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Filipino Americans  
in San Mateo County

## Table of Contents

“Invisible Minority” No More: Filipino Americans in San Mateo County ..... 3 by Albert A. Acena	
San Mateo County Filipino Pioneer ..... 42 by Mitchell P. Postel	

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Address correspondence to: Editor, La Peninsula, San Mateo County Historical Association, 2200 Broadway, Redwood City, CA 94063 or [lapeninsula@historysmc.org](mailto:lapeninsula@historysmc.org).

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**Front Cover Caption:** Augustin De Ocampo with his ukulele and friends on the San Mateo County Coast. Photograph courtesy of the De Ocampo family.

# "Invisible Minority" No More:

## Filipino Americans in San Mateo County

Albert A. Acena

### Albert A. Acena

Acena is a professor emeritus of history and former dean of the social science division at College of San Mateo. A native of Seattle, he received his graduate degrees from the University of Washington. He served on the board of the San Mateo County Historical Association from 1984 to 2008. He is also on the board of the Filipino American National Historical Society.



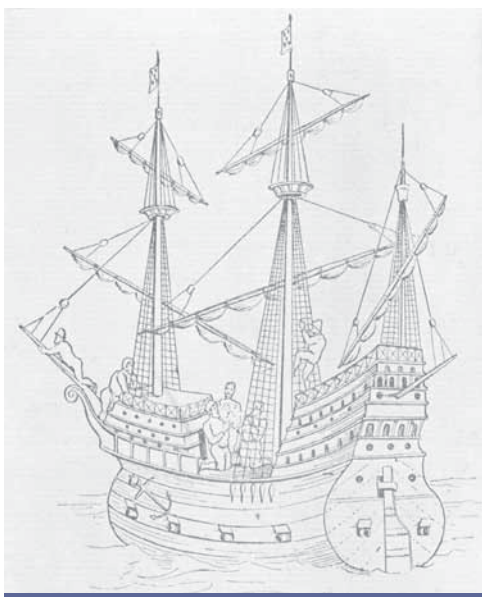
Departure of the California First Regiment on the steamship *City of Peking* for the Philippine Islands, May 25, 1898. Britton & Rey, San Francisco, 1898.

The year 2006 was a particularly special year for Filipino American communities in the United States. That year marked the centenary of the arrival of the first contract laborers from the Philippines to work in the plantations of Hawai'i, the island territory annexed by the United States in July 1898. These workers were the vanguard of the many to come to Hawai'i and to the mainland over the next two and a half decades. To commemorate the anniversary the Smithsonian Institution sponsored programs and events in Washington, D.C., and in several cities with a significant Filipino American population, such as Honolulu, San Francisco, Los Angeles, San Diego and Seattle.

The Philippine archipelago itself was ceded to the United States by Spain in December 1898 as a result of the Spanish American War. Sadly, the "Splendid Little War" (as Secretary of State John Hay called the war with Spain) was followed by the Philippine-American War, a more costly and longer engagement, as the United States forces were redeployed to suppress independence-minded Filipinos who resisted the American take-over. In due course, the "insurrection" was quelled and features of American civilization in the Progressive era were brought into America's new overseas possession such as public schools, a public health system, political institutions, the English language and Protestantism. Also, the Philippines became a part of the American colonial economy, providing the United States and its dependent territories with basic commodities and needed labor, hence the arrival of the first *sakadas*, or contract workers, in Hawai'i in 1906.<sup>1</sup>

Even before 1906, however, people from the Philippines ("Filipinos" as the 19th Century ethnic inhabitants of the archipelago began calling themselves) had already been to Hawai'i and to what would become California. In the case of Hawai'i Filipino seamen had been a presence in the pre-American era, while the Filipino encounter with California is part of the saga of the Manila Galleon trade that began to ply the route between the Philippines, a Spanish possession, and Acapulco in New Spain (Mexico), starting in 1566. Pedro de Unamuno, commanding the galleon *Nuestra Señora de Buena Esperanza*, made a landfall at what is believed to be Morro Bay in October 1587. In

***“The Spanish called them chinos, and it is clear that the Spanish in using this term were referring to men coming from the Philippines.”***



Drawing of a Manila galleon.

the party going ashore, as Unamuno claimed the territory formally for the Spanish kingdom, were several *indios de Luzon* (in other words, Filipinos). Unfortunately, a skirmish between the Filipino crew members and the local inhabitants ensued.<sup>2</sup> Several years later, the Manila galleon the *San Agustín*, commanded by Sebastião Cermenho, went aground near Point Reyes as it was exploring the coast. Filipinos were among the several dozen crew members who accompanied Cermenho in the arduous journey by longboat down the coast from Point Reyes to Mexico.<sup>3</sup>

Filipinos enter the California record again when the California that the Spanish knew as *el Sur de California* (today's Baja California) became an area for missionary activities undertaken by the Catholic Church's Jesuit order. A mission was established at Loreto in 1697 by Father Juan María de Salvatierra, and a civilian pueblo and military presidio eventually developed. Among those settling down in Loreto were former Filipino crew members of the Manila galleon who had had enough of the risky trans-Pacific journey and who either took up trades or worked on the supply boats that crossed the Sea of Cortez between Loreto and settlements on the Sea's eastern shore.<sup>4</sup> The Spanish called them *chinos*, and it is clear that the Spanish in using this term were referring to men coming from the Philippines.<sup>5</sup>

In any event, Father Salvatierra, the pioneer missionary to “the South of California,” observed that there were five Pampangueños (Pampanga is a province north of the Manila area) in 1700 among the sailors in Loreto.<sup>6</sup> As early as 1733, Gaspar Molina, a Filipino sailor, was working out of Loreto; from the 1740s to the 1760s he became a prominent shipbuilder. In 1761 he launched a ship of his own design, the 48-foot *Nuestra Señora de la Concepción*, a much-admired vessel. Ironically, this ship in a few years would be used to carry California's Jesuit missionaries off into exile when the Jesuit order was suppressed by Spain.<sup>7</sup> In 1768, Pablo Regino Mayoral's daughter was baptized at Loreto. Mayoral, a sailor, was born around 1730 in the Philippines and most likely is the progenitor of many of those in Baja California today whose name is Mayoral.<sup>8</sup> There were probably more individuals in 18th Century California with links to the Philippines than the records show. For example, many so-called Christianized indios who were engaged by the Spanish in work at the missions and presidios of California, both *Baja* and *Alta*, were often *indios Luzones* or their descendants, who had been Christian for some time and were living in New Spain's frontier areas, like Lower California and Sinaloa.

The Franciscans under Junípero Serra succeeded the expelled



Jesuits in continuing the mission effort in California. When Spain finally embarked upon developing *Alta California* in the late 1760s, Don Gaspar de Portolá was given the overall command of the expeditionary force, while Serra and his fellow Franciscans were entrusted with pushing the mission frontier northward. On August 10, 1779, Father Serra himself confirmed a Filipino sailor, Vicente Tallado, *indio de Pampanga*, at Mission San Carlos in Carmel.<sup>9</sup> In September 1781 the second civilian pueblo (the first being San José) was established in *Alta California* at Los Angeles and the Spanish authorities selected eleven families from New Spain to be the pueblo's settlers; among that pioneer band was Antonio Miranda Rodríguez from Manila. However, Miranda, an armorer at the presidio of Loreto, was excused from joining the original party because he wished to remain behind to take care of his sick daughter. After his daughter's death, Miranda, a man 50 years old, continued his work at the presidio in Loreto, then journeyed in 1783 to the Presidio of Santa Barbara where he became the armorer. He apparently was the first Filipino to settle down permanently in Santa Barbara and is buried in the presidio chapel there.<sup>10</sup>

"The world rushed in" with the California Gold Rush of 1849 and Filipinos were no exception. Filipinos came from Louisiana to work claims in the Southern Mother Lode country at Tulitas in Mariposa County.<sup>11</sup> These Filipinos could trace a presence in Louisiana going back to the late 18th Century. The vast Louisiana Territory had become a Spanish possession in the 1760s and Spain established its effective control of New Orleans by 1768. During this period, Filipinos, some possibly being former sailors in the Manila Galleon trade, settled in the bayou country outside of New Orleans. Later, during the 19th Century people continued to arrive from the Philippines, reinforcing the original settlements. This Filipino American community in Louisiana has the longest continuous presence in the United States.<sup>12</sup>

Before the arrival of the Filipino contract workers in Hawai'i, there already were Filipinos going directly to the United States [see sidebar]. There were students who would be completing their professional education in America and returning to the Philippines. One hundred four of them arrived in 1903 when the program officially began, although students started coming to the States in 1900. Many were *pensionados*, students with government-sponsored fellowships, and many of these were to become prominent in political and professional life in the Philippines.<sup>13</sup> Many, also, were to come on their own without benefit of a government scholarship, some inspired by an American teacher in their home town to continue their schooling in America. Many



Father Junipero Serra confirmed a Filipino sailor, Vicente Tallado, at Mission San Carlos in Carmel.

### Filipinos in Half Moon Bay

The 1870 Federal Census revealed that the following residents of the Fifth Township, Post Office Half Moon Bay had been born in Manila. Under race, the census listed all of the Filipinos as white.

#### Name, Age, Occupation

Mirand Francis, 39, Day Laborer  
 Lozero Domingas, 39, Day Laborer  
 R[quanto?] Francis, 76, Day Laborer  
 Honesto Espinosa, 48, Fisherman  
 Rohemo Delcarnem, 38, Farmer\*  
 Corpea Delcarnem, 28, Keeping House\*  
 Thomas Santos, 39, Farmer\*  
 Shan Tee, 35, Farmer  
 Santago Lagorio, 31, Farm Laborer

\* Additionally, the household had children born in California.

Information from [www.sfgenealogy.com/](http://www.sfgenealogy.com/)

of the latter were to eventually settle down in America and not return to their homeland; they became “unintentional immigrants,” as two scholars put it.<sup>14</sup>

The foregoing overview is meant to provide some background and context before attempting to sketch out the Filipino American presence in San Mateo County. The point is that Filipinos were not just “strangers from a different shore,” but people who, however small or large their number, in the course of three centuries had become part of California’s social fabric. From a few sojourners and settlers in its earlier eras, the Filipino population of California was to grow to the 918,678 in the 2000 census. Until relatively recently they have been “invisible” or “forgotten.”<sup>15</sup> This survey will attempt to address these perceptions, especially as they apply to San Mateo County.

Before proceeding further, it will be helpful to deal with the terms Filipino and Filipino American. Both terms will be used interchangeably in the passages that follow. To be precise, “Filipino” should apply specifically to individuals who were born in the Philippines and were acculturated there and “Filipino American” should refer to persons of Philippine descent born in the United States whose forebears came from the Philippines or to persons who were born in the Philippines and have become residents or citizens of the United States. The context should indicate what is meant. There is a further issue of ethnic identity. Filipinos in America have been mistaken for Chinese or Japanese Americans or Native Americans or Pacific Islanders, or because many Filipinos have Spanish surnames, they have been classified as Hispanic. In addition, many Filipinos have intermarried with other ethnic groups, thus adding to complications of ethnic identity. For some people in America the Filipino will remain “the Other,” a “stranger” in the land, despite birth, citizenship, education, and long-time residency.

One more preliminary comment: The effort at hand is only a sketch touching upon some highlights; it is not meant to be complete or encyclopedic in its treatment of the Filipino American presence in San Mateo County. That presence goes back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century and has grown to over 60,000, according to the 2000 census. It should be clear where further probing and research could be done. Each topic sketched out can easily be the basis of a much fuller account. Also, the writer apologizes for any omissions; an essay of this sort can only hint at the many stories that can be told or recorded when several thousand people are involved.

Let us review some figures. According to the 2000 census, the Filipino American population of San Mateo County was 66,518.

Out of a total population of 707,161 this constituted 9.4% of the county's population. The city that led the county both in number and percentage of Filipino Americans was Daly City, with 35,099, or 33.87 % of the population. Next was South San Francisco with 11,127 and 18.3% of the city's total. Pacifica on the Coastsides had 3,925 Filipino Americans out of total of 38,390 or 10.2%. Nine percent of San Bruno's population, 3,634, was Filipino American. San Mateo followed with 3,478, or 3.7% of the city total. Hillsborough and Atherton had 183 and 61, respectively. (Hillsborough also had 1,973 Chinese residents.) Other San Mateo County cities and towns with Filipino residents include: Millbrae (913), Belmont (642), Burlingame (865), San Carlos (472), Redwood City (1,555), Menlo Park (219), Brisbane (147), Foster City (552), Colma (265), Half Moon Bay (144), and Moss Beach (4). Interestingly enough, the population of Filipino Americans in San Mateo County in 2000 exceeded the total number of Filipinos in the mainland United States in 1930 (45,208). Of the 66,518 enumerated in the 2000 census, 42,113 or 64% were foreign-born, almost as many as the 1930 figure. The United States' population then was 123 million; whereas in 2000 the nation's total was 281,421,906. The Filipino American population for the U. S. in 2000 was 1,850,314, the second largest Asian American group after Chinese Americans.<sup>16</sup>

The restrictive laws of 1921 and 1924 limited and finally excluded the Japanese from immigrating, but no such restriction barred Filipino entry to the United States since Filipinos were in a peculiar situation: they were American "nationals" with freedom to move between the Philippines and the United States – nationals, though, who were ineligible for citizenship. Having freedom of movement as American nationals, many Filipino young men during the 1920s opted to make the trans-Pacific journey and found work on farms and cities on the West Coast and on the plantations of Hawai'i. Consequently, the Filipino population of California climbed during the 1920s from 7,674 to 30,470 in 1930.<sup>17</sup> Likewise, during the 1920s and into the 1930s Filipinos began to be a noticeable presence in San Mateo County. There was the De Ocampo family in Menlo Park.<sup>18</sup> There were those employed as houseboys and chauffeurs in affluent communities in the county.<sup>19</sup> There were the workers on farms in the agricultural areas of the county. But many who also came were students, intent on advancing their education. Since they were literally "working their way through school" as domestics and in service industries, other Filipinos, especially those working in the agricultural fields, called them the "schoolboys" or "fountain-pen boys".<sup>20</sup>

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ineligible for citizenship.*

In 1922, San Mateo Junior College was established in the Kohl mansion in San Mateo; soon it moved to the vacated premises of San Mateo High School on Baldwin and San Mateo Drive, handy to the No. 40 streetcar line from San Francisco. Several students from the Philippines began attending the junior college, which was at the time the only junior college in the area (City College of San Francisco would not open until 1935). What attracted them to San Mateo and its junior college we may never know fully. More than likely proximity and affordability were important factors. Some probably commuted from The City riding the No. 40 or the train, since the train station was also close to the downtown campus. One might also surmise that several of them may have been working as household help, living with local families while going to school. Whether commuting, living with a family or sharing quarters to save expenses, these students from the Philippines would be following a pattern not confined to San Mateo County, but also happening at the time in San Francisco, Seattle, and other communities where Filipinos were students.

A survey of *The Campus*, the junior college's yearbook, gives a glimpse at who some of these young men from the Philippines were. The first Filipino student who appeared in the yearbook was Serapio San Diego in 1926. He and Vicente G. Orencio of San Mateo made the honor roll that year.<sup>21</sup> Students came from all over the Bay Area to attend junior college in San Mateo; one Filipino student, Q. B. Perry, came all the way from Vallejo in 1927. Among the sophomores, in 1928, were two students from the Philippines, Andrés Hamoy and Marciano Joven. Juan B. Selga, of Burlingame, transferred from St. Ignatius in San Francisco and was a sophomore in 1929.<sup>22</sup>

There apparently were enough Filipino students at San Mateo Junior College to organize a Filipino Club in the fall of 1928; the first president was L. Pineda, and B. Catapusan was the club's first secretary-treasurer. He was probably Benicio Catapusan, who later went on to graduate work at University of Southern California in sociology and to become a frequently-cited resource for his studies on the situation of Filipinos in America during the 1920s and 1930s.<sup>23</sup> The Filipino Club appears in most of the yearbooks from 1929 to 1937. There were twelve club members in 1934, and in 1935 eighteen members posed for the yearbook with their club sponsor, E. H. "Sy" Bashor, a popular history instructor.<sup>24</sup> An on-going campus project of the club's was to increase awareness and knowledge about the Philippines. To help accomplish this the club donated books and publications on the Philippines to the college library.<sup>25</sup>





San Mateo Junior College students, c. 1929. Photograph courtesy of the Photo Library Project of the SMCCCD.

These students took part in the college's campus life. They made the honor society, joined the Engineers' Club, the yearbook, and the Art Club and took part in intramural sports and varsity athletics. Ariston P. Armada of Janivay, Iloilo, graduated in 1931 and was in the Art Club and on the yearbook staff.<sup>26</sup> In 1933 there were four Filipino graduates of the junior college, and one of them, Gregorio Basug, was on the college's tennis team.<sup>27</sup> In 1936, Camilo Hilario was the Filipino Club president; he was also on the boxing team and rated "outstanding" in the 129-pound class.<sup>28</sup> Maximo Goltiao belonged to the Art Club and the Defense Club and was on the yearbook staff.<sup>29</sup> How well were these students from Philippines received by their fellow students? One cannot tell from just yearbook entries, but Filipinos were clearly involved in the everyday life of the junior college campus.

As the names mentioned indicate, overwhelmingly the Filipino students attending the junior college in this period were male, reflecting the general immigration pattern of the time. However, there was at least one Filipina during this period attending junior college in San Mateo and probably more who did not appear in the college's yearbooks.<sup>30</sup> The population ratio of males-to-females among U.S. Filipinos was around nine to one or higher at the time. The 1920s experienced a heavily male migration, and while many of these young men went to the farm areas of California to work, others gravitated towards the cities. Many worked summers in the salmon packing industry in Alaska. Whether student, urban worker or farm laborer, these young men, together with the few women, constituted the pioneer Manong generation of the 1920s and

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from the Philippines.*

1930s in Filipino American history. Manong is an Ilocano word meaning “older brother,” and it has been applied by post-1965 youth activists to this pioneer “old-timer” generation from the Philippines because many of them came from the Ilocos provinces of northern Luzon; the other major area of Philippine out-migration at the time was the Visayan region of the central Philippines.<sup>31</sup> Unlike the post-1965 immigration to the United States, Tagalog speakers – the language spoken around Manila -- were in the minority at the time. Now Tagalog, officially designated as Pilipino, is the Philippine national language.

Besides the junior college, Filipino students could also be seen attending local high schools. Lorenzo C. Daquioag of San Francisco came to the United States to complete his high school studies; he went to school at night while holding down a hospital job during the day. When he graduated from high school, he enrolled at San Mateo Junior College.<sup>32</sup> Santiago Marinas was a senior at San Mateo High School in 1932 and was the Peninsula Athletic League tennis champion in singles in 1930 and in doubles in 1931. Rafael José was a 1932 senior and a 1930 transfer from the Philippines, and was a member of the Debaters’ Club. Juan Menil transferred to San Mateo from San Francisco and was in the honor society.<sup>33</sup> Crescencio Eala played in the school band and was a member of the French Club; this 1939 San Mateo senior’s ambition was to be a “Scholar.”<sup>34</sup>

What happened to these students who went to junior college or to high school in the county? Some of those attending the college went on to further study at four-year institutions and returned to the Philippines, like Benicio Catapusan, who became a leading sociologist there. From a 1928 yearbook published for Filipino students in the United States we learn that Rafael P. Joson, an alumnus of San Mateo Junior College, went on to major in zoology at Stanford University and was also president of the Palo Alto Filipino Club.<sup>35</sup> After graduating from San Mateo Junior College in 1930, Lorenzo Daquioag transferred to University of California, Berkeley, where he received his bachelor’s in history and science in 1932.<sup>36</sup> Daquioag remained in the Bay Area as we shall see shortly. But who went back to the Philippines and who else remained in the county or in the Bay Area, and what did they do after completing their schooling, if they managed to finish it? How many of them became “unintentional immigrants”?

Also, as the 1920s segued into the 1930s, how many of the later students attending local schools were still from the Philippines and how many now were the offspring of pioneer Filipino families who settled in San Francisco or the Peninsula? Immigration from the Philippines

had declined with the onset of the Great Depression in the 1930s, and the Tydings-McDuffie Act of 1934, which established a timetable for Philippine independence and imposed an immigration quota of fifty persons per year, slowed immigration down to a trickle. So it is likely that many of the Filipino students attending local high schools from the late 1930s on were children of first-generation Filipino immigrants and probably the same could be said for Filipinos attending the junior college from the 1940s onwards, until the immigration patterns changed in the later 1960s. However, another intriguing question that might be asked is: How many of these students were able to find careers and employment commensurate with the education they received? With a B.A. from Berkeley, Lorenzo Daquioag, who originally came from Laoag, Ilocos Norte, continued to do janitorial and culinary work in San Francisco until the Second World War.<sup>37</sup> With the Depression and the racial attitudes of that era, the 1920s and 1930s were not the best times for Filipinos looking for jobs outside of farm work, domestic service and kitchen help. There were restrictions and barriers, despite seeming prospects in “the land of opportunity.”

Besides limited job opportunities, among the restrictions Filipinos found when they came to California in those days were these: the legislation on “alien” land ownership dating from the Progressive era, ineligibility to citizenship (although American “nationals”), and anti-miscegenation laws. Related to the alien land issue were the restrictive covenants that forbade what a later generation would call ‘fair housing.’ As a consequence, Filipinos when settling into a community found that they were frequently restricted to certain neighborhoods, such as “Chinatowns” or “Little Tokyos.” In San Francisco, Filipinos established “Manilatown” on Kearny Street, near Chinatown. In due course, Filipinos found other areas to live in; in San Francisco this would mean the Fillmore, Western Addition, Mission, and South of Market districts. How restrictions affected Filipinos who lived on the Peninsula can be only conjectured, though the exclusiveness of Peninsula communities at the time might give us a hint.

The so-called “alien land” law, passed by California’s legislature in 1913 when reform-minded Progressives were in charge, was primarily aimed at the Japanese, who had become a presence in the state since Chinese exclusion began in the 1880s. The thrust of the law was to forbid the ownership of land in the state to persons who were ineligible for United States citizenship. Naturalization law in effect at the time restricted American citizenship to whites and blacks; all others, Asians included, were “ineligible.” Filipinos thus fell into this latter category,

*There were restrictions and barriers, despite seeming prospects in “the land of opportunity.”*

*Filipinos were “..in the curious situation of being too American to be excluded, and yet too alien to be naturalized.”*

*Albert W. Palmer, 1939*

despite the ambiguity of being American nationals. As an observer put it, Filipinos were “in the curious situation of being too American to be excluded, and yet too alien to be naturalized.”<sup>38</sup> Consequently, in California, as in other western states, Filipinos could not own land, and the leasing of land was limited. Eventually, the United States Supreme Court, in 1948, struck down California’s alien land law as unconstitutional.<sup>39</sup>

In 1880, California forbade marriage between whites and “Negroes, mulattoes, and Mongolians.” Was this anti-miscegenation law applicable to Filipinos? In 1930 the county clerk’s office in Los Angeles, which had been issuing marriage licenses to Filipino and white couples, was told to stop this practice. In 1933, Salvador Roldan, who wanted to marry his white fiancée, successfully challenged the ban on inter-marriage between whites and other races. His argument was that, being a Filipino, he was not “Mongolian,” but Malay. An appeals court ruled in his favor, and Roldan was allowed to get a marriage license, but several weeks later the California legislature retaliated by amending the 1880 law to add “Malays” and rescinded marriages such as Roldan’s. It was not until 1948 that the Supreme Court of California ruled the anti-miscegenation law unconstitutional.<sup>40</sup>

The fact that there were so few Filipinas, except nurses and students, immigrating at the time somewhat explains the bachelor society that developed in the early Filipino communities in the United States.<sup>41</sup> Nevertheless, Filipino families did emerge in cities and towns such as San Francisco and Stockton in this pioneering period. If Filipinos could not find Filipinas to marry, they could marry Native Americans or blacks or other Asians, but until California’s anti-miscegenation law was overturned Filipinos who wanted to marry whites (and vice versa) would have to go to a state, such as Washington, to get married. Interracial dating and socializing with white women, such as in dance halls in rural towns, often brought on tensions and confrontations, like the infamous Watsonville riot of 1930, where one Filipino was killed. Were there similar tensions in San Mateo County? How did Filipino families fare in the county in this early period? Perhaps we won’t fully know, but there is the example from the 1920s of the De Ocampo family in Menlo Park, where Augustin De Ocampo married a woman of Portuguese descent. Apparently, this generated no controversy. Maybe because they resided in what was then a more isolated part of the town, no particular issue arose.<sup>42</sup>

As mentioned above, many of the immigrants coming from the Philippines worked in the agricultural areas of California. This also



Picnic at Pebble Beach in Pescadero, 1937. Second from the right, Artemio Basconcillo holding six-month old Fred. Photograph courtesy of Fred Basconcillo.

was the case in San Mateo County for some, although the county did not have a significant Filipino farm labor population.<sup>43</sup> Filipino farm workers were on the Coastside since the 1860s, and in the 1920s more came. After a few years as plantation workers in Hawai'i, Felix Dacuyan and his wife Florencia Catiel, originally from the Visayas, arrived in San Francisco in December 1925 and soon were working for a nursery in Half Moon Bay. A daughter, Rosario, was born, but when another daughter died in infancy, possibly from pneumonia, the family, traumatically affected and thinking the Coastside climate contributory to this tragedy, moved around 1930 to the Central Valley town of Cressey.<sup>43a</sup> Juan Brille arrived in the U. S. from La Union province in 1934. In late 1935 he went to work for a farm in Half Moon Bay; in all, six Filipinos worked on that farm. Typical for the area, they cultivated cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli and brussels sprouts. In June 1938 he moved to San José, but the next year he was working for a nursery in Redwood City.<sup>44</sup>

There were a couple of Filipinos in the mid-1930s who leased a farm at Pebble Beach in Pescadero. These two men, J. B. Isidro and J. V. Evangelista, would occasionally host picnics where people from San Francisco would come down for the day. But these were not just simply open-air meals in the country, a nice break from urban hubbub and congestion; "picnic" apparently was also a code word for cockfighting, a custom in the Philippines, but illegal in California and carried on surreptitiously.<sup>45</sup>

This brings up the scofflaw attitude of San Mateo County



authorities at the time. Artemio Basconcello, a pool hall owner on Kearny Street in San Francisco, also clandestinely sponsored cockfights, not in The City, but in what was then rural Daly City, just across the county line. Also, Basconcello, whose pool hall had an illicit gambling den in the basement, would be informed from time to time by the patrolman on the beat when a crackdown was forthcoming and would move his gambling activities to tolerant San Mateo County, somewhere along Hillside Boulevard, ironically where in later years a popular card room and casino would operate legally.<sup>46</sup>

The Second World War brought changes to the situation of Filipinos in the United States and in California. On December 8, 1941 (December 7 in Hawai'i) Japanese forces attacked the Philippines, and both the Philippines and the U. S. entered the war. In 1942 the U. S. Army created the First and Second Filipino Infantry Regiments, and many draft-age Filipinos on the West Coast enlisted. The training areas for these two regiments were in California; altogether the regiments had about 9,000 men.<sup>47</sup> Also, in 1942 special provision was made for these soldiers to become United States citizens, if they chose to do so. The restrictions on American citizenship based upon race was cracking, and actually had been cracked as far as Filipinos were concerned when those who had retired from service in the U. S. Navy and other branches of the armed services had earlier been granted citizenship. Besides these two regiments, which were volunteer units, Filipino Americans, both first- and second-generation, enlisted or were drafted into the army or served in the marines, the merchant marine, the Army Transport Service, the navy, or the U. S. Army Air Force. As a consequence of their war service, 10,737 stateside and Hawai'i Filipinos became citizens.<sup>48</sup> Now, it ought be pointed out here that these stateside and Hawai'i veterans of the World War II should not be confused with the many veterans of former Philippine army units which were incorporated into the U. S. Army in the Philippines when the war in the Pacific broke out. The veterans of the First and Second Regiments and other stateside and Hawai'i veterans had full benefits from their war service, while those in the second category, many of whom having immigrated to the U. S. in the later years of the 20th Century, have been seeking to gain benefits denied them when the Philippines became independent in 1946. Another opportunity that the war afforded was the chance to leave service industries and to work in war plants and shipyards. Lorenzo Daquiaoag was one of many who went to work for the shipyards.<sup>49</sup>



The SS *San Mateo Victory*, launched in 1943, was one of the ships built by the Western Pipe and Steel shipyards in South San Francisco during World War II.

One change wrought by the experience of the Second World

War was that many of the soldiers of the First Filipino Infantry Regiment (the Second had been folded into the First) came back to the States with “war brides” from the Philippines. Thus would begin another phase of immigration to the United States. War brides did not fall within the quotas imposed upon immigration from the Philippines. So for many in the bachelor “Manong Generation” who were veterans, family life, postponed by circumstance and situation, could finally begin. Consequently, in the 1950 census, the Filipino population in California reached 40,424 as not only war brides entered and existing families increased their numbers, but also students and nurses again, as before the war, were coming to America. Selected nurses, for example, could enter the U.S. for short-term periods under the Exchange Visitor Program inaugurated in 1948.<sup>50</sup>

Another trend in the wake of the Second World War was the emigration to the suburbs. For many Filipinos and others in San Francisco, this meant San Mateo County. During World War II there was a landmark ruling involving the Alien Land Law. Celestino Alfafara of San Francisco contracted to buy land in San Mateo from Bernice Fross in June 1944; she refused to convey the property, citing the Alien Land Law. Judge (later Mayor) Elmer Robinson of San Francisco upheld Alfafara’s challenge to the law, and in 1945 the California Supreme Court in *Alfafara v. Fross*, in supporting Robinson’s decision, ruled that Alfafara was not an “alien,” but a loyal national whose allegiance was to the United States, thus setting the stage for further change. By the 1950s, Filipino families were moving to the county in growing numbers as some of the property ownership barriers began to erode, and Filipino American veterans partook of the GI Bill’s housing benefits.<sup>51</sup> Among the earliest moving to Daly City were second generation Filipino Americans from San Francisco Felix Oliva, Felix Duag, Jr., and Emilio Cubillo. All moved to the St. Francis Heights area of Daly City. Oliva had served as a steward to Admiral William Halsey in the latter days of the war, while Duag, likewise a veteran, was a teacher and later a principal and public relations officer in the San Francisco School District. Duag also was one of the 15 charter members of San Francisco’s Mango 5 Filipino American basketball team, having joined in 1940. The Mangoes originally were founded in 1939 to play against other San Francisco and Bay Area teams; after the interruption of the war the Mango 5 became the San Francisco Mango Athletic Club in 1947, fielding teams in several sports. Emilio Cubillo joined the Mangoes after the war, but during the war he had enlisted in the First Filipino Infantry; eventually he went to work for Pacific Gas & Electric. In 1968 another fellow Mango team

*...many of the soldiers...  
came back to the States  
with “war brides” from  
the Philippines. This  
would begin another  
wave of immigration....*

member from San Francisco, Fred Basconcello, a local labor official, came to live in St. Francis Heights.<sup>52</sup>

On the Coastside, Francisca Domingo settled in Rockaway Beach after the war, having earlier lived in Redwood City and operated a farm in Palo Alto.<sup>53</sup> As in the past, Filipinos, like Juan Tabar in Moss Beach, were farming during the 1950s. Tabar was a fixture at San Francisco's farmer's market where he sold the vegetables and strawberries he grew. And as in earlier years, Filipino families from San Francisco continued to visit their country friends on the Coastside.<sup>54</sup> One item of historical minutiae involving the Coastside: Pura Zarco Alabastro, who came to the U.S. in 1951, went to work for the U. S. Post Office in 1963, and in 1978 she became the postmaster for Moss Beach.<sup>55</sup>

Also moving to the county after the war was Prisca Agcaoili Cooper, who originally came from Ilocos Norte in the Philippines. Her husband, Lawrence Cooper from Kansas, came to teach school in Ilocos Norte. It was while there that he met and married his wife. Leaving teaching, Cooper moved to Manila with his family and settled in a new development, San Juan Hills Addition. He became a manager with Goodrich Tire in the Philippines. In the 1930s, Cooper sent their daughter Helen to be with his family in Kansas and to go to high school and college there. When the war broke out, and the Japanese army occupied the Philippines, Lawrence and Prisca Cooper were interned at the University of Santo Tomás. Liberated from their internment and with the war over, rather than go to Kansas, the Coopers decided to live in Burlingame. While purchasing his house, Cooper was asked by the realtor about his wife, apparently making an oblique reference to the restrictive covenants then in place. Cooper let the query pass, and he and his wife moved into their new home without further discussion. That "small" matter was reflective of the times and the restrictions placed upon where "people of color" could live. Prisca Cooper melded into the post-war Burlingame community, and she was soon joined by their daughter, Helen and her family. Now Helen Ward, she married a Kansas attorney who passed away a few years after the war. Eventually, Helen Ward became a librarian at the Burlingame Public Library. While Filipinos working as houseboys and other domestic help had earlier lived in Burlingame, Prisca Agcaoili Cooper and her daughter may be the pioneer Filipina permanent residents in Burlingame. By the time of the 2000 census, some fifty years after Prisca Cooper came there to live, Filipinos in Burlingame had increased to 865.<sup>56</sup>

Federal immigration laws and policies, changing social attitudes,

legal decisions, as well as natural increment contributed to the growth of the Filipino population in California during the decades of the 1950s and 1960s. Federal laws and policies continued to evolve. The McCarran-Walter Act of 1952 retained the quota allocation of one hundred immigrants per year coming from the Philippines, but “established the principle of family reunification as customary rather than extraordinary in U.S. immigration policy.” Prior to this a U.S. citizen had to petition for a quota exemption to allow immediate family members to enter the country.<sup>57</sup> The greatest change, however, was to come in 1965.

When President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act, he remarked, “This bill that we sign today is not a revolutionary bill. . . . It will not reshape the structure of our daily lives, or really add importantly to our wealth or our power.”<sup>58</sup> In a way, the president was playing down the significance of the new legislation – for most Americans. But for Filipinos and Filipino Americans it would be a different story. In ways yet to be fully studied and understood, the law’s impact has been profound. Those who drafted the legislation and the President who signed it into law only vaguely understood the social, economic and political conditions in countries like the Philippines that would play a role in the immigration push-pull dynamic. One of the main effects of the law, over time, has been the continuing process of family reunification. The law also provided for the immigration of professionals needed in the U. S. work force. It virtually did away with the quota-by-country system by allowing the immigration of 20,000 per year from each country in the Eastern Hemisphere (which included the Philippines) into the United States. As far as Filipino immigration was concerned, this set the stage for the most recent, and in a way, most significant immigration from the Philippines, where one might observe that the Filipino “invisibility” of earlier times would be reversed. This is reflected in the rise in the Filipino population in San Mateo County from 5,676 in 1970 to 24,053 in 1980.<sup>59</sup>

It has been observed that the greatest export of the Philippines is not rice or sugar, but its people who have become a significant part of the global workforce. (In this respect, the Philippines may be no different than other countries such as China, Ireland, or Italy whose sons and daughters have also scattered across the planet.) When “workforce” is used here, it is not confined to just work in the sense of services or manufacturing but also includes professions such as medicine, engineering, and business. In San Mateo County, Filipinos can be found in all manner of work: municipal and county government,

**1965 Immigration and Nationality Act**  
*One of the main effects of the law, over time, has been the continuing process of family reunification.*



Architectural drawing for Mary's Help Hospital in Daly City, where Filipino doctors, nurses, and technicians have found employment.

hospitals and laboratories, high-tech industries, the culinary crafts, airport security, accounting, education, the law, care-giving, banking, currency remittance, shipping, and real estate. Let us elaborate on the presence of Filipinos in some of these lines of work.

As was noted earlier in this essay, nursing was one of earliest professions in which Filipinos since the 1920s – actually mostly Filipinas – could be found. In the decades since, Filipino nurses have been most visible in the staffing of the nation's and the county's hospitals. The move of the former Mary's Help Hospital in 1965 from San Francisco to Daly City brought not only veteran Filipino doctors who had been practicing medicine in the City since the 1950s but also Filipino nurses and technicians as well. The move also coincided with the passage of the new immigration law which would help to bring in more health care professionals. Nurses and technicians were also to staff the Kaiser hospitals in Redwood City and South San Francisco, Peninsula in Burlingame, Mills and the county hospital in San Mateo as well as other private hospitals in the county. A 1989 study showed that over 82% of Filipino registered nurses in the U.S. worked in hospitals, and perhaps this might be also applicable to San Mateo County. Nurses and doctors trained in the Philippines frequently had to face issues of certification and licensing and the problem of non-recognition, in some instances, of non-U. S. medical schools. There were also problems with bait-and-switch recruitment of health care professionals who expected to be working in regular medical centers, but instead found themselves employed in extended care facilities and nursing homes.



The *Filipino Yellow Pages USA*, published in 2007, showed 33 dentists and a number of physicians in San Mateo County. Since the 1980s Dr. Alexander Yap, a graduate of the University of the Philippines medical school, has been a cardiac surgeon on the staff at Seton Medical Center (formerly Mary's Help Hospital), one of many Filipinos at that facility.<sup>60</sup>

One work activity in the post-1965 era where Filipinos were quite prominent was that of airport security. Filipinos had been most visible in the county as baggage screeners at San Francisco International Airport (SFO). Many, especially from the ranks of the retired, had been recruited in the Philippines by Argenbright Security of Atlanta, which had the contract at several U. S. airports for this work. In 1999 many joined the Service Employees International Union to better their wages. Erlinda Valencia, who had lived in the U. S. for two decades, was one of the leaders in the effort which succeeded in having wages raised to \$10/hour. Then the events of September 11, 2001 occurred.

Since those carrying out the attacks on that day had boarded flights from various American airports, the concern for increased and more rigid security became paramount.<sup>61</sup> President George W. Bush issued an order that the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) would take charge of airport security and that to be an airport screener one had to be a U. S. citizen. Filipino screeners who had not yet lived in the States long enough to apply for citizenship would be losing their jobs, as would be those who had been in the country longer, but were not yet citizens. Many were to argue that U. S. citizenship had not been a requirement for service in the U. S. armed forces or in some other sensitive employment. The associate pastor of St. Augustine's in South San Francisco, a church that many of the screeners attended, was the co-chairman along with a representative of the Service Employees International Union of the Bay Area Organizing Committee (BAOC) to provide support for job training and placement of laid-off screeners. In the end, despite an injunction and appeals to the courts, the TSA took over the screening operations at SFO and many Filipinos were displaced from their screener positions.<sup>62</sup>

Rather than going into all the other areas in the public and private sector in which Filipinos in San Mateo County are active, let us focus on a couple of individuals who are illustrative of the many roles played by Filipinos in the post-World War II county economy. One was born in the Philippines, the other in Chicago. Originally from Pangasinan province, Mario Panoringan came to the U.S. in 1970. In the mid-1970s he had his own insurance agency and financial services office in Daly

City. He became active in politics (the Democratic Party) and in civic affairs and ran for local office. In 1998 he was appointed to Daly City's planning commission. When Senator John Kerry, the 2004 Democratic presidential candidate came to Daly City during his campaign, Panoringan was the one who introduced the senator to a crowd of several hundred in the Westmoor High School gymnasium. He headed the Filipino American Coalition, founded in 2005, to encourage Filipino Americans to participate actively in the political process. Cutting back on his time with his business, Panoringan began a consultancy in 2002, with clients such as Outback Steakhouse, Philippine Airlines and Goldilocks restaurant. He was president of the Daly City-Colma Chamber of Commerce, and became the Chief Executive Officer of that chamber, retiring from the latter post in early 2008.<sup>63</sup>

Keith Bautista was born in Chicago, but went to Kennedy Middle School (then Goodwin School) and Sequoia High School in Redwood City. He was an outstanding wrestler at Sequoia and was three times league champion. He received his engineering degree from Cal-Poly San Luis Obispo, and went to work in 1972 for a newly-founded firm, Design and Engineering Systems in Redwood City, which became DES Architects + Engineers. The firm soon acquired a reputation for engineering and design originality in working with Silicon Valley companies. With the retirement of the original founders of DES, Bautista was chosen to lead the firm. After ten years as president and CEO, Bautista, one of the five original employees of DES and a licensed architect as well as structural engineer, retired in 2005. He had also been chairman of the board, Redwood City-San Mateo County Chamber of Commerce. He started serving on the Redwood City Board of Building Review in 1974 and has served continuously since then, occasionally as chairman. He has been on the board of Sequoia Hospital, the San Mateo Community College Foundation, and the San Mateo County Historical Association.<sup>64</sup>

An area where Filipinos have been evident is education. Since the 1960s, Filipino students have constituted a significant group in the public and private school system in the County and that continued into the 21st Century. The number of Filipino students enrolled in the public schools of the County numbered 8,590 in 2005, a figure higher than neighboring San Francisco with 3,603. San Mateo County ranked third after Santa Clara County and Alameda County in the Bay Area in numbers of Filipino students. Reflecting the post-1965 immigration pattern, English learners in the county's public schools who spoke Tagalog or Pilipino in 2007 accounted for 6.5% of the English learners,



Keith Bautista has served on the board of Sequoia Hospital, the San Mateo Community College Foundation, and the San Mateo County Historical Association.

a distant second to the 74.8% whose first language was Spanish. Many Filipinos were bilingual before immigrating to the U.S., thus the lower percentage of English learners. It is natural that the high schools situated near the center of the Filipino population in North County, mainly the schools in the Jefferson Unified High School District (JUHSD), would have Filipinos as a leading percentage of the student body. In 2005-06 Jefferson High School in Daly City had a Filipino population that was 35.1% of the student body, while Westmoor High School, also in Daly City, had a student body that was 43.5% Filipino. Filipino students at Oceana High School in Pacifica, also part of the JUHSD, were 31.2% of the student body. Filipinos in 2005 had the second lowest (2.3%) high school dropout rate among the six Bay Area counties (Alameda was the lowest with only 1.7% of Filipino students not finishing).<sup>65</sup>

Some forty-plus years after the first Filipino students enrolled in San Mateo Junior College, that institution (which took the name College of San Mateo in the early 1950s) was joined by two more public colleges: Cañada in Redwood City in 1968 and Skyline in San Bruno in 1969. From the two dozen or so Filipino students in the 1920s and 1930s, Filipinos in the San Mateo County Community College District, encompassing the three public colleges, numbered 2,702 or 9.3% of the district total in the fall of 2002, with Skyline College, the campus serving the North County, having 1,699 Filipino students, 17.7% of the college's population.

Skyline had Filipinos on the pioneer staff that opened the campus, among them Josie Buelow in the drama department and Bob Lualhati in athletics. Later, Dennis Arreola, a former Skyline student body president, would become registrar of the college and, in February 1997, Eloisa Briones joined the Skyline administration as director of business services, having been previously supervisor of auxiliary services at the college district office. Dr. Lori Adrian, a graduate of the University of the Philippines, whose post-graduate work was done at University of the Pacific and Claremont Graduate University, was appointed Skyline's vice president for student services in August 2005. Skyline's Kababayan program was started in the late 1990s by Jeffrey Acidera, a counselor, to reach out to students of Filipino background, and in 2003 it became a learning community with cohort courses and with English professor Liza Erpelo as coordinator.

College of San Mateo (CSM) also had a significant Filipino student population in 2002 with 845 or 6.7% of the student body. In the 1970s and 1980s Filipino students at CSM formed the Samahan

Club (*samahan*, a Tagalog word signifying people getting together); the students were unaware, however, that a Filipino club had existed in earlier years. Serving the south part of the county, Cañada College had the lowest number of Filipino students of the three public colleges: 168 or 2.3%. On the district level, Ben Gonzales, a Skyline student, sat on the governing board of the college district from 2000 to 2002 as a non-voting student trustee.<sup>66</sup>

Educating the citizenry on matters of common (and not-so-common) interest has been a role played by the press. In the pattern of other ethnic groups and nationalities in the U. S., Filipinos established a community press that goes back to at least the 1920s. In the post-1965 era, two publications headquartered in San Mateo County assumed a national, even an international, role in Filipino American journalism, *Philippine News* and *Filipinas* magazine. Alex Esclamado, who came to the U. S. in 1959 and settled in San Francisco, founded the U.S. edition of a Manila newspaper in 1961, publishing it at first from his garage. By 1967, the newspaper became the *Philippine News*. In the 1980s, Esclamado moved the paper's operations to South San Francisco, where the weekly continues to be published. The paper garnered a readership that was both national and international with reporters in key cities in the U.S. and a circulation in the mid-1980s of over 75,000. Early on, Esclamado took on the dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos in the Philippines and to silence criticism Marcos and his agents offered several times to buy the paper from Esclamado in the 1970s and early 1980s for amounts ranging from \$750,000 to \$12 million. Esclamado demurred, despite the pressure put by the Marcos regime on him and on the paper's advertisers.<sup>67</sup>

With the downfall of the Marcos presidency in the People Power Revolution of early 1986, Esclamado began to turn his efforts towards developing an organization which would represent the interests of Filipino Americans on the national level, for example, in dealing with Congress, something not fully realized in the past. Beginning with a meeting in South San Francisco in late May 1987, the Filipino-American Council – United States was conceived and a national conference called for August 1987 in Anaheim. By 1997 that organization was re-established as the National Federation of Filipino American Associations (NaFFAA), with Esclamado as its founding national chairman, a position he held until 2002. In the meantime, he had sold his interest in the *Philippine News* and moved to Nevada. NaFFAA, in which Esclamado continues to play a part, has branches around the country and has developed into an organization with a voice and presence in

Washington, D.C.<sup>68</sup>

In May 1992 a new publication entered the field of Filipino American journalism, *Filipinas: A Magazine for All Filipinos*. (“Filipinas” is taken from the Spanish name for the Philippines. There were some who mistakenly thought that this might be a woman’s publication since the name is also the plural for a woman of Philippine descent.) This glossy publication was the conception of Mona Lisa Yuchengco, who arrived in the Bay Area in 1982. Yuchengco, from a prominent family in the Philippines and the daughter of a Philippine diplomat, published the magazine from San Francisco at first, then in April 1999 the magazine began to publish from South San Francisco. Her purpose, as she told the *San Francisco Chronicle* in 2003, was for Filipinos “to have pride in who they were as a people, where they came from, their culture and heritage, and to pass on that pride to non-Filipinos who wanted to know more about us.” By 2005, *Filipinas*’ circulation had reached 30,000 and received an award from New California Media, an organization of ethnic publications. After thirteen years as the founding publisher and editor-in-chief, Yuchengco, in the summer of 2005, turned the magazine over to Greg Macabenta, a journalist and advertising executive from the East Bay.<sup>69</sup> Macabenta moved the magazine’s offices to Daly City and continued the magazine’s objective as a publication for “all” Filipinos, meaning Filipinos in the U. S., the Philippines, and the global diaspora.<sup>70</sup>

Yuchengco, like Esclamado, turned to other areas of interest. Before founding *Filipinas* magazine, she had already been attracted to philanthropy and formed Philippine International Aid, a foundation that provides scholarships to about 2,000 needy children in the Philippines. She established the Maria Elena Yuchengco Memorial Journalism Scholarship to support those students of Filipino heritage interested in pursuing studies in journalism as a major or as a career. Yuchengco has served on several community or non-profit boards including the Seton Health Services Foundation, the University of San Francisco Center for the Pacific Rim, the Asia Society (Northern California), and the Asian Pacific Fund.<sup>71</sup>

The print media is but one side of contemporary journalism, and community print media may not be as well known outside the community as it might be within. In the electronic media side of journalism, San Mateo County Filipino Americans have been visible on the Bay Area’s television screens. A Peninsula resident who was born in Hawai’i, Lloyd LaCuesta joined KTVU-TV in August 1976 and became the station’s South Bay bureau chief and a familiar face to local news program viewers. LaCuesta grew up in Southern California and



Mona Lisa Yuchengco started *Filipinas: A Magazine for All Filipinos*. Photograph by Matthew Sumner, 2003, courtesy of the *San Mateo County Times*.



received his bachelor's in political science and journalism from San Jose State University. He went on to take his master's in journalism from University of California, Los Angeles. His most memorable experiences as a television journalist include a flight into the crater of Mt. St. Helens in Washington State after its eruption in 1980, traveling on assignment to the Philippines, and covering the first landing of a space shuttle at Edwards Air Force Base in California. LaCuesta has been actively involved in the effort to recruit more minorities into journalism. He served for three years as the national president of the Asian American Journalists Association and was the first national president of Unity '94, an organization bringing together journalists of color in America. LaCuesta received several Emmy awards in his career as well as a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Asian American Journalists Association in 2004 and *Filipinas* magazine's Achievement Award in 2007.<sup>72</sup>

Another visage familiar to Bay Area viewers, Peninsula-born-and-bred Malou Nubla has been an Emmy Award-winning television host and news anchor. She began appearing in 1994 doing reports for a service that contracted with KRON-TV to do the station's traffic news. Within eight weeks, Malou Nubla was hired by KRON to be its first in-house traffic reporter. She went from traffic reporting to anchoring the station's early morning news program. Changing stations, she went on to co-host KPIX's Evening Magazine in 2000 and stayed with that program until 2005. Since then she has been on nationally syndicated programs and in November 2007 began a new early morning program on KTVU. Nubla graduated from San Francisco State in journalism and has her own company, Malou Nubla Productions, Inc., in Foster City. In 1998, Christine Nubla, a graduate of University of California, Santa Barbara, followed her sister in traffic news on KRON, then went from there to traffic and general reporting for KNTV-TV NBC 11. She also did local sports for Channel 36. In 2005 she became the first anchor hired by Comcast SportsNet West on its morning program SportsRise on weekdays.<sup>73</sup>

Another area of visibility for the county's Filipino community has been in religion. The growth of the Filipino population in San Mateo County has had an effect on the county's Catholic churches. The Philippines are reported to be 81% Catholic and with the increase in numbers of Filipinos in the Bay Area it is no surprise that this growth would be reflected among Catholic churches in the area. North County parishes in Daly City, South San Francisco, San Bruno and Colma have especially seen much of this increase. Some parishes, such as St.



St. Augustine in South San Francisco became the largest parish in the San Francisco Archdiocese. Eighty percent of the parishioners are Filipino.

Andrew's and Our Lady of Perpetual Help, both in Daly City, and St. Augustine in South San Francisco, by the early 2000s had become 80% Filipino. Filipino attendance has either revived older existing parishes which were losing numbers or has increased the numbers at newer parishes such as St. Augustine. St. Andrew's, completed in 1975, was 30% Filipino at first, but by 1989 70% of the 2000 in the parish were Filipino. The pastor of Holy Angels in Colma, an older parish, said that Filipinos "have energized the parish. They brought a great faith and that has influenced the community." In 1989, Holy Angels had some 3,500 members, about 70% of them Filipino. The Colma parish had more than twice the total population of the town itself on its rolls; clearly, the church is drawing from nearby Daly City neighborhoods. By 2000 the estimate was that 25% of the San Francisco Archdiocese's faithful were Filipino (the archdiocese comprises the counties of San Francisco, San Mateo and Marin).<sup>74</sup>

Most, if not all, of the Filipino priests who have been serving parishes in the county are Philippine-born. In a way, this is reminiscent of earlier heavy migrations when priests from Ireland followed the Irish to America, and German, Polish and Italian priests did likewise. Among the Filipino priests who have served as pastors in the county are Father Floro Arcamo at St. Charles in San Carlos and Father Eugene Tungol at St. Augustine in South San Francisco. Father Tungol has served as the chair of the Council of Priests of the Archdiocese of San Francisco. To focus on St. Augustine as an example, the parish was founded in the 1970s in the Westborough section of South San Francisco as that area was being developed. In the course of time, St. Augustine grew to become the largest parish in the San Francisco Archdiocese, with 5,000 households on its rolls. More than 4,000 people attend Mass on the weekends, and as was previously mentioned, 80% of its parishioners are Filipino. Some twenty years after its founding, St. Augustine's embarked on an expansion that included a new school and an enlargement of the church building.<sup>75</sup>

With the numbers of Filipino Catholics in the pews of Catholic churches not only in San Mateo County, but throughout America, what one scholar calls the "Filipinization" of American churches is taking place. At the same time, there is the "second coming of Christianity" to America, meaning Christianity being sustained in the U.S. not from Europe, but from the Far East, that is, the Philippines and Vietnam, and from Mexico and Latin America. As far as the cultural impact of Filipinos on local Catholic churches, the parallel may be seen with parishes with a significant Mexican American population where the feast of the Virgin

*With the numbers of Filipino Catholics in the pews of Catholic churches... the "Filipinization" of American churches is taking place.*

***“The growing Filipino population ensures that Filipino Catholics will play an ever increasing role in archdiocesan affairs.”***

***Jeffry M. Burns,  
archdiocese historian***

of Guadalupe has become prominent or where churches with an Irish congregation passed St. Patrick's Day celebrations on to the non-Irish. Filipinos have added their traditions in which non-Filipinos have also participated. Since 2003, Catholic parishes in San Mateo county have been sponsoring Simbang Gabi, a practice in the Philippines of nine evening Masses leading up to Christmas Eve, followed by a meal in the church hall each night. In 2006, St. Gregory the Great in San Mateo was the host for the first of these novenas of Masses and the archbishop of San Francisco came to celebrate the Mass. Other festivals include Flores de Mayo, which is similar to earlier May Day celebrations. Holy Angels church in Colma has a regular Tagalog Mass for those whose first language is not English. The historian of the San Francisco archdiocese observed, “The growing Filipino population ensures that Filipino Catholics will play an ever increasing role in archdiocesan affairs.”<sup>76</sup>

Protestant Filipinos are also represented in the county. On August 16, 1979, the First Filipino-American United Church of Christ opened in San Francisco, with 41 people in the former St. John's United Church of Christ. Its founding minister was the Reverend Erasto L. Arenas, who had come from a church in Honolulu. Many in the fledgling congregation the Reverend Arenas knew from the Philippines. In March 1980, the members of the church moved to San Bruno, where the congregation has been located ever since. In 2000 it numbered some 420 members, drawing not only from the Peninsula and San Francisco but the entire Bay Area. The Daly City Methodist Church has an associate minister who is Filipino, and the Iglesia ni Cristo (Church of Christ), a restorationist church founded in the Philippines in 1914, has a congregation in Daly City that was commended by the city for its community activities.<sup>77</sup>

While many, if not most, Filipino newcomers became involved in their churches, it was a different matter regarding politics. Despite House Speaker Thomas “Tip” O'Neill's observation “All politics is local,” interesting people in *really* local politics has been difficult. This seemed especially so for those Filipinos who were still more focused on family and events back in the Philippines, rather than developments in their new home. Many of the newcomers could not vote; they were either not yet citizens or were under 18. Others were uninterested or indifferent to politics, especially American politics. The new immigrants were often “transnational” in attitude and feeling; although living in America, they still felt pulled back to the Philippines. Perhaps this view might be represented by a columnist for *Filipinas* magazine, a Montara

resident: “Although I have now spent more than half my life in the United States, as a teen and as an adult, the Philippines is still home, a place I revisit year after year.”<sup>78</sup> The ease of air transportation, compared to the earlier tedious ship-crossing taking weeks, made transitioning back and forth between the U. S. and the Philippines (the *balikbayan* [“returnee”] phenomenon) much less difficult.

It is the indifference to politics and to the political process in America that Alice Peña Bulos strived to overcome among her fellow compatriots. In the 1970s, Bulos, the former chair of sociology at the University of Santo Tomás, arrived in the U. S. to join her husband. She became immersed in politics, Democratic Party politics, on the local level. In 1983 she started the Filipino American Democratic Club of San Mateo County and became its president. She got involved with the state Democratic Party, serving as chair of the Filipino American Caucus and as a delegate to several national party conventions. Besides politics, she was active in her parish, St. Augustine’s in South San Francisco, serving on the building committee. Still, politics and involvement in the Filipino community were her driving interests. She founded the Filipino American Grassroots Movement to get Filipinos to vote and to become more participatory in politics. In recognition of her work with senior citizens in San Mateo County, she was appointed to the federal Commission on Aging by President Bill Clinton in 1993 and in 1995 she was a delegate to the White House Conference on Aging. Bulos also helped to develop the Filipino American Women’s Network to give support to women in their personal and professional lives. Curbing domestic violence against women has also been a concern of hers. In 1999, *Filipinas* magazine gave her an award for lifetime achievement and the President of the Philippines in December 2000 recognized her as a distinguished overseas Filipina.<sup>79</sup>

In 1993 a big breakthrough occurred: the election of a Filipino American to the city council of Daly City, the county’s largest city. If Filipino Americans’ “invisibility” was to some extent based upon their being “invisible” in America’s political life, then the election of Michael P. Guingona marked a big step towards more “visibility.” (Again, all this matters if one accepts that Filipino Americans have been “invisible” at all.) Daly City, a community of 92,315 in the 1990 census, had a Filipino population of 24,450 or 27% of the total population.<sup>80</sup> Since the mid-1980s, Filipinos had been trying to get onto the city council in Daly City, but with no success.

Hitherto, Daly City was known for the 1909 Stanley Ketchell-Jack Johnson championship fight, the Cow Palace, and folk singer

*But now Daly City was acquiring another distinction: it had become the premiere Filipino American suburb in the United States.*

Malvina Reynolds' 1962 song "Little Boxes," with its sardonic look at suburban sameness. But now Daly City was acquiring another distinction: it had become the premiere Filipino American suburb in the United States. Its neighborhoods, stores, and shopping centers reflected the growing presence of Filipinos in the community. This clearly was the effect of the post-1965 influx of new people from the Philippines. The leading shopping mall in Daly City, Serramonte Center, which opened in 1968, would see crowds of Filipino Americans on any day of the week. St. Francis Square had Asian and Filipino shops and restaurants. Daly City was being transformed from a white middle- and working-class community to one diversified in its racial and ethnic make-up and made distinctive by its Filipino residents. Among the attractions of Daly City, including fog and overcast skies, had been its affordability and its closeness to San Francisco. As mentioned earlier, second-generation Filipino Americans had already been moving to Daly City from San Francisco. With the state's fair housing law validated by the U. S. Supreme Court in 1967 and the migration trends already in place, the transformation of Daly City was set in motion. One of the areas that Filipinos began moving into was Broadmoor (an unincorporated area surrounded by Daly City) during the late 1960s. Another neighborhood development, Westlake Subdivision Improvement Association, created by builder Henry Doelger, opened in 1949 and had barred non-whites from buying property in Westlake; that was no longer the case as new homeowners in the 1960s began moving in.<sup>81</sup>

Even though Filipinos, through the 1980s were becoming a significant part of Daly City's population, they were unable to elect a candidate from the community to the city council. There were splits and differences within the community, as well as indifference. Mario Panoringan and Ernie Sana vied for a council seat in 1986, but both lost, Panoringan being fourth in a contest for three council seats.<sup>82</sup> More attempts were made to get a Filipino on the council, until a special situation arose: a vacancy would occur in 1993 due to the elevation of a council member, Mike Nevin, to the county board of supervisors. In this situation, Michael Guingona, a second-generation Filipino American, originally from San Francisco, but who had lived in Daly City since he was four and attended local schools, stepped in.

Guingona, a lawyer, had been a student at Skyline College and had gone on to University of California, Los Angeles, earning a degree in history; he completed law school at the University of San Francisco and went on to public service law in the public defender's office in San Francisco. In 1992 he ran unsuccessfully for the Daly City city council;



Michael Guingona, Daly's City's first Filipino American Mayor. Photograph courtesy of Mayor's Office, Daly City.



there were five Filipino Americans in the race, and none won a seat. Guingona trailed Rolito Recio, a realtor active in civic affairs and a 17-year resident of Daly City. Prior to this failed bid, Guingona stated, "My background is Filipino American and not Filipino, so I am able to see things in two ways."<sup>83</sup> When Guingona entered the lists in 1993 there was ill-feeling in the community at first that Guingona had violated an agreement not to run so that Panoringan, running again, could be the sole candidate from the community.<sup>84</sup>

Guingona's electoral victory in June 1993 showed that to win, a candidate had to appeal to more than a Filipino constituency; a broad support base that reached beyond one ethnic group was the key to winning. Yet both candidates enjoyed support coming from outside the Filipino community. Panoringan was endorsed by a former mayor of Daly City, two members of the county board of supervisors and a member of Congress, while Guingona was supported by three members of Daly City's city council, the Police Officers Association and Fire Fighters. One might ruminate here on the efficacy of endorsements in politics. Guingona told the Chronicle, "I didn't use my ethnicity as a badge. The message was never, 'Vote for me, I'm Filipino.' That's not to say that I'm not proud of who I am."<sup>85</sup> Was the extra element the fact that Guingona was American-born and related more effectively to the broad Daly City electorate?

Guingona has served continuously on the city council of Daly City since taking office in 1993 and was the north county representative on the San Mateo County Transit District Board of Directors (SamTrans) for eight years; he also served on the board of the County Transportation Authority. He was involved in the formation of the Daly City-Quezon City (Philippines) Sister City Committee (Daly City's other sister city is Albuquerque, Bohol, also in the Philippines). Guingona first served as mayor in 1995, at 33 the youngest person to serve as mayor in the history of Daly City. He subsequently served as mayor again in 1997, 2001 and 2005. As in the case of many Peninsula cities the office of mayor rotates among council members.<sup>86</sup>

In addition to Daly City, San Bruno has had a Filipino American member of the city council since 1996. Ken Ibarra, an architect, has served continuously from that year and was last re-elected in 2005. Ibarra is a grandson of Lorenzo Daquioag, the early San Mateo Junior College student mentioned previously.<sup>87</sup>

Another community that has had Filipino Americans deeply involved in its political and economic life has been Colma, with a Filipino population in 2000 of 265 or 23% of the total population of 1,191, the

next highest percentage after Daly City. Filipinos were elected to the town council: C. R. “Larry” Formalejo, who came on the council in 2004 was briefly the town’s mayor before he resigned his seat in early 2008, and Joanne del Rosario, who was elected in November 2006.<sup>88</sup> Colma, San Francisco’s cemetery city, was undergoing a transition. After five years of controversy and objections, Rene Medina, a Filipino American businessman from South San Francisco, had opened a card room, Lucky Chances, in the summer of 1998. Colma, not previously known for being a destination site, except for funeral processions, saw new life as a casino town. Medina became a philanthropist and a supporter of political candidates. The town received millions of dollars in taxes through the casino’s operations, which enabled Colma to meet its bills and provide the town’s citizenry with unprecedented perquisites, such as field trips paid for by the town. As time went on it appeared that certain town council members had accepted favors from Medina, and charges were filed.<sup>89</sup> It seemed that the future of the “new” Colma had become intertwined with the fortunes of a casino.

On a county-wide basis, Gerry Trias was the first Filipino American to hold a county elective office. An accounting graduate from the University of the East who arrived in the U. S. and San Mateo County in 1968, Trias joined the county controller’s office in 1970 and since 1984 had been assistant controller of the county, when the veteran controller decided to retire before his term expired. The outgoing controller endorsed Trias as his successor, and Trias also had the support of the entire board of supervisors as well as the county assessor. In the June 1986 primary, Trias was elected, and the board of supervisors appointed him to assume the now-vacated position immediately rather than wait until January 1987 to take office.<sup>90</sup> He began his term in office supported by members of the board of supervisors, but just as his first term was drawing to a close and his candidacy for a second term was being announced, a question regarding his management of the controller’s office arose. The issue had to do with an erroneous disbursement of public funds to a school district. Many of his supporters on the board of supervisors had become less supportive. The board of supervisors proceeded to re-assign some functions of Trias’s office, in a move that one defender of Trias called an “emasculatation proclamation.”<sup>91</sup> Despite this development, Trias ran unopposed and was re-elected. After a twelve-year incumbency, Trias’s bid to continue in office for a fourth term was ended with his defeat in the June primary election in 1998.<sup>92</sup>

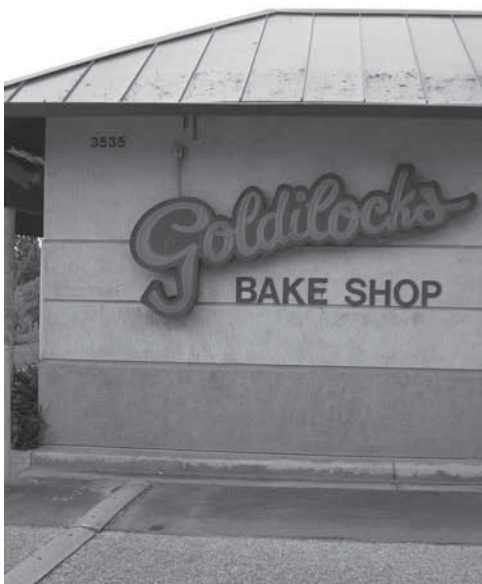
Has more active involvement in local politics by San Mateo

County Filipinos made a difference to the community at large? Has it made a difference within the Filipino community? One writer has observed that “Filipino Americans are still an invisible minority to the centers of power and purveyors of influence,” while another has felt that “compared with the second-wave Chinese immigrants, the recent Filipino immigrants have been ‘invisible.’”<sup>93</sup> Whether the increased visibility of Filipinos as actors in the political scene in San Mateo County has offset these views remains to be seen.

With the growing Filipino population in the county and especially in Daly City, problems of adjustment as well as problems involving family issues and health care arose. Gangs have formed. Violence against women has happened. To address these issues several organizations emerged. The Daly City Filipino Organizing Project (DCFOP) was launched by the San Mateo County Organizing Project in 1986. One of the offshoots of the DCFOP was the formation in 1989 of Teatro ng Tanan (“theater for everyone”) (TnT), which developed a following among the younger generation. TnT’s first performance took place in the Serramonte del Rey auditorium in Daly City, and eventually TnT moved to San Francisco. One member of TnT, Allan Manalo, left the company to start Tongue in a Mood; Manalo, who is American-born, felt that TnT was dominated by Filipino immigrants who had different emphases from the American-born. Like many other communities, the foreign-born and American-born members of the same group did not necessarily share similar outlooks, methods or attitudes.<sup>94</sup>

In 1990 the Pilipino Bayanihan Resource Center, a non-profit agency, opened in Daly City to provide youth and family services to Filipinos in San Mateo County, especially those that have recently immigrated to the United States. To offset the attractions offered by gangs, alcohol and drugs to Filipino youth, Liwanag Kultural Center opened in March 2007 in a Daly City park as a “safe place” for young people. Tutoring help and workshops in art and culture are among its programs. Addressing the problem of domestic violence, Overcoming Relationship Abuse Kumares/Kumpares received an award from the President of the Philippines in its work with immigrant women, advising them of their rights and offering support to battered wives. The program is an outreach effort by the Burlingame-based non-profit CORA.<sup>95</sup>

Popular culture may be the area where Filipinos from San Mateo County have given more “visibility” to Filipinos nationwide. “Pop” culture includes sports, music, media entertainment, films. But perhaps food as an element of popular culture and ethnic identity might be a place to start.



Goldilocks in South San Francisco, 2008.



Red Lantern in Redwood City, 2008.

Food is certainly one feature by which a group becomes known. Onto the menus of hospital cafeterias, office parties, neighborhood gatherings, and street fairs have come staples of Filipino cuisine such as *lumpia* and *adobo*, signs of the cultural impact of a growing Filipino population in San Mateo County. There had been many mom-and-pop Filipino eateries in the past, especially along the Mission Street corridor from San Francisco into Daly City, and offshoots of chains with roots in the Philippines such as Goldilocks in the Westborough district of South San Francisco, Max's in the same city or Tito Rey of the Islands in Daly City. When a major player in the Philippine fast-food industry opened its first United States outlet in Daly City this drew media attention and stirred pangs of nostalgia from recent immigrants who grew up with it back in the Philippines. Jollibee, which started in 1978 before McDonald's penetrated the Philippine market, opened its Daly City branch on June 12, 1998. As San Francisco Chronicle writer Benjamin Pimentel observed, "[Jollibee] is a modern, Americanized version of the *turo-turo* ("point-point" in Tagalog), the popular working-class Filipino cafeteria where patrons simply point to dishes they want." Pimentel was fourteen when the first Jollibee opened in Quezon City, next to Manila where he lived. When McDonald's opened its first restaurant in the Philippines in 1981, Jollibee was already well established and by 2005 Jollibee had more than 500 restaurants in the island republic while McDonald's had only around 250.<sup>96</sup>

Besides having an outlet of a popular Philippine fast-food chain, the Peninsula has also seen the emergence of restaurants featuring original and traditional takes on Filipino cuisine in a *haute cuisine* style. When Barrio Fiesta of Manila opened its doors in South San Francisco in 1984, it attracted the favorable attention of restaurant reviewers. Among the Peninsula restaurants combining ambience and fine Filipino cookery that opened in the 1990s and 2000s are Patio Filipino, Kuya's Asian Cuisine, and Tribu, all in San Bruno, and Bistro Luneta in San Mateo. The 2000s have also seen the rise of Filipino American "celebrity chefs" on the Peninsula, among them Jeffrey San Diego at Red Lantern in Redwood City, which opened in July 2007, and Emmanuel Santos and George Bustamante of Bistro Luneta, which was launched in the fall of 2006. These Peninsula restaurants join similar ones in the fine-dining category in the Bay Area highlighting Filipino or Pan-Asian dishes such as Poleng Lounge, Pres a Vi, and Palencia, all in San Francisco, and Va de Vi in Walnut Creek.<sup>97</sup>

The earlier generation of Filipinos were involved in junior college and high school athletics in the county. In the post-1965 era,

the Peninsula Filipino community has a championship golfer, Dorothy Delasin, raised in Daly City and South San Francisco. In 1996, at the age of fifteen, she won two titles: the California State Women's Championship and the United States Junior Girls Championship (USGA). She concluded her amateur career by taking the United States Women's Amateur Championship (USGA) in 1999. The following year, her first as a professional, she received the Louise Suggs Rolex Rookie of the Year Award. She won the first match she entered as a pro, the 2000 Grand Eagle Classic, and would be winning that same tournament again in 2001. Altogether, she would have four LPGA victories and continues to play on the LPGA tour. Her sister Divina caddied for her for years, then began her own career as a golf pro and was chosen to be on the Golf Channel's reality television show, *The Big Break V: Hawaii*, in 2006, but was eliminated.<sup>98</sup>

So-called "reality" shows go back at least to the days of *Candid Microphone* and *Candid Camera* in the 1940s and 1950s or even to the earlier 1930s-1940s Major Bowes Amateur Hour radio program where "the Major" would strike a gong to dismiss an untalented performer. Early television game and quiz shows with contestants eliminating each other are further examples of the genre. The present version of television "reality" shows emerged in the 2000s with similarities to past programs, but with newer twists; these shows quickly became immensely popular with television viewers. Among the several programs loosely associated with the "reality" format is *Dancing with the Stars*, which first aired in June 2005. A leading performer on *Dancing* has been Cheryl Bautista Burke, who grew up in Atherton and graduated from Menlo-Atherton High School. A professional dancer, Burke is of Filipino, Irish and Russian descent. She and her partners won the first-place trophy in the second and third seasons of the show in the spring and fall of 2006. Burke received Emmy nominations in 2006 for outstanding choreography and went on to be a regular with the program, both on television and on tour. She rescued the former Metronome Ballroom on San Francisco's Potrero Hill from demolition, and in its place opened "Cheryl Burke Dance" in April 2008 as a studio for teaching ballroom dancing. Another Filipina American dancer, Melody Lacayanga from Daly City, appeared in the first season of the Fox network's *So You Think You Can Dance* in 2005 and was the runner-up in the finals.<sup>99</sup>

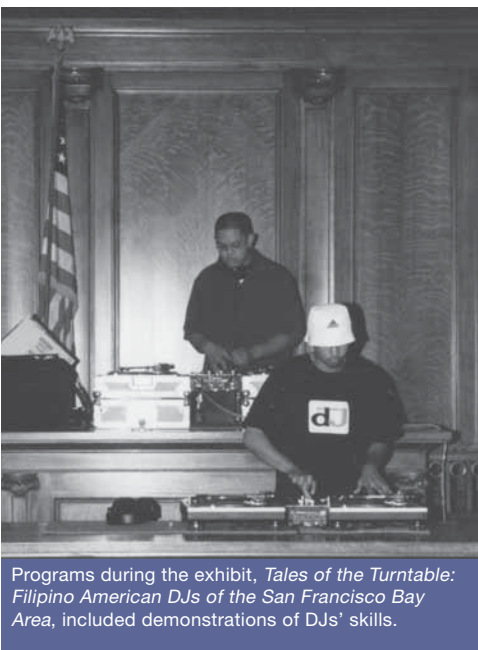
Dance and music have a symbiotic relationship, and Classified Records, founded in 1993 by Noel Laxamana, Rino Que, and Kormann Roque, played a significant role in promoting Filipino American recording



artists. Roque, who was born in Manila and graduated from Daly City's Westmoor High School, pursued studies in music/software engineering and became the president of Classified Records. In 1994, Classified Records released dance-pop singer Jocelyn Enriquez's debut album, *Lovely*. A native of San Francisco, Enriquez graduated from Pinole Valley High School; her parents came from the province of Pangasinan. In 1996 the company signed up Pinay, four young women, who had been an a cappella group for three years, and released their debut album, *Inevitable*. Elvin Reyes, previously involved with Roque and Que in Music Quest Productions, which became Classified Records, was the producer for Pinay's first album. Dance music was the staple of Classified and dance music artist M:G's first hit was on the Classified label and stayed on Billboard's charts for 22 weeks. The independent record company, however, disbanded in 2001.<sup>100</sup>

Nevertheless, the musical scene saw other groups and innovations come out of the Peninsula and San Francisco. Bay Area disk jockeys played a leading part in promoting new sounds and familiarizing their listeners with hip-hop music. The DJs, many of whom were Filipino, worked in teams (mobile DJs) and would throw backyard dance parties in South San Francisco and competed with one another to determine the "best" DJ. Although many of these Filipino American DJs came from San Francisco, they developed large followings on the Peninsula and soon were known nationally and internationally. An offshoot of this activity in the 1980s was the emergence of "turntablism," where the DJ played turntables as if they were musical instruments, using the techniques of mixing, scratching and beat-juggling. The mobile DJ crew from the Bay Area that appeared to be the epitome of the turntabling art was San Francisco's Invisibl Skratch Piklz, with one of their number, Q-Bert (Richard Quitevis of San Francisco's Excelsior District), an inspired exponent. The phenomenon was such that in 2001-02 the San Mateo County History Museum hosted an exhibit, *Tales of the Turntable: Filipino American DJ's of the San Francisco Bay Area*, curated by Melanie Cagonot. Wherein lay the appeal of the art and its practitioners? Cagonot thought that this was "the first time young Filipino Americans have had something that's ours."<sup>101</sup>

"Something that's ours" may also apply to independent (or "indie") films which have attracted the creative talents of Filipino Americans. A Daly City native, Patricio Genelsa was the associate producer of *The Debut*, a film focusing on generational and cultural gaps in Filipino American society. This film was taken up by Columbia Tri-Star distribution and shown around the U. S. in 2003. Genelsa also



Programs during the exhibit, *Tales of the Turntable: Filipino American DJ's of the San Francisco Bay Area*, included demonstrations of DJs' skills.

wrote and directed *Lumpia*, which made the film-festival route in 2003, and took awards at the Hawai'i International Film Festival and the 2004 Toronto Reel World. Besides film-making, Genelsa produced music videos with the Southern California-based pop/hip hop group Black Eyed Peas.<sup>102</sup>

Another indie film involves a former film student at College of San Mateo, H. P. Mendoza, who had made a personal CD with lyrics about a town on the Peninsula. Mendoza linked up with Richard Wong, a friend from film class. Wong, upon hearing the CD, urged Mendoza to write out a script. With Wong directing, they created *Colma: The Musical*, a well received film that premiered at the San Francisco Asian American Film Festival in 2006, where it received the Jury Prize. It went on to several other festivals that year, then picked up a contract with Lionsgate Films and Roadside Attractions for distribution nation-wide. In 2007, *Colma*, probably the only film so far bearing the name of a Peninsula community, had its regular theater release in San Francisco and New York and other venues. While the theme of the film is not particularly focused on the Filipino American experience per se, it is there nevertheless in the story of young people just out of high school, contemplating their future and their relationships. Mendoza, a Filipino American originally from San Francisco, the film's lyricist, composer and scriptwriter, ended up also being the lead actor-singer. The film had attained somewhat of a "cult" status in its two years out, so much so that at the 2008 San Francisco Asian American Film Festival, *Colma* was re-shown in a sing-along karaoke-style version. *Colma* may be the first film to use the Peninsula's cemetery city as a backdrop since the 1971 film *Harold and Maude*.<sup>103</sup>

This account of the impact of Filipino Americans in American popular culture and in the visual and musical arts may fittingly serve as a conclusion to this effort to counter the view or impression of the "invisibility" of Filipino Americans in American life. Increasingly, Filipino Americans have been making their presence felt not only in San Mateo County, but in California and the nation at large, and San Mateo Filipino Americans in particular have played a major part in this development. Filipinos are and have been visible in the work force, the professions, in education and business, in the arts, in the military, in the faith communities and in political life. As their numbers grow and their participation in the larger society increases, and the larger society acknowledges them, so also will their impact and influence become more and more evident.



Visitor exploring the exhibit *Tales of the Turntable: Filipino American DJs of the San Francisco Bay Area* at the San Mateo County History Museum.

<sup>1</sup>For an overview of the Filipino American experience, see Barbara M. Posadas, *The Filipino Americans* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1999), Fred Cordova, *Filipinos: Forgotten Asian Americans, A Pictorial Essay* (Dubuque: Kendall Hunt, 1983), Ronald Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans*, Updated and Revised (Boston: Back Bay Books [paperback] Little, Brown, 1998). Helpful for certain facets of Asian American society are Angelo N. Ancheta, *Race, Rights, and the Asian American Experience* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1998), Bill Ong Hing, *Making and Remaking Asian America Through Immigration Policy, 1850-1990* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993).

<sup>2</sup>Henry R. Wagner, *Spanish Voyages to the Northwest Coast of America in the Sixteenth Century* (San Francisco: California Historical Society, 1929), Unamuno's *relación* translated, pp. 143-45. While there is no doubt that Filipinos came ashore as part of Unamuno's party, where Unamuno landed is a matter of discussion. Wagner's placement of the landfall in Morro Bay is based upon Unamuno's account that the site was at 35.5° north latitude. Others dispute Morro Bay as the landing site, citing possible inaccuracy in the latitude reading and discrepancies in details of the landing area with the actual bay, for example, see W. William Mathes, "Vizcaino and San Diego History," *The Journal of San Diego History*, XV (Spring 1972), online version; this leading California historian put the landfall at Monterey Bay, apparently going by Unamuno's description of the landing site and other elements. Also disputing Morro Bay as the site and summarizing the argument is Hector Santos, "Did Philippine *indios* really land in Morro Bay?" Sulat sa Tansô, © 1995, 1997. The use by the Spanish of the term *indios* to describe their colonial subjects was part of the common parlance. The governing body for the overseas Spanish colonies was called (in English) the Council of the Indies, hence the inhabitants of those areas, to the Spanish, were people of the Indies, or *indios*, regardless of whether it was the West Indies (the Americas) or the East Indies (East Asia).

<sup>3</sup>Wagner, pp. 156-67, Cermenho's *declaraciones*.

<sup>4</sup>Harry W. Crosby, *Antigua California: Mission and Colony on the Peninsular Frontier, 1697-1768* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1994), pp. 175-176, 279.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 279, 500 (n. 78). To the Spanish all people coming from the region of East Asia were called "Chinese," but the term was especially applied to Filipinos.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 500, n. 78.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 347.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 418.

<sup>9</sup>Confirmation records, Mission San Carlos de Monte-Rey, Aug. 10, 1779, *Thomas Workman Temple II Collection* (The Californianos Library), cited in a *Chronology of Filipinos in America Pre-1898* by Eloisa Gomez Borah (1997-2004).

<sup>10</sup>William M. Mason, *Los Angeles Under the Spanish: Spain's New World* (Burbank: Southern California Genealogical Society, 2004), p. 15; see also p. 66, 1781 *Padron* (Census) of Los Angeles, where the absent Miranda is listed as "chino."

<sup>11</sup>Eloisa Gomez Borah, *Chronology of Filipinos in America Pre-1898*, citing *Stockton Daily Evening Record*, Dec. 15, 1934, p. 20, and *The Mariposa Sentinel* (Mariposa Museum & Historical Center), Second Quarter, 1989, p. 15.

<sup>12</sup>Posadas, pp. 13-14; Takaki, p. 315. See also Marcelino A. Foronda, Jr., "America is in the Heart: Ilokano Immigration to the United States (1906-1930)," *De La Salle University Occasional Paper*, No. 3, (Manila: De La Salle University, 1976), pp. 5-6, where Foronda summarizes the several surmises about this Louisiana community and their origin, including the view that they had been brought there sometime before 1780 to teach French and Spanish settlers how to cultivate rice.

<sup>13</sup>Posadas, pp. 16-19; Foronda, pp. 6, 50 (n. 15a). In 1900, three Filipino students

already had arrived in the United States to pursue studies, with the encouragement of American authorities. (Posadas, p. 16.)

<sup>14</sup>Posadas, p. 19 (the two scholars are Posadas and her husband, Roland Guyotte).

<sup>15</sup>Hence the title of Cordova's book. See also Jonathan Y. Okamura, "Filipino Americans: The Marginalized Minority," in Larry L. Naylor, *Cultural Diversity in the United States* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1997), p. 191. Census figures are from U. S. Census 2000 Summary File 1: California, DP-1. California's total population for 2000 was 33,871,648. Filipinos thus made up 2.7% of the state inhabitants.

<sup>16</sup>The census figures for 2000 are taken from [www.factfinder.census.gov/servlet/SAFF](http://www.factfinder.census.gov/servlet/SAFF), hereafter referred to as "2000 Census." The total for the county and the cities includes both those who identify themselves as Filipino only and as Filipino plus one or more races. The 1930 figures for the Filipino population are from *Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930: Population*, Volume II: General Report/Statistical Subjects (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1933), p. 25.

<sup>17</sup> See Sonia Emily Wallovits, "The Filipinos in California," M. A. thesis, University of Southern California, June 1966, p. 80.

<sup>18</sup>See Mitchell Postel's article in this issue of *La Peninsula*.

<sup>19</sup>Roberto V. Vallangca, *Pinoy: The First Wave (1898-1941)* (San Francisco: Strawberry Hill Press, 1977), p. 115. Paul Valdez, who arrived in the U. S. at age 19, went to Lowell High School in San Francisco and was a houseboy with a San Francisco family of five. He had a townmate from the Philippines who was with a family in Burlingame with two children. Sometimes this townmate came up to San Francisco to help Valdez when he had to clean up after parties given by Valdez's 'family.' Also, there was a friend, Roberto, who did similar work for a family in San Mateo.

<sup>20</sup>Cordova, 123-31, on students from the

Philippines in the 1920s and 1930s. Also, on the terms "schoolboys" and "fountain-pen boys," see *Voices*, (Stockton: Filipino Oral History Project, 1984, 2000), pp. (15), (41-42) (the pages are unnumbered) and Wallovits, p. 22.

<sup>21</sup>*The Campus*, 1926, III (San Mateo: San Mateo Junior College, 1926), p. 18; 1927, IV, p. 30.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, 1927, IV, p. 17; 1928, V, pp. 15, 16; 1929, VI, p. 20.

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*, 1929, VI, p. 43.

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, 1933, X (unnumbered pages); 1934, XI, pp. 23, 25; 1935, XII, pp. 16, 20; 1936, XIII, p. 19; 1937, XIV (unnumbered pages).

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*, 1935, XII, p. 16; 1937, XIV (unnumbered pages).

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid.*, 1931, VIII, pp. 22, 34, 37.

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*, 1933, X (unnumbered pages).

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*, 1936, XIII, pp. 16, 48.

<sup>29</sup>*Ibid.*, 1932, IX, p. 32.

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*, 1934, XI, see page on Defense Club; one Filipina was a member.

<sup>31</sup>On the Ilokano (or Ilocano) migration to the U. S., see Foronda cited above.

<sup>32</sup>Cordova, p. 123.

<sup>33</sup>*Elm*, 1932 (San Mateo: San Mateo High School, 1932), pp. 10, 11, 18.

<sup>34</sup>*Ibid.*, 1939 (unnumbered pages).

<sup>35</sup>*Bagumbayan* (New York: Filipino Christian Students Movement in America, 1928), p. 47.

<sup>36</sup>Cordova, p. 123; *The Campus*, 1930, VIII, p. 28, for Daquioag as a graduate.

<sup>37</sup>Beverly Daquioag Ventura interview, Sacramento, April 16, 2008.

<sup>38</sup>Albert W. Palmer, *Orientalism in American Life* (New York: Friendship Press, 1934 (reprinted by R & E Associates, San



San Mateo Junior College students, c. late 1920s. Photograph courtesy of the Photo Library Project of the SMCCCD.





Hiyas Philippine Folk Dance Company performed at the San Mateo County History Museum's Immigrants Day Festival in 2006.

Francisco, in 1972), p. 75.

<sup>39</sup>Ancheta, pp. 29-30, 33.

<sup>40</sup>Takaki, pp. 330, 341-42; Ancheta, pp. 20, 33-34.

<sup>41</sup>On nurses coming from the Philippines to work in the U. S., see Catherine Ceniza Choy, *Empire of Care: Nursing and Migration in Filipino American History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), although Choy does not explore fully the pioneer generation of Filipino nurses who on their own accord came to America in those early years. On a personal note, both parents of the present writer came as nurses, father in 1919 (to Seattle) and mother in 1926 (to Cleveland, then to Brooklyn, NY, a year or so later).

<sup>42</sup>Again, see Postel's essay in this issue. On the Watsonville riot, see Howard DeWitt, "The Watsonville Anti-Filipino Riot of 1930: A Case Study of the Great Depression and Ethnic Conflict in California," *Southern California Quarterly*, 61:3 (1979), and Alex S. Fabros, Jr., "In the Heat of the Night: The Exeter and Watsonville Riots 1929-1930," in *Filipinos in America: A Journey of Faith* (South San Francisco: Filipinas Publishing, 2003), pp. 37-41 (originally in *Filipinas*, Jan. 1996).

<sup>43</sup>See Wallovits, p. 28. The Bay Area counties with significant Filipino farm workers were Alameda, Contra Costa, and Solano.

<sup>43a</sup>Interview with sisters Andrea Gimeno, Helena Villarruz, and Conchita Gin-Alconzo, daughters of Felix and Florencia Dacuyan, July 4, 2008.

<sup>44</sup>Vallangca, p. 138.

<sup>45</sup>Fred Basconcillo interview, Daly City, Feb. 27, 2002; Nick Vicerra interview, Berkeley, March 30, 2002. Vicerra also recollected that "picnic" often signified a clandestine cockfight.

<sup>46</sup>Basconcillo interview. "Native Son," *Filipinas*, March 2006, pp. 28-29, is Basconcillo's memoir of growing up Pinoy in San Francisco. His father's establishment was the New Luneta Café.

<sup>47</sup>See Alex S. Fabros, "California's Filipino Infantry," at [www.militarymuseum.org/Filipino.html](http://www.militarymuseum.org/Filipino.html); Alex S. Fabros, "Boogie Woogie Soldiers," in *Filipinos in America*, pp. 42-46 (originally in *Filipinas*, Sept. 1993); Bienvenido N. Santos, "The Fighting Filipinos," *Filipinas Magazine*, Dec. 1995, pp. 19-20 (reprinted from the Nov. 30, 1942, issue of *The Far Eastern Review*). Also, Posadas, p. 26; Cordova, pp. 217-23.

<sup>48</sup>Posadas, p. 26.

<sup>49</sup>Ventura interview.

<sup>50</sup>Posadas, pp. 28-31; Wallovits, p. 80; Choy, pp. 97ff.

<sup>51</sup>Basconcillo interview. This writer can remember on his second visit to California and the Bay Area in 1953 visiting a family in Daly City. Juanita Tamayo Lott, *Common Destiny: Filipino American Generations* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006), p. 34; Analise Suguitan, "The Sky is the Limit," *Filipinas*, October 2004, p. 69 (Suguitan is Alfafara's granddaughter).

<sup>52</sup>Basconcillo interview and telephone interview, Nov. 17, 2003. *Program*, The Grand Reunion: The Grand Reunion Filipino/American Athletic Clubs 1940-1970s, Nov. 2, 1991, San Ramon, p. 5; *Program*, Mango Reunion, Oct. 23-24, 1999, South San Francisco Elks Lodge, p. 3.

<sup>53</sup>Vallangca, p. 110.

<sup>54</sup>Vicerra interview. Vicerra was Tabar's cousin.

<sup>55</sup>Caridad Concepcion Vallangca, *The Second Wave: Pinay & Pinoy (1945-1960)* (San Francisco: Strawberry Hill Press, 1987), p. 144.

<sup>56</sup>Helen Ward re-interview, March 14, 2008.

<sup>57</sup>The quote is from Posadas, p. 31. See also Posadas, pp. 26-31; Hing, pp. 61-65; Ancheta, p. 27.

<sup>58</sup>Quoted in Roger Daniels, *Coming to America* (New York: Harper Collins, 2002),



p. 340.

<sup>59</sup>Hing, pp. 79-80, 88-94; Ancheta, pp. 19-20; Posadas, pp. 35-37. The San Mateo County figures are in Lorraine Jacobs Crouchett, *Filipinos in California* (El Cerrito: Downey Place Publishing, 1982), p. 131.

<sup>60</sup>*Filipino Yellow Pages USA* (San Francisco: Filipino Yellow Pages LLC, 2007), pp. 116-25, 162-85; the dentists' figures were arrived at by counting the "obviously" Filipino names on the list; the physicians' listing inexplicably ends with "L" and up to this point 10 physicians are identified. Choy, p. 193; Posadas, pp. 37-40; Vincent Laus, "Rx for the Heart," *Filipinas*, June 2006, p. 53.

<sup>61</sup>James B. Goodno, "Airport Security: how should screeners be screened?" *Commonweal*, July 12, 2002 (online version).

<sup>62</sup>*Ibid.*; Ancheta, p. 100; Vivian Zalvidea Araujo, "Why Pick on Non-Citizens?" in *Filipinas*, Jan. 2002, pp. 102-06; *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 18, 2002, p. B1; Michael Flaherty, "The Great Airport Fire-Off," *Nation*, Sept. 30, 2002 (web version); "SFO Screeners Accuse Feds of False Hope," *AsianWeek*, Sept. 27-Oct. 3, 2002 (web version); *Metropolitan News-Enterprise* (Los Angeles), May 21, 2003.

<sup>63</sup>*San Mateo Times*, Sept. 23, 1986, pp. 1-2; *San Francisco Chronicle*, Feb. 20, 1998; *AsianWeek*, Feb. 20, 2008; *Filipino Insider*, January 2007, p. 07; *Contra Costa Times*, May 2, 2008; *The Filipino Press Online*, Sept. 18-19, 2004, pp. 4-5.

<sup>64</sup>Board of Supervisors Resolution, Nov. 16, 2005; Sequoia Sports Hall of Fame, 1950-1974; [www.des-ae.com/index.php?cmd=staticpage&page\\_id=52](http://www.des-ae.com/index.php?cmd=staticpage&page_id=52); City of Redwood City, City Clerk, Redwood City Rosters, January 2007; [www.sequoiahospital.org/About\\_Us/Rebuilding\\_Sequoia\\_Hospital/127608](http://www.sequoiahospital.org/About_Us/Rebuilding_Sequoia_Hospital/127608).

<sup>65</sup>[www.kidsdata.org](http://www.kidsdata.org) for 2005 and 2007 county figures; the high school figures are from the School Accountability Report Cards (SARC) of the Jefferson Union High

School District for 2005-06 at [www.juhsd.org](http://www.juhsd.org).

<sup>66</sup>Data are from San Mateo County Community College District Demographic Snapshot for Fall 2002 at [www.smccd.net/accounts/doresearch/demog02.html](http://www.smccd.net/accounts/doresearch/demog02.html). The other details are from the SMCCCD office, some of the individuals named, online bios, and from the writer's own knowledge.

<sup>67</sup>Rodel Rodis, "The Not So Impossible Dream of Alex Esclamado," November 18, 2007, posted on NaFFAA8's web page; C. Vallangca, pp. 128-35; *Filipinas* magazine, June 2006, 2006 *Filipinas* Magazine Achievement Award citation. Rodis' account has a \$10M figure offered Esclamado in 1977, while in the Vallangca interview the offers tendered took place from the 1970s to 1982 and ranged from \$750K to \$12M. A brief account of Filipino American journalism, including the *Philippine News*, is in Posadas, p. 89, where she also cites an article by Fred Cordova.

<sup>68</sup>*Philippine News*, May 27-June 2, 1987, pp. 1, 15; Rodis article previously cited; *San Francisco Examiner*, Sept. 17, 1989, p. 2; *Filipinas*, June 2006, achievement awards.

<sup>69</sup>*Filipinas*, May 1992, April 1999, Aug. 2005; *San Francisco Chronicle*, Feb. 24, 2003, p. B1; *San Mateo County Times*, Nov. 28, 2003, p. News 2.

<sup>70</sup>*Filipinas*, Aug. 2005, publisher's message; *Oakland Tribune*, Aug. 24, 2005.

<sup>71</sup>*San Mateo County Times*, Nov. 28, 2005, p. News 2; Asian Pacific Fund @ [www.asianpacificfund.org/about/bbio.shtml](http://www.asianpacificfund.org/about/bbio.shtml), p. 2; Asian Pacific Fund @ [www.asianpacificfund.org.awards/yuchengco.shtml](http://www.asianpacificfund.org.awards/yuchengco.shtml).

<sup>72</sup>*Filipinas*, June 2007, p. 26; LaCuesta bio on [www.ktvu.com/station/1849425/detail.html](http://www.ktvu.com/station/1849425/detail.html).

<sup>73</sup>Interview with Pati Poblete and Ben Pimentel, June 27, 2006, on Pinoy Pod, <http://den.sfgate.com/blog/sounds/sfgte;cover> and "50 Things you didn't know about Malou Nubla," *San Jose Magazine*,



Filipino American Society plaque at St. Augustine in South San Francisco.



Manila Oriental Market at King Plaza in Daly City.

Jan. 2005, pp. 82-91; [www.ktvu.com.entertainment/14496257/detail.html](http://www.ktvu.com.entertainment/14496257/detail.html); [www.malounubla.com/malou.shtml](http://www.malounubla.com/malou.shtml); *San Francisco Chronicle*, Aug. 11, 1998, p. D1; Press Release, Comcast SportsNet, May 17, 2005.

<sup>74</sup>"Philippines Religious Demographic Profile" from [pewforum.org](http://pewforum.org); Joaquin L. Gonzalez III, "If McKinley Only Knew," *Filipinos in America*, p. 12 (article originally appeared in *Filipinas*, Nov. 2001); *San Francisco Examiner*, Sept. 17, 1989, p. 2; *Philippine News*, July 4, 2000, p. B7; *AsianWeek*, May 3-9, 1996; Jeffrey M. Burns, "The Immigrant Church," in Jeffrey M. Burns, ed., *Catholic San Francisco: Sesquicentennial Essays* (Menlo Park: Archives of the Archdiocese of San Francisco, 2005), pp. 194-97.

<sup>75</sup>Noemi Castillo, "Once Invisible, Now Indispensable," *Filipinos in America*, pp. 2-9; Gonzalez, p. 12; *San Francisco Catholic*, March 5, 1999.

<sup>76</sup>Gonzalez, p. 12; *Oakland Tribune*, Dec. 14, 2006; Jeffrey M. Burns, "The Immigrant Church"; the quote is from Jeffrey M. Burns, *San Francisco: A History of the Archdiocese of San Francisco*, Vol. 3: *A Journey of Hope, 1945-2000* (Strasbourg: Edition du Signe, n.d.), p. 33. This writer had made similar observations regarding the role of Filipinos in "rescuing" declining urban churches while commenting on papers at a session of the Catholic Historical Association in January 1998 in Seattle.

<sup>77</sup>Brochure, *The First Filipino-American United Church of Christ*, n.d.; Wikipedia on Iglesia ni Cristo; Gonzalez, p. 14.

<sup>78</sup>Christina Dunham, "Homecomings," *Filipinas*, Aug. 2007, p. 46.

<sup>79</sup>*San Francisco Examiner*, Sept. 17, 1989, p. 2; *Filipinas*, June 1999, p. 56; *AsianWeek*, Aug. 23-29, 1996, p. 37; *Philippine News*, March 11-17, 1987, pp. 1, 15; Jan. 24-30, 2001, p. B3; *San Mateo Times*, Aug. 23, Sept. 23, 1986, p. 2; *Oakland Tribune*, April 11, 2006. Some sources say Bulos arrived in the U. S. in 1972, while others say "the late 1970s."

<sup>80</sup>Figures from [www.bayareacensus.ca.gov/cities/DalyCity70/html](http://www.bayareacensus.ca.gov/cities/DalyCity70/html).

<sup>81</sup>On Daly City see: Benito M. Vergara Jr., "Betrayal, Class Fantasies, and the Filipino Nation in Daly City," in Martin F. Manalansan IV, ed., *Cultural Compass: Ethnographic Explorations of Asian America* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2000), pp. 129-58; James Sobredo, "From Manila Bay to Daly City," in James Brook, Chris Carlsson & Nancy J. Peters, eds., *Reclaiming San Francisco: History, Politics, Culture* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1998), pp. 273-86 (184-86 on Daly City); Bert Eljera, "Filipinos Find Home in Daly City," *AsianWeek*, May 3-9, 1996; Chris Aranda, "Daly City: The New Manila," *Filipinas*, May 1992, pp. 30-34. Daly City timeline at [www.timelines.ws/cities/DALYCITY.html](http://www.timelines.ws/cities/DALYCITY.html). The Rumford Fair Housing Act of 1963 was challenged by Proposition 14 in 1964. The proposition won a 66% majority of California's voters; in 1967 the U. S. Supreme Court invalidated the proposition, restoring the non-discrimination provisions of the housing act.

<sup>82</sup>*San Mateo Times*, Sept. 23, 1986, p. 1. Alex Esclamado tried to talk each into dropping out in favor of the other; *San Francisco Examiner*, Sept. 17, 1989, p. 2.

<sup>83</sup>Guingona biography at [www.bawsca.org/bios\\_pdf/Bio\\_MikeGuingona\\_June2007.pdf](http://www.bawsca.org/bios_pdf/Bio_MikeGuingona_June2007.pdf); *Philippine News*, Oct. 14-20, 1992; *San Mateo Times*, Oct. 27, p. D9, and Nov. 4, 1992, p. A12; *San Francisco Chronicle*, Nov. 3, 1992, p. A25.

<sup>84</sup>*Bay Guardian* (San Francisco), Feb. 3, 1993, pp. 18-19; *San Francisco Examiner*, Feb. 5, 1993, p. A7; *San Francisco Examiner*, June 10, 1993, pp. A21, A23; *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 21, p. A13, and July 16, 1993, p. A14.

<sup>85</sup>*San Mateo Times*, June 1, 1993, p. 5; *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 21, 1993.

<sup>86</sup>Guingona biography; SamTrans resolution, March 15, 2007; San Mateo County Transportation Authority, *Annual Operating and Capital Budget* (San Carlos: San Mateo CTA, June 3, 2004), pp. 21-22; Wikipedia on Daly City.

<sup>87</sup><http://sanbruno.ca.gov/lbarra.html>;  
Ventura interview (Ventura is Ibarra's  
mother).

<sup>88</sup>Census 2000; *Asian Journal*, Nov. 11,  
2006.

<sup>89</sup>*San Francisco Chronicle*, July 3, 1998,  
p. A21, and Sept. 7, 2005, pp. B1, B10;  
*AsianWeek*, March 31, 2006; *Examiner*  
(San Francisco), April 7, 2007; July 13,  
2007, and Aug. 1, 2007; *San Mateo*  
*County Times*, Dec. 15, 2005, p. Local 1;  
April 22, 2006, p. Local 1; Oct. 4, 2006, p.  
Local 1; July 14, 2007; March 22, 2008, p.  
News 3; *Burlingame Daily News*, July 10,  
2007, p. 7; *SF Weekly*, May 9, 2007; *Asian*  
*Journal*, July 27-August 2, 2007, pp. 10,  
13. As the reader may already have noted,  
this issue of *La Peninsula* has been made  
possible through a generous grant from  
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<sup>90</sup>*The Philippine Press USA*, March 1986,  
p. 1, and June 1986; *San Mateo Times*,  
June 11, 1986, p. B5; Sept. 23, 1986, p. 1.

<sup>91</sup>*San Mateo Times*, Dec. 20, 1989, p.  
A1; July 13, 1990, p. 1; August 1, 1990;  
*Philippine News*, Aug. 8-14, 1990, p. 4  
(Rodel Rodis column); Sept. 12-18, 1990,  
pp. 1, 10.

<sup>92</sup>*San Mateo Times*, Feb. 6, pp. A1-A2, and  
Feb. 20, 1991, p. A4; May 23, 1998, p. 2,  
and Dec. 17, 1998, p. 5.

<sup>93</sup>Okamura, p. 191; Ronald Takaki, *In*  
*the Heart of Filipino America* (New York:  
Chelsea House Publishers, 1995), p. 95.

<sup>94</sup>MC Canlas, *SoMa Pilipinos* (San  
Francisco: Arkipelago Books, 2002), p.  
198; Ben Pimentel, "Filipino Group Finds  
Its Own Humor," *San Francisco Chronicle*,  
Aug. 13, 2000, p. K37.

<sup>95</sup>Canlas, p. 198; *San Mateo County Times*,  
March 26, 2007, pp. Local 1-2; July 13,  
2007, pp. News 1, 9.

<sup>96</sup>Benjamin Pimentel, "Feeding the Filipino  
Spirit," *San Francisco Chronicle*, June  
26, 1998, p. PN 1; *International Herald-*  
*Tribune*, May 31, 2005; *Nation's Restaurant*  
*News*, July 13, 1998; *San Mateo County*

*Times*, June 15, 1998, pp. 1, 8.

<sup>97</sup>Gemma Nemenzo, "You Can Eat Home  
Again," *Filipinas*, Dec. 2006, pp. 58-60;  
Mila de Guzman, "Filipinos in Foodie  
Heaven," *Filipinas*, Aug. 2007, pp. 38-41;  
Michael Bauer review of Luneta Bistro,  
*San Francisco Chronicle Magazine*,  
Sunday, May 6, 2007, pp. 16+. This writer  
remembers the *San Francisco Chronicle*  
review of Barrio Fiesta which appeared  
in 1984, but cannot retrieve the original  
review since sfgate's online archives only  
go back to 1995.

<sup>98</sup>[www.lpga.com/content/2008playersBios.](http://www.lpga.com/content/2008playersBios.PDF/Delasin_08.pdf)  
[www.dorothydelasin.](http://www.dorothydelasin.com/index.php?page=bio)  
[com/index.php?page=bio](http://www.dorothydelasin.com/index.php?page=bio); C. W. Nevius,  
"A Home-Advantage Foursome," *San*  
*Francisco Chronicle Magazine*, Oct. 2,  
2005, pp. 14-21; *San Mateo County*  
*Times*, Jan. 30, 2006, pp. 1, 7.

<sup>99</sup>Wikipedia article on Cheryl Bautista  
Burke; [www.tvguide.com/celebrities/](http://www.tvguide.com/celebrities/cheryl-burke/bio/216506)  
[cheryl-burke/bio/216506](http://www.tvguide.com/celebrities/cheryl-burke/bio/216506); *San Francisco*  
*Sentinel*, March 20, 2008; Wikipedia article  
on Melody Lacayanga.

<sup>100</sup>*Filipinas*, June 1999, p. 52, on Kormann  
Roque; Wikipedia article on Jocelyn  
Enriquez; Wikipedia article on Classified  
Records; [http://atdp.berkeley.edu/9931/](http://atdp.berkeley.edu/9931/jvillaf/pinay.html)  
[jvillaf/pinay.html](http://atdp.berkeley.edu/9931/jvillaf/pinay.html).

<sup>101</sup>Neva Chonin, "Turning the Tables,"  
*San Francisco Chronicle*, Sept. 27, 2001,  
p. E-1; Victor Hugo Viesca, "With Style:  
Filipino Americans and the Making of  
American Urban Culture," (originally a talk  
given at the Los Angeles conference of  
the Filipino American National Historical  
Society, July 27, 2002); [www.ourownvoice.](http://www.ourownvoice.com/essays/essay2003a-1.shtml)  
[com/essays/essay2003a-1.shtml](http://www.ourownvoice.com/essays/essay2003a-1.shtml). See  
also, Neva Chonin, "A Dilly of a Career,"  
*San Francisco Chronicle*, Nov. 1, 1998, p.  
PK 36.

<sup>102</sup>See [www.myspace.com/pgenelsa](http://www.myspace.com/pgenelsa).

<sup>103</sup>*San Francisco Chronicle*, June 19,  
2006, p. E1; Manohla Dargis review, *New*  
*York Times*, July 6, 2007; *San Francisco*  
*Chronicle*, March 15, 2008, pp. E1,  
E10; Jeffrey Anderson review at [www.](http://www.combustiblecelluloid.com/2007/colmamus.shtml)  
[combustiblecelluloid.com/2007/colmamus.](http://www.combustiblecelluloid.com/2007/colmamus.shtml)  
[shtml](http://www.combustiblecelluloid.com/2007/colmamus.shtml); *Variety*, March 29, 2006.



BoBo's in King Plaza in Daly City.

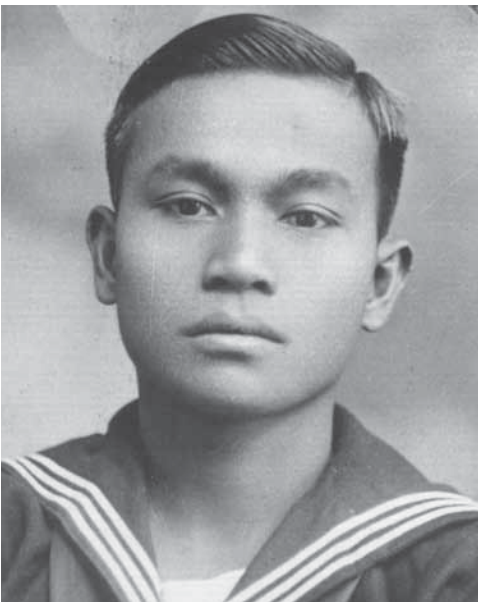
# San Mateo County Filipino Pioneer:

Augustin De Ocampo

Mitchell P. Postel

## Mitchell P. Postel

Mitchell P. Postel has been the Executive Director/President of the San Mateo County Historical Association since 1984. He has taught history at the College of San Mateo, and is a frequent speaker on San Mateo County history. Postel is a member of the San Mateo County Historic Resources Advisory Board, the Board of the San Mateo County Visitors and Convention Bureau and the San Mateo Leadership Advisory Board. He is the author of seven books on local history, including the recent *San Mateo County: A Sesquicentennial History*.



Augustin De Ocampo served in the United States Navy during World War I, aboard the *USS Westpool*. Photograph courtesy of the De Ocampo family.

Perhaps the earliest Filipino resident of Menlo Park was Augustin De Ocampo. If not the earliest, he was surely the one who lived here the longest, coming just after the conclusion of World War I and living in Menlo Park until his death in 1995. During his years on the Peninsula, he and his family became quite well known and contributed importantly to the development and well being of the community. While keeping a close connection with the Filipino community in the Bay Area, Augustin and his family's experience was hardly typical of that of the Asian working class on the West Coast.

Family tradition has it that Augustin was born during the Spanish-American War, which began in 1898. As a teenager he came to know Douglas MacArthur and pleaded with him to go to Europe with him at the beginning of World War I. MacArthur teased him, saying he was "too little" for the Army (he was 5'3") but he was eventually impressed enough with Augustin that MacArthur made him his personal valet. After serving with him in Europe, MacArthur saw that Augustin was enlisted into the Navy. Augustin served aboard the *USS Westpool*.

After the War, at the suggestion of MacArthur, he came to live at Menlo Park, perhaps because it was the home of Camp Fremont, an important Army training center during the War. He moved a house from the camp and started a chicken farm. About the same time, he met a Portuguese girl, Mary Frances Borba, and married her. During the 1920s, they had two sons, Tony and Frank. First they lived at 903 Alice Lane, and then in 1934, Augustin built a house with his own hands at 587 University Drive, on property formerly part of Camp Fremont.

During his life in Menlo Park, Augustin had a variety of jobs, but he always worked for himself. His daughter Anna, born later out of a second marriage, remembers that her father was so independent that he simply "couldn't work for anyone else." In fact because he worked so hard and did not take breaks, nobody could work for him.

At various times during the 1920s, Augustin was a builder, ran the chicken farm and raised dogs. In the 1930s he became a landscaper for upscale homes in Portola Valley and Atherton.





Augustin, second from right, works to clear a field for housing early in his days in San Mateo County. Photograph courtesy of the De Ocampo family.

Family friend Helen Lencioni Urban, born and raised in Menlo Park, remembers her mother Etta Lencioni's story of Augustin's most trying moment in Menlo Park. During the 1920s, a Caucasian cabinetmaker lived in Augustin's neighborhood. Because his carpentry activities produced some noise, neighbors presented him with a petition demanding that he cease his work. The cabinetmaker was angered by this effort and sold his property to two African-American families, the Taylors' and the Gaines' and perhaps more. These families had Augustin build their houses. One night men on horses carrying torches rode up to the houses, their intent, obviously, was to burn the new houses down. Augustin couldn't recognize any of the riders despite the fact that they wore no disguises. Augustin faced down the riders with his shotgun, and they never returned. However, racial tensions continued to be a part of Augustin's life. Some in the community overtly resented a Filipino living in the area. The worst instances involved the periodic poisoning of dogs raised by Augustin.

These occurrences were rare enough that life seemed good to Augustin and his family. He was an avid boxer and set up a ring in his backyard. He boxed with friends for the sport of it. He enjoyed horse and buggy excursions to Forester Hall in Redwood City for family outings. He became involved with various Filipino organizations headquartered in San Francisco and went there for meetings and special dinners. He enjoyed abalone diving and beach excursions with family and friends to the San Mateo County Coast.





Augustin aboard an early Harley- Davidson.  
Photograph courtesy of the De Ocampo family.

His realization of the “American Dream” was especially evident in the success of his sons. While Frank, the youngest, went into the construction business, older brother Tony achieved considerable notoriety as a police officer.

Tony, a Sequoia High School graduate, joined the Menlo Park Police Force at the age of 22 in 1946. Records are sketchy on these types of issues, but Tony’s mixed Filipino and Portuguese blood probably made him the first person of color to join the force. After consultation with a variety of local historians, it can at least be considered that Tony was the first person of color to join a law enforcement agency in San Mateo County History.

Tony proved to be a great addition to the force, holding an early reputation as a tough, capable officer of the law for his entire career. One story about Tony from Frank Helfrich of the Menlo Park Historical Association has it that Tony did not look the other way when enforcing the law for friends or even family. Augustin, who according to his family was a terrible driver, even felt the wrath of Tony after breaking a traffic law and receiving a costly ticket from his own son.

Perhaps that toughness was the reason why, at some point in his career, someone shot into the family home at 587 University Drive. Anna De Ocampo can take one for a tour of the house and show you the bullet holes still visible today.

It wasn’t just his desire, but also his smarts that allowed Tony to move ahead within the department. In 1952 he competed with members of the force during civil service hearings conducted by the city’s personnel board to become a lieutenant. In March 1953 he furthered his abilities by completing a month long training program conducted by the California Peace Officers Training School at St. Mary’s College. Police Chief George Potter sent De Ocampo who picked up new skills in various phases of law enforcement including identification investigating, laws on arrest and court procedure.

All that preparation paid off in a well-publicized episode in 1958. A local newspaper article dated September 4, now in the archives at the San Mateo County History Museum, headlined “Tony-on-the-Spot: Suspicious Officer Balks Burglary.” The article reported that Tony spotted “something strange” in the way a man was looking into store windows and doors while on his way to the police station at 10 o’clock that Sunday night. He was driving east on Santa Cruz Avenue near Chestnut, when he noticed a person on the sidewalk looking in the window and transom of Maurice Williams’ Beauty Salon. Tony parked his car and watched the man break into the Lux Cleaners at



Augustin and musical friends in the 1920s; he is second from the left. Photograph courtesy of the De Ocampo family.

1135 Chestnut. Tony called for assistance, and the arrest was made. Later that same night, Tony was again “at the right spot at the right time” when he found the suspect’s car with a woman sleeping in it. The woman turned out to be the burglar’s wife. He was looking for money to help with the birth of an expected baby. District Attorney Keith Sorenson charged David Roy Forrester, 19, of South San Francisco, with burglary. The woman was let go.

Tony later commented on being at the right spot at the right time: “this doesn’t happen very often” and “it’s part of the job.” Tony spent his entire career with the Menlo Park Police Department and retired as Captain.

After Augustin’s first wife died in 1967, he married Inez, a woman from El Salvador, and started a second family. From this union, a son, Patrick, and a daughter, Anna, were born. Augustin passed away on May 8, 1995. Today Patrick manages a bicycle shop, and Anna, after recently graduating from Notre Dame de Namur University in Belmont, is planning to become an art therapist.

# De Ocampo Family Photographs



A



B



*Mayon Lodges No. 459 Legionarios Deltrabajo.  
San Francisco, Calif. April 26th 1930.*

C



D

- A (Clockwise) Augustin, Maria, Tony and Frank.
- B Augustin refereeing a boxing match in his backyard.
- C Pictured middle row, seventh from the left, Augustin enjoyed participating in Filipino organizations in San Francisco.
- D Augustin in his backyard with peach tree and vegetable garden.

All photographs courtesy of the De Ocampo family.





In both 1880 and 2000, one-third of the population of San Mateo County was born in another country. To learn more about the stories of local immigrants, visit the San Mateo County History Museum's exhibit *Land of Opportunity: The Immigrant Experience in San Mateo County*. Filipino artifacts include Augustin De Ocampo's ukulele. Photograph by Randy Silver, 2008.

The San Mateo County Historical Association thanks Lucky Chances, Inc. for sponsoring this issue of La Peninsula.

Congratulations to the Filipinos of Northern California for choosing the County of San Mateo as their home away from home.

Filipinos populate just about every country in the world. During the early days there were mostly the migrant workers in this country who've displayed dignity in labor. With the changing times, today one will find Filipinos particularly in America and Europe who are scholars, scientists, management consultants, artists, entertainers, computer programmers, corporate executives and business entrepreneurs. Given the talent, creativity and because Filipino parents make it a priority to provide their children with quality education, we are able to excel and possess a competitive edge in the global market. Staying united and working together in chasing the American promise of golden opportunity, we will be empowered and make a mark not only in the San Mateo County but also in the entire world.

There are many Filipino traits, traditions and unique cultural heritage that we preserve and treasure. We are known for our resiliency and the ability to rise above the challenges and trials in life; our great sense of humor and the determination to pursue the best things in life is beyond compare. We must therefore stand tall and carry with great pride and joy the banner of being a Filipino.

Indeed, we are the best ambassadors of our homeland.

*Mabuhay ang Filipino!*

Rene Medina  
Founder, Lucky Chances, Inc.



San Mateo County  
Historical Association

2200 Broadway Street  
Redwood City, CA 94063  
650.299.0104  
[www.historysmc.org](http://www.historysmc.org)

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