

Francisca Lopez Kimball

(1841- 1907)

Francisca Lopez Kimball was born in Mexico. The untimely death of her mother, Maria del Carmen Severina Ruiz de Esparza, in 1847, was the event which changed the course of her life.

Her father was prominent trader/merchant, Spaniard, Damaso Lopez. In 1850, she travelled the Santa Fe Trail from Santa Fe to St. Louis Mo with her father and her three brothers. She was enrolled in the Academy of the Visitation Convent School at age 8.

The following are her own words, from her recollections of her childhood: "We children found ourselves in a covered wagon with an escort of soldiers to protect us from the Indians, bound for the United States. We traveled six months through the plains. The first place I remember to have stopped was a town in Missouri called Independence. We visited a friend of my father's there, Mr. Waldo, who had lived some years in Mexico. My father left two of my brothers, Melquiades (11) and Francisco (6 or 7), in Independence at boarding school. Then we came to St. Louis. I was placed in the Visitation Convent, my brother Trinidad (about 14) at the Jesuit College, my Father saying to me as he bade me goodbye, "Francisca, you are to learn everything that the Nuns can teach you. When you have finished your education, then I will take you to Spain to see my old home."

After this journey, Francisca never saw her father again. She became a well-educated young woman of St. Louis, with connections to the founders of St. Louis through her marriage to Benjamin Kimball in 1860.

The Santa Fe Trail delivered Francisca to a new life, where she was able to obtain a good education, an introduction into St. Louis society and a stable life. She is an example of someone who benefitted greatly from the mobility provided by the Santa Fe Trail.

