

Foreword

Past and Present Lives, Our Gifts To the Generations After Us

In the 1960s, I, the eldest of the Capen-Rodriguez clan that originated in the Philippines, started to seek out family records with the hope of creating family histories on my maternal and paternal side. Information gathering was done from members of the Noel-Capen, Badolato-Rodriguez, and Capen-Rodriguez families. Later, my sister, Carmen Marion Colona, and my brother, Joaquin “Jackie” Manuel, joined in the endeavor. Soon after, the three of us produced more stories about the past and present lives in our family tree. We traced back to hundreds of years the rich historical existence of our families. Somehow, historical records were passed on to us. We used diaries, family trees, genealogical records, letters and memories, old and new sources to give flesh, blood, and voices to all of us including our forebears. Even before the Year of the Internet, we had already retraced the lines of descent from our ancestors and we kept with us through the years several yards of paper that contained our family tree.

During the colonial era, it was not unusual for young and adventurous men and women to leave their birthplace and travel half way around the world to start a new branch. Many of our ancestors did that. Many of us moved to many places: from Spain to different European cities; from other European countries to Spain; from England to America; from Spain to the Philippines; from America to the Philippines; from the Philippines to Australia and back to America. We believe that geography has the power to shape people’s nature. That is why our stories are also about the countries or locations where our family members have lived and died.

Records about our forebears go back to the 1500s. A lot of our stories deal with the oldest family members whom we knew: from our grandfather Joaquin Serra Rodriguez who left Spain, went to Puerto Rico and reached the Philippines in 1896, to Charles James “Sam” Capen who left San Francisco and came as a serviceman of

the US Army to the Philippines in 1931. Our grandfather Joaquin was married to Carmen Gonzales Badolato in the Philippines. Our grandfather Sam was married to Florence Noel in California in the late 20s, before they arrived in the Philippines. Our father Joaquin ‘Chucho’ Rodriguez and beloved mother Elizabeth ‘Emma’ Capen were married on Much 3, 1932 in Manila.

After a thorough scrutiny of the near and distant past of our families, we have learned that our great grandparents and our forefathers always tried to be professionals. They belonged to

the ranks of the middle class during their time and place. They had diverse opportunities in businesses and they had many options to choose from which made them soar to several heights. Because of their indomitable spirit and diversities, we were blessed with a myriad of cultures and qualities that have strengthened our bloodline and given us a healthy heritage. In a sense, we want the future generations to see us and our forebears with pride, too.

We lost a vast amount of records due to perennial natural calamities such as storms and earthquakes, and the destruction of Second World War in the 1940s. But Jackie, Carmen and I have resurrected stories of our childhood in Tuguegarao and Manila, our memories of the Second World War, our struggles and overcoming while we were growing up; our prosperities with our beloved and our children; our work during our peak; and above all, our happiness with the lives that we have lived. They are now part of various chapters in our new book, a very ambitious project with more than 500 pages of memories.

The three of us, though all Philippine born, now live in different continents: Carmen in Florida and in Wachapreague, Virginia; Jackie in the Philippines; and I in Australia. But in the year of the Internet and through interviews that compelled us to remember everything about us, we have managed to struggle through the difficult task of putting to words the stories of our lives. We have also checked and counter-checked all the things that we have remembered about each one of us in order to arrive at our true portraits and real assessments of our lives.

Prominent facets of our philosophies in life and our intrinsic characteristics have emerged after we have talked about ourselves and after we have traced our family histories. Like our parents, grand parents and our forefathers, all of us have always tried to earn as best as we could. We have lived well but not beyond our means. We are not adverse to hard work at any level of the production sphere. We have tried to get the most practical education and fair ambition has been our sail in life. We have been very careful with our health. We believe in God. We love our neighbors and are sympathetic to mankind. We believe that we can go and rise anywhere in the world. We always leave something for the next generation. The three of us have done that with our best.

We are committed to continue to build on this history by passing on information to the future generations of our families. We see this project as a form of updating the past not only as a gift for present day members of our clan, but for them to continue and love what we have done.

Carmen, Jackie, and I have not allowed the generations after us to remain silent and voiceless. Through interviews, we have a vast collection of their recollections of the past, and their present views and ideas. In a sense, we have an interaction with them in this book. Carmen, Jackie and I have been driven by the desire to put in concrete form the history of our families for our future generations to see and appreciate. Since they are now part of our recollections, we hope that they, in turn, will continue to update and improve from where we rest.

Our book entitled *The Story of A Global Family: Capen-Rodriguez*; our *RodriguezCapen.com Website*; as well as our family tree require constant updating and amendments as years move forward and as our families grow. Everyone in the family must have a passion for this endeavor. Each and every member has the responsibility to see the continuity and advancement of the book, the website and the family tree. Initiative must be taken by those who are interested in history and those who have learned to love the family after reading our book, surfing our website, and browsing through our family tree. Indeed, stories of our past and present lives are our gifts to ourselves, to our forebears, and the generations after us.

As of 2009 we have traced over 2700 individuals and about 700 families spread out over different continents in our family tree. More moments of remembrances are in order, needed, or demanded as family members grow exponentially, and apart from each other, in years to come

Charles “Guy” Capen-Rodriguez, Publisher COPYRIGHT

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