

# PAPER SONS AND DAUGHTERS

BY THE END OF THE 19TH CENTURY, Chinese immigrants were having an especially hard time gaining entry into America. Thousands of Chinese immigrants were turned away, even after traveling all the way across the Pacific Ocean. There was only one way immigrants from China could get in: they had to prove they were related to an American citizen.

The problem was that most Chinese immigrants were not related to any American citizens. This, however, did not stop many of the immigrants. They were desperate to start new lives away from the hardships they faced in China. Many of them felt they had no choice but to pretend they had an American relative. These immigrants would hand Angel Island immigration officers fake documents that claimed they were related to an American citizen. Sometimes this strategy worked, and sometimes it didn't. Immigration officers were constantly on the lookout for fake documents.

They called the Chinese immigrants who tried to enter the country this way paper sons and daughters since the immigrants were only related to an American on paper.



A Certificate of Residence for one of the Chinese immigrants allowed into the U.S. in 1894

~The paper sons and daughters did lie in an attempt to get into America, but their lies were motivated by unfair rules that kept them out of America. Do you think this type of lying is different than lying about doing your homework or lying to a friend?

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