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Mambisas: Rebel Women in Nineteenth-Century Cuba. By Teresa Prados-Torreira. (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005. xii + 186 pages. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$59.95 cloth.)

Determining who Cuba's female militants were and how they contributed to Cuban independence is central to the investigation of Cuban national identity for both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The *mambisas* were important in their day for the pivotal roles they played in the execution of the three wars waged against Spain and for the propaganda that came from their own examples of heroism and martyrdom. Their heroism and patriotism inspired women and men to demand rights for women and foment unsuccessful revolutions in the first half of the twentieth century and to withstand withering reprisals from the United States in the post-1959 revolutionary government. Standing as symbols of state, the *mambisas* have been lionized by families who sought leadership recognition through the nationalist efforts of their ancestors. Political leaders appropriated their heroism to justify subsequent governing ideals and their own authority. Feminists demanded full citizenship based upon the citizen soldiers, the *mambisas*, who fought for Free Cuba. With so much riding on the seemingly unusual contributions Cuban women made to nationhood and *cubanidad*, it is past time to get their history right. But writing an accurate history from what has become legend requires careful research of the few diaries and eyewitness accounts that have survived. Most women left few records of their experiences, perhaps because diary keeping and personal introspection were not popular among the educated classes or possible for the illiterate. Teresa Prados-Torreira breaks through the romanticized histories of the *mambisas* by consulting diaries and letters, reading trials of women brought before Spanish tribunals, contextualizing women's biographies into period national and hemispheric history, and explaining how the trauma of the wars affected women's and men's lives differently. Her work is on much firmer ground than the work that has been done before.

Mambisas: Rebel Women in Nineteenth-Century Cuba surpasses other histories because it embraces a wide range of female activities and explains the multilayered motivations for women's actions. Prados-Torreira concludes that women and men lived within the confines of gendered roles even though the exigencies of war thrust women into the world of war and into male roles. Certainly, she argues, women and men experienced war differently, and women found themselves facing the choice between removal from their homes into concentration camps, resistance, exile, or surrender. The way they met these challenges inspired a nation to fight to the death and to include women's rights in the construction of national law.

Women's experience in the wars of independence was not uniform. The author writes a careful history that delineates the racial and class stratifications that divided women. Not all black women were slaves, and not even all black slave women wanted independence from Spain. Prados-Torreira

deftly culls out women's political loyalties, placing them in their social and racial context. The author is at her best when she shows how women altered their lives to meet the demands of industrialization and how society changed to meet women's demands for self definition in an enlightened world. Elite white women, for instance, put a price on their modesty, purity, and beauty by the end of the nineteenth century. If they were to become commodities traded in marriage for social advantage, then they would participate in the selection of their suitors. The plight of black and mulatto women reflected the unchecked power of white patriarchy that sexually exploited women of color and emasculated their men. By the end of the nineteenth century, however, the mulatta had gained the reputation as a seductress and wily social climber. White wives could say little about their husbands' exploits and had to endure their infidelity.

But women did more than suffer men's sexual exploitation. Prados-Torreira demonstrates how mothers taught children to love their country. National legends, songs, food, aesthetics, and attachment to nature were passed from generation to generation through stories and customs practiced in the home. The notion of *cubanidad* took shape around the hearth. Family was not the same experience for white and black people, of course. Independence had different meaning for women of color who wanted citizenship for the male members of their families and freedom for slaves. So, mothers of color, with some trepidation at first and more boldly with time, not only taught love of country, they committed themselves and their families to the freedom of the colored race.

Mambisas is well researched, nicely written, concise, and accessible to undergraduate and graduate student alike, although the book is too expensive for classroom use. It should be assigned, however, because it clarifies the contributions women made to the independence age in Cuba, thus bridging an important gap in the history of Cuban women.

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Black Blood Brothers: Confraternities and Social Mobility for Afro-Mexicans. By Nicole von Germeten. (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2006. xiv + 287 pp. Map, tables, graphs, appendix, notes, bibliography, index. \$55.00 cloth.)

Research on New Spain's black population has experienced a veritable renaissance over the past decade or so with most scholars focusing their attention on socioeconomic concerns rather than religious or cultural ones. Some work has focused on spiritual transgressions, such as witchcraft,