This book began taking shape as a specific project in 2017, but it has a prehistory that dates back to 1998, when José Luis Guerín’s film Tren de sombras sparked my interest in the use of home movies in contemporary cinema. I began developing this interest further during two short stays (in 2000 and 2001) at the Anthology Film Archives, where I enjoyed the hospitality of Robert Haller and Jonas Mekas, and where I began studying the work of the latter in depth—research that served as the foundation for the last chapter of this book. A few years later I would sketch out the connections between home movies, documentary film, and microhistory in an article published in 2007 in the journal Secuencias. The book I edited in 2010, La casa abierta: El cine doméstico y sus reciclajes contemporáneos (The open house: Home movies and their contemporary recycling), with the support of Documenta Madrid and Antonio Delgado, represented another important step, as although its focus is different, it contains many related elements.¹ Over the years my research has been enriched by other filmmakers and filmographies that have made the exploration of this relationship more complex, leading to presentations at conferences such as Visible Evidence, SCMS, IAMHIST, and NECS, and to various publications, some of which appear in this book in updated versions. Specifically, chapter 1 is partially based on an article published in the journal Historia Social, while chapter 2 is based in part on a chapter published in the book Amateur
Filmmaking: The Home Movie, the Archive, the Web, and on an article published in Studies in Documentary Film, and chapter 7 is based on an article published in Biography. I am grateful to these journals and publishers for having given me the opportunity to share my research.

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My deepest gratitude goes, of course, to my family and friends (including the “overlookers,” “alemanes,” and “mendebalderos”) for having made this journey so much easier. On these occasions, I am always reminded of Joseph J. Rotman’s amusing book dedication, which could be paraphrased here as: “To my family and friends, without whom this book would have been completed two years earlier.”
FILMING HISTORY FROM BELOW