

Oswaldo Díaz Díaz (1910-1967)

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Oswaldo Díaz Díaz died in Bogotá on December 15, 1967. His death has removed an active and dedicated scholar from the scene of Colombian historical scholarship. Born in 1910 in the small town of Gachetá, Cundinamarca, Díaz D. retained throughout his life a profound attachment to the town of his birth and its history despite his later career in Bogotá. Although he won his doctorate in Law, that key to most posts and preferment in Colombia, Díaz D. chose to spend his life in the classroom. Gradually advancing in the academic hierarchy, he won fame as a teacher of history and literature. He influenced several generations of secondary school and university students. His reputation as an indefatigable playwright would have in itself perpetuated his memory for his theater-loving countrymen (see his four-volume *Obras teatrales* [Bogotá, 1963-1967]).

But "Oswal-Díaz," as his intimate friends knew him, was also an important figure in Colombian historical circles. He was elected Secretary of the Academia Colombiana de Historia in 1961. His genial good nature, wit, and literary fluency lent life and luster to the Academy's bimonthly sessions. Serious scholars from abroad found him a firm ally in their efforts to obtain access to private archives and libraries. Over two decades, Díaz D. produced a number of historical articles until his knowledge and interest focused on the activities of the patriot cause in the period 1816-1819. His deepening archival research bore fruit in *Los Almeydas* (Bogotá, 1962), the study of an hacendado family whose unflinching patriotism sparked an extensive, anti-Spanish guerrilla movement in the northeastern highlands of New Granada during the Spanish reoccupation.

The major work of Díaz Díaz soon followed, *La reconquista española* (Bogotá, 1964-1967). Broader in perspective as well as firmer in its grasp of a wide array of manuscript and printed sources, this study established firmly the intrinsically popular nature of the Granadan resistance to the restoration of royalist rule. Its analysis of the ferment linking the patriot cause to broad-based social change would alone have made it an important contribution. Equally masterful was its carefully constructed thesis that the success of Bolívar's Bo-

yacá Campaign of 1819 was built upon the groundwork laid by lesser-known and obscure patriot guerrillas who operated in defiance of the Spanish Army during the grim years 1817-1819.

Just days before his passing, Dr. Díaz Díaz was invited to Vanderbilt University as a Distinguished Visiting Professor for the Spring Semester of 1969. His loss will be deeply felt by the world of historical scholarship, but especially by his friends, students, and colleagues.