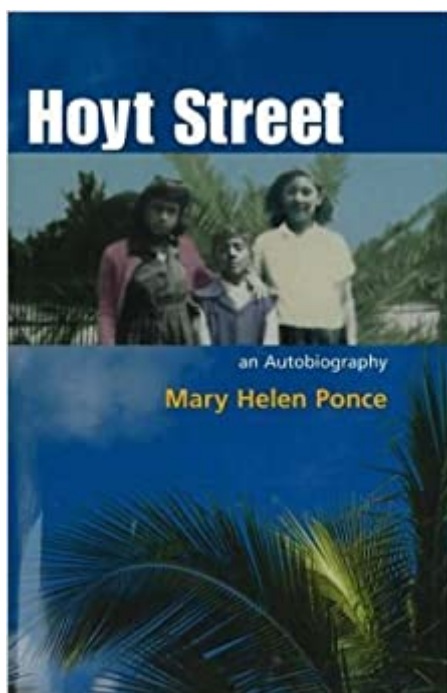


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# Hoyt Street: An Autobiography



## Synopsis

"Church movies we saw were mostly westerns--old westerns, in black and white. Father Mueller drove to 'Los,' as we called Los Angeles, to pick up the films and assorted reels. He never explained why western movies were all he got; I figured he knew a cowboy."It's the 1940s. Little Mary Helen Ponce and her family live in Pacoima, a Mexican American barrio near Los Angeles. Unmindful of their poverty, Mary Helen and friends Beto, Concha, Virgie, la Nancy, and Mundo sneak into the circus, run wild at church bazaars, snatch apricots from the neighbor's tree, and poke fun at Father Mickey, the progressive priest who plays jazz on the church organ. Experience the shame of first-generation Americans examined at school for lice, and the desire of a little girl who longs for patent leather shoes instead of clunky oxfords. Share Mary Helen's joy as she savors the sun on her face during walnut-picking expeditions, and basks in her family's love all year long."I am overjoyed to be invited into la casita on Hoyt Street. . . . Thank you, Mary Helen, for placing your house on the map, for inviting me to the intimacy of its rooms, allowing me the privilege to sit at the table and be nourished. In naming your own life history on Hoyt Street, you are also naming mine."--Sandra Cisneros

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Published simultaneously as *Calle Hoyt: Recuerdos de Una Joventud Chicana* (\$12.95 -47551-9), Ponce's memoirs recall her life as a Chicana growing up in Pacoima, Calif., during the 1940s.

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"Here is a perfectly splendid autobiography that can also be classed as a fine ethnohistory about the Mexican American barrio of Pacoima, [Calif.] . . . recall of detail is impressive and readers will be enchanted by the characters who walk through the pages."... "its heartfelt picture of the meaning of place for immigrants in this city has not been surpassed." . . . one of the first true autobiographies by a Chicana . . . a priceless portrait of how tradition builds and sustains all cultures." Drawing on a child's freshness of vision, "Hoyt Street" depicts growing up Mexican-American as the norm, not as a sociological phenomenon. It will touch your heart; make you laugh out loud. "This book is very difficult to put down, one simultaneously wants to rush through it, and at the same time, savor the wealth of details that captures the feel and flavor of growing up in a large working-class family. Here is a perfectly splendid autobiography that can also be classed as a fine ethnohistory about the Mexican American barrio of Pacoima, Calif. . . . recall of detail is impressive and readers will be enchanted by the characters who walk through the pages." Ponce presents a fascinating slice of the life of a young girl growing up in the urban barrio of Pacoima, California... "Hoyt Street" offers the reader a detailed and impressive window into the Southern California Mexican American experience." . . . "its heartfelt picture of the meaning of place for immigrants in this city has not been surpassed." . . . one of the first true autobiographies by a Chicana . . . a priceless portrait of how tradition builds and sustains all cultures." "This book is very difficult to put down, one simultaneously wants to rush through it, and at the same time, savor the wealth of details that captures the feel and flavor of growing up in a large working-class family." [Ponce] presents a fascinating slice of the life of a young girl growing up in the urban barrio of Pacoima, California... ["Hoyt Street"] offers the reader a detailed and impressive window into the Southern California Mexican American experience."

A nice read for stepping back in time

Hoyt Street is as disarming a book as its author is. This is one of the only narratives of what life was really like for Chicanos in Los Angeles. Its humor captures us as well as the authenticity of its story, but more, we dive deep into the experience because the narrative is so rich and inviting. A must read for anyone.

I don't think we've ever met but my dad said I should tell you I am part of your family. My name is Rachel Marie Ponce daughter of Steven Tomas Ponce. I would like to meet you some day. Bye,

Rachie

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