

REDISCOVERING BUENAVISTA(Guimaras)THROUGH ARTIFACTS AND NATURAL HERITAGE

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ABSTRACT

This paper highlights the contribution of Buenavista in the history of Guimaras. This aimed to connect the history of the town with the artifacts, man-made and natural sites that are existing. The data was gathered through interviews of the old folks and unearthing secondary data. The history started as early as pre-Spanish time when Muslim raiders ravaged the resources of the locality and instigated the blindfolded people of Getulio to fight up to death known as Bulang Moros. The Spanish era left artifacts such as the Church, the Belfry, the bell and the cemetery of Navalas, as well as the bell of Sto. Rosario Church, the ruins of the old church and the first municipal hall in Old Poblacion formerly known as Tilad. The location of the municipal hall atop a hill revealing the panoramic view then enthralled the Spanish Governor who was the guest of honor during the inauguration of the town in 1844 and who exclaimed "Buena vista" or good view, thus, the name Buenavista. The American forces left an indelible mark in the town. Among these were the ruins of camp Jossman, an American cantonment located in Supang, where Gen. Douglas Mc Arthur spent his first year in service after graduation in the US military school in 1903. It was in Buenavista where he was ambushed by the natives that could have caused his death and could have changed the course of the history of the world. These artifacts were the bowling alley, tennis court, old bottles, the culvert, the post of the hospital, the cemented foundation of a building, the road, Punta Blanco firing range and others. These artifacts need to be preserved and transformed into a tourist attraction as part of the historical heritage of the municipality.

KEYWORDS: Buenavista, artifacts, historical heritage

INTRODUCTION

Background of the study

Every place has reasons for its existence. No place has existed without any beginnings. People of any place would always look back to the humble beginnings of their community upon which they can claim that they were part and parcel of such beginnings. These beginnings spell out the contribution of any place and its constituents in the society that could likewise serve as the inspiration of the future generation.

Buenavista coined as one of the oldest municipalities in the province of Guimaras had a colorful history of its own to mention the stay of Douglas MacArthur in the island, the famous Navalas Church as a mute witness of the Christianization of the island and many others.

These things, however were all in the past. There were many written bits of information about the different places and events in the Municipality, but these facts and information were not collected and just became part of the bedtime stories among the folks in the Barangays.

Buenavista is one of the five municipalities of the island province of Guimaras. The others are the municipalities of Jordan, Nueva Valencia, San Lorenzo and Sibunag. Buenavista has a total of 36 Barangays-17 coastal

and 19 inlands. Its agricultural products are rice, corn, copra, calamansi, mango and a variety of vegetables. It is also very rich in first-class limestone deposits which are produced in a commercial scale since the 1800's. Manufacturing of lime has immensely contributed to the development of the sugar industry in Panay and Negros islands.

The dominant religion is Roman Catholic with two parishes-the parish of the Most Holy Name of the Child Jesus in Brgy. Mclain and the Sto. Rosario Church in Sto. Rosario, Buenavista and St. Isidore the Worker in Brgy. Navalas. There are other religious sects, such as the Iglesia Filipina Independencia (IFI) popularly known as the Aglipayan, the Seventh Day Adventists, various Baptist churches, Iglesia ni Kristo and the Born Again and Pentecostal churches.

The events in the history of the municipality have left several markers that served as mute witnesses of what happened in the past. Knowing these artifacts and relating them to the events in the past would be the best legacy a person or an institution could leave to the future generation, so that they could establish their identity and help preserve these artifacts for the generations to come.

It is, therefore, the objective of this work to relate the artifacts found in the different Barangays in Buenavista, Guimaras and the significance of such artifacts in the history of the municipality.

Guimaras in the Pre-Spanish Era

During the pre-Spanish era, the island of Guimaras was Himara-os in the ancient map of Panay. The people of Panay and Guimaras had already a flourishing civilization and trade relations with other neighboring countries with proofs gleaned from the Oton diggings. The writeup about the history of Oton states "the early people of these islands had trade relations with the Chinese and other Asian countries."

The two similar maps below showed the ancient names of several islands in Western Visayas pinpointing the places in each island. Figure 1a shows the island of Panay with points of entry such as Irong-Irong (Iloilo), Ogtong (Oton); Araut (Dumangas); Tabucan (Molo), Gibuangan (Guimbal), and Salog (Jaro) as recognized ports during the ancient time. The adjacent island is known as Himara-os (Guimaras). Figure 1b is the ancient map of Western Visayas showing the three islands Panay, Himaraos and Bugras. In Panay the points of Akean (Aklan) mentioning other towns such as Batang and Madianos; other points are Hamtik (Antique), Ogtong (Oton), Salog (Jaro), Araut (Dumangas), and Zuruaqa (San Joaquin) were clearly indicated. The adjacent island is called Himaraos (Guimaras) and the next island to Himaraos is Bugras (Negros).



Fig.1a. Ancient map of the islands of Panay and Guimaras

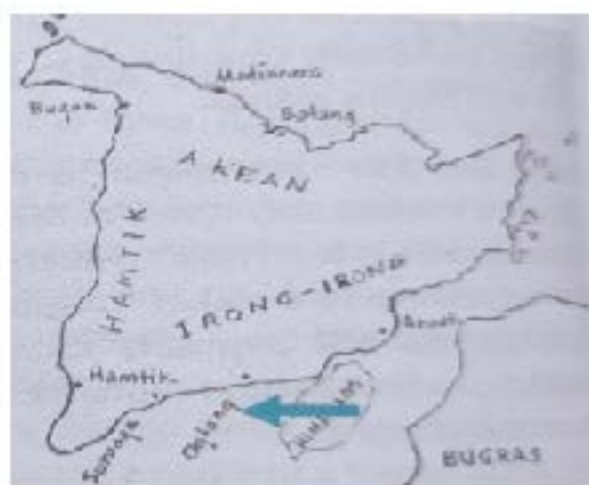


Figure 1b. Ancient map of Panay, Guimaras and Negros. These two similar maps (Figs.1a and 1b) were taken from the history of Oton as provided by Vice Mayor Jose Niel P. Olivares

Spanish era

During the arrival of the Spaniards here in the Philippines, many events in the history of Buenavista lingered in the memories of the Buenavistahanons. One of these was the story of "Bulang Moros." Prior to the arrival of the Spanish colonizers, the islands of Visayas were frequented by Muslim pirates known as Moros. Most of the Datus and their soldiers were very cruel. The two Muslim leaders Sali and Silungan devastated Cebu, Negros and Panay unopposed by people who were without sufficient men and weapons (Franco and Regalado, 1973). The story of Bulang Moros.

During the Spanish time pirates frequently attacked Panay Island looking for food and to get slaves. The Island of Guimaras was their refuge for relaxation. They found a place called "Elle" or Getulio. They stayed in a cave known as "Kinubkuban." This was their temporary shelter while in Guimaras. This cave is located in a secluded place along the mountains of Getulio. The pirates were fond of cock fighting. However, while in Guimaras (Buenavista) they made fun of their "alipins." They were men from different places in the country, which are robust and strong looking whom they kidnapped to be their alipins including people from Buenavista. Instead of holding a fight between roosters they did it between men. They held the fight inside the cave wherein they have placed a big stone wide enough to hold two persons fighting as if they are in the arena of a "Bulangan." However, at present this stone is not found any more inside the cave. The fighters used either "Kris, Espading or Binangon" and a "Taming" or shield to protect their bodies. According to stories, the Muslims believed that their weapons are more valuable than their wives. Both fighters were chosen and trained by the Datu themselves. The natives participated as well by betting their properties, either a cow or a carabao. The Muslim pirates were after prize and popularity. The declaration of winners depended upon the agreement made by both parties prior to the start of the game. The fighters wore warrior ornaments in their bodies and had G-strings as their form of clothing. The dead warrior was brought back by the Muslim pirates either to their own place or thrown to the sea.

The cockfighting of men lasted even until the Japanese invasion of the country. It stopped only when the natives of Getulio fought against the Muslim pirates after they have felt that they have enough of the abuses and kidnappings done by the pirates. The people of Getulio were successful enough to drive the pirates away. At present, the people called the place as "Bulang Moros" (Victor M. Sinfuego, 2012, Informant).

Below are the pictures of the cave. It has two openings. The first opening is not frequented by people because it is stiff and has a hole which is very dark that nobody yet has explored its depth. The other opening is somewhat flat and it is where the "bulang" or cockfight was done.



Navalas was the first to become a town in Guimaras during the Spanish Regime

The detail of how the municipalities in Guimaras were created especially the town of Buenavista was discussed by Aurelio Zambrano (Undated) (Presidente/Alcalde of Buenavista, Iloilo, 1908-1909) in his, "Ang Maragtas sa Pulo sang Guimaras cag Pagpatukod sang mga Municipio sang Navalas, Jordan, Buenavista cag Nueva Valencia."

During the early years or before the turn of the 200 years of Spanish regime, Navalas was already a town or municipio in this part of Guimaras Island. The leadership of Navalas town was called "tentiente absolute," together with the "Ministros de Justicia," "tenientes" and "cabeza de barangay." "This town continued to thrive with independence and a known municipio up to the highest leaders of the Spanish regime in the country until 1896 prior to the "riboc" or "revolucion" (revolution) of the Filipinos against the Spanish rule.

A simple deduction from the information provided in the writeup of Zambrano as to when the township of Navalas was created may show that if the Spanish regime started with Miguel Lopez de Legaspi's arrival in Cebu, Philippines in 1565 (minus 10 or 20 years= 190 or 180,, adding these numbers to 1565, then Navalas would probably be established in 1755 (minus 10 years) or 1745 (minus 20 years from the "before the turn of 200 years of Spanish regime". This information would tally more or less with the account of Fr. Fernandez, who mentioned that as early as 1742; Guimaras became part of Dumangas up to 1751 when the Augustinians ceded it to the Jesuits and in 1768, to the Dominicans. In addition, considering the geographical nearness of Dumangas and Navalas, the likelihood of the Augustinian priests crossing into this part of Guimaras is not impossible.

Furthermore, Zambrano mentioned that for so long a time, the people of this town lived a peaceful, happy and prosperous life wherein they have built a beautiful Roman Catholic Church donated by the richest man of Navalas during that time in the person of Don Miguel Jayme. There was no other religion during that time except the Roman Catholic.

During the Spanish time, (1573) the "Real Ordenanza Para Nuevas Poblaciones" (Royal Ordinances for New Towns) was publicized. This Law required a gathering of population in a square plaza complex or a high ground for the "Iglesia" (church) as the centerpiece. Around the church were built the "convento" (Convent), "patio" (Cemetery), "corral real" (municipal hall), "Casa Tribunal" (court house), "Escuela publica" (Public school) and "cuartel" (headquarters) of the "guardia civil" or colonial police (Sevilla).

This Spanish Law corroborates the existence of Navalas as a "municipio" during the Spanish time because it has a church of its own, a plaza, and a cemetery which are all in existence up to this time. However, the only missing link was the municipio and the school. As per personal conversation with Lola Iska (Francesca Del Solor Manuel), 92 years old (one of the oldest residents of Navalas), the municipio of Navalas was found in the place where the present house of Justo Hiponia is located. This site is fronting the sea exactly opposite the Navalas church. Later Navalas also got the school which was called "pribada" (private). It was managed by the priest. It was located just in front of the old belfry which was constructed during the Spanish period. The same account was narrated by Mrs. Clarita Hiponia, 89 years old and also a resident of Navalas. According to her, the great grandfather of her husband has mentioned that the municipio of Navalas was located near the "imburnal" or drainage which was covered by culvert along the Navalas road just in front of the Navalas church. Adjacent to this drainage is the house of Justo Hiponia. According to the story of Mrs. Nenita J. Cotimo, one of the older residents of Navalas, that this drainage was before a river wherein ships or "batels" can dock. The residents of Navalas mentioned that there is still "tisa" buried in the drainage even up to this time; however, they need to be excavated. The corroboration of these stories has concretized the story of Zambrano that Navalas was indeed the first town to be established in Guimaras during the Spanish period.

Lola Iska further mentioned that during the construction of the church in 1880, Teniente Egel (referring to Miguel Jayme) would provide new clothing materials (made from lanot or piña fiber) to the residents so that they can attend the mass during Sundays but they were required to bring with them "sillar" or coral rocks shaped into square to be used in building the walls of the church. These are still the walls found in the facade of the present-day church of Navalas. These "sillar" were gathered by the people from the "katunggan" (mangrove area).

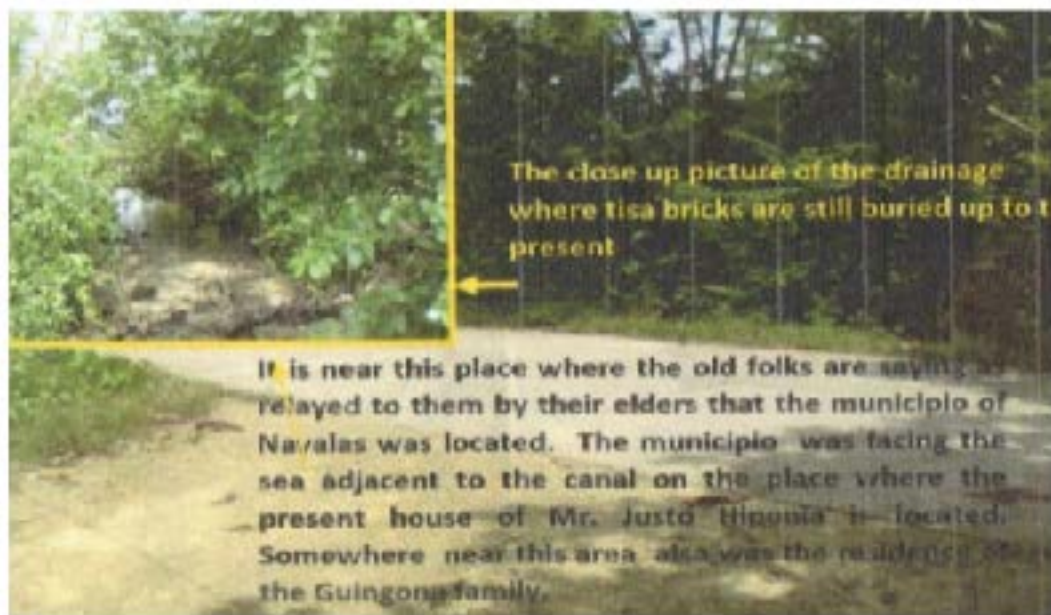


The Navalas Church built during the Spanish period.



The Belfry of Navalas Church built during the Spanish period.

The pictures below indicated the location of the municipal building of the town of Navalas during the Spanish period.



This is the place according to the old folks where the old municipal building of Navalas was built during the Spanish era when Navalas was still a municipio.

The bell of Navalas church was minted in 1882. According to Salvilla, when the church was finished in 1885, it had a very big bell made of an alloy of silver and gold. Its diameter was about a meter. Its peals could be heard as far as the pueblo of Dumangas across the Strait. The bell warned the natives of the coming of Muslims raids who raided the village and took away the big bell. On their way, they threw it at the sea near the Islas de Siete Pecados (Isles of the Seven Sins), a cluster of seven mystic islands between Navalas and Dumangas. At present, only the lower part of the belfry was left as a reminder of that big bell of long ago.

The bell of Navalas that is presently kept at Jaro Archbishop Palace for safekeeping has an inscription that it was minted in 1882 while that of Buenavista was made in 1877 under the parish priest Fr. Francisco Consing.



Pictures of Navalas bells presently kept at the Archbishop Palace, Jaro, Iloilo City



The marker inside the Navalas Church which shows that the church was built in 1880 until 1885

In 1896 to 1899, "junta local" was established in Navalas according to the "Orden General" General Order of the Central Revolutionary Government in Central Luzon headed by General Emilio Aguinaldo, President Cristeto Gonora, Vice President Eusebio Jayme, Delegados de Policia, Justicia kag Rentas.

As part of the growth of Navalas as a thriving municipio during the spanish time, one of the supporting stories is in the biography of Teofisto Guingona, Sr. the father of former Vice President of the Republic of the Philippines Teofisto Tayko Guingona, Jr. In his biography (Guingona autobiography) he became the first Municipal Treasurer of Navalas from 1899 to 1901. He then became Municipal President from 1901-1902. However, their stay in the municipio of Navalas (Navalas) was short lived because in 1907, (five years after he became the Municipal President of Navalas), he graduated from the Escuela de Derecho with the degree Bachelor of Laws and left Navalas to settle in Negros Oriental.

Further, according to Zambrano, after Navalas, Nagaba (now Jordan) was the next to become a town. Jordan was the first town to have leaders called Gobernadorcillo, Jues de Cementera and Jues de Gagados, Tenientes and Cabeza de Barangay. The whole barrio in Buenavista including those in the western part of the province called Nueva Valencia was formerly part of Jordan. However, Navalas was not part of the jurisdiction of Nagaba (Jordan). Nagaba was like a town because it has a "gobierno local" during the Spanish regime. The barrio Valencia now Nueva Valencia was made into a town during the riboc (revolution) against the Spaniards in 1896- 1901 under the ruling of the first Republic of the Philippines with Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo as the first president of the republic. Nueva Valencia's separation from Nagaba was historic because after it was fused with Nagaba (Jordan) it was separated from the mother town to be formed later into an independent town. It was realized because of the efforts made by the people of the municipality coming from the junta local headed by D. Manuel Segovia as President, Vice President Gregorio Gonzaga, Delegates Marcelo Geonanga (Police), Alberto Gonzaga (Justice) and Pio Geisana (Revenue and member).

The Creation of Barrio Tilad Now Buenavista as a Municipality in Guimaras, Iloilo (literal translation from the Ilonggo version)

In 1854, which was already more than hundred years (1 century) as to the time of the writing of this history by Zambrano, the people of barrio Tilad and the neighboring barrios located in the northern part of the whole island of Guimaras composed of Barrio Tacay, Ambolong now Salvacion, Culambog now Mclain, Supang now San Fernando (Sic), Aguilongan now Abila, Umilig, Mantangingi now East Valencia, Libas, Sinalgan, Mantasic, Langab, Suclaran, Paus now M.Chavez, Piña, Agsanayan, Daragan, Monpeller(Sic) and other sitios which are part of the above mentioned barrios headed by well-off people of the places composed of Patricio Gallo, Domingo Garganera, Babilicio Vilches, Mariano Martir, Eugenio Tarrazona and Jacinto Gabinete were the ones who have made efforts to submit the "escrito" (written request) to the highest Spanish authority in the country to convert into town or municipality the barrio Tilad including the above- mentioned barrios and sitios to be separated from the mother town which is Nagaba (Jordan). It was a lengthy time of suffering which the people of those barrios have experienced because the leadership of the Mother town Nagaba did not permit the dream and the request of the people of Tilad to be a town despite the efforts of the elders for the construction of a town hall (tribunal), school, church, cemetery and other requirements needed for the creation of a town. This was covered by the law Real Ordenanza Para Nuevas Poblacion (Sevilla).

In 1841, the people were able to construct and to comply with the requirements that Tilad would be converted into a town. They needed a priest to be the "Cura Parroco" of the town because during that time the church and the state were not separated. However, during that time priests were very scarce in Panay because the Archbishopric was found in Cebu so the people of Tilad had chosen representatives to compose the team to go to Cebu. They were Domingo Garganera, Mariano Martir, Eugenio Tarrazona and Francisco Lachica. In a short time, the dream of the people of Tilad to form their own municipality which is Buenavista was realized. The group was able to request from the archbishop of Cebu for a Cura Parroco to be assigned in Buenavista in the person of Redondo (Rdo.) Padre Jose Arias and after him was Redondo (Rdo.) Francisco Consing and others. In year 1844 Buenavista became a municipality or a town.

The first Capitan or Gobernadorcillo was chosen by the twelve (12) "Delegado de la Principalia" coming from the Cabeza de Barangays in the person of Valentin. This activity was attended by Gobernador P.M. of Iloilo and the parish priest Rdo. Jose Arias. The place where the names were written in "leyenda" or legend was burned during the "rivoc" by the "revolucionarios" including the municipal archives of all the towns in the whole Philippines.

In the year 1844, Tilad was changed to Buenavista as requested by Governor P.M., and it was appreciated by those who attended the event. The people celebrated a "fiesta" or feast which they called "pagcagos sang baras" and sang "Te Deum" (Thee O God, We Praise) in the church, and the whole town was jubilant. The name "Buenavista" was given to Tilad because the town hall in Tilad or old Poblacion was overlooking the panoramic view of Guimaras strait separating Buenavista and the City of Iloilo.

The assignments of priest for the three towns of Guimaras as per records of the Roman Catholic Church book Curas Almas (19th century) are shown in table 1.

Table 1. Parish Priest in 19th Century

Buenavista Parish 1858 April 14 (Redondo) Guimaras Island		
Years	Curas Parrocos/ Misioneros	Variations in Spelling/ Remarks
1855- 1859	(el de Guimaras)	
1860	D Jose Arias	
1861- 1864, 1875- 1879, 1884- 1886, 1890- 1893	D. Francisco Consing	Conig, Comig, Cosing, Cousing, Consiac, Consiag, Consin
1885- 1896	D. Cipriano Pedrasa	Pedroza
1897- 1898	D Simon Covarubias	Fr. Simon Covarubias
1892	D Praxedes Magalona, cdj.	
1896- 1897	Fr Jose Lino Ojanguren	
1898	Fr Wenceslao Garcia OSA	
1892	D Eusebio de la Riarte, cdj	
Nagaba also spelled Nagaua, Naguba, Nagava (formerly Guimaas (also spelled Guinaras), listed 1839-1856, 1864; now Jordan, on Guimaras Island		
1839- 1852	D. Bernardo Chaves	
1853	D –	
1855- 1864, 1875- 1879, 1884- 1886	D Mateo Jalandoni	
1890	D Cornelio Salas	
1891- 1898	D Luis Jalandoni	Fr Luis Jalandoni, Jacandoni
Navalas on Guimaras Island		
1895- 1898	El de Buenavista	1895- 1898

During the period of revolution (riboc) Buenavista was ruled by the "junta local decreto" or local board decree by the "Gobierno Central Revolucionario" or Revolutionary Central Government in Luzon headed by General Emelio Aguinaldo.

The chosen local leaders were as follows:

Presidente	-Crispulo Gaylan
Vice Presidente	-Mateo Zambarrano
Delegado de Plicia	-Manuel Zarganera
Delegado de Justicia	-Aurelio Zambarrano
Delegado de Rentas	-Aguedo Vilches

Furthermore, according to Aurelio Zambarrano (undated), in 1903 there was a fusion of four(4) towns in Guimaras, namely; Navalas, Jordan, Nueva Valencia and Buenavista, making the later(Buenavista) as the cabesera (head village) making three(3) other towns as the "Arrabal sa Cabesera" (outskirt of the town). Since Buenavista became the "cabesera," it turned out to be progressive because it is where the Campamento Militar (Military Encampment) of the regimen of American military was located, specifically in Supang. This American military government was able to construct a beautiful concrete port in Buenavista and a road from the port to Barrio Supang with a budget of P1,000,000.00 was constructed. Besides these, mejoras (improvements) were made Buenavista got a school called "Escuelas Central de Concreta" (Concrete Central School) in Poblacion (now Old Poblacion) in 1909 and was completed in 1910 with a total budget of P75,000.00. Roads from the town going to Jordan and roads going to all important barrios and roads in going to "Arrabal" (outskirts) of Navalas were constructed. There were three (3) important "fabrica" (factory) of lime in Tacay, Taminla and Salvacion and many limestones quilns were found. There were also other products like rice, corn, copra, fishes and many other industries and commerce in the Municipality.

In support to these claims, in the 1903 Census of Population (Guimaras in Focus, (1999), four (4) Guimaras municipalities were mentioned: Buenavista, Jordan, Nueva Valencia and Nabalas. However, in the 1918 and 1939 Census of Population, Guimaras contained only two municipalities, Buenavista and Jordan. Nva. Valencia had been incorporated with Jordan while the former municipality of Nabalas formed part of Buenavista.

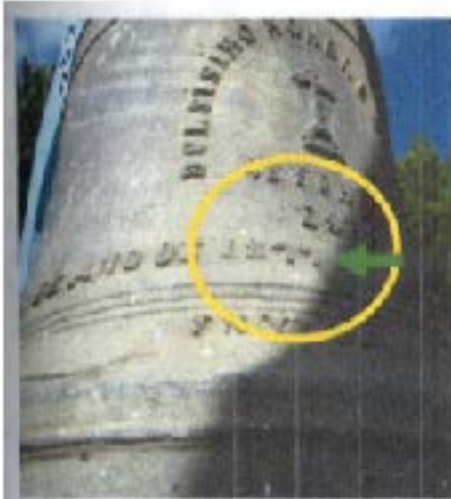
The historical accounts mentioned previously maybe thought of as not very plausible, but there are physical evidences that could attest to the time by which these churches were built. These physical evidences could prove and support the corroboration of the existence of the church and the priest assigned in the two churches of Buenavista and Navalas. One of these is the old bell found in the present day Roman Catholic Church in Sto. Rosario with the Spanish inscription:

"Dulcísimo Nombre de Jesus Sefundio Esta Consia del Pueblo de Buenavista en el año 1877 Siendo Cura Parroco de Francisco Consing"

Or:

"Sweetest name of Jesus melted this for the town of Buenavista in the year 1877 with/being Francisco Consing as Parish Priest"

This bell is still being used in the Roman Catholic church in Sto. Rosario, Buenavista, Guimaras.



Spanish Inscription of the Sto. Rosario Bell: "Dulcísimo Nombre de Jesus Sefundio Esta Consia del Pueblo de Buenavista en el año 1877 Siendo Cura Parroco de Francisco Consing"

Rough Translation of the Spanish Inscription:

"Sweetest name of Jesus melted this for the town of Buenavista in the year 1877 with/ being Francisco Consing as Parish Priest"

The ruins of the early church found in the property of the family Gumarin in Old Poblacion, Buenavista, Guimaras are proofs of the creation of the Municipality of Buenavista in 1844. Adjacent to it within the compound of the Old Poblacion Elementary School are also the ruins of the old Municipal Building of Buenavista. These edifices were totally burned down during the Japanese occupation of the Municipality. Below is the picture of the ruins of the old Roman Catholic Church found in Old Poblacion, Buenavista, Guimaras.

The ruins of the roman Catholic Church in Poblacion formerly Poblacion Buenavista, Guimaras constructed in 1844 but was burned during the revolution Shown are the coral stones which served as the walls of the church. According to the elders of Old Poblacion, every time they went to church they were required to bring with them coral stones, hence, it can be attributed the first feast day of the town which is named "cagos baras".



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The remains Old Poblacion Municipal Building, Old Poblacion, Buenavista housed within the compound of the Old Poblacion, Elementary School.



These artifacts are proofs of the existence of this "municipios" as mentioned above. The bells of the Roman Catholic Church in Sto. Rosario is one solid evidence that the church was in existence in 1844. It has the inscription of 1877 (or 33 years after the founding of Buenavista as a town) under Fr. Francisco Consing who was assigned as the parish priest of Old Poblacion beginning in 1861 to 1864 (Zambarrano undated) after Fr. Arias.

In 1948, the municipal officials passed Resolution No. 7 which was about the transfer of the seat of government from Old Poblacion to another place. It mentioned that the town while that time was already more than 100 years old. The excerpt of the resolution was:

"Whereas, the Municipal Building of this municipality was completely burned by the Japanese Forces during their occupation of this town; Whereas, the present seat of the municipal government is very inadequate for it contains not more than 400 square meters and located at the top of the hill which could not provide for a suitable ground for town plaza, playground and a market place; hence improvement and beautification of this town are impossible. Whereas, because of the aforementioned condition of its site, this town has never been improved although it had been established in its present seat for more than one hundred years before the destruction of the municipal building by the enemy, and as a matter of fact there are actually 14 small houses found in the whole Poblacion."

According to Aurelio Zambarrano that the municipality of Tilad or Buenavista was created in 1844 and deducing from this resolution, it shows that when the resolution was made, Buenavista in 1948 was already 104 years old.

In 1908, the Guimarasnons were given the right to elect their municipal president. Table 2 shows the list of municipal officials in Buenavista.

Table 2. Chronology of Gobernadorcillo and Capitanes of Buenavista during the Spanish Period

Names	Period
Valentin (Surname cannot be deciphered in the Leyenda or Legend)	1844- 1845
Casem (Surname cannot be deciphered in the Leyenda or Legend)	1846- 1847
Patricio Gallo	1848- 1849
Carlos Quison	1850- 1851
Domingo Garganera	1852- 1853
Victorino Gaylan	1854- 1855
Basilicio Gaylan	1856- 1857
Mateo Gallo	1858- 1859
Magdaleno Natividad	1860- 1861
Mariano Martir	1862- 1865
Eugenio Tarazona	1866- 1867
Jacinto Gabinite	1868- 1871
Pablo Gabutin	1872- 1873
Hipolito (cannot be deciphered in the legend)	1874- 1875
Manuel Garganera	1876- 1877
Marcelo Gabiazon	1878- 1879
Sergio Consing	1880- 1882
Pedro Saldivar	Year Cannot be deciphered

Table 3. The presidents and mayors of Buenavista, Iloilo

Names	Period
1 Sergio Consing	1904-1905
2 Feliz Gonzales	1906-1907
3 Aurelio Zambarrano	1908-1909
4 Luis Garganera	1910-1911
5 Licerio Segovia	1912-1916
6 Melquiades Javellana	1917-1919
7 Silverio Gabutin	1920-1922
8 Nicolas Gabales	1923-1925
9 Laureano Tarazona	1926-1931
10 Pascual Beltran	1932-1934
11 Rubin Habaña	1935-1940
12 Guerra Mundial [Occupacion sang mga Hapones, (Alcalde Habaña evacuated to Panay)]	1941-1945

Camp Jossman and the American occupation of Buenavista

When the Americans established their government in the Philippines after the Spanish-American War Buenavista was their choice for the installation of a military unit in Guimaras. The construction of the camp in Guimaras Island was authorized by US Congress in July 1902, and it was named Camp Jossman (Wiki Camp Jossman 2009).

Camp Jossman was named after Albert L. Jossman, a graduate of the University of Michigan who fought in the Spanish-American War. As a member of the 35th Michigan Volunteer Infantry, he joined the regular army as a member of the 22nd Infantry Regiment. Jossman was wounded in the battle of Bayan and died in Manila on July 28, 1902 while en route to the United States (Seeley 1912). Camp Jossman was a US Army Cantonment in Supang, Buenavista, and Guimaras, Philippines after the Spanish-American War.

The subsequent Acts of Congress authorized the expansion of the Camp, 67 buildings were planned for Camp Jossman and not all of these buildings had been completed when the post was vacated. Camp Jossman was the base for the 19th Infantry and two battalions of Philippine Scout (USA-PMA Graduates, 1939).

General Douglas MacArthur left a landmark at Guimaras. After his graduation at West Point in June 11, 1903, he was first assigned to the Philippines at the age of 23. He sailed to the Philippines and arrived in Manila in October 28, 1903. His next six months were filled with high adventures.

Assigned to the Department of Visayas, he saw duty in Panay, Samar, Cebu, Leyte, the four major Visayas islands. Assigned as an engineer, MacArthur commanded work parties that cleared roads and built bridges and piers in the area. He wrote to his home about his narrow escape when two Filipino bandits attacked a work detail he was commanding. As he recounted in his memoirs: "While attempting to construct piers and docks at Guimaras island, located at the mouth of Iloilo Harbor (in Panay Island), I had to procure my own piling, and took a small detachment to cut timber in the jungle forests. The place was dangerous, being infested with brigands and guerillas." On a narrow jungle trail, his party was waylaid "by two of these desperados". Like all frontiersmen, I was an expert with a pistol," he bragged. "I dropped them both dead, but not before one had blazed away at me with his antiquated rifle. The slug tore through the top of my campaign hat and almost cut the sapling tree immediately behind me"(Young 1994). However, during the one-year tour of duty in the Philippines, he spent much of his time in Manila (Young, 1999). He had his headquarters in Guimaras at Camp Jossman in Barangay Supang, Buenavista while he was here in Guimaras. The monument of the stay of Gen. Douglas MacArthur in Buenavista, Guimaras was the Sto. Rosario Wharf and the road from Sto. Rosario wharf to Supang, which is about seven kilometers.

MacArthur was the third son of Gen. Arthur MacArthur, a senior officer in the United States. Gen. Arthur MacArthur served in the Philippines as the military governor and as a replacement for Gen. Elwell S. Otis. He served in the Philippines from 1900 until 1903 when he and the civilian governor William Howard Taft were always in clash with one another. The former was relieved of his post and transferred to Command the Department of the Pacific. The year 1903 was also a time when Douglas MacArthur graduated with highest and finest records in the West Texas Military Academy.

Lewis E. Gleeck, Jr. an American Consul in Manila (1962-1968) and consultant of Agrarian Reform in 1974 to the Director of the US Agency for International Development gave a recount of Camp Jossman during the year 1908 - 1909. The revolution enables one to take a look at Camp (and barrio) life in those early days of the Occupation. Camp Jossman located at the Guimaras Island, nine (9) miles from Iloilo, had several hundred men of the 4th Infantry stationed in the Camp in 1908.

The presence of 150 Americans billeted in Iloilo encouraged joint social and recreational activity. The construction of the Panay railroad and a small railroad from Iloilo to Capiz prompted road building of all kinds including a small railroad in Guimaras itself. Camp Jossman was not an exciting duty for the enlisted men, but its relation both with the small barrios of Guimaras and the city of Iloilo was cordial, and it was a pleasant station. Contact to Manila was minimal, but there were few distinguished visitors. Among them was Episcopal Bishop Brent, who had dropped in, preached a magnitude sermon before General John Bubbs and the men of the 12th Infantry then beat all the tennis players who were prepared to give them a game? The young officers impressed both by the bishop's sermon and his tennis prowess raised enough money to buy a bell for the Episcopal cathedral in Manila. The tennis court today is still part of the grounds of the family Yuday in Supang, Buenavista. Information also from the elders of the community showed that the cemetery in Camp Jossman is found opposite the present compound of Supang Elementary School.



Camp Jossman Tennis Court at the property of family Yuday in Supang, Buenavista, Guimaras

The same author, Lewis E. Gleeck, Jr. traced the humble beginnings of the real estate millionaire C. N. Hedges to bottle legging liquor at Camp Jossman. Different types of bottles were excavated surrounding the area in Supang where the artifacts/ remains of the US Camp can be found specifically at the place of Brgy. Captain Alfredo Magsipoc.



These are the bottles collected from the property of Brgy. Capt. Alfredo Magsipoc, Brgy. Supang, Buenavista, Guimaras. Some of the bottles have an inscription of M.B. & C. CO.18

Moving farther, in the junction of the road going to San Fernando and toward the national road is the property of the family Odollia Jasanggas, where a cemented part in his property according to the people of Supang, Buenavista, was also part of the old camp.



Picture of the remains of the original Road constructed by the American forces in Supang, Buenavista, Guimaras

In the property of family Betansos, one can find the remains of the bowling alley which the American forces had constructed during their stay in Supang. Now, it is part of the house/ property of the Betansos family.



Remains of the Camp Jossman Bowling Alley which is now part of the house of the Betansos family

Before entering the property of the Betansos family, on the left portion is the cemented pit which is still part of the relics of the old Camp. AS to its purpose, no one knows. There are theories that this might be their "Ice Refrigerator".



Cemented Pit or the Ice Refrigerator of the Americans

Moving farther, towards the national road, one can pass the two culverts constructed by the American forces.



Culvert 1



Culvert 2

Considering the number of soldiers assigned in Camp Jossman a hospital was built to take care of their medical needs. This edifice was found in the property of Mr. Bernabe Galanza. According to Galanza, his property Was the site of the Camp Jossman Hospital. It measures approximately 40 meters by 100 meters. The relics of the posts of the hospital can still be seen in their property. Alongside the hospital was the drainage that ended up to the creek where the culvert was constructed. It was presumed that the Wastes coming from the hospital went directly to the drainage.



Relics of the posts of the old Hospital of Camp Jossman

Southwest of Camp Jossman, about three (3) kilometers from the junction of Barangay Salvacion to Tinadtaran is Punta Blanco, the target range of the American Army in the early 1900. Punta Blanco is nobw part of Barangay Tinadtaran. The two parallel parapets are made of rocks and mortar. The layer parapet was parallel to and about 20 feet from the dirty road of San Roque, Tinadtaran and Gaban road sections. It was six (6) and a half foot wide and about 420 feet long. Facing the road near the center of the parapet was a slab of rock embedded on the wall marked "29 Inf. 1903," a mute autograph of the builders of the parapets. About 1,100 feet from this larger parapet is a smaller one parallel to it, about 75 feet high and about 2/% feet. The center of Punta Blanco is located at Mount Sulangan, Tinadtaran, Buenavista, Guimaras.



Picture of the small parapet about 1,100 feet from the larger parapet measuring about 75 feet high and 2 % feet thick.



The big parapet is about 20 feet from the dirty road of San Roque, Tinadtaran and Gaban road sections measuring 6 % ft. wide and about 420 ft. long.



The hollow portion of the parapet facing the road where a slab of rock embedded on the wall marked "29 Inf. 1903", a mute autograph of the builders of the parapets but at present it is already gone.



The close-up view of the parapet showing the materials used by the American soldiers to build it.

Camp Jossman is still a point of reference of the Bureau of Land Sketch Plans of properties around this Barangay. Camp Jossman to this day still hides the remains of the stability of the American Army occupation of those early days. Farmers plowing their fields around the area many years ago occasionally found oversized rusty horseshoes of a long dead mule of cavalry horse or bottles of different sizes, thickness, shape and color, and even bullets or mortars and other ammunitions can still be found in the area. To enable the readers and the Buenavistahanons to have a glimpse of Camp Jossman as it was during the American occupation, the researchers restructured the map based on the available relics as of the conduct of the study.

Figure 1 shows the restructured map of Camp Jossman. From the present Buenavista Water District water reservoir, approximately 200 meters is the present Supang Barangay hall. Opposite the Barangays hall is the property of the family Serra wherein there is a cemented part which according to Capt. Magsipoc was part of the relics of the old camp. The Barangay road on the side of the water reservoir going to San Fernando was the remains of the road constructed by the American forces.

Their fight against the Japanese made them leaders of their compatriots with the same courage, indomitable will and self-sacrificing spirit that characterized military leaders of the world.

The Municipality of Buenavista was also the home of Filipino revolutionaries against the Japanese occupation and public servant's unknown in our history. They reflected the spirit and quality of a hero, faced the war proudly throughout history, shaping it according to their aspirations, making the best of the most trying circumstances and emerging as persons worthy to be called Filipino heroes.

The spirit of nationalism was the greatest factor that inspired and forced the people of Buenavista to revolt and to put an end to the 300 years of Spanish colonization and the Japanese government. Long before the spirit of nationalism had been conceived, the Filipinos in general and the people of Buenavista in particular, were not aware of the future of the Filipinos under the role of the harsh and cruel colonizers.

During the bombing of Pearl Harbor and the beginning of World War II, Rubin Habaña was the Municipal Mayor. In 1942, the Japanese invading forces were met by a few inhabitants headed by Candido Yngalla, who later became Mayor of a Puppet Government set by the Japanese. During the liberation, Ingalla was accused of rebellion, killing, burning of properties and being a traitor. He was sentenced to "Cadena Perpetua" (Life sentence) in Munting Lupa prison in Manila. Yngalla was captured by the guerillas under Captain Dominador Gregorio (Zambarrano undated).

Military historian, Manikan made an account of the first Japanese troops landing in Guimaras during the war (Undated). He stated that in April 18, 1943, Japanese transport unloaded 3,000 enemy troops in four (4) different points of Guimaras Island.

The holocaust of war did not stop the supreme sacrifice offered by the sons of Buenavista in the battlefields of far flung provinces. In August 1943, the most tragic event in the history of the town occurred, as narrated below:

After Southern Iloilo (Capt. Tai-1) Watanabe's mobile forces crossed over on August 25, 1943 to the nearby Guimaras Island. According to the OCCA "Special Report," Watanabe and his murderous band, finding no guerilla troops in Guimaras, continued their gruesome massacres of the people. The covering civilians were killed in their hiding places and during the two weeks of bloody and orgiastic murder of the civilians in Guimaras the population was reduced to at least 1,000 victims. In the barrio of Salvacion, for instance, 50 women were captured, stripped, maimed and abused. After abusing them, they were exposed naked for half a day under the scorching heat of the sun. In the barrio of Nazaret, the women were killed after being abused. On the same day, 2nd Lt. Salvador Militante "D" Company, 15th Battalion, 63rd Infantry was captured by the enemy in Guimaras Island. He was tortured by the bayonet thrusts. Later, he was burned alive and left unburied. A week later his decomposing remains was discovered by Sgt. Eñano, who buried him in Ban - Ban, Navalas, Buenavista.

Militante was killed in the present site of Cansilayan Elementary School particularly at the place where the flagpole of the school is located. After the enemy brutally killed 2nd Lt. Salvador Militante, they went back to Iloilo. The information from civilians and the smoke of the burning houses reached Eduardo Legita. He prepared an ambush operation with Francisco Mucho supplying him a grenade but returned to him after he saw the coming of many Japanese soldiers. While hiding at the creek by the side of the road in Sitio Hulot, the whole company of Japanese soldiers took a rest and prepared for their meal before proceeding to Iloilo. Legita surprisingly fired his automatic carbine rifle killing two (2) Japanese soldiers near him, and a group preparing their meals, pouring all the bullets loaded in his rifle followed by a quick retreat to a safety place to secure himself. Despite counter fires of automatic weapons and "tekenando" grenade throwing bomb, Legita was able to escape. The dead Japanese soldiers were carried by oxen cart to nearby Sto. Rosariogarrison. Mr. Victor Selebio, his sister and Francisco Mucho were the witnesses of the incident. In January 20, 1944, Legita with sufficient logistics attacked the garrison with the guerillas and almost killed the entire enemy, but one Japanese soldier countered by throwing a grenade killing Lt. Custodio Aligaen, Lt. Rufino Umali, and wounded other enlisted men including Legita.

A number of army officers and practically all of the key men in Confesor's resistance government in Guimaras headed by Deputy Governor Constantino Gulmatico had to surrender to the Japanese soldiers in order to stop the wanton killing of innocent civilians by the Japanese soldiers. They were taken to the City of Iloilo to attend the Japanese School for "spiritual rejuvenation" at Fort San Pedro. But the persistent defense and counter attacks by local heroes did not cease under the command of Dominador Gregorio. They were able to capture the officials of the Japanese puppet government including Candido Yngalla.

In the account of Zambarrano, Perfecto Luhan was chosen by Gov. Tomas Confesor to be the mayor of Buenavista during the Second World War (1942-1945). Liberation took place in 1945. Rubin Habaña returned to his position as mayor. During the next election, Habaña was elected again for the third time as mayor of Buenavista.

Liberation of Buenavista

The Sto Rosario Garrison which was captured and overran by the Japanese was liberated at 3:30 A.. on March 18, 1945 under the command of Capt. Luis C. Herrera. The "F" Company was on its way to attack and captured the enemy garrison at Buenavista, that was defended by 32 Japanese troops while on the approach march its 1" platoon engaged an enemy patrol of seven (7) men. During a brief skirmish, one of the enemy's enlisted men was killed, and three (3) others were wounded. At 6:30 A.M the attack began, the second platoon was deployed in the immediate front of the enemy with one.50 machine gun. The 3rd platoon was assigned as beach guard along the shore. At about 8:00 A.M., three (3) Japanese soldiers were captured, one of whom was the commissioned officer Captain Uno the garrison commander identified by insignia that consisted of one gold stripe superimposed by three small silver stars. The captured Japanese soldiers tried to get away from the guard but were immediately shot and later died. At about 12:00 noon, an undetermined number of enemy troops aboard one small motor boat and sailboat landed at Montpiller. On their way to Sto Rosario, Buenavista, they were ambushed by the platoon led by Lt. Mijares and Gumayan. Twenty (20) Japanese were bagged, but some were able to reach the garrison. The attack was resumed at 5.00 P.M that continued throughout the night.

The following morning, March 19, 1945 Sto. Rosario garrison fell and was burned. The total enemy found dead in the garrison was 15 and four (4) more were wounded. Booties were composed of one (1) samurai sword, two (2) Japanese rifles, and several Japanese hand grenades.

Heroes of Buenavista During the 2nd World War

A historical landmark in the town plaza was constructed in recognition of the courage and heroism of Buenavistahanons who fell victims to the holocaust of war. The memorial for the town heroes during the global war stands out significantly in the town plazá. This monument was erected by freedom-loving people of Guimaras Island, officers and members of the Six Military District World War II Veterans Association headed by Col. Ernesto P. Golez, its national chairman. To honor the painful memory of 1st Lt. Salvador Militante, Chief Officer, "Company 15t Infantry Reg. 6 MD (captured and killed by the enemy on the 25th day of August 1943). He made the supreme sacrifice of organizing rear guard action against the superior number of the enemies conducting primitive campaign, "Jues de Cuchillo" in the island of Guimaras. This became their futile effort to subdue or destroy the enemy. They were in the 6MD Forces stationed in the Island under the command of Major Ernesto Golez.



The shrine containing the names of the heroes of Buenavista during 2nd World War found at the plaza of Buenavista,Guimaras constructed through the efforts of the late Gov.Abelardo Javellana and the municipal officials during that time. The improvement and beatification of this monument was done during the administration of Mayor Samuel T. Gumarin

Buenavista after the war and its subsequent development

On March 19, 1945, Mr. Perfecto Luhan was appointed municipal mayor by Governor Tomas Confesor. Then a small group of American soldiers came on March 21,1945 and reorganized the local government. Mr. Perfecto Luhan continued serving as appointed mayor under the Philippine Civilian Authority Unit (PCAU) - Municipal Government. His service in that capacity was short lived. The seat of Municipal government was in Supang. When the educational machinery was revived, Mr. Luhan resumed his teaching position, and Mr. Rubin Habaña was appointed municipal mayor. The destruction brought by World War II enabled the municipal officials to have a temporary office at the house of Roy Davis at Salvacion, Buenavista.

After the restoration of peace and order, many American soldiers opted to settle in the Island. Among them were Mr. Roy Davis and Mr. Clark, Who married local girls and raised their families. Another enterprising American was Mr. John Bordman, who established a lime factory in Buenavista (Pendon,1985).

As a municipality, Buenavista after the war lacked national government agency offices which are national in scope such as the Circular Letter of the Commission on Election regarding the establishment and designation of election precincts and polling places in the municipality of Buenavista for the coming plebiscite to be held on March 11, 1947 and on motion of Mr. Gabriel Rubrico, seconded by Mr. Federico Piodena the following precincts, with its corresponding barrios and sitios were created:

Precinct No.	Location	Barrios & sitios
1	Central School	Daliran, Buang, Poblacion
2	Central School	Montpiller, Poblacion Proper
3	Public Market	Rizal, Sto. Rosario
4	Zaldivar School	Salag Diutay, Zaldivar, Itor
5	Dagsa-an School	Sawang, Dagsa-an, Boroboro
6	Salvacion School	Banugon, Cabanbanan, Laude, Sinamay
7	Salvacion School	Tago-on, Salvacion
8	Calingao School	Taminla, Mabini, Mclain, Calingao
9	Supang School	San Pedro, San Nicolas, Supang, San Fernando, Nazaret
10	Navalas School	Tacay, Getulio, San Miguel, Navalas, Bacjao
11	Cansilayan School	Tanag, Umilig, Igsungay, Cansilayan
12	East Valencia School	Avila, East Valencia
13	Suclaran School	San Enrique, Suclaran, M. Chavez
14	San Roque School	Tastasan, San Roque, Agsanayan, Piña, Daragan

Municipal Council Resolution No. 7, series of 1948 was passed, a move to transfer the town site from Old Poblacion to a new place in the municipality. Considering that the municipal building was completely burned by the Japanese forces during their occupation of the Island, and with the desire of the municipal officials to facilitate the development of Buenavista they felt that there was a need to transfer the seat of the municipal government to another place which had an adequate space and a level ground to provide space for a plaza, playground and market. To quote: "Whereas, the Municipal Building of this municipality was completely burned by the Japanese Forces during their occupation of this town; Whereas, the present seat of the municipal government is very inadequate containing less than 400 square meters and located at the top of a hill which could not provide for a suitable ground for town plaza, playground and a market place, hence, improvement and beautification of this town are impossible; Whereas, because of the aforementioned conditions of its site, this town has never been improved although it had been established in its present seat for more than 100 years before the destruction of the municipal building by the enemy, and as a matter of fact there are actually 14 small houses found in the whole Poblacion." Thus, the Municipal Council decided to hold a convention at Salvacion, Buenavista, and Iloilo for the purpose of selecting a new town site as per Resolution No. 5, series of 1948. The result of the convention for the selection of the new town site composed of 96 delegates representing the 33 barrios of Buenavista, 75 voted for Sitio Calingao, Salvacion; five (5) voted for Sto. Rosario; two (2) voted for Sitio Igbuyo, Tastasan; five (5) voted for Poblacion the present site and nine (9) abstained from voting.

With the result of the said convention, the Municipal Council on March 16, 1948 session passed Resolution No. 15 series of 1948 on motion of Mr. Apolonio Sandoval seconded by Mr. Luis Germina, Sr. and unanimously approved, recommending approval for the Provincial Board of Iloilo for the transfer of the seat of the municipal government from the present site (Poblacion) to Sitio Calingao, Salvacion. Whereas, Municipal Council Resolution 15 series of 1948 was approved by the Provincial Board of Iloilo as per its 1st endorsement on April 22, 1948.

The Municipal Council on their January 6, 1949 session approved Resolution No. 1 series of 1949 Requesting the District Engineer to undertake the survey of the new town site.

In January 1949, the Municipal Council passed a resolution requesting the President of the Philippines to approve the transfer. The request was granted and by the virtue of Executive Order No. 406 dated February 1951 signed by Pres. Elpidio Quirino the town site was transferred to Sitio Calingao now Poblacion.

The lot for the new town site was donated by Former Vice President Fernando H. Lopez with an area of more or less seven (7) hectares which took effect in 1967 during the incumbency of Mayor Abelardo Javellana.

On February 16,1951 the Municipal Council in the temporary building at Salvacion approved the transfer of the seat of the municipal government to Sitio Calingao Salvacion as embodied in Executive Order No.406 dated February 7,1951 of President Elpidio Quirino. This authorization was accepted as motioned by Mr. Cirilo Fernandez seconded by Mr. Apolonio Sandoval through Resolution No.16 series of 1951. Further, this was affirmed by the Letter from the Technical Assistant and Chief, General Affairs Division acknowledging receipt of Resolution No.16 series of 1951 regarding the approval for the transfer of the seat of the municipal government to Sitio Calingao by President Elpidio Quirino.

Further, to affect the transfer, Mr. Cirilo Fernandez made a motion and was seconded by Mr. Asterio Eñano to change the name of Poblacion to Daan Banwa and that of Salvacion to Poblacion as per Municipal Resolution No. 32 series of 1951.

Ordinance No. 4 series of 1952 on the motion of Vice Mayor Mateo Auayan, seconded by Councilor, Ernesto Natividad imposed a municipal license tax on cement factory. It required any person, company or corporation desiring to engage in the business of manufacturing cement within the jurisdiction of this municipality before effecting said business, shall obtain a permit from the Municipal Mayor and to pay the Municipal Treasurer an annual municipal license tax of Php 5,000.00 payable quarterly.

Municipal Resolution 36, series of 1952 proposed to acquire two (2) lots in barrio Sto. Rosario described as: 1) "A parcel of commercial land owned by Mr. Jose Nava, situated in barrio Sto. Rosario, Buenavista, Iloilo, with an area of 270 square meters, valued at Php 320.00, Lot. No. 12 bounded on the North and East by Provincial Road; South by lot of Eugenio Guilaran; and West by Daliran Cave"; 2 "A parcel of residential, forest and coconut land owned by John Bordman Lime Factory, Ltd. situated at barrio Sto. Rosario, Buenavista, Iloilo, with an area of 16,532 square meters, assessed at Php500.00 under Tax Declaration No. 352, Assessor's Lot No.14."

On the motion of Jose Sideño, seconded by Luis Germina, Sr. an appropriation in the sum of Php 50.00 from the unappropriated balance of General Fund for the purchase of a house of mixed materials owned by Mateo Auayan situated at the wharf in barrio Sto. Rosario of this municipality is used as the police station.

Resolution No. 51, series of 1952 passed on June 16,1952 during the Municipal Council Regular Session requested the owners, operators or managers of the land and water transportation operating in this municipality to charge only one-half fare to all students who are bonafide residents of this municipality as a response to the letter of the Buenavista Students' Association led by Rizalino A. Beltran submitted to the Municipal Council through Manuel Eñano, of which after due deliberation Ernesto Natividad motioned and seconded by Jose Sideño, which the council unanimously approved.

Resolution No. 56, series of 1952 requested Hon. Pascual Espinosa, Congressman 2nd District of Iloilo province, to secure an allotment from the war damage aid for the reconstruction of school buildings from War Damage Commission.

On November 17, 1952, Resolution No. 100 series of 1952 during the Regular Session, requested the Hon. Secretary of the Department of Public Works and Communications, that in the event that the radio-telegraphs station is removed from Gigantes Island it would be transferred to the municipality of Buenavista.

In the year 1961, General Douglas MacArthur made his sentimental journey to Iloilo City. Buenavista, Guimaras is very memorable to him having been assigned in Camp Jossman at Supang, Buenavista right after his graduation from the Military Academy.



General McArthur in his 1961 sentimental journey to Iloilo
(Picture courtesy of Interesting Facts about West Visayas by
Rex Salvilla)



Picture of Gen. Douglas from the collection
of FernandoC Lopez Foundation

In 1972-1976 Martial Law Regime was imposed by the late President Ferdinand Marcos. Election during this time was done by block voting meaning that the vote of Mayor was the vote of all candidates in a particular party. The Kilusang Bagong Lipunan (KBL) party dominated the government power. The constitution in 1972 abolished the bicameral form of government, and a unicameral system was in full force which was reinforced by the Presidential decree in the promulgation of enabling laws governed by the President, Prime minister and cabinet Minister until the EDSA Revolution in 1986.

1986 The freedom constitution

Right after the EDSA revolt, all the incumbent government officials were considered resigned; thus, the DILG Secretary as alter ego of the President has to appoint government officials.

Buenavista after EDSA

Despite controversies in the appointment of Officers In-Charge (OICs) in all levels of bureaucracy all over the country, the municipality experienced a smooth transfer of leadership. On August 15, 1986, outgoing Mayor Abelardo D. Javellana, turned-over the stewardship of the town to Rubin C. Ferrer, the incumbent Vice Mayor, and then Mayor Abelardo Javellana was appointed OIC Governor of the Sub-Province of Guimaras and OIC Mayor Rubin G. Ferrer served for more than a year (Pendon, 1985).

The year 1987 was considered as the Cory Aquino Administration. The ratification of the Freedom Constitution restored democracy and lifted Martial Law. The first local election on February 2, 1988 was held, and Rubin Ferrer was elected as Mayor.

In April 08, 1993, the Sangguniang Bayan of Buenavista approved a resolution requesting Hon. Albertito Lopez to create another municipality in the Province of Guimaras for effective delivery of services to the people in far-flung barangays of Jordan and Buenavista. With the great concern of Albertito Lopez, he responded positively to Resolution No. 77, series of 1993 and introduced the House Bill 7795, an Act creating San Lorenzo resulting to the reduction of an area of Buenavista from 15,384 hectares to 12,826 covering the territorial jurisdiction of Gaban, Cabungahan, M.Chavez, Suclaran and San Enrique.

President Fidel V. Ramos marked the historic event in signing Bill 7795 into law (R.A. 7897) for the people of San Lorenzo on February 20, 1995. Honorable Arsenio B. Zambrano the number one councilor of Buenavista during the May 11, 1995 election was appointed Mayor of San Lorenzo the newly created municipality and made a temporary town hall at the Barangay hall of M. Chavez taken from Buenavista. On July 25, 1995 Buenavista shared some of its territory of Lebas, Gaban, Cabungahan, Suclaran and M.Chavez (Paos) to create the municipality of San Lorenzo.

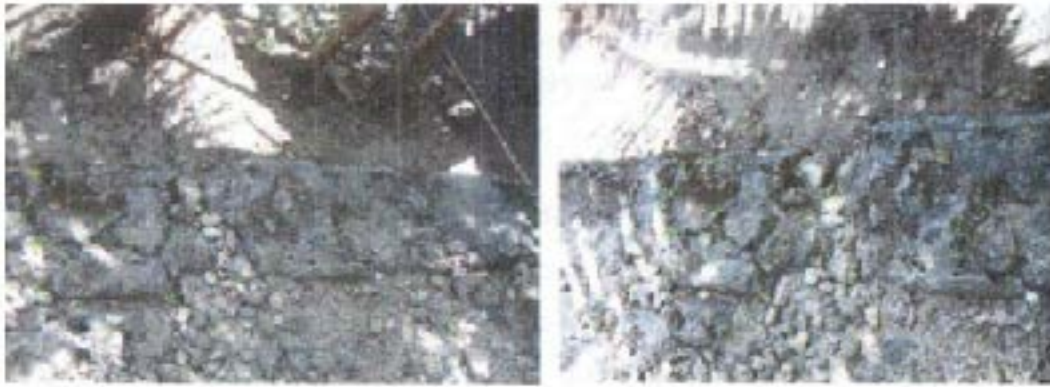
The Local Government Code allowed only (8) eight members of the municipal council but for the period of four (4) months, 10 councilors and two (2) representatives from ABC Federation and Sangguniang Kabataan Federation composed the Sangguniang Bayan of Buenavista. Hon. Arsenio Zambrano left Buenavista to serve the Newly born baby San Lorenzo in 1995 while the two councilors Jimmy Gajo and Rolando Gananan remained for 36 months and preferred to serve Buenavista.

The municipal buildings of Buenavista from Old Poblacion to the present location

The municipal town hall in the Old Poblacion was an elevated structure gleaned from the ruins of the building with a "terasa" or terrace where one could see the beautiful view of Guimaras strait. According to stories, the ground structure served as the prison cell during that time for those who committed crimes against the government. This building was presumably constructed in 1881.



Prior to the transfer of the seat of government of Buenavista from Daan Banwa to New Poblacion the municipal officials have their office at Mr. Roy Davis' house. The ruins of the house are still found at its present location as shown on this picture. This house is just opposite the present site of John Bordman Lime Factory in Salvacion, Buenavista.



The post and cemented remains of Mr. Davis' house (A & B) in Salvacion, Buenavista which served as the temporary Municipal Building in 1951 prior to the construction of the Municipal Building in New Poblacion, Buenavista. C is the present house where the old house of the Davis' was located. This is just opposite the John Bordman Lime Factory in Salvacion, Buenavista.



The wooden municipal building was constructed in the site of the present children's park in a place where the marker of the Buenavista Balikbayan is located. This was the first municipal building in the new town site after the approval of the resolution by President Elpidio Quirino in Feb. 1951.



The Municipal officials of Buenavista with their background, the Old Wooden Buenavista Municipal Hall constructed right after the transfer of the seat of government from Old Poblacion to Sitio Calingao, Salvacion (1951)



The present children's Park was the site of the old town hall. The circular base of this structure was the remains of the first town hall in New Poblacion, Buenavista.

SALIENT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Early Names

The early name of Buenavista as seen in the ancient map of Panay and Western Visayas prior to the arrival of Spaniards in the country cannot be separated from the early names given to Guimaras because it was collectively called in the old name of the island which is either Himaraos, Ymaraos, Himal-us, Guimaraes, etc. Gonzalo Ronquillo de Peñaloza was struck by the beautiful scenery as early as 1581. The Island is rich in limestone and has excellent hunting and fishing grounds. No account can pinpoint that these old names refer to the different municipalities in the island, or it mean only a certain place. But in the account of Mrs. Adoracion Alzate, the old name of Buenavista was Tilad that means valley but, it was changed to Buenavista when one Spanish Gobernadorcillo was struck by the beautiful view and he exclaimed "Buen Vista" or good view.

The old name of Buenavista in 1569 was Nayup. There are some write ups which referred to as Navalas to a small settlement in Himal-us, with San Pedro Apostol as its patron saint; while Jordan was called Nabilhan with St. John the Baptist as titular saint; and Igang or Nueva Valencia with Sta. Ana as the patron saint.

The first Augustinian ministers who visited these settlements were Fr. Diego Maza and Fr. Benito Lamas.

During the Spanish time Navalas, was the first municipio created by the Spanish government (between 1740-1750 more or less), followed by Nagaba (Jordan) and the last was Tilad now Buenavista.

In 1901-1902, former Sen. Teofisto Guingona, Sr. the father of former Vice President Teofisto Guingona, Jr. became the first Municipal Treasurer of Nabalas (Navalas) and later became the Municipal President.

Tilad was created in 1854 with the seat of government in the Old Poblacion but after the war between the Spaniards and the Americans in 1903, these three (3) towns were fused into one town with Buenavista as the capital and the other three (3) towns made as "arrabal" or outskirts of a town.

- In 1918, Jordan separated from Buenavista and in 1941, Nueva Valencia followed suit.
- As early as 1859, Buenavista was already visited by important persons such as Sir John Bowring, the British governor of Hongkong and Mr. Dean Worcester, who came in 1877. Some people who were considered as national figures who visited the place particularly the late Jaime Cardinal Sin among others.
- Supang housed the well - known Camp Jossman, an American installation in the island and the famous Gen Douglas MacArthur was part of the corps of engineer who established the more or less seven (7) km road from Sto. Rosario to Supang. However, the remains of Camp Jossman are not located where the present marker of MacArthur's Headquarters is located, rather it is found near the Barangay hall of Supang and the surrounding areas as shown in figure 2 (the recon structured map of Camp Jossman).

- During the Japanese Occupation, Buenavistahanons had fought hard just to liberate the town that happened in 1945 after four (4) years of struggle. The list of those who fought and died in the war can be found in the Heroes Park of Buenavista.
- Camp Jossman was a camp complete with facilities such as hospital, canteen/bar, bowling alley, tennis court, cemetery and the target range known as Punta Blanco.

Economics

- Buenavista was the place for boat construction by Nicholas Loney, who revolutionized the sugar industry in Western Visayas. Their boats were called "lorchas" patterned from the former Brixham trawler of Devonshire, the place of Nicholas Loney in England.
- The limestone of Buenavista was used in the production of sugar in Negros and Iloilo, and its production started as early as 18th century. The witness of this industry was the John Bordman Lime Factory considered as the oldest lime factory located at Salvacion, Buenavista, Guimaras.E
- The first privately owned cement factory was established in 1949 at Getulio, Buenavista known as the Philippine Panay Cement Factory owned by the Lopez family, but it was closed in 1976 due to labor disputes.
- Two (2) multinational organizations had put up their businesses in Buenavista, the AFC Agribusiness Corp (AAC), a subsidiary of Atlas Fertilizer Corporation, which pioneered aseptic technique of producing processed fruit puree, dried fruits and juices/nectars such as mango, papaya, passion fruit, guayabano and guava. The plant has the capacity of 20 tons raw materials per day. The other one is the Oro Verde Holding and Development Corporation with 240 hectares farm located at Piña, Buenavista, Guimaras.
- The famous, single proprietorship processing business named McNester Food Products is owned by Mrs. Rebecca Tubongbanua, who produces dried mango, mango puree, mango ketchup, mango polvoron and many others is located at San Isidro, Buenavista. Her business started only as a kitchen scale fruit processing project until it reached its present stature. McNester's Products are gaining reputation all over the country and even in other countries outside of the Philippines.
- Buenavista has evolved from a rural municipality to a prosperous one with available services such as hospital, medical center, water factory, pension house, in-land and beach resorts, computer shops with internet facilities, etc.

Education

- In Buenavista, the first religious organization was the Roman Catholic Church established together with the establishment of the government earlier than 1844.
- The Iglesia Filipina Independiente (IFI) was founded in 1904 at Sto. Rosario, Buenavista with Mr.Federico "Tiyong Ikong" Zaragoza as the founding member.
- The Seventh Day Adventist had started preaching and teaching among the Buenavistahanons in 1928 - 1930 when they put up the West Visayan Academy at Banogon Hill, Salvacion, Buenavista, the present site of Good Shepherd Fold Academy.
- The oldest Baptist church in Buenavista is the East Valencia Fundamental Baptist Church founded in 1928 at East Valencia, Buenavista, Guimaras.

Miscellaneous Facts

- Guimaras is the source of “tabreya” or stone tablets for the construction of Miag-ao Church.
- of the entire town in West Visayas, only Buenavista had a folksong of its own entitled, “Sa Banua sang Buenavista May Tatlo ka Dalaga.”
- The Roca Encantada in Navalas was already the place of social events by the elite young men and women for Iloilo and Bacolod as early as 1910.
- Navalas as the oldest municipio had a school called “prevada” (private) run by the priests. The first secondary school in Buenavista was the West Visayan Academy of the Seventh Day Adventist.
- Only in Buenavista where one can find an orphanage, the Good Shepherd’s Fold Academy (GSFA) which continues to offer its services to the homeless children of Buenavista and the rest of Guimaras province. GSFA likewise had the first and only radio station called DYVS (Voice of salvation) which became operational from 1963-1976. Due to the high cost of maintaining this station, it was transferred to Negros Occidental and still continues to operate up to this time and still carries its old name DYVS.
- The first privately owned cement factory was found in Buenavista, founded by Don Eugenio Lopez. The cement factory was called “Philippine Portland Cement Factory” Getulio, Buenavista, Guimaras.
- A molasses installation was established in Dagsaan, Buenavista in 1960. It was owned by the Allied Overseas Trading Company Incorporated.

Legend of 36 Barangays

- The 36 barangays of Buenavista had their individual stories retold orally by the old folks of the respective communities. These stories tell how these barangays were given their present names which symbolize their way of life, the things around them and other activities related to their day to day existence.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the aforementioned findings, the following are the recommendations:

1. Since the Municipality had already made its centennial celebration just recently, a move to rectify it should be done since Buenavista is already 166 years since its establishment.
2. The marker for the MacArthur Camp, Camp Jossman should be transferred near the area where the actual camp was located as evidenced by the remains of Camp Jossman.
3. Carbon dating should be done if financial resources would warrant on the old church at the Old Poblacion so that the years as written by some early historians would be confirmed or negated.
4. A municipal ordinance should be passed creating a Historical Commission to protect and preserve the artifacts that the Municipality have, for the future generation of the Municipality and as part of its cultural heritage. These artifacts should include but would not limit only to:
 - a. Good Shepherd Fold Academy
 - b. Old Bell of Sto. Rosario
 - c. Old Bell of Navalas
 - d. The ruins of Old church in Old Poblacion and the old municipal building in the same barangay
 - e. The ruins/remains of Camp Jossman in Supang, Buenavista
 - f. Navalas Church and belfry
 - g. The belfry of Navalas church
 - h. Roca Encantada and other old houses in Navalas
 - i. The Punta Blanco Target Range

This committee could make necessary representations with the National Historical Commission for the recognition of the landmarks as part of the national history of the country. Likewise, if the local government could buy those properties like the American tennis court in Supang, Buenavista the better for the municipality because it might be sold by the present owners and will be removed by the new owners having no knowledge about the significance of such structures.

5. These landmarks be provided with markers and be part of the tourist attractions of the Municipality by creating tour packages to visit these places. Part of the proceeds from the income of tour packages should be plowed back for the preservation efforts for the landmarks.
6. Miniature structures at Camp Jossman be established as part of the tourist attractions of the Municipality using the artifacts found at Supang, Buenavista as guide in the re-establishments of such structures.
7. A marker should be placed or installed in Cansilayan Elementary School for 1st Lt. Salvador Militante, who gave his life for the people of Buenavista. This is where he was burned alive by the Japanese soldiers.
8. These historical facts of Buenavista be included as part of the instructional materials of the elementary and secondary schools in Buenavista and even in the whole Guimaras so that the youth will have an idea of the historical beginnings of this Municipality.

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2. As narrated by Rosita Hiponia, 83 yrs old. The Oldest resident of Brgy. San Miguel, Buenavista, Guimaras
3. Mrs. Fidela Sotero as interviewed by Mr. Pablito Esmaya.
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7. Lucia Fernandez-Brgy. McLain, Buenavista, Guimaras
8. Mr. Laureano Pauchano-Brgy. Mabini, Buenavista
9. Juanita Delgado-Rizal, Buenavista, Guimaras
10. Clarita Hiponia- 89 years old - Navalas, Buenavista,Guimaras
11. Francesca Manuel - 90 years old, Navalas, Buenavista, Guimaras
12. Victor M. Sinfuego- retired Principal (BSE, AB Pol Sci), Getulio, Buenavista, Guimaras