

## **PATIÑO RÍO, DOLORES (1909– )**

She was born in West Tampa, Florida, on May 29, 1909, worked in the cigar factories for fifty-one years, and lived to see the transformations in the industry from hand rolling of the cigars to mechanization. Patiño grew up in a radical immigrant community where the readers in the tobacco factories informed a predominantly working class workforce about the class struggle. She entered the workforce at the age of fourteen and after a two-week unpaid apprenticeship was offered a job as a *buncher*. This group of workers was paid more and had access to the readers who read aloud the literary classics and the news of the day. In time, Patiño became a cigar roller, a job that helped the family during the critical Depression era. The tumultuous strike of 1931 forever eliminated the readers from the factories and when the workers returned to the job they found radios in their place. During the 1930s and 1940s, work declined due to mechanization but Patiño was able to transfer to the new methods. Patiño availed herself of all the benefits connected with the workers' organizations. She joined the Centro Asturiano, a mutual-aid society that provided healthcare, burial benefits, and midwives. It was a social center that included theater and musical activities. In 1974 Patiño retired from the cigar industry, the first worker to receive a pension.