

Essay Prompt: Transcontinental Railroad-150th Anniversary and Future of Chinese in America

150 years ago the Transcontinental Railroad that stretched across the United States of America and linked the east and west coasts was completed. Immigrants from poor areas in Guangdong Province were recruited by railroad labor contractors to do the dangerous and difficult jobs such as blasting areas with explosives, laying track, and carrying heavy cargo in extremely hot and cold weather. The Chinese laborers would eventually help create a transportation system that would easily connect people and trade goods, and eventually fully develop the America West.

Since then, Chinese Americans have contributed in ways that express citizenship, patriotism, and unity. A disproportionately large number of Chinese Americans (~20% of population) enlisted and fought in World War II (who were honored with the Congressional Gold Medal in 2018). With pride and spirit, they continued to work hard in diverse occupational fields to make America better and more prosperous.

In spite of these contributions, there is the perception even today that Chinese in America remain not fully accepted into the “mainstream” society.

From your perspective, do you agree or disagree with this perception? If you agree, discuss how and why this is so and suggest things that the Chinese communities can do to correct the situation. If you disagree, discuss how and why the perception that Chinese in America remain not fully accepted into the “mainstream” is inaccurate, and why the perception persists to this day.