ISABEL PÉREZ FARFANTE DE CANET
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Isabel (Isa) Pérez Farfante had a long, interesting, and productive life, both professionally and personally, whose course was profoundly affected by historical events. Her parents emigrated from Spain to Cuba, where Isa was born. As a young teenager, Isa was sent by her parents to live with relatives in Asturias, Spain, to pursue her high school education. She later began studies at the Universidad Central de Madrid, but these were interrupted by the Spanish Civil War. Isa and her family supported the Republicans, who were defeated by the Franco regime. Isa was forced to leave Spain and continued her education in Cuba at La Universidad de Habana, receiving a Bachelor of Science in 1938. She took positions at El Instituto de la Víbora in Havana and then as Assistant Professor of Biology at the Universidad de Habana. In 1941, she married Gerardo Canet Alvarez, himself a professional (geographer, economist) who enthusiastically supported the career of his beloved Isa. Soon after, Isa and Gerardo applied for Guggenheim Fellowships, which were awarded to Isa in 1942 (Organismic Biology and Ecology) and then to Gerardo in 1945 (Geography and Environmental Studies). The Guggenheim, as well as a fellowship with the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, and the Alexander Agassiz Fellowship in Oceanography and Zoology, enabled Isa to enter Radcliffe College of Harvard University, where she obtained a master’s degree in biology.