

The Military Bounty Land of Seferino Gurule

Uncovering family data in land application records

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Bounty Lands were given as a reward to men who had enlisted in the military. New Mexico was no different, and in this case, Seferino Gurule applied for land, consisting of 160 acres, on 12 October 1895 while living in San Miguel County, New Mexico. His Land Warrant no. 114254 is detailed in 26 pages of filings, contracts, and questionnaires.¹

When requesting a Bounty Land record, you need to know the warrant number, acreage, and what act this was done under. In Seferino's case, the Act was 1855. As genealogists, we want to know more about the applicant, their families, where the land was located, and to garner any new data for our records. Let's walk through some of these documents.

We have copies of the application, patent, testimony of witnesses, non-mineral claims, affidavits and other documents.

Apparently, Seferino applied for a homestead in 1893, and some of the documents in the packet refer to that and are titled "Homestead" in some form.

The first homestead testimony was from Ambrocio Chavez, who was 23 and lived in Watrous. He states part of the land is timber, part is grazing and there are no minerals. He knew Seferino since 1890 when he had been living on the said land. He knows the family and states that Seferino was married in 1893. The property had a four-room house, corrals, and one barn with two big rooms, valued at about \$90. He signed and dated this on 30 September 1895.

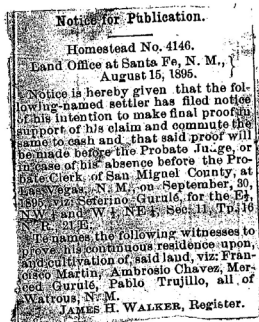
Seferino Gurule himself fills out the Claimant Testimony and we find that he has a homestead entry No. 4146, he is 24 years old and he lives in Watrous. He is native-born. His house was built in April 1893 at which time he established actual residence. He has

a three-room house, two corrals, stables, valued at \$80 and \$90. He states that his wife² has continuously resided on the land while he is away on business at times. He signed his name on the document.

Another testimony is that of Francisco Martin, 38, who lives in Watrous and knew that Seferino had been living there since about 1893. He has seasonal crops on four to five acres, some timber and grazing land. He acknowledges the house has four rooms, stables, corrals and they are valued at \$80 and \$90. He does not sign but makes a mark and the testimony is dated 30 September 1895.

The following documents are within the packet and are all very repetitive in terms of the land, signatures, etc. They have been rearranged so they are in date order moving backwards.

- An Affidavit on 4 May 1893, swearing that he has never filed for other lands. Signed Seferino Gurule, Chas Rudolph, County Clerk.
- A Non-Mineral Affidavit is filled out 4 May 1893, by Seferino Gurule for the lands in Watrous, Mora County, New Mexico. This is witnessed by J. C. Tipton stating he thinks Seferino is a credible person. The probate clerk is now Chas. Rudolph.
- The homestead record itself, application dated 6 May 1893, payment of \$16.00 for 160 acres.
- A Certificate as to Posting of Notice is filled out by James Walker, stating that the notice was posted in his office for 30 days in a conspicuous place, beginning 15 August 1895.
- Notice for Publication in the newspaper. Lorenzo Lucero states he is the Foreman of the La Voz del Pueblo a newspaper published in Las Vegas and has general circulation. The advertisement is in said paper six times, dated 17 August 1895.
- The Affidavit Required of Homestead Claimants is within the packet. A legal filing on the land itself. (5 September 1895)
- Non-Mineral Affidavits are filled out and signed. This land does not have minerals per the paperwork. (30 September 1895)
- A Final Affidavit Required of Homestead Claimants was filled out explaining the coordinates of the land. Signed by Seferino Gurule and Patricio Gonzales, the Probate Clerk for San Miguel County. (9 October 1895)
- Next is a Register and Receiver's Report which has 20 questions many of which are yes/no answers; the checklist for the filing. (12 October 1895)
- A letter from the State of California, County of Los Angeles. Nora McCartney states she is the person who assigns bounty land warrant No. 114,254 to David H. McCartney on 23 July 1895, she is over the age of 21 and she signed it. Sworn on 30 December 1895 before Notary Public Preston in Los Angeles



TERRITORY OF NEW MEXICO, } ss.
 County of San Miguel.
Lorenzo Lucero, being duly sworn deposes and says that he is *Foreman* of the *La Voz del Pueblo*, a Newspaper published at Las Vegas, in said County, and having a general circulation therein.
 That the advertisement, a copy of which is hereto attached, was published in said paper *six times* consecutively, the first publication being on the *17th* day of *August* 1895 and the last on the *21st* day of *September* 1895
Lorenzo Lucero

County.

Now it gets confusing. Apparently, this land was owned by someone else prior to Seferino applying for a homestead. Speculating that he applied for this land, built a home, corrals, barns and used the land for some time is part of the testimony. Perhaps when the notices were posted, someone recognized the property description and informed the land office this once belonged to someone else or was currently owned by someone else. Whatever the case may be, Seferino found himself having to revoke ownership of this land of Military Bounty. We know he did not serve in the military, so this type of land was not something he could apply for.

Also, part of this paperwork was a letter dated 11 July 1891. A transcription follows:

State of California, County of Los Angeles

Nora McCartney of Los Angeles City, California, being duly sworn deposes and says: that she is the widow of, and executrix of the last Will and Testament of William McCartney, deceased; that her said late husband died in April 1890; that during his lifetime he was the owner by purchase and assignment of a certain Military Land Warrant No 114254 for 160 acres issued under

Act of Congress of March 3, 1855 to one Madison Hern, now of Watrous, Post Office, Territory of New Mexico, who sold and assigned the same in good faith and for a valuable consideration to S. B. Watrous & Son, now of Watrous, Post Office, Territory of New Mexico, who sold and assigned it in good faith and for a valuable consideration to Frank Samples, now as she is informed and believes as a resident of the State of Kentucky, who sold and assigned the same in good faith and for a valuable consideration to said William McCartney, deceased, who was the owner of the same at the time of his death; that a short time prior to his death said Warrant was lost and said William McCartney after thorough and diligent search in every place where it would be likely to be

kept, was unable to find said warrant; that her late husband had not during his lifetime, sold, transferred, assigned or hypothecated said warrant, nor has she as the executrix of his last Will and Testament sold transferred, assigned or hypothecated the same, nor has any person having any interest in the estate of her late husband so done to her knowledge.

That said Warrant is lost and if now in existence would belong to the estate of said William McCartney, deceased; and this affiant Mrs. Nora McCartney as the widow of one of the heirs of, and executrix of the last will and testament of said William McCartney deceased, hereby gives notice that she intends to apply under section 2441 of the Revised Statutes of the United States for and on behalf of the heirs of said William McCartney deceased to the Hon. Commissioner of Pensions for a duplicate of said lost military Land Warrant No 114254, Act of March 3, 1855, and she gives this notice to the Hon. Commissioner of the General Land Office, in order that if said Military Land Warrant is presented for location at his Department the same may be withheld from location until the legal ownership of same is established. That she is the identical person named in the annexed copy of Letters Testamentary, Nora McCartney.

I hereby certify that the foregoing affidavit was sworn to and subscribed before me this 11th day of July 1891 and that the affiant is personally known to me, and that I verify that I believe her to be a credible person and that I have no interest in this claim. H. Ward, County Clerk, by C. Hamilton.

The last document which is written on in every space is dated 1 February 1895 giving the warrant to Mrs. Nora McCartney.

The transfer was signed sealed and sworn to before me this 1 February 1895, Otto Lange, Notary Public.

In Los Angeles, California, July 23, 1895, Nora McCartney acknowledges receipt of the Land Warrant.

She transfers that to David McCartney.

Then he sells, assigns and transfers the land to Seferino Gurule and his heirs, and assigns forever the Bounty Land Warrant, and all rights, title and interest. David McCartney, assigned by Nora McCartney, signs the transfer, which is dated 6 September 1895. There is no dollar amount written in this section.

Seferino Gurule, do hereby, relinquish to the United States the within Military Bounty Land Warrant, on Certificate of location in payment of the E2, NM4 and W2 NE4, Section 11, Tp 16 N. Range 21 E, located in my name at the land office at Santa Fe, N. Mex, this 6th day of May 1895. Attest. Charles Tipton, T. Tipton, Seferino Gurule.

In looking at the census records for him, we wanted to make sure Seferino the owned land. In the following censuses, he is identified as:

1900 Watrous, Mora, New Mexico: Seferino Gurule, 26; Cicilia, 24; Luiz, 4. Rents his land and lives in a home.³

1910, Encinosa, San Miguel, New Mexico: Seferino Gurule, 39; Cecilia, 36; Luis, 13. They own their own home, no mortgage.⁴

In summary, this Bounty Land was never meant for Seferino Gurule. His homestead land somehow got caught up in prior ownership and his claim is denied or relinquished as he attests to that fact. Although never identified in these documents as a homestead in error, the one statement in the homestead testimony tells us he lived on the land from 1890-1895, but he would have moved off the land once he signed the documents, taking his wife and family with him. Or he may have failed to live on the land for 10 years and the homestead application became void. There are still questions that need to be answered, and more research to be done. This land record was valuable for us, the researchers, as it tells a story we wouldn't have known, the testimonies, and Seferino's part in this land transaction.

1 NARA, Record Group 49, Military Bounty Land Warrants, act of 1855, 160 acres, #114,254. Stack area 13W3, Compartment 15, Shelf 5, Box 2770.

2 FamilySearch.org, Film #17040, p 136 entry #3. Image 127 of 765. Severino Gurule, single, legitimate son of Rafael Gurule and Asencion Cordoba with Cecilia Martinez, single legitimate daughter of Jose Nieves Martinez and Trinidad Teshen, deceased; padrinos were Monico Martinez and Guadalupe Padilla.

3 Year: 1900; Census Place: Watrous, Mora, New Mexico; Roll: 1001; Page: 8B; Enumeration District: 0071; FHL microfilm: 1241001.

4 Year: 1910; Census Place: Encinosa, San Miguel, New Mexico; Roll: T624_917; Page: 14A; Enumeration District: 0209; FHL microfilm: 1374930.