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# Afro-Latinos

## *An Annotated Guide for Collection Building*

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Guest Columnist

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Collections that explore the wealth of a culture are vital to the essence of every library, as they provide opportunities to build connections between students, faculty, librarians, and the community. As witness to the possibilities stands the amazing Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. New York Public Library provides a service to the world with this rich collection and beautifully arranged, accessible Web site.

Yet as with the Jazz collections the Schomburg Center includes, the interwoven strands of cultural studies are long, tangled, and complexly interrelated. Shana Higgins's gathering of resources will help librarians build a collection that provides students, researchers, and lifelong learners a way to contextualize and study the unique cross-cultural aspects of African American and Latino culture.

Higgins is uniquely suited to author this guide. As an instructional services librarian at the University of Redlands Armacost Library, she is responsible for collection development in Latin American studies and race and ethnic studies. In addition to holding an MLS from Indiana University, Bloomington, she also holds a masters degree from their Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies.—*Editor*

**A**rthur, or Arturo, Schomburg is best known as the bibliophile whose collection of books, prints, and manuscripts on African American art and culture served as the foundation for what is now the New York Public Library Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. Less known is that Arturo Schomburg was Puerto Rican. The fact that we rarely encounter Schomburg represented as both African American and Latino (Afro-Latino) is emblematic of the experience of most Afro-Latinos in the United States and underscores this bibliography's purpose. These resources are intended to illuminate some recent voices seeking to make visible the lived experience of Afro-Latinos across the Americas.

Piri Thomas's enduring classic memoir of growing up in Spanish Harlem, *Down These Mean Streets* (New York: Knopf, 1967), provided one of the first descriptions of the experience of being identified as both African American and Latino in United States popular culture. One might consider *Bodega Dreams* (New York: Vintage Contemporary, 2000) by Ernesto Quiñonez to be an update on Thomas's classic, insofar as it tells a more current tale of growing up Puerto Rican in East Harlem. Each novel subtly deals with the experience of being both African American and Puerto Rican. It is a part of the *mise-en-scene*, noticeable if one is attuned. Likewise, the Dominican-born Julia Alvarez characterizes Afro-Latina experience in her book *In the Name of Salome* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: Algonquin Books of Chapel

Hill, 2000). Of late, Afro-Dominicans have also found some visibility in United States popular culture. On television, characters such as Judy Reyes as nurse Carla Espinosa on *Scrubs* and BET's first Latina host, Julissa Bermudez, both of Dominican descent, claim their blackness and *latinidad*. Still, the Afro-Latino experience across the Americas remains marginalized.

The term Afro-Latino is itself fraught with ambiguity. According to *Africana*, the multivolume encyclopedia edited by Kwame Anthony Appiah and Henry Louis Gates Jr., the term refers to "the cultural experience of Spanish-speaking black people in what has become the territory of the United States."<sup>1</sup> For Latin American and Latino studies scholars, such as Anani Dzidzienyo and Suzanne Oboler, the term includes those identified as or who self-identify as black in Latin America and the Hispanophone Caribbean.<sup>2</sup> A more popular United States understanding of the term describes the connection between Latino and African American communities in the United States, particularly in relation to Cuban Americans and Puerto Ricans on the East Coast, whose cross-cultural contact and productions have been more widely disseminated.<sup>3</sup> Despite ambiguities, in the last few years, the Afro-Latino experience has become an increasingly rich area of study within academia.<sup>4</sup> The U.S. 2000 Census seems to have served as a catalyst for some in the United States to intensify examination of Afro-Latino cultures.<sup>5</sup> For the first time, the Latino population exceeded the African American population in the U.S. Census, clarifying the need to address the heterogeneity within the Latino community and the changing meanings of blackness in the United States.

The principal objective of this column is to educate readers about Afro-Latino experiences across the Americas, and to direct librarians and interested researchers to some current resources. Included are annotated recommendations for books, periodicals, reference materials, films, subscription databases, and Web sites. Print publications and audiovisual materials date from 1995 to 2006. The works listed are in English or include subtitles in English.

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## BOOKS

This selection of books is limited to items that would enhance a core collection at the university level or at a small college, and several are suitable for public libraries rounding out their popular culture and history collections.

Andrews, George Reid. *Afro-Latin America, 1800–2000*. New York: Oxford Univ. Pr., 2004. (ISBN: 0-19-515232-8).

Reid's book examines societies with relatively large Afro-American populations and provides relevant background on the ideology of racial egalitarianism, including concepts of *blanquamiento* and *mestizaje*.

Duany, Jorge. *The Puerto Rican Nation on the Move: Identities on the Island and in the United States*. Chapel Hill, N.C.: Univ. of North Carolina Pr., 2002 (ISBN: 0-80-785372-0).

In addition to providing an analysis of Puerto Rico's intensely circular migratory relationship with the United States

and a problematization of the concept of nationhood as it relates to Puerto Rico, Duany examines the construction of race and blackness in the Spanish Caribbean and United States as well as the sort of ambivalences that develop when these interact.

Dzidzienyo, Anani, and Suzanne Oboler, eds. *Neither Enemies Nor Friends: Latinos, Blacks, Afro-Latinos*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005 (ISBN: 1-40-396568-4).

This edited volume collects fifteen essays that explore the interaction of African Americans, Latinos, and Afro-Latinos within particular racialized spaces in the Americas. Several articles deal with the Afro-Cuban and Afro-Puerto Rican experience in the United States as well as with the Haitian, Ecuadorian, and Columbian experience.

Ferrer, Ada. *Insurgent Cuba: Race, Nation, and Revolution, 1868–1898*. Chapel Hill, N.C.: Univ. of North Carolina Pr., 1999 (ISBN: 0-80-784783-6).

Ferrer's book provides a rich analysis of the tensions between racist and anti-racist rhetoric that was deployed during Cuba's wars of independence and shaped Cuban nationalism. She demonstrates the persistence of racial hierarchies even within an ideology of racial egalitarianism.

Findlay, Eileen J. S. *Imposing Decency: The Politics of Sexuality and Race in Puerto Rico, 1870–1920, American Encounters/Global Interactions*. Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Pr., 1999 (ISBN: 0-82-232396-6).

By analyzing Puerto Rican antiprostitution campaigns, attempts at reforming marriage laws, and working-class ideas about free love, Findlay exposes the race-related double standards of sexual norms and practices in Puerto Rico between 1870 and 1920, the period that witnessed Puerto Rico's shift from Spanish to United States colonialism. Findlay's examination of popular and elite, Puerto Rican and American, and black and white discourses found in both literature and official archives contends that racialized sexual norms and practices were consistently a central component in the construction of social and political orders.

Flores, Juan. *From Bomba to Hip-Hop: Puerto Rican Culture and Latino Identity, Popular Cultures, Everyday Lives*. New York: Columbia Univ. Pr., 2000 (ISBN: 0-23-111077-4).

Flores contests and explores the appellation "Latino" as a term that elides multiple identities, particularly those more closely identified as black or of African descent, connecting these explorations to music. He re-establishes ties between the African American and Latino communities through an examination of the birth of hip hop. Forgotten by most, the beginnings of hip hop in New York City were multiethnic in composition.

de la Fuente, Alejandro. *A Nation for All: Race, Inequality, and Politics in Twentieth-Century Cuba, Envisioning Cuba*. Chapel Hill, N.C.: Univ. of North Carolina Pr., 2001 (ISBN: 0-80-784922-7).

## THE ALERT COLLECTOR

*A Nation for All* examines the effects of institutional policies on official discourses of race and on the characteristics of racial inequality in Cuba from 1902 to 1999. Fuente analyzes the framing of race in Cuba through three republics and foreign influences (particularly the United States) on racial constructions and race relations. Moreover, he illuminates some of the contradictory racial discourses of Castro's socialist Cuba, at once de-emphasizing race while creating the circumstances for fuller inclusion of Afro-Cubans in education and employment.

Greenbaum, Susan D. *More Than Black: Afro-Cubans in Tampa*. New World Diaspora series. Gainesville, Fla.: Univ. Pr. of Florida, 2002 (ISBN: 0-81-302747-0).

An important resource, as Greenbaum makes visible the Afro-Cuban-Americans absent in most discussions of Cuban ethnicity in the United States. Her ethnographic study focuses on a specific locality and on a particular organization, the Marti-Maceo Society.

Negrón-Muntaner, Frances. *Boricua Pop: Puerto Ricans and the Latinization of American Culture*. New York: New York Univ. Pr., 2004 (ISBN: 0-81-475818-5).

Negrón-Muntaner makes thought-provoking connections and distinctions between constructions of race on the island of Puerto Rico and in the United States. For example, in the chapter, "Writing on the Wall," she places Jean-Michel Basquiat within his Afro-Caribbean roots. Her analyses not only highlight the social constructedness of racial thinking but also the foreground diverse constructions of race and the ways in which they are transformed through space, time, and reception.

Pérez-Sarduy, Pedro, and Jean Stubbs, eds. *No Longer Invisible: Afro-Latin Americans Today*. London: Minority Rights Publ., 1995 (ISBN: 1-87-319485-4).

This collection of essays addresses the experience of black Latin Americans of African ancestry. Activists and scholars from Latin America, North America, and Europe map the veiled history of the black Latin American experience from slavery to contemporary times. The book examines black African experience across the region, including Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, Mexico, and Peru, highlighting the ways in which it compares and contrasts in different states.

Rivera, Raquel Z. *New York Ricans from the Hip Hop Zone*. New Directions in Latino American Cultures series. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003 (ISBN: 1-40-396044-5).

Rivera seeks to restore the links between the Puerto Rican and African American communities by centering the birth of hip hop culture in the 1970s. She pays attention to the tensions between the African American and Puerto Rican and Latino communities, signaling the complex and multiple identities available to Afro-Caribbeans in the United States.

Rivero, Yeidy M. *Tuning out Blackness: Race and Nation in the History of Puerto Rican Television*. Console-ing Passions series. Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Pr., 2005 (ISBN: 0-82-233543-3).

Rivero explores the political and cultural dynamics that have shaped racial representations in Puerto Rico's commercial media from the late 1940s to the 1990s. She advances critical discussions about race, ethnicity, and the media in Puerto Rico, countering the discourse of racial egalitarianism that allegedly pervades Puerto Rico's national culture.

Rogers, Reuel R. *Afro-Caribbean Immigrants and the Politics of Incorporation: Ethnicity, Exception, or Exit*. New York: Cambridge Univ. Pr., 2006 (ISBN: 0-52-167640-1).

This book considers the political behavior of Afro-Caribbean immigrants in New York City to answer a familiar but nagging question about American democracy: Does racism still complicate or limit the political integration patterns of racial minorities in the United States? The book concludes that discrimination does interfere with immigrants' adjustment to American political life. But their strategic options and political choices in the face of this challenge are unexpected ones not anticipated by standard accounts in the political science literature. Thus Rogers offers a fresh theoretical perspective on how foreign-born racial minorities adapt to the American political system.

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## CURRENT JOURNAL LITERATURE

Because material discussing Afro-Latino cultures and experiences is so diffuse, it is difficult to provide a list of periodicals that regularly publish articles in this area. Below is a list of journals, magazines, and newspapers that do occasionally include content of relevance.

*Afro-Hispanic Review*. Nashville, Tenn.: Vanderbilt Univ., 1982-. Semi-annual (ISSN: 0278-8969).

This bilingual journal of Afro-Hispanic literature and culture is the only periodical that directly addresses the subject. (Full text can be found in *International Index to Black Periodicals Full Text* and *Proquest*.)

*NACLA Report on the Americas*. New York: North American Congress on Latin America, 1967-. Bimonthly (ISSN: 1071-4839).

This journal often provides content pertaining to Afro-Latino populations in the Americas. (Full text can be found in *Academic Search Premier* [EBSCO], *Informe!* [Gale Group], *Proquest*, and others.)

*Black Enterprise*. New York: Earl G. Graves, 1970-. Monthly (ISSN: 0006-4165).

A monthly business and lifestyle magazine whose mission is the financial autonomy of African Americans. (Full text available in *Academic Search Premier* [EBSCO], *International Index to Black Periodicals Full Text*, *Ethnic NewsWatch*, *Lexis Nexis Academic*, and others.)

*Callaloo*. Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins Univ. Pr., 1976-. Quarterly (ISSN: 0161-2492).

A literary journal that focuses on the African diaspora, publishing original works by and critical studies of black writers globally. (Full text available in JSTOR through fall 2000, and in Project Muse from winter 1995.)

*Latino Studies*. Houndmills, England: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003–. Three issues per year (ISSN: 1476-3435).

*Latino Studies* is an interdisciplinary journal of scholarship that relates to the lived experience of Latinos and strives for their equity and representation and for social justice in the Americas. Articles engage the local, national, transnational, and hemispheric realities that impact Latino communities in the United States. (Full text available in ABI/INFORM Global and Proquest.)

*New York Amsterdam News*. New York: Amnews Corp, 1962–. Weekly (ISSN: 1059-1818).

Founded in New York in 1909, this publication (which ceased publication in 1938 and resumed publication in 1962) strives to be the voice of the African American community. Although a New York institution, this weekly newspaper covers national and international issues of interest to communities of African descent. (Full text available in *Academic Search Premier* [EBSCO] and *Ethnic NewsWatch*.)

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## REFERENCE RESOURCES

Appiah, Kwame Anthony, and Henry Louis Gates Jr., eds. *Africana: The Encyclopedia of the African and African American Experience*. 2d ed. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Pr., 2005 (ISBN: 0-19-517055-5).

*Africana* is an excellent resource edited by two well-known scholars in the fields of African and African American Studies. The encyclopedia is devoted to the African continent and its descendant cultures in Latin America, the Caribbean, and North America. However, the encyclopedia also covers the African presence throughout the world. Entries lack reference lists.

Chabrán, Richard, and Rafael Chabrán, eds. *The Latino Encyclopedia*. New York: Marshall Cavendish, 1996 (ISBN: 0-76-140125-3).

This encyclopedia presents one- to two-page essays providing brief overviews of topics relevant to research on Afro-Latino experience, such as: “Afro-Cuban,” “Afro-Hispanic,” “Mestizaje,” “Arturo Schomberg” and “Skin Color.” Each article is signed by the author and lists pertinent, if somewhat dated, references.

Horowitz, Maryanne Cline, ed. *New Dictionary of the History of Ideas*. Farmington Hills, Mich.: Thomson Gale, 2005 (ISBN: 0-68-431377-4).

This six-volume set presents an excellent overview of intellectual history, particularly as it reflects current scholarship and intellectual thought. Includes relevant entries on “Mestizaje,” “Ethnicity and Race,” and “Latinos.” Essays

average two pages, and include especially germane and current bibliographies.

Martin, Dolores M., ed. *Handbook of Latin American Studies*. Austin, Tex.: Univ. of Texas, 1936– (also available online, vols. 56–60) (ISSN: 0072-9833).

Since 1936, the Hispanic Division of the Library of Congress has produced this selective bibliography on Latin American issues, containing publications chosen and annotated by academics. A search for “afro latino” in the online HLAS database returns 149 records, ranging from articles on salsa to black identity in Bermuda.

Oboler, Suzanne, and González, Deena J., eds. *The Oxford Dictionary of Latinos and Latinas in the United States*. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Pr., 2005 (ISBN: 0-19-515600-5).

This four-volume set includes more than nine hundred essays on Latino experiences in the United States from Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Central America, South America, Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. Each essay is signed. Particularly useful entries include: “Afro-Latinos,” “Black-Latino Relations,” “Blanquamiento,” “Colón, Jesús,” “Hip-Hop,” and “Ybor City.”

Skutsch, Carl, and Martin Ryle, eds. *Encyclopedia of the World's Minorities*. New York: Routledge, 2005 (ISBN: 1-57-958392-X).

While brief, the essays in this encyclopedia direct the researcher to people, movements, and concepts to pursue in depth. Each opens with a capsule summary that includes the population of country or region, the language of area, and religion. Essays are signed by the authors.

Stavans, Ilan, ed. *Encyclopedia Latina: History, Culture, and Society in the United States*. Danbury, Conn.: Grolier Academic Reference, 2005 (ISBN: 0-71-725815-7).

This four-volume set provides concise but rich essays signed by the authors. A reference list accompanies each essay. It should be noted that Ilan Stavans is one of the most prominent scholars and prolific editors of Latin American and Latino academic reference resources.

Tenenbaum, Barbara A., ed. *Encyclopedia of Latin American History and Culture*. New York: Macmillan Library Reference USA, 1996 (ISBN: 0-68-419253-5).

The essays in this encyclopedia are brief, but dense and useful. References are somewhat dated. Relevant entries include, “African Brazilians,” “Color terminology,” “African-Latin American Relations,” and “African-Latin American Religions.” Articles are signed by author.

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## FILMS

Fortes, Jorge, and Diego Ceballos. *Afroargentinos/Afroargentines*. VHS. New York: Latin American Video Archives (distributor), 2002.



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This film provides a counternarrative to the national myth of Argentina's exclusively European heritage by tracing the history of black people in Argentina and their contributions to Argentine culture and society.

Morillo, Bernardo. *Africa Mia*. DVD. Lanham, Md.: National Film Network (distributor), 2002.

This film provides a view into the lives of a group of Ecuadorian Afro-Latinas who organize themselves into a group they call *Africa Mia* (Africa Mine) in order to negotiate racial discrimination, create a community, and live independently.

Negrón-Muntaner, Frances. *Brincando el Charco: Portrait of a Puerto Rican*. VHS. New York: Women Make Movies (distributor), 2000.

This fictionalized autobiographical documentary directly engages the construction of race and expressions of racism in both the United States and Puerto Rico.

Rebollar, Rafael. *La Raiz Olvidada/The Forgotten Roots*. VHS. New York: Latin American Video Archives (distributor), 2001.

This film details the history of Mexico's overlooked African populations. Utilizing interviews and archival footage and photographs, the film traces the contributions of African groups in Mexico, from the slave ring of the colonial period to today's Afro-Mexican communities in Guerrero, Oaxaca, Campeche, Morelos, and Veracruz.

Sporn, Pam. *Cuban Roots/Bronx Stories*. VHS. New York: Latin American Video Archives (distributor), 2000.

This documentary examines the multifaceted identity of a black Cuban family in the Bronx.

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## PERIODICAL DATABASES

The databases listed below are good sources for identifying recent articles in this interdisciplinary area. Keywords and phrases to employ in the search process are Afro-Latin\*, Afro Latin\*, Afrolatin\*, "black\* AND Hispanic", "black\* AND latin\*" (the asterisk indicates truncation). Using the national appellation retrieves additional results: Afro-Puerto Rican, Afro-Cuban, Afro-argentino, and so on. The phrases "Afro-Latin\* OR Afro Latin\*" and "Black AND (Hispanic OR Latin\*)" yielded the best results.

*AnthroSource*, American Anthropological Association (AAS).

This database provides the complete, full-text archive of all peer-reviewed journals, newsletters, and bulletins published by the AAS through 2003.

*Ethnic NewsWatch*, Proquest CSA.

This database indexes a collection of full-text articles from newspapers, magazines, and journals of the ethnic, minority, and native press in America, covering news, culture, and history from more than two hundred publications in multiple languages dating back to 1990. It is particularly useful in find-

ing local commentary related to the Afro-Latino experience from popular magazines and newspapers (such as *New York Amsterdam News*, *Philadelphia Tribune*, *Michigan Citizen*).

*International Index to Black Periodicals*, Proquest CSA.

This database includes current and retrospective bibliographic citations and abstracts from more than 150 scholarly and popular journals, newspapers, and newsletters from the United States, Africa, and the Caribbean. *International Index to Black Periodicals* indexes some scholarly journal articles not found in the above databases (from *Afro-Hispanic Review*, *Journal of African American Studies*, and *Palara—Publication of the Afro-Latin/American Research Association*).

*Web of Science*, Thomson.

Included in this database are the *Social Sciences Citation Index* and the *Arts & Humanities Citation Index*. This database is valuable if you have known items for which you can perform cited reference searches.

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## WEB RESOURCES

*HLAS Online* (Library of Congress Handbook of Latin American Studies), <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/hlas>

Produced by the Hispanic Division of the Library of Congress, the handbook is a multidisciplinary annotated bibliography of scholarship concerning Latin America. Annually alternating between the social sciences and the humanities, scholars in these fields choose more than five thousand works for inclusion. *HLAS Online* is a searchable database. A large quantity of the indexed material is in the Spanish language.

H-Atlantic, [www.h-net.org/~atlantic](http://www.h-net.org/~atlantic)

H-Net is a hub of discussion lists related to the humanities and social sciences. The H-Atlantic discussion list addresses Atlantic World History from 1500 to 1800. Relevant content deals with the Atlantic slave trade and early Afro-Caribbean, Afro-Latin American, and African American communities. H-Atlantic contains book reviews, syllabi, bibliographies, and links to other Web documents and sites.

H-Latin America, [www.h-net.org/~latam](http://www.h-net.org/~latam)

H-Latin America is an international forum for the discussion of Latin American history. Though it is not as robust as the H-Atlantic group, it includes useful book reviews and conversations.

LANIC (Latin American Network Information Center), <http://lanic.utexas.edu>

A directory of resources related to various Latin American countries, LANIC is maintained in part by the University of Texas at Austin.

The New York Public Library Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, [www.nypl.org/research/sc/sc.html](http://www.nypl.org/research/sc/sc.html)

The Schomburg Center has an excellent online exhibit on the African Diaspora titled “In Motion: The African-American Migration Experience.” The exhibit includes photographs, maps of population statistics, and a thorough selection of texts available electronically. Among these texts are articles on Spanish Caribbean migrants, including those identified as black or Afro or African, specifically Cubans and Puerto Ricans. Of particular interest is “The Migrations of Arturo Schomburg: On Being Antillano, Negro, and Puerto Rican in New York 1891–1938.” This is an excellent resource for educators and librarians from K–12 to the university level.

### References and Notes

1. Kwame Anthony Appiah and Henry Louis Gates Jr., eds., *Africana: The Encyclopedia of the African and African American Experience*, 2d ed. (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Pr., 2005); s.v. “Afro-Latino Cultures in the United States.”
2. Anani Dzidzienyo and Suzanne Oboler, eds. *Neither Eemies Nor Friends: Latinos, Blacks, Afro-Latinos* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).
3. For example, Arlene Dávila, *Barrio Dreams: Puerto Ricans, Latinos, and the Neoliberal City* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Pr., 2004); Ruth Glasser, *My Music Is My Flag: Puerto Rican Musicians and Their New York Communities (1917–1940)* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Pr., 1997); Milagros Ricourt and Ruby Danta, *Hispanas de Queens: Latino Panethnicity in a New York City Neighborhood* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Univ. Pr., 2002); and Raquel Z. Rivera, *New York Ricans from the Hip-Hop Zone* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), to name just a few. According to Augustin Lao-Montes in *Mambo Montage* (New York: Columbia Univ. Pr., 2001), New York is the “symbolic center of Latin culture” (2).
4. For example: “Any Enemy of the People Is an Enemy of Me: Departures and Definitions of Afro-Latino Identity in the New Millennium,” an all-day conference presented by The Graduate Center of the City University of New York, March 17, 2006; “Variations on Blackness: Race-Making in the Americas and the World,” Indiana University, Bloomington, March 30–April 1, 2006.
5. “Any Enemy of the Black Man Is an Enemy of Me.” This conference cited the U.S. 2000 Census as a moment in which to examine racial identification of Latinos.