

## QUEZON AND THE BONES OF BONIFACIO

By: Francisco Villanueva, Jr.  
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In 1934, after a hectic publicity campaign in America, Manuel Luis Quezon - then head of the Philippine Senate succeeded in having the Tydings-McDuffie Law enacted by the American Congress.

Returning to the islands Quezon was welcomed as a hero. The Constitutional Convention was held. The new Philippine Constitution was enacted and put into effect on November 15, 1935.

Quezon then launched his candidacy for the presidency of the Commonwealth. To oppose Quezon, the Democrats, headed by Juan Sumulong, the Veterans of 96, and other oppositionists convinced General Emilio Aguinaldo to run against Quezon.

When Quezon learned that his strongest opponent was to be General Aguinaldo, the dynamic Tayabense and his lieutenants thoughts of reviving the old and by then forgotten "Bonifacio issue." Quezon mobilized his lieutenants - mostly employes of the office of the Secretary of the Philippine Senate, Faustino Aguilar, Pio del Pilar, Tomas Mascardo, Domingo Ponce, Potenciano Salita, Servando de los Angeles, and others to look for the remains of Andres Bonifacio in Cavite. The press warmed up to the idea. A galaxy of writers and newspapermen, who were working for Quezon, made rescarches and wrote articles about the Father of the Katipunan.

Quezon believed that the finding of the remains of the Supremo would enhance the popularity of his candidacy, and reflect against that of Aguinaldo.

FOR SEVERAL MONTHS Quezon's lieutenants, with the help of the provincial, municipal and Constabulary officers of Cavite, prowled around the mountains of Cavite seeking the "Lichuan's unmarked graveyard - but in vain.

However, one morning, Guillermo Masangkay, a Bonifacio follower who was very familiar with the mountains of Cavite, after much search and digging, succeeded in locating Bonifacio's graveyard in the mountains of Buntis in the town of Maragondon. The diggers found bones and joints. These Guillermo Masangkay, tenderly placed in a wooden box, and brought to the municipal building Maragondon.

Guillermo Masangkay (who is now a centenarian, having been born in September, 1901) had been a trusted lieutenant of the Bonifacio brothers. Masangkay happily notified Quezon about the discovery. Quezon instructed him to carry the remains to Manila so that Quezon could see them.

From Maragondon the remains of Bonifacio were deposited in the Temple of the Legionarios del Trabajo, whose Supremo, Domingo Ponce, was a Quezon man, also engaged in the search. This Masonic Temple was situated on the Azcarraga-Soler junction.

Quezon wept when he saw the bones of Bonifacio. Many Katipuneros cried too.

But those who suffered most at the sight of the remains of Bonifacio were two unhappy women. They were Bonifacio's widow (his third wife Gregoria de Jesus, who survived three wars and remarried the composer of the Katipunan hymn, Julio Nakpil) and Bonifacio's daughter (by second wife, Dorotea Tayson), Francisca Bonifacio, who came from Albay, where she engaged in farming with her husband, Roman Balmes.

News of the discovery of the remains of Andres Bonifacio was spread far and wide in Manila and the provinces - even in foreign countries.

But the enemies of Quezon, the oppositionists, through speeches in public platforms and the press, cast doubts on the veracity of the reports of Quezon's lieutenants. These contended that, after the lapse of some 38 if not impossible, to identify the bones of the war hero, in a place, like Mount Buntis, where so many soldiers of the Katipunan were buried.

Quezon thereupon called for an expert - Dr. Sixto de los Angeles, who was the chief of the medico-legal clinic of the college of medicine of the University of the Philippines.