



EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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U.S. Celebrates Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month

Asian Pacific American Heritage Month (APAHM), officially proclaimed "*Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month*" by President Barack Obama May 1, 2009, is a celebration of the culture, traditions, and history of Asians Americans and Pacific Islanders in the United States. The U.S. Congress passed a joint Congressional Resolution in 1978 to commemorate Asian American Heritage Week during the first week of May. This date was chosen because two important anniversaries occurred during this time: the arrival of the first Japanese immigrants in America on May 7, 1843 and the completion of the transcontinental railroad (by many Chinese laborers) on May 10, 1869. In 1990, the Congress voted to expand the recognition from a one week to a month long celebration and in May 1992, the month of May was permanently designated as "Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month.

The 2012 Proclamation

"Generations of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) have helped make America what it is today. Their histories recall bitter hardships and proud accomplishments -- from the laborers who connected our coasts one-and-a-half centuries ago, to the patriots who fought overseas while their families were interned at home, from those who endured the harsh conditions of Angel Island, to the innovators and entrepreneurs who are driving our Nation's economic growth in Silicon Valley and beyond. Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month offers us an opportunity to celebrate the vast contributions Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have made to our Nation, reflect on the challenges still faced by AAPI communities, and recommit to making the American dream a reality for all.

This year, we also commemorate the 100th anniversary of the first Japanese cherry blossom trees planted in Washington, D.C., an enduring symbol of the friendship shared between the United States and Japan and a reminder of America's standing as a Pacific nation. Over the centuries, we have maintained a long, rich history of engagement in the Asia-Pacific region, and our AAPI communities have been essential to strengthening the economic, political, and social bonds we share with our partners around the world."

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States do hereby proclaim May 2012 as Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month. I call upon all Americans to visit www.AsianPacificHeritage.gov to learn more about the history of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, and to observe this month with appropriate programs and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this first day of May, in the year of our Lord two thousand twelve, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-sixth.

BARACK OBAMA

For more information, please visit www.AsianPacificHeritage.gov.