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Beyond "Viuda de": Practical Approaches to Promoting Mexican Books Printed at Women-Owned Businesses

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Beyond *Viuda de...*

Practical Approaches to Promoting Mexican Books Printed at Women-Owned Businesses

Who They Were

Women printers in colonial Mexico. Since the early modern era, women have sometimes inherited printing presses after the death of a husband, providing an otherwise unlikely means to economically participate in society. In official colonial records and in their printed volumes, these women were typically designated as *viuda de* (widow of) followed by the husband's name, thus obscuring their own identity. Thankfully, many of these women's names have been recovered by historians of print culture, allowing us to update bibliographic records with more precise information and give credit to the women in question.

We have 25 printed volumes by the following women printers in the Wilson Mexicana Collection that we co-manage at the University of Kentucky:

- **Rosa Teresa de Poveda**
(active 1741-1755)
- **Manuela Cerezo**
(active 1714-1758)
- **Maria de Benavides**
(active ~1684-1700)
- **Jerónima Delgado**
(active 1683-1696)
- **Gertrudis Vera y Escobar**
(active ~1707-1714)
- **Paula Benavides**
(active 1641-1684)

What We Did

Collaborated to forefront women printers of New Spain. Following a digitization metadata review, we identified materials in our collection containing the *viuda de* phrase in the publisher field, did research to uncover the proper names of these women, and advocated for their names to be listed as a creator along with a general note reading, "This book was printed at a woman-owned print shop" (see example [here](#)). We also promoted this collection to the Learning Lab, an undergraduate primary source-based library internship, and met with previous stewards of the collection to learn about the intentionality of collecting these materials.

Why We Did It

To update bibliographic records with more precise information and increase discoverability of women printer publications. This effort supports the EDI focus of our collection development policy and allows users to more easily find materials when searching in our system.

Plans for the Future

- Continue collecting materials created by women printers
- Promote collection via targeted digitization and outreach
- Update ILS bibliographic records
- Feature collection in a hybrid exhibit (physical/digital)
- Increase awareness of the collection through primary source instruction sessions

Who We Are



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Further Reading on Women Printers:

<https://bit.ly/3ghYYg7>

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