

Chapter 11: Interview “Memories of the Locals”

1. Mr. Franciso Corpus Aguilar (Pancho) also known as Paquito

Pancho as a boy, was very bright and brilliant. He grew up very smart, that he has a way of thinking and living on his own. Nevertheless, his sharp memory recalls several events and politicians in Aliaga, Nueva Ecija. Paquito as we called him, was born on March 9, 1951 as Francisco Corpus Aguilar.



Mr. Paquito helped the researchers verify many points of research findings dating back to 1800s, and 1900s. The list of Municipal Mayors and town people; the living and the dead, he fondly mentions their families and told accurate stories. He knew very well the 1968 incident caused the head of Our Lady to be missing from the Altar of Nuestra Senora De Las Saleras Parish. However, he was not aware with another incident occurred during the 1990s that Nuestra Senora De Las Saleras together with the baby Nino was missing. The new image surface with the new look. Crafted with gentle face and more defined features.

2. Mrs. Luzviminda Sayson Moreno

Mr. Domingo J. Sayson (May 12, 1916 - April 21, 1987) is the father of Mrs. Luzviminda and the late Parish Priest Fr. Ludy Sayson from Brgy. Poblacion Centro, Aliaga, Nueva Ecija. He was a well-known sculptor and painter from the town of Aliaga. A talented man with great visions ahead of his time, he was versatile in crafting the works of Saint images made of Santol wood. Santol is known as cotton fruit in English. He sculpted Nuestra Senora De Las Saleras in front of the Nuestra Senora De Las Saleras Parish and painted it himself.



Mr. Sayson was a person the town people ran to when they are sick, in Tagalog, “Manggagamot” (local doctor). He has the knowledge of “Hilot” (massage). Among other craft works, he sculpted Dr. Jose Rizal (located at the back of Aliaga Municipal Hall), other national heroes, as well as saints including baby Jesus and Santo Nino.



Around year 1968, the church bell rang continuously, prompting town people to come out of their residence. Many rushed to the church, Parish of Nuestra Senora De Las Saleras, Brgy. Poblacion Centro, Aliaga, Nueva Ecija: to discover that the head of Our Lady had gone missing. Not knowing what to do, town people wept and cried. Many town people living near the church recalled the incident very well.

One of the known manufacturing places for the saint (santo and santa) was in Paete, Laguna. Saints made here in Paete has similar characteristics of a rounded face. Another manufacturing place for the saints is in Pampanga. The characteristics of the santo and santa here are presented with a more sharp face or refined look.

To date, the family of Mrs. Luzviminda Moreno and Sayson family are devotees to Nuestra Senora De Las Saleras, helping and assisting with the church events.

3. Mr. Juan Vicente Obispo (Tata Gemo)

Tata Gemo is a well-respected local politician from Brgy. Sto. Tomas, Aliaga, Nueva Ecija. Born on March 28, 1928 he served as Brgy. Captain of Sto. Tomas, Aliaga, in 1989 and was one of the political advisors of Mayor Marcial R. Vargas from 1992.



From the liberation in 1946, Aliaga was under flood. Mayor Eusebio Bumanlag (Aliaga Mayor from 1952-1955) ordered to dig a small canal in order to prevent flood. This coincide with the story of the Miracle of Nuestra Senora De Las Saleras, where Our Lady was seen by unknown Town People sweeping the flood water, and that time Aliaga was spared from flood.

Memory of his childhood seeing a vast rice farm land which is now a cemetery in San Emiliano. As a young Hoobbalahab Reserve, he went through training and hiding. He witnessed vegetable farms, sugarcane farms, java farms (similar with sugarcane), and even tabaco plantation. At present Aliaga no longer produce sugarcane, java, nor tabaco.

In 1953 his business was to sell palay from Aliaga to Isabela province. During the martial law some residents of Aliaga opt to go to Isabela to work in the rice farm there because they are jobless here at home.

Remembering Martial Law during the Spanish Occupation

The first was in 1896, when Ramon Blanco, then the Spanish Governor-General Ramon Blanco of the Philippines, placed eight provinces of the Philippines under martial law. These provinces were ***Manila, Bulacan, Cavite, Pampanga, Tarlac, Laguna, Batangas, and Nueva Ecija***, where rebels had been fighting Spanish soldiers in what eventually became the start of the Philippine revolution.

The acts of rebellion of which armed bodies of the people have been guilty during the last few days at different points of the territory of this province, seriously disturbing public tranquility, make it imperative that the most severe and exemplary measures be taken to suppress at its

inception an attempt as criminal as futile,” Blanco said in the proclamation, according to historian Ambeth Ocampo. (Philippine Daily Inquirer 2009)

“Those who are found on, or who had been at the scene of an action, and those who are captured fleeing or in hiding, after having been with the rebels, shall be treated as presumably guilty,” he added. “That seems to cover almost everyone, including the aged, infirm, women and children.”

Two years later, in May 1898, Emilio Aguinaldo issued a similar proclamation, soon after his return from exile in Hong Kong. “Now that the great and powerful North American nation has come to offer disinterested protection for the effort to secure the liberation of this country, I return to assume command of all the forces for the attainment of our lofty aspirations, establishing a dictatorial government which will set forth decrees under my sole responsibility, assisted by the advice of eminent persons until these islands are completely conquered and able to form a constitutional convention and to elect a president and cabinet, in whose favor I will duly resign the authority,” Aguinaldo said, according to the book *A History of the Spanish-American War of 1898*.

First official proclamation of martial law

While both instances involved leaders declaring a form of military rule, it was actually Jose P. Laurel, who was the country’s commander-in-chief during the Japanese Occupation in World War 2, who was the first to declare martial law over the country in an official proclamation as President.

“The danger of invasion being imminent and the public safety so requiring, I, JOSE P. LAUREL, President of the Republic of the Philippines, pursuant to the authority conferred upon me by section 9, article II, of the Constitution, do hereby place the Philippines and all parts thereof under martial law and suspend the privileges of the writ of *habeas corpus* therein,” according to the official proclamation.

“For the purpose of carrying this Proclamation into effect, the President of the Republic of the Philippines hereby assumes all powers of government essential to or incident in the establishments and maintenance of martial law all over the Philippines, and to that extent, will exercise such powers and functions personally or by delegation by him to the presently organized and existing civil authorities, or to such new agencies or instrumentalities as he may, from time to time, create, in accordance with the exigencies of the situation,” he added.

The proclamation was dated September 21, 1944, the exact same day as Marcos’ own proclamation in 1972 (although Marcos announced it to the country on September 23). It became effective at 9 a.m. the next day, September 22, 1944.

Also on September 22, Laurel issued Proclamation No. 30, which declared a state of war between the Philippines and the U.S. and Great Britain. It became effective at 10am on September 23, 1944.

“President Laurel had been under pressure from Japanese Premier Hideki Tojo, since as early as the inauguration of the wartime Philippine Republic on October 1943, to declare war against the United States and Great Britain,” according to history site The Kahimyang Project. “Laurel had successfully parried off that Japanese demand for more than a year. But in the face of attacks on the territory of the Philippines by the returning allies, President Laurel found no more reason to delay the proclamation of martial law and the state of war.

“In his eventual trial for treasonable collaboration in 1946, President Laurel argued that by declaring a state of war between the Philippines and the United States and Great Britain, but mandating that no Filipino would be conscripted in the Japanese army, he did not give the Japanese anything that they did not already have; in fact, he gave them nothing.”

Martial law was eventually lifted on August 17, 1945.

Second official proclamation of martial law

At 7:15 p.m. on September 23, 1972, President Ferdinand Marcos announced on television that he had placed the Philippines under martial law, stating he had done so in response to the "communist threat" posed by the newly founded Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), and the sectarian "rebellion" of the Muslim Independence Movement (MIM). Opposition figures of the time (such as Lorenzo Tañada, Jose W. Diokno, and Jovito Salonga) accused Marcos of exaggerating these threats and using them as an excuse to consolidate power and extend his tenure beyond the two presidential terms allowed by the 1935 constitution. Marcos' signed Proclamation No. 1081 on September 21, 1972, marking the beginning of a fourteen-year period of one-man rule which effectively lasted until Marcos was exiled from the country on February 25, 1986. Proclamation No. 1081 was formally lifted on January 17, 1981, although Marcos retained essentially all of his powers as dictator until he was ousted in February 1986, making it the longest in the country's history.

Post-Marcos

Of course, after Marcos, martial law was declared two more times in the country. First, in December 2009, through Proclamation 1959 during the administration of **President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo**. Martial law covered only the province of Maguindanao soon after the events of the so-called Maguindanao massacre. It was lifted eight days later, on December 13, 2009.

The second was on May 23, 2017, through Proclamation 216 under the **President Rodrigo Duterte**. The President placed the whole island of Mindanao under martial law following clashes between the military and Islamist guerillas affiliated with the Maute Group. It proclamation was lifted over two years later, on December 31, 2019.

Source:

CAÑA, PAUL JOHN. (Sep 22, 2020). No, Marcos Wasn’t the First To Declare Martial Law in the Philippines: The first happened during World War 2. Available on <https://www.esquiremag.ph/long-reads/features/martial-law-in-the-philippines-a00289-20200922-lfrm>

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