

FROM IMMIGRANT TO AMERICAN

By

Benjamin Chan, John Cotter, Molly O'Handley and Hollis Kelly

A student with a backpack wearing a Suffolk University cap walks down Harrison Avenue. He is about 20-years-old, of Chinese descent. He looks at the windows of some shops and restaurants with Chinese names. Student stops and addresses the camera directly.

STUDENT

The Chinese immigrants are now considered the "model minority" because they show other immigrants and ethnic minorities in how they can be successful after immigrating to America.

TITLE CARD "Model minority". Definition: a minority group whose members are perceived to achieve a higher degree of socioeconomic success than the population average.

STUDENT (CONT'D)

In the United States, Chinese immigrants have a higher median earned income than races such as white, Hispanic, and African American, as well as other immigrant groups who have come to the United States. This economic difference sets a tone and expectation that they are now the "good immigrants" in this country. But this was not always the case.

Student looks up at the Chinatown Gate and then turns to the camera.

STUDENT

Boston's Chinatown is the third largest Chinatown in the United States, after San Francisco and New York. It is a true cultural significance that holds some of its past renderings to this day.

PICTURES OF BOSTON'S CHINATOWN BUILDINGS IN THE 1890's

STUDENT (CON'T)

Buildings during the late 1800s and early to mid 1900s as in the book "Chinese in Boston" for example, had family businesses on the first

(MORE)

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2.

STUDENT (CON'T) (cont'd)  
floor and the residential  
apartments on the above ground  
floors.

CUT TO FOOTAGE of same place that was shown from 1890s but  
new building standing in their place.

STUDENT (CON'T)  
As we take a look throughout Boston  
Chinatown, the area hasn't been  
significantly modernized in  
conjunction with current times.

MONTAGE of footage: Boston Common, South Station, I-93,  
Tufts Medical Center.

STUDENT (V.O.)  
It starts where Boston Common ends.  
It is bordered by South Station,  
highway I-93 and Tufts Medical  
Center.

3 EXT. BEACH STREET - DAY

3

Tourists walking around Chinatown and student is interacting  
with them. Footage of old men playing chess, pictures of  
newspaper clippings talking about crime in Chinatown,  
footage of a seedy part of Chinatown.

FADE IN MUSIC

STUDENT (V.O.)  
You always find tourists and  
visitors going to Chinatown to eat,  
locals gathering for the latest  
gossips. But do you know that  
Chinatown always has a bad  
reputation? As a den of crime and  
vile? We will trace back the  
history of Chinese immigrants in  
Boston and talk about their  
economic hardship.

CUT TO

4 INT. PAT REEVE'S OFFICE - DAY

4

The same student which has been walking through Chinatown  
now finds themselves in an office, and Pat Reeve sits across  
from him. Reeve behind her desk and the student on a chair  
on the other side.

(CONTINUED)

STUDENT (V.O.)

Pat Reeve is a historian and the department head of the history department at Suffolk University.

OVER THE SHOULDER SHOT OF PAT REEVE

PAT REEVE

Any immigrant group particularly immigrant groups of color were discriminated against as newcomers.

STUDENT

What struggles did the Chinese immigrants face when coming to America for work?

MONTAGE of footage: pictures and old videos of Chinese immigrants congregating after just having arrived to the United States and white native-born Americans 'reacting' to them.

PAT REEVE (V.O.)

They were newcomers, they were viewed as many immigrants especially of color being inferior to native born white Anglo Saxon Protestants ...

TITLE CARD "Anglo Saxon Protestants" - definition: An informal, sometimes disparaging term for a closed social group of high-status and influential white Americans of British Protestant ancestry who control disproportionate financial, political and social power in the United States.

PAT REEVE - CON'T (V.O.)

which was basically the general american populace expect the children born to immigrants, and they were also seen as incapable of being americanized so the word that was frequently used was that they were 'unassimilable'.

TITLE CARD "unassimilable" - definition: not able to be assimilated or taken into a culture.

VIDEO FOOTAGE of the protests and demonstrations of those against the Chinese in their residency

STUDENT (V.O.)

The slogan "The Chinese Must Go!" was said loudly by the opposition

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

STUDENT (V.O.) (cont'd)  
in San Francisco and outside  
Congress. Those against the Chinese  
passed the Chinese Exclusion Act in  
the US as the first immigration  
law; excluding an immigrant group  
on a national level.

DISSOLVE

MONTAGE of old pictures consecutively of the experience  
Chinese immigrants went through to officially stay in  
America. People ferrying onto the ships and head to the  
mainland, those held in concentration centers and the  
interrogation process.

STUDENT (V.O.)  
Non-immigrants labeled them  
undesirable; charged with taking  
away jobs, corrupting white women  
and threatening American  
civilization. The Chinese became  
America's first illegal immigrants.  
Their experience was extremely  
difficult in trying to come to  
mainland America and getting  
cleared by immigration officials in  
unpleasant conditions.

FOOTAGE of the ways Chinese immigrants tried getting around  
restrictive laws to reach the freedom in America.

STUDENT (CON'T)  
Most working-class Chinese spent  
their energy devising strategies to  
circumvent the laws  
altogether. Some Chinese utilized  
fake documents called "paper sons"  
and "paper daughters" at an  
expensive rate per child to get  
them away from the war and  
poverty. Chinese illegal  
immigration was a thriving,  
nontraditional black market that  
had long-term repercussions for  
both Chinese immigrants and  
American immigration policy.

5 INT. PAT REEVE'S OFFICE- DAY

5

STUDENT  
Where did they work?

PAT REEVE  
Mostly as laborers, in fact the first Chinese in any sizeable numbers came from California and were brought to North Adams, Massachusetts;

MONTAGE of the map of North Adams, news articles and pictures of North Adams and its shoe factory the Chinese immigrants worked at.

PAT REEVE (V.O.)  
~ there was a strike going on by Massachusetts native workers, and the owner of a shoe factory thought he could end the strike by bringing in Chinese laborers from California.

6 INT. PAT REEVE'S OFFICE- DAY

6

PAT REEVE  
However as the Chinese immigrants increased in number, what you begin to see is a concern particularly among the working men and women; they begin to worry about competition for jobs.

CARTOONS depicting Chinese laborers in discriminatory ways like seen as unnecessary and taking too much from others.

PAT REEVE (V.O.)  
That is when you start to begin to see the most vile characterization of the Chinese.

POSTERS showcasing the discrimination that Chinese were depicted as.

INT. PAT REEVE'S OFFICE- DAY

Pat Reeve and the student sitting across from each other.

STUDENT  
What other lines of work did Chinese immigrants get into?

(CONTINUED)

PAT REEVE

As with any marginalized community they created services and small businesses that served their community, like restaurants and laundry services.

TITLE CARD: "marginalized community": Definition: the lower class of society

STUDENT

Laundry services? Like HARRY HOMO DOW and his family?

PAT REEVE

Like Harry Hom Dow and his family.

CUT TO

7 INT. SUFFOLK UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES- DAY

7

FOOTAGE of students walking around the suffolk university library

CLOSE-UP of a variety of books and an overlook of the Suffolk University archives.

The Suffolk University student sits at a table, he has in front of him a plethora of documents, old articles and pictures which he is looking through, while he is taking notes. OVER THE SHOULDER SHOT behind the student, showing pictures of Harry Hom Dow. Student turns at the camera and addresses it directly.

STUDENT

Harry Hom Dow, is a significant example of a Chinese immigrant family starting off with a laundromat service. Then Harry himself being the first Chinese person to pass the MA Bar exam from the very university in which Pat Reeve works and I attend, Suffolk University.

CUT TO

8 INT. PAT REEVE'S OFFICE - DAY

8

PAT REEVE

Eventually over time, an increasing number of Chinese Americans sought a higher education as a means of beginning to bring back certain professional services.

MONTAGE of pictures of "Old Chinatown", as well as pictures of other immigrant communities; including Irish, Eastern European and Italian communities/neighborhoods.

PAT REEVE (V.O.)

But initially the Chinese immigration story and their occupational story is very similar to what you might see among any other immigrant who came before the Civil War, Irish, Eastern Europeans and Italians who came at the half turn of the century; they all tended to live in their own communities, and you know... part of that was that there was a certain push and pull-

9 INT. PAT REEVE'S OFFICE- DAY

9

PAT REEVE (CON"T)

The Chinese were pushed out of the white communities but it also felt safer for them to congregate in their own communities, known as Chinatown today.

STUDENT

So would you say that you could equate the experience of Chinese immigrants to those of other immigrants?

PAT REEVE

Up to a point...

ANIMATION of segregation;

Depicting what Reeve's is explaining in cartoon form. Little cartoon people of color (Black, Asian and Latinx) and little cartoon white people depicting segregation.

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