

Historic Filipinotown Tour

Saturday May 7, 2022



Organizers and Tour Guides:

- Josleyn Geaga-Rosenthal, *Friends of Echo Park Branch LA Public Library* ([Friends](#)) & *Carlos Bulosan Book Club* ([CBBC](#))
- Gerald Gubatan, [Rotary Club of Historic Filipinowon](#) (incoming president)
- Pinky Jones, [Council Street Studio & Gallery](#) (Owner), & real estate agent (Sotheby's Int'l Realty)
- Jaime Geaga, [Carlos Bulosan Book Club](#) (chair) & Friends Board member
- David Rockello, [Friends of Echo Park Branch LA Public Library](#) & [CBBC](#)
- Joanthan Geaga-Yap, *artist and entrepreneur*

**The tour coaches were provided through the courtesy of Councilman Mitch O'Farrell's Office*

Background of Filipino Americans in America

The Philippines won its independence from Spain in 1898 but that freedom was short-lived because shortly after, Spain, in surrendering to the US in 1898, still claimed sovereignty over the Philippines and sold it along with Guam and Puerto Rico to the United States for the sum of US \$20 million. Thus ensued the Philippine American War from 1899 to 1902 which resulted in the Philippines becoming a colony of the US until 1946. Filipinos fought bravely as part of the allied forces against the Japanese Army in WWII.

There were three major waves of migration from the Philippines – first in the 1920's and 1930's consisting of 100,000 single young men recruited as agricultural workers, second, after the 1965 US Immigration and Naturalization Act which abolished the quota system limiting entry to Western Europeans and a new policy based on attracting skilled professional labor to the US and reuniting immigrant families led to the third wave of Filipino immigrants starting in the 1980's.

According to preliminary figures from the 2020 US census, there are now 4.1 million Filipinos in the US, the second largest Asian group after the Chinese. The Los Angeles -Riverside-Orange county area has the largest concentration of Filipinos in the US, numbering over 4400,000. In Los Angeles City proper, Filipinos comprise the largest Asian group. It is no surprise then that here was officially designated the only section with the term Filipinotown in the USA.

Welcome

- Show of hands who's visiting HiFi for the first
- Show of hands who've visited once or even live in the area
- Housekeeping:
 - Tour will take about 1 ½ hours. The last stop is at Unidad Park
 - Show of hands who plan to return here
 - Show of hands who plan to leave tour and remain in Unidad Park & HiFi Eastern Gateway
 - For the noon tour, be mindful of the tour progress. Need to complete in 1 ½ hours so the bus can be back by 1:45 to start loading for the 2 pm tour.

Tour Start: [Citizens of the World Charter School](#)

Distribute brochure "Historic Filipinotown Directory" with map of HiFiTown and websites of legacy organizations.

- Historic Filipinotown designation in Aug 2002
- Characteristics of Historic Filipinotown
 - 2.1 square mile area
 - boundaries: NORTH - 101 Freeway, WEST - Hoover St., EAST - Glendale Blvd., SOUTH - Beverly Blvd.
 - According to the 2010 US Census 15% of the area's 40,000 residents; 65% are "Little Manila"
 - Bunker Hill Area
 - Temple-Beaudry Area
 - Temple-Beverly Corridor

[Time Check: Promptly Depart at 12 noon/2 pm](#)

[Start driving towards Beverly Blvd](#)

- Turn right, driving westward, passing by businesses including [Genever Bar](#),
- On Dillon St., turn right, to Council Street 3019 Council Street, [Council Street Studio & Gallery](#)
- Drive east and turn right on Reno, driving south on Reno to Beverly Blvd., turn right. Continue driving west towards Virgil Ave., turning right; continue to Silver Lake Blvd. turning right, stay on the right to go up the ramp to merge on to Temple Street, passing by the [Western Gateway Sign of Historic Filipinotown](#).
- Continue driving west to:

Search to Involve Pilipino Americans ([SIPA](#))

Founded in 1972, the mission of Search To Involve Pilipino Americans (SIPA) is to enhance the quality of life in Los Angeles' Historic Filipinotown and for Filipino Americans throughout Los

Angeles County. As such, SIPA provides a wide range of health and human services and community economic development programs aimed at improving economic self-sufficiency, educational attainment, cultural awareness and civic engagement.

Youth and family services (counseling and case management, afterschool programs, etc.) are the core of SIPA's programs, but in the 1990's housing, small business and consumer assistance and civic engagement and advocacy were added to more comprehensively address the needs of our clients. Additionally, SIPA has expanded its capacity to serve a diverse population and currently provides services in English, Tagalog (Filipino), and Spanish.

In the next few years, SIPA's goals include leading cultural tourism and revitalization projects, supporting community-based entrepreneurs and redeveloping its own 23,000 sq. ft. property into a state of the art community, recreational, social service and arts/cultural center.

Lampposts with medallions



Along the streets of Historic FilipinoTown are lamp posts adorned with Filipino cultural medallions. These medallions decorate the tops of lamp posts with different symbols. Roel Punzalan is the artist who designed the streetlight art. His vision for the project was to tie the Filipino values of “kapwa,” “lakbay,” and “kapayapaan” to the unique interaction of Filipino culture and Historic FilipinoTown.^[42]

The streetlight art served both as an educational opportunity to share Filipino culture and history and as a way to improve pedestrian safety. Streetlights were placed at 17 different intersections, and about 54 lamp posts were adorned with Punzalan's art.^[43]

The Filipino cultural values can be defined as: “[kapwa](#)” is “shared humanity or togetherness,” “lakbay” is “journey,” and “kapayapaan” is “peace”.^[44] These are the descriptions for each streetlight art:

- “Kapwa: Shared Humanity - ALL HANDS IN. The Filipino Sun, a symbol of unity, is created by stacking hands in a team huddle, a gesture of unity.”
- “Lakbay: Journey - BUILD BRIDGES. Two figures holding hands to form a bridge symbolizes both the journey to America and the relationships that are created among the various people after they arrive.”
- “Kapayapaan: Peace - EMBRACE PEACE. The parol, a star-shaped lantern symbolizing the Filipino Christmas, is created by interlocking figures in a group hug as a reminder of peace throughout the year.”

Punzalan explained that the streetlights highlight the importance of humanity in the Filipino culture and that the people are essential for the culture to last through the challenges and passage of time.

At 12:15/2:15 pm, drive east on Temple Street, and slow down at the intersection with Alvarado St. is approached.

Remy’s Square

Intersection: Temple Street and Alvarado Blvd.

On November 2, 2010, the intersection at Temple Street and Alvarado Boulevard was named as "[Remedios \(Remy\) v. Geaga Square](#)", and the Department of Transportation was directed to erect a permanent ceremonial sign at the location. A resident of Historic Filipinotown, Geaga dedicated her life to end discrimination in employment, education, and housing.^[12]

Right on Alvarado St., right on Court ST. and left on Lake St. to 227 N. Lake St., park and dismount.

Time Check: Arrive here by 12:20 pm/2:20 pm

Filipino American WWII Veterans Memorial



In November 2006, Eric Garcetti, then-president of the Los Angeles City Council, joined Filipino veterans from around the country in unveiling the first monument dedicated to the 250,000 Filipino and 7,000 Filipino American soldiers who fought for the United States in World War II. The monument, located in Lake Street Park in the heart of Historic Filipinotown, consists of five slabs of polished black granite and commemorates the history of the Filipino veterans, from WWII to immigration to their subsequent fight for equality.

It was designed by artist [Cheri Gaulke](#) and the project was led by Joe Bernardo, a former staffer of Eric Garcetti.^[45] Inscribed in the front of the memorial is the quote, “Bataan was not our last battlefield. We are still fighting for equity,” by Faustino “Peping” Baclig. Baclig, a survivor of the Bataan death march and longtime leader of the movement to gain financial and medical benefits for the veterans comments on the longstanding battle that the Filipino community would face to gain recognition and equality in the country.^[46]

At 12:40/2:40 pm, drive south on Lake, right on Beverly Blvd., right on Park View, point out 135 N. Park View, FASGI

Filipino American Service Group, Inc. (FASGI)

Established in 1981, FASGI’s mission is to promote the cultural, social and economic advancement of individuals, families and the community.^{rf} life for all;

Continue driving north on Park View, R on Temple Street to Union Ave., turn R, driving south one block to 301 N. Union Ave. Filipino Christian Church. Stop and park.

The Filipino Christian Church was built in 1915, in the [craftsman](#)-style featuring stained-glass windows.^[1] The church was designated Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument No. 651 in 1998, and added to the [National Register of Historic Places](#) on January 4, 2019.^[2]

Continue driving south on Union Ave. pointing out two other churches with significant Filipino congregations. Our Lady of Loretto Catholic Church, 250 N. Union Ave. and Iglesia Ni Cristo, 141 N. Union Ave.

Continue driving south on Union Ave to Beverly Blvd. turn right, go west one block and turn right on Burlington Ave. to 242 N. Burlington Ave.

[Burlington Nursery School](#), owned and operated by Cecile Ramos, who with late husband Val Ramos were property developers in HiFi since the 1970's. Among their projects were Manila Terrace Apartments, Luzon Plaza and Villa Ramos Apartments.

Continue driving north on Burlington to Temple. turn right. Point out FACLA

The Filipino American Community of Los Angeles ([FACLA](#))

was originally established in 1945, making it one of the earliest civic groups in the city to serve the Filipino immigrant community. The current building, named the Filipino American Cultural Center, was constructed as a social hall in 1965; its opening marked the start of the "golden years" of the Filipino-American community in the area.

[Time Check: Arrive here by 12:50/ 2:50 pm](#)

[Echo Park Branch Los Angeles Public Library](#)

Continue driving east on Temple St. past Glendale Blvd. to Douglas St. and turn right to the Echo Park Branch Library (EPL), 1410 West Temple St.

Dismount to visit the Philippine Heritage Collection. This is the only dedicated space to Philippine heritage material within the 70 plus branch libraries of the Los Angeles City Public Library system. The [Friends of EPL](#) also established the [Carlos Bulosan Book Club](#).

Carlos Bulosan lived, worked and socialized in the HiFi area in the 1930s & 40s. Carlos's most well known book, "[America is in the Heart](#)" has just been reissued by Penguin Books and listed as an American Classic. Carlos was part of the first immigration wave, at age 16 with a 3rd grade education, who later expanded his knowledge, self taught, spending hours reading at the Los Angeles Central Library. Bulosan's works describe the experience of growing up poor in a rural area of the Philippines, chronicling social and economic conditions created by the American occupation and centuries of Spanish colonialism. Bulosan's work captures the "push" factors that drove his generation to the United States. Like Bulosan, they hoped to find a better future and forged resilient and adaptive communities in the face of an often-hostile and exploitative European American culture in the United States.

[At 1:05/3:05 pm](#) Leave the Echo Park Library parking lot, turn left on Douglas, left on Temple St, left on Glendale Blvd to the Pilipino Workers Center (PWC) Larry Itliong Village, www.pwcsc.org, 153 Glendale Blvd.
(Stop)

[Pilipino Workers Center](#)

was formed in 1997, on the idea that all individuals deserve a high quality of life. This means that we are entitled to safe working conditions, living wages, decent living conditions, access to quality healthcare and basic human dignity. We provide services and resources that help meet

the immediate needs of Pilipino workers and their families while organizing for long-term change. We also believe that the conditions of Filipino workers and the community here in Los Angeles are inseparably linked to the conditions in our homeland, the Philippines. Justice here includes justice there. PWC also serves as a research institute that focuses on the latest data, statistics and situation of Filipino workers and immigrants here in the United States, as well as a resource for information on the Philippines

[Larry Itliong Village Apartments](#), is also the main headquarters of the Pilipino Worker's Center. This site combines three Filipino design elements: the "[piloti](#)" which was first introduced to this country during the 18th Century by Filipino settlers of [St. Malo](#) and [Manila Village](#) who built houses made of wood and platformed on stilts; the four inter-woven red bars above the main entrance which pays homage to Filipino baskets, ethnic weaving, the commoner's house ([bahay kubo](#) which was essentially built like a basket), and the bamboo dance known as "[Tinikling](#)"; with the sun with eight rays of the [Philippine flag](#) completing the Filipino branding of the site.

Just across the street is [Ava DuVernay's Campus, ARRAY Studios](#), at 180 Glendale Blvd., one of several film production companies that have moved into the area.

Continue driving south on Glendale Blvd., into Lucas Ave., till 3rd St. to turn right, continue to Union Ave. and turn right. Park and stop just before Beverly Blvd. Dismount and walk east on Beverly Blvd. to Unidad Park. For the Noon tour, check the time and plan appropriately so you can return to Citizen of the World School in time to load at [1:45 pm](#) for the 2pm tour.

Point out the [Rideback Ranch](#) at 1660 Beverly Blvd. another film production company that moved into Historic Filipinotown. Its owner, Dan Lin has produced films that have grossed over \$4 billion in worldwide box office and include the LEGO movie franchise films.

[Unidad Park. Gintong Kasaysayan, Gintong Pamana Mural](#), 1664 Beverly Bl.

Before the area was designated as Historic Filipinotown, on June 24, 1995, the nation's largest Filipino American mural, Gintong Kasaysayan, Gintong Pamana (Filipino Americans: A Glorious History, A Golden legacy), was unveiled. The mural promotes ethnic solidarity and the fight for historical inclusion of the 'forgotten' or 'invisible' Filipinos in American history. For example, the mural includes Larry Itliong who challenged young Filipino American activists to organize themselves to fight for equality in the 1960s and fought alongside Cesar Chavez to lead the Delano Grape Strike groups (Kim, 1999). The mural also includes [apl.de.ap](#), who is a hip hop performer, rapper, producer, and composer.

In 1997, the City of Los Angeles Board of Cultural Affairs Commissioners awarded the mural its first ever Award of Design Excellence for public art. The mural was likewise featured in [Los Angeles County Museum of Art](#)'s "Made in California: Art, Image and Identity 1900-200", the Smithsonian Institution's traveling exhibition celebrating 100 years of Filipino migration to the United States called "Singgalot (The Ties That Bind): From Colonial Subjects to Citizens" and the Smithsonian Traveling Exhibition "I Want the Wide American Earth" honoring the history and contributions of Asian and Pacific Islanders in the United States.

The mural was painted by then 22-year-old artist Eliseo Art Silva while a junior attending [Otis College of Art and Design](#). According to the artist, "...the mural encapsulates 5,000 years of Filipino and Filipino American history; the design is divided into two parts: the first is historical (represented by the outline of a fish at sea), leading up to the awakening of Filipino national and political consciousness; the second part is dominated by a huge [bird](#) with significant Filipino-Americans on its wings, the farm workers on the bottom left and the youth and community on the right."

[Unidad Park and Community Garden](#)



An information kiosk that stands in front of the Gintong Kasaysayan, Gintong Pamana mural in Unidat Park which provides a brief history of the park, community garden and mural. The mural originally faced a large community garden called the Candy Chuateco Community Garden. Sponsored by Search to Involve Pilipino Americans.

The land was purchased by the City of Los Angeles and converted into Unidat Park through the Los Angeles Neighborhood Land Trust (LANLT). Unidat Park's design was conceptualized by leaders and stakeholders of the Filipino community and based largely from submitted renderings by the mural artist Eliseo Silva, which includes the Philippine [Bontoc/Kankana-ey](#) communal gathering place, park features and a community garden referencing the [Rice Terraces of the Philippine Cordilleras](#), a [UNESCO World Heritage Site](#), as well as an entrance walkway based on a design by Filipino American [Pedro Flores](#).

The park is a destination for the neighborhood with its Dap-ay used by students and the sandbox inside this space used by toddlers, the interactive play area, community garden as well as onsite

barbecue grills with matching tables and benches for family gatherings and parties, enhanced by a covered tent to protect park users from the sun and rain.

[Historic Filipinotown Eastern Gateway - May 7, 2022 Inauguration](#)

The gateway, officially called “Talang Gabay - Our Guiding Star,” rises 30 feet high and spans 82 feet across the width of Beverly Boulevard, at the eastern entrance into Historic Filipinotown. The project features the work of Filipino artist Eliseo Art Silva with Celestino Geronimo, Jr. Design elements include: the Parol; the Gumamela flower also known as hibiscus, which pays tribute to frontline workers; and the Sarimanok – all symbols with deep roots in Filipino culture.

Handouts

- [Historic Filipinotown Neighborhood Directory](#) (HiFi Coalition); has websites of legacy organizations
- PASSPORT Card - lists local HiFi restaurants
- [Remy's Square brochure](#)
- Voices From Filipinotown bookmark
- [Carlos Bulosan Book Club info card](#)
- [Council Street Studios & Gallery](#)

HiFi Tour QR Code

