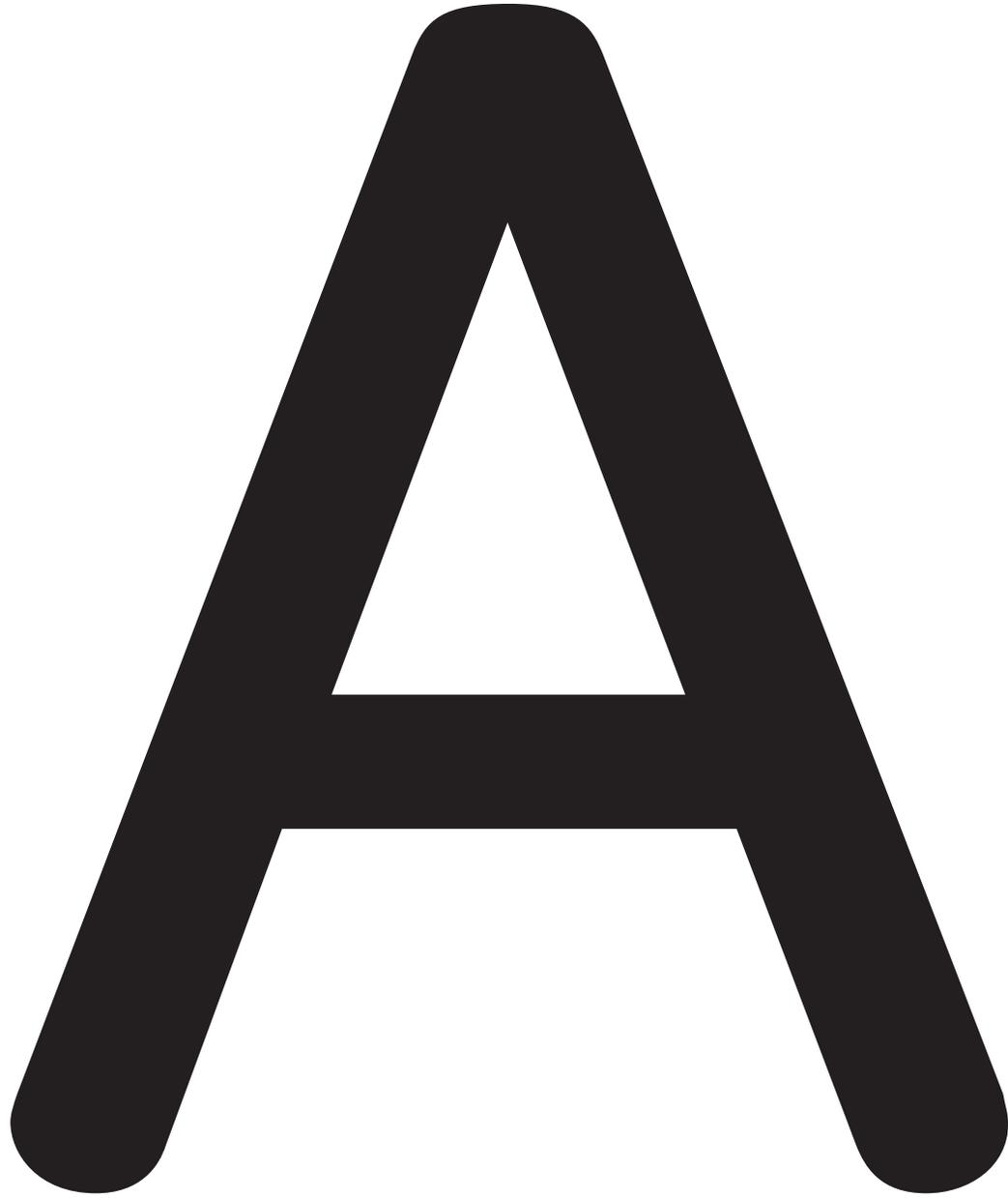


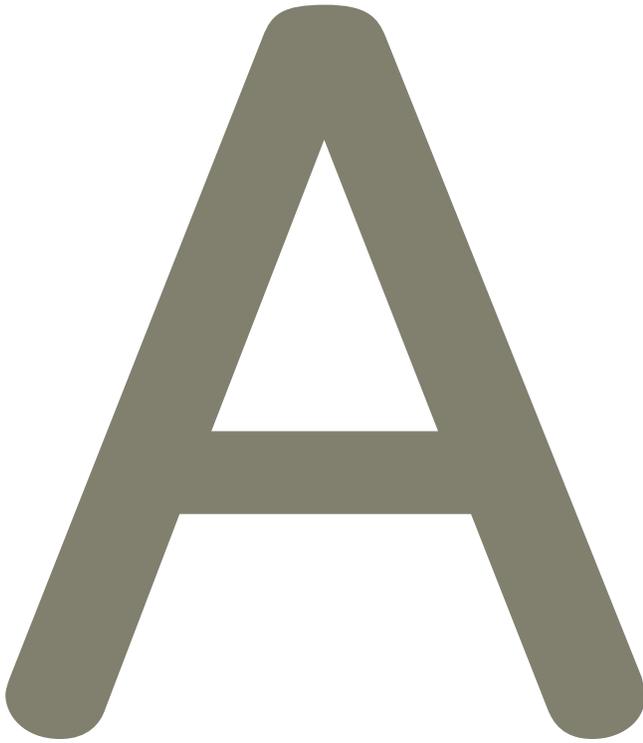
Ignacio Manuel Altamirano, *El Zarco* (episodios de la vida mexicana en 1861-1863): *Novela póstuma*, drawings by Antonio Utrillo and engravings by D. J. Thomas (Mexico: J. Balleca y Ca., sucesor, 1901)



COLLECTION THAT SPEAKS
VOLUMES

The Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection
Is a Magnet for Researchers from around the World





ANN HARTNESS HAS A PASSION FOR BRAZIL. “I’VE LOVED BRAZIL since I lived there in my early 20s,” Hartness says. (See related article, p. 33.) Now, as Head Librarian for the Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection at the University of Texas at Austin, Hartness shares her enthusiasm and knowledge with scholars and students as she oversees the most comprehensive university collection of Latin American resources in the world. Currently, the collection houses over 900,000 bound volumes and other published and archival resources that provide in-depth documentation on Mexico, Central and South America, the Caribbean, and the U.S. Southwest when that area was part of Spanish or Mexican territory, as well as all aspects of Latino Studies in the United States.

The Benson is unusual in that it houses rare books and papers and is also a contemporary library. The library’s collection began as an endowment of rare books and manuscripts relating to Mexico and has grown from there. This impressive accumulation during the last eighty years has information dating back to the fifteenth century. The collection of Mexican bibliophile Genaro García, containing over 25,000 volumes and 250,000 pages of original manuscripts, was purchased by the university in 1921 to form a strong foundation for the collection. In 1937,

Pieces from the Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection include, clockwise: *La comedia humana: Semanario festivo, político-social y de actualidades* (16 septiembre 1905), published in Chile; *Relacion geográfica de Cempoala* (Mexico: 1580); *Antiphonarium* (Mexico: Petrum Ocharte, 1589); Molina’s Parrot from Sclater and Hudson, *Argentine Ornithology: A Descriptive Catalogue of the Birds of the Argentine Republic* (London: R. H. Porter, 1888-89), vol. 2: plate 14.

the university acquired 247 volumes from the Joaquín García Icazbalceta collection, including sixteenth-century *relaciones geográficas*, reports and maps relating to Mexico and Guatemala, and 45 of the first books printed in the New World, published in Mexico between 1543 and 1600, on language, science, history, music, and religion. “We not only have manuscripts,” Hartness says, “but in the regular book collection, we have the secondary sources to back up the primary sources—all under one roof.”

The collection adds approximately 1,500 volumes every month, as well as intermittent finds throughout the year. Hartness says the library is the lucky recipient of many gifts. “Many authors send books, and often retiring professors give us their personal collections. Last week, the Consul General of Ecuador was here to present books to the library.”

When it comes to finding new gems for the collection, Hartness and her team are always on the hunt. Each year, Benson staffers make several trips to Latin America to acquire special new materials for the library. “We’re looking for things we can’t get from book dealers, like publications from government agencies. We visit university departments and meet with authors to find all kinds of amazing published materials.”

Historians and scholars take advantage of the centralized location of the many different sources that make it easier to do multinational research without having to travel from country to country. “We have visiting researchers from all over the world,” Hartness says. “Most of my time is spent talking with people.”

Nicolas Shumway, Director of LLILAS, believes the Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection to be one of the most visible signs of the university’s commitment to the study of Latin America. “One of the ironies of the library collection is that people from Latin America frequently want to come here to study because this is one of the few places you can actually study Latin America as a whole,” Shumway says. “Mexico is a great place to study Mexico. Argentina is a great place to study Argentina. But when you try to study Latin America as a whole, you need to be in a place like the University of Texas with the resources of the Benson Latin American Collection.”

The Benson Collection hosts an extensive Web-based exhibit highlighting its holdings. This currently includes the papers of Argentine writer Julio Cortázar and Chilean author Gabriela Mistral, and maps from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries depicting Mexico, Latin America, and the Caribbean. See them for yourself at the Benson Latin American Collection Web site at <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/benson/>. 🌟

The Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection by the Numbers
900,000 books, periodicals, and pamphlets.
2,500 linear feet of manuscripts.
170,000 photographs.
19,000 maps.
42,000 microforms.
11,500 broadsides.
38,000 items in a variety of other media, including sound recordings, drawings, videotapes and cassettes, slides, transparencies, posters, memorabilia, and electronic media.
More than 60,000 periodical titles (including 8,000 currently received titles).

BENSON LIBRARY COLLECTIONS AND ACQUISITIONS

Relaciones Geográficas

The *Relaciones Geográficas* collection is consistently an attraction for visiting scholars. With dates ranging from 1578 to 1586, these highly detailed maps serve as primary sources of information about the Spanish conquest of Middle America. These documents were created in response to a questionnaire initiated by the Spanish Crown in 1577 requesting information about Spanish held territories in the Americas. The questionnaires covered such topics as population demographics, political jurisdictions, language(s) spoken, physical terrain, and native vegetation. Spanish cartographers created some of the maps; others were made by indigenous peoples. There were 191 responses to this questionnaire, of which the present location of 167 is known, including the 43 held by the Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection. The other known existing *relaciones geográficas* are held by the Archivo General de Indias, Seville, and the Real Academia de la Historia, Madrid.

Lister Papers

In July 2005, the Benson Library acquired the papers of influential diplomat George Lister through a partnership with the Bernard and Audre Rapoport Center for Human Rights and Justice at the University of Texas School of Law. Scholars are now able to examine the history of human rights public policy through letters, speeches, essays, and other pieces accumulated during Lister's lengthy career in the government. Lister's work was focused mainly on Latin America and stemmed from his examination of horrific human rights violations that occurred in Latin America in the 1960s. His work in foreign affairs aided in the creation of a State Department bureau that deals solely with human rights, aptly named the Bureau of Human Rights, Democracy, and Labor.

Anzaldúa Archive

The archive of Gloria Evangelina Anzaldúa (1942–2004) was recently acquired by the Benson. The collection includes manuscripts, essays, and correspondence written by the renowned feminist author, cultural theorist, and scholar. Anzaldúa, a lesbian, had a hard time fitting into the conservative climate in her native South Texas. These early experiences helped shape her autobiographical book *Borderlands/La Frontera*. She later worked as a professor and traveled the country lecturing on her views of theory and gender studies.

Ignacio Luis Vallarta

The Benson recently acquired the correspondence of Ignacio Luis Vallarta, a significant Mexican attorney and politician in the mid-1800s. After years of government work, including serving as the governor of Jalisco, Vallarta served as the president of the Supreme Court of Justice in Mexico for five years, a position similar in power to the vice president in the United States. Most of the papers are correspondence to other political and business figures discussing issues important to Vallarta's role in the government.

Modernist Brazilian Music

In 2004, the Benson acquired Dr. Marion Verhaalen's extensive collection of modern Brazilian music. Verhaalen began the collection in 1969 with the piano music of Camargo Guarnieri and Francisco Mignone. The bulk of the collection focuses on the work of Guarnieri, but also contains musical scores, LPs, tapes, CDs, correspondence, and notes from the last three decades of Brazilian music. ✨



George Lister



Gloria Evangelina Anzaldúa

PHOTO BY ANNIE F. VALVA



Ignacio Luis Vallarta



Camargo Guarnieri