STRANGERS OF THE SAME SHORE
EXPOSING THE MISSING HISTORY OF ASIAN AMERICANS
by Ashley Ng
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“I would like to be, sometimes just considered as an American.”

—East of Main Street: Asians Aloud

1 THE PROBLEM
What Are The Issues?

Today, Asian Americans are the largest and fastest growing minority group in America, and yet most Americans will hardly ever read a word of Asian American history. Thus many Asian American’s are not even seen as American. They are often seen as foreigners from another land.

Most students have to wait until they enter college to learn about Asian American history; and that’s only if they choose to take a course that specifically lectures about Asian history. This means that the majority of children in America will go through at least fourteen years of schooling without learning apart of their national history.

If you look at U.S. History textbooks of today, you will be lucky to find a few paragraphs explaining monumental events regarding Asians that changed the course of American history. Events such as, the Chinese Exclusion Act, Japanese Internment, or Asian American civil rights movement are all skimmed over or never even mentioned. Although we learn a vast amount about the hardships of American slavery, the brutal colonization of Native Americans, and the waves of ethnic European immigration, there is rarely any discussion on the history of Asians in America. Why is Asian American history left in the dark?

LEFT: Helene Nakamoto Mihara, 7 recites the Pledge of Allegiance at the Raphael School in San Francisco, CA before being sent to Topaz Internment Camp in 1942.
ASIAN AMERICAN IDENTITY
THE FASTEST GROWING MINORITY GROUP IN THE U.S.

18,205,898

TOTAL U.S. ASIAN AMERICANS

FAR MORE IDENTIFY THEMSELVES BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN AND ONLY 1 IN 5 DESCRIBE THEMSELVES MOST OFTEN AS ASIAN OR ASIAN AMERICAN.

14% IDENTIFY AS AMERICAN

19% IDENTIFY AS ASIAN/ASIAN AMERICAN

62% IDENTIFY AS COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

SIX GROUPS MAKE UP AT LEAST 83% OF THE TOTAL OF ASIAN AMERICAN POPULATION IN THE UNITED STATES.

Chinese: 4,010,114
Filipino: 3,416,840
Indian: 3,183,063
Vietnamese: 1,737,433
Korean: 1,706,822
Japanese: 1,304,286

OF ASIAN AMERICANS ADULTS 18+ ARE FOREIGN BORN (OUTSIDE THE U.S.).

74%

1 in 2

OF ASIAN IMMIGRANT ADULTS 18+ SAY THEY SPEAK ENGLISH VERY WELL.

Above Information attained by Pew Research Center.
“Our stories should be listened to by many young people. It’s for their sake. We really had a hard time, you know.”

—Retired Japanese Plantation Laborer

THE PROPOSAL
What Can I Do As A Designer?

As a designer I want to help educate children on the history and diversity of Asian cultures in America by making it easily accessible for parents and children to acquire fun and educational materials. I want to expose the hidden stories of those who have worked hard to be successful in this country. I will share the struggles, successes, and where we will be in the future. I want Asian Americans to be seen as Americans and not just by their country of origin.

I plan on educating parents and children on the start of Asians in America during the late 1700s that has been missing in history textbooks. I also look forward to achieving a stronger acceptance of diversity in homes and classrooms. And hopefully the question “where are you from?” will no longer be directed towards an Asian American assuming that they have immigrated from a foreign land.

In order to capture the interest of parents and their children, my designs will be fun and engaging. Similar to PBS Network that educates adults and children through online games and reading, but I will focus on Asian American history.

“It is time for parents to teach young people early on that in diversity there is beauty and there is strength.”

—Maya Angelou

Target Audience
Who Am I Talking To?

Parents of Children Grades 1–3: Parents play an important role in their child’s life and will be the major contributing factor to their education. These parents will be middle class citizens that have either immigrated from another country or were born in America. They will include all parents of children in grades 1–3 living in the United States. These parents have a desire to teach their child the meaning of tolerance and the differences that exist among the people of the world.

Students Grades 1–3: All children in grades 1–3 who have either immigrated or were born in the United States. It is important for children to be educated while they are still at a young age because it will allow them to carry this knowledge throughout their lives. And if they have prior knowledge of Asian American experiences in history, they will be more open to diversity. According to The League of Defamation, “by ages 6–8, children begin to become aware of history and attitudes for and against racial, religious, and cultural groups.” So, by 8 years old, if children do not learn Asian American history, they will inherit negative assumptions such as the perpetual foreigner stereotype.
THE DELIVERABLES

What Will I Do?

- NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION to be the primary learning institute to teach children on Asian American history. An organization that could potentially become real and branch out to all minorities in America.

- EDUCATIONAL CAMPAIGN to advertise the importance and excitement of being educated in Asian American history.

- SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS to educate children and parents such as, books, games, and flash cards.

- WEBSITE to be a fun interactive place for reading, games. Also the primary base used as an archive of historic photos, and stories of struggles and success.
Chinese Folklore
Annual Festivities

Chinese folklore not only ties in with stories and religion, it also
influences specific festivals and celebrations. Most Chinese festivals
are driven by Chinese folklore and mythology. Traditional lanterns
began to be used during the Tang Dynasty (618-907 AD), Chinese holidays are
an essential part of Chinese culture and there are several customs
that the Chinese follow.

CELEBRATIONS

There are many Chinese festivals that fall on specific days on the Chinese lunar calendar.
Each festival has its own legend of how the celebration began. Almost all traditional
Chinese festivals correlate back to Chinese mythology and are based on spiritual
mythological creatures.

Chinese New Year Festival is one of the most important Chinese holidays, also known as the
Spring Festival, which is also celebrated in other Asian countries where there is a large
Chinese population. All traditional holidays are scheduled according to the Chinese lunar calendar.

According to tales and legends, the beginning of the Chinese New Year is
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"I experienced a lot of discrimination while I was in the Marines, and I had a lot of fights. One time someone called me a 'Jap.' Knocked him out with one punch."

—Carlton Big, U.S. Marine Corps Veteran

"Asians were pioneers, whose contributions made the American Dream possible. But when they tried to gain the American dreams for themselves, they faced prejudice and ignorance."

—The Slanted Asian

The cover of the Gold Rush shows the American spirit in its most extreme form. The book is the first of its kind to explore the role of Asian Americans in the U.S. Civil War, and how they were used as a source of labor for the Union. The book also examines the role of Asian immigrants in the development of the U.S. economy, and how they were instrumental in shaping the American Dream.

Because they were forbidden from owning land or homes, working in manufacturing, getting an education, and living in certain parts of the country, the Chinese were forced into their own isolated communities at the mercy of racism, discrimination, and exclusion. This history of Chinese exclusion and expulsion from the United States is the subject of this book.

The point is that these did not happen in isolation of Asian Americans, but as a response to the larger context of racism, discrimination, and exclusion. This history, that still continues in many parts of the U.S., is relevant today. Nevertheless, the history of Asian Americans also stands as a reminder that all citizens of this country should be afforded the same rights and opportunities, regardless of their race or ethnicity.