

Don Santiago Liniers, gobernador interino de los treinta pueblos de las misiones guarantes y tapes, 1803-1804. By JULIO CÉSAR GONZÁLEZ. Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, Publicaciones del Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas, Número XCIV.] (Buenos Aires: Peuser, S. A., 1946. Pp. 276. Facsimiles. Paper.)

This monograph of Julio César González possesses a combination of qualities that scholars often idealize but rarely achieve. It is based almost exclusively upon unedited and little-used manuscripts. It discloses serious lacunae in long-accepted biographies of a key national leader and poses a tangible point of departure for reëvaluation of his personality. The text is supported by scholarly paraphernalia in the best tradition. Typography and format are superb.

Biographers of Don Santiago Liniers—Jules Richard, Santiago Estrada, Paul Groussac—have accented his record as leader of the reconquest of Buenos Aires, as viceroy, and as counterrevolutionary. They have furnished his audacious exploits with the Spanish Navy in the Mediterranean and in the Río de la Plata. But the interlude between the end of his naval career in 1802 and his emergence as popular leader against the English invasions has been largely glossed over. All three biographers gave no more than passing mention to Liniers' nineteen months as provisional governor of the Guaraní villages of Misiones. They made no attempt to use his administrative experience on the frontier to explain the formation of Liniers' character, his spectacular rise to leadership, and the unfortunate aberrations that led to his assassination. Manuscripts in profusion lay fallow in the Archivo General de la Nación, the Museo Mitre, and the Biblioteca Nacional, but the scientific cultivation of them has remained for the author of this volume.

After some months of frustrating naval service in Montevideo, Liniers secured appointment as provisional governor of the thirty villages of Misiones. He arrived in Candelaria on March 6, 1803, determined to accomplish a program of reform for the benighted Guaraní and to merit the consideration and esteem of his superiors. His first undertaking, planned even before his departure from Buenos Aires, was to secure adequate means for the defense of the frontier against the incursions of the Portuguese. At the same time, he sought amelioration of the sad conditions of the native population. Visits of inspection to the Indian villages revealed the lack of hospitals, physicians, and medicines, the need for improvement of native economy, both agrarian and industrial, and the desirability of elementary education and stimulation of the arts. With imperious hand, the governor sought to root out corrupt, inefficient, and apathetic functionaries. With equal zeal he

supported diligent and energetic subordinates. Apparently believing in liberal economic ideas, he urged his superiors to wipe out monopolistic and clandestine trade, and, in a singular memorial to the king, he recommended for Misiones military and political independence from the tutelage of Buenos Aires and Paraguay. He concerned himself with the reconstruction of decaying government buildings, with the machinations of Spanish intruders, and with all manner of administrative abuses.

In scores of comprehensive official reports, Liniers related his findings to the viceroy. These he laboriously dictated to clerks with inadequate knowledge of the Spanish language and with little preparation for their assignment. When clear exposition did not carry his point, he resorted to expressive practical examples, to energetic arguments, or even to strong emotional appeals. When the viceregal response was utter indifference—as it usually was—he showed no consideration or respect for the administrative hierarchy. Long before the English invasions, Liniers had learned to know “the small bureaucratic world of Buenos Aires.”

In apparent respect for Paul Groussac, Dr. González insists that he was not guided by the “proposition of formulating a special atmosphere of vindication of Liniers,” nor does he propose his rehabilitation. But the author clearly feels that Liniers, from 1806 to 1810, revealed characteristics distinct from those he manifested during his administration of the Misiones villages and that any scholar who attempts a new evaluation of the viceroy’s personality should use his Misiones career as the starting point.

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David Curtis DeForest and the Revolution of Buenos Aires. By BENJAMIN KEEN. [Yale Historical Publications, Miscellany, XLVI.] (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1947. Pp. 186. Illustrations. \$3.00.)

This biography of David Curtis DeForest provides us with fresh evidence of the infiltration of North American ideology into revolutionary La Plata. It shows how colorful, bold, and not too scrupulous merchants and sailors took advantage of progressive Spanish disintegration to promote independence of La Plata while lining their pockets with freedom’s gold. Dr. Keen emphasizes how close were both the regular and the irregular contacts between the United States and the revolutionary colonies. His greatest contribution to our knowledge has come from a perusal of DeForest’s private letter books, which retail his