
On Commission: María Amparo Ruiz de Burton and the J. B. Lippincott & Co. Job Printing Department

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Who Would Have Thought It? (1872)—the first known novel published in English by a Mexican American author—was made to look like other J. B. Lippincott & Co. novels at the time. Bound in blue cloth, the duodecimo volume has a simple rectangular pattern on the front cover, with the book title and publisher's name in gold on the spine. The novel was published anonymously and sold at a retail price of \$1.75. In the back of the copy that is now held by the Library Company of Philadelphia, after the conclusion of the novel, there are ten pages of advertisements for other J. B. Lippincott titles, including a full page that advertises novels by Ouida, the Anglo-French sensationalist.¹ *Who Would Have Thought It?* was designed to fit alongside these novels, and its title echoes other titles published by Lippincott at the time, such as *Must it Be?* and *How will it End?*² Because the novel was published anonymously

1. *Who Would Have Thought It?* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1872).
2. Klara Bauer, *Must It Be?* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1873); J. C. Heywood, *How Will it End?: A Romance* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1872).

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without reference to its author, María Amparo Ruiz de Burton, and because it was not advertised with any description of its contents, readers would have purchased and begun reading the novel in terms of this sensational fiction. Indeed, Ruiz de Burton arranged for her book to appear in this way.

Yet while *Who Would Have Thought It?* was produced by one of the world's largest book distributors of the mid-nineteenth century, little is known about the relationship between Ruiz de Burton and J. B. Lippincott & Co. In this essay, I refer to J. B. Lippincott & Co. business records and correspondence to reconstruct the production and sale of this important work of early Mexican American literature. I show that Ruiz de Burton hired J. B. Lippincott & Co. because of their specialization in job printing and ability to produce and distribute books for a commission.³ In fact, Ruiz de Burton paid J. B. Lippincott \$500 to serve as job printers. Yet the novel was not marked as a commission printing in any way. *Who Would Have Thought It?* can thus be read as a sensationalist novel in camouflage, conveying its ideas in an anonymous yet impressively durable form. As an example, the novel also points to the many other books that J. B. Lippincott & Co. printed on commission, without any distinguishing features to mark them as such.

J. B. LIPPINCOTT & COMPANY

In the mid-nineteenth century, Lippincott was known for its sheer size and its ability to manufacture all aspects of the book. In an 1852 article from *Godey's Lady's Book*, "A Visit to the Book Bindery of Lippincott, Grambo, and Company," engraver C. T. Hinckley describes the company as "one of the largest publishing houses in the country."⁴ The article was part of a series on book production, and was meant to cover only the book bindery, but as its introduction describes, the author was so amazed by the "amount of business performed [and] capital

3. The terminology of book "jobbing" was used broadly in the nineteenth century. "Job printing" often described when publishers produced business cards, fliers, and letterhead. Meanwhile book "jobbers" were companies that helped to distribute books printed elsewhere or by other presses. As I describe, J. B. Lippincott & Co. published full books and novels for a commission, and their company records list these publications under the "Job Printing Department."

4. C. T. Hinckley "A Visit to the Book Bindery of Lippincott, Grambo, and Company," *Godey's Lady's Book* 45 (November 1852): 403-12.

invested,” that he expanded the article to describe the Lippincott company more broadly.

Joshua Ballinger Lippincott himself was born in 1813 in New Jersey and began working in the Philadelphia book trade for David Clark in his teens. When Clark’s business ran into financial difficulties, Lippincott was put in charge, and the company ran as Clark and Lippincott in the 1830s before becoming J. B. Lippincott & Co., Booksellers and Stationers, in 1837.⁵ This company would then purchase Grigg, Elliot & Co. in 1849 and reorganize temporarily as Lippincott, Grambo, & Co., before establishing itself as J. B. Lippincott & Co. In 1861, the company moved to a large industrial facility at 715–717 Market Street, and in 1871 they added a large factory to the north on Filbert Street, annexed to the Market Street building on its first two floors.

At this time, the Lippincott offices and factory covered more than five acres of land, “the largest establishment of its kind in the United States,” and the company would remain here until 1899, when a fire destroyed the building.⁶ Indeed, *The Publishers’ Weekly* printed a wonderful illustration of the building in this era, with a cutaway view of its various departments, including the retail store, shipping rooms, the book bindery, and the magazine department.⁷ *Who Would Have Thought It?* was produced here in 1872, just one year after the Filbert Street factory began operation. In terms of the various sections of the building, however, it was not produced through the publication department (that is, selected by editors for publication), but rather through the job printing department.

CALIFORNIANS IN THE NORTHEAST

As a novel, *Who Would Have Thought It?* centers around the life of a young Mexican girl, Lola Medina, who is born in captivity to Sonoran Indians in California. Lola’s mother has been abducted and forced into marriage with the native chief. Both women’s skin has been dyed black so that they will not be recognized as kidnapped Mexicans, but they are

5. Michael Winship, “Finding Aid for J. B. Lippincott Co. Records,” Collection #3104, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

6. J. Stuart Freeman, *Toward A Third Century of Excellence* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1992), 24.

7. “Sectional View of J. B. Lippincott Company’s Publishing House,” *The Publishers’ Weekly* 31, no. 18 (30 April 1887): 583.

discovered by a New England archaeologist, Dr. James Norval. Lola's mother explains their situation to Dr. Norval, and describes how they have a large fortune of gold, diamonds, and gems hidden nearby. She asks Dr. Norval to serve as Lola's guardian until the girl can be reunited with her father in Mexico. He agrees, and the reader learns throughout the novel that Dr. Norval will honor his word. Upon returning to his New England home, however, Lola finds that Dr. Norval's family and servants are less trustworthy. While his son Julian, a Union army officer, is sympathetic, Lola is confronted with harsh racist treatment from Dr. Norval's daughters (Ruth and Mattie), from the family's Irish servants, and especially from Dr. Norval's wife, Jemima Norval.⁸ Despite her purported Christian and abolitionist beliefs, Mrs. Norval is disgusted by the presence of Lola and wants nothing to do with the dark-skinned girl. However, when Mrs. Norval learns of Lola's inheritance, she is overtaken with greed and begins conversations with a depraved minister, a caricature of Henry Ward Beecher, to find ways to steal Lola's fortune. The two are given even more time and space to collaborate when Dr. Norval must leave for an archeological expedition in Egypt.

There is a widespread dispersion of characters at this point in the novel, and the narrative does not focus on Lola exclusively. Mrs. Norval and her daughters proceed to spend as much of Lola's inheritance as possible. It is rumored that Dr. Norval has died in Egypt. Reverend Hackwell leaves the ministry and is secretly engaged to Mrs. Norval. Julian gradually falls in love with Lola, but as a soldier in the Union Army, he must respond to Washington, DC politics and an increasingly complex war. Ultimately, at the novel's conclusion, Lola is reunited with her father in Mexico and marries Julian, who decides he will travel south to live with her. The novel thus imagines a future defined by interracial marriage and alliances across the US-Mexico border.

Ruiz de Burton herself occupies an important place in nineteenth-century American literature, as one of the first Mexican Americans to write novels in English. Born in 1832, she was raised by a wealthy land-owning family in Baja California and came of age at the time of the Mexican-American War. In 1848, after the war had ended and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was signed, Ruiz de Burton traveled with her mother

8. María Amparo Ruiz de Burton, *Who Would Have Thought It?* (Houston, TX: Arte Público Press, 1995), 19–26.

as a refugee to the town of Monterey in Alta California.⁹ There, at the age of seventeen, she became an American citizen and married US Army Captain Henry S. Burton. In the 1860s, she moved east as her husband served in the Union Army—living in Rhode Island, New York, Washington, DC, Delaware, and Virginia.¹⁰ Ruiz de Burton socialized in elite circles at this time, but when her husband died in 1869, she returned to California a widow with two children. Ruiz de Burton wrote and published two novels in her lifetime, *Who Would Have Thought It?* (1872) and *The Squatter and the Don* (1885), both offering powerful critiques of the United States and its expansion into Mexican territories in the mid-nineteenth century. The first novel was published anonymously and the second under the pseudonym C. Loyal. She also wrote a comedic play, *Don Quixote de La Mancha*, staged in San Diego in the 1850s and published in 1876.¹¹

Ruiz de Burton's novels and collected letters were recovered and republished from 1992 to 2001 by Rosaura Sánchez and Beatrice Pita through the "Recovering the U.S. Hispanic Literary Heritage" project, which is managed by Arte Público Press and the University of Houston. Since that time her work has received increased scholarly attention from critics such as John Morán González and in a book collection edited by Amelia María de la Luz Montes and Anne Elizabeth Goldman.¹² Indeed, her social position—in between Mexico and America, colonizer and colonized, Hispanic and white—has made Ruiz de Burton an important figure for historicizing Hispanic subjectivity in the nineteenth century. As Rodrigo Lazo has pointed out, "the multiplicity of contradictory positions inhabited by Ruiz de Burton led to additional critical scholarship that helped

9. Rosaura Sánchez and Beatrice Pita, "María Amparo Ruiz de Burton and the Power of Her Pen," in *Latina Legacies: Identity, Biography, and Community*, ed. Vicki L. Ruiz and Virginia Sánchez Korrol (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005): 72–83.

10. José F. Aranda, Jr., *When We Arrive: A New Literary History of Mexican America* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2003), 93.

11. Sánchez and Pita, "María Amparo Ruiz de Burton," 75.

12. John Morán González, *The Troubled Union: Expansionist Imperatives in Post-Reconstruction American Novels* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2010); *María Amparo Ruiz de Burton: Critical and Pedagogical Perspectives*, ed. Amelia María de la Luz Montes and Anne Elizabeth Goldman (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004).

to build the archive about her.”¹³ In other words, Ruiz de Burton’s complex social position has driven research that further documents her life story. For a number of reasons, however, it was not possible for this scholarship to fully explore the publication history of Ruiz de Burton’s first novel. Recovering the publication history of *Who Would Have Thought It?* thus expands our understanding of both Ruiz de Burton’s social status and of the Latino nineteenth century.¹⁴

EXTANT COMPANY RECORDS

It was long believed that the J. B. Lippincott Company records had been lost in the fire that destroyed the Market Street offices in 1899,¹⁵ and it was only in recent years that company records were rediscovered and made available for scholarship. When the publisher—now known as Lippincott Williams and Wilkins—prepared to move offices in 1999, they initiated a donation of materials to the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Over the span of three years, they donated 144 boxes of materials to the Historical Society.¹⁶ These records are not comprehensive, but they offer valuable information regarding this major nineteenth-century publisher and the titles it produced. The condition of these company records is also noteworthy. Many of the papers have suffered damage from water and mold over the years, and they have not yet been archivally arranged but are held in the cardboard moving boxes in which they were donated. Indeed, it took some time before a preliminary finding aid was created by Michael Winship and Matthew Lyons in 2008 and then finalized and published by the Historical Society in March 2016.

Thus while these records are a rich source of information for the study of nineteenth-century literature and publishing, they remain largely

13. Rodrigo Lazo, “Confederates in the Hispanic Attic: The Archive Against Itself,” in *Unsettled States: Nineteenth-Century American Literary Studies*, ed. Dana Luciano and Ivy G. Wilson (New York: New York University Press, 2014): 31–54, 47.

14. Here, I am drawing on the language of a collection of essays edited by Rodrigo Lazo and Jesse Alemán, *The Latino Nineteenth Century* (New York: New York University Press, 2016).

15. *The Author and His Audience, with a Chronology of Major Events in the Publishing History of J. B. Lippincott Company* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1967).

16. Michael Winship and Matthew Lyons, *Finding Aid, J. B. Lippincott Company Records* (Collection 3104), Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

unexplored territory. To my knowledge, one of the only works of scholarship deriving from the materials is an uncensored edition of Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, as the novel was originally published in *Lippincott's Monthly Magazine*.¹⁷ Among these company records, there are significant materials for understanding J. B. Lippincott's publications, including Ruiz de Burton's first novel. There are ledgers that show costs of production and sales figures. There are records that show how many copies of books the company kept in stock. There are pressed letter books that include correspondence between the company and its authors.

PUBLISHING *WHO WOULD HAVE THOUGHT IT?*

Figures 1 and 2 are from a double-entry accounting book, and they describe the production and sale of *Who Would Have Thought It?* The costs of production are listed on page 466 and the revenue generated by the book are listed on 467. The entry shows that in June of 1872, Lippincott produced 750 copies of the novel at a total cost of \$1,015.68. The stereotype plates cost \$636.95; the stamp for the spine cost \$7.50; and manufacturing the book cost \$0.49 per copy. All copies of the book were bound and none were left as sheets. Ruiz de Burton paid the company \$500 on 13 May, before production began, which was transferred to the Lippincott "Cash" account. On 31 December 1872, when Lippincott recorded biannual sales, page 467 shows that they had sold 400 copies of the novel, and Ruiz de Burton was credited \$350. The round sales figure, precisely 400, suggests that Lippincott may have sold these copies at the publisher's trade auction. The Lippincott records also provide more detailed information for special mailings sent out to editors and particular individuals and booksellers at no cost.

Shortly after these initial 400 copies were sold, in a 29 January 1873 letter, J. B. Lippincott & Co. wrote to Ruiz de Burton asking her to pay the difference between the cost of production and the \$850 she had been credited for her initial cash payment plus sales of the novel.¹⁸ In other words, Ruiz de Burton was responsible for all costs of publication and owed the company

17. Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray: An Annotated, Uncensored Edition*, ed. Nicholas Frankel (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2011).

18. J. B. Lippincott & Co. to Mrs. M. A. de Burton, 29 January 1873. Box 1.6, p. 267, Lippincott Company Records (Collection 3104), The Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

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Mrs Francis Elizabeth Bennett

To deposit after September 10 to the Patent = 17.6

Expense
 Jan 2019
 March 1.00
 Oct 24 1.00
 91222 11.60
 217.75

Share Method created

May	1	Quota		1000		
June	12	3.000 + Postage 2.107 200				3.17
				1000		3.16

Mrs Maria A. Burton

General Ledger, Special No. 5

June	27	From "Who would have thought"				656.75
"	"	From "Who would have thought"	7.50			
"	"	to R. G. Co. " " "	7.50			
"	"	Manufact. " " "	367.50	7.00		
"	"	Exp. of Ch. and Co. "	5.00			371.00
July	8	Postage on 7 copies	5.00			1.60
September	20	1884 and 6.00	5.00			75
				750		1015.65

Fig. 1: J. B. Lippincott & Co. Ledgers detailing costs to produce Ruiz de Burton's *Who Would Have Thought It?*, p. 466. "General & Publication Ledger No. 5, Special No. 1," Vol. 71. J. B. Lippincott Co. Records (Collection 3104), Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

Etcetera

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July 19	Expenses for B.C.				
July 20	Revised Edition		2		
July 21	Transf'd to Pub Dept. Sp. Ledger		27		
July 22	Publ'd in 2 ^d Dept	265	911		
					3.16
					3.16
			1000		
<i>11/70 Receipts and checks</i>					
<i>Who Would Have Thought It?</i>					
July 23	July 23 93	back	202		500
July 25	Exp't. author, New York		6		
July 30	Orange Colln.		1		
July 31	Post Treasury, Justice, for order		7		
July 31	to B. & W. Adams to B. & W. Adams		20		
Aug 1	to Board of the Lippincott Co.		2		
Aug 1	Exp'd. for B.C.		17		
Aug 1	Exp'd. Edition		100		
Aug 1	July Sales in 178 70. 70	101	277		500
Aug 1	" " " " " "	329	34		17.12
Aug 1	" " " " " "	387	2		17.12
Aug 1	" " " " " "	196	3		17.25
Aug 1	" " " " " "	493	3		2.62
Aug 1	" " " " " "	158	3		2.62
Aug 1	" " " " " "	343	3		2.62
Aug 1	" " " " " "	118	100		2.62
Aug 1	Transf'd to Pub Dept. Sp. Ledger	793	99		67.68
Aug 1	Publ'd in 2 ^d Dept	265			101.68
			750		

Fig. 2: J. B. Lippincott & Co. Ledgers detailing sales of Ruiz de Burton's *Who Would Have Thought It?*, p. 467. "General & Publication Ledger No. 5, Special No. 1," Vol. 71. J. B. Lippincott Co. Records (Collection 3104), Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

\$165.68, even after paying \$500 initially and selling 400 copies of the book. Ruiz de Burton did not pay this money but allowed additional sales to be credited to her account. When sales are again recorded on 30 June 1873, the book had sold an additional seventy-nine copies, reducing the amount owed. In the decade between 1874 and January 1883, however, the book sold only twenty-eight additional copies. Ultimately, Ruiz de Burton never paid Lippincott the final amount owed for *Who Would Have Thought It?* The company held remaining copies of Ruiz de Burton's novel in its warehouse until they were destroyed by the fire in November of 1899. In 1900, the company reimbursed itself for Ruiz de Burton's debt by insurance, or what is labeled a "Contingency Fund" within the records.¹⁹

More than breaking even on this account, though, Lippincott profited from the novel. While *Who Would Have Thought It?* sold at a retail price of \$1.75, Ruiz de Burton was only credited \$0.875 per copy sold; this is why she earned only \$350 for the sale of 400 copies. The Lippincott ledgers describe their accounting methods, saying: "We a/c sales \$1.75 $\frac{1}{3}$ $\frac{1}{4}$." In this equation, \$1.75 is the retail price of the book, $\frac{1}{3}$ is the discount given to booksellers, and $\frac{1}{4}$ is the commission fee that Lippincott charged for each sale. On the publisher's end, this fee amounts to \$0.295 per copy sold, so that Lippincott would have earned \$118.00 from the 400 copies initially sold and more than \$150.00 for the 537 copies sold over the life of the book. Within J. B. Lippincott & Co., the job printing department played a significant role in terms of publication and revenue. Countless titles in the Lippincott records are entered in the same way as Ruiz de Burton's, printed with a $\frac{1}{3}$ discount to retailers and a $\frac{1}{4}$ commission for the company.

Whether such commission printing was exploitative is open to debate. In correspondence, Ruiz de Burton questioned the amount owed, wondering how she was still indebted to the company after her novel had sold hundreds of copies. Certainly, in this relationship, the publishing house always won. Yet at the same time, company records show that books such as *Who Would Have Thought It?* received all sorts of care and benefits in being published by J. B. Lippincott & Co. Ruiz de Burton paid less than half the cost of production for a book that was given the imprimatur of a major US publisher. This book was sold and distributed

19. "Publication Dept. Special Ledger [No. 2]," Vol. 82, 799, J. B. Lippincott Co. Records (Collection 3104), Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

throughout the country, and Lippincott kept remaining copies of the book on hand, and for sale, for more than twenty-five years.²⁰ It was shipped to friends, editors, and booksellers free of charge at Ruiz de Burton's command. Although the company did not spend money to advertise Ruiz de Burton's novel in outside publications or periodicals, they listed her book in their own catalog and in advertisements appended to the back of comparable Lippincott novels.²¹ Moreover, if Ruiz de Burton had ever paid the remaining amount owed to the company for the cost of production, she would have been given the stereotype plates, and the copyright that customarily accompanied them. In all these ways, Ruiz de Burton was able to express herself in a volume of literary fiction that would not easily disappear from the world.

UNDERCOVER NARRATIVE

How might this history of the book affect our understanding of the novel? While *Who Would Have Thought It?* has often been understood by literary critics as a parody of sentimental writing, the context of the Lippincott catalog indicates that the book is much better understood within the genre of sensationalism. Lippincott published a range of sensation fiction at this time, particularly novels by Ouida and translations of the German novelist E. Marlitt. Indeed, in the ten-page gathering of advertisements included at the end of *Who Would Have Thought It?* (1872), there are full-page advertisements for novels by both Ouida and Marlitt. Likewise in the Lippincott catalog that is included in the 1873 *Publishers' Trade Annual*, which lists *Who Would Have Thought It?* for sale, the works of Ouida and Marlitt are featured prominently.²²

Sensational fiction itself can be difficult to define, but it is generally marked by provocative plots that involve crime, affairs, and mistaken

20. In 1883, Ruiz de Burton's Ledger account is transferred to "Publication Dept. Special Ledger [No. 2]," Vol. 82, 798–99, J. B. Lippincott Co. Records (Collection 3104), Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

21. One such advertisement for *Who Would Have Thought It?* appears in the back pages of the Lippincott translation of Eugenie Marlitt, *The Second Wife* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1874). Similarly, the *Publishers' Trade List Annual* includes a September 1874 J. B. Lippincott & Co. catalog, which advertises Ruiz de Burton's novel (*The Publishers' Trade List Annual* [New York: Publishers' Weekly, 1874]: 35).

22. *The Uniform Trade List Annual* (New York: Office of the Publishers' Weekly, 1873).

identity. In a 2012 article, Emily Steinlight describes sensational novels as “notorious for exposing bigamy, adultery, and false identities in the midst of seemingly ordinary and often genteel milieu.”²³ Similarly, Andrew Radford defines sensationalism as a genre that employs “psychic disintegration, duplicates, spectres, and transposed identities to erode the seemingly solid and respectable structures of mid-Victorian domesticity.”²⁴ The genre was wide-ranging, a reaction against sentimentalism that would become influential for crime and adventure fiction of the late nineteenth century. Ruiz de Burton’s novel—with its depraved minister and its adulterous white woman, its vast sums of gold, its lost letters, and its mistaken identities—clearly fits within the genre of sensationalism. Published alongside novels by Ouida and Marlitt, and manufactured to look like them, customers purchasing *Who Would Have Thought It?* would have recognized it as sensational fiction, if nothing else.

Moreover, the genre of sensationalism was particularly suited to Ruiz de Burton’s goals. As Jesse Alemán and Shelley Streeby describe, “Sensational literature is more outrageous and less respectable [than sentimental literature,] more concerned with exotic foreign spaces than the domestic sphere, making it an excellent archive of popular fantasies and fears about U.S. imperialism.”²⁵ Ruiz de Burton understood that sensationalism, a genre that had always criticized genteel culture, would serve as a useful vehicle for her own critique of white womanhood and Manifest Destiny. The genre also allowed Ruiz de Burton to offer meta-commentary on sensationalized depictions of California and the frontier. Ruiz de Burton’s innovation, then, was not so much to parody sentimentalism, but to turn the lens of *sensationalism* back upon the United States, so that national myths surrounding white womanhood and Manifest Destiny become illicit material.

23. Emily Steinlight, “Why Novels are Redundant: Sensation Fiction and the Overpopulation of Literature,” *ELH* 79, no. 2 (2012): 501–35, 502.

24. Andrew Radford, *Victorian Sensation Fiction* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009): 3.

25. Jesse Alemán and Shelley Steeby, introduction, *Empire and the Literature of Sensation: An Anthology of Nineteenth-Century Popular Fiction* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2007), xviii. See also Shelley Streeby, *American Sensations: Class, Empire, and the Production of Popular Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

I would also suggest that, because of its anonymous publication, the novel's narrative voice emerges covertly as that of a Hispanic speaker. In general, *Who Would Have Thought It?* is written from a third-person omniscient perspective, moving freely among various characters' subjectivities. At times, however, the narrator steps in to offer more explicit commentary on the events taking place, much in the style of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. In chapter 8 of the novel, for example, the narrator considers what thoughts might be passing through the mind of Mrs. Norval's sister, Lavinia Sprigg. This reflection on Lavinia is then answered with another question: "Quién Sabe?"²⁶ The passage is one of the first instances in which the narrator breaks the third-person omniscient perspective and interjects by posing a question directly to the reader. And significantly, this interjection is given in Spanish. The narrator is thus introduced to the reader as Spanish-speaking.

The question itself—"Quién Sabe?" or "Who knows?"—echoes the novel's title, reiterating its epistemological concerns over the ways identity and knowledge intertwine. The question is rhetorical and is answered by the outsider status of the Spanish-speaking narrator. In other words, as the book parodies American culture, an implied response to the title—*Who Would Have Thought It?*—is proffered through its underlying Mexican American perspective. This is one reason why anonymity was so important to Ruiz de Burton, who never published under her own name. Her publication strategy attempted to draw unsuspecting Anglo readers into the narrative and to guide them gradually toward the perspective of a Mexican American narrator.

SENSATIONAL JOB

The example of Ruiz de Burton and Lippincott indicates that many other nineteenth-century books with small print runs may have been printed on commission, and yet not marked as such. In a sense, Ruiz de Burton's publication through J. B. Lippincott & Co. reflects her liminal relationship to the US nation as it overtook Mexican territories. The border status of the job-printed novel, a publication that is not fully within the publication department, can be compared to the border status of Ruiz de Burton as an American. Indeed, her relationship with J. B. Lippincott's job-printing department links her to other ethnic authors in

26. Ruiz de Burton, *Who Would Have Thought It?*, 38.

this period, such as Harriet Wilson, who self-financed publication in hopes of sharing their ideas and making money.²⁷ Ruiz de Burton's novel tried to imagine a marriage between Mexico and America, a future that would cross national and racial boundaries. While this publication came at a price and was not favorably received by contemporary audiences, it nevertheless ensured that her book was well manufactured and distributed across the nation.²⁸

27. Eric Gardner, "The Attempt of 'Their Sister': Harriet Wilson's *Our Nig* from Printers to Readers," *The New England Quarterly* 66, no. 2 (June 1993): 226-46.

28. I would like to thank Michael Winship, John Garcia, and the anonymous readers at *PBSA* for their commentary during the preparation of this essay. Research for the essay was supported by a Directors' Scholarship at Rare Book School and by an Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Fellowship at the Library Company of Philadelphia and the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.