

SOURCE A

LETTER WRITTEN BY SAUM SONG BO IN RESPONSE TO THE PEDESTAL FUND

"But the word liberty makes me think of the fact that this country is the land of liberty for men of all nations except the Chinese. I consider it as an insult to us Chinese to call on us to contribute toward building in this land a pedestal for a statue of Liberty. That statue represents Liberty holding a torch which lights the passage of those of all nations who come into this country. But are the Chinese allowed to come? As for the Chinese who are here, are they allowed to enjoy liberty as men of all other nationalities enjoy it? Are they allowed to go about everywhere free from the insults, abuse, assaults, wrongs and injuries from which men of other nationalities are free? ... Whether this statute against the Chinese or the statue to Liberty will be the more lasting monument to tell future ages of the liberty and greatness of this country, will be known only to future generations."

SOURCE B



THE CHINESE EXCLUSION ACT, 1882

SOURCE

A political cartoon entitled “The Chinamen’s Idea of It,” published in *The Judge* in 1882

BACKGROUND

In 1882 Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act, the first time it placed a restriction on immigration based on nationality. Chinese laborers had worked on the railroads, and a wave of nativist sentiment, particularly in California, pressured government to restrict Chinese immigration. The ban on Chinese immigration was in effect until 1943. However, the quota for the number of Chinese immigrants who could enter was still very low. It wouldn’t be until 1965, when a new immigration law influenced by the Civil Rights movement passed, that Chinese immigrants could come in significant numbers.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

As you read the source consider how it informs these questions:

- What is the difference between the representatives of other immigrant groups and the Chinese immigrant?
- What is the point of view of the artist with regard to the Chinese Exclusion Act? Does he believe it is unfair? If so, do you think he recommends banning the other immigrant groups in or letting in the Chinese as well?
- The Chinese Exclusion Act was passed a year before Emma wrote the New Colossus. Thus she understood that not everyone in the country welcomed all immigrants. Still, she wrote the poem anyway. Do you think people who supported the Chinese Exclusion Act would have liked the New Colossus poem? Why or why not?

HISTORICAL NOTES

Definitions of terms used in the source.

The Judge: A weekly satirical paper which ran from 1881-1947

Castle Garden: From 1855-1890, this was the immigration reception center for New York City. Approximately 8 million people came through Castle Garden, mostly from Ireland and Germany in the beginning and later from Italy and Eastern Europe. In 1890, the US government deemed immigration a federal responsibility and started to plan a larger immigration processing center. Eventually they decided to build it on Ellis Island. Ellis Island opened in 1892 and closed in 1954.