

The AACCP Newsletter

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Hollywood Still Doesn't Get It

An Editorial by Philip Chin

The Screen Actor's Guild (SAG) recently commissioned a report about the state of minorities, seniors, and women in film and TV roles and came to the conclusion that they had seen few gains in recent years. As reported in *Variety*, "The breakdown of film and TV roles for 2008 was 72.5% Caucasian, 13.3% African-American, 6.4% Latino-Hispanic, 3.8 Asian-Pacific Islander, 0.3% Native American and 3.8% other-unknown. SAG noted in its report that U.S. Census data from 2000 showed that the nation's population was 73.4% Caucasian, 11.5% African-American, 10.6% Latino-Hispanic, 3.7% Asian-Pacific Islander and 0.8% Native American." The SAG report also said that Asian-Pacific people were the only minority group to gain from 2007 to 2008, going from 3.4% to 3.8% of roles, mostly due to increased opportunities on television. But what kind of roles were these?

I've been watching the new NBC drama series, *Trauma* lately and thinking about those issues. The show is about the lives of paramedics working in San Francisco. As anyone that knows the health services in San Francisco the mostly white cast doesn't reflect the reality of a city that is nearly 35% Asian American and where whites are the minority. You would think there should have been at least a few Asian faces around as medics, nurses, doctors, and other professionals to reflect that reality. But after so many years of fruitless protest you kind of resign yourself to seeing that lack of diversity on TV. Still, there are times when something comes up that really smack you on the head.

The recent episode of the series entitled *Stuck* had a plotline that included an explosion at a restaurant in Chinatown. Anytime I hear "Chinatown" and a network TV series in conjunction with each other I automatically have that sinking sensation. You

automatically know you're in for a ride into cliché land. I wasn't disappointed, at least in that.

In the show you see emergency vehicles rushing through the streets of Chinatown, a Chinatown that is strangely empty of Asian faces. The medics enter a devastated restaurant in the heart of Chinatown that is almost completely filled with white people. Now why is that fat white customer dead in the back wearing a condom? Of course, it's because the restaurant was really a front for a Chinese prostitution ring and the girls were locked up in the back. Cue the Chinese women in scanty miniskirts screaming unintelligibly as a madam yells at them. Is that Mandarin I hear?

Then the evil Chinese pimp shows up to chase the girls away from the medics and emergency workers also barking in Mandarin. Then the prostitute with the heart of gold sticks around and agrees to testify against the evil prostitution ring in court, all the while speaking in perfect American English with no trace of an accent. True, she does it at the behest of a sympathetic African American medic but where were the other good Asian Americans? There were so many obvious places where this storyline was either flat out implausible or offensive that it is hard to know where to begin.

Is this where we stand in 2009, almost at the end of the first decade of the 21st Century? What happened to all the Asian faces in Chinatown? In Hollywood thinking, those Asians that appear merely exist as the backdrop. Even the venial white patron of the prostitutes is already dead and thus beyond all useful condemnation. It is the Chinese pimp and madam that get all the hatred of the audience.

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Manila Men in the New World

An Article for Filipino American History Month

By Leonard D. Chan

Back in June 2006, I wrote a short article about the first recorded arrival of Asians in North of America. Filipino explorers that were part of a Spanish expedition arrived in California on October 18, 1587. A couple of months ago, I visited the plaque that commemorates the landing of these Filipino explorers. The plaque itself was not that impressive, however the visit to this location was inspirational - Asians 422 years ago had traveled thousands of miles to reach the lands that I was now stand at. This was our Plymouth Rock.

At the recent Teachers for Social Justice conference, I found a great book called *Manila Men of the New World*, which further

heightened my interest in learning about early Filipino arrivals to America.

Although this book may fall a little short of being a true academic history of the early Filipinos in America, the author Floro Mercene does do a comprehensive investigation on the subject. The result is a fascinating readable book that will hopefully spur new studies and interest on this aspect of American history. It certainly has stirred my imagination.

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Give Us Your Feedback

Please feel free to send us your reviews, comments, and book suggestions. You can contact us at -
aacpinc@asianamericanbooks.com

Up Coming Events

Here are some events that AACP will soon be attending. Invite us to your events.

Date/Time	Event	Location
Nov. 7 10am-4pm	5th Annual Artistry Faire Fine Arts and Asian Crafts Palo Alto Buddhist	Temple Gym Palo Alto, CA
Nov. 1-30	National Novel Writing Month In	Your Home
Other Event of Interest that AACP May Not Attend		
Oct. 28- Nov. 1	Nat. Assoc. for Multicultural Ed. (NAME) 2009	Conference Grand Hyatt Denver, CO
Oct. 30- Nov. 2	CA Lib. Assoc. Annual Conference	Pasadena Convention Center Pasadena, CA
Nov. 7 5:30pm & 7pm	Eth-Noh-Tec - Salon! You're On! Genny Lim (Playwright & Poet), Tsering Dorjee (Musician, Dancer), Judith Kajiwarra (Butoh Dancer), Doris Feyling (Storyteller), Leon Sun (Painter & Poet)	977 S. Van Ness Ave San Francisco, CA
Nov. 14 8-3pm	National Pacific Islander Educator Network (NPIEN) 8th Annual Education Conference	Paramount High School 14429 S. Downey Ave. Paramount, CA
Nov. 19 7:30pm	Thanksgiving Harvest Reading with author David Mas Masumoto	Geology Corner Bldg 320, Room 105 Stanford, CA
Nov. 20-23	CA School Lib. Assoc. Conference 2009	Ontario, CA

Hollywood Still Doesn't Get It

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These stock characters don't even speak Cantonese or Toishan dialect, the usual languages of San Francisco's Chinatown. Mandarin speakers even today complain about not being understood in San Francisco. There are several distinct Chinese languages besides the official Mandarin used in China and Taiwan. San Francisco isn't a Mandarin speaking community as of yet. Did the producers from NBC even bother to consult with real experts from the community who could have given them a clue?

In this day and age we should expect TV to reflect their audiences, not just in ethnic diversity, but also in the quality of roles that those minorities play. You can't have Asian Americans playing more roles on TV and claim those numbers mean progress

Editor's Message

Hello Everyone,

Happy Halloween! I was going to try to connect the Filipino pirates and vanished ghost mining camps to the occasion, within my article, but I'll have to do it here and leave it to your imagination.

Like always, I'll have to make this short - it won't be long till the witching hour and the beginning of a new month.

To top things off, I think I'm going to try to participate in the November National Novel Writing Month this year. So I'll have to come up with a plot outline by midnight. Why don't you all join me in this extremely creative effort - drop me a line during the month and share how you're doing - maybe we can help each other past plot blocks.

Thank you Philip for your call for better TV and movie programming. Thank you Wendy Jorae for sending me a copy of your wonderful book.

By the way, the next newsletter will be coming out in early December. For you newer subscribers - I usually combine the November and December newsletters.

Have a Happy Thanksgiving everyone!

Leonard Chan
Executive Editor

when they are still playing the same old faceless stereotypes that they were back in the 1880s when the most popular American slogan was, "The Chinese Must Go!" To have it happen in a TV series set in San Francisco where Asian Americans form such an overwhelming part of the community is even more offensive. Come on Hollywood, it's time to change. If Americans can elect an African American president then Hollywood can certainly cast Asian Americans in TV and movie as something more than stereotypes. Please join us in the 21st Century and get out of the 19th.

Variety's article –
SAG stats: Diversity lags
Minorities, seniors, females underrepresented
<http://www.variety.com/article/VR1118010361.html?categoryid=1055&cs=1>

Manila Men in the New World

(Continued from page 1)

Here is a summary of some of the interesting topics contained within *Manila Men of the New World*.

The Pacific Ocean Spanish Galleon Trade

Between 1570 and 1815, Spain had a thriving trade route between Manila in the Philippines and Acapulco, Mexico. Manila was essentially used as a way station for trade with China. During this era, the Spanish galleon ships were not only provisioned in the Philippines, but were often built and manned by Filipinos (also known at the time as Manila Men). Mercene states that at the beginning of the Galleon Era, Filipinos would often comprise 20% of the crew of these ships and that by the later years of the era, some crews consisted of as many as 80% Filipinos. Mercene states an unnamed source that estimates as many as 60,000 Filipinos may have sailed on this trade route during this era.

Filipinos continued to play an active maritime role even after the end of the Galleon Trade Era and Mercene states that there is documented evidence of Filipino sailors forming communities in major port cities throughout the world.

Spanish Exploration

As mentioned earlier, Filipinos were members of the 1587 Unamuno Expedition of California. An interesting note to the Unamuno Expedition is that a Japanese boy/youth may have also been a passenger on this expedition. Mercene mentions that one of his major sources was a 1929 book by historian Henry R. Wagner called *Spanish Voyages to the Northwest Coast of America in the Sixteenth Century*.

Interesting enough, I found this book at one of my local libraries. Unfortunately, the book could not be checked out and I had very little time to review it for this article. I did learn that *Spanish Voyages to the Northwest Coast of America in the Sixteenth Century* is an amazing volume which contains primary source material such as reproductions of actual logs, notes, and maps from the various expeditions along with Wagner's translations and interpretations of these materials.

Wagner does corroborate Mercene's statement that a "young Japanese novice" was among the missionary passengers that joined Unamuno's voyage. However, from what little I read, Wagner only describes this passenger as being a Japanese boy that would be of interest to the king (of Spain; I'm working from memory here, so don't quote this without checking directly with Wagner's book). I skipped to the end of Wagner's description of the expedition and saw that cargo belonging to the boy had survived the journey to Mexico.

The significance of the Japanese boy being on the Unamuno Expedition is that this is most likely the first documented arrival of Japanese to America.

As the Spanish explored the Pacific and the West Coast of America, Filipinos were undoubtedly a part of many of the expeditions that took place during the Galleon Era.

The *Manila Men of the New World* mentions that Filipinos were a part of the 1595 Cermeno Expedition to the coast of California. They were also vital members of the Malaspina Expedition of the Pacific Ocean and American West Coast from 1789 to 1794. Mercene describes the Malaspina Expedition as being as grand and ambitious as the British James Cook Expedition during this same time period.

Filipinos were also members of the Father Junipero Serra led 1769 land expedition and settlement of California. One such Filipino by the name of Narciso was Serra's personal servant.

Filipinos Buccaneers

In November of 1587, an English buccaneer named Thomas Cavendish and his two ships raided the treasure laden Spanish galleon Santa Ana off the coast of Baja California. Many of the crew and passengers of the Santa Ana were Filipinos. As part of the plunder Cavendish took three Filipino boys and two young Japanese men off the Santa Ana. Mercene does not mention what became of these individuals, but Cavendish continued his adventure to Asia and eventually back to England where Queen Elizabeth I joyously greeted him.

In 1818 the renown privateer Hypolite Bouchard, a French Argentinean, attacked and for a short while captured Monterey, California. At least one of Bouchard's attacking ships had Filipino and Hawaiian crew members. Bouchard's many exploits are well documented and even the Monterey Maritime Museum highlights Bouchard's brazen attacks in California.

Gold Rush and the Civil War

The 1949 California Gold Rush - Filipinos were there too. The *Manila Men of the New World* cites accounts of a Filipino mining camp called Tolitos during the California Gold Rush. Their appearance in mass to a normally uninhabitable little spot in the California foothills brings up many questions. Mercene asks "Where did these Filipinos come from and what happen to them?" His only speculation was that they were crewmembers of some trade or whaling ship (or ships) and that they jumped ship as so many others had done during this period.

Last night I watched a PBS episode of the program The American Experience that dealt with the California Gold Rush. It made sparse reference to any non-Caucasians being in the gold fields (nothing about Filipinos), but *Manila Men of the New World* shows that there was quite a diversity of individuals that came to the gold fields.

Manila Men of the New World also has a chapter on Filipinos that participated in the US Civil War. In this chapter, Mercene relies on the research of Nestor Palugod Enriquez, a former US Navy member that became a writer and researcher. Enriquez's research uncovered the names of 31 possible Filipinos that fought in the Civil War. *Manila Men of the New World* list all their names accompanied by a short description of each individual based on their military records.

Just as in the chapter on the Filipino gold miners, Mercene leaves us with many questions - "where did they come from and what happened to them?"

Filipinos Were There




Manila Men of the New World has other chapters dealing with early Filipino settlements in Louisiana, Baja California, and Mexico. Mercene spent much time and effort trying to find the descendants of these early Filipino immigrants. His efforts often times seemed unfruitful - inter-ethnic marriages and people's general lack of knowledge of their lineage hampered his ability to discover a lot of descendants. He did find some though and

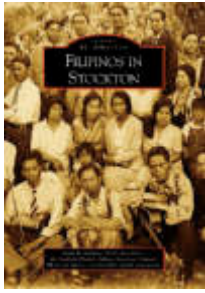
Manila Men of the New World reports on his many findings.

Manila Men of the New World exhibits a preponderance of evidence that Filipinos do have a long history in the American experience. For those racist individuals that believe that people belonging to ethnicities other than their own have no claim to America, nothing could be further from the truth. America was and has always been a diverse country.

ADDITIONS TO OUR WEBSITE

The following books are discounted for subscribers to our newsletter. The discounts on these books end November 22, 2009.

	<p>Manila Men of the New World Filipino Migration to Mexico and the Americas from the Sixteenth Century</p> <p>By Floro L. Mercene 2007, 161 pages, Paperback.</p> <p>Item #3582, Price \$24.95</p>
	<p>The Children of Chinatown Growing Up Chinese American in San Francisco 1850-1920</p> <p>By Wendy Rouse Jorae 2009, 295 pages, Paperback.</p> <p>When you think of San Francisco Chinatown during the 19th and early 20th centuries you may conjure up the common images used in documentaries and books of Chinese men in crowded alleys and store fronts, maybe even some men in opium dens. Women, if shown, are usually in the context of prostitution.</p> <p>Wendy Jorae's erudite work fills in one of the least known aspects of early Chinese communities - that being its children and family life. The Children of Chinatown is filled with information that will forever dispel the narrow views of early Chinese communities as being rough undesirable bachelor societies.</p> <p>Item #3579, Normally \$22.95 ... for newsletter subscribers \$18.36</p>
	<p>Wherever There's a Fight How Runaway Slaves, Suffragists, Immigrants, Strikers, and Poets Shaped Civil Liberties in California</p> <p>By Elaine Elinson and Stan Yogi 2009, 498 pages, Paperback.</p> <p>The authors of <i>Wherever There's a Fight</i> aptly describe their book with a quote from Fred Korematsu, the Japanese American who fought Executive Order 9066 that interned nearly 120,000 Japanese Americans during World War II. Korematsu said, "They did me a great wrong."</p> <p><i>Wherever There's a Fight</i> is the retelling of cases of injustices that were committed during the history of California and of the brave people that fought to right these wrongs. Many of the injustices described were outright atrocities that were often committed against disenfranchised and powerless minorities. One whole chapter is devoted to the World War II internment of Japanese Americans and another chapter to the issues of harsh treatment of immigrants dating back to the 1800s when Chinese were first persecuted.</p> <p>This is a page turning composition on California's many historical warts and on the related inspirational fights for justice.</p> <p>Item #3578, Normally \$24.95 ... for newsletter subscribers \$19.96</p>



Imagines of America Filipinos in Stockton

By Dawn B Mabalon, Rico Reyes, Stockton Chapter of the Filipino American National Historical Society, and the Little Manila Foundation
2008, 128 pages, Paperback.

Filipinos in Stockton is another book in the wonderful *Images of America* series by Arcadia Publishing. Some of the books in this series do a much better job of telling the story of the community - *Filipino in Stockton* is one of them. The many group photos are accompanied by good captions that not only describe the people in the picture, but also give you a sense of what the people of the community did for work and leisure.

Some of the more interesting photos include a hotel with a "positively no Filipino allowed" sign, a photo of the Filipino Federation of America building after it was bombed by racist mobs, and pictures of Filipinos in the farm labor movement.

Item #3581, Normally \$19.99 ... for newsletter subscribers **\$15.99**

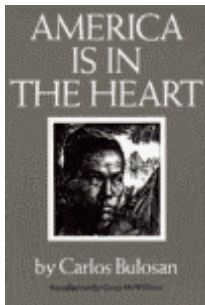


My First Book of Tagalog Words Filipino Rhymes and Verses

By Liana Romulo and Jaime Laurel
2006, 27 pages, Hardback.

My First Book of Tagalog Words is a marvelous introduction to the Filipino language for young English speaking kids. It has one word for each letter of the alphabet and the text that goes with each word is in the form of a rhyme that helps to explain the meaning of the word and aids in its memorization.

Item #3580, Normally \$12.95 ... for newsletter subscribers **\$10.36**



America Is in the Heart A Personal History

By Carlos Bulosan
Introduction by Carey McWilliams
1973, 327 pages, Paperback.

America is in the Heart is Carlos Bulosan's classic semi-autobiographical book about his early life in the Philippines and his grueling existence as an itinerant labor during the Great Depression. Some have characterized this book as a Filipino *Grapes of Wrath*.

We are happy to be offering this to our newsletter subscribers for Filipino American History Month.

Item #187, Normally \$13.95 ... for newsletter subscribers **\$11.16**

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