

eastern South America, an area too often ignored in books of this nature; yet it appears to have been an important cultural hearth area. Two bonus chapters complete the book. Lanning's "The Transformation to Civilization" considers possible processes in the development of native American civilizations, while "Transoceanic Diffusion and Nuclear America" by Tolstoy presents a reasoned and scholarly appraisal of possible contacts with other cultures (primarily Asian).

The book's greatest drawbacks are its brevity and bibliography. The brevity forces the authors to limit their coverage and discussion. This makes the book difficult to use as a text except in general survey courses where other books (including possibly others from the same series) are also used. The brevity may send the reader to the bibliography for further information, only to meet with frustration. Most of the books cited are themselves only larger secondary summaries.

University of Illinois

DAVID GROVE

Across South America: An Account of a Journey from Buenos Aires to Lima by Way of Potosí. By HIRAM BINGHAM. New York, 1976. Da Capo Press. Illustrations. Maps. Index. Pp. xvi, 405. Cloth. \$27.50.

Behind this rambling travel account, in almost equal parts, are physical energy, intellectual curiosity, love of history, and concern about the then present. Having previously retraced the route of Bolívar across Venezuela and Colombia, Bingham readily succumbed to an urge, in 1908, to retrace the route of colonial commerce between Buenos Aires and Lima. However, his varied forms of travel greatly affected his capacity to report, as he intended, concerning the "people, their history, politics, economics, and physical environment" (p. viii). A train ride of 720 miles in twenty-four hours defeated his every purpose while numerous forty-mile-per-day stages by mule admirably served most of his ends.

The best of Bingham concerns those parts of Bolivia and Peru where the roads were execrable and the Aymaras and Quechuas predominant. He is tantalizing in terms of sixty-five-year-old theorizing and speculation and weak in the irrelevance of his opening chapters. To Bingham himself the greatest worth lay in the role this travel prompted Peru to play in his subsequent career. Even as the reader marvels at Bingham's energy, he is left to wonder why the editor of the reprint series in which this appears fails to marshal a single word to validate the desirability of reissuing the volume.

Murphysboro, Illinois

C. HARVEY GARDINER

Mexico State Papers, 1744-1843: A Descriptive Catalogue of the G. R. G. Conway Collection in the Institute of Historical Research, University of London. By MICHAEL P. COSTELOE. London, 1976. The Athlone Press. Index. Pp. 153. Cloth. \$9.50.

Students of late colonial and early modern Mexico will find this a well-edited monograph of particular value. The G. R. G. Conway Collection consists of over 1200 printed documents acquired by the Institute of Historical Research, Univer-

city of London in 1936. The collection begins with a small selection of viceregal documents but its main strength lies in the rich variety of materials on the independence struggles, the first Federal Republic and the complex political events of the period up to 1843.

The bulk of the documents is made up of presidential and congressional decrees which were issued and circulated by federal ministers to the appropriate government departments and authorities throughout Mexico. Although a number of well-known political plans, *pronunciamientos* and diplomatic treaties are included, the great value of the collection is in the wealth of detailed information it provides on the fiscal and economic legislation of the different post-independence governments. Students of the economic and bureaucratic history of the period will be interested to note that many of the documents listed by Michael Costeloe in this catalogue are accompanied by the administrative instructions of the ministers responsible for their implementation.

La Trobe University, Australia

BARRY CARR

A Guide to Historical Sources in Saltillo, Coahuila. By DAVID C. BAILEY and WILLIAM H. BEEZLEY. East Lansing, 1975. Latin American Studies Center, Michigan State University. Map. Bibliography. Pp. 101. Paper. \$3.00.

The guide encompasses all the major civil and ecclesiastical archives in Saltillo. It is a useful guide, but it is not a model of archival reporting. There is an imbalance in the attention given to the state archives. For example, the *Archivo de Justicia* is described as massive and complete (p. 61), but is summarized in one page. The *Biblioteca del Congreso* and the *Registro de Propiedades* together receive three pages. The forty pages given to the *Archivo General* of Coahuila contain an internal imbalance. In a sample of condensed entries from the archival guides, the years from 1688 to 1875 are compressed into four pages, while the years from 1876 are given a run of thirty-one pages. Insufficient access to the municipal archive causes a lapse in the reporting of its contents. The key *ramos* of *Inventarios y Testamentos* (1617–1846) and *Actas del Ayuntamiento* (1701–1919) are not mentioned, while the colonial section of the municipal *Ramo General* is credited with thirty *legajos* fewer than it actually contains. The parish archives of Santiago and San Esteban are well handled. Researchers will still want to look over this guide. It locates the archives and gives a general indication of their holdings.

Berkeley, California

JOSÉ CUELLO

Political Handbook of the World: 1976. Governments and Intergovernmental Organizations as of January 1, 1976. Edited by ARTHUR S. BANKS, REBECCA T. GRANGER, et al. New York, 1976. McGraw-Hill. Tables. Appendices. Index. Pp. xi, 545. Cloth. \$19.95.

For quick, fundamental information on the politics of any country in the world (as of the end of 1975) one can delve into the comprehensive *Political Handbook of the World: 1976*. Its editors provide a compendium which succeeds in placing a great deal of factual material in an economical space. Considering the amount and utility of information, the price is reasonable.