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Dear Ms. Harrington:

As a senior professor and historian of Chicana/o Studies, I have worked on several PBS projects, including the award-winning U.S.-Mexican War Series.

Many years ago, I was interviewed by a Ken Burns associate for a discussion on women in the western United States. More likely than not, despite a lovely dinner in Pasadena, my response to a burning question of his about Mexican-origin women was unsettling. He asked, "how in one word would you describe women of Mexican origin in the western United States?" The answer was easy, and so I said, "as fierce." No Mexican-origin women appeared in the aired documentary. Twenty-four years of research in archives across the southwest still lead me to the same answer; Mexican-origin women were hardly servile, existed as more than saloon girls, and resisted all manner of oppression and discrimination, fiercely.

I have learned from a listserv to which many scholars of ethnic America subscribe that the new Ken Burns documentary on WWII omits Latinos, Mexican-origin/Chicanos entirely. Tell me that in this day and age of many oral history projects, of bookshelves full of scholarly, readable books, anthologies, and encyclopedias that this is not the case. Chicanos were the most decorated soldiers of any ethnic group serving in WWII battalions. To overlook this does those veterans, now nearly gone, a disservice, but more than that, explains as well why Latinos (the largest ethnic group in this country today) support less and less PBS. I think PBS' programming does not reflect our histories, realities, or experiences, sadly, and exists, in terms of Latino/as, still under an apartheid system.

I served as co-editor in chief of the award-winning comprehensive encyclopedia, *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Latinos and Latinas in the U.S.* (2005). Could I ask that you make it recommended reading for filmmakers of all stripes (and please consult our many entries on WWII)? Only when your executives and fundraisers take a lead in this will the situation of willful neglect and of oversight be corrected. Given that some decades from now the electorate who support and vote for politicians and elected officials who determine the uses of public tax dollars and of grants will soon be Latino/a, it might also be in the interest of PBS to do something immediately and not wait for future boycotts, rancor, and angry public receptions; this will surely accompany the airing of what sounds like a long, overdue examination of an important event in U.S. history. I would venture that if you polled the viewers of the documentary, you will find a very healthy percentage of Spanish-surnamed and/or Latino/as who will surely be disappointed.

Thank you for reading. Please share my letter with your executives.

Professor Deena J. González