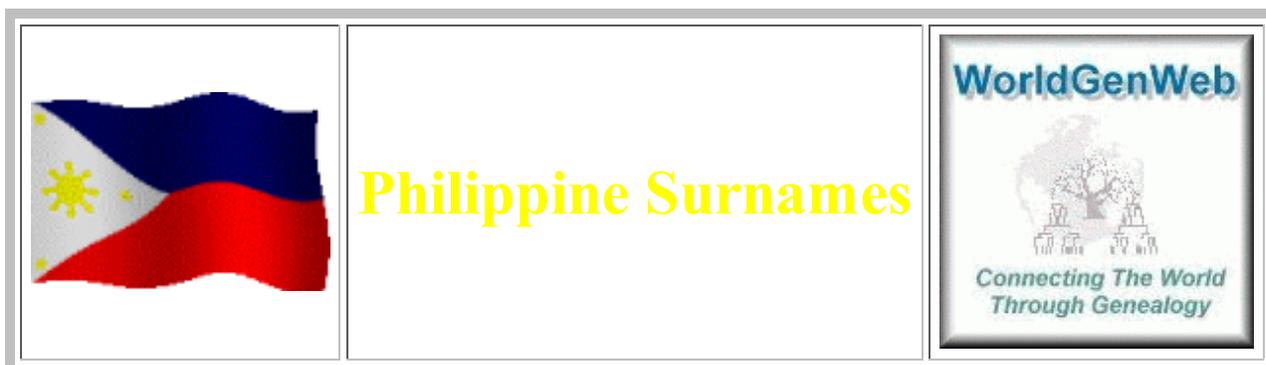


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CLAVERIA'S DECREE ON FILIPINO SURNAMES*

21 November 1849

**From the "Introduction" of Dr. Domingo Abella in Catalogo Alfabetico Apellidos (1849).
Reprinted by the National Archives in Manila in 1973. Publication no. D-3.*

During my visit to the majority of the provinces of these islands, I observed that the natives in general lack individual surnames, which distinguished them by families. They arbitrarily adopt the names of saints and this practice has resulted in the existence of thousands of individuals having the same surname. Likewise, I saw the resultant confusion with regard to the administration of justice, government, finance, and public order, and the far-reaching moral, civil and religious consequences to which this might lead, because the family names are not transmitted from the parents to their children, so that it is sometimes impossible to prove the degrees of consanguinity for purpose of marriage, rendering useless the parochial books which in Catholic countries are used for all kinds of transactions.

For this purpose, a catalogue of family names has been compiled, including the indigenous names collected by the Reverend Fathers Provincial of the religious orders, and the Spanish surnames they have been able to acquire, along with those furnished by the vegetable and mineral kingdoms, geography, arts, etc. In view of the extreme usefulness and practicality of this measure, the time has come to issue a directive for the formation of a civil register, which may not only fulfill and ensure the said objectives, but may also serve as the basis for the statistics of the country, guarantee the collection of taxes, the regular performance of personal services, and the receipt of payment for exemptions. It likewise provides exact information of the movement of the population; thus avoiding unauthorized migrations, hiding taxpayers, and other abuses.

Having heard the testimonies of the Most Reverend Bishops, the Reverend Provincials of the religious orders, and the Honorable Assessor General of the Government, I hereby order:

1. A copy of the printed catalogue of surnames, previously prepared for this purpose shall be remitted to all the heads of provinces of these islands.

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3. Having thus formed the catalogues corresponding to each town, the head of the province shall send these to the respective parish priests for distribution to the cabeceras (barangays); this distribution shall be carried out with the help of the gobernadorcillo, another municipal official, and two competent and respected principales. Each cabeza shall be present with the individuals of this cabecera, and the father or oldest person of each family shall choose or be assigned one of the surnames in the list which he shall then adopt, together with his direct descendants.
4. Natives of Spanish, indigenous, or Chinese origin who already have a surname may retain it and pass it on to their descendant.
5. Children whose fathers are dead shall be given the surname of the paternal grandfather, and in the absence of this, the surnames of the brothers or relatives of their father, thus avoiding unnecessary multiplicity and ensuring that those of the same family branch shall have the same surname.
6. The children of unknown fathers shall be given the surname of the mother, and if this is also unknown, the surname of the guardian, or baptismal sponsor, or of the parish priest in case the sponsor does not allow it.
7. In the lists that will be made for the cabeceras, in order to complete the register later, each person shall indicate (a) his baptismal name, followed by the new surname which may be assigned to him, and (b) the name which, until then may have served him as surname, leaving him free to retain this as long as he wishes.
8. To avoid confusion which might result to the prejudice of those who with their surnames inherited from His Majesty certain benefits, the names of Lacandola, Mojica, Tupas, and Raja Matanda shall not be adopted except by those who have a just title to possess them.
9. Families who can prove that they have kept for four generations their surname, even though it may be the name of a saint, but not those like de la Cruz, de los Santos, and some others which are so numerous that they would continue producing confusion, may pass them on to their descendants; the Reverend Fathers and the heads of provinces are advised to use their judgement in the implementation of this article.
10. Having notified the elders or parents of the new surname which corresponds to them and to the members of the family, that is, all those who because of their close relationship should bear the surname, each barangay shall be assigned two or three days for any objections which may be made before the parish priest; the latter will act on these objections in accordance with the provision of this superior decree.
11. School teachers shall have a register of all the children attending school, with their names and surnames, and shall see to it that they shall not address or know each other except by the surname listed in the register which should be that of the parents. In case of lack of enthusiasm in compliance with this order, the teachers shall be punished in proportion to the offense at the discretion of the head of the province.
12. The heads of families shall make known their new surnames to their children who may be absent, in addition to the notification that shall be furnished by the gobernadorcillo to the gobernadorcillo of the town in which the absent relative is residing. For this purpose, they will

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- the army to whom a surname has been assigned, so that the said provincial head may inform the branches of the army, and the surname which corresponds to each soldier may be recorded in his personnel file.
13. For record purposes, the gobernadorcillo of each town shall keep a list of the individuals who, by virtue of the preceding article, have been informed of the surnames which they are to use.
 14. In towns where the residents were born in other places where their families reside, the gobernadorcillo, without prejudice to the provisions above, shall send a list of their names to the gobernadorcillos of the towns from which they had come, so that on the one hand, there may be no alteration or delay in transmitting the surnames which correspond to each one, and, on the other, there may be no unnecessary duplication. It adds to the confusion to assign a surname to individuals who should adopt that of the family from which they are descended, and no other.
 15. The cabeceras in each town shall be numbered, starting from one and so forth; all classes of people in them shall be enrolled, natives as well as mestizos, no matter what their occupations may be, such circumstances being duly recorded.
 16. Once the lists of the cabeceras are finalized and approved by the reverend parish priest, a register for each of them shall be prepared so that by assembling all of these, a general register for each town will result, signed by the gobernadorcillo and approved by the parish priest, following the customary practice for the annual inventories of the provinces; three copies thereof shall be prepared, one to serve as a master copy in the parish, another to be conserved by the head of the province in the archives, and the third to be sent to the Superior Government for inclusion in the expediente of this decree and for other uses as needed.
 17. In order to obtain uniformity and to facilitate their completion, a sufficient number of registers, patterned on the attached model, shall be printed, to be paid for from the general discretionary funds of the province.
 18. At baptisms, the parish priest shall demand a sheet of paper whereon, in addition to the name to be given to the one to be baptized, the names and surnames of his father and mother shall be written, except as prescribed in article 6. The same shall be done at marriages, in which case not only the names and surnames of the couple to be married, but also those of their parents, shall be entered.
 19. In the margin of sacramental certificates as well as in all public manuscripts or documents that may be issued by either the provincial notaries or the town judges, the surnames of the interested parties to whom the documents refer shall be written in clear and legible writing; all such documents issued under names other than those which had been assigned to these parties, as certified by the master registers or their baptismal certificates, shall be null and void.
 20. Neither the heads of provinces, nor parish priests, nor gobernadorcillos shall approve applications or documents in which the interested parties do not express their names and surnames; this rule shall be observed in the Capital [Manila], in municipal and provincial courts, by authorities, military chiefs of the navy, and treasury, and any other officials before whom the natives may appear or present themselves.
 21. Any individual who, after being inscribed in the new register, changes his name or surname

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inattention.

22. The register having been prepared with the maximum accuracy in accordance with article 16, the heads of the provinces may easily submit such statistical reports as the Superior Government may require, and at the same time ensure uniformity and precision, and avoid frauds, besides establishing the number of those who should serve in communal public works, contribute to the communal funds, and pay taxes imposed by the law. The said register shall be prepared in accordance with the master copy, in which there are nine columns for those who pay tribute, those bound to perform communal labor, the name and surname of each of these together with those of the whole family, their ages, marital status, and occupation, the reason for exemptions from personal service and tribute, and a final column to be prepared each successive year, for recording any changes, increases or decreases in each cabecera.
23. Items in the ninth column, pertaining to alterations of each register, shall be entered most accurately, for this is the only way by which the course of time it may become as perfect as possible, with the disappearance of inaccuracies which may occur at the beginning, especially with regard to the ages of the individuals. The cabezas de barangay therefore shall each month note all the variations that may have happened in their cabeceras, and shall submit these annotations on the first Sunday of every month to the gobernadorcillo and the parish priest for their examination and approval.
24. The heads of provinces shall exercise the utmost zeal and the full measure of their authority, both for the preparation of the registers with the requisite accuracy, and for the strict implementation of the previous article, by which the desired perfection may be obtained, and various significant advantages may be derived. It is understood that by the coming month of June [1850] the registers shall be completed and their submission to the Superior Government shall be accompanied by a report on the resultant increase in all the classes that compose the register.

In addition to their administrative and executive functions, as enjoined by the government, the parish priests should also, by their counsel and exhortations help make their parishioners understand the advantages which in various respects shall result from the execution of this decree. To this effect, the secular and regular prelates are requested and enjoined to exert their pastoral zeal and the full influence of their authority and position so that the parish priests shall extend their cooperation, which is indispensable for the complete success of what is herein provided. It is understood that the Government shall take into account, for purposes of reward, the merit or demerit which each one may earn in a matter of such importance.

Let this decree, with the catalogue of surnames and the model of the register, be sent to the heads of provinces and to others whom it may concern.

D. Narciso Claveria y Zaldua

El Conde de Manila

Gobernador y Capitan General de Filipinas

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