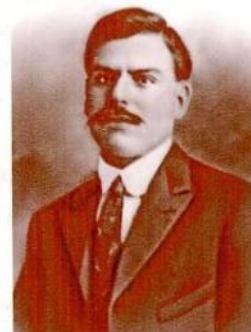


"GRANDMA'S WEDDING"

January 6, 1919



*As told by
Tia Lichie Alderete
to
Marcella Trujillo Albidrez
Written by
Louie Albidrez*



Christmas and New Year had just passed.
It was cold enough for snow.
But no... not snow... that was excitement in the air.
We were going to have a wedding!!!
The Garfield (San Isidro) village blacksmith, Alvaro Trujillo, had asked the lovely Maria Lina Gallegos to be his bride.
She said "yes."
He was 29 years old. She was 19.
Alvaro was the eldest of ten brothers and sisters.
The youngest of them was Lichie (Felicitas).
She was six years old at the time, and it's her vivid memories which give us this story today.
At age 19 Lina was also the eldest child in her family.
However, 19 was still far too young to make the difficult trip to Las Cruces for a wedding dress.
Besides, in those days it was customary for the family of the groom to provide "Las Donas" (the bride's wedding outfit).
Alvaro hitched up a horse and buggy for the long trip south.



He also took one of the dogs with him. It was a good thing he did. The journey to Las Cruces was a three day round trip by buggy.

Along the way Alvaro would have to sleep outdoors by the side of the road.

Some bad weather rolled in. It got so cold he nearly froze.

Fortunately, he had the dog. The two of them would bundle under the blankets, keep each other warm, and survive the freezing night.

In Las Cruces, Alvaro found the bridal shop. Inside were lots of little ladies eager to help him.

Picking out a bridal outfit was no easy task for a man more used to hammering steel on an anvil next to a raging furnace.

The little ladies help was welcome.

Together they selected a white dress, veil, crown, gloves, shoes... everything that a young bride would wear.

Plus a bouquet of flowers... and a "petaquilla" (trunk) to put it all in.

However, there was no wedding ring... and there would be none.

The price of gold was something the hard working people of Garfield could ill-afford. Over the generations, rings were not given.

Rings were not expected.

In fact, rings were given little thought.

However, there was something every bride dreamed about.



It was customary for the groom to give his bride a string of pearls... a beautiful, shimmering, white string of pearls... to wear as she walked down the aisle.

Precious gems? Probably not... but pearls as real as your imagination would let you believe.

Pearls were the true Garfield tradition. On his return to Garfield, Alvaro became terribly ill with a fever.

Abuelita Hijinia (his mother) immediately put him to bed and did all in her power to cure him. He got well fast.

The wedding day finally arrived... January 6, 1919.

January 6th was also Abuelita Hijinia's birthday.

Double the reason to celebrate.

There was no church in Garfield in those days, so the wedding party had to go to the Catholic Church, San Francis De Sales, in nearby El Colorado (town of El Colorado later renamed Rodey).

How did they get to the church?

Well, the wedding party climbed aboard a "carro de caballos" (covered wagon) and they all went together.

El Colorado was a quite a journey, 22 miles round trip.

Too much for two mules pulling a wagon full of people.

So they all went the day before the wedding and stayed at Tia Marillita's house.

Tia Marillita was Grandma Fita's sister.

Father Mowins performed the ceremony.

The padrinos were Manuel Barajas and



Ricarda (Trujillo) Barajas (Alvaro's sister).

As the wedding party returned to Garfield, there was a loud "Kaboom!!!"

Tio Vicente (Alvaro's brother) had set off a cannon to announce their arrival.

Yes, a cannon! It was a homemade cannon, but still "real loud" as Tia Lichie described it.

And so the celebration had begun.

Everyone gathered at Grandma Fita and Grandpa Antonio Gallegos' house.

It was a little place in the corner of Garfield.

The whole village was there.

"Mucha fiesta!" as Tia Lichie described it.

There were so many people, they had to put up a big "ramada" (tarp) to provide everybody enough shade.

And the food was wonderful... all the delicious things you remember best about New Mexico.

It was evening now... time for dancing.

From the Gallegos house everybody moved over to the "Salon de Molinas" (Molinas Dance Hall).

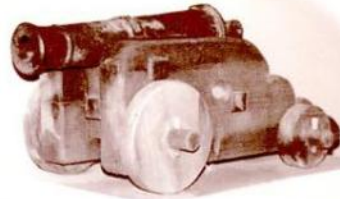
The Molinas were lifetime friends of the Trujillos and Gallegos.

There was music, with old time musicians playing fiddles and guitars.

"They played everything," Tia Lichie tells us.

But everyone's favorites were the "waltzes y las polkas."

They danced and danced... and everyone hoped it would never end.



--- "Grandma's Wedding"
first printed
Christmas 1995