Summary of Session 1 (Ep. 1 & 2)

Our first conversation focused on the role of labor, the legal system, and visions of American values in the experiences of the Asian American community. Despite denial of citizenship and equal opportunities for housing, education, and employment, immigrants from China and other Asian countries expanded the definitions of citizenship and the American dream by challenging these injustices, including in several landmark legal cases. Immigration from Asia has happened in different waves across US history, and immigrants at different times and from different countries can have very different experiences. Our history shows that immigrant communities are perpetually on tenuous ground; previously granted citizenship can be stripped away, and even citizenship or demonstrated loyalty does not protect people from great harms like the Japanese internment camps. The US seems to be able to mobilize resources much faster for oppressing groups than for removing systems of oppression and offering restitution.

Related Resources:

- Hollywood: A Netflix series that reimagines post-WWII Hollywood with increased representation for people of color, including members of the Asian American community
- My Family Story through the Duke Digital Collections Program: A blog post written by Duke library staff member Giao Luong Baker, sharing stories from her family history and reflections of those stories in the library’s digital collections.
- Far East, deep South: A documentary exploring the lives of Chinese immigrants in the US South, especially after WWII
- Allegiance: A musical inspired by the true-life experience of Star Trek’s George Takei, which follows one Japanese American’s family, the Kimuras, during the time of Japanese internment (recording on Amazon Prime via Broadway HD)
- Luo Zhou: Duke’s librarian for Asian American Studies and a wonderful resource for research topics across many areas