PART 1

The Philippines’ Independence
From Henry Otley Beyer’s The Philippines Before Magellan
By: Charity Bagatsing Doyl
Four hundred years ago, Ferdinand Magellan anchored his little exploring fleet in Philippine waters in the evening on March 16, 1521. Herein, to most people Philippine history begins with Antonio Pigafetta's splendid diary of Magellan's voyage. Spanish colonization both in the Americas and the Philippines has been characterized by a fanatic zeal for the Christian faith and corresponding hatred for all other forms of belief led them to regard the native writings and art as works of the devil—to be destroyed wherever found.
William Henry Scott in his book the Pre-Hispanic Source materials intenerates:

“When the pre-Hispanic epoch was brought to a close by Ferdinand Magellan’s arrival in 1521, Luzon traders were sailing to Timor, Malacca and Canton, had a colony in Minjam on the Malay Peninsula, a Portuguese appointed magistrate in Malacca and marriage relations with the Sultan of Brunei, and the Manila bourgeoisie were learning to speak Malay.”
From the 12th to the 15th centuries, accounts of Bruni, Sulu, Ma-i and others of the Philippine islands became more numerous. The following abbreviated account comes from Chau Ju Kua written about 1225. The salient points of this report are as follows:

“The island of Ma-i lies north of Borneo. When trading ships enter the anchorage, they stop in front of the officials' place, for that is the place for bartering of the country. There is a great market there. After a ship has been boarded, the natives mix freely with the ship’s folk. The chiefs are in the habit of using white umbrellas, for which reason the traders offer them as gifts.”
Sixteenth century descriptions of Manila records a well fortified heavily populated trade port with special quarters for Chinese and Japanese merchants and a well-organized port area managed by a grand chieftain and a number of lesser chiefs.

Early Spanish documents provide a detailed documentation of the Southeast Asian trade industry. Asides from the Chinese junks; large trade ships from Borneo, Thailand and Japan were regularly arriving at some of the larger Philippine coastal ports: Manila, Mindoro, Pangasinan, Cebu, Jolo (Sulu), and Cotabato. Filipino traders had significant knowledge and presence at other Southeast Asian trade ports such as Melaka, Borneo, Ternate (Moluccas) and Myanmar.

Chiefs in pre-Hispanic Philippines also financed and equipped outgoing trade voyages for foreign trade. Furthermore they made attempts to attract foreign trade partners by investing in port facilities, good harborage, military protection for merchants, housing, provision and entertainment for foreign traders, and developed efficient systems for mobilizing the trade goods.
Though Luzon is mentioned early in the thirteenth century as a dependency of Ma-i, under the name Liu-sin, the first real account of the largest Philippine island appears in Chapter 323 of the Ming Annals, where it is known as Lu-sung. An embassy from this country arrived in China with tribute, in the year 1372.

The Emperor reciprocated the gifts of this embassy by dispatching an official with presents of silk gauze woven of gold and colored threads to the King of the country.

In another early account it is stated that "Luzon produces gold, which is the reason of its wealth.

Several late Sung and Yuan period Chinese documents make frequent reference to the Philippine trade centers. Ports in Sulu are described to having a well-developed organized network for exportable forest and maritime products (sandalwood, laka-wood, ebony, animal hides and pearls).
We find the following accounts of trade in Sulu from the brush of a Chinese author in 1349: “When a ship arrives there, the natives take all the goods and carry them for sale in the interior, while they also sell to the neighboring countries and when they come back, the native articles are delivered to the merchants as payment. The natives are always afraid that our ships will not return, and whenever a ship leaves, they detain some men as hostages to make sure the ship will call again.”

Medieval Filipinos merchants and mercenaries were deemed as honest business entrepreneurs throughout Southeast Asia as stated by Wang-Ta-yuan in his Tao I Chih Lueh written in 1349 after 20 years of travels in the pursuit of overseas profits “The shipboard merchants advance them credit for never have they defaulted since the beginning.”
When Magellan arrived in the Philippines, he did not come across a land occupied by ignorant wild savages but discovered one of the epicenters of the international trade industry which extended from the Atlantic to the Pacific.
Spain had three objectives in its policy toward the Philippines, its only colony in Asia:

1) Their goal in exploring Asia during the 1500s was to find ways to access and secure their share of the spice trade with the East. At that time, there was a great demand for silk, spices, porcelain, and other 'exotic' goods in the markets of Europe. Eventually this was expanded to growing cash crops like sugar, and tobacco in plantations across the Philippines.

2) The Philippines' location proved to be an ideal trading post. The Manila-Acapulco Galleon Trade between the Philippines and Mexico started in 1565 and lasted until Sept. 14, 1815. For 250 years, Spanish ships crossed the Pacific Ocean and traded in various goods such as spice, cotton, jade, ivory, silk and gold. Manila became one of the world's great ports, serving as a focus for trade between China and Europe.

3) Spain is one of the defenders of the Catholic Church against Protestant Reformation. The Philippines is not just an ideal trading post; in order to continue to receive funding from the royal treasury they had to convert the Filipinos to Catholicism, which was important to the devoutly Christian (and imperialist) Spanish kings as justification for their rule.
Spain occupied the Philippines for 333 years. The Manila-Acapulco Galleon Trade bears its remarkable significance for linking four continents and two oceans, contributing to the development of trade in Asia, Europe, North and South America. It paved the way for the widest possible exchange of material goods, cultural traditions and practices, knowledge and belief systems and peoples.

For some 250 years, it served as a formidable bridge between East and West. Today, it is considered as an early manifestation of globalization, having influenced the politics, philosophy, commerce, and trade development of almost the entire world. The Galleon Trade firmly put Manila on the world map as the largest trade hub in the Orient with solid historical links to its neighbors.
The Spanish-American War of 1898 ended Spain’s colonial empire in the Western Hemisphere and secured the position of the United States as a Pacific power.

The declared war aim of the United States was Cuban independence from Spain. This was soon accomplished. The American forces landed in Cuba on June 23 and, with the surrender of Santiago on July 16, the Spanish sued for peace through the French ambassador in Washington two days later. Events in the Cuban theatre were concluded in less than a month. The effective result in the American intervention in the Cuban War of Independence, and the Philippine Revolution, ultimately lead to the Philippine-American War.

The United States had not expressed an interest in taking over the remnants of Spain’s colonial empire. On news of Dewey’s victory, warships began arriving in Manila Bay from Britain, France, Japan and Germany. The German fleet of eight warships was especially aggressive and menacing. All of these imperial powers had recently obtained concessions from China for naval bases and designated commercial spheres of interest. American interests had reason to fear that leaving the Philippines to the designs of the imperial powers might exclude the United States from the Asia-Pacific trade altogether.

At the end of the Spanish-American War, pressure on President William McKinley to annex the Philippines was intense. Unaware that the Philippines were the only predominantly Catholic nation in Asia, President McKinley said that American occupation was necessary to “uplift and Christianize” the Filipinos.
By late July, 12,000 American troops had arrived from San Francisco. The Spanish governor, Fermin Jaudenes, negotiated the surrender of Manila with an arranged show of resistance that preserved Spanish sensibilities of honour and excluded Aguinaldo's Filipinos. The Americans took possession of Manila on August 13, 1898.

As it became apparent that the United States did not intend to recognize Philippine independence, Aguinaldo moved his capital in September from Cavite to the more defensible Malalos in Bulacan. That same month, the United States and Spain began their peace negotiations in Paris.

The Treaty of Paris was signed on December 10, 1898. By the Treaty, Cuba gained its independence and Spain ceded the Philippines, Guam and Puerto Rico to the United States for the sum of US$20 million.

The Treaty of Paris was not well received in the Philippines. Filipino nationalists were incensed at the arrogance of the imperial powers to bargain away their independence for the tidy price of US$20 million with not so much as a pretence of consultation with Filipinos.
On February 4, 1899, just two days before the U.S. Senate ratified the treaty, fighting broke out between American forces and Filipino nationalists led by Emilio Aguinaldo who sought independence rather than a change in colonial rulers.

The ensuing Philippine-American War lasted three years and resulted in the death of over 4,200 American and over 20,000 Filipino combatants. As many as 200,000 Filipino civilians died from violence, famine, and disease. The United States needed 126,000 soldiers to subdue the Philippines.

The war took the lives of 4,234 Americans and 16,000 Filipinos. As usually happens in guerrilla campaigns, the civilian population suffers the worst. As many as 200,000 civilians may have died from famine and disease.

As before, the Filipino rebels did not do well in the field. Aguinaldo and his government escaped the capture of Malalos on March 31, 1899 and were driven into northern Luzon. Peace feelers from members of Aguinaldo's cabinet failed in May when the American commander, General Ewell Otis, demanded an unconditional surrender.

Aguinaldo disbanded his regular forces in November and began a guerrilla campaign concentrated mainly in the Tagalog areas of central Luzon. Aguinaldo was captured on March 23, 1901. In Manila he was persuaded to swear allegiance to the United States and called on his soldiers to put down their arms.

The United States declared an end to military rule on July 4, 1901.
Aguinaldo was captured in March 1901 and eventually pledged allegiance to the United States. The Philippine-American War was declared to be over a year later, though Muslim fighters in the southern Philippines continued to resist until 1914.

To run America's new possession, President McKinley implemented a policy of "benevolent assimilation," under which the United States would control the Philippines temporarily while it oversaw the transition to self-rule and independence.

The colonial administration, headed by future president William H. Taft, set up local governmental bodies and a system of universal public education. But it did little to reform the land tenure system, which gave a few wealthy landlords control over the rural areas where most Filipinos lived.

Filipino nationalists suspected the United States of postponing independence indefinitely while exploiting the islands' economic resources and using their country as a military base. A 1910 editorial in a Manila journal summed up the first decade of American colonial rule as "10 years of bitter deception."
During the 1920s and 1930s, prominent Filipino nationalists like Manuel Quezon took their case for independence to Washington, D.C. Their breakthrough came in 1934, when President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed a bill that made the Philippines a commonwealth until 1946, when it would become fully independent. Quezon was elected president of the new commonwealth.

World War II interrupted the transition to independence. Within minutes of the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, Japanese airplanes bombed Manila and nearby American military bases.

Japan claimed to have liberated the islands from the "oppression and tyranny" of American rule but replaced it with something far more brutal and exploitive. Guerilla groups formed to harass Japanese forces and the Filipino puppet government they installed. The most powerful group was the Hukbalahap, or Huks, a 25,000-strong peasant army based in Luzon. The communist-influenced Huks not only attacked the Japanese but also seized land from landlords. With military aid and covert assistance from the United States, the Philippine government quashed the Huks by 1954.
MacArthur and the U.S. army returned to the Philippines in 1944. After a bloody battle for Manila, the islands were declared liberated from Japanese rule. More than 1 million Filipinos had died during the World War 2.

The United States of America granted independence to the Philippines on July 4, 1946. In accordance with the Philippine Independence Act (more popularly known as the "Tydings–McDuffie Act"), President Harry S. Truman issued Proclamation 2695 of July 4, 1946 officially recognizing the independence of the Philippines.
This presentation was prepared for the Spokane Public Library in honor of Philippine Independence Day.

THANK YOU!
For questions and comments: Charitydoyl@yahoo.com

Sources:
The Philippines Before Magellan
H. O. Beyer

The Philippine Saga
H. O. Beyer & Jaime C. De Veyra

The American Occupation of the Philippines 1898-1912
James H. Blount

www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/philippines/tl02.html

history.state.gov/milestones/1899-1913/war