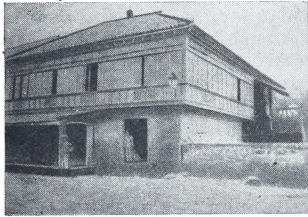


HISTORY SECTION

THE EARLY DAYS OF RIZAL



The Birthplace of Rizal

JOSE RIZAL, destined to be the great Filipino martyr, was born in Calamba, June 19, 1861. A biographer states that he was by birth a typical Filipino, for "few persons in this land of mixed blood could boast a greater mixture than his." All his ancestors were immigrants to the Philippines, and included early Malays, Chinese of prehistoric times in the Philippines, and Spaniards of Castile and Valencia.

A short time before Jose Rizal was born, his father built a home in the center of Calamba, a town on the south shore of Laguna de Bay. The house was of typical Philippine-Spanish construction, as shown in the photograph on this page, and must have been a very pretentious dwelling for those days, eighty years ago.

In the nearby church Jose was christened when he was three days old. His godfather was a Filipino priest of Calamba named Father Pedro Casañas, and the priest who christened him was also a Filipino named Father Rufino Collantes.

When Jose was three years old he learned his A B C's, because he said in

his baby way that since his elder sister was being taught to read, he wanted to be taught also. At that early age, one day, so the story goes, his mother found him with his sister's story book propped up before him spelling out the words.

As a boy Jose was not a strong child, so he was carefully nurtured. His mother was his first teacher, and it was she who taught him to read. She imparted to him also many other things which were useful to him in later life.

The Calamba church and *convento*, built several years after the great earthquake of 1863, was near his boyhood home. He spent much of his time there as a young boy, because, as he said, he liked "to watch the people."

The kindly priest at first tolerated the little boy about his church and living quarters, but soon the youngster became "a welcome visitor." According to the priest, the boy never disturbed the meditations—often words spoken aloud—of the clergyman, but listened seriously to the remarks of the good priest. Sometimes Jose asked for information from the priest, who always gave a sensible answer or careful explanation to what the boy asked.

When the lad was seven years old, with his parents he made a journey which he never forgot. This was a trip to visit the famous image which had been brought to Antipolo in 1672 from Mexico, after having been carried in galleons as the patron saint of voyages across the Pacific.

We are told that "a print of the Virgin, a souvenir of this pilgrimage, was, ac-

ording to the custom of those times, pasted inside Jose's wooden chest when he left home for school; later on it was preserved in an album and went with him in all his travels."

Often in the boyhood home of Rizal there were visitors. Some of these persons were of high social rank. No doubt the boy listened to their conversation, and since he was a child of serious mind, the conversation of his parents' guests must have helped to mold the character of this unusual boy.

When Jose was nine years old, he was sent to study at Biñan, a town not far from Calamba. The boy studied here a short time, and then it was decided to send him to school in Manila.

During his brief stay at Biñan, the boy had learned much. He had numerous relatives in the place. Among them was an uncle, Jose Alberto, who had been educated in a school in India in which he had spent eleven years. While Jose was in his uncle's home in Biñan, a distinguished visitor from Hongkong, Sir John Bowring, governor of Hongkong, was a guest. Doubtless the visit of this notable Englishman made a great and lasting impression upon the observant youth.

In Manila the first place in which Rizal lived was a *nipa* house to which he

went in the latter part of February, 1872, although he himself said that the formal beginning of his studies was in June of that year.

The first school which he entered was San Juan de Letran, but soon he went back to Calamba. In July he entered another school, the famous Ateneo. While attending this school he was a "day pupil" until his fourth year. At that time the Ateneo was a very popular school in Manila, and there were many students in the school.

During his last two years in the school Rizal was a boarding student. The Ateneo then was like our present high schools, but not so advanced nor so thorough. The method of instruction that was used by the Jesuits. Ac-

ording to this system there was always a review of the lesson of the previous day, questions on the lesson of the day, and an explanation of the lesson for the next day. This was an excellent system and Rizal benefited very much from such instruction.

While in the Ateneo Rizal frequently wrote poetry. Some of his verses were taken to Calamba for his mother's criticisms and suggestions. He won a prize with one of his poems which he called *Al Juventud Filipino (To the Philippine)* (Please turn to page 479.)



The Church at Calamba Which Rizal Attended as a Boy.

EARLY DAYS OF RIZAL

(Continued from page 467)

Youth). A translation of the first stanza of this poem is as follows:

*Hold high the brow
serene,*

*O youth, where now you
stand;*

*Let the bright sheen
Of your grace be seen,
Fair hope of my father-
land!*

After Rizal graduated with highest honors from the Ateneo, he entered the University of Santo Tomas. Here he studied agriculture and philosophy, and began to specialize in medicine. While a student in Santo Tomas, he decided to continue his education outside of the Philippines.

With the help of his brother, he started to Europe for further study. On his way he stopped at Singapore, the first modern city he had ever seen. At Singapore he embarked on a French steamer and sailed for Europe via the Suez Canal. When enroute he saw something of the city of Aden and a little of Egypt. He arrived at Naples, and from thence went to Marseilles in France. From this French port he went by rail to Barcelona, Spain.

He remained in Barcelona a short time. Evidently

this city, founded by the ancient Romans, made a great impression upon the youthful traveler. Then he went to Madrid, where he entered the University of Madrid. Here he began to study medicine, as well as literature and philosophy. He also had training in sculpture, drawing, and painting, and in addition had private lessons in languages. His college days in Madrid were busy days, although he found time to meet with a group of Filipino students from time to time, and to attend the theater occasionally. Later, Rizal studied in Paris and Berlin.

After some more travel in France and Italy, Rizal, now a young man, started on his return trip to Manila. He had been gone seven years. When he arrived at Manila, he immediately started for his home at Calamba.

Rizal had now become a skillful doctor and surgeon. His first surgical operation in the Philippines was an operation on his mother's eyes. Doctor Rizal soon achieved local fame, and had patients from all parts of Luzon.

The remainder of this hero's life until his martyrdom belongs to the history of the Philippines.

REVIEW

1. Where and when was Jose Rizal born?
2. Who were his ancestors?
3. Tell of the family residence in Calamba.
4. Tell of the boy's christening.
5. Tell of his early desire to learn to read.
6. Tell of the boy's early physical characteristics.
7. How was the boy treated by the parish priest?
8. Tell of his pilgrimage to Antipolo.
9. What was done with his print of the Virgin?
10. Tell of visitors at his home.
11. Where was he sent at the age of nine years? Why?
12. Tell of his stay at Biñan.
13. Tell of his early life in Manila.
14. What school did he first enter?
15. What school did he next enter?
16. Tell of his school life at the Ateneo.
17. Tell of his early poetical efforts.
18. What university did Rizal next enter?
19. Where did he later decide to go?
20. Tell of his journey to Spain.
21. What did he study in the University of Madrid?