

PROMINENT AMERICAN BUSINESSMEN  
IN THE PHILIPPINES

1910-1935



**A.L. Ammen**

Albert Louis Ammen came to the Philippines in February as an employee of the quartermaster corps. In 1903, he went into the transportation business, establishing both water and land transportation lines in Ambos Camarines. In 1914, he incorporated the A.L. Ammen Transportation Company, the first auto-bus line in Luzon, from which eventually sprang the Pangasinan Transportation Company and the Batangas Transportation Company.

**George C. Arnold**



Arnold came to the Philippines in 1899 as a civilian employee of the quartermaster corps, moved to the Bureau of Education in 1901 to be the secretary of Dr. David Barrows. He left government service in 1903 to work for various business companies including the China Mutual Life Insurance, Standard Oil, and International Banking Corporation, and returned to Manila in 1916, shortly after the outbreak of the First World War to open the local office of Willits and Patterson and build several coconut oil mills.

**Emanuel Morris Bacharach**



On his physicians' order to seek a warmer climate for his health, Bachrach went to the Philippines in 1901. He went into the import business with a start-up capital of 1,700 Mexican dollars. He brought the first automobile, a Ford, to the Islands which began what would become the biggest automobile business in the Far East.

**Henry Boyle**



In 1911, the 30-year old Boyle accepted a position with the Philippine Bureau of Agriculture and rose to become the chief of its fiber division. He resigned from government service in 1918 to become the manager of the local office of Columbian Rope.

**George Fairchild**



On hearing that the Democrats would remove the duty on sugar, Fairchild sold his business interests in Hawaii in 1911 and moved to the Philippines. He was the moving spirit behind Welch, Fairchild, and Company, operators of the Mindoro Sugar Estate, and the manager of the Hawaiian-Philippine Central in Negros. In the early 1920s, he acquired control of the Manila Times to fight the immediate independence campaign in the legislative assemblies. Fairchild served in the U.S. Senate from 1908-1912.

**Carl Davidson**



Davidson was manager of the Manila branch of the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company in the early 1920s.

**Frank Goulette**



From serving in Porto Rico during the Spanish-American War, Goulette reenlisted in 1899 with the 33rd U.S. Volunteers to fight in the Filipino American War. On his discharge in 1901, he joined the Metropolitan Police Force of Manila and was in service until 1906 when he bought and operated the Anloague police mess for the next three years. He went into the moving picture business, establishing a chain of movie houses, including Lyric and Savoy Theaters.

**Robert J. Harrison**



He first saw the Philippines in 1899 when he came in the new colony on the transport Grant as a quartermaster clerk. For two years, he had the chance to travel all over the Archipelago and get acquainted with local conditions and needs. He left government service to join the California Lumber Company, the first American firm to import American lumber into the Philippines. For two years, he travelled from province to province selling lumber and putting up buildings, after which he spent another two years in Sorsogon constructing buildings for the Company. He remained with California Lumber until 1910 when Norton and Harrison was formed to take over the interests of the former. He eventually took full control of Norton and Harrison in 1919.

**Alex George Henderson**



A cabin boy at age 15 and with seven years of sailing experience behind him, Henderson arrived in Manila in 1903 on board the Great Northern Minnesota. He remained on this ship until 1915 when it withdrew from the Pacific. In 1917, Henderson joined Frank Waterhouse and Company, the shipping company that started the first line between the North Pacific Coast and the Philippines.

**Gustave T. Hermann**



Hermann arrived in the Philippines in 1904 and spent the next four years as a public school teacher in Tarlac. In 1908, he became the local agent of the International Correspondence School, but soon transferred to the optical firm Clark and Company which allowed him the opportunity to study ophthalmology in Chicago.

**Henry Herman**



Came to the Philippines with the 27th U.S. Volunteers; went into the importation of electrical goods upon his honorable discharge from the army in 1901.

**James G. Jefferys**



A private in the US Army during the First World War, he joined Atkins, Kroll & Co in 1919. He was sent to Manila as officer-in-charge of the local office, which was then trading in copra.

**Harry D. Kneedler**



He came to the Philippines in 1900 under contract with army and was assigned in Albay. When a cholera epidemic erupted in 1902, he had his contract annulled and volunteered to work with the Sanitary Board. He practiced medicine in Manila until his retirement in 1919, after which he devoted his time to real estate.

**Henry B. McCoy**



McCoy, a lieutenant-colonel with the First Regiment of the Colorado Infantry, had the honor of raising the first American flag over Manila in 1898. He was deputy collector of customs of the Philippines from 1901 to 1909 when he was promoted to the position of Insular Collector of Customs, which he kept until the Harrison administration. He went into mining.

**Richard A. McGrath**



McGrath came to the Islands in 1899 with the Battery D, First California Heavy Artillery, U.S. Volunteers. Shortly after his discharge that same year, he opened a small shop on Plaza Goiti, later to be named Hike Shoe Store.

**John Northcott**



Sent to Manila in 1905 as cashier of the New York Life, Northcott secured the general agency of the West Coast Life 1910. By the 1920s, his company had become one of the largest life insurance companies in the Philippines.

**William J. Odom**



William J. Odom arrived in the Philippines in 1899 with the 26th U.S. Infantry. His mechanical and technical skills won him the prestigious position of foreman in the construction of Santa Cruz Bridge (Manila). He joined the civil government in 1902, but returned to the U.S. in 1906 to help in the reconstruction of earthquake-ravaged San Francisco. Coming back to the Philippines in 1909, he was assigned to Capiz where he built roads, bridges and culverts.



**Walter E. Olsen**

Arriving in Manila in February 1899, Olsen served with the 20th U.S. Infantry. Upon the official end of the Philippine-American War, he moved to the Federal Civil Service where he stayed for two years. In 1904, he left government to start a small retail business, "almost as unpretentious as a push cart vendor." His company grew to become the largest exclusive tobacco corporation in the Philippines.



**Horace B. Pond**

Pond arrived in the Philippine in 1902 as a stenographer in the Bureau of Customs. He moved to the Appleby Nauman and in a short time became its general manager. Upon absorption of Appleby Nauman by the Pacific Commercial Company, he became the latter's vice president and general manager.



**Walter Scott Prince**

He arrived in the Philippines in 1899 with the 4th U.S. Infantry and went into the contracting business upon his discharge. In 1911, he started the Leyte Transportation Company with three trucks, a fleet which would grow into scores by the next decade. He also founded Bazar Gran Capitan.



**James C. Rockwell**

From New York where he was superintendent of transportation, Rockwell moved to Manila in 1911 to manage the railway department of the Manila Electric Railroad and Light Company. He was transferred to the electric department the following year, then appointed general manager in 1917 and vice president in 1918, shortly before electricity generation and distribution became the main business of the company.



**John J. Russell**

The son of a senior partner of the pioneer American merchant house in the Philippines, J.J. Russell worked for Findlay, Richardson and Company, and later Warner, Barnes, and Company, before he launched his own brokerage Russell and Company in 1905. Russell specialized in Philippine hemp and was regarded as one of the leading authorities on the product in the Islands.



**Albert Tait Simmie**

In 1912, Simmie joined Luzon Stevedoring Company, a firm his elder brother George had founded. By the early 1920s, the company was the biggest of its kind in the Islands, bagging a contract to handle the cargo plant of the Bureau of Customs in the government piers.

**Carson Taylor**



A former teacher who enlisted in the First Colorado U.S. Infantry Volunteers, Taylor arrived in the Philippines in August 1898. On his discharge in July 1899, he became circulation manager and later business manager of the Manila American. He sold his interest in that paper and entered the custom service, which acquainted him with the needs of the shipping business. In 1910, he founded the Bulletin, a small sheet devoting to shipping.

**Shelley P. White**



A lawyer by training, White arrived in Manila in 1918 as manager of the American Express Company, by then already in travel and railway. The following year, he moved to Willits and Patterson in Shanghai and soon became president and general manager of its Manila office. Willits and Patterson traded in coconut oil.

**Stanley Williams**



He arrived in Manila in 1906 to become an agent of the International Banking Corporation and was assigned to Cebu, Hong Kong, San Francisco (CA), Colon (Panama) and Tientsin before he was finally appointed manager of IBC in Manila.

**John R. Wilson**



Wilson came to the Philippines in 1899 with the 17th U.S. Infantry to fight the Spanish forces and subsequently, the Filipino army. After his discharge in 1901, he worked with the Manila city government to implement the first official real estate assessment under the American administration. Gov. Taft was impressed with his work that he was tasked to organize the Land Registration office as an ex-officio clerk until 1905, when he was appointed Assistant Director of Lands. He was replaced in 1913 due to Gov-Gen. Francis B. Harrison's Filipinization agenda ("resigned of his own accord", reported Harrison). He was soon hired to manage the Agusan Coconut Development Corporation and the Visayan Refining Company.

**Thomas J. Wolff**



Arriving in the Philippines in 1899 with the quartermaster corps, he opened the Sanitary Steam Laundry upon his discharge. He was also director of several companies including Philippine Mining, Ilocos Sur Products, and Isuan Mineral Water, and director-general of the Philippine Carnival Association.