

Constructing Identity in Narratives of Asian America

Timeline 2: History of Asians in the United States and Canada

Adapted from Timothy FONG, "The History of Asians in America" (Chapter 1), *The Contemporary Asian American Experience: Beyond the Model Minority*, 10-35. New York: Prentice Hall, 1998.

1571: First Chinese arrive in California, brought to be shipbuilders for the Spanish

Late 1700s: Filipino seamen first settle in Louisiana.

19th Century: Most Japanese immigrants settle in Hawaii until the 1890s. From the mid-19th Century, growing demand for laborers increases immigration to both Western Canada and the United States. The discovery of gold also brings Chinese immigrants to the West Coast. Fort Victoria, present day Victoria in British Columbia, becomes the site of the first permanent Chinese community in Canada. Many Chinese immigrants came to Canada overland through the United States.

1877: Japanese begin to immigrate to Canada. Most Japanese immigrants work in the fishing industry or in farming.

1880s: Following the United States' Chinese Exclusion Act, Chinese immigrants are encouraged to come to Canada to help complete the Canadian Pacific Railway. Later in the decade, discrimination against Asians in Canada begins to increase.

1903 – 1905: Koreans first arrive in Hawaii.

1904: Initial South Asian immigration to Canada begins. By 1907, there is a community of over 5,000 Sikhs in British Columbia. Initially, South Asian immigrants face less discrimination than either Chinese or Japanese because they are British colonial subjects.

1905 – 1940: 1,000 Koreans migrate from Hawaii to mainland North America. During this time, Japan occupied Korea and did not allow Koreans there to emigrate to the Pacific Islands or to North America.

1907 – 1919: 28,000 laborers immigrate from the Philippines to Hawaii, having been actively recruited as agricultural laborers.

1945: Following the end of World War II, interned Japanese Canadians are given the choice to return to Japan or relocate permanently east of the Rocky Mountains. While few decide to return to Japan, the coastal Japanese farming communities are effectively ended.

1950s: Discriminatory policies against Asian immigration are gradually lifted.

1960s: Asian immigration to Canada surges.

1990s: Immigration from East Asia now comprises over 50% of all immigration to Canada.