

# NARRATIVE TEXTS

## Jovita Idar, Journalist and Activist, 1885-1946

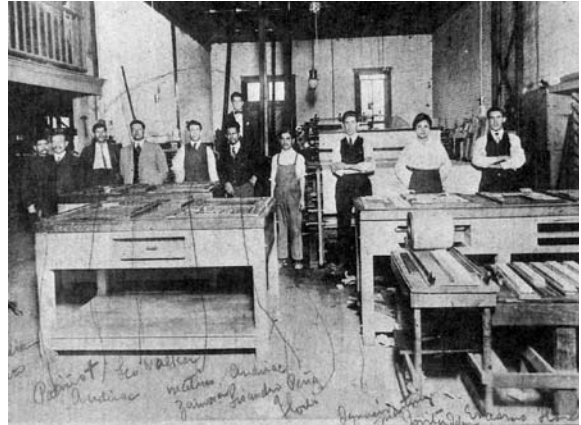
Jovita Idar was born in 1885 into a Laredo family of journalists. She and her brothers worked for their father's newspaper, *La Crónica*, writing articles that condemned racial prejudice and violence. When the Idars arranged for the First Mexican Congress in 1911, Jovita organized the women who attended. From their efforts sprang the Mexican Feminist League, which provided free education for Tejano children.

The Mexican Revolution of 1910 to 1920 incited fear and tension in South Texas.

Jovita and her friend Leonor Villegas de Magnón crossed the border into Mexico to nurse the war-wounded. In 1914 Jovita was working for the Laredo newspaper *El Progreso* when it published an article critical of President Wilson.

Incensed by the editorial, Texas Rangers arrived to close down the print shop. They found Jovita alone. She faced them squarely in the doorway and convinced them to depart.

In her later years, Jovita married and moved to San Antonio, where she started a free kindergarten and volunteered as an interpreter in a hospital. She remained an active voice for reform throughout her life.



### Quotations

*Mexican children in Texas need an education.... There is no other means to do it but ourselves, so that we are not devalued and humiliated by the strangers who surround us.<sup>1</sup>*

*Working women know their rights and proudly rise to face the struggle. The hour of their degradation is past.... Women are no longer servants but rather the equals of men, companions to them.<sup>2</sup>*

### Photo

ITC 84-592. Caption: "Jovita Idar (*second from right*) and other employees of *El Progreso*, Laredo, 1914."

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Jovita Idar writing under pen name A.V. Negra, "Por la Raza: La Niñez Mexicana en Texas," *La Crónica* (Laredo), August 10, 1911, p. 1, translation McKenzie.

<sup>2</sup> Jovita Idar writing under pen name Astraea, "Debejamos trabajar," *La Crónica* (Laredo), December 7, 1911, translation McKenzie.