

BEHIND THE VIGNETTE...: Heroines of the Homeland (4)

By: Magdalena García Ramírez

Returning to the sheet dedicated to **Heroines who forged the Homeland** (17/9/2025) (Fig.1), I have grouped the 13 Heroines displayed there into 4 groups:

- Those that in their time influenced the formation of the country (3).
- Those who participated in the Mexican Independence movement (3).
- Those who participated in the defense of the Republic during the French intervention (2).
- **Those who played a leading role in the Mexican Civil War (5).**



Fig.1 Heroines who forged the Homeland, year 2025.

Thanks to the sculptures made of them to build the **Paseo de las Heroínas** (a) and the issuance of these stamps, we can learn about their lives, their work and pay tribute to each of them by getting to know them and spreading their legacy to Mexico.

This time the topic is **5 outstanding Mexican women who actively participated before and during the Mexican Civil War...**

From different geographical points of the country...

Dolores Jiménez y Muro (1848-1925). She was born in Aguascalientes, Ags. and grew up in the city of San Luis Potosí.

Sara Pérez Romero (1870-1952). She was born in San Juan del Río, Querétaro.

Juana Belén Gutiérrez (1875-1942). She was born in San Juan del Río, Durango.

Carmen Serdán (1875-1948). She was born in Puebla, Puebla.

Hermila Galindo (1886-1954). She was born in Villa de San Fernando, Lerdo, Dgo. and grew up in Torreón, Coah.

From different socio-economic backgrounds...

Dolores, born into a middle-class family, she had access to education and earned a teaching degree. She witnessed the French invasion and the reign of Maximilian. She is the oldest of the five heroines.

Sara, from a rich family, her father was a landowner, orphaned by her mother 3 days after birth, "her childhood was wandering", she studied in Mexico City and in San Francisco California, in the United States of America.

Juana, daughter of a laborer and blacksmith originally from the state of Jalisco and her mother a descendant of the Caxcanes tribe of Zacatecas, she married a miner at the age of 17 and they migrated to different mines in the northern region of the country, becoming a widow very young.

Carmen, from a family with liberal ideas, his maternal grandfather participated in the Reform War and his father drafted the first agrarian law in the country, she had access to a private education.

Hermila, born Hermila Acosta, taking her mother's surname, she was recognized by her father after her mother's death and changed her name to Hermila Galindo Acosta. Raised by a paternal aunt, she was orphaned at 16 and began working to support herself and her aunt. The youngest of the five heroines.

They were all political activists...

... from before the official start date of the Mexican Civil War (November 20, 1910), they participated in spreading its ideology through the written word, as writers or journalists, the spoken word in conferences, socially organizing and supporting anti-reelectionist associations and liberal clubs that fought for greater legal rights for women, raising funds, acting as a link between like-minded groups, transmitting confidential information, etc.

Some took up arms...

Carmen Serdán, which records her armed participation in the defense of her parents' house where weapons and ammunition were stored, days before the agreed start of the armed struggle; **Dolores** Jiménez obtained the rank of brigadier general in the Zapatista army; **Juana** Belén Gutiérrez was a colonel in Emiliano Zapata's army.

They shone and stood out individually during the revolutionary period because...

Dolores Jiménez y Muro.-

(Position 21 in Fig.1) (Fig.2)



Fig.2

"There is no other influence on me than my own judgment and my conscience," said journalist Dolores Jiménez y Muro.

Dolores shone for her intelligence. At 14, she began writing poetry and later other forms of writing, contributing to opposition newspapers. By the end of the 19th century, her poetry was nationalist, expressing her ideology. In 1901, she moved to Mexico City and collaborated with Juana Belén and Elisa Acuña on the opposition newspaper *Vésper*, founded by Juana. All three were arrested and imprisoned. Upon her release, Dolores returned to her journalistic work and joined the Mexican Liberal Party of Ricardo Flores Magón. She was arrested again in 1910. She joined the Madero movement and founded an anti-reelectionist women's club, "Las Hijas de Cuauhtémoc" (The Daughters of Cuauhtémoc). She wrote the prologue to the Plan of Ayala, which rejected Madero as president, and rose to the rank of brigadier general in Emiliano Zapata's troops. After Madero's assassination, she publicized the details of the event and incited people to rise up against Victoriano Huerta, for which she was arrested again. She is the only woman who appears in the photograph of Pancho Villa and Emiliano Zapata at the National Palace, with Villa seated in the presidential chair, she directly behind them, though slightly close to Villa (b). In 1917, while working at the Ministry of Public Education, she promoted the first literacy campaign. She died in 1925 at the age of 77. Widely respected, she was known as "The Torch of the Revolution."

Sara Pérez Romero.-

(Position 22 in Fig.1) (Fig.3)



Fig. 3

She married Francisco I. Madero in 1903 and from then on embraced her husband's democratic ideals, accompanying him on his travels throughout the country, during his imprisonments in Monterrey and later in San Luis Potosí; she promoted the creation of women's associations and participated in their leadership. As the wife of the President of the Republic, she supported the most needy. She maintained a close friendship with Carmen Serdán and her entire family. In February 1913, Madero was deposed by the armed forces; Sara pleaded for the lives of her husband and Vice President Pino Suárez before the American ambassador, Henry Lane Wilson. When Madero was assassinated on February 22 of that year, Sara had to leave the country and obtained support from the Japanese ambassador to Mexico, going into exile in Cuba, and later in the United States. In 1916, she gave an interview to the American journalist Robert Hammond Murray, where she recounted her February 1913 meeting with then-Ambassador Wilson, seeking his intervention to ensure the safety of her husband and the Vice President, the ambassador made her a false promise to intervene to save them both, although during their conversation Wilson openly displayed his antipathy towards Madero. Sara returned to the country in 1921, settled in Mexico City, received a pension from the federal government, and participated in social service activities until her death in 1952 at the age of 82.

Juana Belén Gutiérrez.-

(Position 7 in Fig.1) (Fig.4).



Fig.4

Born into extreme poverty, Juana was self-taught, thanks to her precocious intelligence. At 22, she was imprisoned for the first time for publishing an article exposing the mistreatment of miners at La Encantada mine in Coahuila. The exact date of her widowhood is unknown, but it must have been around this time, in 1901, when she founded the weekly newspaper *Vésper*. In 1902, she fled to Mexico City and continued publishing her newspaper. She joined liberal movements and was again imprisoned and briefly exiled to Laredo, Texas. She returned to Mexico City and continued publishing dissenting articles. In 1907, she founded the feminist organization "Hijas de Anáhuac" (Daughters of Anáhuac), with over 300 members, who demanded better working conditions. She was imprisoned in 1909 for three years, along with Dolores Jiménez. Upon her release, she joined the Zapatista movement. She was imprisoned again in 1916, this time by the government of Venustiano Carranza, for being a Zapatista. After the Revolution, she founded several women's organizations, actively participated in the United Front for Women's Rights, served as director of the Zacatecas hospital, and was a federal inspector in schools in Zacatecas and Querétaro. She continued writing and participating in activities supporting the underprivileged. She died in 1942 in Mexico City at the age of 67.

Carmen Serdán.-

(Position 16 in Fig.1) (Fig.5)



Fig.5

The Serdán family rallied around the Madero movement. Carmen, along with her brother Aquiles, visited Madero in San Antonio, Texas, before the start of the armed struggle. She wrote for opposition newspapers and orally spread libertarian and democratic ideals. Her house was raided by the government on November 18, 1910, and the arsenal the Serdán family had stored to begin the armed struggle on the 20th was discovered. She was wounded, and her two brothers were killed. She was imprisoned along with her mother and her sister-in-law, Aquiles's wife, and they were released three months later. Once free, they rejoined the Revolutionary Junta of Puebla, and they continued to support the revolutionary cause. In 1914, she worked as a nurse for the Constitutional Army; in 1917, after the promulgation of the Constitution, she retired to private life. She died at the age of 73 in 1948.

Hermila Galindo.-

(Position 25 in Fig.1) (Fig.6)



Fig.6

Distinguished from a very young age for her intelligence, she studied bookkeeping, shorthand typing, telegraphy, and English. In 1909, commemorating the anniversary of Benito Juárez's birth, a prominent lawyer from Torreón gave a passionate speech opposing the government of Porfirio Díaz, the city's mayor confiscated the original, but Hermila had transcribed the entire speech in shorthand and took it upon herself to disseminate it in Durango and Coahuila. This marked a turning point in her life, as she became fully involved in politics and obtained better jobs in regional law firms. Finally, after Madero's victory, she moved to Mexico City to work as a shorthand typist. In 1914, she delivered the welcoming address for Venustiano Carranza upon his arrival in the capital and became responsible for Carranza's personal correspondence. She was also a strong activist for women's rights, through writings, lectures, and other means. In 1916, she participated as a remote speaker at the first Women's Congress in Mérida, Yucatán. Her avant-garde ideas surprised even the most progressive attendees, as she presented concrete ideas on sex education for women. At the second congress, held later that same year, again in Mérida, she defended herself against criticism and gained the support of influential women such as Eulalia Guzmán, an archaeologist, and Matilde Montoya, the first female doctor (c). She presented a bill to the constituent assembly to grant women the right to vote, but it was not accepted. Nevertheless, she ran as a candidate for federal deputy in 1917. When President Carranza was assassinated in May 1920, Hermila withdrew from public life. She married in 1923 and had two daughters. In 1940, she was awarded the Revolutionary Merit Medal. In 1953, women's suffrage was approved in all elections in the country, during the government of President Ruiz Cortines, and in 1954 Ruiz Cortines named her "The First Woman Congresswoman"; she died before being able to exercise her vote for the first time, in August 1954 at the age of 68.

Conclusions...

With such disparate origins, a common cause linked them at some point in their lives... It was an inclusive Mexican Civil War... the relationship between Dolores and Juana, between Sara and Carmen, and between Hermila and Elvia Carrillo Puerto and Matilde Montoya (c) is evident. Despite their different marital statuses and different perspectives, they are united on this commemorative sheet and during the Mexican Civil War by their decision to say YES to what the country required at that time. Of the five, Sara, after becoming a widow, Carmen, after the promulgation of the Constitution in 1917, and Hermila, after the death of Venustiano Carranza in 1920, stepped aside from the public life of the country, but after the end of the armed conflict, none of the 5 put aside their social activism for the rest of their lives, in one way or another.

Correos de México (Mexican Postal Service) has dedicated a postage stamp to Carmen Serdán, recently issued on December 2, 2025, to commemorate the inauguration of the newest Centros Libre-Casas Carmen Serdán (Carmen

Serdán Houses), a shelter built by the state government of Puebla to protect abused women. Dolores, Sara, Juana, and Hermila are recognized for the first time on the sheet of Heroines.

Hermila Galindo and Carmen Serdán are honored by the Bank of Mexico by appearing on the current circulation MN\$1,000 banknote, along with Francisco I. Madero.

The biographies of these 5 women are very interesting; space limits us, but giving them their place in the Walk of Mexican Heroines and on the postal sheet opens a path to their **recognition** and the **knowledge** of their lives and works.

Notes.-

(a) The images of each of the Heroines correspond to the statues that make up the Paseo de las Heroínas (Walk of the Heroines), located in Mexico City on Paseo de la Reforma, from the Monument to Independence to the Puerta de Los Leones (Gate of the Lions). Each statue is made of bronze, measures 1.75 meters high, 60 centimeters wide, and 63 centimeters deep. This Walk of Fame was created during Claudia Sheinbaum's administration as Head of Government of Mexico City. The idea originated in 2020, and it was inaugurated on March 5, 2023. In the News section of this website (etiangui.com), you can find a detailed description of the topic of this editorial in the article "New Issues September 2025."

(b) The photo can be found online; simply type in the search engine: "photograph of Villa and Zapata at the National Palace," it was taken by Agustín Víctor Casasola on December 6, 1914.

(c) Both Elvia Carrillo Puerto (Position 24), promoter of the Feminist Congresses and Matilde Montoya, the first female doctor in this country (position 10) are also protagonists in Heroines forging the Homeland, in installment (1) published on 5/Dec/2025, on the website etiangui.com you can find more information about them.

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