

Official Scenic Historic Marker Program



CPRC meeting: October 5, 2007

Name of Marker: Curanderas

Review: Original Text/Replacement Marker
 Move of Existing Marker

Revised Text
 New Marker

NMDOT District: Mora County

NMDOT Highway:

Suggested Site for Installation:

Existing or Proposed Text:

Throughout New Mexico, Hispanic women blessed with a special knowledge of herbs, household remedies, human health and a strong faith have been relied upon to cure real or imagined human maladies. These women played a prominent role in the well-being of their respective communities at times and in places where medical doctors did not exist or were sparse

Word Count: 63

Previous Title and Text: N/A

Researcher/author: Thomas E. Chávez

Source(s):

Ricardo Arguijo Martínez, editor, *Hispanic Culture and Health Care: Fact, Fiction, Folklore: Fact, Fiction, Folklore*. Saint Louis; Mosby Press, 1978.

Rubén Cobos, *A Dictionary of New Mexico and Southern Colorado Spanish*, Santa Fe; Museum of New Mexico Press, 1983.

L. S. M. Curtin, *Healing Herbs of the Upper Rio Grande: Tradition Medicine of the Southwest*, Santa Fe; Western Edge Press, 1997.

Gregorita Rodríguez, *Singing for My Echo: Memories of Gregorita Rodríguez, A Native Healer of Santa Fe*, as told to Edith Powers, Santa Fe; Cota Editions, 1987.

Lyle Saunders, *Cultural Difference and Medical Care*, New York; Russell Sage Foundation, 1954.

Text Approved by CPRC on Date: _____

CPRC Comments: _____

For Referral to:

Curanderas *Mora*

Curanderas have existed in many societies throughout history. Curanderas (women healers) and curanderos (male healers) spread with Spanish society as it expanded globally from the sixteenth through nineteenth centuries. Probably because curanderas also became midwives, primarily women took on the special task of being a combination of a knowledgeable, caring, faith healer.

As a result of historical circumstance curanderas existed in New Mexico for centuries. Until the last hundred years or so, New Mexico lacked medical doctors. So within the Hispanic and Native American communities the mysteries of healing fell to those who had the knowledge of local herbs and remedies. Much of their work is common sense combined with an emphasis on faith. Called medicine men and women in Native American society, these people know to apply pressure to stop bleeding or heat to remedy an ear ache. They also have an extensive knowledge of plants and wildlife, from which they concoct medicines such as broths and salves for specific ailments.

Faith and superstition come into play, for the curanderas are usually called in to counteract bad luck, or a serious malady like "*el mal ojo*," the "evil eye."

Curanderas still play important roles in the distant suburban areas of New Mexico. Their presence has proven to be an excellent intermediary between modern medicine and the local community. For example, many curanderas still help in the birthing process. Many do this, with the help of specialized training now made available to them. On the other hand their knowledge has come under increasing study by medical scholars.

The people of Mora Valley, like much of northern New Mexico, has benefited from curanderas throughout all of its history. Local healers are as much a part of the fabric of the valley's history as is the Spanish language.

Perrone, Belette; H. Henrietta Stockel, and Victoria Krueger. *Medicine Women, Curanderas, and Women Doctors*. Norman; University of Oklahoma Press, 1993.

Luna, Elaine. "Nurse-Curanderas; Los Que Curas at the Heart of Hispanic Culture," *Journal of Holistic Nursing*, Vol. 21, no. 4 (2003), 326-342.

Thomas Chavez

From: "Patty Guggino" <heritage@loslunasnm.gov>
To: "Tom Chavez" <chavez.22@comcast.net>
Sent: Wednesday, April 02, 2008 3:44 PM
Subject: FW: NMHPA Website

Hi Tom.....FYI ...this is a copy of the communication I had with the computer programmer.....

Patty Guggino, Cordinator
Oral History & Preservation Program
Los Lunas Museum of Heritage & Arts
PO Box 1209
251 Main St. SE
Los Lunas, NM 87031
505-352-7714
heritage@loslunasnm.gov

-----Original Message-----

From: Wesley Owens [mailto:Wes@ToolsForOrganizations.com]
Sent: Wednesday, March 26, 2008 3:32 PM
To: Patty Guggino
Subject: Re: NMHPA Website

Hi Patty-

You need to contact Gary Wolff at: gwolff@nmheritage.org

He is able to make changes to his website via admin tools my company provides to his organization.

Thanks,

Wes

Wesley Owens
Tools for Organizations
PO Box 1981
Keaau, HI 96749-1981

tel: 808.982.4174
e-fax: 815.301.1760

<mailto:Wes@ToolsForOrgs.com>
<http://www.ToolsForOrganizations.com/>

Patty Guggino wrote:
> Hi

Ricardo Arquiyo Martínez, editor, Hispanic Culture and Health Care: Fact, Fiction, Folklore. Saint Louis, Mosby Press, 1978

* Gregorio Rodríguez, Singing In My Echo: Memories of Gregorio Rodríguez, A Native Healer of Santa Fe. As told to Edith Powers, Santa Fe; Cota Editions, 1987

Curanderas (os) have existed in many societies throughout history. In Spanish society that spread, and changed throughout the sixteenth through nineteenth centuries, primarily women took on the ~~task~~ special task of being a combination knowledgeable, caring, faith healer.

As a result curanderas existed in New Mexico for centuries. Until the last hundred years or so, New Mexico was doctor poor. So within Hispanic and Native American societies the mysteries of healing fell to those who had the knowledge of local herbs, the common sense to remedy certain illnesses, and a strong faith that would help them up their patients. Called medicinas ~~men~~ and women in Native America society and curanderas in Hispanic society, they know to apply pressure to stop bleeding or heat to remedy an ear ache. They also have an extensive knowledge of plants and wildlife, from which they concoct broths and salves for specific ailments.

Faith and superstition comes into play, for the curanderas are usually called in to counteract such maladies like "El Mal de ojo",