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# Marianas History Conference

Oral History/Genealogy



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# Espritu Tasi/The Ocean Within: Critical Postcolonial Dance Recovery in Guahan

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**Abstract:** *Considering the layers of colonial histories, this study examines key issues arising from projects of dance revitalization in Guåhan. The analysis draws from reflections of the June 2011 Chamorro dance competition and conversations with oral historian Leonard Iriate, the director of Guma' Pálu Li'e' – I Fanlalai'an. The dance renaissance in Guåhan is linked to dance recovery work carried out by other Pacific people at home and in their Diaspora locations. Across the Oceania, dance is utilized for accessing and perceiving historical, ecological and genealogical knowledge (Cruz Banks 2011; Teawia 2008; Hau ofa 2008). Based on preliminary findings, recommendations are given on how to conceptualize the role dance plays for promoting knowledge grounded in indigenous heritage and creativity. As a Chamorro dance anthropologist, this research strives to use the politics of dance in Guåhan as a lens for discerning the history and (post) colonial predicaments of the Marianas islands.*

I felt the hair on my skin rise when the young songstress passionately sang “Mariana, Mariana”. She was a member of the dance troupe Guma Katon I Tano, who performed at the 9<sup>th</sup> annual Dinana Minagof/ Chamorro Dance Competition and Festival held June 25-26, 2011 at the University of Guam’s field house. The festival featured the work of fifteen *guma* or dance families/schools from around the Marianas and special guests from Japan. The dancers and chanters wore beautiful landscape-made regalia; they adorned themselves with leaves and flowers that were alive. Over a hundred young people performed on the stage with a painted backdrop of a sunlit blue sky reflecting the ocean and horizon; the portable mural prominently featured huge latte stones, a massive banyan and many *niyok*/ coconut trees with wild flowers growing from lush green grass.

I missed the opening ceremony that included the prayers, blessings from the matua and opening remarks. The bilingual Chamorro/English event was divided into three categories: Contemporary, Spanish and Ancient. Each style of dance had their own suite of judges and before a *guma* would begin their performance, one to two student- representatives of the group would come on stage and answer a question posed by a judge. Inquiries included: What is the significance of

chamorro language on Chamorro culture? What is the your favorite aspect of chamorro culture to perform and why? What are we celebrating and why is it important? The *guma* were judged on best overall across the categories and individually.

Beautiful children of a wide range in age came on stage with fierce confidence, strengthen, conviction, and commitment, and there were some adorable disoriented, nervous ones too. The songs bounced and permeated the big spacious auditorium. Many of the lead singers and musicians contributed from backstage. You could not see them. For the contemporary and Spanish dances the guitar was featured prominently. The ancient section was more percussive, featuring the stick rhythms and drums from West Africa. Families cheered for their children. The crafters set up their stalls on the other side of the field house directly across the stage. Spondylus, blue coral, bone, conch shells, mango jam, cartoon drawings, t-shirts with the printed phrase ‘lechay’, red rice, wood- carvings and other items were for sale.

The director and conductor of the event was Frank Rabon. He is a key Chamorro educator, choreographer and dance leader on the island. The *guma* teachers were trained by Rabon. With his leadership Pa’a Taotao Tano, the non-profit organization that formed in 2001, produced this event. They are funded by federal and local grants, corporate sponsors and local fundraising events.

The previous portrait of this affair illustrate how this dance on the island of Guam is a window into the contemporary Chamorro identities, transcultural production and the dilemmas and opportunities of colonialism. In this event there is an active reaching back into the cultural timeline and clear desire to know and honor the cultural distinction of the Mariana Islands. The two-day festival uses dance, chant and music has a way to charge up Chamorro integrity, and activate cultural rebirth and political transformation; however, this is not without contradictions and questionable cultural frameworks.

Nonetheless, I witnessed some effective performance. Sometimes, the chanting and dancing unleashed kana/spiritual energy into the space – a tangible power that gave me goose bumps and made me cry. I see the competition has an effort to practice traditional modes of education and storytelling. The focus of this paper is to reflect about dance as an important resource for indigenous knowledge on the island of Guam; the paper explores how Dinana Minagof engages in what I call ‘critical



postcolonial dance recovery’ (Cruz Banks, 2009, 2010). In other words, how dance promotes cultural survival, reinvention, and renaissance. In addition, I want to make some recommendations and raise questions for (re)conceptualizing Chamorro indigenous dance practices.

### **Bailan Irensia-ta/Embodying Heritage**

In the Guahan context, dance is a tool for strengthening culture, less about the physical form but more about the consciousness it creates (Rabon 2010; Iriate 2010, 2011; Flores 1999). If I can pose a possible working definition of dance relevant to Pacific people, I would say it’s the embodiment of relationships. The link between bodies, oral histories, and cultural production is key to understanding the role and purpose of dance. As Underwood (2012) pointed to in his keynote address “history does not refer to the past, we carry is within us”, he quotes renowned late African American writer and political activist James Baldwin. Underwood said we all have histories finely woven into our identities.

This idea was also articulated by Chamorro spoken word artist and rapper dākota Alcantara-Camacho, who raps the verse “I am like a turtle, I carry home on my back”; the stanza was inspired by the work of Chicana poet and feminist, Gloria Anzaldua (1987). Dance exemplifies how we carry home, because how people dance or not dance is often a reflection of cultural politics, the political choreography of identities. Our bodies (and this includes our minds and hearts) are repositories of tragic histories, pain, and triumphs; how we articulate our bodies is a kinetic expression often determined by the contours of land and sea we live and hence, the embodiment of indigenous knowledge and worldview.

Dance is used to interrupt the deliberate oppression of dance by colonialism and Christianity around the globe (Cruz Banks, 2009). Across the Pacific, dance provides access to cultural roots and help us to determine the routes of reconciliation and healing from cultural degradation (Hau’ofa 2000, 2008; 2009a, 2009b; Teaiwa 2005, 2008; Hereniko 2006). Renowned Kenyan writer wa Thiong’o (1981) wrote that ‘decolonizing the mind’ was about promoting cultural expressions such as songs, music and dance. Tuhiwai Smith (1999) stated decolonizing methodologies requires indigenous people reclaim our research processes and set in place principles that are aligned with our indigenous cultural values and the land we live (see also Royal 2009b, 2010).

As a Chamorro and African American woman born in the Turtle Island/United States who has been living in Aotearoa/New Zealand for five years I reflect about this topic as a choreographer, anthropologist, auntie, sister, and daughter of the Guahan diaspora. I also draw from my perspective of studying dance in very diverse cultural contexts. However, this analysis still needs to consult with Frank Rabon, his protégés and student dancers. More time spent on Guam is needed to get better acquainted with the nuances of the cultural dance climate. Another limitation is that I do not speak Chamorro, hence, I miss some cultural meaning. However, this research was really inspired to increase my knowledge of the language and a desire to connect with my Chamorro heritage and to learn about my family and our genealogy through researching dance on the island.

### **Dancing homeland(s): The Dance Debate on Guahan**

This research calls for more attention on the ecological picture of dance because this is easy to miss for definitions and histories of dance are tangled in colonialism, Christian conversion, diaspora stories and imprinted with the effects of global capitalism and American pop culture. An important context for understanding indigenous dance practices is that frequently it seeks to nourish and/or (re)develop somatic relationships with land and sea. For many communities, dance is what Yvonne Daniels calls ‘social medicine’ a healing practice that reclaims ritual, creates community and family harmony within the postcolonial predicaments. For example, discussing dance in the Native American context, Henderson (2000) calls this process ‘postcolonial ghost dancing’ which is about taking our worlds back, consciousness making and recovering native epistemologies.

My island of Guahan/Guam is layered with colonial, conquest, and complex migration histories. The island’s cultural encounters with the Spanish, United States and Japan have shaped the dance occurring on the island. Currently there is a cultural renaissance led by master dancer and educator Frank Rabon with Tao Tano, oral historian Leonard Iriate of I Fanlalai'an and Dr. Judy Flores spearheaded Gef Pa'go cultural village and now the emerging Dr. Benji Santiago, who founded the Natibu dance company. The revitalizations of dance on the island were inspired by the interactions with other Pacific nations at the Festival of Pacific Arts in 1976. At this occasion, the Guam delegation realized the need to recover pre- Spanish contact dance. Ancient dances have been described as dead or lost on the island. The above choreographers are in engaging in what Flores (1995) calls the reinvention of Chamorro indigenous arts; their sources of inspiration for reestablishing traditions derive from cultural styles observed and learned from

other Pacific cultures, Spanish missionary accounts, early Mariana ethnographies, current research, oral histories, and the natural environment.

There is a lively debate regarding issues of the authenticity of dance and the appropriation of the Chamorro dance in the tourist circuits. For instance, Underwood (2012) accused the dance troupes as romanticizing ancient Guahan and calls this history unrecoverable. He argues there is a glorification of the ancient Chamorros and he is right in saying young people today make a mistake if they leapfrog over their parents or the heroes right in front them in effort to try to recover ancient caricatures. However, the dance groups are not trying to invoke cartoons, they are connecting with their ancestors and this is attainable. As Te Ahukaramu Charles Royal (2009), director of Nga Pae in Auckland, an esteemed Maori research institute writes cultural knowledge is in both the temporal and transcendent world. In other words, it is what we can't see and also what is in front of us. He says we live in a woven universe; there are elements that must be accounted for that live in the visible and invisible world. Flores (1999) talks about this too within the Guam context. Mythological characters, such as Puntan and Fu'una, are ancestors and are very significant to the Chamorro genesis. The paragons help us embody and uphold the memories and connections that help us consciously weave our past into our present. This kind of revitalization of dance is occurring throughout the Oceania.

A key questions for the Guahan context is how does dance enable us to reestablish and promote a unique Chamorro spiritual strengthen that helps us navigate the world we live in? Dinana Minagof, the dance festival I described earlier, is a record of an ongoing Chamorro articulation of oral histories, and identity. How does the event engages with culture, history, and articulates the Chamorro identity is discussed below.

The dance event has multiple educational benefits. Pa'a Taotao Tano provides opportunities for young to dialogue about critical cultural issues in the Chamorro language, they learn a repertoire of chants, and choreography that is cultural relevant. Some of the movement vocabulary is reflective of a pan pacific borrowing. Cultural appropriation is highly debated in Guam and across other Pacific nations and comes with many controversies and ethical concerns. Research done by Flores (1999) in Guam; Keappler (2004) in Hawai'i; Moulin (1994) in Marquesa and Tahiti; Teaiwa (2005, 2008) in Kiribati and Figi; Alexyeff (2011) in the Cook Islands; Mazer (2007) in Aotearoa; Baiwa Dance company (2012) in Torres

Strait shows evidence of cultural borrowings from our island neighbors, Western culture and beyond. The Chamorro dance competition illustrates this transaction. Nonetheless, the festival engages in the transmission of traditions and indigenous knowledge.

### **(De)Compartmentalizing Ourselves**

In many Pacific cultures, the term traditional dance is often used to describe contemporary or 19<sup>th</sup> century dance practices; and there is a fine line between tradition and contemporary creativity. In Guahan, the authenticity debate needs to take stock of this conversation. Discourses about “what is real, accurate Chamorro dance” would benefit from problematizing these dichotomies. How dance is conceptualized at Dinana Minagof signals the need to take stock of our identity so we can properly honor the island’s hybrid heritage and lineage. There is something problematic about the division of dance at the festival into categories: contemporary, Spanish, ancient. Contemporary Chamorros hold all these moments of history at once. Reflections about how the people carry these story lines simultaneously need to be discussed. How do these historical moments inform one another? What are the implications of this framework or way of viewing our history? Reconciling the Guahan Chamorro mixed identity and viewing history as a constant unfolding continuum is a clear challenge in the Guahan dance renaissance.

### **Decolonizing notions of Contemporary**

The showcase began with the contemporary section reflecting “how we see Guam today”, these are the words of Frank Rabon. One of the *gumas* perform what looks like the Carolinian stick dance, singing “we are the world” in Chamorro. Another group takes on the Lion King theme. Gorgeous children are dressed like flamingos, lions, trees and sing Elton John’s ‘Circle of Life’ in Chamorro and English. These selections represented modern Guam. You can see in these presentations, there is an unabashed influence of popular American culture. This signaled to me the need to re-articulate contemporary Chamorro dance to rethink who we are and what contemporary creativity means for the Marianas Island context. What are our conditions of innovation? How does our indigenous epistemologies inform this creativity? What are the semantics of Chamorro dance? What are the principles and protocols around performance and borrowing? How do our unique environments inform our dance traditions: the qualities of the sea, the air, the ground below, the flowers, and the animals? In Maori context, Royal states performing arts should enable “nature to find expression through human creativity”. How does the land and sea of Marianas find expression in Chamorro

dance? Rabon (2001, 2007) does address the development of pre-contact and post-contact movement but I think the philosophies of reinvention of Chamorro dance need to be addressed.

The above questions are important to taking back knowledge authority. Hokowhitu (2010) calls this the genealogy of indigenous resistance. He says colonized people need to stop defining ourselves from colonial lenses and start taking responsibility of identity making and be sure to select careful choices about how we represent and conceptualize ourselves.

The collection of oral histories in the book Mariana Island Legends compiled by Bo Flood (2001) contains some very rich definitions of dance from Carolinian elder, Joseph Rauk who shared stories passed down to him by his father. His story pointed to how dance promoted cultural survival during WWII. Dancing was about lighting the fire within you, to give bright the way the candle does to dark, to seek protection, to give respect to the ancestors, to lift your heart, to hold truth in your body. “Dance with full force, be proud of who we are”, Ruak was told. Leonard Iriate (2011) has also stated chanting should fine tune ones sensibilities and develop an acute observation and communion with the environment. He went on to say dance is never central to ceremony, its bout becoming one and creating connection; and cultivating unity with our island and ancestors. These are great starting points for a discussion on the creative philosophies of Chamorro performing arts.

These descriptions of dance and their purposes show dance to be a viable methodology for exploring indigenous consciousness, concepts and epistemologies. Dance is knowledge for Pacific people. As the late Figian scholar, artist, activist Hau’ofa (2000) said our cultural expressions are how we keep our oral narratives alive. Dance is a source of kinetic story telling, memories, genealogies, and essential to how we make our worlds; I see dance as important to bonding ourselves to the ocean within, quieting down and transforming cultural dominance.

To conclude, the dance renaissance in Guam is an opportunity to claim an indigenous voice and energize our culture. The festival and the other significant dance communities on Guahan contribute to enabling us to see the heritage of our islands as living, growing, mutually supporting, and the activation of the wisdom that sprouts from the unique vantage point of the Marianas.

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Her research includes dance anthropology, pedagogy, choreography, postcolonial studies, and indigenous perspectives of dance; and specializes in sabar and djembe dance traditions from West Africa, contemporary dance, and recently started an exploring dance engages issues of the Guåhan/ Pacific diaspora.



# Genealogy: Challenges, Tools and Techniques

*By Jillette Torre Leon-Guerrero*

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**Abstract:** *Television programs like, “Who do you think you are?” evidence the growing popularity of genealogy and family history. [Ancestry.com](http://Ancestry.com) would have you believe that all you have to do is enter your ancestor’s name into their database and you will make significant discoveries. These TV spots do little to inform novices about the trials and tribulations of actual genealogical research. What they don’t tell you is that genealogical research can take a lifetime. In the 12 years that I have conducted research into my own genealogy I have gained an understanding of genealogy utilizing various tools and techniques. This presentation outlines the challenges of doing research in Guam and offers some insight into the tools, techniques and strategies that one might utilize when conducting research. A list of genealogical resources will also be made available for those interested.*

## Introduction

Television programs like, “Who do you think you are?” evidence the growing popularity of genealogy and family history. [Ancestry.com](http://Ancestry.com) would have you believe that all you have to do is enter your ancestor’s name into their database and you will make significant discoveries. These TV spots do little to inform novices about the trials and tribulations of actual genealogical research. What they don’t tell you is that genealogical research can take a lifetime.

In the 12 years that I have conducted research into my own genealogy I have gained an understanding of genealogy utilizing various tools and techniques. This presentation outlines the challenges of doing research in Guam and offers some insight into the tools, techniques and strategies that one might utilize when conducting research.

The tracing of genealogical lineages dates to the first century and the gospel of St. Matthews. Until the 16<sup>th</sup> century, genealogy was primarily a tool of the aristocracy, used to prove membership in noble or royal families thereby confirming their entitlement to wealth and power. Modern “scientific genealogy” came about in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. This saw the rise of lineages recorded in writing supported by documentary evidence. The American centennial in 1876 spurred an increase in the popularity of genealogy. Americans took great pride in tracing their ancestors

back to the birth of the nation. It was then that organizations such as the Daughters of the American Revolution (1890) and the Mayflower Society (1897) were founded. Then in the late 1800s the Mormon Church began to collect and make genealogical records available to the public. By the 19<sup>th</sup> century genealogy was an acceptable pastime although not practiced widely. Perhaps this was due to the fact that up until this point, most were searching for “famous” ancestors. It was not until 1977 with the publishing of Alex Haley’s novel, “Roots” that genealogy became a tool to celebrate all ancestors – even those with “ordinary” lives. This book and the resulting television miniseries are widely credited with the surge of interest in genealogy in the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Today, interest in finding one’s roots has hit an all time high. In some cases it has been referred to as America’s latest passion. As a result, resources for genealogists have exploded. With the advent of the Internet numerous genealogy companies popped up and made research available to anyone with an Internet connection and a computer. The largest of these, Ancestry.com, is almost a household name. Popular television programs like, “Who Do You Think You Are?” and “Finding your Roots” has also contributed to the growing popularity of tracing your lineage. New advances in genetics brought about by the human genome-mapping project in 2000 have also spurred the growing interest in tracing one’s roots.

Local interest in genealogy has also blossomed in recent years. Familial identity has always been important in Guam and the CNMI. When meeting a new person from the island, inevitably one is asked to explain their familial relationship. This is a way of establishing a connection, knowing how we relate to each other. But really knowing and validating lineages in writing was rarely done in the past. In the past local genealogy research was done by only a few. Most notable was Paul Souder’s early work at compiling a Guam genealogy in 1981. Toni “Malia” Ramirez started interviewing *manamko* in the 1960s. In the late 1980’s his research of the Ramirez-de Leon Guerrero family was published in the Guam Tribune. His research later became the basis of the local companion exhibit to the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibit “Family Folklore” that the Guam Humanities Council sponsored in 1994. Then in 2003, the GHC launched another program, “My History is Guam’s History” that focused on family history in Guam. While these projects drew significant interest, the growth and availability of resources today has made it easier for the family history buff to conduct research. This has spurred even more interest in genealogy.

The natural growth of collections held by the LDS church and the Micronesian Area Research Center have increased the chances of finding research already conducted by others. Other efforts by Guam and CNMI researchers have led to the creation of an online database featuring Guam families.

“ChamorroRoots.com” developed by Bernie Punzalan is a prime example. People everywhere can log on to ChamorroRoots.com to conduct family history research and upload their family lineages to help others find links to their past. Herman Guerrero in the CNMI has taken on a tremendous project hoping to produce a genealogy of all of the CNMI families. The cooperation of these organizations and researchers is helping to build a local database of significant proportions. Because of the nature of the family history, some of these sources are sometimes fraught with errors but experienced researchers are aware of these potential pitfalls. They recognize the importance of recording even incorrect information for further evaluation later on. What is important is that we have a starting point for researching our family histories in order to tell the story of our people.

### **Challenges and Considerations**

Genealogical research in Guam is challenging due to several reasons: The lack of historical records for the period between 1758 and 1897 make validating information difficult for anyone searching for ancestors during this time period; the change in the naming patterns brought about first when Spain colonized the island and again when Spanish Guam was ceded to the United States in 1898; the destruction of church records, cemeteries and graveyards during WWII and the loss of a significant portion of the *man'amko* in the 1918 due to the flu epidemic also contribute to the challenges faced by those researching their family histories.

A resource or guideline for strategies to use in conducting genealogical research on Guam that address these and other issues does not exist. Most of the information that does exist about life on Guam between 1758 and 1897 is located in the Spanish archives at the Micronesian Area Research Center. While it is available to the public, knowledge of old Spanish and old handwriting styles, and an understanding of the Spanish judicial and administrative practices of the time are essential to understanding the material and can make it difficult to decipher. There are also other scholarly publications, but almost no information pertaining specifically to genealogy research in Guam and the Northern Marianas.

In addition to the lack of records there are other issues to consider when searching for your ancestors.

## **Names**

Your family surname is usually a good place to start your family research. But for the Chamorro genealogist, tracing your lineage back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century can be challenging. Traditionally Chamorros did not have surnames. When the Spanish arrived and began baptizing the population, they gave the Chamorros Christian names. The traditional Chamorro names then became their last name or surname. So in a family of five siblings, all five of the children would carry different surnames. The earliest Spanish census of 1728 lists some familiar surnames: Taitano, Manfaisin, Taitano, Aguan, Tedtaotao, Taitagui, Teisipic, Quidachai, and Taingatongo. It also lists some surnames that have become modern place names: Mangilao, Piti, Ygum, (Ugum?), Malulu (Malolo?), and Yuna (Yona?). Unfortunately the majority of the Chamorro surnames listed in the early Spanish census no longer exist as surnames. This could be attributed to the rapid depopulation of the islands and the ultimate total Christianization of the population.

This is a significant problem for the genealogist who wants to trace their bloodlines back beyond the 1800s. Those descended from Spanish colonists have a better chance of tracing their genealogy through traditional means. Genetic genealogy using DNA may be the only way to trace Chamorro lineages back beyond the 1800s

## **Surnames**

Some general information on surnames is helpful when starting genealogical research:

- Surnames were not used widely in many places until the 14<sup>th</sup> century
- In some cultures, not all siblings carry the same surname
- Surnames don't always follow the paternal lineage
- The practice of wives carrying the surname of their husband is a relatively new development and is not practiced universally
- Spelling of surnames change over time

## **Double surnames**

Hispanic cultures use a double surname system. This has been traced back to the Castile nobility in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century. Under this system a person takes two surnames, one from the mother and one from the father. In Spain, the first surname would be the paternal surname followed by the maternal surname. In Portugal, the first surname would be the maternal surname followed by the paternal. While patrilineal surname generational transmission is currently the norm, it was not always so. It is believed that prior to the mid-eighteenth century

(need citation) Hispanic societies practiced matrilineal surname transmission. In some cases, children were given a grandparent's surname for prestige.

### **“y”**

Spanish naming patterns include the option of conjoining surnames with the conjunction “y” (meaning “and.”) Double surnames sometimes were willed to following generations when the maternal lineage carried more prestige than the paternal line. An example of this would be Jose Maria Alvarez del Manzano y Lopez del Herrero. His first name is a composite name “Jose Maria” and he also carries two composite surnames, “Alvarez del Manzano” and “Lopez del Herrero.” In this case, “Manzano” and “Herrero” are maternal surnames. In cases when the child's father either is unknown or refuses to legally recognize him or her, the child sometimes takes both maternal surnames.

### **“de”**

The preposition “de” is often used as a conjunction in two surname spelling styles and in modern times to distinguish a surname. The first style is in patronymic (derived from a man's surname) and toponymic (derived from a place name) as in many conquistador names: Juan Ponce de Leon and Vasco Núñez de Balboa. The second style is only toponymic in the case of “de la Rúa” (of the Street) and “de la Torre” (of the Tower). In 1958 Spanish law prohibited the use of prefixing “de” to a surname except in cases when the surname may be mistaken for a composite first name. An example would be Pedro de Miguel Jiménez. Without the “de” one might think that his first name is Pedro Miguel. In the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries the usage of “de” to denote a noble heritage gained popularity (even among those with no noble heritage) as a way to distinguish the bearer from the Jews and Moors. Because of this, the particle “de” does not always denote a noble family especially in Castile and Alava where “de” usually is applied to the place-name of the origins of the person.

### **Identity**

A man named after his father might append “h.” to his surname indicating that he is the son, much like Jr. in English.

Spanish surnames ending in “ez” denotes the “son of” as in the case of Álvarez (son or Alvar or Alvaro), Díaz (the son of Diego), Fernández (the son of Fernando), Sánchez (The son of Sancho).

Abandoned babies and orphans were often given toponymic first names after the town where they were found. Because they were often raised by church orphanages, the children were typically given the surnames “Iglesia” or “Iglesias” meaning church or churches or Cruz meaning cross. “Blanco” connoting “blank” and “Expósito” meaning “exposed” were other surnames given to abandoned babies and orphans. “Expósito” labeled the bearer as abandoned and connoted low social status and prestige. This social stigma prompted the Spanish government to allow those with the surname “Exposito” to change it without charge in 1921.

### **Foreign Citizens**

When foreigners become Spanish citizens they are legally obliged to assume Spanish-style names. If the person has a one-name surname then his surname is often duplicated. If the person has a middle name as in the English system, then his first and middle name become a composite name. For instance, the English name George Michael Duran (First, middle and last names) would become George Michael (composite first name) and Duran Duran (last name).

### **Given Names**

Given names in Hispanic societies typically come from Roman Catholic saint names. Children are often named after the saint whose feast day falls on the day of their birth. Children are usually given more than one name – boys, many times have “Jose” and girls “Maria” as one of their names. Children are also named for godparents or deceased relatives. It was also not uncommon in Spain for a male to carry “Maria” and a girl to carry “Jose” as one of their names.

### **Naming Patterns in Guam and NMI**

Naming patterns in Guam and the NMI during the Spanish period of our history appear to follow the Hispanic naming system with one addition: Clan names. Historian Toni Ramirez believes that clan names came about in the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century as a way to distinguish among the various lines of a single surname. In the 1728 Census there are 16 individuals with the surname “Cruz,” 14 with the surname “Espinosa” and “Rios,” 12 with the name “Salas” and 10 with the name “Leon Guerrero.” With each passing generation, the number of descendants in some cases exploded. Giving specific families clan names was one way to distinguish them. Ramirez said when he started his genealogy research in the 1960s some *manamko* (elderly) couldn’t remember their surname because they identified themselves with their clan name. It appears that these clan names were given for a variety of reasons. A sample from Ramirez’s research:

- Reference to a place: My Torre family clan name is “Manila” referring to the birthplace of my 2<sup>nd</sup> great grandfather.
- Reference to a given name: Binu’ derived from Balvino/Leon Guerrero
- Reference to surname: Teyu derived from Tello or Robat derived from Roberto or Roberts
- Reference to animal: Atu’/Swamp fish refers to Guzman
- Reference to quality or characteristic: Yomuk/fat, obese refers to Leon Guerrero or Kabesa/leader refers to Flores
- Reference to objects: Galaidi’/Canoe refers to Sablan
- Reference to food: Poto/Rice dessert refers to Palomo

Ernie Guerrero once told me how his family obtained their clan name. His ancestor was given a present of a pair of shoes by a priest in recognition for his work. This ancestor loved those shoes so much that he was never without them. He even wore them to feed the pigs! The name brand of the shoes was Charriol. His family name, “Charot” was a Chamorro derivative of the brand name! While many clan names have survived, the meaning behind them is often lost.

In 1920, Naval Governor of Guam, Captain William W. Gilmer decreed that all residents of Guam 16 years and older must register for a *cédula* personal or identification card. This was required to establish the identity of residents for tax payments, land registration, birth registration and court matters. It would also end the centuries old Spanish system of double surnames. The result of this single decree created a major challenge for genealogists. In some cases family members dropped their paternal surname while their siblings dropped their maternal surname. In some cases the compound surname “de Leon Guerrero” became “de Leon” or just “Guerrero.” One of my relatives carries the maiden name “Fejarang.” Her grandfather told her that his surname was really “de Guzman” but that he had to change it to get work. I assume this is a reference to this decree that in order to get work you had to have only one name. This little bit of information gave me another avenue for to research a line that had been stalled because I couldn’t find the previous generation.

Another issue in researching surnames is spelling and placement. In my efforts to research my paternal line, I have found my grandfather’s name listed in official documents as “Ignacio F. Leon Guerino,” “Ignacio Fejarang Leon Guerrero,” and “Ignacio Fejearan Leon Guerrero.” My great-grandfather’s name listed as “Justo de Leon Guerrero Gregorio,” “Justo Gregorio de Leon Guerrero” and simply “Justo de Leon Guerrero.” It is obvious from this that it was my grandparent’s generation

that dropped the “de.” My grandmother’s family dropped the “de” from “de la Torre” around the same time. In some census records the family name is listed as “de la Torre,” in others it is “La Torre” and more recent records show simply “Torre.” In my research into my maternal line I have found numerous spelling errors and transcription errors. Today we are so concerned about the spelling of our names. I’ve been told, “I’m an Pangelinan with an ‘i’” As opposed to an “e” the same for “Fejerang” with an ‘e’ or an ‘I’ with a ‘g’ or no ‘g.’ Perhaps in the more recent generations this may be true, but I don’t think that this is a hard and fast rule.

We have all heard about how immigrants changed their names at Ellis Island to make them more “American.” We also have that issue with families that travel. Growing up we moved around the globe because my father was in the Air Force. He taught me to write my name “Leon-Guerrero” in order for people to understand that my name was not “Guerrero” but “Leon-Guerrero.” This is how I have written my name all my life. On the other hand, my sister-in-law who lives in South Carolina spells it “Leonguerrero.” I think that people have “bucked” the system in the past for one reason or another and changed their surnames. In modern times I have heard of couples combining their surnames or a part of each surname to make new one, or simply create an entirely new name. These practices will make it much more difficult for genealogists.

## **Cultural Practices**

### **Inheritance Primogeniture**

Male primogeniture (inheritance to first born son) was practiced in Hispanic families for hundreds of years. It is often said that in a family of four brothers, the first-born inherits all, one brother goes into the priesthood, one becomes a soldier and one is left to make his own way. The nobility in Spain fought hard against a law that allowed either gender primogeniture in 2009. While male primogeniture is still in place for the Spanish Royal family, (this would require a change in the Spanish Constitution.) it is not the case for the rest of the country. This is important to genealogists as knowing the birth placement of children can help to understand the choices that they made as adults. Since first-born sons inherited their parent’s property, it is most likely (but not always the case) that those who choose to venture abroad are younger.



In Guam the custom is slightly different. While males are given preference over females when dividing property, males and females will typically inherit property if there is enough. Many times the youngest son inherits the family home.

### **Poksai**

*Poksai* (to nurture) is the custom of informal adoptions practiced in many Pacific Island cultures. This practice of rearing the natural children of others can be traced to ancient Chamorro times. This practice was more common in the past due to modern day legalities. In ancient times, *Mapoksai* (adopted children) held all the rights and responsibilities of a natural child with one exception – they could not inherit a titled position if another relative could fill that position. Although *Poksai* is still in practice today, many families now opt to formally adopt the child so that the child can legally be entitled to all benefits under the law. This can often explain the presence of children with different surnames than the rest of the family in households. It sometimes can be challenging for the genealogist to figure out which extended family is the child's natural family, but when that is figured out, it can open up another line of research into another branch of the family tree. Many times childless couples will rear children of their siblings or extended family, grandparents rear grandchildren, and I have heard of cases of couples asking parents to raise a child. In cases when parents die or are unable to care for their children then members of the extended family often step in to raise the child or children as their own. It can be challenging for the genealogist to figure out which family is the child's natural family, but when that is figured out, it can open up another line of research into another branch of the family tree.

### **Children out of wedlock**

In the past children born out of wedlock usually carried their mother's names along with a social stigma. Today having a child out of wedlock is more acceptable than in the past resulting in more fathers recorded in birth records. The New York Times reported in February that 53% of babies born to children under the age of 30 are born out of wedlock and 41% of all babies born in the U.S. are born out of wedlock.

### **Historical Gap**

The gap between the 1757 and 1897 census is formidable. Many can trace their heritage back to the 1897 census but getting beyond that takes sleuth and patience. One strategy that I used was to go through Levesque's History of Micronesia twenty volumes and record all of the names listed within. I also did the same with other publications and created a spreadsheet of sorts. I created a listing of Spanish

soldiers beginning with a 1717 document and ends with 1789. Herman Guerrero shared a Spanish document with me that lists the births, marriages and deaths of Guam residents in 1823. Publications put out by RFT MARC usually contain names of not only the leaders of the community but others as well. Church records were destroyed during the war in Guam but some were saved in Saipan. Access to these records may help to fill in the gap. The Spanish documents collection at MARC is a gold mine. The digital archival and indexing of the Spanish documents collection at MARC would greatly enhance the research potential of the collection and at the same time help to preserve the original documents.

### **Tools and Techniques**

The availability of tools and techniques for genealogical research has spurred the incredible growth in this occupation in recent years. You can now share information with collaborators all over the world via the Internet! The number of resources can be daunting at times. I know I have found myself immersed in research that I didn't plan! And because it is so immediate you sometimes forgot one of the most important things in researching your family tree. That is to record all of your searches and all the information that you get from all of your sources. That means that little bit of information from Uncle Juan that doesn't seem to fit anywhere. In a week, a month or even a year later you may find another tidbit of information that connects the two and you need to not only have that information, but to retrieve it. I personally have learned the hard way. I have had to redo the research that I did previously because I did not keep accurate and complete records. This will save you a lot of time. The best way that I have found is to keep a notebook for every surname. Every time you start to research an ancestor, write down the current date and the name/reference of the source you are searching. This could be a person, a database, a book etc. Be sure to write down the information that you find or DO NOT FIND. This information can later be transferred to other documents and formats, but it is a good way to start and keep everything in order. By writing down what you didn't find you can avoid looking for the same information another time in the same source.

## **Home and Family Sources**

### **Family members**

Interview family members. Discuss memories that the person has of the deceased family member, talk about memories of earlier years, adult years, events that affected the life of the person you are interviewing. You can also ask them questions from a questionnaire that you have prepared. This often helps move the

conversation along. Ask them to show you photographs and other documents that may relate to the person. A portable scanner is useful if they agree to let you copy the photos and documents.

### **Documents, Records and Photographs**

If at all possible get copies of vital records, photographs, news clippings, passports, visas, work permits, citizenship or naturalization papers, legal\land documents, baptismal or other church records, old letters, military service records, school and work records, newspaper clippings, identification cards, membership cards and awards, diaries, biographies or autobiographies, written family histories, and medical records. The list goes! These records can contain information that is not readily evident at the moment you collect them but can help to verify the identify of an ancestor.

### **Public\Private Records\databases Online**

There are more records available for genealogists than ever before. The number of sources continues to grow each day. It can be daunting to know where to start your research with all the options. A good place to start after your preliminary research at home is with an online search. You can search for family trees submitted by users from all over the world. Some require subscriptions and others are free or have free options.

ChamorroRoots.com started by Bernard Punzalan is the best place to start for those searching for families from Guam and the CNMI. He is working at bringing together as much genealogical information for Guam and the CNMI as possible. Originally his database was free but the amount of time required to keep up the database not to mention the amount of work at putting all of this information online has prompted him to charge a nominal subscription fee of \$60/year for access to his site. His database contains thousands of records. As of last month, the site contained almost two hundred thousand names. Individuals can submit their family trees to him and he will upload them to the site. A complete list of the information contained on his site is appended to this paper. Through this site you can have access to family trees, databases, indexes and obituaries. The most recent addition was the 1920 Guam census. This is a good place to start to see if anyone else has already done some of the work for you. But please remember that the information submitted by families may not always be correct. This brings to mind a sign that hung in the editorial department of the Pacific Daily News where I worked. It said, "If your mother tells you she loves you, check it out!" If the family tree does not contain sources for the information, then you should try to verify it

through other sources. By the same token, if you are submitting a tree to the database, be sure to include sources so that others do not need to do so. This holds true for all family trees that you find anywhere.

Familysearch.org is the free genealogy website of the Church of the Latter Day Saints (Mormons). You can find family trees that have been submitted to their site as well as other resources. While many items are indexed and available through a search function, there is also a lot of information that is not indexed. Un-indexed information is available to search document by document. This is time consuming but sometimes you can get lucky. If you have time and want to volunteer, they are always looking for individuals to index the information. You can read about this under “indexing” on the website. But a word of caution again be sure to verify the information you get from the site. The information is only as good as the researcher who submits it. During a recent visit to the site I entered the name “Leon Guerrero” and I got 371 results. I did note that several of them appeared to be my ancestors with an incorrect middle initial. After researching this particular line for a while now I understand how someone might make this mistake. But I have found this same entry duplicated on other databases on the Internet. Unfortunately you cannot correct errors on this database so this will continue to appear for others to perpetuate the error.

This site also includes other historical records where you can search for your ancestors. Of particular interest is Guam land records, The Guam land records are not indexed but are categorized by village. So if you are searching for an ancestor and you know where they lived, you can browse through the images in the appropriate village. Be forewarned, the collection includes almost 290,000 images. Land records are important as many times contain names of other family members and can confirm the relationship between two people. Other collections pertinent to our area are: 1898-1964, Pohnpei Civil Registration, 1948 -2009, Pohnpei Court Records, 1951-2010, Pohnpei land records, 1971-2007.

Ancestry.com is the largest of the corporate entities that entered into the family history genre early on. The company has two sections, a research side and an exchange side where users can upload their data and collaborate with others. This company has grown by leaps and bounds and appears to be scooping up smaller companies at an alarming rate. Fold 3, The Generations Network, Myfamily.com, Genealogy.com. Rootsweb.com and Family Tree maker are now all owned by Ancestry.com. Because the company offers to digitize records for

repositories for free it also has numerous digitization agreements. Ancestry digitizes records and gives the repository a digital master copy which is enticing for state (more than 20 by 2008) and federal agencies with little funding for archival services. Ancestry.com has an agreement with the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) to digitize records on a project-by-project basis. Ancestry will then make them available to its members via its website, and NARA cannot post the images on their website for a five-year period. The first project is the digitization of the INS Passenger and Crew Arrival and Departure List from 1897-1958 and Death Notices of U.S. Citizens Abroad from 1835-1974. These records were only available to researchers visiting NARA or one of its branch repositories. While many of the records available on Ancestry.com are available elsewhere for free. The convenience for the researcher is significant – a one stop shop – so to speak. Ancestry.com does have some free information but most of the information requires a subscription. The value of the exchange section of the site is also significant. This section allows you to collaborate with other researchers. Sometimes you get lucky and find a distant relative that has much information to offer.

## **Government Departments/Libraries and Research Centers**

While many of the online sources above provide information for Guam and the CNMI, there is nothing like going to the source. After your online search, you can visit government departments, libraries and research centers to access original information:

- The Micronesian Area Research Center (MARC) has extensive genealogical resources for the researcher. MARC has transcripts of census documents, indexes to judicial records, photographs, published genealogies and an online genealogy database to name only a few. They have copies of the Guam Newsletter and the Guam Recorder that are a good source for information about Guam in the early 1900s including vital statistics. An interesting note: When searching for surnames in the Guam Newsletter, be sure to search both the Spanish naming pattern and the American naming pattern. It appears according to Bernard Punzalan that pre-1919, the Spanish naming pattern was followed. After that it appears the American naming pattern was followed. It wasn't until 1920 that the American naming pattern was formally adopted. Perhaps they were preparing for the census that would take place in 1920.
- The Guam Public Library has an impressive collection of historical photographs, books, magazines and documents.
- Department of Health and Social Services for copies of birth, death and marriage certificates.

- Department of Land Management historical maps and land documents. Familysearch.org has land documents for the period of 1898-1964 online. You can visit the Dept. of Land Management for other land documents.
- Court Records MARC has an index to judicial records for the period of 1807-1935. The original records are housed at MARC at the University of Guam. The District court of Guam provides access to more recent court cases via an RSS feed. Another site: [www.legaldockets.com](http://www.legaldockets.com) provides online information for ninth Circuit Court of Appeals cases.

## Collaboration

Almost all of the major websites for genealogy research allow some sort of option to share information with others conducting family history research. These connections can be invaluable. I met the 97-year-old cousin of my mother through the internet and eventually visited her in Arizona to share family history information. She helped me fill in the gaps and even shared copies of letters from my aunt talking about my great grandmother. I would have never had access to this information if I hadn't reached out to her. This distant cousin still corresponds with me via email! (she is now 100 years old!) Sometimes these connections do not pan out but when the rewards can be tremendous. I regularly correspond and share information with others here and abroad. I have my family tree on Ancestry.com in the public domain so others can comment on. I have received some good tips and some thanks for sharing the information that I have. The standard for sound genealogical research calls for the publication and sharing of research with others such as placing copies in libraries or repositories. The RFT Micronesian Area Research Center will always welcome your research.

## Genetic Genealogy

Strides in genetic genealogy have opened up a whole new area for research. In the past only Y dna test could be used to test the male line and MTDNA could be used to test the female line. These tests especially the MTDNA only showed distant relations. Today, the two largest companies testing for genealogy offer autosomal dna tests that can show relations within five generations revealing both the paternal and maternal lines of an individual. Of course genetic genealogy needs to be used in conjunction with traditional genealogy methods. DNA can show a relation but it cannot show how you are related.

Genetic genealogy should be used when you have exhausted your search through traditional means. Your history is written in code within your DNA. Oral and family history can only take you so far. With DNA testing you can go back even further – 500 to 1000 years.

One challenge with DNA testing for small communities is that the database does not carry a large enough population to reveal links. My experience has shown that this is true with the earlier tests, but the new autosomal tests have revealed connections a large number of connections. Of course most of these come from my mother's side but I have had several few from my paternal line.

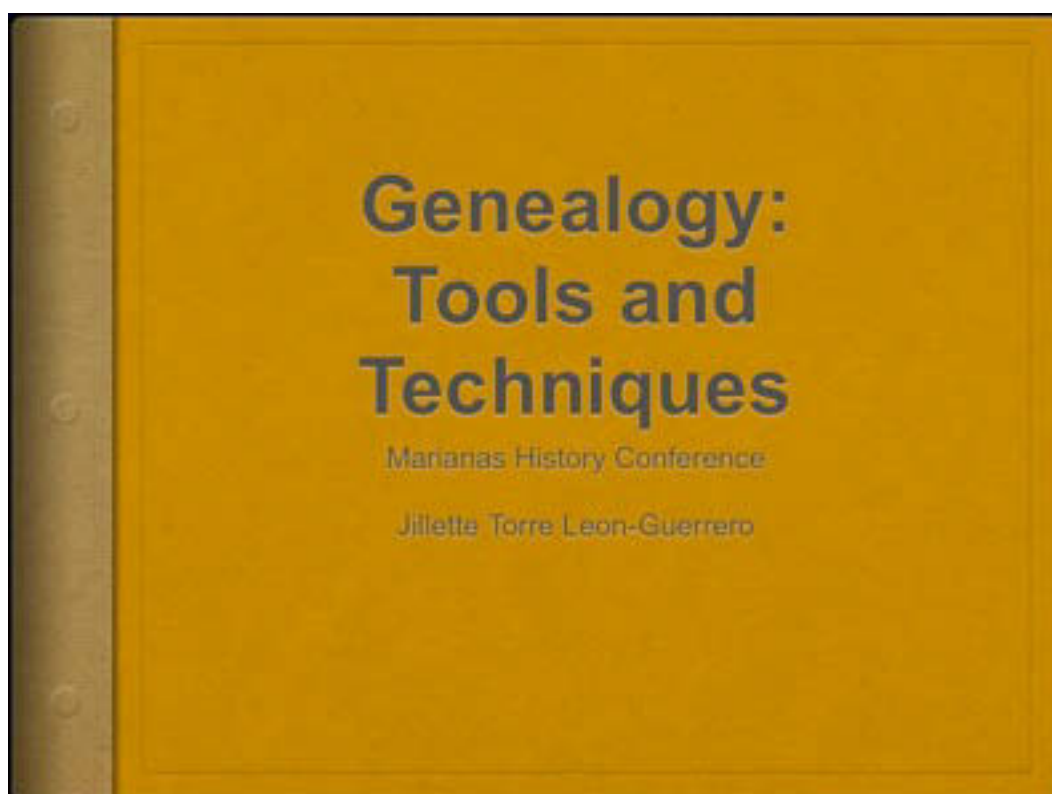
One revelation that surprised me was that my paternal line (de Leon Guerrero) descends from Ashkenazi Jews who were living in Spain 600 years ago as Sephardic males. Dad is a match to several from this line but the most interesting is "Manuel Tenorio" from New Mexico. He has traced his lineage back to Don Juan of Seville, Spain. It is believed that Manuel's ancestors left Spain in the late 1500s. The DNA signature of this line is not very common in the Ashkenazi world. Researchers are investigating whether this signature will be more common in the Spanish world. This means that Dad's ancestors converted to Catholicism about the time of the inquisition. It is known that many of these converts left Spain in later years. My research shows that the first "de Leon Guerrero" arrived in Guam about 1717. I have not yet proven that we are descended from "Don Diego de Leon Guerrero" but it seems probable. I have been able to trace his descendants to the 1757 census. An Antonio de Leon Guerrero and Ignacio de Leon Guerrero are listed in the First company of Spanish soldiers in 1790. I have been able to find Leon Guerrero's in the records of military soldiers in Guam until 1807. The next document I have been able to find a reference to a Leon Guerrero is with the birth of Vicente de Leon Guerrero in 1823 who I believe is my 2<sup>nd</sup> great grandfather. Between 1830 and 1899 I have found references in historical documents and books to the following with the surname Leon Guerrero: Nicolas, Joaquin, Vicente, Juan, Justo and Maria. This indicates that the Leon Guerrero family stayed in the islands. Oral family history has always maintained that all with the surname Leon Guerrero were related and had a common ancestor. If this is the case, then it appears very probable that Diego was the patriarch of the Leon Guerrero family.

DNA testing is a great tool if used in conjunction with traditional genealogy research methods. One challenge is getting a large enough population tested so that the database can grow.

## Conclusion

For many, learning about their family history is interesting, informative and in some cases, enlightening and surprising. Most family members do not know much beyond their grandparents generation unless they spent a lot of time talking to them about their past. I believe that most people are interested in knowing about their heritage but many do not have the patience or desire to do the research. They want results. But the truth is that researching ancestors is a time consuming and challenging process. The challenge for the family history researcher is to maintain objectivity and an open mind when coming to conclusions from the research findings and having infinite patience. There are many things to consider when weighing the evidence. In some cases, the evidence discredits years of family folklore and this can be hard for some to accept. For me, the rewards of genealogy are priceless – not only to me, but to my children, grandchildren and generations to come. I reaped the rewards of the hard work of relatives that went before me when they recorded their lineage. I now want to do the same for those that follow me.

## Presentation Slides





## **Some Early Chamorro Names in 1728 Spanish Census**

- Taitano
- Taingatongo
- Manfaisin
- Mangilao
- Aguan
- Piti
- Tedtaotao
- Ygum
- Taitagui
- Malulu
- Teisipic
- Yuna
- Quidachai

## **Most Common Early Spanish Surnames in 1728 Census of Hagåtña**

- 16 with the surname CRUZ
- 14 with the surname ESPINOSA
- 14 with the surname RIOS
- 12 with the surname SALAS
- 10 with the surname LEON GUERRERO

# HISPANIC SURNAME TRADITIONS

## Compound given names

- Jose Maria
- Pedro Miguel
- Maria Carmen

## Double surnames

- Fejeran y Guzman
- Fejeran y Leon Guerrero
- Paulino y Borja

## Conjunctions/ Prepositions

"y" meaning "and"

*Usually joining the maternal and paternal surnames*

"de/de la" meaning "of"

*Can be patronymic or toponymic*

## Identity

"h" appending name (Jr.)

Ending in "ez" = "son of"

*Sanchez = son of Sancho*

*Fernandez = son of Fernando*

Abandoned Babies/Orphans

*Iglesias (church)*

*Cruz (cross)*

*Blanco (blank -- not white)*

*Exposito (exposed -- 1921 law)*

# Guam/CNMI naming patterns

## Clan Names (*Research of Toni Ramirez*)

- Mid 18<sup>th</sup> century
- References to:
  - Place – "Manila" for de la Torre family
  - Given Name – "Binu" for Balvino Leon Guerrero
  - Surname – "Robat" for Roberto
  - Animal – "Atu" for Swamp fish that refers to Guzman
  - Characteristic – "Yomuk" for Leon Guerrero or "Kabesa" for Flores
  - Objects – "Galaidi" for canoe that refers to Sablan
  - Food – "Poto" for rice dessert that refers to Palomo
  - Maternal surname – for survival of the surname such as "Kottis" for Cortez (Torres) "Desa" for Deza (Camacho) "Teyu" for Tello (Leon Guerrero)

## Challenges researching names

- ♦ 1920 decree by Governor William Gilmar 16 years and older only one surname:
  - ♦ De Leon/Leon Guerrero/Guerrero
  - ♦ Guzman/Fejeran
- ♦ Spelling changes, Placement and Transcription errors
  - ♦ Fejerang, Fejarang, Fejeran, Ferajan
  - ♦ Leon Guerino, Guerrero instead of Leon Guerrero, Peredo, Pineda
- ♦ Convenience
  - ♦ Perez/Taljeron
  - ♦ Leon-Guerrero, Leonguerrero
  - ♦ Frank/Francisco
  - ♦ Perez/Paris

## Cultural Practices to be aware of

- ♦ Primogeniture (inheritance by firstborn)
  - ♦ Hispanic usually follows male primogeniture
  - ♦ Chamorro favors male but if there are enough resources all children inherit property with the family home usually going to youngest male
- ♦ Poksai (to nurture)
  - ♦ Not as common as in the past
  - ♦ Children that are raised by others usually have all rights and responsibilities of a child raised by their natural parents
  - ♦ Children out of wedlock usually carry maternal name



## **Challenges: Access to records**

- Historical gap 1727 - 1897
- War and destruction – destroyed records, cemeteries
- Church records – not easily accessible

## **Tools and Techniques**

- Home and Family
  - Interview Family members
  - Documents, official records, photographs, letters, diaries news clippings, awards, membership cards etc...
- Online Resources
  - ChamorroRoots.com
  - Familian Chamorro (MARC) at <http://ns.gov.gu/genealogy/>
  - Familysearch.org
  - Ancestry.com/Fold3.com
  - Message boards

## **Tools and Techniques**

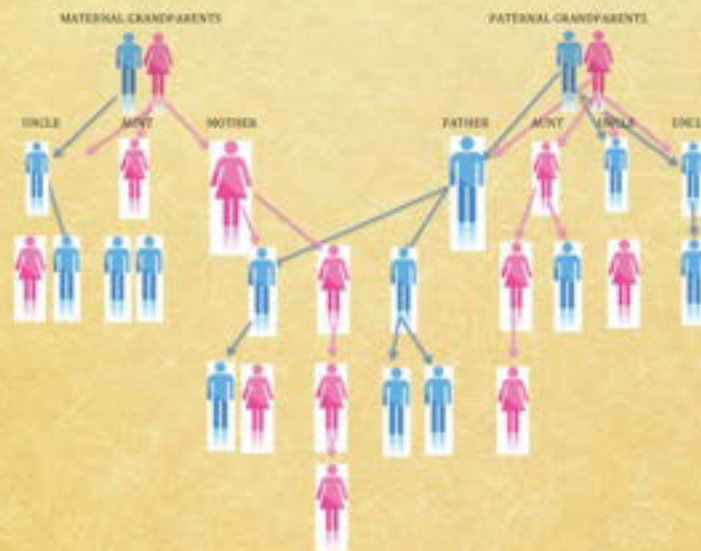
- Government, Archives, Libraries, Research Centers
  - MARC
  - Guam Public Library
  - Department of Health and Social Services Vital Statistics (1901)
  - Court Records
  - Military Records
- Collaboration
  - Share with other researchers, online and in your own community.

## **Tools and Techniques**

### **Genetic Genealogy**

- MtDNA – both males and females receive from mother but only females pass on to the next generation
- Y DNA – passes through paternal line
- Autosomal DNA – 1-22 chromosomes both male and female lineage 50% from mother 50% from father

## INHERITANCE of MTDNA and Y DNA



## Haplogroups

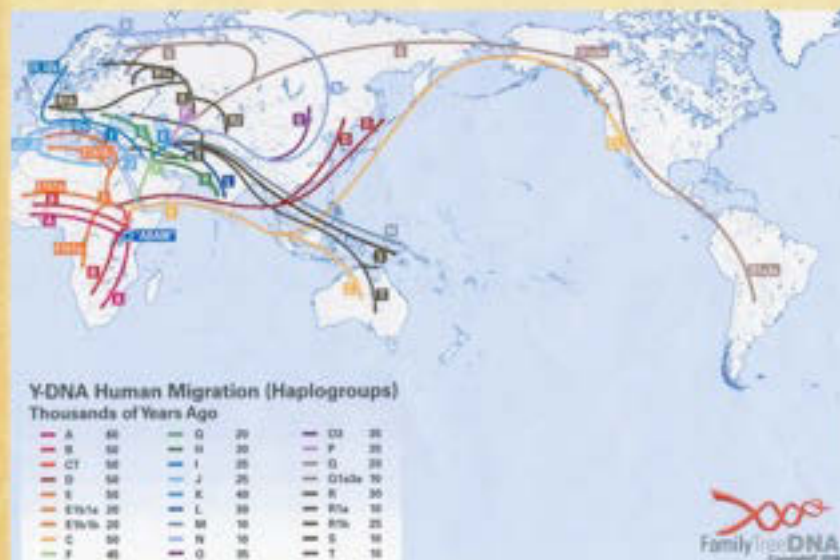
- ♦ A haplogroup is a cluster of people who share the same marker that they inherited from a single ancestor.
- ♦ Haplogroups are the major branches of the chromosome tree. Haplotypes of the same group are the leaves on the branches of that tree.
- ♦ There is a Haplotree for the Y chromosome and one for the MtDNA: All MtDNA haplogroups descend from a single female and all Y haplogroups descend from a single male. Both of these individuals originated in Africa.



## J Haplotype



## Y DNA Haplogroups



# J Haplogroup



"C" mutated from "A" 50,000 years ago

"F" mutated from "C" 45,000 years ago

"J" mutated from "F" 25,000 years ago



## Arabian Peninsula J1c3d-L147





## MTDNA Haplogroups

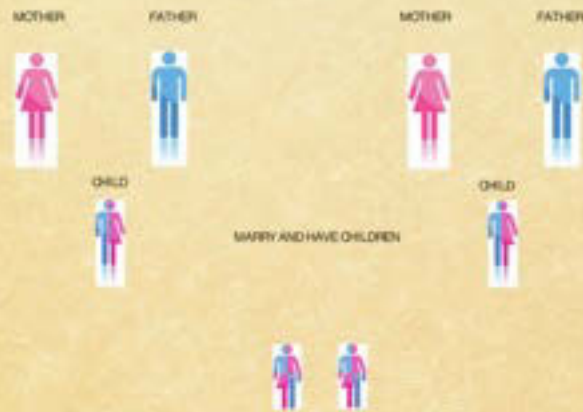


## MTDNA – M Haplogroup



## Autosomal DNA

last 5 generations



## Family Finder (Autosomal) results



64.13% Southeast Asian (Malay) / 23.03% East Asian (Mongolian Han and Japanese)  
12.84% European (Basque, French, Orcadian, Sardinian, Spanish and Tuscan)

## Matches (Autosomal)

GENEALOGICAL MATCHES BASED ON DNA						KNOWN GENEALOGY	
Name	Match Date	Relationship Suggested	Assumed Relationship	Shared cM	Unshared cM	Known Relationship	Ancestral Surprises (Click name to view your common ancestor)
 [REDACTED] Y-DNA12 (M/R)	8/18/2011	2nd Cousin - 4th Cousin	3rd Cousin	102.81	23.26	<a href="#">Add note</a>	
 [REDACTED] Y-DNA17 (M/R)	8/4/2011	2nd Cousin - 4th Cousin	3rd Cousin	84.82	20.34	<a href="#">Add note</a>	Buch (Germany) Erding (Germany) Friedberg (American Samoa) Hawaii Hawaii Hawaii
 [REDACTED] Y-DNA17 (M/R)	7/8/2011	3rd Cousin - 5th Cousin	4th Cousin	70.72	13.17	<a href="#">Add note</a>	

## Conclusions

- ✦ Challenges
- ✦ Resources
- ✦ Genetic DNA must be used in conjunction with traditional genealogy methods
- ✦ Collaborate and share
- ✦ If researched properly and archived either publicly or privately then your work will not only enhance your understanding of your family history and our communities history, it will also benefit generations to come.

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Jillette Leon-Guerrero has a BA in Anthropology from the University of Guam and an MA in Human Relations from the University of Oklahoma. She currently is the President of Guamology, Inc., a Guam-based publishing company. She also provides consulting services for Guampedia.com, the War in the Pacific National Historical Park and various other Guam organizations. Leon-Guerrero began researching her family tree for her mother over twenty years ago to verify family stories that she was related to Richard Wagner, the German composer. Her interest in genealogy has expanded to her paternal line and DNA research.

She is especially interested in trying to find a link between families of the early Spanish colonial period and possible descendants in modern day Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands.

She is currently working on a television special documenting the search for “John” Perez, a resident of Guam who left the island in the late 1800s and settled in Kauai, Hawai’i. Leon-Guerrero is a resident of Agana Heights and is married to Jean Lescure. She is the proud mother of two sons, Christopher and Island, and two grandsons, Christian and Chauncy.

# Digital Storytelling

*By Rlene Santos Steffy*

MARC Research Associate

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**Abstract:** *Collecting oral histories is an effective process in documenting life experiences of the people in Oceania and how they and their communities were impacted by the high degree of trauma in World War II. It provides insight into the experience and degree of trauma they endured in relationship to who they were and the direct or indirect relationship they had with the Japanese or their interpreters. I have produced six video documentaries using the testimonies of World War II Survivors to establish the historic context by which they survived the war and the background into historic sites on Guam. I have engaged digital storytelling – the combining of narrative with images, video, music and other sounds and animation to document these lived experiences. This paper will explore how the survivors are my partners and not just historical sources to this end.*

## Introduction

As many of you know, I began my first oral history project, not as an oral historian. I began my first ethnographic research project not as an ethnographer. At the time, I was a professional journalist hosting my own radio show and an investigative reporter at K57 Radio, while managing editor for the Guam Variety Newspaper. As such, I was engaged in the everyday practice of watching, listening, asking, recording, reporting and writing about other people's experiences. My plate was full. I was genuinely interested in who, what, where, when, why and how things happen to people and the change that each experience has on their lives.

I was not groping in the dark wondering what oral historians and ethnographers do. I knew how to ask questions. Perhaps too well for some I interviewed on my radio show, who did not appreciate my tapping into their reasons for doing things or their inability to get things done. I knew how to watch, listen and document their stories. I took notes, a great deal at first. Then I learned to write down only the points that needed clarification, because I also learned that it was critical that I maintain eye contact as they related their stories.

I recorded their stories on video so that I would not misrepresent their accounts in future works. Really, the reason I preferred video to audio recording or exclusive note taking, is that I could ensure their stories would be delivered in the first





Leoncio Ignacio Castro

person when I relayed them. Everyone I interviewed knew and understood before the video camera lens opened that everything they said in the interview could and would be used to present their pasts in different forms of media. That point comforted them. In 2003, Leoncio Ignacio Castro thanked me for immortalizing him and his WWII experience. Leoncio Ignacio Castro died several years ago.

Regardless how sensitive their story, they understood and resigned themselves to the fact that the story should and needed to be told in the hope that others would understand what it was like to survive the war on Guam. Each person who was interviewed for his or her World War II experience discovered at the end of the interview, that they were overcome by a sense of relief. They were surprised that expressing their story gave them peace in letting the story go. Many exclaimed that they did not know why they kept the details to themselves all these years and hope that someone would benefit from their story. They were finally able to let go of painful and agonizing memories. Memories they had kept to themselves and only a few others for forty, fifty or sixty years. They were also surprised that those many years later their memories were as clear in their minds as the day they happened, and amazed that all the suppressed sensations would flood back as they released their stories.

I have been shaped by what I have learned from their experiences. What I learned from my last interview whets my appetite for the next. What I learn from them are the details that form a storyline. We know that World War II was fought in the Pacific and that we were part of that theater. We know that the Japanese forced survivors on Guam to concentration camps. It is not enough to know that people suffered hardship, starvation and witnessed massacres. It is not enough to know that their infant children died from malnutrition or were bayoneted by reckless Japanese soldiers. Everyone knows that war is a terrible experience. What we want to understand is how a person survives and copes with such a horrific experience. We want to know why persons who live through war continue to live as if there was no war. They do not deny. They do not escape the realities of war. They simply do what it takes to live one day at a time, whatever that means for each one in their own set of circumstances, the same but uniquely different. And, because one could consider their experience humiliating in the context of sanity, of recovering and

reconstructing their lives and Guam, they buried their experience as something of minimal consequence. They buried them along with their infants and elder family members who died or were massacred during the war.

I was not a film producer when I began producing video documentaries on the historic sites in Guam using the oral history of World War II survivors to develop a storyline for the historic perspective of these sites. I was an oral historian who discovered a passion for recording World War II Survivor accounts of their pre-war life in Guam, war-torn life experiences and post-war memories of their efforts to reconstruct a sense of place and purpose. I was also a 26-year journalism veteran who understood video production and was very good friends with one of the best video editors in Guam, Susan Blanchard, with whom I have maintained a very close friendship. Convincing her to help me produce video was not difficult. Especially after explaining to Susan that I had many WWII Survivor video interviews with captivating stories that demonstrated a deeper and greater story on film about the CHamoru survival of WWII and the historic sites in their villages. Together we have produced five video documentaries to date.

The most holistic way of extracting activities linked to culture, language and beliefs today is through life histories. The growing interest in life histories and its narrow focus and its inherent bias is what makes oral history and digital storytelling effective, interesting and a popular means of educating people about the past.

In an ironic sense, the questions regarding oral history that present the oral historian in a defensive posture is what makes oral history popular. Oral history is trustworthy because others who witnessed the accounts validate it. It is subjective because as Joseph Torres Barcinas explains in his digital story, memories of the past are based on perspectives that are accompanied by feelings and sentiment. The other way that oral history is subjective is the difficulty for the ethnographer not to get involved with those interviewed. It is very difficult to remove the ethnographer from the context of the story in a way that a journalist is expected to be impartial. This is tough for me to balance as an oral historian because habits are hard to break, and many of the people I have interviewed are related to me or friends of my World War II Survivor parents. I find myself attempting not to get closer than I am to those I interview, but reminded how important personal relationship is to confidence.



Eduardo Garcia Camacho

Eduardo “Eddie” Garcia Camacho, known as Mr. C, reminded me of this point on Friday, June 1, 2012. As I was packing my equipment to leave a wonderful afternoon with Mr. C, he mentioned that his close relationship with my husband Robert and my friendship with his daughter Yolanda was a reason why this reserved World War II Survivor asked me to interview him about his life.

So, what next? I learned about ethnography and what ethnographers do is study a particular cultural group or experience. At first it was strangely familiar because I was born and raised in Guam and have known much of the history of the people and the island. I discovered that the stories lie in the details that have not been collected or written about and from that I learned to look for the gems that others left behind to formulate the context of the History of the CHamoru. And, I solicited their partnership to this end. I was also determined to collect the stories of emigrants who made Guam their home and choose to be buried here.



Charles H. Troutman, III

This was true in the case of attorney Charles Henry Troutman, III the Superior Court’s Compiler of Laws. Troutman agreed to be interviewed, but was recovering from a bout with pneumonia. Although his spirit was willing, his physical condition limited our interview sessions and he agreed to meet several times a week in order to conclude his interview. He was concerned that talking would tire him out, but he discovered that the interview sessions energized him instead. He died several months later, his interview completed.

It is the same with Joseph Torres Barcinas. As many of you know, Joseph Torres Barcinas is the son of Jesus Cruz Barcinas of Merizo who wrote the Village Journal for Laura Thompson who published it in her book, “Guam and its People.” I had encouraged Joseph Torres Barcinas to record his life story and he agreed as long as we did it in the manner of Laura Thompson, only this challenge was reversed. It was the subject that presented the challenge and I accepted. Every Saturday



morning until we were satisfied, Joseph Torres Barcinas' life story was captured on video. We met each Saturday at the Micronesian Area Research Center's (MARC) conference room. Joseph Torres Barcinas suffered from asthma and he was noticeably stressed by the long narratives, but he was eager to relate his memories of life on Guam before World War II. He spoke about his privilege as the son of Jesus Cruz Barcinas, credited as a professional fisherman by Laura Thompson after she interviewed Jesus Cruz Barcinas and others in Inalahan about the CHamoru people and their customs and beliefs before World War II. Joseph Torres Barcinas explained proudly his father's role in the Merizo Revolt against the Japanese soldiers stationed at Merizo during the war, and his wisdom in leaving a canoe along the shore, hidden well from sight. The canoe served as a way for them to escape to Dano', a local place name for Cocos Island, after dark on July 20, 1944. At dawn the following morning, Jesus Cruz Barcinas and others made their way over the reef and were spotted by the U. S. Wattsworth on Liberation Day, July 21, 1944.



Joseph Torres Barcinas

For my presentation at the 1<sup>st</sup> Marianas History Conference, I have three examples of digital storytelling. In addition to Joseph Torres Barcinas, I present the stories of Frescania "Fressie" Taitano Taitague's near death experience at the age of 10 or 11 years while living in Saipan. Fressie discovers that editing her interview for presentation forced her to finally process the event that happened more than 14 years ago.



Frescania "Fressie" Taitano Taitague

Catherine Sablan Gault worked with former Governor Ricardo Jerome Bordallo on his life story on a dedicated basis after he lost his bid for a second term as governor of Guam in 1986. Catherine Sablan Gault was with former governor Ricardo Jerome Bordallo, with whom she became very close, because not only did she work on his life story, but also in the process of doing so, Catherine Sablan Gault discovered how closely related they were and how much that meant to her. During the final hours of



Catherine Sablan Gault

former Governor Ricardo Jerome Bordallo's life, Catherine Sablan Gault describes his behavior and the circumstances at the office before learning about his suicide.

Digital storytelling is a good way to give voice to World War II Survivors, and individuals whose stories of trauma silence them.

I also discovered that speaking CHamoru can help the survivors tell the personal side of their stories because they were less able to distance themselves from painful memories by speaking English. They expressed their grief. They spoke of their shame and about how they starved. They were innocent, but tortured or beheaded as if guilty. They cried privately. They prayed. They bled. Eventually, they gained confidence from other WWII Survivor accounts in magazine and newspaper articles, video documentaries and digital stories. Then they spoke and continue to speak through their video interviews.

Digital storytelling is the art of telling stories with the use of multimedia. It combines graphics, audio and video animation with narration. Self-expression being its focus, digital storytelling's autobiographical content is usually accomplished within a five-minute film, or video clip and associated with some impacting experience of the individual. It is popular among young people and can be an effective tool in allowing youth to express themselves and develop self-confidence, knowledge of media and media skills and social competency. You will see this example in Fressie's interview.

Digital Storytelling is a modern way of expressing the ancient art of telling stories, the way in which Pacific Islanders pass on skills, family history, and cultural practices from one generation to another. It is also related to education, film, visual media, culture, social, healthcare, community and oral history. It provides people with a voice by giving them access to media infrastructure and technology to express themselves. It is an effective tool in engaging young and old in dialogue, and in building a stronger sense of community attachment by connecting generations. It can bridge the generational gap between WWII Survivors, their children and grandchildren, as well as other residents of Guam.

It's been stated that learning always happens in context; it happens in relation to other things that we know. We largely function as people in relation to other people and settings, and never in a vacuum. Introducing WWII Survivors to young Chamoru in digital storytelling is a way that culture and historical digital narratives are brought together. Antoine-Alfred Marche (1844-98), William Edwin Safford (1899), Margaret Mead (1928), and Laura Thompson (1938), observed the beliefs and practices of Pacific Islanders and documented their findings based on the perspectives of the individuals they interviewed. Their works were published in books. With digital storytelling we help the survivor to learn in context, by analyzing his or her experience, something they are only now able to do many years after the war. This is best expressed in Joseph Torres Barcinas' digital story.

And, we learn more about the past because they are able to reflect on and explain why things happened. Even if just to say that, they do not know. Seeing them, reading the non-verbal communication from their eyes, hand and bodies, help us to understand in the way that only video can provide. Catherine Sablan Gault shows this in her digital story.

Young children and sometimes even adults typically do not read books unless it's related to their work or study. But they all enjoy sitting down in front of the television and listening to the history channel. Well digital storytelling is our history channel.

Years ago, this would have been too complex and expensive, but today, elementary school children can create media-based digital stories on computers and post them on YouTube for all to see. We will continue to produce digital stories to help close the gap and heal the wounds of trauma and time.

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Rlene Santos Steffy is a research associate at the Richard F. Taitano Micronesian Area Research Center (MARC) at the University of Guam. She is a mass communication specialist of 34 years, incorporating a unique combination of professional, practical and academic casework and experience in the areas of advertising, electronic media, journalism, photo-communications, public relations, cyber-journalism, photography, videography, ethnography and oral history collection.

Steffy has produced five locally, nationally and internationally acclaimed Guam history video documentaries with grants from the Guam Historic Resources Division Office, Department of Parks and Recreation, and the National Park Service titled, “Oral History Overview of Guam and Micronesia;” “Hagåtña Historic District;” “Umatac Historic Sites;” “Merizo Historic Sites;” and “*Hotnon Ladriyu*.” She will release a Guam Massacre Sites video documentary in the summer of 2012.

# Finding Unity in Culture: Using Our Stories to Shape Our Future

By Victoria- "Lola" Leon Guerrero

Creative Writing Instructor

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**Abstract:** *Chamoru people from the Mariana Islands have rich and beautiful stories to tell, to write. However, we are not often the ones writing our stories, and as a result, writings about us often misrepresent, divide, victimize, and disempower us. These writings do not contain our truth. We have the power to change that by simply sharing our truth and writing our own stories. Our stories connect us despite the political and historical boundaries that have been set up to push us away from each other. We are family and we must use our stories to erase these boundaries and shape a better future for our people. This session will be designed as a writers workshop in which we will begin the sharing process. We will explore the stories that unite us and start writing them. We will also explore possibilities for publishing our stories.*

## Introduction

"We are all the same Chamoru," said my Auntie Pao when I asked her what unites Chamorus from Guåhan and Chamorus from the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. "We talk the same language. We have the same culture. We are all Chamoru."

Auntie Pao, who is almost 80 and has lived in Saipan her whole life, was stating a simple truth that historical and political narratives about the Marianas often overlook or underplay. Even we, as Chamoru people, tend to focus on the negative aspects of our relationships with each other. However, if we examine our experiences together more closely, we will find that through our culture, we are more united than we are divided. We need to use these memories of unity to shape deeper narratives that tell a more complete story about who we are as a people.

When Guåhan Senator Judi Guthertz introduced a bill in April 2011 that proposed to ask the people of Guåhan in the island's 2012 election if they support political reunification with the CNMI, many people responded negatively. The message boards on local media websites were full of hurtful and ignorant comments about how reunification was impossible. Elected officials from both Guåhan and the CNMI expressed concerns that our people had become too divided, and that the moments in our history that created these divisions were too painful to overcome.

CNMI residents expressed fear in a poll that because Guåhan is a bigger island than the rest of the Marianas, reunification would make their islands less powerful, and that they would be treated merely as villages governed by Guåhan. Members of the CNMI Congress also stressed that Guåhan had not exercised self-determination and had a less favorable political status than the CNMI. They wondered what kind of political status a reunified Marianas would have. While all of these are valid concerns, they are not obstacles impossible to overcome. Many leaders simply said, let's leave it to the people to decide.

This got me thinking. If the people of all the Mariana Islands were to decide on reunification, what would influence their decision? The voices of their leaders, their elders, the media, would all be very loud. And what would influence those voices? History, politics, and the economy, definitely, but probably not culture. Not at first. Thus, I want to flip the order of things. We have to look past our conflicts and celebrate our culture.

We have to remember that before outsiders divided us; before Spain moved us all around; before America took Guåhan; before Germany and then Japan took Saipan; before the Japanese used us against each other in that ugly war; and before the people of Guåhan voted not to reunify with the people of the CNMI, we were one beautiful people, one powerful nation.

Our people understood the power of the ocean and used it to stay connected. Our Chamoru ancestors traveled between our islands with ease. Now, we struggle to afford plane tickets to see each other. Instead, we should reconnect with the ocean, and reconnect with our ancestors. They still speak to us, and we have to listen to them. We have to continue to practice the values they instilled in us, speak the language they spoke to us, and love our *familia*.

My father has always shown me that family is more important than anything else. When his family is in need, he doesn't think twice, he gives them everything he has. Even when they hurt him, he is able to forgive. I think this is because he was born right after World War II, when family was all that many of our people had left.

During the war, my father's mother, who is from Guåhan, met and fell in love with his father, who is from Saipan. My grandfather was an interpreter for the Japanese. And while I was taught in school that the Chamoru interpreters from Saipan were

very mean, that is not how my family from both Guåhan and Saipan describe my grandfather. Instead, they say he was a talented and hardworking man, who built my grandmother a house all by himself. He stayed on Guåhan with her and worked as a carpenter after the war. One night, he went fishing, and when he came home, he got very sick and couldn't feel his legs. His sister said he angered a *Taotaomo'na*. A few days later, he passed away. My father was only a baby at the time and had three older siblings. My grandmother moved to Saipan so that my grandfather's family could help her raise them. Several years later, she married my grandfather's brother, Papa Dung.

When I was in high school, I had to write about World War II for a school paper, and Papa Dung was on Guåhan visiting us, so I decided to ask him about his experiences. He was also sent to Guåhan as an interpreter for the Japanese. He didn't say anything to me for a long time, as if he were seeing it all again in that moment. Finally, he looked me in the eyes and said, "That was the hardest time of my life. No one should have to see the things I saw." He paused again, and a tear fell down his cheek. He told me about how he was forced to come to Guåhan to work for the Japanese. He said he didn't want to come, but he had no choice. Even as a little girl, I could feel the weight of those memories in his words. He didn't say much else, but I felt his sadness and it changed the way I saw the world. Even the happiest people like Papa Dung carry such deep sadness because of things they had no control over. I know that our family helped ease some of that pain for him, but even on his deathbed, I could still see it in his eyes.

To be part of a family, we must learn to overcome our pain together. We must love each other for who we are, and forgive each other for the things we cannot control. As Chamoru people, we are one very large family, spread throughout many islands. We have the ability to love and forgive each other; we have the ability to come together. We experience this often. It's called *inafa'maolek*. During times of need, we give all we can to our families, and our families are not just made up of our blood relatives. When a co-worker's mother dies, for example, we go to the rosaries and the funeral, and we give *chen'chule*. We try to help heal the pain. We also come together in celebration. When Luta is having a fiesta, mayors from Guåhan's villages send food, and vice versa. Reciprocity is one of the values we are taught even before we can speak. We know how to give, and it is a beautiful part of who we are.

Some of my favorite things about having family in both Guåhan and Saipan are the gifts we share. The boxes of ice keki, pan tosta, butter fingers from Esko's, Herman's sweet bread, apigigi. Every time a relative comes to visit, they never come empty handed. And every time I return to Guåhan from Saipan, I always have at least a box full of delicious treats to give to all our family in Guåhan. When there are big family functions – weddings, christenings or funerals – my immediate family travels to Saipan filling our boxes and suitcases with whatever is asked of us. The most exciting gifts for me, however, are the stories we all share.

When I was a child, I loved sitting around with my dad and his brothers when they would talk about how they grew up. I loved the playful way they still teased each other as adults. I loved sitting at my Auntie Linda's outside kitchen table and listening to all the people of all generations who would gather around it to eat all day long. And I loved staying up all night talking with my cousins, as if we were making up for lost time. And every time we'd see each other, we'd pick up right where we left off.

My best stories from Saipan are of my dad's youngest brother, Uncle Aldie. He didn't have kids of his own, so he would spoil my cousins and I. He liked to take us on exciting adventures in the back of his pick-up truck. Someone was always bound to get hurt, and Uncle Aldie would come to the rescue. Then he'd immortalize the moment in one of the many large tales he'd always tell. I'll never forget the story he loved to tell about me.

When I was eight, Uncle Aldie took me spear fishing at Pau Pau Beach. We were just outside the reef and he had told me to stay with the endboat while he went looking for fish. I was floating with the endboat for a while until the ocean rocked me into a short slumber. When I awoke, and realized the depth of the water below me, fear began to form in the pit of my stomach. Then I looked around and saw something moving quickly toward me and I panicked. It was a shark. In my panic, I started drinking water and couldn't keep my head up long enough to catch my breath. Uncle Aldie saw me and immediately swam in to help. When he would tell the story, he'd say that he swam half a mile in 30 seconds, slew the shark and then rescued me just in time because I was already turning blue. I do remember him swimming fast, but the shark was long gone before he came. He squeezed the water out of me, let me cry and shed a few tears himself, then put me on his back and swam us to shore. The best part is, he wouldn't let me stay afraid of the ocean. A few days later, he took me back to the same beach and we went fishing again.



“*Nen*, whoever you are going to marry has to love you as much as your Uncle Aldie does,” he would always tell me. “He has to be ready to kill a shark for you and save you when you’re drowning.” Uncle Aldie died two years ago, but sometimes I dream about that day at PauPau Beach, and sometimes, I can smell him passing through my house.

Our belief in spirits is another important part of who we are that unites us as a people. I feel the spirits of my family and my ancestors around me all the time. It is a feeling I have always known. My house in Toto is rich with spirits, so is my grandfather’s house in Chalan Kanoa. The *taotaomo’na* in my family’s lands taught me how to recognize their spirits and how to respect them. As I got older and was able to travel to Luta, I felt them there, too. While walking from Coconut Village to the Swimming Hole, I would get an intense feeling in my chest that would make me stop walking and look into the jungle. Then, I’d find latte, or a *Tronkon Nunu*, or both. I even discovered the roots of a *Tronkun Nunu* wrapped around the *haligi* of a latte. And in all of these sacred spaces where our ancestors still roam, there is a light that fills the jungle, fills my soul and humbles me instantly.

My friend Ursula told me about how her cousin, who is a *suruhâno* from Guåhan, visited the ancient village of Mochong in Luta. He sat on one of the huge *tâsa* there, and he started to hear our ancestors. He heard the bustling of the village and was instantly transported back to the time when it was alive. The longer he sat there, the more he began to see them. It was like a time portal, she said. I didn’t sit on a *tâsa* when I went to Mochong, but I definitely felt like I was taken back in time. It is an amazing space, and a gift to us from our ancestors.

Our ancestors have also given us the ability to heal each other, and to recognize when we are in need of healing, no matter what island we are from. My sister-in-law is pregnant and has been having a difficult pregnancy. She lives in Ma’ina, where the spirits are especially strong. About a month ago, her three-year-old daughter started waking up in the middle of the night saying that a man was staring at her through the window. My sister-in-law did not know what to do about the situation, until one night, help came to her.

She was at a laundry mat folding her clothes when a man approached her. He told her that he was a *suruhâno* from Luta and that he could sense something was wrong. She told him about what her daughter was seeing and he offered to *sâffe*, or

dust off the unhealthy spirit from her. He went to her house and found the spirit her daughter had seen. He escorted the spirit out of the house and explained that the man had been attracted to her baby. He gave her ladda leaves to protect her family, and came a few more times to *sâffe* her. Since then, her pregnancy has been easier, and her daughter has stopped seeing the man in the window.

Just like our *suruhâno* and *suruhâna*, we have to look into each other's souls and find the places that need healing, and heal together. Whether or not our islands can reunify politically, we will always be united culturally. We will always be *familia*. With love, forgiveness and healing, we can create a better future together. We must simply tell our stories and shape our own understanding of ourselves and what we are capable of. We are still one beautiful people, one powerful nation. As Auntie Pao said, "we are all the same Chamoru."

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Victoria-Lola Leon Guerrero is an Instructor of English and Creative Writing at the University of Guam. She has an MFA in Creative Writing from Mills College and a BA in Politics from the University of San Francisco. Leon Guerrero is a published author and is working on an historical fiction novel set on Guåhan in the 1950s. She has always seen her writing as a tool for social change. As a reporter on Guåhan, Leon Guerrero learned much about the island's historical and contemporary struggles, including the need for self-

determination. She has continued to collect information about the island's history and culture and uses her skills as a writer to tell the story of the Chamoru people. Leon Guerrero has written several articles and produced two short films critiquing the current U.S. military buildup, which are available online. She is also actively involved in organizing the community to fight for self-determination and express their concerns about the buildup.

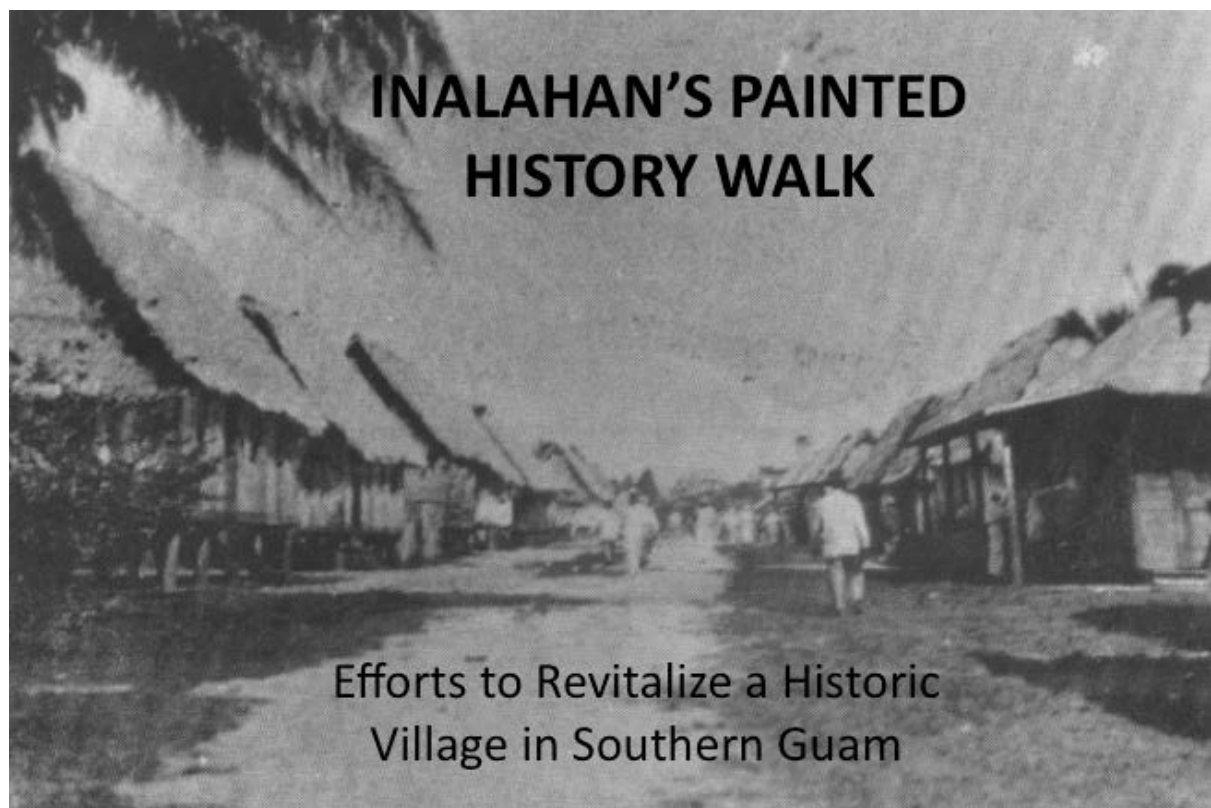
# Inalahan's Painted History Walk

*By Judy Flores, PhD*

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**Abstract:** *I will show a selection of the painted histories in Historic Inalahan, and present them as a way to introduce storytelling through drawings and paintings. I will explain how the Painted Histories Project involved the children who are descendants of the people depicted in the painted doors and windows of abandoned buildings. I drew pictures of the family members of the 1950s going about their daily activities as I remember them. As the children painted the pictures, I told them the stories about them. In one case, the Paulino family gathered to paint the pictures of their family-run store. They named each person in the scene as one of the Paulino siblings. The now-elderly siblings told family stories to their children and grandchildren as they painted. This project was a successful way to reconnect children with their past through visual introductions that led to oral histories.*



Early 1900s street of thatched houses

The tiny village of Inalahan (Inarajan) is located on the rural southeastern shore of the island of Guahan (Guam). The village was founded in 1680 after the 30-year Spanish-Chamorro wars had subjugated the Chamorro people. Spanish Governor Jose Quiroga laid out the streets that still exist today. The coastal highway along the bayside, currently called Pale' Duenas Street, was named Salai Lagu, "outer street"; and the inner San Jose Avenue was called Salai Haya, meaning "inner street" in Chamorro directional terms. Clans from all surrounding lands were forced to live in the village to be near the church. Families built thatched houses on small plots that lined the two streets. They maintained their ancestral lands as *lanchos* (ranches) for farming and food gathering. Usually the men and boys would spend the weekdays at their *lanchos* and come join the women and girls on Saturday and Sunday in the village house to attend church services.

Spanish soldiers who had married Chamorro women were given large parcels of land for moving to the village. People were taken from the northern Mariana islands, called the "Gani" islands, and resettled in Inalahan 15 to 20 years later (c. 1698-1700). Descendants of the original settlers of Inalahan village still own the historic properties in the village.



Arial View of Inalahan, immediate post WWII

The oldest surviving houses in Inalahan were built in the early 1900s. They stand as a testament to the strength of the local *ifil* wood poles (Intsia bijuga), raised floor, framing and joinery techniques that defined vernacular architecture as it evolved from thatched dwellings to Spanish-influenced elements. At that time, all Guam's villages and the capitol city of Hagåtña had streets and buildings like those of Historic Inalahan Village. Hagåtña and most other villages were destroyed during World War II. Inalahan village was placed on the National Registry of Historic Places in 1976.



Salai Haya St towards church

The focus of this presentation is to show recent efforts to revitalize Historic Inalahan through adaptive re-use of the historic buildings. I believe that Inalahan's rich history can be memorialized through visitor attractions that tell the stories of the families and events that shaped this village. Comparisons with several other historic towns that have become popular visitor sites include research on Yomitan Village in Okinawa, and visits to Columbia Town State Park in California, Telluride and Silverton mining towns in Colorado, Plantation Village in Oahu, Old Koloa Town in Kaua'i, Carcar Plantation Houses in Cebu, Plymouth Plantation and Sturbridge Village in Massachusetts, to name a few. Like most travelers, I enjoy learning the history of a place by seeing old buildings and old streets come to life through reenactments, museum exhibits, and businesses that enhance that

atmosphere through the sale of traditional foods and crafts. I am not alone in my vision for Historic Inalahan.

The Guam Preservation Trust has rehabilitated 13 historic buildings there between 1992 and 1998. The Guam Visitors Bureau strategic plan includes promotion of Guam's history and cultural sites, whereby they organize study tours of Gef Pa'go and the Inalahan Painted Histories for travel agents and media visitors. Through the Tourist Attraction Fund the Government of Guam has provided over \$300,000 in funding to support projects in Historic Inalahan. Pacific Micronesia Tour Company (PMT) began to bring a tour group through the village in April 2012, specifically to see the Painted Histories. The American Institute of Architects (AIA), Guam Chapter, completed a master plan for Historic Inalahan in 2012, funded by the Guam Preservation Trust. The development of San Jose Street as a visitor attraction is an important part of this master plan.

The urgency of preserving these buildings can be seen through the photographs that show extreme neglect and decay in the overwhelming number of abandoned buildings in the historic district. Interviews and surveys conducted over a 20-year period (1991 – 2011) reveal factors that contributed to the decline of this village. To summarize, these factors include:

- Properties located along the bayside were subject to storm flooding; in the 1970s the government instituted a program whereby owners of these small lots could exchange them for ½-acre lots in the Malojloj plateau and elsewhere.
- Residents sought homes closer to their work in the central and northern areas, and this trend increased as the price of gas increased.
- Insurance companies stopped insuring wood-frame structures; therefore, owners couldn't get bank financing to repair or improve their homes in the village.

These issues are discussed in other articles, and are referenced here only to point out reasons why so many buildings are abandoned. The focus of this presentation is to show some positive first steps towards the revitalization of Historic Inalahan.

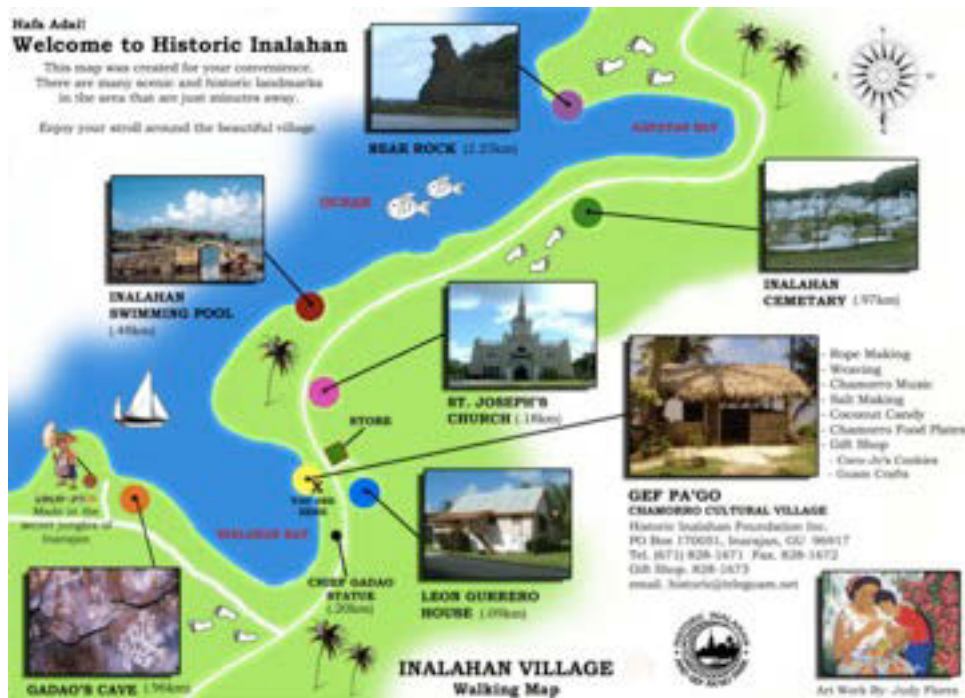
Every village in Guam has something special to celebrate. In Inalahan we celebrate our family roots that go back three centuries. Many of the houses still standing today have been lived in by more than four generations of the same family.





Men at Gef Pa'go in 1930s dress

These families proudly celebrate Chamorro traditions from long ago. Fishing, weaving of palm leaves into baskets, and other uses of the coconut tree for food and shelter are still a part of Inalahan life. Inalahan is best known for its rich history and culture.



Historic Inalahan District Tour Map

Visitor attractions include Gef Pa'go Chamorro Cultural Park, the old Baptist Church ruins next to the statue of Chief Gadao, and Gadao's cave.

## Inalahan Historic District Painted History Project

Under the Guam Visitors Bureau Branding Image initiative in 2010 each village mayor was encouraged to paint a mural designed by a selected artist and painted by community members. Most of the 19 villages painted big murals on concrete walls in their villages. Since Inalahan doesn't have any big walls, the mayor and council members decided to do a "Painted History Walk" through Historic Inalahan.



Youths painting historic buildings

Artist Judy Flores drew scenes of families that she remembered living in each house, doing daily activities when she was a youth in the 1950s. Village youths whose elders once lived in each house helped with the painting and learned the stories from the artist as they painted. Youths were invited to choose the paint colors and to name various members of their family depicted in the paintings.

The Painted History Walk starts at the west end of the village, on San Jose Street. It is an easy walk of about 10 minutes beginning with the blue house on the corner (Josefina T. Flores Obing House) and ending in front of the big San Jose Church at the east end. There are many historic homes along this street, built as early as 1901 to 1914. The concrete structures were built between 1945 and 1950.





### **Josefina T. Flores Obing House**

Vicente and Josefina T. Flores (Obing), named on Historic Registry as Jesus A. Flores House, circa 1915-1920; 1-1/2 story; manposteria foundation/base: wood framing; metal roof; porch is immediate post-war concrete construction.

The "Obing" Flores house is situated at the intersection of the road at San Jose Street. The detail on the front porch railing is identical to the design of the choir loft railing of St. Joseph Church, indicating the close relationship between families and their church. The same craftsman evidently worked on both structures.

Vicente inherited this house from his father, Jesus A. Flores, a village commissioner (mayor) in the early 1900s. This house has been continuously occupied by the Vicente "Obing" Flores family, most recently by Mrs. Josefina T. Flores, widow of Vicente, until her death in 2005. It then passed into the care of her son, Vicente (Ben). The house was restored by the Guam Preservation Trust in 1997. In 2006, this house became the first guest house rental in the historic district, in a cooperative arrangement between Gef Pa'go and private owners. The space under the floor, called the bodega, was used as a medical clinic during the Japanese occupation.



Juan S.N. and Rita Flores House (Kabesa) named on the historic registry as Juan D. and Carmen S.N. Flores House, built in 1939. Wood pole framing with manposteria bodega, walls, and massive staircase. The original roof slope was modified after World War II.

Juan Jr. inherited the property from his father and brought his wife, Rita to live here in the 1960s. They raised five children in this house. The family continues to occupy the house.



### The Fred Meno House

Immediate post-war reinforced concrete construction, wood framed, corrugated metal roof. This two-story house was built by Fred's parents, Joaquin Meno and Lolita Diego Meno in the late 1940s. When they moved away, Lolita's sister, Margarita (Mag), moved into the home with her family. She and her husband, Vicente Naputi Flores, had 8 boys and 2 girls. It was a lively household, and Mag's parents, Enemesio and Regina Diego, spent most of their days with the family in the ground floor space, called the "bodega".

Mag's grandchildren and other village youth painted the scenes. Mag spent her days cooking, cleaning, and ironing clothes. Tan Regina helped care for the babies, and organized family rosaries and *nubenas*. She organized the building of the small shrine located at the east corner of the house. She was known for her healing skills through local plant medicines and massage. She had very strong hands, and all agreed that her massages were painful and effective. "It sure felt good when she quit." The large painting in the porch shows Mag cooking with her children Shirley and Mark watching. Tan Regina is shown holding the baby, George.

The doorway shows Mag's daughter Bernadita sweeping with a coconut broom. All the family footwear "zories" are customarily removed before going into the house.



Tun Enemesio was as wide as he was tall. He possessed tremendous strength. He loved to challenge his grandchildren to hit his Budha-like stomach, which hurt their hands more than it hurt him. He had served as assistant commissioner prior to World War II and during the Japanese occupation period. These days he sometimes worked at his little ranch outside the village. But more often he sat on his metal folding chair in his boxer shorts and nothing else, observing his busy family around him, chewing his *ma'ama'un* (betelnut wad). The painted window shows Tun Enemesio preparing his betelnut wad while grandson Danny cuts the betelnut for him. They were sometimes joined by great-great grandfather, Tun Rinaldo Diego, who had served as commissioner in the early 1900s. He was very old, but in good health. He spent his days making and repairing fishing nets, as shown in another painting.

Vicente Flores built a new home for his large family in the 1970s, directly across the street. Fred Meno inherited the house from his parents and rented it out to various people through the years. The roof was damaged by Typhoon Chata'an in 2002 and the house was abandoned.



Rosa Mantanona House. Ifil wood pole and frame construction with mamposteria bodega. This house was originally built in 1905-1910 by Jose and Antonia L.G. Rios. Jose Rios was a school teacher assigned to teach in Inalahan, where he met and married Antonia Duenas Leon Guerrero. The Duenas and Leon Guerrero

families owned much of the Inalahan Village property located inland from Sallai Haya (San Jose Street). It is very likely that the first Duenas of Inalahan was a retired soldier of Spanish or Mexican heritage. Photographs and oral histories reveal that the generation of Duenas women in the early 1900s had blue eyes and very light skin. They married into the Leon Guerrero family – also of Spanish origin. When Jose was promoted to principal of George Washington High School, he moved with his family to Sinajana. They sold the house to the Manuel T. Paulino family. They later moved to property in Ipan, Talofoso, and sold the house to Juan and Rosa Mantanona. The Mantanonas raised their large family there through the 1960s to 1990s.



The painting of the man grating coconut in front of the bodega is an example of the daily activities that went on in these houses from the earliest times up until the 1970s and 80s. Rosa extensively restored the house in the early 1990s, keeping the historical elements intact. The most recent occupant of this house was Rosa's son, Kenneth. He excavated and rebuilt the bodega into living quarters in early 2000, then left the house for larger property in the new Iha subdivision.



George Flores House and Retail Store. Manposteria bodega ground floor, with ifil poles, spliced to extend from the foundation to the roof; 2<sup>nd</sup> floor wood frame; metal roof. This house was built in 1914 by George's father, Jose, who was a son of Commissioner Jesus A. Flores (Kabesa). He and his wife raised their large family upstairs. They were one of the most well-to-do families in the village. They had a large ranch in Malojloj, where they raised livestock, corn, cut coconut for copra, and raised many other products which they used for the family or sold in the store. They had a cook, a laundress, and a caretaker for the children. In the 1950s the store was operated by a cousin, Mary SN Flores, under the name of Mary's Store. George and his family lived upstairs after he retired from the U.S. Navy in the 1960s. His wife, Carmen (Mami'), operated a retail store on the ground floor. He remodeled the house in the 1970s, shown by the ceramic tile exterior and replacement of the manposteria staircase with iron railings. The second-story porch railings were changed from wood to ceramic balustrades. The Guam Preservation Trust rehabilitated the second floor in 1997.





The paintings show the various uses of the building throughout its history. The window above the stairs and the main doorway show paintings of the George Flores Store. “Auntie Mami” (Carmen Candaso Flores – George’s wife) is shown in the window, stocking the store shelves. In the doorway, she is shown in the background, with George and his brother Alfred (former senator “Davy Crockett”) enjoying a drink and conversation at the counter. A fighting rooster in a portable cage draws the interest of a young boy.

The front window shows a typical “mom and pop” inventory of supplies on shelves behind a woman who is sewing. Stores in the 50s and 60s carried yardage materials and often had a seamstress who would sew clothing ordered by customers. These seamstresses could take a picture from the Sears & Roebuck catalog and duplicate the style by using a dress supplied by the client to measure for size. The right front window shows a bakery scene, based on the history of the building as a bakery run by George’s father in the 1930s and 1940s. At the time, there was a wood-burning, domed oven (*Hotnu*) located in the back kitchen. Elders today fondly remember lining up to buy fresh-baked bread when the baking fragrance wafted over the neighborhood.

The George Flores Building is the focus of the first revitalization project for San Jose Street. Through a cooperative agreement with the George Flores heirs, I am working towards re-creating the retail store in the bodega as a museum of village history. A business partner has agreed to open a small snack and crafts shop in the space to sustain the museum operations. Future plans call for development of the upstairs living area as a vacation rental. I am encouraging residents and property owners to open vendor stalls to sell fruits and crafts.



### **Leon Guerrero House**

Mariano & Ana Leon Guerrero House 1901. Ifil poles and beams with mamposteria bodega. Walls of ifil board and batten construction without use of nails, secured by grooves and wood joinery. Built by master carpenter Jose Duenas Cruz.

Mariano R. Leon Guerrero served as the village commissioner appointed by the U.S. Naval governor. He and his wife raised their 16 children in this one-bedroom house. The mother and father slept in the bedroom, while all the children slept on woven pandanus mats in the living room, under a huge mosquito net. Every morning they would roll up the mats and fold up the mosquito net.





Lola D. and Vicente San Nicolas House Post-war construction with many Spanish-era architectural features. Cast concrete with corrugated tin roof. Front balcony is supported with curved embellishments; and the staircase balustrade begins with a curved swirl feature at ground level.

Built by Francisco Paulino Cruz (Beja) circa 1950 as a soda fountain and ice cream parlor on the ground floor and living quarters on the second floor; he converted the downstairs for his family in the late 50s and rented the second floor to school teachers. He moved his family to a new home in Ipan, Talosfofo in the 1960s, and the building was used for several years as a government health and dental clinic to serve the south called Hospit Haya. The building was purchased by Vicente Paulino and Lola Diego San Nicolas. They operated a U.S. Post Office branch on the ground floor and lived upstairs. When they moved their family to the mainland U.S. in the 1980s, it was occupied by various family members until it was abandoned due to typhoon damage to the roof in the 1990s.

The main door on the left depicts the “Hospit Haya” (Southern Hospital) clinic which occupied the ground floor in the 1960s. The post office, operated by Lola and Vicente San Nicolas in the 1970s, shows Lola and Ben at the service window,

and the gathering of people checking their boxes in the center of the building. The girl is “sniffing” the hand of an elderly lady (Tan Soledonia Duenas – Tan Dona’, who lived across the street) as a traditional sign of respect, called *manginge*’.



The west-facing window, above the circular staircase, shows a scene from a well-known Chamorro song, “Ballentino” that has been enacted in many performance programs throughout the village history. The song refers to the Spanish-era tradition whereby the young man named Ballentino serenades his intended sweetheart by singing to her below her window.

The two front windows on the right of the building shows typical scenes of the women and girls preparing to attend Church services, and the men and boys prepare to go fishing and farming.

This large building has several more windows to be painted. One more has been completed, on the side street facing east. This scene shows a typical morning activity performed by teen-age girls throughout Spanish and American periods into the 1960s – the making of corn *Titiyas* for breakfast. She makes balls from corn

flour and water, then presses them flat on a waxy banana leaf. The flattened *padda* is cooked on a flat pan over the fire.

The woman on the right is cooking “red rice” - rice cooked in *Achote* (Annato) water and seasonings.

Joseph Flores House Registered under the name of his parents, Joaquin and Rita B. Flores. Ifil pole construction with mamposteria original construction later remodeled with concrete.

During World War II, a bomb fell through the porch roof but did not explode. It has local ifil hardwood floors. The bodega shows the hand-cut ifil floor beams that support the main floor. This area was used to store dried food such as corn and rice. The thick rock and lime-mortar walls made this room cooler during hot days. The women often sat in the bodega to weave or to shuck corn. Joseph raised his family here in the 1970s and 1980s, and rebuilt the kitchen with concrete floor and walls. While extensively remodeled and modernized, the house retains its original character.



Isabel Cruz House   Listed on the historic registry as  
the Jose Duenas Cruz House

Ifil pole and wood frame with mamposteria bodega, hand-cut floor studs, with many fine joinery features.

Jose D. Cruz was a master carpenter who built this house in 1915 for his family. The floors, walls, and sliding window shutters are made of local ifil wood. This house was one of the first built with an inside flush toilet. The third story room was added after World War II. Like many of the houses of this era, the kitchen was once an outside open terrace that was later enclosed with walls and a metal roof.





Enemesio S.N. Diego House (shown at the far end of the street) This is a good example of a well-maintained traditional house, occupied by many generations of the Diego family. In early 2000 the ifil floor and frame was replaced with concrete supports hidden in the bodega and a concrete floor finished with ceramic tile. The character of the house was carefully maintained.



Manuel San Nicolas House    Registered as the Josefa San Nicolas House (Fat)

This is the oldest surviving house in the village. A photo dated 1885 shows this house with a thatched roof. The existing metal roof was built after World War II.

The exposed pole frame shows how these traditional houses were built. A few sections of the batten-board wall structure remain, showing the grooved board that reached from floor to ceiling. A thin panel of ifil wood was held in place with this grooved board, without the use of nails.



Jose Tayama “Paulino Store”, circa 1910 (The “Flower House”) Since the early 1990s this house has become known as the “Flower House” because of the huge bouganvillea flower tree that has taken over the building. During the immediate post-war years, this house was owned by Jesus Diego and Josefina Sugiyama Paulino, where they operated a retail store and raised their family upstairs. When they moved out in the 1960s, the upstairs was rented to several successive tenants . A store and post office downstairs was operated by Jesus’s daughter, Patricia. The building was abandoned after Typhoon Karen in 1976, and the bouganvillea bush planted beside the front steps began to grow. It has now taken over the entire building.

Facing the building, the right front window looks into the activities of Paulino’s store in the 1950s. Young men gathered at the small tables to drink Cokes and watch the girls who came to buy household goods. Two shy “Chamoritas” are

shown in the doorway, with their shopping bags. Young men and women were not allowed to speak to each other in public, so they only looked at each other secretly from a distance. Later, the interested boy might pass a love letter to her with the help of a trusted messenger. Children are playing games on the floor. Using a green lemon for a ball and shells for “jacks”, the children were very skillful to throw up the “ball” while scooping the shells before catching the ball again. The middle window shows a family shopping, while a young girl is showing respect to an elder by “smelling” her hand. The elder will give her a short blessing in return.

The left front window shows members of the Paulino family. Jesus D. Paulino, who was a school teacher and a farmer, is shown with his wife Josefina, who ran the store. Their oldest daughter, Patricia wipes the table, while their youngest daughter, Barbara (Bobbie), stands by her mother.

The Paulino children, and grandchildren gathered to paint the pictures and to tell stories of their memories of growing up in the Paulino’s Store.

### **Old School / Social Hall**

This building was built by the U.S. Naval government for a school in the early 1900s. The one-room structure was divided by moveable partitions, and classes from grade 1 to 8 were taught by Chamorro teachers. In the 1970s the building was used as a social hall and recreation center. There are only two remaining buildings like this – one in Merizo and this one. This building is scheduled to be rebuilt in the same style as a community center. Surveys revealed that youths of the 1960s and 1970s have fond memories of this building when it served as the village recreation center.

### **St. Joseph Church**

The church was built in three years with volunteer labor by village men and boys, who mixed cement and carried it in buckets to build the structure. The present building was completed in 1939. In 1993, it was damaged by an 8.1 earthquake and was completely rebuilt from only the original walls by professional builders, completed in 1998. When they were rebuilding, they discovered that the walls had no foundation. Therefore, the people say that it was “held together by the hands of God” for over 60 years.



Official Church Photo courtesy of St. Joseph Church

The Painted History Walk has helped to tell the story of our village's long and interesting history. In the process of painting the histories, a new generation of village youth learned more about their heritage. The paintings have attracted the attention of a tour company that brings groups of visitors to San Jose Street. The George Flores Store and village museum project will provide interactive learning experiences for village residents and will entice more visitors to come and to spend more time in the village. The expected result is that others will see the opportunities and set up produce, food and crafts booths along the street. The tenuous first steps have been taken. The outcome will be a subject for future historians.



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Judy Flores, PhD, is a folklorist, historian, teacher, and visual artist who has lived and worked in the island of Guam since 1957. She earned a BA from the University of Guam and an MA from the University of Washington. She taught secondary school art for 10 years, then served as folklorist for the Guam arts council for another 10 years. She helped found Gef Pa'go, Guam's only living museum of Chamorro culture, serving successively as advisor, director and president over a 20-year period. She earned a second MA in Micronesian Studies from the University of Guam; and a PhD in Arts of Oceania from the University of East Anglia in Norwich, England. She returned to teach at the University of Guam, retiring in 2005. She is widely recognized as a professional visual artist of batik paintings that depict Guam's culture and history that can be seen in many of Guam's public buildings.

