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Asian Pacific American Heritage Month (APAHM) is a time to celebrate and honor the beautiful cultures of Asian and Pacific American communities. Throughout this month Saint Mary's will be hosting several informative and educational events to alert the college community to issues that directly affect Asian and Pacific Islander Americans. During the past year AAPI communities have been severely racially attacked mainly due to ignorance regarding the origins of the COVID-19 pandemic. Although these attacks are startling to the modern public, from a historical perspective the recent spike in racism directed towards AAPI communities is not a new occurrence. Instead, these acts are a part of a repeated sequence in a larger history of discrimination that directly targeted AAPI communities.

Asian and Pacific Islander Americans have been the victims of racial discrimination since at least the 18th century. The earliest documented racial legislation was in 1790 when the U.S. government imposed a statute that prevented immigrants who were not white from becoming U.S. citizens. This direct attack against AAPI and other people of color set a pattern for continued racially motivated legislation.

The passage of the Page Act in 1875 specifically targeted Chinese immigrants by prohibiting immigration of individuals that the government believed were entering for "immoral purposes." This law was joined by the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act, which prevented immigration and citizenship for Chinese people, and the 1907 Gentleman's Agreement, which excluded Japanese workers from immigrating to the U.S. Over time, the federal rulings only become more extreme, with the government passing the 1924 Immigration Act, which banned Japanese immigrants, and the infamous 1942 Executive Order 9066, which gave the order to intern Japanese Americans. These legislations are only a few examples of the many federal mandates that the U.S. government created in order to oppress AAPI people.

Although not confined to California, the recent spike in anti-Asian violence in California adds to a long history of state-wide discriminatory legislation and violence directed towards AAPI communities. Throughout the 19th century the California state government passed many forms of legislation that discriminated against AAPI and allowed for anti-Asian violence to occur without penalties.

In 1877 the anti-Asian San Francisco riots caused the destruction of numerous businesses and the death of four Chinese Americans. That same year several Chinese workers were murdered in Chico at Lemm Ranch by six white men. In 1906 Santa Ana's Chinatown was burned to the ground by firefighters when it was deemed to be a "health hazard." These are just a few

examples of the horrific treatment that AAPI communities faced at the hands of their fellow Californians.

Saint Mary's History Department has composed a timeline of legislation and known violence and hate crimes inflicted onto the AAPI community over the course of U.S. history to show how severely impacted the AAPI community has been by violence and racism. The History Department encourages all members of the Saint Mary's community to attend events held throughout APAHM to learn and show support for the AAPI community and to contribute to the timeline to expand its usefulness as a resource for our community.