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ZIMMERLY FAMILY IN SOCORRO FOR 100 YEARS
[Zimmerly – Torres – Stackpole families]

Members of the Zimmerly family have lived in Socorro for at least a century. The founder of the family, **Samuel James Zimmerly**, and his wife, **Paula Torres**, were married in San Miguel Catholic Church Sept. 29, 1866. Their sponsors were Vibian Tafoya and Delores Garcia.

Samuel J. Zimmerly came to the United States from Germany as a youngster. There is no evidence of a definite date he got off the boat in New York, but he later served with the Union Army during the Civil War as a sergeant with Co. 1, First California Infantry. He served at Ft. Craig and was sent to the Tularosa area as a government Indian scout, but again there are not definite dates available.

Samuel J. was born March 14, 1837 near Pottsdam, Germany, and the family name of Zimmerleigh was changed to Zimmerly when he became a citizen. He came to America with two other brothers; one went to Canada and the other settled somewhere in the East, or possibly on the West Coast.

Paula Torres Zimmerly, called Pablita, was born in Ft. Craig but lived in Paraje, which was located southeast of San Marcial and is now called Lava by railroaders. [Lava, or Lava Station, is actually about 5 miles southeast of Paraje. The railroad bypassed Paraje by about 4-1/2 miles to the east – PH]. After their marriage in 1866 Pablita helped Samuel J. run Zimmerly's Grist Mill. The mill was adjacent to the family home and located at the foot of Socorro Mountain about one quarter of a mile from Socorro Springs where the city now gets part of its water supply.



Samuel J. and “Pablita” Torres Zimmerly
(Image scanned from 1966 El Defensor Chieftain newspaper)

Samuel J. was not a large man, only five feet six inches tall and weighing between 140-150 pounds. He had a full crop of chestnut hair and dark blue eyes and sported a handlebar moustache. He was

described as shrewd, hot-tempered, a tender and loving father, more so with his girls. He was rougher on the boys, but fair.

Samuel was a charter member of the Knights of Pythias in Socorro and sponsored by the Methodist Church in which he became a deacon, when it was organized here. He was able to converse in English, French, Spanish, German, and possibly some Indian dialects since he traded with Indians at his mill.

Samuel was also quite a sportman and had a rifle range at the mill for target practice. Besides the flour mill he also had a good sized hog farm and smokehouses where he smoked bacon and hams and had dry salt port.

Samuel James Zimmerly died of what was then called sunstroke Nov. 20, 1887, at 50 years of age.

His wife, Pablita, was only 35 when Samuel J. died and she and her eldest son, Juan Jose, ran the mill for a time and she operated it with her daughter and son-in-law, Mary Lola and Ricardo Abeyta.

In 1913 the mill was abandoned and destroyed and Pablita moved to Socorro to a 10-acre farm about three miles below the old Stackpole residence on Cuba Road, then later to one section of the Stackpole home. Pablita became ill with pneumonia and her daughter, Teresa, took her to San Antonio and cared for her until she died July 23, 1917.

Pablita was described as tall for a woman, about the same height as Samuel J., but slender. She had ravenblack hair and dark brown eyes. She was good-natured and smoked much, carrying her own case and black tobacco and rolling her own dainty cigarettes.

Samuel J. and Pablita had six children –

Juan Jose, born Jan. 14, 1868 and died March 20, 1916, in Luis Lopez [48 years old – PH].

Gertrude, born June 1, 1871 and died Sept. 6, 1920 [50 years old]

Richard, born May 6, 1878

Mary Lola, born March 10, 1881 and died in Sept. 18, 1947 [66 years old]

Teresa, born Sept. 14, 1884, and died Oct. 7, 1965 [81 years old].

Steve, born Oct. 3, 1887 and died Sept. 20, 1936 [49 years old].

Juan Jose, the eldest son, married **Isabel Torres** Feb. 8, 1888, and she bore him two sons –

Sam T., born Jan. 21, 1889, and

Benito, born Sept. 8, 1905.

Both live in Albuquerque. Juan Jose attended some seminars at the newly-founded School of Mines and was a farmer in Escondida.

Gertrude Zimmerly married **Herminio Torres** Nov. 1, 1889, and had three daughters and one son -

Maria Paula was born July 29, 1890

Ernest was born Dec. 4, 1897, and died March 16, 1935 [37 years old]

Anita Josephina was born May 30, 1900; and

Elisa Isabel was born Dec. 26, 1902, and died Feb. 24, 1954 [61 years old].

Gertrude died in Albuquerque Sept. 6, 1920 [50 years old]. Her two daughters reside in Albuquerque.

Mary Lola Zimmerly married **Ricardo Abeyta** in 1902 and gave him eight sons and daughters –

Leonides, born Sept. 14, 1903

Eloisa, born Feb. 6, 1906

Adelina, born March 23, 1908

Rosa, Nov. 6, 1910

Petrita, born June 6, 1913

Dick, born Jan. 3, 1916

Tomasita, born June 30, 1919, and

Johnny, born Oct. 28, 1923

Mary Lola died in Socorro Sept. 18, 1947 [66 years old]

Teresa Zimmerly married **J. E. Miera** May 28, 1906, and presented him with four children –
Estevan Mauricio, born Oct. 3, 1907 and died Feb. 26, 1953 [46 years old]
Alice Helen, born Nov. 29, 1909
Benicia Josephina, born March 18, 1914, and
Berta Odilia, born Oct. 18, 1916

Teresa died Oct. 7, 1965 in Socorro General Hospital [81 years old].

Steve married **Delfina Torres** April 14, 1908 and she gave him eight children –

Maria Paublita, born Dec. 10, 1924
Celilia, born March 11, 1912
Gertrude, born Feb. 18, 1914
Steve D., born April 7, 1917 and died Sept. 13, 1953 [36 years old]
Ida, born Dec. 125, 1919
Max, born March 17, 1922
Albert, born Dec. 10, 1924
Ceililia, born Jan. 7, 1927

Steve was at one time a building contractor, with his specialties windmills and drilling water wells. He owned the White Garage in San Antonio, where he was a mechanic for several years and moved to Socorro in 1931 or 1932 after he became ill. Steve died in Socorro Sept. 20, 1936 [49 years old].

Richard was married to **Eloisa Stackpole** Feb. 126, 1900 and she gave birth to 11 children –

Samuel J. born Dec. 30, 1900
Joe, born Oct. 7, 1902
Alice, born June 5, 1904
Charles, born Nov. 7, 1905 and died Nov. 17, 1961 [56 years old]
Fidelia, born July 13, 1908 and died about two years of age
Ben, born July 20, 1910
Peggy, born Dec. 8, 1912
Richard Jr., born Feb. 8, 1915
Christine, born Nov. 11, 1916
Agnes, born May 19, 1918
Edward, born Dec. 26, 1919 and died April 11, 1944 [24 years old]

Edward was killed during World War II, shot down in Germany near the birthplace of his grandfather, the first Samuel J. Zimmerly.

Richard was the “movingest” of the children. In 1902, after his marriage to Eloisa, they moved to Kelly, which was then a thriving mining town, and he worked for Babcock Mercantile Co., a general merchandizing store. In 1905, they went to Magdalena, where he was employed by Becker-MacTavish Mercantile. They went back to Kelly (and Babcock) before 1908 and back to Magdalena and Becker-MacTavish until 1916. In 1916, the family was back in Socorro. (Becker-MacTavish eventually bought out Babcock).

Richard Sr. ran for and became county assessor on the Republican ticket as of Jan. 1, 1917 for two terms. In 1923 the family moved to San Antonio where Richard Sr. owned a drug and general store and was manager of the telephone exchange. He also freighted coal from Carthage and had a contract in 1928 with a mining company doing diamond core drilling furnishing water and supplies.

In 1929 Richard Sr. brought his family back to Socorro to stay. The home on South California Street was built in 1929 or 1930.

Richard Sr. was the county director for WPA from 1933 through 1936. He was elected treasurer on the Democratic ticket for 1937 and 1938. During his term in office he forced the sale of the La Joya Grant for delinquent taxes and the grant was bought by Gen. Jack Campbell, the Wheat King.

Richard Sr. subsequently worked as night manager for George Cook's Garage for several years and died Dec. 30, 1947. His son, **Charles**, and his wife, **Hilda**, lived there with Richard's wife, Eloisa,

until she went to live with her daughter and son-in-law, **Alice** and **Henry DelCurto** in 1949.

Hilda preceded Charles in death. Charles died in Nov. 1961 and the house was closed until Richard Jr. occupied it in 1962.

Of all the sons and grandsons to carry the name of Zimmerly, only Samuel J., Ben F., and his son Ben Jr., and Richard Jr. of Richard Sr.'s family, and Albert of Steve's family now live in Socorro. But there have been some 100 years of Zimmerly's here.



Albert Zimmerly near his home in Pueblito, NM
(Paul Harden photo)