Chapter One:

History

# History

San Carlos City was formerly named Nabingkalan, in honor of a beautiful daughter of a chieftain of a Negrito settlement in the area. The settlement was later bought by Carlos Apurado from Badian, Cebu who, with the help of fellow pioneers, developed it into a thriving Christian village. The barter system was the common trading practice in this early settlement. Agricultural products such as bananas, root crops, vegetables and other short gestation crops were bartered or exchanged for tools and other useful items. Even personalized belongings (e.g. windpipe for cigars) were traded in exchange even for a piece of agricultural land.

In 1856, Señor Don Emilio Saravia, the first political military governor of Negros Island during the Spanish era, renamed the place San Carlos and established it as a “pueblo”.

San Carlos prospered through the years although it later lost its “pueblo” category. When Negros Island was divided into Occidental Negros and Oriental Negros in 1890, San Carlos was recorded as an “arrabal” or barrio of Calatrava (Hilub-an) which is now a separate municipality at the southern side of San Carlos.

San Carlos acquired its status as a town in late 1898 when Gen. Juan Araneta of the Revolutionary Philippine Republic officially proclaimed it as a municipality. This was confirmed by the American Military Administration in 1901.

In May 1942, the Japanese Army occupied the town and encountered a defiant Municipal Mayor, Eugenio Antonio Sr., who refused to surrender and collaborate with them. He rallied the renegade soldiers along with loyal civilians and organized them as a guerrilla unit. Thus, San Carlos became the hotbed of resistance activities against the Japanese throughout the war. On March 1, 1945, San Carlos was liberated from the Japanese Imperial Forces by the First Combat Team, 7th MD (Negros) Guerilla Forces, under Major Uldarico Baclagon.

San Carlos became a city on July 1, 1960 with the passage of Republic Act No. 2643. This historical experience developed San Carlos’ character as a resilient city with innovative changes towards social reform. A former first district congressman, Don Carlos Ledesma, contributed to this resilient and innovative character of San Carlos when he led significant socio-economic changes in the 1973 Philippine Constitutional Convention and in the agricultural system and industrial development of the City itself from the 1960s to the 1980s. Another historical milestone occurred on August 27, 1996 when then President Fidel V. Ramos held a cabinet meeting in San Carlos making it the first component city to host such an event.

San Carlos City, one of the 13 cities in Negros Occidental, lies at the northeastern part of Negros Island. It is bounded at the north by the town of Calatrava, at the west by the town of Don Salvador Benedicto and the City of Bago, at the south by the town of Vallehermoso and the City of Canlaon both of Negros Oriental, and at the east by Tanon Strait. It is 82 kilometers distant from Bacolod City through the new Negros Translink Eco-Tourism Highway and 146 kilometers through the old coastal road, 167 kilometers from Dumaguete City and 14 nautical miles from Toledo City, Cebu. The City’s strategic location in relation to the other cities of Bacolod and Iloilo at the west as well as the cities of Toledo, Dumaguete and Cebu at the east, makes San Carlos an ideal hub for educational, residential, retirement and agro-industrial investments. Reliable and appropriate transportation systems by air (PAL, Cebu Pacific, Zest, Airphil), water (Aboitiz, Negros Navigation hydrofoil, boat/shipping lines) and land (Ceres liner bus system) is available for daily travel to Bacolod, Iloilo, Dumaguete, Cebu and outlying provinces and cities in Regions VI and VII.

Its ideal geographical location and financial stability has made San Carlos City the center of the Panay-Negros-Cebu economic zone. Its agro-industrial economy is centered on trade and industry that takes advantage of its vast and fertile agricultural land which comprise 66% of the City’s land area of 45,150 hectares. Large tracts of agricultural land which are easily accessible through well-developed mountain roads are planted to staple crops like rice and corn, and high-valued crops like cabbage, carrots, soy beans, mango, cashew and coffee. Sugar manufacturing is still one of the major industries in the City although vast sugar plantations have given way to real estate development for residential, commercial and industrial enterprises. An ethanol plant using biomass for renewable energy provides 6% of the City’s energy supply. The ethanol plant supports San Carlos City’s vision of a robust and vibrant economy pioneering as an agro-industrial energy renewal center in the Visayas and the Philippines.

*Source: Wikipedia.org*

San Carlos is a port city with a fine natural harbor protected by Refugio Island (Sipaway). Its long coastline extends to 36 kilometers and its thriving island barangays on Refugio Island, replete with white sand beaches and rich marine resources, attribute to the growing fish and tourism industries of the City.

The City has an annual grand cultural celebration known as the Pintaflores festival. Held every November 3 to 5, the festival includes a colorful street dancing ritual performed by dancers with painted bodies originating from an old Visayan tradition of welcoming visitors through dances performed by natives with tattoo-painted bodies. San Carlos City’s flower is the Sunflower depicting its warm, friendly, hospitable and welcoming people.

San Carlos was adjudged as the one of the most livable cities in the world by the United Nations -sponsored International Awards for Livable Communities. The City was ranked second in the category of cities with not more than 150,000 population. San Carlos was also recognized as a City of Renewable Energy, being a major investment destination of renewable energy in the Philippines and Capital of Earth Construction in the Philippines by using environment-friendly earth-based construction technology (Enviro-blox) in its housing and school building projects. It was also cited for its multi-awarded solid waste management and water levy projects.