

BRAULIO RIVERA
(1867-1897)

Katipunero and One of the thirteen
Martyrs of Bagumbayan

“Katotohanan”, meaning “truth”, was the name of one of the five sections of the popular council Catagalugan (headed by Alejandro Santiago) which Braulio Rivera led as a member of the Katipunan.

Born on March 26, 1867 in Gitna (now renamed after him), Tondo, near the corner of Zabala and Sto. Cristo Streets, Manila. Rivera was the son of Jose Rivera, a worker at the tobacco monopoly administration. Little is known of his early background: although only an elementary graduate, he was employed as a clerk at the “Sub-inspeccion General de Montes”. He was blessed with an exceptional singing voice thus, was inclined to singing. He was also an able musician who played three instruments - the guitar, violin and flute.

He joined the Katipunan during its early stage, rapidly gaining the confidence of its founder Andres Bonifacio who preferred tight-lipped men for his trusted companions. He took the nom de guerre of “Guitna” after his place of birth.

Not long after, he formed and led a chapter of the secret organization in his birthplace, calling it Balangay Gitna. Its treasurer was Policarpio Tarla.

Tarla, whose code name was “Pagsanjan”, was the superintendent of the lithographic and printing plant of Ramirez y Cía., publisher of the *Diario de Manila*. He was probably the leader of the Katipuneros secretly operating there.

It was in the printing shop of the *Diario de Manila* that Spanish authorities, during the nighttime raid on its premises, found the list of Katipunan members whose names were in codes, Tarla and Rivera’s included.

The raid came about with the disclosure to the authorities of the existence of the Katipunan by Teodoro Patiño, one of the workers in the printing shop. A rivalry for a promotion between Patiño and his co-employee Apolonio de la Cruz, who was a Katipunan member, triggered a grudge fight that eventually drove Patiño to unmask the Katipunan to Fr. Mariano Gil. The latter lost no time in informing the authorities and initiating a raid on the shop on August 19, 1896. Evidence was found proving the existence of a subversive organization in their midst.

This led to a crackdown on suspected rebels, among them Rivera, who was arrested on August 24. Along with Tarla and others, he was thrown into Fort Santiago where he suffered various forms of torture including being suspended upside down and suddenly released; caning, and drowning. Jose Rizal in his first novel, *Noli Me Tangere*, described the last, where a prisoner would be dunked into a well filled with dirty water.

He was put to death by firing squad on January 11, 1897 on Bagumbayan field, along with 12 others, namely: Moises Salvador, Faustino Villaruel, Luis Villareal, Jose Dizon, Numeriano Adriano, Ramon Padilla, Geronimo Medina, Antonio Salazar, Eustaquio Mañalac, Domingo Franco, Benedictio Nijaga, and the business magnate Francisco Roxas.

The 13 men shot to death on that fateful day became known as the “Thirteen Martyrs of Bagumbayan”.

Rivera’s wife was Francisca Santos. Although she bore several children, none of them survived to maturity.

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