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FINDING THE FOUNDATION: FORMERLY A BARRIO BELONGING TO THE VILLAGE OF BAY TO LOS BAÑOS, LAGUNA

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ABSTRACT

This study deals with the history of Los Baños, Laguna, Philippines. It compared the recognized history of the town of Los Baños and available primary and secondary sources. The researcher traced the sources cited in the in the official website of the municipality that states September 17, 1615 as it's foundation day. In the year 2015, the researcher was part of the historical committee under the Quadricentennial Committee that was formed by the local government of Los Baños to come up with a timeline of the history of the town in connection to the celebration of the 400th founding anniversary of the town. In doing the timeline, the researcher found out that there are no primary sources that explicitly cites the date (September 17, 1615) as the foundation of the town of Los Baños. With a combination of various sources, the researcher was able to identify the correct foundation day of the town of Los Baños. Furthermore, the researcher believes that there was actually an error in the translation of primary sources which was originally written in Spanish that lead people to believe the foundation day is September 17, 1615.

INTRODUCTION

As researchers, we are bounded to go by what the evidences show, and various sources tell us. Something may have been practiced and recognized for the longest period of time, but it does not make that thing true and factual, if it is in fact not. In this case the researcher will challenge the long-established recognized foundation day of Los Baños, Laguna. Los Baños, Laguna, Philippines is often associated with the University of the Philippines (UPLB), International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) and the Buko Pie. It was somewhat immortalized and made famous when it was mentioned as one of the settings in the controversial novel *El Filibusterismo* of Dr. Jose Rizal one of the most

recognizable heroes of the Philippines. It is a municipality of the province of Laguna. In August 2000, it was declared as a special Science and Nature City of the Philippines through Presidential Proclamation No. 349, which recognizes the town as the center for science and technology and for agricultural development and environmental preservation. The municipality is 63 km. south of Manila and situated on the northern slopes of the dormant volcano Mount Makiling and is widely known for its hot springs' resorts. It has a total land area of 5,650 hectares and is bordered on the south and southwest by mount Makiling—which dominates the municipality, on the north by Laguna de Bay On the northwest by Calamba City and on the east by the town of Bay. It has 14 Barangays (Barker, 1975 as cited by Luna in 2015).

However, when it comes to the foundation date and history of the town, it now becomes problematic. The local government is firm at believing that it was founded September 17, 1615 as backed up and legalized by the Municipal Ordinance No. 89-05. Upon checking and counter checking the sources cited in the primer which was made in conjunction with the law and the official website of the municipality, it turns out that there are no clear statements that explicitly mentioned September 17, 1615 as the official founding day of the town.



Image 1. Map of Los Baños

Statement of the problem

In the year 2015, the researcher was part of the historical committee that was commissioned by the local government of Los Baños under the Quadricentennial Committee to come up with a timeline of the history of the municipality as part of the Bañamos festival in relation to the 400th founding anniversary of the town, as a result the historical committee found out the recognized foundation day, which is September 17, 1615 is very questionable and that there are no primary sources nor any reliable historical record that supports and explicitly state that September 17, 1615, except for a primer made back in the year 1989, is the official foundation of the town. The members of the historical committee raised this issue with the local government and all the members of the Quadricentennial committee, but the local government and the other members of the Quadricentennial committee insisted that September 17, 1615 is the official foundation and that September 17, 2015 was the 400th founding anniversary of the town of Los Baños.

Objective of the study

The objective of this study is first, to compare the timeline of the officially recognized history of the town Los Baños to other available primary sources and secondary sources. And second, is to correct and set the record straight, that the recognized foundation day of Los Baños which is September 17, 1615 is wrong and has no historical merit. And lastly, is to provide and recommend the correct day or year of the foundation of the town of Los Baños.

Related Studies

There are quite a number of errors when it comes to those officially recognized history. There are numerous numbers of historical figures and key events that have been part of the educational curriculum which were believed to be true but are actually results of erroneous/irresponsible research or even to an extreme, aimed to raise the stature of a place/group of people, or an individual, here are a few of such recognized histories:

First example, is the story of Princess Urduja (Nelmidia-Flores, M. 2011), Princes Urduja is a legendary princess who first appeared in the book Rihlah (Travels) by Ibn Batuta (1304 – 1378), as he reached the land of Tawalisi (present-day Pangasinan) after 71 days in the sea on his way to China. he met woman named Urduja who would only marry the man who could beat her in fistfights. However, it has been debunked by Dr. Rosario Cortes, a UP professor who was also the primary person to write down a comprehensive history of Pangasinan, He concluded that Urduja's story is really a "fakelore" than history.

Another example is about the war medals/awards of the former president of the Philippines, Ferdinand Marcos during World War II (Bueza, 2016), the official Ferdinand Marcos biographies provide accounts and stories on how the 3 medals supposedly were received by former President Marcos during World War II. In addition, an internet site under the name of his wife, Imelda Marcos has photos and newspaper clippings that allegedly support these claims. As stated in a page entitled "Most Decorated War Hero", former president Ferdinand Marcos was mentioned to possess and received a complete number of 32 medals in relation to World War 2. However, upon the verification of those medals/awards, researchers found that there are no official awards nor medals ever was given during and after world war II. This was done to build a fake legend to a man who was in politics just like the likes numerous stories about Kim Jong Il of North Korea.

METHODOLOGY

The researcher used and analyzed a combination of online, primary sources and secondary sources. The researcher double checked, verified and cross-referenced the sources cited by a primer made back in 1989 as part of the official proclamation thru municipal ordinance no. 89-05 and an unpublished book entitled Los Banos: Its Life and Times (2001) officially declaring September 17, 1615 as the foundation of Los Banos.

RESULTS

It is clearly and explicitly stated in the official website of Los Baños, Laguna (<http://losbanos.gov.ph/facts-and-figures/official-seal>), the primer made in the year 1989, Municipal Ordinance 89-05, and the unpublished book entitled “Los Baños: Its Life and Times” that the founding day and year of the town of Los Baños was on September 17, 1615. According to these various sources, it was when the Franciscan Friars took over the government as a separate town from town of (Barangay Mainit) Bay, Laguna. However, if you will look at the book of Fray Felix de Huerta’s “Estado, Topográfico, Estadístico, Histórico—Religioso, de la Santa y Apostólica Provincia de San Gregorio Magno, de Religiosos Menores Descalzos de la Regular y Mas Estrecha Observancia De Nuestro Padre San Francisco, en las Islas Filipinas”. Binondo: 1865, by Dominador N. Marcaida Jr. (Accessed 21 Sept. 2015 @<http://bdh-rd.bne.es>). It was clearly narrated there that “LOS BAÑOS”, *“This town takes its name from the thermal baths that exist in its territory. Formerly a barrio called San Nicholas of Tolentino, belonging to the village of Bay, when it was under the charge of the shoed Augustinians who, by a public deed, authored by the scribe Don Luis Vela on 17 September 1613, gave the administration of this barrio, consisting then of forty tributes, to this apostolic province of San Gregorio, which had already founded a hospital in these baths, leaving from that date as servants of the hospital, under our administration, and not coming to be formalized as a town until the year of 1640 when Don Juan Castaneda was appointed its first captain or gobernadorcillo. It is located to the 14° 9' 12" latitude on a plain between the Northern skirt of mount Makiling and Southern coast of the great Laguna de Bay. Bordered on North by the said Laguna, on the East-Northeast by the town of Bay, the one and a half legua; on the South with the cited mount Makiling, which form the boundary of this province with Batangas and on the West-Northwest by the town of 48 Calamba, a short distant a legua. The weather is warm and moist, sheltered from the winds of the South and opposed by the North and West wind. The most common diseases are fevers. It sources its water from a river called Dampalic, whose waters are some of the best known in the Philippines. It has a regular road in the direction of the town of Bay, with one for Calamba, which is mainly due to the knowledge and industriousness of Fray Juan Carrillo who became a parish priest in this town in the year of 1849 and succeeding, by means of mines, blowing up the necessary part of the carriageway on mount Lalacay, that is all of live rocks. The mail is received Thursday morning and by late Monday, leaving the same days. Since the year of 1613 until 1727 this town had no Church of its own, only served by our Hospital already mentioned, which was dedicated to the Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception, with the title of Holy Waters. As a result that the Hospital and its church had been burned in that year, it was necessary to construct another of bamboo cane and nipa, under the patronage of the same Lady, which was also prey to the flames. The one that exists today is of stone, built by the year of 1790 under the direction of Fray Domingo Mateo, but was roofed with nipa until in 1851, renovated all the woodwork, and roof tile by Fray Manuel Amat, who also built the tower, founded two bells, constructed the sacristy and painted very curiously the said Church. The parish house is also stone and quite comfortable, repaired and cleaned in 1852 by the abovementioned father Amat. There is a tribunal of solid factory, with its*

corresponding prison, a school of early childhood education, gifted by the funds of the community, and a couple hundred fifty houses of bamboo cane, in the style of the country. It is currently administered by Fray Manuel Rodriguez, Preacher of 24 years of age.”

Los Baños was also mentioned in page 145 of the same document with a header “LOS BAÑOS HOSPITAL”

“While San Pedro Bautista was returning from a regular visit of all the religious in the year of 1590, he discovered the hot waters of Mount Maquiling, located on the Southern coast of Laguna de Bay, whose waters we talked much about in folio 155. Our Holy prelate Fray Pedro Bautista, always charitable and always zealous for the spiritual and temporal good of their residents, appreciating the true value of its so happy discovery, ordered at the end of the said year of 1590, the venerable brother, Fray Francisco de Gata, to return to that site and, recognizing the said waters, informed of its results, but if the departure of the concerned religious had any effect, it did not succeed in its purpose by having fallen seriously ill, and was required to return to Manila, where he died. With the same purpose, and on the order of our provincial Fray Pablo de Jesús, the brother Fray Diego de Santa María passed to the aforementioned site in 1593, who analyzing waters, finding them to be medicinal, remained some years, with the consent of his prelate, curing a few patients who presented themselves, this Apostolic province were seen to be determined to found a hospital. To this effect, a license was obtained from the Illustrious cabildo sede vacante, dated July 29, 1602 and the Superior Government dated 13 October of the same year, it built a hospital in nipa, dedicated to the Immaculate Conception, under the title of our Lady of Aguas Santas. In the year of 1608, the principals of the town of Bay, gave all the land in favor of the hospital between the mouth of the Dampalit River and the Quinacapatlan River, and in 1610 the town of Pila ceded the land of Jalajala, as we have noted in the aforementioned town of Jalajala, and with the produce of such lands and the alms of the faithful, a spacious and strong stone hospital, Church and convent, were built. The ailing humanity ran this hospital with great advantage until 1640, at which time Don Sebastián Hurtado de Corcuera took its administration from our religious, and the hospital began to decline, until the year of 1676, it was consumed by flames because of the negligence of a servant of an Spaniard, today being found abandoned as a useful remedy”

Los Banos was again mentioned on page 45 in the same source, but it was under the header “Mabitac”(Another town in the province of Laguna)

“For the years from 1599 up to 1600, second lieutenant Don Cristobal de Mercado commanded to make an image of Our Lady of Candelaria, and donated it to our Church in the town of Dilao, outside the walls of Manila, where the aforementioned image remained there until the year of 1608 when it was transferred to our Hospital in Los Baños, which by then was founded. The year of 1615, Fray Miguel de Talavera still as minister in the town of Siniloan beseeched the Provincial Friar Blas of the Madre de Dios, to give the image of the Hospital, to put it in a Montecito between two barrios named Inaguasan and Galay, belonging to the town of Siniloan, with the object to gather there several

ranches scattered and the power, in this way, to manage more easily the spiritual pasture. The prelate happily complied the request, and as a result Fray Miguel de Talavera built a small chapel, by placing the holy image. In the same year of 1615, and as soon as the Commissioner visitator Fray Fernando Moraga came to govern, he withdrew to the shrine the already quoted P. Provincial Fr. Blasde la Madre de Dios, where he exercised his fervent zeal, echoing the thoughts of the P. minister of Siniloan with such success, that at the beginning of 1616 there were already many houses built around the chapel. The divine Lady favored the project with wonders so marked, that at last in the year of 1616 the religious had already questioned whether allow a devotion that attracted daily thousands of people with abandonment perhaps of all its obligations, and founded on this doubt ordered the Provincial Fray Diego of Chinchón, to move the Holy image to the town of Siniloan. But in vain. Three times so resisted the natives to the minister Fray Miguel de Talavera. For the fourth times eight religious tried to fulfill the mandate of the prelate, but the men, women and children, armed around of the chapel, strongly rejected the claim. The same Provincial in person tried to execute what he had previously ordered but found, with amazement, the same resistance; he saw fit to separate them from their matrix in order to form a new town, as it is in fact had happened in the year of 1618, giving it the name that it bears, taken from the way that the fields crack in dry weather, with Fray Francisco de la Cruz being its first minister, according to our chapter table.”

Table 1 is a comparison of a timeline based on the recognized history of Los Baños and what are stated in the primary sources

Table 1. Comparison of the Timeline of Los Baños

History Recognized by the Municipality	History of Los Baños Based from Primary Sources
1590- Franciscans learned about the healing powers of the waters in Mainit (Los Baños)	While San Pedro Bautista was returning from a regular visit of all the religious in the year of 1590 , he discovered the hot waters of Mount Maquiling, located on the Southern coast of Laguna de Bay,
1593- Franciscans have cleared tract of the forest to built a rattan and nipa rest house to provide accommodation for the sick	provincial Fray Pablo de Jesús, the brother Fray Diego de Santa María passed to the aforementioned site in 1593 , who analyzing waters, finding them to be medicinal, remained some years, with the consent of his prelate, curing a few patients who presented themselves, this Apostolic province were

	seen to be determined to found a hospital.
1602- Governor General Pedro de Acuña licensed the Franciscans to build a hospital which was eventually called “hospital de Aguas de Santas de Mainit”	a license was obtained from the Illustrious cabildo sede vacante, dated July 29, 1602 and the Superior Government dated 13 October of the same year , it built a hospital in nipa, dedicated to the Immaculate Conception, under the title of our Lady of Aguas Santas
	For the years from 1599 up to 1600, second lieutenant Don Cristobal de Mercado commanded to make an image of Our Lady of Candelaria, and donated it to our Church in the town of Dilao, outside the walls of Manila, where the aforementioned image remained there until the year of 1608 when it was transferred to our Hospital in Los Baños, which by then was founded.
1603- The Franciscans was granted sole jurisdiction over what was now called “Visita, Baños de Mainit”	In the year of 1608 , the principals of the town of Bay, gave all the land in favor of the hospital between the mouth of the Dampalit River and the Quinacapatlan River
1615- Nuestra Señora de la Candelaria was transferred to “Mavitac” (Mabitac) 1615- The Parish was now called Nuestra Señora de Inmaculada Concepcion	Formerly a barrio called San Nicholas of Tolentino, belonging to the village of Bay, when it was under the charge of the shoed Augustinians who, by a public deed, authored by the scribe Don Luis Vela on 17 September 1613 , gave the administration of this barrio, consisting then of forty tributes, to this apostolic province of San Gregorio, which had already founded a hospital in these baths, leaving from that date as

	servants of the hospital, under our administration (Franciscans)
<p>September 17, 1615- The Foundation of Los baños as a separate town from Bay.</p>	<p>Since the year of 1613 until 1727 this town had no Church of its own, only served by our Hospital already mentioned, which was dedicated to the Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception, with the title of Holy Waters</p> <p>The year of 1615, Fray Miguel de Talavera still as minister in the town of Siniloan beseeched the Provincial Friar Blas of the Madre de Dios, to give the image of the Hospital, to put it in a Montecito between two barrios named Inaguasan and Galay, belonging to the town of Siniloan,</p> <p>and not coming to be formalized as a town until the year of 1640 when Don Juan Castaneda was appointed it first captain or gobernadorcillo</p>

DISCUSSION

The Foundation is Not 1615

Upon cross checking and verification and comparison of the sources cited by the local government of Los Baños and other available primary and secondary sources that deals with the history of the town, during the first parts of the timelines, they were pretty much the same, however after 1602 differences were now beginning to be noticeable. It is very clear that the historical basis of the claim of the local government, that the foundation day of the municipality is September 17, 1615 was not mentioned in any primary source and it may have been actually a result of a mistranslation/misinterpretation from the discussion under “Mabitac”(another town in the province of Laguna) particularly in page 45 of “*Fray Felix de Huerta’s “Estado, Topográfico, Estadístico, Histórico— Religioso, de la Santa y Apostólica Provincia de San Gregorio Magno, de Religiosos Menores Descalzos de la Regular y Mas Estrecha Observancia De Nuestro Padre San Francisco, en las Islas Filipinas”*. Binondo: 1865, by Dominador N. Marcaida Jr. (Accessed 21 Sept. 2015 @<http://bdh-rd.bne.es>).” which states that “For the years from 1599 up to 1600, second lieutenant Don Cristobal de Mercado commanded to make an image of Our Lady of

Candelaria, and donated it to our Church in the town of Dilao, outside the walls of Manila, where the aforementioned image remained there until the year of 1608 when it was transferred to our Hospital in Los Baños, which by then was founded. The year of 1615, Fray Miguel de Talavera still as minister in the town of Siniloan beseeched the Provincial Friar Blas of the Madre de Dios, to give the image of the Hospital, to put it in a Montecito between two barrios named Inaguasan and Galay, belonging to the town of Siniloan, with the object to gather there several ranches scattered and the power, in this way, to manage more easily the spiritual pasture. The prelate happily complied the request, and as a result Fray Miguel de Talavera built a small chapel, by placing the holy image.”

It was only on this part that the year 1615 was mentioned by the primary source but it was actually referring Fray Miguel de Talavera asking the Provincial Friar Blas of the Madre de Dios, to give the image of Our Lady of Candelaria from the Hospital (Los Baños), to put it in a Montecito between two barrios named Inaguasan and Galay, belonging to the town of Siniloan (another town in the province of Laguna) and that it is very clear according to the same primary source that Los Baños was “*formerly a barrio called San Nicholas of Tolentino, belonging to the village of Bay, when it was under the charge of the shoed Augustinians who, by a public deed, authored by the scribe Don Luis Vela on 17 September 1613, gave the administration of this barrio, consisting then of forty tributes, to this apostolic province of San Gregorio, which had already founded a hospital in these baths, leaving from that date as servants of the hospital, under our administration, and not coming to be formalized as a town until the year of 1640 when Don Juan Castaneda was appointed its first captain or gobernadorcillo.*”

The Foundation is either 1613 or 1640

In the case of when Los Baños become a separate town from merely being a barangay (Mainit) of Bay, Laguna, it is worth noting and emphasizing that during the Spanish Colonization period in the Philippines, the foundation of a town heavily depends on the existence of a Church that is controlled and operated with its own religious order. So when the Augustinians ceded the control and operation of the Visita (Chapel under the control of a parent church) of Barangay Mainit (Los Baños) to the Franciscans, it was when Los Baños as a town came into existence, which was clearly stated that it was on 17 September 1613 as mentioned on page 47 of *Topográfico, Estadístico, Histórico—Religioso, de la Santa y Apostólica Provincia de San Gregorio Magno, de Religiosos Menores Descalzos de la Regular y Mas Estrecha Observancia De Nuestro Padre San Francisco, en las Islas Filipinas*. Binondo: 1865 not in 1615. However, it is also worth noting that there was no actual church that existed during that time and that what actually existed there was a hospital that had a cottage that served as a resting place. Furthermore, according to the same source it was also clearly and explicitly mentioned there that Los Baños was only formalized to become a town until the year of 1640 when Don Juan Castaneda was appointed as its first captain or gobernadorcillo.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

In conclusion, as researchers we should always and only go by what can be proven through experimentation, observation and in the field of history, we only recognize what can be backed up by primary sources. Something that may have been recognized and practiced for the longest period of time does not make it factual if there are credible sources that tells otherwise. In this study, the researcher cross verified the sources cited by the primer made in conjunction with Municipal Ordinance No. 89-05, an unpublished book entitled *Los Baños: Its Life and Times* (2001), and the official website of the town of Los Baños and found that there are no explicit statements that indicates and backs September 17, 1615 as the official foundation day of the town of Los Baños. The only event in 1615 that was mentioned about Los Baños in the primary source was when Fray Miguel de Talavera asked the Provincial Friar Blas of the Madre de Dios, to give the image of Our Lady of Candelaria from the Hospital, to be put it in a Montecito between two barrios named Inaguasan and Galay, belonging to the town of Siniloan (Province in Laguna). It is hereby recommended that the foundation of the town of Los Baños is either 1613 or 1640 should be recognized as the official foundation of the town of Los Baños, which was explicitly mentioned by *Fray Felix de Huerta's* in his book "*Estado, Topográfico, Estadístico, Histórico—Religioso, de la Santa y Apostólica Provincia de San Gregorio Magno, de Religiosos Menores Descalzos de la Regular y Mas Estrecha Observancia De Nuestro Padre San Francisco, en las Islas Filipinas*". Binondo: 1865, by Dominador N. Marcaida.

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