

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



This week:

Isabella "Nunie" Camarillo Burkett

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Thank you to Nunie's grandchildren, great-nieces and nephews.

July 3, 2020

Isabella “Nunie” Camarillo Burket (1897-1963)
by
Beth Miller



In the few short years following the period that Adolfo and Isabel Camarillo had moved into their grand Queen Anne Victorian home, the family had grown. The heartbreaking times of losing daughters Martina (1896) and Minerva (1898) gave way with the blessings of two births in 1897.

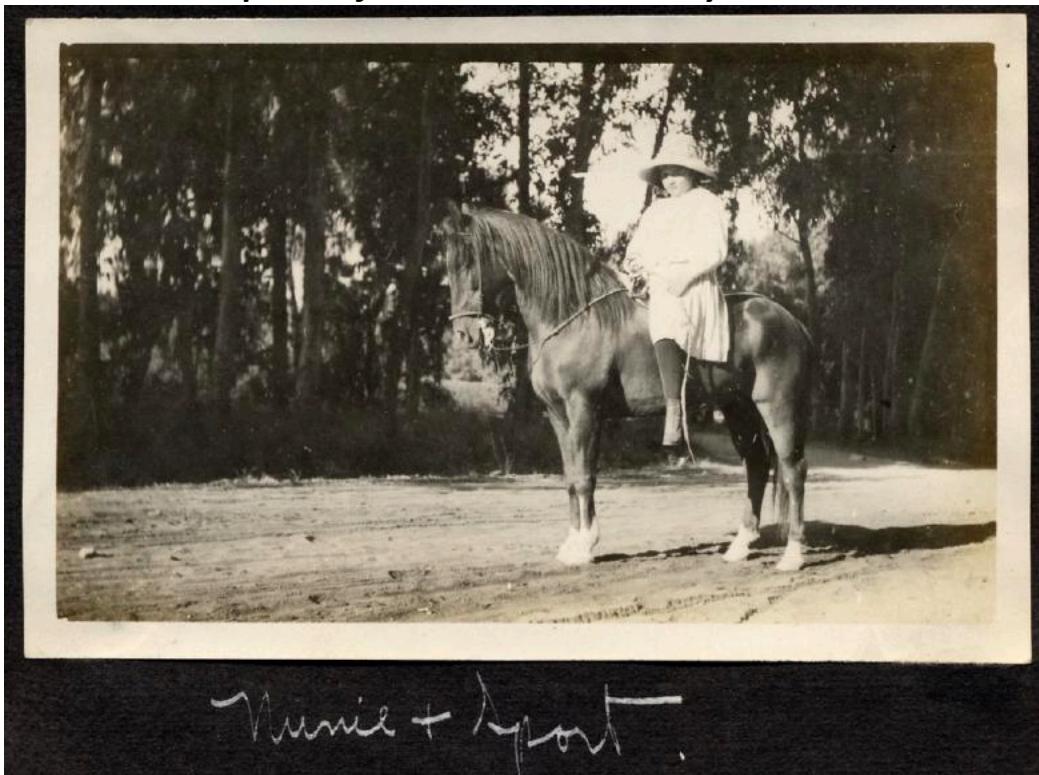
Isabella Martina was born on January 28, 1897. Everyone called her Nunie. The origin and meaning behind her nickname have not yet been discovered. Francisco Adolfo was born on December 30, 1897. He was called Pancho.

This close connection would remain throughout their lives. Even when she lived away from the Camarillo Ranch, there was a spirit that kept her united to her family. Letters, post cards, holiday and birthday greetings kept the family links strong. Visits back to her childhood home were frequent.

Like her older sisters Rosa and Ave, Nunie would follow them to the same schools. She attended St. Joseph's Institute in Oxnard and the College of Notre Dame in San Jose.



Above **Nunie and Ave** from their sister Rosa's photo album 1908
Both photos from the Marvel Family Collection



Nunie and Sport

As a teenager and young adult, Nunie traveled extensively, both domestically and internationally, with her mother and sisters. In 1916 the Oxnard Courier reported, she enjoyed “a delightful tour of the Hawaiian Islands.” That was the year President Woodrow Wilson signed a bill establishing Hawaii National Park as the nation’s 13th national park. Also in 1916, Nunie’s uncle, Juan E. Camarillo, wrote long reports about Hawaii stating “there is a multiplicity of interesting things to tell you about.” The...“wealth of beauty among other things included the Hawaiian plants and volcanos. Juan also wrote an essay entitled “The Church in Hawaii” for the Catholic publication The Tidings.



Hawaiian postcard 1916

In 1920, there was a nearly four month long trip to Europe with her parents, family friends Mr. and Mrs. Charles Donlon, and their daughter Kathleen. The trip began in May. They returned in September. The first stop on their journey was San Francisco for a few days to attend Pancho’s graduation from Santa Clara College. Then it was on to New York and sailing to Antwerp.

After touring Paris, Isabel and Nunie traveled across the English Channel in an airship that became lost in the fog. The usual two and one half hour flight became extended to five and one half hours. Nunie, who became ill during an earlier channel crossing by boat, had hope to avoid repeating the situation by taking the airship. She did not.

Adolfo, who said he enjoyed Paris best of all, had opted to make the crossing by rail and steamer. The party rejoined at the Savoy Hotel.



June 1920 New York before leaving for Europe

Front: Adolfo with Charles Donlon

Back: Left to right: Laura Donlon and Isabel

On April 11, 1923 both Isabella and Pancho were members of the wedding party for Jessie Frances Petit and Paul Wolfe Donlon at Santa Clara Church. A photo of the wedding party is displayed in the Rosa/Nunie bedroom.

Nunie was a bridesmaid and Pancho served as an usher. The bride was Rosa Camarillo Petit's sister-in-law. Jessie Petit was the sister of Alfred Petit, Rosa's husband. Jessie wore Rosa's veil from her wedding to Alfred in 1914. The ring bearer was Rosa and Alfred Petit's son John.

The groom was a member of the large Donlon family who were friends of Adolfo.



Nunie is the second woman from the left. Pancho is the first man on the right.

Adolfo and his friend Charles Donlon shared interests and connections. It's easy to see their paths crossing. Both were bankers, directors and members of several agricultural associations, active in the Elks, on the committee that established Ivy Lawn Cemetery and regularly chaired committees at the Ventura County Fair.

Just like her siblings and parents, Nunie was active in the Ventura County Fair. She often worked on committees with her sisters and mother. One year she rode in a surrey with U.S. Senator from California Samuel Morgan Shortridge, who served from 1921-1933.*

A photo of the ride is displayed in the Rosa/Nunie bedroom. Nunie enjoyed painting and won first place in china painting at the fair. In 1925 the town of Camarillo was awarded first prize for a community exhibit. Nunie worked on the committee that designed an agricultural products exhibit.



Isabella and U.S. Senator Samuel Shortridge Ventura County Fair September 1925

**It is unknown what Nunie or her father thought of Shortridge. The Republican senator, who served two full terms, was an unmistakable voice for anti-Japanese factions in California.*

In October 1926 Nunie's engagement to Harold Burkett "a prominent architect of Long Beach," was reported in the Oxnard Courier. During a luncheon gathering of family and friends at the Camarillo home, "little notes announcing the engagement were slipped into tiny replicas of engagement rings, presented to the guests on their departure by little Miss Carmelita FitzGerald" (*daughter of Ave Camarillo*). The Los Angeles press also reported Nunie and Harold's engagement with coverage of an "elaborate tea." Some background of the couple was given. Harold Burkett was an alumnus of the University of California at Berkeley. "The charming bride-elect is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Adolfo Camarillo of Camarillo, California. Miss Carmen Camarillo will assist her sister as maid of honor."

The society column reported that Pancho hosted a pre-nuptial party for Nunie, Harold and eighteen guests with an elaborate five course dinner. Ornate floral displays of low baskets containing yellow roses, golden chrysanthemums, delphiniums adorned the tables. "At each end (of the table) were tall yellow candles and at each place the nut baskets were in the form of jonquils, with the face of a girl, hand painted, peering out from the petals."

It was an evening of fine dining and dancing at the Gables Club. As was popular at the time, a broadcast of a radio* program was in progress from the Gables Club. As a gesture to Nunie's Hawaiian travel adventure, a program performer, who specialized in playing the ukulele, dedicated a song to the bride-to-be. It was also reported that "the festivities continued through Sunday at the Biltmore hotel."

The wedding was an evening ceremony at St. Mary Magdalen Chapel. Pancho along with George FitzGerald and Alfred Petit were ushers. Gloria Petit (*Rosa's daughter*) and Geraldine FitzGerald (*Ave's daughter*) were the flower girls. Preceding the ceremony, Ave sang "Oh Promise Me." The reception took place in Nunie's childhood home. The couple's honeymoon began with a two week road trip to Northern California . A few months later they left for an extended tour of Europe. Both the bride and groom would have shared an enthusiasm for European travel. Nunie would have an opportunity to revisit some of the sites from her 1920

*After being introduced during World War I, radio became a popular feature of American life. During the 1920s Americans embraced the new technology as hundreds of radio stations were established across the nation broadcasting news, serial stories, political speeches and a variety of musical entertainment.

family trip. Harold would be able to see first-hand the famous buildings he studied while an architectural student at UC Berkeley.

Nunie's wedding signaled a significant change in her lifestyle. She would no longer reside in the open country side like her siblings. While Carmen remained in their childhood home, Rosa, Ave and Pancho, after marriage, had all set up their homes on the Ranch. Nunie and Harold would live in Long Beach and later in 1928 they moved to Ventura where Harold opened an office.

The wedding gifts given by the bride's parents and her Tio Juan may also indicate the family was aware of the couple's style of living. Adolfo and Isabel gave the newlyweds "a complete tea service with parfait glasses in all solid silver." Tio Juan gifted the couple "a chest of sterling flat silver." The gifts from Adolfo, Isabel and Juan were all "in the new Duston pattern."

After her marriage, Nunie may have left Ventura County for a short time, but she continued to be part of the homelife of the Camarillo Ranch.



**"Miss Isobel Camarillo" Her first name was incorrectly spelled in the newspaper
"Tea given for bride-elect" in the Los Angeles Daily Times November 16, 1926**

In 1929, Nunie and Harold welcomed the first of their two daughters. The newspaper reported that Susanita Camarillo Burkett, who was born in Los Angeles, was back at her parents' home on Evans Avenue in Ventura just four weeks later. Her sister Francisca "Paquita" was born in 1930.

The girls were given names directly from the family tree.

Their maternal great-grandmother was Susan Ewell Lorenzana Menchaca.

The sisters of their maternal grandmother (*Isabel Menchaca Camarillo*) were Susana and Francisca. These names are just a few of the many beloved namesakes in the Camarillo family tree that have been passed along to later generations. Nunie had been christened with the names of her mother, Isabel, and her paternal grandmother, Martina.



1890- *Isabel Camarillo (right) and sisters , Susana and Francisca*

Susana and Paquita would spend much of their childhood playing, riding and exploring the Camarillo Ranch and participating in parades. They also learned eloquence and poise at an early age from their mother. Family, friends and children gathered for a charming birthday tea party to celebrate Paquita's first birthday with pink roses on a pink cake. Games were played and toys were given to the young guests.

Nunie, along with Harold, participated in family events from casual gatherings at the Ranch to major celebrations such as the Fiesta de Los Angeles.

"Camarillo Clan Central Figures in L.A. Fiesta" stated the headline 1931. The Fiesta celebrated the 150th anniversary of the founding of Los Angeles. Adolfo, as Grand Marshal, led the procession with Gov. James Rolph on Sultan. Carmen, attired in a Spanish costume, was at the head of the parade as a flag bearer.



Carmen welcomed Pancho, sisters and their spouses at the Camarillo family Los Angeles home at 609 Manhattan Place. Adolfo and Isabel opted for a suite of rooms in a hotel.

They all gathered again at "609" to attend the 1932 Olympic Games in Los Angeles. Nunie's young daughters joined the family as the newspaper reported "all of the Camarillos are in Los Angeles while they attend the Olympic Games."



January 1932 advertisement in the *The Saturday Evening Post* - California Governor James Rolph, Jr., on Sultan.

In 1935 together the Camarillo family welcomed the New Year as they rode in the Rose Parade. Adolfo led his son, daughters and sons-in-law. Nunie and her sisters wore red satin Spanish dresses. The men dressed in black Spanish suits.

Nunie and Harold's daughters quickly joined their parents in the parade riding tradition. They were 9 and 10 years old when they rode in the Santa Barbara Fiesta parade. Susana and Paquita wore matching outfits and rode matching ponies. Not far behind them were their parents also in parade attire and riding Camarillo White Horses.

They had excellent teachers. The girls had learned to ride and care for horses from their grandfather Adolfo. Meliton Ortiz tutored them on riding techniques.



Paquita and Susana with their grandfather Adolfo



Paquita's riding lesson with Meliton Ortiz



Santa Barbara Fiesta 1939 Paquita and Susana followed their parents



*Nunie and Harold Burkett Santa Barbara Fiesta.
They rode behind their daughters in the parade 1939*

Throughout the many years of his daily diaries, Adolfo recorded the countless times that Nunie visited her childhood home with her children. A demanding career made Harold's visits less often. Harold's architectural career advanced in

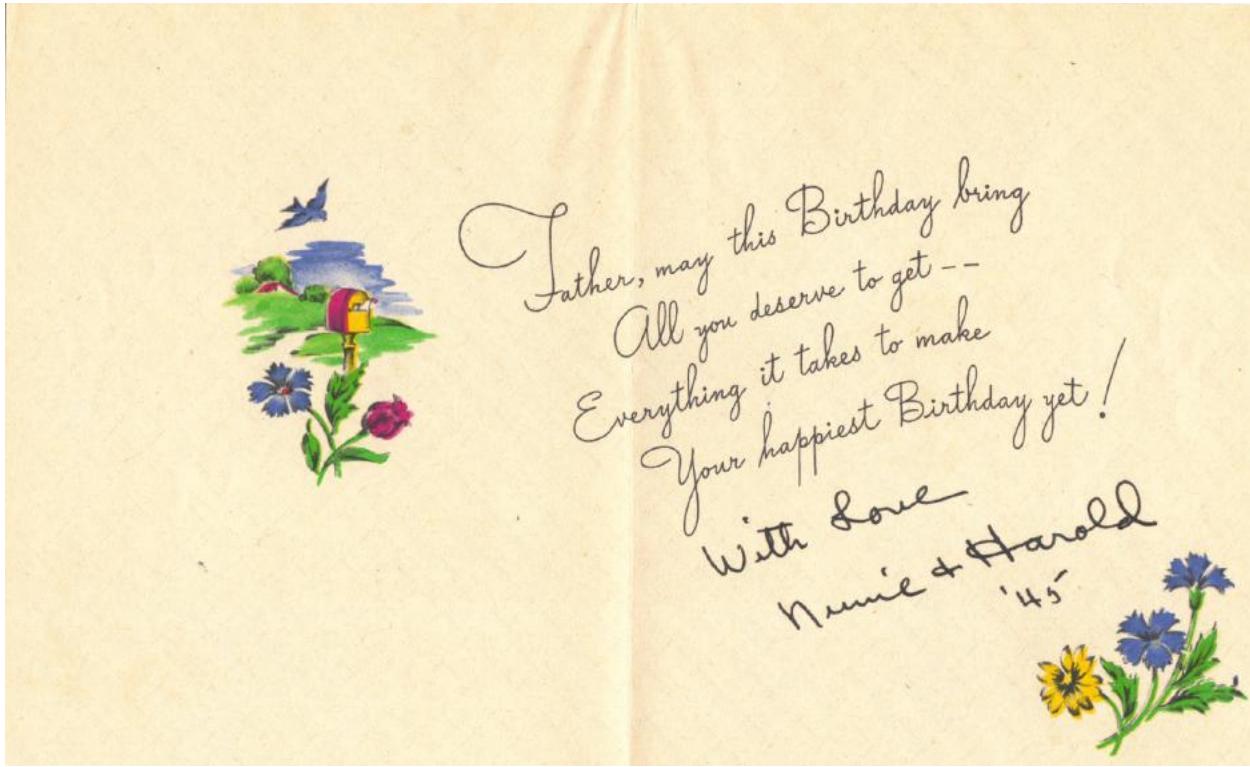
Ventura County. He was often listed as the architect or inspector on various buildings throughout the county. One of his most memorable buildings is the Adolfo Camarillo High School. Harold also joined Los Rancheros Visitadores and rode along with Adolfo and other notables from Ventura County as well as members from 25 states and Canada.

. Nunie, along with Carmen, planned special dinners for their father. Years later, her son-in-law, Robert “Bob” Bertram Lamb, recalled in a 2010 interview that “Nunie was an excellent cook especially for enchiladas and chili rellenos.”

He said that “holidays were a special time, especially for celebrating Adolfo’s birthday, Christmas and Thanksgiving.” Bob recalled that “Nunie was a great mother-in-law and a lovely hostess.”



Nunie with her father. A family celebration of Adolfo's birthday



On the Ranch, Nunie established a weekend home that the family called "the cabin." It was a get-away home for the Burkets. Nunie cherished western art and had murals painted on the cabin walls by Ventura artist and friend George Randall. After Pancho and Tweedy married, Nunie gave the house to her brother and his wife. She wanted them to have their own place on the Ranch.

In the 1950s both Susana and Paquita became brides. They would follow their parents' footsteps and celebrate their weddings at St. Mary Magdalen Chapel. Susana married Robert "Bob" Bertram Lamb on August 12, 1950. The groom was a graduate of the University of California at Berkeley. Their reception was at Susana's childhood home in Ventura. Paquita was her maid of honor.

Susana Camarillo Burket, Robert B. Lamb Married

Miss Susana Camarillo Burket, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Harold E. Burket of Ventura, exchanged marriage vows Saturday morning at St. Mary Magdalen Catholic Church in Camarillo with Robert Bertram Lamb, son of Mrs. Robert Lamb and the late Mr. Lamb of Ventura.

Given in marriage by her father, the bride wore a white marquisette gown with a train and a tunic edged with shadow embroidery. The gown was fashioned with cap sleeves and a petite rounded collar completing the high neckline. The fitted bodice buttoned down the back with tiny covered buttons. She wore matching short mitts.

A chapel length veil fell from a Mary, Queen of Scots, crown, which was covered with matching embroidery. She carried a bouquet of white butterfly orchids centered with a large orchid.

Maid of honor was Miss Paquita Burket, sister of the bride. She wore a gown of white organdy over aqua taffeta with taf-



Mrs. Robert B. Lamb
—Press-Courier Staff Photo

bridegroom's mother was attired in a dusty pink crepe floor length dress with lace trim. She

The couple had three sons:

Robert "Bert" Bertram Lamb, III; David Adolfo Lamb and John Burket Lamb



Nunie and Harold's eldest daughter, Susana Burkett Lamb (1949).

Like her father and husband, Susana also graduated from the University of California at Berkeley. And like her mother, she was an artist, homemaker and volunteer. Susana died in 1989. She was 60 years old.

October 29, 1957 - Rancho Camulos - Adolfo Camarillo (93 years old) ringing the Russian bell.



LIVING PATRIARCH of noted California dynasty, el Señor Don Adolfo Camarillo, rings centuries-old Russian bells at Rancho Camulos for two of his great-grandchildren, David Adolfo Lamb, left, Robert Bertram Lamb.



Rose Parade 1951

*Paquita (left) continued the family tradition of riding in parades
and passed along the love of horses to her children.*



Paquita and her son Harold Parker, Jr. Santa Barbara Fiesta



Paquita Burkett Parker, Nunie's youngest daughter
September 1953
Photo is displayed in the Rosa/Nunie bedroom



(Left unknown) Paquita with her parents Harold and Nunie (far right)

Like her sister and parents, Paquita was also married in St. Mary Magdalen Chapel. She wed Harold Bowler Parker in September 1953. Susana was her matron of honor. The wedding reception was held at her childhood home and garden in Ventura.

Paquita's groom, Harold Bowler Parker, was a building contractor and rancher. In 1955 the couple made their home on a ranch in Ojai . Together they worked the cattle ranch and raised their four children: Harold Parker, Jr., Michael Parker, Bruce Parker and Ynez Parker LaDow.

Just as Paquita and her sister learned to ride on ponies, the four Parker children would do the same. She also surprised her grandchildren with ponies.

Paquita would also make arrangements for her children to spend time on the Camarillo Ranch. Sadly, they could not learn directly from their great-grandfather Adolfo who died in 1958 . But they had the opportunity to learn from Meliton Ortiz.

Paquita's husband, was also a member of Los Rancheros Visitadores (RV) and frequently rode with their local group Campo Adolfo. Susana's husband, Bob Lamb, was also an active RV member . Paquita and Susana's father, Harold Burkett, had been an RV member since 1933.

Though she could never become a member of the male only Los Rancheros, Paquita was active in several women's equestrian organizations. One group was the Sage Hens where she served as president and shared the adventurous rides with her daughter Ynez. It was also through the Sage Hens that parade riders for the Camarillo White Horses joined Carmen Camarillo and other family members.

Paquita's love of all things equestrian would be fully on display at her home during the holidays. The Christmas tree was completely decorated with western themed ornaments. Her children and grandchildren continue the tradition with Paquita's collection. Paquita died in 1999. She was 69.

Nunie symbolized a gentleness and eloquence at the Camarillo Ranch. Everything in her life revolved around family. After her mother's death in 1936, Nunie came frequently just to be with her father and help her sister Carmen.

When she began experiencing serious health problems, the family came to her. The next generation was on her mind and in her heart. The family gathered for what was Nunie's final birthday.

A few days after receiving the last rites, Nunie, surrounded by her family , died in 1963. She was 66 years old.



Isabella Nunie Camarillo Burkett

Nunie's grandson and family were the last of the Camarillos to live in Adolfo and Isabel Camarillo's beautiful Queen Anne Victorian home.



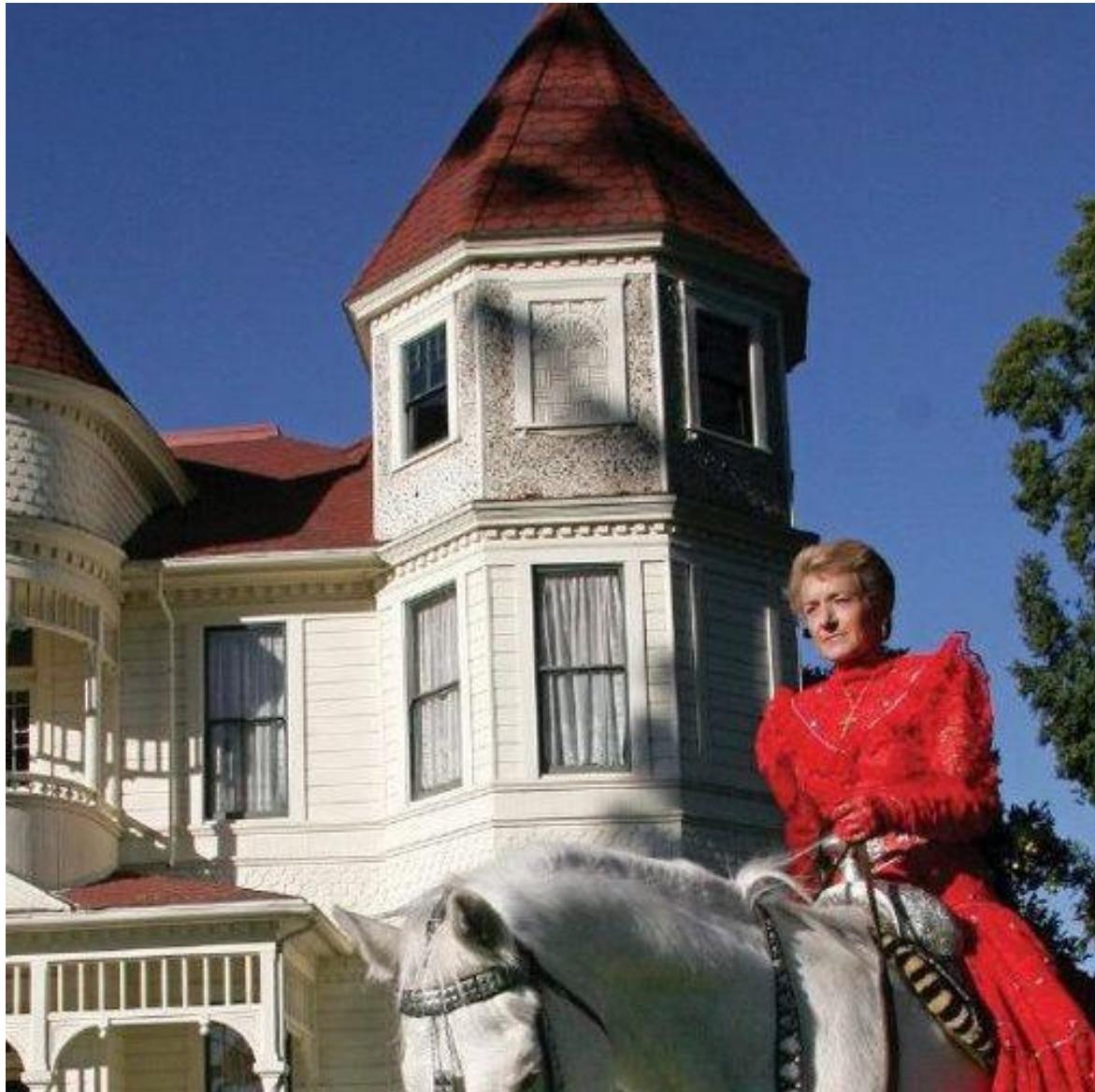
Robert "Bert" and Linda Lamb family 1983



*Camarillo Ranch 1997
Robert "Bert" Bertram Lamb III*

*Son of Robert and Susana Burkett Lamb
Grandson of Harold and Isabella Nunie Camarillo Burkett
Great grandson of Isabel and Adolfo Camarillo*

Nunie's grandchildren and great-grandchildren continue the Camarillo White Horse traditions with the Camarillo White Horse Association.



Ynez Parker LaDow

*Daughter of Harold and Paquita Burkett Parker
Granddaughter of Harold and Isabella Nunie Camarillo Burkett
Great granddaughter of Adolfo and Isabel Camarillo*



July 3, 2020

*This is our last chapter in the series about women at the Camarillo Ranch.
New essays on other topics are being prepared.*

*If you have an idea for a future report, comment or suggestion, please email
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Thank you!

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