

Filipino american lives in the us

[Science](#), [Social Science](#)



Centuries before the immigration laws of 1965, Filipino seamen that escaped from Spanish galleons were thought to have “ congregated in the marshlands of Louisiana’s Barataria Bay” as early as 1765. However, says author Yen Le Espiritu (1995), mainly due to socio-historical amnesia, limited research has been expended on the immigration and settlement history of Filipinos in the US (p. 1).

Other sources, such as the book *The Filipino Americans* by Barbara Mercedes Posadas (1999), do not cover Filipino diaspora to the US during the Spanish occupation in the Philippines. Posadas asserts that the first wave of immigration came during World War II. Some Filipinos were enlisted in the US Army and later naturalized and sworn to citizenship. The second wave was during the 1965 liberalization of immigration laws. Many factors such as the Philippine independence from American colonization, access to naturalization, the institution of export labor by the Marcos regime, and the ethnic community expansion among others have contributed to a new face of Filipino Americans (p. 26).

Perhaps because of limited available publications on their history, Filipino Americans have often been plagued by questions of identity. In many known Filipino American literary pieces, identity is always a central theme. Reshi Hebbar (1998) from the Post Colonial Studies at Emory College notes that renowned Fil-Am authors like Jose Garcia Villa, Carlos Bulosan, Bienvenido Santos, and Jessica Hagedorn wrote: “ to exile themselves from the home country or to accept the status of a hyphenated American or to find a bridge

between the two.”

Maria P. Root (1997), in her introduction to the book *Filipino Americans: Transformation and Identity* attribute much of the identity confusion explored by Fil-Am writers to the five centuries of colonization that “ravaged the souls and psyche of the indigenous people of the archipelago dubbed Las Islas Filipinas ... regardless of our nativity, language, class or gender” (xi). She affirms that colonization plays a big part in the Fil-Am experience.

Currently, there are communities in the US that have helped many Filipino immigrants and descendants cope up with the dominating air of Americans and assimilate themselves into their society. Still, assimilation is not a requisite for acceptance. It breeds what Nick Joaquin (1988) terms a Filipino whose identity is that “of a person asking what is his identity” (p. 244).