

History and Culture

Capiz is province where myth and reality merge. One enduring legend tells of Balingaangan, Datu Bangkaya's eldest son, name his two sakups (or territories) Akean and Kapid (meaning twins) in honor of his twin daughters. Another version is based on the story that when the Spaniards to settle in the area, it was the that the wife of Bangkaya gave birth to twin daughters. Twin in the local dialect is Kapid but the settling Spaniards adopted the name "Capiz"; either due to their difficulty in pronouncing the letter "d" or the natives inadvertently miscommunicated it to them. Still, many folks believe that Capiz got its name from "kapis" or "pios" – a shell of the mollusc family that was abandoned in the area during that time. Centuries before the coming of the Spaniards, Capiz was one of the early settlements of the Malays. It formed part of the confederation of Madya-as after the Bornean datus purchased Panay Island from the Negrito King, Marikudo. Panay was divided into three major districts and the Aklan district, included Capiz, was formally formed in 1223. During the Spanish Era, Capiz became the second Spanish settlement in the country when Miguel Lopez de Legaspi entered Pan-ay Town in 1569. On May 8, 1570, the Spaniards conquered Pan-ay and consequently district of Aklan under the leadership of Martin de Goiti. Capiz was created in separate encomienda and later was organized into a politico-military province in 1716, embracing the neighboring islands of Romblon, Tablas and Sibuyan. The town of Capiz (now Roxas City) was not the capital of the province then. The Spaniards moved the capital to its present site when they discovered that it is near the sea and had better docking facilities for their galleons. The American established a civil government on April 15, 1901. William Howard Taft appointed Simplicio Jugo Vidal as its first Municipal President. On May 12, 1951, the town of Capiz converted into the City of Roxas, named after one of its illustrious and famous sons the late Pres. Manuel A. Roxas, the first President of the Philippine Republic. In 1954, by virtue of Republic Act 1414, Aklan was separated from Capiz and made into a district province.

PEOPLE, CULTURE AND THE ARTS

Capizeños are of the Malayo-Indonesian ancestry with more than 90% of the population Catholic. They speak Ilonggo or Hiligaynon dialect, a Visayan dialect that is widely spoken in the region; although it has a distinctive different accent than that spoken by the Ilonggos of Iloilo and Negros Occidental. Two types of indigenous people are found in the hinterlands of the province. The Negritos (popularly known as Aetas or Atis) live in the mountains. Aetas group together and are now resettled at Mt. Tag-ao, Tamulalod, in Dumarao. The other indigenous peoples grouping is the Panay Bukidnon or the Tumandoks who are of Indonesian ancestry. They live in the uplands of the Municipalities of Tapaz and Jamindan, within the 33,000-hectare military reservation. They still produce ancient designs on their ornately carved sword handles and sheaths. They are also noted for the Sinulog, a traditional fertility dance, popularly observed in Cebu and Negros Islands. Capiz is home to Jovita Fuentes, a National Artist on Dance and a world-renowned soprano. Its people are known for their bayanihan spirit, hospitality and sharing. These qualities are generally depicted in the various festivals of the different municipalities. Most notable of these festivals is Sinadya Sa Halaran in celebration of the Our Lady Of Immaculate Conception. The fitting description of this festival is a "fete of faith and thanksgiving through the joyful celebration of the Capiznon way of life". Loosely translated, Sinadya sa Halaran means "joy in thanksgiving and sharing". Many municipalities organized and strengthened their respective culture and arts council with the aim of preserving indigenous songs, dances, literature and other forms of arts. The Sigmahanon Foundation for Culture and the Arts Incorporated and Dagway Sigmahanon Incorporated are 2 non-governmental organizations based in Sigma, Capiz that are known throughout the country. Source: Capiz Provincial Tourism Office

PERIOD MILESTONE (Unverified)

1569 Captain Diego de Artieda, who was sent by Miguel Lopez de Legaspi from Cebu, landed on the town of Pan-ay and proclaimed it as the capital. 1590 Navy of Acapulco of Mexico made Capiz ports its arsenal (naval yard) and where they sought shelter when the sea was rough. Capiz then eventually grew into a bustling port and several houses of stones were built.

1746 Capiz was made the seat of the politico-military government, although it was ecclesiastically controlled by the Bishopric of Cebu. 1795 Under Gobernadorcillo Miguel Bautista, the old road to Baybay Beach was built as an extension of San Roque Street. (see later Governors of Capiz Province) 1814 Stone ports and towers of Baybay Beach (Baluarte) were built through the initiative of Gobernadorcillo Jose Consolacion. 1870 The ground was broken for the foundation of the Cathedral of Capiz under the guidance of Reverend Apolonio Alvarez. 1876 Diocese of Jaro in Iloilo was erected and Capiz came under its jurisdiction.

1877The cathedral was finally finished. (Prior to its construction, a chapel was built on Burgos Street just beside the municipal building.)

August 1899

The Spanish colonial government represented by Governor Juan Herrero formally surrendered to General Anasias Diokno in Baybay Beach. 1904The Missionary effort of the Americans who came earlier in the town to help educate the natives eventually gave birth to a school later known as Filamer Christian Institute. 1914Economic debacle hit the town of Capiz when the Ayala Distillery grounded to a halt. 1910Old Provincial Capitol building was reconstructed and the Capiz Bridge (now Roxas City Bridge) was constructed. These major infrastructures were initiated and completed during the incumbency of Governor Antonio Habana who was an engineer by profession. 1917Division Superintendent of School F.E. Hemingway founded Capiz Trade School for intermediate pupils and offered woodworking as the only vocational course. The next division superintendent opened the Capiz High School (now Capiz National High School). 1926

Division Superintendent Arthur Wittman authorized teaching of complete secondary curriculum in the Capiz Trade School. (later known as Capiz School of Arts & Trade or CASAT then as Capiz Institute of Technology or C.I.T. then to Panay State Polytechnic College or PSPC and lately as Capiz State University or CAPSU).

Culasi port was built to accommodate inter-island ships. February 1, 1951

The diocese of Capiz became a separate ecclesiastical jurisdiction from Jaro. Its first bishop was Msgr. Manuel Yap.

In the same year, former Vice Mayor Libertad Conlu became the first female mayor of Capiz. May 12, 1951

Capiz became a chartered city through House Bill 1528 sponsored by Ramon Acuna Arnaldo, the representative of the First District of Capiz. April 11, 1951House Bill 1528 was approved by President Elpidio Quirino as Republic Act 608. Consequently, the town was named Roxas City after her greatest son, President Manuel Acuna Roxas, the last president of the Commonwealth and the first president of the Philippine Republic.

1959Lorenzo Acuna Arnaldo again became the head of the city as the first elected city mayor. (see Mayors of the City of Roxas)