

# History of Balintawak Lodge No. 28, F-AM

By WB VICTORIANO A. TANAFRANCIA

*Secretary, Balintawak Lodge No. 28*

Among the earliest lodges established in the Philippines and not unlike other pioneers in the fraternity, the Balintawak Lodge had a humble but courageous beginning. It is with no uncertain pride that the brethren of this Lodge can look back to these by-gone days of its inception, its establishment, its stability through the years as a bulwark of our ancient and venerable institution in this part of Quezon valley.

It is indeed nostalgic to think especially to those living oldtimers who founded this Lodge, that on June 15, 1914 several members of the then Rizal Lodge No. 312 (now No. 20) situated in Lopez, in the then Tayabas Province under the jurisdiction of the Gran Oriente Español, took pains and heart to brave the miles of tortuous trails through forested hills, virgin valleys and swampy brooks and convened in the town of Gumaca, where then and there they laid down the groundwork for the establishment of a masonic lodge to be named Balintawak to do honor to the place hallowed by the blood of the brethren who gave their lives that the light of freedom shall shine in the Philippines. Thus Balintawak Lodge No. 354 (now 28) joined the family of sister lodges. The next day, on June 16, 1914, the election of officers of the new lodge was held.

Bro. Basilio de Guzman was appointed Chairman of the Committee on Election, with Bro. Victoriano A. Tañafracia and Bro. Gerardo L. Tañada as Members, and Bro. Tomas Tañada as Acting Secretary. The

following were the first elected and appointed officers who were installed the next day, June 17, 1914: Antonio Argonsino, Master; Gerardo L. Tañada, Senior Warden; Basilio de Guzman, Junior Warden; Marciano Principe, Secretary; Benito Querol, Treasurer; Ramon Olivera, Steward; Rufo Reyes, Almoner; Vicente Noscal, Orator; Victoriano A. Tañafracia, Master of Ceremonies; Ulpiano Camacho, Arquitecto Reviser; Mariano Barretto, Arquitecto del Templo; Tomas Tañada, Maestro de Banquete; Quiterio Magno, Librarian; Panfilo Tañada, Standard Bearer; and Deogracias Tañada, Tyler.

The Gran Oriente de la Orden Oriente de Madrid issued the Charter on August 16, 1914 but Balintawak Lodge No. 354 (now 28) was constituted on April 17, 1915 by a Committee on Installation appointed by the Gran Logia Regional de Filipinas, namely: Wor. Bro. Teofilo Gregorio of Banahaw No. 332, as Chairman; Wor. Bro. Uldarico Villamor of Rizal No. 312 and Wor. Bro. Mariano Salandanan of Araw No. 304, as Members. Place — rented building on Capisonda Street, now Quezon Street in Gumaca, Quezon.

From its modest beginning, the founders nurtured and nourished the new lodge through years of vicissitudes and sacrifices. The present lodge building, though wrinkled with age and repeated repairs, still stands triumphant as a glorious monument to their unselfish efforts. With due credit to them, especially to Wor. Bro.



Victoriano A. Tañafranca, still living and active as our present lodge Secretary, this building and lot was acquired on October 1, 1918 through funds contributed by the members. The building and lot was duly registered and titled under the name of the lodge, with the Register of Deeds for Quezon Province only recently in 1958. Aside from a spacious lodge hall on the second floor, the other spaces were and still are rented by the government as school-room, from which the lodge derives about P400.00 yearly income.

It is with distinct honor to note that this lodge was instrumental in the establishment of Filipinas Lodge No. 54 (now defunct) in Panaon, Unisan, Quezon, the Kalilayan Lodge No. 37 in Lucena, Quezon, and the Abad Santos Lodge No. 43 in Tayabas, Quezon. The extension work for the Filipinas Lodge No. 54 in Bo. Panaon, Unisan, Quezon was initiated by Jovencio Trinidad, Jose Santayana, Estanislao Verder and other members of Balintawak Lodge, while those for the Kalilayan Lodge No. 37 and Abad Santos Lodge No. 43 were done by other teams of Balintawak Lodge.

Ever since its foundation, the lodge enjoyed a continuous growth and a healthy program of activities, except for the few years during the Pacific War which brought about a temporary disruption of its work; the lodge was unspared in the looting that followed the Japanese entrance in the town, tools and implements of the craft were lost, furniture and other paraphernalia were looted, leaving the temple hall bare and destitute. But immediately upon liberation of the town by the American forces, through the initiative, leadership and untiring efforts

of Wor. Bro. Victoriano A. Tañafranca, Wor. Bro. Simeon Estrada, and other zealous brethren, the lodge was rehabilitated. Wor. Bro. Simeon Estrada spent his own money to repair the lodge building, while contributions from the members replaced the lodge furniture and implements.

In the course of its existence, this lodge has adopted and conferred honorary membership to the following:

M.W. Bro. Manuel L. Quezon, 1915; M. W. Bro. Felipe Buencamino, Jr., 1915; M. W. Bro. Vicente Lucban, 1915; M. W. Bro. Rafael Palma, 1915; M. W. Bro. Valentin Polintan, 1915.

As of this writing, four of the original founders are living:

Victoriano A. Tañafranca still active, life member, and presently Secretary; Ulpiano Camache, life member, presently weak and sickly; Marciano Principe, presently dormant; Ramon Olivera, presently dormant.

Among the brethren who received Certificates of Merits from the Grand Lodge are the following:

Ulpiano Camache, 1951; Victoriano A. Tañafranca, 1952; Simeon Estrada, 1953.

We have with us life members conferred in 1959 as follows:

Ulpiano Camache, since 1913; Co King Heng, since 1919; Simeon Estrada, 1920; Lim Hap, since 1921; Romualdo Libranda, since 1917; Teofilo Olivera, since 1917; Victoriano A. Tañafranca, since 1912; Gregorio Valencera, since 1920; Eustacio Villafuerte, since 1916.

This is the history of Balintawak Lodge No. 28, F. & A. M. in a nutshell. The Lodge owes much to the zealousness and selflessness of the charter members.



# *With the Grand Master*

Since the beginning of the year 1960 the Grand Master has been kept busy with the usual invitations to Lodge installations, visitations, dedications of Lodge temples, and being invited as guest speaker.

## *Guam Visitation*

Accompanied by MWB Esteban Munarriz, Grand Secretary, MWB Macario Ofilada visited the two Guam Lodges on Jan. 23. It being the first visit of Grand Lodge officers since 1956, they were welcomed with great satisfaction by the Guam brethren. The two were guests at the fraternal banquet at the Curtis Le May High Twelve Club following the official visitation to the Charleston Lodge No. 44 and Milton C. Marvin Lodge No. 123; were house guests at Governor's Mansion of Acting Governor and RWB Marcellus Boss; and on Jan. 24 toured the island with Bro. Earle Conway. The two were guests of Bro. Rizal G. Adorable, Philippine Consul in Guam, at the bienvenida and despedida dinners at which Filipino and American brethren were present.

## *Supreme Council Session*

At the Tenth Anniversary celebration of the founding of the Supreme Council of the 33rd. Degree of the Philippines, he was the guest speaker on Feb. 12. His speech (see page 146) was well applauded.

## *Eighth District Convention*

On Feb. 20, the Grand Master was guest at the Eighth Masonic District Convention at Olongapo, Zambales. The convention of Zambales and Bataan Lodges was well-attended. The other guest speaker at the convention

was Admiral Arthur F. Spring (see page 135).

## *Birthday Celebration*

As the beginning of the climax of his year in the grand East, MWB Ofilada was the object of a celebration of his birthday on March 8 at the Jose Abad Santos Hall, Plaridel Temple, when the Lodges in the Greater Manila area arranged a program and party in his honor. The literary-musical program was participated in by members of the Eastern Star, DeMolay, Rainbow, Job's Daughters, Grand Lodge officers, and members of blue lodges. Special participants were the Girls String Band of the Government Training School at Mandaluyong, the Sinag Tala Dance Group and the Upsilon Sigma Phi Fraternity of the University of the Philippines.



## ORDER OF JOB'S DAUGHTERS

Officers for the first term of 1960, Bethel No. 1, Olongapo, Zambales, of the International Order of Job's Daughters, installed on December 27, 1959 at the Lincoln Lodge Hall are: Esperanza Bada, Honored Queen; Diane Blackwell, Senior Princess; Salvacion Gregorio, Junior Princess; Nida Santos, Guide; Rosalyn Farrar, Marshal; Nancy Malito, Chaplain; Marion Cooper, Recorder; Lilian Ela, Treasurer; Liberty Arce, Librarian; Ernestina Gregorio, Musician; Ricky Trummer, First Messenger; Ligaya Bustamante, Second Messenger; Deirdre Webster, Third Messenger; Kathy Peck, Fourth Messenger; De Ann Wright, Fifth Messenger; Nora Manglicmot, Senior Custodian; Lucille Steenson, Junior Custodian; Lo Lai Co, Outer Guard.



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Mason of the blue lodge will be the backbone of the team. After all, the Master will be of little use without a lodge to govern, even as the perfected ashlar is useless until it forms part of the temple. In the perfect team, the members pull together, and the mason will take his place and will do his work as he has always done these past thousands of years.

In that view, the anonymous master mason is properly oriented, his intrinsic worth properly evaluated. Every little stint that he does is definite and becomes definitively an everlasting part of the ideal Masonic Edifice that will continue building while man still aspires for perfection.

That Masonry is a continuous and continuing endeavor is self-evident in human frailty, so the sincere mason is bound for disappointment should he find life too short for the great task that he must leave unfinished when he must lay down his working tools. But he must be comforted in the thought that his own particular task, no matter what the stage of its progress, will someday be finished, for there will come others who will take up those tools and fill his place on the

jobsite, even as before, nay, even as afterwards.

In that light, how many of our great men have had to put down their tools, leaving their great work for others to finish? Jose Rizal, Marcelo H. del Pilar, Jose Abad Santos, Rafael Palma, Teodoro M. Kalaw, Manuel Roxas, Manuel Quezon, to name but a few in this jurisdiction.

After all, things in nature are but an installment, an episode in the serial story of life. And so, literally and figuratively, the great rivers will continue to flow on and on. The Nile has been there a long time, and so have the Nilers. The Nilers and all the others will be there for a long, long time.

Masonry is a long way from completion.

If my vision is correct, then every good Mason, however lowly his station in life, and however humble his role in Masonry, finds comfort in the thought that when the time finally comes to lay down his tools, the Supreme Architect will give him welcome and say, "Here is a Mason in whom I am well pleased. He did his bit, and was not dismayed that he could not finish the job, knowing that Masonry is an unfinished task."



In the face of the menace of materialism — the father of both crime and Communism — we must seek divine help to accomplish our task. The power of prayer does not lend itself to measure any more than does the strength of faith; but of this I am sure: the man who lacks faith and has never sought help beyond himself is limiting his capacity to live, to create and be happy.

For some, prayer lends the strength to span the gap between what we are and what we ought to be. For some, it is the clarifying medium which separates truth from falsehood. For some, it is the force which disperses fear and confusion. For some, it is the current through which the soul receives surcease from sorrow and despair. For me, it is a kind of bridge. Whether it be a hymn of praise, or a simple plea for mercy, it is a bridge which unites mankind to God.

—Bro. J. Edgar Hoover.