

# Historic Plaza Names in Downtown Manila

An initial paper in this magazine on historic street names in downtown Manila promised a later one about the plazas, Cervantes, Moraga, Sta. Cruz and Goiti; but another, *Moriones*, because it is taking on the character of a *Hyde Park* or *Washington Square*, may be added. Notes in the Salt-Heistand manuscript that gave the data on streets have the following to say about the plazas listed in this paragraph:

"*Cervantes*. Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra was born in Madrid in October 1547, of an old and noble Castilian family, and died in poverty on April 23, 1616, after many hardships and experiences. He distinguished himself by great bravery at the battle of Lepanto (one of the world's decisive battles), but on his way home was captured by pirates, and imprisoned in Algiers for five years, only securing his ransom by complete beggary of his family. In 1605 he produced the first part of *Don Quixote* (a book that still makes all the world envy Spain Cervantes's genius), which at once became popular. The second part was not published until the year before his death, as a jealous contemporary had written a false sequel. As a truly brave man Cervantes could claim the right to laugh at the mock bravery of a sentimental chivalry."

Briefly, Cervantes bade medieval chivalry adieu with guffaws equally from the gallery and from the pit and the boxes; his wholesome humor will leave intransigence for all time, as his renown will forever reflect glory upon Spain and evoke the reading man's respect for his people.

"*Moraga*. Fernando de Moraga, Franciscan friar, was born in Alcozer, Spain. After joining the Franciscan order, he went to Mexico where he served for a time as parish priest in Michoacan. The date of his departure for the Philippines is unknown, but in 1579 he was living in Dilao (now Paco). On May 14, 1605, he was chosen parish priest of Santa Ana (for long a famous Franciscan shrine). On April 16, 1616, we find him presiding over the chapter of the Franciscans in the islands. After two ineffectual attempts to return to Spain as a member of the general chapter of the order, he was, on the third effort, forced to take port in Malacca. Hence he passed to Goa (mother of Portuguese missions in the orient) and so returned home across Persia, where he was received with much favor by the king, Armenia, Arabia, Chludae, Syria and Turkey, to Venice and finally in 1619 to Spain. Most of the journey was made on foot, his daily bread being secured by begging as he went along.

"In Spain he found King Philip III almost ready to abandon the islands owing to financial difficulties, and persuaded him to reconsider his decision. He also published in the same year, at Madrid, by request of the king, an elaborate account of the Philippines. On his return with 30 more religious to the islands, on the last day of December, 1619, he was drowned in a storm off the coast of Spain on January 3, 1620, and was buried at Conil, in the province of Cadiz. The name of this plaza was approved on August 16, 1871."

Franciscan chronicles rightly exalt Moraga's effort for the Philippines. It is said he appeared in the attired raiment of his travels before King Philip III, having no time to make himself presentable because the king was on the point of signing the decree to abandon the Philippines; but that travel stained as he was, the king was so moved by his eloquence that, against the Council of the Indies and the cabinet, he said he would support the Philippine mission to the last penny of his revenue.

"*Goiti*. After taking part in the Villalobos expedition (to the Moluccas, that touched the southern Philippines), Captain Martin de Goiti accompanied Legaspi to the Philippines as field marshal. He was the first to discover the town of Cabalian, Leyte, to which he persuaded Legaspi to sail, on March 5, 1565. Near Bohol, in the middle of March, he

captured a small Moro boat from Borneo and brought the sailors back to his chief. In 1570 he was dispatched, in company with Juan de Salcedo, 120 Spanish soldiers, and 14 or 15 boats filled with Bisayan allies, to Manila, and reached there on May 19, 1570. After Legaspi's arrival the next year, he consummated the conquest of the island of Luzon, from Manila bay to the gulf of Lingayen and was then sent back to control the Spaniards in the Bisayas.

"*Legaspi* was extremely fortunate in his captains, who included such old campaigners in the field as Martin de Goiti."

Goiti's house was the first point of attack by the Chinese corsair Limahon when he battled the Spaniards for Manila and the Philippines in 1575, and Goiti and his wife were both wounded, though both escaped. With other conquistadores, the noble Legaspi included, Goiti sleeps in the chapel at the left of the altar of the Augustinian convent church, of St. Peter and St. Paul, in the walled city.

"*Santa Cruz*. Holy Cross. This plaza is in front of the Santa Cruz church (at the eastern end of the Escolta). The village of Sta. Cruz was administered by the Jesuit order who had a residence here.

"The population was composed of married Christian Chinese, with a few Tagalogs, mestizos and free Negroes who worked on the farm belonging to the Jesuit college of San José at Mayhaligue (marked in our day by calle Mayhaligue, crossing Rizal avenue). The Jesuit priests were paid out of the communal fund of the Chinese in the Parian. As, however, the Parian was under the spiritual jurisdiction of the Dominicans, they objected to contribute to this tithe, and a very acrimonious lawsuit ensued, in which Governor Corcuera, June 30, 1636, endorsed the decision of his predecessor in favor of the Jesuits. Another communal was, May 4, 1622, established in Tondo to pay the magistrate there. In the revolution of 1638 the Chinese of Sta. Cruz were especially vigorous in rebellion, and burnt the church almost to the ground. In 1640 they were, however, exempted from the tribute as a concession to the Jesuits. In 1662 the district was beautified with a bridge over the *estero* to allow the cavalry troops to unhindered, for maneuvers, to the other side of the Pasig river. Another bridge was built across the lagoon to Quiapo, which aroused the hostility of the mestizo element who were unwilling to contribute to its cost.

"During the British occupation of Manila, 1762-1763, Sta. Cruz, which was then the home of many Spaniards and foreign merchants, suffered severely."

In this hint about foreign merchants in the midst of a Chinese progressive community is an explanation of why the Escolta and Binondo became the business section of Manila.

"*Moriones*. Domingo Moriones y Murillo was the 87th Spanish governor of the Philippines, 1877-1880. He became governor of the islands on February 28, 1877, having previously distinguished himself in the Carlist war. In 1877 he found himself confronted with a mutinous artillery regiment, but he suppressed the mutiny with great rigor. In the same year he was instrumental in preventing the transference of the tobacco monopoly, and in 1878 he set on foot the machinery which led to the establishment of the city waterworks. His term of office lasted until March 20, 1880. A plaza in the walled city, just outside Fort Santiago, also bears his name."

For defeating the Carlists in 1872 at the battle of Oroquieta, Moriones was made Marqués de Oroquieta, and therefore calle Oroquieta, paralleling Rizal avenue beyond calle Azcarraga to the railroad, is named for him too.

Future papers will take up other bits of Manila history recorded in monuments and names.