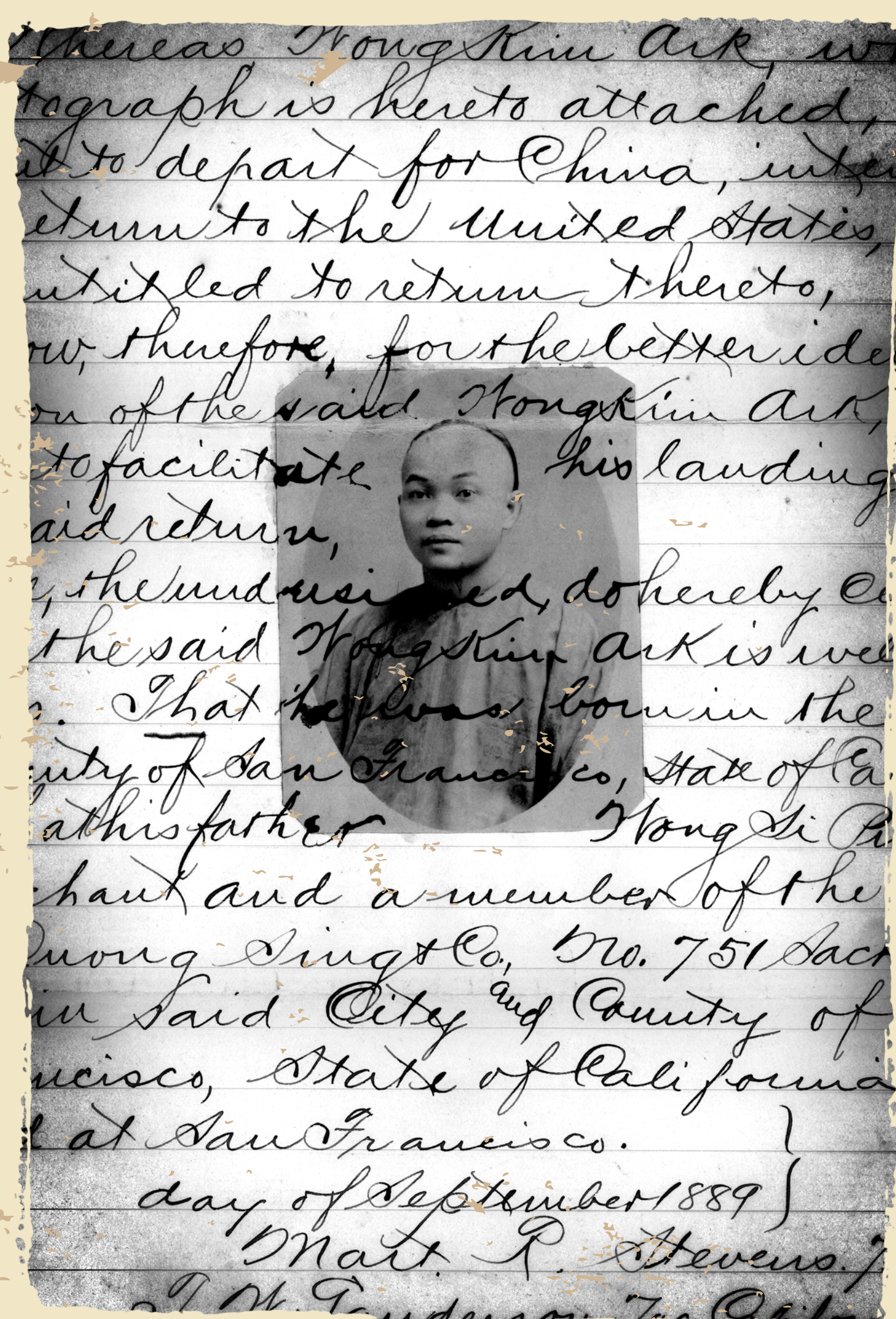


# WHO IS AN AMERICAN?

## SOME PEOPLE HAVE BEEN DENIED CITIZENSHIP RIGHTS BASED ON THEIR ETHNICITY

When 22-year-old **Wong Kim Ark** returned to his home town of San Francisco after a visit to China, a customs official refused to let him back into the country. Even though Wong was born in California, the official argued he was not a citizen - because his parents were Chinese immigrants. Wong sued and won. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1898 that the 14th Amendment guarantees U.S. citizenship to everyone born in this country.



WONG KIM ARK WAS REQUIRED TO CARRY THIS IDENTIFY DOCUMENT VERIFYING HIS BIRTH IN SAN FRANCISCO.



IN THOSE DAYS, IF YOU'RE AN ASIAN, PEOPLE THOUGHT YOU DON'T BELONG IN THIS COUNTRY. YOU'RE NOT AN AMERICAN. AND I THOUGHT THAT WAS WRONG.

- FRED KOREMATSU

Citizenship mattered little during World War II when the government forced 120,000 people of Japanese ancestry living on the West Coast into internment camps. Police arrested **Fred Korematsu** for refusing to go. He challenged his exclusion, but the U.S. Supreme Court ruled against him.

Nearly 40 years later, a judge overturned Korematsu's conviction because of freshly uncovered evidence that the government deliberately misled the court about Japanese American disloyalty.



FRED KOREMATSU (THIRD FROM LEFT WITH HIS FAMILY) WAS ONE OF A FEW PEOPLE WHO CHALLENGED THE GOVERNMENT INCARCERATION OF JAPANESE AMERICANS DURING WORLD WAR II.

Wong Kim Ark: Records of the U.S. District Courts, (Record Group 21) Courtesy of National Archives and Records Administration - Pacific Region, San Bruno  
Fred Korematsu with Family: Courtesy of Karen Korematsu and the Korematsu Institute