

FELISA RINCÓN DE GAUTIER: PUERTO RICO'S FIRST LADY OF POLITICS;
GRANDE DAME STYLE, 1946 TO 1968

DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

In 1946, during a time when women and politics were an unusual combination in Puerto Rico and around the world, Felisa Rincón de Gautier became mayor for San Juan, capital of Puerto Rico. During the twenty-two years of her tenure, she transformed the city into one of the greatest and cleanest of Latin America. She was admired for her position as mayor and the accomplishments of her administration, including the establishment of the School of Medicine, the construction of the Hiram Bithorn Stadium, and the creation of pre-school afternoon programs. During her time as mayor of San Juan, Felisa Rincón de Gautier transformed herself into an iconic figure through her unique manner of dress. It was this fashion image that made her recognizable both in Puerto Rico and around the world, a characteristic important for the success of a politician.

A person's appearance may express their personal identity and cultural values. Felisa Rincón de Gautier's *grande dame* image was an intricate combination of her Spanish heritage, experience as a dressmaker, and her philosophy of individuality and femininity. She created an elegant, regal, distinctive look, giving the effect of a Velazquez painting or looking like a Goya Duchess. Wherever she would go, people could easily identify the "Lady mayor of San Juan." Her intriguing image would make people stop, look, and then listen.

This study examines the life of Felisa Rincón de Gautier through her appearance and creation of a *grande dame* fashion image and its ultimate impact on her success as mayor of San Juan. To explain the origins, purpose and meaning of her fashion image three objectives were posed: 1) recognize sources of influence in the creation of Felisa Rincón de Gautier's *grande dame* image, 2) identify the dress elements composing the *grande dame* image, and 3) understand the impact that Felisa Rincón de Gautier's *grande dame* image had on her success as mayor of San Juan from 1946 through 1968.

In looking at the life of Felisa Rincón de Gautier and understanding the origins of her *grande dame* image, it is clear that her family life and social experiences set the groundwork for what would become her "calling card." Her family life was grounded in Spanish heritage and traditions, yet often centered on lively discussions on Puerto Rican politics and culture. In the 1930s she owned her own dress shop and was a member of the *Partido Liberal* (Liberal Party). As a full-time political activist, Felisa Rincón de Gautier rose from member of the *Partido Liberal* to Mayor of San Juan, Puerto Rico under the *Partido Popular Democrático*.

Felisa Rincón de Gautier set herself apart by individualizing her appearance through her "office wear," accessories, headdress and hairstyles, creating a look that can be defined as a *grande dame* image. Three themes emerge as reasons for the creation of her distinctive manner of dress: the need or function and convenience in dress, as "a woman, not a man" in politics, and the desire to make an impression when involved in public relations for San Juan and Puerto Rico.

Felisa Rincón de Gautier's *grande dame* style became a distinctive powerful identifier for a female politician in a male dominated field both in Puerto Rico and the

United States. It can be argued that her image and the interest in it, was the introduction to everything that was Felisa Rincón de Gautier, her values, personality, and political leanings. Thus, the former dressmaker of Spanish descent, as mayor of San Juan, dressed to create a better work environment through functional clothing, as well as to promote her city and Puerto Rico around the world.

Dedicated to my husband and my family, whose love, patience, support, and understanding never wavered as I pursued my goals.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Abstract.....	ii
Dedication.....	v
Acknowledgments.....	vi
Vita.....	viii
List of Tables.....	xiii
List of Figures.....	xiv
Chapters:	
1. Introduction.....	1
Historic Method.....	14
Procedure.....	15
2. Felisa Rincón: Puerto Rico and the <i>Familia</i> Rincón Marrero, 1897-1934.....	19
Puerto Rico 1897-1934.....	20
Puerto Rican Women 1897-1934.....	28
The Rincón Marrero Family.....	37
Felisa Rincón: 1897-1934.....	44
Conclusion.....	49
3. Felisa Rincón: Dressmaker and Businesswoman, 1934-1938.....	51

	New York City Garment (Fashion) District.....	52
	Puerto Rican’s In The Garment District.....	57
	Felisa Rincón In New York City.....	62
	Kiviette, Inc.	66
	Felisa Rincón at Kiviette, Inc.	69
	The Clothing Business in Puerto Rico.....	71
	Felisa's Styles Shop.....	75
	Conclusion.....	79
4.	Felisa Rincón de Gautier: Politician and Mayor of San Juan, 1932-1968.....	80
	Women in Puerto Rican Politics.....	81
	Beginnings of Felisa Rincon’s Political Career.....	92
	<i>Partido Popular Democratico</i>	95
	Mayor of San Juan, Capital of Puerto Rico.....	100
	Conclusion.....	106
5.	Felisa Rincón de Gautier: Fashion Style and <i>Grande Dame</i> Image, 1946-1968	109
	Fashions from the Late 1940s to the Late 1960s.....	110
	Felisa Rincón de Gautier’s Manner of Dress.....	118
	“Office Wear”.....	119
	“Out-of-the-Office Wear”.....	121
	Eveningwear.....	127
	Accessories, Neck Scarves, Shawls, Fans and Jewelry.....	129
	Accessories.....	129

	Neck Scarves, Shawls, and Fans.....	131
	Jewelry.....	133
	Headwear.....	135
	Hairstyles.....	138
	Felisa Rincón de Gautier’s Key Elements of Dress.....	143
	Conclusion.....	146
6.	Origins, Purpose and Meaning of Felisa Rincón de Gautier’s <i>Grande Dame</i> Image	147
	Origins of Felisa Rincón de Gautier’s <i>Grande Dame</i> Image.....	149
	Purpose of Felisa Rincón de Gautier’s <i>Grande Dame</i> Image.....	154
	Meaning of Felisa Rincón de Gautier’s <i>Grande Dame</i> Image.....	157
	Conclusion.....	163
	Future Research.....	164
	Appendices.....	166
	Appendix A-Tables.....	167
	Appendix B-Figures Chapter 1.....	171
	Appendix C-Figures Chapter 2.....	175
	Appendix D-Figures Chapter 3.....	190
	Appendix E-Figures Chapter 4.....	207
	Appendix F-Figures Chapter 5.....	226
	Appendix G-Figures Chapter 6.....	298
	Bibliography.....	311

LIST OF TABLES

	<u>Page</u>
Table 1: Women in Legislature of Puerto Rico, 1932-1968.....	168
Table 2: Women Mayors in the municipalities of Puerto Rico, 1932-1968.....	169

LIST OF FIGURES

		<u>Page</u>
Figure 1	<i>Infanta Doña María, Queen of Hungary</i> by Diego Velázquez, circa 1630,	172
Figure 2	Duchess of Alba wearing the dress of a <i>maja</i> by Francisco Goya, 1797	173
Figure 3	<i>Doña María Catalina de Urrutia</i> by José Campeche, 1788.....	174
Figure 4	Francisco Rincón and Esilda Plumey de Rincón, circa 1884.....	176
Figure 5	Map of Puerto Rico.....	177
Figure 6	Francisca and Francisco Rincón Plumey and Petra Nuñez, circa 1902-1905.....	178
Figure 7	Felisita Rivera de Marrero, circa L 19 th century.....	179
Figure 8	Enrique Rincón Plumey, circa 1900.....	180
Figure 9	Rita Marrero de Rincón, circa 1900.....	181
Figure 10	Enrique Rincón Plumey, Rita Marrero de Rincón, and Rincón Marrero child, circa 1902-1905.....	182
Figure 11	Josefina, Cecilia and Felisa Rincón Marrero, age 9, 1906.....	183
Figure 12	Felisa Rincón Marrero, circa 1909-1911.....	184
Figure 13	Felisa Rincón Marrero and Josefina (Finí) Rincón Marrero in <i>La Ceramica</i> circa 1912-1914.....	185
Figure 14	Felisa Rincón Marrero in the Sofía Kerney dress worn to the <i>Casino de Puerto Rico</i> inaugural ball.....	186

Figure 15	Felisa Rincón Marrero, circa 1921.....	187
Figure 16	Felisa Rincón Marrero, circa 1927.....	188
Figure 17	Meeting of the <i>Partido Liberal</i> Executive Committee, 1932.....	189
Figure 18	B. Altman & Co. velvet gowns designed by Kiviette.....	191
Figure 19	Map of the New York City Garment District.....	192
Figure 20	Best & Co. advertising for the college girl.....	193
Figure 21	Fragment of advertisement for Best & Co. Liliputian Gift Bazaar.....	194
Figure 22	Costume designed by Yeda Kiviette (signed Kiviat) for the 1919 musical <i>Monte Cristo, Jr.</i>	195
Figure 23	1936 Autumn cruise wear designed by Kiviette (Yeda Kiviette).....	196
Figure 24	1936 Autumn cruise wear designed by Kiviette (Yeda Kiviette)	197
Figure 25	Advertisement for <i>González Padín Co., Inc.</i> Department store in Puerto Rico.....	198
Figure 26	Map of Old San Juan, Puerto Rico.....	199
Figure 27	#15 Cruz Street, San Juan, Puerto Rico.....	200
Figure 28	View of the <i>Plaza de Armas</i> in Old San Juan, Puerto Rico.....	201
Figure 29	View of Cruz Street, San Juan, Puerto Rico.....	202
Figure 30	#101 Salvador Brau St. (now San Francisco St.), San Juan, Puerto Rico.....	203
Figure 31	View of Puerto Rican women walking the streets of San Juan in 1935..	204
Figure 32	View of Puerto Rican women walking the streets of San Juan in 1935..	205
Figure 33	Advertisement for <i>Giusti</i>	206
Figure 34	Mariana Bracetti, “ <i>Brazo de Oro</i> ,” 1825-1903.....	208
Figure 35	Lola Rodríguez de Tío, 1843-1924.....	209

Figure 36	Luisa Capetillo, 1879-1922.....	210
Figure 37	Ana Roqué de Duprey, 1853-1933.....	211
Figure 38	Suffragists in Puerto Rico, circa 1910s.....	212
Figure 39	Emblem (<i>pava</i>) and slogan (bread, land and liberty) for the <i>Partido Popular Democratico</i> of Puerto Rico.	213
Figure 40	On March 23, 1940, Felisa Rincón Marrero married attorney Jenaro Gautier.	214
Figure 41	On December 5, 1946, Felisa Rincón de Gautier (FRdeG) is sworn in as mayor of San Juan, Puerto Rico.....	215
Figure 42	1948, FRdeG, elected as mayor of San Juan, Puerto Rico.....	216
Figure 43	Felisa Rincón de Gautier’s first job was to “clean up San Juan.....	217
Figure 44	19 th century <i>Teatro</i> (theater) <i>Tapia</i> in Old San Juan was restored in 1949.....	218
Figure 45	Preschool childcare centers in Puerto Rico.....	219
Figure 46	Hiram Bithorn baseball stadium in San Juan.....	220
Figure 47	In 1952 a winter wonderland in Puerto Rico.....	221
Figure 48	FRdeG attends conference of Municipalities in Lisbon, Portugal, May 1959.....	222
Figure 49	1958, FRdeG is awarded the Order of the Holy Sepulcher of Jerusalem.....	223
Figure 50	1954, FRdeG, “Woman of the Americas”.....	224
Figure 51	FRdeG and John F. Kennedy, c.1960.....	225
Figure 52	Late 1940s tubular/box silhouette.....	227
Figure 53	Late 1940s 1947 Christian Dior “New Look” silhouette	228
Figure 54	Mid-1950s, Christian Dior “H-line”.....	229
Figure 55	Late 1950s, A-line or trapeze silhouette.....	230

Figure 56	Late 1950s, <i>saque</i> or chemise silhouette.....	231
Figure 57	Late 1950s, boxier silhouette represented by the Chanel suit.....	232
Figure 58	Late 1940s, dress with ankle length full skirt and fitted bodice.....	233
Figure 59	Early 1950s, shirtwaist dress. Pixiecut hairstyle.....	234
Figure 60	Early 1960s, overblouse dress	235
Figure 61	Early 1950s, suit fitted at waist with narrow skirt.....	236
Figure 62	Mid-to-late 1950s, suit with square, waist-length jacket and under-the-knee skirt. Toque hat.....	237
Figure 63	Early 1960s, suit with unfitted short jacket and peg-top skirt. Mitrelike hat.....	238
Figure 64	Late 1940s – Early 1950s, coat in the “New Look” line.	239
Figure 65	Mid 1950s, straight-line coat with small collar. Brimless cap	240
Figure 66	Early 1960s, collarless coat with empire waist and flare	241
Figure 67	1940s, 1950s and 1960s, accessories: gloves, shoes and handbags.....	242
Figure 68	Early 1960s, pillbox hat and teased bouffant hairstyle... ..	243
Figure 69	Late 1950s, beehive hairstyle	244
Figure 70	December 5, 1946, FRdeG (detail)is sworn in as mayor of San Juan, Puerto Rico	245
Figure 71	FRdeG wearing the “uniform;” Two- <i>chignon</i> hairstyle. Criss-cross flat sandals	246
Figure 72	FRdeG wearing a shirtwaist dress with a fuller cut skirt. Grouping of ringlets or coils hairstyle, embellished with small flowers. Holding a folding/pleated fan.....	247
Figure 73	1953, FRdeG wearing printed blouse and dark color skirt.....	248
Figure 74	1952, FRdeG wearing a floral printed blouse and small neck scarf tied in to a bow. Braided two- <i>chignon</i> hairstyle. Round stud earrings.....	249

Figure 75	1952, FRdeG wearing blouse embroidered with the United States and Puerto Rican flags250
Figure 76	1958, FRdeG wearing chemise dress and coat ensemble.....251
Figure 77	1963, FRdeG wearing an overblouse dress and triple large beaded strands necklace.....252
Figure 78	1949, FRdeG in a dress exemplifying the longer lines of the late 1940s.....253
Figure 79	1953, FRdeG wearing afternoon dress in fit-n-flare silhouette.....254
Figure 80	Early 1960s, FRdeG wears a neck scarf tied in to a very large bow. Single strand of large pearls. Pair of white gloves.....255
Figure 81	1950, FRdeG wearing an afternoon dress embellished with lace inserts.....256
Figure 82	1950, FRdeG wearing an afternoon dress with overall small geometric design.....257
Figure 83	1966, FRdeG wearing a polka dot dress.....258
Figure 84	1952, FRdeG wearing cocktail dress with short puffed sleeves. Grouping of coils hairstyle. Holding a folding fan.....259
Figure 85	1954, FRdeG wearing lace cocktail dress with long sleeves. Ribbon chocker and large disk pendant. Small square clutch bag.....260
Figure 86	1952, FRdeG wearing a floral cocktail dress. Two-tone spectator high heel pumps.....261
Figure 87	1948, FRdeG wearing a dark color tailored suit. Medium brim hat with clusters of white flowers. Top handle leather handbag.....262
Figure 88	1955, FRdeG wearing a fitted suit with three-quarter sleeves.....263
Figure 89	1962, FRdeG black square/box line suit.....264
Figure 90	Early 1950s, FRdeG wearing a white suit. Small brimless hat trimmed with feather. Hoop earrings. Small top-double handle handbag.....265
Figure 91	1952, FRdeG wearing a triangular shape, fuller cut coat.....266

Figure 92	Mid 1950s, FRdeG wearing a fur coat. Lace jabot.....	267
Figure 93	1950, FRdeG wears long, full skirt evening gown. Holding folding fan.....	268
Figure 94	1954, FRdeG wears full skirt long evening gown. Brooch.....	269
Figure 95	1967, FRdeG wears a floor length, narrower skirt evening gown. Lace shawl. Long, white gloves.....	270
Figure 96	Early 1960s, FRdeG wears black floor length gown made out of a Spanish shawl.....	271
Figure 97	1949, FRdeG wears a floor length evening gown with Lace.....	272
Figure 98	Early to mid 1960s, FRdeG wears white low flat heel. Squared toes....	273
Figure 99	1962, FRdeG wears multicolor printed open-ended turban. White neck scarf tied into a bow.....	274
Figure 100	1966, FRdeG wears matching turban and neck scarf tied into a bow....	275
Figure 101	1954, FRdeG wears off-white floral Spanish shawl with long fringes...	276
Figure 102	Early 1960s, FRdeG holding a large lace net folding fan.....	277
Figure 103	1967, FRdeG, <i>porta-abanico</i> for the folding fan.....	278
Figure 104	Mid to late 1950s, FRdeG wearing single long strand of pearls tied into a knot.....	279
Figure 105	1961, FRdeG wearing several types of beaded necklaces worn at the same time.....	280
Figure 106	1954, FRdeG wearing medium brim hat trimmed with white flowers...	281
Figure 107	1949, FRdeG wearing black velvet bonnet trimmed with white lace....	282
Figure 108	1961, FRdeG wearing light color satin turban.....	283
Figure 109	1954, FRdeG in braided coronet/crown hairstyle. Lace <i>mantilla</i> as headwear.....	284
Figure 110	1966, FRdeG wearing white headband surrounding pulled back <i>chignon</i>	285

Figure 111	Late 1940s, FRdeG in pompadour, fullness on top, hairstyle.....	286
Figure 112	1953, FRdeG wearing “Half” coronet hairstyle embellished with ribbon.....	287
Figure 113	Late 1950s, FRdeG. Hairstyle embellished with white feathers.....	288
Figure 114	1956, FRdeG in double braided coronet/crown hairstyle, embellished with a diagonal headband.....	289
Figure 115	Early 1950s, FRdeG. Hairstyle: braid(s) gather at top of head, unbalanced.....	290
Figure 116	1953, FRdeG. Braided “half” coronet/crown hairstyle.....	291
Figure 117	Late 1950s, FRdeG. Braided coronet/crown hairstyle: single braid encircling large <i>chignon</i>	292
Figure 118	Mid 1950s, FRdeG. Braided coronet/crown hairstyle: two braids entwine.	293
Figure 119	1952, FRdeG. Hairstyle: intricate design of ringlets and coils or curls...294	
Figure 120	1955, FRdeG. Smooth two- <i>chignon</i> hairstyle, each circled by a small scarf.....	295
Figure 121	1952, FRdeG. Ringlets or rolled two- <i>chignons</i> hairstyle.....	296
Figure 122	1962, FRdeG. <i>Chignon</i> hairstyle, embellished with small flowers.	297
Figure 123	Countess of Fernan Nuñez painted by Francisco Goya, 1803.....	299
Figure 124	Political cartoon of FrdeG, March 1947.....	300
Figure 125	Political cartoon with FrdeG, 22 March 1947.....	301
Figure 126	Political cartoon with FrdeG, 20 December 1948.....	302
Figure 127	Political cartoon of FrdeG, 19 September 1949.....	303
Figure 128	Political cartoon of FrdeG, 24 March 1952.....	304
Figure 129	Caricature of FrdeG, February 1953.....	305

Figure 130	Political cartoon of FrdeG, 29 January 1954.....	306
Figure 131	Political cartoon of FrdeG and Richard Nixon, 15 November 1958.....	307
Figure 132	Political cartoon of FrdeG, 15 March 1961.....	308
Figure 133	Political cartoon of FrdeG, 14 September 1964.....	309
Figure 134	Political cartoon of FrdeG and Luis Muñoz Marín, 6 May 1968.....	310

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In the late 1940s, when women and politics were an unusual combination around the globe, Felisa Rincón de Gautier became the first female mayor of San Juan, Puerto Rico. In office for twenty-two years (1946 - 1968), she transformed the capital of Puerto Rico into one of the greatest cities of Latin America.¹ This she accomplished with a governing style best described by the words of the famous Puerto Rican poet, Luis Llorens Torres: “she came with a sword in one hand and a rose in the other, and used whichever seemed appropriate.”² In this most powerful of positions in Puerto Rico, Felisa Rincón de Gautier embodied “the gentleness of a woman with the strength of spirit of a man” to play the role of a skillful administrator and loving “mother” to all *Sanjuaneros*.³ During her time as mayor of San Juan, Felisa Rincón de Gautier became

¹ Annette Oliveira, “Doña Fela: The Great Lady of Puerto Rican Politics,” *Américas*, January 1981, 49; Doña Felisa Rincón de Gautier [Official Biography - Felisa Rincón Foundation] (San Juan, P.R.: Puerto Rico en breve, 1999, accessed 1 July 2000) available from <http://www.Preb.com>; Internet. Through out her tenure as mayor, Felisa Rincón de Gautier was commonly referred to as “Doña Fela. *Doña* is the “Spanish title used before Christian names of married women or widows.” *The Williams Spanish & English Dictionary* (1987), s. v. “Doña.”

² Annette Oliveira, “Doña Fela: The Great Lady,” 52.

³ *Sanjuaneros* are inhabitants of the city of San Juan, Puerto Rico. Marianna Norris, *Doña Felisa: A Biography of the Mayor of San Juan* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1969), 49.

an iconic figure through her manner of dress. It was this fashion image that made her visible and recognizable both in Puerto Rico and around the world, an important characteristic for the success of a politician.⁴ Annette Oliveira in “Doña Fela: The Great Lady of Puerto Rican Politics,” described her personality as combining:

the aristocratic air of a Spanish *grand[e] dame*, the grassroots sensitivity of a community organizer, the theatrical flair of a former *couturiere*, and the manipulative skill of a politician....she is a fascinating mixture of the very old and the very new in Puerto Rican womanhood.⁵

Grande dame is derived from French meaning great or grand lady. In this research, when referring to Felisa Rincón de Gautier as a Spanish *grande dame* or her *grande dame* image or style, Spanish aspects of dress, her demeanor and manner in which she carried herself in relation to her overall appearance characterize it.⁶ With her *grande dame* style, Felisa Rincón de Gautier created an elegant, regal, distinctive image, which gave the effect of a Diego Velázquez painting (Figure 1), a Francisco Goya Duchess (Figure 2) or even a José Campeche *dama* (lady) in Puerto Rico (Figure 3).⁷ Her appearance exemplified the dichotomy that is Puerto Rico - the old traditions from Spain

⁴ For the purpose of this research, fashion image means aesthetic appearance.

⁵ Spanish *grande dame*, as interpreted by the researcher from Oliveira, means a great or grand lady of Spain. Oliveira, “Doña Fela: The Great Lady,” 49.

⁶ There are two definitions as to what constitutes a *grande dame*, one is an older woman of great prestige, socially important, dignified, and even of aristocratic bearing. The other is a woman who is influential, respected, with extensive experience, considered the “dean” of a specified field. The American Heritage Dictionary, 4th ed., s.v. “grande dame,” <http://www.bartleby.com/61/34/G0223400.html>; Compact Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. “grande dame,” http://www.askoxford.com/concise_oed/grandedame?view=uk; Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, s.v. “grande dame,” <http://www.m-w.com/cgi-bin/dictionary?book=Dictionary&va=grande+dame>.

⁷ Diego Velázquez, Spanish court painter of the 17th century. Francisco Goya, Spanish court painter of the 18th and 19th centuries. José Campeche, Puerto Rican painter of the 18th and early 19th centuries.

(through her sense of fashion style) and the new American influence (the emancipated woman, both in business and politics). This study examines the life of Felisa Rincón de Gautier through her appearance and creation of a *grande dame* fashion image and its ultimate impact on her success as mayor of San Juan.

The first lady of Puerto Rican politics, Felisa Rincón de Gautier, played an eminent role in the development of the Puerto Rico of today. The creation of the School of Medicine and construction of the Hiram Bithorn Stadium, the pre-school education programs and similar social advances exemplify the fruits of her twenty-two years of public work. Her fame was not contained to just Puerto Rico; it spread throughout the United States, Latin America, and Europe. All over the world, articles were written about “the colorful lady mayor of San Juan.”⁸ Many of these articles contain comments or statements about Felisa Rincón de Gautier’s appearance. For instance, *The New York Times* described her as “a handsome woman in a yellow flowered smock with a wide hair ribbon of matching color,”⁹ *The Miami Herald* mentioned her “crisp white linen suit elaborately embroidered.”¹⁰ Her individualistic personal image made such a lasting impression, that even when she passed away in 1994, the AP bulletin announcing her death mentioned “her meticulous...appearance, wearing her hair in her trademark chignon wrapped in a turban and painting her nails and lips bright red.”¹¹ The investigation will provide insight into Felisa Rincón de Gautier’s role as fashion icon of Puerto Rico and

⁸ Oliveira, “Doña Fela: The Great Lady,” 53.

⁹ It should be noted that these articles ranged from front-page news to exclusive features on the mayor to society reporting. *New York Times*, April 7, 1961.

¹⁰ *Miami Herald*, November 16, 1961.

¹¹ *Associated Press*, September 17, 1994.

offer a unique view of the interface between women's history and fashion, as well as fashion's power of communication.

A person's gestures, conduct, and dress are considered "signs" of their identity.¹² Dress as defined by Roach and Eicher "groups together all kinds of body ornamenting and covering...." These ornaments and coverings includes such activities as "arranging the hair; donning jewelry and other accessories; investing with robes, tunics, aprons and trousers; painting, scarring, tattooing the skin; chipping or staining of teeth; stretching of earlobes or lips; binding of waists or feet."¹³ Besides functionality, a person's dress "announces his[her] identity, shows his[her] values, expresses his [her] mood, or proposes his[her]attitudes."¹⁴ In her political career Felisa Rincón de Gautier created a fashionable image reminiscent of a *grande dame*. The *grande dame* style moved her to the position of fashion icon - she became known for this style, which was a distinctive powerful identifier for a female politician in a male dominated society. It is this style that this study will explore. The research will look into Felisa Rincón de Gautier's life and how the *grande dame* image was created. This process will begin by understanding Puerto Rican women's culture, history and it's relationship to dress.

Elements from the different cultures, Tainos, African, Spanish, and American, intermingled over the years to create a distinctive female culture. These elements include religious beliefs, position or role in the family structure, and form of dress, to name a

¹² Karlyne Anspach, *The Why of Fashion* (Ames, IA: The Iowa State University Press, 1967), 24.

¹³ Mary Ellen Roach and Joanne B. Eicher, *The Visible Self: Perspective on Dress* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1973), XXIV.

¹⁴ Melvin Seeman and John W. Evans, "Apprenticeship and Attitude Change," *American Journal of Sociology*, LXVII (Jan., 1962): 368; quoted in Karlyne Anspach, *The Why of Fashion* (Ames, IA: The Iowa State University Press, 1967), 25.

few. Among the women of the island, there has always been a great interest in dress. Puerto Rican women love clothes and a great deal of money, when available, went into the purchasing of clothing.¹⁵ Even middle or lower class women found a way to supplement their wardrobes.¹⁶ Fashion was so important to Puerto Rican women that sometimes it overrode other social considerations. For example, when French fashion in the eighteenth century dictated the low, round neckline, the Catholic Church considered it too low for decent women. Still, the women used the excuse of the climate as the reason for the low neckline and it worked! The woman of Puerto Rico could still wear the revealing fashions and not be thrown out of the church.¹⁷

Puerto Rican women's love for fashion may have been manifested during the Spanish era. According to Margherita Hamm, in 1899, Puerto Rican tastes and habits were a combination of Spanish culture, French influences, and the tropical climate.¹⁸ When it came to adornment, the *mantilla* (lace headscarf), of Spanish descent, was commonly worn to church. Additionally, the fan was part of the social equipment. The *mantilla* and fan, however, are seldom seen today.¹⁹ Yet, most women still wear earrings and nearly all baby girls have their ears pierced early.

¹⁵ Louise Cripps Samoiloff, *Portrait of Puerto Rico* (Cranbury, NJ: Rosemont Publishing and Printing, 1984), 173.

¹⁶ Maritza Diaz Alcaide, "Del Guanín al Polizon: La Trayectoria de la Moda en Puerto Rico," *Imagen*, April 1993, 92.

¹⁷ María Teresa Babin, *Panorama de la Cultura Puertorriqueña* (Panorama of Puerto Rican culture) (New York: Las Americas Publishing Co., 1958), 145; Diaz Alcaide, "Del Guanín al Polizon," 95.

¹⁸ Diaz Alcaide, "Del Guanín al Polizon," 93; Margherita A. Hamm, *Porto Rico and the West Indies* (New York: F. Tennyson Neely, 1899), 154.

¹⁹ Cripps Samoiloff, *Portrait of Puerto*, 175.

When the Americans arrived in 1898 new trends in dress appeared, but were said to have not been welcomed immediately.²⁰ However, the American influence in the twentieth-century brought socio-economic changes and Puerto Rican women's lifestyles and dress changed abruptly. Gone were the days of illiteracy, ignorance, and seclusion supposedly typical of their lifestyle under the Spanish regime. Suddenly women's opportunity for education was more accessible and they took it, thus "preparing themselves for the intellectual work which was to be the basis for their economic independence, and their emancipation."²¹ With their new education, women cornered the teaching market, became nurses, organized civic groups, and became involved in the suffrage movement.²² Diaz Alcaide states:

The Puerto Rican woman would go out to the street. She would become an important figure in production and because of this, gained the right to a more practical and simple dress...which she adored.²³

Even though coquetry has been a fundamental characteristic of the manner of dress of Puerto Rican women, in the twentieth century their dress became a synthesis of elegance and comfort. For the Puerto Rican woman of the 1930s, there were several ways to acquire a wardrobe: purchase ready-to-wear apparel, hire a seamstress or a dressmaker to construct a garment, or make the garment herself. The 1940s brought tailored clothing and suits. In addition, this is the period when pants or slacks came into

²⁰ Diaz Alcaide, "Del Guanín al Polizon, 97.

²¹ *Enciclopedia Puertorriqueña Ilustrada*, s.v. "women in the teaching profession and in the field of politics."

²² Edna Acosta-Belén, *Women in Twentieth Century Puerto Rico*, in *The Puerto Ricans: Their History, Culture, and Society*, ed. Adalberto López (Cambridge, MA: Schenkman Publishing Company, Inc., 1980), 276; *Enciclopedia Puertorriqueña Ilustrada*.

²³ Maritza Diaz Alcaide, "Piernas al descubierto: La trayectoria de la moda en Puerto Rico," *Imagen*, May 1993, 110.

popularity for women.²⁴ During the decade of the 1950s, the local production of clothing transferred from dressmakers (who copied designs from magazines or used patterns) to local fashion designers.²⁵ The rise of local fashion designers evolved from the desire of Puerto Rican society ladies for more sophisticated fashions than the ones offered by the dressmakers. By the 1960s, the decade that saw the mini-skirt in Puerto Rico, the fashion industry and its local designers were well known all over the island and in the New York market.²⁶

One woman who exemplifies the role of the new Puerto Rican woman was Felisa "Doña Fela" Rincón de Gautier, who expressed Puerto Rican womanhood through a mixture of the old, Spanish past, and the new, American present. Born in 1897 to a small well-to-do family. She learned what every girl in society needed-- to sew, to dance, and the coquettish art of fan language. Yet, she was not only interested in the typical female activities. She played baseball, and was interested in politics, pharmacy, and helping the needy. Due to her mother's early death, Rincón could not finish high school. She became more involved in politics and volunteering services. She lived and worked in New York for a while, in the garment district, and later returned to Puerto Rico to open her own style shop named *Felisa's Styles Shop*.²⁷ Her involvement in politics took her all the way to the mayor's office in San Juan, a position she held for 22 years.

²⁴ Ibid., 112, 115.

²⁵ Maritza Diaz Alcaide, "Piernas al descubierto: Diseñadores tocan a la puerta," *Imagen*, June 1993, 94.

²⁶ Diaz Alcaide, "Diseñadores tocan a la puerta", 96.

²⁷ Oliveira, "Doña Fela: The Great Lady," 49, 51.

Felisa Rincón de Gautier once said: "*Me formaron mis padres y maestros* [My parents and teachers made me]."²⁸ In this journey deciphering her unforgettable image and understanding her heritage, starting with her family and upbringing is most important. Looking into her life as a dressmaker, both in New York City and as a dress shop owner in San Juan, Puerto Rico from 1934 through 1938, is another key aspect into the understanding of Felisa Rincón.

In the years between the closing of the dress shop in 1938 and her appointment as mayor of San Juan in 1946, Felisa Rincón got married, opened and closed a flower shop, and became indispensable to the *Partido Popular Democratico* (Popular Democratic Party).²⁹ In the 1948 election, Felisa Rincón de Gautier was elected mayor of San Juan, a post she held until the last day of the year 1968. Her twenty-two years as the official administrator for the capital of Puerto Rico brought great improvements to the city and its inhabitants.³⁰

This study focuses on a point in time when women in Puerto Rico were rare in politics. Felisa Rincón de Gautier played a pioneering role in the advancement of their social position within the island. She helped with job access, political participation, and education for the women of Puerto Rico. As the first female mayor of San Juan the prestige of women of the island would depend partially on her accomplishments thus, as

²⁸ Josean Ramos, "Doña Fela: Comunicadora Política" (M.A. Thesis, University of Puerto Rico, 1986), 23.

²⁹ Ruth Gruber, *Felisa Rincón de Gautier: The Mayor of San Juan* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1972), 112; *Hispanic Biographies* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Globe Book Company, [1989]), 165 166.

³⁰ Oliveira, "Doña Fela: The Great Lady," 52.

Felisa Rincón de Gautier said, "I worked hard - but hard, hard, hard!"³¹ It was not easy for her. Ricardo Alegría, a friend of the mayor, in a interview mentioned how "*aveces se olvida, no se dice, de que no le fue facil a Felisa ser la alcaldesa de San Juan, hubo siempre cierto prejuicio contra ella, en por el sentidos de ser mujer...*" (sometimes it is forgotten, or not mentioned, that it was not easy for Felisa to be San Juan's mayor, there was always some prejudice against her because she was a woman).³² Even though it was difficult for her, her friend Ruth Fernandez in a 1997 interview mentioned how "*Felisa dentro de toda esa fuerza interior que tenia, era muy dama, era muy elegante, muy señora siempre, entonces ella no peliaba con los hombres en forma que ella perdiera su femininidad, no...Felisa siempre se vistio como una dama, discutia como una dama, pero con firmeza...*" (Felisa with all the interior strength she had, she was a lady, she was very elegant, always a madam, then she would not argue with men in such a manner that she would lose her femininity, no...Felisa always dressed as a lady, argued as a lady but with firmness).³³

In *The Why of Fashion*, Karlyne Anspach talks about how individuals use fashion to express personality, to define status or a situation, and to play a role.³⁴ Felisa Rincón de Gautier is someone who used fashion to create an individualistic style, reflecting her personality, which later was defined as a *grande dame* image, and become her calling card in Puerto Rico and around the world. This study will identify the various aspects of dress that made her who she is. It will reveal how her appearance communicated her

³¹ Ibid., 52-53.

³² *Autografo: Seres ordinarios con vidas extraordinarias: Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, prod. People Television, Inc., 1997, videocassette.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Anspach, *The Why of Fashion*, 42.

personality and defined her status and her role as a female politician in the middle of the twentieth century in Puerto Rico.

In the years of growing up, she had learned the importance of being Felisa. She had created her own image of herself, the way a painter creates a portrait...her clothes were made in a way that was indisputably hers.³⁵

Felisa Rincón de Gautier chose her clothes for their practicality and fit for her figure, but these clothes were not all utilitarian garments that were easy to forget. The mayor's apparel included garments designed by her, but constructed by a dressmaker. She also patronized one of the popular dressmakers in Puerto Rico at the time, Rafaela Santos, who specialized in eveningwear. Her trademark look was a combination of apparel, accessories, headwear and hairstyles.³⁶ The *grande dame* image was a positive one for Felisa Rincón de Gautier providing as such visibility and recognition, important characteristics for a politician. Yet at the same time, the image offered fuel for political opponents and caricaturists to distort her image and relationship with her supporters. Nevertheless, Felisa Rincón de Gautier became one of the most popular politicians and public servants in Puerto Rico.³⁷ The exposure and publicity that Felisa Rincón de Gautier's imposing and feminine image brought could be compared to Jackie Kennedy's or Evita Peron's own identifiable styles.

This study is of value in that it explores the life of Felisa Rincón de Gautier, Puerto Rico's first female mayor for the capital of Puerto Rico, through her appearance.

³⁵ Gruber, *Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, 187

³⁶ Gruber, *Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, 188; Oliveira, "Doña Fela: The Great Lady," 52; Díaz Alcaide, "Piernas al descubierto," 95

³⁷ Gruber, *Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, 188, 208-209; *El Mundo* (San Juan, PR), February 26, 1965; *El Mundo* (San Juan, PR), March 1, 1965.

During her tenure as mayor of San Juan there was much written about her in the press and even a few literary works. Subsequently, after Felisa Rincón de Gautier stepped down as mayor in 1968, several books narrating and analyzing her life and work were published. These publications include biographies such as *Palabras de Mujer: Una época reflejada en la vida de Felisa Rincón* by Puerto Rican journalist Josean Ramos, *Felisa Rincón de Gautier: the Mayor of San Juan* by Ruth Gruber, *Doña Felisa, a Biography of the Mayor of San Juan* by Marianna Norris, and *Doña Felisa Rincón de Gautier: Mayor of San Juan* by Magali García Ramis. In *Una mujer al servicio de su pueblo*, author Leonardo Rodríguez Villafañe compiled a directory of Felisa Rincón de Gautier's work during her years as mayor of San Juan, including accomplishments and improvements for San Juan, awards, honorary degrees, and city keys, just to name a few. The most recent book written about Felisa Rincón de Gautier is the 2003 *Mas que signos...significados en la vida politica de Felisa Rincón de Gautier* by Jose Alberto Morales. The mayor became such an important figure politically and socially, that she is part of Globe's series of *Hispanic Biographies*, as well as the biographical series of sound recordings of *Great American Women*. In addition, scholarly research has been conducted on her life to fulfill the requirements for a master's thesis at the University of Puerto Rico. Felisa Rincón de Gautier continued to be featured in newspaper and magazine articles, such as *Americas* and Puerto Rico's *Angela Luisa*. Interest on her life continued through radio interviews and television appearances. In the 1990s, Felisa Rincón de Gautier's life and achievements became part of People Television's video biographical series *Seres ordinaries con vidas extraordinarias*. In 2002 a video documentary, available to the public for purchase, was released under the title *Doña*

Fela: Documental inspirado en Felisa Rincón de Gautier. In 1984, Felisa Rincon de Gautier's life was brought to the theater stage in the musical Fela.

In view of all that has been written, spoken, viewed, sung and even danced about Felisa Rincón de Gautier, what would be the value and importance of this research, which focuses on her dress? Even though this work focuses on Felisa Rincón de Gautier's life up to 1968, it is being conducted from the point of view of her appearance and image, which became her "calling card." This "calling card" impression of Felisa Rincón de Gautier was so strong in the minds of the Puerto Rican population that during the investigative phase of this work, when this researcher mentioned Felisa Rincón de Gautier's name to Puerto Ricans, they immediately mentioned her hairstyle, the pearl necklaces or the fans.

In the introduction to his book *Una mujer al servicio de su pueblo*, Rodríguez Villafañe indicated that inspiration for his book was Felisa Rincón de Gautier's comment that there was too much emphasis on her image and appearance and not enough on her actual work and accomplishments as mayor of San Juan. At first glance, yes, it does seem that the mayor may have been correct in her perception of the focus on her style. But if one digs deeper into this notion that she was just known for her appearance, it is this researcher's argument that a connection can be made to the importance of her overall style and her success as mayor of San Juan. Furthermore, Felisa Rincón de Gautier's image was not just a reflection of a successful female politician, but it also helped bring exposure to the city of San Juan and put Puerto Rico in the world map. Her image resulted from her Spanish heritage and upbringing, her dressmaking skills, and the importance she placed on individuality. She was a "walking billboard" for the new role

of Puerto Rican women in twentieth century society, for the island's Spanish heritage, and for its political relationship, as a commonwealth, with the United States. The importance of her overall image, her packaging, is not something trivial and should not be dismissed as "just what she looked like." In order to counter the lack of understanding of the mayor's image, a comprehensive study that looks into the meaning, purpose and origins of her image as *grande dame* is warranted.

This research is based on the life of Felisa Rincón de Gautier as a fashion icon, and how she created a distinctively powerful image as a female politician in a male dominated society. To explain the origins, purpose and meaning of her fashion image three objectives were posed: 1) recognize sources of influence in the creation of Felisa Rincón de Gautier's *grande dame* image, 2) identify the dress elements composing the *grande dame* image, and 3) understand the impact Felisa Rincón de Gautier's *grande dame* image had on her success as mayor of San Juan from 1946 through 1968.

The first objective involved an understanding of Felisa Rincón de Gautier's life before becoming mayor of San Juan. It necessitated a look into her family, heritage and upbringing, as well as her experience as a dressmaker and businesswoman, and later as a politician. The second research objective required identifying and analyzing photographic images and newspaper and magazine articles concerning Felisa Rincón de Gautier, throughout her tenure as mayor of San Juan from 1946 through 1968. The third objective of the study was to look at the reasoning behind the creation of the *grande dame* image and what it ultimately communicated about Felisa Rincón de Gautier the person, the politician and finally her success as mayor.

Historic Method

This study will use the methods of historical research. The purpose of historical research is to document the relationship between persons and events, and to explain and understand the meaning of those relationships through the interpretation of acts and artifacts.³⁸ Historical research relies mainly on “the logical analysis of evidence obtained from documents,” which is implemented into meaningful generalizations. The ultimate goal is one of “clarification, correction, or expansion of existing knowledge as well as to the discovery of new knowledge.”³⁹

In the process of conducting a historical study, the researcher needs to consider the value and authenticity of the primary or secondary sources. Primary sources have a direct, “first-hand” connection with what is being investigated, while secondary sources are “one or more steps removed from the original source.” As an exercise in caution, all sources, primary or secondary, are evaluated for their authenticity and accuracy. In the process the author will identify sources that are factual and accurate, incorrect or incomplete, and any that may include a hidden agenda or a bias point of view. Once trustworthiness has been established within the sources of information, the material is synthesized in order to form “the picture” on the way to “re-creating the past.”⁴⁰

History has to have meaning; meaning is not just facts; interpretation creates meaning. In the process of “re-creating the past” it needs to be taken into consideration

³⁸ David Madsen, *Successful Dissertation and Theses*, 2d ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1992), 44. ; Harriet McBride, “Fraternal Regalia in America, 1865 to 1918: Dressing the Lodges; Clothing the Brotherhood” (Ph.D. Diss., The Ohio State University, 2000), 362.

³⁹ John Touliatos and Norma H. Compton, *Research Methods in Human Ecology/Home Economics* (Ames, IA: Iowa State University Press, 1992), 298.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 298, 300-303.

that the historical scholar's interpretation may be influenced by her/his convictions. This in turn creates another source of information for future researchers, since the historical scholars are not only "re-creating the past" but also they have become the past through their creation of meaning. History is constantly changing; it is not static. With each new generation of historical scholars comes a different interpretation, and with it a new re-created past.⁴¹

Procedure

A descriptive historical survey was conducted in order to understand Felisa Rincón de Gautier's *grande dame* image and give meaning to its importance in her role as Puerto Rico's first woman mayor from 1946 to 1968. Primary sources, including photographs, periodicals, audio and video recordings were analyzed to investigate the mayor's manner of dress. Secondary sources included books, academic documents, television documentaries, and recorded interviews conducted by the researcher with individuals acquainted with Felisa Rincón de Gautier. Materials available in Columbus, Ohio, through interlibrary loan, in New York and Puerto Rico limited the research.

The following institutions or collections were visited in search of primary and/or secondary sources in regards to the research. Sources in New York City focused on the garment industry, Puerto Ricans in New York and Kiviette, a New York City fashion house. In Puerto Rico, sources found were related to culture, society, government, and Felisa Rincón de Gautier.

⁴¹ Susan L. Hannel, "The Africana Craze in the Jazz Age: A Comparison of French and American Fashion, 1920-1940" (Ph.D. Diss., The Ohio State University, 2002), 11-12.

New York

Fashion Group International (archives)
Fashion Institute of Technology (library)
Stuart Culin Archives, Brooklyn Museum of Art
La Casa de la Herencia
New York Metropolitan Library
Shubert Theater Archives

Puerto Rico

Archivo General de Puerto Rico
Centro de Estudios Avanzados de Puerto Rico y el Caribe (library)
Colección Puertorriqueña, Universidad de Puerto Rico
Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueño
Museo Felisa Rincón de Gautier
San Juan City Hall

The researcher conducted audio-recorded interviews on April 2002 in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Interviewees were a family member and close personal acquaintances of Felisa Rincón de Gautier.

Rita A. Rincón de Rubiano
Hilda Jimenes de Rodríguez
Lcdo. Luis Muñoz Rivera

The *Archivo General de Puerto Rico* houses the *Felisa Rincón de Gautier* photographic collection. Over 1, 000 photographs of the mayor's twenty-two year tenure were examined. Of these around 200 were selected for analysis. The 200 photographs were supplemented with other images available at the *Museo Felisa Rincón de Gautier*. Furthermore books and magazines also enhanced the total number of photographs to study. The books included: *Palabras de Mujer: Una epoca reflejada en la vida de Felisa Rincón* by Josean Ramos, *Felisa Rincón de Gautier: the Mayor of San Juan* by Ruth Gruber, *Doña Felisa, a Biography of the Mayor of San Juan* by Marianna Norris, and *Una mujer al servicio de su pueblo*, author Leonardo Rodríguez Villafañe.

The cultural/society based *Alma Latina* magazine was examined from 1947 to 1965 for photographs of Felisa Rincón de Gautier. Besides photographic images, portraits and color video film of the mayor were also examined. The photographic and painted portraits were located at the *Museo Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, they spanned the three decades she was in office. The video films are part of the *Archivo General de Puerto Rico* video library. These were compilations of film recording several events in San Juan during the 1950s, which were attended by the mayor.

Other sources of information concerning Felisa Rincón de Gautier, included audio recordings of various interviews she gave to Puerto Rican radio stations throughout the 1970s and 1980s. The radio stations included *Noticias 1140*, *Notiuno*, and *OnceQ*. In addition, there was a 1970 audio recording of the mayor dictating her autobiography. Also, her appearance in the 1980s television show *Haciendo Historia* was available as an audio recording.

As sources for images and narrative, video documentaries featuring Felisa Rincón de Gautier were examined. These included of People Television's *Seres ordinaries con vidas extraordinarias* and the 2002 documentary *Doña Fela: Documental inspirado en Felisa Rincón de Gautier*.

The dissertation is organized in the following manner: Chapter 2 surveys Puerto Rico's society and culture, with emphasis on women. It follows with a look at Felisa Rincón de Gautier's family and her life from birth to 1932. Chapter 3 provides a look into Felisa Rincon de Gautier, the dressmaker. It includes her experience in the New York City garment district and as a dress shop owner in San Juan. Exploring Puerto Rico and its politics in Chapter 4 follows this chapter. In this chapter politics are viewed

through women's involvement, the creation of the *Partido Popular Democratico*, and Felisa Rincon de Gautier's tenure as mayor of San Juan. With a background of her upbringing, and experiences as dressmaker and mayor, Chapter 5 analyzes Felisa Rincon de Gautier's *grande dame* style. This includes a survey of contemporary fashions for comparison with the elements of Felisa Rincón de Gautier's manner of dress. Finally, in Chapter 6 the origins, purpose, and meaning of Felisa Rincón de Gautier's *grande dame* image is interpreted.

CHAPTER 2

FELISA RINCÓN: PUERTO RICO AND THE *FAMILIA* RINCÓN MARRERO, 1897 - 1934

This chapter explores Puerto Rican society and culture during the first 37 years of the life of Felisa Rincón. The discussion includes an in-depth look at Felisa Rincón's family, including parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles, who by her own account were important figures in her life. The chapter considers Felisa Rincón's life from birth in 1897 up to 1934, the year she traveled to New York to work as a dressmaker. As it looks at her life during the first 37 years, other components of who and what "made her" and molded her views in life will also be highlighted such as her teachers, the *tertulias*, the social and economic struggles of people of color and the *jibaros*,¹ and of course the "hand that was dealt" to her by life. This stage of Felisa Rincón's life will be placed within the context of Puerto Rican culture during these years. The political status of the island, its ultimate takeover by the United States, the results of the takeover and Puerto Rican women's roles during this period also will be discussed.

¹ *Jibaro* is the name given to the Puerto Rican peasant, who lives in the hilly, rural countryside. With the 1940s industrialization movement, many peasants adopted the "urban culture." Currently, the image and virtues of the *jibaro* have become part of Puerto Rico's folklore. Kenneth R. Farr, *Historical Dictionary of Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands* (Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1973), 49.

Puerto Rico 1897-1934

In 1897 the island of Puerto Rico was still a colony of Spain. Christopher Columbus encountered the island of Borinquén in 1493 during his second voyage to the New World. Columbus claimed the island for the Spanish crown by right of discovery and named it San Juan Bautista. After 1521, the capital came to be known as San Juan and the island as Puerto Rico. During its four hundred years of control of Puerto Rico, the Spanish regime largely neglected the “Columbus discovery”. By the end of the nineteenth century, the people of Puerto Rico were working toward the independence of the island. In 1897, a few months before the take over by the U.S., Spain awarded an Autonomous Charter to Puerto Rico. The Charter provided autonomy and self-governing provisions to the island, but did not provide complete freedom from Spain’s sovereignty. It was under a cloud of disenchantment with the Spanish government that Puerto Ricans came to be involved in the Spanish-American War at the end of the nineteenth century. The bombing of the U.S. ship *Maine* at port in Havana, Cuba sparked a four-month war between Spain and the United States, which included an American invasion of Puerto Rico.²

The 1898 Spanish-American War concluded with the signing of The Treaty of Paris by both Spain and the United States in August of the same year. With this treaty, "Spain ceded to the United States the island of Puerto Rico and other islands now under Spanish sovereignty in the West Indies".³ Thus Puerto Rico went from four hundred

² Arturo Morales Carrión, *Puerto Rico: A Political and Cultural History* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1983), 6, 8; Farr, *Historical Dictionary of Puerto Rico*, 21; Guy S. Métraux, "American Civilization Abroad: Fifty Years in Puerto Rico," *Americas* 7 (1952): 60; Francisco A. Scarano, *Puerto Rico: Cinco siglos de historia* (San Juan, PR: McGraw-Hill, 1993), 556.

³ E. Fernández García, *El libro de Puerto Rico* (San Juan, PR: El Libro Azul, 1923), 111.

years of Spanish rule, and neglect, to the commercial, political, and moral influence of its North American neighbor, the United States.

Puerto Ricans, who were overtly sympathetic with their cause, received the Americans cordially and enthusiastically, thus allowing the U.S. to immediately put its plan into progress.⁴ Over the years Puerto Rico has been transformed by contact with the U.S.⁵ An elected civilian government replaced military rule. Trade between the United States and Puerto Rico increased dramatically after 1898, with U.S. imports averaging \$9 out of every \$10 by 1914. The agricultural system of production changed "from the period of family-style haciendas to that of [U.S. owned] corporate land combines", with the production of sugar becoming the number one priority, and *la industria de la aguja* (the manufacturing of embroidered cotton textiles) and tobacco following.⁶ Roads and railroads opened throughout the island connecting all the island's people.⁷ U.S. influence

⁴ Even though Métraux (59-62) does not elaborate on the reason for the gleeful welcome, others have explained it in their writings. See Eileen J. Findlay, "Love in the Tropics: Marriage, Divorce, and the Construction of Benevolent Colonialism in Puerto Rico, 1898-1910," in *Close Encounters of Empire: Writing the Cultural History of U.S.-Latin American Relations*, eds. G. M. Joseph, C. C. LeGrand, and R. D. Salvatore (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998), 139; Olga Jiménez de Wagenheim, *Puerto Rico: An Interpretative History from Pre-Columbian Times to 1900* (Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener Publishers, 1998), 206

⁵ After Puerto Rico's takeover by the U.S., a military government was established from October 1898 until April 1900. During this period important changes were made into the Spanish political tradition that had dominated the island for four hundred years. Examples of these changes include: dismantling the parliamentary system, reorganizing the judicial system, and in the American tradition, separating church and state. Farr, *Historical Dictionary of Puerto Rico*, 56; Eugenio Fernández Mendez, *Cronicas de Puerto Rico: Desde la conquista hasta nuestros dias (1493-1955)* (Barcelona: Manuel Pareja, 1973), 605; Scarano, *Puerto Rico: Cinco siglos de historia*, 571-572, 596.

⁶ Louise Cripps Samoiloff, *Portrait of Puerto Rico* (Cranbury, NJ: Rosemont, 1984), 106; Scarano, *Puerto Rico: Cinco siglos de historia*, 585-595.

⁷ Cripps Samoiloff, *Portrait of Puerto Rico*, 111; Fernández García, *El libro de Puerto Rico*, 193.

was also seen in the celebration of American holidays, the introduction of the eight-hour workday, trial by jury and the right to divorce. The latter was established in Puerto Rico in 1902, earlier than in other countries of Latin America.⁸

In 1903, the University of Puerto Rico was founded. American influence also allowed public schools to triple in number with English as the official language. Yet, by the beginning of the 1910s a large majority of the population still lived in rural settings and was in need of education. As a result, rural schools were established. By 1920 there were eleven high schools around the island.⁹

Even with improvements in education, the first few years after the United States became sovereign over Puerto Rico were characterized by economic and social instability. This period saw the decline of international commerce and the devaluation of the Spanish coin that reduced the wealth of many Puerto Ricans. In addition, merchants and plant owners of Spanish descent throughout the island became victims of a violent anti-Spanish movement known as *partidas sediciosas*. Also during this period, on August 8th 1899, Puerto Rico was hit by a very powerful and destructive hurricane, *San*

⁸ Cripps Samoiloff, *Portrait of Puerto Rico*, 126; Eileen J. Suárez Findlay, *Imposing Decency: The Politics of Sexuality and Race in Puerto Rico, 1870-1920* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999), 111-112.

⁹ Scarano, *Puerto Rico: Cinco siglos de historia*, 609, 605; William Boyce, *U.S. Colonies and Dependencies* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1914), 439; Morales Carrión, *Puerto Rico: A Political and Cultural History*, 174; Fernández García, *El libro de Puerto Rico*, 193. Spanish as the primary language of instruction was reinstated in 1946. In 1898 there were 528 public schools in Puerto Rico with an attendance of 18,243 by 1914 there were 3,000 schools with an attendance of 118,000 students. Originally, the University of Puerto Rico was exclusively an institution for the preparation of teachers, a Normal School.

Ciriaco, which completely demolished plantations, factories, and houses, leaving thousand of Puerto Ricans, including many of the well-to-do, in poverty.¹⁰

The takeover of Puerto Rico by the United States after the Spanish-American War of 1898 altered the importation of goods to the island. Puerto Rico began to trade less with Spain and more with the U.S. In 1896, 18% of Puerto Rico's trade was with the U.S., but after the Organic Act of 1901, the percentage rose to 71%. This law guaranteed free trade between the U.S. and Puerto Rico. Thus, American merchandise entered the island and Puerto Rican merchandise was exported without payment of customs duties. After fifteen years under the American government, Alpheus Verrill remarked on how the Americanization of the island could be seen in commerce, social life, and manner of dress. The Puerto Ricans, who adopted American ideas, replaced aspects of Spanish life, still prevalent in places such as Cuba and other Spanish-American lands. The transformation was visible in the up-to-date stores stocked with American and European goods.¹¹

In 1914, the dry-goods stores of earlier times were being replaced by department stores, such as *González Padín*. In the shops and stores of Puerto Rico, a visitor could buy anything that could be found in a New York store and the prices were as low or lower than in the U.S.. Not only was American merchandise found in Puerto Rican stores, but American-owned stores, such as *Gillie and Woodward*, had opened retail locations on the island. When walking down the shopping arcade in San Juan, Verrill

¹⁰ William S. Bryan, ed., *Our Islands and Their People as Seen with Camera and Pencil* (St. Louis: N. D. Thompson, 1899), 382.

¹¹ Boyce, *U.S. Colonies and Dependencies*, 448; Alpheus H. Verrill, *Porto Rico, Past and Present* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1914), 11,17.

noted that "the large plate-glass windows of the stores in this section are filled with an attractive display of the latest...Parisian, Spanish, and American wearing apparel, musical instruments, furniture, kitchen utensils, curios and every article known to American stores."¹²

By the end of the 1910s, the 1917 "Jones Act", giving U.S. citizenship to all Puerto Ricans, was already a year old. In addition, the First World War that had started in 1914 was coming to an end, a war in which 18,000 Puerto Ricans served. In 1919, the first bill to grant suffrage to Puerto Rican women was introduced in the local legislature unsuccessfully. By 1920 the Puerto Rican population had risen from 1,118,102 in 1910 to 1,299,809.¹³

The decade of the 1920s continued Puerto Rico's colonial status and tutelage under the United States, as exemplified in the selection of governors. The governors were non-Puerto Rican citizens from the mainland, appointed by the President of the U.S. Some of the selected American governors, especially Arthur Yager (November 1913 to May 1921) and Horace M. Towner (April 1923 to October 1929), had understanding of the situation of the island and worked with the Puerto Rican's to improve it. Others, particularly E. Montgomery Reilly (May 1921 to April 1923), came with a "100% Americanism" attitude and ethnocentric prejudices which did not sit well with Puerto Rican politicians, unions, and the overall population.¹⁴

¹² Verrill, *Porto Rico, Past and Present*, 39, 20, 30, 40.

¹³ Truman R. Clark, *Puerto Rico and the United States, 1917-1933* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1975), 42; Morales Carrión, *Puerto Rico: A Political and Cultural History*, 173.

¹⁴ The first non-military/civilian governor appointed by the U.S. was Charles H. Allen who served from May 1900 to September 1901. Other American governor's appointed

The 1920s continued the development of Puerto Rico's concern with its political status. The debate on this issue translated into the form of political parties. While the Jones Act of 1917, gave American citizenship to Puerto Ricans, it also modified the electoral laws set in Puerto Rico by the American government after 1898. The result of these modifications include: the addition of the Senate to the Legislature, members of the Legislature arrive to their position only by being elected, and the elections are to be held every four years, on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November. With the new legislative and electoral laws, and the debate of Puerto Rico's political, social and economic situation, the political scene is filled with activity within the established political parties and with the creation of new parties. The *Partido Republicano Puertorriqueño* supports American ideals and permanent annexation to the US. The *Partido Union de Puerto Rico* began the decade of the 1920s supporting the notion of an independent sovereign nation, but changed its platform to support the idea of an autonomous/commonwealth state. Other political parties of the 1920s worth noting include the *Partido Socialista* and the *Partido Nacionalista*, with the former supporting labor, Americanization, and permanent union with the US, while the latter voiced anti-Americanism rhetoric and independence for Puerto Rico. This same period saw the

by Presidents of the U.S. include Theodore Roosevelt Jr. from October 1929 to January 1932, Blanton Winship from February 1934 to August 1939, and Rexford G. Tugwell from September 1941 to September 1946. Tugwell was the last American governor to serve in Puerto Rico, but not the last to be appointed to the position. In 1946, President Harry S. Truman appointed Jesust T. Piñero, a Puerto Rican, to serve as governor of the island. In 1948, the Puerto Rican population was able for the first time to elect their own governor. For a complete list of all Governors appointed by U.S. Presidents in Puerto Rico refer to Farr, *Historical Dictionary of Puerto Rico*, 43. Morales Carrión, *Puerto Rico: A Political and Cultural History*, 204-209.

creation of political *alianzas* (alliances) and *coaliciones* (coalitions) of parties with similar ideologies for the purpose of political strength in the Legislature.¹⁵

In addition to dealing with Puerto Rico's political status, the 1920s saw politics of the social classes. In comes the *Partido Socialista*, a labor party not only advocating economic and social reforms, but also statehood. The party was established as part of the labor movement in the 1910s to defend workers' rights in the Legislature, a constant battle to be fought in light of Puerto Rico's agrarian industry being dominated by large American corporations. During this period there was an awareness of social dislocation between urban professionals and the farm labor in the island, which was affecting the socioeconomic factors of the island. For example, by 1925, 43.6% of the sugar industry's total production was controlled by three corporations, *Central Aguirre Syndicate*, *South Porto Rico Sugar Company*, and *Fajardo Sugar Company*. Even though there were increases in workers' wages, they were not enough to keep up with increases in living expenses and the large population growth. The socioeconomic situation would deteriorate even more with the arrival of natural and man-made disasters. In September

¹⁵*Alianzas* (alliances) and *coaliciones* (coalitions) between the political parties in Puerto Rico will play a key factor in the demise of the *Partido Liberal* in the 1930s. The result, the formation of the *Partido Popular Democratico* and Felisa Rincón's total immersion into Puerto Rican politics. The issue of Puerto Rico's political status, commonwealth or statehood or independence, is one that is still being debated in 2004. Fernando Bayron Toro, *Elecciones y Partidos Politicos de Puerto Rico 1809-2000*, 5th ed. (Mayagüez, PR: Editorial Isla, 2000), 114, 148, 153, 159-162. *Elecciones y Partidos Politicos de Puerto Rico 1809-2000* is an excellent source of information on elections, political parties, and the general atmosphere in Puerto Rico under both the Spanish and American regimes.

1928, Puerto Rico was hit by powerful hurricane *San Felipe*, and in October 1929, the US stock-market crash precipitated the *Great Depression* of the 1930s.¹⁶

When the decade of the 1930s began, Puerto Rico and its inhabitants found themselves in a state of gloom and hopelessness. The *Great Depression* made the already weak agricultural economy even more fragile, *agudizando* (worsening) the deplorable socioeconomic situation of the Puerto Rican masses. In *Puerto Rico: A Political and Cultural History*, author Arturo Morales Carrión references a 1930 report by the Brookings Institution that highlights the terrible economic and social conditions in the island. The report notes how the average income of rural workers minimally reached \$150 a year, with town workers earning a little more. Four out of five rural workers were landless. Inhabitants had to deal with inflation and paying higher prices for staple goods such as food and clothing, because these had become mainly imports from the United States.¹⁷ Unemployment continued to grow, because the economic resources and organizations were not fit to handle a growing population and its need to make a living. The deterioration in the economy and society was evident in 1933 when the average income *per capita* was 30% less than its counterpart in 1930. The prices for staple items

¹⁶ Hurricane *San Felipe* had winds reaching 200 miles per hour. The entire island was affected. 300 people lost their lives. Over 250,000 homes were destroyed, 500,000 inhabitants were destitute, both the sugar cane and coffee industries were severely hurt, and a price tag of \$85 million in total losses for the island. The *Great Depression*, a severe economic crisis in the US from 1929 to the early 1940s. It was characterized by its long duration, the overall poverty it brought to society, and its negative impact on the international economy. "Great Depression," in *The Columbia Encyclopedia*, 6th ed. <http://education.yahoo.com/reference/encyclopedia/entry?id=19881>, [cited 20 July 2004]; Farr, *Historical Dictionary of Puerto Rico*, 66; Morales Carrión, *Puerto Rico: A Political and Cultural History*, 203-212; Scarano, *Puerto Rico: Cinco siglos de historia*, 586-587, 625, 648.

¹⁷ Morales Carrión, *Puerto Rico: A Political and Cultural History*, 216, 218.

continue to increase dramatically between 1932 and 1933. For example, a *quintal* of rice went from \$2.40 in 1932 to \$4.10 in 1933; a *quintal* of beans increased from \$3 to \$5.25; codfish went up 68% from \$19 to \$28; a half a liter of milk went up from 5 cents to 15 cents; bread increased 150% to 10 cents from 4 cents a pound. The critical situation of the island was influenced additionally by hurricane *San Ciprian* in 1932. In general, the conditions in Puerto Rico at the beginning of the 1930s could not improve without a major overhaul of its economic, social and political systems. Improvements in the economy and social sectors of Puerto Rico would begin to appear in the mid 1930s with Franklin D. Roosevelt's *New Deal* version for the island.¹⁸

Taking into account the constant cross-cultural contact between Puerto Rico and the United States from 1898 to 1934, potential for one or both of the cultures influencing the rate and direction of change in the island, as well as shaping specific cultural details was very probable, this was seen in Puerto Rican women's lives.¹⁹

Puerto Rican Women 1897-1934

At the end of the nineteenth century, the world of Puerto Rican women centered on elements from the different cultures, *Tainos*, African, and Spanish, all of which intermingled throughout the island's history.²⁰ These elements include religious beliefs,

¹⁸ Scarano, *Puerto Rico: Cinco siglos de historia*, 672; Bayron Toro, *Elecciones y Partidos*, 173, 181.

¹⁹ For the purpose of Chapter 1, the work is concentrating on the relation between the United States and Puerto Rico after the Spanish-American War and subsequent takeover up to the early 1930s. These dates in no way reflect an end to cross-cultural exchanges and influences between these two cultures. As of 2004, Puerto Rico is still under the governing power of the United States. Marvin Harris, *Cultural Anthropology*, 2nd ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1987), 12.

²⁰ Edward W. Christensen, "The Puerto Rican Woman: A Profile," in *The Puerto Rican Woman*, ed. E. Acosta-Belén (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1979), 53.

position or role in the family structure, and form of dress, to name only a few. Spanish social customs prevailed on the island in the late 1890s. In Frederick Ober's words, "scratch a Puerto Rican and you find a Spaniard underneath the skin, so the language and home customs of Spain prevail here..."²¹ This is especially true of Puerto Rican women of the higher and middle classes, the Spaniards of the island. These women belonged to the commercial, professional, and planter classes, being reared in affluence and luxury. Several writers, including Americans and Spanish, at the end of the nineteenth century described the Puerto Rican women of the elite classes as:

...sweet and amiable, faithful as wives, loving as sisters, sweethearts, and daughters, ornaments to any society in the world, tasteful in dress, tactful in conversation, graceful in deportment, and extremely elegant in their carriage. In truth, visitors from Old Spain have often remarked their resemblance to the beautiful *doncellas* of Cadiz, who indeed are world famous for their beauty, grace, and loveliness!²²

In 1898, American Frederick Ober in his second visit to Puerto Rico observed that:

The type [of beauty] here is also that of Spain the mother country. Brunettes prevail and blondes are a rarity. The large eyes, black as night; the peachblow complexion; hair abundant, dark and glossy as a raven's wing; gracefully moulded, voluptuous form—these attributes of Spanish beauty have not changed during all the 300 years of Spanish domination.²³

As with other Latin American societies, the lives of the Puerto Rican women of the elite classes were molded by ideals derived from the "old European legacies of patriarchy"

²¹ Bryan, *Our Islands and Their People*, 383; Frederick A. Ober, *Puerto Rico and its Resources* (New York: Appleton & Company, 1899), 168.

²² Opinion of a 19th century Spanish writer on the "fair sex" of the island found in Ober, *Puerto Rico and its Resources*, 174-175.

²³ Ober, *Puerto Rico and its Resources*, 173.

resulting in their own subjugation to the male-dominated society.²⁴ The condition of women in Puerto Rico at the end of the nineteenth century was one of an inferior status. If the woman was unmarried, the social rule that "little children must be seen and not heard" also applied to them.²⁵ Another example of women's inferior status was seen at the dinner table, where guests and males were placed in the seats considered most honorable, while the women were all grouped at less distinguished seats of the table.²⁶ Margherita Hamm interpreted the relationship between men and women of the island in this way:

the men treat women with exquisite courtesy, both in speech and action. They foresee every want, and they bestow attention with tact and delicacy, but it is the master pleasing the slave, and not one human being treating his equal.²⁷

With this type of culture, the life of the Puerto Rican women of the middle and upper classes was essentially secluded and conducted inside the home. As a newspaper correspondent for *The Evening Post* during the months of August, September, and October 1898, Albert Robinson noted this seclusion by "the absence from the streets [cities and towns] and stores of ladies whose apparel and demeanor would indicate them as of well-to-do families."²⁸ The seclusion of women of the elite classes was attributed to their Spanish heritage, education, and habits, as well as lethargy produced by the climate,

²⁴ Jiménez de Wagenheim, *Puerto Rico: An Interpretative History*, 251; Edna Acosta-Belén, *The Puerto Rican Woman: Perspectives on Culture, History, and Society*, 2nd ed. (New York: Praeger, 1986), 3..

²⁵ Margherita Hamm, *Porto Rico and the West Indies* (New York: F. Tennyson Neely, 1899), 131.

²⁶ William Dinwiddie, *Puerto Rico Its Conditions and Possibilities* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1899), 153.

²⁷ Hamm, *Porto Rico and the West Indies*, 99.

where staying indoors was preferred to many physical activities.²⁹ By the end of the nineteenth century, the situation of the women of the island was being questioned by a few progressive minds (both male and female), who argued that their subjugation and confined conditions had created a "deplorable state of ignorance" which could be improved with education.³⁰

At the end of the nineteenth century, women were not only being restrained in their social life, but their educational level was "pitiably behind." An observer in 1898 recounted how 75% of middle class women were illiterate; the higher classes had similar low levels of literacy. William Dinwiddie stated that "one never sees a book or a magazine in these [well-to-do] houses, though in two or three of the larger cities there are many literary men. Reading is not a strong point of the island population". This notion of a lack of reading is supported by Robinson who stated the "Porto Rican generally are not a reading people." However, this generalization obscured the fact that some well-bred Puerto Rican women had a reading knowledge of French, and sometimes Italian. This knowledge was achieved through the home teachings of governesses or tutors.³¹

Besides their formal education with a governess or tutor, many Puerto Rican women displayed more socially acceptable "female" achievements in the 1890s. Nearly

²⁸ Albert G. Robinson, *The Porto Rico of To-day: Pen Pictures of the People and the Country* (New York: Charles Scribners Sons, 1899), 57.

²⁹ For views on Puerto Rican society, including the seclusion of elite women, at the end of the nineteenth century, see Bryan, *Our Islands and Their People*, 383; Hamm, *Porto Rico and the West Indies*, 121; Charles Morris, *Our Island Empire: A Handbook of Cuba, Porto Rico, Hawaii, and the Philippine Islands* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1899), 205; and Ober, *Puerto Rico and its Resources*, 169.

³⁰ Jiménez de Wagenheim, *Puerto Rico: An Interpretative History*, 252.

every woman played an instrument and sang. Some painted and drew, while others made lace, embroidered, or crocheted. Other activities Puerto Rican women excelled in were floriculture, fruit culture, herbaria, and cultivation of aquariums.³² In addition, Dinwiddie described the well-to-do Puerto Rican woman as being far more assiduous in her interest in household economy than her sisters of other Spanish-speaking territories of North America.³³

The "bourgeois spirit" that characterized England, France and the U.S., had not yet fully developed in the Puerto Rican woman.³⁴ During the 1890s in Puerto Rico there was an obvious absence of the "grisette and shop-girl class, and of women professors, doctors, lawyers, dentists, typewrites [typists] and bookkeepers."³⁵ Not only were women not employed in stores but also until 1900 there were no female typists on the island. As a consequence of the lack of "bourgeois spirit" within the general female population in Puerto Rico, positions such as nurses, invalid's companions, readers,

³¹ Hamm, *Porto Rico and the West Indies*, 131-132; Dinwiddie, *Puerto Rico Its Conditions*, 153; Robinson, *The Porto Rico of To-day*, 188; Bryan, *Our Islands and Their People*, 383.

³² Hamm, *Porto Rico and the West Indies*, 131.

³³ It is not clear if Dinwiddie, *Puerto Rico Its Conditions* (153) was referring just to Mexico or his statement also includes the Spanish speaking territories of the west and southwest United States.

³⁴ Pico Vidal, "The History of Women's Struggle for Equality in Puerto Rico," in *Sex and Class in Latin America: Women's Perspectives on Politics, Economics and the Family in the Third World*, eds. J. Nash and H. I. Safa (South Hadley, MA: J. F. Bergin Publishers, Inc., 1980) (202) argues that the lack of "both a feminist movement and a strong feminist consciousness" for most of the nineteenth century in Puerto Rico was due to the "precarious educational and employment situation of women of the island."

³⁵ Hamm, *Porto Rico and the West Indies*, 138.

preceptors, book agents, art critics, garden directors, and advisors in household economics were held by members of the religious sisterhoods.³⁶

The position of the Puerto Rican women was to shift in the early 1900s with the economic and social changes brought under U.S. rule. Gone were the days of illiteracy, ignorance, and seclusion typical of their lifestyle under the Spanish regime.

Opportunities for education allowed Puerto Rican women to enter the teaching market. They also became nurses, suffragettes and organizers of civic groups.³⁷

During the first decades of the twentieth century the main concern of Puerto Rican women of the middle and upper classes was to achieve an education. This desire for education was reflected in an increase in the number of schools and number of students in attendance on the island. In 1899, immediately after the U.S. takeover of Puerto Rico, there were 528 public schools with an attendance of 18, 243. By 1914, the island's schools had multiplied to 3,000 with an attendance of 118,000.³⁸ Acquiring an education paved the way for women to participate in professional services, such as teaching and nursing, and clerical occupations, which would be the basis for their economic independence. Statistics reflect the increase of Puerto Rican women in these professional areas of work. Their presence in the field of teaching increased from 30% of the teachers being females in 1899 to 74.5% in 1930. In 1910 women equaled 50% of

³⁶ Hamm, *Porto Rico and the West Indies*, 138; Bryan, *Our Islands and Their People*, 303.

³⁷ Edna Acosta-Belén, "Women in Twentieth Century Puerto Rico," In *The Puerto Ricans: Their History, Culture, and Society*, ed. Adalberto López (Cambridge, MA: Schenkman, 1980), 276; Federico Ribes Tovar, *Enciclopedia puertorriqueña ilustrada* (San Juan, PR: Plus Ultra Educational, 1970), 194. Teaching became a "female" occupation with 74.5% of teachers' female in 1930 vs. 30% in 1899. See Pico Vidal, "The History of Women's Struggle", 206.

the combined work force in the clerical and nursing fields. By 1930 the percentage of females in these jobs had increased to 66% clerical and 94% nursing.³⁹

Puerto Rican women of the middle and upper classes were not the only ones being influenced by changes in the economy and society at the turn of the twentieth century. With the development of capitalism, the working class woman found herself moving from “unpaid” work at home to paid work in the manufacturing sectors of tobacco and needlework. The participation of women in the labor force in three decades increased from a 9.9% rate in 1899 to a 26.1% in 1930. The needlework industry reached commercial importance during the 1920s, resulting in an increase in employment for women. Some of the needlework production was conducted as factory work, but the major part of the working force was involved in home production. The needlework industry produced embroideries of all kinds, handkerchiefs, ladies and children’s underwear, as well as ladies' dresses. The majority of the items were to be sold in the American market. Unlike tobacco manufacturing, which hired both men and women, the needlework industry was predominantly female.⁴⁰

The "soft rumbles" of an emerging feminist movement in the late nineteenth century did not take-off until the beginning of the twentieth century due to a wider

³⁸ Boyce, *U.S. Colonies and Dependencies*, 439.

³⁹ Ribes Tovar, *Enciclopedia Puertorriqueña Ilustrada*, 187; Pico Vidal, "The History of Women's Struggle", 206; Isabel Picó de Hernández, "The History of Women's Struggle for Equality in Puerto Rico," in *The Puerto Rican Woman*, ed. Edna Acosta-Belén (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1979), 29.

⁴⁰ In the 1935 Census 99% of responses under the category of employment “home needlework and embroidery worker” were women. For an in-depth look at the Needlework industry in Puerto Rico from 1900-1929 refer to Lydia Milagros González García, *Una puntada en el tiempo: La industria de la aguja en Puerto Rico (1900-1929)*

availability of education and professional jobs for the women of the middle and upper classes.⁴¹ With their education in hand, not only were Puerto Rican women able to participate in the professional workforce, the "murmurs" of the 1890s bourgeois spirit became a full fledged "roar" with the creation of civic and women's organizations and the right-to-vote as a key fight in their new position as emancipated women in society. Through their involvement with women's organizations and civic groups, the women of Puerto Rico contributed to the American war effort during World War I by making bandages and other work for the Red Cross in Puerto Rico.⁴² The feminist movement at the turn of the twentieth century in Puerto Rico was composed of two factions: labor, representing working-class women and the professional, representing women of the upper and middle classes. Both desired the improvement and equality of Puerto Rican women's lives at home and at work, but they implemented their beliefs differently.⁴³ It was the professional faction with its membership of middle and upper class Puerto Rican women that made acquiring the right to vote its mission. In 1917, the first feminist organization was established under the name of *Liga Femenina Puertorriqueña* (Puerto

(Santo Domingo, RD: Editora Taller, 1990); Picó de Hernández, "The History of Women's Struggle", 26-29.

⁴¹ Suarez Findlay, *Imposing Decency*, 54; Pico Vidal, "The History of Women's Struggle", 210.

⁴² Truman, *Puerto Rico and the United States*, 37.

⁴³ Key leaders in the women's movement from both the labor and professional factions include Luisa Capetillo and Ana Roqué de Duprey. Capetillo was involved in the labor movement, established a journal devoted to women's issues and it is considered the first woman in Puerto Rico to wear pants in public. Among her many accomplishments, Roqué de Duprey was a teacher, wrote academic textbooks, founded several female oriented journals, as well the *Liga Femenina Puertorriqueña* and *La Asociación de Mujeres Sufragistas de Puerto Rico*. For more on these extraordinary women see Norma Valle Ferrer, *Luisa Capetillo: Historia de una mujer proscrita* (Puerto Rico: Editorial

Rican Feminine League), this was followed in 1925 with the *Asociación Puertorriqueña de Mujeres Sufragistas* (Puerto Rican Association of Suffragist Women). After much battle with the Puerto Rican Legislature and with male ignorance on women's intellect and abilities, in 1929 Puerto Rican women were given the right to vote.⁴⁴ Once the suffragettes acquired their goal – the right to vote, the association and its members seemed to lose interest on continuing the fight to release women from oppression. At the same time, the women's labor movement was also losing steam because of reductions in employment and the disappearance of many labor unions. As a result, the 1930s was witness to the dissolution of both professional and labor feminists organizations. But the 1930s also witnessed the positive results of emancipation, for Puerto Rican women began to become more involved in politics, and were being elected to the Legislation.⁴⁵

Improvements in education, industry, commerce and the recognition of divorce were very influential in modifying the role of Puerto Rican women during the first three decades of the twentieth century. They took the necessary steps to unwrap themselves from seclusion and ignorance, emerging as independent and educated contributors to

Cultural, 1990) and Sarah Vazquez Graziani, "Flor nueva' en viejos quehaceres masculinos" (master's thesis, Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1985).

⁴⁴ The suffragists try to get the right-to-vote bill passed in 1919, 1921, 1923 and 1927 before it was finally approved in 1929. The bill only gave literate women the right to vote. After voting for the first time in 1932, the law was changed in 1935 to include all Puerto Rican women in the electoral process. Picó de Hernández, "The History of Women's Struggle", 31-34; Carmen Delgado Votaw, *Puerto Rican Women* (Washington D.C.: National Conference of Puerto Rican Women, Inc., 1995), 76; Scarano, *Puerto Rico: Cinco siglos de historia*, 650-654.

⁴⁵ In the 1932 Elections, María Luisa Arcelay from the district of Mayagüez became the first woman elected to the Legislature. Norma Valle Ferrer, "Feminism and its influence on women's organizations in Puerto Rico," in *The Puerto Rican Woman*, ed. Edna Acosta-Belén (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1979), 41-42; Delgado Votaw, *Puerto Rican Women*, iii.

society and developing a voice that could not be ignored. The working-class women of the island played an integral part in the success of the tobacco and needlework industries, while the women of Puerto Rico's middle and upper classes became teachers and nurses, organized civic groups, and became involved in the suffragette movement.⁴⁶ Included in the groups of professional women in Puerto Rico in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth were members of the Rincón Marrero family, including Felisa Rincón.

The Rincón Marrero Family

On the island of Puerto Rico in the last quarter of the 19th century two families would unite to become the foundation for Felisa Rincón. This "foundation" was transplanted from Spain and adapted to the tropical island. Three of her grandparents were Spanish in culture and the fourth was of French/Spanish heritage. The dominance of the Spanish heritage in the Rincón Marrero family, instilled in them the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church of Spain, and was reflected in their language, manners and values.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ For more on the Puerto Rican women's emergence into society see Isabel Pico Vidal, "The History of Women's Struggle", 202-213.

⁴⁷ The dates as to the birth, death and other events of many of Felisa Rincón's ancestors were not available. In general, the majority of the available dates related to the Rincón Marrero family were furnished by Felisa Rincón herself via the many interviews she conducted throughout her life. The majority of these interviews were the sources of information for several written biographies, master thesis, radio shows, television programs, a video documentary, and newspaper and magazine articles on Felisa Rincón. The researcher assumes the dates provided by Felisa Rincón are accurate. Other dates maybe the result of this researcher's deductions and conclusions after analyzing and comparing information on historical events related to family members and that provided by the Rincón Marrero family, including Felisa Rincón. Ruth Gruber, *Felisa Rincón de Gautier: The Mayor of San Juan* (NY: Biblio Press, 1994), 10.

The paternal side, the Rincón branch, of the Rincón Marrero family was a combination of Spanish and French heritage. The patriarch Francisco Rincón, was born and raised in Salamanca, Spain. He was one of two children, the other being a sister named Cipriana Rincón. At the age of 18, as a student of medicine in Salamanca, Francisco Rincón joined the Spanish army and was sent out to Santo Domingo (what is now the Dominican Republic) to appease a developing revolt. As history shows, the revolt became a full-fledged war between the inhabitants of Santo Domingo and the Spanish troops. *La Guerra de la Restauración* (The War of Restoration), which started as a revolt in support of Santo Domingo's permanent separation from Spain, carried on for two years (1863-1865). The conflict officially ended on March 3, 1865 with the Queen of Spain signing a decree annulling the annexation. In the aftermath of the war, the Spanish soldiers in Santo Domingo either returned to Spain or settled in the Spanish colonies of Cuba or Puerto Rico. The latter was the path taken by Francisco Rincón.⁴⁸ In San Juan, Puerto Rico, Francisco Rincón met his future wife Esilda Plumey Irizarry (Figure 4). Her father Juan Bautista Plumey was a French captain, while her mother María Petrona Irizarry was Puerto Rican of Spanish decent. Esilda Plumey Irizarry was

⁴⁸ The island of Hispanola was “discovered” by Christopher Columbus in 1492. The entire island was under Spanish control until 1697 when the western part of the island (today Haiti) was passed on to the French. The Spanish section was known as Santo Domingo. After constant battles between the French and Spanish, in 1822 Santo Domingo became part of the Republic of Haiti. In 1844 the inhabitants of Santo Domingo separated from Haiti and established an independent state, the Dominican Republic. In 1861, the former Spanish colony annexed itself to Spain. *La Guerra de la Restauración* (1863-1865), a costly endeavor to Spain in lives and money resulted in the return of the independent state of the Dominican Republic. *Genology of the Rincón Marrero Family* by Ketty Palerm Rincón (audiotape) 25 April 1986; Gruber, *Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, 18; Felisa Rincón de Gautier, interview by Ruben Arrieta, *Notiuno*

one of twelve children. Felisa Rincón described her paternal grandmother as "tall, blonde, blue-eyed...beautiful." During their marriage, the Rincón Plumey family lived in the towns of Lares and Yabucoa (Figure 5). Their union produced six children, three males: Francisco (Paco), Juancho and Enrique and three females: Francisca (Cachú), Chefa and María (Figure 6). Enrique Rincón Plumey would become Felisa Rincón's father.⁴⁹ The family's stay in Lares coincided with the *Grito de Lares* in 1868.⁵⁰ Francisco Rincón's political views were conservative and pro-Spanish, while Esilda Plumey de Rincón's were liberal and pro-independence. As a result, she became involved with the Puerto Ricans who rebelled against Spanish oppression. Esilda Plumey de Rincón's contribution was to hide and help in the escape of a nephew and revolutionary, Clodomiro Plumey, and his friends, from the Spanish troops sent to Lares to appease the revolutionaries. After the *Grito de Lares*, the Rincón Plumey family moved to the town of Yabucoa, on the southeastern coast of Puerto Rico.⁵¹ With his medical studies, Francisco Rincón was able to become a pharmacist and he opened the

radio, October 5 & 12, 1986; Frank Moya Pons, *The Dominican Republic: A National History* (Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener Publishers, 1998), 210, 212, 218.

⁴⁹ Josean Ramos, *Palabras de Mujer: Una época reflejada en la vida de Felisa Rincón* (San Juan: Editorial Universidad de America, 1988), 2; Ketty Palerm Rincón, audiotape; Ruben Arrieta, interview.

⁵⁰ In 1868 the Spanish Empire was down to two colonies in Latin America, Cuba and Puerto Rico. The *Grito de Lares* was a proclamation of Puerto Rican independence from Spain on September 23, 1868. The insurrection was short-lived and unsuccessful on acquiring its goal. Puerto Rican pro-independence groups annually commemorate the anniversary of the *Grito de Lares*. Farr, *Historical Dictionary of Puerto Rico*, 44.

⁵¹ When Felisa Rincón was a young girl, her paternal grandmother Esilda Plumey de Rincón would entertain her with family stories. One of these was her involvement in the late 1860s with some revolutionaries in Lares. Esilda Plumey de Rincón hid her nephew and his friends at her house for a few days. Afterwards she "cooked up some black dye" for them to paint their faces and hands black to escape the Spanish troops. Clodomiro

first pharmacy in Yabucoa - *Farmacia Rincón*. In 1885, Francisco Rincón was appointed Mayor of Yabucoa, a position he held until 1889.⁵²

The maternal side of Felisa Rincón's family, the Marrero branch, was of Spanish descent. Ramón de Jesus Marrero married Felísita Rivera, originally of the Canary Islands. Their union produced four children: Rita, Monse, Ines and Ramón, the latter the only male. Rita Marrero Rivera would become Felisa Rincón's mother.⁵³ In the latter part of the nineteenth century, Felísita Rivera de Marrero (Figure 7) was a schoolteacher with her own private school in the town of Fajardo. Students from all over the area, including the island of Vieques (Figure 5) attended Rivera de Marrero's school. The population of nineteenth century Spanish Puerto Rico was lacking in education. This was a time when eight out of ten Puerto Ricans could neither read nor write, schools were few throughout the island and careers outside of marriage were not a popular notion for

Plumey and friends were able to escape, but unfortunately he later was captured and put in prison. Gruber 18-19; Ramos, 39-40.

⁵² In her work Gruber (18) gives an account, based on interviews with Felisa Rincón de Gautier, of Francisco Rincón opening pharmacies in Lares and Yabucoa. The researcher was not able to find any other sources corroborating the establishment of the Lares pharmacy, but found several sources supporting the Yabucoa pharmacy. Gruber, *Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, 18, 20; Ramos, *Palabras de Mujer*, 39; "Alcaldes de Yabucoa 1793-Presente," <http://www.linktopr.com/yabucoa.html> (retrieved 21 July 2004).

⁵³ The author was not able to determine the chronological order of the Marrero Rivera children. Ramón Marrero Rivera became a priest. Ines Marrero Rivera would become an influential relative in Felisa Rincón's life. A discrepancy was found by the researcher as to who was Ines Marreo Rivera. In Ramos (13), he refers to Ines as a first cousin of Rita Marrero. The researcher did not find any other sources corroborating such as statement, while found several corroborating the status of Ines Marrero Rivera as Rita Marrero's sister. Ramos, *Palabras de Mujer*, 2; Gruber, *Felisa Rincón de Gautier* 13; Ketty Palerm Rincón, audiotape; Ruben Arrieta, interview. Catalina "Ketty" Palerm Rincón was a daughter of Maria Esilda Rincón, Felisa Rincón's third sister. Ketty Palerm died in August 1996.

educated women.⁵⁴ In the midst of this cultural and societal trend we find Felisa Rincón's maternal grandmother, Felísita Rivera de Marrero, going against the grain.

In addition to her grandparents, Felisa Rincón came in contact with other family members throughout her upbringing that would influence her life. Two key family members are from her mother's side, Ines Marrero de Celis Aguilera and from her father's side, Paco Rincón Plumey. Ines Marrero de Celis Aguilera was married to Abelardo de Celis Aguilera, a poet who also was an invalid. The couple resided in the town of Fajardo (Figure 5). Because of her husband's situation, Ines Marrero de Celis Aguilera was completely dedicated to her husband's well being. Such was her commitment to her husband that, as Felisa Rincón explains in her biographies, she would only leave him once a month for a trip to the post office. Felisa Rincón describes her aunt Ines Marrero de Celis Aguilera's dress "as if she were going to a ball." For Ines Marrero de Celis Aguilera dressing "to the nines" to visit the post office was as important for her husband as it was for her.⁵⁵

While Felisa Rincón was learning from Ines Marrero de Celis Aguilera the importance of one's appearance, from her uncle Paco Rincón Plumey, she learned about pharmacy. Paco Rincón Plumey lived in the town of San Lorenzo (Figure 5). Just as his father, Francisco Rincón had done in Yabucoa, Paco Rincón Plumey (Figure 6) owned a pharmacy also called *Farmacia Rincón*. During her upbringing, Felisa Rincón spent time with Paco Rincón Plumey's family in San Lorenzo. As an assistant in the drugstore, Felisa Rincón learned about being a pharmacist. Afterwards, as she relates in her

⁵⁴ Gruber, *Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, 27; Ramos, *Palabras de Mujer*, 4; Ruben Arrieta, interview.

biographies, she aspired to become a pharmacist, after all, “it was a Rincón family tradition”.⁵⁶

Of all the family members in the life of Felisa Rincón, there are no two people who influenced her as much as her mother and father. Felisa Rincón’s father, Enrique Rincón Plumey (Figure 8), was an attorney and Rita Marrero de Rincón (Figure 9), her mother, was a schoolteacher. Enrique Rincón Plumey’s career ascended from being a notary in Fajardo, to Court Secretary for the town of Humacao, and then to a full-fledged attorney working with Rafael López Landrón in San Juan.⁵⁷ Enrique Rincón Plumey, as a member of the *Partido Union de Puerto Rico*, believed in the independence of Puerto Rico. In 1912, the members of the *Partido Union de PR* who believed in independence separated themselves from the party to establish the *Partido de la Independencia de Puerto Rico*. Some of the organizers for the new party included Luis Lloréns Torres, Rosendo Matienzo Cintrón, Rafael López Landrón and Enrique Rincón Plumey.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Gruber, *Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, 13-14; Ramos, *Palabras de Mujer*, 14-15.

⁵⁶ Events would happen in Felisa Rincón’s life that would put a stop to her desire to study pharmacy and become a pharmacist. Gruber, *Felisa Rincón de Gautier* 24-25; Ramos, *Palabras de Mujer*, 20; Felisa Rincón de Gautier, audiotape of autobiography, San Juan, PR, February 1970.

⁵⁷ In Puerto Rico at the end of the nineteenth century was common to encounter notaries practicing law in the smaller towns of the island due to a lack of actual lawyers. Enrique Rincón Plumey practiced law as a notary until 1906, when he received his law degree in Washington D.C. and practiced as an actual attorney. Gruber, *Felisa Rincón de Gautier* 10, 20; Ramos, *Palabras de Mujer*, 2.

⁵⁸ The new *Partido de la Independencia* will fail to flourish, but it forced the *Partido Union de Puerto Rico* to look at their stand on the status of Puerto Rico. As a result, the *Partido Union* removed from their platform the option of statehood for the island, and favored an autonomous state on way to independence. Bayron Toro, *Elecciones y Partidos*, 139-140; Felisa Rincón de Gautier, interview by José Miguel Agrelot and M. Falcon, *Haciendo Historia*, WKAQ-TV, March 19, 1985; Felisa Rincón de Gautier, autobiography; Felisa Rincón de Gautier interview by L. Santiago and F. Aquino, Once Q radio, January 2, 1989.

Rita Marrero de Rincón followed in her mother's footsteps to become a schoolteacher. After her mother, Felisita Rivera de Marrero's death, she went to live with her uncle a priest, father Aurelio Faustino Marrero in the town of Guaynabo (Figure 5). During her stay with her mother's brother, Rita Marrero continued to teach. After her marriage to Enrique Rincón Plumey, the couple moved to Fajardo and afterwards to the small town of Ceiba, on the outskirts of Fajardo. In January 1897, Rita Marrero de Rincón was transferred from Ceiba back to Fajardo to continue as a schoolteacher. While in Fajardo, she was in charge of teaching reading, writing, arithmetic, the history of Spain and the colonial history of Puerto Rico.⁵⁹

Felisa Rincón described her father, Enrique Rincón Plumey, as a humanist and a gentleman. She recalled never seeing him unkempt, but always well dressed. Felisa Rincón described her mother, Rita Marrero de Rincón as a beautiful woman both inside and out. She remembers her mother wearing white starched blouses and an upswept hairstyle, a very elegant and hard working woman (Figure 10). As a reflection of the parents, in the Rincón Marrero household order and discipline prevailed. The marriage produced twelve children, but only eight survived, five females and three males. The eldest of the Rincón Marrero children was Felisa Rincón.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Gruber, *Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, 10; Ramos, *Palabras de Mujer*, 2, 4; Felisa Rincón de Gautier, autobiography; L. Santiago and F. Aquino, interview.

⁶⁰ Jose Miguel Agrelot and M. Falcón, interview; Felisa Rincón de Gautier, autobiography; L. Santiago and F. Aquino, interview; María M. Muñiz Hernandez, "Una mujer de pueblo sus vivencias cotidianas como lider de comunidad en la gestión politico-administrativa desde abajo y con su gente una historia de su vida" (master's thesis, Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1992), 4-5 appendix 3; Gruber, *Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, 13; Ramos, *Palabras de Mujer*, 4-5, 9.

Felisa Rincón: 1897-1934

Felisa Rincón Marrero was born on the 9 of January of 1897 in the town of Ceiba, Puerto Rico (Figure 5). She was the first child of Enrique Rincón Plumey and Rita Marrero de Rincón. Within two weeks of Felisa Rincón's birth, this middle class family moved from Ceiba to Fajardo. In 1903, when Felisa Rincón was six years old, Rita Marrero de Rincón stopped teaching to become a full time mother. The eldest child was Felisa Rincón, followed by Josefina (called Finí), Cecilia and Maria Esilda (called Silín) who were born in 1899, 1901 and 1903 respectively (Figure 11). After Silín Rincón's birth the family moved to Humacao, a town on the southeast coast of Puerto Rico, where Enrique Rincón Plumey was appointed Court Secretary.⁶¹ By 1909, the Rincón Marrero family, now in San Juan, was completed with four more children, three boys and a girl, Ramón (called Moncho), Enrique, Rafael (called Gallego) and Rita.⁶²

In the Rincón Marrero household the children were raised in typical Spanish heritage fashion. The Rincón Marrero daughters learned the “womanly arts,” including how to cook, wash and iron, sew and embroider. In addition, Rita Marrero de Rincón taught her daughters the importance of one's conduct and appearance (Figure 12). She emphasized the need to stand up and sit down straight, to always be clean, to never raise ones voice, and the importance of being neat, but not necessarily pretty. Their father,

⁶¹ The researcher was able to confirm only Josefina Rincón's birth date through the Social Security Death Index. The birth dates of the other Rincón Marrero children are a postulation based on analysis of information available to the researcher. Gruber, *Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, 10-11; Ramos, *Palabras de Mujer* 9-10; Ruben Arrieta, interview; Jose M. Agrelot and M. Falcón, interview.

⁶² Birth years for the last four Rincón Marrero children are as follow: 1904-Ramón, 1906-Enrique, 1907 or 1908- Rafael, 1909-Rita. Reminder to the reader: these dates are a

Enrique Rincón Plumey also stressed politeness, discipline, and proper dress. All of these lessons sprang from the Spanish cultural values that prevailed in the Rincón Marrero family.⁶³ Felisa Rincón summarized it in a 1992 interview when she told María M. Muñiz Hernandez how:

My mother was a woman that...that..that...was so attentive to the discipline and order of the home, you know. She would tell me, 'Don't worry about putting on airs, beautiful...or that people say you're beautiful...care about people saying ...how neat you are and look, Felisa...!' That ...and she was very much aware of her appearance, you know...she was a woman that was so well-put-together...her nails were neat...her hair-do so beautiful!...And always...I never saw my parents look sloppy. Always (with emphasis) so beautiful, so well-put-together.⁶⁴

In addition to their Spanish customs of family and society, the children of the Rincón Marrero household were exposed to artists, lawyers, politicians, and poets. The *tertulias* would serve as a forum to discuss and debate a wide range of topics including, but not limited to: judicial cases, political and social issues affecting Puerto Rico, international affairs, biology, literature, etc. As Felisa Rincón explained, the *tertulias* were part of her home education.⁶⁵

postulation based on analysis of information available to the researcher. Gruber, *Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, 23-24

⁶³ Gruber, *Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, 11-13, 21; Ramos, *Palabras de Mujer*, 9; Jose M. Agrelot and M. Falcón, interview.

⁶⁴ “*Mi madre era una mujer que...que...que...estaba tan pendiente de la disciplina y el orden de la casa, tu sabes. Ella me decía: ‘a ti no te importe aparecer, bella...que digan que eres bella...que te importe que digan que...que nitida estas, Felisa...!’ Eso...y estaba muy pendiente del arreglo, tu sabes...era una mujer que siempre estaba tan presumida... ¡sus uñas tan lindas...su peinado tan bonito!...Y siempre...yo nunca vi a mis padres desarregla’os. Siiiempre (con énfasis) tan bonitos, tan en or...tan en orden.*”

The quote is extracted from an interview with Felisa Rincón de Gautier conducted by María M. Muñiz Hernandez on February 13, 1992 as part of her master’s thesis. Muñiz Hernandez conducted three interviews and all were transcribed. Muñiz Hernandez, “Una mujer de pueblo,” 4-5 appendix 3.

⁶⁵ *Tertulias* are gatherings of people where they sit around and discuss. The meetings could take place in a home or in public places such as pharmacies, cafés or restaurants.

In Puerto Rico at the beginning of the twentieth century, it was very common for families to send their children to live with relatives for a certain period of time. As a young girl in Humacao, Felisa Rincón was sent to Fajardo every other year to live with Ines Marrero de Celis Aguilera. By 1909, twelve-year old Felisa Rincón had lived in the towns of Ceiba, Fajardo, Humacao and San Juan (Figure 5). Well-known, exceptional educators of Puerto Rico such as Ana Roqué de Duprey, Isabel Andreu Aguilar, and Ines Encarnación had shaped her academic education. Ana Roqué de Duprey was her Kindergarten teacher in Humacao. While in Fajardo, Isabel Andreu Aguilar served as either the 1st or 2nd grade teacher and Ines Encarnación was either the 4th or 5th grade teacher.⁶⁶

Her academic and “at home” education was to be critical for Felisa Rincón as she handled key events that would lay the foundation for her future, her mother’s death and having to take care of the family household and farm. At the age of 37, Rita Marrero de

In the city of San Juan, the café and restaurant *La Bombonera* is well known for its *tertulias*. Some of the prominent Puerto Ricans participating in the *tertulias* at the Rincón Marrero household include Cayetano Coll y Cuchí, Matienzo Cintrón, Luis Lloréns Torres, José de Diego, Nemesio Canales, and Rafael López Landrón. Gruber, *Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, 12, 25; Ramos, *Palabras de Mujer*, 12; Jose M. Agrelot and M. Falcón, interview; L. Santiago and F. Aquino, interview; Josean Ramos, “Doña Fela: Comunicadora Política” (master’s thesis, Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1986), 20-21.⁶⁶ Other instructors in Humacao included Mercedes Cintrón and Antonia Sáez, but it is not clear as to the grades they taught. The moving around between towns at different stages of childhood, could explain the inconsistencies found throughout the sources of information on Felisa Rincón’s history of her education. Gruber, *Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, 13; Ramos, *Palabras de Mujer*, 24 –25; Ramos, “Doña Fela: Comunicadora Política,” 22-23; Muñiz Hernandez, “Una mujer de pueblo,” 182; Leonardo Rodríguez Villafañe. *Una Mujer al Servicio de su Pueblo*, 2nd ed. (San Juan, PR: Centro Grafico del Caribe, Inc.,1987), 5; Jose M. Agrelot and M. Falcón, interview; Ruben Arrieta, interview.

Rincón died due complications during childbirth.⁶⁷ As a result of this tragedy, the family was temporarily dismantled. The older children, including Felisa Rincón, were sent to stay with Paco Rincón Plumey, the pharmacist in San Lorenzo, while the younger ones went to Fajardo to stay with Ines Marrero de Celis Aguilera.⁶⁸ The separation of the Rincón Marrero family was short. The family was reunited in San Juan and a new member was introduced, Mercedes Acha Gabaraín, Enrique Rincón Plumey's new wife. The Rincón family grew by one with the birth of Manolín Rincón Acha, a child of the union of Enrique Rincón Plumey and Mercedes Acha Gabaraín. The Rincón Acha marriage did not last, Mercedes Acha Gabaraín divorced Enrique Rincón Plumey.⁶⁹ When the Rincón family found itself without a matriarch, Felisa Rincón, now in her middle teens, took on the role of full time housekeeper and surrogate mother to her siblings. Following the tradition of "when necessary, the oldest daughter [becomes] the mother" will be of importance to Felisa Rincón's future role as Mayor of San Juan.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Rita Marrero de Rincón suffered internal hemorrhage during the birth of daughter Rita Rincón Marrero. A discrepancy has been found as to the Felisa Rincón's age during this tragedy. The majority of the sources put her at 12 years old (1909), with at least one having her at 11 years old (1908). Gruber, *Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, 24; Ramos, *Palabras de Mujer*, 7; Rodríguez Villafañe, *Una Mujer al Servicio de su Pueblo*, 5; Felisa Rincón de Gautier, autobiography.

⁶⁸ It was during her stay in San Lorenzo, while helping the family's pharmacy, that Felisa Rincón considered becoming a pharmacist. Gruber, *Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, 24-25; Ramos, *Palabras de Mujer*, 20.

⁶⁹ Enrique Rincón Plumey married Mercedes Acha Gabaraín within six months of the death of Rita Marrero Rincón's death. Based on the analysis of information the researcher estimates Manolín Rincón Acha was born on 1911. It is not clear when they divorced, but it took place before the family moved to *La Cerámica* farm around 1912. Gruber, *Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, 25, 27-28; Ramos, *Palabras de Mujer*, 19-20.

⁷⁰ Because of her new position as "pseudo matriarch" of the family, Felisa Rincón was not able to finish high school. At least she could rely on a good educational foundation due to the many exceptional educators she had during her primary school years. Gruber, *Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, 27-28; Ramos, *Palabras de Mujer*, 19 - 20,

Another event that would influence Felisa Rincón's perspective on Puerto Rican society was moving to the coastal town of Vega Baja (Figure 5) and living on a farm named *La Cerámica* (The Ceramics). At *La Cerámica* farm, fifteen-year old Felisa Rincón continued her role as "pseudo matriarch" of the family, and became knowledgeable in farm management and learned about the harsh reality of the *jibaro* life.⁷¹ On the opposite spectrum, during her time in *La Cerámica*, Felisa Rincón experienced hunting doves (Figure 13), enjoyed picnics on the beach, attended the inaugural ball for the *Casino de Puerto Rico* (Figure 14), and was even engaged to be married. Their stay at *La Cerámica* was short lived. The farm did not progress as Enrique Rincón Plumey had planned, so he sold it and moved the family back to San Juan.⁷²

In the following years, Felisa Rincón would witness the First World War (1914-1918), Puerto Ricans becoming U. S. citizens (1917), the American suffragettes acquiring

⁷¹ *Jibaro* is a Puerto Rican peasant from the mountain region. It is not clear at what age, 14 (1911) or 15 (1912), Felisa Rincón moved to Vega Baja. In a 1989 radio interview, she acknowledges living at the farm for three years. The reason Enrique Rincón Plumey purchased the farm, was to keep young men and potential suitors away from his two eldest daughters, Felisa and Josefina (Finí). Vega Baja is located 35 miles west of San Juan. At the turn of the twentieth century, the Puerto Rican *jibaros* find themselves struggling to survive in the now defunct *hacienda* systems of agriculture and dealing with the big U.S. corporations Gruber, *Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, 30; Ramos, *Palabras de Mujer*, 34; L. Santiago and J. Aquino, interview.

⁷² Right before World War I (it is not clear if it was 1912 or 1913), the *Casino de Puerto Rico* in San Juan was inaugurated. The *Casino* (social club) was a social gathering place for the high and middle classes of Puerto Rico. Felisa and Josefina (Finí) Rincón attended the gala by all accounts wearing gowns design by Sofia Kerney, who is considered to be a popular dressmaker of the times. Felisa Rincón became engaged to Francisco Font, the owner of a successful grocery store in San Juan. Due to circumstances, the marriage never took place. Gruber, *Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, 36, 39, 40-42; Ramos, *Palabras de Mujer*, 41-42, 47, 50.

the right to vote (1920) (Figure 15), and the growth and ultimate victory of the Puerto Rican suffragist movement (1917-1932) (Figure 16).⁷³

In 1932, after years of playing the “pseudo matriarch,” and keeping busy sewing for her family and friends, Felisa Rincón took the first step toward independence. She registered to vote. With this act Felisa Rincón also took her first step toward a long and illustrious political career. In 1932 she became a member of the Liberal Party (Figure 17) and dedicated her efforts to the registration of women. From her experience of going to the slums of San Juan to register people for the party, Felisa Rincón learned of the sub-standard conditions experienced by its residents.⁷⁴ Her experience would stay with her and influence her career as a dressmaker and as a politician.

Conclusion

At the turn of the twentieth century, Puerto Rico was transcending through changes in government, economy and society brought about by the United States' possession of Puerto Rico. In the Rincón Marrero household, Felisa Rincón was being

⁷³ The Puerto Rican suffragists try to get the right-to-vote bill passed in 1919, 1921, 1923 and 1927 before it was finally approved in 1929. The bill only gave literate women the right to vote. After they voted for the first time in 1932, the law was changed in 1935 to include all Puerto Rican women in the electoral process. Scarano, *Puerto Rico: Cinco siglos de historia*, 650-654; Gruber, *Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, 47.

⁷⁴ Felisa Rincón defied her father by registering to vote. She was the 5th on line to register, behind the daughter of Ana Roque de Duprey, América Duprey. Felisa Rincón cast her first vote in the elections of November 1932. Because of her hard work within the party, Felisa Rincón was appointed to the Executive Committee of the Liberal party. Gruber, *Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, 55, 58; L. Santiago and F. Aquino, interview; Felisa Rincón de Gautier, autobiography; Jose M. Agrelot and M. Falcón, interview; Ruben Arrieta, interview; Felisa Rincón de Gautier interview by Janet Negretti, Noticias 1140 radio, 1982; Rodríguez Villafañe, *Una Mujer al Servicio de su Pueblo*, 5; Ramos, *Palabras de Mujer*, 64-70.

brought up with the Spanish traditions and culture ingrained in her family.⁷⁵ With the influence of her parents, grandmothers, grandfather, aunt and uncle, Felisa Rincón began to form the basis of her persona, and social and political beliefs. The education received from her primary school instructors, and the *tertulias*, the practical experiences and sacrifices she met due to her mother's death, and her life in *La Ceramica*, and the ultimate victory of the Puerto Rican suffragettes, all contributed to prepare Felisa Rincón to strike out on her own to use her needle skills to become a dressmaker, and eventually to draw on her knowledge of politics and the human condition in Puerto Rico to formulate a memorable career as a politician and Mayor of San Juan.

⁷⁵ Gruber, *Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, 10.

CHAPTER 3

FELISA RINCÓN: DRESSMAKER AND BUSINESSWOMAN, 1934-1938

The preceding chapter reveals the importance family and Puerto Rican history and society contributed in the molding of Felisa Rincón's character in the first three decades of her life. Their influence is expressed in her social and political beliefs, as well as her manner of dress. This chapter will continue to look at the sources and events that played an important role in the creation of Felisa Rincón's *grande dame* fashion image; an important factor in her political life and derived from Felisa Rincón's experience as a dressmaker and dress shop owner.

In the early 1930s, after already becoming involved with the *Partido Liberal*, Felisa Rincón wanted to do more for the poor people of Puerto Rico. With her expertise in sewing and dressmaking came the idea of opening a clothing business (factory or retail store) in Puerto Rico. At the age of 37, Felisa Rincón ventured to New York City and its garment district, from where she hoped to learn how to go about opening a clothing business in San Juan.¹ In the process of following Felisa Rincón's career as a dressmaker

¹ The records are a bit unclear as to what specifically Felisa Rincón wanted to do, whether to open a garment factory or a clothing store in San Juan. In Gruber (63) she wanted to open a dress factory, while in Josean Ramos, *Palabras de Mujer: Una época reflejada en la vida de Felisa Rincón* (San Juan: Editorial Universidad de America, 1988), 59 and in Felisa Rincón de Gautier's audio autobiography, she wanted to open a clothing store. In addition, it is understood that she left for New York City in 1934, but in her audio

and shop owner in the 1930s, the chapter will explore the functioning of the garment district in New York City and the role that Puerto Rican immigrants played within it in the early 1930s. Next, the discussion considers Felisa Rincón's experience in the New York garment district, both in a factory environment and a specialty shop. The chapter will conclude with an examination of San Juan's clothing business in the 1930s and Felisa's Styles Shop, which was in business from 1934 to 1938.

New York City Garment (Fashion) District

Starting in 1929, with the stock market crash, up to 1940 and the beginning of World War II, we find the most important period toward the formation of an important and respected American fashion industry. This would be the time when American designers came into their own and began to be accepted by the American consumer. Historically the American fashion industry had been a clone of French designs. It had relied on the dictates of France to either sell the original imported models or reproduce them in the United States. As a result, the American woman could: 1) acquire an imported French model, 2) obtain an American made identical copy (i.e. "original"), 3) purchase a lower quality copy, or 4) buy an adaptation.² The decade of the 1930s would

autobiography she says it was in 1935. Discrepancy comes when examining the Puerto Rico Telephone Company book of 1934, which already lists Felisa Rincón's clothing business. Ruth Gruber, *Felisa Rincón de Gautier: The Mayor of San Juan* (NY: Biblio Press, 1994), 63; Felisa Rincón de Gautier, audio autobiography, February 1970.

² The word "Original" on an American store's label was the equivalent to an identical copy of a French model. Sandra Buckland, "American Design 1900-1946: Moving from the Shadows to Leadership" in *Fashion American Style: 1900-1999*, (exhibition catalogue), The Ohio State University, 2001, p. 4. Caroline Rennolds Milbank acknowledges that "adaptations" could be considered American designs in the sense that they were modifications of French designs to American tastes. Caroline Rennolds Milbank, *New York Fashion: The Evolution of American Style* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1989), 105-106, 129.

see the beginning of the separation process between the American fashion industry and France. As Milbank explains it, one of the reasons for the interest in American fashion and their designers in the 1930s was the increased difficulty selling French imported models to the American woman. This was the result of a fashion silhouette (i.e. bias) which was more difficult to fit and required more work. Thus, American customers felt more comfortable with the custom-fitted American made versions and “clothes designed by Americans for Americans.”³ In addition, efforts were being made by the American press and the fashion industry to promote American designers and their creations. An example is Lord & Taylor’s 1930s sponsorship and promotion of American designers, such as Elizabeth Hawes, Muriel King, and Clare Potter.⁴ Another retailer promoting American designers in the 1930s was B. Altman & Co., located on Fifth Avenue and 34th Street. A September 11, 1932 advertisement in the New York Times for B. Altman & Co. states:

Wear velvet after six. But wear the new velvets...they adorn you in strange lovely color, new fuchsias and burning purples, smoldering reds and wines, gala blues. Here are four “After Six” dresses, designed by the great American designer, Kiviette. Every one is a brilliant dress; all could justly be priced scads more. \$49. 50 (Figure 18)⁵

The “talented native designers,” at every price level, would emerge from wholesale houses, custom design houses, specialty shops, and department stores all

³ Rennolds Milbank, *New York Fashion*, 106.

⁴ *Proceedings for “Work Opportunities in American Fashion Design” Conference held in New York City, April 23 and 24, 1941* (New London, CT: Institute of Women’s Professional Relations), 4; Sandra Buckland, “Promoting American Fashion 1940 through 1945: From Understudy to Star” (doctoral dissertation, The Ohio State University, 1996), 14; Rennolds Milbank, *New York Fashion*, 105-106.

throughout New York City's fashion district.⁶ This area was anchored by New York's Fifth Avenue, the Mecca of apparel design and shopping (Figure 19). As Rennolds Milbank explains in *New York Fashion*, “the most exclusive shops and custom houses were clustered on and off Fifth and Madison avenues in the Fifties and Sixties.” Examples include Elizabeth Hawes and Valentina, with their couture or custom-made shops in the sixties. Shops were also found off Fifth in the forties; an example is Hattie Carnegie's specialty shop. Wholesale houses, also sources of American talent, were generally found on the forties and fifties of the fashion district. For instance, Milgrim could be found on 57th Street, while Nettie Rosenstein and Louise Barnes Gallagher were both located on W. 47th Street.⁷

For American designers operating their own establishments in the 1930s it was easier to be recognized in the fashion market than for the large majority who worked in the “backrooms” of stores or wholesale houses. The latter did not receive credit through labels or advertising for their creations. For example, Norman Norell worked for the specialty shop of Hattie Carnegie during the 1930s, but he never received “physical” (i.e. name on label) credit for his designs. The labels would carry Hattie Carnegie's name. The “backroom” designers for wholesalers had it even tougher, because a wholesaler's collection was only seen by buyers, and not the press or private clients. The result was

⁵ Yeda Kiviette will play an important role in Felisa Rincón's experience while in New York City. *New York Times*, September 11, 1932.

⁶ Rennolds Milbank, *New York Fashion*, 97-98, 100.

⁷ In the 1930s Elizabeth Hawes and Valentina were located on 67th Street, at 21 and 27 respectively. Hattie Carnegie was located on 42-44 E 49th Street. Of interest to this research is the address for Louise Barnes Gallagher, from 1930 her business was located at 37 West 47th Street. This happens to be the same address that in 1934 Kiviette, Inc.

that any information on the wholesale designer would “remain inside knowledge.”⁸ As Rennolds Milbank recognizes, the anonymity of these wholesale designers began to disappear in the 1930s, when they started to get credit for their work in the wholesale houses. Examples of these designers include Clare Potter, Jo Copeland and Nettie Rosenstein, Germain Monteil, Molly Parnis, Emmet Joyce, Louise Barnes Gallagher.⁹

As mentioned previously, the stores, custom-shops, and wholesale houses could be found in the Forties, Fifties and Sixties off and on Fifth Avenue. On the other hand, the actual manufacturing of apparel in New York City was concentrated between Eighth and Madison Avenues in the Twenties and Thirties, with Seventh Avenue as its anchor (Figure 19). In 1941, speaking at a conference held by the Institute of Women’s Professional Relations, Mortimer C. Ritter, Principal for the New York Central High of Needle Trades defines the boundaries of the apparel manufacturing sector as “Fourteenth and Forty-second Streets, between Fourth and Eighth Avenues.” He goes on to state the importance New York City’s apparel manufacturing district, which produced “three-fourths of the women’s wearing apparel and two-fifths of the men’s clothing” of the United States total. It is the manufacturing of ready-to-wear clothing that drives the American apparel industry.¹⁰

acquired additional space. *New York Times*, “Business Leases,” November 8, 1934; Rennolds Milbank, *New York Fashion*, 109, 114, 115, 118, 121.

⁸ Rennolds Milbank, *New York Fashion*, 122.

⁹ Yeda Kiviette and Jo Copeland started out together as sketch artists in New York City. *Fashion Group Bulletin* (January 1935), 1; Rennolds Milbank, *New York Fashion*, 124-126.

¹⁰ Rennolds Milbank, *New York Fashion*, 109; Georgina O’Hara, *The Encyclopedia of Fashion* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1986), 226; Jessie Stuart, *The American Fashion Industry* (Boston, MA: Simmons College, 1951), 15; Mortimer C. Ritter, “Designing and Manufacturing Ready-to-Wear Clothing the American Way” in the

The industry benefited from technological advances in apparel manufacturing with many of these emerging during the 1930s depression era. For instance, with United States government support, the industry standardized women's dress sizes and created a new fabrication process, known as section method, which increased production 20 to 25 percent. Still, the manufacturing industry felt the effects of the economic situation gripping the nation during the 1930s. Rennolds Milbank in *New York Fashion* illustrates the effects of the economic crisis on the clothing industry, by their manufacturing of "cheap clothes" to sell at low prices, and the reduction in price of high-end items, such as fur coats. The result was the bankruptcy of several retailers and manufactures of high-priced ready-to-wear clothing. The effects of the Great Depression in the garment district were also exemplified by the long lines that would form outside the factories when Help Wanted signs were posted.¹¹

Historically the manufacturing sector of the fashion industry has been dominated by immigrant labor. During its development stages at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries, the garment industry in New York was able to grow because of large-scale immigration from Eastern and Southern Europe. Jewish and Italian women constituted the majority of the workforce, with Jewish males concentrated in the coat and suit sectors of the industry. Thanks to immigration, the clothing industry found a large and skilled workforce that would become the cornerstone of their success.

Proceedings for "Work Opportunities in American Fashion Design" Conference held in New York City, April 23 and 24, 1941 (New London, CT: Institute of Women's Professional Relations), 21-22; Bernice G. Chambers, *Fashion Fundamentals* (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1947), 225.

The first two decades of the twentieth century experienced a change in the makeup of the female immigrant workforce in the New York Garment district with the addition of Puerto Rican women.¹²

Puerto Rican's in the Garment District

Inhabitants of Puerto Rico have been emigrating to the United States, particularly New York and other cities along the eastern seaboard, since the nineteenth century. Some came for political reasons, others for education, but the majority for economic reasons. The events of the 1898 Spanish-American War, with the subsequent takeover of Puerto Rico by the United States “triggered” an increase in migration from the island to the mainland. Demographically, these immigrants included some members of the elite, but the majority were Puerto Ricans from the countryside and urban centers, unskilled or semi-skilled laborers, looking to improve their economic situation. With the 1917 Jones Act, which granted American citizenship to Puerto Ricans, movement within the island and to the continent became easier. The decades before WWII saw an increase in the number of Puerto Ricans living in the United States. The numbers would decrease some in the 1930s with the Depression, but would move up again in the 1950s and 1960s. The largest concentration of Puerto Ricans could be found in New York City. Statistics show that from 1910 to 1945 the Puerto Rican population in New York City increased 84%,

¹¹ Section method, “specializing in individual sections of a garment.” Buckland, “American Design 1900-1946,” p. 6-7; Rennolds Milbank, *New York Fashion*; Chambers, *Fashion Fundamentals*, 120; Gruber, *Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, 65.

¹² International Institute for Labour Studies. "Development of core-periphery forms of organization: Some lessons from the New York garment industry." [case study] download on February 15, 2004 from

with the majority working as cigar makers, sailors, domestics, garment makers, or in other low-paying service jobs.¹³

In general, the Puerto Rican migration to New York has been characterized by the constant presence of more women than men. For example, in the eleven years between 1930 to 1941, for every 100 women who entered New York from the Puerto Rico, there were but 40 men. Beginning in the 1920s, many of these Puerto Rican women found themselves taking over the factory jobs, particularly within the garment industry, previously held by newly arrived European immigrants.¹⁴

For Puerto Ricans, particularly Puerto Rican women, working in the manufacturing of clothing is not a rarity. At the beginning of the twentieth century, many American Companies opened factories or hired by "homework" Puerto Rican women throughout the island for the manufacturing of embroidered goods to be sold in the United States. The *Industria de la Aguja* (needlework industry) as it was called provided women of the lower classes with work, particularly work that could be done from home.

<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/inst/papers/1997/dp95/ch2.htm>; Virginia E. Sánchez Korrol, *From Colonia to Community: The History of Puerto Ricans in New York City* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1994), 29.

¹³ It is not a coincidence that New York City attracted the greater part of the Puerto Rican migrants, because the shipping lines connecting the United States with the island had their hub in this city. The New York Puerto Rican community grew from around 1,600 to 135,000 people. Félix V. Matos-Rodríguez and Pedro Juan Hernández. *Pioneros: Puerto Ricans in New York City 1896-1948* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2001), 7; Sánchez Korrol, *From Colonia to Community*, 1, 29, 31, 44; C. Wright Mills, Clarence Senior and Rose Kohn Goldsen, *The Puerto Rican Journey: New York's Newest Migrants* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1950), 22.

¹⁴ In 1921 the United States passed the Johnson Act, which reduced European immigration into the states. Starting in 1930, Puerto Ricans were provided with identification cards certifying their American citizenship to facilitate employment. Matos-Rodríguez and Hernández, *Pioneros: Puerto Ricans*, 23; Wright Mills, Senior and

These women worked for long hours in the completion of their workload, because their payment was based on the number of finished pieces. When computing the rate per piece into an hourly wage, economically these women were barely making a living. For example in 1934, 31.4 percent of the women received less than one cent per hour, 31.1 percent received less than two cents hourly, and 31.4 percent received less than four cents hourly. Even with the low wages a workforce remained available for the *Industria de la aguja*, which thrived in Puerto Rico from the 1920s through the mid 1940s, when it began to decline.¹⁵ The work produced by the needlework industry included the embroidery of women's and children's apparel, lingerie, handkerchiefs, towels and household linens. A 1935 advertisement in the *New York Times* for retailer Best & Co. featured Puerto Rican made "handmade silk lace trimmed panties and slips" for the college girl (Figure 20), and a 1936 ad included hand embroidered silk panties and slip for girls (Figure 21).¹⁶

Puerto Rican women's knowledge and tradition of needlework transferred easily into the apparel business in New York City. These women either used their abilities in home-based needlework and piecework or in the manufacturing of apparel in a factory. The procedure of the former was almost identical to the home-based needlework

Kohn Goldsen, *The Puerto Rican Journey*, 25-26; Sánchez Korrol, *From Colonia to Community*, 29, 31.

¹⁵ The 1934 statistics are based on a United States Department of Labor Report on the employment of Puerto Rican women in the island. Francisco A. Scarano, *Puerto Rico: Cinco siglos de historia* (San Juan, PR: McGraw-Hill, 1993), 593; Sánchez Korrol, *From Colonia to Community*, 91; Altagracia Ortiz, ed., *Puerto Rican Women and Work: Bridges in Transnational Labor* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996), 7.

¹⁶ Eileen Boris, "Needlewomen under the New Deal in Puerto Rico, 1920-1945," in *Puerto Rican Women and Work: Bridges in Transnational Labor*, ed. A. Ortiz

production in Puerto Rico. Women secured a “lot” or workload from a local contractor or subcontractor. Once the woman finished her work, she returned it to the contractor or subcontractor, who then submitted payment based on each piece completed. Even though wages for home-based needlework were higher in New York than in Puerto Rico, they were still very low. In an October 24, 1934 *New York Times* article, the director of the Regional Labor Board, Mrs. Elinore M. Herrick argues that "home work had become 'the most pressing industrial issue before this State [New York]'...". In the article she notes that New York has a homework labor force of 150,000, who are working for two to five cents an hour. Her concern deals with competition from other countries and local immigrant labor, which is driving the homework business. She states:

American workers today are actively and directly engaged in competing with wages paid in Puerto Rico by American firms, many of them located in the City of New York; they are competing with Spaniards, Puerto Ricans, Italians living in the slums of New York City, many of them recent immigrants who think that five cents an hour is the best that the American employer can offer...¹⁷

Products produced by homework labor in relation to the apparel industry include "knitted goods for women and children, embroidery on dresses, night gowns and negligees, children's and infants' garments, artificial flowers for dresses and decorative purposes...veils...". Mrs. Herrick does not suggest stopping home work all together, but that it be federally regulated and that consumers be educated to do without home work products or pay enough for them so the workers are able to get a decent wage. The result

(Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996), 37; *New York Times*, Aug 25, 1935; *New York Times*, Dec 13, 1936.

¹⁷ *New York Times*, "Mrs. Herrick asks Home-work curb," October, 24, 1934.

of more regulation on homework by the New York State Labor Department was an increase in illegal businesses dealing with piecework.¹⁸

Even with the anti-home work campaigns being sponsored in New York City in the 1930s, Puerto Rican immigrant workers continued to work for the garment industry, in the clothing factories. Employment in garment factories could be acquired through several methods: 1) being recruited in Puerto Rico, 2) through the help of friends or relatives already in New York, 3) walking through the garment district, or 4) browsing through the want ads in the local Spanish-language newspapers. In contrast to home-based needlework, which required skills in embroidery, crocheting and/or sewing, working in a garment factory was more of a semi-skilled job. With the implementation of the “section method” of production, the main skill a worker would need in a garment factory was being able to operate a sewing machine. Even though sewing machine operator was the main category of apparel factory work, it was also the less common job option of dressmakers and seamstresses. Puerto Rican women were filling jobs in the manufacturing of dresses, accessories, and children’s wear, previously held by Jewish and Italian women in the 1920s and 1930s.¹⁹

The economic crisis of the 1930s forced many factories in New York City to shut down or relocate to other regions of the United States. In addition, Puerto Rican women had to compete with more people for factory jobs, due to the high unemployment caused by the depression. Owing to the harsh economic situation, the Department of Labor of

¹⁸ *New York Times*, "Mrs. Herrick"; Sánchez Korrol, *From Colonia to Community*, 94.

¹⁹ Altagracia Ortiz, “‘En la aguja y el pedal eché la hiel’: Puerto Rican Women in the Garment Industry of New York City, 1920-1980,” in *Puerto Rican Women and Work:*

Puerto Rico established an office in New York City to aid the immigrant population in finding employment. The Puerto Rican Employment Service Agency was in operation from 1930 through 1936. Their records show of the 3,641 women placed in jobs during their six years of service, 699 were under the category of “needleworkers and hand sewers,” and 694 as “garment workers,” for a combined 28 percent of the Puerto Rican women placements.²⁰

One Puerto Rican woman immigrant in the 1930s was Felisa Rincón, who traveled to New York City in 1934. Just as many other Puerto Rican immigrants before her, she already had family on the mainland to help her with her new surroundings. Josefina (Finí) Rincón was already living in Newark, New Jersey where she worked as a secretary. In addition, the Rincón siblings had a cousin, María Alvarez who had lived in North Bergen, New Jersey for several years and worked for the telephone company. With the support of her family, Felisa Rincón would become one of the many Puerto Ricans who worked in the New York City garment district.²¹

Felisa Rincón in New York City

During the 1930s, Puerto Rico, too, was suffering through an economic depression. Unemployment, poverty and despair were dominant within the population of the island. As a member of the political party *Partido Liberal*, Felisa Rincón was able to witness first hand the poverty in Puerto Rico while going out to register voters in the city

Bridges in Transnational Labor, ed. A. Ortiz (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996), 56-58; Sánchez Korrol, *From Colonia to Community*, 108.

²⁰ Ortiz, “‘En la aguja y el pedal eché la hiel,’”58; Sánchez Korrol, *From Colonia to Community*, 32; Lawrence R. Chenault, *The Puerto Rican Migrant in New York City* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1938; re-issued, Russell & Russell, 1970), 74.

²¹ Gruber, *Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, 63.

of San Juan. She would later state that it was this experience that provided her with the idea to open a garment factory as a source of employment for the lower classes in San Juan. Apparel manufacturing was a growing industry being promoted and supported by Puerto Rico's government. Considering precedent already existed for Puerto Rican women to be in charge of needlework factories, with her experience as a seamstress, no wonder Felisa Rincón would contemplate establishing a garment factory as a way of helping the poor in Puerto Rico.²²

Felisa Rincón's sewing skills were part of her traditional Spanish upbringing in early twentieth century Puerto Rico. Her mother, Rita Marrero de Rincón, taught the females of the family the "female necessities" including sewing. The skills she acquired during the family tutorials were put into use by Felisa Rincón after her mother's death, when she became the surrogate mother to her siblings. One of the responsibilities of her new role was the production of clothing for the family.²³

As Felisa Rincón recalls, during the first two decades of the twentieth century, the availability of ready-to-wear apparel was limited. A person could hire a seamstress to

²² It has already been established, the existence of contradictory accounts as to what type of fashion oriented business Felisa Rincón wanted to establish in San Juan, Puerto Rico, if a clothing factory or clothing store. Maria Luisa Arcelay was the first woman elected to the Puerto Rican House of Representatives in 1936. She was involved in the needlework industry, where she established and managed several workshops. Carmen Delgado Votaw, *Puerto Rican Women* (Washington, D.C.: National Conference of Puerto Rican Women, Inc., 1995), 4. An example of an apparel manufacturer in San Juan during the 1930s is J. A. Rodríguez Inc. It employed over 2,000 workers. Manufactured ladies silk underwear, dresses, and children's clothing under the name brand- Tiny Town Togs. Ignacio Guasp, ed., *The Port of San Juan* (San Juan, PR: Chamber of Commerce of Puerto Rico, 1937), 110. Scarano, *Puerto Rico: Cinco siglos de historia*, 670; Gruber, *Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, 60-63.

make his/her clothing, but it was a process that would take time. With her sewing skills, Felisa Rincón would create and sew apparel for her sisters who wanted to "look good" for Sunday mass. Felisa Rincón, also recollects how on Fridays after school, her sister Josefina (Finí) Rincón and she would go to *El Porvenir* store to purchase *dos cortes de traje* and three yards of fabric for the creation of two dresses. She would spend the entire weekend sewing the garments, which they would wear to their high school the following Monday. Besides her immediate family, Felisa Rincón also used her skills as a seamstress in the creation of bridal ensembles for cousins and friends.²⁴

By 1934 Felisa Rincón was an experienced seamstress, who had been in charge of her family and *La Ceramica* farm, thus providing her with a good foundation to run an apparel business. But, by traveling to New York and working in the garment district, she would complement her knowledge and skills by learning about the "Fashion business," and as a result, improve her chances of setting up a successful fashion based business in Puerto Rico.²⁵

Just as other Puerto Rican immigrants may do when looking for a job in the garment district, Felisa Rincón walked the streets of the district, including Seventh

²³ Gruber, *Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, 11, 28, 52; Felisa Rincón de Gautier, audio autobiography, February 1970; Felisa Rincón de Gautier, interview by José Miguel Agrelot y M. Falcón, *Haciendo Historia*, WKAQ-TV, March 19, 1985.

²⁴ When referring to "*dos cortes de traje*," Felisa Rincón was describing the quantity of fabric to make two dresses. Felisa Rincón de Gautier, autobiography; Ramos, *Palabras de Mujer*, 57-58.

²⁵ There are contradictory accounts as to Felisa Rincón's original reason to travel to New York and work in the garment district. In Gruber (63) the reason is to learn how to open and run a factory of ready-to-wear dresses, while in Ramos (59) the reason deals with her desire to open a clothing store in San Juan, thus she wanted to learn how clothing was finished ("*cómo eran las terminaciones allá, cómo terminaban la ropa.*") The latter is also mentioned in her audio taped autobiography.

Avenue in search of a position. Because of the economic situation, she had to compete with a large pool of applicants. As Felisa Rincón relates, after several weeks of looking for a job she was hired as a sewing-machine operator at a dress factory. She was one of the many constructing dresses and was paid at a rate of thirty-five cents an hour.²⁶ At first she was not completing enough dresses for her shift, but with time she got better and faster, completing as many dresses as the other workers. As explained by Felisa Rincón, her time in the dress factory taught her the importance of speed "to produce clothing cheaply and in large quantity." Such an observation is in accord with 1940 figures from the United States Chamber of Commerce, which illustrate the importance of high volume or "mass field" and inexpensive ready-to-wear clothing in the American fashion industry. Quoting Mary Ainsworth Merryfield, a volume consumer consultant and participant in the 1941 "Work Opportunities in American Fashion Design" Conference held in New York City:

Only 10 percent of last spring's [1940] coat business was in the \$29.95 and up class, whereas 60 percent was done in the \$1.98 to \$12.98 price group, and 30 percent ranged from \$14.98 to \$24.75. A piddling little 8 percent of our women and girls invested the sum of \$69.95 or over on a coat.... And when you consider that 90 percent of the fashion purchasing, at least from the dollars and cents angle, is done by Miss and Mrs. America, volume consumers, it's not such a bad market to shoot for.²⁷

²⁶ Discrepancy within Gruber (65) and Ramos (60) as to Felisa Rincón's method of payment while at the dress factory, either 35 cents a piece or 35 cents an hour. Sanchez Korrol (108) cites a want ad from *La Prensa*, a New York City Spanish-language newspaper seeking out sewing machine operators to work 44 hours for \$20.00 a week. The rate breaks down to about 45 cents an hour. Based on such ad, the researcher assumes that Felisa Rincón was being paid by the hour while working at the dress factory. Sánchez Korrol, *From Colonia to Community*, 32; Ortiz, "'En la aguja y el pedal eché la hiel,'"57.

²⁷ Mary Ainsworth Merryfield, "Designing for Volume Production" in the *Proceedings for "Work Opportunities in American Fashion Design" Conference held in New York*

After some time in the dress factory, Felisa Rincón went to work at Kiviette, Inc., off Fifth Avenue. As she describes it, Kiviette was the type of boutique where artists and socialites would have clothing made. At this shop she would learn about finishing and salesmanship.²⁸

Kiviette, Inc.

Although American style was primarily considered sporty and relaxed, there was great variety among the early designers [in the 1930s], as befitted a group that was designing for a wide range of tastes, pocketbooks, climates, and types, as well as for city and country living....There were very sophisticated designers who specialized in dressier clothes...wholesale houses known for classical sportswear...²⁹

One of the American wholesale houses beginning to make its mark in the 1930s was Kiviette, Inc., the brainchild of Yeda Kiviette (aka: Kiviat, Yvette Kiviat, Yetta Kiviat, Yeda Kiviat, Kiviette, Yetta Kiviette, Kive Kalette, Yvette Kalette, and Mrs. Michael E. Kalette), designer of theatrical costumes and high-end ready-to-wear. Kiviette was born in Staten Island, New York in 1893. She attended the School of Applied Design in New York City. From there she joined the theater as a sketch artist, working for such companies as Mahieu Costumes, Mahieu-Brooks, and Brooks Costumes

City, April 23 and 24, 1941 (New London, CT: Institute of Women's Professional Relations), 25.

²⁸ It is not clear how long did Felisa Rincón worked at the dress factory. The only source that suggests a time frame is Gruber (65) with a few months. Felisa Rincón referred to Kiviette, Inc. as Kiveatt Fifth Avenue or Kiveatt Fashions. Describing Kiviette, Inc. as a boutique of custom clothing is a bit misleading because it also was a wholesale house. "Finishing" in the apparel business refers to completing the garment, which may include seam finishes (finishing fabric edges), adding button and buttonholes or decorative aspects to the garment. Gruber, *Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, 65; Ramos, *Palabras de Mujer*, 60.

(Figure 22).³⁰ She is first credited as costume designer for the 1917 Broadway production of *Odds & Ends*. In 1927 she established her own theater costume shop, the Kiviette Costume Co. The bulk of her career as a costume designer for the New York stage spanned eighteen years until 1935, with a few recurrences in 1937, 1942 and 1948. Her costume design style evolved from "novelty or fantasy costumes...to more sophisticated fashions...". As Yeda Kiviette states on a 1942 questionnaire conducted by the Brooklyn Museum of Art, her first outstanding achievement was "revolutionizing the costuming of musical plays from the tinsel era to the fashion-conscious one and introducing such fashion firsts as SHORTS for sportswear in *Follow Thru* [1929]."³¹

Because her modern fashionable clothes for the stage were so well received, Yeda Kiviette extended her abilities to create fashion. In 1929, after twelve years of strictly designing for the theater, she opened her own fashion house, Kiviette, Inc. on 37 W. 47th

²⁹ Rennolds Milbank, *New York Fashion*, 125.

³⁰ After 1924, Yeda Kiviette signs her theatre costume designs "Kiviette." Other theatrical companies she worked for designing costumes include: Sam Harris, Max Gordon, Aarons and Freedley, Schwab and Mandel. Grace D. Ely, *American Fashion Designers* (New York: Personnel Group of the National Retail Dry Goods Association, 1935), 28-29; Stefanie Munsing Winkelbaugh. *Wake up and Dream: Costume Designs for Broadway Musicals 1900-1925 from the Theatre Collection of the Austrian National Library* (Wein: Böhlau, 1986), 40-41; Bobbi Owen. *Costume Design on Broadway: Designers and their Credits, 1915-1985* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987), 88; Social Security Death Index - web- downloaded Friday, May 4, 2001; Yeda Kiviette (answers to 1942 questionnaire by the Brooklyn Museum of Art Libraries and Archives).

³¹ Other examples of shows costumed by Kiviette include: *Good News* (1927), *Girl Crazy*, *Three's a Crowd* (1929), *The Band Wagon* (1931), *Face the Music* (1932), *Roberta* (1933), *No More Ladies* (1934), *Light up the Sky* (1948). *Follow Thru* (1929) was a musical comedy centered around a Country Club and the sport of golf. Ely, 29; Kiviette, (questionnaire), 1-2; Munsing Winkelbaugh, *Wake up and Dream*, 40-41; Owen, *Costume Design on Broadway*, 88-89; Josephine D. Paterek, "A Survey of Costuming on the New York Commercial Stage: 1914-1934" (doctoral dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1961), 121-122.

Street (Figure 19). Based on accounts by Felisa Rincón, the shop made apparel to order for a clientele that included theater and movie stars and society women. In addition, it produced ready-to-wear designs for the mass market, categorizing Kiviette, Inc. as a wholesale house.³² As her work in fashion design became better known, there was an increase in demand for "models" to be sold through different retailers across the country. The wholesale business took her designs to such establishments as B. Altman & Co. in the 1930s and De Pinna in the 1940s. A B. Altman & Co. (September 11, 1932) advertisement in the *New York Times* featured four "After Six" dresses in velvet designed by "the great American designer Kiviette" (Figure 18). By 1935 demands on the wholesale end of the business was such, that Kiviette's theatrical designs became less of a priority. Kiviette has been described as "creating clothes with dramatic value....dramatic appeal in a subtle way."³³ Kiviette designed different styles of dresses, ensembles, coats and shoes, as well as accessories, jewelry and millinery (Figure 23). These models could be included in such categories as sports, street, or evening apparel (Figure 24).³⁴ The Retail Research Bureau featured Yeda Kiviette as one of the American fashion designers in the 1935 publication, *American Fashion Designers*. Under the wholesale designer category, she was in the company of Clare Potter, Lilly Dache, and Sally Victor to name a few. In the February 1, 1940 issue of *Vogue*, Yeda Kiviette was featured in the article "Designers in America." In addition, Virginia Pope for *The New York Times* in

³² By 1942, Kiviette, Inc. was known as Kiviette Gowns, Inc. located on 15 W 47th St.. In 1947, Bernice Chambers (177) describes Kiviette as "designing wardrobes for society women." Gruber, *Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, 65; Kiviette, (questionnaire); Musing Winkelbaugh, *Wake up and Dream*, 41.

³³ Ely, *American Fashion Designers*, 29.

³⁴ Kiviette, (questionnaire); *New York Times*, Sep 11, 1932.

November 13, 1940 states: “Kiviette ranks high among the best of the designers in the wholesale field. Her collection [1941 Resort] will shortly be seen in stores in as well as out of New York.” It was the up and coming Kiviette, Inc. that in 1934, 37 year old Felisa Rincón joined as part of the dressmaking work force, after leaving the dress manufacturing factory.³⁵

Felisa Rincón at Kiviette, Inc.

Felisa Rincón worked for six months at Kiviette, Inc. She worked as a fitter, finisher, and salesperson.³⁶ Felisa Rincón recounts in *Palabras de Mujer* her experience working at Kiviette, Inc. She started as a finisher, making 18 dollars a week. Felisa Rincón had been working at Kiviette, Inc. only two weeks when Yeda Kiviette found herself in a predicament. Her designer for the shop called in sick, two custom clients were coming in that day for fittings and their garments were not completed. Felisa Rincón volunteered to complete them and perform the fittings. But as she recalls, first she had to prove to Yeda Kiviette that she was capable of the task. Felisa Rincón was

³⁵ Based on an article found in the Puerto Rican magazine *Alma Latina* of January 5, 1952, Yeda Kiviette was still creating fashionable women's clothing in 1952. She had traveled that year to Puerto Rico for a fashion show promoting her clothing line, which was being carried by a boutique in the Caribe Hilton Hotel in San Juan. It is not clear when she closed down her fashion business. Yeda Kiviette died on August 1978 in Westchester, New York. Ely, *American Fashion Designers*, 28-29; “Designers in America,” *Vogue*, February 1, 1940, 147-149; *New York Times*, “Fruit Gives Motif for Resort Wear,” Nov 13, 1940; SS Death Index (web); Felisa Rincón de Gautier, autobiography.

³⁶ Discrepancy as to how long Felisa Rincón worked at Kiviette, Inc. - 6 months or 1 month. A “Finisher” is “the worker in the apparel trades who finishes, who takes the last final stitches, who checks all work and adds any necessary stitches, paint, gilt, or trimming that completes the work.” A “Fitter” is the person who adjusts, makes sure “a garment conform[s] correctly to the figure according to the fashion.” Mary Brooks Pickens, *A Dictionary of Costume and Fashion: Historic and Modern* (New York: Dover

given the fabric, the style of the dress and the measurements. She created the garment on a dress form, with some alterations for a better fit. Yeda Kiviette approved and gave her the material to make the other dresses. When the clients, both described as artists, came for the fittings, they were very pleased with the dresses.³⁷ Felisa Rincón is quoted in Ramos (1988), *Palabras de mujer: Una época reflejada en la vida de Felisa Rincón*, on how the exchange with one of the artists went:

I [Felisa Rincón] told her [the actress], “Look, I have taken the liberty to fix it (the dress) in this way.” She had not noticed it and was saying, “But it fits so perfectly!” I told her, “What you haven’t noticed is that I lowered the waist line because on the screen we see too much of your skirt and not enough of your body, and I’m simply streamlining your body. Now, if you don’t like it, I can take it back up.” She said, “No...no...no...”³⁸

As a result of Felisa’s success, Yeda Kiviette switched Felisa Rincón from finisher to fitter and dressmaker. She went from making 18 dollars a week to 118 dollars a week. Felisa Rincón had made such an impression with her dressmaking skills with the artists that they would not accept anyone else to fit and work on their clothes.³⁹

After her experiences at the dress factory and the custom made/wholesale house Kiviette, Inc., Felisa Rincón was ready to return to Puerto Rico. Instead of opening a clothing factory in San Juan, she decided to open her own "smart" shop of women's

Publications, Inc., 1999), 130-131; Gruber, *Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, 65; Ramos, *Palabras de Mujer*, 62.

³⁷ Felisa Rincón remembers the two artists as Betty Monroe and the other was a very well known artist who dance, but who she could not recall her name. Ramos, *Palabras de Mujer*, 60 - 62.

³⁸ I [Felisa Rincón] told her [the artist]: “*Mire, yo me he tomado la libertad de preparar esto así.*” She had not noticed it and was saying: “*¡Pero que bien me queda!*” I told her: “*Lo que usted no ha notado es que yo le bajé el entalle porque en la pantalla a usted se le ve mucha falda y poco cuerpo, y yo le estoy estilizando el cuerpo. Ahora, si a usted no le gusta, yo se lo subo.*” She said “*No...no...no...*” Ramos, *Palabras de Mujer*, 62.

clothing. In 1934, Felisa Rincón's store would become one of many retailers available in the capital of Puerto Rico where customers could purchase clothing.⁴⁰

The Clothing Business in Puerto Rico

At the turn of the 20th century, if a Puerto Rican woman of means wanted something to wear she most likely would have a seamstress make it for her. Ready-to-wear was not a concept in full bloom. By 1914, Puerto Rican department stores, such as *González Padín* and American owned stores like *Gillie and Woodward*, were making their mark in the retail landscape of Puerto Rico. These and other stores carried the latest Parisian, Spanish, and American merchandise, including apparel.⁴¹ By the 1930s, the island of Puerto Rico was already very much influenced by its relationship with the United States.

In 1931 Richard and Elizabeth Van Deusen related their experiences and observations of Puerto Rico in *Porto Rico: A Caribbean Isle*. In this book, they discuss the Americanization of the island that increased during the thirty years of American influence. This, as they observed, is exemplified through the change in retail establishments. As the Van Deusens state:

³⁹ Ramos, *Palabras de Mujer*, 62.

⁴⁰ Felisa's Styles Shop is included in the December 1934 edition of the Porto Rico Telephone Company directory. Gruber, *Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, 65; Ramos, *Palabras de Mujer*, 62; Leonardo Rodríguez Villafañe, *Una Mujer al Servicio de su Pueblo*, 2nd ed. (San Juan, PR: Centro Grafico del Caribe, Inc., 1987), 6.

⁴¹ Alpheus H. Verrill, *Porto Rico, Past and Present* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1914), 39, 20, 30, 40.

Many of the old solid fronts of the San Juan business houses, with their arched doorways, have given way to glass display windows, through which one may view familiar merchandise of all sorts, from modish gowns and hats to the latest model of an outboard motor boat.⁴²

During the 1930s there was a movement to promote the island, its government and agencies. This was being accomplished by the publication of "tourism pamphlets." Examples of such pamphlets are the 1935 *Puerto Rico: The Mountain Paradise of Tropical America* and *Puerto Rico: Commercial and Industrial (with a brief historical sketch and miscellaneous information)* from 1936, both published by the Government of Puerto Rico, Department of Agriculture and Commerce. In general these tourism pamphlets included information on history, culture, commerce and industry. They featured the advantages the island provided for tourists and business people who would want to vacation or establish a business in Puerto Rico. An example points out American features: "Puerto Rico is an integral part of the American political system and consequently 'Domestic'....Exporters, business men, visitors in general must think of San Juan as they would of Jacksonville, San Francisco or Boston."⁴³

Of interest to this investigation is the promoting of clothing manufacturers and retailers in Puerto Rico, specifically in San Juan during the 1930s. In the manufacturing sector, the needlework industry was "the most important", followed in importance by garment manufacturing. These industries were complemented by the production of men's

⁴² Richard J. Van Deusen and Elizabeth K. Van Deusen. *Porto Rico: A Caribbean Isle* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1931), 165.

⁴³ Ignacio Guasp, ed. *The Port of San Juan: Puerto Rico's Dominant City* (San Juan, PR: Chamber of Commerce of Puerto Rico, 1936), 112.

straw hats, shell-buttons, cotton textiles and leather manufactures.⁴⁴ The garment industry not only produced apparel, but also home fashions. Examples of products manufactured include: "Ladies wearing apparel, comprising dresses, skirts, waists, silk underwear, night gowns and pajamas; children's dresses, men's (linen suits and shirts) and boys clothing; also handkerchiefs, bridge sets, luncheon sets, table cloths, scarves, towels, sheets, and pillow cases, etc...."⁴⁵

Retailers featured in the tourism pamphlets include *Los Muchachos* and "Miss New York Dress Shop." In 1936, *Los Muchachos* was the leading department store in San Juan. It was centrally located with entrances on both Salvador Brau and Allen Streets. It included departments for "hardware, furniture, glassware, sporting goods, perfumery, and general outfitting departments for men, women, and children". ...In the spirit of marketing, one pamphlet describes the various departments as "well stocked...offering all classes of commodities...[a testament to Puerto Rico's] ability to assimilate practical North American methods in merchandising."⁴⁶ "Miss New York Dress Shop" was part of the Luxuriant Dress Company, "importers of ladies, misses and children's dresses of the latest styles....The company specialized in ladies and misses stocking[s] and shoes....They offer a complete assortment of boudoir articles , and are famous for their selection of original styles." The company had two retail locations, one

⁴⁴ Government of Puerto Rico, Department of Agriculture and Commerce. *Puerto Rico: Commercial and Industrial*, 4th ed. (San Juan: Government of Puerto Rico, 1936), 15, 17-18, 20; Guasp, ed., *The Port of San Juan*, 109.

⁴⁵ Much of the manufacturing was for export, in particular to the United States. Based on statistics for 1935, the U.S. absorbed \$ 15,737,269 of garment and home fashions products manufactured in P.R. Guasp, ed., *The Port of San Juan*, 109.

⁴⁶ Guasp, ed., *The Port of San Juan*, 111.

in the southern city of Ponce and the other in San Juan.⁴⁷ Based on the Porto Rico Telephone Company directories between 1934 and 1937, the address for "Miss New York" in San Juan was Salvador Brau #50.

Close scrutiny of the listings of the Porto Rico Telephone Company directories revealed that *Los Muchachos* and "Miss New York Dress Shop" were not the only apparel and accessories retailers available to the Puerto Rican consumer of the 1930s. Between 1934 and 1937 the phone book categorizes the clothing and accessories retailers into several classifications: Bazaars, Footwear stores, Jewelry stores, Ready-made clothing retailers, and hat makers. In addition to clothing and accessories retailers, the phone book also includes clothing manufacturers and dressmakers, as well as producers of raincoats, belts, buttons, thread, and even perfume stores. As a reflection of Puerto Rico's status as a territory of the United States, the names of the clothing retailers are either in Spanish, English or a mix of both languages. Examples of Bazaar shops include *El Pitirre*, *Giusti y Co., Inc.*, *Ladies Shoppee de L. Cabán*, *La Samaritana*, and *Miller Gift Shop*. Retailers of footwear include: *Bata Shoe Co.*, *Flores*, *Alvarez & Co.*, *González Padín & Co.*, *La Favorita*, and *La Koketa*. Jewellery stores available to the Puerto Rican consumer were *Bouret Inc.*, *La Rosa de Oro*, and *Felix López*. There were not many retailers listed as just selling headwear, but a well-established one was *Suárez Hermanos*. In San Juan, clothing retailers selling ready-to-wear apparel for men and/or women and /or children include: *American Clothing Co.*, *El Cortes Ingles*, *El Pitirre*, *El Siglo*, *González Padín & Co.*, *Kleins Fashion Shoppe*, *Marta Dress Shop*, *Miss New York*

⁴⁷ *Puerto Rico: Propaganda Pro-turismo* (Habana, Cuba: Empresa Editorial Cubana, 1934), 250.

Dress Shop, Smart Fashion Shop, The New York Dress Co., The Royal Star and *Felisa's Styles Shop*, to list a few.⁴⁸

Felisa's Styles Shop had a large number of competitors in San Juan and the Metropolitan Area. Many of these shops even advertised, something that was never found for Felisa Rincón's store (Figure 25).

Felisa's Styles Shop

Felisa Rincón having her own business was in keeping with family tradition. Her paternal grandfather and uncle, Francisco and Paco Rincón respectively, established pharmacies in Puerto Rico in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Felisa Rincón decided to open her own clothing store in San Juan (what is considered Old San Juan today) after realizing that establishing a clothing factory would be a complicated and expensive venture. Felisa's Styles Shop, as she named her clothing store, would provide custom made services, but the focus was on selling ready-to-wear apparel and accessories.⁴⁹

Based on the Porto Rico Telephone Company (PRTC) directories, in December 1934 Felisa's Style's Shop was located on Cruz Street #15, San Juan (in 2004 the tenant is

⁴⁸ The category "Bazaar" is defined by Webster's as "a shop for selling various kinds of goods." *Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language, 2nd College Edition*, 1984. Telephone directories from the *Porto Rico Telephone Company*, June 1933, 8-39, December 1934, 6-41, June 1935, 6-41, 1st ed. 1936, 8-46, 1st ed. 1937, 7-44.

⁴⁹ Discrepancy as to the existence of a second Felisa's Style Shop in 1937 in the city of Ponce. In my investigation I have encountered a few sources, including Gruber, mentioning the Ponce shop. But at the same time, I have encountered several more sources that only mentions the shop in San Juan. In addition, in the interviews conducted with family, friends and co-workers of Felisa Rincón in 2002, they deny the existence of the Ponce shop. Also, research of the Porto Rico Telephone Company directories from

Pueblo Supermarket) (Figure 26 & 27). This location was across *La Plaza de Armas* and near City Hall (Figure 28). Some clothing retailers near Felisa's shop included The New York Dress Co., caddy-corner was *González Padín* Department Store, and on Cruz Street #11 was Flores Alvarez & Co., a shoe store (Figure 29). About a year later, the "First Edition" of the 1936 PRTC phone book lists Felisa's Style's Shop on Salvador Brau Street #101, San Juan (as of 2002 *Benny's* jewelry store) (Figure 26 & 30). Clothing retailers near Felisa's shop on this street include Luckee Girl Dress Shop on S. Brau # 32, *El Pitirre* on S. Brau #47, Miss New York Dress Shop on S. Brau #50, and Alonso Store on S. Brau #60, just to name a few. The 1938 "Second Edition" of the PRTC, does not have a listing for Felisa's Style's Shop.⁵⁰ This coincides with the information from several sources, including Felisa Rincón herself, for she closed the dress shop in 1938 to dedicate herself fulltime to politics.⁵¹

Authors Josean Ramos and Ruth Gruber both quote Felisa Rincón on how she set up her "smart shop." From her own experience working in the garment district, Felisa knew that New York was the center of American fashion. Therefore, she returned to this city to purchase merchandise for her store. From several wholesale manufacturers, Felisa

1930 - 1939, includes a telephone number for the shop in San Juan, but not for the "shop" in Ponce. It is this author's conclusion that the Ponce shop did not exist.

⁵⁰ At the time of this investigation the PRTC directories available included the years 1930, December 1931 & 1932, June 1933, December 1934, June 1935, "First Edition" 1936, "First Edition" 1937, "Second Edition" 1938 and "First Edition" 1939.

Discrepancy on the actual location of Felisa's Style Shop. In Gruber (65, 72), the first location is at the end of La Fortaleza Street and the second location was right near City Hall. In Ramos (57) the location (there is no first or second) is near *La Bombonera* Restaurant. Both are partially correct, the first location was near City Hall on Cruz Street and the second location was on Salvador Brau Street (currently San Francisco Street) the same street where *La Bombonera* Restaurant has been located for over 100 years.

Rincón acquired five thousand dollars' worth of merchandise, including dresses, lingerie, and millinery trimmings. Felisa's Styles Shop sold New York ready-to-wear fashions for women, lingerie and accessories, including Felisa Rincón's own headwear designs. She also provided fitting services and custom-made apparel for a selective clientele.⁵²

In the late 1910s and early 1920s, the United States witnessed a steady decline in dressmaking establishments, and the rise of stores offering both custom and ready-to-wear apparel to their clients. The reason behind this change, as reported by *The New York Times* in 1923, was the improvement in quality of ready-to-wear and its increasing popularity with American women. As such, if a dressmaking business wanted to survive and be profitable, they would carry ready-to-wear with the additional benefit of fitting services. An example of a dressmaking business modernizing with the ready-to-wear boom is the Rhode Island based Tirocchi sister's dressmaker shop, which existed from 1911 through 1947.⁵³ In establishing an apparel shop in San Juan, Puerto Rico offering both ready-to-wear merchandise and made-to-order clothing, Felisa Rincón was

⁵¹ Gruber, *Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, 73; Rodríguez Villafañe, *Una Mujer al Servicio de su Pueblo*, 6.

⁵² In Gruber it was mentioned that Felisa Rincón was a friend with Louis Aronowitz, a New York buyer. The latter was Felisa Rincón's contact when acquiring merchandise in New York for her store opening. Unfortunately, the researcher has not been able to find evidence supporting: 1) the existence of Louis Aronowitz, 2) his role as a New York buyer, 3) his partnership and friendship with Felisa Rincón. In addition, Gruber notes how Felisa Rincón was planning on selling headwear of her own design and manufacture. This would be a skill that Felisa Rincón would continue practicing as Mayor of San Juan. Gruber, *Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, 65-66; Ramos, *Palabras de Mujer*, 62,

⁵³ In 1911, Italian immigrants, Anna and Laura Tirocchi, established a dressmaking shop in Providence, Rhode Island. With the rise in the popularity of ready-to-wear clothing, in the 1920s, the shop decided to offer this type of merchandise in addition to made-to-order apparel. The Tirocchi Shop would carry on until 1947. Susan Hay, ed. *From Paris to Providence: Fashion, Art, and the Tirocchi Dressmakers' Shop, 1915-1947* (Providence, RI: Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, 2000), 20, 42.

following the trend in the apparel industry that started in the late 1910s and early 1920s. Felisa's Styles Shop carried merchandise imported from New York City, a business decision that was reflected in the manner of dress worn by modern Puerto Ricans at the time. As the Van Deusens observed in 1931:

The visitor from the United States [will observe] upon landing in San Juan...a modern American city...[whose people] are clad in clothes of the same cut and fabrics as he himself is wearing...modern ideas, styles, and so on are not limited to the wealthy and privileged upper classes, but are followed and emulated in modified form by the entire population. No longer does the country *Señorita* pile her dusky hair into a high mass and stick into it a cherished Spanish comb when she is dressing for the *fiesta*, for now her hair is attractively bobbed, and the rest of her appearance and clothes are calculated to look as nearly as possible, within her pecuniary limitations, like those of her sister in the city (Figures 31 & 32).⁵⁴

To compete with the many retailers located in San Juan, Felisa's Styles Shop sold dresses for less than other stores. As Felisa Rincón explained to Ramos, her desire was to sell lots of merchandise. Having worked in the garment district and thus seen first hand what goes into the actual cost of a garment, she understood the possibility of still making a profit even with lowered price merchandise. For example, she relates how Felisa's Styles Shop carried dresses priced at \$9.95, while her competitor *Giusti* offered the same dresses at \$19.95 (Figure 33).⁵⁵

Felisa's Styles Shop, had a small sales staff, with Felisa Rincón continuing the roles of owner, buyer, fitter, and even sales person. On occasions when she could not fulfill her role as buyer, she would rely on her sister Josefina (Finí) Rincón, who was still

⁵⁴ Van Deusen and Van Deusen, *Porto Rico: A Caribbean Isle*, 164-165.

⁵⁵ Felisa Rincón shares how women in the 1980s would come up to her and mention having kept dresses they had purchased at Felisa's Styles Shop in the 1930s. Ramos, *Palabras de Mujer*, 63.

living in Newark, New Jersey, to purchase the merchandise for the shop. Ironically, with the addition of a sales staff, Felisa Rincón found more time to continue her interest in politics and her work with the *Partido Liberal* what would ultimately have an impact in the demise of Felisa's Styles Shop.⁵⁶

Conclusion

Felisa Rincón acknowledges that she was "made" by her parents. In many aspects her own business, Felisa's Styles Shop, is a reflection of her upbringing. With the business she took her ability to sew and put it to work. Her administrative experience at the farm, *La Ceramica* also came into play. In 1932 she stood up to her father by demanding that he let her register to vote. She did so again when she wanted to move to New York to experience the clothing business first hand. Since very young in age, Felisa Rincón referred to herself as a "social worker," and it was her desire to help people, to be able to employ them, that inspired her to open her own clothing business. Unfortunately for the apparel business, and who knows, maybe even for Puerto Rican fashion, her work in politics won over her desire to maintain the store. She felt that she could accomplish more, help people more, by becoming fully involved in politics. After approximately four years, in 1938, Felisa's Styles Shop closed its doors.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Gruber, *Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, 66-67, 72.

⁵⁷ In the early 1940s, the now married Felisa Rincón de Gautier ventured into another retail business, this time a flower shop with her brother-in-law, Antonio Gautier. The shop was located at the Palace Hotel and was called *Miles de Flores* (Thousands of Flowers). The business did not last and Felisa Rincón de Gautier threw herself fulltime into the political arena. Gruber, *Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, 89.

CHAPTER 4

FELISA RINCÓN DE GAUTIER: POLITICIAN AND MAYOR OF SAN JUAN, 1932-1968

This chapter continues to explore Felisa Rincón's life, in this case, through her role in Puerto Rican politics. It covers her involvement in politics in the 1930s with the *Partido Liberal* to her final position as Mayor of San Juan in 1968. Felisa Rincón's involvement in politics, in particular as Mayor, became the venue for the development of her *grande dame* image, an important identifier for Felisa Rincón and Puerto Rico.

Felisa Rincón was no stranger to politics. In the Rincón Marrero family, the Rincón branch had been directly and indirectly involved with Puerto Rican politics since the nineteenth century. In the 1860s, Esilda Plumey de Rincón, her paternal grandmother, was indirectly involved with the *Grito de Lares*. In the 1880s, Francisco Rincón, her paternal grandfather, was appointed Mayor of Yabucoa. In 1912, Enrique Rincón Plumey, Felisa Rincón's father, was involved in the creation of the *Partido de la Independencia de Puerto Rico* and later became an active member of the *Partido Liberal*. In addition, many of the political and intellectual minds of the time would gather at the

Rincón Marrero home for afternoons and evenings of political, social and legal discussion known as *tertulias*.¹

It is no surprise with this background and her desire to serve and help the less fortunate that Felisa Rincón would become involved in politics. That she would become such an iconic figure in Puerto Rican politics is another matter. This chapter first examines the role of women in Puerto Rican politics, then looks at how Felisa Rincón started in politics, the creation of the *Partido Popular Democratico*, and concludes with Felisa Rincón de Gautier, in the role as the mayor of San Juan from 1946 through 1968.

Women in Puerto Rican Politics

The idea of women involved in Puerto Rican politics is not a twentieth century phenomenon. It is, though, in this century that women really made their mark in the realm of politics, one that has even carried over into the twenty first century with a woman, Sila María Calderón elected as governor in the 2000 elections.² Edna Acosta-Belén in the essay “*Women in Twentieth Century Puerto Rico*”, comments on the absence of a female emancipation movement in the island until the second half of the nineteenth

¹ Ruth Gruber, *Felisa Rincón de Gautier: The Mayor of San Juan* (NY: Biblio Press, 1994), 12, 18-19, 25; Josean Ramos, *Palabras de Mujer: Una época reflejada en la vida de Felisa Rincón* (San Juan: Editorial Universidad de America, 1988), 12, 39-40; “Alcaldes de Yabucoa 1793-Presente,” <http://www.linktopr.com/yabucoa.htm>; Fernando Bayron Toro, *Elecciones y Partidos Politicos de Puerto Rico 1809-2000*, 5th ed. (Mayagüez, PR: Editorial Isla, 2000), 139-140; Felisa Rincón de Gautier, interview by José Miguel Agrelot y M. Falcón, *Haciendo Historia*, WKAQ-TV, March 19, 1985; Felisa Rincón de Gautier, interview by L. Santiago and F. Aquino, Once Q radio, January 2, 1989; Josean Ramos, “Doña Fela: Comunicadora Política” (master’s thesis, Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1986), 20.

² In the year 2000 Sila María Calderón, the candidate for the *Partido Popular Democratico*, was elected governor of Puerto Rico. Before being elected as governor, in 1996 Calderón became the first woman, after Felisa Rincón de Gautier, to be elected Mayor of San Juan. In 2003, she declared her desire not to run for re-election in 2004.

century. As Acosta-Belén notes, there were discussions by a group of men from the educated liberal elite of the Creole *hacendados* as to the importance of Puerto Rican women's participation in society. These discussions were supported by a group of educated women, peers of these men's class, who actively participated in the movement for Puerto Rican independence. Two of the better-known Puerto Rican women to be involved in the political situation of the island at the end of the nineteenth century are Mariana Bracetti and Lola Rodríguez de Tío.³ These women were recognized for their political militancy and defense of the Puerto Rican nationality. In the 1860s, Mariana Bracetti (Figure 34) found herself part of the Lares Revolutionary Board that promoted Puerto Rico's independence from Spain. *Brazo de Oro*, as she was nicknamed, played an important part in the 1868 insurrection and the uprising known as the *Grito de Lares*. As a consequence of her revolutionary activities, Bracetti was imprisoned for a time, but later released. She has been immortalized in Puerto Rican history because she is credited with sewing the Banner of Lares, the flag symbolizing the short-lived Puerto Rican Republic resulting from the 1868 uprising. Similar to Mariana Bracetti, Lola Rodríguez de Tío (Figure 35) supported Puerto Rico's independence. As a literary figure, she contributed to the cause by composing patriotic lyrics to the then popular song *La Borinqueña*, as a way to rally the people during the *Grito de Lares*. Unlike Bracetti, Rodríguez de Tío was never imprisoned for her nationalist work, instead was exiled

³ Edna Acosta-Belén, "Women in Twentieth Century Puerto Rico", in Adalberto López *The Puerto Ricans: Their History, Culture, and Society*. (Cambridge, MA: Schenkman Publishing Company, Inc., 1980), 275 - 276.

permanently from Puerto Rico.⁴ Through their actions, these women inspired other women to play a more effective and proactive role in Puerto Rican society and politics.

At the dawn of the twentieth century, Puerto Rican women's involvement in political and social movements translated into a feminist movement. This cause was characterized by two major factions: labor/proletarian and the professional/petty bourgeois. The proletarian faction of the feminist movement developed as part of the labor movement. One of its most important leaders was Luisa Capetillo, "a socialist and a writer who argued on behalf of equal rights for women, free love, and human emancipation." As a reflection of her beliefs, Luisa Capetillo dressed in men's apparel (Figure 36).⁵ On the other hand, the suffragist leaders of the petty bourgeois were educated women of the middle and higher classes whose main goal was to acquire the right to vote. One of their most fearless leaders was Ana Roqué de Duprey, a teacher and school director, who strongly believed in the education of women (Figure 37). Not only did she work for several schools, she also founded her own, the *Colegio Mayagüezano*,

⁴ Mariana Bracetti was born in Añasco, Puerto Rico in 1840. She was married three times, including to Manuel Rojas one of the leaders of the independence movement in the 1860s. It is believed she passed away around 1904 in Puerto Rico. Lola Rodríguez de Tío was born in San German, Puerto Rico in 1843. She was married and had two daughters. During her exile she lived in Venezuela, New York and Cuba. She died in 1924. The song *La Borinqueña* was written by Felix Astol in 1867. In 1952 it became the official anthem for the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. Acosta-Belén, "Women in Twentieth Century Puerto Rico," 275 - 276; Carmen Delgado Votaw, *Puerto Rican Women: Some Biographical Profiles* (Washington DC: National Conference of Puerto Rican Women, Inc., 1978), 4, 15; Francisco A. Scarano, *Puerto Rico: Cinco siglos de historia* (San Juan, PR: McGraw-Hill, 1993), 499.

⁵ Acosta-Belén, "Women in Twentieth Century Puerto Rico," 276-277; Delgado Votaw, *Puerto Rican Women: Some Biographical Profiles*, 6; Scarano, *Puerto Rico: Cinco siglos de historia*, 651; Loida Figueroa, *El papel histórico y social de la mujer en el Caribe hispánico, con énfasis en Puerto Rico* (S.I.:s.n., 1982), 17-19.

and in 1902 the *Liceo Ponceño de Niñas* in the southern city of Ponce. In addition to being a teacher, she was a writer, journalist, and had a great interest in astronomy.⁶

Luisa Capetillo, Ana Roqué de Duprey, and all the other leaders of the feminist movement at the beginning of the twentieth century played an important role in the lives of their Puerto Rican female "constituents." Both factions, the labor/proletarian and the professional/petty bourgeois, desired the improvement and equality of Puerto Rican women's lives in the home, at work and in society. It was the professional wing (Figure 38) that, after much battle with the Puerto Rican legislature, was able to acquire the female right to vote in 1929. The right to vote was originally only given to literate women who participated in the 1932 elections. By the elections of 1936 all Puerto Rican women had the right to vote. There no longer was discrimination for voting based on illiteracy, gender, and ownership of property or tax payments. Eligibility was based on age, over 21 and legal U. S. citizenship.⁷

In *El papel histórico y social de la mujer en el Caribe hispánico, con énfasis en Puerto Rico*, author Loida Figueroa notes that for an island lacking sovereignty, Puerto Rico giving women the right to vote by the decade of the thirties, was a tremendous achievement especially when comparing it to other sovereign nations around the world.

The result of Puerto Rican women receiving the right to vote was their increased

⁶ Acosta-Belén, "Women in Twentieth Century Puerto Rico," 277; Delgado Votaw, *Puerto Rican Women: Some Biographical Profiles*, 16; Figueroa, *El papel histórico y social*, 16; Scarano, *Puerto Rico: Cinco siglos de historia*, 652.

⁷ Other leaders of the feminist movement in Puerto Rico at the beginning of the twentieth century include Juana Colón from the proletarian faction and Isabel Andreu Aguilar and Mercedes Solá from the professional faction. In the town of Fajardo, Isabel Andreu Aguilar served as Felisa Rincon's 1st or 2nd grade teacher. Acosta-Belén, "Women in

participation in politics, something that had not been seen previously in the island.

Puerto Rico is the first country in Latin America to have elected a woman to the legislature. In 1932, business woman and member of the *Unión Republicana Socialista* party, María Luisa Arcelay was elected as representative for the district of Mayagüez. In 1936, she was reelected and was joined in the legislature by María Martínez de Pérez Almiroty, who was elected as the first female senator representing the *Partido Liberal Puertorriqueño*.⁸ The 1930s not only experienced women in the Puerto Rican Legislature, but there is also evidence of women connected to mayoral positions throughout the island. Records for the Municipality of Arroyo list María Alvarez de Choudens as mayor in 1933. The Municipality of Maricao claims Rosa Campos de Quiñones as their mayor from 1938 to 1941.⁹

Twentieth Century Puerto Rico,” 277; Scarano, *Puerto Rico: Cinco siglos de historia*, 651-654; Fernando Bayron Toro, *Elecciones y Partidos Politicos*, 185.

⁸ María M. de Pérez Almiroty was elected as Senator at large, thus there is not district affiliation only a political party one. From 1932 up to the 1952 elections, Puerto Rico is divided into seven districts. These include the districts of San Juan, Arecibo, Aguadilla, Mayagüez, Ponce, Guayama and Humacao. Each district elects two senators. In addition, there are five “at large” senatorial seats. The House of Representatives is also divided into the seven districts, but within each district there are five precincts. Each precinct constitutes a seat in the legislature for a total of thirty-five. Also, there are four “at large” seats in the House of Representatives for a final total of thirty-nine. Figueroa, *El papel histórico y social*, 13; Delgado Votaw, *Puerto Rican Women: Some Biographical Profiles*, 14; Scarano, *Puerto Rico: Cinco siglos de historia*, 654; Bayron Toro, *Elecciones y Partidos Politicos*, 178-179, 187-188.

⁹ It is not clear if these women were candidates in the Elections of 1932 and 1936 or if they were appointed to the position of mayor. Puerto Rico is divided into seventy-seven municipalities. In 1952, the number decreases by one, when the municipality of Rio Piedras is annexed to San Juan. *Searching for our roots: Mayors of Puerto Rico*, <http://www.rootsweb.com~prsanjua/towns.html>; Link to Puerto Rico.com, *Datos Municipios*, <http://www.linktopr.com>; Comisión Estatal de Elecciones de Puerto Rico, *Elecciones Generales*, <http://www.ceepur.net>.

Once the suffragists acquired the right to vote, it is argued that they lost interest in continuing their fight for total female emancipation, resulting in the majority of feminist organizations disbanding. It could be argued that the negative impact on the feminist movement was connected to the economic crisis of the 1930s, with its decline of the capitalist plantation economy and the very high level of unemployment. Even though there was a major decrease in the feminist movement in Puerto Rico, which gave women a public stage, there were several women interested in and were looking to acquire political positions within the government.¹⁰

In contrast to the thirties, the 1940s was a decade of political and social reforms, which brought greater female participation into Puerto Rican politics and government. The newly created *Partido Popular Democrático* (PPD) under the leadership of Luis Muñoz Marín introduced the social, economic and political transformation of the 1940s. With its motto *Pan, Tierra y Libertad* (Bread, Land and Liberty), the PPD's focus brought forward the importance of agrarian reform and industrialization as key to economic and social improvements. This message resonated with the populous of the island translating into electoral victories for the PPD in the 1940s.¹¹ The popularity and dominance of the PPD introduced many more Puerto Rican women into government

¹⁰ Isabel Picó and Idsa E. Alegría, *La Mujer en los Medios de Comunicación Social* (San Juan, PR: Centro de Investigaciones Sociales, 1982), 104; Acosta-Belén, "Women in Twentieth Century Puerto Rico," 277-278; Mary Frances Gallart, "Las primarias de la alcaldesa: apoderamiento femenino en Guayama (1952)" in Mario R. Cancel, *Historia y Género: Vidas y Relatos de Mujeres en el Caribe* (San Juan, PR: Asociación Puertorriqueña de Historiadores, 1997), 59.

¹¹ Acosta-Belén, "Women in Twentieth Century Puerto Rico," 279; Arturo Morales Carrión, *Puerto Rico: A Political and Cultural History* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1983), 244; Fundación Luis Muñoz Marín, *Luis Muñoz Marín: Presidente del Senado (1940)*,

posts. Women were elected to the House of Representatives in all three elections in this decade. In 1940, as one of the 18 representatives for the PPD, Maria Libertad Gómez was elected to the house for the district of Arecibo. She would be reelected in 1944 and 1948. Joining her at the House during this period were fellow party members Libertad Pascual for Mayagüez and Guadalupe G. Pérez for Ponce in the elections of 1944 and 1948 respectively.¹² Puerto Rican women were not only making their mark in the legislature, they continued to be in charge of mayoralties around the island. In 1940, the Municipality of Canovanas submitted the names of attorney Josefina Flores Quintero and Dolores Sanchez de Sanchez as mayors from 1940 to 1941 and 1941 to 1945 respectively. As candidates for the PPD in the elections of 1944, María de Choudens de Alvarez and Esperanza Ydrach vda. de Quiñones were elected as mayors of the municipalities of Arroyo and Guánica. Other women who would be elected or appointed as mayor between 1944 and the 1948 elections include Justina Viñas for Trujillo Alto, Engracia González de Mulero for Culebra, Dolores Rivera Candelaria for Utuado and Felisa Rincón de Gautier for San Juan.¹³ In 1948, Guanica re-elects Esperanza Ydrach

http://www.flmm.com/pags_nuevas_folder/biografia_folder/presidente.html.

¹² In the elections of 1940, the PPD acquire ten seats in the senate, eighteen in the House of Representatives and twenty-nine mayoralties throughout Puerto Rico. The elections of 1944 resulted in seventeen senate seats and thirty-seven in the house. In the elections of 1948, the PPD elected again seventeen senators, but added one more seat to the house from the previous elections for a total of thirty-eight representatives. Bayron Toro, *Elecciones y Partidos Politicos, 194-196*, 203-205, 212-214.

¹³ There is a discrepancy as to Engracia González de Mulero's election. Based on records from the Municipality of Culebra, she served as mayor from 1946 – 1949. But, in Roldan Monzon's thesis, she lists Mulero as having been elected in 1944. Mulero and Rincón de Gautier are also members of the PPD, but it is not clear if Viñas and Rivera Candelaria are also. Figueroa, *El papel histórico y social*, 13, Ana Rosa Roldan Monzon, *Analisis de la trayectoria del liderazgo de la mujer puertorriqueña a traves de la historia*. Master's

vda. de Quiñones, Cabo Rojo, Salinas, and Yabucoa join the trend by electing Blanca E. Coldberg Rodriguez, Victoria Mateo Serrano, and Rosa Sanchez Vargas as their mayors. Also elected are Felisa Rincón de Gautier and Dolores Rivera Candelaria, who continue their positions as mayors of San Juan and Utuado respectively.¹⁴

The decades of the 1950s and 1960s continue to experience the dominance of the *Partido Popular Democratico* in Puerto Rican politics and government. By the time the 1952 elections arrived key changes had occurred in the political status of the island. It was in this year the *Estado Libre Asociado de Puerto Rico* (ELA) was officially founded. With its new commonwealth status, the government modified some of the electoral laws. As a result, Senators and Representatives not only could be elected by district or at large, but also *por adición* (by addition). The latter was a new measure to provide representation in the legislature for the political parties in the minority. In addition to the new electoral law, Puerto Rico was redistributed into eight districts, the original seven plus the new district of Bayamón. With these changes the total senate seats available equaled thirty-two, sixteen by district, eleven at large and five by addition; the House of Representatives increased to forty seats by district/precinct, eleven at large and thirteen by addition. The legislature vacancies by addition were not necessary after the 1968 elections, because two-thirds of either or both legislative bodies were not dominated by

Thesis, Universidad de Puerto Rico, 1986, Table 6; *Searching for our roots*, <http://www.rootsweb.com>; Link to Puerto Rico.com, <http://www.linktopr.com>.

¹⁴ Mayoral candidates Colberg, Quiñonez, and Rincón de Gautier are known to be part of the PPD. It is not clear, but highly likely, that Mateo, Candelaria and Vargas would also be members of the PPD, since by the end of the 1940s, it was the most popular and dominant political party in Puerto Rico. Roldan Monzon, Table 6; *Searching for our roots*, <http://www.rootsweb.com>; Link to Puerto Rico.com, <http://www.linktopr.com>.

one political party.¹⁵ The increase in seats in the legislature in the 1950s and 1960s provided Puerto Rican women more opportunities to enter government. Many of them, from various political parties, took the advantage. In the elections of 1952, two women were elected to the Senate, for the PPD Juana Rodríguez Mundo as Senator at large and for the *Partido Estadista* (Statehood Party) Antonia C. de Fajardo as Senator by addition. The House welcomed three women, all from the PPD. As representative for the district of Arecibo is Dolores Rivera Candelaria, for the district of Aguadilla is Milagros González Chapel and by addition; Maria Libertad Gómez. The 1956 elections witnessed the same number of women and political ideologies elected to the legislature as in the previous election. Unlike the 1952 election, in 1956 the five seats were divided into three for the senate and two for the house. The PPD senators include Palmira Cabrera de Ibarra for the district of Arecibo and Juana Rodríguez Mundo at large. Antonia Cabassa Vda. de Fajardo was selected as senator by addition for the *Partido Estadista Republicano*, previously named *Partido Estadista*. In the house, PPD members Milagros González de Chapel was reelected for Aguadilla, and Carmen Solá de Pereira was newly elected for the southern district of Ponce. The decade of the sixties witnessed the election of six, five and four Puerto Rican women to the legislature for the corresponding years of 1960, 1964, and 1968. The 1960 election saw the reelection of the previous three female

¹⁵ In July 25, 1952 the ELA is officially established. The ELA is based on the concept of commonwealth or autonomous state of the United States. In 2004, Puerto Rico is still a commonwealth of the United States. The *Ley de Minorías*, the electoral law representing the political minorities in the legislature takes effect when two-thirds of either or both legislative bodies are dominated by one political party. As a result, seats are “added” to the Senate or House to be filled by legislatures of the political minority. Bayron Toro, *Elecciones y Partidos Politicos*, 215-221, 225-227, 232-235, 241-244, 249-251;

senators, with the slight difference of Cabassa Vda. de Fajardo being selected at large instead of by addition. In the House, González Chapel and Solá de Pereira were reelected, with pro-statehood Julita Arce de Franklin newly elected at large. In 1964, there was only one female senator, PPD's Josefina O. de Batelle, who was elected at large. The house differed from the senate by having four women, two veterans and two rookies. The veterans included González Chapel and Solá de Pereira, while PPD's Blanca E. Coldberg for the district of Mayagüez and pro-statehood Josefina Llovet Díaz selected by addition are the female rookies of the house. The continuing decline of women elected to the legislature was apparent in the 1968 elections with the total reduced to four, three senators and one representative. Even with the decline, a bright spot resulted when Sila Nazario de Ferrer became the first woman elected as senator for the district of San Juan, the largest district in Puerto Rico.¹⁶

The 1950s and 1960s not only experienced an increase in women's participation in the Puerto Rican legislature, it also saw an increase of women in charge of the city halls of many municipalities throughout the island. For the 1952 elections, Cabo Rojo, Guanica, San Juan and Yabucoa re-elected their female mayors, and Guayama elected Obdulia Velazquez vda. de Lorenzo. Four years later, in 1956, five were in the mayoral houses, with three of them being re-elected from the previous elections. The three were the mayors Blanca Colberg for Cabo Rojo, Esperanza Idrach Vda. de Quiñonez for Guanica and Felisa Rincón de Gautier for San Juan. The new mayors elected in 1956

Comisión Estatal de Elecciones, *Representación de Partidos de Minoría (Ley de Minorías)*, <http://www.ceepur.net.pr/sobreCee/leyElectoral/leyMinorias.htm>.

¹⁶ *Searching for our roots*, <http://www.rootsweb.com>; Link to Puerto Rico.com, <http://www.linktopr.com>; Bayron Toro, *Elecciones y Partidos Politicos*, 224.

were Lydia López de Gómez and Ofelia Torres de Melendez for Juncos and Orocovis respectively. In addition, two women, Rosalva Marty Ramirez for Lajas and Isabel Diaz de Diaz for Trujillo Alto were appointed as mayors for their municipalities. By 1960, eleven towns around Puerto Rico elected female mayors. These included the re-elections of the mayors from Cabo Rojo, Guanica, Orocovis and San Juan. The new mayors of Coamo, Rosa Maria Ortiz Alvarado, Fajardo, María S. Perez de Gaos, Juana Diaz, Ada Elena Mage de Colón, Juncos, Hilda Pacheco de Algarín, Lajas, Rosalva Marty Ramirez, San Lorenzo, Dolores González Diaz, and Trujillo Alto, Isabel Diaz de Diaz joined these women in the legislature. For the 1964 elections, the number of women in the *alcaldias* (municipal house or mayoralty) decreased to six. But the five were all re-elected officials for the towns of Fajardo, Juana Diaz, Juncos, Orocovis and San Juan. The sixth, Guanica's Auera E. Vega, was elected for the position, thus continuing her role as mayor after taking over in 1963 for Esperanza Idrach Vda. de Quiñonez. Just as the number of women in the Puerto Rican legislature dropped for the elections of 1968, so did the mayoralties held by women. Of the four women mayors elected that year, one was a reelection, the mayor of Juncas, while the rest were newcomers. These included Arcibo with Elba A. Otero de Jove, Peñuelas with Elena Rivera Gutierrez and Santa Isabela with Hilda E. Santiago.¹⁷

¹⁷ The mayoral elections of 1968 did not include Felisa Rincón de Gautier, who decided not to run for a sixth term. Following the 1968 elections, the next eight political cycles encounters a rollercoaster ride for women in the mayoral houses. The elections of 1972 selected five, one in 1976 and another appointed later. In 1980, no woman was elected or appointed mayor, this was followed by two in 1984, three in 1988, five in 1992, eight in 1996, and two in 2000, with a third appointed for the municipality of Ponce after the death of its mayor in early 2004. Roldan Monzon, Table 6; *Searching for our roots*,

Puerto Rican women were awarded the right to vote in 1929; they took their new right and used it to become more involved in government by running for the legislation and many mayoral positions. These intrepid women not only served in the Senate, House of Representatives and numerous city halls, but they also served in important government posts as Secretaries of Social Services and Education and even in the Supreme Court to name only a few.¹⁸ Of the female politicians in Puerto Rico, the one who has had national and international fame is Felisa Rincón de Gautier. How did Felisa Rincón go from dressmaker and businesswoman in the 1930s to Mayor of San Juan for twenty-two years?

Beginnings of Felisa Rincón's Political Career

In the early 1930s, Felisa Rincón became part of the wave of women entering the realms of politics in Puerto Rico. The year 1932, is not only important in Puerto Rican women's history because it is the first time they are allowed to vote, but it is also the key moment in Felisa Rincon's life and her source of future involvement in politics. As Felisa Rincón explained to many who interviewed her, she had been following what was happening with the suffragist movement in the island. Once the suffragists won the right

<http://www.rootsweb.com>; [Link to Puerto Rico.com](http://www.linktopr.com), <http://www.linktopr.com>; Manuel Alvarez-Rivera, *Elections in Puerto Rico*, <http://eleccionespurtorico.org>; Comisión Estatal de Elecciones, <http://www.ceepur.net>.

¹⁸ See Tables 1 and 2 for a list of the Puerto Rican women in the Legislation and City Halls from 1932 through 1968. For more information on election results for Puerto Rico refer to Fernando Bayron Toro, *Elecciones y Partidos Politicos de Puerto Rico 1809-2000*, 5th ed. (Mayagüez, PR: Editorial Isla, 2000 or visit the Comisión Estatal de Elecciones de Puerto Rico (Puerto Rico's Elections Commission) website at <http://www.ceepur.net>. Refer to [Link to Puerto Rico.com](http://www.linktopr.com) (<http://www.linktopr.com>) as a source listing the mayors for each municipality. The information is provided by the Mayor's office for each municipality. The majority of the municipalities include all of

to vote, Felisa Rincón , the good daughter who became keeper of the household and surrogate mother to her siblings, decided to participate in the process and register to vote for the 1932 elections. Her decision was controversial in her home, because she was going against her father's wishes. Enrique Rincón Plumey, an attorney and member of the *Partido Liberal* (Liberal Party), did not believe in giving women the right to vote. Felisa Rincón described her father as "old school." "Old school" or not, for the first time ever in her life, she confronted her father and demanded that he allow her to register. After a back and forth argument which climaxed with Felisa Rincón's remark "if they have given us the right I should use it," Enrique Rincón Plumey realized the great importance of such an act by his daughter and agreed to let her register to vote for the 1932 elections. As Felisa Rincón has recounted many times, on the first day to register she stood fifth in line behind América Duprey, the daughter of the great suffragist leader Ana Roqué de Duprey at the Department of Health building, the place of registration. Felisa Rincón had made the decision to register under the *Partido Liberal*, because of family connections and at the time, she believed in the platform of the Liberal Party. As destiny would have it, when she entered the Department of Health building, where the registration took place, there was no representative for the *Partido Liberal* to sign up new members. When the leader of the Liberal Party, Antonio R. Barceló was made aware of the situation, he designated Felisa Rincón as its representative. Her assignation as representative for the *Partido Liberal* in 1932 became her first official political post,

their Mayors, beginning with Spanish colonial times to the present. Acosta-Belén, "Women in Twentieth Century Puerto Rico," 281.

which marks the beginning of sixty-two years of productivity and fame in Puerto Rican politics.¹⁹

As part of her "job" for the Liberal Party, Felisa Rincón (Figure 20) was in charge of registering Puerto Rican women into the party and encouraging them to vote in the elections. Strangely, as she found out, it was difficult to convince her female friends and acquaintances who qualified to vote in the 1932 elections, to register. They did not see the importance of it and did not want to mix in with the *gentusa*. Felisa Rincón did not give up, instead she went after the working class women, to help them realize the importance of this first step toward their emancipation. As it happened, she would connect more with these women than with her own peers.²⁰

The 1932 elections were not very fruitful for the *Partido Liberal*. A few of its members were elected to the legislature, but overall it was not a successful campaign. As a result, Felisa Rincón became more involved with the *Partido Liberal*, registering more people and spreading the party's message of reform for the poor. By now a "new" face had entered the political landscape of the *Partido Liberal* and Puerto Rican politics, Luis Muñoz Marín. The son of Luis Muñoz Rivera, the Puerto Rican poet, journalist and political leader of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, he would question aspects of the *Partido Liberal* during the 1930s. In 1937, as a result of the internal

¹⁹ The 1932 elections were held on November 8th. Gruber, *Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, 53-57; Ramos, *Palabras de Mujer*, 66-68; Felisa Rincón de Gautier, audiotape of autobiography, San Juan, PR, February 1970; Felisa Rincón de Gautier, interview by Janet Negretti, Noticias 1140 radio, 1982; José Miguel Agrelot y María Falcón, interview; Felisa Rincón de Gautier, interview Ruben Arrieta, Notiuno radio, October 5 and 12, 1986; L. Santiago and F. Aquino, interview.

debates within the party sparked by Luis Muñoz Marín, he and many of his followers, including Felisa Rincón, were expelled from the *Partido Liberal*. Just when Felisa Rincón thought her work in Puerto Rican politics was over, the fateful event of the expulsion created the right situation to establish a new political party, the *Partido Popular Democratico*, of which she was a founding member.²¹

Partido Popular Democratico

In the decade of the 1930s, the island of Puerto Rico was in distress economically owing to the Great Depression, the Federal Act limiting the production of sugar, its main agricultural industry and the devastating effects of hurricanes San Felipe and San Ciprián, in 1928 and 1932 respectively. Economic relief came in the form of Federal aid from the Franklin Delano Roosevelt administration, but it was not enough. There was social discontent, particularly with the rural and labor masses, which Luis Muñoz Marín understood. As Arturo Morales Carrión notes in *Puerto Rico: A Political and Cultural History*, the working classes were ready for a “populist movement under the banner of agrarian reform,” a mission the *Partido Popular Democratico* took on and included as part of their platform.²²

²⁰ *Gentusa* is a denigrating word referring to “those people,” generally of lower economic status or class. Gruber, *Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, 57-58; Ramos, *Palabras de Mujer*, 69; L. Santiago and F. Aquino, interview.

²¹ Gruber, *Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, 60, 71; Ramos, *Palabras de Mujer*, 77; Kenneth R. Farr, *Historical Dictionary of Puerto Rico and the U. S. Virgin Islands* (Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1973), 58; Felisa Rincón de Gautier, autobiography; Ruben Arrieta, interview.

²² Bayron Toro, *Elecciones y Partidos Politicos*, 173, 181; Scarano, *Puerto Rico: Cinco siglos de historia*, 670; Morales Carrión, *Puerto Rico: A Political and Cultural History*, 244.

The *Partido Popular Democratico* (Popular Democratic Party or PPD) was officially founded in 1938, headed by Luis Muñoz Marín, and supported by many other politicians, including, of course, Felisa Rincón, as well as intellectuals, people from the middle and lower middle class, and small farmers or landowners. The foundation of its messages was social, economic, and political reform. Although originally, the party's platform included the independence of Puerto Rico from the U.S, this “states issue” was later discarded when pursuing the status of commonwealth for the island.²³ As a reflection of the PPD’s core message, the slogan *Pan, Tierra y Libertad* (Bread, Land and Liberty), as well as the emblem, the *pava* hat, were “symbols” of hope and improvement to the masses in the rural areas and cities, to which the party was speaking (Figure 39). Both the slogan and emblem connected with Felisa Rincon’s interest to reforming the living conditions of the poor, the original reason for her involvement in politics.²⁴ As a founding member of the PPD, Felisa Rincón had two major responsibilities, registering new members into the party and serving as president of the San Juan Committee for the PPD, a position she held until January 1970.²⁵

The message of social economic reform resonated with the Puerto Rican electorate, and in the 1940 elections, the PPD won over 38 percent of the votes cast. The

²³ Morales Carrión, *Puerto Rico: A Political and Cultural History*, 244-245; Gruber, *Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, 74; Bayron Toro, *Elecciones y Partidos Politicos*, 209.

²⁴ The *pava* is the broad-brimmed straw hat worn by the *jibaros* (mountain peasants) of Puerto Rico. Felisa Rincón would regularly say that her calling was to be “*Al servicio de mi pueblo*” (to serve her countrymen). Leonardo Rodríguez Villafañe, *Una mujer al servicio de su pueblo*, 2nd ed. (San Juan, PR: Centro Gráfico del Caribe, Inc., 1987), 6; Gruber, *Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, 73; Edna Acosta-Belén, ed., *The Puerto Rican Woman* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1979), 4.

²⁵ Rodríguez Villafañe, *Una mujer al servicio de su pueblo*, 6; Gruber, *Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, 73, 84-85; Felisa Rincón de Gautier, autobiography; Ruben Arrieta, interview.

new party captured the Senate with a majority of one (10 of 19 seats) making Muñoz Marín Senate president. The PPD also acquired 18 of 39 seats in the House and the post of Resident Commissioner. They won 29 of the 77 mayoral seats, but lost San Juan. Still, overall, it was a "smashing victory."²⁶ In the 1944 elections the PPD continued its control, with 64 percent of the total vote, 17 of 19 seats in the Senate, 37 of 39 seats in the House, Resident Commissioner in Washington DC and the position of Mayor of San Juan.²⁷ A candidate supported by the now married Felisa Rincón de Gautier, after she turned down the opportunity to run herself filled the latter.²⁸

The *Partido Popular Democratico* became the dominant political party in Puerto Rico from 1940 through 1968. In the 1940s, this party not only controlled the legislature, San Juan and if not all the majority of the municipalities, but in 1946 Jesus T. Piñero, one

²⁶ Gruber, *Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, 88-89; Bayron Toro, *Elecciones y Partidos Politicos*, 194-195.

²⁷ Carlos Muñoz Santaella, Felisa Rincón de Gautier's candidate for Mayor of San Juan, turned out to be a weak and disinterested mayor. As a result of political pressure, he resigned and Roberto Sánchez Vilella was appointed in his place. Sanchez Vilella was close to Luis Muñoz Marín and "was known as a good administrator and excellent political technician." Gruber, *Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, 95-97; Ramos, *Palabras de Mujer*, 88-92.

²⁸ Jenaro Gautier was the son of a well-to-do businessman from Ponce, who owned a large automobile agency. He was interested in poetry and political reform. A lawyer by trade, he worked as a secretary of the Popular Democratic party and as one of Muñoz' aides. Jenaro Gautier and Felisa Rincón came to know each other through their work for the PPD party. Even though in many respects they were opposites, in many others they shared the same beliefs and passions, including the progress of the PPD and Puerto Rico." In March 23, 1940, at the age of 43, Felisa Rincón married attorney Jenaro Gautier (Figure 40). "She wore a white wedding gown, which she had made herself, with a mantilla of white lace that covered her black braids...she wore calla lillies in her hair, and carried a small bouquet of them." The couple was married until Jenaro Gautier's death in 1971. They had no children. Gruber, *Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, 75, 78, 81; Felisa Rincon de Gautier, autobiography; Janet Negretti, interview; Ruben Arrieta, interview.

of its members, was appointed the first Puerto Rican governor to the island.²⁹ In 1948, Luis Muñoz Marín became the first Puerto Rican governor elected by the people.³⁰ In addition, the PPD implemented a massive industrialization plan for the island's economy known as "Operation Bootstrap" and established the *Estado Libre Asociado de Puerto Rico* (Commonwealth of Puerto Rico) in 1952, a status the island held after more than fifty years.³¹ Author Ruth Gruber best explains the meaning of a "free associated state" to the island:

The people of Puerto Rico could henceforth live by their own constitution, elect their own governor, remain citizens of the United States, and still maintain their own Spanish culture and language and traditions within the American Union....The United States would continue its responsibility for the defense of Puerto Rico and the for the operation of the post office and other federal agencies on the island. The island would still elect a resident commissioner and send him to Congress in Washington, with all rights and privileges except the right to vote. Since Puerto Rico is not a state, it could not send congressmen or senators to Washington, nor could the people vote for President. But they were free to vote in political conventions of the major parties that nominated the President.³²

²⁹ In the 1944 elections, Jesús T. Piñero, the close friend of Muñoz Marín, was elected Resident Commissioner in Washington DC. In December 1945, Rexford Tugwell, governor of Puerto Rico, announced his resignation. In 1946, President Harry Truman appointed Piñero as governor of Puerto Rico. Morales Carrión, *Puerto Rico: A Political and Cultural History*, 263-264.

³⁰ Luis Muñoz Marín was re-elected in 1952, 1956 and 1960. He decided not to run in 1964. The PPD selected Roberto Sanchez Vilella as their candidate for governor. Sanchez Vilella won the 1964 elections. Gruber, *Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, 157, 164-165; Morales Carrión, *Puerto Rico: A Political and Cultural History*, 271; Scarano, *Puerto Rico: Cinco siglos de historia*, 776, 780.

³¹ Operation Bootstrap "invited industries from the U.S. and the world to open branch factories on the island. The government gave the new factories tax 'holidays.' The industries paid no income tax to the island for a period of from 10 to 17 years, and none at all to the federal government....Labor was plentiful and cheaper than in the States." Acosta-Belén, *The Puerto Rican Woman*, 4; Gruber, *Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, 125.

³² Felisa Rincón de Gautier, was a regular at the Democratic National Conventions. In 1992 she attended her last Democratic Convention, and she had the honor of being the

As part of the political machine known *Partido Popular Democratico* that introduced the *Estado Libre Asociado* to Puerto Rico, Felisa Rincón de Gautier held the position of president for the San Juan Committee of the PPD. In the late 1940s, she came to the realization that this position did not hold much authority in relation to her goal of helping the people of the island. What she needed was political power, which came in the form of City Manager (i.e. mayor) of San Juan.³³ After refusing to run for mayor several times, because both her father and husband opposed the idea, finally on December 5, 1946, Felisa Rincón de Gautier was appointed and sworn in as City Manager of San Juan (Figure 41), filling the vacancy left by the departing Roberto Sánchez Vilella.³⁴ Two years later, in 1948, she would be elected "mayor" of San Juan by the people of Puerto Rico (Figure 42), a post to which she was re-elected four more

oldest delegate at the event. Gruber, *Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, 129; Delgado Votaw, *Puerto Rican Women: Some Biographical Profiles*, 70.

³³ As the anecdote goes, in September 1945, a hurricane warning had been posted for Puerto Rico. A large group of people came to Felisa Rincón de Gautier's home seeking her help with shelter, etc. She could not give everyone shelter in the residence but took them to a nearby school. From her experience trying to deal with local and governmental administration to get the school open, acquire food and water, etc. for these people came the realization that she needed to be in government to directly help the needy. Thus came her resolve, that next time she would be asked to run for a governmental position, no matter what her father or husband said, she would do it. Gruber, *Felisa Rincón de Gautier* 97-100; Ramos, *Palabras de Mujer*, 93-96; José Miguel Agrelot and María Falcón, interview; Ruben Arrieta, interview.

³⁴ Roberto Sanchez Vilella resigned as mayor to take the job of commissioner of public works. The word mayor is not really accurate when describing her post in San Juan. Felisa Rincón de Gautier really was the city manager or administrator of the capital, but everyone called her mayor. Later law gave the title to her. Felisa Rincon de Gautier, *Autobiography*; Jose Miguel Agrelot and Maria Falcon, interview; Ruben Arrieta, interview; Gruber, *Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, 100, 102-103.

times (1952, 1956, 1960, 1964) ending in 1968, a reflection of the dominance of the *Partido Popular Democratico* in Puerto Rican politics.³⁵

Mayor of San Juan, Capital of Puerto Rico

When Felisa Rincón de Gautier took office at the end of 1946, the city of San Juan was a small urban center of around 180 thousand citizens. In her audio autobiography, she described San Juan as “an uninspired urban center.” As she found out, the capital city of Puerto Rico had been poorly administered and it had an image problem, the latter depicting the city as an *arrabal* (a slum). In *Palabras de Mujer*, the mayor remembers how during this period the city of San Juan was represented in photographs as a poor city with a child of African descent climbing a palm tree. This image was not only a reflection of San Juan, but it became the picture of Puerto Rico around the world. This became the first challenge for Felisa Rincón de Gautier, to improve the perception of San Juan, and at the same time, Puerto Rico's status and image around world.³⁶ Her drive was based on her belief that, “one of a woman's mission[s] in life is to beautify things, to make them tidy.”³⁷ The intense desire to clean the city, wipe out the city's slums and change the overall image of San Juan and Puerto Rico was carried on for the twenty-two year's that she was the official administrator of the capital

³⁵ Even though Felisa Rincón de Gautier was elected for five terms as Mayor of San Juan, this does not mean that she did not have some competition during the elections. Based on an article in the July 11, 1956 *New York Times*, television actress Mona Marti would run for Mayor of San Juan representing the Independence party. It is not clear if she did go through it, but it is a fact that she did not win, since Felisa Rincón de Gautier was re-elected. Delgado Votaw, *Puerto Rican Women: Some Biographical Profiles*, 70; Felisa Rincón de Gautier, autobiography.

³⁶ Felisa Rincón de Gautier, autobiography; Rodríguez Villafaña, *Una mujer al servicio de su pueblo*, 7; Ramos, *Palabras de Mujer*, 97, 99.

(Figure 43). Myraida Chaves, the host for a television documentary on Felisa Rincón de Gautier, described her work for the capital of Puerto Rico as "converting the city of San Juan into a reflection of her personality; happy, educated, modern, communicative, and in particular elegant...".³⁸ She brought great improvements to the city and its inhabitants, including the women of the island.

As one of the first female politicians in Puerto Rico with an important and powerful post in government, Felisa Rincón de Gautier played a pioneering role in the advancement of women's social position within the island. She never considered herself a feminist, but through her work as mayor, she helped with job access, political participation and education for the women of Puerto Rico. As the first female mayor of San Juan, it can be argued that the prestige of women of the island would depend greatly on her accomplishments thus, as Felisa Rincón de Gautier said, "I worked hard - but hard, hard, hard!" Her work as mayor was so important to her that she would work at least sixteen hours a day.³⁹ Such work was admired locally and internationally. For example, at the 1957 International Council of Women conference in Montreal, Felisa Rincón de Gautier was one of eighty prominent women from thirty-one countries among the guests

³⁷ *The New York Times*, "San Juan and its woman mayor form mutual admiration society," June 30, 1957, pg. 5.

³⁸ "Cleaning up San Juan" was Felisa Rincón de Gautier's first project. Purchasing new equipment, new trucks, new uniforms for the sanitation workers, and creating a sense of pride within the workforce accomplished this. She even changed the title of the workers from *barrenderos* (sweepers) to *Empleados de Limpieza Publica* (Public Sanitation Employees) to motivate and show the workforce the importance of their job. Janet Negretti, interview; Jose Miguel Agrelot and María Falcón, interview; *Autografo: Seres Ordinarios con Vidas Extra Ordinarias: Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, People Television, Inc., 1997.

³⁹ Annette Oliveira, "Doña Fela: The Great Lady of Puerto Rican Politics" *Américas* 33, no.1 (1981): 52-53; Ruben Arrieta, interview.

of honor at a dinner given by the National Council of Women of the United States.⁴⁰ But even with her popularity, being Mayor of San Juan was not an easy transition for her. Felisa Rincón de Gautier recalls the early days as Mayor: “When I began, people would call to ridicule me saying, ‘What’s going to happen? A woman in politics!’” Dr. Ricardo Alegría, former director of the *Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña* and a friend of the Mayor, recalled in a television interview how “sometimes it is forgotten, or not mentioned, that it was not easy for Felisa to be San Juan's mayor, there was always some prejudice against her because she was a woman.”⁴¹

Prejudice or not, Felisa Rincón de Gautier, the first lady of Puerto Rican politics, played an eminent role in the development of the city of San Juan and the Puerto Rico of today. In this most powerful of positions in Puerto Rico, she embodied “the gentleness of a woman with the strength of spirit of a man” to play the role of a skillful administrator and loving “mother” to all *Sanjuaneros*.⁴² The latter is exemplified by Wednesday's Open House, in which she would be available the entire working day for her constituents to visit and talk with her about their problems, needs, etc.⁴³ As mayor of the capital she achieved the accreditation of the Municipal Hospital of San Juan and established the School of Medicine. She was a pioneer in the conservation of historical monuments in the Old San Juan (Figure 44), because “she was convinced that the past must be

⁴⁰ Throughout her twenty-two years in service, Felisa Rincón de Gautier would be awarded many honors, both national and international, for her work as Mayor of San Juan, Puerto Rico. *The New York Times*, “Visiting women are feted here”, June 21, 1957, pg. 3.

⁴¹ Oliveira, 52; People Television, Inc., videocassette.

⁴² Marianna Norris, *Doña Felisa: A Biography of the Mayor of San Juan* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1969), 49.

preserved to insure the future." This philosophy "planted the seed" for the future cultural movement to preserve Puerto Rican traditions, music, folklore and art. Felisa Rincón de Gautier organized legal aid centers for the poor and senior citizen's centers. She established the first preschool childcare centers (Figure 45), which the John F. Kennedy administration used as a model for the creation of the Head Start programs in the U.S. Her administration oversaw the construction of the Hiram Bithorn baseball stadium (Figure 46) and left in place the plans for the construction of the Roberto Clemente Coliseum.⁴⁴ Always "the mother" figure, Felisa Rincón de Gautier combined forces with Eastern Airlines to create the impossible, a winter wonderland Puerto Rico.⁴⁵ This was an event that brought much joy to the children of the island (Figure 47). One of her greatest achievements, and a reflection of her personality, was San Juan receiving the "All American City" award for being one of the cleanest cities of the United States. This was a reward of her work in cleaning up and beautifying San Juan that began from the moment she took over as mayor. These accomplishments were the most important of her twenty-two years of public work for the island.⁴⁶

⁴³ Ramos, *Palabras de Mujer*, 99-100; Rodríguez Villafañe, *Una mujer al servicio de su pueblo*, 15.

⁴⁴ Gruber, *Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, 143; Felisa Rincón de Gautier, autobiography; Janet Negretti, interview; Rodríguez Villafañe, *Una mujer al servicio de su pueblo*, 7-10; Ramos, *Palabras de Mujer*, 113-115.

⁴⁵ In the early 1950s, Mayor Felisa Rincón de Gautier and her husband Jenaro were good friends with Eddie Rickenbacker, WWI American air combat hero and president of Eastern Airlines. With his assistant, Eastern Airline planes flew in snow from the New England area to Puerto Rico, for the children of the island to experience and play with it. This event was repeated for a few more years, but it was cancelled once Eastern Airlines changed types of planes, with the new ones not having the lower cargo area to carry the the snow. Ruben Arrieta, interview.

⁴⁶ For a more detailed account of Felisa Rincón de Gautier's accomplishments as mayor of San Juan, Puerto Rico refer to Leonardo Rodríguez Villafañe, *Una mujer al servicio de*

As mayor of the capital of Puerto Rico, Felisa Rincón de Gautier had the opportunity to travel around the world while attending numerous conferences of world municipalities (Figure 48). From these experiences she learned the "importance of travel, of learning how other mayors administered their own towns, and of linking North and South America."⁴⁷ Her fame spread not only across the mainland but also to Europe and Latin America. As a result, the United States Federal government made her America's "good will ambassador" south of the border. Geographically and culturally, Puerto Rico was a bridge between North and South America. As an accomplished woman, Felisa Rincón de Gautier also could serve as a bridge, for she was a citizen of the United States, who spoke the language of both continents, and who shared the culture, the religion, and the traditions of most of Latin America." "A Goodwill Tour in 1957 gave Felisa Rincón de Gautier the opportunity to speak at large gatherings about the relationship between the United States and Puerto Rico."⁴⁸ *The New York Times* in a June 5, 1957 article summarizes the connection between Felisa Rincón de Gautier and the Goodwill tour:

Honoring of Doña Felisa [i.e. Felisa Rincón de Gautier] is not confined to the reaches of her own island. She is one of Puerto Rico's most valuable export items in the matter of international goodwill. She is in great demand as a speaker in Latin America, where the surging feminist movement finds in her a militant leader, and the United States mainland is on her itinerary....Our Department of

su pueblo, 2nd ed. (San Juan, PR: Centro Gráfico del Caribe, Inc., 1987). This summarizes her work as mayor. The husband of Felisa Rincón De Gautier's personal secretary, Hilda Jimenes de Rodriguez, wrote the book. Felisa Rincón de Gautier, autobiography; Janet Negretti, interview; Rodríguez Villafañe, *Una mujer al servicio de su pueblo*, 11.

⁴⁷ Gruber, *Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, 147.

⁴⁸ The "Goodwill tour" encompassed three weeks traveling to the cities of Washington DC, La Paz in Bolivia, Bogotá, Medellín and Calí in Colombia, Quito and Quayaquil in Ecuador, and such countries as Panama, Guatemala and Mexico. Gruber, *Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, 148; Ramos, *Palabras de Mujer*, 128; Felisa Rincón de Gautier, autobiography.

State finds her from time to time a quite handy United States citizen. When propaganda tries to pin the imperialism charge on Uncle Sam in connection with Puerto Rico Doña Felisa is invited to take a tour. In some well-chosen words she gives her audiences the political facts of life about her country.⁴⁹

Although Felisa Rincón de Gautier was a defender of American democracy and believed in the positive, and necessary, relationship between Puerto Rico and the United States, she did not support the notion of statehood for the island. As she explained it in an interview with Janet Negretti in 1982, the establishment of the *Estado Libre Asociado*, in her eyes, resolved the status issue for Puerto Rico. For her statehood was not an option because “we would lose our identity as a group of people.” On the other hand, independence was also not an option because she believed that Puerto Rico could not survive economically without the protective umbrella of the United States. For Felisa Rincón de Gautier, the commonwealth status was "the best of both worlds. We have our Spanish culture and traditions; and yet we are part of the great United States."⁵⁰ The integral relationship between the United States and Puerto Rico was solidified to the world when in 1954, the city of San Juan hosted the fifth reunion of the InterAmerican Congress of Municipalities. Four hundred Mayors and other municipal officials from the Americas attended the conference. One of the event’s highlight was a message from President Dwight D. Eisenhower to the Congress, reiterating the important role the city of San Juan had played in "civic resourcefulness and democracy in action" in the Western Hemisphere. In a speech at the same conference, Felisa Rincón de Gautier, who was the

⁴⁹ *The New York Times*, "San Juan and its woman mayor form mutual admiration society," June 30, 1957, pg. 5.

⁵⁰ Gruber, *Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, 148; Janet Negretti, interview.

president of the congress, "pictured her country as a bridge between the cultures of North America and Central and South America."⁵¹

As a result of her indefatigable and extraordinary work in Puerto Rico and abroad, Felisa Rincón de Gautier received many awards, plaques, diplomas, honorary city keys, and honorary mentions from municipal and national governments around the world, the Catholic Church (Figure 49), and other religious organizations, as well as cultural and civic organizations. In addition, several doctorates Honoris Causa were conferred from colleges and universities across the U.S. and P.R. She was honored for her public service and patriotism by the U.S. Military, and selected in 1954 as "Woman of the Americas" by the United Women of America (Figure 50). Other women who had received the latter award include the suffragist, Carrie Chapman and First Lady, Eleanor Roosevelt.⁵²

Conclusion

Politics and social issues had always been part of the Rincón Marrero household and in turn, part of Felisa Rincón de Gautier's upbringing. Her paternal grandfather's being mayor of Yabucoa, the many *tertulias* she experienced at her home, and Puerto Rican women being able to participate in the electoral process, helped shape her political and social ideologies and paved the way for her position as mayor of San Juan.

Felisa Rincón de Gautier's political career started in 1932, when she confronted her father, Enrique Rincón Plumey, with her desire to register to vote. From member of the *Partido Liberal* to Mayor of San Juan, Puerto Rico under the *Partido Popular*

⁵¹ Douglas Dales, "Americas chided on arms spending," *The New York Times*, December 4, 1954, pg.9

Democratico, her motivation was to improve the lives of all Puerto Ricans. This, and more, she was able to accomplish with hard work and devotion to the citizens of San Juan and the island of Puerto Rico. In the process she acquired a “hemispheric reputation for cleaning up and building up the Puerto Rican capital.”⁵³ As seen by the multiple awards and recognitions, Felisa Rincón de Gautier’s fame as mayor was not contained to just Puerto Rico, it spread throughout the United States, Latin America and Europe. Ruth Fernandez, former senator of Puerto Rico and a friend of the mayor once said in a television interview, “Felisa with all the interior strength she had, she was a lady, she was very elegant, always a madam, then she would not argue with men in such a manner that she would lose her femininity, no...Felisa always dressed as a lady, argued as a lady but with firmness.”⁵⁴ It was not just the incredible work she did for San Juan and its citizens, or her role as U.S. Goodwill Ambassador throughout the Americas, or her connections with U. S. political figures such as John F. Kennedy (Figure 51) and Hubert Humphrey that brought her national and international fame, it was also, her unmistakable appearance and manner of dress that gave her what could be considered a celebrity status. As *The*

⁵² Rodríguez Villafañe, *Una mujer al servicio de su pueblo*, 16-21; Gruber, *Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, 149; Felisa Rincón de Gautier, autobiography; José Miguel Agrelot and María Falcón, interview; Oliveira, 53.

⁵³ In 1964 opponents of Felisa Rincón de Gautier, which many were from the PPD, began to spread rumors about her persona and her administration. From it, many well-known personalities came to her defense, including world-renowned cellist Pablo Cassals and the leader of the statehood party in Puerto Rico, Luis A. Ferre. The latter reiterated the notion that Felisa Rincón de Gautier is the mother image of San Juan, the benefits that this image has brought to the citizens of San Juan. As a result of the rumors, in 1965 Felisa Rincón de Gautier was charged “with violating municipal law.” She was found not guilty, but the experience left her with a bad feeling and her decision not to run again for mayor in 1968. Gruber, *Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, 163,167,170; Peter Kihss, “San Juan mayor gets city award.” *The New York Times*, June 1, 1962, pg. 4.

⁵⁴ People Television, Inc., videocassette.

New York Times described her in 1957, "No matter what the ceremony, Her Honor is the *grande dame*. Her entrances to receptions are in the regal manner right down to the flicking ever present fan."⁵⁵ Merrill Folsom, also writing for the *New York Times* went as far as to describe Felisa Rincón de Gautier as "quite a tourist attraction herself."⁵⁶ Given the press attention to her appearance, what was it about Felisa Rincón de Gautier's style that created her iconic *grande dame* image?

⁵⁵ *The New York Times*, "San Juan and its woman mayor form mutual admiration society," June 30, 1957, pg. 5.

⁵⁶ Felisa Rincón de Gautier played a key role in campaigning for John F. Kennedy during the 1960 election. The Hispanic vote was key in John F. Kennedy's win of the White House. Afterwards, John F. Kennedy offered Felisa Rincón de Gautier a post as an ambassador. Although she was grateful, she declined, because all she wanted to be was San Juan's mayor. Ramos, *Palabras de Mujer*, 139-140, 143; Rodríguez Villafaña, *Una mujer al servicio de su pueblo*, 22; *The New York Times*, June 30, 1957; Merrill Folsom, "Puerto Rico's two faces," *The New York Times*, January 19, 1964, pg. XX17.

CHAPTER 5

FELISA RINCÓN DE GAUTIER: FASHION STYLE AND *GRANDE DAME* IMAGE, 1946-1968

After considering Felisa Rincón de Gautier's upbringing, her time as a dressmaker, and her political life, this chapter explores her manner of dressing, including her choice of clothing, accessories and hairstyles, and considers, in particular, the elements that would allow her to create a *grande dame* image. As the very popular mayor of San Juan, Puerto Rico from 1946 through 1968, Felisa Rincón de Gautier became very visible both locally and internationally- a great attribute for a politician. Wherever she traveled, people recognized the mayor: she often wore flowers in her hair, a coronet of braids piled high on the head, sometimes worn with a neck scarf, and always carried a folding fan. The press described her as the "colorful lady mayor of San Juan," and frequently remarked on her appearance.¹ Whether in New York, Buenos Aires, New Orleans, Madrid, Cleveland to the Philippines, they commented on her hairstyle, apparel, even the color of her lipstick.² Before examining the elements of her image, it is essential to have an understanding of the context of contemporary women's fashion. Thus this

¹ Annette Oliveira, "Doña Fela: The Great Lady of Puerto Rican Politics," *Américas*, January 1981, 53.

² Mary O'Hara, "Woman Mayor of San Juan Takes Everything in Stride," *Pittsburgh Press*, February 15, 1963. Felisa Rincón de Gautier was known for wearing bright color

chapter begins with an overview of western women's fashions from 1946 to 1968. It continues with an analysis of Felisa Rincón de Gautier's manner of dress and compares her dress to contemporary fashion. Her manner of dressing is divided into categories "office wear", "out-of-the-office wear", eveningwear, accessories and jewelry, headwear, and *coiffures*. This discussion is followed by an analysis of Felisa Rincón de Gautier's overall image as a *grande dame*.

Fashions from the Late 1940s to the Late 1960s

After a dose of military inspired clothing and the proliferation of a tubular, boxy line with short skirts and padded shoulders throughout most of the 1940s, women were drawn back to a more feminine look with the popularity of Christian Dior's "New Look" in the late 1940s (1947). An uplifted bust line, pinched waist, and rounded hipline characterized the new silhouette, one that would make its mark in 1950s. This decade in fashion was all about appropriateness in dress at all times. Thus women would attire themselves with white gloves, shirtwaist dresses, and hats for all occasions. Unlike the exaggerated femininity of the fifties, the 1960s was all about modernity, which was expressed through uncomplicated, streamlined styles. In dress, modernity was exemplified through a minimalist approach to jewelry, accessories and ornamentation, as well as a more linear silhouette.³

lipstick, and having her nails and toenails polished. She did not use eye makeup or eyebrow pencil.

³ Douglas A. Russell, *Costume History and Style* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1983), 453, 459; Annalee Gold, *90 Years of Fashion* (New York: Fairchild Fashion Group, 1991), 117-118; Caroline Rennolds Milbank, *New York Fashion: The Evolution of American Style* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1989), 170, 172, 200, 202.

In the span of Felisa Rincón de Gautier's twenty-two years in office, there were a wide variety of silhouettes in women's fashions. The tubular/box silhouette in the late forties (Figure 52) was trumped by the "New Look" with its fit-n-flare line (Figure 53). The full skirt and narrow waistline of the fit-n-flare silhouette held constant during the fifties but received some company from a linear H-line in the mid-fifties (Figure 54). This silhouette was followed by the triangular A-line or Trapeze (Figure 55) and by the tubular *saque* in the late fifties (Figure 56). The *saque*, with its straight unfitted design was modified into the chemise, with a bit more fit. At the same time a boxier silhouette (Figure 57), in the form of the Chanel suit, makes its presence. It was the boxy silhouette and the chemise with somewhat geometric lines, that dominated the 1960s.⁴

All of these silhouettes, in one way or another were adopted for dresses, suits and coats in the late forties, fifties, and through the late sixties. After the end of World War II, in 1945 the styles had square lines and short skirts, but began to have a longer look, with dropped hemlines and features such as swags and tunics. These styles were overshadowed in 1947 when Christian Dior introduced his "New Look," which had (almost ankle length) fuller skirts and a fitted bodice (Figure 58). This look was adopted in the 1950s for shirtwaist and afternoon dresses. In addition to this look, narrower, curvier styles in both shirtwaist (Figure 59) and afternoon dresses were also available. As the decade continued, the fitted bodice and the narrow waistline began to disappear in dresses and hemlines began to rise. This idea was interpreted in particular dress styles, such as the loose fitting A-line or Trapeze, *saque* or chemise. The trapeze dresses follow a triangular line, which focus on narrow shoulders and full pleated or stiffened hems.

⁴ Gold, *90 Years of Fashion*, 117-118; Russell, *Costume History and Style*, 448, 450, 459.

The *saque* dress was cut straight with no waist seam, later being cut to fit closer to the body. It could be worn with a belt to create the illusion of a waist. Another style of dress for daytime in the late 1950s was the combination of a simple straight dress with matching jacket. Daywear fabrics common in this decade included silk shantung, tie silk, sheer wools, wool-and-silk blends, and cotton - seersucker, stripes, plaids, some with embroidery effects or eyelet details. Prevalent fabric prints had medium-scale floral patterns in colors such as taupe, rose, olive, lilac, sapphire blue, and moss green. Of the design elements found in all types of dresses of the fifties the most important was the ornamental neckline. These necklines ranged from cutout or scalloped, halters, camisole style, and off-the shoulder.⁵ Daytime dresses throughout the 1960s were dominated by a loosening silhouette with a boxy image, although full-skirted dresses continued to be shown and worn, especially for summer and evening. Popular day dress styles during the first half of the 1960s include the sheath and the overblouse (Figure 60). The latter consisted of a high-necked overblouse and a slim skirt. Other dress options throughout the sixties include coat and dress ensembles and the short shift dress with architectural lines. Overall, dresses in the sixties were quite simple in design and ornamentation.⁶

In the late 1940s most evening dresses were strapless, with very wide hem skirts extending to the upper ankle or floor. In the early to mid fifties the look continued, either

⁵ Rennolds Milbank, *New York Fashion*, 143, 170, 175 –176, 181; Russell, *Costume History and Style*, 453, 456-458; Gold, *90 Years of Fashion*, 15, 17-18. Shirtwaist dress is defined as a “one-piece tailored dress with bodice like a shirtwaist, often tucked, usually belted.” An afternoon dress is defined as a “costume suitable for daytime social functions, more dressy and usually longer than for general wear.” Both definitions were retrieved from Mary Brooks Pickens, *A Dictionary of Costume and Fashion: Historic and Modern* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, Inc., 1999), 101,104.

still strapless or with very narrow shoulder straps. The short evening and cocktail dresses of the fifties also follow the “New Look” line with its narrow waist and ankle length skirt with wide hem. The later fifties saw the continuation of the strapless top and fitted waist for evening gowns, but with the skirt falling straight to the floor with minimum fullness. Eveningwear fabrics favored in the 1950s included paper taffetas, faille, moiré, and heavy satins.⁷ In the 1960s eveningwear follows the straighter, looser silhouette popular at the time. There are long and short evening chemise dresses. A version of the overblouse dress was created for evening but with a long, narrow skirt. By the mid sixties, there is no longer a lack of ornamentation in eveningwear as beads, glitter, feathers or extravagant fabrics are being used on these.⁸

The square-shouldered suits dominant in the 1940s were replaced in the late forties by the “New Look” design with its long, flaring skirt, a short, fitted jacket with sloping shoulders, and straight sleeves. Through the first half of the 1950s, suits came with jackets in straight, tailored styles or very fitted at the waist and worn over narrow (Figure 61) or full skirts. By the mid-to-late 1950s suits had square, waist-length jackets and skirts were worn just below the knee (Figure 62). The Chanel suit, with its simple boxy jacket and skirt, exemplified this look. Suits in the 1960s continued bypassing the waistline to have unfitted short jackets, such as in the Chanel suit, bypassing the waistline. These jackets were paired with gathered peg-top skirts (Figure 63) or more

⁶ Gold, *90 Years of Fashion*, 17-19; Rennolds Milbank, *New York Fashion*, 175, 204-205; Russell, *Costume History and Style*, 460.

⁷ Russell, *Costume History and Style*, 453, 456; Rennolds Milbank, *New York Fashion*, 174-176. Evening gown is defined as a “décolleté costume, usually of delicate or luxurious fabric.” Cocktail dress is defined as an “informal but rather dressy costume to wear...in late afternoon or evening.” Brooks Pickens, *A Dictionary of Costume*, 102.

tubular skirts. Also, there was an overblouse suit, consisting of the overblouse, skirt and matching jacket.⁹

In the late 1940s the most fashionable coats “were great triangles or pyramids of wool or faille” to complement the “New Look” line (Figure 64). The long full-backed coat started losing its flare in the early 1950s in favor of a more tubular look. The straight-line coats of the mid-fifties (Figure 65), which closed up the front to small collars, evolved into collarless shorter coats with an empire waistline and flare in the 1960s (Figure 66). Other types of outerwear, particularly popular in the 1950s, include fur wraps, shoulder or cloth capes, stoles, and knee-length or calf-length fur coats.¹⁰

In the 1950s costume jewelry was *de rigueur*, with matching sets of earrings, choker or bib necklace, bracelet and brooch. The latter was very popular during this decade and worn both with daywear and eveningwear. Also popular in the 1950s was jewelry with rhinestones, diamonds or pearls. Pearl necklaces were a common piece of jewelry during the first half of the 1960s. Simplicity was key during this decade thus jewelry was kept to a minimum with a necklace and earrings or a brooch and earrings. From the mid-sixties on, as a way to accessorize the simple lines of clothes, there was a trend toward more colorful, bold costume jewelry including necklaces, earrings and bracelets.¹¹

⁸ Gold, *90 Years of Fashion*, 19; Rennolds Milbank, *New York Fashion*, 202, 204.

⁹ Russell, *Costume History and Style*, 448, 450, 456; Gold, *90 Years of Fashion*, 38, 41; Rennolds Milbank, *New York Fashion*, 176.

¹⁰ Russell, *Costume History and Style*, 453, 455, 457; Gold, *90 Years of Fashion*, 29, 31; Rennolds Milbank, *New York Fashion*, 176.

¹¹ Rennolds Milbank, *New York Fashion*, 176 -177, 202.

Another accessory fashionable during the 1950s and part of the 1960s was gloves (Figure 67). They were worn during the day and night. Daywear gloves were wrist or three-quarter length and were available in colors to match apparel. At night, gloves were worn in every length, made out of such materials as kid, cotton or taffeta. Just as with daywear gloves, evening gloves were available in colors and patterns to match the dress. The first half of the 1960s saw the continuation of gloves as part of the fashionable ensemble, but the practice declined noticeably in the second half of the sixties.¹²

Handbags and pocketbooks (Figure 67) in the decade of the 1950s were bigger and rounder compared to the styles of the 1940s. Most handbags had one or two short straps and were carried in hand or worn over the arm. During this period it was the fashion to have matching handbags and shoes, particularly in such colors as black, blue, brown, beige and dark burgundy. Handbags in the sixties continued to have short straps, but became larger in size. For evening clutch handbags were the most common in both decades.¹³

In general, shoes (Figure 67) in the 1950s were high-heeled with rounded toes, with medium heels gaining acceptance for dress wear. Evening sandals were popular for every season. After the mid-fifties shoes gradually became more pointed with a very high, slender heel. This style of shoe, with its stiletto heel, continued into the decade of

¹² Ibid., 176-177.

¹³ Rennolds Milbank, *New York Fashion*, 177; Gold, *90 Years of Fashion*, 130; Russell, *Costume History and Style*, 458.

the sixties. Gradually, the sharply pointed toes become more rounded, and the heels decreased in height to low or flat heels.¹⁴

There were a wide variety of headwear styles available to the fashionable woman between 1946 and 1968. The popularity of the “New Look,” at the end of the 1940s, brought back an emphasis on feminine clothes, reflected in headwear. In the 1950s, women wore hats in the daytime with shirtwaist and afternoon dresses, as well as suits. Available hat styles for daywear throughout the fifties included: wide-brimmed, low-crowned hats (Figure 53), brimless caps (Figure 65), cloches (Figure 56) toques (Figure 62), flat turbans, and pillboxes. Many of the early fifties hats had asymmetrical brims, tilted up on one side, and trimmed with veils and feathers. There was a vogue for hats, no matter the style, to be embellished with lots of artificial flowers. Also in vogue were veiled hats, which included half hats with veiling and an all-veiling “cage” with some appliqué for ornamentation. Cocktail dresses also were accessorized with hats, including “‘cartwheels’ of velvet, lace, or horsehair; little turbans or close-fitting caps of brocade, taffeta, or satin.” By the end of the 1950s and early the 1960s, all kinds of bushy fur, fake or real, hats became popular for winter. Besides the popular pillbox hat (Figure 68) with its flat, brimless style, hats in the sixties began to increase in size with towering crowns, such as the mitrelike hat (Figure 63). It is during this decade that headwear in the form of hats start decreasing in importance and use. Instead, women start dressing their hair with fabric-covered hair bands and bows at the back of the head.¹⁵

¹⁴ Rennolds Milbank, *New York Fashion*, 177; Russell, *Costume History and Style*, 457; Gold, *90 Years of Fashion*, 117-118, 128, 130, 132.

¹⁵ Gold, *90 Years of Fashion*, 100-101; Rennolds Milbank, *New York Fashion*, 176, 179, 200, 206; Russell, *Costume History and Style*, 457.

Just as with headwear, fashionable hairstyles for the twenty-two years in question greatly vary in style. The early 1950s hair was softly curled and worn in a variety of styles and lengths. Examples include the softly waved pageboys (Figure 58) and curlier shorter styles known as the pixiecut (Figure 59).¹⁶ A change in silhouette, brought change in hair size and style, thus *bouffant* hairdos made their appearance in the mid-1950s. These hairstyles, including the beehive (Figure 69) and the bubble, were created by excessively brushing and teasing or back combing the hair to create volume and hair sprayed to maintain the shape. Besides the high volume hairstyles, other *coiffures* popular in the late fifties included the smoothed back *chignon* and the French twist. Wigs and colored hair became more prevalent at the end of the 1950s. At the beginning of the 1960s, the teased bouffant (Figure 68) with fullness at the sides and on top of the head, was made popular by Jackie Kennedy. Teasing the hair was very popular during the sixties and it was common for women to wear hairpieces and wigs. With the decline of the hat as headwear, the hair became a key accessory in a woman's appearance. After the mid-1960s softer, more natural hairstyles returned, including long, straight hair.¹⁷

As part of a woman's *toilette*, makeup changes with fashion. In the forties, women wore bright and dark red lipstick. The fifties, with its feminine mood, brought more elaborate makeup with a focus on the eyes created by using eye shadow and black

¹⁶ Doreen Yarwood, *Fashion in the Western World* (London: B.T. Batsford, Ltd, 1992), 162; Russell, *Costume History and Style*, 457; Gold, *90 Years of Fashion*, 92, 101; Rennolds Milbank, *New York Fashion*, 179, 200, 202, 206

¹⁷ Yarwood, *Fashion in the Western World*, 162; Russell, *Costume History and Style*, 457; Gold, *90 Years of Fashion*, 92, 101; Rennolds Milbank, *New York Fashion*, 179, 200, 202, 206

liner. The sixties continued the focus on the eyes, but the look became even more dramatic with the use of false eyelashes and multiple colors of eye shadow.¹⁸

In general, the fashion lines for the period of the late 1940s to the mid 1960s have been described as predominantly “smooth textures, strong silhouettes, and geometric lines.” All in all, the fashions of the 1950s had an air of exaggerated femininity, while the fashions of the 1960s can be classified as simple, clean and pared down.¹⁹

Felisa Rincón de Gautier’s Manner of Dress

As the head administrator for the capital, Felisa Rincón de Gautier had an extraordinarily visible public position. It required her to work in city hall and be out in the streets and neighborhoods. She regularly held a Wednesday “open house” for the residents of San Juan. In addition, she received and entertained many dignitaries and personalities who visited the island and went with them when traveling abroad representing Puerto Rico and/or the United States. Whether in her office within the walls of City Hall, out and about in the city or attending cocktail parties and evening galas or around the world in a Goodwill Tour, Felisa Rincón de Gautier dressed for success and to impress.

As Mayor of San Juan from 1946 through 1968, Felisa Rincón de Gautier’s manner of dress followed conventional fashion. She adopted many of the styles of dress that were fashionable during her twenty-two years in office, sometimes with modifications. There were consistent independent aspects to her manner of dress: her hairstyles, headwear and accessories. These three elements moved Felisa Rincón de

¹⁸ Gold, *90 Years of Fashion*, 92; Rennolds Milbank, *New York Fashion*, 179, 202.

Gautier from fashion follower to fashion individualist, thus creating her “calling card” in Puerto Rico and around the world. The analysis of this “calling card” is organized into “office wear,” “out of the office” wear, and eveningwear. “Office wear” is defined as apparel worn specifically for working in the office, dealing with administrative issues, and City Hall. “Out-of-the-office” wear is categorized as apparel including dresses, suits, and outerwear, worn for events and activities related to Felisa Rincón de Gautier’s responsibilities as mayor. Examples include visits to municipal buildings, receptions, conferences, traveling abroad, dedications of new works, etc. Eveningwear is identified as apparel, short or long evening dresses, selected for galas and formal events connected to the mayor’s job. In addition, the analysis will continue with the categories of, accessories and jewelry, headwear and hairstyles.

“Office Wear”

When Felisa Rincón de Gautier was sworn in as city manager/mayor of San Juan in December 5, 1946, she was simply dressed in a white short-sleeved, shirtwaist dress (Figure 70). This would signal one of the two garments that would ultimately become her working “uniform” during her time in San Juan’s city hall. Besides shirtwaist dresses, her other “uniform” for the office consisted of a short sleeve blouse and a dark colored skirt (Figure 71). The latter ensemble, in a variety of fabrics and colors, will be the key “uniform” throughout all of her twenty-two years in office. The first uniform, the shirtwaist dress (Figure 72), was mainly worn during the first eight years in office. The style consisted of short sleeves, with the skirts varying from straight and tailored in the

¹⁹ Russell, *Costume History and Style*, 459; Rennolds Milbank, *New York Fashion*, 181, 202.

late forties to fuller and gored for a fit-n-flare silhouette in the mid fifties. Sometimes the dresses would be matched with a very thin belt. The fabrics ranged from solid colors to all-over patterns, such as abstract floral, small polka dots, and geometric squares. The second office “uniform,” the blouse and skirt ensemble included the light colored blouse and dark colored straight skirt, the light colored printed blouse and dark colored circle skirt in the mid fifties (Figure 73), and on occasions, a matching blouse and skirt ensemble. Throughout the period, the look of the ensemble was the same, a hip-length blouse over a skirt. Originally, the blouse was more tailored and buttoned up the front. It resembled in style the Caribbean men’s *guayaberas*.²⁰ Afterwards, the blouses started to show a looser fit and were either trimmed with ties at the neck or were matched with a neck scarf tied into a bow (Figure 74). By the sixties, the blouses were still loose in fit, either with a round neckline or trimmed with a large bow. The fabric for the blouses included linen and cotton, embellished with eyelet embroidery (Figure 75), drawn work, or prints. The latter includes partial and all over floral prints, as well as geometric and linear prints, such as stripes. The blouse and skirt uniform of Felisa Rincón de Gautier was well known, several newspaper and magazines articles mention her “uniform.” For example, in 1953 the *Bridgeport Sunday Post* noted how “in her [Felisa Rincón de Gautier] office she wore a [embroidered] kimona-like loose blouse, her regulation working uniform, because she says, it is convenient and protecting and unobtrusive.” In 1956, *McCall’s* mentioned “her standard daytime costume, made to her order with a royal disregard for current fashion: a circular skirt of dark silk, and floating, hip-length

²⁰ A *guayabera* is a short or long sleeved shirt, made out of lightweight fabric, with front button closure to be worn untucked.

blouse decorated with beautiful needlework and tied in a soft bow at the neck.” While in 1961, *The New York Times* pointed out the “yellow flowered smock [blouse] with a wide hair ribbon of matching color....[suggesting that]Her working costume is a smock because she has to dress quickly.”²¹

“Out-of-the-Office Wear”

As Mayor of San Juan and the most important woman in Puerto Rico, her responsibilities took her beyond the administrative aspects of her job.²² Not only was she the official hostess for the city, she also became a representative for the United States around the world. For any of the events or social functions her position as mayor may create, Felisa Rincón de Gautier had to be ready with a suitable dress, suit or coat to wear. The dresses under in this category are classified as “afternoon” dresses and “cocktail” dresses. An “afternoon” dress is apparel for daytime social functions, while a “cocktail” dress is defined as informal and partially dressy apparel for late afternoon functions. Women’s suits were two or three piece matching ensembles composed of skirt and jacket or coat, or skirt, jacket and coat. Coats, as a single outerwear entity, were worn for warmth and protection from the elements. They are usually made out of wool fabric, leather or fur.²³

²¹ Anne Whelan, “A Visit to Puerto Ricans’ Homeland, *Bridgeport (Connecticut) Sunday Post*, October 4, 1953; Llewellyn Miller, “McCall’s Visits Doña Felisa,” *McCall’s*, November 1956; Brooks Atkinson, “Mayor of San Juan Lends Human Touch to Bureaucracy of City Government,” *The New York Times*, April 7, 1961

²² Alice Frein Johnson, “Writer Tells of Trip to Caribbean,” *Seattle Times*, March 19, 1950.

²³ Mary Brooks Picken, *A Dictionary of Costume and Fashion* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, Inc.,1999), 4, 65, 70, 339.

As a woman with a background in dressmaking and understanding of fashion, Felisa Rincón de Gautier generally dressed according to the popular styles of the time, but added her own twist to the overall look. In 1947, barely a year after being appointed to the position of mayor, she was quoted in a newspaper article lamenting the fact that with her new job, she no longer had time to design and sew her own clothing, something she had always enjoyed.²⁴ As a solution to this situation, she would have her clothes made by a professional dressmaker, but contributed to the design process.

Rafaela Santos, a distinguished Puerto Rican fashion designer, designed for Felisa Rincón de Gautier. In an interview with in 1964 with *St. Petersburg Times*, Rafaela Santos explains how her “specialty will always be high couture evening gowns.” Her original designs are completely made by hand, with prices (at the time) starting at \$150 a gown. Her clientele included “actresses, singers and performers in TV and the cinema and society women.” Felisa Rincón de Gautier is quoted as acknowledging herself as “one of Rafaela Santos’ most devoted customers and admirers.” She believed Santos “enhanced the charm of our women through the creation of original models.”²⁵

The various styles of afternoon and cocktail dresses Felisa Rincón de Gautier wore during her twenty-two years in office are examples of garments made just for her. The afternoon dresses were composed of one or two pieces. The two-piece afternoon dresses followed the styles typical of the late fifties/early sixties, a chemise dress and matching coat ensemble (Figure 76), while in the sixties, the forward style was the

²⁴ *El Mundo* (San Juan, PR) “En Boston Elogian a la Alcaldesa de San Juan,” June 12, 1947.

²⁵ Judy Hamilton Cooper, “Will Be Shown Here: Couture From Islands,” *St. Petersburg Times*, February 6, 1964.

overblouse dress (Figure 77). Her affinity for two-piece ensembles was based on fit, as she told the *Christian Science Monitor* in 1961: “They are so kind.”²⁶ The silhouettes for the afternoon dresses covered the spectrum starting with the long, straight look of the late forties (Figure 78), followed with the fit-n-flare look (Figure 79), which Felisa Rincón de Gautier wore during most of the fifties, and ending with the straight, tubular look of the sixties (Figure 77). Even with the changing silhouettes, the afternoon dresses had some consistent characteristics: short or long sleeves, high necklines or collars. Necklines ranged from V and square in the late forties and early fifties, to jewel or high round necklines in the late fifties and sixties. There was an effort to bring focus to the bodice or neck area of the dress. The focus to the neck was accomplished mainly through tying a bow, which could contrast the dress or match it. The bows at the neckline of afternoon dresses start small in size in the mid fifties (Figure 74) and grow into enormous sizes by the decade of the sixties (Figure 80). The bodice trimmed with nailheads was common in the forties, and all types of lace inserts (Figure 81) when worn in the early fifties, bringing attention to this section of the dress. Afterwards, the fabrics become the attention getters. Some of the afternoon dresses were of a solid color fabric, but the majority, were made out of printed or lace fabrics. Prints ranged from overall small floral or geometrical shapes (Figure 82) in the early to mid fifties, to overall larger floral, striped (Figure 79), and checked in the late fifties, and then to extremely exaggerated and large designs in plaid, polka dots (Figure 83), and stripes in the sixties. In a 1954 article in the *Saginaw News* Felisa Rincón de Gautier is described as wearing a navy blue linen

²⁶ Nan Trent, “Woman today: Doña Felisa Rules with Graze, Vigor,” *Christian Science Monitor*, July 10, 1961.

afternoon frock, accented with Spanish lace. Another example of an afternoon dress is found in the *Star and Herald* of 1956, where they described her “navy blue dress with a large rose colored bow to match the flower [in hair].” In 1962, the *Memphis Press-Scimitar* described two afternoon ensembles, a flowered print dress and a white lace dress with a white satin coat.²⁷

The cocktail dresses were mainly created as one-piece garments. These dresses, even in the sixties, mainly focus on the fit-n-flare silhouette, which was achieved with either gored skirts in the early fifties or circle skirts in the late fifties. Even though the look is continued into the sixties, there is a reduction in the size and volume of the skirt. Cocktail dresses worn by Felisa Rincón de Gautier were sleeveless or with small puff sleeves (Figure 84) in the early fifties, these were followed with three quarter length to long sleeves (Figure 85) from the mid fifties to the sixties. Similar to the afternoon dresses, the focus of the cocktail garments, was on the bodice and neckline areas. These dresses were dominated by an off-the-shoulder neckline. This was the staple neckline for cocktail dresses all throughout her tenure as a mayor. It could be round, V-neck, or part of the lace illusion, but it was an off-the-shoulder style. Other, but not as common, necklines encountered include halter, sweetheart, and wide-square. In the majority of examples, the necklines featured lace, embroidered eyelet, beading, or scalloping. Unlike the afternoon dresses, which were dominated by printed fabrics, cocktail dresses were mainly solid in color, with embellishment breaking the monotony. Still, there are a few

²⁷ Esther M. Way, “Fine Mayor Yet Ever-Feminine—That’s First Lady of San Juan, *Saginaw (Michigan) News*, May 27, 1954; *Star & Herald* (Panama), “Woman Mayor Makes Big Hit at Municipalities Conference,” August, 1956; Richard H. Boyce, “Puerto

examples of printed fabric cocktail dresses, which include floral designs(Figure 86). Fabrics for cocktail dresses ranged from taffeta and satin, to velvet and brocade. *McCall's* comments how "at six o'clock she was on hand in gray taffeta to welcome some visiting dignitaries." While, in 1958, syndicated columnist Edyth Thornton McCleod met Felisa Rincón de Gautier at the opening of the San Juan Intercontinental Hotel in Puerto Rico. McCleod was amazed that for a warm afternoon, when everyone else was dressed in summery dresses, Felisa Rincón de Gautier, "our individualist!" was wearing a black velvet cocktail dress.²⁸

In Felisa Rincón de Gautier's "out-of-the-office" wardrobe, black velvet fabric was not reserved just for cocktail dresses, but would also make an appearance in the design of one of her suits, as noted by the *Milwaukee Journal* in 1958. At the time, she had traveled to Milwaukee to receive an honorary degree from Mount Mary College and her wardrobe for the event consisted of a "black velvet suit trimmed with white lace."²⁹ Having suits in her "out-of-the-office" wardrobe provided Felisa Rincón de Gautier with an additional apparel option. She could wear one of them instead of an afternoon dress when needing to attend a function. The suits in her wardrobe consisted of 2 pieces, a jacket and skirt, worn with a blouse. Overall, the look of the suits was one of easy fit and smooth lines, including a straight skirt. The jacket evolved from a linear, masculine cut in the late forties (Figure 87), to one nipped in at the waist in the early to mid fifties

Rico's Doña Fela, Power in Island Politics," *Memphis Press-Scimitar*, November 12, 1962.

²⁸ Miller, "McCall's Visits Doña Felisa,"; Edyth Thornton McCleod, "Beauty After Forty," *Syndicated Column*, April 14, 1958.

²⁹ Marilyn Gardner, "Rights Mean Little Without Respect: Puerto Rican Mayor Stress Femininity," *Milwaukee Journal*, April 18, 1958.

(Figure 88), and then to a more square line in the sixties (Figure 89). As her suits changed in cut, so did the lapels, starting with medium size at the beginning of Felisa Rincón de Gautier's mayoral tenure, moving to large in the mid-fifties, and finishing with no lapels in the sixties. With the constant straight silhouette for the skirt, its length became the variable in the design. The blouses worn with the suits in her wardrobe included styles with button-up shirtwaist collars, round necklines, band collars, and fabric ties to create a bow. In general, the blouses were of a lighter color contrasting with the darker colored suits. An exception is seen with white suits (Figure 90), which were paired with either a white or a darker colored blouse. The skirts of the suits worn by Felisa Rincón de Gautier in the late forties reached below the knee, in the early to mid-fifties the hem dropped to lower calf length, then went up to top calf length in the late fifties and early sixties. Unlike the dresses and office "uniform" which created an upper body focus, the suits themselves did not move the eye to the upper body. Focus on the face and head was accomplished by the headwear or hairstyles. Of the many articles in the press talking about Felisa Rincón de Gautier, many describe or make note of her suits. In 1954, *La Prensa* from New York mentioned her gray tailored suit. The *Miami Herald* in 1961 described her suit as "crisp white linen" embellished with embroidery. Two years later, the *Detroit Free Press* commented on her black suit skirt with a white and silver print blouse. While in 1966, the *Matawan Journal* pointed out how Felisa Rincón de Gautier was "attractively dressed in a white suit with gold mesh ascot."³⁰

³⁰ *New York La Prensa*, "Doña Felisa Rincón esta orgullosa del titulo de Mujer de las Americas," May 23, 1954; Juanity Greend, "Doña Felisa: City's Pinup: San Juan's Mayor a Real Sweetheart," *Miami Herald*, November 16, 1961; Pauline Sterling, "Lady

As part of the “out-of-the-office wear”, coats serve more of a functional purpose than a decorative one. In the analysis of images of Felisa Rincón de Gautier, it appears that coats (these are separate entities from the dress/coat ensembles) were worn mainly during travel and/or during her visits to the United States or other countries. Coats were predominantly dark in color, with a fuller cut (Figure 91), loose silhouette, which became more streamline toward the sixties. In addition, Felisa Rincón de Gautier wore a fur coat (Figure 92). As the *Daily Globe* noted in 1958, the mayor was “wrapped in mink.”³¹

Eveningwear

If there is a category of apparel in which Felisa Rincón de Gautier’s *grande dame* style was most apparent it was in eveningwear. Anne Whelan, writing for the *Bridgeport Sunday Post*, described her as giving “the effect of a Velázquez painting, and she looks like nothing so much when garbed for a formal affair, as Titian’s “Flora,” regal, elegant.” For the many formal functions, galas, receptions, and events she attended throughout her twenty-two years in office, Felisa Rincón de Gautier was “distinctive and picturesque” in her manner of dress. Her distinctive dress was accomplished by following a particular formula. The formula pattern of dressing included gowns created by her composed of a long full skirt, fitted bodice, either long or short sleeves, and the most important ingredient, the off-the shoulder neckline. As with the cocktail dresses she wore to semi-formal activities, the evening gowns followed the concept of a one-piece garment in the fit-n-flare silhouette (Figure 93). The long skirt of her evening gowns ranged in fullness

Mayor Tells Women How to Win,” *Detroit Free Press*, February 17, 1963; *Matawan* (New Jersey) *Journal*, “Mayor of San Juan, Puerto Rico, Visits Key Port,” June 9, 1966

³¹ Margaret Gorman, “Puerto Rico Recognized Women of Ability: Lady Mayor has Brains, Beauty,” *Boston Daily Globe*, December 2, 1958.

from the widest in the mid-fifties (Figure 94) to somewhat narrower toward the end of the sixties (Figure 95). Illustrations of her gowns show the skirt trailing into a train. In general, this style of dress defines eveningwear all throughout her tenure, even in the sixties when fashion moved away from the extreme femininity and fit-n-flare silhouette of the fifties to a simpler, tubular silhouette. The sleeves in these garments ranged from short puffs, to three quarter in length, to long, to no sleeves at all. The latter is seen on garments designed and created with Spanish shawls (Figure 96), where the fringe serves as a cover for the upper arm, but is not technically a sleeve. Again, like the “office wear” and the “out-of-the-office wear” dresses, which focus on the upper body, the evening wear continues this trend with the use of lace, beading, embroidery, fringes, and the off-the-shoulder neckline. Lace fabric with sheer lining is used as part of the neckline, as well as in long sleeves. As with cocktail dresses, illustrations reveal a variety of off-the-shoulder necklines that include round, V, and lace illusion (Figure 97). The evening gowns were predominantly made out of such fabrics as taffeta, satin and lace in solid dark colors, with black as the most popular. In rare instances solid light color or printed fabrics were used. An example is the gown Felisa Rincón de Gautier wore in 1954 to accept the award as “Women of the Americas,” which was made out of a striped fabric.³²

In line with her daytime “uniform,” and her afternoon and cocktail dresses, the press also mentioned her evening gowns. During her trip to New Orleans in 1950, the *Times-*

³² Rafaela Santos designed this particular dress. Another of Felisa Rincón de Gautier’s gowns created by Rafaela Santos, is the black gown made out of a Spanish shawl she wears in her 1960 portrait. In an interview with the researcher in 2002, Felisa Rincón de Gautier’s former personal secretary, Hilda Jimenes de Rodriguez, tells how the black Spanish shawl used for the gown was gift to the Mayor from Gloria Swanson, the movie

Picayune commented on her black evening gown paired up with a black lace *mantilla*. In 1956, *McCall's* noticed how for an eight o'clock event, Felisa Rincón de Gautier was dressed in black lace. Even in 1961, the *Miami Herald* commented on her "black lace dress."³³

Accessories, Neck Scarves, Shawls, Fans and Jewelry

The accessories worn with an outfit – gloves, shoes, handbags, etc – are important elements in an overall appearance. Just the same, jewelry is an equally important element in the completion of a look. Both of these aspects of dress were fundamental in the creation of Felisa Rincón de Gautier's *grande dame* image. Accessories, such as fans, shawls and neck scarves, in conjunction with jewelry, particularly necklaces and earrings, helped differentiate her manner of dress from conventional fashion and were therefore important elements for the creation of her individualistic style. In considering gloves, shoes, and handbags in relation to Felisa Rincón de Gautier's style, it must be noted that they did not contribute toward her *grande dame* image. Their role was the more the traditional one of completing the dress ensemble as dictated by 1950s and 1960s standards of elegance and proper dress.

Accessories

Felisa Rincón de Gautier wore gloves with "out-of-the-office wear" such as suits, afternoon (Figure 80), cocktail and evening dresses (Figure 95), and when necessary, with a coat. The gloves vary in length, with short, three-fourth, and elbow lengths. Some

star. Hilda Jimenes de Rodríguez, interview by author, tape recording, San Juan, Puerto Rico, 19 March 2002.

prominent colors include white, blue and black. On occasion, the type or color of the gloves she would wear was reported in the press. For example, in 1956 Roberta Applegate, writing for the *Miami Herald*, commented on her “black kid-gloved hand.” In 1957, the *Buenos Aires Herald* noted her “matching blue gloves,”³⁴ Just as the gloves, Felisa Rincón de Gautier’s footwear was in line with the fashions of the time. Her collection of shoes for the office in the late forties and early fifties included low-heeled wedge sandals and flat shoes (Figure 71). For “out-of-the-office” events, her footwear consisted of high-heeled sandals and pumps (Figure 86). The late fifties and early sixties she wore predominantly medium to high low pumps with pointed toe. From the mid sixties and toward the end of her tenure in 1968, the dominant style of shoe, again is the pump, but with more of a square toe (Figure 95). One reference to her footwear was found in the press, in 1947 the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* described her as wearing “patent leather sandals.”³⁵ The other type of accessory that in general did not play a part in the formation of Felisa Rincón de Gautier’s distinctive manner of dress was the handbag. Two styles, the top-handle bag and the clutch dominated the selection of handbags throughout the twenty-two years of her service as mayor of San Juan. The top-handle bag, square in shape, was available in single (Figure 87) or double handles (Figure 90), in sizes small, medium or large These were mainly used for daywear. In the fifties, the

³³ Harry Heintzen, “ ‘Good Neighbors’ Mingle Before Opening Congress,” *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, May 1, 1950; Miller, “McCall’s Visits Doña Felisa.”; Juanity Greend, “Doña Felisa: City’s Pinup: San Juan’s Mayor a Real Sweetheart.”

³⁴ Roberta Applegate, “Lady Mayor says: Use Feminine Approach for Success in Politics,” *Miami Herald*, May 23, 1956; *Buenos Aires (Argentina) Herald*, “A Lady Wears the Pants in San Juan,” March 23, 1957.

³⁵ *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, “Lady Mayor’ Gives San Juan Brisk Petticoat Regime,” April 15, 1947

clutch bags (Figure 85) were rectangular, beaded and used for evening events. In the sixties, they are designed longer and less rigid, and are used for “out-of-the-office” informal events.

Neck Scarves, Shawls and Fans

Accessories that did influence or play a part in the overall image of Felisa Rincón de Gautier include neck scarves, shawls and fans. A staple in the mayor’s wardrobe throughout the decades of the 1950s and 1960s, the neck scarves directed the focus to the upper body and face, just as ornamentation and necklines did with her dresses. These long pieces of fabric were worn around the neck and in most cases tied into a bow. They were created from solid and multiple color fabrics (Figure 99), which could or could not have a woven design. What differentiated the neck scarves between the fifties and sixties is their sizes with the latter decade seeing the largest. The neck scarves were often created from the same fabric as the headscarves, and in the sixties were made to match the turbans (Figure 100). In some instances the neck scarves’ were substituted with jabots (Figure 92) or ascots. Since they reflected her individualistic style, comments on Felisa Rincón de Gautier’s neck scarves appeared in the press. Examples include the *Star & Herald* in 1956 that noted how the scarves used in the two-*chignon* hairstyle matched with the scarf on her neck. In 1963 the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* commented on the matching red and green silk neck scarf and turban. While in the same year, the *Miami Herald* pointed out how “with each turban there is a matching scarf of the same fabric to give her costume a fashion finish.” It was not just scarves making the news. The

Matawan Journal in 1966 described the mayor as wearing a “gold mesh ascot, [with] matching gold turban.”³⁶

Another key accessory in Felisa Rincón de Gautier’s wardrobe was the shawl. This she paired up with cocktail dresses and evening gowns when attending semi-formal and formal events. The shawl was functional, used for warmth or to conceal the body, and decorative, adding flair to the ensemble. The shawl styles included the rectangular/straight type and the Spanish type with embroidery and fringes (Figure 101). Fabrics for the shawls included satin, crepe, and lace (Figure 95). In 1954 Katherine Young writing for the *East of Fifth: The Community Newspaper for East Side Families* noticed Felisa Rincón de Gautier’s “bright gossamer shawl draped loosely over her shoulders.”³⁷ To understand the importance of the shawl’s role in contributing to Felisa Rincón de Gautier’s *grande dame* image, it is necessary to consider the look that she created, for the shawl was worn at the same time that she carried a folding fan.

The folding fan was no doubt the most important accessory in Felisa Rincón de Gautier’s wardrobe. As a female born in the late nineteenth century to a Puerto Rican family, she was raised with Spanish values and culture. One of the aspects of her Hispanic heritage, which she adopted all through her life, was the use of the folding or pleated fan. As the *dame* of the fans, Felisa Rincón de Gautier had fans for everyday wear (Figure 72), as well as semi-formal (Figure 84), and formal occasions (Figure 93).

³⁶ *Star & Herald* (Panama), “Lady Mayor Wears Striking Hair Style at Conference.”; Kathleen Jones, “San Juan’s Woman Mayor ‘Keeps House’ for Her City,” *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, June 6, 1963; Eleanor Hart “Doña Felisa: Lady Mayor Lets Down Her Hair,” *Miami Herald*, October 27, 1963; *Matawan Journal*, “Mayor of San Juan, Puerto Rico, Visits Key Port.”

Her fans varied in size, materials and design (Figure 102). In addition to the fan itself, pictorial evidence shows that she also wore a *porta-abanico*, a long necklace attached to a fan (Figure 103). For a modern woman in the twentieth century, holding the position of mayor for a capital city, and pretty much trespassing into a man's world, the use of the folding fan created curiosity and brought her attention. For example, in 1950 the *Times-Picayune* noticed how Felisa Rincón de Gautier would punctuate "her remarks with a fluttering fan." the *Saginaw News* in 1954 noted how "She carries a fan." In 1956, *McCall's* magazine pointed out her use of a fan during daytime, and observed how later for an evening event that she carried a different fan, in this case made out of mother-of-pearl. The *Miami Herald* in 1961 observed how "at parties...she operates behind one of her elaborate Spanish fans." For an interview with the *Memphis Press-Scimitar* in 1962, Felisa Rincón de Gautier "languidly waved an ivory fan she said once belonged to the last czarina of Russia."³⁸ Because she had been taught since the age of seven on how to use the fan, her handling of it was regal and elegant, which added to the aura of *grande dame*.

Jewelry

It was observed that throughout Felisa Rincón de Gautier's tenure as mayor of San Juan jewelry played a prominent part in her overall appearance, in particular

³⁷ Katherine Young, "In Diplomatic Circles," *New York East of Fifth: The Community Newspaper for East Side Families*, June 19, 1954

³⁸ *Porta-abanicos* are long necklaces to which a folding fan is attached. The "necklace" can be made out pearls, beads, metal chain, etc. Heintzen, "'Good Neighbors' Mingle Before Opening Congress."; Way, "Fine Mayor Yet Ever-Feminine—That's First Lady of San Juan."; Miller, "McCall's Visits Doña Felisa."; Greend, "Doña Felisa: City's Pinup: San Juan's Mayor a Real Sweetheart."; Boyce, "Puerto Rico's Doña Fela, Power in Island Politics," *Memphis Press-Scimitar*.

earrings, necklaces and brooches. Felisa Rincón de Gautier always wore earrings, in the office, visiting the neighborhoods, and when attending evening events. From the time she entered city hall through the mid 1950s, Felisa Rincón de Gautier was observed wearing hoop earrings (Figure 90), small to medium stud earrings (Figure 74), and small dangling earrings. Necklaces were prominent with “out-of-the-office wear”, particularly with dresses with off-the-shoulder necklines. The common styles of necklaces observed were chokers, either a plain velvet ribbon (Figure 109) or beaded, with or without a pendant, and short beaded strand necklaces. The pendants included a large gold disk (Figure 109), a cameo, and a large Christian cross. Brooches made their appearance sporadically, but when worn they were prominently displayed at the center of the bodice (Figure 94) close to the neckline or collar, as in the case of the dress worn when Felisa Rincón de Gautier received the “Woman of the Americas” award in 1954. During the second half of the 1950s, the mayor’s earrings and necklaces became bigger and longer. Now she was seen wearing larger size stud earrings, as well as more dangling earrings. During this time necklaces were not exclusive to cocktail and evening dresses, but were also worn with afternoon wear. She continued to wear short necklaces and chokers with pendants, with the addition of multiple strands of pearls. Another option in necklaces was a very long single strand of pearls, which sometimes was tied into a knot (Figure 104). The 1960s saw Felisa Rincón de Gautier strongly embracing the wearing of earrings and necklaces for all situations, including the office. She continued to wear stud earrings, which became larger and more ornate. In addition, long or drop earrings, with round beads were worn. The necklaces during this period did make an impact in her appearance. The styles range from a short single strand of large pearls (Figure 80), to

multiple strands of beaded necklaces in all sizes, shapes and colors (Figure 77). In the sixties long pearl necklaces were still part of her jewelry selection, but by now she combined different styles of necklaces (Figure 105). As with most elements of Felisa Rincón de Gautier's appearance, the press commented on jewelry selection. Examples include: the *Saginaw News* in 1954 which commented on how her "Jewelry was in keeping with her costume, an heirloom gold lavalier set with pearls and enclosing a picture of her father, and earrings to match." In 1958 the syndicated columnist Edyth Thornton McCleod commented on the mayor's "pearls and diamonds," while in 1961 *This Week* magazine notes her "her blue necklace." Also in 1961, the *Memphis Press-Scimitar* described two sets of Felisa Rincón de Gautier's jewelry: "clusters of red stones at her ears and two ropes of similar stones at her throat... green clusters at her ears and five strands of green stones at her throat." The *Matawan Journal* in 1966 commented on her "interesting pearl earrings and necklace."³⁹

Headwear

Another element of dress that Felisa Rincón de Gautier became known for was her headwear, in particular hats and turbans. These two types of headgear tend to dominate one decade or the other, hats in the 1950s and turbans in the 1960s. As a dressmaker and dress shop owner in the 1930s, she had the opportunity to design and sell hats, a knowledge she drew on in the creation of her own headwear. In the late 1940s and through the 1950s, Felisa Rincón de Gautier was observed wearing many different styles

³⁹ Way, "Fine Mayor Yet Ever-Feminine—That's First Lady of San Juan"; Thornton McCleod, "Beauty After Forty."; Clementine Paddleford, "The Mayor is a Good Cook: Doña Felisa Proves it with this Dessert," *This Week Magazine*, May 28, 1961; Boyce,

of hats. She also wore hats with afternoon dresses, suits, and coats when traveling abroad. As her hairstyle became more ornate and increased in size, there were fewer instances when the mayor wore a hat. Still, when she did, these ranged from small brimless styles (Figure 90), to medium sized hats with brims (Figure 106), or large wide-brim, low crowned hats. A 1949 visit to New York City found the mayor wearing in an unusual black velvet bonnet trimmed with white lace (Figure 107). In general, the hats were worn perched on the side, or on top of the head. Most of her hats were trimmed with flowers (Figure 87), ribbons, tulle and feathers (Figure 90). The press noticed Felisa Rincón de Gautier's headwear and frequently commented on it. Examples include: *La Republica* from Colombia in 1956 mentioned the mayor's black hat with a garland of white roses. During that same year the *Miami Herald* commented on the "mass of bright flowers on a tiny black straw hat." In 1958 the *Detroit Times* described Felisa Rincón de Gautier as "wearing a seven-year-old [blue straw] hat," of which she was quoted saying "The hat...is seven years old. I bought it in New York. All I do is change the flower on it once in a while." Also in 1958, syndicated columnist Edyth Thornton McCleod asked the mayor about the black ostrich feathered hat she was wearing. Felisa Rincón de Gautier was quoted as saying: "I made it from an old feather fan and some black velvet ribbon." The columnist observed how the black feathered hat "was truly her [Felisa Rincón de Gautier's] hat, flattering and in perfect harmony with her long hair." In the same year, the *Milwaukee Journal* described the mayor as wearing a "black straw hat, trimmed with two jaunty white rose[s]...firmly pinned in place atop her crown of silvery

"Puerto Rico's Doña Fela, Power in Island Politics.;" *Matawan* (New Jersey) *Journal*, "Mayor of San Juan, Puerto Rico, Visits Key Port."

gray braids.” Also in 1958, the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* mentioned how for a luncheon, Felisa Rincón de Gautier “wore a large black straw hat trimmed in blue.”⁴⁰

In the 1960s, Felisa Rincón de Gautier started moving away from the elaborate braided coronet hairstyles she wore constantly in the 1950s, to a more smooth pulled back style with a *chignon*. The latter became her staple hairstyle for the office and afternoon wear. As a result of this particular style, she began wearing turbans instead of hats (Figure 108) as headwear. She created the turbans herself using all types of fabrics, including brocades. In an interview with the *Miami Herald* in 1963, Felisa Rincón de Gautier talked about her turbans, “most of the time, in the daytime I wear a turban...I make them up in two seconds.” Her process consists of swatches of fabric, about half a yard, which are twisted around a towering hairdo. The turban could be embellished with flowers or feathers anchored with a hatpin. As previously mentioned, Felisa Rincón de Gautier when cutting the fabric for a turban also cut some to make a matching neck scarf (Figure 100). The wearing of the turbans by the mayor was not only for style, but also for functionality. In an interview with Hilda Jimenes de Rodríguez in 2002, Felisa Rincón de Gautier’s former secretary, described how the mayor, because of her busy schedule, would wrap three turbans at once to take her through the day. For example, she would layer a gold, a white and a black turban one on top of each other. The black was for the morning session, the white for afternoon, and the gold for the evening. All she

⁴⁰ *La Republica* (Bogota), “‘Seguridad en la mujer’ dice la ilustre alcaldesa de Puerto Rico,” February 22, 1956; Applegate, “Lady Mayor says: Use Feminine Approach for Success in Politics.”; *Detroit Times*, “New Hat? No, Only the Flower,” April 1958; Thornton McCleod, “Beauty After Forty.”; Gardner, “Rights Mean Little Without Respect: Puerto Rican Mayor Stress Femininity.”; Mary Hirschfeld, “Pleads for Puerto Rican Natives Here,” *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, April 18, 1958.

had to do was to “peel” the layers to change her appearance. The press noticed her appearance and headwear. For example the *Memphis Press-Scimita* in 1962 noted how Felisa Rincón de Gautier commented on the color of her turbans, a purple one and a green turban. In the same year, the *Detroit Free Press* noted her “high matching turban,” and the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* commented on the “bright red and green silk turban” she wore. In 1966, the *Matawan Journal* not only pointed out Felisa Rincón de Gautier’s gold turban, but the matching gold mesh ascot.⁴¹

Throughout her tenure as mayor of San Juan, Puerto Rico, Felisa Rincón de Gautier, wore other memorable headgear. On occasions, she would wear lace *mantillas* and headscarves or bands. The lace *mantillas* were worn for very special occasions, such as when she won the “Woman of the Americas” award in 1954 (Figure 109) and when in 1958, she received the Order of the Holy Sepulcher of Jerusalem from Cardinal Spellman of New York City (Figure 49). The hair bands (Figure 110) were observed in the 1960s, the same period of the turbans. This type of headwear was also noticed by the press who in 1961 mentioned Felisa Rincón de Gautier wearing a “wide hair ribbon of matching color,” or in another instance noted her “hair held in place by a blue band.” In 1962 the *Miami Herald* commented on her “festive head scarf.”⁴²

⁴¹ Hart, “Doña Felisa: Lady Mayor Lets Down Her Hair.”; Hilda Jimenes de Rodriguez, interview by author, tape recording, San Juan, Puerto Rico, 19 March 2002; Boyce, “Puerto Rico’s Doña Fela, Power in Island Politics.”; Sterling, “Lady Mayor Tells Women How to Win.”; Jones, “San Juan’s Woman Mayor ‘Keeps House’ for Her City.”; *Matawan (New Jersey) Journal*, “Mayor of San Juan, Puerto Rico, Visits Key Port.”

⁴² Atkinson, “Mayor of San Juan Lends Human Touch to Bureaucracy of City Government”; Jack Kofoed, “People a Delight in Puerto Rico,” *Miami Herald*, May 1, 1961; *Miami Herald*, May 6, 1962.

Hairstyles

When Felisa Rincón de Gautier took over as city manager/mayor of San Juan, Puerto Rico in December 1946, her hairstyle was a reflection of 1940s fashions with front top fullness (Figure 111). There was nothing particularly individualistic about it. As she continued her tenure as mayor through the 1950s and 1960s, her early non-distinctive hairstyles evolved into intricate designs, which in 1956 the *Star & Herald* newspaper declared as “show stoppers.” Her hair arrangements included a braided coronet or crown, a grouping of ringlets or curls, two wide spread chignons, or hair pulled back tightly into a large *chignon*. When at the office, visiting San Juan’s neighborhoods, at dedications, receptions, conferences, galas, etc, Felisa Rincón de Gautier’s hair was *coiffed* in a version of these styles. No matter the situation or activity, she was never seen without one of her unique hair designs. As a result of her efforts, the mayor of San Juan became famous not only for being the first woman mayor of a capital city in the world, but also for her individualistic image capped by her *coiffures*.⁴³

To achieve the variety of hairstyles worn during her time as mayor, Felisa Rincón de Gautier kept her hair long, almost hip-length and when necessary used hairpieces for volume and support. The hairpieces matched her hair color, which for most of her time in office was described as whitish gray or silver. This was the result of a woman in her fifties and sixties embracing her natural hair color, after realizing she was too busy with her job to continue the practice of having it colored at the beauty salon. In addition, she embellished the hairstyles with flowers (Figure 72), feathers (Figure 113), ribbons

⁴³ *Los Angeles Examiner*, “San Juan Mayores Raps Puerto Rican Terrorists,” June 5, 1954.

(Figure 112), tulle, headbands, scarves (Figure 114), and open-ended turbans. As she said to the *Christian Science Monitor* in 1961 in relation to hairstyle ornamentation, “When I want something different, I just change the flowers or wrap a turban around.” Such embellishments were very much noticed by the press and one writer declared that Felisa Rincón de Gautier was the “Mayor with flowers in her hair.”⁴⁴ The following references were made in the press regarding the variety of ornamentations for her *coiffures*: in 1954 the *Los Angeles Examiner* noted that she, “wears flowers in her hair- a bunch of red roses in her iron-gray coronet braid,” in 1956 the *Star & Herald* observed her, “crown of gray plaits ornamented in front with a silver pin comb and filled in the center back with a drooping pink rose and black veil,” in 1958 the *Milwaukee Sentinel* noted, “her heavy silver and black hair topped with huge scarlet flowers,” in 1961 *The New York Post* commented on her, “famous coroneted hair dress covered by an intricately wound and tied silk scarf which seemed to be a bunch of great tropical flowers,” and in 1966 the *Matawan Journal* referred to her, “gold turban.”⁴⁵

When looking at Felisa Rincón de Gautier’s hair arrangements, the braided coronet or crown, the group of ringlets or curls, the two *chignons*, and the large *chignon*, were characterized by being set either at top or on the back of the head. The braided coronet or crown evolved from an earlier style (Figure 115), in which braided hair was

⁴⁴ Gorman, “Puerto Rico Recognized Women of Ability: Lady Mayor has Brains, Beauty”; Hart “Doña Felisa: Lady Mayor Lets Down Her Hair”; Trent, “Woman today: Doña Felisa Rules with Graze, Vigor”; Applegate, “Lady Mayor says: Use Feminine Approach for Success in Politics.”

⁴⁵ *Los Angeles Examiner*, “San Juan Mayores Raps Puerto Rican Terrorists”; *Star & Herald* (Panama), “Lady Mayor Wears Striking Hair Style at Conference,” August, 1956; *Milwaukee Sentinel*, “Donna Captivates 300 Countrymen,” April 16, 1958; Agnes

piled on top of the head. Unlike the braided coronet, the earlier hairstyle did not create a circlet, but more the look of a band with the tendency for more volume on one side of the head than the other. The braided (or plaited) coronet/crown hairstyle was first noticed on Felisa Rincón de Gautier at the end of 1951 and continued in different versions all throughout her tenure. The style came in the form of 1) a “half” coronet, separating the hair down the middle into two braids that crossed on top of the head (Figure 116), 2) a single braid encircling a large *chignon* (Figure 117), 3) two medium width braids entwined on top of each other (Figure 118), and 4) a combination of single or multiple braids and coils/ringlets (Figure 109). Felisa Rincón de Gautier wore the coronet/crown hairstyle and its variations for all occasions in relation to her job. The style grew in size and complexity through the decade of the fifties, reaching its highest in the late fifties (Figure 114). In the sixties, the braided coronet/crown elaborate style continued for evening events and a simpler version was designed for daytime. Ultimately, the day version of the braided coronet/crown style was replaced by the tightly pulled back *chignon* hairstyle worn with a turban. The braided coronet/crown style became Felisa Rincón de Gautier’s most memorable and famous hairstyle, a fact supported by the many references made to it by the press. Some examples include: in 1953 the *Bridgeport Sunday Post* noted the “style of her hair dress, two braids of her heavy white hair are wound in coronet fashion around her shapely head,” in 1956 the *Star & Herald* commented on her “high crossed crown of gray plaits,” in 1960 *The New York Times*

Murphy, “At Home with Doña Felisa Gautier,” *New York Post*, May 21, 1961; *Matawan*(New Jersey) *Journal*, “Mayor of San Juan, Puerto Rico, Visits Key Port.”

observed that she “wears a five-inch-tall crown of silvery braids atop her head,” and in 1962 *The Washington Post* noted “her famous plaited crown hair style.”⁴⁶

The other three styles: grouping of curls, double *chignons*, and single large *chignon* were not as celebrated as the braided coronet/crown hairstyle. The grouping of ringlets, coils or curls had the look of the coronet/crown *coiffure*, but instead of braids was composed of ringlets, coils or curls (Figure 84). This style was common during the fifties for afternoon (Figure 72) or evening events (Figure 119). Even though this style was not as notorious as the braided coronet/crown, it still made it into the press.

Examples include the comment in the 1956 *Miami Daily News*: “steel gray tresses piled high and in ringlets at the back of her head,” the *Star & Herald*: “evening hairdo centers around a grouping of curls.”⁴⁷

The third hairstyle in Felisa Rincón de Gautier’s *coiffure repertoire* was the two wide spread *chignons*. Making its “debut” in 1951, the style was created by separating the hair into two *chignons* (i.e. buns or donuts) on each side of the head. For variety, the *chignons* could be placed at the top of the head, the direct sides or even more toward the back of the head. In addition, the hairstyle came in a variety of designs, such as the traditional smooth *chignon* (Figure 120), in clusters of ringlets or rolls (Figure 121), and in interlaced small braids (Figure 74). The two-*chignon* hairstyle was commonly seen throughout the 1950s and still, sometimes during 1960s. The style was particular to the

⁴⁶ Whelan, “A visit to Puerto Ricans’ Homeland”; *Star & Herald* (Panama), “Lady Mayor Wears Striking Hair Style at Conference”; Nan Robertson, “San Juan’s Woman Mayor Here to Urge Puerto Ricans to Vote,” *The New York Times*, October 8, 1960; *The Washington Post*, “Hubert’s Their Hero: 300 Women Have Eyes on One Man,” May 21, 1962.

times when Felisa Rincón de Gautier was working at the office and when attending informal and semi-formal “out-of-the-office” events. The *coiffure* was mentioned in the *Star & Herald* in 1956 as “two widely spread *chignons*, each circled by a small grey-green scarf.”⁴⁸

The last hairstyle attributed to Felisa Rincón de Gautier’s individualistic image is the tightly pulled back *chignon* hairstyle (Figure 122). This particular *coiffure* became the style of choice by the mayor for the office and “out-of-the-office” informal and semi-formal events for the decade of the 1960s. The *chignon* was pulled back high at top of the head. It was dressed up with a headband (Figure 110), scarf, or open-ended turbans (Figure 99). Even though this hairstyle was not as eye-catching as the other three, it was still noticed by the press. In 1961 the *Miami Herald* mentioned “her barely graying hair is pulled back tight from her forehead in a bun, held in place by a blue band.”⁴⁹ It should be noted that another hair option that she experimented with were full size wigs. The wigs were large in volume, and styled into a combination of coronet/crown and all over rolls/curls/ringlets. This was a hairstyle option that Felisa Rincón de Gautier started using in the late sixties, and became a staple for the rest of her life.

Felisa Rincón de Gautier’s Key Elements of Dress

As noticed through the survey of fashions from the late 1940s to the late 1960s and the analysis of Felisa Rincón de Gautier’s fashion style, it is clear that she followed fashion for certain elements of dress, but for others she either modified them a bit or

⁴⁷ *Miami Daily News*, “The Lady Mayor’s Success: An Explanation Helps,” May 23, 1956; *Star & Herald* (Panama), “Lady Mayor Wears Striking Hair Style at Conference.”

⁴⁸ *Star & Herald* (Panama), “Lady Mayor Wears Striking Hair Style at Conference.”

⁴⁹ Kofoed, “People a Delight in Puerto Rico.”

created her own individual style. For example, Felisa Rincón de Gautier followed the fashion of the times through her selection of handbags, footwear, gloves and coats. She also was following fashion through her choice of silhouettes for her dresses and suits, and by wearing hats and jewelry, all acceptable notions of fashion at the time.

Just because Felisa Rincón de Gautier accepted the fashion silhouettes, however does not mean that her dress was completely “in fashion.” The mayor favored the fit-n-flare silhouette that was popular in the 1950s, as well as the off-the-shoulder neckline. In this she was following fashion, but what made her dresses different were the fabrics, such as lace, the decorative elements, such as beading, and even the design of the off-the-shoulder necklines. In another example, hats were popular headwear in the 1950s, a fashion concept followed by Felisa Rincón de Gautier. However, what made her hats different from the “fashion” hats was the application of her own taste through the various embellishments. In the 1960s, the overblouse dress was fashionable. This type of dress was worn by Felisa Rincón de Gautier, but was modified to her figure, thus it had sleeves and the overblouse sat lower on the hip, and it was embellished with neck scarves tied into enormous bows.

Felisa Rincón de Gautier, whether for functionality or as an expression of her persona, incorporated many unique elements into her appearance that aided the creation of the *grande dame* image for which she became famous. Even when these elements were not considered fashionable for the time, she still made them part of her dress. These individualist elements fall under the categories of “office wear,” accessories, headwear, and hairstyles.

As the first female mayor of San Juan, Puerto Rico, Felisa Rincón de Gautier who worked long hours, she found practicality in creating a “uniform” for the office. This ensemble under the category of “office wear,” consisted of a blouse and a skirt. The blouses, for the period for the 1950s, buttoned up the front, were square cut, and made out of such fabrics as linen, lace and eyelet. They were paired with a dark colored straight or semi-circular skirt. In the 1960s, the “uniform” concept of the blouse and skirt continued, but as a matching ensemble. Many times, the “uniform” would be paired with a neck scarf tied into a bow.

One of the identifiable accessories in Felisa Rincón de Gautier’s wardrobe was the folding fan. As a woman of Spanish heritage, who was raised in the tradition of the folding fan, Felisa Rincón de Gautier continued its use all through her life. She became notorious for having one with her at all times, no matter if she was in city hall, around the island, or even abroad. The mayor had a fan for every occasion. Of course it served the functional purpose of cooling, but it also served as a communicator of her Spanish heritage.

Another of her identifiable accessories was the neck scarf. Throughout her time as mayor, Felisa Rincón de Gautier wore neck scarves to complement her “office wear” suits, and later in the 1960s the afternoon “out-of-the-office wear.” The neck scarves not only individualized the clothing, but attracted attention to the upper body. Considering that Felisa Rincón de Gautier was a dressmaker, and understood her body figure, it seems logical to assume the scarves, and any of the elements of dress bringing attention to the upper body, could be serving the purpose of deflecting focus from figure flaws and

placing emphasis on the head and face. The neck scarves matched the turbans of the 1960s.

Turbans have been fashionable at particular periods of time, such as the 1930s and 1940s for example. In the fifties, small turbans were one of the many headwear options for women. But in the 1960s, for Felisa Rincón de Gautier, turbans became another of her celebrated aspects of dress. She wore them for everything, except formal events. They were both functional and decorative.

When fashion dictated short curly hair close to the head, Felisa Rincón de Gautier not only had waist-length hair, but also with it created such styles as the braided coronet/crown, the two-*chignons* and the grouping of ringlets or curls. It was not just the hairstyles that brought her attention it was also the way embellished, with flowers, feathers, ribbons, and scarves.

Conclusion

When comparing Felisa Rincón de Gautier's fashion style with the contemporary fashions of the time from 1946 through 1968 it was seen that, in many aspects she followed fashion, yet in others she was completely on her own. The key elements of her individualist look were the "office wear," neck scarves, the folding fan, turbans, and her hairstyles. In looking at her manner of dress, it is clear that it not only was influenced by her age and body type, but that it also reflected her heritage, dressmaking skills, and the self-assurance and confidence of a woman with political power, who marched to "the beat of her own drum."

CHAPTER 6

ORIGINS, PURPOSE AND MEANING OF FELISA RINCÓN DE GAUTIER'S *GRANDE DAME* IMAGE

In her political career Felisa Rincón de Gautier created a fashionable image and identity reminiscent of the Spanish *grande dame*; an image that surpassed the usual image of a woman of Latin America and her Spanish heritage at the time.¹ When acknowledging the Spanish *grande dame* style, consider the women dressed as *majas* of 18th & 19th century Spanish painter Francisco Goya. These women were elegant, regal, feminine and exemplifying Spanishness by wearing lace *mantillas* and carrying folding fans (Figure 123).² The *maja* image did not go unnoticed by the frequent visitors to Spain. One for example in 1860 commented how, “to the general mind, Spain is a matter

¹ Another interpretation for the term Spanish *grande dame* is a distinguished lady of Spanish nobility or culture.

² *Majas*, as defined by Susannah Worth and Lucy Sibley, were “female dandies, single or married, who worked as domestics, or more frequently as street vendors (53).” In the 18th century women of the higher classes in Spain adopted the Andalusian based *maja* costume, with its skirt trim, red sash, *redecilla* (hair net) or *mantilla* and comb. In the late 19th century, the embroidered *mantón de manila* (China crepe/Spanish shawl) would also become part of the *maja* dress. The *maja* dress would become the image of Spain. Other examples of women dress as *majas* by Francisco Goya include the 1799 portrait of Queen María Luisa of Spain, the 1803 portrait of Joaquina Candado Ricarte, and 1804-1805, portrait of *Doña* Isabel de Porcel. "Maja Dress and The Andalusian Image of Spain," *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal* 12, no. 4 (1994): 53-57.

of mountains and orange-trees, castanets, dancing veils, black-lace fans....”³ Regal, elegant, feminine, wearing a black lace mantilla and holding a fan, are all observations describing Felisa Rincón de Gautier’s manner of dress and appearance. She chose her clothes for their practicality and fit for her figure, but these clothes were not all utilitarian garments that were easy to forget. When she found the time, Felisa Rincón de Gautier designed and made her own garments, applying her skills as a dressmaker.⁴ She also wore fashions created by one of the better-known dressmakers of Puerto Rico, Rafaela Santos, who was known for her work with rhinestones. Other elements of Felisa Rincón de Gautier’s manner of dress included hairpieces fixed into various braids and curls and fabrics in all colors. These would be used for her amazing hair-dos and turbans, which became one of her trademarks.⁵ Her *grande dame* style became a distinctive powerful identifier for a female politician in a male dominated field both in Puerto Rico and the U.S.

When considering women in politics in the United States and other western nations "You want to make sure you don't stand out....If you stay in uniform, it's hard to be criticized," stated Georgette Mosbacher, CEO of the cosmetics company Borghese Inc. Worldwide and resident of Washington DC during the previous Bush administration. Because politicians need to consider their constituency as "they walk out the door every morning" says *Washington Post* reporter and author Sally Quinn, they opt for more

³ G. W. Thornbury, *Life in Spain: Past and Present* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1860), 295, quoted in Worth and Sibley, "Maja Dress and The Andalusian Image of Spain," 58.

⁴ Ruth Gruber, *Felisa Rincón de Gautier: The Mayor of San Juan* (NY: Biblio Press, 1994), 188; Annette Oliveira, "Doña Fela: The Great Lady of Puerto Rican Politics," *Américas* 33, no. 1(1981): 52.

⁵ Maritza Diaz Alcaide, "Piernas al descubierto: Diseñadores tocan a la puerta," *Imagen*, June 1993, 95; Gruber, *Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, 188.

conservative dress. For women in politics, conservative dress does not include cleavage, spike heels, big jewelry, fur, red nail polish and red lipstick. The latter two, trademarks of Felisa Rincón de Gautier's image, would "practically guarantee social extinction" said Mosbacher.⁶ So if this is the case, how did Felisa Rincón de Gautier "get away" with such an anti-politically-correct image for a female politician for so many years?

As interpreted by this researcher, Felisa Rincón de Gautier's fashion image was a combination of her Spanish heritage, her dressmaking skills, and the need to be her self. As a result, this manner of dress and appearance became her calling card in Puerto Rico and around the world. Wherever she would go, people could identify the "Lady mayor of San Juan." Her intriguing image would make people stop, look, and then listen. Locally, people would listen when she would promote a better, cleaner, more beautiful San Juan. By practicing what she preached, the importance of presentation and image, Felisa Rincón de Gautier was telling the citizens of San Juan to take care of their city and themselves.

Origins of Felisa Rincón de Gautier's *Grande Dame* Image

Looking at Felisa Rincón de Gautier and understanding the origins of her *grande dame* image, her family life and social experiences set the groundwork for what would become her "calling card." Born in 1897, Felisa Rincón de Gautier's upbringing was set in an atmosphere of change in the island. At the turn of the twentieth century, Puerto Rico was being transformed through changes in the government, the economy and society brought about by the United States' possession of Puerto Rico. While political

⁶ Anne Slowley, "Politically incorrect: From the Supreme Court to Capitol Hill, Washington puts a veto on high style" *Elle*, May 2001, 122-128.

status, the economy, education, the transportation system, the infrastructure, and other aspects of everyday life changed after contact with the United States, many cultural values and beliefs implemented by over 400 years of Spanish rule in the island still were very much dominant in Puerto Rican society.

It was in the context of Puerto Rican women's lives that the patriarchal society of Spain was still strongly being felt. As such, their participation in education and the social discourse was very limited, if not almost non-existent. The women were not supposed to think, they were there to beautify and make life pleasant as ornaments of society, they were not meant to be problem solvers for Puerto Rico. Yet not all Puerto Rican women would adhere to the notion of a male dominated society, as "whispers" of an emerging feminist movement were being listened to. Women participated in the *Grito de Lares* in the 1860s, embraced education at the beginning of the twentieth century, entered the professional workforce and became activists in the right-to-vote movement. Puerto Rican women moved off their "pedestal" and into the streets. They became active partners in molding the Puerto Rico of the twentieth century. Such was their drive for equality, that in 1929, after a hard fought battle by the suffragists, the Puerto Rican legislature passed a resolution awarding women the right to vote. This act opened the door for women, and in turn Felisa Rincón de Gautier, to play important roles in Puerto Rican politics and government.

As a woman born at the end of the nineteenth century in Puerto Rico, Felisa Rincón de Gautier was raised with the Spanish traditions and culture embraced by her

family.⁷ The Rincón Marrero daughters learned the “womanly arts,” including sewing and using the folding fan, the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church, and the importance of one’s conduct and appearance. Felisa Rincón de Gautier learned from her father and other male family members about discipline, social justice and the management of a business. Many of the female members strayed beyond the role of traditional Puerto Rican female and her “ornament” status. Her paternal grandmother, who supported the 1860s independence uprising, and her maternal grandmother and mother, who were teachers, helped to shape Felisa Rincón de Gautier. In addition, her maternal aunt, as well as her mother, instilled in her the importance of neatness and the *toilette* and proper dress. Felisa Rincón de Gautier’s upbringing brought her in contact with exceptional educators, artists, poets, lawyers and politicians. These factors, as well as her mother’s early death and Felisa Rincón de Gautier’s subsequent role as the household and family manager were significant in shaping her overall personal, social and political beliefs.

On the journey through the first three decades of her life, Felisa Rincón de Gautier not only learned from the *tertulias* concerning the distressing economic situation of the majority of Puerto Ricans, but she was able to see it first hand when living in *La Ceramica* farm. The knowledge gained from her experience inspired her to help the less fortunate, which she tried to do by setting up a dress shop. The idea for a business related to clothing came from the success of her well-received creations as a dressmaker. Her skills as a dressmaker were put to use in her role as manager of the family household, as well as in creating apparel for family relatives and friends. In 1934, Felisa Rincón de

⁷ Gruber, *Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, 10.

Gautier ventured to New York City and its garment district to learn more about design, manufacturing, and selling of clothes. She not only experienced work as a sewing machine operator, but also learned first hand about fashion design, finishing, fitting, and selling while working at Kiviette's fashion house. In addition, her experience at the fashion house brought her directly in contact with celebrities, in theater and cinema, as well as women of society. These women, by being in the limelight or society pages, knew how to maintain an image or create one using their clothes. When she returned to Puerto Rico and opened Felisa's Styles Shop in San Juan, Felisa Rincón de Gautier drew on the experience and knowledge acquired in New York to sell clothes, but also applied it to herself.

An important act which set the stage for further development for Felisa Rincón de Gautier, was in standing up to her father, not once but twice. In 1934 she stood up to her father when she wanted to move to New York to experience the clothing business. Before that, in 1932 she challenged her father's beliefs by demanding that he let her register to vote. The latter would be a turning point in her life, because the registration process would become her introduction to actively participate in Puerto Rican politics. As she became more involved with politics, her priorities changed from being a dressmaker and dress shop owner, to being a full-time political activist, which resulted in her entering and becoming a "player" in an arena dominated by men. She observed her rise from member of the *Partido Liberal* to Mayor of San Juan, Puerto Rico under the *Partido Popular Democratico*, was based on her secret to success in a man's world: "Never antagonize a man; and always allow him the delusion of thinking himself the master," words she would tell the *Daily Mirror* in 1949. As the first female mayor of San

Juan, Puerto Rico Felisa Rincón de Gautier believed that running a city was similar to running a home, thus “that’s why women are well adapted to it,” she said to the *Palm Beach Post* in 1949.⁸ Her motivation as mayor was to improve the lives of all Puerto Ricans, which she was able to accomplish with hard work and devotion to the citizens of San Juan and the island of Puerto Rico. By 1949 people had noticed her work for the capital, not only in the island but also abroad. *Look* magazine noted how Felisa Rincón de Gautier was breaking the stereotype of a Latin woman’s place being in the home, and stated how “People say she’s done more in three years than all the men who’ve held the office for the past 25 years.” As the *Times-Dispatch* wrote, she was “recognized as a clever political leader by men in a land reluctant to give women a place outside the home.”⁹ When traveling abroad to conferences and other events bringing together city officials and administrators from the United States and other countries, Felisa Rincón de Gautier as a woman, just as in Puerto Rico, found herself in the minority, sometimes even the only woman in a group of hundreds. Instead of being threatened by the reality of being the first female mayor of San Juan and one of the few women mayors of an American city, Felisa Rincón de Gautier embraced full heartedly the interest, scrutiny and publicity that her position created, thus setting the stage for her *grande dame* image to emerge and flourish.¹⁰

⁸ Sidney Fields, “Only Human, Shooting at a Fake Marc,” *New York Daily Mirror*, November 7, 1949; *Palm Beach (Florida) Post*, “‘Similar to Running a Home,’ Says the San Juan’s Woman Mayor, December 2, 1949;

⁹ *Look*, “Look Applauds...Mrs. Felisa de Gautier,” September 13, 1949; *Richmond (Virginia) Times-Dispatch*, “Lady Mayor in a Man’s World Helps Santa in the Tropics,” January 4, 1950.

¹⁰ *El Mundo* (San Juan, PR), “Felisa Rincón de Gauthier fue Unica Mujer Entre Delegados,” October 10, 1947; *Star & Herald* (Panama), “Lady Mayor Wears Striking

Purpose of Felisa Rincón de Gautier's *Grande Dame* Image

Felisa Rincón de Gautier, mayor of San Juan, Puerto Rico from 1946 to 1968, was visible locally and internationally. Start with the fact that she was the first woman to be the head administrator of a capital city in the Americas, followed by her success in improving the city and the lives of its inhabitants, and add to it a unique style of dress, and you have the recipe for celebrity status. In considering her distinctive manner of dress, three themes emerge as reasons for the creation of Felisa Rincón de Gautier's *grande dame* image: 1) the need or function and convenience in dress, 2) as "a woman, not a man" in politics, and 3) the desire to make an impression when involved in public relations for San Juan and Puerto Rico.

As a woman raised in a household that stressed the necessity of neatness, cleanliness, the importance of ones *toilette* and manner of dress, as well as overall appearance, Felisa Rincón de Gautier followed these early lessons even when confronted with sixteen-hour workdays as mayor of San Juan. With a position very much in the public eye, she adopted specific elements of dress for functionality and convenience, which in turn became synonymous with her overall image. The particular elements of dress include the "uniform" - blouse and skirt ensemble worn at the office, and hairstyles including the braided coronet/crown, the two-*chignon* styles, and the pulled back large *chignon*, and headdresses, especially turbans. Even though these elements of her style

Hair Style at Conference," August 1956; *Star & Herald* (Panama), "Woman Mayor Makes Big Hit at Municipalities Conference," August 1956; *Elyria* (Ohio) *Chronicle-Telegram*, "San Juan Popularity Follows Mayor Doan Felisa to Lorain," June 30, 1961; Kathleen Jones, "San Juan's Woman Mayor 'Keeps House' for Her City," *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, June 6, 1963; Anne Whelan, "A Visit to Puerto Rican's Homeland," *The Bridgeport* (Connecticut) *Sunday Post*, October 4, 1953.

may have not been considered fashionable at the time, they provided Felisa Rincón de Gautier with a “put-together” appearance without having to spend too much time on it. In regards to her “uniform,” the mayor is on record commenting on its convenience, protection, and unobtrusiveness. It is also to Ann Whelan from the *Bridgeport Sunday Post*, that in relation to her hairstyles, she noted: “I have so little time...that this is, the easiest way to do my hair.”¹¹ These hairstyles, in particular during the 1950s, fulfill the need to wear a hat in public and to events in which she may have been the only woman at hand. As it is noted in the *Star & Herald* of 1956, Felisa Rincón de Gautier wanted be presentable, dignified and feminine, all without the formality of a hat.¹² By adopting the turban as the key headdress in the 1960s, it would also serve the purpose of looking impeccable without too much to-do, at any time of the day or night. This was especially true, because she would wear multiple turbans at the same time as a method to save time in rearranging her headdress when attending several functions within one day.¹³

“I never feel handicapped being a woman in politics,” Felisa Rincón de Gautier said to the *Chronicle-Telegram* in 1961.¹⁴ In relation to her role as a woman in Puerto Rican politics, her *grande dame* image could be interpreted as a buffer tool, stressing femininity, in the process of working with men. It was the mayor’s viewpoint that the relationship between men and women is one of not antagonizing each other. Her philosophy was one of “women should always be women,” that they should not try to be more than men. To her, the success she had with men during her tenure as mayor, was the

¹¹ Whelan, “A Visit to Puerto Rican’s Homeland.”

¹² *Star & Herald*, “Lady Mayor Wears Striking Hair Style at Conference.”

¹³ Felisa Rincón de Gautier, interview by Ruben Arrieta, Notiuno radio, October 5 & 12, 1986.

¹⁴ *Chronicle-Telegram*, “San Juan Popularity Follows Mayor Doña Felisa to Lorain.”

result of compromise and letting them know beforehand that she was not here to “take over” and be a man. In the same token, it was important for them to understand that what they had was a partner on hand, not a subordinate.¹⁵ By wearing elements of dress that stressed femininity, such as jewelry, her particular hairstyles and headdresses, as well as carrying a folding fan, Felisa Rincón de Gautier was informing the men, that she did not want to be one of them, so when she had to “act like a man” in administrative matters, the males would not have felt threatened by her actions. As the *Memphis Press-Scimitar* noted in 1962, even though the mayor of San Juan “conducts municipal affairs with a masculine firmness, she is still feminine in dress.” *Time* magazine attests to the latter, when it noted that the image of Felisa Rincón de Gautier “briskly waving her fan as she rapped out facts and figures was enough to topple a man’s world.”¹⁶

When “in Old San Juan don’t fail to go to City Hall and meet one of the world’s most amazing women, Doña Felisa Rincón de Gautier.” Such a statement appeared in an article about visiting Puerto Rico, suggesting that the mayor as one of San Juan’s many tourist attractions.¹⁷ Why not? As mayor of San Juan for twenty-two years, Felisa Rincón de Gautier was a very visible and involved public servant. For through her hard work, she transformed San Juan from one of the dirtiest cities in the hemisphere to a city that won a prize for its cleanliness. Her fame as 1) the first female mayor of an American capital city, 2) the accomplishments as mayor, and 3) her *grande dame* image, provided

¹⁵ Felisa Rincón de Gautier, interview by Janet Negretti, Noticias 1140 radio, 1982;

¹⁶ Richard H. Boyce, “Puerto Rico’s Doña Fela, Power in Island Politics,” *Memphis Press-Scimitar*, November 12, 1962; *Time*, “Puerto Rico: Mayor on Tour,” March 18, 1957, 30.

¹⁷ *Hartford (Connecticut) Courant*, “Increasingly Popular Puerto Rico Offers Variety of Vacation Fun,” November 15, 1959.

her, San Juan, and Puerto Rico with worldwide publicity. It is the *grande dame* image that became a source of information in the press. Throughout her tenure many articles were written about this extraordinary woman, with many of them commenting on her *grande dame* image. Noted examples include: “San Juan, Puerto Rico...the oldest city under the American flag...probably the only city in the world where exotic flowers are worn in the mayor’s hair,” “She is tall, handsome, with motherly regality about her,” “Mrs. Gautier looked more like a symbol of romantic South America rather than a prosaic city official,” She “looked every inch the grand[e] dame she is,” “The personification of the well-groomed, smart looking matron...wears her clothes with a flair.”¹⁸ Considering the apt politician that she was, Felisa Rincón de Gautier would use all of this publicity, even when it was skewed toward her personal image, to promote her city, island and even their relationship with the United States. As Leonardo Rodríguez Villafañe noted in *Una Mujer al Servicio de Su Pueblo*, before Felisa Rincón de Gautier became mayor of San Juan, the city was unknown within the national and international scene, a fact that by 1969, thanks to her work and publicity, was not the case any longer.¹⁹

Meaning of Felisa Rincón de Gautier’s *Grande Dame* Image

¹⁸ Henry La Cossitt, “The Mayor Wears Flowers in Her Hair,” *Saturday Evening Post*, May 22, 1954; Fields, “Only Human: Shooting at a Fake Marc,”; Harry Heintzen, ““Good Neighbors’ Mingle Before Opening Congress,” *New Orleans Times-Picayune*, May 1, 1950; Valerie Edinger, “San Juan’s ‘Felisa’ is Popular With All,” *Richmond (Virginia)Times-Dispatch*, November 10, 1950; Esther M. Way, “Fine Mayor Yet Feminine – That’s First Lady of San Juan,” *Saginaw News*, May 27, 1954.

¹⁹ Leonardo Rodríguez Villafañe, *Una mujer al servicio de su pueblo*, 2nd ed. (San Juan, PR: Centro Gráfico del Caribe, Inc., 1987), 22.

A person's appearance may express their personal identity and cultural values. Dress as part of appearance can communicate a wide variety of meanings, including: a person's role, gender, age, personal interests and preferences.²⁰ As an element of dress, clothing is not "born" with meanings; these are culturally defined. Meanings are based on human interaction within a culture. As people assign meanings to elements of dress, the media, for example, helps promote and solidify these throughout society and the world.²¹ As an example, Felisa Rincón de Gautier, communicated through her appearance and dress her individuality, her philosophy on femininity, and her political beliefs. It was the press, local, national, and international, that was taken with her appearance and gave meaning to the various elements of her dress, and defined her image as that of a *grande dame*.

"Individuality in dress refers to an awareness of the norm and a desire to set one's self apart from it."²² The article "It's My Style and I'm Sticking to It" in *The New York Times* discusses how an "original and distinctive look...gives a face to personality." It suggests that looking like no one else can get a person noticed and communicate one's identity. If the identifiable style can be easily caricatured, then it is a true signature

²⁰ Mary Lynn Damhorst, "Introduction," in *The Meanings of Dress*, eds. Mary Lynn Damhorst, Kimberly A. Miller, and Susan O. Michelman (New York: Fairchild Publications, 2000), 3; Mary Lynn Damhorst, "Dress in Human Interaction," in *The Meanings of Dress*, eds. Mary Lynn Damhorst, Kimberly A. Miller, and Susan O. Michelman (New York: Fairchild Publications, 2000), 127.

²¹ Susan O. Michelman, "Appearance for Gender and Sexuality," in *The Meanings of Dress*, eds. Mary Lynn Damhorst, Kimberly A. Miller, and Susan O. Michelman (New York: Fairchild Publications, 2000), 168; Damhort, "Introduction," in *The Meanings of Dress*, 5.

²² Mary Lynn Damhort, "Introduction," in *The Meanings of Dress*, eds. Mary Lynn Damhorst, Kimberly A. Miller, and Susan O. Michelman (New York: Fairchild Publications, 2000), 207

look.²³ American ceramist Beatrice Wood set her self apart by individualizing her appearance through the wearing of Indian saris and lots of jewelry as part of her everyday wardrobe. Just the same, Felisa Rincón de Gautier set her self apart by individualizing her manner of dress through her “office wear,” accessories, headdress and hairstyles, and with them created a look that can be defined as a *grande dame* image, which was greatly caricaturized (Figures 124-134).²⁴

For the mayor of San Juan, individuality was key in her personality. As she told syndicated columnist Edyth Thornton McCleod, “I don’t want to look like anyone else (she doesn’t), I want my own personality....When I cook I cook differently, when I sew I sew differently, when I work I work differently.”²⁵ Even in the face of criticism, Felisa Rincón de Gautier did not waver from her individualistic manner of dress. In 1953 Anne Whelan writing for the *Bridgeport Sunday News* noted how “some of the islanders who dress uniformly well, with the most modish Continental style because all apparel comes from the mainland, think she is a bit eccentric rather than original in her apparel.”²⁶ In an interview with Ruben Arrieta for *Notiuno* radio station in 1986, the then former mayor told of criticism she received about her hairstyles: “When I was in politics, some people would try to insult me by saying ‘¡que moño, moñua!’ (what a *chignon*, *chignon* head!)...I would look at them and say ‘¿Qué bonito me quedo, verdad?’ (truly, does not it

²³ Cathy Horn, “It’s My Style and I’m Sticking to It,” *The New York Times*, July 27, 2004, <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/07/27/fashion/27DRES.html>.

²⁴ Miller, “Standing Out from The Crowd,” in *The Meanings of Dress*, 207; Marcia Forsberg, “Beatrice Wood: A Case Study,” in *Individuality in Clothing Selection and Personal Appearance*, 6th ed., eds. Suzanne G. Marshall, Hazel O. Jackson, M. Sue Stanley, Mary Kefgen, and Phyllis Touchie-Specht (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2004), 100-101.

²⁵ Edyth Thornton McCleod, “Beauty After Forty,” *Syndicated Column*, April 14, 1958.

²⁶ Whelan, “A Visit to Puerto Rican’s Homeland.”

look good?) Which would disarm them.” She reiterated her philosophy on individuality when Arrieta asked her if she copied the idea of wearing turbans from somebody else, her answer was a resounding no. As she explained “I have never copied anything from anyone. I am who I am. I have my own personality. I believe everyone should have his or her own personality. I do not care if my hairstyle is criticized....I will continue with my hairstyle.”²⁷

A person’s gestures, conduct and dress are the signs of her/his identity and personality. Dress as a mode of non-verbal communication functions as the “scenery/backdrop of a play” while other forms of communication - verbal or non-verbal “performs” in this “play.”²⁸ Felisa Rincón de Gautier’s *grande dame* image is the “scenery/backdrop” of the “play” on her philosophy of femininity. It helps set the stage for her “performance,” when she is advocating the culture of womanliness. She strongly believed that women had to be feminine, that no matter what the situation, they should always maintain their femininity. This, the mayor reiterated to the *Saginaw News* as she is quoted saying “Women must always remember they are women – they must never lose their femininity....No matter how busy a woman is...she must always take time to complete her toilette.” If any one person would understand this, it was Felisa Rincón de Gautier, whose typical day would go from six in the morning to two the next morning.²⁹ The mayor’s philosophy on femininity, communicated verbally and non-verbally, was

²⁷ Ruben Arrieta, interview.

²⁸ Mary Lynn Damhorst, “Dress as Nonverbal Communication,” in *The Meanings of Dress*, eds. Mary Lynn Damhorst, Kimberly A. Miller, and Susan O. Michelman (New York: Fairchild Publications, 2000), 79; Karlyne Anspach, *The Why of Fashion* (Ames, IA: The Iowa State University Press, 1967), 24.

²⁹ Way, “Fine Mayor Yet Feminine – That’s First Lady of San Juan.”; Oliveira, “Doña Fela, the Great Lady,” 52.

well documented in the press. For example, in the *Denver Post*, when asked about the awakening of the Puerto Rican woman, she stresses how “the Puerto Rican woman has invaded the political, educational and professional world of the men without jeopardizing their femininity.” The *Miami Herald* declared to have found the secret of political success through Felisa Rincón de Gautier as she insists that “It’s the way you approach public life – in a feminine way....We who are in public life have to be very careful about keeping feminine.”³⁰ Her non-verbal message of femininity was transmitted through her *grande dame* image, and was noted in the *Star & Herald* describing the mayor’s “coiffures that give her an air of great femininity and stateliness.” Syndicated columnist Esther Van Wagoner Tufty states how “one of her [Felisa Rincón de Gautier] great assets is her femininity.”³¹ Perhaps her image of a *grande dame* was so ultra feminine and queenly, that it obscured negative male responses.

Felisa Rincón de Gautier did not just talk about femininity, she exemplified it through her dress. Her strong belief in it was implemented into city policy under Municipal Ordinance 18, which did not allow people to walk around the city in either a bathing suit or shorts. Such was the mayor’s dislike for women walking around in shorts or trousers, that she was known to “reprimand” any female she saw wearing them around

³⁰ Nello Cessai, “Delegates Told of Gains Made in Puerto Rico,” *Denver Post*, June 3, 1954; Roberta Applegate, “Lady Mayor Says: Use Feminine Approach for Success in Politics,” *Miami Herald*, May 23, 1956.

³¹ *Star & Herald*, “Woman Mayor Makes Big Hit at Municipalities Conference.”; Esther Van Wagoner Tufty, “You’ve Got to Elect a Woman Mayor to Get Things Done!” *Syndicated Column*, March 28, 1958.

San Juan. “Go home and put on a dress. You look terrible,” she would say, or “You look ugly. Pants are for men. Don’t you know you are a Puerto Rican woman.”³²

Felisa Rincón de Gautier created policy based on her philosophy on femininity and dress, and in the same token, conveyed her political convictions through dress. In the essay “Dress and Identity,” Mary Ellen Roach-Higgins and Joanne B. Eicher noted how sometimes political affiliations could be communicated by the use of “pins, badges, armbands, unique hair arrangements, and other forms of identifying dress.”³³ In the early twentieth century, Mahatma Gandhi started to use clothing to communicate his changing sociopolitical identity. He replaced his western manner of dress with various combinations of Indian dress, which communicated “simplicity, asceticism, and identity with the masses....[and] his view of a truly Indian nationalism.”³⁴ When considering Felisa Rincón de Gautier’s political ideologies, it can be interpreted, that through her manner of dress she was communicating her support for Puerto Rico’s Free Associated State status with the United States.

³² *El Imparcial* (San Juan, PR), “Mulan American que Lleva Pantalón Corto,” October 11, 1958; *The Sign, National Catholic Magazine*, “Mayoress of San Juan,” November 1956, 46-48; Patricia McCormack, “Tea and Sympathy: Lady Mayor Spends One Day a Week Listening to People’s Troubles,” *Detroit Free Press*, December 18, 1962. In 1958 an American woman living in Puerto Rico with her husband who was stationed in a naval base in Puerto Rico, was arrested and fined \$3 for wearing shorts in public. As time went on, Felisa Rincón de Gautier embraced wearing slacks for everyday wear due to their comfort and functionality. She found them very convenient when taking care of her ill husband at the end of the 1960s.

³³ Mary Ellen Roach-Higgins and Joanne B. Eicher, “Dress and Identity,” in *Dress and Identity*, eds. Mary Ellen Roach-Higgins, Joanne B. Eicher and Kim K.P. Johnson (New York: Fairchild Publications, 1995), 14.

³⁴ Susan S. Bean, “Gandhi and Khadi, the Fabric of Indian Independence,” in *Cloth and Human Experience*, eds. Annette B. Weiner and Jane Schneider (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1989), 366.

As a commonwealth of the United States in 1952, the island of Puerto Rico found itself with an “autonomous government, but with strong ties to the United States.”³⁵ Here was an island whose values and culture were a reflection of its Spanish heritage, and at the same time, it shared a relationship and interest with the United States. Felisa Rincón de Gautier, was a woman who appreciated and embraced her Spanish heritage, but at the same time understood and believed in the American way of life. With her *grande dame* image, which included references to her Hispanic culture in the folding fan and *mantilla*,³⁶ the mayor would embark on goodwill tours around Latin America, to speak about the positive relationship between the United States and Puerto Rico. What a powerful scene that must have been to have this elegant Puerto Rican woman, with her crown of braids and her folding fan, red lipstick and red nails, promoting to her Latin American brothers and sisters the advantages of a "partnership" with the United States. Not only did it benefit the United States in communicating their message of "friendship", but it also supported the work of Felisa Rincón de Gautier and the *Partido Popular Democrático* in creating the Commonwealth status of Puerto Rico. As to the latter, the mayor had in her wardrobe a white linen blouse embroidered all-over with the U.S. and Puerto Rican flags coupled together, another example of using dress to express a political or ideological principle.

³⁵ Oliveira, “Doña Fela, the Great Lady,”52.

³⁶ Susannah Worth and Lucy R. Sibley examine the use of Andalusian imagery, including the *mantilla* and fan, to define Spanishness. See "Maja Dress and The Andalusian Image of Spain," 51-60.

Conclusion

Dress is a defining source in communicating personality, values, culture and even political leanings. Felisa Rincón de Gautier used this non-verbal communicator during her twenty-two years as mayor of San Juan, Puerto Rico. From 1946 through 1968, the capital city was the stage for its head administrator's imposing and feminine *grande dame* image. It was an exclusive image, one that is reminiscent of the identifiable styles of national and international figures Jackie Kennedy and Evita Perón.

As Ruth Gruber states in her biography of Felisa Rincón de Gautier, "wherever she went, everyone recognized the smiling woman with the braids wound high, or the gay turban on her head, and dangling earrings." This former dressmaker of Spanish descent, as mayor of San Juan dressed for functionality, to create a better work environment and to promote her city and island around the world. The *New York Post* in 1960, goes as far as to say, "A regal woman with a flare for distinctive clothes and dramatic hair-dos...she is probably better known for the way she dresses and carries herself than for her tireless efforts to improve the lot of the poor and humble."³⁷ It can be argued that the interest in her image was the introduction to everything that was Felisa Rincón de Gautier, her values, personality and political leanings. So by people "Looking, stopping and listening," the first female mayor of San Juan was able to promote her city and island around the world, a great testament to the power of dress.

³⁷ Gruber, *Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, 188; Arthur Massolo, "When Basic Principles Clash, Few Escape the Vibrations," *New York Post*, November 23, 1960.

Future Research

It may be of interest as future research on cross cultures to analyze the image of American female mayors during the same period as Felisa Rincón de Gautier's tenure and compare them to her own individualistic style. In keeping up with Felisa Rincón de Gautier's life, another exploration of interest may be to expand this research into the years following her retirement to investigate how being away from the constant limelight may or may not have influenced a change in her manner of dress and image.

This investigation brought to light the different types of retail clothing establishments in San Juan in the 1930s. Within these shops there seemed to be several owned by women. It may be of interest to dig deeper into the concept of Puerto Rican women in business, particularly as dress shop owners in the first half of the twentieth century. In addition, examining the life and career of Puerto Rican dress designer Rafaela Santos and American Yeda Kiviette would add to the body of literature of women fashion designers.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

TABLES

Elections	District	Elected as Senator	Elected as Representative	Party affiliation
1932	Mayagüez		María Luisa Arcelay	<i>Unión Republicana-Socialista</i>
1936		María M. de Pérez Almiroty*		<i>Liberal</i>
	Mayagüez		María Luisa Arcelay	<i>Unión Republicana-Socialista</i>
1940	Arecibo		María Libertad Gómez	PPD
1944	Arecibo		María Libertad Gómez	PPD
	Mayagüez		Libertad Pascual	PPD
1948	Arecibo		María Libertad Gómez	PPD
	Ponce		Guadalupe G. Pérez	PPD
1952		Juana Rodríguez Mundo*		PPD
		Antonia C. de Fajardo**		<i>Estadista (statehood)</i>
	Arecibo		Dolores Rivera Candelaria	PPD
	Aguadilla		Milagros González Chapel	PPD
			María Libertad Gómez***	PPD
1956	Arecibo	Palmira Cabrera de Ibarra		PPD
		Juana Rodríguez Mundo*		PPD
		Antonia Cabassa, Vda. de Fajardo**		<i>Estadista-Republicano</i>
	Aguadilla		Milagros González Chapel	PPD
	Ponce		Carmen Solá de Pereira	PPD
1960	Arecibo	Palmira Cabrera de Ibarra		PPD
		Juana Rodríguez Mundo*		PPD
		Antonia Cabassa, Vda. de Fajardo*		<i>Estadista-Republicano</i>
	Aguadilla		Milagros González Chapel	PPD
	Ponce		Carmen Solá de Pereira	PPD
			Julita Arce de Franklin***	<i>Estadista-Republicano</i>
1964		Josefina O. de Batlle*		PPD
	Aguadilla		Milagros González Chapel	PPD
	Mayagüez		Blanca E. Colberg	PPD
	Ponce		Carmen Solá de Pereira	PPD
			Josefina Llovet Díaz	<i>Estadista-Republicano</i>
1968	Aguadilla	Edma Santiago de Hernández		PPD
	San Juan	Sila Nazario de Ferrer		<i>Nuevo Progresista</i>
		María Arroyo de Colón*		PPD
			Olga Cruz***	PPD

*Senator *por acumulación* (at large). There is no district affiliation.

** Senator *por adición* (by addition). There is no district affiliation.

*** Representative *por acumulación* (at large). There is no district affiliation.

**** "Representative *por adición* (by addition). There is no district affiliation.

Table 1: Women in Legislature of Puerto Rico, 1932 – 1968.

Elections	Municipality	Elected as Mayor	Listed as Mayor	Years in office
1932	Arroyo		Maria Alvarez de Choudens	1933
1936	Maricao		Rosa Campos de Quiñones	1938-1941
1940	Canovanas		Lcda. Josefina Flores Quintero	1940-1941
	Canovanas		Dolores Sanchez de Sanchez	1941-1945
1944	Arroyo	Maria Alvarez de Choudens		1944-1948
	Culebra		Engracia Mulero	1946-1949
	Guanica	Esperanza Idrach Vda. de Quiñonez		1944-1963
	San Juan		Felisa Rincón de Gautier	1946-1968
	Trujillo Alto	Justina Viñas Castillo		1944
	Utua	Dolores Rivera Candelaria		1945-1952
1948	Cabo Rojo	Blanca Colberg		1949-1964
	Guanica	Esperanza Idrach Vda. de Quiñonez		1944-1963
	Salinas	Victoria Mateo		1949-1953
	San Juan	Felisa Rincón de Gautier		1946-1968
	Utua	Dolores Rivera Candelaria		1945-1952
	Yabucoa	Rosa Sanchez Vargas		1948-1956
1952	Cabo Rojo	Blanca Colberg		1949-1964
	Guanica	Esperanza Idrach Vda. de Quiñonez		1944-1963
	Guayama	Obdualia Velazquez Vda de Lorenzo		1952
	San Juan	Felisa Rincón de Gautier		1946-1968
	Yabucoa	Rosa Sanchez Vargas		1948-1956
1956	Cabo Rojo	Blanca Colberg		1949-1964
	Guanica	Esperanza Idrach Vda. de Quiñonez		1944-1963
	Juncos	Lydia López de Gómez		1957-1960
	Lajas		Rosalva Marty Ramirez	1959-1964
	Orocovis	Ofelia Torres de Melendez		1956-1968
	San Juan	Felisa Rincón de Gautier		1946-1968
	Trujillo Alto		Isabel Diaz de Diaz	1958-1962
1960	Cabo Rojo	Blanca Colberg		1949-1964
	Coamo	Rosa María Ortiz Alvarado		1960-????
	Guanica	Esperanza Idrach Vda. de Quiñonez		1944-1963
	Guanica		Aurea E. Vega	1963-1965
	Fajardo	María S. Perez de Gaos		1960-1968
	Juana Diaz	Ada E. Mage de Colón		1961-1969
	Juncos	Hilda Pacheco de Algarín		1960-1972
	Lajas	Rosalva Marty Ramirez		1959-1964
	Orocovis	Ofelia Torres de Melendez		1956-1968
	San Juan	Felisa Rincón de Gautier		1946-1968
	San Lorenzo	Dolores Gonzalez Diaz		1960-1964
	Trujillo Alto	Isabel Diaz de Diaz		1958-1962

Continued

Table 2: Women Mayors in the municipalities of Puerto Rico, 1932-1968.

Table 2 continued

1964	Fajardo	María S. Perez de Gaos		1960-1968
	Guanica	Aurea E. Vega		1963-1965
	Juana Díaz	Ada E. Mage de Colón		1961-1969
	Juncos	Hilda Pacheco de Algarín		1960-1972
	Orocovis	Ofelia Torres de Melendez		1956-1968
	San Juan	Felisa Rincón de Gautier		1946-1968
1968	Arecibo	Elba A Otero de Jove		1966-1970
	Juncos	Hilda Pacheco de Algarín		1960-1972
	Peñuelas	Elena Rivera Gutierrez		1968-1972
	Santa Isabela	Hilda E. Santiago		1968-1969

APPENDIX B
FIGURES CHAPTER 1



Figure 1: c.1630, *Infanta Doña María, Queen of Hungary* (detail) painted by Diego Velázquez. José López-Rey, *Velázquez, Painter of Painters: The Complete Works* (Köln : Taschen-Wildenstein Institute, 1997), 75.



Figure 2: 1797, portrait of the Duchess of Alba wearing the black dress of a *maja*. Painted by Francisco Goya. The portrait is located at The Hispanic Society of America in New York. Elke Linda Buchholz, *Francisco de Goya: Life and Work* (Cologne: Könemann, 1999), 41.



Figure 3: 1788, *Doña* María Catalina de Urrutia, wife of Puerto Rico's governor from 1783 to 1789. Painted by José Campeche. Portrait is part of the José Campeche collection at the *Museo de Arte de Ponce*. René Taylor, *José Campeche and His Time* (Ponce, PR: Museo de Arte de Ponce, 1988), front cover.

APPENDIX C
FIGURES CHAPTER 2



Figure 4: Francisco Rincón and Esilda Plumey de Rincón, circa 1884. *Museo Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, San Juan, Puerto Rico.



Figure 5: Map of Puerto Rico. <http://welcome.topuertorico.org/exploring.shtml>



Figure 6: Francisca (Cachu) Rincón Plumey, Francisco (Paco) Rincón Plumey and Petra Nuñez, aunt from Venezuela, circa 1902-1905. *Museo Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, San Juan, Puerto Rico.



Figure 7: Felisita Rivera de Marrero, circa L 19th century. *Museo Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, San Juan, Puerto Rico.



Figure 8: Enrique Rincón Plumey, circa 1900. *Museo Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, San Juan, Puerto Rico.

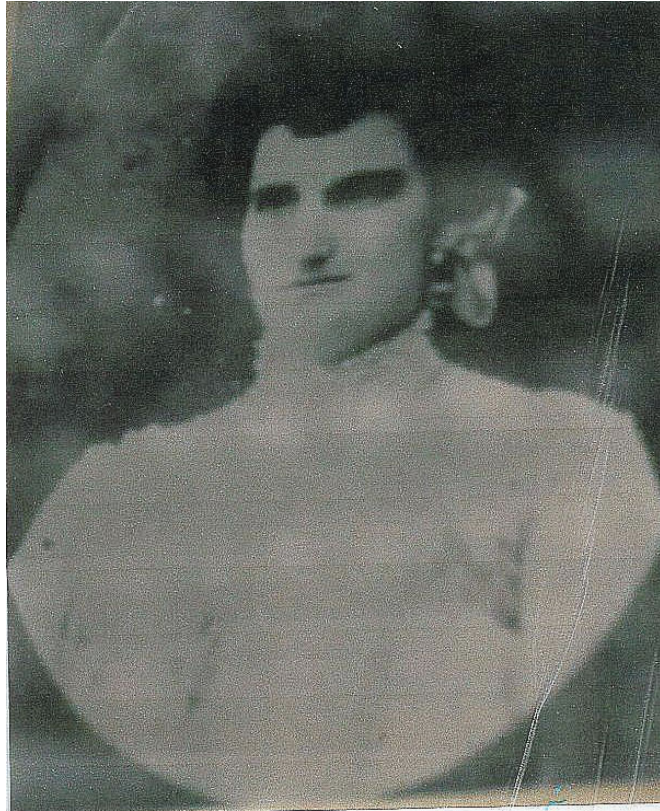


Figure 9: Rita Marrero de Rincón, circa 1900. *Museo Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, San Juan, Puerto Rico.



Figure 10: Enrique Rincón Plumey, Rita Marrero de Rincón, and one of the Rincón Marrero children, circa 1902-1905. Josean Ramos, *Palabras de Mujer: Una época reflejada en la vida de Felisa Rincón* (San Juan: Editorial Universidad de America, 1988), 151.

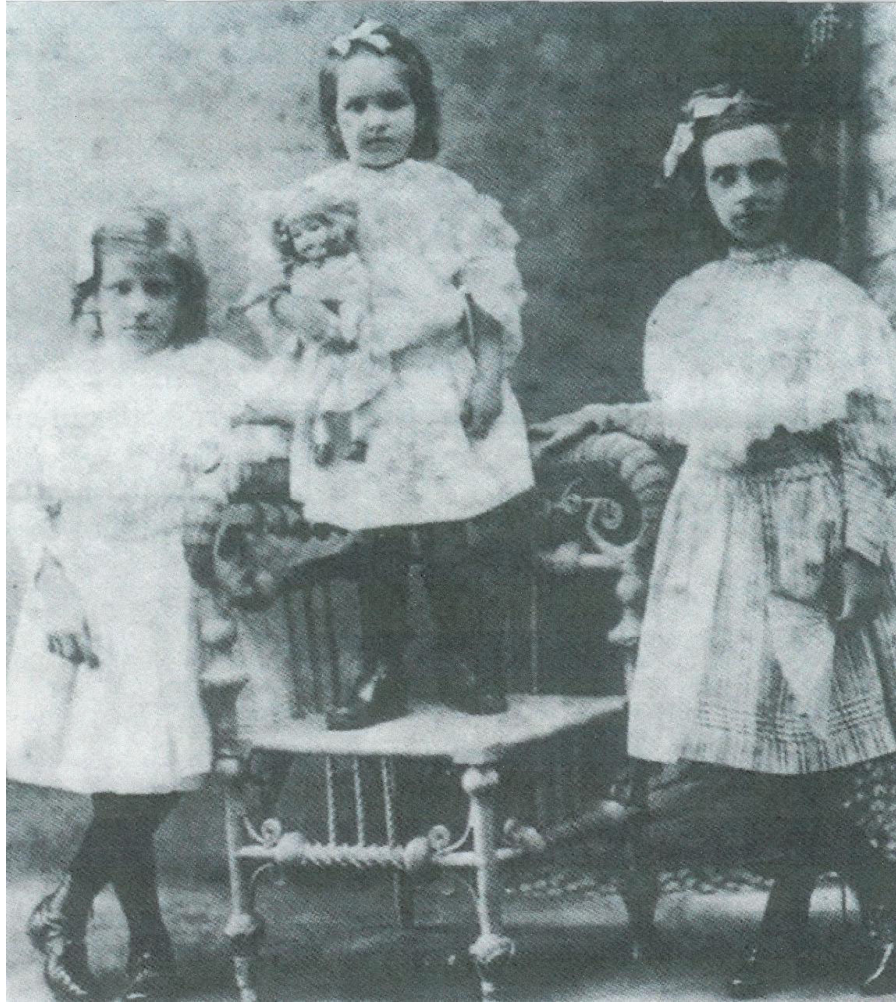


Figure 11: Josefina (Finí) Rincón Marrero, age 7, Cecilia Rincón Marrero, age 5, and Felisa Rincón Marrero, age 9, 1906. *Museo Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, San Juan, Puerto Rico.



Figure 12: Felisa Rincón Marrero, circa 1909-1911. *Museo Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, San Juan, Puerto Rico.

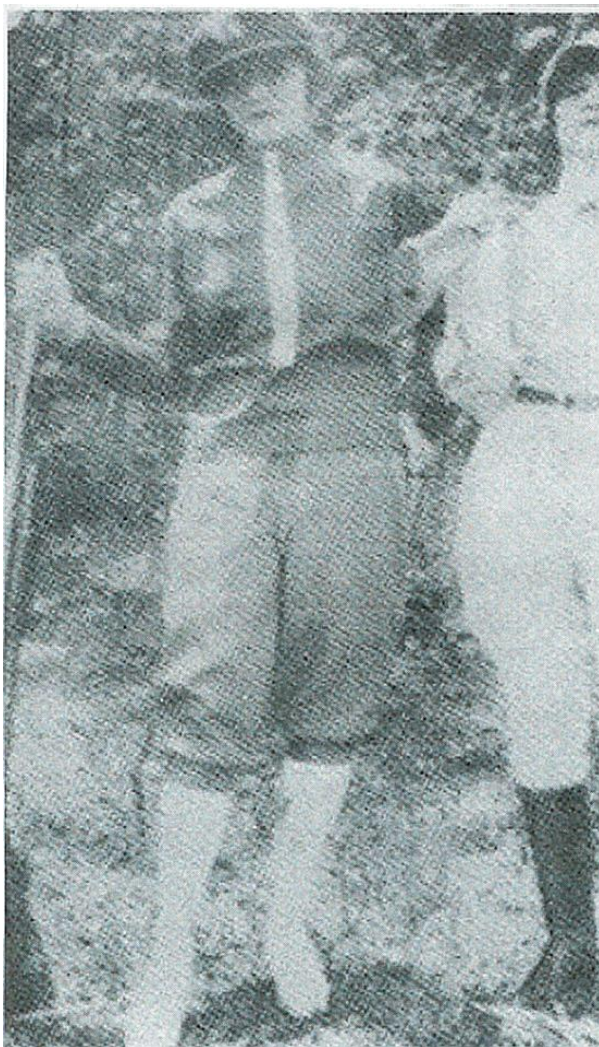


Figure 13: Felisa Rincón Marrero and Josefina (Finí) Rincón Marrero, hunting wild doves in *La Ceramica* farm in Vega Baja, Puerto Rico, circa 1912-1914. *Felisa Rincón de Gautier: The Mayor of San Juan* (NY: Biblio Press, 1994), 101.



Figure 14: Felisa Rincón Marrero in the Sofía Kerney dress worn to the *Casino de Puerto Rico* inaugural ball. The photograph was taken the day following the ball at the Colorado photographic studios, circa 1912-1913. *Museo Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, San Juan, Puerto Rico.



Figure 15: Felisa Rincón Marrero, circa 1921. *Museo Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, San Juan, Puerto Rico.



Figure 16: Felisa Rincón Marrero, circa 1927. *Museo Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, San Juan, Puerto Rico.



Figure 17: Meeting of the *Partido Liberal* Executive Committee. Felisa Rincón Marrero is the first (L-R) in the second row, 1932. *Museo Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, San Juan, Puerto Rico.

APPENDIX D
FIGURES CHAPTER 3

B. ALTMAN & CO.
 FIFTH AVENUE AT 34TH STREET, NEW YORK



VELVET

**more subtle in color . . . more formal
 in mood . . . more flattering than ever!**

Wear velvet after six. But wear the new velvets. . . they adorn you in strange lovely color, new fuschias and burning purples, smoldering reds and wines, galo blues. Here are four "After Six" dresses, designed by the great American designer, Kiviette. Every one is a brilliant dress; all could justly be priced scads more. **\$49.50**

Kiviette, important American designer, designed and created these four models exclusively for B. Altman & Company. As for the velvet, it is the famous luxury velvet, "Vel Aristocrat" (semi-doll) and "Vel du Pêche" (doll velvet) Reg.

MISSES' DRESSES—THIRD FLOOR . . . ALSO AT OUR EAST ORANGE AND WHITE PLAINS SHOPS

Figure 18: B. Altman & Co. advertising featuring velvet gowns designed by the "important American designer" Kiviette. *New York Times*, September 11, 1932.

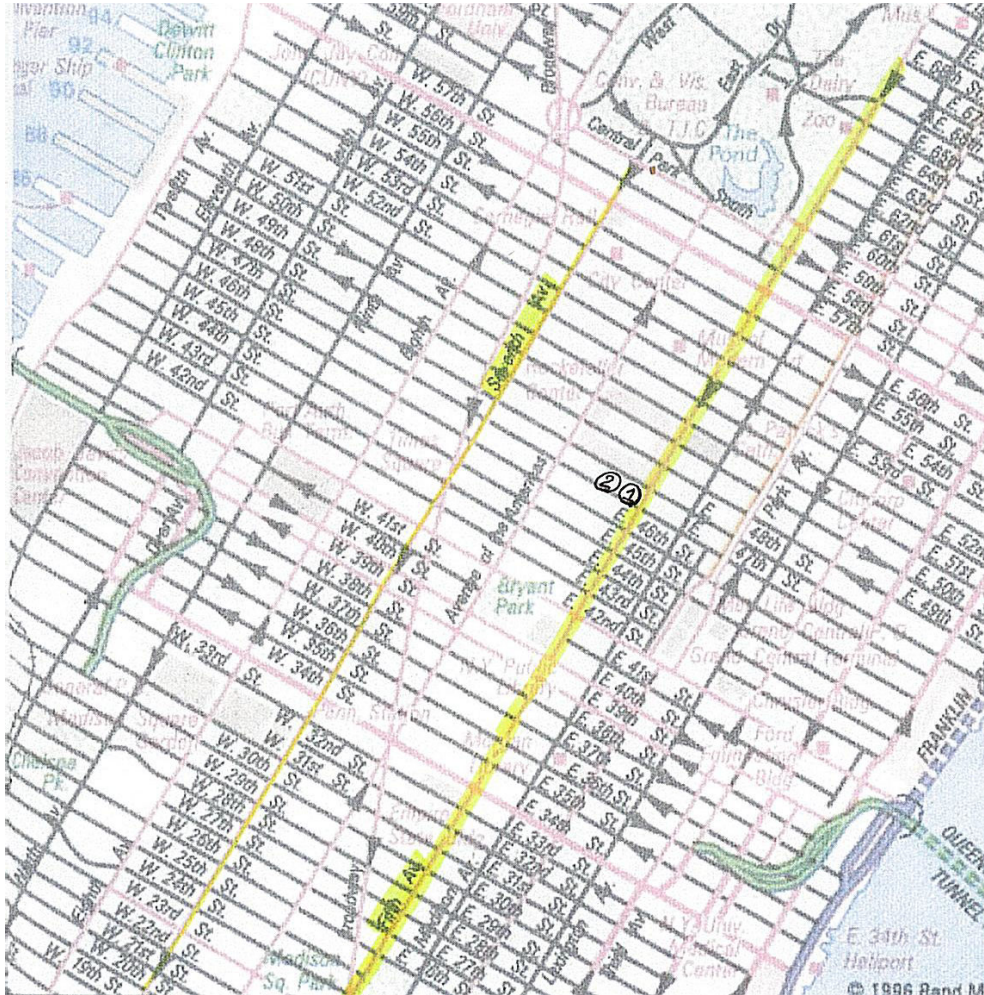
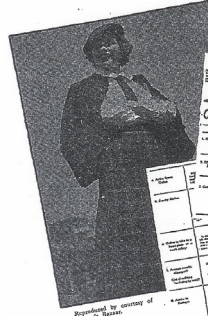


Figure 19: Map of the New York City Garment District. Featuring Fifth Avenue and Seventh Avenue. Location #1 is 15 W. 47th Street, first address for Kiviette, Inc. Location #2 is 37 W. 47th Street, a later address for Kiviette, Inc.

THE COLLEGE GIRL



Best & Co. presents
Special Fall 1935
plans

Prepared by courtesy of Massachusetts Magazine.

Freshman Fashion Chart

Category	Item	Price
Dresses	Black and white	\$12.50
	Dark and light	\$15.00
	Dark and dark	\$17.50
	Dark and light	\$20.00
Blouses	Black and white	\$5.00
	Dark and light	\$7.50
	Dark and dark	\$10.00
	Dark and light	\$12.50
Skirts	Black and white	\$8.00
	Dark and light	\$10.50
	Dark and dark	\$13.00
	Dark and light	\$15.50
Suits	Black and white	\$25.00
	Dark and light	\$30.00
	Dark and dark	\$35.00
	Dark and light	\$40.00



A hat chosen with the dress is vital. For a dark dress, a hat with a dark crown and light brim. For a light dress, a hat with a light crown and dark brim. \$1.50. Accessories extra.



"Place the tiny hat on her at Best, in the little boxes. We refer you to the current issues of Harper's Bazaar and Mademoiselle."

By her sweaters you will know her!
 She collects them — she adores them — and treasures and cuddles them!
 She buttons her cardigans up the back, her skirts down the front.
 She pushes her sleeves up and her hats back.
 She likes GOOD TWEENS. And knows the difference between the real and phony.
 She wears a FOLIO COAT OF FABRIC TWINED on the campus — and prefers it to look exactly like her brother's, or her best's.
 Her shoes are a sight. Old and battered and little coffee. She never cleans them. She wears socks all year round.
 Her PET HAT is a riding felt — she kicks it around.
 She wears HER SUITS to classes. She adores gundy MITTENS.
 She ties a KITCHEN towel over her head, enigmatic fashion, when it rains and does her muffs when it freezes.
 Her UNDERWEAR never saw Paris — she prefers WOOLLEN in Winter, LATEX nothings for dances, a SLIP and shorts as her irrevocable minimum.
 She doesn't wear nighties — alternating gay cotton PALLMOS with gay wooden ones as the season requires.
 She dresses up (in silk frocks, fur-trimmed suits, fur coats, evening gowns) for Sunday dinner, faculty teas, lectures, dates and dances, as her taste and the occasion suggest.
 She's never without LIPSTICK but red fingernails are taboo. She goes in for little HAIR RIBBONS and cherishes her coat of tan.
 She looks like a little girl (or perhaps a little boy) on the campus, but the most outgoing and sophisticated of young women away from it.
 She has a personality, a style, that's all her own, and also times out of ten, here in the East.



Handmade silk laces from Puerto Rico. \$1.50. Slips with matching lace. \$1.50. Slips with matching lace. \$1.50. Slips with matching lace. \$1.50.

Black velvet dress with white, high collar and buttons. \$17.50.
 Party dress of Kenmore. Handmade lace. \$15.00.
 Black silk dress for special occasions. \$15.00.
 Dressy laces of Imported Puerto Rico. \$1.50. Slips with matching lace. \$1.50.

To give our employees the benefit of the long labor day we closed the store will be closed all day Saturday August 10.

SHE BUYS HER CLOTHES AT BEST'S

Handmade silk lace trimmed slips and slippers from Puerto Rico. \$1.50. Slips with matching lace. \$1.50.



OUR COLLEGE SHOP IS OPEN NOW — All our pre-freshmen are here — everything from knits to silk knits meticulously assembled in one spot. In our current catalog guide to the shop. The right choice — Dependable advice. Prices that consider her allowance. Second Floor

Children's slippers in gay colors. \$1.50. Slippers with matching lace. \$1.50. Slippers with matching lace. \$1.50.

Extra articles supplied by Best & Co. 3655

Best & Co.
Fifth Avenue at 35th Street

Figure 20: Best & Co. advertising for the college girl. Features "Handmade silk lace trimmed panties and slippers from Puerto Rico." *New York Times*, August 25, 1935.



Silk Panties and Slip

A thrilling gift when one is 2 to 6. Handmade sets from Puerto Rico have hand embroidery and imitation Val. Panties 1.95. Slips 2.95. Domestic sets with beading and lace. 1.00 and 1.50. Tearose or white.

Figure 21: Fragment of advertisement for Best & Co. Liliputian Gift Bazaar. Featuring girl's "Silk Panties and Slip[s]" handmade in Puerto Rico. *New York Times*, December 13, 1936.



Figure 22: One of the costumes designed by Yeda Kiviette (signed Kiviat) for the 1919 musical *Monte Cristo, Jr.* The light house was one of several costumes included in the musical number “Women and Light.” *Shubert Archive*, Lyceum Theater, New York, NY.



Figure 23: 1936 Autumn cruise wear designed by Kiviette (Yeda Kiviette). Form-fitting jacket and mid-calf length skirt. Broad shouldered cape. Associated Press Photo. No. 2544, July 30, 1936. *Fashion Designers Costume Plates, 1933-1936* (1941).



Figure 24: 1936 Autumn cruise wear designed by Kiviette (Yeda Kiviette). Broad-shouldered short coat. Scarf of English tweed complements wool dress. Associated Press Photo. No. 2546, July 30, 1936. *Fashion Designers Costume Plates, 1933-1936* (1941).

PADIN

Aviso Importante

Ofrecemos a las damas y damitas el nuevo surtido que acabamos de Recibir de New York.

Trajes y Sombreros, Nuevos modelos, Gran actualidad, Estilos y colores. — Última expresión de las Modas de Otoño.

Sweaters Bonitos para Señoras y Niñas. — Gran variedad de Estilos y Colores. — Precios Populares.

Ropa Interior. — Fajas y Brassieres. — Ropita para Babies. — Trajecitos para Niños. Pantalones y Bombachas.

EL PARAISO

GONZALEZ PADIN CO., INC.

SAN JUAN

PONCE

MAYAGUEZ



Figure 25: Advertisement for *González Padín Co., Inc.* Department store in Puerto Rico. The ad notifies their female customers of the arrival of new merchandise from New York. *Alma Latina*, February 1936.

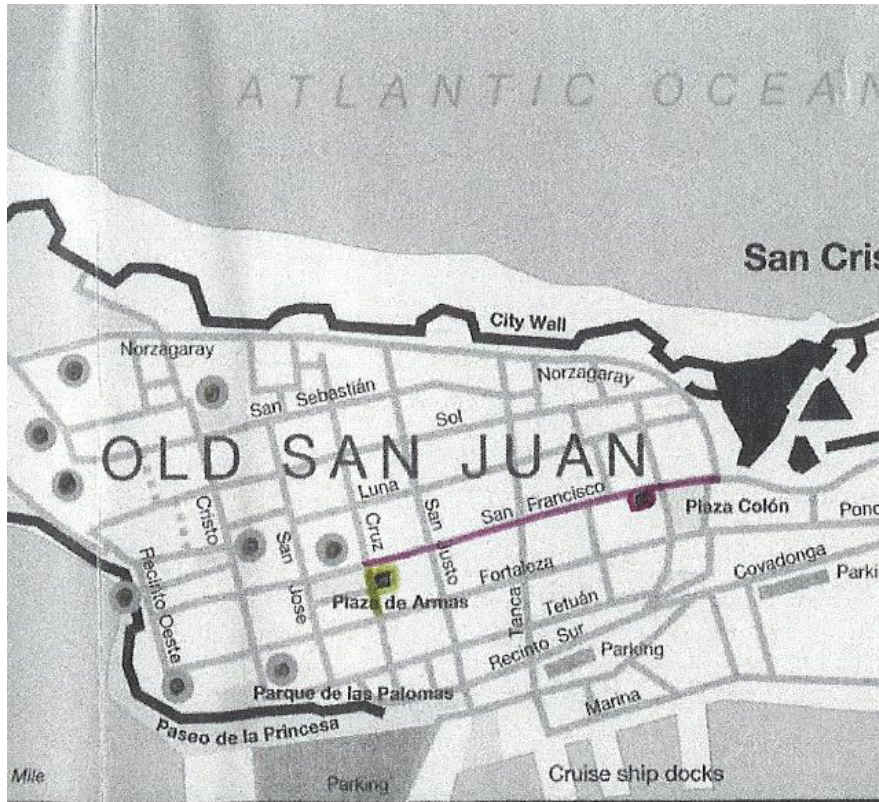


Figure 26: Map of Old San Juan, Puerto Rico. Features locales for Felisa's Styles Shop. Yellow outlined square: #15 Cruz Street, 1934-1936; Purple outlined square: #101 Salvador Brau (now San Francisco), 1936-1938.



Figure 27: #15 Cruz Street, San Juan, Puerto Rico. Where the two people are sitting, marks the building where Felisa's Styles Shop was located from 1934-1936. As of 2004, the tenant is *Pueblo* Supermarket.

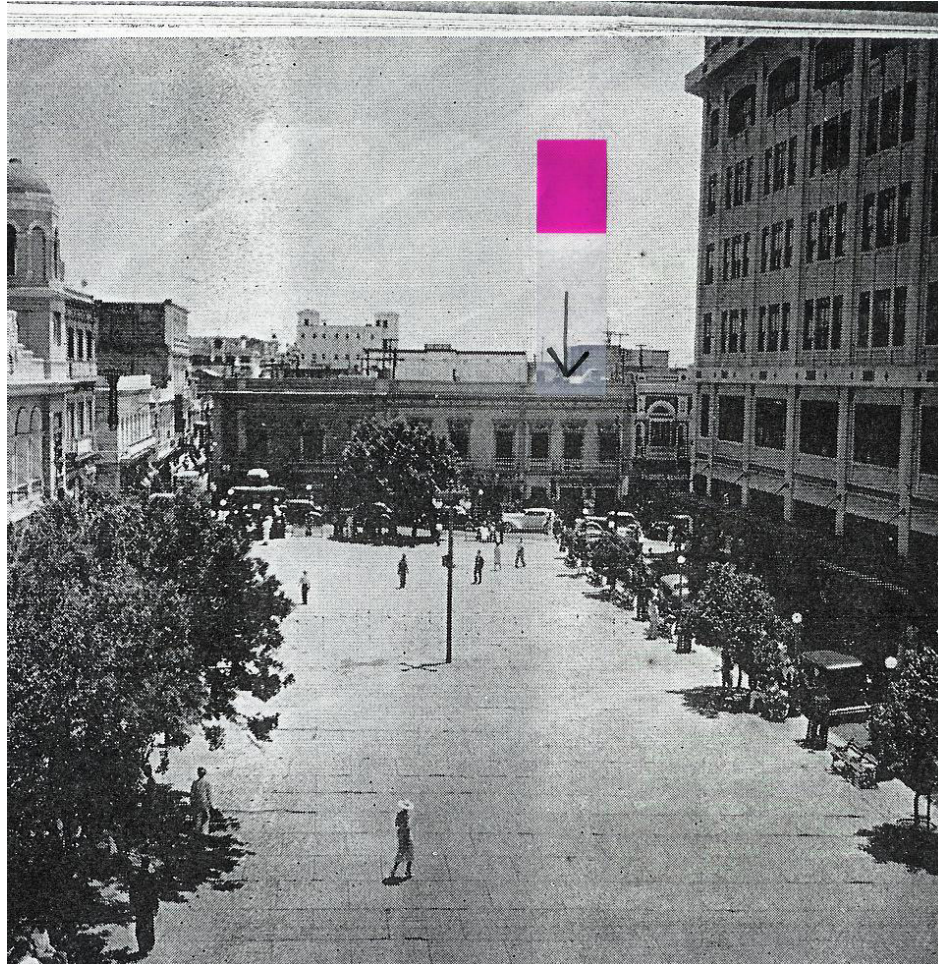


Figure 28: View of the *Plaza de Armas* in Old San Juan, Puerto Rico. To the left is San Juan's City Hall. The arrow indicates the location of #15 Cruz Street, Felisa's Styles Shop first locale. To the left and diagonal to the building is the location for *González Padín* Department Store. *Guide to the City of San Juan, Puerto Rico*, 2nd ed. (San Juan, PR: Institute of Tourism, Government of Puerto Rico, 1940), 14.



Figure 29: View of Cruz Street, San Juan, PR. Features *El Siglo*, ready-to-wear store, followed by Flores, Alvarez & Suarez, Co., footwear retailer. Approximately three or four doors up from *El Siglo*, was the first location of Felisa's Styles Shop. *Guide to the City of San Juan, Puerto Rico*, 2nd ed. (San Juan, PR: Institute of Tourism, Government of Puerto Rico, 1940), 9.



Figure 30: #101 Salvador Brau St. (now San Francisco St.), San Juan, Puerto Rico. The light pink building is where Felisa's Styles Shop was located from 1936-1938. Since 2002, the tenant has been Benny's jewelry store.



Figure 31: View of Puerto Rican women walking the streets of San Juan in 1935. *Alma Latina*, February 1935.



Figure 32: View of Puerto Rican women walking the streets of San Juan in 1935. *Alma Latina*, February 1935.

GIUSTI



EN TRAJES DE BAILE

TENEMOS UN SURTIDO FORMIDABLE

TODAS TALLAS

TODOS COLORES

PRECIOS MUY RAZONABLES

**TODO ACABADO DE RECIBIR
VISITENOS HOY MISMO!**

Figure 33: Advertisement for *Giusti*. Felisa Rincón considered *Giusti* one of the competitors of Felisa's Styles Shop. *Alma Latina*, February 1936.

APPENDIX E
FIGURES CHAPTER 4

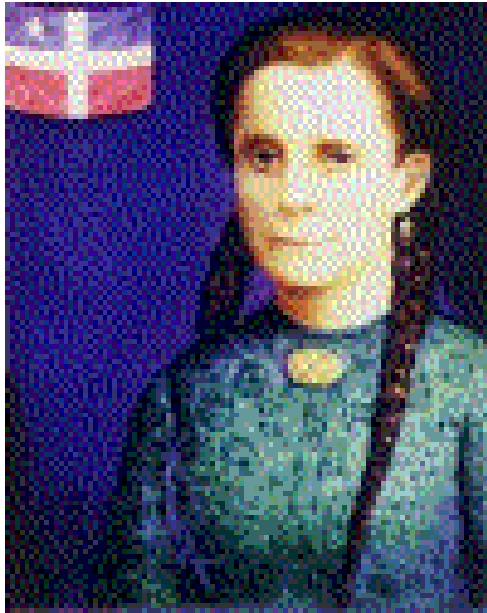


Figure 34: Mariana Bracetti, “*Brazo de Oro*,” 1825-1903. She sewed the flag for the *Grito de Lares* in 1868. http://www.proyectosalohogar.com/BiografiasPr/mariana_bracetti.htm.



Figure 35: Lola Rodríguez de Tío, 1843-1924. She composed patriotic lyrics to *La Borinqueña* for the *Grito de Lares* in 1868. <http://www.rootsweb.com/~prsanjua/bp-002.htm>.



Figure 36: Luisa Capetillo, 1879-1922. Feminist and labor leader. She is considered the first woman in the Puerto Rico to publicly dress in men's clothing. This photograph made headlines in the front page of *El Día* newspaper of Havana, Cuba on July 26, 1915. <http://andrejkoymasky.com/liv/fam/bioc1/cape2.html>.



Figure 37: Ana Roqué de Duprey, 1853-1933. One of the most important leaders of the suffragist movement in Puerto Rico. *Revista*, October 1941, 3.



Figure 38: Suffragists in Puerto Rico, circa 1910s. Suffragist leader Ana Roqué de Duprey is fourth from the left in first row. Francisco Scarano, Puerto Rico: *Cinco siglos de historia* (San Juan, PR: McGraw-Hill, 1993), 653.



Figure 39: Emblem (*pava*) and slogan (bread, land and liberty) for the *Partido Popular Democrático* of Puerto Rico. [http://encyclopedia.thefreedictionary.com/Partido%20Popular %20Democratico](http://encyclopedia.thefreedictionary.com/Partido%20Popular%20Democratico).



Figure 40: On March 23, 1940, Felisa Rincón Marrero married attorney Jenaro Gautier.
Museo Felisa Rincon de Gautier, San Juan, PR.



Figure 41: On December 5, 1946, Felisa Rincón de Gautier is sworn in as mayor (i.e. city manager) of San Juan, Puerto Rico. Office of the Mayor of San Juan, *Report*, 1968, 2.



Figure 42: In 1948, Felisa Rincón de Gautier was the first woman ever elected as mayor of San Juan, capital of Puerto Rico. Sworn in ceremony February 15, 1949. Josean Ramos, *Palabras de Mujer: Una época reflejada en la vida de Felisa Rincón* (San Juan: Editorial Universidad de America, 1988), 183.



Figure 43: Felisa Rincón de Gautier's first job was to "clean up San Juan." A goal she achieved through the purchase of new trucks and creating a sense of pride within the workforce. Josean Ramos, *Palabras de Mujer: Una época reflejada en la vida de Felisa Rincón* (San Juan: Editorial Universidad de America, 1988), 190.

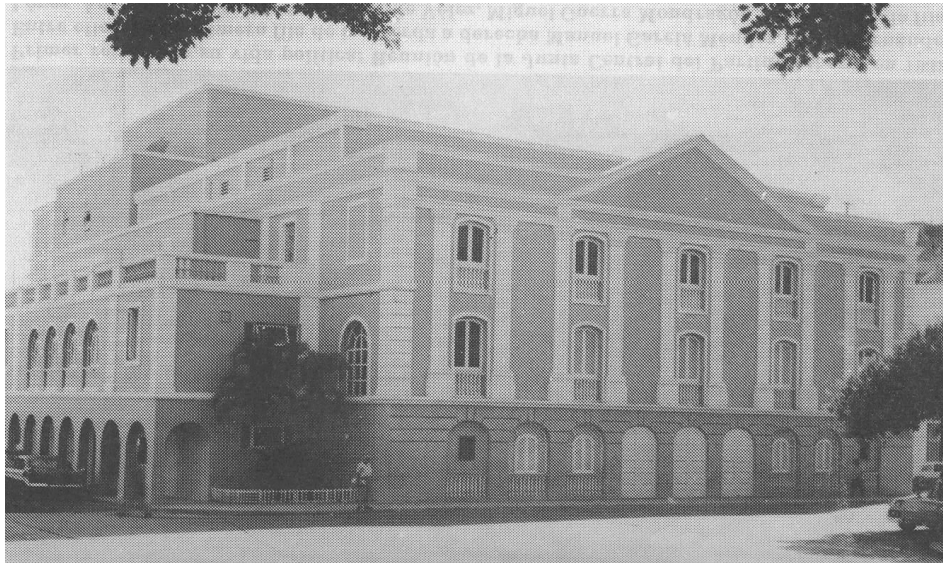


Figure 44: Under Felisa Rincón de Gautier's administration, the nineteenth century *Teatro* (theater) *Tapia* in Old San Juan was restored and inaugurated in 1949. Leonardo Rodríguez Villafañe, *Una mujer al servicio de su pueblo*, 2nd ed. (San Juan, PR: Centro Gráfico del Caribe, Inc., 1987), 212.

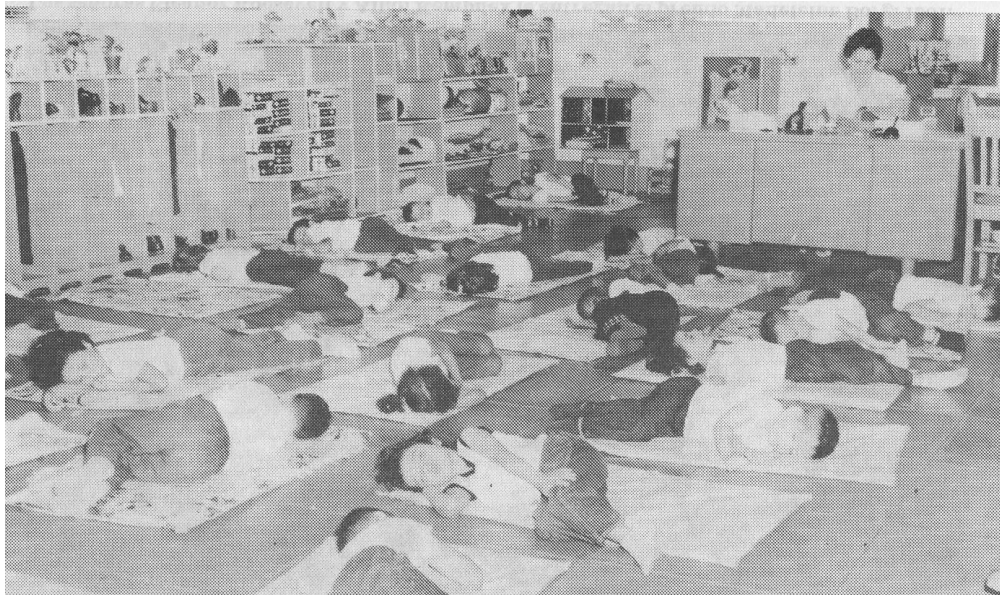


Figure 45: As mayor of San Juan, Felisa Rincón de Gautier established the first preschool childcare centers in Puerto Rico. Leonardo Rodríguez Villafañe, *Una mujer al servicio de su pueblo*, 2nd ed. (San Juan, PR: Centro Gráfico del Caribe, Inc., 1987), 219.



Figure 46: Felisa Rincón de Gautier's administration oversaw the construction of the Hiram Bithorn baseball stadium in San Juan. Leonardo Rodríguez Villafañe, *Una mujer al servicio de su pueblo*, 2nd ed. (San Juan, PR: Centro Gráfico del Caribe, Inc., 1987), 227.



Figure 47: In 1952 mayor Felisa Rincón de Gautier, with the help of Eastern Airlines, created a winter wonderland in Puerto Rico. The event was repeated a few more years, but was cancelled due to a change in airplane models. Josean Ramos, *Palabras de Mujer: Una época reflejada en la vida de Felisa Rincón* (San Juan: Editorial Universidad de America, 1988), 150.



Figure 48: Felisa Rincón de Gautier attends the *Congreso Hispano-Luso-Americano-Filipino* of Municipalities in Lisbon, Portugal, May 1959. *Colección Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, Archivo General de Puerto Rico, 1-0108/29-89-38.



Figure 49: In 1958, Felisa Rincón de Gautier is awarded the Order of the Holy Sepulcher of Jerusalem from New York City's Cardinal Spellman. Marianna Norris, *Doña Felisa: A Biography of the Mayor of San Juan* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1969), 65.



Figure 50: In 1954, Felisa Rincón de Gautier, second from left was selected as “Woman of the Americas” by the United Women of America. *Museo Felisa Rincón de Gautier, San Juan, PR.*



Figure 51: As a dedicated Democrat, Felisa Rincón de Gautier campaigned intensely in the elections of 1960 for John F. Kennedy. The President, who offered her an ambassadorship, did not miss the effort. Felisa Rincón de Gautier humbly decline. *Museo Felisa Rincón de Gautier, San Juan, PR.*

APPENDIX F
FIGURES CHAPTER 5



Figure 52: Mid 1940s tubular/box silhouette. Original line drawing by Dilia López-Gydosh inspired by Sears, Roebuck and Co. dress in JoAnne Olian, ed., *Everyday Fashions of the Forties: As Pictured in Sears Catalogs* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1992), 78.

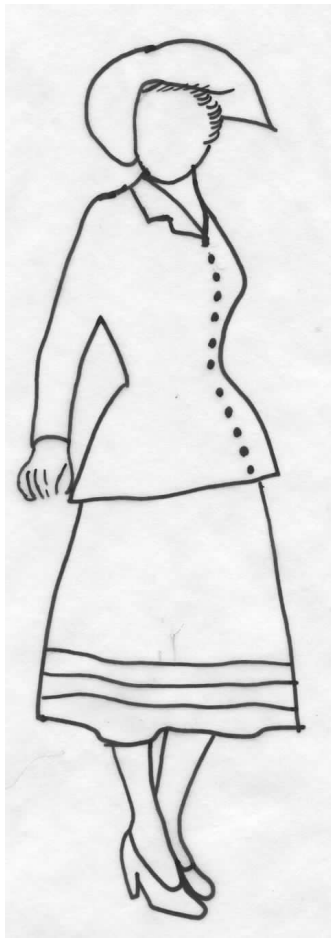


Figure 53: 1947 Christian Dior's "New Look" silhouette; soft shoulders, narrow waist and full skirt. Wide-brimmed, low-crowned hat. Original line drawing by Dilia López-Gydosh inspired by dress from *Vogue* magazine in Jane Mulvagh, *Vogue: History of 20th Century Fashion* (New York: Viking, 1988), 195.



Figure 54: Mid-1950s, Christian Dior's "H-line," tubular dress. Douglas A. Russell, *Costume History and Style* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1983), 451.



Figure 55: Late 1950s, A-line or trapeze silhouette, dress forms triangular line from shoulders to hem. Original line drawing by Dilia López-Gydosh inspired by Sears, Roebuck and Co. dress in JoAnne Olian, ed., *Everyday Fashions of the Fifties: As Pictured in Sears Catalogs* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 2002), 84.

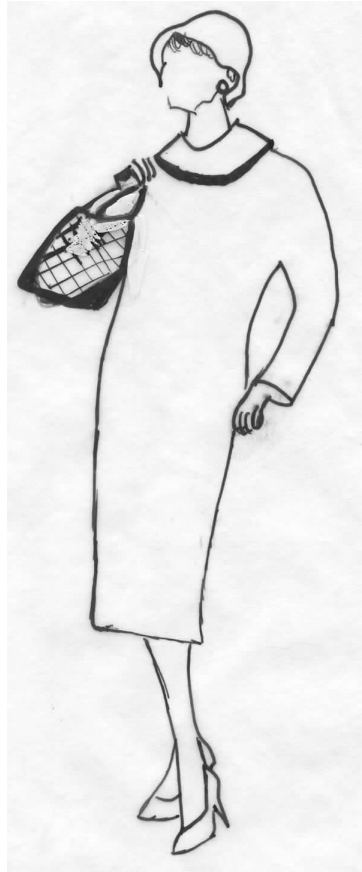


Figure 56: Late 1950s, *saque* or chemise silhouette, loose fitting simple straight line. Cloche hat. Original line drawing by Dilia López-Gydosh inspired by Sears, Roebuck and Co. suit in JoAnne Olian, ed., *Everyday Fashions of the Fifties: As Pictured in Sears Catalogs* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 2002), 85.



Figure 57: Late 1950s, boxier silhouette represented by the Chanel suit. Annalee Gold, *90 Years of Fashion* (New York: Fairchild Fashion Group, 1991), 39.



Figure 58: Late 1940s, dress with ankle length full skirt and fitted bodice. Original line drawing by Dilia López-Gydosh inspired by dress from *Vogue* magazine in Jane Mulvagh, *Vogue: History of 20th Century Fashion* (New York: Viking, 1988), 194.

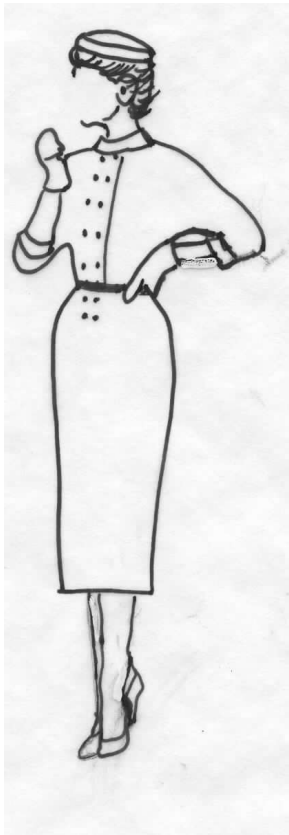


Figure 59: Early 1950s, shirtwaist dress in narrow, curvier line. Pixiecut hairstyle. Original line drawing by Dilia López-Gydosh inspired by Sears, Roebuck and Co. dress in JoAnne Olian, ed., *Everyday Fashions of the Fifties: As Pictured in Sears Catalogs* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 2002), 40.

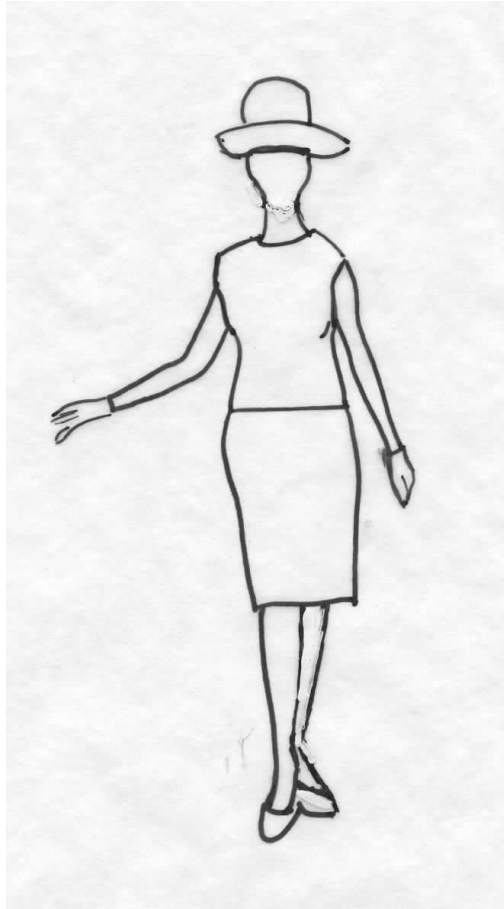


Figure 60: Early 1960s, overblouse dress with boxier, loose fitting line. Original line drawing by Dilia López-Gydosh inspired by Sears, Roebuck and Co. dress in JoAnne Olian, ed., *Everyday Fashions of the Sixties: As Pictured in Sears Catalogs* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1999), 34.



Figure 61: Early 1950s, suit fitted at waist with narrow skirt. Original line drawing by Dilia López-Gydosh inspired by suit from *Vogue* magazine in Jane Mulvagh, *Vogue: History of 20th Century Fashion* (New York: Viking, 1988), 214.

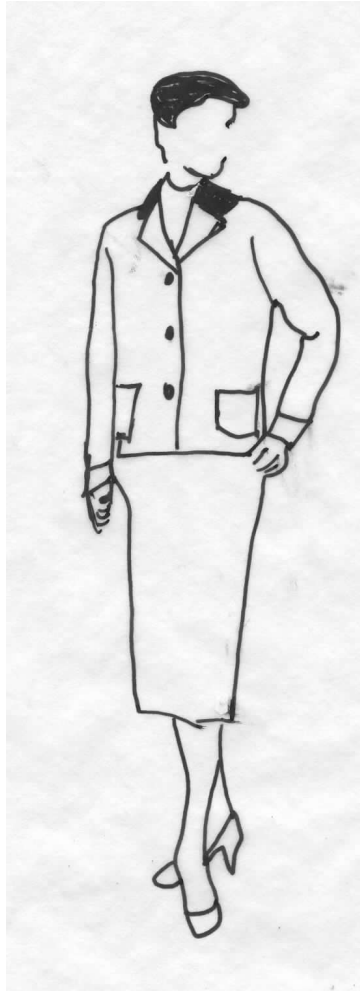


Figure 62: Mid-to-late 1950s, suit with square, waist-length jacket and just under-the-knee skirt. Toque hat. Original line drawing by Dilia López-Gydosh inspired by Sears, Roebuck and Co. suit in JoAnne Olian, ed., *Everyday Fashions of the Fifties: As Pictured in Sears Catalogs* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 2002), 51.

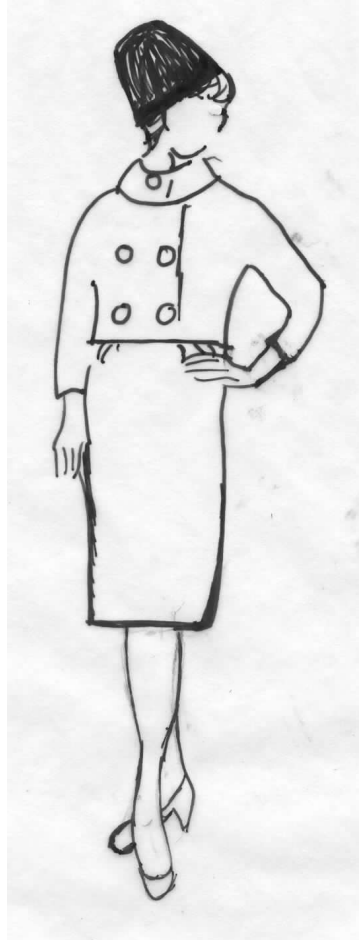


Figure 63: Early 1960s, suit with unfitted short jacket and peg-top skirt. Mitrelike hat. Original line drawing by Dilia López-Gydosh inspired by Sears, Roebuck and Co. suit in JoAnne Olian, ed., *Everyday Fashions of the Sixties: As Pictured in Sears Catalogs* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1999), 5.



Figure 64: Late 1940s – Early 1950s, coat in the “New Look” line with back bottom fullness. Original line drawing by Dilia López-Gydosh inspired by Sears, Roebuck and Co. coat in JoAnne Olian, ed., *Everyday Fashions of the Fifties: As Pictured in Sears Catalogs* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 2002), 20.



Figure 65: Mid 1950s, straight-line coat with small collar. Brimless cap. Original line drawing by Dilia López-Gydosh inspired by Sears, Roebuck and Co. coat in JoAnne Olian, ed., *Everyday Fashions of the Fifties: As Pictured in Sears Catalogs* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 2002), 82.



Figure 66: Early 1960s, collarless coat with empire waist and flare. Original line drawing by Dilia López-Gydosh inspired by Sears, Roebuck and Co. raincoat in JoAnne Olian, ed., *Everyday Fashions of the Sixties: As Pictured in Sears Catalogs* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1999), 23.

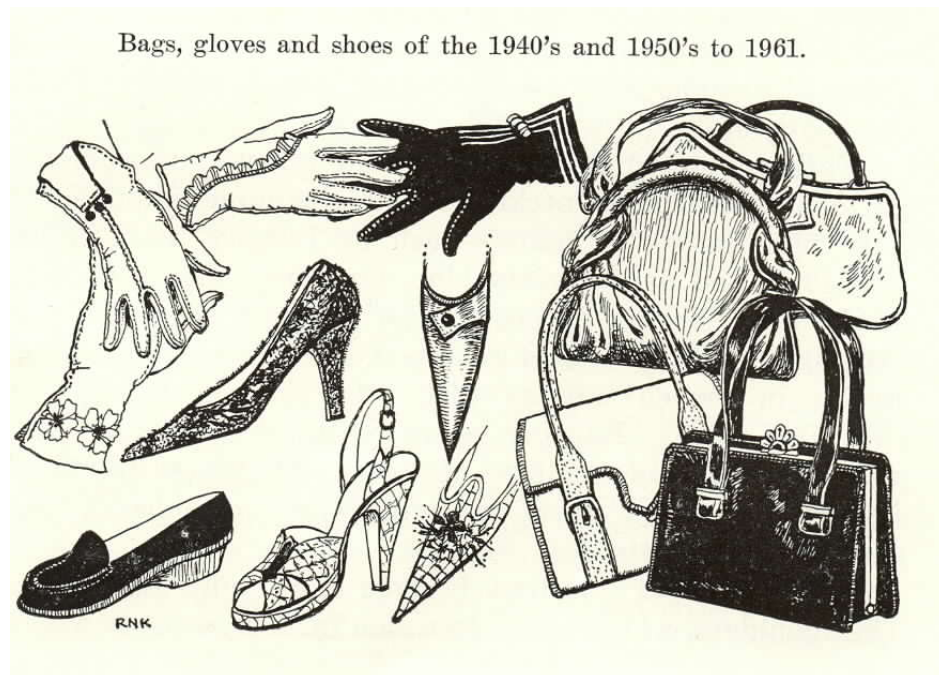


Figure 67: 1940s, 1950s and 1960s, accessories: gloves, shoes and handbags. Katherine Morris Lester and Rose Netzorg Kerr, *Historic Costume: A Resumé of Style and Fashion from Remote Times to the Nineteen-sixties*, 5th ed. (Peoria, IL: Chas. A. Bennett Co., Inc., 1961), 267.

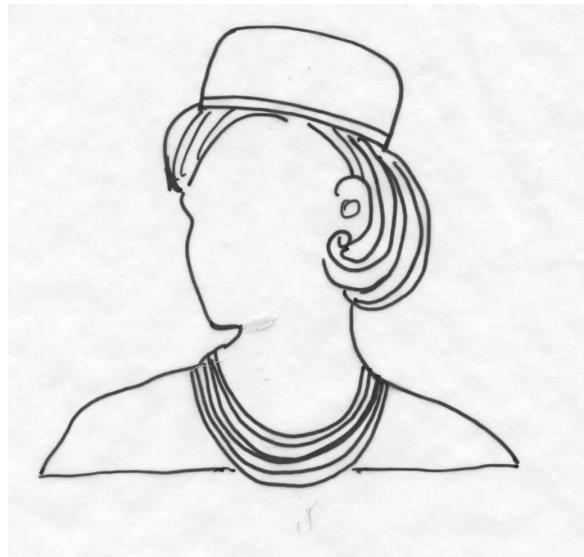


Figure 68: Early 1960s, pillbox hat and teased bouffant hairstyle ala Jackie Kennedy. Original line drawing by Dilia López-Gydosh inspired by Sears, Roebuck and Co. dress ensemble with matching accessories in JoAnne Olian, ed., *Everyday Fashions of the Sixties: As Pictured in Sears Catalogs* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1999), 29.



Figure 69: late 1950s, beehive hairstyle. Doreen Yarwood, *Fashion in the Western World* (London: B.T. Batsford, Ltd, 1992), 163.



Figure 70: December 5, 1946, Felisa Rincón de Gautier is sworn in as mayor of San Juan, Puerto Rico (detail of figure 41). She is wearing a white shirtwaist dress. Office of the Mayor of San Juan, *Report*, 1968, 2.



Figure 71: 1951, Felisa Rincón de Gautier wearing the “uniform” consisting of a loose fitting blouse and skirt. Two-chignon hairstyle. Criss-cross flat sandals. *Colección Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, Archivo General de Puerto Rico, 1-0061/8-26-8.



Figure 72: 1953, Felisa Rincón de Gautier with visitor at city hall. She is wearing a shirtwaist dress with a fuller cut skirt. Grouping of ringlets or coils hairstyle, embellished with small flowers. She is holding a folding/pleated fan. *Colección Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, Archivo General de Puerto Rico, 1-0082/18-59-11.



Figure 73: 1953, Felisa Rincón de Gautier wearing the printed blouse and dark color skirt version of the “uniform.” *Alma Latina*, January 3, 1953, 26.



Figure 74: 1952, Felisa Rincón de Gautier wearing a floral printed blouse and small neck scarf tied in to a bow. Braided two-chignon hairstyle. Round stud earrings. *Museo Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, San Juan, Puerto Rico.



Figure 75: 1952, Felisa Rincón de Gautier wearing blouse from “uniform” embroidered with the United States and Puerto Rican flags. “Half” coronet hairstyle. Josean Ramos, *Palabras de Mujer: Una época reflejada en la vida de Felisa Rincón* (San Juan: Editorial Universidad de America, 1988), 158.

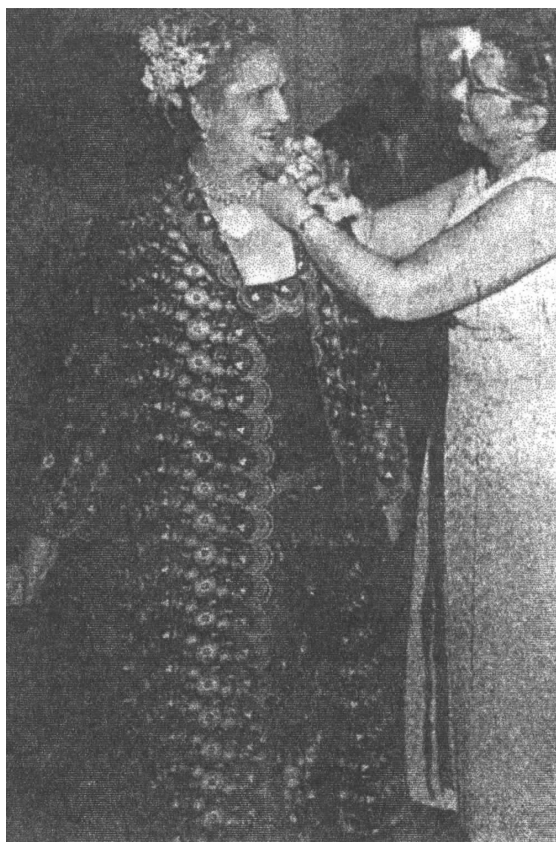


Figure 76: 1958, Felisa Rincón de Gautier wearing the chemise dress and coat of ensemble. Hairstyle adorned with small flowers. *Alma Latina*, September 27, 1958, 27.



Figure 77: 1963, Felisa Rincón de Gautier wearing an overblouse dress, striped turban and triple large beaded strands necklace. *Colección Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, Archivo General de Puerto Rico, 1-0126/36-108-56.



Figure 78: 1949, Felisa Rincón de Gautier in a dress exemplifying the longer lines of the late 1940s. *Alma Latina*, April 9, 1949, 28.



Figure 79: 1953, Felisa Rincón de Gautier wearing a striped afternoon dress in the fit-n-flare silhouette. Round toe high heel pumps. *Alma Latina*, July 4, 1953, 25.



Figure 80: Early 1960s, Felisa Rincón de Gautier wears a neck scarf tied in to a very large bow. Single strand of large pearls with matching drop earrings. She is holding a pair of white gloves. *Colección Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, Archivo General de Puerto Rico, 1-0116/31-95-25.



Figure 81: 1950, Felisa Rincón de Gautier wearing an afternoon dress embellished with lace inserts at neckline and bands on the sleeves. *Colección Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, Archivo General de Puerto Rico, 1-0025/4-14-6.



Figure 82: 1950, Felisa Rincón de Gautier wearing an afternoon dress with overall small geometric design. *Colección Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, Archivo General de Puerto Rico, 1-0009/3-10-4.



Figure 83: 1966, Felisa Rincón de Gautier wearing a polka dots dress with white jacket. White turban, single strand of large pearls and matching drop earrings. Fingernails polish. *Colección Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, Archivo General de Puerto Rico, 1-0141/42-121-107.



Figure 84: 1952, Felisa Rincón de Gautier wearing a floral cocktail dress with short puffed sleeves. Grouping of coils hairstyle. Holding a folding fan. Choker necklace and earrings. *Alma Latina*, August 23, 1952, 25.



Figure 85: 1954, Felisa Rincón de Gautier wearing a dark color lace cocktail dress with ornate off-the-shoulder neckline and long sleeves. Braided coronet/crown hairstyle. Ribbon choker and large disk with fringes pendant. Black gloves and black shawl. Holding a folding fan and small square clutch bag. *Colección Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, Archivo General de Puerto Rico, 1-0087/20-66-7.



Figure 86: 1952, Felisa Rincón de Gautier wearing a floral cocktail dress with off-the-shoulder neckline and short sleeves. Rolled two-*chignons* hairstyle. Holding a folding fan. Two-tone spectator high heel pumps. *Alma Latina*, November 29, 1952, 24.



Figure 87: 1948, Felisa Rincón de Gautier wearing a dark color tailored suit with white blouse. Medium brim hat with clusters of white flowers. Top handle leather handbag. Josean Ramos, *Palabras de Mujer: Una época reflejada en la vida de Felisa Rincón* (San Juan: Editorial Universidad de America, 1988), 202.



Figure 88: 1955, Felisa Rincón de Gautier wearing a fitted suit with three-quarter sleeves. Braided coronet/crown hairstyle. Long neck scarf. *Alma Latina*, June 25, 1955, 20.



Figure 89: 1962, Felisa Rincón de Gautier black square/box line suit, matched with white collarless blouse. Two-tone turban. Multiple strands pearl necklace and matching earrings. *Colección Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, Archivo General de Puerto Rico, 1-0118/32-98-5.



Figure 90: Early 1950s, Felisa Rincón de Gautier wearing a white suit with darker color round neck blouse. Small brimless hat trimmed with feather. Hoop earrings. Small top-double handle handbag. *Colección Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, Archivo General de Puerto Rico, 1-0095/24-75-2.



Figure 91: 1952, Felisa Rincón de Gautier wearing a triangular shape, fuller cut coat. Black medium heels pumps. *Colección Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, Archivo General de Puerto Rico, 1-0072/14-47-18.

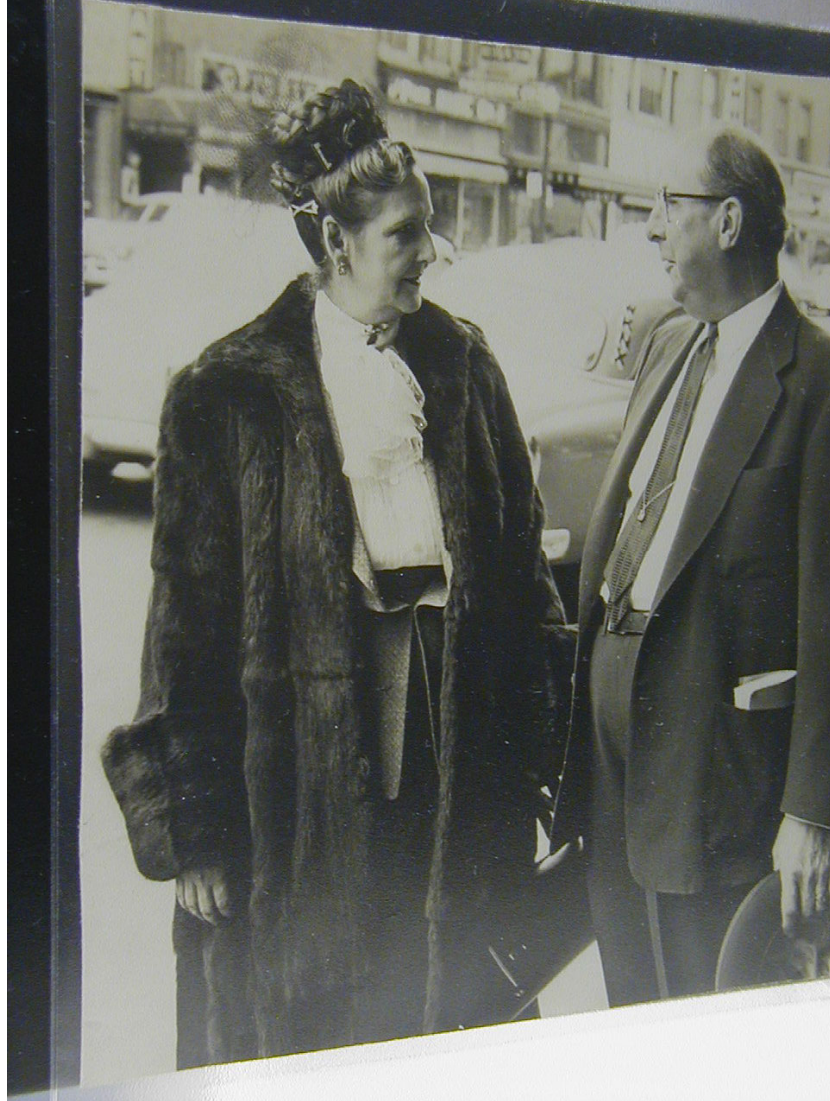


Figure 92: Mid 1950s, Felisa Rincón de Gautier wearing a fur coat while visiting the United States. Underneath she wears a suit with white blouse and lace jabot. Braided coronet/crown hairstyle adorned with black band. *Colección Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, Archivo General de Puerto Rico, 1-0086/20-65-2.



Figure 93: 1950, Felisa Rincón de Gautier wears a long, full skirt evening gown with off-the-shoulder neckline and short puffed sleeves. Holding a folding fan. Choker length necklace, pendant and earrings. *Colección Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, Archivo General de Puerto Rico, 1-0015/4-13-1.



Figure 94: 1954, Felisa Rincón de Gautier wears full skirt long evening gown, off-the-shoulder V neckline. Braided coronet/crown hairstyle. Brooch. Gown, worn to receive “Woman of the Americas” award, fitted by Rafaela Santos, Puerto Rican dressmaker. *El Imparcial* (San Juan), April 3, 1954. *Colección Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, Archivo General de Puerto Rico, 1-0178.



Figure 95: 1967, Felisa Rincón de Gautier wears a floor length, narrower skirt evening gown ornamented with fringes and flowers. Lace shawl. Long, white gloves. Multiple strands pearl necklace and earrings. Full head wig in the braided coronet/crown style. *Colección Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, Archivo General de Puerto Rico, 1-0160/53-133-27.



Figure 96: Early 1960s, Felisa Rincón de Gautier black floor length gown made out of a Spanish shawl, ornamented with flower. Braided coronet/crown hairstyle. Long, pearl necklace. Holding a folding fan. *Museo Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, San Juan, Puerto Rico.



Figure 97: 1949, Felisa Rincón de Gautier wears a floor length evening gown with Lace. Off-the-shoulder neckline with lace illusion, long lace sleeves. Hair ornamented Pompadour hairstyle ornamented with ribbon bow. *Colección Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, Archivo General de Puerto Rico, 1-0045/5-17-21.



Figure 98: Early to mid 1960s, Felisa Rincón de Gautier wears a dark color dress underneath a criss-cross patterned coat. Black neck scarf tied in to a bow. White turban. White low flat heels, squared toes. *Colección Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, Archivo General de Puerto Rico, 1-0094/23-74-4.



Figure 99: 1962, Felisa Rincón de Gautier wears her version of the overblouse dress, with the skirt reaching just below the knee. Multicolor printed turban. White neck scarf tied into a bow and low heel pumps. Choker length pearl necklace and matching earrings. *Colección Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, Archivo General de Puerto Rico, 1-0124/34-103-7.



Figure 100: 1966, Felisa Rincón de Gautier wears a black satin taffeta two-piece dress ensemble. Matching turban and neck scarf tied into a bow. Carrying a folding fan. Medium heel, black square-toe pumps. *Museo Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, San Juan, Puerto Rico.



Figure 101: 1954, Felisa Rincón de Gautier wears a beaded cocktail dress with off-the-shoulder neckline and long sleeves. Grouping of ringlets or coils hairstyle, embellished with a large Spanish comb. Clusters of pearls for earrings and necklace. Off-white floral Spanish shawl with long fringes. Holding a folding fan. *Colección Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, Archivo General de Puerto Rico, 1-0092/21-68-13.



Figure 102: Early 1960s, Felisa Rincón de Gautier in a black off-the-shoulder neckline dress and three quarter sleeves. Braided coronet/crown hairstyle. Long pearl necklace. Holding a large lace netting folding fan. *Museo Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, San Juan, Puerto Rico.



Figure 103: 1967, Felisa Rincón de Gautier wears dress/coat ensemble made out of lace. Mesh turban. Triple strand beaded necklace with earrings. A *porta-abanico* for the folding fan. *Colección Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, Archivo General de Puerto Rico, 1-0153/48-128-13.



Figure 104: Mid to late 1950s, Felisa Rincón de Gautier wearing an off-white satin cocktail dress with off-the-shoulder neckline. Lace shawl. Single long strand of pearls tied into a knot. Holding a folding fan and a square clutch handbag. High heel pumps. *Alma Latina*, November 29, 1952, 24. *Colección Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, Archivo General de Puerto Rico, 1-0100/26-80-15.



Figure 105: 1961, Felisa Rincón de Gautier wearing a printed sheath dress with black satin coat. Black gloves and black clutch handbag. Black stud earrings and several types of beaded necklaces worn at the same time. *Colección Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, Archivo General de Puerto Rico, 1-0113/31-94-1.



Figure 106: 1954, Felisa Rincón de Gautier wearing a polka dot afternoon ensemble. Braided two-*chignons* hairstyle with medium brim hat trimmed with white flowers. Stud earrings. *Alma Latina*, July 7, 1954, 23.



Figure 107: 1949, Felisa Rincón de Gautier wearing a black suit with lace jabot. Black velvet bonnet trimmed with white lace. *Alma Latina*, November 12, 1949, 23.



Figure 108: 1961, Felisa Rincón de Gautier wearing a white brocade blouse and bow with dark color skirt. Light color satin turban. Choker length single strand beaded necklace and drop earrings. Black handbag and medium heel black pumps. *Colección Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, Archivo General de Puerto Rico, 1-0111/30-93-1.

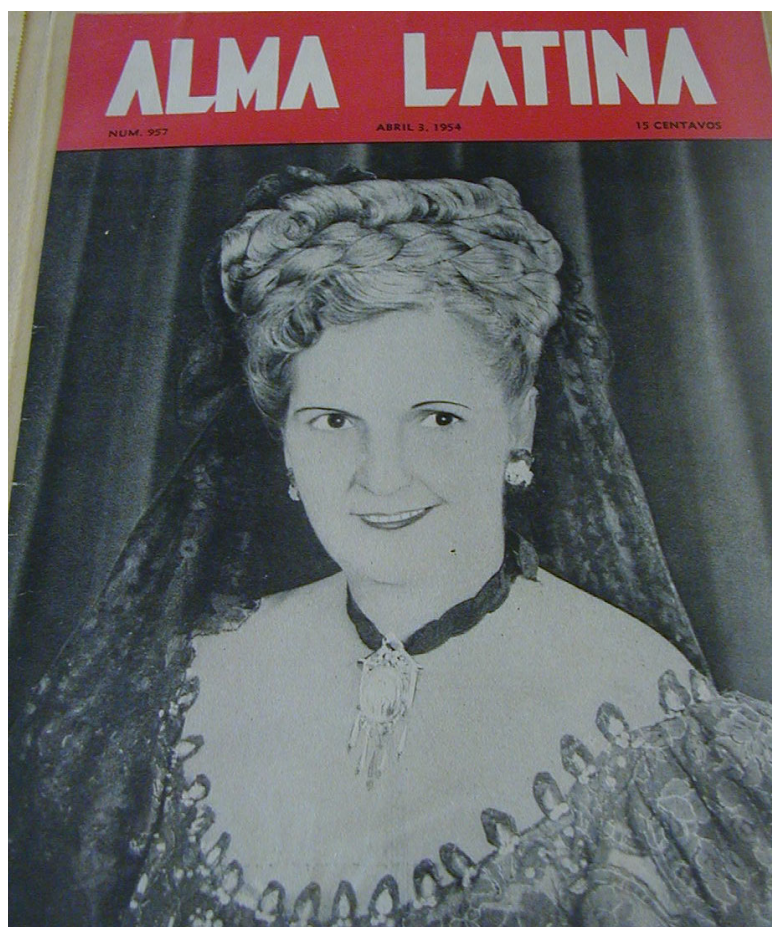


Figure 109: 1954, Felisa Rincón de Gautier wearing a black lace cocktail dress trimmed with tabs on the off-the-shoulder neckline. Braided coronet/crown hairstyle. Lace *mantilla* as headwear. Large flat stud earrings and black velvet ribbon choker with pendant. Front cover of *Alma Latina* magazine, celebrating the mayor as “Woman of the Americas.” April 3, 1954. *Colección Felisa Rincon de Gautier*, Archivo General de Puerto Rico, 1-0181.



Figure 110: 1966, Felisa Rincón de Gautier wearing matching large polka dots dress and coat. Single pearl drop earrings and choker length necklace. White headband surrounding the pulled back *chignon*. *Museo Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, San Juan, Puerto Rico.



Figure 111: Late 1940s, Felisa Rincón de Gautier wearing a dark color dress with lace insets. Pompadour, fullness on top, hairstyle. *Museo Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, San Juan, Puerto Rico.



Figure 112: 1953, Felisa Rincón de Gautier wearing a two-piece dress ensemble with short sleeves. “Half” coronet hairstyle embellished with ribbon. *Colección Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, Archivo General de Puerto Rico, 1-0084/18-60-38.



Figure 113: Late 1950s, Felisa Rincón de Gautier wearing a chemise dress matched with a sheer coat. Hairstyle embellished with white feathers. Long dangling earrings and triple strand pearl necklace. *Colección Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, Archivo General de Puerto Rico, 1-0105/27-84-27.



Figure 114: 1956, Felisa Rincón de Gautier wearing a white blouse with small floral print circle skirt. Double braided coronet/crown hairstyle, which is embellished with a diagonal headband. White flat round stud earrings. Neck scarf tied into a knot. Holding a folding fan and a single top-handle handbag. Black medium heel pumps. *Colección Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, Archivo General de Puerto Rico, 1-0099/25-78-3.



Figure 115: Early 1950s, Felisa Rincón de Gautier wearing a feather print shirtwaist dress. Hairstyle: braid(s) gather at top of head, unbalanced. *Museo Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, San Juan, Puerto Rico.



Figure 116: 1953, Felisa Rincón de Gautier is wearing a black suit with white blouse. Neck scarf tied into a bow. Braided “half” coronet/crown hairstyle. Fingernails polished. White socks and saddle shoes. *Colección Felisa Rincon de Gautier*, Archivo General de Puerto Rico, 1-0080/17-57-44.



Figure 117: Late 1950s, Felisa Rincón de Gautier wearing a black jacket and floral design blouse. Braided coronet/crown hairstyle: single braid encircling large *chignon*. *Museo Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, San Juan, Puerto Rico.



Figure 118: Mid 1950s, Felisa Rincón de Gautier wearing a black off-the-shoulder dress. Triple pearl strands necklace and matching pearl stud earrings. Braided coronet/crown hairstyle: two braids entwine. *Museo Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, San Juan, Puerto Rico.



Figure 119: 1952, Felisa Rincón de Gautier wearing a white lace evening gown with eyelet work on the sleeves. Hairstyle: intricate design of ringlets and coils or curls. *Alma Latina*, June 1, 1957, 21.



Figure 120: 1955, Felisa Rincón de Gautier wearing a white blouse with small print. Smooth two-*chignons* hairstyle, each circled by a small scarf. *Alma Latina*, December 1955, 25.



Figure 121: 1952, Felisa Rincón de Gautier wearing a floral cocktail dress with off-the-shoulder neckline and short sleeves. Ringlets or rolled two-*chignons* hairstyle. Holding a folding fan. *Colección Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, Archivo General de Puerto Rico, 1-0073/14-48-29.



Figure 122: 1962, Felisa Rincón de Gautier is wearing a dark colored top with small white print. Printed neck scarf tied into a bow. Short pearl drop earrings and single choker length pearl necklace. *Chignon* hairstyle, embellished with small flowers. *Museo Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, San Juan, Puerto Rico.

APPENDIX G
FIGURES CHAPTER 6



Figure 123: 1803, portrait of María Vicenta de Salís Vignancourt Lasso de la Vega, Countess of Fernan Nuñez painted by Francisco Goya.
http://www.almendron.com/arte/pintura/goya/obras_goya/goya_37.htm.



Figure 124: Political cartoon, “We have to help and cooperate with her.” *El Mundo* (San Juan, PR), March 1947. *Colección Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, Archivo General de Puerto Rico, Box #2/2-0122.



Figure 125: Political cartoon, “Very soon! Debut of the Mexican Trio composed by Jesus, Felisa and Ernesto Juan.” *El Mundo* (San Juan, PR), 22 October 1947. *Colección Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, Archivo General de Puerto Rico.



Figure 126: Political cartoon, “The mayor and the mayors.” *Diario de Puerto Rico* (San Juan, PR), 20 December 1948. *Colección Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, Archivo General de Puerto Rico, Box #2/2-0123.



Figure 127: Political cartoon, "With you yes, with you no." *El Imparcial* (San Juan, PR), 19 September 1949. *Colección Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, Archivo General de Puerto Rico, Box #6/2-0119.



Figure 128: Political cartoon, "The great skater." *El Imparcial* (San Juan, PR), 24 March 1952. *Colección Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, Archivo General de Puerto Rico, Box #12/P1010117.



Figure 129: Caricature of Felisa Rincón de Gautier sketched in Uruguay. From February 21-27, 1953, the mayor attended the Fourth Inter-American Congress of Municipalities in Montevideo, Uruguay. *Colección Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, Archivo General de Puerto Rico, 1-0103/26-81-11.



Figure 130: Political cartoon, "Coffee at cost for the consumer." *El Imparcial* (San Juan, PR), 29 January 1954. *Colección Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, Archivo General de Puerto Rico, Box #17/P1010116.



Figure 131: Political cartoon, “The mare is surly.” *El Imparcial* (San Juan, PR), 15 November 1958. *Colección Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, Archivo General de Puerto Rico, 2-0126.



Figure 132: Political cartoon, “Tells how things are going for her at the fair.” *El Imparcial* (San Juan, PR), 15 March 1961. *Colección Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, Archivo General de Puerto Rico, 2-0135.



Figure 133: Political cartoon, "The umbrella of thunder." *El Imparcial* (San Juan, PR), 14 September 1964. *Colección Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, Archivo General de Puerto Rico, 2-0140.



Figure 134: Political cartoon, "Microdramas." *El Mundo* (San Juan, PR), 6 May 1968. *Colección Felisa Rincón de Gautier*, Archivo General de Puerto Rico, 2-0136.

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