

Philipino Colony Bar and Refreshment Co. and Caballeros de Dimas-Alang Louisiana Lodge No. 34, 1107-1111 St. Anthony, New Orleans, La. 70116

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Long before the US colonization of the Philippines in 1898, Filipino sailors had established communities in South Louisiana. At the turn of the 20th century, Louisiana was home to the largest Filipino population in the country. In the 1930s and 40s, the building at 1107-1111 St. Anthony was central to a thriving Filipino community comprised of descendants of early settlers and recent immigrants. A site for activities that uplifted the community socially, politically, and economically, it housed the Philipino Colony Bar and Refreshment Co. – a popular gathering spot for young and old; was headquarters for the Caballeros de Dimas-Alang Louisiana Lodge No. 34 – a fraternal order that advocated for Filipino nationalism; and hosted events for community organizations like the Filipino Communities of America – a group supporting the city’s Filipino seamen.

In 1935, Dimas-Alang was recognized for sponsoring an award-winning Mardi Gras float in the inaugural Elks Krewe of Orleanians parade, the only entry by people of color in the all-white parade. The tropically designed float featured Uncle Sam, the white-bearded symbol of American patriotism and imperialism, wielding a giant pair of scissors next to a chained Filipino maiden. This daring motif referenced the Tydings-McDuffie Act of 1934, which promised the Philippines independence and reclassified Filipinos from US nationals to resident aliens. Tydings-McDuffie left US-based Filipinos vulnerable to discrimination and exclusion, and emboldened nativists who called for the deportation of all Filipinos. The change in status threatened the livelihood of Filipino seamen, leading Filipino Communities of America to host events at the site demanding Filipinos be eligible for citizenship. In 1946, Filipinos were finally given the right to apply for naturalization.

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Gonzales, Randy. “Philipino Colony Bar and Refreshment Co. and Caballeros de Dimas-Alang Louisiana Lodge No. 34,” *The People’s Guide to New Orleans*. Lynnell L. Thomas and Elizabeth Steeby. University of California Press.