LIVING IN THE PHILIPPINES: THE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE (1898–1946)

May–October 2013
American Historical Collection
Rizal Library

The exhibit displays some of the materials at the American Historical Collection related to the extensive involvement of Americans with the Philippine Islands from 1898–1946. Over sixty books, photographs, and ephemera showing various aspects of American life in the Philippines—governance, leisure, commerce, education, and so on—are on display. These materials provide a key to understanding the goals and policies of the American colonial administration.

Some of the interesting objects exhibited are the following:

_Exciting Experiences in Our Wars with Spain and the Filipinos_ (1899) tells the story of the American capture of the Philippines by following the lives of Admiral George Dewey, Brig. Gen. Funston, and Emilio Aguinaldo. The illustrated book recounts battle scenes and other moments, both heroic and incidental, in the Philippine-American war.

Official documents on public education show how the colonial mind was fashioned. Unofficial accounts by participants in the project provide a more intimate view of the process. Books displayed in this regard include Mary Fee’s _A Woman’s Impressions of the Philippines_ (1910) and William Freer’s _The Philippine Experiences of an American Teacher_ (1906). Also displayed are photographs of early school buildings and an early elementary textbook.

How is a city to be planned? A showcase is devoted to William Cameron Forbes’s efforts to populate and encourage investment in Baguio. Displayed is a 1925 photograph of a tract of Baguio landscape—what would be Burnham Park—beside which are pages from a brochure of the Manila Railroad Company (ca. 1928) showing the infrastructure that was built by Forbes’s campaign: Kennon Road, a government center, a market place, the teachers’ camp.

The Commonwealth Period is represented by these books: Jose M. Aruego’s _The Framing of the Philippine Constitution_ (1936–1937),
George A. Malcolm’s *The Commonwealth of the Philippines* (1936), and the *Blue Book of the Inauguration of the Commonwealth of the Philippines and the Induction into Office of Manuel L. Quezon, First President of the Philippines, and Sergio Osmeña, First Vice President of the Philippines. Manila, November 15, 1935* (1935).

Douglas MacArthur, a figure that continues to interest scholars, cannot be excluded. General MacArthur’s *Reminiscences* is on display, as are rare photographs (including one of the Leyte landing in 1944) related to MacArthur’s long military career.

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