

## URREA, TERESA (1872–1906)

The noted mystic, *curandera*, and folk hero known as "la Santa de Cabora," was born and raised in humble surroundings in Ocoroni, Sinaloa, daughter of a poor domestic servant and a moderately successful farmer. Bestowed legitimacy at the age of fifteen, Urrea moved to live on the Cabora estate. Apprenticed to the local *curandera*, at the age of seventeen, Urrea experienced the first in a series of trancelike spells leading to catatonic states and seizures. Devoted to the Virgin Mary, Urrea promised to heal humanity in exchange for good health. Urrea emerged as a symbol of hope in the face of drastic economic and political transformations in Mexico. Within the year she had amassed a faithful following among the poor and exploited, but also the ire of the Catholic Church and the Mexican government. Following three years of government surveillance, Urrea was exiled to the United States. Initially relocating to Nogales, she moved shortly thereafter to Solomonville, Arizona. Hounded by government opposition, she moved to El Paso, Texas, to continue healing but Mexican rebels evoked her name as la Santa de Cabora in their revolutionary activities forcing Urrea to retreat to Clifton, Arizona. Urrea embarked on a healing tour in California enabling the healer to experience the dire circumstances in which Mexicans lived and labored in the U.S. She soon protested these conditions taking on the mantle of activist and increasing the numbers of her followers. Once again the laborers glorified her as the symbolic la Santa de Cabora. She continued her healing while living in East Los Angeles, and bore two daughters, Laura and Magdalena Van Order but her health deteriorated and she died at the age of thirty-four of Tuberculosis. Urrea's fame as a *curandera* straddled two nations.