
Robert Eric Barde provides a wealth of meticulously researched material on the San Francisco immigration industry that came to be through the enforcement of the Chinese Exclusion Acts. *Immigration at the Golden Gate* examines the tension between the Chinese exclusion laws and the continued migration of Chinese to the United States through legal and administrative loopholes, ingenuity, and greed. He argues, "Despite laws aimed at severely restricting the Asian presence in America, the process of moving persons into and out of San Francisco constituted an ongoing set of vibrant economic activities employing thousands of people—from shipowners to ship's crews, from customs watchmen and immigration inspectors to lawyers and labor brokers" (p. 53). Through close readings of San Francisco newspapers and records from the National Archives, Barde presents three different narratives focusing on immigration law, the Pacific maritime industry, and the inspection and policing of Chinese immigrants.

Barde begins with the narrative of Quok Shee, a Chinese woman detained on Angel Island for twenty months as she contested her denial of entry. Her story, as just one of over 250,000 immigrants who had to endure the legal and bureaucratic filters enforced at the Angel Island Immigration Station, began with her entry in September 1916 and ended with her admission to the United States in August 1918 after a lengthy appeals process. Earlier Chinese immigrants had been kept in the custody of the shipping company that brought them to the U.S. until the federal government assumed responsibility for their detention in 1910 with the opening of the Angel Island Immigration Station. Barde details the conversion of a San Francisco warehouse into an immigrant detention shed in 1898 by the Pacific Mail Steamship Company. There, immigrant officials began conducting their lengthy scrutiny of the immigrants offshore rather than on the ship, allowing the ships to leave port without delay. Barde calculates the average stay at the detention shed at over twenty-three days, substantially longer than the two-week detention average on Angel Island.
Few scholars have examined the maritime history of Chinese immigration as closely as Barde has. The restrictions placed on Chinese migrants directly affected the maritime industry, which profited from the transpacific movement of peoples and goods, including other Asians. One chapter traces the changes made by shipping companies from the transportation of semifree contract laborers through the rise of luxury passenger ships. Barde answers many questions about the conditions that Chinese and Japanese migrants faced during their transpacific journeys with a specific focus on life below deck, including health and hygiene, food and drink, and leisure activities.

American-owned companies did not have an exclusive hold on the shipping industry, and two chapters narrate the history of the Japanese-owned passenger liner the *Nippon Maru* and the Chinese American–owned shipping business the China Mail. The *Nippon Maru* made ninety trips to San Francisco from 1898 to 1919, carrying many Asian immigrants, including Quok Shee, across the Pacific. Barde also examines the complicated shipping venture between China and the U.S. undertaken by American-born Chinese Look Tin Eli, the president of Canton Bank, who took advantage of the sale of the Pacific Mail Steamship Company in 1915 to develop the China Mail, sponsored by Chinese investors in the United States and Hong Kong as well as European American investors. Despite surviving for only eight years before collapsing due to the drastic decline in shipping after World War I, this company is an important example of a transnational business during a period of great international stress.

Barde concludes his work by returning to an individual's story, studying the diaries and papers of John Birge Sawyer, an Angel Island inspector employed by the Chinese Division of the Immigration Service. His biography of Sawyer gives insight into how immigration officials perceived their roles in enforcing the Chinese Exclusion Act. Sawyer was employed at Angel Island in 1916, during an immigrant smuggling scandal detailed in a preceding chapter. Sawyer left to work in Shanghai in 1918, unhappy with the morale at Angel Island, and wrote in his diary, "I feel much relieved to be done with the Station. It is not a safe place to be connected with and I feel that I will have to be pretty desperate to return to it.... I see only stormy seas ahead for them and consequently for the Service" (p. 250).

Robert Barde modestly considers his work as "the 'thick' material that puts the flesh of description on the skeleton of analysis," and he credits other scholars of Chinese American history who have greater analytical focus (p. 4). Nonetheless, many scholars will acknowledge Barde's detailed historical narratives in *Immigration at the Golden Gate*, an excellent sourcebook for those interested in learning more about the ancillary activities surrounding Chinese immigration during the Chinese exclusionary period.

Jeffrey A. Ow
Arizona State University