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Editor: Ann Hartness

CURANDERISMO: FOLK HEALING IN THE MEXICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY

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Traditional folk healing practices continue to be viable and prevalent in the Mexican American community. The study of curanderismo and related folk medical practices encompasses several disciplines: anthropology, folklore, sociology, psychology, medicine, and history. This bibliography makes no attempt to be comprehensive; it is merely meant to provide readers with a sampling of titles geared, for the most part, to the non-specialist. Note that works listed here are generally limited to curanderismo and related fields in the Mexican American community. Additional sources for curanderismo can be found in the [online catalog](#) under the subjects, Mexican American folk medicine; Folk medicine; Healers; Herbs—Therapeutic use; Medicinal plants, and Mexican Americans—Health and hygiene.

Printed Sources

Avila, Elena, and Joy Parker. **Woman Who Glows in the Dark: A Curandera Reveals Traditional Aztec Secrets of Physical and Spiritual Health.** New York: Tarcher/Putnam, 1999.

The author, a psychiatric nurse and practicing curandera, "takes readers deep into ... the fascinating culture of curanderismo to offer a fresh perspective on physical and emotional wellness."

BF 1615 A85 1999 LAC • Benson Collection stacks

Babb, Jewel. **Border Healing Woman: The Story of Jewel Babb as told to Pat Ellis Taylor.** Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981.

Although not Mexican American, this remarkable woman, wife of a West Texas rancher,

utilized natural and psychic healing techniques and built up a devoted *mexicano* following on both sides of the border. See especially Taylor's afterword.
RZ 408 B32 A33 LAC • Benson Collection stacks

Carrasco, Sara Margarita Campos. "**Mexican American Folk Medicine: A Descriptive Study of the Different Curanderismo Techniques Practiced by Curanderos or Curanderas and Used by Patients in the Laredo, Texas Area.**" Ph.D. diss., Texas Woman's University, 1984. [Microfilm]
Film 18, 874 LAC • Microform Room 1.316

Curtin, L. S. M. **Healing Herbs of the Upper Rio Grande: Traditional Medicine of the Southwest.** Revised and edited by Michael Moore. Santa Fe: Western Edge Press, 1997. Originally published in 1947, this classic and comprehensive work is an alphabetical listing of herbs and other plants utilized as medicinal treatments. Authoritative text accompanies each entry and reflects practices of Hispanos and Native Americans in New Mexico. Includes valuable bibliographies and indexes.
RS 164 C832 1997 LAC • Benson Collection stacks

Dodson, Ruth. **Don Pedrito Jaramillo: "Curandero."** Corpus Christi: Henrietta Newbury, 1994.
Originally published in 1934, this bilingual edition collects stories of individuals who claimed they were healed by Don Pedrito, "the faith healer of Los Olmos."
RZ 408 J37 D63 1994 LAC • Benson Collection stacks; additional copy in Benson Collection Rare Books Room

Gardner, Dore. **Niño Fidencio: A Heart Thrown Open.** Photographs and interviews by Dore Gardner; essay by Kay Turner. Santa Fe: Museum of New Mexico Press, 1992. Extraordinary photographs of pilgrimages to Espinazo, Nuevo León, made twice yearly by those faithful to the memory of Mexico's greatest folk healer who died in 1938 and whose influence continues among Tejanos.
RZ 408 N56 G37 1992 LAC • Benson Collection stacks

Garza, Mary Jane. "**Healing Spirits: The Growing Acceptance of Alternative Medicine Enhances the Popularity of Curanderismo.**" *Hispanic*, June 1998.
A good overview of history, treatments, and past and present practitioners of folk healing.
E 184 S75 H487 LAC • Benson Collection stacks

Gonzales, Elena. "**The Role of Chicano Folk Beliefs and Practices in Mental Health.**" In *Chicanos: Social and Psychological Perspectives*, eds. Carrol A. Hernández, Marsha J. Haug, and Nathaniel N. Wagner, 263-281. 2nd ed. St. Louis: Mosby, 1976.
"Presents the culturally relevant aspects of folk beliefs and practices as they relate to Chicanos [and suggests] that mental health is better served when the traditional perspectives of distinct cultures are recognized, appreciated, and represented in mental health facilities."
E 184 M5 W3 1976 LAC • Benson Collection stacks

Hispanic Culture and Health Care: Fact, Fiction, Folklore. Edited by Ricardo Arguijo Martínez. Saint Louis: Mosby, 1978.
An anthology of previously published works on health care among Mexican Americans. Useful for the reprints of classic studies on curanderismo and related folk medicine

practices, including works by Arthur Rubel and Julian Samora.
RA 448.5 M4 H57 LAC • Benson Collection stacks

Homenaje a nuestras curanderas. Honoring Our Healers. Edited by Luz Alvarez Martínez. Oakland: Latina Press, 1996.

A bilingual tribute, published in conjunction with a *Día de los muertos* exhibit, to "curanderas, yerberas, [and] sobadoras," which consists of biographical sketches, interview excerpts, and commentary by family members and protégés. Most women honored here were born in Mexico but resided and practiced in the Bay Area of California.

R 692 H66 1996 LAC • Benson Collection stacks

Keefe, Susan Emley. "**Folk Medicine Among Urban Mexican-Americans: Cultural Persistence, Change, and Displacement.**" *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Science* 3, no. 1 (1981): 41-58.

Presents case studies in three southern California communities on the extent and persistence of folk medicine beliefs and practices. Concludes that curanderismo and other folk healing manifestations are not as widespread among urban Chicanos.

BF 1 H576 LAC • Benson Collection stacks

Kiev, Ari. **Curanderismo: Mexican-American Folk Psychiatry.** New York: Free Press, 1972.

Written from a psychotherapist's perspective, this study seeks to "determine the nature of a folk healer's sensitivity to the nuances and subtleties of psychopathology among the members of his group, and in what ways the care he offered was suitable for the specific psychopathological conflicts created in his own culture."

GN 477.1 K5 1972 LAC • Benson Collection stacks

Lauren, Sara Elena J. "**Ritual as Therapy: Psychotherapeutic Healing Rituals in Curanderismo as Exemplified by the Work of Diana Velázquez, Curandera.**" Ph.D. diss., Union Graduate School, 1987. [Microfilm]

The subject of this study, Diana Velázquez, was trained as a curandera first by her grandmother, and later by her Yaqui father-in-law in Sonora. Upon her return to the United States, she was employed as a psychotherapist by the Colorado state mental health system.

Film 20,381 LAC • Microform Room 1.316

Macklin, June. "'All the Good and Bad in This World': Women, Traditional Medicine, and Mexican American Culture." In *Twice a Minority: Mexican American Women*, ed. Margarita B. Melville, 127-148. St. Louis: Mosby, 1980.

Considers the role that women play in the practice and beliefs of curanderismo. Concludes that the importance of the curandera may be fading, particularly as Mexican Americans move away from the southwestern homeland.

E 184 M5 T84 LAC • Benson Collection stacks

Paredes, Américo. **Folk Medicine and the Intercultural Jest.** Offprint series, 83. Austin: Institute of Latin American Studies, University of Texas at Austin, 1969.

Discusses parodies of belief tales, specifically six curandero jests, from an anthropological perspective. Texts of parodies are included.

G980.6 T312of No. 83 LAC • Benson Collection stacks

Perrone, Bobette, H. Henrietta Stockel, and Victoria Krueger. **Medicine Women, Curanderas, and Women Doctors.** Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1989. Three curanderas from New Mexico are featured: Sabinita Herrera (*hierbera*), Gregorita Rodríguez (*sobadora*), and Jesusita Aragón (*partera*). Descriptions of healing techniques and skills are provided.

R 692 P47 1989 LAC • Benson Collection stacks

Rodríguez, Gregorita. **Singing for My Echo: Memories of Gregorita Rodríguez, a Native Healer of Santa Fe.** As told to Edith Powers. Santa Fe, NM: Cota Editions, 1987. Valuable not only for Rodríguez's recollections of her work as a curandera, but also for her description of the Hispano way of life in the early twentieth century. Herbal remedies are interspersed throughout text.

RZ 408 R63 A3 1987 LAC • Benson Collection stacks

Roeder, Beatrice A. **Chicano Folk Medicine from Los Angeles, California.** Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988.

Based on data collected in the 1970s by UCLA researchers, this work includes a brief history of Mexican and Mexican American folk medicine, and "reviews the scholarly literature on Mexican American health beliefs and practices" Useful medicinal appendix; glossary; bibliography, and index.

GR 111 M49 R64 1988 LAC • Benson Collection stacks

Rose, Linda C. **Disease Beliefs in Mexican-American Communities.** San Francisco: R & E Associates, 1978.

Citing studies conducted from the 1950s through the early 1970s, this work explores the maintenance of folk medicine beliefs in Chicano culture.

RA 448.5 M4 R66 LAC • Benson Collection stacks

Rubel, Arthur J. "Illness Behavior and Attitudes." In *Across the Tracks: Mexican-Americans in a Texas City*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1966.

Considered a classic and based on case studies carried out in the late 1950s in the Lower Rio Grande Valley, this chapter explores and illustrates concepts of folk diseases and their treatment.

F 392 H56 R8 LAC • Benson Collection stacks

Torres, Eliseo. **The Folk Healer: The Mexican-American Tradition of Curanderismo.** Kingsville, TX: Nieves Press, 1983.

A very brief and basic introduction to principal ailments, healing practices, and healers associated with curanderismo.

At bindery for Benson Collection

Torres, Eliseo. **Green Medicine: Traditional Mexican-American Herbal Remedies.** Kingsville, TX: Nieves Press, 1983.

Recognizing their crucial role in the practice of curanderismo, the author has compiled a glossary of curative herbs, with popular Spanish translations and brief descriptions of their preparation and therapeutic aspects.

RM 666 H33 T67 1983 LAC • Benson Collection stacks

Trotter, Robert T., and Juan Antonio Chavira. **Curanderismo: Mexican American Folk Healing.** 2nd ed. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1997.

Originally published in 1981, this work examines how curanderismo is learned and passed on as a healing art, in effect "an ethnography of the healing theories and practices of curanderos." Special attention is given to the three levels of treatment employed by practitioners. Includes glossary, bibliography, and index.
GR 111 M49 T76 1997 LAC • Benson Collection stacks

Sandoval, Annette. **Homegrown Healing: Traditional Home Remedies from Mexico.** New York: Berkley Books, 1998.

An alphabetical listing of common ailments and recommended herbal treatments, followed by a listing of herbal remedies, their popular Spanish names, therapeutic uses and applications. The author wisely warns that some remedies may have potentially dangerous side effects if pre-existing conditions exist.

RC 82 S26 1998 LAC • Benson Collection stacks

Electronic Information Sources

Several indexes and databases with content related to curanderismo are available to all library users on the UT Library Online (UTLOL) computer workstations. When accessed from outside of the General Libraries, these databases require a valid UT ID. They may be accessed from the UT General Libraries World Wide Web Homepage (<http://legacy.lib.utexas.edu/>) by clicking on "Indexes, Abstracts, and Full Text" under which the databases are listed in alphabetical order:

Chicano Database

Anthropological Literature

HealthSTAR

MEDLINE

PsycINFO

Sociological Abstracts

Websites:

El Niño Fidencio Research Project

<http://unix.utb.edu/~cla/fidencio.html>

Don Pedrito Jaramillo's Shrine, Falfurrias, Texas

<http://www.globalite.com/shrine/dpjshrine.html>

Traditional Home Remedies from Mexico

<http://web2.kpix.com/xtra/remedios/>

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