



CAAM TO DEVELOP “WHO IS AMERICAN?” PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PROJECT

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THE CENTER FOR ASIAN AMERICAN MEDIA LAUNCHES CROWDFUNDING CAMPAIGN TO DEVELOP EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES ABOUT THE CHINESE EXCLUSION ACT

August 15, 2016, SAN FRANCISCO, CA — The Center for Asian American Media (CAAM) is launching a crowdfunding campaign August 15, 2016 to raise \$50,000 that will go toward developing educational resources and hosting community screenings for *The Chinese Exclusion Act*, a two-hour documentary film directed by Ric Burns and Li-Shin Yu.

The initiative, **Who is American? Immigration, Exclusion & The American Dream**, will foster public understanding and dialogue about the history and impact of the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act, a landmark, little-known piece of federal legislation that reshaped American law, foreign policy, and civic life. The Chinese Exclusion Act is the only time in United States history where immigration rules outlawed a group of people based on ethnicity and nationality—essentially banning most immigrants from Asia—from 1882 Act until 1943.

While the ban was more than 60 years, Chinese immigrants fought back and resisted through the American legal system. Thousands of lawsuits were brought forth, including more than 20 cases that ended up in the Supreme Court. “In the process of resisting the discriminatory laws, the Chinese community helped define, in the most positive ways, what American citizenship is, from birthright citizenship to the foundation for desegregation of schools to establishing equal protection under the law,” said CAAM Executive Director Stephen Gong.

CAAM, in partnership with the Asian/Pacific/American Institute at New York University and Steeplechase Films, will plan and implement a national public engagement and educational initiative to be coordinated with the national primetime broadcast premiere of *The Chinese Exclusion Act* on PBS in May 2017, during Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, as part of the acclaimed series *American Experience*.

Who is American? will bring Americans of all backgrounds together to reflect on themes of immigration, citizenship, national identity, civil rights, globalization, labor, democracy, and other issues of ongoing relevance. CAAM will distribute free educational resources kits to teachers, community groups, and organizations in 2017-2018.

The crowdfunding campaign is live until Thursday, September 15, 2016. Please visit www.caamedia.org for more information. Please use hashtags: #WhoisAmerican #StoriestoLight

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