

COLÓN, RUFA CONCEPCIÓN FERNÁNDEZ (“CONCHA”) (1903–1958)

Rufa Concepción Fernández, known to her family and friends as Concha, was born in 1903 in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Arriving in New York City on January 29, 1925, on December 31 of that year she wed her fiancé, Jesús Colón, writer, intellectual and radical organizer. Their early letters reflect the struggles of migration and acculturation and the difficulties in maintaining a long-distance relationship. She became politically active alongside her husband. As his secretary, Concha assisted in the founding of various community and grassroots organizations in the fledgling New York Puerto Rican barrio. Through her letters and activism Concha Colón became a link between the home culture of Puerto Rico and the host culture of New York, especially Brooklyn. Concha became the secretary of la Liga Puertorriqueña e Hispana, which fostered mutual aid in the collective struggle and solidarity with all Hispanics in New York City. Much like her husband, she believed in the “people’s capacity to achieve revolutionary change.” Although she left no will or archival materials, Concha’s daily life and routine tasks were in part contributions to the growth and acculturation of the New York Puerto Rican community.