; *Boycott on Chinese Restaurants*, *Deseret News*, Apr. 10, 1903, at 8; *Ogden Standard* (Utah), Mar. 22, 1904, at 8.

\(^{301}\) *After Chinese Restaurants, supra* note 290, at 3.


\(^{303}\) *Ogden Restaurant Keepers Win Case*, *Salt Lake Trib.*, Mar. 5, 1904, at 3.

\(^{304}\) *Hard To Kill Off*, *Salt Lake Herald*, June 1, 1903, at 7.

\(^{305}\) *Ogden Restaurant Keepers Win Case, supra* note 303.

\(^{306}\) *Reform in Ogden*, *Ogden Standard* (Utah), Feb. 10, 1906 at 4.
Ogden considered a new booth ordinance in January 1918. Chinese restaurant proprietors insisted that the ordinance “represented racial prejudice, agitated by the restaurant trust and directed against all Orientals in that business here.” Nevertheless, the ordinance was enacted and enforced. It is not clear whether the 1918 version of the law impacted white restaurateurs any differently than the 1903 version, but it is clear that Chinese restaurants received disproportionate enforcement attention. One Ogden citizen who rented space to a Chinese restaurant complained that this “appeared to him like persecution against the Chinese,” asking “[w]hy don’t you go after the white men who are violating the city laws as well as the Chinamen?”

In a test case, the proprietor of the Alhambra Café, a Chinese restaurant was convicted of violating a city ordinance. The Utah Supreme Court affirmed. The Court further endorsed the anti-booth policy by noting “[w]e know, as all men know, that the best and largest dining rooms everywhere are open, and that the respectable and law-abiding men and women do not seek closed booths or dark rooms when they go to a public eating place to eat their meals.”

Other booth regulations appeared across the country. In some cases, the regulations targeted Chinese restaurants. For example, the mayor of Minneapolis ordered the closure of a Chinese restaurant for selling liquor without a license and concurrently ordered that “all booths be torn out of Chinese restaurants.” Given the major union

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307. See Private Booths in Restaurants, OGDEN STANDARD (Utah), Jan. 23, 1918, at 7.
309. See Crusade Starts on Chinese Restaurant Booths, OGDEN STANDARD (Utah), Apr. 3, 1918, at 6; May Issue Warrant To Test Booth Ordinance, OGDEN STANDARD (Utah), Apr. 6, 1918, at 32.
310. Beginning of the Legal Fight Against the Booths in the Local Restaurants, OGDEN STANDARD (Utah), July 18, 1918, at 6.
311. The Alhambra Café was a Chinese restaurant in the sense that owner John Doe Leo was Chinese. Stamping out the Liquor Offenses, OGDEN STANDARD (Utah), Feb. 22, 1916, at 3. In addition, Chinese people were among its patrons and employees. See Chinese Cook, Hit by Auto, Dies on Way to Hospital, OGDEN STANDARD (Utah), Oct. 25, 1918, at 10 (reporting death of Lee Hun Poye, Alhambra Café cook); Chinese Woman Allowed To Go, supra note 209. However, the restaurant advertised “regular dinner served every day. Short orders served any time.” Alhambra Cafe, OGDEN STANDARD (Utah), Jan. 16, 1915, at 2. Therefore it is not known if it served Chinese food along with its American cuisine.
313. Booths Must Go Now That Supreme Court Has Decided in Favor of City of Ogden, OGDEN STANDARD (Utah), June 27, 1919, at 14.
314. Ogden City v. Leo, 182 P. 530, 533 (Utah 1919).
boycott in Minneapolis,\textsuperscript{316} and the mayor’s reported policy of denying liquor licenses to Chinese restaurants,\textsuperscript{317} this is hardly surprising. Similarly, following the “chop suey raids” of 1918, the New York district attorney announced “the abolition of private rooms in chop suey restaurants.”\textsuperscript{318} In other instances, news accounts do not make an explicit connection between the Chinese nature of the restaurant and the regulation. However, many jurisdictions that banned booths also implemented or seriously considered other anti-Chinese restaurant measures, or had strong union activity against the restaurants.\textsuperscript{319}

\section*{III. VICTORY AND NATIONAL IMMIGRATION POLICY}

\subsection*{A. The End of the War}

Something changed the war as it moved into a new decade. A 1919 union report indicated that in Boston there was “progress in the fight on the Chinese restaurants.”\textsuperscript{320} A 1921 report in \textit{The Mixer and Server} suggests that by then union goals had been achieved; as one columnist boasted, “I take pleasure in saying that the worst enemy that we have had to contend with here is beginning to wane and vanish, and we all

\begin{itemize}
\item 316. See supra note 69 and accompanying text.
\item 317. See supra note 248 and accompanying text.
\item 318. Police Capture 178 in Chop Suey Raids, supra note 112, at 8.
\item 319. One such jurisdiction was Chicago. PROCEEDINGS OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CHICAGO 2219–20, 2652 (1904); Bishop Sumner Urges Action: Advises Enforcement of Laws, S.F. CHRON., Jan. 27, 1917, at 4; Chicago Council Knocks out Another Saloon Adjunct, BEMIDJI DAILY PIONEER (Minn.), July 1, 1904, at 4. Another was Los Angeles. Police Commissioners Make Good Their Threats To Punish Saloon Men by Suspension of Many Licenses, L.A. HERALD, Sept. 2, 1900, at 1; see also Police Chief Will Now Act, L.A. HERALD, Sept. 8, 1900, at 5. Other California cities banned booths. Mayor Approves Box Ordinance, S.F. CALL, Nov. 22, 1910, at 8; San Rafael May Bar Restaurant Booths, S.F. CALL, May 15, 1911, at 3. San Francisco considered but apparently never adopted a ban. No Dark Places, S.F. CALL, July 7, 1893, at 3; Protection of Young Women Urged by Research Workers, S.F. CHRON., Oct. 23, 1916, at 3; Scandal Draws Toward Close, S.F. CALL, Dec. 9, 1904, at 16. Other jurisdictions included Phoenix, No More Sequestered Drinks, ARIZ. REPUBLICAN, Jan. 21, 1909, at 6, Tucson, Curtained Booths Must Go, ARIZ. REPUBLICAN, Mar. 21, 1921, at 2, and other cities in Massachusetts, Review of Liquor Laws Passed by States This Year, ST. LOUIS POST, June 21, 1915, at 14; see also EL PASO HERALD, June 21, 1915, at 6; Great Progress Is Made in Prohibition Legislation, BISMARCK DAILY TRIB., June 23, 1915, at 6, and Oregon, License Denied Six, supra note 290, at 15; Licenses to be Given, MORNING OREGONIAN, Jan. 11, 1910, at 16; see also Boxes Ordered Removed from Dallas Restaurants, EAST OREGONIAN, Apr. 29, 1911, at 7; Licenses Opposed First, Then Given, MORNING OREGONIAN, Dec. 30, 1909, at 11; Ordinance No 110, OREGON MIST, June 2, 1911, at 1; Private Boxes Doomed, MORNING OREGONIAN, Apr. 28, 1911, at 3.
\end{itemize}
wish him a speedy exit.”321

If union members and competing restaurateurs sensed that the Chinese had been vanquished, they were correct. The U.S. census reported 107,488 Chinese residents in the continental United States in 1890; 89,863 in 1900; 71,531 in 1910;322 and 61,639 in 1920.323 Anti-Chinese policies had reduced the population by almost half. The Naturalization Act of 1790 limited eligibility to “free white persons,” but people of African nativity and descent became eligible after the Civil War.324 While Japanese immigration was restricted by the Gentlemen’s Agreement of 1907–08,325 in 1924 it was explicitly barred by statute.326 Members of races native to continental Asia were barred by the Immigration Act of 1917.327 Congress provided that those racially ineligible for naturalization were also ineligible to immigrate in the Immigration Act of 1924,328 which became law “[w]ith the AFL’s strong support.”329 For all of these reasons, native white workers had reason to be confident that the problem of Asian immigration and competition was permanently resolved.

Unions had argued that Chinese workers should not be allowed to compete with whites because they were not allowed to become citizens—Chinese workers’ precarious immigration and citizenship status meant whites did not anticipate much pushback. Indeed, keeping Chinese restaurants around facilitated discrimination against Chinese workers. Those suspected of being undocumented could be targeted by law enforcement. The police raided New York’s Chinatown in 1925,330 resulting in the “largest seizure of Chinese under the Exclusion act ever made” in the city.331 In addition, employers could threaten recalcitrant

324. Chin, supra note 17, at 281.
325. Id.
326. Id.
327. Id.
328. Id. In addition the Immigration Act of 1921 put temporary limits on European immigration, which in similar form would be made permanent in the national origins quota system included in the 1924 immigration law. Id.
329. See Burgoon et al., supra note 14, at 942.
331. Id. The same source reports that “[m]ore than 500 [Chinese] were gathered in by 100
workers with deportation.\textsuperscript{332} To this day, Chinese restaurants continue to be immigration enforcement targets.\textsuperscript{333} Chinese immigration, and therefore Chinese restaurants, seemed to have been tamed.

Perhaps because the perception of the Asian threat was changing—tough immigration laws meant there was no more “yellow peril”—the perception of Chinese restaurants themselves also changed. In New York, the health commissioner said “that a report had been made to him that the Chinese restaurants were the cleanest in New York.”\textsuperscript{334} Connecticut authorities similarly reported that “[t]he Chinese restaurant is a feature in all towns and it is clean in its kitchen, cleaner than many other sorts in its linen and gives a more varied menu at a lower price, invariably.”\textsuperscript{335}

\textsuperscript{332} Chinese May Organize, WASH. EVENING STAR, May 24, 1919, at 2 (noting “underlying motive for these arrests [of restaurant workers] was membership in the union”).


[The officer's] attention was initially drawn to petitioner and his companion by their distinctively oriental appearance and their clothing. We do not in any way intend to suggest that the appearance of being oriental is in any respect “suspicious”, and we wish to state in unequivocal terms that we could never condone stopping or questioning an individual simply because he looked to be of oriental descent. Nonetheless, we need not be so naive as to blink at the reality of the fact that many of the aliens who illegally enter the United States each year are oriental seamen who desert their ships at such major seaports as New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore in our geographical area. Nor do we need to ignore the fact that many such illegal entrants find employment in and around food service establishments, particularly those specializing in oriental cuisines where other employees are likely to be conversant in their native languages.

Cheung Tin Wong v. INS, 468 F.2d 1123, 1127 (D. C. Cir. 1972).

\textsuperscript{334} 3,000 N.Y. Chinese in Protest Parade, N.Y. HERALD, Sept. 17, 1921, at 6.

\textsuperscript{335} The State of Conn., Report of the Department of Labor and Factory Inspection for the Year 1921–22, at 132 (1922); see also Charles C. Dominge & Walter O. Lincoln, Fire Insurance Inspection and Underwriting 176 (6th ed. rev. enl. 1948) (reporting that “CHINESE RESTAURANTS, generally speaking, are cleaner than the usual run of restaurants”); Emanuel B. Halper, Food Service Lease Use and Exclusive Clauses, 32 REAL PROP. PROB. & TR. J. 455, 509 (1997) (“Chinese restaurants maintain a more attractive
On both coasts, the “Chop Suey craze” continued, but often, slumming had been replaced with glamour:

Broadway between Time Square and Columbus Circle was home to fourteen big ‘chop suey jazz places.’ One Chinese night club owner, a former Essex Street laundryman, supposedly wore a huge diamond ring, rode in an imported car, and squired around a bottle-blond burlesque dancer. In San Francisco, most of these new nightspots were in Chinatown . . . . Featuring all-Chinese singers, musicians, chorus lines, and even strippers, clubs like the Forbidden City attracted a clientele of politicians, movie stars, and businessmen out for an exotic good time.336

Bing Crosby, Bob Hope, Ronald Reagan, and other celebrities patronized the Forbidden City, a glamorous nightclub in San Francisco’s Chinatown.337 The first major Chinese cookbook was published in English in 1945, signaling that Chinese food had been tamed enough to have around the house.338

And yet, unions were right to worry that Chinese restaurants could be a Trojan Horse, in that they served as an economic toehold that gave the Chinese community a chance to grow. As Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan and Professor Nathan Glazer noted in Beyond the Melting Pot, restaurants could be centers of economic activity for the larger community, because “[t]he Chinese restaurant uses Chinese laundries, gets its provisions from Chinese food suppliers, [and] provides orders for Chinese noodle makers.”339 In addition, a scholar explaining in 1943 the reasons for the partial repeal of Chinese exclusion statutes noted that “[a]n important factor . . . was their entrance into characteristic occupations held as a natural monopoly, notably, the hand laundry and environment than most.”).

336. COE, supra note 2, at 189.
338. Charles W. Hayford, Open Recipes, Openly Arrived at: How To Cook And Eat In Chinese (1945) and the Translation of Chinese Food, 45 J. ORIENTAL STUDS. 67, 73 (2012). Yet, Chinese restaurants are still exotic enough that some believe “Chinese Restaurant Syndrome” is a racial-psychological rather than physical phenomenon. See Jennifer L. LeMesurier, Uptaking Race: Genre, MSG, and Chinese Dinner, 12 POROI 1, 2 (2017) (arguing that, even though “[c]urrent nutritional research is focused on the potential positives of consuming MSG” and MSG is not “a primarily Chinese ingredient,” the beliefs that “MSG [i]s an inherently dangerous substance” and Chinese food is “an edible health hazard” persist because rhetoric has subconsciously “reproduce[d] prejudicial attitudes and solidifie[d] them into seemingly commonsense beliefs”).
Chinese restaurant,“ and asserts that “[t]his occupational specialization destroyed ‘white’ labor’s fear of competition, while enjoyment of the Chinese cuisine and other services won for the ‘Celestial’ the patronizing good-will, if not the friendship, of a substantial section of the American public.” So, Chinese restaurants not only provided Chinese people an opportunity to earn a living, they offered the possibility of somewhat more personal encounters with non-Chinese people than was routine in a laundry.

The war on Chinese restaurants is also an example of what Professor Douglas NeJaime has called winning through losing. Unions and law enforcement declared war on Chinese restaurants, and the Chinese restaurants won, in the sense that Chinese restaurants not only survived but thrived. The innovative tool invented for the fight, banning white women from eating in Chinese restaurants, became law almost nowhere and was, in the end, legally untenable. Yet, unquestionably the unions won a more important victory by eliminating the possibility of substantial competition with Asian workers. Indeed, the unions has their cake and ate it too, as they restricted competition with Asian workers through federal immigration laws, without having to forego the opportunity to eat in Chinese restaurants.

B. Drawing Modern Parallels

Because the proponents of innovative, invalid legislation lost the battles but won the war, the episode is reminiscent of the saga of Arizona’s Senate Bill titled Support Our Law Enforcement and Safe Neighborhoods Act (SB 1070).


341. Pfaelzer, supra note 53, at 99 (“Despite segregated housing and jobs, white and Chinese men and women interacted closely in rural towns in the West—at popular Chinese restaurants” and in other areas).

342. See Douglas NeJaime, Winning Through Losing, 96 Iowa L. Rev. 941, 1011 (2011) (concluding that social movements, “counterintuitively, produce positive indirect effects” in the wake of a failed litigation by using the defeat to mobilize constituencies, increase favorable cause lawyering scholarship, and influence legislators, among other strategies).

by many states, sought to impose state systems of regulation on undocumented immigrants. Unlike their predecessors in state legislatures in the first decades of the twentieth century, modern legislators insisted on enacting the laws and subjecting them to judicial tests even though the statutes were palpably unconstitutional.

Though a legal failure, SB 1070 was a smashing political success. It contributed to making immigration an important issue in the 2016 presidential campaign. SB 1070 attempted to allow state and local police to enforce federal immigration law, and much of what it proposed to do is on the Trump administration’s agenda. The failure and unconstitutionality of local measures did not make political impulses disappear; rather, it channeled them to the branch and level of government with the power to act, just as the drumbeat of the economic and moral danger posed by Chinese restaurants and other Asian activities—and the inability to regulate them at the state level—contributed to a climate in which Asian exclusion dramatically expanded in 1917 and 1924.

The war on Chinese restaurants also explains the idea of Asian-Pacific Americans as a cognizable group. As many observers, including particularly critics of affirmative action sometimes point out, Chinese, Japanese, Koreans, Indians, Cambodians, Vietnamese, (exploring the role of the states in immigration policy and enforcement, including SB 1070).


345. See generally Gabriel J. Chin & Marc L. Miller, The Unconstitutionality of State Regulation of Immigration Through Criminal Law, 61 DUKE L.J. 251, 252 (2011) (arguing that “state enforcement [of federal immigration law] would be unconstitutional even if it were explicitly authorized by Congress”). The Supreme Court struck down many parts of SB 1070 in 2012. Arizona v. United States, 567 U.S. 387, 416 (2012) ("Sections] 3, 5(C), and 6 of S.B. 1070 are preempted.").

Filipinos, and members of all other Asian national groups have different cultures and histories, often different languages, and sometimes distinct appearances.\(^{347}\) Yet, for legal purposes, they were often amalgamated as a single race, because the public perception of them was that they were all part of the same “yellow peril.”\(^{348}\) Concerned about Chinese immigrants, restaurant-related and federal immigration legislation targeted Asians as an undifferentiated racial group.

The story reveals that Asian Pacific American legal history has been underinvestigated. It is not particularly surprising that Arizona, California, Montana, Oregon, and Utah targeted Chinese restaurants, as those states had pervasive anti-Asian policies reflected by a range of anti-Asian statutes that prohibited Asians from intermarrying with whites\(^{349}\) and owning land.\(^{350}\) But eastern and midwestern states like Illinois, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, and Pennsylvania had no antimiscegenation or property laws targeting Asians or any other races, and those states or cities within them carried on heretofore

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\(^{347}\) Calli Fletcher, Note, *Using Racism To Combat Racism: Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin, 18 FLA. COASTAL L. REV. 413, 421–22 (2017) (“Further, the minority pointed out that students who are labeled or are forced to label themselves as ‘Asian-American’ harken from an incredibly diverse geographic locale, one that includes ‘roughly 60% of the world’s population.’”) (citing Fisher v. Univ. of Tex. at Austin, 136 S. Ct. 2198, 2228 (2016) (Alito, J., dissenting)).

\(^{348}\) Chris K. Iijima, *The Era of We-Construction: Reclaiming the Politics of Asian Pacific American Identity and Reflections on the Critique of the Black/White Paradigm*, 29 COLUM. HUM. RTS. L. REV. 47, 63 (1997) (“‘Asian American identity’ also has been conceptualized as a political unity that enables diverse Asian groups to understand similar unequal circumstances and historical treatment and that empowers the heterogeneous community to confront institutions that marginalize us.”). As Professor Yamamoto notes:

> [I]n the late 1960s and 1970s diverse Asian groups in the United States articulated a new encompassing racial identity, ‘Asian American,’ to raise political consciousness about common problems and to assert collective demands on government. By minimizing group differences among distinct Asian cultures and political outlooks, the racialization of Asian Americans aggregated political power among formerly disparate, relatively powerless groups.


unexplored legal attacks on Chinese economic activity. Racial discrimination imposed by law was not restricted to the South, and racial discrimination with respect to Asians was not limited to the Pacific Coast or western states.

One advantage revealed by campaigns against Chinese restaurants is that the Chinese enjoyed some diplomatic protection of their interests. In 1901, the Chinese legation filed a claim for damages with the U.S. State Department for mistreatment by Americans. When the Pittsburgh city council threatened discriminatory legislation, Chinese restaurant keepers sought help from their ambassador to invoke treaty rights, and a letter from the secretary of state shut down an anti-Chinese restaurant bill in Montana. When Chinese men around the country were harassed by the police after the murder of Elsie Sigel, members of the community would “call[] on the Chinese Legation and afterward [go] to the State Department . . . to protest against the manner in which . . . the Chinamen of New York, Philadelphia, and other of the large cities of the country are being persecuted by the police.” Of course, invoking diplomatic assistance hardly assured victory or even safety. But it was almost certainly better than nothing. By contrast, African Americans and Native Americans in the United States could rarely turn to an outside power for aid or protection.

Adding this chapter to U.S. history underscores the pervasiveness of racism in the United States. The Framers and the political leaders who followed them conceived of the United States as a white nation.

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352. Chop Suey Ordinance Passed, supra note 153, at 1 (“Chinese restaurant keepers . . . talked of appealing to their ambassador . . . if any effort is made to enforce the measure, which compels them to close at midnight, forbids women and girls to patronize them and inflicts a fine of $50 upon the proprietors for any violation.”).


355. “According to its English conquerors, America was always meant to belong to white Englishmen.” Juan F. Perea, Los Olvidados: On the Making of Invisible People, 70 N.Y.U. L. REV. 965, 972 (1995). In 1890s, American leaders believed “America was by rights a white nation, a Protestant nation, a nation in which true Americans were native-born men with Anglo-Saxon ancestors.” Sanford Levinson, Why the Canon Should Be Expanded To Include the Insular Cases and the Saga of American Expansionism, 17 CONST. COMMENT. 241, 257 n.52 (2000) (quoting ROGERS SMITH, CIVIC IDEALS: CONFLICTING VISIONS OF CITIZENSHIP IN U.S. HISTORY 3 (1997)); see also Ruth Gordon, Racing U.S. Foreign Policy, 17 NAT’L BLACK L.J. 1, 11 (2003)
Nonwhites were restricted in their ability to immigrate and become citizens; accordingly, it is hard to deny the white nationalist argument that the Naturalization Act of 1790 reflects the idea of a white America. On the other hand, few people are willing to embrace the idea that they also discriminate simply to advantage themselves. Intelligent, decent people required legitimate reasons that whites were preferred and others not. Those opposed to Chinese immigration did not oppose it arbitrarily; they did so because of a belief, reached after study, of “the inborn inferiority of the Yellow Man.” That does not preclude the possibility that their conclusions were subconsciously influenced by a belief that eliminating Asian competitors would improve their personal financial situation.

A broader point is that modern racial discrimination and segregation in employment, criminal justice, education, and (“America was proclaimed a white country and the nation was equated with its white population.”).
housing parallel historical discrimination regarding immigration and naturalization, because such discrimination was intended to increase economic opportunities for whites. Segregation was not simply a matter of social separation. Schools, jobs, and housing available to African Americans in the Jim Crow South, and to Indians, Hispanics, and Asians, were not better or equal, they were worse; the opportunities for whites were superior.

**CONCLUSION**

Chinese restaurants played a complex role in the development of the Asian American community. They made it possible for Chinese people to earn a living. But, even now, Chinese restaurants open to people of all races, often run by American-born U.S. citizens, seem to contribute to the conceptualization of Asians as perpetual foreigners. During a moment of geopolitical tension with China just fifteen years ago, “[a] radio station disc jockey in Springfield, Illinois suggested boycotting Chinese restaurants.” U.S. citizen Wen Ho Lee, a nuclear scientist of Chinese racial ancestry wrongly accused of spying for China, may have been charged in part because of Chinese restaurants. A witness inferred “something nefarious about the number of Chinese restaurants in Los Alamos,” and an investigator reportedly agreed, commenting that “just the fact that there are five Chinese restaurants here meant that the Chinese government had an interest.” Just as they did a century ago, Chinese restaurants contribute to a stereotype of Asians as exotic, and not quite American.

Recognizing that there was a war against Chinese restaurants offers several insights into American law. It is an example of how legal ideas can propagate. In this case, innovation occurred not through

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363. Natsu Taylor Saito, *Alien and Non-Alien Alike: Citizenship, “Foreignness,” and Racial Hierarchy in American Law*, 76 Or. L. Rev. 261, 268 (1997) (“To be identified as foreign, as Asian Americans have been, is to be considered not American and, often, un-American.”).


judges,\textsuperscript{366} international organizations,\textsuperscript{367} or colonial bureaucrats,\textsuperscript{368} or organizations of lawyers. Instead, labor organizations and the motivated private citizens who were their members directly pursued a legislative audience for their ideas.

There are reasons to think that similar movements today can reach powerful policymakers directly, bypassing the legal establishment. Few judges, international organizations, or bar associations would express the view that Asians are not fully American, but the actions and ideology of President Donald Trump’s administration seem to reflect just that. Steve Bannon, a former senior White House official in the Trump administration, hosted a radio show in 2015. During an interview, he discussed immigration with then-candidate Trump, who supported keeping skilled immigrants in the country, explaining “[w]hen someone is going to Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Penn, Stanford, all the greats” after they graduate, “we throw them out of the country, and they can’t get back in. . . .”\textsuperscript{369} He went on to say, “I think that’s terrible,” and to comment that “[w]e have to be careful of that, Steve. You know, we have to keep our talented people in this country.”\textsuperscript{370} However, Bannon disagreed, saying “[w]hen two-thirds or three-quarters of the CEOs in Silicon Valley are from South Asia or from Asia, I think . . . A country is more than an economy. We’re a civic society.”\textsuperscript{371} Bannon wildly overestimated the number of Asian CEOs, as a 2015 study showed “that 27 percent of professionals working in Silicon Valley companies were Asian or Asian-American,” and that “[t]hey represented less than 19 percent of managers and under 14 percent of executives.”\textsuperscript{372} Of course, many American citizens are of Asian racial ancestry. It is unfortunate but—as this article shows—

\textsuperscript{366} Anne-Marie Slaughter, A Typology of Transjudicial Communication, 29 U. RICH. L. REV. 99, 99 (1994) (“Courts are talking to one another all over the world.”).


\textsuperscript{368} Anthony Lester QC, The Overseas Trade in the American Bill of Rights, 88 COLUM. L. REV. 537, 537 (1988) (noting that western “legal ideas and systems were . . . spread, through imperial rule, to other continents”).

\textsuperscript{369} Willa Frej, Steve Bannon Suggests There Are Too Many Asian CEOs in Silicon Valley, HUFFINGTON POST (Nov. 16, 2016 10:34 AM), http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/steve-bannon-disgusted-asian-ceos-silicon-valley_us_582c5d19e4b0e39c1fa71e48 [https://perma.cc/HF5M-2U2K].

\textsuperscript{370} Id.

\textsuperscript{371} Id.

\textsuperscript{372} Id.
nothing new, that some believe that only white citizens can be a part of this nation’s “civic society,” and that something is wrong if the best economic opportunities are not reserved for whites.373