

Ben Valdez

Dob: 6-25-1935
Dixon, NM



Charlotte Valdez



Parents: Jose Dolores and Juanita Valdez



Maternal parents Gregorita and Jose Pablo Lujan

Mother: Juanita Lujan Valdez - Dob: 12-12-1892 - Dixon

Father: Jose Dolores Valdez Dob: 4-4-1882 - Dixon

Maternal Grandparents: Gregorita Atencio - Dixon
Jose Pablo Lujan: Dob: 1862 - Dixon

Paternal Grandparents: Pelegrina Lovato Valdez - Dob: 10-30-1855 - Dixon
Juan Valdez: Dob 6-7-1853 - Dixon

Great Grandparents: Antonio Lujan: Dob: 1820 - Penasco
Manuela Lujan - Penasco
Felipe Atencio: Dob: 1843 - Rio Arriba
Juana Atencio - Rio Arriba
Loretta Lovato Pacheco: Dob: 1848 - Dixon
Gregorita, Beroniz, Zacarias, Silas, Celina, Laura, Rose, Lucy, Alice

Siblings:

Married: Charlotte Samaniego, 4-9-1956 - Kingman, Az.

Children: Debra Ann: Dob: 3-11-1957
Benjamin Gerald: Dob: 3-10-1960

Ben, was the youngest child born to Jose Dolores and Juanita Valdez. He attended the Mission school and Dixon elementary. The family moved to California in the mid-40, and returned to Dixon 3 years later. Ben was not aware that he had attended grammar school, in California, with his future wife. After the family returned to New Mexico, Ben lived in Colorado for a short time and then went to California where he met Charlotte. After they got married, the Valdez' lived in Victorville, Ca., for five years, and in 1961 moved to Dixon, to the family home, which has been owned by the Valdez' since early 1900. Ben and Charlotte worked hard remodeling the house, while working and raising their family. Ben retired from Los Alamos County and became very active in church and senior citizens activities. Debbie and Benjy attended Dixon Elementary, JFK Jr. High, and Menaul School. They moved away to continue their education, and stayed in the big cities. Ben enjoys working at the ranch, hunting, fishing and keeping busy around the ranch.

Younger memories are of walking to, and from school, and during the winter months they would skate on the river. When the cold was unbearable for walking, Ben and his sisters would stay in town, with an older married sister. Remembers coming home to chop wood to heat the house, driving the family truck, and with his father they would go to different communities to sell fruit. Ben's father signed for him to get his driver's license at age 13, as his father needed help with the driving. Putting fresh milk in a jar and tying a rope around it, and putting it in the water well to cool, made for a pleasant cool glass of milk afterwards. Growing up in El Bosque in Dixon has many memories, a horse named "Bole" who did not allow anyone to ride him, except Ben. Racing horses with his cousin was cause for a broken arm, and with his faithful dog he walked to Dixon and exchanged an egg for a candy at Santos store. Times were hard because there were no jobs in the area, but the family always had plenty to eat. Ben and his cousin Nene would take a jar of fruit from his mother or aunt's pantry, and would picnic under the trees. That was the best fruit ever! His cousins, who lived in the neighboring ranch, would come over and they would sleep in the ground out in the yard, counting the stars and telling stories about brujas, black cats, people disappearing, and ghosts. There were horse races at the Pareja, which is the mesa behind the house, and many men would bring their horses to race. In the summer and when the town celebrated Santa Rosa, the carnival would come to town and there were also the "maromeros" acrobats, who would perform great stunts, which was very exciting. In the 40's the family would spend their summer months in their ranch in Las Tusas (near Hopewell). Ben's dad had around 50 cows, so they would go and take care of them. Ben's uncle J.O. Lujan also had a ranch nearby, so they had relatives nearby. During this time there was a shortage of elk so Ben and his father would watch the Game and Fish Department bring elk to stock in that region. Going to California in the mid 1940's, was a fun event for the young boy, because four or five families family traveled together in a truck, and in the evening they would camp out. It took the family many days to get to their destination.

Ben went to school at the Mission School, joined 4-H Club, where Miss Cook taught them to make furniture. He still has a table, which won him a blue ribbon. Favorite teachers were Miss. Reed, and Delfino Valdez. Delfino would let Ben drive his car to run errands. Playing basketball and going to tournaments with classmates was great fun and hold many fond memories. His two older brothers were ten years and older so Ben grew up with lots of sisters. As a teenager he remembers taking his sisters and their friends, to dances and other youth activities. The Embudo Hospital had a recreation room where young people would gather to visit with the girls who worked there. Many of the young men in the community met their future wives there, including some church members.