

A SHORT AND TRUTHFUL HISTORY OF THE TAKING OF CALIFORNIA AND OREGON BY THE CHINESE IN THE YEAR 1899 BY ROBERT WOLTER, A SURVIVOR

Wolter wrote this novel in 1882, the year the Chinese Exclusion Act was passed by Congress. The island that Wolter refers to as the site of the Chinese quarters is Goat Island in the San Francisco Bay.

“...it would have been impossible to find a more suitable and satisfactory place for all concerned than that island for the Chinese quarters. The island was sufficiently large for the purpose, and the Chinese being accustomed to boating and living on the rivers and coasts of their own country, they would have found little difficulty in communicating freely with the city and Oakland. Apart from the Chinamen employed as domestic servants, and such others as might have been permitted to reside within the city limits, all the Chinese could have been strictly compelled to reside on the island, but of course should have had unmolested access to the town, and should have been free as ever in all, excepting the obligation to reside in the quarter especially set apart for them.”

● QUESTIONS

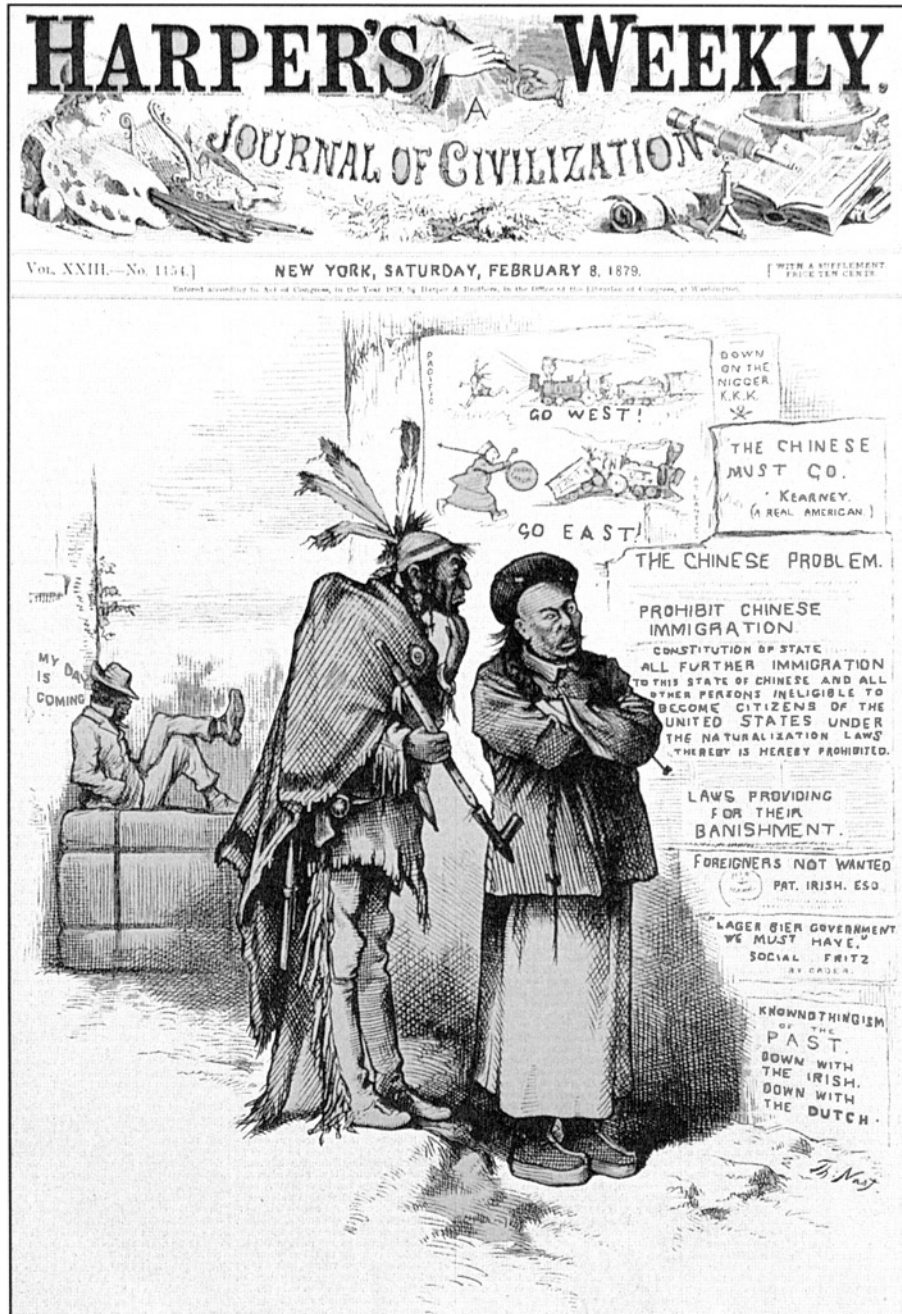
How does this plan compare with the reservation system applied to Native Americans in the 19th century?

Can you think of other instances in both the United States and other countries, where this same sort of system of segregation was established?

What effect do you think segregation has on the separated groups?

I The Chinese Experience in 19th Century America

This illustration by Thomas Nast appeared on the cover of *Harper's Weekly* on February 8, 1879, three years before the Chinese Exclusion Act was passed.



“EVERY DOG” (NO DISTINCTION OF COLOR) “HAS HIS DAY”

Red Gentleman to Yellow Gentleman, “Pale face ‘fraid you crowd him out, as he did me.”

● QUESTIONS

1. What is meant by the title “Every Dog” (No Distinction of Color) “Has His Day”?
2. List the groups referred to on the posters in the illustration.

How have each of these groups been treated?

3. What does the illustration suggest European Americans are afraid of?

In 1880 there were 105,465 Chinese living in the United States and the total U.S. population was over 50,000,000. Were the fears of European Americans based in fact?

4. What do the posters in the illustration propose as a solution to the “Chinese Problem”?
5. What statement do you think the artist of this illustration was trying to make? How do you think he felt about the treatment of the Chinese and the ongoing debate about the Exclusion Act?