



# *Happy Birthday, Carmen!*

*By  
Beth Miller*

*Thank you to the Camarillo Family for your help!*

*The Research Committee*

*Barbara Burrows, Karin Farrin, Beth Miller, Lynn Preiss, Sherry Reynolds*

# *Happy Birthday, Carmen!*

*July 20, 1903*



## *“The Big Deal!”*

Carmen Camarillo’s birthday was an important event for the entire family. Everyone played a part in lovingly planning and organizing this major celebration for her. It was a time for visiting and reconnecting. Just as the Ranch celebrations during her father’s day, cherished the past and embraced the future, so did Carmen’s birthday parties.

Her great-niece Martina Nicholson wrote a poem about this beloved gathering that the family affectionally called “The Big Deal.”

## The Big Deal

by

Martina Nicholson, M.D.

from: Fiesta for the Camarillos  
poems from El Rancho Grande

Carmen's birthday was July 20  
A few weeks before the fiesta in Santa Barbara.  
The Big Deal fiesta  
Was given for her, in gratitude for her generosity,  
By her nieces and nephews.  
The big lawn in front of the house  
Was set up with tables and chairs,  
Ladies wore Mexican dresses,  
Men wore Guayabera shirts,  
Or Hawaiian or cowboy shirts,  
Mariachi music poured from the band  
On the porch in charro costumes;  
Carmelita and Jim, Gloria and George, Paquita and Harold,  
Susana and Bob, Jim and Shirley, Gerald and Lorraine,  
Geraldine, Rosita from Nevada,  
Many we hardly ever saw, some we didn't recognize.  
Are the Petit boys coming?  
And children, running here, there and everywhere!  
Which belongs where on the family tree?  
Are those people related to us, we wonder?  
And so many friends, from all the nooks and crannies  
In the years of her life!  
White horses clean and running in the paddock,  
A great barbeque on the spit roasting.  
Men drinking and laughing as they turn the meat,  
Ladies coming and going from the kitchen with platters of food.  
The ranch awl with colors:  
Mexican dresses, lace and petticoats,  
Music and flowers,  
The great event of the summer in town.  
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## *The Big Deal Memories*

“The Big Deal was every year & the whole family would gather at the Ranch. Carmen's Big Deal for her Birthday was always her way of keeping the family united & giving back. A very fun time & lots of fun & special memories. There was a picture at the Ranch with all the family gathered in front of the house. I was 8 months pregnant with Carmela. And yes, Carmen even had her own wine label.

Carmela was two when Carmen died. She was elated and loved Carmela like my Nana (Isabella Nunie Camarillo Burket) loved me. It's very sweet when we visit the crypt. Carmela has so much love and respect for her family.”

### **-Ynez Parker LaDow**

Daughter of Harold and Paquita Burket Parker  
Granddaughter of Harold and Isabella Nunie Camarillo Burket)  
Great granddaughter of Adolfo and Isabel Camarillo



*Tia Carmen Vino*

“Aunt Carmen was also Tom’s godmother. Tom always enjoyed the birthday celebration. He attended many parties when he came to California. It was a time for all of the family to have fun visiting, laughing, having a few drinks, and a good dinner! The family enjoyed the parties immensely! Tom's mom came and had a swell time as did his sister Sally who brought her daughter Holly to one of the parties. Everyone had a great time!”

**-Tom Marvel as told by his wife Theresa Marvel**

Son of Rosita and Tom Marvel  
 Grandson of Rosa and Alfred Petit  
 Great-grandson of Adolfo and Isabel Camarillo

“I attended a birthday party for Aunt Carmen with my Nana (Rosita Marvel). They partied hard and had lots of fun!”

**-Holly Rose Crawford**

Daughter of Sally Marvel Freeman  
 Granddaughter of Tom and Rosita Petit Marvel  
 Great-granddaughter of Alfred and Rosa Camarillo Petit  
 Great-great granddaughter of Adolfo and Isabel Camarillo

“I remember the women in Spanish dresses with ruffles, embroidered flowers, and Spanish veils. Not all, of course. Some wore modern clothes. I remember the smell of the roasting side of beef in the open barbecue pit, the men drinking and talking and laughing as they watched the smoke rise, and smelled the meat as it cooked, and helped, if anyone asked, with the tasks that needed to be done to get the food out and ready. I remember the big trays of food, the salsa which was always excellent, the great taste of the BBQ meat, and seeing all these people enjoying the event. Many toasts, and always a funny and interesting toast from my Uncle Gerald, who helped Carmen a lot.

We had a big BBQ with the big BBQ pit which used to be about the place we park the cars now, behind the old house, across from the old stable, which was on the other side of the street and down aways. I always loved the pepper trees, draping over the dirt roadway. I loved to see the horse parade down the lane between those rows of pepper trees.

Melly (Meliton Ortiz) gave rides to the children in the pony-cart/buggy, and that was fun and well-loved, too. I loved that Aunt Carmen enjoyed it, and felt loved and honored by people being there, gathering the clan around her. It was a wonderful

place to have a party, and we all looked forward to it, and then looked back fondly at it. Usually some Mariachi music was being played for at least part of it.”

**-Martina Nicholson**

Daughter of James and Carmelita FitzGerald Nicholson  
Granddaughter of George and Ave Camarillo FitzGerald  
Great granddaughter of Adolfo and Isabel Camarillo

“We had wonderful family gatherings on the front lawn. I liked to see the horses come over to the fence and hang their heads over whenever company came. I loved seeing the White Horses. Carmen was very happy. Happy times with Carmen! Meliton and his wife, Felicitas, helped Carmen after she was married. “

**-Shirley FitzGerald**

Widow of Jim FitzGerald  
Daughter-in-law of George and Ave Camarillo FitzGerald  
Granddaughter-in-law of Adolfo and Isabel Camarillo



*Carmen near her own Camarillo Ranch home*

Now it's time to prepare for Carmen's virtual birthday party! The "Cooks in the Camarillo Kitchen" essay (from the May reports) contained several family recipes including the following: "enchies," salsa, chili rellenos, tortillas, pinto beans, Spanish rice, empanadas... What would you like to make?

Don't forget the music!



### *"El Rancho Grande"*

One of Carmen's favorite songs was "El Rancho Grande." The family sang it in Spanish.

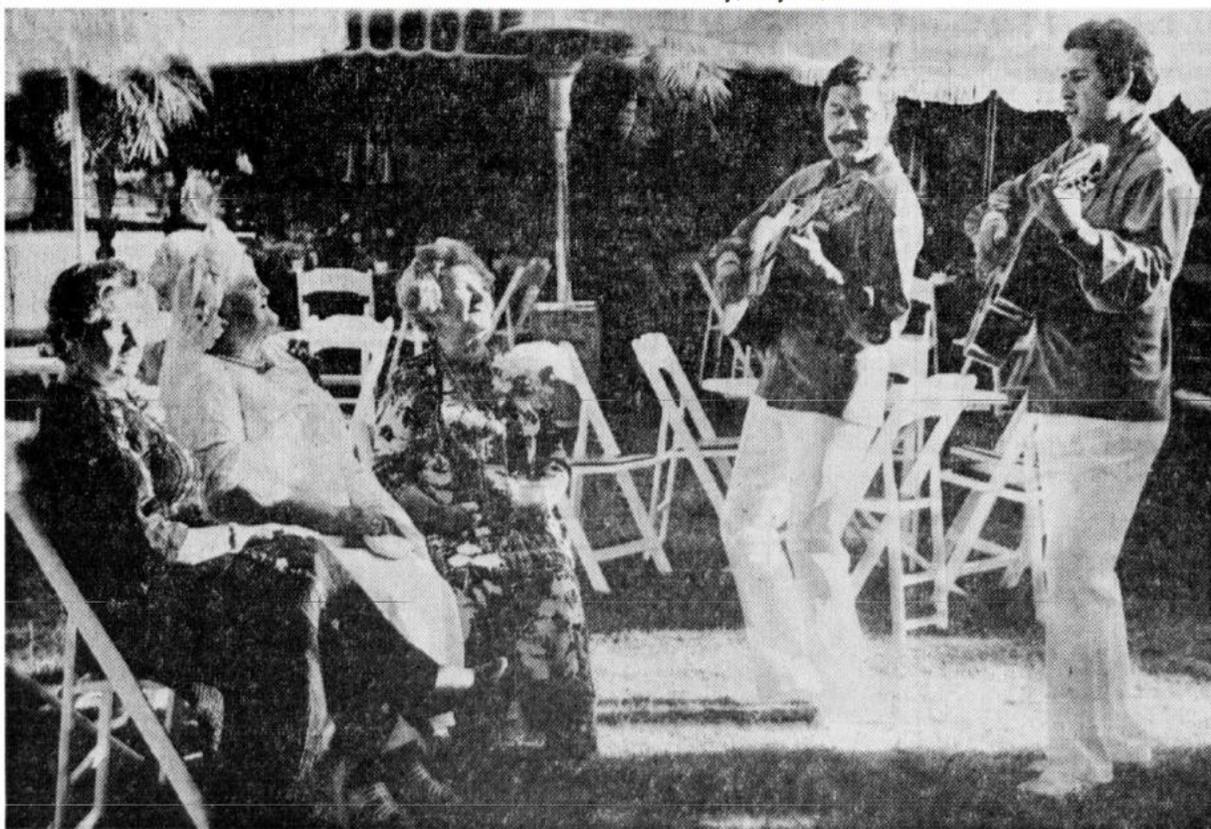
Whenever Carmen entered Las Posas Country Club, the band immediately greeted her with her special song.

"Jorge Negrete has a fabulous version!" emailed Martina Nicholson. She selected this link on YouTube :

[https://youtu.be/PoK\\_xTlw6DU](https://youtu.be/PoK_xTlw6DU)



Oxnard Press-Courier dated Tuesday, July 24, 1973



Guitarists serenade the daughters of Adolfo Camarillo, from left, Mrs. Roy E. Jones (Carmen), Mrs. George FitzGerald (Ave Maria), and Mrs. Alfred Petit (Rosa).

Oxnard Press-Courier dated Tuesday, July 24, 1973

## Birthday-Family Reunion Held At Historic Camarillo Rancho

The garden of the old Camarillo Ranch home was the setting Saturday for a birthday party in honor of Mr. and Mrs. Roy E. Jones and hosted by their nieces and nephews.

The occasion provided an opportunity for a family reunion at the former homestead of the Adolfo Camarillo family. Close friends were invited to help celebrate the July birthdays of the honored couple. The house and grounds were given to the Augustinian Order by Mr. and Mrs. Jones several years ago.

During cocktails in the garden, a highlight of the afternoon was a demonstration of four of Mrs. Jones' white Arabian-Morgan horses ridden by Mrs. Harold Parker and her daughter Ynez and Mrs. Thomas J. Marvel and her daughter Mrs. Edward Murphy, nieces and grand nieces of the honoree.

A sit-down dinner was served in a special tent which had been set up on the lawn.

Strolling guitarists provided music, and photographs depicting the celebrants' earlier years decorated the tent, as did centerpieces of carnations and roses with hurricane lamps on red clothed tables.

Mrs. Jones (Carmen) is the youngest daughter of the late Adolfo Camarillo and her background is interwoven with the history of California and Ventura County. She is a descendant of Capt. Jose Francisco de Ortega, scout of the Portola expedition of 1769 who discovered San Francisco Bay and in 1782, was the builder and first commandante of the Royal Presidio of Santa Barbara.

Mrs. Jones' father inherited Rancho Calleguas (Camarillo Ranch) in 1880 with his brother Juan. The ranch will have been in the Camarillo family 100 years in 1974.

Mrs. Jones' sisters, Mrs. Alfred Petit (Rosa) and Mrs. George FitzGerald (Ave Maria), both of Camarillo,

attended the party. Another sister, Mrs. Harold Burket (Isabel), and a brother Frank, are deceased.

Hosts and hostesses were Mr. and Mrs. Gerald FitzGerald, Miss Geraldine FitzGerald, Mr. and Mrs. James FitzGerald, Mr. and Mrs. George Longo, all of Camarillo; Mr. and Mrs. Robert Lamb and Mr. and Mrs. Harold Parker of Ojai, and Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Marvel and Mrs. John Petit, widow of Col. John Camarillo Petit, USMC, of Coronado (a grandson of Don Adolfo), who was there with sons, John Petit of Los Angeles, Michael Petit of Santa Barbara, and son and daughter-in-law, Lt. and Mrs. Stephen Emory Petit, USMC, San Juan Capistrano.

Other family members there included the children of the James FitzGerald (he's also a grandson): Brian, Tom and Kerry Lynn; grandson Gerald FitzGerald and wife, their daughter and son-in-law, the

Michael Kings of Oakland; children of the Longos (she's a granddaughter); Margo and John; Miss Geraldine FitzGerald, also a granddaughter, all of Camarillo.

Also there was another daughter of the Thomas J. Marvels (she is a granddaughter), Miss Amy Marvel, and a son and his wife, the Thomas Petit Marvels, all of Battle Mountain; also, granddaughter Mrs. Robert Lamb with her family, Bert, David and John, all of Ojai; also granddaughter, Mrs. Parker and her children in addition to Ynez: Harold, Michael and Bruce, all of Ojai. Another granddaughter, and her husband, the James Nicholsons, and family, of Soquel, were unable to attend.

Among the guests also were Mrs. Edward Canet of Ojai, a long-time friend of the family, who had her 100th birthday in January, and the Rev. John Blethen and the Rev. John Keller of the Augustinian Order.

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The July birthdays of Mr. and Mrs. Roy E. Jones were the occasion for a combined birthday party-family reunion at the stately home of the late Adolfo Camarillo, for whom the City of Camarillo is named. Mrs. Jones (the former Carmen Camarillo) is the youngest daughter of Adolfo.

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In 1973, the family organized a joint birthday celebration for Carmen and her husband Roy Jones. Sadly, just days after the party, he died. Roy was buried in the family crypt at St. Mary Magdalen Chapel.

Press-Courier dated July 30, 1973

[Died on July 29, 1973]

## Roy E. Jones, Son-in-Law Of Adolfo Camarillo, Dies

Roy E. Jones, 72, 250 Crestview Ave., Camarillo, the son-in-law of the late Don Adolfo Camarillo for whom the City of Camarillo is named, died suddenly Sunday morning at his residence.

Born in Edison Park, Ill., on July 8, 1901, Jones had lived in Ventura County for 35 years after moving here from Santa Barbara. He was a rancher.

Jones was a charter member of Rancho Vista Dorez; Camp Adolfo, and was on the advisory board of Commercial and Farmers National Bank. He was a member of the Channel Islands Yacht Club, Las Posas Country Club and had been an active polo player in Santa Barbara before moving to Ventura County.

Survivors include his wife, Carmen Camarillo Jones; a son, Ernest H. of Santa Barbara; a daughter, Mrs. Florence Eder of Belvedere, Calif., and six grandchildren.

Services will be held at 3 p.m. Tuesday at Griffin Brothers Funeral Chapel, Camarillo, with Rev. John F. Blethen officiating. Entombment will be in the family mausoleum in St. Mary Magdalen Catholic Church in Camarillo.

Friends may call until 8 tonight at Griffin Brothers Funeral Chapel, Camarillo, and those who wish may make donations to the Ventura County Heart Association.

Newspaper's error:

"Rancho Vista Dorez" should read as "Rancheros Visitadores" (Visiting Ranchers)

Roy and Carmen Camarillo Jones



After they had married, Carmen and Roy lived in Los Posas Estates at 250 Crestview Avenue. At Roy's passing, with the love and support of her family, Carmen returned to living at the Camarillo Ranch.

She wrote the following in her diary:

June 4, 1974

"Went to the Rancho, Ave, Jerri, Jim and Shirley came to see the new house. Jim brought a sketch for a horse we are going to put on the door of the garage. Very nice."

June 30, 1974 "Went to the Rancho to see house. It's just about finished. Drapes and rugs are in."

July 18, 1974 "Movers came at 10am took everything to the new house. I spent first night on the Rancho."

July 19, 1974 "FitzGerald's gave me a lovely swing. Just what I have been wanting for a long time."

**July 20, 1974**

**" Home. We had lots of buen tiempo. My 71<sup>st</sup> birthday."**

Carmen was home again at the Camarillo Ranch with her beloved horses. Her new home looked toward the future, but it was also set in the past. She lived in a comfortable up to date ranch-style home of her own creation that had been built not far from her parents' grand mansion.

Her nearby neighbors were Meliton and Felicitas Ortiz.



Carmen's home on the Camarillo Ranch (left rear)





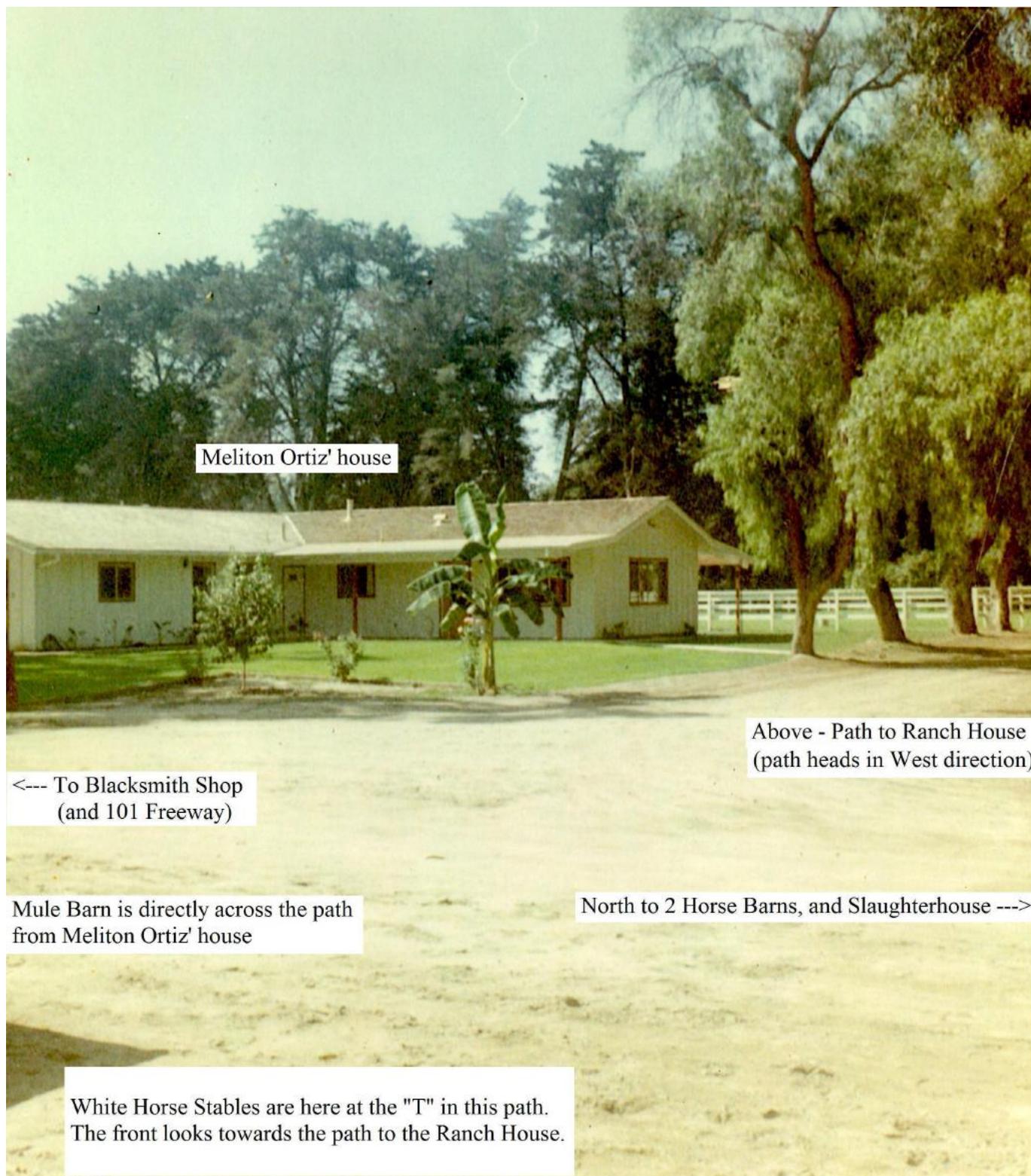
**Carmen's Ranch home**



**Carmen's love of animals started early in her childhood and continued throughout her life.**



**In parade attire circa 1976  
Carmen (center) with Nicholson nieces: Victoria (left) and poet Martina**



Meliton Ortiz' house

Above - Path to Ranch House  
(path heads in West direction)

<--- To Blacksmith Shop  
(and 101 Freeway)

Mule Barn is directly across the path  
from Meliton Ortiz' house

North to 2 Horse Barns, and Slaughterhouse --->

White Horse Stables are here at the "T" in this path.  
The front looks towards the path to the Ranch House.



**Meliton's home of the left. Bunkhouse on the right**