

HISTORY OF ABRA

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Before Magellan discovered these Isles (1521) this Basin had been filled up with limy-salty water by the sources of the Abra River system. No portion of the rim yielded to break so the reservoir remained a lake (ban-ao).

As time rolled by the confined water cut slowly its way through the least resistant part of the Ilocos ranges on the western brim. A deep narrow gap was incised at last and the opening was christened Banaoang (drained off lake). Abra means mouth of river, hence it is also the name applied to the basin east of the Water Gap, Banaoang, or Abra above the famous Quirino Bridge.

After the lake was drained off, an undulating inside surface emerged. There grew luxuriant vegetation upon which wild life fed. For many years Abra had no people.

The Spaniards busied themselves in Christianizing the natives in the Ilocos in the seventeenth and in the eighteenth centuries. Those who refused baptism immigrated into the basin for refuge. The Tinguianes came by the waves. Most of them were hunters, stock raisers laborers, and land-clearers for primitive agriculture. Up to 1800 all Abreños were non-Christians.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century Pidigan, Bangued, Tayum, La Paz, Dolores and Bucay were well peopled. These towns are on the Abra River. La Paz on the Tineg and Dolores on the Malanas are located near the junction of the streams to the main river.

In 1843 an expedition led by Padre Blanco, a priest and botanist, was sent into Abra on bamboo rafts and on land. He had with him Spanish cazadores and Tagalog guardia civiles. His mission to subdue the Tinguianes with the Sword and with the Cross began in Pidigan. The expedition reached Bucay early in 1846.

Bucay in the central part of the province became the capital. There were

two aims in view: pivoting Christianity to the Tinguianes and getting supplies from Vigan on rafts. But the Cross could not do 100% on the pagans. Baptism drove away one-third of the people to the brink of the basin. However, the remaining two-thirds on the lower Abra Valley became the forefathers of the cultured Abreños of today.

Pratt, Carrera, Redondo and Tajonera were the Spanish Military Governors who ruled Abra after the expedition. Tajonera escaped to Bangued in 1861 making the largest town the new capital of the province.

To an average Filipino, Abra is unknown. To traders, Abra is important for her strong and beautiful horses, her corn and tobacco exports. To lovers of strong wooden houses, Abra is No. 1 in the Ilocos.

A decade before the death of Rizal (1896) Don Agaton Alzate y Cariño of Bucay was given a gold medal (tuzon) for partly subduing the Kalingas in an expedition. His oldest son, Don Ismael Alzate y Astudillo, the father of ex-Congressman Manuel A. Alzate of Nueva Ecija, paid homage to Queen Isabel of Spain and was given the title of nobility—"Caballero de Honor."

Every town populated with Christians in the province made Abra a better place to live in. She had the Parífiases in Pidigan, Cariños and Brillanteses in Tayum, Lalims and Parados in La Paz, Paredeses in Bangued. Pilar was peopled by old Christians from Southern Ilocos Sur and Bangued.

The two-soldier Villamors-Don Blas and Don Juan—were greatly honored during the Filipino-American War. When peace came Don Juan was elected the first Civil Governor of Abra, then first representative to the Philippine Assembly for Abra, first governor in the fusion of Ilocos Sur and Abra and the only Senator yet elected from Abra. Then followed Don Ignacio Villamor, an equally great man from Abra—a

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professor, judge and first Filipino President of the University of the Philippines. Then emerged the youngest of all—Don Quintin Paredes. At one time he was Secretary of Justice during Governor-General Wood's Administration, Filipino Resident Commissioner to Washington, D.C., patriot at heart during the Japanese Occupation, Representative for Abra during the Commonwealth Government and Congressman for Abra at present.

In the field of sports, the province of Abra is not far behind. Twice during the American Regime her baseball team was the champion in the N.L.A.A. Once her pole-vaulter, Justo Llanes, of Bangued made the Philippines greatly honored by representing her at the Far Eastern Olympic Games held at Tokyo, Japan.

Thus Abra's fame rises still higher.
(From *The Interscholastic*)

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NEPOTISM CONSTRUED.—Executive Order No. 111, dated August 30, 1937, prohibiting and restricting the practice of nepotism, provides, among others, that "when there are already two or more members of one family in an office or bureau, no other member of such family shall be eligible for appointment to any position therein" and that "previous appointments which are in contravention hereof shall be corrected by transfer." It is obvious from these provisions that the employment of a person in an office where there is already employed a relative of his within the third degree, either by affinity or consanguinity, is prohibited. In view thereof, the proposed employment of Mr. Ricardo Pacana as market collector at P480 per annum in the office of the Municipal Treasurer of Santa Cruz can not be approved, it appearing that his brother is now employed as janitor in the same office.—*From 2nd Ind., Nov. 7, 1946, of Undersecretary of Finance to Provincial Treasurer of Laguna.*

AUGUST, 1949

PRONUNCIAMENTOS

FRANCISCO BENITEZ—Teachers have always been the agents for the preservation of those ideas and ideals which our people have learned to cherish and, furthermore, agents for those progressive changes in our people and our society that may result in social stability in a dynamic democratic society. Teachers should, therefore, be neither too conservative nor too radical; they should be progressive thus transmitting to the present generation what is good in the past and introducing those changes in practices, ideas and ideals that will fit the individuals for modern life.

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MARIA PAZ MENDOZA-GUANZON—Social workers are needed in our country today to teach the Gospel of Hygiene, to teach prevention and resistance to the various diseases that the human body is heir to, and to teach the duties of citizenship.

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Model Ordinance . . .

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make application for license on the required form submitting necessary plans and descriptions of such signs, signboards and billboards to the municipal treasurer who shall grant or deny such license upon the recommendation of the district engineer. The fee for such license is P..... per square meter per annum. Signs, signboards, and billboards less than one square meter shall be considered as one square meter for computing license fees.

ART. 3. Any person or persons found guilty of violating any of the above regulations shall be subject to a fine of not less than ten (P10) pesos nor more than one hundred (P100) pesos or imprisonment for not less than three days nor more than ten days, or to both such fine and imprisonment at the discretion of the court.

ART. 4. This Ordinance shall take effect on its approval by the provincial board.

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