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## Lovers On The Run, 1822

Exploring the Legend in *El Camino Viejo a Los Angeles*

by Gilbert P. Gia

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**I**n 1928 Frank F. Latta interviewed Antonio J. Forquera and heard the romantic tale of his grandparents Ramon and Loreto Solorzano.<sup>1</sup> In 1933 Latta read the story before the Kern County Historical Society, and in 1936 the society published it as part of *El Camino Viejo a Los Angeles*.<sup>2</sup> That book has been republished by Bear State Books, but genealogical research shows that the story of Solorzanos from 1822 could not have happened then and likely did not happen at all.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Frank Forrest Latta, 1892-1983. In 1982 Latta estimated that he had conducted about 1,700 interviews of San Joaquin Valley residents (Los Tulares, #134, June 1983). The name Loreto in later years was sometimes spelled Loreta. The name *Solorzano* is spelled variously in historical records. The spelling Solorzano is used in this study. Note that electronic searches on the word Solorzano return different results than searches on Solórzano.

<sup>2</sup> Frank Forrest Latta, *El Camino Viejo á Los Angeles : an address delivered before the Kern Co Historical Society Feb 20, 1933. Bakersfield, California: Kern Co Hist. Society, 1936. Annual publication # 2.*

<sup>3</sup> ISBN 1-892622-31-9, Bear State Books, [bearstatebooks.com](http://bearstatebooks.com)

**From *El Camino Viejo a Los Angeles*: "There is a legend to the effect that in the year 1822, Ramon Solorzano, then sixteen years of age, eloped from Santiago, Chile, with the beautiful daughter of a wealthy merchant of that city. The young lovers came to San Diego on a Spanish sailing vessel. Several months after arriving in San Diego, word was received that the couple was being pursued by agents of the angry father. A year later, still fleeing, the young refugees traveled by ox cart to Pueblo de Los Angeles and from there by way of San Fernando and Canada de San Emidio into the San Joaquin Valley. <sup>4</sup> There were several other persons in the party, which was guided by an old Indian." Latta's informants said the Solorzanos lived in a tule and brush hut just south of Stockton in 1826, "at the site of the present village of French Camp."<sup>5</sup> Latta concluded the legend, "This story of the old refugee road through the San Joaquin has been handed down through several generations of the Forquera family, now living in Delano, Kern County, and is furnished by Jose Antonio Forquera, a grandson of Solorzono."<sup>6</sup>**

**Decades later, in 1941, A.J. Forquera told the story to Amy Fox Hall who was interviewing San Joaquin Valley old-timers.<sup>7</sup> From her notes: "July 5, 1941. The maternal grandparents, Ramon and Loretta Solorsano came from Chile by boat, landing at San Diego in 1822. The young married couple came overland to Sonoma County where he**

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<sup>4</sup> The valley route followed springs along the eastern slopes of the Coastal Range and had been in use by the Spanish at least as early as 1780. The path had been a Native Californian trading trail.

<sup>5</sup> Latta, op cit. In 1848, 100 families lived at French Camp which then was called the Charles M. Weber tract. It was part of the old *Campo de los Franceses* ranch (Wallace Smith, *Garden of the Sun*. pp 102, 403.

<sup>6</sup> Latta, p 3. Forquera, son of A.J. Forquera and father-in-law of this author, said Ricardo Matley was present during the Latta interview.

<sup>7</sup> Amy Fox Hall, *Fruit of the Valley by California Artists and Writers of the San Joaquin Valley*. Ward Ritchie Press, Los Angeles, California, 1942. An unnamed daughter of A.J. Forquera's sister Louisa Estrada was present during the Hall interview.

***joined the Mexican army in which he served until the United States took over California at which time he joined the American army. During the Civil War, although already discharged from the regular army in California, he went east and joined the northern forces. Following the war, the couple settled in Hanford.”***<sup>8</sup>

**About 15 years ago, preliminary genealogical research of the fact-laden story revealed puzzling contradictions. Interviews by this author with A.J. Forquera’s son Ralph<sup>9</sup> turned-up conflicts in names and an impossible time line. Research since then progressed in two directions, forward in time from 1700 and backward in time from the present. The findings reveal a mother and child, both of whom were not raised by their own parents.**

**A.J. Forquera got the story either from his mother, Estefana, from his step-father Ricardo Mattley<sup>10</sup>, from his grandmother Loreto or from her husband Ramon Solorzano. Forquera could also have heard it from all of them. In 1928 when Latta interviewed A.J. Forquera, Estefana, Loreto, and Ramon Solorzano had been dead almost 30 years, and Ricardo Mattley was well into his eighties.<sup>11</sup> At the time of the Hall interview in 1941 Forquera was dredging-up memories many decades old.**

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<sup>8</sup> Tulare Co Historical Library, Vertical File, *Mexican-Americans, Tulare Co, #4*, an annotated, signed, and dated draft of Amy Fox Hall’s interview of the A.J. Forquera interview for *Fruit of the Valley*. Hanford began as a city in 1874-1875 after the railroad reached the area. Ramon Solorzano’s name does not appear J. Carlyle Parker, *A Personal Name Index to Orton’s “Records of California Men in the War of the Rebellion, 1861-1867”* (Detroit, Michigan: Gale Research Company, 1978).

<sup>9</sup> This author’s father-in-law

<sup>10</sup> The name was sometimes spelled *Mattle*, *Mattlee*, or *Mattley*.

<sup>11</sup> This author’s interview in 1996 with Manuel V. “Buddy” Estrada (1913-1998)



**A.J. Forquera in 1910<sup>12</sup>**



**A.J. Forquera and Ricardo Matley, 1932-33<sup>13</sup>**

**Records dispute the legend's time frame. In the late 18<sup>th</sup> Century, Juan Francisco Solorzano y Martinez was a Spanish leather-jacket**

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<sup>12</sup> **Forquera family album**

<sup>13</sup> **Ibid.**

soldier in Santa Barbara, San Fernando, and Los Angeles,<sup>14</sup> but his later military career was mostly at Santa Barbara and San Fernando.

Between 1786 and 1804 Solorzano, also known as Jose Francisco Ayala or Juan Francisco Trinidad Ayala,<sup>15</sup> soldiered at the Santa Barbara Presidio. A garrison report of 1790 showed him as a single, 25 year-old *indio*.<sup>16</sup> In fall 1792, at Mission Santa Barbara, Solorzano used the name Jose Francisco Ayala when he married Maria Faustina Lara y Campos.<sup>17</sup> 1802 they had a daughter, Maria Gurtrudis Solorzano, born at Santa Barbara. Juan Solorzano was absent from the Santa Barbara Easter Duty garrison list of 1804, although he might have been at San Fernando Mission. In 1806 his son Manuel Antonio Ramon Solorzano died at Santa Barbara.

*San Diego Blas Manuel Solorzano* was born in Santa Barbara in February 1807. By 1808 Juan Solorzano and Maria Faustina Lara y

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<sup>14</sup> Early records used the spelling *Golorzano* or *Zolorzano*.

<sup>15</sup> 1998 email to this author from Robert E. Lopez, genealogist for Pobladores 200, Descendants of the Founders, El Pueblo de Los Angeles, 1781 (<http://lospobladores.org/>). In an email to this author, Granville W. Hough (1922-2010) wrote that Solorzano's various names appear in Mutnick (Dorothy Gittinger Mutnick, *Some Alta California Pioneers and Descendants*, Past Time Publications, Lafayette, California, 1982). See also, Maria Northrop, Bk VII, p 133. In an email to this author of Mar 3, 2000, Hough wrote, "*Now as to why the name Solorzano was preferred. It may be a grandmother's surname, but we do not know, as neither grandmother's name was recorded. If a Solorzano line was the most prestigious in the background of Juan Francisco, and he looked around and could find no one using it, he just decided he would use it rather than Ayala, who did have other California Families.*" Hough added that a soldier also might select a new name in order to avoid conflicting identities or to gain greater prestige.

<sup>16</sup> The name was spelled *Golorzano*.

<sup>17</sup> (1) Maria Lara born about 1779 at Cosala, Sinaloa, Mexico, to Jose Fernando de Velasco y Lara and Maria Antonia Campos (Mission San Fernando marriage records). Robert E. Lopez stated that Maria Campos was Native American. (Letter to this author, Jun 27, 1998) (2) V. II, p 133, #1551, Aug 7, 1792, citation from Robert E. Lopez. (3) Married soldiers sometimes used different names to avoid problems from Catholic priests who wished to guard local morality.

Campos lived at San Fernando where he was Majordomo of the Mission. On December 6, 1808 Reverend Father Juan baptized their daughter Maria Nicolasa, and in winter 1810 Petra Francisca was born.<sup>18</sup>

In 1812 while on Easter duty at Mission San Fernando, Juan was shown as *soldato Ymbalidus*, disabled. He was then living with his wife and Antonio "Solorzno," who might have been a son or brother. Maria Faustina Lara y Campos de Solorzano died in childbirth in summer 1812.<sup>19</sup> The child that was born was named Dolores.

Soldiers who had served 18 years were eligible for retirement, and Solorzano had been a soldier for at least 20. At the baptism of his daughter Nicolasa Solorzano at Santa Barbara in 1815<sup>20</sup> Solorzano was again identified as disabled [*invalido*]. In 1816 he moved to the Los Angeles Pueblo,<sup>21</sup> and the Padron of 1816 for that settlement listed him as a retired soldier and widower of Maria Faustina Lara. He would have been about 46.<sup>22</sup>

While at Los Angeles Juan Solorzano met Maria Rochin.<sup>23</sup> Records from later censuses show they had a son named Ramon Solorzano, born in 1821.

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<sup>18</sup> Feb 10, 1810

<sup>19</sup> Jul 11, 1812 at Mission San Fernando

<sup>20</sup> Santa Barbara Baptisms, 1815, # 1857

<sup>21</sup> Bancroft identified soldiers Francisco and Juan Solorzano as Los Angeles settlers (Historical Society of Southern California Quarterly, V. XLIII, Jun 1961, #2, #3, pp 350-352 (entry #80); vol LIX, #4, winter 1972, p 327).

<sup>22</sup> Born about 1770.

<sup>23</sup> (1) Her name is in the 1816 Padron. (2) The 1836 Los Angeles Padron shows Maria de la Concepcion Rochin born in 1810 and *hija natural* (illegitimate child) of 34 year-old Maria del Carmen Rochin. The child's father, Jose Clemente Navarro, died in 1807. In a letter of Jul 27, 1998 to this author, Robert E. Lopez referred to Maria Rochin as Maria Anastasia

Jul 12 1821- RAMON MARIA SOLORZANO, r.n. of el Soldado invalido, Juan Franco., natl. de Acapulco, y Ma. Anastacia Rochin, natl. de Monterey? y vecinos del Pueblo de L.A. Franco. Xavier Alvarado, y su madre Ma. Ygna. Amador, c.c. Sargto. retirado Franco. Xavier Alvarado, pads. N.

### **Extract from Northrup – baptism of Ramon Solorzano, 1821**

Juan Francisco Solorzano died a few months later. He was buried April 3, 1822 at San Gabriel Mission.<sup>24</sup> Surviving him was his young wife Maria Rochin, their one year-old son Ramon Solorzano, and Maria's step-son, 16 year-old Blas.<sup>25</sup> The census of 1836 listed Maria as 60, widow of Juan Francisco Solorzano and mother of 14 year-old Ramon Solorzano.<sup>26</sup> In 1840 Ramon Solorzano might have soldiered with the Mexican army of California.<sup>27</sup>

### **Solorzano - Blanco Family**

In 1807 at San Diego, the child Maria del Pilar Blanco was born to Maria Martina Petra Felez and Miguel Blanco.<sup>28</sup> Jose Joaquin

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Rochin.

<sup>24</sup> *Alphabetical Listing of the California Missions Vital Records*. Thomas Workman Temple III. San Gabriel Difs 11. (Difs means difuntes, or deaths).

<sup>25</sup> *Padron 1822*. Microfilm of the Zoeth Skinner Eldredge collection, "Correspondence and Papers," Bancroft Library, Berkeley, California.

<sup>26</sup> *Los Angeles Padron, 1836*, p 3. Ages shown in the Padrons often incorrect.

<sup>27</sup> Between 1839 and 1842 a Ramon Solorzano was a soldier with the San Francisco Company and was "at Sonoma '44, age 19" (Hubert Howe Bancroft, et al, *History of California: 1825-1840*).

<sup>28</sup> Jun 8, 1807, *Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), San Diego Baptisms, #3386, #1647*. Miguel Blanco (? -1825) Maria Martina Petra Felez was Blanco's third wife (Mardith Schuetz-Miller (complier), *Biofile of Building Artisans Who Worked on the Northern Spanish Borderlands of New*

Cresencio Blanco was born in 1811,<sup>29</sup> Maria del Carmen Feliciano Blanco in 1813,<sup>30</sup> and Maria del Espirtu Santo Blanco in 1814.

In 1828 in San Diego, Maria del Carmen Feliciano Blanco married Blas Solorzano.<sup>31</sup> Jose de San Juan Benito Solorzano was born in 1829<sup>32</sup> and in 1837 Maria Loreto Solorzano.<sup>33</sup> Blas and Maria were both dead by the time Loreto was two years old.<sup>34</sup> She was taken in by her maternal aunt.

## Blanco - Apablaza Family

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*Spain and Early Mexico. See*

<http://www.lib.utexas.edu/taro/drtsa/00099/drt-00099.html>)

<sup>29</sup> Apr 19, 1811. See also, San Diego Baptisms 1816, May 2, 1816, #4271. DAR, San Diego Baptisms #3821

<sup>30</sup> San Diego Baptisms 1813, Jan 18, #4022. Mardith Schuetz-Miller says 1812.

<sup>31</sup> San Diego Matrimonios, Jan 4, 1828, #1647. Noted also in Schuetz-Miller

<sup>32</sup> Maria del Pilar Blanco Quinteros and Salvador Quinteros were padrinos for Blas and Maria del Carmen's son Jose de San Juan Benito Solorzano, born June 6, 1829 in San Diego. DAR, San Diego Baptisms 1829. # 6317, Jun 6, 1829.

<sup>33</sup> San Gabriel Bap, 1837, #8178, Sep 8, 1837, Maria Loreto Solorzano, "r.n. de Ma. del Carmen Feliciano Blanco y Cristobol Solorzano." Sponsors Antonio Salazar and Maria Guadalupe, "Vlure vecs. Nuevo Mexico." "Pad. E." Noted also in DAR, Los Angeles Plaza Bap, # 8178, p 76. In an email of Jan 25, 2000 to this author, genealogist Granville W. Hough wrote, "The baptismal record shows her father as Cristobal Solorzano, but Mutnick thought the father was Blas, as there was no Cristobal in the family, and the mother was Maria del Carmen. So the best we know, Blas Manuel and Maria del Carmen were parents of Maria Loreto."

<sup>34</sup> San Gabriel Difuntes [*death records*], Oct 27, 1837, #5909. Ma. del Carmen Feliciano Blanco de Blas Solorzano. According to Mardith Schuetz-Miller the mother was buried Oct 22, 1839 at San Gabriel as the widow of Blas Solórzano. Additional documentation: Los Angeles Confirmations, Temple III Index, Mar 2, 1843, Loreto Solorzano y Blanco, pg 10, # 3015.



Apablasa family history says Juan Apablasa immigrated to Chile from either Portugal, or Santander (Spain,) or from the Islas del Cabo Verde, and from there to California.<sup>35</sup> Greenwood wrote, "The patriarch was supposed to have gone to San Francisco, according to his great-great grandson Carlos Apablasa, but a layover in Los Angeles convinced him of this area's merits."<sup>36</sup> The earliest document associated with Juan Apablasa's name is dated 1836 when he was a single, 26 year-old Los Angeles barman.<sup>37</sup>

Baptisms of 1837 and 1840 show that Apablasa fathered children by two different women.<sup>38</sup> In 1843 Juan Jose Apablasa, 32, married the widow Maria del Espirtu Santo Blanco, 29.<sup>39</sup> Witnesses were Manuel Lopez of the Islas del Cabo Verde,<sup>40</sup> Jose Simeon Valenzuela, and Cristobal Aguilar of Los Angeles. Each said they had been acquainted

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<sup>35</sup> The Santander reference is from this author's correspondence with John Apablasa, Jan 1999. The obituary of Salvador Apablasa said Juan Apablasa arrived in California in 1840 (Los Angeles Times, Mar 22, 1985).

<sup>36</sup> During construction of the Metro Rail subway at Union Station, Carlos Apablasa responded to an advertisement placed by Greenwood's research group. The firm was seeking historical information about the site of the subway excavations. Mr. Apablasa family history, as obtained by one of Greenwood's associates, became a chapter in Greenwood (op cit). Email to this author from Carlos Apablasa, 2000). See, Greenwood, p 8

<sup>37</sup> "*tavernero*," Los Angeles Padron, 1836", p 9, Records of Los Pobladores 200.

<sup>38</sup> (1) DAR records, Los Angeles Co, baptism records 1771-1873, p 158 #809. Oct 8, 1837. Norverto Apablasa born to Jose Juan Apablasa and Maria de Los Angeles. Agustin Salgado and Luisa Perez, sponsors. Father Estenaga. (2) Jose de Jesus Apablasa baptized Mar 11, 1840, child of Juan Apablasa and de la Anjila, *India de San Juan Capistrano*. sponsors, Nicholas Diaz and Isabella Abila (Bautismos 1826-1864, Our Lady of the Angles, p 164, #982).

<sup>39</sup> Jan 17, 1843. 1843 San Gabriel Matrimonios. 1844 Padron. Juan Apablasa was confirmed at Los Angeles Mission, Mar 2, 1843. Confirmations, p 9, #2997. A child of Juan Apablasa?

<sup>40</sup> Today it is an island nation of Portuguese-speaking people near the Canary Islands.

with Juan Apablasa for several years. This suggests that Juan Apablasa arrived in Los Angeles in the mid-1830s when he was about 23 years of age.

Juan Apablasa farmed near the Los Angeles Plaza Church.<sup>41</sup> The 1844 Padron lists him as a 33 year-old *labrador* (farmer) married to Maria Blanco, 22, of San Diego.<sup>42</sup> Apablasa built his house "ten feet from the spot where the Los Angeles Union Station's main entrance is now and facing what later became known as Juan Street."<sup>43</sup>

A year later gold was discovered in California. After decades of slow population growth, 80,000 Yankees, 8,000 Mexicans, 5,000 South Americans, and several thousand miscellaneous Europeans came to the Pacific Coast in 1849, and those numbers swelled to a quarter million by 1852.<sup>44</sup> During this period the value of Apablasa's land grew to \$2,000, or the equivalent of about \$400,000 today.<sup>45</sup>

Fourteen Chinese names appeared in the 1850 US Census for Los Angeles. By 1863, Chinese made up about three percent of the town's population and they were concentrated around the Los Angeles

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<sup>41</sup> Los Angeles was incorporated Apr 4, 1850. "As early as the 1850s the [Los Angeles] common council began disposing of the pueblo holdings it inherited from the *ayuntamiento*." (Robert M. Fogelson, *The Fragmented Metropolis: Los Angeles, 1850-1930*, p 39). Apablasa's holdings were unaffected.

<sup>42</sup> Married Jan 17, 1843 at Los Angeles Plaza Church

<sup>43</sup> Los Angeles Times, 1933; Los Angeles Herald Express, 1959, Carlos Apablasa collection (Greenwood. op cit, p 8-9). An excerpt of the deed appears on the same page. There he probably cultivated grapes on leased land. He bought it in 1848 from Rosalia Dalton. According to Dakin, p 119, Henry Dalton was a partner of Hugo Reid. Dalton came from Lima, Peru in 1845 and bought land at San Gabriel. In 1846 when Tomas Estenaga was padre, Dalton shared the position of mayordomo of that mission with Mariano Roldan.

<sup>44</sup> Pitt, 1966, p 65-79, after Wright

<sup>45</sup> Alan P. Bowman, Index to the 1850 Census of California, 1972. GS:979.4,sp2, Tulare Co Library

Pueblo where Apablasa owned property. In the 1860 US Census, Apablasa's real estate was valued at \$3,900. Apablasa was prospering.

The 1844 *Padron* shows that the Apablasa family was made up of 33 year-old Juan Apablasa, his 22 year-old wife, Maria,<sup>46</sup> and their two children, six month-old Juana<sup>47</sup> and a seven year-old girl named *Loreto* from "Angeles."<sup>48</sup> Loreto was the orphaned daughter of Maria Apablasa's deceased sister Maria del Carmen Feliciano Blanco Solorzano and her deceased husband, Blas.<sup>49</sup>

At the Apablasa address the enumerator also recorded "Joaquim" Feliz, 35; Maria, 26; Petra, 30; Dolores, seven; and Jose, who was two years of age.<sup>50</sup> In 1845 Leonora Apablasa was born.<sup>51</sup> Cayetano Apablasa was born in 1847<sup>52</sup> and Candelaria in 1849.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Spelled "Apablaza." The ages of individuals listed in censuses are often incorrect.

<sup>47</sup> The 1844 *Padron* shows that Juana was born 1843 or 1844. An Apablasa daughter born Nov 1, 1855 was named Maria Juana.

<sup>48</sup> Records of *Los Pobladores 200* (Los Angeles *Padron*, 1844, p 10). Regarding the spelling *Loreto*, Griswold wrote, "*The most common error in the manuscript censuses was the incorrect spellings of Spanish first and last names. Few, if any, or the census-takers spoke Spanish, and their phonetic interpretation of Spanish surnames produced a number of variant spellings.*" (*The Los Angeles Barrio 1850-1890*, p 178)

<sup>49</sup> In this society relatives or padrinos adopted orphaned children (Richard Griswold del Castillo, *Los Angeles Barrio 1850-1890*, pg. 13).

<sup>50</sup> Census of the City and Co of Los Angeles, 1850, #221. "Joaquim" was probably Mrs. Apablasa's brother Joaquin. His age in the *Padron* matches his baptism record. Joaquin used their mother Petra's maiden name, Feliz. Petra, 30, was probably a Blanco sibling.

<sup>51</sup> 1850 Census. Maria Eleonor born June 16, 1845, DAR Bap. #8782, p 93

<sup>52</sup> (1) DAR, Bap #1679, 12 April 1847. (2) 1860, 1870, 1880 Census Indexes, Tulare Co. (Donna Benson)

<sup>53</sup> 1850 Census, 1860 Census. Born 1849. This child was identified as both

The Los Angeles censuses of 1850 and 1852 did not show Loreto in the Apablasa household, nor does her name appear anywhere in the census.<sup>54</sup> The 1852 census recorded "*Juan Apolaco*," a white, 42 year-old, male gardener from Chile and his children, 10 year-old "*Clopia*,"<sup>55</sup> seven year-old "*Leondora*,"<sup>56</sup> and four year-old "*Cyatanco*."<sup>57</sup> Also in the family was a three year-old female child listed only as "C."<sup>58</sup>

Maria Apablasa died in 1852, and about three months later her 45 year-old sister Pilar gave birth to a son, Antonio, *hijo natural* of Francisco Crispin. Padrinos were Tomasa Silvas and Juan Apablasa.<sup>59</sup>

By 1850 about seven percent of Spanish-surname couples in Los Angeles censuses were common-law unions.<sup>60</sup> Griswold wrote,

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Candelaria and Candelario. In 1862 Juan's daughter Candelaria married Manuel Silva (Los Angeles Co Book of Marriages I, p 80).

<sup>54</sup> "*JuanA Pablasa*", 50, and Maria Blanco, 30. The mother probably died from complications of child birth. Between 1843 and 1852 Maria was pregnant eight times. The infant Pioquinto Apablasa died Feb 2, 1852, and 39 year-old Maria Apablasa died Mar 20, 1852. She was buried at Calvary Cemetery. (1852 Plaza Church Difuntos II, #1321, age "28, cc. [*cansada con, married to*] Juan Apablasa."

<sup>55</sup> Maria Josefa Cleofe Apablasa. Confirmation, Sep 5, 1850 (LA Conf I, p 5, entry 112).

<sup>56</sup> Leonora Apablasa. Confirmation. Sep 5, 1850 (LA Confs I, p 9, #113).

<sup>57</sup> Cayetano, born Apr 13, 1847, was incorrectly entered in the census as female. DAR Bap #1679, p 181

<sup>58</sup> Maria Candelaria Sebastiana Apablasa, confirmed in 1849, was either not listed, or the census incorrectly recorded her year of birth.

<sup>59</sup> Born May 9, 1852, Plaza, Temple, #629. *Hijo natural* means the parents were not married. The large number of unmarried couples during the Mexican era was not exceptional at the time (Arnaz, *Recuerdos*, pt. 15). California Census of 1852. Archives of the Secretary of State, Sacramento, California. Index by Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR). See Genealogical Society, Salt Lake City, Indexed by county.

<sup>60</sup> Griswold, p 68, citing Armstrong, *California Family Law*

***"California did not recognize the legal responsibilities of common-law couples until 1862, when the civil code made these unions valid. Prior to this time, local traditions determined the duties of common-law couples."***<sup>61</sup>

Born on September 1, 1854, and baptized eight days later at Plaza Church was "***Estefana Banales.***"<sup>62</sup> Her father was Nepomuceno Banales and her mother "***Soloria.***"<sup>63</sup> About a month later, 88 confirmations were held at the church, and included was a child named Rosalino Amesquita, ***hija legitimate*** of Franco Amesquita y Trinidad Gutierrez.<sup>64</sup> The child's padrino was Juan Apablasa.<sup>65</sup> The succeeding confirmation was of "***Maria Estefana de Los Angeles Banales, h.l. de Nepomuceno [Banales] y Loreto Solorzano. Maria Escrecia, madrina.***"<sup>66</sup> Loreto was Juan Apablasa's niece who had lived in his household ten years earlier.

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<sup>61</sup> Griswold, p 68, citing Armstrong, *California Family Law*

<sup>62</sup> Estefana baptized 8 Sep 1854 of 8d

<sup>63</sup> Los Angeles Plaza Baptisms, 1854, v2 , p 168, #1034 (#505). Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (CJCLDS), *Extracts of Church Records, 1826-1890*, FHL US/CAN 35mm film #1320538, item 10. An image of the original entry is found in CJCLDS, FHL US/CAN 35mm Film #000253 (2<sup>nd</sup> roll of 9), Church records, 1826-1920, Bautismos 1826-1864. "Microfilm of original records in Los Angeles, California. Source: Catholic Church. Our Lady Queen of the Angels (Los Angeles, California). Salt Lake City, Filmed by the Genealogical Society of Utah, 1946. On Nov 1, 1855, Maria Juana, child of Ramon Solorzano and Maria Josefa Garcia was baptized at Plaza Church Los Angeles Plaza Baptisms 1855. Nov 1, 1855, #1262. Los Angeles Plaza Baptisms 1855, Dec 17, 1855, #728.

<sup>64</sup> The initials *h.l.* were used signifying *hija legitimate*, meaning the child's parents were married in the church.

<sup>65</sup> Los Angeles Plaza Baptisms 1855, Dec 17, 1855, #727

<sup>66</sup> In 1852 Nepomuceno Banales was married to an Apodaca (San Juan Capistrano Matrimonios, Feb 24, 1852, #1488). This author found no records showing that Nepomuceno Banales and Loreto Solorzano were married. In an email to this author, Bob Lopez of Pobladores 200 wrote, "It is unusual that all children on all pages in the record are termed h.l." [h.l.: child of parents who were married in the church.]

In 1857 Loreto married Ramon Solorzano "en la Capilla de rancho de San Jose casa de Dn. Ricardo Vejar."<sup>67</sup> Ramon was Loreto's father's half-brother.<sup>68</sup> In 1858 Ramon and Loreto had a son, Domingo Teofilo Solorzano.<sup>69</sup> According to genealogist William H. Rosar, in 1862 Ramon Solorzano filed a land claim at Rancho San Jose, which was near today's La Verne and San Dimas. Rosar observed, "It seems that Miguel Blanco [Loreto's father] at one point lived in the arroyo of San Dimas--which might explain what Loreto was doing on the Rancho San Jose, if not Ramon Solorzano."<sup>70</sup> Rosar ventured that Solorzano lost his land to Anglo speculators who had come into the rancho during the 1860s.<sup>71</sup>

At Estefana's baptism in 1854, her mother Loreto's maiden name was shown as Solorzano, but at the baptism of Loreto's son Domingo in 1858

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<sup>67</sup> *"In the chapel of Rancho San Jose in the house of Don Ricardo Vejar."* [I no longer have source documentation for this marriage-gg.] Ricardo Vejar was born about 1811. In 1833, he served as Juez de Campo (Country Judge) in Los Angeles. He was one of the wealthiest men in Los Angeles county. In 1858 he was worth \$42,000, being the fourth richest man in the county. In 1863, unable to repay a loan of \$30,000 he was compelled to give up the deed to his section of San Jose Rancho to his creditors. He died in poverty in 1882 ( John Kielbasa, *Historic Adobes of Los Angeles Co*, Dorrance Pub., 1997).

<sup>68</sup> When Ramon Solorzano was about 34, he and Maria Josefa Garcia had a daughter, Juana (Los Angeles Baptisms 1855. Nov 1, #1262).

<sup>69</sup> Ysidro Alvarado was godparent. Domingo was born Mar 20, 1858 (San Gabriel Baptisms, May 6, 1858, Vol 4, p 77, # 9793). Alternate birthdate: June 6, 1858. DAR. Baptisms 1858, # 9793. In 1846 Ysidro Alvarado received the 13,322 acre Monserate Land Grant from the legislature of Mexican California. The President at that time was Pio Pico, who was Ysidro Alvarado's brother-in-law ([http://home.znet.com/schester/fallbrook/history/memories/rancho\\_monserate.html](http://home.znet.com/schester/fallbrook/history/memories/rancho_monserate.html)).

<sup>70</sup> Email to this author Aug 28, 2008

<sup>71</sup> Rosar's email to this author, 2008. A large tract of land close by was sold to Loop and Messerve and came to be known as the Loop & Messerve tract.

Loreto's maiden name was Carbajal.<sup>72</sup> Where was Loreto's daughter then?

1	2	3	4	5	6
1		Estef Apablasa	6	f	

1860 US Census, Estafa is Line 1 on second page

### 1860 US Census – Apablasa family (two consecutive pages)

Married in 1860 was Apablasa's 15 year-old daughter, but the 1860 US Census showed that two Apablasa's children were still at home, 13 year-old Cayetano<sup>73</sup> and Candelaria, 11. The third child in the household was six year-old Estafa, the child of Apablasa's wife's niece Loreto.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> San Gabriel Bap #9793: Jun 6, 1858. b May 20th. Domingo Teofilo Solorzano of "Ramon Solorzano y Loreto Carbajal en la Capillade Sn Jose. Isidro Alvarado y Concepcion Moya pads." Loreto was about 17 when Estefana was born and about 21 when Domingo was born.

<sup>73</sup> Cayetano was raised on the family ranch adjacent to the Los Angeles Plaza, attended parochial schools, and during the Civil War worked as a wheelwright in the Wilmington Shipyards. After the war he opened a blacksmith shop, became interested in local politics, and was elected to the Los Angeles City Council. As a realtor and landowner his land holdings were changed to commercial use. The Workingman's Party nominated him for the California state senate in 1880. In 1889 42 year-old Apablasa was thrown from a horse and within weeks died leaving Concepcion Carrasco Apablasa and their ten children that ranged from one to 21 years of age. In 1892 Mrs. Apablasa married Los Angeles Judge Ildelfanso Sepulveda.

<sup>74</sup> They knew Estefana as their sister. Greenwood wrote, "*Estasfa probably died, as no further mention is made of her*" (Greenwood, op cit). In a Mar 29, 2000 email to this author, Carlos Apablasa wrote, "*About 1990, or 1991 I read an item in the Times about research by Greenwood & Associates, and the Apablasa name was mentioned. I called and talked to Lynn Kronzek. I never met Greenwood. Well, Lynn and I met, and she collected data from my files, much of what she included in Cultural, Resources Impact Mitigation Program, the impact report for the Red Line [Chinatown] prepared by Greenwood and Associates for the MTA, dated Oct 1993. Lynn*

In early 1863 a smallpox epidemic swept through the Los Angeles Plaza. That February, 276 were ill, and there had been scores of deaths.<sup>75</sup> Juan Apablasa died, probably in the epidemic.

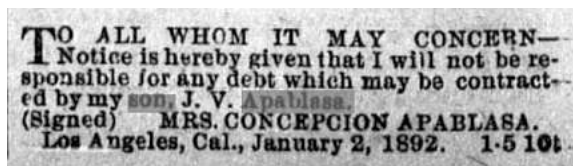
Construction of the Central Pacific railroad began in 1869 and the Southern Pacific in the early 1870s. In the decade, Chinese laborers arrived by the thousands in California, and the Apablasas profited<sup>76</sup> in the form of rent paid to the sons of Juan Apablasa who owned most of what became known as Chinatown.<sup>77</sup>

In 1870 15 year-old Estefana Apablasa married Jose Jorquera at the Los Angeles Plaza Church. The book of matrimonios said her parents were Juan Apablasa and Loreto Carvajal.

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*also published a book for the Los Angeles conservancy.” (Lynn C Kronzek, Los Angeles, Place of Possibilities: the People and Resources That Created Los Angeles. Heritage Media, Carlsbad, California, 1998). The Los Angeles Times article Apablasa read was probably Nov 14, 1990, “Metro Rail Excavation Casts New Light on `Old Chinatown': [Home Edition]”*

In the early 1920s a bitter lawsuit among the Apablasas entered its second decade. About 1922 Juan Vincent Apablasa traveled to Visalia to invite Louisa Forquera Estrada, who was Estefana's daughter, to join his side in the family's legal conflict (This author's 1996 interview with Manuel V. “Buddy” Estrada).



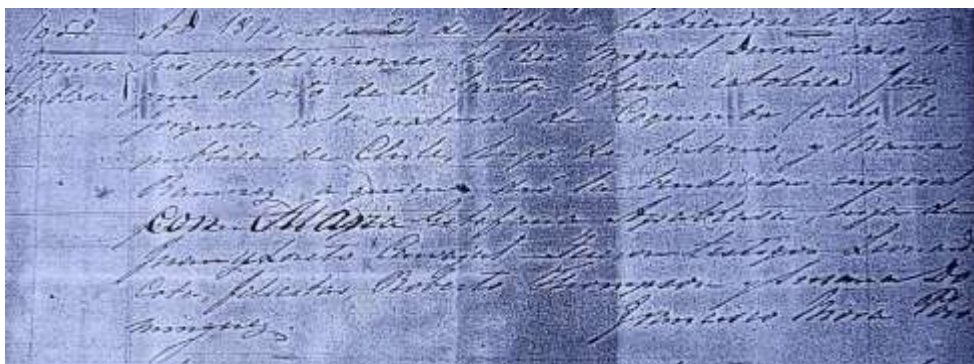
TO ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN—  
Notice is hereby given that I will not be responsible for any debt which may be contracted by my son, J. V. Apablasa.  
(Signed) MRS. CONCEPCION APABLASA.  
Los Angeles, Cal., January 2, 1892. 1-5 10t.

<sup>75</sup> Pitt, 247. Pitt quotes Cleland, Robert Glass. *The Cattle on a Thousand Hills: Southern California 1850-1880*. San Marino, California, 1951(Huntington Library)

<sup>76</sup> Greenwood, p 10

<sup>77</sup> Henstell, p 198





### 1870 marriage entry – Estefana Apablaza - Jose Jorquera

***"AD 1870 dia 24 de febrero habiandose hecho tres publicaciones, el Rev. Miguel Duran casó seque el rito de las Santa Yglesia catolica Jose Jorquera, ulto natural de Coquimbo Santa Republica de Chile, hijo de Antonio y Maria Ramirez a quien yevé [lleva] la bendicion matrimonial con Maria Estefana Apablaza hija de Juan [Apablaza] y Loreto Carvajal—Fueron testigos Leonardo Cota, Felicitas, Roberto Thompson y Sesma Dominguez. --Francisco Morra, Pbro."***<sup>78</sup>

Jose Jorquera probably came to California around 1868 and married Estefana in 1870 when he was about 21. His name is not in the 1870 US Census, but the Los Angeles City Directory of 1878 shows Jorquera as a laborer at Cayetano Apablaza's 99 Alameda Street wagon shop. In May 1870, Jose and Estefana Jorquera were godparents to Cayetano and Concepcion Apablaza's daughter.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Pbro. stands for *presbitero*. Los Angeles Plaza Church, Mats I, 1870, Feb 24, 1870, pg 70, #1059. See also, Los Angeles Marriages, Bk 1, #479.

<sup>79</sup> Maria del Espiritu Santo Apablaza, LA Plaza Baptisms, #2231, page 336, 1878. The baptism of May 1878 is the last discovered information bearing Jose Jorquera's name.



**Juan Cayetano Apablaza, about 1880<sup>80</sup>**

**Jose Jorquera was about 30 in 1878 when he died on the Tejon Pass.<sup>81</sup> By then Estefana's mother, Loreto, and her husband, Ramon Solorzano<sup>82</sup> probably lived near Hanford in the San Joaquin Valley. Did Jorquera die while his family was en route to visit Estefana's mother?<sup>83</sup>**

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<sup>80</sup> [www.lagenealogy.com/Biographies/biosA.htm](http://www.lagenealogy.com/Biographies/biosA.htm)

<sup>81</sup> This author's correspondence in 1997 with Annie R. Mitchell (1906-2000). Mitchell got the information from Estefana's daughter Louisa Forquera Estrada (1872-1932). When Amy Fox Hall interviewed A.J. Forquera he told her that his father died when A.J. Forquera himself was about six months old (Annie R. Mitchell History Room, Visalia, California, Hall vertical file, typed notes: "A.J. Froquero"[sic], July 5, 1941). Those sources suggest that Jose Jorquera died about 1878.

<sup>82</sup> Ramon Solorzano was then about 58.

<sup>83</sup> In a letter to this author, Annie Mitchell noting that Jose Jorquera was buried in Bakersfield, but there are no records showing his death or burial anywhere. Many historians advise that he was probably buried along the trail.

Between June 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> 1880 the census taker at Borden, Madera County,<sup>84</sup> recorded a single, 30 year-old saddle maker named Ricardo Matley.<sup>85</sup> The next house visited was that of Ramon Solorzano, age 61, his wife Loreto, 40, and their son Domingo, 18.<sup>86</sup>

29	19	Matley, Ricardo	W	M	30					Saddle Maker
30	30	Solor, Ramon	W	M	61			1		Laborer
		Loreto	W	F	40			1		Keeping House
		Domingo	W	M	18			1		Laborer

### 1880 US Census – Matley, Solorzano

On June 17, 1880 an enumerator in Fresno County listed Jesus "Domingos," a 45 year-old farmer from Chile, his 25 year-old wife, "Estephina," daughter Louisa, six, a five year-old son Josepha [sic], and a three year-old son named Antonio. The children's father was from Chile.<sup>87</sup>

<sup>84</sup> Borden was south of Madera near Ave 12 where Cottonwood Creek crosses State Hwy 99. By the 1880s the town began a steady decline, and in 1907 its post office was permanently closed. Today the only remnant of Borden is the Chinese cemetery (<http://www.maderacountylibrary.org/borden.html>). In an email to this author on Jun 8, 2002 genealogist and archivist for the Diocese of Fresno Adrienne Alston wrote that in 1883 Solorzanos were confirmed at Libertad, north of Riverdale (NW of Hanford and N of Lemoore.) Today a stream called Liberty is the last vestige of the former settlement.

<sup>85</sup> Spelled as "Solso." Ramon and Domingo were laborers (CJC, LDS FHL Film 1254065, National Archives Film T9-0065, page 287B. 1880 US Census, Borden, California, p 21, lines 43-46). Citation courtesy of Ken Doig, Madera Genealogical Society, email to this author of Aug 15, 2001. Matley's name appears in the 1880 census, but it cannot be found via a digital search of the that census at [www.heritagequestonline.com](http://www.heritagequestonline.com).

<sup>86</sup> Also listed then at Borden was Gregoras "Solarsano," 29. (His name appears at <http://www.cagenweb.com/madera/1880MaderaCensus.htm>, but does not appear on census sheets made in the 1880 US Census at Borden.)

<sup>87</sup> The 1880 US Census, Fresno, 7<sup>th</sup> Enumeration District, Sp Dis. 4, p 17, lines 169-173. A.J. Forquera did not mention his mother's marriage to Domingues.

189-178	Domingos, Jesus W. 44		1	Farmer	
	Estefina W. 25	Wife	1	Keeping house	
	Louisa W. 6	Daughter			
	Joseph W. 5	Son	1		
	Antonio W. 3	Son	1		

**1880 US Census – Jesus Domingos, Estefana, and children**



**Estefana about 1887 (Forquera family album)**

**In 1887, in Visalia, Estefana Apablaza Jorquera Dominguez married Ricardo Matley who had been her neighbor in 1880. The marriage entry lacks punctuation, but in translation it reads, *United in marriage, Ricardo Matle, 37, single, from San Miguel de Alcasir, Mexico, a resident of this parish for eight years, son of Leonardo and Jesus Gontes of Mexico, to Estefana Apablas widow of Jesus Domingues. [Estefana] 32 born in Los Angeles, resident here for eight years, daughter of Juan and Soreto Carbajales of***

**Mexico in a common-law marriage.<sup>88</sup> In 1890 Ricardo and Estefana married a second time.<sup>89</sup>**



**Saddle-tree maker Ricardo Matley (right) and spur-maker Alsailio Herrera, about 1885<sup>90</sup>**

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<sup>88</sup> **St. Mary's Church, Visalia California, 1887 Matrimonios, Dec 20, 1887, p 293: "Matle, Ricardo y Estefana Apablas Visalia Dec 20, 1887. Uni en matrimonio Ricardo Matle 37 anos, soltero natural de San Miguel de alcasir (Mejico) residente en esta Parroguira 8 anos hijo de Leonardo y de Jesus Gontes de Mejico con Estefana Apablas (as spelled) viuda de JESUS DOMINGUES de 32 anos natural de los Angeles Cal. residente en esta 8 anos hija de Juan y Soreto Carbajales de Mexico vivan como casados. Testigos Casimiro Romer y Teresa Dias. P. Carrasco." The cursive S in Soreto probably is a cursive L.**

<sup>89</sup> **Marriages, St Mary's Catholic Church, Visalia, Apr 20, 1890, p 9, Ricardo Matley, Estefana "Abablas," witnessed by Juan Federico y Aurelia Llassay, contrageron, Apr 28, 1890 "p. Carrasco" Fa. Carrasco was pastor of St. Mary's Visalia from 1882-1891. Contrageron means contracted in marriage or got married.**

<sup>90</sup> **Image is from Los Tulares, Quarterly Bulletin of the Tulare Co Historical**

The 1890 Great Register of Hanford included voters Ramon Solorzano, 70, and 33 year-old Domingo Solorzano. Voter No. 116 in the 1896 Great Register of Kings County,<sup>91</sup> Lucerne District,<sup>92</sup> was Ramon Solorzano, laborer, 76 years, 5-ft 5-in, dark completion, gray hair and brown eyes. Voter No. 117 was Domingo Solorzano, also a laborer, 35 years, 5-ft 4-in, dark complexion, black hair and brown eyes.

Hanford death records show that Loreto "Solorsano" died February 26, 1899 at age 64, and Ramon Solorzano died at age 81 on June 16, 1901 at Hanford. Their son Domingo Solorzano died at 324 East 6<sup>th</sup> Street, Hanford, on September 22, 1909. He was 51. Father and son were buried at Calvary Catholic Cemetery on Tenth Avenue south of the Carnegie Museum at Hanford.<sup>93</sup>

Nadine Athey of the Hanford Carnegie Museum wrote, "*...[T]here is no grave marker for Ramon Solorzano. Only one had a stone. All of the crosses that were markers, and the building were in a fire in that section of the cemetery... St. Brigid's Catholic Church records were destroyed by a priest. We reconstructed that section [of the cemetery] through mortician records. The cemetery itself does not have those records.*"<sup>94</sup> Loreto Solorzano probably rests near her husband and son at Catholic cemetery.

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Society, Sep 1959. From a tintype. The 1900 US Census noted that Matley came to the United States in 1871.

<sup>91</sup> Oct 20, 1896. Kings co was organized from Tulare Co in 1893.

<sup>92</sup> Lucerne, organized in 1904, was a dairy region near 12<sup>th</sup> avenue at Lacy blvd. The Solorzanos' might have lived that area in 1890.

<sup>93</sup> In 1998 Nadine Athey of the Hanford Carnegie Museum compiled cemetery data in the UCMC Cemetery Index. Also indexed was a Nellie Solorzano, single, b 1883 - d Dec 21, 1903.

<sup>94</sup> Feb 16, 1998 letter to this author



left to right, A.J. Forquera, Estefana, Josephine Forquera, Ricardo Matley,  
about 1896<sup>95</sup>

Estefana Apablaza-Forquera-Domingos-Matley died in 1899 in Visalia.<sup>96</sup> The 1900 US Census listed Ricardo Mattlee, 51, saddle maker and head of household, his stepdaughter Josie, 23, and his stepson Anthony, 21, a house painter. This was A.J. Forquera who Frank Latta interviewed in the late 1920s and from whom Latta learned the legend of Loreto and Ramon Solorzano.

117	321	Mattlee Ricardo	Head	W	Oct 18 1848	Wd
319	320	Josie	Step daughter	F	Apr 1877	D
		Anthony	Step son	M	July 1878	S

Above, 1900 US Census - Mattlee, Forquera<sup>97</sup>

<sup>95</sup> Probably at their home on East Acequia street, Visalia. Forquera family album

<sup>96</sup> Buried on Mar 28, 1899, Visalia Cemetery, C block 1, lot 12, NE grave (Bk 6, p 132). Name recorded as Estefana Mattley

<sup>97</sup> Tulare Co, S. T623, R115, PS 253

**Adrienne Alston coined the phrase *historical slippage* to describe the drift of family stories over time. She wrote, "Some events ... slide about from one generation to another, gathering little changes here and there, until sometimes one can hear a story moved a couple of generations back of, or away from the principal parties."<sup>98</sup>**

**Historical research moves the legend of Loreto and Ramon Solorzano at least 60 years closer to us in time. Did Juan Apablasa send the agents into the San Joaquin Valley to find Loreto and Ramon Solorzano and reunite the mother and daughter? Did Solorzano own money to Apablasa? Those are questions genealogical research cannot yet answer.**

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<sup>98</sup> **Email to this author**