



Organizing Asian-American Labor: The Pacific Coast Canned-Salmon Industry, 1870-1942 (Asian American History & Cultu)

Chris Friday

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Between 1870 and 1942, successive generations of Asians and Asian Americans predominantly Chinese, Japanese, and Filipino formed the predominant body of workers in the Pacific Coast canned-salmon industry. This study traces the shifts in the ethnic and gender composition of the cannery labor market from its origins through its decline and examines the workers' creation of work cultures and social communities. Resisting the label of cheap laborer, these Asian American workers established formal and informal codes of workplace behavior, negotiated with contractors and recruiters, and formed alliances to organize the workforce. Whether he is discussing Japanese women workers' sharing of child-care responsibilities or the role of Filipino workers in establishing the Cannery and Field Workers Union, Chris Friday portrays Asian and Asian American workers as people who, while enduring oppressive restrictions, continually attempted to shape their own lives. Chris Friday is Assistant Professor of History at Western Washington University.

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