

# FINAL SENT TO NMDOT

## Official Scenic Historic Marker Program



CPRC meeting: JUNE 2007

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Name of Marker: AGUEDA S. MARTINEZ, (1898—2000)  
"YOU WILL FIND ME DANCING ON THE LOOM"

County: Rio Arriba County

Review:  Original Text/Replacement Marker  Revised Text  
 Move of Existing Marker  New Marker

NMDOT District:

NMDOT Highway:

Suggested Site for Installation: At or near Medanales, HWY 233

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Existing or Proposed Text: Agueda is the matriarch of Hispanic weaving in New Mexico. From a very young age, she was known for her complex designs and natural dyes. She was the subject of the Academy Award-nominated documentary film, "Agueda Martinez: Our People, Our Country." Her weaving is carried on by fifty-two direct descendants and can be seen today in many museums, including the Smithsonian.

Word Count: 61

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Previous Title and Text:  N/A

Researcher/author: Dr. Thomas E. Chavez

Awards: Agueda Martinez received The Governor's Award for Excellence in The Arts in 1975.

Source(s): Helen R. Lucero, Ph.D., Curator of New Mexican Hispanic Crafts & Textiles, Museum of International Folk Art, Santa Fe, NM.

Text Approved by CPRC on Date: 6/8/07

CPRC Comments:

For Referral to: New Mexico Historic Women Marker Initiative

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revised 05/08/06, jwm. Revised TC 4/2007

Agueda S. Martínez, (1898-2000) *Rio Arriba*

Born in 1898 in Chamita, New Mexico, Agueda Martínez learned to weave at the age of twelve and continued to improve her weaving talent until it became a source of both income and inspirations for her. She has been called the “matriarch” of Hispanic weaving in New Mexico.

She made her own dyes from plants and flowers that added to the added to the original color in the stripe and diamond-shape design of her tapestries. She constantly invented new designs for her work and often stated that she never repeated a weaving design. She was known for her complex designs and natural dyes. She also taught others how to weave. In her own family fifty-two direct descendants have learned to weave. She stated that weaving “...is the most important thing I do.”

She needed a context for that most important thing and that was the maintenance of her lifestyle and heritage so that her work was always in turn with nature and heritage. For her, nurtured by the rhythms of nature and the traditions of her dual ancestry, Navajo and Spanish, a life apart from the earth she cherished was unthinkable. She had a deep-rooted relationship with both the land and her family that enabled her to achieve a simple yet effective harmony with her environment that is reflected in her work. She led a self-sufficient life through her farming, gathering herbs, and weaving

rugs and tapestries for sale. She also taught weaving before she began to receive national recognition for her art.

In 1975, Agueda Martínez received the prestigious Governor's Award for Excellence in the Arts. A few years later, she was the subject of the Academy Award nominated documentary film, *Agueda Martínez: Our People, Our Country*. In 1980, she was selected as the first Feria Artesana Honoree by the Albuquerque Museum and in 1981 The Smithsonian Institution purchased one of her weavings for its permanent collection.

She said that she would weave “until the day I can no longer move” and until then “*Ya me va hallar bailando en el telar,*” “You will find me dancing on the loom.”





