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## Storytelling as Design Methodology: Reclaiming Little Manila's Urban Landscape Identity

Alyssa M. Gill

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# **STORYTELLING AS DESIGN METHODOLOGY: RECLAIMING LITTLE MANILA'S URBAN LANDSCAPE IDENTITY**

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
Louisiana State University and  
Agricultural and Mechanical College  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Master of Landscape Architecture

in

The Robert Reich School of  
Landscape Architecture

By  
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B.A., Knox College, 2014  
May 2022.

The story of our relationship to the earth is written more truthfully on the land than on the page. It lasts there. The land remembers what we said and what we did. Stories are among our most potent tools for restoring the land as well as our relationship to the land. We need to unearth the old stories that live in a place and begin to create new ones, for we are storymakers, not just storytellers. All stories are connected, new ones woven from the threads of the old.

Robin Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass*, 2013

Do you want to bring your grandchildren and point to an empty lot and say ‘this is where that important strike was planned’? ...Because what does that say about how we value our history? That if we allow our historic places to become parking lots and to become empty lots...what does that say about what we think of ourselves as Filipino Americans and how much we value our long history in the U.S.?

Dawn Mabalon, *Little Manila: Filipinos in California’s Heartland*, 2013

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## **ABSTRACT**

My thesis explores how landscape design can improve its methods of reclaiming lost cultural stories in the urban landscape, using the example of the Filipino American neighborhood known as Little Manila in Stockton, California. Through interpreting both stories and narratives that surround the neighborhood, I propose a basis for landscape design inspiration that focuses on oral history and lived experience. Using this understanding I propose to design a landscape within in the Little Manila Historic Site that celebrates the community's history while providing public space for continued community use.

My work focuses on the area of Downtown Stockton that earned the name "Little Manila" in the early twentieth century. By the 1920s, the enclave was known as the largest Filipino population outside of the Philippines. Violence and racist policies from police, farmers, governmental institutions, and external communities drove the creation of a Filipino-American identity, despite many immigrants arriving from different ethnic groups within the country. Little Manila was primarily active beginning in the 1920s when many Filipino immigrants arrived in the Delta seeking educational opportunities and jobs. A need for services, restaurants, and recreation drove the self-creation of a distinctive neighborhood through the mid-twentieth century, up until 1970 when the construction of the California 4 (CA-4) highway demolished the vibrant neighborhood. Beyond its everyday importance to the Filipino community, Stockton became the setting for significant labor movements including many agricultural strikes that united different communities of workers. This thesis asserts that the act of storytelling evokes key memories surrounding the everyday and eventful happenings within the Little Manila cultural neighborhood. As few physical remnants of the enclave remain, this thesis

asserts that the collection and use of stories to inspire landscape design is a powerful methodology that reinvigorates a social connection to space, as well as a sense of place.

## INTRODUCTION



Figure 1. A Little Manila Historic Site Marker at the Intersection of Washington St. and Center St. in Stockton, California. Source: Author's Photo, 2021.

At the corner of Washington and Center Street in Downtown Stockton, California, a sign reading “Little Manila Historic Site” stands in the shade underneath the California-4 Freeway. Less than ten feet away a steel fence guards rows of police cruisers. Across the underpass, the drive-thru line at the McDonalds inches forward, carefully avoiding the traffic from the adjacent gas station. A few cautious pedestrians pass through shaded areas, pausing for a break from the summer sun.



The scene before you is not where the story of Little Manila begins. However, for younger generations of the Filipino American<sup>1</sup> Diaspora<sup>2</sup>, myself included, this landscape is the first physical introduction to the story of decades of cultural heritage in Stockton.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, waves of Filipino immigrants came to the United States mainland and Hawai'i. By the mid-twentieth century, Little Manila became the thriving center of a Filipino American identity. Centered on El Dorado Street, this section of Stockton's West End neighborhood (known to some currently as skid row, or historically as the "West End Slum"<sup>3</sup>) earned the nickname "The City of Gold", both for its proximity to gold mining country and for the promises given to immigrants that they could find their fortunes in the United States.<sup>4</sup> It wasn't until World War II that that local resident Frank Perez coined the term "Little Manila" due to the large population of Filipinos.<sup>5</sup> In the 1920s, the mostly male Filipino immigrant population sought space to congregate for recreation, services, and fellowship, but were forced to live in Stockton's West End due to surrounding neighborhoods enforcing racist

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<sup>1</sup> As this thesis concentrates solely on the neighborhood known as Little Manila in Stockton, California, references to "America" are interchangeable with "the United States". It can also be said that the phrase "Filipino American" is somewhat redundant, as I will discuss that the Filipino Identity is an American construct.

<sup>2</sup> I have debated whether to utilize the term 'Filipinx' in this paper. The term was introduced in 2020 as a gender-neutral identification of somebody who is living in or has roots in the Philippines. The term is controversial and the subject of debates about colonialism and linguistics. Arguments on both sides question whether the word is necessary. In the diaspora, the term 'Filipino' can be considered sexist. I am choosing to use the term 'Filipino' in this paper. With respect to both sides of this important discussion, I understand that there are associations to be drawn from this choice, and whole-heartedly support an individual's agency to use the proper terminology that affirms their gender. My choice is carefully rooted in personal history rather than a desire to take one side. I remember my mother telling me that I am not in fact Hawaiian (both of my parents grew up on O'ahu), but rather I am Filipino, and the term has significant personal memory tied to my family and my ancestors.

<sup>3</sup> Dawn Mabalon, *Little Manila is in the Heart* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013) 278.

<sup>4</sup> "Little Manila: Filipinos in California's Heartland – KVIE", YouTube Video, 26:46. "KVIEvideo", October 1, 2013. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=FNCZ8sGJs8I>

<sup>5</sup> Mabalon, *Little Manila*, 4. The story was also confirmed to the author in a phone conversation with Letrice (Letty or Aunt Letty) Perez, February 16, 2022.

policies barring them from accessing residences or services.<sup>6</sup> In establishing businesses and social groups, the Filipino population developed the neighborhood beginning in the 1920s, eventually growing throughout the 1930s and 40s to offer a significant number of restaurants, shops, residential spaces, pool halls and dance clubs, as well as gathering spaces for community events. By the 1960s, Little Manila had become home to new generations of families, while also offering significant space for the expression of cultural traditions.

Since the end of the twentieth century, the urban landscape of Stockton has been shaped and re-shaped by urban renewal, redevelopment, and a notable city bankruptcy<sup>7</sup>. In the late 1960s/ early 1970s, the City of Stockton demolished nine blocks to make way for construction of the California-4 Freeway. This demolition displaced thousands of people from their residences in Little Manila and Chinatown.<sup>8</sup>

In observing the Little Manila Historic Marker (Figure 1), we can see an example of the stories of the neighborhood's destruction, and the Filipino community's desire to visually assert their history in the space. By further critiquing the elements of space seen in the photograph (Figure 2, Figure 3, Figure 4) we can understand the visual stories currently being told in the landscape.

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<sup>6</sup> Mabalon, *Little Manila*, 102.

<sup>7</sup> Diana Marcum, "Stockton to file for bankruptcy, will be the largest U.S. city to fail," Los Angeles Times, June 26, 2012.

<sup>8</sup> Mabalon, *Little Manila*, 291.



Figure 2. The CA-4 Freeway in Downtown Stockton. Photograph by Author, 2021.

The California-4 Freeway (Figure 2) bisects Stockton, creating a space dedicated to transition, a placeless space. The freeway's looming presence over the space indicates the erasure of Filipino businesses and residences, which caused the displacement of thousands of residents during the neighborhood's destruction in the 1960s.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Dawn Mabalon, Rico Reyes, FANHS Stockton, *Filipinos in Stockton*, (Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2008), 63.



Figure 3. Police Parking Lot in Downtown Stockton. Photo by Author, 2021.

The space under the CA-4 Freeway (Figure 3) is currently used as a parking lot for the adjacent Police Station. The six-plus foot iron fence surrounding visually contributes to the message that this is an unwelcoming space. Its uses are clear: this is a space of transit only, and it provides few clues to the neighborhood that once existed here.

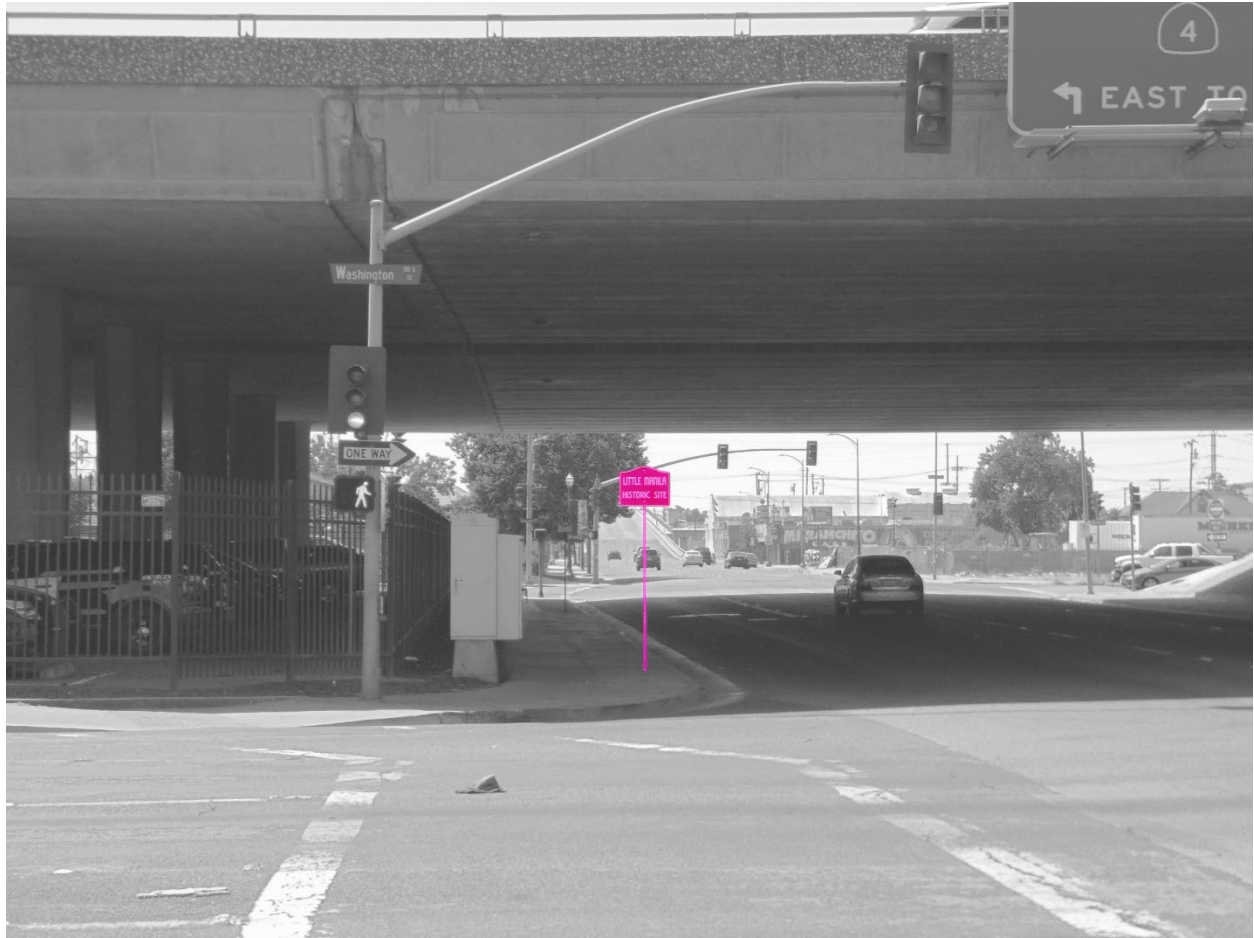


Figure 4. One of four Little Manila Historic Markers in Downtown Stockton. Photo by Author, 2021.

The historic markers, albeit the product of a hard-fought campaign by the Little Manila Foundation in 2003<sup>10</sup>, only begin to suggest that this area was once a vibrant neighborhood. Historic Markers, while important, further suggest a condition of placelessness that requires a label. And although the markers are placed within the boundaries of the neighborhood, noting else remains to tell Little Manila's story.

<sup>10</sup> While I critique the use of the historic marker as a celebration of space, I do not wish to undermine the importance of the efforts of local organizations such as The Little Manila Foundation, Little Manila Rising, and FANHS. The campaign to designate Little Manila as a historic site was hard-fought by the Filipino community in 2000, with a dedication of the four signs in 2002. I view this effort, as well as the collaboration with the National Trust for Historic Preservation to name Little Manila as one of the "Top 11 most endangered Historic Spaces in America" in 2003, to be jumping off points for reclaiming the landscape of Little Manila. Mabalon, *Little Manila is in the Heart*, 339-342.

The elements highlighted in Figures Figure 2, Figure 3, and Figure 4 come together to tell a story of urban renewal projects that have taken place in Stockton in the twentieth century. Scholars of place such as Dolores Hayden have written about this phenomenon of urban renewal and the erasure of communities--particularly communities of color-- and the social implications of such a practice.<sup>11</sup> As Hayden writes, "For many years, urban history was dominated by a kind of 'city biography' that projected a single narrative of how city leaders or 'city fathers'- almost always white, upper-and-middle-class men- forged the city's spatial and economic structure, making fortunes building downtowns and imposing order on chaotic immigrant populations."<sup>12</sup> This critique reveals an emphasis on how the story of American urban landscapes has been told, a privileging of certain stories over others. This issue of privilege has remained part of professional discourse, with research projects such as *Heterogeneous Futures* seeking to re-integrate multivalent social, ecological, cultural, and linguistic spatial measures into our landscapes.<sup>13</sup> Landscape Architect and Professor Walter Hood writes about the homogenization of space in his book *Black Landscapes Matter*:

We are constantly engaged in the process of acculturation and assimilation. Rarely is difference validated, unless it is economically profitable. Urban design and planning projects often seek to organize, tidy, and homogenize environments through standards that can be easily understood by all. But if the focus is given to unique ways of life, alternative narratives can emerge that describe how people live in different places.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Dolores Hayden, *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History*, (Cambridge, The MIT Press, 1995), 39.

<sup>12</sup> Hayden, *Place*, 39.

<sup>13</sup> Diana Fernandez, Stephen Gray, Breeze Outlaw, Mel Isidor, Beth Meyer. "Heterogeneous Futures," <https://www.heterogeneousfutures.com/>.

<sup>14</sup> Walter Hood and Grace Mitchell Tada, *Black Landscapes Matter* (University of Virginia Press, 2020), 35.

Reclaiming and reintroducing the stories of dispersed communities into our design process helps to reassert their importance: both at the local scale and within the context of the larger history of American Landscapes. Storytelling illuminates the social narratives of space.

Accounts of the planned destruction of communities, often communities of color, are important pieces of this larger history. For the many individuals who may be part of a community, adjacent to one, or considered an outsider, the stories of a place's social and historic importance may be lost. In this loss of space and the stories that surround it lies an opportunity to honor, advocate, and celebrate community history.

This thesis asks how landscape designers can address such a dilemma. We have the capacity to move beyond the historic marker and make known the social narratives of space. Our training in understanding site conditions, history, and hopeful visions of the future positions us to meaningfully interpret such narratives through our work. We work as translators and communicators, our medium is the land. By engaging in storytelling, designers can create reverent, resonant spaces to remember the history and legacy of significant urban landscape spaces.

Storytelling, for our purposes, has two meanings. The first is the act of sharing stories, both telling and, more importantly, listening, with communities as a means of building relationships and trust. The second meaning is the synthesis of collected community stories that becomes integrated into a proposed design. Landscape designers have the capability and responsibility to engage with both means of storytelling. My work uses Little Manila as a case study for this practice.

To those who remember it, Little Manila was home. The late Doctor Dawn Bohulano Mabalon, a professor of history at San Francisco State who grew up in the community, introduces her book *Little Manila is in the Heart* by describing her earliest memories of the urban landscape. She talks about the sights of the sidewalks, sounds of her laughing “uncles”, and smell of the hotcakes at the Lafayette Lunch Counter.<sup>15</sup> Her memories are not unlike those of others she discusses in her book, as well as those of members to the Filipino American Historical Society (FANHSS) Stockton chapter. Through her writing, Mabalon describes a vibrant, welcoming neighborhood that offered her a sense of safety, community, and belonging as a young girl.

That vibrant Little Manila now lives only in memory. This memory permeates the overall narrative of Little Manila, painting a picture of a deeply dimensional community that was forged through the hardships of necessity and need, as well as joyful commonality. Recognizing the patterns that emerge from stories told by a community illuminates important themes and events within a space’s narrative. Using both narrative and story, landscape designers can work toward the goal of designing joyful, celebratory cultural spaces.

Four key understandings drive this work. The first is that landscapes are stories. Whether intentionally designed by an accredited professional or shaped in a vernacular manner by residents of a space, both interacting with and experiencing the landscape includes gleaning some form of story from it. This is the basis for engaging communities in sharing their stories, which I discuss in Chapter 1 section 4, *Listening to and Reading Stories*.

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<sup>15</sup> Mabalon, *Little Manila*, 1.



The second understanding is that we do not immediately experience every story in a landscape. While we tend to prioritize our ability to visually process stories in space, there are many additional means of experience. When we talk about stories, we must ask who is being listened to, and why. If there was no “Little Manila Historic Site” marker, the story we would visually comprehend about the neighborhood is a parking lot cascaded in shade, holding rows of white police vehicles surrounded by an iron fence, signaling that *you should not be here*. This does not point to the vibrant sense of belonging experienced by Dawn Mabalon and other Little Manila residents. Chapter 1 section 2, *Stories vs. “Neutrality”*, offers a critique of “placelessness” in design. This thesis seeks to test how landscape design can engage with memory beyond the act of visual perception or recreation, moving away from the idea of “placelessness”.

The third understanding is that landscapes, and the stories of landscapes, hold a key to the identity of a community. They create a sense of belonging and hold significant meaning for those who regularly experience and interact with the space. Recognizing the patterns of storytelling, which stories are consistently and immediately told by a community, becomes a significant indicator of the community’s own values and what they wish to communicate about themselves. Through allowing such stories to influence design, we expand that idea of importance into the spatial realm. Chapter 3, *Expressing Stories* crafts a narrative of Little Manila through sharing the neighborhood’s history. Chapters 4 and 5 continue to analyze story while applying the methodology introduced in chapter 1.

The fourth understanding, which ties back to the first, is that landscapes are stories that we design. We tell a story. We choose whose story to tell, and we present a

piece of a larger narrative. A landscape architect can help communicate this importance through the sensorial languages of design, celebrating this landscape both internally and externally by displaying its importance to the outside world. The process of determining whose story to tell becomes tricky, as methods of community engagement often suggest multiple understandings, even within our own profession and adjacent professions. The nebulous state of Government-produced guidelines for community engagement leaves ample room for interpretation on how to run the outreach process. This thesis reacts to such an open-ended directive. An example of this includes the community outreach guidelines set forth by the State of California's Governor's Office of Planning and Research in 2017.<sup>16</sup> While the guideline document lays out measured requirements, including two public hearings, it leaves room for methodologies based upon external, potentially negative perception rather than offering autonomy of an individual community to explain its relationship to the urban landscape. Without engaging story, designers and planners run the risk of erasing important cultural narratives within a space.<sup>17</sup> Therefore I see a need to refocus our methods to include this use of storytelling as a practice. A discussion of the design methods of storytelling follows in Chapter 2, section 5: *Incorporating Story*. By reacting to a framework

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<sup>16</sup> The State of California Governor's Office of Planning and Research, *State of California General Plan Guidelines 2017*, Governor's Office of Planning and Research, 2017. Digital PDF, <https://www.opr.ca.gov/planning/general-plan/> (Accessed April 7, 2022).

<sup>17</sup> This critique is inclusive of the reported community outreach strategies employed by the City of Stockton as part of their 2035 General Plan update in March of 2016. The city undertook an innovative strategy of using a double-decker bus to solicit community input about proposed sections of Stockton, using the input to inform their 2040 general plan. While this strategy is a means of quickly gathering a hefty quantity of input, it creates a separation between people and place. I question how viewing a space from afar allows community members who may not be from the space to adequately understand its importance. Engaging in storytelling with other community members is a method of grounding humanity and story into place, and can offer an alternative to a distanced judgement of the places that we may not spend our everyday lives in. City of Stockton, California, "Envision Stockton 2040 General Plan", December 4, 2018. Digital PDF, [http://www.stocktonca.gov/files/Adopted\\_Plan.pdf](http://www.stocktonca.gov/files/Adopted_Plan.pdf) (Accessed April 7, 2022) 2-8.

proposed by Michael Potteiger and Jamie Purinton in *Landscape Narratives*, this thesis asserts that the techniques of association, sequence, program, and metaphor engage time and a composite of stories to create meaningful spaces that are rooted in both the eventful and quotidian details of everyday life.

Engaging the space through design allows us to move past the placelessness of a historic marker. While a useful indication of the cultural significance of a place, the marker itself can only take us so far. Little Manila, in its heyday, became a space of support, joy, and survival as it created a Filipino American identity and community. Pursuing design that celebrates this space's history and importance is an act of remembrance, and an assertion of hope that the space can provide meaning for future generations. To create a space that allows for future stories, we must first turn toward the past.

## CHAPTER 1. ON STORYTELLING AND LANDSCAPE

### 1.1. Defining “Story”, Defining “Narrative”

Before we move forward, I want to address the use of the words *story* and *narrative* in this thesis. For our purposes these words are not interchangeable.

This thesis defines *story* as the account of an event. Story includes character and setting and is often told by a single person or a group of people who share an experience. The story is inherently connected to the individual/group’s opinions, feelings, and general point of view.

*Narrative*, then, is an overarching structure of stories, a larger composite that provides additional meaning through the identification of recurring themes. Narrative points us toward why a story is important in a larger context. Narrative includes both the content of a story and how it is told.

This definition builds upon the work conducted by landscape architects Matthew Potteiger and Jamie Purinton, authors of *Landscape Narratives*. Their work investigates the ways that story and narrative are experienced in landscape design. They refer to narrative as “both the *story*, what is told, and the means of telling, implying both product and process, form and formation, structure and structuration. *Narrative* is thus a more comprehensive and inclusive term than *story*.”<sup>18</sup> While there are many understandings of both story and narrative, I specifically use these definitions to identify the connections between story and landscape. In their work, Potteiger and Purinton emphasize narrative over “naïve storytelling” as a “more significant means of making places”.<sup>19</sup> This thesis

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<sup>18</sup> Potteiger, Matthew, and Jamie Purinton. *Landscape Narratives* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1998)

<sup>19</sup> Potteiger and Purinton, *Landscape Narratives*, 19.

insists on using the word “storytelling” because of the term’s associations with tradition and sacred space. Dismissing storytelling as “naïve” discounts a basis of human interaction—a sacred and commonly understood practice that unites community. This thesis is in part a reaction to Potteiger and Purinton’s work, but also finds value in their identification of the types of landscape narratives. A further discussion can be found in section 5 of this chapter, *Incorporating Story*.

To think of landscape as story suggests capturing a design as a frozen moment in time, but also generates a means of understanding the interplay between story and narrative. I have created a diagram to help visualize the process of building narrative using stories that are associated with place and heritage (Figure 5). Time is an important piece of this discussion. Some stories are of the distant or recent past, others are currently being lived, and the act of designing space implies that there will be future stories created.

For this thesis, this definition of narrative supports the importance of gathering stories from multiple sources and multiple time periods. Within the context of landscape architecture, a designer synthesizes multiple voices or points of view to understand the wants and needs of a larger community. As stories overlap, confirm, or depart from one another, the designer recognizes themes, patterns, and details in the narrative. A further discussion of how theme, pattern, and detail illuminate stories in the landscape follows at the end of this chapter.

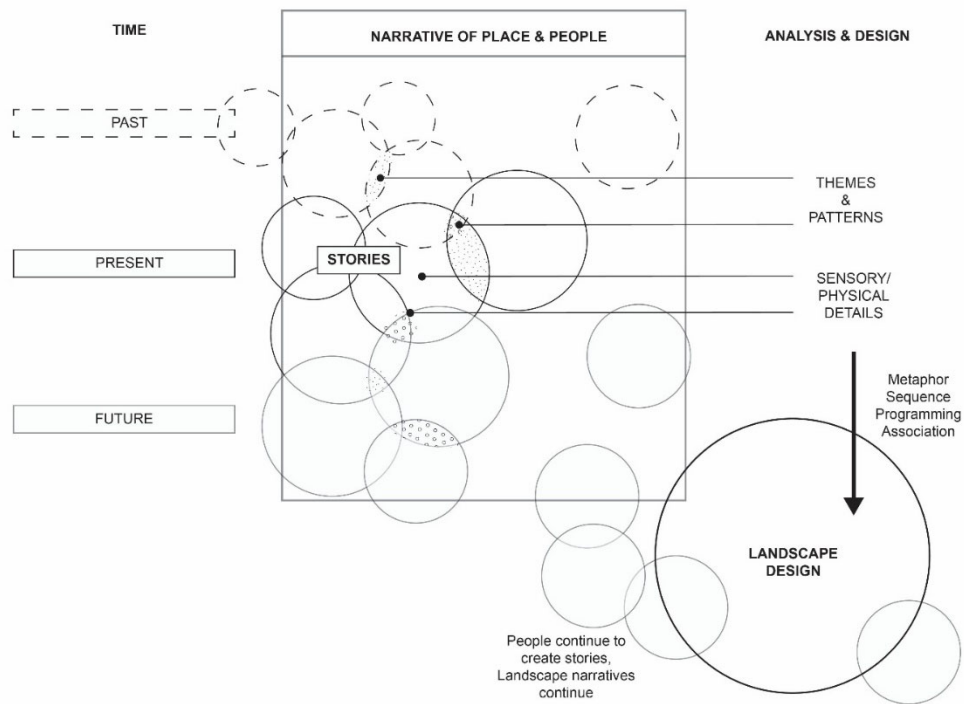


Figure 5. Story, Narrative, and Design Diagram. Created by Author, 2022.

The shared stories of a community shape the landscape, but also become shaped by the landscape. For the purposes of this thesis I conceive of landscape as both setting and character. We often think of landscape as a gathering space and backdrop for use. However, the landscape is also alive. It tells its own story if we pay attention. It holds its own meaning beyond that which people attribute to it; it takes on additional characteristics when interacting with individuals who form their own sense of meaning. In this sense, landscape is not just a passive setting but also becomes an active agent of story. Its fluctuating size, changes, and distinctive elements engage with the communities that inhabit it. It develops arcs of change, as any character would.

Both oral and written traditions of sharing story thus become useful tools for community engagement practices and design processes. The act of storytelling includes

both telling and listening. Engaging in storytelling builds trust with the teller and listener. As designers, our capacity to listen is key in our ability to interpret community wants and needs to conceptualize our ideas. When we speak, whether it is through our designs or with a community, we are demonstrating our ability to listen.

### *1.2. Stories vs. “Neutrality”: A Critique of Placelessness*

This thesis reacts to the idea that public spaces are more welcoming if they are devoid of culturally identifiable characteristics, that through a lack of cultural specificity, they might be more accessible to all. However, these neutral spaces still prioritize aesthetics and ways of thinking that have historically been understood in the profession, and stem from a singular, often-white, often-male point of view. The aesthetics and stylistic tendencies produced by communities that differ from this point of view, i.e. non-white and non-male, become classified as ‘other’, and construed as ‘alienating’.

For example, take San Francisco’s Chinatown (Figure 6). Walking through the Dragon Gate on Bush Street and north along Grant Avenue takes you past restaurants, souvenir shops, and large tour groups learning about the enclave’s history.



Figure 6. Map of San Francisco Chinatown. Diagram by Author, 2022.

Many of the older buildings evoke a traditional Chinese aesthetic, and lanterns hang in the breeze above the street (see Figure 7). While portions of the neighborhood cater to tourists, it is not hard to find the surrounding services that continue to fuel the neighborhood. Temples, schools, salons, and community organizations sustain the neighborhood's residents. Walking along a side street such as Waverly Place, the tourist crowd lessens and instead you can perceive signs of everyday life. The clack of Mahjong tiles echoes through an open door. Joyous screams of children in the distance alert you to the proximity of the Willie "Woo Woo" Wong Playground. These sensory details emerge as indicators of place that are not as easily recognizable on Grant Avenue.





Figure 7. Chinatown Streetscapes. Source: Author's Photo, 2021.

To the east of Grant Avenue, at the corner of Clay and Kearny Streets sits Portsmouth Square. The square itself predates Chinatown and has evolved into an important gathering place for the local Chinese community. When I visited on a Monday in July, the energy was electric. Many local elders gathered to sit in the shade, visit with friends, or join one of the many ongoing card games.



Figure 8. Portsmouth Square. Source: Author's Photo, 2021.

The square itself has a pavilion and gate that evoke traditional Chinese architectural aesthetics. The rest of the plaza hosts stone planters, benches, tree plantings, a lawn, and several playgrounds. As seen in Figure 8, a red gate (left) blocks a bridge that leads over the street to the adjacent Chinese Culture Center. On this sunny afternoon, singers crooned Chinese tunes into a portable microphone, accompanied by an erhu<sup>20</sup>, raising money for “A Better Chinatown Tomorrow.” The ever-growing energy of the space indicated a joyful and active community culture (Figure 9).

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<sup>20</sup> A bowed Chinese instrument.

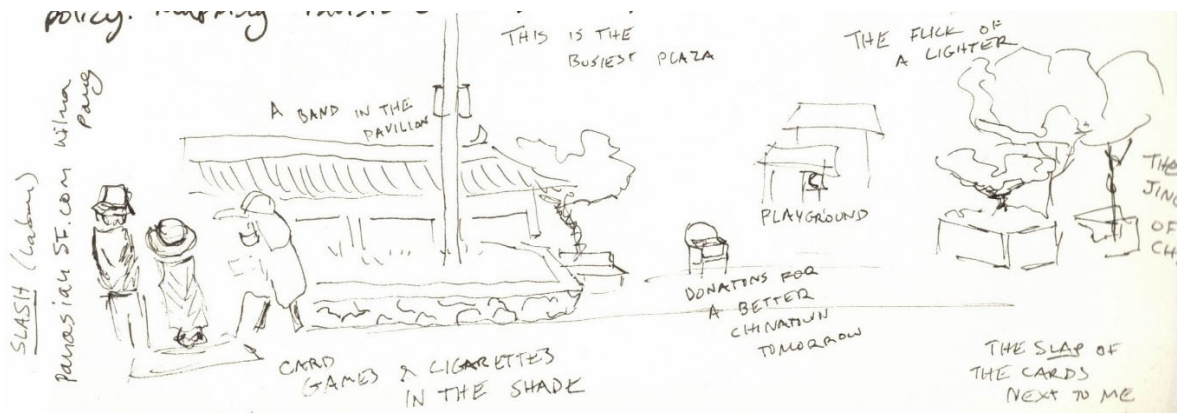


Figure 9. Sketchbook excerpt: Impressions of Portsmouth. Source: Author's Sketch, 2021.

In 2014, the San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department, along with the San Francisco Planning Department, began the *Portsmouth Square Improvement Project*<sup>21</sup>. The project brief states that the project seeks to address “community-identified priorities”, including the removal of the Kearny Street pedestrian bridge, enhanced accessibility, updating of facilities, and a new community clubhouse with spaces for gathering. San Francisco-based SWA Group provided the landscape architecture services for the project, along with MEI Partners who provided architecture services. The two firms undertook a lengthy community engagement process, which

<sup>21</sup> “Portsmouth Square Improvement Project,” Active Park Projects, San Francisco Recreation & Parks, last modified August 4, 2021, <https://sfrecpark.org/1166/Portsmouth-Square-Improvement-Project>.



has been described both by SWA and the San Francisco Recreation and Parks department as successful.



Figure 10. Aerial Rendering of Portsmouth Square by SWA Group and MEI Partners. Source: SWA Group <https://www.swagroup.com/projects/portsmouth-square/>

However, their released renderings demonstrate an aesthetic that seems more evocative of contemporary park projects (Figure 10) than of Chinatown. Rather than establishing an aesthetic connection to the adjacent neighborhood, which is another stated goal of the project, the space begins to resemble other “neutral” public spaces in San Francisco like the recently built Salesforce Park in the Financial District (Figure 11). Looking at the rendering for Portsmouth Square, I ask what is special about the space that is created. Does it evoke a sense of belonging? Could it be anywhere? What ties this specific design to Chinatown?



Figure 11. Salesforce Park in San Francisco. Source: <https://salesforcetransitcenter.com/salesforce-park/>

Between the Portsmouth Square redesign and Salesforce Park, we see some similarities in terms of aesthetics and placelessness. Salesforce Park clearly identifies who the space is for: as an elevated space, it is only accessible by elevator and/or escalator. Sitting on top of a transit center, the park is positioned several stories above the ground and is mainly accessible by the adjacent corporations who have offices and direct connections to the park. Both the Portsmouth Square redesign and Salesforce Park evoke an idea of “neutrality”, an aesthetic that is untethered from specific cultural context.

I use Ping Tom Memorial Park in Chicago as an example of a park that feels welcoming to all while retaining strong cultural aesthetic elements (Figure 12, Figure 13). Designed by *site design group*, Ping Tom Memorial Park opened in 1999 in



Chicago's Chinatown and remains an important fixture of the local community. In this example we see that the park is not “neutral” in terms of aesthetics. Ironwork, color, and the main pavilion form (Figure 12, Figure 13) are only a few examples of elements that are derived from classical Chinese garden design.<sup>22</sup> The design feels anchored to the adjacent community as they share similar aesthetic elements. Ping Tom Memorial Park feels welcoming and is often used by Chinatown residents as well as other Chicagoans.



Figure 12. Pavilion at Ping Tom Memorial Park. Source: Author's Photo, 2022.

Events held at the park, such as annual dragon boat races, celebrate a particular culture while inviting communities outside of Chinatown to participate.

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<sup>22</sup> Ernest Wong, Zoom Conversation with Author, January 29 2022, “Ping Tom Memorial Park 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary,” Site Design Group, Vimeo, November 20, 2019. [https://vimeo.com/374518301?embedded=true&source=vimeo\\_logo&owner=36682815](https://vimeo.com/374518301?embedded=true&source=vimeo_logo&owner=36682815).



Figure 13. Bridge at Ping Tom Memorial Park. Source: Author's Photo, 2022.

The design of Ping Tom Memorial Park presents an alternative possibility for thinking about cultural spaces. Landscapes with proximity to cultural neighborhoods and/or cultural characteristics are not inherently unwelcoming for those who do not share in the culture. Rather, design can allow for both a presentation of cultural nuance as well as an open invitation for use by all. This idea is supported by Dolores Hayden, author of *The Power of Place*. She writes: "It is key to the power of historic places to help citizens define their public pasts: places trigger memories for insiders, who have

shared a common past...places often can represent shared pasts to outsiders who might be interested in knowing about them in the present.”<sup>23</sup> This is the vision that I have for Little Manila. In reimagining this area in Stockton, I see an opportunity to create a space that is resonant and celebratory of the Filipino community while also remaining welcoming to “outsiders”.

One goal for designing a space in Little Manila is to educate on the history of the Filipino Community. This goal necessitates creating a sense of welcoming others who are not of the culture in order to have them to engage with the space. The Chinese-American geographer Yi-Fu Tuan offers his insights into “welcoming” spaces. In his essay *The City as a Moral Universe*. He writes: “A great city’s characteristic virtue is recognizing human beings beyond the confines of neighborhood. It demonstrates the virtue through gestures of courtesy to make strangers in public places feel, if not welcome, at least as if they have a right to be there. This right is empty without the means of physical access.”<sup>24</sup> Landscape design provides that access, both to the space itself and the stories that occupy it.

A problematic pitfall of interpreting history through design is the tendency to create placeless spaces that are unrooted in social ecosystems. The American architectural designer and critic Michael Sorkin discusses ideas of nostalgia and placelessness in his edited volume *Variations on a Theme Park*. He argues that in focusing solely on evoking a visual history, designers lose a sense of place. In other words, “design [that is] based in the same calculus as advertising, the idea of pure

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<sup>23</sup> Dolores Hayden, *The Power of Place*, 47.

<sup>24</sup> Yi Fu Tuan, “The City as a Moral Universe”, *Geographical Review* 78, No.3 (July, 1988): 318.



imageability, oblivious to the real needs and traditions of those who inhabit it.”<sup>25</sup> Sorkin’s critique reacts to what he calls the “new city”: a development that feels like a simulation of a space rather than a space itself. His work in compiling *Variations* sought to identify the characteristics of this “new city”. He based his work on the identification of three “salient characteristics” of placeless spaces: a lack of specificity, an “obsession with ‘security’”, and a disconnect with social cultures.<sup>26</sup> While his critique focused on Disneyland as a prime example of placeless nostalgic architecture, he also found similar attitudes of design within the urban landscape.<sup>27</sup>

Within his discussion, Sorkin posits that placeless spaces are also spaces of consumption. He writes: “In this new city, the idea of distinct places is dispersed into a sea of universal placelessness as everyplace becomes destination and any destination can be anyplace. The world of traditional urban arrangements is colonized by the penetration of a new multinational corridor, leading always to a single human subject, the monadic consumer.”<sup>28</sup> In thinking of consumption as a parasitic process, cultural aesthetics become oversimplified. Little Manila was not built to a particular aesthetic but rather through the power of developing a social ecosystem, which gives it more meaning for its daily users. Yi fu tuan describes this phenomenon by expanding the definition of the city beyond its physical space: “...the city is built form as well as human relationship- a material place that visibly and tangibly expresses human needs and

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<sup>25</sup> Michael Sorkin, “Introduction: Variations on a Theme Park,” in *Variations on a Theme Park*, ed. Michael Sorkin (New York: Hill and Wang, 1992), xiv-xv.

<sup>26</sup> Sorkin, “Introduction”, xiii-xiv.

<sup>27</sup> Michael Sorkin, “See you at Disneyland,” in *Variations on a Theme Park*, ed. Michael Sorkin (New York: Hill and Wang, 1992), 205-232.

<sup>28</sup> Sorkin, “See you at Disneyland”, 217.

aspirations, supporting or hindering their fulfillment.”<sup>29</sup> The existence of ongoing relationships is what fuels the city and fights tendencies of extractive design. Engaging with everyday stories to use in design instills a relationship with place, rather than a lifeless space.

### *1.3. Perceptions of the Landscape & Community Networks*

It is important to note here that the above discussions, both of Sorkin’s work and Portsmouth Square, discuss the prioritization of visuals and aesthetic. While both are important components of design, there is more to be perceived and experienced in a community than the visual. This thesis asserts that through the act of storytelling designers activate important senses of history and memory. Furthermore, the act of engaging communities in storytelling clarifies memories. As Michael Sorkin writes of placeless spaces: “the only logic is the faint buzz of memories of something more or less similar...but so long ago, perhaps even yesterday.”<sup>30</sup> Sharing in the act of storytelling gives a voice to those who lived in the space, allowing designer and resident to emerge from the fuzz of a hollow visual memory<sup>31</sup>. Sorkin’s work cautions designers to not lose sight of the social components of space. In the context of this thesis, his work supports a goal of social connection, which can be found through the act of storytelling.

Both of the above examples of Chinatown are rooted in networks of services that sustain the life of each neighborhood’s residents. Little Manila established a similar

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<sup>29</sup> Yi-Fu Tuan. “The City as a Moral Universe,” 316.

<sup>30</sup> Sorkin, “See You At Disneyland”, 232.

network throughout the twentieth century, which helped with its success in creating a Filipino-American identity. While the network is not immediately influenced by a proposed spatial design, the idea of incorporating social need into the landscape is of re-emerging importance in our profession. In her book *Cultural Landscapes of India: Imagined, Enacted, and Reclaimed*, Dr. Amita Sinha writes: “The concept of landscape has evolved from a picturesque view to an embodiment of social, economic, and ideological values.”<sup>32</sup> Sinha, a former professor of Landscape Architecture and a Ph.D. from the University of California at Berkeley, focuses on methods of seeing and interpreting the landscape through understanding everyday social practices.

The connections between community and landscape are not a new observation. In *A Pair of Ideal Landscapes*, J.B. Jackson writes: “No group sets out to create a landscape, of course. What it sets out to do is create a community, and the landscape as its visible manifestation is simply the by-product of people working and living, sometimes coming together, sometimes staying apart, but always recognizing their interdependence.”<sup>33</sup> This is true for the residents of Little Manila, who first focused on addressing need and finding kinship. Their shared lived experiences subsequently created an important cultural space.

In considering the history of a site, we look towards the significant events that shape our communities and our spaces. Everyday practices and more-than-usual events play equal roles in understanding the significance of a place. For this reason, it is important to recognize both the eventful and the everyday in the stories we take design

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<sup>32</sup>Amita Sinha, *Cultural Landscapes of India: Imagined, Enacted, and Reclaimed*. (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2020), 5.

<sup>33</sup> Jackson, John Brinckerhoff. “A Pair of Ideal Landscapes,” in *Discovering the Vernacular Landscape* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), 12.

inspiration from. The connection that storytelling has to the social world of communities in a space is the valuable information I seek to engage with for design inspiration.

#### *1.4 Listening to and Reading Stories*

This thesis pulls both from oral histories and community-produced written histories such as Mabalon's *Little Manila is in the Heart*, and Mabalon and Gayle Romasanta's *Journey of Justice: The Life of Larry Itliong*<sup>34</sup>. A significant source of my research is the collection of the Filipino American National Historical Society's (FANHS) Stockton Chapter, and their museum located on Weber Street in Downtown Stockton (Figure 14). I had the pleasure of visiting the museum on January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2022, and meeting with FANHS members and local Stockton residents Beverly Engkabo and Christopher Castro. Before describing my work, I asked both Engkabo and Castro "what is your story?". Our ensuing conversations revealed retellings of journeys, life in Little Manila, high school memories, and the everyday cycles of life that connected them to this place in the city.

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<sup>34</sup> Mabalon, Dawn Bohulano with Gayle Romasanta. *Journey of Justice: The Life of Larry Itliong*. Brentwood: Bridge & Delta, 2018.



Figure 14: Interior of the FANHS Stockton Museum. Photo by Author, 2022.

The story of FANHS itself points to a recurring theme in Little Manila: recognizing a need for a community resource and working with others to address the need. In 1982, Dr. Dorothy Laigo Cordova and Dr. Fred Cordova founded the FANHS national network, which now includes 30 local chapters throughout the United States. As an organization their mission is “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.”<sup>35</sup> Since its founding, FANHS has worked hard to collect and support matters of Filipino American history, including offering itself as a resource for student research.

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<sup>35</sup> “Mission”, About, Filipino American National Historical Society, 2020, <http://fanhs-national.org/filam/mission/>.

After our visit, Engkabo connected me with Aunty Letty Perez, a woman who is considered one of the *manangs*<sup>36</sup> of the community. Aunty Letty has been an active member of FANHS and has a plethora of stories to share. She even revealed a connection to my own family, who moved to Stockton from the Philippines by way of San Francisco in the 1950s. While I have personal ties to the stories of the community and intend to access them in the creation of a narrative, I recognize that this is often not the case for landscape designers. A pre-existing personal connection is not a prerequisite of utilizing storytelling as design methodology. Rather, incorporating the practice of storytelling and listening to community members creates community relationships.

Using storytelling as design inspiration necessitates a synthesis of multiple voices. In my conversation with Engkabo, she mentioned the need for multiple storytellers: “You tell your story because that’s different from my story.” It is through the composite of individual stories that designers craft narrative (Figure 5), and the process necessitates accommodating a diversity of story sources.

### *1.5 Incorporating Story*

This thesis operates through the synthesis of stories and the creation of a narrative. While this previous discussion has addressed the use of storytelling as a methodology for engaging with communities and building relationships, storytelling also is a tool of design. This section frames a basis of understanding of the link between

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<sup>36</sup> *Manang* is an Ilocano term of respect for an elder relative or revered member of the community. *Manong* and *Manang* are both used to describe a generation of Filipino elders who immigrated to the United States.

design and story, while continuing the discussion of the previously shared story, narrative, and design diagram (Figure 5).

This thesis reacts the framework of landscape narratives presented by Matthew Potteiger and Jamie Purinton. Their book thoroughly collects, organizes, and analyzes examples of the intersections of narrative and landscapes.<sup>37</sup> Among their discussion of landscape as a setting and the genre of landscape, they specifically identify the following examples of landscape narrative types; *Narrative Experiences*, which they identify as “routines, rituals, or events that represent or follow narrative structures,” *Memory Landscapes*, which include monuments, museums, and preservation projects, *Processes* that are found in the landscape such as erosion and weathering, *Narrative as Form Generation* which includes the use of sequencing or developing images, *Interpretive Landscapes* that “make existing or ongoing narratives intelligible” through texts or elements of design form, and *Storytelling Landscapes* such as “gardens, memorials, and themed landscapes...designed to tell specific stories.”<sup>38</sup> Their work offers a substantive basis for understanding the intertwining of story and design.

Potteiger and Purinton also describe the “practices” of landscape narrative that they see as directly connecting with story: naming, sequencing, revealing and concealing, gathering, opening, recycling, referencing, inscribing, and registering.<sup>39</sup> In their analysis, these practices are employed through any number of the types of landscape narratives.

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<sup>37</sup> Potteiger and Purinton, *Landscape Narratives*, 11.

<sup>38</sup> Potteiger and Purinton, *Landscape Narratives*, 11.

<sup>39</sup> Potteiger and Purinton, *Landscape Narratives*, 73.

For the purposes of collecting and synthesizing stories centered around Little Manila, this thesis extracts and re-organizes four key techniques from Potteiger and Purinton's given types of landscape narratives. This re-organization has resulted in four categories of technique: association, sequence, program, and metaphor. While these techniques are named separately, this thesis intends that they are fuzzy around the edges, their differences are not so clear-cut.

Association directly ties to the previous discussion of aesthetics. Visual elements, such as traditional cultural design aesthetics, apply to landscape to inspire an association with a specific culture. Naming, which Potteiger and Purinton discuss at length as a tool for communicating history and story<sup>40</sup>, falls under the category of association. Associations and references in the landscape can draw heavily from the details of the stories shared. For example, integrating the crates used to transport produce from farms around Stockton. This thesis also identifies association with the less than literal landscape, one that seeks to evoke a significant view and elicit emotions, but not necessarily provide a picturesque story as one may see in a sequencing technique.

Metaphor is a strong, poetic means of interpreting story in landscape. Its use allows users to embed their own meaning as well as understand that there is a special contextual meaning in the design. As a technique, metaphor includes the creation of form, or of drawing strong connections with specific plants or materiality. It is here that association and metaphor begin to blur.

The concept of sequence derives from experiences of moving through a landscape. It is also akin to the processes of storyboarding and crafting specific

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<sup>40</sup> Potteiger and Purinton, *Landscape Narratives*, 75.



picturesque shots. It is more literal than the technique of association. Sequencing orders a landscape, it is an act of control that both conceals and reveals layers of story. Sequence can be experienced as the movement throughout a space, but can also be experienced in a singular spot, engaged as a visual palimpsest. Sequence is also inclusive of the processes caused by natural forces.

Finally, a proposed program can elicit cultural practices from across time. Giving space for cultural practices such as festivals, or even for quotidian celebrations such as birthday parties, allow for a community to engage in story. In the case of Little Manila, where the social ecosystem drove the creation of program, such proposals may form connections to a narrative. Spaces for food, sleep, and care come to mind when thinking about stories of Little Manila.

The story, narrative, and design diagram (Figure 5) demonstrates that the four presented techniques work directly with theme, detail, and pattern to influence a landscape design. This is possible through the synthesis of story, of which I provide an example in Chapter 3 that works with both oral storytelling and written materials. Prior to that discussion I recognize a need to tell a history of Little Manila, which will offer context to my design work. The following chapters follow the process outlined in the diagram: identifying narrative, gleaning patterns, themes, and details for use towards a design. At the conclusion of this written work, I intend use the discussed methods of association, sequence, metaphor, and program to translate these stories into a design that moves beyond the Little Manila Historic Marker to create a significant space.

## CHAPTER 2. EXPRESSING STORIES; LITTLE MANILA'S NARRATIVE



Figure 15. Little Manila Historic Site Marker. Source: Author's Image, 2022.

This chapter provides a larger narrative of Little Manila to establish a contextual basis for the series of stories told in chapter 3, *Synthesis of Stories in Place*. This history is a written illustration that extends beyond the Little Manila Historic Marker. By providing a larger context, this chapter provides a narrative from which I draw patterns, themes, and details. A more thorough explanation of several key spaces in little manila follows in Chapter 3.

### 2.1. Stockton

The land known now as Stockton was originally the home of the Taki-Yokut First Nations Tribe.<sup>41</sup> While European arrival significantly impacted the Taki-Yokut peoples through conversion into missions and the spread of deadly disease, there remains a Yokut presence in San Joaquin Valley today.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> "About Us", Tachi Yokut Tribe, <https://www.tachi-yokut-nsn.gov/>.

<sup>42</sup> "History", City of Stockton, last updated January 28, 2016, <http://www.stocktonca.gov/discover/history/hist.html>.

Charles M. Weber founded the City of Stockton in 1849 as a commercial center that could serve miners during the gold rush.<sup>43</sup> The city's proximity to the fertile Delta region, as well as its convenience as a midway point between San Francisco and the Sierras, San Joaquin County and Sacramento, made it an important stopping point for travelers (Figure 16). The city's establishment as a port hub, as well as a stop for several railroads, cemented its status as an important California port.<sup>44</sup> A birds-eye drawing by EA Crennan and Co from 1890 (Figure 17) shows an early look at the development of the city, including what would become the Downtown and West End neighborhoods south of the San Joaquin River and McLeod Lake.

The San Joaquin Valley has served as an important center for agricultural enterprise throughout California's history. The Unique Map of California, created



Figure 16. Stockton Regional Diagram. Diagram by Author, 2022.

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<sup>43</sup> "History", City of Stockton, last updated January 28, 2016, <http://www.stocktonca.gov/discover/history/hist.html>.

<sup>44</sup> "History", The City of Stockton Website.



Figure 17. Stockton, California Drawing from E.A. Crennan & Co. Real Estate Auctioneers. Source: The California State Library. Accessed October 17, 2021.

by E. Johnstone and Dickman-Jones Co, even shows each county with its major exports from the year 1888 (Appendix: Figure 43).

Industry and enterprise have long been tied with the city of Stockton. The adjacent farms and fields created the context for Filipino immigration into the United States, as farmers needed a source of labor. Stockton's role as a seasonal agricultural hub with many employment opportunities attracted this Filipino community to settle and grow in the city.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>45</sup> Mabalon, *Little Manila is in the Heart*, 5.

## 2.2. Immigration & Forming a Filipino Identity

The United States' annexation of the Philippines in 1898 played a key role in allowing for the first major wave of Filipino immigration to the U.S. Mainland and Hawai'i (Figure 18).<sup>46</sup> In 1896 Philippines declared independence from Spain, and continued to fight the Spanish until the Treaty of Paris in 1898, after which some provinces resisted American colonial rule until 1913.<sup>47</sup> The United States initiated a colonial government in the Philippines, absorbing the islands into the U.S. empire in 1899. The Philippines remained a colony of the United States until July 4<sup>th</sup>, 1946.<sup>48</sup> In 1912, Filipino migrants were definitively classified as U.S. Nationals, following the formal creation of "Philippine citizenship" in 1902.<sup>49</sup> This classification helped farmers and agricultural recruiters in the United States attract Filipino workers after the 1924 Japanese exclusion act. During the exclusion act, labor contractors turned to the Philippines to attract cheap laborers, resulting in the immigration of thousands of Filipinos to the United States.<sup>50</sup> In 1965, Lyndon B. Johnson passed the Immigration Rights Act, which voided prior quotas of immigrants. This effectively created a second larger wave of immigration into the U.S. Mainland.<sup>51</sup>

Table 1. Sources: Data from H. Brett Melendy., "Filipinos in the United States," *Pacific Historical Review*, 43, no. 4 (1974): 530-547.

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<sup>46</sup> Ian Morley. "Spanish Colonialism, American Imperialism, and the Philippines." In *Cities and Nationhood: American Imperialism and Urban Design in the Philippines, 1898-1916*. (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2018): 19.

<sup>47</sup> Mabalon and Romasanta, *Journey for Justice*, 43.

<sup>48</sup> Ian Morley. "Spanish Colonialism, American Imperialism, and the Philippines.", 18.

<sup>49</sup> Filomeno V. Aguilar Jr. "The Riddle of the Alien-Citizen: Filipino Migrants as US Nationals and the Anomalies of Citizenship, 1900s-1930s.

<sup>50</sup> Melendy, H. Brett. "Filipinos in the United States." *Pacific Historical Review* 43, no. 4 (November 1974), 521.

<sup>51</sup> Melendy, "Filipinos in the United States", 522.

Table 2. Sources: Data from H. Brett Melendy., "Filipinos in the United States," Pacific Historical Review, 43, no. 4 (1974): 530-547.

**TABLE I**  
**Filipinos in the United States**

	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970
<b>Mainland</b>	<b>5,603<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>45,208<sup>b</sup></b>	<b>45,563<sup>c</sup></b>	<b>61,636<sup>d</sup></b>	<b>107,669<sup>e</sup></b>	<b>241,051<sup>g</sup></b>
<b>Hawaii<sup>f</sup></b>	<b>21,031</b>	<b>63,052</b>	<b>52,659</b>	<b>61,062</b>	<b>68,641</b>	<b>95,680<sup>g</sup></b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>26,634</b>	<b>108,260</b>	<b>98,132</b>	<b>122,698</b>	<b>176,310</b>	<b>336,731</b>
<b>Mainland States: Subtotals</b>						
<b>California</b>			<b>31,408<sup>c</sup></b>	<b>40,424<sup>d</sup></b>	<b>65,459<sup>e</sup></b>	<b>135,248<sup>g</sup></b>
<b>New York</b>			<b>2,978</b>	<b>3,719</b>	<b>5,403</b>	<b>14,045</b>
<b>Illinois</b>			—	—	<b>3,587</b>	<b>12,355</b>
<b>Washington</b>			<b>2,222</b>	<b>4,224</b>	<b>7,110</b>	<b>11,488</b>

While men arrived from many regions of the Philippines, the largest waves of immigration came from the Metro-Manila region, islands of the Visayas, and Ilocos Norte and Ilocos Sur in the Luzon Province (Figure 18).<sup>52</sup> Initially enticed by educational and professional prospects, these men were met with limited job opportunities upon their arrival. Despite their dreams of furthering their education, many found work in the agricultural fields, others as busboys or janitors. In discussing the history and educational backgrounds of immigrants from the Philippines, Beverly Engkabo has

<sup>52</sup>, Melendy, "Filipinos in the United States", 522.



expressed her desire to flesh out the story: the men who arrived in the United States and Hawai'i were often highly educated. She recalls hearing stories of men who had

been trained as doctors and students in the Philippines heading to the asparagus fields, as they were barred from practicing in the United States.<sup>53</sup>



Figure 18. Travel from PI to Hawai'i and U.S. Mainland. Image by Author, 2022.

Over time, external forces created the idea of the Filipino Identity: farm owners and labor contractors, as well as Little Manila's Japanese, Chinese<sup>54</sup>, and White neighbors, began to group men together and refer to them as "Filipino", rather than by their home province. Initially, the different immigrant groups from distinct regions in the

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<sup>53</sup> Engkabo, Phone Conversation with Author, March 16, 2022.

<sup>54</sup> I understand that there must be similar stories from the Japanese and Chinese communities in the United States and Stockton, who are often referred to by country rather than by province. This would be an interesting endeavor to continue to study in future iterations of this work, and sets a basis for inter-cultural understanding.

Philippines attempted to separate themselves by their home language and region.<sup>55</sup> H. Brett Melendy in his article “Filipinos in the United States” discusses the difficulties of adjusting to differing cultures of the Philippines as well as that of the United States.<sup>56</sup> Violence against Filipinos<sup>57</sup> further solidified this identity, as Dawn Mabalon writes: “[The Violence] rendered regionalism, factionalism, linguistic differences, and class divisions increasingly unimportant.”<sup>58</sup> Racialized violence was prevalent in California throughout the early twentieth century. Mobs of white men, angered by the presence of Filipino communities, miscegenation, and the prevalence of Filipinos workers in the agricultural fields, would enact violence throughout the state. This included but was not limited to looking for Filipinos in the streets of Stockton, beginning race riots in Filipino dance halls, and bombing the Filipino Federation in 1930.<sup>59</sup> The mistreatment of the Filipino community would continue across many spaces in the San Joaquin Valley, from mistreatment in the labor camps and fields to police raids in the West End neighborhood. Xenophobic lawmakers proposed exclusion acts that targeted Filipinos, while White labor organizations rallied to exclude them from work in the fields.<sup>60</sup> Through these interactions with external communities, the men from Luzon, Manila, and Visayas found solidarity and a drive to continue to grow their community in the face of danger.

### 2.3. Agriculture

Agricultural workers followed the West Coast Migratory Labor Circuit (Figure 20), in which they would travel by rail or car along the West Coast of the U.S. mainland,

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<sup>55</sup> Mabalon *Little Manila*, 63.

<sup>56</sup> Melendy, “Filipinos in the United States”, 522.

<sup>57</sup> Mabalon, *Little Manila*, 139.

<sup>58</sup> Mabalon, *Little Manila*, 104.

<sup>59</sup> Mabalon, *Little Manila*, 93.

<sup>60</sup> Mabalon, *Little Manila*, 92.



finding work in one of California's agricultural valleys (Figure 19), Washington State's hops fields, or at one of many salmon canneries in Alaska during the summer.<sup>61</sup> As this cycle progressed, Stockton became a central hub where work could be found year-round, with crop harvesting in the spring, summer, and fall, and pruning of the orchards in the winter. The agricultural fields became spaces of struggle for Filipinos, serving as both a site of tension with other ethnic groups, but also became spaces of inter-cultural solidarity during agricultural strikes of the 1930s.<sup>62</sup> Initially, Filipinos found that their pay was often lower than other groups working in the fields. Through a series of coordinated strikes and eventual partnerships with leaders such as Caesar Chavez, the Filipino Community resisted unfair practices and created a legacy of activism and inter-cultural solidarity<sup>63</sup>. A further discussion of strikes follows in Chapter 3, section 2.



Figure 19. Asparagus fields, 1900. Source: University of Southern California Libraries, California Historical Society. Digitally reproduced by the USC Digital Library.

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<sup>61</sup> Mabalon, Dawn. *Little Manila is in the Heart: The Making of a Filipina/o American Community in Stockton, California*. Durham, Duke University Press, 2013, pp. 91.

<sup>62</sup> Elizabeth Sine "Grassroots Multiracialism" *Pacific Historical Review* 85, no. 2 (May 2016), pp.227-254.

<sup>63</sup> Mabalon and Romasanta, *Journey for Justice*, 27.

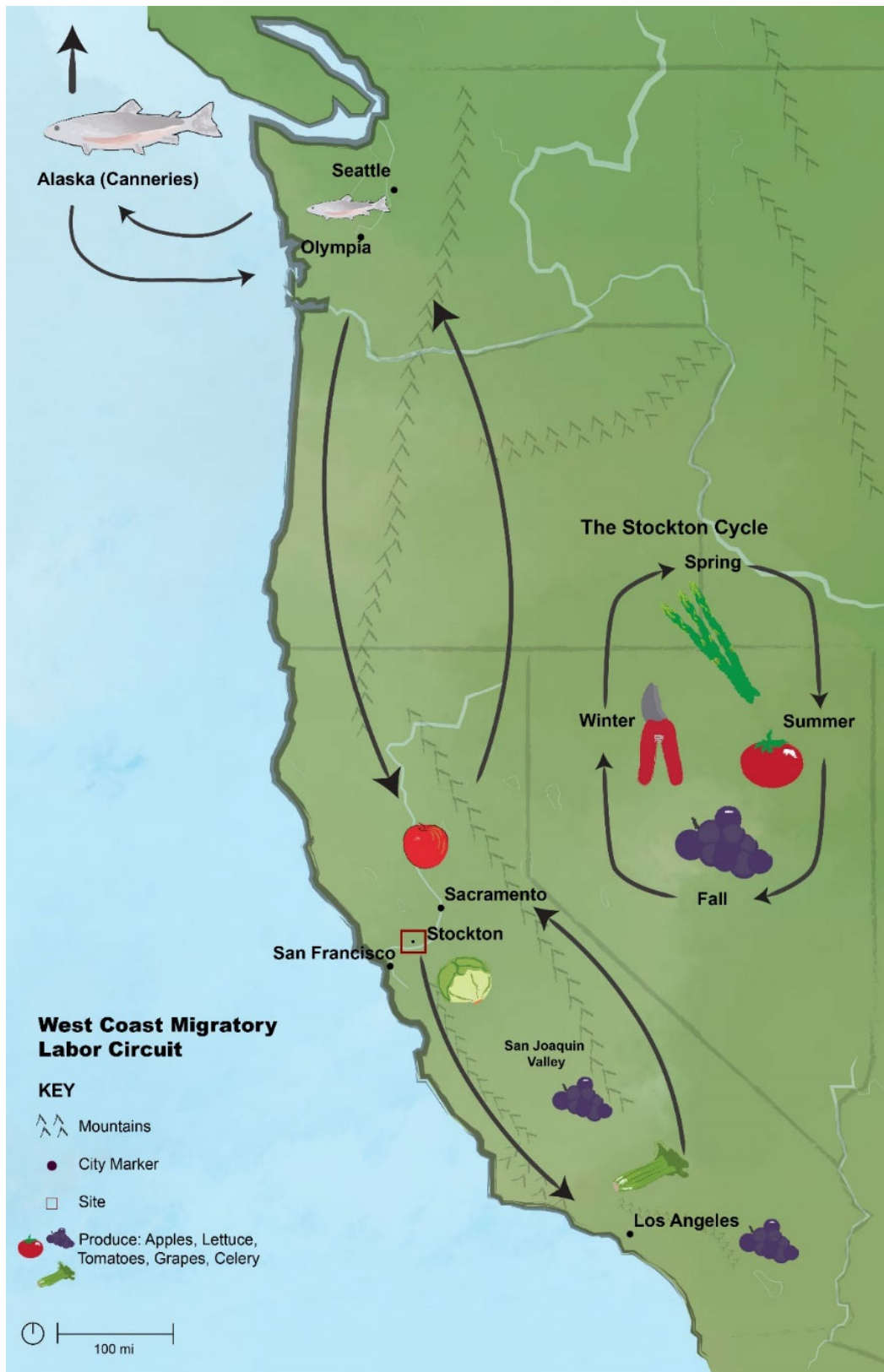


Figure 20. The West Coast Migratory Labor Circuit. Map by Author, 2022.

During working seasons, laborers would stay in the *campos* <sup>64</sup> located on the farms where they endured harsh conditions. Dawn Mabalon collected interviews from agricultural workers who explained the conditions at the time:

Even up to the 1970s, Filipina/o workers in the Delta and Central Valley lived without electricity, running water, or flush toilets in segregated ramshackle wooden bunkhouses, old barns together with animals, or abandoned boxcars in the campo. Bunkhouses ranged in size from those that could house hundreds of workers to deteriorating cabins with dirt floors. <sup>65</sup>

The FANHS museum in Stockton still holds several artifacts (Figure 21) from the campos that illustrate the quality of the conditions that the laborers had to work in. With brutal work for little pay, Filipinos endured harsh conditions to survive, but were left with few alternatives to make money.

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<sup>64</sup> The *campos* referred to living quarters given to Filipino and other agricultural workers during their working periods.

<sup>65</sup> Mabalon, *Little Manila is in the Heart*, 79.



Figure 21. Display of artifacts from Filipino Campos, FANHS Stockton Museum. Photo by Author, January 2022.

While in the campos, Filipinos used their leisure time for a variety of activities including gambling, practicing music and martial arts, visiting prostitutes, and illegal cockfights.<sup>66</sup> The perpetuation of recreation in all of these forms began to create a sense of community, which would later be spatialized in the opening of businesses in Little Manila.

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<sup>66</sup> Mabalon, *Little Manila*, 82.

## 2.4. Growing Little Manila



Figure 22. Little Manila El Dorado Street. Source: FANHS National.

In its early years, Little Manila catered mainly to Filipino men who had immigrated and were in need of services. The creation of ethnic organizations such as the Filipino Federation of America, religious organizations such as the Filipino Lighthouse Mission, and the fraternal organizations/masonic orders such as the Legionarios del Trabajo, addressed such a need that was not being met by other non-Filipino programs in Stockton.<sup>67</sup> As Filipinos were still barred from certain White, Chinese, and Japanese-run businesses around town (Figure 23), the community found strength in helping each other.

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<sup>67</sup> Mabalon, *Little Manila*, 107.





Figure 23. A Sign at the Stockton Hotel reads "Positively No Filipinos Allowed", 1945. Source: FANHS National.

Between the decades of 1920-1960/70, Little Manila experienced considerable growth through community members opening up businesses, restaurants, labor unions, clubs, and community organizations. As J.B. Jackson asserted, no group intentionally creates a landscape<sup>68</sup>. As the Filipino residents of Little Manila sought community, they created a vibrant and significant neighborhood in Stockton. Through mapping the development of services offered in Little Manila from the 1920s through the

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<sup>68</sup> John Brinckerhoff Jackson. "A Pair of Ideal Landscapes," in *Discovering the Vernacular Landscape* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), 12.

1960s, we can see patterns of fluctuating community need emerging.<sup>69</sup> Based on original maps by Ben Pease<sup>70</sup>, the following maps (Figure 24) intentionally demonstrate the period of growth for Little Manila, rather than the period of destruction.

I have created an overlay of the historic neighborhood, separated by service type: Community Organization, Individual Business, Media Outlet, Religious Institution, Recreation (such as a pool hall), Residential—including both hotels and apartments, Food—including both grocery stores and restaurants, shops and services, fraternal organizations, Labor Unions, and Parks. These businesses are composited over the early twentieth century streetscapes and the contemporary building footprints of Downtown Stockton to visualize memory rooted in existing spaces.

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<sup>69</sup> Mabalon, *Little Manila is in the Heart*, 116, 120, 236, 280, 338.

<sup>70</sup> Ben Pease, *Stockton's Little Manila-1930s* [Print]. In: *Little Manila is in the Heart*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2013, pages 116, 120, 236, 280, 338.



Figure 24. Composite Maps of Little Manila Businesses, 1920s-1960s. Diagram by Author, 2022 based on Maps by Ben Pease. Source: Mabalon, Little Manila is in the Heart, 116, 120, 236, 280.



Assessing these maps of 1920 through 1960 shows exponential growth in the first three decades, with more stability and equal distribution of services settling in the 1950s and 60s (Figure 25). The map of Little Manila in the 1940s shows an increase in residential spaces, which include both hotels and apartments. The largest concentration for each map centers at the intersection of El Dorado and Lafayette Street. The following maps (Figure 25, Figure 26) include a visualization of the highway that destroyed the neighborhood and businesses. The highway's construction in the late 1960s/early 1970s is part of a larger pattern of the fates of cities across the United States. I discuss Stockton's urban renewal effort further in Chapter 3.

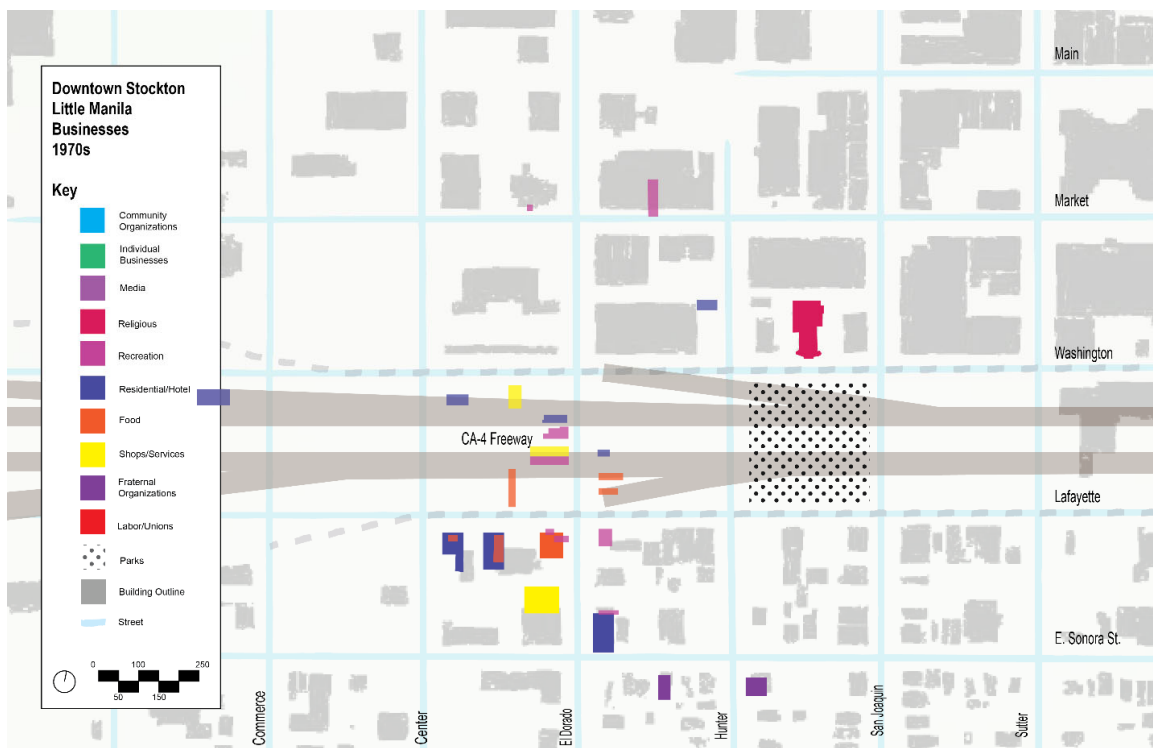


Figure 25. Map of Little Manila, 1970s. Map by Author, based on map by Ben Pease. Source: Mabalon, *Little Manila is in the Heart*, 338.

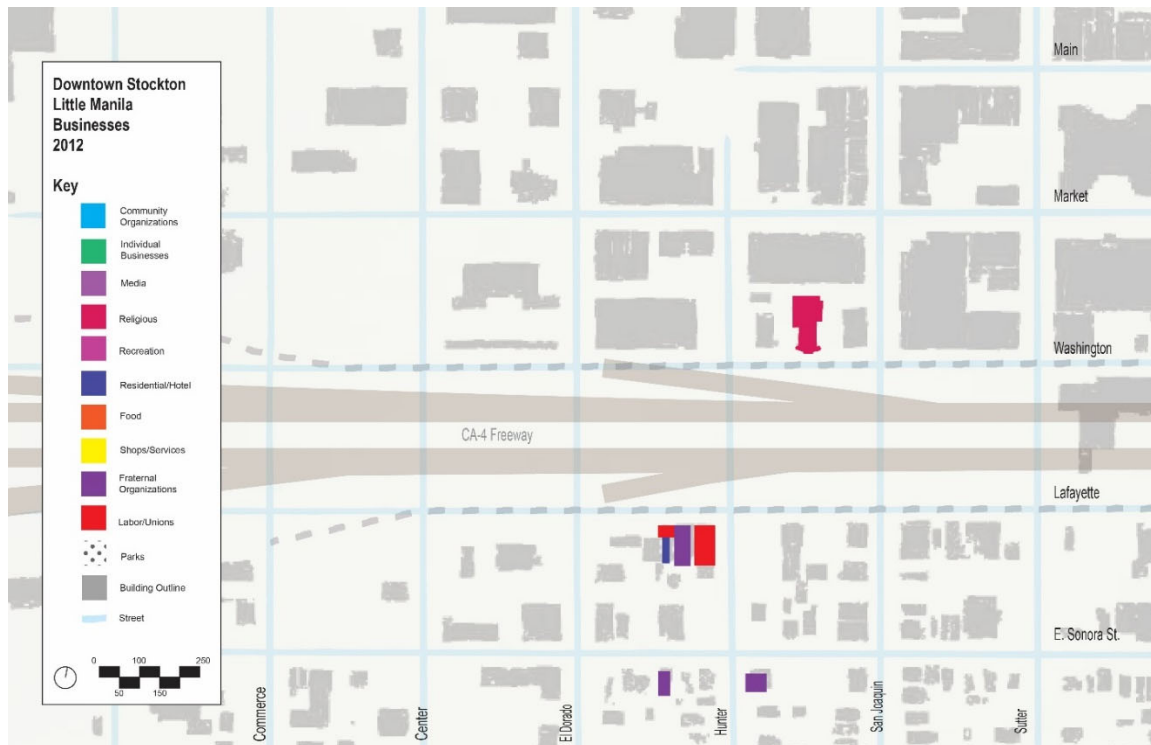


Figure 26. Map of Little Manila, 2012. Map by Author, based on map by Ben Pease. Source: Mabalon, Little Manila is in the Heart, 338.

Observing figures Figure 25 and Figure 26 we see a significant decrease in extant Little Manila buildings. The number of buildings in has continued to decline over the past twenty years, leaving very few buildings standing to this day: The Mariposa Hotel, the Filipino Recreation Center, Iloilo Circle, and the Legionaries Del Trabajo building (Figure 26). The extant spaces, while candidates for design sites, remain in various states of condition and ownership by the Filipino community, the City of Stockton, and private owners.

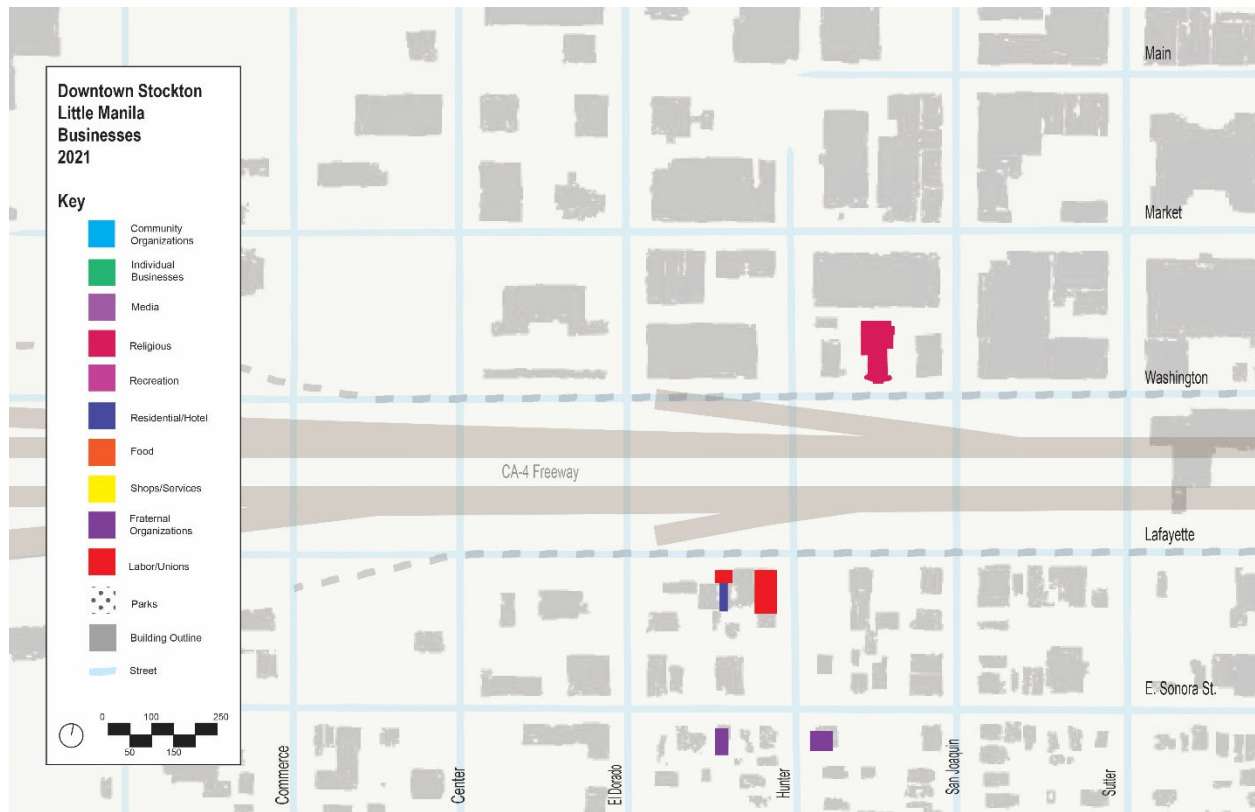


Figure 27. Map of extant Little Manila buidings, 2021. Map by Author, based on maps by Ben Pease, 2022.

## 2.5. Destruction of Little Manila

The Filipino community had long been targeted by racist mobs, farm owners, police, and even governmental institutions throughout its decades-long existence. Many of the community's white neighbors accused Filipinos of being alcoholics and raucous gamblers, perpetuating a racist stereotype of the Filipino community. Post-World War II, the City of Stockton focused its attention on clearing what had been dubbed as skid row or the "West End Slum". By 1952, the Stockton City Planning Commission had prepared a proposal for redevelopment of the West End Neighborhood, which included Little

Manila.<sup>71</sup> A considerable defeat for the Little Manila community came several years later with the creation of the West End Redevelopment Project in 1956<sup>72</sup>.

At this point, the city of Stockton was charged with clearing the slums and created a Redevelopment Authority (RA) to become eligible for Federal Funding. The RA proposed a highway that would connect the new Interstate 5 with the California-99 highway, effectively eliminating significant portions of Little Manila and the adjacent Chinatown. Many owners from whom Filipinos leased space to operate their shops sold to the redevelopment authority. Even owners who opposed redevelopment were fought with eminent domain and federal subsidies for slum clearance.<sup>73</sup> In all, opponents of the redevelopment and highway proposal were fighting considerable Federal Government funding, as well as pushback from many of the White city council members. Despite strong vocal opposition from the Filipino and Chinese communities, the American Civil Liberties Union, and local politicians, a committee of redevelopment supporters called the “Citizens Committee for the Elimination of Skid Row” formed<sup>74</sup>. Support for both sides of the redevelopment argument continued to grow. Those who opposed redevelopment gained the help of city architects, as well as the only female City Council member Edna Gleason.<sup>75</sup>

The Citizen’s Committee for the Elimination of Skid Row, which included downtown business owners and developers, took the case to Superior Court where they argued that the West End was a slum in need of clearance. The judge ruled in favor of

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<sup>71</sup> Mabalon, *Little Manila*, 276.

<sup>72</sup> Mabalon, *Little Manila*, 276.

<sup>73</sup> Mabalon, *Little Manila*, 277.

<sup>74</sup> Mabalon, *Little Manila*, 282.

<sup>75</sup> Mabalon, *Little Manila*, 278.

redevelopment, and by the trials' end in 1963, the committee had already begun to clear sections of Stockton's West End.<sup>76</sup>



Figure 28. The clearance of nine city blocks of Downtown Stockton, including Little Manila and Chinatown, 1970. Source: FANHS Stockton Museum.

By 1972 when construction of the highway through Little Manila and Chinatown had been scheduled to finish<sup>77</sup>, nine blocks of the West End had been cleared, and thousands of residents were displaced. Construction and funding were then delayed to 1974, and the first stretch of the highway was completed in 1976. It took until 1993 to

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<sup>76</sup> Mabalon, *Little Manila*, 282.

<sup>77</sup> Mabalon, *Little Manila*, 296.

completely build the California-4 freeway that connects the north-south Interstate 5 and the north-south California-99 freeways.<sup>78</sup>

By this time few residents remained in Downtown Stockton in a complex known as the Filipino Center. Constructed in 1972 after a quick fundraising effort by the community, the Filipino Center came to life as a residential building and a business center (

Figure 29).<sup>79</sup> Other Filipino community members spread throughout the city or moved out of Stockton. While the Filipino center has played host to events and community gatherings over the years, it never expanded into the size that Little Manila had. Many generations of the diaspora have since moved throughout the United States. According to Census data from 2019, as reported by ABC 10 Stockton, there are currently around 28,000 Filipinos in Stockton<sup>80</sup>.



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<sup>78</sup> Mabalon, *Little Manila*, 296.

<sup>79</sup> Mabalon, *Little Manila*, 330.

<sup>80</sup> Ananda Rochita "A look into the rich history of Filipino Americans in Stockton and Little Manila," *ABC10*, May 3, 2021. <https://www.abc10.com/article/news/community/race-and-culture/history-of-filipino-americans-in-stockton-and-little-manila/103-15c09f0d-c9a9-48ea-8c0f-ac3fa082eee5#:~:text=According%20to%20the%20most%20recent,in%20the%20city%20of%20Stockton>

Figure 29. Filipino Plaza & Center Street. Photo by Author, 2021

Between the completion of the California-4 Freeway and 2022, there have been considerable efforts from the community to recognize Little Manila as a space of important cultural value. Organizations such as Little Manila Rising<sup>81</sup> and FANHS have fought for the preservation of the Stockton Filipino Community's history as well as the ability to pass on the history to future generations. This includes the installation of the Little Manila Historic Site markers in 2003.<sup>82</sup> This thesis asserts that the community deserves spatial recognition beyond these markers, as well as a reclaiming of space that is thoroughly embedded in the story of Little Manila.

In synthesizing stories and extracting themes and patterns, as discussed in the next chapter, I intend to move closer to reclaiming the space as part of a thoughtful, celebratory landscape design.

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<sup>81</sup> "Home" Little Manila Rising, <https://littlemanila.org/>.

<sup>82</sup> Mabalon and Reyes, *Filipinos in Stockton*, 124.

## CHAPTER 3. SYNTHESIS OF STORIES IN PLACE: FIVE LITTLE MANILA SPACES

This chapter exemplifies a process of synthesizing of stories that are associated with five key spaces of Little Manila that I have identified. In the previously shared Story & Narrative Diagram (Figure 30) I illustrate a composite of story from the past, present, and future that comes together to form a narrative. This exercise of exploring both written and oral stories of place sets a framework for themes that can emerge in design through the outlined techniques of association, metaphor, sequence, and program. Following this chapter is a discussion of the emerging themes and patterns from the narrative, that will be matched with the methods of incorporating story, as seen in Chapter 1.

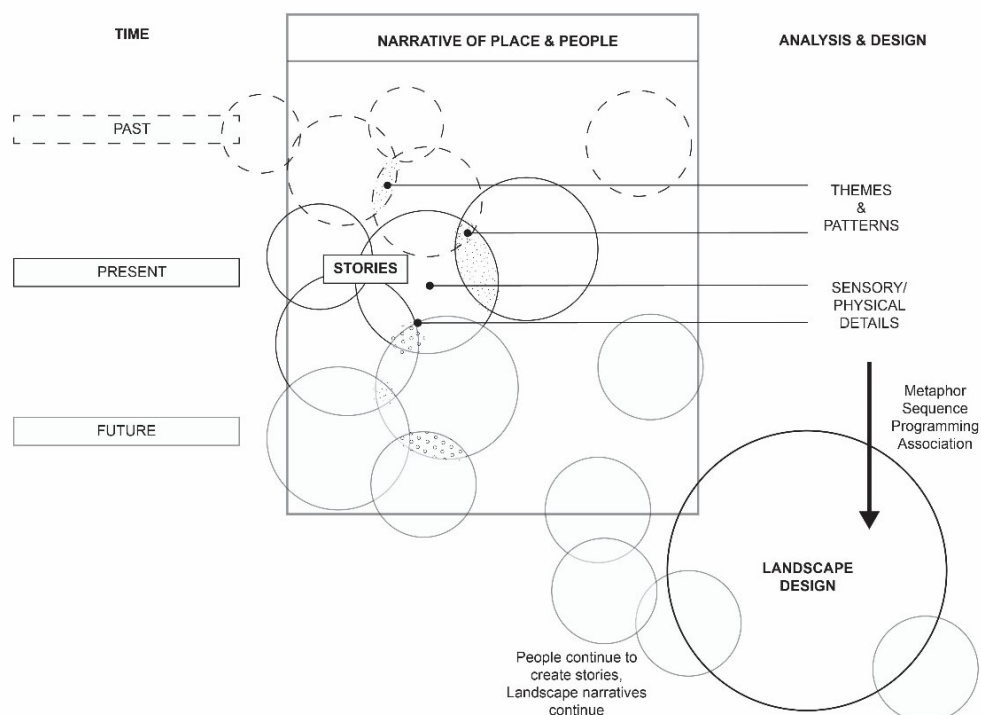


Figure 30. Story & Narrative Diagram, revisited. Created by Author, 2022.



The following stories exemplify both the quotidian and the more-than-ordinary moments that have emerged in the lives of Little Manila residents. The practice of honoring the everyday establishes a sense of life as it is constantly rooted in space. As Landscape Architect Walter Hood writes, “Attention to the everyday and mundane recognizes what already exists around us, and activates the space between its ‘things’ and its people. Activating the mundane is an opportunity to see and experience the beauty and utility of the things in our life.”<sup>83</sup> A synthesis of stories centered around each space demonstrates a relationship between place and the Filipino Community in Little Manila. While a reading of Dawn Mabalon’s *Little Manila is in the Heart* reveals a considerable depth to every space that has once been a part of Little Manila, I focus on five spaces that stood out for their stories: The Rizal Social Club/Filipino Recreation Center, the Mariposa Hotel and Castillo Market, Washington Square Park, Trinity Presbyterian Church, and the El Dorado streetscape. In discussions with members of FANHS, Aunty Letty, and my own family, I gleaned key narratives of agricultural work, social gatherings, and outdoor space.

By listening to multiple stories that are associated with a landscape, designers can engage memory and synthesize multiple voices in a singular place. This practice enlivens the space without the constraints of time. Rather, time and memory are engaged simultaneously in the act of illuminating the importance of social and physical structures.

While there is much to be said about the importance of each type of service offered in Little Manila--from the need for social interaction at pool halls to the need of

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<sup>83</sup> Walter Hood, *Black Landscapes Matter*, 29.

simple services such as tailors--this section focuses on five key sites that provided spaces for social interaction. These five chosen spaces played important roles in the community, both in encounters of everyday importance and in fostering larger events that are paramount in the larger narrative of the neighborhood. As mentioned in Chapter 1, section 5, collected stories come from both written history and personal conversations, offering details that point to the significance of these spaces within the larger context of Little Manila. I want to be clear that I am not proposing to design all five identified spaces. Rather, I explore these spaces to gain a further understanding of the interactions between story and place.

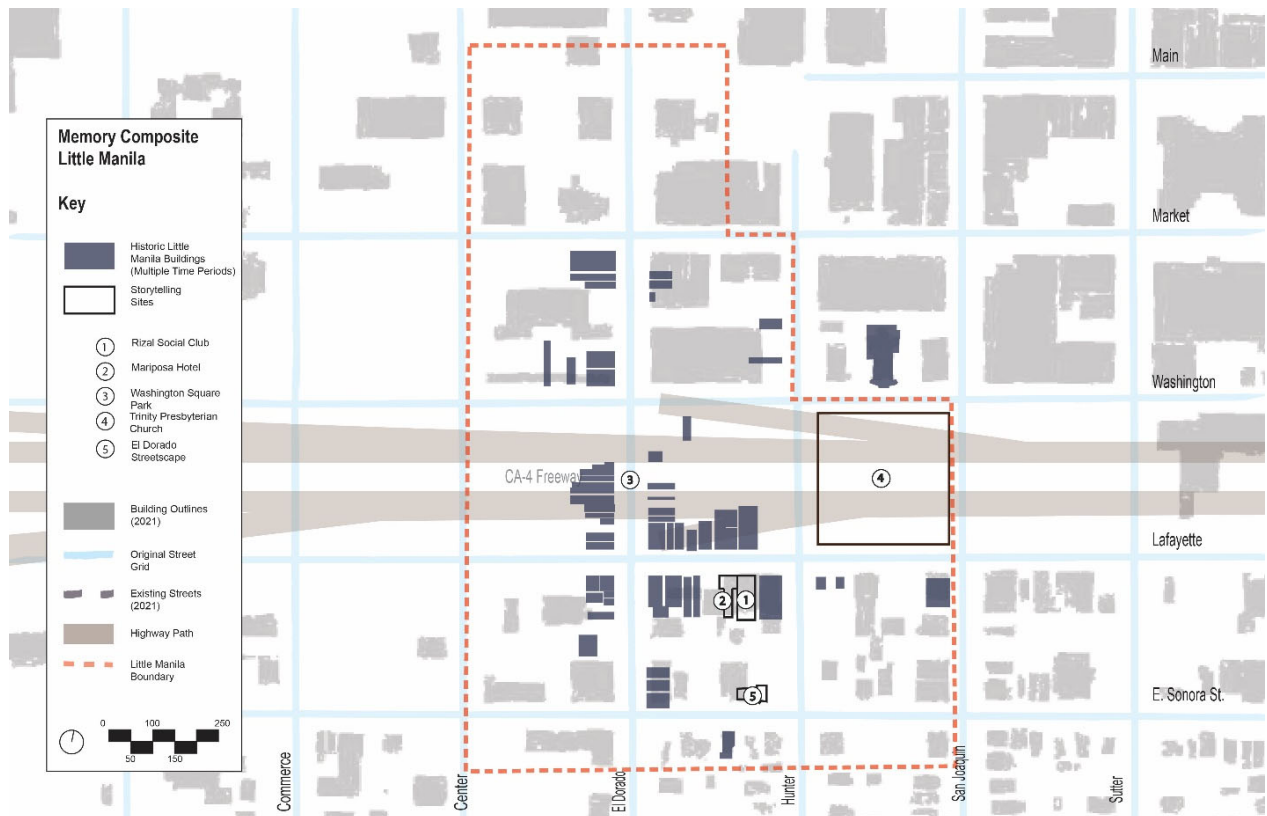


Figure 31. Memory Composite of Little Manila. Diagram by Author, 2022.

### 3.1. *The Rizal Social Club & The Filipino Recreation Center*

The mostly-male community of Little Manila often turned to local pool halls and clubs for entertainment and companionship. Entrepreneur Demetrio Ente, an immigrant from Bohol, recognized this need and opened the Rizal Social club in 1937. Ente had originally immigrated to Seattle but expressed a fondness for Little Manila in interviews with Dawn Mabalon: “At that time, there was Filipinos all over Stockton, you thought you were back in the islands”<sup>84</sup>. As a business owner he wanted to provide another space for dancing, including offering taxi dances to the young Filipino men who patronized the club. Taxi dances, a staple of Filipino dance halls where men could pay a dime for a dance with a young woman employee, were one of the means that lonely men could engage in social activity. This practice often engaged tensions in the community, particularly when the young taxi dancers were accused of engaging in prostitution, which was not always the case at the clubs.<sup>85</sup> Religious members of the Little Manila community, as well as the local organization the Filipino Community of Stockton, Inc. denounced the club. Furthermore, the employment of white women in these dance halls became a point of racial tension between Filipinos and the external White community. To mitigate the potential for violence, Ente opened the club with a pay-for-membership model and hired private security to keep white men out.<sup>86</sup> Mabalon writes that jealousy and or fights over women were a common occurrence in dance halls, sometimes leading to dangerous violence and arrests.<sup>87</sup> At one point, a white woman accused Ente of hiring her sixteen year old daughter to dance, which resulted in the woman calling the

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<sup>84</sup> Mabalon, *Little Manila*, 135.

<sup>85</sup> Mabalon, *Little Manila*, 134.

<sup>86</sup> Mabalon, *Little Manila*, 135.

<sup>87</sup> Mabalon, *Little Manila*, 134.

police and the club being raided. In August of 1937, five months after the club's opening, the Rizal Social Club closed along with the other two dance halls in Little Manila due to reports of interracial dating.<sup>88</sup>

Later that same year, Ente re-opened the social club in its final location on Lafayette street. While the club still catered to Filipinos, some Japanese neighbors became members. As the club continued its operation, it became a fixture in the Filipino music scene.<sup>89</sup> Stockton became home to several Filipino jazz bands and continued to increase in popularity. Spaces for gambling, dancing, and socializing with women were still in high demand throughout Little Manila's history, writes Mabalon.<sup>90</sup>

As Demetrio Ente earned more money from his club ownership, he decided to invest in the adjacent building to the Rizal Social Club. In 1948 he invested \$175,000 into the building next door. He named it the Filipino Recreation Center, and it hosted taxi dancing, community dances, movie screenings, union meetings, and gambling until the Rizal Social Club closed in the 1950s. At this point, it became a boxing gym until the 1980s. From 1990 until 2011 the building was home to the Emerald Chinese Restaurant.<sup>91</sup>

As multi-purpose spaces, The Rizal Social Club and the Filipino Recreation Center also became the setting to more contentious moments in the neighborhood's history.<sup>92</sup> In 1942, the bombing of pearl harbor caused distress in the Chinese,

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<sup>88</sup> Mabalon, *Little Manila*, 134-135.

<sup>89</sup> Fashion was often on display in the social clubs. Filipino men were known for their flamboyant wearing of Americanized suits, while women wore traditional Filipina dresses known as terno. This included white women or non-Filipinas who were married to Filipino men. Mabalon, *Little Manila*, 117.

<sup>90</sup> Mabalon, *Little Manila*, 138.

<sup>91</sup> Mabalon, *Little Manila*, 137-138.

<sup>92</sup> World War II marked a shift for American attitudes toward Filipinos. This came at the cost of being praised for assimilation, and Filipino support of Japanese Internment. As many had begun to fight in the war, their social status among external communities in Stockton elevated. Religious Filipino women were

Japanese, and Filipino neighborhoods in Stockton.<sup>93</sup> Dawn Mabalon explains the aftermath and the reaction of the Filipino community:

Days after the bombing of Pearl Harbor and the invasion of the Philippines, the Filipino Community of Stockton, led by Teo-filo Suarez, met at Rizal Hall... The members of the group pledged their loyalty to America, declared a boycott of all Japanese-owned businesses, ordered all Filipina/os to move out of Japanese rooming houses, and suggested that all Filipina/os wear identification buttons to prevent their being mistaken for Japanese. Dozens of Filipinas/os moved out of hotels owned or leased by Japanese immediately after the meeting. The Caballeros de Dimas Alang made identification buttons that read "I AM FILIPINO" and were 'swarmed' by Filipinas/os who desired to purchase them.<sup>94</sup>

Mabalon's account was confirmed by my great Aunt Lily's memories. As a child she recalls having Japanese neighbors, but was forbidden by her father from socializing with them. She attributes this sentiment to lingering tensions from my great-grandfather's time fighting in World War II. As a self-proclaimed "theater kid," Aunt Lily remembers making friends with her Japanese classmates anyway. In high school she spent so much time in the theater with her classmates that they became friends.

The intersection of stories at the Rizal Social Hall and the adjacent Mariposa Hotel and Filipino Community Center reveal a complex layering of stories that engage themes of harm, socializing, and tension with other communities. These stories help to embed an everyday sense of place into the space formerly occupied by the Rizal Social Club, until its demolition in 2020.<sup>95</sup>

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invited to bible studies by their White church-going neighbors. Though this all came at the expense of Stockton's Japanese Community, the Filipino community had begun to experience the rewards of assimilation. Mabalon, *Little Manila is in the Heart*, 238.

<sup>93</sup> Mabalon, *Little Manila*, 230-231.

<sup>94</sup> Mabalon, *Little Manila*, 231. Mabalon also writes about how Stockton's landscape and economy were "transformed by the war" (232-33). While this story is interesting and does have a significant impact on the landscape, I will not be following the thread of this story as I am following other relations to identified spaces.

<sup>95</sup> Little Manila Rising (LMR) is a group of Filipino activists who have been advocating for the preservation of Little Manila, along with passing along its history and Filipino culture to future generations.<sup>95</sup> In a blog



Figure 32. The Space of the Demolished Rizal Social Club. Photo by Author, 2022.

The site of the club now sits between the Mariposa Hotel and Filipino Community Center buildings (Figure 32). Since its demolition, the parcel has been fenced, and more recently has been listed for sale.<sup>96</sup> This block of buildings has stood as the last remaining block of Little Manila since the destruction of the Lafayette Lunch Counter in

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post for the organization, Dillon Delvo explained the loss of the building that occurred in just a few months of 2020.<sup>95</sup> In February of 2020, the City of Stockton inspected the Rizal Social Club property upon noticing a dip in the roof. After creating a report on the building's structural integrity, they notified Little Mania Rising, giving them only a few days to collaborate with an engineer to create a plan to save the building. Upon further assessment, LMR assessed the damage in order to create a plan of action. They were told that one of the few solutions would be to knock down part of the building to save the remainder. This maneuver would have been costly and would have taken away from funds that were already allocated towards other building projects. Delvo Wrote: "With heavy hearts and tears shed, the LMR board voted to not pursue the purchase of the Rizal Social Club." Dillon Delvo, "The Demolition of the Rizal Social Club", Little Manila Rising, November 10, 2020. <https://littlemanila.org/blog/2020/10/22/the-demolition-of-the-rizal-social-club>.

<sup>96</sup> Author observation, January 9, 2022.

1999<sup>97</sup>. As one of the few last remaining fixtures of Little Manila, it deserves to remain as a space for the community. As such, I have identified it as a potential space to propose a design.

### *3.2. Mariposa Hotel & Castillo Market, Washington Square Park*

The Mariposa Hotel, located at 130 East Lafayette Street, still stands today, boarded up and facing the highway, a *Little Manila Historic Site* marker standing on the sidewalk facing north. This building housed many functions and groups throughout the twentieth century, including acting as a home for the Legionarios del Trabajo No. 528 Social club<sup>98</sup> in the 1930s.

In one of our conversations, Beverly Engkabo spoke of a spirit of generosity and sharing within the community that she experienced while growing up at the Mariposa, which was run by her parents along with John's Family Market, right underneath the hotel.<sup>99</sup> She recalls that workers who would come home from the fields would bring produce directly to the store. Large crates of asparagus, grape, and salmon would be passed around...the same crates that would stack in Washington Square Park during the farmer's market. When offered these foods, if the store didn't need any more produce the workers would bring their crates to somebody else.<sup>100</sup>

The relationship to agriculture and labor is another key theme in Little Manila's narrative. For many, agricultural patterns dictated the cycles of their lives, such as the West Coast Migratory Labor Circuit (WCMLC, Figure 20). Other stories, such as my

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<sup>97</sup> Amy Starnes, "Corner of History Falls to Progress", *Stockton Record*, May 19, 1999.

<https://www.recordnet.com/story/news/1999/05/19/corner-history-falls-to-progress/50809833007/>

<sup>98</sup> Ben Pease, *Stockton's Little Manila-1930s* [Print]. In: *Little Manila is in the Heart*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2013, page 120.

<sup>99</sup> Beverly Engkabo, email to Author, April 6, 2022. John's Family Market opened in 1950 at 132 E. Lafayette Street, directly under the Mariposa hotel.

<sup>100</sup> Beverly Engkabo. Phone Call with the Author. March 27, 2022.

Aunty Lily's memory of driving in the car and stopping at various Filipino-run produce stands, show a more casual relationship to food and farming, and how it connected members of the community.<sup>101</sup> The West End's farmers market "thrived" in Washington Square Park before the park's destruction to make way for the CA-4 Freeway<sup>102</sup>. The large- and small-scale impacts of agriculture were instrumental in illustrating a need for the formation of a community.

A significant history of the Little Manila neighborhood is inherently tied to the agricultural strikes that took place throughout California's Central Valley. Leaders such as Larry Itliong became important parts of the struggle for equal rights as agricultural laborers.<sup>103</sup> An immigrant from Pangasinan province on Luzon, Itliong traveled along the WCMLC and gained experience in witnessing acts of resistance from Filipino field workers, including walking off the fields in protest. His exposure to these practices, along with his engagement with additional migrant communities, allowed him to develop a key perspective of unionizing and labor organizing to facilitate strikes and acts for fair wages throughout the WCMLC.<sup>104</sup>

Agricultural workers/organizers Ernesto Mangaoang and Crispulo Mensalvas became prominent figures in many agricultural strikes throughout the early twentieth century in California (Figure 33). This includes assisting in organizing Salinas lettuce workers in 1934<sup>105</sup>, celery strikes in 1936, and asparagus strikes in 1948.<sup>106</sup> For a map of several of the Filipino-led agricultural strikes, see Figure 33.

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<sup>101</sup> Lily Beltran, Phone Call with the Author. June 14, 2021.

<sup>102</sup> Mabalon, *Little Manila*, 279.

<sup>103</sup> Leatrice Perez, Phone Call with Author, February 16, 2022.

<sup>104</sup> Dawn Mabalon and Gayle Romasanta, *Journey of Justice: The Life of Larry Itliong* (Stockton: Bridge and Delta Publishing, 2018), 1, 12.

<sup>105</sup> Mabalon, *Little Manila*, 97.

<sup>106</sup> Mabalon, *Little Manila*, 255.



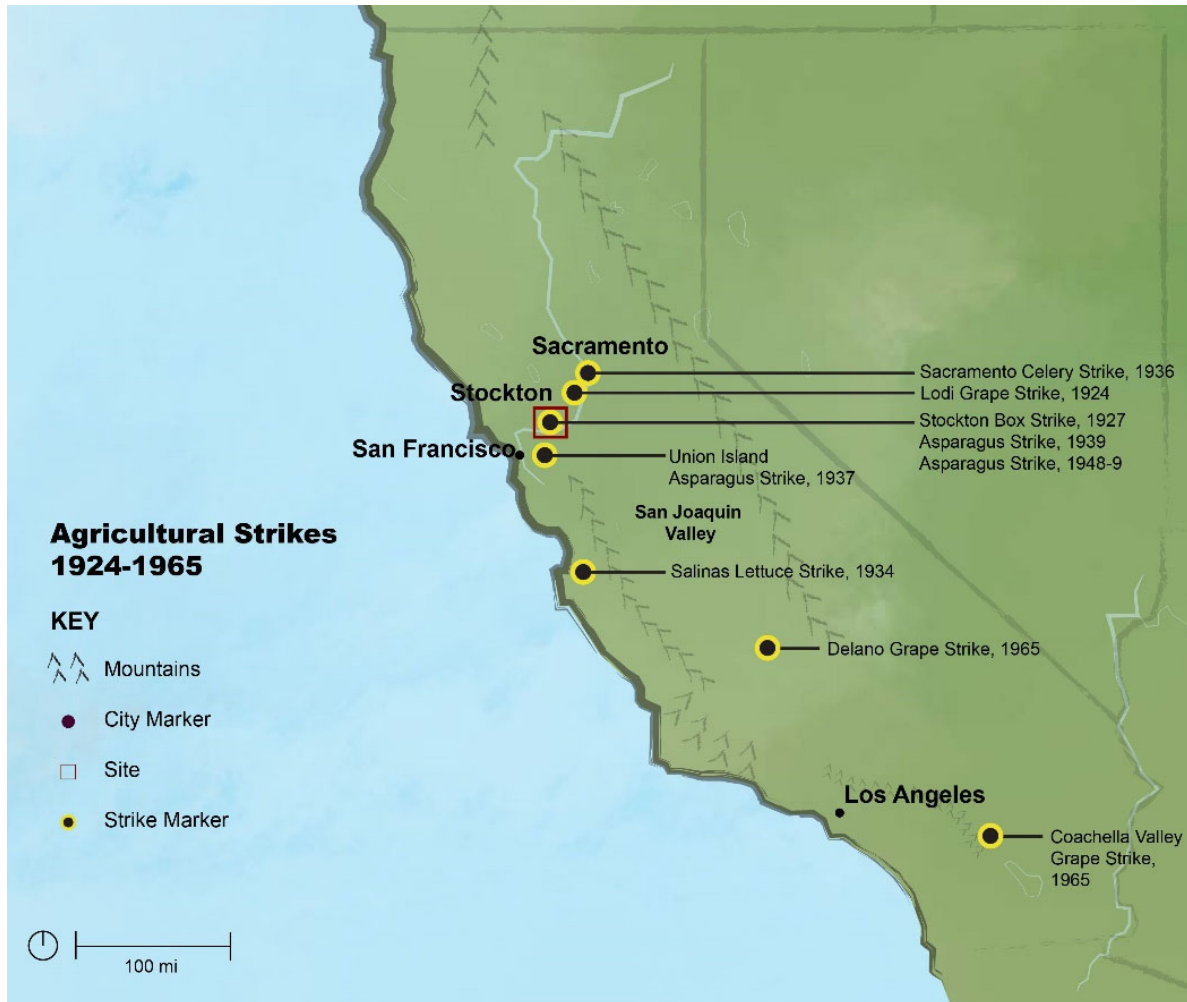


Figure 33. California Agricultural Strikes 1924-1965. Map by Author, 2022. Sources: Dawn Mabalon, *Little Manila is in the Heart*, pp. 88, 97-99, 220-225, 254-258.

Itliong eventually made his way to Stockton where he met with community leaders such as Mangaoang, Mensalvas, and Carlos Bulosan. In 1939, asparagus growers in Stockton significantly cut Filipino wages, triggering one of the largest agricultural strikes in California's history.<sup>107</sup> In retaliation, the community formed the Filipino Agricultural Laborers Association (FALA) and began to strike.<sup>108</sup> As growers

<sup>107</sup> Mabalon, *Little Manila*, 220.

<sup>108</sup> Mabalon and Romasanta, *Journey of Justice* (21).

agreed to restore wages, FALA members began to return to work. This movement inspired a similar strike over wages in 1948. As Carlos Bulosan and Chris Mensalvas began to organize for the upcoming working season, they made the Filipino-operated Mariposa Hotel in Little Manila their main headquarters. Carlos Bulosan and Chris Mensalvas headquartered the FALA union at the Mariposa Hotel. Two doors down, a large meeting of fraternal and community organizations gathered to gain support for the union's work.<sup>109</sup> Laborers unanimously voted to strike. Led by organizer Rudy Delvo, Filipinos took to the streets and marched in protest for higher wages. Though they initially lost this strike, the unions were able to negotiate a higher pay rate in the following year.<sup>110</sup> From this point forward, Little Manila remained the site of multiple labor unions and organizations that sought fair wages for agricultural workers (Figure 34).

Agricultural laborers found inter-cultural solidarity through the organization of the Delano grape strike. Itliong became friends with Rudy Delvo, an organizer in Stockton, who introduced him to the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee (AWOC). Mexican activists Dolores Huerta and Gilbert Padilla, along with Caesar Chavez, were introduced to Itliong and the AWOC, which is where they heard of the Delano grape strike that the three were helping to organize. Both groups traveled to Delano where they realized that the best means of striking was to band together. With this, the AWOC joined the National Farm Workers' Association (NFWA) in striking for better wages,

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<sup>109</sup> Mabalon, *Little Manila is in the Heart*, 256.

<sup>110</sup> Mabalon, *Little Manila*, 99.

eventually merging together as United Farmworkers (UFW) to continue the fight for equitable pay in for agricultural labor.<sup>111</sup>



Figure 34. Local 7 Demonstration, 1948. Source: FANHS Museum Stockton.

Washington Square Park (Figure 35) was a prominent public space that was used by multiple communities in Downtown Stockton. Mabalón writes: “Working-class families from all backgrounds held picnics, religious festivals, and parades in

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<sup>111</sup> Mabalón and Romasanta, *Journey of Justice* (34).

Washington Square Park, which was also home to the area's thriving farmer's market."<sup>112</sup>

The removal of Washington Square Park destroyed an important site of community gathering, including spaces for events, recreation, and even space for tired laborers to take naps in the shade. Washington Square Park held ties to the larger agricultural life of Little Manila, thus tying the theme to the space.

Resistance to the growers and labor contractors became a significant and eventful part of the neighborhood's social livelihood. The everyday spaces of Little Manila, such as the Mariposa Hotel, John's Market, and Washington Square park, are not without direct connection to the more eventful demonstrations that allowed Filipinos improved success in making money and building community in Stockton and the San Joaquin valley.

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<sup>112</sup> Mabalon, *Little Manila*, 279.



Figure 35. Exterior view of St. Mary's Catholic Church, Stockton, ca. 1900. Taken from Washington Square Park. Source: California Historical Society and University of Southern California Libraries. Accessed April 6, 2022.

### 3.3. *Trinity Presbyterian Church*

Religion played a significant role in daily Filipino life in Little Manila. As a gathering space of worship, Trinity Presbyterian Church is a place where stories and memories intersect. As a child, Beverly Engkabo lived in the back of the market her parents ran on Lafayette street. She became enamored with the vase that sat on top of the secretary's desk at the Presbyterian Church just around the block. In her free time, Beverly would ride her bike around the corner, stopping to pick geraniums to deliver to the Church's secretary. This story, Engkabo says, would later be confirmed by Aunty Letty, a prominent member of the church to this day.<sup>113</sup>

The church, which was originally called the Lighthouse Filipino Mission, formed in the 1920s and sat on East Lafayette Street, right next to the Stockton Filipino Community Center<sup>114</sup>. In 1942 the mission chartered itself as Trinity Presbyterian Church to reflect a more "inclusive" congregation<sup>115</sup>. In the 1960s the church sat at the corner of South Hunter and Sonora Street, in the same block as the Mariposa Hotel where Beverly grew up. Since the 1960s the church has relocated southwest of its previous locations in Little Manila, across the Interstate-5 freeway. Trinity Presbyterian will celebrate its 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary in October of 2022. As a member, Aunty Letty holds many stories of the Church's history, including stories of social connections to the other church members.

Beyond its physical proximity to the neighborhood, and its key history in providing food and shelter to the local community, and the intra-community connections it

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<sup>113</sup> Beverly Engkabo, Phone Call with the Author, March 27, 2022.

<sup>114</sup> Ben Pease, *Stockton's Little Manila-1920s* [Print]. In: *Little Manila is in the Heart*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2013, page 116.

<sup>115</sup> "About Us," Trinity Presbyterian Church, last modified 2021, <https://www.tri-pres.org/aboutus>.

fostered, The Filipino Lighthouse Mission became a point of connection to communities outside of Little Manila. As Dawn Mabalon writes, in World War II the attitudes toward Filipinos had changed to the point where “Stockton’s elite began to welcome Filipina/os into their homes as guests and not only as domestics.”<sup>116</sup> Filipino and White women, seemingly reconciling previous tensions, would gather for Bible Study sessions.

The stories told about Trinity Presbyterian from Beverly, Letty, and Dawn, overlap in the physical space of Trinity throughout across spans of time. Trinity serves as a space of encountering, and although each individual experienced the space in different times and in different ways, they are linked through their memories of this shared place.

While I consider Trinity Presbyterian to be one of the many important spaces in Little Manila, my design will not focus on this site. However, I do recognize a need for space that could be used by church groups. Based on the above stories, I seek to choose a site that can meet this need.

### *3.4. El Dorado Street*

The aforementioned strikes, festivals, moments of violence, and daily lives all played out in the streets of Little Manila. As a connecting space between the four other key spaces, the streets themselves reveal their importance. Little Manila’s other nickname, the “City of Gold”, has a direct association to El Dorado Street (Figure 22).

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<sup>116</sup> Mabalon, *Little Manila is in the Heart*, 238.





Figure 36. Teodora Lodge, the Ladies Chapter of the Legionarios del Trabajo marches in a 4<sup>th</sup> of July Parade. Source: Tony Somera.

Demitrio Ente fondly offered some sensorial memories of Little Manila in his interview with Dawn Mabalon: “And it was just—at night time, at summer—and the Filipino people was just all over El Dorado...You could smell different kinds of foods, cigars. The minute you just look out the window, it was something to see ‘cause it was alive with people. It was quite a place there.”<sup>117</sup> In considering the landscape of Little Manila, the streetscape itself becomes an important piece of creating a community. It was where people greeted each other, gathered outside of shops, marched for their rights, and celebrated heritage through parades (Figure 36).

<sup>117</sup> Mabalon, *Little Manila*, 135.



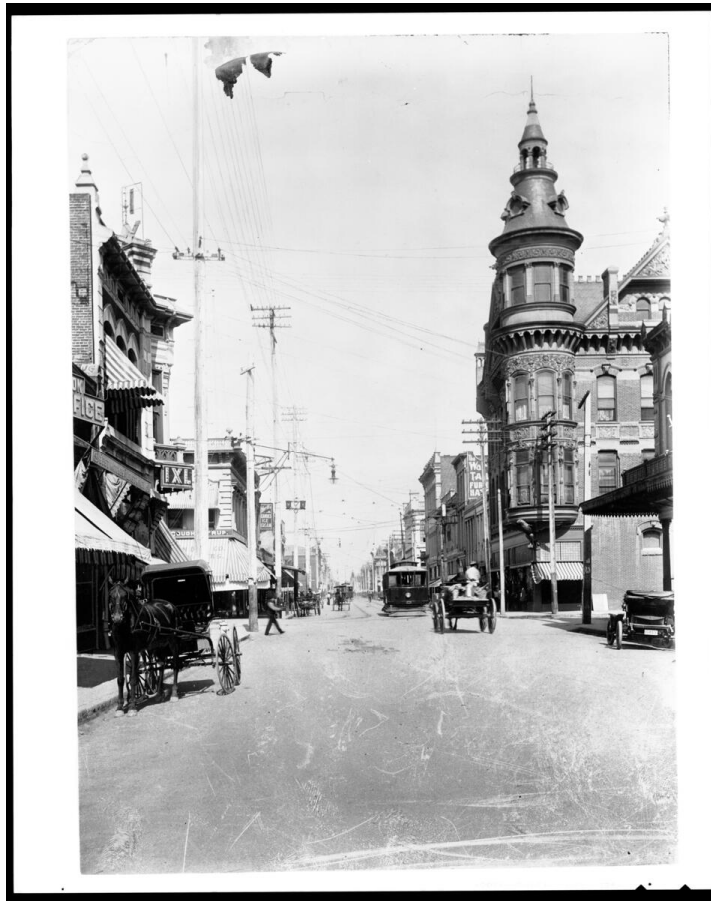


Figure 37. View of the corner of Main Street and El Dorado Street, Stockton, ca. 1900. Source: California Historical Society and University of Southern California Libraries. Accessed April 6, 2022.

Dawn Mabalon writes of the spaces of Little Manila as a free space for expression of the Filipino identity:

In these spaces, they rejected the identity of the debased, exploited, faceless laborer hunched over endless miles of asparagus, celery, or beets. Dressed in impeccable suits and moving out of their stifling hotel rooms and into the shade of the palm trees in front of Washington Square Park, or in front of St. Mary's Church on Washington Street, or gathered with their friends on El Dorado Street

or inside a pool hall or restaurant, Filipinas/os asserted their right to flourish on the streets of Stockton.<sup>118</sup>

The streetscape of Little Manila functioned not only as a connection between buildings and social organizations, but also as a space that filled with life, demonstrating the vivacity of the community. This thesis began with a critique of how users first encounter Little Manila. The first part of the urban landscape that we see is the street. For this reason, I believe that it is imperative to incorporate into the final design.

These five identified spaces are useful studies for understanding the intersections of storytelling and space. This practice of engaging palimpsest (Appendix: Figure 46) helps to identify potential sites for my final design proposal. In thinking of a space that can celebrate the community, this practice of mapping and overlapping identified a centralized important area: the block of Lafayette Street between El Dorado and Hunter that includes the now demolished Rizal Social Club, the former Mariposa Hotel, and the former Filipino Community Center.

Furthermore, while discussing the stories told in these important spaces of Little Manila, I have developed a means of understanding how multiple stories interact within space. By tracing paths that meet, taper off, change direction, and bisect, the following diagrams show the interplay of story in space:

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<sup>118</sup> Mabalon, *Little Manila*, 147.



Figure 38. Composite Silhouettes of Little Manila. Diagram by Author, 2022.

Figure 38 composites the silhouettes of several key buildings in Little Manila, along with the 2021 figure ground of buildings. This process of layering helps me to diagram the past and present of the space, while providing locations for the five identified community spaces. In the process of diagramming, I decided to begin stripping away the physical layers of the space (Figure 39) to begin to see movement within the defined boundary of Little Manila.

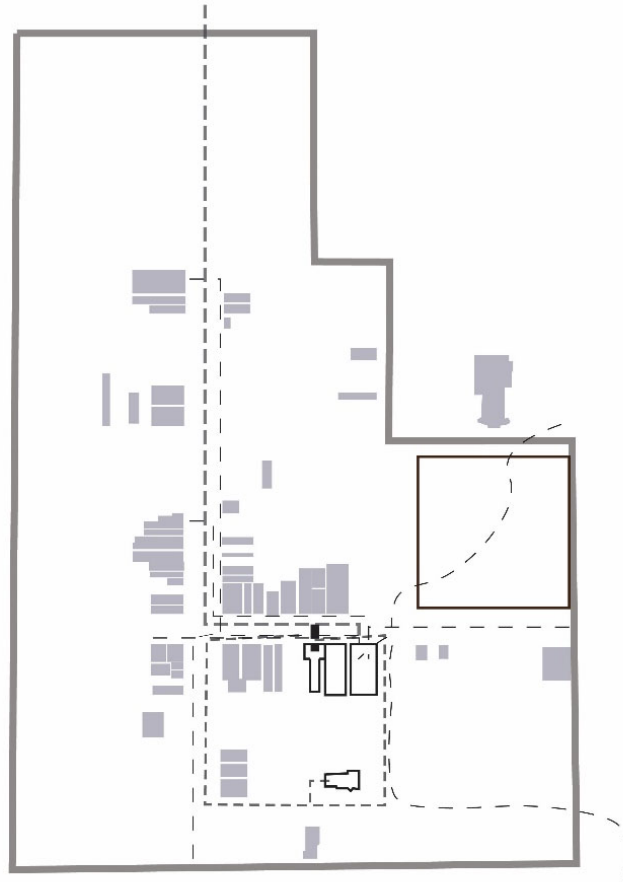


Figure 39. Silhouettes of Little Manila with Story Paths. Diagram by Author, 2022.

Figure 39 takes the above stories of the five key spaces and overlays them on top of the silhouettes. This diagram begins to show the intersections of story and space: what drives everyday paths, and where they take residents. This diagram is anchored in the silhouettes of Little Manila buildings. In order to observe a more abstracted idea of movement in space, I removed the silhouettes for the final diagram (Figure 40).

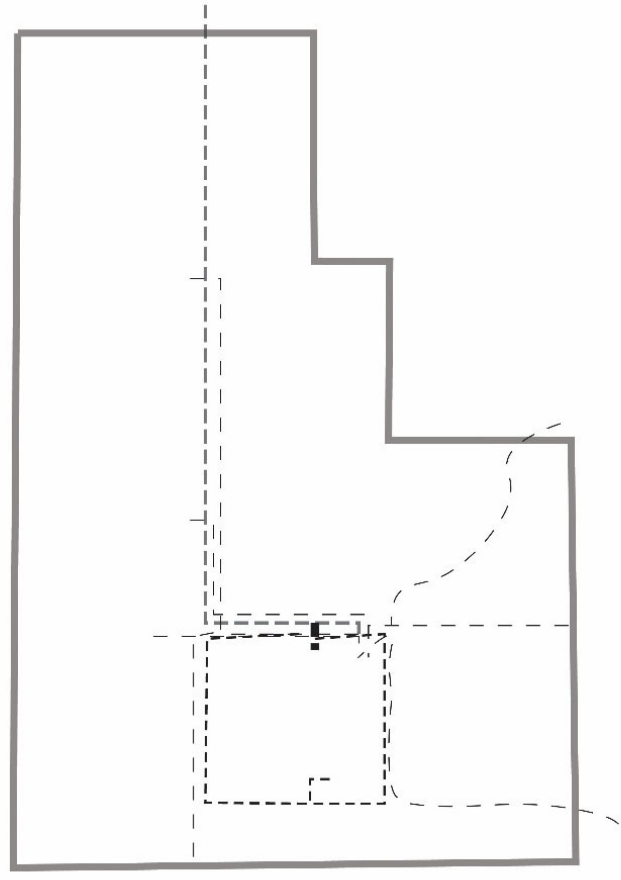


Figure 40. Stories in Little Manila. Diagram by Author, 2022.

Figure 40 is the final diagram in this abstracted series of composites, which shows the interplay between stories in space. When buildings are removed, we see the circulation of stories through a space, as they exit and enter a boundary, converse with each other, and ultimately make their way forward. The lines of movement in Figure 40 show a crossing of different lives and stories and begin to illustrate the more ephemeral social conditions of place. This diagram is essential in my thinking about the convergence of stories in space, and I intend to use it as a guide for design. This step in the process, the synthesis of story, pairs with the recognition of themes and patterns, which follows in the next section.

### *3.5. Themes & Patterns in Little Manila's Narrative*

There are many interpretations we can glean from the collection of stories shared in this chapter. However, in the exercise of considering the community and the physical buildings that created the space, several key themes emerged as part of the overall narrative: resistance, care, and belonging.

The shared stories demonstrate a theme of resistance, easily recognized through important agricultural strikes that were planned in Little Manila and carried out throughout the San Joaquin Delta and beyond. The fight for fair wages became important as an intercultural struggle, as well as a model for organized forms of striking.

Less overt forms of resistance also remain a key component of many stories. Little Manila formed due to the self-determination and need of the Filipino community in Stockton. Addressing need and caring for the community internally is a method of resistance in and of itself. Establishing an identity through quotidian expressions such as means of dress, practicing food cultures, gathering, and celebrating heritage through festivals, parades, and events, are all forms of resistance against the outside community, police, and governmental institutions that aimed to obliterate Filipino culture in the United States.

Belonging is a subjective notion that is hard to identify from an external point of view. However, the narrative of Little Manila shows that the neighborhood formed from a very need to feel a sense of belonging. Of her childhood and growing up in Little Manila, Beverly Engkabo discusses feeling a sense of belonging: "When I am here, I am Filipino."

The composite of stories in spaces reveal a significant connection between the social life of Little Manila and the spaces that Filipino community members occupied. These spaces were important not only for their tangible value as services, but also fostered social happenings, built relationships, and created a larger network of care. In assessing these five key spots of Little Manila, I have gathered ideas and inspiration that I intend to use in a site design, one that will breathe life to the memories of the neighborhood.

#### **CHAPTER 4. SPATIALIZING STORY & STORY INSPIRING SPACE**

The design proposal for this thesis will include the creation of a public gathering space, which is located at the site of the former Rizal Social Club. This site is nestled between the two extant buildings of Little Manila. The proposal will also include the design of a streetscape that connects this newly proposed gathering space with the Filipino Plaza, an apartment building and block of businesses built in the 1970s (Figure 41).

The design of this space will draw inspiration from details of the shared stories of Little Manila. Engaging metaphor, association, sequence, and program, I hope to bring a sense of vibrancy back into the space. While I do not yet know what my final design will entail, I intend to investigate the construction of form and sequence, not just of the now-demolished buildings that once housed the Filipino community, but also those of the asparagus crates that offered sustenance to the hungry. I seek to engage the senses with association, perhaps an auditory moment of a violin being played to honor



the fallen community members who had been lost to racialized violence.<sup>119</sup> Perhaps a space of gathering that will attract people, both of the Filipino community and “outsiders”, who through the act of celebration create the vibrant soundscape described by Demetrio Ente. Perhaps the underside of the California 4 freeway will become adorned in gold, bringing the “City of Gold” nickname back to El Dorado Street. Stacks of asparagus crates could become the fences for a new park. The temporality of the seasons could be reflected in the planting design of a park at the former Rizal Social Club site.

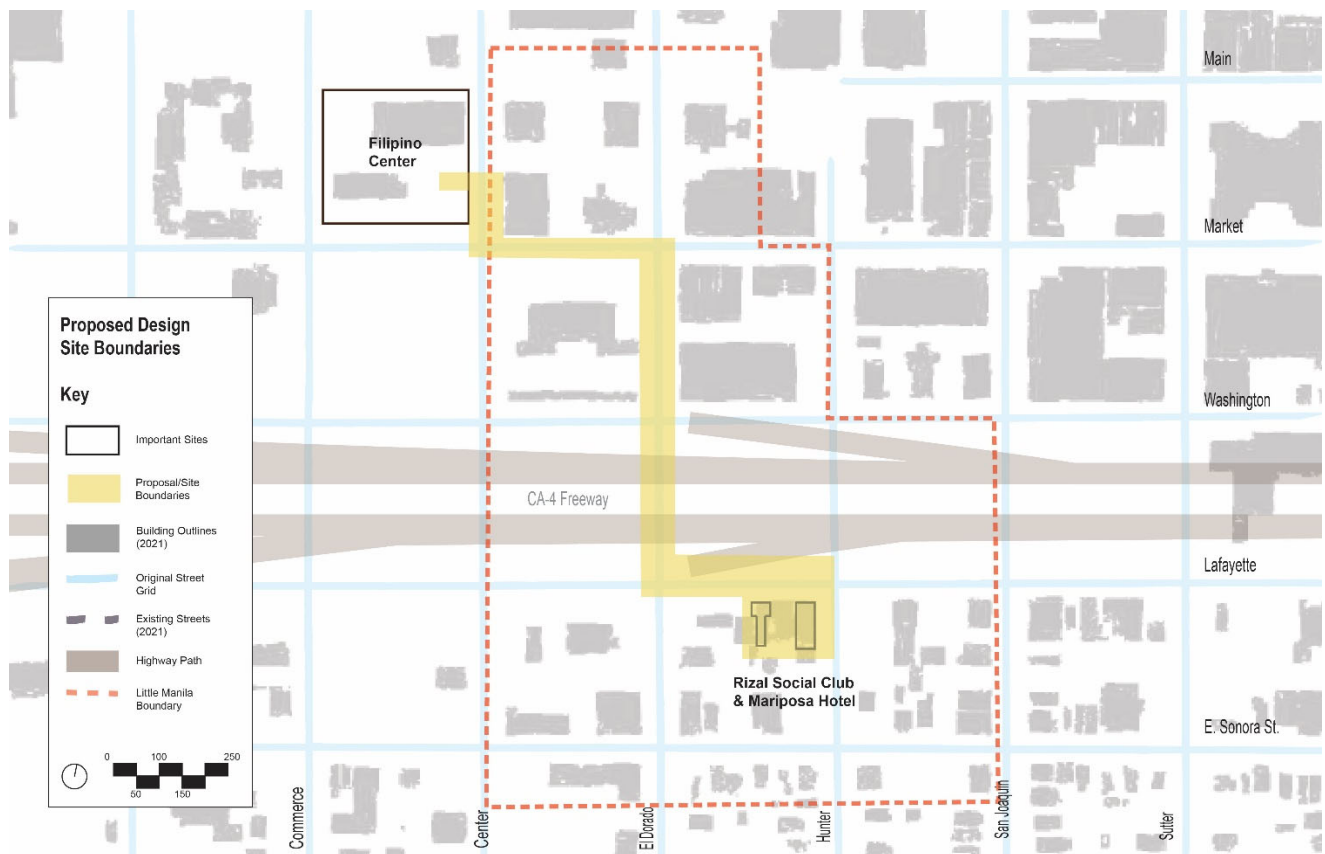


Figure 41. Proposed Design Site Boundaries. Diagram by Author, 2022.

<sup>119</sup> Mabalon, *Little Manila*, 106.

The emergence of these themes through collected stories indicates an importance to members of the community, not only in asserting their own identities, but in how we can communicate their importance to outsiders. The challenge of design becomes the expansion of these themes through offering programming and opportunities for gathering and remembrance. The discussion of “neutrality” in chapter 1 suggests a need for a specific aesthetic. I imagine using the technique of association through the use of plant material for the proposed design. This is not necessarily an endorsement of using agricultural crops, but rather an invitation to explore plant materials that elicit memories, such as the geraniums Beverly would pick, or plant materials evocative of those in Philippine gardens. I imagine some monumentation that further explains the history of Little Manila: perhaps a series of sculptures that, when viewed from the proper point, align to evoke the silhouette of a destroyed but important building.

I believe that the proposed programs should evoke some of those from Little Manila’s history: not only programs for the Filipino community to engage in cultural festivals and events...but also programs that allow organizations to provide outreach for the community as needed. This type of programming, I believe, calls upon previous work that the Filipino Lighthouse Mission undertook in the 1930s. I envision streetscapes adorned with gold and trees, offering shade to the next march of community members fighting for fairer conditions. I imagine the smell of lumpia<sup>120</sup> in the air.

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<sup>120</sup> A delicious fried Filipino treat, much like an egg roll.

As Dawn Mabalon wrote: “The walls and interiors of the remaining buildings of Little Manila—the Iloilo Circle, Daguhoy Lodge, Mariposa Hotel, Rizal Social Club, Emerald Restaurant/Filipino Recreation Center, and the Caballeros de Dimas Alang house—spoke of the history of a community determined to stay and build places to live and thrive in the face of racism.”<sup>121</sup> The possibilities of integrating the collected stories into a designed landscape are endless, and I look forward to rooting the associated stories of Little Manila into the urban landscape.

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<sup>121</sup> Mabalon, *Little Manila is in the Heart*, 16.

## CHAPTER 5. IMPLICATIONS FOR DESIGN & THE PROFESSION



Figure 42. Little Manila Historic Sign, Revisited. Image by Author, 2021.

The Little Manila Historic Marker sits at the edge of one of many significant urban cultural landscapes of the twentieth Century. The history and stories behind this sign cover decades of cultural roots and have the power to inspire legacy. By engaging in story that inspires metaphor, sequence, program, and association, I intend to create a design in Little Manila's public space that expresses not only the existing sign, infrastructure, and space as highlighted in the introduction...but also the history, culture, and people who are embedded in the landscape through story.

While this thesis focuses on Little Manila, I see the method of using storytelling to reclaim an urban community identity as having much larger implications for the profession. The practices of sharing stories, listening, and telling, allow for designers to let the community voice what is important to them. When creating their plans for the future, the City of Stockton has the chance to engage residents at a personal, emotional level. Walter Hood wrote: “Environments should be layered in their physical construction, becoming a collage of all the lives that have been lived in a place.”<sup>122</sup> By engaging with the palimpsest of a space, designers pay homage to history, present, and future. In this way we can share agency with communities as we offer them our experience and services as spatial designers.

Storytelling creates a compelling cultural space for those inside a community as well as outsiders. As Hayden writes, “A large and diverse audience for urban history exists today in American cities—people who will never go to history museums, attend public humanities programs, or read scholarly journals.”<sup>123</sup> Public space has the potential to engage users directly in a place. In allowing many to experience an honorific space, we open the door to welcoming deeper understandings of community history.

Storytelling honors both the eventful and the ordinary, which paint a more complete picture of the importance of space and place to community. Our spaces are important, and our communities are important. The practice of using story to engage with design and place allows for us to thoroughly demonstrate to a community that their existence is valid and vibrant. A design commitment to honoring the past through the

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<sup>122</sup> Hood, *Black Landscapes Matter*, 46.

<sup>123</sup> Hayden, *Place*, 77.

creation of meaningful, interactive spaces also points us toward a hope for the future sharing of community knowledge, heritage, and identity.

When she thinks about the impact of Little Manila, and the lessons she learned from her community growing up, Beverly Engkabo recalled the importance of her work with FANHS to me. The work, she says, is about thinking of the future: “The next generation is watching us...”<sup>124</sup>. When we design, we do so as future ancestors. The growing Filipino American community has deep roots in Little Manila and Stockton. Through design we have the opportunity to move beyond the historic marker, to educate future generations about their history. By creating powerful, emotionally rich honorific spaces we leave room for the sharing of stories; whether they are of the past, or in the process of being created, or are incoming revelations of the future.

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<sup>124</sup> Beverly Engkabo, Phone call with the Author, March 16, 2022.

## LAGNIAPPE. PERSONAL IMPLICATIONS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you for taking the time to read this thesis. As I have alluded to in the final chapter, this project remains a work in progress. I intend to pursue a design project centered in Little Manila after publication, which necessitates a continued relationship with the community in Stockton.

This thesis could not have been completed without the tireless work of my committee, particularly my chair Robyn Reed who has been an incredible guide and mentor throughout the process. My committee members Kevin Benham and Kevin Risk have been incredibly helpful in critiquing diagrams, editing drafts, and asking the right questions.

Many thanks to the wonderful Stockton Chapter of FANHS, particularly Beverly Engkabo, Chris Castro, Aunty Letty Perez, and Terri Torres. I am continuously encouraged by their work and look forward to a continued correspondence.

I would also like to thank my husband, Trent, for hearing me rehearse my defense from the other room, listening to me mutter to myself when I write, disappearing to the studio for long periods of time, and keeping me sane and fed throughout the whole ordeal.

In the introduction to *Little Manila is in the Heart*, Dawn Mabalon wrote: “I hope that this book can inspire succeeding generations of Filipina/o Americans in Stockton, particularly the children and grandchildren of immigrants who arrived after 1965, to begin to see that the materials of everyday life—their grandparents’ stories, documents, photographs, and other belongings—are history, and therefore, priceless.”<sup>125</sup> Mabalon’s

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<sup>125</sup> Mabalon, *Little Manila is in the Heart*, 16.

book has been an incredible source of inspiration for me not just personally, but also as a graduate student who has thought about the intersections of memory, relationship, and place for the past three years.

After my initial visit to the FANHHS museum, Aunty Beverly reached out with a familial connection. I had mentioned that my great grandmother (my Lola<sup>126</sup>), Faustina Beltran, had immigrated to California with her husband Evans Beltran, and five children. As it turns out, Lola had been Aunty Letty's babysitter, and her oldest daughter Winnie had been the church pianist for several years, both before and after attending college. Her relationship to the church, as well as my family's, is what helped to create relationships with other community members.

While this personal connection has helped to drive my own interest in the topic, I believe that an interest in stories can create personal connections regardless of having a pre-existing relationship to a community or not. Through the act of sharing stories, designers build trust and relationships to communities. Incorporating details and memories from these stories into a landscape design evokes a poetic association for the community's storytellers, leaving them with a special honorific connection to the place.

My thesis is for my own education, but I have also conducted this research in the interest of being a good ancestor. I find beauty in the continued cycle of sharing knowledge, whether through family, community, or written material. FANHHS operates with the mission of educating future generations of Filipino Americans (and those who are not Filipino but are interested) on the importance of our history and culture. I hope

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<sup>126</sup> Lola and Lolo are Tagalog words for Grandmother and Grandfather. I grew up referring to my great grandmother as Lola.



that this work contributes to their mission, and that as a landscape designer I can use my own education and talents towards this goal. As knowledge is passed to me, so do I have the duty to continue the cycle.

As such, this project is dedicated to my mother, whom I consider to be an outstanding example of a caring, loving, and thoughtful community member. It is for her sisters. Her father. My brother. My late great Aunt Lily, whose laugh warms my heart. I am forever grateful that I now have a recording of us laughing together.

This project is for Keanu James Mukuno Gill. It is for Ezra Groody. It is for all the forthcoming nieces/nephews/cousins/children of my relatives who share roots in Little Manila. I consider my father to be a person who does not have Filipino roots but has a great respect for history. This project is for him.

While this project is deeply personal, it is also for the “outsiders” ...those who may not identify with the space but wish to learn about it and respect it.

This project is for whomever encounters it.

## APPENDIX A. ADDITIONAL IMAGES



Figure 43. The Unique Map of California. E. Johnstone and Dickman-Jones Company. 1888. "Southern Pacific Company and the State Board of Trade of California. [loc.gov/item/99446216/](https://loc.gov/item/99446216/) (October 2, 2021)





Figure 44. Another Little Manila Historic Marker at the corner of Lafayette and El Dorado Street. The onramp to California 4 can be seen in the background, as can the Mariposa Hotel. Photo by Author, 2021.



Figure 45. Photograph of a drawing of the harbor in Stockton, 1852. The drawing looks south over schools, churches, courthouses, and other buildings. Source: California Historical Society and University of Southern California Libraries. Accessed April 6, 2022.



Figure 46. A Preliminary Collage, working with Palimpsest. Image by Author, 2022.

## **APPENDIX B. A NOTE ON IRB APPROVAL**

As my work included follow up interviews with community members based on the contents of the FANHS Stockton museum, I applied for IRB approval. The IRB Chair reviewed my application and determined that my project did not require a formal review (IRBAM-22-0147).

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## VITA

Alyssa Gill is a Master of Landscape Architecture candidate from the Robert Reich School of Landscape Architecture at Louisiana State University. Zie holds a Bachelor of Arts with Honors in Theatre from Knox College in Galesburg, Illinois.

After graduating from Knox College, zie pursued a career in themed entertainment and events in the greater Los Angeles area. During this time Alyssa developed an interest in landscape design. This interest, along with a continued interest in working with people, led Alyssa to pursue formal design training. The connection between community and place has held a resounding interest for Alyssa, manifesting in several of zir project designs at the Robert Reich School of Landscape Architecture. This thesis merges Alyssa's interests in landscape history, theory, and community engagement with a personal interest in exploring zir ancestor's own stories of immigration to the United States. Alyssa plans to receive zir Master of Landscape Architecture degree in May 2022.