

A Glimpse of History

Why we celebrate the Filipino American History Month in October

We celebrate the Filipino American History Month (October) to reflect on our ancestors who set foot in America on **October 18, 1587**. Eight Filipinos (called "Luzones Indios" by the Spaniards) along with a priest and 12 Spanish soldiers arrived in Morro Bay, San Luis Obispo, California. They were sailors on the *Nuestra Senora de Esperanza Galleon* commanded by Pedro de Unamuno. From 1565 to 1815, the Manila-Acapulco Galleon trade was the primary source of income of the Spanish colonists in the Philippines. The *Indios* comprised majority of the Manila Galleon's crew. Some of the descendants of these sailors found their way to New Mexico. According to the 1790 Spanish Census in New Mexico, three Filipinos, one of whom was a teacher, settled near Isleta Pueblo here in New Mexico.

After more than 300 years of Spanish colonization, the Philippines became a US Territory, after Admiral Dewey defeated the Spanish Armada at the Battle of Manila Bay in 1898.

Filipinos celebrate June 12 as the "Independence Day" but this is only the end of Spanish colonization. Philippines was ceded to the US by Spain for \$20 million along with Puerto Rico and Guam in 1898. Philippines became a US territory. The US granted independence to the Philippines on July 4, 1946. Filipinos celebrate July 4 as the Philippine-American Friendship Day, which is the true independence of the Philippines.

The population of Filipino Americans (one and combination of races) in the 2010 census is 3.4 million. New Mexico has 8,000.

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