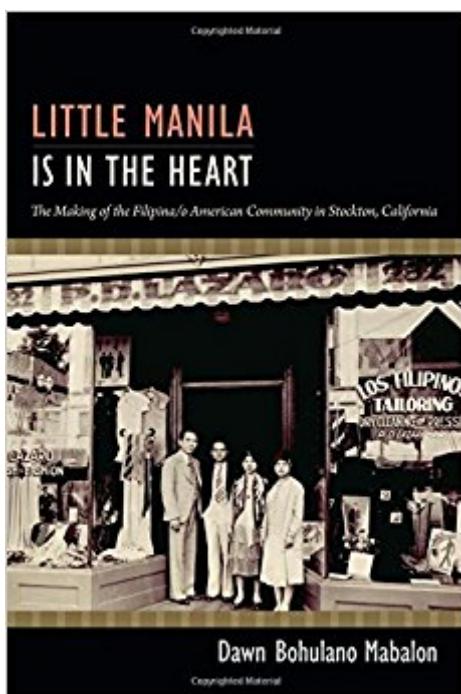


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# Little Manila Is In The Heart: The Making Of The Filipina/o American Community In Stockton, California



## Synopsis

In the early twentieth century—not long after 1898, when the United States claimed the Philippines as an American colony—Filipinas/os became a vital part of the agricultural economy of California's fertile San Joaquin Delta. In downtown Stockton, they created Little Manila, a vibrant community of hotels, pool halls, dance halls, restaurants, grocery stores, churches, union halls, and barbershops. Little Manila was home to the largest community of Filipinas/os outside of the Philippines until the neighborhood was decimated by urban redevelopment in the 1960s. Narrating a history spanning much of the twentieth century, Dawn Bohulano Mabalon traces the growth of Stockton's Filipina/o American community, the birth and eventual destruction of Little Manila, and recent efforts to remember and preserve it. Mabalon draws on oral histories, newspapers, photographs, personal archives, and her own family's history in Stockton. She reveals how Filipina/o immigrants created a community and ethnic culture shaped by their identities as colonial subjects of the United States, their racialization in Stockton as brown people, and their collective experiences in the fields and in the Little Manila neighborhood. In the process, Mabalon places Filipinas/os at the center of the development of California agriculture and the urban West.

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## Customer Reviews

"Little Manila Is in the Heart is a triumph of Filipina/o American history and American studies. There is no other scholarly analysis of the dynamic and vibrant Filipina/o American experience central to the development of Stockton's urban life and the larger San Joaquin Delta, a key area of California's

agribusiness. Moreover, Dawn Bohulano Mabalon is a masterful storyteller. She draws on oral histories to illuminate the pain and joy of building, sustaining, losing, and attempting to preserve Little Manila in Stockton, weaving in with great finesse family history, archival research, and her own activism on behalf of Little Manila's preservation."•Catherine Ceniza Choy, author of *Empire of Care: Nursing and Migration in Filipino American History*"Offering new and exciting insights into the Filipina/o American experience, Little Manila Is in the Heart is a painstakingly researched history of the Filipina/o American community in Stockton. Dawn Bohulano Mabalon connects that local history to national and global phenomena; examines in depth the roles of gender, religion, and community organizing within Stockton's Filipina/o American community; and carefully documents the role of development on an urban Asian American community over the past several decades."•Dorothy B. Fujita-Rony, author of *American Workers, Colonial Power: Philippine Seattle and the Transpacific West, 1919–1941*"Little Manila Is in the Heart is a triumph of Filipina/o American history and American studies. There is no other scholarly analysis of the dynamic and vibrant Filipina/o American experience central to the development of Stockton's urban life and the larger San Joaquin Delta, a key area of California's agribusiness. Moreover, Dawn Bohulano Mabalon is a masterful storyteller. She draws on oral histories to illuminate the pain and joy of building, sustaining, losing, and attempting to preserve Little Manila in Stockton, weaving in with great finesse family history, archival research, and her own activism on behalf of Little Manila's preservation." (Catherine Ceniza Choy, author of *Empire of Care: Nursing and Migration in Filipino American History*)Offering new and exciting insights into the Filipina/o American experience, Little Manila Is in the Heart is a painstakingly researched history of the Filipina/o American community in Stockton. Dawn Bohulano Mabalon connects that local history to national and global phenomena; examines in depth the roles of gender, religion, and community organizing within Stockton's Filipina/o American community; and carefully documents the role of development on an urban Asian American community over the past several decades." (Dorothy B. Fujita-Rony, author of *American Workers, Colonial Power: Philippine Seattle and the Transpacific West, 1919–1941*)• "[An] engaging account of the Filipino American experience in the 20th century. . . . It expands and deepens our knowledge of that past beyond Bulosan's riveting account of the Filipino American experience in the first half of the 20th Century. Of course, it helps that Dawn Mabalon is retelling the history of her own family and her own community. (Benjamin Pimentel Phillipine Daily Inquirer)• Mabalon's text is not merely a history of a community, but a study of how that community has been remembered and forgotten, given the redevelopment and gentrification policies that demolished most of Little

Manila's buildings after the 1960s. (Christopher Patterson International Examiner) Mabalon's work reminds us of the precious importance of engaging in conversation with our elders. As a fellow third generation Filipina American, almost twenty years older than the author, I had often felt alone in seeking out the stories of my grandparents and ancestors, then writing about them in order to keep them alive for all generations.

Mabalon author, professor, and community activist sets the bar for projects such as these to new heights. Justly so, because A community worth saving is a community worth writing about. And vice versa. (Lisa Suguitan Melnick Positively Filipino blog) "This extensive book has valuable information for multiple audiences, including ethnic studies academics, students of ethnic studies, and general readers interested in labor, gender, intergenerational relations, urban studies, race, and the everyday lives of Filipina/os in the twentieth century." (JoAnna Poblete Journal of American History) "I expect that Little Manila will become a staple in courses focused upon histories of California, immigration, and labor." (Allison Varzally American Historical Review)

Dawn Bohulano Mabalon is Associate Professor of History at San Francisco State University.

Little Manila in Stockton doesn't really exist anymore. This DOES NOT mean the Stockton Filipino American community doesn't exist. In fact, Mabalon demonstrates that in spite of the disappearance of Little Manila as a spatial entity, the Stockton Filipino American community has evolved and persisted to the present day as a vibrant community coping with city politics and economics. The community has also had to deal with historic and contemporary social forces (especially labor exploitation, racism and newcomers). Mabalon grew up in Little Manila, so its history is also a major part of Mabalon's and vice versa. Thankfully, Mabalon's narrative is spiced with numerous oral history quotations from "old-timers" -- a generation that will soon be lost. While there is some hope in the future for a community with memory, it can only happen IF newer generations of Filipino Americans gain an appreciation of their past and by reading Mabalon's very readable (but long) book! Little Manila is in the Heart is sometimes a bit disjointed but is full of emotion and purpose. Many Filipino American communities need to have similar accounts written like Mabalon's.

This is not your ordinary history book. Dr. Mabalon has called on the tool of personal narratives to bring history to life. For once in my life, I was not bored by the topic. Normally, history is just not my thing. But I could not put this book down. I was pulled in by the people in the book and their stories.

It really makes the reality of the past something you can connect to. I could see how the stories of my Mexican relatives related to the stories of the manangs and manongs in the book. I strongly recommend this to anyone interested in Filipino-American history, California history, farm labor history, and immigration history.

Dr. Dawn B. Mabalon wrote this book as her thesis for her doctorate at Stanford University. She is now an associate professor of History Cal State University at San Francisco! It took her 20 years and thousands of interviews , intense research on undocumented stories hence verbal interviews with people who lived, worked, and knew Little Manila in Stockton CA.. She had some 1,276 notes in the book, several personal stories about families and individuals that impacted Stockton's Filipino Community since their emigration from 1902- 1940. She explored the real world of racism and prejudice against Filipinos in the early days into the 21st Century Filipino, on which a document was written by Alma Marie AlcalÃƒÂ¡ & published in the Filipino newspaper The Philippine Review! Dr. Mabalon's mastery of historical events is a masterpiece to the Filipinos in that era when Little Manila was a thriving, bustling place now replaced by the crosstown freeway. But at least there is the Filipino Center, a low cost housing building adjacent to Filipino stores, an office space or hall where the all Filipino American Legion Post #798 Manual A. Roxas have their meetingsand social events .. There used to be an import/export store there plus a nice Filipino restaurant now gone. The Filipino Barrio Festival takes place there at the Filipino Center yearly in June.Dr.Mabalon's book is a pivotal point in Filipino -American history which had never been documented before now. She wrote a magnificent history of Stockton's Filipino Community.and how it was weaves into today's society after all the years of low, work wages for field labor, why so many Filipino men "MANONGS" never married, the inclusion of all the Filipino men who volunteered to fight with the Americans during World War II, the baby boom, and to the good years of the district known as Little Manila in downtown Stockton. In-depth and interesting stories, keep you glued to the book, as she once aspired to be a journalist! Perhaps this book was her calling in this lifetime. And make no mistake about it, she thoroughly documented as much as she could to reveal the history of what really went on with the brown skinned man in Stockton CA! KUDOS TO DR. MABALON FOR DOCUMENTING OUR PEOPLE'S HISTORY IN AMERICA FOR IT HAD NEVER BEEN DONE BEFORE AND YOU ARE A CHAMPION FOR TAKING ON SUCH A GREAT CHALLENGE! MAKIBAKA HUAG MATAKOD! BAHALA NA! SALAMAT NAMÃƒÂ•N DR.MABALON FROM THE ENTIRE FILIPINO COMMUNITY'S HEART!

Great book to read and very insightful

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