

BRIEF HISTORY

It is believed that Igaras was the last sanctuary of Datu Marikudo and his wife Maniwangtiwang in the mountain area of Napulak. But history of the town started with its founding by Datu Malagwis and Datu Labing-Isog, who were both sub-datus of the ten Bornean datus. They established settlements and ruled Igaras until the Spaniards came.

As early as 1615, Igaras was already a *visita* of the Augustinian Missionaries, and Binanua-an was established as first town site. It proved to be impregnable to Muslim raids, however later, floods inundated it. The town site then was moved to *Utas* a high-rise area. It was a flourishing settlement even before the coming of the Spaniards as evidenced by the uncovered antique wares so abundant with impressions of Ming and Sung Dynasties of 960 A.D. But the area is a flooding hazard and unproductive, so it was again transferred to *Cabubugan*, another flourishing settlement in 1223 A.D under the control of Ogtong, the seat of Confederation of Madia-as. The new town site was imperative by then.

In 1752, Fr. Juan Aguado transferred the new town site, which until now exists. Don Diego Tamo-oc headed the new pueblo in 1761 being the 1st municipal head. Prominent edifices such as church and convent were constructed during that time until 1795 by Fr. Ignacio Marcos, but were washed away by floods. However their remains are still visible today. *Gobernadorcillo* Don Pedro Sixto initiated the construction of Casa Real during his incumbency in 1799 at *Calle San Agustin*, the *calle real* of Igaras, however, was completely inundated by floods.

The biggest convent in Panay and a church was built in 1878 by Fr. Celestino Fernandez and during the term of his parish priest Fr. Jose Laviana, but were also destroyed by a strong earthquake “Lady Caycay” in 1948.

During the American Regime in the late 1800, Igarasnon joined the revolutionary forces to fight against Spaniards under *Directorcillo* Julian Bucoy and later fought against the American forces where the latter was *Teniente Estado Mayor* under the command of General Martin Delgado with headquarters in Santa Barbara, Iloilo.

In 1902, Igaras was fused as *arabbal* of Guimbal until 1918. Gen. Charles Yeater issued an Executive Order #64 dated December 24, 1918 mandating its separation effective January 1, 1919.

Don Flor Evidente was elected first Municipal President in 1919-1922, followed by Lucas Gentica, 1922-1925; Julian Bucoy Saavedra, 1925-1931; Justo Estrella, 1931-1938; Dionesio Esquilla, 1938 but lost to Gerardo Escala in an electoral protest, 1939-1941; Toribio Melliza, 1941-1945; Ricardo Ealdama, 1955-1961; Toribio Melliza, 1961-1964; Atty. Daniel Esmeralda, 1964-1977; Vicente Perez, 1977-1985; Fruto J.

Saavedra, 1992-2001; and Jaime E. Esmeralda, 2001-2010. The present Municipal Mayor of Igaras is Atty. Vicente Escorpion, Jr.

Igaras has the distinction of having the first congressman elected to the Philippine Congress in 1925-1928 in the person of Don Eugenio Ealdama and the delegate to the 1935 Constitutional Convention, Don Mariano Ezpeleta who later served as Consul General and Ambassador to the different countries.

Igaras produced Don Eugenio Ealdama the 1st Congressman of the 1st District of Iloilo elected to the Philippines Congress in 1925-1928. Don Mariano Ezpeleta was elected delegate to the 1935 Constitutional Convention and later appointed by the government to serve as Consul General and Ambassador of the Philippines to the different countries.

During the Second World War, the Poblacion was burned into ashes by the resistance against the Japanese Imperial Forces. The Philippine Civil Government under the command of General Tomas Confesor in the Province of Iloilo appointed Ramon Esporas to head the town. Lt. Pedro Saavedra organized guerilla forces in Igaras under the command of Gen. Macario Peralta. After the war in 1945, Perfecto B. Saavedra was appointed mayor prior to local election in 1947 in which he was elected mayor and served until 1955.

February 22-25, 1986, the bloodless revolution had placed Corazon Aquino to the highest position of the land and Wilfredo C. Uy was appointed officer-in-charge of the municipality of Igaras. His priorities focused in agricultural production, infrastructure support programs and education. More school buildings were constructed in the barangays.

Honorable Jaime Ecube Esmeralda, M.D. took over the leadership as municipal mayor last July 1, 2001 – June 30, 2010. From July 1, 2010 to present, Hon. Vicente Escorpion, Jr. is the municipal mayor.

Today Igaras is 3rd class municipality with 46 Barangay scattered in 12,732.27 hectares of land.