

## Aunt Pat Stories about Sisters

The following is a continuation of the story about when Tia Pat stayed with her sister Tia Carmen, Ray and Paula's mother, who was a teacher & died fairly young, before her father Gregorio Pino died. They both had kidney problems. That must have been a very sorrowful time, as you don't expect your child to die before you do. The memory pages were not numbered and Tia would write down incidents as she remembered them, so they might not follow in chronological order all the time. Still, we're blessed to have her memoirs! Margaret Pino's note. The square Brackets throughout are my personal notes, not quotes from Tia Pat Pino's memoirs.

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In High School in Carrizozo, Tia Carmen was once entered into a singing competition with others from other counties. She won First Place among all entrants including Jane Clayton who was later on to become a movie star and the first Mother in the recurring Lassie series.

I learned a lot from Carmen, including new songs she'd learned in the University. "Santa Claus is Coming to Town" was one of them, also songs in Spanish. As I sang with her, I discovered I was an Alto and she a Soprano and our voices blended so beautifully. We sang together every chance we had.

After a term with Carmen, she married Salomon Saavedra, and I went to school in Carrizozo. My new teacher, Mr. Bright, looked quizzically at me after seeing my good report card. "Any relation?" he asked when he read "Miss Pino."

I didn't tell him that I had confronted Carmen with the lower grades she'd given me. She had explained that she and I both knew I deserved better grades, but one of my classmates lived in the same house. It would be uncomfortable to live there if anyone thought she was cheating in giving me higher grades than I deserved. I trusted Carmen's judgment on this and I respected her for considering its effect on others. [I believe Tia Carmen was renting a room for she and her sister Pat from this family, at the time.]

Anyhow, I knew I could do better and vowed I'd surprise Mr. Bright and I was happy when I did.

Each of my siblings was a gem and each so unique—there was no comparing them.

After her marriage, my sister [Emma] joined her husband to the Rancho de la Gallina, where he worked for a while with uncle. One Friday after school, she asked me to spend the weekend with her. I went without permission. She's [her mother Raymunda] at the ranch, I'm sure she'd give me permission. She knows you'll be okay. There was a little bar right next to her, where she was tending bar. It was so much fun to get to talk together. For some reason we got into telling stories. After a while, I started getting very cold. Emma got me a chair right close to the little cook stove. By this time, I was shivering and I was really sick. She fixed a cot with lots of blankets. She took an extra mattress which Mother had made, put it over me and still I was freezing. Youngsters that they were, they had not one remedy. She said I'll be right back. She returned with a glass of whiskey, poured some on my back, then also massaged my chest. Last, she said drink this. I was warm and asleep immediately. God bless Emma. I'll never forget her.

Louise ...[unreadable]...golden. She and her husband had raised such a big family, it's incredible. Their house was always clean and welcoming to anyone who needed a place to spend the night. Their kids made their parents proud. On their own, they educated themselves. Then went on to do well on the career they'd chosen. I'm so proud of them. Louise taught the kids to dance and they are outstanding dancers.

She was so generous; everybody who needs to sleep overnight was treated regally. She had enough of mom's mattresses and enough floors to spread out for us. It breaks my heart to remember Louisa. Each of my siblings I mention each one I remember; I'm tempted to say she or he was my favorite. I really do believe that each one was my favorite in a different way.

Another thing I remember about Louise is during Court season in Carrizozo, she got a job at the Cibola Hotel washing dishes. There were lots of people, including CCC boys. I went to help her from time to town. She would bring home an 8 pound can of vegetable soup no matter what anyone thought. After my Dad died, I got a job with the railroad warehouse.

One of my nieces, younger than Mary Alice, older than Gracie, when she was 6 or 7, happened to hear there was a fire in another neighborhood. She took off without permission. Then we heard about it. Bea was stern as she walked Margie home. Please Mama, don't spank me at home. Let's stop by Mama's house and spank me there. I don't remember how this turned out. After a few months working there, one of my sisters told me my Mom was homesick for the ranch, so were Minnie and I. It was a relief to go back to the ranch.

The day she [her mother] died, she was all dressed up, as she had a Doctor's appointment. She came into the kitchen at the "New" house, kind of staggering as she reached for the chair that was there. Pres walked in all dressed up. Louise, when she saw Mother kind of stagger, she said what was intended to be a joke like "Stayed out partying last night?" I think she didn't want to believe Mother was...Pres came in and saw Mother right away he scooped her in his arms and put her to bed, then took off to get the doctor. When the Dr. arrived, he pronounced her dead and we went out of our minds with grief. The Dr. called us all to the kitchen and told us "I know how you feel, but she suffered such a bad stroke, there was no way she could have survived. Just think about it, if she had survived, she would have been helpless, just like she was. I'm sure she would be glad to die and you would be happy that dying was not the worst thing that could have happened to her. God bless him. It did help somewhat that he would take the time to talk to us.

I'll tell you a bit more about my Grandpa Pino. [Preciliano I]. When he was very old, he came to live at the ranch. He'd go out every day to bring home driftwood from the floods. When he returned, he'd ask me to take stickers out of his hands. I did with a needle and tweezers. He was such a quiet and gentle person. He had very light eyes, sometimes they looked blue and sometimes green. He always gave me a few little candies. I loved my Grandpa, the only Grandpa I got to know.

On a lighter note: I'll tell you about a couple of remedies. For earaches, he would roll the page of a magazine. The small end was placed in the ear. You could feel the relief immediately after they lit it with a match and the warm smoke went into your ear. On a ranch with lots of farm animals, there must've been some who had ticks. When we told my dad about the earache, he would take a bite of chewing tobacco. After chewing it a little while, he would take a clean handkerchief. He would take the tobacco juice and squeeze the juice through the handkerchief and place a wad of cotton into the ear. After a little bit, he took out the cotton and presto there was the tick clinging into the cotton.

One evening when no one was at the ranch but us, Mom, Dad, Minnie and I walked to the Gallegos ranch. Before long, a windstorm came up. As we were lifting the wires to go through the fence between the two places, one of us happened to look up towards the old house. We all saw in the approaching darkness a bright light on one corner of the house where a clothesline was attached. We ran, fearing the house was on fire. My brother had left to go to town and Mom feared that he'd left embers in the stove that somehow got the place on fire.

When we got there, there was no sign of the phenomena we'd all seen. By the light of the kerosene lamp, we checked the inside of the house. No live embers anywhere. The stove was cold. Pres had gone to town. Dad went out to check around the outside. It occurred to me that maybe men could be afraid too, so I went with him since we outnumbered him.

In later years, after Mom, Minnie and I returned to the Ranch from El Paso, Pres told us that someone had seen a prairie fire blowing from the highway miles away but directly toward the old house. The fire had reached the house, in fact, without damaging any of the old posts that formed the walls. It was uncanny to see the black charred remains of the fire next to the posts. [Some years later, Dad told me that a firefighter had told him that the flame was licking right up against the posts forming the house walls but it seemed that something was keeping them from igniting. A force. Reasonably, they should have caught fire quickly and burned the house down.]