Bacolor
ONE BRIEF SHINING MOMENT
THE Center sponsored a multi-sector research cruise down Pampanga River last summer, discovered that the river is not as silted and polluted as many believe, and as a result, organized cultural and ecological tours in coordination with the Department of Tourism Region 3, local government units in the river communities, and a private boatyard owner.

The project was launched last June 28 to coincide with the fluvial procession marking the feast of Apung Iru (St. Peter), patron saint of Apalit. Rep. Rimpy Bondoc of Pampanga’s Fourth District, Masantol Vice Mayor Bajun Lacap, DOT Region III officials and members of local and national media attended the launching and press conference. Ivan Anthony Henares, San Fernando City tourism officer, and Engr. Robert Canlas, owner of the boatyard, coordinated the affair. The Holy Angel University brass band, rondalla and polosa performer Renie Salor provided entertainment.

Congressman Bondoc promised to convert a portion of his fishponds into a mangroves nursery and to construct a port in San Luis town where tourist boats can dock. The town’s centuries-old church is part of the planned itinerary for church heritage river cruises. Other cruise options include a tour of the mangroves in Masantol and Macabebe, and tours coinciding with folk festivals like the batalla of Macabebe, kuradal of Sasmuan, Apung Iru fiesta of Apalit, and the aguman sanduk of Minalin.

The University’s Community Outreach Program will also participate in DOT Region 3’s skills enhancement training program on basic tour guiding and other livelihood projects to help boost tourism and other economic activity in the river communities.

The HAU Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management will take charge of booking and promoting the tours in coordination with DOT Region 3, while the Center, which prepared the tour’s itinerary, will also train tour guides from the local communities.
THE SANTIAGO de Galicia parish church of Betis, one of the few churches in the country declared National Treasures by the government, was the setting of the free concert of world-class pianists Ingrid Sala Santamaria and Maestro Reynaldo Reyes held early last month.

The concert was part of the Pampanga leg of the concert series entitled A Romantic Journey which Ms. Santamaria and Maestro Reyes have taken across the archipelago to educate their fellow Filipinos on classical piano. The Center for Kapampangan Studies, which sponsored the Betis concert in cooperation with the Betis Pastoral Council, invited students from various schools in Pampanga and Tarlac as well as three busloads of HAU students.

“Originally the concert was planned for the HAU campus, but we had this vision of merging beautiful music and beautiful venue, so we transferred it to the loveliest church you can find, the Betis Church,” says Robby Tantingco, Director of the Center.

On exhibit at the Center
Kapampangan beauties of yore

Ongoing at the Center’s gallery is an exhibit of photographs of Kapampangan women who won local and national beauty contests in the early 20th Century, specifically in the Manila Carnival, the forerunner of Miss Philippines pageant. It is curated by Alex R. Castro, the Center’s new museum curator.

Rare photographs of early Kapampangan beauty queens like Socorro Henson of Angeles (the first Kapampangan to win a national beauty title in 1926), Corazon Hizon (1933), Carmelina del Rosario of San Fernando (1935), Cleofe Balingit of Macabebe (1936), Elisa Manalo (1937), and Cristina Galang of Tarlac, Tarlac (1953), after whom the Maria Cristina park was named.

Baro’t saya from the early 20th Century, on loan from Leonor “Denden” Sanchez of Betis and Jojo Valencia of San Fernando are also on exhibit.

Mr. White of Tarlac
Book on Thomasite to be launched at Center

The Center for Tarlaqueño Studies and the Center for Kapampangan Studies will jointly launch Prof. Lino L. Dizon’s latest book, Mr. White: A Thomasite History of Tarlac Province, 1901-1913 on September 3. The launching will coincide with an exhibit entitled Escuelang Laun: The Thomasites and Early Public Education in the Kapampangan Region and another exhibit by the Public Affairs Office of the United States Embassy, which partly sponsored the publication of the book.

Mr. White was the name of the ghost that schoolchildren reported seeing in an old school building in Tarlac. Prof. Dizon’s research revealed that there was a real Mr. White who served as principal and later an education minister during the American regime 100 years ago.

Dr. Ronald J. Post, the US Embassy’s Counselor for Public Affairs and Rep. Jesli Lapus of the Third District of Tarlac will be the guest speakers.

Prof. Dizon is the Director of the Center for Tarlaqueño Studies based at the Tarlac State University, and Consultant for the Center for Kapampangan Studies.
Native Kapampangan architecture

To help promote the pre-colonial architecture of Filipinos, specifically Kapampangans, the Center will have a permanent exhibit of a miniature bale kubu (bahay kubo, or cube house), to be constructed by Santy Dizon and annotated by Siuala ding Meangubie.

“Filipino architects today prefer Mediterranean, Japanese, American, Balinese and Mexican designs, anything except Filipino,” Robby Tantingco, Center Director, says. “We want to inspire future architects and homeowners to use elements of the native, pre-Hispanic house design, which was simple, useful and in harmony with the environment. The fact that we will still see such houses today proves their resilience after all these centuries.”

As Siuala ding Meangubie explains, the orientation and design of the bale kubu depend on the ancestors’ understanding of wind direction, sunrise and sunset, path of typhoons and floods.

Old poets meet young poets

The Center has started weekly poetry reading sessions involving veteran Kapampangan poets and students in an effort to ensure that the Kapampangan language survives in future generations. The sessions are being coordinated by Erlinda Cruz, the Center’s cultural activities coordinator, and Renie Salor, resident polosa artist. In other developments, the Center will publish a book on culinary arts by Lilian M. Lising Borromeo as well as a series of booklets on crissotan (Kapampangan verbal jousts), folk festivals and other folk practices. “These are cheaper to buy than books, so they are more accessible,” Robby Tantingco, Center Director, says. “Hopefully we can popularize crissotan again among students.”

The crissotans were composed by Candaba poet Jose Gallardo, whose works have been turned over to the Center by his family. The Kapampangan counterpart of balagtasan, crissotan is named after Juan Crisostomo Soto, the prolific writer from Bacolor who is acclaimed as the Father of Kapampangan Drama.

Aside from booklets, the Center is also publishing plates of Kapampangan heroes and historical events for classroom use in public and private schools, as well as illustrated comics, maps and other instructional materials. CDs and videos of folk festivals are also being prepared.

Bencab and other donors

Ben Cabrera, a.k.a. Bencab, the famous visual artist who hails from Sasmuan but is now based in Baguio City, recently donated copies of his books as his contribution to the Center’s efforts to build a library where students and researchers can have access to books in Kapampangan, on the Kapampangan region and by Kapampangans. Bencab was in Angeles City to attend the opening of his exhibit with Claude Tayag and Patis Tesoro at the Museo ning Angeles.

Other recent donors are: Msgr. Alfredo Lorenzo, who turned over three boxes of his collections to the library; Dan Dizon, who donated prints of his paintings; Rep. Zenaida Ducut of Lubao and DAR Secretary Obet Pagdanganan who gave cash for research activities; Dr. Romeo Taruc who donated copies of his father Luis Taruc’s book on Pedro Abad Santos; Dr. Ofelia Tolentino of CHEDRO III who donated old copies of Angelite; Ed Sibug who donated documents; and Dr. Marietta Gaddi who lent old photographs of her mother, a former Miss Angeles.

Candaba poet Jose Gallardo
Bacolor
and the Origin of Kapampangan Studies
By John A. Larkin
100 years ago, an American educator in Bacolor started it all

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Bacolor reigned supreme as the political and cultural heart of Pampanga, then one of the richest provinces in the archipelago. The town possessed a very active cultural life, and served as the home of poets, playwrights and journalists. There occurred an outpouring of local plays, poetry contests and other literary works, and Bacolor provided the first provincial governor under the new regime. In the town, as in the province, it was an era of celebration of things Kapampangan and the time when the concept of Kapampangan studies had its beginnings.

One of the originators, perhaps the prime instigator, of the field of Kapampangan studies was an American teacher named Luther Parker. With a degree from Chico (California) Normal College, he came to Masantol in 1901 as one of the earliest of the new government teachers. In 1904 he became an instructor at the Bacolor Trade School and its principal from 1908 to 1910. During his stay in Bacolor, he developed an interest in the history and culture of the province. Afterwards, he transferred to other assignments in Pangasinan, Ilocos Norte and Nueva Ecija.

Parker possessed no formal training as a historian or as an anthropologist, but he maintained a genuine enthusiasm for Pampanga’s past and its contemporary culture. Likely, his association with the luminaries of Bacolor and its surrounds stimulated that interest. His connection with the trade school put him in touch with the town’s leading literary and political figures. When the school marked its fiftieth anniversary in 1911, the preparatory committees were laced with important local personalities. The Program Committee enlisted Modesto Joaquin, the Committee of Invitations included Felix Galura and future governor Francisco Liongson, the Committee of Festivities contained former Governor Ceferino Joven, the Committee of Reception had Zoilo Hilario and the Decorations Committee boasted as one of its members Juan Crisostomo Soto.

Besides becoming acquainted with Bacolor’s political, social and literary elite, Parker also corresponded with leading American scholar administrators. He undertook a field report on the Negritos of Pampanga for David Barrows, contributed this work and others to the collections of anthropologist H. Otley Beyer and corresponded with the renowned librarian and document compiler James A. Robertson. However, it was Pampanga that provided Parker’s main inspiration.

His part in the creation of Kapampangan studies derived from his research between 1904 and 1910 into the earliest history of the towns of Pampanga. He set about to determine the foundation dates for all of the churches in the province and to compile lists of all the priests in the parishes from 1572 to 1905.

It was in this focus on all of Pampanga’s towns that the idea of Kapampangan studies had its origins. At the time conceptualizing national history was in its infancy, and it was still possible and reasonable to think of other areas as essential regional centers of politics and culture. Hence, Parker concentrated on Pampanga as a separate entity. He did not look at all the Augustinian parishes in Central Luzon, just ones where the Pampangos resided and practiced their faith.

Parker did not consider the towns of southern Tarlac in his collection of histories of the Pampangos. Only one reference to Concepcion appears in a list he made of the graduates of the Bacolor school between 1861 and 1869.

Out of this interest in town foundations Parker made his most important contribution to Kapampangan studies. Around 1909-1910, he conceived of the idea of each municipality in the archipelago compiling its own local history, and he took that scheme to James A. Robertson, then head of the Philippine Library. Robertson liked the project and convinced Governor W. Cameron Forbes to issue an executive order enacting Parker’s plan. It does not seem that those histories were ever completed by other provinces, but Parker collected a set from most towns in Pampanga, which he then deposited in the Philippine Library.

Eventually they came to rest, after the Second World War, in the main library of the University of the Philippines, Diliman. They continue to this day as crucial sources on the early history of the province. Parker himself never wrote anything enduring on the history of Pampanga, but his efforts to organize the writing of the town histories remains a strategic factor in establishing the notion of the Kapampangan having a separate and significant historical development.

Among the compilers of the town histories brought together by Parker, at least three added in other significant ways to Pampanga’s cultural heritage. Dr. Felino Simpao of Guagua was a highly regarded poet and playwright, as a well as the erstwhile editor of local newspapers. Manuel Gatbonton later wrote another, more complete, history of his home community of Candaba, which became the basis for all subsequent work on the history of the town. And, finally, Don Mariano Vicente Henson sent Parker a fairly complete list.

Dr. Luther Parker

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When the Americans came to the Philippines towards the end of the 1800s, they were surprised to discover that the islands they had purchased from Spain (for a measly $20 million) were far more cultured than they had imagined. “Sixty miles from Manila, right in the edge of the foothills,” an American soldier wrote, he came upon a town that he said would put to shame all colonizers who thought they were bringing light to a dark continent.

“Many in the States doubtless believe this country a wilderness and the people savages,” the white soldier wrote. “I would like to take them into some houses here and see them stare.”

He was referring to Bacolor, the jewel in the Spanish colony’s crown at the time.

Even in early colonial times, the residents of this small town were already possessed with a pioneering spirit and a taste for greatness. The country’s first priest, first woman author, the playwright of history’s longest literary work, the writer of the first zarzuela in any native language and a multitude of doctors, lawyers, musicians, painters, soldiers and civil servants—they were all born and bred in this tiny community.

The American soldier stationed in Bacolor in the late 1800s described some of the townspeople he had met during his stay:

“There is one gentleman here who formerly practiced in the Manila courts. While you might not expect him to be quite a savage, you would scarcely look for a fine Greek scholar in the jungles of Luzon, yet here is surely one.”

**Bakulud/Bacolor**

**JEWEL IN THE CROWN**

This tiny community in the heart of the Kapampangan Region has produced more illustrious Filipinos than any other town or city in the country, and has changed the nation’s history in ways disproportionate to its size

By Robby Tantingco

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**TIMELINE OF BACOLOR COLONIAL HISTORY**

1576 Local landlord Guillermo Manabat established pueblo of Bacolor based on an ancient settlement called Bakulud; first church built on his land; Augustinians chose San Guillermo Ermitaño (St. William the Hermit) as town’s patron saint to honor the town’s founder; Augustinian records dated December 31, 1576 mention “Bacolot (or Vacolot), a convent... located by the river Bets, and was called San Guillermo”

1578 Fray Diego de Ochoa, who wrote the first Arte, Vocabulario y Confesionario en Pampango, appointed Bacolor’s first priest on April 30

1599 Bacolor asked to contribute an annual rent of 200 pesos, 200 bushels of rice and 120 chickens to San Agustin Monastery in Manila

1607 Bacolor asked to pay same rent to Augustinian Monastery in Guadalupe

1608 Bacolor one of most prosperous Augustinian territories in country, next only to Manila, Cebu, Guadalupe and Tondo.

1609 On October 31, the Intermediate Definitor of the Augustinians held in Bacolor conven

1612 Bacolor had four priests and 3,900 Catholic inhabitants paying tributes, not to mention thousand others who didn’t pay

1645 Quakes damaged church

1672 Fire razed convent beside the church

1722 In addition to the already onerous rental fees to the Augustinian monasteries in Manila, Bacolor was asked to pay annual fee of 50 pesos as assistance to missionary priests in Ytalones
“There is another family of musicians here. They have a very fine place and I have spent some evenings there, listening to the piano, violin, mandolin, harp and singing, as pleasant as I ever passed in my life. "Señor Joven is a scientist quite up in modern electrical research. His house is lighted by an electric plant of his own manufacture. He was educated in Hong Kong and is a free-thinker.

"But the man I am most interested in is the principal of the schools, from whom I am taking lessons in Spanish. I go down at three o’clock, and business begins. I teach him English and he teaches me Spanish. At five o’clock we have a lunch of cakes and cigarettes and then resume our studies. I am becoming fairly proficient in Spanish, which is likely to be of great value to me. It has already brought me a standing offer of a good position in the schools of Manila."

Bacolor’s prehispanic name is Bakulud, which means high and level ground. When the Spaniards first came in 1571, they found an ancient settlement of traders and rice growers, as the land was well irrigated by a river that led to the sea. (The other pre-hispanic communities in Pampanga were Lubao, Betis, Macabebe, Candaba, Pinpin [later Sta. Ana], Cabagsac [later San Luis], Arayat, Apalit, Sasman, Mexico, Guagua and Porac.)

There are accounts that when a combined force of Spanish and Macabebe soldiers defended Manila from Chinese pirate Limahong on November 29, 1574 and chased him across Luzon all the way to Lingayen Gulf, some of the pirates settled along the banks of the Cabalgantian River and intermarried with Bacolor natives. Two years later, local landlord Guillermo Manabat, probably with Spanish backing, organized the town into a pueblo; thus he is credited as the founder of Bacolor, upon whose land the church was eventually erected and upon whose name the choice of the town’s patron saint was based.

The town’s strategic location, being at the crossroads between Guagua, Macabebe, Lubao, Porac and Mexico, made the colonial government establish the provincial capital there in 1755. (Casa Real, the capitol building, was erected in 1758, at the site of the future Bacolor Elementary School.)

When the British Navy captured Manila in 1762, the Spanish forces under Simon de Anda retreated to Bacolor which was named the colony’s capital. Gen. Anda organized an army of volunteers from Pampanga and other provinces who launched attacks on the British in Manila. (Eventually the British withdrew after a treaty was signed in Europe formally ending the war between Spain and England.)

The material prosperity of Bacolor allowed its people to devote time and wealth to things spiritual and artistic. By mid-1800s, the town was a thriving center of arts and trades. The longest work in Philippine literature, Comedia Heroica de la Conquistada de Granada o sea Vida de Don Gonzalo de Cordoba llamado el Gran Capitan, all 832 pages of it, was staged for seven consecutive nights in February, 1831 in Bacolor—the first and only time it was performed. It was written by Padre Anselmo Jorge de Fajardo, a native of Bacolor. (This masterpiece, written in elegant Kapampangan, equals if not surpasses the Tagalog epic Florante at Laura, according to many scholars.)

Bacolor also produced the country’s first vernacular zarzuela, Mariano Proceso Pabalan Byron’s Ing Manapge, staged at the Teatro Sabina on September 13, 1900.

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Relaciones de Baculud

BACOLOR
as the center of Philippine history
1762-1764

Stirrings of nationalism among Kapampangans when the capital was moved to their province

By Prof. Lino L. Dizon

In 1858, Jose Felipe del Pan made an unusual trip to the provinces of Central Luzon, a trip he called “expedición aventurero-filosófica”. Considered until the recent times as the Dean of Philippine Journalism, this prolific Galician writer-editor later published his reminiscences on Pampanga in the initial issue of his Revista de Filipinas (1876): “I have looked upon those Pampangos with certain curiosity and sympathy. During a brief stopover in the capital en route the Cabo (ship), I have first read about this ‘grand curiosity’ of the region among many books, both old and current, interspersing major historical periods. Here they were—since I was supposedly speaking as I have met these natives in the streets of Pampanga—the loyal companions of our disgraces and of our glories. They, and only they, were with us during the 1650s to the 1750s, in that century of frustrations, whence we have been harassed at all fronts, not being able to sustain the farms (terrenos ganados) and the honor of the flag, with Manila burning with ridicules and sterile discords; they were there, in equal number with the Spanish soldiers, and constantly with them, participating fraternally in their limitations, in their poverty, and in their glories, guarding the fortresses, defending against the frequent assaults of the Dutch, the Moros, the Igorots; acting as the “perfect associate” (contra diez) since they presumed themselves to be the friends of these Castilians. Brave people! At that time, Pampanga province did not even have one fifth of its present population, (yet) it gave to the service of the army thousands of volunteers, including officials, petty officers (sargentos), and soldiers, always disciplined and valiant, as attested by our historians. Afterwards, we encountered some of them with Don Simon de Anda, the self-same soul in the noble adhesion of our flag; until now, Pampanga has offered a most dignified chapter in memory… In Pampanga, there is so much honorable military history.”

J. del Pan was musing about the relaciones of a century earlier, especially about the British Occupation of the Philippines, where Kapampangan soldiers and the town of Bacolor figured prominently in their loyal

William Draper, nearly killed by a Kapampangan

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Anda’s missing monument
Revolucionarios left no trace of memorial to the great Spanish general

In 1853, a monument was erected in front of the house where Simon de Anda lived in Bacolor, across the church patio. It was an obelisk, 6 meters high, standing on a pedestal that was 1.7 meters high, which in turn stood on a 6-meter-square graded base. One side of the obelisk had a marble plate on which was carved a commander’s cane and a general’s sword united by a crown of laurel and palms. The monument was made of Meycauayan stone; it was surrounded by an elegantly designed iron fence which stood upon the edge of the largest step. Carved on the marble plates on the four sides of the pedestal were the following inscriptions (presumably in Spanish): (1) To the memory of Don Simon de Anda y Salazar, Defender of these Islands, 1762; (2) At the same time he attacked the invaders and suppressed the interior disorders; (3) Fray Remigio Hernandez, Bultos, Areza, Fray Sales; (4) Erected in 1853. After the Spaniards fled, Governor Tiburcio Hilario ordered the statue destroyed. By 1909, only the pedestal had remained, on top of which stood the wooden spine of what used to be the obelisk. The four marble slabs with inscriptions had disappeared. A rumor went around that the slabs had been buried under the front door stones of the Escuela de Artes y Oficios (now DHVCAT) when the school was reconstructed in 1907.

Source: Luther Parker Collections Folder 239 No. 95
Villa de Bacolor. The name evokes a glorious era long gone, now obscured by the sands of time. All that is left of it are memories in books and old wives tales, as well as its monuments which stand as mute witnesses to a time when it was known as the Athens of Pampanga, the social and political heart of the province. And behind this immense saga that was Bacolor, were powerful families, the strong ties that bound them together, and pedigrees that spoke no less of grandeur.

No one has gone deep enough through the history of Bacolor to find out the state of affairs before the 19th century. The enumeration of families would begin at the turn of the 19th century, when the affluence of Chinese traders plying the Pampanga route was reaching its peak, thus sparking the rise of a new class of society prevalent in Pampanga, the Chinese mestizo.

At the center of the noble lineage of Bacolor were three mestizo families, who through intermarriage strengthened the ties that connected them together. Many of the prominent names from Bacolor can trace their lineage to three individuals: Don Juan Joven, a rich Chinese trader from Binondo who also became a gobernadorcillo of Bacolor. These individuals became the patriarchs of the de Leon, Leon Santos and Joven families respectively, together a very powerful conglomerate by the late 1800s.

The web of intermarriages is indeed too intricate for one to clearly grasp the strong #

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damaged the church; Fr. Eugenio Alvarez ordered repairs, which were completed in 1886; further renovation finished in 1897 under Fr. Antonio Bravo.

1882 40-day monsoon rains; cholera ravaged Bacolor and the entire province from August to January, 1883; the cemetery at Salinas consisted only of eight graves; another flood on November 10.

1883 End of the tobacco monopoly; tribute increased to P1.50 or allung salapa; gold chalice stolen from the church.

Balabac island between Palawan.

Cecilio Hilario

A cousin, Marcelo Hilario del Pilar of Bulacan, also a partner in the Hilarios’ law firm, shared their hatred for the Spaniards after a friar caused his suspension at UST and after his brother, a priest, was tortured.

Meanwhile, the Hilarios’ law firm, shared their hatred for the Spaniards after a friar caused his suspension at UST in 1883. The governor-general and the Archbishop of Manila were among the guests, all the towns of Pampanga were required to construct their respective arches and send their brass bands, from the San Fernando train station all the way to Bacolor; the town of Betsis erected an intricately decorated bamboo tower.

1884 Strong typhoon

1886 On February 1, treasury was transferred from Guagua to Bacolor

1887 Series of typhoons destroyed much of Bacolor; Fray Eugenio Alvarez pleaded for alms.

1893 Inauguration of the reconstructed Escuela de Artes y Oficios (earlier destroyed by fire) on March 8; the Governor General and the Archbishop of Manila were among the guests, all the towns of Pampanga were required to construct their respective arches and send their brass bands, from the San Fernando train station all the way to Bacolor; the town of Betsis erected an intricately decorated bamboo tower.

1894 All town officials were required to wear suits.

1897 Provincial prisoners attempted to escape from the Casa Real; the doors were locked in time and 84 prisoners were executed and buried in Talisay.

1898 Voluntarios Locales de Bacolor quartered in the Escuela de Artes y Oficios, led by Felix Galura, Paulino Lirag and Alvaro Panopio, rose in arms against the Spaniards, marking the start of the Revolution in Pampanga; they burned the Casa Real to smoke out the Cazadores and Macabebe: guarding it; prisoners were set free and big houses in the poblacion were torched, including the Bazar de Bacolor and the mansions of the Jovens, the Ramirez y otros.

1899 In March the townspeople began to evacuate out of fear for the new colonizers.

American soldiers arrived on May 10, 1898, at the Escuela de Artes y Oficios de Bacolor when Felix Galura, Alvaro Panopio and Paulino Lirag led the Voluntarios Locales de Bacolor in a revolt against the Spanish authorities. They burned the Casa Real (provincial capitol) and killed the pro-Spanish Cazadores and Macabebe - this event was the basis for what is probably the best play of Mariano Proceso’s Play: *Pojo* (1862-1904) Apat Ya Ing Junio, about a local woman who puts on men’s clothes to fight alongside her Katipunero boyfriend.

Low-profile heroes

The Hilarios of Bacolor and the road to freedom

Cecilio Hilario

A cousin, Marcelo Hilario del Pilar of Bulacan, also a partner in the Hilarios’ law firm, shared their hatred for the Spaniards after a friar caused his suspension at UST and after his brother, a priest, was tortured and deported.

Following Jose Rizal’s visit to the Hilarios’ residence, Tiburcio was exiled to Jolo, Cecilio to Balabac island between Mindanao and Palawan.

Other Kapampangan revolutionaries suffered similar fate (Maximino Aquino, Felix Galura, Pedro Liongson, Andres Serrano and Aurelio Tolentino). When Commodore Dewey sailed into Manila Bay, the beleaguered Spaniards got

Jose Rizal

Emilio Aguinaldo

Paulino Lirag and Alvaro Panopio, rose in arms against the Spaniards, marking the start of the Revolution in Pampanga; they burned the Casa Real to smoke out the Cazadores and Macabebe: guarding it; prisoners were set free and big houses in the poblacion were torched, including the Bazar de Bacolor and the mansions of the Jovens, the Ramirez y otros.

Day 1 of the Revolution in Pampanga

The first cry of revolution in Pampanga occurred on June 4, 1898, at the Escuela de Artes y Oficios de Bacolor when Felix Galura, Alvaro Panopio and Paulino Lirag led the Voluntarios Locales de Bacolor in a revolt against the Spanish authorities. They burned the Casa Real (provincial capitol) and killed the pro-Spanish Cazadores and Macabebe - this event was the basis for what is probably the best play of Mariano Proceso’s Play: *Pojo* (1862-1904) Apat Ya Ing Junio, about a local woman who puts on men’s clothes to fight alongside her Katipunero boyfriend.

P1M missing in Tarlac

As the Americans advanced to Pampanga, Governor Tiburcio Hilario watched from the belfry of the Bacolor church how the new colonizers defeated the Filipino army in Calumpit. He packed up and moved his and other families (like the Aquinos and the Barreras) to Concepcion, Tarlac, bringing with him one million silver pesos which was the voluntary contributions from Kapampangans, war bonds and Chinese donations. This entire amount was formally turned over to Gen. Antonio Luna in the house of Julian Santos in Tarlac, Tarlac in the presence of witnesses. However, three days later, Gen. Luna was assassinated in Nueva Ecija and no one knows, to this day, where that money from Bacolor ended up.
or was the father of

B. Mendoza

Women of Bacolor avert war of the generals

In his unpublished Memoirs, Justice Jose Gutierrez David (1891-1977) recalled that a schism had developed between two of Gen. Aguinaldo’s generals which threatened his revolutionary government. Gen. Tomas Mascardo’s soldiers were stationed in Guagua while Gen. Antonio Luna’s were in Calumpit, Bulacan. On the day that Gen. Luna marched his troops towards Guagua for a showdown with Gen. Mascardo, the ladies of Bacolor, among them Jose’s sister Trining, met Gen. Luna in Bacolor and persuaded him to drop his plan to attack Mascardo in Guagua. Later the young Jose saw Luna’s troops marching back in the opposite direction, averting a potentially bloody and tragic battle between revolutionaries.

Gen. Tomas Mascardo

Revolucionarios from Bacolor

Propagandists, poet-soldiers and secret financiers helped win the day

By Ivan Anthony Henares

As sparks of the Revolution began to find their way into the province, signs of a revolt became evident. By this time, intellectuals, professionals, poets and artists, the emerging ilustrado class, had gained prominence in Bacolor, already being acclaimed as the Athens of Pampanga. Several of these individuals would later become assets of the Philippine Revolution.

Among the Filipinos in the Propaganda Movement in Spain was Valentín Ventura, whose contribution to the cause was financing the printing of Rizal’s second novel, El Filibusterismo, with the help of his brother Balbino, who was among the landed gentry in Bacolor. Another was Francisco Liongson who later became a senator of the Republic. Kapampangan literary geniuses like Juan Crisostomo Soto, Felix Galura y Napao, and Mariano Proceso Pabalan Byron produced works that fanned the flames of the Revolution; some of them left writing for a while and actually took up arms.

Among those who led the revolutionary cause in Bacolor were its presidente municipal, Ceferino Joven y Casas and his brother Francisco, grandchildren of Don Juan Joven; revolutionary governor Tiburcio Hilario y Tuason of San Fernando, whose maternal grandfather owned vast tracks of land in Bacolor; Praxedes Fajardo of the Philippine Red Cross, among the women of the Philippine Revolution who together with her brother Dr. Jacobo Fajardo, and labor leader Joaquin Balmori, are among those listed in the NHI publication Filipinos in History; and Mateo Gutierrez Ubaldo, a delegate to the Malolos Congress, whose son Eduardo Gutierrez David was also active in the revolutionary cause.

Gen. Antonio Luna

Sources:

Luther Parker Collections. The Story of Bacolor in a Nutshell by Dr. Rogelio M. Samia: Angels in Stone (1987 edition) by Fr. Pedro Galende, OSA; special thanks to Arwin Lingat for the transcriptions

Tragedy in the family

(The tragedy) involved a prominent respectable and wealthy citizen of the town—Don Balbino Ventura. He was the father of Don Honorio Ventura, a contemporary of Rizal in Europe. Don Valentín was one of those who supplied funds which made the printing and publication of the El Filibusterismo possible. Through indiscretion, perhaps, of Don Balbino’s two older daughters—Nunilon and Belen—who were boarding students (colegialas) in a Catholic school in Manila, the friars came to learn that Don Balbino was a Mason. Masons were then being executed as enemies of the Church. Don Balbino was brought by the Guardia Civil to San Fernando, about six kilometers from Bacolor, on foot with his hands tied behind his back, in broad daylight and in view of everyone. After sometime, he was released and returned to Bacolor.” (Don Balbino never recovered from the pain and indignity of the experience. He died soon thereafter.)

Masonic logos
The homegrown art of SIMON FLORES

This famous Manila artist left behind a lucrative career to settle in the bucolic town and paint the ceilings of local churches

By Alex R. Castro

One of the country’s most celebrated masters of the brush in the last quarter of the 19th century was a Manila artist who made Bacolor his home in the most productive year of his life: Simon Flores y de la Rosa. Born on 28 October 1839 in San Fernando de Dilao (now Paco), Flores grew up amidst a cultured and artistic milieu; uncle Fabian Gonzales was a painter who decorated the ceilings of Malacañang Palace and who collaborated with the Italian scenographists, Divella and Alberoni in house painting commissions for the native elite. Another uncle, Pio de la Rosa taught young Simon the rudiments of painting.

Simon’s natural talents prompted the family to enroll him at the Academia de Dibujo y Pintura where he was tutored by the Spanish director himself, Agustin Saez y Granadell and also Lorenzo Guerrero and Lorenzo Rocha. After 4 years of intense study, he set up his own studio where he accepted commissions for portraits, religious works and trompe l’oeil painting, thereby continuing the tradition of early masters Justiniano Asuncion and Antonio Malantic. In the same studio, he held art classes, teaching painting to students such as his nephew, Fabian de la Rosa, who would go on to achieve even greater fame.

His work would soon attract the attention of Monsignor Ignacio Pineda Tambungui, a canon of the Manila Cathedral and a chaplain at the San Juan de Dios Hospital. Msgr. Tambungui was instrumental in opening doors for Simon, giving him design and painting jobs for churches, cemeteries and mortuary niches. This led to a church-decorating project in Guagua, Pampanga, the Tambunguis’ native town—plus more commissions in Sta. Rita, Mexico, Betis and ultimately, Bacolor. Here, in San Vicente, Simon chose to settle down, after having married and the Monsignor’s sister, Simplicida Tambungui. The couple, however, were to be childless.

The environs of Bacolor were very conducive to Simon’s artistic pursuits. He not only painted vigorously but also gave art classes. Among those he tutored was Celestina, a niece who suffered a nervous breakdown after an unrequited love affair with a Guardia Civil. Simon was thus the first known Filipino to use art therapy for mental health care patients.

Though largely homegrown, Simon’s reputation quickly spread via his international triumphs that pre-dated Juan Luna’s more famous wins. His oil painting, “La Orquesta de Pueblo” (Music Band of the Town), won a Silver Medal in the Philadelphia Exposition of 1876, an event held to mark America’s centennial. Two canvasses, “Despues de la Ultima Cena” (After the Last Supper) and “El Prendimiento” (The Arraignment of Christ), bested 52 entries to garner the highest honors in an art contest held to commemorate the tercentenary of the birth of St. John of the Cross in 1891. His win merited national media attention with him being featured on the popular periodical La Ilustracion Filipina. At the 1895 Regional Exposition of the Philippines, The Expulsion won an Honorable Mention.

No amount of encouragement and material promises could lure him back to sophisticated Manila though. Instead, he chose to stay and work in seclusion in Pampanga’s heartland, holding art classes and giving drawing lessons to Celestina, in his desire to soothe her troubled mind and make her well. In one of her manic fits, she bit the hand of her kind uncle. The wound festered and became gangrenous, leading to Simon Flores’s death on 12 March 1904.

Of his style, Art Critic and Professor Emmanuel Torres keenly observed: “The art developed by Flores and his kind assumed a gently lyrical and celebrative, rather than a dramatic and self-questioning mode; a modesty and serenity of tone rather than an aggressively heroic eloquence; in short, an art more suitable to the intimate privacy of the parlor than the museum or salon.”

He is at his best in capturing the cozy, intimate atmosphere of pastoral living in his genre paintings. But his enduring images of the country’s rising new bourgeoisie are better known. He rarely painted a subject with a smile, in keeping with the ascending role of the new aristocracy in Central Luzon. Visual cues of their authority are seen in their glum expressions, rigid

Vicente Alvarez Dizon

The Bacolor painter who bested Salvador Dali

The first Kapampangan artist to receive an international award is Vicente Alvarez Dizon of Bacolor (1905-1947), whose painting After a Day’s Toil, won first prize in a competition marking the Golden Gate World Fair and Exposition in San Francisco, California in 1939. He bested entries from 79 countries including his compatriot Fernando Amorsolo and Spanish surrealist painter Salvador Dali, who placed second. As sponsor of the Exposition, IBM now owns the painting; the original is on permanent display at the IBM Gallery of Fine Arts in New York. A prolific painter, musician and lyricist, teacher and book author, Dizon is also known to have introduced finger painting in the country. He married Ines Henson of Angeles City, with whom he had four children, Victor Jose, Daniel Antonio (also a painter), Edilberto Luminoso and Josefina, a.k.a. Josie Henson, painter and president of Akademyang Kapampangan.
CRISSOT

The volume, variety and quality of his literary output should put him in Shakespeare’s league

One poet could have singlehandedly put Bacolor on the map. The name Juan Crissot Soto y Caballa (1867-1918), popularly known as Crissot, shines the brightest among the galaxy of Kapampangan writers. He wrote a mind-boggling 50 plays (including 3 tragedies, 8 comedies, 20 zarzuelas), more than 100 poems as well as essays, novels and short stories. “This is an output,” wrote Rosalina Icbcan-Castro, “one expects from a major writer in the order if not of Shakespeare at least the minor Elizabethans.” His best known works are the zarzuela Alang Dios! written after the death of his daughter Maria Luz Generosa; the novel Lidia; the play Delia; the short story Y’Miss Phathupats; and the poem Malaya. Soto edited three newspapers, El Pueblo, El Imparcial and Ing Alipatpat. Literary verbal jousts in Kapampangan, rhymed and popularize his legacy.

Excerpts from Alang Dios!

by Juan Crissot Soto

Music by Pablo Palma

ESCENA 64 MARIA LUZ Y ENRIQUE

ENRIQUE: Maria, oh salamat queca…. Micalma ca! Mipala ca!

MUSICA

MARIA: Enrique!

MARIA: Enrique!

MARIA: Ay, bandi cu!

MARIA: Casaquit na ning bili co!

ENRIQUE: Nanung lungcut mu, Virgen Malasia! Virgen Malasia! sabian mu canacu at piramayang ta.

MARIA: Cacuanan da cu qng candungan mu; qng candungan mu; ing e cu sinta patanggap deng pilit qng pusu cu.

ENRIQUE: Bulaclac ning ilang,calulu na ca… calulu na ca… e ca pailanat caniting lasa.

MARIA: Ua’l aguiang mapait iti alducan ta… iti alducan ta… bista’man masapit bibatan tana.

ENRIQUE: Nanung panayan tang bayu?

MARIA: Ing camatayan, bandi cu…

ENRIQUE: Baquet nanu ita sabian mu?

MARIA: Uling talasaua na cu.

LOS DOS: E bala aguiang mate cu, ning uarit qng candungan mu; dapot qng picututan cu panga bengi yapa mu cu, At ilang tumulu mung lua, Mamasgus uli ning lugma, yang ambun a pasaguiau caring bucung malanta.

Nung mate cu, ay, mate cu; tuqui cu queca, tiqui cu… Nung nanu ing acalman mu yang buring acalman cu, acalman cu.

HABLADO

MARIA: Baquet dinatang ca ngeni? Nanu ing buri mu queti?

ENRIQUE: Maria—

Birthplace of the vernacular zarzuela

Sometime in 1900, the three dramatists of Bacolor, Juan Crissot Soto (Crissot), Felix Galura (Flauxiagier) and Mariano Proceso Pabalan Byron met and decided to incorporate songs into their plays. Previously, all the plays staged in Pampanga were moro-moros, comedias, and straight dramas, without musical numbers. The trio asked Amado Gutierrez David to be their composer and after several weeks, Pabalan Byron came up with Ing Managpe, the first vernacular zarzuela in the Philippines, and Magparigaldigal, and Soto produced Paninap nang Don Roque. Rehearsals were held in the Gutierrez mansion in barrio Sta. Ines, Bacolor, where Don Mateo Gutierrez y Ubaldo had built a stage for family presentations. Thus, this house could be considered as the birthplace of the Kapampangan zarzuela. When the zarzuela had been rehearsed thoroughly, it was brought to the Teatro Sabina for the gala performance. Hundreds of zarzuelas were presented in Bacolor within a three-decade period, considered the golden age of Kapampangan drama.

Source: The Unpublished Memoirs of Justice Jose Gutierrez David.

Athens of Pampanga

Kapampangan literature reached its golden age during the lifetime of Soto, Galura and Pabalan Byron, the drama triumvirate of Bacolor. Pampanga was among the first provinces to have theatre companies with resident playwrights, directors and actors, and nowhere in the province was the theatre scene more active than it was in Bacolor.

Felix Galura

It probably came with the gene pool, but the role of money could not be underestimated. Many rich families sent their children to Europe to study, and when they returned they brought with them European tastes and lifestyles, including love for theatre. Zarzuela companies from Spain came from Bacolor, thanks to rich families, which also financed local productions whose performers included children of the same rich families, thus ensuring continued support.

In Bacolor, the first theatre company was Compania Sabina, organized shortly before 1901 by local patron Ceferino Joven, who was then governor of Pampanga. Actors’ wages ranged between P4 and P15 per showing. The play’s author received P100 per production. Costumes were provided by the performers themselves and the troupe performed for free during fiestas and other big community celebrations.

The theatrical season in Pampanga coincided with the dry season, recessing during the Holy Week when the folk cenaculo plays took over. The rainy season was when the playwrights wrote their scripts.


Teatro Sabina

Constructed in 1901, Teatro Sabina, was one of two important theatres in that part of Pampanga (the other being Teatro Trining in Guagua, home base of Aurelio Tolentino). Named after its owner, the spinster sister of Ceferino Joven, Teatro Sabina was unique for its deep well located under the middle of the stage, dug there to improve acoustics.

Entrance fees varied, from P2.00 (palco proscenio seats), to between 60 centavos and P1.00 (orchestra seats), to 20 centavos (entrada general). Rates were often reduced after opening day. Teatro Sabina averaged two productions a month. It was renovated in 1909; the proscenium arch contained the names of dramatists Pabalan, Soto, Galura, Gozun and Jose Gutierrez David (only 18 at the time) and the names of composers Pablo Palma, Jose Prado and Amado Gutierrez. The theatre eventually closed when patronage dwindled.

Source: The Unpublished Memoirs of Justice Jose Gutierrez David.

Music by Pablo Palma

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It was converted back into a school and alternately named Bacolor Intermediate School, Bacolor Trade School (in 1922), and by virtue of Republic Act 1388, Regional School of Arts and Trades (on July 1, 1956).

The school was destroyed by fire at least five times, in 1869, 1896, 1898, 1944 and 1958.

The school is credited for the active local industries requiring skilled labor which not only sustained the economy of the communities in the region but also inspired and guided the unique craftsmanship and artistry of Kapampangans.


grounds and school linked forever

The Escuela de Artes y Oficios de Bacolor (formerly El Colegio de Santa Tereza de Jesus, later Pampanga School of Arts and Trades, now Don Honorio Ventura College of Arts and Trades), founded by Fr. Juan P. Zita and Don Felino Gil on a site donated by the Suarez sisters of Bacolor, opened on November 4, 1861 upon the approval of its statutes by Governor Lemery.

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Sugar is sweet

The new industry brought huge profits but widened the gap between rich and poor

By Ivan Anthony Henares

In the latter part of the 19th century, sugar became a very powerful commodity, dictating the movements in the upper echelons of Pampanga’s social classes. The early 20th century saw the rise of a new class of society, which was beginning to gain prominence—the sugar planter. Although the center of activity shifted to neighboring San Fernando, the new provincial capital, several citizens of Bacolor still found themselves at the center of the lucrative trade.

A look at the Pampanga Social Register of 1936 would reveal an emphasis on sugar in the social patterns of Pampanga. And quoting its preface, the social register aimed to put “the right people in the right places, and in the places where they belong.” It was “a tribute to Pampanga’s leaders in business, in the professions, and in society.”

Among these sugar planters was Jose Leoncio de Leon y Joven, founder and president of the Pampanga Sugar Development Company (PASUDECO) which constructed the first Filipino-financed sugar central in Pampanga in the town of San Fernando.

Belles of Bacolor
In a province known for lovely women, the loveliest should naturally come from Bacolor

By Alex R. Castro

True to its title as the “Athens of the Pampanga”, Bacolor was not just a cradle of culture, it was also the seat of beauty, echoing the famed reputation of Greece as the land of beautiful goddesses—Hera, Aphrodite and Athena—who figured in perhaps, the first documented beauty pageant of ancient times, as judged by Paris.

Bacolor belles like Luz Sarmiento, Paz Sanchez, Consuelo Santos and Elisa Gutierrez were regarded as the town muses in the mid 1920s-1930s. The more notable crowned beauties however were Rosario Manuel and Guia Balmori.

ROSARIO MANUEL
Miss Pampanga 1927

In 1927, a Bacolor beauty was crowned Miss Pampanga, and thereby gained the right to represent the province in the 2nd National Beauty Contest sponsored by The Philippine Free Press. Do-every Rosario Manuel went to Manila for the competition to make her bid for the Miss Philippines crown. It was a tall order for Rosario, as among the previous year’s winners was a kabalen—Socorro Henson of Angeles, who reigned as Manila’s Carnival Queen of 1926.

In the 1927 edition, 28 beauties from around the country participated. Two of the contenders that year were Amelia Romualdez, Miss Leyte, who bore a striking resemblance to a niece, Imelda Romualdez and fellow Kapampangan, Luz Besa of Tarlac. In the end, Luisa Marasigan, Miss Manila, won as Miss Philippines. Her court included Miss Luzon, Iluminada Laurel (Batangas), Miss Visayas, Lourdes Rodriguez (Cebu) and Miss Mindanao, Nora Maulano (Sulu). Even then, Rosario Manuel’s beauty was immortalized in a special commemorative booklet issued by Free Press.

GUIA BALMORI
Miss Philippines 1938

Guia Balmori was the second known winner of the National Beauty Contest (formerly, the Manila Carnival) with Kapampangan roots. Her father was Joaquin Balmori of Bacolor, a well-known labor leader who married Rosario Gonzales. The Balmoris were of Spanish stock, and this showed clearly in Guia’s fair and finely chiseled mestiza features.

The Balmori family settled in Ermita and Guia was named after the district’s titular patron, Nuestra Sra. De Guia. Guia was a secretarial student at the U.S.T. when the contest beckoned. Her candidacy stirred quite a ruckus, from her father who saw the pageant as a frivolous exercise, and from the religious nuns in school who frowned on such beauty shows. Nevertheless, she surprised everyone with her victory. At her coronation, she wore a Ramon Valera gold gown and was escorted by a dashing Kapampangan collegian, Ernesto “Gatas” Santos, son of Teodoro Santos of San Fernando and Mabalacat. Her prize money of P1,000 was discreetly tucked away.

Other sugar planters included siblings Justo Arrastia, president of the Pampanga Sugar Mills Planters Association, and Jose Arrastia, first cousins Alfonso de Leon y David of San Fernando and Rafael de Leon y Lazatin ofMexico, a half-sibling of Jose Leoncio de Leon.

Writer’s Note:
My fascination with Bacolor began with a Simon Flores portrait of Don Jose Leon Santos published in the Manila Bulletin a few years back, as part of an announcement of the opening of the Museo De La Salle in Dasmarinas, Cavite. The museum is actually a showcase of the rich Bacolor heritage, as the entire Santos-Joven-Panilillo residence and its contents were transferred there before the coup de grace struck Bacolor in 1995. Thus, everything was saved. And how ironic but true it is to say that for one to feel the former opulence of Bacolor, a visit to the Cavitew Museum is necessary.

With further research, I found out that Jose Leon Santos was my direct great-great-great grandfather, a son of Don Francisco Paula de los Santos and Doña Luisa Gonzaga de Leon. His son from his first wife, Doña Arcadia Joven, was Don Mariano Leon Santos y Joven, my great-great grandfather, who would later transfer to San Fernando and become its municipal president from 1902 to 1903. Arcadia Joven was a daughter of Don Juan Joven and Doña Germina Suares.
Church Pioneers

Bachiller Don Miguel Jeronimo de Morales, the first Filipino priest (1654)
Padre Mariano Hipolito, the first Filipino priest-calligraphic artist (1793)
Padre Anselmo Jorge Fajardo, the first Filipino priest-playwright (1793)
Dona Luisa Gonzaga de Leon, the first Filipino woman author; translated the religious work Ejercito Cotidiano into Kapampangan (published posthumously in 1844, reprinted in 1854 by the UST Press)
Sor Bibiana Zapanta, the first Filipino missionary beata to Mindanao; she served as priest delegate to the Spanish Cortes of 1822
Sor Asuncion Ventura, the first Filipino foundress of an orphanage; she founded the Asilo de San Vicente de Paul, a house with school for wayward girls, in Pasay, Manila in 1885; using her own inheritance; the orphanage still exists

Source: Laying the Foundations: Kapampangan Pioneers in the Philippine Church 1592-2001 by Dr. Luciano PR Santiago (Holy Angel University Press)

Legislators

Don Francisco Liongson, the first Kapampangan senator
Venancio Concepcion, represented Iloilo in the Malolos Congress
Pablo Angeles David, member, House of Representatives, senator from 1947 to 1953;

Artists

Pablo Palma wrote music of countless zarzuelas, including Crisostomo Soto’s Alang Dios!
Virgilio Palma, musician
Antonio Fajardo, doctor, orator, linguist, actor, musician
Vicente Alvarez Dizon, now in Canada
Henry Dizon, award-winning international painter and sculptor
Flor de Jesus, “the Joni James of the Philippines”

Businessmen and Accountants

Don Jose “Pepito” Leoncio de Leon, Pampanga’s first millionaire, founded the Pampanga Sugar Development Company (PASUDECO)
Justo Arrastia
Carlos Valdes
Amaury Roque Gutierrez, first Filipino President of Caltex
Joaquin “Jake” Gonzales
Francisco Gamboa
Roman Gonzales
Marciano Dizon
Francisco Granada

Judges

Jose Gutierrez David, delegate to the Constitutional Assembly that drafted the 1935 Constitution
Pedro Valdes Liongson
Zoilo Hilario, chief justice of the Philippine Supreme Court
Sally Gozun Acosta, member of the California State Legislature

Artists

Dario Fajardo, “the Harry Belafonte of the Philippines”
Fred Panopio, “the singing cowboy”
Lorenzo de Jesus, star at the Teatro Sabina
Jose Rodriguez, popular movie star
Chito Feliciano, star of TV show Dancetime with Chito
Arturo and Ceferino “Ninoy” Joven, leading stars of Circulo Escenico
Temang Mangio, who, along with husband Pepe Baltazar of Sasuan, founded the famous Banda 31

Ambassadors

Carmen Buyson
Carlos Valdes
Bienvenido Tan, J. R.
Rafaelita Hilario Soriano

Governors of Pampanga

Tiburcio Hilario
Ceferino Joven
Francisco Padua de los Santos
Fulencio Nunes
Honorio Ventura
Pablo Angeles David
Estelito Mendoza

Cabinet

Honorio V. Macapagal, chief of the cabinet
Amb. Rafaelita Soriano, Secretary of Social Welfare
Rodrigo P. Garcja, Secretary of Education
Ricardo Puno, Secretary of the Interior

Out of the great men a small village in Kapampangan became a whole nation.
**Members**

Ventura, the first member of the Cabinet, Executive Bureau in 1921, Secretary of the Interior, (Felipe Agoncillo); he is also as the benefactor of a Lubao, Diosdado gay, Secretary of General Illamor, Secretary of the Perez, J. Jr., executive President Macaysay Puno, Sr., Secretary of Pardo, S., Solicitor General Prendoza, Solicitor General, Secretary of Justice

**Educators**

Pantaleon Regala, first Superintendent of the Philippine School of Arts and Trades Vidal Tan, President of the University of the Philippines and Far Eastern University Ceferino Joven, (not to be confused with the revolutionary), Supervisor of Private Schools

Elisa Gutierrez Abello, Head of the Spanish Department of UP Diliman Fr. Bernardo Perez, Rector of the San Beda College Evangelina Hilario Lacson, Akademyang Kapampangan

**Doctors/Scientists**

Regino Navarro, bacteriologist; chief of the Laboratory Department, Philippine General Hospital Jacobo Fajardo, the first Filipino Director of the Bureau of Health Antonio Fajardo, an official of the World health Organization Conrado Buenviaje, chairman of the Committee on Scientific Assemblies of the Philippine Medical Association Mariano “Ano” Alimurung, internationally known heart specialist, first Asian to become Vice President of the International Federation of Catholic Physicians Benjamin Canlas, head of Pathology Department, UP College of Medicine; Vice President of the Philippine Society of Pathologists Benjamin Barrera, Dean of the UP College of Medicine Lucrecia Regala Castillo, chief of Pediatrics, Veterans Memorial Hospital Amelia Almeida Garcia, chief of Clinical Pathology, Veterans Memorial Hospital Rogelio Samia, cardiologist, Secretary-Treasurer of the Philippine Heart Association Francis and Luz Serrano, prominent doctors Juan Galang, owner and director, Galang Maternity Hospital in Manila

**Church Leaders**

Msgr. Alejandro Olalia, DD, Bishop of Lipa Raquel Gonzales De Leon headed the national Catholic Women’s League; she rose to national prominence when she crusaded against motels and lodging houses

**Public Servants**

Praxedes Fajardo, headed the Red Cross during the Revolution Conrado Cajator, PAGCOM chief Jose Regala, Trafcon chief Emerito de Jesus, Undersecretary of National Defence Regis Puno, Undersecretary of Justice Bienvenido “Bidong” Escoto, headed the Presidential Anti-smuggling Commission and sat in the National Advisory Board on Health Ernesto V. Santos, Member of the Monetary Board Rodrigo Perez, Jr., Chairman of the Commission on Elections Manuel Abello, Chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission Rolando Olalia, labor leader Fortunato Agas, Commissioner, Bureau of Internal Revenues

**Media Leaders**

Enriqueta David Perez, editor of the Philippine Herald Wilfredo Buyson Villarama, President of The Manila Times

**Philanthropists**

Don Jose “Pepe” Panlilio, behind the unequalled Santacruzan of Bacolor in 1934 Don Mariano Alimurung, pioneer of the Knights of Columbus Don Gregorio Alimurung Don Francisco “Paquito” Panlilio Pedring de Jesus Dona Natividad de Leon and her children ran a charity clinic in Malate Jorge de Leon, received papal decoration for his works in charity and service to the poor Don Pascual Gozun, writer, dramatist, public servant, town leader

**Military Officers**

Maj. Porrino E. Zablan, the first Filipino fighter pilot; an airfield at camp Murphy (now Camp Aguinaldo) was named Zablan Air Base in his honor Gen. Gregorio M. Camiling, J. R., Commanding General of the Philippine Army Col. Modesto Gozun, Adjutant General of the Armed Forces of the Philippines Brig. Gen. Virgilio David Col. Augusto Gutierrez, PC Commander of Pampanga Federico Calma, chief of staff of the PC engineers Ciceron de la Cruz, PC personnel chief

**Border calligraphic drawing by Padre Juan Severino Mallari (1785-1840)**
As I look back the years gone by, I cannot but recall with very fond memories the 15 long years that the Lord permitted me to spend in the town of Bacolor. They were not only years to remember but they were also the earlier years of my priesthood; consequently, they were the years when the idealism and vigor of youth drove me to many inspiring ideas.

My recollections of Bacolor date back to my boyhood days when I first came to the town as a student in the Instituto Zita del Moral. This was a famous educational center in those early days. First of all, it was established to honor the late Rev. Fathers Zita and del Moral, two very distinguished Filipino priest educators during the days of the first Philippine Republic. The school was organized by Don Roman Valdes and was situated in what is now the house of the late Don Pepito de Leon. Among its leading professors were such luminaries as Don Marcelino Aguas, Don Tomas Gamboa, Don Modesto Joaquin, Don Benigno Ricafort, and later Don Vicente Neri and Don Tirso Manabat. Don Roman Valdes was the director and the sub-director was Don Pedro Abad Santos. Among the many prominent alumni of that small school, I can recall Don Pedro Valdes Lionson, Don Jose Valdes, and many others. It was opened only to boys.

Another important remembrance I treasure with much value today is the close association of the foundation of the Catholic primary, later elementary, school of the town (St. Mary's Academy) and the Circulo Escenico. When I invited the Benedictine Sisters to conduct the school in 1922, the Sister Superior-to-be remarked that the physical condition of the school building (the old Convento) was in a sad state, needing immediate repairs and roofing. I can recall with special satisfaction now that, through the Lord’s kindness, I was able to have such repairs accomplished in one-and-a-half months’ time, so that classes were opened formally under the Sisters in June, 1922. How was this accomplished? It was through the presentation of a Spanish zarzuela (Morirse a Tiempo), through the generous services of a group of first-class actors of the town and a few guests from Manila, including Pepe and Paquito Panlilio, Antonio Fajardo, Leonardo Abola, and others. I had to prepare for the whole presentation, rehearsing and directing the play. However, since it was a zarzuela, I discovered that, on the gala night, someone would have to be with the orchestra to conduct the same. I had to do this also. In so doing, the need for someone to remain in the back of the stage to coach and serve as apuntador de telon became obvious.

It was for this specific task that I invited Don Paquito Lionson to serve as such. I believe this was an important experience of his that must have contributed to Don Paquito’s subsequent interest in dramatics. And it was also from that original stage presentation that the same group became inspired enough, so that they continued together and eventually formed themselves into the Circulo Escenico. Everybody knows now how popular this dramatic club became, not only in the town and in the province but later even in Manila.

Tickets for that original presentation were sold at P2.00 per seat in the rows of preferentes, and the rest at P1.00. By combining the classrooms of the first floor of the building we were able to have a capacity of 240.

I do remember that among those who came to the affair was a young lad who paid P200.00 for his seat to be in a preferred spot to listen to a lady guest pianist from Angeles City.

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MLQ and the red-hot chili peppers

Aside from Rizal and Aguinaldo, Bacolor was visited by other historical figures, according to the unpublished memoirs of Justice Jose Gutierrez David (1891-1977). When Jose was a young boy, his brothers Amado and Eduardo regularly brought home their classmates in Manila for the Christmas vacation. Among them were Epifanio de los Santos, Vivencio del Rosario, and Manuel L. Quezon. In one of those visits, the young Quezon arrived after everyone had left the house for the midnight mass. He went straight to bed but since it was cold, he took a woolen suit hanging near the bed and wore it to sleep. It turned out to be Vivencio’s holiday suit. When he found out, he roused Quezon from sleep and a shouting match ensued. The next morning, Vivencio secretly put red pepper in Quezon’s cup of hot chocolate, causing Quezon’s lips to swell. But out of respect for their hosts, the two boys controlled themselves. Jose’s mother, noticing the tension, reconciled the two and ironed Vivencio’s suit for him. Years later, when Quezon became President of the Philippine Commonwealth, he appointed Vivencio to various important positions in government and the judiciary.

Source: The Unpublished Memoirs of Justice Jose Gutierrez David

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Juan Luna and the lucky horse-rider

Other prominent house guests of Jose Gutierrez David’s family included Fernando Ma. Guerrero, Cecilio Apostol, Jose Palma, writer of the original Spanish lyrics of the National Anthem, and Juan Luna, already a famous painter at the time. His visit coincided with a horse race, the prizes of which were clothing material decorated with embroidery or painting, donated by prominent ladies in the community, including Jose’s sister Trining. Trining’s donation turned out to be plain-looking compared to the other donated prizes, so she asked her brother Eduardo to ask his friend Juan Luna to paint something on it. Juan Luna complied and finished the painting after a few minutes. Trining’s prize, it goes without saying, outshone them all.

Source: The Unpublished Memoirs of Justice Jose Gutierrez David
As Compania Sabina faded, a new breed of artists in Bacolor organized Circulo Escenico in 1923, with Madrid-based Francisco Liongson Alonzo, son of Don Francisco Liongson by his first wife, as president and Jose Gutierrez David as vice president. The objective was to stage dramas, zarzuelas and operettas in Spanish and Kapampangan. Performers included children of Bacolor's rich and famous: Elisa Gutierrez, Ofelia Pamintuan, Nieves Joven, Jose Panlilio, Francisco Panlilio, Arturo Joven, Horacio Gutierrez, Antonio Fajardo, Ignacio Santos and guest performers from Manila. The group's first Kapampangan production was a translation of Severino Reyes' Huling Pati (Ing Tauling Bilin), starring Luz Palma, Arturo Joven and Pablo Angeles Loroño, with Jose Gutierrez David directing.

Source: The Unpublished Memoirs of Justice Jose Gutierrez David

The paper lanterns of Bacolor

The Giant Lantern Festival, for which San Fernando is known today, has its roots in Bacolor’s La Naval fiesta

As part of the La Naval celebrations held at the tail end of the rainy season in November, residents used paper lanterns to protect the candle flame from wind and rain as well as to liven up the procession with multi-colored lights. These lanterns hung until the Christmas season. Lanterns mounted on poles during the La Naval eventually made their way to the lubenas, the nine-day advent procession, and the mañinis, when processions from various barrios converge in the church patio on Christmas Eve.

(According to parol makers, the trend this year in parol design is a return to the traditional Bacolor-style lanterns.)

End of an era

Losing the capital to San Fernando

Newly elected Pampanga Governor Macario Arnedo of Apalit presided over the transfer of the provincial capital from Bacolor to San Fernando, despite the objections of his predecessor, Ceferino Joven, and prominent families of Bacolor. The transfer began in early 1903 and accomplished July, 1904. The Philippine Commission had earlier approved the decision, citing the strategic location of San Fernando. The Manila-Dagupan railroad, which crossed San Fernando but not Bacolor, linked the former with Manila, Cavite, and Tarlac. The capital was first housed in an old building in barrio Del Pilar, across the San Fernando River fronting the parish church (now cathedral).

Source: The Unpublished Memoirs of Justice Jose Gutierrez David

Tuqui Ca, Baculud

Queta qng busal na
Niting Capampangan
Carin ya mayaquit
Tibuan cung balayan
A nung nu babagul
I ng marimum lang amiam
At nung nu masayang
Titiman ing bulan.

Carin e mapansing
Angin dayat-malat
Dapot caring ilang
Misna qng calapad
Sangapan mu naman
I ng tiup nang banayad
Ning macayayamang
Angin qng abagat.

Malambis a basle
Carin mu damdaman
I ng siuc da ding batis
Ang angin qng parang
Ang dalit ding ayup
I ng biung ding tanaman...
Paua nga ning bable
Tula’t capaldanan.

Laiuisuis ding cuayan
Matas magparayo
I ng azul a banuang
Lilung qng yatu
Alun ding palayan
I ng sinag ning aldo
Panagaula nala
Masayang balen cu.

At ita... balu mu?
Ausan dang Baculud.
Qng bale meyaring
Cuayan at pinead
A quecang acaquit
Qng metung nang suluc
Carin cu mibait
Mebiasang linugud.

Tana... tuquian mucu
Carin ca magsaya
Queta qng balen cu
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At carin, baluan mu
Alang lua’t paliisa
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Bucud mung mimiral
I ng lugad at tula.

(Queta ca)
And then... **HORROR**

The end came in the form of boiling mud and water that sounded like a thousand carabaos running berserk. It came from the same mountains from which gentle rivers had, for centuries, flowed into the town to create its idyllic landscapes and inspire its resident poets and painters. It came like a thief in the night—monster would be more like it—snatching children from their parents' grip and burying them where their bodies could never be found again.

No community deserved this kind of ending. History's great civilizations were treated with more kindness: Greece was defeated in war, Rome deteriorated over centuries. But Bacolor's fate is worse than war or epidemic or flood or fire or earthquake, or all of those combined. Lahar comes unannounced; it scalds and then entombs you with dirt that hardens like rock; then it does the same thing to the rest of your family, your house, your car, and your entire neighborhood. It does so with such swiftness and finality that you will not be able to retrieve anything, not even memories, not even the chance to return and start again. Even the gravesites of Bacolor's heroes and artists disappeared forever.

Bacolor has finally come full circle; lahar fulfilled the prophetic etymology of the town—it elevated the place above the rest. Bacolor is now, truly and ironically, **makabakulud**.

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**ALL GONE**

On October 2, 1995, the town of Bacolor ceased to exist. That was the day the worst in a series of lahar avalanches erased the heavily populated barrio Cabalantian from the map. More than 100 lives were lost and at least 15,000 houses destroyed. "Villagers escaped death by a hairline climbing on roofs (of their rich neighbors' houses) but remained marooned for days without food, water and change of clothes," said **Ananias Canlou**, then town mayor at the time.

Since 1991, lahar from Mount Pinatubo had repeatedly struck portions of the town at a time, and the barrios fell one by one like domino chips. Of the 21 barrios—Balas, Cabalantian, Cabambangan, Cabetican, Calibutan, Concepcion, Dolores, Duat, Macabacle, Magliman, Maliwalu, Mesali Parulog, Potrero, San Antonio, San Isidro, San Vicente, Santa Barbara, Santa Ines, Talba and Tinajero, only Calibutan at the boundary with Angeles City has remained relatively unscathed.
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EVEN THE DEAD NOT SPARED

It can be said that Bacolor's dead were given two burials—well, actually, several burials, if you count the number of times lahawlayer the cemetery at the back of the church every year from 1991 to 1995. When All Saints' Day comes, the living returns to Bacolor to light candles where they think their departed relatives' graves lie, 20 feet below. "First we buried them six feet below," one resident says. "Then lahaw buried them 20 feet below. It's a total of 26 feet between us and our loved ones! Worse, we might be several more feet off the mark!" The parish priest has instructed the people to light candles in their homes instead.

“As this was worse than the eruption itself”

By Robby Tantingco

THE PARISH church of Cabalantian, one of the more populous barrios of Bacolor, was still being fortified with sandbags on the night of October 1, 1995, which was a Saturday, when Typhoon Mameng crossed Central Luzon.

Parish priest Fr. Eduardo Musni, 47, was supervising the work, despite a fever. He retired to his room at 3:30 a.m. At 4:30 a.m., his assistant, Louie Lansang, 18, rose to prepare for the Sunday Mass scheduled at 6 a.m.

Groping his way in the dark convento, Louie's thoughts were on the trip he was to make with his parents the next day, Monday, for a surgery to remove a large birthmark on his shoulder. As the rains continued, he worried about lahaw which had inundated parts of Bacolor in the last few years. He calmed himself by thinking that Cabalantian was a relatively elevated area, and that the Gugu dike recently built by government engineers would hold.

Suddenly, the parish secretary came in shouting about rising floodwaters and people climbing to the choir loft of the church next door. In an instant, Louie felt warm water around his thighs. Fr. Musni, the secretary and Louie had barely climbed the ladder to the choir loft when the flood overtook them.

Louie, who could not swim, sank. The priest pulled him out of the water and, by government engineers would hold.

As they crawled in mud like trapped animals, it was difficult to imagine that these were the same proud descendants of the Jovens, Galuras, Maligs and Palmas of Bacolor

By government engineers would hold.

They saw the muddy water, now steaming with volcanic debris and reeking with sulphur, rise inside the church below them. The wooden pews floated noisily and then, in a heap against the altar, sank under their own weight. To the priest's horror, the flood continued rising until it overflowed into the choir loft.

The men peeled off the ceiling and they helped the women and children climb to the roof of the church. The steep pyramidal roof forced them to spread around, while doing a balancing act on the gutters. Louie and the secretary sat close to the parish priest: drenched to the bone, they looked at the tempest around them: the dark grey

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Lahar victims’ travails did not end after they had fled to safety. First, they were herded like cows on military trucks to evacuation sites, which ranged from school buildings to tent cities and gymnasiums. These were halfway houses en route to the permanent resettlement areas—nothing more than rows of identical units located in the middle of sugarcane plantations that sizzled under the sun. Conditions in evacuation and resettlement areas can be hellish—loss of privacy, lack of sanitation, flies, disease, petty thieves and other indignities. Farmers suddenly had no farms and shop owners had nothing to do, except to line up for relief goods. These on top of the trauma of being uprooted from home and losing all possessions and livelihoods and facing a bleak, even blank, future. Hundreds had succumbed to depression, neurosis, even psychosis. Suicides had been recorded.

And, as if to add insult to injury, corruption reared its ugly head amidst the sea of suffering. Billions of pesos in government funds were reported missing as dikes, megadikes, sabo dams, catch basins and other engineering interventions were pushed by politicians, contractors and agents who salivated after the commissions, when the money could have been better spent on welfare and livelihood among the evacuees. In some cases, the dikes had given residents a false sense of security, leading to tragic consequences.

Bacolorinos with their proud heritage are probably wondering what they did in the past to earn this suffering.

FROM BAHAY-NA-BATO TO HOUSE-ON-STILTS

Some families used single car jacks to raise their houses

Some houses have been raised as many as four times.

Family members dug with shovels and bare hands to retrieve and recycle materials from their old house to reconstruct a new one. Against all odds, Bacolor returnees raised their recycled houses using single car jacks until rich Kapampangans in the United States donated six large hydraulic jacks to the town. The local government then instituted a house-raising program, donating jacks, materials and copper molds for making the concrete stilts and supporting beams, and designated a local contractor and construction crew. Homeowners paid only the labor costs.

Source: Can This Town Survive? A Case Study of a Buried Philippine Town by Kathleen S. Crittenden (University of Illinois at Chicago)

FROM BAHAY-NA-BATO TO HOUSE-ON-STILTS

The elegant colonial houses of Bacolor, locally known as bahay na bato (stone house), were not spared in the deluge. Many were totally entombed, together with their antique furniture, paintings, documents and other heritage materials. One exception was the Panlilio mansion which was transported, in the nick of time, to Cavite to become the Museo de La Salle, thanks to the efforts of Bro. Andrew Gonzales and Joey Panlilio.

Other houses were raised on stilts to outwit the annual flow of lahar. In 1991, houses were buried in two-meter deep mud. In 1994, a fresh flow elevated the ground with another one meter of mud. In 1995, another 3.5 meters, for an average total deposition of 6.5 meters.

MISERY WITHOUT END

Depression, disease and corruption plagued evacuees

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Anachronistic houses-on-stilts in the middle of dry land
Construction of train bridge over Pampanga River in the 1890s  Lahar devastation in the 1990s

TWO KNOCKOUTS

History delivered the first blow, Nature the second

By Jean-Christopher Gaillard, Ph.D.

WHEN speaking about disasters and Bacolor, one would think first about Pinatubo lahar onslaughts. But another event also had a tremendous and surely longer-lasting effect. This is the construction of the Manilia-Dagupan railway. The succession of these two disasters struck Bacolor down, from the glorious seat of power and culture it once was, to a small village it has become today.

Founded in 1576, Bacolor was described by Mariano Henson as the capital of Pampanga as early as 1746—at the time when Pampanga covered a wide territory that extended to Nueva Vizcaya in the north, Aurora in the east, and parts of Bulacan and Bataan in the south. From 1762 to 1764, it even enjoyed the privilege of being the capital of the Spanish government in the Philippines during the British occupation of Manila. In 1762 it was also granted the very rare title of Villa by the Spanish authorities. During the colonial period, this town therefore enjoyed complete urban functions. Provincial-level administrations were located in Bacolor which also enjoyed commercial functions due to its strategic location at the contact between the two geographical units of Pampanga—the wetlands of the Pampanga River delta and Candaba Swamp, and the so-called dry lands. Bacolor was also famous for its trade school, the first in East Asia, and for its cultural activities. These complete urban functions made Bacolor rank very high in the Philippine urban hierarchy, at least at the level of a regional urban center.

However, in 1892, the government decided to build a railway to link the Lingayen Gulf to Manila. The choice of the route seems to have passed through a debate. The principala of Bacolor presumably faced tough objection from the nobility of Mexico (Masicu), who also wanted the railroad to pass through their town. Allegedly, to settle the feud the government selected San Fernando instead, which lay in midpoint between the two towns. As it turned out, the railway became a major axis of development in the Central Plain of Luzon and Bacolor was cut off from it. Ten years later, the provincial capital of Pampanga was transferred from Bacolor to San Fernando. Thus, Bacolor lost its administrative functions and much of its economic power, in favor of San Fernando. What remained were its cultural functions.

Bacolor eventually deteriorated into a mere satellite of the new provincial capital. The two towns were indeed connected by intense daily shuttles; the eastern portion of the Bacolor town proper (e.g., barangay Cabalantian) even became part of the outer, upper-income residential ring surrounding San Fernando's historical center. A clear sign of this urban stagnation is the relatively slow population growth of Bacolor during the 20th century. Between 1903 and 1990, censuses show Bacolor population multiplying by 4.98, compared to San Fernando's 8.85. (Prior to the transfer of capital, between 1837 and 1887, Bacolor population multiplied by 1.78, compared to 1.58 of San Fernando and Sto. Tomas, then combined.) Evidently, the transfer reverted the trend.

By 1990, Bacolor had thus been down-ranked to the level of a small town, its only claim to fame being its cultural functions. Then came the Pinatubo eruption of 1991, and the huge recurrent lahars (volcanic debris flows) between 1991 and 1997 buried Bacolor by portions and in stages. At least 75% of Bacolor's population has fled the town or been resettled in the adjacent municipalities of San Fernando, Mexico, Mabalacat, Floridablanca and Lubao. Bacolor thus lost one of the main elements that help define the hierarchical level of a town: its population. In a previous article (see Singsing Vol. 1 No. 4), we have already shown how the people of Bacolor struggled to maintain the town's cultural functions and how the value of territorial markers increased throughout the crisis. Another asset that never left Bacolor was the Don Honorio Ventura College of Arts and Trades (DHVCAT), which did not stop its operations even at the peak of the lahar crises, compared to the commercial and economic establishments (banks, hospitals, stores, etc.) and administrative units (municipal offices, justice court, water service, etc.) that fled, closed down or were destroyed. It is really the cultural and educational functions of Bacolor that helped the town survive the disasters.

The decrease in population resulted in revenue shortage as well, as the internal revenue allotment (IRA) is mainly based on population figures. Taxes from economic investors were also cut down to almost nil. In 1996, Bacolor was ranked at the bottom of the Pampanga urban hierarchy. In the span of one century, the combination of anthropogenic and natural disasters has produced a complete reversal of fortune for Bacolor.

Despite a stunning reversal of fortune, Bacolor now has a real chance of recovering the power and the glory

(To page 28)
DEFYING PINATUBO

By risking everything, the trade school inspired the town

True to the spirit of their ancestors, the first structures that Bacoloreños rebuilt were their churches and schools. They did through donations from teachers, private citizens, elected officials and foreign benefactors, as well as through an informal tax on each truckload of sand quarried from the town (as many as 100 trucks per day). The Don Honorio Ventura College of Arts and Trades (formerly the Escuela de Artes y Oficios de Bacolor), alternately closed and reopened throughout the lahar season; students, faculty and administrators cleared debris each time. Since all shops and labs had been buried to their rooftops, as well as all first-floor classrooms, make-up classes were held in resettlement areas and alternate campuses were readied. At some point, enrollment dropped to 2,800 (down from 5,300), but the school remained open, although dismissing students early to allow them to go home before dark. By 1998, enrollment had recovered at 4,079 students. By 2001, the school was the major employer in Bacolor, with 186 regular faculty and 50 non-teaching personnel, not to mention the economic activity it created in the town proper and the inspiration it gave to residents of Bacolor.

Source: Can This Town Survive? A Case Study of a Buried Philippine Town by Kathleen S. Crittenden (University of Illinois at Chicago)

HIGH AND DRY

Ironically, Bacolor, once condemned as the catch basin for lahar, has become the safest town in the province

Because of the tons of lahar dumped on the town, the raising of the national highway, and the dikes intended to sacrifice it, Bacolor is now at least 6 meters higher in elevation than either San Fernando on the east or Guagua on the west. By sustaining the lahar flows, Bacolor has ironically solved its historical problem with flooding, which in turn has become severe in other Pampanga towns not directly affected by lahar. Since all government buildings, residential houses, churches and schools have been either raised or fortified in anticipation of future flows, and residents and town leaders have shown independence from the national government in responding to disaster situations, the town is probably the safest place in the province today.

UNIFYING SYMBOL

The much-photographed San Guillermo Church of Bacolor is the visual symbol, measure and diary of lahar devastation in Pampanga. Lahar began entering the church in 1994; by 1995, the cumulative deposition was 6.6 meters. What used to be the choir-loft window above the buried main entrance is now the door. Huge chandeliers are nearly touching the elevated ground. The famous retablo (main altar) had been unearthed and raised, and religious services have resumed as early as 1996 to contribute a sense of normalcy to the community. The La Naval was celebrated in November, 1995, barely weeks after the worst lahar episode. A large tent was erected in front of the church, and scattered Bacoloreños returned to participate in the ceremonies. At once heartbreaking, defiant and hopeful, it was one of the shining moments in the history of the town.

No place like home

In the face of a diaspora, Bacoloreños have shown an awe-inspiring devotion to the land of their birth. Aside from houses on stilts, residents built new houses on top of dikes rather than go back to resettlement areas. “I would rather live and die in Bacolor” is their determined reply when asked why they would risk their lives again. They also express disappointment with former neighbors’ lack of loyalty to their town. Many families have invested heavily in rebuilding their houses in the town; others who don’t have the resources to rebuild content themselves with returning every day to visit old friends and try to capture a lifestyle that is probably lost forever. Those in resettlement areas try to recreate their former environment by naming streets after their old streets, insisting on electing their old town officials instead of the officials of the town where the resettlement area is located, and celebrating the fiesta of the town that is miles away. Unfortunately, the residents’ attachment to their land is not shared by the town’s economic sector, which fled and relocated at the first sign of danger and stubbornly stays away.

Reference: Can This Town Survive? A Case Study of a Buried Philippine Town by Kathleen S. Crittenden (University of Illinois at Chicago)
of Spanish era officials which supplemented the “official” history of Angeles. However, Don Mariano’s unique contribution to Kapampangan studies may have been the inspiration he supplied to his nephew, Mariano A. Henson, who decades later composed histories of both Angeles and Pampanga Province. The younger Henson also utilized Parker’s works that he found in the collections of H. Otley Beyer. Thus, there exists a direct linkage between the work of Mariano Vicente Henson and Luther Parker and the histories of Mariano A. Henson that represent a starting point for the modern era of Kapampangan studies.

Bacolor’s preeminence did not long outlast the first decade of the twentieth century. The status of capital of Pampanga already migrated from Bacolor to San Fernando in 1904. Through the latter community passed the railroad that carried passengers and commodities to Manila. In addition, in 1921 San Fernando became a milling center of the revived sugar industry that flourished for two decades following the 1909 passage of the Payne-Aldrich Tariff Act. Eventually, cinema and other diversions cut into Bacolor’s local cultural production and the town faded into regional obscurity. Around 1911, Luther Parker transferred out of the province, and his project of the writing of Kapampangan town histories ended. The idea was reborn after World War II with the compiling of the Historical Data Papers (HDP) by local teachers from every province. The format of the HDP resembles remarkably that of Parker’s original histories with their listing of officials and breakdown into barrios; however, I have never been able to learn enough about the origins of the HDP to establish a connection between the two projects. Nevertheless, the similarity between the two indicates the worth of Parker’s original scheme.

In his thinking about Pampanga’s history and culture Parker was, no doubt, stirred by the vibrant cultural life of Bacolor. Besides knowing its outstanding authors, perhaps he also attended zarzuela performances at the Teatro Sabina, and other cultural happenings. Perhaps he was impressed that Bacolor had once served (from 1762 to 1764) as the Spanish capital of the entire Philippines. At any rate, he proved himself one of those rare American colonials who possessed an appreciation of the culture that he discovered around him. And in Pampanga in that decade, Bacolor was the place to be. While it is not fashionable in the post-colonial era to accentuate the positive about America’s representatives, Luther Parker deserves at least a simple acknowledgement for his role in forging Kapampangan studies. Bacolor made that role possible.

In search of prehistoric Bacolor
Facing extinction, a town goes back to its beginnings
By Joel P. Mallari

At the early period of colonization, it was noted that there were already at least eleven important settlements, namely Lubao, Mabacebe, Sasman, Betis, Guagua, Bacolor, Apalit, Arayat, Candaba, Porac, and Mascicu (later Mexico) located along the major waterways of the Kapampangan Region. By choosing Bakulud from among these settlements as the regional capital, the Spaniards already acknowledged the town’s superiority at the time.

The early Kapampangans were probably Buddhist as a result of cultural influences from India through the Sri-Vijaya and Majapahit Kingdoms dominating the Southeast Asian region with which Kapampangans were trading. The Kapampangans that the Spaniards found were Muslim because by that time, Islam had already dominated the entire Southeast Asian region from its point of origin in northern Sumatra.

Bakulud was ideally situated because of its access to river networks, specifically the Betis River (linked to the Guagua-Pasak River, which is the main tributary to Indung Kapampangan, or the Pampanga River). Pre-colonial Kapampangans (so named because of their communities along the riverbanks) probably used tough barangay-style boats, which carried 60 to 90 persons, in interacting with various merchant capitals overseas. The heavy trading activity in the area is evidenced by artifacts unearthed in Lubao and Porac which are in the vicinity of Bacolor. From all indications, they were active seafaring people. Archaeological as well as satellite evidence shows the ancient delta reached the Betis area, which makes pre-Hispanic Bakulud a coastal town, further reinforcing its role as an entrepot of trade and economic development in the region. When the Spaniards came in 1571, they found a thriving Muslim community in Betis with a population of at least 3000—big compared to Sugb (Cebu), Mactan, Maynilad (Manila) and Bigan (Vigan) each of which had a maximum population of 2000 at the time of the conquest (Candaba, by the way, had 3500). Thus, the Spaniards added little to the already progressive Bakulud to make it the capital of the new province.

Pieces of artifacts like black-white decorated jars, discovered in Lubao, which is very near Bakulud, date back to the Sung (A.D. 960-1279) and Ming (A.D. 1368-1644) Periods. Excessive burial sites dating as early as Tang (A.D. 618-907) to Middle Sung Period and another burial site dated Sung, Yuan (A.D. 1279-1368) and Ming Period, containing a huge number of sherds and pieces of earthenware, have also been discovered in Porac, Bakulud’s neighbor to the west.

In short, the unearthed tradeware and the Muslim faith discovered by the earliest Spanish conquerors show that Bakulud and its neighbors in the delta were firmly linked to the Southeast Asian trade network centuries before 1571.
In the early 70s, motorists passing through Bacolor never failed to notice a hobbi standing motionless on the roadside near the Don Bosco Academy. Rich students in the exclusive boys’ school threw sandwiches at him; children taunted him. Old folks said he lost his mind after his wife died in an accident on her way back home; since then he had stood on that spot day and night, rain or shine, as if waiting for his wife who would never return.

After the lahaw episodes in the 1990s, nothing more was heard of him.

(From page 8)

and exceptional defense of the Spanish crown.

Juan de Medina, an Augustinian historian, wrote in 1630 about the noble Kapampangan military heritage which del Pan was still praising two centuries later:

And yet it can be said of these Indians (and a strange thing it is), that although they are treated so harshly, it is not known that a single one has deserted to the Dutch in Maluco, where they suffer more than in their own country. Many of the other Indians go and come. When these soldiers leave Pampanga, they present a fine appearance, for the villages come to their aid, each with a certain sum, for their uniforms. All this is due to the teaching of the religious of our father St. Augustine, whose flock these Indians are, and the children of their teaching."

“Bacolor is the best village not only of Pampanga, but of all the islands.”

- Juan de Medina,

17th century Spanish chronicler

When the Englishmen attacked the Philippines as a carry-over of the Seven Years’ War that had repercussions on the diplomatic relations between their country England and Spain, there was a showcasing of this Kapampangan military tradition. The British arrived in Manila on September 23, 1762, immediately taking over the strategic portions of the Spanish capital. Skirmishes around the arrabales of Manila persisted for a week, but since Day One the superiority of the British arms was evident. There were, however, motions of support for the Castilian escudo, especially from the Kapampangans.

On October 4 (or 3 in other accounts), at about two in the morning, some 3,000 Kapampangans and 200 Spaniards attacked British detachments in Manila; an assault characterized by bloody surges and stiff hand-to-hand combat. It was in this encounter that José Manalastás, a Kapampangan soldier, distinguished himself for his boldness. He personally entered the tent of the British commander, General William Draper; then dragged him out with a dagger poised to pierce his heart. The timely arrival of reinforcements nullified the brave Filipino’s aim; wounded by British rifles, he had to flee. The lull after the battle would reveal that reinforcements nullified the brave Filipino’s aim; wounded by British rifles, he had to flee. The lull after the battle would reveal that reinforcements nullified the brave Filipino’s aim; wounded by British rifles, he had to flee. 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and that all lands of Pampanga be planted with rice and sugar cane; however, as a rebuttal against the British and their Spanish collaborators, he forbade the sending of any provision to Manila. He also encouraged the circulation of the barrilla (coins) in the whole province, which he later suspended with the proliferation of counterfeits from the Sangleys (Chinese).

In answer to the enticement of the British among the ‘indios’, he also allowed them “freedom of worship, and exemption from of counterfeits from the Sangleys (Chinese).

He also encouraged the circulation of the barrilla (coins) in the whole province, which he later suspended with the proliferation of counterfeits from the Sangleys (Chinese).

Collaborators, he forbade the sending of any provision to Manila. Cutting provisions to Manila and other safeguards to retaliatory letters and counter-charges to Rojo from his Bacolor capital.

Anda, who continued the struggle in Bacolor.

Charged with defiance and insubordination, Anda wrote many retaliatory letters and counter-charges to Rojo from his Bacolor capital. Cutting provisions to Manila and other safeguards to maintain his capital, he also instructed both friars and secular priests in Pampanga to defy their archbishop who had instructed them to go back to Manila.

It was during the stay of Anda in Bacolor that some Filipinos took advantage of the situation and started also their revolts. Included were the rebellions of Diego Silang in the Ilocos Region, the Chinese in the adjacent town of Guagua, and that of Juan de la Cruz Palaris in Pangasinan.

To maintain the integrity of the Spanish crown, Anda utilized mostly his loyal Kapampangan troops and other Filipinos in suppressing these revolts.

It should be noted that the melting-pot arrangement of what was once the Kapampangan region took place during Bacolor’s term as the capital. For example, there was an edict from Anda that “land in the village of San Ysidro be given to the Tagalogs who had fled from Manila.” Upper Pampanga, specifically the towns of Tarlac and Capas, was opened for the Ilocanos and Pangasinenses who had fled their provinces due to the Palaris revolt.

Kapampangans proved their loyalty to the concept of nation and showed their kinship with other ethno-linguistic tribes

In the midst of the fight between Anda and the British, the Seven Years’ War came to a close on February 10, 1764, when England restoring the Philippines to Spain. On the 14th of March, 1764, the new Spanish Governor-General, Francisco de la Torre arrived in Bataan. Anda invited him for a visit; de la Torre arrived in Pampanga on the 15th. The next day, the 16th, he took over the post from Anda in the capital of Bacolor. Two weeks later, on the 31st of March, the Spanish troops with their loyal Kapampangan and other Filipino soldiers marched back to Manila.

In recognition of the unquestionable loyalty of Bacolor and the whole province of Pampanga, a royal decree of November 9, 1765 transformed the erstwhile capital into the Villa de Bacolor.

Most historians have downplayed events in Bacolor, Pampanga in 1762-64, viewing the episode only as a fight between the Spaniards and the British. However, it should be seen as one of the first signals of Filipinism: by initially resisting even the Spaniards who collaborated with the invading British, Kapampangans proved their loyalty to the concept of nation and not to their colonial masters; and by opening their region to other ethno-linguistic groups affected by revolts and disorders, Kapampangans showed kinship with other tribes. Kapampangans probably already thought of themselves as ‘Filipinos’ even in that early period of our history.

Right:
Guia Balmori, daughter of labor leader Joaquin Balmori, escorted by Ernesto “Gatas” Santos, son of Teodoro Santos of San Fernando and Mabalacat; she is the second Kapampangan to win a national beauty contest, after Socorro Henson.

Far right:
Rosario Manuel represented the province in 1927 (Photo courtesy of Museo ning Angeles, thru kindness of Marc Nepomuceno)

(Belles... from page 15)

In her bouquet. Her court included Rosario Ferro (Miss Luzon), Belen de Guzman (Miss Visayas) and Marina Lopez (Miss Mindanao). Later in life, she married Jose Avelino Jr., who would soon be a Senate President, with whom she bore 7 children. She settled in Paranaque and operated a beauty parlor in Makati with her daughter.

Right:
Guia Balmori, daughter of labor leader Joaquin Balmori, escorted by Ernesto “Gatas” Santos, son of Teodoro Santos of San Fernando and Mabalacat; she is the second Kapampangan to win a national beauty contest, after Socorro Henson.

Far right:
Rosario Manuel represented the province in 1927 (Photo courtesy of Museo ning Angeles, thru kindness of Marc Nepomuceno)
interconnections between these three families. Among the children of José Leonardo de Leon and his wife Casimira Custodia, were Doña Luisa Gonzaga de Leon, who is well remembered for her Kapampangan translation of the Ejercito Cotidiano, and Don José Aniceto de Leon.

José Aniceto would pass on the surname of Leon to his descendants. While Luisa married Don Francisco Paula de los Santos, and their daughter of Joven patriarch, Don Juan Joven and Doña Geronima Suárez, the land donor of the Escuela de Artes y Oficios, the oldest trade school in Asia, now known as the Don Honorio Ventura College of Arts and Trades. Upon Arcadia's death, José would later marry her younger sibling Ramona Joven Suárez. Two of their daughters, Juana and Josefa Leon Santos, married Domingo Panillo, creating the Santos-Joven-Panillo Clan. Don José Aniceto de Leon married Doña Aleja Buyson, with whom he had five children. Among them was Leonor de Leon de Keyser, whose daughter Dolores Keyser, would marry José Joven y Gutierrez, a grandson of Don Juan Joven. Another child, Damaso de Leon, had a son Jose Leoncio de Leon y Hizon, who would also marry into the Joven clan with his two marriages to siblings Regina and Natividad Joven y Gutierrez. These ties that bind are endless. But two patterns definitely emerge: the numerous internmarriages,
and the Joven tradition of marrying the younger sibling upon the death of the older, which in the examples above, appeared thrice. This is indeed a most royal pattern not at all new. The Royal Houses of Europe had for the longest time, used this same pattern of intermarriage, as a form of consolidation as well as strengthening of wealth and power.

Towards the end of the 19th century, it was said that almost everyone bahay na bato in Bacolor was either a Joven or a de Leon house, as every prominent resident, one way or another, was connected to this principalia pedigree. Together with other ilustrado families such as the Lionsons, Valdeses, Venturas and Palmas, these clans dominated the social patterns of this elegant Pampanga town, representing as what John Larkin terms as “the pinnacle of native society.”

(Jewel ... from page 7)

The wealthy Joven family financed the Compania Sabina, whose members included prominent residents of Bacolor drawn together by a common love for theatre. Juan Crisostomo Soto was the company’s resident playwright and director. The Jovens also supported the Orquesta Palma, whose member Pablo Palma composed the music of Soto’s famous zarzuela, Alang Dios! Many of the songs from this musical have become popular folk songs.

When the revolution against Spain broke out—Bacolor, despite its being a colonial bastion, and despite the widespread notion that Kapampangans sided with the Spaniards—produced the bravest freedom-fighters. Even poets and artists took up arms against their colonial masters. Crisostomo Soto, Felix Galura, Mariano Proceso Pabalban Byron and many others joined fellow Kapampangan writers (like Aurelio Tolentino from the neighboring Guagua town) in the fight against Spain and later against the United States. Only a few kilometers separate Macabebe and Bacolor on the map, but these two Pampanga towns represented the farthest opposite ends of the political spectrum of the time. While the Macabebe cast their fortune with the colonizers, Bacoloreños severed all ties with their former masters. Jose Rizal planted the seeds when he visited his wealthy friends Don Balbino Ventura and Don Francisco Joven in Bacolor in 1871. The first cry of the Revolution in Pampanga occurred on June 4, 1898 in Bacolor. The following year, Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo entered Bacolor in triumph. But the tide of history quickly swapped the small town. In 1900, the last Capitan Municipal, Don Ceferino Joven, stepped down as the Americans occupied the archipelago. The next year, the new colonizers inaugurated in Bacolor the country’s first civil government, with Ceferino Joven as the provincial governor.

In 1903, the Philippine Commission transferred the provincial capital to the next town, San Fernando, where the all-important Dagupan-Manila railroad passed.

But the jewel did not lose its luster even when history moved the spotlight away from it. Throughout the 20th century, Bacolor continued to produce hundreds of great men and women, way beyond what might be expected from a small town.

References: Kapampangan Literature: A Historical Survey and Anthology by Edna Zapanta-Manlapaz (Ateneo de Manila University Press); Our Islands and their People by Jose de Olivares; “The Story of Bacolor in a Nutshell” by Dr. Rogelio M. Samia.

(This was worse... from page 22)

sky melted into the dark grey sea of lahar that raged below them. Only rooftops and the tips of trees and electric posts were all that remained of Cabalantian. Louie wondered if the rest of the world knew what was happening to them and if they were already doing something about it.

Lahar flowed intermittently, at noon, in the evening and again at dawn the following day, Monday. The 200 survivors sat helplessly around the edge of the church roof for more than 24 hours. “We were wet all throughout,” Louie narrates. “We urinated and defecated in full view of everybody. Nothing was important anymore since we expected the lahar to overtake the roof and kill us all.”

Helicopters came, hovered around, and left. Louie could not understand why no help arrived for 24 hours when dry land was just a couple of kilometers away. “When night came I felt desperate,” he says. “The children were crying and the adults were in shock. All that Fr. Musni could do was tell us to pray.”

By daybreak Monday, the rain had not stopped and fresh lahar flowed dangerously close to the roof. At 9 A.M., during a lull, Fr. Musni decided to evacuate the rooftop. “He felt that if we didn’t, the next lahar flow would drown us,” Louie says.

So one by one they climbed down and gingerly stepped on hardening ground, avoiding soft spots that could turn into quicksand. Someone had the bright idea of using the electricity lines as hanging bridge, and everybody followed him. Men carried old folks and children on their backs; sometimes they fell into the mud, screaming and flailing their arms like terrified trapped animals, and had to be rescued.

It was hard to imagine that these were the same proud descendants of the Jovens, Galuras, Maligs and Palmas of Bacolor.

Fr. Musni was the last to reach safe ground. Days later, they dug out his vehicle along with other cars where escaping families had been trapped and suffocated inside. To this day, the images that still haunt Louie are those of people being carried away by lahar. “We saw them on their roofs embracing each other as lahar engulfed them,” he recalls. “They floated for a while and then they were gone. They were not shouting or crying. They just looked so shocked.”

Interview conducted by Gina Diaz and Sheila Laxamana on July 17, 2003.

(Two Knockouts... from page 24)

Bacolor will probably never get back the same administrative and commercial glory it once enjoyed, but like the proverbial phoenix it is rising from the ashes of Mt. Pinatubo. The lahar threat has progressively decreased. The accumulation of volcanic sediments has elevated the town and rendered it safe from flooding. The returnees from evacuation sites are beginning to boost the town’s population and tax revenues. New infrastructure rehabilitated roads and bridges are also boosting the morale of the residents. The construction of the municipal hall, frequently relocated in the past, symbolizes the return of the municipal seat of power to the town’s historical center. All these represent the governmental green light to the full rehabilitation of Bacolor.

Today, the asset of Bacolor in terms of urban development resides in its location along the Manila-San Fernando-Subic Bay Freeport pathway. This corridor is a major avenue for population, goods and information flux of national importance. Commercial activities as well as passage-tourism for Subic-bound tourists are areas to look into. Bacolor can also take advantage of the economic dynamism that animates the City of San Fernando, especially because it can offer flood-safe and vacant grounds for investors. (Ironically, it is the historical center of San Fernando that now takes a beating from floods.) Finally, Bacolor’s cultural heritage will always be its main element of identification and differentiation; it should certainly be taken into account in future development plans.

Please visit our redesigned website: www.hau.edu.ph/kcenter
WHEN the Kapampangans started referring to Baculud (Bacolor) as the “Atenas ning Pampanga” or the cultural center of the province, they were unanimous in celebrating the literary company that was fostered and nurtured by this town.

From Baculud’s Fajardo in the 18th century and on to the mid-19th to 20th century literati dotted the map of literary history in the region and gave the Kapampangans the arts and letters that have remained distinguished since the earliest times of creative writing, publication, printing and performance in the region. The “Athens of Pampanga” found its flowering in the contributions of Bacolor’s sons and daughters, works and writings that are rooted in Kapampangan sense and sensibility yet borderless in their exploration of human experience significant and true. When we speak of the glory of Baculud, we speak synonymously of the artistic creations of her people. In a world where gilded monuments and illuminated memorials are fleeting and transitory, the emotions, hopes, ideals, dreams and values of a people find ethereal repository in the poetry, prose and dramatic/musical articulations as well as the long tradition of patronage and support for the arts as exquisitely defined for the Kapampangans by Baculud and her literati.

For these poets and writers, musicians, printer-publishers and patrons and the audience of Kapampangan literary arts, their town, ‘Baculud,’ is a home and an ideal, their residence as well as their pastoral and idyllic realm. ‘Baculud’ for the artists was not only their town, the source of their rootedness; it was more important, and still is for many Bacolorenos, the acadia of their poetry and song. It is the inspiration, the bucolic and the pristine bit of heaven that they go home to again and again, literally or imaginatively, despite what calamities and natural disasters can and may fashion. It may have been that Baculud was in the past ‘Atenas’ or Athens, the cultural center for a people. In the interim she has suffered much from the clutches of man-made and natural calamities like world wars, economic dislocation and volcanic eruptions and lahar inundation. The last years of the 20th century plunged the town and the people into the gloom and death path reminiscent of a ‘Pompeii.’

Yet above it all, Baculud and her artists have moved on to the fabled locale as the native-born’s ‘Acadia,’ the serene and quiet dreamland of one’s hopes and aspirations. In the country of her literary and artistic triumphs, Baculud remains one of the enduring, the main sources and well-spring of beauty and truth for the Kapampangan. Her poetry, prose and drama continue to delight and inspire those who rediscover them in the age of cyberspace. Her writers, artists, printers and publishers have become models and mentors to other Kapampangans and to long generations of literary artisans and craftsmen. Here Baculud prevails, is untouched by the pains and sufferings of the world, of disasters and famine. Here she is timeless as myth, poetry and song, the stories and worlds imagined or factual that permeated her once elegant turn-of-the-century homes and country streets, her glittering theater and private artistic salons, her silvery orchestral and choral compositions from zarzuelas, during religious processions and misa cantadas, her busy printing presses merrily putting out the local reading and pietistic fare of the Kapampangans for well over a century.

Baculud, as locals continue to refer to the town, evoke the image of the cradle of regional civilization, a cultivation that is one’s own, a journey from ‘Atenas to Pompeii,’ yes, and on to ‘Acadia’ that makes the tribulation and the triumph equally poignant for a people who know that Baculud is, and always will be, the town enshrined in our hearts.

(Sources: L.P.R. Santiago, Laying the Foundations (2002); E.H. Lacson, Kapampangan Writing (1984); R.I. Castro, Literature of the Pampangos (1981); Villa de Bacolor (1975); F.P. Gutierrez, Parnasung Capampangan (1932))

Rosario Baluyut and other immortal Bacolorenos

From Athens to Pompeii

... and on to Acadia

In her great and immortal children Bacolor transcends disasters and human suffering, and is now timeless as myth, poetry and song

by Erlita P. Mendoza
Archbishop Francesco Marchisano, D.D., Vicar-General of the Vatican City-State and President of the Pontifical Commission for the Cultural Heritage of the Church, Holy See, will be the Guest of Honor at the Third Biennial National Convention of Church Cultural Heritage Workers on 29-30 September-1 October, 2003 at the Center for Kapampangan Studies, Holy Angel University, Angeles City.