CHAPTER II

Velez Family of Guagua

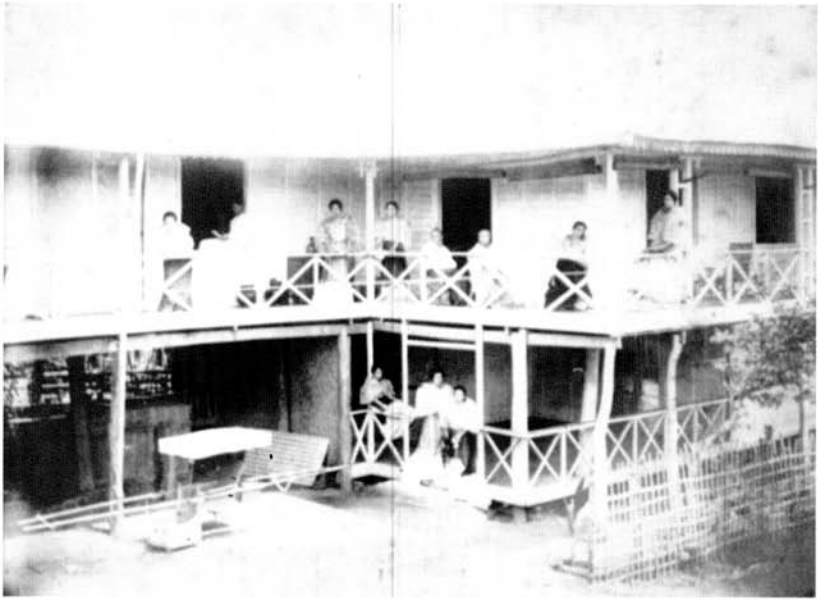
Coat of Arms of the Velez Family.

Velez Family of Guagua

One of the best legends I have heard of romance on these islands comes from the Velez family. So powerful is it that landmarks still stand, along with a number of islands, which bear the names of its protagonists.

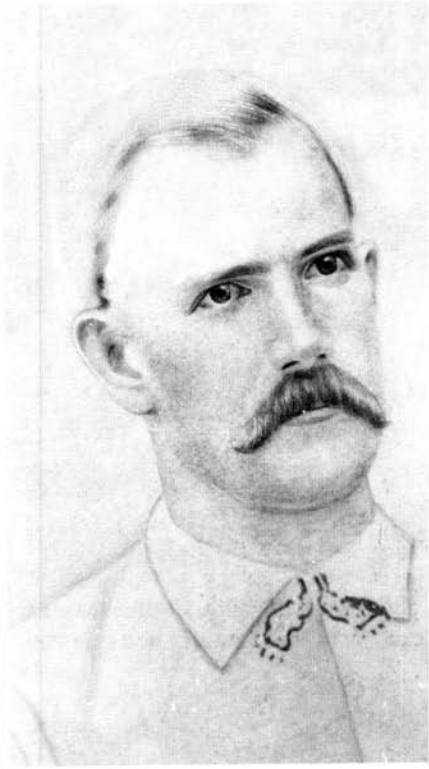
Instead of the ocean that now separates the Bataan from the Cavite headlands, the legend has it there once lay a salt marsh. At the foot of the high mountains on the Bataan side proudly stood a monastery and a convent, making it possible for love to bloom between a young friar and a beautiful nun, the lovely Maria Velez (Marivelez). The young couple determined one day to forsake their consecrated lives, but to do so they needed to cross the marsh, whish they did on a horse. When their elopement was found out the pursuit of them began. The horse on which they had tried to make their escape was soon mired in a marsh, forcing a transfer to that most faithful but slowest of Filipino draft animals, the carabao. On their swift steeds, however, their pursuers quickly gained ground on them, which forced the lovers to continue their escape on foot. Finally catching up with them, their pursuers remanded them to the local magistrate, a haughty *Corregidor* who issued a decree that, as punishment for their sin against heaven and the community, they be separated from each other, one on either side of the marsh.

Scandalized by the harshness of the *Corregidor's* disposition of their case, the merciful Deity who watches over lovers, declared, however, that he should "not decree eternal punishment in relation to anyone, much less faithful lovers." Still, because they had broken the Vows they had made as religious, the Deity decided that He would make of them an eternal example both of His justice and of lovers' fidelity. Maria Velez he placed in eternal repose on the heights of the mountains of Bataan, which from that moment on bore her name, Marivelez. It used to be said that from the marshes of Bataan, now the watery channel between the two headlands, one can make out the outline of Maria Velez' figure. The young friar, on the other hand, he put on the opposite side of the channel, on an island now called *El Fraile,* from where it would be possible for him to gaze eternally upon the countenance of his beloved. The overbearing magistrate he similarly turned into stone and placed at a point between the two lovers as today's island of *Corregidor*. The Deity did not immortalize the horse and carabao as well, giving them an eternal presence as the islands of *Caballo* and *Carabao*.



Rosario, Patrocinio, Carmen Velez R. Infante, and their friends, at a family picnic in their country house in Pampanga, 1900. (ZA)

Portrait of Doña Rosario Velez R. Infante of Guagua, Pampanga. (ZA)



Sr. Don Ramón Rodriguez Infante

Sra. Doña Rafaela Limonco

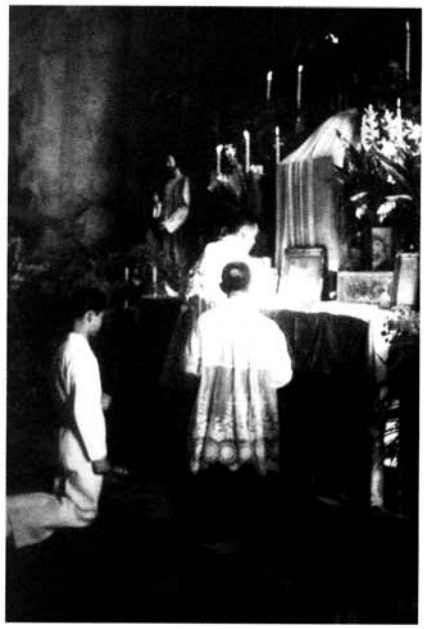
Sr. Don Ricardo Velez y Corrales

Sra. Doña Rosario Rodriguez Infante

The *Santo Entierro* of the Velez Family of Guagua, Pampanga, 1949. (ZA)

The *Santo Entierro* silver *carroza* of the Velez Family during the Good Friday procession in Guagua, Pampanga. The black veiled penitents pull the ropes in typical mourning attire, 1949. (ZA)

A Spanish friar, a close friend of the Velez Family, 1895. (ZA)



A priest officiates a Mass in honor of the Velez Family, 1940. (ZA)

Palm Sunday in front of Guagua Church, 1915. (ZA)

Rosario, Patrocinio, and Carmen Velez, in the company of their cousins at a picnic in Guagua, 1910. (ZA)

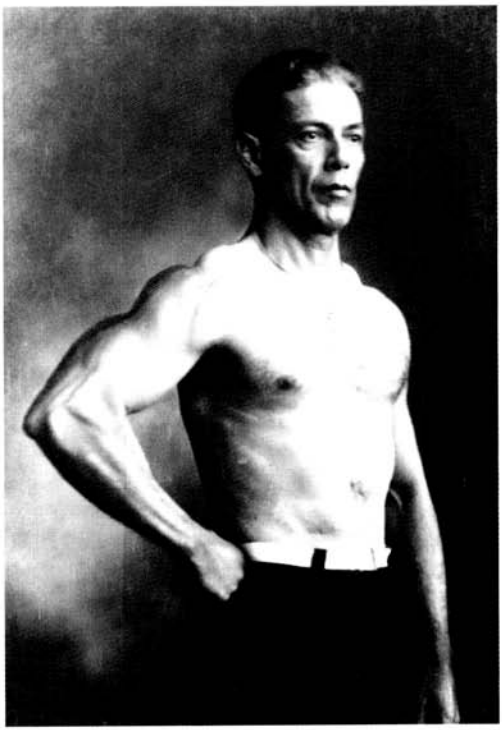
Affluent Pampango guests and their Japanese visitors wearing hats, at a picnic at the Velez's Hacienda del Carmen in Floridablanca, Pampanga 1910. (ZA)

Rosario and Patrocinio Velez at a picnic along the Guagua River, 1910. (ZA)

Velez's family guests at a picnic on the riverbank by their house in Guagua, 1910.(ZA)

Wedding portrait of Don Rafael Velez R. Infante. (ZA)

Studio portrait of Doña Rosario Velez R. Infante, 1912. (ZA)



Don Ramón Velez R. Infante, at 86 years, showing his magnificent physique. (ZA)

Studio portrait of Doña Patrocinio Velez R. Infante, 1912. (ZA)

Guagua River and the stone bridge connecting to the Velez ancestral mansion, 1890. (ZA)

A newer and bigger new stone bridge connecting to the Velez ancestral mansion circa, 1900. (ZA)

A guest room at the Velez mansion in Guagua, 1915. (ZA)

The masters bedroom at the Velez mansion, 1898. (ZA)

Hacienda del Carmen overlooking the Paguiruan River. Don Alfredo Infante and Doña Florence R. Infante spent their holidays here, 2007. (ZA)

The main entrance to and front porch of Hacienda del Carmen, 2007. (ZA)

The back porch connecting to the dining room and leading to the kitchen and bathroom, 2007. (ZA)

The kitchen at Hacienda del Carmen, 2007. (ZA)