

**Chapter 8**  
**THE PHILIPPINE WAR (1899-1902):**  
**Moving pictures for the American military**

**INTRODUCTION**

America's military interventions at the turn of the nineteenth century both began and ended in the Philippines. This was where the Spanish-American war had started, with the US naval victory over Spain at Manila Bay in May 1898, and conflict on the islands continued for several years as America took over Spain's colonial rule, and fought Filipino nationalists and insurgents for control of the country. Though this conflict is almost forgotten today, and in historical accounts it is sometimes presented as little more than a footnote to the Spanish-American war, the war was militarily important, for it was a larger conflict than is sometimes realised – thousands of men fought and were killed – and it marked an important chapter in the evolution of 'irregular' or guerrilla warfare.<sup>1</sup>

In recent years the war has been reassessed by historians, and is emerging as a far more interesting conflict than the epitome of colonial brutality which has so often been its reputation hitherto. Historian Brian Linn has produced the most complete account of the war to date and has shown that the US military, despite blunders, pursued a relatively subtle and intelligent policy, making this 'the most successful counterinsurgency campaign in U.S. history' (albeit, one must add, with thoroughly imperialist aims).<sup>2</sup> The war as a filmed event was also more complex and interesting than media historians have yet appreciated, notably for being a 'test bed' for visual propaganda of surprising sophistication. The major development filmically was the technique of 'arranging' scenes with troops in the war zone – these set-up shots being far more effective than off-the-cuff shooting. Such 'arranged' scenes, along with various fakes shot in the USA, constituted a disturbingly persuasive visual case for America's first, much criticized, imperialist adventure.

**Historical introduction**

After the swift defeat of Spain in Manila, and the fighting with Spain coming to an end in August 1898, the question arose: what should become of the Philippines? Among the Filipinos there was a strong nationalist faction which had launched a revolution against the country's Spanish rulers in 1896, and now effectively controlled much of the archipelago. The Filipino revolutionaries initially welcomed the US forces and expected or hoped that the Americans would agree to their dream of self-rule.<sup>3</sup> This hope was encouraged by the fact that shortly after his naval victory, Admiral Dewey brought the nationalist leader, Emilio Aguinaldo, back from exile to his Philippine homeland. For a time the two armies cooperated in the defeat of the Spaniards, but the friendship was not to last long.<sup>4</sup>

In the United States there was widespread discussion and disagreement in 1898 and 1899 about whether America should take on the Pacific nation as a colony. Many of the newspapers were against it (though the proportion in favour increased to a majority by the end of 1898),<sup>5</sup> and politicians were only narrowly in favour. President McKinley made the final decision, and later described the options that he thought he had faced in deciding the fate of the Philippines:

'(1) That we could not give them back to Spain – that would be cowardly and dishonorable; (2) that we could not turn them over to France and Germany – our commercial rivals in the Orient – that would be bad business and discreditable; (3) that we could not leave them to themselves – they were unfit for self-government – and they would soon have anarchy and misrule over there worse than Spain's was; and (4) that there was nothing left for us to do but to take them all, and to educate the Filipinos, and uplift and civilize and Christianize them, and by God's grace do the very best [we could] by them, as our fellow-men for whom Christ also died.'<sup>6</sup>

Passing over the fact that the Philippines was already Christian (McKinley really wanted to *Protestantise* the predominantly Catholic islanders)<sup>7</sup>, there were other factors that McKinley didn't mention which encouraged the drive in America for assimilation. One of these was that the Philippines would effectively give the United States a western Pacific base, extending the global reach and influence of the burgeoning superpower, and promising access to the markets of China and the East. Secondly the Philippines was rich in natural resources, including timber.<sup>8</sup> In January 1900 US Senator Beveridge who knew the islands, stressed these economic factors in a speech to the Senate, calling the Philippines 'a revelation of vegetable and mineral riches' and adding that these products, such as copra and timber, 'supply what we need and cannot ourselves produce'.<sup>9</sup> He believed that the God given 'mission of our nation' was to achieve 'the civilization of the world', which certainly would include bringing backward nations into the world market economy. (Incidentally, as we shall see, the Senator was making his remarks at the very time that cameraman Carl Ackerman was filming the American army during the war with Filipino insurgents.)

However, as well as economic factors, there were also more altruistic motives among some of the pro-assimilationist Americans. There was little doubt among the US public that, as with Cuba, the Philippines had been misruled by Spain for generations: Filipinos and half-castes were discriminated against, with Spaniards getting all government jobs, and huge areas of land being owned by Catholic friars who were often autocratic and corrupt. The growing belief in the United States was that Spanish colonialism was an unacceptable anachronism. Indeed one American writer saw the demise of Spanish rule as part of the passing of the 'Dark Ages' – along with the victory of the British at Omdurman – and that American victory in the islands would be a triumph for progress and civilization.<sup>10</sup>

Furthermore, many Americans might have agreed with McKinley that self-rule for the Philippines would be little better than Spanish rule, and that a dose of Yankee administration was the only way to sort the country out. In any case, this view prevailed, and by the Treaty of Paris, signed on 10 December 1898, the islands were ceded by Spain to the United States for \$20 million. This was a reversal of previous indications to the Filipinos that they would be allowed self government, and the policy was highly contentious. Many Americans were concerned that their idealistic country was taking on a colonial role, and the Anti-Imperialist League (and writers including Mark Twain) helped focus opposition.<sup>11</sup> The controversial nature of annexation is underlined by the fact that ratification of the treaty in the Senate only just passed, squeezing through by just one vote more than the required two thirds majority.<sup>12</sup>

On 21 December 1898 President McKinley issued his so-called 'Benevolent Assimilation' proclamation, which outlined the aims of his policies in the Philippines as being to help the people and to develop the country, through American rule. In response, the Philippine Republic was declared in January 1899, with Emilio Aguinaldo as its president.<sup>13</sup> The United States refused to recognize this as the legitimate government, and tensions grew between the two sides.

Even before the actual decision on annexation was taken, from as early as the summer of 1898 indications were appearing that this was America's aim.<sup>14</sup> American troops were arriving in the islands, and they soon controlled Manila (though Filipino forces surrounded the city and controlled most of the country beyond). On 4 February 1899, after three Filipino soldiers were killed by U.S. troops, full-scale fighting broke out and the Philippine Republic declared war on the United States forces. In Kiernan's characteristically pithy phrase: 'Revolt against Spain went on as revolt against America'.<sup>15</sup> A bitter war ensued, lasting from 1899 to 1902 and beyond, known at the time as the Philippine insurrection, and these days dubbed the Philippine-American War, or simply the Philippine War.<sup>16</sup>

The war initially involved a number of set-piece battles, but the Filipino nationalist side fared poorly at conventional war and by 1900 had changed their tactics to guerrilla-style warfare. Yet the Americans had themselves developed an approach which proved unbeatable, the so-called 'attraction and chastisement' strategy. The 'attraction' part of this was based on the Army offering generous surrender terms, and then helping to provide schools, health care, sanitation programs etc to cooperative communities. Chastisement meant aggressively pursuing resistance and punishing uncooperative individuals and communities, with the penalty supposedly being proportionate to the offence.<sup>17</sup> Though this did not have immediate results, and the fighting continued for many months, the Americans gradually gained control by making peace and establishing local government in one region after another.

The Filipinos pressed the Americans hard on many occasions, and the conflict revealed weaknesses in American weaponry.<sup>18</sup> But there was little real doubt as to which side would ultimately win. A decisive moment came on 23 March

1901 when the elusive Aguinaldo was captured from his remote hideout in a bold operation led by Colonel Frederick Funston.<sup>19</sup> Theodore Roosevelt proclaimed hostilities in the Philippines over on 4 July 1902, and, although guerrilla resistance continued for some years, America was the new colonial master.<sup>20</sup> The war had been costly in lives: over 4,000 Americans died, and at least 16,000 Filipinos were killed in combat with untold numbers dying of privation and disease.<sup>21</sup>

### **News reporting and censorship**

As I have mentioned, the main thrust of historical writing in recent decades has presented the war as a brutal colonial struggle, close to genocide. But this is not how it was generally perceived at the time in America (though opinions were modified as the war proceeded). At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the public was proud of the achievements of their armed forces in toppling the Spanish tyranny in Cuba, and to a lesser extent in the Philippines. Thousands of American men had volunteered to serve in the forces, and these soldiers, as well as the US public, mainly wanted to see their work and actions portrayed in a positive way. And, with notable exceptions, this is generally what they got (almost entirely so in the case of motion pictures about the war) partly due to control of the news by the military.

As we have seen in the previous chapters on the Spanish-American war, the American expedition to Cuba had been overburdened with a vast number of journalists and war artists/photographers accompanying the troops, but it seems that there were far fewer journalists who covered the war in the Philippines. My impression is that probably less than a score of correspondents were in the islands at any one time reporting on the war, though many of those who did go were talented and industrious, including some good writers as well as artists and photographers, and their work was supplemented by reports from the troops themselves. Among their number was famed correspondent Frederick Palmer, as well as lesser known names such as James McCutcheon and Albert G. Robinson.<sup>22</sup>

One possible reason for this modest number of correspondents was a relative lack of interest in the war from editors and the wider public. After all, the Philippines was further away from America's shores than Cuba, and correspondingly less familiar to the American public and media. What is more, the war against the 'insurgents' was often conceived of as a mere mopping up operation after the Spaniards had been defeated, not a proper war in its own right.

Another significant factor in keeping correspondent numbers well below the vast figures of the Cuban campaign were those official controls I've mentioned. When the first troop ships set off in May 1898 the War Department set a maximum limit of only half a dozen correspondents allowed to accompany the troops, and only then if 'their presence will not impede or endanger the success of military operations'.<sup>23</sup> It is possible that restrictions on numbers were maintained as the war progressed, though I have found no further official edicts on the subject. Correspondents were not always welcome among the troops, for many soldiers were suspicious of them,

especially when anti war articles started appearing in the US press, though actually the pressmen covering the war tended to be pro annexation.<sup>24</sup>

Most of the curbs on reporting originated from General Elwell S. Otis, the American commander during the first part of the war. Otis was notorious for wanting to control all aspects of the American war effort personally, including news reporting. He had his work cut out with the pack of reporters, who were surprisingly assertive and persistent, and some of the newsmen in Manila harassed Otis for information daily.<sup>25</sup> The General was having none of it, and signally failed to cultivate the press corps in the Philippines and refused to give them reliable information. The General acquired a reputation among journalists for exaggerating the strength of his own forces and underestimating that of his Filipino opponents. The correspondents thought that the official despatches issued by Otis, 'misrepresent the facts of the situation', and the reason for this was that Otis thought that the true facts 'would alarm the people at home' in the USA.<sup>26</sup>

However, the journalists could not easily report their own versions of the military situation back to their newspapers. Telegraph traffic was controlled by Otis' office, which could censor dispatches, removing negative comments on such matters as the perceived mishandling of the conflict. Some correspondents covering the war became very frustrated by the draconian controls, and in July of 1899 eleven of these journalists signed a letter of protest, which caused some upset but little lasting effect.<sup>27</sup> The press soon had little regard for Otis, and in their reports stressed conflict among the military top brass.<sup>28</sup>

Otis and his colleagues could not control what people said or published after they left the islands, and in the following couple of years a number of critical accounts were published in US newspapers, regarding such matters as the brutal treatment of Filipinos by American troops and the slow progress of the war. By and large, though, media coverage in the US tended to be positive, due in part to the fear of seeming to be disloyal.

### **The war and other media**

Before 1898 the Philippines had been almost unknown to most Americans, but following the military intervention, a new interest in the islands emerged in the United States. Descriptive articles about the far Pacific nation started appearing in popular magazines such as *National Geographic* and *Munsey's*. Filipinos were often referred to in a patronising fashion in these sources, were compared to children, and the nation was considered incapable of self rule.<sup>29</sup> As mentioned, there was, of course, detailed coverage of the war in all the newspapers, and there were also fictional treatments: from the 1900s, a number of novels and stories were published about the American intervention, with titles such as *Under Otis in the Philippines*.<sup>30</sup>

The theme of the heroic American also appeared in visual form. One famous painter, Vasili Vereschagin, visited the Philippines during the war and painted action images of battles, as well as a series of five narrative pictures of the war. These told a sentimental story of a sergeant who is wounded, then is

seen in hospital as he dictates a letter to his mother back home, and finally dies.<sup>31</sup> This series has obvious parallels with Biograph's film, *The American Soldier in Love and War* (1903), which depicted the experience of a soldier who leaves home to serve in the Philippine War where he is wounded.

Many photographs were taken during the campaign, both by professional lensmen and by soldier photographers. The most comprehensive project to photograph the war was by one Karl Irving Faust, who co-ordinated the efforts of soldier-photographers in most of the US regiments in the field, and then published a book which documented the campaign with great thoroughness.<sup>32</sup> Several photographers seem to have arranged action for their photographs – in a direct parallel to what film cameramen, as we shall see, were doing in the war.

There were also live shows which dramatised America's new colonial wars, perhaps the most extraordinary in relation to the Philippines being Buffalo Bill's re-enactment. A group of Filipinos joined the troupe, playing their own role as freedom fighters during the Spanish-American War, and at first were cheered as such, but as soon as the Philippine insurrection began, they were booed as enemies. They ended up playing American Indians in a different act of the show.<sup>33</sup> Such were the ironies posed by shifting power alliances in the Philippines.

The war was depicted in various other art and entertainment forms from 1899 onwards, including in plays, posters, firework shows, songs and lantern slides, mainly in the USA (with one earlier instance in Spain).<sup>34</sup> Del Mundo has documented some of these examples, showing that they were often patronising towards the Philippines and its inhabitants.<sup>35</sup> In some cases the belittlement was quite shocking, most notably when tribal Filipinos were put on display at expositions.<sup>36</sup> At the Philippine Exposition in St. Louis, 1,200 Filipinos were housed in native villages as exhibits to be stared at by visitors; to make it worse, they were divided into degrees of civilisation, between the lighter-skinned Igorots, whom the experts claimed could be civilized, and the dark-skinned Negritos who could not.<sup>37</sup>

During the Philippine intervention, as is the case in many wars, there was a love-hate relationship between the media and the forces. In the early part of the war some print journalists had criticised particular military decisions, but the censors managed to restrict the scribes from telegraphing the information from Manila. This continuing censorship, though, itself antagonised the press, and criticism in American newspapers continued, shifting to more general issues about the justification for the colonial intervention itself, and the apparently brutal way in which the war was being conducted. However, the voices of criticism were always in a minority, and generally the American media had a patriotic and pro-war attitude, so the US military effectively had their publicity job done for them by these sympathetic writers and artists – this was 'propaganda by proxy', so to speak.

One notable characteristic of the media coverage of the war was the practice of recruiting reporters within the forces. Karl Faust's ambitious project entailed

several soldier-reporters and photographers being 'embedded' in American regiments in the Philippines. And a version of this embedding would take place in motion picture reporting of the war, through the work of Carl Ackerman, who lived and filmed among the troops for several months.

### **FILMING THE WAR: HOLMES, ROSENTHAL, et al**

While the Philippine War was not such a major news event as the Spanish-American conflict, it did have the advantage so far as film companies were concerned that it lasted longer and so they had more time to prepare to film it. Ironically, however, most efforts to record the war in moving pictures came rather late, after it had become a guerrilla conflict, and so all chance of capturing aspects of the early, larger battles was lost.

At least three cameramen/crews went to film the Philippine War. Burton Holmes was there from May to July 1899; another American, Carl Ackerman, filmed for Biograph from about November 1899 to around April 1900; and finally Joseph ('Joe') Rosenthal, working for the Warwick Trading Company, was there rather briefly in early 1901. All the filming by Holmes, Ackerman and Rosenthal was in the central part of Luzon, between Laguna de Bay to the south and Pangasinan province to the north, taking in the Manila region and Pampanga province. [See map: Fig. 1] The efforts of these cameramen were very limited therefore, both in terms of the amount of time that they remained in the country, and the range of places they visited, and were also limited by their pro-American attitudes. They photographed or filmed American forces almost exclusively (never Filipino rebels), and presented these invading forces in a sympathetic light.

The work was also circumscribed by limited technical resources. With cumbersome camera equipment, the three cameramen generally were unable to film actual military operations in this fast-moving guerrilla war, so like some of their photographer colleagues, they enhanced the impact of their images by setting-up or 'arranging' certain shots. These 'posed actualities' were in a sense the on-location versions of the war fakes which were being shot in the USA at this time by the Edison company and others. Like the fakes, these location-shot films of the conflict took a generally one-sided, pro-American position, and the development of this near-propaganda stance may be seen as one enduring legacy of the filming of this war. In this section I cover Holmes and Rosenthal, while I will treat Carl Ackerman's more significant work in the islands in a section to itself (even though he came before Rosenthal).

#### **Initial and miscellaneous efforts**

The first films pertaining to the war were shot in May 1898 by Edison cameramen, White and Blechynden, who photographed troop transports departing San Francisco for the Philippines, released as *Troop Ships for the Philippines*, and *Troops Embarking at San Francisco*.<sup>38</sup> Then as troops returned to the US some months later, they were sometimes recorded on film, in such views as *Astor Battery on Parade* (Edison, 1899). Incidentally, this

unit, the Astor artillery battery, was coming back to the US relatively early in the war, and they were greeted enthusiastically by crowds, though further into the war as the public became bored with the conflict, the crowds failed to come out for returnees and the filmmakers seem to have stayed at home too.<sup>39</sup>

The first filming in the Philippines itself was apparently by a Spanish army officer, Antonio Ramos, who shot scenes of Manila in 1898 and then screened them.<sup>40</sup> Frustratingly there is little more information about this work, though it was possibly related to the war in some way, because it happened in the first year of America's involvement in the Philippines, and also because Ramos was an army man.<sup>41</sup>

I have found a couple of other brief reports of war filming. An intriguing story in a US newspaper in September of 1899 mentions the screening of films of the battle of Manila taken by a certain Charles E. Butler of the *New York World*. The report adds that Butler was killed during the filming. However, I can find no further information on this man or his activities.<sup>42</sup> F.M. Prescott, a film distributor in New York, released four films in his November 1899 catalogue which showed US troops in Manila, presumably filmed earlier that year, and one film of a *Philippine War Dance*.<sup>43</sup> The Lubin company released a few films of troops in the Philippines, including *Scaling a Fort at Manila*, and *10th Pennsylvania Drilling at Manila*. It is not clear who shot these films from Prescott and Lubin, or if they really were filmed in the Philippines.

At the end of April 1899 the first films from the Philippines about the war were on show in the USA. At the West End entertainment venue in New Orleans, among a programme of a dozen films (mainly comedies and other fiction), several war films were offered, under the heading: 'On the Firing Lines at Manila. Incidents during the recent battles between the U. S. troops and the Filipinos'. These comprised the following four views, as described in a press ad: 'General Otis reviewing troops; Skirmishing in woods at San Tolan; the charge; the Red Cross on the field'. A week later these four films were singled out for praise from the other films in the programme as, '...the best that have been seen here, especially those of battles pictured from the movements of troops engaged in the present war'. The newspaper report noted that they '...were received with great applause....'<sup>44</sup> The films were said to have been 'taken by the American Vitagraph Company', though this is not certain, and they may have been made by other companies and simply distributed by Vitagraph. To judge from the titles, the latter three could well have been fakes (see staged films section). The Otis title could be Lubin's *Gen. Otis and His Troops in the Philippines*.<sup>45</sup>

### **Burton Holmes**

The first person who we are sure filmed in the war zone was Burton Holmes (1870-1958). Holmes started roving the world from the 1890s, visiting and photographing remote or picturesque places, and was to become a famed traveller and lecturer. He teamed up with a lantern projectionist, Oscar Depue, who became Holmes' long-term cameraman and technician.<sup>46</sup> Initially the pair took still photographs, but in 1897 Depue bought a 60-mm Gaumont film



camera, and he and Holmes started shooting moving picture views in addition to their stills, starting in Europe and the USA.<sup>47</sup>

Two years later, as war raged in the Philippines, Holmes set off to immortalise the conflict in stills and moving pictures.<sup>48</sup> Departing from the west coast of Canada on 1 May 1899, he travelled to the Philippines and stayed briefly in Hong Kong. He apparently set off alone, for he doesn't mention Depue in his account, but he did work with a Chinese assistant, Ah Kee from Hong Kong, who may have taken Depue's place for this assignment. In Hong Kong Holmes found that Admiral Dewey's flagship *Olympia* was in the harbour, and he didn't miss this chance for filming. He managed to take a circling shot of the ship as well as to film the Admiral himself. For recording these and other scenes in Hong Kong and Canton, Holmes tells us he was using what he called his 'chronomatograph', which is a similar enough word to 'Chronophotographe' or 'Chrono' to suggest that this was the Gaumont instrument which Depue had bought.<sup>49</sup>

From Hong Kong Holmes sailed to the Philippines, and he took Ah Kee along, for, as he explained to the suspicious US authorities on arrival, the Chinese assistant had by now become invaluable in his 'pictorial work'.<sup>50</sup> In Manila they shot a few scenics: a view on the Pasig river, a boat in the process of docking, the local fire brigade, and also set up an illegal cock-fight 'for motion-picture purposes'. The latter was a lively scene on film: 'The animated record shows the contending birds surrounded by a crowd of excited owners and backers, offering bets'.<sup>51</sup> They filmed the American military too: a gun crew on the US navy ship *Baltimore*, and the Ninth Infantry on the Bridge of Spain.<sup>52</sup>

Such views of scenery and military forces were all very well, but Holmes had really come here to document the war, and his first chance came when he, and presumably Ah Kee, found themselves in Baliuag, north of Manila. This town, formerly a base of Aguinaldo, and on an extension of the railway from Manila to Dagupan, had been won by the Americans from the Filipinos some months previously, and was at this time occupied.<sup>53</sup> It was a fairly isolated outpost, with hostile forces in the vicinity. Here in this town Holmes made a couple of films of the US army, and interestingly, in both cases the films were set-up or arranged, rather than showing events as they happened. Holmes discusses making these films in his printed lecture about the Manila visit, and this account constitutes a fascinating illustration of the issue of filmic 'arranging'. It constitutes too one of the first ever examples of co-operation in the field between a cameraman and the military.

It seems that the Colonel in charge of the American unit in Baliuag, a unit of about eight hundred men, was keen to demonstrate for the movie camera that his men were ready for any attack by Filipino forces.<sup>54</sup> He therefore, Holmes tells us, 'placed two companies at our disposal, to take part in a carefully planned defence of an entrenchment'. Holmes then gives us a remarkably frank description of what was a totally set-up scene:

'The day was dark and wet, conditions all unfavorable, but the motion picture successfully reproduces the dramatic sequence of incidents as

they occur. First, four men are seen retiring from the outpost, giving the alarm, one company promptly mans the trench, and begins a vigorous fire, using smokeless powder; an orderly brings a dispatch to the commanding officer, then re-enforcements dash forward from the town, then comes the best friend of the soldiers, the unerring Gatling, and finally the enemy having been seen to waver, the command to charge is given, and the entire force breaks over the earthwork, and with a wild yell dashes across the fields in hot pursuit of the imaginary enemy. Meanwhile the dead and wounded who have fallen in the foreground are cared for by the surgeon and his Chinese stewards. So realistic is the feigned death of one soldier that spectators will not believe that the picture represents only a sham battle.<sup>55</sup>

The latter comment suggests that Holmes might have been aiming at making a film which would pass for genuine. From the description, it seems possible that the film consisted of more than one shot, which would be a significant development at this date, though apparently it does not survive, so we may never know (some frames from what may be this film are in Holmes' published lectures: Fig. 2). The other film that Holmes describes making in his account was also a set-up or arranged scene, and was on a particularly interesting theme. As we have seen, the US army's strategy for winning the war involved a two-pronged approach, which has been dubbed 'attraction and chastisement', in both rewarding Filipinos who knuckled under to American rule and punished those who resisted.

An instance of chastisement was to be the subject of another film by Burton Holmes. While Holmes was in Baliuag, a telegraph wire outside the town was cut by Filipino rebels. This was serious. The American war effort relied utterly on telegraph communication, and therefore anyone who damaged lines was severely dealt with, sometimes shot.<sup>56</sup> If no culprit were located, the community as a whole might be punished. In this case the guilty party could not be found, so, Holmes tells us, the colonel ordered that a native house be burned, 'as a warning that tampering with the telegraph line will invariably bring chastisement upon the village'. (House burning was a common punishment for communities, used by the American forces and guerrillas alike). Evidently Holmes had arranged with the Army that he could film this somewhat spectacular reprisal scene, and he himself was given an opportunity by the captain in command of the squad to, as Holmes reports, 'pick out the house that will make the most effective motion picture as it goes up in smoke!' Holmes continues:

Fortunately the one lending itself best to artistic necessities was an abandoned nipa dwelling — a pretty little affair with a neat little garden around about it. But the green hedge hides part of the house — and the drooping branches of a splendid tree will cut off the view of the rolling smoke, which should form an important feature of the dramatic picture that we are about to make. I mention these objections to the captain. Gruffly he orders half a dozen Filipinos to fetch their bolos and chop down that pretty hedge; two other obedient natives are sent up the tree to lop off the interfering branches. Then when all is ready, several

soldiers enter the house, pour kerosene on the walls and floors of thatch and bamboo, and set fire to the flimsy structure. When we rode on nothing but ashes marked the cite.' [sic]<sup>57</sup>

This suggests that Holmes had his qualms about this policy of hut burning, for he uses the word 'fortunately' in mentioning that the house chosen for burning was an abandoned one. But it is surprising that the American Army allowed, even suggested, the filming of a native hut being burned (even an abandoned one), as this would surely be seen by film audiences as cruel and inhumane. Clearly the US Army still had something to learn about visual propaganda.<sup>58</sup> In any case, this description by Holmes of what he filmed, as well as the previous example (the battle scene), show that the Army was keen to have its activities recorded in motion pictures.

At this time of the year the rainy season arrived and, Holmes tells us that at this point all hostilities were postponed (which was not quite true), and that any further travel and filming were also impossible. Therefore he returned to Manila, and late in July 1899 departed the country.

Holmes had been in the islands for about two months, but it had been a frustrating time for his photographic and motion picture work, and he expressed himself, 'far from satisfied with the results of our war-time visit to the Philippines'. The trip had been disappointing principally, he notes, because he and Ah Kee had seen and filmed so little of the country: 'we have seen only the city of Manila and the narrow strip of Luzon territory held by our forces'.<sup>59</sup> This comment suggests that Holmes had been more interested in recording the scenic places in the Philippines than in filming the war – scarcely surprising, perhaps, as he was a travelogue lecturer. This impression is reinforced by a description of a lecture he delivered in the US later that year about his trip to the islands. (These lectures about the Philippines were some of the first in which he integrated film with lantern slides.) The description gives us an idea of the content of the lecture, and it seems that, surprisingly, neither his slides and films nor the lecture itself covered the war to any great extent.

Holmes kept his lecture on a light-hearted note, in the tradition of a travelogue, and much of it was about his personal experiences during the trip – of the shabby insect-infested accommodation in Manila, for example. The only aspect of the actual war that he covered, it seems, was a description of the lifestyle of the officers and soldiers – for example he screened images of the houses of US officers based in the Philippines – with very little about military events and actions.<sup>60</sup> It is not even clear from this lecture report if he showed the two war-related films – the battle and the burning – which I have described above. If not, this would be somewhat surprising, given that the war was still an important news story in America, and that Holmes had apparently put considerable effort into filming these war scenes. But it seems that he simply didn't have much concern for the war as such, for clearly it was scenic views which really excited him, and when next he visited the Philippines, in 1913, it was to secure travelogue views.<sup>61</sup>

But just because Holmes was somewhat dismissive of his work in filming the war, does not mean we should be. In fact, the two scenes which he staged for his camera are, based on his descriptions, of considerable filmic interest, for they required much setting up and indeed actual *direction* from Holmes. Like some other fledgling producers and cameramen at the time, he had realised that films – especially films in a war zone – could be made significantly more dramatic and interesting with a modicum of planning and special arranging. Later in the year, as we shall see, Ackerman would take a similar approach.

### **Joseph Rosenthal**

The second most significant filmmaking venture of the Philippine War was by the Warwick Trading Company, through their cameraman Joseph Rosenthal. Rosenthal was one of the most celebrated roving cameramen in the early years of the cinema, notable especially for his work in South Africa during the Boer War from 1899 to 1900 (see chapter 9). After his Boer assignment, Rosenthal travelled to the Boxer Rebellion in mid 1900, and then by early the following year, came on to the Philippines where the war with the Americans was still in progress. This itinerary was the converse of Ackerman's, who went first to the Philippines (a year before Rosenthal) and then to China.<sup>62</sup> The difference was probably due to the dissimilar interests of the two companies: Ackerman worked for Biograph, an American company, which would have set a priority on the Philippines as an American war zone, while for the UK-based Warwick Trading Company, the conflict in China in which British troops were involved was of more news value, meriting an earlier visit from their cameraman.

Almost all of what we know about Rosenthal's venture in the Philippines comes from a Warwick catalogue supplement of approximately August 1901, which lists and describes – under the heading *Uncle Sam's troops in the Philippines* – a number of films which Rosenthal made in the islands.<sup>63</sup> We do not know when exactly Rosenthal arrived in the Philippines, though it is claimed that he stayed there three or four months.<sup>64</sup> We know that he was certainly there in February 1901, for he filmed a dated event in that month as we shall see. (Incidentally, this was shortly before the triumphant Americans captured Aguinaldo in March 1901.) Equally, we know all too little about his experiences while filming, and none of the resulting films survive. But the Warwick list does give a fair amount of detail about the films.

Some sixteen films are listed in all, a small number indeed, though even that overstates Rosenthal's output, because some of the films are little more than different angles of the same location, or sections cut from a longer take (in the case of his Pasig River panoramas). This implies that Rosenthal might not have stayed long in the Philippines, which is also suggested by the fact that none of the given filming locations are very remote: ten of the sixteen films were shot in or around Manila; one or two were shot in Macabebe, Pampanga (only a half a day's travel away); and while five films were shot in unnamed locations, there is no reason to suppose that these were far from Manila.<sup>65</sup>

**Box:**

**Uncle Sam's troops in the Philippines**

Series shot by Joseph Rosenthal for the Warwick Trading Co., 1901.

- Along The Pasig River. Passing The Pirate's Lair (75)
- Approaching Manila by the Pasig River (150)
- Panorama of the Pasig River, showing Gen. McArthur's Headquarters, Manila (50)
- Native Traffic Over The Bridge Of Spain, Manila (50)
- Palacio Plaza, Manila, including the American Headquarters (50)
- Circular panorama of the Plaza de Calderon, Manila (50)
- The Columbia Market Place, Philippines Isles (50)
- Cock Fighting in the Philippines (100)
- The Seventh Artillery, U.S.A., Charging (50)
- The Seventh Artillery, U.S.A., in action (100)
- The Twentieth Infantry , U.S.A. (Otis' Pets), marching through a banana grove; a splendid subject (100)
- The Twenty-Seventh Infantry , U.S.A., entering Manila (125)
- The Macabebe Scouts passing through a native village (125)
- The [Fourth] Cavalry U.S.A. repelling flank attack (100)
- The Ilocano Scouts charging the enemy's entrenchment[s] (125)
- The charge of the Macabebe Scouts (125)

NB. The series also included *Uncle Sam's Latest Battleship The Kentucky* and *H.M.S. Goliath in Chinese Waters*, which on the face of it seem irrelevant, but perhaps these ships were somehow connected with the Philippine campaign. The *Battle of Baliuag* is given by de Pedro as a Rosenthal title, but not listed in any other source.

Several of the films are non-military scenic views, such as *Native Traffic over the Bridge of Spain, Manila*, though even some of these have military content, as in *Panorama of the Pasig River Showing General MacArthur's Headquarters at Manila*. Several of the films are simply views of American army units, such as *The 20th Infantry U.S.A. ("Otis's Pets") Marching Through a Banana Grove*, or *The 27th Infantry U.S.A. Entering Manila*.

One of the more intriguing military forces which Rosenthal filmed were the so-called Philippine 'scout units', created by the US Army as a way of using the military skills of Filipinos themselves against the rebels. These scouts sided with the Americans for personal, tribal or financial reasons, and they were to prove a vital help in the American war effort against the nationalists (who regarded them as traitors).<sup>66</sup> Rosenthal took three films of the scout units, comprising one film of the Ilocano Scouts (of which more below), and two of the Macabebe Scouts, the best known of the native units: *The Charge of the Macabebe Scouts* and *The Macabebe Scouts Passing through a Native Village*. The latter was filmed, the catalogue tells us, two weeks after the

Macabebe unit was equipped on 25 January 1901, which would mean in the second week of February (the only one of Rosenthal's films that we can date).<sup>67</sup> The Macabebes were the first ethnic group to be enlisted on the US side, and were made up of men from the town of Macabebe in Pampanga province. Ruthless warriors, they loathed the Tagalogs, the main ethnic group in the central plain of Luzon, and were enthusiastic recruits to the American cause.<sup>68</sup>

One can imagine that Rosenthal's US minders would have been delighted to have him photograph the Philippine scout units, for these units proved that not all Filipinos were opposed to American rule. This indicates that the British cameraman was basically shooting the war from a viewpoint sympathetic to the US: primarily Rosenthal filmed American or pro-American forces. Though Rosenthal was not so closely tied to the American military as Ackerman, there was clearly some dependency, and the Warwick catalogue states that their Philippine films were made 'by kind permission of General MacArthur' (who was by that time commander of US forces in the Philippines).<sup>69</sup>

The catalogue titles/descriptions assigned to the resulting views by the Warwick Trading Company, Rosenthal's employers, show a strong bias to the American side, and one should recall that the Warwick company was formed and run by Americans.<sup>70</sup> Warwick titled Rosenthal's film of the banks of the Pasig River (taken from a moving boat) *Along the Pasig River, Philippine Island: Passing the Pirate's Lair*. The 'pirate's lair' is a disdainful reference to the Philippine fighters or insurgents whose stronghold this was, and the Warwick catalogue adds an editorializing comment that this area was subject to 'the depredations of the river pirates who infest this section and have proved so troublesome to the Americans since the war with Spain'.

### **Rosenthal's film technique and 'arranging'**

Apart from their ideological content, Rosenthal's films have some other points of interest. Rosenthal was an enterprising cameraman, and was willing to experiment with film technique. Two of his films are panning shots, so he must have had a panning head on his tripod. There is panoramic movement in another sense in these films, for three of the views were filmed from the deck of a moving steamer. Furthermore, Rosenthal was not afraid of filming longer takes, and several of his group of films from the Philippines were 100 feet long and more.<sup>71</sup>

Like Holmes and Ackerman, Rosenthal would sometimes arrange scenes for his camera. Some five of his Philippine films were clearly set up or reconstructed (and others might have been), depicting the troops of various military units, American or their Filipino allies, in the process of firing at or charging the enemy. That there were as many staged films as this – almost a third of Rosenthal's total production in the Philippines – is somewhat surprising, given his reputation as a straight-shooting news cameraman, but he had made 'set-up' films before. For example, as we shall see, one of his Boer War films, *A Skirmish With the Boers Near Kimberley* includes a scene in which a group of British cavalymen gallop towards us, stop dramatically,

and set up two Maxim guns pointing directly over the hedge toward the camera.

His Philippine films which are plainly set-up include: *The 7th Artillery U.S.A. in Action*; *The 7th Artillery U.S.A. Charging*; and *The 4th Cavalry U.S.A. Repelling Flank Attack*. The catalogue description of the latter gives a flavour of these subjects:

'A detachment of the 4th Cavalry are seen dashing past the camera, dismounting, then lying on the ground and firing repeated volleys at the enemy. They then remount and gallop off while another squad takes their place, going through a like action. A splendid subject.'

Two of Rosenthal's set-up films portray the scout units. *The Charge of the Macabebe Scouts* is described in the catalogue as follows:

'This subject depicts the mode of these scouts charging the enemy who are firing at them from the woods in the background. These new troops of Uncle Sam seem to thoroughly enjoy the fight.'<sup>72</sup>

It is unlikely that this firing from the woods was genuine enemy fire, and might presumably have been arranged by posting men in the woods who were firing blanks. The description of action in Rosenthal's other scout film, *The Ilocano Scouts Charging the Enemy's Entrenchments*, shows even more evidence of arranging. The catalogue notes that this film:

'...shows the enemy entrenched, awaiting the charge of the Ilocano Scouts, who finally come into view, and after dislodging their opponents, chase them into the jungle, keeping up a running fire. They then emerge from the dense undergrowth and charge another lot of Insurgents discovered in an opposite direction. Full of action and picturesque surroundings.'

This film must have been set up, for the chances of a cameraman managing to film not just one but two attacks within a couple of minutes of cranking (this film was 125 ft. long) are remote. The catalogue adds one other comment of interest, claiming that, 'This subject was procured with a long focus lens'. It is possible that Rosenthal had a longer focal length lens with him for this assignment (though not of a length that we today would describe as 'telephoto'), though the alternative explanation is that this claim was part of the catalogue's strategy to make potential purchasers believe the film was genuine. In this era there were other claims of the use of telephoto lenses for filming war views (see Appendix).

Even at this early date war cameramen were sometimes given extra 'billing' in publicity (more than was accorded to cameramen shooting general views and news). In the section about the Philippines in the Warwick catalogue Rosenthal was credited by name, and a photograph of him on location in the islands was included, showing him standing awkwardly with three local

Philippine people.<sup>73</sup> [Fig. 3] After this assignment Rosenthal went on to Hong Kong.

### **Conclusion**

Neither Rosenthal nor Holmes ended up producing a large amount of footage during their relatively brief Philippine assignments, for differing reasons. I suggest that these were, in the case of Holmes that as a travelogue writer concerned with scenic views, he had little interest in the war; and as for Rosenthal, while he was more of a professional cameraman than Holmes, he didn't have enough time in the Philippines to make a more complete job. Nevertheless, both of them recorded interesting aspects of the war, though seen from a very American point of view. In this respect they resembled most journalists covering the war, the majority of whom were fairly uncritically pro-American. All of the films of this war, or representations of it, made during this period were pro-US, and this came spontaneously, as far as one can judge, with no direct pressure put on the companies or cameramen to 'toe the line'. One can only assume that among both the film companies and camera operators the nationalist point of view was seen as marginal, and the 'default' position was to believe that the Americans were basically doing the right thing in the Philippines.<sup>74</sup>

The cameramen seem to have shared not just a view of the war, but also a sense of how to record it on film, and both Holmes and Rosenthal set up scenes in order to represent the conflict in a more effective manner. Their colleague Carl Ackerman took this arranging technique further, by working in even closer collaboration with his hosts, the American Army.

### **THE FIRST 'EMBEDDED' CAMERAMAN: C. FRED ACKERMAN**

#### **Box:**

'To the thousands of people who cannot see the land where their soldier boys are fighting in the Philippines the marvelous [sic] biograph has come as a friend in need. The difficulties which have been met and overcome by the agents of the moving picture machine are very great, but perseverance conquered, and miles upon miles of film are being reeled off every week in the far-away islands, the sensitized gelatine catching and keeping, with absolute accuracy, the innumerable interesting sights.'

'The Biograph in the Philippines', *Boston Journal* 25 March 1900.

The quotation above exaggerates greatly, but it does capture a flavour of the ambitions of the firm, the American Mutoscope and Biograph Company ('AM&B' or 'Biograph'), which undertook the most focused and sustained effort of all the companies to film the Philippine War through their cameraman, C. Fred Ackerman. Until recently little has been known about Ackerman. Indeed, so little was known that most historical sources wrongly give his first name as



'Raymond'.<sup>75</sup> But through my researches in various American archives I have managed to find out much more about him, and to piece together his career as Biograph's war cameraman in the Philippines and China.<sup>76</sup>

The most surprising points about Ackerman are his lack of camera experience before Biograph sent him to film hostilities in the Philippines, and secondly, how briefly his filming career lasted. He had shot only a score or so of films when he went to the Philippines in 1899, and on this assignment and in China he shot a little over a hundred scenes – and that was virtually the end of his filming career, all within the space of less than two years. But though of short duration, Ackerman's work is highly significant for the history of war filming. Firstly because he exemplifies the multi-faceted and interlinked nature of the various different media in this era, for he was not only a cameraman, but was also writing articles and taking photographs for the press. More significantly he was tied closely to the US military in the Philippines, and in a sense his film work was little more than propaganda.

### **The Biograph company and war**

Ackerman's employers, the American Mutoscope and Biograph Company (AM&B) had an abiding interest in war and things military. It is striking how frequently the company filmed the American military in the 1890s, a period when America made its first imperialistic forays. Even as early as their first year of production, 1896, Biograph recorded two scenes of cadets at West Point, performing on horses and at drill. Over the following two years they again sent cameras to US military bases, and made a film of artillery being fired at Sandy Hook, and a series of films showing the Thirteenth Infantry in exercises and parades at Governor's Island.<sup>77</sup>

This kind of filming was sometimes as much *for* the military as of them, and Biograph went to another American military base, Camp Wickoff, to record a scene of some leading military officers (General Wheeler, Major Hopkins and Secretary of War R.A. Alger and his military aide). Afterwards Wheeler and Alger wrote to Biograph to thank them for their services, and Alger wrote to the Biograph executive, Frank J. Marion in person, asking for an enlarged still of the scene.<sup>78</sup> All these above mentioned films were effectively collaborations between Biograph and the military: propaganda in all but name. And Biograph not only worked for the army, but made a variety of films for the American Navy in 1898 and again around December 1903, some of which were used for recruiting.<sup>79</sup> Most relevant in terms of military experience, the company also became known for its diverse war reportage, despatching cameramen to the Spanish-American war, as well as sending Dickson to film the Boer War and Ackerman to film in the Far East (as I show in other chapters).

### **Ackerman's background**

Carl Frederick Ackerman (1873-1938), usually shortened to C. Fred Ackerman, was born in Syracuse, New York, and he became a well known athlete and then a sports journalist in his home town from the mid 1890s. It was probably this journalistic work and the fact that he came from this city which got him a job with AM&B, because Biograph executive Frank J. Marion was also a former newspaper man from Syracuse, and H.N. Marvin, co-

founder and vice president of the company, was a graduate of Syracuse university.<sup>80</sup>

According to Marion, Ackerman was brought into the company by Marvin. Marion himself didn't think much of Ackerman, later recalling that, 'Ackerman was a parasite...[who] talked Marvin into sending him to the Philippines'. [sic]<sup>81</sup> This term 'parasite' seems somewhat harsh, as Ackerman ended up doing quite well on his Philippine assignment, but it might have been more a comment on Ackerman's conceited personality. It seems likely that he was indeed taken on (as Marion's recollection suggests) with the specific aim that he would go to film for the company in the Philippines. Clearly he was not taken on as a general duty cameraman as such, for he had no experience in this field, but Ackerman did have experience which was relevant for the role of war cameraman/reporter: his work as a journalist for about five years (albeit in sports), and the fact that he had served in the Spanish-American War. Furthermore, he had been an award winning athlete in sports such as vaulting only a few years earlier, so he was probably still in good physical shape for the rigours of the Philippine War zone. He was also unlikely to be critical of the war, for he seems to have been a Republican, and indeed his reports and films from the Philippines suggest that he was in favour of the American intervention there.

Nevertheless, Ackerman was undoubtedly lacking in expertise compared to other people who filmed wars in the early days: one thinks of Villiers, Rosenthal, Dickson, or even Paley, who all had relevant experience either in war reportage or as photographers/cameramen. In the circumstances it seems odd that Biograph should send Ackerman alone, when a 2-man unit of a trained cameraman/photographer and a journalist/producer was seemingly a more natural arrangement, and one which was already emerging in this period.<sup>82</sup> Perhaps this was a decision based on cost – one man was cheaper than two – or on restrictions from the War Department on numbers of correspondents who could go.

In any case, Ackerman obtained some experience as a cameraman in the few months leading up to his departure for Manila, shooting around 20 films for Biograph, a mixture of comic and actuality subjects (released from June 1899).<sup>83</sup> While we don't know for sure, it seems on the face of it that this was an attempt by Biograph to familiarise him with camerawork before he set off across the Pacific to cover the war. By the time he departed Ackerman was being described by one source as 'one of the best known experts in the employ of the company',<sup>84</sup> though his novice work as cameraman before the war does not suggest expertise. But whatever his limitations in experience, Ackerman managed to make several dozen films in the war-torn country, many of which were quite satisfactory photographically. As many filmmakers have shown over the years, determination is sometimes as important as previous experience.

### **The plan**

As we have seen, quite a few journalists and photographers covered the Philippine campaign, though there were some restrictions on numbers. The

Biograph company managed to place Ackerman in the war zone with relative ease, probably due to their existing good relations with the US military (as we have seen) and with the Government.<sup>85</sup> Thus, when Biograph applied to film the war in the Philippines, the company would have been known to several officials in both the executive and military branches of the government. I have discovered documentation in the US National Archives which demonstrates what occurred (and which has never previously been used in accounts of the company's activities in the war).

Though there might have been informal contacts earlier, the first official move seems to have been a letter from H.N. Marvin, Vice-President of AM&B, to the Assistant Secretary of War, George D. Meiklejohn, on 23 August 1899. [Fig. 4] Marvin requested permission to send their cameraman Ackerman (mentioning him by name) to Manila, 'for the purpose of taking moving pictures of military scenes in the Philippine Campaign', and adding:

'All we want of the Department is transportation from San Francisco to Manilla [sic] and return for our representative and his biograph camera outfit, and would like the officers in charge to extend such reasonable facilities for taking pictures as they can consistently do. In return for this, our Company will furnish a Mutoscope and sample sets of the scenes taken to the War department, so that officials of the Department may see for themselves the actual moving steps of important scenes in the Phillippines [sic], which will make a very interesting addition to the archives of your Department.'<sup>86</sup>

Marvin noted, as an additional persuasion, that his company had previously shown 'a large number of war and navy pictures' throughout the USA, 'and our experience is that these pictures are very valuable in educating the public, and they certainly elicit the greatest enthusiasm wherever they are shown'. Over the next couple of weeks, as annotations in the official file show, the application was referred for endorsement to other officials and departments of the US Government, most crucially receiving the support of Adjutant General H.C. Corbin, who noted on the file, 'A mutoscope with sets of pictures taken would be very valuable to the War Department and could be used to good purpose at the service schools'.<sup>87</sup>

Two weeks after Marvin's request, the Secretary of War himself, Elihu Root, replied [Fig. 5] to agree to the proposal, noting that Ackerman would be offered transport free of charge to the islands (but the Army would not cover his subsistence). He made it clear that the War Department was to receive a copy of *all* scenes filmed, and that a copy of his letter was to be returned to the Department after signature by Marvin, and would in this way constitute a contract with the government.<sup>88</sup> Marvin duly signed and returned the letter the next day with a covering letter, reiterating to Root that 'these Mutoscope scenes will prove of great interest and value to the War Department'. On 13 September Root wrote a note to the commanding officer in San Francisco (who happened to be none other than Major-General Shafter of Cuba fame) requesting that AM&B's representative be offered accommodation on the first available transport to Manila, and similarly for his return.<sup>89</sup>

It was reported that Ackerman started his journey on 16 September via New York and San Francisco, and he tells us that he embarked for the Philippines on an Army transport ship, the *Sheridan*. This ship left San Francisco, carrying the Thirty-Third Infantry (and Ackerman) on 30 September.<sup>90</sup> The journey to Manila took five weeks, he says, a duration which is probably about correct for a Pacific sailing.<sup>91</sup> So Ackerman would have arrived in early November, and the American forces' winter campaign commenced on 6 November.<sup>92</sup> Incidentally, Ackerman started his filming work during the journey: in San Francisco he filmed American troops who had just returned from duty in the Philippines, and when his ship paused in Hawaii he filmed the Thirty-Third parading in Honolulu.

In addition to his responsibility to film for AM&B, Ackerman was also working for the weekly illustrated periodical, *Leslie's Weekly*, as one of their two correspondents covering the war.<sup>93</sup> *Leslie's* had a history of collaboration with AM&B, and had been publishing photographs credited to Biograph – often taken from film frames – from well before Ackerman left for the Philippines.<sup>94</sup> In the months after his departure several photographs by Ackerman and frames from his non-war films appeared as illustrations in the magazine, and later the cameraman/journalist wrote several pieces for the magazine about the war. This linkup with the periodical press was typical of the Biograph company's cross-media operation by this date, and is a crucial, and much overlooked, aspect of early filmmaking. (Biograph's cameraman in South Africa, W.K.-L. Dickson also acted as an occasional print correspondent.)

Apart from his responsibilities to AM&B and *Leslie's*, Ackerman was also working closely with the US Army. Marvin had asked that officers in Manila be requested to assist Ackerman, and it seems that they complied, helping him in practical ways and (as we shall see) manoeuvring troops to make suitable scenes for his moving picture camera.<sup>95</sup> Ackerman left nothing to chance and came with the highest credentials. We are told that he:

'...carried with him letters of authority from the Secretary of War and from the Adjutant-General to Gen. Otis and others in command. These letters gave Mr. Ackerman unusual facilities, and Gen. Otis placed him in the charge of the quartermaster's department in the Philippines, and he was transported with every facility, and had unusual opportunities of securing valuable pictures.'<sup>96</sup>

This close liaison with the quartermaster's department underlines the key point about Ackerman: that he was in many ways in thrall to his US military hosts. His expedition to film the Philippine War was, as we have seen, arranged by contract and so was virtually an official US military venture. During his time in the Philippines Ackerman wore the US military uniform, travelled and mixed with American forces, and made no secret of his siding with his compatriots. He was in no sense an independent journalist.

### **Ackerman's work in the Philippines**

Ackerman started filming in the Philippines in November 1899.<sup>97</sup> Thereafter

we have several shooting dates for his films, up to his last dated film of 12 March 1900, and near the end of April he filed a written report for *Leslie's* (from Sual, as we shall see). This means he was in the islands some six months, and possibly a while longer.<sup>98</sup> He was certainly back in the USA by June 1900, for, as we shall see, he exhibited his films in Washington on about the 22<sup>nd</sup>. Some reports suggest that Ackerman took about fifty films during his time in the Philippines, though I can count at most 45 such films that were actually sent to Biograph for processing.<sup>99</sup> Only nine of these survive (all derived from paper prints) though frames from all of them are in Biograph's frame-clipping collection.

Ackerman was initially attached by General Otis (the supreme commander in the islands) to Colonel Bell's Thirty-Sixth Infantry.<sup>100</sup> Thereafter he was at various times with the Twenty-Fifth, Thirty-Third, and Thirty-Seventh Infantries (all volunteers), and Battery K of the Third Artillery. It seems that Ackerman was well looked after by his army confreres, and certainly ate well, for he wrote to friends that he had gained 15 pounds in weight in the first couple of months in the field.<sup>101</sup> [Fig. 9: news report]

While being officially recognised as a cameraman must have helped his work, Ackerman nevertheless had other problems to contend with. The Biograph company used an unusually wide film gauge, which meant that all associated equipment including the camera and film stock was also larger and heavier than standard 35mm filming equipment. Including film stock, therefore, Ackerman had a lot of heavy gear to transport around the country, as one article noted in June 1900:

'The job undertaken by Mr. Ackerman was a stupendous one, for he had to carry with him a camera and apparatus weighing 750 pounds. Each film on which the pictures were taken was 360 feet long and two and a half inches wide.'<sup>102</sup>

The figures mentioned are probably about right. Ackerman would seem to have been using Biograph's second model of camera introduced in the late 1890s, which was much lighter than their original huge 'Model A' camera, but still very heavy. It was electrically operated, and batteries and motor accounted for most of the weight, amounting to a quarter of a ton total.<sup>103</sup> The 360 feet of film stock mentioned in the June article roughly tallies with the lengths of films which Ackerman actually shot, for Biograph's production register shows that his Philippines films mostly fall into two lengths: either a little more than 300 feet or a little more than 150 feet.<sup>104</sup> (see Appendix on Ackerman). Allowing for spare stock for winding on and separating, these lengths would approximately tally with a full or a half camera load.<sup>105</sup> Because of the large size of the film and its high rate of frames per second, these lengths of film correspond to about a minute and half a minute of screen time respectively. Ackerman's total output from his half year in the Philippines, therefore, was a meagre 30 minutes of footage (approximately), a rather short amount of screen time for such a large amount of equipment and such a long stay.

The size of this equipment presented practical problems, especially because Ackerman was often forced to use local – often very basic – transport methods to convey the large Biograph apparatus around the country and into remote war zones. This is apparent from a couple of still photographs which were published at the time. One depicted, in the words of the caption, how ‘Oxen are used to drag the cart which carries the delicate photographic apparatus’.<sup>106</sup> In another photograph Ackerman is pictured standing by a ‘banco’ boat with two large crates next to him.<sup>107</sup> [Fig. 6] The crates are presumably full of Biograph equipment and film stock, and their large size indicates the major logistical task presented in moving this gear around the Philippines.

In addition to these practical issues were the problems facing a cameraman trying to film a modern, fast-moving war, for Ackerman arrived just as the war was changing in nature: after initial victories for the Americans, the summer of 1899 had been a stalemate, as the insurgents turned increasingly to guerrilla-style tactics.<sup>108</sup> These kind of fast-moving operations were even more difficult to capture on film than the earlier set-piece battles would have been, and indeed Ackerman in his period of filming in the Philippines didn’t even try to film ‘combat’ in any sense. His films mainly fall into three categories: scenic view of the country, American units on the move, and arranged scenes of these units attacking or repelling an off-camera enemy.

### **Filming the war: chronology**

During the course of his months in the Philippines, Ackerman filmed in various regions of the country, but always in Luzon, the main north island of the archipelago. Based on the places and events mentioned in the titles and descriptions of his films, and on newspaper reports of his activities, I have worked out that the chronological order of his work was something like this:<sup>109</sup>

- 1) **Manila region** October to November 1899
- 2) **Pangasinan province** November
- 3) **Manila** December
- 4) **Pampanga province** early January 1900
- 5) **Pangasinan province** 11 January to early February
- 6) **Manila region** 18 February to 12 March.

#### *1) Manila and sorties north*

It seems that Ackerman’s first few weeks were spent in and around Manila, with some sorties north into Pampanga, and he probably shot at least fifteen films during this time. Some of these featured the Thirty-Third Infantry volunteers, who had also appeared before his camera in Hawaii, and would feature again when the unit went out of the city into action.<sup>110</sup> Ackerman also filmed several scenic views in Manila, such as *Panoramic View of Manila Harbor* and *Blanco Bridge*.

As so often in warfare, transport and geographic factors played a dominant role. The main theatre of operations was on the plain of Pampanga along which the Manila to Dagupan railway ran, being the only railway in the

Philippines and subject to attack by insurgents.<sup>111</sup> Suitably, then, one of Ackerman's films recorded the railway: *Train with Red Cross Supplies, Manila*.

Ackerman went 50 miles north along the railway in the second week in November to the important town of Angeles, and on 11 November he filmed the Third Artillery near there. He was for a time quartered with the 2nd Battalion of Gen. A.S. Burt's Twenty-Fifth Infantry, a black regiment, and in an article he described the unit's daring assault on the town of O'Donnell on the night of 17 November during which the Americans took many 'insurrecto' prisoners and the largest capture of arms to date.<sup>112</sup> Manila was the starting point to commence the next stage of his filming venture, to Pangasinan province.<sup>113</sup>

## 2) Pangasinan province – the capture of Aguinaldo's family

Ackerman had arrived in the Philippines near the start of the so-called 'Northern Campaign' of the winter of 1899-1900. This campaign was an attempt to stifle the remaining resistance and, crucially, to capture Aguinaldo. The classic military operation involved three separate columns which were to surround and subdue enemy forces on the central Luzon plain.<sup>114</sup> As the northern-most of the three American strategic advances, in early November General Wheaton began a sea-borne invasion at San Fabian, Pangasinan province. Ackerman followed north later that month with his camera, hoping to film aspects of this historic assault.<sup>115</sup>

San Fabian is over a hundred miles north of Manila, on Lingayen Gulf near the terminus of the railway at Dagupan. At that time, parts of the plain between there and Manila were still controlled by insurgents, and another of the columns of US troops were fighting their way up the line of the railway as Wheaton's men were landing at Lingayen Gulf. To reach San Fabian in November therefore, Ackerman could not travel on the railway and had to use the same means of transport as Wheaton's men had done: boat.<sup>116</sup> He left the capital on the *Castellano*, a small coasting vessel, together with elements of the Thirty-Third Infantry. It proved to be a difficult trip, as he explained later, in one of the few extended descriptions we have from Ackerman about his filming work:

'The boat was very small, and in the China Sea we struck the tail-end of a typhoon. I was with Capt. Ellis and two Lieutenants of the Thirty-third, and we had a close call. San Fabian is 200 miles from Manila by water and 120 by land. For 24 hours our tub made no progress whatever, every time she stuck her nose into a wave she would be buried, and water came into the cabins in great volumes. I had a guard stationed around the biograph apparatus, but it broke its latching twice, and we were often in water to our knees trying to save it from going overboard. It took us two days to reach San Fabian, and during that time I had no opportunity to inspect the camera, so do not know whether the machine was damaged during the trip or not. We had to unload it into a small boat in a heavy surf at San Fabian, and in letting it out the camera was dropped. As soon as we got ashore I set it up, and tried to get a picture of the detachment coming ashore and firing on

some intrenchments [sic] in the distance, but it refused to work. I labored for several hours, but could not get at the seat of difficulty.'

Ackerman had no backup Biograph camera, and this breakdown must have been exceptionally frustrating, for he was right there at the very time when the American military operation was coming to its climax of triple converging columns. But the camera could not be fixed on location, so Ackerman had to give up his plans for filming:

'There was no alternative but for me to return to Manila as quickly as possible for repairs. No boat would return for 10 days, and I could not waste the time, so I consulted Gen. Wheaton, who gave me a guard and wagon to Dagupan, 10 miles across country, where the insurgents were thick as flies. We were only fired on once, however, and then from a considerable distance. It took a day to reach Dagupan, and in order to get to Calisian I had to hire a banco, a sort of native raft, and pole down the river for five miles. My trip down that river was the experience of my life. We made it safely, but how I do not know. This feat consumed seven hours, and we were constantly in danger of being captured by the insurgents.'<sup>117</sup>

The place Ackerman was aiming for, Calisian (called Calasian these days) was on the railway line from Dagupan to Manila. Though General MacArthur had entered Dagupan on the 20<sup>th</sup> November, presumably the railway line in the immediate vicinity was still dangerous for Americans, hence the need to make for this station a little way down the line. A photograph (mentioned earlier) was published in *Leslie's* of the 'banco' part of Ackerman's journey to Calisian, showing the cameraman with his bulky crates containing the biograph equipment on the boat, 'leaving Dagupan for the dangerous journey to Caliesiao' [sic].<sup>118</sup> He is depicted with a pistol at his belt, testimony to the dangers of his journey, and is dressed in army uniform, again reinforcing the fact that his mission was *for* the US forces, not merely to report on them as an independent journalist. [Fig. 6]

However, before leaving San Fabian, though unable to use his Biograph camera, Ackerman had been on hand to hear of an important piece of news. Some days earlier the Thirty-Third Infantry had received a tip-off, and raiding a small town, Carbarnan, had captured Aguinaldo's son and mother.<sup>119</sup> Aguinaldo himself escaped, but the fact that the Filipino leader had abandoned his close family was seen as an indication of his increasing desperation, so the family was an important capture for the Americans.<sup>120</sup> Ackerman was apparently present quite soon after the famous captives were brought in, and had himself photographed with the son and mother. [Fig. 8] This photograph was published in *Leslie's* alongside the one of him on the 'banco'. The fact that Ackerman produced only a *still photograph* of the captives, and didn't record them on film, is further corroboration that his Biograph camera was indeed out of action, for a film of Aguinaldo's family would have been a real scoop. In fact no films of Pangasinan in November appear in the Biograph register, which is a real disappointment and a sad lost opportunity, for this was a crucial time in the American military campaign.



### 3) *South to Manila: the funeral of General Lawton*

But if Ackerman couldn't film, at least he could report in writing (this being one advantage of his multi-media affiliation) and this also gives us a chance to date his movements. Ackerman's report of the capture of Aguinaldo's family was by-lined San Fabian, 30 November 1899. A couple of days after this he must have completed the journey to Calisian and taken the train south, for on 2 December he filed a story for *Leslie's* from the town of Bamban, near Angeles.<sup>121</sup> Ackerman then proceeded to Manila and must have got the camera fixed some time in December, because he filmed a number of scenic views of the city from the middle of the month.

Some of these films can be dated precisely (from data in Biograph's production log). For example, he shot *The Market Place, Manila* [1385] on the 15 December and *Bridge of Spain, Manila* [1380] the following day. On the 21<sup>st</sup> he filmed *Unloading Lighters at the Government Dock* [1354] and also shot a view of the city's busiest street, *The Escolta, Manila* [1351]. He may have filmed other scenics of the city at this time, including *Making Manila Rope* [1384], showing one of the native industries, and *Water Buffalo, Manila* [1388]. The war was never far away and even the latter, an apparently innocuous view, had military connotations which gave it much more edge, for as the Biograph catalogue tells us, the view showed, 'A train of Water buffalo, captured from the insurgents by the United States troops at Angeles, Philippine Islands'. Another film or films taken at the docks which depicted Chinese coolies and Chinese drivers of Buffalo carts, also had military connotations, for the Chinese were proving particularly useful to US forces as auxiliaries.<sup>122</sup> A couple of 'arranged' military films may have been shot at this time, but we'll discuss more about 'arranging' below.

The major news story of the month was that General Lawton, one of the top US commanders, and a respected if wayward soldier, was killed in mid December during the battle of San Mateo.<sup>123</sup> Ackerman filmed Lawton's body being brought back to Manila, and then filmed the General's funeral itself in the city on 30 December. This was Ackerman's longest film of the war, a tribute perhaps to the importance that he and others attached to the fallen General.

### 4) *Pampanga province: rescuing American soldiers*

Early in the new year Ackerman retraced his steps northward to Pampanga province, to join a campaign commanded by Brigadier-General Frederick D. Grant (son of the famous Civil War General, Ulysses S. Grant). Grant commanded the aforementioned Twenty-Fifth Infantry, a 'colored', i.e. African American regiment (black soldiers played an important role in both the Spanish-American and Philippine wars).<sup>124</sup>

Ackerman shot half a dozen films during his sojourn with the Twenty-Fifth in Pampanga, several of which were made in and around the town of Angeles, some 70 kilometres north of Manila. A couple of films are datable precisely to the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> January, and all were probably filmed within the week immediately before. One which survives is entitled *Twenty-Fifth Infantry*

*Returning from Mt. Ariat*, and shows troops marching past camera, led by Generals Grant and A.S. Burt. Ackerman probably filmed the troops after they had taken part in an operation at Mount Ariat (now spelled Arayat) which became quite a celebrated incident in the war, and which Ackerman witnessed.<sup>125</sup>

The Ariat campaign was intended to counter a substantial insurgency in the region, and Ackerman accompanied the Twenty-Fifth as they went on an expedition to reconnoitre Mount Ariat, an area controlled by Filipino forces under their General Akino. An immediate cause for this action was that the US forces had heard of the mistreatment of five American prisoners held by Akino's men. On 6<sup>th</sup> January three companies of the Twenty-Fifth attacked the Filipino camp, and after overrunning this site the unfortunate American captives were discovered in a pitiful condition.<sup>126</sup> *Leslie's Weekly* published a dramatic account of these events, written by Ackerman, who was as he stated, 'the only newspaper man on the scene'.<sup>127</sup> Though rescued by the American forces, three of the five captives later died, having been, as Ackerman observed with disgust, 'starved and ill-treated since their capture two months before'. They had also been, he added, '...shot without mercy and butchered with bolos' (machetes).

Ackerman talked to the survivors himself, and was clearly shocked and angered by the cruelty and torture that they had endured. He concluded a second article with a personal observation: 'As I look over the events of that day I cannot but feel that the most severe measures must be dealt out to Akino and his men. It is common rumor in the Twenty-Fifth that they will take no more prisoners'.<sup>128</sup> Ackerman neither filmed nor photographed the prisoners – perhaps he couldn't, or perhaps he felt that words were the only means tastefully to report such grim matters. It should be added that there was cruelty on both sides during the war, as several historians, Filipino and otherwise, have noted.<sup>129</sup>

#### 5) Pangasinan province – with Generals MacArthur and Bell

After filming in Pampanga, Ackerman must have headed directly and swiftly north again, for three days later he was back in Pangasinan province (and this time the camera was in full working order).<sup>130</sup> On the 11 January he filmed the Seventeenth Infantry, under Colonel Jacob H. Smith 'returning from a fight with the Tagalogs, near Dagupan'. He also made a film entitled *Major-General Arthur MacArthur and Staff*. In all, Ackerman shot some dozen films during this period, and was to stay in the province for a month in the area around Lingayen Gulf and Dagupan, with various American units who were fighting the insurgency.<sup>131</sup>

Seven of his dozen films depicted General J.F. Bell's Thirty-Sixth Infantry.<sup>132</sup> One of these, *The Fighting Thirty-Sixth*, showed the troops on parade, and another depicted *General Bell and His Staff* at Dagupan. Bell was one of the most successful and enterprising officers in the US army in the Philippines, who would later enjoy a meteoric rise. His regiment was notably successful, and was described as one of the most energetic American units.<sup>133</sup> Ackerman's remaining five films with Bell all depicted one of the unit's boldest

exploits. However, I will delay describing this filming until below, for it more properly forms part of our discussion of the theme of arranging, while another of his films from this period, *Aguinaldo's Navy* is more relevant to our discussion of propaganda, also below.

#### 6) *Manila and final days in the Philippines*

By mid February Ackerman was back in the Manila region, and filmed a scene with the Sixth Artillery on the 18<sup>th</sup> of the month.<sup>134</sup> From the end of February he shot some scenics of the city. In the first week of March he linked up with General Wheaton's forces, and made three films, one of which, entitled *Major-General Lloyd Wheaton*, showed the General with his staff as they started on a reconnoitring tour from Calamba (south of Manila on Laguna de Bay – a place which the Biograph catalogue called the 'Hell Hole of the Philippines').<sup>135</sup> This work with Wheaton in Calamba included a couple of films which show simulated attacks on insurgents – I'll come back to these below.

A week later Ackerman was back on the outskirts of Manila, and on 12 March shot two scenes of the Fourth Cavalry in Pasay, these being the last films that he would shoot in the Philippines. One of the scenes was entitled *Fourth Cavalry on the March*, and showed this cavalry regiment under command of Lieut.-Col. E.M. Hayes heading out 'on a search for Filipino insurgents'. The film had an alternative title, *After Aguinaldo*, underscoring the fact that the Army's foremost military goal was still to hunt down the leader of the Filipino forces. But they would have a long wait, for Aguinaldo was not captured until over a year later.

Though Ackerman stayed in the Philippines for a few weeks after this, there was to be no more filming by him in the islands. It is not clear why not, though it could have been due to a number of reasons: further camera problems, or running out of film, or that the Biograph head office had not rated his last few scenes as being very good (see below), or simply that he had produced enough films to satisfy the predicted public demand.

Ackerman continued working a little longer in the Philippines, but only as a journalist and photographer for *Leslie's Weekly*, most notably in Pangasinan. Here, probably sometime during late April he photographed a highly significant ceremony in Sual. An important element of the American pacification programme was that, after gaining control over a district, they would assemble the chiefs of the various communities, and induce them to accept an oath of office, in a public ceremony. This basically involved swearing allegiance to the new US-led administration. Two photographs by Ackerman of such a ceremony in Sual are reproduced in *Leslie's*, with Sual's Presidente reading the oath to assembled heads of the community and they accepting it, as an American officer from the Thirty-Sixth regiment supervises proceedings.<sup>136</sup> It is a real shame that Ackerman did not film this event, for it would have been a unique record of the early stages of American political interference in the Philippines. (But as we have seen, this was not the only important episode where he had been present but had failed to film). It was probably soon after this event in Sual that the journalist/cameraman left the Philippines, though his exact date of departure is unknown.<sup>137</sup>

### *Back in America*

Ackerman probably returned to the USA in May, and on or around the 22<sup>nd</sup> June he and Biograph executive Frank J. Marion paid a visit to the War Department in Washington.<sup>138</sup> They took with them some ten of Ackerman's fifty-odd Philippine scenes, and one or more mutoscope viewers on which to show them. Gathered to see the films were the top-brass of America's military: Secretary of War Elihu Root, Adjutant-General Corbin, General Miles, as well as a number of other officers. Some of these men, as we have seen, had approved the plan to send Ackerman to the Philippines, so they were no doubt keen to have their decision vindicated. The films – or rather flip-card mutoscope reels – were displayed in Corbin's office.<sup>139</sup> A press report described the reaction:

‘Mr. Ackerman gave the exhibitions and all who witnessed them declared that the reproductions were remarkable for their clearness and accuracy, and that as a war record they would prove most valuable. Secretary Root, after looking at all the views declared that the pictures were not only interesting but very valuable. Gen. Miles thought them wonderful, while Gen. Corbin, who first realized of what value the pictures would be to his record of photographs of the war, declared that the pictures were remarkably fine, and that he was delighted with the success of the experiment.’<sup>140</sup>

The moving images were thereby ‘accepted by the United States government as official records’ and deposited in the War Department.<sup>141</sup> Corbin later wrote ‘a most flattering letter’ to the Biograph company about the films.<sup>142</sup> After the images had been presented in this way to the nation's top military officials, Ackerman returned to his home town of Syracuse and lectured about his Philippines experiences at the Lakeside Theater in July 1900, while screening some of his films.<sup>143</sup> This was not the end of Ackerman's filming for the US military, and that same summer the Government authorised him to proceed to China to film the military action taking place as part of the international expedition against the Boxer Uprising.<sup>144</sup> (See chapter 12).

### **Ackerman's films**

#### *Technique*

In some respects Ackerman's war films were quite an achievement, especially given his relative youth at the time (he was only 26 years old) and his lack of experience of camerawork. Non-fiction of the early era, unlike fiction, is rarely analysed from the stylistic point of view, but Ackerman's roughly 44 films from the Philippines are of some interest from this standpoint.

Let us look at the question of technique first. The Biograph camera register is a unique and invaluable source of information on various aspects of films shot by the company's cameramen (and remains to be fully analysed or exploited by film historians). It gives details for all films about footage, dates of filming and of release, along with other information, including a rating of quality. The latter is most often given as a single word comment: ‘good’, ‘fair’, or ‘poor’.

Of Ackerman's films shot in the Philippines which received such a mark, 17 are listed as 'good', 13 'fair', and 11 'poor'. It is not entirely clear what qualities these ratings are meant to indicate, though photographic quality was one component. For example, *Bringing General Lawton's Body Back to Manila* [1389] is classed as 'poor', and a viewing of a print today shows that the film looks very overexposed (probably Ackerman's negative was so overexposed that it was not correctable in the printing).

But it seems that as well as photographic quality, other less definable factors of aesthetic quality were involved in the ratings. My viewing of *The Escolta, Manila* [1351], reveals a well-exposed view, shot from a well chosen high angle, as horses and carts pass in the busy street. Sure enough, the Biograph register calls this film 'good'. Also described as 'good' is *Bridge of Spain; Manila* [1380] and the 'Picture Catalogue' confirms this judgement in calling the film, 'Well arranged and interesting'.<sup>145</sup> The films rated 'good' decrease toward the end of Ackerman's period in the Philippines, and the 'poors' increase, for reasons unknown.

Given that Ackerman was such a neophyte in camerawork, he could be surprisingly technically proficient. *Attack on Mt. Ariat* [1399] depicts a scene as General Grant issues orders, and then the American troops race across a field, the camera panning to follow. The pan is smooth and well done, certainly by comparison with the jerky, badly-paced pans often seen in other films from the early era.<sup>146</sup> Furthermore, Ackerman had a good understanding of the need for films to contain plenty of movement, especially movement in depth. Several of his Philippine films involve groups of soldiers marching or charging toward and past camera: 'up and pasts' as modern documentary cameramen call them. Such shots not only introduce movement, they also – within the limited scope of a one-shot film (and most films of this era were a single shot) – display the 'actors' on screen for a useful amount of time, as they approach and come past camera.

#### *Films of commanders*

And this brings me to wider questions of who and what Ackerman filmed. The US forces are the subject of most of his Philippine films, and one interesting aspect of these army films is that many of them feature not just the ordinary soldiers, but also the commanders leading their men. Of course one would expect some films of an army in the field to include commanders, but the numbers here are striking: of the approximately 30 of Ackerman's Philippine films which depict the US Army, about half of them, to judge from the descriptions, feature commanders in a prominent role. Sometimes this is clear from the film's title, such as *Gen. Floyd Wheaton and Staff*, and sometimes from the synopsis. Ackerman managed to film an impressive number of the top brass, including the following: Major-Generals Arthur MacArthur, Loyd Wheaton and Henry W. Lawton (his funeral anyway); Brigadier-Generals Franklin Bell, A.S. Burt and Frederick D. Grant; and Lieut.-Col. E.M. Hayes, Colonel Jacob H. Smith and Major Charles Morton. These commanding officers are depicted in various roles: with their staffs; making inspections; and leading their men into battle.

Why did Ackerman film so many of these commanding officers? While it is possible that he was encouraged to do so by the army or by the commanders themselves, it is equally likely that it was his own choice, possibly encouraged by his colleagues at Biograph. The Biograph company made something of a specialisation of filming celebrities (one thinks of their films of Commander Dewey, the Pope, and various monarchs).<sup>147</sup> The benefit in featuring these commanders was twofold: films 'starring' well known or prominent individuals were more likely to attract the interest of the public and media back home.

Secondly, there were perhaps advantages for Ackerman in proposing to these important individuals that they go before his camera. Probably these commanders would appreciate the chance to be immortalised in the theatre of war, for by appearing in a film, a commander's profile would be raised among the general public back home. To this end, perhaps these commanders in the Philippines cooperated more enthusiastically with Ackerman in having the troops 'perform' as the filmmaker wished? Such cooperation is important, because a non-fiction filmmaker cannot rely on events just happening conveniently for his camera. It is often the case that a cameraman manages to get subjects in front of his camera only as a result of an arrangement made, and negotiation with, either the subjects themselves or the person who controls those subjects. In the case of filming the Philippine War, the controlling authority for each army unit was very obvious, being the commanding officer, and it would have been this authority who agreed to make his troops available for filming. Even though Ackerman had the general permission of the War Department to film in the war zone, it was the officers in any locality who had to agree to it and to allocate the specific manpower, i.e. troops to parade past the camera. In any case, this filmic glorification or 'celebration' of the US commanders in the theatre of war represents an interesting further step in the relations between cinema and warfare.

#### *Ackerman's arranged films*

If we are using terms like 'negotiation', 'allocating manpower' etc, does this mean that Ackerman's Philippine War films were set up or arranged? Certainly many of them must have been. Indeed, I would suggest that between half and two thirds of the titles were arranged for filming, as opposed to being records of existing action, filmed as it happened.<sup>148</sup> Even apparently 'off the cuff' films, such as columns of troops passing camera, would need to be set up and cued, but Ackerman's arranging went a lot further than this.

The most ambitious endeavour in Ackerman's entire Philippine assignment was in filming a march of the Thirty-Sixth infantry led by General Bell through the mountains of Pangasinan province. In late November 1899 Bell had been given an important mission: to assist the Thirty-Third infantry under Captain Fowler, whose forces were outnumbered in a place called Mangatarem, in Pangasinan.<sup>149</sup> For Bell to get there in time with sufficient weaponry and supplies necessitated a hard march over mountains near Sual and across the Agno River, leading a force of picked men, native scouts and a pack train of mules. Ackerman's group of films depicting this event showed the troops and pack mules laden with ammunition coming across the mountainous

landscape, through undergrowth, and traversing a river. The films have evocative phrases in their titles and descriptions: *Gen. Bell's Expedition Near Sual; Breaking Through Jungle; Bell's Pack Train Swimming Agno River; and Into the Wilderness!*

The surviving films and frame stills show the expedition marching through a dramatic landscape, [Fig. 7] and there is nothing in the titles or descriptions to suggest that these films are anything but records of the actual events. But the dates of filming prove that this was not the event itself, but a later rerun for the camera. The five films were all shot (according to the filming dates entered in the Biograph register) on the 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> February 1900, whereas the event itself had been the previous November. And let us recall that though Ackerman had come to Pangasinan at that time, his camera had broken, so he could not have filmed anything during that visit. So these films must have been post-event reconstructions, filmed over two months later.

There are some giveaways even within the films themselves, as the position of the camera for some shots is implausible if these really were records of the actual events. For example, one of the key moments of the operation was when the expedition had to get over the Agno River. Bell sent one man across on horseback with a rope and then the pack train of about sixty mules were guided or pulled across to follow.<sup>150</sup> Ackerman's film of the event, *Bell's Pack Train Swimming Agno River (aka An Historic Feat)* is filmed from the far bank of the river looking past this leading man as he pulls the mules on the rope. The animals swim toward us in a line, come out of the water and past the camera position. If the film were genuine, the obvious question would be, how could Ackerman have got across the river to be there ahead of the mule train? It is inconceivable in a genuine military operation that General Bell would have allowed a cameraman to cross the river ahead of his own men. Indeed, it is doubtful that he'd have wanted Ackerman on the real expedition at all. No commander leading a fast-moving unit on an important mission through rugged and hostile territory would want a cameraman along, especially one toting an oversize movie camera and equipment.<sup>151</sup>

Presumably the reconstruction of this exploit took place as a result of a deal between Ackerman and Bell. By the time the films were shot, as I have related above, Ackerman had been in Pangasinan since the second week in January (over three weeks). He had already filmed Bell and his staff at least once, on 31 January, so the cameraman and the General clearly knew one another. The mountain march was one of Bell's more picturesque exploits, so a good choice for a re-enactment. With the regiment still in the region it might have been fairly straightforward to set up again, though it was still quite an event to set up, and Bell had to commit many men to the mountains again to participate in this filmic recreation.

There were good reasons to want to re-enact the march, though, for the events back in November in Pangasinan had been part of a decisive military advance by the US Army, a turning point of the war, and at that crucial time the Biograph camera had malfunctioned. So this arranged filming with Bell might be seen as Ackerman's way of recording for posterity the historic

military events which he had missed earlier in the war. Biograph eventually released five film reconstructions of the expedition.<sup>152</sup>

However, it seems that Ackerman was not altogether straightforward in his statements about what the films recorded. For example, he exaggerated the limited military importance of Bell's march, later saying to a reporter that this was an important event militarily which 'would live eternally', for if General Bell hadn't got this pack train across the river, he would never have been able to reach Mangatarem in time to relieve General Fowler.<sup>153</sup> But in fact it seems that Bell's Thirty-Sixth played a peripheral role in the Mangatarem operation, and that Fowler's was the more important achievement.<sup>154</sup> So, in immortalising the undoubtedly impressive march across the Sual mountains by Bell and his men Ackerman also inflated its significance.<sup>155</sup>

More seriously, when he showed the films back in the US, Ackerman failed to make clear to people that these were re-enactments, not the original events. For one thing, in his descriptions of the march to a reporter he gave the impression that he (Ackerman) had been present during the original crossing:

'It was a terrible and desperate struggle, the swift current carrying the mules down the river and many times several of them sank from sight. Gen. Bell stood on the bank and said that during all of his experience he had never seen a more remarkable spectacle.'<sup>156</sup>

He might not even have been frank with his Biograph employers, and both they and he suggested in public that the films were genuine. Many viewers were apparently given the impression that they were seeing films of the real events, not reconstructions. When one of the films (probably *Into the Wilderness*) was screened in Philadelphia in June, a newspaper stated that this film, 'is one of the series now on file in the office of Secretary of War Root, and vouched for by the Government as absolutely authentic'.<sup>157</sup> Partly, no doubt, because they were presented as 'absolutely authentic' the films were well received by American audiences. 'The picture has made a decided sensation wherever it has been shown', the Biograph catalogue noted of the Agno river crossing film.<sup>158</sup> As is so often the case, what one states or claims about a film, or the specific title it is given, is as important as – or more important than – the actual content of the film itself. This kind of 'creative titling' is found in a high proportion of Ackerman's Philippine War films.

#### *False titling: attacking the off-screen enemy*

A prime example is a film he shot of a river in Dagupan in February 1900, showing small paddle or sail boats passing through shot.<sup>159</sup> It is a pleasantly-shot scenic view – quite innocuous – with no apparent hint of things military, yet is entitled *Aguinaldo's Navy [1454]*. This title is, as historian del Mundo puts it, 'not quite a subtle way of belittling the enemy', for with such a title the feeble Filipino military resources are implicitly being compared with the powerful US ones – specifically with the American navy which had recently destroyed two Spanish fleets.<sup>160</sup> In this sense the film is the most blatant example in Ackerman's work of propaganda against the Filipinos. (It is not known who supplied the editorialising title: whether AM&B or Ackerman.)



In this case a surplus value was given to the film by the indicative title, and the same could be achieved by additional words of description. *Fourth Cavalry on the March* [1463] for example, depicts (as shown in the Biograph frame-clippings) a troop of US cavalry in Pasay marching toward and past camera. Yet the description in the Biograph catalogue tells us that these troops were going out, 'on a search for Filipino insurgents'. Furthermore, an alternate title for the film is *After Aguinaldo*. But who knows if the troops were really going out looking for insurgents, let alone for Aguinaldo? A well-chosen title or description could be as important as the film itself in attracting and intriguing an audience.

So far the titling we have mentioned was merely 'indicative' or 'suggestive' rather than downright false. But several of Ackerman's films go further than this, and imply that the film shows an actual encounter with the Filipino enemy, especially by having the word 'charge' or 'attack' in the title or description. This is the case, for example, in *Attack on Mt. Ariat* [1399] and *A Charge on the Insurgents* [1457], with the same action-related words appearing in the films' descriptions. In *A Filipino Town Surprised* [1461], part of the Thirteenth Infantry is described as being seen 'in a charge upon an insurgent stronghold in Northern Luzon', while another film shows the Thirty-Seventh regiment at Guadalupe bridge near Manila, 'starting to repel an attack by insurgents' and then 'charging the Filipinos'.<sup>161</sup> In *On the Advance with Gen. Wheaton* [1448] the US forces are said to be pictured in the process of '...attacking an insurgent force at Calamba, Northern Luzon. The American troops come at full tilt down a narrow path at the foot of a mountain, deploy into the open, and start the engagement.' Other titles which imply action include *Repelling the Enemy* [1383], and *Responding to an Alarm* [1400]. But despite the titles or descriptions, none of these films show any fighting and only feature US forces, not the Filipino enemy. All of them were evidently set-up, arranged, with the American troops told to charge as if the enemy were nearby.<sup>162</sup> For example, both *Attack on Mt. Ariat* and *Responding to an Alarm* show commanders issuing orders and then the US troops running or riding off out of shot in pursuit of an supposed off-screen enemy.

Because these films were shot in genuine Philippine locations with genuine American troops, though the enemy was not seen, the images still had a certain authenticity about them. It goes without saying that a film claiming to depict an actual military action would be more of a scoop and therefore more of an attraction than a view simply showing the background action to the war, e.g. troops marching en route to battle. Going back to the concept of 'conceptual distance' which I described in Chapter 2, the 'attack' aspect of these films would make them closer to the 'ideal' war film depicting actual battle.

Appeal to the audience was surely one reason why Ackerman arranged these scenes with the troops in action. Another reason why he did it, and why the commanders cooperated was surely for propaganda value. The effect of presenting the US forces in action, with commanders leading their men, was surely greater than simply showing the troops idly trotting by. The effect on

screen of such attack films was to depict the forces as active, competent and getting results. And if the enemy were nowhere in sight, the title could 'put' them there. But being arranged in this way the films were certainly not accurate records of the war, and the claim made in the opening quotation of this section, that Ackerman's films were, as the writer stated, 'catching and keeping, with absolute accuracy' the events of the war, was erroneous.

### **A perspective on Ackerman's work in the Philippines**

As we have seen, the Biograph company made a contractual arrangement with the War Department to film the conflict. Ackerman was based within American units throughout his half-year of reporting on the Philippine War; he was assisted by the Army quartermaster's department, was wearing US Army uniform, and was utterly dependent on the American military for his livelihood and safety. Ackerman, an ex-soldier, was effectively working *for* the American army in the Philippines, and even if he'd been so inclined, would have been ill-advised, to say the least, to bite the hand that fed him. In terms of his filmic and journalistic output from the war zone, he entirely toed the American line, and made no films which showed the Army in a negative light.

In the 2003 Gulf War, various television stations 'embedded' their correspondents with the invading forces, and this was presented by news organisations as if it was somehow a 'new' development. Of course it was not. War correspondents have always been attached, to a looser or tighter extent, to fighting forces. But in 1899 Ackerman set something of a precedent by the almost umbilical closeness with which he was bound to the American military, who were effectively his sponsors. In subsequent wars cameramen would rarely be attached so firmly to an army, nor be so uncritical in their attitude to it.

All in all, as a filmmaker actively working for the US military, Ackerman succeeded well in his job. He managed to film various different regiments and units of the US Army, often featuring their commanders prominently, and he depicted several of these units apparently taking part in military engagements. Though some of his films were arranged, they nevertheless showed real American troops in real locations, and only the off-screen enemy was imaginary. These were certainly more believable than the outright fakes which Edison made (as we shall see in the following section), of flag-waving American troops storming the trenches of the Filipino enemy, but they promulgated a similar message of American triumph. Ackerman's films were therefore propaganda rather than news, and propaganda of a more subtle and, some might say, more insidious kind than the cinema had yet seen.

## ‘ROUTING THE FILIPINOS’: STAGING AND EXHIBITION

### Fake films of the war

Many of the films about the Philippine War were dramatised reconstructions, fakes, rather than actualities, and were produced from fairly early on in the conflict. Before the main filmmakers of this war – Ackerman and Rosenthal – had even set foot in the Philippines, the fakers were at work, the main producer being the Edison Manufacturing Company. From May to September 1899, James White, Kinetograph Department Manager, supervised seven re-enactments or ‘dramatised scenes’ of this war.<sup>163</sup> These films were very pro American and patronizing toward the Filipino enemy, this attitude being clear from some of the titles: *Rout of the Filipinos*, *Advance of Kansas Volunteers at Caloocan*, *Capture of the Trenches at Candabar*, and *Filipinos Retreat from the Trenches*.

One of this group of films, *Colonel Funston Swimming the Bagbag River*, is particularly interesting historically in that it depicts one of the most famous American personalities of the war, Colonel Funston, accompanying his troops as they cross the river on a raft under enemy fire. This was based on a real incident, for which Funston was awarded a commendation for gallantry, though the film version unsurprisingly has several points of inaccuracy, including Funston triumphant on a white horse at the further river bank.<sup>164</sup> The other six films all show staged battles between groups of American and Filipino troops, acted in melodramatic style as the Americans, often waving the Stars and Stripes, force their adversaries to retreat.

These Edison fake films as a group have been the subject of analyses by various authors including Nick Deocampo and Clodualdo del Mundo.<sup>165</sup> Del Mundo’s account is marred by some historical misunderstanding. For example, he describes the action in *Filipinos Retreat from the Trenches*, and notes that each Filipino soldier, ‘quite fantastically’, is armed with a rifle. Actually there is nothing ‘fantastic’ about this, for at times the Filipino revolutionaries were well armed with good rifles, sometimes better armed than the Americans.<sup>166</sup> On the other hand Del Mundo’s aesthetic analysis of the films is interesting. For example, he argues that, while the documentary films of Ackerman are somewhat ‘ineffectual’, these ‘dramatised representations’ offer more of a clear-cut winner in the colonial struggle, and ‘are aimed to rouse the patriotic enthusiasm of the American viewers’. Several of the films show the Americans attacking, and the Filipinos in ignominious retreat:

‘The natives are literally driven out of the screen and the contested space is claimed by the coloniser. Each victorious battle ends with the constant waving of hats, a rousing celebration of adventure and heroism. The flag is pitched at every piece of land that the soldiers subdue and there is always someone to raise it proudly. Moreover, Red Cross nurses take care of the wounded, while the enemy run for their lives, leaving their fallen comrades. Americans wage an orderly war against the disorganised rebels.’<sup>167</sup>

Another author, Kristen Whissel, also stresses that the position of the camera

has the effect of 'aligning the audience with the agents of US imperialism', notably in *Advance of Kansas Volunteers at Caloocan*, as the US Army responds to a Filipino attack.<sup>168</sup> Deocampo extends this analysis, by seeing these films in the wider context of a colonial point of view or 'look' which he suggests that they embody. He writes:

'... the almighty camera expresses power. As Filipinos line up before the camera, they appear vulnerable, as though facing easy slaughter ... Filipinos start withering away from the hail of bullets that dart from the direction of the murderous look cast by the camera.'

When each of the films comes to an end, Deocampo notes, the Filipinos have effectively disappeared, lying inconspicuously as dead bodies, and in their place, 'American soldiers colonize the screen'. For a Filipino viewer, Deocampo remarks, watching these images can be an uncomfortable experience, in that one is effectively seeing one's own side as sorry victims. But another Filipino writer offers a different take on these fake reels. Jose Capino in his thesis offers what he calls a 'strong re-reading' of the films, attempting to reclaim them 'as objects of entertainment rather than of grief and anger', seeing them not so much as humiliating propaganda but as ridiculous productions of a colonising power.<sup>169</sup>

The assumption by all these writers seems to be that the Filipino fighters on screen represent 'Filipinos in general', whereas, as we have seen, the American public was being told that these rebels were but a small portion of the Filipino population, and that most of their countrymen welcomed the American presence. While the latter in particular is debatable, the point is that in the context of the time the films might not be as racist and anti-Filipino as they seem: many American viewers might have seen them rather as depicting their country wiping out a minority of rebels who stood in the way of social progress for the majority.

These films were mainly shown in the USA, though it is not clear how they were received there. It might seem unlikely that such glorifications of American military power were ever screened in the Philippines, and yet an example of exactly this has been unearthed by Nick Deocampo. He has found ads from Philippine newspapers in 1905 for a film show at the Gran Cinematògrafo del Oriente in Manila, which included the film, *Avance de los Voluntarios de Kansas en Caloocan*. This would seem to be the 1899 Edison fake, *Advance of Kansas Volunteers at Caloocan*.<sup>170</sup> The film appeared in the programme of films in January and again in March.<sup>171</sup> What is surprising is firstly that this scene was being screened some six years after production (and long after the war had finished), and secondly, and even more surprising, that such a film portraying the defeat of Filipinos was shown to a predominantly Filipino audience. Deocampo draws what seems to be a reasonable conclusion, that the film was not taken seriously by the audience, and indeed to modern eyes it is a very crude fake.<sup>172</sup> Perhaps the audiences were doing what Capino suggests, and treating the film as a joke rather than as a serious piece of American triumphalism. On the other hand, by 1905 the war was some years past and the Americans were by this time seen to be

acting as agents of progress in many ways, bringing health and education, and some democracy, so perhaps some Filipinos in the audience would have supported the advance of the Kansas volunteers against the rebels? In any case, this remains one of the few examples of a screening of an early war film in the country where the war took place.

Edison was not the only company to make fakes of this war. A film by an unknown maker, the *Battle in the Philippines*, was screened in Kentucky in July 1899, and 'was so full of action and so realistic that it aroused the audience last evening to wild enthusiasm'.<sup>173</sup> In 1899 the Lubin company released a film which recalled the 'flag films' made during the Sudan and Spanish-American wars: *Battle Flag of the 10th Pennsylvania Volunteers, Carried in the Philippines*. It is not clear what this film actually depicted, but the patriotic message of its title would have been very clear to US audiences. Another film, *Philippino War Dance*, possibly made by Lubin too, is much more chauvinistic, and indeed racist. It showed, in the gloating words of the catalogue, the 'half-civilized' and 'unruly inhabitants' of the Philippines who, the catalogue added, were being subdued by 'brave American soldier boys'. This film was being distributed by Lubin in early 1903, but may have been made and available as early as 1899.<sup>174</sup>

In 1900 Lubin released an unusually long fake film, the 400 ft. title, *Fighting in the Philippines, Near Manila* (copyrighted 10 March 1900), which again took a demeaning view of the Filipino adversary, the catalogue describing the action as follows:

'... a life motion picture of the American soldiers and the half-wild Philippinos in active battle. The high bridge and stone wall behind which so many were killed and wounded, is seen in the distance, and after a stubborn resistance, "our boys" vanquished their foes, and climbing down from the top of the wall, proceed to deal a deadly fire on the semi-dressed savages, who scatter in all directions.'<sup>175</sup>

The reference to 'semi-dressed savages' and earlier to 'half-civilized' foes indicates just how far these portrayals of Filipinos strayed from reality. Actually many Filipinos at this time were quite westernised (which is roughly what was meant by 'civilised' in this era): several commentators remarked on their refinement and courtesy, and their neatness and stylishness of attire.<sup>176</sup> The remoter mountain dwellers were presumably what these catalogue writers had in mind when referring to semi-dressed savages, though these tribal peoples played little part in the war. Similar patronising views of Filipinos are found in other media at this time. [Fig. 12] No doubt the film, *Fighting in the Philippines*, helped to promote negative stereotypes of Filipinos, for it was distributed in the US, and also in Germany (where German-born Lubin had strong connections).<sup>177</sup> Lubin's catalogue claimed that the film's action was so emotive 'that audiences have been moved to shout aloud and some stand in dread of a stray bullet that might come their way'. It recommended that sound effects be employed by the exhibitor to simulate the screen gunfire.

A further fake (judging from the description) was being distributed by the Selig company in 1903, which might have been a re-issue of one of the Edison or other fakes, though was more likely a new production. Entitled *Infantry Charge*, it was a mere 40 feet in length, and depicted what the catalogue correctly claimed had become 'a familiar scene' in the guerrilla warfare of the latter stages of the conflict, in which 'constant and harassing attacks and ambushes' were met with a firm response by the Americans:

'A bugler is seen to rush from the tents sounding the call to arms, the boys rush out, pick up their arms and dash out of sight. This show of force daunts the enemy, for our force return in a short time, stack their arms and go back to their tents.'<sup>178</sup>

### **Propaganda in film and lantern shows**

It is likely that these fake films and the actualities by Ackerman and Rosenthal were mainly shown in general entertainment venues, and while most of these scenes offered a pro-American view – and some presented a demeaning view of Filipinos – they were not really designed for overt propaganda or pedagogy. More overtly educational or propagandistic shows did take place, however, often employing lantern slides rather than films, or a combination of the two media. Various stereopticon companies in the USA distributed slide sets about the Philippines and America's war in the islands. Images included, for example, a picture of pro-American natives and an artist's impression of Funston's heroic crossing of the Bagbag river.<sup>179</sup> A poster from 1899-1900 advertised a combined film and lantern (stereopticon) show, in which the lantern section was entitled 'Our New Possessions', and consisted of 52 slides about the war. [Fig. 10 and 11] (The film part of the show may have comprised entertainment rather than war-related scenes). The lecture was apparently given in various parts of the USA, possibly with some government backing.<sup>180</sup> The publicity material announced:

'A most interesting and instructive lecture will be given describing our new possessions, beautiful Hawaii, the Philippines, the theater of the war, Porto Rico, ...and new scenes of the island of Cuba...Fruitful and beautiful countries which have been acquired by the United States.'

I have been unable to find out any more about venues for this lecture or much further information about it. However, more is known about aspects of lantern propaganda from the opposing camp on the Philippine question. This campaign was organised by a body called the Anti-Imperialist League, which was formed at the end of the Spanish-American war in 1898 to oppose American annexation of Spain's colonies.<sup>181</sup> The League's aims were crystallised through Kipling's, 'The White Man's Burden', a poem about America's new responsibility as an imperial power in the Philippines, with all the potential pitfalls which attended that thankless task. The League circulated information about the Philippines, offering a positive view of this nation and explaining why it should be granted self-rule (and opposing the display of Filipinos as primitive peoples at expositions, for example).

The League made use of lantern shows to further its aims, and in 1899 and 1900 sent two ex-volunteer soldiers on a tour to present lectures illustrated by lantern slides, in Chicago and major east coast cities. Sergeant Andreae and Private Reeves had served with the Signal Corps in the Philippine War, and their lantern show countered the official view of the war. They asserted that the Philippines was capable of self government and desired it; that Americans and not Filipinos had started the war; and that most US volunteer soldiers in the Philippines didn't support the war and wanted to return home.

They were attacked as liars by an Army General, though the League countered by saying that the General 'should know that his real quarrel is less with the young men than with their camera'.<sup>182</sup> The implication was that their projected images made a strong case for America's withdrawal from the Philippines. Unfortunately I have not yet managed to establish what kind of images these were, nor if any survive. The League was countered at every turn by the US military, which thought that it was encouraging the Philippine rebels, and therefore prolonging the war.<sup>183</sup> There was some truth in that, for, by 1900 one of the few remaining hopes of the Filipino nationalists, and a strong motivation for continuing the armed struggle, was that the anti-annexation candidate, Bryan, might win the US presidential election. When he lost and McKinley won, many of the nationalist fighters lost heart.

### **Film propaganda after the war**

By 1902 the Americans were in control in the Philippines and in effect the war had been won. But the need to keep control of information and to make the pro-imperialist case continued, both in the islands themselves and for an audience back home in the USA, and for this reason propaganda continued to play an important role for years after the war was won, including film propaganda. A 1914 lecture tour by Dean C. Worcester, former Secretary of the Interior for the Philippines (1901-1913), used 'motion picture films and lantern slides' to show conditions in the country. His lectures were sponsored by the 'American-Philippine Company', a corporation formed in 1912 to facilitate U.S. investments in the Philippines, which therefore aimed to portray the Filipinos as a primitive people who still needed American guidance and rule. Worcester used a kind of 'before and after' approach in his lectures, contrasting 'savage' Filipinos with others influenced by the 'civilizing' role of a U.S. administration. A press notice stated that:

'The contrast between these different peoples was emphasized by slides showing Speaker Osmena of the Philippine Assembly, General Aguinaldo and a highly educated Filipino woman on the one hand and a negrito warrior, a head-hunter, and women of the hills clad in banana leaves on the other.'<sup>184</sup>

The demeaning attitudes in this presentation were, it seems, much the same as in those Edison and Lubin faked films about the Philippine War, but at least Aguinaldo, who, during the war had been described in very uncomplimentary terms, was now presented as a positive role model. All colonial regimes use propaganda, and indeed more forceful methods of persuasion, and 'benevolent' as the Americans were in some respects, they were ruthless in

others, and were certainly prepared to use stereotyping as one of the tools of control.<sup>185</sup> And there was more to this campaign to control information and debate, for in addition to promoting its own viewpoint, the US regime also tried to suppress nationalist propaganda. The restrictions which General Otis had imposed on American journalists during the war continued afterwards in the form of censorship of 'seditious' writings and of plays which advocated an anti-American position – though this point of view still managed to be heard and seen, through the subtle efforts of Filipino writers and artists.<sup>186</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Throughout the Philippine conflict, though there were voices of criticism in some newspapers, generally the American media were in favour of the intervention. Either through luck or design, the US military hosted a press corps in the Philippine theatre of operations which was mainly pro-forces, as was much of the media and public back home in the USA (though there was significant and cogent opposition).

The moving picture industry was as pro-intervention as any of them. The Biograph company's cameraman, Ackerman, was more or less working for, or embedded in, the American army, and the other two cameramen in the Philippines who were ostensibly independent also 'toed the line'. All three of them, apparently quite separately, employed a technique for shooting actualities during the war, which had the effect of boosting the image of the US military. What I call 'arranging' involved setting up scenes with troops in the war zone, often depicting them pursuing, supposedly, an off-screen Filipino enemy. This technique allowed much finer control of the action and framing, and therefore resulted in better films, while still looking quite authentic. When exhibited later such films were sometimes re-titled to imply that the shots were genuine battle scenes.

The aim of these 'arranged' films was to show the American military effort in as dramatic, vigorous and heroic way as possible. Most of the other available films, non-fiction and staged, also put over a pro-American message – and with little prompting from the authorities. This steady diet of uncritical visuals acted as a powerful 'argument' for the triumphs of the new American imperialism, and therefore this war marks an important step in the development of film propaganda.

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<sup>1</sup> Max Boot, in a review of Linn's book (see below) states, '...the Spanish-American War, which begot the conflict in the Philippines, is much better remembered, in spite of the fact that it involved fewer combatants, fewer casualties and considerably less time. No doubt this is because the Spanish-American War is widely thought to have heralded America's rise to world power, whereas, in the view of most historians, the Philippine War was a blind alley – a short-lived U.S. foray into colonialism.' *The National Interest*, Summer, 2000.



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<sup>2</sup> Brian McAllister Linn, *The Philippine War, 1899-1902* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2000), p.328. See also the work of John M. Gates. The simplistic view of the war is epitomised in the aptly titled Kenneth C. Davis, *Don't Know Much About History : Everything You Need to Know About American History but Never Learned* (New York: Avon Books, 1990), p.223. In this work the event is called (incorrectly) the 'Philippine incursion', and, we are told, was noted for 'massive strikes against civilians, war atrocities, and a brutality that had been missing from American wars with Europeans. Fighting against the "brown" Filipinos removed all excuses for civility.' Later editions repeat the same statement. The online Wikipedia encyclopaedia entry is similarly unreliable. Brian Linn's aforementioned book is the best researched account of the war to date. Similarly nuanced accounts are available of particular aspects of the war: to name just one, see Rosario Mendoza Cortes, *Pangasinan, 1801-1900 : The Beginnings of Modernization* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1990), p.113-115, whose discussion of why the Americans eventually won in Pangasinan province is admirably balanced.

<sup>3</sup> When the Americans first arrived there were even cries of 'Viva Americanos'. Pandia Ralli, 'Campaigning in the Philippines', *Overland Monthly* 33, March 1899, p.231.

<sup>4</sup> As Kiernan puts it: 'the Americans brought Aguinaldo back, to make use of him against the Spaniards, but then shouldered him aside and annexed the islands'. V. G. Kiernan, *European Empires from Conquest to Collapse : 1815-1960* (London: Leicester University Press in association with Fontana Paperbacks, 1982), p.117. Emilio Aguinaldo y Famy was his full name.

<sup>5</sup> In August a sampling of newspaper opinion found 43% of the press in favour of permanent retention of the Philippines, but this had risen to over 61% by December. Brad K. Berner, *The Spanish-American War : A Historical Dictionary* (Lanham, Md. ; London: Scarecrow Press, 1998), article on 'Press – United States'.

<sup>6</sup> This is from a church lecture of 21 November, 1899. Quoted in James Ford Rhodes, *The McKinley and Roosevelt Administrations, 1897-1909* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1922), p.106-7; and in Clodualdo Del Mundo, *Native Resistance : Philippine Cinema and Colonialism, 1898-1941* (Malate: De La Salle University Press, 1998), p.9-10. McKinley didn't mention that one other possibility had been seriously considered in 1898: to offer the islands to Great Britain. See Charles E. Howe, 'The Disposition of the Philippines', *National Geographic*, June 1898. which is taken from an article in *The Financial Review*, 27 May, and see Oscar M. Alfonso, *Theodore Roosevelt and the Philippines, 1897-1909* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1970), p.74-5. One contributor to *The Atlantic* magazine in 1898 wrote: 'we want no "colonies"... ...The nature of our institutions forbids that we should set up any form of government except one that at the earliest possible moment shall become self-government... We cannot leave the people of these islands either to their own fate, or to the mercy of the now defeated and disorganized Spanish rule, or yet to the mercy of any predatory nation that might seize them. We are become responsible for their development.' Walter Hines Page, 'The End of the War, and After', in *119 Years of the Atlantic*, edited by Louise Desaulniers: Little, Brown and Co., 1977 [1898]), p.187-8.

<sup>7</sup> Protestant missionaries started arriving even as the war was still being fought, and soon began setting up missions; interestingly, as early as the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century these organisations were using film as a means to proselytise. I will cover this theme in a future article.

<sup>8</sup> One expert noted the 'thousands of miles of virgin forests' in the islands, with varieties of timber 'eagerly sought for by merchants from China'. Ramon Reyes Lala, *The Philippine Islands* (New York: Continental Publishing Company, 1899), p.251-2. See also the same author's article in *Success*, 11 Nov 1899, p.827. Lala, though a Filipino, opposed Aguinaldo, and supported the US takeover up to a point, as did a number of his countrymen (in Negros for example), though the pro-Americans were probably a minority across the entire island group.

<sup>9</sup> Albert Jeremiah Beveridge, Senator for Indiana, in a speech to the Senate, 9 Jan 1900. *Congressional Record*, vol.33, p.705. See also *History Today* Aug 1992, p.46. O.P. Austin, 'Our New Possessions and the Interest They Are Exciting', *National Geographic*, Jan 1900: this stressed that the islands' economy complemented that of the US, by providing tropical products which America didn't itself produce, and which were then costing \$250 million annually to import. Some more recent historians also stress the business interests which may have encouraged intervention. See Angel Velasco Shaw and Luis Francia, eds., *Vestiges of*

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*War : The Philippine-American War and the Aftermath of an Imperial Dream, 1899-1999* (New York: New York University Press, 2000).

<sup>10</sup> Michael Meyers Shoemaker, *Quaint Corners of Ancient Empires : Southern India, Burma and Manila* (New York ; London: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1899), p.109, 156-7, 183.

<sup>11</sup> See Jim Zwick, *Mark Twain's Weapons of Satire: Anti-Imperialist Writings on the Philippine-American War* (Syracuse University Press, 1992).

<sup>12</sup> Article on the Philippines in the *Encyclopaedia Americana*.

<sup>13</sup> The Filipino government proclaimed its constitution on 27 January 1899. Information from Library of Congress website, etc.

<sup>14</sup> For example see the cover of LW 9 June 1898, which depicts Uncle Sam taking a close look at the apparently insignificant Philippine islands, saying 'Guess I'll keep 'em! '.

<sup>15</sup> Kiernan, *European Empires from Conquest to Collapse : 1815-1960*, p.117. Moorfield Storey and Marcial P. Lichauco, *The Conquest of the Philippines by the United States, 1898-1925* (New York ; London: G. P. Putnam's sons, 1926), p.94-7. This calls the decision to attack the Filipinos on 5 Feb 'an act of usurpation', as war had not been declared by the US Congress. On the other hand the Americans would have argued that, by the treaty of Paris, Spain had sold the country to the USA, and the latter therefore had a right to exercise control.

<sup>16</sup> Many Filipinos these days believe that the Americans never had a right to rule their country, therefore the conflict was really a war proper, between two nations, and not a mere insurrection. Brian Linn, for a variety of reasons which he explains, calls it simply the Philippine War.

<sup>17</sup> The policy was renamed 'hearts and minds' in Vietnam, though was not implemented nearly as effectively as during the Philippine War.

<sup>18</sup> As in the Cuban war, American soldiers in the Philippines were sometimes, ironically, met by better armed adversaries: in some battles half the Filipinos had Mauser rifles with smokeless powder, while the Americans had the inaccurate 1873 Springfield rifles, using old-fashioned smoky powder. See Ralli, 'Campaigning in the Philippines', p.232. Interestingly some American troops were still using volley firing in this campaign, whereas the Filipinos and even the Spanish practiced free firing. (Ralli, p.166.)

<sup>19</sup> A Spanish officer Salcedo played a crucial role in this operation. See David Haward Bain, *Sitting in Darkness : Americans in the Philippines* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1986). For a brief and readable account of Funston's role in the events, see Mark C. Carnes, 'Little Colonel Funston', *American Heritage* 49, no. 5, Sep 1998.; and for a good account of his considerable abilities as a soldier and commander, see chapter 6 of Thomas W. Crouch, *A Leader of Volunteers: Frederick Funston and the 20th Kansas in the Philippines, 1898-1899* (Lawrence, KS: Coronado Press, 1984).

<sup>20</sup> By that time the US had also acquired Puerto Rico and Guam from Spain, was effectively in charge in Cuba, and had annexed Hawaii.

<sup>21</sup> My main figures are taken from Micheal Clodfelter, *Warfare and Armed Conflicts : A Statistical Reference to Casualty and Other Figures, 1618-1991* (Jefferson, N.C. ; McFarland, 1992), p.420. The 4,000 American deaths compares with only 385 killed in action during the preceding war with Spain, and this is a relatively low figure given the major task of pacification. Though over 126,000 US troops were to serve in the Philippines altogether, only a fraction of this number were committed to the field at any one time. Some people estimate that as a result of privation and disease partly brought on by the conflict, including a devastating cholera outbreak, as many as 200,000 Filipinos died, though this figure has been disputed in recent historical studies. See the discussion of Filipino deaths during the war in Bruce Gordon, 'Mass Deaths in the Phil-Am War', *Bulletin of the American Historical Collection* 32/2, no. 127, Apr-June 2004.

<sup>22</sup> Linn, *The Philippine War, 1899-1902*, p.132-36. Another journalist present was Arthur J. Pierce who went through the northern campaign with Generals Lawton and Young: see HW 28 Apr 1900, p.398, including illustration. Berner states that 'fewer than 30 correspondents made it to the Philippines', most from 1899, though it's not clear what period this covers. Brad K. Berner, *The Spanish-American War : A Historical Dictionary* (Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 1998), p.90.

<sup>23</sup> As the first troops left for the Philippines, the Assnt. Secretary of War sent a telegram to the commander of the expedition, Gen. Merritt, stating that Merritt was authorised by the Secretary of War to allow 'not exceeding six correspondents of the press to accompany your expedition to Manila at their expense if the accomodations will permit and their presence will

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not impede or endanger the success of military operations'. Telegram 24 May 1898, G.D. Meiklejohn, Assistant Secy. of War to Maj-Gen. Wesley Merritt, San Francisco. National Archives, Washington: RG 107/E.80/3741.

<sup>24</sup> Linn, *The Philippine War, 1899-1902*, p.133-34.

<sup>25</sup> LW 18 May 1899, p.394-5. The same report relates that an unnamed young lady journalist who specialised in stepping out with officers from Dewey's fleet, possibly as a means of gaining information.

<sup>26</sup> 'War Correspondents', *The Spectator*, 22 July 1899, p.114-115. See also: Ora Williams, *Oriental America : Official and Authentic Records of the Dealings of the United States with the Natives of Luzon and Their Former Rulers* (Oriental America, 1899), p.126-135. Storey and Lichauco, *The Conquest of the Philippines by the United States, 1898-1925*, p.98- . William Thaddeus Sexton, *Soldiers in the Philippines: A History of the Insurrection* (Washington: Infantry Journal, 1944), p.132.

<sup>27</sup> Robert John Wilkinson-Latham, *From Our Special Correspondent : Victorian War Correspondents and Their Campaigns* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1979), p.219. The signatories included Charles E. Fripp for the *Graphic*.

<sup>28</sup> Linn, *The Philippine War, 1899-1902*, p.132-36. For more on censorship, see Leon Wolff, *Little Brown Brother : How the United States Purchased and Pacified the Philippines* (Singapore ; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1960), p.241, 262-5, 275.

<sup>29</sup> Christopher A. Vaughan, 'The "Discovery" of the Philippines by the U.S. Press, 1898-1902', *The Historian* 57, Winter 1994. This interesting, but in parts inaccurate, article examines coverage of the war in publications such as *Munsey's Magazine*, the *Literary Digest* and the newspaper press.

<sup>30</sup> Edward Stratemeyer was the author of both *Under MacArthur in Luzon, or Last Battles in the Philippines* and *Under Otis in the Philippines, or A Young Officer in the Tropics*. At least one of these was in print through to the 1930s.

<sup>31</sup> 'Philippine War pictures exhibited by the famous Vereschagin', *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, 5 Jan 1902, p.6.

<sup>32</sup> Karl Irving Faust, *Campaigning in the Philippines* (San Francisco: Hicks-Judd Co., 1899). Several versions of this were published. In the future I hope to publish an article about photography during this campaign.

<sup>33</sup> Rob Kroes and Michael P. Malone, eds., *The American West, as Seen by Europeans and Americans* (Amsterdam: Free University Press, 1989), p.269.

<sup>34</sup> In December 1894 a 'ciclorama' illustrated 'the wars of Melilla and Mindanao'. See José Caballero Rodríguez, *Historia Gráfica del Cine en Mérida, 1898-1998* (Mérida (Badajoz): Editora Regional de Extremadura, 1999), p.35.

<sup>35</sup> Clodualdo Del Mundo, 'The "Philopene" through Gringo Eyes: the Colonisation of the Philippines in Early American Cinema and Other Entertainment Forms, 1898-1904', in *Celebrating 1895: the Centenary of Cinema*, edited by J. Fullerton (Sydney: John Libbey, 1998), p.212-222. Del Mundo makes valid points and some less convincing ones. Among the latter are his discussion of the songs of this period about the Philippines, where he observes that the majority are about Philippine women and that they demean the Filipinos as 'an inferior Other'. Yet the trend in sentimental titles such as 'Ma Filipina Babe' could be interpreted as *admiration* of the beauty of the country's women, and such an admiring tone has been a regular theme in descriptive literature about the Philippines. For example, a 1925 book about the islands has a chapter entitled 'The Fair Filipina', and is a peon of praise to Filipinas for their beauty, grace and talents; though Del Mundo might argue that such praise is itself somewhat patronising, given the colonial situation. Frank G. Carpenter, *Through the Philippines and Hawaii* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Page, 1925).

<sup>36</sup> The theme of these human displays has been covered in several works of cultural studies, including Benito M. Vergara, *Displaying Filipinos : Photography and Colonialism in Early 20th Century Philippines* ([Quezon City]: University of the Philippines Press, 1995), though this book has been criticised for its excessive use of the concept of 'the Other', which in the opinion of one critic, perpetuates a patronising attitude to Filipinos. See Lisa Cariño Ito, 'Book Reviews', *Philippine Collegian*, 23 November, 1998: at [www.librarylink.org.ph](http://www.librarylink.org.ph). These displayed Filipinos are dealt with in a documentary from the 1990s, *Savage Acts: Wars, Fairs and Empire*.

<sup>37</sup> David Nasaw, *Going Out : The Rise and Fall of Public Amusements* (Cambridge, Mass. ; London: Harvard University Press, 1999), p.75.

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<sup>38</sup> The former was shot 25 May 1898. The latter was copyrighted in June 1898, and survives. It shows the troops going up the gangplank, shot over the heads of onlookers, with jump cuts to cover different stages of the embarkation. White and Blechynden shot four films in the city of US troops for the Philippines. See Musser, *Edison Motion Pictures... Filmography*, #574-7. One of the pioneers of the film business in San Francisco, George Breck, later recalled that the departure of the First California Volunteers from the city – heading for Manila – was filmed by a mechanic called Wright, using a camera of his own construction. See 'George Breck reminiscent', *MPW* 10 July 1915, p.241. This either refers to one of the Edison films or might be an additional title.

<sup>39</sup> A returning soldier noted that hardly anyone was in San Francisco to welcome their troop ship back from the war in August 1900, in marked contrast to the crowds there for their departure from the city almost two years earlier. Needom N. Freeman, *A Soldier in the Philippines* (New York: Tennyson Neely, c1901), p.103-4. Though del Mundo mentions a couple of films of returning troops, it is unclear when they were made and by whom.

<sup>40</sup> John A. Lent, *The Asian Film Industry* (Bromley: Christopher Helm, 1990), p.150. Ramos had also given the first film shows in the Philippines.

<sup>41</sup> The filming may have been related to the nationalist struggle, rather than the Philippine War. More information about Ramos' career in the Spanish military has recently come to light, due to the researches of Nick Deocampo. Another interesting figure in the early days was a certain 'Colonel' Johnson, 'an ex-hotel keeper of Shanghai, who was running a cinematograph show' and became involved in the war on the Philippine side. So states Dean C. Worcester, *The Philippines Past and Present* (London: Mills and Boon, Limited, 1914).

<sup>42</sup> *Delmarvia Star* (Wilmington) 24 Sep 1899, p.8. Cited in Elbert Chance, 'The Motion Picture Comes to Wilmington', *Delaware History* 24, no. 4 (Fall/Winter 1991-2), p.232. I cannot trace Butler in any newspaper index, nor in the New York *World* from 22 to 24 September. There were two battles of Manila: the first occurred 13 Aug 1898 and the second from 6 to 8 Feb 1899.

<sup>43</sup> F.M. Prescott, 'New Films', catalogue supplement, 20 Nov 1899. On Musser, *Motion Picture Catalogs... Microfilm Edition*. The titles were: *Troops from Several States Marching in Manila*, *Regiments of Several States Drilling in Manila*, *Marines and Sailors Entering Manila*, *Artillery Training in Manila*, *Philippine War Dance* (the latter was also released by Lubin, and Holmes' *Bamboo Dancers* could be the same film).

<sup>44</sup> The films were shown by Prof. William A. Reed, with his Edison Vitagraph machine ('Edison's Latest Moving Picture Machine') and included one scene from Cuba. See Sylvester Quinn Breard, 'A History of the Motion Pictures in New Orleans, 1896-1908,' M.A., Louisiana State University, 1951, p.72-73. Reported in the *Picayune*, 30 April 1899, p.9 and 8 May, 1899, p.3.

<sup>45</sup> The theatrical trade paper *New York Clipper* includes Lubin Manufacturing Company advertisements for some Philippine War films; however, these films do not survive in the Paper Print Collection. These Lubin films and similar films produced or distributed by other companies might have been staged scenes, shot in the United States. They could have been imitative of the existing Edison films since during this period it was commonplace to pirate, imitate and copy each other's work; and Lubin especially was notorious for this practice.

<sup>46</sup> Oscar B. Depue had been a skilled lantern projectionist, which is how Holmes had met him, probably in 1893. Burton Holmes, *The World Is Mine* (Murray & Gee, 1953), p.141. This is a rather disappointing volume as far as the late 1890s to 1914 is concerned, as Holmes skates over this period of his work in a single short chapter (p.199-201), presumably because he had related these incidents in his published travelogues. Holmes' biographer, Caldwell (see below) gives only a little more on this period.

<sup>47</sup> See [www.burtonholmes.org](http://www.burtonholmes.org)

<sup>48</sup> In his published lecture about the Philippine experiences he states that he set off on the anniversary of Dewey's victory, which was 1 May. See 'Manila' section in volume 5 of *The Burton Holmes Lectures* (Battle Creek, Michigan: Little Preston Co., 1901), p.119. Holmes travelled via Japan as well as Hong Kong.

<sup>49</sup> 'Chronophotographe Demenÿ' was the French term and 'Chrono' the British. The shots he took of the Admiral are mentioned in a report of Holmes' lecture, 'Manila and the Philippines', *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* 30 Dec 1899, p.14, col.2. Citation courtesy Charles Musser. For China filming details (including problems of filming in the streets) see: 'Manila' section in volume 5 of *The Burton Holmes Lectures*, p.140, 142, 155, 172-86. Holmes had two other cameras, he

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tells us, for this assignment, probably meaning stills cameras, one of which was operated by his assistant, Ah Kee.

<sup>50</sup> 'Manila' section in volume 5 of *The Burton Holmes Lectures*, p.242-6.

<sup>51</sup> 'Manila' section in volume 5 of *The Burton Holmes Lectures*, p.260, 284, 287, in which some frames of the cock-fight are reproduced. It was later released as *Filipino Cockfight*, with a couple of other scenics, *Bamboo Dancers* and *Woman Washing Clothes by the River*. See Nick Deocampo, *Cine : Spanish Influences on Early Cinema in the Philippines* (Quezon City; Manila: National Commission for Culture and the Arts, 2003). Both Rosenthal and Bonine made films of cockfights while in the country: *Cock Fighting in the Phillipines* [sic] (1901) and *A Filipino Cockfight* (1902), respectively.

<sup>52</sup> Volume 5 of *The Burton Holmes Lectures*, p.268.

<sup>53</sup> Baliuag is about 50 kilometres north-north-west of Manila. As well as taking moving images during this stay in Baliuag, Holmes also took still photographs. One of these stills shows a church in the town turned into a barracks for US troops. See Genoa Caldwell, *The Man Who Photographed the World: Burton Holmes Travelogues 1886-1938* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1977), p.70.

<sup>54</sup> Holmes states that this was the Third Infantry. I can find no such regiment serving in the PI. I suggest he means the Thirty-Fifth Infantry, which was indeed quartered Baliuag, headed by Colonel E.H. Plummer. See Charles F. Baker and James J. Erwin, *A History of the Thirtieth Infantry, U.S. Volunteers in the Philippine Insurrection, 1899-1901* ([Clarkston, Wash.]: [Press of the Clarkston Herald], 1934), p.99. This detail comes from a useful list of the US regiments who fought in the Philippines, given on p.98-102.

<sup>55</sup> 'Manila' section in volume 5 of *The Burton Holmes Lectures*, p.315-316. The shot of reinforcements dashing forward from the town is possibly illustrated on p.320 as 'Fourth Cavalry'.

<sup>56</sup> Without the telegraph, claimed General MacArthur, the Army could not have pacified the Philippines with so few soldiers. Given this importance, commanders were 'ruthless with guerrillas who damaged the lines', and such people might be shot on sight in some areas. Brian McAllister Linn, *The Philippine War, 1899-1902*, p.203, 237-38.

<sup>57</sup> 'Manila' section in volume 5 of *The Burton Holmes Lectures*, p.320-321. He meant 'site' rather than 'cite'. The burning or threatened burning of houses while brutal, was effective in gaining cooperation, and was a tactic used by both sides in the war. Linn, *Ibid*, p.220-24.

<sup>58</sup> While reprisals against civilians have always played a part in warfare, armies and authorities try to downplay them; such scenes are a rarity in early war films.

<sup>59</sup> 'Manila' section in volume 5 of *The Burton Holmes Lectures*, p.336.

<sup>60</sup> To be fair, the full content of his lecture is not quite clear from the article's description, and he did discuss to some extent 'the front' where US troops were facing the insurgents. 'Manila and the Philippines', *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, op. cit.

<sup>61</sup> Photographs from the 1913 trip survive and are viewable at [www.burtonholmes.org](http://www.burtonholmes.org). See also 'How Burton Holmes shot Aguinaldo', *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, Editorial and Dramatic section, 28 June 1914, p.3. Cited in Musser and Nelson, *High-Class Moving Pictures*, p.346.

<sup>62</sup> As mentioned earlier, the American photographer James Ricalton, like Ackerman, also went first to the Philippines and then China. According to Will Day, Rosenthal went from Hong Kong to the Philippines after filming the post Boxer campaign. Will Day MSS, 'Joe Rosenthal' (8<sup>th</sup> page), in Cinémathèque française.

<sup>63</sup> Warwick Trading Co. 1901 catalogue supplement, c. Aug 1901, p.237-241. The films are also listed in the 1902 WTC catalogue, p.80 etc. Another film, *Gen. Otis and His Troops in the Philippines* of 75 ft. appears in *Lubin's Films* catalogue of January 1903, which may be a re-titled Rosenthal film, *The 20th Infantry U.S.A. ("Otis's Pets") Marching Through a Banana Grove*.

<sup>64</sup> Four months is claimed in 'Round the World with a Camera', *Bioscope* 17 Dec 1908, p.22. Three months is stated in Will Day MSS, 'Joe Rosenthal' (8<sup>th</sup> page), in Cinémathèque française, which adds that from the Philippines he went to Hong Kong and from there to Australia for the Commonwealth celebrations, May 1901.

<sup>65</sup> The latter five films were: *The 7th Artillery U.S.A. Charging*, *The 7th Artillery U.S.A. In Action*, *The 4th Cavalry U.S.A. Repelling Flank Attack*, *The Ilocano Scouts Charging the Enemy's Entrenchments*, *The Charge of the Macabebe Scouts*.

<sup>66</sup> Linn notes: 'By the war's end, over 15,000 Filipinos served in officially recognized Scout or constabulary units and did quite well under American officers...' Brian McAllister Linn, 'The

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Philippines: Nationbuilding and Pacification', *Military Review*, March-April 2005. See also John Bancroft Devins, *An Observer in the Philippines; or Life in Our New Possessions* (Boston: American Tract Society, 1905), chapter 35, 'Exhibit at St. Louis'. He notes that four of the by-then 50 companies of 'Philippine Scouts' were represented at the exhibit: the Macabebes, Ilocanos, Tagalogs and Visayans. Some scouts were filmed in June 1904 when they were in America: *Filipino Scouts, Musical Drill, St. Louis Exposition* (AM&B).

<sup>67</sup> Wilcox includes an article on the Macabebe scouts, which notes that they were organised in September 1899, and at the time of writing there were five companies, numbering about 600 men in all. Marrion Wilcox, *Harper's History of the War in the Philippines* (New York & London: Harper, 1900), p.333. From this it would seem that the unit which Rosenthal filmed was a late starter.

<sup>68</sup> The town Macabebe is on the Pampanga Grande river, about 25 miles north-west of Manila, says the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1911 edition, vol. 17. Sexton says the Macabebes lived in an area east of Calumpit. See William T. Sexton, *Soldiers in the Philippines: A History of the Insurrection* (Washington: Infantry Journal, 1944), p.131-2. The Macabebes were somewhat outside the run of Philippine society, for their ancestors had supposedly been brought by the Spaniards from Mexico, and later generations served in the Spanish army. Several contemporary writers were full of praise for the Macabebes. See Freeman, *A Soldier in the Philippines*, p.58. More recent reassessments paint them as a nasty lot. See Glenn Anthony May, *A Past Recovered* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1987), p.135, 146-7. Nasty but effective in serving the Americans. It was a Macabebe unit which was instrumental in Colonel Funston's audacious and successful raid to capture Aguinaldo in March 1901, an event which finally tipped the war in America's favour. The Warwick catalogue reminds potential purchasers of their film, *The Charge of the Macabebe Scouts*, of the important role of the Macabebe scouts in this capture. For more on the Macabebes, see Linn, *The Philippine War, 1899-1902*, p.128, 216, 260.

<sup>69</sup> Will Day stated, 'Much courtesy and kindness was shown during this campaign to this camera operator...' (i.e. Rosenthal). Will Day MSS, 'Joe Rosenthal' (8<sup>th</sup> page), in Cinémathèque française.

<sup>70</sup> The founders were Maguire and Baucus, and the London-based company was run by Charles Urban – all were Americans.

<sup>71</sup> Their lengths vary from 50 ft. to 150 ft., with the staged films tending to the longer lengths.

<sup>72</sup> A still which may be from this film is reproduced on p.241 of the Warwick catalogue.

<sup>73</sup> A copy of this photograph, and others taken in the Philippines, is included in the Rosenthal collection in the BFI. These photographs seem to have been largely Rosenthal's own private collection, rather than having been taken specifically for the Company.

<sup>74</sup> Most print journalists assigned to the Philippines were also in favour of assimilation, and if they voiced any criticism it was directed at *how* the war was run, not whether. Downright anti-war opinion was generally confined to the anti-Imperialists based in America.

<sup>75</sup> Kemp Niver and the AFI catalogue call him 'Raymond'. I have been unable to discover the reason or source for this misinformation.

<sup>76</sup> Archival sources which I have consulted include military records at the National Archives, Washington; Biograph materials located in the Museum of Modern Art, New York and at the Seaver Center, Los Angeles. I was kindly sent material from local collections in Syracuse, NY: by Onondaga County Public Library (OCPL) and the Onondaga Historical Association (OHA). The most crucial Biograph materials are located at MoMA: the company's 'Picture Catalogue', the sample frame-clipping collection, and the company's production register (the former two are on Musser, *Motion Picture Catalogs... Microfilm Edition*, Reel 2. A xerox of the Biograph register is held in LoC-MBRS.

<sup>77</sup> Frames from this 10-inch gun being fired are reproduced in Albert A. Hopkins, *Magic, Stage Illusions...* (NY: Scientific American, 1898) p.505. Frames from one of the 11 films of the Thirteenth Infantry – a blanket tossing scene – are reproduced in *Scientific American*, 17 April 1897, p.249.

<sup>78</sup> Correspondence from Alger dated 8 Oct 1897 and Wheeler 22 Oct 1898. These letters were seen at Frank J. Marion's home by Gordon Hendricks who transcribed them on 19 Dec 1957. As it is probable that Wheeler's letter immediately followed Alger's, the year of 1898 may be a mis-transcription by Hendricks for 1897. See Gordon Hendricks collection, Series 2, box 4, folder 3, 'Biography' (NMAH). Wheeler was with the 4<sup>th</sup> Army Corps.

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<sup>79</sup> See 'Naval warfare pictures exhibited', *Denver Republican*, 10 May 1898; and Biograph frame-clipping collection: nos.2686-92 of US Navy Dept., and 2710-13 and 2720-35 of recruiting for the Navy.

<sup>80</sup> *Post Standard* (Syracuse) 18 Dec 1899.

<sup>81</sup> Hendricks Collection, series 2, box 4, folder 3, 'Biography', (NMAH).

<sup>82</sup> Charles Musser uses the term 'cameraman system' to describe the arrangement in which a cameraman was the prime member of a filming unit, with a producer to provide editorial input. The latter role was sometimes played by a journalist. Musser, *Emergence*, p.265. In the case of Ackerman, Biograph might have thought that his journalistic background provided the necessary editorial input, and that actuality camerawork was a relatively simple additional skill to acquire.

<sup>83</sup> Niver suggests that Ackerman was actually working for the company from June. See Kemp Niver, *Biograph Bulletins, 1896-1908* (Los Angeles: Locare Research Group, 1971) cited in McKernan/Herbert, *Who's Who*.

<sup>84</sup> 'Moving Pictures of War', *Mail and Express* (NY) 25 June 1900. I found this and some of the other newspaper articles about Ackerman's filming work, which I cite below, in a scrapbook of Biograph cuttings held in the Seaver Center, Los Angeles.

<sup>85</sup> The company had close contacts with the higher reaches of the Republican Party and, during the 1896 presidential campaign had made films of McKinley which presented the candidate in a positive light. Cordial relations continued with the administration in succeeding years. On 15 April 1898 H.N. Marvin sent some newspaper clippings to the White House, the contents of which McKinley's secretary acknowledged as 'very gratifying to the President'. It is not known what the clippings comprised, but probably they were comments on films of the President. The letter of acknowledgement (of 18 April, addressed to Marvin at 841 Broadway, NY) is in *William McKinley Papers*, series 2, reel 28, vol.115.

<sup>86</sup> National Archives, Washington: RG 107/E.80/#3635. Part of this passage was underlined by a War Department official. That the Biograph company suggested the filming project to the US War Department is confirmed in an article about Ackerman's Philippines work: '...Some months ago the American Mutoscope and Biograph Company suggested to the Secretary of War and to Adjutant-Gen. Corbin that a series of moving pictures be taken in the Philippines, so that the exact movements and actions of the armies could be reproduced with lifelike faithfulness in the future for the use of the department.' 'Moving Pictures of War', *Mail and Express* 25 June 1900. The War Department worked closely with the Adjutant General's office, which is why this letter and other correspondence that I cite was filed in the records of the latter department, at RG 107.

<sup>87</sup> Corbin and Secretary of War, Elihu Root, were relatively new appointments. They were highly efficient men, especially Root, who during his career at the War Department revolutionised the American military, turning it into an efficient force after the fiasco of the Cuban campaign. Corbin and Root apparently had no trouble with appropriating new media including film, for the US Army at this time was very much a modern and forward-looking organisation, progressive and deft at public relations. Peter Karsten, 'Armed Progressives: The Military Reorganizes for the American Century', in *Building the Organizational Society*, edited by Jerry Israel (New York: Free Press, 1972): cited by John M. Gates.

<sup>88</sup> Under section 3744 of the 'Revised Statutes' such signature for Government contracts was ruled mandatory by the Supreme Court. This point was made in relation to the AM&B proposal by the Judge-Advocate General in an endorsement written in the file. Root's letter was dated 7 September. National Archives, Washington: RG 107/E.80/#3635.

<sup>89</sup> Root sent a copy of the note for Ackerman to present to Shafter upon his arrival in San Francisco.

<sup>90</sup> Charles F. Baker and James J. Erwin, *A History of the Thirtieth Infantry*, op. cit., p.99.

<sup>91</sup> He started his journey on the night of 16 September to New York (presumably travelling from Syracuse), according to one article: 'Bound around the world', *Post Standard* (Syracuse) 17 Sep 1899. Courtesy OHA. Re the *Sheridan* journey, see C. Fred Ackerman, 'How brave young Logan died', *LW* 13 Jan 1900, p.30. Commercial liners in the early 1920s (the only period for which I have data) were taking about a month from Manila to San Francisco, via China. One source states that he landed in Manila on 30 September. 'Pictures that will be historic', *LW* 13 Jan 1900, p.18. Actually this was the date he left San Francisco.

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<sup>92</sup> This was a three pronged advance through Luzon, as I describe below, and began 6 November. Edwin Wildman, 'Crushing Aguinaldo', LW 25 November 1899, p.419. Perhaps the source giving his arrival date of 30 September meant 30 October?

<sup>93</sup> The two main correspondents for *Leslie's Weekly* (LW) in the Philippines were artist Sydney Adamson, who drew pictures and also wrote reports for the magazine, and Ackerman himself, who was described as, 'a photographic artist and correspondent of recognized standing'. LW 10 Feb 1900, p.102. Adamson was of British nationality says LW 3 Nov 1900, p.332 (see p.318 for more on Adamson). Like Ackerman, the following year Adamson reported on the Boxer conflict in China, sent by *Leslie's* from the Philippines with a Mr R. van Bergen. LW 7 July 1900, p.2.

<sup>94</sup> Photographs credited to Biograph appear in *Leslie's* from as early as 9 March 1899. Incidentally, Ackerman's stills and their captions in *Leslie's* are sometimes a valuable additional guide to what and where he filmed.

<sup>95</sup> As I mentioned above, Marvin had asked the War Department for 'the officers in charge to extend such reasonable facilities for taking pictures as they can consistently do'.

<sup>96</sup> 'Moving Pictures of War', *Mail and Express*, 25 June 1900. As if to acknowledge his debt to this supply department, one of Ackerman's films, *Unloading Lighters, Manila* was described in the catalogue as, 'Illustrating the work in the Quartermaster's Department'. General Elwell Otis was the US commander in the Philippines through 1899, but was thought unsuited to the irregular warfare which developed in the Philippines by late 1899, and was recalled in May 1900 (about the same time Ackerman too departed, coincidentally). See entry on 'Philippines Insurrection' in R. Holmes, ed. *The Oxford Companion to Military History* (Oxford: OUP, 2001).

<sup>97</sup> The first of his films for which we have an exact date were dated as shot on 1 November, though that might actually mean any date in November.

<sup>98</sup> One article states that: 'Mr. Ackerman spent nearly eight months with the American army' ('Mr Ackerman took pictures', *Syracuse Journal* 13 July 1900.) Also giving the 'nearly 8 months' figure is the *Post-Standard* of 14 July 1900. Courtesy OCPL and OHA. Charles Musser states that Ackerman was filming in the Philippines from November 1899 to early March 1900, which would seem correct, though Ackerman's complete stay, including a non-filming period at the end, was probably a little longer. Musser, *Emergence*, p.264-5.

<sup>99</sup> According to one article he 'took over fifty pictures': see 'C. Fred Ackerman is to lecture', *Post Standard* (Syracuse) 14 July 1900, p.6. Another article claimed that he returned with 'nearly fifty different views'. 'Moving Pictures of War', *Mail and Express* (New York) 25 June 1900. Some of the details I have found for Ackerman's films are from Biograph's production register. The first group was listed (as received) 21 December 1899, consisting of one film of Honolulu and five films made in Manila. More listings of Philippine films followed in 1900: ten films on 28 Feb, nine on 22-23 March, and seventeen on 8-10 May. Frames from these Philippine War films are also in the Biograph clippings collection in MoMA, nos.1349-53, 1383-90, 1399-1404, 1448-1464.

<sup>100</sup> 'Pictures that will be historic', LW 13 Jan 1900, p.18.

<sup>101</sup> 'Stories of the...', *Post Standard* (Syracuse) 18 Dec 1899. Courtesy OHA. The article adds that Ackerman had written to friends that he'd seen enough interesting things 'to fill a large book'. Sadly though, this book never seems to have materialised.

<sup>102</sup> 'Moving Pictures of War', *Mail and Express* 25 June 1900.

<sup>103</sup> 'The first biograph camera used in this country ... weighed a ton altogether. ... Next came an electric camera of one-fourth the weight of its predecessor.' From Roy L. McCardell, 'Pictures That Show Motion', *Everybody's Magazine* 5, August 1901, p.231. Two photographs in the Hendricks Collection show this second 'portable camera' which was used on their roof stage in New York before 1900. Though smaller than its predecessor, it is still large, a box in the shape of a cube, about 450 cm. each side. (Hendricks Collection, Series 2, Box 3, folder 7, '2<sup>nd</sup> Camera'. There is a similar photograph, but with operator, in folder 8 'Misc Cameras'.) George Eastman House and the Cinémathèque française may hold models of these smaller cameras. The George Eastman House Biograph camera is illustrated in Raymond Fielding, *A Technological History of Motion Pictures and Television* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967) p.106. It seems to be similar to a Biograph held in the Cinémathèque française, which weighs 110 lbs and is about 20" x 14" x 16" (50 x 35 x 39 cm): see item 1034 in Laurent Mannoni, *Le Mouvement Continué* (Paris: CF, 1996). Strangely this looks as if it has a hand-crank, and is marked 'Kruger', which may refer to the filming of President Kruger when he



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came to Europe from South Africa in November 1900. Biograph's sub-100 lb hand camera was introduced in late 1900.

<sup>104</sup> The average length of Ackerman's Philippine-shot films, where the footage is given, is as follows: for his 17 half-load films, approx 154 ft.; for his 24 full-load films: approx 309 ft. The release length of 35mm film is respectively in the mid 20's or the low 50's measured in feet. That is a little less than a sixth of the original lengths, this vast difference being partly because the 35 mm format is physically smaller, but also because, I surmise, these versions may have been step-printed from the Biograph large-format originals, missing out every other frame, which would enable projection at a more standard rate of 15 to 20 fps. The Biograph film's image area was four times larger than standard 35mm film, and the film was run through the camera at 30 or 40 fps – double the normal frame rate for that date. Bitzer and McCardell, op. cit., claimed that Biograph films were taken at 320 ft/minute or 5 ft/sec. During the late 1890s the Biograph camera was usually loaded with between 150 and 200 feet, various sources tell us: Eugene Lauste said the camera film was usually about 160 ft long but might be thousands of feet long. ('The American Biograph', *Bristol Evening News*, 28 Aug 1897, p.3). Dickson's camera for filming the Worthing lifeboat had a load of 200 feet. ('Cinematographing at Worthing', *OMLJ*, vol.9, 1898, p.72). 'The ordinary length of a film is about 200 ft., but on the occasion of a Paris fire about 700 ft. were used.' [R.H. Mere, 'The Wonders of the Biograph', *Pearson's Magazine* 7 (Feb 1899), p.198]. The film in the camera is about 150 ft long, though 'length may be either greater or less than this'. [E.W. Mayo, 'The Making of Moving Pictures', *The Quaker* 6 (Oct 1899), p.466.] McCardell, op. cit., says 160 to 300 feet.

<sup>105</sup> The only one of Ackerman's films which is significantly longer is his film of Lawton's funeral, at over 400 feet, which was perhaps made this long by combining film loads together.

<sup>106</sup> 'The Biograph in the Philippines', *Boston Journal* 25 March 1900.

<sup>107</sup> The photograph is in LW 10 Feb 1900, p.113.

<sup>108</sup> For example, between January and April 1900, US forces had some 124 skirmishes with the Filipinos. Wilcox, *Harper's History of the War in the Philippines*, p.341. By April there were more than 63,000 US troops in the Philippines.

<sup>109</sup> Basic descriptions of what he did were published in two newspaper reports, and give some idea of the chronological order. 'Mr. Ackerman, after reaching the Philippines, went out with the Thirty-third Regiment and took a number of photographs. Then he was with Gen. Grant at Magalang and secured some valuable views. He was with the Twenty-fifth Colored Infantry at the time of their advance on Mount Arayat. He was with Gen. Bell's expedition through Pingisnan Province and over the mountains.' 'Moving Pictures of War', *NY Mail and Express* 25 June 1900. 'While with the Thirty-third regiment he got a number of interesting pictures and then joined Gen. Grant at Magalang. He was with the Thirty-third Infantry (colored), when they advanced on Mount Ariat, and witnessed the slaughter of the five American prisoners which was one of the most startling events of the campaign. He was with Gen. Bell's expedition through Pingisnan Province and over the mountains.' From 'Mr Ackerman took pictures', *Syracuse Journal*, 13 July 1900. Pangasinan was sometimes called 'Pingisnan' province at the time.

<sup>110</sup> He seems to have been with the Thirty-Third in Pangasinan too. One of his still photos shows 'Filipino trenches at San Jacinto, captured by the gallant Thirty-third Regiment'. (LW, 10 Feb p.114). San Jacinto lies a little inland, between Dagupan and San Fabian.

<sup>111</sup> LW 9 Feb 1899, p.112 has photographs of insurgent damage to the Manila-Dagupan railway, which, the writer reiterates, is the only railway in the islands. (It was built in 1892.)

<sup>112</sup> The unit was under Capt. H.G. Lenhauser, and the name Lenhauser (or Leaubaeuser) is mentioned in an article about Ackerman's work, 'Tales from the Philippines', *NY Telegram* 4 June 1900. Captain Lenhauser features in *Responding to an Alarm*, which Ackerman filmed in Magalang, probably in early 1900. Ackerman may have reported this story at second hand, for he was apparently in Manila at the time. See C. Fred Ackerman, 'How brave young Logan died', *LW* 13 Jan 1900, p.30. The by-line for this story reads 'Manila, November 17<sup>th</sup>, 1899'.

<sup>113</sup> He states Manila as his starting point in the *Boston Journal* article cited below.

<sup>114</sup> General Otis' strategy was to try to trap Aguinaldo between Dagupan and the Pampanga plain and prevent his escape to the mountains further north. Sexton, *Soldiers in the Philippines: A History of the Insurrection*, p.141-57. Sexton calls it 'an almost brilliant plan', while Cortes calls it 'clear, masterly, comprehensive'. [Rosario Mendoza Cortes, *Pangasinan, 1801-1900: The Beginnings of Modernization* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1990), p.104.] The three columns, under three Generals, would act as follows: 1. Lawton to move

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north through Nueva Ecija province, closing the mountain passes. 2. Wheaton to land from the sea near San Fabian and block escape to the Beguet mountains to the north. 3. MacArthur then to advance along the railway, and push Aguinaldo into Wheaton's and Lawton's forces. But, says Sexton, Lawton's task was too difficult, Wheaton was too cautious and so Aguinaldo escaped. This was during the middle part of the war, after it had become a guerrilla conflict but before the get-tough policies instigated by McKinley (through General MacArthur) after his re-election in November 1900, and I suggest was one of the most interesting periods in the conflict, though, strangely, the least discussed in the historical literature. For example, the Library of Congress chronology misses out the whole of 1900, as does one web account, 'Events of the War' at [www.geocities.com/Athens/Crete/9782/](http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Crete/9782/) [sic!]. This passes from the battle of Tirad Pass in November and December 1899 to the Battle of Lonoy in March of 1901, mentioning nothing in between. T. Agoncillo also glosses over early 1900. Teodoro A. Agoncillo and Milagros C. Guerrero, *History of the Filipino People* (Quezon City: R. P. Garcia Pub. Co, 1977). Linn, thankfully covers this period in some detail.

<sup>115</sup> San Fabian is in Pangasinan province. I originally supposed that Ackerman had made only one trip to Pangasinan, c Jan-Feb 1900. Now I believe that he made two trips to Pangasinan, one in November, another in February, for the following reasons: the February visit is proven by the filming dates in the Biograph register of at least half a dozen films that he shot there; the previous November visit is proven by the photograph of himself with Aguinaldo's family, who were captured at that time, and by the fact that in mid December it was reported that Ackerman had already been with Bell's regiment in the mountains of northern Luzon. ('Stories of the...', *Post Standard* (Syracuse) 18 Dec 1899.) Though Ackerman's disastrous journey by boat is not dated, I believe it was during the November visit, because that was when the American assault on San Fabian was launched, whereas by February the area was effectively under US control.

<sup>116</sup> On 6 November Wheaton's force, 2,500 strong, left for Lingayen Gulf and arrived on the 9th, while MacArthur's troops, the Seventeenth Infantry, advanced, clearing country between Angeles and Arayat, and on 20 November MacArthur entered Dagupan. (See Wilcox, *Harper's History of the War in the Philippines*.) On 7 November the Thirty-Third had landed near Dagupan, as Ackerman reported, though the cameraman presumably only joined them later. (C. Fred Ackerman, 'How brave young Logan died', *LW* 13 Jan 1900, p.30.) Incidentally, San Fabian was also a key location in the Second World War during the Japanese occupation: in January 1945 American forces landed at San Fabian, and the town became the scene of severe fighting. As in the 1900 campaign, the Dagupan to Manila route was the locus of the American effort, but in the 1940s they were headed toward Japanese-occupied Manila rather than spreading out from it.

<sup>117</sup> Both parts of this account are from 'The Biograph in the Philippines', *Boston Journal* 25 March 1900. Ackerman states in this article that he departed Manila 'two weeks ago', but the account probably dates from December, with a delayed publication in the Boston newspaper in March.

<sup>118</sup> The photograph of Ackerman is in *LW* 10 Feb 1900, p.113. The story about the capture in Carbaran is on p.106. (Aguinaldo himself was captured in March the following year).

<sup>119</sup> The Thirty-Third made the capture on 20 November. This information is given in: C. Fred Ackerman, 'Aguinaldo's son captured', *LW* 10 Feb 1900, p.106-7. By-line 'San Fabian, P.I., November 30<sup>th</sup>, 1899'. The capture was near Mangatarem, say other sources. Cortes says it was in Pozorrubio. (Cortes, *Pangasinan, 1801-1900: The Beginnings of Modernization*, p.109.) Most sources (e.g. Sexton, *Soldiers in the Philippines: A History of the Insurrection*, p.157-8) say only Aguinaldo's son and mother were captured. But a soldier in the Thirty-Third recorded that his unit captured Aguinaldo's 'wife and mother and child' some way out of San Fabian (and recovered some cash too), but he gives no date except indicating that it was sometime between 11 and 27 November. The family were taken into custody and were well treated. See William Oliver Trafton and William Henry Scott, *We Thought We Could Whip Them in Two Weeks* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1990), p.29.

<sup>120</sup> Then on Christmas day the Filipino forces under Aguinaldo, fleeing from the pursuing Americans, gave up their remaining women and children. Aguinaldo himself would remain free, though in remote hiding, for more than another year.

<sup>121</sup> C. Fred Ackerman, 'Brave Sergeant Green', *LW* 10 Feb 1900, p.107. In this article, Ackerman extols the courage and marksmanship of Green, a Sergeant in the Twenty-Fifth Infantry regiment. The story is by-lined, 'Bamban, P.I., December 2d, 1899'. Bamban, then

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the forward base for General Burt's Twenty-Fifth, was on the railway about 10 miles north of Angeles in Pampanga province.

<sup>122</sup> Linn, *The Philippine War, 1899-1902*, p.127. In 1899 the Americans employed over 100,000 Filipinos (the figure presumably including Chinese), says Linn, 'The Philippines: Nationbuilding and Pacification'. Photographs of Chinese drivers and coolies at the dock, taken from Ackerman's film, appeared in *Leslie's* – in Biograph scrapbook at Seaver Center.

<sup>123</sup> Agoncillo and Guerrero, *History of the Filipino People*, p.251. A description of the death and funeral of Lawton and photographs are in Wilcox, *Harper's History of the War in the Philippines*, p.325-31. A detailed description of the funeral and a photograph of it appear in Charles F. Gauvreau, *Reminiscences of the Spanish-American War in Cuba and the Philippines* (St. Albans, Vt.: Messenger Office, 1912), p.108-9.

<sup>124</sup> The Twenty-Fifth Infantry fought with distinction at El Caney, Cuba. The regiment were sent to the Philippines in August 1899, and engaged frequently with the enemy in many skirmishes. (Library of Congress information).

<sup>125</sup> According to one source ('Amusement notes', *Philadelphia Record* 10 May 1900, p.10) the advance on Ariat and finding of the prisoners occurred after the scene was filmed of the *Attack on Mt. Ariat* (see below).

<sup>126</sup> The expedition went to Ariat via Magalang, Ackerman tells us. Linn, *The Philippine War, 1899-1902*, p.270, suggests that the date was 5 January, and that the General was Servillano Aquino. See also *Correspondence Relating to the War with Spain and Conditions Growing out of the Same, Including the Insurrection in the Philippine Islands and the China Relief Expedition, between the Adjutant-General of the Army and Military Commanders in the United States, Cuba, Porto Rico, China and the Philippine Islands from April 15, 1898 to July 30, 1902, Etc* (Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., 1902). This mentions the problem of 'robber bands' in the Arayat area, and the finding of the five badly-treated American prisoners. Insurgents, sometimes called 'bandits' or 'brigands' by US forces, were said to be preying on the local people, as well as fighting the Americans. Wilcox, *Harper's History of the War in the Philippines*, p.337-338, 356.

<sup>127</sup> C.F. Ackerman, 'Avenging the bloody slaughter by the Filipinos of defenceless American prisoners', LW 14 Apr 1900, p.294-95. *Leslie's* also published nine of Ackerman's images (film frames) relating to the campaign, credited to AM&B, and principally concerned with the American attack on Filipino forces at Mt. Ariat, led by Gen. Grant and the Seventeenth and Twenty-Fifth Infantry. The frames published in this issue of *Leslie's* were presumably from Biograph films, though it is possible that some were actual still photographs that Ackerman may also have been taking. They included images of General Grant and the march on the mountain stronghold of the Filipinos, with the Seventeenth, Nineteenth (?) and Twenty-Fifth infantry and Third Artillery. In a note about their Battle of Mt Ariat film AM&B claimed that they had a certificate from Gen. Burt stating that 'the operator' (Ackerman) was the only civilian present at the attack to rescue the five US prisoners. See 'Amusement notes', *Philadelphia Record* 10 May 1900, p.10. Ackerman's reporting of this campaign was the most significant written work that he produced in the war, for he happened to be on hand for this significant news story.

<sup>128</sup> C. Fred Ackerman, 'Awful butchery by Filipinos of defenceless American prisoners', LW 14 April 1900, p.286, and photographs on p.294-5.

<sup>129</sup> Agoncillo and Guerrero, *History of the Filipino People*, p.259-262. Agoncillo shows commendable even-handedness in parts of his account, though in general he is pro-nationalist. Henry O. Thompson, Matthew Plowman, and Thomas Solevad Nielsen, *Inside the Fighting First : Papers of a Nebraska Private in the Philippine War* (Blair, Neb.: Lur Publications : Danish Immigrant Archive, 2001), p.113. This notes that the maiming of dead US soldiers by Filipino insurgents enraged the Americans, and Linn adds in his book that troops were particularly infuriated by the ill-treatment of fellow soldiers by the other side during this war. See Linn, *The Philippine War, 1899-1902*, p.221.

<sup>130</sup> According to dates entered in Biograph's register, on 8 January Ackerman filmed Gen. Grant in Pampanga in the process of 'inspecting the old market place at Angeles', and on 11 January filmed the Seventeenth Infantry near Dagupan in Pangasinan province (sometimes called 'Pingsinan' province at the time).

<sup>131</sup> Ackerman was at various times during this Pangasinan assignment with the Thirteenth, Seventeenth and Thirty-Sixth Infantry regiments. See 'Pictures that will be historic', LW 6 Jan 1900, p.18.

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<sup>132</sup> A photograph attributed to the Biograph Co. (presumably by Ackerman) depicting the aftermath of one of Bell's actions was in LW of 10 February, which, given the time required to mail a photograph back to the States, suggests that Ackerman might have been with Bell's unit from about mid January. This photograph shows 'Filipino artillery captured by Colonel Bell', LW 10 Feb, p.114.

<sup>133</sup> 'Pictures that will be historic', LW, op. cit.

<sup>134</sup> *Lieut. Howell's Light Battery D* was shot with the Sixth Artillery in La Loma, Blumentritt (today in Quezon City). Incidentally, this is where the Filipinos had first fought the Americans during this war.

<sup>135</sup> This was one sortie during an offensive in south-eastern Luzon from January 1900. Linn, *The Philippine War, 1899-1902*, p.162-69. The by-line of the article, 'Awful butchery by Filipinos of defenceless American prisoners', LW, op. cit., is 1 March in Magalang but this date/place combination may be a later attribution, as Magalang is a long way from south-eastern Luzon.

<sup>136</sup> 'Swearing to serve Uncle Sam', LW 16 Jun 1900, p.464; and "'Swearing in" Filipino officials', LW 16 Jun 1900, p.466-7. This was by-lined Sual, 25 April 1900, and presumably the event had happened recently.

<sup>137</sup> It is worth adding that, coincidentally, just after Ackerman departed, in May 1900, the US commander in the Philippines, General Otis requested to be replaced and he was succeeded by General MacArthur. Wilcox, *Harper's History of the War in the Philippines*, p.341. Biograph sent one other cameraman to the Philippines, Robert K. Bonine, who filmed two scenes there for the company, well after Ackerman had departed: *A Filipino cockfight* (photographed 15 Aug 1901 ; copyrighted 21 May 1902) *Bridge Traffic, Manila* (photographed 14 Aug 1901 ; copyrighted 23 May 1902).

<sup>138</sup> 'Moving Pictures of War', *Mail and Express*, 25 June 1900 states that Ackerman's colleague was Mr. F.J. Merriam, which must surely mean Marion. The article, by-lined Washington 23 June, states that the exhibition was 'yesterday afternoon', adding that the Department was making up photographic albums of the war which would include Ackerman's images. Another article with the same Washington by-line of 23 June states the exhibition was 'this afternoon'. See 'The Mutoscope in War', *Kansas City Star*, 24 June 1900, p.8. This June meeting gives a latest date for Ackerman's return to the USA.

<sup>139</sup> 'The Mutoscope in War', *Kansas City Star*, 24 June 1900, p.8.

<sup>140</sup> 'Moving Pictures of War', *Mail and Express*, 25 June 1900.

<sup>141</sup> 'Mr Ackerman took pictures', *Syracuse Journal*, 13 July 1900. 'Theatrical Notes', *Philadelphia Item*, 1 July 1900, p.14; McCardell, op. cit., p.231. Perhaps the films are still held in the US Government archives/records in some form?

<sup>142</sup> 'The Mutoscope in War', *Mail and Express* 2 Aug 1900. Incidentally, the Biograph company also had a cosy relationship with the British military, and it was reported at this time that the company planned to present a set of their Boer war films to the British government (see Boer war section).

<sup>143</sup> 'C. Fred Ackerman is to lecture', *Post Standard* (Syracuse) 14 July 1900, p.6. This was to be on a Sunday evening at the Lakeside Theater, Syracuse.

<sup>144</sup> '...the Government of the United States... have just authorised the representative of the American Company who went through that war to proceed to China.' British Mutoscope Co report, 9 July 1900, p.23.

<sup>145</sup> Another example: *Aguinaldo's Navy* [1454] was rated in the Biograph register as 'good', and was described in the company's published 'Picture Catalogue' as 'unusually fine photographically', and a viewing of the surviving print confirms a pleasing quality of the image.

<sup>146</sup> *Panorama of Water Front, Manila* [1462] also seems to involve a pan, or a track.

<sup>147</sup> See the section on celebrity culture in Stephen Bottomore, "'Every Phase of Present-Day Life": Biograph's Non-Fiction Production', *Griffithiana*, no. 66/70, 1999/2000, p.147-211.

<sup>148</sup> Most of Ackerman's non-arranged films were scenic views of streets in Manila or elsewhere, though even in one of these, *Making Manila Rope* [1384], the natives may have been placed in position for filming. Incidentally, in many documentaries, some minimal setting up is commonly practiced: for example, when the camera starts running, the participants sometimes need to be cued to start their activities.

<sup>149</sup> The place was cited as Mangaterin or Mangataven, but Linn calls it Mangatarem. Ackerman mentions a 'General' Fowler, but in fact he was only a Captain. 'Mr Ackerman took pictures', *Syracuse Journal* 13 July 1900; Linn, *The Philippine War, 1899-1902*.

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<sup>150</sup> Ackerman told a journalist that the operation was begun by one of Bell's bravest men who 'swam a powerful horse to the opposite bank' carrying a rope. Then this rope was attached to one of the mules and every mule in the train followed. 'Mr Ackerman took pictures', *Syracuse Journal*, 13 July 1900.

<sup>151</sup> So even if Ackerman's camera hadn't malfunctioned in November it is unlikely that he would have been able to film the actual expedition.

<sup>152</sup> Biograph film numbers 1449, 1451, 1453, 1455, 1459.

<sup>153</sup> 'Mr Ackerman took pictures', *Syracuse Journal* 13 July 1900. Ackerman states that following the success in Mangatarem, General Bell was made a Brigadier General, though it is not clear that it was Mangatarem which made Bell's reputation.

<sup>154</sup> Linn, *The Philippine War, 1899-1902*, p.151.

<sup>155</sup> This is not to belittle the achievements of Bell at other stages of the Philippine War – he was perhaps the most impressive General to emerge from the conflict – merely that Ackerman's assessment of the importance of the march is exaggerated. James Franklin Bell arrived in the Philippines as a Major in a volunteer regiment. Often performing dangerous reconnaissance missions, he rose quickly through the ranks to become colonel in command of the Thirty-Sixth Infantry. Later he was promoted from Captain to Brigadier-General, outranking many officers previously his senior. In the Philippines his achievements included strengthening the intelligence services of the Army, and he was known for taking hard measures against rebels and their supporters, even to the extreme of ordering the concentration of local people into protected zones in order to combat the insurgency. Surprisingly there is no published biography of Bell.

<sup>156</sup> 'Mr Ackerman took pictures', *Syracuse Journal* 13 July 1900.

<sup>157</sup> *Philadelphia Press*, 1 July 1900. Biograph's film was to be exhibited at Keith's theatre that week. The report noted that this film, shot about 25 miles (40 kilometres) from Sual, depicted Bell at the head of a group of his men coming down a mountain. Another report stated that the men carried their weapons and General Bell was in the lead. See 'The mutoscope in war', *Kansas City Star*, 24 June 1900, p.8. The Biograph catalogue commented: 'This picture gives an excellent view of the character of the country through which the American troops fought in their chase after Aguinaldo'.

<sup>158</sup> Frames from the river crossing film are reproduced in McCardell, op. cit., p.234. Not all the Bell films are impressive visually, but they would have been of interest to audiences as they did depict a dramatic expedition. As with so many early actualities, the image itself is often of less importance than what is claimed for it. Perhaps audiences of the time would have been told of the importance of this military mission and primed with an explanation of the action in the film. No doubt they would also have been assured that the film was genuine.

<sup>159</sup> This film was shot in 'Dagupan', according to the Biograph register; or in Manila, according to the company's published catalogue. Deocampo reads the shooting date in the register as 18 February, but I think it looks more like 2 February.

<sup>160</sup> Clodualdo Del Mundo, 'The "Philopene" through Gringo Eyes: The Colonisation of the Philippines in Early American Cinema and Other Entertainment Forms, 1898-1904', in *Celebrating 1895: The Centenary of Cinema*, edited by J. Fullerton (Sydney: John Libbey, 1998), p.212-222.

<sup>161</sup> This latter description refers to two films, *The Call to Arms!* and *In the Field*, though these may be one and the same film, no. 1381. Another example of an action title, *An Advance by Rushes* [1390], shows, we are told, 'United States troops attacking an insurgent camp near Dagupan'.

<sup>162</sup> Based on a viewing of the surviving films, I believe that all the mentioned titles conform to this 'implied off-screen enemy' pattern, though not all the films survive.

<sup>163</sup> The titles are: *Advance of Kansas Volunteers at Caloocan*, *Rout of the Filipinos, U.S. troops and Red Cross in the Trenches Before Caloocan*, *Filipinos Retreat from the Trenches*, *Capture of the Trenches at Candabar*, *Colonel Funston Swimming the Bagbag River*, *The Early Morning Attack*. The first five were made in May and the final two between June and September. See Musser, *Edison Motion Pictures... Filmography* #685-9, #720-21.

<sup>164</sup> See the perceptive analysis of Nick Deocampo in his 'Imperialist Fictions: The Filipino in the Imperialist Imaginary', in *Vestiges of War: the Philippine-American War and the Aftermath of an Imperial Dream, 1899-1999*, edited by A. V. Shaw and L. Francia (New York: New York University Press, 2000), p.224-236. The depiction of Funston crossing the river is inaccurately portrayed in the film: Crouch notes that in crossing the Bagbag river, Funston and a dozen of

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his men mainly passed over the semi-destroyed bridge and only partly had to go in the river itself. See Thomas W. Crouch, *A Leader of Volunteers: Frederick Funston and the 20th Kansas in the Philippines, 1898-1899* (Lawrence, KS: Coronado Press, 1984), p.119-20.

<sup>165</sup> See: Nick Deocampo, *Cine : Spanish Influences on Early Cinema in the Philippines* (Quezon City; Manila: National Commission for Culture and the Arts, 2003); Clodualdo Del Mundo, 'The "Philopene" through Gringo Eyes: The Colonisation of the Philippines in Early American Cinema and Other Entertainment Forms, 1898-1904', in *Celebrating 1895: The Centenary of Cinema*, edited by J. Fullerton (Sydney: John Libbey, 1998), p.213 etc.

<sup>166</sup> At the start of the war, most American soldiers were armed with Civil War-era Springfield rifles which were inferior to the Mausers which some rebels were using.

<sup>167</sup> Del Mundo, op. cit.

<sup>168</sup> Kristen Whissel, 'Placing the Spectator on the Scene of History: the Battle Re-Enactment at the Turn of the Century, from Buffalo Bill's Wild West to the Early Cinema', *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 22, no. 3, Aug 2002, p.225-243; see especially p.233-40. However, Whissel is wrong in stating that these Philippine War re-enactments 'consistently begin with Filipinos firing first', so the American side are seen as victims, for in three of the films, *Rout of the Filipinos, U.S. Troops and Red Cross in the Trenches before Calocan* and *The Early Morning Attack*, the Filipinos are already on the retreat so there is no provocation. Whissel's essay also makes interesting points about the 'impossible' position of the camera in these fakes (see my discussion of this in my Spanish-American war section).

<sup>169</sup> Jose Bernard Tagle Capino, 'Cinema and the Spectacle of Colonialism: American Documentary Film and (Post) Colonial Philippines, 1898-1989', Department of Radio/TV/Film, Northwestern U., 2002, p.69.

<sup>170</sup> Nick Deocampo, *Cine : Spanish Influences on Early Cinema in the Philippines*, op. cit., p.165-75.

<sup>171</sup> The January ad located the film in the second part of the programme, and the March ad in the first part.

<sup>172</sup> Del Mundo (1998) and Deocampo offer good descriptions of the film, apart from making the error that the man who picks up the flag was an officer. The Edison catalogue states that he was a Sergeant: the film was based on a real incident or real people and the man was a certain Sergeant Squires. I would add that the groups of actors are apparently the same as in the other Edison Philippine War fakes, as is the wooded landscape, demonstrating that these films were shot as a group. The tactics of the Americans, advancing in full view while waving their flag are so laughable, indeed suicidal, as to reveal this as an obvious fake. Incidentally, the Filipinos also have their flag.

<sup>173</sup> Gregory A. Waller, *Main Street Amusements : Movies and Commercial Entertainment in a Southern City, 1896-1930* (Washington D.C./London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995), p.59.

<sup>174</sup> Cited and analyzed in Deocampo, 'Imperialist Fictions...', p.234. It appears under the rubric 'War films', in *Lubin's Films* catalogue, January 1903, but a 50 ft. film with a similar title, *Philippine War Dance*, was being distributed by the F.M. Prescott company (New York) in 1899. See F.M. Prescott, 20 Nov 1899 catalogue supplement no.3. under 'New films'. Both are on Musser, *Motion Picture Catalogs... Microfilm Edition*.

<sup>175</sup> *Lubin's films*, Jan 1903.

<sup>176</sup> See for example LW 8 Dec 1898, p.443 and 22 Dec, p.495.

<sup>177</sup> *Lubin's films*, Jan 1903, p.74: 'the longest film of the war thus far produced.' And see Lubin ad in *Der Komet* no. 787, 21 April 1900, p.27 – the ad also appears in other issues of this periodical during the year.

<sup>178</sup> 'War in Cuba and the Philippines': section in the Selig catalogue, 1903.

<sup>179</sup> Del Mundo, 'The Philopene...' p.216-7. The stereopticon companies he mentions were Kleine Optical Co., Stereopticon and Film Exchange, L. Manasse Company, Sears, Roebuck and Company. I have some differences with him in interpretation (see above, and in my introduction). The two scenes mentioned are illustrated in Sears Rosebuck catalogue 110, p.213, reproduced in *ML Bulletin* 4, no.4, Jan 1983.

<sup>180</sup> A poster for the lecture 'in near mint condition' was sold on ebay in December 2003, described as being about 28 by 21 inches in size, with black lettering printed on light pink newsprint-type paper, and dated to around 1902 – but this would seem too late. The poster may also have been issued as a broadside, with the same or similar text. The ebay description states (though with no source for the claims): 'The U.S. government under Teddy

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Roosevelt sponsored this early display of the powers of the moving pictures for political reasons. This particular moving picture event circulated around the US in towns large and small. Thus the government was very happy to have this particular moving picture display circulate throughout the continent and was very supportive of the venture.'

<sup>181</sup> The Anti-imperialist League was formed on 15 June 1898 to fight U.S. annexation of the Philippines, and its members included luminaries Andrew Carnegie, Mark Twain and William James, though following the signing of the Treaty of Paris the League began to decline. There was quite a wellspring of opposition to the annexation of the Philippines in the US. For example, the Municipal Assembly of the city of New York declared their sympathy for the Filipino rebels in their 'gallant struggle for independence'. Reported in *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* 30 Dec 1899, p.14, col.1. The *St Louis Republic* was against annexation, noting that even Britain's colonies were 'a losing investment' and that for America, imperial endeavours were 'distinctly forbidden by the principles upon which our fabric of government rests'. Quoted in *Herald Tribune* 21 Dec 1900.

<sup>182</sup> Jim Zwick, 'The "Stereoscopic" War of 1899', in *Voices & Scenes of the Past: The Philippine-American War Retold*, edited by Maria S. I. Diokno (Quezon City: Jose W. Diokno Foundation, 1999), p.4-5. More on this subject is at Zwick's website <http://www.boondocksnet.com/stereo/wars.html> The content of Andreae and Reeves's presentations is discussed in *The Public* vol. 2, 8 July 1899, p.1-2, and 15 July 1899, p.2. The League's relationship with the pair is discussed in letters from Frank Stephens to Herbert Welsh, 23 June 1899, and 1 December 1899, and William Lloyd Garrison to Frank Stephens, 29 November 1899. In Herbert Welsh Papers, Pennsylvania Historical Society, Philadelphia: cited by Zwick.

<sup>183</sup> General Lawton condemned the League for this reason, as have some later military historians, such as Gates and Sexton. See Sexton, *Soldiers in the Philippines :A History of the Insurrection*, p.217- . The suggestion is that while their motives were noble, the effect of the League was to prolong the conflict.

<sup>184</sup> Quoted in Jim Zwick, 'The Profits of Racism: The Campaign Against Philippine Independence', in his forthcoming book Jim Zwick, *Anti-Imperialism in the United States, 1898-1935*, and also on his website at <http://www.boondocksnet.com/ail/campaign.html> Also on this site see: 'The Campaign Against Philippine Independence' in *The Filipino People*, vol.2, Jan. 1914. Worcester's lectures were co-sponsored by the non-commercial 'Philippine Society', formed in 1913. For more on Worcester's use of film, see Jose Bernard Tagle Capino, 'Cinema and the Spectacle of Colonialism: American Documentary Film and (Post) Colonial Philippines, 1898-1989', thesis, Department of Radio/TV/Film, Northwestern U., 2002.

<sup>185</sup> Incidentally, as historians we should recognise that language which is today unacceptable in describing other cultures, was in the 1900 era unexceptional.

<sup>186</sup> See Amelia Lapena-Bonifacio, *The "Seditious" Tagalog Playwrights: Early American Occupation* (Manila: Zarzuela Foundation of the Philippines, 1972), especially a section, p.36-41, on 'The use of theatrical machinery and stage effects': this describes the use of symbols and flags of the katipunan revolutionaries in stage imagery as a form of visual resistance to US rule. See also the section 'Suppression of nationalistic journalism and literature', in Agoncillo and Guerrero, *History of the Filipino People*, p.290-293.