

Marching into the Unknown: Situating Aguinaldo's Transit from Pangasinan to Isabela with Earlier Explorations, Expeditions and Travels in the Cordillera Mountains

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ABSTRACT

In November 1899 Emilio Aguinaldo, President of the Philippine Republic, accompanied by his family, some Cabinet officials and loyal officers and soldiers, left the plains of Pangasinan and trekked northward to Ilocos and then to the Cordillera Mountains. For over a year, Aguinaldo and his retinue marched and scaled the heartland of the Cordillera until they reached the secluded coastal town of Palanan in Isabela. Billed as “Aguinaldo’s Odyssey” by a member of Aguinaldo’s inner circle and “Aguinaldo’s Long March” by another, the trek to the north was necessary to evade capture by the American forces. In

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earlier times, many lowlanders ahead of Aguinaldo already made the trek to mountains of Cordillera with different kinds of persuasions—evangelize, establish towns, extract gold from, or simply for adventure. Aguinaldo's reasons was different. This paper explores Aguinaldo's trail from Pangasinan to Isabela through this rustic unspoiled landscape of the Cordilleras, his experiences with the communities, and his circuitous route in his attempt to elude the American soldiers sent out to capture him.

KEYWORDS

Cordillera Central, Lubuagan, Kalinga, unknown region, Philippine-American War

INTRODUCTION: TRAVELING INTO THE UNKNOWN IN HISTORY

The dictionary defines “unknown” as something that is unfamiliar and cannot be guessed at or calculated because so little is known about it.¹ The “unknown place” is one that is far, remote, uncharted or unmapped, and difficult to reach. Throughout history, it was the “unknown” that had always intrigued people. The pages of history are filled with accounts of travelers going to unknown places unfazed by high mountains, rugged cliffs, arid deserts, rushing river waters or the unending horizon of seas and oceans.

What makes people travel? In ancient times, man was a hunter or a gatherer. He therefore traveled from place to place to look for food. As he progressed, man found new

reasons to travel: to bring items of trade to other lands; to search for commodities of great value; to search for more habitable places of domicile; to disseminate information to new places; to discover new ideas; to conquer new lands; to evangelize or spread the faith; to establish empires and dominions; and many more. One can fit into any one of these motives the compelling reason of history's great travelers to the unknown such as Alexander the Great, Marco Polo, Ibn Battuta, Christopher Columbus, Charles Darwin, Ferdinand Magellan, Leif Erikson, Genghis Khan, Herodotus, Vasco da Gama, James Cook, Sir Francis Drake, and many others. These famous explorers have the distinction of having traversed long distances over continents and oceans despite the uncertainty beyond.²

THE CORDILLERA: REGION OF THE UNKNOWN

The Cordillera is a complex group of mountains in Luzon. It occupies the region between the Ilocos coastal plain and the Cagayan Valley. Also known as the Cordillera Central or Central Cordillera, this mountain chain has a north-south orientation from the Luzon Strait in the north to the northern boundary of the central plains of Luzon in the south. The Cordillera Central towers over an average elevation of about 5,900 feet or 1,800 meters. Its highest crests are located in its western border.³ Today, most of the Cordillera Central is home to a landlocked region known as the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR). Consisting of six provinces namely, Abra, Benguet, Ifugao, Kalinga, Mountain Province, and Apayao, CAR was created on July 15, 1987 by virtue of Executive Order No. 220.⁴

From the 16th century up to the 18th century very few people traveled to the Cordillera. Basically, the Cordillera typified most of the characteristic features of the “unknown” place—far, remote, uncharted or unmapped, and difficult to reach. When they began their exploration of Luzon in preparation for the establishment of colonial rule, the Spaniards encountered enormous difficulty in reaching this mountain region. In 1572 Juan de Salcedo led a contingent of 80 Spanish soldiers north of Manila. Trekking inland was impractical so, Salcedo and his men sailed from Manila to as far as Bolinao (Pangasinan) where they went ashore and continued their exploration by foot.⁵ Up to the 19th century sailing north up to San Fernando (La Union) was still the customary way of going to Benguet, the southernmost area of the Cordillera Central. This was a 24-hour trip followed by a two- to three-day horseback ride on Naguilian Road.⁶

In the 19th century most of Luzon was already fairly settled and organized into civil provinces. In 1840 there were a total of 32 provinces in the country; 20 were *alcaldias* or civil provinces while the other 12 were military areas. Luzon counted 14 of these civil provinces and five of the military provinces.⁷ But the region of the Cordillera Central was not yet organized into civil provinces. It was still frontier land loosely organized into military districts. In the 1820s the colonial government created the *Comandancia del Pais de Igorrotes y las Partidas del Norte de Pangasinan* which was reorganized into another military command with four divisions—Trinidad Valley in Benguet, Mankayan, Abra and Ifugao. This reorganized military command was later replaced by *comandancias politicos-militares* in distinct areas—Benguet, Lepanto, Bontoc,

Saltan, Quiangan, Amburayan, Apayao, and Cayapa.⁸ In 1899 it was this region where Emilio Aguinaldo, President of the Philippine Republic, sought his last refuge from the pursuing American soldiers.

AGUINALDO IN THE CORDILLERA CENTRAL

Shortly after its inauguration on January 23, 1899, the Philippine Republic faced its first and most serious test. The Philippine-American War broke out with its opening salvo in Santa Mesa in Manila on February 4, 1899.⁹ The Americans lost no time and began their advance. First to fall were the towns in the north—La Loma (February 5), and Caloocan (February 10). Then the Americans turned eastward to Guadalupe (March 13), Pasig (March 15), Cainta (March 16), and Taguig (March 18-19), after which they advanced northward taking Valenzuela (March 25-26) and Malabon (March 25). Before the end of March, the Americans were already in Bulacan. One by one, the towns of this province fell to the Americans—Marilao (March 27), Bocaue, and Bigaa (March 29). Two days later, March 31, the Americans entered Malolos where just a few days earlier President Emilio Aguinaldo inaugurated the Philippine Republic. It was in the town's Barasoain Church where Aguinaldo convened the Malolos Congress a year earlier on September 15, 1898. A grim scenario replaced the festivities, revelry, and euphoria that enveloped Malolos just a couple of months earlier.¹⁰

Towards the end of 1899, the fledgling Philippine Republic was in an even greater danger of collapse. The Americans continued to pursue Aguinaldo who had left

Malolos shortly before the besieged capital fell. From Malolos Aguinaldo fled to San Isidro, Nueva Ecija where he established the new capital of the Philippine Republic. However, San Isidro did not remain for long as capital of the Philippine Republic as it fell to the hands of the Americans on May 17 (1899). Aguinaldo then proceeded to Angeles, Pampanga where he led the celebration of the first anniversary of the proclamation of Philippine independence. Mass was celebrated followed by a civil parade and a military review of 2,000 soldiers from different cavalries and regiments. From Angeles, Pampanga Aguinaldo was again on the move arriving in Tarlac, Tarlac on June 21 which he declared as the new capital of the Philippine Republic.¹¹ However, the Americans were relentless in their advance. Earlier in April in Bulacan, they forged ahead resulting in the fall of Plaridel (April 23), Pulilan (April 24), and Calumpit (April 25). By October, the Americans were already in Tarlac. In a matter of days, on October 12, the Americans seized Tarlac. But by then, Aguinaldo had already moved northward and found safety in the town of Bayambang in Pangasinan where he set up the capital of the Philippine Republic.¹²

At this time, the Americans became even more determined to capture Aguinaldo, bring down the Philippine Republic, and thus hasten the end of the war. They operationalized their plan by organizing three teams that would trap Aguinaldo in Pangasinan. The first headed by General Henry Lawton which was already along the Rio Grande in Nueva Vizcaya would march toward Lingayen and capture the nearby towns. The team headed by General Loyd Wheaton would sail from Manila up to Lingayen Gulf.

General Arthur MacArthur would lead the third team and travel north from Manila by train. When the three teams arrived in the vicinity of Lingayen, lying in wait for them were the soldiers of General Manuel Tinio who comprised the rear guard defending the escape of Aguinaldo. Heavy fighting ensued in the towns of San Fabian, San Jacinto, and Pozorrubio.¹³

On November 13, 1899 Aguinaldo's retreat to the north underwent its second phase.¹⁴ From Bayambang Aguinaldo continued marching to northern Pangasinan. With him was his wife (Hilaria del Rosario) and sister, the Leyva sisters, Colonel Manuel Sityar and his wife, General Concepcion and his aide, Commanders Tirona and Jeciel, the Governor of Pangasinan, Drs. Barcelona and Villa, and War Commissioner Timoteo Paez.¹⁵

Aguinaldo and his retinue passed through the towns of Malasiqui, San Carlos, Calasiao, Sta. Barbara, Manaoag, Pozorrubio, and Alava. They crossed the boundary separating Pangasinan and La Union entering Rosario, pushing forward to Aringay, Bauan, Naguilian, Balaong, Namacpacan, and Bangar. Thereafter, they continued their northward direction toward Ilocos Sur entering the province through Tagudin and then to Santa Cruz, Santa Lucia, and Candon.¹⁶

In Candon Aguinaldo began his perilous ascent to the Cordillera. From here he passed by Salcedo, Concepcion,¹⁷ Angaki¹⁸ and Cervantes arriving there on November 30. However, Aguinaldo and his party could not rest easy since news reached him that the Americans were already

in Candon since two days earlier and with orders to leave immediately and to position their forces between Aguinaldo's troops commanded by General Gregorio del Pilar and the army of General Manuel Tinio coming from Abra. Instead of leaving Cervantes with Aguinaldo, General Gregorio del Pilar returned to Angaki and then to Tirad. He joined his men who were encamped in the pass. The Americans started shelling the place but General del Pilar's men successfully repulsed them. On December 2, while standing on a promontory surveying the ground, General del Pilar was shot in the neck which killed him instantly.¹⁹

Now without a rear guard to secure his safety and his fleeing party, Aguinaldo's continuing trek across the Cordillera became even more dangerous. He cut across Cayan, Tadian, Bontoc, Talubing, Ambayaoan, Banaue, Pinang, Alimit, Ayangan, then Oscariz.²⁰ Oscariz was both an end and a beginning. In Aguinaldo's original plan, upon reaching Oscariz he would go south to Bayombong in Nueva Vizcaya by way of Bagabag and Solano and then to Tayug in eastern Pangasinan where he would establish his new base of operations. In fact, he had already ordered supplies to be sent there in anticipation of this development. However, this did not happen. The Americans found out about Aguinaldo's plan. General Lawton whose army already held Nueva Vizcaya received instructions to send some of his forces to Tayug and prevent Aguinaldo from setting up camp there.²¹

Since pursuing American forces were already encamped in Nueva Vizcaya, Aguinaldo had no other choice but to abandon his original plan. From Oscariz Agunaldo began

an extended phase of his trek across the Cordillera. His intention was to proceed farther away from the reach of General Lawton's army. He pressed on in a northeastward direction to the lands inhabited by the Itaves people in western Isabela. He bypassed the military districts of Quiangan (Ifugao today) and Bontoc and entered the military district of Saltan (Kalinga today). Aguinaldo was now in the deep recesses of the eastern Cordillera. From Butiqui he advanced northward to Manoc and from thereon, marched directly westward to the general area of Gaddan, Taluctoc, and Mabuntot until reaching Lubuagan.²²

Lubuagan is one of the more important places in Aguinaldo's Cordillera Itinerary. It was in Lubuagan where Aguinaldo stayed the longest. He arrived in Lubuagan on March 6, 1900 and left on May 17, 1900. He was in Lubuagan for a total of 72 days. Aguinaldo could stay longer in Lubuagan for two reasons. Firstly, there was no news reaching him of Americans approaching from their rear. Hence, after days of traveling in earnest and with great speed, they could now rest, recuperate, or regain their strength in the safe and secure confines of Lubuagan. Secondly, Lubuagan was much nearer to the military camps of his revolutionary generals that had not yet been overcome by the Americans. In Lubuagan he received reports from General Manuel Tinio who was based in Vigan and General Juan Villamor who was based in Bangued on the progress of the war against the Americans. From Lubuagan also he gave instructions to other officers in various parts of northern Luzon to defend their stations and to advance against the Americans. While in Lubuagan, Aguinaldo found time to discharge the functions of President of the

Philippine Republic. He wrote letters to his officials in Manila and to the Comite Central Filipino or the *Junta* in Hong Kong. He reconnoitered the areas in the vicinity to seek ways to better defend himself and his men.²³

On the lighter side, it was in Lubuagan where Aguinaldo celebrated his birthday in 1900. At 12 o'clock noon of March 22, 1900, lunch was served which consisted of the following:²⁴

First Course	paella valenciana
Second Course	spring chicken stuffed with sweet potatoes with a loving strawberry sauce
Third Course	roasted pig
Fourth Course	cocido
Fifth Course	apritada in the Lubuagan mountain style, basi wine of the mountains, fruits of the season, sweets, thunder jelly

AGUINALDO’S TRAVAILS IN THE CORDILLERA

While he was in the Cordillera, Aguinaldo was safe from capture by the Americans especially as he went into the deep recesses of its forests and elevated areas. However, capture was not the only high anxiety that tormented Aguinaldo and his men. Night and day, they were also distressed by the serious challenges that wreaked havoc to their physical ability to continue their march across the mountain fastness of the Cordillera Central.

The first month on the run proved to be most difficult physically. Coming from the relative comforts of the plains of Pangasinan and La Union, Aguinaldo and his party had to adjust to the changing geography and temperature once they reached the Cordillera. One of the earlier physical challenges that they faced was the cold weather. Aguinaldo and his men began their ascent to the Cordillera in November of 1899 when a drop in the temperature began to be felt. The cold climate continued in the following month of December.

NOVEMBER 15, 1899

“It was 5 o’clock in the afternoon; it was raining hard; at 8 o’clock in the evening, we arrived in Famy (a Rancheria of Rosario), a settlement located at the foot of the mountain. We were all wet but we could not change, for our clothes are with the soldiers of the rear guard.”²⁵

DECEMBER 2, 1899

“We arrived there (Cayan) at midnight; we continued to Tadian, then to Bagnen, crossing higher mountains; it is 3 o’clock in the morning, the cold is killing us, the wind blows fiercely. The cold seems almost to reach our very bones, while our skin is numb and our lips blue...”²⁶

By March of the following year, it was no longer the cold but the smoldering heat that bogged down the marching pace of Aguinaldo and his men.

MARCH 6, 1900

“We climbed slowly, being affected by the heat of the sun which obscured our sight. Our clothes were wet with perspiration, our breath came with difficulty and our knees trembled. It was not possible to rest because the mountain is devoid of vegetation and the heat of the sun causes dizziness.”²⁷

Another difficulty was fatigue. Aguinaldo and his men had to be constantly on the go. This did not leave them enough time to stop and rest.

DECEMBER 2, 1899

“The first rays of sunlight appear in the East; night has vanished; the intensity of the cold remains the same but we do not stop to rest.”²⁸

DECEMBER 21, 1899

“We stop to rest a little; being very tired, we lie down, the ground as our mattress; ... A feeling of fatigue seems to rob us our consciousness. Thus we fall asleep.”²⁹

Even periods of rest had to be short.

DECEMBER 21, 1899

“We left Banaue. At 10:45 am we began ascending Mt. Polis, 2,700 meters high. It was 5 o'clock and we had not rested. We passed a beautiful spring where we stopped

to eat to strengthen us on our trip up which was not even halfway. Soon after we finished our meal, which lasted scarcely fifteen minutes, we moved on.”³⁰

The trek itself was difficult.

NOVEMBER 14, 1899

“We struggled our way into this town (Santa Barbara) because of the mud, which reached up to our knees and made our advance very difficult”³¹

Hunger was a real problem to Aguinaldo and his men:

NOVEMBER 15, 1899

“But we ate little as there was not enough food to satisfy our hunger”³²

At times, there was food available. However, it was not always enough, nutritious and different (as there was not much variety):

DECEMBER 7, 1899

“There was an abundance of *camotes* but rice was so scarce that our meals had been reduced to twice a day; the first consisted of *camotes* cooked at 9 o'clock in the morning and the second at 3 o'clock in the afternoon consisted of rice and viands. Our ration was one half chupa (equivalent to about 1/3 of a liter) only so we never felt satisfied. When viand was not available, and this really was

scarce, we had *camote* tops or pepper leaves cooked in salt and water. Sometimes, when rice was scarce, *camote* took its place in our afternoon meal, so we had *camotes* for one whole day.”³³

Despite the fatigue, they could not just stop and rest whenever they became tired. Even if they were tired, they had to go on because the Americans were steadily gaining on them.

NOVEMBER 15, 1899

“Gen. Tinio suddenly arrived with his few forces to inform us that the Americans are in pursuit. We started marching again.”³⁴

Also the group had to be prepared to resume their trek at any hour of the day or night.

NOVEMBER 19, 1899

“Major Jeciel returned at 5 o’clock in the afternoon with the news that the Americans had succeeded in capturing the town of Santo Tomas and had moved as far as Aringay. As the latter is only 2 or 3 hours’ walk from Naguilian, the President ordered the departure of everybody at midnight”³⁵

DECEMBER 3, 1899

“Without even taking our breakfast we continued our trip across mountain ranges and at 11 o’clock we arrived

at the rancheria of Sagada; ... At 12:30 we left for Bontoc and reached it at 5 o'clock in the afternoon"³⁶

DECEMBER 6, 1899

"At 10 o'clock at night we began our journey to Banaue, passing through Ambayuan, which we reached at midnight. We go on, ascending Mt. Polis to its summit, about 2,700 meters high."³⁷

The fear for their safety was constant and real especially after news reached them of the death of General Gregorio del Pilar.

DECEMBER 2, 1899:

"At 5 o'clock in the afternoon, the President received a verbal report from two officers that the Americans had captured our trenches in Tirad and that Gen. del Pilar had died from a shot in the head. At 8 o'clock that night, the President with his companions and the remaining forces left Cervantes for the Cayan settlement; we arrived there at midnight. We continued to Tadian, then to Bagnen, crossing higher mountains."³⁸

Anticipation too was a constant torment.

DECEMBER 25, 1899

"Are the Americans coming? We suspected this at once for Ambayuan is very near Banaue. We went to see the lights but they were far away. We waited until 11 and 12

o'clock for the lights to come nearer. Overcome by fatigue and loss of sleep, we went back to bed fully dressed with our shoes on and guns near us; the soldiers had their guns and their cartridge belts with them."³⁹

EARLIER TRAVELERS IN THE CORDILLERA CENTRAL

Before Aguinaldo made his hazardous trek, the Cordillera had already seen other travelers making their way into its mountain fastness. Unlike Aguinaldo, however, these travelers were foreigners and not enemies or fugitives being pursued or hunted.

Spanish soldiers were sent to the Cordillera Central by Spanish governors-generals to search for gold. Soon after Miguel Lopez de Legazpi established a permanent Spanish capital in Manila in 1571, he began sending expeditions to various parts of the country not only to subdue the natives but also to prospect for gold. Legazpi sent two trusted lieutenants, Juan de Salcedo and Martin de Goiti, to explore Camarines and Ilocos which according to reports were rich in gold. Salcedo allegedly returned to Manila from his expedition to the Ilocos with 50 pounds of gold.⁴⁰

Reports of gold in various areas in the Cordillera perpetuated the belief in the mineral potential of the region. In 1576 Governor-General Francisco de Sande reported to the King that the expedition that he sent out indicated that the best gold mines were located in the province of Ilocos. The existence of wealthy communities

in the headwaters of the Pampanga and Cagayan Rivers prompted Governor-General Santiago de Vera to send an expedition there headed by a local chieftain. Unfortunately for the Spaniards, the local chieftain turned back due to the hostility of the people there. However, the same local chieftain agreed to lead expeditions later organized, first, by Governor-General Gomez Perez Dasmariñas and later, by his son Luis Perez Dasmariñas. He succeeded in reaching the Cagayan River Valley in the area of present-day Aritao, Dupax, and Bayombong. He was able to get tribute from the people in the form of gold jewelry.⁴¹

Probably, the most important of the gold-searching expeditions was the one headed by Sergeant-Major Alonso Martin Quirante. He left Manila for Pangasinan on foot on December 22, 1623 and arrived in Aringay on February 11, 1624 with a force that included soldiers, natives to serve as miners recruited in Pangasinan and Ilocos, armorers, carpenters, smiths and sawyers. From Aringay he went ahead to Duplas, and then Galan where he found new gold mines. He set up camp here and built a fort which he called Fort Santiago.⁴²

Quirante succeeded in opening the gold mines and to have samples of gold ores assayed. However, the effort of nearly two months of smelting the gold ore samples yielded only 5,600 kilograms of gold. Upon his return to Manila, the Royal Audiencia ordered all further search for Igorot gold mines to cease in view of the huge costs incurred vis-a-vis the miniscule potential for abundant returns. The verdict of the Royal Audiencia with regards the findings of the Quirante expedition was both a boon and a bane. It was

a blessing for the people of the Cordillera because it halted for about two hundred years the intrusion of Spaniards in search for gold in the Cordillera. On the other hand, it was a disaster to the Spaniards who had dreamed of a huge windfall of wealth through gold mining in the Cordillera.⁴³

Spanish missionaries also traveled to the Cordilleras with the purpose to convert the native peoples whom the Spaniards collectively called Igorots. For the overseas expansion of the Spanish empire, Christianization was as much important as the acquisition of territory. After all, the Spanish kings took pride in affirming themselves as defenders of the Christian faith.⁴⁴ The Christianization of the Cordillera was carried out by missionaries who years earlier had already begun the evangelization of the provinces flanking the eastern and western borders of the Cordillera Central. Since the 1570s, the Augustinians and the Dominicans had been establishing missions and building churches for the evangelization of Ilocos and Cagayan, respectively.⁴⁵

Missionaries entered the Cordillera from two directions. The ascent from the east was rather difficult and hazardous. It entailed following the headwaters of the Magat River going north toward the Caraballo Mountains in Nueva Vizcaya (today the area encompassed by Aritao, Dupax, and Bayombong) to reach a region in the Cordillera then known as Ituy. Fray Alejandro Cacho, an Augustinian friar, began his travel to Ituy further south—in Carranglan, Nueva Ecija—and then hiked over the Caraballo Mountains.⁴⁶ The approach from the west, i. e. the Ilocos was easier. Here the Cordillera sloped

almost near the coast. This kind of terrain thus made travel to and from the Cordillera less tough and arduous. For years this particular geography of the land allowed more frequent contact between highlanders and lowlanders. In fact, ascent from Vigan to Abra could be completed in two days by horseback.⁴⁷ Moreover, the crossing to Abra could be accomplished by following the Abra River up to its source which was the southern section of Mount Data or the Tineg River which begins in the upper areas of Abra.⁴⁸

Altogether, opening up the Cordillera for the purpose of evangelization exacted much from the missionaries. The ascent itself was difficult. It required hiking long distances. In many instances they were met by fierce resistance from the natives. Hence, the evangelization of the Cordillera did not proceed smoothly in the Ilocos and Cagayan and in many other regions in Luzon and in the Visayas. The manifestations of successful evangelization—the acceptance of Christianity and its accompanying rituals and services and the establishment of settled communities in accordance with the prescriptions of the “Ordinances Concerning Discoveries, Settlements and Pacification of the Indies”⁴⁹—did not materialize in the Cordillera. Nonetheless, there were inhabitants who agreed to be baptized but their acceptance of Christianity was in name only. There were also those who paid some tribute so that the government would allow them to continue their trade with the lowlanders.⁵⁰

In the first quarter of the 19th century another set of travelers arrived in the Cordillera. These were Spanish soldiers comprising a military unit called *Comandancia del*

Pais de Igorrotes y las Partidas del Norte de Pangasinan. They were sent to the Cordillera to locate and destroy the tobacco fields of the Igorots.⁵¹ Some years earlier in 1781, Governor-General Jose Basco y Vargas established a monopoly on the planting of tobacco to raise additional revenue for the colonial government's operating expenditures. Designated by the colonial government for the exclusive planting of tobacco were the regions on the flanks of the Cordillera such as the Ilocos provinces in northwestern Luzon and the province of Cagayan which then included Isabela and Nueva Vizcaya in northeastern Luzon. All tobacco harvests were to be surrendered to the government which shall then manufacture them into cigars and cigarettes and sold in government tobacco stores.⁵² However, the Igorots in the Cordillera did not abide by the guidelines of Basco's tobacco monopoly. They planted tobacco and sold their tobacco harvests to the Ilocanos who manufactured these into cigars and cigarettes for their own use. The Igorot-Ilocano contraband tobacco trade resulted in a loss for the colonial government.⁵³

In command of the *Comandancia del Pais de Igorrotes* was Lieutenant Colonel Guillermo Galvey. He ascended the Cordillera from Agoo in 1828 with a force of about a dozen Spanish officers, 50 Spanish soldiers, and 200 *polistas* (Filipinos rendering draft labor service). His target was "Valle de Benguet" (today the Trinidad Valley) which he described "as a very large town situated in a broad and fertile valley the inhabitants of which were very rich and brave people and made war upon the pagans of the foothills."⁵⁴

During his 10-year sojourn in the Cordillera Central, Galvey visited many other places in this mountain region. Outside of the Valle de Benguet, he went to Sayangan, Kapangan, Bakun, Kamantakba, and Kayan. In 1830 he prepared for a trek to the Magat Valley stopping at Karao, Ambayek, Bambang, and Dupax. Galvey also reached as far east as Kiangnan and Mayaoyao, and as far north as Baay in Abra.

Galvey mounted 45 punitive expeditions against the Igorots between 1829 and 1839. He brought destruction to every place that he and his men visited. They destroyed hectare-upon-hectare of Igorot planting fields and burned hundreds of Igorot houses. Their incursion into the Cordillera introduced smallpox in epidemic proportions that considerably decreased the Igorot population. By 1840, the effect of Galvey's punitive expeditions began to be felt. The number of houses in Valle de Benguet that used to be 500 was reduced to less than a hundred. After 20 years, in 1860, the population of Igorot communities in the entire Agno River Valley was less than 250. By 1880, the Igorots had abandoned their rice terraces southwest of Quiangan due to the disease.⁵⁵

In the 19th century another set of travelers arrived at the Cordillera. There were four of them who were German in nationality. Their interest on the Cordillera was related neither to evangelization, conquest, and colonization of the people nor to the opening and exploitation of gold mines like their Spanish predecessors. Theirs was a different goal altogether. They went to the Cordillera to search for new knowledge.⁵⁶

Carl Semper was from Altona (Hamburg). He arrived in the Philippines in 1858 to make a firsthand study of Philippine biology, zoology, and anthropology. To conduct his studies, he went to various places in the country such as Zamboanga and Basilan in 1859, Cagayan Valley in 1860, Bohol, Cebu, Leyte, and Mindanao in 1863. He went to the Cordillera in 1861. He began his ascent from the town of San Nicolas in Pangasinan which he described as the last Christian settlement at the foot of the Caraballo Mountains. He followed the waters of the Agno River until he reached Benguet. He then visited the villages of Kabayan and Buguias in Benguet and later proceeded to the village of Mankayan at the foot of Mount Data. He described in great detail the physical features of the people, their clothing and ornaments, their houses, their livestock, their festivals, and their religion. His article entitled "Trip through the Northern Provinces of the Island of Luzon,"⁵⁷ was based on his travel in the Cordilleras.

Richard von Drasche was born in Vienna. He went to the Philippines in 1875 as part of a group studying regional volcanoes and volcanic formations in Asia. He began his ascent to the Cordillera from the town of Aringay in La Union. He arrived in La Trinidad, capital of Benguet, after a 10-hour ride by horseback on the mountain trail.⁵⁸ From here he made a 10-hour journey to the Agno River from where he began a three-and-half day hike to Mankayan which was already a part of the military district of Lepanto and then a further 10-hour ride to Cayan, capital of Lepanto. He went further on to Sagada and Bontoc, capital of the military district of the same name. He returned to Cayan by way of Besao and then followed the Abra River up to

Angaki and then descended towards Vigan. Throughout his journey he made detailed descriptions of the people, their customs, traditions and way of life, and of the flora and fauna of the landscape. He used these data in writing an article entitled “The Military Districts of Benguet, Lepanto and Bontoc.”⁵⁹

Hans Meyer was born in Hildburghausen. He did extensive studies on history, political science, anthropology, and botany in the universities in Leipzig, Berlin and Strasbourg. After earning his doctorate, traveled far and wide, which brought him to various places like Egypt, India, Malay Archipelago, China, Japan, and the Philippines. He arrived in the country in 1882. At the young age of 24, he began his travel to the Cordillera. He left Manila by boat which dropped anchor in San Fernando, La Union. From there he took a *calesa* to Aringay where he began his ascent to the Cordillera. Guided by the map book of Manuel Scheidnagel, Meyer and his party hiked on foot arriving in La Trinidad by sunset of the same day. He proceeded to visit other villages like Ambuklao, Kabayan, Buguias, Suyoc, Mancayan, Cayan, Angaki, Bangued, Balbalasang, and Guinaang. Out of his travels in the Cordillera, Meyer wrote the articles “A Trip to the Igorots in the Interior” and “The Igorots.”⁶⁰

Alexander Schadenberg was born in Breslau. Professionally, he was a chemist. In 1876 he went to the Philippines as part of the pharmaceutical firm of Pablo Sartorius. While in the Philippines, he became interested in the non-Christianized peoples who lived in the remote areas of the country. An illness forced him to return to

Germany but he came back to the Philippines in 1881. He went to Mindanao to study the Bagobo people and the Samal burial caves. He returned to Europe using the data that he collected to lecture in the Anthropological Congress in Berlin. He returned to the Philippines in 1885 was bent on visiting the Cordillera. He based himself in Vigan to enable him to to go to the Cordillera as often as possible. Like Hans Meyer, he went to Balbalasang and Guinaang. But unlike Hans Meyer and even Richard von Drasche and Carl Semper, he was able to survey a larger area of the Cordillera traversing places in the the mountain region such as Lepanto, Bontoc, Banaue, and Alimit all the way to Nueva Vizcaya and Calanasan in Apayao. Using his notes on the Cordillera people, he wrote three articles: “The Banao People and the Guinaangs, Gran Cordillera Central,” “Tribes Living in the Interior of Northern Luzon,” and “The Ethnography of Northern Luzon.”⁶¹

For Aguinaldo and the travelers aforementioned, above, the Cordillera was an unknown region. Their journeys to the Cordillera were all maiden travels. In the Cordillera they experienced what the “unknown” had waiting for them—something that requires discovery, identification, or clarification.⁶²

CONCLUSION

In November 1899 Aguinaldo began a journey to the “unknown”—the Cordillera Central. Previous to this date, the length and breadth of Aguinaldo’s known world was Cavite. In Cavite Aguinaldo played his two most important roles in Philippine history. First, he served as

a revolutionary general in various battles against Spain, among them the Battle of Binakayan, Battle of Zapote Bridge, and the Battle of Alapan. Second, he acted as a stalwart father of the Filipino nation for his proclamation of Philippine independence in Kawit in 1898. But in the Cordillera, Aguinaldo was a virtual stranger vulnerable to the many difficulties posed by an inhospitable environment and the danger of capture by the Americans. The Cordillera Central was devoid of the familiarity of the Cavite landscape and the support of his comrades-in-arms.

Aguinaldo though was not the first to travel in the Cordillera Central. He was preceded by Spanish soldiers searching for gold, Augustinian and Dominican friars intent on Christianizing the Igorots, soldiers of the *Comandancia del Pais de Igorrotes* authorized to destroy fields planted to tobacco by the Igorots, German scientists eager to study the mountain region and the Igorots, and soldiers of the *comandancias politicos-militares* established in various parts of the Cordillera Central to consolidate the region under a more organized umbrella of the colonial government.

Despite the many difficulties encountered, Aguinaldo's trek through the Cordillera yielded positive effects. First, Aguinaldo made a successful transit from Pangasinan to Isabela. His eventual capture by the Americans took place in Isabela and not in the Cordillera.

Second, by eluding the Americans, he was able to prolong the life of the Philippine Republic for nearly 16 months of which 12 months were spent in the Cordillera.

Third, by his presence in the Cordillera he was able to extend the reach of the Philippine Republic to areas that previously were outside of the circle of the revolutionary struggle for Philippine independence initially against Spain and later against America.

Fourth, Lubuagan remains as one of the unrecognized capitals-on-the-move of the Philippine Republic in the same rank or standing as San Isidro (Nueva Ecija), Tarlac (Tarlac), Bayambang (Pangasinan), and Palanan (Isabela). Aguinaldo stayed in Lubuagan for some considerable time (72 days) dispatching orders to and receiving reports from his officers and officials.

Lastly, Aguinaldo's march into the mountain stronghold of the Cordillera lends truism to the belief of indigenous Filipinos in the efficaciousness of mountains as places of safety and refuge. Aguinaldo's journey from 1899 to 1901 brings to mind the many instances in the previous centuries of revolts whereby after forcibly entering the town, assaulting and killing the *cura parroco*, *encomendero* or *alcalde mayor*, destroying the church, the tribunal and other government buildings, and burning the town, the armed natives would withdraw to the mountains where they were safe from being captured by the Spanish military authorities, and free from proselytizing by the parish priests, and tax collection by the *gobernadorcillo*.

NOTES

- 1 dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/unknown
- 2 Salvador y Conde, J., *El libro de los viajes*. STVDIVM, ediciones Bailen: Madrid, 1970; “5 of History’s Most Famous Travellers” love2fly.iberia.com/2018/08/travellers-history; “10 Most Legendary (And Infamous) Travelers in History” thoughtcatalog.com/matthew-kepnes/2014/02/10-most.; “A History of Why People Travel” matadornetwork.com/bnt/a-history-of-why-people-travel; “The Greatest Historical Journeys” www.bbc.com/travel/story/20110630-greatest-historical-journeys; List of Famous Explorers in History historyplex.com/famous-explorers
- 3 Domingo C. Salita, *Geography and Natural Resources of the Philippines* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1974), 55; “Cordillera Central: mountains, Philippines.” www.britannica.com/place/Cordillera-Central-mountains.
- 4 “Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR), Republic of the Philippines,” www.chanrobles.com/legal3car.html
- 5 Nicholas Cushner, S.J. *Spain in the Philippines: From Conquest to Revolution* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University, 1971), 70.
- 6 Olivia M. Habana, “Gold Mining in Benguet: 1900–1941,” *Philippine Studies* 49, no. 1 (2001):3–41.
- 7 Civil provinces in Luzon: Batanes and Babuyanes, Cagayan, Nueva Ecija, Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur, Pangasinan, Zambales, Bataan, Pampanga, Bulacan, Tondo (Manila), Laguna, Batangas, Camarines Norte; military provinces in Luzon: Nueva Vizcaya, Cavite, Tayabas, Camarines Sur, Albay. Eliodoro Robles, *The Philippines in the Nineteenth Century* (Quezon City: Malaya Books, Inc. 1969), 98.
- 8 William Henry Scott, *The Discovery of the Igorots: Spanish Contacts with the Pagans of Northern Luzon* (Quezon City: New Day, 1977), 3–4.

- 9 The first shot of the Philippine-American War took place at 9:00 in the evening of February 4, 1899 at the corner of Sociego and Silencio Street in Santa Mesa, Manila. Doreen G. Fernandez, "The Hills of Sampaloc," *Philippine Studies*, 50, no. 3 (2002): 444–446.
- 10 Cesar C. Baroman, "History of Nueva Ecija" in *History from the Filipino People*, edited by Violeta Suarez Ignacio, vol 3, 110 (Manila: National Historical Institute and Philippine Historical Society, 1998).
- 11 There is a contention that before Aguinaldo proclaimed Tarlac as capital of the Philippine Republic on June 21, he first proclaimed Bamban as capital of the Republic on June 6. Lino Dizon, "Bamban, Tarlak Bilang Kabisera ng Republika, Junyo 1899: Nakaligtaang Palatandaan ng Kasaysayang Pilipino," in *Sulib: Mga Usapin ng Pagkabansa, 1899–1835*, edited by Rhina Alvero-Boncocan, Ma. Susana Picones-Fermin, Ryan V. Palad (Manila: National Commission for Culture and the Arts, 2009).
- 12 Teodor M. Kalaw, *Ang Himagsikang Pilipino* (Manila: Pambansang Suriang Pangkasaysayan, 1989), 122–123, 135–137.
- 13 Ibid.
- 14 Aguinaldo's trek across the Cordillera Central was fully documented through diaries kept by two of his closest confidantes, Colonel Simeon Villa and Dr. Santiago Barcelona. Through the entries in this diary, the various travails that Aguinaldo and his men experienced are described in full detail. Simeon Villa, *Aguinaldo's Odyssey: As Told in the Diaries of Col. Simeon Villa and Dr. Santiago Barcelona* (Manila: Regal Printing Co., 1963).
- 15 Teodoro M. Kalaw, *An Acceptable Holocaust: Life and Death of a Boy General* (Manila: National Historical Institute, 2003), 53.
- 16 Kalaw, *Ang Himagsikang Pilipino*, 138.
- 17 Renamed to Gregorio del Pilar. Republic Act No. 1246 An Act Changing the Name of the Municipality of Concepcion,

Province of Ilocos Sur to Gregorio del Pilar (June 10, 1955) www.officialgazette.gov.ph/1955/06/10/republic-act-no-1246

18 Today known as Quirino. “General Aguinaldo Trail: Hike & Survey” (Part #3) baldrunner.com/2014/09/08/general-aguinaldo-trail-hike...

19 Kalaw, *An Acceptable Holocaust*, 54–57.

20 At present, Oscariz is a barangay of the municipality of Ramon, Province of Isabela.

21 Arnaldo Dumindin, “Trapping Aguinaldo,” Oct 12–Nov 20, 1899, *Philippine American War 1899–1902*, www.filipinoamericanwar.com/trappingaguinaldo1899.htm

22 Kalaw, *Ang Himagsikang Pilipino*, 138.

23 Villa, 46–65.

24 Villa, 53–54.

25 Villa, 4.

26 Villa, 8.

27 Villa, 46.

28 Villa, 8.

29 Villa, 14.

30 Villa, 14.

31 Villa, 3.

32 Villa, 4.

33 Villa, 11.

34 Villa, 4.

35 Villa, 5.

36 Villa, 8.

37 Villa, 9.

38 Villa, 8.

39 Villa, 17.

40 Scott, *The Discovery of the Igorots*, 10.

41 Ibid., 11–12.

42 Alonso Martin Quirante, “Expedition to the Mines of the Igorrotes, 1624” in *The Philippine Islands: 1493–1898* edited by Emma Helen Blair and James Alexander Robertson, vol. 20, 262–306 (Cleveland: The Arthur H. Clark Col, 1903–1907). This 55-volume compilation of primary sources will hereinafter be referred simply as “Blair and Robertson.”

43 Ibid.

44 Hayes Carlton, *Medieval and Early Modern Times: The Age of Justinian to the Eighteenth Century* (New York: MacMillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1983) 314–319.

45 Baroman, 91–92.

46 Scott, *The Discovery of the Igorots*, 75–76.

47 Ibid. 107.

48 Cordillera People’s Alliance, “Public Information Commission, Dams in the Cordillera: The River Systems of the Cordillera and Their Watersheds,” 1, www.internationalrivers.org/sites/default/files/attached

49 The Ordinances consisted a set of guidelines for the founding of new towns in the Indies. Patricia Sendin. “The Spanish Colonial Town: Planning Flexibility in Spite of the Grid.” www.patriciasendin.com/2014/06/the-spanish-colonial-town-planning.html

- 50 Ibid., 75–136.
- 51 philippinediaryproject.com/.../about-guillermo-galvey
- 52 For a comprehensive study on the implementation of the tobacco monopoly in the Philippines, read Edilberto C. De Jesus, *The Tobacco Monopoly in the Philippines: Bureaucratic Enterprise and Social Change, 1876–1880* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1980).
- 53 Scott, *The Discovery of the Igorots*, 3–4.
- 54 valredolsim.blogspot.com/2017/10/valle-de-benguet.html
- 55 philippinediaryproject.com/.../about-guillermo-galvey
- 56 Wiliam Henry Scott, Ed. *German Travellers on the Cordillera, 1850-1890* (Manila: The Filipiniana Book Guild, 1975).
- 57 Ibid, 17–34.
- 58 He was welcomed by no less than the Military Commandant of Benguet, Manuel Scheidnagel, who in 1878 published his own descriptive report on Benguet entitled, *Filipinas: Distrito de Benguet* (Madrid: Impr. de la Direccion General de Infanteria).
- 59 Ibid, 35–45.
- 60 Ibid. 46–128.
- 61 Ibid., 129–171.
- 62 www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/unknown

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