

[Elizabeth Garrett]

Interview

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ELIZABETH GARRETT

Musician, Author, and Composer of State Song , " O Fair New Mexico " and Numerous Other Songs of The Southwest.

Elizabeth Garrett , Roswell musician, composer, and author of the State Song - 'O Fair New Mexico" and numerous other songs of the Southwest is the daughter of Pat Garrett,

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and Polinari Gutierrez, Garrett She was born at Eagle Creek, above the Ruidoso, in the White Mountains of New Mexico.

When an infant she moved with her parents to a ranch home five miles east of Roswell.

“My childhood days on the ranch were happy - neither constricted nor restricted,” states Miss Garrett.

Even though blind, since early childhood she led an active outdoor life - rode horseback, and found pleasure and happiness in all other active amusements and sports with her brother and sisters.

“One of my earliest recollections of composing was when swinging on a limb of an apple tree, in bloom, one spring,” said Miss Garrett, during an interview in which she gave an interesting story of her early life.

“Now I never catch the odor of apple-blossoms that I don't feel again the leafy shadows, under the trees, and the bright sunshine, and [hear?] the birds that called to each other from tree to tree. The song I composed was about the apple blossoms and the bees that were buzzing around the trees.” C18-6/[0?]/41-N. Mex.

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Elizabeth Garrett spoke in praise and affection of her brave father who accomplished a great deal as a peace officer, and holds a tender place in the hearts and memory of the people of Southeast New Mexico for putting an end to the dreaded outlaw and early-day desperado - known as Billy the Kid.

“Quite frequently,” said Miss Garrett, “my father had to bring harmony with a gun. I always have tried to do so by carrying a tune.” As a very small child she showed unusual musical talent, which she inherited from her mother who was descended from Spanish musicians.

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At six years of age Elizabeth's father placed her in a school for the blind in Austin, Texas, where her musical education was begun. After graduating with honors, she continued her music under the best teachers in Chicago and New York, paying her own way by her compositions and teaching. Her voice is a dramatic soprano. When hearing Elizabeth Garrett singing the state song - "O Fair New Mexico" - with her own people, one is completely carried away. Then to listen to her sing the music of the Old Masters - The Birth, Death and Resurrection of the Savior, is like a benediction.

Miss Garret has been enthusiastically received in all the large cities in the United States. She has been much feted and honored, but no matter how much they fete her - how greatly honored - they can not keep her, for "Daughter of the West", as she is, she always returns to her beloved New Mexico. New Mexico is proud of Elizabeth Garrett. Roswell people feel that she belongs to them, for here she has built her "Dream-House", and here she will live her life and write in song and music, the stories of her people and the land she loves.

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To really know Elizabeth Garrett, one should see her in her home. Her five room stucco adobe house, "La Casa", at 102 So. Lea Avenue has all the color and atmosphere of the early-day Spanish architecture, interior decoration and furnishing. The living room is bright and cheering (no shades are ever drawn to exclude the sunlight here) and there are flowers everywhere, with a soft blending of bright colors - gold predominating - in draperies, rugs and pictures.

There in a corner fireplace which speaks plainly of being the center of interest, and sun symbol designs and Thunder Birds adorn the andirons and door knocker made especially for this home by Colonel "Scotty" Andrew - being gifts of Mr. Joe Strong and his sister Mrs. Peter Nelson.

"most everything in my home are gifts from friends," stated Elizabeth Garrett.

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“Many are from my dearly loved Sister Pauline who lives at Las Cruces.”

The gentle touch of her seeing hands showed me each prized treasure. A hand painted tray - a “Spanish Seniorita”, the work of an artist friend, held the place of honor over the fireplace. There was a splendid painting “Small De Fonso” by Hazel Hanson, a framed Western picture with song - “Out In New Mexico” by Annie Laurie Snorf, that was put to music by Elizabeth Garrett, and many articles of gift furniture - a Spanish vase, inlaid coffee table, stools, chairs, lamps, and bright colored Navajo rugs. All these gifts accumulated for the “Dream House” - longed for, planned for and at last come true, in all its quaint artistry of construction.

The home is dedicated to Elizabeth Garrett's mother Polinari Gutierrez, Elizabeth Garrett's mother, who passed on to a home in the Great Beyond, two weeks after a visit to her daughter in Roswell, where as the widow of Pat Garrett, the famous pioneer peace officer of the Southwest, she was the guest of honor and proclaimed “Queen of the Old Timers” for the Old Timers’ celebration of 1936.

The three hobbies of Elizabeth Garrett are the theater, swimming and housekeeping. As a housekeeper, she is a constant marvel to her friends. There are no homes in which there are more highly polished floors, or shining windows. There are no more beautifully ironed clothes than those done by the hands of this musician, who does everything she attempts equally as well, as playing and singing or composing of songs in the career she has chosen.

Pets of Elizabeth Garrett are Teenie, - her “Seeing Eye Dog” that is her constant companion - “Jerry”, a canary that sings gaily in the sunshine of a big window - and “Smutty”, a cat - that considers himself master of the house, judging by the attention demanded by him from the other members of the household.

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The wonderful "Seeing Eye Dog", is from a dog training school in Morristown , New Jersey, where the most intelligent animals they can secure are trained as guides for the blind. Miss Garrett and her dog are familiar and interesting subjects of attention, as they are [seen?] almost daily, even in the most traffic-congested districts, where the keen eyes of the dog are ever watchful of every step of the adored mistress.

The home of Elizabeth Garrett, planned by her with the assistance of Frank [Stanhardt?], architect in typical of the unusual characteristics and individuality of this true "Daughter of the West", who has gone far, accomplished much, and is one of the most beloved 5 women of New Mexico. Just as her father - Pat Garrett was one of the most useful and beloved of men.