

Yligan Como Pueblo, 1838-1898

Ma. Cecilia B. Tangian

Abstract

This paper seeks to understand the historical development of Iligan from 1838 to 1898, based on available primary and archival sources. It covers the period from 1838, founding of Iligan as a pueblo to 1898. External and internal factors that shaped the economic, political and social conditions of Iligan are hereby presented and analyzed. Secondary source materials gathered from different academic institutions and government offices were also taken into account. Interviews were also conducted to corroborate and further substantiate the data gathered from documents.

Keywords Yligan, pueblo, reduccion, Misamis, Bayug, pueblos de indios, local history

Statement of the Problem

The paper intends to know the conditions of (Yligan) Iligan as a pueblo during the years 1838–1898. Specifically, the paper sought to answer the following questions;

1. How did Iligan become a pueblo?
2. What were the Spanish policies in Iligan as a pueblo?
3. What was the role of Iligan as a Spanish pueblo?
4. What were the problems and challenges of Iligan at the time?
5. What were the changes and development which took place in Iligan during that period?

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Theoretical Framework

The study is based on the ideas of Fernand Braudel author of the three-volume *L'Identité de la France* ("The Identity of France"). In this study, Braudel presented the identity of France using the framework of time, place and culture. It focuses on the concept of change and continuity with pueblo as a point of reference.

Methodology

The researcher relied heavily on the archival material in the National Archives, National Library of the Philippines and Museo de Oro (Xavier Museum) at Xavier University, Cagayan de Oro City to obtain the pertinent data related to the establishment of towns. The records were also taken from "Ereccion de los Pueblos" and "Estadística de Poblacion" at the Philippine National Archives. The translations of the Spanish language to English were done because most of the Spanish reports were documented in Spanish language. There were also translations made from the visayan language to English because some descriptions of the Misamis province were documented in the vernacular. The relevant literatures from the secondary source materials were also gathered from the National Library of the Philippines, Libraries of the University of the Philippines like the Third World Studies Center, College of Law Library, and the Library of Asian Studies; Ateneo de Manila University Library, Lopez Library, Ayala Library and at Xavier University Library, Cagayan de Oro City.

Significance of the Study

Local history is the building block of Philippine historiography. Thus, this paper is an attempt to write about Iligan being one of the local places in the country to show its local features in the context of the national level. The primary sources and archival materials during the Spanish regime in the Philippines are the basis of the paper in enriching the existing literatures during the years 1838-1898.

Introduction

The Filipino people under the Spanish colonial administration that was organized into pueblos (municipalities) were governed by the formal system of colonial laws and doctrina.¹ A pueblo is a Spanish word to mean a town or a municipality under the jurisdiction of the poblacion. It was in these political bureaucracies where the central area of the reduccion (resettlement) process took place. There is also a cabecera (central village) of each municipality where the church and rectory, the municipal building, and the central plaza are located.²

The resettlement of the population into fewer but larger communities was one of the earliest colonial undertakings.³ The growing community was characterized by the presence of the plaza and the church. Both structures were the centers of town, a common sight among the Spanish occupied places in the country. On the other hand, the responsibility of the resettlement fell ultimately into the hands of the missionaries⁴ who devoted considerable effort in bringing the dispersed inhabitants of their wide jurisdictions of *bajo de campana* (under the bells), into a central place of residence where they could establish a permanent church and community in the hispanic urban tradition.⁵ Such a resettlement pattern would facilitate the conversion, spiritual administration, civil control, recruitment of *corvee* (labor), and collection of tribute.

There were 111,683 reported Filipino families organized into 457 pueblos in 1723. The pueblo system essentially covered the lowland Filipinos in accessible plains and valleys. The friars continued to expand their missions from the established pueblos at the periphery of this

¹ Daniel F. Doepfers The Development of Philippine Cities before 1900. Asian Studies 31. no. 4 (August 1972): 769 -92.

² Michael Cullinane, Accounting for Souls: Ecclesiastical Sources for the Study of Philippine Demographic History in Xenos and Doepfers (eds). Population and History: The Demographic Origins of the Modern Philippines. Quezon City. Ateneo de Manila University Press. 1998.

³ John L. Philan The Hispanization of the Philippines. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1959.

⁴ Francis C. Madigan "Hindsight and Foresight: The Census of the Philippines, 1948 and 1960." Philippine Studies 6, no.1 (March 1958) p. 87.

⁵ Ibid. p. 35.

system and the friars looked upon the hinterland to further the colonization process.⁶ By the mid-seventeenth century about two-hundred (200) *pueblos de Indios* (native settlers) had been founded. These could be labeled as towns by virtue of their planned layouts, churches, secular administrative headquarters, and newly settled Filipino families. The first towns were relatively small in size, comprising from 100 to 300 houses. More often, families declined to reside permanently in the pueblos, but maintained houses there to which they could come from their hamlet (village) for Sunday services or for other special church functions. A Spanish priest and sometimes the Spanish soldiery were the regular residents of the pueblo.⁷ The pueblos normally were situated in agricultural lowlands when possible, with the objective of relocating numerous barangay into villages so that the largest possible Filipino population could be brought under secular and religious control.

Iligan: Its history and geography

Yligan (Iligan) became a Spanish pueblo under the old province of Misamis in August of 1838.⁸ The Spanish Missionaries and Conquestadores established their mission station and forts in Iligan due to its importance as a strategic place for the eventual conquest to Lake Lanao. Iligan is also served as a base of operations in the succeeding Spanish missions to Northern Mindanao specifically in the towns of Naawan, Initao, Alubijid, El Salvador and Cagayan de Oro.

Iligan being the gateway of the Spaniards from Lanao del Sur to Southwestern sections of Mindanao is under the jurisdiction of Dapitan known to be the crown village of the Spaniards in Mindanao.⁹ Misamis

⁶ Estado Correspondente a Ano de 1862, que Manifiesta los Religiosos Existentes en la Provincia de San Nicolas de Agustinos Descalzos. Manila. 1863. Braodside.

⁷ Onofre D. Corpuz. The Roots of the Filipino Nation. Vol. 2. Quezon City. Aklahi Foundation Inc. 1989.

⁸ "Ereccion de Pueblo", Misamis, 1833 - 1835, leg. 100 (PNA)

⁹ The Bautista manuscript on the Philippine Revolution in Misamis Province, 1900-1901 in Francis C. Madigan, S.J. (ed) from The Research Institute for Mindanao Culture. Xavier University. Cagayan de Oro City

(Ozamiz) and Iligan were early Spanish fortress settlements.¹⁰ In 1819, the document on the ereccion de pueblo accounted for the construction of baluartes (forts) along the rivers of Iligan for its defense against the Moros coming from Laguna de Lagnao (Lanao Lake).

Iligan's terrain is an advantage for defense against invasions and attack. It is surrounded by the three small river systems, in the Southeast the Mandulog river with its source in the highlands of Lanao del Norte, that connects the Bayug river, Tubod river in the West and Tambacan river in the Northeast. Both Tambacan and Tubod rivers got its source from the highlands of Mt. Agad-Agad, the highest mountain in Iligan.¹¹ Each of these rivers had its own fortress for defense against the Muslim attacks and depredations. The known "fort Victoria" was located in Tambacan, fort Overton in Tubod and the last one was known as the fort of Bayug are important landmarks of Iligan, but with the eventual inundation of these rivers, all those forts sank.¹² The fort Victoria is now the present location of the Philippine National Bank, PNB in Iligan City and the fort Overton is at the present site of the Global Steel Philippines Incorporated formerly, the National Steel Corporation. The name "Iligan" is said to have come from the Talaandig term Ilihan or from the Banwaon's Iliyan which means last fortress of defense against the Maranao. Iligan could also mean Ilig, a Maranao term meaning "water going downstream" which may have been aptly applied to describe the fort at the mouth of the river⁵. Oral history seems to support the later version.

The Recollect Missions in Iligan and in Lanao

The Spaniards set foot in Bayug, village in Iligan as early as 1625 when the Recollect Missionaries established their settlements at the mouth of Bayug river, two kilometers from the present Iligan City. Fray

¹⁰ Francis J. Madigan, "The Early History of Cagayan de Oro", *Philippine Studies*, II, p.76, 1963.

¹¹ Cabili, Camilo P. "A Saga of the Native Courage", *The Philippines Herald Magazine*, (December 26, 1964) pp. 16

¹² Patrocenia T. Acut. *Iligan Before the War*. MA Thesis. University of the Philippines, Diliman. 1989

Juan de San Nicolas was appointed to administer the area accounted his mission works at Bayug;¹³

"The preaching of our religious in Bayug and Malanao (Lanao) had been decided by an intermediary chapter of that province of Filipinas that our laborers should go to the districts of Bayug and the vicinity of Lake Malanao (Lake Lanao) as there were many people there, and hopes were entertained of gathering abundant fruit of the church. Armed then with spiritual weapons, we went to the village of Bayug, where there were few Christians. We began to make much of the chief people, for if they are once subdued, the conversion of the common people is not difficult"

The Spanish superior in Manila appointed Father Fray Juan de San Nicolas to take charge of a mission to Bayug, about two miles northeast of Iligan. From Bayug, the Recollects extended their mission to the lake of Malanao, which is now Lake Lanao area. This brought the missionaries to Iligan - Dapitan residency. The Spaniards recognized the fact that they could not penetrate the area without strong military support. Thus, in 1637, the Spaniards appealed to Governor General Hurtado Corcuerra to take a Moro stronghold near Lake Lanao and followed up its victory with another on March 18, 1638 at Ilihan (Iligan).¹⁴

Corpus also noted that the Augustinian Recollects had been in charge of missionary work in the area in the early sixteenth century. They had some progress and established a mission in Bayug (the area around Modern Iligan). From here they planned to penetrate further into the Lake Lanao region, a stronghold of heathenism.¹⁵ Accounts had also noted that Iligan's colonization had started shortly after the coming of Legaspi in 1565. A certain Manook, (later baptized Pedro Manuel Manook) from Dapitan in Zamboanga del Norte, established his

¹³ Juan dela Concepcion and Luis de Jesus, "The Recollect Mission, 1625 - 1640", in B & R. Vol. XXXV, p. 97

¹⁴ Teresita T. Barcenas. "Traditional Institutions and Western Colonization: The case of the Maranaos in Marawi City" in The Journal of History Vol. XXXVIII January - December 1993

¹⁵ Onofre D. Corpuz. The Roots of the Filipino Nation. Vol. 2. Quezon City. Aklahi Foundation Inc. 1989

settlement in Bayug between 1557 and 1609 (contemporaneous with the Spanish efforts in Surigao and Butuan under the Recolletos).

Bayug, said to be earliest Christian settlement is located at the mouth of Iligan river (Bayug river). However, Iligan had been constantly besieged by raids carried by Muslim groups where Iligan served as a base of the Spanish colonizer in their numerous military expeditions against the Maranaos.¹⁶ Demetrio stressed that Iligan, Macajalar, Dapitan are the most convenient and safest bays in Northern Mindanao.¹⁷ On the other hand, Iligan's port in the Northern Mindanao sea is an important gateway of the Muslim northward movement towards the Visayas particularly in Cebu, Bohol and Leyte. Likewise, the event on the 333 years of Spanish – Moro war provided the port facility of Iligan as a gateway for the eventual conquest of the Muslims in the Visayas during the third phase of Spanish – Moro War in 1599-1600.¹⁸

The Socio – Cultural Condition of Iligan

The historical and cultural linkages of Iligan as a small town are attributed with her neighboring areas peopled by the Higaonon tribes and the Maranaos. The Maranaos antedate¹⁹ by many centuries the arrival of the first Christians in Northern Mindanao. The culture of the Iliganons is linked to that of the Higaonons. The Higaonons theorized to be the original inhabitants of Iligan and of the neighboring areas of Lanao and Misamis, the animistic tribe of Bukidnon and of the mountain region of Rogongon.²⁰ Moreover, the historical and cultural relationships between the Iliganons and the Muslim Maranaos may be attributed to Iligan's proximity to Marawi City and Lanao del Sur. Despite the fact that they have different religious beliefs, the Iliganons and the Maranaos possess common historical and cultural bonds. Iligan was once a Maranao

¹⁶ Ibid p. 74

¹⁷ Francisco R. Demetrio SJ. *The Local Historical Sources of Northern Mindanao*. Vol. 1. Cagayan De Oro. Xavier University Press. 1995

¹⁸ Ceasar A. Majul. *Muslims in the Philippines*. Quezon City. University of the Philippines Press. 1973.

¹⁹ Ibid

²⁰ Steven Patrick C. Fernandez. *The San Miguel Fiesta Rituals of Iligan City: A study of form, function and value in Luis Q. Lacar and Gabino T. Puno (eds). Iligan City. Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and Extension, OVCRE, MSUIT. 1883.*

domain before the pursuing Spanish colonizers pushed the Maranaos further inward to their lake Lanao region.

Reduccion Pattern in Iligan and the Sr. San Miguel Tradition

An indication where the reduccion policy was established in Iligan can be glimpsed from the legacy of Spanish settlement and Christianization in the area. Iligan is a proto type of the reduccion policy of Spain where the earliest towns had a Cathedral of Saint Michael, the Archangel, a plaza, a market and a street layout. Iligan celebrates every 29th of September as the fiesta of its patron saint, San Miguel. The choice of San Miguel as Iligan's patron saint is explained by several myths that centered around the supernatural exploits of San Miguel which have become oral institutions in Iligan. The study of Fernandez revealed certain interviews regarding the patron Saint Michael. One regarded as popular tells of the image of San Miguel during its voyage from Spain in the early years of colonization which was accidentally interchanged with that of the Immaculate Virgin, now patron saint of Ozamis, a neighboring city. The San Miguel statue intended for Ozamis city was instead brought to Iligan. A storm had accidentally brought the ship carrying the statue to the city and many attempts to return the statue of Ozamis City were prevented as a sudden storm always followed each attempt.²¹

Fernandez added that the ardent faith and devotion to San Miguel are explained by numerous stories passed down through the generations. These legends demonstrate the Iliganon's values and attitudes. The Iliganon claimed protection, security, and good luck in harvest, life, and health by San Miguel as the patron who saved the city from misfortune, calamity, and attacks from Muslim marauders with his heroic, epic, and romantic exploits. The legends of San Miguel, some events relate set the dates as far back to Iligan's Spanish colonization narrating of superhuman feats and exploits. These legends are widespread and quite popular in Iligan whose setting is ringed by an atmosphere of strife and conflict. The situations in the legends, where the fiesta rituals draw

²¹ Magdalina Ignacio. "El Senior San Miguel", NSC Newsletter, vol. 1 no. 5. September 1974

considerable basis, illustrate Iligan's history with her numerous conflicts with the Muslim Maranaos.²²

The rituals according to Fernandez make up the traditional sinulog that includes a street dancing performance, the *pagkanaog* (to descend the statue from the higher altar); *diyandi* (dance ritual festival by the Higaonon tribe), and the traditional *comedy* (drama) de San Miguel; the marde gras parade with black tattooed or painted bodies of some Iliganon devotees shouted *hala bira* to signify the bravery against marauders. The sinulog (literally translated: celebration) or ritualistic dance with triumphant shouts "Viva Senior San Miguel". The source of the sinulog is the Roman Catholic catechism and the street drama reenacts the actual conflict between San Miguel and Lucifer.

This ritual goes beyond the Iliganon's taste for celebrations as it embodies deeper religious and socio-cultural implications: it is the Iliganon's veneration of the patron saint. Moreover, the Muslim harassment and the successful conquests of Christian settlements as far north as Luzon have been prevalent during the Spanish period. It is a cause for wonderment why Iligan which immediately borders on Muslim Maranao regions, has been spared from Muslim onslaughts despite the absence of a concrete and formidable *kota* (fort). This is attributed to the protective powers of San Miguel since his arrival in the town of Iligan until at present.

The Political and Demographic Condition of Iligan under the Province of Misamis

Iligan as one of the towns under the old Misamis was under the governance of Don Remegio del Rosario, who exercised full power in the implementation of Polo Y Servicio Personal (Forced Labor) and the collection of tribute.²³ Each of the five districts of Mindanao had a politico – military governor who was an army officer, a secretary of the governor, a civil employee and according to its importance, one or two treasury employees, a justice of a first instance, promoter, a recorder.

²² Steven Patrick C. Fernandez "The Sinulog", Iligan City Fiesta Souvenir Program, 1981.

²³ "Ereccion de los Pueblos", Prova de Misamis, 1859 – 1891, leg. 21 (Philippine National Archives).

From 1838 to 1898 there were two prominent persons from Iligan who served as a recorder and a civil employee by the family names of Zalsos and Actub.²⁴ Most of the government officials at that time were the family names from Cagayan than from Iligan. Corpuz noted that in the early 1870s to the late 1890s the political hierarchy of the pueblo had a deputy gobernadorcillo who acted during the Capitan's absence. There were also the old *juez de sementeras* (inspector for cultivated fields), the *juez de ganados* (for livestock) and lately the *Juez de policia y fomento*, in charge of the pueblos (neatness and adornment, inspection of schools and public order). These three were also supposed to function as the townspeople agents when they had complaints for presentation of the barangay or his deputy. There were in addition three tenientes (lieutenants) who served as guards in the casa tribunal.

Corpuz further accounted that the visitas had become noticeable by their number during the eighteenth century were still in evidence and had become even more numerous. These were groups of pueblo residents who over the years had built their houses away from the church and the center town. The captain of the pueblo appointed officers to settle disputes in the visita in the first instance, to maintain public order, to take care of the post and messages, and to have charge of the local jail. There was finally, the directorcillo of the pueblo. Custom and necessity required that the capitanes, most of whom did not know Spanish and some of whom did not know how to read and write, had to have a "secretary". The Directorcillos (Resident Director) were pueblo residents who knew some Spanish. In Iligan, a certain Don Ramiro became the Directorcillo since 1860 until the early years of the 19th century. They wrote all the pueblo's public documents and served as the interpreters between the Capitanes and higher authorities. In law, the government of the pueblo was vested in the tribunal composed of the gobernadorcillo and other officials. It met regularly every Sunday and on holidays. The members would assemble, march to the *convent* (church convent) often to the accompaniment of band music, fetch the curate, and escort him to the church. After the high mass the officials were expected to kiss the curate's hand and then they proceeded to the casa tribunal for official business. The tribunal however, was no more than a consultative body of

²⁴ Onofre D. Corpuz. *The Roots of the Filipino Nation*. Vol. 2. Quezon City. Aklahi Foundation Inc. 1989.

the *gobernadorcillo*. Rizal as quoted by Corpuz commented that the rulers of the pueblos were all Spaniards like the friars and the *alferez* (*guardia civil*).²⁵

The survey of Iligan's population can be viewed from a statistical data of 1830 and from the ethnographic survey of Mindanao. It is integrated in the list found at the second district Misamis, which had the largest population among the five districts.²⁶ The Spanish officials described that the ethnography of Mindanao shows the effort of the Missionaries to achieve civilization and material progress. These million of souls (persons) are shown in the table below:

Districts	Population
1 ST District (Zamboanga)	17,000
2 nd District (Misamis)	100,000
3 rd District (Surigao)	50,000
4 th District (Davao)	1,800
5 th District (Cotabato)	5,500
Total	174,300

The researcher observed that the accounts on the town of Iligan from 1859-1891 are limited to appointments, tributes and *polo y servicio personal*. The communications from the Superior of Manila stated as follows: First, that the Expediente by officials of Yligan (Iligan) town, seeking transfer of their town to sitio Talabaan (a place in Naawan, Northern Mindanao) but that was not granted. The second request was granted as requested by the citizens of Iligan for a Parish of their own, separate from the cabecera of Misamis. The accounts also showed a document, asking for the construction of *baluartes* (forts) along Laparan (Tambacan) river to fend off the hostile Moros coming from Laguna de Lagnao (Lanao Lake). The third communication on statistical data of towns in the second districts of Mindanao and information given included

²⁵ "Ereccion de Pueblo", Misamis, 1808-1839, leg. 112 (Philippine National Archives).

town area, distances to cabecera, population, dialects and the means of communication.

The towns entered in the data were *Cagayan, Cuza, Agusan, Tuguloan, Santa Ana, Jasaan, Balingasag, Lagonlong, Salay, Guinuguitan, Talisayan, Gingoog, Guinciliban, Sagay, Catarman, Mambajao, Majinog, Yponan, Molugan, El Salvador, Alubijid, Ynita, Naaun, Misamis, Loculan, Jimenez, Aloran, Oroquita, Langaran, Dapitan, Ylaya, Lubungan, Dipolog and Yligan*. And the last document was the record on the creation of parish in *visita Naawan and Yligan* town.²⁶

The Economic Condition of Iligan as a Pueblo

Iligan's primary agricultural production is rice. Studies in the late 1800s found in the *Estadística de Provincias* showed that Iligan has been a corn producing town which reflects the higher share of tribute collection (table below) and the study of Jose S. Gutierrez, "Corn Production and Consumption Requirements in Philippine Agricultural Situation" under the undivided Lanao in the early 19th century indicates to have 25,000 metric tons while other neighboring towns like Misamis Oriental was 16,000 metric tons and below. The corn plantations were found in the river valleys and in the hinterlands of Iligan. On the other hand, other goods of economic importance found in the center of the town was the Chinese stores which sell items and goods such as cloth, umbrellas, slippers, soap, china ware or kitchen utensils.

Earlier accounts noted that Iligan showed an evidence of "business activities" in the early part of the eighteenth century due to the Chinese influx of the area. Among the early Chinese families who started their business ventures in Iligan since the 1850s were the Lim, Ang, Chiu, Kho, Pua, Tan, Siao, Go, Sing among others. However, the other agricultural products of Iligan include corn, upland rice, coconut and rootcrops. These were the principal goods ready for the barter of lowland goods produced by the coastal dwellers of Iligan such as fish and other aquamarine products. The place is also abundant in water resources, the Agus river traverse 31.18 kilometer and ends at Maria Cristina Falls (3 kilometers

²⁶ Rosalina A. Concepcion. Manila. Finding Erecciones. La Union – Pampanga. March 1990.

from the present location of Iligan City) is the source of four hydro – electric power plants of the National Power Corporation.²⁷ Iligan is blessed with the natural gift of water for hydro-electric power plant which added the natural advantage of the town which was utilized to support the industries from the middle of the 19th century.

Moreover, Iligan is also rich in natural resources having an abundant supply of raw materials such as calcarious shales and limestone which are found in the mountains of Kiwalan and Bunawan are utilized in the manufacture of cement. Thus, heavy industries of more than fifteen (15) companies making use of the natural resources have existed throughout Iligan.²⁸ The presence of both agricultural and natural resources showed Iligan's highest share of Spanish tribute collection. The notice of tribute collection in the six towns of Northern Mindanao including Iligan with percentage collection among the six towns in 1832 is indicated in the table below:²⁹

Pueblos	Percent de Tributoz
Yligan (Iligan)	207%
Visita de Naawan	20%
Ynitao (Initao)	91 %
Alubijid	85 %
Mulugan	70 %
Pigtao	99 %
Total	573 %

²⁷ Ana Maita Villaluz "The Lake Lanao: Its Scientific and Economic Importance" in Saber and Madale (eds) *The Maranao*. Manila. 1979, p5.

²⁸ Facts on Iligan City. "Papers on Tourism", Iligan City Tourism Office. 1989.

²⁹ "Ereccion de Pueblo", Misamis, 1821- 1894, leg. 112 (Philippine National Archives).

The reasons for the greater collection of tributes from the town of Iligan aside from her income advantage were mainly due to the encouragement of the friars who were assigned in that town and the dedicate souls of Christian doctrine. Moreover, the curates commented that the people had superior intelligence in understanding the teaching of the church and very keen in knowing the necessity of the church and the religious ministry, thus they give sufficient tributes. In this regard, Yligan (Iligan) rose into a status of first class town in 1836 to 1840.³⁰

The accounts of Vidal revealed that every Saturday of each month, Iligan becomes a place of trade where the barter system took place. They visited Iligan twice, where numerous people engaged in *palitan* (trade). Every Saturday was the day where the Muslims came from Marawi and the Higaonon came from the highlands of Lanao. There were many Camiguignon (people from the island of Camiguin) who were the first inhabitants of Iligan. Among the families was G. Juan Gayta who was very hospitable. The town of Iligan is small and there were small houses of good structure near the trading place. There were also many Chinese store (retail trade) and goods they sell which came from other countries.³¹

The importance of transportation facilities in Iligan is always linked to the port of Cagayan de Misamis. In the early years of the 19th century, there were three (3) streamers that set sail to Iligan from Manila via Cagayan de Misamis which carried among others office supplies and materials for the Administracion de Rentas (Misamis District). Records show, ships arrived at Cagayan de Misamis twice a month and in Iligan once a month. Table below shows the passenger rates according to accommodation with Cagayan de Misamis as the principal port.³²

³⁰ "Estadistica de Misamis" 1837 leg. 140.

³¹ Toralba Vidal "Mindanao Accounts" on The local and Historical Sources of Northern Mindanao in Francisco R. Demetrio, SJ, Ph.D. (ed). Vol. 2, Xavier University Press. Cagayan de Oro City. 1995.

³² Francisco R. Demetrio, SJ, Ph.D. "The Village: Early Cagayan de Oro" on The Local and Historical Sources of Northern Mindanao in FR Demetrio (ed) Vol.1, Xavier University. Cagayan de Oro City. 1995.

Destination	1 st Class Accommodation	2 nd Class Accommodation	3 rd Class Accommodation
Cagayan de Misamis to Manila	48.60	30.00	16.20
Cagayan to Romblon	39.00	24.00	13.20
Cagayan to Iloilo	29.40	18.00	10.20
Cagayan to Cebu	15.33	9.33	5.30
Cagayan to Maribohok	9.33	5.33	3.33
Cagayan to Misamis (Ozamis)	4.00	2.67	2.00
Cagayan to Iligan	2.67	2.00	1.30
Cagayan to Camiguin	2.00	1.33	0.67
Cagayan to Surigao	7.33	5.33	2.67

However, towards the end of the eighteenth century, the flourishing town of Iligan had experienced several challenges on leadership issues both in the church and the local administrators and the presence of outlaws and deserters.

Problems Encountered by the natives in the town of Iligan

Bautista's accounts showed that the chief defect of the Spanish administration in the Philippines was the great attention given by the state to the church authorities and their interests. This frequent conflict between the church and the government was an impediment to the rapid progress and development of the province of Misamis and the town of Iligan which affected the welfare of the people. The Spanish government in Manila did not even hear the petition of the natives of Iligan to have an independent province from Misamis even if Iligan got the highest tribute collection as noted in the reports compared to the neighboring pueblos under the province of Misamis.

The worst condition suffered by the natives was on health problems particularly of the province of Misamis including Iligan. In 1883 the province of Misamis suffered the worst cholera epidemic in its history. Lieutenant Colonel Leopoldo Roldan was the Military governor of the province. He was very strict in the enforcement of quarantine and the isolation and hospitalization of cholera patients. Roldan ordered father

Ramon Zueco through a diplomatic letter that all patients suffering from cholera should be isolated in the island of Mantegue near Camiguin. The father denied Roldan's petition that led to the controversy between them. The natives of the province observed that the above condition discourage a good leadership due to the influence of the clergy and his superiors. The natives believed that there would be no improvement of the town unless the governor of the province must have a political will to go against the Spanish priest.³³

Other challenges and threats that occurred in the town were the case of the deserters. In this regard, the Spanish officials observed that the male natives of Iligan joined a group of disciplinario (deserters) as a sign of disloyalty to the insincerity of the Spanish officials of the town. It was Father Sabino Camillas of Initao who fought side by side with the citizens of Initao in fighting the disciplinario of Iligan in 1897 because the main reasons for the growth of these disciplinarios were the Spanish government did very little in protecting the people against the Moro devastation.³⁴

Moro Invasion and the Formation of Disciplinarios in Iligan

The land defenses of Iligan and the Northern Mindanao areas against the Moros consisted in building trenches and fortifications in most towns and settlements. Ditches were built and breastwork of stakes and palisades (wall) were planted, crowned with watch towers of wood and stones. They usually burned and plundered the towns or settlements as they attacked. In 1875, the places raided by Moros during the later part of the Spanish regime were *Pigtao, Lumbia, Manticao, Iligan, Initao and Tambaling* (El Salvador) in the municipality of Cagayan de Misamis.³⁵

³³ Filomino M. Bautista "The Bautista Manuscript on the Philippine Revolution in Misamis Province, 1900. – 1901" on The Research Institute for Mindanao Culture (RIMCU), Xavier University Press, Cagayan de Oro City. January 1968.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

³⁵ The Bautista Manuscript on the Philippine Revolution in Misamis Province, 1900 – 1901" on The Local Historical Sources of Northern Mindanao Vol. 1, in Francisco R. Demetrio SJ (ed), 1995.

Thus, the peaceful and tranquil towns in the island of Mindanao were forced to live in continual anxiety and panic. These towns did not have weapons to confront the *disciplinarios*. However, a little gunboat called *Dalingding* with soldiers on board moved up and down the coast ready to give support to the towns since the number of *disciplinarios* in Iligan increased. Some Spanish soldiers changed strategy by moving to Zamboanga to prevent the escapades of outlaws. It was also reported that during the whole week more than twenty (20) *disciplinario* rebels were shot in Iligan.³⁶

Moreover, the *disciplinarios* of the 3rd Company which was garrisoned at the fort of the New Victory near Agus 4 Baloi, Lanao del Norte had numbered to three hundred fifty (350), all bearing their respective weapons with some 30,000 rounds of cartridges were coming down towards Iligan. Their commander was a native Corporal named Sanchez Arrojo who had made himself the leader in lieu of the Spanish Captain. Other accounts noted that the bandits were in connivance with the deportees in Iligan passing through the towns of *Cagayan de Misamis* at *Manticao*, *Initao*, *Naawan*, and *Alubijid*, *El Salvador*, *Molugan* and *Opol*.³⁷ It was also accounted that these towns had experienced lawlessness like the ransacking of the *convento* (Spanish convent), going through the houses of the peninsular Spaniards, and the theft of Chinese stores. The above situation in Iligan resulted to the migration of people to Cagayan instead of people staying in Iligan.

Moreover, another infamous incident happened to a parish priest in his sixties. He was assigned in *Opol* (*Cagayan de Misamis*), going to Iligan for his mission work but, incidentally, he suffered pains and hardships due to the lawlessness of *disciplinarios*. He even spent days at sea on a tiny *banca* (boat) to escape the tortures. Fortunately, he arrived in *Mambajao* (Camiguin) safely for recuperation. The Spaniards immediately sent a gunship with one hundred sixty (160) troops and a Montserrat ship from Manila through General Lazo in order to intercept the *disciplinarios* in Iligan and Northern Mindanao. Generally, the *disciplinarios* brought problems in the town of Iligan because they abandoned their corn farming and left their families alone resulting in an economic depression in Iligan since the early decades of the 19th century.

³⁶ The Bautista Manuscript, p.14.

³⁷ Montero Y Vidal "Historia General" in B & R, Vol. 1.

Iligan and the Role of Spanish Administrators in the Province of Misamis

*Lieutenant – Colonel Leopoldo Roldan, Governor 1877-1883*³⁸

Lieutenant-Colonel Leopoldo Roldan, governor of the Province of Misamis in 1877-1883 was responsible for exacting heavy tribute and the exercise of brutality in dealing with the townspeople. He wanted to accomplish what he wanted. His only fear was the Moros and the deserters from Iligan. Once he notified the Gobernadorcillo of Iligan that he was coming and then the gobernadorcillo failed to meet him. Upon their future meeting he, Roldan, beat up the Gobernadorcillo with a cane and when the cane broke he still continued to punch him with its sharp end. Roldan was the governor who arrested Father Anecito Grima of Mahinog and put him in chains in criticizing him for his choice of Mantigue (Camiguin) as a place of isolation among the cholera patients.

*Lieutenant Colonel Jose de Togores, Governor 1890-1893*³⁹

Lieutenant Colonel Jose de Togore's leadership succumbed the Moro invasion and disciplinarios. When the Moros invaded barrio Tambaling (El Salvador) in 1890, Governor Togores, accompanied by Manuel Corrales, Cayetano Pacana, and the government forces went after the Moros and attacked them. Many of the Moros were killed and wounded and their weapons seized. The booty were taken back from them and returned to the owners. During de Togores's time several arms and ammunitions were seized by the Maranaos and again on June 23, 1890 the news brought to Cagayan that the Moros gathered in the barrio of Bayug for an invasion in the coastal towns of Misamis province. However, the Spanish officials were cautioned because of Manuel Corrales, a Cagayanon who immediately organized citizen volunteers for an expedition to Bayug. This expedition made the *Datu Sa Bayug* and the men of Corrales to have a peace pact and the promise to send news to Cagayan de Misamis pertaining to Moro activities around Iligan.

³⁸ The Bautista Manuscript, p. 11.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p.15.

US CONSULS E. SPENCE PRATT'S ADMINISTRATION 1893 – 1898⁴⁰

He organized the Central Government and sent a big Spanish army that consisted of the infantry, artillery, and a battalion of armed convicts to Malawi, now Camp Diethyl and also to Gilligan to conquer the "rebellious" Moors. Most of the soldiers were natives but the officers, from Sergeant to General, were Spaniards. In August 1896 when the growing discontentment among the Tagalog who burst into flames and a few months after Dr. Jose Rizal's execution, the Filipino soldiers in Marawi and Iligan began to show signs of rebellion. Later on the first company of armed convicts killed all their Spanish officers and left Iligan. They marched towards Cagayan, carrying with them their guns, ammunitions and supplies. Immediately Regiment no. 72 under the command of a Spanish Lieutenant and a Spanish Sergeant, but native soldiers were sent to Cagayan. The deserters passed through Cagayan at midnight. They shot the guards at the bridge, fired at the "casa real" and shot the patrol in town. The government forces were unable to attack them because the officers did not come out to lead their soldiers. They followed them later on but could not arrest them until finally the deserters escaped to the mountains.

Another group of well armed deserters left Iligan and came towards Cagayan. Regiment No. 72 went to meet them at *Molugan*, a baranggay fifteen (15) kilometers from Cagayan de Misamis but when they found that the deserters were already in Molugan they stopped at Opol, a baranggay five (5) kilometers from Cagayan de Misamis to evade fighting. The people in Cagayan, believing that the deserters would attack them at night took refuge in the church.

At this time the Spanish officials being few in number were afraid that a revolt might happen. They held secret meetings among themselves including the friars knowing that the people were in a state of revolt. One day, one of the deserters from Iligan, Tomas Gigante, told the members of the regiment no. 72 that some of them were being suspected as revolutionists. Hence, all the suspects would be arrested and taken to

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

Iligan to be shot or drowned in the sea. The whole regiment left their barracks and went outside of the town and escaped from being arrested. If not for the intervention of Manuel Corrales, that the deserters be pardoned and allowed to stay as civilians without being molested, they would have created an uprising in Cagayan de Oro.

The last year of the Spanish Administration in the Province of Misamis was characterized by horrible cruelties. Secretly, the deserters from Iligan were captured and shot. In Iligan, suspects were shot publicly outside the fortress on a daily basis. Gaspar Cruz, a Spanish resident of Cagayan, had drowned many innocent suspects in the sea between Cagayan and Iligan. Those unfortunates were taken on his boat, the *S.S. Dalingding* to Iligan under the pretense that they were summoned by the military authorities. Before they reached there, scrap irons or stones were tied to their feet and they were helplessly thrown into the sea. One of the unfortunates was Valeriano Akut, a brother of Lieut. Uldarico Akut, of the battle of Agusan Hill.⁴¹

It was the inhabitants of the towns of Iligan and Cagayan who were left to their own resources and initiatives against the Moro invasions. The inhabitants had to build *paluas* and equipped with the best available weapons of war that would defeat the enemies of the province. Some of the heads of *Paluas* who rendered creditable services were Captain Leon Neri, Captain Lino Neri, Commander Lino Racero and Commander Crisanto Acut.⁴² They made the best means of protection against Moro piracy in the Misamis province.

The Role of Iligan under the New Philippine Republic

The New Provincial Government organized by the Filipinos under the Malolos Central Government left Misamis Province to organize the new government there based upon the laws and regulations of the Revolutionary Government. Provincial officials were elected and the council passed a resolution with the following provisions: to fight against any invaders, to organize armed forces and build the provincial defense and to secure and manufacture arms and ammunitions. Immediately, a commission composed of Apolinar Velez, Anastacio Neri and Celso Roa

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 12.

⁴² Ibid. p.19.

was sent to Iligan by General Buile to request more arms and combatants hoping that the disciplinarios will cooperate with the Spanish with the Spanish side. Later on, Juan Bautista, through the machinations of Aguido Ramiro in the Quartermaster Department of the forces in Iligan was able to secure 16 Remington guns, 200 machetes swords, 2,000 cartridges of ammunition and 5,000 army blankets.

During the Spanish regime however, the possession of guns and revolvers, as well as ammunitions were not restricted. That is the reason why many of the people in Iligan helped in arming the new government.⁴³ On this regard, a factory and a repair shop in Iligan was also organized headed by Timoteo Baz, an expert mechanic in the repair of cannons, guns, weapons, ammunitions, swords, and other war supplies for the revolutionary forces.⁴⁴ Consequently, the role of Iligan in the province of Misamis was significant aside from being the gateway of the Moro force. Iligan was also the first among the members of the five districts of Misamis to organize an activist movement known as the *disciplinarios* against the Spaniards. Significantly, Iligan supplied "some combatants", arms, and ammunitions to her neighboring towns and municipalities during the early part of the 19th century.

Spanish rule was disrupted by the victory of Admiral George Dewey in Manila on May 1, 1898 which signaled the start of American rule in the Philippines. Initially, the policy pursued by the United States with respect to Lanao areas and the Muslim region was one characterized by the non – interference in the affairs of the Filipino people.⁴⁵ This policy pursued by the Americans during the early years involved the use of the army. American garrisons were established in Iligan and Malabang to secure and maintain the confidence of the people.

⁴³ The Bautista manuscript on the Philippine Revolution in Misamis Province, 1900 – 1901 on The Local and Historical Sources of Northern Mindanao. Demetrio and Madigan (eds.) Vol. 1, 1995.

⁴⁴ Vic Hurley, *Swiss of the Kris: The Story of the Moros* (New York: E.P. Dutton and Co., 1936).

⁴⁵ Annual Report of the War Department: General George Davis Report on Moro Affairs (Manila: Bureau of Printing, 1901), Vol. VIX. p. 494.

Conclusion

The History of Iligan as a Spanish pueblo since 1838 – 1898 is always attached to the province of the old Misamis, the second of the five districts in Mindanao organized by the Spanish government of the Philippines. The 1625 accounts in Blair and Robertson of the early Recollect Missionaries in Bayug showed traces of Christianization with the few exceptions of some natives in the place who were adamant in "giving alms" to the church. In 1625, the Recollect clergy left Iligan and subsequently established a bigger visita in Cagayan de Oro.

The status of Iligan being the baseline of defense from the eventual attack of the Muslims in the different villages in Northern Mindanao discouraged the Spanish missionaries to establish a permanent mission / settlement in the area. However, the reduccion (resettlement) policy of the Spaniards is successful because the pueblo of Yligan developed into a city of what is now the vicinity of the modern Iligan. As a result, tangible structures were built such as the Catholic Church or the Cathedral of Saint Michael Archangel, the Philippine Postal office, a market, a plaza, a street layout are those of the legacies of the Spanish resettlement policy.

Consequently, almost all the Spanish pueblos in the Philippines were developed into modern towns in the 19th century.⁴⁶ In the case of Iligan, there are no changes as to the location of its pueblo today, it even served to continue its administrative unit with her developing socio-economic activity. Iligan is located on the Northern part of Mindanao. It is bounded on the Northwest by the province of Misamis Oriental, on the East by Bukidnon, on the South by Lanao del Sur and the municipality of Baloi, on the southwest by the municipality of Linamon, and on the west by Iligan bay. It has an area of 73,053 hectares of relatively flat and with rolling and mountainous areas in the hinterlands.⁴⁷

In the early 19th century, the booming industrial complex in the city of Iligan and the rapid resettlement and migration of people from Luzon and the Visayas resulted in the increase of population. The

⁴⁶ Frederick L. Werstedt and JE Spencer. *The Philippine Island World: A Physical, Cultural and Regional Geography*. University of California Press. Berkeley. 1967

⁴⁷ Task force on Urban Development, "Profile Report on Iligan City", Iligan City, January 15, 1968, p.4.

Visayan migrants from Cebu, Bohol and from Camiguin continue to come to Iligan. The Chinese migrants who started the retail trade activities and the early family names such as Actub, Zalsos, Adeva were already in Iligan.

In the years 1900s to 1950s, the towns of Iligan and Cagayan de Oro were the two most important urban centers in Northern Mindanao which had also a very long existence as a center of Industrial development.⁴⁸

The landscape of Iligan is seen with its irregular coastlines along the river banks of Bayug, Tambacan and Tubod. Iligan being one of the finest harbors in Northern Mindanao with such characteristics as a deepwater pier serving the Lanao del Norte and the interior lands of Lanao del Sur for its domestic interisland shipping activity. Consequently, the principal significance of Iligan stems from the important industrial developments during the past decade. Iligan is not only the major industrial center for Mindanao but also in the entire Philippines. Her Industrial growth stems largely from the presence of the Agus river five (5) kilometers from the city.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Werstedt, p. 167.

⁴⁹ Werstead, p. 169.

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