

## ILOILO- YEAR FROM 1800 TO 1803

Literal description of the Proceedings in the Court on the dispute between the towns of Igbaras and Miag-ao regarding two schools that were established in the place called Aguiauan, along with the other things that are referred in them.

### SCHOOLS

*Novales vs Father Maximo.*

*Mr. Chief Constable. The current government of the town of Igbaras entrusted us, the four past and current captains who sign below in our name and in the name of the community of this town, to present ourselves before you in the best way possible and say:*

*Having received various notices that the people of Miagao were preparing with great enthusiasm to carry out an inspection near the boundaries of our territory, we gathered all the information that we deemed most prudent and capable of uncovering the truth:*

*Three of the most distinguished individuals were sent to investigate the matter themselves, and they found that what was said in the simple narrative of this event was indeed true. They immediately presented to reason the harms that are to follow to our town. But there is even more, as the people of Miagao are not content with having us in the greatest constriction with such short boundaries that make up about a quarter or so of their boundaries, as your honor and all those who have traveled through those parts can attest. These boundaries are made up of continuous mountains, gorges, and landslides. Despite having endured this unjust distribution that was made out of passion and sustained by prepotence until now, they are reducing the area assigned to our boundaries.*

*And they have taken such measures that, in a short time, they will achieve, without any pretensions to improvement, even if they could annihilate this town. In addition to having always been good neighbors, fulfilling their obligations, paying their taxes and duties, and never having any complaints against us from the Lord Mayors. With our industry and hard work, we have made a place full of ravines and gorges useful for God and the King, among the greatest in this province. It is dear that the same people who are gathering at that site have informed us that, once the two schools that are being built are finished, a large house is planned for the meetings of another reduction that already has a separate census, although they are private and without heirs for the account that they must give to your honor. And to make this happen, they have removed eight families to compose the population, taking many subjects from the center of the town, removing several of them from their ancient cultivations (most of them say it is against their will) so that they can cultivate the new site. They even say they have two families from Igbaras to whom they will also attract.*

*They offer sufficient lands to increase the population with their registered residents. This has been reported by them, as well as others who live or have been forced to live elsewhere.*

*It is worth noting, sir, that having learned about the reports we have taken and that we were going to present them, they are threatening us with losing the resource, making various speeches in support of the reduction. But the main reason they have, which they believe will decide against us, actually favors us. They say they will respond that they do not intend to establish a visit in any place, and that they only intend to establish two schools for the education of the children who live in the Aguiauan site in Miagao, up to a distance of one league.*

*We are conveying to you, sir, what they have officially responded. We forgive them the term "visit," but what else are two schools, already started, and several houses (not made of cement), if not a beginning of a reduction? What else are two schools, if not two public buildings for a town? But they say they are for the education of children, and how will children and adults have good administration at such a distance, unless the minister of the church or the minister of the King visits them? For less than that, the visit of Talami began, and a visit was demanded.*

*But then, upon understanding it, the higher government ordered it to be demolished, and it caused less harm. So, should these two schools and the houses built at such a distance be demolished? These two schools are a demand from the people, and in fact, there are already several houses. How do they usurp the authority of the monarch, to whom it belongs exclusively, for such foundations and vote for communion with the higher government? This is consistent in the Laws of the Indies and the repeated orders of all the lord mayors, who with the execution of the laws, continuously dispatch orders not to allow houses far from the well, but only a small house in the cemetery that can only be used for emergencies that occur in deserted areas. On another occasion, they attempted to establish this visit, but Father Garcia stopped them. Now, our Father Priest Fray Geronimo de Prado has attempted the same thing, but we remain silent about the dishonor he has received, being so worthy of honor and asking for justice. This could intimidate us, as we have other precedents in the matter of registration and many threatening words. But we are before the rectitude of your mercy, who will not let evil triumph.*

*We request that Your Grace, considering us duly presented, prove and order the demolition and destruction of the two schools and any other public buildings that may have been built or started. Also, all houses that may have been built or started in our site should be demolished, allowing only some small cottages for farming purposes, and warning them of disobedience or recurrence. These actions are justified because they oppose the great laws and orders of His Majesty's ministers, who have sought to contain the visitation of the first ones. We swear that we do not intend any malice, and we ask for justice to be served in this matter.*

*Juan Tiburcio = Juan Baptista = Francisco Revilla = Nicolas Vicencio = Pedro Sexto.*

*And by being presented, release an order to the Government of the Town of Miagao, so that they personally appear in this court with some leaders and heads of the barangay, and having been summoned, they are informed of the contents of this document, so that in view of what they produce, they can provide what is fair and just. So provided, I, Don Damian Novales, Captain of the King's Infantry Regiment that guards the city of Manila, Mayor by His Majesty's Captain in charge of this province, Minister of Marine of this division, and commander of the war branch in this island of Panay, shall act as a receiving judge due to*

*the indigence of a public notary, with the assistance of my lieutenants, with whom I signed in this port of Iloilo on May twenty-one, of the year eighteen hundred.*

*I attest that the order was dispatched to the governor of the town of Miagao, for the purposes expressed in the previous order. And for the record, I note it inconvenient and give faith of it. In the post of Iloilo, on May 24th, 1800. In accordance with the order in the previous document, the current governor of the town of Miagao appeared before this court with the signed heads of Barangay, and I made known to them through one of my sworn interpreters the content of the preceding letter. After being informed, the governor said When he was absent from the head of the town in May, he returned to find that the two schools mentioned in the document were already being built by the leaders of the town. When he asked the reason for this formation, they told him that it was by order of Reverend Father Fray Max Gonzales. After hearing this, the governor went to the convent and asked the Father if it was true what the leaders had told him. The Father replied that it was, and that he had no business meddling in what the said Father ordered and arranged in the town, to which the governor had to remain silent, and out of respect for his Father, he did not inform this court about the formation. The said leaders and heads of Barangay said that the formation of the two schools was arranged and ordered by Reverend Father Fray Maximo Gonzales. One Wednesday, whose date they do not recall, Father Vicar Fray Laureano recruited the people who usually give for the works of the church and town, and the same Father Priest took them with all the sacristans to the place where these schools are located to teach them how to form them. When the other leaders asked their reverend Father Priest the purpose of these schools, he replied that it was for the good of the children and that the town had no intervention in them. Therefore, out of respect for their Father Cura, they did not inform this court, which they answered and signed with me, other witnesses, and an interpreter, of which I give faith.*

*M. R. F. Provincial Vicar, Friar Jose Santa Maria.*

*Dear Sir,*

*By means of this document, I inform you of the order I have issued on this date and the accompanying proceedings, through which you will become aware of my request. I sincerely hope that you will see fit to execute it in order to ensure the proper administration of justice in this court. In this regard, I humbly implore Your Reverence's assistance on behalf of Our Sovereign (may God guide him), and I am committed to reciprocating in cases where similar circumstances arise in said court. May God guide Your Reverence for many years to come.*

*Iloilo, May 24th of the year 1800. Damian Novales.*

*We hereby attach the relevant file to Reverend Father Friar Maximo Gonzales, the priest of this town of Miagao, to whom we grant our permission to present the aforementioned file as requested and provide any information he may possess regarding the matter.*

*In response to the license granted to me, visible in the same manner, I hereby state: I consistently affirm, just as I affirmed before the elected judge Friar Juan Campos, in whose court the Reverend Father Cura of Igbaras, Friar Geronimo de Prado, has initiated this*

*lawsuit, that it has never been my intention to establish a visitation in any place in Miagao. I assure you that I will not establish one, and it is a tremendous slander to say that I have wanted or want to establish a visitation. I request Your Honor, through the administration of justice, to not let the person who has levied this slander against me go unpunished, or to allow them to propagate it.*

*Considering that I have observed several zealous ministers who have established schools within the boundaries of their parishes without the involvement of the local magistrates, it seemed to me that I could establish one for boys and another for girls in the area of Aguiauan, paying the teachers from my own pocket. My sole purpose is to provide better education and instruction in the Christian doctrine for the children who reside in that area, as they are unable to attend the main school in the town due to the distance. I call upon the divine tribunal to witness that anyone who orders or causes the demolition of said schools shall be held accountable.*

*Signed on May 26, 1800, in Miagao.*

*Fr. Maximo Gonzales.*

*Considering the statement made by Reverend Father Friar Maximo Gonzales, I hereby declare:*

*Release the Governorcillo of Miagao, with the provision that if he fails to report any developments pertaining to the administration of justice or the public affairs of his town to this court, he shall face harsher punishments. I will incorporate said statement into the proceedings of its origin. I, the aforementioned Alcalde Mayor Judge, acting with my accompanying individuals due to the absence of a public scribe, hereby issue this order and sign it with them in the Port of Iloilo on May 28, 1800.*

*Note: The Governorcillo was released, and he was duly informed of the provisions stated in the order. Furthermore, the statement made by Reverend Father Friar Maximo Gonzales has been included in these proceedings. Take note of this for future reference and inform accordingly to avoid any inconvenience.*