

FIRST DRAFT

José Hilario "J.H." and Maria Sabina Maes Cortez

The Longmont Hispanic Study is forever indebted to Dorothy Cortez Sanchez, granddaughter of J.H. and Sabina Cortez, who loaned us her copy of *Following in the Footsteps of Our Ancestors from Santa Fe to Maes Creek*,¹ a painstakingly scholarly work by Arthur F. Maes, which traces the history of the Maes family, that of Maria Sabina Maes Cortez, from the original Oñate expedition of conquest and colonization of New Mexico in 1598 to the twentieth century. This book has proved a virtual treasure trove of information filled with names, dates, photographs, and official documentation. *Santa Fe to Maes Creek* is as good as it gets for background information to combine with the family's Longmont experience. Patsy Cordova, great-granddaughter of J.H. and Sabina Cortez and research associate for the Longmont Hispanic Study, contributed the rest of the information.

Although the family history of Maria Sabina Maes Cortez is treated in some detail, little is known about the family history of her husband, José Hilario "J.H." Cortez. Hilario Cortez married Sabina Maes in Turkey Creek, Huerfano County, Colorado in 1899. They had seven children, all born in Turkey Creek: Carlos, born 1901; Maria Adela (Dela), born 1903, husband Benjamin Vigil; Finano, born 1905; Francis, birth date unknown, husband Elias Blazon; Dora, birth date unknown, husband Casiano Martinez; Edarda, born 1909, husband Antonio Padilla; Juan Pablo (Paul), born 1911, wife Tilly Martinez. The family had come to Longmont from time to time to work beets, but moved to Longmont permanently in about 1915(?).

What happened to Carlos and Finano?

If there was ever a *Patron*² in Longmont, it was J.H. Cortez. J.H. and Sabina Cortez lived on Third Avenue, about where the Our Center is now located. On warm evenings they could be seen relaxing on their front porch, J.H. in his overstuffed chair and Sabina in her rocker, both of them smoking their pipes. Passersby nodded and greetings were exchanged. With the distinguished manners which were then so prominent, people who wished to stop

and visit asked politely for permission to approach, "*Con su permision*," and J.H. would, just as politely, extend an invitation "*Pasa le*." Unlike the traditional *patron*, J.H. had no money, but he had charisma, wisdom, common sense, a wide network of friends and associates, and he was trusted and eminently respected by all.

J.H. politically active, but he was very much a behind the scenes man. He held political meetings in his home, often in the parlor—which was off limits to the children of the house. He educated people on the politics of the day and encouraged them to vote.

J.H. was an *hermano*, or brother, of the secret society of *Penitentes* whose *morada*, or chapel, was in the Ft. Lupton area. He would attend the meetings and services with his friend, Onofre Romero, and others. The *Penitente* brotherhood had been driven underground by the Roman Catholic Church, which had been dismayed by its extreme religious rites. The *Penitentes* have since reclaimed their legitimacy and operate freely in New Mexico and, presumably, elsewhere. Apparently they have tempered their religious zeal.

J.H. worked the many jobs of his generation. Farm work, shepherd, coal miner, and railroad worker. He was much sought after sheep shearer. Even after his retirement, he continued to shear sheep far and wide.

While J.H. was concerned with the social aspects within the community, Sabina ruled the household. She had little patience and would tolerate no nonsense from her children, grandchildren, or great-grandchildren. Good behavior was never enough; she aimed for perfection, based on a very strict brand of Catholicism and imposed through her own iron will. If she thought they needed it, she did not hesitate to thrash a child with her cane—anybody's child who was misbehaving and within her reach. Although she was a no-

nonsense disciplinarian, she loved to play Chinese checkers and was delighted to take on all comers.

Sabina was an encyclopedia of *remedios* for nearly every ailment. She was a great believer in the curative powers of camphor—as a tea or as an ingredient in any number of her medicinal concoctions. For example, she would add camphor to the potato and vinegar poultice applied on the forehead for headaches. She applied a mustard plaster for sore throats or chest colds. She browned flour in a cast-iron skillet and added cinnamon and water to boil up for a drink to cure diarrhea. Sabina was a big believer in enemas for fevers or constipation. She cooked onions with who knows what as an instant and effective cure for heartburn. She had a “magic plant” in her parlor, which was actually a giant aloe vera plant, good for cuts.

To keep evil out of the house, Sabina hung crosses over all of her doorways, especially over the front door. When there were bad storms, she would make the sign of the cross with salt, and then make the sign of the cross with a knife, outside, in the elements, to “cut the storm.” Sabina maintained an altar in the house and, from time to time, she enjoyed the privilege of hosting the “Traveling Virgin” from St. John the Baptist Catholic Church, as the Virgin made her rounds throughout the parish.

Sabina wore flesh-colored cotton stockings year around. She wore an apron at all times in the house. Her aprons always had pockets in which she kept the makings for rolling her own cigarettes. In the summertime, Sabina wore a sunbonnet with a big, floppy brim and with a long ruffle at the back which that not only protected her neck, but formed a little cape to protect her shoulders from sun, although her shoulders were never bare. She braided her

hair and wrapped it around her head for daytime wear. For bedtime, she wore her hair in a single braid and donned a huge nightgown.

J.H. and Sabina raised seven grandchildren after their daughter, Maria Aldela (Dela), died. Her husband, Benjamin Vigil, had deserted her and the children. It was thought that Dela died of a broken heart. The children were: Phillip Edward (Eddie), Maria Mercedes (Mercy), Julia, Reyes (Ray), Patricio (Pat), Maurice (Maury), and Cecelia (Cee).

In happier times, Benjamin and Dela lived across from *la colonia*, a row house for farm workers and sugar beet factory workers and their families close to the Great West Sugar Factory. *La colonia* also functioned as a social center for dances and other festivities for the local Hispanic community. When there were dances, young mothers took their children to Dela's house. There the mothers took turns tending the children so that they could also take turns enjoying the dance.

Dela's children attended St. John's Catholic School due to the generosity of benefactors; J.H. and Sabina could never have afforded to send them on their own. Despite their generosity of pocketbook, the benefactors lacked a generosity of spirit. They never let it be forgotten that the children attended St. John's because of them. The nuns, too, constantly reminded them that they were wards of charity. For example, the benefactress would bring clothes to the children and announce before the classroom, "These are for the Vigil children." The children felt humiliated before their peers and, being brought up in a household of exquisite manners, they also felt embarrassed for their benefactress and the nuns, whose manners were lacking.

Despite their perfect manners, the Vigil brothers were full of the dickens. Once, Sabina caught Ray, Pat, and Maury smoking. Normally she would have just beaten them with

her cane, but she decided to wait for their grandfather to come home and handle it. J.H. called them into the parlor. Ooh, the parlor! He told them that he hadn't realized that the three of them wanted to become men that day. He handed them each a cigar and told them that they would all sit in the parlor and smoke cigars, as men. They couldn't leave until they were finished, even as they turned green and got sick. It was a long time before any of them touched tobacco again.

The boys helped supplement the family income by picking up scrap metal and working odd jobs. They also earned money by helping set up circuses and carnivals. Eddie rounded up his brothers and the Montour brothers to help set up a circus. They were to be paid at end of circus, after teardown. Eddie was to collect the pay and divvy it up. His brothers and friends waited for him in happy anticipation. Eddie didn't show up at the set time and, when he did show up, he didn't have any money. He had squandered it all on a circus hooker.

Eddie and his buddies liked to sneak down to the far east end of town, past Kuner Empson's, to watch the Ku Klux Klan gatherings. They were mesmerized by the carryings on. This was the site of the eventual show down between the Ku Klux Klan and the men of the Longmont Hispanic community. —NEED DETAILS—

Eddie lied about his age and joined the service when he was fifteen. When they finally caught up with him, he was of age. Retired from the military. MP. (What branch?) details.

J.H. and Sabina had much of their family living close by, in the area where the Our Center is now located. There was Erickson's Garage, the Alley, and then Paul and Tilly Cortez, J.H. and Sabina, and Mercy and Gabe Martinez—all shared a common backyard.

José and Rosita Lucero, related as *padrinos*, lived on the corner. Their daughter and son-in-law? son and daughter-in-law, Jimmy and Ella Romero, lived around the corner facing Atwood.

Mexican Americans here, coming from Mexico were called Nationals.

Padilla, Uncle Tony. Loved bowling. Bowling shirts, all with "Tony". House decorated with bowling pins. Drove an Ice cream truck at that time. Kids loved it. Edarda "Aunt Margaret".

Gabes natural father: Acosta: Sheepherder. Worked for the Echiveria (sp) Longmont. Wore a coin in his ear. (Sign of an assassin) Very fair, blue eyes. Castil

Beginning of excerpts from
Following in the Footsteps of our Ancestors from Santa Fe to Maes Creek

Don Juan de Oñate led the first conquest-colonization expedition into the "Kingdom of New Mexico" in 1598. He was a *criollo*, of Spanish blood born in the New World. His father, Don Cristobal de Oñate, was immensely wealthy from his silver mines in Zacatecas, New Spain, and was a personal friend of King Phillip I. Don Juan de Oñate pledged to recruit two hundred men (two hundred four were recruited; one hundred thirty-nine actually joined) equipped at his expense and to provide firearms, lances, shields, flour, corn, jerked meat, seed for sowing wheat, three thousand sheep, one thousand rams, one thousand goats, one thousand cattle, one hundred black cattle, one hundred fifty colts, one hundred fifty mares and tools required to begin work in the new land. The Spanish Crown in turn furnished three cannon, thirty quintals of powder, one thousand quintals of lead, and a loan of six thousand pesos.

There were about four hundred men in Oñate's 1598 enterprise: about two-thirds from Spain and one-third *criollos* from New Spain. One hundred and thirty-nine new colonists had their families with them; one hundred and thirty were accompanying soldiers who were not expected to stay; ten were priests.

In July 1598 they founded San Juan de los Caballeros, the first settlement and capital of New Mexico, on the east bank of the Rio Grande. The second governor of New Mexico, Don Pedro de Peralta, established and moved the capital to Santa Fe in 1610.

Records are sketchy, but the first Maese found was Juan Maese. In 1632 he was a twenty-eight-year-old *sargento*, who had an *estancia* (farm for grazing cattle) somewhere in

New Mexico. Nothing more is known about him. Another Maese was Esteban Maeze, whose wife, Antonia Gonzáles, is listed as a widow with four children: Alonso, Luís, Luisa, and Maria.

In 1680 the Pueblo Indians united and staged a successful revolt driving the Spaniards from New Mexico. Under the leadership of Governor Antonio de Otermín, the settlers fled south to El Paso del Norte. Included were the brothers, Alonso and Luís Maese, and their numerous extended families. Having escaped with their lives and little else, the families became destitute while they waited twelve years for the *Reconquista* and resettlement of New Mexico.

In 1692 the *Reconquista* was led by Don Deigo de Vargas with one hundred soldiers, handpicked in Spain, seventy families, and eighteen friars. Among the families were Luís Maese and his wife, Josepha de Archuleta, their six children including two married daughters (one the mother of three-year-old twin boys, both named Joaquín and referred to as *los Joaquines*) and their husbands, and two orphans whom they were raising.

Several persons named Maese remained at El Paso del Norte; however, it appears that Alanso Maese returned to New Mexico, at least briefly. It is not known which, if any, of his family members accompanied him. Because this account deals with the lineage of Luís Maese, however, we are not concerned with Alanso Maese.

In 1695 Luís Maese received a land grant from Governor Vargas, "*el qual sitio esta en esta Villa en El Pueblo Quemado, con solar de casa y huerta y media fanega de sembradura asta el arroyo,*" "on which site in this Villa of Pueblo Quamado, with lot for a house, fertile irrigated area and half a measurement of grain and seed for sowing as far as the arroyo." Apparently renamed La Villa Nueva de Santa Cruz de Españoles Mexicanos de Rey Nuestro Carlos Segundo, The New Villa of Santa Cruz of Spanish-Mexicans of Our King Charles the Second, or Santa Cruz de la Cañada, as it came to be known, was established with settlers from Santa Fe and forty-four newly arrived families. Vargas distributed a division of goods and stock to residents; each family received twenty-five sheep, two cows, and one bull.

Houses and other buildings were usually made of adobe in an ell shape around a patio with rooms arranged in a single row opening into the patio and seldom opening from room to room. The kitchen doubled as a bedroom. Every room had a corner fireplace for warmth. New rooms were added as the family grew. Floors were packed dirt and sprinkled with water before sweeping. Settlers slept on wooolsacks or sheep pelts wrapped in a blanket. Stools and low tables were made of pine. Utensils and bowls were made of wood. Kettles, caldrons, and drinking mugs were made of copper.

Tadeo Maese is listed in the 1750 Santa Fe census with his wife Ana Maria Galindo. Evidence points to Tadeo's being a grandson of Luís Maese, but it is not known which of Luís Maese's sons, Juan or Cristóbal, was his father. Tadeo Maese and Ana Maria Galindo had seven children and lived in Santa Fe until about 1785, when they moved to Cundiyo, in the vicinity of Santa Cruz.

Economic life centered upon subsistence farming and raising stock: horses, cattle, sheep, and goats. Economic necessity required that the settlers perform manual labor—work or starve.³ Horses were a particularly valued commodity for the plains Indians; they were their chief article of trade. Sometimes whole herds were stolen from ranches of the Spaniards.

Juan Domingo Maese was one of Todeo Maese and Ana Maria Galindo's children. He married Juana Maria Herrera in about 1783. They had six children. In 1798 or 1799 Juan Domingo Maese received a land grant from Governor Fernando Chacon called the Merced de Fernandez de Taos. It was 63 varas wide and 63 varas long, from the brow of the cross to the boundary of the Pueblo. Juan Domingo Maese served in the Taos militia. In the 1806 militia muster roll, he is listed under Group V.

Their son, Juan Paulin Maese, was born in 1784 and married Maria Ignacia Varela in 1810. They stayed in the Fernando de Taos area and had five children. Juan Paulin Maese was also a member of the Taos militia. In the 1806 militia muster roll, Juan Paulin Maese is listed under Group VI: New Infantry Recruits (*de Familia*) age fifteen and older; each had a bow and twenty-five arrows.

Juan Paulin Maese and Maria Ignacia Varela's son, José Benito Maes, was born about 1811. He married his first wife, Maria Paula Archuleta, in 1829, and they had ten children. In 1881, José Benito Maes, claiming to be seventy-four, married thirty-nine-year-old Maria Antonia, a *Navajosa*.

Note change in spelling: from Maese to Maes. Descendents of Maese family members who did not return to New Mexico at the time of the *Reconquista* retain the ending "e" to this day. New Mexicans dropped the ending "e" during the nineteenth century and began pronouncing the name as one syllable, i.e., "Més."

Other changes in the nineteenth century: José Benito Maes was born a subject of Spain; he became a Mexican citizen in 1822, and a U.S. citizen in 1848.

In 1843 José Benito Maes and his wife, Maria Paula Archuleta, and their growing family moved to San Antonio del Rio, in the northern region of Taos County. In about 1857 they moved to Culebra, near the San Luis Valley. In 1868 José Benito Maes moved his family to Huerfano County, Colorado. While on a hunting trip, he had found excellent, unsettled land with good soil, pastures, and a creek located on the west side of the Greenhorn Mountain. The land is described as being from the Maes Creek *morada* to the Greenhorn Mountain.

Of note: José Benito Maes and Maria Paula Archuleta were the grandparents of the honorable Juan de Dios Montes, commonly known as J.D. Montez, a successful farmer, stock raiser, and politician in Huerfano County. He was the son of their eldest daughter, Juana Maria Maes, and her husband, Jesus Maria Montes. Clippings from the *Walsenburg World Newspaper* regarding J.H. Montez are reproduced in *Santa Fe to Maes Creek*.

José Benito Maes and Maria Paula Archuleta's seventh child, Juan Pablo Maes, was born in 1848. Juan Pablo Maes married Margarita Lujan in 1871. They had fourteen children. Five of their children died in infancy; two died at age eleven. Their fifth child was Maria Sabina Maes, who would marry José Hilario "J.H." Cortez in 1899.

Soon after they were married, Juan Pablo and Margarita started their homestead. Juan Pablo built a two-room house, a pole and post corral, dug an irrigation ditch, and cultivated twenty acres for crops. Over time he built an additional five rooms onto the house. Schoolmaster Juan Valdez lived with the family and taught in one of the rooms until a school was built. Juan Pablo and Margarita's house was a popular place for wedding receptions, baptisms and wakes. Margarita did beautiful beadwork, an art she learned from her mother. *Santa Fe to Maes Creek* contains a picture of some of her beadwork.

Juan Pablo Maes died in 1902. Of their seven surviving children, five were still at home. Overwhelmed, Margarita married Aniceto Martinez in 1904. Aniceto was a poor

manager and, to make ends meet, he had Margarita and her children mortgage the homestead to J.D. Montez for \$500. To earn cash, the family traveled to Longmont to work sugar beets, and the brothers slaughtered stock and sold the meat at the mining camps around Walsenburg. Margarita died in 1922. She was buried at the foot of Juan Pablo's grave. Aniceto died a couple of months later. He was buried at the foot of Margarita's grave. The three sons, Urbano, Leandro and José Saul Maes, became farmers and ranchers. It took them over twenty years to pay off the mortgage on the homestead and other debts they inherited from Aniceto Martinez's bad business deals.

Margarita Maes' mother was an Oglala Souix named Makigle (Resting on the Ground). Margarita's father, José Antonio Lujan had been an adventurer who lived among the Oglala Souix for a time. They were married in about 1856 and eventually made their home in Maes Creek. Margarita was the oldest of their five children.

Makigle's parents were Oyi Luta (Red Track) and Good Cow. Red Track had two wives, who were sisters. The name of the other wife is unknown. Red Track and Good Cow had six children: Wasu (Mary Hail), husband unknown; Makigle (Resting on the Ground) who married José Antonio Lujan; Yellow Dress, wife unknown; Bone Necklace, wife unknown; Camilla (Mary) who married José Armijo, and Sha Win (Ring/Rattles/Rattler) who married Okicirn (His Fight). Red Track and Good Cow were among the last of the Oglala Sioux to remain free. Their children, however, ended up on the Pine Ridge and Rosebud Reservations.

In 1872 Yellow Dress was killed by two men named Reddy and Dutch Bill who had gone to the Red Cloud Agency to trade whiskey. They got Yellow Dress drunk and killed him. They then stole eighteen horses from the Cheyenne and escaped. The Agency report indicates that Yellow Dress was a relative of Red Cloud.

Red Track and Good Cow's son Bone Necklace and son-in-law His Fight are believed to have fought in the 1876 Battle of the Little Big Horn against George Armstrong Custer and his ill-fated troops.

Jose Antonio Lujan was born in 1833 in San Juan, New Mexico. He was the son of Juan de Jesus Lujan and Maria de la Luz Romero. The parents of Juan de Jesus were José Pascual Lujan and Antonia Mestas.

It is thought that Antonio Lujan joined up with Mariano Medina and José Armijo to go on a scouting trip into what is now Wyoming and Montana during the mid-1850s. On this trip Antonio met and married Makigle. Their first child, Margarita, was born in the Wyoming area in what was Lakota Territory at the time. In 1861 the family was living in the Big Thompson area. In 1870 Antonio Lujan and Makigle, now using the Spanish name of Francisca Baca, settled in Maes Creek. Makigle died before 1882. Antonio married Juana Maria Gonzales in 1882. Juana Maria died by 1884.

Antonio worked as a farmer, sheep breeder, and herder. In 1884 he received a land patent from the government for 160 acres. In his later years, Antonio Lujan became known as "Padre Antonio." As the elder of Maes Creek he was held in high esteem and residents would go to him for advice and guidance. José Antonio Lujan died in 1902 in Maes Creek.

End of excerpts from
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¹Maes, Arthur F. *Following in the Footsteps of Our Ancestors from Santa Fe to Maes Creek*. Colorado Springs: Earth Design Systems, Inc., 1995.

²*Patron* is Spanish for boss which, although it can be associated with the political “boss system,” is a relic of feudal Spain, whereby leadership, conveyed either officially or by consensus, carries an awesome responsibility: political, social, and economic well-being of one’s people.

³It is particularly noteworthy that these settlers worked. Their forefathers settled New Mexico with the promise of becoming *Hidalgos*, landowning gentry, a lower rank of nobility. In Spain, except for soldiering, it would have been unthinkable for a person of this social class to work. Because, since 1680 the Pueblo Indians would no longer serve them, and because there were no other tribes willing to be conquered and enslaved, these bona fide Spanish gentlemen and their ladies were forced to do their own work.

First Draft 5/1/09: Oli Duncan/Patsy Cordova

This is a good start, but it still needs a lot of work. Most importantly, we need to get permission from Arthur Maes to use the material excerpted from his book.