

1956

## Book Reviews

Florida Historical Society  
membership@myfloridahistory.org

 Part of the [American Studies Commons](#), and the [United States History Commons](#)

Find similar works at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/fhq>

University of Central Florida Libraries <http://library.ucf.edu>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by STARS. It has been accepted for inclusion in Florida Historical Quarterly by an authorized editor of STARS. For more information, please contact [STARS@ucf.edu](mailto:STARS@ucf.edu).

---

### Recommended Citation

Society, Florida Historical (1956) "Book Reviews," *Florida Historical Quarterly*. Vol. 35 : No. 4 , Article 8.  
Available at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/fhq/vol35/iss4/8>

## BOOK REVIEWS

*The Basic Ideas of Alexander Hamilton.* Edited by Richard B. Morris. (New York, Pocket Books, 1957. 451 pp. \$.35.)

IT IS DELIGHTFUL to see this significant collection of Hamilton papers offered to the public in a paper-bound, thirty-five cent edition. The selections are from Hamilton's letters, speeches, essays, reports and other incidental writings. Frequently an entire letter is given; but the editor normally gives only as much from any document as needed to convey the central thought.

It is highly appropriate that this book should appear among those planned for publication to commemorate the Hamilton Bicentennial.

Dr. Morris introduces the work with a neat ten-page essay of his own on "Alexander Hamilton after Two Centuries." It is obvious that he has really "touched the hem of his garment," for he makes cogent observations concerning the sources of Hamilton's greatness, the nature of his contributions, the basic principles of his life, and some reasons for the frequent lack of objectivity among those persons who have spoken or written about the Great Federalist. He points out that Hamilton did not believe in political parties, was "profoundly radical" in that the "new kind of republican federalism" which he advocated "constituted a sharp break with the political ways of the past." Hamilton stood for "change and progress," but hoped it would evolve gradually.

The cover painting of the book is a good reproduction, in color, of the Trumbull portrait of Hamilton - the same one that is reproduced on the ten dollar bill. This is by far the best of the Hamilton portraits, for it conveys something of the tremendous intellectual powers that account for Hamilton's magnificent achievements.

The title of this book is partly misleading. Hamilton's "ideas" are, truly, to be found in the chapters on "The Right of Revolution," "On Government: Some Guiding Principles," "The Principles of Constitutional Government," and "On Life and Death." But other chapters develop primarily the deeds rather than the ideas of Hamilton, as, "Winning the Revolution," "Building a New Nation," and "The Fight for Ratification."

It is the nature of original documents that they retain a freshness and charm that causes them to be easily imprinted upon the mind of the reader. Those who read this brief collection of papers cannot fail to attain a deeper understanding of the statesmanship of Hamilton and of the principles upon which our republic is founded.

GILBERT L. LYCAN

*Stetson University*

*The Growth and Culture of Latin America.* By Donald E. Worcester and Wendell G. Schaeffer. (New York, Oxford University Press, 1956. 963 pp.)

The writers of texts and surveys of Latin American history face two serious problems. First, large gaps in basic research exist, particularly in the social and economic spheres, so that synthesis is difficult and generalization dangerous. The closing of these gaps can be accomplished only by prolonged and painstaking scholarship. Second, there is the problem of organization. How is the history of a region which includes such a diversity of climate and topography and which possesses such a heterogeneous cultural background to be welded into an integrated whole? The obstacles are particularly formidable after independence when the writer must cope with twenty independent nations. In treating the national period the solution has generally been simply to write the history of each of the countries or at least of the larger and more important ones. The results are not properly histories of Latin America but compilations of national histories. An alternative has been to treat the period topically; that is, chapters are devoted to the church, government, immigration, international relations, education, and other aspects of Latin American life since independence. In the process, however, the chronological framework is sacrificed.

A third approach to the problem of organization is to identify and trace a sequence of major themes, trends, or problems which have been more or less common to all of Latin America and to weave the history of the individual nations into this fabric. Professors Worcester and Schaeffer have experimented boldly with

this organization. They divide the republican period into three sections. The first is entitled, "The Struggle for Political Stability," and extends from the achievement of independence to *circa* 1860. The first chapter discusses the major problems that promoted instability. Were the newly-created nations to be monarchies or republics? Were they to be organized along federal or centralist lines? Was their orientation to be conservative or liberal? What was to be the relationship between church and state? The rest of the chapters in the section trace the struggle over these issues and the solutions achieved in the several countries. The second section is entitled, "Popular Government on Trial," and extends from 1860 to *circa* 1930. It is concerned primarily with the rise of new values, a growing social consciousness, the liberalization of the political process, and economic development. These developments are traced in the history of various countries. The last section bears the title, "The Contest for Hegemony and the Rise of Indigenous Nationalism," and covers the period from the Great Depression of the 1930's to the present. It is concerned with important social, political, and economic changes which took place in Latin America as a result of the economic crisis. Among the major themes discussed are the rapid growth of economic nationalism, the trend toward collectivism whether it be by democratic or dictatorial processes, the impact of foreign ideologies, Indianism, and social reform.

The authors use the same topical-chronological approach to the colonial period. Here, the main sections are, "Genesis of Empire," "Consolidation of Empire," and "Maturity of Empire," dealing respectively with the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, and "The Revolutionary Era." In each of these a discussion of major trends and developments is followed by a treatment of their operation in the various parts of the Spanish Empire in America and in Brazil.

Readers will disagree on how successful Professor Worcester and Schaeffer have been in presenting an integrated history of Latin America. The various nations of Latin America have developed at different rates and at times in different directions. To try to fit them into an arbitrary organization is extremely difficult and sometimes leads to a little strain. This reviewer feels, however, that although the authors approach is the most difficult to

handle, it is also the most desirable. They have used it very effectively and the result is truly a history of Latin America. It might be added that the book will not only be an answer for many teachers of Latin American history but will meet the needs of the general reader. It is scholarly work and at the same time the authors have made a special effort to enliven the factual narrative with life and color.

LYLE N. MCALISTER

*University of Florida*