

VALENCIA'S CULTURAL HERITAGE AND HISTORY

Submitted by:
Valencia Bukidnon Historical and Cultural Society

"For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope."

- *Romans 15:4 (ESV)*

There is an old saying that says, "*Ang dili kahibalo molingi sa iyang giagian, dili gyod kaabot sa iyang paingnan.*" This is a reminder that one has to be thankful for one's past. For Christians, the Bible is also clear on the importance of lessons of the past as written in the hearts and minds of the people during Christ's time. This is the importance of history and culture in planning a future.

Article 2 Section 17 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution states that "the State shall give priority to education, science and technology, arts, culture, and sports to foster patriotism and nationalism, accelerate social progress, and promote total human liberation and development". This is the Constitutional mandate for including culture in developmental considerations.

A people must recognize its roots, that is, their cultural heritage. Without being aware of its cultural heritage, a place and its people cannot define itself. Without allocating time, talent, and resources for cultural and historical purposes a people will be lost. As such, allocating resources for cultural reasons should be also be reflected in the government's land use plan.

The idea of culture being also a necessary consideration for human development cuts across the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in September 2015. This agenda, aimed at "Transforming Our World", includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 specific targets. The Philippines is a signatory to this agenda. One specific target in Goal 4, Quality Education, states that "to promote sustainable development, learners must acquire the knowledge and skills needed for global citizenship and the appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development".

This implies that cultural considerations are

not only important for quality education but for sustainable development as well. In Goal 11, which aims to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable, it specifies that there is a need to strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage. To achieve the SDGs for Valencia City, its culture and cultural heritage must also be recognized, respected, and safeguarded among others in the overall plan for sustainable human and community development.



Valencia has nothing much left of its physical inheritance to show its old tangible cultural heritage. The old plaza, for example, has been converted from an old plot of the Guaans around a large *balite*¹ tree, first used as a playground for tribal children from before the

1 This plant of the *Ficus* species is apparently indigenous to the Philippines. It is also otherwise known as "strangler plants". It starts as an air plant which may land on a plant that will serve as its host for a while. It then starts to grow hanging roots. Once the roots reach the ground, it starts to grow into a tree around the host plant, eventually suffocating it. One belief in Valencia is that where there is a *balite* tree, there is water. True enough, in this piece of Guaan land, potable water was pumped out through an artesian well within that piece of land in a corner along Sayre Highway and T.N. Pepito St., just across the Roman Catholic Church. The artesian well was gone by the early 70's, more than a decade after the *balite* was felled down, and the artesian well structure was converted into a large pot to serve as a marker for the old water source. The same marker is now also destroyed and lost.

war, to something like a half-playground, half community area becoming a flea market every Sunday, later becoming a real marketplace. The only structures built on it were an artesian well, most probably built as part of the American preparations, and the Puericulture Center, equivalent to a barangay health clinic in the 1950's. In the 1960's, this Guaan land became Plaza Rizal with a multipurpose stage and a basketball court. In the 1990's a skating rink was added, and Rizal Monument in between the rink and the basketball court. Sometime in 2018 it became this modern plaza with a water fountain above a dug-out parking area.

The old Puericulture Center became the Municipal Health Center built in 1961 on a lot donated by Mr. Angeles V. Selorio². However, although the old structure may still be standing, it has now become unrecognizable due to the many revisions and additions into the building as well as having new buildings built alongside it which eclipsed the old building. The City Health Office of Valencia, has been transferred to the New Terminal Compound.

There were only two prominent churches in Valencia before it became a town. The Roman Catholic Church, which was just a small chapel

2

A settler from Aklan who arrived in Valencia sometime in 1937 alone. He left his wife and children in Aklan and only was able to collect them after the Second World War.



*Valencia's first gas station
Photo courtesy of Ms. Leontima P. La Viña*

built in 1892³, and the Valencia Baptist Church⁴ built sometime after the war. Both of these churches have since been renovated and no

³ Martin, Juan. S. J. (1892) "Cartas de los Misioneros de la Compañía de Jesus en Filipinas", p 516. Retrieved from <https://archive.org/details/cartasdelospadresjesus>. 20 November 2020.

⁴

The establishment of this church was spearheaded by Mr. Angeles V. Selorio, a pioneering settler who arrived in Valencia from Aklan sometime in 1937. He allocated this piece of land along Sayre Highway for this church. He also donated another piece of land for the road needed to connect Sayre Highway to the old Pulangi Bridge when it was constructed in the late 1950's. It later became part of the provincial road that connects Valencia to San Fernando, Bukidnon.

longer reflect their original building structure, particularly the Roman Catholic Church which did not only change from a small chapel into its cathedral-like presence since the turn of the 21st century but also changed its orientation and location, utilizing now what used to be the Parish Office and priest's lodgings above it. This Parish Office was also utilized as the Administration Office for the San Agustin High School (SAHS), the first secondary school in Valencia, established in 1960 by the then parish

priest, Rev. Fr. Manlio Caroselli, S.J.⁵

Further, only stumps of the old Pulangi Bridge can be seen today because it was destroyed by Typhoon Vinta in December of 2017. This bridge, first constructed in 1955⁶, and inaugurated in 1961 played a pivotal role in Valencia becoming a town. This opened up trade and traffic from the lowlands of Valencia, increasing its productivity. This became the origin of the Valencia sobriquet "City of Golden Harvest"

Before the bridge was constructed, Valencia commerce relied on the gakit, a makeshift bamboo raft, used by the lumad population to navigate Pulangi River from Namnam (now the municipality of San Fernando, Bukidnon) and carry their goods from the north and east side of the Pulangi River to the south and west side of this river and made the west bank of the river as a trading area, that stretch between where the

5 This is the forerunner of San Agustin Institute of Technology (SAIT). In 1963, The SAHS occupied a lot donated by Mr. Guillermo and Mrs. Bonifacia Laviña (nee Eduave), three blocks away from the Sayre highway going southwest. It then offered technical/vocational education, a forerunner of today's senior high curriculum, and changed its name to San Agustin Technical Institute (SATI). Later, when SATI decided to offer college courses, particularly the BS in Industrial Education, the school became Saint Augustin Institute of Technology (SAIT). The old automotive shop still remains standing among all the SAHS/SATI earlier building which could be declared one of Valencia's tangible cultural icons.

6

From the accounts of Mrs. Leontina P. La Viña who arrived in Valencia as a 17- year old lass from Bacolod City in 1950. She said that the foundations of the bridge was first laid down a few meters downstream from where the stumps are located now but the great flood on Christmas Eve in that year (1955) washed everything out prompting the construction team to transfer it at the present site.

first foundation was laid and where the bridge finally stood. Hence, making the gakit vital to the economy of Valencia at the time.

Aside from this, in the 1940's, the entrepreneurial Mr. Uldarico M. Valmorida⁷, Sr., constructed a gakit that can go sideways, navigating to and from the west and east banks of Pulangi River. Instead of the gakit only going from Namnam to Valencia, it went from Pinatilan, now a barangay of Valencia from the east bank, to Poblacion, Valencia on the west bank. Although still limited, this gakit ferry trip, at ten centavos per trip, served the transportation needs of the Valencia residents from the vast Valencia plains and improved commerce between the lowland people and the people residing in the uplands, improving at the time the exchange of goods and services, promoted social contact among its people, and allowed the children from the east bank to attend school which were constructed beyond the west bank.

Later, Mr. Franciso I. Langub⁸ operated another

7 Mr. Uldarico Motilla Vakmorida, Sr (1909-1986), who arrived in Valencia sometime in the early 1920's, was the first recognized finiente del barrio (barrio lieutenant, the rank of the barrio chief), when Valencia became a barrio around the time Bukidnon became a province.

8 Mr. Francisco I. Langub arrived in Valencia from Bato, Leyte, in 1937 as a supervisor in the then ongoing construction of Route 3 highway, now known as Sayre Highway. He was elected into the Malaybalay Council when Valencia became a barangay in the early 1950's. He also was elected to the Valencia Council when Valencia became a town.

“gakit ferry” near where the old bridge was constructed, complete with a franchise and license to operate although in 1952, when Mr. Langub entered public service, he sold this gakit ferry to a young entrepreneurial couple, Mr. and Mrs. Juanito K. La Viña⁹, who operated this gakit until 1961 when the bridge was made operational, maintaining the flow of goods and people from the east bank to the west bank during the years without the bridge, keeping the people of Valencia economically growing even then. This makes the “gakit” not only a true cultural icon and a historical reality of Valencia, but also a symbol of the grit, innovativeness, and entrepreneurial spirit that prevailed in the hearts of the pioneering Valencia settlers.

The only significant private buildings from generations past are the Tang residence¹⁰ in the corner of Sayre Highway and Andres Bonifacio Street, and the Namuag residence along the same Sayre Highway, next to the Catholic Church, just ahead of the Tang residence but on the eastern side of Sayre Highway, if one is going from the southern part of Bukidnon to Cagayan de Oro City. Most houses were

⁹ This couple both arrived in Valencia in 1950 within months of each other, he, as a young man of 21 years old and she as a young lass of 17. They married on 9 April 1951.

¹⁰ Although this house has been renovated a few times over the years, its basic structure and materials remains the same and still stands where it was first constructed way back in the early 1900's. It is just across the highway from where a Jollibee building now stands, which used to be the old residence and office of former Valencia town councilor Saturnino Alfonso.

built this way in the 1960's and such houses show that Valencia residents were a little well-off when Valencia became a town. The Tang residence, specifically, was the landmark house even before World War II. The house itself must have been constructed in the early 1930's. It was also the hub of commerce especially just after the War until Valencia became a town, being the only store in that area. The Namuag residence was also built just around the time when Valencia became a town¹¹.

Over in the barangays, there are still old houses that will give the present generation an idea of how the early Valencia people lived. There is the Bangis¹² residence built sometime in the early 1960's along the provincial road connecting Valencia City to San Fernando, Bukidnon, now part of barangay Batangan. In Barangay Sinabuagan, there is the Caluya residence, built by an Ilocano couple¹³ who arrived in Valencia in 1951. These houses reflect not only the architecture of their day, including the materials used in building these houses but also they reflect the generous attitude of

¹¹ Originally owned by spouses Panfilo Namuag and Carmen Guibelondo, from Bohol and from Misamis Oriental, respectively.

¹² Originally owned by Mr. and Mrs. Anecito Bangis, a couple from Negros.

¹³ Marcelo A. Caluya and Apolinaria G. Caluya from Vintar, Ilocos Sur, who arrived in Valencia as a couple in 1951. There is an older house in Kawayanon, now Barangay Vintar of Valencia City, but this house in Sinabuagan has served more as their business office and at the same time as a community center where people meet, settlers and *lumad* alike.

the owners because these were also houses with community significance being community centers in those days where people gather to discuss issues and needs of the day.



The tangible cultural remnants aptly introduce the intangible but prevailing spirit that marked the foundation of Valencia as a people. In fact, while the tangible cultural markers that defined the foundations of the community are already lost, there are clear indications from the historical accounts of how this intangible culture became the basis of the collective decisions that pushed the small settlement in the late 1890's to become a happy fiercely independent and "hamugaway" town in 1961, serving as the center of trade and commerce in the province of Bukidnon, becoming the most populous among all cities and municipalities in Bukidnon after 50 years, and the most populous inland/landlocked city in Mindanao, the third largest city in Northern Mindanao in terms of population, after Cagayan de Oro and Iligan City, respectively¹⁴.

Perhaps the best indicator of the intangible

¹⁴ Wikipedia. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Valencia, Bukidnon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Valencia,_Bukidnon) 02 April 2021.

culture of Valencia is its becoming a city within forty years of its founding as a town. Not only did it take only 40 years for Valencia to become a city from its humble 4th class municipality beginnings, despite the horrors of martial law, particularly during the period 1978-1984, and the tragic assassination of its beloved mayor, Mayor Absalon P. Catarata, in 1988, where Valencia staged the longest and most attended funeral march in the history of Valencia, life has been pretty hamugaway for Valencia's population even then¹⁵.

This achievement has nothing to do with Valencia people being rich or most of them being educated, rather it reflects the founding values of the pioneering people, the reason generations of Valencia people became rich and educated. Rather, it had everything to do with the values the community kept and allowed to prevail in those days, values such as grit, kinship, honesty, hard work, gratitude, with a high dose of individuality and deep spirituality, values which they also found in their early leaders.

One of the best examples that shows the success of the principles of culture the people of Valencia have chosen to observe was the election for tinylene del barrio in 1959¹⁶. It was

¹⁵ Bojo, A. C. (2 July 2020). "Bukidnon's Valencia City: The Diversity Creating a Hamugaway Town". Mindanao Creative & Cultural Workers Group, Inc. Retrieved from <https://web.facebook.com/mccwgofficial2/posts/> on 20 November 2020.

¹⁶ From the accounts of Mr. Lauro P. Torrepalma who was



*The old Tamay Lang Building in downtown Valencia
Photo courtesy of Ms. Leontima P. La Viña*

a contest between Victor Sagde, a lumad¹⁷ tribal leader at the time, and Guillermo Laviña, a dumagat from Leyte who settled and married

veritably "appointed" by the Valencia community as the barrio treasurer because he ran unopposed.

17 The terms lumad and dumagat were first used to distinguish between the settlers in Valencia. Dumagat refers to immigrants from beyond the sea while lumad refers to the pioneering tribes who settled first in Valencia.

into the Valencia community in the early 1900's later became a Deputy Governor of Southern Bukidnon when it became a province on March 10, 1917¹⁸.

The election was conducted open to the

18 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bukidnon> retrieved on 16 December 2020.

public in the public square, now called Plaza Rizal. According to various accounts, when the counting started, hurrays were heard punctuated by silence. The election resulted to a tie and Mr. Sagde and Mr. Laviña agreed to settle the tie with a toss coin. Mr. Laviña won but everyone was happy and satisfied with the results. When Mr. Laviña organized his office, he appointed the sub-tinyente del barrio of sitio Lumbo, Mr. Absalon P. Catarata, as his barangay secretary. This event greatly defined Valencia society immediately before it became a town.

Another example was when the place was organized into a town. Aside from the requirement for a bridge, there were also requirements for a market place and a municipal site. It should be noted that the Executive Order that would convert the barrio of Valencia into a town was signed by President Carlos P. Garcia on 11 October 1959 but it only came operational as municipality on 16 January 1961. In response to this need, Mr. Guillermo C. Laviña who was then the Barrio Captain of what is now Poblacion, Valencia donated more or less a hectare, more or less, of his land for the public market and asked his cousin, Mr. Justiniano Paloma to donate a part of his ranch land into the municipal site where the municipal building was erected in 1961 upon inauguration of the town. The petition for converting the barrio of Valencia into a town was filed and approved by the Malaybalay Municipal Council in 16 March

1954¹⁹.

During the 1959-1961 years, while Mr. Francisco I. Langub was busy organizing compliance to requirements, Mr. Teodoro N. Pepito²⁰, also organized the first cooperative in Valencia, the Farmers Cooperative for Marketing (FACOMA) which, by 1960 was able to put up a building for their purposes²¹ while Mr. Guillermo C. Laviña was also organizing Valencia government and Mrs. Bonifacio Eduave Laviña was also organizing the women's sector, particularly the Rural Improvement Club (RIC)²². Meanwhile, Fr. Manlio Caroselli was organizing a high school, the first it would in the town. As a result of the activities, donations kept pouring in, in terms of the people's time, talents, and treasures.

The historical development of Valencia shows

19 The petition was approved as a resolution on motion made by Mr. Esmeraldo A. Cudal, a councilor from Malaybalay, duly seconded by Mr. Francisco I. Langub, a councilor from Valencia.

20 Mr. Teodoro N. Pepito who arrived in Valencia in the early 1920's as a young agriculture graduate from the University of the Philippines as the ranch head of the Sanvictores Farms. He later married Ms. Rosario Demata Eduave, a native of Valencia, and settled in Valencia raising a family with 13 children.

21 This FACOMA building was the first seat of Valencia government. Since the ground breaking for the municipal building was held on 16 January 1961 as part of the inauguration of the town, the FACOMA building was utilized as the temporary seat of government, housing the Executive Offices, the Police Chief's Office and the prison cell.

22 There was also the Valencia Women's Club which was organized by many women including Mrs. Rosario E. Pepito, wife of the appointed mayor.

that the pioneering people have adopted the values of being fiercely independent but cooperative, being hardworking and entrepreneurial but honest and grateful, and being generous with an equal ability to enjoy family and friends. The Valencia community has always been known for great kinship among its people, no matter the tribe, most of them copying the attitude of the Bukidnons who welcomed them to Valencia. This can be reflected in the first set of appointed officials of Valencia who operated Valencia from 1961 to 1963 when Valencia was able to elect its first set of public officials in the local elections of November 1963.

The endorsed Valencia officials, then appointed by President Garcia included a Cebuano for a mayor Mr. Teodoro N. Pepito, a Boholano as vice mayor, Ernesto L. Garcia, and as councilors, one Ilonggo, Policarpo P. Valero, one Igorot, Robert Laoyan, one Waray, Jose P. Cajés, and Lorenzo Binayao, Melecio Tilanduca, and Marcelo Salintao from various indigenous tribes all over Valencia. With them were also appointed into office Mr. Maximo F. Saavedra (from Leyte) as municipal treasurer, Mr. Benjamin A. Belisario (from Abra) as municipal secretary, and Mr. Absalon P. Catarata (another Cebuano) as Chief of Police, who also organized a police force consisting of men from the tribes, like Mr. Dongogan, and from the early settlers like Mr. Norberto Vale. The national government

also then appointed Atty. Paterno T. Aurelio (an Ilocano) as municipal judge and Mr. Santiago V. Dablio (a lumad from Misamis Oriental) as the community development Officer.

Mr. Dablio promptly organized the 13 barangays assigned to Valencia upon its organization into a town and expanded it to the 31 barangays composing Valencia to date. When President Diosdado Macapagal won the national elections of 1961, he appointed Mr. Lucilo T. Alkuino (a war veteran from Leyte) as municipal mayor of Valencia²³.



Aside from the officially appointed leaders, the Valencia community can be said to have been founded by great leaders who were known not only for their personal discipline but also for their unassailable integrity and dedication to public good. First, as far back can be reconstructed, there was Sebastian Manangkila, known as Datu Mansintunan²⁴, the

²³ Valencia had two mayors in 1962 until the local election of 1963 where Mayor Teodoro N. Pepito became the first elected mayor of Valencia, Bukidnon.

²⁴ From the accounts of Francisco Bayagna, son of Faustino Bayagna, an adopted son of Datu mansintunan, who is known as the first visual artist of Valencia.

old village chieftain of Valencia in the late 1890's who first settled in Tagunokon²⁵, near the creek called Pangalibatohan²⁶. The community then didn't have a name for the place. However, as can be seen from Jesuit accounts as early as 1892, the place was already named Valencia by the Jesuit missionaries who came up to Bukidnon from the Jesuit House in Tagoloan.

Early American accounts like that of an American officer who explored Mindanao in 1902 mentioned a place called Balibatuan which geographically corresponds to Valencia²⁷ which might have been the old name for Valencia before the Jesuits came. In Higaonon language, "m" maybe interchanged with "b", so that Balibatuan may have been Malibatoan, a place where malibato trees were abundant. In those dates, Valencia was known for a rich

25 From the combined accounts of Mrs. Avelina Manangkila-Macaso and Mr. Francisco Bayagna during one of the meeting of the Valencia Bukidnon Historical and Cultural Society in 2013. Tagunokon is now a place called Hagkol in Valencia City.

26 Although this creek is now called Panlibatohan, assumed to be due to the many malibato trees which were abundant in the area in those days, its original Bukidnon name was Pangalibatuhan which means the place where the people make "pangali" (dig out food like frogs) under the rocks, according to the accounts of Mr. Francisco B. Bayagna and Ms. Carmeliana Manangkila Macaso. Since according to Mr. Telesforo Sungkit, the first and only so far Bukidnon novelist, the Bukidnon are not known to break up a root word nor would their language allow a letter in the root word disappear from the derived word. So if the root word was malibato, the natives would have named the place Malibatohan.

27 Annual Reports of the War Department by United States War Dept (1902), <https://archive.org/details/annualreports>, retrieved on 23 September 2020, p 628.

population of malibato trees.

Datu Mansintunan was known for his wisdom and judicious management of his tribe, teaching them the proper ways of living a peaceful life. He adopted one member of the tribe, Faustino Bayagna, and trained him to be a tribal leader but when Valencia became recognized as a sitio of Mailag he was chosen as the representative to the council in Malaybalay when the civil government was organized with the coming of the Americans.

Datu Mansintunan's son Fortunato, known as Iyo Tatoy, became the next tribal chieftain, and Antonio, the son of Faustino Bayagna, who married into the Binalhay clan, followed Faustino into representing Mailag in the Malaybalay Council. It was Antonio who was able to secure the artesian well that drew out potable water for the residents of Valencia²⁸ and Mailag²⁹. The Mailag artesian well is still in use today while the Valencia artesian well did not anymore yield potable water about a decade after the balite tree near it was felled. The leadership style and example set by Datu Mansintunan's sons, adopted and biological, set the tone of leadership the first Valencia settlers were exposed to.

28 From the account of Mr. Francisco B. Bayagna, a member of the Valencia Bukidnon Historical and Cultural Society.

29 This account needs to be verified with the people of Mailag.

Although already known as Valencia in 1892, at least, Valencia was nothing but a cluster of houses which could not even afford a bell for its Catholic church or stubborn enough to refuse to secure a bell and the image of its patron saint³⁰ from the Tagoloan Parish Church, the reason why there was no mass for Christmas in its church that year³¹. This shows the independent spirit of the people of Valencia in 1892 but which was still observable when Valencia became a town in 1961. In addition, many activities were undertaken as a community, including trapping crocodiles complete with yells of joy and success³². This is just one example of how hardworking the original settlers in Valencia were in a social and collaborative way.

Thus, the rich cultural heritage of the City of Valencia can be gleaned from the collective temperament and achievement of its people,

30 It is not clear who decided that St. Augustine would be the patron saint of the Valencia Catholic Church but, according to the accounts of Mrs. Rebecca Manangkila Macaso-Oblad, the first image of the saint was brought to the church by Mr. Uldarico Montilla Valmorida, Sr. whose family may have arrived in Valencia in the early 1900's. Mr. Valmorida rose to become the first capitan del barrio of Valencia, sometime in the early of 1950's and became the first known "lolo ng bayan" because of his loving and respectful ways to the children of Valencia.

31 Vilaclara, Jose, S.J. (1982) "Cartas delos Misioneros de la Compañia de Jesus en Filipinas". Pages 523. Retrieved from <https://archive.org/details/cartasdelospadresjesus>, 20 November 2020.

32 Martin, Juan, S.J. (1892) ""Cartas delos Misioneros de la Compañia de Jesus en Filipinas". Page 516. Retrieved from <https://archive.org/details/cartasdelospadresjesus>, 20 November 2020.

and the values they hold, rather than from a collection of artifacts it may have had accumulated through the years. At the time of his death, for example, Mayor Absalon P. Catarata was the President of the Municipal Mayor's League of Region 10, when Region 10 yet included the provinces of Agusan del Norte, Agusan del Sur, and Surigao del Norte, in addition to the provinces of Bukidnon, Misamis Oriental, Misamis Occidental, and Camiguin, which are the provinces that comprise the present Region 10. Although there were protest marches organized by the Valencia youth organizations³³, it was a solemn, grave, and peaceful funeral.

However, while it may be true that in the previous decades Valencia relied heavily on intangible culture to define its backbone, it is equally true that the City is slowly awakening to a harvest of its tangible cultural heritage with the birth of the Valencia Bukidnon Historical and Cultural Society (VBHCS) in 2008. For example, on 16 January 1986, Mayor Absalon P. Catarata led Valencia in celebrating its 25th founding anniversary as a town, with a simple awarding program at the old historical plaza, on 16 January 2011, Mayor Leandro Jose H. Catarata and the VBHCS led the City in celebrating its Golden Jubilee with a gakit parade in Pulangui River. This Golden Jubilee and the work of the VBHCS started what we can be considered as a

33 This was led by Hector E. Bacolod.



*The old Tamay Lang Building in downtown Valencia
Photo courtesy of Ms. Leontima P. La Viña*

work for recognizing the foundational intangible culture heritage as well as the tangible cultural heritage of Valencia.

The earliest accounts found so far that mentions Valencia came from the notes of Carlos P. Bagonoc³⁴. The first one he was able to trace was a report of Fr. Juan Martin, SJ, dated 2 October 1892, writing from Tagoloan to his Superior de la Mision, R.P. Pablo Pastells³⁵. Apparently Fr. Martin was a Jesuit priest who

³⁴ This is another example of a simple Valencia resident contributing to the growth of Valencia. Carlos P. Bagonoc is a licensed Forester and a native son of Valencia whose father was given a large track of land in Valencia and Paitan (now a barangay of the municipality of Quezon, Bukidnon), like the other veterans who served during the Second World War.

³⁵ Martin, Juan. S.J. (1892) ""Cartas delos Misioneros de la Compañia de Jesus en Filipinas". Pages 515-517. Retrieved from <https://archive.org/details/cartasdelospadresjesus>. 20 November 2020.

was assigned to take a trip to the hinterlands of what is now the province of Bukidnon and, starting from Bugcaon, which he described as a town, he visited several places including Valencia, Sevilla (Mailag) and even to Linabo, Impasug-ong, and Tanculan (Manolo Fortich) to bless the cemeteries and asked the people to place a cross in each of them and a fence around the cemeteries to prevent animals from getting in³⁶.

Fr. Martin's report also claimed that he ordered a cross to be planted in each church. Since there is no other place called Valencia along this route described by Fr. Martin up to the present, this description could only be Valencia, Bukidnon which became a town on 16 January 1961.

In addition, Fr. Martin claimed that at one point, when he stayed in Valencia, and after getting up from a small rest during siesta, he heard loud noises, screeches, voices, he asked, amazed at the novelty (of the noise apparently), that was "Boaya, Pare, Boaya". He learned the people caught through a looped trap a crocodile 2 meters 70 centimeters long, something that (a) Father Sanches would have been proud exhibiting it at Ateneo Hall³⁷.

³⁶ As transduced by Raimundo Folch de los Santos a Filipino artist living in Valencia, Spain.

³⁷ Martin, Juan. S.J. (1892) "Cartas delos Misioneros de la Compañia de Jesus en Filipinas". Page 516. Retrieved from <https://archive.org/details/cartasdelospadresjesus>. 20 November 2020.

Further, Fr. Jose Vilaclara, another Jesuit who was sent as companion of Fr. Martin reported to their Superior of Mission in a letter from Tagoloan, dated 29 December 1892 that there were no festivities in Valencia (and other place called Lepanto) because they "did not deserve a feast for not having gone down to Tagoloan to look for their respective bells and statues of their patrons"³⁸. The fact that the Valencia church had no bell and statue for their patron saint was affirmed by another letter of Fr. Martin, dated 6 January 1893³⁹.

From these accounts, it can be said that, first, Valencia already existed as a known place in 1892 and there was already a church and a cemetery in it blessed by a Jesuit priest. Second, the place was already inhabited and the people were creative enough, being able to build a looped trap for at least a crocodile to be trapped in it, but judging from the admitted amazement of Fr. Martin, had been happy of their collective success to trap a crocodile. This description of Valencia and its people form part of its cultural heritage although even if the crocodiles were gone a few years after Valencia became a town, that collective creative spirit and hard work had been imbibed and passed on for years to come.

38 Vilaclara, Jose. S.J. (1982) "Cartas delos Misioneros de la Compañia de Jesus en Filipinas". Page 523. Retrieved from <https://archive.org/details/cartasdelospadresjesus>. 20 November 2020.

39 Ibid, p. 528.

Third, either the community was so poor that they could not get down to Tagoloan to get a bell and a statue for their patron Saint, or the people were content enough not to see the need for a church with a bell. This also means that the Roman Catholic faith of the early settlers was "inherited" directly from the Spanish Jesuit who may have baptized the place Valencia.

By May of 1893, another Jesuit, Fr. Llord, reported that the mission was firmly established at Sevilla (Mailag) with "four main towns of this mission of Sevilla which are Linabo, Oroquieta, Bugcaon and Calasungay" although he also reported that a convent was already built in Valencia established by one Fr. Heras but "for the churches of Sevilla, Valencia and Silay we need bells, candlesticks, crucifixes and patrons"⁴⁰. This perhaps is also the origin of why Valencia was only the sitio of Mailag (Sevilla) when people from other places started to settle in Valencia.

The lumad of Valencia consists of the Bukidnon and Higaonon tribes with some Moros, Tlandig, and Manobo tribes. The moros came from the south southwest area of Bukidnon, settling also along the southern most banks of the Pulangui River. Their presence around the Valencia area was also described by Fr. Martin to his letter

40 Llord, Ramon. S.J. (1892) "Cartas delos Misioneros de la Compañia de Jesus en Filipinas". Page 343. Retrieved from <https://archive.org/details/cartasdelospadresjesus>. 20 November 2020.



City of Valencia now

to his Jesuit superiors in Manila. The Tlandig and Manobo tribes may be the aborigines of Bukidnon. The Tlandig people were described by the Americans when they explored Bukidnon sometime in 1902⁴¹.

The Manobos have been described as the early inhabitants of Mindanao. Both the Bukidnons and the Higaonons came from the coastal areas

around Tagoloan who left the area in favor of the uplands. The Bukidnons, in particular, scaled the mountains and adopted the highlander's life to escape Spanish colonization of the area in the 1890's. They choose to embrace the highlands and the wilderness than stay as subjects of Spain⁴². When the Spanish missionaries did scale the mountains of the Bukidnons, they met with some resistance, with both aggression in

41 United States of War Department. (1902). "Annual Reports of the War Department". Retrieved from <https://archive.org/details/annualreportswardept>. p. 630.

42 From an interview with Ricardo Demata Eduave, Sr. (7 February 1933- 6 January 2018), Baptist minister and founding member of the Valencia Bukidnon Cultural and Historical Society.

some parts but with some cunning in some areas, for those who wanted a non-violent struggles. These peace-loving but fiercely independent Bukidnons and Higaonons may be the reason why Valencia had not developed during the Spanish and even American colonial days.

Among the Bukidnons and Higaonons in Valencia are the members of the Manangkila, Bayagna, Eduave, Guaan, Sagde, Lanayan clans, among others. As far as can be traced, the Lauga clan are descended from the Moros who intermarried with the Bukidnons⁴³. They kept and passed on the tradition of peace and fierce independence but great community spirit which the later immigrants observed and respected. For example, the Bukidnons were fond of family picnics, usually after harvest where they enjoy storytelling and instructing their young and honing their skills in hunting, mat-weaving, herb gathering and others⁴⁴. These traits described the intangible culture of early Valencia community.

The first dumagats⁴⁵ probably came with the

43 From an account of Victoriana Lauga Barrot (24 December 1932- 16 July 2019), founding member of the Valencia Bukidnon Cultural and Historical Society.

44 Ibid.

45 A *dumagal* is someone who comes from across the seas, usually a migrant, but who may have decided later to settle in the place for reason of marriage or livelihood or some other reason. Settlers are usually immigrants from somewhere within the country who made Valencia their home. This is opposed to the lumad or

Americans who explored Bukidnon after the Philippines declared Independence from the Spanish in 1896⁴⁶, among them Mr. Guillermo Laviña, from Leyte, who became Deputy Governor of the South when Bukidnon was declared by the Americans as a regular province in 1917 and the last Tinyente del Barrio of Valencia before Valencia became a town in 1961. The next wave of immigrants may be the teachers and other professionals who were sent to or volunteered to come to Bukidnon and decided to settle in Valencia either by marriage or by an opened opportunity.

Note:

The Valencia Bukidnon Historical and Cultural Society (VBHCS), as vanguards of Valencia's heritage and history, submitted this essay which asserts the importance of culture in shaping the city's future.

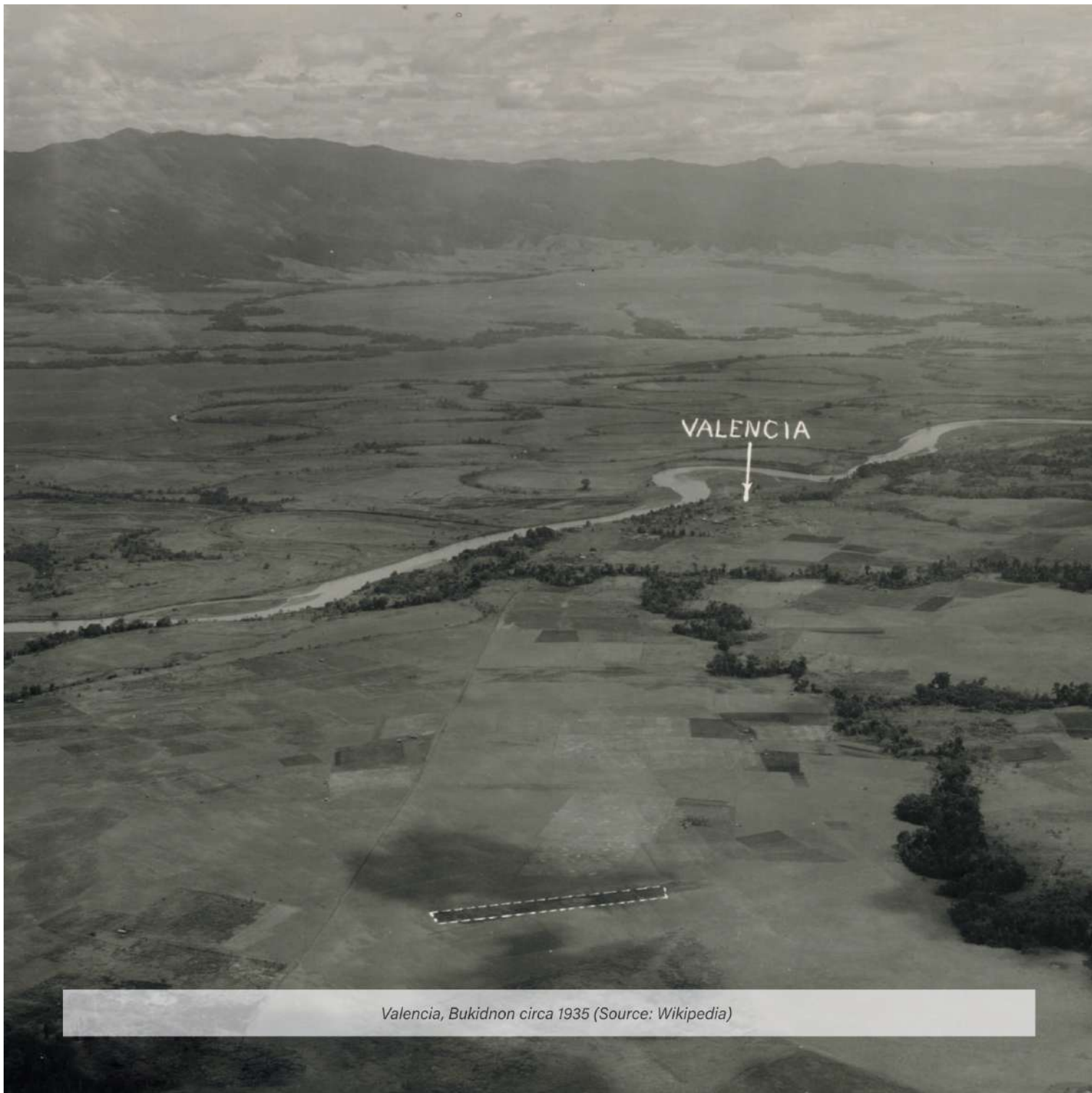
This work narrates Valencia's history, beautifully weaving together personal accounts of early settlers with works of missionary Jesuit priests, and relates how the early community's values like grit, kinship, honesty, hard work, gratitude and deep spirituality, shaped the bustling and progressive place that Valencia City has become.

*SEEDS would like to thank VBHCS through its President Ms. Leontina P. La Vina for allowing us to publish this essay which we titled "**Valencia's Cultural Heritage and History**".*

• *Editor-in-Chief*

the indigenous people whose family over a few generations have known no other place except Valencia.

46 United States of War Department. (1902). "Annual Reports of the War Department". Retrieved from <https://archive.org/details/annualreportswardept>, pp 588-589, on 20 November 2020.



Valencia, Bukidnon circa 1935 (Source: Wikipedia)