

TITLE

THE PHOTOGRAPHY OF CORKY LEE: ASIAN AMERICANS IN PHOTOS

GRADE LEVEL: MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL

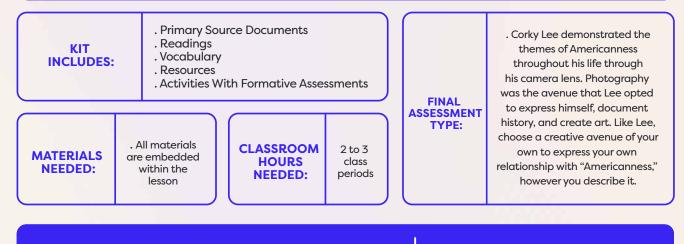
DISCIPLINE: -Civics, U.S. History, Art, Journalism

TOPIC: e.g Chinese Exclusion, Colonization of Hawai'i, Japanese American Incarceration, etc.

STANDARDS: The Roadmap - Educating for American Democracy: See Theme 1: Civic Participation; Theme 3: We thePeople; Theme 5: Institutional and Social Transformation United States History Content Standards: See Era 6, Standards1, 2, 3.

OBJECTIVES:	 Students will: Demonstrate the value in photography as a mode of advocacy and activism through the camera lens of Corky Lee and his documentation of the lives of Asian Americans.
	 Explain how history is interpreted by examining Corky Lee's work and showing how different perspectives can bring deeper understanding to the past.
	 Understand the role Corky Lee played in helping to establish an Asian American identity.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:	 In what ways does photography enable an individual to create their own kind of history?
	 How do Lee's photographs demonstrate the intertwining of Asian American history with American history?
	 How did Lee express the themes of belonging, inclusion, and exclusion through his photography?
	• In what ways can we utilize photography as a means to advocate for causes?



CREDIT AUTHOR AND CONTACT: ANA LUOCAI

. .

LAST UPDATE:

MAY 6, 2022

••••



THIS LESSON PLAN FOCUSES ON:

The significance of photographs in creating a view of history and the importance of interpreting History through a critical lens using multiple perspectives.

Corky Lee was a Chinese American photographer from New York City, dubbed by many as the "Undisputed Unofficial Asian American Photographer Laureate." Not professionally trained in photography, Lee began taking photos of rallies and demonstrations in Chinatown, New York City in the 1970s after realizing there was a lack of historical documentation of Asian Americans. His photography, spanning decades, captured what otherwise would have been forgotten from American history.

INTRODUCTION:

From the mundane everyday lives of Asian Americans to lively protests amidst the larger Asian American Movement, Lee was there to document the role of Asian Americans as part of the fabric of American society. Lee passed away from COVID in 2021, but his legacy and impact remains, sustained by his photography.

Have students answer the following questions based on this npr Article and the two images below:

- Why do you think Chinese rail workers were excluded in the 1869 photo and what are the implications of this exclusion?
- Why do you think Corky Lee chose to recreate this particular photo instead of other historical images documenting the development of the Transcontinental Railroad?
- What is the value in recreating historical images with a different subject?
- With the inclusion of descendants of Chinese rail workers, what message does the 2014 photo send to those in 1869?

ACTIVITY:







PROTEST AS A MEANS OF SURVIVAL

••••



1882 Foundation

CREDIT AUTHOR ANA LUOCAI

••••



RESOURCES:

CONGRESS AND THE AMERICAN WEST: THE TRANSCONTINENTAL RAILROAD

DESCENDANTS OF CHINESE LABORERS RECLAIM RAILROAD'S HISTORY

PHOTOGRAPH OF GOLDEN SPIKE CEREMONY AT PROMONTORY, UTAH

MERRIAM-WEBSTER DICTIONARY, "PROTEST"

CHINESE PROTEST ALLEGED POLICE BEATING HERE

AUNION AND WAITERS FACE OFF IN CHINATOWN

CORKY LEE: MEMORIES OF A SEEKER

IMMIGRATION ACT OF 1924 PROHIBITS IMMIGRATION FROM ASIA

IN 1968, THESE ACTIVISTS COINED THE TERM 'ASIAN AMERICAN'—AND HELPED SHAPE DECADES OF ADVOCACY:

THE BATTLE OF 'MISS SAIGON': YELLOWFACE, ART AND OPPORTUNITY:

CORKY LEE, WHO PHOTOGRAPHED ASIAN-AMERICAN LIFE, DIES AT 73