

## Richard Blaine McCornack (1919-1959)

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The sudden and premature death of Richard Blaine McCornack in Hanover, New Hampshire on May 14, 1959 from cancer shocked his colleagues and has left a real gap in the ranks of Latin Americanists. At the time of his death, Dr. McCornack was professor of history at Dartmouth College.

He was born in Chicago, July 19, 1919. He received his A.B. degree at Dartmouth in 1941, having achieved an outstanding undergraduate record which included being named Senior Fellow and election to Phi Beta Kappa. On a Barker Fellowship from Dartmouth he entered the Graduate School at Harvard in 1941 and was granted his A.M. degree in 1942. On the outbreak of World War II McCornack entered the Navy and served as an officer in the Supply Corps from 1942 through 1946. He returned to Harvard to complete his work for the doctorate in history; during 1946-1947 McCornack completed his residence requirements and made a trip to Mexico to obtain further material for his thesis: "Mexico and Latin America, 1855-1872: Mexico's Relations with Latin America during the Juárez Administration." He was named Assistant Professor of History at Dartmouth in 1947, a position which he held until 1951. In 1949, McCornack completed the requirements of the Ph.D. at Harvard. In June 1948, Professor McCornack married Barbara Bayse, daughter of Professor Arthur H. Bayse of the Department of History of Dartmouth.

In 1951, Dr. McCornack served as an Intelligence Research Specialist in the Department of State. During the same period in Washington he was a lecturer on Latin American history at the George Washington University in that city. In 1952 he returned to Dartmouth to assume teaching duties there, and remained until his death in 1959.

Growing out of his interest in diplomatic history of Mexico, reflected in his doctoral dissertation, Professor McCornack published a series of articles on this topic from 1951-1957, extending slightly the period of his interests in the 19th century. The first of these articles dealt with James Webb and his relations with Napoleon III; in the

same general period were articles on Manuel Nicolás Corpancho and on Maximilian's unsuccessful attempt to gain support from the Emperor of Brazil, Dom Pedro II. Aid given by the United States Navy to Juárez was the theme of another useful contribution. McCornack also wrote on episodes preceding the Juárez period and one on Porfirio Díaz.<sup>1</sup> McCornack also presented an unpublished paper at the Mississippi Valley Historical Association meeting in 1951 on "Juárez and Latin America," a general summary of his thesis findings.

Shortly after his return to Dartmouth from Washington, Dr. McCornack developed a new and important research interest. Working in the contemporary and recent past, he was much struck by the impact of foreign enterprise on underdeveloped areas, and undertook a training and research program which would equip him to cope with an investigation of these matters. During 1954 he was the recipient of a Ford Foundation Faculty Fellowship which permitted him to obtain anthropological training at the University of Chicago and to undertake a trip through South America investigating matters of his new interest. During 1956 he terminated his fellowship, briefly visited Spain, Ireland, Great Britain, and published "Some social aspects of American business in Latin America." At the time of his death in 1959, Professor McCornack was considering still another field of endeavor, that of tracing relationships between Spain and the United States during the period of the American Revolution.

To his colleagues and students, Richard McCornack remains in memory as one of the most pleasant, cooperative, and able of our Latin Americanists. He was a scholar and a gentleman. We all lament his passing.

<sup>1</sup> Richard B. McCornack, "James Watson Webb and the French withdrawal from Mexico," HAHR, XXXI (May, 1951), pp. 274-86; "The San Patricio deserters in the Mexican army," *Americas*, VIII (Oct., 1951), pp. 131-42; "Un amigo de México," *Historia Mexicana*, I (abr.-jun., 1952), pp. 546-70; "Maximilian's relations with Brazil," HAHR, XXXII (May 1952), pp. 175-86; "Los estados confederados y México," *Historia Mexicana*, IV (ene.-mar., 1955), pp. 337-52; "Porfirio Díaz en la frontera texana, 1875-1877," *ibid.*, V (ene.-mar., 1956), pp. 373-410; "Juárez y la armada norteamericana," *ibid.*, VI, abr.-jun., 1957), pp. 493-509.