

*En los albores de la independencia: Las Provincias Internas de Oriente durante la insurrección de don Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla, 1810-1811.* By ISIDRO VIZCAYA CANALES. Monterrey, 1976. Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Pp. xvii, 340. Paper.

Chronicles of major historical movements most often focus on the vortex of action. If the movement is peripatetic—as was the case in the Hidalgo revolt—geographic regions receive attention only when they are involved with the main events. Thus the Provincias Internas de Oriente, comprising Nuevo León, Nuevo Santander (modern Tamaulipas), Coahuila and Texas, have been traditionally discussed only for the period of February and March 1811 when Allende brought the bludgeoned remnant of his main force north to Saltillo and thence into the disastrous trap at Baján near Monclova. Only then have historians, myself included, summoned the region and its local actors into being. Happily Isidro Vizcaya Canales has written a different sort of history which treats a vast and sparsely settled region before and after, as well as during, the dramatic capture of the leaders of Mexico's first independence movement.

Vizcaya's exhaustive study is based on painstaking research in Mexican archives. In it the author reveals the precariousness of a region chronically threatened by Comanches and other tribes and recently exposed to pressure from the United States. The Hidalgo insurrection was yet another intrusion. Vizcaya argues, for example, that Nuevo Santander went over to the revolt in the belief that joining would be the best way to keep the alien insurgents from the Bajío out of their territory!

The cast of characters is enormous. Among them are Manuel de Santa María, the peninsular governor of Nuevo León, who became the highest royal official to join the insurrection and was shot in Chihuahua for his trouble; the Baron de Bastrop, a Dutch contrabandist and soldier of fortune who became a royalist spy; Joaquín Vidal de Lorca, leader of a royalist force sent to aid Calleja, who complained of every known ailment including his "continua gonorrea;" and, of course, Ignacio Elizondo who, with his nine children and a debt of 28,000 pesos, becomes credible as a turncoat. But Elizondo, presented in nationalist histories as the archtraitor, is actually representative of hundreds of opportunists from Monterrey to San Antonio who embraced the revolt when it was in flood tide and as easily returned to royalism after the battle of Calderón.

Curiously, for all his attention to personalities, Vizcaya overlooks

the signal importance of the Sánchez Navarros in the counterrevolutionary intrigue at Monclova, as explained by Charles Harris. While he discusses some elements of patron–client relationships, Vizcaya underplays the power of such latifundistas and the strength of extended families in favor of too many names and minute details of troop movements (without including a map!).

Yet, the cumulative effect of these details is important, for it makes possible Vizcaya's masterful comparison of the responses to the insurrection by Mexico's core and by the northeast. He attributes the frontier's superficial acceptance and rapid rejection of a rebellion which would become endemic in parts of central Mexico to a society less urbanized, with fewer *gachupines*, more criollos and less Indians, and relatively indifferent in religious matters. The arguments are provocative and should stimulate borderland buffs and students of Mexican independence.

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*La vida cotidiana en La Paz durante la guerra de la independencia: 1800–1825.* By ALBERTO CRESPO R., RENÉ ARZE AGUIRRE, FLORENCIA B. DE ROMERO and MARY MONEY. La Paz, 1975. Editorial Universidad Mayor de San Andrés. Illustrations. Chronology. Bibliography. Index. Pp. 278. Paper.

Strong in the belief that a university, in addition to fostering knowledge in the classroom, has the responsibility to encourage research and writing, the Universidad Mayor de San Andrés in La Paz recently published a series of volumes commemorating the sesquicentennial of Bolivian independence. The work under consideration was the first volume produced and written by three students in the university's department of history in collaboration with the distinguished Alberto Crespo R., a member of that department. According to the introduction to *La vida cotidiana en La Paz*, this is the premier Bolivian collective effort in the field of history; hopefully it will serve as the model for other such undertakings.

The author's purpose is to explore the social and economic milieu out of which the political and military events developed between 1800 and 1825 insofar as La Paz was concerned. Their premise is that everyday affairs give a rhythm to the lives of a people and provide a pulse that can be read by the latter-day investigator; material that seems trivial to the untrained eye can prove valuable in helping to