# ASIAN AMERICANS

# LESSON OVERVIEWS

WETA

CAAM
CENTER FOR ASIAN AMERICAN MEDIA

ASIAN AMERICANS ADVANCING JUSTICE

PBS LearningMedia

**ASIAN AMERICANS** is a production of WETA Washington, DC and the Center for Asian American Media (CAAM) for PBS, in association with the Independent Television Service (ITVS), Flash Cuts and Tajima-Peña Productions. The series executive producers are Jeff Bieber for WETA; Stephen Gong and Donald Young for CAAM; Sally Jo Fifer for ITVS; and Jean Tsien. The series producer is Renee Tajima-Peña. The producer for Flash Cuts is Eurie Chung. The episode producers are S. Leo Chiang, Geeta Gandbhir and Grace Lee. The consulting producer is Mark Jonathan Harris.

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Lesson plans have been developed between WETA and engagement and education partner Asian Americans Advancing Justice (AAAJ). Stewart Kwoh is the founder of AAAJ and Patricia Kwoh is the project director for education curriculum on behalf of AAAJ. Amy Labenski and Stefanie Malone managed the education and engagement on behalf of WETA.

# INTRODUCTION

In creating the curriculum for PBS's Asian Americans, our goal has been to continue sharing the untold stories of those who arrived from abroad and paved the way for Asian Americans in the U.S. today. This booklet contains an overview and the objectives of each lesson plan that has been designed for grades 4-12 students. Educators are encouraged to select multiple lessons that can be integrated into their regular classroom instruction to enhance their student's historical knowledge. More detailed and complete lesson plans can be found online at: **www.AdvancingJustice-LA.org/LessonPlans** and **PBSLearningMedia.org/collection/asian-americans-pbs/**. We hope that the lessons will spark meaningful dialogue within and outside the classroom, and inspire each generation to empower the next. Thank you for your commitment in joining us on this journey in understanding the past of Asian Americans, and helping to shape the future of this country together.

# RESOURCES

- For complete lesson plans:
  **AdvancingJustice-LA.org/LessonPlans**
  **PBSLearningMedia.org/collection/asian-americans-pbs/**

- To order free teaching kit:
  **AdvancingJustice-LA.org/LessonPlans**

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## REDEFINE AMERICAN

Mamie Tape, born in the U.S., is one of the earliest Asian Americans. Her parents, Joseph and Mary, were self-made, entrepreneurial Chinese immigrants. Her father found a way to continue a thriving business as a broker despite the anti-Chinese atmosphere. In claiming the rights and privileges of an American citizen for their daughter, the Tapes tried to enroll Mamie in an all-white school in San Francisco in 1884. When Mamie was denied entry because she was Chinese, the Tapes brought her legal case, Tape v. Hurley (1885), to the California Supreme Court, similar to the more famous Brown v. Board of Education (1954), these cases contested the racial segregation of schools.

Students stand outside the Chinese Primary School, a segregated school opened in San Francisco in 1895.

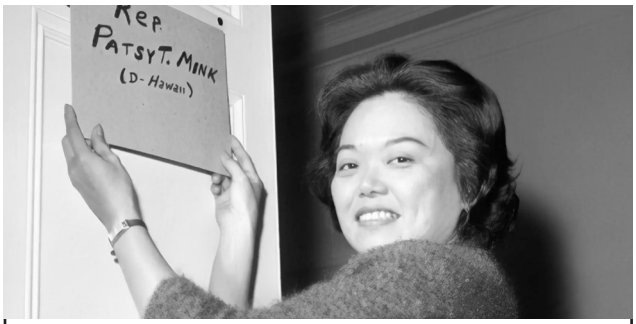
## JAPANESE AMERICAN INCARCERATION DURING WORLD WAR II

Over 110,000 Japanese Americans during World War II were incarcerated. Many were given only a few days' notice and most of them ultimately had to leave their belongings, their houses and their businesses behind -- losing much of their life savings and their livelihoods. Upon incarceration, many families were separated and found a difficult life in poor and harsh conditions. Despite doing nothing wrong, Japanese Americans lost their freedom and their rights as U.S. citizens.

A Japanese American family with their possessions following the forced removal from their home due to Executive Order 9066.

## WOMEN ADVANCING EQUALITY

Throughout her life, Patsy Mink faced obstacles because she was Asian and female. Mink joined the Democratic Party in order to fight for equality and change. While Mink wanted to run for the House of Representatives to represent Hawaii, she did not get the support of the decision-makers of the Democratic Party and lost the election. But Mink did not give up her pursuit of a political career. In 1964, she was elected to Congress in her second attempt. In Congress, she co-authored Title IX, a law to ensure that no one will be discriminated against in education and federally-funded activities based on gender. In addition to working on Title IX, Mink also fought racial barriers by supporting civil rights legislation.




Patsy Takemoto Mink faced many obstacles in life because she was Asian and female. As a Congresswoman she fought racial barriers by supporting civil rights. She co-authored Title IX, a law providing equal opportunity for girls and women getting into college and into sports.

## FILIPINO AMERICAN FARMWORKERS FIGHT FOR THEIR RIGHTS

During the 1960s, Asian Americans sought justice against discrimination and negative treatment in the United States through social activism. Through protests, Asian Americans worked together with people from different racial and ethnic groups towards a common purpose.

An important example of Asian American activism and coalition building was Filipinos' leadership and participation in the farmworkers' movement. Larry Itliong, a central leader of the farmworkers movement, was a Filipino farmworker who had been organizing laborers for years throughout the west coast. In the summer of 1965 in Delano, California, he saw a great opportunity to form a coalition with Mexican American farmworkers to strike for better working conditions. He initiated this coalition with Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta, leaders of the Mexican American farmworkers union. Together, they created the United Farm Workers Union and led a grape boycott that spread nationwide.


Filipino farmworkers in California organized with Mexican-American farmworkers to form the United Farm Workers Movement and win better working conditions for all farmworkers.

## 1904 WORLD'S FAIR — EXHIBITION OF THE IGOROT PEOPLE

At the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair visitors explored exhibits on science, art, and new inventions, like the earliest automobiles and X-ray machines. One of the most horrifying of these exhibits, however, was an anthropological exhibit that was like a human zoo.

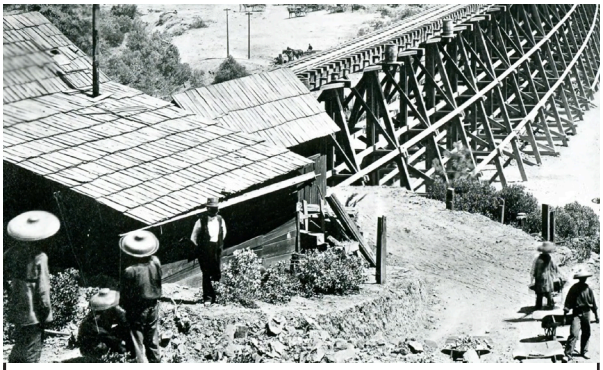
The St. Louis World's Fair was an opportunity for America to demonstrate its strengths to the world and be seen as an imperial power. After the Philippine-American War ended in 1902, the U.S acquired the Philippines as its newest colony. Future president and current governor-general of the Philippines, William Howard Taft, was interested in a way to introduce this newest colony to fellow Americans.

The Philippine Exposition attracted many visitors with an exhibit that included over 130 buildings on 47 acres of fairground and 1,100 Filipinos from over 30 tribes. This exhibit presented four diverse ethnic villages of Philippine culture, including the Igorot, Negrito, Visayan, and Moro, with the most popular village the one that featured the Igorot people.

Antero Cabrera, an Igorot boy who was brought to the U.S. from the Philippines for the 1904 World's Fair and served as anthropologist Albert Jenks's interpreter and "houseboy."

## CHINESE TRANSCONTINENTAL RAILROAD WORKERS

The construction of the 1,776-mile Transcontinental Railroad was established by the federal government's Pacific Railway Act of 1862. The Central Pacific Railroad (West, breaking ground in Sacramento, California) and the Union Pacific Railroad (East, breaking ground in Omaha, Nebraska) took on the challenge to link travel between the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans. From 1863 to 1869, Central Pacific hired roughly 15,000 Chinese laborers—enduring long journeys across the ocean from China to California—to complete the Summit Tunnel at Donner Pass. This was exhausting work, with Chinese workers shoveling twenty pounds of rock over 400 times a day to make their way through 1,659 feet of the Sierra Nevada Mountains to complete the project.



Chinese laborers build a fill across a ravine while constructing the Transcontinental Railroad.

## THE CHINESE EXCLUSION ACT

Signed on May 6, 1882 by President Chester Arthur, the Chinese Exclusion Act was the first in a series of laws explicitly used to limit immigration based on race. The law changed the landscape for American immigration and set a precedent in policy-making for generations to come.

When the Chinese Exclusion Act was signed, it reflected the rampant scapegoating and stereotyping of the Chinese workers. This law barred Chinese laborers from entering the country, only allowing Chinese students, teachers, travelers, merchants, and diplomats to still apply for admission. This also marked the start of required immigration documents that the Chinese were required to hold on to their person to avoid deportation.

Chinese workers were an important part of California's workforce, from manufacturing to construction to agriculture.

## THE FIGHT AGAINST SCHOOL SEGREGATION

Following the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, which prohibited Chinese laborers from immigrating to the U.S., Chinese Americans were racially excluded in other ways. In California, the Tape family legally challenged the San Francisco Board of Education because their daughter was denied access to public education. This led to the 1885 landmark California Supreme Court case, Tape v. Hurley, one of the earliest civil rights decisions against racist policies that segregated students on the basis of race. This occurred 69 years before the U.S. Supreme Court deemed school segregation unconstitutional in Brown v. Board of Education (1954).

Joseph and Mary Tape with their three children.

## ANGEL ISLAND AND THE CHINESE EXCLUSION ACT

After years of anti-Chinese sentiment, Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882, the first in a series of laws explicitly used to limit immigration based on race. This law barred Chinese laborers from entering the country, only allowing Chinese students, teachers, travelers, merchants, and diplomats to still apply for admission. This also marked the start of required immigration documents that the Chinese were required to hold on to their person to avoid deportation.

Chinese women and children being detained at Angel Island Immigration Station.

When Angel Island Immigration Station opened in 1910, the majority of its detainees Chinese. Unlike the Ellis Island immigration inspection station in New York City, where the average wait was between three to five hours, the Chinese immigrants' confinement ranged from two weeks to six months. Some had to wait as long as two years.

## EARLY SOUTH ASIAN IMMIGRATION

In the 1880s, the United States began to intentionally and legally close their borders to non-Anglo immigrants through laws like the Chinese Exclusion Act, which barred Chinese laborers from immigrating to the United States. At that same time, there was a group of South Asian men who found a way to migrate and thrive in the United States, coming into ports on the East Coast. Some were laborers on British ships, who would then jump ship at U.S. ports. Others were Muslim peddlers from the Bengali region of South Asia who sold "exotic" products popular in the U.S. at that time. One of the earliest of those migrations consisted of Muslim men from the region of Hooghly, in the Indian state of Bengal, who were silk traders. And one of those men was named Moksad Ali.

Moksad Ali (left), a Bengali Muslim immigrant who settled in New Orleans in 1880s and married Ella Blackman (right), an African American woman native to New Orleans.

## RACIAL IDENTITY AND AMERICAN CITIZENSHIP IN THE COURT

Beginning in the 1800s, Asian American immigrants faced intensifying hostility, discrimination, and even exclusion from the United States. The case of Bhagat Singh Thind (1923) is a particularly important case in U.S. legal and immigration history, in how we perceive race and citizenship. Bhagat Singh Thind was from the Punjab region of India who came to the United States as a young man and joined the army, serving during World War I. After the war, he sought to become a naturalized citizen. During this period the United States Caucasians were permitted to appeal for citizenship, and Bhagat Sign Thind sought citizenship, through a legal process where he claimed he was white. This legal fight went all the way to the Supreme Court. Ultimately, the Court found that even though he was Caucasian, he was not white.

Bhagat Singh Thind, pictured (third in the back row) while serving in World War I, appealed for citizenship as a South Asian in 1923, taking his case all the way to the Supreme Court.

## CONSTITUTIONAL VIOLATIONS DURING THE JAPANESE AMERICAN INCARCERATION

Two months after the U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii was bombed by Japan, ushering the U.S. into World War II, President Roosevelt issued Executive Order No. 9066, which forcibly incarcerated approximately 120,000 Japanese Americans. The ensuing war between the U.S. and its allies against the Axis forces of Germany, Italy, and Japan increased anti-Japanese sentiment, causing distrust of the large Japanese population on the West Coast of the United States. Despite the fact that many of them were U.S. citizens, Japanese Americans were suspected of being loyal to America's wartime enemy, Japan.

Shizuko Ina pictured with her children, Kiyoshi and Satsuki, in an internment camp in Tule Lake, CA in 1945.

## ASIAN AMERICANS IN MILITARY SERVICE DURING WORLD WAR II

Asian Americans viewed the United States' declaration of war on Japan in 1941 with both hope and apprehension. For those whose ethnic heritage came from Asian countries colonized by Japan, it represented a long-awaited check on Japanese aggression. This motivated Korean American Susan Ahn to join the U.S. military to fight against Japan, leading her to become the first Asian American woman enlisted in the U.S. Navy. Similarly, many Chinese Americans and Filipino Americans also joined the military to free Asian countries from Japan. Before World War II, Asian Americans were not allowed to serve in the U.S. military. However, soon after Japan's attacks on Pearl Harbor, Asian Americans were granted permission to enlist.

Susan Ahn Cuddy, on the far right, was the first female Asian gunnery officer in the U.S. Navy.

## WHO DEFINES LOYALTY? JAPANESE AMERICANS DURING WORLD WAR II

Approximately 120,000 Japanese Americans were incarcerated in camps for over three years during World War II. While imprisoned by their own government, Japanese Americans expressed varying reactions to tests of their loyalty to the United States. In the camps, all prisoners were required to complete what is commonly referred to as a "loyalty questionnaire." This controversial questionnaire was aimed at Nisei—the adult children of Japanese immigrants who were born with American citizenship—to assess whether these prisoners could "safely" relocate outside of the camps, and was used to help the War Department recruit Nisei men and women into military service.


The 442nd Regimental Combat Team, comprised almost entirely of Japanese Americans, is one of the most decorated units in military history.

## CIVIL LIBERTIES ACT OF 1988

After the bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, the United States entered into World War II, fighting Japan, Germany, and Italy. Within a few months, Japanese Americans found their rights violated through Executive Order 9066, issued by President Franklin Roosevelt. This executive order was aimed at forced relocation and internment of Japanese Americans in camps. The Civil Liberties Act of 1988, a formal apology by the U.S. government acknowledged and made restitution for the treatment of Japanese Americans during World War II. Of the 110,000 people of Japanese ancestry who were incarcerated, two-thirds (over 70,000) were American-born citizens.

Pictured Amy Uno, one of the Japanese Americans who testified in support of the redress movement during the Commission on the Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians hearings, addressing the injustices they faced and advocating for policies to rectify the harm they faced.

## CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS OF AMERICAN CITIZENS

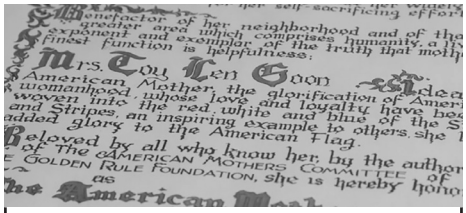
On the morning of December 7, 1941, Japan conducted a surprise military attack on the United States naval base at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii, ushering the United States into World War II.

In the aftermath of this attack, some Americans developed unfounded fears about their fellow Japanese American citizens and what they might do to sabotage America's efforts in World War II. On February 19, 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066, an order that forced all Americans of Japanese descent into internment camps. All in all, 110,000 Japanese Americans—79,000 who were American citizens—were incarcerated, leaving behind their homes, their businesses, their livelihoods.

During World War II, 120,000 Japanese Americans, almost the entire population in the continental United States, were incarcerated due to Executive Order 9066, violating their constitutional rights and freedoms.

## THE MODEL MINORITY MYTH

During the post-World War II era and after nearly a hundred years of anti-Asian sentiment and legislation, many Asian Americans hoped to be more accepted by American society. They didn't want to be viewed as a threat to national security like Japanese Americans were when they were imprisoned during WWII. Instead, they wanted to be seen as "good Americans" and desired to assimilate and Americanize, which developed into the idea of the "model minority myth," recasting Asian Americans as prime examples of representing the quintessential American values of opportunity, meritocracy, and the American Dream.




In 1952, Toy Len Goon, a Chinese immigrant, was named American Mother of the Year and was uplifted as an early example of what it meant to be a "model minority".

During the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, the concept of the "model minority" became a stereotype used to pit Asian Americans against other communities of color, particularly Black Americans. This stereotype also hid how Asian Americans were discriminated against based on racist policies, such as being excluded from living in certain neighborhoods.

## MCCARTHYISM

During the 1950s, the United States was gripped by fear of the Cold War, with concerns that communism was taking over and Soviet spies were infiltrating the U.S. Fanning these flames was Senator Joseph McCarthy of Wisconsin.


During the Red Scare and height of McCarthyism, alleged communists or sympathizers were targeted and blacklisted, including Chinese leaders and publications such as Eugene Moy and the *China Daily News*.

## HAWAIʻI STATEHOOD

Before Hawaiʻi became part of the United States, it was an independent kingdom with a distinct culture that had been in place since the 12th Century. In 1898, the island was annexed as a U.S. territory and then becoming the fiftieth state in 1959.

Native Hawaiʻians went through a very challenging history from the arrival of the Europeans, to a sovereign nation, to colonization, to the sugar plantation economy, to the influx of Asian laborers, and to be a state of United States, and is now going through the sovereignty struggle.

## ASIAN AMERICAN VOICES IN POLITICS

Patsy Mink faced both racial and gender discrimination as a Japanese American woman who was born in Hawaii. Many tried to deny her opportunities, such as attending medical school, practicing law and running for U.S. Congress. However, she was able to overcome obstacles and found success as both a lawyer and political leader, ultimately becoming the first woman of color elected to Congress in 1965. In the House of Representatives, she fought for gender and racial equality and was an author and sponsor of the Title IX law, which prohibits sexual discrimination in any federally-assisted education program or activity. She was a staunch supporter of the civil rights movement.


Patsy Takemoto Mink, the first woman of color elected to the U.S. House of Representatives.

## THE IMMIGRATION AND NATIONALITY ACT OF 1965

From the early 1800s to 1965, Asian Americans' rights to immigration and citizenship in the United States were severely limited by a series of immigration laws that focused directly on Asians. The Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s, spearheaded by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the long-fought efforts of African Americans, led to the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, outlawing discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. Subsequently, immigration laws based on national origin came under serious review. The passage of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 (Hart-Celler Act) completely removed the quota system, instead opting for a system that relied on "preferences" for immigrants who were highly skilled in fields that the Department of Labor deemed understaffed or who had existing family relationships within the United States.

The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 – part of a legacy of Civil Rights Movement policies – removed past quota systems of immigration and, in effect, opened up immigration from Asian nations.

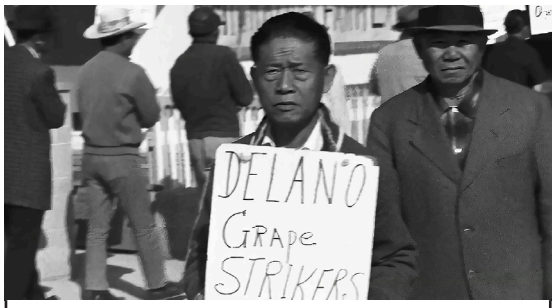
## ASIAN AMERICANS ON THE BIG SCREEN: RESPONDING TO STEREOTYPES

Asian Americans have historically been stereotyped in the United States as "foreigners, promoted and maintained by the film industry. Across many of these Hollywood films, Asian males were played as scheming, weak, ignorant, and undesirable; on the other hand, Asian females were framed as exotic, cunning, and subservient. Even with the success of Crazy Rich Asians (2018), the highest-grossing American romantic comedy in over a decade, Asian Americans continue to face obstacles on- and off-screen. Today, filmmakers and actors—like Ang Lee, George Takei, Sandra Oh, Constance Wu, Margaret Cho, John Cho, Daniel Dae Kim, Grace Park, and the Media Action Network for Asian Americans—have campaigned against such stereotyping, whitewashing, and unequal treatment in the film and television industries. These protests have stirred larger, and still ongoing, conversations about diversity and representation in the media.

Hollywood and media has historically perpetuated the stereotyping of Asian Americans and other communities of color by typecasting actors of color into limiting, one-dimensional characters on-screen.

## FILIPINO AMERICAN FARMWORKERS

In September 1965, Larry Itliong, a manong labor leader and co-founder of the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee (AWOC), inspired Filipino farmworkers in Delano, California to initiate a strike against the grape farm owners. After they began striking, Itliong and other Filipino leaders such as Philip Vera Cruz, urged Mexican Americans to join Filipino farmworkers and fight for civil rights instead of being used as strikebreakers. Dolores Huerta and Cesar Chavez, civil rights leaders who had been organizing Mexican American farmworkers, were convinced by Filipino leaders to strike together. Thus, Filipinos and Mexican Americans formed the United Farm Workers (UFW), striking as one.




Filipino and Mexican farmworkers came together to strike for better working conditions and increased pay, leading a five-year, successful grape boycott that grew across state and nation-state borders.

The Delano Grape Strike inspired people around the nation and Europe to support the farmworkers by boycotting grapes. The joint Filipino and Mexican American effort would later lead to the passage of the California Agricultural Labor Relations Act of 1975, providing collective-bargaining powers for farmworkers state-wide.

## ASIAN AMERICANS SERVING AND FIGHTING IN THE VIETNAM WAR

Among the 8.7 million Americans who served in the Vietnam War (1955 to 1975)—referred to by the Vietnamese as the American War—approximately 35,000 were Asian American. The war, between communist North Vietnam and anti-communist South Vietnam, was the fourth U.S. military conflict in Asia within the past sixty years. Like many young Americans who served in Vietnam, Asian Americans were drawn to the military by patriotism and desire to leave home. However, Asian Americans who served in the Vietnam War faced racial challenges that made their experiences unique and, in many cases, traumatic.

Asian Americans who served in the Vietnam War faced unique and varied experiences during and after the war, including racism during their services, internal struggles with identity, trauma, and more.

## THE FIGHT FOR ETHNIC STUDIES

With the struggle for civil rights and the death of Dr. Martin Luther King, students were expressing an interest in classes that explored black history and culture. San Francisco State University (SF State) was a college with a mostly white student body and the Black Student Union began to question whether their own education was failing them. They started to demand curriculum that reflected their lives and a better representation of faculty of color. And with these demands from the Black Student Union, Asian American students took note.

The Third World Liberation Front fought for the true histories of communities to be valued and taught through ethnic studies curriculum.

## GENERATION RISING: ASIAN AMERICANS IN THE ARTS

During the 1970s, arts and culture became vehicles for elevating the narratives of Asian Americans, a term first used in 1968 during the struggle to establish ethnic studies at California universities. Under this new pan-Asian identity, a generation of young Asian American organizers, academics, and artists emerged, ready to define themselves and their history to the rest of America. Arts and culture can serve as catalysts in propelling movements forward. The arts reflected the spirit of and supported the Asian American Movement in the fight for social and racial justice, ethnic studies, and visibility.


Actors, musicians, artists, writers, and filmmakers have helped to increase the visibility of Asian American identities and cultures across various media.

## ASIAN AMERICAN VETERANS AND THE ANTI-WAR MOVEMENT

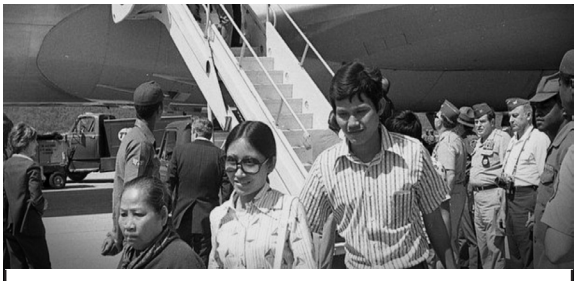
The U.S. was involved in the Vietnam War from the 1950s to 1975 in an effort to prevent the communist government of North Vietnam from overtaking the democratic republic of South Vietnam and creating a unified communist Vietnam.

Asian Americans who served in the Vietnam War speaking out against the war, providing testimony about the war crimes abroad.

Asian Americans drafted into the military during the Vietnam War spoke out against the war along with other veterans when they came back from their tour of duty. Japanese Americans Mike Nakayama and Scott Shimabukuro were among over 100 veterans and civilian contractors who participated in the 1971 Winter Soldier Investigation in Detroit, Michigan. This was a 3-day event in January, held by the organization Vietnam Veterans Against the War. It allowed former soldiers to give testimony about the war crimes they committed or witnessed abroad.

## SOUTHEAST ASIAN REFUGEES

On April 30, 1975, the fall of Saigon marked the end of the Vietnam War, with the communist government of North Vietnam taking over anti-communist South Vietnam. Having played a major role in the war, the U.S. government coordinated many operations to evacuate any South Vietnamese who were against North Vietnam.



After the end of the Vietnam War, the U.S. experienced a large-scale immigration of Southeast Asian refugees from Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos.

This resulted in a large-scale migration of nearly 130,000 Southeast Asian refugees from Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos (including the Hmong people, an ethnic group of people without their own country) to the United States. On May 23, 1975, President Gerald Ford signed the Indochina Migration and Refugee Assistance Act into law, which categorized Vietnamese, Cambodian, Laotian, and the Hmong people as refugees to be resettled in the U.S. By 2010, 1.2 million southeast Asians fled to the United States.

## KNOW HISTORY, KNOW YOURSELF: THE ROOTS PROGRAM AT SAN QUENTIN STATE PRISON

In the wake of the 1960s and 70s-era struggles to establish ethnic studies at colleges on the West Coast, scholars and activists are finding new venues to support radical changes and learning about one's identity. One such venue is San Quentin Prison in California, where volunteers have been teaching an ethnic studies program to mostly Southeast Asian refugees. Since 2013, the Restoring Our Original True Selves (ROOTS) program, organized by the Asian Prisoner Support Committee (APSC), offers participants at San Quentin the opportunity to learn about immigration and refugee history, intergenerational trauma, leadership development, and planning to re-enter life after prison.

The ROOTS Program at San Quentin State Prison builds on the importance of ethnic studies curriculum, engaging the lived experiences of the program participants in context of the system of mass incarceration to promote healing and empowerment.

## THE IMPACT OF THE VINCENT CHIN CASE

The 1982 murder of Vincent Chin represents a pivotal moment in civil rights history. It is the first time that federal hate crime laws are used in a case involving an Asian American victim.

Judge Kaufman sentenced the perpetrators to three years' probation and a $3,000 fine because it was deemed as nothing more than a simple barroom brawl. Given the severity of the crime, the light sentence galvanized the Asian American community across the country to fight against this injustice. Activists pushed for federal hate crime laws to apply to the case.

The legacy of the Vincent Chin case has inspired generations of Asian Americans to stand up against anti-Asian racism, bringing them together in solidarity within the community and across racial lines.


Lily Chin, the mother of Vincent Chin, fought for justice for Vincent following his murder, inspiring many other Asian Americans to become active and vocal in matters of injustice.

## THE 1992 L.A. RIOTS AND CIVIL UNREST

On April 29, 1992, a week-long period of rioting and chaos swept through South Central, Koreatown, and other neighborhoods of Los Angeles, California. The initial unrest was sparked by the acquittal of four white police officers responsible for the beating of Rodney King, a Black man arrested for driving under the influence. The events were preceded by a long history of police brutality in Los Angeles' Black communities.


Examine the root causes of civil unrests: systemic racism in unjust laws, unfair sentencing, police brutality, discrimination, economic injustice, media bias.

Resentment and fear grew between newly immigrated Koreans and Black residents of South Central, possibly due to cultural differences and a lack of historical knowledge of past African American civil rights struggles.

Over five days, angry rioters, which included Black and Latinx people, looted stores and burned down buildings. The devastation spread from South Central to Koreatown and other areas.

## BUILDING COMMUNITY CONSCIOUSNESS AND COALITIONS

The 1992 Los Angeles riots and civil unrest were traumatic and transformative for many Korean Americans. The unrest started after the acquittal of four white police officers for the beating of Rodney King, a Black man, during a traffic stop. In South Central and Koreatown, a week of looting and rioting resulted in the destruction of over 2,000 Korean-owned businesses, damages over $1 billion, and the death of 63 people. Forty percent of businesses affected by rioting and looting were Korean-owned shops. Shop owners were angry at the police who left their businesses unprotected. Moreover, mainstream media focused heavily on the tension between Black and Korean Americans rather than the riot's original cause—police brutality. From the unrest, emerged a political and community consciousness within Korean Americans of the need for leadership, activism, and coalitions to create peace and to demand racial justice together with Black Americans.

Following the 1992 L.A. Civil Unrest, Korean Americans and Black Americans came together in solidarity to call for racial justice, community healing, and rebuilding of South Central L.A.

## VIEWS FROM THE TOP AND BOTTOM OF SUCCESS IN SILICON VALLEY

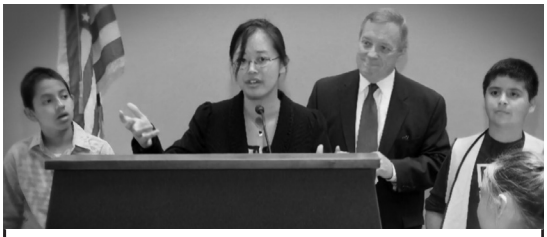
Asian Americans are significant contributors to the high tech boom in California's Silicon Valley, which began in the late twentieth century and continues today. In the 1990s, Silicon Valley was a fertile field of innovation. Its allure attracted many college-educated professionals in the computing and technological fields. Highly-skilled Asian Americans and Asian immigrants worked to establish successful high tech startup companies—over 40 percent of them—during this period.

Asian immigrants, many of whom were refugees from Southeast Asia during the 1970s and 1980s, worked as piecework laborers for high tech companies, contributing to these companies' great success.

While some Asian American entrepreneurs were able to build lucrative companies, their success was made possible because of the labor of many lower-income Asian Americans, often in ways that were not widely acknowledged.

## TEREZA LEE AND UNDOCUMENTED ASIAN AMERICA

First introduced in 2001, the DREAM Act (Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act) provides an opportunity for young undocumented immigrants who came to the United States as children to be given a pathway toward U.S. citizenship. This immigration bill came to be established because of Tereza Lee, a Brazilian-born South Korean who moved to the U.S. with her parents in 1985 when she was two years old. She is an undocumented American referred to as the first DREAMer. As of 2018, approximately 3.6 million undocumented youth entered the U.S.



Tereza Lee, the first DREAMer, an undocumented student, was the inspiration for the 2001 DREAM Act, which aimed to create a pathway toward U.S. citizenship for young undocumented immigrants.

Tereza's Chicago high school artistic director advocated on her behalf to U.S. Senator Dick Durbin of Illinois, which led him to co-sponsor the DREAM Act with U.S. Senator Orrin Hatch. This bill had bipartisan support from other lawmakers and President George W. Bush.

## 9/11, SOUTH ASIAN AMERICANS & ISLAMOPHOBIA

On September 11, 2001 (9/11), Al-Qaeda, an Islamic terrorist group, headed by Osama Bin Laden from Saudi Arabia, launched an attack on the United States by flying hijacked airplanes into designated targets, such as the World Trade Center in New York City.


After 9/11, many South Asian, Middle Eastern, Arab and Muslim Americans felt compelled to prove their loyalty to the U.S. and denounce terrorism in the face of being scapegoated for 9/11.

Afterward, acts of racial profiling, hate crimes, and discrimination were committed against Americans of South Asian, Arab, Muslim, and Middle Eastern descent because they were scapegoated for 9/11. Some questioned if they were terrorists or "un-American", challenging their citizenship and loyalty to the U.S. According to comedian and activist Hari Kondabolu, they were "victimized twice." First, as Americans, they were victimized by the terrorist attacks; second, they were being blamed by many Americans for the acts of terrorism. Over 500 hate crimes against South Asian Americans were reported during the period immediately after 9/11.

## OUR HISTORY, OUR FUTURE

The history of Asian Americans in the United States is an integral part of American history. Since the day Asian immigrants arrived in America, they have contributed to and shaped the way the country is today.

Asian Americans have been an integral part of United States' history, from building up the nation as laborers to challenging injustices to advocating for more equitable policies with other communities.

# NOTES

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“Asian American history is deeply intertwined together with America’s own history, yet often forgotten or ignored within today’s classrooms and public discourse. The online lesson plans provide a tailored grades 4-12 curriculum for educators to teach this rich history. These lessons are but just a brief snapshot into the journey of Asian immigrants and their native-born children within America’s timeline—both bright and dark, from acceptance to exclusion. By showcasing the struggles and triumphs of Asian Americans over the course of two centuries, those involved with this momentous project, want to underscore, share and amplify the importance and voices of this growing, integral segment of the population in building the United States into what it is today and can become tomorrow, together as Americans. Thank you for joining us on this learning experience.”

- Prabhneek Heer, Immigrant History Initiative, Kate Lee, and Antony Wong, developer and editors