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## **The New “American” Houses in the Colonial Philippines and the Rise of the Urban Filipino Elite**

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## The New “American” Houses in the Colonial Philippines and the Rise of the Urban Filipino Elite

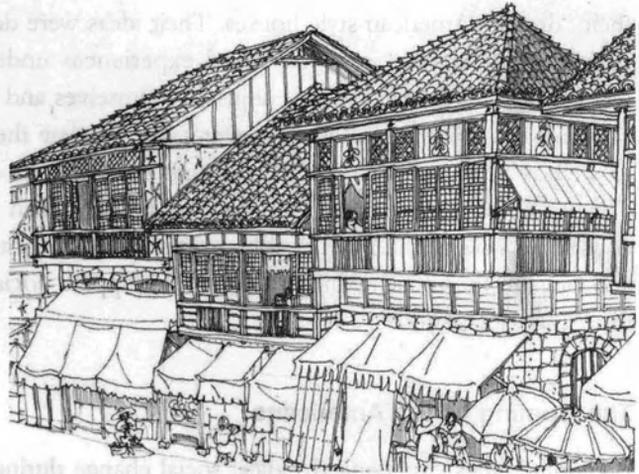
Kiyoko Yamaguchi

*In addition to the bahay na bato of the Spanish period, what other historical architectural structures can be found in Philippine cities? This article argues in favor of the importance of American-period public buildings, which showcased American superiority, and the Filipino urban elites' interpretation and appropriation of American colonial culture and their creation of “American-style” dwellings. Because Americans did not build houses either for Filipinos or for themselves, Filipino elites, particularly in regional cities where professional architects were almost non-existent, were the ones who created “American” wooden houses and thus declared their claims to colonial modernity. These elite houses then became intertwined with family histories and their rise to economic prominence, as several examples from Cebu demonstrate.*

KEYWORDS: *American colonialism, public buildings, residential architecture, family histories, Cebu*

What is Philippine historical residential architecture? Under the Marcos regime, emphasis on preserving “Filipino” heritage led to the reconstruction of the Rizal house, and later to the inclusion of the Vigan houses in the World Heritage List. The wood and stone house of the Spanish period, known in Tagalog as the *bahay na bato*, became the epitome of the historical urban house of the Philippines (fig. 1).<sup>1</sup> The stone- or brick-covered ground level, supported by inner wooden frames, was relatively resistant to the frequent earthquakes that shook the country.<sup>2</sup> Except for the massive stone churches, other forms of urban architec-

Figure 1. The Spanish-period *bahay na bato* (illustrations by the author unless noted)



ture, especially other types of historical houses, have been overlooked, if not almost forgotten. And yet Philippine architecture has been shaped by heritages other than Spanish, one of the most crucial of which dates back to the American period. Most of the extant "historical" houses were, in fact, built in the early twentieth century. Major examples of urban transportation, water systems, public edifices, and educational facilities from the American period are still in service today. It is true that some of the basics of the *bahay na bato* were applied to later houses; however, massive public works and education reforms during the American period also shaped and transformed both society and architectural styles.

This article looks at the new American-style public and private buildings and houses of the early twentieth century as tangible articulations not only of American colonial rule but also of the Filipino elite's self-perceptions, social aspirations, and appropriation of an imagined "America" in the Philippines. It examines the ways in which residential architecture in regional cities not only reflected social change and colonial hierarchy in the new era of American rule, but also shaped the lives and visions of the emergent Filipino urban residents. Even though there were new professional architects, they were small in number and their activities were concentrated in and around Manila. In the provinces, the Filipino elite expressed their social and economic success by building

their “dream” American-style houses. Their ideas were derived from their educational, occupational, and social experiences under the American regime. Filipino urban residents adjusted themselves and their lives to the different spaces they created, and even came to view their own histories, as well as their family histories, through the histories of their houses. The American-period residences constructed by urban Filipinos can be considered one of the most visible products of American colonial policy and one of the most tangible slices of Philippine social history during the American period.

### **The Coming of the Americans**

Philippine cities experienced radical social change during the early twentieth century under the colonial rule of the United States. After seizing the islands from the Spaniards in 1899, Pres. William McKinley issued the “Benevolent Assimilation Proclamation.” America’s duty was to “civilize” Filipinos with superior American culture. Under the administration of William Howard Taft, the U.S. Secretary of War, the government and the institutions of the Philippines were remodeled along American lines (Trocki 1992, 92). The Americans also adopted reforms in education, sanitary programs, and industrial and economic development. Taft stated that Americans were “guardians especially of the poor, the ignorant, and the weak, and we could not discharge our duty as such guardians” (Forbes 1985, 406). Ideally, Americans would be more philanthropic, democratic, and advanced than the Spanish-Catholic bureaucrats. In reality, the “benevolent assimilation” of the Philippines turned out to be one of the earliest—and brutal—linchpins of American colonialism.

To obtain an overall grasp of their new territory, Americans conducted various surveys, including anthropological and geographical studies all over the islands. The “majority Filipinos” were newly defined and assumed to share the same values, religion, and ethnicity. The urban plans in the regions revealed the physical scheme of colonial rule: For faster dissemination of American policies all over the archipelago, a local *poblacion* (town center) was physically connected with adjacent ones and the provincial capitol. Since the architectural and environmental reforms were an integral part of American colonialism, architects and civil engi-

neers were recruited from the United States. The most famous government-hired architect was Daniel H. Burnham from Chicago; Burnham and his successors planned two American colonial cities, Manila and Baguio, using a "City Beautiful" method.<sup>3</sup> Later in 1942, Joseph Hayden, the vice governor from 1933 to 1935, wrote that Manila had "become one of the most beautiful, healthiest, and safest cities in the Far East," and it represented an "American triumph" (Camagay 1998, 14). However, little was written about the radical transformation of Filipino domestic architecture, especially in the provinces.

### **Public Buildings: Monuments to Americanism**

William Cameron Forbes and William Howard Taft, both governors-general, regarded the development of infrastructure "as a necessary precursor to political development" (Halsema 1991, 33). The transformation of the environment was an intentional and effective tool to modify the Philippine political system. Government projects allowed professional Filipino architects to practice their skills, while underscoring, in plain view of the majority of Filipinos, the presence, role, and superiority of the American colonial government. Large-scale concrete constructions in Philippine cities were mostly government projects; not only were the scale, design, and materials new, but most of the building types were also new to the Philippines. The executive bureau guided the construction of municipal halls with geometric patterned plazas, public market structures, public elementary schools, and railway stations—facilities that were built for the first time (Moe 1912, 24). The construction of secular facilities blossomed amid American-style democracy that emphasized the power of civil governance over Spanish Catholicism.

American urban planning introduced the modern technique of large-scale construction in the Philippines, along with new materials such as concrete, steel, and glass. The permanent structure became more durable and larger in scale, compared with the Spanish-period stone structure (Cabalfin 2003, 103–5). One of the notable examples built with a new style, material, and function was the Manila Hotel. When the semi-government hotel was inaugurated on American Independence Day in 1912, the *Manila Times* headlined: "MANILA HOTEL – MONUMENT TO

AMERICANISM” (Romulo 1987, 16–17). From the late American period the Manila Hotel became a prestigious gathering place for the Manila elite; however, it started as an exclusive entertaining space for “white” Americans. The massive edifice served to distinguish Americans—and, later, Filipino elites—from the rest of the population. At the same time, American ideas on civil society were imparted to Filipino folks in rural areas (fig. 2). The parish church once was the religious, social, educational, and economic center, but with the arrival of American secular architecture the town hall and its designed front plaza, the public school and its grounds, and the permanent market structure diluted the power of the church.

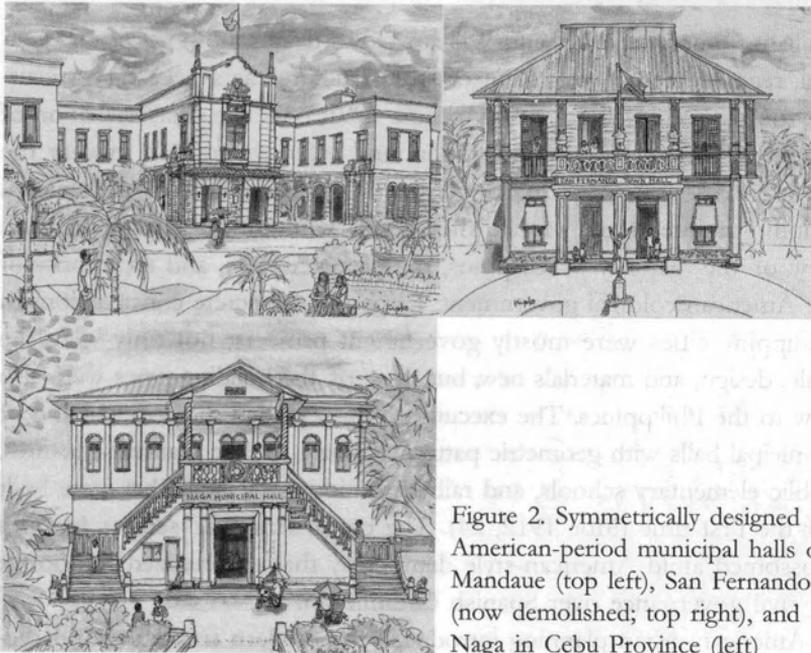


Figure 2. Symmetrically designed American-period municipal halls of Mandaue (top left), San Fernando (now demolished; top right), and Naga in Cebu Province (left)

### Education and the “New” Filipinos

The new American public education helped to disseminate the “American dream,” especially among urban Filipinos, and indirectly led to the creation of new American-style houses decades later. The educational transformation started in the early 1900s with the arrival of American

teachers who spread the English language (U.S. Embassy Manila 2001). In addition, the school building was an educational text (fig. 3). Numerous schoolhouses were built all over the archipelago, and became physical icons of the new era even in rural villages. In 1912 Kilmer O. Moe, an officer of the Buildings Division in the Bureau of Education, wrote that the plans of school premises "should receive the careful consideration and united support of everyone interested in the public schools of these islands," because the environmental change would have the strongest appeal to and influence "upon the growth and importance of the public school system." The school site itself was a major component in education, or, in Moe's words, "even more important than class-room instruction" (Moe 1912, 24). Architecture served as a well-planned American education tool, not only for pupils but also for the surrounding rural community.

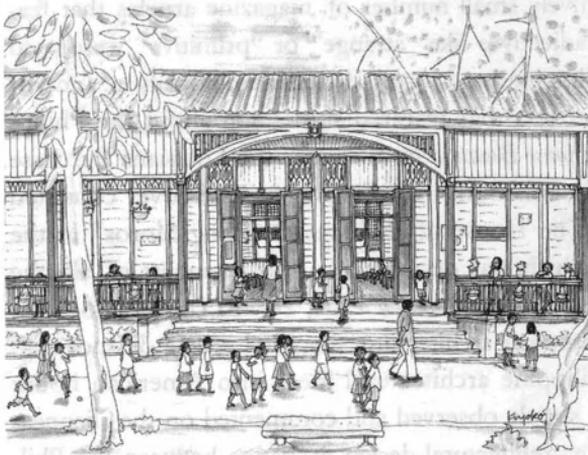


Figure 3. Typical elementary school building, Aloguinsan, Cebu

Through instruction and extracurricular activities around the school premises, young Filipinos began imagining America and the American way of life. Filipino children learned about American heroes, pledged allegiance to the American flag, and looked at pictures of American scenery. America also became the land of dreams and opportunities for Filipino laborers. In the early 1920s, Filipinos "were always talking about going to America, to Hawaii in particular" (Scharlin and Villanueva 2002, 52–53).<sup>4</sup> The public school, even when presided over by only one American teacher, was influential enough. In 1945 Forbes (1985, 192), proudly

reflecting on the American achievement in developing public education, reported that “no other tropical country has attempted to build up a complete school system with a distinctive type of architecture.” The United States relied on architecture to demonstrate the superiority of its culture, values, and way of life to those of Spanish-period Philippines as well as other Western colonizers in the tropics. Americans united the dispersed and diverse islands with public education, letting the pupils share the same kind of space and doctrines.

### **Print and Images of Architecture in the United States**

How did Americans in the United States view the Philippines? Most of them were not interested in the Philippines and in its architecture and culture, and did not even know the geographic location of the Philippines. Among the relatively small number of magazine articles that featured the Philippines, adjectives like “strange” or “primitive” were used to characterize the Philippines and justify American colonialism. One of the earliest magazine covers that featured something about the Philippines appeared in *The House Beautiful* to introduce the Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1904 (fig. 4). The cover consisted of a photograph of “The House of the Tree-Dwelling Moros” in the southern Philippines, which was described as “the strangest of all [the exhibited native houses]” (*House Beautiful* 1904, 24). In contrast to other issues that featured European architecture, the 1904 article did not suggest incorporating Philippine architectural ideas into American house designs; the Americans simply observed and commented on the alienness of tropical houses. The architectural-design exchange between the Philippines and the United States was a one-way traffic.

In 1917 A. N. Rebori introduced Philippine architecture in *The Architectural Record*, a long-running architectural magazine in the United States. In his opinion, “[u]nlike other Oriental countries, as Japan, Korea and China, the Philippines have developed no peculiar architectural or art traditions of their own” (Rebori 1917, 305). Similar to other American writers of that time, Rebori observed only the Spanish churches and pantropical nipa huts. The Spanish-period urban residence, the bahay na bato, which today is considered an exemplar of the Filipino style, was

also regarded as "Spanish-developed architecture" (ibid., 315). To Americans the Philippines was a tabula rasa for architectural development, and they thought it their mission to help create a "real" Filipino tradition. Similarly, in February 1919, government architect Ralph Harrington Doane wrote in *The Architectural Review* that it was the Americans' pride to be the superior master designer of the Philippines. He claimed the Philippine islands were "ours," and that American architects with the higher civilization should build "real" colonial architecture (Doane 1919, 25). In a follow-up piece that appeared in May 1919, Doane (ibid., 116) continued that there was no native architecture in the Philippines, so it was reasonable to import ready-made Western styles with some local modifications (fig. 5). Indeed, the "new colonial architecture" was realized in massive public facilities around Manila, a demonstration of the power of the United States. Still, very few articles on the Philippines appeared in American magazines in the United States, and even by the end of the American period the American public was not much interested in the Philippines.

### **Print and Images of Architecture in the Colony**

In the Philippines print, in the form of illustrations and photographs in magazines, was the main source of images and views of contemporary American culture, including housing. The daily American newspapers, such as the *Manila Daily Bulletin*, *Manila Times*, and *Cablenews American*, quickly delivered new ideas to Philippine cities through advertisements of foreign products and lifestyles (Halsema 1991, 28). Various American items were advertised in magazines as fun, healthy, and fashionable (fig. 6). Although it is not known if American architectural magazines were brought to the Philippines, other magazines—through images of American scenery, housekeeping, and lifestyle—worked just as well in conveying new ideas about space and living.

The subscription advertisements in *Philippine Education* in 1912 indicate that many American families in the Philippines received three or more imported periodicals, which helped them retain a psychological connection to their homeland. At the same time, urban Filipinos gained access to used magazines from their American employers. In the 1920s, writer



Figure 4. Cover of *House Beautiful*, 1914

The Foundation of a GOOD EDUCATION IS GOOD HEALTH and "BEAR" BRAND MILK

stands pre-eminent for improving the health of your children!

WILD EVERYWHERE IN LARGE AND SMALL CANS

Advertisements of natural milk with a toned gel and of corned beef/Philippine Magazine 1910 269; 306, 420

Bar Libby's

Corned Beef

For a properly balanced diet!

"ODEON" ELECTRIC RECORDS

Press the electric to gramophone records - you will find them all with most important musical records at low prices in quantity.

BEHN, MEYER & CO., 11, 111, American Building, Manila

Advertisements of Ivory Soap and American electric records/Philippine Magazine 1910 273; 188, 195

and Beautiful are usually there

Backcover of the magazine advertisement and depicts a sophisticated American

Figure 6. Magazines conveyed new ideas with visual images

THE ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW

Provincial Capitol Building at Tacloban, Leyte, P. I.  
Ralph Harrington Doane, Architect

effort is not inconceivable to those who have been there. In the first place these lands abound in stores of untouched natural resources. In the second place, right or wrong, it is nevertheless a fact that American and European styles are the vogue, in oriental countries; and in the third place American architects in business in the United States now actually have lucrative commissions in the far East. Furthermore, various American construction companies and sellers of building materials have successfully established their agencies in these remote parts, over 10,000 miles distant from their home offices. This condition of affairs makes the story of American Architecture in the Philippines pertinent and interesting to the profession at this time.

Some general idea of geography is necessary, before the possibilities of this archipelago can

Main Facade, Provincial Capitol Building, Lingayen, P. I.  
Ralph Harrington Doane, Architect

Figure 5. The public buildings in American style (Doane 1919a, 27)

Lina Espina Moore, who later recollected her childhood during the "happy colonial" American period, looked forward to reading the *Saturday Evening Post* from her father's office, the Shell Gasoline Asiatic Petroleum Cebu. Filipinos born during the American period "would have a bit of that [Campbell Soup] kewpie, antedating Betty Boop by decades, and that Goodyear boy in his/her psyche." In addition, the urban upper-middle class read contemporary American novels by F. Scott Fitzgerald or Ernest Hemingway at the newly built public library (Manlapaz 2000, 65–69). The introduction of contemporary American literature and popular culture, via mass printed books and magazines, enabled Filipinos to consume and creatively appropriate American products, fashion, scenery, and space.

In addition, American magazines published in Manila played a crucial role in setting new housing standards in a tropical environment while simultaneously conveying the colonizers' views on Philippine architecture. One of the most widely circulated and influential periodicals was the monthly magazine published by the Philippine Education Company in Manila.<sup>5</sup> The *Philippine Education* magazine contained various sections, and its readers were not limited to American and Filipino school teachers. The magazine included articles on housekeeping, which were meant to upgrade Filipino life and make better, healthier Filipinos. In the August 1910 issue, for example, Prescott Jernegan, an American teacher at the Philippine Normal School, advised readers *not to keep animals in and under the house*, adding that "no matter how small the grounds in which your house stands you should make something grow there." Jernegan (1910) also criticized Filipinos for gambling at cockpits, "who might spend their money in building better houses," and "no work or money will be better spent than making a good home," because "Good people build good houses and good houses help to make good people." If people neglected these suggestions in the article and continued to live as they were, "from such homes it is not likely that good citizens will come" (*ibid.*). An orderly environment and lifestyle were deemed crucial for turning Filipinos into "good" citizens.

A physician named Isaac Brewer (1911, 170) wrote a series of articles on health and the living environment, recommending durable modern steel and concrete for sanitary reasons. Similarly, the magazine advised

readers on the rudiments of better housing, which focused more on health than on aesthetics. Since Philippine cities were suffering from cholera and other diseases, the illustrations served as warnings against the “native” lifestyle. An article in the January 1913 issue depicts a local family dining near their nipa huts, with the caption “Eating with the fingers from a common dish; one of the ways in which disease germs are spread” (fig. 7) (*Philippine Education* 1913, 298–99). Most of the illustrations indicate that the majority lived in wooden or nipa huts (fig. 8); very few could afford modern materials, and rebuilding all the nipa houses was unrealistic. Thus, at least one characteristic of the nipa house—its natural ventilation—was positively evaluated, as in an article in the October 1912 issue (*ibid.*, 1912, 160–61). It is notable that Americans advocated the new lifestyle for health and sanitary reasons, but did not actually concern themselves with planning model houses for Filipinos. The government budget for construction was spent mostly on public works, and the building of new houses was left largely to local and civilian initiatives.

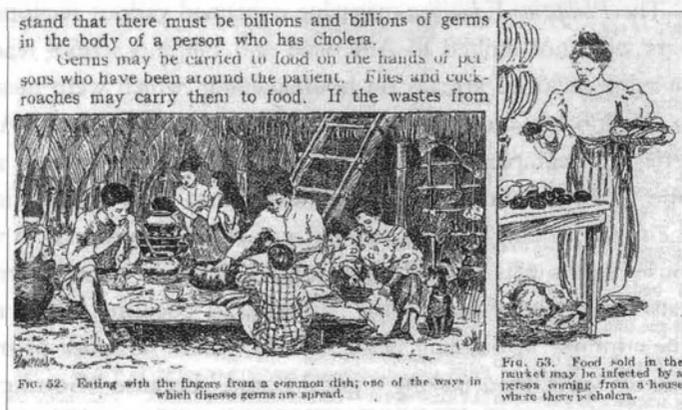


Figure 7. “Native” lifestyle should be modified with new standards, for sanitary living (*Philippine Education* 1913, 299)

### Filipino Elites and Their Imagined “America”

The educated, upper class Filipinos generally favored and adopted the American architectural model. In 1920 Carlos P. Romulo contributed an

SPENDTHRIFT—Shiftless  
No Preparation for Tomorrow

CARELESS—Forgetful  
Tomorrow—a Vision

THOUGHTFUL—Thrifty  
Tomorrow—Planned For

**THE STORY OF THE 3 LITTLE PIGS**

One played — one procrastinated — one worked hard and planned for the future.  
What will happen to them when adversity comes?

**WHAT IS GOING TO HAPPEN TO YOU?**

THRIFTY PEOPLE OWN LIFE INSURANCE

**THE INSULAR LIFE**  
ASSURANCE COMPANY, LTD.  
INSULAR LIFE BUILDING, MANILA

C. S. BALMAIN  
Box 734  
Manila  
Please send me information about your  
Old Age Endowment Policy.

Name.....  
Address.....

Figure 8. An assurance advertisement in *Philippine Magazine*, December 1936. The house material is a metaphor for the stability of life.

article to *Architecture* magazine, pointing out to American readers that towns in the Philippines had attractive and picturesque buildings “designed in accordance with modern ideas of architectural art,” and the Philippine government was “doing away with the old standards.” Romulo (1920) lauded the steel-and-concrete buildings in Manila as the fruit of American sovereignty in the Philippines. He even looked down on the churches in the Philippines because they “cannot be considered to be types of architectural art, when compared with the cathedrals of medieval Europe” (*ibid.*, 244). Romulo’s attitude was more extreme than even that of the American architectural critics who still regarded the stone churches as a precious heritage. Considering Romulo’s social status—a

member of the Filipino elite contributing an article to a prestigious American architectural magazine—it is no surprise that he criticized the Spanish heritage of Manila while praising American modernity and its visible markers. The American colonial experience effected the mental colonization of Filipinos by “a discourse that not only extolled American culture . . . but that also degraded the Spanish colonial past” (Mulder 1991, 6; cited in Cannell 1999, 203). The Filipino elite during the American period tried to pigeonhole the Hispanic heritage into the past as something that should not be preserved in a renewed and superior Filipino-American society.

Interestingly, while Americans thought the culture of “natives” in the Orient curious and strange, to be improved and westernized, well-educated Filipinos regarded neighboring Asian cultures as foreign. When Filipino delegates visited Japan on an educational tour in the late 1930s, the shrines and temples seemed exotic to them, as they had come from “a country of Western-style churches” and equipped with American education. In the same period, Pres. Manuel Quezon was inspired by the Japanese *bushido* (the ethics of Samurai chivalry), which he discovered through American translation (Yu-Jose 2001, 413). Asian cultures were alien to the Filipino upper class who learned about Asia through magazines and books written in English by Americans. American and other western representations mediated Filipino elite views of Asia. Thus, the elites were more likely to consider the Philippine cultural landscape closer to the West than to their neighbors.

### **Americans in the Philippines and the Clubhouse**

The Americans tried to transform the Philippines and Filipinos, but who were the Americans who arrived in the Philippines, and how did the Philippine environment in turn transform them? Many of the Americans who came to the Philippines were first- or second-generation European Americans. Some spoke European languages in their Philippine homes, as they would in their hometowns in the United States. For instance, a German-speaking Swiss-American family could be culturally closer to a Swiss or German family than to an Irish-American family in the Philippines. Kyburz, a jewelry merchant in Escolta, spoke French to his Ameri-

can grandchildren in Cebu, since "English was the language of barbarians." Ironically, for American children from different ethnic communities in the United States, it was the American school in the Philippines that united them as an English-speaking community. In addition, non-American white men could become political leaders in the American government, meaning that Europeans had the civil status of Americans. The borders of "Americanness" were blurred, and expanded their social circle to include Europeans (Halsema 1991, 173–76; Milne 1997, 7–11, 26). Some important American figures befriended the highest class of Filipinos; an important example is the relationship between Douglas MacArthur and Manuel Quezon. However, in general, the Americans in the Philippines made friends with other white residents, but not with non-white Americans or their Filipino neighbors. Surrounded by Filipinos of Malay and Chinese-mestizo background, the white European Americans and Europeans forged a new solidarity; they were the new "Americans" in the Philippine context.

Given the diversity among Americans, the clubhouse—among various new American-period buildings—strove to create (if not police) "American" uniformity. The major new American clubs in Manila were the Army and Navy Club, the Manila Polo Club, and the Manila Golf Club. The clubhouse and its yard were a social retreat for white Americans, and did not accord membership to Filipinos (Klassen 1986, 167–68; Romulo 1987, 24). The new American clubs attracted the local white elite, and membership constituted a prestigious gateway to American society for the descendants of Spaniards in the Philippines.

The American clubs were also built in regional cities. In Cebu "Club Americano" was founded in 1898 as the U.S. Army and Navy club of Cebu (fig. 9) (Quisumbing 1983). The life of the American family was concentrated around the American club and American school. An American wife found life in Cebu "far more interesting than her hometown [in Ohio], thanks largely to the Club, which was the center of American social life." During the day, wives came to play cards, gossip, sew, and knit, taking tea at 4 p.m., until their husbands came in at 5 p.m. for drinks; then, many stayed for buffet dinner and evening parties. On Sundays and holidays, there were many social activities and the American family enjoyed their colonial life together (Halsema 1991, 41, 98).



Figure 9. American Club in Cebu, 1919 (Best 1998, 232)

These Americans with various backgrounds would not have befriended each other in the United States, but once (or because) they were in the tropical colony, “these class, regional, and other social differences tended to give way to a shared and seemingly unquestioned attachment to a specifically U.S. national identity” (Rafael 2000, 56). They trained their Filipino servants to cook authentic American food, and dined with “tablecloth, napkins and pretty dishes” to reproduce the American table (cf. *ibid.*, 59). The Americans were not Filipinized by living in the Philippines; they became more self-consciously and assertively American, a fact most apparent in the club premises, where they confined themselves in particular buildings.

Subsequently, English, Spanish, and new Filipino clubs were founded in major cities, such as the Wack Wack Golf Club, Los Tamaraos Polo Club, and Club Filipino (Romulo 1987, 26). The Wack Wack club was designed by Filipino architect Juan Arellano, who “excelled in the [European American] classic style.” Arellano first designed the club along “Spanish traditional” lines, but Filipino and American club officers “did not allow Mr. Arellano to design their building in the Oriental style” (Mallari 1930, 197). The Filipino club members wanted the clubhouse to be more American in style. These exclusive social clubs articulated the views, desires, and aspirations of the new social classes. Despite the American introduction of electoral democracy and public education to

create an "equal" society (although literacy requirements disenfranchised many, especially indigent, Filipinos), Philippine cities became even more expressly hierarchical during the American period. The clubhouse building symbolized social change by classifying and separating people and making the members more American, Spanish, or "modern" Filipino, within the American system.

### **"Camping Out" and Moving into the Ground Floor**

The changes in the residential architecture started from the capital city Manila, and then spread to the new American city of Baguio and other regional urban cores. As early as 1905, Baguio's newly developed high-class residential lots were on sale (Brody 2001, 133). New housing estates were developed and new house designs were employed (fig. 10). The Anglo-American idea of the suburban upper class had arrived. In recent Filipino novels set in Manila during the American period and right after the war, this American tradition of suburban estates is often depicted so as to give readers a sense of the affluent, "American" way of life.<sup>6</sup> However, regional poblaciones such as in Cebu province did not expand. Most of the American-period new residences were built on vacant lots either in the newly developed residential quarters or within the existing poblacion grids.

Although the new roads and suburbs were direct products of American governance, the new houses were not created by Americans. The latter did not directly guide the creation of new American houses for Filipinos, nor did they build their own houses in the Philippines. Although a small number of government-owned cottages were built for American officials in Baguio (fig. 11), these were exceptional (Halsema 1991, 177). In most of the major cities Americans rented existing houses originally built by and for local elites; some lived in hotels. In Cebu City, Eusebius Halsema, a young American engineer who later became mayor of Baguio City, moved from a hotel to a shared bachelors' house. He then rented an old Spanish-style house in the Parian (Chinese mestizo district), owned by Cebuano engineer Veloso-Regner. Living in a local abode with a patio full of "exotic flowers," he had a glimpse of the "cultured Filipino life" that was "unusual for most Americans" (ibid., 68–69).

**Buy A Home In Manila**

**RIZAL PARK**

*Small Payments Each Month*

"RIZAL PARK" is the name given to a new Residential District in Manila. It is located within the city limits and near the San Lazaro Railroad Station of the Manila R. R. Co. Available Rizal Electric Cars pass within one block of "Rizal Park".

The Title of this Property is guaranteed by the Government under a "Torrens Title."

"Rizal Park" is divided into blocks, and the blocks into small lots. These small building lots contain as small an area as 195 sq. m. and can be purchased on easy monthly payments as follows:

P40.00 CASH PAYMENT. BALANCE P3.00 MONTHLY

"RIZAL PARK" is approved by the City Government. Washington Avenue is the name of the central street and this street is now being improved by the city. Washington Avenue will have Electric Lights and Public Free Water Hydrants.

POSSESSION OF LAND GIVEN TO PURCHASER AT ONCE UPON FIRST PAYMENT. Application to purchase for almost 1,000 lots actually received by us.

WRITE AT ONCE FOR FULL INFORMATION.

Ask your friend or relative in Manila to select a lot for you.

ADDRESS:

**ROSENSTOCK, ELSER & CO.**  
GENERAL MANAGERS

Office is open until 7 o'clock each day

Office: 363 Rizzo (off Rizal Ave.), Sta. Cruz  
Office: 363 Rizzo (off Rizal Ave.), Sta. Cruz

Figure 10 (left). Advertisement of a new estate in *Philippine Education*, December 1912 issue

Figure 11 (below). Government cottages in Camp John Hay, Baguio City (Best 1994, 67)



On a visit to Singapore in 1912, Halsema recognized that Americans were not investing in housing in the Philippines. In Singapore he was impressed by the luxurious "tree-shaded enclaves" of Europeans and wealthy Chinese. The huge tile-roofed houses with broad porches had an "air of permanence that was lacking in the quarters rented by most Americans in the Philippines." Compared with the British effort to settle down in their colonies, most Americans "seemed only to be camping out" (ibid., 83). Yet, the engineer himself continued to live in rented houses. Most of the Americans assigned to the Philippines, like Halsema

(who stayed on until the Japanese occupation), initially thought their Philippine mission was temporary; later on, as Americans expected to turn over governance to Filipinos, transplanting themselves and investing in housing were deemed unnecessary.

Even families of the highest officials did not build their homes in the Philippines. Helen Taft, the wife of the Secretary of War, wrote about Manila houses and their rented residence. The existing urban houses she saw around 1910 were "nearly all built in the Spanish style with high stone basements and frame superstructures overhanging the street"—the *bahay na bato*. She also noted that the great number of houses were the "nipa shacks" of lower-class natives. The Taft residence had partial elements of the new American period, such as colorful glass windows and a roofed driveway, but for Helen everything was a foreign experience. Their house had a large dining room and commodious bedrooms on the side of the broad central hall, while over the driveway was a small drawing room. On the ground floor were the baths and three large rooms, and a duplicate of the upstairs verandah. Because it was a *bahay-na-bato* type of residence, the ground floor was originally a storage space. But Mrs. Taft rebuilt the ground level into a residential space, because it "was dry and well-built, I forthwith turned over to the children" (Taft 1914, 98–102). The transformation of the ground floor as a residential space must have been a surprise for the Filipino servants and visitors. People used to believe that the ground floor would make people sick from the humidity and the local spirits; thus, ground space was for storage and animals. However, influential Americans such as the Taft family had no qualms about living on the ground floor. Evidently, the coming of the Americans changed Filipino beliefs, and since then urban Filipinos have resided on the ground level.

### **Appurtenances of Colonial Life: The Porch and Servants**

One of the remarkable new spaces in the American-period house was the porch, especially for American residents. The porch was a semi-indoor entertaining space, and was not considered as an alternative to the Spanish-period *azotea*, the back terrace near the kitchen. An article in 1930 offered some ideas for the hostess who wanted to give tea parties

on the porch: "To sum it up, the porch can be made the social center of the home" (fig. 12) (Macdonald 1930, 171). The function of the porch in the American period was similar to the British colonial verandah. American wives enjoyed their tea on the porch, served by Filipino servants. The porch allowed Americans to transform what was outside into inside, and mark it as American private space. Thus, the porch became a new accent to the Philippine urban house (Perez 1963, 87).

The everyday social life of the affluent class was made possible by the labor of nonfamily members, mostly live-in servants. For Filipinos one house accommodated a household of two or three conjugal laboring families, and the wealthier households had additional servants (Mojares 1983, 86). More than ten or fifteen people worked in one mansion as maids, nannies, houseboys, or gardeners. It was the same with the American residents. In the large mansions, domestic order depended heavily on the labor of servants, without whom the American women in the tropics could not retain their American way of life (Rafael 2000, 69). While they were in the United States most of the Americans did the chores themselves, but once in the colony they enjoyed a life of ease and luxury (Halsema 1991, 91; Milne 1997, 56, 64). Moreover, the coming of the Americans transformed the urban social hierarchy by race and occupation. For most American wives and children, the Filipinos with whom

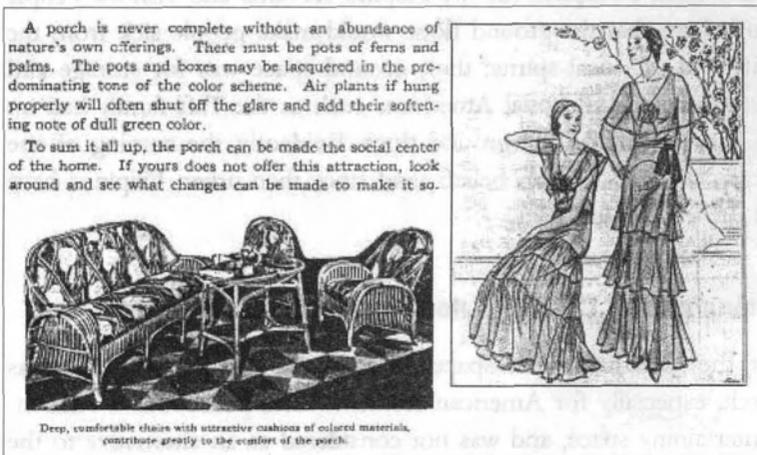


Figure 12. A magazine illustration suggesting furniture for the porch (Macdonald 1930, 171)

they came into contact in their everyday life were domestic workers. For their part upper-class Filipinos began to employ the new Chinese and Japanese laboring classes scattered in Philippine cities. Consequently, the large urban residences were designed not only for family members but to accommodate servants, who became part of the fixture of the house and were crucial to its functioning.

### **Social Separation and Cultural Absorption**

Americans led a life of parties, yet most socialized only with others in the white community. An American anthropologist, Dr. Elsie Clews Parson commented in 1905 that Americans perpetuated racial separation. Parson noted that there were many Filipino and mestizo families who lived "in considerable comfort and luxury." They were rich enough to travel, study, or stay in Europe, and their houses were "large and well, although somewhat archaically, furnished." However, the Americans and the local elites had "little or no social intercourse, although the natives have a deep sense of hospitality and are devoted to social festivity." She argued that this social barrier was "raised up by the Americans, and, moreover, by the American women," as she often met American ladies "who had never been inside a Filipino house" (Hart 1973, 59–60). The local elite tried to mingle with Americans but many Americans did not socialize, even with high-class Filipinos.

If an American became friends with Filipinos, it was newsworthy. Lucie Milne recalls her childhood in Cebu; "We did [socialize], and since Daddy was a leader in the American community, it was scandalous to some that we should 'mix' [with the Filipinos]" (Milne 1997, 29–30). American Judge Lyman Carlock in Cebu City was popular among Filipinos because he "spoke Spanish, learned some Cebuano," and lived "in the populous 'native' district of San Nicolas" (Cullinane 1989, 86). Such exceptional Americans who appreciated the local culture and befriended the locals were always noted. Thus, when American high officials visited the house of a member of the local elite the visit was photographed as news (fig. 13).

Presumably, most Filipino homeowners did not have direct access to the American lifestyle in American houses, although they chose to inter-

pret and recreate the “American” lifestyle indirectly via second-hand information. Although the separation of the American and Filipino communities was undeniable, American customs and lifestyles through texts nevertheless diffused among the local upper class. Local entertainments and celebrations were also modified by deference to “American” standards and values (Cannell 1999, 204). Wealthy Filipino families began to decorate the walls of their houses with the frames of photographs, family portraits, and diplomas. “Calling cards” became the vogue, following the American constabulary custom. Newcomers or juniors laid their name cards in appropriate numbers on senior officers to notify them of their social presence (Halsema 1991, 177). Calling cards prevailed further among the local elite in rural poblaciones.<sup>7</sup> Far more important, the exterior, interior, and contents of the house dramatically changed from the arrival of the Americans.



Figure 13. Cebuano politician Don Jose Avila is seated between the “wives of important American officials” at the house of Don Vicente Noel, Carcar, Cebu (Mercado 1965, 7)

### Reconfigured Urban Residential Spaces

In addition to social and political changes, new construction techniques enabled the transformation of buildings. With the introduction of new materials and the method of frame construction, the house structure became lighter than the Spanish-period heavy timber supports. The lighter prefabricated wooden members, concrete, and sometimes iron enabled irregular and fanciful shapes, and freed the boxy outline of the previous *bahay na bato* or *balay na tisa* (house of tiles) (Villalon 2002, 35–36). In Cebu poblaciones the American-period houses became more complicated in their exterior design, with various playful roof lines, facades, and window designs, thanks to the new materials and ideas (fig.

The design of these mansions was influenced by the American and European styles, which were introduced to Cebu during the American colonial period. The mansions were built by the wealthy and prominent families of Cebu, and they reflected the architectural trends of the time. The mansions were characterized by their large size, multiple stories, and ornate details. They often featured a central tower or a prominent entrance, and they were surrounded by lush gardens and lawns. The mansions were a symbol of wealth and power, and they played a significant role in the social and cultural life of Cebu during the American colonial period.

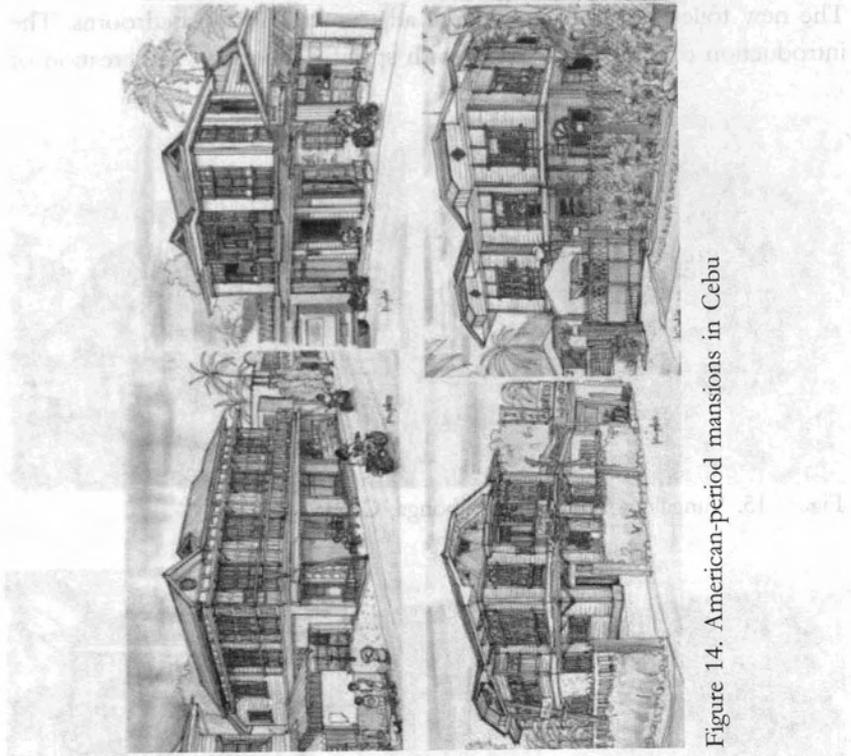


Figure 14. American-period mansions in Cebu

14). The design change incorporated imported styles. Some Americans and American-educated Filipinos started to build bungalow or chalet-type houses in the “American” manner (fig. 15), usually a single-storey structure raised slightly above the ground and constructed in reinforced concrete and wood (Zialcita 1997, 55).

While the Spanish-period mansions were built on the street boundary, the American-period house was built at a distance from the street and had a front garden to show to passersby (fig. 16). Another important change in the plan was the use of the ground floor as residential space. In Cebu a house built in the 1930s had its living room, porch, dining room, and kitchen on the ground level, while bedrooms were located on the upper level. The staircase to the second floor became more private and narrower, contrary to the grand staircase in Spanish-period houses. The new toilet and bath units were adjacent to private bedrooms. The introduction of individual spaces with specific functions, the creation of



Figure 15. Bungalow-style houses Sibonga, Cebu



Figure 16. American-period houses with front yards, Cebu

inside and outside kitchens, and automobile garages were also new. In short, the plan became similar to single suburban houses in the United States (fig. 17).

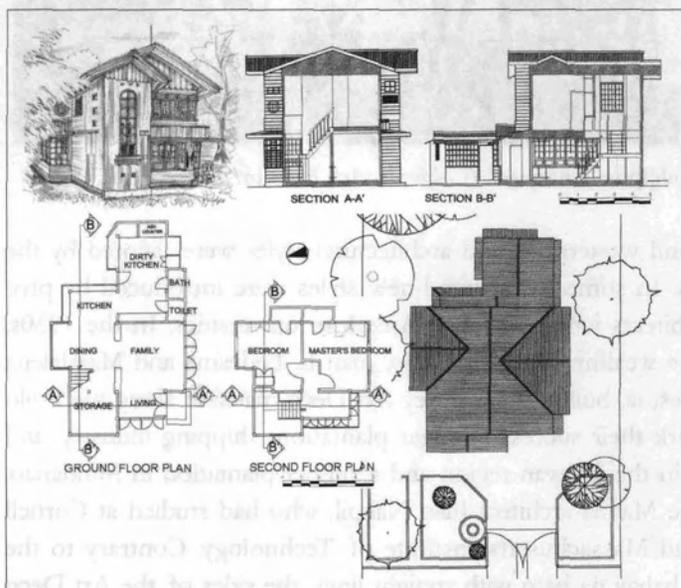


Figure 17. Kintanar House 1927, Argao Poblacion, Cebu (surveyed by Architect Melva Java and associates, November 2004)

The interior design and furniture also incorporated contemporary European and American cultures. The most popular “foreign” styles were actually manufactured in the Philippines. The March 1931 issue of *California Arts and Architecture* introduced the furniture in Philippine mansions. However, although the article was titled “Philippine Antiques Cross the Pacific to California,” the term “Philippine antiques” did not mean “native Filipino” but rather “Spanish furniture with Moorish influence” or “Victorian English chairs” (fig. 18) (*California Arts and Architecture* 1931, 48). Today, these houses and furniture are included as examples of the “Filipino” style, but in the early twentieth century they were appreciated for being “European” or “American.”

Numerous “American-style” mansions were constructed in rural poblaciones, even though no Americans, except school teachers, resided

A Victorian console which once adorned the home of Senator Juan Alegre of Manila, and two old English chairs of Jacobean pattern. These came to the Islands by way of Spain.



Figure 18. "Philippine Antiques" (*California Arts and Architecture* 1931, 48)

there. New and western art and architectural styles were favored by the affluent class. In some cases brand-new styles were introduced by professional architects who studied in American universities. In the 1930s, for instance, a wealthy couple in Iloilo, Juan L. Ledesma and Magdalena Javellana Ledesma, built a three-storey Art Deco mansion along the Iloilo River. To mark their success in sugar plantation, shipping industry, and a steel plant in the Visayan region and a rubber plantation in Mindanao, they hired the Manila architect Juan Nakpil, who had studied at Cornell University and Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Contrary to the boxed shape *bahay na bato* with straight lines, the sides of the Art Deco house "gracefully curve, and the second and third floors have balconies throughout with sleek metal handrails," and the designs of the windows also followed the Art Deco style. The grandson of the couple recalls that "On a street with 19th century *bahay na bato* and Antillian mansions, my grandparents' house was a radical architectural departure, rivaling that of the Lopez Family's own Art Deco house across the river." The neighbors should realize the family's success, visually through the construction of the new house. For Juan L. Ledesma, the "radical streamline design of Art Deco for a house was his statement that the world belonged to innovation and new ideas" (Silva 2002, 70–71). The house also demonstrated that he belonged to the new world of modernity and innovation.

Contrary to what is generally assumed today, most houses of "historical" towns with Spanish-period churches were not built during the Spanish period. For example, in the southern Cebu town of Sibonga, majority of the remaining mansions was built from the 1910s to the 1930s, while in the adjacent town of Argao most of the elaborate houses were built

around 1930. With the exception of some houses like the Ledesmas' in Iloilo noted above, most of the new houses were not designed by professional architects but by homeowners, since there were very few architects working in the regional cities before the Second World War. The homeowners came up with various design ideas gleaned from magazines and their own travels to Cebu, Manila, and abroad. These mansions are now called "ancestral houses," inherited by heirs through several generations. However, not all houses built by ancestors are counted among "ancestral houses," for only the stable, large, and elaborate mansions have been called and valued as such.<sup>8</sup> In Cebu it was during the American period that many "ancestors" or patriarchs marked their social success by constructing new-style houses.

### **Occupational Changes and House Construction**

The house owners' economic backgrounds and occupations reflected the era. After the opening of regional ports to world trade in the late nineteenth century, export agriculture expanded (Legarda 1999, 110–11). In Cebu most of the mansion owners had large farms in the same municipality, and farm profits were the major sources of capital for building a new house in the poblacion. Their haciendas grew coconut, corn, fruits, vegetables, sugarcane, and tobacco, farmed by peasants. In addition to farm operations, almost all the house owners had new salaried jobs. They served as local governmental officials, public school teachers, licensed nurses, military officials, and company employees—jobs newly created by the American administrative system. For example, the Mancao house in Carcar was built in 1933 by Pedro A. Mancao, who was originally a farm owner in a mountainside barrio of Carcar (fig. 19). Married to farm owner Sofia Panuncialman, Mancao bought a residential lot in the poblacion when he became the Carcar public school supervisor.<sup>9</sup> Income from public works and the farm enabled the couple to purchase a lot and build a new American-style house, marking the establishment of the family.

The Villacastin house in Lahug, Cebu City, was designed and built in 1937 by Col. Francisco Villacastin of the Philippine Army and his wife Rosario Escario Villacastin. His family was originally from Bantayan Is-

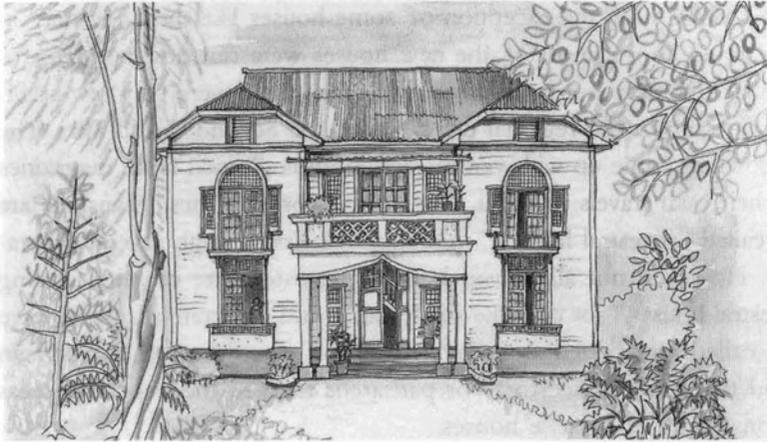


Figure 19. Mancao House 1933, Carcar, Cebu

land, Cebu; the family had farms in Bantayan and Carcar municipalities.<sup>10</sup> His salary and social environment within the American administrative system enabled him to design and build the new house. In the same year, Eusebio Mercado Lopez, an employee of the Philippine Railways originally from Candaguid barrio in Carcar, built an American-style house. He designed the house himself, after purchasing the lot across from the former Carcar railway station. Eusebio's wife, Gonzala Hermosissima Lopez, used to be a public school teacher, and their daughter, Agustina, was sent to Manila to study nursing at the University of the Philippines. Agustina married Isabelo Cui Barcenilla from Carcar, and later they moved to the Lopez house; both of them were public elementary school teachers. The American-period Lopez mansion is still the relatives' gathering place, and Agustina says it is their "ancestral house."<sup>11</sup> The family tree starts from the building of the large, permanent house in the poblacion. Jobs at the American-period facilities, such as the Army base, the Philippine Railway Station, and public elementary schools, and the advent of stable incomes enabled and even accelerated the construction and maintenance of the new mansions.

An exception was the original owner of what is now known as the Silva House in Carcar Poblacion. The parish priest Anastacio Del Corro had Spanish blood, but was regarded as Filipino. Spanish priests reportedly did not allow him to live in the parish convent. However, Del Corro

had an enormous farm income, and was wealthy enough "to travel to Europe, host breakfast for first-communion kids, and give coins from the window to the kids waiting on the street." Thus, in 1898 he started building his own mansion adjacent to the church plaza. By the time the house was completed, it was already the American regime, and Del Corro was allowed to live in the convent. His relatives moved into the newly built house, which was subsequently renovated in 1920.<sup>12</sup> The padre's house history also depicts a part of the social and ecclesial transformation between the two colonial periods.

### House Histories and Interrelated Family Histories

The original owner's heirs became closely interrelated with each other, and inherited the historical mansions. These families were related to other prominent families not only in the same poblacion but also in other urban centers. For instance, the prominent families in Sibonga poblacion were not from the surrounding Sibonga barrios but from other poblaciones or from the Parian Chinese district in Cebu City. There was also a small number of Spanish mestizo migrants who rose to prominence in Sibonga poblacion. They originally came from diverse areas like Manila, Cagayan, and Pamplona in Spain, as Dr. Noel Ponce, the founder of the heritage society in Sibonga, wrote in the *Cebu Daily News* on 2 August 2003. After becoming rooted in Sibonga, the sons and daughters of these families married members of other established families in the same poblacion, in adjacent poblaciones, or in Cebu City.

The Escaño family was one of the upper-class Spanish mestizo families in Cebu who built luxurious mansions. Most of their sons and daughters studied in Spain and married Spaniards, but moved back to Cebu to establish their families. For example, Nemesio Escaño, born in 1888, studied in Spain and married the Spanish Antonia Arellano. The newlyweds started life in Leyte, had four children, but were separated. After moving to Cebu City, Nemesio and his new wife had eight children, thus establishing another Escaño family branch in Cebu. Nemesio's sister, Marciana Escaño, was born in 1893. She went to Hong Kong to study, where she "fell in love with a handsome Englishman" Arthur Walkin Jones; the couple married in Cebu City (Mojares 1989, 76, 86).

The local elite emerged not from a neighboring working class, but from an upper class of migrants from other regions. The elite class shared the new lifestyle and taste evinced by similar educational and travel experiences, interactions, and marriages.

Interestingly, family relations are told and traced back through the inheritance of houses. The oldest Spanish-period house in Carcar poblacion, known as the Balay na Tisa, was built by a wealthy Chinese mestizo family, the Sarmientos, in 1859. Its inheritance history tells the interrelations among the residents of Carcar. The two houses adjacent to the Balay were owned by Sarmiento relatives. The Balay was bought by Roman Sarmiento and his wife Ana Canarias; their daughter, Manuela Sarmiento, married Jose Osmeña, a son of a prominent family in Cebu. Manuela and Jose Osmeña bought another wood-and-stone house in Carcar poblacion. Their daughter, Catarina E. Sarmiento-Osmeña, and her husband, Dr. Pio Valencia, inherited the house owned by her parents, and the structure is now known as the Valencia House. Their son, Mario Valencia, and his wife, Esterra Silva Valencia, are the present owners and residents. To build and maintain the mansions, the family should have enough wealth. Esterra's uncle was the owner of the Silva House, the large mansion built by Father Del Corro. Esterra's cousin is the mother of Zarah Silva Castro, and Zarah now lives in the Silva House. The present owner of the Balay, Manny Castro, and the resident of the historical Casa Noel, Jerry M. Noel Alfafara, are also related.<sup>13</sup>

Almost all the last names mentioned above belong to prominent families with wealth, education, and local political power. Historical mansions were the symbol of family success, and the inheritance of the house was closely linked to complicated family histories. "The bourgeois home," as Vicente Rafael (2000, 66) has argued, "would serve as an outward sign of the private life of its owner, a tribute to the fact of ownership itself, and hence, a monument to the ideal of possessive individualism." The private house thus served as a tangible symbol, a physical embodiment of the success of the homeowner and the family. Family histories could then be told through the history of the house, especially the inheritance history, given that family histories and house histories are deeply intertwined.

Consequently, in any rural poblacion in Cebu there could be found interrelated prominent families with large mansions. Initially they would come as migrants from Cebu City or other provinces; subsequently these prominent families would extend geographically and build elaborate mansions in adjacent municipalities. The wealthy Chinese mestizo Cui clan was founded in Barili in western Cebu by the patriarch Don Pedro Cui. After studying in Cebu City and Manila at the end of the nineteenth century, he returned to Cebu City and practiced law. On his retirement he went back to his hometown of Barili, where he owned rich tobacco farms. In 1927 Pedro Cui founded the Hospicio de San Jose de Barili to help the poor elderly and as a way of giving back to the community (fig. 20) (Jurado 2002, 28–29). The west coast towns on Cebu island were not as urbanized as the east coast, but after Cui's success the rural towns on the west attracted business-minded families from other parts of the Philippines. One of them was Capt. Alfonso Jakosalem, originally from Cavite province. His son, Dionisio Jakosalem, studied in Cebu and in Madrid with Pedro Cui's financial support (Briones 1983, 31). Dionisio later became a governor of Cebu Province, and the Jakosalems also became a prominent family in Cebu. Some of the Cui members moved from Barili to Carcar, where they established new Cui branches and where they also became the prominent family that produced mayors. One Cui mansion in Carcar, Teodoro Cui Elvira's house, is a wooden mansion



Figure 20. Hospicio, 1924–1927, Barili, Cebu



Figure 21. Angel Cui House, 1933, Carcar, Cebu

built in 1920, while another elaborate bungalow was built by a large farm owner, Angel Cui, in 1933 (fig. 21).<sup>14</sup> The upper-class branches of the Cuis expanded into the adjacent municipalities, building elaborate houses in the new American-period style. Consequently, the new styles of mansions and urban cultures spread from one poblacion to another, paralleling the spread of elite family trees.

### The “Ancestral House” as a Memory Palace

The family remembers the house, but the house is also a memory palace, a way of remembering the family. Family history is remembered through the house history—the social affairs, marriages, and deaths that took place in it, the house repairs that had to be undertaken, and the individuals who inherited it. In most of Cebu’s poblaciones former municipal mayors built or inherited large mansions after their political appointment. One famous mansion in the historical town of Cebu was inherited by the American-period Carcar mayor Mariano A. Mercado, a descendant of a prominent family in Parian, Cebu City. The first level of the mansion could have been built around the 1880s. In 1906 Mariano designed and renovated the house using local hardwood and adding a full second floor. In the 1930s, when American Senator Key Pittman was entertained at the Mercado mansion, it was recorded as a “very memorable occasion.” The second floor master bedroom later became famous, as presidential candidate Ferdinand Marcos took a siesta in it during his campaign sorties in the 1960s, as Trizer D. Mansueto noted in an article in *The Freeman* on 15 December 2002. The mansion is thus remembered along with memories of important family events and nonfamily visitors.

Members of the family, who did not physically mark their presence in the house, including the ancestors before the house was built, are forgotten in most cases. The Estrada House in Barili was built in the beginning of the American period by a wealthy farm owner, Nicolas Vergara (fig. 22). The original structure was designed by Nicolas and built by local carpenters. The original roof was cogon grass, and the ground floor was made with brick and bamboo, which was later renovated with GI sheet roofs and concrete walls. Around 1910 the whole house was raised one meter higher, because of flooding and the repaving of the



Figure 22. Estrada House, Barili, Cebu

road. The house is now owned by Vergara's heir, farm owner and grain retailer Jose Estrada and his wife Rosario Yap Estrada. Jose's father, Tomas Estrada, was a former Barili mayor, while Rosario's father was a Chinese immigrant from Amoy. The Estradas had been in Barili for more than three generations, but the present family members do not know the ancestors before the house was built; the ancestors could have been migrants from Pangasinan, but they are not sure.<sup>15</sup> The family ancestral history started when Nicolas settled down in Barili poblacion and memorialized the family's success by building a permanent house.

In some cases the establishment of a prominent family tree took place hand-in-hand with the patriarch's acquisition of a ready-built mansion. The Pañares family in Barili became established after they moved into the large abode. The patriarch of the present Pañares family, Mariano Pañares, was a close friend of Don Pedro Cui in Barili, so he decided to move from Naga to Barili. Eventually, Mariano became a successful tobacco merchant and a landholder in Barili. Because of his wealth he could move into an elaborate *balay na tisa*, which had been built in 1878 and used to house the Spanish Casa Tribunal. After Mariano's death in 1911, his heirs inherited the house.<sup>16</sup> The Pañares family is said to have started from when Mariano moved into the large stone abode, and the

historical house has become a symbol of their beginning and continuity as a local upper class.

The Satos are owners of enterprises and three large historical abodes in Carcar poblacion. Their family tree also started with the “purchasing of an ancestral house.” The Sato family history begins with Don Roberto Regis Jaen, a wealthy sugar hacendero who bought a large house near the Carcar Plaza. The house was originally constructed from the 1890s to 1906 by the Barcenilla-Regis family. After Jaen’s death the house was divided into four parts by four nieces and nephews. One of them, Antonia Enriquez, married Roberto Sato, a military man who obtained a U.S. National Guard Diploma in 1917 before being assigned to Manila. When he returned to Cebu, he became the principal of a public elementary school in Carcar. Thanks to their income from the farm and the stable salary, Antonia and Roberto Sato bought the whole house before the war, which became the “ancestral house” of the Satos. The couple’s only child, Leto, went to universities in Dumaguete and Manila, where he met his Chinese wife, Chinita Sia, from Mindanao. Leto and Chinita now live in Cebu City, and the historical mansions in Carcar have been bequeathed to their children.<sup>17</sup> The Sato “ancestral house” was not built originally by the Satos but was purchased; however, as long as the family maintained the social and financial stability to own the house, which also bore their physical marks through “renovations,” it could be transformed into the real Sato house. The acquisition of the large mansion in the poblacion marked the beginning of the family tree, and was one of the defining characteristics of the new American-period prominent families.

### **Regional Variations**

The construction and development of new American-period mansions reflected the rise and increase of the wealthy classes of the regions. The degree of changes in the house design differed in the provinces. While Visayan cities that developed economically in the American period showed rapid change, Spanish-period houses remained in northern Luzon poblaciones even at the end of the American period. In January 1938, Japanese traveler Zentoku Nakahara wrote about the townscape of

Vigan. Many of the prominent residents were Chinese, but there were also Japanese bazaars. As for the residences, he noted that almost all the houses in Vigan were roofed with red Spanish-style tiles. Nakahara had never seen other Philippine towns with so many tile-roofed houses, which suggested that Manila and other cities had more GI-sheet roofed houses. The Vigan houses were large, and had separate storages. The old town's streets reminded Nakahara (1941, 351–52) of grid-patterned Kyoto. In Ilocos Sur, unlike Manila or Cebu, urban development did not progress during the American period due to the massive migration to other agricultural "frontier" regions in the Philippines and to the United States. Vigan was the provincial capital with relatively little major American influences on architecture and city planning. In contrast, rural poblaciones in the Visayas had numerous American-period mansions and fewer Spanish-period houses. The vicissitudes of regional economic history would be reflected directly in the number of permanent residential constructions and in the changes in house designs and townscape.

Even in the economically prosperous regions, however, the number of people who were "happy colonials" during the American period was quite limited. But from the 1920s onwards, large-scale haciendas developed and the wealthy became even richer. The new prominent Filipino families profited under the American colonial government. In contrast, most of the people were subjected to scarcities of commodities, employment, low wages, and volatile prices. In Carcar 4,329 households out of 7,419 (or 58 percent) did not own the land on which their houses were built; most were peasants. The result was a substantial increase in the number of rural dwellers who migrated to Cebu City, or to Mindanao and Hawaii, as laborers. Thus, in the 1930s, with a population of one million, Cebu City became the Philippines' second largest city, while Carcar's population dropped from 42,994 in 1914 to 36,308 in 1939 (Cullinane and Xenos 1998, 71; Mojares 2000, 20–22). The population decline in rural areas and the increase in Cebu City indicated the extent to which migrants had moved to Cebu City, Mindanao, or the United States; the poor became poorer or had to move to other places. Rural poblaciones saw the boom in the construction of luxurious mansions, arguably at the expense of increasing numbers of ever suffering peasants. In short, the elaborate mansions in the poblaciones of Cebu clarified the

new social hierarchy created during the American period, while serving as visible symbols of the polarizing social divisions that would haunt Philippine society and politics.

### Conclusion

The various reforms under the American colonial government took on their most visible forms in the construction of public works. Americans claimed that public structures were the bases and precursors of political development, even as they served as monuments to Americanism. Furthermore, the education reforms left a lasting impact among Filipinos, and the people began to dream about migrating to the United States. At the very least, the Filipino people began to accept American culture as something they could and should appropriate. Unlike some of the governmental, military, and clinical changes, the architectural transformation by the Americans did not generate local resistance (fig. 23). The locals, especially the rich, welcomed the construction of the elementary school in their communities.

The American government sought to change the Philippine landscape by constructing public buildings, schoolhouses, and infrastructure, but the



Figure 23. A local elite in colonial white suit at the American-period plaza in Carcar, Cebu, c. 1940 (Silva-Castro Family Collection)

transformation of the residential architecture was left to the locals. Aside from some upper-class residences in Manila, very few houses were designed by professional architects. Besides, it was not the American residents who built the new-style houses because the Americans did not think of the Philippines as their permanent home. Most of the American recollections are filled with detailed observations of their rented houses, which meant that the "American" style houses in the Philippines were foreign to them. Instead of socializing with Filipinos and settling down in the Philippines, Americans created new semipublic yet exclusive private facilities such as the social club. Through the sharing of space and private life among the exclusive communities, each group formed a distinctive solidarity, and the Americans became more American through Philippine life.

The Filipino urban elite also changed their lifestyle. They established American-style social clubs, and began enjoying life as "happy colonials" during the American period: garden parties on a lawn, American music and dances, picnic and shopping via family automobile, decorating house walls with college graduation portraits, and new fashion—white colonial suits for men and American-style dress for women. The most tangible expression and symbol of family success was the large urban mansion. Without the Americans' direct guidance or the architects' professional blueprint models, American-period houses were built even in regional poblaciones. The house owners derived their ideas and inspiration from nonarchitectural American magazines, or from their own travel and study experiences in the regional capital city, in Manila, in Europe, or in the United States. Private spaces were formed by local urban residents by relying on their interpretations of American culture. They could afford to build the new mansions because of their enormous farm income and salaried jobs. They were beneficiaries of the global trade boom and governmental and commercial jobs created by the American regime. American-period Philippine cities served as spaces for the creation not just of "new" Americans with a standardized American colonial lifestyle, but of a "new" Filipino urban upper class with an imagined "American" lifestyle, interpreted and filtered through their experiences of American colonial rule and the spaces and opportunities created thereby.

## Notes

The author conducted fieldwork in Baguio, Manila, Tagaytay, and Vigan (July–Aug. 2000), Bohol and Cebu (Feb. 2002), and Cebu (Sept. 2002–Nov. 2003). The archival resources were found at the Cebuano Studies Center of the University of San Carlos; the Library of the Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University; Kroch Library, Cornell University; and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) of the Philippines. The author appreciates the research assistance extended by the Departments of Architecture and History of the University of San Carlos, and the heritage conservation societies in Cebu. For her advice throughout the writing of this paper, the author deeply thanks Prof. Caroline Sy Hau of Kyoto University.

1. “*Bahay na bato*” literally means “house of stone” in Tagalog. The name differentiates the large wood-and-stone house from the “*bahay kubo*” (cubical house) or the bamboo-and-thatch house on stilts. On the *bahay na bato*, see Zialcita and Tinio 1980.

2. In response to environmental factors and natural disasters, the style of the *bahay na bato* gradually evolved after the 1645 earthquake. Aside from world-famous Vigan, the towns of Malolos and Taal also have heritage houses of national historical importance, built both during the Spanish and American periods. The author thanks an anonymous reader for providing insight into the characteristics of the *bahay na bato* and the historical continuity of houses of the Spanish and American periods.

3. For the works of Burnham, see Brody 2001; Hines 1974; Klassen 1986; Reed 1976.

4. Filipinos who moved to the United States confronted racism and found “how different reality was for us Filipinos living here from the stories we heard back home” from American teachers. See Scharlin and Villanueva 2002.

5. The title of the *Philippine Education* magazine changed from *Philippine Teacher* (1904–1905) to *Philippine Education* (1906–1925), to *Philippine Education Magazine* (1926–1929), then to *Philippine Magazine* (1930–1941).

6. The new trend of the American suburban estate, usually with names that include “Park,” “Village,” or “Hills,” continued after the Second World War. The most famous, Forbes Park, was named after William C. Forbes. It often appears in novels to represent the westernized lifestyle of wealthy Manileños. For example, in the 1988 novel *Ermita* by F. Sionil José, Forbes Park plays a starring role as the desired address and physical symbol of the Philippines’ stratified social hierarchy.

7. Interview with Ms. Zarah Silva Castro, 25 July 2003.

8. Interview with Prof. Aida Jumao-as, 15 Jan. 2003.

9. Interview with Mrs. Luz Mancao Sandiego, 7 Oct. 2002. The daughter of

Pedro and Sofia, Luz Sandiego, and Luz's son, Val Sandiego, are supporters of the heritage movement in Cebu.

10. Interview with Mrs. Delia Villacastin and Mr. Jose Villacastin, 1 Oct. 2003.
11. Interview with Mrs. Agustina Barcenilla, 27 June 2003.
12. Interview with Ms. Zarah Silva Castro, 25 Sep. 2002.
13. Interview with Mrs. Esterra Valencia, 27 June 2003.
14. Interview with Dr. Lolita Cui and Hon. Cristino Cui, 20 June 2003.
15. Interview with Mrs. Rosario Estrada, 11 July 2003.
16. Interview with Mr. Manuel Pañares, 11 July 2003.
17. Interview with Mr. Juric Sato, 3 Oct. 2002.

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