

Lost & Found Connections

By Echo Yun Chen

A living, illustrative timeline map of Afro-Asian histories, interactions, and solidarity centered in the United States, documenting arrivals and departures, breaking down and becoming, together.

American history has been distorted and taught in a way that erases and manipulates events, collaborations, and connections in history to tell a story that supports systems of oppression and violent power. Through re-finding our connections, my hope is that more space will be made for understanding, dreaming, love, and stronger solidarity in the fight for our liberation, which, after all, is intertwined and bound up in one another's.

1500s

1526

Spanish colonists build the community of San Miguel de Guadape in what is now Georgia. They bring along enslaved Africans, considered to be the first in the present-day United States. These Africans flee the colony, and make their homes with local Indians.

1540

Africans serve in the New Mexico Expeditions of Francisco Vasquez de Coronado and Hernando de Alarcon.

1587

First Filipinos are brought to North America in what is now California by a Spanish Manila Galleon.

1600s

1603

Mathieu Da Costa, a free black explorer, guides the French through parts of Canada and the Lake Champlain region of what is now New York state.

1619

The first shipload of enslaved Africans to go the British American colonies arrives in Jamestown, Virginia. The Dutch trading vessel carries 20 people, seized from a captured Spanish slave ship.

1635

An “East Indian” is documented in Jamestown, Virginia. He is listed on a headright, a legal grant of land

1651

Anthony Johnson, a free African American, imports several enslaved Africans and is given a grant of land on Virginia's Puwogoteague River. Other free African Americans follow his lead.

1663

Maryland slave laws rules that all Africans arriving in the colony are presumed to be slaves. Free European American women who marry enslaved men lose their freedom. Children of European American women and enslaved men are enslaved. Other North American colonies develop similar laws.

1700s

1761

The first enslaved Africans arrive in Louisiana.

1738

The first permanent black settlement in what will become the United States is established by fugitive slaves at Gracia Real de Santa Teresa de Mose (Fort Mose), Florida.

1764

Permanent Filipino settlements established in the United States. Filipinos escape imprisonment aboard Manila galleons, and flee to St. Malo, Louisiana.

1775

Chinese arrive to the East Coast of the U.S. in Baltimore, Maryland. Sailors are brought by John O'Donnel, the founder of Canton. This is the creation of the port of Baltimore and beginning of trade with China.

Five thousand African-Americans serve during the Revolutionary War including two predominantly black units in Massachusetts, one in Connecticut, one in Rhode Island.

1780

The Free African Union Society is created in Newport, Rhode Island. It is the first cultural organization established by blacks in North America

1784

The Pallas arrives in Baltimore, Maryland. Chinese, Malays, Moors, and Japanese arrive alongside a European crew.

1790

The Naturalization Act of 1790 allows citizenship to “any alien, being a free white person, who has been in the U.S. for two years. (leaves out indentured servants, slaves, and women

1795

Bowdoin College is founded in Maine. It later becomes a center for Abolitionist activity; Gen. Oliver O. Howard (Howard University) graduated from the college; Harriet Beecher Stowe taught there and began to write Uncle Tom's Cabin while there (in 1850)

1800s

1808

The United States government abolishes the importation of enslaved Africans when it enacts the Slave Importation Ban. The ban, however, is widely ignored. Between 1808 and 1860, approximately 250,000 blacks are illegally imported into the United States. Slave trading within the states (the domestic trade) continues until the end of the Civil War.

1812

Manilamen from St. Malo, Louisiana fight for the U.S. militia in the War of 1812, caused by the U.S. territory expansion.

Two African American regiments are formed in New York to fight in the War of 1812.

1815

Abolitionist Levi Coffin establishes the Underground Railroad in Indiana. Eventually it will spread across the North with routes originating in the South and stretching to British Canada.

1823

Alexander Lucius Twilight becomes the first known African American to graduate from a college in the United States. He received a bachelor's degree from Middlebury College in Vermont

1829

More than half of Cincinnati's African American residents are driven out of the city by white mob violence. The Cincinnati riots usher in a more than century-long period of white violence against Northern black urban communities.

1830

Chinese-born naturalized citizens live in New York. Many serve on board trans-atlantic ships and marry white citizens.

1834

Afong Moy is the first Chinese woman in the United States. She is advertised as a “beautiful Chinese Lady” and placed inside an exhibit designed as a “Chinese Saloon” for viewers to pay 25 cents to watch her use chopsticks and speak.

African Free Schools are incorporated into the New York Public School system. South Carolina bans the teaching of blacks, enslaved or free, in its borders.

1843

The first documented Japanese arrivals in the U.S. Most work as domestic servants for middle-class white families.

1844

On June 25, the Legislative Committee of the Provisional Government of Oregon enacts the first of a series of black exclusion laws.

1848

The first Chinatown in America forms in San Francisco, California. Anti-Chinese racism and legal barriers prevent assimilation. Asian Americans are forced to form own communities of ethnic enclaves.

1849

23,517 Chinese make their way to California for the Gold Rush. the influx of foreign laborers leads to ethnic tensions, especially as gold grows scarce.

Harriett Tubman escapes from slavery and begins her efforts to rescue enslaved people.

1850

The Compromise of 1850 revisits the issue of slavery. California enters the Union as a free state, but the territories of New Mexico and Utah are allowed to decide whether they will enter the Union as slave or free states. The 1850 Compromise also allowed passage of a much stricter Fugitive Slave Law.

The American League of Colored Workers, formed in NYC, is the first African American labor union in the United States.

1852

The Foreign Miners Tax of 1852 taxes immigrants, targeting specifically Chinese and Mexican workers at \$4 a month.

1854

Yung Wing is the first Chinese to graduate from a U.S. College, Yale University.

People v. Hall bars Chinese Americans from testifying in court.

Already a statute that barred testimony by African Americans, mulattoes, and Indians newly applied to all non-whites, including Chinese as they are argued to be “inferior and incapable of progress or intellectual development beyond a certain point”.

1855

Frederick Douglass is nominated by the Liberty Party of New York for the office of secretary of state. He is the first black candidate in any state to be nominated for a statewide office.

1857

On March 6, the Dred Scott Decision is handed down by the U.S. Supreme Court, stating that the Constitution of the United States was not meant to include American citizenship for black people, regardless of whether they were enslaved or free, and therefore the rights and privileges it confers upon American citizens could not apply to them.

1859

The Oriental Public School is founded in San Francisco, California. It is the first segregated public school for Chinese children.

1860

The Central Pacific Railroad building begins in California. 90% of the railroad workforce is represented by Chinese track layers. 70% of Chinese immigrants work as miners.

1861-1865

The Civil War. Approximately 200,000 blacks (most are newly escaped/freed slaves) serve in Union armed forces and over 20,000 are killed in combat.

1862

The Prohibition of Coolie Trade Act of 1862 outlaws coolie labor.

1865

On February 1, 1865, Abraham Lincoln signs the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution outlawing slavery throughout the United States.

1866

On June 13, Congress approves the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution, guaranteeing due process and equal protection under the law to all citizens. The amendment also grants citizenship to African Americans.

1867

5,000 Chinese laborers go on strike. They demand a pay increase from \$35 to \$40 per month and a reduced workday of 8 hours

1868

On July 21, the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution is ratified, granting citizenship to any person born or naturalized in the United States.

1870

The Preparatory High School for Colored Youth opens in Washington, D.C. It is the first public high school for African Americans in the nation.

1871

Chinese Massacre of 1871 targets Chinese residents. A mob of 500+ white men enter Chinatown to attack, loot, and murder Chinese residents.

1875

The Page Act of 1875 denies entry to Undesirables: coolies, prostitutes, and convicts.

1882

Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 bars laborers from entering. It exempts only merchants, students, students, teachers, and diplomats and introduces policies to interrogate and deport as a “gate-keeping nation”, and denied citizenship or the right to vote.

1883

The 50th Congress has no black members. Intimidation keeps most black voters from the polls.

1890

On November 1, the Mississippi Legislature approves a new state Constitution that disenfranchises virtually all of the state's African American voters. The Mississippi Plan used literacy and understanding tests to prevent African Americans from casting ballots. Similar statutes were adopted by South Carolina (1895), Louisiana (1898), North Carolina (1900), Alabama (1901), Virginia (1901), Georgia (1908), and Oklahoma (1910).

1892

A record 230 people are lynched in the United States this year, 161 are black and 69 white.

1895

“Die Gelbe Gefahr” is published in the London Review of Reviews. Translating to “Yellow Peril, this illustration becomes the most influential political illustration as propaganda for German imperialism and European colonialism in China.

1896

Plessy v. Ferguson is decided on May 18 when the U.S. Supreme Court rules that Southern segregation laws and practices (Jim Crow) do not conflict with the 13th and 14th Amendments. The Court defends its ruling by “separate but equal”

On July 21 the National Association of Colored Women is formed in Washington, D.C. Mary Church Terrell is chosen as its first president.

1898

Wong Kim Ark v. U.S. The Supreme Court rules in favor of jus soli, meaning “right of soil”, the concept of citizenship to anyone born in the country regardless of race or ethnicity.

The National Afro-American Council is founded on September 15 in Rochester, New York. The organization elects Bishop Alexander Walters as its first president.

1900s

1908

Pushed by the violent outbreaks, both the United States and Canada began to negotiate with Japan to restrict Japanese immigration. Japan agreed to these regulations voluntarily (rather than be subject to a humiliating Japanese Exclusion bill), these policies were known as the Gentlemen's Agreement.

1909

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) is formed on February 12 in New York City, partly in response to the Springfield Riot.

1912

In 1912, the Democratic Party in California opposed all immigration from Asia and included Koreans on its list of immigrants to be immediately excluded from the country.

1913

In California, the 1913 Alien Land Law permitted "aliens ineligible to citizenship," a legal category only applicable to Asian immigrants, to lease land for only three years and barred them from further purchases.

1915

By the 1920s, Hollywood had brought the yellow peril of Asian-white miscegenation to a number of popular films, including Cecil b. DeMille's The Cheat in 1915 and D.W. Griffith's Broken Blossoms in 1919.

The Great Migration of African Americans from the South to Northern cities begins.

1916

Marcus Garvey founds the New York Division of the Universal Negro Improvement Association with sixteen members. Four years later the UNIA holds its national convention in Harlem. At its height the organization claims nearly two million members.

1917

On February 15, the Immigration Act of 1917 was passed with the Asiatic Bar Zone in place, and another gate was closed to Asian immigration.

The United States enters World War I on April 6. Some 370,000 African-Americans join the armed forces with more than half serving in the French war zone.

Nearly 10,000 African Americans and their supporters march down Manhattan's Fifth Avenue on July 28 as part of a silent parade, an NAACP-organized protest against lynchings, race riots, and the denial of rights. This is the first major civil rights demonstration in the 20th Century.

1919

The Seattle General Strike saw labor unions such as the AFL and IWW stand in solidarity with one another to gain higher wages. Japanese- and African-American workers organized both within unions and independently for racial equality and to subvert white worker's racist and entrenched positions of power.

1923

And in 1923, the US Supreme Court ruled that in *Bhagat Singh Thind v. The United States* that South Asians were not eligible for citizenship.

1933

Filipino Labor Union, the FLU, formed by D.L. Marcuelo, took its first stand for higher wages, union recognition, and improved working conditions in August 1933 in the Salinas Valley.

1935

On December 24, Mary McLeod Bethune calls together the leaders of 28 national womens organizations to found the National Council of Negro Women in New York City.

1939

World War II brought enormous changes for Asian Americans. While Japanese Americans were removed from their homes and incarcerated, other Asian Americans, including Chinese, South Asians, Filipinos, and Koreans, came to be viewed as "good Asians" whose homelands were wartime allies of the United States or were engaged in the struggle against Japan.

Jane M. Bolin becomes the first African American woman judge in the United States when she is appointed to the domestic relations court of New York City.

1941

The war first dramatically altered Chinese Americans' domestic prospects. Twelve to Fifteen thousand (nearly 20 percent of the adult Chinese male population of the United States) served in all branches of the US military during the war. The majority were in the army, but some Chinese Americans served in the Flying Tigers, the covert US-China air force formed to defend China.

The desperate need for factory labor to build the war machine needed to win World War II leads to an unprecedented migration of African Americans from the South to the North and West. This migration transforms American politics as blacks increasingly vote in their new homes and put pressure on Congress to protect civil rights throughout the nation. Their activism lays much of the foundation for the national Civil Rights Movement.

When Japanese bombs fell in Hawai'i and the United States declared war against Japan on December 8, 1941, Japanese Americans came under intense scrutiny and their lives were turned upside down.

1942

By February 16, 1942, there were 2,192 Japanese being held in US Department of Justice camps. On February 19, the president signed Executive Order 9066 allowing for the mass removal and incarceration of Japanese Americans

1945

Japan surrenders on Victory over Japan (VJ) day ending World War II on September 2. By the end of the war one million African American men and women have served in the U.S. military.

1946

Chinese American Wing Fong was the first Asian American to be elected to state office when he became a state representative in Arizona.

1950

Juanita Hall became the first African American to win a Tony award, honored for her role in the Broadway play, South Pacific.

1952

The 1952 Immigration and Nationality Act— known as the McCarrin-Walter Act repealed the final measures excluding Asian immigrants, including eliminating the Asiatic Barred Zone. It also placed all Asians on the quota system like other immigrants.

1954

On May 17, the Supreme Court in Brown v. Board of Education declares segregation in all public schools in the United States unconstitutional, nullifying the earlier judicial doctrine of separate but equal.

1960

During the 1960s and 1970s, a new generation of activists came of age and expanded their previous generations' struggles against racism and inequalities at home and abroad. Groups like the Asian Woman United and the Organization of Asian Women flourished

1963

Daniel Inouye represented Hawai'i as a US senator from 1963 to 2012. As president pro tempore of the Senate, he was both the highest-ranking Asian American elected official in the country and the second-longest serving senator in history.

Over 200,000 people gather in Washington, D.C. on August 28 as part of the March on Washington, an unprecedented demonstration demanding civil rights and equal opportunity for African Americans. Dr. Martin Luther King delivers his "I Have a Dream" speech here.

1964

By the 1960s, some Asian Americans were being characterized as "model minorities" who overcame past obstacles to achieve the American Dream. After the mid-1960's the Asian American model Minority stereotype evolved in response to the ongoing civil rights movement.

Civil Rights Act was passed. A number of Asian-American activists such as Yuri Kochiyama participated in the Civil Rights movement alongside African American activists and communities.

1966

The Black Panther Party (BPP), is founded by Bobby Seale and Huey Newton in October in Oakland, California. A good friend, Richard Aoki was one of the first members, and although there were several Asian Americans in the Black Panther Party, Aoki was the only one to have a formal leadership position.

1967

On June 12, the U.S. Supreme Court in *Loving v. Virginia* strikes down state interracial marriage bans

1968

Together with other activists, [Yuji] Ichioka and [Emma] Gee formed the Asian American Political Alliance (AAPA) at UC Berkeley in May, drawing influences from the Black Power and anti-war movements.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. is assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee on April 4. In the wake of the assassination 125 cities in 29 states experience uprisings. By April 11, 46 people are killed and 35,000 are injured in these confrontations.

Asian American and African American women are active in the larger women's liberation movement in the U.S.

1972

On March 10-12 several thousand African Americans gather in Gary, Indiana, for the first National Black Political Convention.

1975

After the Vietnam War, The resettlement of Southeast Asian refugees in the United States begun in 1975 eventually brought 1.2 million Vietnamese, Cambodian, Lao, Hmong refugees to the country and transformed America's involvement in refugee issues around the world.

1978

On June 28, the U.S. Supreme Court in *Regents of the University of California Regents v. Bakke* narrowly uphold affirmative action as a legal strategy for addressing past discrimination.

1979

Working alongside other LGBT people of color and their allies, an Asian American LGBT movement began in October 1979 when more than 600 black, Latino, Native American, Asian, and white people attended the First National Third World Gay and Lesbian conference in Washington, D.C.

1980

With roots in World War II and the Cold War, the Asian American model minority stereotype gained even more traction in American public discourse during the 1980s, when newspapers and magazines routinely praised Asian Americans for holding the formula for success.

1982

The 1982 killing of Vincent Chin, a Chinese American engineer out of town for his bachelor party, became emblematic. The Chinese American community was the first to organize, but soon they were joined by Japanese Americans, Korean Americans, Filipino Americans, and African Americans in one of the first large-scale-pan-Asian American and interracial campaigns to call attention to hate crimes targeting Asian Americans.

1988

The Civil Liberties Act grants Japanese Americans reparations

1989

In March Frederick Drew Gregory becomes the first African American to command a space shuttle when he leads the crew of the Discovery.

1990

Immigration from Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka to the United States has also increased since the 1990s, with most new arrivals coming through family-sponsored immigration.

1992

The LA Riots were in reaction to the acquittal in the case of Rodney King and the death of Latasha Harlins. Korean-Americans and their stores throughout LA's Koreatown were hit the hardest, with an estimated \$400 million done in damages. A major criticism of the mainstream media's coverage of the riots was its pitting of Koreans and blacks against one another and its framing of the LA riots as having been caused by a black-Korean conflict.

1998

Twin Cities radio host Tom Barnard made racist statements about Hmong culture following an infanticide committed by a thirteen-year-old Hmong girl in Wisconsin. Hmong activists formed Community Action Against Racism (CAAR), a multiracial coalition of whites, Latinos, and Asian and African Americans that staged protests and publicized the issues.

2000s

2000

The “Model Minority” stereotype is disproven. The US 2000 Census confirms that Asian Americans are overrepresented in both privilege and poverty.

2001

Hate crimes increase by 1600% directed towards Middle Eastern and South Asian Americans. 1200+ people were arrested days after 9/11.

2008

Barack Obama becomes the first Black president of the United States

2013

The Association of Asian American Studies becomes the first U.S. academic association to endorse the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions campaign.

2014

The Black Lives Matter movement, initiated by 3 black women organizers, Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi, takes hold, fueled by the 2013 acquittal of George Zimmerman for the killing of Trayvon Martin, the killing of Eric Garner by NYPD officers, and the killing of 18-year-old Michael Brown by a white police officer in Ferguson, Missouri.

2014-2016

NYC police officer Peter Liang fatally shoots Akai Gurley, splitting the Asian American community. Liang is convicted of manslaughter, inspiring a divisive protest in the Chinese community, one side against the use of Asians as scapegoats, vs. the other side fighting for black lives and against anti-blackness.

2016

Christina Xu publishes “Letters for Black Lives” as a response to pro-Liang rallies. This evolved to be translated into 30 different languages on Google Drive with the goal to educate communities about racial justice, police brutality, and anti-Blackness.

2018

Only 7 black students were admitted into Stuyvesant High School in NYC, starting heated conversation about diversity and affirmative action, garnering national attention.

Present Day

Organizations bringing together the Afro-Asian community, classes that teach our erased histories, and communities where space is made to share in each others stories build the dream of radical justice and collective care and healing. I hope that this timeline is challenging, reflective, reassuring, and inspiring to you — that it can be a living document that we all add to and share knowledge from. With love, Echo.