

Modesto ARAGON

Modesto Aragon was born at a time when New Mexico was experiencing many changes in the Hispanic way of life. His ability to adapt to the Anglo way of life helped him provide liberally for his family. A rancher and cattleman, Modesto was well known and respected in the Wagon Mound area of New Mexico. He spent over fifty years as a rancher in Wagon Mound.

Modesto was born the 15th of June 1861 in Manzano, New Mexico. His parents, Juan and Maria Ascencion (JARAMILLO) Aragon, had sixteen children. Not all of their children reached maturity. Modesto's mother died three months after his birth. As a child, Modesto was educated in the Spanish school at Manzano. He also spent a number of years working for the French Priest at Manzano. During his childhood, Modesto learned ranching and carpentry from his father.

Juan Nepomuceno Aragon, Modesto's father, was born in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Juan made his home at Manzano shortly after its settlement. Manzano was settled the 29th of September 1829, under a grant by Governor Antonio Jose CHAVEZ. Juan married Maria de la Ascencion JARAMILLO (daughter of Vicente JARAMILLO of Tome and Maria Gregoria JARAMILLO of Santa Fe) the 16th of June 1834 in Tome, New Mexico. According to the 1850 census of New Mexico, they were living in Manzano by 1850. Juan engaged in sheep ranching and was also a carpenter. Juan and his family lived in an area where the populace still had problems with Indian raids. According to one source, Juan, a veteran Indian fighter, had over sixteen bow and arrow wounds from his encounters with Indians. Juan lived to be about eighty years old, passing away in the mid 1880's. Juan Nepomuceno was the son of Jose Francisco Raphael ARAGON and Maria del Carmen ENCINAS, both of Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Some of the children and grandchildren of Juan Nepomuceno and Maria de la Ascencion (JARAMILLO) ARAGON. In order of birth:

1. Maria Monica ARAGON was born 1838 and baptized in Tome.
2. Florencia ARAGON (1840-1902) married Roque CANDELARIA. They had a son Teodoro CANDELARIA.
3. Genovevo ARAGON (1841-1925) married first Altagracia SERNA, and second Epifania MALDONADO. His children were Celestina, Francisco, Petra, and Eliseo ARAGON.
4. Juan de Encarnacion ARAGON, born 1845, married Maria BENEVIDES at Tome.
5. Rumaldo ARAGON, born 1851, married Estefana DURAN. They had a son Jose Angel ARAGON who had a very large family.
6. Casimiro ARAGON, born 1852, married Josefa ARGUELLO.
7. Maria ARAGON
8. Benislado ARAGON
9. Felix ARAGON, born 1856, married first Domecinda JARAMILLO, and second Severiana OTERO.
10. Modesto ARAGON (1861-1934) married Maria Domecinda MARTINEZ.

Modesto worked for the Santa Fe Railway while it was being built from Santa Fe to Raton. Around this time, he became interested in Maria Domecinda MARTINEZ, his future wife. However, neither of their families thought much of their impending marriage. One attempt by the couple to elope ended when her brothers caught up the buggy and forced them to turn around. This could explain why both Modesto and Domecinda, residents of Manzano, had to go one hundred and

fifty miles to Wagon Mound to get married. After his marriage, Modesto spent a short time freighting ties for a contractor into Wagon Mound. Later, he was employed as a cowboy for the Jack Cully Company for twelve years.

In John H. "Jack" Cully's book, Cattle, Horses and Men, he mentions Modesto several times. Jack writes "A few natives, however, who had worked with American outfits learned to be good cow hands and to handle horses satisfactorily. Among these was my good friend, Modesto ARAGON, a man of unusual intelligence ... excellent sheepman, cow hand and horseman." Several of Modesto's grandchildren have told stories of how he loved to race horses.

In 1893, Modesto quit work for the Jack Cully Company and homesteaded in Mora County. Over the next forty years, Modesto accumulated more than 3,000 acres, part of it was excellent farm land. He also leased a large amount of land, for the grazing rights, from the government. During his life he made numerous cattle and sheep drives. The ARAGON's owned a home in Wagon Mound as well as their ranch house at Optimo. Modesto and Domecinda raised a large family consisting of seven boys and four girls. In 1934, Modesto and his sons went on a cattle drive to Denver. While in Denver he went to St. Lukes Hospital for an operation. He entered the hospital the 25th of September and died from complications the 28th of September, 1934. His body was taken back to New Mexico and was buried at the family ranch. Modesto ARAGON's abilities to adapt to the American ranching and farming styles helped him and his family to prosper.

Several years of drought made farming and ranching difficult. Modesto's children and grandchildren gradually moved out of the area, each selling his/her inheritance. Two of Modesto's sons, Fructoso and Rumaldo, moved to Southern California, another two, Margarito and Benancio, move to La Junta and Manzanola, Colorado. His two surviving daughter moved to Denver and Pueblo, Colorado. The other children and grandchildren remained in New Mexico moving to Las Vegas, Albuquerque and other towns.

Modesto and Domecinda children in order of birth:

1. Maria Clara ARAGON (1883-1893) married Canuto MARTINEZ. Their children are Victorio, Juan P., and Benito MARTINEZ.
2. Maria Rosenda ARAGON (1885-197?) married Enriques BACA. Their daughter Lucinda BACA married Jacobo MONDRAGON.
3. Aurlia ARAGON was born and she died at a young age.
4. Juan Francisco ARAGON (1889-1938) married Tefolia GARCIA. Their children are Rose, Celia, Solomon, Margaret, Florencia, Domecinda, Simonita, Dolores, Nancy, Ernesto, Jose and Frank ARAGON.
5. Alfonso ARAGON (1891-1953) married Eufracia GONZALES. Their daughter, Flaminia "Jenny" ARAGON married first Ismael SANCHEZ and second, Bill WALTERS.
6. Melquiades ARAGON (1894-1949) married Josefita MANZANARES. Their children are Fructosa and Flora ARAGON.
7. Fructoso ARAGON (1896-1978) married Dorothea MARTINEZ. Their children are Margarita, Manuel, Dora, Luis, Jose, Carlos, and Rita ARAGON.
8. Rumaldo ARAGON (1898-1978) married Elosia PADILLA. Their children are Modesto, Jose Eliano, and Aurelia ARAGON.
9. Florencia ARAGON (1901-1910)
10. Margarito ARAGON (1903-1933) married Pacifica ROMERO. Their children are Albert, Lucy, Fidel, Clyde, Virginia, Robert, Inez, Clorinda, Bobby, Ida, and Nora

ARAGON.

11. Benancio ARAGON (1905-1965) married Clorinda ROMERO. Their children are Filomeno Genovevo, Jose Eurasio "Joe", Brenda, and Esequiel "Kelly" ARAGON.