

Biography of

AGAPITO L. CENABRE

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AGAPITO L. CENABRE was born on August 18, 1888 in the town of Pamplona, Cagayan. He completed his early education in his home province in 1903; and Manila High School in 1907. He took up the Ranger course in the School of Forestry, U.P. from 1912 to 1914; and returned to the same institution in 1923-1925 and 1927-1928 to earn his B.S.F. degree.

"TITO" as he is intimately called by his friends, rose from the ranks through sheer force of merit, diligence contributing much to his success. He started his public life as a municipal teacher in several towns of Cagayan from 1903 to 1905. He shifted to forestry on April 1, 1908 after qualifying in a civil service entrance examination. He was appointed as Temporary Ranger with station in the Central Office of the Bureau of Forestry in Manila for training. Because of his love for work and sense of responsibility, he earned promotions from one position to another, and creditably handled various technical and administrative assignments in the Bureau.

The various positions he held, after qualifying in the civil service examinations for Ranger, Assistant Forester and Forester, may be chronologically stated as follows: Assistant Ranger; Ranger—Officer in Charge of Station; Senior Ranger—Officer in Charge of Forest District; Forest Supervisor; Forester; District Forester (Cebu, Bohol, Oriental Negros; Northern Mindanao; and Samar and Leyte Districts); Assistant Chief of Division, *Forester-at-Large, in Charge of Public Relations and Inspection Service*; Acting Chief of Division (Division of Forest Lands

and Maps and Forest Management and Forest Concessions); Assistant Chief of Division (on special detail as District Forester of Cotabato and Davao); SUPERINTENDENT OF THE MOUNT APO NATIONAL PARK; FORESTER IN CHARGE OF THE BUREAU OF FORESTRY, for and in the absence of the Director of Forestry, during the emergency as per Special Order No. 491 dated December 24, 1941, issued by the Under Secretary of Agriculture and Commerce; Supervising Forester for Mindanao and Sulu in addition to his duties as District Forester of Davao; Division Forest Inspector (Northeastern and Southern Mindanao); Sr. Forester and Assistant Chief, Division of Forest Concessions and member of the Advisory Staff, investigating and efficiency committees of the Bureau of Forestry.

CENABRE was selected by *The Magindanao*, the oldest Davao Weekly, as Forester of the year 1939. During the early part of 1942, in addition to his duties as District Forester of Davao, he was detailed to head the Department of Industry of the City of Davao and subsequently as acting Provincial Agricultural Supervisor, Bureau of Plant and Animal Industry. After liberation, he was designated by PCAU No. 29 as liaison officer for Mindanao and Sulu between the PCAU and the Bureau of Forestry.

It can be said in passing that "Tito" has left some indelible imprint on the sands of Philippine botany and forestry. As a result of his prolific botanical collections during his exploration surveys throughout the country in the early days the world famous

botanist, Dr. Elmer D. Merrill, named in his honor the following seven (7) species:

1. *Eugenia cenabrei* Merr. N. Sp.
2. *Arthophyllum cenabrei* Merr. N. Sp.
3. *Semecarpus cenabrei*, Merr. N. Sp.
4. *Strychnos cenabrei* Merr. N. Sp.
5. *Glochidion cenabrei* Merr. N. Sp.
6. *Sterculia cenabrei* Merr. N. Sp.
7. *Knoma cenabrei* Merr. Quis N. Sp.

He contributed in no small measure in making popular in the Philippines memorial tree planting, and arbor and birds' day celebration. He also prepared some papers for publication. Of those that were published, the most widely known or read, especially by scientists, is his paper entitled "Cinchona Culture in the Philippines."

A hardworking and trustworthy public servant, CENABRE did not confine himself to Bureau activities alone, but also endeavored to expand and spread his activities as to place himself on a high level and esteem in the community. In testimony of his civic activities, while assigned as District Forester of Davao, he served as Consulting Technical Adviser of the Davao Lumbermen's Association, which in a resolution duly passed, accredited him as the guiding spirit that led to the organization of the association and the one who has shown great interest, zeal and skill in helping enhance the success and prestige of the Association.

As a departing member of the Rotary Club of Davao in 1948, and as a token of his services to the Davao Rotary, a resolution was approved, pertinent portion of which is as follows:

WHEREAS, the older members of the Rotary Club of Davao are unanimous in giving Rotarian "Tito" Agapito L. Cenabre almost exclusive credit for the immediate revival of the Rotary Club of Davao shortly after liberation as a result of which the Rotary Club of Davao had been among the first in the Philippines to have been accorded by Rotary International, a renewed CHARTER as a recognized member thereof, hence, Rotarian "Tito" Agapito L. Cenabre has been as he is, rightfully regarded as the

personification of the Rotary Club of Davao since the liberation."

CENABRE is one of the few among the Veteran employees of the Bureau who was instrumental in the establishment of the Cinchona Plantation in Mindanao; responsible in initiating Act No. 3294 which dealt on the disposition of Kaiñgin fines; and labored, as a lone lobbyist, for the passage of a reforestation Bill known as Commonwealth Act No. 119, the first biggest reforestation fund to be released.

As a tireless organizer of civic societies and associations, "Tito" organized the BSP in Davao before and after the war where he served in various capacities, as field scout commissioner-at-large for camping from 1934 to 1939; president, Davao Council, BSP, 1940-1947; Honorary Adviser, Davao Council; Regional Scout Commissioner for Mindanao and Sulu, 1947; and Field Scout Commissioner-at-large, BSP, todate in Manila. He was also the President of the DACDEA (Department of Agriculture and Commerce Davao Employees Association) from 1940 to 1946.

Aside from his activities in the organizations mentioned, he is associate member of the National Research Council of the Philippines; Member of Philippine Scientific Society and of the Society of Filipino Foresters.

In recognition of his scouting activities, on 11 May 1947, he was awarded the Silver Thanks Badge citation by the National Council, BSP, for meritorious and outstanding service rendered to BSP. The citation particularly referred to his very great interest and enthusiasm in scouting and similar civic organization.

On May 1, 1949, he received the Bronze USA citation, quoted as follows:

"For his continuous outstanding service as a Regional Council wide basis as District Forester and Regional Scout Commissioner for Mindanao and Sulu for many years. Through his indefatigable efforts, the movement has gained secure and ever widening ground in many provinces in Min-
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danao. In various other ways he has demonstrated a positive interest in the welfare of the local boyhood through volunteer service in Scouting. A real Scouter and leader."

On the occasion of the Golden Anniversary of the Bureau of Forestry on April 14, 1950, Agapito L. Cenabre was a recipient of service award diploma and special gift from Secretary Placido Mapa of the Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources. The service award was in recognition of continuous, faithful and meritorious service rendered to the Bureau for not less than 25 years, while the special gift was for attaining 42 years of service in the same Bureau.

"Tito" had twice made a vow with the seventh sacrament; however, in both cases he was not blessed with any child.

Tito had applied for retirement effective on August 18, 1953, but his services was indefinitely extended by the President of the Philippines in accordance with the decision of the Cabinet. He finally got retired on February 28, 1954.

But this biographer has only narrated so much of what he and other people know about and think of Cenabre. The following extract from a letter of Tito on his retirement, will give a direct insight of the man on his sense of duty and relation with his co-employees.

"* * * I am now retired since February 28, 1954. Of course the reality of such severance is poignant indeed minimized only by the thought that I always did my best in the interest of our country and the forestry profession.

"I cease to be an employee of our bureau, but my love for forestry will always remain, as well as the warm association I had with you. Above all, of course, I wish to thank you and those who have worked with me directly during all these years for their co-operation, and those other co-workers in the Bureau with whom I have come in contact, for all the help, courtesy and understanding extended to me.

"This severance is, however, not the part-

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need of a forest. It is perhaps only in this way that we can enlist the support of almost everybody, the rich and the poor, the men and the women, and probably even going to the extent of winning the sympathy of our legislators, who are empowered to formulate our laws and to appropriate our revenues and taxes for such projects deemed necessary for public improvements. Once public sentiment on the preservation of our forests is created, the continuous existence of the Philippine Forests is assured.

Conclusion

In the furtherance of forestry in the Islands, an individual can cooperate with the government in many ways without the expense of his personal money, yet the help he has made for the cause of forest conservation finds no equal in money value.

SOME ANTIMALARIAL . . .

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Valenzuela, et al., "Constituents, Uses, and Pharmacopeias of Some Philippine Medicinal Plants", *Philippine Journal of Forestry*, 6:39, 1949.

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ing of my ways from yours. I find my mind and body still responsive to our work and I believe I can still be of service to forest users in a private way. * * *

Tito will stay in Manila for a while to work his way privately helping forest users as mentioned in the last quoted paragraph above. He will open his office as Consulting Forester at Capitol Theater Building, R-205, 31 Escolta, P.O. Box 1836, Manila.