

The "F" in Simaranhon Surnames

Written by gilbert

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By Gilbert F. Fajiculay

In several occasions while studying engineering at Mapua Institute of Technology in Manila, my classmates would curiously ask me where I come from. They were somewhat amazed by the uniqueness of my last name which, of course, starts in letter F. And they would ask what this uncommon word meant or whether it is a Spanish term. My answer, naturally at that time, was I do not know. The only thing I could respond was that I come from a paradise island, in the province of Romblon, called Simara.

We learned in our high school history textbooks that a Spanish governor-general, named Narciso Claveria y Zaldúa, promulgated a decree in 1849. This decree compiled a list of words culled from many Philippine languages and dialects that denote themes in nature, vegetation, animal, mineral and geography, arts, space, etc. Possible conjugations of the root word were also included to expand the list. Naturally, Spanish words made up the bulk of the surnames, and the whole source was published in a catalogue, aptly termed **Catalogo Alfabetico de Apellidos**. This catalog consists of 141 pages, and each page consists of six columns with 72 surnames each column. The words listed per alphabet section were not strictly sorted in alphabetical sequence. In fact, a few words are re-entered in the page or other page but in another spelling form.

The Claveria decree of 1849 directed a formation of a civil register, the main purpose of which is to ensure proper collection of taxes. Other aims were for updating census statistics, information and control of movement of population, and performance of government services to the provinces. Copies of the catalog and the decree were sent to every provincial heads. These provincial officials were told to assign to every town a number of surnames, based on estimated number of families in the territory, and send these to the respective parish priests for distribution to barangays. Then each head of family in the barangay would select from this list his new family surname and that of his descendants. For big families, they were directed to select several surnames, one different surname for each of the children.

I recently saw a copy of this catalog, a reprint published in 1973, obtained from a university library in the US. The catalog shows that the **F** surnames are in pages 46 thru 51. Some **E** surnames are listed at the beginning of page 46, and some **G** surnames are shown in page 51. It is interesting to mention here the following observations: Firstly, pages 46 and 47 of the catalog show the surnames of majority of residents living in Simara Island, as well as many of those in Banton and Sibale. Secondly, pages 49 and 50 show surnames of people mostly residing in Tablas Island. Thirdly, some surnames spelling as originally listed in the catalog differ from current variant surnames of present Simaranhon residents. And finally, there were some early migration of residents between Simara and Tablas towns; this was possible because many island residents in those times work as farmers, animal herders, fishermen, and few became traders who traveled between islands in the province or in nearby regions.

These observations somehow offer truth to the stories back home from long ago that, in implementing the Claveria decree, the Romblon government administrator tore pages from the catalog and sent two pages to the Maghali islands of Simara, Banton and Sibale, several pages each to Tablas towns, Romblon, and Sibuyan. By the luck of the draw, Simara and the Maghali islands got pages 46 and 47 containing the **F** surnames, some Tablas towns received the **F** (pages 49 and 50) and **G** pages, Sibuyan got the **R** and **S** pages, and Romblon and San Agustin ended up with the **M** pages. It can be assumed here that only one parochial priest and/or administrator was in-charge of the islands of Banton, Sibale and Simara, during the Claveria administration.

A notable

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observation is the migration of some residents between Tablas towns and Simara. There was this story from the Fondevilla clan which claimed that there were these three Dela Vega brothers from Panay who traveled to Tablas and Simara. During the Claveria conversion of surnames, one of the brothers took the surname Fabriquier (in the catalog, *fabrequer* shown in page 46) and he eventually settled in Odiongan; another brother who stayed in San Agustin changed to Montesa; and the third one named Jose dela Vega changed to Fondevilla (in page 49 of the catalog, *fondevila*). Also listed in page 49 as originally-spelled and ordered are the surnames like Fernalo, Ferrancollo, Fery, Ferrer, Ferriol, Ferrera, Fesaret, Festejo, Festin, Fetel, Fetalino, Fetalco, Fetalver, Fetalvero, Fodra, Fojas, Fondevila, Fontamillas. Other instances of possible migration and trading can be coming from residents with surnames found in page 50; these are originally-spelled as: Fopalan, Fortaleza, Fortes, Fortu, Foronda, Fradejas, Frias, Fronda, Frogosa, Froelda. There is also a possibility that migrants to Simara came via other nearby islands/towns before finally settling in with their descendants in Simara island.

As per the decree, residents whose children have big families will be split and given several surnames. An example of a big family that took several surnames from the catalog is the Santiagos of Simara. According to the family history of the Fallarme clan, their ancestral father's name was Pedro Santiago. For his six sons, Pedro Santiago took the surnames Fallar, Fallarna, Fallarme (in catalog, *fallarmi*), Fallarcuna (in catalog, *fallarcana*), Fallurin, and Fallaria (in catalog, *falluria*).

As already mentioned, some spellings of the surnames in the catalog differ from current spelling use of surname owners in Simara and other towns. This might be due to the fact that education in the Spanish colonial era was very limited and mostly consisted of daily Spanish prayer recitations. And many original surname owners may have just passed their surnames to their children by word of mouth. Availability of original written documents then would be very uncommon as many original records were lost in fires that befell the church in Simara. There is also a phonetic variation in the accent of vowels in many parts of Central and Southern Philippines. Over the years, the oral-to-written translation or interpretation by these descendants and civil registrars could have been the reason why the present variant surnames in print form differ from the original Claveria catalog.

Listed hereunder are several surnames, as originally spelled and sequenced alphabetically, in pages 46 and 47 of the Claveria catalog. Enclosed in parentheses after the entry is the variant spelling currently used by Simaranhons and other Maghali island residents.. This is only a partial list of the 432 words sequenced in each page.

Page 46: faa, faala, fababeir (*fababair*), fabiala, fabic, fabicon, fabillo (*fabello*), fabon, fabona, fabrega (*fabregas*), fabregar, fabregara, fabreag, fabro, fabreque, fabrequer, fabrequil (*fabriquel*), fabella, fabellar, fabit, fabito, fabroa, fabul, fabula, facalarin, factur (*factor*), factura, faderan, faderon, faderog, faderogao (*faderagao*), faderanga, fadri, fadriquel, fadriquela, fadriquelan, fadolla, fadollo (*fadullo*), faeto, fagar, fahego, faila, failman, faimalan, faig.

Page 47: faigmani, faigao, faildan, faildon, fainsan, fainsani, fajanilan, fajuda, fajutag, fajutina, fajutagana, fajutnao, fajelan (*fajilan*), fajelago, fajarit, fajarito, fajarillo, fajanilan, fajicolay (*fajiculay*), fajilago, fajilagot, fajilagutan, fajilagmago, fajilamig (*falamig*), falible, falami, falaminiano (*faminiano*), falcatan, falciso (*falceso*), falconetin (*falcunitin*), falconay (*falcunaya*), falconayo, falcotela (*falcutila*), falcolan

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(*falculan*), falogmi (*falogme* or *falogmy*), falcon, falguesa (*falqueza*), faliyo (*falejo*), falo, falon, fallar, fallarco, fallarna, fallarmi (*fallarme*), fallarca, fallarcana (*fallarcuna*), falluri, fallurin, falluria (*fallaria*), famaño (*faminiano*), familiara, famini, faminia, faminial, famiron, famironag, famorcan, famodolan (*famodulan*), famat, famatingan (*famatigan*), famaran, famupul, fan, fanco (*fanlo*), fancuber, fancubila, fancubig (*fancubit*), faner, fanfu (*fampo*), fanfulmi (*fampulme*), fano, fanoga.

In the Tablas towns of Calatrava and Odiongan, several of the following surnames shown in pages 49 and 50 are common among residents.

Page 49: ferol, ferma, fermalo, fermalan, fery (*ferry*), feire, ferrer, ferranco (*ferrancullo*), ferrara, fesare, fesaret (*fesarit*), fesalbon, festejo, festin, fetalbo, fetallo, fetel (*fetil*), fetalino, fetalco, fetalcorin, fetalver, fetalvero, figuracion, figuerras, figueroa, firma, firmalan, firme, florenda, flores, foja, fodra, fojas, folgosa, folgado, fonacier, fondeo, fondevila (fondevilla), fontanilla, fontana, fontamillas, fonte, fontera.

Page 50: fontelar, fontelo, fontemayor, fontiveros, fopa, fopalan, fofue, formon, fortaleza, forca, formanés, forte, fortes, fortu, fortuna, fortunado, foronda, foz, fradejas, franco, frialda, frias, froa, fron, fronda, frogosa, froelda (*fruelda*), frondosa, frua, fruezada, frugalidad, fuente, fuentes, fuerte, fula, funay, funada.