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Research Article

Visions Of Empire Through The Public Education System: The Central Luzon Agricultural School as A Site Of Colonial Knowledge Production, 1901–1938

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Abstract. This article critically examines the origins and early development of the Central Luzon Agricultural School (CLAS), now Central Luzon State University (CLSU), as a site of colonial knowledge production between 1901 and 1938 during the American period in the Philippines. It argues that CLAS was not just an American-established provincial school, but also a product of a deliberate colonial strategy that combined public instruction, land settlement, agricultural modernization, and a cosmopolitan tradition of industrial education. Its pedagogical lineage extended from the Hilo Boarding School in Hawaii through Hampton and Tuskegee institutes in the United States, while its administrative form reflected the centralized bureaucracy created by Act No. 74. Evaluating statutes, executive orders, official reports, periodicals, and institutional histories together, the article reconstructs the establishment of CLAS and explains how its campus produced knowledge about land, labor, citizenship, and rural life. It concludes that CLAS's significance lies in educational innovations and state consolidation.

Keywords: American colonial education; agricultural education; Central Luzon Agricultural School; colonial knowledge production

INTRODUCTION

One of the most overlooked yet significant aspects of Central Luzon State University's history is its true provenance. Institutional narratives correctly acknowledge that the university began as an American-sponsored school, but they often present its founding as an isolated act of administrative foresight. It was further implied that the establishment of institutions such as the Central Luzon Agricultural School (henceforth, CLAS) was just a natural product of political development and inevitable social processes during the early twentieth century. While this may be true, this rather abbreviated narrative obscures the historical contexts in which the CLAS emerged, and ignores the fact that it was a deliberate move by a colonizer to comprehend and effectively consolidate the new colony. Cognizant of this, then, the school eventually became part of a comprehensive program that strategically combines public instruction, land administration, agricultural development, and social reform through which the American colonial government sought to reorder Philippine society (May, 1976; Steinbock-Pratt, 2019).

That being said, this paper ultimately argues that it would be historically erroneous to say that CLAS was only a public school established by the Americans or that it may be an inevitable product of its time, instead of looking at it for what it was: a colonial government project with an imperial vision to modernize Philippine agriculture through educational institutions and to integrate the countryside and unexplored territories into the political economy of the new regime. The United States, of course, has explicitly demonstrated its intention towards the Philippines as its colony through its “Benevolent Assimilation” strategy. But history has revealed that this messianic approach has other dimensions that remain contested up to this day.

While it can be considered a kind of “social engineering project”, this did not make the education offered at CLAS empty or wholly coercive. Public school systems established in later periods expanded access to education, and supporting agricultural training programs also taught practical knowledge to students and graduates. This system would be credited eventually to have helped in agricultural and rural development in the country. However, the practicality of this type of education cannot be separated from the colonial framework that shaped it, as this paper has explored and articulated in the discussion. As will be demonstrated, colonial officials implemented this framework by classifying population groups, assigning labor they assumed as appropriate for the colonial subjects, converting public land into administrative sites, and using public education to train loyal subjects (Coloma, 2009).

In line with the aforementioned, this article traces the “colonial” and “social engineering” processes from the official creation of the colonial public school system in 1901 to the appointment of the first Filipino superintendent of CLAS in 1938. This paper argues that the campus at Muñoz, Nueva Ecija became a site of colonial knowledge production in three interrelated domains. First, it translated a trans-Pacific tradition of industrial education, extending from Hawaii to Hampton and Tuskegee institutes, into a Philippine agricultural curriculum. This illustrates the

cosmopolitan character of the public education system, which was transplanted in CLAS and was later on exported from CLAS to other territories as far as New Zealand. Second, it brought education into the centralized bureaucratic structure of the colonial state, where colonial administrators practically defined the direction and outcome of the institution. And, third, it made land and student labor into objects of measurement, discipline, and demonstration. Ultimately, the “school republic” admired by visitors was both a functioning community and a pedagogical innovation in its own right: its farms, bank, store, campus police, and elected officers taught self-government, but always within boundaries set by colonial administrators.

RESEARCH METHODS

Through the process of historical method and critical historiography, the succeeding discussion and analysis rely on primary sources such as statutes, executive orders, relevant newspapers, Bureau of Education reports, contemporary accounts by Fred W. Atkinson, David P. Barrows, Kilmer O. Moe, and Frank G. Carpenter, and later institutional and scholarly studies (Atkinson, 1905; Barrows, 1905; Carpenter, 1926; Moe, 1916; Steinbock-Pratt, 2019; Viray, 1982). Furthermore, the first priority of the historical method is to establish the historical credibility of any given source (Howell & Prevenier, 2001; Tosh, 2015). Thus, the sources for this study have been read critically and examined for their trustworthiness and significance for historical interpretation following the research objectives explored here.

In the eyes of careful source criticism, colonial reports often celebrated accomplishments while minimizing coercion, conflict, or Filipino initiative (Kramer, 2006; Steinbock-Pratt, 2019). Institutional histories, on the other hand, sometimes compressed the colonial context in favor of a continuous narrative of progress, as in early attempts to write the university's history. Reading these records against one another makes it possible to recover both the ambitions of the colonial state and the work through which Filipino students and local actors made the school possible (Steinbock-Pratt, 2019). Thus, the resulting discussion and arguments in this paper form a historical narrative that is both descriptive and analytical.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Historical Roots and Pedagogical Lineage

As earlier mentioned, the educational framework later applied at CLAS can be traced to American models of vocational and agricultural instruction, particularly Hampton Institute in Virginia and Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, United States of America (Atkinson, 1900; May, 1976, pp. 140–145). One of the influential people behind this plan was Dr. Fred W. Atkinson. Appointed the first civilian general superintendent of public instruction in 1900, Atkinson helped formulate the education bill that became Act No. 74, passed by the Philippine Commission on January 21, 1901. The law established a Department of Public Instruction and provided for a centralized system of free primary education, a normal school, a trade school, and agricultural instruction (Carson, 1961; United States Philippine Commission, 1901, secs. 1–3, 14–15). Atkinson served during the formative years of this system before

becoming president of the Polytechnic Institute of Brooklyn, a position he held from 1904 to 1925 (“Dr. Fred Atkinson Dies,” 1941; May, 1976, p. 141).¹

Taking confidence in his training and background, Atkinson considered vocational training especially suitable for Filipinos. However, let it be said that this position reflected the colonial objective of producing a skilled labor force for agricultural and industrial work, rather than directing the majority of students toward academic or professional advancement.

Before going to the Philippines, he consulted Booker T. Washington and visited both Tuskegee and Hampton. As it turned out, this was a fateful event because this is where Atkinson conceived of the same educational approach for the new colony. Thus, in a report to the Philippine Commission, he recommended:

“that the Filipinos may be taught those things for which they have a capacity, i.e., industrial and mechanical pursuits. . . . [T]here should be established throughout the Philippine Islands schools of agriculture. It will be necessary to send to our agricultural colleges for instructors. These instructors should follow the plan of work of Hampton and Tuskegee. . . .” (Atkinson, 1902, p. 1337).

The wording in this report is important, one that needs careful understanding of the prevailing contexts of the time. It articulates an appraisal, albeit on a personal level, about Filipino “capacity” to a proposed division of educational labor. As can be observed, industrial education promised social mobility and useful skills, but it was also structured by racial assumptions imported from the United States. The analogy that American officials drew between African Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Filipinos placed different peoples within a common curriculum of manual work, discipline, and tutelage. Moreover, as can be historically inferred, race was not incidental to this educational vision; it helped colonial officials define what Filipinos should learn and what place they were expected to occupy in the imperial order (Coloma, 2009). In hindsight, colonial administrators and education technocrats such as Atkinson, given the energy and enthusiasm of a colonizer during the early stages of their first imperial project, built an educational program based on a hunch of what was needed despite having limited information about the colony and its people at that time.

Consequently, Act No. 74 gave this vision an institutional machinery. It created positions for a general superintendent, division superintendents, and local school administration; designated English as the basis of public-school instruction; and authorized the recruitment of as many as one thousand trained teachers from the United States. The best-known contingent became collectively known as the Thomasites. Their arrival introduced new methods, textbooks, and institutional routines into Philippine classrooms (Carson, 1961, p. 36; United States Philippine Commission, 1901, secs. 14–15).² These reforms broadened access to schooling and established a more systematic public education network. English also connected students to a wider body of official, scientific, and professional knowledge. At the same time, the American colonial government made English the basis of public-

school instruction, thereby privileging the language of colonial administration and marginalizing Philippine languages as media of formal education (Bernardo, 2008, pp. 34–35; Rafael, 2015; Sibayan, 1999, p. 73).

American officials justified these reforms by contrasting them with the erstwhile Spanish-era education. Atkinson portrayed the earlier system as restrictive, clerical, and unable to place basic instruction within reach of the majority before the educational decree of 1863. That criticism contained elements of truth, including the uneven reach of primary schools, but it also served a political purpose. It presented the United States as a benevolent and modernizing power whose rule would remove ignorance and extend opportunity (Atkinson, 1902, pp. 1317–1320). Later historical work has shown that schooling existed before 1863 and that the decree expanded an earlier, if limited and uneven, educational structure. The distinction matters because the colonial claim to have created education almost from nothing made American authority appear both necessary and generous (Fox, 1965).

The language of benevolence had been present from the beginning of the occupation. President William McKinley's December 1898 instructions described American rule as an effort to secure the "well-being" and "advancement" of the inhabitants. Public education gave that political language an everyday institutional form (McKinley, 1898). Classrooms taught literacy and technical knowledge, but they also taught English, hygiene, punctuality, record keeping, and a civic order centered on the colonial state. The same tension would become visible at CLAS: useful learning and expanded opportunity operated alongside discipline and economic direction.

The pedagogical lineage extended beyond Hampton and Tuskegee. Kilmer O. Moe, who later served as superintendent of CLAS, traced a formative influence to the Hilo Boarding School in Hawaii. Hilo had educated Native Hawaiian boys through a combination of religious, academic, and manual instruction. Samuel Chapman Armstrong's experience in Hawaii helped shape the program he later established at Hampton, which in turn influenced Washington's Tuskegee Institute (Beyer, 2007; Moe, 1953). The route from Hilo to Hampton and Tuskegee, and then to the Philippines, was not a simple transfer of an unchanged model. Each institution responded to a different setting. Nevertheless, the continuity is historically significant. Across these locations, administrators treated productive labor as a method of moral formation, economic adaptation, and, as argued in this paper, a form of social control.

Seen from this cosmopolitan, trans-Pacific perspective, the origins of CLAS were not confined to a single Philippine executive order. Its curriculum grew out of an older colonial and missionary practice of educating subordinated populations through labor. At Muñoz, however, Filipino students and local officials did more than receive an imported scheme. They built the campus, cultivated its fields, operated its enterprises, and eventually assumed its leadership. The school's history therefore cannot be reduced either to colonial design or to a simple narrative of progress. It developed through the interaction of official policy, local conditions, and student work (May, 1976).

Bureaucratic Setup and the Colonial Agenda

As a matter of historical necessity compounded by physical and environmental factors, the Philippine public school system was established to be highly centralized. Under Act No. 74, the archipelago was divided into school divisions, each administered by a division superintendent who exercised substantial authority over teachers, funds, property, and the implementation of policy. David P. Barrows, general superintendent of education from 1903 to 1909, described an arrangement in which educational authority ran downward through a comparatively uniform chain of command (Barrows, 1907). The superintendent's participation in provincial administration also linked schooling to the wider machinery of colonial governance.

This bureaucratic structure offered clear advantages. Policies could be introduced rapidly, accounts and reports could be standardized, and schools could be extended into provinces where the state previously had only a limited educational presence. A later survey by W. W. Marquardt similarly described the system as unusually centralized, with the Bureau of Education directing curricula, personnel, and inspection across the islands (Marquardt, 1919, pp. 38–53). Standardization helped sustain the system's remarkable geographical expansion.

Yet centralization also carried inherent weaknesses. Local communities had limited authority to determine what kind of education best suited their language, economy, and social conditions. The effectiveness of a division could depend heavily on the judgment of its superintendent. Administrators who worked with Filipino teachers and local leaders could adapt policy constructively; those who treated uniformity as an end in itself could make the system rigid and remote. The same concentration of power that enabled rapid expansion could therefore produce disconnection, resentment, or administrative failure (Barrows, 1907, pp. 81–82). Barrows expressed the social objective of the system with unusual directness:

“Public instruction in the Philippines was organized with the conscious purpose of transforming the condition and position of the gente baja. Our aim is to destroy caciquismo and to replace the dependent class with a body of independent peasantry—owning their own homes, able to read and write and thereby gain access to independent sources of information, able to perform simple calculations, keep their own accounts, and consequently rise out of their condition of indebtedness. If possible, they should also be inspired with a new spirit of self-respect, a new consciousness of personal dignity, and an awareness of their civil rights.”
(Barrows, 1907, p. 73).³

The statement captures the reforming promise of American education, but it also reveals its paternalism. Colonial officials would identify the social problem, define the independent peasant or subject, and devise the instruction through which that subject would be produced. Agricultural schools were particularly suited to this objective because they combined classroom learning with land settlement, household economy, and productive labor. In this specific regard, CLAS would become one of the most ambitious expressions of that program.

The Birth of a “School Republic”

Central Luzon State University—formerly the Central Luzon Agricultural College and, before that, the Central Luzon Agricultural School—was locally known in its early years as the “Muñoz School.” Frank G. Carpenter later called it the “School Republic of Muñoz,” a phrase that captured the organization of its student community (Carpenter, 1926, pp. 116–126). The school emerged from the conviction that practical and scientific farming could support both rural education and the settlement of land in northern Nueva Ecija.

American administrators viewed Central Luzon’s uncultivated lands and forests as resources awaiting classification and productive use. Act No. 926, the Public Land Act of 1903, established procedures for homesteads and other dispositions of the public domain. Act No. 1148, the Forest Act of 1904, formed part of the broader system through which the government classified and administered land and forest resources (United States Philippine Commission, 1903b, 1904).⁴ These measures did not by themselves establish CLAS. They created the larger legal landscape in which homesteading, surveying, forestry, and agricultural instruction became related instruments of policy. Moreover, they provided the necessary context upon which education would emerge and develop in the colony.

Nueva Ecija Governor Isauro Gabaldon, elected in 1906, became an important advocate of an agricultural school in the province. During a visit to Muñoz, then a barrio of San Juan de Guimba, he discussed the proposal with Percy A. Hill, an American planter and homesteader who had served in the United States Army and the Philippine Constabulary. Hill knew the terrain and had participated in the settlement of northeastern Nueva Ecija (Hartendorp, 1932; Roque, 1997). T. W. Thompson, division superintendent of schools, also promoted the project. With support from the provincial board, a survey was funded, and a tract near Muñoz was selected. During this time, the area combined open grass, forest, roads, and streams, making it suitable in official eyes for an agricultural school and demonstration farm.

Hill assisted with the survey, while Thompson and Gabaldon carried the proposal through the provincial administration. Director of Education Barrows and Edwin B. Copeland, later dean of the College of Agriculture at Los Baños, Laguna, supported the plan. Kilmer Moe’s contemporary account credited Thompson with “fathering” the project and also identified C. D. Whipple as an early sponsor (Moe, 1914). The school was thus the result of a network rather than the achievement of a single founder: provincial officials, American educators, surveyors, homesteaders, and, eventually, Filipino students all took part.

The direct statutory authority for reserving the site was Act No. 648 of 1903. That law empowered the governor-general to withdraw portions of the public domain from sale or settlement for civil public purposes. In April 1907, Governor-General James F. Smith used that authority to reserve approximately 658 hectares at Muñoz for the public schools of Nueva Ecija (United States Philippine Commission, 1903a). The order is reproduced here in its entirety because its legal language shows how education, surveying, and territorial administration converged at the founding of CLAS:

*The Government of the Philippine Islands—Executive Bureau
Manila, April 12, 1907
Executive Order No. 10*

Pursuant to the provisions of Act Numbered Six Hundred and Forty-Eight, Philippine Commission, entitled “An Act Authorizing the Governor-General to reserve for civil public purposes, and from sale or settlement, any part of the public domain not appropriated by law for special public purposes, until otherwise directed by law, and extending the provisions of Act Numbered Six Hundred and Twenty-Seven so that public lands desired to be reserved by the Insular Government for public uses, or private lands desired to be purchased by the Insular Government for such uses, may be brought under the operation of the Land Registration Act,” I hereby reserve for the use of the public schools of the Province of Nueva Ecija and withdraw from sale or settlement the following-described parcel of public domain in the barrio of Muñoz, municipality of San Juan de Guimba, Province of Nueva Ecija, to wit: Beginning at a point marked “1” on the plan, being an alibambang tree on the west side of the Muñoz–San Jose Road, about six kilometers from Muñoz, and south forty-four degrees twenty-nine minutes west, one thousand nine hundred and twenty-two and two-tenths meters from the center of the bridge over Sapang Asta on said road; thence north eleven degrees fifty-one minutes west, two thousand one hundred and twelve and ten-hundredths meters to an alibambang tree twenty-five centimeters in diameter, marked “Cor. 2” on the plan; north eighty-eight degrees thirty-seven minutes east, three thousand one hundred and ninety-five and forty-hundredths meters to a bayug tree twenty-five centimeters in diameter, marked “Cor. 3” on the plan; south nine degrees one minute east, two thousand one hundred and twenty-nine and eighty-hundredths meters to “Cor. 4,” being a molave post fifteen centimeters in diameter set two meters above the ground; south eighty-nine degrees fifteen minutes west, three thousand and ninety-four and thirty-hundredths meters to the point of beginning, containing an area of six million five hundred and seventy-eight thousand five hundred and twenty-nine and sixty-eight hundredths square meters.

Bounded on the north, east, and south by government lands; on the west by properties of Ciriaco Sablaya, Luis Ramos, and Simon Quitobbo. All points referred to are marked on the plan; bearings are true; variation 00°52' east.

Date of survey: February 16–22, 1907.

*James F. Smith,
Governor-General (Moe, 1914, pp. 580–581; Roque, 1997; Smith, 1908)⁵*

The order converted a surveyed landscape into an educational reservation. Its metes and bounds were not incidental details. They made the site legible to the state and fixed a jurisdiction within which the Bureau of Education could promote public schooling, land settlement, and agricultural experiment. The reservation also withdrew the land from private acquisition, even as the surrounding region was opened to homesteaders. As this paper argues, colonial public education thus became one instrument for reorganizing the frontier.

For Nueva Ecija and Central Luzon, Executive Order No. 10 was a turning point. It created a center from which agricultural knowledge could be produced and circulated, while the large reservation offered enough land for fields, livestock, buildings, irrigation, and student projects. Relative to this, the campus was expected to demonstrate the productive use of soil and to encourage similar development beyond its boundaries. This vision was consistent with the Bureau of Education's wider program of agricultural and industrial instruction (Marquardt, 1919, pp. 38–53). In short, the school became an effective demo farm for the colonial project and a prototype for later similar institutions that would be planted in different parts of the archipelago.

Moreover, the physical campus became a curriculum in itself. Students learned by clearing, planting, constructing, maintaining accounts, and organizing community life. Moe described a system of student captains, police, a court, and work assignments, along with a store and bank. These arrangements reduced operating costs, but their educational purpose was equally important. Work was meant to train judgment, reliability, self-command, and habits of cooperation (Moe, 1914, pp. 586–598). However, ideal as it may be, the educational model embodied a contradiction in such a way that students practiced self-government, but within an institution whose rules, land, and ultimate authority remained under colonial administrators.

In one of his visits, Carpenter encountered a more developed version of this community in 1925. He described hundreds of boys from many provinces, student officials, farms, workshops, a bank, and a store. To him, it appeared to be “a boy republic in the heart of Luzon.” (Carpenter, 1926, pp. 116–126). The phrase became an enduring description because it recognized that the campus had acquired the functions of a small town. Yet the “republic” was not a sovereign polity. It was an educational simulation in which participation and responsibility were encouraged under supervision. Its significance lay precisely in this mixture of agency and discipline. These expectations form a large part of what the colonial administrators intended to accomplish in the public education sector.

Challenges in the Early Years

The reservation of more than 658 hectares for an agricultural school was a substantial gain, but transforming it into a functioning institution proved more difficult than was expected. The first administrators and students encountered forests, grasslands, and almost no built infrastructure. There were no permanent houses or prepared fields. Needed supplies traveled over approximately thirty-three kilometers of *carreton* trails that became mud holes during the rainy season (Moe, 1914, pp. 581–585).

As expected, the students who arrived at Muñoz were not recipients of a completely and fully functioning school. They were ordinary teenage boys asked to make one. A contemporary account described an initial group of roughly fifty students living in temporary quarters and working under conditions that tested both health and morale. They cleared vegetation, constructed buildings, dug canals, planted crops, and maintained the grounds. Unlike agricultural pioneers who could hire an established adult labor force, the school depended heavily on inexperienced students. When some chose to leave, administrators had little recourse beyond persuasion and the promise that the institution would improve (Moe, 1914, pp. 583–590).

Furthermore, natural conditions added to these difficulties. A severe storm on October 23–24, 1909, destroyed temporary buildings and damaged the work already completed. Fever and dysentery affected the community. The isolation of the site complicated transport and medical care (Moe, 1914, pp. 584–585). These hardships reveal an aspect of the school republic that celebratory accounts could easily overlook. Student labor was described as character formation, but it was also indispensable to the survival of the institution.

Despite all the physical, environmental, and moral challenges that it encountered during its infancy, the campus nevertheless took material shape. In a 1916 assessment, Moe reported that students had built quarters, cleared and cultivated land, constructed irrigation canals, and maintained farms and grounds. He also followed the work of graduates, many of whom entered agricultural teaching, government service, or farming, including assignments in distant provinces. The combination of theory and practice had therefore begun to circulate knowledge beyond Muñoz (Moe, 1916).

Official reports presented CLAS as the largest insular agricultural school and emphasized its courses in farm management, agricultural education, and farm mechanics. By 1918, the reservation included cultivated acreage, irrigation works, a model farm, and student enterprises such as a store, bank, printing press, sawmill, and cinema (Philippines Bureau of Education, 1919, pp. 42–43). While these claims should be read as institutional self-presentation, they also indicate how quickly the school grew from an uncharted clearing into a viable campus. Its productivity depended on Filipino students, laborers, teachers, and local partners, even when official narratives centered on American administration and colonial policies.

From Colonial Model School to a Filipino Institution

From its foundation in 1907 until its growth through 1938, CLAS remained under the Bureau of Education and was administered by American superintendents who generally resided on the campus. This arrangement was obviously a reflection of the centralized structure of the public school system, where the superintendent oversaw the daily operation of the institution and served as the principal link between Muñoz and the insular bureaucracy in Manila.

Overall, fourteen American superintendents administered the school before Filipinos assumed its leadership (Roque, 1997).⁶ Their successive terms brought continuity, but also periodic shifts in emphasis and management. The system could benefit from a superintendent's technical knowledge and commitment; it could also

become vulnerable to turnover and to decisions made far from the communities most affected by them. Filipino teachers, students, and local officials provided much of the continuity that formal rosters conceal.

The appointment of Emeterio A. Asinas as the first Filipino superintendent in 1938 marked an important institutional transition. It formed part of the wider Filipinization of government during the Commonwealth period and altered who could exercise authority within a school created under American supervision. This change did not erase the pedagogical and bureaucratic structures inherited from the colonial period. It did, however, make possible a different relation between institutional leadership and the society the school served.

By 1938, CLAS had become a recognized model of agricultural education rather than the precarious outpost of 1909. It had trained students, developed farms and workshops, and created a campus community that later accounts remembered with pride. These achievements were real. They were also inseparable from the state's effort to classify land, direct labor, and define modern rural citizenship. The history of CLAS is most clearly understood when both sides of that inheritance remain visible.

CONCLUSION

The origins of Central Luzon State University go beyond the formal establishment of a school at Muñoz. CLAS grew from a trans-Pacific pedagogical lineage, a centralized colonial bureaucracy, and a legal regime for administering the public domain. Atkinson's appeal to Hampton and Tuskegee, the deeper connection to Hilo, Barrows's vision of an independent colonial subject, and Smith's reservation of land were parts of a single historical movement. Together, they made agricultural education a means of transforming and flourishing both people and place.

As demonstrated, the campus converted this vision into daily practice. Its students cleared land, built structures, operated enterprises, maintained accounts, and participated in a supervised school republic. Through these activities, CLAS produced more than agricultural techniques and innovations. It produced knowledge about productive land, disciplined labor, civic conduct, and the modern farmer. This paper argues that knowledge could serve the colonial state, but it was never monopolized by it. Filipino students and graduates carried skills into schools, farms, government offices, and communities, where they could adapt them to needs not fully anticipated by American administrators.

This tension is central to the institution's historical significance. A narrative concerned only with colonial control would overlook the opportunities students created from the education available to them. A narrative of uninterrupted progress would conceal the racial assumptions, concentrated authority, and demanding labor on which the school was built. By holding these histories together, the early development of CLAS becomes more than an institutional preface. It explains how an educational project of empire acquired a durable local life and why the Filipinization of its leadership in 1938 was both a break and an inheritance.

Endnotes

¹ Contemporary and later accounts sometimes give different dates for Atkinson's appointment. May identifies his appointment as general superintendent on September 1, 1900; he remained a central figure in the system until 1903 (May, 1976, p. 141).

² The law authorized the recruitment of up to one thousand teachers; the term "Thomasites" is commonly associated with the large group transported aboard the USAT Thomas and, more broadly, with the early American teaching force.

³ The quoted wording has been retained from the original manuscript; punctuation has been standardized.

⁴ Act No. 1148 appeared in earlier accounts as the authority for the school reservation, but its subject was forest administration. The direct authority for Executive Order No. 10 was Act No. 648.

⁵ Moe's contemporary account gives April 10, 1907, while the published order and later institutional histories give April 12. This article follows the date printed with the official text (Moe, 1914, pp. 580–581; Roque, 1997; Smith, 1908).

⁶ The fourteen American superintendents were T. W. Thompson (1907–9), C. D. Whipple (1909), George Whiting (1909–10), Allen Helms (1910–13), Kilmer O. Moe (1913–22), James A. Wright (1922), Ernest H. Oesch (1923–25), Sylvester G. Kelleher (1925–28), Frederick Roth (1928–29), Harry Comer (1929–31), Carl Hartman (1931–34), Arthur G. Spiller (1934–35), William Wade Head (1935–36), and Christian Reimers (1936–38) (Roque, 1997).

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