

A Brief Glimpse

**ASIAN AMERICAN
PACIFIC ISLANDER**

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS THEME STUDY

The National Park Service is pleased to issue the introductory essay of *Finding a Path Forward: Asian American/Pacific Islander National Historic Landmarks Theme Study*, which will be published in its entirety later in 2016. In this essay, Franklin Odo, editor of the theme study, introduces the content and scope of the upcoming work. The theme study will include contributions from sixteen other scholars of Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) history and culture. It is our hope that Dr. Odo's essay—and those that follow—will familiarize the American public with AAPI contributions to our nation's history and lead to the recognition of associated properties. The theme study is intended to help in the identification of buildings, structures, sites, objects, and districts associated with AAPI history, and facilitate their designation as National Historic Landmarks and their listing in the National Register of Historic Places. With this recognition, an important step toward the preservation of these historic properties will be taken. Although we intend to publicize widely the release of the full publication, please look for it later in the summer on the Asian American Pacific Islander webpage at www.nps.gov/subjects/tellingallamericansstories/index.htm.



Introduction

ASIAN AMERICAN/PACIFIC ISLANDER NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS THEME STUDY

Franklin Odo

There are two major lists of officially designated historic properties in the United States. Both are maintained by the National Park Service (NPS) which celebrates its centennial in 2016. Known more widely for its stewardship of the national parks—“America’s best idea”—the NPS also maintains the National Register of Historic Places and the National Historic Landmarks Program.¹ The National Register lists properties that are important to cities, states, and the nation, while the National Historic Landmarks (NHL) Program only designates those of outstanding national

*U.S. Immigration Station
Angel Island, California*

Photo from the collections of the
National Register of Historic Places.



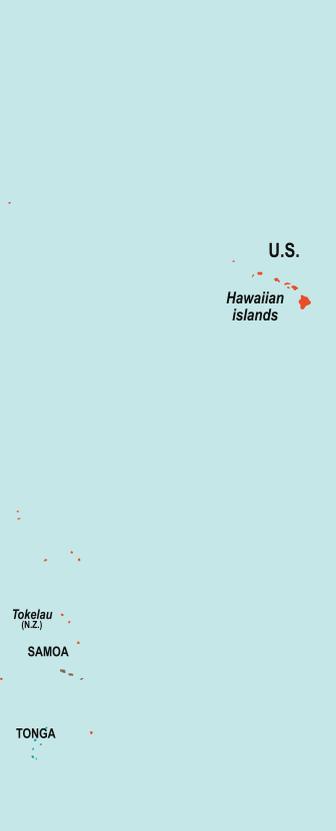


*From Asia to America:
Asian Americans and Pacific
Islanders emigrated from a huge
geographic area to settle in the
United States.*

significance that retain a high degree of integrity. Fewer than 3,000 NHLs have been designated, with properties ranging from Mt. Vernon to the Angel Island Immigration Station in the San Francisco Bay, through which many immigrants came into the U.S., but where many Asians were detained and barred from entrance because of their race and nationality. These places are critical as effective lessons through which visitors absorb American history and learn about the people who belong in that narrative and in this nation.

When peoples of color, including Asian Americans and Pacific Islander Americans, are not reasonably represented, the historical narrative of the nation itself becomes skewed and biased. Because it was manifestly evident that the histories and heritages of AAPIs are dramatically underrepresented on both lists of significant historic properties, in 2013 then-Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar asked the NPS to undertake this AAPI theme study. Secretary Sally Jewel carried the project forward. NPS Director Jonathan Jarvis has taken a personal interest in the project and Stephanie Toothman, Associate Director for Cultural Resources, has been a champion for its completion.²

This volume seeks to inspire Americans to discover the story of America's Asian and Pacific Island heritage. Further, it is intended to inspire and



help those seeking National Historic Landmarks or National Register of Historic Places designation for historic places linked to stories about Asian American and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) and their experiences in the United States over time. Designed to be inviting and inspirational, these essays are not intended to be encyclopedic or comprehensive.³ Instead, we hope to reach local historians, planners, elected officials, the AAPI community, and all Americans interested in linking the power of place to the ideas, people, and movements that have been meaningful to American communities. When and how did Pacific Islanders become part of the American empire/fabric? When and where did the earliest people from Asia appear in the United States—or earlier, in the American colonies—or even earlier, in North America? How did ethnic communities like Chinatowns develop? What are the legacies of these vast movements of people, capital, resources, and labor—where do they

begin and end? Do they end? The NPS hopes to help answer these and other questions by identifying and designating historic places that can provide stories explaining the long and fascinating histories of AAPIs.

Who are Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders?

What do we mean by the term “Asian American and Pacific Islander Americans”? As the accompanying map shows, some of these Americans travelled farther to get to North America than most European settlers and some Africans. Asia generically refers to the Eastern hemisphere of the globe. The Asian region of interest in this theme study is generally defined by China to the north and Indonesia to the south, and spanning from Afghanistan and Pakistan to the South Pacific Islands and Hawai‘i. The South China Sea, the Philippine Sea, and the Indian and Pacific oceans are major bodies of water in this region.

The Pacific Islands are highly fragmented geographically, but some of the major island groups are Hawai‘i, Guam, the Marshall Islands, the Virgin Islands, the Solomon Islands, the Northern Mariana Islands, Samoa, and Fiji.

People who came to the U.S. from the Pacific Islands and Asia represent a staggering number of cultures, languages, and religions, some resulting from an ancient mingling of cultures and others representing more recent merging.

In this theme study we refer to the people from these diverse and geographically far flung cultures as “Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders”—AAPI for short. Because they share a sense of community in the United States, they often unite for political or cultural reasons under various names, but often as “Asian Pacific Americans” (APA), “Asian American and Pacific Americans” (AAPA), or simply “Asian Pacific Islanders” (API). There is no common agreement that one designation is more accurate than others; we selected AAPI as a convenient acronym, but we do not consider it superior to others.

Why This Theme Study is Needed

The year 2016 marks the centennial of the establishment of the NPS by an act signed by President Woodrow Wilson. The NPS includes 411 units, including units in every state, American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and the District of Columbia. Some of these units already commemorate the extraordinary presence of AAPIs, but people of AAPI heritage are still underrepresented in terms of designated places that tell their stories. AAPI communities and the general public need to be awakened to the sites that provide insights to AAPI groups, from indigenous peoples in Hawai‘i, Guam, and Samoa to more recent refugees from Southeast Asia.⁴ And there will be exposure to large audiences; in 2015, some 307,247,252 visitors enjoyed the natural wonders and historic buildings, museums, memorials, and parks that NPS protects and interprets and that help explain America’s rich and diverse history.

The explosive growth of Asian American and Pacific Islander American communities has fueled political, scholarly, economic, cultural, and transnational interest in many circles. The AAPI share of the American population in 1970 was less than one percent (just over one million people) but, largely as an unintended consequence of the 1965 immigration reforms and the influx of refugees after the disastrous American interventions in Southeast Asia, by 2015 there were close to 20 million AAPIs in the U.S.⁵ AAPIs have experienced the fastest growth rate among all “races” in the United States since 2000, and they appear to be continuing this trajectory into the foreseeable future. This “racial” demographic has enormous potential to influence future policy-

making in myriad arenas. The quality and quantity of designated historic sites with significant AAPI linkages will have considerable impact on the ways in which AAPI heritage is understood and embraced by all Americans.

Like other groups that have discovered or rediscovered their need to establish more intimate ties to their nation, their states, and their neighborhoods, AAPIs are looking for real places that harbor (or hide) stories about their histories in the United States. Recent NPS attempts to include communities whose legacies were historically and effectively marginalized include the 2013 *American Latinos and the Making of the United States: A Theme Study* and the LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer) theme study project, launched in June 2014.⁶

The Collection of Essays

What binds these seventeen essays about AAPI heritage together most coherently is the collective sense among AAPIs that their history, indeed American history writ large, must be understood in the context of the United States as it developed into an American empire. The nation's origin as colonies within the expansive British Empire serves as a backdrop to the revolution of 1776 that gave birth to a new nation. That new entity immediately embarked upon the acquisition of enormous territories at the expense of the indigenous hosts and neighbors who we now call Native Americans. Even earlier, the vast Spanish empire reaching from Mexico to the Philippines became a regular conduit for Asians coming to the Americas, as early as the sixteenth century. But living in an imperial order inevitably places individuals and communities in conditions requiring serious, sometimes deadly, moral and political choices. AAPIs became consequential victims and participants as a result of those decisions, as will be explored in the essays in this AAPI theme study. As targets, objects, and agents, they have consistently faced difficult alternatives, beginning with the earliest sojourners and continuing with contemporary generations of immigrants and their children.

In the mid-nineteenth century, as the United States extended its reach to the shores of the Pacific Ocean, international European competition for Asia and the islands en route to that vast continent unleashed a torrent of imperial adventures. At the same time, the insatiable hunger for new lands and resources committed the U.S. to absorb the indigenous inhabitants of the territories it coveted and seized or otherwise acquired, as well as others who

had settled there. Manifest destiny assumed the racial inferiority of some of those peoples, but there was considerable tension over democratic principles and rights accruing to people already living on newly acquired “American” soil. Did the Constitution, as some Americans argued or feared, follow the flag? Would these “inferior” peoples insist on rights properly claimed only by European Americans? If so, would that unfortunate outcome contaminate core principles of racial hierarchy in the homeland? Indeed, the insistence on equal treatment under the law/Constitution has long been anathema to white supremacists.

The quest for empire incorporated Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders into the American body politic, even as it recruited limited but important numbers of AAPIs into the U.S. as immigrants. A seemingly insatiable need for cheap labor, to develop not only the newly conquered territories but significant sections of the metropole in which Americans lived, created complex and difficult contradictions. For example, the expansion into the Pacific and Asia necessitated the annexation of islands like the Hawaiian archipelago, in 1898, with its indigenous population of Native Hawaiians as well as growing numbers of Asian immigrant workers. But it also effectively created an opportunity to exploit thousands of Chinese workers recruited to build the transcontinental railroad in the 1860s and Japanese laborers to harvest agricultural crops to feed a burgeoning population in the 1890s.

When periodic crises in the capitalist economy resulted in recessions and depressions, including in the 1870s, nativist racism surfaced more strongly, resulting in the nation’s establishment of its first exclusion laws. These laws eventually barred nearly all AAPIs from entering the country or becoming naturalized. When the Chinese and Japanese had been effectively excluded, Filipinos, as part of the American empire, were recruited to work as sugar and pineapple plantation workers in Hawai‘i and as migrant workers and fish cannery laborers on the West Coast and in Alaska. Even the Filipinos, “nationals” as colonial subjects, were eventually effectively cut off in 1934, albeit at the cost of a promise of future independence for the Philippines. These contradictions are formidable parts of the AAPI legacy; all too often they helped define who Americans could be by excluding AAPIs as unfit to enter or be naturalized.

Given the salience of empire running through this volume, it is fitting that we begin with the essay “Imperialism” by Gary Okihiro on that very

theme. Okihiro stakes out a wide purview, suggesting that the topic should begin with the Greeks and Romans and not, as some scholars insist, as a stage of late capitalism. And he contends that “[u]nlike most standard U.S. histories that depict imperialism as largely restricted to the nineteenth century and as an aberration, this chapter maintains imperialism, both as discourses and the material conditions, is a crucial aspect of the republic’s constitution. The U.S. was made in the idea and act of expansion.” Okihiro further argues that advocates like Alfred Thayer Mahan in his influential *The Influence of Sea Power upon History* (1890) combined lethal doses of imperialism, manifest destiny, and white supremacy to solidify American intentions to secure strategic and material supremacy in Asia and the Pacific. These intrusions and conquests of places like Hawai‘i not only disrupted indigenous cultures and societies, but displaced Native Hawaiian peoples by the thousands, forcing many to work on sailing ships in the Pacific Northwest, as well as on whaling fleets based in places like New Bedford, Massachusetts.

In her essay “Early Foundations and Mobilities of Pacific Islanders,” Amy Stillman takes us on a journey over thousands of miles of the Pacific Ocean, reminding us there were vibrant peoples and cultures existing long before European colonialism reared its fearsome head. We now know that long-range, non-instrument navigational skills developed more than a millennium ago and extended the capacity of blue ocean travel for Pacific Islanders well beyond visible horizons, long before the compass and sextant were invented.

In “Battling Imperialism,” Davianna McGregor uses two examples from the Pacific to illustrate the long and involved histories of indigenous resistance to imperial agendas in Guam and Hawai‘i. Pagat is the sacred site of a former village on the northeast coast of Guam, one of the spoils of war acquired by the U.S. after the Spanish-American War of 1898, which also incorporated American Samoa, Cuba, and Puerto Rico into the American empire.⁷ Pagat was listed by the National Park Service in the National

A view from the ancient village of Pagat on Guam’s northeast coast. This site is important to the indigenous Chamorro people.

Photo by Brian R. Turner



Register of Historic Places in 1974. In 2012 Pagat was targeted as a live-fire site for 6,000 U.S. marines who were being forced to leave Okinawa, Japan, and scheduled for redeployment in Guam. According to McGregor, this military use of Pagat was sacrilegious and provoked a firestorm of protest from indigenous Chamorro people. The military backed down and is now considering other sites. McGregor also uses the example of Kaho‘olawe, an island used by the U.S. Navy for live fire exercises from 1941 into the 1990s. Sacred to the indigenous Native Hawaiians, military use of the island was sacrilegious; a sustained movement led by Native Hawaiians succeeded in 1994 when the U.S. Navy signed title for Kaho‘olawe over to the Hawai‘i state government. These are but two examples of native resistance to ongoing American imperial designs on indigenous properties and cultures.⁸

Imperialism and colonialism constitute central themes in Erika Lee’s essay “Immigration, Exclusion, and Resistance.” She notes the early arrivals in North America via the Spanish empire and the large emigration of people from China, partly as a result of the destructive impact of British imperialist incursions such as the Opium Wars of 1839-42. The modest numbers of Korean immigrants may be explained by Japanese control of Korea, formalized in 1910, because of Japanese concerns that Korean workers would undermine Japanese labor mobility and aspirations. In the U.S., Korean immigrants became pawns in the looming collision of American and Japanese empires in the Pacific.⁹

A new perspective on Asian American labor in the West can help us, Dorothy Fujita-Rony insists in her chapter “Labor, Labor Activism, and Workers.” She maintains that understanding “what happened to racialized workers through the United States empire also had an impact on U.S. culture as a whole.” One example is a lesson for those seeking places to designate as significant historic sites. In the first decades of Asian labor on the West Coast,

migrant laborers, with no fixed homes or neighborhoods, formed immense and vital units deployed to tend and harvest crops and process seafood. We will need, she implies, some considerable wisdom, to imagine actual places that can

Pokaneloa, also known as Loa‘a, is a collection of petroglyphs and cupules located on the top surface of this 3 x 4-meter boulder located in the hardpan area on the island of Kaho‘olawe. Studies indicate that the boulder may possess an archaeological significance in Hawaiian culture.

Photo by Stanton Enomoto





function to commemorate their pain, their loneliness, their contributions, and their agency. She reminds us as well that, in the imperial competition

Farm families of Japanese ancestry boarding buses in Byron, California, for Turlock Assembly Center 65 miles away. An official of the WCCA is checking the families into the bus by number.

for land, resources, and labor, the United States was not the only destination point for migrants seeking jobs. For example, fewer than 100,000 Indians left for the U.S., Canada, Australia, Argentina, Panama, and Mexico, while over thirty-two million of their countrymen and women went to the Caribbean, Southeast Asia, and British and French colonies in the Pacific and Indian oceans. Truly, AAPI history helps us better understand the transnational nature of the American experience.

WRA photo by Dorothea Lange, May 2, 1942. Courtesy of the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration.

The forced removal and incarceration of 120,000 Japanese Americans, primarily on the West Coast of the U.S., was the quintessential culmination of necessary consequences for the racialized war between the American and Japanese empires. While Brian Niiya does not overtly utilize imperialism as an analytic tool in his essay “World War II and AAPIs,” he reminds us that many white Americans had long sought to remove Japanese Americans from their midst: “This is our time to get things done that we have been trying to get done for a quarter of a century” – referencing one Californian’s outburst on February 6, 1942, urging mass removal only 13 days before Roosevelt signed

Inset photo: Exclusion orders are posted on April 1, 1942. The order directs the removal of people in San Francisco of Japanese ancestry by noon on April 7, 1942.

WRA photo by Dorothea Lange, April 11, 1942. Courtesy of the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration.



Top left: Topaz—the Central Utah Camp—as it appeared in the 1940s and recently. The site is a National Historic Landmark.

WRA photo courtesy of the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration.

Top right: Current photo from the collections of the National Historic Landmarks Program.

Executive Order 9066, officially authorizing the army to begin. Niiya’s descriptions of the WWII internment/concentration camps, where West Coast Japanese Americans were forcibly sent, provide stark notice that, at least for some groups at some times, the notion of internal colonies invoked by Third World Liberation Front activists in the 1960s and 1970s could be graphically depicted. The experiences of AAPI groups and individuals, in other words, illuminate critical parts of American history shaded by neglect or design.

WWII had demonized Japan and Japanese Americans and provided a brief racial respite to other Asian Americans. Japan was effectively using America’s anti-Asian racism, including the exclusion acts and the mass incarceration, to tout its own aggression as part of a race war in which it would lead other Asians to victory. In order to counter that propaganda, the U.S. amended the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act by agreeing to admit a paltry 105 people of Chinese descent. But even with this concession, immigrants of Chinese descent from any part of the globe (not, as with other nations, from that country alone) counted against that quota. Still, and very importantly, it did permit resident Chinese Americans to become naturalized citizens. That respite, however, was short-lived because the American empire’s preeminence as the world’s only super power was being contested by the Soviet empire and what was perceived to be a monolithic global communist threat.

Rick Baldoz explains in his essay “The Cold War” that Asian Americans were part of “long-standing stereotypes characterizing Asians as an ‘enemy race’ that threatened to destabilize the global political order.” This unfortunate development followed a brief period of several years when post-WWII policies appeared to favor Asian American communities, whose leaders urged the celebration of wartime heroism demonstrated by ethnic groups loyal to their American homeland.

Daryl Maeda’s essay, “AAPIs and Cultural Retention/Assimilation,” explores the origins and meanings of Asian American and Pacific Islander

American activism in the 1960s and 1970s. While he correctly points to influences from Black Power, Brown Power, Native American protests, civil rights advocacy, and the anti-war movements, he also notes the linkages to anti-imperial/anti-colonial struggles roiling much of the globe. These struggles, loosely combined and acknowledged domestically as the “Third World Liberation Front” (TWLF), gave rise to a pan-ethnic, pan-racial, united front confronting colonialism abroad and what some leaders termed “internal colonialism” within the United States. This direct comparison energized large numbers of both old and new left activists. The student strike in 1968 at San Francisco State College (now University) heralded a new era of unity for activist students of color in the U.S. and generated a host of new movements to bring about positive change for AAPI communities. Followed soon after by student strikes at the University of California, Berkeley, and then across the country, the TWLF movement proved to be emblematic of a generation of social justice activism.

While primarily focusing on the post-1965 influx of AAPI immigrants

Students gathered recently in the quad at San Francisco State University to protest budget cuts proposed for the College of Ethnic Studies. Similar protests in 1968 and 1969 led to the introduction of ethnic studies at San Francisco State and other colleges and universities around the country.

Photo by Tomo Hirai/Nichi Bei Weekly.





Lafcadio Hearn called attention to the Filipino settlement near New Orleans in an essay published in Harper's Weekly on March 31, 1883. Hearn's house still stands in New Orleans.

Photo from the collections of the National Register of Historic Places.

and refugees, Linda Vo's essay "Asian American Activism and Civic Participation/Battling for Political Rights, and Citizenship" points to the fact that the wars in Southeast Asia were direct results of the clash between imperial and colonial ambitions inherent in American/Western and Soviet/Chinese empires. These wars, like the previous one in Korea, led to economic and political immigrants arriving in the U.S., as well as increasing numbers of Amerasian infants and children born to American GIs and Asian women. These children, despised and abandoned in their Asian homelands, were adopted mainly by white families in the U.S. Tens of thousands of Southeast Asians found their first temporary homes in four military bases: Fort Chaffee in Arkansas, Camp Pendleton in California, Elgin Air Force Base in Florida, and Fort Indiantown Gap in Pennsylvania.

Moving beyond the initial confrontation and intersections between AAPIs and the American empire, the other essays focus primarily on the existence of these communities within the U.S. Not surprisingly, many of the narratives hark back to troubled times when neighborhoods and the nation attempted to remove or eradicate AAPIs as too foreign and too unalterably different to be assimilated into the American body politic. For the millions of Asian migrants seeking better economic conditions away from their homelands, their reception in many countries was unfortunately similar to hostilities faced by compatriots in the U.S. One result is the striking accomplishments in the field of Chinese diaspora archeology in places like Australia, New Zealand, and Canada. Doug Ross also mentions Japanese American archeology in passing, noting that much of it deals with an entire cottage industry involving the WWII incarceration of that ethnic group. In his essay "Archeology as Methodology for AAPI," Ross notes that much of Chinese American archeology centers on early Chinese mining camps and Chinese laborers on the Central Pacific Railroad. The Central Pacific led from Sacramento, California, up and through the formidable Sierra Madre mountain range and eastward to meet the Union

Pacific Railroad at Promontory Summit in Utah, finally connecting both coasts in 1869. An analysis of artifacts sifted from old sites, especially in Nevada, California, and other western states, seems to confirm that early Chinese laborers continued traditional cultural lifestyles even as they adopted western foodstuffs, clothing, and other cultural elements.

In the face of often hostile and intermittently violent lynchings and “drivings out,”¹⁰ AAPIs used old cultural forms and newly learned American strategies to protect themselves and advance their community standing. Nayan Shah distinguishes four analytically separate categories of such advocacy and social movement in his essay “Establishing Communities.” They include: 1) social, mutual aid, and spiritual institutions; 2) transformation of the physical landscape; 3) labor, advocacy, political, and nationalist organizations; and 4) commercial and entertainment cultures. Among the earliest mutual aid societies was the Sociedad de Beneficencia de los Hispano Filipinos, established in 1870 in the tiny, deliberately hidden, village of St. Malo, just outside New Orleans, Louisiana. Lafcadio Hearn visited this remote village in 1883 and wrote an essay about the early Filipino settlers. He included several images of drawings by Charles Graham after sketches by J.O. Davidson. The essay was published in *Harper’s Weekly* on March 31, 1883.¹¹

These men had probably jumped ship to escape terrible conditions as seamen aboard Spanish galleons, while Spain maintained colonial control of Mexico and the Philippines. The Manila Galleon trade flourished in an era predating the American colonies and through the first decades of the young nation, 1565-1815.

AAPI communities were highly diverse from their earliest beginnings. The workers who created railroads, canneries, farms, ranches, sugar and pineapple plantations, seafood industries, and myriad urban businesses are occasionally recognized in our histories, on markers, and as memorials. However, there were also numbers of Asian immigrants who arrived with money and savvy. They were armed with financial and social capital, ambitious to do more than earn a basic wage. Lane Hirabayashi chronicles some of these entrepreneurial ventures on the U.S. continent with a wide-ranging account of ventures, including the owners and operators of early gold mine claims. In his essay “Asian Americans and Agriculture, Innovation, and Business,” Hirabayashi explains that they extend to more recent businesses, like the Vietnamese businessman who built a veritable empire based on the chili-

based Sriracha sauce and the Hmong from Southeast Asia who created farms in California and urban enterprises in Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota. A few became seriously wealthy: some formed family and kinship-related corporations—such as the Patels from India who, beginning in the 1950s, created a formidable national network, now owning as much as two-thirds of the budget hotels and perhaps as much as forty percent of all hotel and motel rooms in America.

In her essay on AAPI architectural legacies in the chapter “Architecture and Landscape Architecture,” Gail Dubrow focuses on the singular achievements of Japanese Americans. Other AAPI groups also have distinguished accomplishments in this area, but Dubrow seizes this opportunity to use one ethnic group as a model for research into and potential designation of properties to highlight the AAPI experience. For example, she makes two critically important points that may usefully be extended to other AAPI ethnic groups. First, American society followed many European counterparts in widespread fascination for Japanese design in arts and architecture (Japonisme) but, unlike Europe, the U.S. was forced to deal with significant Japanese immigration that was met with widespread hostility and racism. Second, while some of the built environment using Japanese design principles was created by Japanese or Japanese American professionals, much more was attributed to white artists, architects, and businessmen, who had free and easy access to these styles while their Japanese or Japanese American counterparts faced varying degrees of discrimination. Dubrow also points to the fact that design professionals contributed to the growth of Japanese styles in the built environment or the landscape, but much more credit should be assigned to the communities where vernacular processes allowed a multitude of carpenters, contractors, gardeners, nursery owners, Buddhist and Shinto priests and parishioners, and donors, to design and build large numbers of Japanese gardens and buildings across much of Hawai‘i and the West Coast.

Indigenous people found themselves literally outgunned in the numerous battles and struggles against colonial onslaughts and were involved in continuous efforts to protect dwindling resources, including land, people, cultures, and heritages. As Mary Yu Danico points out in the essay “The Interconnections: Cultural Production, Exchange, and Appropriation,” Asian immigrants and refugees were quickly put to similar tests. Their collective acts surely included resistance to restrictive laws and policies, exploitative



labor practices, racist wartime conditions, and degrading images in the media and popular culture. But they also responded to hostile assimilation forces with wide-ranging claims to maintaining and creating their own languages, education systems, theater, writings, political movements, and media expressions. The sheer range of these acts of resistance to forced assimilation into a mythical American mainstream is astonishing. Collectively, they constitute a notable testament to the resilience of the human spirit.

In Catherine Ceniza Choy’s essay, “New Immigration, Migration, and Refugees,” she notes that both Korean and Southeast Asian communities developed rapidly in the second half of the twentieth century, largely because of the wars between empires representing communist and capitalist interests. The large Filipino American community owes much of its size, complexity, and vibrancy to the colonial history of their homeland within the American empire. But her essay focuses on the development of the five largest ethnic groups within the AAPI demographic: Chinese, Filipino, Indian, Korean, and Vietnamese. Japanese Americans are the sixth; until the 1970s, Japanese

Bok Kai Temple. This traditional Chinese temple is located in Marysville, California.

Photo by Elaine Jackson-Retondo.

Americans were the single largest AAPI group. When the 1965 Immigration Act reforms were implemented, they unleashed dramatic increases from the rest of Asia. So, while there are imperial roots in all their legacies, Choy emphasizes the fact that these AAPI communities have their own trajectories within the U.S.

The final essay in this theme study is an overview of AAPI political history as it intersects with mainstream political institutions. Kim Geron notes in his essay “Insider/Outsider Politics,” that few Asian Americans were elected or appointed to local, territorial, state, or national bodies before WWII, even in areas like Hawai‘i, where AAPI populations far exceeded whites or haoles. A large part of the reason was, to be sure, the existence of racist laws preventing the large population of Asian immigrants from becoming naturalized citizens. In Hawai‘i, the indigenous Kanaka Maoli had always been significant parts of the elected and/or appointed political officials, even as ultimate political authority resided in the minority white community. Some progress was made after WWII, especially in Hawai‘i where returning veterans were supported by a large and organized labor union work force. But the astonishing growth in sheer numbers of AAPIs in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries has been accompanied by noticeable increases in federal, state, and local officials from, now, nearly all major AAPI ethnic groups.

How this Theme Study Can Contribute to Historic Preservation Activities in the U.S.

This AAPI theme study of seventeen essays is intended to inspire all Americans to consider the history of the many Asian American and Pacific Islander groups that contributed to the development of the United States and to the rich diversity of this nation’s cultural heritage. Historic properties related to AAPI heritage have been neglected among many historic preservation initiatives, and this theme study should inspire their designation as National Historic Landmarks and their listing in the National Register of Historic Places. To that end, the concluding chapter of this collection addresses the potential for National Historic Landmark and National Register of Historic Places listing among properties associated with AAPI history.

Multi-volume Asian American encyclopedias already exist; they complement a rapidly growing store of monographs, magazines, journals, social media resources, websites, documentaries, and blogs filling the growing

demand for content and analyses of AAPI issues. In addition to recognition through the NHL and National Register programs, historic houses, museums, national parks, and other places associated with AAPI heritage are sorely needed to provide the general public with easily accessible, readily digested, readily affordable, educational, recreational, and historically responsible information about this rapidly growing “racial” demographic in America. Providing these resources will help AAPIs better understand their places in American history. This understanding will empower the U.S. to act positively to secure their roles going forward in complex times, when issues of race, class, gender, and religion make increasing demands on the political and moral character and stamina of the entire nation.

Finding a Path Forward: Asian American/ Pacific Islander National Historic Landmarks Theme Study

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Franklin Odo

Essay 2

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Gary Okihiro

Essay 3

Early Foundations and Mobilities of Pacific Islanders

Amy Stillman

Essay 4

Archeology as Methodology for AAPI

Doug Ross

Essay 5

Immigration, Exclusion, and Resistance

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Establishing Communities

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Labor, Labor Activism, and Workers

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Conclusion

Registration Requirements for AAPI Properties

Endnotes

¹ Wallace Stegner won the Pulitzer Prize in 1972 for *Angle of Repose* and National Book Award in 1977 for *The Spectator Bird*.

² Paul Loether, Chief of the National Register of Historic Places and National Historic Landmarks Division, assumed authority over this project; Alexandra Lord, Branch Chief, directly supervised this project until she moved to the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History. Barbara Wyatt, Historian/Reviewer, provided guidance as the essays were prepared for publication. Theodora Chang is Advisor, NPS, and principally responsible for bringing the project to fruition. The Advisory Panel was instrumental in setting initial guidelines for the content, suggesting scholars who might write the essays and reviewers for the essays.

³ There are, now, increasing numbers of such useful reference works. See, for example, *Asian American Society: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Mary Danico. Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2015; *Asian American History and Culture: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Huping Ling and Allan Austin. NY: Routledge, 2010; and *The Oxford Handbook of Asian American History*, ed. David Yoo and Eiichiro Azuma. NY: Oxford University Press, 2015.

⁴ Immigrants and refugees from West Asia, the region usually referred to as the Middle East, is sometimes considered part of this complex group. This region might include Afghanistan and Iran to the east, stretching to Morocco in the west. At times the reference is to the "ethnic" group and Arab Americans or Iranian Americans become the subjects or agents; at other times, the reference is to a religion: Islam can then become the reference point and the fact that the largest Muslim country in the world is Indonesia, clearly within Asia, makes the point. These then, make it clear that, in the U.S., mosques should be apprehended as historical sites in addition to Indian American Hindu "gurdwaras." The fact that Asian Americanists have abandoned the terms, "Orient" and "Oriental" should not obscure the fact that, as Edward Said made clear, "Orientalism" was first systematically applied to the Middle East. The fact that a number of key nations, Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco, are also in Africa, complicates the issue. See, for an early exploration, Sunaina Maira and Magid Shihade, "Meeting Asian/Arab American Studies: Thinking Race, Empire, and Zionism in the U.S." In *Journal of Asian American Studies*, Volume 9, Number 2, June 2006.

⁵ "The Pew Research Center's 2012 Asian-American Survey is based on telephone interviews conducted by landline and cell phone with a nationally representative sample of 3,511 Asian adults ages 18 and older living in the United States. The survey was conducted in all 50 states, including Alaska and Hawai'i, and the District of Columbia. The survey was designed to include representative subsamples of the six largest Asian groups in the U.S. population: Chinese, Filipino, Indian, Japanese, Korean and Vietnamese. The survey also included Asians from other Asian subgroups." This report was severely criticized by AAPI scholars who condemned its rosy message of super-achieving, model-minority, communities.

⁶ See NPS websites for more: www.nps.gov.

⁷ More directly relevant to the overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom is the NHL, Iolani Palace. There is now a lesson plan about the coup and annexation by the U.S. in the 1890s. In the lesson, students have opportunities to investigate American expansionism, how indigenous cultures responded to colonization, and how some historic sites hold great power as sites of contemporary activism and political protest. This is the 161st lesson plan from the NPS. Find out more about *Iolani Palace*

at the new Teaching with Historic Places website: http://nps.gov/subjects/teaching-with-historic-places/lesson-plan_iolani-palace.htm

⁸ Of course, the United States was but one of several Western powers competing in Asia and the Pacific. Samoa is a good example of societies torn asunder by imperial contestation; where the sun first rises over Guam in the American empire, it finally sets over American Samoa just over the international dateline. Initially divided between the U.S. and Germany, Samoa [formerly Western Samoa] is an independent nation while American Samoa remains firmly under American control.

⁹ Eiichiro Azuma, *Between Two Empires: Race, History, and Transnationalism in Japanese America*. NY: Oxford University Press, 2005.

¹⁰ See, especially, Jean Pfaelzer, *Driven Out: The Forgotten War Against Chinese Americans*. NY: Random House, 2007.

¹¹ Bronner, Simon, ed. *Lafcadio Hearn's America: Ethnographic Sketches and Editorials*. Louisville, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2002.



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