

as a threat to their masculinity, for they believed that wage earners had only a tenuous claim to manly independence. Many spoke of "wage slavery" and interwove whiteness into their constructions of artisanal manhood to distinguish their identities as laborers from those of black slaves.

The change from artisan to wageworker did not happen instantaneously, nor did it occur at the same pace in each trade. Before the Civil War, many men could reasonably hope to achieve the status of independent artisan. Until 1860, as many as 90 percent of white men owned their land or shop, and half of the 10 percent who were wage earners worked in shops with ten or fewer employees, where the traditional mixture of work and play, task-oriented work, and close master-journeyman relationships survived.

But the small, familial shops of the artisans began to disappear in northeastern urban centers as early as the 1810s. Increasingly, some artisanal masters hired more journeymen, while others struggled to compete with larger shops—facing the possibility of becoming dependent employees themselves if their shops failed. Most wage labor was now time-oriented rather than task-oriented. Masters no longer labored alongside journeymen, work discipline limited or eliminated recreation, and journeymen lost hope of becoming masters themselves. Faced with the prospect of dependence on another man for wages, craftsmen adhered more closely than ever to the traditional ideal of artisanal manhood.

After the Civil War, wage work, rather than independent artisanal production, increasingly became the norm. With the emergence of both a large proletariat and ever-larger corporations, the notion of a manly citizen based on production and self-employment became both increasingly problematic and increasingly romanticized. The figure of the artisan remained vivid in the public imagination, but it increasingly represented an elusive and fading ideal. Likewise, the artisan remained prominent in labor rhetoric, becoming for labor organizations such as the Knights of Labor a symbolic image invoked in resistance to wage work and male dependency.

Artisanal manhood largely disappeared from American culture in the twentieth century. Although images of the artisan remain on products such as Arm & Hammer baking soda, the specific connection between the muscular arm grasping a large hammer and the property-owning craftsman has been lost. During the twentieth century, working-class manhood came to be defined more in terms of recreational activities, such as sports, hobbies, and outdoor activities, than in terms of control of labor time or property ownership. However, the traditional ideals of the artisan endure in popular images of the small-business owner and the family farmer.

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RELATED ENTRIES

Agrarianism; Alcohol; Apprenticeship; Breadwinner Role; Citizenship; Industrialization; Labor Movement and Unions; Market Revolution; Property; Race; Republicanism; Whiteness; Work; Working-Class Manhood

—Rosanne Currarino

ASIAN-AMERICAN MANHOOD

Despite their roots in strongly patriarchal Asian cultures, American men of Asian extraction have continually struggled against the idea that they are somehow less masculine than men from other cultures. For nearly a century after Asian immigration to the United States began, this idea was more than simply a cultural stereotype, it was also embodied in the U.S. legal code. Until 1870 only white males had enjoyed the full benefits of U.S. citizenship, but that year these benefits were extended to men of African descent by the Nationality

Act. According to this act, however, Asian Americans were designated as "aliens ineligible to citizenship." The enfranchisement of women by the Nineteenth Amendment in 1919 further eroded the legal standing of Asian-American men and reinforced the idea that Asian men were naturally inferior to other men. Although the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 finally enfranchised Asian Americans by removing nationality and race from consideration in determining eligibility for immigration or naturalization, the emasculation of the Asian-American man would remain an ongoing problem for Asian-Americans into the twenty-first century.

Early Asian Immigrants in the Nineteenth Century

Asian immigration to the United States began in the mid-nineteenth century as an almost exclusively male phenomenon. In 1849, 325 Chinese men arrived in California to take part in the California gold rush, followed by 450 more the following year. Beginning in 1851, the number of Chinese men emigrating to California began to rise dramatically, with more than 2,500 arriving that year and more than 20,000 arriving in 1852, bringing the total number of Chinese immigrants to about 25,000.

These Chinese emigrants called themselves *gam saan haak* (travelers to the Gold Mountain) and they thought of themselves, at least initially, as sojourners (*dekaseginin*) who would earn enough money working in the United States to return home rich within a few years. Largely from the province of Canton, these immigrants came from a patriarchal, Confucian culture that regarded men as naturally superior to women, who were taught to be obedient to their fathers, husbands, and (in the case of widows) sons. Women were left behind because the expense of paying their passage to the United States would have decreased the profitability of the trip, and most women from the better classes were unfit for difficult journeys because their feet had been disformed by the practice of foot binding. Chinese immigrants worked initially as miners, and in the 1860s more than ten thousand Chinese were working on the construction of the western portions of the Central Pacific Railroad. By the 1880s, male Chinese in the United States outnumbered female Chinese by almost twenty to one.

Throughout the 1850s, California's popular press presented favorable portraits of Chinese immigrants, who were welcomed as visitors who could assist in fostering California's economic growth. However, because the Chinese lived in highly concentrated enclaves such as San Francisco's Chinatown, were largely non-Christian, and were willing to accept low-paying jobs that were shunned by whites, many white Americans soon began to regard the Chinese and other

Asian immigrants to the United States as a "yellow peril" that posed a threat to American democracy. Chinese men came to be regarded as less masculine than men of other races, in part because Chinese culture seemed to be the antithesis of American individualism, and in part because male Chinese dress and hairstyles differed from those of Euro-American men. Putting self-interest aside, the Chinese banded together and managed to undercut white labor by working harder and for lower wages. In both political documents and yellow-peril fictions such as P. W. Dooner's *Last Days of the Republic* (1880), the Chinese were depicted as insectlike automata who were inhuman in their ability to subsist on starvation wages. Popular stereotypes also portrayed "chinamen" as naturally suited only to feminized, service-oriented jobs such as washing laundry and waiting on tables, despite the early association of Chinese men with mining and work on the railroads. With the suspension of the Burlingame Treaty with China in 1881 and the passage of the first Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882, the Chinese became the only ethnic group that could not immigrate freely to the United States. A series of subsequent acts ensured that the Chinese would remain ineligible to emigrate to the United States until 1943, when the Chinese exclusion laws were finally repealed by Congress.

Emigration from Japan began in the late 1860s, when small groups arrived in both Hawaii and California. Japanese emigration also began as a predominantly male phenomenon, with most of the immigrants working as agricultural laborers. Japan's relative domestic prosperity, its openness to Western technology, and its military victories over China gave it international prestige and meant that relatively few of its citizens were seeking to emigrate to the United States. Because the U.S. government held Japan in higher esteem than it did China, the Japanese at first suffered less from anti-Asian sentiment than did the Chinese. In the early 1890s, Japanese immigrants began to arrive in California in significant numbers, but like the Chinese before them, these first-generation immigrants, known as Issei, regarded themselves as sojourners whose goal was to make money and return to Japan. By the turn of the century, Issei attitudes toward the United States had changed, and a significant number settled down in California to become farmers.

The United States and Japan established the so-called Gentleman's Agreement of 1907–8, through which Japan voluntarily limited the emigration of Japanese laborers to the United States. The agreement did, however, allow laborers already present in the United States to send for their wives and families back in Japan, and therefore by the 1920s the Japanese-American population did not have the gender imbalance that

marked the Chinese-American population. Because Asians were prohibited by U.S. anti-miscegenation laws from marrying whites, Chinese men were unable to marry and start families at the same rate as the Japanese. The Chinese thus constituted a bachelor population, in which old men far outnumbered young men (although many of these “bachelors” were actually married men whose wives remained in China).

What Chinese and Japanese men had in common, however, was their continued pursuit of traditionally Asian models of masculinity. Issei wives, for example, were expected both to contribute to the farm work and to keep house, and many felt that their husbands were more imperious and less helpful than white husbands. Meanwhile, as the century progressed, whites began to make fewer distinctions between Chinese and Japanese, disparaging the masculine qualities of men from these groups equally. By the mid-1920s, the anti-Chinese exclusion laws were extended to Japanese and other Asians, who were all treated as aliens ineligible for citizenship and denied the rights held by men and women from other racial and ethnic backgrounds.

From Yellow Peril to Model Minority

The experience of Chinese-American men looms large in any history of Asian-American manhood because the Chinese dominated the early years of Asian immigration to the United States, when the abiding stereotypical attitudes toward Asian cultures were formed. Even after the passage of the Immigration Act of 1965, which opened up Asian immigration on a quota basis, immigrants from other nations in Asia tended to suffer from the same set of stereotypes. The Chinese-American playwright, novelist, and critic Frank Chin has argued that throughout the period leading up to World War II, the stereotype of the emasculated Asian male “came out of the laws, out of the schools, out of the white literary lights of the time, out of the science, out of the comics, movies, and radio night and day” (Chin, 12). As a result, not only white Americans, but also many Asian Americans came to internalize it. The force of the stereotype remained undiminished even after World War II, when considerable publicity was given to the many heroic acts performed by *Nisei* (second-generation Japanese-American) soldiers in the service of the United States, including a presidential reception for the highly decorated 442nd Regimental Combat Team, composed of *Nisei* from Hawaii and from internment camps in California.

After World War II, however, the idea of the less-than-masculine Asian man was given a new stereotypical basis. Asian Americans were no longer considered unassimilable aliens; instead, they were stereotyped as the “model minority,”

in contradiction to those minorities—particularly African Americans and Chicanos—who were growing increasingly militant in their calls for social equality. The years after the Immigration Act of 1965 saw a rapid increase in immigrants not only from China and Japan, but also from the Philippines, Korea, Vietnam, and South Asia. These groups have adopted different approaches to the problem of assimilation into U.S. society: Far more than Filipinos, Japanese, or South Asians, Asian Americans with roots in China, Korea, and Vietnam have tended to emphasize the maintenance of ethnic communities into which economic resources can be invested. All, however, have found themselves affected by the stereotype of the model minority, according to which Asians have been portrayed by the white mainstream (in the words of the literary scholar Elaine Kim) as “restrained, humble, and well-mannered, a people who respect law, love education, work hard, and have close-knit, well-disciplined families” (Kim, 177). Asian-American men, consequently, have often been depicted by the U.S. mainstream as domesticated and meek.

Thus, while the myth of the model minority does promote respect for Asians as intelligent and diligent, it also associates them with conformity rather than individuality, setting them at odds with the values most promoted by U.S. cultural mythology. This association, combined with the fact that at the close of the twentieth century Asian men still tended to be employed in service-oriented, secondary-sector jobs (e.g., janitors, waiters, machinists, clerks), perpetuated stereotyped perceptions of Asian-American men as less than fully masculine. Even when they managed to penetrate the primary sector, companies pursuing them for technical jobs often shunned them for managerial jobs, in part due to the stereotype that they are too passive to be effective managers and administrators.

At the same time, the late twentieth century saw the emergence of an alternative stereotype, as the popularity of martial arts films promoted an image of Asian hypermasculinity. Indeed, because the better known of the Asian martial arts has roots in Zen Buddhist practice, it is possible to find in these arts a model of individuality that arises from a communally oriented masculine ethos and that might offer an alternative to the rugged individualism that looms so large in U.S. popular culture. Perhaps, as the proportion of Asian Americans grows in relation to the rest of the U.S. population, this model of masculinity may increasingly pose a challenge to the models that traditionally dominate in the United States. However, it is more likely that white audiences view the Asian kung-fu fighter as an escapist fantasy, rather than a threat, precisely because Asian-American manhood is assumed to be safely

feminized or domesticated. At the start of the twenty-first century, many Asian-American writers have set themselves the task of both combating the stereotypical portrayals of Asian-American manhood and leading both white Americans and Asian Americans to recognize the diversity of Asian—and Asian-American—cultures.

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RELATED ENTRIES

California Gold Rush; Citizenship; Crisis of Masculinity; Immigration; Martial Arts Films; Patriarchy; Race; Work; World War II

—Cyrus R. K. Patell

ATLAS, CHARLES

1894–1972
Bodybuilder

As early-twentieth-century industrialization brought more women into areas that were traditionally male, men began to depend on physical development to maintain a sense of power

and manliness. Mechanized production, decreases in the need for skilled labor, and the mass influx of immigrants all challenged traditional notions of masculinity. During this period, the bodybuilder Charles Atlas preached that the road to economic and social success began with physical improvement. Atlas's popular fitness and health program offered a way for millions of young men in factory and office jobs to achieve this new masculinity through exercise.

Born Angelo Siciliano in Acri, Italy, Atlas immigrated to the United States in 1904 with his mother after his parents separated. A physically weak young boy, Angelo worked in a women's pocketbook factory and was prone to sickness. After enduring taunts and regular beatings by Brooklyn neighborhood bullies, he decided to transform his physique and developed an idea for isometric exercises that he would later trademark as Dynamic Tension. Through a regular workout routine he was able to sculpt his body into the award-winning shape that became his ticket to achieving the American dream.

Atlas adopted his new name after spotting a poster of the Greek god Atlas holding the world, and he went on to win the World's Most Beautiful Man contest in 1921. He then won a national muscle building contest the next two years in a row, earning him the title of World's Most Perfectly Developed Man. At 5' 10", 180 pounds, with a 47-inch chest, his physical measurements were judged by experts to be masculine perfection. Atlas modeled for artists, and parts of his body have been reproduced for more than seventy-five statues around the world.

In 1927, Atlas published his total fitness and health program and created a correspondence course that promised to help other "weaklings" transform their bodies. Ads were placed in boy's magazines and comic books with headlines such as "Are You a Red-blooded Man?" and "Yes! I turn Weaklings into He-Men," suggesting that young boys could become self-dependent, powerful, and attractive to women just like their favorite superheroes.

It was also in 1927 that Atlas built his first gymnasium, in New York, and in 1929 he teamed up with marketing whiz Charles Roman to form Charles Atlas, Ltd. Together they attracted thousands of customers by suggesting that physical stamina would help men compete successfully in the harsh and strenuous conditions of industrial society. Program materials, which were translated into seven languages and Braille, used effective advertising techniques, including cartoons, to promote the company. Atlas also performed amazing public feats: he pulled a 731.5-ton railroad car and towed six linked automobiles for a mile. By the 1950s, his company had

recruited nearly a million pupils all over the world, including Gandhi, Joe DiMaggio, Rocky Marciano, and Robert Ripley.

By promoting self-discipline and a health-conscious routine, Atlas symbolized the ideal masculine physique and inspired other men to achieve the same results. He preached that physical transformation alone, without intellectual or emotional development, was enough to achieve success as a man, presenting himself as living proof that through hard work and self-discipline the average man could become superior if he developed his body's potential.

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RELATED ENTRIES

Advertising; Body; Bodybuilding; Health; Heterosexuality; Immigration; Industrialization; Passionate Manhood; Self-Made Man
—Fred Gardaphé

AUTOMOBILES

For over a century, men have used the activities of making, purchasing, driving, racing, and working on cars to assert and reinforce American perceptions of masculine work, consumption, skill, and technological prowess. At the same time, women and minority males have faced limits and challenges to their access to and authority over automotive technology.

Automobiles debuted in the United States at the turn of the twentieth century, a time when the ongoing processes of

industrialization, bureaucratization of white-collar work, and feminization of office spaces were undermining older work-based sources of masculinity. The automobile industry played a significant part in accelerating these changes, particularly after Henry Ford introduced the moving assembly line in 1913. Autoworkers, like other male industrial workers during the twentieth century, responded by asserting their masculinity through a shop-floor culture that sought control over the work process and fostered increased homosocial leisure activities such as drinking, gambling, and hunting.

As a commodity, the automobile offered early-twentieth-century American males a new form of consumption to salve the psychic wounds of modern industrialized manhood: a unique consumption of comfort, convenience, and often luxury that was also an unquestionably masculine activity conducted in an all-male retail setting. Once purchased, automobiles offered multiple avenues for exercising and expressing manly independence, freedom, and control. Automobile drivers were in complete control of their destiny, free of the limits of horse-drawn or rail transportation. Even when the machine broke down or became mired in the mud, it provided men the opportunity to display masculine traits of technical knowledge and mechanical skill as they tinkered with and, they hoped, asserted mastery over an expensive industrial product that they owned, operated, and (ideally) understood mechanically.

Women and minority men also sensed the freedom and power of automobiles, and they exploited opportunities to master the new machines. Before World War I, women drove, raced, and worked on cars in defiance of strong social pressures against such behavior. In the face of widespread racism and segregation, African-American men established their own networks of automobile clubs and auto-related businesses to facilitate black motoring. However, automakers inundated the popular print media with images that both exploited and perpetuated ideals of white men as controllers of automotive technology and women as passengers, spectators, or trophies of motorized male sexual conquest. The advent of federally funded vocational education in public schools during the 1920s established an enduring system of gender-segregated technical training that made automotive technological knowledge a rigidly masculine, and often racially segregated, terrain.

Following World War II, as suburbanization, automatic transmissions, and fatherhood domesticated automobile consumption, the now rigidly male culture of automotive technology found renewed expression in a plethora of regional and national motor-sports activities, such as drag racing, stock-car