

This study of the beginnings of printing in the Internal Provinces of the East is indispensable to the student of Spanish-American culture in the Spanish Southwest. It constitutes a welcome contribution and a worthy memorial to the five hundredth anniversary of the invention of moveable type and the four hundredth anniversary of the introduction of the printing press in America.

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*Bosquejos históricos.* By VITO ALESSIO ROBLES. (Mexico: Editorial Polis, 1938. Pp. 467.)

It is a rare occasion when one is permitted the pleasure of reading a series of historical sketches based for the most part on previously unknown documents without having to check the sources (and without having to look at footnotes). The reading of the *Bosquejos Históricos* is such an occasion. The author of these sketches, Ing. Vito Alessio Robles, statesman, engineer, historian, university professor, and without doubt Mexico's greatest living authority on her colonial history, has again scored with a delightful series of short articles cleverly debunking certain historical theories and graciously approving and strengthening others. The prolific pen (or should we be modern and say typewriter?) of Alessio Robles has a way of surprising his friends with treatises written in the best Prescott manner. But this Mexican historian is not only disinterestedly scholarly (a rare trait in any Latin historian), but delights in making the history of collections of documents in Mexico an intriguing story far stranger than fiction.

The sketches embrace many different themes, with those on the colonial history of northern Mexico and Texas predominating. Those sections hold a warm spot in Alessio Robles' heart, because he was born in Coahuila and has spent some of his happiest days in exile in Texas. The rôle of Alberto del Canto as the founder of Saltillo is again made secure in three of the sketches. The origin of the city of Parras merits a fourth sketch, while a fifth, most appropriately for modern trends, relates the gruesome story of the anti-Semitism practiced in Monterrey in the late 16th century against the Carvajal family. It is interesting to note that the small Jewish settlement of San Luis has in time become the great industrial city of Monterrey, today the stronghold of Mexican Fascism! Brief articles give additional light on the church and convent of Huexotzingo; the work of Juan Larios (the "Las Casas of Coahuila"); the origin of the name Coahuila; the faking of seals of Mexican cities and states during the

ministry of José Vasconcelos; and the history of the much discussed region of La Laguna in Coahuila and Durango. The campaigns of Ugalde (after whom Uvalde, Texas, is named) in the desert of Chihuahua, Coahuila, and Durango are discussed in a sarcastic comparison with the campaigns of Obregón, who also, according to the ex-Villista author of the sketches, measured the merits of his campaigns by the number of Castilian leagues covered. The position of Elizondo in the betrayal of Hidalgo is clarified by relegating him from the position of instigator of the crime to that of executor of it. The scheme was the work of Manuel Royuela, treasurer of the royal coffers of Saltillo. Two sketches of especial interest praise and re-evaluate the work of the great patriot priest, Fray Servando Teresa de Mier, who probably was arrested more frequently and escaped more often than any other person in history. Gutiérrez de Lara is absolved of treason against his mother country, while Bravo is given his true place as the instigator if not perpetrator of the assassination of Guerrero.

But probably of most interest to historians are the eight sketches on the vicissitudes of the most important archives of Mexico. Not satisfied with placing intriguing information concerning historical archives in almost all the other sketches, Alessio Robles devotes eight of them entirely to the history of historical collections in Mexico.

Our conclusion can be only the happy one that the art of writing accurate history and even historiography in a manner that will allow the layman to revel in them, has not died out, at least not in Mexico.

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*Ranchos Become Cities.* W. W. ROBINSON. (Pasadena: San Pasqual Press, 1939. Pp. 243. \$2.75.)

*Ranchos become Cities* is the story of Southern California's growth from a few Spanish *ranchos* with their Indian neophytes to the vast, urban-populated area that is Southern California today. Core of the tale is the burgeoning forth of Los Angeles and the cluster of towns and cities that surround it. There is, perhaps, no other place in the world where such a stupendous transformation has altered the earth's surface.

Spanish soldiers, called "leather-jackets," who accompanied Governor Portalá from San Diego (founded 1769) to Monterey in 1770, crossed this region and saw only swamps, plains, and mountains, inhabited by scattered Indians. And it was not until 1781, after the settlement of San José and other communities, that the villa of Los