

Contents



<i>Preface</i>	xv	Arias, Anna María	57
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xix	Arizona Orphan Abduction	58
Introduction: A Historical and Regional Overview of Latinas in the United States	1	Armiño, Franca de	58
<i>Latinas in the Southwest</i>	1	Arocho, Juanita	60
<i>Latinas in the Northeast</i>	7	Arroyo, Carmen E.	61
<i>Latinas in the Midwest</i>	14	Arroyo, Martina	62
<i>Latinas in the Southeast</i>	18	Artists	63
<i>Latinas in the Pacific Northwest</i>	24	Asociación Nacional México-Americana (ANMA)	67
Abarca, Apolonia "Polly" Muñoz	29	<i>ASPIRA v. New York City Board of Education</i>	69
Acosta, Lucy	30	ASPIRA	68
Acosta Vice, Celia M.	31	Avila, María Elena	69
Aging	33	Avila, Modesta	70
Agostini del Río, Amelia	35	Aztlán	71
Alatorre, Soledad "Chole"	35	Babín, María Teresa	74
Albelo, Carmen	36	Baca, Judith Francesca	74
Alfau Galván de Solalinde, Jesusa	37	Baca Barragán, Polly	75
Allende, Isabel	38	Baez, Joan Chandos	76
Alonzo, Ventura	38	Barceló, María Gertrudis ("La Tules")	78
Altars	40	Barnard, Juana Josefina Cavasos	79
Alvarez, Aida	41	Barraza, Santa Contreras	80
Alvarez, Cecilia Concepción	42	Barrera, Placida Peña	81
Alvarez, Delia	43	Belpré, Pura	83
Alvarez, Julia	44	Bencomo, Julieta Saucedo	84
Alvarez, Linda	44	Bernal, Martha	85
<i>Alvarez v. Lemon Grove School District</i>	45	Bernasconi, Socorro Hernández	86
Americanization Programs	46	Betances Jaeger, Clotilde	87
Antonetty, Evelina López	48	Betanzos, Amalia V.	88
Antonio Maceo Brigade	49	Bilingual Education	88
Anzaldúa, Gloria	51	Black Legend	90
Apodaca, Felicitas	52	Blake, María DeCastro	91
Aprenda y Superese	54	Borrero Pierra, Juana	93
Aragón, Jesusita	54	Boyar, Monica	94
Arballo, María Feliciana	55	Bozak, Carmen Contreras	95
Arguello, María de la Concepción (Sister María Dominica)	56	Bracero Program	96
		Braga, Sonia	99
		Briones, María Juana	99



Contents

Burciaga, Mirna Ramos	100	Chicana Rights Project	151
Caballero, Diana	103	Chicano Movement	151
Cabeza de Baca, Fabiola	104	Chicanos Por La Causa (CPLC)	155
Cabrera, Angelina "Angie"	105	Cigar Workers	156
Cabrera, Lydia	106	Cinema Images, Contemporary	159
Calderón, Rose Marie	107	Círculo Cultural Isabel la Católica	161
California Missions	108	Cisneros, Sandra	161
California Sanitary Canning Company Strike	110	Clínica de la Beneficencia Mexicana	162
Callejo, Adelfa Botello	111	Collazo, Rosa Cortéz	163
Callis de Fages, Eulalia Francesca y Josepha	112	Colón, Miriam	164
Calvillo, Ana María del Carmen	113	Colón, Rufa Concepción Fernández ("Concha")	166
Canales, Laura	114	Comisión Femenil Mexicana Nacional (CFMN)	167
Canales, Nohelia de los Angeles	115	Communist Party	168
Canino, María Josefa	116	Communities Organized for Public Service (COPS)	169
Cannery and Agricultural Workers Industrial Union (CAWIU)	117	Community Service Organization (CSO)	170
Cántico de la Mujer Latina	118	Congreso del Pueblo	172
Capetillo, Luisa	119	Córdova, Lina	173
Carbonell, Anna	119	<i>Corridos</i>	175
Cardona, Alice	120	Cossio y Cisneros, Evangelina	176
Carr, Vikki	121	Cotera, Martha Piña	177
Carrillo de Fitch, Josefa	122	Crawford, Mercedes Margarita Martínez	178
Casal, Lourdes	123	Cruz, Celia	179
Casals, Rosemary	124	Cuban and Puerto Rican Revolutionary Party	181
Casanova de Villaverde, Emilia	125	Cuban Independence Women's Clubs	182
Casita Maria	126	Cuban Women's Club	183
Castillo, Ana	128	Cuban-Spanish-American War	184
Castillo, Guadalupe	129	Cuero, Delfina	185
Castro, Rosie	130	Davis, Grace Montañez	187
Castro, Victoria M. "Vickie"	131	De Acosta, Aida	188
Ceja, Amelia Moran	132	De Acosta, Mercedes	189
Central American Immigrant Women	134	De Aragón, Uva	190
Centro de Acción Social Autónomo (CASA)	137	De Arteaga, Genoveva	191
Centro Hispano Católico	139	De Avila Dolores C.	192
Centro Mater	139	De Burgos, Julia	193
Cepeda-Leonardo, Margarita	140	De la Cruz, Jessie López	194
Cervantes, Lorna Dee	140	De la Cruz, Sor Juana Inés	196
Chabram, Angie González	142	De la Garza, Beatriz	197
Chacón, Soledad Chávez	143	De León, Patricia de la Garza	198
"Charo" (María Rosario Pilar Martínez Molina Baeza)	144	Del Castillo, Adelaida Rebecca	199
Chávez, Denise	144	Del Prado, Pura	200
Chávez, Helen	146	Del Río, Dolores	201
Chávez, Linda	147	Del Valle, Carmen	202
Chávez, Ravine, Los Angeles, California	148	Delgado, Jane L.	203
Chávez-Thompson, Linda	149	Demography	204
Chicana Caucus/National Women's Political Caucus	150	Deportations during the Great Depression	209

DiMartino, Rita	211	Ganados del Valle	274
Dimas, Beatrice Escadero	212	Gangs	276
Domestic Violence	214	García, Cristina	278
Domestic Workers	216	García, Eva Carrillo	280
Dominican American National Roundtable (DANR)	217	García, Providencia "Provi"	280
Dueto Carmeny Laura	218	García Cortese, Aimee	282
Durazo, María Elena	219	García-Aguilera, Carolina	283
Echaveste, María	221	Garcíaz, María	284
Education	222	Garment industry	285
El Congreso de Pueblos de Hablan Española	226	<i>Giant</i>	286
El Monte Berry Strike	226	Gómez Carbonell, María	288
El Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano, de Aztlán (MEChA)	227	Gómez-Potter, Socorro	289
El Paso Laundry Strike	228	Gonzáles, Elvira Rodríguez	290
El Rescate	229	González, Laura	290
Entrepreneurs	229	González, Matiana	292
Environment and the Border	232	González Mireles, Jovita	292
Escajeda, Josefina	236	Govea, Jessica	294
Escalona, Beatriz ("La Chata Noloesca")	236	Grau, María Leopoldina "Pola"	295
Escobar, Carmen Bernal	237	Great Depression and Mexican American Women	297
Espailat, Rhina P.	238	Guerra, Fermina	300
Espinosa-Mora, Deborah	239	Guerrero, Rosa	300
Esquivel, Gregoria	240	Guerrero, Victoria Partida	302
Esquivel, Yolanda Almaraz	241	Guillen Herrera, Rosalinda	303
Estefan, Gloria	242	Gutiérrez, Luz Bazán	305
Esteves, Sandra María	243	Guzmán, Madre María Dominga	306
Family	245	Hamlin, Rosalie Méndez	308
Farah Strike	249	Hayworth, Rita (Margarita Cansino)	309
Farmworkers, Contemporary	250	Head Start	310
Feminism	253	Health: Current Issues and Trends	311
Fernández, Beatrice "Gigi"	255	Henríquez Ureña, Camila	315
Fernández, Mary Joe	255	Hernández, Antonia	317
Fernández, Rosita	256	Hernández, Ester	318
Ferré Aguayo, Sor Isolina	257	Hernández, María Latigo	319
Fierro, Josefina	259	Hernández, Olivia	320
Figueroa, Belén	260	Hernández, Victoria	322
Figueroa Mercado, Loida	261	Herrada, Elena	323
Flores, Diana	263	Herrera, Carolina	324
Flores, Francisca	264	Herrera, María Cristina	325
Florez, Encarnación Villarreal Escobedo	265	<i>Hijas de Cuauhtémoc</i>	326
Folk Healing Traditions	266	Hinojosa, Tish	327
Fontañez, Jovita	270	Hispanic Mother-Daughter Program (HMDP)	328
Fornés, María Irene	270	Houchen Settlement	329
Friendly House, Phoenix, Arizona	271	Huerta, Cecilia Olivarez	331
Fuerza Unida	272	Huerta, Dolores	332
Gallegos, Carmen Cornejo	274	Hull-House, Chicago	333

Contents

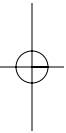
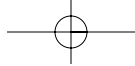
Idar, Jovita	336	Los Angeles Garment Workers Strike	408
Immigration of Latinas to the United States	337	Lozano, Alicia Guadalupe Elizondo	410
Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA)	341	Lozano, Emma	411
Intermarriage, Contemporary	342	Lozano, Monica Cecilia	412
Intermarriage, Historical	344	Lucas, María Elena	413
International Ladies Garment Workers' Union (ILGWU)	348	Machuca, Ester	415
Jaramillo, Cleofas Martinez	351	Madrid, Patricia A.	415
Jiménez, María de los Angeles	352	<i>Madrigal v. Quilligan</i>	416
Journalism and Print Media	353	Maldonado, Amelia Margarita	419
Jurado, Katy	358	Maquiladoras	420
Kimbell, Sylvia Rodríguez	359	Mariachi	421
Kissinger, Beatrice Amado	360	Mariachi Estrella de Topeka	422
La Llorona	362	<i>Marianismo</i> and Machismo	423
"La Lupe" (Guadalupe Victoria Yoli Raymond)	363	Marshall, Guadalupe	424
La Malinche (Malinalli Tenepal)	364	Martí de Cid, Dolores	425
La Mujer Obrera	366	Martínez, Agueda Salazar	426
La Raza Unida Party	367	Martínez, Anita N.	426
Labor Unions	368	Martínez, Demetria	428
Lares, Michelle Yvette "Shell'y"	372	Martínez, Elizabeth Sutherland "Betita"	429
Las Hermanas	373	Martínez, Frances Aldama	430
Latina U.S. Treasurers	374	Martínez, Vilma S.	431
Latinas in the U.S. Congress	375	Martínez Santaella, Inocencia	432
Léague of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)	378	McBride, Teresa N.	433
Lebrón, Dolores "Lolita"	380	Mederos y Cabañas de González, Elena Inés	434
Ledesma, Josephine	381	Media Stereotypes	436
Lee Tapia, Consuelo	382	Medicine	438
Legal Issues	383	Medina, Esther	440
León, Ruth Esther Soto ("La Hermana León")	384	Meléndez, Concha	441
León, Tania	385	Meléndez, Sara	442
Lesbians	386	Méndez, Consuelo Herrera	443
"Letter from Chapultepec"	388	Méndez, Olga A.	444
Liberation Theology	389	<i>Méndez, v. Westminister</i>	445
Lideres Campesinas	390	Mendieta, Ana	447
Literature	392	Mendoza, Lydia	448
Lobo, Rebecca Rose	396	Mendoza, María Estella Altamirano	448
Lomas Garza, Carmen	397	<i>Mendoza v. Tucson School District No. 1</i>	450
<i>Lone Star</i>	397	Mercado, Victoria "Vicky"	451
López, Lillian	401	Mesa-Bains, Amalia	452
López, María I.	402	<i>Mestizaje</i>	453
López, Nancy Marie	403	Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF)	457
López, Rosie	403	Mexican American Women's National Association (MANA)	458
López, Yolanda	404	Mexican Mothers' Club, University of Chicago Settlement House	459
López Córdova, Gloria	406	Mexican Revolution	460
Lorenzana, Apolinaria	407	Mexican Revolution, Border Women in	464

Mexican Schools	466	Nieto Gómez, Ana	524
Migration and Labor	468	Norte, Marisela	525
Military Service	473	Novello, Antonia Coello	526
Miller, Esther	475	Nuestra Señora de la Divina Providencia	528
Mining Communities	476	Núñez, Ana Rosa	529
Miranda, Carmen	478	Nuns, Colonial	530
Mistral, Gabriela (Lucila Godoy Alcayaga)	479	Nuns, Contemporary	531
Mohr, Nicholasa	480	Obejas, Achy	533
Mojica-Hammer, Ruth	481	Ochoa, Ellen	534
Molina, Gloria	482	O'Donnell, Sylvia Colorado	535
Montemayor, Alicia Dickerson	483	Olivares, Olga Ballesteros	535
Montes-Donnelly, Elba Iris	484	Olivarez, Graciela	537
Montez, María (María Africa García Vidal)	485	Olivera, Mercedes	538
Mora, Magdalena	487	Ontiveros, Manuela	540
Mora, Patricia (Pat)	488	Operation Pedro Pan	541
Moraga, Cherríe	488	Orozco, Aurora Estrada	543
Moraga, Gloria Flores	489	Ortega, Carlota Ayala	544
Morales, Iris	491	Ortiz Cofer, Judith	545
Morales Horowitz, Nilda M.	492	Ortiz y Pino de Kleven, María Concepción "Concha"	546
Moreno, Luisa	492	O'Shea, María Elena	547
Moreno, Rita (Rosa Dolores Alberío)	494	Otero-Smart, Ingrid	548
Morillo, Irma	496	Otero-Warren, Adelina	549
Mothers of East Los Angeles (MELA)	497	Pachucas	552
Movie Stars	497	Palacio-Grottola, Sonia	555
Mugarrieta, Elvira Virginia (Babe Bean; Jack Bee Garland)	502	Pantoja, Antonia	557
Mujeres in Action. Sunset Park, Brooklyn	503	Parsons, Lucia González	558
Mujeres Latinas en Acción (MleA)	505	Patiño Río, Dolores	559
Mujeres por la Raza	506	Pauwels Pfeiffer, Linda Lorena	561
<i>Mujerista</i> Theology	507	Payán, Ilka Tanya	562
Munguía, Carolina Malpica de	508	Pedroso, Paulina	563
Muñoz, María del Carmen	509	Peña de Bondas, (Ana) Virginia de	563
National Association for Chicana and Chicano Studies (NACCS)	510	Peñaranda, Ana Marcia	564
National Association of Puerto Rican/Hispanic Social Workers (NAPRHSW)	511	Pentecostal Church	565
National Chicana Conference	512	Perales, Nina	569
National Conference of Puerto Rican Women (NACOPRW)	513	Pérez, Eulalia	570
National Council of La Raza (NCLR)	514	Pérez, Graciela	571
National Hispanic Feminist Conference	515	<i>Pérez v. Sharp</i>	573
National Puerto Rican Forum	516	Phelps Dodge Strike	573
Naturalization	517	Phillips, Carmen Romero	574
Navarro, M. Susana	519	Pilsen Neighbors Community Council	575
Nerio, Trinidad	520	Pinedo, Encarnación	576
New Economics for Women (NEW)	521	Politics, Electoral	577
New York City Mission Society (NYCMS)	522	Politics, Party	579
Nieto, Sonia	523	Popular Religiosity	581
		Prida, Dolores	582
		Propositions 187 and 209	583

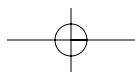
Contents

Puerto Rican Association for Community Affairs (PRACA)	584	Salsa	652
Puerto Rican Radical Politics in New York	585	<i>Salt of the Earth</i>	656
Puerto Rican Women Political Prisoners	587	San Antonio, Ana Gloria	657
Puerto Ricans in Hawaii	591	San Antonio Pecan Shellers' Strike	658
Quesada, Alicia Otilia	596	San Joaquin Valley Cotton Strike	659
Quesada, Dora Ocampo	597	San Juan, Olga	662
Quinceañera	598	Sánchez, Loretta	662
Quintanilla Pérez, Selena	600	Sánchez, María Clemencia	663
Quintero, Luisa	601	Sánchez, María E.	664
Race and Color Consciousness	603	Sánchez Cruz, Rebecca	666
Ramírez, Emilia Schunior	607	Sánchez Garfunkel, Aura Luz	667
Ramírez, Sara Estela	608	Santería	669
Ramírez, Tina	609	Santiago, Petra	670
Ramírez de Arellano, Diana	609	Saralegui, Cristina	672
Rangel, Irma	611	Saucedo, María del Jesús	673
Rape	611	Schechter, Esperanza Acosta Mendoza ("Hope")	674
Reid, Marita	613	Scientists	675
Reid, Victoria Comicrabit	614	Sena, Elvira	679
Religion	615	Sepúlveda, Emma	680
Reyes, Guadalupe	622	Sexuality	681
Rico, Angelina Moreno	623	Silva, Chelo	682
Rincón de Gautier, Felisa	624	Silva de Cintrón, Josefina "Pepiña"	682
Rivera, Aurelia "Yeya"	625	"Sister Carmelita" (Carmela Zapata Bonilla Marrero)	683
Rivera, Chita	626	Slavery	684
Rivera, Graciela	627	Sloss-Vento, Adela	686
Rivera, Roxana	629	Smelertown, El Paso, Texas	687
Rivera, Martínez, Domitila	630	Smith, Plácida Elvira García	689
Robles Díaz, Inés	631	<i>Soldaderas</i>	690
Rodríguez, Hermelinda Morales	632	Solis, Hilda L.	691
Rodríguez, Isabel Hernández	633	Sosa-Riddell, Adaljiza	692
Rodríguez, Josefa "Chepita"	634	Soto Feliciano, Carmen Lillian "Lily"	694
Rodríguez, Patricia	634	Souchet, Clementina	695
Rodríguez, Sofía	636	Southwest Voter Registration Education Project (SVREP)	696
Rodríguez Cabral, María Cristina	637	Spanish Borderlands	697
Rodríguez de Tió, Lola	637	Colonial Law	700
Rodríguez McLean, Verneda	639	<i>Commadrazgo</i>	703
Rodríguez Remeneski, Shirley	640	Early Settlement Life in the Borderlands	703
Rodríguez-Trias, Helen	641	<i>Encomienda</i>	708
Romero Cash, Marie	643	Women in California	709
Rosado Rousseau, Leoncia ("Mamá Léo")	644	Women in New Mexico	710
Ros-Lehtinen, Ileana	645	Women in St. Augustine	714
Roybal-Allard, Lucille	646	Women in Texas	716
Ruiz, Bernarda	647	Women's Wills	719
Ruiz, Irene Hernández	649	Spiritism	720
Ruiz de Burton, María Amparo	650	Spiritism in New York City	721
Sada, María G. "Chata"	652	Sterilization	723

Street Vending	725	Urrea, Teresa	780
Student Movements	727	Valdez, Patssi	782
Substitute Auxiliary Teachers (SATs)	728	Vallejo, Epifania de Guadalupe	783
Swilling, Trinidad Escalante	730	Vallejo de Leese, María Paula Rosalia	784
<i>Tabaqueros'</i> Unions	732	Vanguardia Puertorriqueño Inc	785
Talamante, Olga	733	Varela, Beatriz	786
Tarango, Yolanda	734	Varela, María	787
Telenovelas	735	Vásquez, Anna	788
Television	736	Vásquez, Enriqueta Longeaux	789
Tempe Normal School	740	Valázquez, Loreta, Janeta	790
Ten Years' War	742	Velázquez, Nydia M.	791
Tenayuca, Emma	743	Vélez, Lupe	793
Tex-Son Strike	745	Vélez de Vando, Emelí	793
Theater	746	Vélez-Mitchell, Anita	795
Padua Hills Theater	748	Vicioso Sánchez, Sherezada "Chíquí"	797
Playwrights	748	Vidal, Irma	798
Puerto Rican Traveling Theater (PRTT)	751	Vidaurri, Rita	799
Teatro Campesino	752	Villareal, Andrea and Teresa	800
Villalongín Dramatic Company	753	Viramontes, Helena María	800
Toraño-Pantín, María Elena	754	Virgen de Guadalupe	801
Torres, Alva	756	Virgen de la Caridad del Cobre	803
Torres, Ida Inés	757	Voting Rights Act	804
Torres, Lourdes	758	Watsonville Strike	805
Torres, Patsy (Patricia Donita)	759	Welch, Raquel	806
Tovar, Lupita	760	<i>West Side Story</i>	807
Toypurina	761	Wilcox, Mary Rose Garrido	808
Trambley, Estela Portillo	762	Wolf, Esther Valladolid	809
Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo	762	World War II	810
Treaty of Paris	766	Ybarra, Eva	815
Treviño-Sauceda, Mily	766	Young Lords	815
Tufiño, Nitza	767	Zamora, Bernice B. Ontiz	818
Ulibarri Sánchez, Louise	769	Zárate, Rosa Marta	819
United Cannery, Agricultural, Packing, and Allied Workers of America (UCAPAWAF/FTA)	770	Zúñiga, Alejandra Rojas	820
United Farm Workers of America (UFW)	772	<i>List of Biographical Entries</i>	823
Women in the United Farm Workers (UFW)	773	<i>List of Organizations</i>	829
U.S. Mexican War	776	<i>Selected Readings in Latina History</i>	831
Urquides, María Luisa Legarra	779	<i>Notes on Contributors</i>	835
		<i>Index</i>	851



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Preface



Latina history is a mosaic across time, region, gender, and borders. At the heart of this encyclopedia is a commitment to reclaim the lives of Latinas within their own historical moments and to recover their stories—frequently hidden, forgotten, or ignored. Since the founding of St. Augustine in 1565, Spanish-speaking women have left their imprints on U.S. soil. They appeared on the historical landscape before the establishment of English and French settlements. Many Latinas have Native American roots, while some trace their heritage to the rich contributions of the peoples of West Africa, among whom most were brought to these shores as enslaved women. Still others descended from Spain and diverse European countries and, in time, combined their particular experiences with different communities of people in the Americas in the process of *mestizaje*, the blending of Spanish, African, and indigenous peoples. This pivotal point is important for understanding the cultural and biological syncretism that, in turn, gave form to Latinos in the United States in both the past and the present. As poet Aurora Levins Morales has aptly surmised: “I am new. History made me. My first language was spanglish. I was born at the crossroads and I am whole.”¹

Nomenclature for Latinas in and of itself reveals much about the diversity of Spanish-speaking peoples in the United States, past and present. There has never existed a single signifier of self-identification from Tejanos and Californios of the nineteenth century to Latinos and Hispanics today. In this encyclopedia Latina is an umbrella term that refers to all women of Latin American birth or heritage, including women from North, Central, and South America and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean. Mexicana and Mexicano refer to those born in Mexico, and Mexican American indicates U.S. birth. Chicana and Chicano reflect a political consciousness that emerged out of the Chicano student movement, often a generational marker for those who came of age during the 1960s and 1970s. Nuyorican refers to Puerto Ricans born on the mainland, not just in New York, while Puertorriqueña and Puertorriqueño include islanders and Nuyoricans alike. Boricua signifies endearment, empowerment, and unity for all

Puerto Ricans. For some, regional identification becomes synonymous with nationality—Tejanos in Texas and Hispanos in New Mexico and Colorado. Others situate themselves in terms of racial location, preferring perhaps an Iberian connection (Hispanic) or emphasizing indigenous (*mestizo/a*) or African (Afro-Latino/*a*) roots. Cultural/national identification remains strong—Salvadorans, Dominicans, Brazilians, and Cubans, to name just a few. Divergent cultural locations mark the heterogeneity within Latino communities, a heterogeneity that occurs even within families. As Salt Lake City housing activist María García reflected, “My mother is Spanish; one brother is Mexican; my sister Mexican-American; I am Chicana. Three brothers are Hispanic and the youngest is Latino.”²

Within these pages the historical and literary narratives marking the U.S. Latina experience come to life. From *mestizo* settlements, pioneer life, and diasporic communities, *Latinas in the United States* documents women’s contributions as settlers, healers, ranchers, and landowners, as community organizers and educators, and as writers, artists, and performers. Their experiences during and after Euro-American colonizing and conquests of the Southwest are also explored, in addition to the early-nineteenth-century migration of Puerto Ricans and Cubans. For the twentieth century, issues of immigration, literature, cultural traditions, labor, gender roles, community organizations, and politics are addressed, as well as individual biographical profiles of women who have left their marks on history, such as Puerto Rican feminist Luisa Capetillo, conservative New Mexican politician Concha Ortiz y Pino de Kleven, and Guatemalan labor and civil rights activist Luisa Moreno. This encyclopedia focuses on how Latinas have shaped their own lives, cultures, and communities through mutual assistance and collective action and how our understanding of pivotal events, such as the U.S.-Mexican War, the Great Depression, and World War II, becomes transformed when they are viewed through women’s eyes.

Written to engage general and scholarly readers, this encyclopedia, the first to focus specifically on Latina history, consists of almost 600 entries (700,000



Preface

words) and nearly 300 photographs. The introduction features five comprehensive regional and historical overviews of Latina history in the Southwest, the Northeast, the Midwest, the Southeast, and the Pacific Northwest. Several themes interlace the diverse components within this compendium of new knowledge. First, the encyclopedia is essentially a working-class history of Latinas whose experiences and actions during three centuries helped build this nation. Second, it also represents an intellectual history of women who witnessed, defied, negotiated, and chronicled the forces that shaped Spanish American colonization and the present contours of this nation. Education, religion, activism, and labor and community have loomed large in the lives of Latinas, past and present. Representing cutting-edge scholarship, *Latinas in the United States* documents the divergences and convergences in the U.S. experiences of Mexican American, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Dominican, Central American, and South American women in a manner not possible before this publication. The coeditors are indebted to the cadre of talented authors who wrote entries for the encyclopedia, many of whom are among the most distinguished scholars in the fields of history, cultural studies, social science, and Latino studies. Their insights, hard work, and *corazón* shaped this collective, landmark enterprise.

This project began in the spring of 1998. The coeditors, widely recognized as leaders in the field of Latina history, embarked on this project as an intellectual conversation that moved the discussion from a one-group, one-coast perspective (whether Chicanas in California or Boricuas in New York) to an exploration of panethnic comparative perspectives that examined common legacies, divergent paths, and intersections of community activism and cultural production. The coeditors solicited nominations from five associate editors, specialists in various aspects of Latina studies, and an advisory board of well-known scholars. The majority of the profiles were generated through these recommendations, and the editors and board member played crucial roles in identifying subjects, photographs, and potential authors.

In 2000 publicity about the project spread across the nation based on a Knight-Ridder column, a *New York Times* feature article, a lead story in the *Miami Herald*, and subsequent exposure on television and other media sources, including the newspapers *Hoy* and *El Diario/La Prensa*, which, in turn, brought additional biographical profiles to our attention. The coeditors might never have known about Amelia Maldonado, a pioneer bilingual elementary teacher in Tucson, Arizona, who began her forty-year career in 1919, had except for the correspondence of her nephew, Francis Brady. Perhaps, too, Verneda Rodríguez McLean, a

pilot during World War II, would have gone unnoticed if museum director Bruce Ashcroft had not approached Vicki Ruiz after her lecture at the University of Texas, Austin. The entry on Madre María Dominga Guzmán, founder of a religious order and in the process of canonization, came to us in similar fashion. Even within the final week of putting the finishing touches on the manuscript, additional nominations kept arriving. To honor those who shared their stories and to provide examples of representative women, the coeditors have endeavored to include as many of these nominees as possible.

During the past three decades Latina educators from university professors to precollegiate teachers have contributed to the florescence of Latina history and Latina studies as recognized academic disciplines. They are acknowledged in these volumes through their scholarship. The advice of the associate editors and advisory board members provided critical guidance in selecting not only individuals, but also events and organizations with an emphasis on historical significance. The criteria for inclusion in *Latinas in the United States* favored older public women who had made a difference in their respective communities or on the national stage. A handful of young women representative of political activism and the arts are included, in addition to a few women like Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz and Felisa Rincón de Gautier whose influence transcended national boundaries. Although many present-day women are profiled, the coeditors sought to avoid a “who’s who” approach. For this reason film legends like Carmen Miranda or Rita Moreno merited individual biographies, while their current counterparts may be included only in larger thematic entries. Contemporary representatives of women in the public eye were selected from a variety of fields—business, labor, literature, religion, social work, education, law, politics, entertainment, and the arts, to name a few. Encouraging comparative insights as well as discrete cultural narratives, the coeditors, as authors of numerous entries and editors of many more, have emphasized, whenever possible, a sense of real people—their dreams, routines, personalities, values, and contributions. From settlers to *curanderas* and from flappers to feminists, Latinas have indeed made history.

Contrary to popular media images that portray Latinos as recent immigrants, their legacies actually stretch back hundreds of years to the founding of St. Augustine in 1565. Indeed, this Spanish outpost was not just the realm of conquistadores and missionaries but also of women colonists and their families. St. Augustine was one of three military units in the primary line of defense established by the Spanish Crown throughout the Caribbean. Living under constant danger of British invasion, colonists in this neglected fron-

tier settlement faced enormous obstacles. As mulattos, Negroes, Indios, mestizos, and criollos, they resisted and reinforced the injustices of life within a rigid class, color, and labor system that privileged Spaniards. Critical to the settlement's survival, St. Augustine women participated in every aspect of colonial life. Their lives were conditioned by race, class, and marital status. Indian and black women were concentrated at the bottom rungs of the social scale, often enslaved or indentured laborers in the house and the fields. However, free blacks, recent immigrants, and nonelites could also own property. By 1763 St. Augustine included some Catalan immigrants, Christianized Indians, and free blacks who added to the colony's already diverse and shifting demographic profile. Juana Ana María Paniagua, for example, was a *mujer mercenaria* (prostitute) who owned slaves and property. Most women were not, in fact, landowners, but more than a quarter of all landowners in the colony were single women, probably widows.³ The story of St. Augustine, one that reveals the dynamic syncretism and fissures marking colonial society, provides an example of the histories tucked within this text. The five-part introduction, divided by region, provides the historical context for the encyclopedia as a whole and for the individual entries.

In the words of Chicana artist Irma Barbosa, "Stories are the spirit threads passed on from generation to generation."⁴ Latina history has often been a private one, narratives told at the kitchen table. We hope that this encyclopedia inspires a new generation of historical research, including recording family memoirs and writing scholarly monographs. Many histories remain to be discovered and interpreted, especially of women with Central American, South American, Cuban, and Dominican roots. The preponderance of Mexican and Puerto Rican profiles reflects the current state of the field. As coeditors, we have also privileged the lives of women grassroots community organizers whose contributions have not had a wider hearing outside their respective towns or neighborhoods. Often underestimated in community politics and at city hall, these women demonstrate determination, resourcefulness, and tenacity. A Salvadoran immigrant and restaurant

owner, Mirna Burciaga, successfully challenged discriminatory policies of a local southern California school district and in a recent interview related why she refused to be ignored.⁵ "I have an accent . . . when I talk . . . But that doesn't mean I have an accent . . . when I think."

Burciaga is a naturalized U.S. citizen whose community engagement may be a bellwether for Latina politics in the twenty-first century. According to recent census figures, Latinos represent almost 50 percent of the foreign born in the United States (15 million out of 31 million total). In 2002 the Latino population could be categorized as follows: 67 percent Mexican, 14 percent Central and South American, 8 percent Puerto Rican, 4 percent Cuban, and 6 percent other groups (e.g., Dominicans). Moreover, 40 percent of all U.S. Latinos are foreign born.⁶ This layering of generations and of diverse cultural groups, ranging from Hispanos in New Mexico whose roots extend back four centuries to recently arrived Dominican immigrants in New York City, speaks to an array of Latino/Latina experiences, past, present, and future. *Latinas in the United States: A Historical Encyclopedia* documents, chronicles, and traces the ways in which Latinas make meaning in their own lives and in the lives of others. ¡Ap'lante!

Notes

1. Aurora Levins Morales and Rosario Morales, *Getting Home Alive* (Ithaca, NY: Firebrand Books, 1986), 50.
2. Vicki L. Ruiz, "Garcíaz, María," in this volume.
3. Susan L. Pickman and Dorcas R. Gilmore, "Women in St. Augustine," in "Spanish Bonderlands" in this volume.
4. Chicana artist Irma Lerma Barbosa, quoted in María Ochoa, *Creative Collectives: Chicana Painters Working in Community* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2003), 68.
5. Garrison, Jessica, 2001. "Orange County District to Overhaul English Instruction." *Los Angeles Times*. November 2, B1.
6. Social Science Data Analysis Network. "Nativity and Citizenship, 1990–2000." www.censusscope.org (accessed June 22, 2005); U.S. Bureau of the Census, June 2003. *The Hispanic Population in the United States: March 2002*. Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1.