

JGL Eye Column

By JOSEPH G. LARIOS

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CHICAGO (jGLi) – Jose Rizal stopped by Chicago, Illinois, for about 10 hours on May 11, 1888, exactly 123 years ago to the day last May 11, while taking a transcontinental train across the U.S. mainland en route to Europe.

Rizal took the trip following the advice of Spanish Governor-General Emilio Terrero to leave the Philippines or be persecuted at home for exposing the abuses of the Spanish friars in colonial Philippines. Rizal's book, "Noli Me Tangere" (Touch Me Not), a romantic novel and required reading book among Filipino high-school students.

On the occasion of Rizal's 150th birth anniversary on June 19, 2011, a Filipino-American group in Chicago, SamaSama Project, will not be reliving Rizal's less than daylong stay in Chicago

. But a musical, "Sweet Stranger, Untold Stories of Mrs. Jose Rizal," will dramatize his loves that might have even inspired many generations of Filipinos, among them the current Philippine president, Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino. Mr. Aquino, the country's first bachelor president, would only face his own matrimony only after liberating the Filipinos from poverty.

On paper, Rizal, the Filipino polymath, was married to Josephine Bracken a few hours before his execution at Luneta. But in reality, Rizal put on hold his marriage for a long time although he was romantically linked to many women because duty to his country was far above anything else in his life.

According to excerpts from the book, *Filipinos in History (Volume 1)*, a publication of the National Historical Commission of the Philippines (NHCP), posted on the website of the Philippine Consulate in Chicago, Rizal was linked to one of the Beckett sisters, Gertrude, Susanne Jacoby of Belgium, O Sei-san of Japan, Nellie Bousted of France, Consuelo Ortega of Madrid, Leonora Valenzuela of Intramuros, Leonor Rivera of Tarlac and Segundina Katigbak of Batangas.

“SWEET STRANGER, UNTOLD STORIES OF MRS. JOSE RIZAL”

S amasama's Louella Maningas, a musical theater and TV actress from Manila and a mainstay of Chicago Philippine Reports TV, and Baron Cabalona, a Filipino-American musician and multi-instrumentalist from Tacloban City, said auditions for the world premier of the planned contemporary musical, "Sweet Stranger, Untold Stories of Mrs. Jose Rizal," start on Tuesday, May 31st, 6-9 p.m.; Thursday, June 2, 6-9 p.m.; and Saturday, June 4, 1-5 p.m. at Akira Operation Office, 1837 West North Avenue in Chicago, IL 60622.

The musical adapted from the Palanca award-winning play by Sir Anril Tiatco (Miss Dulce Extranjera), music and lyrics by William Elvin and Vince de Jesus and Musical Director Baron Cabalona and under the direction of Sir Anton Juan will be seeking actors/singers of all ages and ethnicities. They should be able to dance or move well for lead, support and ensemble roles.

Appointments are required. Callbacks will be Sunday, June 5 at 1 p.m.

Written by
Saturday, 14 May 2011 20:13 -

{xtypo_quote} **Editor's Note:** This article was first published by the author, Dr. Erlinda K. Albuero, in 1999 and was reprinted with permission in the forerunner of this website in 201: [Josephine Bracken, Jose Rizal's Widow, Actually Became a Cebuana](#)
{/xtypo_quote}

The musical opens on Aug. 26, 2011. Inquiries may be emailed to SamaSamaProject@gmail.com or calls may be placed on Tels. 708-528-6321, 312-593-5154 or 847-987-5227. Parties may also check out SamaSamaProject.weebly.com website.

BASED ON RIZAL'S 100 LETTERS, POEMS

The musical will delve into Rizal's 100 letters and poems that focus on Rizal's relationship with Josephine Bracken, an Irish woman, whom Rizal lived with during his exile in Dapitan.

A popular impression of Bracken was that of whore-like persona while one historian, Floro Quibuyen, raised Bracken to an important personality in the Philippine revolution of 1896.

The musical is only one of the activities being celebrated by the Filipino American community in Chicago to observe the anniversary of Rizal, who was born in Calamba, Laguna in the Philippines

, on

June 19, 1861

, less-than two months after the outbreak of Civil War in the United States

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Another activity announced by Philippine Consul General Leo M. Herrera-Lim is the declaration of President Aquino of Monday, June 20, 2011, as Special Non-Working Day, instead of June 19, 2011, which falls on a Sunday. This will give all Filipinos the opportunity to commemorate Rizal's patriotic deeds and sacrifices for the country, rekindle their admiration and respect for him, and to celebrate this milestone with appropriate ceremonies.

To celebrate the sesquicentennial of Rizal's birth in Chicago, the Consulate General would like to invite all members of the Filipino American community to support and participate in the year-long activities organized by the Consulate to honor our national hero, Dr. Jose Rizal.

FLORAL OFFERINGS ON SUNDAY, JUNE 19, 2011 AT 9

A.M.

A floral offering will also be held on Sunday, June 19, 2011, 9:00 a.m.

at Dr. Jose Rizal monument located at
4739 N. Marine Dr.

,
Chicago

,
IL
60640

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Last May 6, Consul General Herrera-Lim donated copies of the original manuscripts of *Noli Me Tangere* and the sequel, *El Filibusterismo*

, to Northern Illinois University (NIU) in
DeKalb

,
Illinois

. The manuscripts were presented to NIU President John G. Peters in a simple ceremony held at the Altgeld Hall of the University.

Earlier on April 28, 2011, Mr. Herrera-Lim also presented similar original manuscripts to University of Chicago Dean of Humanities Division Martha T. Roth at the Joseph Regenstein Library in Chicago, Illinois. The university is well known to have the most Nobel laureates in its academic staff.

Director and University Librarian, Ms. Judith Nadler, in her public remarks, expressed her gratitude for the gift of two of Dr. Jose Rizal's masterpieces, in the presence of two of Rizal's family members.

Also present during the event were Mr. Willi Buhay, descendant of Dr. Rizal and commander of the Knights of Rizal, Chicago Chapter, Ms. Estrella Alamar, president of the Filipino-American Historical Society of Chicago, Mr. Edward Brotonel, president of

the Filipino-American National Historical Society, Midwest Chapter, members of the faculty and students, Filipino-American community and officials of the Consulate and Tourism office.

The donated books will be on display at the Library through June 11. # # #

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