



**THE STOREY'S  
OWN  
STORY**

*By R. K. Storey*

Richard K. Storey  
General Department of Youth  
The Wesleyan Church

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# THE STOREY'S OWN STORY

by Reverend R. K. Storey

On February 3rd, 1945, a mechanized squadron of heroic United States Army men raced through the streets of Japanese-held Manila to the gates of the Santo Tomas University. These intrepid warriors made their way through gunfire and death to where 3,700 internees were slowly but surely starving to death in the internment camp at that place.

Words cannot express the relief and joy that surged through the men and women imprisoned there when the first U. S. tank broke through the wall. I know how they felt, for I was one of them. My dear wife, Rachel Storey, and our two children, David and Martha, know too, for they were with me there for three long years. We felt as the Psalmist expressed it, "When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter and our tongue with singing: then

said they (we) among the heathen, the Lord hath done great things for them (us). The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad" (Psalm 126).

Wife and I went to the Philippine Islands to work for the Pilgrim Holiness Church.

We sailed from the United States on May 16, 1937, and landed in Manila, June 20th. How we had looked forward to the hour when we should stand on those distant shores, and now we had arrived. No doubt our hearts would have failed us had we known what the future held, but we only knew that we had moved in His blessed will, and our souls were full of faith and praise. Our family at this time, besides wife and I, consisted of Lola Mae, age five, and David, age one. Dear little Martha, now with us, came along later.

We were met at the pier by two of our young Filipino brethren who helped us find suitable lodging in Manila. We remained in that city for about a month, during which time we made every effort to orient ourselves and to plan for the work that lay ahead.

From Manila we went to the town of Baguio. This proved to be a much more favorable climate for us during the hot summer, as it is situated in the mountains. While living at Baguio, we made our first visit to the work that had been opened by the young Filipino Christians.

The work of the Pilgrim Holiness Church in the Philippine Islands had been started three or four years previously by several godly young Filipinos who had been brought to Christ in the Pilgrim work in California.

During the winter of 1934-35 our Missionary Secretary had spent some time on the island of Luzon, and as a result of his reports to the General Board of our Church, the Philippine mission had been authorized and missionaries appointed. We were both surprised and delighted to see what God had already done through these workers and thoroughly enjoyed our first evangelistic trip among them.

After about two months God gave us an opening in the city of Cabanatuan. The Lord gave us a fine group of people as a nucleus.

In the spring of 1938, we received funds and instructions from our missionary office for the opening of our Bible training school. We started our school that first year with eleven student workers. At the close of the school year we took our students on an evangelistic tour visiting the churches, preaching, and praying wherever we had opportunity.

Following this trip there was a period when I engaged in revival meetings, in between times working on our acres and getting the boys' dormitory ready for

the next year. We opened school that fall with thirty student workers.

The Philippine Island of Luzon seemed to me to present a wonderful field for full salvation work. There was opposition, yes, and some persecution, but for the most part we met a hungry and appreciative people. Good seed had been sown and things were beginning to move. When we first went to the field there were but two full-time workers and six regular preaching points. Now there were seven full-time native ministers, and we had twenty-one preaching points besides eight organized churches. There were eleven Sunday schools. Our church membership now stood close to three hundred. And, of course, there was much that could not be reported by statistics. To God be all the glory.

Then came the third year of our school. If we had taken all who applied, we would have had fifty students.

Our plan at the school was to have half days in classes, so from early morning till noon the students were engaged in study. The afternoon was given over to work in our gardens. We had a nice start with the garden and also with our poultry and a piggery that had been added. Things looked bright and promising.

During the late summer of 1941, we saw the war clouds gathering. Our Missionary Secretary wrote telling us that we had better return to the States at once, that war seemed inevitable. We waited too long.

December of 1941, found us still living in Cabanatuan at the Bible school. On Monday, December 8, we first learned that the Japanese forces had landed in the north part of Luzon, our Island. All bus and train accommodations for civilians were immediately cancelled. The roads were taken over by the U. S. army, and all trucks were used by the army for transporting troops. We, of course, were very much concerned about our students getting home from the school. To provide food for them under these threatening conditions could become an impossible burden, but they could not get home. We stayed on in our Bible school home with our students until December 24th. Much time was spent in prayer, waiting before the Lord.

On the 24th, one of our native workers came from town with the news that the Japanese army was approaching, and we must leave our home. Knowing we might never return, we gathered in the chapel just before dark and had our last prayer there. The presence of the Lord was precious and near. We prayed for special guidance, for we knew not where to go. That evening as we left our home we looked

over toward the U.S.-Filipino Army camp and saw it afire. The beautiful buildings and supplies were being destroyed by our own forces. This was to us an ominous warning of things to come, for we knew then our Army was withdrawing.

We hiked through the rice fields that night for some miles and found shelter in an abandoned house, only to discover in a few days that we were in another dangerous place. We again traveled all night, fearing the machine guns of the Japanese planes, for Filipinos had been machine-gunned while working in their rice fields, and we knew we must travel at night to be safe.

This time we sought refuge farther back in the mountains. While there I heard that there was an American officer and a tank force some two miles from us.

I had a good talk with this officer, and he told us the Japanese might already be in the rice field around us. He advised us to get to Manila as quickly as possible, for it had been declared an open city, and he thought we would be safe there. Manila was seventy-five long miles away. We walked all night. Our interpreter was dear little Lola Mae, who could speak the Tagalog dialect fluently.

We had begun to realize by this time that we could never reach Manila, for we had suitcases to carry and



Martha, who was just two, had to be carried as well, and at times David. We decided to turn back and see if we could find the Christian Filipinos whom we had left.

It was some few days before we could make this contact. It was surely a happy day when we met them and we could start our nightly march together. We eventually camped beside a mountain stream with our Christian Filipinos.

Lola Mae took sick while we were camped along the side of this creek. She told her mother one day that she was ill and asked her to forgive her for drinking water out of the stream without its being boiled. Lola Mae grew steadily worse as the days passed. We prayed and she gave a clear testimony of salvation. Quickly and quietly Lola Mae departed to be with Christ. This was February 1, 1942.

We placed some rice straw in a box and a Filipino girl gave us a blanket which we used as a spread. There was a short service. One of our Filipino pastors gave a message and we laid her body to rest on a nearby hillside, there to await the resurrection of the just.

Early the next morning while we were on the trail to visit the grave, we were startled by the wild cries of Japanese soldiers. When they caught sight of us,

they leveled their guns and we thought they were going to shoot us then and there. Of course we raised our hands in submission. They came up to us yelling like wild men. For some unaccountable reason the noncommissioned officer in charge of the patrol stepped in and restrained the savage soldiers. I shall never cease to praise God for this deliverance.

One of the most brutal of the soldiers, whose bayonet was covered with fresh blood, forced Mrs. Storey to clean it for him. This she did with my handkerchief. She was then allowed to go back to camp. The Filipino doctor and I were marched up the trail to meet the Japanese captain. After talking with the officer they sent soldiers back to camp with me to get Rachel and the children. We were then started on our way back to Cabanatuan. We spent that night in a Japanese Army camp. The next morning before daylight we were put on Japanese trucks from the camp to be taken to Cabanatuan.

These were lonely and trying days. We were living within sight of the markets where formerly we had held open-air services. These were nerve-racking days for all of us, particularly for Rachel. It was very hard for her to sleep because of the awful fear of the Japanese soldiers.

We were held in Cabanatuan about twelve days be-

fore being sent to Manila and the Santo Tomas Internment Camp. When we arrived at the Manila headquarters they said they hardly knew what to do with us, as the Colonel at Cabanatuan had given us such a good recommendation. It seemed that they wanted to leave us outside the camp, but not having any churches there, and with all our funds beyond reach in the now-closed American bank, they took us to the camp. There we took up our post with the rest of the Americans.

For the first six months the Japanese provided nothing for the camp. Our food came from Red Cross supplies which were left after the surrender of our military forces. Beds and personal effects were finally allowed to come in, brought by Filipino friends of those whose homes had been in the city. The food situation became critical as the Red Cross supplies were exhausted. Some of the people who had funds could make contacts with those outside, who delivered food to them at the gate. Since our funds were beyond reach, we were not among the fortunate ones, but the God Who feeds the sparrows knew our needs. A family of Manila Filipinos, business people and total strangers to us, obtained our names and began sending gifts of food to us. Native fruits, and sometimes a fried chicken, contributed to our comfort. How thank-

ful we were for these mercies!

Further trials yet awaited us. The Japanese authorities were finally told by our Internee Committee that they would have to take over and buy the food and necessary supplies for the camp. The Japanese then allowed us thirty-five cents a day per person. From this amount the light bills, water bills, and camp incidentals were paid, leaving a balance of twenty cents a day for food per individual.

My work was in the kitchen. Part of the time my job was making tea for the whole camp, and later on I assisted in the cooking. Rachel did some work cleaning and preparing vegetables, also picking the worms out of the cracked wheat. They finally excused the mothers with children of a certain age from this kind of work.

On February 1, 1944, the military replaced the diplomatic corps as directors of the camp. With the coming in of the military, privileges such as buying extra food, hospital facilities outside the camp, and laundry service from the city, all ceased. A barbed wire fence was set up within ten feet of the inside of our wall as though they were determined to isolate and cut us off from all connections with the outside world. They compelled us to plant gardens, but limited us in the harvesting of the same. Many of the

fruits were used by the soldiers themselves. This was particularly so of some nice bananas we had raised, although they did give us some for the sick. Much of the gardening, even to breaking of the soil, had to be done with large hoes.

The food allowances became smaller and smaller until we were granted less than a half pound of dry cereal per person for the day. Consequently, most of our food consisted of water, mush, and soup. Hunger and starvation prevailed. All the conversations were about food. The plea of the children was for food. There was even a rage of copying food recipes by the hour, and also of planning meals that the internees said they were going to have when the war was over. Many would gather at the food lines long before serving time, longing for the first sight of food, and to be the first in line. Children were often seen dipping their fingers in the mush on the way to their rooms. They would cry in the night for food. The children, as well as the adults, were growing thin and sick.

During these days I recall that the Japanese soldiers brought an old carabao, or water buffalo, into the grounds. The internees were told to kill and dress this particular beast, only to watch the Japanese soldiers carry it away to their own barracks, leaving only

the hoofs, horns, hide, and the entrails for us. It was pitiful to see the people snatching at what remained. I was not in the yard in time to secure any part of this questionable feast, but David managed to salvage a piece of the hide for us which we cooked and ate after burning off the hair.

News had long since been denied us; then on September 21st, 1944, the first American planes flew over, and we knew General MacArthur was on his way back to the Philippines. The morale of the camp bloomed like flowers in the springtime! The Japanese did not approve of this, however, and forbade us to even look up when the planes flew over. The bombings and the visits from these planes continued over the period of weeks until February 3rd.

### DIARY NOTES

The following diary notes were written in an old copy book at different times. They reflect with considerable accuracy our everyday life in the internment camp.

April 30—So they say Italy has surrendered, but I am afraid it is another rumor.

May 3 (Monday)—Good rumors, but how much

truth is there in what we are hearing? "Big battle action in Manchukuo." "Peace feelers by Hitler." Well, we shall wait and see.

May 23—Preached my first Sunday sermon since being in camp. The Lord did help me, giving liberty and blessing.

Nov. 25—Thanksgiving Day. Surely glad and thankful to get to talk to Ganibe. He brought me the liberal gift from Marion of \$100.00. Also \$25.00 from Cabanatuan. May the Lord bless all of our dear friends.

February 15, 1944—Things seemed to be getting tighter; orders today are that there is to be no more building.

March 24—Praise the Lord for the uplift in the last month, six letters from home folks, and four boxes.

June 15—They have stopped our newspaper again. Maybe they think the news is too good for us. I surely do have a bad cold. Yesterday we received three letters from home folks. News about two years old, but glad to hear from them.

July 8—Quite a little excitement in camp this morning with so many new folks (missionaries) coming. We wonder why the great secrecy—soldiers guarding them, and too we wonder how long they are going to stay.

Sept. 21—This is the day that we have looked for, for about two years and ten months. We are sad for the loss of life, but we have prayed for deliverance from this prison that is getting worse and worse.

Sept. 23—Another air raid signal this A.M. Did see three planes very high, but no bombing; maybe they were “wild eagles.”

Sept. 25 (Monday)—The Philippines declared war on the U. S. last Saturday at 10:00 A.M. Poor folks, have to do what the “Boss” says. I hope it does not cause a great number to get killed.

Sept. 26—Surely are weak and hungry. We are getting so little rice. The 800 grams for the week leaves me weak. It gives about five big spoonfuls for the noon and the night meal. A little more mush for breakfast.



Oct. 8 (Sunday)—Praise the Lord for victory over sin and the devil. Have been feeling the blessed presence of the Spirit today. Surely someone has been praying for us! How encouraging to know that relatives and friends are remembering us at the Throne of Mercy.

Oct. 17—We did get an extra dipper of rice for lunch. I surely am hungry.

Oct. 19 (Thursday)—The longest air raid, 10 hours and 22 minutes, with many waves of planes numbering up to about 60 or 70. Rachel, Martha, and I were caught at the shanty, but David was at the bathroom, so he ran to the Main Building. It surely was a surprise to all of us, for they were in and dropping their bombs without even a warning signal. Had steamed bread with butter!

Oct. 24 (Tuesday)—Air raid signal this A.M. at 5:58. We had three raids in all during the day. All clear at 4:00 P.M.

Nov. 6 (Monday)—Air raid alarm at 4:23 A.M. Several raids during the day. Was caught in a raid while at the shanty baking some bread. So we are to bow and like it!

Nov. 13—Had the longest air raid up to this time; it lasted 11½ hours. Came again without any warning. Many planes and heavy bombs.

### THE YANKS COME BACK

Our first indication of the approaching United States army forces was the sound of artillery the evening of that notable day of our release. We heard the rumbling of the tanks, then the rapid fire of the machine guns. The loud reports of field guns boomed through the night. The Japanese guards became very excited, driving everybody to the buildings at the point of the bayonet. No one was allowed to pass from one building to another. The tanks rolled nearer. I fled to the building where Rachel and the children hugged the floor, and I joined them there! We prayed and held on while the bullets whined and whistled over our heads. Suddenly a great noise was heard at the entrance. A U.S. army tank was breaking through the wall of our internment camp. Deliverance had come! Glory, hallelujah!

The camp that had been dark so long from continuous blackouts now became aglow with the searchlights of those tanks. The internees suddenly awakened to the glorious reality that the boys in khaki for whom we had been looking so long, had come. We

poured out of the buildings like a cloudburst! Crowding around the tanks, we hugged the soldiers; we wept and cried and shouted for joy! With an eager fondness men and women patted the grimy sides of the tanks, those iron engines of war. Our own hearts were filled with gratitude and praise to God and to these noble men. Similarly will our Great Deliverer, Jesus Christ, break through the clouds some of these days. Hallelujah!

The 37th Infantry was supposed to have come in the next morning to reinforce the advantage of the 1st Cavalry, but for some reason the coming was delayed. This left these soldiers (less than seven hundred) alone against some twenty thousand Japanese who were in the other parts of the city. The reinforcements soon moved in, however, and the next day firing began. The Japanese were busy getting their forces across the river to make their final stand in the old walled city, and in some of the stronger buildings. They started firing into our camp, and those shells tore big holes in the buildings. Numbers of our internees were killed. One lady inside of our building was blown to pieces, and they could not find enough of her to bury. David and I just escaped. We had gone into the washroom and a little while after we left, a shell hit that room and killed a man, injuring

many others. For a while we were in the front line of battle.

Our soldiers did a noble job of finding the Japanese guns and knocking them out as fast as they could. They finally silenced them all. Once more God had seen fit to preserve our lives. Our hearts are deeply moved as we think of the noble young soldiers who died for us in those terrible days!

The troops who first came shared the contents of their knapsacks with the internees, but our first food supplies from the army arrived either Sunday afternoon or Monday morning. About fifteen truckloads came in through heavy gunfire. Some of the truck drivers were shot and killed by Japanese snipers along the roads. The fighting raged in the streets of Manila, and the city by this time was aflame in many places.

Those were thrilling and exciting days in our prison camp. I can never forget the scene when they first raised the Stars and Stripes. The internees nearly went wild with joy and gratitude. What a time we had!

Then there was the day when General of the Armies Douglas MacArthur visited the camp. The people thronged around him until he could hardly move through the crowd. They wept and shouted. We shall always remember this gallant soldier, and I am glad

that I got to see him.

The tide had turned. The Japanese were being destroyed and driven back out of the burning, ruined city. The U. S. Government began to take steps at once to clear the internees from the camp. Names would be called, and in a few hours a load of people would roll away toward the airfields and the transport planes.

Word from home began to reach us. One of the first communications we received after our liberation was an encouraging letter from our Foreign Missions Secretary quoting those wonderful words from an old hymn, "Grace has brought us safe thus far, and grace will lead us home." How we did praise God for His grace that had indeed brought us safe thus far. That letter, too, told us that thousands in the homeland had been praying for us.

We do praise the Lord for the way He stood by us in these weeks and months of suffering and sorrow. Through it all it was a great comfort to my soul to realize that we had come to the Philippines in the will of God, and we were there in His service.