

Pleasure Trail: American Land Travels to Baguio, 1900s to 1920s

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ABSTRACT

During the American colonial period in the Philippines, Americans from different backgrounds made the upland trip to Baguio, the sole colonial hill station in the colony, primarily because of its cooler climate. Through an analysis of American travel accounts, I will show that the pace of traveling to Baguio had a particularly profound influence on American travelers' multisensory experiences while in transit. Before the Benguet Road was completed and opened in 1905, travelers endured slow and difficult travel conditions, so they saw themselves as resolute individuals who were worthy of the sensory delights that the highland environment offered. When the Benguet Road was opened and motorized vehicle transportation to Baguio was introduced shortly afterward, the faster pace of travel made American travelers captivated by the experiences of an easier and more sensorily overwhelming climb to the hill station.

Keywords: Baguio, American colonial period, travel writing, highland-lowland, mobilities

Introduction

During the American colonial period in the Philippines, Americans from different backgrounds made the upland trip to Baguio, the sole colonial hill station in the colony, primarily because of its cooler climate. Not only did Americans get a semblance of the cooler climate in their home country, but they also greatly believed in the supposed ability of Baguio's climate to reinvigorate one's health, especially after a prolonged experience in the torrid and sickening lowlands.

In their accounts of their travels to Baguio, Americans included narrations of their experiences while in transit—most especially the part when they made the ascent to the hill station. That the American travelers included in their accounts their upland mobilities meant

that the very act itself of traveling to Baguio constituted significant experiences that merited recording. Although the use of travel accounts as historical sources is bound to be problematic owing to their tendency to be very impressionistic, Mary Louise Pratt ([1992] 2008), the trailblazer in contemporary critical travel writing scholarship, has proven in her seminal work *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* that a careful scrutiny of these impressionistic accounts can enrich studies on empire. Travel accounts heavily rely on whatever the travelers' human senses perceive, and as Andrew J. Rotter (2019) has shown, examining perceptual experiences which are mainly mediated through the human senses are important in understanding how colonial actors navigated colonial realities.

Analyzing American travelers' perceptual experiences as they made their way to Baguio amidst the changes introduced in the highland landscape during the early part of the twentieth century presents an opportunity to interrogate in a novel manner American perceptions of themselves vis-à-vis the Philippine environment. This is important given that much of the historical literature on Baguio, though they manage to critique the American environmental perceptions and discourses that surrounded and justified the establishment of a so-called "summer capital," neglect to magnify on and problematize the aspect of mobility to Baguio; that is, the act and ability of physically traveling to the hill station (Reed 1999; Anderson 2006, 142–47; Morley 2018, 86–114; Brody 2010, 148, 152–55, 158; Skelchy 2021). In fact, very few works have recognized the importance of giving due focus on mobility to Baguio. Vernadette Vicuña Gonzalez (2013, 51–67) allotted some space in her book to deconstruct the militarism tied to the building of the touristic Benguet Road, now known as Kennon Road. Rebecca Tinio McKenna (2017, 152–54) briefly discussed how the vistas appreciated by American travelers while ascending the Benguet Road exemplified the consumption of a naturalized landscape. James J. Halsema (1991, 165–282), meanwhile, provided a glimpse of the public works endeavors of his father, E.J. Halsema, when the latter was mayor of Baguio (1920–1937). Such endeavors included the building of the Baguio-Bontoc Mountain Trail (now Halsema Highway) and of other roads to and from the hill station, along with improving and maintaining already existing thoroughfares.

To fill this gap in Baguio historiography, I will show that the pace of traveling to Baguio had a particularly profound influence on American travelers' multisensory experiences. Before the Benguet Road was completed, travelers endured slow and difficult travel conditions, so they saw themselves as resolute individuals who were worthy of the sensory delights that the highland environment offered. When the Benguet Road was opened in 1905 and motorized

vehicle transportation to Baguio was introduced shortly afterward, the American travelers were captivated by the faster pace of travel and the experiences of an easier and more sensorily overwhelming climb to the hill station.

Valiant Riding on Horse Trails: Traveling to Baguio Before 1905

In the years before the Benguet Road was completed, there was no substantial change from the preceding Spanish colonial period with regard to the state of traveling to the area which would eventually become the prime American colonial hill station in the Philippines and in Asia.² American travelers set out from lowland towns on horseback and on foot, and their upland trips took days. Travel conditions were difficult. For one, the mountain trail had steep gradients and narrow segments that featured deep ravines. Steadily riding a horse was thus a considerable challenge, as Edith Moses, the wife of Philippine Commission member Bernard Moses, experienced in her 1902 trip.

Once we rode along the backbone of a mountain where the trail was not more than twenty inches or two feet wide, with a precipitous descent of a thousand feet on either side.

It would have been impossible for us to ride over this place had it not been for the tall grass that grew interlaced with tree ferns and bamboos, closing in the dizzy fall. One must keep his pony to the trail...In some places the descent was so precipitous that the horses slid down on their haunches; again, the ascent was so steep that we held on to the horse's mane to keep from sliding backward. (Moses 1908, 243)

In some instances, travelers had to get off their horses and lead them through the challenging highland terrain, as Helen Herron Taft, the wife of William Howard Taft, recounted her participation in a 1901 inspection trip to Northern Luzon.

According to my own diary: "I was completely tired. The greater part of the way we rode through beautiful pine forests, but up and down hills as steep as the side of a house; across rivers, and up a waterfall." This sounds like pretty heavy going, but my account of it written at the time was, I am sure, only slightly exaggerated. I remember distinctly that from Loo to Baguio, five full days, we walked a great part of the way; and not only did we walk, but we rendered necessary assistance to our horses which, giving out one by one, had to be dragged up the steep grades and "eased" down the opposite sides in a way that would have been highly ludicrous had we been engaged in anything but a very serious business. (Taft 1914, 200)

Weather was also a complicating factor. For one, it was hot on the lowland to the midland part of the Naguilian Trail, the typical route to the Cordillera from the lowlands, when the weather was sunny. Rain, on the other hand, did not offer a welcome respite from the heat, as it made traversing the trail very uncomfortable for travelers, with rains making the trail “execrable” and “wretched” (Worcester 1914, 452; 454). Both sunny and rainy weather were particularly a nuisance for the members of the Philippine Commission when they conducted an inspection trip in June 1901, as Daniel R. Williams, the commission’s secretary, reported.

Our start [from Dagupan] was made in the rain, giving color to the stories told of hard travel in the interior at this season...What with the mud and water, and the black grease off our saddles, we soon lost that sense of respectability which attaches to cleanliness. (Williams 1913, 256–57)

The usual afternoon rain fell in torrents, and we were soon thoroughly soaked. For a certain kind of rain, and for a certain time, an army poncho (rain cape) keeps you dry, but neither in kind nor time was this rain one of them. (Williams 1913, 258)

We left civilization today and headed for the mountains. A short stop was made at Naguilian, just at the foothills, where our real work began. The trail is a rough one, and, as we advanced, the sun grew hotter and hotter and the going harder and harder. In many places we were obliged to walk, and men and horses were used up when we struck camp [at Sablan] at one-thirty. (Williams 1913, 260)

The rain started earlier today than usual, and it was not the warm rain of the lowlands but a thorough-going downpour that made us shiver – the elevation here being over five thousand feet. Long before we reached our destination we were wet, cold, and hungry, a condition said to test the sweetest disposition. While no one was heard to say he really enjoyed it, there was no complaining. Some of the escorts, however, who thought they were going on a pleasure trip with the Commissioners, were heard to remark that had they known what was coming they would have been on sick report. From all accounts the worst is yet to come. (Williams 1913, 262)

Despite the aforementioned difficulties, travelers nevertheless saw interesting scenes as they laboriously made their way to Baguio. For one, the Americans were able to get a glimpse of the Cordillera natives, who they homogeneously referred to as Igorots. The Igorots attracted American curiosity—ranging from fascination at the

former's physical abilities to disgust toward the natives' physical and cultural attributes. William B. Freer (1906), an American teacher who traveled to Baguio in 1903 during his annual vacation, made the conclusion that the Igorot who he saw ascended the trail with ease and who conversely saw him and his companion struggling to hike the trail was "reflecting no doubt upon the inferiority of the white man" (272). On the other hand, Charles Henry Brent, the Episcopal Missionary Bishop of the Philippine Islands, when he was on his way to Baguio as part of a wider Northern Luzon tour, thought that the Igorots' houses which he saw along the trail were "dirty, and with an unkempt appearance given by the rough thatch, which looks as though it were an imitation of an Igorrote head of hair" (Brent 1903, 790). Brent also found revolting the notion that the Igorots who he saw crowding around one of his group's horses which fell down a cliff "apparently appreciate mule flesh...hoping that a *cañao*, or feast, would be their reward" (Brent 1903, 791).

Travelers also took pleasure at the scenic views along the trail. The sea, the lowlands, and the mountains panoramically stretched out in front of the travelers as they gradually made their way to Baguio. Maud Huntley Jenks vividly described how far her eyes saw as she accompanied her husband, anthropologist Albert E. Jenks, in a 1902 trip.

At six o'clock we were on our way, and rode until four in the afternoon, going up 3,000 feet. That day's ride was worth all the discomfort, for the scenery was exquisite...At one place, not far from Trinidad, we could look over the mountains and gorges and see the ocean extending a long way up the coast. We could see across the country to Dagupan and San Fernando, and could distinguish almost the whole course of the Naguilian river winding to the ocean. The great gorges were covered with a tangle of tropical foliage, which seemed to separate here and there so that we could see far deep down into the almost bottomless depths. There were little mountain streams rushing down over the rocks...I hope when we go down the trail some future day it will be clear weather so we may enjoy again all this alluring soul-stirring scenery. (Jenks 1950, 43)

But perhaps the most delightful sensory experience for travelers was their astonishment as they experienced for themselves the gradual transition from a humid lowland to a cooler highland environment. Although some travelers such as Mrs. Moses and Bishop Brent appreciated the abundant tropical flora along the trail (Moses 1908, 244; Brent 1903, 790), in general, travelers would be positively surprised and gratified as they finally saw pine trees after kilometers

upon kilometers of tropical vegetation, inhaled the pines' fragrant scent, and felt the cooler mountain air—sensations which they thought would have been impossible in the tropics. Philippine Commissioner Dean Worcester, in recalling his July 1900 expedition to Baguio which he led with fellow commissioner Luke E. Wright, said that, upon leaving Sablan which possessed the typical “steaming hot” climate of the lowlands, they found themselves “dumbfounded...”

when within the space of a hundred yards we suddenly left the tropics behind us and came out into a wonderful region of pine parks. Trees stood on the rounded knolls at comparatively wide intervals, and there were scores of places where, in order to have a beautiful house lot, one needed only to construct driveways and go to work with a lawn-mower. At the same moment, a delightful cold breeze swept down from the heights above us. (Worcester 1914, 453)

For Freer, the sight, sound, and smell of the pines represented a reward for weary travelers such as him and his companion after a difficult ascent on the trail, as well as a motivation to continue the climb to finally reach Baguio.

Two-thirds of the way up we came among the pine trees. These, at first few, increased in number until when we arrived upon the summit, we found ourselves in a pine forest, free from undergrowth and carpeted with needles. The beauty of their pines, their soft murmur, the cool, balsamic air, the pleasing lack of jungle growth, the green turf growing in the open spots—these repaid us many times over for the toil of reaching them. With a new zest in life we followed the smooth, wide trail, built by Igorrote labor, the fourteen miles to Baguio.... (Freer 1906, 272–73)

Thus, in the years before the Benguet Road was completed, traveling to Baguio was filled with challenges. Travelers had to contend with the steep and precipitous paths and the discomforts of weather extremes. Despite difficult travel conditions, travelers nevertheless found themselves in an interesting environment as they encountered the Igorots, marveled at the panoramic views along the trail, and most especially, experienced for themselves that a cooler climate was possible amidst the pervasive tropical heat which generally characterized the Philippine climate. For Mrs. Taft, Mrs. Moses, and Mrs. Jenks, riding through the mountains, despite all the hardships it entailed, was a wonderful experience which liberated them from the confining environment and tedious lifestyle in the lowlands, particularly in chaotic and sickening Manila.

It was the “rainy season” and we were wet most of the time, but Mr. Taft was right when he promised that we would have a glorious time and that the trip would do us a “world of good.” Down in the heat and the political turmoil of Manila I was taking things much too seriously, while up in the far-away north there was nothing to do but dismiss all worry and accept things as they came along... So I enjoyed myself thoroughly, as did every one else in the party, hardships and physical discomforts seeming only to add to our gaiety. (Taft 1914, 188–89)

I don’t know how to express an idea of bigness in a mere touch of description as I pass on through the story of this trip, but I want to convey an impression of overwhelming size in everything. It is a great, wild world where one sees miles in every direction and where nature seems to have done everything on a gigantic scale. (Taft 1914, 196)

We are having a glorious time. I am ready to give up civilization. How much more healthy and happy one would be riding over the mountains amidst magnificent scenery, eating from tin plates, and forgetting all about microbes, dust, servants, and dinner parties. I have not thought of a cholera germ since yesterday. Even the doctor’s wife has forgotten to ask if the plates are clean more than twice during a meal. And how we do eat! (Moses 1908, 239–40)

You must not think that all life over here is like this trip. We came over the trail in the worst season of the year for travel; in the dry season the rivers are low and there is no mud. Now that the trip is over and didn’t hurt me at all, I wouldn’t have missed any part of it. (Jenks 1950, 44)

However, the arduous experience of traveling to Baguio, such as what these three colonial officials’ wives especially enjoyed and what other aforementioned American travelers also went through, would soon be put to an end as the American colonial government introduced modern transportation infrastructure as part of its wider project of opening up and developing Baguio to become a governmental “summer capital.” On 17 March 1905, the Benguet Road was opened, initially for wagon traffic. Shortly afterward, automobiles were introduced as a faster mode of transport to shuttle travelers from the Manila Railroad Company’s Camp One branch line terminus up to Baguio (Forbes 1928, 567–71; Worcester 1914, 463–64; 469). Consequently, it was now possible to reach Baguio within the same day as departing from the hot and humid lowlands. Moreover, the resultant faster pace of travel also changed travelers’ experiences when going to Baguio.

Rapid Motoring on the Benguet Road: Traveling to Baguio Until the 1920s

The Benguet Road was the only paved route to Baguio until in 1915 when the Naguilian Trail was paved and subsequently opened as an alternative route to the hill station.² In spite of the fact that the Naguilian Road's traffic statistics surpassed that of the Benguet Road from 1917 onward (Bureau of Public Works 1917–1931), the Benguet Road had become the most well-known road to Baguio during the American colonial period, as far as travel accounts are concerned. Apart from being the fastest and most direct route to Baguio coming from Manila, the Benguet Road's popularity was rooted in its ballooning cost owing to construction miscalculations and its vulnerability to calamities (Forbes 1928, 567–71; Worcester 1914, 459–63; 469–72).³ It is thus unsurprising that American travelers generously wrote of their experiences as they ascended the Benguet Road.⁴ For one, traveling on the road was an opportunity to see fascinating scenery while being whisked through by a modern automobile. Grace Helen Bailey richly described her experience of ascending the Benguet Road during the *amihan* (monsoon) season of 1908–1909 as one of easily discovering the previously hidden world of the fertile Cordillera.

Crossing the Carabello [sic] Pass from Manila to interior Luzon in the winter months (November, December, January, February) one dips into the clouds which hang above and on the east side of the summit of the range; in the spring of the hillsides are covered with the exquisite Benguet lily...For miles, they stretch a carpet of pure bloom rooting into a soil rich and dark as that of Canaan. Far below are the grassy hills and the groves and forests of pine, while ages of decayed vegetation have taken away the sharpness of the country's contour, except where the swiftly rushing Bued cuts precipitous clefts in the rocks or works into gorges. The interior of Northern Luzon, especially along the Benguet road, resembles the coast range of the Sierra Nevadas, suggesting at times the Cumberland Mountains, although the latter cannot boast of the wonderful fertility of this tropical range.

Countless flowering orchids, frequently of great size, and innumerable parasitic plants, cling to almost every tree, or swing like hanging baskets from thick vines that wind, python-like, to huge tree limbs. From the road, one gazes into mysterious jungle depths, fecund with the quick-bearing richness of the tropics, and strange foreign sounds beat from the green density onto ears unfamiliar with the myriad and languorous life. Strange tales of the half-million head-hunters secreted in the great unmapped Northern Bontoc, come to one either as dawn glides out of the

lavender East or as the short tropical sunset palpitates into the purple velvet of transparent nights. Some of the 203 bridges are fifty feet long, and must be crossed slowly with frequent rests. As the grade rises and pauses are made on these airy structures, swung as it were, in space, from chasm to chasm, weird fancies, born of the vast silences and the occasional hoot of the great mountain owl come to the stranger with a thousand suggestions of unknown things, of creatures feathered and of humans never seen on shores other than those where the sun of the Orient drops its flame of scarlet and gold. (Bailey 1909, 39–40)

A visual plethora of landforms, bodies of water, and Igorots and their settlements along the road made it almost natural for travelers to glance at different angles from their speeding vehicles, as Frank G. Carpenter did when he drove his car up the Benguet Road. In his account, which was posthumously published in 1926, Carpenter also praised the road's engineering and upkeep, which he saw and felt for himself.

Even in Massachusetts there is no better highway than the Benguet Road. It is macadamized from one end to the other, and is kept in perfect condition. As we went along we saw half-naked Igorot men and women dragging stones from the cliffs and with rude hammers of steel breaking them inside iron hoops into bits the size of a walnut. Most of the men wore only a shirt and a gee string...The workers are paid by the cubic meter of crushed rock, receiving ninety cents in our money for pounding to bits a pile of stones heavier than two horses could haul on our country roads. The stones are afterward crushed fine by machinery and steam rollers so that the road is smoothly surfaced throughout.

Here and there labourers were repairing the walls that safeguard motor traffic over this scenic highway. In the heart of the mountains the road is often so narrow that two cars cannot pass, and as they dash around the curves a skid might drop them into the rocky canyon below. At such places walls a foot wide and half as high as your knee have been built, and altogether there are many miles of them. We passed over long wooden bridges just wide enough for the car, and stopped again and again at the frequent gates to wait for the automobiles coming down so that they might pass us at these wider places. At each of the stations stood a Filipino section guard who controlled the traffic by telephone, thus preventing accidents.

The road is cut right out of the cliffs, and at times it seems to cling to the rock halfway between the mountain tops and the

rushing river in the canyon below. It follows the course of the Bued, a stream more winding than the Jordan...The road twisted and curved like a corkscrew, much of the time we went in low gear and often the grade seemed as steep as the slope of a barn roof.

The ragged hills were covered with green. At times they rose straight into the fleecy white masses of clouds resting on their sides, and there was no level land anywhere. The torrential rains had cut great gashes in the mountains, so that their sides looked as though they had been ploughed by a race of Titans. Part of our way was through a narrow winding canyon, shut in by towering cliffs. In one place a waterfall, like a bridal veil, draped a precipice several hundred feet high. The wet black rock gleamed through the glistening white spray. Farther on, the canyon was filled with boulders that reminded me of the gigantic stones guarding the grave of Cecil Rhodes in the Matopo Hills of Rhodesia.

We frequently passed villages, and in nests of the hills saw Igorot *barrios*, little groups of huts from twelve to twenty feet square with thatched roofs. There were many Igorot porters on the road, barelegged men clad only in shirts, and women in tight jackets and striped calico skirts almost to their knees. The women carried loads in big baskets balanced on their heads or held on their backs by ropes about their foreheads. (Carpenter 1926, 81–83)

Travelers also caught sight of sobering reminders of the previous calamities which befell the Benguet Road, as what Melvin A. Hall and Reginald M. Clutterbuck saw in their respective ascents. Hall and Clutterbuck published their accounts in 1913 and 1915, respectively, just a few years after the July 1911 typhoon devastated Baguio and the Benguet Road.⁵

Sometimes we crossed the Cañon high above the river, and again descended and ran along its very edge, passing the partially interred remains of what once were steel bridges several miles above. The insignificant trickle in the cañon has often earned its title to Noer as is witnessed by further wreckage. In one place the road encircles gigantic bowlders which frown where but a year ago flourished a fine little pine grove, and further up passes over a great gravel mass that caused its almost total destruction in the 1911 typhoon. (Hall 1913, 5)

At several points on the trail we saw indisputable evidence of the fury of the river during the wet weather—here, the remains of a great steel bridge, tangled into a snarl, and red with rust, which had been washed away a few seasons ago, at a time when the rain was falling in the canyon at the rate of one and one-half inches

an hour, there, a huge tree, the earth from whose roots had been washed away, with the result that, being unable to support its own weight any longer, it had toppled over into the river...

The scenery is extraordinarily wild and picturesque; giant peaks towered way above us, some entirely clad in vegetation, whilst the side of others were badly scarred as the result of recent landslide. (Clutterbuck 1915, 232)

Besides the visual treat to travelers coasting along the Benguet Road, travelers also highlighted, with an observable tone of wonder, the rapidity by which they eventually found themselves in a different climate after just a few hours of motoring from the hot lowlands. Isabel Anderson, who published her travelogue in 1916, contrasted her sensations of enduring an uncomfortable overnight railway trip from Manila with the gleeful sensations she and her companions felt as they ascended the Benguet Road.

Our party was divided, and while several of the men went into the heart of the headhunting country, the rest of us took the train to Baguio, the mountain capital. What a night it was! The heat was frightful, and swarms of mosquitoes added to the torture...

Leaving the tropics behind, we climbed up, up among the glorious mountains. At last the train stopped at a little station, and we took the motors that were waiting and went on higher and higher into cloudland, where the tall pines grew and the mountains rose into the sky. We had indeed ascended "into Paradise from Purgatory." As one resident in Manila expressed it: "The heavenly coolness, the sweet pine air and the exquisite scenery give you new life after the years spent in the heat, glare, dust and smells of the lowlands." (Anderson 1916, 246-47)

Clutterbuck gave a vivid description of how quick in terms of distance travelers ascended the Benguet Road, while also commenting on the different sensations which he experienced as he neared Baguio.

The ascent of this [zigzag] portion of the road proved to be the most interesting and unique of the whole ride. When we left the river-bed the altitude was a little over three thousand feet above sea-level, but by the time the summit of the zig-zag was reached we were but a few feet from the 4,000 mark, and this in a lineal distance of only 2 ½ miles!...The whole aspect of the countryside was now changed. In place of the eternal bamboo, mango

trees, and coconut palm, of the plains, were splendid specimens of pines, the scent from which delighted our nostrils. The air, too, was much cooler and decidedly invigorating, and, after the drowsy, humid, atmosphere of the lowlands, seemed to put new life into us. (Clutterbuck 1915, 233)

The rapid ascent on the winding and precipitous road also equated to a thrilling ride which fueled one's excitement of going to Baguio, as John Arthur Fowler narrated in his account which was published in 1911.

Not at first does the atmosphere change and it is many miles before the cooler temperature and the smell of the pines betoken our actual arrival in the cooler clime, but the exhilaration and expectation that attend the fast moving auto as it speeds perilously near the edge of a fearful precipice or takes a plunge onto a suspension bridge that swings nervously with our weight marks a change that leaps the chasm between the zones.

This great gash in the mountains up which our auto speeds gives pause to all man's efforts at description. Some convulsion of nature made a network of intersecting gorges that have taxed man's ingenuity to climb with his roads and bridges. From either side open canyons sending their streams of water over falls or rapids to join the main stream five hundred feet below... The famous zigzag, whose ample curves swerve, within a mile, upward to chills and heavy clothes, gives many a thrill ere the pines come into view. (Fowler 1911)

From a survey of American experiences of traveling to Baguio in the years after the Benguet Road was opened, one could very well say that, for American travelers, motoring on the Benguet Road was bound to be a wondrous experience. Although one may argue that travelers mounted on horseback and travelers riding their vehicles essentially experienced similar sensations such as feasting their eyes on a visual spectacle of various scenery and feeling thrilled at just how near they were to danger, one must not discount the importance of how the faster pace of motorized travel was a factor that differentiated the experiences of motoring travelers with those of earlier horseback riding travelers. Motoring travelers bore witness to how American engineering ingenuity and skill were displayed in a foreign land, and they were amazed at the compression of time and space—sensory experiences which could only be appreciated by travelers who were in the comfort of their vehicles which dashed along the Benguet Road. Bailey is thus correct in stating early on that the Benguet Road's scenery and all the sensations it offered particularly to American

travelers was a worthwhile experience of its own; that traveling on it was sure to “repay any one for a protracted stay in the islands” (Bailey 1909, 36).

By the 1930s, Baguio urbanized owing to the growth of its mining industry (Luga 2022). Consequently, air travel marked its entry into Baguio, thus bringing about another shift in travelers’ experiences when traveling to the hill station.⁶

Conclusion

For American literature professor Wendy Martin, traveling for Americans necessarily constituted experiences which “provide distance and difference from daily life and expectations” (Martin 2019, 265). In the case of American travelers who made the upland trip to Baguio during the American colonial period, they indeed had experiences which were out of the ordinary as they made their way to the hill station. American travelers did not have simplistic and homogenous experiences while in transit, and as earlier sections have shown, the pace of traveling particularly exerted a profound influence on American travelers’ experiences.

Before the Benguet Road was opened in 1905, the slow pace of traveling to Baguio meant that American travelers endured difficult travel conditions when they made the upland trip. In their writings, travelers juxtaposed the challenges in traversing the horse trails with the sensory delights which they experienced as they gradually made their way to Baguio. That the American travelers highlighted difficulties in traveling and the rewards of enduring those difficulties bears resemblance to Romantic-style travel writing which first took root in the Western world during the mid-nineteenth century, wherein travelers considered difficulties and inconveniences as the markers of “authentic” travel in the midst of a world which, by virtue of its West-induced modernization, was becoming increasingly “inauthentic.”⁷ For American travelers, the way to Baguio was filled with authentic travel experiences of hardship and adventure. Early American travelers’ accounts of climbing the trail to Baguio are representative of Western mountain travel literature, wherein “the extreme challenge of the heights takes [center]-stage” (Dhar 2019, 354). Hence, in the years before the Benguet Road was completed, American travelers fashioned their experiences of traveling to Baguio as narratives of intense resolve to make the ascent to the hill station, even amidst the seemingly insurmountable obstacles of difficult terrain and extreme weather along the way. They who persisted were rightfully rewarded with sensations that were not experienced anywhere in the Philippines; that of gazing at fascinating scenes of Igorots and panoramic vistas, sighting, hearing, and smelling pine trees, feeling the cooler highland

breeze, and enjoying the wide-open spaces of the mountains which gave travelers a distinct feeling of freedom—a theme which can also be found in other Westerners' writings on mountain climbing (Dhar 2019, 353). Curiously, between men and women, it was the latter, as exemplified by Mrs. Taft, Mrs. Moses, and Mrs. Jenks, who particularly found delightful the difficult climb to Baguio. In contrast to the male travelers such as Dean Worcester, Daniel R. Williams, and William B. Freer who tended to gripe about the challenges during their ascent, female travelers were more appreciative of the unique and often difficult experience of traversing a mountain environment. Indeed, Mrs. Taft, Mrs. Moses, and Mrs. Jenks all explicitly voiced their enjoyment during their respective upland trips, thus lending credence to the notion that women saw Baguio as a refuge that liberated them from the more hectic lifestyle in the lowlands.

When the Benguet Road was opened and motorized vehicles were introduced as a form of transportation to Baguio, the swifter pace of travel brought forth a shift in American travelers' experiences. If previous travelers were already mesmerized by the sights, sounds, smells, and ambience while they traveled at a slow pace, then motoring travelers' senses, particularly their sight and haptics, were subjected to more overwhelming sensory pleasures. Both male and female travelers attempted to catch a good glimpse of the rapidly passing scenes of the flora, the fauna, the landforms, the bodies of water, and the Igorots which constituted the thriving environment of the Benguet highlands. This time, it was the male travelers such as Frank G. Carpenter, Melvin A. Hall, Reginald M. Clutterbuck, and John Arthur Fowler who provided more generous descriptions of what they perceived as they motored along the Benguet Road. In their accounts, the male travelers sought to appreciate the road's engineering and maintenance, endeavored to grasp the compression of space and time made possible by the Benguet Road, and strove to fathom the feelings of bodily danger—all while being seated in a speeding automobile. That it was the male travelers who provided more space to articulate what they felt as they ascended the modernly engineered yet calamity-prone Benguet Road substantiates Vernadette Vicuña Gonzalez' argument that the road, similar to many other road-building projects during the American colonial regime, catered to an American colonial masculine fantasy. Occupying positions of mobile American men utilizing a modern road that "[forced] itself into foreign terrains," Carpenter, Hall, Clutterbuck, and Fowler had a profound appreciation of how the Benguet Road "embodied a modern, masculine infrastructure of control and discipline laid over the resistant wilderness" (Gonzalez 2013, 55).

Regardless of differences between men and women's perceptions, motoring American travelers were illustrative of what

mobility scholar Jonas Larsen calls the “travel glance”—wherein faster mobility meant travelers could no longer “gaze” and linger to better take in a certain scene; all they could do was “glance” and struggle to sensually comprehend the rapidly changing scenes which passed by them (Larsen 2001; Urry and Larsen 2011, 156–63). Moreover, American travelers appreciated the convenient mobility afforded by automobile transport on the Benguet Road, thus making them part of a trend among Western travelers which not only “welcomed the faster pace and the ease of longer journeys,” but who also shared the view that “motor vehicles were...a means of getting closer to nature rather than despoiling it” (Youngs 2019, 125). Indeed, American travelers saw motorized travel as one which facilitated a more harmonious relationship with the environment because they were able to see, smell, hear, and feel the sensory experiences of making the climb to Baguio without the inconveniences and hardships of previous traveling by foot and by horseback. Ultimately, by emphasizing on the sensory pleasures which they enjoyed along the Benguet Road while in the comfort of their vehicles, American travelers were active participants in an imperialist discourse that whitewashed the controversial history behind the construction of a faster transportation link to Baguio (Gonzalez 2013, 51–67) and contributed in naturalizing the American colonial regime’s dispossession of the Igorots (McKenna 2017, 152–154).

Notwithstanding the variety of American travelers’ experiences owing to the differences in the pace of travel, it is clear that traveling to Baguio during the American colonial period was not a case of simply getting from the lowlands to the highlands or impatiently fixing all attention to the destination. Indeed, for American travelers, the ascent to Baguio itself was an experience as memorable as that of being in the Baguio townsite. Traveling to Baguio constituted extraordinary mobile sensations that were not possible to be experienced when one was in the dreary lowlands. Thus, American travelers’ experiences of making the upland trip to Baguio reinforced the exaggerated differentiation that the Americans constructed between the lowland and highland environments of the Philippines.

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Notes

1. For Spanish-era travel accounts to the area roughly corresponding to Baguio, see Quirante 1904, 262–304; de Vivar 1904, 133–62; Meyer 1975, 46–103.
2. For Bureau of Public Works-issued sources documenting the construction of the Naguilian Road, see Greene 1915; Williams 1915.
3. For more critical assessments of the Benguet Road, with emphasis on the matter of labor, see Bankoff 2005; Hayase 2022; Corpuz 1999, 134–41; Gonzalez 2013, 55–56; McKenna 2017, 49–74.
4. Even though the Naguilian Road's unpaved predecessor was the primary route to Baguio before the completion of the Benguet Road, a vivid narration of experiences while ascending the paved Naguilian Road is rare in American travel accounts. To read an example, see *The Philippine Review* 1916, 75.
5. For primary source accounts of what befell the Benguet Road and Baguio during the July 1911 typhoon, see Coronas 1920, 110; Worcester 1914, 471–72; Greene 1912, 61.
6. For an account of the first flight which landed in Baguio, see Halsema 1991, 237–38.
7. For more extensive discussions on the theme of authenticity in Western travel literature, see Thompson 2019, 119–24; Elsner and Rubies 1999, 1–56; Urry and Larsen 2011.

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