Who Are We Really?

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Preface and Acknowledgements

When I think back on the first Seminar on the Acquisition of Latin American Library Materials (SALALM) meeting I attended, in June 2002 at Cornell University, I still feel the warmth of meeting new colleagues and subsequent friends, who shared a deep and solid interest in the trends and traditions of Latin American librarianship. In the days that followed I was treated as a family member, exposed to formats and strategies employed by librarians and their associated institutions, and to libreros who affirmed the values, goals, and vision of SALALM’s mission statement. That sense of family never left me, so it is not difficult to see what inspired the theme of the 59th SALALM meeting of May 10–14, 2014, at the Radisson Downtown in Salt Lake City, Utah. That theme was “Who Are We Really?: Latin American Family, Local and Micro-Regional Histories, and Their Impact on Understanding Ourselves.”

The present volume includes a representative sample of the presentations made at the conference, and captures the essence of how scholars and librarians focus on family, local and micro-regional historical resources, and their place in the scholarship. Further, the scholarship explores several areas. One is how these resources add to the discussion of genealogical data: how families represent themselves; and how governments record vital statistics to document growth of population, guarantee certain rights for citizens, as well as attempt to document non-citizens. Another area treats racial and ethnic identities, or how people view themselves and are viewed by others. Still another is how those perceived identities conflict with perceptions of governments in the citizenship and rights guaranteed to people based on racial and ethnic identities.

What this volume does not capture, and can only be experienced in person, is the warm, informal sharing of information among libreros, experienced librarians, new SALALM members, and scholars. It is in this that SALALM comes together and why we look forward to seeing one another annually, when possible.

I want to thank many people and institutions who helped organize the SALALM meeting. I am very indebted to John Wright and the Local Arrangements Committee, and especially Wendy Duran at the Harold B. Lee Library, for their collective expert logistical assistance. Salt Lake City, Utah, was a wonderful conference site. I am also very grateful to Brigham Young University for its commitment to making our meeting a success. An immense thanks to Orchid Mazurkiewicz and the Editorial Board for their help in editing these papers. I want to express my gratitude to the SALALM Secretariat, as well, for its efficient efforts and helpfulness. Thanks also to the many active members of SALALM who participated in committee meetings and volunteered as panelists, moderators, and rapporteurs. Finally, I dedicate these
proceedings to Lynn Shirey, with whom I shared a taxi ride following the end of the 2001 Feria Internacional del Libro de Guadalajara, and who strongly encouraged me to attend SALAML. Needless to say, my SALALM membership has been the best professional decision in my career!

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