

From: [Rasheed El Shabazz](#)
To: [Lara Weisiger](#)
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Correspondence: Proclamation (2021-795)
Date: Tuesday, April 6, 2021 5:10:10 PM

Peace Lara,

Please attach as correspondence, and, utilize it for the future as it's useful.

Rasheed

On Tue, Apr 6, 2021 at 5:06 PM Lara Weisiger <lweisiger@alamedaca.gov> wrote:

Hi Rasheed,

Can you please confirm whether you would want this attached to meeting record as correspondence or if we should hang onto it for future efforts?

Thanks,

Lara

From: Rasheed El Shabazz [mailto:rasheed@berkeley.edu]
Sent: Tuesday, April 6, 2021 4:40 PM
To: Sarah Henry <SHenry@alamedaca.gov>; Lara Weisiger <lweisiger@alamedaca.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Correspondence: Proclamation (2021-795)

Peace,

I wanted to share some historical information related to anti-Asian (American) rhetoric and violence in Alameda that you may wish to incorporate into this [evening's proclamation](#), or consider for future efforts of acknowledgment, recognition, and addressing harm against API folks.

I wrote this to clarify one part, but ended up sharing a little more (For what it's worth).

Whereas, racism and scapegoating toward individuals of Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) heritage have persisted since the 19th century and influenced local policies excluding Chinese and Blacks from purchasing homes in the more desirable neighborhoods, and federal policies including the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, which prohibited immigration of Chinese laborers; and

The reference to restrictive covenants is a little more nuanced. The restrictive covenants also exclude Japanese people also. In fact, Fernside's 1925 Clause 16 states, " "No person of African, Japanese, Chinese or of any Mongolian descent shall be allowed to purchase, own or lease said property or any part thereof." Notably, in some places, there were exceptions for domestic laborers.[1][2]

As for places being desirable, that is a more complicated convergence of property and whiteness. These "more desirable neighborhoods" were partially more "desirable" because they excluded non-white people. The idea that non-white people lowered property values is embedded in covenants, Alameda's zoning, and eventually the redlining maps. The undesirable neighborhoods may have been older, but the northside of Alameda was considered less desirable because non-white people lived there.[3]

It's also notable that Alameda's Senate representative Joseph Knowland sought to exclude Japanese from purchasing property. (There's a monument to him at the bench in front of the Shell at Webster and Lincoln Ave. His name was on the potential facilities names list—until we called this out).[4]

Serena Chen recently asked, when Alameda's Japanese American community was the first community removed under EO 9066, what was Alameda's reaction? Did people support their neighbors? Or did they seek to benefit from the plight of our relatives? The Alameda Free Library's grant with NPS to document Alameda's Japantown is a critical part of restorative work.

There was also a Chinese American community.[6] Imelda Merlin wrote, "Of all the ethnic groups in Alameda, the presence of the Chinese was the most completely documented in the daily papers because of the strong anti-Chinese sentiment during the last half of the last century." [7]

During the effort to Rename Haight School, I learned a lot about Asian American history in California. I am still learning, so forgive any errors here. We compiled the [#HaightSyllabus](#) [8], which includes a reading list about Asian Americans in California history. From Ling Sing [9], to Gov. Henry H. Haight [10], to Yick Wo v. Hopkins [11], there's a longer, deeper history. It happened here. It still happens here.

Hopefully Alameda will do better now and in the future, especially considering demographics changes. A proclamation is part of that effort of facing our history. Hopefully there are opportunities to work with AAPI communities (plural) to engage folks in

developing proclamations and appropriate actions to challenge white supremacy, the 'hate' API folks experience, and stop people from profiting from racism, xenophobia, and violence.

Rasheed Shabazz

[1] <https://alamedasun.com/news/black-history-month>

[2] <https://dasquarebear.tumblr.com/post/167523598042/waterside-terrace-racial-segregation>

[3] <https://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/redlining/>

[4] "Would prohibit Japanese from owning land here," *Alameda Argus*, Jan. 23, 1909.

[5] "The Impact of Japanese American Incarceration on Alameda, California—the First California Community Removed under Executive Order 9066", https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1207/04-27-2020-nps-awards-grants-to-preserve-and-interpret-wwii-japanese-american-confinement-sites.htm?fbclid=IwAR2J4L0_Xh3gECV90AD60D5fm4QK6HD7FFqTSIHwXWvcJu40d8rYFGS0Vb0

[6] Historical gims,” In Alameda, < <http://blog.sfgate.com/inalameda/2010/09/03/historical-gims/>>

[7] https://alamedamuseum.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Imelda_smallpics_4printing.pdf

[8] <https://renamehaight.wordpress.com/syllabus/>

[9] The murder of Ling Sing in 1853 is critical for locating historic violence against Asian people and the role of the state. A white settler George Hall shot Ling and was convicted for murder based on the testimony of Chinese miners. California's testimony law forbid Indigenous non-white people from testifying against white people, and the State Supreme court called Chinese folks inferior and a whole bunch of other 19th century things we'd understand as racist today.

[10] As many people now know, Gov. Henry H. Haight, later an Alameda resident, campaigned on anti-Asian sentiment in 1867. Part of the logic of renaming Haight was the dissonance of having a school named after Haight where over 40 percent of students identified as API. See <http://renamehaight.wordpress.com>

[11] Notably, the scholars argue that residential zoning's origins also came out of San Francisco seeking to target laundries to target Chinese entrepreneurs. *Yick Wo v. Hopkins* was an early civil rights effort evoking the 14th amendment.

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