



## MARIANA DE PINEDA: ABRIDGED BIOGRAPHY

Mariana de Pineda was born on 1<sup>st</sup> September 1804 into an era characterised by a social structure flagged by strata divisions of groups that could only be accessed through birth, alongside an unwieldy religious morality.

Her father, Mariano de Pineda Ramírez, belonged to a well-off family from the nobility. o **(V.A.13)**. Her mother, María de los Dolores Muñoz Bueno, was a youth of humble upbringing. This difference in classes prevented the two from marrying.

Mariana was christened in the Santa Ana Church **(V.A.12 and 18)**. Aged barely one, following the stormy judicial separation of her biological parents, the child went to live for a short period with her father, who passed away at the beginning of 1806. This same year she appeared for the first time as registered in a stately home in Carrera del Darro along with who would be her tutor at the time: her uncle José de Pineda. **(V.A.11)**. Following these ups and downs, her mother then disappeared from her life forever.

Only one year elapsed before Mariana left the company of her uncle. The presence of the young pupil proved bothersome for the future spouse of her tutor. The latter was obliged to waive her custody so that the tiny Mariana was eventually adopted by two loyal servants who became her loving adoptive parents: José de Mesa and Úrsula de la Presa. Although José de Pineda displayed heart-warming concern for his niece, correspondence signed by Mariana on 7<sup>th</sup> December 1830 **(V.A.3)** unearths the vicissitudes she faced to arrange her paternal inheritance, which she never obtained owing to the ambition of her aunt by marriage.

Alongside these harrowing events, Mariana's childhood was also marked by one of the most unsettling episodes in the political and ideological panorama, both at home and in Europe: the Napoleonic invasion and the War of Independence. During these years, she resided with her adoptive family in a street close to *Plaza Nueva*, overshadowed by the scenario of the executions performed by the invading army. The defeats inflicted on the French troops gave rise to the eagerly awaited proclamation of the 1812 Constitution, and the movement of the family unit to the Carrera del Darro. From here, she would bear witness to the return to power of Fernando VII and the implantation of absolutism for a period of six years.

In 1820, the proclamation of the liberal triennium, unveiled a new constitutionalist stage that would brand the first years of her married life. Having become an enlightened and literate young woman **(V.A.14, 15 and 16 and E.24)**, her marriage to the military serviceman Manuel de Peralta Valte in 1819 meant her first forays into political liberalism, while her family grew with the birth of her children José and Úrsula. The latter died shortly after her birth.

During these years of liberal euphoria, political gatherings were commonplace in cafeterias and bottle shops around *Plaza Nueva*, as well as in the drawing rooms of the most renowned liberal characters in Granada, rooms decorated with certain objects that can be seen in a corner of the exhibition room **(E.1 and E.20-E.28)**. The dames were decked out in the typical garments of the period **(E.19 and E.23)**, including jewels, fans and dance bags **(V.A.1, 2 and 4)**.

In 1821, Mariana moved with her family in the bustling Magdalena neighbourhood, specifically in calle Recogidas. Her early widowhood in 1823 would mark the start of the so-called ominous decade: a tragic period characterised by strict absolutism under King Fernando.

Under these circumstances, Mariana's militancy began, along with her participation in Granada's public and political life, infringing the prevailing social formalism and behavioural patterns of her era. Despite the prejudices of Granadan society, she met, at the residence of the Counts of Teba, Casimiro Brodett, a liberal militant whom she almost married. Later on, from her extramarital relationship with the lawyer José de la Peña and Aguayo **(V.A.7)**, a daughter named Luisa would be born.

Mariana's tragic execution by garrotting on 26<sup>th</sup> May 1831 as a result of her involvement in a liberal cause, and her refusal to snitch on her accomplices, meant the death of a brave and young woman, barely 26 years old, disposed of her assets and subject the profound distress over the future of her son Jose and the infant Luisa.

Following the death of Fernando VII, the re-established liberal government compensated them as victims of the liberal cause. From Mariana's son, José Peralta Pineda **(V.A.8)** a family letter has been preserved addressed to her niece **(V.A.9)**. Until 1846 Luisa was not acknowledged as being his legitimate daughter by her father, the opportunist José de la Peña Aguayo. He does so when, out of danger, Mariana is revered as a heroine and even presents himself as her first biographer. From Luisa's marriage to José Valverde and Orozco, José and Dolores were born **(V.A.5 and 6)**.

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