

## Albert Borrego and Elvinia "Bea" Martinez Borrego

Submitted by their daughter, Shirley Borrego Tacket, and granddaughter, Ronda Borrego

Albert "Paco" Borrego Sr. was born July 12, 1906 in Clayton, New Mexico to Francisco Borrego and Juliana Salazar Borrego. Albert was the oldest of ten children, in order of birth: Albert, John, Frank, Manual (died in infancy), Celia, Anita, Margaret, Cora, Nora, and Ida.

As was all too common but a necessary practice of the time, especially in large families, Albert, John, and Anita were, literally, rented out to work while still young children in order to contribute to the family pocketbook. Albert was only eight years old when he went to tend his uncle's sheep for 50 cents a month. [Ques: all he earned? Or only what he was allowed to keep for himself?] He felt totally abandoned. Isolated, exposed to the elements [Was there shelter?], sometimes wet and cold, having to fend for himself, and even kill rattlesnakes, Albert hated it. Occasionally his mother came to drop off staples. When she drove off in the wagon, Albert ran after her, crying, begging to go home. She left him, nonetheless.

They say what doesn't kill you makes you strong, and Albert Borrego was as tough as they come. His having to work at such a young age ended his formal education, so Albert had only two years of school. His innate intelligence, however, allowed him to excel in all endeavors he undertook, including schooling himself throughout his life so that he could be educated in subjects of his needs and keep up with current events.

The family moved from Clayton, New Mexico to Brighton, Colorado, where Albert quickly finished growing up and continued taking on a lot of responsibility to contribute to the support of his family.

As a young man in the late 1920s, he was a top competitor in the horse and cart races in Brighton. One day, after a victorious race, Albert was approached by [Charles?] C.W. Pace,

owner of C.W. Pace Land and Livestock Co. in Longmont and after whom Pace Road is named (endnote). Impressed by young Albert's talents and showmanship, Charlie Pace made Albert an offer he couldn't refuse. Albert moved to Longmont, where he worked as Mr. Pace's top ranch foreman and raced the Company's entry in the horse and cart races at the Roosevelt Park Racetrack. Albert's duties managing the ranch included busting broncos, training and riding wild horses, and shoeing all the Animals(?) on the ranch. Horses and muels?

After moving to Longmont, Albert met and fell in love with Elvinia "Bea" Martinez, who used to drive by Roosevelt Park and wave at the tall, handsome cowboy. Like her prince in shining armor, Albert swept the love of his life off her feet, and they were married in Longmont on July 19, 1931. They had three children together: Albert Jr., Rudy, and Shirley.

One of the highlights of Albert's life was attending the Denver Stock Show every year with C.W. Pace. They stayed at the Brown Palace, the finest hotel in Denver, for the duration of the Stock Show. Not long before he died, Albert found a key belonging to the Brown Palace, which he had inadvertantly kept. It was in the old travel bag he had used the last year he and C.W. Pace attended the Stock Show together. Finding the key put a smile on Albert's face as he reminisced about the good times they shared when they wined and dined among the finest and most famous cowboys and cattlemen back in the "Good Old Days." The last time Albert attended the Denver Stock Show was in January 2004. He was ninety-seven years old.

According to Dick Pace, grandson of Charlie W. Pace,

Albert worked for our family for forty-six years. He worked for my grandfather, C.W. Pace, until he passed away; then Albert continued to work for my uncle, Fred Pace, until he passed away in the mid-1970s. My whole family had a great deal of respect for Albert, particularly my grandfather, who considered him to be more than just an employee. ... He was Grandpa's No. 1 right-hand man, whom he could always count on to do "the tough cowboy stuff" that nobody else could or would do.

Albert kept up with progress as the world became more complicated. He was very adept as a self-taught mechanic, maintaining and repairing all types of farm equipment. He became

everyone's No. 1 mechanic, taking pride as he enjoyed fixing his family's, friends', and neighbors' cars, tools, and equipment.

In 1947, in tandem with his position at the Pace Ranch, Albert took on a second job and began a new career as a coal miner in Erie working for the Clayton Coal Co. During his tenure at the mine, he was an active union member and instilled those core values and strong work ethics into the minds of his young family. For the twenty-three and one-half years, the Clayton Coal Co. offered increasing opportunities for personal growth. Albert retired from the mining industry in 1971.

Albert's name, along with others, is immortalized on a monument honoring the handworking miners of Erie and northern coalfields along the Interstate 25 corridor. The monument was commissioned by the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) and placed in downtown Erie. The dedication ceremony took place on April 29, 2000.

After retiring from the mine and ranch, Albert kept himself busy maintaining his own little "Green Acre" of which he was always so proud. Until the last year of his life, he took care of his yard full of fruit trees and the beautiful flowers he grew for his wife. A master gardener, Albert took pride in planting and raising his own garden to harvest, particularly his chile plants. His favorite foods were his homegrown chile, beans and tortillas.

Albert was a great hunter and avid sportsman throughout his life. He passed on his hunting, fishing, and survival techniques, as well as his love of the outdoors and mountains, to his children and grandchildren during the many hunting, camping, and fishing trips they took together. He loved to stream fish and hunted wild game up to the age of ninety-two, before he took up the sport of gambling in Central City and Black Hawk.

Albert enjoyed and lived a long, full life surrounded by his cherished family. His most precious and deepest feelings of eternal love and devotion were reserved for his wife of more

than seventy-four years, his beloved Bea, [What did Uncle Albert call Auntie Beanie?] whom he showered daily with kisses and affection up until the very last day of his life.

Albert witnessed unimaginable changes from traveling in horse-drawn wagons to jet planes and witnessing man traveling to space in rocket ships. He witnessed news brought by primitive methods of communication such as the telegraph to the age of personal computers, programmable camera phones, and big-screen televisions complete with video games, all of which he experienced with his family. Despite his age, he remained witty, wise, and sharp as a tack. His ability to remember history, names, faces and, particularly, dates, amazed family and friends to the end.

Albert always read the *Daily Times-Call* and kept up with the news and current events on television. Thanks to the aid of closed captioning, he became quite the speed-reader. He loved to watch wrestling and bull riding and never missed "The Price Is Right."

Albert was a very hardworking, honorable gentleman with strong beliefs and core values.

John also, Anita to do housework.

When you have a hard childhood, you want more for your kids.

Elvinia "Bea" Borrego was born on October 13, 1912 in Chama, New Mexico to Selestino [I've always had a problem with this spelling. I use Celestino. I may be wrong.] Martinez and Sylvaiana [Sylviana?] Rivas Martinez. When she was three years old, her mother died, and Bea went to live with her grandmother, Lójina (maiden name) Martinez, in Cebolla. Lójina was a remarkable woman. She was a mid-wife and she also owned and operated the area dancehall, which extended back from her house. She lived to be one hundred and five years old.

Bea's father remarried when she was eight years old, and she went to live with him and her stepmother, Gregoria "Gertie" Romero Martinez. Bea did not have much of a childhood, nor was she able to attend school. She had to help her father work in the fields and help her stepmother with the household chores, including the care of her younger brothers and sisters. She was so small that her father made a special little bench [stool?] for her to stand on so she could help wash clothes, iron, and do dishes.

The family moved to Longmont in 1926. In the late 1920s she met the true love of her life: the tall, handsome cowboy, Albert Borrego. She would wave to and flirt with him every time she drove past Roosevelt Park on her way to and from jobs around town. He was her "Prince Charming," who swept her off her feet. They were married and had three children together: Albert Jr., Rudy, and Shirley.

Elvinia was a loving and devoted wife and mother. She was a professional homemaker, sewing, crocheting, gardening, and cooking for her family. Times were hard during the Depression, but she always managed to cook and bake goodies for her family. She made money stretch. Taking advantage of the summer harvest, she canned everything she could for the winter months and always had a cellar full of home-canned goods. She raised her own chickens so they could have fried chicken on Sundays, plus she sold fresh eggs to a local market to bring in a little extra income and sometimes buy treats and an occasional soda for the children. She took in ironing for extra money. She always liked to iron, starting out with flatirons heated on the coal stove to modern steam irons. She even ironed her bed sheets and pillowcases.

She had a kind heart and was known to take into their home on the farm all the little sick, abandoned, and orphaned animals. Her children remember sharing their home with baby chickens, rabbits, and lambs that their mother fed from bottles and eyedroppers and administered Watkins products until they were well and strong enough to join the rest of the animals.

Bea's favorite thing to do was dance with Albert. They regularly went to dances in nearby farming communities. Gas was rationed during the Depression so, when there was not enough gas to drive to the dances, they would walk, sometimes far, Bea in her fancy dress and high heels. Nothing stopped her from going to a dance. Sometimes they made [held] their own dance; they pushed back the furniture, rolled up the rugs, and called in the local fiddlers and guitar players [musicians?].

In 1949 Bea and Albert moved from the farm [ranch? Did you live in the original Pace homestead house?] and bought their own home in town where they lived for the rest of their lives. Although she had no formal education, Bea taught herself to read, write, drive, bank and take care of the family finances. She enjoyed reading the *Longmont Times-Call*, sometimes aloud if there was an interesting article or a sale at one of her favorite stores. Although her own children did not have Little Golden Books when they were growing up, Elvinia enjoyed reading them to her grandchildren. Her favorites were "The Three Little Pigs" and "Little Red Riding Hood." [Note to Ronda: quotes or ital.?)

She loved playing games with her children and grandchildren. She was especially skilled at Chinese Checkers. She could still win at the age of ninety! Her favorite card game was Old Maid. In their later years, Albert and Bea discovered Central City and Blackhawk. They both enjoyed going "up the hill" with family members and playing the slot machines.

Bea loved life; she loved to laugh and have a good time. She was a true jokster and loved to play harmless tricks on unsuspecting friends and family members. Her favorites were offering them a can of peanuts, from which a snake sprung, or a box of candy, which contained a rubber snake. She got a big bang out of fooling Albert with plastic spiders in the bed or on the floor. Always her hero, he would, of course, "save" her from the spider only to learn that she had fooled him again.

Albert was still protecting Bea at the age of ninety-six. Their children threw Bea a lovely nintieth-birthday party in the backyard. Someone had hired a male stripper, who arrived with his own music and proceeded to take off his clothes and gyrate suggestively for Bea. When Albert realized what was going on, he rushed to defend his wife's honor. Hobbling across the yard and waving his cane, he yelled, "Get the hell off my property" (among other things) to the hapless young man, who frantically picked up his CD player and clothes and ran barefoot out of the yard. He barely escaped Albert's threatening cane, which Albert fully intended to use if he could have moved just a little faster. Bea thoroughly enjoyed the whole thing.

The family spent a lot of time in the mountains.

They made sure all of their children graduated from Longmont High School. Al and Rudy played football and baseball and were both outstanding athletes. Their parents loved watching them play and never missed a game.

Al joined the Army after high school and played on the Army's traveling baseball team.