

## DELIS NEGRÓN AND HIS ADELISA

I consider my Father an exceptional man—a kind, caring and very attentive Father. He was greatly loved by all and well respected during his lifetime. He was a good husband, father and friend, a talented newspaperman and an inspired Poet. It is my deep yearning that his work be preserved; and that he be remembered for his exceptional qualities and character. I pray his beautiful words will be known and appreciated throughout the Hispanic Community.

It was not until later that I learned my Father was a political activist in Laredo politics. The opposition did not like his bitter criticism of the Old Party, so they terrorized him and our family. In the Fall of 1935, my father relocated all of us to Del Río.

We traveled 150 miles by car from Laredo to Del Río. Father was driving with Mother sitting next to him. Two-year old baby César sat on her lap. The rest of us, Tato (Delis, Jr., eight), Lico (Víctor Hugo, six), and Bebe (Adelisa, four), squeezed into a rumble seat along with a few family belongings.

The rumble seat was in the rear of the old black car. Although it was upholstered, it was a bumpy ride. We entertained ourselves by playing games and enjoying the scenery. The drive was quite an adventure for us. Nevertheless, it was a long tiresome drive for the three bouncing kids in the back!

We occasionally stopped to eat and rest. Everything was going well until half way to our destination we ran into problems. Father was a well-respected poet, a newspaper editor—a man of many talents—but definitely not mechanically inclined.

All of the sudden, we heard a strange pop and a loud scraping sound. One of the front tires had jumped off its rim. Undeterred, Papá ignored it and defiantly drove on. Mother continually insisted that he stop and fix the problem. Papá finally relented, stopped the car and got off. He made a brief inspection and climbed back declaring: "I am NOT changing the blasted tire—let's keep moving!" We rode the rest of the way to Del Río— sparks flying and a whole lot of screeching going on!

Soon after arriving (and now in our newly rental home) one night I went to sleep in the same bed with Papá and Mamá. The next morning, as if by magic, I awoke in a different bed. Smiling wide, Papá came in to wake me saying, "Come and meet your new baby brother!" What? I was confused because I didn't even now my mother was pregnant! I was delightfully surprised to meet my cute little baby brother. He was named after King David because David was born on Christmas Eve.

His friends and new co-workers must have recognized the talented newspaperman and activist. They soon came bearing gifts of big beautiful baskets full of fruits and vegetables and of course, baby gifts.

I believe that at my Father's request, Tía Lucía came from Laredo to help Mamá with the baby. She was kind and took good care of us. I enjoyed watching Tía wash the laundry and the baby diapers. She would hang the clothes outside to dry. It was so cold that when she pulled the diapers off the clothesline, they were stiff as boards! She softened them by repeatedly smoothing them out with her hand. Tía stayed with us until Mamá felt well enough to do things on her own.

During the hot summer, Papá wanted to make sure I learned English. He would take me by the hand and walk me down the street to an outdoor "escuelita." The children gathered under a big shady tree with a very young teacher. We each ran to choose our seats—produce crates. She taught us the alphabet, singing and dancing. We played games and ate sweet treats.

After class, we usually entertained ourselves by hunting Taratulas, looking for their burrows in the hard ground. We could spot the special markings they made while spinning their silky slumber bags. Unafraid, I would grab and pull them out as they slept. I played with them until I would hear Papá calling. I would run up to him, and then we would walk home, hand in hand.

When Papá deemed it safe. The family returned to Laredo, where he returned to work at the Laredo Times.

He grinned as he saw me and his lunch arrive daily at the newspaper. I walked ten blocks along the dusty streets of Laredo to bring him a hot meal in a “portavianda”. A “portavianda” is a stack of three containers. The bottom one was filled with burning coals to keep the food warm. I walked along the railroad tracks cutting through a beautiful plaza with kids roller skating and riding bicycles. My Father was always so happy because he got to see me and eat delicious homemade food.

Adelisa es risa, calor que se sirisa, rosa tempranera,  
un cariño en flor; del hogar la santa, fiel sacerdotisa,  
que la vida alumbra con su resplandor.

—Delis Negrón

God has greatly blessed me. I am the daughter of Delis Negrón. I especially feel the great love he had for me because of the unique name he bestowed on me. He was inspired to frame his own name, Delis with the A's from Adela, my mother's name. For that reason, and for the tenderness with which he treated me, I understand how priceless Adelisa is to Delis.

