



**Republic of the Philippines**  
**Province of Isabela**  
**ISABELA TOURISM OFFICE**



**HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE  
MUNICIPALITY OF SAN PABLO, ISABELA**

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In recorded history, the oldest existing pueblo of the Province of Isabela since its foundation up to present time is the town of San Pablo. The territory of what is now the Municipality of San Pablo, Isabela was originally incorporated in the territory then known as La Irraya. Irraya (Addaya and Yrraya in other manuscripts) region comprised the vast area from Tuguegarao in Cagayan province up to the present Gamu town in Isabela province. Irraya was also the term used for the native's name and their dialect. Irraya is an Ibanag word which means "upriver". In the Gaddang dialect, the term "dirraya" also means "upriver". In 1607, the provincial chapter of the Holy Rosary Province (or Dominicans) ordered Frays Luis Flores and Francisco Minaio to the Irraya speaking Pilitan (now a barangay of Tumauni town) and its adjoining communities, to exert all efforts that the natives must learn to speak Ibanag and to minister to them in the said language. In short, Ibanag (Ybanag) was made the official language in the valley. Ultimately, the distinct Irraya area, its people and the dialect became extinct with the whole area, its residents and tongue now known in the modern world as Ibanag. Only a handful from barangays Tallag and San Bernardo in Cabagan town can still remember some Irraya phrases.

As a result of the historic Irraya Revolt on November 8, 1621, a new town was organized by Dominican missionary, Fray Pedro de Santo Tomas, gathering the Irrayas from the former Christian missions of Pilitan, Abbuatan, Bolo and Batavag and named it "Maquila" which was situated at the junction of the Cagayan and Pinacanauan Rivers of Tuguegarao. The name "Maquila" was derived from the Ibanag word "quilat" which means "clear" referring to the clear water of the Pinacanauan River. On November 30, 1646, due to its proximity to Tuguegarao, the residents of Maquila were transferred to a new site upstream southwards at the mouth of the Cagayan and Pinacanauan Rivers of Cabagan and is now the poblasyon (town center) of San Pablo. The new site was called "Cabagan". The name "Cabagan" came from the native word "bag" or "bajaque" which referred to the stores selling g-strings. Another version stated that the name came from the word "cabbagang" which means "pilgrim" or "stranger" because the settlement was in constant contact with the other tribes in the region. On May 15, 1647, the Dominican Order in Manila recorded "San Pablo Apostol de Cabagan" as an ecclesiastical mission under the patronage of Saint Paul the Apostle. The church of Cabagan was constructed with a lofty bell tower of six layers including the circular apex made of adobe which was the tallest in Cagayan Valley.

In 1683, Mengal Baladdon and his men, alarmed at the success of Fray Pedro Jimenez in forming Christian villages in the Irraya, wrecked havoc in Cabagan by killing twelve of its Christian inhabitants prompting the natives to flee to the mountains. The settlement in the verge of collapsing was rescued by the alcalde-mayor of Cagayan killing some accomplices and captured seventy. Their properties were confiscated and were given to the troops.

In 1709, a great fire demolished the Cabagan Church and the big convent. In 1718, a rebellion in Cabagan was crushed by Don Pablo Orduna and many natives of Cabagan and Tuguegarao fled to the mountains for security. In 1738, the military fort of Cabagan (situated in what is now San Pablo town), a triangular two-bulwarked stone fortress, was destroyed (also by earthquakes) and transferred to Cabcungan (now Claveria town in Cagayan province) for the reason that the fort was no longer needed. On March 20, 1758, Dominican missionary of Cabagan, Fray Jose Marin, reported of a cholera epidemic which broke out killing approximately 500 in Cabagan and 800 in Tuguegarao.

He also informed them of the construction of a wine and sugar factory that was very beneficial to the townfolks. In 1841, Dominican Fray Antonio Garcia built the casa real in Cabagan. The casa served as an important government center during the Spanish rule in the alcaldia (province). It was a 20x30 square meter two-storey building made of stone. On one of its walls was the inscription: "Esta Casa Tribunal se con Cluio en año de 1846, Siendo Governad d' Juan de Guzman." However, in 1857, the Casa Real was burned and eventually repaired.

In 1761, a growing settlement across the Pinacanauan river was formally separated from the mother-town of Cabagan (now San Pablo town) by virtue of a royal decree and was also referred to with the same name. It was only in 1861 when a royal decree was issued separating the new village of Cabagan (now Cabagan town) from the mother-town of Cabagan (now San Pablo). On January 25, 1877, the old town of Cabagan (now San Pablo) was transferred by Dominican Fray Pedro Ricart to a new site (the present territory of Cabagan town) because of unhealthiness of the old site and seemed that progress was bypassing the town in favor of the villages of the south. The new site was only about three kilometers away from the old and was situated between the present barangays of Ugad and Luquilu.

In 1888, the Spaniards resurrected the abandoned site of Cabagan (now San Pablo) into a new town and called it "Cabagan Viejo" with Fray Segundo Rodriguez as cura parroco. He renovated partly the church and convent and gave for the patroness of the town the Virgin of the Rosary. Later, the patron was changed to Saint Paul the Apostle. The other Cabagan was named "Cabagan Nuevo" to avoid confusion on the two Cabagans. The word "Viejo" means "old" while "Nuevo" means "new" in the Spanish language. When the Americans arrived they re-christened Cabagan Nuevo as simply "Cabagan" and the Cabagan Viejo as "San Pablo". In 1944, by Japanese instigation, the seat of government of San Pablo town was transferred to Barrio Auitan then to Barrio Minanga. According to Robert Osterlund, the seat of government seesawed because of factional strives between the Centro people (Southern group) and the Auitan citizens (Northern group). In 1959, however, Mayor Calixtro B. Cauan restored the government center to its original site, now the present site.

During the early part of the American Occupation, a public hearing was conducted by the Philippine Commission headed by Governor-General William Howard Taft (who would later become President of the United States and Chief Justice) on the re-organization of provinces. The three towns of Cabagan Nuevo, Cabagan Viejo and Santa Maria attended the hearing in Tuguegarao, Cagayan and requested that the aforementioned towns be incorporated in the re-organized province of Cagayan. However, in the public hearing conducted in Ilagan, Isabela on August 23, 1901, Municipal President Rafael Maramag of Ilagan commented that the exclusion of the three towns would greatly reduce the size of the province. "The population of Isabela was about 54,000 and these three towns contained about 20,000. The proposed change would therefore take away over a third of the province." The Commission ruled the following day that they were not amenable for the change "as it would too greatly reduce the population and tax-paying power of the province of Isabela."

Based on available records, the following served as Capitan Municipals of San Pablo during the latter part of Spanish rule after Cabagan Viejo was re-established: Don Juan S. Gollayan (1884-1889), Don Salvador Cauan (1890-1895) and Don Agripino Cammayo (1896-1899). The following served as Municipal Presidents during the American period: Don Antonio Pagulayan (1900-1903), Don Thomas Gollayan (1904-1907), Don Ventura Santos Guzman (1908-1910), Don Salvador Tumaliuan (1911-1914), Don Agustin Miro (1915-1918), Don Angel Cammayo (1919-1922), Don Valeriano Palattao (1923-1925), Don Anacleto Pagulayan (1926-1931), Don Antonio Cauan (1932-1936) and Don Agustin Mesa (1937-1938).

The municipal mayors of San Pablo during the Commonwealth period, Japanese Occupation and the Third Republic: Hon. Manuel Masigan (1938-1940), Hon. Marciano Nolasco Castañeda (1941-1942 & 1945-1946), Hon. Melecio Antonio (1942-1943 appointed), Hon. Jose Guzman (1943-1944 appointed), Hon. Jesus Gollayan (1946-1947 appointed), Hon. Jose L. Tumaliuan (1948-1950), Hon. Aniceto Palattao (1951), Hon. Calixtro B. Cauan (1952-1955, 1956-1959 & 1960-1963), Hon. Cayetano N. Cauan (1964-1967, 1968-1971, 1972-1980 and 1980-1986), Hon. Antonio N. Miro, Jr. (1986-1987 OIC, 2004-2007, 2007-2010, 2010-2013, 2016 to present), Hon. Roy Umayam (1987-1988), Hon. Cayetano A. Cauan, Jr. (1988-1992 & 1992-1995), Hon. Edwardson B. Tumaliuan (1995-1998 & 1998-2001), Hon. Celia M. Aragon (2001-2004) and Hon. Antonio Jose T. Miro III (2013-2016).

San Pablo located at 17°28'N 121°59'E is bounded by Tuguegarao City in the north, the Municipality of Maconacon in the east, the Municipality of Cabagan in the south and the Cagayan River and Municipality of Santa Maria in the west. It is subdivided into 17 barangays and has a land area of 637.9 square kilometers with a population of 25,384 in 2015. The highest point of the province is located near the border with Cagayan. Mount Dos Cuernos peak has an elevation of 1,785 metres (5,856 ft) located in San Pablo near the border with Maconacon. The Baka (Cow) Festival established in 2004, during the tenure of Mayor Antonio N. Miro, is observed annually every January 15 during the patronal town fiesta to promote the cow industry and its by products.

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## Special Thanks to:

- Provincial Planning & Development Office of Isabela
- Municipal Planning & Development Office of San Pablo, Isabela
- Department of the Interior and Local Government, Isabela Field Office
- Mayor Antonio N. Miro, Jr.
- Ms. Janine M. Balilia