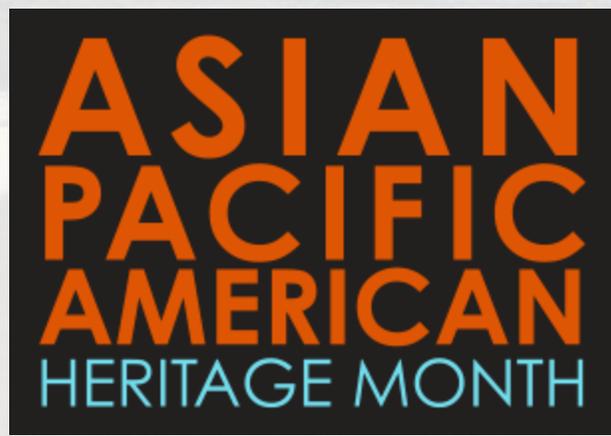




City of Long Beach
Asian Pacific American
Heritage Month

Cultural Heritage Commission- May 30, 2023



Asian Pacific American Heritage Month

- In honor of Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, city staff would like to recognize Long Beach's unique connection to Asian Americans
- The broad term, Asian/Pacific encompasses all of the Asian continent and the Pacific Island and nations of Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia
- Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have a rich heritage thousands of years old and have both shaped the history of the United States and have had their lives dramatically influenced by moments in its history.

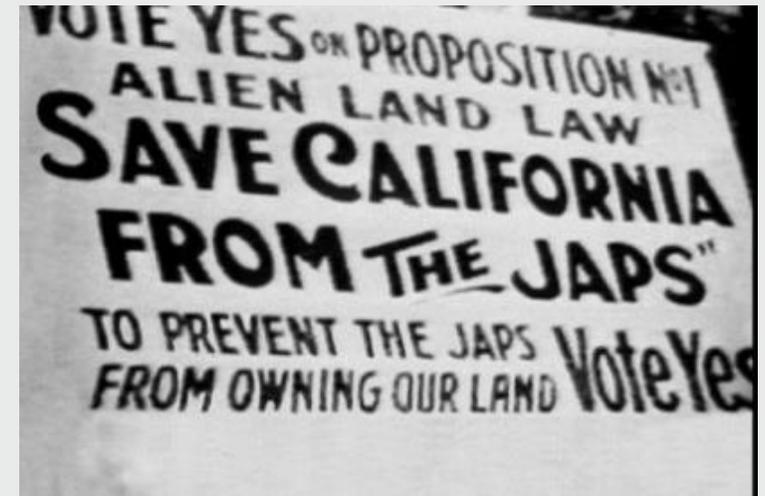
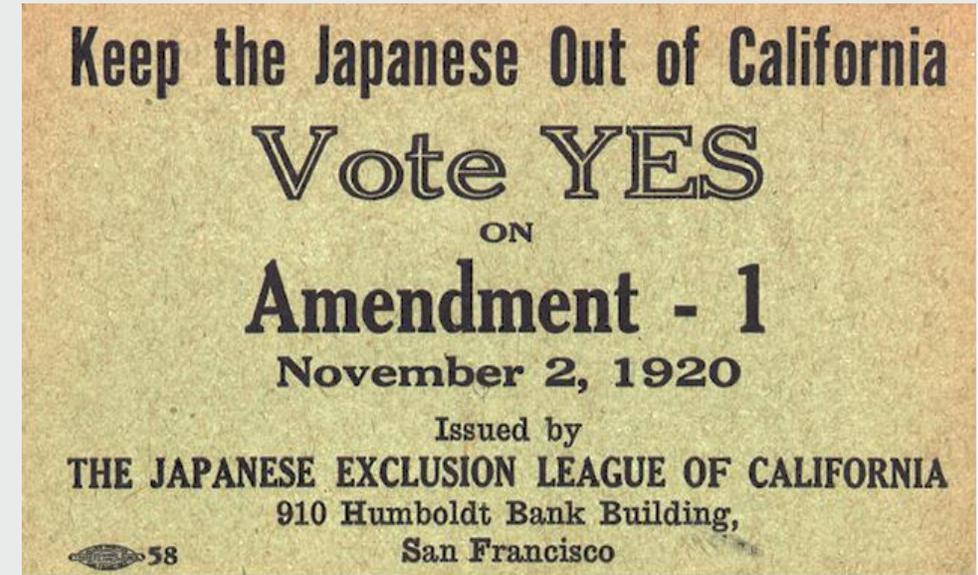


History of Asian Pacific American Heritage Month

- First starting as Asian/Pacific American Heritage Week.” the joint resolution was passed by the House and then the Senate and was signed by President Jimmy Carter on October 5, 1978
- In 1992 Congress passed public law 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 workers who laid the tracks were Chinese immigrants

Asian Pacific History in California

- California's passage of the Alien Land Law of 1913 had a profound impact on the Japanese and Chinese communities. In response to anti-Asian sentiment, the law prohibited "aliens ineligible for citizenship" from owning land or holding long-term leases
- Although some Japanese and Chinese residents developed workarounds for the laws by placing land in the name of their American-born children, these restrictive laws effectively prohibited Asians from participating in the real estate market and created generations of renters.



Asian Pacific History in Long Beach

- The Navy presence in Long Beach, with its military operations on the islands and active recruitment of locals, was a catalyst for an influx of Asian Pacific Islander populations from the Philippines, Guam, and the Samoas.
- The robust exchange student program at California State University, Long Beach also helped to establish populations of Southeast Asians in the city. Many students stayed in Long Beach and then brought family and friends fleeing from persecution and war in places like Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia.



Japanese Internment Camps/Terminal Island

1940s, Terminal Island housed a community of nearly 3,000 Japanese and Japanese-American residents. It had grown out of a small Japanese fishing village whose settlers helped launch a booming industry for canned tuna.

The island later starred in one of the darkest chapters of U.S. history, when its residents became the first Japanese Americans to be forcibly removed from their homes and detained at internment camps during World War II. On February 19, 1942, FDR signed Executive Order 9066, sending 120,000 Japanese Americans to internment camps.



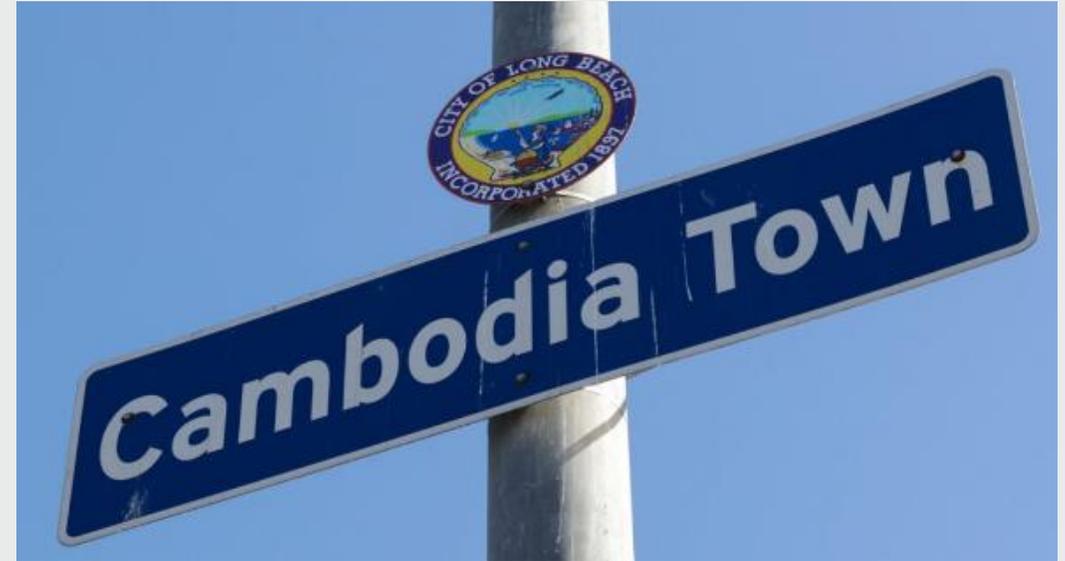
Khmer Rouge and Mass Exodus

- In April 1975, refugees left Cambodia when the Communist Party of Kampuchea took control of the country, frequently referred to as the Khmer Rouge. In the US, persistent Black protest and organizing called for refugee entry, which eventually led to the legislative pass of both the Indochina Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1975 and the Refugee Act of 1980. These laws were important in helping Cambodian refugees migrate and settle in Long Beach.
- From 1975 to 1979, the War in Southeast Asia, the Khmer Rouge, and Killing Fields in Cambodia forced many Cambodians to migrate to Long Beach
- At least 160,000 Cambodians were admitted into the United States between 1975 and 1994



Cambodian Migration to Long Beach

- In the 1950s and 1960s, Cambodia and the United States created a program for Cambodian students to attend California colleges and universities and learn about agriculture, industrial arts, and engineering. Many students stayed in Long Beach and then brought family, eventually helping to settle refugees fleeing the Khmer Rouge
- Today residents of Cambodian descent account for at least 4% of Long Beach's 486,000 total population. Long Beach has the largest concentration of Cambodians of any city outside of Cambodia.



Cambodian Heritage In Long Beach

- Long Beach is now the home to many Cambodian businesses, including grocery stores, restaurants, beauty salons, clothing stores, photography and more. Cambodia Town remains the cultural hub for the diaspora community through various community organizations, Cambodian food, festivals, dance and music



Asian American Leadership



- Eunice Noda Sato, born in 1921, was the first Asian-American female mayor of any major American city and Long Beach's first woman leader from 1980 to 1982.
- Before her death in 2021 at the age of 99, a local middle school (now high school) was dedicated in her name. She also served as president of the California Conference for Equality and Justice and three state commissions as well as the National Advisory Council on Educational Research.

Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Leadership

- Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders (AA and NHPIs) represent us at every level of government, including Vice President Kamala Harris
- Dr. Suely Saro has been the City Councilwoman for Long Beach's Sixth District since December 2020, She was born in a refugee camp to parents who survived the Cambodian Genocide. She is focused on a future of organizing, civic engagement, and advocacy, and to pay tribute to the generations of Asian and Pacific Islanders who have enriched America's history and are instrumental in its future success.



Conclusion

- Important to recognize, celebrate, protect and pay tribute to the generations of Asian and Pacific Islanders who have enriched America's history and are instrumental in its future success.
- Recognize the diverse Asian Pacific American community in Long Beach and work to rectify the historic oppression of Asian Pacific residents





Thank you

Alison Spindler-Ruiz
Planning Bureau Manager
Development Services Department