

This is a story about a true pioneer and hero of the American West.

Her name is Teresita Sandoval and she's my eighty-year-old mother.

They're almost here, mama.

COLORFUL HISTORY

presents
Teresita Sandoval
Story by Jeremy Whitely
Illustrated by Ruth Clark

Good. Then-

Let's give them our answer.

This is private property. You gentlemen lost?

CLACK!

My mother was born in the pueblo of Taos, Mexico in 1811.

Unlike the United States, Mexico allowed women to own property.

She married her first husband, Manuel Suaso, young and they were granted land by the Mexican government in Mora, Mexico.

Where's the man of the house?

I'm holding him and he's excited to meet you.

From the time she was a young bride, she had her name on the deeds.

So she has opinions about whether I ought to be able to keep owning my dead husband's house.

My mom could have been a rancher's wife and worked a small patch of soil until the Americans came in and took it from her, but she opted for a more adventurous life.

You hear a lot about young white men crossing the wilderness for the fur trade and setting up forts, but Teresita Sandoval did it as a Mexican mother of three.

1841

She met Matthew Kinkead, a fur trader traveling to Colorado, in Mora.

A pioneer at heart, Teresita went with Kinkead and helped him found Fort El Pueblo, known today as Pueblo, Colorado.

Kinkead wanted to expand further West, and left her behind while he and his son travelled to California.

Of course, my mom never was much for staying in one place.

My mom helped run the fort by herself for years, where she interacted with some of the wildest and best known characters of the frontier.

She soon met British trader Alexander Barclay, who wanted to build a fort even further out on the frontier.

So my mother went back across the border with him and founded "Fort Barclay," one of the furthest forward outposts into Mexico.

That is, until the border crossed them. Under U.S. law, Barclay kept his land, but Teresita, as a woman, could not. Her name was removed from the deeds.

A few years later, she left Barclay and moved in with my family at this farm. Now, it's just her and me. Two women with every right and no right to live here.

But my mother isn't about to lose my home like she'd lost her own. Even without the law to protect us, my mother defended our farm from the cattleman. She had always done things her own way.

That's what I thought.

She would die in this house at the old age of 83. After a lifetime of adventure, we remember her today as a true pioneer.