

FLORES, FRANCISCA (1913–1996)

Born in San Diego, California, Francisca Flores contracted tuberculosis at the age of fifteen and spent more than a decade in isolation. Inspired by veterans of the Mexican Revolution, Flores organized the Hermanas de la Revolución Mexicana upon her release from the sanitarium at the age of twenty-six. By the Second World War, Flores had embarked on a series of ventures as a community organizer, journalist, and political activist. She joined the Sleepy Lagoon Defense Committee, a group of California progressive activists who fought to release twelve young Mexican American men wrongly accused of murder. Active in Democratic Party politics, Flores organized the Mexican American Political Association (MAPA) in 1960 and embraced the Chicano movement. She became the founding president of the Comisión Femenil Mexicana Nacional, a major Chicana feminist organization. At the age of sixty-five she participated in the National Equal Rights Amendment March to Washington, D.C. and lobbied for extension of equal rights to women. A true icon in the Chicana feminist struggle, Flores died at the age of eighty-two leaving a powerful legacy for all Latinos.