

Document A

The Page Act

**Forty-Third Congress. Session II. Ch.141. March 3, 1875 Chapter 141
March 3, 1875 Chapter 141.**

An act supplementary to the acts in relation to immigration
(only the pertinent sections are included)

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress-assembled,

SEC.1. That in determining whether the immigration of any subject of China, Japan, or any Oriental country, to the United States, is free and voluntary, as provided by section two thousand one hundred and sixty two of the Revised Code, title "Immigration,"....

SEC.3. That the importation into the United States of women for the purposes of prostitution is hereby forbidden; and all contracts and agreements in relation thereto, made in advance or in pursuance of illegal importation and purposes, are hereby declared void; and whoever shall knowingly and willfully hold, or attempt to hold, any woman to such purposes, in pursuance of such illegal importation and contract or agreement, shall be deemed guilty of a felony, and, on conviction thereof, shall be imprisoned not exceeding five years and pay a fine not exceeding five thousand dollars....

In 1875, the U.S. Congress enacted the Page Law, ostensibly to prevent prostitutes from migrating to the United States. Even though the statute stated that it applied only to prostitutes, in practice it prevented all Chinese women from coming to the United States. Enactment of the Page Law also marked the transformation of anti-Asian prejudice from an exclusively western matter into a national phenomenon.

Document B

“Our Misery and Despair”:

To add to our misery and despair, a bloated aristocracy (wealthy ruling class) has sent to China—the greatest and oldest despotism in the world—for a cheap working slave. It rakes the slums of Asia to find the meanest slave on earth—the Chinese coolie—and imports him here to meet the free American in the Labor market, and still further widen the breach between the rich and the poor, still further to degrade white Labor.

These cheap slaves fill every place. Their dress is scant and cheap. Their food is rice from China. They hedge twenty in a room, ten by ten. They are whipped curs (a mixed breed dog), abject in docility (tameness), mean, contemptible and obedient in all things. They have no wives, children or dependents.

They are imported by companies, controlled as serfs, worked like slaves, and at last go back to China with all their earnings. They are in every place, they seem to have no sex. Boys work, girls work; it is all alike to them.

The father of a family is met by them at every turn. Would he get work for himself? Ah! A stout Chinaman does it cheaper. Will he get a place for his oldest boy? He cannot. His girl? Why, the Chinaman is in her place too! Every door is closed. He can only go to crime or suicide, his wife and daughter to prostitution, and his boys to hoodlumism and the penitentiary.

Source: Dennis Kearney, President, and H. L. Knight, Secretary, “Appeal from California. The Chinese Invasion. Workingmen’s Address,” Indianapolis Times, 28 February 1878.

Kearny was an Irish immigrant was a leader of the San Francisco based Workingman’s Party who give fiery anti-Chinese speeches. The Irish felt especially threatened by the Chinese since they competed for the same jobs. Kearny threatened to harm railroad owners if they continued to hire Chinese. The sandlot was a vacant lot next to SF City Hall where Kearny gave his racist speeches Unlike the Chinese; the Irish could become U.S. Citizens and vote. They were a politically important force.

Document C



Source: "What Shall We Do With Our Boys" – 3 March, 1882 by George Frederick Keller for The San Francisco Illustrated Wasp

The Wasp was a 19th Century satirical magazine published in San Francisco

Document B



Source The Wasp of May 26, 1882,

This cartoon promotes the then-common racist myth that diseases were rampant in Chinatown.