

Asian American & Pacific Islander Heritage Month

Advancing Leaders Through Purpose-Driven Service

May 2021 | #AAPiHeritageMonth



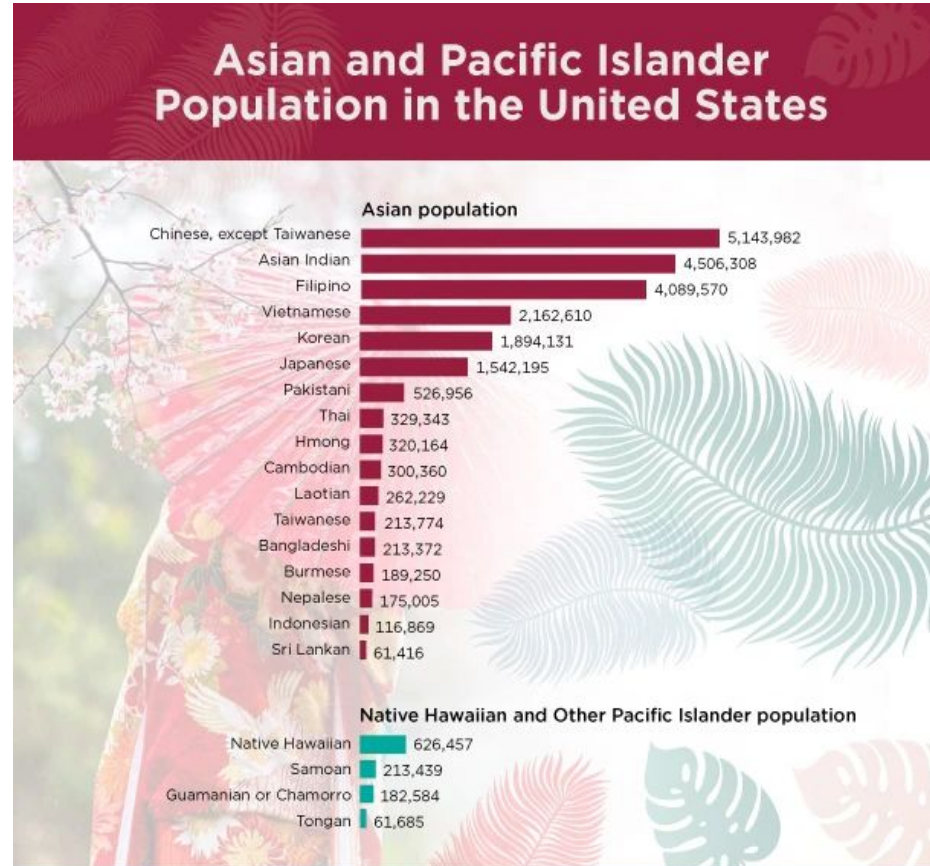
Mrs. Anderson's Sociology Class

Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month

“May is Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month – a celebration of Asians and Pacific Islanders in the United States.

Like most commemorative months, Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month originated with Congress... and was originally celebrated as a week, until 1990 when Congress passed Public Law 101-283 which expanded the observance to a month for 1990. Then in 1992, Congress passed Public Law 102-450 which annually designated May as Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month.

The month of 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.”
from the Library of Congress



From the US Census Bureau

Grace Lee Boggs

Grace Lee Boggs was born in Providence, Rhode Island on June 27, 1915. Her parents were Chinese immigrants, with her mother being a strong feminist, and her father known as “the king of the restaurant businessmen among the Chinese,” so their success gradually inspired hers. She was very smart, and enrolled at Barnard college at the young age of sixteen, then later earned her Ph.D. from Bryn Mawr College in philosophy. After graduating and trying to find herself, Grace avidly began to study the works of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Karl Polanyi and Karl Marx, which led her to slowly formulate an opinion favoring socialism. Especially as an Asian woman, she greatly struggled to find work, and eventually settled for a job at the University of Chicago's philosophy library paying only \$10 weekly. Fortunately, she knew how she felt about the society around her, and joined the Workers Party, then the Socialist Workers Party, and later the Johnson-Forest Tendency, where she involved herself in their goals of having working people be able to free and organize themselves in society.



After moving to Detroit in 1953, she married radical African-American activist James Boggs (also part of the Johnson-Forest Tendency), and together they fought for labor and civil rights, feminism, Black Power, Asian Americans and the environment. She became a symbol of resistance for both Asian-Americans and African-Americans through her dedication and resilience towards equality for the minority groups. As the Detroit around her slowly became more crime-filled, she tried her best to combat it by creating crime tactics, food shelves and community groups, and organizing protests for unemployed workers on strike. She also helped to found the youth repair program of Detroit Youth, the charter elementary school James and Grace Lee Boggs School, and participated in the Save Our Sons and Daughters (SOSAD) group, which protested against mainly African-American conflict in Detroit public schools. All of these groups had a shared goal of creating a new generation of leaders in Detroit from the kids within it. Grace Lee Boggs was the blueprint for many later activists who had similar goals of revolution through individual ability. She wrote multiple books throughout her life, describing the change possible by all people, especially minority groups. She devoted her later years in life to the enhancement of Detroit, dedicated to the young people. Even after her death in her Detroit home, she still remains an emblem of inspiration for all children and people of color, who can unlock in themselves revolutionary change.

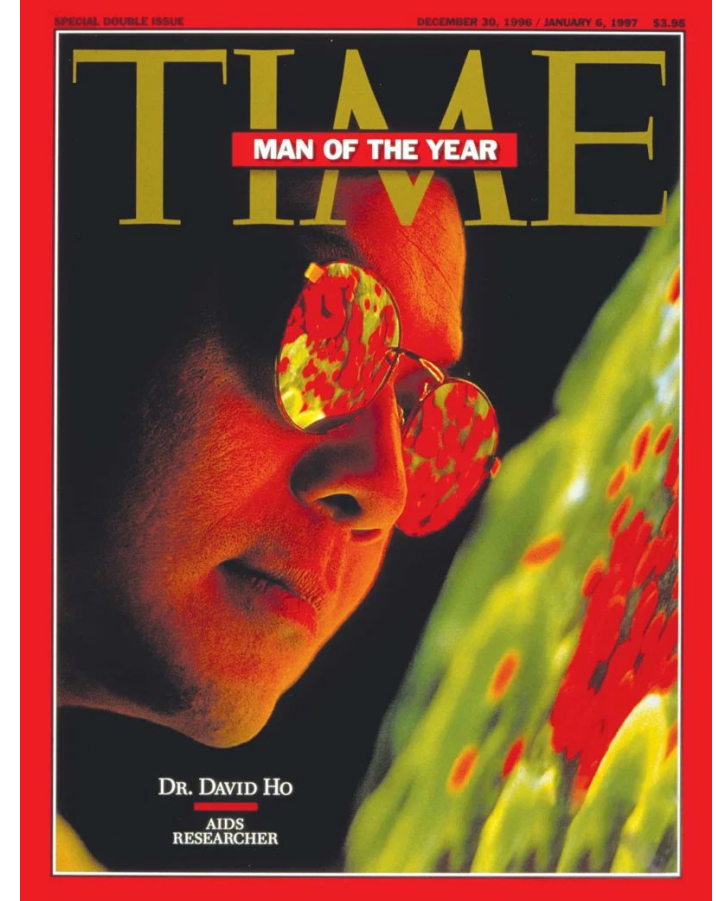
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Dr. David Da-I Ho (American Microbiologist Medical Researcher)

David Da-I Ho was born in Taichung, a city in Chinese Taiwan in 1952. His father left for the US to further his career, and David grew up with his mother in Taiwan. It was there where he learned about his aptitude for mathematics and science in school. A few years later, David, with his siblings and mother, joined his father in the US. To better assimilate into the predominantly Christian community in the US, David's father renamed his son to David from Da-I, his original name. David found it difficult to adapt to this new environment, and was discriminated against by his peers for being Asian, and for not speaking much English. He managed to overcome these obstacles, however, and managed to graduate from the California Institute of Technology, majoring in molecular biology.

David became the fourth scientist to notice and isolate the relatively unknown virus HIV. Together, working with a team of scientists, they discovered the link between the HIV virus and the disease itself. In 1994, the team discovered a combination of drugs that would bring down the virus to almost unnoticeable levels. He has won numerous awards for his work, and has worked with global organizations in an effort to eradicate and contain AIDS and HIV.



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Michelle Kwan was born on July 7, 1980 to a family of Korean-Americans living in Torrance, California. Her parents

immigrated to the United States about nine years prior to her birth. When she was young, Kwan had been surrounded by figure skating, mainly because her siblings participated in the activity, so she decided to as well. By the time that she was seven, she was involved in many extracurricular activities besides skating, such as gymnastics. Because her parents experienced financial and scheduling difficulties, with so many of their children enrolled in a vast amount of activities, they finally asked Kwan to focus on the area she was most passionate about. One influential day by the television watching the Olympic Games in 1988, Kwan decided that she wanted to pursue a career in Olympic Figure Skating.

Kwan was always ambitious as a child, and that ambition led her to becoming a successful skater in the Olympic Games! She was a very dedicated and determined skater, willing to practice day and night in order to perfect her routine. She endured various setbacks on her road to notoriety, such as self-image, financials, and isolation from her friends. However, her parents always encouraged and supported her, no matter what challenges she needed to face. She began to win various national, and sometimes international, competitions, alongside Tara Lipinski. Soon, she was able to qualify for the 1998 Olympic Games, where she won the silver medal. At the next Olympic Games, in 2002, she received the bronze medal. She continued to compete until 2006, but was injured, and decided to retire. Currently, she holds the record for obtaining the most United States victories in figure skating championships - nine total - along with Maribel Vinson. She also holds “five world titles” (*L.A. Times*).

In 2006, she enrolled at the University of Denver, and, in 2010, pursued graduate studies in International Relations at Tufts University. There, she earned her Master’s degree. Since then, she has become an active member of the political community, seeing her successes emulated within the White House. Her first major position within the political community was that she was “appointed the first U.S. diplomacy public envoy by then-Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice” (*L.A. Times*). After having served in this position, she became an advocate for the campaigns of both Hillary Clinton and Joe Biden, where she actively participated in rallies. In addition to her many successes, Kwan wrote an autobiography, titled *Michelle Kwan: Heart of a Champion*, which was first published in 1997.

As a figure skating legend herself, Kwan has inspired many to pursue their dreams, even when they feel unachievable or impossible to attain. Additionally, as a woman of many talents, Kwan shows others that a person can pursue multiple passions and explore multiple interests - life is not so limited as to pursue only one. Through figure skating, Kwan has set the bar very high for talented skaters. Through her political activism, Kwan has encouraged many more to become active within their communities and to vote. She has also become a driving force within the AAPI community. She is the picture of positivity, and inspires many to do the same, daily.



Michelle Kwan

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Dr. Chien-Shiung Wu

Born May 31st, 1912 in a town called Liu He near Shanghai in china. Her family heavily appreciated education as her mother was a teacher and her father was an engineer. After attending her fathers school she moved to a boarding school named Soochow pronounced Suzhou school for girls. After her stint at the boarding school she managed to be admitted to the Nanjing Institute one of the most prestigious schools of china where she studied physics being inspired by Marie Curie and graduated with top honours in 1934. After some work in china she was encouraged to move to the united states to further her education and work on more influential projects. Due to influences from her colleagues she decided to stay and obtain her Ph.D. In breaking edge field of nuclear fission.

After obtaining her Ph.D. she was invited to be the first female instructor at Princeton University. Only 2 years later she was recruited into the highly influential Manhattan Project in the development of the world's first atomic bomb. Her work on the Manhattan Project was the discovery of how to enrich uranium a critical step in the production of nuclear weapons and the use of nuclear power as well as the development of an improved geiger counter to better detect radiation which helped save her colleagues from developing cancer. After her time in the Manhattan Project she went on to be a part of a team to win the nobel prize although sadly she was never awarded that honor even though her work was critical in the discovery. The last thing I will mention is how throughout her life she advocated against the prevailing sexism in academia and encouraged women to join the sciences.



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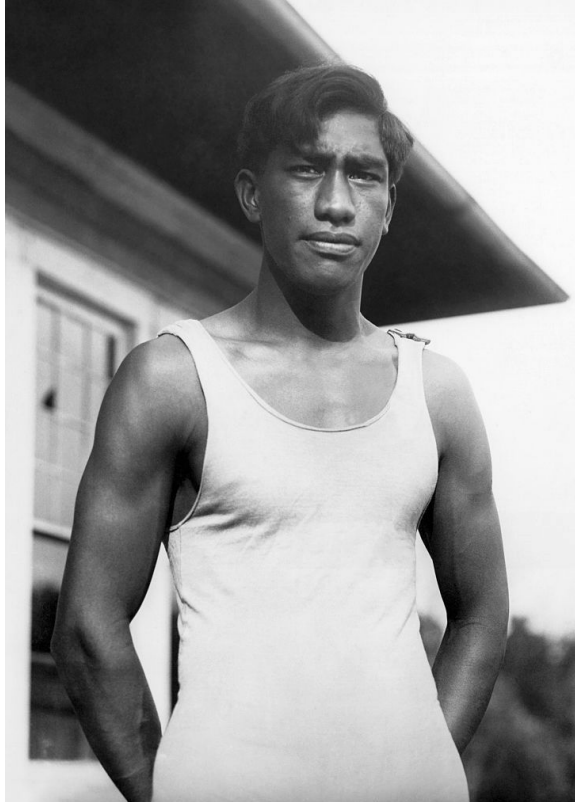
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Duke Kahanamoku

Duke Kahanamoku was born on August 24, 1890. He was born in Honolulu to Duke and Julia, who were fully blooded native Hawaiians, and was a descendant of royalty. He was the first child out of six sons and three daughters. He grew up in the carefree environment of Waikiki, spending most of his days around the Ocean. His favorite things to do were swimming, surfing, canoeing, bodysurfing, and lots of other water-oriented activities. He started surfing virtually from birth, and then went on to become a famous surfer.



In 1911, Kahanamoku hit 3 world records in freestyle swimming in the Honolulu harbor. The year after, in the Olympics, he went on to win a gold medal in the 100 meter freestyle, and a Silver for the U.S. freestyle relay team. Part of the reason he is known as the “Father of Modern Surfing” because he introduced surfing to the U.S. Atlantic Coast, Australia, and New Zealand in the year 1914. From 1922-30, he played a character in over 28 movies while living in Los Angeles. Duke’s accomplishments were important because he consolidated the Hawaiian culture of surfing around the world.

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Fred Korematsu

Fred Korematsu was born on January 30, 1919. He was born in Oakland California and is of Japanese descent. Once world war two broke out he enlisted to be apart of the National Guard and the Coast Guard, but was denied because he was Japanese. He then decided to become a welder. Korematsu had a job as a ship welder in the Oakland shipyard but was soon fired for being Japanese.



On February 19, 1942 President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, forcing 110,000 Japanese residents on the West Coast into internment camps. Once this happened Korematsu, at age 23, refused to go into the camps. He attempted to save up enough money so he and his girlfriend could move to the midwest in order to escape the camps. He was later arrested for resisting the government's order. Then he took his case, Korematsu vs the United States. In 1944 the case was lost, but four years later the decision was overruled. This led Congress in 1988 to state a formal government apology and pay reparations to Japanese survivors of the camps. Then in 1998 Korematsu was given the Medal of Freedom from president Bill Clinton.

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Hiroshi "Hershey" Miyamura

Hiroshi “Hershey” Miyamura was born in Gallup, New Mexico on October 6, 1925. His father was born in Kumamoto, Japan and their family moved to the United States in 1923. He got his nickname because one of his teachers couldn’t pronounce his name, and said “Hershey” instead. He joined the ROTC during his senior year but wasn’t allowed to join the military until near the end of World War II. He didn’t end up serving then, but would end up in the midst of the Korean War.

On April 24, 1951, Miyamura’s group of soldiers was attacked by the Chinese. They were outnumbered and were losing men quickly. They needed to retreat, but some would have to try delay the Chinese soldiers. Miyamura killed enemy soldiers with hand to hand combat and machine gun fire and helped other American soldiers with their wounds and directed them to safety. It is estimated that he killed at least 50 enemy soldiers. When the battle was over and things calmed, he was taken as a prisoner of war and spent two years in China under terrible conditions. After an armistice between North Korea and the United States, Miyamura was released from captivity and found out that he had been awarded the Medal of Honor for his efforts at the battle. Another interesting fact is that this was the first ever “secret” Medal of Honor. The United States feared that if the Chinese knew what he had done at the battle, he would be tortured or executed so the award was kept as a secret until his release. His valor and courage serves as an inspiration for all.



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Kiyoshi Kuromiya



Kiyoshi Kuromiya, an Asian-American, was born on May 9, 1943 in a Japanese incarceration camp in Heart Mountain, Wyoming during World War 2. After the war, Kiyoshi's family moved to California where throughout his teens to young adult years, he started to figure out who he was in terms of what he believed in and his identity. After he graduated high school he attended the University of Pennsylvania and joined the SDS (Students for a Democratic Society). This group helped him gain and improve the skills needed to draw people to his beliefs.

His most famous non-violent protest happened at Selma. He joined Martin Luther King Jr in the fight for African American civil rights and was brutally beaten by the state troopers of Alabama. Later, there was also a rise of the AIDS epidemic which Kuromiya played a huge part in. He himself was battling AIDS at the time which was one of the reasons why he participated and took notes in different conventions regarding AIDS and HIV. He wrote a book called the Creative Path which eventually led to a creation of the website which gives out HIV and AIDS information. Kuromiya always fought for what he believed was right for him and for the people. His use of the internet helped people reach information about AIDS and also helped fight for LGBTQ rights.

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George Takei



George Takei was born on April 20th, 1937, in Los Angeles, California. He was a son to Japanese-American parents who lived in the U.S., but were from Japan. His father worked in the real-estate sector and his mother was a homemaker. A couple years later after he was born, World War II started which caused great trouble for the Japanese immigrants. This unfortunately caused his parents to be forced to move to Japanese internment camps in Arkansas and northern California. Later on though, they returned back to their home after World War II ended. Takei later enrolled at the University of California at Berkeley to study architecture. During college, Takei replied to a newspaper ad that was looking for Asian voice-over actors for the English version of the Japanese monster movies *Rodan* (1956). This is where he became more interested in theater and later decided that he wouldn't pursue architecture and instead put all of his time and energy into acting. Because of that, he transferred to the University of California Los Angeles, in which he earned both a bachelor's degree and a master's degree in theater.

Takei continued to voice other films and movies which eventually led him to be in small parts in television programs such as *Perry Mason* and the film *Ice Palace*. In 1966, he became one of the few Asian Americans to be featured on TV when he started as Lieutenant Hikaru Sulu on the science-fiction series *Star Trek*. He continued doing many, many, voice-overs or other appearances in movies. In the 1990s, he got the opportunity to do a voice-over for one of the characters in the Disney animated feature *Mulan* (1998), as well as be in the episodes of *The Simpsons*. His accomplishments are important to this day because they are good examples of hard work and dedication, especially during the times when Asian American actors didn't have much respect in the theater industry, more specifically in 1965, when he decided to take on a major role of 'Hikaru Sulu' in the 'Star Trek' series. After that major role that he took, he started getting multiple offers for many big films and TV series, in which proved that his breakthrough was a success.

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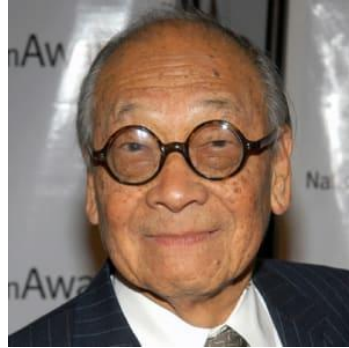
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I.M. Pei (1917-2019)

I.M. Pei is regarded as one of the best architects of the 20th and early 21st centuries. He was born on April 26, 1917 in Canton, Guangzhou, China. He traveled to the United States at the age of 17. He attended the University of Pennsylvania before transferring to M.I.T. where he earned his bachelor's degree in 1940. Pei was unable to return to his home due to WWII, so he carried out some architectural contracts in Boston. During the war, he decided to take a break from his education and he joined the National Defence Research Committee. In 1944 he went back and got his masters in architecture at Harvard University two years later. He then became a professor at the Graduate School of Design and stayed there until 1948.



At the age of 31, Pei was hired by a contracting firm in New York City called Webb & Knapp to direct the architectural division. In 1955, he created his own firm called I.M. Pei & Associates. It then got changed to Pei Cobb Freed & Partners. One of his first major projects was the Mile High center in Denver, Colorado. He also made the Kennedy Library after the President. For more than 60 years, Pei was known to be one of the best architects ever. Unfortunately, he died on May 16th, 2019, at 102 years old.

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Kalpana Chawla



Kalpana Chawla was born on July 1, 1961, in the city of Karnal, in India. Kalpana was the youngest of four children and the name given to her parents means "imagination" or "idea" which is quite fitting for the profession she worked in.

At a very young age Kalpana was intrigued and amazed by the idea of flight, especially with her father. When younger, her father would bring her to a flight club where every now and then she would be able to ride in a plane named the Pushpak, along with being able to ride in gliders.

Kalpana Chawla proceeded to spend the next years of her life studying engineering and space in order to become an astronaut at NASA.

Kalpana Chawla was the first Indian-born woman in space who worked with six other crewmates aboard the Columbia space shuttle. Kalpana had two mission total that were in space. The first was in November of 1997, which lasted two weeks while she and the other crewmates performed experiments and used observing tools, such as a Spartan satellite in order to understand the other shell of the sun more. Her second mission was in 2003 with the same crewmates. This mission lasted 16 days and consisted of the crew conducting over 80 experiments. However, on February 1 of 2003, when the space shuttle was set to return to Earth, there was a large piece of insulation that had broken off which caused the shuttle to burn up and depressurize the crew when returning to orbit.

Her legacy still lives on as the first Indian-born woman in space, and as being a large step forward in understanding our universe more. She will always be a symbol to Indian women that anything is possible if you put your mind to it.

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Jokichi Takamine

Jokichi Takamine was born November 3, 1854, in Japan. He began to study the sciences in Nagasaki as young as age 12, and studied at the University of Glasgow in his twenties. There, he took an interest in the manufacture of fertilizers and became fluent in English. After graduating, he worked for Japanese government to apply “Western” science to Japanese problems. He was soon assigned to New Orleans where he studied fertilizers. He also met and married his wife, Caroline Field Hitch. For his honeymoon, Takamine studied fertilizers in South Carolina, patent law in Washington DC, and traveled to Japan where he obtained government support to found the Tokyo Artificial Fertilizer Company to provide artificial fertilizers to rice farmers.

Unfortunately, Takamine’s family wasn’t very accepting of his new American wife, so they returned to America, where he applied for a patent to make a biological enzyme that was marketed as a digestive aid. The product was extremely successful, and Takamine became a pharmaceutical consultant. He moved to New York, where he began his groundbreaking research on Adrenalin at a new laboratory. Adrenalin was Takamine’s name for the biological compound that we now know as epinephrine. After two years, he applied for multiple patents for Adrenalin and his company began marketing it. It was a huge success; epinephrine is very useful in the medical field, and it was positively received by many doctors and patients. While there was some scandal over the rights to the patent, Takamine eventually won out over his competitors and received the Order of the Rising Sun, Fourth Class, from the emperor of Japan for his work. He afterwards founded three pharmaceutical companies that went on to great success. After becoming wealthier, Takamine focused on improving the state of Japanese in the United States, founding the Nippon Club and Japanese Society to better relations between Japanese and Americans. His work in chemistry was revolutionary and still important today, and his dedication towards human rights and international cooperation in his later years makes him an excellent role model.



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Anna Mae Wong

Anna May Wong was born on January 3, 1905, in Chinatown near Los Angeles, California. She is the second oldest out of eight siblings. Her birth name was Wong Liu Tsong. Though her childhood area was quite diverse, she was bullied for her race at school. Anna was later moved to a Chinese Mission School, where she and her older sister were welcomed. As film production became popular, Wong would skip school and use her lunch money to visit the movie sets. She fell in love and, at age nine, decided to become a movie star; she came up with the stage name Anna May Wong, a combination of both English and Chinese. Her first movie role was an extra, at age eleven.

Throughout her teen years, she continued to work as an extra. She dropped out of high school in 1921 to pursue her dream as a full-time actress. At seventeen, she landed her first leading role in film "The Toll of the Sea". She had trouble finding lead roles and left Hollywood due to constant discrimination. She moved to Europe, where she was on absolute fire, and starred in over six films. The United States soon realized their mistake and contacted Wong, promising many lead roles. She still faced problems with acting as the stereotypical Asian. However, in the 1950s, Wong became the first Asian American to lead a US television show! Unfortunately, Wong died young at fifty-six years old in 1961. Her motivation and courage to pursue her dreams in a racist era will forever live on with her successfulness..



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YURI KOCHIYAMA

Yuri Kochiyama was born in San Pedro, California on May 19, 1921. After the bombing of Pearl Harbor, her father who was just out of surgery was detained in a hospital. He was isolated with sheets around him that said "Prisoner of War." later her father died. When the time came, Yuri and her remaining family were forced to go to a concentration camp in Arkansas. That's when she realized how the government abused people of color, and how she would be forever involved in such matters.



Yuri's fight began in the 1960's, when she started advocating for Asian American, African American, Third world country movements, and being against the Vietnam war. She was a centerpoint in movements such as the Young Lords and the Harlem Community for Self Defense. Kochiyama heavily believed the the Asian American struggle was heavily linked to the struggle that all minorities faced, and that they should fight together rather than apart. In the 1980's along with her husband, she worked in the redress and reparations movement for Japanese Americans. Yuri's fight concerning the Asian american struggle and the African American struggle impacted many, and she should be seen as someone who stood up for the weak or the wronged.

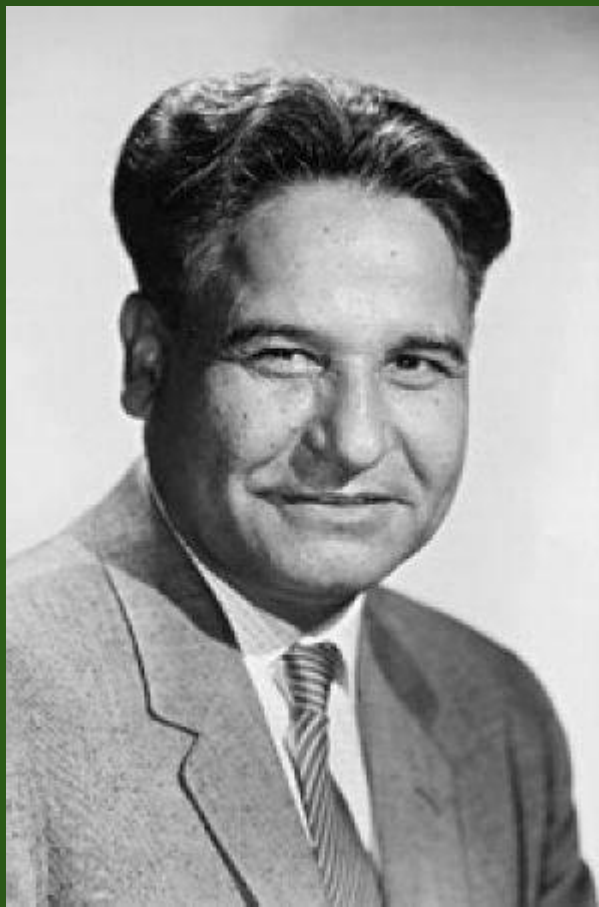
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Both of his parents lived under British colonization, which was still present when Dalip Singh Saund was born & raised. He himself was born on September 20, 1899, in Chhajalwaddi, in the northern part of Punjab, in India. Although neither of his parents had gone to school, education became a turning point for Dalip. The first stepping stones towards education began when his father & uncles gathered enough money to open a small school. When he was eight years old he was sent to a boarding school located in Amritsar, near modern day Pakistan.



Dalip Singh Saund

During his time as a student at the University of Punjab, he was part of an independence movement being led by Mohandas Gandhi. After graduating in 1919, he moved to the United States to continue his education at the University of California, from which he graduated four years later. Before moving to the U.S.A., he worked towards improving his village. As a result, public buildings were built or improved & trees were planted. While in America, he was a farmer, but the Great Depression was still a major problem. The New Deal, a potential solution to the Great Depression, led him to be a Democrat. On January 3rd, in 1957, he broke quite a few glass ceilings when he was elected to be the congressional representative for California's 29th district. He then became the first Asian, Indian-American, & Sikh to be a United States Representative. He earned himself the nicknames "The Peacemaker" &, as he was commonly called, "Judge." There is a lot more to his story, so I definitely recommend that you read more about this reasonable guy.

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A black and white portrait of Mine Okubo. She is a woman with dark hair, looking slightly to her left with a gentle smile. Her right hand is raised, touching her hair near her temple. She is wearing a dark, high-collared garment. The background is light and out of focus.

Mine Okubo

Mine Okubo was a Japanese American born on June 12, 1912. Her family, both her parents immigrating from Japan to the United States to represent their country at the St. Louis Exposition of Arts and Crafts. Although her parents, especially her mother, were too busy for art they still encouraged her interest in it. On scholarship she got a Master of Arts degree in not just art but anthropology as well at Berkeley, which is shown in the art she makes.

The beginning of Okubo's career and life were quite successful, she got the Bertha Taussig Traveling Art Fellowship and with it went to Europe to paint and do art for two years. This unfortunately was cut short as world war two began. When she came back to the US she did a number of mural projects. But then after the bombing of Pearl Harbor and with it the US joining the war, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt issued the Executive Order 9066 that probid Japanese people from living on the West Coast. Because of this, Mine and her family were forced to live in a relocation center then an internment camp in Utah. While there she made over 2,000 drawings depicting her everyday life there, which some were later published in her book Citizen 13660 the first published account of the experience from an internee. Also in the camp she helped create Art schools and produce a literary magazine called Trek, which was noticed by Fortune magazine who offered her a job in New York which she accepted and with it was able to leave the internment camp. These accomplishments along with the many others that followed the rest of her career are important because they gave a voice and image to the Japanese Americans who faced internment, she even appeared before the committee for the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians. Through her words and her art she impacted and changed how the world viewed Japanese Americans at the time, and probably their perspective and knowledge of internment camps as a whole.

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