

The Influence of Chinese Immigrants at Early Stage on Western Fisheries of the United States*

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美國 西部 初期 水産業에 미친 中國人의 影響

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I . Introduction

Being in Oregon State, the author was interested in the history of Oregon's commercial fisheries. Looking into the history of Oregon's commercial fisheries, the author found that the Chinese immigrants in U.S.A. took a very crucial part in the development of commercial fishing on the West Coast of United States.

This paper is to look into Chinese immigrants' influence to the fisheries of West Coast of U.S.A. by surveying the published articles and literatures.

By this surveying study, a great influence of Chinese immigrants at early stage on the U.S.A. Fisheries would be known to more people than ever.

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II. Chinese Immigrants in the United States

A document in the US National Archives in Washington recorded the individuals and groups arriving well before 1820, but the US immigration Commission recorded the arrival of Chinese for the first time in 1820.¹⁾

In the 1850s, when immigration from China was at a peak in the Gold Rush days, Chinese numbered about 35,000 in the States.

The Chinese immigration to the United States at early stage was a product of two factors ; the harsh condition which prevailed in certain parts of China and the positive attraction of the United States.

The Chinese immigrant too fled civil disorder, poverty, and suffering. The bad situation in China led to the considerable emigration of the 1840s. The urgency of the situation was no less in the 1850s.

In the mid-nineteenth century, China was a land in turmoil. The prime cause of the turmoil was the decaying feudal system, which had dominated China under ruling Qing dynasty (1644-1912) which had become one of the great feudal dynasties. Unrest and suffering were especially widespread in the southern maritime province of Guangdong, and it was here that the hardy, adventurous, and desperate were best placed to try their luck overseas.

Floods became frequent and ever more destructive. An increasing population was forced to live on less land per capita. Inflation was inevitable. The rulers attempted to maintain their income by increasing taxes and levies.²⁾

What sparked the renewed and increased Chinese interested in America in 1848 was, of course, the news that gold could be picked up in California streams.³⁾ This news, which electrified adventurous men in many parts of the world, was brought early to China because of the ties already made with California, and that was also why the news first of all came to Canton and its environs.

During the eighteenth century, the Western nations one by one entered the phase of development of the West known as the Industrial Revolution. They actively sought markets all over the world for the products of their factories. The Celestial Empire, on the other hand, adhered stubbornly to a rigid closed door trade policy.

Trade was limited to certain designated ports, the most important of which were Amoy and

1) Jack Chen, "The Earliest Arrivals", *The Chinese of America*, Harper & Row Publishers, San Francisco, 1980, p.1.

2) Ibid., p. 3.

3) Ibid., p. 5.

Canton. Gradually Canton became the principal port for China's foreign trade. After Opium War, China was forced to open up the five ports of Guangzhou(Canton), Amoy, Fuzhou, Ningbo, and Shanghai to foreign trade.

The people of these ports became the Chinese with the greatest exposure to ideas, knowledge and products from Europe and the America.

One aspect of the uniqueness of the Chinese immigration is the heavy concentration of immigrants from less than a dozen counties or areas in South China's Guangdong Province.

Since the people of the ports had long maritime contacts, it was only natural that, when the news came of the discovery of gold in California and good wages to be had, some would consider emigration to America as a solution to their economic difficulties.

These immigrants from coastal Guangdong knew not only the flow and flood of the rivers, they breathed the ebb and tide of the sea. On the coasts of West they became pioneering fishermen naturally.

In the beginning these new fishermen may have learned by watching the old fishermen, the Indians, who knew the best waters for fish and shellfish up and down the coast. The fishermen of Guangdong were not content, however, in imitating the Indians and they quickly introduced their own methods and tools for fishing.⁴⁾ They grouped together and started small fishing villages. They were the first commercial fishermen in California.⁵⁾

So, Chinese fisheries started from California which a lot of Chinese came to spread up to the States else. Probably, they might be the first commercial fishermen in the United States of America.

III. Fishing Villages and Fishing Methods

1. Fishing Villages

The first document about the Chinese fishing village was sought in *Chambers Journal*(Jan. 21, 1854), which said that "Chinese fishing village was set up in Rincon Point(San Francisco). It consists of about one hundred and fifty inhabitants, who are chiefly engaged in fishing. They have 25 boats, some of which may be seen at all hours moving over the waters." At Humboldt Bay a fisherman's colony was set up before 1857.⁶⁾

4) Steiner Stan, *The Chinese who built America*, Harper & Row Publishers, 1979, p.147.

5) Ruthanne Lun McCunn, *An Illustrated History of the Chinese in America*, Design Enterprise of San Francisco, 1979, p. 44.

6) Robert F. G. Spier, "Food Habits of the 19th Century California Chinese," *California Historical Society Quarterly*, Vol.37, 1958, pp.79~81.

In March 1860, a Chinese company was organized to compete for the local fish trade in Los Angeles. Around 1863 several companies of fishermen settled on what is now Marine Laboratory Point near Pacific Grove. This village of some 200 huts was probably one of the most thriving fishing village on the West Coast.

Old residents of the Monterey peninsula can remember that in the 1880's and 1890's the villagers set up several fish stalls made of driftwood, along the road on the Seventeen-Mile-Drive.

By 1870, Chinese fishing activities had spread up and down the coast from the Oregon boundary to Baja California, and along the Sacramento River Delta. San Francisco, Monterey and San Diego were the principal centers. By 1888, there were over twenty villages in San Francisco and eight in other area with over 2,000 fishermen all told.

By 1890, Chinese made up only 20 percent of the work force. Between 1895 and 1898, the San Diego, Sacramento, and the San Joaquin village disappeared. The Monterey village was set afire by an arsonist in 1906, and the inhabitants were prevented from rebuilding.

In 1900, there were 1,000 fishermen in thirty camps and villages. By 1910, there were fewer than ten settlements. In 1913 and 1914, still more men left for homes in China or took up other occupations.⁷⁾

2. Fishing methods

Chinese fished both the bay and the rivers for salmon, sturgeon, and other market fish. The methods used were sweeping-seining in the bays, and hook and line fishing outside the bays in the kelp beds and along the rocky parts of the coast.

Each of the fisheries employed practices and equipment peculiar to its kind. Some fisheries required small sampans for gathering operations while others required large junks to transport their catch. Shoreside facilities were also characterized by the particular enterprise.⁸⁾

By diligent and methodical work the year round, the Chinese made up for the restrictions placed upon them. Their fine mesh nets caught vast quantities of fish.

Chinese fishing camps were located on the ocean shore, around the bays, and along the Sacramento River. A visitor to one such camp on the Sacramento River near Rio Nita in 1873 observed :

"It consists of a neat of Chinese fishing boats numbering seven small boats and three large

7) Chinn Thomas W., Lai Mark H. and Choy Philip P., *A History of the Chinese in California : A Syllabus*, Chinese Historical Society of America, 1969, pp.36~37.

8) Robert A. Nash, "Chinese in California Fisheries," *The Chinese-American Journal*(Jan.22), 1969, p.5.

ones. The small boats were little, flat-bottomed dories, square at the stern, sharp at the bow, about 15 feet long and strongly built.”

“The large boats were also strongly built, but narrow and pointed at both ends, and constructed in the Chinese fashion. Two of the three large boats had one mast, and the other one had two masts with Chinese sails.”

“The whole air and look of these crafts was decidedly foreign, and I might say oriental...”

“The small boats are to visit the sloughs and various fishing points... and the large boats are really only movable dwellings and storehouses, where they live and receive the fish that are brought in by the small boats...”⁹⁾

The pressure of the white fisherman’s union limited the Chinese to a minor part in the market fishing in San Francisco Bay. They were also pretty well excluded from the salmon industry, and in 1880 there were only 25 Chinese out of a total of 500 salmon fishermen working in Contra Costa and Marine Counties.

However, they caught quantities of sturgeon. During this same period, Chinese fishermen on the Monterey Peninsula annually caught great quantities of squids rockfish, rock cod, halibut, flounder, red fish, blue fish, yellow tail, mackerel, sardines and shell fish, most of which were salted and dried for export to San Francisco where they found their way to Chinese communities all over the State or abroad.¹⁰⁾

IV. The Influence of Chinese on Western Fisheries of United States

1. Pioneering the California Fisheries¹¹⁾

The Chinese first began to fish West Coast waters in a small way in 1849, and in 1852 one group was fishing on a commercial scale off San Francisco’s Rincon Point while another group was based in Monterey.

A year later, the Monterey group had a whole fleet of Chinese style craft. In 1854, the Rincon Point village had 150 men with twenty-five boats, landing a daily catch of 3,000 pounds of sturgeon, shark, and herring. Soon other Chinese fishermen were catching salmon on the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers and other villages were set up at Point San Bruno.

Scouting out the best fishing grounds, they started the fishing industry in smelt in San Diego, and by the 1880s they were fishing from Oregon to Baja California. They caught general

9) George B. Goode, *The Fisheries and Fishing Industries of the U.S.*, Vol. 5, 1887, pp.735~739.

10) Chinn Thomas W., Lai Mark H. and Choy Philip P., *op. cit.*, p.37.

11) (Extracted from) Jack Chen, *op. cit.*, pp. 97~99.

market fish in San Francisco Bay outside the Golden Gate, Monterey, and San Diego.

Their small sampans brought in smelt, sole, rock cod, and other rock fish. Fishermen using large junks caught barracuda. Importing bag nets from China, they caught shrimp from camps at Hunter's Point, China Point, and other places on the Bay. They caught clams, crabs, and lobsters. They gathered abalone as far as Bahia de Tortugas and began to harvest seaweed from Humboldt Bay before 1857. And they introduced seaweed, abalone, and squid(in 1863)to the early California diet, which was severely limited.

At a time when California had not yet developed its rich agricultural resources, gold miners up in the hills in the early 1850s subsisted on a basic diet of salt pork and hardtack biscuits. But when the Chinese developed the fisheries, fish were sold fresh and often alive in San Francisco, as is the custom to this day in Chinatown. Part of the catch was dried for the use of Chinese miners up in the hill.

By the late 1860s, when work on the first transcontinental railway was ending, more Chinese entered the trade. By 1870, about 100 shrimpers were bringing in regular catch of succulent blacktail shrimp. Ten years later, their number had increased over eight times. The 1880s and 1890s were boom times for the trade. Chinese fishing camps were dotted up and down the coast from Humboldt Bay in Oregon to Baja California in Mexico. They were bringing in salmon, sturgeon, smelt, flounder, sculpin, shrimp, crab, abalone, clams oysters and other seafood.

In 1892, California held sixth place among the United States in value of seafood. But by that time the number of Chinese in the trade had begun to drop sharply. While they still made up 50 percent of the fishing crews in the 1880s, by 1890 Italians made up 30 percent of the work force. A smaller number of Portuguese and white made up the rest, fishing whale and barracuda outside the bays. Anti-Chinese agitation and harassing legislation spurred on by the 1882 Exclusion Act was making it more difficult for Chinese to fish. The attacks were sporadic and sometimes strictly localized.

For example, Chinese abalone junks were not allowed to leave for lower California. Even in the 1860s feeling against the Chinese in the Sacramento River area was so intense that a Chinese found fishing there for salmon stood a good chance of being lynched on the spot. Taking advantage of the situation, other fishermen used strong-arm harassment to push the Chinese out of fishing. By 1905, less than a hundred were left in shrimping, their last foothold. The last Chinese shrimp enterprise(Jenny Lynd's Hunter's Point shrimp Company) went out of business in 1956.¹²⁾

12) There was talk of making the remains of the Chinese fishing village there an historic site.

2. Chinese Immigrants Fisheries in California

2-1 Shrimp fishery

For a decade or more, Chinese fishermen and shrimping in California were almost synonymous. Shrimp fishing beginning in the 1860s was the largest and longest-lasting Chinese fishing enterprise in the state.

In 1871, Chinese fishermen were already reported using bag net imported from China and taking great quantities of shrimps from San Francisco and Tomales Bay.¹³⁾

And by 1880, California led among the eight shrimp-producing states. In 1871, Chinese did most of the shrimping. Each camp or individual fishermen had fishing rights to certain areas in the shrimp beds which were mutually recognized.

The industry gave employment to many Chinese. One source stated that several hundreds were engaged in shrimp fishing on San Francisco Bay in 1874~1875.¹⁴⁾

In 1879, some 5 million pounds of shrimp were sold in San Francisco, in the railway and mining camps where Chinese still worked, and also exported to China, Hawaii, and Australia. Chinese merchants developed these steady export markets and the income both from dried shrimp and squid was a substantial addition to California's economy. The Chinese by that time made up 50 percent of the work force, and in 1880 California led the nation in shrimp production. The number of the shrimp camps on San Francisco Bay was 26 in 1897, 19 in 1910, 14 in 1930.¹⁵⁾

Even the humble Chinese fish peddler with yoke or carrying pole and two baskets of fresh fish helped developed the California fisheries by popularizing fish food throughout the Bay Area towns.

Some of the camps bought the catch outright from independent fishermen for processing. In other camps, fishing and shore equipment were owned by companies who then hired fishermen to work for them. There were also owner-companies which would lease the camp, vessel and equipment to others to operate.

The efficient fishing methods used by the Chinese shrimpers brought charges that the Chinese fishing methods were destroying young smelts. Efforts were made to curtail the activities of the shrimp industry. In 1901 legislation was enacted making May, June, and August of each year a closed season for taking shrimp. The frankly expressed hope was that the interrupted season would force the shrimp camps to close and the experienced crews to

13) Paul Bonnot, *The California Shrimp Industry*, Fish Bulletin No. 38, 1932, p.5.

14) Robert G. Spier, *op. cit.*, pp79~83.

15) Paul Bonnot, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

leave for other employment, so that when the season reopened, there would be difficult in getting trained hands.

Subsequently in 1905 legislation was passed prohibiting the exportation of dried shrimps and shrimp shells out of the States.¹⁶⁾

Actually, all these restrictions did not kill the shrimp industry in San Francisco Bay, for there were still 14 shrimp camps lingering in 1930. The Chinese were accused of overfishing and destroying the San Francisco Bay fisheries. But there were no evidence about it. Human activity of another kind -industrial, residential, and leisure use- was the cause. Dumping and harbor pollution upset the delicate balance of this ecosystem and drove the fish and shrimp away.

Finally, San Francisco had to import shrimp. By 1945, Chinese shrimping operations had been ended in San Francisco Bay.¹⁷⁾

2-2 Abalone fishery

The native American Indians had gathered abalone shells occasionally to make shell ornaments and for barter trade, but the Indians were accustomed to a simple natural economy in which trade played but a small part. It was the Chinese fishermen who first realized the potential commercial importance of these shells with their tasty meat and pearly, iridescent inner surface.¹⁸⁾

Abalone were generally obtained by prying the shell fish with a trowel or from the rock to which they attached themselves. Although abalone meat had long been prized as a food in various parts of the world, Americans in the 19th century had not yet learned to appreciate this delicacy. However, starting in 1860, the shell of this mollusks began to be prized here for ornaments and jewelry. By 1866 demand for abalone shells had so increased and was exported from San Francisco to China, Europe, or Eastern United States.¹⁹⁾

The meat of the abalone was salted and dried, with the larger portion of every season's crop shipped to China. By the 1870's Chinese abalone junks were a familiar sight in San Diego. One authority observed in the 1880's that in San Diego County "Most of the abalone are collected by Chinese who have already stripped the coast as far south as Cerros Island. There are eight companies of them now between there and San Diego"

The junks used in the abalone fisheries were of Chinese design and were built in the

16) California State Board of fish Commissioners, *19th Biennial Report*, 1905, p.52.

17) Jack Chen, *op. cit.*, p.100.

18) Jack Chen, *op. cit.*, p.103.

19) George Goode, *op. cit.*, pp. 623~624.

California camps. These were seaworthy vessels, a typical one being 54 feet long, with a beam of 12 feet and a hold depth of four feet. The government considered these junks to be alien vessels because of their Chinese ownership. After the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1894 was passed, the Chinese suddenly found that they were forbidden to own junks operating in "foreign waters." Consequently, many left for other employment and their place in the industry was gradually taken over by the Japanese.

In 1901 a law was passed in the state legislature forbidding the taking of certain species of abalone measuring less than 15 inches around the outer edge. Subsequent legislation was even more restrictive, finally practically forcing the Chinese out of the industry.²⁰⁾

2-3 Shark fishery

In the waters off Santa Catalina in the 1880's, and for 20 years previous, Chinese fishermen caught shark for eating, for its fin-a great Chinese delicacy, and for its liver which yielded a lubricating oil. This was one area where there was no other competition.²¹⁾

2-4 Crab fishery

In the 19th century, the Pacific Coast crab fisheries was not as highly developed as it is today. San Francisco wharves were used to a great extent by the Chinese who caught crabs for market by use of traps consists of a strong circular net fastened inside. The crabs fastened themselves on the bait and made no attempts to escape even when the net was lifted from the water.

2-5 Seaweed Harvesting

The Chinese fishing camps added seaweed to the California table in the 1880s. At first in northern California, American Indians gathered and sold the seaweed to the Chinese, who made it into a nutritious iodine-rich soup. Later, when regular Chinese fishing villages were established, the women and children there did the gathering. In southern California, there was a Chinese operation based on Moss Beach. Kelp farming by the Chinese only became an important activity near the 1890s. Chinese in the Monterey fishing colony used to gather huge amounts of seaweed off the rocky shores of the Monterey Peninsula.²²⁾

The weed was dried in the sun and shipped to San Francisco to be used as food and as a source for agar-agar. Most of the seaweed was exported to China, but some, apart from eating,

20) California State Board of Fish Commissioners, *17th Benial Report*, 1901, p.23.

21) John S. Hittell, *The Commerce and Industries of the Pacific Coast of North America*, San Francisco 1882, pp.359~360.

22) Jack Chen, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

was used locally as fertilizer.²³⁾

2--6 Squid fishery

In 1863, as the Chinese fishermen from Guangdong soon discovered, the waters off Monterey teemed with sturgeon and squid. Chinese sampans put out onto the bay on dark nights. One boat carried a lighted torch in a wire basket suspended from a pole over the water to attract the shoals of squid. Two other sampans then gradually encircled the squid with a giant purse seine 180 feet long and 18 feet deep and quietly closed its mouth. At the last moment, the torch boat would row out of the encirclement, and the squid were caught.

This catch found a ready market. Fresh and dried, it is a traditional food of the Cantonese immigrants. San Franciscan gourmets soon learned to prize it as a delicacy, and thereafter it was in constant demand in Chinese restaurants in the United States and around the Pacific basin.²⁴⁾

2-7 Salmon canning industry

In the salmon fishing and canning industry of the northwestern United States, the Chinese applied their considerable skills at a very early date and up until the mid-1930s.²⁵⁾ One of the reasons that the Chinese were able to survive so long in the salmon canning industry was because the work was highly seasonal and hours were long. Thus it was not attractive to most other workers and Chinese workmen became the mainstay of the industry.²⁶⁾

Chinese labor was supplied by Chinese contractors, being firms based in San Francisco, Seattle, Portland or Vancouver. Under this system, the contractor makes an agreement with the canning company at certain fixed sums per case, to do all the work from the time the fish is delivered at the wharf until they are ready to ship at the end of the season, while the owner guarantees to pack a certain number of cases.

Chinese began to fish salmon commercially in that river as early as 1849, and they were among the first to work in the cannery started by George Hume in 1864 in Washington. They comprised most of the work force in the twenty Sacramento canneries in 1881. Soon Chinese cannery workers were used almost exclusively in salmon canneries in Washington, Oregon, British Columbia and Alaska.²⁷⁾

In 1872, Chinese were manning the Columbia River canneries in Oregon, and five-sixths of

23) Even today there is still some harvesting of seaweed by Chinese along the California coast.

24) *Ibid.*, p. 103

25) *Ibid.*, p. 105.

26) Thomas W. Chinn, H. Mark Lai, and Philip P. Choy, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

27) *Ibid.*, p. 41.

the annual payroll went to them. In 1881, some 3,000 were in the canneries there. From 1884 onward, they were hired in San Francisco in increasing numbers to work the canneries of the Alaska Packers' Association in southern Alaska, etc. By 1888, they made up 86 percent of the cannery workers in California, Oregon, and Washington States. By 1892, their numbers had increased to 2,460 working in thirty-six canneries along with 1,900 white workers and 1,500 Alaskan natives. In 1900, there were 3,570 cannery workers there. From 1892 to 1935, they averaged 52 percent of the work force but totalled less than 30 percent in the later thirty-two of those years. This steady decline in the numbers of Chinese employed was due to the Chinese Exclusion Acts in 1882 and later. The Chinese hands made the cans from sheet metal (until 1901); cleaned, gutted, and cut the fish; packed and cooked them in the cans; and then did the lacquering, labeling, and packing. Work went on nonstop until the job was done.

Over the turn of the century, the canneries were increasingly mechanized. The "Iron Chink" was invented in 1890 to clean and gut the fish. Developed and introduced in APA operations in 1901, it could handle 30,000 fish in ten hours, replacing fifty men. But the market for Alaskan salmon was so good that both it and the Chinese packers worked together.

But by the end of the 1930s the Chinese role in this industry had ended, because the old-timers had died or retired and the young men could find better ways of making a living.²⁸⁾

3. The restriction against Chinese fisheries

The main cause of Chinese exodus was legal or illegal harassment, as shown by the following list: ²⁹⁾

1860; A fishing license costing \$4 a month was required of Chinese fishermen. This was abolished in 1864 because it produced little revenue due to the difficulty of collecting.

1876; Italians, Greeks, and Yugoslavians entering the industry got a law passed regulating in size of Chinese net meshes and so reducing their catches. Chinese were at one time forbidden to use any but bag nets. At one time, they were required to throw back small fish and throw back the large one.

1879; The California legislature refused fishing licenses to aliens ineligible for naturalization. When challenged in the courts, this regulation was declared unconstitutional, but while such cases were pending the results were devastating to the complaints.

1880; A fishing tax of \$2.50 per month was imposed on Chinese fishermen. That same year, David Star Jordan and his successor, Norman E. Schofield of the California Fish and Game

²⁸⁾ Jack Chen, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

²⁹⁾ *Ibid.*, pp. 100~101.

Department, who devoted strenuous efforts to harass the Chinese fishermen and shrimpers, declared, after a study of less than two weeks, that the fishing in the Bay was "being constantly and rapidly diminished by the Chinamen with their fine-meshed nets". This statement alone scared quite a number of Chinese out of the trade. Also, aliens ineligible for naturalization were prohibited from fishing for sale. This was at the height of the anti-Chinese agitation that led passage of the Exclusion Act in 1882.

1887 ; All fishermen were required to obtain licenses to fish. Chinese immigrants, however, knew that this would not be just a routine procedure for them.

1889 ; A new law was passed prohibiting the use of nets commonly used by Chinese fishermen, such as bag net.

1894 ; California-based junks were prohibited in Pacific coastal waters. This ended Chinese abalone fishing.

1895 ; The use of gill nets by Chinese fishermen was prohibited.

1897 ; On Schofield's advice, the State Board of Fish Commissioners ordered a closed season in shrimp fishing from May to October. This included the best fishing period, from June to August. Chinese fishermen challenged this ruling but lost the case. There were twenty-six Chinese shrimping camps.

1905 ; The regulation ordering a closed season for shrimp was repealed, but the export of dried shrimp was prohibited. This reduced the number of Chinese shrimp boats by 50 percent.

1912 ; The closed season for shrimp was reinstated. Chinese began trawling for shrimp, but this gave only temporary relief.

1915 ; The Chinese bag net was again permitted, and the shrimping industry revived over the next decade.

1917 ; Sturgeon fishing was entirely prohibited.

1930 ; Export of dried shrimp was prohibited again.

1935 ; The San Francisco Bay Area fisheries declined noticeably due to pollution, and most of the Chinese left the industry.

V. Summary and Conclusion

Chinese started to immigrate to United States in 1820's. The fisheries, however, by among them were started in the end of 1840's. That was the first commercial fisheries in the Western United States. There was no fish they didn't catch in abundance. But most notably they introduced the eating of shellfish-crab, lobster, shrimp, and mollusks into the West.

They built sampans and junks, as they had in China. Many of their fine mesh nets were brought from Guangdong. And so were their fishing gear and sails, though these were later fashioned in United States when the building of junks became more and more an Americanized trade.

So successful were these fishermen that as early as 1860 a special and discriminatory tax was levied by the State of California on only Chinese fishermen. Chinese expertise and competition in the fishing industry aroused opposition. White fishermen charged that the Chinese were destroying young smelt, killing baby fish, and harvesting small abalone. The California legislature bowed to pressure from white fishermen and passed laws to discourage and curtail Chinese fishing activities.

After this kind of laws went into effect, fewer and fewer young Chinese fishermen were able to continue the business established by aging veterans. And Chinese fishermen were driven from the Bay by the building of the Great Bridges that destroyed their breeding beds and by the industrial pollution. In 1945, Chinese fisheries(shrimping) had all but ended in Western United States.

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美國 西部 初期 水産業에 미친 中國人의 影響

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요 약

본 연구는 필자가 미국 Oregon 州의 水産業史를 조사하던 중 1940년대부터 시작된 미국으로 移民한 中國인들이 미국 서부 수산업에 미친 영향이 至大하다는 것을 발견하고, 이에 관련된 문헌을 찾아 최초 미국 서부(특히, California 州)에 이민하기 시작했던 中國 移民者들이 미국에서 수산업 활동을 시작한 背景과 그에 따른 영향 등을 살펴본 것이다.

中國인이 미국에 이민하기 시작한 배경은 두 가지가 있다. 하나는 국내적인 요인으로서 中國에서 의 경제적 貧困과 정치적 逼迫이었고, 다른 하나는 국외적인 요인으로서 금캐기가 가능하다는 소식 등 미국 생활에 대한 憧憬이었다.

中國인의 미국 移民史에서 독특한 점의 하나는 中國 남부지방에 위치한 廣東省 지방민들이 절대적인 비중(90% 이상)을 차지하고 있다는 것이다. 가장 큰 이유는 廣東省은 일찌기 외국문물이 드나드는 곳이어서 인근 廣東省 지방민들은 다른 지방민보다 외국소식을 쉽게 접할 수 있었기 때문이었다.

미국에 도착한 廣東省 지방민들은 쉽게 직업을 구할 수 없는 處地이 되자 그들이 익숙하게 알고 있는 바다생활에 뛰어들었고, 마침내는 미국 서부에서 진취적인 漁業人이 되었다. 따라서 서부에서 최초의 商業的 漁業人이 되었으며, 미국 서부에서 시작한 中國인의 수산업은 점차 다른 州로 퍼져 나갔다는 기록은 中國인이 미국 전역에서 최초의 商業的 漁業人이었음을 알게 한다.

최초의 中國인 漁村은 1854년 San Francisco의 Rincon Point에 세워졌으며, 25척의 어선과 150여명의 住民이 살았다. 그들이 사용한 어구·어업은 통발, 정치망, 선망, 낚시, 연승 등이었으며, 中國風의 어선과 어구를 직접 만들어 새우, 철갑상어, 대구, 우럭, 넙치, 게, 가재, 전복 등을 어획했다. 1888년에는 San Francisco 전역에 20개의 어촌이 형성되었고, 2천여명의 어업종사자가 있었다. 1900년부터는 점차 그 수가 줄기 시작하였다.

가장 크고 오래 지속된 어업은 새우어업은 1860년대부터 1940년 중반까지 계속되었으며, 이 어업에 의해 새우가 인근 지역의 보편적인 食品으로 자리하게 되었다.

인디언에 의해 단순한 장식품으로 사용되던 전복은 中國인에 의해 그 맛이 알려지게 되었고, 유럽이나 미국 東部로 팔려 나갔다.

상어 또한 中國인에 의해 먹기 시작하였으며, 내장에서 鰾 기름이 사용되기 시작하였다.

게를 잡기 위한 통발과 市場形成으로 San Francisco 부두의 많은 부분이 차지되었다.

1880년대부터 시작된 海藻類의 採取는 처음에는 인디언들에 의해 시작되었으나, 곧 中國인들에 의해 本格化되었다.

廣東省 지방민들의 土俗食品의 하나인 오징어를 잡기 위해 中國인들은 배를 만들어 야간에 횃불을

밝혔다. 오징어는 곧 San Francisco 주민은 물론 태평양 沿岸州와 미국 全域에 있는 중국식당에서 需要가 지속되었다.

중국인들은 1849년부터 연어를 상업적으로 잡기 시작하였으며, Washington 주에서 시작되어 Oregon, British Columbia, Alaska로 퍼진 통조림 공장은 주로 중국인의 勞動力에 의해 운영되었다.

위와 같이 중국인들이 미국 수산업 분야에서 크게 활동하자 미국인들은 그들의 수산업 활동을 牽制 또는 統制하고자 일정한 納稅를 명시한 각종 법률, 특히 The Chinese Exclusion Act 등을 制定하였다.

미국 西部에서 중국인의 수산업은 미국인의 法的 制裁, 중국인의 다른 직업으로의 移職 등으로 1940년대를 끝으로 막을 내렸다.