

Willows in the West

In this project, I created a storyline for a historical fiction film that highlights the experience of a Chinese mail-order bride in the West in the 1800s. The central idea of this project was to analyze and incorporate themes and patterns women experienced in the American West. In my story, upon arriving in the US, a Chinese mail-order bride is immediately encountered with barriers impeding her. She must overcome stereotypes that she never would have gotten in China, and also overcome the obstacles of race, sex, and class. This story takes place in 1878 in Virginia City, Nevada where there is a bustling mining town. In this town, there is a brothel full of prostitutes that are both American and foreign. For this reason when my main character, who is Chinese, enters this city, she is presumed to be there for prostitution. When she enters the country she is detained, because at this time there was security in place to stop women immigrating to America to escape the horrible conditions they left at home, because it was likely that they were here to be prostitutes. My purpose for this project was to create a way for people today to understand what the West was like for Chinese women entering into the American West in the 1800's. I also wanted to help people be aware of how everyone can make automatic assumptions about people they don't know, especially when they are different in a clear way. The girl in my story learns how to overcome circumstances and barriers brought against her and is able to make a life for herself. And while obviously not everything is perfect, she shows resilience, standing firm in who she is and what she wants to be.