MUGARRIETA, ELVIRA VIRGINIA (BABE BEAN, JACK BEE GARLAND) 
(1869–1936)

“I have been wearing men’s clothing off and on for five years,”
“for as a man, I can travel freely, feel protected and find work.”.

Known as Babe Bean, Elvira Virginia Mugarrieta became an itinerant journalist and self-appointed social worker who dressed and later passed as a man in northern California. In her late teens, Mugarrieta lived as a vagabond hiking the Santa Cruz Mountains and called herself Jack Garland. Taking the name Babe Bean, by the 1890s Mugarrieta had become a reporter for the Stockton Evening Mail. She wrote on local mining conditions, the state hospital for the insane, hobo camps, gambling houses, and on political figures. In 1899 she stowed away as a cabin boy on a transport ship bound for the Philippines. A second such journey enabled her to live among the troops, accompany the Twenty-ninth infantry into battle, and work at a military hospital. Returning to San Francisco, Mugarrieta took the name Jack Bee Garland and lived the rest of his life in the Bay area. He earned a reputation for his humanitarian efforts. Upon his death in 1936, his identity as a woman was revealed. Mugarrieta was buried in the family plot in Colma, California, as a female wearing a white satin dress in sharp contract to the usual attire.