Archives and Manuscripts

Archives and Manuscripts: Historical Antecedents to Contemporary Chicano Collections

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Abstract

This article takes a historiographic approach in examining the development of Chicano archives and manuscripts in the U.S. It traces their evolution within the context of antecedent documentary research and bibliographic inquiry as well as through the development of precursor Latin American and Spanish American collections. The author reviews the socio-political underpinnings of Chicano academic programs that provided the infrastructure upon which libraries and special collections are meeting the demands of new Chicano scholarship. The author discusses the success and constraint variables that have a bearing upon the acquisition of primary sources in this field. Prospects for development are advanced within the framework of consortial efforts involving scholars, archivists and librarians.

Dispelling Traditional Views

Possibly one of the greatest misconceptions about Chicano historiography is the view that published intellectual writings by Chicanos are of recent vintage, traceable only over several decades. This assumption is in part supported by the large and growing body of contemporary published materials by and about Chicanos, especially within the past fifteen years.

The thesis that a Chicano literary void existed prior to the 1960's had its contingent of historian advocates as well as some current adherents. Among the most egregious of such scholars was Edward Simmen, editor of The Chicano: From Caricature to Self Portrait. In the introduction he writes:

Neither the upper class Mexican American nor the lower class laborer has produced literature: the former is not inclined; the latter is not equipped. ¹

Needless to say, Simmen was summarily criticized by Chicano historians and literary critics. The more progressive view that Hispanics have a documented history in both print and non-print records throughout the Southwest is one which is shared by an increasing number of scholars, including such writers as Guillermo Hernandez and Luis Leal. Through Hernandez' research in recordings and newspapers he has demonstrated the failure of traditional published materials to show that Chicanos have had such a documented history. Similarly, the literary historiography of Luis Leal promotes the idea that Chicano literature is not at all a contemporary phenomenon, that placed in its proper historical context it has actually been present for several hundred years. He states:
We shall consider Chicano literature here to be that literature written by Mexicans and their
descendants living or having lived in what is now the United States. We shall consider works,
especially those dating before 1821, written by the inhabitants of this region with a Spanish
background, to belong to an early stage of Chicano literature. We are not overlooking the fact
that before 1848 Mexican Americans legally did not exist as a group; they have, however, a long
uninterrupted tradition.2

What Luis Leal offers us is a panoramic view of the history of Chicano literature as a body of
literature that had its genesis in the American Southwest during the 16th Century and continues
to the present. This view is endorsed by a cadre of literary critics including Lomeli, Ortego,
Paredes, and Rodriguez.

The Documentary Evidence

Since this more balanced view of Chicano historiography points to four hundred years of literary
tradition then it would stand to reason that the documentary evidence of this productivity existed
in the American Southwest and was available for those seeking to study the Mexican experience
in the United States. A paper trail was generated involving primary data and sources along with
published creative and analytical works. In fact, not only was the Hispanic experience being
documented, but through the pioneering work of such Hispanic scholars as Carlos E. Castaneda
and George Sanchez, many important archival and manuscript sources were identified and
subsequently preserved. Castaneda, who in 1927 was made librarian of the Genaro Garcia
collection at the University of Texas, and who is considered to be one of the early Chicano
historians wrote:

Here I was surrounded by old books, beautiful examples of the earliest printing in the New
World. Some went back to the beginning of printing in the Americas...there were manuscripts,
too, hundreds and hundreds of them, the personal archives of the leading figures in the history of
Mexico and Texas. I had to pinch myself to realize that I was not dreaming, it all seemed so
wonderful.3

Castaneda went on to publish many monographs and journal articles on Southwest and Texas
history, including numerous guides and calendars to Hispanic manuscripts and archival
collections in the University of Texas Library. His monumental multi-volume set Our Catholic
Heritage in Texas, 1519 - 1936 (1936-58) is a seminal reference source for students of the
colonial history of Texas and the Southwest.

One might ask, if this Chicano literary tradition is as long lived as it is claimed to be, why has it
not gained much more visibility and stature within the broader orbit of American literature? The
historical records demonstrate amply that there was no shortage of works by talented Hispanic
writers who were active throughout the Southwest, including, for example, Gaspar Perez de
Villagra's Historia de la Nueva Mexico (1906), the works of Francisco Palou such as Noticias de
la Nueva California (1874), and innumerable corridos, religious plays, folktales and poems.
Contributions Ignored

For the most part however, these writers went unnoticed and their works unanalyzed. For example, scant attention was given to Southwest colonial literature written by Hispanics. Leal and Barron offer several reasons, one being that the presence of a dual language in much of this literature largely relegated its study to Latin American and Mexican literary critics. Written works penned and published in the Spanish language were disregarded. There was a similar disinterest by scholars in oral literature. Meanwhile there was a strong predisposition towards the European literary tradition.

Mainstream literary historians therefore had a long history of ignoring Chicano writings, perhaps due to a perceived linguistic obstacle, however Cecil Robinson attributes this lack of interest to a socio-political polarization of the White and Chicano society which resulted from a rejection of the Chicano in and by this country. Robinson's best known work which amply documents this was his With the Ears of Strangers: The Mexican in American Literature (1963). A much earlier study (1949) showing similar findings was Carey McWilliams' North From Mexico. The parallel findings of these two studies exemplifies the historical contempt and disdain exhibited towards Mexicans in the United States. According to Robinson, the image of the Mexican in the popular literature of the day reveals more openly than most records of the time the naive and cocky sense of superiority with which young America regarded itself. The greaser provides a most apt foil for the projection of such an inflated self-image and the dime novels are full of incidents in which Saxon intelligence, strength, and purity of motive triumph over the guile and treachery of the degenerate "yellow belly."

This view is supported by Leal and Barron who state that the historical void in the study of Chicano writings was inevitably filled "by the narrow, extremist works of Southwestern Anglo writers."

Lack of Recognition

Later, despite the growing fascination with the Southwest and even with Hispanic folklore and culture in general, bibliographic inquiry by a host of Anglo historians continued to ignore the presence and role of the Chicano. They failed to recognize the importance of chronicling the Chicano experience within the dominant society. Ray Padilla discusses the subject at length in his important essay "Apuntes para la documentacion de la cultura chicana." Among the many bibliographies that he critically analyzes are Caldwell Walton Raines' Bibliography of Texas (1896), Herbert Eugene Bolton's Guide to the Materials for the History of the United States in the Principal Archives of Mexico (1913), and Ralph Emerson Twitchell's The Spanish Archives of New Mexico: Annotated and Chronologically Arranged with Historical, Genealogical, Geographical and Other Annotations (1914). These bibliographies were prepared in order to facilitate the writing of U.S. and state histories. However, Padilla argues that the choice of materials was largely biased towards an Anglo constituency. It is fascinating that the U.S. historians did not limit themselves to archival collections in this country but pursued documents found throughout Mexico, Cuba, Spain and France. In many instances documents which would have been extremely useful to Chicanos were left out. According to Padilla,
These zealous gentlemen ransacked the dusty piles of colonial bureaucratic records, made catalogues and calendars of their contents and sorted useful from useless documents. Naturally they established their own criteria about what was useful and what was not. Since they were interested in writing U.S. or state histories, their selections necessarily reflected this prejudice. In the decades that followed, many of the bibliographies generally retained the ethnocentric tendencies mentioned above although there were improvements, such as Lyle Saunder's *Guide to Materials Bearing on Cultural Relations in New Mexico* that contained many references pertinent to the Chicano, despite the numerous entries suffering from the "siesta-fiesta" syndrome in which the Chicano image is one of folkloric curiosity.

**Library Negligence**

Libraries during this period could have played a more significant role as cultural gatekeepers but generally neglected to collect and preserve the materials being generated by the Chicano community since there was ample material throughout the Southwest. Libraries could have collected much more extensively to reflect the dynamism and prolificacy that did exist in the Chicano community. This would include not only their publications but also the fugitive materials such as ephemeral and primary sources. In addition to playing an enlightening and educating role these materials would have provided fertile ground for new scholarship. It is known, for example, that there was a considerable number of Hispanic newspapers produced throughout the Southwest, and not only along the border with Mexico. In fact over five hundred were published over the past one hundred thirty-five years. Granted, many of these were short-lived but there was no shortage of successors. As each met its demise there were others which arose to take its place. In reference to these newspapers Arthur Campa writes in his study of Spanish in the Southwest:

They provided an outlet for literary expression of Hispanics interested in writing...The sum total of newspapers published in Spanish was undoubtable a factor in keeping the Spanish language alive and functional in the Southwest. There are many Hispanics and Mexican Americans today who are not able to read English, but many of them are able to read Spanish and continue reading it in the local newspapers.

The evidence demonstrates that conventional library and information services remained dismally inadequate. Rarely did they exhibit more than perfunctory attention to the contributions of Chicanos. It was the very unusual librarian who made any attempt at actively acquiring such materials. The paucity that existed in these collections was symptomatic of the environmental and organizational context in which their libraries operated. Their languor towards things Chicano was indicative of the psycho-social and linguistic comfort zone of Anglo institutions preoccupied with documenting the activities of an English speaking dominant society. Their more "invisible" compatriots did not figure in to their outlooks and ideologies so they were bypassed. Similarly, archival institutions pressed forward with ambitious programs to acquire and collect the documents and manuscripts produced by the predominantly Anglo male elite. The oral tradition which was so important to Chicanos, the newspaper outlets and ephemeral publications that vented much of their intellectual energies never made it to the shelves of libraries and much of it was missing from special collections.
Latin American and Spanish American Collections

There were, however, some noteworthy precursors to Chicano archives and manuscript collections. These were developed under the rubric of Latin American and Spanish American, or Southwestern collections, with much of this activity dating back to the 1920's and 30's although the inception for some of these is much earlier. One such case is the University of Texas whose interest in the history and culture of Spanish Americans goes back to 1897 when several of its researchers undertook a project of copying manuscripts in Mexico's Archivo General de la Nacion. Only a few years later in 1905 Herbert Eugene Bolton began teaching the University's first Latin American history courses which led to the purchase of the Genaro Garcia Library. This in turn germinated a commitment to Latin American studies and the establishment of its present day Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection.

Other such collections include the renowned Bancroft Library at the University of California at Berkeley which contains many works about Mexico and about Chicano history.

Respectability But Lack Of Definition

The Bancroft Library has a pre-1900 period scope for its Californiana collection and has acquired materials which reflect the Chicano experience but as with comparable institutions, such materials have not been actively acquired within a defined scope or conceptualization as being "Chicano" or "Mexican American." Similarly, the Eugene Barker Texas History Collection at the University of Texas at Austin has a considerable amount of local historical materials which do document to some degree the tejano, or in other words, Chicano Texans. An analogous case is found with the Huntington Library's Western Americana collections. Inevitably there will be many Chicano foot prints strewn throughout a great many Americana, Southwestern, and Californiana collections which undoubtedly have been missed by many researchers of the Chicano experience. Since these manuscript materials have neither been originally defined as Chicano, nor been acquired in a systematic manner within the Chicano context, the researcher will probably have greater success by resorting to certain semantic devices upon submitting requests, i.e., using such search terms as Californios or "Spanish Americans."

The large historical archives may indeed have found some degree of respectability in what can be considered to be Chicano materials, thus allowing their inclusion within the periphery of the Southwestern or Latin American orbit. But it is certain that these were not originally defined as being Mexican American or Chicano and were certainly not acquired through some systematic design for their inherent value in depicting or documenting the Chicano experience.

Mexican-American Collections Activity--L940's And 50's

The vast majority of contemporary Chicano archives were not acquired until following the Chicano Movement of the 1960's although during the 1940's and 50's there was some special collections activity which formed the beginning corpus of contemporary Chicano archives. But the pattern of acquisitions signaled no real change towards a conscientious effort at systematic collection development of primary resources. Nevertheless, collecting agencies were now beginning to move towards acceptance of the "Mexican American" phenomenon. Among the most significant of such developments was the acquisition by UCLA in 1943 of the archives of...
the Sleepy Lagoon Defense Committee. These records which were donated by Alice Greenfield McGrath document the Sleepy Lagoon Case of 1942 in Los Angeles, the infamous court case which was an expose of flagrant judicial bias and mass media prejudice against Chicanos. The case mobilized the Los Angeles Chicano community to seek justice. Historically this case and the Zoot Suit riots the following year helped set the stage for the Chicano Movement of the 1960's. Another historically important collection that was donated to UCLA in 1951 was the Carey McWilliams Collection which contains books, personal papers and photographs on California agriculture and labor.

**Contemporary Socio-Political Context**

It was not until the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960's that there was a more programmatic and conscious effort at building American ethnic research collections and archives. The Black Civil Rights Movement awakened an ethnic pride among Black students in colleges and universities throughout the country. Student protests and demands for curricular programs in Black history and culture resulted in the institutionalization of Black studies programs and an unprecedented development in Black studies and ethnic archive collections. As stated by Stanton Biddle and Verdia Jenkins,

The expanded curricula, which included the black experience and later the experiences of other ethnic and cultural minority groups, placed new demands on both public and academic libraries. Where these programs went on to require more comprehensive library collections and original resource materials increase.

**Chicano Movement**

It can be said that the socio-political pressures of the Black Civil Rights Movement provided the backdrop for discontent within the Chicano community also, which led to the Chicano Movement of the late 1960's. By the mid-sixties the enrollment of minority students on college and university campuses had increased. The "movimiento" swelled throughout the West and Southwest in response to the dissatisfaction and frustration of Chicanos against discrimination, disenfranchisement and widespread institutional neglect. In the colleges and universities this movement was propelled by a myriad of newly emerged student activist organizations, including MECHA (Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlan), MAYO (Mexican American Youth Organization), the Brown Berets, and others.

These groups engaged in protests and demonstrations as did the Blacks, and demanded curricular and programatic attention to the history and culture of the Chicano. The outcome of this youth militancy was the establishment of Chicano Studies departments, programs and Chicano research centers in the late 60's. Furthermore, plans of action were formulated at youth conferences which included the First Chicano Youth Conference in Denver, Colorado (1969) and the Mexican American Studies Conference held at the University of California at Santa Barbara (1969). Two planning documents resulted from these conferences, which were "El Plan Espiritual de Aztlan" and "El Plan de Santa Barbara." These provided guidelines for the development of Chicano studies programs. As these programs became institutionalized, it became evident that
campus libraries sorely lacked the collections that would be needed to support the teaching and research needs of Chicano Studies students and faculty.

**Evolution of Chicano Collections**

Chicano library programs emerged largely through student-initiated efforts and were for the most part staffed by students and located within academic departments and cultural centers. As Chicano collections evolved there were also a few which were incorporated into the campus libraries. These responded by developing acquisitions programs to collect research and reference materials to support the needs of the Chicano Studies programs.

Many institutions organized special Mexican American collections, such as the Coleccion Tloque Nahuaque in the library at the University of California, Santa Barbara, or they established separate Chicano libraries, such as the Chicano Research Center Library at the University of California, Los Angeles. Portions of book budgets were designated for Mexican American resources, and subject/language specialists were assigned to develop the collections.  

**Increased Demand for Primary Sources**

Those university collections which advanced the farthest did so synchronously to the growth and sophistication of the Chicano academic infrastructure on their campuses. Several of these library programs were located within the University of California--on the Berkeley, Los Angeles, and Santa Barbara campuses. The other major Chicano collections were at the University of Texas at Austin, and at Arizona State University in Tempe. Stanford University was also one of these institutions, whose particular interest was in the acquisition of Chicano manuscript collections, an outgrowth of the Library's support for the study of farm labor history.

With a few exceptions, the developing Chicano collections stressed the acquisition of current monographs and serials with which to support curricular and research needs. The majority of these collections did not actively nor systematically seek out archives, manuscripts, or other primary sources and data. Since the late 1970's, however, the depth and breadth of contemporary Chicano research had increased so that much more demand was brought to bear upon primary source materials. One barometer of the increased acceptance and maturation of Chicano research has been the increasing number of university presses and mainstream publishers that are now providing outlets to new scholars of the Chicano experience. Another indicator has been the publication of many new Chicano reference sources including bibliographies, indexes, directories, guides, dictionaries, and the increasing attention to this field internationally, given the growing interest by European scholars in Chicano Studies. The impact of these developments upon libraries is quite clear. As Stanton Biddle and Verdia Jenkins aptly stated:

Many ethnic-collection librarians, as well as mainstream librarians, attempted to respond to these demands by expanding the scopes of their collections to include primary resource materials. These librarians began active campaigns of soliciting personal papers, organizational records, correspondence files, memorabilia, and other original resource materials that are essential for supporting true research and scholarship.
Creation Of New Scholarship

The field of Chicano studies is continuing its evolution. On one hand there is a new generation of scholars expanding upon and refining previous investigations. In other cases researchers are rejecting some of the old scholarship and seek new paradigms thereby creating a need within their discipline for a new corpus of research, a need which could be satisfied only by turning to the primary sources.19

Chicano archive and manuscript collections quite often are found within university library settings. Again, while a number of universities and other agencies were in fact acquiring primary sources which were relevant to the Chicano, the conscientious and systematic approach to collecting 20th century materials did not begin in earnest until Chicano academic infrastructures developed sufficiently to ensure this. In most cases this was associated with the presence of a Chicano studies faculty and a supporting library collection of secondary source material.

Institutional Models

At Stanford University the acquisition of Chicano manuscript collections was an outgrowth of the Libraries' commitment to collect primary sources in farm labor history. Acquisition of the Ernesto Galarza Papers from 1971 to 1978 led to an expansion in scope to encompass the papers of other Chicano leaders, with the broadened aim of documenting the history of Chicanos in the United States and in particular in California. At the time, there was no other library in that state which was actively acquiring Chicano manuscripts. Gifts to Stanford of other important papers followed, including those of Manuel Ruiz, Jr. (1982), Eduardo Quevedo (1981), and Edward Valenzuela (1983). Related collections that were added included the papers of Bert Corona (1980), the Centro de Accion Social Autonomo (CASA) collection (1980) and those of various United Farm Workers of America (UFW) activists and sympathizers, Anne Loftis, Anne Draper (1973), the Reverend James L. Vizzard (1980) and the Reverend Victor Salandini (1973). Stanford's most recent major acquisitions have been the archives of the Mexican-American Legal Defense and Education Fund (1984) and the Teatros Nacionales de Aztlan (1986).20

At the University of Texas a notable development occurred in 1974—the establishment of the Mexican American Library Project within the Benson Latin American Collection. As noted earlier, the University of Texas had previously not planned any systematic acquisitions program for Chicano manuscripts. By 1976 the Mexican American Library Project placed an emphasis on expanding its archival materials which by that time included the Economy Furniture Strike Papers (1978), the Eleuterio Escobar Collection (circa 1975), the E.E. Mireles and Jovita Mireles Collection (1980) and the archives of the League of United Latin American Citizens (1980). Since that time the Mexican-American Library Project became a permanent program within the Benson Collection with its own staff. It later actively sought and succeeded in adding to its collection of organizational archives and personal papers. It subsequently purchased literary manuscripts of various Chicano and Chicana writers.21 Most recently, it acquired as a gift the papers of Dr. Julian Samora (1985).

At UCLA, there was no systematic activity involving primary sources until about 1979-80 but there were some important collections which were acquired through the initiative of the Center
for Chicano Studies Research and which were housed therein. These include the Sterilization Archives (1980), the Latino Community Development Archives (1981), the CASA Collection (1985), the Ron Lopez Papers (1980), the Grace Montanez Davis Papers (1982), and the Jose Ortiz Papers (1978). Most recently, in 1985 they acquired the Pedro J. Gonzalez Collection, and in 1986 the archives of La Comision Femenil Mexicana Nacional, Los Angeles Chapter. The latter are housed in the University Research Library's Department of Special Collections.  

Another major collection of Chicano materials is the Chicano Studies Library at the University of California, Berkeley. Originally established by students in 1969, it was brought within the fold of the Chicano Studies Program and has remained there, developing into one of the country's leading Chicano collections. It is the home for the Chicano DataBase and houses one of the most extensive collections of Chicano serials. Among its many projects has been an extensive microfilming program which has assured the preservation of numerous retrospective collections of Chicano newspapers. In addition to building a large monographic and serials collection, the Chicano Studies Library has also developed an aggressive and successful publications program.

The Chicano Studies Library did not begin to actively acquire archival and manuscript collections until about 1979 although by 1986 this activity had considerably abated. Its primary source materials are housed within the Chicano Studies Library rather than the Bancroft Library since the scope of the latter largely excludes contemporary twentieth century materials. The Chicano Studies Library lacks accession dates for some of their collections such as the Juan Corona Defense Committee archive and the Southwest Network Collection. Other collections housed there include the Richard and Gloria Santillan Collection (1981), the Antonio Hernandez Collection (1979), and about four or five other collections.

The only other major Chicano collection within the University of California is located at the Santa Barbara campus. It is the only discrete research collection that operates as part of a university library. Named the Coleccion Tloque Nahuaque, it was conceived in 1968 through the initiative of members of the United Mexican-American Students and the staff of the Center for Chicano Studies, and was supported by the University Library administration. Initially there were two separate collections with one of these, the Centro Library, operating out of the Center for Chicano Studies which was itself established in 1969. Eventually that collection merged with its counterpart, the MECHA collection, located in the University Library. Within the span of eight years it developed into a major research-level collection, although it had not developed Chicano archives or manuscript collections, save for a small archive of a local Chicano advocacy group, the Confederation of Raza Organizations (CORO). It was not until 1984 that the Chicano Studies Librarian was charged with the task of developing a major program of identifying and acquiring archives and manuscripts on Chicano cultural and social history, an acquisitions initiative which resulted in various collections of major importance to theater and art. These came to include the archives of El Teatro Campesino (1985), the papers of the playwright Luis Valdez (1985), the archives of Self Help Graphics and Art (1986), the archives of Galeria de la Raza (1986), the Ralph Mariadiaga Collection (1986), the Richard Duardo Collection (1986), and a large videotape archive collection entitled "Califas: Chicano Art and Culture in California" (1986). Many other archives and manuscript collections have since been acquired. Notably, in 1993 scope of the archives program was expanded to include the four major ethnic groups in
California, and the program adopted the name California Ethnic and Multicultural Archives, becoming an arm of the Department of Special Collections.

The other major Chicano library program is the Chicano Studies Collection in the Hayden Library at Arizona State University in Tempe. This Chicano collection was formally established in 1970 through the efforts of a concerned Chicano Studies instructor and various Chicano students. They had the good fortune of finding a receptive climate in the library administration. The Hayden library director favored the development of a separate Chicano collection within the library. It does not have an active program of Chicano archive and manuscript acquisition, although some pertinent holdings, including manuscripts, photographs and ephemera that illuminate the Chicano experience are found within the Arizona Collection. Its period scope ranges from the territorial period to statehood.

### Success And Constraint Variables

Some observable patterns have emerged in the development of contemporary Chicano archives and manuscript collections. First, systematic and serious acquisitions activity will take place within those academic institutions where the Chicano Studies infrastructure is strongest. This would seem obvious, but taking the process several steps further, one must also factor in a conscientious commitment on the part of the university library administration. It must possess a certain degree of foresight to appreciate the value and significance of both present and future Chicano scholarship that is solidly based on the availability of primary source materials. Systematic and planned development of primary sources is also more apt to occur when the university library already has a track record of allocating resources towards building a collection of secondary sources that would support Chicano research. The presence of informed and actively interested special collections and Chicano Studies library professionals and a network of supportive faculty will provide a climate that will lead towards the serious building of Chicano archive and manuscript collections. Presently there are several academic institutions where these conditions exist and where most of the current activity is now centered.

The converse will be evident where any one or more of the above conditions are absent or are compromised due to such factors as weak programmatic activity, insufficient resources for field work, special purchases and processing, low priority for such collections, attitudinal indifference, or unfavorable administrative and political climate.

### Conclusion

The present status of American archives and manuscripts is thus a problematic one when viewed within the Chicano context. A major effort will be required to offset the presently skewed representation of American culture as reflected in many of this country's libraries and archival institutions. There may be something more than anecdotal to the remark by a Chicano scholar who once stated that the most extensive collection of documents on the Chicano Movement is likely to be found within the files of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. There is a need for at least a modicum of consortial development of Chicano archives and manuscript collections among those institutions that are either presently building or planning to acquire such materials.
Successful efforts at archives development will naturally bring greater prestige to the recipient institutions but there is a disadvantage for scholars who must use fragmented collections which are divided by any number of institutions with some of these collections preserved, processed and described according to standard archival conventions while others receive the most rudimentary of treatment.

A healthy spirit of competition is bound to stimulate special collections departments to begin acquiring Chicano-related documents. But there is a concomitant need for greater inter-institutional dialogue that can lead to cooperative and coordinated ventures.

Another issue lies in the contemporary nature of many Chicano archives and manuscripts. Are institutions that have purchased the manuscripts of living writers willing to make a life-long commitment to those writers, or will they do so only until they run out of funds to support such purchases? An analogous situation is found with the archives of contemporary organizations. Is the institution ready to make a long-range commitment to periodically augment and process future-generated materials, make working copies as needed by the organization, and meet any number of other needs? The complexity increases with the need to accommodate a wide range of record types embodied in folk traditions, in theater, music, art, and so on. Also literary property rights, access policies and legal considerations must be accounted for in many instances; and then there is the sheer volume associated with the archives of the larger national organizations which are expected to continue to grow and generate many more records over time.

It was the intent of this article to explore some of the historiographic and socio-political underpinnings, as well as problems and prospects which have a bearing on the acquisition of contemporary Chicano archives and manuscripts. The prospects for such development are exciting and the opportunities do exist. But it is the view of this writer that effective collection development in this field will come about only through the involvement and cooperation of scholars, archivists and librarians. Institutions will thus be in a better position to conscientiously define their collecting goals and evaluate their options for meeting those goals within the larger context of some kind of collective plan.

Notes


8. Ibid., p.7.


11. Ibid., p.13.


18. Stanton Biddle and Verdia Jenkins, p.274.


21. Gilda Baeza, telephone interview, June 1986

