LITTLE MANILA IS IN THE HEART

The Making of the Filipina/o American Community in Stockton, California

Dawn Bohulano Mabalon

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Photo credit (frontispiece): A group of friends gather on Lafayette Street in the 1930s. From left to right, unknown man, Coleta Delgado Luisen, Angelina Bantillo Magdael, and Domingo Tuason. Courtesy of the Angelina Bantillo Magdael Family Collection.

Photo credit (p. vi): The northern end of Little Manila, El Dorado and Washington Streets, in the late 1920s. Photo by Frank Mancao, courtesy of the Filipino American National Historical Society.

Photo credit (p. viii): A gathering of friends in the *campo* in Stockton in the late 1920s. Photo by Frank Mancao, courtesy of the Filipino American National Historical Society.

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This book is for

my mother, Christine Bohulano Bloch, my first teacher,

and my father, Ernesto Tirona Mabalon, who taught me how to become a historian;

my grandparents, whose sacrifices made our lives possible, Isabel Tirona Mabalon and Pablo Magdaluyo Mabalon and Concepcion Moreno Bohulano and Delfin Paderes Bohulano;

my family, whose love and support sustained the writing of this book;

all the *manangs* and *manongs* of Little Manila,

all Filipinas/os who call Stockton their home,

and all the future generations of Filipina/o Stocktonians


LINCOLN
HOTEL
ROOMS

CONTENTS

ILLUSTRATIONS

MAPS

PHOTOGRAPHS

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INTRODUCTION

REMEMBERING LITTLE MANILA

I was born and raised in Stockton, California, the daughter and granddaughter of Filipina/o immigrants who called Stockton home for much of the twentieth century. In my earliest memory of Stockton's Little Manila neighborhood, it was 1977, and I was a precocious five-year-old. My *tatay*—my father, Ernesto Mabalon—led me across busy El Dorado Street to the corner of Lafayette and El Dorado and nodded greetings to the elderly Filipinos standing there, surrounded by the din and fumes from the Crosstown Freeway. The uncles stuffed dollar bills and quarters into my hands, and they greeted my father effusively in Tagalog, Illonggo, Aklanon, and English. "*Anong balita*?" (What's the news?) was my father's smiling response. Within minutes, I was balanced on a stool at the counter of my grandfather's diner, the Lafayette Lunch Counter, the tips of my toes brushing the footrest. My white-haired, dimpled *lolo*, Pablo "Ambo" Mabalon, set a plate of my favorite steaming hotcakes in front of me. As I ate, I listened to the elders around me, who were making *kuwento*—telling stories—and roaring with laughter. This was not history to me, at least not then. This was just another morning, my father's day off from work in the fields, with my favorite breakfast.

Almost two decades later, I was a student at the University of California, Los Angeles, and was home for the weekend. I had just read a riveting book, *America Is in the Heart*, by a Filipino author, Carlos Bulosan, which was required reading in my Filipino American history course. I asked my father about Bulosan, and the story he told me continues to intrigue and astound me. From the 1930s to the early 1950s, Bulosan used the Lafayette Lunch Counter at 50 East Lafayette Street as his permanent address in Stockton. When-

ever he came to town, he picked up his letters at the community mailbox, an old shoebox my grandfather kept for this purpose, and sat at the counter and sifted through his mail. Bulosan usually ate free at the restaurant because my soft-hearted Lolo couldn't bear to see Filipinas/os starve, my Tatay said. In return, Bulosan gave my Lolo a signed copy of *America Is in the Heart*. My father remembered that when his niece Cynthia Mabalon was a toddler, she used the book—cast off by the family as scratch paper—as her scribbling pad. Skeptical of my father's story, I consulted Bulosan's papers at the University of Washington. In one letter there, a girlfriend tells Bulosan that she sent her letters to "Pablo" in Stockton for him. Suddenly, my father's memories became history, corroborated by archival evidence, and framed by my deeper understanding and embrace of my hometown's Filipina/o American history. This discovery was a life-altering one, for with all the kuwentos that my family shared with me, there was still a terrible silence about the history of our community.

My Lolo sold the restaurant in the early 1980s, when he was too old to run it any longer. In 1997 I went to the shuttered Lafayette Lunch Counter and peeked through the dusty windows, imbued with a deep longing to understand what had brought thousands of Filipinas/os to the intersection of El Dorado and Lafayette and the kind of community that they created here. Two years later, the Lafayette Lunch Counter was reduced to rubble, cleared for an urban redevelopment project dubbed the Gateway Project, intended to beautify the freeway exit in downtown Stockton with such structures as a gas station and a McDonalds. The destruction of the restaurant inspired me to explore this community's history while working on a dissertation at Stanford, which was the start of this book.

When I was growing up, my elders rarely spoke about the Little Manila community that had thrived in downtown Stockton or the demolitions that destroyed it in the 1960s and 1970s. Moreover, few of them ever talked of the intense racism and discrimination that they had survived in Stockton. Very few old-timers ever spoke of Bulosan, and those who remembered him regarded the celebrated author as an alcoholic Communist who never worked in the fields, yet wrote as though he did. He died in Seattle in 1956, forgotten by the Stockton community he immortalized in his 1946 ethnobiography. My book is an attempt to understand the silences, recover and find meaning in the memories of Stockton's community members, and interpret and tell their stories. I wrote this book with the deep and unquenchable hope that these stories might inspire community members to continue to challenge and, eventually, defeat capitalism's ruthless and persistent attempts to reduce to dust what is left of this historic community.

Little Manila Is in the Heart is about how Filipinas/os created a distinctive community and identity in the city of Stockton in California's San Joaquin Delta throughout the twentieth century. I argue that the racialized ethnic community they built in Little Manila, the neighborhood itself, and its institutions—labor unions, fraternal lodges, hometown mutual aid associations, and ethnic businesses—offered sites for the construction of a unique Filipina/o American ethnic identity and culture by Ilokana/o, Visayan, and Tagalog immigrants, shaped by their racialization in Stockton as brown "others" and their collective experiences in the fields and in the streets of Little Manila. This book weaves together many threads of Filipina/o American experiences in Stockton over the span of a century.

This journey to uncover my community's long-buried past has been emotional and highly personal. My family's history is inextricably linked with the history of Little Manila and of Filipinas/os in Stockton. My mother, Christine Bohulano, was born in Cebu City and arrived in the United States in 1952. Her father, Delfin Bohulano, met and married her mother, Concepcion, during World War II in Leyte, when he was fighting with the First Filipino Infantry Regiment. My grandfather brought his young family back to the San Joaquin Delta in 1952 and found work as a labor contractor in Tracy, twenty miles south of Stockton. The family spent every weekend in Little Manila, seeing movies, visiting friends, and eating at the Lafayette Lunch Counter. The Veterans Administration loan program allowed my grandparents to purchase a home in South Stockton in 1955. My mother was among the first Filipinas/os in Stockton to have the opportunity to leave the fields. She attended the University of California, Davis, and became a schoolteacher in nearby Lathrop in 1970.

My grandfather Pablo Mabalon, who had emigrated to Stockton in 1929, was able to send for his older son, my father, Ernesto, because immigration laws allowed American citizens to bring over their immediate family members. My father arrived in Stockton in 1963 with a medical degree from the University of Santo Tomas in Manila. My grandfather's work at his restaurant had put my father through college in the Philippines. Unable to get his medical license in the United States because of discriminatory laws, my father became a labor contractor in the Delta fields. It was work that he embraced as honorable and dignified. Community life was my father's passion: he served as president of the Filipino Community of Stockton in the 1980s and was a longtime member and leader of the Legionarios del Trabajo, a fraternal order of workers with lodges in the Philippines and the United States. My grandfathers Delfin and Ambo hailed from the Visayas, the central Philippines, and both came from the town of Numancia, in Aklan province on the island of

Panay, and my parents met at the Mabalon family restaurant in the 1960s. The restaurant was a gathering place for Filipina/o immigrants, especially those from the Visayas. My parents married and settled in south Stockton, with all of their immediate relatives within one mile of them.

My grandparents and parents came to Stockton as part of a massive stream of Filipinas/os to that Delta town, a flow that began in 1898. According to Stockton's old-timers, the first Filipina/o immigrant to arrive and settle in Stockton was a man they remembered simply as Villareal. Villareal jumped ship at the port of San Francisco in 1898, made his way to Stockton, and worked harvesting fruit and on the railroads. Soon he became Stockton's biggest booster among the early Filipina/o arrivals to the West Coast in the 1910s. When he met Filipinas/os arriving at the port of San Francisco, he encouraged them to take advantage of job opportunities in Stockton. Vicente Roldan, a prolific writer who contributed to several Filipino newspapers in California, recalled that these immigrants "were not convinced nor converted," but their interest had been piqued. "But they became Stockton conscious, so that when they went back home, just to brag about their adventures among relatives, friends and acquaintances, they talked about what he told them in their own ways and in a very lurid manner," he wrote. "They talked of the valley of opportunity with Stockton as its axis." According to Roldan, some of the earliest immigrants, *pensionados* (Filipina/o college students sponsored by the United States colonial regime) who were studying at University of California, Berkeley, and University of the Pacific (first in San Jose, now in Stockton), worked in the fields around Stockton as early as 1914.[1]

Roldan came from the same town as my grandfather, Ambo Mabalon. By the late 1920s, several hundred Aklanons—and thousands of Filipinas/os from all over the Philippines, especially the provinces in the Ilocos and other places in the Visayas—had settled in Stockton. The story of Stockton is in many ways, the story of Filipina/o America. By World War II, so many Filipinas/os had flocked to Stockton that the columnist Frank Perez dubbed the Stockton area, and the downtown Filipina/o neighborhood, "Little Manila."[2] Stockton became, in the words of the old-timer Pete Valoria, the hometown of the entire Filipina/o American community, and the intersection of Lafayette and El Dorado streets in Little Manila was a literal crossroads of Filipina/o America. By World War II, the city was home to the largest Filipina/o community outside of the Philippines, a distinction the community held well into the 1960s. Stockton became the capital of Filipina/o America.

When my Lolo Ambo died, in August 1987, the Ilocano journalist Frank Perez called him "Mr. Little Manila" with great affection in an obituary on the front page of the *Philippines Press (USA)*.[3] My humble Lolo would have

protested, but Perez was accurate in understanding that his life story was not unlike those of thousands of other lower-middle-class and poor young men and women who left rural villages in the Philippines to settle in Stockton. My grandfather left for the United States because he could not earn enough money in the Philippines to feed his five children and wife, Isabel. His family's poverty was a direct result of the death of his father, Guillermo, in the 1902 cholera epidemic that was a tragic consequence of the Philippine-American War.

Filipina/o American experiences in Stockton are part of a larger history of American imperialism. After brutal wars of conquest—the Spanish-American War in 1898 and the Philippine-American War in 1899–1913—that wrested control of the Philippines first from Spain and then from Filipina/o nationalists, the islands became an American colony. As colonial wards, or "nationals," Filipina/o students and workers streamed into the United States until the Tydings-McDuffie Act of 1934 promised Philippine independence and restricted immigration to only fifty people per year. By the end of World War II, more than 150,000 Filipinas/os lived in Hawai'i and on the U.S. mainland.

By the 1920s, San Joaquin County growers had become dependent on Filipino labor. The entry of thousands of Filipinas/os in the 1920s and 1930s provided California growers with the cheap, immigrant labor they needed to harvest the "green gold" growing from the fields and orchards of the Central Valley and Delta. Stockton was at the center of a West Coast migratory labor circuit in which Filipinas/os worked in the salmon canneries of Alaska and the vineyards of Southern California. Thousands of other Filipinas/os did not follow the crops and stayed in and near Stockton because the area provided work year-round, with pruning in the wintertime and picking asparagus in the spring and tomatoes and grapes in the summer and fall.[4]

Moreover, Stockton became a destination point for these early Filipina/o immigrants because there simply were not enough domestic service and restaurant jobs for Filipina/o workers in Seattle, San Francisco, and Los Angeles, especially during the Depression, and because the farmers of the fertile San Joaquin Valley and Delta needed cheap, transient farm labor for their expanding industrialized farms. Filipinas/os became specialists in labor-intensive produce like asparagus, a multimillion-dollar crop in the region. In the 1920s and 1930s, approximately five thousand to six thousand Filipinas/os lived in the Stockton area. During the asparagus season, from late February to June, the Filipino population would double.[5]

The pull to Stockton soon became so strong for some Filipina/o immigrants that they came to the city almost immediately after landing in San Francisco, Seattle, or Los Angeles. The activist and writer Carey McWilliams

noted that Filipinos were exploited in a "weird California whirligig" from the moment they arrived on American soil. McWilliams noted that "fly-by-night taxi drivers" waited at San Francisco's Embarcadero for newly arrived Filipina/o immigrants. The drivers took the immigrants to Stockton, charging them $65–75 in taxi fare. The immigrants didn't know that the bus or train would cost them only $2.[6]

From the 1920s until the 1970s, Filipina/o families, community organizations, and businesses thrived in an area of downtown Stockton called Little Manila, four to six square blocks near Chinatown and Japantown in Stockton's West End. In that part of Stockton, Chinese, Japanese, and Filipinos shared cramped quarters in a working-class area full of hotels, rooming houses, bars, pool halls, dance halls, saloons, grocery stores, storefront missions and churches, union halls, dry goods stores, and barbershops. By World War II, the number of Filipinas/os in Stockton had mushroomed to around 15,000. According to 2010 Census figures, Filipinas/os are the second-largest Asian American group nationwide, the third-largest minority group in California, and the largest Asian American group in San Joaquin County. Though most Filipinas/os now live in urban areas such as Los Angeles and the San Francisco Bay Area, thousands of Filipina/o Americans can trace their roots to Stockton's Little Manila.

Three themes are central to this book. I am particularly concerned with the politics of historical memory in Stockton and the ways in which we remember, and forget, the history of the community. This book is organized around the historical processes of racialization and cultural transformations that turned provincial immigrants into Filipina/o Americans, and it considers the central roles that race, place, and space played in shaping a unique Filipina/o American identity in the twentieth century. The third theme is the politics of historical memory and the demands and logic of capitalism that led to the urban redevelopment policies that caused the destruction of much of the community in the 1960s and the 1990s.

This book grew from my interest in the politics of historical memory, the power of place to shape ethnic identities and memories, and the ways in which the Filipina/o community tries not to forget its ethnic neighborhood. According to the historian David Blight, the study of historical memory is the "study of cultural struggle, of contested truths, of moments, of events, or even texts in history that thresh out rival versions of the past which are in turn put to the service of the present."[7] The urban redevelopment projects of the 1950s, 1960s, and 1990s scraped the landscape almost completely bare

of the Filipina/o ethnic neighborhood that had once flourished there, giving rise to a kind of traumatic forgetting in which the historical memory of the thriving ethnic community was almost lost. If, as Dolores Hayden argues in *The Power of Place*, "identity is intimately tied to memory: both our personal memories (where we have come from and where we have dwelt) and the collective or social memories interconnected with the histories of our families, neighbors, fellow workers and ethnic communities," and "urban landscapes are storehouses for these social memories," then the destruction of most of Little Manila in the 1960s and the 1990s not only destroyed the physical community but also threatened to obliterate the collective memory of this important place.[8]

This book also explores the relationship of Filipinas/os in Stockton to their history and their memories of their community. The historian Michael Frisch writes, "The relationship between history and memory is particularly and perhaps uniquely fractured in contemporary American life."[9] The rupture between Filipinas/os and their history in Stockton was forged by the destruction of Little Manila, streams of new immigration, and the invisibility of Filipina/o Americans in the media, local government, and the racist environment of Stockton. The loss of Little Manila in the 1960s as a result of urban redevelopment left a traumatic wound for old-timers and second-generation Filipinas/os. The pain of the loss of their community prevented older generations from speaking openly about the destruction of that community. There are no monuments to Filipina/o American history in Stockton. Young Filipinas/os in the city's public or private schools do not learn about Filipina/o American culture or history, much less the history or contributions of Filipinas/os in the city. Frisch charges those of us engaged in public history with the repair of this rupture, so that we can enhance our "ability to imagine and create a different future through a reuse of the past."[10] This book is an attempt to answer Frisch's challenge: to recover the memories of the past in order to reimagine a better present and future for the Filipina/o American community of Stockton.

The arguments in this book rest heavily on Michael Omi and Howard Winant's theory of racial formation, in which racial categories are "created, inhabited, transformed and destroyed."[11] The emigrants arriving in Stockton in the first decades of the twentieth century brought with them ideas about race, ethnicity, culture, and difference that were shaped by their ethnic, linguistic, and cultural identities—which in turn were tied to their kin networks and hometowns in the Philippines—and by their racialization as brown colonial wards of the American empire. It was only in their parents' generation that the *indios* began calling themselves Filipinas/os, a term that had been

reserved primarily for those Spaniards who were born in the islands. In fact, the totalizing experience of American colonialism would provide even more impetus for the residents of the islands to begin thinking of themselves as Filipina/o, as the racial colonial state imposed a new language (English) on all Filipinas/os and racialized them as one people. As Paul Kramer argues in his important work on race making and empire in the Philippines, the American colonial regime ushered new racial formations. The earliest ideas about race derive from the Philippine-American War, with the racialization of the insurgent enemy as "goo-goos" and as "niggers."[12] Kramer argues that the American colonial administration constructed "a new racial state organized around an aggressively optimistic colonialism of 'capacity'" for self-rule. At the heart of this new racial formation was the split of the population of the Philippines into Christian and non-Christian peoples. Kramer argues that this was an inclusionary racial formation that both "invited and delimited Filipino political agency in colonial state building."[13]

When emigrants arrived in Stockton, they brought with them these ideas about Filipina/o national identity. However, the identities that were most meaningful were those tied primarily to their class and the region, province, and the town from which they hailed. Emigrants saw themselves first as Ilocanas/os, Visayans, or Tagalogs. The Philippines consists of more than seven thousand islands, and its people speak almost a hundred languages and dialects. Partly as a result of this geography and abusive Spanish colonialism, a sense of nationalism had developed primarily among the elite Filipinas/os in Manila and the Tagalog-speaking provinces, and only in the generation of the emigrants' parents and/or grandparents. For almost all of the early emigrants, their first and only visit to Manila, the national capital, or Cebu, the oldest city in the Philippines, was on the eve of their departure, as they prepared to board ships at the ports of those cities. Even more specifically, they organized themselves around their hometowns and villages: Palomponganons (from Palompon, Leyte) or Numanciahanons (from Numancia, Aklan), or Calapeñas/os (from Calape, Bohol), or Tarlekanians (from Tarlac, in Central Luzon). Their segregation in the labor market, which limited them to agricultural work and the domestic and service sector; antimiscegenation laws and the extremely unbalanced sex ratio, which enforced bachelorhood; their status as "nationals" who were unfit to be naturalized; and their identity as colonial wards of the United States all served to racialize these provincial immigrants into despised brown others, into Filipinas/os.

This book explores their experiences as racialized colonials, and how space and place—that is, the fields of the San Joaquin Delta and the streets and buildings of Little Manila—as well as historical events such as World

War II and the residents' work in the fields, labor activism, political activism, and religious activities and involvement in community organizations all helped shape ethnic identities and Filipina/o American culture. Over time, the racialized, gendered, and sexualized space of Little Manila (often called Skid Row by local officials) became a site for the negotiation of a local Filipina/o American identity that was shaped by the work they performed as farm laborers, by the distorted sex ratio that influenced marriage and family formation for decades, and by the racial violence and repression of Stockton.

As immigrants found themselves racialized as despised brown people, they turned to their family networks and to fellow immigrants to survive, constructing a social world and ethnic identity formed both by their provincial identities and the world they now inhabited in Stockton. As George Sanchez argues in his study of Mexican Americans in Los Angeles, "ethnicity . . . was not a fixed set of customs . . . but rather a collective identity that emerged from daily experience in the United States."[14] In exploring the ways in which Visayan, Ilocana/o, and Tagalog emigrants became Filipina/o Americans in Stockton, I take to heart the call for a new kind of Filipina/o American history heralded by the late historian Steffi San Buenaventura, who insisted that early Filipina/o American history "should be as much a narrative of the cultural world they brought with them as it is an account of their life in the new country."[15]

This book traces how historical events and their lived realities created Filipina/o American racial and ethnic identity, culture, and community throughout the twentieth century. What we know of the turbulent early colonial period tells us that the racial and ethnic identities and cultural worlds of Filipina/o immigrants were already in flux by the time they began arriving in the United States in large numbers in the 1920s. At the same time that Filipinas/os were leaving for Hawai'i and the United States, the upheaval of the Philippine-American War and the American colonial regime had already made an indelible impact on the identities and lived realities of immigrants, which is why this book begins with an exploration of life and culture in the provinces of the Philippines in the first two decades of American colonial rule. Immigrants hailed from different provinces and lacked a unifying language besides English to allow them to communicate with one another. In the earliest years of the community, those who did not speak English fluently preferred to associate mainly with other people from their own hometown, province, or region. Class differences between educated and uneducated immigrants and between urban and rural immigrants also created divisions.

The 1920s and 1930s were crucial decades for the forging of a powerful Filipina/o American culture, identity, and community in Stockton. Fili-

pinas/os in Stockton may have seen themselves in the 1920s as students and adventurers whose stay in the metropole would be exciting yet brief. By the mid-1930s this attitude had been transformed. The brutality of industrialized agriculture and the devastating joblessness of the Depression years; pitiful agricultural wages and conditions; anti-Filipina/o violence, exclusion, and deportation; and labor repression marked the first years of the 1930s. After 1934, Filipinas/os were reclassified as aliens. The Filipino Repatriation Act of 1935 was essentially a deportation measure, as it offered Filipinas/os a one-way ticket back to the Philippines if the immigrant promised never to attempt to return.

The fact that Filipinas/os weathered the Depression, exclusion, repatriation, violence, and poverty while refusing to leave showed that the community that they had built in Stockton in the 1920s and early 1930s had given them the resources that allowed them to survive, and even flourish. Just as the Mexican Americans of whom Sanchez writes created new identities and possibilities for themselves in the 1930s and 1940s, by the 1930s so had Filipina/o immigrants developed and assumed "a new ethnic identity, a cultural orientation which accepted the possibilities of a future in their new land."[16]

Immigrants responded to their racialization and new identities in surprising and diverse ways. When my grandfather Delfin Bohulano, a native of Kalibo, Aklan, applied for Social Security in 1936, he scrawled "brown" in between spaces for "white" and "Negro" on the line that asked him to indicate his color. When asked to identify himself on his World War I draft card, Eleno Ninonuevo, an immigrant from Libacao, Aklan, also wrote in "brown." When presented with these documents during lectures on the ways in which the immigration experience racialized immigrants and initiated them into the puzzling logic of ever-changing American racial categories, my students always laugh and say my grandfather must have been confused when he wrote "brown." I gently remind them that the collective experiences of early Filipina/o immigrants led them to believe that they inhabited a despised place below whites and near blacks, a category that reflected their skin color: brown. Moreover, their new lives in America afforded them an opportunity to remake and reshape new ethnic and racial identities.

A third theme in this book is about how the logic of capitalism, with its prioritizing of urban redevelopment, demolition, and displacement over the preservation and revitalization of ethnic communities, ultimately destroyed the Little Manila neighborhood. The story of Little Manila demonstrates the destructive impact of federal, state, and local urban redevelopment and freeway construction policies that continue to disproportionately affect poor neighborhoods of color—often wiping them off the map, both physically

and psychologically. The Little Manila community is a case in point. This book describes how the politics and strong ties of the community and its historical memory have attempted to challenge urban redevelopment's scrape-and-burn policies toward Little Manila.

Little Manila Is in the Heart builds on and challenges the histories of Filipina/o Americans produced by scholars in the last three decades. In its largest context, this book's most ambitious goal is to rewrite the dominant narrative of Asian American history, which has downplayed Filipina/o American community building to favor a male-centered, sojourner narrative; and to examine the important local communities, identities, and institutions built by early immigrants and investigate how they were constructed and changed over time.[17] This book also challenges historians of the Asian American experience to broaden their ideas about the emergence, creation, and maintenance of Asian ethnic communities in the United States.

For example, in his *Strangers from a Different Shore*, Ronald Takaki asserts that Filipinas/os did not develop their own neighborhoods in American cities, nor did they open their own businesses.[18] The story I tell in this book challenges histories that have downplayed or denied the existence of important Filipina/o American enclaves by describing Filipina/o immigrants as roving bands of workers who, some historians assert, rarely settled in West Coast cities. The migratory nature of Filipina/o life in the early to mid-twentieth century pushed Filipinas/os to create flexible notions of family, community, and home, but Stockton remained a mecca for even those Filipinas/os who traveled frequently throughout the West Coast. And although I focus on Stockton, I believe that this book also provides frameworks for understanding the development of other Filipina/o communities on the West Coast—such as those in San Francisco, Salinas, Los Angeles, Watsonville, and San Diego—and other communities throughout the nation.

When Fred Cordova, along with his wife Dorothy, published *Filipinos: Forgotten Asian Americans* in 1983, that pioneering book was one of the few sources on Filipina/o American history. The plethora of books and articles produced in the last decade by academic and community scholars has endeavored to correct the dearth of scholarship on Filipina/o American history so evident in the 1980s and 1990s. Books, dissertations, and articles have explored themes of American empire, Filipina/o community building, ethnic cultural production, gender relations, and interracial relationships and conflict. Notable among these publications are Arleen de Vera's and Eiichiro Azuma's work on Filipina/o-Japanese relations in the Delta region, Dorothy Fujita-Rony's book on Filipina/o Seattle, Linda España-Maram's book on Filipina/o male youth culture, and Catherine Ceniza Choy's book on Filipina

nurse migration. Filipina/o American scholars in the social sciences are also studying the impact of place on Filipina/o American histories and identities; examples include Benito Vergara's study of Daly City and Rick Bonus's and Yen Le Espiritu's books on Filipinas/os in San Diego, and Joseph Galura and Emily Lawsin's collection of oral histories of Filipino women in Detroit.[19] Most important, their work has noted how historical Filipina/o American identities have been contingent, varied, and dynamic.[20]

The most groundbreaking recent works on the urban West have focused on interethnic and interracial relations and the interplay between communities and urban space. These works remind us that peoples of color in the West did not live in a vacuum, hermetically sealed off from one another in segregated communities. In fact, the works show how working-class people and people of color struggled to live and get along together, challenged racism and exploitation, created new ethnic cultures and identities, and made the most of their often meager resources in their urban working-class communities. Matt Garcia's book on Mexican labor and community formation in Los Angeles, Scott Kurashige's groundbreaking work on blacks and Japanese in Los Angeles, Mark Wild's book on multiethnic communities in Los Angeles, and Allison Varzally's study on interracial marriage all attempt to understand how different groups interacted with one another in California, and how these interactions forged new identities and communities.[21]

A FRAGMENTED PAST

In *America Is in the Heart*, Bulosan's protagonist, Carlos, sat wearily at the bare table in his kitchen and "began piecing together the mosaic of our lives in America." "Full of loneliness and love," Carlos began to write.[22] A mosaic is an apt metaphor for the fragments of materials and memories I would encounter as I began research for this book. In the mid-1990s, when I began to explore my community's history for an undergraduate paper, I interviewed my father's best friend, Claro Candelario, whom I called Uncle Claro. He revealed to me that he was the restaurateur–turned–radical labor activist, the character "Claro," in *America Is in the Heart*, and a close friend of Bulosan. He explained, the bitterness still fresh, how a relative, in an attempt to clean out his garage, had taken everything to the trash heap—the old letters, newspapers, photographs, records of his time with Bulosan in the Committee for the Protection of Filipino Rights, and more. Uncle Claro's daughter, Angelina Novelozo, was able to save a few of her father's precious photographs and documents, and some of them are published here.

I had known Uncle Claro my entire life. I had to leave Stockton and encounter him in a completely different context—as a character in a book as-

signed in one of my classes—to begin to appreciate and understand who he was, and the role he had played in our community's history. Old-timers rarely spoke openly of their early experiences, perhaps because the past was painful. And when they did share their stories with us, like Uncle Claro did, they often fell on deaf ears. My peers and I, most of us in our teens when the old-timers were in their twilight years, were unable to connect their memories to the larger history of the United States or to our own identities. When we finally knew the right questions to ask, many of our elders had already passed on, or their memories had grown too dim. In the process of writing this book, I have often been filled with a shameful regret that many of the members of my Filipina/o American generation, who came of age in Stockton in the 1980s and 1990s, did not engage in enough conversations with our elders because we were too naive or too ignorant to understand their memories as history.

These attitudes about our history have roots in colonial mentality and the internalization of hatred of Filipinas/os in Stockton. We have lost much of our community's history because of the assumption that our past is not history, that it is not an American experience worthy of interpretation and analysis. As I was gathering materials for this project in the 1990s, many descendants of pioneering families had already thrown away the newspapers, community programs, photo albums, documents, and other ephemera that historians need to piece together the stories of the past. To some people, these materials were only junk, or at best someone else's memories, rather than history. At several junctures in this project, research involved trying to race families—at one point, my own—to the trash bins. In too many cases, it was too late. Locating sources for this project that lay deep in basements, attics, and garages required patient excavation, and sometimes begging and pleading.

This idea that our community's past as one that is not historically important has been compounded by our invisibility in the curriculum of the K–12 public educational system in Stockton. There is no Filipina/o American history course at San Joaquin Delta College or the University of the Pacific. Most Filipinas/os in Stockton are largely unaware of how central their experiences have become to understanding the history of American colonialism, twentieth-century immigration, ethnic community building, the history of American agriculture and labor, and the building of the urban and agricultural U.S. West. Prominent figures such as Carlos Bulosan and Larry Itliong—widely known in academic, activist, and community circles in Seattle, the San Francisco Bay Area, and Los Angeles—are unknown to most Filipina/o Stocktonians, young or old.

The lack of materials on Filipina/o Americans in local archives com-

pounds this problem. None of the dozens of local organizations or community leaders donated their papers to a local library, university, or historical society, resulting in a deafening silence about Filipina/o community life in local archives. Moreover, no local Filipina/o American ethnic community organization, with the possible exception of the fraternal order Legionarios del Trabajo, has preserved its papers, and that group's papers are not open to researchers. The search for information about the past of the labor leader Larry Itliong is just one example of the unique challenges that Filipina/o American historians face: it was extremely difficult to find memories or materials in Stockton about him. Though within the past two decades there has been a resurgence of interest in Itliong's life and his cofounding of the United Farm Workers, it is impossible to find any local archival materials or anyone who can speak about Itliong's life and work in Stockton, since almost no one who had worked closely with him is still alive.

Though most of the documents of Stockton's Filipina/o American history have been relegated to the trash heap, there has been progress. Because of the dedicated efforts of the Filipino American National Historical Society chapter in Stockton and the National Pinoy Archives in Seattle, photographs, newspapers, documents, and oral histories have been preserved for researchers and community members. In 2005 Antonio Somera, a member of the Daguhoy Lodge and grand master of Bahala Na Escrima, began to clean out the basement of the lodge, at 203 East Hazelton Street in Stockton. The building had been purchased by the lodge in 1937, and over the decades, the lodge members had tossed all manner of boxes and trash into the basement until it was full to bursting. "Take it all out, and do whatever you want with it," they told Somera. Under many layers of trash, he discovered hundreds of photographs, old uniforms of the lodge, band instruments, clothing, pomade jars, citizenship test materials, documents, and several dozen steamer trunks full of the personal belongings of lodge members who had passed away in the 1930s, leaving no next of kin. This discovery, which deserves its own book, could be counted as one of the most significant finds in Filipina/o American history to date. With these materials, he created a museum in the basement. Several photographs that Tony found are featured in this book.

Because of the dearth of archival and printed sources on the history of Filipinas/os in Stockton, oral histories provided the richest source of information on the history of my community. I am indebted to my father, Ernesto T. Mabalon, and my grandmother, Concepcion M. Bohulano—two family members who, until their recent deaths, were just as passionately dedicated to Stockton's history as I am. They opened up their well-worn address books and drew on their web of kin and community to identify people who were

willing to share their stories with me. These community members graciously entrusted me with their memories, shared photographs and historical documents, and talked for hours. As Alessandro Portelli writes, oral histories show us that "memory is not a passive depository of facts, but an active process of the creation of meanings."[23] Their stories brought to life the rich and vibrant community that was Little Manila. In our talks, we journeyed back in time to provinces in the Philippines, Hawai'ian sugar plantations, asparagus fields in California, Lafayette and El Dorado streets, cramped and suffocating hotel rooms in Little Manila, Fourth of July parades, boxing matches, and cockfights.

Each interview provided me with a unique and nuanced perspective on the themes of this book. Sometimes my interviewees' memories and opinions contradicted one another. At other times, their total agreement on certain themes was illuminating and deeply moving, as in the case of the shock and grief that the entire community felt about the destruction of Little Manila. I was also blessed to be able to draw on oral histories conducted by scholars who interviewed old-timers in the 1970s and 1980s. These voices, so essential to this project, were recorded and preserved by the Filipino Oral History Project in Stockton, the Filipino American National Historical Society in Seattle, and the collections of the Washington State Oral/Aural History project and the Demonstration Project for Asian Americans.

The many Filipina/o American newspapers of the period, as well as government records, city directories, and Census information, allowed me to reconstruct the Little Manila neighborhood decade by decade by providing concrete locations of Filipina/o, Japanese, and Chinese businesses and organizations in downtown Stockton, and showing the neighborhood's changes over time. To obtain information on the settlement and eventual destruction of Little Manila, I relied heavily on the archival records of the City of Stockton, including the official records regarding the area which encompassed Little Manila, Japantown, Chinatown, and the Mexican community. Some families had saved diaries, photograph albums, letters, and other documents and graciously shared them with me. My family's collection of documents and photographs, organized by my grandmother, Concepcion Bohulano, was invaluable.

Manuscript collections and ethnic newspaper archives at the University of the Pacific and the Haggin Museum, as well as at the University of the Philippines, yielded important historical material, including correspondence about the Little Manila community, church records, and the activities of selected Filipina/o social organizations. Indispensable for the book were the priceless archival collections of the Filipino American National Historical Society,

especially the growing collection of the Stockton chapter, and the National Pinoy Archives in Seattle, which housed a significant amount of material on the Filipino American experience in the Stockton area. The Filipina/o American ethnic newspapers collected by the Filipino American Experience Research Project at San Francisco State University were absolutely invaluable. The Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley, houses the papers of James Wood, an economics doctoral student who studied Filipinas/os and left boxes of his notes, interviews, drafts, and articles for future researchers. The new technologies that have made passenger ship lists, naturalization records, Census data, and military records easily accessible allowed me to glean insights about the arrivals and provincial origins of the earliest Filipina/o immigrants to Stockton, where they lived and worked, with whom they lived, and their families.

The lack of a wealth of conventional archival materials led me to use creative ways in which to uncover the history of this community. As the historians Antoinette Burton and Dolores Hayden remind us, physical sites and buildings can become archives and important sites of memory.[24] The walls and interiors of the remaining buildings of Little Manila—the Iloilo Circle, Daguhoy Lodge, Mariposa Hotel, Rizal Social Club, Emerald Restaurant/Filipino Recreation Center, and the Caballeros de Dimas Alang house—spoke of the history of a community determined to stay and build places to live and thrive in the face of racism. The celebrations and gatherings of our community were sites of memory to which I went in search of its history: church services including masses, novenas, and rosaries; family birthday parties, weddings, christenings, and funerals; the annual Barrio Fiestas; meetings of fraternal orders such as the Legionarios del Trabajo and the Filipino Federation of America; events at the county senior center, neighborhood card rooms, and ethnic restaurants and businesses; family and generational reunions; and the meetings of clubs, provincial associations, and professional organizations such as the Association of Filipino American Educators. In these gatherings, I found documents, community stories, oral history interviewees, and most important, the spirit of community and resilience that has sustained Filipina/o American Stocktonians over many decades. I hope that this book can inspire succeeding generations of Filipina/o Americans in Stockton, particularly the children and grandchildren of immigrants who arrived after 1965, to begin to see that the materials of everyday life—their grandparents' stories, documents, photographs, and other belongings—are history, and therefore, priceless.

I also went to the Philippines several times for archival research, as well as to visit the rural provinces to which many Filipinas/os in Stockton trace

their roots. Riding hulking inter-island steamers, jeepneys, buses, and on the motorbike and bicycle-powered "tricycles" that carry whole families which abound throughout the Philippines, and, in some cases, traversing towns on foot, I visited ancient churches and historic sites, cemeteries and town plazas, lush rice and coconut fields, and beaches. I visited the towns of Loboc and Tagbilaran in Bohol, the towns of Palompon and Ormoc in Eastern Leyte; the towns of Numancia, Lezo, Makato, Ibajay, and Kalibo in Aklan province; Cebu City and the towns of Talisay and Carcar; the towns of Binalonan and Dagupan in Pangasinan; tiny villages like Masinloc on the coast of Zambales; the American colonial town of Baguio; the emerald rice terraces of Banaue; and drove through the provinces of Nueva Ecija, Nueva Vizcaya, and the bustling city of Davao in Mindanao.

Visiting the provinces about which the old-timers waxed sentimental allowed me to better understand how colonialism, poverty, and dreams of big-city life and college educations pushed emigrants to the United States. Most important, seeing the provinces, the white sand beaches and impossibly turquoise oceans, the million shades of green in the rice and coconut fields, and meeting families torn apart by immigration—especially my own relatives—taught me about the ache of homesickness that the first generations of Filipinas/os in the United States must have felt. As I flew above the lush archipelago in 1997 on a short island hop between Manila and Cebu, I was choked with emotion as I looked down at the tiny green islands in turquoise water through my plane window. What kinds of poverty and dreams could have pushed my grandparents to leave such a beautiful land, and how might it have felt to build a new home thousands of miles away?

OUTLINE OF THE BOOK

This book describes how Filipina/o American ethnic identities and the Filipina/o American community were constructed and changed over time in Stockton's Little Manila. Part I presents the stories of the members of Little Manila from their lives in the provinces to the initial Filipina/o settlement in downtown Stockton in the 1910s. Chapter 1 examines life in the Philippines on the eve of the emigration of thousands of Filipinas/os to Hawai'i and the mainland. I argue that Filipinas/os came to the United States not only because of the pervasive influence of American colonialism, especially public education, but also because changes in the economy of the Philippines extinguished any hope that peasants and members of the lower middle class would be able to hold onto their family land and obtain gainful employment in their home provinces. Chapter 2 examines the development of industrialized agriculture in the San Joaquin Delta and Valley, and how Filipinas/os be-

came the solution to severe labor shortages in the area after 1924. Their horrific working conditions racialized and radicalized them, and they responded to those conditions by abandoning regionalism and embracing ethnic solidarity and labor militancy.

Part II explores how community members created their own world in Stockton, establishing institutions such as churches, labor unions, and community organizations. Chapter 3 explores how Filipinas/os carved out a social world for themselves through their community institutions and in the development of their corner of Stockton, Little Manila, in the decades before World War II. Filipina/o American ethnic identity in Stockton is shaped from the unique culture that emerges from the lodges, organizations, and streets of Little Manila. I also discuss how the attempts to exclude and deport Filipinas/os failed, as Filipinas/os decided to stay in Stockton permanently.

Chapter 4 explores women's lives in Little Manila from the 1920s to World War II. The extremely imbalanced sex ratio—fourteen Pinoys to one Pinay in the prewar years—prevented large-scale family formation in Little Manila. Interestingly, however, the imbalance and relative youth of the immigrant population provided immigrant and second-generation Filipinas to challenge and transform traditional gender roles. I also discuss how Filipinas/os shaped the contours of a new kind of Filipina/o American family in Stockton. The second part of chapter 4 turns to the experiences of second-generation Filipina/o Americans from the late 1930s to the 1960s, with a focus on young women's ethnic identity and culture.

Chapter 5 examines the religious life of Filipina/o immigrants and their families and explores the conversion and Americanization efforts of evangelical Protestant missionaries. This chapter also explores the role that the church played in sustaining the Filipina/o farm labor movement in the early 1960s. Chapter 6 shows how World War II was a watershed moment for Filipinas/o in Stockton, as changing racial discourses and the war in the Pacific remade Filipinas/os into the "good" Asians. Before the war, workers organized the most militant and successful farm labor union the West Coast had witnessed. The forced removal of Japanese Americans from Stockton during World War II allowed Filipina/o entrepreneurs to expand the borders of Little Manila. Citizenship, a baby boom, and new immigration caused the community to grow exponentially in this period. Furthermore, the labor movement was represented by the powerful Local 7, the leaders of which, such as Larry Itliong, would go on to lead the Delano Grape Strike and cofound the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee.

Part III describes how by 1968, much of the Little Manila and Chinatown area had been destroyed by urban redevelopment. Moreover, new immi-

gration threatened to tear apart the delicate fabric of the community. The Crosstown Freeway cut through the heart of Little Manila, and by 1972, only two struggling blocks remained. The destruction of Little Manila as a result of the city's postwar scrape-and-burn urban renewal policies and the California State Highway Commission's policy of freeways at all costs is described in chapter 7. The Crosstown Freeway wiped out two blocks of Little Manila in the late 1960s, displacing thousands of Filipina/o residents and destroying dozens of businesses, residential hotels, and community institutions. Chapter 8 describes the five-year struggle of a group of postwar immigrants, second-generation Filipinas/os, and progressive old-timers who proposed the creation of a Filipino Center as a solution to the displacement of thousands of Filipina/o old-timers and several Filipina/o businesses. This last chapter explores how the community forged an elusive unity by coming of age politically, banding together to speak to power, and demanding federal funding for the center.

In the epilogue, I reflect on the legacies and burdens of Stockton's Filipina/o American history, and the politics of history and memory in ethnic community building. The community's heated debates over what to preserve and why, disputes over the memories of the special place that was Little Manila, and the economic and cultural challenges of revitalization and historic preservation remind us that Filipinas/os in Stockton continue to struggle with issues of history, memory, and power.

ON THE TERMS AND THE TITLE

Several terms used in this book are defined and explained here for greater clarity. I chose to use *F* instead of *P* in reference to the Filipina/o American community for several reasons. "Pilipina" and "Pilipino" are as commonly used as "Filipina" and "Filipino" by both pre-1965 and post-1965 immigrants and their descendants for various reasons, including the lack of the *F* sound in Tagalog. Filipina/o American activists in the 1960s and 1970s rejected the *F* and its Spanish and American colonial legacy, preferring to use the *P*.[25] However, in Stockton, "Filipina/o" was used more widely throughout the twentieth century by the community members. Following the lead of the historians Dorothy Fujita-Rony, Teresa Amott, and Julie Mattaei, I have used "Filipina/o" (and "Ilokana/o" and so forth) throughout this book to call attention to the gendered nature of the Filipina/o experience.[26]

When referring to Filipina/o immigrants before World War II, I have occasionally used "manong" for men and "manang" for women, but only when writing from my own point of view or from the viewpoints of younger generations. In Ilocano, Visayan, and Tagalog, these are honorific terms used

for one's elders. In the 1960s, younger generations of Filipinas/os began to use the terms to refer to those Filipinas/os who immigrated to the United States before World War II. Because some people use "manong" and "manang" to refer only to close relatives, many prefer the term "old-timer" to denote people who came to the United States before 1965. I sometimes use the terms "old-timers" and "pioneers" for those immigrants who arrived in Hawai'i or the United States before 1965. When referring to any Filipina/o in the United States, I use the words "Pinoy" (Filipino American male) and "Pinay" (Filipina American female). According to first-generation immigrants, these terms were developed specifically by Filipina/o immigrants as a nickname for Filipinas/os living or born in the United States.[27] The earliest documented appearance of the term "Pinay" was in 1926 in the *Filipino Student Bulletin*.[28] "Pinoy" and "Pinay" are now used for any Filipina/o in the Philippines or in the Diaspora. How fitting that the etymological roots of these terms lie in the experiences of the pioneers of the Filipina/o Diaspora: the Pinays and Pinoys of Stockton's Little Manila.

The book's title, *Little Manila Is in the Heart*, was inspired by *America Is in the Heart*, Bulosan's classic 1946 ethnobiography of the Filipina/o American experience in the 1930s. Bulosan split his time among the great centers of Filipina/o American life—Stockton, Seattle, and Los Angeles—and a number of significant events in his book take place in Little Manila or elsewhere in Stockton. Carlos, the wide-eyed idealist who is the protagonist of *America Is in the Heart*, yearned to be part of the America of his colonial education and his most optimistic dreams, an America of racial and social justice and equality, a nation that would reciprocate his loving embrace. In the last chapter of the book, as the tumult of World War II created a new world for Carlos and other Filipina/o Americans, he felt "the American earth was like a huge heart unfolding to receive me." "It was something that grew out of the sacrifices and loneliness of my friends, of my brothers in America, and my family in the Philippines—something that grew out of our desire to know America, and to become part of her great tradition, and to contribute something to her final fulfillment," Bulosan writes. "I knew that no man could destroy my faith in America that had sprung from all our hopes and aspirations, ever."[29]

As Bulosan knew too well, this faith in America, and the hopes and aspirations of the first generations of Filipina/o immigrants, stood in stark contrast to their lived realities. Nonetheless, life in Stockton, before World War II, with the barriers erected to prevent the immigrants' settlement, and the urban redevelopment policies that wreaked destruction on Little Manila from the 1960s to the 1990s, did not in the end deter Filipinas/os from making their homes in Stockton. From the earliest years of the community, as Bulo-

san writes in *America Is in the Heart*, emigrants cherished the hope that they would one day find a real home in their adopted country. This deep faith in America sustained them through decades of sacrifice and poverty; racial violence; denial of the rights to immigrate, become citizens, and marry whom they wished; and labor repression.

Through these long decades, they married and established families, brought over their relatives from the Philippines, created enduring institutions and a vibrant ethnic community, made their voices heard politically—in short, used their imagination and creativity to become that new entity, Filipina/o Americans. In so doing, they themselves created the America of which they dreamed: the Little Manila of their hearts, a beloved ethnic community and a unique and special world in Stockton. Though the buildings are gone, and the old-timers have passed away, the power and promise of the Little Manila community remains in the hearts of every Filipina/o who remembers and reclaims its legacy.

PART I PUTTING DOWN ROOTS

1898–1940s

The Filipino youth has learned the great achievement of America, its economic prosperity, its gigantic industrial institutions, the high wages paid, its beautiful cities, its big buildings and skyscrapers, and other wonders and opportunities. All of these fires the imagination of the Filipino youth and creates in his mind the love of adventure.

His education increased his wants.

— Hermenegildo Cruz, Director, Philippine Bureau of Labor, 1931

The growing and harvesting season of the farm crops orchestrated the rhythm of our lives. Asparagus, starting in February; thinning fruits, sugar beets; picking cherries in spring, potatoes, tomatoes, tokay grapes in summer; and in the fall and winter, pruning grape vines, cutting celery, thinning onions, and planting garlic was our general cadence. . . . Like the weary traveler when he beds down at night, closes his eyes but still sees the rushing pavement, I would see the tomatoes, smell the pungent vines, feel the oppressive unrelenting afternoon heat, and totally, unconditionally accept this way of life.

— Gussie Gesulga Bowden, writing in 1985

Stockton
magic city
streets of the happy life
poolhalls, girls and grass . . . Stockton!
. . .
Stockton,
I remember you
gaudy, happy, sinful
Stockton
meeting place and clearing house for 20,000 Pinoys.

— "Stockton, 1950," Lanosa, in Liwanag

CHAPTER 1

FROM THE PROVINCES TO THE DELTA

Life on the Eve of Emigration to the United States

My grandfather Pablo Magdaluyo Mabalon had poignant memories of the Philippine-American War. When he was four years old, he watched Tagalog and U.S. troops burn houses in the *barangay* (neighborhood) of Albasan, in Numancia, Capiz province, in 1901. The following year, his father, Guillermo Mabalon, became one of the estimated 200,000 victims of the cholera epidemic that raged across the Philippines in the wake of the war.[1] Guillermo left behind his wife, Victorina, and two children, one of whom was my grandfather. He remembers that without his father, the family spiraled into deep poverty: "As far as my memory could recall, no special family celebration of any kind was ever held due to our poverty." There were other families who were poorer, however, he recalled: "My family was in a position to still have three meals a day and have less worry where to get the next meal."[2]

Like thousands of other poor provincial families in the immediate aftermath of the Philippine-American War and with the advent of American colonial rule, the Mabalons traveled to Manila to find work. Pablo, also called "Ambo," was a fifth grader in a colonial public school when his uncle Sacarias Macavinta hired him to work in his restaurant. At dawn, ten-year-old Pablo delivered heavy bags of hot rolls, called *pan de sal*, throughout Manila and then returned to the restaurant to work.[3] In his twenties, he met Isabel Timtiman Tirona, a young woman from Makato, a town just north of Numancia. Isabel's family had also relocated to Manila to find better opportunities. A Protestant priest married the couple in the Malate neighborhood in 1919, and they moved to Numancia and had five children. Pablo's work as a *matanzero* (butcher) and Isabel's

business as a weaver of abaca and *sinamay* (a coarse, open-weave textile derived from abaca) could barely feed their young children, Rodrigo, Florencia, Ernesto, Teqio, and Francisco.[4] Rodrigo and Francisco died in childhood as a result of illness and malnutrition. In 1929 Pablo decided that the only way the family could survive would be if he traveled to the United States. He sold his meager inheritance—his grandmother Clara Macavinta's rice and coconut fields, a sliver of rich land that fronted the province's narrow main road.[5] He traveled to Manila and, for 75 pesos, bought a steerage class ticket for Seattle. On March 2, 1929, Pablo, with a group of relatives and fellow town mates, left for Seattle on the steamship *President Jackson*, a ship operated by the Dollar Steamship line, which dominated prewar Pacific steamship travel.

It must have been with mixed emotions that my grandfather left behind his wife and their three surviving children. Foremost on his mind, however, must have been the dream of seeing his surviving children fed and educated.[6] His daughter, Florencia, nicknamed "Puring," then only seven, thought that he was only going on a short trip to Manila.[7] Ernesto, my father, was then four and has dim memories of his father's departure: "When [he] left in 1929, I was almost five. I don't have a clear picture of how he looks. I had no feeling about where he was going, and I wasn't aware that he was going away for long. A five-year-old can be lured into believing that your father is just going out, and he never comes back."[8] It would be seventeen years before they would see their father again.

My grandfather was one of 150,000 mostly Ilocano and Visayan men with meager landholdings, hungry families, and little cash for their children's education who left their homes for the United States in the first half of the twentieth century. His story tells us that Filipinas/os would have never come to the United States in significant numbers in the early twentieth century if the United States had not first colonized the Philippines in 1898. By 1899 the United States had fought two wars—one with Spain and a much longer war with Filipina/o nationalists—that would forge a new American empire in the Pacific. The violence, death, and dislocation caused by the American conquest of the Philippines would disrupt life across the provinces in ways that would reverberate over the generations and play a central role in the movement of Filipinas/os to the United States. The expansion of the American empire in the Pacific sparked the massive movement of Filipinas/os to the metropole in two important ways: the totalizing influence of the colonial public education system served to convince Filipinas/os of the superiority of American culture and institutions; and the shift to a capitalist, export economy so exacerbated the extreme poverty of rural life that leaving home was, for some, the only option.

This chapter examines the lives of Filipinas/os in the provinces of the Philippines in the first decades of the twentieth century, on the eve of massive emigration to Hawai'i and the United States. To attempt to understand the motivations behind this first massive wave of emigration, I explore life in the hometowns and provinces of these early emigrants, with a particular focus on the Ilocos region in Northern Luzon and the Visayas, the two regions that sent the most emigrants to the United States in the last century. The first half of this chapter explores the ways that American imperialism and capitalism, particularly through the public education system, shaped life in the provinces; racial, cultural, and political identities; economic opportunities; gender roles; and family lives for the generation coming of age in the 1910s and 1920s. The second half of the chapter explores the motivations and experiences of those who left the provinces to work as contract laborers (*sakadas*) on the sugar plantations of Hawai'i in the first two decades of the twentieth century. From these sugar plantations came most of the first Filipina/o immigrants to arrive in the San Joaquin Valley and Delta in the 1910s and 1920s.

Exploring province life and life on the sugar plantations of Hawai'i in the early years of the American regime reminds us that emigrants did not immediately imagine themselves as Filipinas/os; rather, they identified primarily with others from their town, province, and region. Their primary identities were based on their kin networks, villages, towns, and regional languages and/or dialects. They sought the company of others from their towns when they arrived in the United States not only because those people were likely to be members of their extended kin networks, but also because it was easier to communicate with those speaking the same, or at least a similar, dialect or language. Until universal use of English was mandated, there was no national language that tied Filipinas/os together across the thousands of islands. Spanish was a language of the elite. Few Spaniards actually went to the Philippines, and friars, who were the primary representatives of the Spanish Crown there, learned local languages and dialects and did not force indios (the name the earliest Spanish explorers, who had hoped to reach India, gave to the indigenous population of the Philippines) to speak Spanish. Moreover, English fluency ranged dramatically. Emigrants who were high school graduates were able to read and write with great fluency in English, but emigrants who had not gone beyond elementary school were less fluent.

American colonial rule made it possible—and, for some, necessary—for Filipinas/os to emigrate to the United States. As Dorothy Fujita-Rony argues, the advent of American empire in the Philippines and colonialism as practiced by other Western powers "created new opportunities and sites around the globe, dramatically changing the realm of the possible for people around

the globe."[9] Because of their status as colonial wards, Filipinas/os were classified as nationals, not aliens as other Asians were. And as nationals, they were not subject to the immigration exclusion laws of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—laws that barred Chinese laborers in 1882, Japanese laborers in 1907, and South Asian immigrants in 1917. This special status would facilitate the massive immigration wave that brought thousands of Filipinas/os to the United States, and then to Stockton. Their lives under the American flag and their collective experiences in Hawai'i and, later, in Stockton transformed and racialized them from *provincianas/os* into Filipinas/os and, eventually, Filipina/o Americans.

THE PHILIPPINE REVOLUTION AND AMERICAN EMPIRE

Those emigrants who arrived in Stockton in the first decades of the twentieth century were following a path carved out by people from the Philippines who came to the New World as early as the sixteenth century. Ferdinand Magellan reached the islands of Cebu and Mactan in 1521, beginning three centuries of Spanish colonial rule. The lucrative trade between China, Manila, and Acapulco that commenced in 1565 and lasted until 1815 brought the first indios to the New World, where they worked as shipbuilders, prostitutes, sailors, and slaves on the Spanish galleons.[10] The earliest recorded arrival of Filipinas/os in what would become California was on October 18, 1587, when a group of "Luzon Indios" landed near what is now Morro Bay.[11] The first permanent New World communities of Filipinos were formed as early as 1763 in the Louisiana bayous by indios who jumped ship at ports in the Gulf of Mexico.[12]

While these communities were establishing themselves across the globe, Spain relegated the governing of its far-flung colony to Mexico and the Roman Catholic Church.[13] By the late nineteenth century, the abuses and oppression of the friars had inflamed the outrage of the educated elite—called *illustrados*, or enlightened ones—who demanded representation in the Spanish *Cortes* and an end to the friars' abuses. Most prominent among the elite was José Rizal, a wealthy doctor educated in Madrid, whose two books, *Noli Me Tangere* (1887) and *El Filibusterismo* (1891), offered scathing criticisms of Spanish corruption and abuse. Rizal insisted that the indios be called Filipinos, a name formerly reserved for Spaniards born in the Philippines. He established the Liga Filipina, an anticolonial political organization, in 1892. One of its earliest members was Andres Bonifacio, a native of Tondo. In 1892, drawing on his experiences as a Philippine freemason (Bonifacio, Rizal, and almost all of the illustrados and many mestizo elites were freemasons, which incensed the Catholic hierarchy), Bonifacio formed the secret society Kati-

punan ng Kataastaasan ng Kagalanggalangan ng Anak ng Bayan (Highest order of the brotherhood of the children of the nation).

The Katipunan began the Philippine Revolution in August 1896, fighting the Spanish throughout Luzon and in Negros and Panay.[14] Rizal was immediately imprisoned and killed by a firing squad in Luneta Park in December 1896.[15] A power struggle among the Katipunan leadership ensued, and Emilio Aguinaldo and his relative Daniel Tirona, both members of the Cavite elite, asserted that Bonifacio's lack of education disqualified him from leading the organization. When he attempted to reassert control over it, Bonifacio was executed for treason on the order of Aguinaldo, who then became the group's leader. In 1898 Aguinaldo agreed, under the Pact of Biak-na-bato, to retreat to Hong Kong in return for a payment of $400,000 and the promise of Spanish reforms. There he plotted his next move.

By the late nineteenth century, the race for empire among Western countries had whetted the appetite of American politicians, military leaders, and other elite groups for building an American empire in the Pacific. The United States and Spain began the Spanish-American War in May 1898, in the midst of the Cuban and Philippine Revolutions, after the United States blamed the explosion of the USS *Maine* in Havana on Spain (it was actually caused by a malfunction in the ship). Immediately, the United States sent Admiral George Dewey and the Pacific fleet to Manila Bay.[16] To save face, Spanish officials agreed to stage a mock battle in which they would surrender to the Americans instead of to the Philippine nationalists.[17] Confident of U.S. support, Aguinaldo sailed for Manila and declared the independence of the Philippines on June 12, 1898, from the balcony of his family mansion in Kawit, Cavite. In the summer and fall of 1898, Aguinaldo declared himself president of the Philippine Republic and presided over a constitutional convention at the new capital, Malolos, in Bulacan province, north of Manila, which resulted in the nation's first constitution and Malolos Congress. Meanwhile, thousands of U.S. troops, including several all-black regiments, began to arrive in Manila. That fall, Spain and the United States negotiated the Treaty of Paris, which ceded the Philippines, Guam, and Puerto Rico to the United States for $20 million. The treaty was signed on December 10, 1898, and then sent to the U.S. Senate for ratification. President William McKinley then issued the Benevolent Assimilation Proclamation, which promised that the Americans came as friends and not as conquerors.[18] The treaty ignited a fierce debate in Congress and among the American people over whether or not the United States should possess a colony in Asia.[19]

A vocal pro-imperialist majority, led by such figures as McKinley and Senator Alfred J. Beveridge, argued that the United States had a racial and