

*The Camarillo Sisterhood*  
*Stories of Women Who Made a Difference at the Camarillo Ranch*



*This week:*

***Carmen Clothilda Camarillo Jones***

*Research Team:*

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*Thank you*

*Camarillo Family and Friends & Pleasant Valley Historical Society*

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***Carmen Clothilda Camarillo Jones (1903-1987)***

***by***

***Sherry Reynolds***

## *Carmen Clothilda Camarillo Jones*

Our Carmen was truly an amazing woman! We've heard many of the stories throughout our years as Docents, so I am going to try to touch on the familiar parts of her life, and maybe add a few newly discovered anecdotes and some deeply hidden photographs.

Carmen Clothilda Camarillo (Jones) was born on the Camarillo Ranch on July 20, 1903. She was the last of the 7 children born to Don Adolfo and Doña Isabel Camarillo. She was one of the 5 children who lived to adulthood.

She was a petite little miss, and I'm sure she was the apple of her daddy's eye. The evidence for her tininess can be seen in this recently discovered photo. This is the student body of Pleasant Valley School in 1910. This means that Carmen is 7 years old at the time of this photo. You can see her in the front row below, 5<sup>th</sup> from the left. She seems to be covering a bit, but is markedly smaller than her schoolmates.



*Pleasant Valley School pupils in 1910: Bottom row, left to right, Lottie Hughes, Mable Daily, Gladys Daily, Robert McCormick, Carmen Camarillo (Jones), Martha Daily, Mary McCormick; others in group, Merle Smith, Irma Daily, Dora Cawelti, Mary Daily, Ralph Cawelti, Ralph Daily, Raymond Silva, Dick Hughes, Milton Daily, Alton Smith, Clifford Glenn, Miss Lester (teacher), Louise Baptiste, Stella Hughes, Gene Nelson, Josephine Richardson, Lillian Daily, Gladys Smith, and Edna Daily.*

Family stories tell us that Carmen started riding horses at the age of 3 or 4, so that by the time this photo was taken, she had been riding for almost half of her life. There's a cute little family story that when Carmen was about 3, and so loved riding and could ride bareback, her mother and dad decided that she needed a "babysitter". Her dad chose "old Mike", a Ranch pony. Don Adolfo would tie Carmen on "Old Mike", then hook up a long rope on "Mike", which was then attached to a stake. "Mike" knew his

job well and would walk round and round for hours “babysitting” Carmen while her parents tended to their chores.



Here Carmen is a little older but you can still see how she loves being on horseback.



#### LAYING OF CORNERSTONE

Here Carmen can be seen at the Laying of the cornerstone at St. Mary Magdalene Chapel 1913

Carmen was the youngest in the family, so when Tio Juan, (Juan Ezekiel Camarillo, Adolfo's brother) was building the Chapel of St. Mary Magdalene and it came time for the laying of the cornerstone, He naturally thought of his niece, 10 year old Carmen.

## *“First, a Little History*

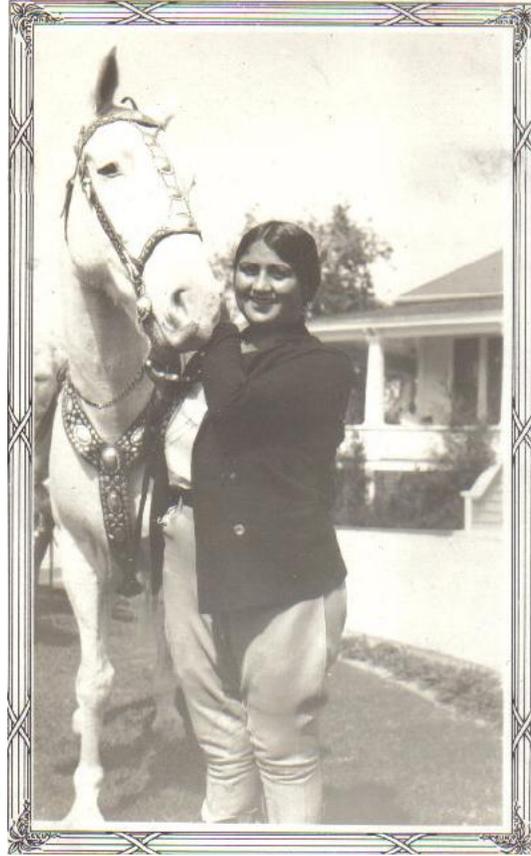
*Standing in a place of honor on the rough wooden plank platform next to the priest, a dark-haired little girl holding a small metal box, and dressed in her Sunday-best, fidgeted in the warm summer sun. Along with a small group of nuns, neighbors and family members, she waited impatiently for her part in the ceremony as the priest seemed to drone on endlessly in Latin verses over a block of imported grayish marble.*

*Finally, after sprinkling the carved block one last time with Holy Water, he turned to Carmen, youngest daughter of Adolfo Camarillo. The 10 year-old handed him the box containing the family history and other memorabilia. The priest placed it within the foundation. Workmen then moved the heavy cornerstone into its final place. It was July 1, 1913. St. Mary Magdalen had been officially established.*

*The spectators slowly disbanded. Climbing into black convertible touring cars, they drove down the dusty hill and rough road to celebrate this event at the nearby Camarillo Victorian mansion with its multi-cupolaed red rooftops thrusting above the surrounding lush green grove of trees. It marked the fulfillment of a dream for Juan E. Camarillo and his brother, Adolfo. “*

Carmen grew, thriving on the Rancho Calleguas. Don Adolfo was a great promoter of education, so our Carmen attended elementary school, first in Camarillo at Pleasant Valley school, the later at St. Catherines Academy in Oxnard. Then it was on to Mount St. Mary's College in Los Angeles, then on to Columbia University in New York. After a year at Columbia studying art, she returned to Camarillo where she preferred living with her large family and the slow, easy pace of life on the Rancho Calleguas.

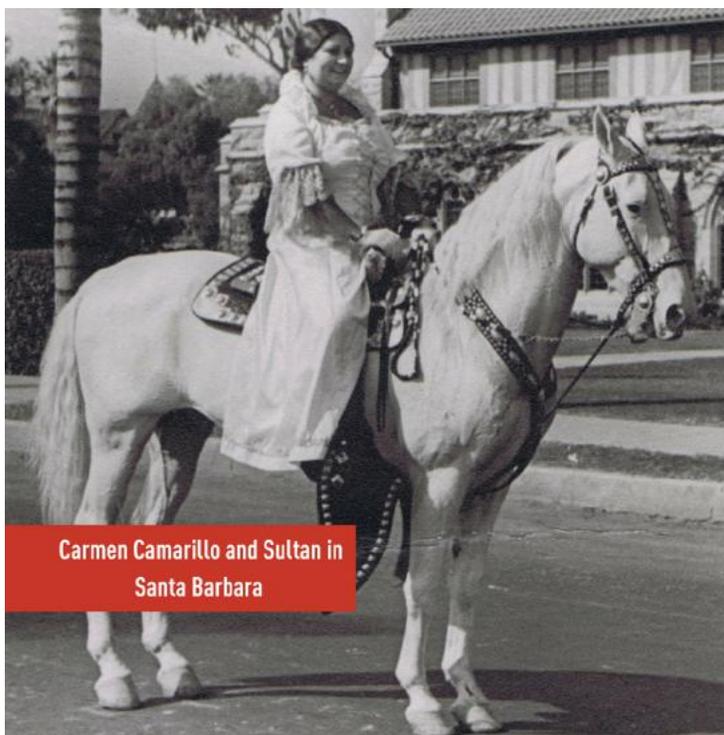
Even with a good education under her belt, the horses were still the love of her life.



These photos of the young Carmen were taken at the home of Tio Juan, before the devastating fire in 1936



*Early photo of youngest daughter, Carmen Camarillo Jones, on one of family Arabian-Morgan white horses.*



**Carmen Camarillo and Sultan in  
Santa Barbara**

Both of these photos were taken of Carmen on Sultan, Don Adolfo's prize stallion. Back in the day, he and Carmen were a favorite pair in parades.



Carmen Camarillo and Vice Mayor Stan Daily, fiesta circa 1965

Carmen truly loved every single bit of Ranch life, especially the horses. Riding was her passion and she would go out and just ride for fun sometimes. If people on other ranches needed help with their animals she was ready and willing to give a hand. Meliton Ortiz told me that sometimes she would go with the hands down to the Railroad Station when the mules arrived to help drive them home, or sometimes when they were driving livestock to Simi Valley, she might go with them too. He told me that there was a good sized pond on the way to Simi, and they would hang their bread for lunch in a tree so the critters wouldn't eat it, and wrap their cheese and parishables,

then float them in the water to keep them cool until their return so they could have a nice picnic in the shade of the trees that surrounded the pond.

But, parading was the best! Like in the photo below. If you'll look really close, you will see Carmen, second from the right, and Paquita Parker on the far left horse, and right in the center, the place of honor is Carmen's cousin, Leo Carrillo! (He's related to the Camarillo family through Martina Hernandez Camarillo, Adolfo's mother, Carmen's grandmother).



The Camarillo Family and their famous White Horses spent lots of time showing their beauties to the community and the world. They were represented at one point, in the Santa Barbara Fiesta parade for 55 of 57 consecutive years. The only years with no White Horse presence were 1936 the year that Mrs. Isabel Camarillo died, and the year during WWII when the parade was not held. Since that time, they are a much anticipated entry in the parade every year! The family always has, and to this day, loves

to show their beautiful horses. They are a feature of the Camrillo Christmas Parade, the 4<sup>th</sup> of July parade in various places including Santa Paula. The Camarillo White Horses lead the parade for the opening of the Oakland Bay Bridge in November 1936, and then participated in the parade over the Golden Gate Bridge during its opening week in May 1937, too! They have appeared several times in the Rose Parade in Pasadena, plus Mr. Camarillo had given a standing invitation to anyone interested to come on Saturday afternoons, after 1:00 to visit his striking lovelies.



Carmen Camarillo and Meliton Ortiz on bath day.

Saturday morning was bath time on the Camarillo Ranch, and after our beauties were sparkling, they were tethered to the wash rack, with the concrete floor, to keep their pearl like appearance until company arrived. Ain't they beautiful?

As I mentioned before, the horses were the stars of the show at many events, including the Conejo Valley Days parade in Thousand Oaks in 1970. In this photo you can see Carmen on the right and Paquita Parker in the center, and Donna Fargo on the left, (no not the singer. This is the original Donna Fargo. The singer approached her and

asked if she could use the name and Our Donna graciously gave her permission!) Donna was the Grand Dame of the Conejo Valley for many years. She loved the area, and promoted celebrations and a family feeling among the residents by creating the parade and Conejo Valley Days celebration, the Chile Cookoff, and the Whiskeroo contest. Anything to bring people together!

*Conejo Valley Days Parade 1970*



*Left to Right  
Donna Fargo, Paquita Parker, Carmen Camarillo*



Carmen Camarillo Jones carried on the family's tradition of riding the white horses in local parades, a practice which spanned 70 years.

Notice the gold and diamond cross at Carmen's throat. This was always a part of the way she presented herself at parades. Next time you attend a function or parade featuring the Camarillo White horses, look for this cross, Carmen left it to one of her grand nieces and who wears it proudly whenever she appears with the Horses.



Meliton Ortiz trains one of the white horses while Carmen Camarillo tends to the reins.

Parades are fun and all, but, it's quite a job to train a horse, and keep them trained. They are, in my opinion, much like 3 year-old children. Turn your back and they'll get into mischief. You, can't be an owner and rider by sitting back, and Carmen was one to be right there with the horses for feedings, mucking stalls and training, the works.

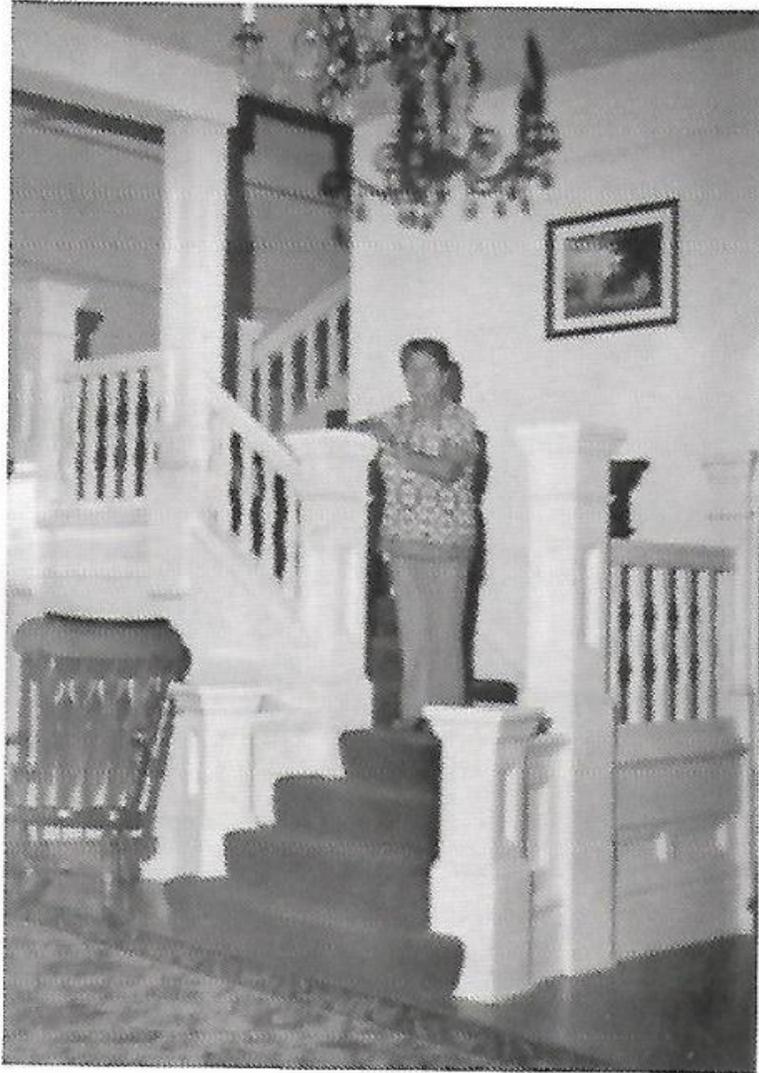


Carmen's talents and passions were not limited to the barn and the horses. She was a trained artist who's works were wonderful, she also loved to cook and was very good at it! After the death of Isabel, and when Nati, the cook, was away, Carmen took up the task of cooking for her father, anyone who was working at the house or any guests, and herself. It is said that in the morning, either Carmen or Mr. Camarillo would determine the menu for the evening meal and go into the Refrigerator with a very sharp knife and cut a roast, or steaks, or meat to chop up for stew off of the beef quarters hanging there, and then either Nati or Carmen would do the cooking. In the fall, the family would gather together and spend an entire day making the famous Camarillo tamales, with the white corn grown right there on the Ranch, which they used to make their own masa.



Carmen playing the organ for Mass at St. Mary Magdalene chapel.

She was also a consummate musician. Carmen's sister Ave sang professionally when she was young, then to accompany services at the church. Carmen shared her talents in church on Sunday's, too. She played the organ and accompanied many of the very best Camarillo had to offer, like her sister, Ave, and Adele Hernandez Flynn.



After the passing of her mother, Doña Isabel, Carmen became companion to her father and hostess to their guests. She also took charge of the running of the household, became the cook when necessary and I have seen it mentioned in the Diaries of Don Adolfo, that she did some of the house cleaning, too.

As can be seen in the following photos, Carmen and her dad were close and were seen together at many parties and functions. It seems that many people were given the

chance to taste the results of Carmen's culinary skills. Note Carmen accompanying her father to some celebration, bringing a "covered dish".





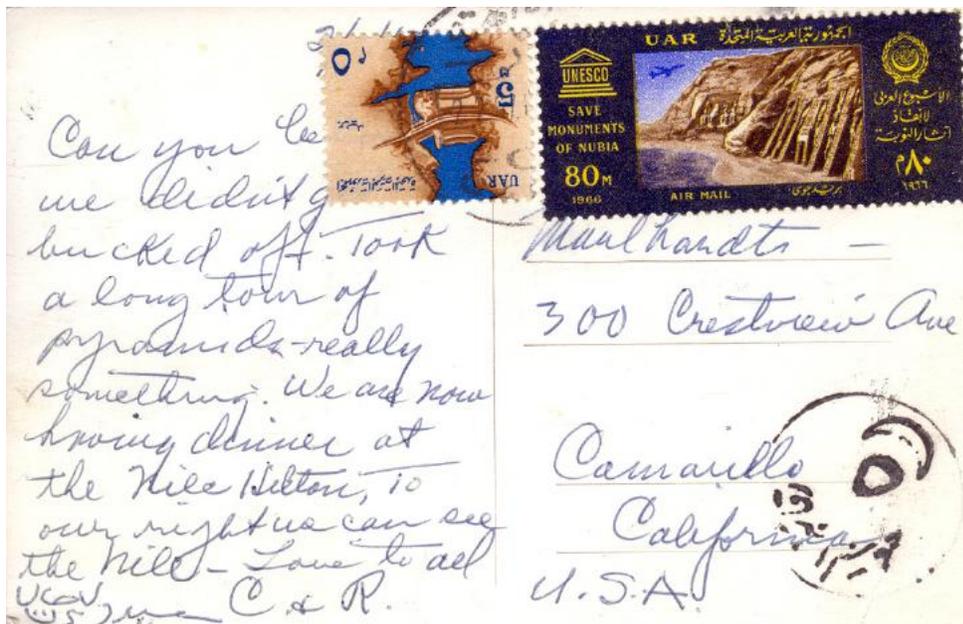
You didn't know there was going to be a quiz, did you? Look carefully, who is this woman with Adolfo. Many of us have been happily sharing that this is a picture of Don Adolfo with his daughter Carmen at a birthday. We were happy doing that until Ynez Parker LaDow, a great granddaughter and grand niece told us that this was Nunie, Carmen's sister, Isabella. Quite a family resemblance?

Don Adolfo Camarillo passed away on December 10, 1958, leaving Carmen alone to handle the business of the household and the Ranch. She continued the breeding program of the Camarillo White Horses, ran the family business and kept the household running as well. Many movie studios and TV commercial companies clambered to rent space on Rancho Calleguas for locations for their projects. Much of this industry happened during Carmen's time as manager of the property.



Carmen in the center, Roy on the right and an unidentified woman on the left at a function at the Ranch.

There had been a gentleman friend in Carmen's life for a while, but they finally got around to tying the knot on May 16, 1959. Carmen was wed to a man from Santa Barbara and who was a rancher in Simi, named Roy Jones whom she met at a Santa Barbara Fiesta. They were very happy together and had some grand adventures to some exciting places.



This postcard was sent to the Maulhards and shows Carmen and Roy at the pyramids, with the Sphinx peeking at them from the left.

Carmen made a comment to a family member that she had been unable to find a White one, meaning the Camel!



Carmen was a great proponent of family tradition. Here she is seen in her later years wearing one of the famous Camarillo Spanish Shawls, perhaps one that had belonged to her mother.

All during her lifetime, Carmen emulated her father in many ways, but especially through community service and furthering the legacy of Don Adolfo within the community. During an interview, Carmen said, "During my life, I always tried to do many things to help our community. I wanted people to remember the early history and all the things that my father did for the community and so I gave things, too." Carmen started a Girl Scout troop with her niece, Carmelita Nicholson because Carmen felt there were not enough opportunities for girls. The Troop met at the Camarillo Ranch.

After Roy's death, Carmen spent much of her time and energy on civic minded activities. She donated an archives room in the library of the Santa Barbara mission in memory of her father. In addition, she was instrumental in building a library for the Boys club of Camarillo, she lent her support to many other worthy causes throughout the county.

Women's World dated February 6, 1974 - Pleasant Valley Hospital Auxiliary Luncheon

Left to Right: Rosa Camarillo Petit - Carmen Camarillo Jones - Ave Camarillo FitzGerald



Special guests at the luncheon included the three Camarillo sisters, daughters of the Late Adolfo Camarillo, from left, the Mmes. Rosa Camarillo Petit, Carmen Camarillo Jones and Ava Camarillo Fitzgerald.



Circa 1964

Carmen Camarillo Jones, Rosa Camarillo Petit, Mayor Earl Joseph are pictured in the midst of two developers.

I believe that if Don Adolfo were still alive today, he'd say to this youngest daughter of his, "In so many ways you have upheld the legacy and mission of the Camarillo Family!"

*Daughter, you have made me Proud!*