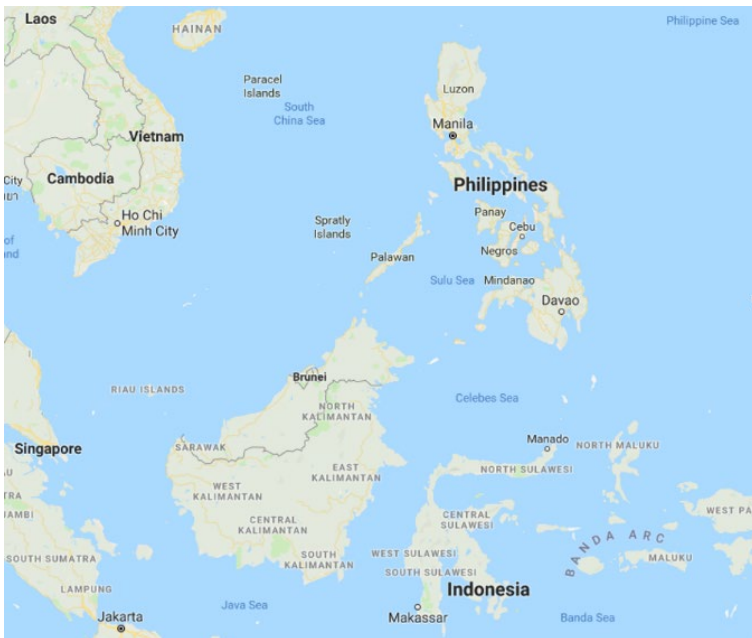


The Filipino Texans

Texas and the Philippines share many aspects of their culture, in large part because of the history of colonialism in both regions. The Philippine Islands are an archipelago of over 7,100 islands in the western Pacific Ocean. Across these many islands, native Filipinos developed numerous languages, religions, and cultures. In the mid-1500s, the Spanish conquered these islands and ruled the Philippines for 333 years.



The first Filipinos in Texas were likely sailors and ship-hands who landed in Mexico, Louisiana, or California and made their way to what is now Texas. Unfortunately, these individuals' names and stories have been lost to history. The first Filipino known to have lived in Texas was Francisco Flores, who arrived in the Mexican state of Texas in 1822 as a cabin boy aboard a merchant ship. From Cebu, Flores settled in Port Isabel, Texas, where he became a fisherman. He later raised a family in Rockport, where he died in 1917 at 108 years old.

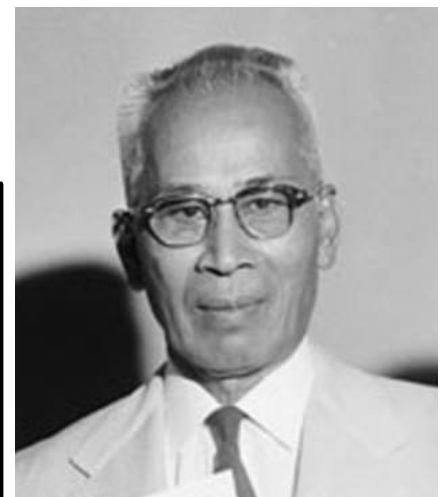
It was not until the late 1800s that a substantial number of Filipino people migrated to the U.S. The Spanish-American War ended in 1898, and as a part of the treaty, Spain ceded its colonies in Guam, the Philippines, and Puerto Rico to the U.S. But the

Philippine people declared their independence and wanted the right of self-governance. They fought the U.S. for their freedom, but the U.S. conquered the islands in a war lasting 15 years.

During this period, many U.S. military members served in the Philippines, and many had Filipino servants and domestic workers. As they returned home to San Antonio's Fort Sam Houston and El Paso's Fort Bliss, many brought their Filipino employees with them, creating the first large wave of Filipino immigration to Texas in the early 1900s.

Teodolfo Dizon (1898-1975)

One such individual was Teodolfo Dizon who was 14 years old when he moved to San Antonio with Col. Henry Ripley. A founding member of the Filipino American Association of San Antonio, he was an active community leader. Teodolfo married Estella Munoz and had four sons, all of whom served in the U.S. military. His son Manuel was a Golden Gloves champion boxer, while his son Dolfo became one of the first Asian Americans to work in the U.S. space program as physicist at NASA's School of Aerospace Medicine.



As an American colony, Filipinos were active during WWI and II in both military and civilian roles. They volunteered in huge numbers, raised funds to construct U.S. Navy vessels, and volunteered in the armed forces as well as in the Red Cross. After WWII, the U.S. granted independence to the islands in 1946, and many who had served in the military became U.S. citizens.



Colonel Melecio J. Montesclaros (1917-2004)

Born in Cebu, Philippines, he immigrated to the U.S. with his parents in 1926. He entered the military in 1942, and saw service during WWII before holding a number of distinguished positions throughout his long military career. Montesclaros worked at the Pentagon, commanded the School of the Americans in Panama, and attended the Army War College before being appointed commander of Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio in 1971. He is buried in the Fort Sam Houston Cemetery.

The educational and business opportunities in Texas after the war became attractive to many Filipinos. Entering professions like medicine and engineering in huge numbers, cities like Houston, Dallas, and El Paso became hubs for the Filipino community. Many Filipino people entered the medical profession, including Dr. Pura Santiago (right), who worked in the Nix Hospital lab in San Antonio in the late 1940s. She was the first doctor in her family and later returned to the Philippines, where she continued her career as a disease specialist.



Dr. Anatolio B. Cruz Jr.

Originally from Luzon, he is a surgical specialist and one of the founding faculty members of the University of Texas Health Science Center. He and his family are still active in the Filipino community in San Antonio.

Filipino culture is a mix of many influences, from Chinese to Spanish, making it distinct from other Southeast Asian cultures. The Spanish conquest made Catholicism the dominant religion and Spanish the official language for many years. So when Filipinos came to Texas, many fit in with Hispanic communities because of their similar histories and cultural backgrounds.

Even traditional Filipino clothes reflect this cultural blending. The formal shirt style worn by Filipino men, called the *barong tagalog* (right), is a response to a Spanish rule forbidding Filipinos from tucking in their shirttails as a sign of servitude. Filipinos appropriated this symbol of colonialism and made it their own, creating beautiful cloth and embroidery, constructing a symbol of pride and cultural identity.



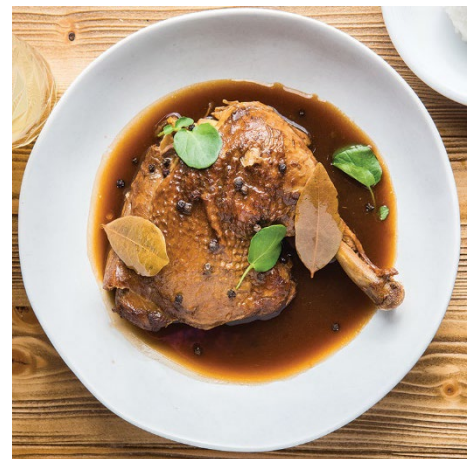
Because of their history of cultural blending and colonization, many people speak more than one or two languages, and there are more than 175 native languages spoken in the Philippines. English and Filipino are taught in schools and are the official national languages. Filipino is based on the Tagalog language, which is widely spoken across the island nation.

Filipino immigrants to Texas speak a variety of native languages that reflect the linguistic diversity of their home country. Many early Filipino migrants to Texas came from different islands and spoke a variety of languages, so they used Tagalog or English when talking to each other. In Texas, Tagalog is still the fourth most spoken language other than English in the state.



One of the major avenues that Filipino-Texans use to maintain their cultural identities is through foods and cuisine. In Filipino culture, food symbolizes sharing and is a way to establish and maintain social relationships. Considered rude to refuse food from a host, Filipinos are known for their communal dinners and large banquets (left). Traditionally, there are three main meals a day – *agahan* (breakfast), *tanghalian* (lunch), and *hapunan* (dinner) – plus a morning and afternoon snack called *merienda* (also called *minandál* or *minindál*).

Filipino cuisine is a mixture of Eastern and Western influences that form a unique expression of what it means to be Filipino. One of the most famous Filipino dishes is chicken *adobo* – a stew of vinegar, soy sauce, and a variety of spices (right).



In major cities around Texas, a wide range of Filipino societies and organizations developed as immigration increased. Many of the organizations, including Filipino businesses and medical associations, social clubs, and community activists, helped Filipino immigrants establish themselves in Texas business, society, and politics. Other organizations devoted to preserving the arts and customs of the Philippines also emerged.

Traditional performing arts are preserved through groups that practice dances that celebrate important events in a person's life, including birth, marriage, and death.



Filipino-Texan dance groups still perform the most popular traditional dance in the Philippines – the *Tinikling*. The dancers move between bamboo poles with steps that imitate the *tikling* bird as it moves among rice stalks and through long grass.

The Philippine Islands are at the center of intercontinental trade routes, and the many cultures of the Philippines reflect this melting-pot history. When Filipinos come to Texas, they bring with them cultural traditions from their homelands that blend with their new identities as Texans.

Name: _____ Date: _____ Period: _____

Filipino Settlers in Texas

Instructions: Read and answer the corresponding questions

For centuries, the Philippine Islands were controlled by other nations: first by China, then by Arab and Indian rulers, Spain, and most recently the United States. In 1946, the US granted independence to the Filipino people.

Even traditional Filipino clothes reflect this cultural blending. The formal shirt style worn by Filipino men, called the *barong tagalog*, is a response to a Spanish rule forbidding Filipinos from tucking in their shirttails as a sign of servitude. Filipinos appropriated this symbol of colonialism and made it their own, creating beautiful cloth and embroidery, constructing a symbol of pride and cultural identity.

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When did Filipinos first come to Texas?

What role did World War II play in Filipino immigration to Texas?

Explain the origin and significance of the *barong tagalog* shirt.

Word Knowledge		(*Answer Key)
Write the letter next to the correct meaning	WORD BANK	
Tagalog _____	Chicken soup served over rice	
Adobo _____	Traditional dance	
Agahan _____	A major language spoken in the Philippines	
Barong tagalog _____	Breakfast	
	Traditional men's shirt	

Digging Deeper

Using *Texans One and All: The Filipino Texans*, answer the following questions about Filipino history and culture.

What languages are spoken in the Philippines?

What religion influenced Filipino culture?

What does the *Tinikling* dance represent?

Name 2 ways Filipino culture is similar or different from your culture?
