

## Chinese Diaspora in Borderlands

Becoming more visible in the mid-1800s, many Chinese immigrants came to the United States in search of economic opportunity. Some immigrated to California in search of fortune, but as the supply of gold to be found there declined they sought other jobs, with many famously working on construction of the railroads being built to connect the vast distances across the continental United States. As the railroad coming from the West coast moved East, so did these Chinese workers, bringing many to New Mexico and Texas where they remained after the completion of the railroads. Other people of Chinese ancestry entered the United States via the Mexican border, also building their lives in the Borderlands region. Despite facing resistance from their non-Chinese neighbors and laws restricting further immigration, their rights to become citizens, and their rights to own land, they became important members of their communities, often running businesses such as restaurants, hotels, laundries, and general stores. Chinese Americans would sometimes also create their own communities in the form of Chinatowns, such as that which used to be in El Paso, Texas. Part 1 of this unit explores the lives of Chinese Americans in rural New Mexico. Part 2 of this unit teaches about the resilience of Chinese immigrants in the face of discriminatory laws and anti-Chinese sentiment as well as their impact on the Borderlands region and immigration law.

### Compelling Question

Why did Chinese Americans come to the Borderlands and how did they become part of communities in Southern New Mexico and El Paso?

### Standards and Practices

*Ethnic, Cultural, and Identity Studies 22. Community Equity Building*

*8.96. Investigate how identity groups and society address systemic inequity through individual actions, individual champions, social movements, and local community, national, and global advocacy.*

*9-12.ECI.20. Examine historical and contemporary cultural, economic, intellectual, political, and social contributions to society by individuals or groups within an identity group.*

*9-12.ECI.21. Investigate how identity groups and society address systemic inequity and transformational change through individual actions, individual champions, social movements, and local community, national, and global advocacy.*

*9-12.ECI.22. Evaluate the role of racial social constructs in the structures and functions of 21st-century U.S. society.*

*Inquiry 24. Gather and Evaluate Sources*

*7.4. Evaluate primary and secondary sources for fact, opinion, author's bias, perspective of the creator, and relevance to the topic.*

*8.4. Evaluate primary and secondary sources for the author's bias, perspective of the creator, and relevance to the topic.*

*Inquiry 25. Develop Claims*

*7.8. Make connections between current events, historical materials, and personal experience.*

*8.7. Categorize and sequence significant people, places, events, and ideas in history using both chronological and conceptual graphic organizers.*

*8.11. Make connections between current events, historical materials, and personal experience.*

*8.12. Examine how and why diverse groups have been denied equality and opportunity both institutionally and informally.*

*Inquiry 26. Communicate and Critique Conclusions*

*7.9. Present student-developed texts communicating thinking and understanding, including but not limited to written text, oral presentation, visual representation, and multimedia.*

*8.13. Engage in discussion, debate, or academic conversation analyzing multiple viewpoints on public issues.*

*8.14. Create maps, charts, infographics, or other visual media that communicate research findings or other significant information digitally or on paper.*

*8.15. Develop informational texts, including analyses of historical and current events.*

*8.16. Portray historical people, places, events, and ideologies of the time to examine history from the perspective of the participants through creative expression.*

*9-12.Econ.7. Construct arguments using precise and knowledgeable claims, with evidence from multiple sources, while acknowledging counterclaims and evidentiary weaknesses.*

*9-12.Econ.8. Construct explanations using reasoning, correct sequence, examples, and details with significant and pertinent information and data, while acknowledging the strengths and weaknesses of the explanations given their purpose.*

*9-12.NMH.7. Construct arguments using precise and knowledgeable claims, with evidence from multiple sources while acknowledging counterclaims and evidentiary weaknesses.*

*9-12.NMH.8. Construct explanations using reasoning, correct sequence, examples, and details with significant and pertinent information and data, while acknowledging the strengths and weaknesses of the explanations given their purpose.*

*9-12.US.7. Construct arguments using precise and knowledgeable claims, with evidence from multiple sources, while acknowledging counterclaims and evidentiary weaknesses.*

Staging the Question	What does your family do in your community?	
<b>Supporting Question 1</b>	<b>Supporting Question 2</b>	<b>Supporting Question 3</b>
<p><i>Why do people choose to create communities apart from the dominant culture?</i></p> <p><i>How do communities such as “Chinatowns” form?</i></p> <p><i>What are the benefits of being in such a community versus “assimilating” into the dominant culture?</i></p>	<p><i>What brought Chinese immigrants to El Paso, Texas?</i></p> <p><i>Who were they and what did they do for work?</i></p> <p><i>Why was a Chinatown created there?</i></p> <p><i>Why did the Chinatown disappear?</i></p>	<p><i>How do immigration issues today compare to those in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century?</i></p> <p><i>Who do these different immigration laws and agencies target?</i></p>
<b>Formative Performance Task</b>	<b>Formative Performance Task</b>	<b>Formative Performance Task</b>
<p><i>Examine materials describing and highlighting the economic opportunities and successes of the Chinese American community in New Mexico and El Paso in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Consider the stereotypes and anti-Chinese attitudes of non-Chinese Americans that Chinese Americans faced during that time. Imagine you are a Chinese business owner in New Mexico in the early 20th century and create a newspaper ad or poster advertising your business. Consider how you advertise your business to both the Chinese community and your non-Chinese neighbors. Discuss similarities and differences in how Chinese American owned businesses advertise today.</i></p>	<p><i>Create a timeline of the experiences of Chinese railroad workers who settled in El Paso, Texas, the creation of Chinatown in El Paso, and its disappearance. Include the laws which they face and analyze the effect of each law on their actions.</i></p>	<p><i>Create an essay or presentation in which you compare and contrast articles on the immigration and deportation of Chinese immigrants in the United States in the early 20th century to articles on illegal immigration issues today. Infer how laws against Chinese immigrants, court decisions, and the creation of the Border Patrol has impacted the immigration experiences of others through precedents set in the early 20th century. Explain how immigration laws have or have not impacted your family.</i></p>

