

PADUGO

In the town of San Rafael in the northern part of the province of Bulakan in the Philippines, there is a marker in front of the San Rafael Church. The marker refers to one of the town's three prized treasures, which are: history, tradition and faith in God. This particular marker refers to the town's wealth found in its history.

The marker states that on November 30, 1896, one of the bloodiest battles in the history of Bulakan took place in San Rafael, exactly where the church stood. The battle happened during the Philippine Revolution against Spain. The Filipino Katipuneros were led by a young general named Anacleto Enriquez with the nom de guerre of "Matang Lawin" (Hawk-eyed). The Spanish forces were under Lt. Col. Lopez Artiaga.

At the end of the battle, eight hundred Filipino revolutionaries including their leader General Enriquez, lay dead down to the last man with none ever surrendering to the superior force of the Spanish colonial government. The volume of blood spilled in the church reached the ankle ("hanggang bukong-bukong").

Anacleto Enriquez is one of the leading twelve provincial heroes of Bulacan, as mentioned

in a resolution of the provincial government. He is not known outside Bulakan.

He was born September 24, 1876 in the town of Bulakan, Bulakan, one of the oldest towns in the Philippines. His parents were Don Vicente Enriquez y de Jesus and Dona Petrona Sepulvida-Fernando y Gatmaitan. He and his brothers studied at the Ateneo Municipal de Manila. His best friend was fellow Atenean, neighbor, and gangmate Gregorio del Pilar. Like most Ateneans of his time, Anacleto idolized his upperclassman Dr. Jose Rizal, whom Anacleto had a chance to meet at Hotel del Oriente in Manila.

In the month of July 1896, Anacleto and his younger brother Vicente joined the Katipunan. Under orders from Katipunan Supremo Andres Bonifacio, Anacleto went to his hometown of Bulakan to organize the “Balangay Uliran”, together with co-founder Doroteo Karagdag. “Balangay Uliran” would merge with “Balangay Apuy” of Malolos to form the “Sangguniang Apuy”.

On August 27, 1896, the “Sangguniang Apuy” received orders from Supremo Bonifacio to rise up in arms. In the last years of their Bachillerato courses at the Ateneo, Anacleto and his brother Vicente abandoned their studies to fight for the freedom of their country.

On October 20, 1896, General Isidoro Torres, the head of the Revolutionary Forces in Bulakan, summoned Anacleto to Masukol, Paombong, Bulacan and appointed him second-in-command with the rank of General at the age of 20 years old. His brother Vicente headed the “Uliran” unit, with the rank of Colonel.

Anacleto and Vicente found out the consequences of their decision to fight Spain. The Spanish authorities marked Anacleto as Bulakan’s most dangerous military leader. Their sister Victoria was thrown into jail, their mother Petrona was jailed in Bilibid Manila.

The Philippine revolutionaries were ill-prepared for any type of war. They lacked arms, soldiers, training, technology, ammunition, information, experience and strategic savvy. On November 29, 1896, upon the orders of Gen. Torres, Anacleto moved his troops to Hacienda Buenavista (San Ildefonso). Finding Buenavista hard to defend, Anacleto decided to move to San Rafael in the early hours of November 30, 1896.

By seven in the morning, Anacleto’s forces were under the strongest artillery and infantry attack unleashed by the Spanish forces since the start of the revolutionary war. Either because all means of escape had been cut off or because they simply preferred death instead of surrender,

Anacleto and his men proceeded to the San Rafael Church for their last stand. At noontime, one of the largest military contingents ever mobilized by the Spanish authorities during the Philippine Revolution assaulted the church.

The Spanish forces (Infanterio and Guardia Civil) and the Katipuneros under General Enriquez engaged in hand-to-hand combat. When the smoke cleared, there was blood everywhere, in the sacristia, in the altar area, in the choir area. There were headless bodies, disemboweled bodies and bodyless heads. Intestines were all over with food in different stages of digestion. Blood was ankle-deep, the blood of the rich mixed with the blood of the poor. The blood of Anacleto mixed with the blood of his men, among who was the Enriquez family cochero.

El Diario de Manila carried the news, with special reference to Anacleto Enriquez and how he was found dead, as he clutched in his hand the braided hair of Clara Siapit, the girl he loved and had promised to marry.

Anacleto Enriquez's padugo (blood offering) was pure, unconditional, unqualified. He gave up everything for his country – his life and his bright future, his talents, his time, his education, his share of the family inheritance, even the love of the woman he wanted to marry and of the family he

hoped to have. He simply gave. He did not give to give back. He did not give to get anything in return. Measured against the standard of his generosity and heroism, how do we all rate?