

**HISTORY AND CULTURAL LIFE OF BANGUED  
AND ITS BARRIOS**

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## FOREWORD

This manuscript contains the history and cultural life of the Municipality of Bangued, capital of Abra Province. The report is made by barrios arranged alphabetically after the information gathered for the town proper. No effort was made to consolidate them.

This report is made in compliance with the request made in Memorandum No. 34, s. 1952, of the Director of Public Schools, dated at Manila on April 28, 1952.

The report for each barrio was prepared by the Principal or head teacher of the elementary school in the barrio. Those inhabitants of the barrio who kindly supplied the facts and information embodied in the report are mentioned at the end of each. Effort is made to contact them and to sign the official copies to be sent.

The undersigned respectfully and gratefully thank those who submitted these reports and their informants, and all those who had a helping hand in gathering the data contained herein and in the preparation and handling of these papers. No doubt these will be the bases of the history of the province, of the region, and of the country in the future.

Bangued, April 20, 1953

(Mrs.) NONA B. CARINO



## HISTORY AND CULTURAL LIFE OF BANGUED

### Part One: History

1. Present official name of the town:

BANGUED

2. Former name or names and their meaning and derivation:

In 1861, Bangen became the capital of Abra. Gobernador Politico Militar Carrera transferred the seat of the provincial government from Bucay, the old capital, due to some circumstances that could not be avoided. The capital was christened on July 25, 1861. The people could hardly pronounce the nasal word "Bangen" so they called it "Banged". The Americans called it BANGUED in 1899.

The reason for calling Bangued "Bangen" before 1861 was due to a bamboo palisado on the top of a hill, now CASA MATA or House of Death - due to a small vault where gunpowder was kept. The bamboo palisado reinforced with thorns was pitched on the top of the Casa Mata Hill to prevent the headhunters from Patco (then called San Idefonso, now Penarubia), from attacking the town. The headhunters were non-Christians who refused baptism. The people of Bangued, at that time, embraced the Roman Catholic religion. The headhunters hated their own relatives for accepting the Christian faith. Because of this hatred the Bangen was built.

As time went by, Bangen was termed Banged until the Americans arrived in the town. Since the Americans do not use the sound of "ng" they pronounced "Banged" to "Bangued" and we all followed.

3. Date of establishment:

The exact date is not known although the town was christened on July 25, 1861, when it was made the capital of Abra.

4. Names and social status of the founders:

None of the old folks who are still alive could tell who the founders of Bangued were.

5. Names of persons who held leading official positions in the community:

- (a) During the Spanish regime:

The following were gobernadorcillos

Don Eulalio Villamor  
Don Juan Paredes  
Don Juan Valera  
Don Mariano de la Vega  
Don Leocadio Valera  
Don Santiago Alejandro

- (b) During the American regime up to the present:

1900-1901	President	Don Lucas Paredes
	Vice President	Mr. Juan Ferraren

1902-1903	President	Mr. Juan Ferraren
1904-1905	President	Mr. Marcos Baula
	Vice President	Mr. Timoteo Acosta
1906-1907	President	Mr. Santos Valera
	Vice President	
1908-1909	President	Mr. Maximo Blanco
	Vice President	Mr. Teodoro Valera
1910-1911	President	Mr. Augusto Colet
	Vice President	Mr. Alejandro Belandres
1912-1915	President	Mr. Felipe de la Vega
	Vice President	Mr. Bienvenido Valera
1916-1918	President	Mr. Luciano Barcena
	Vice President	Mr. Severino Benedito
1919-1921	President	Mr. Longino Bersamin
1922-1925	President	Mr. Bienvenido Valera
	Vice President	Mr. Aquilino Reyes
1926-1928	President	Mr. Bienvenido Valera (reelected)
	Vice President	Mr. Adriano Bigomia
1929-1931	President	Mr. Esteban Valera
1932-1934	President	Mr. Longino Bersamin
1935-1937	President	Mr. Anselmo Bringas
	Vice President	Mr. David Sayo
1938-1940	President	Mr. Longino Bersamin
	Vice President	Mr. David Sayo
1940-1942	President	Mr. Longino Bersamin (reelected)

#### During the Japanese Occupation

1942 - March 10, 1945 - Mayor - Mr. Agapito Garduque  
(Appointed by the Japanese Occupation Forces)

Bangued was liberated from the Japanese on April 15, 1945.

	Military Mayor	Mr. Reynante (appointed)
	Vice Mayor	Mr. Santos Bargas
May 1945-1947	Mayor	Mr. Longino Bersamin
1948-1951	Mayor	Mr. Beato Alberto (elected)
	Vice Mayor	Mr. Carlos Banez
1952	Mayor	Mr. Simplicio Bringas
	Vice Mayor	Mr. David Sayo

#### 6. Data on historical sites, structures, buildings, old ruins, etc.:

A historical site that exists up to the present is CONSILIMAN. This is a spring and it was the source of drinking water for the whole town before the erection of the water system. There was a stairway leading to the spring. Walls were built around it by the Spanish rulers. But as time went on these walls and stairway were ruined. Recently they have been reconstructed and today it is still a beautiful sight. It is still a source of water whenever the water system fails.

The small concrete buildings on top of the Casa Mata Hill are other historical ruins. These buildings were used by the Spanish government for storing dynamite. They are now in ruins and practically useless.

The dyeing well called "pagtimbugan" which still stands south of the town near Caboloan is another monument to an industry of the people of Bangued now extinct. This well was used for dyeing cotton yarn into blue.

7. Important facts, incidents or events that took place:

(a) During the Spanish occupation:

Not much can be remembered by the old folks of the events that took place during this period. It may be mentioned that people in Bangued did not have an easy life under the Spanish rulers. The Spanish rulers did not want the Filipinos to hold high positions in the government. The highest position that a man could attain was that of a teacher but wages were very low, so low that it was not enough to provide for the teacher's needs.

(b) During the American occupation to World War II:

The American troops entered Abra in 1898. Colonel Blas Villamor was the commanding officer of all the Abra Filipino troops. He met the Americans at Tangadan but when he received two bullet wounds he was brought to La Union for treatment and his soldiers retreated. Lt. Col. Juan Villamor continued the fight as commanding officer of troops in Bangued. They carried on guerilla warfare.

Through the mediation of Dona Laura Villamor and Don Ignacio Villamor, sister and brother of Col. Blas Villamor, Col. Blas Villamor and his troops surrendered to the Americans after long months of fighting. The Americans entered the town in December, 1899. A military government was put up and Don Lucas Paredes became the first military president of Bangued while Don Juan Villamor became governor of Abra.

(c) During and after World War II:

When news of the declaration of war against Japan by the United States were flashed through the radios of Bangued, the people became alarmed. The Japanese army was heard to be occupying provinces, cities, and towns. The people of Bangued evacuated to distant places. The soldiers stationed in the town went to the hills to join the American soldiers who went into hiding.

The Japanese came and thus began a reign of fear and terror. People were pacified and induced to go back to their homes. Bangued once more busied with life. The provincial governor was Hon. Juan Brillantes and the Mayor of Bangued was Mr. Agapito Garduque. At first everything went well. The Japanese soldiers mixed with the people. They were friendly. Nippongo classes were organized and many civilians attended these classes. Schools were opened and Nippongo became one of the subjects. The "Hoko" system was introduced. A group of houses made up a "hoko" under a leader who would attend meetings then relay what were taken up in those meetings to the people in his group. Through that system the people of the town were informed of their obligations and responsibilities.

As years went on, news of the activities of the guerillas aroused the suspicion of the Japanese rulers. They distrusted the people in the town. They feared that the people were aiding the guerillas outside. They, therefore, took every precautionary measure to prevent contact. Twenty-one "Bataan Boys" (Filipino soldiers who fought in Bataan, but were then living peaceful civilian life) were rounded up, tied, loaded on a truck and taken to Angad, and there burned alive. That struck fear in the hearts of the people.

Robbers during the time of Colas Valera as chief of police were beheaded in the cemetery. Attorney Tuanguin, then Justice of the Peace at Dolores, was brought to Bangued, shot, and buried in Calaba by the Japanese soldiers.

The Abra hospital was raided by guerillas. They took medicines and Miss Budano, one of the nurses, away with them.

Another attack made by guerillas was at the harvest in Dapat. Accompanied by Japanese soldiers, the civilians started to harvest the rice. Suddenly machine guns barked. Eighteen died and many sustained injuries caused by falls to the ground as the people ran away to seek cover from the bullets of the guerillas.

March 10, 1945. At around three o'clock in the afternoon several airplanes circled over the town. After a few moments bombs dropped on the town. The whole town was razed to the ground. Only three houses escaped the fury of the incendiary bombs - the house of the family of Barras, of Pe Benito, and of Bacarra. Many people died by direct hit of the machine gun barrages and many died burned in foxholes. Most of the people could evacuate to other towns, but many died of sickness at the evacuation places

In a few weeks all the Japanese left Bangued. After a few months people returned. Out of the ruins of their homes, they put up huts in which to live. Reynante was appointed Military Mayor of Bangued.

When the whole Philippines was liberated, civil government was established in Bangued. Government officials before the war returned to their offices. Schools were opened and once more the people enjoyed the blessings of peace.

#### 8. Destruction of lives, properties, and institutions during the war:

(a) In 1896-1900. Many soldiers as well as civilians were killed. Houses were burned.

(b) In 1941-1945. Many people died of sickness, especially of malaria. People evacuated to other places. They went to the mountains. Many joined the guerillas and they got sick and due to lack of adequate medical cars, many died. Many persons were also killed by guerillas on suspicion that they worked as Japanese spies. The Japanese soldiers, too, killed many Filipinos, soldiers and non-soldiers, on suspicion that they were helping the guerillas.

On March 10, 1945, Bangued was bombed by the Americans. Fire resulted. Around 300 people died. Almost all houses except three, were razed to the ground. People evacuated to other towns. Because of this complete destruction, the people who survived the war began life anew.

After Bangued was liberated in April, 1945, the people returned to the places where their homes once stood. Out of charred galvanized iron sheets they put up shacks as temporary homes. They put up vegetable gardens. Many engaged in the "buy and sell" business. Soon afterwards, better homes were constructed and when the War Damage Commission paid the damages, permanent buildings were constructed. The schools were rehabilitated; the church was re-roofed; houses sprang up like mushrooms. The town kiosk and the capitol were reconstructed. Only the municipal building has not been reconstructed to this date.

#### 9. Traditions, customs, and practices in domestic and social life:

a) Birth

When a child is born, the midwife wraps it and places it in a winnowing basket and scares the baby by jerking the basket and shouting at the same time. This is done so that in the future when the baby grows up he will not be easily scared or frightened by noise or similar disturbances. The newly born baby stays with the mother in bed and before the baby is brought outside the house, he is taken to church for baptism. Usually this is done on the third or fourth day after birth.

(b) Courtship

In days of long ago, courtship was done by parents. The parents of a man choose the lady in marriage. The parents of the man were the ones who tried to win the love of the lady's parents, and if both parties agreed, they made arrangements for the dowry - thus fixing a date for the marriage. This was common in marriages although there were some couples who were engaged by themselves before their marriage.

(c) Death

When a person died, he was kept in the house for several days without embalming. His relatives, near or far, had to be informed of his death. The dead one's precious possessions were hanged or placed near his corpse and, except the jewelry, were buried with him. The dead body was usually buried under his own house.

(d) Festivals

Festivals were made by clans. A clan invited other clans from other places to attend the festival. Several cows, pigs, and goats were slaughtered during the festivities. They had dances, singing, and drinking. The men and women wore their best attire. The festival usually lasted for a week or longer.

(e) Punishment

Punishments were given according to the offense made. A person to be punished was not imprisoned but was made to pay a fine in cash or in kind.

10. Beliefs and superstitions:

(a) When the top of Mount Bulagao is covered with clouds in the morning, it will rain in the afternoon.

(b) When you point to the rainbow with your forefinger, that finger will become shorter.

(c) When the "bakalao", a kind of tree bears fruit, it is believed that the harvest will be poor.

(d) No aginit iti malem sa agtudo, panagcacasar dagiti caibaan. Masapul a puruacan ti bagas diay remmengda no labasan tapno saan datao nga aggaddil.

(e) When a person dies the feet must be fixed well and they must not bend down so that the other members of the family will not follow. When the dead body is brought out of the house, the members of the bereaved family should not look out of the window. The floor should not be swept when the corpse is still in the house.

After the dead is buried, the members of the family go to a spring and all together bathe themselves so that all their sorrows and burdens will be washed out. It is not good to scratch the head near a dead body because that will bring many lice.

(f) When the bride and the groom are in front of the streams, the people throw to them a handful of rice, so they may live in abundance.

(g) When the newly married couple go up the house, both of them should step at the same time, so they will live peacefully.

(h) During the wedding feast the people should be careful not to break any chinaware or jar because that may bring bad luck to the couple.

(i) The bride and the groom are given each a candle when they are in front of the altar. The owner of the candle that burns out first is believed to die first.

(j) When a person or a pig sneezes while starting to go somewhere don't continue the trip anymore lest you will meet misfortune.

(k) If you are going to a gambling place and on your way you happen to see a big lizard (banas), never attempt to continue your plan otherwise you will surely lose.

(l) It is believed that if you dream catching plenty of fish you will surely win if you go to gambling place.

(m) If you eat the brains of animals you will have gray hair.

(n) If you eat the tongues of animals you will get tired easily.

(o) If your rooster crows at night and no rooster answers it, bring it to the cockpit for it will surely win.

(p) It is believed that, if you dream of your front teeth being pulled out, one of your near relatives will die.

(q) If a cat licks its paws, it is a sign of a coming visitor.

(r) When you hear an owl at night (midnight), one of the people who is sick nearby will die.

(s) It is a belief that when they bury the dead they will remove all the jewelry, shoes, and slippers so that the dead will be able to climb the stairs to heaven.

#### 11. Popular songs, games, and amusements:

(a) Some of the more popular songs are:

#### MANANG BIDAY

Manang Biday, tumandag ca man  
Ta ventana icalumbabam  
Ta kitaem toy kinayawan,  
Ay! matayacon no dinac caasian

No nabana, diacto gaw-aten;  
No nangato, diacto sibbulen;  
No matinnag, diacto piduten;  
Ngem labasiabasacto laeng.

Asino ca nga aglabaslabas,  
Toy jardin co a minuyongac,  
Ammom ngarud a balasangac,  
Sabong ti lirio di pay nagucrad.

Deytoy panyoc no maregregco,  
Ti macapidut isublinanto  
Ta nagmarca iti naganco  
Ket naburdaan pay sinan puso.

Denggem ading, ta bilinenca,  
Ta no incantot sadi Laguna,  
Agala cantot' bungat' mangnga,  
Lansones pay ken adu a kita.

Alaem deyta cuchillo  
Abriem toy barucongco  
Tapnon maipapasmo  
Taguram caniac ken sentimiento.

No nababa dimo gaw-aten,  
No nangato dimo sibbulen,  
No matinnag dimo piduten,  
Ngem labaslabasamto laeng.

Agsinanto ket dica lumdaang  
Ket toy singsingco ti ikutam,  
Pamanecmot kinapudno  
Toypanangayat nga naimpapuso.

#### MENA

1. Masmasnaganac man laeng  
nga agar-arapaap iti yayang  
ni darisay laeng ta innamo  
a pagbiagac.  
Ta no ooma dita dennam  
mayapardac dita nasam-it  
a ayatec inna kence ipalawag.
2. Essem a pinasam ni ayat  
Di danona a mabuyanaca  
dagitoy matac  
Nanipud idin incaricon  
nga agayatac  
Nanipud idin asim ti  
aw-awagac  
Ngem no inton napait  
a clak-amac  
Awagacton ni patay a  
tungpal toy kitaem  
dacsangasat. a
3. Ngaminen ya ni ayat  
a tuoc ti meysa nga agbing  
Ngaunayen dagita matam  
Apacay daayac ket  
no deyta pusom  
iparit na a saranayennac  
Biagcot guibusac  
Ta isu ti napudno  
a liwliwac.

#### CALAPATI KEN BUL-LILISING

Bul-lilising nga bulding  
Ken calapati nga gusing  
Napanan dagidi asim  
Dungngom caniac ken pannagibin?



## 12. Puzzles and Riddles

1. Adda dua a bilog; aw-awitem ida, aw-awitendaca met.
2. Ania ti aramid ti tao nga maymaysa ti lapayagna?
3. No addaac, dinac cayat; no awanac, sapsapulannac.
4. Tudoc, tudoc; sirip, sirip; silsilmutem pay bassit.
5. Langit ngato, langit bab; agtengtengnga ti danumca.
6. No umoliac ta balaymo, agpacpacleb da amin a madanonco.  
Aniana?
7. Cayo, cayo dalumpinas; incor-it, incompas.
8. "Idiayen, "idiayen, conana; awan met matana.
9. Apay, apay nga agtil-ayca pay laeng, ket magaw-at mo la  
ngaruden?
10. No unulog-agal-alud-od; no umuli, gulpe.
11. Macato ti pucnna, rugac ti ngodona.
12. Sipatca la nga sipat ket di met mangeg ti caarrubam.
13. Kimmali, immusoc, kimmagat.
14. No aldaw, tubong; no rabii, bandera.
15. Baston ti capitan, dimo malggaman.
16. Sangaduyog a busi, mawarasanna amin nga ili.
17. Sangcagalip a rabong, mawarasanna amin a lubong.
18. Tacki ni lpang, nagrarpang.
19. Siac ti ulo ni pintas; runawec toy bagic.
20. Agbitbitin, sinan puso.
21. Cabassitan ti bassit dica maala no dica kissayan bassit.

### Answers:

- |                          |                   |             |
|--------------------------|-------------------|-------------|
| 1. sapatos               | 8. tammudo        | 15. uleg    |
| 2. baina                 | 9. ag-ilo         | 16. bituen  |
| 3. angin                 | 10. buteg         | 17. bulan   |
| 4. ag-ubon<br>ti dagum   | 11. macaturogac   | 18. laya    |
| 5. niyog                 | 12. kirem a kirem | 19. candela |
| 6. datar                 | 13. adgli         | 20. mangga  |
| 7. casafuego<br>(guitar) | 14. icamen        | 21. soso    |

## 13. Proverbs

1. Ibagam ti gayyemmo, ta ibagac met no siasino ca.
2. Ti narueng a dawa isut nabagas.
3. Ti macaturog, macamucat; ti nasalucag isu ti agbiag.
4. Ti danum a naalinsay, isut adalem.
5. Ti agtulidtulid a bato, awan ti lumotna.
6. Ti nasapa a tumatayab isut nalucmeg.

## 14. AN HONEST BOY

Early one morning last week, while peeping out through the window of my house, my attention was attracted by a child's voice calling, "Good morning, Ma'am." I glanced up and saw three boys looking expectedly at me. Before I could ask them what they wanted the smallest took off his little hat and asked, "May we have some of your flowers? We want them for our school."

I was much pleased with their courtesy and honesty because many other boys had broken off the flowers and scampered away without even a "thank you".

### THE MICE, THE CAT, AND THE BELL

There was once a big cat in a house. The mice were very much afraid of her. They tried to find some ways to prevent her catching them.

"Do as I say," said one of the mice. "Hang a bell on the cat's neck to warn us when she is near."

This bright plan made the mice jump for joy.

"Well," said an old mouse, we have a pretty plan. Now who will hang the bell on the cat's neck?"

Not a single one volunteered.

### THE HEN AND THE GOLDEN ROD

There was once a man who had a hen that laid a golden egg everyday. He thought that she must have gotten gold inside her. So he killed her and cut her open. But he found that she was in no wise different from other hens. So by being so greedy, he lost all he had and did not get the riches in return.

Information above was given by:

(SGD.) BIENVENIDO VALERA

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(SGD.) LUIS VALERA

### PART THREE: OTHER INFORMATION

Herewith are the biographies of two great men of Bangued:

#### BIOGRAPHY OF DON IGNACIO VILLAMOR

Don Ignacio Villamor was born in Bangued, Abra, on the first day of February, 1863. His parents were poor farmers. His father died when he was about ten years old. In spite of their poverty, Villamor managed to finish his elementary education. So while he studied, he had to help in the management of their farm.

An uncle helped him attend the Seminary in Vigan. In his determination to learn, he served as a household helper and later as a capista to finance his studies in the College of San Juan de Letran and in the University of Sto. Tomas. From these institutions he received his degree of Master of Arts, Bachelor of Arts, Licentiate in Laws, and Master of Laws.

Justice Villamor's first position was a judge of the Court of First Instance. Later, he was promoted to the position of Attorney General. In his succeeding promotions he became chief of the Executive Bureau and the first Filipino President of the University of the Philippines.

Villamor was a diligent historical researcher. He dug deep into ancient Filipino history. He sought to clear up certain historical events and facts. His research work contributed greatly to Philipinology. When he went deep into his research work he did not expect any material gains.

In addition to this, he was an effective writer with liberal ideas, as well as a great educator. He was a teacher first of all because he wished to hand down to Filipino students the product of his researches and his learning. To do this, he wrote books, among which are:

- Criminality in the Philippine Islands (1903-1908)
- Industrious Men of the Philippines (1932)
- Organization of the Philippine Census (1918-1918)
- The Ancient Filipino Writings (1922)
- Guide to Philippine Laws (1926)
- Crime and Moral Education (1926)
- Locusts vs. Agriculture (1916)

Justice Villamor founded the Colegio de San Antonio de Padua where he taught good manners and the arts of dancing. He helped lay the foundation of the Liceo de Manila of which he was secretary. He taught in the "Universidad Literaria de Malolos" in whose establishment he had a hand.

Justice Villamor spent the best years of his life for the service of his country and people. He was an untiring supporter of the Filipinization of the government. As a politician, he filled positions formerly filled by Americans. When he was raised to another position his successor was most often always capable Filipinos.

He had the march of the Filipinos to the high and dignified positions in the government, and he rose because his people and the Americans had confidence in him.

Ignacio Villamor was a truly religious man. He had a strong faith in God and he believed implicitly that everything would be right as long as he felt right. So when he worked, he had no view of material returns. He had only the feeling of satisfaction for having done his best for his God, country, and people. He was notable figure in three different periods of his country - The Spanish period, the Philippine revolution, and the American occupation.

On May 23, 1933, while Justice Villamor was attending holy Mass in Antipolo, death claimed him when he was in communion with God.

#### QUINTIN PAREDES

Don Quintin Paredes is the eighth child of the family. His parents were Juan Paredes of Bantay, Ilocos Sur, and Regina Babila of Bangued, Abra. He has eight brothers: Lucas, a lawyer and former representative of Ilocos Norte; Isidro, a lawyer and served for many years as Judge of First Instance in provinces and regions in the Philippines; Jose, a well known Doctor of Medicine and a great professor in the famous Pontifical University of Santo Tomas; Susana, now a widow of the late Candido Mercado of Magsingal, Ilocos Sur; Josefa, also a widow of the late Enrique Purugganan of Bangued; Mariano, a pharmacist and professor in the University of Sto. Tomas; Isidra, single; Quintin; and Geronimo, a lawyer and former Judge of First Instance of the Cagayan Valley as well as in the Visayas.

Quintin Paredes was born on September 9, 1884, in Bangued, Abra. His early schooling was in his father's own school where Religion, Spanish, and Reading were taught. This education was as good as primary education during those times. Later on he took his secondary course in the Seminary of Nueva Segovia, Vigan, Ilocos Sur; studied law in the Escuela de Leyes of Manila, and was admitted to the Philippine Bar in 1907, before his graduation; former interpreter of the first American Army of Occupation; former Assistant Provincial Treasurer of Abra; First Filipino prosecuting Attorney; and first City Fiscal of Manila; Professor of law in the Escuela de Leyes; appointed Solicitor General in 1917; Attorney General in 1918; Secretary of Justice in 1920; nominated by President Wilson as Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the Philippines; Colonel of the Philippine National Guard; member of the Philippines in 1950; elected President of the Philippine Senate in 1952, after the 1951 General Elections.

Senator Paredes spent the best years of his life for the service of his country and people for almost fifty years as an honest public servant.