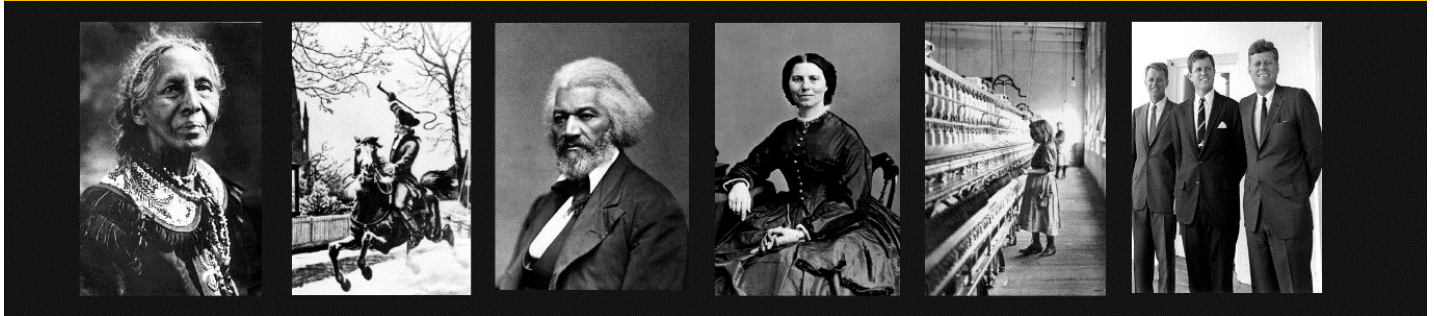


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**A Chinese worker hired by Calvin Sampson**  
(Photo courtesy of the North Adams Public Library)

# When the Chinese Came to Massachusetts:

## Representations of Race, Labor, Religion, and Citizenship in the 1870 Press

MARY M. CRONIN



**Abstract:** *In 1870, Massachusetts shoe factory owner Calvin Sampson did something unprecedented in the history of American labor: he hired seventy-five Chinese immigrants in San Francisco and brought them to North Adams to work as strikebreakers during a period when race and labor relations were highly-charged topics of debate. The “experiment,” as it came to be known, was followed closely by the nation’s press. Dr. Cronin examines newspapers in Massachusetts and New York during a three-month period following the Chinese men’s arrival and reveals that publishers’ political and personal beliefs about race and class, as well as their views of laborers and capitalists, influenced their coverage of the Chinese. Newspapers across the nation frequently reprinted the stories from the journals studied, thus giving these publications a central role in what became a national debate concerning the worthiness of Chinese immigrants. This debate culminated in the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882.*

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When readers of *Harper's Weekly* magazine opened the August 6, 1870 issue, they were greeted by a Thomas Nast cartoon titled "The New Comet." In it, a diverse group of citizens, including journalists, industrialists, members of the middle class, and laborers, were watching, some in fascination, some in anger, and some in despair, as a new phenomenon streaked into view—the arrival of low-paid Chinese laborers to a Northeastern factory.

The editorial cartoon was based on an event that had occurred two months prior: shoe manufacturer Calvin Sampson had hired seventy-five Chinese immigrants at a low rate of pay to work in his North Adams factory. The young men arrived from San Francisco via the newly-completed transcontinental railroad and took up their work within forty-eight hours.<sup>1</sup> The industrialist hired the Chinese after he failed to entice Europeans, Canadians, and native-born Americans to replace his striking shoemakers who were members of the Knights of St. Crispin shoemakers' union. Those



**The New Comet — A Phenomenon Now Visible  
in All Parts of the United States**

Thomas Nast, *Harper's Weekly*, August 6, 1870

employees had walked out in response to Sampson's demand that they accept a ten percent reduction in pay during the slow season of shoe production.<sup>2</sup>

Despite the metaphoric portrayal of the Chinese laborers as a comet and the placement of telescopes to view the workers' arrival, Nast's illustration was strikingly similar to the actual events of June 13, 1870. The young immigrants who stepped off the train were met by a crowd estimated at between 500 and 2,000 people that included curious citizens who had never seen someone from Asia before, members of the middle and working classes, industrialists, and indignant members of the shoemakers' union.

Although some members of the crowd jeered at the young workers, only two isolated cases of attacks occurred: one man threw a stone and another man struck one of the laborers.<sup>3</sup> Scattered among the crowd were journalists from New York City, Troy, and Albany, as well as reporters from Boston, Springfield, and a number of other western Massachusetts towns. All were sent to witness what they termed Sampson's "experiment."<sup>4</sup>

Within two weeks of the workers' arrival, an editorial in the *Lowell* (Massachusetts) *Daily Citizen and News* acknowledged the "experiment" had created shock waves in government and labor circles: ". . . the movement has been seized upon by political manipulators with great vigor, and has already made nearly as much stir in the body politic as the Fenian raid on Canada."<sup>5</sup> The *New York Herald* concurred, but a reporter for the Worcester-based *Massachusetts Spy* viewed Sampson's actions as unnecessarily troublesome: "The effects of his rash enterprise,—for whatever may be its final results . . . is to precipitate the quarrel between labor and capital into active politics by at least ten years sooner than otherwise would have been the case."<sup>6</sup>

The North Adams "experiment" quickly developed into a national discussion that went beyond the issue of whether or not Chinese immigrants should be employed as an inexpensive industrial work force. In an era that witnessed growing factory mechanization and a subsequent de-skilling of



**Calvin Sampson**

(Photo courtesy of the North Adams Public Library)

industrial labor, nativist beliefs steeped in Anglo-Saxon racial superiority came to the fore regarding immigration.<sup>7</sup> The young Chinese men never suspected their presence helped fuel ongoing, roiling national debates about race, class, labor, and citizenship. Reporters covered clashes between nativist and progressive viewpoints, and editors weighed in about the era's economic upheaval, industrial strife, and racial concerns.<sup>8</sup>

During a period in which reporters still mixed facts and opinions in their stories and editors viewed themselves as a key source of education and information,<sup>9</sup> the arrival of the Chinese provided a catalyst for journalists to consider some key questions of nationhood during the Reconstruction era, including: What did it mean to be American? Who had the right to become an American? Did race, culture, or religion disqualify someone for citizenship? And, relatedly, in a country that upheld individualism as a bedrock of nationalist belief, was there a place for organized labor?

Less than a decade after the brutal Civil War had freed 3.9 million black slaves, the press also was forced to ponder whether the arrival of the Chinese was a harbinger of a new form of industrial "wage slavery."<sup>10</sup> These ongoing debates culminated in the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, a Federal law that barred Chinese laborers from entering the U.S. for a decade, prohibited Chinese from being naturalized and allowed only certain individuals from China, mainly educated merchants, to remain in the U.S.<sup>11</sup> In an era of growing class conflict, opportunistic politicians saw the Chinese as an easy scapegoat to blame for the nation's problems. The 1882 Act was presented in palatable terms to voters back home who were told that the Chinese were taking away jobs. As Patrick Fisher and Shane Fisher note, the cry of "anti-Chinese immigration" became synonymous with "pro-workingman."<sup>12</sup>

A search using Genealogy Bank's historic newspapers database reveals that national interest in the issues of Chinese immigration and naturalization, and the related issue of Chinese labor, was high at this time: 24,763 articles and editorials concerning the arrival of the Chinese in Massachusetts were published in the nation's newspapers from June 1870 to June 1871. Editors sent reporters to Sampson's factory with some regularity until 1873, when the workers' contracts expired. Those correspondents kept readers apprised of the latest developments in North Adams, including whether the Chinese laborers were assimilating, as measured by whether or not the workers were learning English, were willing to convert to the Protestant faith, and were adopting western-style clothing and western hair styles.<sup>13</sup>

The majority of editors couldn't afford the expense of sending reporters to Sampson's factory and thus reprinted articles from newspapers that were able to do so. The editorial practice of reprinting was common at the time, but it

allowed newspapers to gain a disproportionate influence by the widespread readership of reprinted articles and editorial matter.<sup>14</sup>

This research examines how newspapers from Massachusetts and New York State represented the issues of race, class, religion, and citizenship that came to the fore following Sampson's hiring of the Chinese. It also examines the related concerns and debate about the role of labor during the Reconstruction era. This study is based on articles from the following newspapers (political affiliations are shown in parentheses after the name): from Massachusetts, the *Boston Advertiser* (R), *Boston Recorder*, *Lowell Daily Citizen and News* (R), *Northampton Free Press* (R), *Pittsfield Sun* (D), *Hoosac Valley News* (I), *Adams Transcript* (R), *Springfield Daily Republican* (R), *Massachusetts Spy* (R), *Berkshire County Eagle* (R), and the Worcester-based *National Aegis*; from New York State, the *New York Herald* (I), *New York Tribune* (R), *New York Evening Post* (R), *Troy Times* (R), and *Albany Evening Journal* (R).<sup>15</sup>

These newspapers were selected because their articles and editorials about the Chinese were regularly reprinted across the country, thus giving these publications a national voice on what became known as "the Chinese Question." The majority of these journals had reporters on the scene when the Chinese arrived in June 1870. Correspondents from most of these journals also visited North Adams with regularity. Since the bulk of news about the Chinese appeared during the period from June to September of 1870, this study is limited to that time frame.

The arrival of the Chinese provoked intense debate among politicians, religious leaders, union members, and average citizens, and the nation's newspapers were crucial vehicles for that debate. Journalists reported on the Chinese, and editors weighed in with often harshly-worded editorials. Both the articles and editorials attempted to influence the public by constructing images and guiding public opinion.<sup>16</sup> The latter was a conscious act. Even in the postwar environment, publishers continued to view themselves as molders of public opinion, seeing the task as an essential function.<sup>17</sup> And that opinion often was partisan, since editors saw such partisanship as part of the press' "proper public mission" in a democratic society.<sup>18</sup> Yet as historian Mark Wahlgren Summers states, partisanship was just one factor that shaped and influenced news coverage in the post-Civil War era. Prejudices, including class ideologies and views on race, also influenced reporting, as did differing definitions of what constituted news.<sup>19</sup>

This research argues that, in an era where partisanship still flourished, editors' affiliations did not always inform their support for or opposition to the importation of Chinese for use as a source of inexpensive factory

labor. Instead, a more complex mix of factors, including race, Anglo-Saxon beliefs in their own cultural superiority, perceptions of whether or not Asian immigrants could assimilate into American culture, economic concerns, distinct viewpoints on American labor, and varying beliefs in the definition of progress, impacted editorial policies. The research also finds that publications' physical locations also impacted coverage.

Before examining how the newspapers in Massachusetts and New York represented the arrival of the Chinese in North Adams, a brief examination of the inconsistent depictions of Chinese immigrants prior to 1870 is necessary to provide context for the debates that followed.

### CONFLICTING IMAGES OF THE CHINESE

Although almost twelve million foreigners were admitted to the United States from 1850 to 1870, only a small fraction of those immigrants—approximately 100,000—were Chinese.<sup>20</sup> The greatest number of immigrants, proportionally, came from Ireland and Germany.<sup>21</sup> Like other immigrants, the Chinese came to work and hoped to grow prosperous. Economic, political, and social instability in the Pearl River Delta area of southern China brought many of them to America's shores starting in the 1850s, a period marked by relatively unrestricted immigration. Unlike many European immigrants, however, the majority of Chinese hoped to make their fortunes in America, then return home. Some repeated the trip several times.<sup>22</sup>

No one image of the Chinese took hold of the public's imagination during the nineteenth century. Both positive and pejorative images jostled for dominance, as Floyd Cheung has noted, a reality which demonstrated an uneasy dichotomy in public thought:

During the nineteenth century, American journalists, cartoonists, novelists, and playwrights represented Chinese American men as both docile pets and nefarious invaders; potential citizens and unassimilable aliens; effeminate, queue-wearing eunuchs and threateningly masculine, minotaur-like lotharios. The way in which Chinese American men were imagined as “not quite” American and “not quite” men indicate much about how Euro-Americans defined “authentic” Americanness and manliness.<sup>23</sup>

Historian Stuart Creighton Miller's study of portrayals of Chinese immigrants in the American press reveals that these opposing stereotypes developed during the first fifty years of American contact with China.



Beginning in the late 1700s, the public's fascination with Chinese trade goods led to a keen interest and admiration by the middle and upper classes—and editors—for Chinese arts. The press relied on ship captains and merchants, individuals with vested interests in promoting Chinese products, for most of its information on China during the early years of press coverage.<sup>24</sup>

Negative portrayals, replete with pejorative stereotypes, including claims that the Chinese lacked proper morals and were filthy and disease-ridden, emerged during the first half of the nineteenth century as missionaries, steeped in Jacksonian nationalist ideals and Anglo-Saxon beliefs in their own racial superiority, began making their way to China. A new image of the Chinese emerged in the popular press: one that portrayed them as idolatrous heathens who were lazy, opium-addicted, dishonest, and drawn to thievery and prostitution. Chinese clothes and hairstyles, so different from those worn by westerners, often were ridiculed, as were their customs.<sup>25</sup> Missionaries' reports on China's high rate of epidemics (many of which claimed the lives of missionaries and their wives) also fueled growing American fears of the Chinese as that information began being reprinted in American publications.<sup>26</sup> Medical professionals who were just discovering the links between dirt and disease in the mid-1800s lent support to missionaries' views that Chinese filth and disease endangered American society.<sup>27</sup>

Events in China, including the Opium War and attacks on missionaries, as well as detailed reports on China's wide-ranging cuisine and the nation's traditional medicines, led many editors by mid-century to turn away from portraying China as "exotic," and instead view the nation with repugnance and disgust. For example, the noted *New York Tribune* publisher Horace Greeley told his vast readership that the Chinese were too great a threat to allow into the U.S. The venerable publisher also worried that large-scale Chinese immigration would result in a new form of wage slavery. The publisher of the *New York Herald* concurred, sensing that war could rekindle over the issue of cheap labor.<sup>28</sup>

The discovery of gold in California and other parts of the West initially brought thousands of Chinese to America's shores. After the signing of the Burlingame Treaty in 1868, the number of Chinese arrivals to America jumped threefold.<sup>29</sup> Some editors, exhibiting sinophobic attitudes, reiterated existing, yet unproven, pejorative stereotypes. They also highlighted the "otherness" of the Chinese, who attempted to maintain a number of familiar cultural traits in order to survive in an unfamiliar new land.<sup>30</sup>

Although the majority of Chinese immigrants were hard workers who honored their labor contracts, their exotic nature—to western eyes—led some editors by mid-century to view them with ambivalence and others with

hostility.<sup>31</sup> The illustrated press frequently weighed in on the worthiness of the Chinese as potential citizens. The Chinese, African Americans, Native Americans, and Irish immigrants frequently were lumped together “as something less than perfect; something less than American, something definitely less than pure white.”<sup>32</sup>

Some editors chose to ignore the Chinese in their communities, never providing coverage of them, while others lobbied for the Chinese to be accepted on an equal footing with other immigrants to America.<sup>33</sup> Further muddying the issue, some influential publishers, including those at the *New York Herald*, the *New York Tribune*, the *San Francisco Daily Alta California*, and the *Portland Oregonian*, shifted their viewpoints. Initial anti-Chinese editorials that portrayed the Chinese as “loathsome” and “abominable,” or that put forth fearmongering appeals centered on beliefs that millions of Chinese would pour into America, later were moderated as politicians and industrialists demonstrated a need for Chinese labor and the tax money the immigrants paid.<sup>34</sup>



### “What Shall We Do With John Chinaman?”

These images from the September 25, 1869 issue of *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* (New York) depict an Irish worker throwing a Chinese man off a cliff and, in the next frame, a Southern plantation owner leading the same Chinese man to a cotton field. (Source: Library of Congress)

The Chinese were not the first immigrant group to inspire nativist fears. As Irish Catholics began outnumbering Protestants in America, questions about whether or not the United States should admit non-Protestant immigrants developed into a national debate that was heavily covered in the nation's press. Native-born Americans accepted Germans and other northern European immigrants far more quickly than they did Catholics or Jews, since the majority of Germans were Protestant and thus were seen as easier to assimilate.<sup>35</sup> Methodists, in particular, envisioned and promoted a nation that was evangelical and Anglo-American at its core. They believed their faith brought "order, morality, and civilization" to the United States' diverse population.<sup>36</sup> Even before the Chinese set foot in North Adams, therefore, citizens and politicians were divided on key national issues concerning citizenship, race, immigration and class.<sup>37</sup>

## REPRESENTATIONS OF THE CHINESE IN NORTH ADAMS

In an era of intense newspaper competition, the nation's young reporters not only were allowed, but often were encouraged to put forth their own opinions and to make their news accounts "spicy, saucy, smart, interesting, [and] exciting" for readers. Except for a few staid, conservative sheets, no newspaper wanted the truth told in tedious fashion.<sup>38</sup> The arrival of a new group of immigrants—the exotic Chinese—to Massachusetts and the reason behind their arrival—labor strife—provided correspondents with a meaty story that had national implications.

The young reporters at the train station, many of whom hailed from Republican-leaning newspapers, were not uniform in their reports of North Adams residents' reaction to the Chinese. The *New York Tribune* correspondent told readers that the North Adams community, excluding its shoemakers, "received the event with genuine pleasure,"<sup>39</sup> while a reporter for the *Troy Times* (who expressed his own uncertainties) claimed locals were divided.<sup>40</sup> The *New York Evening Post* reported that residents voiced concern about whether or not the Chinese represented a new form of slave labor in all but name, as well as whether North Adams' merchants would suffer with the importation of "frugal" Chinese. The *Post* reporter turned those concerns into a class-based argument, claiming "the better classes" approved of Sampson's actions, while viewing the Crispins' behavior, which included threats against the Chinese and Sampson, as "outrageous."<sup>41</sup>

The *Troy Times* correspondent found the public ambivalent about Sampson as well, noting that some citizens praised the industrialist's business acumen, while others saw him as harsh and exacting. The reporter evinced sympathy

for the Crispins and townspeople alike, portraying both as members of a “better” class. Despite their “intense” indignation, the reporter said the striking shoemakers “have behaved with a moderation and propriety worthy of all praise.” The reporter also cited class as a factor in the workers’ reception, stating “the more respectable portion of the people intend that they [i.e., the Chinese] shall have a fair show, and shall not be driven away from town by violence or disorder, come from what sources it may.”<sup>42</sup>

The majority of the correspondents who covered the shoe workers’ arrival initially portrayed them as exotic and played up their otherness, with some correspondents highly curious about the new arrivals and others clearly ambivalent. None of the journalists indicated in their stories that they had ever met someone from Asia before and the reports strongly implied that they had not. Early stories focused on the physical and cultural differences between the Chinese and Anglo/European men. Reporters described the Chinese men’s facial features, their physical stature, hair, style of dress, food, and their “curious” method of cooking in detailed, anthropological fashion.<sup>43</sup>

For example, a reporter for the *Boston Daily Advertiser* found the young men a curiosity and said so in his article. One section of his long report was given over to a description of how the Chinese prepared and ate their food. The reporter witnessed the workers’ simple mid-day meal of tea, rice, and meat. The unnamed reporter pronounced the tea the best he ever had been given before telling readers that although he found Chinese eating habits exotic, he saw their methods as benign: “There is nothing intrinsically offensive about chop-sticks” the correspondent told readers, before deeming the eating utensils “harmless and rather interesting articles.”<sup>44</sup> The *Advertiser’s* readers also learned that the Chinese were far from the threat that some publications previously had deemed them to be. Instead, the reporter constructed a largely positive description of Sampson’s newest employees, telling readers the men were delicate, good natured, well-educated, and satisfied with the barracks built for them inside the factory. Their language was a curiosity to the reporter, who pronounced it as “strange,” noting “. . . a Yankee ear can catch neither available divisions [n]or consonant sounds.”<sup>45</sup>

A reporter for a western Massachusetts newspaper, the *Berkshire County Eagle*, clearly familiar with pejorative accounts of the Chinese from other publications, proclaimed himself surprised by the young workers who alighted from the train: “I was disappointed in their appearance, for as they marched along they looked neat, smart and intelligent. Most of them are young and had a merry twinkle with their eyes,” the unnamed reporter acknowledged.<sup>46</sup>

Editors who supported Sampson’s “experiment” heaped praise on his initiative. They also popularized a newer, benign stereotype of the Chinese,



### **A North Adams Shoe Factory Employee**

Chinese workers attempted to acculturate to America by slowly adopting western dress, learning English and acquiring knowledge of Christianity. (Photo courtesy of the North Adams Public Library)

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one put forward by business owners whose need for laborers forced them to set aside their ambivalence and present the Chinese as a model minority. Far from being threatening, heathen, drug addicted, and diseased, the new, pro-industrial portrayal depicted Chinese workers as tame, controllable, unthreatening, and hardworking.<sup>47</sup>

The *Boston Advertiser* seized on this new image with great relish, portraying Sampson's workers as enthusiastic young immigrants who devoted themselves to learning the shoe trade. The reporter was effusive in his praise, stating that



### **Workers and Students**

Many of the Chinese "boys" hired by Sampson attended Sunday schools and received elementary education from North Adams "ladies" who took an interest in their welfare. (Photo courtesy of the North Adams Public Library)

although a pegging machine was difficult to learn, the Chinese were not discouraged and stuck to the job “with persistence.” Sampson was said to be “exultant” at the success. The reporter gushingly predicted that Chinese-made shoes would “rank as the most desirable in New England.”<sup>48</sup>

Even Publisher Greeley was willing to suspend some of his pronounced aversion to the Chinese and allowed a more positive portrayal of Chinese industrial workers, although much of the *Tribune's* vacillating portrayal can be attributed to the publisher's long-standing dislike of Irish laborers, some of whom were among the strikers that the Chinese replaced.<sup>49</sup> A June 15, 1870 article in the *New York Tribune* labeled Sampson as “an enterprising shoe manufacturer” for his decision to end his labor strife by hiring Chinese strike breakers. The same article depicted the new employees as intelligent and eager to learn.<sup>50</sup> The *New York Herald* heaped similar praise on Sampson, seeing him as both thrifty and shrewd.<sup>51</sup> Similarly, the *Lowell Daily Citizen and News* of July 7, 1870, ran an article by a Professor Eggleston of Williams College, who pronounced the Chinese workers were “very intelligent and pleasant looking,” claiming that they were of “a different class from coolies,” a pejorative term used to describe unskilled Asian laborers. The professor found the young men literate and assured readers that they were learning English and were content and polite—the very picture of a model minority work force.<sup>52</sup> The *Auburn (N.Y.) Bulletin* concurred, reprinting Sampson's words that his young workers were “of a good race and of good blood.”<sup>53</sup>

Other publications mixed positive and pejorative representations of the Chinese, seemingly uncertain how to view men from a culture that was so different from their own. Then, too, decades of western expansion and the subsequent popularization of mythic beliefs in Anglo-American cultural and political superiority led many reporters to reiterate the popularly-held viewpoint that whites were racially superior.<sup>54</sup> For example, a curious reporter for the *Troy Times* devoted several paragraphs of his article to a detailed description of how Sampson's workers dressed, groomed, and fed themselves. Although he praised the Chinese for their culture's respect for elders, the workers' cultural differences ultimately proved repellent. The unnamed reporter admitted that of the seventy-five workers, he “would care to see around me” only one—a translator named Ah Sing. The young man had “Americanized,” during his eight years in the country, taking the Christian name of Charlie, becoming a Protestant, and adopting western clothing and a western hair style.<sup>55</sup>

The reporter also recognized and devoted space within his article to the bigger social and economic picture: Sampson's hiring of Chinese immigrants might signal a paradigm shift in labor. “Westward no longer the course

of empire takes its way. The tide is setting toward the East, and nature or necessity is reversing the order of events in the nineteenth century," he stated, admitting the ramifications of Sampson's actions were uncertain. The report concluded that the "experiment" would prove costly if it failed. Sampson reportedly had spent \$5,000 to transport the men from San Francisco. Local merchants also would be impacted by Sampson's decision, as poorly paid workers did not have the purchasing power of the better-paid Crispins. Sampson, the reporter concluded, "will share the glory or the shame of having brought them here."<sup>56</sup>

LeMoyné Burleigh, the editor of the *Northampton Free Press*, was one of the few opposing editorial voices. In a July 12, 1870 editorial, he opined that other editors soon would be forced to admit that the Chinese were a servile labor force that threatened laborers' livelihoods:

Many of the leading dailies are making an effort to convince the people that there is no issue pending the introduction of Chinese labor into the country—that it is not servile labor, and that of their own free will, not enough Chinamen will emigrate to America to cause a ripple on the surface of the labor system; and these same journals some of them, make a ridicule of the excitement attending the introduction of coolie workmen into our midst . . . the papers referred to will do well not to pre-suppose too much. The magnitude of future emigration is a question that they know nothing about, and the character of labor, whether servile or otherwise, depends very much on the character of the laborer. It is very well known that the genuine Yankee, who makes money his God, will hire workmen for ten, or five or even two cents per day if he can, without the least regard to value received, thereby wielding all the agencies of servitude without wearing the name. If the Chinese can be hired for one-half or one-fourth what their labor is really worth to their employer, the contract that controls their muscle is villainy, it is not servitude.<sup>57</sup>

## CHANGING LABOR CONDITIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS OF LABORERS

Labor and industrial interests already were in collision when the Chinese arrived in North Adams. Most nineteenth-century economists, many politicians, and a number of editors believed that a natural law of economics



existed, which, therefore, led them to believe that the regulation of labor relations was beyond human interference.<sup>58</sup> Reconstruction-era workers thus faced industrialists and editors who often were fiercely opposed to unions. Workers also faced strong opposition from state and federal government officials. Judges often dismantled labor laws and stifled job actions with injunctions.<sup>59</sup>

Wealthy Americans contributed to this antipathy. The upper classes attributed the working poor's hardships not to an unfair economic system, but to individuals' personal failings. Raised in an environment that blended Biblical teachings and longstanding beliefs in the value of individualism, capitalists and their supporters reaffirmed this individualist creed by emphasizing each person's ownership of his or her own labor. Unions were inimical to this mindset.<sup>60</sup>

Rapid changes in market forces, transportation, and manufacturing during the latter nineteenth century greatly affected Americans' lives. Change was especially evident in the Northeast, as a growing capitalistic economy consolidated in the postwar years.<sup>61</sup> The rise of a machine culture—a symbol of American progress and prosperity to some citizens—profoundly transformed patterns of work and life. Both steam and electric-driven machines increased productivity and gave industrialists a greater market advantage, but at the expense of skilled craftspeople who lost their once-proud status and became “mere feeders of machines.”<sup>62</sup>

Shoemakers in North Adams weren't the only laborers concerned about competition with cheaply paid Chinese laborers. Three months before the arrival of the Chinese in North Adams, the cigar maker's union in New York went on strike. Taxation, coupled with the establishment of large cigar-making facilities using cheap labor in other parts of the country, forced a reduction in wages. The *New York Herald* reported that manufacturers regretted bringing cheaper Chinese laborers to New York to make cigars, preferring to hire white, skilled labor, but argued that they had to save themselves from financial ruin.<sup>63</sup>

Sampson also wasn't immune to market forces. Larger manufacturers forced western Massachusetts industrialists to keep the prices of their finished products as low as possible.<sup>64</sup> Sampson's factory produced cheap shoes for the masses, which meant much of the work could be done by machine. Those machines allowed workers to turn out eighty pairs of shoes to a journeyman's single, hand-crafted pair, but also allowed industrialists to demand faster production.<sup>65</sup> At least some of Sampson's laborers objected to the new mechanization, however. A June 1870 *Boston Daily Advertiser* article stated

some shoemakers broke the machinery Sampson had purchased in protest of its installation.<sup>66</sup>

Industrialists from the 1850s onward hired unskilled workers with each successive machinery expansion—a business practice that saw workers’ power and wages diminish, while the industrialists’ ascendance grew. As wealth became increasingly concentrated in manufacturers’ hands, workers used strikes in an attempt to keep out untrained workers and to control both their wages and their status as skilled craftsmen.<sup>67</sup> The workers were fighting a losing battle. The age of corporate paternalism, based on the Lowell, Massachusetts model, had disappeared by the 1850s.<sup>68</sup> Competition and economic recessions had forced employers to trim costs.<sup>69</sup> The Knights of St. Crispin (which formed in Milwaukee in 1867) organized in Massachusetts in 1868 in response to workers’ concerns. Within two years, the shoe workers’ union claimed 50,000 members, a full 40,000 of whom labored in Massachusetts.<sup>70</sup>

As reporters from Massachusetts and New York converged on North Adams during the summer of 1870, questions about low wages, work speedups, and the wrenching changes in status that were occurring for workers often were ignored by many publications, while Yankee ingenuity and the progress brought by the machine age largely were heralded.<sup>71</sup> The number of positive editorial nods toward the Chinese also can be attributed, in part, to bias against shoe workers of Irish descent. Historian Robert G. Lee notes that in an era of intense bias against Catholic immigrants by the region’s Protestant elite, the Chinese workers often were seen in a positive light, even among individuals who were uncertain about Chinese immigrants’ perceived morals and behaviors.<sup>72</sup>

Not surprisingly, the striking Crispins were demonized by many publications. The *Auburn Bulletin* ran a lengthy interview with Sampson on June 23, 1870 that put the blame for the arrival of Chinese workers squarely on the shoulders of the union shoemakers. Sampson denounced the Crispins, portraying the workers as dictatorial and unwilling to bend to changing market forces. The industrialist charged that his workers tried to prescribe how he should run his business, including who should be employed, how much workers should earn, and what profits Sampson should receive. Portraying himself as akin to the Biblical Sampson and the Crispins as an unyielding Goliath, the industrialist presented himself as a fed-up victim who finally decided to do something about his condition. “I am confident the Chinese will bring the Crispins to reason,” he noted with certainty.<sup>73</sup>

The manufacturer repeated his claims to any favorably-inclined journalists he could find. The *New York Herald*, the *Springfield Daily Republican*, and the

*Boston Recorder* all gave Sampson a sympathetic hearing. The *Herald* called the Crispins a “tyrannical” order, while the *Springfield Daily Republican* referred to union members as “treacherous.”<sup>74</sup> The *Herald* put forth the belief that cheap Chinese labor would prove the death knell for labor. Sampson, the *Herald* said with pride, was a shrewd and energetic Yankee.<sup>75</sup>

Publishers supportive of Sampson or of “Yankee ingenuity” unleashed a barrage of criticism at the Crispins. The shoemakers were called “treacherous” and “ignorant,” while one of their leaders was branded a “demagogue” who was willing to spread a “mass of falsehood” to “ignorant hearers, very many



### “The Martyrdom of St. Crispin”

This image by Thomas Nast, published in the July 16, 1870 issue of *Harper's Weekly*, illustrates the threat many white Americans perceived that Chinese laborers posed to Massachusetts shoe workers organized by the Knights of St. Crispin.

of whom can't read the paper and learn the truth."<sup>76</sup> A reporter for the *New York Tribune* proclaimed the Crispins "violent," noting that they hooted at the strikebreakers, threw stones, and threatened "worse violence."<sup>77</sup> The *Boston Daily Advertiser* claimed Sampson faced intolerable behavior from the Crispins, even after the Chinese arrived. A reporter said union members were trying to get Sampson's remaining white workers to quit by using "every argument, falsehood, persuasion and threat in the power of men to invent."<sup>78</sup>

The same article charged that many of the Crispins violated one of the central tenets of New England life: they were "unthrifty." Readers were told that most Crispins worked only four days a week. The newspaper wagged its editorial finger at the Crispins' spending choices, claiming most shoe workers spent a disproportionate amount of their wages on whiskey and tobacco. In contrast, the newspaper said the Chinese worked longer hours for one-quarter of the wages and did not spend their money on drink or cigarettes. Sampson, the newspaper proudly noted, now paid out only \$2,000 per month in payroll; other shoe factory owners' payrolls exceeded \$5,000 per month: "Every manufacturer in the country has felt to some extent the influence of trades unions, for which the most powerful enemy [i.e., the hiring of inexpensive Chinese workers] has now been discovered."<sup>79</sup>

Pro-industrialist publications also highlighted that many members of the shoemakers' union were foreign-born—largely French-Canadian and Irish immigrants—implying that the shoe workers' seemingly belligerent behavior and their willingness to strike had more to do with their lack of American acculturation and less to do with changing industry conditions that directly affected their status and livelihoods. The implication was clear—foreign shoe workers had yet to learn American customs, including how labor negotiations seemingly should be conducted.<sup>80</sup>

A correspondent for the *Springfield Daily Republican*, in an article that was widely reprinted during the month of August 1870, said the Chinese workers were a "pleasing contrast to the other foreigners who, under the Crispin organization, have almost ruined Mr. Sampson's business in the last few years." The reporter was dismissive of laborers' concerns, stating: "It should be mentioned, as a commentary on the ignorant Crispin cry about 'taking the bread from our children's mouths to feed aliens,' that there are now more laborers employed in North Adams" than before the Chinese arrived.<sup>81</sup> The *New York Tribune* also seized on the hypocrisy of the largely immigrant Crispin ranks for opposing another immigrant group when the foreigners themselves had taken jobs from native-born Americans:

Jean and Pierre and Patrick and Bridget look at them frowningly, and declare that their [i.e., the Chinese] coming will be the ruin of a place which has stood one class of immigration so well; but the Berkshire Yankee is quite willing to put his civilization to the test of assimilating them, and is quite sure that kind treatment on the basis of perfect equality will have . . . [a] different result from any that has been developed on the Pacific coast.<sup>82</sup>

Only two publications, the *Massachusetts Spy* and the *National Aegis*, both out of Worcester, Massachusetts, struck a pragmatic, middle ground in the debate. A July 16, 1870, editorial in the *National Aegis* chastised union members' behavior, but also acknowledged that some of their claims were valid. The editor said the Crispins' previous successes in regulating the price of their labor led them to increase their demands and made some members think their "power was unlimited"—factors the editor said led to their downfall. Union shoemakers have "apparently forgotten the privileges of an American citizen to make his own bargains, to refuse to join a labor association, or to sever such a connection after having formed it, and have substituted terrorism in a great degree in place of the persuasion which at first filled their ranks and gave them their early successes."

Despite his harsh criticism, the editor of the *National Aegis* said he would regret if Sampson's actions permanently depressed American laborers' wages. Calling the Chinese salaries a "mere pittance," the editor told readers that Sampson's workers were huddled in barracks, subsisting on "scanty fare" and kept from "the most common luxuries to which American workmen have been accustomed." Such labor practices, he argued, were anathema to America's republican values and "not calculated to develop the qualities which belong to the free, independent citizen, and must inevitably tend to widen the gulf between the rich and the poor." He encouraged laborers to learn "the policy of amicable negotiation, compromise and conciliation" and counseled that the "relations of labor and capital are reciprocal."<sup>83</sup>

The *Massachusetts Spy* concurred. The newspaper gave space to Pennsylvania Congressman William D. Kelley's concerns that "coolie" labor was the key issue.<sup>84</sup> The Congressman, who grew up in poverty, called on his fellow legislators to pass a law aimed at stopping the unrestrained entry of Chinese contract laborers into the U. S., arguing that such immigration was in opposition to American values. Kelley recognized that a permanent underclass of low-paid laborers would have devastating effects on the nation: "It should be the aim of the American statesman to secure to labor such a share of its production that the laborer may be able to maintain a home in comfort,



“The Chinese Question”

Cartoon by Thomas Nast, *Harper's Weekly*, February 18, 1871

educate his children, and make provision for age and adversity,” he argued. But the Congressman said he supported voluntary Chinese immigration, arguing such immigrants assimilated more quickly and became dependable citizens.<sup>85</sup>

### THE DEBATE: A NATION OF COOLIES OR FREE MEN?

Faced with angry laborers and uncertain citizens, the *Adams Transcript*, located at the center of the debate, attempted to serve as a peacemaker, encouraging calm while cautioning readers that the newly-arrived workers did not fit the pejorative stereotypes that had been attached to the Chinese.<sup>86</sup> The timing of the arrival of large numbers of Chinese immigrants to California during the 1850s, a period marked by strong pro- and anti-slavery sentiment, made it difficult for the new immigrants to shake off the coolie “slave” label.<sup>87</sup> Then, too, a number of labor leaders blamed the decline in the number of jobs nationwide and the decline in wages on Chinese immigrants.<sup>88</sup>

The newspaper’s peacemaking role was necessary. A reporter for the *Transcript* recognized that Sampson’s importation of Chinese laborers had important political, social, and economic ramifications: “This private business step has thus become a public event of the widest notoriety and discussion and promises to become the cause of important business and perhaps political results.” He added that the arrival of the Chinese had the expected ripple effect—many strikers returned to work, accepting a ten percent wage reduction.

The reporter sought to dispel one of the main and most incendiary charges against the Chinese—namely, that Sampson’s actions had brought slavery back to Massachusetts, a state that was home to some of the nation’s most outspoken abolitionists. Readers were told that the new Asian cobblers were not working under slave-like conditions. The young men had signed contracts individually and had agreed to a three-year labor term. The workers did not have to pay any remittances back to a San Francisco agent, nor had Sampson ever agreed to transport the bodies of any worker who died back to San Francisco for eventual burial in China.<sup>89</sup>

An article in the *Boston Daily Advertiser* repeated the same facts, with the unnamed reporter attributing rumors about Chinese labor contracts to the large number of political, social, religious, and labor factions, some of whom were worried that the advent of cheap Chinese labor would reduce American workers to a permanent pauper class.<sup>90</sup> Other factions turned the term “slavery” on its head, claiming Sampson was trying to free himself

from slavery of a different kind—union workers' demands that threatened Sampson's business.<sup>91</sup>

Opponents of Chinese immigration looked to history for support. Most Chinese immigrants to the Americas had signed contracts that made them indentured laborers, a practice that was outlawed in the U.S. since 1862.<sup>92</sup> Many Americans, steeped in the racial norms of the times, further besmirched the Chinese by claiming that coolie laborers were of a low class morally and behaviorally, and thus posed a danger to proper, respectable members of society.<sup>93</sup>

The *Boston Recorder* stated that “the loud and persistent declamation of demagogues about ‘servile labor’ and ‘the coolie trade’” were nothing more than a smokescreen: the real issue, the newspaper stated, was the “question of the tyranny of labor over capital. The conflict is sharp, but it cannot be long. There is too much freedom in this country—with all its defects—for that trades-union tyranny . . . to become permanent here. And there is too much popular intelligence for even the Crispins themselves to fail gradually to see that it is their own throats which they are really cutting, with the weapons they are aiming at those of their employers.”<sup>94</sup>

Some opponents of Sampson's “experiment,” including labor leader L. P. Cummings of Boston, argued they would support Chinese immigration only if the Chinese arrived as other immigrants did—as individuals seeking their fortune, and not as contract laborers.<sup>95</sup> The *New York Tribune* branded Cummings and his followers as a threatening force: “The speeches and resolutions at the meeting of workingmen, last night, to consider the Chinese question, display a plentiful lack of sagacity and calm judgment.”<sup>96</sup>

The editor of the *Auburn Bulletin* concurred. While he allowed Sampson space to unpack his reasons for hiring the Chinese via an interview with a reporter, an editorial argued the Chinese were welcome if they arrived in “a legitimate manner” and not in a “semi-slave character.” Fearful of a flood of Chinese coming to America's shores, the editor argued that large numbers of unskilled and “ignorant” coolies would depress laborers' wages and “degrade the price and character of labor generally. . . . We know there are two sides to every story, and have endeavored to look at this new scheme, from every point of observation. We can see very little good and much of evil in it.”<sup>97</sup>

Although Sampson became enraged when a reporter for the *New York Tribune* asked if the workers were “under coolie contracts,” the industrialist's actions caused ripples of concern and discontent all the way to the nation's capital.<sup>98</sup> The *Massachusetts Spy* warned readers in a June 24, 1870, article that members of Congress were being pressured to pass class-based legislation aimed at restricting coolie labor. The correspondent sardonically stated that



Sampson had few supporters in the nation's capital, noting "Personally, your average congressman stands by his own poor, if for no other reason, because they have votes."<sup>99</sup>

The *Adams Transcript* refused to view the new shoemakers as coolies and asked the near-impossible of the striking Crispins, telling them to quell their anger and view the Chinese as on par with any other immigrants in America: "All these men came from China to California as emigrants seeking their fortunes, just as emigrants from Ireland, Germany, France, and England come every day," the newspaper noted, before heaping praise on the young workers by noting their intelligence, diligence, and willingness to learn the shoe trade.

In an attempt to tamp down broader public anxieties, particularly from North Adams' merchants, the *Transcript* article added that the lowly-paid strikebreakers were trading and purchasing goods "more freely and regularly than was expected." The young men had already spent several hundred dollars in town purchasing shoes, clothes and provisions for themselves.<sup>100</sup>

The North Adams-based *Hoosac Valley News* also tried to put the Chinese on an equal footing with other immigrants. After recounting the details of a labor meeting that took place in Hamilton, Ohio on August 14, 1870, at which a labor leader from San Francisco called for evicting all Chinese from the U.S. by lawful or violent means, the editor denounced such threats as un-American: "It is hard to believe that such stuff as the foregoing was heard and applauded by an audience of workingmen in America, or, even listened to by them with patience."

The editor added that the Chinese had proven themselves a model minority, then denounced the "merciless war" against the nation's newest immigrants: "Our laws and treaties invited them here, and justified their coming; and now is it possible that any respectable position of our citizens, can regard with favor, the idea of waging upon them a relentless war of extermination. The thought is too revolting; we cannot believe it."<sup>101</sup>

The U.S. Congress never afforded the Chinese that equal footing in America. Less than a month after the Chinese arrived in North Adams, members of Congress passed the Naturalization Act of 1870, which was signed into law on July 11 by President Ulysses S. Grant. The law denied the Chinese the right to become naturalized citizens.<sup>102</sup>

Fifty miles southeast of North Adams, the publisher of the *Northampton Free Press* remained an ardent supporter of the working class, many of whom undoubtedly were his readers. Although Republican in politics, LeMoyne Burleigh racialized the labor issue in a June 21st editorial. Harkening back to missionary-era stereotypes, the publisher called the Chinese "degraded"

and stated their importation “is a little too much for the stomach of Massachusetts to endure.” He blamed capitalists and union members equally for the arrival of the Chinese, however. Burleigh told readers that factory owners were more interested in their business transactions than in ensuring that the social character of the community was not debased, but said he felt “no shadow of a disposition to exonerate the Crispins from blame,” adding that their dictatorial demands “rendered them obnoxious to the community generally.”<sup>103</sup>

In a second editorial, penned on July 5, Burleigh provided substantial coverage of a New York City labor gathering whose speakers called on the public to urge Congress to take action against the supposed debasing influence of “coolies.”<sup>104</sup> Despite running the article, editor Burleigh did take issue with one of the speakers’ stinging charges—a claim that the Chinese shoemakers were akin to slaves: “However strongly we may protest against the introduction of coolie labor into Massachusetts, we cannot accept the interpretation. . . . They stigmatized it as an introduction of slavery into the State. That is false in letter at least,” the editor stated.<sup>105</sup> He added that the people of Massachusetts would not tolerate slavery in any form: “[T]he imputation of such a crime is a gross slander on the character of her people.”

Burleigh did, however, support the Crispins’ attempts to gain labor rights at a time when unfettered market activity was rapidly reshaping America’s economy and its society.<sup>106</sup> He gave voice to laborers’ fears that as the laws of supply and demand came to dictate the buying and selling of everything, industrialists were establishing a new era of feudalism that would reduce “freemen” to “wage slaves.”<sup>107</sup> Burleigh also charged that the hiring of poorly-paid Chinese undermined laborers’ attempts to better themselves. The editor predicted that Sampson’s decision would “culminate in disaster” for New England’s working class.<sup>108</sup>

The *Northampton Free Press* editor’s criticisms did not stop once he voiced his concerns for laborers’ status and wages. Burleigh continued his racially-tinged denunciation of Chinese immigrants in an August 5, 1870, editorial in which he claimed that their “heathen” beliefs as well as their sojourner status made them unfit immigrants:

This irruption [sic] of pagan muscle into our factories, fields and work-shops has no element in common with the emigration of other foreigners into our midst. The German, the Irishman, the Englishman, the Norwegian, all come to this country, and identify their destinies with its welfare; they form a part of our people, having a common interest with us in our schools and

political affairs, our industries, our social conditions, our religious and moral issues; and the people welcome their advent because they come among us with this intent to make the country their home, sharing equally with the native-born population in all its variety of destiny.<sup>109</sup>

The editor's invectives continued throughout the summer months. Burleigh repeatedly restated his belief that the otherness of the Chinese made them unsuitable as immigrants. Then, too, he told his readers, most Chinese came to America to make money, not to assimilate.<sup>110</sup> Despite the editor's harsh claims, he never called for mass deportation.

## CONCLUSION

The arrival of the Chinese to North Adams in 1870 produced very public debates about race, class, labor, and citizenship expectations. Among members of the press, publishers whose newspapers supported the hiring of Chinese immigrants in America's factories largely took pro-industrialist, anti-labor stances. And, while many of the publications that supported Sampson's experiment evinced unease toward immigrants whose culture was so different from that of Americans and Europeans, publishers clearly stated or implied that the economic benefit outweighed social concerns. Their belief in the role of a natural law of economics, adherence to longstanding republican values of individualism, and/or fears of growing, and potentially violent, labor strife led many publishers to portray the Chinese shoemakers as a model minority who were beginning to fit into the American melting pot by proving themselves to be hard workers, learning English, attending Sunday school, and slowly adopting western dress.<sup>111</sup>

Indeed, as summer turned into autumn, the *Springfield Republican* noted with satisfaction in an August 1870 article that only four or five of the young Chinese men had been dismissed from their contracts and that Sampson was hiring fifty more Chinese laborers for his factory—clear proof that the Chinese were worthy immigrants. The *Republican* article also portrayed the Chinese as a model minority, referring to them as “peaceable, industrious, quiet and eager to learn, and in every respect [a] pleasing contrast to the other foreigners who, under the Crispin organization, have almost ruined Mr. Sampson's business in the last few years.”<sup>112</sup>

The *New York Tribune* also expressed satisfaction, noting in a September 18, 1870, article that the Chinese had mastered the shoe making trade.<sup>113</sup> The *Albany Evening Journal* went further, portraying the young workers as

the type of laborers that industrialists wanted. The *Journal* called the Chinese shoe makers “peaceable, industrious, quiet, and eager to learn.” The article added that the workers were learning English and attending Sunday school.<sup>114</sup>

While the pro-industrialist press supported the right of Chinese immigrants to vie for jobs in America to the point of denying that the Chinese were akin to “coolie” slave laborers, their silence on whether or not the Chinese deserved a right to citizenship was equally telling. Although Congress denied naturalization rights to the Chinese, the newspapers in this study did not disagree with the federal law. Instead, pro-industrialist publishers were willing to go only so far in their support for the new Asian immigrants. Publishers praised the Chinese for their willingness to assimilate, but their otherness continued to provoke unease. In the view of many Anglo-Saxons, the Chinese clearly were not racial equals.

Publications that supported Chinese immigration did so with one caveat: the Chinese had to come as voluntary immigrants, a legal necessity that the nation’s editors believed would produce dependable and assimilable citizens. The issue of citizenship also came to the forefront of a number of articles and editorials, but it was focused on European and French-Canadian immigrants, who were taken to task, more than the Chinese, for not understanding longstanding American values and their implications for the relationship between capital and labor.

Opponents of Chinese immigration, including the editor of the *Northampton Free Press*, penned increasingly strident editorials that both argued for laborers’ rights while also dipping into antebellum-era “yellow peril” appeals where the Chinese were concerned. Complicating matters, a number of prominent New York publishers, including Horace Greeley and the *Herald*’s James Gordon Bennett, Jr., continued to vacillate on the topic throughout the summer of 1870. Positive articles about North Adams’ hardworking Chinese immigrants shared space with often shrill editorials on the cultural and racial dangers inherent in admitting the Chinese to America.<sup>115</sup>

In an era when editors viewed themselves as guides of public opinion, the differing views on Chinese immigration and the possibility of a large-scale Chinese labor force in America demonstrated that vibrant, personal, and often self-interested journalism still existed in the postwar era. Yet the press’ collective uncertainty about the role and place—if any—of the Chinese in American society sowed confusion and demonstrated the complex nature that race held in the postwar environment.

Twelve years after Calvin Sampson experimented with Chinese strikebreakers, the U.S. Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act, a law

which barred most Chinese from entering the country for ten years. Many of the arguments put forth by the press, politicians and labor leaders when the Chinese arrived in North Adams reverberated for a decade and came to the fore during congressional debates in 1882. Supporters of exclusion prevailed, arguing that Chinese immigrants were too alien, too servile, pagan in their beliefs, culturally unassimilable, and uninterested in contributing to the growth and well-being of American society.<sup>116</sup>

HJM

## Notes

1. Soon after Sampson hired his Chinese workforce, other Chinese were hired to work at a laundry in Belleville, New Jersey. Captain James B. Hervey hired the Chinese for his Passaic Steam Laundry because, in Hervey's view, the young Irish women he previously had employed were prone to striking. John Kuo Wei Tchen, "New York Chinese: The Nineteenth-Century Pre-Chinatown Settlement," *Chinese America: History and Perspective* (1995): 161-163; "The Chinese in Massachusetts," *Boston Daily Journal*, June 15, 1870; "John Chinaman in Massachusetts," *Massachusetts Spy*, June 17, 1870.
2. "The Chinese in Massachusetts"; "The Chinese Laborer in Massachusetts," *Northampton Free Press*, June 21, 1870, 2; "The North Adams Sampson," *Auburn Bulletin*, June 23, 1870. For a historical analysis of the arrival of the Chinese in North Adams, see Andrew Gyory, *Closing the Gate: Race, Politics, and the Chinese Exclusion Act* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 39-59.
3. "The Chinese Labor Question," *New York Tribune*, June 15, 1870; "The New Labor Movement," *New York Herald*, June 26, 1870.
4. "The Chinese in Massachusetts"; "Chinese Notes," *Adams Transcript*, June 23, 1870. The *Troy* (New York) *Times* reporter mentioned that many reporters were in the crowd, specifically noting journalists from the *New York World*, *Boston Advertiser*, and *Springfield Republican* in the crowd. "Confucius on the Sole," *Troy Times*, June 25, 1870.
5. "The Chinese 'Invasion' of New England," *Lowell Daily Citizen and News*, July 6, 1870; "Beecher and Butler on the Late Fourth of July," *New York Herald*, July 6, 1870. For information on the 1866 Fenian raid on Canada, see P. M. Toner, "The 'Green Ghost': Canada's Fenians and the Raids," *Eire-Ireland* 16, no. 4 (1981): 27-47; Brendan O. Cathaoir, "American Fenianism and Canada, 1865-1871," *The Irish Sword* 8, no. 31 (1967): 77-87.
6. "Letter from Washington," *Massachusetts Spy*, June 24, 1870. *The New York Herald* observed that politicians from both political parties would seize the opportunity

to politicize the “Chinese Question” to gain supporters, especially union members (“Chinese Labor – the Political Question,” *New York Herald*, June 29, 1870; “The Chinese Labor Question,” *New York Tribune*, July 30, 1870).

7. Robert G. Lee, *Orientalists: Asian Americans in Popular Culture* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999), 10; Jonathan A. Glickstein, *American Exceptionalism, American Anxiety: Wages, Competition, and Degraded Labor in the Antebellum United States* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2002), 218-221; Alexander Saxton, *The Indispensable Enemy: Labor and the Anti-Chinese Movement* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), 44-45, 104-105, 112-20.

8. Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877* (New York: Perennial Classics, 1988), 477, 564; Saxton, 116-120, 128-129; Bill Ong Hing, *To Be an American: Cultural Pluralism and the Rhetoric of Assimilation* (New York: New York University Press, 1997), 14-15.

9. Hazel Dicken-Garcia, *Journalistic Standards in Nineteenth-Century America* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), 157-158.

10. <https://www2.census.gov/prod2/decennial/documents/00165897ch14.pdf> (accessed August 19, 2016); Lee, 54-56, 58-64; Roger Daniels, *Asian America: Chinese and Japanese in the United States Since 1850* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2015), 12.

11. Erika Lee, *At America's Gates: Chinese Immigration During the Exclusion Era, 1882-1943* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 6; Gyory, 223; Anthony W. Lee, *A Shoemaker's Story* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 10.

12. Patrick Fisher and Shane Fisher, “Congressional Passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882,” *Immigrants and Minorities* 20, no. 2 (2001): 59-60, 72; Gyory, 237.

13. For a few representative samples, see “The Chinese at North Adams,” *Hartford* (Conn.) *Courant*, February 20, 1871; *New York Tribune*, March 23, 1871; *New York Sun* October 15, 1862; “Chinese and American Labor,” *Auburn* (New York) *Daily Bulletin*, May 31, 1873.

14. Dicken-Garcia, 54-55.

15. Not every newspaper listed a political affiliation. Information on political affiliation comes from *Geo. P. Rowell and Co's American Newspaper Directory for 1870* (New York: Geo. P. Rowell and Co., 1872).

16. Stuart Creighton Miller, *The Unwelcome Immigrant: American Image of the Chinese* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969), 174-184; Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (London: Verso, 1991), 24-25; Stuart Hall, *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices* (London: Sage Publications, 1997), 19.

17. Dicken-Garcia, 161-162.

18. Richard L. Kaplan, *Politics and the American Press: The Rise of Objectivity, 1865-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 22-23; Mark Wahlgren

Summers, *The Press Gang: Newspapers and Politics, 1865-1878* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 4-5.

19. Summers, 6.

20. <http://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0029/tab01.html> (accessed July 12, 2016); Daniels, 9. Publisher Edwin Lawrence Godkin of the *New York Evening Post* viewed the growing hysteria concerning Chinese immigration as manufactured, snidely noting that both parties “evidently mean to make it a political question . . . unless somebody stops them with a few facts.” He then provided those facts, noting that only 7,000 Chinese were arriving in the U.S. each year while more than 300,000 individuals arrived annually from Europe. “Is There a Chinese Question?” *New York Evening Post*, July 5, 1870.

21. “Is There a Chinese Question?” *New York Evening Post*, July 5, 1870.

22. Lee, 2.

23. Floyd Cheung, “Anxious and Ambivalent Representations: Nineteenth-Century Images of Chinese American Men,” *Journal of American Culture* 30, no. 3 (2007): 293.

24. Miller, 16-17; Ellen Paul Denker, *After the Chinese Taste: China's Influence in America, 1730-1930* (Salem: Peabody Essex Museum, 1985), 20.

25. Alexander Saxton, *The Rise and Fall of the White Republic: Class, Politics, and Mass Culture in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Verso, 2003), 293.

26. Lee, *At America's Gates*, 25; Miller, 59-62; Denker, 20; Reginald Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), 252.

27. Lee, *Orientalists*, 9; Miller, 146, 160-161.

28. Jean Pfaelzer, *Driven Out: The Forgotten War Against Chinese Americans* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), xxi; Lee, *Orientalists*, 3; Miller, 174.

29. Saxton, 218.

30. Hing, 15-16.

31. Mary M. Cronin and William E. Huntzicker, “Popular Chinese Images and ‘The Coming Man’ of 1870: Racial Representations of Chinese,” *Journalism History* 38, no. 2 (2012): 90-91; William E. Huntzicker, “Newspaper Representations of China and Chinese Americans,” in *Outsiders in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Press History: Multicultural Perspectives*, eds. Frankie Hutton and Barbara Straus Reed (Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1995), 93-114; Charles J. McClain, *In Search of Equality* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 9-36.

32. David R. Spencer, “No Laughing Matter: 19th Century Editorial Cartoons and the Business of Race,” *International Journal of Comic Art* 11, no. 1 (2009): 213.

33. Herman B. Chiu, “Power of the Press: How Newspapers in Four Communities Erased Thousands of Chinese from Oregon history,” *American Journalism* 16, no. 1 (1999): 59-60; “Is There a Chinese Question?,” “A Chinese Colony in Massachusetts,” *New York Evening Post*, June 17, 1870; “What Shall Be Done with John Chinaman?” *New York Tribune*, March 3, 1870.

34. Robert Edward Wynne, *Reaction to the Chinese in the Pacific Northwest and British Columbia, 1850-1910* (New York: Arno Press, 1978), 67; Chiu, 65.
35. Jay P. Dolan, *The Irish Americans: A History* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2008), 10; Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 38.
36. D. Gregory Van Dussen, "An American Response to Irish Catholic Immigration: The Methodist Quarterly Review, 1830-1870," *Methodist History* 10, no. 1 (1990): 21-22, 25.
37. Lee, *At America's Gates*, 10; Mark Kanazawa, "Immigration, Exclusion, and Taxation: Anti-Chinese Legislation in Gold Rush California," *Journal of Economic History* 65, no. 3 (2005), 802-803.
38. Dicken-Garcia, 198-199.
39. "The Chinese Labor Question."
40. "Confucius on the Sole."
41. "A Chinese Colony in Massachusetts," *New York Evening Post*, June 17, 1870.
42. "Confucius on the Sole."
43. "John Chinaman in Massachusetts"; "The Coolies in Massachusetts," *New York Herald*, June 16, 1870; "The Celestial Shoemakers," *Springfield Republican*, June 18, 1870; "Chinese Labor," *Springfield Republican*, September 7, 1870. The *Massachusetts Spy* of June 21, 1870 also reprinted the article "John Chinaman in Massachusetts."
44. "China in New England," *Boston Daily Advertiser*, June 18, 1870.
45. *Ibid.* See also "Chinese Labor."
46. Quoted in Lee, *A Shoemaker's Story*, 3.
47. Cheung, 294.
48. "The Celestial Wave," *Charleston (S.C.) Daily News*, June 25, 1870. The original appeared in the *Boston Advertiser*.
49. Miller, 181.
50. "The Chinese Labor Question."
51. "The New Labor Movement," *New York Herald*, June 26, 1870.
52. "The Chinese 'Invasion' of New England."
53. "The North Adams Sampson."
54. Horsman, 156-157, 227, 271.
55. "Confucius on the Sole."
56. *Ibid.*
57. "Editorial Review," *Northampton Free Press*, July 12, 1870.
58. Michael Les Benedict, "Reform Republicans and the Retreat from Reconstruction," in *The Facts of Reconstruction, Race, and Politics: Essays in Honor of John Hope Franklin*, eds. Eric Anderson and Alfred A. Moss, Jr. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1991), 56-57.
59. Bruce Laurie, *Artisans into Workers: Labor in Nineteenth-Century America* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997), 12.
60. Michael McGerr, *A Fierce Discontent: The Rise and Fall of the Progressive Movement in America, 1870-1920* (New York: Free Press, 2003), 8.



61. Christopher Clark, *The Roots of Rural Capitalism: Western Massachusetts, 1780-1860* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1990), 229, 256-257; Eric Foner, 460.
62. Leon Fink, *Workingmen's Democracy: The Knights of Labor and American Politics* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985), 50; Laurie, 113; Alan Trachtenberg, *The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982), 41-42, 55.
63. "The Chinese Coming," *New York Herald*, April 5, 1870.
64. For more on how market forces affected factory owners in western Massachusetts, see Clark, 248-249.
65. *Ibid.*, 145; Laurie, 110.
66. "China in New England," *Boston Daily Advertiser*, June 18, 1870.
67. Mary H. Blewett, *Men, Women, and Work: Class, Gender, and Protest in the New England Shoe Industry, 1780-1910* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 165-167; Blanche Evans Hazard, *The Organization of the Boot and Shoe Industry in Massachusetts before 1875* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1921), 143-144.
68. For more on the Lowell, Massachusetts system, see Thomas L. Dublin, *Women at Work: The Transformation of Work and Community in Lowell, Massachusetts, 1826-1860* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981).
69. Laurie, 119-121.
70. Hazard, 147.
71. See, for example: no headline, *Boston Recorder*, October 20, 1870; "The Massachusetts Chinese," *New York Tribune*, June 30, 1870; "The Celestial Shoemakers," *New York Tribune*, July 9, 1870.
72. Lee, *Oriental*s, 68.
73. "The North Adams Sampson."
74. "The Celestial Shoemakers," *Springfield Daily Republican*, June 18, 1870; "The New Labor Movement"; "New England News Items," *Springfield Daily Republican*, July 2, 1870; "Where the Shoe Pinches," *Boston Recorder*, July 14, 1870.
75. "The New Labor Movement." See also "Chinese and Crispins," *New York Herald*, July 5, 1870.
76. "New England News Items."
77. "The Chinese Labor Question."
78. "China in New England."
79. *Ibid.*
80. See, for example, "Confucius on The Sole"; "The Celestial Shoemakers," *Springfield Republican*, June 18, 1870.
81. "Success of Chinese Labor," *Charleston (S.C.) Daily News*, August 15, 1870. The *Daily News* reprinted the original *Springfield Daily Republican* article.
82. "Coolies and Crispins," *New York Tribune*, June 18, 1870.
83. "The Crispins and the Chinese," *National Aegis*, July 16, 1870.
84. The term "Coolie" is Indian in origin and was used by the British and Europeans, initially, to describe Indians and Chinese who engaged in low-paid manual labor. For more, see Lee, *Oriental*s, 51.

85. "Mr. Kelley on the Chinese Question," *Massachusetts Spy*, September 2, 1870. A number of liberal reformers also supported allowing the Chinese to arrive, but only if they had not signed "coolie" contracts. See "Chinese and Crispins."
86. Jean Pfaelzer, *Driven Out: The Forgotten War Against Chinese-Americans* (New York: Random House, 2007), 26, 29. Protestant missionaries viewed "coolies" as particularly debased and devoted most of their attention to these laborers, rather than to Chinese immigrants of the merchant class. For more, see Daniel Liestman, "'To Win Redeemed Souls from Heathen Darkness': Protestant Response to the Chinese of the Pacific Northwest in the Late Nineteenth Century," *Western Historical Quarterly* 24, no. 2 (1993), 180.
87. Miller, 146.
88. Janice Fine and Daniel J. Tichenor, "A Movement Wrestling: American Labor's Enduring Struggle with Immigration," *Studies in American Political Development* 23, no. 1 (2009):91.
89. "Chinese Notes," *Adams Transcript*, "The Coolie Question," *New York Herald*, June 23, 1870.
90. Historian Robert G. Lee acknowledges that presenting the Chinese as a class of slave laborers helped members of the working class lobby for a return to craftsman status and privileges during an era of growing industrialism: "The racialized construction of a category of proletarianized common labor as 'coolie labor' preserved Free Labor as an ideological refuge, if not an economic reality, for the white workingman. The racialized category of coolie labor enabled the working-class movement to articulate its goals not around the issue of proletarianization but around the demand for the restoration of craft privileges and the family wage." Lee, *Orientalism*, 53.
91. "China in New England."
92. Eddie L. Wong, *Racial Reconstruction: Black Inclusion, Chinese Exclusion and the Fictions of Citizenship* (New York: New York University Press, 2015), 6, 22-25.
93. Kanazawa, 784.
94. "Where the Shoe Pinches."
95. "A Workingmen's Mass Meeting," *Pittsfield (Mass.) Sun*, June 30, 1870.
96. "Threatenings," *New York Tribune*, July 1, 1870.
97. "The North Adams Sampson."
98. "The Chinese of Koopmanschap and Co. are Taken to Massachusetts as Shoemakers," *New York Tribune*, June 4, 1870; Lee, *A Shoemaker's Story*, 54. Sampson both replied to the Tribune reporter and reiterated his denunciations of involuntary labor to a reporter for *Harper's Weekly* magazine ("The Chinese in New England," *Harper's Weekly*, July 23, 1870, 468).
99. "Letter from Washington."
100. Chinese Notes," 1.
101. "Persecution for Labor's Sake," *Hoosac Valley News*, August 31, 1870.
102. Roger Daniels, *Guarding the Golden Door: American Immigration Policy and Immigrants since 1882* (New York: Hill & Wang, 2004), 13-16.
103. "The Chinese Laborer in Massachusetts."

104. "The Coolie Question," *Northampton Free Press*, July 5, 1870.
105. "Chinese Labor," *Northampton Free Press*, July 5, 1870.
106. Walter Licht, *Industrializing America* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1995), xvii; Foner, 460-461.
107. Licht, xvi; Glickstein, 220-221.
108. "Chinese Labor," *Albany Evening Journal*, August 12, 1870.
109. Ibid.
110. "The Chinese," *Northampton Free Press*, August 5, 1870. Despite supporting the right of the Chinese to immigrate to the U.S. and work in America, the *New York Tribune* gave space to *New York Times* Editor John Swinton's anti-Chinese views. Swinton, who was a socialist and a labor supporter, said he opposed cheap Chinese labor on the grounds of race, industry, politics and morality. See "The New Issue," *New York Tribune*, June 30, 1870.
111. "Chinese Labor"; "The Chinese Labor Question."
112. "Success of Chinese Labor," *Charleston (S.C.) Daily News*, August 15, 1870. This article is a reprint of the original from the *Springfield Republican*. The *New York Tribune* also reported that Sampson had signed a contract for more Chinese laborers. "Chinese Labor—Fifty More Coolies for North Adams," *New York Tribune*, August 11, 1870.
113. No headline, *New York Tribune*, September 18, 1870.
114. "Chinese Labor."
115. Miller, 182.
116. Gyory, 5.