



ETHNOHISTORIES

Chico

English

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FOREWORD

To facilitate reading in Ngäbere, we have adapted, with some modifications, the system in the short Ngäbere-Spanish dictionary Kukwe Ngäbere by Melquiades Arosemena and Luciano Javilla, published in 1979 by the Directorate of Historical Heritage of the National Institute of Culture (INAC), now the Ministry of Culture, and the Summer Institute of Linguistics.

VOWELS	CONSONANTS
a - Like in Spanish	/b/ch/d/g/j/l/m/n/ñ/r/s/t/v/y/ Like in Spanish
ä - Deeper than in Spanish	c - Like the soft sound of the /c/ in Spanish
e - Like in Spanish	td - Intermediate sound between /d/ and /t/, like /th/ in English
i - Like in Spanish	k - Like the strong sound of the /c/ in Spanish as in "casa"
í - Guttural sound between vowel and consonant, like the "klick" of some African languages	ng - In Ngäbere it exists in initial position, but in Spanish it does not exist in initial position as in "congo"
ii - An /i/ longer than in Spanish	IMPORTANT: It should be noted that in Ngäbere there is no /f/
o - Like in Spanish	
ö - Deeper than in Spanish	
ó - More accented than /ö/	
u - Like in Spanish	
ü - Deeper than in Spanish	
ú - Like the /w/ in English	

It should also be clarified that this story comes from narrators residing in the village of Potrero de Caña, formerly the Tole district of the Chiriquí province, now the Müna district of the Ngäbe Buglé region, from which the Agronomist Roger Séptimo, the compiler and writer is a native. Consequently, the phonology corresponds to the dialectal or regional variation "Guaymí del Interior" (Pacific slope) which differs from the "Guaymí de la Costa" (Caribbean slope of the province of Bocas del Toro and the now district of Kusapin in the Comarca Ngäbe Buglé) in the *Guaymí Grammar* of Ephraim S. Alphonse Reid, published in 1980 by Fe y Alegría. This variant corresponds to what Arosemena and Javilla call "Chiriquí" and which contrasts with the Caribbean variants of Bocas del Toro and the coast of Bocas.

This ethnohistory was published in 1986 in Kugü Kira Nie Ngäbere / Sucesos Antiguos Dichos en *Guaymí* (Ethnohistory *Guaymí*), by the Panamanian Association of Anthropology, with the PN-079 Agreement of the Inter-American Foundation (FIA) managed by Dr. Mac Chapin, Anthropologist, who encouraged us to follow the example he had set by compiling *Pab-Igala: Histories of the Kuna Tradition*, published in 1970 by the Center for Anthropological Research of the University of Panama, under the direction of Dr. Reina Torres de Araúz.

This book represented the work of the Agricultural Engineer Roger Séptimo, when he was a student in his second year at the Center for Agricultural Teaching and Research in Chiriquí (CEIACHI), Faculty of Agricultural Sciences, University of Panama (FCAUP), not only writing in Ngäbere the stories that he had heard from his family members in his community, but also his effort to translate them into Spanish as a bilingual person that he is, like other indigenous people in Panama, who are striving to receive a formal education.

The ethnohistories were compiled, recorded on cassettes and written by the Agronomist Roger Séptimo in 1983 and 1984.

As Professor-Researcher of Anthropology and Rural Sociology at the CEIACHI of the FCAUP, Luz Graciela Joly Adames, Anthropologist, Ph.D., encouraged Roger, as one of her students, to write the stories, convince him and show him that she would not exploit or abuse his work, but that he would get credit. Consequently, the anthropologist limited herself only to making some corrections of form and style in the Spanish translations without altering their content.

We encourage students from the seven indigenous peoples in the Republic of Panama, and teachers in public and private schools, colleges and universities in Panama, to write in their own languages and translate the ethnohistories and songs they hear in their families and communities into Spanish, as part of their informal education.

We also encourage readers of these ethnohistories in Ngäbere, Spanish and English, to draw the scenes that they liked the most, as they did in 2002, students in an Education and Society course, directed by Dr. Joly, at the Faculty of Education, Autonomous University of Chiriquí.

Article 13 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, approved by the General Assembly, in its 107th plenary session on September 13, 2007:

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to revitalize, use, promote and pass on to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures, and to name and maintain their communities, places and people.
2. The States shall adopt effective measures to ensure the protection of this right and also to ensure that indigenous peoples can understand and make themselves understood in political, legal and administrative actions, providing for this, when necessary, interpretation services or other appropriate means.



Sánchez Pinzón, Milagros. Remedios: *Legendary Land*. Panama: Editorial Culturama Internacional. 2011:50.

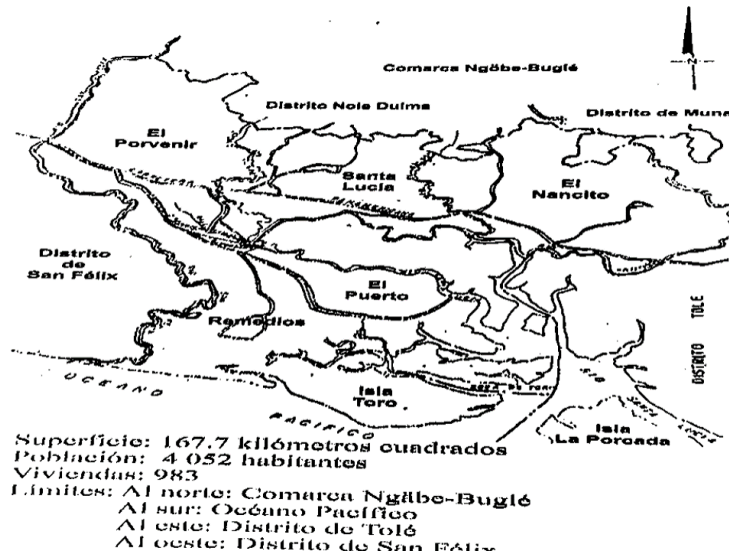
A person named Chico lived in what is now known as Potrero de Olla (now comarcal district of Nole Duima, segregated from the corregimiento of El Nancito). This was a poor and mediocre peasant who worked taking care of pigs for his master who lived in Remedios. But, this peasant possessed intelligence and capability, able to make any feat that was completely unknown to the persons around him. This peasant was who burned the houses in Remedios a long time ago, is commented.

His master had him working as a slave, for which Chico rebelled eating the pigs of his master in a secret manner. Like nowadays that the rich abuse and take advantage of poor people, forcefully putting them to do heavy tasks for the benefit of themselves, just the same it occurred at that time, and is what motivated this case.

Chico, so was called the one who burned the houses of his enemies and then threw himself in the mouth of the river San Felix, is commented since a long time ago.



Sánchez Pinzón, Milagros Olimpia Remedios: *Legendary Land*. Panama: Editorial Culturama Internacional, 2011:36.



On the left side of the map of the district of Remedios is the river San Felix that divides de district of San Félix from the district of Remedios. Sánchez Pinzón, Milagros Olimpia Remedios: Tierra Legendaria. Panamá: Editorial Culturama Internacional, 2011:34.

He was eating the pigs; and afterwards would go to tell the owner that the pigs were lost. This was the message that he always took to his master; until the latter, motivated by this fact, sent another person to take care of the pigs with the peasant, to see if it was true that the pigs were disappearing, in which way, and where they went.

What was happening was that Chico himself was eating the pigs, and then would go to fool the owner, telling him such a lie. He would kill a pig; then would store the meat in a hole that he had made inside his house, in which he buried the meat so that no one could become aware, and then would take it out at night.

That was the way in which he operated the hiding place and, in this operation, he was found one night, taking the pork meat out of the hole, by the other caretaker who went to investigate the case. Immediately, the latter went and told the owner of the pigs what was really occurring.

The master then sent the commissaries to get him and jail him when he arrived. The commissaries went to get him and took him being pulled by a horse, with the intention of dragging him on the ground on the road towards Remedios.

They tied him with a rope, then tied him to the horse; thus they took him. The commissaries, with the intention of dragging him on the ground, hit the horse and took it running; but, he also took impulse and went running alongside the horse. The commissaries could not drag him on the ground at that moment, and thus they repeated it each time that this occurred with him, to drag him, until arriving at the new town of Remedios. There they jailed him, but he escaped from the prison in a mysterious way.

His enemies got tired of him, of taking care of him in prison and of his cunningness, of not being able to keep him in prison without his escapes. Then they were so angry, that they wanted to disappear him. With that intention, they asked him what they should do so that he could die, without any type of arms as the jailors used. He answered that they should tie plenty dry leaves around him, then put fire, and then he would die burned. In this way he answered without any fear of his enemies.

The jailors, without any delay, wanting to burn him without letting too much time elapse, did what Chico said to do with him, taking his recommendation as true. They tied plenty dry straw around him, then they put fire on him. He, instead of burning in flames, calmly came out, running, engulfed in flames, and went around putting on fire the houses that were there at that moment. He put all the

houses on fire. Then, with the sound of an extraordinary cyclone, he began elevating himself in the sky of Remedios and was gone, to fall in the ocean at the mouth of the San Felix River.

After this event, no one has seen him until these days. The colonizers only had the sour memory of the fire that burned the town of Remedios, that finished with all that was there at that moment. He was gone forever.

After that, since a long time ago, when the ocean roars at the mouth of the San Felix River, then the indigenous people who knew who was Chico, would say: "Chico is angry at the mouth of the San Felix river. Chico is alive but lives in the ocean." This is commented, since his departure until nowadays, by the narrators.



Drawing of Agricultura Engineer Arnold Troncoso of Chico throwing himself to the ocean at the mouth of the San Félix River.

JOLLY

Luz Graciela

PUBLIC DOMAIN CONTENT

