

# A History of Our Independence

by JHERLYN MENESES  
AJPress

Filipinos have had a long history of struggle before gaining freedom and independence. The Philippines was under the colonial rule of Spain for almost 200 years. Insurrections led by our brave national heroes broke out because of the authoritarian and abusive Spanish rule. It only came to an end accidentally as a result of the United States' involvement with Cuba, another Spanish colony.

The United States declared war on Spain in 1898. The Battle of Manila Bay was the first hostile engagement of the Spanish-American War. US gained the support of the Filipinos through the help of Aguinaldo who went back to the Philippines after being exiled in Hongkong. He then gathered his rebel forces and re-established a revolutionary government and declared Philippine Independence from Spain on June 12, 1898 at his ancestral home in Kawit Cavite.

The flag of the Philippines was first flown in that event. It was made in Hong Kong by Marcela Agoncillo, Lorenza Agoncillo and Delfina Herbosa de Natividad. It is also where the Philippine National Anthem was first played by the San Francisco de Malabon band, composed by Julian Felipe. The song was played under the name Marcha Filipina Magdalo, later renamed as Marcha Nacional Filipina. This declaration however was not recognized because on December 10, 1898 at the

Treaty of Paris, Spain ceded the Philippines to the United States.

The US did not intend to recognize Philippine Independence, which forced Aguinaldo to move his capital from Cavite to Malolos. Aguinaldo and his advisers were eager to prove that the Filipinos could govern themselves and started to organize the Philippine Republic. He proclaimed the Malolos Constitution on January 23, 1899 and two days later, the Philippine Republic was inaugurated in Malolos Bulacan.

Hostilities between the Americans and the Filipinos began on February 4, 1899 which led to the collapse of the Philippine-American alliance and continued on for two years. It took the lives of many Filipinos. Aguinaldo and his government escaped the capture of Malolos on March 31, 1899, disbanded his forces in November and were captured on March 23, 1901. He was forced to swear allegiance to the United States, called on his soldiers to put down their

arms and on July 4, 1901, the United States declared an end to military rule.

President McKinley noticed the determination of the Filipino people to gain their independence and recommended the establishment of a civilian domestic government. He appointed the Taft Commission and gave it authority over the civilian government. It eliminated three centuries of Spanish governance, established the laws and institutions of a modern civil state, constituted a code of law, a judicial system and an elective municipal and provincial governments.

In July 1907, the Nacionalista Party of Manuel Quezon and Sergio Osmena won the first elections to the Philippine Assembly and continued to reign until World War II.

In 1916, an elected Philippine Senate replaced the appointed Philippine Commission and the former Philippine Assembly was renamed the House of Representatives. The Tydings-McDuffie Act of 1934 established the Commonwealth of the Philippines

and in 1935, a plebiscite on the constitution for the new Republic was approved.

On July 4, 1946, representatives of the United States and the Republic of the Philippines signed a treaty of general relations between the two governments. The treaty provided for the recognition of the independence of the Republic of the Philippines and the relinquishment of American sovereignty over the Philippine Islands.

Manuel Roxas became the first President of the Republic of the Philippines on July 4, 1946. He was succeeded by Elpidio Quirino in 1948, Ramon Magsaysay in 1953, Carlos Garcia in 1957 and Diosdado Macapagal in 1961.

Soon after taking office, President Macapagal signed Republic Act No. 4166 and proclaimed June 12 a national holiday in celebration of Philippine Independence. General Emilio Aguinaldo, who first proclaimed Philippine Independence on June 12, 1898, was the guest of honor at the first Independence Day celebrations held on June 12, 1962.

Since then, every 12th of June, Filipino communities worldwide never fail to celebrate this momentous event known as the Philippine Independence Day. ■

## Celebrating Our Freedom

Events lined up for RP Independence Day

by JOSEPH PIMENTEL  
AJPress

Philippine Independence Day is a time for celebration. All over the world, Filipinos will gather and celebrate this year the 111th anniversary of Philippine Independence day on June 12.

Philippine Independence Day is the day General Emilio Aguinaldo proclaimed the independence of the Filipinos in Kawit, Cavite, in 1898.

Some Filipino organizations have already celebrated.

In the City of Carson, the Philippine Independence Day Foundation held their Philippine Independence Day celebration last June 6 in Veterans Park.

Here are a few other Philippine Independence Day celebrations across Los Angeles.

**June 11 FilAm County Employees**

The Los Angeles County Filipino American Employees Association will host their annual Philippine Independence Day at the LA County Hall of Administration at 500 W. Temple St. in Los Angeles. Parking is available at the Music Center. The event starts at 10 am.

**June 12 Flag Raising**

The Consulate General of the Philippines in Los Angeles cordially is inviting the public in a flag raising ceremony and breakfast at the residence of Consul General Mary Jo Aragon located at 414 S. Muirfield Road in Los Angeles. Guests will need to wear formal attire Barong Tagalog and Filipiniana. The flag raising ceremony starts at 9 am.

Guests need to RSVP

before June 11. Contact (213) 637-3031 or e-mail cultural\_pcgl@yahoo.com for more information.

**June 13 Grand Ball**

A Philippine Independence Day Grand Ball will be held at the Westin Bonaventure Hotel in Downtown Los Angeles. The festivities start at 6 pm.

The event will feature a nine-course Chinese Lauriat dinner plus one drink. Two live bands will set the tone for the evening's entertainment.

Senator Chiz Escudero, Secretary of Energy Angelo Reyes along with representatives from the LA Philippine Consulate General office will be among those attending the event. Tickets for the event are \$59. For tickets call (323) 258-4879 or inquire from the Philippine Consulate.

**July 12 Friendship Day**

With so many Filipino organizations hosting their Philippine Independence Day celebration in June, The Kabalikat Society and Friends decided to host their event in July. The event will commemorate Philippine Independence Day and US Independence Day.

The first annual Philippine Independence Day Festival will be held at the Chino Hills Community Park from 12 p.m. to 8 pm. ■

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### FIESTAS FILIPINAS 2009

## Flavors of the Philippines

Oxnard Plaza Park, Downtown Oxnard on 5th Street between B and C Street  
June 20-21, 2008 (Fiesta)  
10am-5pm  
Opening Date: June 20, 2008, 10am-5pm

The Filipino-American Council of Ventura County invites all to come to their Annual Philippine Independence Day Celebration. This year's theme of *Flavors of the Philippines*, is an event to commemorate the

Philippines' Independence from Spain for over 300 years. This Fiestas Filipinas festival will take place on June 20 and 21, 2008 at Plaza Park in Downtown Oxnard, on 5th Street between "B" & "C" Street. The event will include a variety of experiences from live entertainment, traditional dances, youth activities, cultural displays, martial arts exhibits, a car and bike show, various food vendors, an *Adobo* Cook-off contest and a formal dinner dance.

The fiesta kicks off on Saturday, June 20 which will include live performances by Oxnard's very own pop vocalist Freda Simone. Also gracing the stage will be Ventura County local acts- Yul Vianzon, Jr, and live band Living Room Rock Stars..

Included in the fiesta schedule is an entire day of cultural celebration including Filipino Martial Arts demonstrations conducted by Mt. San Antonio College Filipino Martial Arts group who will demonstrate Eskrima, Arnis, Kali and kickboxing. Cultural Dance Troupe Salin Lahi, Henry

Garcia's Tae Kali Do Studios, Zambales Youth Dancers, the Filipino American Association of Camarillo, Angie's Angels, Keoloha and Co., Undeclared, and Emanon will perform a wide array of dances from traditional cultural, modern hiphop, Polynesian, Hawaiian, Tahitian, to belly-dancing. A car exhibition by High End Performance of Camarillo, CA will also take place on the corner of "B" and 5th Street and will display several modified show class import vehicles.

Day 2 of the fiesta will be headlined with the live performance by entertainer POCA. The 4th Annual Adobo Cook-off will also take place on day 2, while a Harley Davidson bike exhibition by the Pinoy Harley Riders of Southern California will be exhibited. Henry Garcia's Tae Kali Do Studio of Oxnard will also exhibit a fine array of Filipino Martial Arts. The International Cultural Association of California will host the 4th Annual Fil-Am Idol Karaoke Singing Contest. Several local youths will gather in a Santa Cruzan parade, a celebration that culminates a beauty pageant, floral and religious processions just as done traditionally in the Philippines.

For the duration of the event, several vendors will be located throughout the park including youth activities, cultural exhibits and displays, arts, crafts, and food vendors selling Filipino and other Asian cuisine. ■

## Carson Celebrates RP Independence

LOS ANGELES - The City of Carson and the Philippine Independence Day Foundation celebrated the 111th Philippine Independence Day at Veterans Park last Saturday, June 6.

"On behalf of the City of Carson and the City Council, we cordially welcome you to our annual Philippine Independence Day celebration at Veterans Park," said City of Carson Mayor Jim Dear. "Nothing pleases us more than to be able to say welcome back to a full day of culture, live entertainment, food and much more."

It was a day of celebration and fun. Carson is home to more than 20,000 Filipinos and the event draws many of them to the Veterans Park. The event is a commemoration of the independence of the Philippines from the Spanish government who ruled the island nation for over 400 years.

Philippine rock star band Introyvos, tenor soloist Rodell Aure Rosel, the Sampaguita Youth Dance Troupe and many more performed to the thousands of Filipinos in attendance.

The festivities began at 8 am with a flag raising ceremony and mass. President of the Philippine Independence Day foundation Emmanuel Salomon ended the day with closing remarks at 6 in the evening. ■

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## HAPPY INDEPENDENCE DAY!

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