

In some respects it is unfortunate that Moores chose to present the bulk of this centennial history with such great emphasis on biographical sketches. While personalities undoubtedly have had considerable influence on the events that comprise this history, the author's disproportionate reliance upon biographical details tends to obscure the basic purpose of the book. The fact that he presents these details in delightful prose does little to alter this basic criticism.

Furthermore, it should be pointed out that the author makes only passing reference to agricultural education in other land grant schools. Judicious mention of developments at its sister institutions might have served as a basis for a meaningful comparison with developments at the University of Illinois.

It is generally agreed that balance is an essential ingredient of any history. While the author mentions in the preface that it is his intention to concentrate upon the earlier years of the College of Agriculture, his narrative spills over into the twentieth century with only superficial presentation of historical events, some of which appear to have been selected at random.

The generous space Moores allots to appendices is commendable, while the photographs and statistical tables add interesting dimensions to the book. An excellent bibliography is convincing evidence that the history is based upon broad and exhaustive research.

The minor criticisms submitted by this reviewer should not obscure the book's worthwhile contributions to agricultural history. Undoubtedly, *Fields of Rich Toil* will be appreciated by all persons interested in the history of higher education in general and agriculture in particular, especially by those who hail from the State of Illinois.

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Mexico. By Robert E. Quirk. *The Modern Nations in Historical Perspective.* Edited by Robin W. Winks. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1971. Pp. viii, 152. Map, bibliographic essay, index. Clothbound, \$5.95; paperbound, \$2.45.)

For several years Prentice-Hall has been engaged in the publication of compact national and regional histories in its series *The Modern Nations in Historical Perspective*, under the general editorship of Robin W. Winks. Averaging well under two hundred pages in length, the books in this series are restricted to major themes and patterns, but they have been strongly interpretive and oriented toward present day concerns. They have been generally well received by reviewers, and the key to this reception lies in the success of Winks in recruiting an able group of historians as contributors. Such is the

case with the volume now under consideration, for Robert E. Quirk has produced a brief interpretive history of Mexico that is a suitable companion to the other works in this series.

Two themes dominating Quirk's study are the troubled melding of races and cultures that produced modern Mexican society and the evolution of Mexican political life. He takes care in separating fact from myth insofar as Mexico's Indian heritage is concerned, for it is Quirk's view that Spanish influence has played a greater role in shaping modern Mexican society than it is fashionable to propose. Noting that it is the "ideal" and "mythic" Indian of the Aztec empire that is venerated in Mexico today, he adds that "the empire ceased to exist in 1521 and therefore contributed almost nothing to Mexico's postconquest civilization" (p. 21). Spanish institutions and attitudes are not honored by the rhetoric of the Revolution, Quirk argues, "yet despite the disclaimers of politicians and intellectuals, the aristocratic traditions still have a strong hold on Mexican society" (p. 47).

Quirk's discussion of Mexico's political development is structured along familiar lines as he moves through each stage from the period of Santa Anna to the era of Revolutionary Mexico. He characterizes nineteenth century political life as an ideological struggle between conservative forces fighting a rear guard action and liberals whose day had not yet come, and he notes that in the process "the early optimism of the liberals yielded to the harsh reality that the country was not ready for a popularly determined government" (p. 52). Liberals ultimately joined conservatives in accepting the strong man rule of Porfirio Díaz as they wearied of the years of internal dissension, and Mexico went into a period of stability, rapid economic development, and vast profits for favored Mexican and foreign investors.

It is, understandably, the era of the Revolution with which Quirk is most effective. His final chapter is a careful assessment of the gains and failures of the Revolution under the "juggernaut" Party of Revolutionary Institutions. Noting the growing disaffection and alienation on both the political right and left of PRI, and, more importantly, the revolt of Mexican youth, Quirk questions whether Mexico can long continue on its present path. "Most Mexicans," he observes, "though disillusioned with the Revolution, would vote overwhelmingly for PRI's candidates in the 1970s, because they had no other choice" (p. 125). He adds that even by 1970, however, "the new generation had broken with the past and looked to the Echeverría years ahead—a few with guarded hope, many with cynicism, and some with anticipation of violent social upheaval" (p. 125).

Despite its brevity, Professor Quirk's study is challenging, and it should prove to be a useful instrument in college classrooms. The bibliographic essay is excellent.