

History of filipino immigration history essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The making of an American begins at the point where he himself rejects all other ties, any other history, and himself adopts the vesture of his adopted land. Baldwin 29. It is a wonder why Filipinos wanted to leave their own country and live in another place like the United States of America. Maybe because a brighter future is seen in a new place, like a new world of hope that cannot be found in the native land of the Philippines. Filipinos struggled to go out of their country without the assurance of anything. One's self is the only one who could make his/her own destiny. Filipinos have been chasing the American dream since the early 1900s. As opportunities were given, Filipinos didn't hesitate to leave their own country in order to find a brighter future from one of the world's super powers, which was the United States. Filipinos were good in adopting their new environment just to pursue the American Dream. " Cultural identity is a matter of " becoming" as well as of " being." It belongs to the future as much as to the past. It is not something which already exists, transcending place, time, history and culture. Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But, like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation." (Hall). Balancing between two different cultures is very challenging and this paper focused on this issue the most.

Que 2

The first large-scale immigration of Asians into the U. S didn't happen until 1848, when gold was discovered in America. The Chinese nickname for California was called the " Gold Mountain." The Gold Rush was one of the pull factors that led many Chinese to come to the U. S. to find their fortune and return home rich and wealthy (Le). This event triggered the American

dreamer and the sights of a greener pasture. Almost every Asian believed that the moment they had stepped on the grounds of the United States of America, life would be better and richer. But not all were granted with the American dream because not all were given decent jobs.

Filipinos were actually the first Asians to cross the Pacific Ocean as early as 1587, fifty years before the first English settlement of Jamestown was established. This was also during the Manila-Acapulco Galleon Trade. Filipinos were forced to work as sailors and navigators on board Spanish Galleons. Eventually, Filipino sailors were the first to settle in the US around 1763. They made their first permanent settlement in the bayous and marshes of Manila Village, in what would later be Louisiana. They built houses on stilts along the gulf ports of New Orleans and were the first in the United States to introduce the sun-drying process of shrimp (Filipino American History). This was the first wave of Filipinos that came to the United States. Since their migration to the United States, Filipinos have always played an integral role in contributing to America's economy. From 1763 to 1906 other Filipino groups such as mariners, adventurers and domestics followed and eventually grew in numbers. With the passage of time some of them migrated to the West Coast, Hawaii, and Alaska to expand their opportunities in the fishing and whaling industries (Immigration History).

In 1903, the Pensionado Act allowed Filipino students to study in the United States as a way to enhance and further their education and have more knowledge in different areas. While

Que 3

this appears to be an honorable act by the Americans, it was actually not their true intentions. Instead of allowing students to migrate as a way to advance their education and enlighten their minds, the Americans had other ulterior motives. These scholars known as pensionados were shipped off in order to help maintain colonial rule. Many pensionados were given the scholarship program because it was intended to educate these young men in America with degrees in government and administration so that they could learn the United States governmental system. This way they could return to the Philippines and teach the government democratic practices and administer their own government in a similar fashion like the government in the United States. More importantly, they were promised positions in various government sectors particularly in agriculture, business and education. However, this proved to be problematic since the general make-up, history and demographics of the Philippines does not parallel that of the United States. The governmental system that works for America may not work for the Philippines. Nonetheless, by 1912 there were over 200 Filipino students who had graduated from American collegiate institutions. After attaining their degrees most of them went back to the Philippines, but some remained in the US and blended in with the later Filipino immigrants known as Pinoys (Magat). This act was closely tied with what happened during the time when the United States conquered the Philippines. It started when the Battle of Manila Bay occurred. The Secretary of the Navy of the United States of America ordered George Dewey to send his fleet to Manila Bay to fight with the Spanish soldiers because during that time, the Philippines was under the

Spanish Rule. They had a fake battle, also called the mock battle, because the Spanish bureaucracy knew that they could not win the war. Emilio Aguinaldo, a Filipino general and independence leader, returned to the Philippines from his visit to Hong Kong to support the American troops. He trusted the

Que 4

Americans that they would help them get their independence back from the Spanish Rule. When the U. S. fleet succeeded, they went to the capitol and replaced the Spanish flag with the American flag. They also didn't allow Emilio Aguinaldo to enter the city of Manila. That's when he thought that something was wrong, and the Americans couldn't be trusted. The Americans fooled Emilio Aguinaldo, which led to the Philippine-American War. Hypocrisy played its role in these two events. The Americans had their ulterior motives and plans before doing something like helping the people gain their independence or have the pensionados get their education.

Aside from pensionados, laborers also migrated to California under the contract system where they agreed to work as farmers. Most of the Pinoys worked as farmers in California in the San Joaquin Valley, Salinas, and Sacramento. Some became factory workers in the Alaskan fishing and cannery industries, while others took low-paying custodian, busboy, and domestic service jobs. This second wave of migration eventually led to an excess labor supply. The second wave began from 1906 with a heavy concentration going into California and Hawaii. When the Hawaiian Sugar Planters Association (HPSA) needed more agricultural labor workers, they

sent recruiters to the Philippines to set up recruitment centers in Vigan, Ilocos Sur and Cebu. There they hired sugar cane plantation workers known as Sakadas, who unsurprisingly worked for cheap labor. In 1906, fifteen Sakadas were shipped to Hawaii (Garcia). At first, the migrants who mostly spoke Tagalog were hesitant to go, out of fear and due to the long travel which they perceived to be dangerous. Upon their deployment and after their settlement, however, they encouraged other Filipinos to follow their footsteps and told them that their migration had been successful. Through their labor, many were able to save money to send back home as a way to support their relatives and help improve their living conditions. The second wave of Filipino

Que 5

immigrants that stepped into Hawaii helps explain the high Filipino-American population that still exists there today.

The US colonization of the Philippines from 1900 up to 1934 had a tremendous impact on Philippine immigration. Filipinos went to the process of mass migration. As Filipinos became US nationals and were given the opportunity to live legally in the US under the protection of its law and constitution. Demand for labor on Hawaiian plantations and California farmlands attracted thousands of Filipino immigrants known as Sakadas who came mostly from the provinces of Ilocos and Cebu to replace the Japanese work force who intended to leave the Hawaiian plantations. Although the Sakadas came to Hawaii as American Nationals, they were not given full rights as American citizens and were the first Filipino Americans to

experience racial discrimination and cultural oppression. The Pinoys had the most extensive experience with racial discrimination resulting from changes in immigration policies, anti-miscegenation laws and oppressive farm management practices. Many migrant families lived in poverty and children were forced to get educated, speak English only, and mainstream quickly. About the anti-miscegenation laws, some Filipino older adults and family caregivers may have been part of this group. In 1934 the US Federal law known as the Tydings-McDuffie Act was passed to limit Filipino migration. (Immigration History). The Tydings-McDuffie Act is also known as the Philippine Commonwealth and Independence Act. It was enacted on March 24, 1934. The law was supported by Maryland Senator Millard E. Tydings and Alabama Representative John McDuffie, hence the name of the Act. This federal law gave self-government and independence to the Philippines. U. S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed it and it was sent to the Philippine Senate for approval. Although the Tydings-McDuffie Act was enacted in 1934, the

Que 6

law states that Filipino independence will only take effect on July 4, 1946 after a transitional period of ten years. The Act provided the draft and guidelines for a Constitution which formed the foundation of the government in the Philippines before granting their independence. The Filipinos elected their own delegates for a mandatory constitutional convention on July 10, and Roosevelt approved the Philippine constitution on March 23, 1935. The Commonwealth government was inaugurated in November 1935 under the presidency of Manuel Quezon. The law reclassified all Filipinos in America as <https://assignbuster.com/history-of-filipino-immigration-history-essay/>

aliens for the purposes of immigration to America. Filipinos weren't American nationals anymore and they couldn't longer work legally in the US. The support for Philippine independence was highly supported by the white American citizens mostly because of their discontentment with the rapid immigration of Filipino agricultural laborers. After the Spanish-American war in 1898, the Philippines became an American territory. Filipinos were able to enter the U. S. as American nationals. They entered jobs that weren't that attractive to white such as home care, dishwashers, janitors, and other service occupations that don't need a college degree or some education. With that, the fear of their growing numbers around nativists are becoming similar to those against the Japanese and Chinese. The rise of unemployment during the depression of the 1930s and the development of Filipino labor activism created widespread opposition to Filipino immigration, especially in California where the concentration of the Filipino population is high. The Tydings-McDuffie Act was a legal cover for Filipino exclusion in America, similar to the Chinese Exclusion Act. If the Philippines was an independent country, then the Filipinos will no longer have unrestricted access into America. This would also mean that they were not "white" and could not attain naturalized citizenship. This law was later offset by the US Navy's recruitment of Filipino Americans who

Que 7

were exempt from such law. The Filipinos were actually put in a worse position compared to the Chinese and Japanese who were excluded as well. Chinese merchants were able to bring their wives, also with Japanese family members and their wives, they were also exempted from the restrictions of <https://assignbuster.com/history-of-filipino-immigration-history-essay/>

the Gentlemen's Agreement. The only exemptions that the Act had allowed Hawaiian employers to continue importing Filipino laborers whenever they needed them and the U. S. was able to recruit Filipinos into the Navy (Tydings-McDuffie Act of 1934). This also marked the beginning of the third wave of Filipino immigration during 1945-1965. Filipinos from the Philippines joined the U. S. Navy to fight against the Japanese. Filipinos were allowed to join the U. S. Navy because they were so-called " Nationals." They were not U. S. citizens, nor were they illegal aliens. The Filipinos became stewards for the navy. As stewards, Filipinos in the U. S. Navy cooked, cleaned, shined, washed, and swabbed the decks of naval ships and naval bases across America and the entire world. Despite their status, Filipinos fought side-by-side with American soldiers for freedom against the Japanese. During the period of 1935-1965, some Filipino women and families immigrated to the U. S. They were a combination of US military dependents or war brides, World War II veterans, professionals, and students. The fourth wave of Filipino immigration began after the passing of the Immigration Act of 1965 that continues to the present day. This allowed the entry of as many as 20, 000 immigrants annually. (Filipino American History) The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 permitted many Asian residents in the US, including Filipino Americans, to apply for citizenship. The law also gave those who had served honorably for three years in the US Armed Forces the opportunity to become eligible for naturalization. Filipino Americans during this period experienced significant economic exploitation and social injustice despite their contributions to American society. The Filipino

Que 8

American community became more diverse during this period due to the immigration of highly educated professionals, mostly in the health care field. Some example would be nurses, doctors and medical technologists. The 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act, which liberalized immigration laws, made it possible to sponsor other family members such as minor children, spouses, unmarried and married adult sons and daughters, and parents of adult US citizens. Similarly, a high proportion of international students were enrolled in American universities (Immigration History). Many Filipinos have experienced the “ Brain Drain” in exchange of the “ American Dream”, it consisted of professional like doctors, lawyers, nurses, engineers, as well as the military of Filipinos who continued to join the navy off Sangeley Point in Cavite City, Philippines. From the first to the fourth wave of Filipino Immigration, evidently Filipinos have been in America for quite some time, yet one must persistently ask who are the Filipino Americans? Who are they and what have they done? Perhaps it would be better to ask: What is it about Filipino-Americans that make them appear different, yet one and the same? (Filipino American History)

Most of the immigrants were welcomed with open arms but even before they came to their destination here in the United States, they thought that the U. S is a land of opportunity. However, that wasn't the case when they arrived in the U. S. because the opportunities, the jobs that were given to the immigrants were hard and they were paid very low. Some immigrants stayed temporarily but some returned to their own country with their savings that they have acquired working in the United States. However, more immigrants

chose the path of staying in the U. S. and have not given up looking for a better life. They permanently left their own country

Que 9

and became hopeful that they could find a new world in the United States. All these led to the famous term of the “ American Dream”.

American Dream, who wouldn't have known “ The American Dream.” A lot of Filipinos dreamt of living and working in the United States of America for greener pasture. Even until now there are still a lot of Filipinos who are still trying to go through a crowd in the U. S Embassy in the Philippines just to have a U. S Visa. Filipinos believed that living and working in the U. S will give them a brighter future not only to them, but also to their families as well. Filipinos have always pursued the American Dream. It is a proof of which today is that Filipinos are now the second largest Asian group in the United States, according to the latest census bureau report. The number of Americans who have identified themselves as Filipino, either alone or in combination with another race, totaled 3. 4 million, the report showed. The total number is believed to be much higher than the census count. There are an estimated one million undocumented Filipinos in the United States. Census officials attributed the fast growth of the Filipino population to immigration. California, known as the gateway for Asian immigrants, had the largest population of Asian Americans, with close to 6 million, or nearly a third of the total nationwide (Rueda). The family values of reunification, interdependence, social cohesiveness and collectivism continue to persist

within the Filipino American community despite the existence of socio-economic and health care disparities and racism.

People typically migrate to the United States to acquire a better future for them. Filipinos perseverely chase the chance of acquiring the American Dream. Filipinos left their country by choice for economic necessity. However, acquiring the American Dream in America will require

Que 10

adapting to a new culture including but not limited to values, religions needs and most importantly learning English as a secondary language. Filipinos have an advantage in assimilating to America since their history consists of American influence. The Filipino experience of chasing the American Dream is a long and winding road. Filipinos chose to chase it from 1865 to 1945, and up to the present. Success in life is risking everything, even culture and tradition. Filipinos may have the advantage of the English tongue and adaptation in a new environment, but can a Filipino still identify where he is from if a Filipino already learned how to forget where he came from? The sad reality is like a child's adoption. As the child is young, he will never know his identity until he grows or until the parents teach the child. The biological mother will be forgotten and the adopting mother will be in the place of the child's heart. When a Filipino leaves the Philippines, it is a one step in forgetting where a Filipino truly came from or what he truly was.

Que 11

Works Cited - Filipino Immigrants in the US (1865-1945)

<https://assignbuster.com/history-of-filipino-immigration-history-essay/>

Baldwin, James. *Many Thousands Gone. Notes of a Native Son.* Boston: Beacon, 1955. Print. 31 Oct. 2012

"Filipino American History." *Filipino American History.* N. p., n. d. Web. 28 Oct. 2012.

"Immigration History." *ECampus Geriatrics. Stanford School of Medicine,* n. d. Web.

Le, C. N. 2012. "The First Asian Americans" *Asian-Nation: The Landscape of Asian America.* Web. 31 Oct. 2012

Magat, Arianne "Philippines from 1900-1915" *The First Wave of Filipino Migration to the United States.* N. p., n. d. Web. 28 Oct. 2012.

Garcia, Arturo P. "A Brief History: Filipino Immigrants in the United States. Out of the Shadows, into the Streets." *Liberation News.* N. p., 24 Aug. 2007. Web. 28 Oct. 2012.

Hall, Stuart. "Who needs identity." *Questions of cultural identity* 16. 2 (1996): 1-17. Web. 31 Oct. 2012

Rueda, Nimfa U. "Filipinos 2nd Largest Asian Group in US, Census Shows." *Inquirer Global Nation. Inquirer,* 25 Mar. 2012. Web. 28 Oct. 2012.

"The Rise of Asian Americans." *Pew Research Center.* N. p., 19 June 2012. Web. 28 Oct. 2012.

"Tydings-McDuffie Act of 1934." *Asian American Nation.* N. p., n. d. Web. 31 Oct. 2012.

“ U. S. Filipinos Highlight Immigrant Rights on May Day.” AsianWeek: The Voice of Asian America. AsianWeek, 1 May 2012. Web. 28 Oct. 2012.