

The South County Historical Society opened its new 2010 exhibit season with **Routes and Roots, Cultivating Filipino American History on the Central Coast**, on March 20 at the IOOF Hall, 128 Bridge Street, Arroyo Grande.



The exhibit covers the majority of the Filipinos who lived in the region during the 1920s and early 1930s – mostly young, single men who worked here part-time as migrant farm workers. These young men “followed the crops” to plant or harvest along the Central Coast as the need arose. The route they traveled extended from the Mexican border to Alaska. Photos and a map display the variety of crops involved and the daily lives of these young men while they lived in work camps in Monterey, Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo Counties.

The exhibit also focuses on Filipino-American communities that eventually formed later during this period -- in Pismo, Arroyo Grande, Grover, Nipomo, Guadalupe, and Santa Maria. This history is the story of human ingenuity in the face of hardship, of men and women whose individual struggles helped shape our region's farming culture and heritage. The exhibit follows the transformation of these Filipino-American communities through the period immediately after World War II.

The exhibit uses extensive primary sources including oral histories, personal memoirs, public records, and rarely seen documents and photographs received from local residents, the Monterey County Historical Society, the Guadalupe Cultural Arts and Education Center, the Filipino-American National Historical Society and the Bancroft Library. Exhibit directors, Craig Rock and Cal Poly Ethnic Studies Professor Grace Yeh, created the exhibits with the help of Cal Poly students and Cal Poly intern Doug Jenzen. The exhibit and oral history interviews of Filipino American pioneers will continue until November 27 except on Labor Day weekend when it will be featured at the Loonanon annual meeting at the Elks Club in Santa Maria. The IOOF exhibit hall is open Fridays and Saturdays 1 PM to 5 PM. For more information call the South County Historical Society at 489-8282.