

DELFINA HERBOSA – NATIVIDAD (1879 – 1900)

Rizal's Niece, Katipunera

A niece of the national hero, Dr. Jose Rizal, Delfina Natividad y Herbosa was born on December 20, 1879 to Mariano Herbosa and Lucia Rizal, the hero's sister.

The Spanish friars on the flimsy excuse that he had not gone to confession denied Delfina's father, who died of cholera, a Christian burial. It was obvious however, that the real reason for their refusal was because he was a relative of Rizal, whose novel, *Noli Me Tangere*, exposed their abuses. This incident, as well as other acts of persecution perpetrated by the Spaniards on her family and other people, aroused in the young Delfina a strong sense of nationalism and an ardent desire to fight oppression in any form.

In July 1893, a year after the Katipunan was formed, Delfina, then only 13 years old, joined its women's section. She was initiated into the secret revolutionary society along with her aunts, Jose and Trinidad Rizal, and her cousin, Angelica Lopez Rizal. It was in the Katipunan that she met her future husband, Jose Salvador Natividad, whom she married on February 19, 1898, when she was 19. They were together in various battles against the Spaniards.

Her husband later became one of the generals of the Philippine Revolution, and was among the 70 revolutionary leaders present at Biak-na-Bato. Along with Pedro Paterno, he was appointed by Emilio Aguinaldo to negotiate the historic truce for the Filipinos with the Spanish colonial government. However, Governor General Primo de Rivera, who preferred the more moderate and accommodating Paterno, rejected him. He was prevented from signing the Pact of Biak-na-Bato when it was concluded on December 14, 1897.

Delfina accompanied her husband on his self – exile in Hong Kong along with Aguinaldo and other revolutionary leaders as provided by the pact.

Sometime in March or April, Aguinaldo commissioned Felipe Agoncillo's wife, Marcella, to sew a flag for the Philippine Republic. Marcella then asked Delfina to help her and her daughter, Lorenza, to do the task, which was finished in five days. The flag was taken to the Philippines when Aguinaldo returned aboard the U.S. Navy vessel McCulloch after the battle of Manila Bay. Aguinaldo unfurled it from his house in Kawit, Cavite on June 12 1898 after he proclaimed the independence of the Philippines.

As narrated by Rizal family descendants, Delfina was considered the prettiest among the children of the Herbosa couple. President Manuel L. Quezon was reported to have courted her.

Delfina and her husband had a daughter named Paz. Unfortunately, the girl tragically died when an alcohol lamp accidentally fell on her. She was barely two years old.

The sudden demise of her beloved daughter must have caused Delfina much sorrow and mental anguish that she died on March 10, 1900 at the tender age of 21.

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