



Looking for Carrascolendas: From a Child's World to Award-Winning Television (Louann Atkins Temple Women & Culture Series)

Aida Barrera

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If your childhood friends were Agapito, the bombastic, bilingual lion; Campamocha, the fix-it man; Caracoles, the restaurant owner; Uncle Andy, the shoe seller; Berta and Dyana, the life-size dolls; and Senorita Barrera, then you grew up watching Carrascolendas. This award-winning show, which originally aired on PBS in the 1970s and was subsequently broadcast throughout the country in the 1980s and 1990s, was the first Spanish and English children's educational television program broadcast to national audiences in the United States. In this engagingly written memoir, creator-producer Aida Barrera describes how the mythical world of Carrascolendas grew out of her real-life experiences as a Mexican American child growing up in the Valley of South Texas. She recalls how she drew on those early experiences to create television programming that specifically addressed the needs of Hispanic children, even as it remained accessible and entertaining to children of other cultural backgrounds. In addition to her personal story, Barrera recounts the long-term struggles for network acceptance and funding that made the production of Carrascolendas something of a miracle. This off-camera story adds an important chapter to the history of Anglo-Mexican cultural politics during the 1970s. Given the fact that Latino characters are still under- and stereotypically represented on network television, Carrascolendas remains an important reminder of what is possible and what has been lost in authentically multicultural television programming. An award-winning television producer with extensive experience in broadcasting, public policy, and education, Aida Barrera was the creator, executive producer, and project director of Carrascolendas. She lives in Austin, Texas.

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