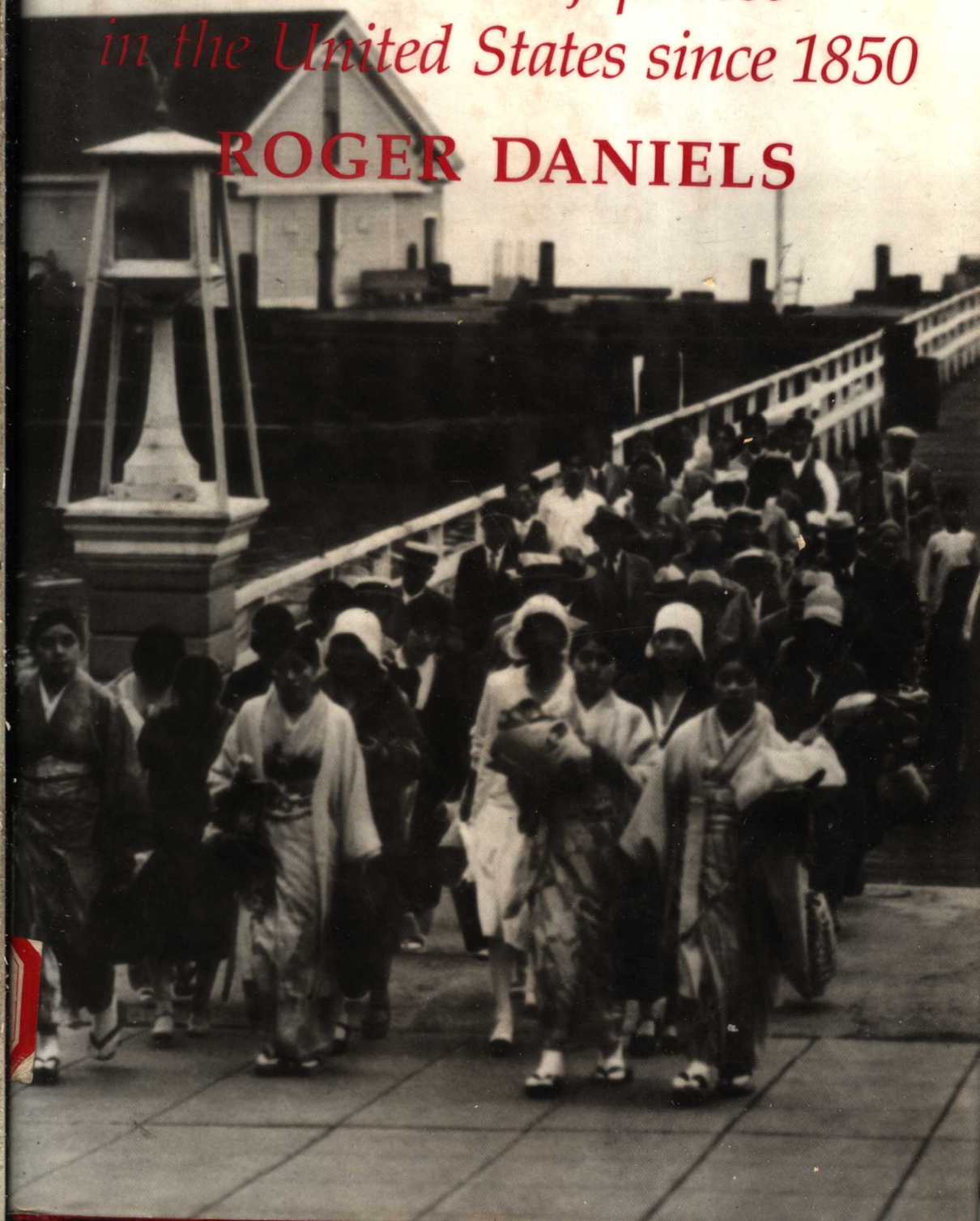


ASIAN AMERICA

*Chinese and Japanese
in the United States since 1850*

ROGER DANIELS



ASIAN AMERICA

*Chinese and Japanese
in the United States since 1850*

ROGER DANIELS

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON PRESS

Seattle and London

Copyright © 1988 by the University of Washington Press
Printed in the United States of America
Designed by Judy Petry

All rights reserved. No portion of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Daniels, Roger.
Asian America.

Bibliography: p.
Includes index.

1. Asian Americans—History. 2. Chinese Americans—
History. 3. Japanese Americans—History. I. Title.
E184.06D36 1988 973'.0495 88-5643
ISBN 0-295-96669-6

This book was published with the assistance of a grant from the National
Endowment for the Humanities

To the memory of
WALTER JOHNSON
(1915-1985)
Friend, Citizen, Scholar

Preface

Some twenty years ago at a meeting of historians, I noted that scholars who wrote about Asian Americans had concentrated on the excluders rather than the excluded. Because I could read no Asian languages, I assumed that I too would write “negative history” about the immigrant generations of Asian Americans: that is, history that recounted what was done to these immigrant peoples rather than what they themselves did. My writing instead has tried to synthesize the Asian American experience, examining and placing into perspective its essential role in American history.

My background and training have focused on United States history in general and immigration history in particular. As the son of immigrants from Britain and Hungary, I began to study the Asian component of our population when the accidents of academic logistics took me to UCLA. There, as a twenty-nine-year-old veteran with eastern and southern roots, I was trained by Theodore Saloutos, one of the pioneers of immigration history and a specialist in Greek American history. In an era that stressed consensus—and the notion of the melting pot is perhaps the arch consensual notion—I was more concerned with conflict and with ethnic and racial relations. In 1957 Theodore Saloutos suggested that I survey the literature dealing with Asian immigration and the reactions it aroused. My subsequent dissertation resulted in my first book, *The Politics of Prejudice*.

In writing about the first generation of Japanese in California, whose principal language was Japanese, I recounted what had been done to them, basing much of my work on the archival remains of their most effective enemies, the California Progressives. Later I wrote

about the World War II incarceration of Japanese American people and about the similar treatment of Japanese Canadians. Because English was the principal language of this second or Nisei generation, these later books took account of what this second generation had themselves said and done.

Now, after a quarter of a century of dealing with the Asian American experience, I am attempting a different kind of book. My earlier works are monographic, based largely upon archival evidence. (A text, co-authored with Harry H. L. Kitano, *American Racism* [1970], presents a broad survey of California race relations and is, in a sense, a pedagogical precursor to the present work.) The present book, while it uses much archival evidence, attempts to synthesize the history of Chinese and Japanese in this country and to treat their lives as integral to the American mosaic. Such a synthesis is essential to a clear perspective not only on the ongoing, ever-widening Asian American immigrant experience but on the immigrant experience in general.

The timely and pressing need for such perspective has impelled me to write even though there exists as yet no dense corpus of scholarly books and articles based on expertise in pertinent areas of history, economics, sociology, anthropology, and folklore. This being true, is this book perhaps premature? Obviously I think not. It is important that an attempt be made now to describe and interpret the political and socioeconomic aspects of the Asian American experience, at least of its two oldest and largest segments. What such a broad focus sacrifices in detail, it gains in showing wider patterns and relationships. For example, I would suggest that immigrants from Asia had experiences parallel to those of their contemporaries from Europe. I would also suggest that, despite certain similarities in their circumstances, the Chinese American and Japanese American experiences have differed in significant ways, one from the other. Such perspective is essential to a basic understanding of the recurring tensions within our modern multiracial society.

The title of this book should not be misunderstood. When I speak of "Asian America" or "Chinese America" and "Japanese America," I am not in any way suggesting that the persons who comprised them were "un-American," whatever that means. By such terms I mean self-conscious, residentially concentrated communities of individuals, much of whose daily business was conducted in the language of the homeland and whose chief cultural impulses came from the society the elders had left behind. Many immigrant groups in America have gone through such a stage, but for most European immigrant groups that stage has neither been of as long duration nor has its periodization been so sharp and clear. The crispness of the periodization of both Chinese and Japanese immigration is chiefly owing to the imposition

of artificial restraints in the form of immigration restrictions by the American government.

In my discussions of Chinese and Japanese Americans, I have tried to stress the roles of individuals and to show something of the variety of human experience that has existed—and still exists—among Asian Americans. The persons upon whom I focus are not, almost by definition, typical or representative, although I have tried, by use of statistics and tables, to provide representative data. All too often, those who write about “people without history” wind up writing history without people. That, at least, is not the case here.

This book will, I hope, cause historians and others to reconsider the broad patterns of the Asian American experience as they apply to our present and future course as a society. Although the major ethnic divisions in American life are and have been European, and although the major racial stress has been white/black, the Asian element in our history has been more significant than its place in textbooks and general histories would suggest. There is need for further scholarly work, and this book will, I hope, suggest a number of topics to be pursued. Much remains to be said on the role of Chinese Americans. A brilliant monograph by Sucheng Chan, *This Bittersweet Soil: The Chinese in California Agriculture, 1860–1910* (University of California Press, 1986), goes well beyond my remarks on the economics of nineteenth-century Chinese America. More such studies are needed. Also, my description of urban Japanese America before Pearl Harbor looks largely at Seattle and Los Angeles and draws on superior work by Frank Miyamoto and John Modell. More material is needed about the third major urban center of Japanese America—San Francisco—but no comparable study exists as yet for that city.

This book was written, for the most part, between 1975 and 1985. Two ongoing matters—the Vincent Chin case and redress—have been updated, and I have added to the bibliography some titles published as late as 1987.

I hope that specialists in Asian American history and culture will, in general, approve the result here, but this book is not written solely with them in mind. Intended as a catalyst, it is directed as well to historians and other students, professional and lay, of American life. If this book serves its purpose, much of it will be rendered obsolete by new work. This is the natural fate of any synthesis; in the words of Stephen Vincent Benét, I would hope that

... the dry bones littered by the way
May still point giants to their golden prey.

R.D.
May 1988

Acknowledgments

Since the genesis of this book stretches back to the beginnings of my academic career, an adequate acknowledgment of all the persons who have helped me is obviously impossible. Archivists and librarians at institutions all across the country have given valued aid, almost always cheerfully. There are a few obligations so pressing, however, that they must be noted here.

At the University of Washington Archives, Richard Berner and Karyl Winn not only provided access to their rich and well-ordered collections but also over two extended periods gave me a comfortable working home and provided both counsel and friendship.

At the University of Utah, Sandra C. Taylor, whose scholarly contributions are indicated in the text and notes, arranged for a quarter's stay that she and her colleagues made most profitable.

At the University of Washington Press, Naomi Pascal and her associates always made an author feel welcome, even if he were very late with a manuscript that kept expanding. Julidta Tarver saw the work through the press with good sense and humor. The editor for this book, Gretchen Swanzey, is a wonder who has left her mark on—and improved—almost every page.

Although I utilized libraries in three nations, the brunt of my bibliographic demands fell upon the librarians of my home institution, the University of Cincinnati. Particularly helpful were Daniel Gottlieb and his interlibrary loan staff and, above all, history bibliographer Sally Moffitt. Judith Austin of the Idaho Historical Society knew about and provided the kind of photograph I needed.

Parts of the research were subsidized by grants from the Foun-

dation of the State University of New York, the Charles P. Taft Foundation of the University of Cincinnati and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Students and colleagues at Cincinnati, and fellow scholars of race, ethnicity, and immigration from all over, patiently listened to papers, lectures, and my ramblings. Often, by question or comment, they helped me to formulate what I wanted to say. One of the latter, my dear friend Sucheng Chan, read it all more than once and provided help in many ways, even though she does not entirely approve of the result.

Finally—and most important—the historian and editor I live with ought properly to be listed on the title page. Judith M. Daniels has modified and clarified my thought in more ways than either of us can recall.

All of these persons, named and unnamed, are partially responsible for the merits of this book and, as the convention properly has it, are blameless for any flaws. I thank them all, and I thank, as well, the much maligned academic enterprise that has given me the training, the tools, and the time to do the job.

R. D.

Contents

<i>Preface</i>	<i>xiii</i>
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	<i>xvii</i>
<i>Introduction: The Significance of the Asian American Experience</i>	<i>3</i>
1. <i>The Coming of the Chinese</i>	<i>9</i>
2. <i>The Anti-Chinese Movement</i>	<i>29</i>
3. <i>Chinese America, 1880-1941</i>	<i>67</i>
4. <i>The Coming of the Japanese and the Anti-Japanese Movement</i>	<i>100</i>
5. <i>Japanese America, 1920-1941</i>	<i>155</i>
6. <i>Asian Americans and World War II</i>	<i>186</i>
7. <i>Asian Americans and the Cold War, 1945-1960</i>	<i>283</i>
8. <i>Epilogue: Since 1960—the Era of the Model Minority</i>	<i>317</i>
<i>Selected Bibliography</i>	<i>345</i>
<i>Index</i>	<i>373</i>

Illustrations

	Maps	<i>page</i>
6.1	Original evacuation zones	215
6.2	The WRA camps, 1942–1946	216

Photographs

following page 174

Asian immigrants arriving at Angel Island
Wedding portrait of well-to-do Chinese American woman
Los Angeles' Chinatown celebrates the New Year
Chinese Americans demonstrating against Japan's aggression in
China
Chinese American film crew
Soldier posting Exclusion Order No. 1
Two Nisei MISLS graduates interrogate captured Japanese
machine gunner
Col. Kai E. Rasmussen pins major's leaves on John F. Aiso
Nisei WACs about to fly to occupied Japan

1st Lt. Howard Y. Miyake being greeted by his sister

President Gerald R. Ford signing Proclamation 4417

The author briefing the Commission on Wartime Relocation and
Internment of Civilians

Tables

2.1 Chinese Americans in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Montana, 1870-1910	60
3.1 Chinese American Population, Sex, Citizenship, and Sex Ratio, 1860-1940	69
3.2 Chinese Americans 1920: Age and Sex Distribution	72
3.3 Chinese American Population in California and Other Western States, 1870-1940	73
3.4 Chinese American Population of San Francisco, Absolute and Relative, 1880-1940	90
4.1 Japanese Americans in the Contiguous United States, 1900-1940	115
4.2 Sex Ratio of Japanese Americans in the Contiguous United States and Hawaii, 1900-1940	127
4.3 Japanese Controlled Agricultural Land, 1900-1919	144
4.4 Japanese Americans in the Contiguous United States, 1900-1920	153
4.5 Sex and Nativity of Japanese American Population, Contiguous United States, 1920	153

4.6 Japanese Americans, 1920: Age and Sex Distribution	154
5.1 Japanese American Population, Contiguous United States, 1920-1940	156
5.2 Ten Leading Trades among Japanese in Seattle, 1935	161
6.1 Chinese Americans, 1950: Age and Sex Distribution	190
6.2 Occupations, Chinese and Japanese Americans, 1950	192
6.3 Immigration of Chinese by Sex, 1945-1952	199
6.4 Movement into and Out of WRA Centers, 1942-1946	242
6.5 Japanese American Volunteers and Inductees, by Relocation Center, 1943-1945	252
7.1 Japanese Americans, 1950: Age and Sex Distribution	287
7.2 Japanese American Population, by Census Regions and Selected States, 1940 and 1950	289
7.3 Japanese Canadian Population, by Province, 1941 and 1951	290
7.4 Migration of Ethnic Chinese and Japanese to the United States by Sex, 1950-1960	307
8.1 Asian American Population, 1970 and 1980	322
8.2 Years of School Completed, Japanese and Chinese Americans 25 Years and Older, 1970	325

Asian America

*Chinese and Japanese
in the United States since 1850*

Introduction

The Significance of the Asian American Experience

According to the census of 1980 there were 3.5 million Asian Americans in the United States, about 1.5 percent of the total population. This was the first time in history that the Asian American population had amounted to as much as 1 percent of the total. Numerical incidence, however, does not necessarily indicate relative importance. The burden of this book, which treats systematically only the two pioneer Asian American groups, is that the immigration and acculturation of Asians has been much more significant in the history of the United States than their relative numbers would indicate. Examination of the unique experiences of Chinese and Japanese Americans gives a different and instructive perspective to more universal questions concerning the nature of the immigrant experience and the role of race and ethnicity in American life.

To examine the Asian American experience involves, among other things, looking at American history the “wrong way”; that is, from west to east rather than from east to west. Most American history, quite properly, focuses on the Atlantic migration and its consequences; the emphasis here will be on the Pacific. Even the question of the frontier—since the time of Frederick Jackson Turner, a crucial nexus for those concerned with American civilization—assumes an entirely different cast when viewed from a Pacific perspective. The standard approach views the frontier as an internal zone moving relentlessly from the Cumberland Gap to South Pass and beyond. But among westerners, particularly Californians, a defensive rather than expansive frontier psychology often developed. Although Californians dreamed of expansion, territorial and commercial, ever