Timeline

1763  First recorded settlement of Asians in the United States: Filipinos in Louisiana

1790  First recorded Indian immigrant in U.S.

1820  First recorded Chinese immigrant in U.S.

1847  Yung Wing becomes first Chinese to graduate from U.S. college (Yale)

1848  California Gold Rush leads to first large-scale Chinese immigration

1854  California Supreme Court rules that Chinese cannot testify against whites

1858  California bars Chinese immigrants

1865  Central Pacific Railroad Company hires first of 12,000 Chinese workers

1869  First Transcontinental Railroad

1869  First Japanese settlers arrive on the U.S. mainland, in California

1870  Naturalization Act of 1870 restricts naturalized citizenship to whites and Blacks

1878  California Circuit Court rules that “Mongolians” are not eligible for naturalization

1879  California’s Second Constitution prohibits the employment of Chinese

1882  Chinese Exclusion Act suspends immigration of Chinese laborers for 10 years

1885  First recorded Korean immigrants

1886  In Yick Wo v. Hopkins, Supreme Court rules that law with unequal impact on different groups is discriminatory

1898  U.S. assumes control of the Philippines and Hawaii after winning Spanish-American War

1898  In United States v. Wong Kim Ark, Supreme Court upholds 14th Amendment, that all people born in U.S. are citizens

1906  San Francisco Board of Education segregates Chinese, Japanese and Korean schoolchildren

1907  Executive Order 589 prevents Japanese and Koreans from entering U.S. mainland

1922  In Takao Ozawa v. United States, Supreme Court rules that Japanese cannot be naturalized

1923  In United States v. Bhagat Singh Thind, Supreme Court rules that Asian Indians cannot be naturalized

1924  Immigration Act of 1924 effectively prohibits immigration of all Asians

1942  Executive Order 9066 results in 120,000 Japanese Americans being sent to internment camps

1943  Congress repeals Chinese Exclusion Act and grants naturalization rights

1946  Luce-Celler Act permits Filipinos and Indians to immigrate and grants them naturalization rights

1946  Wing Ong is first Asian American elected to state office (Arizona)

1949  U.S. grants 5,000 educated Chinese refugee status after Communist takeover of China

1956  Dalip Singh Saund of California becomes first Indian American in Congress

1959  Hiram Fong of Hawaii becomes first Chinese American in Senate
Timeline continued

1959  Daniel K. Inouye of Hawaii becomes first Japanese American in Congress

1964  Patsy Takemoto Mink of Hawaii becomes first nonwhite woman in Congress

1965  Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 eliminates national-origins quota system

1975  Vietnam War ends, leading to large migration of Southeast Asians

1979  First Asian/Pacific American Heritage Week is celebrated

1985  Ellison Onizuka becomes first Asian American astronaut in space

1986  Gerald Tsai of American Can becomes first Asian American CEO of a Fortune 500 company

1988  Civil Liberties Act of 1988 pays surviving Japanese American internees $20,000 each

1989  Amerasian Homecoming Act allows children born to Vietnamese mothers and U.S. servicemen to immigrate

1992  Jay Kim of California becomes first Korean American in Congress

1997  Gary Locke of Washington becomes first Asian American governor of mainland state

1999  Andrea Jung of Avon becomes first nonwhite woman CEO of a Fortune 500 company

2000  Secretary of Commerce Norman Mineta becomes first Asian American Cabinet member

2001  Dr. Wen Ho Lee, a U.S. citizen, is charged with spying for China; a federal judge later apologizes to Lee for being “led astray” by the Department of Justice

2007  Bobby Jindal of Louisiana becomes first Indian American governor

2009  President Barack Obama appoints three Asian Americans to Cabinet

2010  Apolo Anton Ohno becomes most decorated American Winter Olympian, with eight medals

2010  Nikki Haley of South Carolina becomes first woman Indian American governor

2013  Kevin Tsujihara of Warner Bros. becomes first nonwhite CEO of a major Hollywood studio


2015  House of Representatives unanimously passes legislation to remove all references to “Orientals” in federal law and replace the term with “Asian American Pacific Islanders”

2016  California Attorney General Kamala Harris (D) is elected to be the first Indian American to serve in the Senate

2017  For the first time, three Asian American women sit on the Senate: Sen. Mazie Hirono (D-Hawaii), Rep. Tammy Duckworth (D-III.) and California Attorney General Kamala Harris (D)