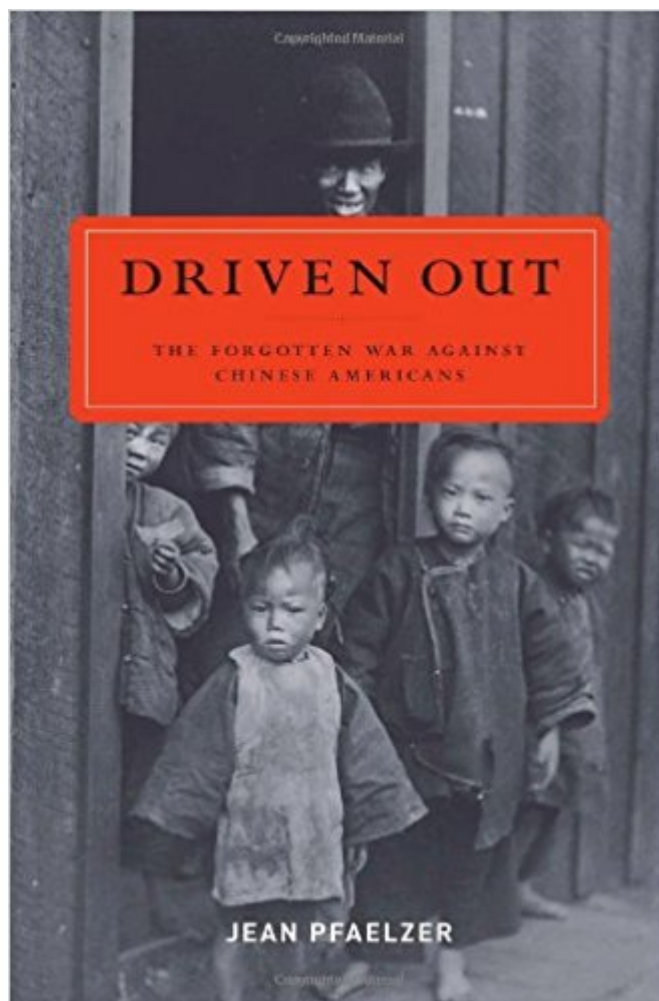


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# Driven Out: The Forgotten War Against Chinese Americans



## Synopsis

A NEW YORK TIMES NOTABLE BOOK  
The brutal and systematic “ethnic cleansing” of Chinese Americans in California and the Pacific Northwest in the second half of the nineteenth century is a shocking and virtually unexplored chapter of American history. *Driven Out* unearths this forgotten episode in our nation’s past. Drawing on years of groundbreaking research, Jean Pfaelzer reveals how, beginning in 1848, lawless citizens and duplicitous politicians purged dozens of communities of thousands of Chinese residents and how the victims bravely fought back. In town after town, as races and classes were pitted against one another in the raw and anarchistic West, Chinese miners and merchants, lumberjacks and field workers, prostitutes and merchants’ wives, were gathered up at gunpoint and marched out of town, sometimes thrown into railroad cars along the very tracks they had built. Here, in vivid detail, are unforgettable incidents such as the torching of the Chinatown in Antioch, California, after Chinese prostitutes were accused of giving seven young men syphilis, and a series of lynchings in Los Angeles bizarrely provoked by a Chinese wedding. From the port of Seattle to the mining towns in California’s Siskiyou Mountains to “Nigger Alley” in Los Angeles, the first Chinese Americans were hanged, purged, and banished. Chinatowns across the West were burned to the ground. But the Chinese fought back: They filed the first lawsuits for reparations in the United States, sued for the restoration of their property, prosecuted white vigilantes, demanded the right to own land, and, years before *Brown v. Board of Education*, won access to public education for their children. Chinese Americans organized strikes and vegetable boycotts in order to starve out towns that tried to expel them. They ordered arms from China and, with Winchester rifles and Colt revolvers, defended themselves. In 1893, more than 100,000 Chinese Americans refused the government’s order to wear photo identity cards to prove their legal status—the largest mass civil disobedience in United States history to that point. *Driven Out* features riveting characters, both heroic and villainous, white and Asian. Charles McGlashen, a newspaper editor, spearheaded a shift in the tactics of persecution, from brutality to legal boycotts of the Chinese, in order to mount a run for governor of California. Fred Bee, a creator of the Pony Express, became the Chinese consul and one of the few attorneys willing to defend the Chinese. Lum May, a dry goods store owner, saw his wife dragged from their home and driven insane. President Grover Cleveland, hoping that China’s 400,000 subjects would buy the United States out of its economic crisis, persuaded China to abandon the overseas Chinese in return for a trade treaty. Quen Hing Tong, a merchant, sought an injunction against the city of San Jose in an important precursor to today’s suits against racial profiling and police

brutality. In *Driven Out*, Jean Pfaelzer sheds a harsh light on America's past. This is a story of hitherto unknown racial pogroms, purges, roundups, and brutal terror, but also a record of valiant resistance and community. This deeply resonant and eye-opening work documents a significant and disturbing episode in American history.

“Jean Pfaelzer has pulled back the veil on one of the most horrendous, frightening, violent, and little known moments in American history, when the Chinese were driven from their homes and businesses in an effort to expel them from communities, states, and ultimately the country. This is the most comprehensive history of this period I have ever read, and Pfaelzer has written it with sensitivity and a keen eye for the horrifying, heartbreaking, and often uplifting and triumphant details.”

*Driven Out* couldn't be more timely or important.

Lisa See, Author, *Snow Flower and the Secret Fan*

“*Driven Out: the Forgotten War Against Chinese Americans* is a meticulously researched and very readable recounting of America's systematic effort to purge all Chinese immigrants, from the mid-19th into the early-20th centuries. Jean Pfaelzer documents hundreds of cases in which the Chinese were lynched, maimed, burned out of their neighborhoods, and forced at gunpoint to leave mining camps, small villages, Indian reservations, and Chinatowns. The methodical and ruthless nature of this ethnic cleansing was matched only by the resistance from the Chinese – sometimes with guns and knives or fists and sometimes with savvy recourse to their government representatives as well as petitions, public confrontations, and hundreds of lawsuits using white attorneys up to the U.S. Supreme Court. Pfaelzer has names and stories for these incidents – making the actors real and accessible. This is a valuable addition to our understanding of the making of modern America.”

Franklin Odo, Director, Smithsonian Institution Asian Pacific American Program; Author, *The Columbia Documentary History of the Asian American Experience*

“Thanks to this gripping narrative, Chinese immigrants to the Far West – so long overlooked – now stand front and center in the saga of the struggle for civil rights in these United States.”

Kevin Starr, University of Southern California; Author, *California, A History*

“Too few Americans have any idea that these events mark the nation's past. Pfaelzer capably reconstructs a shameful history.”

Kirkus Reviews

## Book Information

Hardcover: 432 pages

Publisher: Random House; 1 edition (May 29, 2007)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1400061342

ISBN-13: 978-1400061341

Product Dimensions: 6.5 x 1.2 x 9.4 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.2 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars 31 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #934,701 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #97 in [Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Sociology > Race Relations > General](#) #522 in [Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Social Sciences > Specific Demographics > Asian American Studies](#) #18248 in [Books > History > Americas > United States > State & Local](#)

## Customer Reviews

Pfaelzer, professor of American studies, reveals one of the most disgraceful chapters in American history--the purging of thousands of Chinese immigrants in the Pacific Northwest and Rocky Mountain region between 1850 and 1906. Drawing on newspaper accounts, diaries, legal pleadings, and photographs, Pfaelzer retells the story of the horrific purge of the Chinese. Testifying in their own words, Chinese businessmen recall being driven out of their shops, while women tell of being forced into prostitution; they were driven from gold mines, orchards, and small towns in the booming West. The Chinese responded with defenses from boycotts to lawsuits asking for reparations, challenges to police harassment, shipments of arms from China, and pressure on the Chinese government to intervene. Pfaelzer also catalogs the racist images of docile and dirty Chinese subject to lynchings, night raids, murder, expulsion, and deportation. She compares the expulsions to those in Nazi Germany, as well as modern Rwanda and Bosnia, and puts the Driven Out campaign into the broader context of American racism. Vanessa Bush Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved

"Driven Out is the most comprehensive history of the period, written with a keen eye for the horrifying, heartbreaking, and often uplifting and triumphant details."#151;Lisa See, author of Snow Flower and the Secret Fan --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

Chinese expatriates have often been called the "Jews of Asia," and been treated accordingly in the Philippines, Indonesia, Vietnam, and elsewhere. Also too in the United States, which put American constitutional principles to the test and found them wanting in flesh and blood practice. That this major attempt at ethnic cleansing came on the heels of a civil war to "make men free" is doubly

ironic; and perhaps why its history has been so determinedly funneled down the Orwellian memory hole. What has also been benignly neglected is the role of organized labor in this legalized lynchery. Although slighted by labor and left historians, the anti-Chinese movement was the greatest organizing draw for fledgling unions and the Democratic Party throughout the West. There is much hypocrisy all around in this, too: In 400 grinding pages, Jean Pfaelzer shows an endless attack upon a vulnerable minority, instead of dealing with the powerful vested interests exploiting foreign labor and pitting it against the native-born. Much safer to burn Chinatowns than capitalist property, for that would be "anarchy." In a period when workers' strikes and riots were put down with ruthless fury - per the Chicago Haymarket - disgruntled employees were allowed by officials, police, and courts to take their full wrath upon a scapegoat of convenience: much like German conservatives used Hitler to bash the Jews instead of the Gentile rich. That Americans could embrace such demagoguery in the name of freedom shows us how self-interest triumphs over principles virtually every time. One critique I'll make is the author's grammar. Repeated use of "the Chinese's" as a possessive clattered like a rock on a roof every time it crossed the page. "The role of the Chinese" just sounds right; "the Chinese's role" does not. Overall, though, her book remains the definitive examination of this purposely-suppressed history of the American West and the US in general. I say purposely, because nare a breath is drawn to it in popular Western literature and film, aside from the Cartwright family butler Hop Sing. (This was, btw, the name of a Chinese tong society: yet the violence of highbinder hatchet men, although alluded to, seemed never a direct cause of anti-Chinese rioting. Organized crime in Chinatown rarely touched whites.) The question remains as to why this history was swept under the bamboo mat. It seems, ironically, due to the triumph of liberalism. Conforming to modern racial etiquette gives an out for perpetrators and apologists to hide their crimes; absolving their role to avoid negativity and divisiveness, allowing healing for later generations. There is a point here. But like suppressing the history of lynchings and race riots, it also allows popular culture to revel in American exceptionalism; and thereby launch crusades in full self-righteousness against other nations for crimes it has also perpetrated. A case in point was the Boxer Rebellion of 1900. Retaliation against Western missionaries was in direct response to the "bulldozing" of Chinese in America, and no doubt more than a few Boxers had experienced the wrong end of a fist themselves in a California mining camp. Such was beyond the comprehension of the five-power coalition of the willing that invaded China to teach it a lesson about human rights. This inspiring tradition continues.

As a specialist in Sino-Western relations who writes both non-fiction books and historical fiction on this topic I bought this book already armed with a lot of knowledge of the topic. Nevertheless, I

learned a great deal! The book is extraordinarily well researched and written. Indeed, for this reader/writer it was both time and money well spent.Â Â Beyond The Heavenly Kingdom: Sequel to Tienkuo: The Heavenly Kingdom (Sino-American Tales) (Volume 2)

This is a terrific book, compellingly written and stuffed with thorough research and tons of facts It's about a decades-long era in our history where we tried to drive out Chinese immigrants and Chinese Americans from our country. The long-forgotten details are starting, covering pogroms in mining camps, California towns, the Denver riot of 1880 when a Chinese man was lunched, and how all of these were sanctioned by powerful men in business and politics.Worth reading for anyone with an interest in Asian American history.Got the Kindle edition too -- it's a great important re-read!

It's a mortifying look at the tragic, self-interested racism of California's Caucasians of that era, and the outright complicity of the government officials. I found the story to be repetative at times. The blame for the enslavement & forced prostitution of many Chinese women seemed to fall wholly on the white population of California, with no outrage at the Chinese companies who carried out the enslavement and profited from it.

Professor Jean Pfadelzer's seminal work, Driven Out: The Forgotten War Against Chinese Americans, is indispensable for a critical and comprehensive understanding of the early years of the Chinese American Experience. Without this, we would have continued to operate on the basis of educated and intuitive hunches as to the origins, nature and outcomes of a little-known chapter in the history of racist oppression in this country. By the way, my copy of thus book came in the condition described, in a very timely fashion. Excellent service.

Got the job done with this!

This is a detailed book of what the Chinese immigrants have endured since the Gold Rush. There are stories of what is happening all over the U.S. The anti-asian happenings are an eye-opener as to what the Chinese endured, and how they overcame what was happening to them. I really enjoy the book even though it is painful to realize what was happening.

This was a well-written, well-researched explanation about the little-known persecution of Chinese, Mexican, Native American and Chilians peoples during the Gold Rush era and after.

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