



Guide to the Luis A. Cardona Oral History Collection



Archives of the Puerto Rican Diaspora
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Cover Photo: Luis Cardona and woman looking at 'The Key to Your Future' pamphlet of the Montefiore Hospital School of Practical Nursing

Descriptive Summary

Creator: Luis A. Cardona

Title: The Luis A. Cardona Oral History Collection

Inclusive Dates: 1976-1989

Volume: .25 cubic feet

Repository: Archives of the Puerto Rican Diaspora, Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños

Abstract: The Luis A. Cardona Oral History Collection spans between the years 1976 to 1989. There are a total of 39 audiotapes. Cardona interviewed thirty-two leaders of the Puerto Rican community, many of who were founders of Puerto Rican organizations in New York and throughout the diaspora. Many of these interviews contributed to his research.

Administrative Information

Collection Number: 2001-009

Provenance: Luis A. Cardona

Processing History:

Transfers: None

Copyright: Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños, Hunter College, CUNY.

Restrictions: Release available. Educational purposes only.

Preferred Citation: The Luis A. Cardona Oral History Collection, Archives of the Puerto Rican Diaspora, Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños

Processing Archivist: Jonathan Morales with supervision from Pedro Juan Hernandez.

Date: July 2014

The Luis A. Cardona Oral History Collection, 1976-1989

Biographical Note:

Luis A. Cardona was an important member of the New York Puerto Rican community. In addition to his work with the Migration Division, Cardona was an advocate for better access to employment opportunities and job training for Puerto Ricans who migrated to New York. He conducted extensive research on Puerto Rican history and other matters, the culmination being his oral history interviews with leaders in the community.

Luis A. Cardona was born December 11, 1927 and raised in the East Harlem section of Manhattan, New York by his father Mr. Luis Antonio and his mother Mrs. Maria Dolores Cardona. His Family left Puerto Rico in the 1920's, arriving in East Harlem, and when his mother remarried, Cardona then moved to the South Bronx. His mother worked as a garment worker, and his step-father worked as a building superintendent and janitor. He had 9 siblings, including Alice Cardona who was a community activist in the Puerto Rican community of New York.

Cardona joined the Army in 1948 having only achieved an 8th grade education. While stationed in Germany, Cardona took on a position as a reporter in a local newspaper. After the Army, Cardona went back to high school, getting his degree in two years. He then enrolled as an undergraduate in Long Island University, receiving his BA in English in 1955. He received his Master of Arts degree in 1969 from the University of Oklahoma.

Cardona married in 1956 and had 3 children, two boys and one girl. His wife Lavinia Rodriguez was a social worker. Cardona began working at the Migration Division of the Department of Labor of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico on July 20, 1955. Upon graduating from college, he went to the Migration Division employment office looking for work, and was eventually given a position as an interviewer by the employment office director, Francisca Bou. On his own initiative, Cardona launched a series of programs of tutoring sessions and resume writing counselling for job seekers and future city employees. From thereon, Cardona was considered a specialist in labor matters, especially as it relates to the Puerto Rican community. Cardona was soon promoted to the position of Employment Office director, which he held until 1964. He proceeded to take on a position as Deputy Commissioner in the New York City Manpower and Career Development Agency in March of 1968 when Mayor John V. Lindsay appointed him. Prior to that, Cardona was the Regional Director of the U.S. Labor Department from 1965 until 1966. Cardona also served as a consultant of ASPIRA, assisting in the preparation of an adequate program and training of administrators. He was a consultant to the Inter-American Development Bank, serving in the capacity of employment analyst for the agency. He was named 'Man of the Year' in 1967 by Organizaciones Unidas del Bronx.

Luis A. Cardona was an avid researcher of Puerto Rican history and a collector of materials related to Puerto Rican history and culture, such as photographs, books, etc. His research led him to interview many key leaders and founders of Puerto Rican organizations in New York, which he donated to the Center for Puerto Rican Studies. These include: Antonia Pantoja, Jack Agueros, Awilda Orta, Frank Bonilla, and many others. There are a total of thirty-two interviews in Cardona's oral history collection. He is the author of several books including: *A History of the Puerto Ricans in the United States*, *Contributions of the Hispanics to the United States*, *A Selected Directory of Audiovisual Materials on Puerto Rico and the Puerto Ricans*, *An Annotated Bibliography on Puerto Rican Materials and Other Sundry Matters*, and *The Coming of the Puerto Ricans*, among others. The Luis Cardona Oral History Collection complements the papers of his sister, Alice Cardona and the papers of the Migration Division and others such as Joseph Montserrat, which are in the Centro Archives. Luis Cardona passed away in 2003.

Sources:

Lapp, Michael. *Managing Migration: The Migration Division of Puerto Rico and Puerto Ricans in New York City, 1948-1968*. Baltimore, MD. The Johns Hopkins University, 1991.

The Michael Lapp Migration Division Oral History Collection. Archives of the Puerto Rican Diaspora, Center for Puerto Rican Studies, Hunter College, CUNY 1984.

Ribes Tovar, Federico. *El Libro Puertorriqueño De Nueva York = Handbook of the Puerto Rican Community*. New York, NY: Libro Puertorriqueño, 1968.

Scope and Content:

The Luis A. Cardona Oral History Collection is comprised of interviews with leaders in the New York Puerto Rican community during the 1950's up until the 1980's. This collection documents Cardona's interests in the Puerto Rican community of New York and the diaspora as a whole. The topics of the interviews and Cardona's interests include: migratory history, education, culture, and the arts, among many others. The collection serves to understand Puerto Rican experiences in the United States, primarily in New York. These experiences are told through the interviews of leaders such as Antonia Pantoja which highlighted her childhood in Puerto Rico, her education and her migration to the United States. In addition, the interview of Frank Bonilla serves to place New York as a center of Puerto Rican studies and delves into the Center for Puerto Rican Studies, which he was director of from 1973 to 1993. The dates of the interviews span between 1976 and 1989. There are a total of thirty-two interviews and thirty-six audiotapes total. The tapes are arranged alphabetically and can be listened to with an audiotape recorder available at Centro.

Access Points / Términos de Acceso:

Name / Nombres

Agueros, Jack
Alvarado, Anthony
Bermudez, Federico Aquino
Bonilla, Frank
Burgos, Antonio "Tony"
Carro, John
Cedeño, Blanca
De Martino, Rita
Del Toro, Angelo
Díaz, Otilio
Emeric, Damaso
Hidalgo, Hilda
Llamas, Nestor
Lugoviña, Francisco
Martinez, Miguel
Medina, Vicente
Mendez, Isabel
Montserrat, Jose
Morales, Jose
Negrón, Peter
Nuñez, Louis
Olivero, Jack John
Orta, Awilda
Pantoja, Antonia
Perez de Silva, Matilde
Ramirez, Tina
Reyes, Luis O.
Rodriguez, Jose Erazo
Rosa, Bibiano
Velez, Ramon S.
Villar, Eliana
Vivo, Paquita

Subject Organizations:

ASPIRA
Ballet Hispanico
Boricua College
Casa de la Herencia
Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños
El Museo Del Barrio
Migration Division -- New York Office/National

Subject Places:

New York
Puerto Rico

Document Types:

Audiocassettes

Audiocassette Collection:

This collection is comprised of 32 audiocassette interviews with founding leaders of Puerto Rican organizations and powerbrokers within the Puerto Rican community in New York and in the diaspora broadly. Many of these founding leaders were first generation born and raised Puerto Ricans in the U.S.

Audio Tapes / Interviews

- 1 Agüeros, Jack c. 1980's
- 2 Alvarado, Anthony (two tapes) c. 1980's
- 3 Aquino Bermudez, Federico (two tapes) c. 1980's
- 4 Bonilla, Frank 1983 May 24
- 5 Burgos, Antonio "Tony" 1987 June 5
- 6 Carro, John (two tapes) 1983 May 24
- 7 Cedeño, Blanca (three tapes) c. 1980's
- 8 De Martino, Rita c. 1980's
- 9 Del Toro, Angelo c. 1980's
- 10 Diaz, Otilio c. 1980's
- 11 Emeric, Damaso c.1980's
- 12 Hildago, Hilda c.1980's
- 13 Llamas, Nestor c.1980's
- 14 Lugoviña, Francisco c.1980's
- 15 Martinez, Miguel 1983 May 18
- 16 Medina, Vicente 1976 February 22
- 17 Mendez, Isabel c.1980's
- 18 Monserrat, Jose (two tapes) c.1980's
- 19 Morales, Jose c.1980's
- 20 Negrón, Peter 1983 May 24
- 21 Nuñez, Louis 1989 March 27
- 22 Olivero, Jack John c.1980's
- 23 Orta, Awilda c.1980's
- 24 Pantoja, Antonia 1983 May 22
- 25 Perez de Silva, Matilde 1983 May 16
- 26 Ramirez, Tina c.1980's
- 27 Reyes, Luis O. c.1980's
- 28 Rodríguez, Jose Erazo (two tapes) c.1980's
- 29 Rosa, Bibiano c.1980's
- 30 Velez, Ramon S. 1983 May 24
- 31 Villar, Eliana c.1980's
- 32 Vivo, Paquita 1987 June 30