

Having lived in coastal Florida for 30 years, closely observing the Filipinos interact with each other, qualifies me to write down some notes. There are no documents to say when they arrived here. My contention, some professionals, doctors etc. moved to areas like Gainesville, with the University of North Florida, and possibly nurses who moved to Miami. They mentioned the place to friends and relatives, some from the north, Chicago, Detroit, NY and NJ, who in turn visited and stayed. The bulk of the Pinoys arrived here thru the American navy bases, like Mayport, Pensacola, Key West. They first settled in the beaches, and then moved inland with their families. Metro Jacksonville, has some 25,000 Pinoys. Pensacola too. Their families settled and most of the retirees and their families are now familiar landscape. We found some faculty members of Filipino descent in both Tallahassee and Gainesville universities. Some are graduates of the University of the Philippines. Organizing groups of Pinoys is the easiest thing to do. Pinoys started meeting at parks, picnic areas, fishing holes. First, they were all united by their race. As they moved inland, the Pinoys organized other groups, which usually started out as social clubs. The joke we heard, is that Filipinos "multiply by division". If there are 5 Filipinos in one club, as soon as the president's term expired, he either stays and sabotages, or goes out to organize another club. Basically nothing wrong, but, imagine 2 Cavite clubs, 2 Ilocano clubs, etc etc. We are such joiners. When they are employed by city hall or other government offices, other Filipinos soon follow. "Tga saan ka sa atin" "where are you from?" is a common question. For a long time, there was a "divide" between the professionals and the Soon a community council acts to coordinate the various clubs. Then other bigger groupings are the Knights of Rizal, the Phil medical society, the nurses org, the veteran organizations. Nothing wrong with "over organization" until our Caucasian neighbors notice it. Filipinos for the most part get along with their neighbors, co workers, church mates. Last time we counted, there were some 55 organizations active and inactive. We remain umbilically tied to our Phil homeland. We send monies or Balikbayan boxes. So much so there are 6 businesses doing the "box businesses": When it is to their advantage, they join/participate in the political parties. One nearly made it to be city "councillor" of Jacksonville. Filipinos are closely tied to the Catholic churches and schools. Sacred Heart, St. Catherine are just of the many parishes. Filipinos have "dancing feet" we love to party, to dance. It used to be that dances cost \$20 per person, now it is \$50 and above. A gala affair is about \$80. There we show off our dance steps, our ternos ordered from Manila. I see our students competitive in schools. Some graduate with honors. Wedding binds us. We are asked to be padrinos our children, who invariably calls others as "uncles" or "aunties". WE HAVE SOME MUCH HIGH HOPES FOR THE FILIPINO AMERICAN COMMUNITY. a "COMMUNITY CENTER" WILL BE FINISHED SOON, thanks to the COOPERATIVE EFFORT, THE BAYANIHAN SPIRIT IS ALIVE AND WELL. MABUHAY AND FILIPINAS, MABUHAY ANG AMERICA!!!! navy people.

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