

## **Capas Gabaldon Elementary School and Capas East Central (Pilot)**



Much water has passed under the bridge and countless clouds have sailed or endless rain have poured o'er head since 1565 when the first school the country was opened in Cebu during the Spanish rule under Augustinians missionaries. It was the years 1880 and 1896, when the first school in Capas, was housed in the Intendencia- a municipio cum Mercado, the present public market. Let it be recalled also that Capas was still young, became an independent pueblo in Pampanga in 1710 after the Aetas, its settlers return to Zambales mountains and it automatically became town of Tarlac was created province in 1873. Education at the Intendencia was augmented by house schooling usually conducted in homes, more and more often than not, under the shade trees. The curriculum consisted of Caton, Cartilla, Catechismo and Pacion. When the Americans came in the Philippines, President Mckinley sent the Second Philippine Commission in 1900 creating Act No. 74 which provided also the first system for Philippine education and created three national schools: Philippine Normal School (PNS), Philippine Schools of Arts and Trade (PSAT), and Agricultural School in Negros. The American soldiers were the first teachers in these created national schools.

With the instruction of the Philippine Educational System and English as the medium of instruction, the English language flourished in the country. Primary education also took place in Capas, again in a bamboo school in the market site. Many of its people got the American Education and spoke the English language fluently.

A civic-minded native of Capas, a rich woman by the name of Dona Candelaria Talavera donated one hectare land where the the Capas Gabaldon Primary School was constructed in 1911. Gabaldon schools were constructed in the country when the Gabaldon Law was passes in 1907. This law was named after its sponsor, Assemblyman Gabladon of Nueva Ecija. For a complete elementary school in Capas, another two-hectare school was sonated in 1917 by the same rich woman, Dona Candelaria Talavera through her lone heiress, Macaria Capuno who was married to Roman Salak, a public school teacher. A bamboo/sawali school was constructed, and in the same school, the batch of grade VII pupils were certified graduates in 1921-1922. They numbered 12 and among them were Luis Guevarra, Victor Pineda Sr., Roman Capitulo and Juana Quiambao, their class valedictorian. Pioneer educators included Bartolome Lapuz (Supervisor), Lorenzo Aganon (Principal), and Roman Salak Sr., Felipe Alimurung, Leonor Alonzo, Claro Man, Filomena Roque, Marcos Esguerra, Narciso Cristobal and Maria Salak, the teachers. They were joined by Clemente Mejia, Numeriano Dalusong, Paterno Rueda and Jose Munoz.

Sad to say, the first bamboo school was blown down by typhoon and the pupils had to return to the public market to continue their school was constructed. They enjoyed their academic lessons and gardening in their new bamboo school. Discipline and work were given stress in the education of the children.

In 1928, a new supervisor replaced Mr. Iluminado Torres, Mr. Santiago Ocampo, the new supervisor supervised the construction of the concrete school building which has ten academic rooms and two offices. It was finished in 1929. The Home Economics and Industrial Arts building were constructed on the following year. The Garden House and School Clinic were also added.

The school was completed with fence and three steel gates in front and was touch with a beautiful lawn.

School beautification was not only aspect given emphasis, but much more the academic aspect, citizenship and academic training. The curriculum included the English language and reading, Geography, History, Civics, Health and Science, Music and P.E. The Grade VII curriculum lasted until the outbreak of World War II. And the last batch to graduate in 1940 included Virginia Tizon, Jose Arate, Benjamin Paz, Salvador Perez, Marina Perez, Placido Nogoy, Ermela Lumanlan and Timoteo Tanglao, their class Valedictorian. Graduation rites were more songs and dance affairs till the wee morning hours. The ladies were in their gowns and the young men were in their coat and tie suit.

During the World War II, the schools were temporarily closed. Some Japanese soldiers attempted to teach with emphasis on their Japanese language, songs and physical development. They did not make it, and the schools were totally closed until 1945.

During the post liberation period many pupils enrolled. There were those who were over age on their grades and accelerated if found out performing above average in their class. The first batch to graduate in 1946 and to mention a few were Jeremias Calagui, Angel Rodriguez, Oscar Vergara, Inocencio and Juanito Capan.

In the 1950's, under the principalship of Onofre Mercado and with the Division Academic Supervisor, Santiago Ocampo, the Capas East Central School became one of the 104 pilot schools in the Philippines supported in teaching materials by UNESCO. The schools were made beautiful, learning and teaching materials were supplied including shop and garden tools, sewing materials and kitchen utensils. The teachers, coming from the average and

regular group, received trainings and served not only the teachers of Capas but all the teachers and pupils in the whole province of Tarlac, demonstration teachers. To mention a few of these dedicated teachers, we have Virginia Atienza, Gliceria Atienza, Bartolome Descanzo, Jose Munoz, Socorro salak, Lilia Castro, Liberata Bonifacio, Demetria Pabalan, Rosalina Frias, and Julia Catalan.

Capas East Central ( Pilot) Elementary School did not remain the lone elementary school in Capas. In 1960's more elementary school were oraize in barrios. Capas Gabaldon Primary School, formerly an annex of Capas Central Elementary School was also created into a complete elementary school. But what remains is that the first elementary school in Capas produces several successful graduates. They excel in their chosen field of endeavor not only in the local scene but also in the international scene. Some of them include Mario Zamora, Ben Yalung, Jeremias Calagui, Celso.

Owned by the Department of Education and managed by the Tarlac Division Office.