

Asian Pacific American's Heritage Month



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Office

Origins of APA's Heritage Month

(Asian Pacific American)

Ricco Villanue Siasoco va

May is Asian Pacific American (APA) Heritage Month—a celebration of Asians and Pacific Islanders in the United States. Much like Black History and Women's History celebrations, APA Heritage Month originated in a congressional bill.

Congressional Bills Establish Celebration

In June 1977, Representatives Frank Horton of New York and Norman Y. Mineta of California introduced a House resolution that called upon the president to proclaim the first ten days of May as Asian/Pacific Heritage Week. The following month, senators Daniel Inouye and Spark Matsunaga introduced a similar bill in the Senate. Both were passed. On October 5, 1978, President Jimmy Carter signed a Joint Resolution designating the annual celebration.

APA Becomes Month-long Celebration

In May 1990, the holiday was expanded fur-

ther when President George H. W. Bush designated May to be Asian Pacific American Heritage Month. May was chosen to commemorate the immigration of the first Japanese to the United States on May 7, 1843, and to mark the anniversary of the completion of the transcontinental railroad on May 10, 1869. The majority of the workers who laid the tracks were Chinese immigrants.

Asian Pacific American Heritage Month is celebrated with community festivals, government-sponsored activities, and educational activities for students. This year's theme is "Freedom for All—A Nation We Call Our Own."

Critical Notes on the History of Filipinos in the United States.

Advent in the Promised Land

The advent of Filipinos in U.S. territory was inaugurated by the subjugation of the Filipino revolutionary forces at the beginning of the twentieth century and the annexation of the islands (together with Puerto Rico) as a direct colony of the emerging U.S. empire. Although formally independent, the Philippines has now become the largest source of Asian immigrants to the United States. The reasons for this anomaly need to be analyzed and examined. After the defeat of the first Philippine Republic in the Filipino-American War of 1898-1902, the Philippine archipelago became a source of raw materials and reservoir of human capital. The early decades of colonial pacification established the geopolitical status of the new colony. Peasants were recruited by the Hawaiian Sugar Planters Association as cheap contract labor when the Gentlemen's Agreement of 1908 cut off the Japanese supply. Feudal oppression and colo-

onial brutality drove rural Filipinos from their homes while the lure of adventure and easy wealth blurred the hardships formerly endured by Mexican farmhands now restricted by the Immigration Act of 1924. The poignant narrative of this dispossession is found in the first half of Carlos Bulosan's now classic ethnobiography, *America Is in the Heart* (1946).

A series of errors continue to distinguish the orthodox genealogy of Filipino migration. In the first place, Filipinos as colonial "wards" (from 1899 to 1935, the establishment of the Philippine Commonwealth), were not immigrants. About 400 students (called *pensionados*) on U.S. government scholarship are often cited as the first "wave" of immigrants (1903-1924). In reality, the new rulers invested in the education of these colonial subjects so that they would return to serve as the middle stratum of loyal natives who, subordinated to landlords and compradors, would legitimize U.S. domination. From this segment would come the bureaucrat-capitalists of the Commonwealth and the postwar Republic. Today they play the role of technocrats and petty administrators for the oligarchic elite which comprise less than one percent of 84 million Filipinos.

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Special points of interest:

- <http://www.asianamericans.com>
- <http://www.asian-america.net>
- http://us_asians.tripod.com/timeline-1940.html



Chinese Butterfly Dance

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History of Chopsticks

How did the Asian food utensils originate?

by David Johnson

In much of Asia, especially the so-called "rice bowl" cultures of China, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam, food is usually eaten with chopsticks. Chopsticks are two long, thin, usually tapered, pieces of wood. Bamboo is the most common material, but they are also made of various types of wood, as well as plastic, porcelain, animal bone, ivory, metal, coral, agate, and jade. During the Middle Ages, aristocrats often favored silver chopsticks since it was thought that silver would turn color if it came into contact with poison.



Elegant Craftsmanship

Sometimes chopsticks are quite artistic. Chopsticks can be made of lacquered wood and covered with artwork. Truly elegant chopsticks might be made of gold and embossed in silver with Chinese calligraphy. Artisans also combine various hardwoods and metal to create distinctive designs. A child's plastic set of chopsticks might feature a cartoon character, such as Mickey Mouse, while aluminum from recycled cans might find new life as a lightweight, easy-to-clean pair of chopsticks.

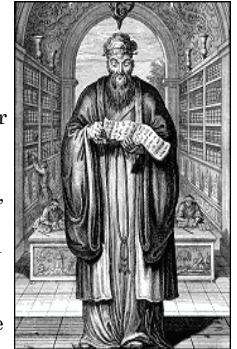
Elaborate Carvings

Chopsticks may be totally smooth or carved or modeled ripples. Silver or gold paint can be used to give them a rough texture. In Thailand, wood is often elaborately carved into chopsticks. The ends of chopsticks can be rounded or squared, while the tips can be blunt or sharp. "Forkchops" are chopsticks for insecure West-

erners and feature chopsticks at one end and forks and knives at the other, just in case the user can't manage during the meal.

Confucius Promotes Non-Violence

The Chinese have been using chopsticks for five thousand years. People probably cooked their food in large pots, using twigs to remove it. Overtime, as population grew, people began chopping food into small pieces so it would cook more quickly. Small morsels of food could be eaten without knives and so the twigs gradually turned into chopsticks. Some people think that the great scholar Confucius, who lived from roughly 551 to 479 B.C., influenced the development of chopsticks. A vegetarian, Confucius believed knives would remind people of slaughterhouses and were too violent for use at the table.



Some believe Confucius championed chopsticks over knives, which would remind people of slaughterhouses.

Non-Chopstick Countries

Chopsticks are not used everywhere in Asia. In India, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Central Asia most people have traditionally eaten with their hands.

Did you know?—1861 - Asian Americans serve in the Civil War. It is a little known fact that several Chinese served in

Asian-American History

by David Johnson

When they first arrived in the United States, Asian (usually Chinese) immigrants were welcomed, or at least tolerated. After the California gold rush brought thousands of Chinese to California, however, Asian immigrants faced restrictive laws and occasional violence. In the late 1800s Chinese, and eventually other Asians, were excluded from citizenship. These laws were repealed during World War II, followed by further immigration-law changes, making it easier for Asians to enter the United States. Today, Asian immigrants have a high rate of assimilation and participation in the American mosaic.

Gold Rush Boom

The Chinese were the first Asians to arrive in large numbers. By the 1830s Chinese were selling goods in New York City and toiling in Hawaiian sugarcane fields. Gold was discovered in California in 1848, eventually attracting thousands of Chinese miners and contract laborers. In 1850, just over 1,000 Asian immigrants entered the U.S., but ten years later, the figure had jumped to nearly 37,000, mostly Chinese.

Violent Protests

In some quarters, Chinese workers were welcomed. The Central Pacific Railroad recruited Chinese to work on the transcontinental railroad in 1865. Three years later the Chinese and the U.S.

ratified the Burlingame Treaty which facilitated Chinese immigration. However, many people feared being "overwhelmed" by the influx, which had swelled to nearly 65,000 in 1870, and over 107,000 in 1880. Some cities passed laws against Chinese and other Asians, often referred to as "Mongolians." Anti-Chinese riots erupted in Chico, California, in 1877 and in Rock Springs, Wyoming, in 1885.

Japanese Arrive

Meanwhile, increasing contact with Japan prompted Japanese to move to Hawaii and California to work in agriculture. In 1869 the Wakamatsu Tea and Silk Colony was established in California.

Contact with the Philippines

In 1899, following the Spanish-American War, the Philippines came under U.S. control, prompting increased immigration. In 1902 the *pensionado* program, which allowed Filipinos to study in the U.S., was implemented. Because most Filipinos are Roman Catholic, their integration into American life was somewhat easier than for other Asians. Though Filipinos faced the same prejudices as Chinese and Japanese laborers (as described in Carlos Bulosan's book *America is in the Heart*), Filipinos arrived with English skills, making assimilation easier.

See page 4

Highlights In Asian Pacific American's History

Asian American Chronology

- **1600s**—Chinese and Filipinos reach Mexico on ships of the Manila galleon.
- **1835**—U.S. and China sign first treaty.
- **1858**—California passes a law to bar entry of Chinese and "Mongolians."
- **1865**—Central Pacific Railroad Co. recruits Chinese workers for the transcontinental railroad.
- **1869**—Completion of first transcontinental railroad. J.H. Schnell takes several dozen Japanese to California to establish the Wakamatsu Tea and Silk Colony. Chinese Christian evangelist S.P. Aheong starts preaching in Hawaii.
- **1870**—California passes a law against the importation of Chinese, Japanese, and "Mongolian" women for prostitution. Chinese railroad workers in Texas sue company for failing to pay wages.
- **1941**—After declaring war on Japan, 2000 Japanese community leaders along Pacific Coast states and Hawaii are rounded up and interned in Department of Justice camps.
- **1981**—Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians (set up by Congress) holds hearings across the country and concludes the internment was a "grave injustice" and that Executive Order 9066 resulted from "race prejudice, war hysteria and a failure of political leadership."
- **1987**—The U.S. House of Representatives votes 243 to 141 to make an official apology to Japanese Americans and to pay each surviving internee \$20,000 in reparations.
- **1989**—President George Bush signs into law an entitlement program to pay each surviving Japanese American internee \$20,000. U.S. reaches agreement with Vietnam to allow political prisoners to emigrate to the U.S.

For more info go to www.asianamerican.net

Presidential Message

2005 Lunar New Year

For Immediate Release

Office of the Press Secretary

February 8, 2005

I send greetings to those celebrating the Lunar New Year, the Year of the Rooster.

For many Asian Americans, the Lunar New Year is a special time of thanksgiving and celebration. It has long been an opportunity for families to honor the past and welcome the future. In marking this special occasion, you help preserve your rich heritage and ensure that your values of family, faith, and respect for tradition are passed on to future generations. This observance also reminds all Americans of the unique fabric that makes up our country and the diversity that has made our Nation stronger and better.

Laura joins me in sending our best wishes for peace and prosperity in the New Year.

GEORGE W. BUSH

Did you Know?—1942 - Military commissions Chinese American fighter pilot. Despite being told that he would be barred from joining the military, Frank Fong joined the U.S. armed forces as a fighter pilot and shot down two German Focke-Wolf 190 fighters in his P-47 Thunderbolt, provided air cover during the D-Day invasion of Normandy and rescued more than 1,000 pilots between January and May 1945.



Notable Asian Americans in Government and Politics

Elaine Chao

George W. Bush's secretary of Labor

Born: 1953

Birthplace: Taiwan

Chao has a distinguished career in public service, having served as President Bush's deputy secretary of transportation from 1989 to 1991. She was the director of the Peace Corps from 1991 to 1992 and then led the United Way from 1992 to 1996. She's currently a distinguished fellow at the Heritage Foundation, a conservative research organization. She's married to Kentucky senator Mitch McConnell. A Chinese immigrant, Chao has said she opposes affirmative action but favors equal opportunity for all. She was appointed two days after Linda Chavez, Bush's first pick for labor secretary, withdrew her name.

Norman Yoshio Mineta

George W. Bush's secretary of Transportation

Born: 11/12/1931

Birthplace: San Jose, Calif.

The lone Democrat appointed to Bush's cabinet, Mineta was offered the same job in the Clinton administration, but passed so he could continue as chairman of the House Public Works and Transportation Committee. He served for 20 years in the U.S. House of Representatives. When he retired in 1995, he became senior vice president in the Transportation and Services Division of Lockheed Martin. In July 2000, he became President Clinton's secretary of commerce. When he was 10 years old, Mineta and his family were sent to a Japanese-American internment camp. As a congressman, he sponsored a bill to compensate internees. The legislation passed, and former internees were paid \$20,000.

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People First Mission Always



Asian-American History cont'd from page 2

Japanese Internment

During World War II, more than 100,000 of Americans of Japanese ancestry were placed in internment camps. Even though many did not speak Japanese or have close ties to Japan, they were nonetheless regarded as wartime threats. Although the U.S. was also at war with Germany and Italy, Americans with ancestors from those countries did not face internment. In 1988 Congress passed a measure giving \$20,000 to Japanese Americans who had been interned during the war. President George H.W. Bush signed it the following year.

Increasing Numbers

Although Asian immigration increased steadily through much of the 20th century, the region still contributed fewer newcomers than Europe, Latin America, and North America. The McCarran-Walter Act of 1952 eliminated race as a barrier to immigration, and in 1965 national quotas were ended, thus facilitating Asian immigration. **For more on this article go to [## Special Emphasis Programs News:](http://www.asian-</p>
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Upcoming Observances	Dates
African-American History Month	February 1 st - 28 th /29 th
Women's History Month	March 1 st -31 st
Asian-Pacific Heritage Month	May 1 st -31 st
Women's Equality Day	August 26 th
National Hispanic Heritage Month	Sep 15 th - Oct 15 th

MESSAGE FROM THE SEEM

Congratulations to TSgt Laque Banks, HQ ANG newly trained EEO Counselor. And a big welcome to the Georgia National Guard's Equal Employment Opportunity Family.

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Equality for Everyone

