

Sara Estela Ramírez

1881–1910



WHY SHE MADE HISTORY This journalist, poet, and political organizer is known as one of the founders of Mexican feminism. She was a supporter of the Mexican Revolution, and her literary work focused on women's issues and the rights of laborers.



As you read the biography below, think about how Sara Estela Ramírez helped shape the Mexican feminist movement. What is the significance of her literary works?

When Porfirio Díaz came to power in Mexico in the late 1800s, he made changes to a country that had been in political shambles for many years. He helped increase production at factories and in many industries. Under his control, the economy improved, but most Mexicans were not reaping the benefits. By 1910 much of the working class began voicing its frustration with Díaz. This unrest ultimately led to the Mexican Revolution. A poet, political activist, and journalist, Sara Estela Ramírez played an active role in bringing about the Mexican Revolution.

Ramírez was born in Villa Progresso, Coahuila, Mexico, in 1881. Following her graduation from teachers' college at age 17, Ramírez moved to Laredo, Texas, where she worked as a Spanish teacher.

Not long after her arrival in Texas, Ramírez became involved with the Partido Liberal Mexicano (PLM), a group that supported the rights of Mexican laborers and called for the overthrow of the Díaz government. After Díaz forced the PLM out of Mexico Ramírez established the U.S. headquarters for the group in her home. She played an active role in ensuring that women's rights were included in the group's overall agenda of revolution in Mexico.

Ramírez strongly believed in the importance of newspapers in unifying people. Between 1904 and 1910 she wrote essays and articles that supported workers' and women's rights. She also wrote poetry that focused on sisterhood, philosophy, politics, and male-female friendships. These appeared in the Spanish-language newspapers and literary magazines in the borderland area of Mexico and Texas. She eventually started her own periodicals in which she published her own writings and those of other Mexicans. She also wrote a play, in which she played a leading role. Her work brought her respect among Mexican Americans and she came to be known as the Texas Muse.

Just three months before the Mexican Revolution began, Ramírez died at age 29 of an unknown illness. Throughout her short life, she worked to

Entering the World Stage

Biography

improve conditions for laborers and women. She was the first woman poet in the borderland region to be published. Her works play a prominent role in understanding the years preceding the Mexican Revolution. They also provide an early glimpse of the Chicana feminist and literary movements.

WHAT DID YOU LEARN?

1. **Describe** What kind of writing did Sara Estela Ramírez use to communicate her beliefs?

2. **Summarize** What did Sara Estela Ramírez accomplish as a writer?

ACTIVITY

Sara Estela Ramírez used her poetry to communicate her political beliefs. Write a short poem that expresses how you feel about one of the most pressing social or political issues facing people today.