

# SPECIAL EDITION

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## WE DIDN'T PASS THROUGH THE GOLDEN DOOR—The Filipino American Experience

Reuben S. Seguritan

Institute for Filipino American Research, USA, Paperback

Who would be more credible and competent to narrate the stories in a historical fashion the heart-wrenching, nerve-racking and often action-provoking experiences of Filipinos living and born in the United States than Reuben S. Seguritan? Seguritan, who has consumed more than two decades of his time defending Filipino Americans off and in court regarding immigration-related cases, is successful collating the varied tales of his countrymen and subconsciously coaxing them to unite, if not completely support the Filipino American community in asserting its right in the discriminating, racist American society.

His book, *We Didn't Pass Through The Golden Door, The Filipino American Experience*, essays the pain of failure, the grief of defeat, the joy of success and the thrill, yet often rewarding struggle to be recognized as an essential minority in helping the United States gain its progressive economic state. *We Didn't Pass Through The Golden Door* reminds the readers that Filipinos have a great contribution to American treasury and that the latter, according to the author, "should not complain" of the ever-increasing Filipino Americans in the country because

"she has been mining a lot of our natural resources and now has got many of our best minds."

America has great things to thank Filipinos for. But in spite of the countless contributions of Filipino Americans to the United States, the latter has been so indifferent with us. The book succinctly presents how we became the victims of the American unfair legislation, mistreatment in the workplace, and other biases/prejudices in the system. There had been instances in the past that Filipinos were not allowed to get into certain establishments like restaurants, theaters, etc. But if we were to compare us with other minorities in the United States, Filipinos are way far ahead of the rest. We take pride in the design of a lunar rover by Eduardo San Juan, the invention of a fluorescent lamp by Aguinaldo Agapito, the pioneering work of Gregorio Zar on a two-way television telephone, and Baldomera Olivera's research on cone snail toxin.

America as pictured perfectly by our American counterparts in the Philippine academe in the earliest time was a place of bread and butter, manna and honey, a utopic society. A place where dreams come true or a fairyland of happy ending stories. However, *We Didn't Pass Through The Golden Door*, chronicles the sad plight of hapless Filipinos in four waves of immigrants. The alleged picture perfect place of Uncle Sam was short of immigrants' expectations as traced back as early as 1760. Filipinos who

have been considered as little brown brothers of the Americans lack that kind of feeling of affinity derived from real brotherhood.

In his attempt to support his viewpoints and analysis of the migrant Filipinos, the author cited several Filipinos who made and who are still making great waves in the United States. She mentioned the likes of Lea Salonga, Lou Diamond Philips (in entertainment); Loida Nicolas



Lewis, Lilia Clemente, Josie Natori, Manuel Aldana, Andy Pada (in business); Angelita Castro-Kelly, Diosdado Banatao (in science); Gloria Ochoa, Judge David Valderrama, Dr. Zal Velez, Benjamin Cayetano (in mainstream politics) to encourage Filipinos to get out of shadow of Uncle Sam, to be distinctly Filipino, able to succeed in his own merits.

*We Didn't Pass Through The Golden Door* is like a fine locomotive (fueled by the intense passion of the author to reach out for Filipinos after centuries of apathy and complacency in the US) which spontaneously, effortlessly grinds through the 18th century history of Filipino migrations to the present, making a once-in-a-while stop in urging Filipinos to unite, be a potent force in reshaping and remodeling the American society to a society favorable to all Filipino Americans or Asian Americans, for that matter.—JOSE RENE T. TANON