Finding Aid for the Maria Acosta Duran Papers, 1915-1988 CSRC.126

Doug Johnson
Chicano Studies Research Center Library

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URL: http://chicano.ucla.edu
Language of Material: English
Contributing Institution: Chicano Studies Research Center Library
Title: Maria Acosta Duran Papers
Creator: Duran, Maria Acosta
Identifier/Call Number: CSRC.126
Physical Description: 1.8 linear feet (2 boxes; 1 oversize flat box)
Date (inclusive): 1915-1988
Abstract: This collection contains the personal papers of Maria Acosta Duran (also known as Maria Duran Lang), a garment worker, political activist, and entrepreneur. It consists of photographs and personal documents. It also includes documents from groups she was active in, such as the Alianza Hispano-Americana, the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, and the Community Service Organization. There is a small amount of correspondence and some writings. Perhaps most notable is Duran's first-hand account of the Battle of Columbus, Pancho Villa's 1916 raid into the United States, as well as its aftermath and her 1973 meeting with Luz Corral, Villa's widow. There is also some material on her businesses in Lancaster, CA, and other events in the city, such as the construction of the prison there.
Language of Material: Materials are in English and Spanish.
COLLECTION STORED OFF-SITE AT SRLF. Advance notice required for access. Contact the UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center Library and Archive for paging information.
Conditions Governing Access
Open for research.
Immediate Source of Acquisition
Unknown, but the James and Margarita Mendez Papers were donated by Victor Duran Mendez on June 7, 2011. It is likely this collection was part of that gift.
Arrangement
The arrangement was determined by the initial archivist.
Biographical / Historical
Maria Acosta was born on August 15, 1906 in Mexico. Around 1914, her family moved to Columbus, New Mexico, where she would witness Pancho Villa's incursion into the United States in 1916. In 1925 she married Epimenio Duran in Los Angeles. That same year, they had a daughter, Margarita, and a year or two later, a son, Eloy. Maria filed for divorce in 1935. She worked in the garment industry and, going to night school, earned her high school diploma in 1940. She was involved with the Alianza Hispano-Americana, a mutual aid society and insurance company for Mexican Americans. She was active with the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union. She served as treasurer for the Community Service Organization, a civil rights group where she worked with future congressman Edward Roybal, among others. She was so central to the CSO's operations that the group actually used her home address as its business address for a time. In 1950 she married Charles H. Lang. At some point, they moved to Lancaster, California, where she opened a cafe called Don Carlos. She was at times the only woman on the Lancaster Chamber of Commerce. There is evidence that she remained politically active with the Chicano Moratorium in 1970. She died on February 26, 1988 in Lancaster.
Preferred Citation
[Identification of item], Maria Acosta Duran Papers, 126, UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center, University of California, Los Angeles.
Processing Information
The collection was processed by an unknown person. It was described by Doug Johnson in 2019.
Related Materials
The James and Margarita Mendez Papers at the UCLA CSRC are a collection of Duran's daughter and son-in-law's papers.
Scope and Contents
The collection includes photographs, mostly from the 1920s to the 1940s. They include portraits and candid shots, including several of Duran's Japanese American neighbors in the years leading up to World War II. There are documents of a personal nature, as well as from the groups Duran was involved in, such as the Alianza Hispano-Americana, the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, and the Community Service Organization. There is a small amount of correspondence, and some writings. Perhaps most notable is Duran's first-hand account of the Battle of Columbus, Pancho Villa's 1916 raid into the United States, as well as its aftermath and Duran's 1973 meeting with Luz Corral, Villa's widow. There is also some material on her businesses in Lancaster, CA, and other events in the city, such as the construction of the prison there.
Conditions Governing Use
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Subjects and Indexing Terms
Community Service Organization
Villa, Pancho, 1878-1923
Corral Vda. de Villa, Luz, 1894-1981
Alianza Hispano-Americana
International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union
Lancaster (Calif.)

Box 1, Folder 1  Personal documents 1925-1988
Scope and Contents
Includes: marriage certificate for Epimenio Duran and Maria Acosta, 1925; life insurance policy for Epimenio; certificate from the White Sewing Machine Company School of Domestic Art; divorce papers; commencement program and diploma from John H. Francis Polytechnic High School, 1940; marriage certificate for Maria Duran and Charles Lang, 1950; identification cards; notice from the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority that Maria was to receive a History Maker Award for her contributions as an advocate for minorities in the Antelope Valley, 1983; death certificate for Maria, 1988.

Box 1, Folder 2  Programs and printed material 1934-circa 1950
Scope and Contents
Includes: program for a tardeada for the Alianza Hispano Americana, 1934; program for Las Posadas at the Padua Hills Theatre, circa 1934; so'ngbook; parliamentary law booklet from the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union, 1936; statement from the Cloak Makers' Union, circa 1950 [in English, Spanish, Italian, and Hebrew].

Box 1, Folder 3  Writings 1922-1986
Language of Material: Materials are in Spanish and English.
Scope and Contents
Includes: correspondence, most interestingly from Eloy Duran; poems (some were written by Maria, and some were written by others and transcribed by her); invitation to a victory dinner for Glenn M. Anderson, who had recently been elected Lieutenant Governor of California; songbook compiled by Eloy.

Box 1, Folder 4  Cards and programs 1922-1989
Scope and Contents
Includes: post cards; program for Diego Rivera exhibit at the Mexican Museum, 1985.

Box 1, Folder 5  Alianza Hispano-Americana 1935
Scope and Contents
Includes: pamphlets; newsletters; insurance documents.

Box 1, Folder 6  Journal 1939-1940
Language of Material: Entries are in Spanish and English.
Scope and Contents
Includes: poems; dirty jokes; essays; notes; names and addresses.
Box 1, Folder 7  **Correspondence 1947 and 1975-1984**
  Scope and Contents
  The 1947 letter is typed, from Margarita Duran to Eloy Duran; the rest are handwritten by Maria; includes drafts of a letter to the Lancaster City Council opposing the construction of a prison.

Box 1, Folder 8  **Community Service Organization 1948-1983**
  Scope and Contents
  Includes: photographs; program for a fundraiser dance for Edward R. Roybal, 1949.

Box 1, Folder 9  **Don Carlos 1955-1980**
  Scope and Contents
  Contains material related to Maria's restaurant and gift shop; includes: photographs; letter to "Honey" about preparations to open the restaurant [probably Margarita Mendez]; matchbooks; business cards.

Box 1, Folder 10  **Notebook 1980-1984**

Box 1, Folder 11  **Pancho Villa 1915-1983**
  Scope and Contents
  Includes handwritten essay "Pancho Villa and the Raid at Columbus, New Mexico, March 9, 1916," which Maria wrote for Eloy. Maria's father had settled the family in Columbus two or three years prior to the raid. This essay is Maria's first-hand account of Villa's incursion into the United States and the U.S. Army's response. It also relates her meeting with Luz Corral, Villa's widow, years later in Mexico. Also includes: post card written by Maria's father, 1915; photograph of Columbus, 1917; photograph of Maria with Luz Corral, signed by Corral, 1973; notes taken by Maria during her 1973 trip to Mexico.

Box 1, Folder 12  **Family portrait photographs 1918-1927**

Box 2, Folder 1  **Photographs 1919-1927**

Box 2, Folder 2  **Photographs 1920-1941**

Box 2, Folder 3  **Photo album 1918-1923**

Box 2, Folder 4  **Photographs 1921-1986**
  Scope and Contents
  Also includes: post card addressed to Harry Truman asking him to veto the Taft-Hartley Act; Maria's membership application for the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union.

Box 2, Folder 5  **Photographs 1941-1947**
  Scope and Contents
  Includes portraits of some of Maria's Japanese neighbors, as well as her own family.

Box 2, Folder 6  **Photographs 1934-1948**
  Scope and Contents
  Includes: photographs of Margarita with some of her Japanese friends; photographs of the Lancaster Mexican Chamber of Commerce, 1947 [Maria is the only woman].

Box 2, Folder 7  **Dismantled scrapbook 1934-1942**
  Scope and Contents
  Includes: photographs taken in Los Angeles and Mexico; clipping about a George Washington play that Margarita appeared in, 1939.

Box 2, Folder 8  **Photographs circa 1952-circa 1970**
  Scope and Contents
  Includes photos with Henry B. Gonzalez, Edward Roybal.
Box 2, Folder 9  
"Mexican Moratorium" photographs 1970-06

Box 2, Folder 10  
Photographs circa 1978

Box 2, Folder 11  
Photographs 1986-1987

Box 3, Folder 1  
Printed materials 1945-1970

  Language of Material: Materials are in Spanish and English.
  Scope and Contents
  Includes: "La Marcha Hacia la Libertad," a World War II-era propaganda booklet; oversize
  newspaper clippings, 1945-1950; El Angelino, 1950-09-22 ["Roybal Comunista?"]; poster for
  the Chicano Moratorium march of August 29, 1970.

Box 3, Folder 2  
Oversize photographs 1931-1955

  Scope and Contents
  Includes: panoramic photo of the Alianza Hispano Americana, 1931; a Japanese wedding
  party, 1946; panoramic photo of Community Service Organization banquet at the Alexandria
  Hotel, 1950; panoramic photo of a California State Conference of Operating Engineers at the
  El Cortez Hotel in San Diego, 1955.

Box 3, Folder 3  
Newspaper front pages 1963-1974

  Scope and Contents
  Includes: Los Angeles Herald Examiner Extra, 1963-11-22 ["Kennedy Slain"]; Los Angeles
  Times, 1963-11-23 ["Kennedy Assassinated"; includes entire first section]; Los Angeles
  Times, 1974-08-08 ["Nixon Resignation Appears Imminent"].