

# CHINESE PIONEER TIMELINE

**Coming to California:** Initially most Chinese came to Gum Sahn (Gold Mountain) for two reasons: 1) the gold rush of 1850 attracted people from all over the world, and 2) to escape the turmoil of the Taiping Rebellion which raged in China from 1850-1864. Most Chinese in San Luis Obispo County came from the south coastal Chinese province of Guang Dong.

- 1849 Census figures list 48 Chinese in San Francisco (50 total in the US)
- 1850 Census figures list 3,000 Chinese in San Francisco.
- 1852 25,000 Chinese in SF. 1852 till 1890 Chinese are the largest minority, making up 10% of California's population.
- 1856-1866 5,000-6,000/yr arrive in San Francisco (Wong On [Ah Louis] arrives to dig gold).
- 1867 Pacific Mail Steamship Co. established regular runs between Hong Kong and SF with an all-Chinese crew.
- 1868 Burlingame Treaty opens immigration between US and China.
- 1870-1883 12,000/yr arrive in San Francisco. Other main ports of entry included Los Angeles and Seattle.

In 1873 a depression hit California brought about by a surplus of labor and low wages. Looking for a scapegoat, most Californians blamed the Chinese. Here were people who ate different food, spoke a different language, dressed differently, and had different cultural ways. It was most likely a fear of the unknown that caused California and eventually the US to turn against their own Chinese Pioneers.

<b>Chinese Pioneer Economy</b>	<b>Laws Discouraging Chinese Pioneers</b>	<b>Prejudice in San Luis Obispo Co.</b>
<p>1856 1<sup>st</sup> record of California Chinese gathering abalone for export to China.</p> <p>1850-1880 China was 3<sup>rd</sup> largest foreign market for San Francisco.</p> <p>Most Important Chinese Imports: Tea (\$1.5 mil/yr), silk, rice (\$1 mil/yr), opium (\$800,000+/yr), and sugar.</p> <p>Most Important Exports to China: gold &amp; silver, flour, ginseng, mercury, dried seafood (\$400,000 - \$5 mil/yr included fish, squid, abalone, shrimp, seaweed).</p> <p>20-30 Chinese import/export firms in San Francisco.</p> <p>1880-1900 Mining declined, opium was made illegal, less demand on rice due to ban on immigration, dried seafood increased and included abalone shell.</p> <p>Only 6 Chinese import/export firms remain in San Francisco.</p>	<p>1850 Foreign Miners Law set a high price for licenses and limited their number.</p> <p>1862 Chinese Coolie Trade forbidden.</p> <p>1870-77 Republicans, Democrats and Grange organization adopt resolutions against the Burlingame Treaty.</p> <p>1879 Calif. governor called special election on immigration; vote was 883 for and 154,638 against (only 5 voters in SLO county supported Chinese immigration).</p> <p>1881 Opium smoking was made illegal in California.</p> <p>1882 Chinese Exclusion Act cut off immigration and denied Chinese the right to become US citizens.</p> <p>1888 Scott Act: any Chinese who returned to China could not return to the US.</p> <p>1892 Geary Act: All Chinese legally in US must carry certificates of residence.</p> <p>1905 Calif. bans export of dried shrimp.</p>	<p>1879 San Miguel: Chin Lee was taken from his home and "accidentally shot". Coroner's jury decided no one to blame but the Chinaman.</p> <p>1879 SLO City passes law to remove Chinese laundries from Higuera Street.</p> <p>1880 All Chinese Leave San Miguel</p> <p>1880 SLO City tries to pass law forcing Chinese laundries out of town.</p> <p>1883 SLO City raises Chinese laundry business license fee prompting strike.</p> <p>1886 Arroyo Grande whites force Chinese to leave town under threat of hanging.</p> <p>1886 SLO City: Anti-Chinese businessmen form the "Caucasian Steam Laundry" to compete with Chinese laundries.</p> <p>1894 SLO City: An attempt is made to blow up Sam Lee's Adobe Laundry.</p>