

National Park System Advisory Board
PROMOTING ASIAN AMERICAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER HERITAGE

May 21, 2014

In February 2013, the Advisory Board endorsed an NPS request to undertake a scholarly study of the contributions of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) to the American experience and achievements. The study will assist government agencies and the private sector in identifying and evaluating places of significance related to AAPI heritage, to consider these sites and their stories for National Historic Landmark (NHL) designation and National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) listing, and to consider the potential effects of Federal undertakings on these properties. The initiative is one of several supported by the Board that seek to diversify the representation of American's story in our national inventories.

Status of Activities

The Board, NPS, and the Organization of American Historians are continuing work to complete a theme study on AAPI heritage. NHL Program staff, in coordination with AAPI scholars and preservationists, developed a framework for the theme study. An AAPI Scholars Expert Panel has been established to assist in researching and writing the theme study. The panel is co-chaired by Milton Chen and Franklin Odo, AAPI Heritage Initiative Coordinator. The other members are:

Professor Christine DeLisle, *American Indian Studies, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign*

Professor Yen Le Espiritu, *Department of Ethnic Studies, University of California, San Diego*
Donna Graves, *Independent Historian and Cultural Planner*

Professor Robert Hayashi, *American Studies, Amherst College*

Michelle Magalong, *Co-Director, East of Main Street: Mapping AAPI History Project and Consulting Grant Writer, LA Commons*

Professor Martin Manalansan IV, *Department of Anthropology, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign*

Professor Davianna McGregor, *Department of Ethnic Studies, University of Hawaii at Manoa*

Dr. Konrad Ng, *Director, Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center*

Professor Karthick Ramakrishnan, *Department of Political Science, University of California Riverside*

Professor Greg Robinson, *Professor of History, Université du Québec à Montreal*

Professor Khatharya Um, *Ethnic Studies Department, University of California at Berkeley*

Professor Barbara L. Voss, *Department of Anthropology, Stanford University*

Bill Watanabe, *Founding Executive Director, Retired, Little Tokyo Service Center Community Development Corporation*

Professor Christopher Yip, *Architecture Department, California Polytechnic State University*

Professor Ji-Yeon Yuh, *Department of History, Northwestern University*

Helen Zia, *Independent writer and journalist*

The study, targeted for completion in 2015, will empower AAPI communities by providing guidance for the nomination of AAPI sites across the country. This work is coordinated with other activities associated with the Department of the Interior and White House AAPI initiatives.

The AAPI theme study builds upon the work of other NPS efforts to highlight the stories and cultural resources associated with groups that are often underrepresented in mainstream narratives of American history. Since 2011, NPS has worked to find and highlight these stories; just over 70 percent of new NHL designations are associated with traditionally underrepresented groups. The newly developed partnership between NPS and the Wing Luke Museum of the Asian Pacific American Experience is an important component of the outreach effort to AAPI communities; a 5-year cooperative agreement was signed between Wing Luke and NPS in October 2013.

Next Steps

- Complete a publication about AAPI heritage and sites for the public (Summer 2014)
- Complete the theme study (2015)
- Identify, evaluate, and nominate AAPI sites for NHL designation and/or NRHP listing (the George Nakashima Woodworker Complex was designated as an NHL in 2014 and a nomination for McGregor Conference Center is being considered for designation at the next Landmarks Committee meeting)
- Update and continue to maintain a website on NPS AAPI activities
- Develop a travel itinerary featuring AAPI sites (2014)
- Collaborate with the Smithsonian and other AAPI groups on a traveling exhibit and a conference in Washington DC (2014)