

with Venezuela, and treated the Caracas junta in a manner virtually amounting to recognition of independence. Robertson also went to Venezuela and held conferences with the insurgents. By mid-1811, the British government became alarmed at the activities of the Curaçao officials and adopted a policy of strict neutrality in its appointment of a new governor who would adhere to this principle.

The administrative change provoked Robertson to abandon his official post and join the Venezuelan independence movement. Robertson's previous experience as an officer in the British army in Canada qualified him to help the Venezuelans considerably. His devotion to the patriot cause won him Simón Bolívar's esteem and a commission to secure from the British government official recognition of Venezuela's separation from Spain. Robertson was unable to get beyond the British-held island of St. Thomas on his mission to London in 1814 because of the hostility of the governor, and he returned to Venezuela. The following year, when the patriots suffered severe reverses, Robertson escaped to Jamaica where he soon died.

Pi Sunyer assigns John Robertson a lofty place in the pantheon of Venezuela's national heroes; yet, as the author readily acknowledges, no documents detailing Robertson's actual exploits in the military campaigns of 1811-1815 are available. Possibly Robertson made his most significant contribution to the cause when, acting as an official on Curaçao, he extended tacit if temporary British recognition of Venezuelan independence. Indeed, as Pi Sunyer asserts, many other British subjects including officers of the Royal Navy in the Caribbean often deviated from their government's stated policy, thus giving the independence movements an important boost in morale.

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Tragic Cavalier: Governor Manuel Salcedo of Texas, 1808-1813. By FÉLIX D. ALMARÁZ, JR. Austin and London, 1971. University of Texas Press. Bibliography. Index. Pp. xii, 206. Cloth. \$7.00.

Texans have become almost notorious for their reverence for their state's history, yet there are curious gaps in published works about the state. The least-known periods are the most recent and the most remote. Perhaps because a study of the Spanish period requires a knowledge of Spanish, perhaps because there were so few Spaniards in Texas, perhaps because research in this period is not glamorous to a generation of students seeking social relevance, little generally is known about

Spanish Texas. In fact, the noted *Handbook of Texas* contains many inaccuracies about the governors of the province while it was under Spanish rule.

Félix Almaráz' *Tragic Cavalier*, a biography of Manuel María de Salcedo, governor from November 1808 to April 1813, will serve as an excellent guide for subsequent studies of this neglected period. Salcedo's early years are consigned to a footnote, for the emphasis is on his years as governor. After a brief introductory chapter on the settlement and growth of Texas to 1808, Almaráz traces his subject's arrival in Texas, the military and political condition of the province at that time, his relationship with his uncle, Nemesio Salcedo, the commandant general of the Eastern Interior Provinces, and Texas' problems with its eastern neighbor, the United States. Most revealing of Almaráz' deep knowledge of his subject is his chapter on social conditions in Texas from 1808 to 1810; herein he traces the problem created by the royal monopoly on paper, he shows how royal funds for the province were expended and how the post office operated (or failed to work), he details the medical service that was available, and he demonstrates how thorny church-state relationships were. Next came the tragi-comic Las Casas Revolt of 1811 and the successful counter-revolution restoring Salcedo to his governorship, to be capped in 1813 when Bernardo Gutiérrez de Lara invaded Texas, captured the provincial leaders, executed them (including Salcedo), and established a short-lived "republic." A final chapter summarizes events in Spanish Texas to 1821.

Almaráz proves conclusively that Salcedo, while working under severe bureaucratic handicaps, was an innovative administrator and a strong governor—contrary to the picture previously painted of him by historians. Soundly documented and written in pleasant style, this volume is sound, scholarly, handsomely printed, and very readable; in sum, it is a book about Texas and Texans which hopefully will inspire other such works about the Spanish period and which will serve as a guide for them.

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Simon Bolivar. By GERHARD MASUR. 2d. ed. Albuquerque, New Mexico, 1969. University of New Mexico Press. Bibliography. Index. Pp. xiv, 574. Cloth. \$15.00.

When this work appeared in 1948, Charles C. Griffin (in his review in the *HAHR*, 29:4 [November, 1949], 591) called it ". . . the most convincing Bolívar within the pages of any one book." Ever since, it has served many as a basic profile of the *Libertador* in English.