

[The Biography of Guadalupe Lupita Gallegos]

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THE BIOGRAPHY OF GUADALUPE LUPITA GALLEGOS

In the face of Guadalupe Lupita Gallegos is written the story of a long and interesting life — a life that has had more than its share of heartaches and happiness. It is a kind, intelligent face and devout.

She dresses in unrelieved black. On her head is worn a tight-fitting cap with ribbons tied under her chin in a bow. Around her slender shoulders is wrapped a black Spanish shawl. Her blouse and skirt are black and on her feet she wears tiny, patent-leather shoes.

When asked a question about some incident of long ago there flashes in her eyes the look of a girl, she smiles half-wistfully, and begins:-

“I was born in Las Vegas, New Mexico on December 12, [1855?]. I was baptized by Father Pinal, a French Priest.

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“My parents, Severo Baca and Maria Ignacia, were wealthy, owning several farms, many cattle and sheep, and much money and jewelry. My great grandfather, Santiago Ulibarri, had several children but I was his only great grand-daughter and so I was his pet. Mr. Ulibarri was tall, blond, and green-eyed, and very wealthy.”

“His home was Spanish with all the windows opening on the placita, a large yard in the middle. This house was very dark and gloomy and was open to no one except a few Spanish friends. When one entered one of tho'se old Spanish houses it seemed as if one were entering a tomb, so cold and uninviting were they. Several families would live in these houses; the owner's children, their husbands and wives, and their children.

“We lived there shut away from the rest of the world. Mr. Ulibarri was the head of his household and he knew it. He was virtually the dictator of 2 his family. The women were never allowed on the streets witho'ut someone trustworthy to escort them. We obeyed Mr. Ulibarri in everything. Only that which he dictated was done. C 18 - N. Mex.

“Since it was considered such a disgrace for a lady of the upper class to be seen on the street unescorted, we spent most of our time sewing, and playing the piano. We never dreamed of soiling our hands in the kitchen cooking or cleaning.

“In front of Mr. Ulibarri we were always very dignified and well-behaved, but when he was not present we were often silly, as most girls are. I was the only one of the girls who was permitted to go with Mr. Ulibarri very often. He would have his chocolate in bed about eleven o'clock, arise later and have his regular breakfast. Then he would say to the servants in a commanding voice, ‘Lousiana, my cape, my cane, and my hat.’”

The servants would rush to do his bidding. Then he would say, “Lupita, come to me.”

“Oh! no! no!” protested the servants, “she is all dirty. Let us wash her.”

“You wash yourself. Leave her alone,” Mr. Ulibarri would say in a very patient voice.

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Then he would go to different stores with little Lupita holding his hand. Immediately upon entering a store Lupita would go to the candy counter and help herself.

One day when Mr. Ulibarri was away all the woman got together. They had heard of a strange new toy that had just come to Andres Dol store. They were very anxious to see it, so much so, indeed, that they sneaked out of the house and went to town to see it. The new toy was a jack-in-the-box. The women had a good time at the store and when they returned home they made Lupita promise not to tell on them.

Later in the afternoon Mr. Ulibarri returned home looking very pleased.

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He called all of his children, servants, and relatives together and told them he had a surprise for them. He laid a large box on the table and told one of the girls to open it. When she opened the box out jumped the jack-in-the-box. Of course everyone was surprised. Only Lupita was unimpressed, "Oh! I have seen it already!" she blurted out.

"What? my child?" asked her great grandfather. Before she had a chance to answer Lupita was carried away to another room and scolded.

Lupita had a Negro nurse who was called Lorenza. She had been brought to Las Vegas by Mr. Ulibarri who had bought her from the Commanche Indians when she was only seven years old. It is believed that she was the first Negress brought into Las Vegas. People from far and near came to see her. Lupita says it was very pleasant to kiss Lorenza because of her soft, thick lips.

Governor Manual Armijo was Maria Ignacia's father's first cousin. He sent word one day from Tecolote that he was coming to Las Vegas to visit his cousin and that he wanted the family to have some delicious hot tamales ready when he arrived.

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The Governor was in Tecolote already! The house was in an uproar. Servants set to work cleaning the house and cooking chili.

Maria Ignacia was in the kitchen when Governor Armijo arrived. She had never seen a governor before and she was anxious to see what one looked like. She took a bag of tobacco and ran into the room. "Mother, here's your tobacco!"

Her mother was embarrassed, "Go and wash yourself," she said.

"Oh, no!" said Governor Armijo, "don't send her away. Come to me, my child."

Maria Ignacia ran to him and jumped upon his lap, spilling the cup of chocolate which he held in his hand all over his trousers, Maria Ignacia's mother was very embarrassed, but the Governor only laughed.

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When Lupita was eight years old Santiago Ulibarri died and left her as inheritance.

When the Civil War broke out Lupita was sick with fever and her father wanted to take her south, but her mother refused, because the sympathies of the New Mexicans were with the North.

In her home Lupita was a regular princess. She was the only child and had [everything?] she desired. At noon the servants would come to dress her. Then she would come downstairs, roam thro'ugh the yard, or play with her toys, or go visiting with her parents.

She had an old tutor who taught her to read, write, and to work out problems in arithmetic. When she was ten years old she attended the Loretto Academy in Santa Fe. She had been there only seven months when a fever epidemic broke out, and her parents sent for her at once. She was taught to embroider, to play the piano, and only such things that would make a lady of her.

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Lupita's mother, Maria Ignacia, was just a little girl when General Kearny came to Las Vegas to take possession of the territory. Maria Ignacia's father got up unusually early and went for a walk. Where the Normal University now stands he saw a many cannons all pointing toward the town. Immediately he rushed to town to spread the news. The town was in an uproar. Everyone, it seemed was screaming and crying. None wanted to become Americans; all wanted to remain under the Mexican flag.

Maria Ignacia's father refused at first to become an American. He left everything he owned and went to Mexico. All his land confiscated, his stock was killed to feed the troops, and only his house remained to him.

The family which Mr. Ulibarri had been the head of for so many happy years moved to San Miguel. After a year Illario Gonzales, head of the family, came back to Las Vegas. He made friends with Kearny, regained some of his possessions and moved into his house where some of the troops had been lodged. [Gonzales?] 5 sent to San Miguel for his family and when they arrived General Kearny, his wife and their six year old daughter moved in with them. The little girl was pretty, having fair hair and blue eyes. General Kearny's men were fed on the cows, sheep, and other stock belonging to Illario Gonzales.