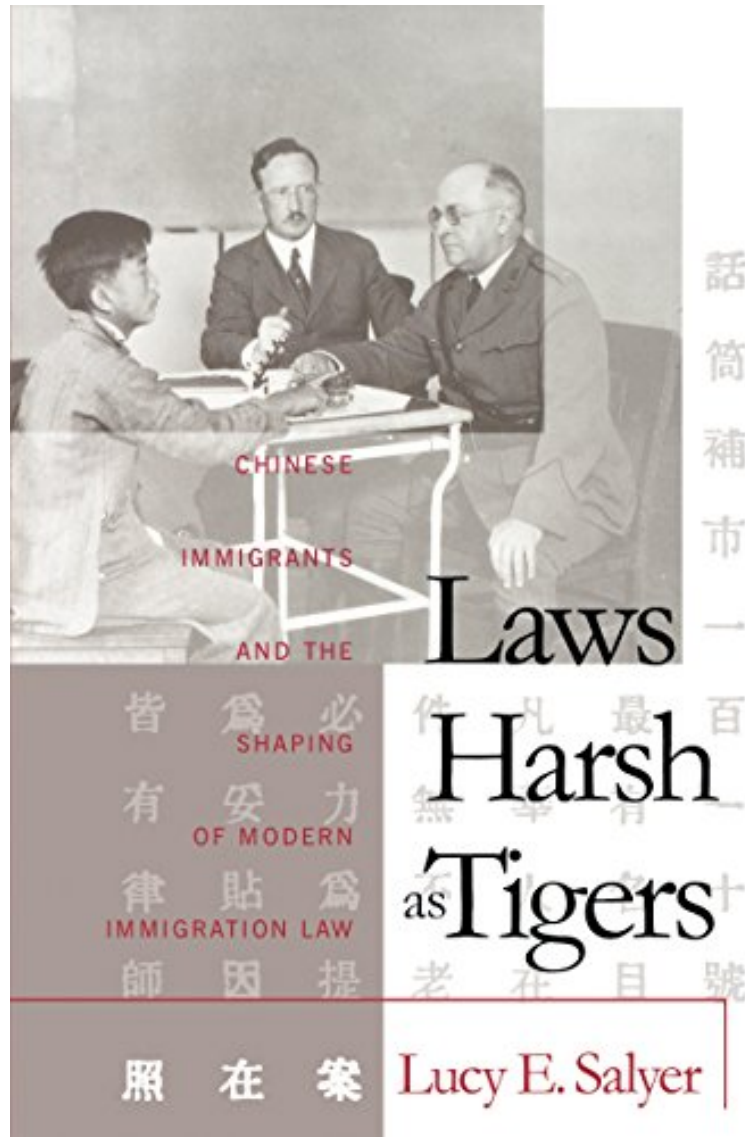


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## **Laws Harsh As Tigers: Chinese Immigrants and the Shaping of Modern Immigration Law (Studies in Legal History)**

*Lucy E. Salyer*

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0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. This is the definitive history of the legal struggle against ...By michiganreaderThis is the definitive history of the legal struggle against the Chinese Exclusion laws that banned almost all Chinese nationals from entering the United States between 1882 and 1943. It shows the racist underpinnings of the legal doctrine that today that limits rights of all of us, citizens and non-citizens at the border. At the same time, it shows the power of an organized legal resistance, and the ways the judicial branch maintained its adherence to the rule of law in the face of bigotry. Salyer documents that Chinese brought over 7,000 cases challenging the laws and their implementation in the first decade of exclusion, and were so successful that Congress ultimately stripped courts of the power to review many exclusion decisions. As--or more--relevant to current political and legal fights as when it was published, this is a must read for those interested in immigration, law, policy, and democracy.

Focusing primarily on the exclusion of the Chinese, Lucy Salyer analyzes the popular and legal debates surrounding immigration law and its enforcement during the height of nativist sentiment in the early twentieth century. She argues that the struggles between Chinese immigrants, U.S. government officials, and the lower federal courts that took place around the turn of the century established fundamental principles that continue to dominate immigration law today and make it unique among branches of American law. By establishing the centrality of the Chinese to immigration policy, Salyer also integrates the history of Asian immigrants on the West Coast with that of European immigrants in the East.Salyer demonstrates that Chinese immigrants and Chinese Americans mounted sophisticated and often-successful legal challenges to the enforcement of exclusionary immigration policies. Ironically, their persistent litigation contributed to the development of legal doctrines that gave the Bureau of Immigration increasing power to counteract resistance. Indeed, by 1924, immigration law had begun to diverge from constitutional norms, and the Bureau of Immigration had emerged as an exceptionally powerful organization, free from many of the constraints imposed upon other government agencies.

This is an important study."Western Historical Quarterly""Brilliant, well-researched and well-written."Law and History ""An elegantly written, well conceived book that makes an important contribution to the field."Pacific Historical ""Contributes a critical and vitalizing measure of complexity to a dimension of immigration history."American Journal of Legal History""This excellent book . . . represents some of the finest recent scholarship in the history of American law."American Historical ""Brilliant, well-researched and well-written."Law and History "An elegantly written, well conceived book that makes an important contribution to the field."Pacific Historical ""This excellent book . . . represents some of the finest recent scholarship in the history of American law."American Historical " Lucy Salyer offers a new reading of a critical chapter in the making of modern America with fresh material, thoughtful interpretations, and marvelous prose. *Laws Harsh as Tigers* is excellent immigration history, excellent social history, and excellent legal history. Its publication marks the emergence of a gifted young historical talent.--Charles W. McCurdy, University of VirginiaThis is an important study for American historians of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, especially those who focus upon the American West, immigration, nativism, ethnicity, and Asian Americans.--Western Historical QuarterlyA tremendous contribution to our understanding of how legal alien residents gradually came to lose their constitutional rights in the United States.--Western Legal HistorySalyer's fresh approach to the study of immigration law contributes a critical and vitalizing measure of complexity to a dimension of immigration history.--American Journal of Legal HistoryThis is an important, compellingly written, and exhaustively researched work on Chinese immigrants and the shaping of American immigration law.--Journal of American HistoryBrilliant, well-researched and well-written.--Law and History An elegantly written, well conceived book that makes an important contribution to the field.--Pacific Historical At a time when immigration is again becoming a 'hot' issue, Lucy Salyer's brilliant explication and analysis of how the now infamous Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 shaped and transformed American immigration law is doubly welcome, both as an analysis of hysteria past and as a warning about the dangers of overzealous administration. *Laws Harsh as Tigers* is an important work that all historians of race and ethnicity should read and ponder.--Roger Daniels, University of CincinnatiMeticulously researched and presented with nuance . . . Those interested in immigration history and policy, Asian American studies, and administrative law will find it an important work.--Political Science QuarterlyThis excellent book, carefully and thoroughly researched and engaginglywritten, represents some of the finest recent scholarship in the history of American law.--American Historical From the Back CoverThis explores the social and legal history of restrictive immigration policies and their enforcement in the United States between 1891 and 1924.