

MOTION

The first large wave of Filipinos came to Los Angeles beginning in the 1920s when the Philippines was a United States colony. The vast majority of these migrants were young, single men from provincial areas of the Philippines. By 1940, the Filipino population in the City of Los Angeles was close to 5,000.

As Filipinos entered the United States in increasing numbers, residential segregation forced Filipinos into live in dense areas of downtown alongside other non-white communities. By the late 1920s, the area centered around First Street, Main Street, Los Angeles Street, and Weller Street (now Astronaut Ellison S. Onizuka Street) became known as "Little Manila," where dozens of Filipino-owned businesses such as barbershops, restaurants, pool halls, taxi-dance halls, employment agencies, community centers, and photograph studios. Establishments like the Rizal Barbershop, the Filipino Protective Association, and the LVM Café catered to the growing Filipino community.

During this time, the City of Los Angeles through the Los Angeles Police Department and Police Commission systematically targeted the Filipino community through containment of these racial and gendered borders through extralegal and intrusive forms of policing. Numerous occasions of police harassment, beatings, and murders of Filipino men in Little Manila at the hands of the LAPD occurred during these decades. One officer of the LAPD vice squad suggested that he "would like to arrest every Filipino and book them all on a murder charge" and that the federal government "made a mistake by ever making those Filipinos citizens of the U.S."

By the 1940s, the geographic focus of the Filipino American community shifted towards the Temple-Figueroa area of downtown Los Angeles from its original epicenter and became the new "Little Manila." Under conditions of segregation and white hostility, Filipinos continued to remake this downtown space as a safe haven from rural and urban forms of racism as well as a social, cultural, and economic center for Filipinos in Southern California. Establishments like the Travelers Café, Civic Center Pool & Billiards Company, and the Manila Post 464 community center became important gathering spaces and community institutions.

The Temple-Figueroa area also became home to Filipino American author, poet, and activist Carlos Bulosan, a pivotal literary figure and a powerful voice for marginalized communities in America. The former apartment where he resided from 1936-1937 at 714 1/2 W. Temple Street is "no longer extant" and is now LADWP's headquarters. In his most famous novel, *America is in the Heart*, Bulosan wrote about Filipinos in downtown Los Angeles and depicted Filipino American life during the period of intense racial hostility. His literary works continue to be read today across the United States and the Philippines.

By the 1950s and 1960s, large-scale urban renewal projects downtown such as the building of City Hall South, the Los Angeles Music Center, the Department of Water and


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Power headquarters, and the 101 and 110 freeways destroyed the homes and businesses of Filipinos essentially erasing the physical remnants of downtown's Little Manila districts and pushing the Filipino American community west to the Temple-Beverly corridor, now known as Historic Filipinotown.

In recognition of these sites' historical significance of both Little Manila districts at First Street/Los Angeles Street and Temple Street/Figueroa Street, it is appropriate that the City erect permanent signage recognizing these important locations in the City of Los Angeles.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the Department of Transportation be instructed to erect permanent ceremonial sign(s) at the intersection of First Street and Los Angeles Street in recognition of the historical location of Los Angeles original Little Manila site.

I FURTHER MOVE that the intersection of Temple Street and Figueroa Street be designated as "America is in the Heart Square" to honor the presence of Filipino Americans especially Bulosan at this Little Manila site and that the Department of Transportation be directed to erect permanent ceremonial sign(s) to this effect at this location.

PRESENTED BY:


YSABEL JURADO
Councilmember, 14th District

SECONDED BY:



ORIGINAL