

Cultural and Historical Geography of Southwest Guatemala. By FELIX WEBSTER MCBRYDE. [Smithsonian Institution, Institute of Social Anthropology, Publication No. 4.] (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1947. Pp. xv, 184. Maps, 47 plates. Paper.)

For almost twenty years F. Webster McBryde has been studying the cultural geography of Guatemala. In the present volume, which is a revision and amplification of his doctoral dissertation (Ph. D. in Geography, University of California, Berkeley, 1940), he brings together a rich fund of mature and detailed observation for the southwest sector of that country. He has analyzed the material culture of the area in more intimate detail than has ever been done before; indeed, it is doubtful whether any other area of comparable size in Latin America has been examined so minutely.

The emphasis throughout the work has been on the location, description, and identification of phenomena observed in the field. This is not armchair geography. If interpretation and evaluation within a broader framework are at times sketchy or omitted, the justification might well be that first things should come first. The reality of the rural scene in Guatemala is fleeting and changing. In order to begin to understand it we need reliable field data before anything else. In terms of environment and culture we have them here, and in full measure.

Confronted with a contribution of such magnitude and detail a reviewer has difficulty in deciding which items to enumerate for special attention. The major additions to knowledge are to be found in the sections on "Agriculture and Food Supply" (pp. 16-41), "Crafts and Industries" (pp. 54-71), "Commerce and Markets" (pp. 71-85), and "Settlements and Settlement Patterns" (pp. 85-128), as well as in the two appendices devoted to "Cultivated and Useful Plants" (pp. 134-149). Noteworthy are (1) the discussion of the term *ladino*, which is shown to have a cultural meaning and to be in no way synonymous with *mestizo*; (2) the extension of the term "*milpa* farming" to include hoe culture without shifting fields; and (3) the evidence that native markets are not mainly social gathering places but function as real trade centers. Not only are most settlements dependent on other centers for certain goods, but they commonly have one or more surplus trade items to give in exchange. The old idea that native markets have mostly a social significance turns out, for southwest Guatemala at least, to be largely a myth.

Twenty-five original maps and about two hundred excellent photographs are included. They are well integrated with the main text. This monograph is a fine example of honest, factual reporting of material cultures within specific physical settings. It shows what a competent geographer can do in the field of area studies. Other social scientists will find it of real interest.

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La gran mentira: Septiembre de 1933. By RICARDO ADAM Y SILVA. (Habana: Talleres Tipográficos de Editorial Lex, 1947. Pp. 518. Paper.)

Fulgencio Batista y Zaldívar may have the solace of a recent election as a Cuban senator and may assume that he is thus vindicated after four years of exile and aspersions. But if any wide acceptance and credence is given in Cuba to the volume under review the book must seem as gall and wormwood to the senator and ex-president of Cuba in the face of such a triumph. This considerable volume comprises a detailed historical account of the stirring events of August and September, 1933, and the months and years following, when Batista's star was in the ascendancy and he was becoming known as a New World Warwick. A king maker's path is not always an easy one, however, and the contention of this volume is that it was smoothed by all sorts of devious devices which in effect operated to betray Cuba. The account is buttressed by some forty pages of documentary appendices.

The author draws a distinction in attitude and action between the officers and enlisted personnel of the Cuban army as of the summer months of 1933. The developments of the ousting of Machado, the troubled provisional regime of Céspedes, the September 4 revolt, and the two or three months following fill about three-fourths of the volume; the remainder deals with the establishment of "dictatorship under Batista" and its results. The results include such items as "lack of discipline under Batista," "how Batista neglected the national defense," "the voiding of civil authority," and "the illegal enrichment of a group of army men." These *nuevos ricos* practiced "a variety of gangsterism . . . organized to perfection," the author maintains. Batista himself, according to the author, profited handsomely from his years in power: apartment buildings near the Uni-