

Harmony Cabie-Quinto

A Nation of Immigrants?



Harmony Cabie-Quinto at U.S. Citizenship ceremony, 2015

Courtesy of Harmony Cabie-Quinto

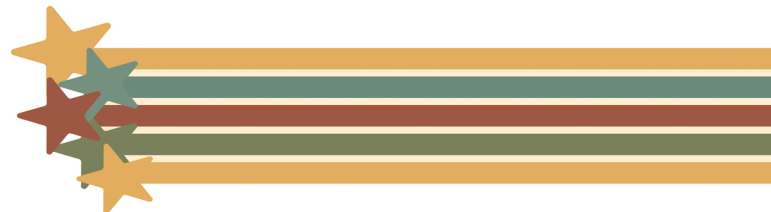
In 1908, playwright Israel Zangwill first staged *The Melting Pot* in Washington DC. The story centers on David Quixano, a Russian Jewish immigrant who fled pogroms in Tsarist Russia, and then falls in love with Vera, a Russian Christian immigrant in America. Although the notion of diverse cultures “melting” together to form a cohesive “American Identity” was not new, Zangwill’s play cemented the term in the popular imagination. In 2026, are we a melting pot? Are we really a nation of immigrants?

America became a new nation in a very old land. Millions of Native Americans lived on the continent for eons prior to colonization and still do. And between 1525 and 1866, approximately 400,000 kidnapped enslaved Africans were brought to what is now America. Everyone outside of these two groups are descendants of colonists, immigrants, or immigrants themselves. The non-partisan American Immigration Council notes that 6.7% of people in Colorado Springs are immigrants. They contribute \$535.2 million in local, state, and federal taxes every year and have over 1.6 billion in spending power. However, their contributions to the vibrancy and culture of America are incalculable.

Despite President Ronald Reagan’s statement in 1981, “More than any other country, our strength comes from our own immigrant heritage and our capacity to welcome those from other lands,” immigration policy has been uneven and discriminatory. Open borders in the 19th century allowed tens of millions fleeing Europe to come to America, but the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act established the first federal law banning immigration based on race or ethnicity. The 1924, Johnson-Reed Act introduced national-origin quotas, banning Asians, and preferencing immigrants from northern and western Europe, while limiting those from southern and eastern Europe.



Colorado Springs
PIONEERS MUSEUM

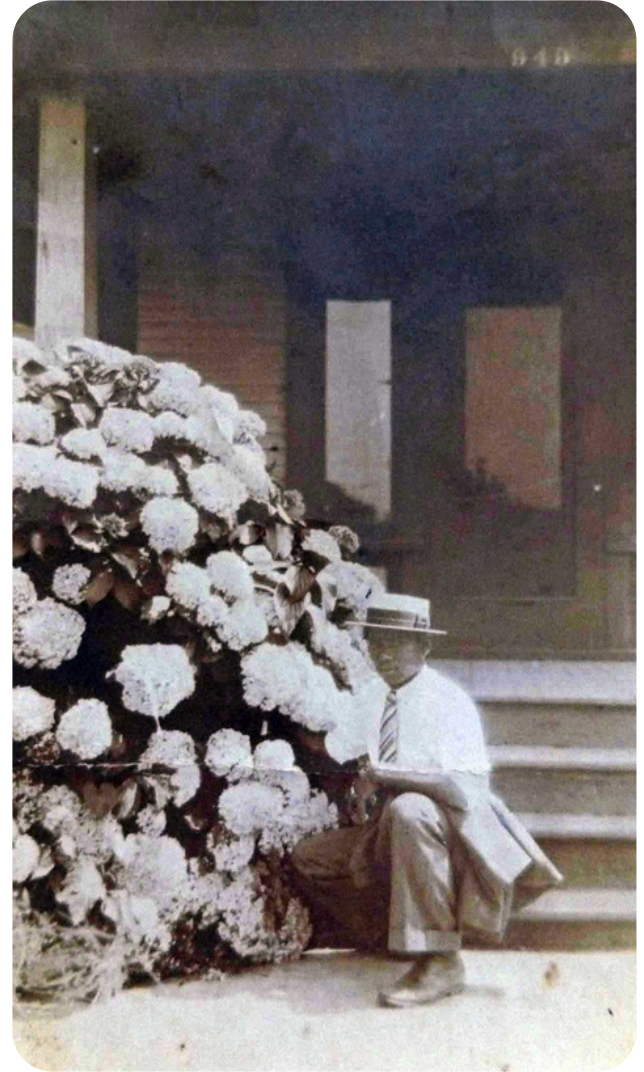


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The U.S. has periodically ignored immigration restrictions during labor shortages. The “Bracero Program” brought four million Mexican men on short-term agricultural contracts during WWII, and from 1906-1946, the Hawaiian Sugar Planters Association recruited Filipinos to work on plantations. Known as “Sakadas,” they were paid 7 cents an hour, working ten hours a day, 6 or 7 days a week. One of the Sakadas was Bernardo Cabie, grandfather of local non-profit leader Harmony Cabie-Quinto. Born and raised in the Philippines, Harmony grew up in an intellectual family that inspired her to make a difference. She graduated from college and law school before immigrating in 2004. She met and married husband Chris Quinto, a decorated soldier, and naturalized citizen who bravely served in the Iraq War. Before leaving the Philippines, she remembers turning to ask her father, “How do I change the world now?” He replied, “You start in your own corner of it.” Harmony became a naturalized citizen in 2015, and her “corner” is now Colorado Springs.



Bernardo Cabie, working on a Hawaiian sugar plantation during WWII, ca. 1927

Courtesy of Harmony Cabie-Quinto

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BUREAU OF LABOR AND STATISTICS H.S.P.A.

634 CONTRACT No. 77885

NAME Cabie, Bernardo AGE M 29

SINGLE - MARRIED _____

ARRIVAL, HONOLULU—Steamer PRES. TAFT Date 3/3/27

ASSIGNED EWA PLANTATION CO. Date MAR 4 - 1927

5312

Left, LETTER 2-28-27.

MAHALAGANG PAHIWATIG SA MGA MANGAGAWA.

Ang pag iingat ang siyang dapat ganapin upang hindi mawala ang libritong ito.

Ito ay totong mahalaga. Kong Sakali ito ay mawala ipag bigay alam agad

ninio ang kaniang pag kawala so ka ta-astasan bos nang Plantacion.

Form 49 10M-10-26-C.P.

5312

**Work card issued to Bernardo Cabie under the
Hawaiian Sugar Plantation Act, March 3, 1927
Courtesy of Harmony Cabie-Quinto**

