

# LOST LA

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## CURRICULUM PROJECT

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HISTORICAL INQUIRY QUESTION

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**What were the causes of the Anti-Chinese Massacre of 1871?**

LOST LA EPISODE

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**Wild West**



USC Libraries



# What were the causes of the Anti-Chinese Massacre of 1871?

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## Author of Lesson

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## Content Standards

11.2.2: Describe the changing landscape, including the growth of cities linked by industry and trade, and the development of cities divided according to race, ethnicity and class.

## CCSS Standards

CCSS.ELA-READING FOR LITERACY IN HISTORY.RH.11-12.9: Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.

CCSS.ELA-READING FOR LITERACY IN HISTORY.RH.11-12.2: Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

CCSS.ELA-READING FOR LITERACY IN HISTORY.RH.11-12.3: Evaluate various explanations for actions or events and determine which explanation best accords with textual evidence, acknowledging where the text leaves matters uncertain.

CCSS.ELA-WRITING FOR LITERACY IN HISTORY.WHST.11-12.1a.b.e: Introduce precise, knowledgeable claim(s), establish the significance of the claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that logically sequences the claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.

Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly and thoroughly, supplying the most relevant data and evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both claim(s) and counterclaims in a discipline-appropriate form that anticipates the audience's knowledge level, concerns, values, and possible biases.

Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from or supports the argument presented

## Lost LA Episode

S2 E2: Wild West 9:30-25:15 - "Hangman's Tree" and "The Chinese Massacre"

<https://www.kcet.org/shows/lost-la/episodes/wild-west>

### Overview of Lesson

In this lesson, students explore the complexities of race, violence, and vigilante justice in early American Los Angeles. In 1871, the population of Los Angeles was 6,000 people. This diverse population participated in the lynching of nearly 20 Chinese in Los Angeles. Why did the Chinese Massacre of 1871 happen? And what does that tell us about early American Los Angeles? That is the question students must answer through watching a segment of episode 2 season 2 of Lost LA, reading, and analyzing documents to develop their own answer. This lesson works best when students have background knowledge about 2 key historical trends: Lynching and anti-Chinese sentiment in the West.

### Sources

- A. Los Angeles Daily News, October 26, 1871
- B. "A Reminiscence: Recollections of the Chinese Massacre of 1871", Los Angeles Daily Times, October 27th 1883"
- C. "Lynching the Chinese": P.S. Dorney's Account, October 28, 1871
- D. "Calle de los Negros and the Chinese Massacre of 1871" Marco R. Newmark, 1944.
- E. The Chinatown War: Chinese Los Angeles and the Massacre of 1871 by Scott Zesch, 2012.
- F. Victor Jew, The Anti-Chinese Massacre of 1871 and its Strange Career

### Procedures

1. **Warm-up:** The teacher projects slide 2 of the **Slide Deck**, and then asks students to respond to the following Guiding Questions:
  - a. What do you notice about this image?
  - b. What questions does this image bring to mind?
  - c. What do you think happened?
  - d. What story does this picture tell?
2. The teacher gives students 5-10 minutes to analyze the image and engage in a Pair Share. Next, the teacher asks students to share out.
3. **Historical Firewrite:** A Historical Firewrite is a low-stakes writing activity where students are asked to write for a sustained period of time without much concern for grammar, spelling or conventions. In this particular example, students are challenged to create their own primary source from the image and description alone. Display slides 3 and 4 and read the instructions. Students will need a sheet of paper to write on for this activity.
4. Tell students that they will be answering the question: **What were the causes of the anti-Chinese Massacre of 1871?** Explain to them that they will need to piece together their own evidence to answer this question.

5. Next, tell students to answer the questions on **Handout 1** while they watch the Chinese Massacre clip from 9:30-25:15 <https://www.kcet.org/shows/lost-la/episodes/wild-west>
6. Students should answer all questions. Stop the video to give them time to write after every question is addressed.
7. Next, show your students the **Guiding Questions (Handout 2)** and pass out **Sources A-C**.
8. Have students read in pairs, annotate, and answer the guiding questions for **Sources A-C**.
9. Stop students after reading **Source A-C** and pose the following questions:
  - a. According to the first 3 documents, what factors contributed to the Chinese Massacre? Identify the best quote from each document to show this.
  - b. Notice the sources and dates of Sources A-C. Which one do you find to be the most reliable? Why?
10. Have students pair share first and then share out with the class.
11. Now pass out **Sources D and E**.
12. Have students read in pairs, annotate, and answer the guiding questions for **Sources D and E**.
13. Direct students to pair share to answer the questions below:
  - a. After reading Sources D-F, what were the causes of the massacre? Did your answer change from the last set?
  - b. According to Source E, why did the Chinese Massacre happen?
14. Share out as a class.
15. Go over the whole-class discussion questions (**Handout 2**)
  - a. Many of the mobs in this time operated with "impunity," meaning that they were not scared of being charged for murder after these killings. Why do you think that was?
  - b. African-Americans in the South and Native Americans in the West also experienced lynchings, how do you think the causes for the killings compare?
  - c. This event is normally called "The Chinese Massacre". Should it be called that or the "Anti-Chinese Massacre"? Why?
16. Intro the final question and explain students should use at least 3 documents to support their argument.

## Assessment

Students will write a paragraph responding to the prompt using 3 documents to support the argument. Paragraphs should be written in TIEA-EA-EA-C Format (**Handouts 3 & 4**).

## Bibliography

- Los Angeles Daily News, October 26, 1871.
- "Lynching the Chinese": P.S. Dorney's Account, October 28, 1871
- "A Reminiscence: Recollections of the Chinese Massacre of 1871", Los Angeles Daily Times, October 27th 1883.
- "Calle de los Negros and the Chinese Massacre of 1871" Marco R. Newmark, 1944. *Hist Soc South Calif*, Vol. 26 No. 2-3, June-September, 1944; (pp. 96-98)
- The Chinatown War: Chinese Los Angeles and the Massacre of 1871 by Scott Zesch, 29 June 2012
- Victor Jew, The Anti-Chinese Massacre of 1871 and its Strange Career, chapter in William Deverell and Greg Hise, *A Companion to Los Angeles* (2010), citing P.M. De Falla, *Lantern in the Western Sky*, Part 2, 42 *Quarterly of the Historical Society of Southern California* 161-62 (1960).

# SOURCE A

Document A: Los Angeles Daily News, October 26, 1871 [Modified]

"A strange and **repulsive** sight was that which presented itself to the eye in the yard of the city jail, yesterday... [T]heir bodies were ghastly and distorted, many of them smeared with blood, and pierced with bullets. Their bodies were **mangled** and **disfigured**, while most of them had their clothing either in **tatters**, or stripped off their persons. Those who met their fate at the hands of the lynchers, had the cords... still attached to their necks."

"The following is a list of the dead and the causes of their death:

No. 1 was the Chinese Doctor, known here by the name of Gene Tong; but given in evidence before the Coroner as Chee Long Tong, was **divested of** his under garments, and had been shot through the head and hanged.

No. 2. Wa Sin Qaai, who was represented as having been a resident of Negro Alley for five years, had received eight shots in the abdomen and legs.

No. 3. Chang Wan, a resident of the Doctor's house, had met his death by hanging.

No. 4. Leong Quai died from hanging.

No. 5. Jounq Burrow was shot through the head and left wrist. These five were members of the **Chin Woa Company** (Companies were social and professional groups developed by the Chinese to help one another)

No. 6 was the body of Ah Long, a cigar manufacturer, who had been hanged.

No. 7. Wong Chin, a member of the **Win Young Company**, had also been hanged. Three **cartridges** were found in his pockets.

No. 8. Tong Wan had been shot, stabbed, and hanged. He was a member of the same company as No. 7, and had only arrived by the last steamer from San Francisco.

No. 9. Ah Loo, a member of the Hap Waa Company, and who had only just arrived from China, had also been hanged.

No. 10. Wan Foo, of the Win Young Company, was hanged.

No. 11. Day Kee was hanged.

No. 12. Ho Hing was hanged.

No. 13. Ah Waa, a member of the Ah Young Company, had been hanged.

No. 14. Ah Cut, a liquor manufacturer, had been shot in the abdomen and extremities. He was a member of the Sam Yap Company.

No. 15. Lo Hey, of the Wong Young Company, was hanged.

No. 16. Ah Wan, a member of the Win Young Company, received his death by hanging.

No. 17. Wing Chee, of the Sam Yup Company, had been shot and hanged.

No. 18, which lay at the cemetery, where he had been taken as soon as hanged, being the first victim, was unidentified"

**DEFINITIONS**

**repulsive:** disgusting

**mangled:** mutilated

**tatters:** torn/shredded

**divested of:** taken off

**cartridges:** ammunition

# SOURCE B

“A Reminiscence: Recollections of the Chinese Massacre of 1871”, Los Angeles Daily Times, October 27th 1883

Los Angeles Daily Times, October 27th 1883.

## FEARFUL SCENES ENACTED IN A FEW HOURS-- A MOB WORSE THAN WILD BEASTS-- BURIAL PLACE OF VICTIMS

It was just twelve years ago yesterday, or October 23rd, 1871, that the Chinese massacre took place in this city, and for a time it did seem as if the mob's desire for blood could never be satisfied. The difficulty arose from a **quarrel** between two Chinamen in **N\*\*\*\*\* Alley**, which was then, as it is now, the headquarters of the Chinese of this city. The men both claimed a moon-eyed beauty, lately imported from the Celestial Empire, and from angry words the two finally came to blows. The disorder naturally called the police officers to the scene, and after much parleying and an attempted arrest, the **highbinders** finally fired at the officers, wounding both seriously. The mostly Mexican, American and European population had for a long time cherished the worst feelings towards the encroaching **Mongolians**, and this act was quite enough to arouse their passion.

In a few minutes the large crowd gathered on the streets and in a rage rushed upon Chinatown. Their first victim was elderly, **inoffensive** Chinaman, whom they **seized** and dragged headlong through the streets, beating and abusing him at every step, until they reached the corner of Temple and New High streets where a rope was hastily put around his neck and he was summarily hauled up. The rope broke and the unfortunate **wretch**, innocent of any wrong, again asked for mercy from his cruel tormentors. This was denied with **jeers**, and he was again hung up; this time successfully.

### DEFINITIONS

**quarrel:** fight

**N\*\*\*\*\* Alley:** The street was named “Calle de los negros,” was translated into the racial slur in the 1880s.

**parleying:** conference amongst fighting sides

**Mongolians:** stereotypical and offensive term used to generalize all Asians

**inoffensive:** innocent

**seized:** grabbed

**wretch:** unfortunate/unlucky person

**jeers:** shouting/heckling

# SOURCE C

"Lynching the Chinese" An Account by P.S. Dorney October 28, 1871

About 8 o'clock the death of Thompson was announced. The announcement was received in **sullen** silence; but in a moment the crowd melted away, and Main Street was deserted. In another moment, armed men were seen **hastening**, singly and in clusters, from every street and avenue, all heading toward Chinatown. The whole city seemed moved by one **grim** and tacit purpose—it streamed down from the hills and swarmed from the suburbs, while "**Sonora**" poured forth a horde of **swarthy** avengers. Businessmen closed their shops and joined the gathering clans, and in less than fifteen minutes after the announcement of "Bob" Thompson's death, the cracking of rifles, the roar of shotguns, and the rattle of small arms proclaimed the investment of Chinatown.

About 9 o'clock the first Chinese was captured. He was armed with a hatchet and was taken while attempting to break through the **cordon** of whites that surrounded the Chinese quarter. A dozen hands clutched him, and a hundred throats hoarsely shouted: "A rope! To the hill! To the hill!"

A man, then and now of standing and influence, dashed into a neighboring store and presently emerged, shaking **aloft** the first rope—a smooth, kinky, brand-new coil.

As the maddened men surged up the hill (Temple Street), the little **ill-favored** prisoner, borne **bodily** along, was stabbed in the back and side and was dead as a doorstep before General Baldwin's corral was reached, to the gate-beam of which the dead man was hanged. While the rope was being fastened to the neck of the corpse, two **burly** human beasts held it **erect**, while an Irish shoemaker known as "Crazy Johnson" stood guard, revolver in hand.

By this time, Chinatown, wholly surrounded, was in a state of **siege**. Mounted men came galloping from the country—the **vaquero** was in his glory, and the cry was "Carajo la Chino!" ["Damned Chinese!"]

## DEFINITIONS

**sullen:** unhappy/irritated

**hastening:** hurrying

**grim:** evil

**tacit:** obvious

**Sonora:** an area of L.A. where Mexicans and diverse groups lived

**swarthy:** dark-skinned

**hatchet:** small axe

**cordon:** line of people, usually police

**aloft:** up in the air

**ill-favored:** unlucky or unliked

**borne bodily along:** body held up and dragged

**burly:** large

**erect:** up

**siege:** invasion or attack of a city or home

**vaquero:** cowboy

# SOURCE D

“Calle de los Negros and the Chinese Massacre of 1871” Marco R. Newmark, 1944

Hist Soc South Calif, Vol. 26 No. 2-3, June-September, 1944; (pp. 96-98)

For more than a generation, the section of Los Angeles neighboring about Calle de los Negros, or as it was more generally but less elegantly known, "**N\*\*\*\*\* Alley**," was the center of the local underworld. Within this unholy precinct, gambling, drinking and **revelry**, always rough and ever ready, held unrestrained and **ribald** sway. Disputes were usually settled without benefit of legal procedure, and murder was an almost daily occurrence.

The explanation of this social phenomenon is that originally the best families lived in the vicinity, and it was only after American occupation that the hosts of evil **descended** upon the neighborhood. It was near N\*\*\*\*\* Alley, in 1871, that one of the most disgraceful episodes in the history of Los Angeles took place.

In October of that year, a war caused by the **abduction** of a woman broke out between two rival Chinese **factions**. Some of the contenders were arrested but were released on bail. It was thought that this would end the trouble, but the following day, the fighting was renewed and officers, accompanied by a number of citizens, attempted an arrest. During the **mêlée**, Officer Jesus Bilder-rain was injured; Robert Thompson, who rushed to his assistance, was shot to death, and some bystanders were wounded. The news spread rapidly and an armed mob, determined to avenge the murder, soon gathered.

## DEFINITIONS

**N\*\*\*\*\* Alley:** The street was named "Calle de los negros," was translated to the racial slur in the 1880s.

**precinct:** area

**revelry:** partying

**ribald:** vulgar

**descended:** fell upon

**abduction:** illegal taking of a person

**factions:** groups/clubs

**melee:** hand-to-hand fight or struggle

**avenge:** take revenge

# SOURCE E

Judge Lynch and “The Quibbles of Law”, The Chinatown War: Chinese Los Angeles and the Massacre of 1871 by Scott Zesch, 2012

The Chinatown War: Chinese Los Angeles and the Massacre of 1871 by Scott Zesch, 29 June 2012

In November 1870, after a year of deadly violence in which the Los Angeles legal system had produced more than a dozen murder incidents but no **convictions**, rumors circulated that a **vigilante committee**, consisting of over five hundred of the most influential citizens, was holding secret meetings in various parts of the county. A few weeks later, this group abandoned secrecy and placed a newspaper notice, advising the public that its members had agreed “under the high canopy of heaven, approved by our own consciences, approved by all good citizens, and above all the laws of God and nature, to deal out justice impartially until the necessity no longer exists...”

Los Angeles had a long tradition of mob “justice.” Its citizens had organized California’s **vigilance committee** in 1836 to **avenge** a Latino man’s murder at the hands of his wife and her lover. During the first two decades after California became a state in 1850, Angelenos witnessed nearly fifty lynchings of suspected criminals. One Yale-educated Los Angeles mayor, Stephen Clark Foster, had resigned his position to lead a mob that hanged a prisoner in 1855; eight years later, Angelenos had hanged an eighteen-year-old boy whose only known offense was stealing chickens. Although both Anglos and Latinos participated in these illegal executions, roughly three-quarters of the victims were Latinos, leading some historians to speculate that **ethnicity** and class were driving forces behind the vigilantes’ killings.

Popular opinion in southern California generally supported vigilantism, which was accepted as a disagreeable but necessary obligation of responsible citizens. Indeed, vigilance committees did not consist of revenge-crazed **rabble** but of successful tradesmen who believed that the legal system, through corruption or **ineptness**, had failed to bring order to the community in which they were inventing their life’s work. Their philosophy was simple: the rule of the “the people” **trumped** the rule of law whenever the vigilantes agreed that quick, decisive action was necessary...

## DEFINITIONS

**convictions:** decisions of guilt in a trial  
**vigilante committee:** group that takes law and order into their own hands  
**avenge:** take revenge  
**ethnicity:** national or cultural group  
**ineptness:** not able to do its job  
**trumped:** were above

# SOURCE F

“The Anti-Chinese Massacre of 1871 and Its Strange Career”, Victor Jew, 2010  
[Modified]

Victor Jew, The Anti-Chinese Massacre of 1871 and its Strange Career, chapter in William Deverell and Greg Hise, A Companion to Los Angeles (2010), citing P.M. De Falla, Lantern in the Western Sky, Part 2, 42 Quarterly of the Historical Society of Southern California 161-62 (1960).

Excitement and the riot happened, but what was done in the streets was done with efficient **dispatch**. It took only four hours... It was possible that **vengeance** was exacted so quickly because the lynchers knew that relatively nearby, in Wilmington, stood a garrison of federal troops that could be mustered to the Plaza in short time to suppress further killing. Hence a type of social knowledge that we identify with Reconstruction - the use of federal troops in 1870 and 1871 to suppress white violence - seemed to **manifest** in Los Angeles that October. In addition to this parallel to **Reconstruction-era** history, another can be drawn between Los Angeles in 1871 and **contemporaneous** events in the former Confederate South. While it is important to note that the riot and disturbance was a **multicultural and multiethnic** disaster, the violence took its license as an angry response to a crisis in post-Civil War whiteness. The Los Angeles mob acted under the **aegis** of a fearsome defense of the racialized **status quo** - they had heard that the Chinese were shooting at white men and they rushed to punish such **impertinence** and **insubordination**.

## DEFINITIONS

**dispatch:** speed

**vengeance:** revenge

**manifest:** take place

**Reconstruction-era:** a time after the Civil War when African Americans sought equality and white supremacists fought back

**contemporaneous:** at the same time

**multi-cultural:** many cultures

**license:** permission

**aegis:** sponsorship or support

**racialized status quo:** how race relations operated at the time

**impertinence:** lack of respect

# HANDOUT 1: THE CHINESE MASSACRE OF 1871

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As you watch the video, answer the questions below

1. Describe the situation that led to Andres Pico participating in a lynching. What message did the lynching send?
2. Who were the most likely lynching victims in California? Why?
3. According to the video, what was the purpose of lynching in the L.A. area during that time period?
4. Why did the fighting erupt amongst the tong? (Chinese Massacre)
5. Why do you think Irishmen, Mexicans and Americans all joined in the lynching?
6. Why do you think the mob killed all the Chinese they saw, even the innocent?
7. Why wasn't anyone convicted of the lynching? What does that tell us about "**vigilante justice**" in this time period? (\*when mobs lynched suspected criminals)

# HANDOUT 2: QUESTIONS FOR SOURCES A-F

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## Source A: Los Angeles Daily News

1. (Sourcing) How many days after the event was this source written? How might that impact the credibility of the source?

2. (Close Reading) What words does the article use to describe the Chinese Massacre? How did most people die?

3. (Close Reading) Who does this source blame for the killing?

## Source B: “A Reminiscence: Recollections of the Chinese Massacre of 1871”

1. (Close Reading) How many years after the event was this document written? How might that impact the credibility of the source?

2. (Close Reading) According to the document how did the “mostly Mexican, American and European population” feel about the Chinese?

3. (Close Reading) What is the tone of the news article? Who do you think it blames for the massacre? How do you know?

**Source C: "Lynching the Chinese"**

1. (Close Reading) According to paragraph 1, how did the townspeople react to the death of "Thompson"?

2. (Close Reading) Who were the different people who participated in the lynching according to this account?

3. According to documents A-C, what were the causes of the anti-Chinese Massacre? Identify a quote to justify your answer.

**Source D: Calle de los Negros and the Chinese Massacre of 1871**

1. (Source) How many years after the event was this document written? How might that impact the credibility of the source?

2. (Close Reading) According to this document, what was the reputation of "Calle de los Negros"? Why do you think the N-word was used to describe the alley?

3. (Close Reading) According to the document, what started the fighting?

**Source E: Judge Lynch and “The Quibbles of Law”**

1. (Close Reading) According to paragraph 1, where did the mob get its authority for “vigilante justice?”

2. (Close Reading) Who was lynched by the mobs in early Los Angeles?

3. (Close Reading) According to paragraph 3, why did Southern California support “vigilantism?”

**Source F: The anti-Chinese Massacre of 1871 and Its Strange Career**

1. (Source) How many years after the event was this document written? How might that impact the credibility of the source?

2. (Close Reading) Why was the lynching done so quickly according to this document?

3. (Close Reading) How does the author connect this event to Reconstruction? What does he claim the mob took “its license” from?



# HANDOUT 6: TIEAC PARAGRAPH STRUCTURE

**TIEAC paragraphs can help provide a structure for students when writing argumentative paragraphs. Can be simplified or expanded to meet various grade level needs.**

Sample Student Handout:

Topic Sentence	Write a topic sentence with a claim that responds to the question.  *This sentence will change depending on the type of question you are being asked. Make sure you are directly answering the question.	_____ because _____.
Introduce Evidence	Write an introductory phrase that cites where you found your evidence.	According to Document __, _____  Based on the text, _____.  The author states that _____.  The image shows that _____.  The text can be used to argue _____ because _____.
Evidence	Include a direct quote from your source or document that you can use to prove your claim.  *You must use the exact words from your source. If referencing an image, give specific details.	" _____ "
Analyze Evidence	Explain why your evidence is important.	This evidence is important because_____.  This means that _____.  Because _____, _____.  Contrary to what many believe, _____.
Conclusion Sentence	Summarize your paragraph and restate your claim.	In conclusion, _____.  Ultimately, _____.  As a result, _____.