



Asian American & Pacific Islander Heritage Month

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What is it?

- ▶ **Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage Month**, celebrated each **May in the United States**, honors the historical and cultural contributions of individuals and groups of **Asian and Pacific Islander descent** to the history, culture, and achievements of the United States.

Who's Included?

"AAPI" is a broad umbrella term that includes people with ancestry from:

- East Asia (e.g., China, Japan, Korea)
- Southeast Asia (e.g., Vietnam, the Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia)
- South Asia (e.g., India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka)
- The Pacific Islands (e.g., Hawaii, Samoa, Guam, Fiji, Tonga)

Why do we celebrate in May?

May was chosen for two key reasons:

1. **May 7, 1843** – the arrival of the first known Japanese immigrant to the U.S.
2. **May 10, 1869** – the completion of the **Transcontinental Railroad**, built largely by Chinese laborers.

Fun Facts

- **1978:** Congress passed a resolution to create **Asian/Pacific American Heritage Week**.
- **1992:** It was expanded to a **month-long celebration** after legislation signed by President George H. W. Bush.
- **1983:** There were around **2,000 Asian students** enrolled across all ABA-accredited law schools, comprising less than 2% of total enrollment.
- By the **mid-2000s**, the total enrollment increased more than five-fold to over 11,000 students.
- There are now over **53,000 lawyers** who are Asian-American, comprising 4.7% of all lawyers in America.



Landmark Cases in U.S. History Spurred by Asian-Americans

United States v. Wong Kim Ark (1897)

- ▶ The Chinese Exclusion Acts denied citizenship to Chinese immigrants. Moreover, by treaty no Chinese subject in the United States could become a naturalized citizen. Wong Kim Ark was born in San Francisco to parents who were both Chinese citizens residing in the United States at the time. At age 21, he went to China for a visit. When he returned to the United States, Wong was denied entry on the ground that he was not a citizen.

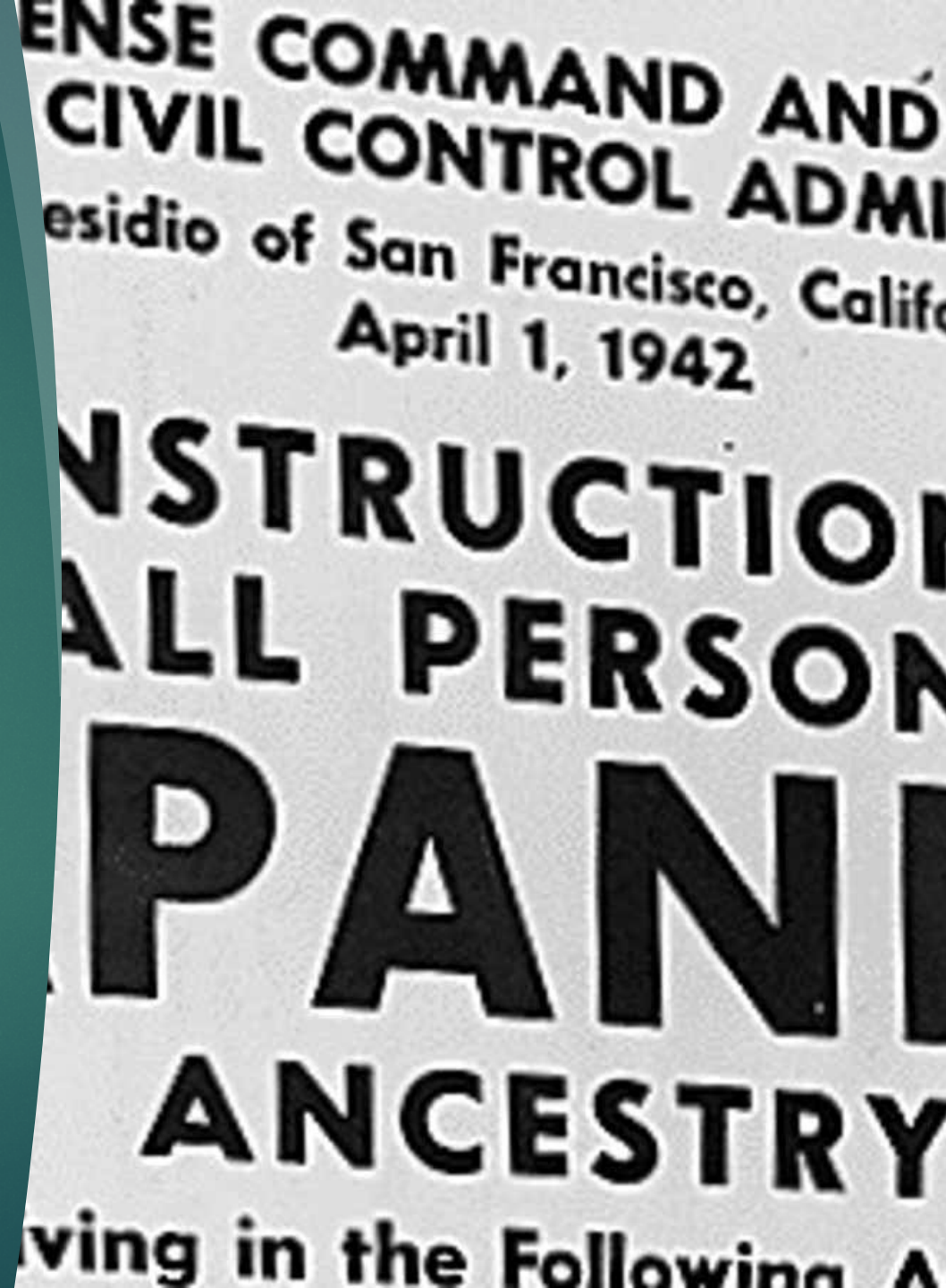


United States v. Wong Kim Ark (1897)

- ▶ **Issue:** Is a child who was born in the United States to Chinese-citizen parents who are lawful permanent residents of the United States a U.S. citizen under the Citizenship Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment?
- ▶ **Decision:** Because Wong was born in the United States, the Citizenship Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment automatically makes him a U.S. citizen. Justice Horace Gray authored the opinion on behalf of a 6-2 majority, in which the Court established the parameters of the concept known as *jus soli* — the citizenship of children born in the United States to non-citizens.

Korematsu v. United States (1944)

- ▶ Following the attack on Pearl Harbor, the U.S. government, fearing potential sabotage by Japanese Americans, issued Executive Order 9066, which authorized the evacuation of all people of Japanese ancestry from designated military areas. This led to the internment of over 120,000 Japanese Americans in camps across the country.
- ▶ Fred Korematsu refused to comply and was arrested.



Korematsu v. United States (1944)

- ▶ **Issue**: Was Executive Order 9066 constitutional?
- ▶ **Decision**: The Supreme Court upheld the internment as a wartime necessity and not based on racial prejudice. The Court reasoned that the government had the right to take necessary measures to ensure national security during wartime, even if it meant restricting the civil liberties of certain groups.

Lau v. Nichols(1973)

- ▶ In 1971, the San Francisco, California school system was integrated. As a result, the San Francisco school system absorbed over 2,856 students of Chinese ancestry who were not proficient in English. Of these students, the school system provided less than half with supplemental English language courses. Classes were taught exclusively in English.
- ▶ Kinney Kimmon Lau and other students of Chinese descent who did not speak English and received no supplemental English courses brought a class action suit against the officials in the San Francisco Unified School District.



Lau v. Nichols (1973)

- ▶ **Issue:** Does a school district violate the Fourteenth Amendment or the Civil Rights Act of 1964 when it teaches exclusively in English and fails to provide non-English speaking students with any supplemental English language classes?
- ▶ **Decision:** Unanimous yes. Schools that fail to provide supplemental classes to students who do not speak English violate the Civil Rights Act.