

THE END  
of the  
FIRST MANILA OBSERVATORY

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Meteorology had not made any important advances in 1865 and hence it was understandable that the Spanish government had done nothing in this matter in the Philippines. But the science teachers at the Ateneo de Municipal became sufficiently interested in meteorology to initiate a series of observations which continued for seventy-five years although some of the first instruments were rather crude. The first typhoon warning was not issued until July 7, 1879.

Seismic instruments had been installed, and a series of severe shocks were felt in Manila in 1880. These shocks and the typhoon warning focused attention on the Observatory, and on April 28, 1884, a royal decree was issued which made the Observatory the Central Office of the Philippine Weather Service. When the Americans set up the civil government in 1901 they continued this same relation with the Observatory.

In 1915, the 50th anniversary of the Observatory, Father Sadera Maso, S.J., wrote a history of the Observatory; but in 1940, the 75th anniversary of the Observatory, nothing was done to mark the event. A very complete history of the Observatory would have been well timed because with the outbreak of the war, in the following years, the demise of the Observatory began.

The Navy evacuated its families from the Philippines a year before the beginning of the war, and the Army its families six months before. The last passenger ship to leave Manila for the States sailed in mid-October, 1941. It is probable that the following notes constitute the only record of the next three years in the Observatory.

About December 3, 1941. The telegraph operators were put on a 24-hour basis. 6:00 A.M. — 2:00 P.M.; 2:00 P.M. — 10:00 P.M.; 10:00 P.M. — 6:00 A.M.

December 8 (Dec. 7 in Honolulu). Reports of the bombing of Pearl Harbor began to filter in, but were discredited as being improbable. Then reports of bombing in the Philippines gave the situation on a more serious aspect, and then reports from Clark Field removed all doubts. Notice was received from the Bureau of Posts that all telephone calls for the Weather Bureau would be routed through the Bureau of Posts; later calls did not give evidence of any