

Mexican Genealogy Tips – presenter Laura Gonzalez

Spanish Naming Customs

When the Spanish conquered most of the Americas, they brought along many of their customs, which continue to this day. One common, and confusing to outsiders, custom has to do with names.

When a child is born, h/she is given one or two first names, such as Andrés Manuel. Manuel is not his middle name, it's part of his *first* name.

Andrés Manuel also has last names, in this case López Obrador. His paternal, or father's, last name is López. His maternal, or mother's, last name is Obrador. Here in the USA, most people would assume that Obrador is the last name.

Adding to the confusion is that back in the day, it was very common to give children a “pre-first name,” with “María,” for girls and “José” for boys. Some people may have used María and José as their proper names, but most probably didn't.

Married names. Many Mexican women kept both their last names. Some may have replaced their maternal names with the husband's, or added *de* before his last name. Ex. Andrés Manuel López Obrador's mom was Manuela Obrador González. When she married AM's dad, Andrés López Ramón, she became Manuela Obrador López, or Manuela Obrador de López.

But to add to the confusion, some names came with the “*de*” and it may have nothing to do with the mother.

<https://script.byu.edu/SiteAssets/resources/guide.pdf> This guide is for those who desire to learn how to read old Spanish handwriting for the purpose of extracting parish records.

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