

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.

Good. Then—

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

**CLICK!**

--let's give them our answer.

This is private property. You gentlemen lost?

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.

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

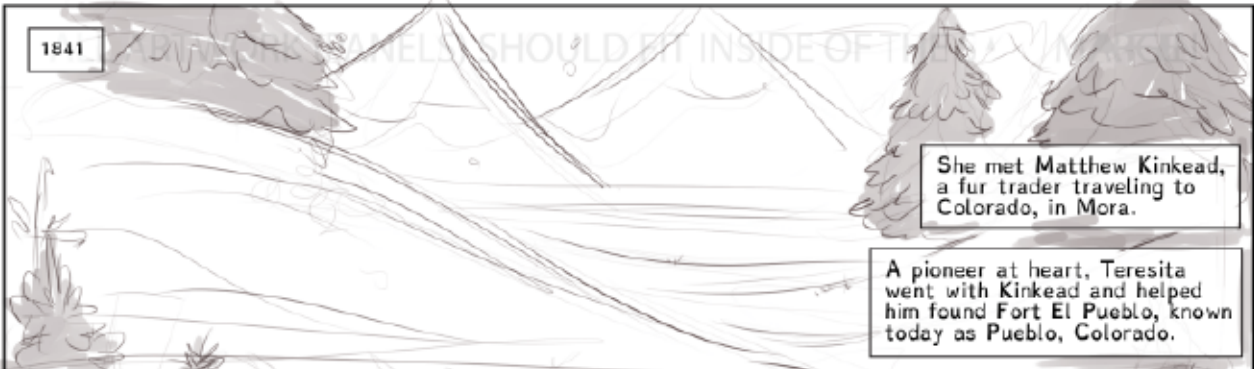
Where's the man of the house?

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

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.

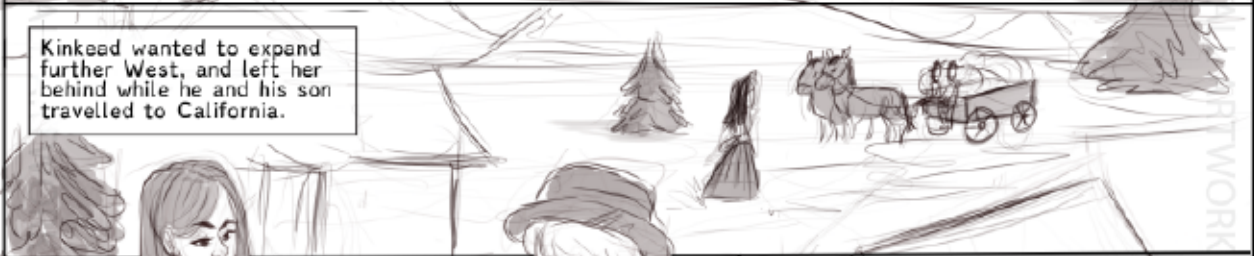
You hear a lot about young white men crossing the wilderness for the fur trade and setting up forts, but Teresita Sandoval did it as a Mexican mother of three.



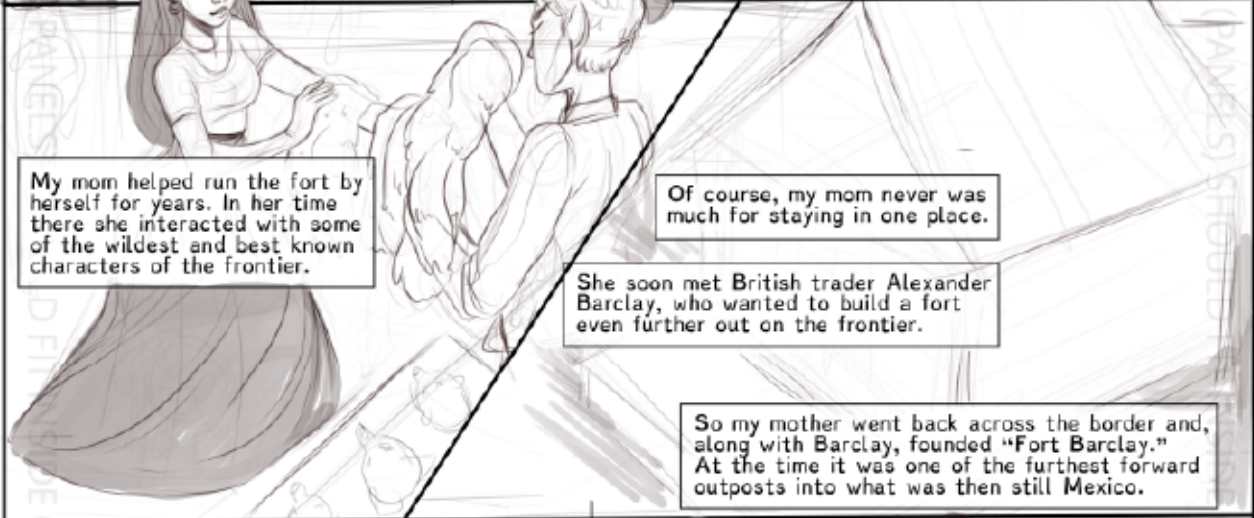
1841

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.



My mom helped run the fort by herself for years. In her time there she interacted with some of the wildest and best known characters of the frontier.

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

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 and, along with Barclay, founded "Fort Barclay." At the time it was one of the furthest forward outposts into what was then still Mexico.



That is, until the border crossed them. Barclay kept his land, but under American law, Teresita's name was removed from the deeds.

A few years later, she left Barclay and moved in with myself and my husband at this farm.

Once my husband died, it was just her and me. Two women with every right and no right to live here.



But my mother wasn't about to lose my home the way she'd lost her own.

Even though we had no laws to protect us, my mother stayed and held off the cattlemen who wanted to take our farm. She had always done things her own way

That's what I thought.



After a lifetime of adventure, she died in this house at the old age of 83. We remember her today as a pioneer both across land and society.



