

Written by Bobby M. Reyes

Tuesday, 23 June 2009 17:49 - Last Updated Wednesday, 08 September 2010 16:58

On June 23, 2009, the *Los Angeles Times* featured in its front page's "Column One" a poignant story about farm workers who pick table grapes. The very-moving story was written by Mike Anton.

(Today, Sept. 8, 2010, is the 45th anniversary of California's "Grape Strike," which was started by Filipino farm workers.)

It appears, however, that Mr. Anton got the "Grape Strike" history only partly right when he wrote in the 16th paragraph of the story, "In the 1960s, Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers of America turned working and living conditions of grape pickers into a potent symbol of rural poverty. After years of protests, strikes and boycotts, the union's first table-grape contract was signed in Coachella in 1970 . . ."

Actually Filipino farm workers started the most-famous of all grape strikes of all and the Mexican-led United Farm Workers Union finished it.

Mr. Anton forgot to mention the pioneering efforts of Filipino, Chinese and Japanese farm workers, who actually started protesting during the pre-war days the often sub-human conditions of grape farming and picking. The now-infamous Grape Strike of 1965 – as started by Filipinos -- was the historic event that supposedly ended the inhuman treatment of farm workers in California's vineyards and table-grape farms. Nevertheless, Mr. Anton's piece needs to be read by all interested in knowing American history, especially those involving its citizens of Filipino descent. Here is the hyperlink to Mr. Anton's article:

[A valley where hope withers on the vine](#)

URL: <http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-grapes23-2009jun23,0,6892712.story>

QUOTE. Picking grapes in the Coachella Valley is still dirty and dangerous. In the region where the United Farm Workers' first table grape contract was signed, the pay is less than it was 40

The History of California's "Grape Strikes" Is Not Complete Without Mentioning the Sacrifices of the Filipinos

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years ago.

By Mike Anton

June 23, 2009 . . . UNQUOTE.

To the inquisitive mind, here are some links that tell the history of Filipino farm workers in California

especially those who started the now-historic Grape Strike of 1965. The United Farm Workers Union—as led by legendary labor leader Cesar Chavez—joined the strike and took over the negotiations with the vineyard owners because the Filipino workers were not that organized:

[Fight in the Fields - UNITED FARMWORKERS UNION | PBS](#)

Farm workers during 1910 grape harvest in California. ... Most of AWOC's members were Filipinos who had come to the U.S. during the 1930s . . . after Chavez led a 300 mile pilgrimage from Delano to the California state capitol, Sacramento . . . Dolores Huerta holding Huelga (strike) sign during first grape strike . . .

www.pbs.org/itvs/fightfields/cesarchavez1.html

[Delano grape strike - WikiPilipinas: The Hip 'n Free Philippine ...](#)

The Delano grape strike began on September 8, 1965, and lasted more than five years . . .

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mostly Filipino farm workers in
California

Delano, C

, walked off the farms . . . Association led by Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta joined the strike

. . .

www.en.wikipilipinas.org/index.php?title=Delano_grape_strike

[12-05-95\] David Bacon, Death of a Filipino Hero -- Inspired by ...](#)

A modest man who started the grape strike that gave birth to the United ... Anti-miscegenation laws in California and the west prohibited the marriage of Filipino men and white women . . . They led strikes, wrote books, edited newspapers . . .

www.pacificnews.org/jinn/stories/1.03/951205-eulogy.html

This writer informed Mr. Anton today of this commentary about his article. The e-mail, with copy furnished Ms. Teresa Watanabe, another *Los Angeles Times* writer, is reproduced at the User's Comments at the end of this article. # # #

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