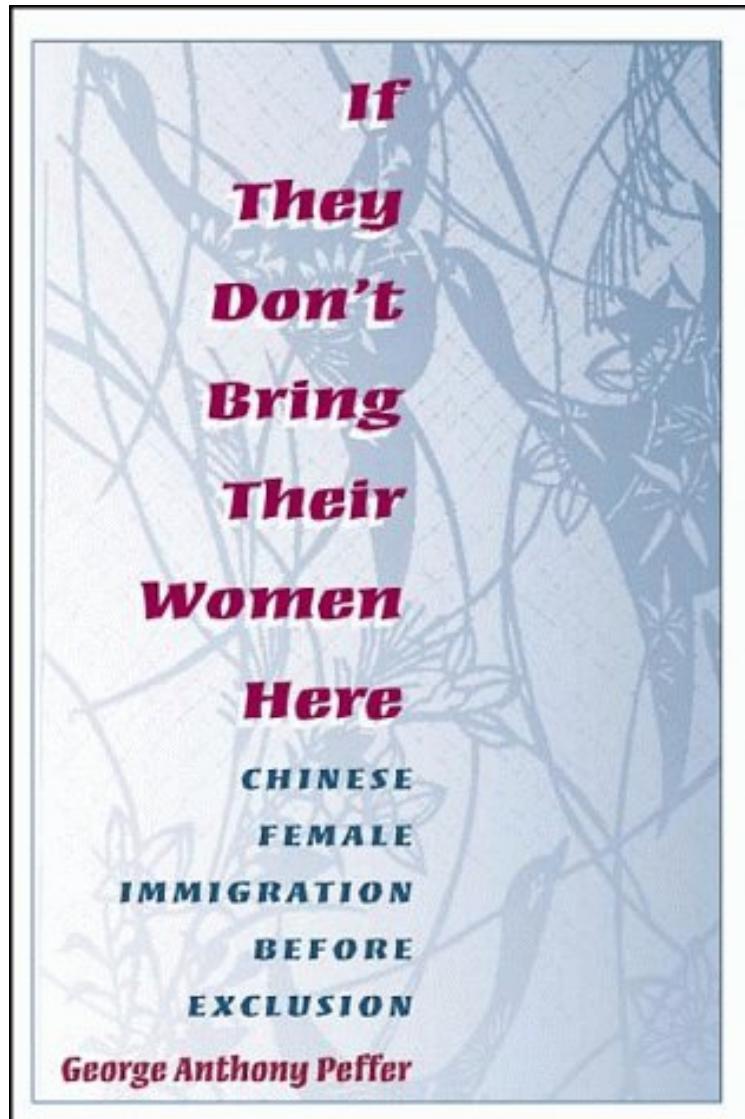


[Download] If They Don't Bring Their Women Here: Chinese Female Immigration before Exclusion (Asian American Experience)

If They Don't Bring Their Women Here: Chinese Female Immigration before Exclusion (Asian American Experience)

George Peffer

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Experience):

Seven years before the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 comprehensively disqualified all members of China's laboring class from immigration status, the Page Law sought to stem the tide of Chinese prostitutes entering the United States. Yet during these seven years it was not just prostitutes but all Chinese females who encountered at best hostility and at worst expulsion when they reached the 'Golden Door'. In this first detailed account of Chinese American women's lives in the preexclusion era, George Anthony Peffer investigates how administrative agencies and federal courts enforced immigration laws. Peffer documents the habeas corpus trials in which the wives and daughters of Chinese laborers were required to prove their status as legal immigrants or be returned to China. He also surveys the virulently anti-Chinese coverage these trials and the issue of Chinese immigration received in California newspapers, confirming that Chinatown's prostitution industry so dominated the popular imagination as to render other classes of female immigrants all but invisible. In the words of one immigration judge, the United States remained favorable to Chinese immigration in the preexclusion period 'if they don't bring their women here'. This important study amplifies the voices of immigrant women who did not fit into the preconceived categories American officials created and establishes a place for them within the historiographic framework of Chinese American studies.

"Individual chapters provide excellent examples of this [discriminatory] behavior among the ranks of Hong Kong consuls and San Francisco authorities. Peffer's work joins a number of recent studies ... in enhancing understanding of the historically negative American reaction to Asians." - Choice "The immigration of Chinese women before 1882 ... has received little attention from historians... Peffer's illuminating, well-designed, and compellingly written work ... fills this gap and presents a truly comprehensive explanation of the severe shortage of female immigrants in America... A fine piece that adds to the mosaic of historical studies of Chinese immigration." -- Mao-xin Liang, *Journal of American History* "Well written and clearly organized. It should be read by everyone who desires an inclusive and accurate reading of the history of immigration in the United States." -- Sharon M. Lee, *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal* "Until Peffer's pioneering work, most historians have failed to acknowledge the significance of the Page Law of 1875 in restricting Chinese immigration to the United States... Peffer convincingly argues that the Page Law ... helped perpetuate the gender imbalance in the Chinese American population for another century and consequently led to a socially dysfunctional ethnic society... This book will encourage people to reconceptualize the periods of Chinese immigration and reinterpret Chinese American experiences." -- Liping Zhu, *New Mexico Historical ADVANCE* PRAISE "Peffer successfully challenges stereotypes that have been the foundation of Chinese American studies." - Sue Fawn Chung, author of *The Silver Mountain: A History of the Chinese in Nevada*