Remembering our Past
1521 – 1946
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PHILIPPINE HISTORY
The Philippines, because of its geographical location, became embroiled in what historians refer to as a search for new lands to expand European empires – thinly disguised as the search for exotic spices. In the early 1400’s, Portugese explorers discovered the abundance of many different resources in these “new lands” heretofore unknown to early European geographers and explorers. The Portugese are quickly followed by the Dutch, Spaniards, and the British, looking to establish colonies in the East Indies.

The Philippines was discovered in 1521 by Portugese explorer Ferdinand Magellan and colonized by Spain from 1565 to 1898. Following the Spanish – American War, it became a territory of the United States. On July 4, 1946, the United States formally recognized Philippine independence which was declared by Filipino revolutionaries from Spain.
Although not the first to set foot on Philippine soil, the first well document arrival of Europeans in the archipelago was the Spanish expedition led by Portuguese Ferdinand Magellan, which first sighted the mountains of Samara. At Masao, Butuan, (now in Augustan del Norte), he solemnly planted a cross on the summit of a hill overlooking the sea and claimed possession of the islands he had seen for Spain. Magellan befriended Raja Humabon, the chieftain of Sugbu (present day Cebu), and converted him to Catholicism. After getting involved in tribal rivalries, Magellan, with 48 of his men and 1,000 native warriors, invaded Mactan Island. Magellan seriously underestimated the strength of Datu Lapu-Lapu’s forces. Grossly outnumbered he and 14 of his soldiers were killed.

1521 – (March 17) Magellan sighted the mountains of what is now Samar while on a mission for Spain to find a westward route to the Moluccas Islands. On Easter Sunday, March 31, 1521, at Masao, Butuan, (now in Augusan del Norte), he solemnly planted a cross and claimed the island for Spain, naming them Islas de San Lazaro.

Reference

Reference
On the morning of April 27, 1521, Magellan sailed to Mactan to confront the rebellious Datu Lapu-Lapu. During the resulting Battle of Mactan with hostile natives led by Lapu-Lapu, Magellan was killed. His body was never recovered. A shrine has been built in his honor near the battle site.

Reference
1565 – Colonization of the Philippines began with the arrival of Spanish explorer Miguel Lopez de Legaspi from Nueva España (present day Mexico) and formed the first European settlements in Cebu. The colony was administered through the Viceroyalty of Nueva España until 1821 when Mexican patriots seceded from the Spanish Empire. After 1821, the colony was governed directly from Spain.

Manila galleon or Galeones de Manila-Acapulco service was inaugurated providing passage once or twice per year across the Pacific Ocean between Manila and Spain via Nueva España. This was made possible with the discovery of the ocean passage by Andrés de Urdaneta, and continued until 1815 when the Mexican Revolution put a permanent stop to the galleon trade route.
Filipinos were the earliest Asians to cross the Pacific Ocean for the New World because of the Manila galleon trade between Nueva España and Las Islas Filipinas from 1565 to 1815. Many jumped ship to escape brutal treatment after having been “exploited and impressed into service” and “forced to become woodcutters, shipbuilders, crewmen and munitions workers.” Filipinos, the majority entering Louisiana directly by galleons from Mexico, followed the mule trail to Veracruz and other Mexican ports and crossed the Gulf of Mexico to Louisiana where they established settlements such as St. Malo on the swamps south of Lake Borgne in St. Bernard County, and Manila Village on the marshland on Barataria Bay in the Mississippi Delta by the Gulf of Mexico.

1762 – (October 30) Archbishop Manuel Antonio Rojo del Rio y Vieyra, Bishop of Manila and representative of the Spanish Real Audencia, following the death of the Gobernador-General, Don Pedro Manuel de Arandia, surrendered the Philippines to the British pursuant to the agreement of Treaty of Paris at the end of Seven Years War. The British ended their rule on April, 1762.
Martín de Goiti was a Spanish Basque Conquistador and founder of the city of Manila. Goiti was one of the soldiers who accompanied the Spanish colonization of the East Indies in 1565. He was the leader of the expedition to Manila, ordered by Miguel Lopes de Legaspi in 1569. There, he fought a number of battles against the Muslim chieftain, Rajah Sulaiman III of Manila for control of lands and settlements. Goiti is laid to rest in a tomb inside the San Agustín Church, in Intramuros.

Reference
Noone, Martín J. The Discovery and Conquest of the Philippines 1521-1581, 1983

1781 – One of the forty-six early settlers of Pueblo de Nuestra Señora Reina de los Angeles, now the City of Los Angeles, probably was a Filipino by the name of Antonio Miranda Rodriguez.

Reference
FILIPINOS: Forgotten Asian Americans by Fred Cordova
The Philippine Historic Past

1863 – Queen Isabella of Spain decreed the establishment of a public school system in the Spanish model leading to an increasing number of educated *indios* and *criollos* or *Insulares*, (Spaniards born in the Philippines), creating a class of citizens called *Ilustrados*.

The *Ilustrados* originally clamored for adequate representation to the Spanish Cortes and later for independence. Jose Rizal, the most celebrated intellectual and radical *Ilustrado* of the era, wrote the novels “*Noli mi Tangere*”, and “*El Filibusterismo*”, which greatly inspired the movement for independence. The *Katipunan*, a secret militant society, was founded by Andres Bonifacio. Its primary purpose was the overthrow of Spanish rule in the Philippines.

On-line reference
http://people.cohums.ohiostate.edu/grimsley1/milhis/phil.htm

1872 – Mass deportation occurred of nationalists to the *Isla los Ladrones* (present day Guam) and Europe creating a Filipino expatriate community of reformers abroad. The community grew within the next generation of *Ilustrados* taking graduate studies in European universities. They allied themselves with Spanish liberals, most notably a certain Spanish senator named *Morayta* of Madrid and formed *La Solidaridad*.

Reference
Manila: Ateneo de Manila University Press.
ISBN 9789715502092

La Solidaridad was an organization created in 1888 in Spain to represent and advocate the Filipino cause at the Spanish parliament. They published a newspaper, *La Solidaridad*, headed by Graciano Jaena.
The desire to form a purely Filipino organization was fulfilled on December 13, 1888 with the establishment in Barcelona of La Solidaridad. This organization was sort of a rival of Morayta's Madrid group although the two organizations joined together in a petition addressed to the Minister of the Colonies asking for representation in the Cortes, abolition of censorship of the press, and prohibition of the practice of deporting citizens merely through administrative orders. The president of La Solidaridad in Barcelona was Rizal's cousin, Galicano Apacible. Among the other officers were Graciano Lope Jaena, vice president, and Mariano Ponce, treasurer. Rizal, in London at the time, was named Honorary President. Unfortunately, Apacible could not hold the wrangling reformists together. It took the prestige of Rizal and the political wisdom of Marcelo del Pilar to unite the Filipinos in Spain and to coordinate their efforts.

Reference
Manila: Ateneo de Manila University Press.
ISBN 9789715502092
1896 – In the last days of August, Bonifacio called Katipunan members to a mass gathering in Caloocan, where they decided to start a nationwide armed revolution against Spain. The event was marked by a mass tearing of cedulas (community tax certificates) accompanied by patriotic cries. The exact date and location are disputed, but two possibilities have been officially endorsed by the Philippine government: August 26 in Balintawak and later, August 23 in Pugad Lawin. Thus the event is called the "Cry of Balintawak" or "Cry of Pugad Lawin". However the issue is further complicated by other dates such as August 24 and 25 and other locations such as Kankong.

Reference
1892 – (July) Jose Rizal was implicated in the activities of the nascent rebellion, was deported to Dapitan in the province of Zamboanga, a peninsula of Mindanao. There he built a school, a hospital and a water supply system, and taught and engaged in farming and horticulture.

1896 - the rebellion fomented by the Katipunan had become a full blown revolution, proving to be a nationwide uprising and leading to the first proclamation of a democratic republic in Asia. To dissociate himself, Rizal volunteered and was given leave by the Gobernador-General, Ramon Blanco, to serve in Cuba to minister to victims of yellow fever. Blanco later was to present his sash and sword to the Rizal family as an apology for the arrest of Rizal.

Before he left Dapitan, Rizal issued a refraction disavowing the revolution and declaring that the education of Filipinos and their achievement of a national identity were prerequisites to freedom.
Rizal was arrested en route to Havana, imprisoned in Barcelona, and sent back to Manila to stand trial. He was implicated in the revolution through his association with members of the Katipunan and was to be tried before a military tribunal for rebellion, sedition, and conspiracy. During the entire passage, he was unchained, no Spaniard laid a hand on him, and had many opportunities to escape but refused to do so. Rizal was convicted on all three charges and sentenced to death. Blanco, who was sympathetic to Rizal, had been forced out of office, and the friars had intercalated Camilo de Polavieja in his place, sealing Rizal's fate. He was found guilty of all charges and sentenced to die by firing squad. While awaiting execution, he was held in a cell at Fort Santiago where he wrote Mi Ultimo Adios.

Reference
1896 – (December 30) Execution of Jose Rizal at Bagumbayan (Luneta), present day site of Rizal Park, in the City of Manila.

1897 – The Katipunan-Magdalo movement of Cavite under self-appointed general, Emilio Aguinaldo and another Cavite faction, the Magdiwang, was embroiled in a power struggle as to who would lead the formation of a Revolutionary Government.

Andres Bonifacio, the original founder of the Katipunan, considered his movement to be the Revolutionary Government, but nevertheless, he acquiesced and presided over elections held during the Tejeros Convention held in Tejeros, Cavite on March 22, 1897.

Away from his power base, Bonifacio lost the leadership to Aguinaldo and was appointed by him to a lesser position in the revolutionary cabinet. Insulted, Bonifacio declared the Convention null and void, and sought to return to his power base in Morong (present-day Rizal Province), He and his party were intercepted by Aguinaldo's men and violence resulted which left Bonifacio seriously wounded. Bonifacio was charged, tried and found guilty of treason by a Cavite military tribunal, and sentenced to death.

After some vacillation, Aguinaldo confirmed the death sentence and Bonifacio was executed on May 10, 1897 in the mountains of Maragondon in Cavite, even as Aguinaldo and his forces were retreating in the face of Spanish assault. Aguinaldo is officially considered the first President of the Philippines.

Reference
The Pact of Biak-na-Bato, signed on December 14, 1897, created a truce between Spanish Colonial Governor-General Fernando Primo de Rivera and Emilio Aguinaldo to end the Philippine Revolution. Aguinaldo and his fellow revolutionaries were given amnesty and monetary indemnity by the Spanish government in return for which the Revolutionary Government would go into voluntary exile in Hong Kong. Aguinaldo would later use the money to purchase firearms.

Filipino Revolutionary Soldiers Encampment
Biak-na-Bato, Bulacan Dec 27, 1897

Delegates to the Pact of Biak-na-Bato
Seated. L to R, Pedro Paterno, mediator, and General Emilio Aguinaldo. Standing, L to R, rebel leaders Isabela Artacho, Baldomero Aguinaldo, Severino de las Alas, Antonio Montenegro and Vito Belarmino. (Paterno became one of the founders, and Montenegro a founding member, of the pro-American Partido Federal when it was organized on Dec. 23, 1900.)

Filipino exiles in Hong Kong, photo taken in early 1898: Emilio Aguinaldo (arrow) led 36 other revolutionary leaders including Gregorio del Pilar into exile in the British colony.
1898 – (April 21) Start of Spanish-American War following the sinking, on February 15 in Havana Harbor, of the battleship USS Maine.

1898 - (May 19) Aguinaldo returned to the Philippines and he immediately resumed revolutionary activities against the Spaniards, now receiving verbal encouragement from emissaries of the U. S. In a matter of months, revolutionary forces conquered nearly all of Spanish-held territories, with the exception of Manila, which was completely surrounded. The Filipinos now controlled the Philippines. Aguinaldo also turned over 15,000 Spanish prisoners to the Americans, offering them valuable intelligence.

On-line reference
Arnaldo Dumindin, Spanish-American War
http://philippineamericanwar.webs.com/
June 12 - Aguinaldo declared independence from Spain at his house in *Cavite El Viejo*. The declaration, however, was not recognized by the United States or Spain, as the Spanish government ceded the Philippines to the United States in the 1898 Treaty of Paris. Tensions between the Philippine Revolutionary Government and the American government existed because of the conflicting movements for independence and colonization, aggravated by feelings of betrayal on the part of Aguinaldo.

1899 – (March 23) The insurgent First Philippine Republic formally established with the proclamation of the Malolos Convention in *Malolos, Bulacan*.

June 2 – The Malolos Congress declared war on the United States, with Pedro Paterno, President of Congress, issuing a Proclamation of War. The date marked the beginning of the Philippine-American War, which ensued between 1899 and 1902.

On-line reference
Arnaldo Dumindin, *Spanish-American War*
http://philippineamericanwar.webs.com/
1899 – (February 4) Armed conflict began when a Filipino soldier was shot by an American sentry at San Juan Bridge. In 2003, the Philippine National Historical Institute found the incident actually happened in Sociego and Silencio streets in Santa Mesa, Manila.

1901 – (March 23) Capture and surrender of Emilio Aguinaldo to the American forces in Palanan, Isabela, which effectively dissolved the First Philippine Republic.
**Official end to the war.** The Philippine Organic Act of July 1902 approved, ratified, and confirmed by U.S. President McKinley's Executive Order establishing the Philippine Commission and stipulated that a legislature would be established composed of a lower house, the Philippine Assembly, which would be popularly elected, and an upper house consisting of the Philippine Commission. The act also provided for extending the United States Bill of Rights to Filipinos.

On July 2 the Secretary of War telegraphed that the insurrection against the sovereign authority of the U.S. having come to an end, and provincial civil governments having been established, the office of U.S. Military governor was terminate.

On July 4 Theodore Roosevelt, who had succeeded to the U.S. Presidency after the assassination of President McKinley on September 5, 1901, proclaimed a full and complete pardon and amnesty to all people in the Philippine archipelago who had participated in the conflict. This date marked the beginning of American annexation of the Philippines.

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**On-line reference**
Arnaldo Dumindin, Spanish-American War
http://philippineamericanwar.webs.com/
From the very beginning, United States presidents and their representatives in the islands defined their colonial mission as tutelage: preparing the Philippines for eventual independence. Except for a small group of "retentionists," the issue was not whether the Philippines would be granted self-rule, but when and under what conditions.

**Cultural Impact.** Then U.S. President McKinley, in his instructions to the First Philippine Commission in 1898 (more popularly known as the Taft Commission), ordered the establishment of a public school system and the use of the Philippine languages as well as English for instructional purposes.

The American administrators, finding the local languages to be too numerous and too difficult to learn and write teaching materials in, ended up with a monolingual system in English with no attention paid to the other Philippine languages except for the token statement concerning the necessity of using them eventually for the system.
The Thomasites arrived in the Philippines on August 12, 1901 to establish a new public school system in the American model, to teach basic education and to train Filipino teachers. The Philippines had enjoyed a public school system since 1863, when a Spanish decree first introduced public elementary education in the Philippines. The Thomasites expanded and improved the public school system, and switched to English as the medium of instruction.

The name “Thomasite” was derived from the transport vessel, the USS Thomas that brought them to the shores of Manila Bay. By 1902, there will be a total of about 1,074 stationed in the Philippines.

The public school system introduced after the passage of the “Taft Commission” in 1902 made it possible for a large number of school-age Filipino to acquire education beyond the 6th grade. Before the arrival of the Thomasites, some American soldiers were used as teachers.

Students, Philippine Normal High School, ca. 1900s

On-line reference
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomasites

Reference
1932 – (December) United States Congress passed the Hare-Hawes-Cutting Act with the premise of granting Filipinos independence. Provisions of the bill included reserving several military and naval bases for the United States, as well as imposing tariffs and quotas on Philippine exports. Finding it too restrictive, it was vetoed by President Herbert Hoover but Congress overrode his veto in 1933 and passed the bill. The bill, however, was opposed by the then Philippine Senate President Manuel L. Quezon and was also rejected by the Philippine Senate.
1934 – (March 24) The Tydings–McDuffie Act (officially the Philippine Independence Act; Public Law 73-127) was approved, a United States federal law, which provided for self-government of the Philippines and for Filipino independence (from the United States) after a period of 10 years. It was authored by Maryland Senator Milard Tydings and Alabama Representative John McDuffie. Philippine Senate President Manuel Quezon headed a "Philippine Independence mission" to Washington, DC that successfully secured the act's passage in Congress.

The act provided for the drafting and guidelines of a Constitution for a 10-year "transitional period" which became the government of the Commonwealth of the Philippines before the granting of Philippine independence, during which the United States would maintain military forces in the Philippines. Furthermore, during this period the President of the United States was granted the power to call into military service all military forces of the Philippine government. The act also permitted the maintenance of US naval bases within this region, for two years after independence. The act reclassified all Filipinos that were living in the United States as aliens for the purposes of immigration to America. Filipinos were no longer allowed to come legally to the US as migrant workers, and a quota of 50 immigrants per year was established.

Reference
Manuel Quezon won the Philippine's first national presidential election under the banner of the Nacionalista Party. He obtained nearly 68% of the vote against his two main rivals, Emilio Aguinaldo and Bishop Gregorio Aglipay.

1935 – (November 15) The Commonwealth of the Philippines was officially inaugurated with Quezon as President of the Commonwealth of the Philippines and Sergio Osmeña as Vice President. During this period, the Commonwealth exercised semi-independence in its territories. It marked the end of the colonial eras as well as the transition of the name of the Philippines from the plural "Las Islas Filipinas" or "Philippine Islands" of the Spanish and American colonial periods, to the singular, "Philippines."
Pre-World War II Years (1939-40). The new government embarked on ambitious nation-building policies in preparation for economic and political independence. These included national defense (such as the National Defense Act of 1935, which organized a conscription for service in the country), greater control over the economy, the perfection of democratic institutions, reforms in education, improvement of transport, the promotion of local capital, industrialization, and the “colonization” of Mindanao, which up to this time have resisted any outside control of the predominantly muslim population.

However, other uncertainties, especially in the diplomatic and military situation in Southeast Asia, in the level of U.S. commitment to the future Republic of the Philippines, and in the economy due to the Great Depression, proved to be major problems. The situation was further complicated by the presence of agrarian unrest, and of power struggles between Osmeña and Quezon, especially after Quezon was permitted to be re-elected after one six-year term.

Reference
1941 – (July 25) U.S. Secretary of War Henry Stimson requested that President Franklin D. Roosevelt issue orders calling the military forces of the Commonwealth into active service for the United States. Stimson explained, "All practical steps should be taken to increase the defensive strength of the Philippine Islands."

On July 31, 1941 the Philippine Department had 22,000 troops assigned, 12,000 of whom were Philippine Scouts. The main component was the Philippine Division, under the command of Major General Jonathan Wainwright. Between July and December 1941 the garrison received 8,500 reinforcements consisting of additional aircrafts and crews for air defense of the islands.

**December 7** - Japan launched surprise attack at Pearl Harbor. Ten hours later, on December 8, Japanese aircrafts bombed Clark Airbase, Sangley Point Naval Station and other military targets in the Philippines.
The Commonwealth government drafted the Philippine Army into the U.S. Army Forces Far East, which would resist Japanese invasion.

President Quezon declared Manila an open city to prevent its destruction, and was eventually occupied by the Japanese on January 2, 1942. Meanwhile, battles against the Japanese continued on the Bataan Peninsula, Corregidor, and parts of the Visayan Islands until the final surrender of United States and Philippine forces.

On-line reference
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Military_history_of_the_Philippines

Reference
February 1942 – President Quezon and Vice President Osmeña were escorted by troops from Manila to Corregidor, and later they were evacuated to Australia and then to the United States. During this exile, Quezon became ill with tuberculosis and died August 1, 1944 in Saranac Lake, New York. Vice President Osmeña replaced him as president.

1942 – (March 12) As the Battle of Bataan raged on, General MacArthur, his family, and several USAFFE staff officers left Corregidor for Mindanao aboard four PT boats and was eventually flown to Australia where he broadcasted to the Filipino people his famous "I Shall Return" promise. MacArthur's departure marked the end of the USAFFE and by 22 March, the defending army was renamed United States Forces in the Philippines (USFIP) and Lt. Gen. Jonathan Wainwright was placed in command.
The Battle of Bataan represented the most intense phase of Japan’s invasion of the Philippines. The capture of the Philippine Islands was crucial to Japan's effort to control the Southwest Pacific, seize the resource-rich Dutch East Indies, and protect its Southeast Asia flank.

1942 – (April 9) Fall of Bataan – Maj Gen. Edward P. King met with Maj Gen. Kameichiro Nagano and after several hours of negotiations, the remaining weary, starving and emaciated American and Filipino defenders on the battle-swept Bataan peninsula surrendered. It was the largest surrender in American and Filipino military history, and was the largest American surrender since the American Revolution.
Fall of Corregidor - (May 6, 1942) After weeks of constant Japanese bombardment, Lt. Gen Jonathan Wainwright finally surrendered the Corregidor garrison at about 1:30 pm. Corregidor, the “Gibraltar of the East” has fallen and marked the fall of the Philippines. More than two brutal years occupation follows.
1943 – (October 14) The Second Philippine Republic, otherwise known as the “Puppet Government” was established in October 14, 1943 under Japanese occupation. The Japanese-sponsored government headed by President Jose P. Laurel with Benigno Aquino, Sr. as Vice President proved to be unpopular. Laurel was not subsequently officially recognized as a Philippine president until the administration of Diosdado Macapagal (1961-1965)

1944 – (October 20) The campaign to liberate the Philippines began with the landing of U.S. forces on the eastern shore of Palo, Leyte, south of Luzon. General Douglas MacArthur came ashore to fulfill his promise to the Filipino people of “I Shall Return.” The campaign, which included fierce, and decisive land and naval battles in and around the Philippines continued until the Japanese surrender on September 2, 1945.
The Philippine Historic Past

Bombing of Manila by American aircrafts.
The Battle of Manila from 3 February to 3 March 1945 was part of the Philippines’ 1945 campaign. The one-month battle, which culminated in a terrible bloodbath and total devastation of the city, was the scene of the worst urban fighting in the Pacific theater, and ended almost three years of Japanese military occupation.

On-line reference

General Yamashita was tried and found guilty of war crimes. On 23 February 1946, at Los Baños Prison Camp, 30 miles south of Manila, Tomoyuki Yamashita was hanged.

Reference
On July 4, 1946, representatives of the United States of America and of the Republic of the Philippines signed a Treaty of General Relations between the two governments. The treaty provided for the recognition of the independence of the Republic of the Philippines as of July 4, 1946, and the relinquishment of American sovereignty over the Philippine Islands.

The Philippines celebrates its Independence Day in recognition of June 12, 1898, when the Philippines declared its independence from Spain, although its independence was not recognized until July 4, 1946, by the United States. From 1946 to 1962, the Philippines observed Independence Day on July 4 each year. In 1961, President Diosdado Macapagal reverted the holiday to the June 12 date, which up to that time had been observed as Flag Day in the Philippines. In place of the former Independence Day, Macapagal created Filipino-American Friendship on July 4.

Filipino historians point out that independence in 1946 came with numerous strings attached. The U.S., for example, retained dozens of military bases, including a few major ones. In addition, independence was qualified by legislation passed by the U.S. Congress to ensure that the Philippines would remain an economic ward of the U.S., for the time being.

Another burning issue is the Bell Trade Act, which prohibited the Philippines from manufacturing or selling any products that might "come into substantial competition" with U.S.-made goods. It further required that the Philippine Constitution be revised to grant U.S. citizens and corporations equal access to Philippine minerals, forests, and other natural resources. But the Philippine government had little choice but to accept these terms for independence. The U.S. Congress was threatening to withhold post-World War II rebuilding funds unless the Bell Act was ratified. The Philippine Congress obliged on July 2, 1946.
EPILOGUE: The Philippines, throughout its recorded history, had endured colonization, wars, including a World War; natural disasters with tragic consequences, and its own internal strife, which continue to the present time. It rose from the ashes and ruins of WWII to slowly, but surely, gain its footing and takes its rightful place in the community of free nations and people. The Filipinos are very much aware that freedom and the democratic process are crucial factors in nation-building. They are a proud people, proud of their heritage, culture, their country, and the legacy of their forbearers that is for them to safeguard. This is true of any race of people.