

Adventure in Davao Puts Chicago In Background: Johnson It Through

The debonair, nonchalant attitude toward life—is it not a fine thing to have? To dare all circumstances, this is the type of man who has made good in Davao. One of the type is J. M. Johnson, of Morris, Illinois, 60 miles out of Chicago. He left Chicago as an enlisted artillery soldier; he might now return, an affluent planter.



J. M. Johnson, Volunteer of Spanish War Days and Creator of Lamidan Plantation, Davao

still in the prime of life and still ready for those great adventures which abound in the border country. True, there may be adventure on Chicago's thoroughfares, dodging motors and beating bandits at gun-drawing; but the optimum reward it offers is getting home with the beefsteak or down to the office in time to punch the clock.

One doesn't, in Chicago, become master of broad acres, the dispenser of law to multitudes—unless he speaks brogue English and can be mayor. By all odds Davao is best.

Johnson's outfit was the 9th Battery, Field Artillery when it was sent to Manila in March 1902, but when he first enlisted it was D Battery, 5th Artillery—"John A. Thorpe's Famous 'D' of the '5th,'" as Buffalo Bill used to advertise it in his Wild West Show. The outfit soldiered south of Manila and in Cavite; Johnson took his discharge June 19, 1904, and enlisted in the police force of Manila, where he was employed exactly two years. He then transferred to the internal revenue service and for one year more he ranged through Bulacan and Pampanga sleuthing for dope dealers, revenue dodgers and distillery crooks—helping, in a plain, blunt way, impart the lesson to the Philippines that modern government can't function without taxes.

Johnson, like other veterans, knew how to obey orders and how to enforce obedience. This trait recommended him to the Mindanao Estates Company, for whom he went to Davao as foreman in 1907. He

soon located a place of his own, and in 1908 came back to Manila and organized a company among his old associates on the police force. The Kalian Plantation Company was first owned by Johnson, who returned to Davao as manager, Andrew Chestnut, the handsome policeman one meets at the entrance to Malacañang, Joe Luke, old-time patrolman who soon sold his share to Johnson and Chestnut and returned to the United States, and Daniel M. Searcy, who died about fifteen years ago, whereupon Johnson and Chestnut bought his share and became sole owners.

Time has winnowed the Davao community, as the history of Kalian shows.

The plantation was steadily developed through a period of more than ten years. In 1919 it was sold to Henry Pahl. It had 118 hectares, of which more than 80 hectares had been put under cultivation when it was sold to Pahl. Johnson then took up Lamidan plantation, his present property, four miles south of Pahl, and Chestnut went in with Arthur Rudes at Kling plantation, Cotabato. Lamidan comprises 200 hectares, 500 acres. It was surveyed in 1914 and taken up under a public-lands lease. In 1919 the application to purchase was filed with the bureau of lands.

It seems to be the right thing to say, that everything is going satisfactorily in the Philippines. Can this be, when veteran's applications to purchase lands remain pending six years without title being issued? It usually takes a sharp rap from the chief executive to get things done at all.



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Johnson has 40,000 hills of hemp on Lamidan, and land cleared for more. He has 2,000 coconut palms, and land cleared for 3,000 more. He is gradually changing over from hemp to coconuts, the latter paying better, one year with another. His plans are to plant the whole place in coconuts, which will mean 20,000 palms, an annual production of 3,000 production of 4,000 piculs of copra at the least, and a revenue of not less than P40,000, \$20,000.

The labor available at Lamidan is that of wild tribes, of *Bilanes* and *Manobos*, who have the quaint custom of working well for the white man they like, and not at all, for anybody, if they don't fancy his ways. Whatever their own shortcomings, their employer must always be reliable, his word his bond. Johnson, like Pahl and other successful men, has been very fortunate in dealing with these people. It saves him the trouble and expense of bringing workmen from other provinces. The *Bilanes* and *Manobos* have their own little places nearby the boundaries of Lamidan, and come at Johnson's bidding to do whatever there is to be done. He pays them cash, they spend their waggies in his store, and both are happy. Hemp stripping is remunerated on the basis of the weight and grade of dry fiber. Men, women and children employed at other work receive from 30 centavos to a peso a day, fifteen to fifty cents, according to what they are able to do. A native foreman gets P1.50 a day, seventy-five cents. The men are expert at clearing off jungle to prepare fields for planting. They fell the small growth, vines, rattans, etc., with their bolos; then they back down the scrub trees and set a fire going. Only charred stumps remain to hinder the plow. Within a year the white ants have removed these, and the fields, already planted to productive crops, are as clean as prairie lands.

Enjoying prosperity, the creator of Lamidan has been touched by the wanderlust. He comes to Manila often. He came to town in 1908, again in 1918, and is up here again this year—with the excuse that he ought to have some dental work done. That is to say, one doesn't just wish for a Davao plantation and come into possession of it. He stays with the job of creating it, for ten years at a time. It is not so much the money invested that makes for success; it's the man on the job, the fellow who delights in pushing jungle borders back from fertile shores and making himself master of the wilderness.

The Coffee Industry in the Philippines Its Decline And Its Partial Recovery

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The Philippines once had the reputation of producing some of the finest and highest priced coffee in the world, which was noted for its superior quality and compared favorably with the best Mocha.

The coffee tree is not a native of the Philippines. It is said that the Spanish missionaries introduced it into the Philippines during the latter part of the eighteenth century. Its systematic cultivation did not begin until the earlier part of the nineteenth century. From this time until 1891, coffee was an important crop and constituted a source of considerable wealth in the Philippines, notably in Laguna, Batangas and Cavite provinces. The highest grades were grown in Batangas.

Official records of the Philippine government show that coffee was an important export of the islands from 1854 to 1894 as represented on the accompanying graph. In 1854 there were P137,221 worth of coffee exported from the Philippines. It constituted 2.16 per cent of the total value of exports. In 1889, the value of the export was P2,474,210, calculated to be 7.08 per cent of the total value of exports from the Philippines. After this date, the figures rapidly fell until 1894, when the export trade had been completely wiped out and at the present time the Philippines are importing coffee for home consumption. According to the official records of the bureau of commerce and industry, the importation of coffee for 1922 and 1923 was P2,181,187.

The rapid decline in the coffee industry of the Philippines was due to the sudden appearance and spread of a devastating disease, coffee blight, or rust, and is caused by a fungus known to science as *Hemileia vastatrix*. This disease was a complete mystery to the Filipino farmers. The fungus covers the lower side of the leaves of coffee with yellow powdery spots containing spores and causes the leaves to fall. The cumulative effect of defoliation goes on for nine months in the year. The disease spreads from an infected plant to a healthy one by means of spores and is more severe during the rainy season. The mycelium penetrates through the stomata of the leaves and grows in the intercellular spaces of the leaf tissue, not only robbing the leaves of the manufactured food of the plant but also destroying these organs upon which the life of the plant is dependent.

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