

When Census Records Led Me Astray: Was My Ancestor Chavez or Garcia?

by Angela Lewis

For those of us who have been doing genealogy for several years, one of the best things that has happened is that new records have been extracted, and more are being digitized. The website *FamilySearch* (www.familysearch.org) has really expanded in the last two or three years. I had never gone back and reviewed some of my previous genealogical research, because for many years I have mainly focused on the Gurulé family - the lineage, keeping the Gurulé website (www.gurulefamily.org) updated, and answering queries about Gurulés.



My grandfather, Telesfor Chavez, born 1887. Or, was he Telesfor Garcia?

Late last year, as I was going through some of my records, I decided to once again review the Chavez family line that joins my Gurulé family. My mother Isabel Chavez was the daughter of Telesfor Chavez and Rafaela Gurulé. Each time I'd work on her father's line, I'd hit the same brick wall, just never could get past it. Here's the story of my brick wall, how I was led astray, and how the new available records solved the mystery.



I had traced my grandfather Telesfor back to his g-g-grandfather Juan Chavez who was married to Trinidad Anaya.¹ Maria de la Trinidad was baptized in 1834 at San Felipe, the daughter of Martin Analla and Viatriz [Beatriz] Garcia.² In the 1850 census, the couple is newly married, with no children. In the 1860 and 1870 census, Juan used the Garcia surname, and then back to Chavez in the 1880 census. I always assumed that he sometimes used the Garcia surname because of his mother-in-law Beatriz. Here is a summary of the census records:



1850: Bernalillo County, New Mexico³

Juan Charvis (age 25, servant), Trinidad Charvis (1830, age 20)



1860: Corrales, Bernalillo County, New Mexico⁴

Juan Garcia (age 43, laborer), Trinidad Anilla (age 28), Selsor Dolores Garcia (age 10), Ricardo Garcia (age 7), Ignacia Garcia (age 4), Jose Anilla (age 2), Beatrice Garcia (age 52)

1 A marriage record has not been found for this couple. For their marital relationship, see census records and baptismal records for their children cited in this article.

2 San Felipe Church, Albuquerque, New Mexico, Baptisms 1828-1850, Maria de la Trinidad Analla baptism (1834); FHL film 16,636.

3 1850 U.S. census, Bernalillo County, New Mexico, population schedule, p. 11 (stamped), dwelling 189, family 189, Juan Charvis household; digital image, *FamilySearch* (www.familysearch.org : accessed 14 February 2016); citing NARA microfilm publication M432, roll 467, imaged from FHL film 16,603.

4 1860 U.S. census, Bernalillo County, New Mexico, population schedule, precinct 2, Corrales, p. 124 (penned), dwelling 1167, family 1033, Juan Garcia household; digital image, *FamilySearch* (www.familysearch.org : accessed 14 February 2016); citing NARA microfilm publication M653, roll 712, imaged from FHL film 803,712.

1870: Corrales, Bernalillo County, New Mexico⁵

Juan Garcia (age 50, farm laborer), Trinidad Garcia (age 35, keeping house), Celsa Garcia (age 19), Ricardo Garcia (age 16), Ignacia Garcia (age 13), Emilio Garcia (age 11), Nicolasa Garcia (age 9), Maria Cruz Garcia (age 3), Pedro Garcia (age 1)

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1880: Corrales, Bernalillo County, New Mexico⁶

Juan Chaves (age 50, ranchero), Trinidad Chaves (age 48, keeping house), Amelio Chaves (age 19, laborer), Maria Chaves (age 13), Colastica Chaves (age 10), Pedro Chaves (age 3)

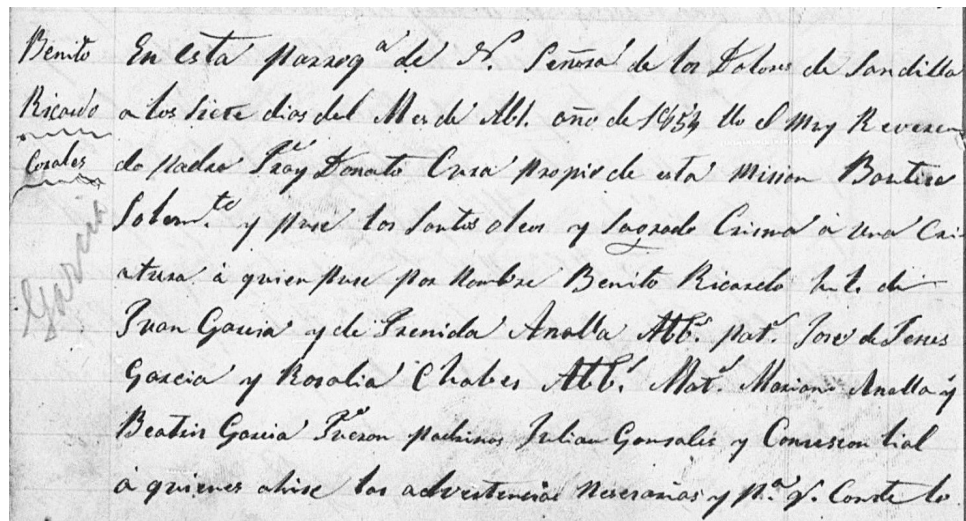
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One of the methods I'd learned about genealogy research over the years was to look at the neighbors, as many times families all moved together, and this is where I made the wrong turn. The 1850 census shows my ancestor Juan Chavez living nearby to several other Chavez families, all about the same age. There is also an elder Chavez family that could have been the parents of Juan and these other younger Chavez families. I never had any luck finding a marriage record for Juan and Trinidad, mainly because records are missing for Bernalillo, so finding them living by all these Chavez families was so exciting. It had to be the right family! Still, even with this find, I had not progressed too much further back. I have since learned an important lesson, though. Just because people with the same surname as your ancestor live next door to them. don't assume that means they are related.

How did I find out that I had the wrong Chavez family? I was talking to Henrietta Christmas, our NMGS President, one day, and asked her to look at my research. I was hoping a fresh set of eyes could see what I was missing, and she's such a good genealogist. I was totally shocked and amazed when Henrietta found some baptism records that named the grandparents. I had the wrong Chavez line! In fact, I had the wrong surname!

Baptism of Benito Ricardo Garcia

The baptism of Juan and Trinidad's son Benito Ricardo on 7 April 1854 at Bernalillo held one of the keys to the puzzle. The record shows he was the legitimate child of Juan Garcia and Trinidad Analla, with paternal grandparents as Jose de Jesus Garcia and Rosalia Chabes, and maternal grandparents as Martin Analla and

A handwritten document in Spanish, likely a church record, detailing the baptism of Benito Ricardo Garcia. The text is written in cursive and includes the names of the parents, grandparents, and the priest. The document is dated 1854 and mentions the location of Bernalillo. The text is written on a piece of paper that appears to be a page from a book or a ledger, with some lines of text visible on the left side of the page.

Benito Ricardo Garcia baptism, 1854

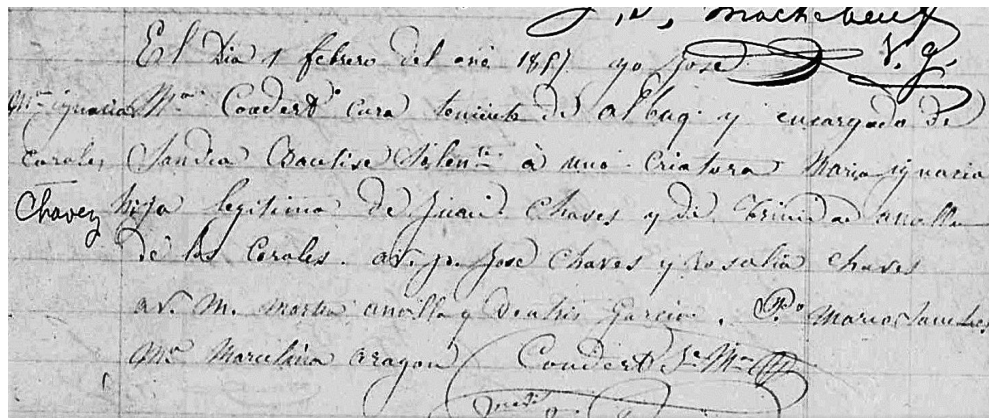
5 1870 U.S. census, Bernalillo County, New Mexico, population schedule, Corrales, p. 56 (stamped), dwelling 25, family 25, Juan Garcia household; digital image, *FamilySearch* (www.familysearch.org : accessed 14 February 2016); citing NARA microfilm publication M593, imaged from FHL film 552,392.

6 1880 U.S. census, Bernalillo County, New Mexico, population schedule, Corrales, enumeration district (ED) 1, p. 24B (penned), dwelling 195, family 252, Juan Chaves household; digital image, *FamilySearch* (www.familysearch.org : accessed 14 February 2016); citing NARA microfilm publication T9, roll 802, imaged from FHL film 1,254,802.

Beatris Garcia. His padrinos were Julian Gonzales and Consencion Leal.⁷

Baptism of Maria Ygnacia Chavez

In another baptismal record for a child of Juan and Trinidad, the surname changes to Chavez. Maria Ygnacia Chavez was baptized on 1 February 1857 at Bernalillo. Her parents were named as Juan Chaves and Trinidad Analla, paternal grandparents were Jose Chaves and Rosalia Chaves, with the maternal grandparents as Martin Analla and Beatris Garcia.⁸ While this record doesn't show the same surname for Juan, or for his father Jose, as the record for Benito Ricardo does, the mother is the same, the maternal grandparents are the same, the paternal grandmother are the same – something was starting to click!



Maria Ygnacia Chavez baptism, 1857

One of the other things Henrietta always teaches is to create timelines, laying out the details that you know. The below table shows the varied names used in the census records and other church records. Unfortunately, after the baptism of Maria Ygnacia, the grandparents are not listed in the baptismal records.

Juan and Trindad Timeline

Event	Date	Name Used
Census ⁹	1850	Juan Chaves & Trinidad
Baptism ¹⁰	1854	Benito Ricardo, s/Juan Garcia & Trinidad Analla
Baptism ¹¹	1857	Ygnacia, d/Juan Chaves & Trinidad Analla
Baptism ¹²	1859	Emilio, s/Juan Chaves & Trinidad Anaya
Census ¹³	1860	Juan Garcia & Trinidad Anilla
Baptism ¹⁴	1862	Nicolasa, d/Juan Garcia & Trinidad Anaya
Baptism ¹⁵	1867	Maria Angela, d/Juan Garcia & Trinidad Analla

7 Our Lady of Sorrows Church, Bernalillo, New Mexico, Benito Ricardo Garcia baptism (1854); FHL film 16,726.

8 Ibid., Maria Ygnacia Chavez baptism (1857).

9 1850 U.S. census, Bernalillo Co., NM, pop. sch., p. 11 (stamped), dwell. 189, fam. 189, Juan Charvis.

10 Our Lady of Sorrows, Bernalillo, NM, Benito Ricardo Garcia baptism, 1854.

11 Ibid., Maria Ygnacia Chavez baptism, 1857.

12 Ibid., Jose Emilio Chaves, 1859.

13 1860 U.S. census, Bernalillo Co., NM, pop. sch., p. 124 (penned), dwell. 1167, fam. 1033, Juan Garcia.

14 Our Lady of Sorrows, Bernalillo, NM, Maria Nicolasa Garcia baptism, 1862.

15 Ibid., Maria de los Angeles Garcia baptism, 1867.

Event	Date	Name Used
Baptism ¹⁶	1869	Pedro, s/Juan Chaves & Trinidad Analla
Census ¹⁷	1870	Juan Garcia & Trinidad
Baptism ¹⁸	1872	Escolastica, d/Juan Chavez & Trinidad Analla
Baptism ¹⁹	1873	Mariano, s/Juan Chavez & Trinidad Analla
Census ²⁰	1880	Juan Chavez & Trinidad

Trinidad's name is consistent. It's the husband - Juan Chavez or Juan Garcia - who appears to be the problem. I had always assumed that Beatriz Garcia, Trinidad's mother, was the reason they used the Garcia surname at times. I was wrong. I learned another lesson: research all of the family members, not just your direct line, and make notes about every clue you find.

I am now convinced that Juan Chavez and Juan Garcia, the son of Jose de Jesus Garcia and Rosalia Chaves, are the same man. I'm sure many of you have also run into this same situation, where the son uses his mother's surname.

In this case, Juan Garcia used his mother's Chavez surname, and that's why he appeared as Chavez in the 1850 and 1880 census, as well as in some of the baptismal records for his children. My theory that he had used the Garcia surname because of his mother-in-law, Beatriz Garcia, was wrong. It was Juan's own mother who have the Chavez surname, while his father was a Garcia. Now I need to do two things. First, I have to tell my cousins that we've got a Garcia line instead of Chavez. Second, I need to go back through my records and do some more expanded research in *FamilySearch*. Genealogy never ends!

About the Author: Angela Lewis retired in 2011 and now devotes a lot of her time to helping people with their lookups. She is also the county coordinator for NMGenWeb, Bernalillo Co., NM, and San Miguel Counties. She continues to work on the Gurule lineage and is always looking for new clues to connect families.



Maria Salome Montoya, born 1858. Wife of Benito Ricardo Garcia.

16 Our Lady of Sorrows, Bernalillo, NM, Pedro Chaves baptism, 1869.

17 1870 U.S. census, Bernalillo Co., NM, pop. sch., p. 56 (stamped), dwell. 25, fam. 25, Juan Garcia.

18 Our Lady of Sorrows, Bernalillo, NM, Escolastica Chaves baptism, 1872.

19 Ibid., Mariano Chaves, 1873.

20 1880 U.S. census, Bernalillo Co., NM, pop. sch. p. 24B (penned), dwell. 195, fam. 252, Juan Chaves.