

*Who was the mother of Higinio Aguayo, son of Macedonio Aguayo,  
born on 11 January 1929 in Atengo, Jalisco, Mexico?*

The parentage of Higinio Aguayo has been a mystery to his descendants who now live in the United States. Higinio claimed he was orphaned at the age of five or six and raised by distant relatives before striking out on his own at a young age. The only factual piece of information his granddaughter had was that his father's name was Macedonio Aguayo. Higinio Aguayo died in 2016 in Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico at the age of eighty-seven.<sup>1</sup>

Macedonio Aguayo registered the birth of his son, Higinio, at the office of civil registry in Atengo, Jalisco on 1 September 1929; the birth had occurred almost eight months earlier on January 11. Macedonio informed the clerk that he was age twenty-nine and "single," and his wish was to establish paternity. Macedonio's parents were Anastacio Aguayo and Leonides Rosales but, he omitted the name of his son's mother. The birth record refers to her as "mother unknown."<sup>2</sup> The terms "mother unknown" or "father unknown" were used in Mexican records going back to the

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<sup>1</sup> <client name redacted for privacy> (address redacted for privacy, Los Angeles, CA), email communication with Claudia Casillas, subject Higinio Aguayo, 18 May 2020; electronic file privately held by C. Casillas, Los Angeles, CA, 2020. Client requested a copy of Higinio's death certificate from family in Mexico, but as of due date of this assignment, it was not received.

<sup>2</sup> Atengo Registro Civil (Atengo, Jalisco, Mexico), "Nacimientos [Births] 1929," p. 17v, entry 43, Jose Higinio Aguayo, 1 September 1929; "Mexico, Jalisco, Civil Registration, 1857-2000," browsable images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1918187> : viewed 22 October 2020), path: Atengo > Nacimientos 1920-1930 > image 575.

Colonial era. The names and identities of parents were omitted from a record to protect privacy and usually applied when a child was born out of wedlock.<sup>3</sup>

Higinio Aguayo married Magdalena Murillo on 26 August 1950 in Atengo, Jalisco. The marriage record indicates that he was the “legitimate” son of Macedonio Aguayo and Guadalupe Pérez.<sup>4</sup> In Mexican naming customs, a woman does not change her surname upon marriage, she retains the surname given to her at birth. Despite this declaration of legitimacy, probably made by Higinio as the informant, no evidence exists that his parents were married and the family story corroborates that they were not.<sup>5</sup> However, there is sufficient evidence in other records to support that his mother was indeed Guadalupe Pérez.

In 1930, Mexico conducted a nationwide census of its population. It is the most accurate census because it counted about ninety percent of the population.<sup>6</sup> Only one “Higinio Aguayo” appears enumerated that year in the town of Atengo, Jalisco, a “six-year-old” living in the same household with a Maria Guadalupe Pérez, age twenty. Customarily, if a female had “Maria” before a second name that was not her surname, she was almost always known by her second name; in

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<sup>3</sup> Ann Twinam, *Public Lives, Private Secrets: Gender, Honor, Sexuality, and Illegitimacy in Colonial Spanish America*, (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999), 132.

<sup>4</sup> Atengo Registro Civil (Atengo, Jalisco, Mexico), “Matrimonios [Marriages] 1950,” p. 11v, entry 17, Yguinio Aguayo-Maria Magdalena Murillo, 23 August 1950; “Mexico, Jalisco, Civil Registration, 1857-2000,” browsable images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1918187> : viewed 22 October 2020), path: Atengo > Matrimonios 1947-1950 > image 97.

<sup>5</sup> Atengo Registro Civil (Atengo, Jalisco, Mexico), “Matrimonios [Marriages] 1924-1946,” and “Matrimonios [Marriages] 1947-1950,” in “Mexico, Jalisco, Civil Registration, 1857-2000,” browsable images *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1918187> : viewed 22 October 2020), path: Atengo > Matrimonios 1924-1946, and also 1947-1950, searches for Macedonio Aguayo-Guadalupe Pérez marriage. Also, see Sagrado Corazón de Jesús Catholic Church (Tenamaxtlán, Jalisco, Mexico), “Matrimonios [Marriages] 1907-1934,” in “Mexico, Jalisco, Catholic Church Records, 1590-1979,” browsable images *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1874591> : viewed 25 October 2020), path: Tenamaxtlán > Sagrado Corazón de Jesús Parish > Matrimonios 1907-1934, search for Macedonio Aguayo-Guadalupe Pérez marriage. Marriage records for this parish at *FamilySearch* end in 1934. For family corroboration, see Stephanie Aguayo, email communication, 18 May 2020.

<sup>6</sup> Michael Martinez, “Mexico’s 1930 Census Revealed, a Mine of Data for 32 Million Americans,” *CNN*, 24 September 2011, (<https://www.cnn.com/2011/09/24/us/1930-mexican-census/index.html> : accessed 26 October 2020), para. 3.

this case, Guadalupe. Table 1 lists all members of the household that appear in the census together. The population schedule did not define relationships between household members, and the boy’s age recorded in the census does not correlate with Higinio’s birth record—he was sixteen months old in May of 1930 when the census taker visited. The only explanation for this discrepancy is that there were two columns for age on the census form: one for years, and one for months. The person recording the information probably meant to write in the months column instead of the years column. Given that Higinio was an infant, and even if the enumerator meant to write-in “six months,” this explanation is logical.

Higinio and Guadalupe lived in the household of Concepción González, a forty-five-year-old widow. The cohabitants comprised seven persons and six different surnames. A notable detail

| Table 1  |     |                       |                        |
|--|-----|-----------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Household of Concepción González in 1930 <sup>a</sup></b> |     |                       |                        |
| (listed in the order they appear in the census)              |     |                       |                        |
| NAME   | SEX | AGE IN<br>MAY<br>1930 | RELATIONSHIP<br>STATUS |
| Concepción González  | F   | 45                    | widow                  |
| Feliciana Mora   | F   | 25                    | single                 |
| Francisco Trinidad   | M   | 35                    | free union             |
| Maria Guadalupe Pérez  | F   | 20                    | free union             |
| Jose Merced Cueva  | M   | 10                    |                        |
| Jose Felix Cueva   | M   | 8                     |                        |
| Higinio Aguayo   | M   | 6                     |                        |
| Julian Pérez   | M   | 16                    |                        |

<sup>a</sup> “Mexico National Census, 1930,” browsable images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1307314> : viewed 23 October 2020), path: Jalisco > Atengo > Atengo > image 18; for Estados Unidos Mexicanos, 5° Censo de Poblacion, Estado de Jalisco, Municipio de Atengo, Pueblo de Atengo, Cuartel Numero 4°, sheet 9 (stamped), 23 Minas, Concepción González household.

in this record is that Guadalupe Pérez and Francisco Trinidad appear to be living in a “*union libre*” relationship, which translates to “free union,” or common-law union. They were the only two adults in the household assigned that relationship status, so presumably they were in a relationship together. This implies that Guadalupe had moved on from her relationship with Macedonio Aguayo.

Three months after the census taker visit, on 22 August 1930, Guadalupe Pérez gave birth to Maria Ascención Pérez. The child’s birth was registered on 24 August 1930 at the municipal registry in Atengo, Jalisco. The record declares that Maria Ascención was the “second child” born to Guadalupe Pérez, “single,” and an “unknown father.” The informant was sixteen-year-old Julian Pérez, most likely the same Julian enumerated with the family in the census, see Table 1.<sup>7</sup> On the same day of her civil birth registration, Maria Ascención Pérez was baptized by the Catholic Church under the name M. Ascención Aguayo. The baptismal record states she was the “natural” daughter of Macedonio Aguayo and Guadalupe Pérez. Her paternal grandparents were Anastacio Aguayo and Leonides Rosales, her maternal grandparents were Marcial Pérez and Concepción González. This record identifies the head-of-household in the census as the mother of Guadalupe Pérez.<sup>8</sup> The term “natural” was used when referring to a child born to unwed parents.<sup>9</sup> Higinio and his sister, M. Ascención, were confirmed by the Catholic Church together on 8 November 1930. The siblings were probably confirmed as infants because this sacrament was only performed when

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<sup>7</sup> Atengo Registro Civil (Atengo, Jalisco, Mexico), “Nacimientos [Births] 1930,” p. 25r, entry 63, Maria Ascención Pérez, 24 August 1930; “Mexico, Jalisco, Civil Registration, 1857-2000,” browsable images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1918187> : viewed 25 October 2020), path: Atengo > Nacimientos 1920-1930 > image 629.

<sup>8</sup> Sagrado Corazón de Jesús Catholic Church (Tenamaxtlán, Jalisco, Mexico), “Bautismos de hijos naturales [Baptisms of illegitimate children] 1915-1933, Vol. 3,” p. 210, entry 771, M. Ascension Aguayo, 24 August 1930; “Mexico, Jalisco, Catholic Church Records, 1590-1979,” browsable images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1874591> : viewed 25 October 2020), path: Tenamaxtlán > Sagrado Corazón de Jesús Parish > Bautismos de hijos naturales 1880-1947 > image 576.

<sup>9</sup> Twinam, *Public Lives, Private Secrets*, 128-130.

the Bishop visited each parish, which would be every few years in smaller parishes like Tenamaxtlán.<sup>10</sup> The church record recognizes Macedonio Aguayo and Guadalupe Pérez as the parents of both children, thus the parental information correlates with their respective birth records.<sup>11</sup>

### *Guadalupe Pérez*

Higinio's mother, Guadalupe, was born at the dawn of the Mexican Revolution on 12 September 1910 in Atengo, Jalisco. Her civil birth record does not name her mother, but confirms her father was Marcial Pérez, age twenty-five and "single," who was present to register the birth.<sup>12</sup> On 7 May 1917, Guadalupe was confirmed by the Catholic Church and the record names Marcial Pérez and Concepción González as her parents.<sup>13</sup> Julian Pérez was Guadalupe's full brother. His birth was recorded on 29 January 1914 in Atengo, Jalisco.<sup>14</sup>

By 1935 Guadalupe had given birth to another son, named J. de Jesús Flores, confirmed by the Catholic Church on 16 February 1936. The confirmation record indicates that he was six

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<sup>10</sup> George R. Ryskamp, *Finding Your Hispanic Roots*, (Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Printing Co., 1997), 183.

<sup>11</sup> Sagrado Corazón de Jesús Catholic Church (Tenamaxtlán, Jalisco, Mexico), "Confirmaciones [Confirmations], Vol. 3," p. 155, entry 244-Higinio Aguayo and entry 243-Ascención Aguayo, 8 November 1930; "Mexico, Jalisco, Catholic Church Records, 1590-1979," browsable images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1874591> : viewed 25 October 2020), path: Tenamaxtlán > Sagrado Corazón de Jesús Parish > Confirmaciones 1877-1910, 1917-1943 > image 207.

<sup>12</sup> Atengo Registro Civil (Atengo, Jalisco, Mexico), "Nacimientos [Births] 1910," p. 31r, entry 80, Guadalupe Pérez, 15 September 1910; "Mexico, Jalisco, Civil Registration, 1857-2000," browsable images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1918187> : viewed 22 October 2020), path: Atengo > Nacimientos 1906-1915 > image 261.

<sup>13</sup> Sagrado Corazón de Jesús Catholic Church (Tenamaxtlán, Jalisco, Mexico), "Confirmaciones [Confirmations], Vol. 3," p. 42, entry 1558, Ma. Guadalupe Pérez, 7 May 1917; "Mexico, Jalisco, Catholic Church Records, 1590-1979," browsable images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1874591> : viewed 25 October 2020), path: Tenamaxtlán > Sagrado Corazón de Jesús Parish > Confirmaciones 1877-1910, 1917-1943 > image 150.

<sup>14</sup> Atengo Registro Civil (Atengo, Jalisco, Mexico), "Nacimientos [Births] 1914," p. 3r, entry 6, Julian Pérez, 29 January 1914; "Mexico, Jalisco, Civil Registration, 1857-2000," browsable images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1918187> : viewed 22 October 2020), path: Atengo > Nacimientos 1906-1919 > image 466.

months old and the son of Guillermo Flores and Guadalupe Pérez.<sup>15</sup> On 25 March 1940, a daughter born to the same couple named M. Alejandra Flores was also confirmed by the Church.<sup>16</sup>

Guadalupe Pérez died on 18 August 1987 in Atengo, Jalisco. Her death record indicates that she was the widow of Guillermo Flores. The informant was her son-in-law, Aniceto González Gutierrez.<sup>17</sup> Guillermo Flores died one year earlier on 27 July 1986 and the informant upon his death was his forty-one-year-old son, Francisco Flores Pérez.<sup>18</sup> All evidence suggests that the couple had at least three children together: J de Jesús, M. Alejandra, and Francisco Flores.

No marriage record exists for Guadalupe Pérez and Guillermo Flores in Atengo, Jalisco, where the couple lived and died, nor in the Catholic parish of Tenamaxtlán, to which Atengo

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<sup>15</sup> Sagrado Corazón de Jesús Catholic Church (Tenamaxtlán, Jalisco, Mexico), "Confirmaciones [Confirmations], Vol. 3," p. 167, entry 169, J. de Jesús Flores, 7 May 1917; "Mexico, Jalisco, Catholic Church Records, 1590-1979," browsable images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1874591> : viewed 25 October 2020) path: Tenamaxtlán > Sagrado Corazón de Jesús Parish > Confirmaciones 1877-1910, 1917-1943 > image 213. He died on 9 September 1984, see Atengo Registro Civil (Atengo, Jalisco, Mexico), "Defunciones [Deaths] 1984," p. 6r, acta 11, Jesús Flores Pérez, 8 September 1984; "Mexico, Jalisco, Civil Registration, 1857-2000," browsable images *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1918187> : viewed 25 October 2020), path: Atengo > Defunciones 1962-1995 > image 422.

<sup>16</sup> Sagrado Corazón de Jesús Catholic Church (Tenamaxtlán, Jalisco, Mexico), "Confirmaciones [Confirmations], Vol. 3," p. 230, entry 27, M. Alejandra Flores, 25 March 1940; "Mexico, Jalisco, Catholic Church Records, 1590-1979," browsable images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1874591> : viewed 25 October 2020), path: Tenamaxtlán > Sagrado Corazón de Jesús Parish > Confirmaciones 1877-1910, 1917-1943 > image 248.

<sup>17</sup> Atengo Registro Civil (Atengo, Jalisco, Mexico), "Defunciones [Deaths] 1987," no. 003471, libro 1, acta 14, Maria Guadalupe Pérez González, 18 August 1987; "Mexico, Jalisco, Civil Registration, 1857-2000," browsable images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1918187> : viewed 25 October 2020), path: Atengo > Defunciones 1962-1995 > image 489.

<sup>18</sup> Atengo Registro Civil (Atengo, Jalisco, Mexico), "Defunciones [Deaths] 1986," no. 48974, acta 08, Guillermo Flores Medina, 27 July 1986; "Mexico, Jalisco, Civil Registration, 1857-2000," browsable images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1918187> : viewed 25 October 2020), path: Atengo > Defunciones 1962-1995 > image 460.

belonged.<sup>19</sup> The information in their death records, however, suggests they remained together until his death in 1986.

## CONCLUSION

In the late 1920s, Guadalupe Pérez lived an unconventional life in a small agrarian town during the time that Mexico was rebuilding after the Revolution. Her son Higinio's birth record omitted her name, while her daughter Maria Ascención's birth record omitted her romantic partner's name. Nevertheless, by correlating the information contained in the 1930 census, the municipal birth and death records, and the Catholic Church baptism and confirmation records, we can reconstruct her relationships and create a timeline of events. The records do not tell us if, how, or why Higinio Aguayo became estranged or "orphaned" from his family; they only illuminate on the life of his mother.

The children of Guadalupe Pérez were:

- i. **HIGINIO AGUAYO**, born on 11 January 1929, in Atengo, Jalisco, enumerated with his mother in the 1930 census. He married Magdalena Murillo on 26 August 1950 in Atengo, Jalisco, and died in 2016 in Guadalajara, Jalisco.
- ii. **MARIA ASCENCIÓN AGUAYO**, born on 22 August 1930, in Atengo, Jalisco and baptized on 24 August 1930 in Tenamaxtlán, Jalisco.
- iii. **J. DE JESÚS FLORES**, born about 1935, probably in Atengo, Jalisco. Confirmed by the Catholic Church on 16 February 1936 in Tenamaxtlán, Jalisco.
- iv. **M. ALEJANDRA FLORES**, born about 1939, probably in Atengo, Jalisco. Confirmed by the Catholic Church on 29 March 1940 in Tenamaxtlán, Jalisco.
- v. **FRANCISCO FLORES**, born about 1945, probably in Atengo, Jalisco. He was the informant on his father's death record in 1986.

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<sup>19</sup> Atengo Registro Civil (Atengo, Jalisco, Mexico), "Matrimonios [Marriages] 1924-1946," and "Matrimonios [Marriages] 1947-1950," in "Mexico, Jalisco, Civil Registration, 1857-2000," browsable images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1918187> : viewed 22 October 2020), path: Atengo > Matrimonios 1924-1946, and also 1947-1950, searches for Guillermo Fores-Guadalupe Pérez marriage. Also, see Sagrado Corazón de Jesús Catholic Church (Tenamaxtlán, Jalisco, Mexico), "Matrimonios [Marriages] 1907-1934," in "Mexico, Jalisco, Catholic Church Records, 1590-1979," browsable images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1874591> : viewed 25 October 2020), path: Tenamaxtlán > Sagrado Corazón de Jesús Parish > Matrimonios 1907-1934, search for Macedonio Aguayo-Guadalupe Pérez marriage. Marriage records for this parish at *FamilySearch* end in 1934.