

On January 26, 1911, the Governor of the Philippine Islands, Hon. W. Cameron Forbes, issued an executive order, intended to promote the advancement of Historical Research in the Philippines by gathering, compiling and preserving for the benefit of future generations the wealth of historical material that was scattered throughout the islands in the form of old manuscripts or personal recollections. ⁽¹⁾ It was deemed imperative to withdraw from the ravages of fire, storms, floods and termites the historical documents, written on paper or bamboo leaves. It was considered a sacred duty to the people to write down in an intelligent form the personal recollections of those men, whose memory had been a veritable treasure-house of national history: otherwise, with their passing away, valuable data might be lost forever. The Executive order called for the following information: name of the town, date of its establishment, names of the original families, of public officials and of ecclesiastical superiors, historical records, narratives of traditions, names of authors with titles of all their productions, whether printed or in manuscript. As a sign of recognition and appreciation, the Government offered to preserve in the National Library for public use the documents and papers sent in by the provincial and municipal authorities. It is no secret that the initiator of the idea was Luther Parker who found in the Acting Executive Secretary Manuel Iriarte a strong supporter of the scheme.

In response to the Executive Order, over 400 documents were received from various municipalities and are now preserved in the shelves of the National Library. The facts reported in documents (floods, earthquakes, etc.) are so plain and public that no special knowledge is required in the chronicler to write them down: veracity and diligence on the part of the chroni-