

FANHIS *Rio Grande*

Filipino American National Historical Society Rio Grande Chapter

Volume 1 No. 1, January to July, 2000

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"He was the prettiest thing I had ever seen"

No One to Champion me

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Rio Grande chapter charter members - Evelio Sabay, Chol Aquino, Marilen and Myrna Ramirez, Connie Perkins, David and Judy Galbiso, Eric David S., and Ricardo Galbiso, Ted Jojola, Josephine Stevens, Ruth and Ver Velasco. Not in picture: Dely Alcantara, Teem Suelto, and Alex Rarang



Making the Invisible Visible: The Rio Grande Filipino American National Historical Society

The Filipino American National Historical Society Rio Grande Chapter was formalized and chartered on September 14, 1998. The inspiration to establish a New Mexico chapter came after Dr. Fred Cordova's presentation on "Remembering their Past for the Future" at our Centennial Celebration of Independence from Spain. His presentation was an eye opener to New Mexico Filipinos. It peaked our curiosity about other Filipinos in the state. It moved some of us to document our family stories and do research on Filipino pioneers in New Mexico.

For most of us in New Mexico, Filipino American history started post-1965. First generation migrants dominate New Mexico Filipinos. Little was known about the labor and student migration to the United States during the first half of the 20th century. That Filipinos have been in this country for more than 200 years was a revelation. That there are second-, third-, and possibly fourth generation

Filipinos in New Mexico was a total surprise to many of us.

The presence of Filipinos in New Mexico was officially recorded in 1910 when 10 native-born Filipinos were counted by the United States Census. By 1930, this number increased to 27 native-born Filipinos. Sixty years later, the 1990 United States Census counted about 2,200 Filipinos in New Mexico. This number has more than doubled in the last 10 years. The economic downturn experienced in

California in the early 1990's and the base closures in the Philippines as a result of the Mount Pinatubo eruption both contributed significantly to the increased migration to New Mexico.

Filipino Americans in New Mexico occupy important positions in federal, local, and state governments. We are successful entrepreneurs. We are pioneer nurses and medical doctors in the Public Health Service. We are nurses and medical doctors in major private hospitals around the state. We are faculty members, researchers, and technical writers in state universities. We are administrators, managers, lawyers, and law enforcement officers. We are represented at all levels of occupations and professions in both public and private service. Yet, the Filipino American is a virtual unknown in New Mexico. Although New Mexico Filipinos are not unique in this predicament, we felt that time has

**Filipino American
National Historical Society
Rio Grande Chapter**

Mission:

" The mission of the Filipino American National Historical Society shall be to promote understanding, education, enlightenment, appreciation and enrichment through the identification, gathering, preservation, and dissemination of the history and culture of Filipino Americans in the United States."

Initiated: July 31, 1997
Organized: July 5, 1998
Instituted: August 16, 1998
Chartered: September 14, 1998

President: Dr. Adelamar Novino (Dely)
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Eric Galbiso
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Mrs. Josephine Stevens
Menandro and Teofila Parazo
Mrs. Connie Perkins
Myrna and Rollie Ramirez
Joseph Ramirez
Marilen Ramirez
Alexander B. Rarang
Evelio A. and Florence M. Sabay
Ethan F. Sabay
Teem Suelto
David Leanio
Cora Romillo
Heddy and Richard Long
Tessie and Randy Greenfield
Mary Ann and Johnny Montoya
Fr. Gil Mangampo
Fr. Domingo Gumpal
Sei Tokuda
Virginia C. and Turk C. Lewis

Making the Invisible Visible... (cont.)

come for us to rectify the situation. Ten families got together and decided to petition FANHS National for a local chapter. The rest is history, so to speak.

Our first year was marked with great enthusiasm and energy. In less than one year, we mounted an historical exhibit at the Annual Albuquerque Summerfest. The results of six months of frenetic oral history and archival research were presented in a story-board format where pictures and narrative were blended together. The exhibit was successful in a number of ways:

- increased the visibility of Filipino Americans in New Mexico;
- increased the awareness of both Filipinos and non-Filipinos alike of the long history of Filipino presence in New Mexico;
- drew attention to the shared colonial history of the Philippines and the Southwest;
- underscored the significant socio-economic and cultural contributions of Filipino Americans in New Mexico;
- invited otherwise disinterested Filipino Americans to identify themselves with the Filipino American community in New Mexico;
- encouraged local-born Filipino Americans as well as those of other races to share their experiences;
- propelled interest for continued historical research; and
- paved the way for alliance with other non-profit organizations and advocacy groups, both public and private.

The exhibit led to a 30-minute interview with three members of the chapter. This is part of a series of programs by the city of Albuquerque Human Rights Office that features the different cultural groups in Albuquerque. The interview is shown on cable television channel that is operated by the city of Albuquerque. A network affiliate also interviewed David Galbiso and his eight-year old son, Eric, about the documentation of their family history. These television interviews emphasize the importance of documenting our history for future generations.

This newsletter is another attempt on our part to document, disseminate, and increase awareness of the presence and contribution of Filipino Americans to New Mexico. In addition to serving a forum for our personal and family stories, it is also our hope that this newsletter will encourage other New Mexicans to share their stories about their experiences with Filipino Americans.

During our second year we plan to continue with our public forum presentations and oral history research. In November, we plan to have an annual achievement award ceremony. The award categories will include the following:

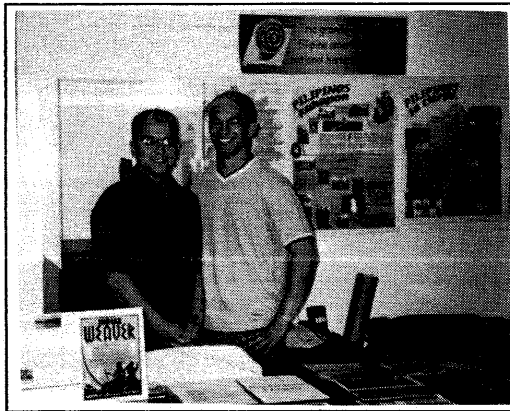
- **Community Achievement Award** which will be given to an individual who had distinguished himself or herself in the promotion of cultural diversity and understanding;

standing;

- **Manoa Award for Identity** which will be given to a Filipino American youth (20 years old and younger) who exemplifies Manoa Alcantara Jojola's pride in his cultural identity and who has made significant contribution in the promotion of a positive personal image through the creative arts. This award is given in honor of my son.
- **Professional achievement award** which will be given to a Filipino American who has distinguished himself or herself in a profession and who has served as a positive role model to other Filipino Americans in New Mexico.

Our goal for the next year is to obtain financial support for our historical research and funding for the publication of a book on Filipinos in New Mexico. We will continue to forge alliances with other cultural groups and public and private agencies in the promotion of our goal for empowering the Filipino Americans in New Mexico.

-Dely Alcantara, Ph. D., President



David Galbiso with his nephew Steve at the Rio Grande FANHS Booth at FANHS National Conference in Virginia, June, 2000