

1574 hasta nuestros días. By JOSÉ LUIS REYES M. Guatemala City, 1960. Imprenta del Ministerio de Educación. Pp. 70. Paper.

This "modest geographic study" is useful but incomplete. It attempts to be a cumulative, alphabetical list of published works (495 items) and maps (120 items) which treat the geography of Guatemala. The difficulty which confronts the scholar is how far to rely on this work. Apparently the rule of selection was to include any work dealing with the geography of Guatemala which the editor could find in Guatemala (*cf.* Introduction). Thus the work contains twenty items by Karl Sapper, some of a cultural character, yet omits completely the works of George Shattuck, among others. It includes Rodríguez Beteta, *El libro de Guatemala Grande*, but omits Gordon Ireland, *Boundaries . . . in Central and North America*. The concluding map list is a useful reference to the historical cartography of Guatemala.

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Historia de Puerto Rico. By JOSÉ LUIS VIVAS. New York, 1960. Las Americas Publishing Company. Illustrations. Maps. Appendices. Bibliography. Index. Pp. 326.

This history was written primarily to meet the need of a textbook for Puerto Rican high schools. The author tries to provide a teachable and interesting history, not an "official" one; in so doing he has written a manual that will be useful to many who will never see high school again. Clear and helpful maps and drawings accompany the text. Such sources as Las Casas and Ledrú are occasionally cited. The book opens with more than perfunctory sections on geography and prehistory. Social, cultural, and economic history receive attention. The author handles without rancor or undue partisanship the relations with Spain and then with the United States, as well as the thorny issues of internal politics. At

the same time his pride in the Estado Libre Asociado is unconcealed. To the narrative he appends vignettes of thirty eminent Puerto Ricans; several historical and constitutional documents; lists of past and present governmental and ecclesiastical officials; schematic comparisons of the various "organic acts"; census figures; a list of hurricanes; and a well chosen four-page bibliography.

Given the length of the book and its intended market, there is inevitable compression and little interpretation. In a departure from the Puerto Ricans' famous "insularismo," the author makes a brave attempt to give his island context in both Latin America and the Caribbean region. He does not go far in this direction, however, and even fails to mention the Caribbean Commission, which, when the book was published, was about to move its headquarters to Puerto Rico and become the Caribbean Organization. Professor Vivas in fact makes numerous slips which show him to be an unreliable guide beyond his island's shores. He gives "St. Pelée" for Mt. Pelée, "King" for Prince Henry the Navigator, and 1536 for 1551 as the founding date of the University of Mexico; he speaks of the large sugar plantations of modern Haiti, the oil refineries of Bonaire, and the predominantly white population of Jamaica. Still, the book represents a step into the larger world, and one hopes that Professor Vivas' students will be taking firmer ones. Meanwhile, for non-Puerto Ricans, here is an attractive introduction to a history that is too much neglected.

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Corridos & Calaveras. Edited by EDWARD LAROCQUE TINKER. Austin, 1961. University of Texas Press. Illustrations. Bibliography. Pp. 60. \$5.00.

The anonymous folk verse sung by street singers, usually with guitar accompaniment, and known, particularly

in Mexico, as *corridos*, is a direct descendant of the troubador ballads that flourished in Europe during the late Middle Ages. In Spain it assumed the garb of the *romances* which the Conquistadors brought to the New World where, like so many other Hispanic traditions, they have persisted in modified form to the present. Widespread illiteracy caused these popular verses to serve as a kind of musical press for the masses. Public events and the exploits of heroes, highwaymen, and other folkloric elements, suitably seasoned to the humble tastes of the listeners, were thus communicated in a rude, oral journalism. The Revolution of 1910 revitalized this popular expression in Mexico and the innumerable *corridos* inspired by that violent episode often have documentary value in providing a "worm's eye" view of events and the "underdog's" interpretation of the personalities of that social upheaval. Scholars, notably Vicente T. Mendoza of Mexico City and Merle E. Simmons of Indiana University, have made large collections and important studies of these folk ballads. To these Professor Tinker's slim volume, in large format with facsimile reproductions of eleven examples printed on pages colored to simulate the broadsheets by which the text of the *corridos* was often circulated, offers an elaborate and appealing footnote.

Along with a general introduction each selection is presented with a brief discussion, and especial attention is given to a type called *calaveras*, a word with the double meaning of "skull" and "scatterbrain." Garnished by drawings of skeletons performing varied antics the macabre imagination, sardonic wit, and nonchalance of the Indian with respect to death are expressed without a trace of morbidity and often with grotesque humor. These *calaveras* supply an outlet for a strong satirical tendency, shared by Indian and Creole alike, and so they have created a peculiar form of "comics" combining the talents of the cartoonist and the versifier. The

nineteenth-century José Guadalupe Posada won renown as a social critic by his searing verses and caricatures set forth in the form of *calaveras*, and he appears to have strongly influenced the great muralist, Diego Rivera who, as a small boy, often came to his studio.

In the appendix Américo Paredes has performed the exacting feat of transforming the difficult colloquialisms of the original *corridos* and *calaveras* into adequate English. All told this large sized, thin volume is a kind of handsome book dividend designed to amuse a casual reader, but it also provides a more serious observer with a realistic exhibit of an engaging Mexican folk art.

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A Regional Geography for Advanced and Scholarship Courses. 10th ed. Part I. *The Americas.* By L. DUDLEY STAMP. London, 1961. David McKay Company, Inc. Maps. Illustrations. Tables. Index. Pp. 274. \$4.25.

Despite the author's statement that this book "is intended primarily for the first years of a University course," it is grossly inadequate for classrooms on either side of the Atlantic. The maps are of varying degrees of quality and usefulness. Some are poorly-drawn; some are ill-conceived; others are inappropriately labeled or of doubtful significance. British bias shows in the uneven areal treatment. Bermuda gets more space than Cuba, the Falklands more than Uruguay, and Montserrat more than Paraguay.

Many of the statements need updating, such as "Cuba is . . . a republic in close alliance with the United States" and "[French Guiana] has been used as a penal settlement . . . since 1885." Some of the author's judgments are unusual. Argentina is "progressive," and Paraguay is said to have been "ruled by a dictator . . . before developing along more orthodox lines." The Chaco's "potentialities