

This reading includes two letters by men who fought for the U.S. in the Philippines. Charles King, who wrote the first letter, graduated from West Point in 1866, and served with distinction in the Indian Wars of the 1870s. He was teaching at the University of Wisconsin when the Spanish-American War broke out, and he immediately offered his services to the government, receiving a commission as a brigadier general. Though pleased by the quick victory in Cuba, King sided with those Americans who felt that the United States' incursion into the Philippines was unwise and unjustified. Thanks to an infected vaccination, he became ill shortly after arriving in the Philippines after his transfer from Cuba. The outbreak of hostilities that King feared came on February 4, 1899, little more than a month after he wrote his letter.

The second letter was written by William Mitchell, a member of a prominent Wisconsin family. The outbreak of the Spanish-American War led him to choose the military as a career, and by the time he wrote this letter he had seen action in Cuba and the Philippines and had risen to the rank of Second Lieutenant. Mitchell was one of many Americans who believed strongly in the United States' occupation of the Philippines during the Spanish-American War. His view of the Filipinos as inferior, and his use of the ethnic slur Gugu were both common at the time. The General MacArthur under whom he served, and whose name he misspelled, was the father of General Douglas MacArthur, who achieved fame during World War II.

“We Should Not Be in the Philippines,” by Brig. Gen. Charles King

Convalescent Hospital
South Manila, Philippines

December 18, 1898

Somehow I cannot feel that this is to be a Merry Christmas for any of us. I am still far too anxious about you all and, as for myself, tho' I have at last reached the field of possible active service and am where I have long wished to be I find the condition of affairs most unsatisfactory to almost any officer with whom I have talked -- from the Commanding General down. The unsettled treaty of peace over which our Senate may debate for months. The feeling of the Insurgents that they are being robbed by the Americans of the fruits of

all their victories and all their really brave efforts to free the islands from the tyranny of Spain; the active & insidious efforts of the Spanish priesthood & the German residents to stir up trouble between us & the Filipinos all point to a clash in the near future & only consummate coolness & mutual courtesy & patience will prevent it. The air is full of rumors & alarms. The Filipinos have been led to believe we are preparing to attack them & so have thrown up earthworks and planted cannon commanding the approaches to the outlying villages they occupy. The Americans have been warned that there is to be a great local uprising of the natives within our lines some still might in conjunction with an attack in force from without & that the American officers are to be murdered in their beds (The Fillies will have some lively experiences when they try that game), and so, as mere precautions we have had to strengthen our outposts. Though not yet sufficiently recovered to ride or walk except a few rods at a time I reported for duty three days ago & since then have spent much time rearranging my “front” which at present, as you will see by the map I sent Ruf [his son] is from Blockhouse 12 to the Pasig in front of Pandican...

Devotedly Your Own Daddy

“We Have the Filipinos on the Run,” by Lt. William Mitchell

Bautista, Philippines December 14, 1899

My dear Uncle Doc

Well, we have been keeping still for the last few days and are beginning to get rather restless but guess that I shall soon be accomodated with all the advancing I can take care of. I am now acting as chief signal officer of Gen. McArthur's division, dont know how long I shall be but probably for several weeks. We have these Gugus pretty well on the run now and they are breaking up into small bands, which we have to chase around the country. The last scrap we had with the whole division was at Bamban, where we soon routed them. I got some good shots in there with my carbine at 250 yds. range and could pick my men they were so near. However, we have not been skinning any Phillipinos as yet but some of them need it badly enough. They are a very funny people from our point of view as stoical as our indians. Utterly unmindful of pain or intense feeling if their outward appearance counts for anything. The climate here is my ideal of what a climate should be. Cool mornings warm in the middle of the day to be sure Cool evenings and very cold

nights. I enclose a newspaper picture & clipping. It is a very good one as we used this kind of transportation along the Manila Dagupau railroad where the track was in tack, but instead of being behind the line we are nearly always in front of it.

I never enjoyed better health. Have more flesh than I had in Milwaukee and seem to be able to stand most any old thing. We have come through rice fields with water up to ones waist, through woods thickets of bamboo, across rivers with currents like a mill race where men drown instantly, if they are washed off rafts or lose their hold of ropes we stretch across and all this right in the face of these insurrectos who are well armed apparently well officered and with plenty of ammunition but pitifully incompetent in marksmanship. They don't seem to kill such a great many of us considering the amount of ammunition they use. This is a fine country and a desirable place for the U.S. to hold in my opinion for many reasons, which you know probably much better than I ... Am enjoying this very much. Have good ponies men who will follow me anywhere and are good shots, good telegraph operators, good cooks and good everything the best scouts in the business also...

I remain As Ever, Wm. Mitchell