

# Countering Eugenic Archival Violence: Restorying the Life of Concepcion Ruiz



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422 Levis Faculty Center

## Abstract:

This colloquium delves into the harrowing narrative of Concepcion Ruiz, a sixteen-year-old girl of Mexican-origin subjected to coercive sterilization in 1930 under California's eugenic policies. A meticulous mining of historical newspapers, genealogical records, and select family oral histories presents us with a multifaceted portrayal of Concepcion, far removed from the skewed image portrayed by state archives. Triangulation of the collected archival evidence unveils the state's gross (mis)representations of Chicana/Latina experiences with eugenic violence. Those eugenic state depictions of Concepcion as a sexual delinquent are countered in this offering of her memory that speaks to who she was as a sister, daughter, aunt, and longtime resident of East Los Angeles. This research scrutinizes the role of state archival records in (mis)constructing Chicana/Latina narratives, memories, and legacies and aspires to activate the greater public against contemporary manifestations of eugenic violence experienced by Chicana/Latina women and girls across the American Southwest. This discussion's overarching mission is to craft an anti-eugenic movement dedicated to decriminalizing Chicana/Latina pursuits of pleasure and desire. In restorying the life of Concepcion, we are invited to challenge the histories of countless other multiply-marginalized women and girls, validating their lived experiences beyond the tarnished lens of oppressive state eugenic regimes.