

WB Geronimo F. Macaraeg,  
WM

On December 18, 1918, some fifteen Master Masons, members of several Lodges in Manila, many of whom were residing in Pangasinan at the time, met in Lingayen, Pangasinan to discuss the matter of organizing a Lodge in the province. Lingayen was then the capital of the province and most of the brethren in the meeting were occupying various important government positions there. Those who met that day were: Bros. Daniel Maramba, Nilad #12; Sotero Baluyot, Malolos #46; Clark James, Malolos #46; Raymundo Camacho, Nilad #12; Victor Tomeklen, Nilad #12; Pedro Maria Sison, Nilad #12; Antonio Ramos, Nilad #12; Manuel V. Moran, Nilad #12; Cirilo Francisco, Bagumbayan #4; Lunsford Burgess, Cosmos #8; Francisco de Leon, Biak na Bato #7; Bartolome Ramat, Biak na Bato #7; Miguel Valenzuela, Biak na Bato #7; Teodoro Basconillo, Biak na Bato #7; and Carlin H. McClure, Manila #1.

In the same meeting, the brethren in attendance elected a temporary set of officers who were expected to pursue the objectives of the group. Those elected were: Bros. Daniel Maramba, Worshipful Master; Sotero Baluyot, Senior Warden; Clark James, Junior Warden; Raymundo O. Camacho, Treasurer; and Victor Tomeklen, Secretary. The Grand Master at the time was MW Manuel L. Quezon, President of the Philippine Senate.

In less than a year after the Dispensation was granted, Pangasinan

Lodge No. 56 was chartered in impressive ceremonies attended by prominent citizens of the town and province. The original fifteen members grew in number. It was also in that year, 1919, when the Lodge was moved from Lingayen to Dagupan; this latter town having become the capital of the province. It was natural that most of the members who had moved to Dagupan would want the Lodge to meet there. The reason, doubtless, was not only their personal convenience; it was more likely the fact that more new members would join the Craft in the new place.

After the Lodge was chartered, the members were faced with the problem of owning a temple building. As late as 1930 the Lodge had been meeting in rented houses. That year, however, the Lodge was able to acquire a piece of land and subsequently a temple was erected. Coincident with the building of the temple, the Lodge was also engaged in acquiring new furniture and paraphernalia for the new temple that was abuilding. Hopefully, the temple neared completion towards the end of 1941.

That year, however, was an unfortunate one. On December 8, Pearl Harbor and the Philippines were bombed. The invading Japanese forces landed in Pangasinan and by December 26, the temple was occupied by Japanese soldiers. Our Masonic paraphernalia, furniture and records were looted, burned, or left to the mercy of the elements and rotted.

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Early in 1945 Bro. Douglas MacArthur and his forces liberated Pangasinan. The bombing and shelling which preceded the landing of his forces levelled to the ground most of the houses in Dagupan. The Masonic temple was one of them and while we were happy for the liberation and all it meant, still we regretted that we could not begin Masonic work at a time when freedom was in the air. We had no temple, no books, no paraphernalia, no furniture.

The officers of 1941 were asked to serve again in 1945. As in 1918, the Lodge met in rented houses. A Holy Bible was loaned by WB Gregorio Gaerlan, our jewels were fashioned from empty ammunition shells, our aprons were cut out of hospital linen. Nonetheless, we were happy to meet and work again in closer togetherness. Our membership increased faster and every member was imbued with loyalty and enthusiasm that never before was in us.

In 1948, we again buckled ourselves for greater effort to build a new temple. Our new temple building was built, as we might say, through the blood, sweat and tears of all of us. We donated cash, labor, lumber, hardware, etc. While we did get ₱3,000.00 in war damage payments, the building as it now stands, which is easily worth ₱50,000.00, is largely our very own.

One other thing that we of Pangasinan Lodge No. 56 can be proud of is that she can rightly be called the Mother Lodge of three other Lodges in the province of Pangasinan. In 1924 Agno Lodge No. 75 was founded in Tayug; in 1960 Dagupan City Lodge No. 158 was founded right here in Dagupan City; and in 1961, Lingayen Lodge No. 161 was founded in Lingayen, the same town where Pangasinan Lodge No.

56 was born in 1918.

That from two pre-war Masonic Lodges in Pangasinan province, our Masonry here has grown to four Lodges since after the war, is a good index of Masonic enthusiasm hereabouts. The year 1967 is also a historic year for us, for this year, the four Masonic Lodges were constituted an independent Masonic district with VW Victorino C. Daroya serving as its first District Deputy Grand Master.

The roll of Past Masters of Pangasinan Lodge No. 56 is as follows:

1. Daniel Maramba\* — 1919, 1920, 1921
2. Clark James\* — 1922, 1923, 1927
3. Rafael Lorente\* — 1924, 1928, 1929
4. Jose V. Sison — 1925
5. Jose W. Curameng — 1926
6. Vicente de Leon\* — 1930
7. Emeterio delos Santos\* — 1931, 1932
8. Francisco Aquino — 1933
9. Gregorio Domagas — 1934, 1935
10. Mariano Ereso — 1936
11. Gregorio Gaerlan\* — 1937
12. Cenon S. Cervantes — 1938
13. Gonzalo P. Nava — 1939, 1940
14. Eusebio Abarcar — 1941, 1945
15. Mauro Rosario\* — 1946
16. Proceso Domagas — 1947
17. Juan A. Benitez — 1948
18. Andres P. Torio — 1949, 1950, 1951, 1961
19. Juan Z. Saingan — 1952
20. Arturo de Guzman — 1953
21. Ramon Labo\* — 1954
22. Teofilo P. Guadiz — 1955
23. Teofilo Goyena — 1956
24. Pio L. Coquia — 1957
25. Evaristo S. Quila — 1958, 1959
26. Lee Sin — 1960
27. Faustino Oviedo — 1962
28. Jose T. Parayno — 1963
29. Ernesto V. Torio — 1964
30. Aquilino M. Javier — 1965
31. Gregorio R. Bailen — 1966   △