

THIS IS THE STORY OF THE BERNAL THAT I KNEW  
AS TOLD TO ME AT VARIOUS TIMES IN OUR SIXTY SEVEN AND A HALF YEARS OF  
MARRIAGE

I DO NOT HAVE A BIBLIOGRAPHY AS THIS IS WORD OF MOUTH

MARSHALL [MARCELLO] BERNAL  
THE SAME WILL APPLY TO THE FOLLOWING STORIES

A FISTFULL OF DOLLARS

THE ACCORNEROS

THE TOYAS

MY TEACHER IS PAMELA ERICSON AT THE SOUTHSIDE SENIOR CENTER TEACHING  
THE CREATIVE WRITING CLASS

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[MARCELLO] MARSHALL BERNAL, A DESCENDANT OF AN OLD  
CALIFORNIA FAMILY, HIS STORY

By

Mary L. Bernal

Marcello Bernal, son, brother, husband, father, father in law, grandfather, uncle and cousin was born to Lois and Rufina Velasco Bernal on January 16, 1903. This birth took place in Hall's Valley, California on the Bernal ranch which was a Spanish land grant given to his family in 1776, by the King of Spain. Hall's Valley is east of San Jose, by about fifteen miles, and is now the site of the Grant Ranch County Park.

At a few months of age he contracted whopping cough and was pronounced dead. Fortunately the local midwife saved his life by reaching into his throat and dislodging a large lump of phlegm. The family was so sure he had died that they had picked flowers for his grave and burned candles to honor him. My mother-in-law told me that she did not sleep in a bed for nearly four years trying to keep her son alive. This

was one of the facets of her determination. She was a very strong woman who had a great influence on my life.

Shortly after this his family moved to San Jose for the reason being that it was not economically feasible to ranch the small parcels of land that resulted after splitting the grant amongst so many children. My mother-in-law herself having twelve children and one family having sixteen. This caused the families to disperse, my husbands family moving to East San Jose at which address they lived for more than fifty years.

Marcello started school when he was about eight years old that was because that at that time all pupils had to buy their own books and his family was unable to do this. His siblings left school at an early age for this reason. He and his sister, who were the middle ones in the family, were the first ones to graduate eighth grade because they were not under this obligation. He had a rough start. He could not speak English and to cap the climax they changed his name, from Marcello to Marshall. It took him a while to find out who Marshall was and after that hurdle was crossed he had to repeat the first grade. In spite of all this trauma he liked school and continued on until he graduated from the eighth grade at which time his teacher went to see his mother and

wanted her to see if she could find some way for Marshall to go on to high school. It was an utter impossibility, as his father had recently been killed in an accident his help was needed in keeping the family together. He had worked on the local farms and ranches and even caddied on the San Jose Country Club, worked on a dairy and at a shooting gallery, but he wanted to learn a trade. To accomplish this he apprenticed himself to the Pacific Manufacturing Co. a large lumber mill which closed down sometime in the early 1950. This was a very difficult decision to make for at that time he was making five dollars per day working on the local farms and the mill was only paying two dollars and fifty cents. He worked there for over thirty years and when they closed He did take a hiatus in 1932, when a severe bout with pneumonia he took a job in a lumber mill in Northern California, where the winters were very cold, in order to strengthen his lungs. He took up ranching for another ten years and then worked for Stokley Van Camp for ten years.

Marshall went on to marry Mary Accornero in 1936. In 1957 bought a property in Morgan Hill on which to raise his children, of which he had two and to generate extra income and a place to retire in his older years, which he was able to do.

He bought his first car in 1921 for six hundred and fifty dollars. He did not know how to drive. The salesman took him home and parked the car in the driveway and said "it's all yours" In order to get a drivers license one wrote to Sacramento, sending them fifty cents and your drivers license was returned, no test of any kind being given.

He told me many stories of his ancestors. Among them the fact that his great-grandmother had an inn at Hall's Valley where horses were changed on the way to the Lick Observatory on Mt. Hamilton.

He also told of Indians raiding their ranch and making off with a number of horses and in trailing them the family found an infant that the Indians had abandoned and brought it home and raised as one of their own. They also took in boys who were in trouble and kept them there until they were able to go out on their own, some even taking the family name.

They paid for their groceries by the year, rounding up horses and cattle to pay the bill. That is the way they bought shoes and boots for all coming down to San Jose and going to our, at the time, most expensive shoe store "Herolds" and buying two pair of boots and shoes for all.

Much of their land was lost in litigation on various charges and eventually all the family moved way from there according to my husbands stories. Today it is known as the Grant Ranch a park I am sure many of you have visited.

My husband Marshall passed away on his one hundredth birthday on January 16, 2003.

## A FISTFULL OF DOLLARS

by

Mary L Bernal

How many of you know where you and your family lived one hundred years ago? This is a story about the house that Marshall lived in almost from the time of his birth until we married when he was thirty two years of age in 1936.

When ever any of our family happen to be in East San Jose we try to go past his mothers' house and the house that Marshall built to see how they are faring. Each time we do this, we find something different has been done. When Marshal, his parents and his older brothers and sisters moved there, they paid fifty dollars for a four room house, and an adjacent lot. This was when he was about six months old, the year 1903. When Marshall was eighteen and had worked at the P.M for about a year he set about remodeling this house. he added indoor plumbing, much to his mothers disgust, her not wanting a toilet in the house, but he prevailed, also adding running water and even a hot water heater. He added three rooms and dug a basement. The house remained that way until the death of his cousin, who had purchased it when we had to put his mother in a rest home. At that time, which was 1947, we sold it for seven thousand dollars.

When it was sold again and we went past we hardly recognized it. The remodeling on the outside had been so extensive that if we hadn't known the address, we would have thought we had the wrong house. I don't know what those people paid for it and can't remember the year Marshall's cousin died, but it was a least ten years later. Our son and is wife went past there recently and there was a for sale on the property, so he called the realator and asked the selling price. "Oh your too late" he was told. "I don't want to by it, I only want to know the price". He was absolutely

stunned when he was told the house had sold for five hundred and twenty five thousand dollars. It is very hard to comprehend that our values could change so drastically in one hundred years, yet here is absolute proof that it did. When Micheal told me this I said, " I'm going right down to the cemetery and tell your dad. I'm sure he would be very interested in hearing this", but I had to be satisfied to be able to tell his brother who was really surprised at the great change that had taken place even if it was a hundred years in the making.

## THE ACCORNEROS

by

Mary L. Bernal

I don't know if you would consider my father Allesandro Ercole Accornero a pioneer, but he did come here from Europe to find a better life, he arrived here in 1906 shortly after the earthquake. He left a small town in Italy where nearly everyone had the same last name. I really do not know the relationship among these people, but am sure most of them were cousins. He brought his brother Natale with him and they were sponsored by some one in Watsonville. There is no one living in my family to tell me the details of this transaction if they knew them. How he ended up in the Santa Clara County and met my mother no one ever told me and I never asked not being particularly interested at that time. I do know that he was an orchardist and planted many of the vineyards in the Paradise Valley where I now reside. In fact when we bought our property in 1947 one could see the redwood stakes in the area where the vines had been grown.

My mother told the story that the first year that the grapes were harvested and the wine made, the vineyardists were looking for a buyer. Some one knew a person who came out and bought the wine giving them a good deal, however the following year the same person bought the fruits of their labor and never paid them a cent. Some hot-headed Italian went to New York and demanded their money but was told to return to California without it. He came back a a very saddened person, as he knew many folk had mortgages to pay off and the sad result was that some men committed suicide.

Some of the folks that were partners in this venture left the area, among them, my cousins who went to southern California and started some of the first orange groves there.

My father died at an early age, thirty-five to be exact, of cirrhosis of the liver, probably not caused by heavy drinking, but most likely by some sprays or fertilizers used in those times. I have been told by some doctors that he would have had to start drinking at the age of two to have such an advanced case of this disease at the age at which he had died, so he did not have much time to leave his mark on our area, however, his brother Natale, who lived here for many years was a well known orchardist. Along with his wife, my Aunt Lucy, who herself was the daughter of an immigrant, and who farmed alongside him, raising chickens for added income along with the prunes and walnuts which were the most important part of their farm. As I see it, they were as much early settlers as those who came over with the padres or even the pilgrims, leaving a land they knew to embark on a whole new life in a strange country far away. My hat is off to them for their pioneering spirit.

## THE TOYAS

by

Mary L. Bernal

My grand parents Guivonni {John} Toya and Guisippiana [Josephine] Barela Toya {originally spelled TOIA, pronounced TWA, came to America by way of the Hawaiian Islands. In 1895 recruiters went through the lower part of Europe looking for men to work the sugar cane fields of Hawaii. My grandfather, John Toya was one who answered the call. He left behind his home in the Province of Praly in northern Italy in that year. He sailed off to his new life, leaving his wife and his infant daughter, who was my mother, behind. It took him five years to be able to save enough money to pay for his passage and to send for his family. At that time Hawaii was still a republic so he had to get the Counsel General to write to some entity in Italy to make arrangements to have his wife and daughter find a way to join him. I still have those letters and am enclosing copies of the originals, which I have had translated and am enclosing copies of these also His reason for leaving his country was the poverty many experienced in those times. I remember my grandmother telling stories of their ways to make ends meet. My grandparents came from the part of Italy that is in the Alps and each spring they would tote bags of earth to the mountains and in a pocket in the rocks and put in the earth and planted a potato .One potato seed will translate to quite a few potatoes, and they did that each year as the melting snow would wash down the earth that they had placed there. In that area folk did not eat a lot of Pasta as in some parts of Italy. My grandfather met my grandmother when he took his cows, he was a dairy person, to the Alps for the Spring graze.

I do not know how my grandparents were connected with the Waldension Sect. Waldo was the first person to break away from the Catholic Church, and by the fact that his followers were persecuted in his homeland they fled to the Italian Alps and lived in caves in the area where my

grandmother resided. I do know that my grandparents were staunch Catholics and they themselves did not join that sect, although when my Uncles went to visit there they became interested in the Waldensian movement but I do not know if they went any further than curiosity.

While my grandmother and my mother waited patiently in Italy my grandfather improved his status in Hawaii. The plantation owner somehow found out that he, my grandfather, was an animal herdsman in his home country, so he promoted him to work in his dairy of imported Jersey cattle. After his family arrived in Hawaii things did not go well for them. My grandmother lost two children and her next child was very sickly so they decided to make another move, this time to America. On coming to this new land they went to the San Joaquin Valley where my grandfather was sure he could get work in a dairy. This proved to be another bad decision as the humid climate was to be too much for them so they ended up moving to San Jose. After some time at this location he decided he wanted to own some land, so he contracted to buy a property in Madrone, which is now part of Morgan Hill. He bought this place sight unseen and when he and his family arrived my mother said he sat down and cried as to what he had done to his family. There was only a sheep herders shack on the property, no water nor other amenities, but he persevered, drilling a well, planting trees for income and a small vineyard so that he could make his own wine. He raised six children there who themselves went on to lead good and productive lives.

In those days transportation was very difficult. I remember my grandparents telling us that different tradesmen came around taking orders for different commodities. My grandmother told of the Caswell coffee man and buying green coffee beans and roasting them herself and grinding them in order to make our coffee. I have to add that she made the most awful coffee you could possibly have tasted. A person from the Central grocery in San Jose also made his rounds periodically and took their grocery order. This grocery was located across from the St. Claire hotel, which was named for the old St Claire brewery was situated at that site. My grandfather took the train a few times a year to San Francisco to a certain bakery in order to buy cookies and

pastries for his family. I do not ever remember my grandmother making other than bread in her outside oven.

My grandmother was totally illiterate but my grandfather had gone as far as the fourth grade in his country. I remember that he took the Italian newspaper and learned to speak passable English, enough so that after the 1915 Exposition in San Francisco and they were selling off the assets my grandfather went there and bought a water tank and had it delivered to Madrone where he erected it. He did this with his limited English and probably some sign language. When I was a small child I thought it enormous but going back there a few years ago I found it held only 2500 gallons.

My grandfather never went into the dairy business, but worked on the various farms in his area. He never learned to drive a car, but depended on his trusty bicycle to get him around. He passed away in 1929 dying of a burst appendix a sad ending to an Interesting life. I do wish I knew more about his early life but all his children have passed away and there is no one left to ask any questions of.

In telling this story I do not want a whole lot of dates but want to tell it as my grandparents would have told it to me when I was a small child. I am sorry now that I did not have the knowledge or the interest in learning more about their lives but the little that I know makes me appreciate their bravery in leaving their country and all that they were accustomed to and travel to an unfamiliar place where they had to start from scratch. I do appreciate that if it was not for their willingness to try a new way of life I would probably be an Italian citizen today.

Consulate General  
of the Republic of Hawaii  
Rome

Rome, 1<sup>o</sup> Agosto 1898.

Sig.ora

Giuseppina Doya.

Ho il piacere  
informarla che il suo  
marito, Giovanni, ha  
arrivato, insieme colla  
famiglia, a Honolulu,  
Hawaii, il giorno di  
20 di Luglio.

Giovanni, ha anzi  
mi richiesto - fra mezzo  
al figlio mio, chi stà  
a Honolulu - a dire  
a lei, che tutti stien

2/ famiglia sono in  
buone salute, e che  
stanno molto contenti.  
Nel nuovo posto, e  
servirà a lei fra poco.  
La lettera del figlio  
mio, di qui emito  
pochi giorni fa, era  
in stato. Honolulu,  
il 20. di Luglio.

Dono Tuo.

Virgil Benton

Consule Generale  
di Hawaii.

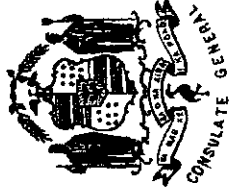
71. Via Cavour.

Roma.

Accusa troverete una ricetta che  
vi prego di firmare e di rimandarvi.

Con ogni offesa  
Corydon P. Benton.

41 - Via Cavour }  
Roma.



CONSULATE GENERAL  
OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF HAWAII  
ROME

Roma, 4 Ottobre - 1898.

Signora Giuseppina Zoja.

Gliogo di Prady.  
(Torino).

Per pregio spedirmi la somma di  
Dollari Cinque (equivalenti a Lire Italiane  
27<sup>50</sup>), detratte la spesa di Lire 0.45. affra-  
-catura della prefetta lettera. La sopra-  
-nominate somma mi fu consegnata da  
vostro marito a Honolulu. Con la prete-  
-to spedirvela prima di ora, Effendo stato  
affai occupato di altre cose.

Quindi sarà cosa buona d'ella  
si munisca, al più presto possibile, di  
un regolare passaporto.

Ella sarà in compagnia di altre  
3 famiglie che si recano anch'esse  
a Honolulu.

A tempo debito mi rekerò in  
Italia per prendere queste fami-  
glie, ed allora le darò indicazioni  
precise ove dovrà trovarsi per incontrar  
mi, ~~mentre~~ e le spedirò inoltre del  
denaro che le sarà necessario.

Intanto la prego d'informarmi,  
il più presto, della sua età e del nome  
dell'età del suo bambino, onde poter  
taccare i biglietti necessari per il viaggio.

La attesa di un suo immediato  
riscontro, this is the ~~note~~ <sup>note</sup>

Davmo

Corydon P. Benton

1. Via Cavour  
Roma }



LEGATION OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF HAWAII  
ROME

Roma, 12 Novembre. 1899.

Sig<sup>ra</sup> Giuseppina Toja.

Ghiogo di Italy -  
(Torino)

Prima Sig<sup>ra</sup> :-

Mi pregio informarla  
che sono incaricato da suo marito Gio-  
vanni (per mezzo del sig<sup>r</sup> Damon) di  
condurla a Honolulu.

L'ella è sempre desiderosa  
di recarsi colà per raggiungere suo marito,  
le avviso che la partenza si effettuerà  
verso gli ultimi di Novembre da Napoli.

Albergo d'Europa

Sinerolo - 19 Novembre 1899

Signora  
Sig.ra Zoya:-

Le scrissi ultimamente da Roma, dandole appuntamento per oggi a Sinerolo all'albergo "d'Europa"

Sono arrivato qui oggi mezzogiorno. Ho aspettato inutilmente dalle 10 ant. sino alle 2½ pom.

Domani mattina sono costretto di partire alle 7½ di mattina per Sondra. S'ella riceverà questo biglietto per tempo, potrà ancora arrivare per la partenza, recandosi immediatamente a Torino all'albergo Genova - ove mi trovo.

Devono

C. Benton

CONSULATE GENERAL  
OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF HAWAII  
ROME

*Rome: August 17, 1898*

*Mrs. Giuseppina Toya,*

*I have the pleasure to inform you that your husband, Giovanni, together with his family has arrived in Honolulu day 8th of July.*

*Giovanni has asked my son, who is in Honolulu, to tell you that all your family are in good health and are very happy with their new position and will write to you before long.*

*The letter of my son was given to me when he stopped by for a few days in Honolulu on the 20th of July.*

*I am yours, (Sincerely yours,)*

*Dwight Benton  
Consul General of Hawaii*

*71 Via Cavour  
Rome*

CONSULATE GENERAL  
OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF HAWAII  
ROME

*Rome: October 4, 1898*

*Mrs. Giuseppina Toya  
Ghigo de Praly  
(Torino)*

*I ask you for the sum of dollars five (equivalent Lire Italian 27.50) for the expenses that I spent of Lire 0.45 which are for the stamp on this letter. Your husband in Honolulu gave the above sum to me. I couldn't send this before now, since I was occupied with other things.*

*Enclosed you will find a receipt that I wish you to sign and return it to me.*

*Corydon P. Benton*

*71 Via Cavour  
Rome*

CONSULATE GENERAL  
OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF HAWAII  
ROME

*Rome: November 1, 1899*

*Mrs. Giuseppina Toya  
Ghigo di Praly  
(Torino)*

*Dear Madam,*

*I will inform you that I am in charge of your husband Giovanni (because of Mr. Damon)  
to conduct you to Honolulu.*

*If you are still desirous to reunite with your husband, I advise you that the departure is  
effective until the last of November from Naples.*

*Therefore, it would be a good thing that you get ready, as soon as possible, a regular  
passport. You will be in the company of three other families who also will be in Honolulu.*

*I will be in Alta, Italy to get these families, therefore, I will give you precise indications  
where you are to meet me and I will send you more money, if it should be necessary.*

*Furthermore, I wish you to inform me as soon as possible, of your age and the name and  
age of your child. Also attached are the necessary tickets for your trip.*

*I am waiting for an immediate answer to this letter.*

*Devmo  
Corydon P. Benton*

*71 Via Cavour  
Roma*

*Hotel d' Europa*

*Pinerolo 19 November, 1899*

*Dear Mrs. Toya,*

*I wrote you last from Rome giving you an appointment for today at Pinerolo Hotel d' Europa.*

*I arrived here today and waited needlessly from 10 a.m. until 2:30 p.m.*

*Tomorrow morning, I need to leave at 9:30 a.m. for London. If you receive this note in time, you still have time to leave, going immediately to Torino at the Hotel Geneva where I am at.*

*Devmo,*

*CP Benton*