

Benton of the "Texas Crap Shooters" Ends Career Here

Former statistician of Manila Harbor Board is congressional medal man: was in the Gillmore-rescue expedition

Scratch any oldtimer ever so lightly and you discover an erstwhile romantic adventurer. Lawrence Benton is one of the last men you would suspect of this, but it is eminently true of him too; and in spite of the fact that for 20 years he has been stout, rather solemn-mannered, and sedate. This dignity developed when he had quit taking his fun where he found it. It came with his advent into civil life, where he had a long and worthy career in the insular customs service—was collector at Zamboanga—and topped it with 10 years as the amanuensis of the Manila Harbor Board where he prepared and published the annuals on the overseas trade of the Islands, often supplemented with special papers on the Islands' main industries.

On retiring from the civil service, he was granted the retirement gratuity, and with the harbor board he had ₱10,000 a year. His contract not renewed, he and Mrs. Benton (they have no children) are to make their future home in the United States. Benton has 3 brothers, older than he, and will so arrange his life as to spend as much time with them as possible.

These brothers live in Wisconsin. Friends everywhere in the Philippines regret the breaking of ties with the Bentons, who however have been successful here and leave the Islands with goodwill toward them.

The regiment that Benton came to the Philippines with as a volunteer soldier was recruited at San Antonio, Texas—"Remember the Alamo!"—and was the 33rd U. S. Volunteer Infantry brought over on the transport *Sheridan* that left San Francisco September 30, 1899, and docked at Manila October 27. The regiment went on immediate duty at Caloccan, then it was reembarked and conveyed up the west coast of Luzon by 4 gunboats, and on November 7 took the town of San Fabian. Largely recruited from Oklahoma and the Indian Territory, and the Texas ranges, soldiers of the 33rd represented every walk of life and had such a propensity for crap as to be dubbed *The Texas Crap Shooters*.

Colonel Hare liked the nickname at once, it told him his men were ready fighters. The regiment was soon in the battle of San Jacinto, one of the toughest fights of the entire Aguinaldo insurrection, and it did itself honor in the fight.

Then Colonel Howze of the 34th Volunteers, and Colonel

Hare of the 33rd, with small selected detachments, drove into the Abra wilderness to rescue the Gillmore party. (In the battle of San Jacinto, Major John A. Logan was killed; his body was taken back to America on the *Sheridan*. Logan was one of the few commissioned officers killed in action during the war, and 2 men of his battalion were killed beside him.)

Lieutenant J. C. Gillmore had been the navigating officer on the gunboat *Yorktown* sent to Baler, Tayabas (President Quezon's birthplace) to bring relief to the Spaniards, about 50 in number, holding out against the insurrectos under the impression that Spain still held the Philippines and the rebellion was a movement against their country. It was this stubborn garrison that kept the Red and Gold flying longest in the Islands. In trying to relieve it, Gillmore and a number of his men encountered overwhelming Aguinaldo forces up the river, that they were exploring with the ship's boat, and were compelled to surrender after some had been killed and others fatally wounded.

Aguinaldo had them taken to San Isidro and placed in the provincial jail, and with other prisoners occasionally taken, they were moved north as Aguinaldo retreated farther and farther into the mountains. The room at San Isidro where they were confined became, under the United States, the office of the division schools superintendent. Visiting that office often, during 5 years of supervising San Isidro's schools, I remember that the names of the prisoners where they had scratched them into the brick, were still on the wall toward the street; and I recall that they were eventually whitewashed over, and that I felt it a sacrilege.

But I remember more merrily my beloved neighbor, the old Spaniard, his loyal wife a Filipino woman, who, released at San Isidro when Aguinaldo trekked north, got a message back from Gillmore to the advancing American line. The message told the American command that Gillmore and his men were still alive, but feared they would be in great danger of being shot as excess enurance during the retreat. Permitted cigarettes, the old Spaniard emptied one, put this message in the wrapper, then closed the ends with tobacco; and then he hid this fragile cartridge in his groin, and made his way south to meet the Americans.



LAWRENCE C. BENTON

... Congress awarded his soldiers in the Abra Mountains with coconut-bark pads for shoes.

Near the column, he climbed a mango tree and concealed himself, calling out when the advance guard approached. So he delivered the message, and the further most personal information that his wife was about to undergo the crisis of childbirth; whereupon the regimental surgeon was requested to take charge of the situation. The woman was conveyed to the field hospital in a Daugherty wagon, and there delivered of a boy who, when baptized, was called Lawton. This boy came to have brothers, Funston, McKinley, Roosevelt, MacArthur, Taft. The grateful and emotional Spaniard seemed to love America equally as he did his wife; and his young republicans attended San Isidro's public school.

After San Jacinto, out of Benton's company no less than 76 men were able to be detailed to the outfit taken by Howze and Hare in rescue of the American prisoners, Gilmore heading them, that General Manuel Tinio had sent into the wilderness under a detail commanded by a lieutenant. Only 24 of the company could not go, something showing the stamina of the young volunteers. The expedition began with about 6 days' rations, and its errand was only effected after weeks of hardships all but beyond human endurance.

At last the prisoners were found, alive but famished—though hardly more so than their rescuers—at the headwaters of Abulog river, gathered at a boulder midstream; and on the bank above, the Filipino officer and his men waiting to surrender. On this turn of fortune the prisoners gave way to long-pent feeling, they behaved like hungry children: they wept hysterically, and laughed by turns—every

pathetic gesture revealed their gratitude. Then Gilmore advised that way should be made to the coast down the Abulog, that flows northward parallel to the Cagayan, instead of recrossing the divide.

This was done, the wounded and exhausted being conveyed on bamboo rafts. But so barren was the country, so empty every knapsack, that at the end of December, when muster had to be taken so the men would have their pay on time, the sergeant had to crawl about the camp to notify the men, and they in turn had to crawl to answer to their names—which every man did grinning.

By this time, foot pads were being improvised out of coconut husks. The men would shoot coconuts from the trees, when they got to the lower lands where such trees grew. They would break off the husks, mesh them with their rifle butts, and tie them to their bare feet with fiber. In this way, Benton hiked from Abulog to Aparri, as many of his comrades did, a distance of some 15 miles. At Aparri the party boarded the *Venus* (an old interislander still in service, Manila to Palupandan weekly) and was taken back to San Fabian under escort of the gunboat *Princeton*. Congress voted all the men medals.

Such was the rescue of the Gilmore party. F. W. Langford, agent for Pabst beer, was among the prisoners; and his gay notes dropped along the way of retreat—"Drink Pabst Beer!" "On the Road to Hell and Still Going!"—were frequent signals that the rescue expedition was on a hot trail.

Gilmore had with him 11 men. Admiral

Watson reported the other 14 as follows: Civilians, G. W. Langford, David Brown, J. W. O'Brien. Soldiers: George T. Sackett, Archie H. Gordon, William Bruce, Elmer Rounyman, Frank Stone, Lehard S. Smith, Albert O. Bishop, Frank McDonald, Harry T. Huber, Martin Brennan, James B. Curran.

Pyton C. March, then a major, was in this decisive northern campaign. (During the World war he was chief of staff). Prisoners kept at Bangued a while had been befriended by the Paredes family, had opened school, and taught Quintin Paredes, now delegate to Washington, his first lessons in English. He had learned quickly, and word of it had reached March.

When March invested Bangued, Abra's capital, all families but the Paredes family had fled to the shelter of the mountains; but this family, praying and preparing to flee, suddenly, by decision of the father, decided to remain in town and trust to the Americans' mercy. March had a little boy named *Quintin* hunted up, and brought before him at the town hall. When March asked Quintin if he spoke English, and if his name was Quintin, he replied, his heart in his mouth:

"No, my name is Quintin (Queen-teen, accent on the second syllable). No, I don't speak English!"

So he became March's interpreter, thus innocently beginning his public career and founding an imperishable friendship. Unable to tell how far along a trail the March column might be, he hit upon the use of a stick in lieu of unknown words. "This morning, sir, we here," he would explain, his hand on one end of the stick. "Tonight we be there," the other end of the stick

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"But we now here only," some intermediate point along the stick. March found this was accurate information.

With such directness the American régime began, that the subject of this sketch had a gallant part in it at the outset, a useful part since. When Bangued was to elect a mayor, March called all voters to his headquarters and told all who wanted to vote for Isidro Parades, Quintín's father, to step to the right. If anyone wanted to vote for Isidro's opponent, if anyone did, they could step to the left. As this, while simpler, differed only in detail from the Spanish elections, it was at once understood and accepted; and of course, Isidro was all but unanimously elected the town mayor.

So the story runs on, adventure after adventure. Yet there are young men who suspect that when oldtimers get together and recount the past, the days of the empire, they depart from strict accuracy and draw

the long bow! Nothing of the sort. In the instant case, I have had the help of the history of the 33rd Volunteers, by the regimental historian, Guilford C. Jones; my own memory as a carpentering school teacher, and the chapters by Benton himself, published in *The American Oldtimer*. Often indebted to Benton for trade data, the *Journal* wishes him and Mrs. Benton many years of continued happiness together. They have been good folk to know. W. R.

Future for Chromite

(Continued from page 40)

approximately one-third the figures used in making the estimates referred to. As regards marketing, chromite, unlike gold, must be sold in a competitive market. Consumption and cost of production play important roles in producing profits. Statistics show that chromite consumption is expanding. New uses are constantly being discovered for its utilization. As an example, the last few months have seen an increasing demand for ferrochrome in the automobile industry due to the discovery that the addition of a small amount of chrome to the iron in the engine—a small amount added to the material formerly used to make forgings such as the crankshaft, permits the casting of these parts instead of forging. The addition of chromium to steel plays an important part in adding strength and decreasing weight—a characteristic which is increasingly being recognized and utilized by various industries. There is no doubt but that consumption is increasing and that we are in on the ground floor of a comparatively new and growing industry. With the acquisition of the data now being compiled it will be possible to intelligently negotiate contracts for ore and decide on the feasibility of constructing metallurgical or other plants to produce a saleable product to actual consumers. As previously pointed out, estimates of the cost of producing ferrochrome from Masinloc ore are decidedly favorable to that deposit.

No far no mention has been made of the use of Masinloc ore in the chemical industry. Exhaustive tests have been made in our laboratory which show conclusively that sodium bichromate can be produced at a cost which compares favorably with that of other producers.

Mr. Searle's conclusions regarding your Masinloc chromite deposit may be summed up as follows:

1. There are a minimum of 10,000,000 tons of commercial ore positively in sight with possibilities of a considerably greater ultimate tonnage.
2. Exhaustive tests show conclusively that the ore:
 - a. Is amenable to metallurgical treatment;
 - b. Is excellent material for refractory purposes;
 - c. Can be used in the production of sodium bichromate.
 All at a cost of production low enough to permit successful competition if necessary.
3. Once into production a long life is assured with an ultimate probable profit to be realized from these reserves far in excess of that which may be expected from other ore reserves now under development by the mining industry of the Islands.
4. We are on the ground floor of a rapidly expanding market and the development of new industry.

Improvement . . .

(Continued from page 20)

dry mining and in cheap adequate air conditioning for great depths. These will render reciprocating electric rock drills immediately popular with a great saving in power and reduction in the cost of breaking. We may yet see the piping of liquid air instead of compressed air to the working faces in hot and deep mines, but for cooling and ventilation purposes instead of for power. Further improvements in scraper loading and more particularly in mechanical loaders are to be expected. Cheap light portable ready-made metal belt conveyors would find useful application for gathering ore—the locomotive has inherent disadvantages. Present types of ropes and hoists do not appear to offer scope for any great improvement, although pumps and fans are still the subject of interesting innovations.

Many ore-dressing processes, particularly the crushing or disintegration of ores, offer a wide scope for technical advance.

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