

philippine studies

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Philippine Studies vol. 52, no. 4 (2004): 474–498

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Fri June 27 13:30:20 2008

The Suyoc People Who Went to St. Louis 100 Years Ago: The Search for My Ancestors

Antonio S. Buangan

In 1904 twenty-five people from Suyoc, northern Benguet province, went to the international exposition in St. Louis where they lived for several months with a hundred other northern Philippine people in the "Igorrote Village." In this article I tell the story of my ancestors' experiences in 1904 as found in United States archives, libraries, and museums as well as in recollections of family members in reunions among Suyoc people in the Philippines and the U.S. held in the past decade. I focus on how descendants of the Suyoc participants identify, talk about, and remember their relatives through stories, oral histories, written lists, and photographs of individuals who participated in this journey to America a hundred years ago. I also talk about the Americans who played key roles in this endeavor and their relations with the Suyoc men, women, and their families who went to the Fair.

KEYWORDS: *World's fair, Igorot, display of people, photography, ethnohistory*

In 1904 twenty-five people from my home region, Suyoc, in northern Benguet province in the island of Luzon, went to the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, more popularly known as the St. Louis World's Fair, in St. Louis, Missouri. Many writings around that time have pointed to the importance of the Fair for St. Louis as well as for the United States as a nation (cf. Bennitt 1905; Francis 1913). The Fair was the largest, grandest, and most expensive ever held in the world at that time. It was the first to be held after the U.S. acquired the Philippines as a colony from Spain in 1898, and William H. Taft, then Philippine civil governor in 1902, saw an opportunity to showcase the new colony.

The U.S. government organized a large Philippine exhibition that included cultural artifacts, commercial merchandise, natural resources, and a delegation of over 1,100 Filipinos representing various ethnic groups in the Philippines (Philippine Exposition Board 1904). These groups included the Negrito, Igorot, Tinguian, Mangyan, Bagobo, Moro, and Visayan. The Igorot group was composed of seventy people from the Bontoc area and twenty-five Suyoc Kankanaey. Seventeen people from Abra, who were called "Tinguianes," were also housed in what would collectively be known by fairgoers as the "Igorrote Village" (see Afable in this issue). Thus, the individuals from my home region lived on the Fair grounds for most of the eight-month duration of the Fair along with the Bontoc and Tinguian.

What few people outside the Suyoc community knew then and now was that the Suyoc participants traveled to the U.S. with a pair of American brothers, Charles and Alvin Pettit, who had been soldiers in the Philippine-American War. Charles had been in the First Wyoming Volunteers and had gone to the mountains to prospect for gold. Truman Hunt, another soldier who had been prospecting with them in 1900, became lieutenant-governor of Bontoc and was in charge of the "Igorrotes" at the Fair. Charles Pettit married Dang-usan, a Suyoc woman, and together they recruited a group of relatives and neighbors to go abroad with them. Their exhibition highlighted gold mining, metalworking, weaving, and dancing; the choice of individuals to go to St. Louis reflected skills in these activities.

This kind of background information gets around in the Suyoc community, often shared informally in extended family circles wherever they have settled, whether in northern Luzon, in other parts of the Philippines, or overseas. Equally important in my view is that in these discussions Suyoc individuals who went to St. Louis one hundred years ago are hardly ever generalized as "Philippine Igorot," "Suyoc miners," or even "objects" on display. Perhaps it is because, to Suyoc people, these individuals have names. Whether or not one is directly related to someone who went to the Fair, it is very likely that someone in your own family has a great deal of personal knowledge about their peers in another family, and the names of these people are important. My research suggests that publications on the 1904 Philippine displays in

general or the Igorot village in particular very rarely mention the names of Igorot in photographs, even if the names are available in the archival records. I will discuss the importance of names later on in this article, along with the rare instances when individual's names were published, but first I would like to talk about Suyoc as a place with a particular history, and with a special connection to myself.

Suyoc is located in a mountainous region in the northern part of Benguet province on the upper Abra River, west of the Halsema Highway, about 100 kilometers north of Baguio. The area is known for its gold and the participation of Spaniards, Chinese, and Americans in its mining history. The Suyoc people have been mining gold for centuries and have carried that tradition to this day. They speak Kankanaey, which is the primary language in northern Benguet province.

My wife Flora Batcagan Buangan and I both trace a major part of our ancestry to Suyoc and to some of the Suyoc people who went to St. Louis. As a boy, I had heard stories of this journey from my maternal grandmother whose older brother, Betuagan (known also as Pepe Betuagan), was a participant in the Fair. I grew up in Tuding, south of Baguio City, where many Suyoc Igorot migrated during the mining boom in Benguet in the 1930s. Two other Suyoc participants at St. Louis, Singwa and Oblika, settled and died in Tuding; Oblika was my wife's father's first cousin. I was fascinated by this select group of Suyoc people of whom I had prior knowledge before embarking on this research—Betuagan, Singwa, Dang-usan, Tugmina, and Oblika—along with the twenty or so others who were bold enough to venture into the unknown. I wanted to share their experiences and wanted to know how they lived and what they did in the eight months they were in St. Louis. As I was beginning my research as an adult now living in the U.S., I developed an intense curiosity about them and felt uplifted by every photograph, document, or news item that I found about my people.

In this article, I tell the story of my ancestors' experiences in 1904 as I found it in U.S. archives, libraries, and museums as well as in family reunions among Suyoc people in Baguio, Benguet, and the United States. As a retired geologist, I make no claims to being a historian or anthropologist. I conducted this research as a personal quest, and over

time, through conversations with many people, I have begun to understand that the perspectives of descendants of Filipinos displayed at the Fair is something not often discussed in scholarly circles, and perhaps it should be. Over the last decade, I have learned much about the lives of these people who went to the Fair and those of their children. Although some of the families of the participants at St. Louis stayed in the Suyoc-Mankayan region, others like my own relatives migrated to the Itogon mining region near Baguio and to other places far away, while keeping alive the stories of that journey long ago to America (cf. Afable 1997, 2000).

Tracing Roots

My interest in pursuing this research began in earnest while on a trip to the Philippines in 1994 to visit my parents and to trace my roots. Family reunions are a popular social event among the Igorot. My maternal aunt, Pacita Betuagan Awisan, Pepe Betuagan's daughter, who has resided in Suyoc all her life, was instrumental in organizing such reunions in her family circles. She probably has the widest compilation of family genealogies from Suyoc, some of which she has been able to trace back to the mid-1800s. Her data consist of hundreds of pages of typewritten and handwritten documents based on oral history, compilations by others in the community, and interviews with the elders over the years. Official birth and death records are often incomplete for the population living in Suyoc before the 1950s. I consider Awisan's records of kin relations as fairly accurate since the Suyoc people have long regarded the knowledge of kinship and its accurate recollection of extreme importance. We hope to bring our studies together for a longer publication on Suyoc history.

My research in the Philippines on Philippine participation in the Fair was hampered by the lack of archival materials, and depended for the most part on Awisan's compilation of names and approximate ages of individuals who had gone to the Fair. Most of this information came from her father, who, together with his wife Tugmina, was part of the Suyoc group in 1904. Other information was provided by the descendants of the Suyoc participants.

No photographic document of the Suyoc participants was found in the Philippines. The one exception is a tinted full-body photograph of a Suyoc woman in native dress in a dancing pose (figure 1). It is one of Oblika, whom I described earlier as my wife's father's first cousin, and it has been displayed for years in my wife's family home in Baguio City. Since I had seen that picture so many times, it took me but a second to recognize the image in the Missouri Historical Society photographic collections in St. Louis during a visit in 1998. Some of the older descendants in the community recalled seeing photographs at the home of Charles Pettit, who had served as juror for the mining exhibits, and his wife Onib (whose name at the Fair was Dang-usan). Unfortunately, the Pettit house in Suyoc burned down during the Second World War and all the photos were destroyed.

A Quest for Names

In 1997 Afable first discussed the identities and experiences of some "Nikimalika," Bontoc people who journeyed to Western cities for cultural displays. That same year, Breitbart's (1997) *A World on Display* included lists of different groups of people who had gone to St. Louis as participants in exhibitions. These accounts increased my knowledge about how the presentation of Filipinos as "primitives" resulted in stereotyping and widespread prejudice against them in both the Philippines and abroad, but they also spurred me to move forward with my research. They made clear the possibility that identification of the Suyoc travelers could also be found in U.S. libraries and archives.

This quest for personal names and their stories has a strong symbolic basis in Kankanaey traditions. The naming of names (and their avoidance) is deeply embedded in everyday and ritual life and they ultimately relate to what defines a community. At curing and prestige feasts in the southern Cordillera (whose indigenous peoples include Kankanaey-, Ibaloy-, I'uwak-, and Kalanguya-speakers), one of the most important rituals involves honoring the celebrants' deceased ancestors by reciting their genealogies and calling them by name (*ingad-an*). In this way their spirits are summoned to the celebration, where they are offered food, drink, and other gifts, including clothing and tobacco, as well as intan-



Figure 1. Oblika retained the same name throughout her life. She is shown here in full Suyoc Igorot (Kankanaey) native dress with tattoos on her arm. Other photographs show her smoking a pipe, a common practice even among young women. This photograph is apparently the subject of the tinted image at my wife's parents' house in Baguio City. (Missouri Historical Society [MHS] Neg. No. WF-1024; photograph by the Gerhard sisters, 1904)

gible gifts such as praising songs and oratory. Then, as the gongs and drums start up, the ancestors are called again by name and invited to “dance.” To be “named” brings ancestors back to their community and to “dance” puts them on center stage among their kindred and descendants. In turn, the renown of a supernatural ancestor gained from being “named” and receiving offerings at many feasts brings prestige to his or her descendants.

This descendant's search in both the Philippines and the U.S. for these names, the photographs of their owners, and the stories of their lives is an endeavor needing its own documentation, for it is part of the Fair's and the American regime's continuing history and legacy. My geological fieldwork in the U.S. presents an unexpected example, for it has given me the opportunity to travel to the far-flung archives and libraries referred to in this article. This advantage has not entirely been the result of accident, for my engineering education was encouraged and paid for by descendants of gold “pocket” miners, among whom were people who had demonstrated their traditional mining and processing techniques at the Fair.

My paternal grandmother, who was well known for her expertise in gold pocket mining and traditional ore processing, introduced me to these important Kankanaey livelihood activities, and I was able to

participate in them as a young boy. She had come from the same Suyoc community whence the Fair participants originated, and in the early 1900s had pioneered in the migration of Suyoc people to the Baguio gold mining district. In the 1930s the Baguio mines, under American exploration and development, were the largest gold producers in east Asia (Halsema 1991, 241).

Writers on the Fairs (for example, Clevenger 1996, 2004) point out how people on display were “effectively turned into objects” and displayed as in a “human zoo.” Indeed, in 2004, as the Philippine participation in the 1904 Fair was revisited in exhibits and symposia in the Philippines and the U.S., it was a novel idea for many that the Igorot who went to St. Louis even had descendants at all. In my research I have taken up the goal to lift those adventurous men, women, and children of my Suyoc great-grandparents’ generation out of the anonymity and the obscurity into which they have fallen.

Visits to U.S. Museums, Archives, Libraries

In March 1998 I went to see a special exhibit at the Missouri Historical Society (MHS) Museum in St. Louis that commemorated the 1904 World’s Fair. There was a special section on the Philippine Exhibit, and the centerpiece of the display was a large cutout picture of Tugmina, a seventeen-year-old Suyoc girl who was at the Fair and my aunt Pacita’s father’s wife. I was able to track the source of this photograph and others to the special photographic collection in the Library and Research section of the MHS in St. Louis. There were large photos of Oblika, Tugmina, and Singwa correctly labeled by the well-known St. Louis-based photographers, the Gerhard sisters. Others did not have any identification other than “Suyoc Igorot.” Looking at these large and very detailed photographs gave me an intense feeling of their presence. In a January 2000 trip to the MHS, I was able to review their entire photographic collection for the Fair. I also had an opportunity to look at objects made by the Suyoc Igorot that were in temporary storage at the Science Building. These consisted of handwoven headbands and woven bamboo bracelets.

Seeing this large set of my relatives' and ancestors' photographs all spread out in that large room at the MHS was an unforgettable experience. For a moment, spirits of the Suyoc people all seemed to be speaking at once, impatiently scolding and asking me, "Where have you been all this time?" My first wish was to offer them some rice wine, for that was what my parents did at home when they summoned their ancestors or felt their presence. Had I known what I was going to find in St. Louis, I would have brought an appropriate libation. I would have offered it to the Society's officials as well, in gratitude for their preserving these invaluable photographs.

On subsequent trips to the Philippines in April 1998 and May 2000 I brought copies of these photos to show descendants in the hope of identifying more unnamed individuals. My method was simple: initially, I would find ways to confirm their relationship to the subject, then inquire on whether they had seen the person, after which I would show the photograph. It was in this way that I learned about two other people who had gone to the Fair: Buli-e and Bayongasan. Buli-e's daughters and Bayongasan's daughter-in-law were thrilled at seeing the photograph of a familiar face and remarked "*Ya sanay si ama!*" ("Oh my, it is father!")

In March 2001 Yolanda Lacpap Morita (granddaughter of Buli-e) of Tacoma, Washington, sent me a 1904 newspaper article regarding the arrival of 235 Filipinos bound for the Fair. They had arrived aboard the steamship USS *Shawmut* in Tacoma on 21 March 1904. I went to Tacoma in April 2001 and was fortunate to find the passengers' manifest at the Tacoma Public Library. Later, in July 2001 I visited the St. Louis Public Library to look at their collections on the Fair. I saw photographs similar to the MHS collections, but the library had other publications and scrapbooks containing newspaper clippings relative to the Fair.

I visited the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) in August 2001, upon the suggestion of Dr. Patricia Afable who had seen some additional photos of Suyoc Igorot. The AMNH has a large collection of photographs of the Philippine exhibit at the Fair, including several taken by Jessie Tarbox Beals (Mathé 2002). I also found out

that during the Fair the AMNH had sent an anthropologist and a plaster maker to select representative individuals from each ethnic group to create a plaster cast. One of the individuals selected was Pulacan of Suyoc, identified as “Bolocan [sic], male, 21 years, Igorote.”

My dependence on photographs for my research has been greatly facilitated by the work of professional women photographers such as Beals (1870–1942) and the Gerhard sisters. Emme and Mamie Gerhard were the first women to have a photographic studio in St. Louis; photographs of Suyoc women were taken in their studio in natural light (Missouri Historical Society Website). The participation of Beals and the Gerhards in documenting the people at the “Philippines Reservation,” in general, and the “Igorrote Village,” in particular, seems to mark important developments for American women who were emerging as professionals, entrepreneurs, and independent scholars at a time when they were more the exception than the rule (see Quizon in this issue).

Three Lists of Names

The list of names of Suyoc participants in the Fair compiled by Awisan (table 1), referred herein as the PBA list, included information on gender and approximate age of the individual. By contrast, the list in the Report of the Philippine Exposition Board to the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, referred to here as the PEB list, provides names by ethnic groups and does not show the gender and age of the individuals. The passengers’ manifest of the *Shawmut* from the Tacoma Public Library, like Awisan’s list, included the gender and most probably the approximate age of the passengers. However, it does not show the ethnic group of the individuals other than that they were from the Philippine Islands bound for the St. Louis exposition. Comparison of the information in all three lists indicates that the group on the ship included eighty Visayans, seventy-one Bontoc Igorot, twenty-five Suyoc Igorot, thirty-seven Negrito, seventeen Tinguian, and five Mangyan for a total of 235.

In table 2, I summarize relevant information from the three lists. The Awisan list includes names that are different from those in the PEB and

Table 1. List of Suyoc Igorot who Travelled to the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair
Compiled by Pacita Betuagan Awisan Based on Oral History and Tradition
("PBA List")

Names as Commonly Known in the Suyoc Community	Sex	Approximate Age in 1904	Remarks
Lepdagen/Bayongasan	M	50	Confirmed participant; died 1938
Kinay	F	45	Unconfirmed; died ~1920
Madanis	M	32	Confirmed participant; died ~1917
Abalos/Bacasen	M	30	Confirmed participant; died ~1933
Pagiyen	M	34	Confirmed participant
Gaynos	F	18	Unconfirmed; wife of Pagiyen
Lebanay	F	28	Unconfirmed; died 1967
Pepe Betuagan	M	22	Confirmed participant; died 1960
Tugmina	F	17	Confirmed participant; died ~1914
Cuytop	M	12	Confirmed participant; died ~1960
Demeyna	F	30	Confirmed participant; died 1943
Baguilod	M	40	Unconfirmed; husband of Demeyna; died ~1938
Buli-e	M	28	Confirmed participant; died 1942
Pulacan	M	22	Confirmed participant; died 1960
Pongcoy	M	12	Confirmed participant; died 1969
Singwa	M	6	Confirmed participant; died 1968
Oblica	F	17	Confirmed participant; died 1944
Pig	M	30	Confirmed participant; died 1928
Sendican/Lub-eg	F	26	Confirmed participant; died 1945
Onib/Oning/Carmina	F	30	Confirmed participant; died 1944
Aguidal/Aponen/			
Langyawen	M	40	Confirmed participant; died ~1908
Labisen	M	32	Confirmed participant; died 1931

Note: Names separated by forward slashes are various single names used by the same person.

passenger manifest. The latter two are generally similar except for some differences in spelling. I was able to identify the Suyoc people in the passengers' manifest by using Awisan's information. The PBA list is unique in that it gives different names for the same individual because it indicates the way that person was popularly known in the Suyoc community after returning from the Fair. Name changes are common among the Suyoc Igorot and are prompted by a person's illness or by

Table 2. Comparison of Various Name Lists of the Suyoc Igorot Participants to the 1904 St. Louis Exposition, St. Louis, Missouri

Report of the Philippine Exposition Board 1904 (PEB List) ¹	Identified as Suyoc Igorot in SS <i>Shamut</i> Passenger Manifest, 21 March 1904 (PM List) ²			Compiled by Descendant Pacita Betuagan Awisan Based on Oral History (PBA List) ³		Notes
	Number and Name in Passenger Manifest	Age	Sex	Popular Names	Approx. Age	
1) Bayungasin, Chief, Suyoc Igorots	44. Banungasan	42	M	Bayongasan/ Lepdagen	50	Died ~1938; reportedly accompanied by wife Kinay
2) Aponen	33. Aepasen	23	M	Aguidal/ Atonen/ Langyawen	40	Died ~1908
3) Bacosen	40. Bacasan	24	M	Abalos/ Bacasen	30	Died ~1933; brother of Madanis and Demeyna
4) Basgnuid	25. Basngued	17	F	Pongcoy Bugtong	12	Died 1969; first cousin of Tugmina
5) Bilig	95. Bilig	12	M			
6) Caluten	60. Caluten	20	M	Billi Cuytop Onib/ Oning/ Carmina Demeyna	12	Died ~1960
7) Cuytop	98. Cuytop	12	M		30	Died 1944; wife of Charles Pettit
8) Dangusan	17. Dainguosan	16	F		30	Died 1943; sister of Madanis and Bacasen
9) Domona	11. Demina	20	F	Buli-e	28	Died 1942; brother of Onib and Sendican
10) Lagney	51. Lagandey	22	M			Died 1945; wife of Pig; sister of Buli-e
11) Lubuc	6. Lubeg	17	F	Sendican/ Lubeg	26	

Table 2 continued

12) Madenis	38. Madanes	32	M	Madanis	32	Died ~1917; brother of Demeyna and Bacasen
13) Maura	28. Mura	18	F			Died at the Fair one month after arrival in U.S.
14) Obleka	18/22. Ublica	17	F	Oblica	17	Died 1944; first cousin of Dang-usan
15) Paguin	32. Paguiin	32	M	Pagiye	34	
16) Pedro	61. Pablo	16	M	Pepe Betuagan	22	Died 1960; husband of Tugmina
17) Pig	69. Pig	22	M	Pig	30	Died ~1928; brother of Labisen
18) Polican	62. Paleco	22	M	Pulacan	22	Died 1960; brother-in-law of Pig
19) Sadipan	39. Sidipin	32	M			
20) Sagued	97. Sagied	13	M			
21) Saperono	45. Leperino	23	M	Labisen	32	Died ~1931; brother of Pig
22) Singwa	96. Lingwa	6	M	Singwa	6	Died 1968; nephew of Dang-usan
23) Sudong	65. Sudong	18	M			
24) Tugmena	21. Tugnina	16	F	Tugmina	17	Died ~1914; wife of Pepe Betuagan
25) Utingni	57. Utinguing	22	M			

1. Names as shown and spelled in the Official List of Awards granted by the Philippine International Jury at the Philippine Government Exposition (Philippine Exposition Board 1904).

2. List of names, ages, and gender from typewritten passengers' manifest of the USS *Shawmut* arriving in Tacoma on 21 March 1904 (Tacoma Public Library 2004). The list does not identify ethnic origins of Philippine Island passengers.

3. Awisan's (2003) list includes the popular names and gender of individuals and is based on oral history and tradition.

an unfortunate experience. Also important to note is that, during that period, only one name was used; there were no surnames. Awisan's list is a rich resource because it gives all the known name changes that the individual adopted. It also shows approximate ages based on local knowledge such as oral history and backtracking from the approximate age of the individual at death.

The Participants

The PEB list includes the names of twenty-five people from Suyoc who were sent to the Fair. By comparing the PEB list and the *Shawmut* passengers' manifest, I was able to determine that the Suyoc contingent consisted of fourteen men, seven women, and four young boys. Hunt organized and managed both the Bontoc and Suyoc, collectively known as the Igorot participation. He apparently requested Pettit to recruit and organize the Suyoc group since the latter was married to Dang-usan and resided in Suyoc. Charles' brother, Alvin, was named manager of the Suyoc Igorot. Charles and Dang-usan recruited close relatives, including her brother Buli-e, sister Lub-eg, and nephew Singwa (figure 2). Other participants had apparent business relationships with Charles, with whom they had filed mining claims. Madanis, Bacasen, Paguiyen, and Pig, for instance, were known to be owners of mining claims in Suyoc. This relationship might have played a role in selecting other



Figure 2. Singwa, age six, the youngest of the Suyoc Igorot, appears in many photographs by himself or in Igorot groups and is easily recognizable because of his distinct physical features. He is shown here apparently with Beals' camera; this image has been reproduced many times, notably on the cover of the book by Breitbart (1997). (American Museum of Natural History [hereafter AMNH] Neg. No. 324169; photograph by Jessie Tarbox Beals)

individuals for the Suyoc group. Kinship links among the other participants are shown in the family trees in figures 3, 4, and 5. Individuals who were positively identified by their families through photographs as of this writing are listed below.

Bayongasan, also known as Lepdagen, was the Suyoc tax collector in the late Spanish period, when he held the title of “Binyadol.” He was the oldest in the Suyoc group and was designated Suyoc “chief”

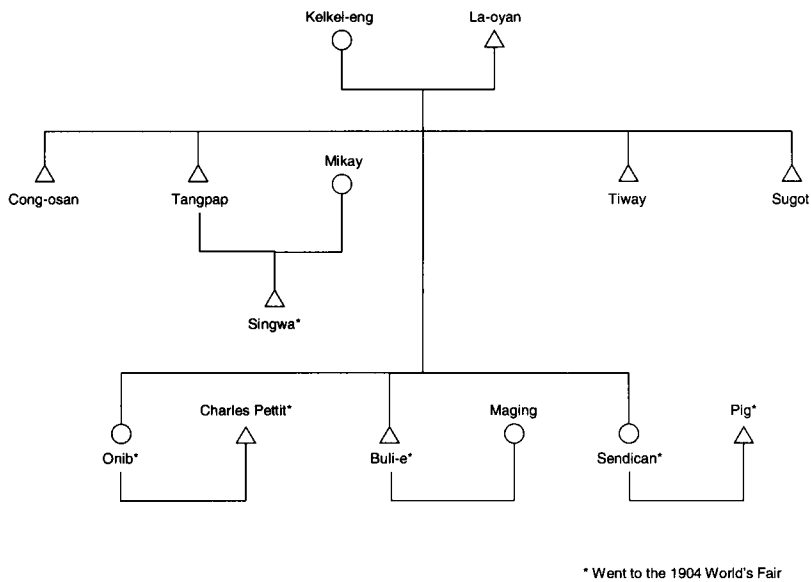


Figure 3. Kelkel-eng/La-oyan Family Tree

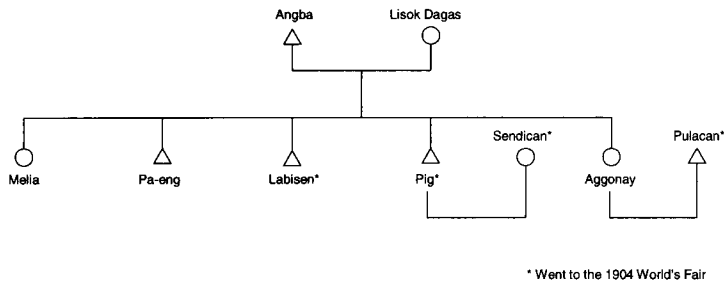


Figure 4. Angba/Lisok Family Tree

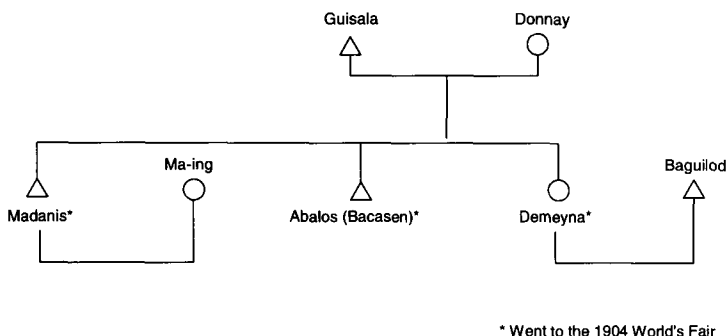


Figure 5. Guisala/Donnay Family Tree

at the Fair. He was not really a tribal chief but was probably accorded the title because of his age and stature in the community. Although there is much respect for the elderly, it is interesting that among the Suyoc there does not exist a hierarchal tribal structure. As the Suyoc's "designated" tribal chief, Bayongasan led the prayers during the native rituals at the Fair. Suyoc oral history reports that he was accompanied by his wife Kinay. Bayongasan's photograph was positively identified by the wife of his late son, Antero, during my visit to the Philippines in November 2001. Bayongasan is believed to have been sent to Madrid during the 1887 exposition. He has descendants that have settled in the United States.

Buli-e may have assumed a different name at the Fair. A photograph taken at the Fair identifies him as "Suyoc Igorot miner" (figure 6). He was positively identified by his two daughters in Suyoc. He is the grandfather of former Benguet Governor Jaime Panganiban. Buli-e died in 1942 and has many descendants, including some in the United States.

Dang-usan was the wife of Charles Pettit and popularly known as Onib or Oning. A photograph by the Gerhard sisters carries the identification "Dangusan, Igorrote Girl (married to one of the Fair Officials)." Her age of sixteen years in the passengers' manifest seems to be a low estimate as her photograph shows an evidently more mature individual. Awisan estimates her age during the Fair to be about thirty. Dang-usan and Pettit settled in Suyoc and did not have any children. She died in 1944. She and her husband were both buried in Suyoc.



Figure 6. Buli-e. Captions in archival copies of this photograph identifies this man as “Suyoc Igorot miner.” This photo was positively identified as Buli-e by his daughters in Suyoc. He is shown here wearing his head dress (*bedbed*) and smoking a pipe (*kuako*). He appears to be repairing the metal chain (*tininggal*) used to attach the pipe cleaner (*pek*) to the pipe. (MHS Neg; photograph by Jessie Tarbox Beals)

Demeyna was listed as “Demina age twenty,” in the passengers’ manifest, which would make her about age fifty-four when she died in 1938. Awisan estimates that she was much older when she died, and believes that she was about thirty at the Fair. Her two brothers, Bacasen and Madanis, were also with the Suyoc group. Suyoc oral history reports that she was accompanied by her husband Baguilod at the Fair.

Lub-eg, also more popularly known as Sendican, was the wife of Pig and sister of Buli-e and Dang-usan. The passengers’ manifest shows that she was seventeen years old, but Awisan estimates her age at that time to be about twenty-six, consistent with her mature look in the photograph and with her approximate age of sixty-seven when she died around 1945. She did not have any children with Pig.

Oblica (also Oblika) retained the same name (spelled differently) up to her death in 1944. Photographs of her taken by the Gerhard sisters show her in full Suyoc Igorot dress; the details of her physical features include her tattoos (figure 1). She was the first cousin of Dang-usan, and did not have any children.

Tugmina was a seventeen-year-old woman married to Pepe Betuagan who was also at the Fair (figure 7). She retained her name until her death in 1914. She has several photos taken by Jessie Tarbox Beals and was the most photographed of the Igorot women at the Fair. She was apparently a weaver and several photographs captured her in this activity. There is a well-known story in Suyoc about Tugmina giving birth to a girl named Denecia toward the end of the Fair. I have yet to find a reference concerning this event.

Pulacan, listed as "Paleco, twenty-two-year-old male" in the passengers' manifest, was identified in a group-weaving picture by his descendants. He was one of many subjects of the AMNH plaster cast project during the Fair; these busts remain in the collection of the AMNH. He died in 1960 and has several descendants.

Betuagan, my maternal granduncle, was about twenty-two years old when he went to St. Louis. He could have assumed a different name during the trip and might be the male named Pedro in the passengers manifest.

Cuytop was a twelve-year-old boy at the time of the Fair. In news reports he was referred to as "Ouetop." He retained his name through his adulthood, and was the father of James Guanso, a former Benguet provincial and municipal official. Cuytop had many descendants, including some currently living in the United States.



Figure 7. Tugmina, age seventeen, has several photographs and is identified by the same name. She is shown here in full native dress with her upper garment (*penet*), skirt (*eten*) and waist cloth (*bakget*). She is wearing strands of necklaces (*keke*) and a bracelet. Tugmina was married to Pepe Betuagan who was also at the World's Fair. There is a well-known but unconfirmed story in Suyoc that Tugmina gave birth to a girl towards the end of the Fair. (AMNH Neg. No. 324181; photograph by Jessie Tarbox Beals)

Pongcoy was a twelve-year-old boy at the Fair, where he probably assumed the name Bilig. His photograph was identified by his close resemblance to descendants in Suyoc.

Singwa, at six years old, was the youngest and the most photographed member of the group (figure 2). He was known as Victoriano Singwa in adulthood and went on to become a rancher in Ocab, near Antamok mines, where he died in the late 1960s. Singwa was a nephew of Dang-usan.

The Voyage

The Suyoc people's journey began on the steamship *Shawmut* that departed Manila on 11 February 1904 and arrived in Tacoma on 21 March 1904. The party was accompanied by Hunt as superintendent and Charles Pettit. Upon arrival, the party was transferred to the ten best tourist cars of the Northern Pacific Railway for the trip to St. Louis. Before the train departed for the east, each member of the party was apportioned five days' ration consisting of rice, canned goods, and hardtack (*The Daily Ledger* [Tacoma], 22 March 1904). They left for St. Louis on the same afternoon of their arrival.

The Igorot group arrived in St. Louis on the Friday afternoon of 25 March. "The whole lot were coughing and sneezing, and they looked weary and haggard from the long ride and close confinement" (*St. Louis Globe Democrat*, 26 March 1904). During the train ride they had thrown the clothing supplied to them by the railroad out the car windows, and upon their arrival in St. Louis many of them had to be given blankets furnished again by the railroad (*Tacoma Daily News*, 26 March 1904). They were brought to the Cuartel de Filipino in rooms with bunk beds. It served as their temporary quarters while their native huts were being built, to be occupied when the Fair officially opened on 30 April.

An interview with Hunt in Tacoma (*Seattle Daily Times*, 22 March 1904) revealed that houses, implements, and tools used by natives in the Philippines had been shipped several months prior to their departure. An Igorot village was built that included native grass-thatched huts. The intent was to set up a village simulating living conditions in the Philip-

pires, so that the Igorot would appear to live in much the same manner as they did in villages at home. I have seen several photographs of the Suyoc people building their own houses; it is worth noting that Talusan's article in this issue mentions the use of other Filipino participants from the scouts and constabulary contingent as carpenters and general construction workers.

Day-To-Day Activities

At the Fair the Suyoc people demonstrated their skills in blacksmithing, cloth weaving, metalworking, pipe-making, basket weaving, bead-making, and other work. Copper and ore reduction were also demonstrated. The Suyoc Igorot, both men and women, were skilled in the processing of gold ore, from crushing the ore to smelting the gold metal, and very likely they demonstrated this procedure at the Fair. Betuagan and Buli-e brought their own sets of blacksmith bellows and were known for their metal working expertise; they made *tinggal* (copper chains) and *pek* (metal pipe cleaner). Demeyna was the pipe-maker and Tugmina was the weaver. Souvenirs that they made to sell to fairgoers included bead necklaces and bracelets, woven cloth, and baskets. At the Fair some Bontoc people reportedly learned to make jewellery pendants and earrings by the lost-wax process from the Suyoc people.

Each of the three communities (Bontoc, Suyoc, and Tinguian) in the Igorot Village performed their native dances. However, while there are many photographs in collections (postcards, book and magazine illustrations) of Bontoc Igorot dancing, photographs of the Suyoc or Tinguian performing in a similar way are rare. The Suyoc Igorot were a relatively quiet and reserved group compared with the larger group of more ebullient and photogenic Bontoc performers. The Suyoc people might also have purposefully restricted their dancing and feasting because these activities were (and continue to be) closely associated with rituals involving prayers and animal offerings (usually pig or chicken) and the presence of a priest to offer prayers. It is also worth noting that photographs of Suyoc people performing a dog feast are rare; there seems to be none for the Tinguian group.

For the Filipino children at the Fair a model school was established in a thatched-roof building especially arranged for exhibition purposes. American visitors observed the class from an elevated section of the room. Two sessions were held daily except for Mondays; the first session from nine to ten-thirty in the morning was attended by children from the Visayan village, followed by a one-hour session for children of the non-Christian tribes, which included the Suyoc and Bontoc Igorot. Group photos show that the four Suyoc boys attended the model school.

A photograph of the group after a meal suggests that the entire Suyoc group dined together (figure 8). Another group photograph illustrates a leisurely setting in front of their house at the Igorot Village.

News Bits and Vignettes

At the St. Louis Public Library I came across news articles that revealed interesting accounts about the Suyoc people. There is one about the fourth death in the Filipino group of an Igorrote woman named Maura, who died of pneumonia after ten days in the hospital (*St. Louis Globe Democrat*, 22 April 1904). When Hunt relayed the news to the group, all at once “the women gathered in a circle and set up a weird and doleful wailing which they carried for several hours,” a common tradition during that period. A pagan funeral was held at the undertaking room of Cullen and Kelly the next day. The Suyoc Igorot wanted to perform full funeral rites over Maura’s body (*St. Louis Globe Democrat*, 23 April 1904); however, it was reported that “they will be allowed to have the ‘can-yow’ or funeral feast, but the smoking of the body over a slow fire [was to] be prohibited.” After the service, the group went back to the cuartel where “funeral baked meat” was served.

This custom continues to this day in Igorot villages, even among the Christianized Suyoc Igorot—the offering to the gods of an animal, usually a pig, cooking it unseasoned, and sharing it with the people attending the funeral service. Maura’s body was reportedly embalmed and kept in storage until the group returned to the Philippines. Interestingly enough, there is no mention of this tragedy in oral history, and whether the body was in fact shipped back to the Philippines.



Figure 8. Group of Suyoc Igorot taking a break from eating to pose for a picture. There are serving basins containing rice, individual enamel metal plates, cups and spoons. Eating on the floor while squatting is typical. There are eleven men, five women and four boys in this group; only some are identified. Pongcoy is the boy at left center. Sendican is the first woman on the left sitting behind a blurred figure which might be the boy Singwa. Tugmina is the second woman from the right. The adult faces in this photograph show their mature looks that seem inconsistent with the estimated ages in the passengers' manifest. Betuagan may be the young man standing. (AMNH Neg. No. 324158; photograph by Jessie Tarbox Beals)

The Suyoc people's mining expertise is described in an article "Igorrotes show miners how to test metals" (*St. Louis Republic*, 15 May 1904). A group of four Igorot who "follows mining as a life business," apparently referring to the Suyoc Igorot, was taken by Charles Pettit to the Mines building to demonstrate how to test minerals by taste. As each specimen was handed to them "they touched it to their tongues and smacked their lips as if tasting." They explained through an interpreter that they could tell the character of the mineral by the taste. I have seen Suyoc miners perform this test, but it appears more directed to spitting and wetting the specimen to reveal the mineral.

There is the account of the young Igorot who longed for gold teeth (*Globe Democrat*, 6 October 1904). Sudong, one of the “ambitious members” of the (Suyoc) tribe, deliberately smashed two front teeth as a pretext for going to the dentist. He had seen gold fillings from many of the visitors to the Igorot Village, believed they were ornaments, and was determined to have his own. When Hunt learned of the ruse, he refused to allow the procedure. Sudong ended up visiting the dentist only to round off the broken teeth but did not get any gold filling.

An article in the *St. Louis Globe Dispatch* (5 November 1904) described the experience of a Suyoc child in learning American practices. When a shipment of goods arrived at the Igorot Village, the call was answered by Cuytop, who in turn called Alvin Pettit, the manager for the Suyoc group, for his signature. As Alvin took his time in coming, and the delivery driver was getting impatient, Cuytop signed the delivery receipt himself and handed it to the driver. He took delivery of the goods and the duplicate receipt on Alvin’s behalf. Cuytop most probably knew how to read and write, and probably started attending school in Suyoc before 1904. A public school had been in place there soon after 1900 because of the fame of the Suyoc mines and the early arrival there of American soldier-prospectors.

End of Trip

After eight months in America, the Suyoc Igorot left the morning of 13 November from the Union Station in St. Louis aboard the westbound Burlington train for Tacoma, Washington (*St. Louis Globe Democrat*, 19 November 1904). The group consisted of eighty-one Filipinos made up of thirty-nine Visayans and forty-two members of the Suyoc and Tinguian groups. Two special cars attached to the westbound Burlington train conveyed the Filipino natives. In Tacoma they reportedly embarked on a government transport on 18 December, accompanied by Charles Pettit. Many were “suffering acutely from rheumatism.” On their trip across the Pacific, they were said to have been attired in Western clothing. From recollections of their descendants, among items they brought back were American silver coins, medals, shoes, and a phonograph.

From bits and pieces of stories told to their descendants, the Suyoc people who had gone to the Fair had no reservations in relating stories of a journey of a lifetime. I could sense the excitement when Grandpa Betuagan told his stories. That they were exploited did not seem to bother him, or perhaps he did not want to talk about it. I did not sense any indication that they were forced to go. In fact, the selection and composition of the group suggested a carefully thought-out representation of multiple generations and intact family units, although there was a noticeable pattern of favoring family members and rewarding business associates.

The Suyoc people were not an isolated, "primitive" group even if their representation at the Fair suggested otherwise. They lived close to the most important routes to the highlands from the Ilocos lowlands, and their involvement in the regional economy surrounding the extraction and refinement of gold and copper meant that they frequently walked to the coast to trade. At the end of the Philippine-American War (was it the official end of the war?), they met the first American soldiers who had come to the mountains of Suyoc to prospect for gold and lay their individual claims. Many married Suyoc women, who themselves had a great reputation for being good miners, and in this way lived out their lives in the Philippines.

What Now?

My research is just a beginning. There are many gaps and unknowns that will require further research. I still have not positively identified a photograph of my grandfather Betuagan and I would like to know if he and Tugmina actually had a baby in America as the story goes in Suyoc. I am hoping that what I started and continue to do will spark interest and arouse curiosity among the descendants of these adventurers to pursue this research not only with the Suyoc Igorot, but also with the Bontoc Igorot, the Tinguian, Negrito, Bagobo, Moro, and Mangyan. I enjoyed reliving their experiences and I am sure there are more accounts of their short stay in America hidden in libraries, archives, and museums waiting to be discovered. Thus shall we value our ancestors and invite them to dance on the center stage of history.

Note

This paper was first presented at the Seventh International Conference for Philippine Studies at the University of Leiden, the Netherlands, 16–19 June 2004. It was also read at the Symposium “Revisiting the Fair” held at the University of the Philippines, Baguio, 18–19 November 2004, to an audience that included several dozen descendants of the Suyoc people who had journeyed to the Fair. I would like to thank Pacita Betuagan Awisan, daughter of Pepe Betuagan, who provided significant information on the Suyoc and the several descendants who shared the stories of their ancestors’ trip to America. My special thanks to Drs. Patricia Afable and Cherubim Quizon for their encouragement and editorial help.

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