

Hist 2, Th 8:10-9:35

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Like Mother Like Daughter

My great-grandmother was born in near Santana Maya, Michoacan. It was a little farm village with seven houses only which no longer stands today. She was married in 1950 in *La Laguinia de Carmen*, Guanajuato, there her daughters Margarita, Consuelo, and her sons Jesus and Amparro were born. They left that place because of the things that are happening where people are picking up arms and terrorizing people. They then moved to Salva Tierra and resided there as her husband came to the United States through contracted work. He would go work for three months at a time and the boss that gave him work was the one who helped their family get their green cards.

Events occurred while my great grandpa was in the United States and my great grandmother was home alone with her kids. One event, and perhaps more personally significant, was that she was pregnant with my uncle Samuel. Mario her other son was small and she was alone with him in her room. Her two daughters and her two boys, Amparro (who was little) and Jesus were in the other room. When Samuel was born he fell on the floor, so she went to the other side of the room to lay him on the bed. When he was born he let out a cry and woke up the other baby, Mario. Mario woke up scared and ran to her, he wrapped his arms around her neck and was screaming. She had one child wrapped in her arms, the other wrapped around her neck. My great grandmother had the door locked with a piece of wood

propped up against the door and Consuelo, my grandmother, heard the kids screaming. She pushed against the door until it fell and when it fell it almost hit my great grandmother because she was on the floor. She came in and saw what was happening and immediately, and without a word, grabbed Mario and took him. She then cleaned off my *Tio* Samuel and cut the umbilical cord and went to lay with him on the bed.

The economic background to this story identifies that this is the way things were back then. In our country, the only people doing at-home births are those who are doing so for spiritual reasons, hardly any are due to resources (or lack thereof). In Mexico, however, people did not have the money to go to the doctor, much less a hospital. So as my great grandmother exemplified, this was an option, perhaps and extreme one, but an option nevertheless.

If this story had occurred in our lifetime or in our country, it might've made headlines. My great grandmother was alone with all her children (14 total) while her husband would leave the family in order to come to America to provide money for them to live. We often hear of programs such as the Bracero program in which men left their families to work for a time in the United States. We don't often hear how the women are, or how their families are, without them. This story meant a lot to me because of the calmness my great grandmother contained throughout, even while telling this story she laughed. My grandma, the one who grabbed Mario, was less than 10 years old when she did this. It would not be surprising if a 10 year old ran out of the room screaming at the sight my grandmother saw. There are men, the fathers of the children who pass out at this sight while in a hospital. I can only

imagine how gory it would look with my great grandmother having no help. Yet, my grandmother helped with no hesitation. These two women are and evidently always have been, very strong.