

Asian Pacific American Timeline

Immigration, Immigration Legislation and Naturalization

1600s – 1850 United States, Oregon and Washington Territory, and Hawai'i

1600s Filipino “Manilamen” arriving in Louisiana’s Barataria Bay on galleons settle in the Bayous.

1780s Early Hawaiian sailors navigate ships to Pacific Coast.

1790s *U.S. Congress restricts the right of naturalized citizenship to whites.*

1802 First Chinese “sugar master” arrives in Hawaii.

1811 First Hawaiian laborers settle in Pacific Northwest.

1848 Gold discovered in California; Chinese begin to arrive on mainland.

1848 *The Great Mahele grants private ownership of Hawai’ian lands to Americans*

1849 *Hawai’ians in the territory are barred from becoming U.S. citizens.*

1850 *Hawai’ians in the territory are denied the right to own land.*

1850 – 1889 California State, Washington Territory, and Hawai'i

1853 *Washington Territorial legislature denies voting rights to Chinese.*

1858 *California passes a law to bar entry of Chinese and “Mongolians.”*

1860s First Chinese laborers come to Washington Territory.

1867 Thousands of Chinese railroad laborers go on strike and manage to gain a slight increase in wages.

1863 *Territorial legislature bars Chinese from testifying against whites.*

1864 *Territorial legislature establishes poll tax on Chinese.*

1880 *California’s Civil Code refuses marriage licenses to whites who want to marry “Mongolians, Negroes, mulattoes and persons of mixed blood.”*

1882 *Chinese Exclusion Act bans immigration of Chinese laborers to U.S.*

1885 First group of Japanese contract laborers arrive in Hawaii under the Irwin Convention.

1886 *Residents of Tacoma, Seattle, and many places in the west forcibly expel the Chinese.*

1886 *Scott Act bars Chinese laborers visiting China from returning to the U.S.*

1888 *State legislature approves Alien Land Law to bar Asians from owning land.*

1889 – 1924 Washington State and the U.S.

1889 Washington Territory achieves statehood.

1890s First Japanese laborers arrive in the Northwest.

1892 *The Geary Act extends Chinese Exclusion Act for 10 more years.*

- 1898 Spanish-American War ends; U.S.-Philippine War immediately follows. The Philippines becomes a U.S. Territory and Filipinos are able to come to U.S. as “nationals.” U.S. annexes Hawai‘i.
- 1898 United States v. Wong Kim Ark affirms the U.S. citizenship of native-born people of Asian ancestry.
- 1899 South Asians, mostly Punjabi Sikhs from British India, begin to enter Canada and the Pacific NW.
- 1900s First Filipino students and laborers come to the U.S.
- 1900s First Korean and South Asian laborers come to Washington State.

1904 Chinese laborers are barred from U.S. indefinitely as Chinese Exclusion Act is extended.

1907-8 Japanese “picture brides” come to America.

1907-8 Gentlemen’s Agreement restricts immigration of Japanese laborers.

1907 Rioting against South Asian laborers begin and spread along the West Coast.

1917 Immigration Act of 1917 bars immigration of South Asian laborers and prevents South Asians from bringing over wives.

1922 Cable Act stipulates that any American female citizen who marries an alien ineligible for citizenship would lose her own citizenship.

1923 U.S. v. Bhagat Singh Thind rules that Asian Indians are not “white” and therefore ineligible for U.S. citizenship.

1924 Immigration Act of 1924 excludes all Asian immigrants except Filipinos and prevents Chinese women from rejoining husbands in America.

1924 – World War II

1927 Anti-Filipino riots begin in Yakima Valley, then spread throughout West Coast.

1934 Tydings-McDuffie Act ensures independence for the Philippines, but limits immigration to 50 per year.

1937 State amends Alien Land Law to prevent Filipinos from owning land.

1938 Swami Vividishananda founds the Ramakrishna Vedanta (Hinduism) Center of Seattle.

1941 Pio DeCano becomes the first Filipino American to own a home in Washington after he wins a Washington Supreme Court decision to exempt Filipinos from the Alien Land Law.

World War II – 1965

1942 U.S. Army forms Filipino Infantry and enlistees are promised citizenship and full veteran’s benefits. Thousands of Filipinos from the U.S. enlist as well as an additional 250,000 from the U.S. and the Philippines as the war continues.

1942 Federal Executive Order 9066 authorizes the forced incarceration of over 110,000 persons (including U.S. citizens) of Japanese ancestry.

1944 Chinese exclusion acts are repealed and Chinese immigrants are given naturalization rights.

1945 California native Mitsuye Endo wins legal battle against the U.S. challenging the incarceration on the grounds that the U.S. could not prove that she was disloyal to the U.S.

- 1945 Chinese and Filipino women come to the U.S. under the War Brides Act.
- 1946 The Luce-Cellar Bill gives naturalization rights to Filipinos and South Asians.
- 1946 *The Rescission Act denies veteran's benefits, including citizenship, for Filipino veterans who served in the U.S. Armed Forces during WWII.*
- 1946 The Philippines become an independent country.
- 1947 India gains independence from the British. Pakistan becomes an independent country.
- 1949 Ernesto Mangaoang wins court case to protect Filipinos in the U.S. from deportation.
- 1950s Guamanians and Samoans begin to arrive.
- 1952 The McCarran-Walter Act gives naturalization rights to immigrant Japanese, the majority of which had come to the U.S. before the Immigration Act of 1924.
- 1953 Korean War ends, and Korean war brides and students arrive.
- 1956 Dalip Singh Saund, a Sikh immigrant, is the first Asian Pacific American elected to a national office (U.S. Congress from 29th California District).
- 1959 Hawaii becomes 50th state

1965 - 1980

- 1965 Immigration Act of 1965 abolishes "national origins" as the basis for immigration restrictions and establishes a nondiscriminatory immigration system. As a result, many Chinese, Filipinos, Koreans, and South Asians immigrate for work and educational opportunities.
- 1968 Students go on strike at SF State University to demand Ethnic Studies Programs.
- 1972 Asian Pacific Americans demonstrate against the building of the Seattle Kingdome because of its negative impact on the Chinatown/International District neighborhood's largely low-income and elderly residents. In response, Gov. Dan Evans creates the Washington State Asian Advisory Board, precursor to today's Washington Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs.
- 1974 Lau v. Nichols rules that school districts must provide bilingual education.
- 1975 More than 130,000 refugees from Vietnam, Kampuchea, and Laos enter the U.S. as communists governments come to power in their homelands.
- 1976 President Ford rescinds Executive Order 9066 issued in 1942.
- 1978 "Boat People" begin coming from Vietnam. Other refugees include Laotians, Cambodians, Hill Tribe people of Laos (including Hmong, Mien and Kmhmu), and the Cham (Vietnamese Muslims).

1980 - present

- 1980 Refugee Act establishes federal funding for those applying for political refugee status. Refugees are exempt from the U.S.'s worldwide limit of authorized immigrant entries.
- 1981 Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians holds hearings across the country to listen to testimonials from Japanese Americans who were incarcerated. It concludes the internment was a "grave injustice" resulting from "race prejudice, war hysteria and a failure of political leadership."
- 1981 The Southeast Asian Resource Action Center (SEARAC) is created in WA DC.
- 1982 *Two European American men beat Vincent Chin, a Chinese American draftsman, to death with a baseball bat in Detroit. This shocking incident serves as a rallying point for Asian*

Pacific Americans to come together across ethnicities to deal with hate crimes and other issues.

- 1982 The Vietnam Veterans Memorial (“The Wall”) is dedicated in WA DC. It is designed by Maya Lin, a Chinese American who is an undergraduate student at the time.
- 1986 Mary Queen of Vietnam, in New Orleans, becomes the first church built and owned by Vietnamese Americans in the U.S.
- 1990 The first group of Vietnamese detained as political prisoners in reeducation camps after the 1975 communist take-over comes to the U.S. after creation of the Humanitarian Operation (H.O. Program).
- 1992 *Los Angeles riots devastate Korea Town. Feeling abandoned by the police, Korean Americans take up arms to protect themselves, only to be stereotyped as vigilantes by media.*
- 1992 *Pre-med student Luyen Phan Nguyen is beaten to death by a college mob in Florida as other students watch.*
- 1992 Tony Lam is the first Vietnamese American elected to public office in the U.S. when he wins his seat to the Westminster, California City Council.
- 1992 Jay Kim is the first Korean American in the U.S. Congress when he is elected to the U.S. House of Representatives from the 41st district in California.
- 1995 The U.S. Embassy opens in Hanoi as the U.S. begins diplomatic relations with Vietnam.
- 1996 U.S. passes act to deport immigrants convicted of crimes (including crimes occurring before 1996).
- 2000 Norman Y. Mineta is the first Asian Pacific American to be a U.S. Cabinet member, appointed by President Bill Clinton to serve as the U.S. Secretary of Commerce.
- 2003 *Balbir Singh Sodhi, a Sikh American, is shot and killed in Mesa, Arizona on September 15, 2001, the first victim of a hate crime in the aftermath of the attack on the World Trade Centers on Sep. 11, 2001.*
- 2007 An estimated 15.2 million U.S. residents identify as Asian American or Asian in combination with other races. This comprises about 5 percent of the total U.S. population. The largest Asian groups in the U.S. (followed by the 2007 estimate) are:
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| Chinese Americans (3.54 million) | Korean Americans (1.56 million) |
| Filipino Americans (3.05 million) | Japanese Americans (1.22 million). |
| Asian Indian Americans (2.77 million) | Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islander (1 million) |
| Vietnamese Americans (1.64 million) | |
- 2009 President Obama’s stimulus package includes funding to grant veteran’s benefits to qualified Filipino veterans who served with the U.S. Armed Forces in WWII for the approximately 15,000 veterans that are still alive.

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