### Brief Timeline of Chinese American History

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1600s</td>
<td>Spanish records document Chinese settlements in Acapulco as early as 1600s and later in Mexico City by 1635.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1785</td>
<td>The arrival of three Chinese seamen in Baltimore marks the first record of Chinese in the United States.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1793</td>
<td>When the first British embassy arrives in China, emperor Chien-lung denies its request for the right to establish British representation in Peking for additional trade ports, and for reductions in Chinese tariffs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1807</td>
<td>Great Britain outlaws the traffic of slaves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840-1842</td>
<td>Great Britain and China engage in the Opium Wars. China loses political control of Hong Kong to Great Britain and is forced to open ports to British commerce.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td>In the United States, statutes prohibiting the testimony of Africans and Native Americans in cases involving European Americans are applied to the Chinese.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td>The first anti-Chinese riot occurs in Tuolumne County, California.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1852</td>
<td>The mutiny of Chinese workers being shipped to San Francisco aboard the vessel “Robert Browne” draws attention under the “coolie trade.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1855</td>
<td>Yung Wing receives a B.A. from Yale University, becoming the first Chinese graduate of an American university.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1861-1865</td>
<td>U.S. Civil War.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1863-1869</td>
<td>Chinese workers help to build the U.S. Transcontinental Railroad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1865</td>
<td>The United States abolishes slavery by passing the 13th amendment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1867</td>
<td>Five thousand Chinese railroad workers go on strike for higher wages and a shorter workday. The strike fails.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1873</td>
<td>The Chinese emperor orders the Cuban Commission Report to investigate the conditions of Chinese sugar plantation workers in Cuba.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1875</td>
<td>Chinese farmer Ah Bing grows a special cherry later known as the Bing Cherry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880-1884</td>
<td>Chinese workers help to build the Canadian Pacific Railroad.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1882</td>
<td>The United States passes the Chinese Exclusion Act, suspending the immigration of Chinese laborers to</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
the United States and denying Chinese the right to become American citizens. It is the first U.S. restriction on immigration based on race and nationality, and stops large scale Chinese immigration for sixty years.

1883 – Lecturer, activist, and journalist Wong Chin Foo begins a weekly bilingual newspaper, the Chinese American. He is an outspoken critic of stereotypes held by Americans of China and Chinese Americans.

1885 – In a massacre in Rock Creek, Wyoming, twenty-eight Chinese are shot dead while Chinese homes and possessions are destroyed.

1888 – The Scott Act prohibits the re-entry of 20,000 Chinese workers who temporarily left the United States for China.

1892 – In “Fong Yue-Ting v. United States,” the Chinese community raises money to test for the constitutionality of exclusionary legislation.

1898 – In “Wong Kim Ark v. United States”, the U.S. Supreme Court concedes that a child of Chinese descent born in the United States is an American citizen.

1905 – Chinese in Shanghai, Hong Kong, and elsewhere stage a one-year boycott of U.S. goods to protest the treatment of Chinese in the Americas.

1906 – The earthquake and fire in San Francisco destroys municipal records, opening the way for the immigration of Chinese “paper sons.”

1909 – Fung Joe Guey flies the first heavier-than-air machine on the West coast.

1910 – Angel Island Immigration Station opens in San Francisco Bay as an entry point and detention center for Asian immigrants.

1911 – In China, revolutionary forces led by Sun Yat-Sen overthrow the Manchu government and establish the Republic of China.


1915 – The Chinese American Citizen’s Alliance forms to protect the civil rights of Chinese in the United States.

1920 – American women gain the right to vote.

1922 – The Cable Act decrees that any American woman who marries “an alien ineligible for citizenship shall cease to be a citizen of the United States.”

1924 – The National Origins Act is passed, which restricts immigration by establishing national quotas that discriminates against immigrants and virtually exclude all Asians. It lasts until the 1960s.
1927 – In China, the Kuomintang, led by Chiang Kai-shek, splits from the Communist party.

1933 – The Chinese Hand Laundry Alliance is organized in New York City in response to discriminatory regulations imposed on the hand laundry industry.

1940 - The U.S. government closes Angel Island Immigration Station.

1941-1945 - During World War II, Asian Americans voluntarily enlist in the U.S. Armed Forces in large numbers.

1943 - The Chinese Exclusion Act is repealed and Chinese in the United States are given the right to become naturalized citizens. The quota for Chinese immigrants is set at 105 per year.

1945 – The War Brides Act permits six thousand Chinese women to enter the United States as wives of U.S. servicemen.

1945-1949 – Chinese Civil War and Revolution.

1949 – Mao Zedong establishes the People’s Republic of China.

1955-late1960’s - The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) creates the Chinese Confession Program, which offers legalized status in exchange for confession of illegal entry into the country. The program results in nearly 14,000 confessions, which allows the INS to bar future immigration.

1959 – Representing Hawaii, Hiram Fong becomes the first Chinese American to be elected to the U.S. Senate.


1966-1976 – China’s “Great Proletariat Cultural Revolution” purges and punished suspected anti-revolutionaries.

1968 – Chinese Americans join other students in planning and executing San Francisco State College Strike, the nation’s longest student strike, which leads to the establishment of the first School of Ethnic Studies in the United States.

1969 – UCLA students launch Gidra, an Asian American monthly, in Los Angeles. Rodan, EastWind, and several other Asian American periodicals begin publication.

1970 - Asian American students, artists, and community activists establish Basement Workshop, an Asian American community arts center in New York’s Chinatown organizing publication services, literary events, exhibitions and community-based projects.
1971 – Roots, the first textbook for Asian American studies, is published.

1971 – The U.S. ping-pong team is invited to China, signaling a renewal in U.S.-China relations.

1971 – Responding to health concerns of Chinatown residents, community members organize the first Chinatown Health Fair in New York, leading to the establishment of the Chinatown Health Clinic.

1971 – U.S. president Richard Nixon visits China at an historic summit with Zhou Enlai and Mao Zedong. These talks open the way for Chinese Americans to visit China for the first time in 22 years.


1973 – Enter the Dragon, posthumously released, makes Bruce Lee a world-renown star.

1974 – Yuji Icioka, one of the founders of the Asian activist organization Asian American Political Alliance, coins the term, “Asian Americans.” The term had been in usage informally since the late sixties replacing the term “oriental.”

1974 – Asian Americans for Equal Employment stage demonstrations in New York’s Chinatown, to protest failures to hire Asian American construction workers for the Confucius Plaza Housing project. As a result over 40 Asian Americans workers are hired.

1975 – Over 2,500 residents of New York Chinatown demonstrate outside City Hall against police brutality.

1976 – Maxine Hong Kingston’s The Woman Warrior is published.

1979 – President Jimmy Carter declares a week in May as Asian Pacific American Heritage Week. Eleven years later U.S. president George Bush officially extends it to a month-long celebration.

1982 – The murder of Vincent Chin sparks national awareness of anti-Asian violence. His murderer, a man distraught by the decline of the Detroit auto industry, did not spend a single day in prison for his crime. In response, the Asian American community creates the advocacy group American Citizens for Justice.

1982 – Yale University student Maya Lin designs the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C.

1989 – Student pro-democracy demonstrations in Beijing’s Tiananmen Square ends in military repression and political arrests.

1989 – Michael Chang becomes the youngest tennis player to win the French Open at the age of seventeen and the first Asian American to win a Grand Slam tennis tournament.

1992 – The Asian/Pacific American Labor Alliance is founded in Washington D.C., the first Asian/Pacific American sub-group of the AFL-CIO union.
1993 – The “Golden Venture,” a vessel transporting undocumented Chinese immigrants, runs aground off Rockaway, N.Y. Eight people lose their lives in U.S. waters and some three hundred are detained in prison.

1993 – Chinese architect I.M. Pei completes the expansion, modernization and reorganization of the Louvre museum in Paris, France.

1994 – California voter pass Proposition 187, restricting educational and medical services to undocumented immigrants.

1994 - Jerry Yang co-founds Yahoo!

1996 - Washington voters elect Gary Locke to the governor’s seat. Locke becomes the first Chinese American to become the governor of a U.S. state.

1996 – Time Magazine’s Man of the Year is AIDS researcher David Ho.

1996 – California voters pass Proposition 209, an attempt to end affirmative action in government agencies.

1996 – Discussion begins on the 80-20 initiative, a national non-partisan organization seeking to educate and urge bloc-voting by Asian Americans in national elections.

1996 – Michelle Kwan wins both the U.S. and World Championships in Figure Skating.

1997 – Bill Lann Lee is appointed Acting Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights. He is appointed Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights in an interim appointment in 2000.

1997 – Steven Chu wins Nobel Prize for Physics.


1999 – Los Alamos nuclear physicist Wen Ho Lee, a Taiwan-born Chinese American, is charged with over 50 counts of mishandling classified nuclear data. Without significant evidence or just cause, Dr. Lee is jailed for nearly a year before federal government arranges a plea bargain on one count of downloading weapons designs to a non-secure computer. The U.S. government drops the remaining charges.

2000 – The Museum of Chinese in America celebrates its 20th anniversary. MOCA is one of a handful of museums devoted to Chinese American history.

2004 – Astronaut Leroy Chiao votes from space in the Presidential Election.

2005 – Steven Chen founds YouTube.

2009 – Steven Chu named Secretary of Energy in President Obama’s Cabinet.
2009 – The Museum of Chinese in America expands and re-opens in a space designed by Maya Lin and celebrates its 30th anniversary. MOCA is one of a handful of museums dedicated to Chinese American history.

Adapted from MOCA publication, “Timeline: 400 years of History of Chinese in the Americas”

The educational programs of Museum of Chinese in America are made possible by our members and by funds provided by the Institute of Museum and Library Services, National Endowment for the Humanities, New York State Council on the Arts - Museum Program & Special Arts Services, New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, New York City Department of Education, Jackie Chan Charitable Foundation, JP Morgan Chase Foundation, Citigroup Foundation, CJ Huang Foundation, JT Tai Foundation, MetLife Foundation, Museum Loan Network, Ong Family Foundation, Pumpkin Foundation and the Robert Sterling Clark Foundation.