

*Antonio Bolívar Perigault Burgos' unique whistle,
a tradition passed on in his Remembrance*

Long before I would learn to whistle myself, I was introduced to what had been my Grandfather's unique whistle. My Grandmother, Esther, my Uncles José Manuel and Augusto, my Aunts Aida and La Niña, and my Dad, Gil, kept the tradition alive for my brother and me. My mother, Clarita, joined the tradition, as well.

The whistle was used at crowded events, such as processions, parades and carnivals, and other gatherings to announce the presence of a Perigault to another Perigault within distance.

My Dad would whistle as we approached the house in San Francisco when coming back from the movies at the Roosevelt Theater on Vía Porras to let the family know that we were almost home. From the house, someone would in acknowledgment answer with the Perigault whistle.

As a little girl, I remember coming to attention and moving towards the sound of the whistle or waiting for a Perigault to appear. And, when I learned to whistle, responding with the Perigault whistle. So, when I would return from the United States on vacation to Panama, I would whistle to announce my arrival to the delight of my Grandmother and the rest of the family.

This practice was repeated over the years very much in the same manner as, my Grandfather was said to have done to announce his approach and arrival, as well as in greeting another Perigault who was nearby.

And that's how it was before cell phones.

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