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FAPAC-DOI Newsletter



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From the president

Dear Chapter Members,

As I mentioned in my statement earlier this month, it has been a pleasure and a privilege to serve as your President this past term. You have been a much-needed community for me and others to flock, share our stories, fears, triumphs, and laughs! Thank you for showing up and helping me be better every day.

These past years have no doubt been challenging. We have weathered it together, and we have had wonderful, difficult, and meaningful conversations together. We've made connections with each other and across the Department. We've told our stories. We've met with Secretary Haaland and received her warmth and support for our community.

This will be my last opportunity to serve as FAPAC-DOI President. We still have a lot of great work to do, and I am excited to see it through. I would like to work with you all to ensure that next year, we can pass the torch to our next President and ensure we equip and support them to do their great work. I couldn't and wouldn't do any of this without you and your support. Thank you!

I want to express my gratitude to **Shuwen Cheung** with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for stepping up with us this past year as our Vice President of Finance; please take an opportunity to say hello and thank her as she finishes out her term to the end of the calendar year.

I also want to give a huge thanks to **Karen Sinclair** with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for saying yes again to being our Vice President of Outreach, and to **Martin Moore** with the Office of Inular Affairs for saying yes to being our Vice President of Programs, a sorely needed position on this board! I am so excited to work with this team and see where we can go together! Anything is possible!

And finally, I would like to thank **Janet Cushing** with the U.S. Geological Survey for stepping up to be our 2021 Election Chair. I know this work takes time and energy on top of our already busy schedules, and I appreciate you all very much!

With gratitude,



Lena Chang
President, FAPAC-DOI



Pohnpei language & culture

Tanya Harris Joshua

Deputy Policy Director and Communications Lead
Office of Insular Affairs



Ihieng oh Kaselehlie Maingko! This is the greeting of Pohnpei, home of the majestic Sokehs Rock and the mysterious Nan Madol, built by Pohnpeian magic, *winani*, and now a World Heritage site. The formative years of my life were on Pohnpei, the island of my patrilineal ancestors. Pohnpei, translated literally means, on an altar, as in an altar to the gods.

Families in the U.S.-affiliated Pacific Island areas are either U.S. citizens or closely allied through a Compact of Free Association. Many of these Pacific Islanders serve in the U.S. military and/or live in the United States, in numbers so small that the 2020 Census can only classify them as “Other”. In 2020, the Census Bureau estimated Native Hawaiians and all other Pacific Islanders at 1,000,000 of which I estimate around 10,000 to be Pohnpeian.

Pohnpeians who live in the United States continue several traditions: they celebrate liberation following World War II through annual baseball and softball competitions. Pohnpeians continue to drink the traditional drink of sakau, even if it is made from Fijian-imported powder rather than the fresh plant from Pohnpei. Pohnpeians here in the U.S. are especially loyal to their island tradition of supporting families and one another during funerals.

This summer, a couple of us Pohnpeian cousins, aunties, and uncles started a club to teach and perpetuate the Pohnpeian language to Pohnpeian-American youth who have grown up in the United States. We want them to retain and keep their ancestral island tongue as part of their identity as Pohnpeian-Americans. We want to ensure that speaking Pohnpeian, along with the inherent cultural pride and dignity that is maintained in speaking one’s native tongue is a tradition that is also here to stay. *Kalahngan oh Kaselehlie.*



Sokehs Rock, Pohnpei, Micronesia.
Photo: Greg Vaughn



Nan Madol Ruins, Pohnpei, Micronesia.
Courtesy photo

Summer story

Karen Sinclair

Wildlife Biologist

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Ventura Office

While returning from a family trip in the Sierra Mountains, my siblings and I accidentally discovered some Asian American history within the Central Valley of California! Blindly trusting google map's directions, we veered off the familiar Highway 5 and were greeted by the unfamiliar, but beautiful, small backroads that parallel the Sacramento River. Suddenly the speed limit slowed to 15 mph and we began to drive past old wooden stores and churches, noticing that many of the signs were in Mandarin! Perplexed, we quickly googled the town's name and, little did we know, accidentally stumbled upon [Locke](#), a town built in 1915 by Chinese immigrants from Heungshan [Xiangshan] County (modern day Zhongshan), in Guangdong Province, China.



Although I grew up in San Francisco and had learned in school about the contributions of Chinese laborers to the building of the Transcontinental Railroad, I never knew about the thousands of Chinese laborers, primarily from the Guangdong Province, who built the vast network of levees to convert approximately 500,000 acres of the swampy Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta into the reproductive farmland we know of today! This reclaimed land resulted in the expansion of agricultural farms and a demand for cheap manual labor. These Chinese laborers filled the positions and created several thriving Sacramento River Chinatowns, including the town of Locke. [During Locke's peak](#), the 14-acre town consisted of a church, a small Chinese school, restaurants and boarding houses, a post office, hotels and rooming houses, a lodge, a theater, grocery stores, a hardware and herb store, a fish market, two dry goods stores, a dentist's office, a shoe repair, a bakery, and a community vegetable garden. The town of Locke is the largest, most complete example of a rural, agricultural Chinese American community in the United States!



Due to a travel time-crunch and not realizing the importance of the town until after driving past it, my siblings and I did not get a chance to walk through Locke and will have to return another time.... Luckily, there was another Asian American Historical District located downstream that we could explore! Like the town of Locke, the city of Isleton was formed during the mass demand of cheap manual labor for levee building and working in the farmlands. Founded in 1875, [Isleton's Asian American District](#) is the only Asian community that was constructed in the Delta during the 1920s, and the architectural style of the buildings, particularly the use of pressed tin siding to prevent fires, is unique to Delta Asian communities and to the town of Isleton.

The history of Isleton represents many of the common themes of how America has reacted to immigrants - First: a demand for cheap labor results in many immigrants entering the US, followed with fear mongering motivating discrimination, and then bans against groups of people. After the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, which barred “skilled and unskilled laborers and Chinese employed in mining” from entering the US for 10 years and forbade Chinese immigrants from becoming US citizens, as well as other similar exclusionary laws, American businesses turned to Japanese immigrants to fill the need for cheap manual labor. In 1910, Japanese and Chinese laborers supplied 90 percent of the workforce for the 6 asparagus canneries in the Delta Region. In addition, Chinese and Japanese workers planted, maintained, and harvested the majority of the crops grown in the area. From 1926 to 1942, Isleton's Chinese District and Japanese District had a prospering community with restaurants, grocery stores, soft drink parlors, saloons, and other general businesses, boarding houses and hotels, Japanese community bath houses, meeting hall, and a movie theater. Asian schools were established to teach Chinese and Japanese languages and customs. Children attended a segregated “Oriental” school during the day and their own language school in the afternoons. There was also a “migratory” school located just west of E Street that was used by children of migrant workers. Unfortunately, after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, President D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 on February 19, 1942 which accused all Japanese Americans of potentially causing espionage and permitted the creation of military zones in California and most of Oregon, Washington, and Arizona - states with a large population of Japanese Americans. The Japanese Americans of Isleton were among the approximately 120,000 Japanese Americans, citizens and non-citizens alike, who were forced by armed guards to abandon the lives they built and sent to relocation centers throughout the US. Once again, to fill the demand of manual labor, the local farmers and cannery companies recruited Filipino and Mexican laborers to occupy the homes and positions of the evacuated Japanese Americans.

This experience reminded me of the importance of preserving these towns as Historical Districts under the National Park Service and through the communities' efforts to restore the buildings. Despite knowing little of my family's ancestry, I know that our grandparents immigrated from China to work in the Central Valley's agricultural fields and perhaps they lived in a similar community. The history of how the US has treated Asian Americans hits harder when you can physically stand between Isleton's two districts. Maybe the stillness from Covid-19 added to the feeling, but I couldn't stop imagining how shockingly quiet the Japanese district must have felt in the days, weeks, and months after the town's Japanese neighbors, friends, and colleagues were forcibly removed from the community. It makes me shudder.... Not only are these remnants of the past a bridge to imagine the experiences of a different time, but they document the hidden accomplishments of our ancestors, and the hindsight regret of a nation that acted on fear and xenophobia - not evidence.

AANHPI census highlights

Thomas Liu

Deputy Regional Director

Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Pacific Region

The US Census results were published this last month. Among the highlights for AANHPIs include:

- The U.S. is now 57.8% white, 18.7% Hispanic, 12.4% Black and 6% Asian. Including mixed-race Asians, the total rises to 7.2%. Another 0.5 percent of the population identifies as “Native Hawaiian” and “Other Pacific Islander” alone or in combination with another race group.
- Asians are the fastest-growing of the nation’s four largest racial and ethnic groups with a growth rate of 35%
- The number of people who identify as Asian in the United States nearly tripled (currently 20 million) in the past three decades (6.6 million in 1990)
- 3.5 million people identify as mixed-race Asian, making up more than a quarter of all mixed-race people in the United States.
- The Asian population has become geographically diverse with wide variations in income, citizenship status and political preference.
- There are disparities between citizens and non-citizens. For example, among Korean households, those headed by a person born in the United States have a median income of \$95,000, but ones headed by Koreans who are not citizens have a median income of just \$54,000.
- Neighborhoods with high concentrations of Asian residents overwhelmingly favored Joseph R. Biden Jr. in the 2020 presidential election, though variations exist among different groups. More than half of places where Vietnamese Americans were a majority, for example, favored President Donald J. Trump in 2020.
- Demographers expect the Asian population to surpass 46 million by 2060.
- For Asians, the categories included - Asian Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, and Vietnamese, followed by an “Other” category where participants could fill in their ethnic identity.
- For Pacific Islander, the categories included - Native Hawaiian, Gumanian or Chamorro, and Samoan with an “Other” category.

Good articles summarizing these trends are linked below:

New York Times - [Inside the Diverse and Growing Asian Population in the U.S.](#) (interactive)

USA Today - [US sees unprecedented multiracial growth](#)

NBC - [Asians in the U.S. are the fastest growing racial group](#)

NBC - [Here’s what the sharp AAPI population growth means for politics](#)

TIME 100: Dr. Russell Jeung

Lena Chang
FAPAC-DOI President

In May 2020 and 2021, we invited [Dr. Russell M. Jeung](#), Professor of Asian American Studies at San Francisco State University and founder of [Stop AAPI Hate](#), to speak on his work tracking anti-Asian hate incidents during the pandemic. We are so proud to see Dr. Jeung and his colleagues Manjusha P. Kulkarni and Cynthia Choi being recognized in [Time Magazine's 100 Most Influential People of 2021](#).

“Stop AAPI Hate has become not only an invaluable resource for the public to understand the realities of anti-Asian racism, but also a major platform for finding community-based solutions to combat hate. And its leaders have locked arms with other BIPOC organizations to find restorative justice measures so that civil rights—for all vulnerable groups—receive the protection they deserve.”

**Manjusha P. Kulkarni, Russell Jeung and
Cynthia Choi**



Myleen Holero (2)

BY CATHY PARK HONG

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