

Gayoc Family Heritage

Barangay Tagpiat, Aborlan, Palawan, Philippines



Historical Narrative
Gayoc Cultural Heritage



Historical Narrative

The Indigenous Palawano

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Genealogy

It is in Palawan that I met and married a woman of the indigenous Palawano group. With the help of her family members, relatives, and others, I constructed a family genealogy dating to the early 1800s. Oral history was key to this project because prior to the establishment of local government post-1903 people would selected a mate and settled down. There was no recognized

official ceremony to document the event. Therefore, few if any records of marriages and offspring exist. Religious leaders did make some recordings, but they lost some records; others remain closely guarded, and some were destroyed because of various calamities.

Only after local government came into existence was there a mandate to officially document marriages, births, deaths, etc. Some people went to have these particulars officially recorded based on their individual memories. However, this did not include everyone because many expressed fear and distrust of the newly implement system of governance. Over time, more people would have their previously arranged companionships solemnized (a civic or religious ceremony, especially that of marriage), recorded and officially documented at a local government office. Their offspring would also be record by them or by a midwife.

Details associated with the Gayoc Family Genealogy are not listed. I only provide the historical, cultural heritage, and setting in which family members finds their roots. This was done to avoid undue external speculation as pre-1920 resources are mainly oral based, see above, as very little or no documentation existed prior to then.



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Indigenous Groups

Palawan, the largest province in the Philippines, is home to several indigenous ethnolinguistic groups namely, the Kagayanen, Tagbanwa, Palawano, Taaw't Bato, Molbog, and Batak tribes. They then lived (some still do) in remote villages in the mountains and coastal areas.

Palawano Group

The Palawano group, also known as Pala'wan (or Palawan, depending on sub-dialect) or Palawano (only by outsiders), is one of the indigenous peoples of Palawan. They have traditionally hunted using soars and bamboo blowguns.

They closely resemble the Tagbanwa people, and in the past they were doubtless the same people. There are some Tausug residents in Palawan call the Palawano Traan, which means "people in scattered places". In the early days, Palawano houses were out of sight of each other, scattered among their plots of farm lands. Their main occupation was subsistence farming, cultivating mainly upland rice, but this has under some change in recent times.

They compose several subs-groups. One small community of south-west Palawanos living in the internal mountain and known as the taaw't bato, often misspelled by Filipinos as tau't bato by substituting the Tagalog word tao "people" for the Palawano word taaw. Taaw't Bato means simple the "people of the rock" and occupy the southern interior of Palawan within the volcanic crater of Mount Mantalingaan. Some uniformed outsiders believe there is a separate group called Ke'ney (and similar forms), but this is a derogatory term meaning "thick, upriver people." No one uses this term to refer to themselves as a people.

Religion

Their religion was mainly a traditional form of belief once practised throughout the central Philippines prior to the Spanish arrival in the 16th century, a mix of traditional animism with elements of Hinduism and Islamic belief. Some embraced Islam from their southern Molbog (one of the Muslim cultural minorities, a people group believed to have been migrants from North Borneo) and Palawani neighbors. Others are Protestant because of early Christian missionary campaigns, Buddhism survives, members of the Baha'i Faith, and those of the Mormon religion.

Settlement

Most of the Palawans settled in the highlands of the island of Palawan, from north of Quezon on the west side and Abo-Abo on the east, all the way to the southern tip of the island at Buliluyan, and Puerto Princesa City is the capital of what is now the Province of Palawan.

Ancient History

Palawan's history goes back over millions of years. Bone fragments, skull cap remains, and tools of the Tabon Man are some of the oldest remnants of human inhabitants found in the Philippines. Scientists unearthed these fossils in 1992 at Lipuun Point now known as the Tabun Cave Complex in Quezon City. Early dwellers of the Tabun caves perhaps originally came from Borneo. Further exploration of the caves revealed burial jars, jade ornaments, animal bones and human fossils showing habitation as far back as 47,000 years ago. Geological studies have also revealed limestone formations on the islands that date back 25 million years.

Ethnic Fusion

Today, the area known as Palawan province is a rich cultural and ethnic fusion of the past. A steady stream of international settlers from the surrounding areas of Borneo, Malaysia and China from as far back as 982 AD provided ancient Palawan with trading partners, political and religious structures and opportunities for intermarriage.

Government

The Spanish Conquistadors made their presence felt from the 1500s through to the revolution of 1898 and followed by a civil government established by the Americans. During World War II, Palawan was the site of a prisoner of war massacre by the Japanese occupying forces that took place shortly before advancing Allies arrived in December 1944. Joint efforts by Filipino and American military personnel liberated the island between February and April 1945. Palawan, now a well-known province, remains a self-governing part of the Republic of the Philippines.

Name Origin

The origin of the name 'Palawan' has a contested genealogy, some arguing it arises from the Chinese 'pa lao yu' meaning 'Land of the Beautiful Harbours', while others believe it derived from a local plant known as 'palwa'. Perhaps its name may owe a debt to the Spanish word 'paragua' as the central island's shape resembles that of a closed umbrella.

Research

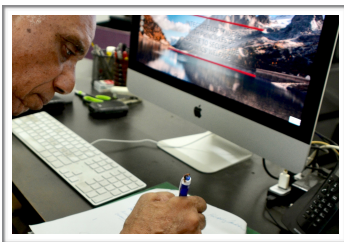
Research has shown that the Tagbanwa and Palawano are possible descendants of the Tabon Caves' inhabitants. Their language and alphabet, farming methods, and a common belief in soul relatives are some of their cultural similarities.

After the death of Ferdinand Magellan in Cebu, Philippines because of his effort to gain the favor of a local ruler, he became involved in a local war. The warriors of Lapu-Lapu, a native chieftain of Mactan Island, overpowered and defeated a Spanish force fighting for Rajah Humabon of Cebu under the command of Ferdinand Magellan. Magellan died in battle on April 27, 1521 and the remnant of his fleet landed in Palawan.

Magellan's chronicler, Antonio Pigafetta, in his writings, described the cultivated fields of the native people populating the Palawan Islands. He also mentioned that these people use weapons comprising blowpipes, spears, and bronze [L]ombard. During his stay in the area, he witnessed for the first time cockfighting and fist fighting. He also discovered that the natives had their own system of writing comprising 13 consonants and 3 vowels, and they had a dialect of 18 syllables. He further wrote that in Palawan, the local King had 10 scribes who wrote the King's dictation on leaves of plants.

End

My thanks to all family members, relatives, and others who provided information to make the Gayoc Family Genealogy Project possible.



Terry Nelson Randolph
Compiler