

MW Jose B. Lopez, PM

The present domicile of Kanlaon Lodge No. 64, F. & A. M. and the Bisayas Bodies, A. & A. S. R. of Bacolod City, which is owned by the Freemasons' Hall, Incorporated, is fraught with a history full of many trials and hardships.

It had its humble beginning way back in 1921, in a small rented wooden frame house at Gonzaga Street of the then Bacolod town. It saw a series of transfers from one rented building to another; in 1922 to Lacson Street, in 1924 to Justicia Street, at another time, to Corner Gonzaga and Lacson Streets. In 1922, the Kanlaon Lodge Masonic Temple Association was formed with a plan to construct a building of its own. Shares were sold at P100.00 each with the aim of raising a P100,000 capital. The amount raised did not reach the goal desired and the shares were recalled and the venture dissolved.

In 1932, with a group of brethren as incorporators, namely: Carlos

Dreyfus, Ernesto S. Salas, Tito Silverio, Manuel Garcia, Ildefonso Coscolluela, Aguedo Gonzaga, Olimpio de la Rama, Rodolfo Medel and Jose B. Lopez formed the Freemasons' Hall, Incorporated. Officers elected were: Manuel Garcia, president; Carlos Dreyfus, vice-president; Rodolfo Medel, secretary; Ildefonso Coscolluela, treasurer; and Jose B. Lopez, assistant treasurer. Thus formed, the Corporation had a capital stock of P20,000 selling each share at P10.00 so that it could be within the means of the brethren. This time the plan materialized a three storey building with Bro. Valeriano Segura, P.M., Mactan Lodge, as engineer and contractor. The three-storey building cost P17,000. The top floor was occupied by the Lodge and the Lopez Jaena Lodge of Perfection, while the ground floor was rented to commercial stores and the rooms of the second floor leased to various private offices. This building was razed to the ground during



NEWS FROM OKINAWA. WB Eric G. Christerson, WM, Coral Lodge No. 142, in conference with Mel, will send more news items about Regional Grand Lodge of Ryukyus. We'll be reading them more often.

the third day of the Japanese occupation of Bacolod City. No insurance was collected, war being the cause of the destruction. However, by then, the corporation was solvent—accounts had been met, dividends distributed among the stockholders, with ₱2,000.00 or so deposited in the bank. This amount formed the nucleus of the capital used for the new building soon after Liberation.

Liberation came with the coming of the Americans in 1945. Bro. Walter Saul, P.M. of Iloilo-Acacia Lodge No. 11, with authority from the Grand Lodge, came to Negros Island to reactivate all Lodges in Western Visayas. He met Bro. Manuel Garcia, P.M. and my humble self and together we reorganized the Lodge without a building where to meet. Wor Bro. Domingo Ballesteros, P.M. of this Lodge, graciously offered his home for our meetings until an appropriate building could be secured.

From the ruins of our old building, we bravely planned to build a new one to house our Lodge and the Bisayas Bodies, A. & A. S. R. and again, a three story building worth ₱75,000 rose up. The first two floors were rented out to a theater and the third story was reserved for the use of the Lodge. This again was made possible through the herculean efforts of Bro. Manuel Garcia with the support of the brethren. Unluckily, this building followed the fate of its predecessor—it was again razed to the ground during

the big fire in Bacolod City on April 14, 1955. Losing no time, the Board of Directors of the corporation immediately rallied and combined their forces once more to build another building with the main aim of again housing the Lodge and the Bisayas Bodies. This time a leader of no mean ability was at the head of all our plans—the late Wor. Bro. Ernesto C. Salas, then President of the Corporation, to whom the newly built Lodge in Bacolod City is truly a living memorial. He placed heart, hand and soul into the new venture and kindled the enthusiasm of the Board of Directors to the construction of the new building. We now have a ₱235,000 building which the stockholders can well be proud of.

The Freemasons' Hall, Incorporated just like any venture has had its ups and downs. We have had our share of misfortunes and successes. We are proud to say that despite the difficulty and agony of nurturing it to maturity, we have had the privilege and pleasure of seeing it slowly grow in status and worth.

There is yet more to be written—but the major difficulties, and the heartaches may now be considered things of the past. The harvest is starting to show good returns. God willing, in the safekeeping of those who follow after us, the Freemasons' Hall, Incorporated will go forward to a more fruitful and worthy venture. △



WB Rupert Demonteverde, Grand Lodge Inspector of Iloilo-Acacia Lodge No. 11, is seen in picture at left speaking at the Lopez Jaena Memorial Service held at the Philippine Independent Church in Iloilo recently. WB Demonteverde is Manager of the Bacolod City branch of the Development Bank of the Philippines.