

The Chinese Exclusion Act (Modified)

Source: The National Archives wrote a summary of the cause and effects of the Chinese Exclusion Act, which was enacted in the late 1800s.

The Chinese Exclusion Act was approved on May 6, 1882. It was the first significant law that stopped people from another country from moving into the United States. The act completely stopped any Chinese workers from moving to the United States for 10 years. This was the first time that federal law stopped the entry of an entire ethnic group, and they did this out of fear that Chinese immigration was bad for American citizens. The only way Chinese could immigrate to the United States during this time was if they were not a worker, but this was a difficult condition to prove, since everyone had to work for a living in the United States. The Chinese Exclusion Act also made life hard for the Chinese who were already living in the United States. They couldn't leave and re-enter the country, making it almost impossible for them to visit their families in China. They also could not become citizens of the United States, and could be sent back to China at a moment's notice if U.S. courts thought it was appropriate.

Source: The first paragraph of the Chinese Exclusion Act, modified for easier reading.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America, That starting from ninety days after the passage of this act, and until ten years from now, the coming of Chinese laborers to the United States be suspended; and during such suspension it shall not be lawful for any Chinese laborer to come, or, if they have come after the ninety days have passed, for them to remain within the United States.

<https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/chinese-exclusion-act#:~:text=It%20was%20the%20first%20significant,immigrating%20to%20the%20United%20States.>