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CALIFORNIAN

California History Center & Foundation

A Center at De Anza College for the Study and Preservation of State and Regional History

Imagine Kearny Street

A window into the Filipino community that once existed on 10 blocks of Kearny Street in San Francisco

4th Annual Sip & Paint

De Anza College

CHC Donors & Members Recognition Dinner

Foothill-De Anza Foundation

Social Sciences and Humanities SSH De Anza College

Thursday DECEMBER 4, 2025 5pm -8pm

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SUGGESTED DONATION $20

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Calendar

Fall Quarter

SEPTEMBER

22 First day of Fall Quarter

OCTOBER

13 Indigenous Peoples' Day / Columbus Day

14 "Imagine Kearny Street" Exhibit – through Nov. 14; CHC; T/W/Th 10-4

30 "Manilatown Manang" Documentary + Q&A; CHC; 11:00am – 3:00pm

NOVEMBER

11 Veterans Day holiday – no classes; offices closed

26-28 Thanksgiving Holiday

DECEMBER

4 4th Annual Sip & Paint - Donor and Member Recognition Evening; CHC; 5:00-8:00pm

12 Last day of Fall Quarter

JANUARY

5 First Day of Winter Quarter

19 Martin Luther King Jr. Federal Holiday

SAVE THE DATE

Saturday, March 21, 2026
4:00pm–7:00pm

California History Center & Foundation

A Center for the Study of State and Regional History
De Anza College

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Trianon Building Hours: Tuesday through Thursday 10:00am–4:00pm

In this Issue

At the Center

Californian is published by the California History Center & Foundation. The magazine is mailed to members as a benefit of annual membership in the CHC Foundation.

Your contribution is tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. The value of goods received as a benefit of membership must be deducted from the amount of all contributions claimed as a deduction.

Cover photo: Benny Gallo on Kearny Street, by Chris Fujimoto

Director's Report

Lori Clinchard

Change, Stress, and Creativity

As 2025 draws to an end, I think back to the last days of 1999, when we all had to stretch our minds to even imagine living into the 2000s.I was fortunate to have known and had close relationships with all four of my grandparents, my great-aunts, and with two of my great-grandmothers, both of whom were born in the 1800s. The fact that I got to spend time with and listen to my great-grandmothers until I was 18 years old made even the 1800s seem personal, and not so far away. Now that we are well into the 21st century, however, we are facing so many changes and challenges that even the more recent past is starting to feel very far away. Is this the nostalgia that comes with ageing? It may be. Anyone who lives a long life ends up living through different eras, and they inevitably see much of what was once familiar pass on. Is our current time really so different in nature from all the times of the past in which change has been the only true constant? I don't know. It feels like the shifts we're experiencing today are deep, profound, grand – although they happen little by little. I remember my childhood winter times here in the Bay Area being so much wetter and rainier. The climate is changing in worrisome ways. And the political and social climates are also worrisome, and are becoming more dangerous, especially for those who are targeted and identified as not belonging.

Think of the flourishing of Polish jazz during the Nazi occupation; the vital role of song for the South African anti-apartheid movement; the creation of African American spirituals under slavery; the blues and then jazz during Jim Crow and beyond.

I used to think that we humans would outgrow violence and war, that we would come to see war as not just wrong, but ineffective, harmful, and illogical – as a form of suicide – humans killing themselves. I don't know now if we will get there. And the growth of AI development brings another layer of stress into our lives, even as it promises some wonderful benefits. We do know that the AI data centers are putting a huge stress on our water and electrical resources, and AI technologies are already creating a certain amount of job loss. They are also creating the framework for intensified surveillance of everyone on earth; the panopticon is here.

I am by nature optimistic, but I'm feeling the weight of these changes. There's a heaviness to them, as if they are exerting an actual pull on the fabric of space-time, bending and slowing down time toward the center of the mass. Sensing the moment in these quasi-scientific terms is helpful, actually, and gives me a feeling of optimism. Searching for patterns in nature makes sense, too, given that we are in and of nature, not apart from it.There have been times in our ancient evolutionary past when organisms faced difficult stresses and found new ways to deal with them through relatively sudden and significant changes.For example, 2 ½ billion years ago, when rising oxygen levels from cyanobacterial photosynthesis made the environment toxic to anaerobes, some microbes evolved enzymes to neutralize oxygen, thus leading to the creation of aerobic life. The stress of the moment led to deep, structural change, so that the next generations of organisms could survive and thrive. Another example from just ~540 million years ago, was the evolution of eyes, believed to have begun as light-sensitive patches that helped animals evade detection during a period when animal diversity was exploding. Again, the stresses of the moment led to creative new developments. If we use these natural world movements as models, we can see

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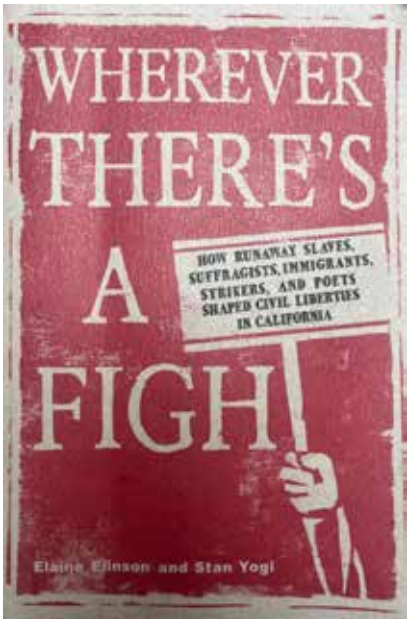
Audrey Edna Butcher Civil Liberties Education Initiative

The Right to Protest and Dissent and the Future of Democracy

by Tom Izu

Tom Izu



In 1923, near the Port of Los Angeles, author and activist Upton Sinclair joined striking maritime workers to give a speech in support of their efforts to win their right to unionize and improve their work conditions at the docks. He decided to begin his speech by reciting the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution in support of the workers' right to free speech and assembly. However, only a few sentence into his recitation, a police captain told him to "cut out that Constitution stuff," arrested him and hauled the future Pulitzer Prize winning author off to jail. Upon his release, Sinclair went on to write a play called *Singing Jailbirds* and helped initiate the formation of the American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California.

How could the police arrest such a famous Californian as Upton Sinclair for something as innocent as attempting to recite the Bill of Rights? Because fear and hate mongering turned into scapegoating can trump any efforts to fight for and expand democracy when civil liberties and rights are not defended and made actionable by enough people. It is important to note that the above incident took place during the post-World War I "Red Scare," when many Eastern European immigrant laborers were labeled as potential anarchists, socialists, or communists. The International Workers of the World (IWW) was leading the dock workers strike and had been smeared for their belief that workers of all backgrounds regardless of race, country of origin, and status as immigrants, could join their "one big union." Prior to Sinclair's attempted recitation, hundreds of strikers had been beaten and jailed by police for simply trying to hold public meetings. Ku Klux Klan members aided the police in their violent attacks and jailings because fighting the IWW resonated deeply with their white supremacist views that did not include the concept of equality under the law.

Sinclair and the strikers' stories come from the book, *Wherever There's a Fight: How Runaway Slaves, Suffragists, Immigrants, Strikers, and Poets Shaped Civil Liberties in California* by Elaine Elinson and Stan Yogi. This book, along with an accompanying exhibit, was used by California History Center to develop the work of the Audrey Edna Butcher Civil Liberties Education Initiative (AEBCLEI) when it was first formed at the end of 2014. The book helped place the struggle to defend and expand civil liberties in the context of California history.

Over the ten years since then, through the AEBCLEI, CHC explored new stories and ways to teach and promote civil liberties concepts using California history. We held all sorts of programs, exhibits, and campus activities working with different student groups, campus departments and programs, utilizing oral history work, curriculum development and campus art and culture projects. While not powerful and mighty, the CHC and the AEBCLEI had an influence on campus and local community life for the better. Through all of this, two main points remain with me that continue to help me in my work:

- Civil Liberties and Civil Rights are not self-enforcing and require action. They need to be defended and exercised or they will cease to be meaningful or even exist making democracy impossible. Protest and dissent are a part of this process.
- These rights also need to be interpreted and expanded by each generation. Communities of color and marginalized peoples of all kinds have been at the forefront of this effort not only to protect our rights, but to expand them for all. Development and change are a part of this process.

Now, at this present moment, I am left speechless as to how the most basic, fundamental civil liberties and rights are being ignored and violated by those in power and that the ability to have a democratic society is itself in the balance.

We are truly living in an unprecedented period in our

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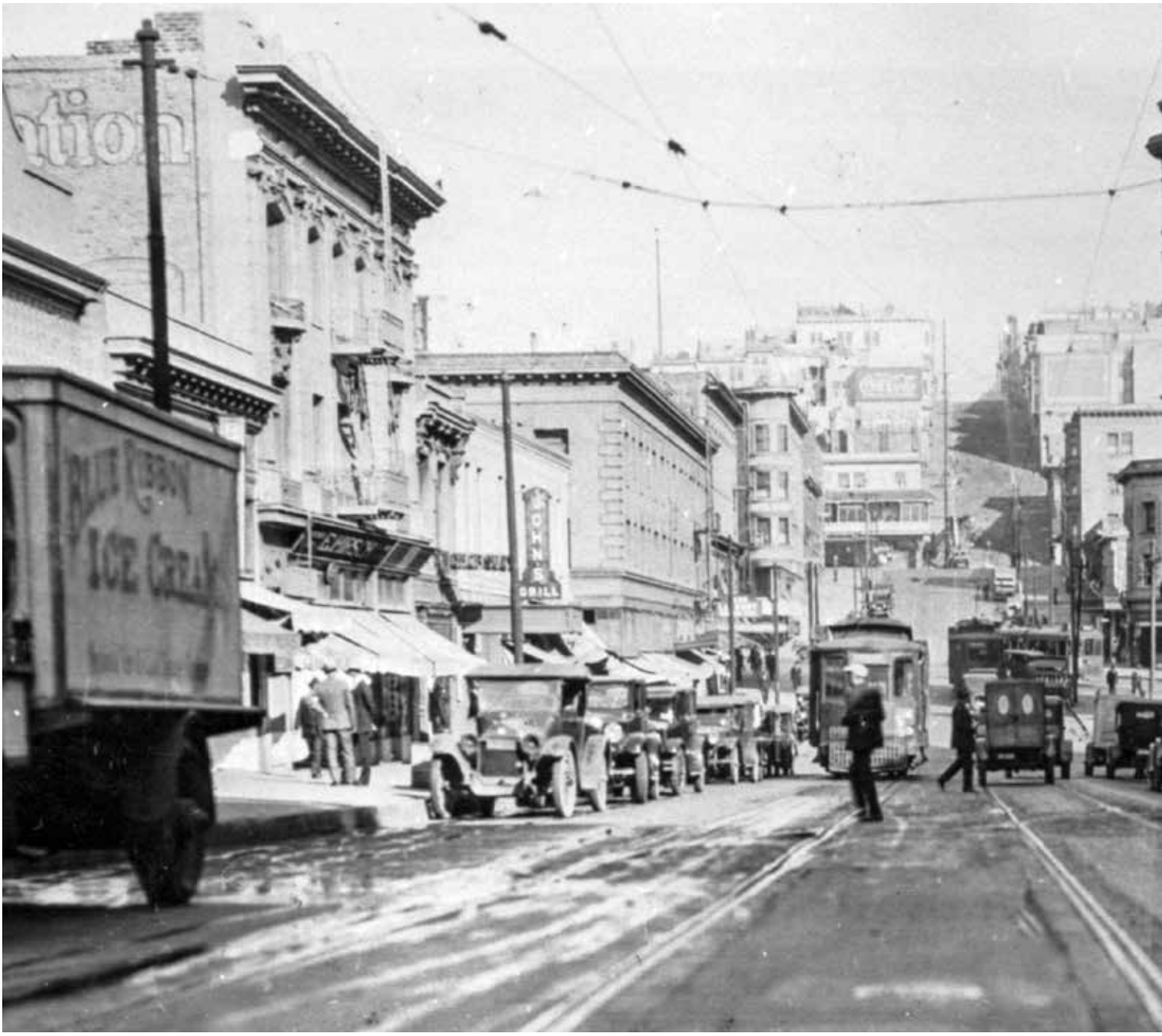
"Equal rights, fair play, justice, are all like the air: we all have it, or none of us has it. That is the truth of it."

– Maya Angelou

Imagine Kearny Street

by Sabrina Oliveros



Once, if Filipinos said "Kearny Street," they meant the Filipino community that flourished from the 1920s through 1960s in downtown San Francisco.

This community was centered on Kearny, one of the city's oldest commercial corridors. Its border, to the north, was the corner of Pacific and Columbus Avenues, where the flatiron Sentinel Building rose and the famed Barbary Coast district began. It extended south towards Market Street, passing Portsmouth Square, and reached its tip at Pine Street, a stone's throw from Old Saint Mary's Church. The main artery of Chinatown, Grant Avenue, bustled just a block west.

Around this 10-block stretch, Filipinos lived in hotels offering affordable single-occupancy rooms. They opened businesses that included restaurants, nightclubs, and clothing stores. They cultivated community centers out of their own pool halls, barbershops, and cafes. The names of such establishments—Luzon, New Luneta, Sampaguita, Bataan, Baguio, Benny's, Tino's, Lucky M—might not have resonated with passersby the way the celebrated landmarks that still line Kearny Street do. But, for a pioneering immigrant generation, they were markers of home.

Estella Habal, a longtime community activist and scholar, said it best: "Manilatown cannot be found on any maps of San Francisco, although it is a very real place."[1]

Indeed, the neighborhood around Kearny Street was real, though it did not receive wider attention, nor the name Manilatown, until 1968. That year marked the beginning of a nine-year struggle to save the International Hotel.

Located at 848 Kearny, the "I-Hotel" was a community cornerstone. At the time, it was the last distinctly Filipino establishment in the area. The majority of its multiethnic residents were elderly immigrants from the Philippines; so were entrepreneurs who rented storefronts on its ground floor. Many had lived on Kearny Street for decades.

In 1968, when San Francisco was exploding in a frenzy of "urban renewal," the I-Hotel's owners, Milton Meyer and Company, slated the building for demolition. The company intended to replace it with a parking lot for the Transamerica Pyramid being built two blocks away. As a passionate anti-evic-

Around this 10-block stretch, Filipinos lived in hotels offering affordable single-occupancy rooms. They opened businesses that included restaurants, nightclubs, and clothing stores.

View to north of Kearny Street from Washington Street, 1926. The International Hotel is on the right. Credit: Western Neighborhoods Project/ OpenSFHistory.

[1] Estella Habal, *San Francisco's International Hotel: Mobilizing the Filipino American Community in the Anti-Eviction Movement* (Temple University, 2007), 9.

tion movement started to grow around the I-Hotel, the tenant leader and poet Joaquin Legaspi coined the name "Manilatown" to give the Kearny Street neighborhood a sense of belonging and identity.[2]

The fight for the I-Hotel infamously culminated on August 3 and 4, 1977. In the dead of night and early morning, 400 law enforcement officers broke through lines of 2,000 protestors and physical barricades to forcibly evict 55 tenants who hoped to stay in their homes. This midnight eviction—which City Sheriff Richard Hongisto called "one of the most distasteful things I've had to do"—made national headlines.[3] In San Francisco and beyond, the I-Hotel became a flashpoint against the inequities of urban redevelopment and a landmark in the fight for affordable housing. But the emptied building, which had stood on that site since 1874, was demolished in 1979.

In San Francisco and beyond, the I-Hotel became a flashpoint against the inequities of urban redevelopment and a landmark in the fight for affordable housing.

For the next two decades, a gaping hole at the southeast corner of Kearny and Jackson streets seemed to be the last vestige of Manilatown.

But there would be—as there had always been—more to the stories of the Filipino community on Kearny Street.

Waves of Immigration

Today, 4.6 million people in the United States identify as Filipino, with 38% living in California. The San Francisco Bay Area has the second-largest concentration of Filipinos in the country, with about 290,000 living in the region.[4] An estimated 44,250 live in San Francisco and comprise just over five percent of the city's residents.[5]

Several periods of immigration helped shape this still-growing demographic. The earliest era spanned from 1565 to 1898, when people from the Philippines were documented to have lived or worked in parts of California, Louisiana, Washington, Alaska, and Hawaii.[6] Records of "Manila Men" suggest the presence of Filipinos around San Francisco as crew members of galleons, whalers, and other merchant vessels—and even as miners in Mariposa County seeking gold in 1850.[7]

The first major wave of Filipino immigration occurred from 1906 to 1934, soon after the United States seized control of the Philippines. This period was bookmarked by the establishment of the American colonial government and its passage, over 30 years later, of a law promising the archipelago's independence. During this period, Filipinos bore the status of "nationals"—a classification of second-class citizenship that nonetheless gave them more mobility than the status of "aliens."

Three broad categories characterize, but not comprise, this generation. There were students, called *pensionados*, whose education was subsidized by the colonial government and who were expected to return to the Philippines and serve in government posts. There were also self-supporting students who pursued the promises of a democratic American education, as well as youths who aimed for lives in America by enlisting in the U.S. Navy. The largest group was of laborers—mostly young, single, and male, with no more than an eighth-grade education. Initially recruited to work on Hawaiian sugar and pineapple plantations, they later moved to the mainland and cycled through myriad industries of the West Coast.[8] The 1930 Census said there were 45,208 Filipinos across the 48 mainland states; 30,470 were in California.[9]

While a steady stream of immigrants came through the 1930s and 1940s, the second major wave of immigrants ar-

2 Habal, *San Francisco's International Hotel,* 38.

3 "Police Evict Elderly Tenants of San Francisco Hotel," *The New York Times*, August 5, 1977, https://www.nytimes.com/1977/08/05/archives/police-evict-elderly-tenants-of-san-francisco-hotel.html.

4 "Facts About Filipinos in the U.S.," Pew Research Center, accessed 10 October 2025, https://www.pewresearch.org/race-and-ethnicity/fact-sheet/asian-americans-filipinos-in-the-u-s.

5 "Filipino Population in San Francisco County, CA by City: 2025 Ranking & Insights," Neilsberg, accessed 10 October 2025, https://www.neilsberg.com/insights/lists/filipino-population-in-san-francisco-county-ca-by-city/.

6 Fred Cordova, *Filipinos: Forgotten Asian Americans* (Demonstration Project for Asian Americans, 1983), 9-10

7 Floro L. Mercene, *Manila Men in the New World: Filipino Migration to Mexico and the Americas from the Sixteenth Century* (The University of the Philippines Press, 2007), 21, 47-49, 76-79.

8 Cordova, *Filipinos: Forgotten Asian Americans*, 14-16, 82-85.

9 U.S. Census Bureau, 1930 Census: Volume II Chapter 2: Color or Race, Nativity and Percentage, Tables 1 and 11. https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1930/population-volume-2/16440598v2ch03.pdf

The sign for the Philippine Pool and Billiard Parlor peeks out above the parked car in this photo from 1934. Credit: San Francisco Public Library/San Francisco History Center.

rived after World War II. This generation was mainly composed of military servicemen who had fought for the U.S. Armed Forces in the Far East, their families, and an increased number of white-collar workers.

A third wave surged following the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965. Removing immigration quotas by national origin, this law enabled even more families and professionals to move to the United States. From this point, the Filipino immigrant community, which numbered 105,000 in 1960, would swell into its numbers today. [10]

Students, sailors, and laborers who made a life in San Francisco through the Great Earthquake and Fire, the Great Depression, and two World Wars are among those who first made Kearny Street home. The community today refers to them as members of the *manong* generation—*manong* being a respectful term for a male elder, or older brother.

First Arrivals

For this older generation of Filipinos, San Francisco was a major port of arrival. Kearny Street, within a mile of the old wharves, was a prime destination for finding first residences, connections, and jobs.

Often, the work available was seasonal and migratory. Whether they came seeking livelihood, education, or adventure, most Filipinos supported themselves by working in farms along the West Coast, as well as lumber camps in Washington and salmon canneries in Alaska. Many *manongs* stayed in hotels on or near Kearny Street as they moved through San Francisco. Others served in the merchant marines or U.S. Navy, always poised to go to sea. The hotels were also a home for them. In turn, many Filipinos who lived in the city rented around Kearny Street as they took jobs downtown as bellhops, chauffeurs, cleaners, cooks, and servers.

Staying in the city was a welcome opportunity. Seasonal work as domestic, hotel, or restaurant staff was less punishing than jobs in remote and rural areas. Moreover, it was a reprieve from cramped and rundown barracks-style housing in the field. As a relative luxury, residential hotels around Kearny offered some privacy—even if kitchens, bathrooms, and sometimes rooms had to be shared.[11]

The International Hotel, in particular, had been originally built for space and comfort. It opened on Jackson and Columbus in 1854 before moving to its Kearny Street location in 1873. The three-story establishment was described as

Whether they came seeking livelihood, education, or adventure, most Filipinos supported themselves by working in farms along the West Coast, as well as lumber camps in Washington and salmon canneries in Alaska.

[10] "Filipino Immigrants in the United States," Migration Policy Institute, accessed 10 October 2025, https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/filipino-immigrants-united-states-2013.

[11] Habal, San Francisco's International Hotel, 10-11.

Filipinos on Kearny Street outside the Bataan Lunch restaurant, ca. 1945.

Eduardo Tacdol (left) in his International Hotel room with Jose Catubig.

"first-class in all of its appointments" and "so built that the sun shines into every room during the day."[12] The handsome brick structure, like most of downtown, was destroyed in the Great Fire and Earthquake of 1906.

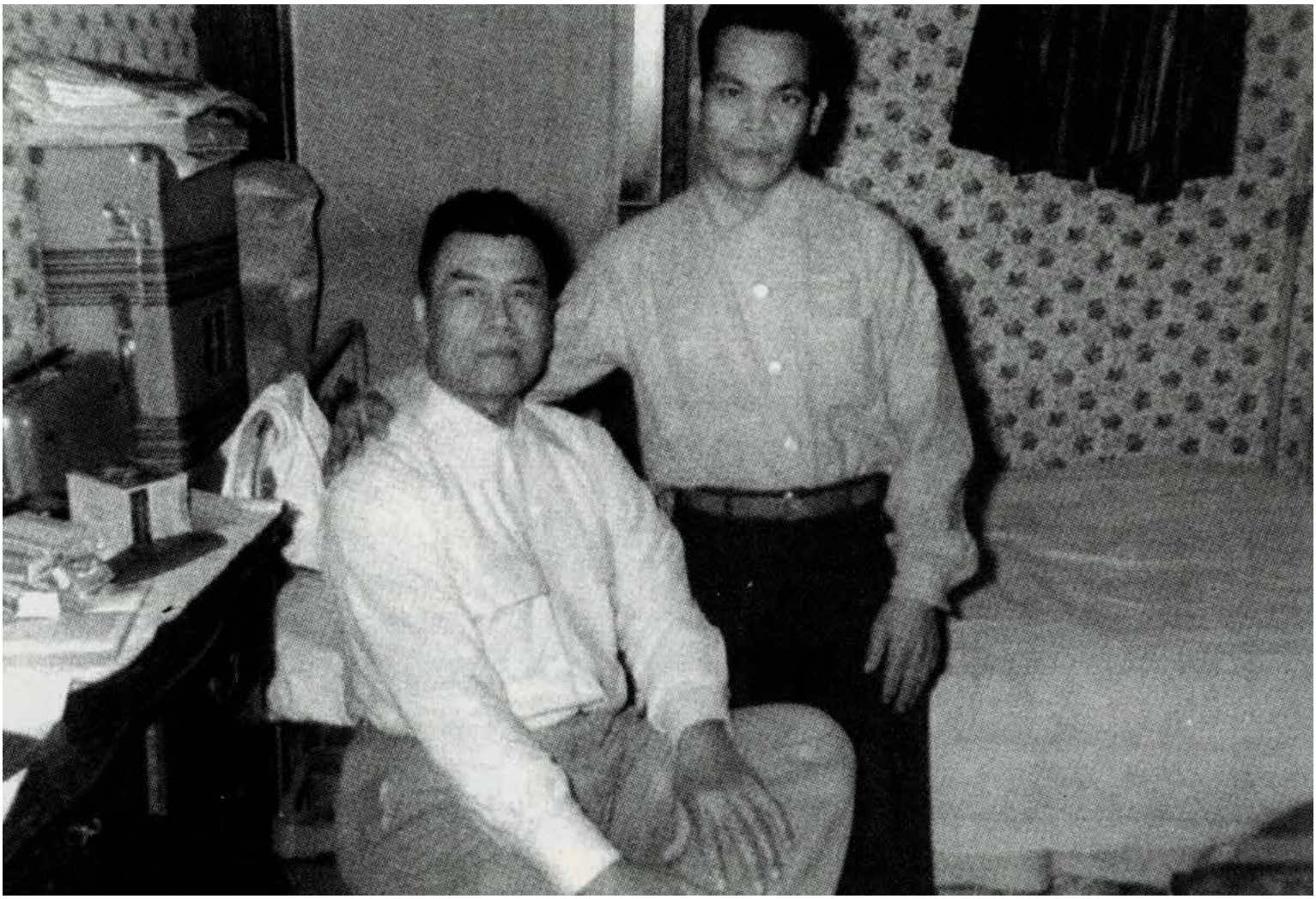
A reconstructed International Hotel reopened on the same site in 1907, taking up nearly two-thirds of the city block. It soon became the residence of choice for Japanese officers serving merchant and navy ships in port.[13] Suggesting the hotel's changing fortunes, newspaper advertisements in January 1908 noted that regular room rates started at 50 cents.[14] In May 1917, prices started at 25 cents a day (around $6.00 in 2025 according to the Consumer Price Index).[15] By 1930, the

[12] Frederick H. Hackett, *The Industries of San Francisco* (Payot, Upham, & Co., 1884), 161, https://ia801300.us.archive.org/15/items/industriesofsanf1884sanf/industriesofsanf1884sanf.pdf.

[13] Luis Salvador Syquia, Jr., *National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form for the International Hotel* (June 15, 1977). https://npgallery.nps.gov/GetAsset/814ea7d4-5af4-43d6-a10c-08dd03a93e79.

[14] *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 10, 1908, 3.

[15] *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 13, 1917, 33.



rate had changed to $2.00 a week (about $38.00 today).[16]

Given its proximity to Chinatown, the hotel's Asian demographic gradually expanded. Classified ads in the *San Francisco Chronicle* from the 1910s hint at the future of Manilatown:

> *"Two young Filipinos wish positions of any kind, with experience in housework, city or country: speak English well. Please write to International Hotel, 848 Kearny Street, San Francisco." (November 12, 1913)*
>
> *"Filipino boy just out of Navy wants position as schoolboy or pantryman. Address International Hotel, 848 Kearny St., room 219." (October 10, 1915)*
>
> *"Expert Filipino auto mechanic and driver or butler in private family would like position in city or country. Address: 848 Kearny International Hotel." (March 2, 1916)*

Though prominent and well-documented, the International Hotel was only one of 37 hotels around Kearny Street that Filipinos stayed at through the 1930s. In the book *San Francisco's International Hotel: Mobilizing the Filipino American Community in the Anti-Eviction Movement*, Habal provides insight into why Filipinos clustered in this area:

> *Since Filipinos were racially categorized as Asians, white Americans assumed that Filipinos would be housed adjacent to the Chinese…. Filipinos could rent rooms in the hotels as long as they stayed within an area bounded by Columbus Avenue to the north and California Street to the south. After World War II, the most rigid segregation began to loosen, and the line extended even farther south towards Market Street. Until then, Columbus Avenue had been the major dividing line: Beyond that boundary, no Filipino could rent a room.* [17]

Moreover:

> *When Filipinos attempted to find housing outside the Chinatown area, they were often told that apartments had already been rented, or they were simply and flatly turned down. Filipinos were restricted from the 'more respectable' quarters of the surrounding white communities…. The Kearny Street area was a safe haven for Filipinos, but only a few blocks away, if a Filipino was seen in the company of a white woman, he could be lynched. Manilatown became a home partly as an act of survival and partly as an act of defiance.*[18]

Even as discrimination eased, only certain hotels regularly accepted Filipinos. These establishments included the Yolanda, Squire, Palm, Bell, and St. Paul, all located within the 400-900 blocks of Kearny.

The migratory nature of their Filipino residents, and the modest sizes of most hotels, make it difficult to determine the population of Manilatown in its heyday. A 1930 sociological study put the numbers of Filipinos in the whole San Francisco Bay Area at 2,500 during the summer and 30,000 in the winter.[19] Based on oral histories conducted with *manongs*, Habal estimates that the 1920s and 1930s could have seen as many as 10,000 transient Filipinos coalescing around Kearny Street. "It is not a far cry to think that this Filipino migratory population may have bunked together in a room in residential hotels," she notes. "How do you count those?"[20]

Based on oral histories conducted with *manongs*, Habal estimates that the 1920s and 1930s could have seen as many as 10,000 transient Filipinos coalescing around Kearny Street.

Sharing a single room was certainly a practice among later International Hotel residents—especially those who were eventually joined by family and friends from the Philippines.

Eduardo Tacdol (1900-1992) served as a sergeant in the U.S. Army during World War II and survived the Bataan Death March. Obtaining American citizenship shortly after the war, he moved to the United States in April 1953 and stayed at the I-Hotel. Tacdol found work with the postal service and spent weekends in his room, typing up petitions and citizen application forms, free of charge, for Filipino "old-timers" in the building.

Two of his sons, Florenio and Alfonso, joined him there after two years. The three made a home out of Tacdol's small room, with Florenio remembering the "smell of the hotel, the crowded kitchen, and the Filipino restaurants downstairs." With more of their family arriving, the Tacdols eventually moved to the Mission District. Great-granddaughter Andrea remarked decades later: "The I-Hotel was the beginning of a chain of Filipino Americans helping each other in their new home." [21]

A Place to Feel at Home

While *manongs* lived in hotels around Kearny Street, they grew their community in other places they established along it.

The earliest Filipino establishments predated Manilatown's boom: Benny's Cigar Store opened on Kearny and Clay in 1910 and the Santa Maria restaurant opened on Jackson

[16] *National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form*.

[17] Habal, *San Francisco's International Hotel*, 10.

[18] Habal, *San Francisco's International Hotel*, 18-19.

[19] Bruno Lasker, *Filipino Immigration to the United States and to Hawaii* (Arno Press, 1931), 21.

[20] Estella Habal and Jeannette Lazam, "Disputing 'Fact-Checking History of San Francisco's Manilatown,'" *Positively Filipino*, accessed October 11, 2025, https://www.positivelyfilipino.com/magazine/disputing-fact-checking-history-of-san-franciscos-manilatown.

[21] Andrea Tacdol, "Home," *Coming Home to Manilatown: International Hotel 25th Eviction Anniversary Commemoratio*, 2002.

Scenes from the billiard parlors of Kearny Street in the 1970s.

near Kearny by 1918.[22] Over the next decades, a long line of businesses serving the community's needs opened. These included cafes, clothing stores, groceries, barber shops, gambling rooms, and pool halls.

While restaurants eased the hunger for familiar cuisine, the sight of their names on the sidewalks might have also nourished souls homesick or nostalgic for the Philippines. The Luzon Restaurant was named after the largest island in the archipelago; Baguio, after a major city in a province from which many immigrants trace their journeys; Sampaguita, after a popular flower used in garlands signaling honor or veneration. New Luneta hearkened to a famous park in Manila with a deep revolutionary history. Multiple establishments named Bataan honored the province where Filipinos and Americans fought side by side during World War II.

It was Manilatown's barber shops and pool halls, however, that served as social and information centers. Under a razor or over a cue stick, *manongs* shared job opportunities, exchanged stories, and tracked relatives, friends, and old townmates. The 1930 San Francisco City Directory listed the Manila Pool and Billiard Parlor at 606 Jackson—the same address held by the Filipino Employment Agency.[23] Around the corner, at 829 Kearny, the Philippine Pool and Billiard Hall also advertised itself as a "quality shaving parlor."[24]

These communal spaces were especially important since early Manilatown was a bachelor society. Laws that restricted the immigration of women from the Philippines had created a stark gender imbalance: through the 1930s, Filipinos in California outnumbered Filipinas 14 to 1.[25] The itinerant nature of seasonal work—and California's laws prohibiting interracial marriages—further hindered many *manongs* from pursuing romantic relationships and family lives. There were exceptions in *manongs* who married women of other ethnicities or races, including white women in states without anti-miscegenation laws; those who met Filipinas in the slowly growing immigrant community; and those whose partners joined them from the Philippines. Yet, by and large, Kearny Street remained a community of bachelors. Barber shops and pool halls—or the nearby Barbary Coast—were where the men went for camaraderie and companionship.

To these general patterns, Ben Abarca's story illustrates both an exception and a rule. Abarca was born in Se-

[22] *National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form*.

[23] *San Francisco City Directory* (R.L. Polk & Co., 1930), 1043 and 1838.

[24] *Police and Peace Officers' Journal of the State of California* (San Francisco Police Department, 1929), 53. https://archive.org/details/policepeaceoffic19341935sanf/page/52/mode/2up

[25] Ronald Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans* (Penguin Books, 1989), 340.

attle in 1932 to a *manong* who arrived on the mainland from Hawaii in 1919 and a Dust Bowl settler from Oklahoma. When he was seven years old, the Abarcas moved to San Francisco. Their first home was above a drugstore on Stockton and Broadway.

Selling copies of the *San Francisco Call-Bulletin* along Kearny, the young Abarca had the Filipino shop owners treating him to food, ice cream, and soda pop. The men, he said, regarded him like family "because many of the people didn't have much family in the United States." Their kindness and generosity extended to anyone they considered one of their own. "There was this one time when a young fellow was broke and down on his luck," he recounted. "He walked into the pool hall and Small Montana [a former Filipino featherweight boxing champion] put a hat on the table and said, 'Hey you boys, put some money here, we will help this guy out.' And just like that, a collection was started." [26]

As Kearny Street's pool halls and barber shops opened and closed through the decades, two became enduring institutions.

Tino's Barber Shop, at 840 Kearny right next to the International Hotel, operated into the 1970s. Its owner, Faustino Regino, came to San Francisco in 1929, followed by his three brothers. He trained as a barber, worked as a utility man during World War II, and served as an interpreter for the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service. His ability to speak several Filipino languages, including Ilokano and Tagalog, enabled him to cultivate relationships with his clientele. *Manongs* called him the Mayor of Kearny Street.[27]

The Lucky M Pool Hall across the way was another longstanding landmark. The site had been a clothing store until around 1930, when a succession of Filipino owners transformed and maintained it as a pool hall. Dozens of images from the 1970s—taken as photographers inspired by the anti-eviction movement documented the lives of *manongs*—show the billiards tables crowded by elderly Filipino and Chinese men, their figures punctuated by the cigars, fedoras, and newspapers they carried.

A *manong* interviewed in 1976 reminisced: "That pool hall has a history all the way up to now. The Filipino boys all know each other. We are drawn together. We all come from the same place. We feel at home." [28]

Several community businesses and services had their storefront at 840 Kearny Street.

A Vibrant Nightlife

Ben Abarca's family did not stay near Kearny Street for long. They moved to the Fillmore District after a few years, joining an increasing number of Filipino families. Like the South of Market, this neighborhood, with its larger apartments and more ethnically diverse makeup, had seen a steady Filipino presence since the 1920s. As many as 230 Filipino families lived in the Fillmore during the 1940s, partly drawn by the low costs of houses that interned Japanese Americans had been forced to leave.[29] After World War II, newer immigrants and growing families continued to move to different neighborhoods, like the Western Addition and Richmond District, as well as to Daly City and other suburbs, especially as discriminatory housing practices eased.

While the city around it changed, life on Kearny Street continued. Abarca himself returned there as a young veteran of the Korean War, living at the Yolanda Hotel on Kearny and California.

His fond memories of the community multiplied in the 1950s as he spent weekends in the company of *manongs*, who went out for drinks bought by the winners of their card and pool games. "[An] impromptu band would play and everybody would begin to dance," he recalled. "The musicians would share their instruments with different people in the audience and everybody would take turns singing. Filipinos really love to dance." [30]

That residents of Manilatown embraced music was no surprise: many in the 1930s through 1960s formed

Tino's Barber Shop, at 840 Kearny right next to the International Hotel, operated into the 1970s. Its owner, Faustino Regino, came to San Francisco in 1929, followed by his three brothers.

[26] Dioscoro Recio, "Manilatown Memories," *Coming Home to Manilatown* (Commemorative Issue), 2002.

[27] Filipino American National Historical Society, Manilatown Heritage Foundation, and Pin@y Educational Partnerships, *Filipinos in San Francisco* (Arcadia Publishing, 2011), 54.

[28] *National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form*.

[29] James Sobredo and Fred Basconcillo, "Fillmore Filipinos," accessed October 20, 2025, https://www.foundsf.org/Fillmore_filipinos.

[30] Recio, "Manilatown Memories."

The Kearny Street Workshop at 854 Kearny. Its wooden front door, with a tiger logo synonymous with the fight for the International Hotel, is a prized artifact preserved by the Manilatown Heritage Foundation. Note the sign for closed Club Mandalay propped up beside it.

recreational bands all throughout the West Coast while also finding employment as musicians. As *manongs* set up bands in halls and hotels around Kearny Street—with barbers at Tino's playing the fiddle and guitar between haircuts[31]—celebrated nightclubs lit up nearby.

In Chinatown, the glitzy destinations were headlined by the Forbidden City, the Skyroom, and Club Shanghai. These Chinese-owned venues capitalized on exoticism to cater to a mostly white clientele, but they also helped shattered stereotypes of Asian Americans in the arts and enabled them to make inroads in popular entertainment. Several Filipinos performed at these venues, usually taking Chinese-sounding stage names to gain employment. They included the Stockton-born Tony Lagrimas, who became the lead male dancer at Forbidden City after starting performances there in the 1940s. He took on the surname Wing, as did his sister, Arlene, who joined him there in 1958.[32] Primo Villacruz, dubbed the "Asian Sinatra," used the name Primo Kim as he sang at the Forbidden City and Dragon Lady.[33]

Offstage, Filipinos continued to keep venues around North Beach and the Barbary Coast bustling. Recalling establishments like Finocchio's, Vanessi's, New Joe's, the Blue Fox, and Golden Pheasant, Abarca noted, "Almost every well-known restaurant in the city had Filipino bus boys, dishwashers, janitors—as well as chefs, bar and restaurant managers."

Filipinos also continued to carve out their own spaces for art and entertainment. Club Mandalay, at 720 Washington, then at 832 Kearny, was a community hotspot. It was one of the few early venues, outside of Chinatown, where Filipinos performed in the Western style.

The Mabuhay Gardens started as a restaurant offering Filipino cuisine on the ground floor of the International Hotel. Opened in 1969, it represented owner Ness Aquino's attempt to revitalize Kearny Street as a cultural and business hub for the Filipino community.[34] The Mabuhay Gardens then moved nearby to 435 Broadway, where, as a supper club, it hosted the era's most popular celebrities from the Philippines.[35] Its fame and fortune changed in 1976, when Aquino agreed to have the music promoter and producer Dirk Dirksen book punk and new wave bands at the venue. Artists like Metallica, The Ramones, and The Dead Kennedys would perform at Mabuhay Gardens until it closed in 1987.[36]

The International Hotel itself became home to Enrico Banducci's hungry i. This legendary club, short for hungry id or hungry intellectual, originally opened in the nearby Sentinel Building. It moved to the hotel basement in 1954 and used an entrance facing Jackson Street. Over the next 14 years, the hungry i hosted new artists breaking ground in their careers: Nina Simone, Johnny Mathis, the Kingston Trio, and Barbra Streisand, to name a few.

Today, the image of such world-famous artists packing a basement venue, as a distinct world of *manongs* revolved around the three-story building above them, may only make for a curious contrast. In the 1960s, however, the difference proved pivotal. The hungry i's success, in an area vibrant with nightlife, helped fuel the view among developers that the International Hotel stood on "a property too valuable for the purpose it was serving."[37]

In June 1968, the owners of the International Hotel, Milton Meyer and Company, applied for a permit to demolish the building. Of the 182 residents who faced eviction, approxi-

[31] Herb Caen, *San Francisco Chronicle*, November 10, 1968, 129.

[32] Peter Janero, "Arlene Lagrimas: Dark, Forbidden City 'Showgirl,' Beautician," *Positively Filipino*, accessed October 20, 2025, https://www.positivelyfilipino.com/magazine/filipino-american-trailblazers.

[33] *Filipinos in San Francisco*, 68.

[34] Habal, *San Francisco's International Hotel*, 35, 51.

[35] *Filipinos in San Francisco*, 72.

[36] Jessica Kariisa, Ericka Cruz Gueverra, Gabriel Glueck, and Alan Montecillo, "The Rebirth of Mabuhay Gardens, SF's Legendary Punk Venue," KQED News, accessed October 22, 2025, https://www.kqed.org/news/12058112/the-rebirth-of-mabuhay-gardens-sfs-legendary-punk-venue.

[37] *National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form*.

The name of this manang *is unconfirmed—but Manilatown Heritage Foundation celebrates her joy captured on camera, ca. 1977.*

Ted Daluyot in his room at the St. Paul Hotel, formerly on 935 Kearny Street.

mately one-third left after receiving the first notice to leave.[38] The hungry i promptly relocated to the newly rehabilitated Ghirardelli Square in Fisherman's Wharf. The remaining residents and businesses responded differently.

The Fight for the I-Hotel

The fight to save the International Hotel, and the last remaining block of Manilatown, lasted for nine years. It raged alongside a larger upheaval throughout San Francisco, as the City remade longstanding working-class areas in the name of removing "urban blight." Justin Herman, the executive director of the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency from 1959 to 1971, infamously justified this campaign of "urban renewal" in the historically Black and brown Western Addition neighborhood, saying "This land is too valuable to permit poor people to park on it."[39]

As such, the fight for the I-Hotel resonated beyond Filipino American circles. It gathered a broad coalition of supporters that included labor unions, civil rights and religious groups, and Asian American community organizations. By February 1977, it had become the city's *cause célèbre*. The *San Francisco Chronicle* reported:

> *The elderly Asian tenants who face eviction from their $50-a-month rooms have gripped the sympathies of some Bay Area liberals and activists like nothing since the Vietnam War. Their battle—drawn as the fight between the "little guy" and a faceless, multinational corporation—has protest crowds as high as 5,000, the largest demonstrations since the anti-war movement of the late '60s.*
>
> *In San Francisco, where entire blocks of Redevelopment-area land stand vacant in the Fillmore and South of Market, the International Hotel is a symbol. A symbol of demolished low-rent housing; rising rents; and neglected old people. And, possibly, the symbol of victory. If the hotel survives as a home for the poor, some supporters hope the city will begin to confront the urban ills they believe the International Hotel symbolizes.*[40]

Throughout it all, *manongs* remained at the heart of the fight. Long invisible to the broader population, they stepped into public view, revealing themselves as shrewd and fearless

[38] Habal, *San Francisco's International Hotel*, 33-34.

[39] San Francisco City and County Board of Supervisors, *Resolution Urging the Recreation and Parks Commission to Remove the Name of Justin Herman from the Plaza on The Embarcadero*, 354-17 (2017). https://sfbos.org/sites/default/files/r0354-17.pdf.

[40] Katy Butler, "Inside the International Hotel Furor," *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 21, 1977, 4.

leaders—and suggesting, through the diversity of their individual strengths and experiences, the richness of lives lived on Kearny Street.

The tenant leaders included Joaquin Legaspi (1896-1975), the poet who coined the term "Manilatown." A quietly inspiring intellectual, he also painted in the realist, modernist, postmodernist, and abstract styles, and operated a small appliance repair shop.[41] Before his death, Legaspi mentored many youths who supported the I-Hotel.

Benny Gallo, always dapper, was another artist. He crafted elaborate altars with materials like suitcases, paper, styrofoam, foil, and glass and gave his pieces names like *Wondering Sight*, *The Fighting Lady*, and *King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba*.[42] He carried his craft with him to the different Kearny Street lodgings he lived at since 1919.

Felix Ayson (b. 1897), a schoolteacher from the Philippines, lived occasionally in the I-Hotel beginning in 1926. As he took the itinerant jobs many of his generation worked, Ayson organized Filipino farm laborers and even led a successful strike during the Great Depression. After serving in World War II, he married a Creole woman from New Orleans and studied to be an electrical engineer. When he came back to the I-Hotel in 1969, he had hoped to make it his permanent home.[43]

Wahat Tompao (b. 1910) first stayed in the I-Hotel in 1929 and periodically returned while serving in the U.S. Navy from 1928 to 1949. In 1963, he moved back in for good. Tompao always expressed pride in his Benguet heritage—the Benguet people being one of the tribes in the Philippines that had never been subjugated by colonizers. With his warrior's dignified bearing, he emerged as one of the most recognizable faces of the I-Hotel struggle. On January 16, 1977, Tompao leaned out of a second-floor window and told supporters:

> *Dr. Martin Luther King said he had a dream. I dream that this building will be for poor people, for the senior people. I dream that this building will never move.44*

A younger generation of Filipino Americans came to share that dream. Some were the children of *manongs* who had managed to marry; some were children of post-war immigrants. Many had personal connections or memories of Manilatown. All were coming of age understanding the social, political, and economic processes that led their families to the United States—and they were seeking to find their roots and shape a Filipino American consciousness and identity.

Estella Habal (leftmost) helps gather community support for the International Hotel, ca. 1970-1977. A professor emerita at San Jose State University, Habal is today considered the foremost chronicler of the anti-eviction movement and the preservation of old Manilatown.

These youth activists included Habal, who would go on to become the foremost chronicler of the anti-eviction movement. There, too, were Bill Sorro, Emil de Guzman, and Jeanette Lazam, who were among the handful of people who purposefully moved into the I-Hotel to live side by side with their elders. For them, as with many in the movement, fighting for the last bastion of Manilatown did not only mean picketing against eviction. It also meant maintaining and repairing the block, investing in it through activities and businesses, and ensuring the elderly tenants had legal and social support. It entailed consistently forming bonds and sustaining the community.

In both the courts of legal and public opinion, the I-Hotel defenders warded off eviction. An initial "peace with a lease" was earned in 1969. As negotiations to extend this lease continued, Milton Meyer and Company sold the property to the Four Seas Investment Corporation, which also pursued eviction. More legal battles ensued. Then, in 1976, Mayor George Moscone proposed that the City take over the property under eminent domain, and have the tenants buy it back.

In both the courts of legal and public opinion, the I-Hotel defenders warded off eviction. An initial "peace with a lease" was earned in 1969.

Courts ruled against this proposal, considering it an overreach for the City's Housing Authority. The tenants then presented an alternative plan, also based on eminent domain, but it failed to win political traction. On July 28, 1977, the Supreme Court of California lifted all legal barriers to the im-

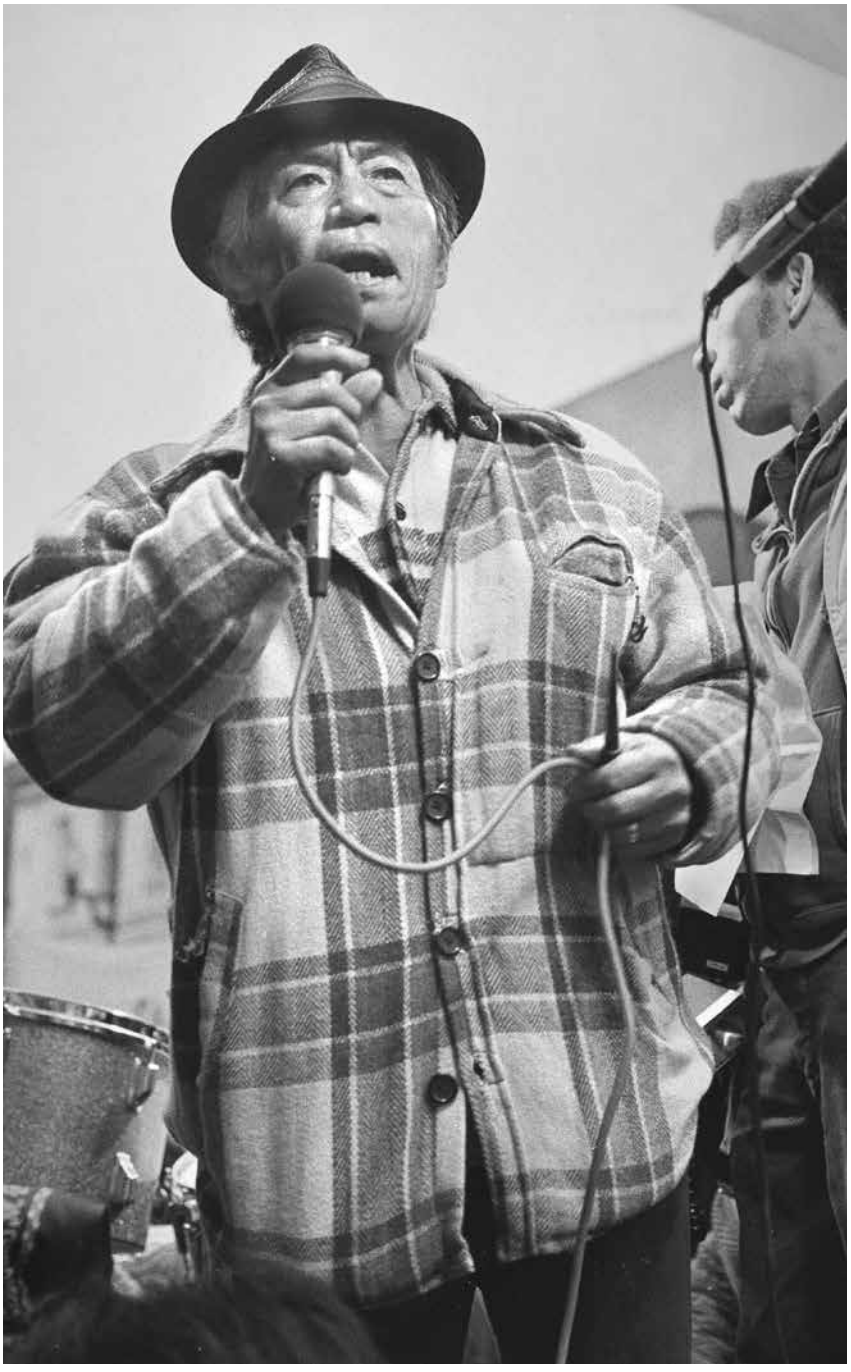
41 *Filipinos in San Francisco*, 107.

42 Carlos Zialcita, "Tony Remington's Launching Point to Fil-Am Consciousness," *Positively Filipino*, accessed October 24, 2025, https://www.positivelyfilipino.com/magazine/tony-remingtons-launching-point-to-fil-am-consciousness.

43 Habal, *San Francisco's International Hotel*, 97.

44 Quoted in Habal, *San Francisco's International Hotel*, 102.

A new coalition, led by representatives from Manilatown, Chinatown, and the Archdiocese, set about rebuilding the site using city and federal funding. Their plan for the new I-Hotel block included senior housing, a parochial school, and an underground garage.



Wahat Tompao, ca. 1977.

mediate eviction of the tenants, even if an appeal on eminent domain had yet to be reviewed.[45]

Less than a week later, 55 tenants were forcibly removed from the International Hotel. Woken by the sound of law enforcers breaking doors and windows, roused from their beds by commotions and barked commands, and shocked at the sight of defenders dragged onto the street, they chose to ease tensions and leave. As the tenants walked out into the darkness of Kearny Street, the crowd of 2,000 non-violent supporters, who had rushed to barricade the hotel in the hopes of dissuading sheriffs and police, could only look on.

Most of the tenants moved to the nearby Stanford Hotel, at 235 Kearny, and tried adjusting to dramatically altered lives. Several of the elderly fell ill or died within a few years. The loss of both a home and a community center cut too deep.

Manilatown, however, was not to be entirely lost.

Continued activism, even after the hotel's demolition in 1979, led the new mayor, Diane Feinstein, to form a citizens advisory committee, composed of tenant representatives and Chinatown community leaders, for the redevelopment of the property. Their efforts helped prevent Four Seas from constructing a parking garage—or any commercial building—on the vacant lot.

Forced to repeatedly negotiate for development that included low-income housing, Four Seas sold the property in 1991. After the new owners also rejected a subsequent mixed-use proposal, the Catholic Archdiocese of San Francisco bought the land for community use.

A new coalition, led by representatives from Manilatown, Chinatown, and the Archdiocese, set about rebuilding the site using city and federal funding. Their plan for the new I-Hotel block included senior housing, a parochial school, and an underground garage. There was also to be a community center run by the newly formed Manilatown Heritage Foundation. Its mission was to commemorate the legacies of the historic neighborhood and the International Hotel—and to cultivate the Filipino community's capacity to enact social and economic justice.

A new International Hotel opened on August 26, 2005. The 15-story complex offered 88 studio and 16 one-bedroom apartments for low-income seniors, as well as a rooftop garden with priceless views of the city. It was a victory, however bittersweet: though former tenants were given priority to live in the new building, many, in the intervening years, had passed on.

At 28 years old, Jeanette Lazam was the youngest resi-

[45] "Court Lifts Ban on Hotel Evictions," *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 29, 1977, 1.

dent of the I-Hotel during the eviction. Her father, who first came to the United States in 1927 to study at Fordham University, lived briefly in Manilatown and afterwards regularly visited Kearny Street. When she came to the I-Hotel as a young activist, the old-timers there asked her for her family name. "I told the *manongs* and their reply was 'Are you Francisco Lazam's daughter?'" she recalled. "Right then and there, I knew I was in the right place, with the right people."[46]

Lazam and Tompao were the last two tenants to walk out of the I-Hotel, arm in arm, in the final hours of August 4, 1977. Nearly 44 years later, on June 3, 2021, she moved back into the International Hotel Senior Residences, physically and symbolically reclaiming residency on Kearny Street.

Manilatown Reborn

Today, the Manilatown Heritage Foundation continues to foster the legacy of Kearny Street at the Manilatown Center, a 2,200-square-foot community space on the ground floor of the new International Hotel.

The Center's main façade, on Kearny, is lit up with a sign announcing the hotel's name, much as a neon sign once did decades ago. The north wall, parallel to Jackson, is lined with large windows decorated with scrim depicting images from the anti-eviction struggle. Parts of the south wall, abutting the modern apartment complex, bear slabs of bricks recovered from the demolished hotel. Set against this red stonework are soulful oil portraits of *manongs*, complemented by framed black-and-white photographs and artifacts from the old neighborhood. An I-Hotel room, recreated to scale and with former tenants' belongings, is a focal display; so is the weatherworn front door to the Kearny Street Workshop, a pioneering Asian American arts organization that was also evicted from the property.

For all the touches teaching a collective past, the Manilatown Center bustles with the energy of the present. History walking tours, musical performances, cultural workshops, art exhibits, and classes on pre-colonial Philippine heritage pack the Center's regular schedule.

The doors are open to curious passersby, tourists, schoolchildren on field trips, researchers, and Filipinos and Filipino Americans of all ages tracing their histories. They are welcome to peruse exhibits and join programs. They are invited to chat with Manilatown staff about the neighborhood. They may mingle with current I-Hotel residents who spend time at the Center—including Lazam, who busies herself with art and teaches the occasional game of mahjong. As the only one now living among the tenants evicted in 1977, *Manang* Jeanette has become the revered elder of the community she first fought for in her youth.

Caroline Cabading, the Foundation's executive director, likes to call the Manilatown Center a "community living room." Multigenerational camaraderie, reminiscent of the bonds formed by *manongs* and student activists in the 1970s, is one pillar for Manilatown's future that she hopes to build.

Cabading herself is a fourth-generation San Franciscan and Filipino American. Her great-grandfather, Maximo Tormes, was a merchant marine who came to San Francisco in 1904. He became a fireman in the U.S. Army Transport Service after witnessing the Great Fire and Earthquake of 1906. In 1918, he married Julia Haya, who had arrived five years earlier as a caregiver for a wealthy family. Their marriage is one of the first documented Filipino marriages in Oakland, California.

Years later, their daughter, Caroline Tormes, would marry another immigrant from the Philippines: Fred Ubungen, who lived, for a while, on Kearny Street. A photo in the family archive shows the young couple in the late 1930s enjoying coffee inside the Luzon Restaurant, beneath storefront letters saying "home cooking," and not too far from where their granddaughter now preserves their memory and their generation's legacy.[47]

To anyone who enters the Manilatown Center in the rebuilt International Hotel, Cabading and her team offer a warm greeting. It's a greeting one may imagine hearing a hundred years ago, at the same corner of Kearny Street, exchanged between one *manong* to another and to another, as traffic and time rumble on. "If you have been to Manilatown before," they say, "Welcome back. If it is your first time here—welcome home."

"If you have been to Manilatown before," they say, "Welcome back. If it is your first time here—welcome home."

Sabrina Oliveros is an exhibit curator and historical interpreter who has worked with organizations like the Manilatown Heritage Foundation, UCSF Archives & Special Collections, and San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park. She curated the exhibit *Imagine Kearny Street* that was on view at the De Anza College California History Center in October-November 2025.

[46] Habal, *San Francisco's International Hotel*, 115.

[47] *Filipinos in San Francisco*, 17.

Director's Report

continued from page 4

these patterns repeating themselves in human societies, when people respond to existential threats to their survival such as totalitarian pressure with acts of creative adaptation.

Think of the flourishing of Polish jazz during the Nazi occupation; the vital role of song for the South African anti-apartheid movement; the creation of African American spirituals under slavery; the blues and then jazz during Jim Crow and beyond. In Los Angeles today, this creative spirit is rising in response to hostility, oppression, and repression, in the form of Liberty Vans which are part of the Save America Movement. The movement's recent initiative sends out three vehicles (Liberty Vans) across the city and surrounding counties to respond to, monitor, and document activities by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Each van is staffed with a faith leader, a lawyer, and a videographer, combining legal assistance, pastoral support, and real-time documentation of enforcement operations. The stated goal is to protect immigrant families under threat, provide "witnessing" of federal actions, offer immediate moral and legal support, and hold authorities accountable. The Save America Movement presents itself as a values-based organization—defending "American values," "the Constitution," and "true American ideals"—and emphasizes moral purpose over partisan politics. Organizers explicitly link the project to democratic accountability, explaining that "we are not there to interfere with the law; we are there to really document... it's a democracy." (see: www.thesaveamericamovement.org)

Creativity like this is an antidote to depression. If the anaerobes can do it, so can we!

In this issue of Californian, I hope you will see inspiring examples of the human spirit rising up in the face of difficulty, and that you will feel encouraged and motivated to seek the spaces you need for your own channels of creativity to open up and flow.We are not alone in this. Despite the sense of separation or isolation we may feel, we are actually all together in this moment.We only need to see it, and to realize the truth of our wholeness.Not too much to ask? Let's aim high.

Audrey Edna Butcher Civil Liberties Education Initiative

continued from page 5

Nation's history. A fundamental question faces us: Will democracy survive? As imperfect as our system has been since its founding there has always existed a fighting spirit among the people to defend and expand the basic civil liberties and rights that serve as guardrails for efforts to make a "more perfect union." During the first Trump administration I heard the echoes of this from students in the CHC classroom who were incredulous that a president could use an executive order to go after Muslim Americans when it was such a blatant violation of our laws. Their voices got louder and louder and so did the instructor's. I was worried that they were having a fight. But no, with much spirit in their voices, they just wanted to know how this could happen and what could be done about it. I also felt it from K-12 summer school students studying civil liberties issues at CHC. I was concerned that they would think talking about past and current violations of rights would be too "controversial" for them after the backlash against football star Colin Kaepernick, and they would be at a loss for how to participate in a poster project. But instead, they eagerly went right to work on their posters, many choosing the topic of the right to protest. They wanted to have their young voices heard.

The question now is, will this fighting spirit adapt to our new conditions and help us continue this legacy when things seem even worse than before? I tend to be hopeful and continue to take inspiration from the stories of so many people who have fought for our rights and for justice even if they never were able to directly benefit from their struggle, but did it for future generations. I don't see any other choice but to continue this legacy. I am strengthened by the creativity and courage that seems to have been ignited all over our country by people of all different backgrounds and experiences coming together to try new ways to defend our democracy. I see this in the marches, assemblies, and organizing efforts of people of all ages.

Here's to another 10 years of the AEBCLEI at CHC!

For more information on the Audrey Edna Butcher Civil Liberties Education Initiative, see: www.deanza.edu/califhistory/initiative.html

At the Center

RECENT EVENTS

Expanding the Louis Stocklmeir Library

The Louis Stocklmeir Library is growing. Books previously held in storage until last year are now housed in the Lisa Christiansen Research Room, where they are being carefully processed to become part of the De Anza Library catalog. This effort, which began towards the end of the Spring Quarter earlier this year, aims to make the collection more accessible to students and the broader community while bringing new visitors into the California History Center.

Our Librarian and Archivist, Lisa Christiansen, for whom the research room is named, has been leading the effort to sort and evaluate the collection. Each book is reviewed to determine whether it should be retained or discarded. While duplicate copies are generally removed, different editions of the same title are preserved. Before any duplicate is discarded, several important factors are considered: Is the book signed by the author? Is it readily available elsewhere? Most importantly, does it align with the scope and purpose of our library? These decisions require careful thought, as they are often final. Margaret Butcher, our longtime volunteer, has been assisting Lisa in this project.

Toward the end of the Spring Quarter, De Anza Library Technician Lisa Hatt trained one of our staff members, Saroj Bangaru, to enter books into the larger De Anza catalog. From start to finish, cataloging a single book involves 15 to 20 steps, including searches across multiple databases before the book finds its permanent place in the system. Since the beginning of summer, we have successfully cataloged nearly 1,000 books.

Our expanding holdings include significant donations, such as the Wheat Collection (gift of historian Carl Wheat), and materials from the estates of Betty Hirsch, Aubrey Abramson, and Austen Warburton, among others.

J Jann, our student volunteer, and Kevin Zhao, one of our new Humanities Scholars Work Experience Interns, have been instrumental in shelving books and organizing the collection for easier access and retrieval.

Creating Catalog Records

Meanwhile, student volunteers Yansy Ngai and Rama Fikru have been working through the summer and fall quarters to create catalog records for our manuscript collection, ensuring these valuable materials are preserved and discoverable for future research. Through the process of creating catalog records, students engage closely with the collection and learn Californian History through hands-on exploration.

Digitization Update

In parallel with the cataloging effort, Edwin El-Kareh has been digitizing key parts of the collection. After completing work on the Pursell Collection, he has begun digitizing our extensive archive of Student Research Papers. The CHC houses more than 1,700 student papers, which we plan to make publicly available upon completion of the digitization project.

At the Center

RECENT EVENTS

"Manilatown Manang"

10/30/25

CHC presented "Manilatown Manang," followed by a Q&A with Dr. Estella Habal, Jeanette Gandionco Lazam and Caroline Julia Cabading. The documentary was well-attended by De Anza students, faculty, and community members, followed by a delicious lunch and a powerful and moving Q&A, moderated by Political Science instructor Laura Chin. This California History Center event enjoyed support from Manilatown Heritage Foundation, Social Sciences and Humanities Division, Office of Equity, APASA | IMPACT AAPI, and the Foothill-DeAnza District Foundation. Special thanks to faculty Vivian Bejarin for all her help.

Dr. Estella Habal, activist, educator, scholar, and Professor Emerita at San Jose State University was one of the speakers.

Anti-racism and housing activist Jeanette Gandionco Lazam, a resident, leader, and defender of the I-Hotel, was one of the speakers.

Moderator Laura Chin (L) moderated and asked thoughtful questions during the Q&A portion of the event, in the CHC Exhibit Hall. Photo Credit to: Jibril Alvarez

Caroline Cabading, Executive Director of Manilatown Heritage Foundation, directed the film, and was one of the speakers.

Exhibits

Ashley Sanchez, our Humanities Scholars Work Experience Intern, now serves as Exhibits Assistant and collaborates closely with the faculty director to develop ideas and plan for our annual fundraising event, 'Taste of History', taking place in March 2026.

Through these ongoing efforts, the California History Center continues to expand access to its archival and library resources for students, De Anza, and the community at large.

At the Center

RECENT EVENTS

Manilatown Heritage Foundation and California History Center collaborated to bring this event to the students and De Anza community. Photo: Jibril Alvarez

"Imagine Kearny Street" Special Exhibit

10/14/25 - 11/14/25

Through materials drawn from the Manilatown Heritage Foundation's Archives located at the International Hotel Manilatown Center (868 Kearny Street, San Francisco), "Imagine Kearny Street," offers a window into the Filipino community that once existed on 10-blocks of Kearny Street in San Francisco — its manongs and migrants, restaurants and pool halls, barber shops and nightclubs, artists and activists. The materials featured include historical photographs and commemorative publications.

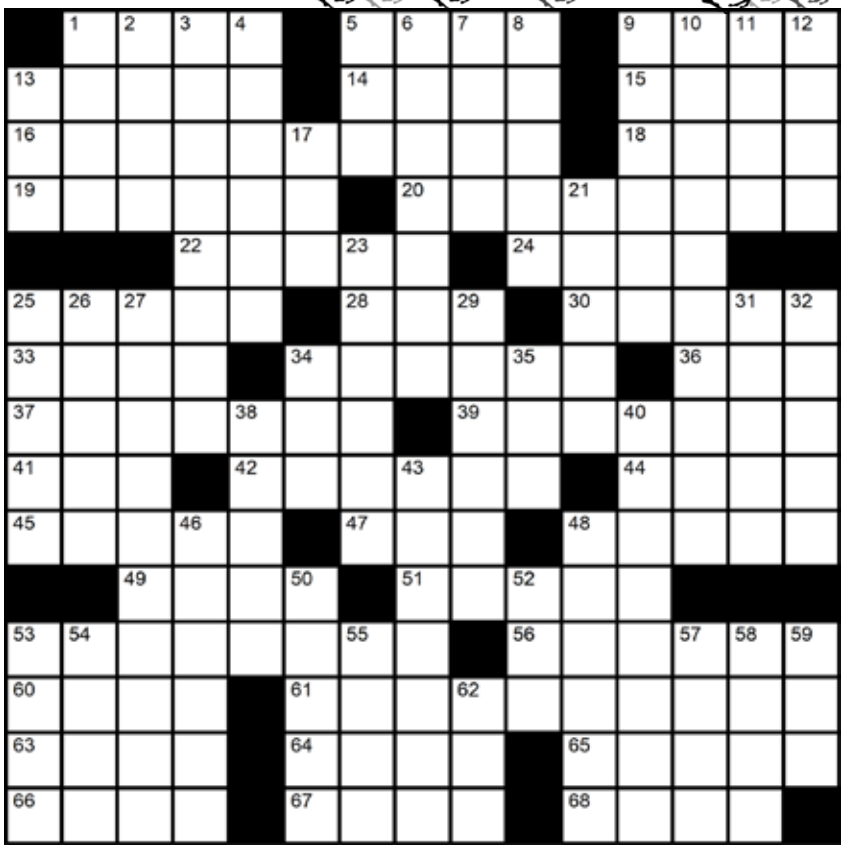
SSH Division Dean Elvin Ramos's Momentum Series provided a delicious meal for attendees. Photo: Jibril Alvarez

The exhibit was mounted by Manilatown collaborators artist Cat Lauigan and curator Sabrina Oliveros.

About the puzzle, opposite page

The Del Mar Turf Club came hard-charging out of the gate in 1937, with one of Hollywood's brightest stars throwing his weight behind the racetrack as a founder. Just one year later, the Turf Club (now named the Del Mar Thoroughbred Club) made history as the first venue for a nationally-broadcast thoroughbred event of any type; a match race which included a Great Depression-era symbol of hope for many. That beloved horse would later get his own movie (on his own merit, not through his Tinseltown connection). The crossword puzzle on the opposite page celebrates just a bit of Del Mar's place in California history. The puzzle is the work of Sepia Features and Jerry Grayson. Grayson has been crafting crosswords since the 1980s, with magazine, newspaper and book publication. A Sepia Features book of California puzzles is expected to go to press in 2026.

Del Mar: "Where the Surf Meets the Turf"



Across

1. "___ to post", Del Mar, et al.
5. Lupino and Hancock Ross
9. Rams game, in S.F.
13. Italian composer, 20th Cent.
14. Infrequent Mojave condition
15. Baltic capital
16. Star, Del Mar co-founder (2 words)
18. Sonoma's ___ Ellen
19. Medieval equestrian garments
20. Coronet, pastern location (2 words)
22. "The Hollywood ___", 1929 flick
24. Present prefix
25. Wager window worker's wearable
28. A class of Fresno State, abbr.
30. Les ___ -Unis
33. _ ___ above
34. Of a body's middle
36. L.A.-born Farrow
37. CA-bound "Sunset ___"
39. Racing Form, for some? (2 words)
41. Apollo moon vehicle, abbr.
42. Aquila's bright star or Python library
44. Dynamics preceder
45. Upright
47. Disney's East Coast locale, abbr.
48. ___ ___ a time
49. Range
51. Turf track task
53. A 1942 Del Mar denizen (initials and word)
56. Staircase affectation
60. Oracle
61. Del Mar match race legend
63. Ancient greetings
64. Gumbo basic
65. "_ ___ _", Rastafarian spiritual unity
66. Coachella, for instance
67. Passable
68. Duel tool

Down

1. Put a roof on
2. River through Florence
3. Challenger to 61 across
4. Jockey's stall?
5. Common Del Mar Fairgrounds words
6. Early-lead horses
7. Pulpit
8. ___ Gyra or PS2 Game
9. Silvery white
10. Del Mar jockey legend Shoemaker (2 words)
11. "A Death in the Family" author
12. Yin's worse half?
13. UK media giant
17. Bible edition, abbr.
21. Delta ___
23. Comfortable with
25. Via de la ___, Del Mar thoroughfare
26. Less emotional

27. Del Mar racing season (2 words)
29. "As" or "like" user
31. Rose Queen adornment
32. Wooden shoe
34. Blanc or Brooks
35. Swiss river
38. Turkic language
40. Analyze for winners
43. A big bettor's take, often
46. Not refined
48. "My bad!"
50. Japanese cooking pastes
52. Govt. asst. prog.
53. Travis, Edwards & Beale initials
54. Golfer Ballesteros
55. Musician Case
57. Ancient alphabetic character
58. Staffer for Sen. Schiff
59. UCLA Nanotech lumens measure, abbr.
62. Steamed Chinese bun

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