

“Girlhood (It’s Complicated)” Select Latinx Object List

“Girlhood (It’s Complicated)” will feature over 200 objects from the National Museum of American History’s collections, including many Latina stories. Below is a select object list, organized by exhibition section.

- **Yearbook photos (20th century)**

- **Education (being schooled)**

- A selection of yearbook photos features girls from various time periods and from across the country, including Latinas from Puerto Rico and California.

- **Yadira Montoya’s report card and award (1998-2002)**

- **Education (being schooled)**

- Yadira Montoya is one of approximately 700,000 DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) recipients. Born in Mexico, she grew up in Little Village on the West Side of Chicago. When applying for DACA, she had to submit report cards, certificates, and awards as proof of residency, good moral character, and educational achievements. Undocumented youth have to lead extraordinary lives to be deemed worthy of inclusion.

- **DACA butterfly wings (2018)**

- **Education (being schooled)**



- In 2012, the Obama administration issued Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), which allowed youths to stay in the country if they could document having lived in the United States for five years. DACA was rescinded in 2017, increasing the risk of deportation for thousands of young people.
 - Monarch butterflies have become a symbol for undocumented Americans, because each year, they migrate from Mexico to North America to survive. Undocumented girls raised in the United States see themselves as Americans; the government disagrees.
 - These wings, made of painted poster board, were worn by Dreamers from Nebraska on March 5, 2018 (the day DACA was rescinded). Hundreds gathered in DC to make their voices heard.

- **Farmworker photos (1930s)**

- **Work (hey, where’s my girlhood?)**

- A selection of 1930s photos of girls as farmworkers includes Latina girls from Texas and Minnesota.

- **Monica Camacho’s hoodie and bandanas (2010s)**

- **Work (hey, where’s my girlhood?)**



- Girls in agriculture aren’t protected by child labor laws because the 1938 agriculture law argued that farm families needed the help of their children. Currently half a million children harvest a quarter of US crops.
 - These bandanas and hoodie were worn by teenage agricultural worker Monica Camacho to protect her face while she was out in the fields. The hoodie served a dual purpose—wearing a baggy hoodie protected Monica from pesticides and dust as well as sexual harassment since in the hoodie, no one could tell she was a girl.

- **Fashion photos (1920s-1990s)**

- **Fashion (remix)**

- The fashion section includes a series of photos of girls in the modern fashions of the day, from Carmen Celia Betran’s bobbed hair in 1925 to Zoot Suit Girls on the West Coast in the 1940s.

- **“Zoot suit girl” photos and pants (c. 1945)**

- **Fashion (remix)**



- Girls on the West Coast adopted and adapted the “zoot suits” made popular by working-class men in cities across the U.S. in the 1940s. During an era of rationing cloth, young Latinas donned loose pants and oversized jackets, challenging gendered expectations and authority.

- **Punk jewelry and clothing (1980s)**

- **Fashion (remix)**



- As an underground culture outside of corporate control, punk gave girls the means to express unruly politics and feelings in unconventional ways. The fashion section also features punk jewelry and clothing belonging to Latina girls in the 1980s.
 - These bracelets were part of what Karen Maeda Allman called her “armor.” When she was performing, she wore them to shows partly as decoration and partly for protection on the dance floor.
 - The section also features a rock t-shirt owned by Michelle Gonzalez.

- **Birth control technologies (1960s-1970s)**

- **Wellness (body talk)**

- New developments in birth control experimented on poor girls and women of color—sometimes under coercion or without informed consent—including the birth control pill trials conducted on Puerto Rican women. A 1960 *Life Magazine* photo in the exhibition depicts a group of Puerto Rican women who had served as test subjects for new birth control technologies learning about contraception.
 - Whose bodies bear the cost of creating greater personal choice for girls and women in the United States?

- **Cotillion dress (1990)**

- **A Girl's Life (Coming of age)**



- Religious communities have long played a role in defining the transition from girlhood to womanhood with rites of passage. Yet girls take on these traditions and remake them in different ways.
- In the 1960s, the Cordi-Marian Sisters in Chicago adopted the tradition of the cotillion to raise funds for their charitable works and to teach a new generation of girls Catholic values. Many Latina girls and their families chose to support the sisters and participate in the cotillion.
- Instead of a Quinceñera, Patricia Loza participated in the annual Cordi-Marian Cotillion in 1990. The nuns had strict rules for the debutante's dresses, which were supposed to be white, elegant, and modest. Patricia designed her own dress, complete with all the 1990s trappings of puffy sleeves, bows, and beadwork.
- **Quinceñera dress (2000)**
A Girl's Life (Coming of age)
 - Verónica Mendez wore this dress to her Quinceñera in Mexico in 2000. Verónica wanted to celebrate her quince in her hometown to connect to her Mexican heritage. Bucking tradition, her dress was a shiny gold instead of pink. The dress is displayed with her bible and Quinceñera doll.
- **Rebecca Lobo's Olympic basketball uniform (1996)**
A Girl's Life (breaking barriers)



- Girls have always played sports, from all-girls basketball teams in the 1800s to the pick-up games that occur in every neighborhood. Yet they faced cultural and structural barriers that denied them the right to play. The federal government aimed to change that in 1972 when it added Title IX to the Civil Rights Act, barring discrimination based on sex and race.
- Born just one year after title IX, Rebecca Lobo broke barriers in sports. She played on boys basketball teams when no girls teams existed, and she excelled. She and other girls who had grown up with Title IX converged at the 1996 Olympic Games.
- Record-breaking audiences watched as Rebecca and the USA Women's Basketball team brought home Olympic gold.